Community participation in the Zimbabwe Community Development Association (ZCDA) ISAL project: A development communication perspective.

BY

CLIVE SHEMBE (214584115)

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Supervisor: **Dr. Lauren Dyll-Myklebust**

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DECLARATION - PLAGIARISM

I, <u>Clive Shembe</u> declare that:

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2. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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ABSTRACT

Community social change projects emphasise the need for participatory communication practises. The intended beneficiaries are expected to participate in the social change projects, but often their voices are not fully heard. This study therefore seeks to 'write from below', by investigating the participation of Gutu Ward 13 community members in the Zimbabwe Community Development Association (ZCDA) Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) microfinance project. This research is cognisant of the key role that the community members play in social change projects. As such, the culture-centred approach (Dutta, 2008, 2011) is employed as the methodological and conceptual framework for this study, as it acknowledges the importance in the interaction of culture, structure and agency. This study also uses the Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) model (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009) as a benchmark upon which participation in the ZCDA ISAL project is analysed. Participation is complex, and in this study participation is conceptualised as power (Arnstein, 1969). Thus, the participatory process should be empowering and accord power to those without it, or those previously excluded from social change projects. This research analyses the participation trends, forms of participation, self-exclusion and non-participation in the ISAL project. It adopts a qualitative research approach and data was collected via focus group discussions with Gutu Ward 13 members participating in the ISAL project, key informant interviews with the village development workers, and external social change agents such as ZCDA staff. Participant observation was undertaken at the Gutu Ward centre during a community meeting and also during the interviews. From the findings and literature, convergence highlights how social cohesion influences the participation of certain stakeholders in the microfinance project. Divergence also highlights the reasons for non- participation and self-exclusion of the stakeholders, most of which are at the 'margins'. This highlights the need to include and encourage participation from previously excluded groups in community projects, and also for the development of a structure which facilitates equal agency in participation, because community interests influences participation. More so, the participation of community members during the project aids in future participation and ownership.

Keywords: participation, culture-centred approach, communication for participatory development, power relations

ACRONYMS

BSAC-British South African Company

CCA-Culture-Centred Approach

CFPD-Communication for Participatory Development

CFSC-Communication for Social Change

ESAP-Economic Structural Adjustment Program

FAO-Food and Agriculture Organisation

DFID-Department for International Development

GMI-Group Maturity Index

HIV-Human Immune Virus

IGA-Income Generating Activity

IKS-Indigenous Knowledge Systems

NGOs-Non Governmental Organisation

PRA-Participatory Rural Appraisal

RMFP-Rural Micro-finance Project

UNICEF-United Nations International Children's Emergence Fund

VIDCO-Village Development Committee

WADCO-Ward Development Committee

WASH-Water Sanitation and Hygiene

ZCDA-Zimbabwe Community Development Association

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<h1 style="text-align:center">CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</h1>

Introduction

This chapter presents the study's objectives and research questions. It provides a brief historical background to the research problem under investigation, as well as the study site and the relevant associated development role players. The principles and practices of participation have become important to development and this study seeks to investigate it from a development communication perspective.

Zimbabwe has been a 'charity case'[1] since the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) from 1991-1995. ESAP aimed at promoting economic growth by regulation of the domestic policy, and though it recorded success in liberalising the economy, continued deficit contributed to the slowdown in growth (Zimstats, 2013).

To present day, many international, regional and local developmental organisations have been actively involved in community development initiatives in their bid to improve the livelihood of urban and rural communities in Zimbabwe. The livelihood of the rural communities has been the worst affected by the prevailing economic conditions and this has led to more community development aid players contemplating reciprocating government's efforts to resuscitate the livelihoods of rural communities (Cubitt, 1997; Zimstats, 2013). Zimbabwe Community Development Association (ZCDA) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that was founded in November 2001. ZCDA's primary purpose and overall objective is to promote, aid and organise disadvantaged rural communities to participate in decision-making and policy formulation processes at community, district and ultimately national level, as a starting point to finding home-grown durable solutions to the socio-economic and political challenges that are faced by their communities and the nation[2].

To date, ZCDA's interventions include humanitarian emergency response, capacity building, research, and advocacy for and on behalf of communities that were displaced since the turn of the millennium by the commencement of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. In the last decade, ZCDA has worked with communities in more than twenty districts spanning across all ten provinces of Zimbabwe, namely Harare, Bulawayo,

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[1] Available at: http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news12755IMF+reduced+us+to+charity+case,+minister/news.aspx Accessed 10 November 2014.
[2] Available at: http://www.zcdt.org.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=2 Accessed 26 March 2015

Manicaland, Masvingo, Midlands, Matebeleland North, Matebeleland South, Mashonaland West, East and Central provinces[3].

ZCDA has also been involved in developmental initiatives such as the Internal Savings and Lending's (ISAL), a microfinance initiative project on which this study will focus. In a bid to increase household income and access to funds, the microfinance project by ZCDA has been implemented in four provinces in Zimbabwe, namely Harare, Midlands, Masvingo and Mashonaland West. The study is based on the ISAL microfinance project spearheaded by ZCDA from period August 2011 to December 2013 and is an investigation on the participation trends in the microfinance project of Gutu Ward 13. Ward 13 was chosen because it mirrors the participation trends in the whole ISAL project according to ZCDA ISAL report (2013). This study is premised on the ISAL project in Ward 13 only, however, ZCDA conducted the ISAL project in three wards in Gutu and many other wards in different provinces.

Figure 1.1 Map showing location of Ward 13 Gutu, Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

Source: (adapted from http://www.maphill.com/zimbabwe/masvingo/gutu/simple-maps/blank-map/)

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[3] Available at: http://www.zcdt.org.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=2 Accessed 26 March 2015.

Zimbabwe in Context

Located on the southern part of Africa is the land locked state of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe shares its borders with Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana and Zambia. Zimbabwe attained its independence in 1980, this marked a new phase of black majority self-rule and the end of the British colonial rule.

Soon after attaining independence in 1980, the Zimbabwean government adopted a central planning model. At the time of just attaining independence, the Zimbabwean dollar was on par with the British pound on the stock exchange (Cubitt, 1997; Stenflo, 1994; Zimstats, 2013). The liberalisation of the economy marked the relaxation on the control of goods and the removal of foreign exchange markets. The free markets arguably led to the collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar on "Black Friday", the 14th of November 1997. From this day onwards, the local currency (Zimbabwean dollar) nose-dived on the market, eventually leading to the sky-rocketing inflation rates, with the highest inflation peak recorded being 231 000 000% in July 2008. Zimbabwe's economy is agriculture-based and, before the economic decline and inclement rain patterns, was the bread basket of Africa (Chung, 2006).

In order to understand the plight and the circumstances of the rural populace, it is imperative to trace the history of colonisation in Zimbabwe. More so, tracing the history of colonisation unearths the historical and geographical background surrounding the existence of most rural communities in Zimbabwe, and Gutu Ward 13, (as the study site) in particular. In pre-independent Zimbabwe, the social, economic and political climate bestowed economic and political benefits to the white minority race (Zimstats, 2013). The settlers forcefully grabbed the fertile land and the natives were pushed away from their productive land into barren and unproductive land (Chung, 2006). The Land Apportionment Act (1930) facilitated the alienation of the natives from their land into Tribal Trust Lands, commonly known as reserves. This term, locally translated to *Ruzevha,* is commonly used today to mean the rural areas which, in most circumstances, exist because of the colonisation of Zimbabwe. The natives were pushed into smaller land potions which could not sustain them, and in most cases these settlements had hazardous living conditions such as a prevalence of tsetse flies and mosquitos, and were in areas that were semi-arid or arid (Rodney, 1972).

In 1890 Cecil John Rhodes and his compatriots started the Pioneer Column which sought to invade Mashonaland. After the invasion of Mashonaland in 1890, Matebeleland was annexed in 1893 which led to the displacement of African natives. Forced labour and taxation were employed as a way to get cheap or free labour to till the land by the British

South African Company (BSAC). This colonial distribution of land highlights the geographical exploitation of natives and typifies how most rural areas in Zimbabwe, and Gutu in particular, find themselves socially, economically and physically marginalised[4]. More so, the legacy of colonisation also gives insight into the 'proletarianisation' of the African natives in Zimbabwe (Chung, 2006).

The colonisation of Zimbabwe and the displacement of natives also exhibits how Europe aimed to develop Africa from the dominant modernisation paradigm. As well as Western economic imperialism, one of the core reasons for the colonisation of Africa was the need to enlighten (or modernise) the 'dark' continent, Africa (Matunhu, 2011). This idea is vital in this study, as it typifies the hypocrisy in developmental work carried out in Zimbabwe by most developmental players for the past decades which yielded minimal results.

Gutu Ward 13 falls under agro-ecological region 5, which is characterised by an annual rainfall range of 450-650 mm, severe dry spells during the rainy season, and frequent seasonal droughts[5] are experienced[6]. Although the region is considered unsuitable for dry land cropping, the major source of livelihood of the community members is farming. The subsistence farmers grow drought-tolerant varieties of maize, sorghum, pearl millet[7]. Figure 1.2 below shows the map of Zimbabwe and the location of Masvingo in the agro-ecological ranking.

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[4] Available at: http://www.zim.gov.zw/index.php/zimbabwe-in-brief/history-of-zimbabwe?start=1. Accessed on 10/04/2014.
[5] Available at: http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0395e/a0395e06.htm. Accessed on 10/04/2014.
[6] Available at: http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0395e/a0395e06.htm. Accessed on 10/04/2014.
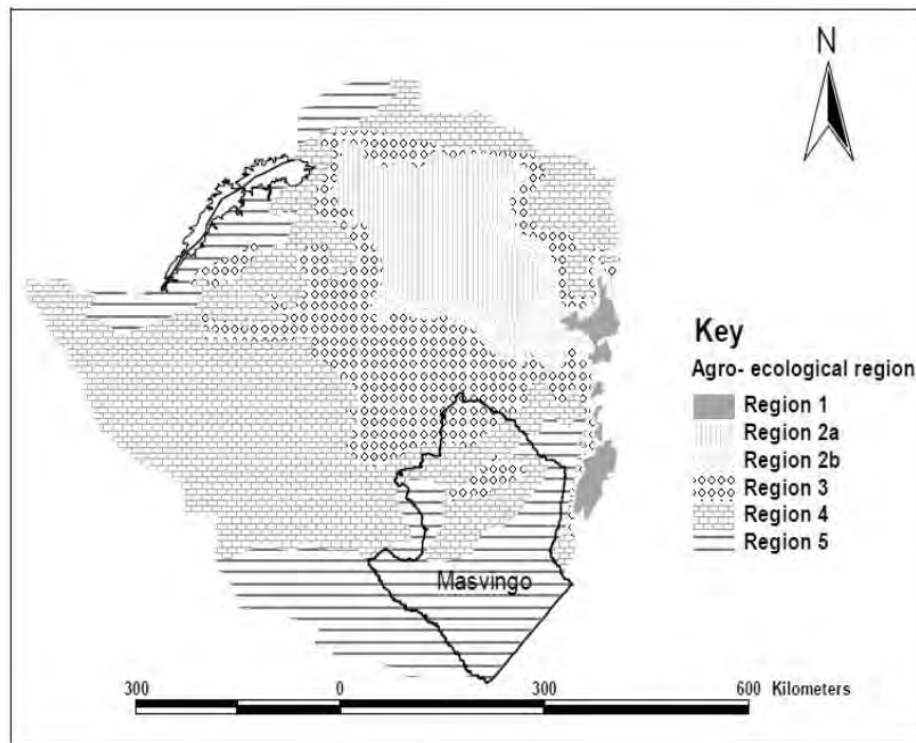
Figure 1.2 Map showing the agro-ecological zones in Zimbabwe.

The ward is characterised by sandy loam soils, and some *chivavani* (clay) is on the east of the ward. In some pockets, red soils are sparsely spread to the west of the ward. Some heavier textured soils do occur in some pockets of the ward, especially to the northern side *(Ruti)*. The soil types in the ward are mostly semi-arid and arid. In addition to the hardships experienced from the land bareness on which they had been moved, the native Zimbabwean's cattle were raided by the settlers in the 1930s[8]. This highlights a level of structural marginalisation and the need for a research frame which valorise communities' access to information and listening to the grassroots voices in the negotiation of meaning.

Framing the study: Development communication

This study adopts a development communication perspective, defined as the study of social change which is brought about by the use, and/or application, of communication research, theory, and technologies to bring about development (Rogers, 1997). Development communication aims to involve the creation of mechanisms that widen the community's access to information, strengthen social change agents' ability to listen to the grassroots voice

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[8] Mazuru Ward 13: Developmental Plan, Compiled by ZCDA, 2011

[9] Source: http://www.fao.org/docrep/x5598e/x5598e07.html

and negotiate meaning, which empowers grassroots organisations to achieve a more participatory process in development (World Bank, 2006).

Definitions of, and approaches to, development communication have varied with time and place (Manyozo, 2008; Tomaselli, 2011). Dyll-Myklebust describes this saying:

> Definitions of development communication have shifted over the years, revealing the changing focus of the field from that of the exogenous introduction of technologies and innovations for economic growth (in the modernisation paradigm) to one that valorises community dialogue and collective action in a more participatory interactive process whereby the intended beneficiaries play a more active role in their own development and poverty-reduction (in the participatory approach) (Dyll-Myklebust, 2011: 112)

Participatory approaches are normative and present the ideal approaches to enact social change. Although there are, at times, a disjuncture between its principles and how they translate on the ground, this study sees the value that dialogue, conscientisation and the valorisation of local knowledge may have on the ISAL Ward 13 project. Through dialogue, people also define who they are, what they need and how to get what they need in order to improve their own lives (Figueroa et.al, 2002). Through dialogue, the community may collectively identify the developmental problem, and ultimately, community-based forms of implementation may facilitate the success of a development project.

This study is premised on the ISAL microfinance initiative in Ward 13, Gutu, Masvingo. Servaes (2008) asserts that development communication rests on the premise that successful rural development calls for the conscious and active participation of the intended beneficiaries at every stage of the development process[9]. Notably, the participation of beneficiaries in every stage of the project cycle may be difficult to attain in reality, the essence of people-centeredness in developmental work brings the value of participation to the community developmental process, as will be discussed further in chapter two.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) (1989), development communication is the planned and systematic use of communication. Some of the notable criteria include to:

- Collect exchanging information among all those concerned in planning a development initiative

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[9] Available at: http://www.fao.org/nr/com/gtzworkshop/a0892e00.pdf. Accessed 23 March 2014

- Mobilise for development action and to assist in mitigating problems that might arise during programme implementation.

- Enhance dialogical skills of the practitioners, so they have effective dialogues.

- Apply communication technology to training and extension programmes, particularly at grassroots level in-order to improve their quality and impact (FAO, 1989).

The growth of development communication can be traced in Paulo Freire work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), the World Bank ways of enhancing participation (World Bank, 1994) and the publication of the report by Gumucio-Dagron in 2001. The development communication and social change scholars differ on wording, but they are constant on the idea that social change projects cannot produce more results without an ongoing, cultural and socially relevant communication dialogue, positioning people at the 'centre' of their development.

Despite government and Non-Governmental Organisations' (NGOs) efforts to address the challenges of poverty, livelihoods of many Zimbabweans are under threat. This could be caused by the fact that most of the community development initiatives are not culturally embedded at a grassroots level, and thus lack sustained social change (Servaes, 2008). Colin Chasi (2011) asserts that without full understanding of the needs of real people, living in real situations, there is little chance that experiences, motivations or desires and actions or powers are accounted for. Thus, Chasi posits, adherence to people-centeredness in project planning and implementation during a social change project. Development communication will be elaborated upon in chapter two as it forms part of the literature review that contextualises this study.

Problem Formulation and Rationale for the Study

Naison Dzinavatonga (2008:1) asserts that

> Development thinkers and practitioners have been pondering over community participation for the last decades. Some even called the 1980s a decade of participation in development discourse while others also view the current decade of social movements, non-governmental organisations, and community based organisations, as a manifestation of organised community participation.

Participation is one of the most hailed approaches to social change, despite the challenges faced during the process of community participation (Dutta, 2008:2011; Servaes, 2008).

Sherry Arnstein (1969:1) evokes a powerful imagery when she argues that, "the idea of participation is like eating spinach: no one is against it principle because it is good for you". Participation goes beyond the physical presence of community members during a project cycle and includes the distribution of power. Genuine participation allows the previously excluded groups to be included in the economic, social and political processes of their community, hence participation is categorically a term for citizen power (Arnstein, 1969). Participation yields more benefits if local people contribute to information-giving, and benefits from the initiation and implementation of a project (Mclvor, 2000). Thus, this assertion highlights the need for the engagement of grassroots community members in the project formulation, during the implementation of the project, and ultimately in the evaluation exercise.

Participation is not a new concept or a buzzword in the Zimbabwean context. The government and NGOs have adopted participatory approaches to social change, much of which fall under the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodology (Chambers, 1994; Zimstats, 2013). PRA allows local people to enhance and analyse their condition, knowledge and gives them a chance to act. Robert Chambers (1994) asserts that PRA has been applied in Africa as early as 1991 and had spread African countries such as Botswana, Ethiopia, Franco- phone West Africa, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe by 1994.

In theory, participation has been hailed as an approach that contributes towards the success of a project, as well as having projects that are community centred (Dutta 2008, 2011). Norman Reid (2000) further argues that participation is a condition for success, and without the participation of grassroots community members, developmental projects would not be successful. The above assertions calls for an analysis of the participatory approach, thus problematising participation in terms of access, timing and the ultimate objective. Problematising participation in that respect, aids in a deeper understanding of participation, not only it its normative form, but its application in the Zimbabwean context, Ward 13 Gutu in Masvingo.

More so, the seeming growth in the use of participatory methods in Zimbabwe, as highlighted above, therefore calls for an investigation of how communities participate, at what stage of the project cycle they participate and for whose benefit. This calls for the need

to investigate the above mentioned factors such as access, timing and the objective for participation. This is so because most rural communities in Zimbabwe live below the poverty datum line, yet for the past decades they have been 'participating' in many different interventions from different NGOs (Zimstats 2013).

Zimbabwe has been under the scourge of a number of political, social and economic crises, broadly speaking, as evidenced by disputed elections, political unrest in rural areas and the economic decline mentioned above. The economy collapse and the political unrest has seen more NGOs coming in to complement the government's efforts in their bid to eradicate extreme poverty and increase household income, especially in the rural areas. In most of the activities by the NGOs, participation has been viewed as key to the success of social change initiatives (Dzinavatonga, 2008) however, in practice, it can be noted that the concept still lacks in yielding the desired results.

Kincaid and Figueroa (2002, 2009) asserts that in most cases participation has been measured naively, for example, the number of people attending local meetings. In this regard, the greater the number of people recorded present during a community meeting, per se, is equated to a greater level of community participation, without analysing the community's role during the project cycle (Kincaid & Figueroa, 2009). This approach is too simplistic, and research into development projects should aim to explore the interaction among participants. This study takes up that objective and investigates the dynamics between leaders and intended beneficiaries in the ZCDA ISAL project in Gutu Ward 13 to determine the nature of participation in the developmental process. The Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009) will be used as a point of reference to analyse the participation in the ISAL project.

CFPD is a descriptive model that provides steps that may explain why community projects are successful or unsuccessful. It is also a prescriptive model that can be used by external change agents and local leaders to increase the likelihood that development projects succeed (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). The CFPD model will be used as a schematic descriptive benchmark against which the ZCDA workshops in Ward 13, Gutu and the different stages or manifestations of participation and non-participation will be analysed. Through constructive dialogue with the ISAL participants and non-participants in the microfinance project, the factors influencing participation will be extracted. Thus, the CFPD

model will aid in establishing the nature of community participation with regards to the ZCDA project.

This will contribute towards the scholarship available on the CFPD model which is an revision of the earlier version Communication for Social Change (CFSC) (Figueroa et al, 2002). Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron (2002) postulates that the nature of social change initiatives usually lack culture-centeredness as they are usually decided on by external agents without any form of dialogue with the community beneficiaries (see also Dutta 2008, 2011). This may lead to a low involvement in the initiative by the community at a later stage, or failure of the project to reach sustainability. This can also contribute to increased vulnerability of the community members, due to the fact that they are rendered voiceless, and this creates a condition of subalternity (Spivak, 1999) which will be elaborated on in chapter three.

Research Objectives

ZCDA conducted five-day ISAL's training workshops in three provinces in Zimbabwe namely Harare, Midlands and Masvingo. All the ISAL workshops were conducted in late 2011 to 2012 and the participants received training in four modules, namely: i) record keeping ii) savings iii) book keeping and iv) constitution crafting. This research aims at exploring the nature of participation in the ZCDA microfinance ISAL project from a development communication perspective.

The main objectives of the study are:

- ➢ To examine the nature of participation and or non-participation in the project.
- ➢ To investigate the factors influencing the participation trends in the project.

The research aims to do so by exploring enabling and disabling factors to participation; assessing reinforcing factors to participation; and observing and documenting existing or developing participatory structures and dynamics.

In light of the above mentioned factors this study's key questions are:

i. Who was expected to participate in the ISAL Microfinance project and at what stage where they expected to participate?

ii. What role did the community play and during which phase of the project cycle was this participation?

iii. What were the participation forms or trends during the project cycle?

iv.   What were the reasons for participation and non-participation in the microfinance ISAL project?

v.   In what ways is the community's way of life an enabling or disabling factor to participation?

Significance of the study

The study is of significance in the development communication field, particularly with regards to scholarship on participatory approaches to development in the rural areas (Freire, 1970; Bessette, 2004; Servaes, 2008, Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). Some research has addressed and highlighted the commendable efforts of the NGOs in complementing governments' efforts (Dzinavatonga, 2008; Kanda, 2011), and this research will further this by analysing the nature of participation in the ISAL project. This will add to the scholarship of the efficacy and the challenges of NGOs in harnessing the participatory approaches to development in the Zimbabwean context.

Moreover, this study will explore the power relations that influence participation in a rural setup, particularly around decision-making, structure, and agency, as they are key elements in the deeper understanding of mechanisms of power. In this study the notion of 'power' is hinged on Shelly Arnstein's (1969) notion of participation being categorically a term for citizen power. This will aid the investigation and ascertain if the communities freely participate, and in analysing the structures that facilitate or hinder participation. Pandit (2006) argues that participation at grassroots level is in many dimensions a better method of realising the goals of good governance, thus, highlighting the power enshrined in 'genuine' participation.

Study Structure

This study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduced a brief historical and theoretical background to the study as well as its rationale, the significance of its objectives, and structure. Chapter two will review and augment this study in line with relevant literature in the development communication field, thus highlighting that this study is not a stand-alone one, but is rather contextualised by previous studies. Chapter three will discuss the CFPD model (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009) and the culture-centred approach (Dutta, 2008, 2011) and their associated theoretical foundations that provide the theoretical framework for this study. Chapter four follows, delineating the study's qualitative methodology. The research findings will be presented and analysed in Chapter

five, and lastly Chapter six will give a summary of the research findings and their implications to the research objectives.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: MICROFINANCE, MACRO PARTICIPATION?

Introduction

To contextualise this study, relevant literature in the field of development communication will be discussed, providing the basis for wider understanding and application of the culture-centred approach (Dutta 2008; 2011) that forms part of the study's theoretical framework, to be discussed in Chapter three. Concepts such as, poverty, perception, power relations, project planning, indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), social change and self-exclusion are of interest to this study. Participation as a deed of involvement in something[10], has attracted attention by most developmental organisations and is viewed by some scholars as a drive to culture-centred project (Dutta, 2008; 2011). Participatory communication is a particular approach within the field of development communication that examines communication issues related to efforts to solve problems faced by society (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009).

This chapter reviews relevant literature and will trace the research problem thematically and via a historic perspective. This will be done by summarising the historical background of participation in social change initiatives in Zimbabwe, and factors influencing its use. More so, investigating the historical background of microfinance institutions will position the research in the Zimbabwean context, thus adding scholarship on participation in microfinance in Zimbabwe[11].

As mentioned above, a closer look into the meaning of participation in theory and practice will also be discussed. The concept of participation is marred by different meanings and application (Gumucio-Dagron, 2000). White et al. (1994:16) further stress that, "the word participation is kaleidoscopic; it changes its colour and shape at will of the hands in which it is held". It is thus important to explain participation from a development communication perspective, and the definitions and principles to which this study subscribes, this will be done later in this chapter after interrogating poverty and microfinance in Zimbabwe.

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[10] Compact Oxford English dictionary, (2013).
[11] Much research on microfinance institutions has been done in Asian countries and West Africa. (Fotabong, LA., & Akanga, K., (2005)

A History of Poverty in Zimbabwe

In order to examine microfinance institutions in Zimbabwe, it is significant to investigate the historical backdrop of the social and economic problem leading to the introduction of these microfinance institutions. The aim of the microfinance institutions is to curb chronic poverty and reduce the vulnerability of communities and that the professed goal of the microfinance institutions is for the betterment of the welfare of the poor as a result of improved access to small loans (Navajaz *et al.*, 2000). The poor have limited access to credit and savings facilities from formal savings and credit institutions because of the absence of collateral, thus they are regarded as risky borrowers (Maleko *et al.*, 2013).

Zimbabwe was under British colonial rule (1890-1979), which saw the eradication of any form of social and economic security for the most of the natives. This is so because the natives were displaced from their productive land and moved into reserves which were tsetse fly-infested areas and had unproductive soil types (Zimstats, 2013). This greatly affected the social-economic fabric of the rural communities, mainly because the natives' livelihood was and still is agriculture-based. The black natives were left with no form of social protection, meaning all public actions carried by the state, or privately, which seeks to address risk, vulnerability and chronic poverty were wiped off (Department for International Development (DFID), 2005).

The disposition and displacement of natives saw them not only geographically moved to the margins but socially and economically they were also moved away from the 'centre' and were treated as the 'other' (Said, 1978). The concept of 'othering' (Said, 1978) typifies how relations, knowledge and space is produced and manipulated. Edward Said (1978), highlights the binary relationship of the 'subject' and the 'object', with the occident dominating over the 'inferior' orient (Said, 1978). This explains the quest of the occident's (the west's) bid to modernise the 'inferior' orient (Africa). The relationship between the occident and the orient typifies the top down approach in the dominant paradigm of modernisation (Lerner, 1958; Rostow, 1960). In relation to this hegemony, Frantz Fanons' *Black skin, White Mask* (1952) mainstreams the importance of identity, culture and race to challenge the notion of orientalist discourse, which will be discussed further in Chapter three of this study.

The phase of land disposition saw the emergence of rural settlements in Zimbabwe, such as Gutu ward 13 which is this study's research site. A pass system was further implemented to decongest the urban areas, thus only a few natives who were employed in the cities were given a pass to stay and work in urban areas; the few natives who were employed in the urban settlements did not benefit from the Old Age Pension of 1936 because they were regarded as temporary urban citizens and supposedly would retire to their rural home (Zimstats, 2013). The occupational pension scheme was later opened to the natives after World War Two. However, it was not compulsory to employers and less than 50% of the employed natives benefited from the scheme (Zimstats, 2013).

Access to credit facilities for the rural communities has been limited because even after independence, rural communities were excluded from social protection schemes. The unavailability of old age pension and non-contributory social security schemes further extends the vulnerability of the rural communities (Zimstats, 2013). Despite the fact that Zimbabwe's economy is agriculture-based, most rural communities including Ward 13 cannot tap into commercial farming because the land is semi-arid/arid and droughts are persistent (Zimstats, 2013, Gutu Ward 13 Development Plan, 2011[12]).

This, coupled by the economic meltdown experienced in Zimbabwe since the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) in 1990, has further increased the vulnerability of most rural people as they are forced to become subsistence farmers after retiring or losing their jobs in the cities. The Zimbabwe Community Development Association (ZCDA), Internal Savings and Lending's (ISAL) project was launched in late 2011 chiefly to address the challenge of poverty and to increase access to credit and saving facilities. Inclement poverty and harsh living conditions in sub-Saharan Africa, and Zimbabwe in particular, has led more developmental thinkers to advocate and employ participatory mechanisms in their social change agendas (Dzinavatonga, 2008), thus a closer look at participation in its normative and practical application will be explored in this study.

Notably, social change agents may inadvertently also contribute towards the condition of the poor; the poor are rendered poor by the institutions that seek to help them (Bromley, 1998). This is caused by negative effects brought about by projects that are not people-

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[12] Development plan for Mazuru (Ward 13), Gutu Rural district council plan developed over period from 15th February to the 26th of February 2011.

centred, hence they lack sustainability. Participating in social change initiatives should be viewed as a right and not a means to attain set desired goals (Pretty 1994, 1996). However, having community involvement in a social change project does not always culminate in positive results that mitigate poverty, as evidenced by the negative results emanating from the work of the developmental agents who seek to influence societal change (Yoon, 1994). Therefore, there is need for more than just the ritual involvement of the poor sectors in social change projects. It is thus necessary to investigate how the poor sectors participate, as will be discussed in this study. Figure 2.1 below highlights the Ward 13 members during the ISAL workshop.

Figure 2.1 Community members during ZCDA ISAL workshop in Gutu Ward 13, Masvingo in Zimbabwe (Clive Shembe).

Development Communication and the Location of Culture

There is a change in the way in which development has been perceived over time from the dominant paradigm of modernisation to the recent participatory paradigm. From the

dominant perspective, the 'third world' countries were encouraged to modernise by the 'first world' countries, which alludes that development can be achieved by imitating the western developed countries. This theory follows a top down approach and has been criticised for lacking cultural sensitivity by treating people as homogenous; it sought to persuade the 'under-developed' groups to adopt exogenous ideas and technologies, and thus it did not valorise community participation.

The participatory development communication paradigm, on the other hand, deems community participation as essential in the success of social change initiatives. This is in direct contrast with the modernisation paradigm as the participatory approach seeks to create a two-way flow of information on a lateral level, encouraging discursive spaces. In recognition of the importance of engaging local cultural narratives (Dutta, 2008; 2011). Chasi (2011:139) asserts that, for "African needs to be addressed in ways that result in development, it is necessary that they should be granted recognition". Granting recognition to local narratives entails amplifying cultural perspectives which are interwoven in how the community conducts itself from a personal level to group level, thus encouraging more participation of the grassroots community members in all the stages of the project cycle[13].

As evidenced by the shift in the approach from modernisation to the recent participatory approach, there is a transition in the field of development communication. The main change can be traced from the position and the role of the grassroots community in social change initiatives. This follows the critical thinking of the 20th century which challenged the notion that development is synonymous with modernisation.

It is worth noting that the dominant paradigm of modernisation came as a result of the US foreign aid policies from the 1950-1960s. This paradigm viewed the developing world's economy and psychological attributes as being primitive and stagnant (Truman, 1949). This approach aimed at westernising Africa, because development in this paradigm is but a veiled synonym of westernisation. In this opinion, local cultural norms and values are not respected as development is also considered as a shift from tradition to modernity.

From the modernisation perspective, development follows a 'trickle down' trend of both information and benefits. Lack of information is attributed to the reason why people do not follow a behaviour change pattern or are under-developed. There is a need for more

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[13] Available at: http://www.usir.salford.ac.uk/26899/. Accessed at 24 May 2014

than information to attain human development, there is a need for a communicative process which fosters active dialogue which augments the local context in a social change process (Quarry and Ramirez, 2009). This has been the major limitation of this approach because, "development is a complex topic…it is an irrelevant signifier unless one connects it to a specific context" (Dyll-Myklebust, 2011:110). Thus, the participatory paradigm seeks to fill that gap by rallying for endogenous development, which increases the power of the grassroots community that take up social change initiatives.

Marginalised groups are the major target of development initiatives, especially in developing countries (Sauvy, 1952). The more current term, 'Global South' refers to countries, territories and communities that have been excluded from the mainstream of economic, social and communication development ([Unknown], 2014). Communities in the 'Global South' are not included in the development of their poverty mitigation measures as these countries and communities are still regarded as the recipients of economic and technical largesse from the 'Global North' (International Association for Media and Communication Research IAMCR conference website, 2012)[14]. Marginalisation of the Global South communities creates a condition of subalternity (Guha, 1981; Guha and Spivak, 1988; Spivak, 1999). The term, subaltern, gives insight into how the spaces for local culture are constricted and how the grassroots voices are erased. The recognition of the grassroots voices is essential because it creates a sense of self-worth, as well as expands the consciousness of local communities (Govender, 2011). This is so because the grassroots community will not see themselves as the 'other' (Edward Said, 1978), but rather as the agents of the change they want, thus creating more space for sustainable social change in communities. Brenda Dervin and Robert Haesca, (1999) furthermore postulate that marginalising the community serves no better purpose other than to maintain dependency and underdevelopment.

The role played by communication in social change has been under scrutiny over the past years, "like a chameleon, communication is embedded in…development, it changes colour to reflect the development thinking of the day" (Quarry and Ramirez, 2009:6). This shows the diverging contentions over the meaning of development communication. For some, development communication is chiefly a transmission of information leading to a desired change in behaviour; in that view communication is merely an instrumental. For others development communication is, itself, part of the development process (Roberge, 2003).

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[14] Available at http://iamcr-ocs.org/index.php/2012/2012/schedConf/overview

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2014) asserts that development communication involves understanding people, their lives, beliefs and values. That is, it is centrally positioned on the notion of learning about the cultural norms that shape people. Jan Servaes (2008:78) argues that, "development communication is the study of social change brought about by the application of communication research, theory, and technologies to bring about development".

Positive engagement is the axle upon which development communication ideally runs. Engaging the grassroots allows the community members to become involved in the change they want to see and aids them to come to terms with their existing reality (Freire, 1972). Communities are given a voice by being given the chance to become the agents of their change. A community's way of life cannot be divorced from the developmental trends in a community, thus this brings the need to explore the role played by culture in social change initiatives.

In exploring the field of development communication, one is faced with a web of meanings due to the multiple application of communication in social change initiatives. The term has been in existence from as early as the 1970s and over time it has gained interest in social change initiatives. Ever since then, a lot of funding has been put towards communication in research projects, leading to different names and tags becoming attached to it and some of the meanings are applied to suit the agents' particular interest. Fraser and Restrepo describe this saying:

> Communication for development is the use of communication processes, techniques and media to help people toward a full awareness of their situation and their options for change, to resolve conflicts, to work towards consensus, to help people plan actions for change and sustainable development, to help people acquire the knowledge and skills they need to improve the effectiveness of institutions (1998:63).

This definition is all encompassing, and emphasises the process rather than the outcome, which is enhancing people's ability to manage their own lives. Paulo Freire (1972) calls this the reality of people's existing knowledge, to use their preferred media, and to use the language and images that make sense to them. Freire (1972, 1973) calls for a dialogical approach to social change and explicitly says that if a structure does not permit dialogue the structure must be changed. This approach is participatory in nature as there is active involvement of the community members.

More importantly this debunks the notion that lack of information is the reason that people do not adopt a particular behaviour. Cees Hamelink (2002:7) asserts that, "most assumptions about the role and effects of information and knowledge are based upon a seriously flawed cause-effect model". The participatory methodology places communities at a central position making them agents of their change in that the community should ideally provide solutions (information) to their challenges contrary to the downward cascade of information as postulated in the dominant paradigm of modernisation. Hamelink (2002:8) further stresses the importance of dialogue and culture when he notes that:

> To solve the world's most pressing problems, people do not need more volumes of information and knowledge – they need to acquire the capacity to talk to each other across the boundaries of culture, religion and language…in reality however the dialogue is an extremely difficult form of speech…it requires the capacity to listen, to be silent, to suspend judgement, to critically investigate one's assumptions, to ask reflexive questions and to be open to change.

The above quote highlights the importance of the cultural perspective and dialogue. The omission of the significance of the cultural context creates a stalemate in the social change initiatives. The significance of the cultural context is essential in this study because it highlights that culture and language are possible factors influencing participation in social change initiatives. The importance of the cultural perspective aids in interrogating if the ISAL project by ZCDA was culturally embedded in the community' way of life. Hamelink (2002) also highlights the importance of engaging the grassroots community members during the formative stages of a project by citing the need to engage in dialogue and to listen without judgement.

Servaes (2008) stresses that 'genuine' participation is positioned in the cultural and environmental framework of a community, which outlines the importance of community-centeredness in participatory communication. More so, culture is the strongest framework for providing the context of life, and knowledge creation, perceptions, sharing of meanings, and behaviour change (Dutta 2009:11). In line with this argument, Geertz (1994) conjoins culture and communication in that culture is a communicative process by which shared meaning, beliefs and practises get produced. Homi Bhabha (1994:172) recognises the importance of the context of culture, he states that "culture reaches out to create a symbolic textuality, to give the alienating everyday an aura of self-hood, a promise of pleasure". Investigating the factors

influencing participation also means an interrogation of Ward 13 cultural perspectives, because culture provides the context of life (Dutta, 2008).

Quarry and Ramirez (2009:15) support this by succinctly stating that, "context matters and solutions need to be designed to fit the local situation. Without context community initiatives will fall short of their objectives". This therefore highlights that language is a carrier of a people's culture, and culture is a carrier of a people's values; values are the basis of a people's self-definition, the basis of their consciousness (Ngugi, 1985). Thus, by engaging in a dialogue with the grassroots, the process of conscientisation begins, and it is imperative in investigating the factors influencing participation in the ISAL project to also look into the culture-centeredness of the project.

Freire (1972) emphasises the need to engage grassroots communities, arguing that extension is a one way transmission of information, and communication is the two way exchange of perspectives which ultimately yields conscientisation. Conscientisation is the cultivation of critical consciousness, thus it stimulates critical consciousness which leads to a better understanding of societal challenges. This is so because, people's ability and knowledge are the basis for sustainable change. Therefore, highlighting the need for the Gutu Ward 13 community members to be actively involved in their social change initiatives during all stages of the project cycle, and having them to define what development means to their lives (Quarry and Ramirez, 2009).

Ideally, conscientisation yields to sustainability in social change as it fosters an awakening as the grassroots community learns "to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive demands of reality" (Freire, 1972:15). A conscientised community is an empowered community because they become subjects and not recipients of the social change process, and develop an awareness of social realities which shape them, and capacitates them to transform that reality (Freire, 1972). This also highlights the need to investigate at what stage Ward 13 participated during the project cycle, in order to attest their critical engagement in the ISAL project. Critical engagement with grassroots members is against the philosophy of the diffusion model thinkers (Rogers, 1962; Lerner, 1958) whose focus is on the transmission of information for social change.

Broadly speaking, development communication and social change is about understanding the role played by information, communication and the media in directed and

non-directed social change. It also includes a variety of practical applications based on the mainstreaming of communication as a process (Thomas, 2014: 9)

Development communication scholars differ in wording of what it is, but the constant concept they share is the fact that social change, from a participatory perspective, cannot be attained without a dialogical approach and an acknowledgement of cultural resources. This is so because communities should reach a point of self-actualisation and be able to define who they are and what they need for their betterment, through the collective use of dialogue. The culture-centred approach (Dutta, 2008; 2011) is influenced by subaltern studies and seeks to write history from below (Dutta, 2008; Guha, 1981; Guha and Spivak, 1988; Spivak, 1999), as will be discussed further in chapter three in terms of this study's theoretical framework. This will aid in a comprehensive exploration of the nature of participation and the factors influencing participation on a cultural level within marginalised communities.

Defining Participation

This study has a theoretical focus on participation, and is also the main question of the study, hence the extensive discussion on participation. Participation as a deed of involvement in something (Oxford English Dictionary, 2013) has attracted attention by most developmental organisations and is viewed by some scholars as the drive behind culture-centred projects (Dutta, 2008; 2011) and has been hailed as a key element in the implementation of sustainable social change initiatives. Despite this, there has been a gross misconception and misuse of the term in practice.

Participation is not a new concept, it has been around since the 1950s (Vettivel, 1999). Despite participation being applied in social change agendas for more than sixty years, there is still an ongoing debate in literature about its application (Cornwall, 2008; White, 1996; Chasi, 2011; Manyozo, 2008; Quarry and Ramirez, 2009; Arnstein, 1969).

Participation is a basic human right. As clearly stated in article 27 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and share in scientific advancement and its benefits[15].

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[15]Available at: http://www.unfpa.org/rights/rights.html

Although, participation is recognised as a human right, it is not always effectively applied; this also brings the notion that one has the right to participate or not participate, as will be discussed below. Participation is multi-faceted and in developmental initiatives can beinstituted during assessment, as part of strategic planning or programme design, during implementation, or in monitoring and evaluation (Camp Management Toolkit, 2008).

Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron (2001) asserts that participation, as a concept, still lacks an accurate definition. More so, despite participation being practiced for many decades there is no consensus to what it really means (Kinyashi, 2006). There are varying definitions as far as participation is concerned. In a generic description, there are two levels of participation, which are genuine and pseudo participation (White *et al.*, 1994, Kinyashi, 2006). Genuine participation allows an equitable distribution of both political and economic power and pseudo participation involves merely listening to how the project was planned and will be administered (Deshler and Sock, 1995).

Central to the idea of genuine participation is 'power' (Arnstein, 1969) which is an aspects that will be considered in this study of the ISAL microfinance project. This assertion highlights a thin line between the participatory approach, which can be empowering, and the non-participatory approaches that can be disempowering or simply does not accord any power to the participants. The concept of power aids in the comprehensive meaning of participation in this study. This definition of participation requires an in-depth analysis of participation in a real life situation, as will be done in this study.

Sherry Arnstein (1969:216) states that, "citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power", and it is from this perspective that participation is conceptualised in this research. This is so because power is central to the process of social change (Dutta, 2011). The distribution and redistribution of power enables the presently excluded (Ward 13) from the participatory practises, to be involved in future social change projects (Arnstein, 1969). Participation without the redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless, participation is more than going through the ritual of involvement, there is need to access to real power required in influencing the outcomes of the social change projects (Arnstein, 1969).

During participatory planning, the social change agents should know that they are planning in the face of power. Thus, this calls for a people-centred approach in participatory planning because participation should be seen as a right, not a means to achieve a desired result (Pretty, 1994; 1996). The social change agents should therefore safeguard the right of participation from internal and external forces that infringe the flow of power to those previously excluded from the participatory process.

Participation has become a politically correct term used in developmental initiatives to secure donor funding and indicate a higher degree of beneficiary involvement (Lubombo, 2011). There is a variance of the definitions of the term, both in theory and in its practical application. Sometimes participation is used as a legitimation of non-participatory approaches (Bessette, 2004, White, 1996). The varying differences in its definition leads to the term losing its meaning as a stand-alone word. Thus some theorists use the word participation in conjunction with 'true' and 'genuine' to highlight a higher degree of community involvement, which the term participation alone seems to no longer represent. This is so because participation has been loosely applied to mean things such as inclusion and attendance (Cornwall 2000).

Roger Hart, (1995) asserts that participation refers to a way of sharing decision making that affects one's life and, on a broader scale, the lives of a community. This definition subtly highlights the stage at which a community ought to participate in a social change initiative. Suggesting that a community should participate in any decision making of anything that affects or impacts their life, emphasises the importance of beneficiary participation during the initial planning stages of a project cycle. Mohan Dutta (2009: 248), in line with this assertion, states that participation at a foundation level is defined in terms of the involvement of the local community in the decision making process:

> The greatest level of community-centeredness is seen with the participation in the decision making framework, where the local community participates in developing the problem configuration and subsequently in the consideration of possible solutions to the problem. In this framework, the focus of decision making is situated in the local community…but also they have to negotiate the other functions of participation as consultation, dissemination, and information gathering.

This emphasises the importance of decision-making as a shared process including the community, rather than just being decided by external agents, as is the case in the modernisation

paradigm. Emphasis on participating in decision-making typifies the importance of giving 'power' to the community members and the thinking of participatory multiplicity theorists (Servaes, 1989; Servaes, 2008; Freire, 1972) who advocate for a bottom up approach, which places substantial value to the local voice.

This thinking is similar to Freirean pedagogy (Freire, 1972) which postulates that communities can only become critically conscious of social reality issues through a problem-posing and solving perspective rather than a solution-based response by external agents to address the needs of a community. For social change to take effect the people should own their problems and ultimately own their solutions (Freire, 1972). This notion highlights the need to engage communities to actively participate in the planning stage of a project cycle. This is so because central to the notion of participation are the principles of empowerment (Govender, 2013).

Notably in the participation discourse one cannot avoid exploring the concept of empowerment due to their interconnectedness and how they correlate, as shown below (Figure 2.2).
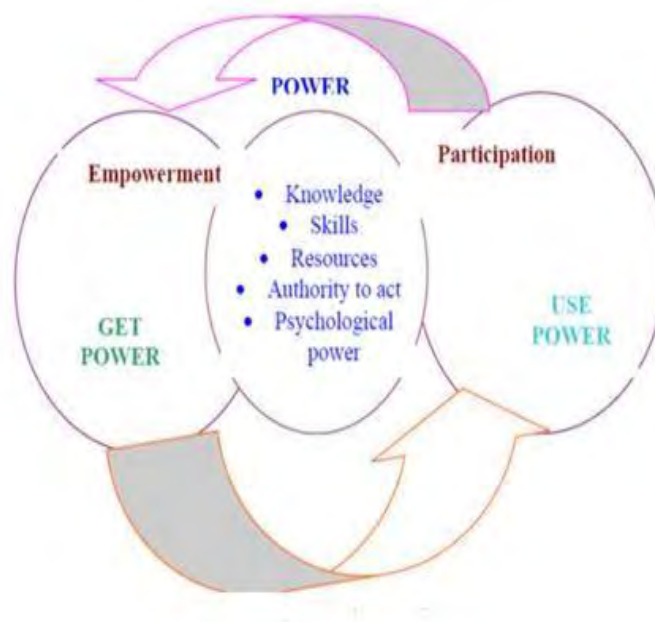
Figure 2.2: Link between empowerment and participation (Kinyashi, 2006)

As highlighted in Figure 2.2, there should be interplay in participation and empowerment for participation to yield desired results. If people are merely invited to participate and the social change participatory process does not empower them, a blind eye is turned to the power inequalities that exist between the poor and those inviting them to participate. This exclusion prevents the participants from "thinking outside the box" (Cornwall, 2002:13) or prevents what the Freirean pedagogy terms 'critical consciousness' (Freire, 1972).

Figure 2.2 also highlights the aspects that act as catalysts to participation. In line with that, Cornwall (2002) asserts that participation calls for more than the creation of spaces for communities to express their needs in gathering 'voices', it requires giving people access to information which aids in them asserting their rights and demanding accountability. Thus, Cornwall advocates for a participatory process which empowers the grassroots community members through knowledge-sharing and creation, skills development, resource allocation and the equipoise distribution of power during a project cycle.

Fetterman (2005) opines that empowerment focuses on power and decision making, thus highlighting that grassroots community participation should empower them. Participation as empowerment also aids in future programming because it makes the community act, thus facilitating conscientisation which enables the community members to 'invent' participation, and not passively waiting to be invited to participate (Cornwall, 2002). As highlighted in Figure 2.2 above, participation becomes a cycle if it yields empowerment. This therefore highlights the need for the local community members to be capacitated in making decisions that mould and develop their social change agenda.

Figure 2.2 shows the ultimate importance of participation is empowerment, and highlights aspects which facilitate the interplay between participation and empowerment, however it does not highlight how the people get knowledge, resources and skills. Shirley White et al., (1994:16) postulate that, "the word participation is kaleidoscopic; it changes its colour and shape at will of the hands in which it is held". This evocative imagery of participation shows how participation can be viewed as something extremely changeable because it's meaning and application alters in relation to whomever applies it and the purpose it seeks to serve.

Participation: Unpacking the Mirage

The emphasis of participation as a term in theory and its application connotes a sense of an unrealistic hope or a destination that cannot be reached (White et al. 1994). In practice, participation is usually treated in a simplistic manner by ascertaining the number of people in attendance during a meeting, at times with some indication on their gender and age. In order to understand participation fully there is need to observe the interaction between those involved, thus ascertaining the degree of engagement, the role of power relations and the level of empowerment, with appropriate indicators to measure such factors (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009).

Therefore, this study calls for "clarity through specificity" (Cohen and Upholf, 1980: 1) as to what is meant by participating in the ISAL project by ZCDA. This is so because, the term has been mired by competing references (Cornwall, 2008). In most cases consultative meetings are used by social change organisations to meet their set project objective in line with community involvement (Cornwall, 1996). This type of participation is frequently used by external social change agents, and it only serves the purpose of reporting and meeting the external social change agent's objectives, in line with community involvement and project sustainability. Thus, full participation does not merely account for the numbers of present participants but rather they must be able to contribute to the decision making process (Bessette, 2004). In this study, ZCDA and other affiliates such as the Rural District Council (RDC) are the external change agents and their role in initiating and or enhancing participation in the ISAL project will be investigated.

Due to its multi-faceted nature and lack of definition, it is of chief importance to ask: who participates in what, at what stage, and for whose benefit? (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). Such questions will be asked in this study of the ZCDA ISAL project. It is worth noting that, every community has its participatory norms that are governed by their beliefs and local rules, and these norms dictates who should and should not participate or speak up in decision-making (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). For example, some communities in Zimbabwe do not allow women and children to speak during community meetings. These factors aid in unearthing factors for and against participation trends in a community, and shall be considered in this study.

Participatory development perceives local people as experts within their own contexts, thus highlighting the need to draw on their strengths and to listen to them (Xavier Institution, 1980; Quarry and Ramirez, 2009). Guy Bessette (2004), asserts that participation should not be limited to consultations, nor should it be equated to mobilisation of community members who are recruited to merely support a development initiative organised and designed by external agents, but rather, beneficiaries should be perceived as partners. This emphasises the need for a dialogical approach, and voice and dialogue are essential in participation, along with a willingness of the external agents to listen and learn from the community members.

Some scholars purport that the ultimate goal of participation is the idea of ownership (Arnstein, 1969; Freire, 1972, Kinyashi, 2006). The right of possession is not an event but rather a process, thus bringing the need to critically engage the community during programme planning. Ownership in social change initiatives can be realised through a process of conscientisation (Freire, 1972). Conscientisation is having a capability of transforming, producing, deciding, creating and communicating oneself (Freire, 2000). This further emphasises the need for a constant process of engaging with the grassroots community and also allowing them, for example, to lead the ISAL microfinance initiative in Ward 13 Gutu. However, this does not take away the importance of external agents role in recognising the problem (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009) and offering training, but emphasises the need for an active role of the community members in the process, for example the inclusion of opinion leaders in the initial stages of a project.

In addition, participation should be viewed as an ongoing process not a destination which is quantified by numbers and gender demographics in reporting and statistics. The Camp Management Toolkit (2008) stresses that participation takes many forms, and "should be planned for and implemented as part of the complete programme cycle": during assessment, strategic planning, implementation, monitoring and ultimately in the evaluation process. Genuine participation ensures that the recipients of the development project are enabled to become actively involved in all stages of a developmental initiative (Piotrow *et al.*, 1997). Thus, full participation supersedes involving the poor ceremonially in the social change project cycle but gives power to the participants in the process of social change.

Participation can best be understood by the developmental theory which shapes it. In the dominant paradigm, participation is treated as a means approach, thus this paradigm places much emphasis into mobilising community members and thrives on the idea of cooperation of members in developmental projects. Within the participatory paradigm, participation is an end approach, thus it is treated as an unalienable human right, and it is applied as an end itself and not merely because of the results (Melkote and Steeves, 2001).

Notably the discourse of participation is echoed in different developmental theories but its application differs, from tokenism to genuine participation. In the modernisation and dependency paradigm (Baran, 1967; Gunder Frank, 1967) the participation of citizens is discredited, as the rural populace were not considered as able to contribute to their developmental agenda following the top down economic approach (Graaff and Venter 2001; Leys 1996; White 1990). This therefore highlights the need to understand the forms of participation in theory and practice.

Participation Forms

Participation is multi-faceted and comes in many forms and variations at different stages. The ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969) brings out the broad forms of participation, which are non-participation, tokenism, and citizen control which is the highest degree of citizen participation as highlighted in Figure 2.3 below. The ladder of citizen participation goes further to highlight the relationship between the community members and their external social change organisations.
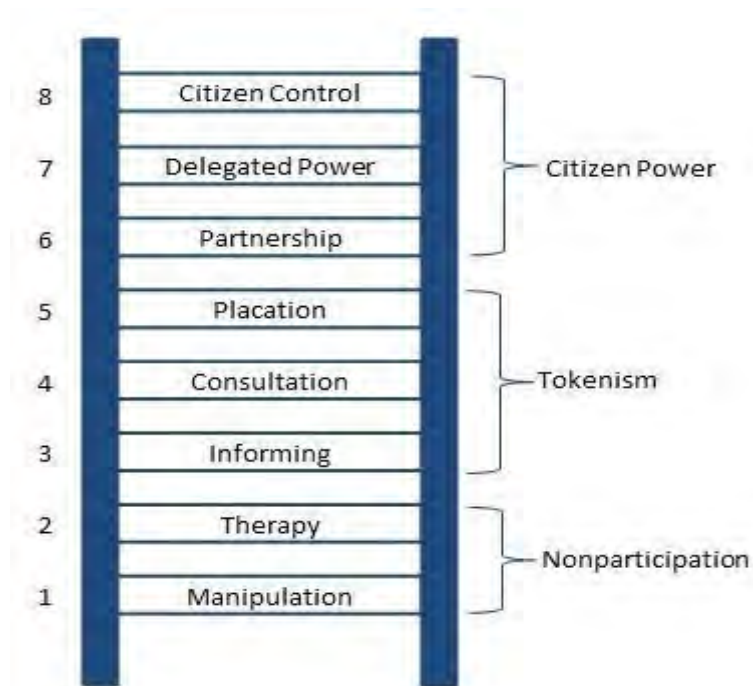
Figure 2.3: Ladder of citizen participation. (Arnstein, 1969)

Under non-participation, the community is deemed passive and there is manipulation of the community members by the external agents. Central to the idea of participation is decision-making which, at this rung, is not in the hands of the community. A step up the rungs brings us to tokenism, which involves some sort of consultation, however, material motivation influences participation. Participation is not exercised freely at this rung, rather there is pseudo-participation. In this form, participation is little more than a ritual, due to the fact that power lies in the hands of the external social change agents and those who invite the citizens to participate (Arnstein, 1969, Cornwall, 1998).

Central to the idea of participation is citizen power (Arnstein, 1969). Thus, there is a need to clearly define what the people are participating in. This is so because an investigation into what people are participating in is helpful in determining how they participate and helps in attesting how the participation can be evaluated (Cornwall, 1998). For instance delegated power over choosing the colour of the paint of a school, with the community members having no awareness about the school itself does not empower the community in any way.

Such pseudo-participation will not accord any power to the participants, thus the exercise cannot be considered as 'genuine' participation because participation should accord the community control and power. To attain genuine participation there is need for a shift of

structures (Molwane and Wilson, 1987). This calls for a reallocation of power and control, thus giving the marginalised groups an equal share of power. This, ideally, leads to genuine participation which leads to social change; the notion of genuine participation shall be critically engaged in this chapter below. Genuine participation and citizen control may differ in wording but they represent a higher degree of community pro-activeness during a social change project.

Ultimately there is citizen control at the pinnacle of the ladder. At this stage, the community makes decisions that affect their day to day lives and critically engages the external stimuli such as the social change agent (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009) during all the stages of the project cycle. Ideally, the locals harness social change initiatives and have a higher degree of ownership over social change initiatives. Being able to contribute in decision-making over the project in all stages of the project empowers the community and also enables them to gain the most out of the social change initiative, thus, sustainability is most likely attained.

In as much as Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969) highlights the forms of participation from a lower level to a higher degree, it does not include the challenges incurred in trying to rise to a higher level of citizen control. Some of the challenges that hinder participation might be cultural factors, beliefs, norms, values and power relations, lack of resources and lack of training. This research will add to the scholarship that investigate and problematises participation in the context of who participates, in what, at what stage, and for whose benefit.

Sarah White (1996) dissects participation into four types namely: nominal, instrumental, representative and transformative. Nominal participation is participation for legitimisation purposes, it does not empower the participants. This type of participation serves the sole purpose of having participation on record as occurring (White, 1996). Instrumental participation is when participation serves as a cost. For instance, instead of hiring 30 builders to build a school, 5 builders are hired and the community participates in providing labour.

This form of participation has been used mostly in Africa and Zimbabwe after the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAPs). This follows a decline in the funds availability for infrastructure and service delivery. It can be noted that this

participation serves the cost efficiency interests of the outside funders and it is viewed   as instrumental, rather than valued in itself (White, 1996).

Representative participation, on the other hand, allows local people to have a voice in the character and nature of projects. This form of participation is an effective means which enables the people to voice their interest (White, 1996). Ultimately, transformative participation is the idea of participation as empowerment, and is premised on collective action and decision-making (White, 1996). White (1996) is successful in highlighting the different forms and dynamics of participation, and the forms highlight how participation can be manipulated and how it can be empowering.

More so, White brings to light the hidden agendas in participation, particularly what is referred to as participation by the 'top' (social change agents) might serve a different agenda because sharing through participation does not mean sharing in power (White, 1996). Thus, central to Arnstein (1969) and White (1996) argument is that participation revolves around power distribution and redistribution.

Cornwall (2008) proposes another form of participation, which is participation through information sharing. This form aims to create transparency and open up areas of collective monitoring and evaluation later in the project cycle, and aids in bringing out the local voice through dialogue in the initial stages of a project. In most cases, this form of participation is deemed less important and only necessary during the later stages of a project cycle; it is essential to keep information flowing during all stages of the project cycle because information sharing contributes to empowering the citizens with knowledge as a resource.

From the above forms of participation it can be noted that participation is not conceptualised as a process rather it is viewed as static. In this study, the Communication for participatory Development CFPD model will be used as the theoretical framework as it underscores participation as a process and improves upon Arnstein's ladder as it consider moments of disagreement, convergence and divergence. During a participatory process, divergence typifies disagreements during a participatory process and convergence exemplifies mutual agreement, thus the CFPD stresses the importance of dialogue in participatory processes. The CFPD also accounts for the empowering role of participation and will be discussed in detail in chapter three.

Much has been noted in literature about participation, from Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969), Sarah White's typology of participation (1996), and Kincaid and Figueroa's (2009) CFPD model, but central to the notion of participation should be the idea of equal sharing of power and opening up interactive spaces for dialogue, to nurture local voices and ultimately lead to empowerment (Cornwall, 2000).

Genuine participation should therefore engage participants in all stages of a given activity and should ideally be implemented from the initial stages of project identification to decision-making, during implementation and ultimately in monitoring and evaluation. This research is informed by the CFPD model, which is considered a critique or reaction to over simplistic and idealized models like the ladder of citizen participation.

While it can also be noted that through participation, patterns of dominance and unequal 'power' relations can be challenged, it should also be highlighted that 'participation' in itself can be a channel it which existing power relations are shaped, maintained, entrenched and reproduced (White, 1996). This further stresses the need to question the 'participation mantra'. This is so because what participation is meant in practice is increasingly elastic, rather than describing the empowering process participation has become a buzzword which signifies the social change agents' good intentions (White, 1996). Ironically looking into the form and functions of participation highlights how participation is used to gloss over issues such as legitimation, sustainability, leverage and empowerment.

Understanding exclusion

Self-exclusion as a form of participation or the rejection of it

Much value has been attached to the involvement of all beneficiaries, whilst less attention has been paid to understanding forced exclusion and self-exclusion. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation, White (1996) and Jules Pretty's (1995) typologies highlight the forms of participation, but they do not tell us about who should participate and who should be excluded, or who excludes themselves and for what reasons. In as much as value is attached to community participation, it should be noted that the inclusion of every stakeholder during all the stages of a project cycle is often unrealistic (Cornwall, 2008).

Who participates and who is excluded

The questions of who participates, who is excluded, and who excludes themselves is a crucial one (Cornwall, 2008). However, including everyone in a participatory process in theory seems ideal, in practice this can be a major hurdle upon which most social change initiatives stumble. Including all stakeholders can lead to a sense of apathy of the participants involved in a project. In this regard Cornwall (2008) considers what she terms 'optimum participation', as striking a balance between depth and right inclusion for the task at hand.

Nevertheless, this does not become the nirvana of participation, because the logic behind depth and coverage can be problematic with regards to voice and representation. Where there is representation, generalisation is bound to occur. This may lead to a misconception about certain groups of people, especially the poor and vulnerable groups. For instance, in as much as rural people share certain attributes among themselves, each group of people is heterogeneous and grouping them together as 'rural poor' denies the specificity of contextual problems and solutions. Cohen and Upholf (1980: 222) argue that:

> If [rural people] are considered in such an aggregated mass, it is very difficult to assess their participation in any respect, since they are a large and heterogeneous group. Their being considered as a group is not, indeed, something they would themselves be likely to suggest. There are significant differences in occupation, location, land tenure status, sex, caste, religion, or tribe which are related in different ways to their poverty.

The presence of the grassroots community in a social change process does not always ensure that they have a real say, and even if they do, it does not always guarantee that this is heard (White, 1996). Thus, physical presence without the empowering notion of genuine participation is a futile exercise which can lead to apathy and self-exclusion.

In as much as the rural communities might be living in acute poverty, it should be acknowledged that a poverty alleviation project should not be viewed as a dangling carrot in front of a stallion to force them to participate, but rather importantly, just as they have the right to participate, rural communities also have an unalienable right to decide not to be involved in a project cycle. Thus, this study seeks to unveil factors and reasons leading to self-exclusion in the ZCDA ISAL microfinance project.

These, and other differences mentioned above, highlight the need to investigate self-exclusion in Gutu Ward 13. There are different reasons for self-exclusion and non- participation in a social change project. Self-exclusion can itself be a form of resistance, for instance it can be influenced by apathy due to various reasons and thus, self-exclusion arguably can be described as an act of passive resistance. Self-exclusion may be a form of 'participation' which is, 'participating against participation'.

More so, self-exclusion can be as a result of external factors such as lack of training, resources and projects structure. The CFPD, which forms part of this study's theoretical framework, is cognisant of the roles of external support in facilitating participation of the community members and also external constraints which lead to self-exclusion. This study will, therefore, not only explore the factors that influence participation in the ZCDA microfinance project, but will also be cognisant of external constraints contributing towards factors for non-participation or self-exclusion. This therefore calls for an interrogation of the ISAL microfinance initiative under study and the factors contributing towards its introduction for a fuller understanding of participation in the ISAL microfinance project.

Reasons for exclusion/self-exclusion

Self-exclusion is not necessarily caused by lack of confidence, fear of reprisal or the feeling that one has nothing to contribute but at times people just do not feel the need to participate (Cornwall 2008). Importantly the social change project should not seek to develop

people but rather the creation of spaces which allows the people to develop themselves. This means that the citizens should freely participate in the activities which affect their lives, and thus should choose from a wide range of activities and projects to be part of, or exclude themselves from. There are many anti-participatory forces that further exclude community members in social change initiatives and some of the reasons for not taking part in a community project are timing, activity, duration and location of the activity (Hinton, 1995). For instance, the use of a classroom can be viewed as a pragmatic choice for a participatory workshop, but the associations that this space has in people's minds can be powerful enough to prevent some from not wanting to enter it (Hinton, 1995).

Sarah White (1996:6) opines that, if the poor participate,

> …what guarantee do they have that their concerns will really be heard? Too many times they have seen their discussions drain away into the sand. The plans are left untouched; but their names remain, like residue, in the list of 'experts' whose opinion the scheme reflects".

Pseudo-participation can be disempowering, thus self-exclusion can be a way to reassert power relations. If attending 'participatory workshops' does not serve the purpose of giving power to the grassroots community, self-exclusion might offer a better option than going through the empty ritual of participation.

Microfinance and Social Change: The Zimbabwean context.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic reached alarming levels, and significantly reduced Zimbabwe's active and productive force (CARE International[16], 2000; Zimstats 2013). This has impacted negatively on the rural communities to a greater extent, because of the fact that the greater proportion of the rural populace are subsistence farmers, hence there is heavy reliance on active labour for their survival.

Zimbabwe is highly centralised, economically, politically and socially. This centralised organisational structure in Zimbabwe, coupled with the economic crisis recorded in Zimbabwe has also seen an acute influx of rural to urban migration, which has further syphoned the able-bodied from the rural 'periphery' moving to the 'core' (cities). This has

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[16] CARE International is an International organisation that works for the poor sectors and vulnerable groups in communities.

created uneven demographics in terms of age and population concentration as the rural communities have become heavily populated with the old, women and children (Zimstats, 2013). These demographics are vital in this study because they aid in highlighting the encouraging and discouraging factors to participation in Gutu Ward 13 ISAL microfinance project.

History of Microfinance in Zimbabwe

Microfinance evolved from micro-credit (Helms, 2006; Elahi and Rahman, 2006; Henry *et al.*, 2003). Micro-credit anchors on providing small loans to the poor, whilst microfinance includes additional non-financial services such as savings, insurance and social engagement (Mago, 2013). The emergence of microfinance institutions can be traced back to after the boom of micro credit in the early 1990s in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe has its historical background in line with the growth of microfinance institutions. Historically, microfinance in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the private money lenders who give loans at an exorbitant interest rate, locally called '*chimbadzo*' (exploitative lending). Microfinance dates back to 1963 when the Catholic Church, through its missionaries, started the Savings Development Movement (SDM) (Raftopoulos and Lacoste, 2001). At its peak, SDM had 3000 clubs with a membership of 60000 in 1970. It was, however, negatively affected by the period of war of independence in Zimbabwe (1976-1980) that saw a decline in microfinance in Zimbabwe (Mago, 2013).

The decline of microfinance, however, did not amount to a decline in the demands for its service. The period 1991-1993 saw the financial liberalisation or what is famously known as the SAPs. Furthermore, the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe from period 2000 to 2009 further called for the need of the poor to access credit and loans (Mago, 2013).

CARE International, in its bid to address the effects of HIV/AIDS and the alarming rate of poverty in Zimbabwe's rural communities reintroduced a microfinance project in Zimbabwe on a larger scale as a means to increase household income. The microfinance initiative was first introduced in Zimbabwe in 1998 under the name Rural Micro-Finance Project (RMFP). The introduction of microfinance initiative in Zimbabwe follows the conspicuous growth recorded by the microfinance projects worldwide. "In the last twenty years, microfinance has firmly established itself, not only as a lexicon of development practise, but above in the public minds" (Hugh, 2006:1).

Microfinance institutions, as a social change initiative, have been employed to alleviate poverty especially in rural communities by increasing household income (Aigbokhan, 2011, Francis Kanda, 2011, Hugh, 2006). While there is consensus about the need for the marginalised communities to access credit and savings facilities, nothing much has been done to unveil and explore the reasons for participation or non-participation in these microfinance initiatives. Much of the research and authorship has been premised on the idea or the impacts of the microfinance and on how they empower communities (Aigbokhan, 2011, Kanda, 2011, Hugh 2006). This study aims at contributing towards the scholarship of the nature of participation, in the ZCDA microfinance project in Gutu Ward 13.

Manfred Zeller and Manohar Sharma (1998) concur that microfinance stabilises household income, thus indicating a positive economic trend which these institution can achieve. Aigbokhan (2008) concludes that microfinance plays an important role in poverty reduction and social capital, and properly implemented institutions are helpful in poverty reduction, however, different models have evolved and they serve different interests and approaches.

Microfinance Models

The microfinance institutions have been viewed as the panacea to the developmental question of rural communities, due to the fact that they target the poor who have been previously shunned by the conventional banking system and give them access to credit and savings facilities. Fotabong and Akangaa (2005), argues that most policy-makers view microfinance institutions as the bridge to the low income population.

However, in as much as the umbrella term 'microfinance' is used to cover different models of the microfinance institutions, it is imperative to note that the different models of these microfinance institutions highlight different approaches. This calls for an investigation of the different models and a "clarity through specificity" (Upholf and Cohen, 1980:1) when addressing participation in these institutions because of the diverging approaches implied by different models. Fotabong (2011) has written widely on microfinance models and is the key scholar in the understanding of the microfinance models. The varying principles in these models highlight the need for a fuller understanding of the models in practise and to identify the model used in the Gutu, Ward 13 ISAL project.

<u>Grameen Bank (GB) Model</u>

In this model at least five people form a group, whose membership to the group is of a moral nature and binding purpose and enables the group to access loans from the bank (Fotabong, 2011; Berenbach and Guzman, 1994). The founder of the Grameen Bank, Professor Yunus asserts that credit is a cutting edge tool which liberates the poor from the poverty cycle and capacitates the poor. He argues that the conventional banking system is a facilitator in widening the chasm between the rich and the poor because the system is anti-illiterate, anti-women and anti-poor people (Fotabong, 2011).

Under the Grameen model, members self-select and acquire a loan which they repay at a stipulated interest rate, and failure to do so by any member of the group results in the disqualification of the whole group who are rendered illegible for loans from the bank (Fotabong, 2011). Arguably this model is highly commercial, as the community members pay back the loans as well as interests back to the agent. The sustainability of this model is based on the good turnover of the loans and interest returns.

Thus, the community members have a minimal role to play and participate in the setting up and running of the loans and savings. Notably, this model subscribes to the notion of the dominant top-down approach as it is premised on the idea of the on the trickling down of resources and information from the top. The participation of the community members is limited to borrowing and returning the loans in the Grameen model. Some of the shortcomings of this model are:

- That it requires much capital to set up a Grameen bank.
- The poor are pushed into a cycle of borrowing which lacks sustainability.
- There is heavy need for external subsidy.
- The Grameen Bank model repayment system is not applicable to agrarian communities, for example, as during a dry season, a member might fail to repay in time leading to the exclusion of the whole group from the bank.
- This model is premised on credit which alone will not solve the challenge of poverty but rather creates a scenario whereby communities dig one hole to fill in another and creates a Sisyphean cycle[17].

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[17] In Greek mythology Sisyphus is punished and compelled to continuously roll an immense boulder up a hill only to see it roll down

- The Grameen bank targets the poor, theoretically, but practically during member selection the poor may be left out as they prove to be a risk to other members who would not want to be disqualified as risky borrowers (Fotabong, 2011).

<u>Village Banking Model</u>

This model works with 30-60 members. The implementing agent sets up a bank and gives the bank financing capital which the members can borrow from. Loans are given, with interest, and after a stipulated time the implementing partner does its reconciliation and the village bank is only eligible for more funding if they managed to get the cash injection initially used for the setting up of the bank (Fotabong, 2011).

The village banking model poses a challenge in term of sustainability of the projects the community engages in. This is so because the professed goal of this model is to fund community members so that they engage in petty trade and other forms of livelihood, thus the high interest rates negatively impact on project sustainability (Ledgerwood, 1999). Furthermore, "the model anticipates that female participation in village banks will enhance social status and intra-household bargaining power" (Holt, 1994:158). This model again creates a higher level of dependence due to high interests which may lead to a cycle of borrowing.

Importantly this model does not actively involve the community in the day to day running of the village bank. In as much as the village bank model affords the community to access loans, this model commercialises social change. The poor and vulnerable groups run the risk of being excluded due to the rigidness of this model, it also is not culture sensitive. Savings is mandatory, thus the members have limited voice in the project. Glen Westley (2004) asserts that the application of this model is difficult, especially in agriculture based communities who depend on the rainy seasons for produce. Leonard Fotabong (2011) highlights some of the weaknesses of this model below:

- High interest rates are charged by the village banks.
- The module sets to get interests from the communities thus increasing their vulnerability.
- Much emphasis is on credit, thus a cycle of borrowing is created

Investment driven (SKS) Model

This is an interest based model of microfinance made popular by SKS Microfinance[18]. The objective of this model is investment, thus it strives to make profits. Loans are distributed by field officers and they also do the collection of interests. There is need for collateral on the part of the borrowers. SKS started as a non-profit making organisation in 1988 and later turned into a profit making organisation. Due to the high interest rates it charges SKS has been deemed as commercialising community development and making money out of the vulnerable conditions of the poor. SKS is a money generating model thus is not people or culture sensitive. This model has been criticised because of how it commercially exploits the poor (Fotabong, 2011).

- High Interest rates are charged.
- Model is investment oriented, thus the major aim is to make profits at all costs.
- Borrowing cycle created as there is only borrowing in this model.

The Means Competence of Community (MC2) Model

This model is community based. The microfinance institutions are created and managed by the community members. This model was promoted by, Dr Paul K Fokam drawing inspiration from Einstein's formula, that is, Victory over poverty (VP) is possible if the means (M) and competence (C) of the community are combined; $VP=M+C+C=MC^2$. This is a community based microsavings and banking approach. The vulnerable community members become the major players of the change in the creation of sustainable means of their survival.

This model strives only on the input of the community. The chief objective of this model is to restore self-worth to the rural communities by making them the masters and caretakers of their destiny (Fotabong 2011; Ledgerwood 2009). More so, this model is premised on the idea of savings more than borrowing. It can also be noted that the MC2 model is not a ready one size fits all package but differs from community to community. The ISAL microfinance initiative by ZCDA is premised on this model.

In this model, the community receives information on how to conduct savings, lending and other non-financial lessons such as constitution making. This model has been

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[18] SKS Microfinance is a microfinance company based in India due to the organisations' heavy reliance on the investment driven approach to microfinance, the model is popularly known as the SKS model.

hailed because of its culture-consciousness, as throughout the whole process, the community members incorporate their cultural and social beliefs in the project. The model can only be functional if the community actively participates in all the stages of the project cycle, as there is little involvement of the external agents. The self-selected group members contribute in the savings and realise interest which can be shared after an agreed set time, or invested in other Income Generating Activity (IGA) (Fotabong, 2011).

ZCDA ISAL methodology is based on the MC2 methodology due to its cultural sensitivity and the central role of community input. However, in as much as this model is viewed as more people-centred, and with higher chances of giving intended beneficiaries more control than other models, there is never a one-size-fits-all project which encompasses the needs of everyone in a community. There is need to also investigate participation in the MC2 model, to be cognisant and document factors leading to participation, and how the participatory model is put into practice. In this study, this will be done using Ward 13 ISAL project as the case study.

ZCDA ISAL Methodology

The methodology of the ISAL initiative conducted in Ward 13 falls under the umbrella term, Participatory Rural Approach (PRA). This method is anchored on the belief that learning is a two way process and thus moving away from banking education, against which Paulo Freire (1970) wrote. Jyita Mukherjee (1995:1) asserts that:

> The past decade has witnessed more shifts in the rhetoric of rural development than in its practise. These shifts include the now peculiar reversal from top down to bottom up, from centralised standardisation to local diversity, and from blueprint to learning process. Linked with these, there have also been small beginnings of changes in modes of learning.

The PRA has been termed a method and an approach for learning about rural life and conditions by external agents, however, PRA is more than just learning because it extends into analysis, planning and action. It is vital to note that it enables rural communities to share, enhance, increase and access their knowledge of their life and condition (Mukherjee, 1995).

Streams of approaches branch out of the PRA, but of relevance to this study is the Activist Participatory Research which refers to methods which use dialogue and participatory research to enhance people's awareness and confidence, ultimately empowering their actions

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(Mukherjee, 1995). Inspiration of this approach is drawn from the Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), which is of the idea that the poor and vulnerable groups should be enabled to do their own analysis of their current situation.

The ZCDA ISAL training module (2011), in line with the PRA, states that:

- The facilitator's main objective is not to teach but to facilitate and create the conditions for the participants to decide for themselves, what they want to do and what best suits them.
- The facilitator should understand that the participants have vast knowledge, experience, and resources thus must be treated with respect. The facilitator should be open-minded to learn new things.
- The facilitator should ask participants to do something rather than tell them what to do.
- The facilitator should create an informal environment that encourages free flow of information.
- A discursive environment should be created rather than lectures.
- The participants should talk more than the facilitator.

The facilitation process in the ISAL project believes in the creativity of participants, communities should speak more and take a leading role in engaging with the social change workers about the challenges they face (ZCDA ISAL training module, 2011). The participatory nature of the ISAL methodology can also be noted in that the participants are supposed to be on the forefront, from the initial stages of the programme design, to during the trainings and ultimately the day-to-day running of the ISAL groups. Therefore, this study assesses the theoretical objectives and methods of the ZCDA ISAL methodology, according to the training module, against that of the possible practical implications, as will be evident from the collected data.

Conclusion

This chapter explored and problematised the varying definitions of participation in theory and practice. Most importantly, the chapter discussed participation in the context of the ZCDA ISAL microfinance initiative in Gutu District under Masvingo province. In light of the microfinance initiative by ZCDA in Gutu Ward 13, this chapter highlighted the different microfinance models and how they involve the communities differently. The following

chapter will discuss the culture-centred approach in terms of its historical developments, major tenets, it relationship with participation, as well as its theoretical application to this study.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CULTURE STRUCTURE AND AGENCY

Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature on participation, development communication and issues of micro-financing as social change, in order to contextualise this study. This chapter presents the theoretical framework that informs this study. The theories and models presented in this chapter are all centred on social change. Participation and facilitation of beneficiary voice and access are the cornerstones of social change initiatives (Thomas, 2014). The culture-centred approach (CCA) to communication for social change, "envisions the capacity of communicative processes to transform social structures, and in so doing, it attends to the agency of the subaltern sectors in bringing about social change" (Dutta, 2011: 39).

In this study, data will thus be analysed through the lens of CCA and its theoretical foundations, such as subaltern studies (Spivak, 1988) and postcolonial theory (Said, 1978) as it is closely aligned to the topic at hand that focuses on a group of people that may be considered subaltern in their economic marginalisation due to structural adjustment programmes, as discussed briefly in chapter two.

This chapter then goes on to discuss the Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) model, as it will be used as a schematic benchmark upon which to analyse participation and agency in the face of structural challenges in the ZCDA ISAL project conducted in Ward 13, Gutu, Masvingo, Zimbabwe. It outlines a social change model that values collective action, and dialogue and it also acknowledges the existence of disagreement, fracturing the "blindly optimistic or Pollyanna stance" (Kincaid & Figueroa, 2009: 515) of many models of participation.

Culture-centred Approach to Social Change

Mohan Dutta explains that the culture-centred approach is not a theory, but is an approach which might one day develop into a theory (Dutta, 2008: 2011). Collins Airhihenbuwa (1995) lays the foundation of the culture-centred approach, criticising western hegemony for failing to tap and draw insight from the rich African culture. He argues that any social change should be planned, implemented and evaluated in the context of the relevant culture.

Theorising from below

Airhihenbuwa (1995) opines that the success of social change initiatives requires them to be in sync with the social-cultural beliefs of a community. Likewise, the culture- centred approach (Dutta, 2008), listens to the marginalised voices and seeks to write history from below, through a participatory framework. This study, being guided by the culture- centred principles, seeks to listen and augment the voices of the Ward 13 Gutu members in the investigation of participation in the ISAL project. This is so because social change projects should be cognisant of the local people's cultural framework (Airhihenbuwa, 1995; Dutta, 2008, 2011).

The culture-centred approach examines how the cultural voices of the subaltern communities are marginalised, and aims at creating dialogical spaces for engaging with these voices (Dutta, 2008), as will be illustrated in the discussion of the CFPD model. The approach seeks to unearth the lived experiences of the marginalised sectors in the community:

> Essential to the dialogue stance of the culture-centered approach is the emphasis on understanding the agency of subaltern participants in local communities across the globe as they challenge the inequitable structures, work within them, and aspire to find avenues of living in their daily negotiation of these structures (Dutta 2011:88).

The above assertion highlights how the culture-centred approach seeks to transform the perceived 'passive' and 'other' voices of the communities into the mainstream of social change. A culture-centred approach to social change is cognisant of the poor and marginalised sectors in a community, and gives these members a chance to narrate their lived experiences with poverty, and the daily struggles they face with regard to the dominant world structure (Dutta, 2011). From the dominant paradigm of modernisation, development has solely been articulated by the elite dominant powers, thus bringing the need to analyse and investigate social change "from the bottom" (Dutta, 2011:88):

> Poverty eradication initiatives are constituted within the broader agendas of the power elite. Knowledge guiding the theoretical conceptualization of poverty as well as the eradication of global poverty lies primarily in the hands of the World Bank, a global institution that articulates its objectives in terms of developing policy documents and policy guidelines regarding development, as well as allocating material resources to projects based on poverty.

The culture-centred approach therefore seeks to empower the marginalised communities by including them in the development narrative. Instead of the poor and marginalised communities being regarded as 'invisible' due to the dominant structures that do not 'see' and 'hear' them, their participation is of chief importance in the culture-centred approach (Narayan *et al.*, 1996). Mohan Dutta (2011) asserts that the symbolic marginalisation works hand in hand with material marginalisation, "therefore, a culture-centered praxis of social change seeks to fundamentally alter the material inequalities across the globe by seeking to create communicative resources, infrastructures, and spaces for listening to subaltern contexts" (Dutta, 2011:89).

As noted in the culture-centred approach, the language of partnership and participation has become the language of political correctness (Porter, 2003; Lubombo, 2011). Regardless of the top-down reality, institutions (World Bank, IMF etc.) still adopt the jargon of participation. Porter (2005), further concurs that the local narratives about poverty are erased by the knowledge-producing bodies such as the IMF, World Bank, and other International donor organisations. This is evidenced by their claims on poverty alleviation that ironically do not fit the local context where they are applied.

The failure of the developmental organisations to harness and tap into the local voices and culture is also noted in the manner in which dominant western epistemologies override and supersede the lived experience of the local people. This is so because the donor organisations do not engage and interact with the local communities, thus their project designs lack the depth of lived experience. This further expresses the rhetoric of participation as it is used to support anti-participatory exercises (Porter, 2003) as previously noted in chapter two.

The erasure of the local voice, ultimately leads to what Dutta (2011: 93) terms "structural absence". For example, the indicators that are used to measure a social change initiative are flawed without the local cultural context. Just as the number of distributed condoms does not equate to safe sex practice, the poverty measures without the cultural contexts makes poverty alleviation but a dream and the social change process becomes nothing but a cul-de-sac

Poverty is an intricate societal challenge and without the depth of a local context it is challenging to measure and evaluate a social change process. Therefore, the culture-centred approach calls for the mainstreaming of the lived experience of people living under poverty.

Only when the voices and the stories of the marginalised sectors are amplified in mainstream society, can the structure be altered in favour of the poor.

Structural absence in the dominant epistemologies, thus calls for the culture-centred approach to foreground structures and call closer attention to the inequities perpetrated by the politics of the dominant structures (Dutta, 2011). Thus, the first step towards a culture-centred approach is to listen to the marginalised communities and the creation of discursive spaces that foster knowledge circulation and openness (Dutta 2008). Dutta describes this saying:

> The participation of subaltern voices in the discursive space creates openings for social change by attending to the structures, and seeking to find avenues for challenging these structures. Listening to the subaltern voices through culture-centred process draws attention to these very reasons of politics that underlie global inequalities, thus creating frameworks for organizing the grassroots in projects addressing inequalities (2011:93).

Theoretical trajectory of the culture-centred approach to social change

The culture-centred approach is rooted in the post-colonial (Said, 1978) and subaltern theories (Spivak, 1988) and is committed to communicative processes of bringing transformation through closing the gap between the marginalised and the hegemonic structures (Dutta 2011). This is done through the creation of dialogical spaces and an active engagement with the voices on the margins (Cousineau, 2009). By subscribing to the conceptual principles of the culture-centred approach to social change, this study questions the hegemonic construction of knowledge, by engaging with the 'other' (Said, 1978) and focusing on the context that brings out lived realities and local stories are recorded and included in knowledge creation.

The culture-centred approach, "builds upon the subaltern studies to disrupt the hegemonic spaces of knowledge production with dialogues with the subaltern sectors that have historically been erased from the mainstream discourses of development and progress" (Dutta 2011:40). To fully understand the culture-centred approach, it is important to acknowledge the historical evolution of the approach based on the critical theory of post-colonial and the subaltern studies.

<u>Post-Colonial Theory</u>

This theory investigates the structure of colonisation and neo-colonisation, and goes further to look into the forms of control in global spaces (Dutta 2008, Dutta 2011). The great thinkers behind this theory consist mostly of post-structuralists such as, Gayatri Spivak (1988), Homi Bhabha (1994) and Edward Said (1978). A central preoccupation of this theory lies in the 'empire' and 'other' binary opposition. In post-colonial theory, colonisation is deemed as having created the 'other' (native), who is primitive and is ruled by emotion compared to western individuals who are deemed advanced and rational (Said, 1978). This typifies the reasons for the drive by the dominant paradigm of modernisation to model the third world countries into a similitude of the west.

In addition, post-colonial studies are concerned with the descriptive overview of the colonisation and neo-colonisation process, and seeks to rectify the colonisation process by seeking to empower the colonised. Dutta (2011) asserts that post-colonial theory is fundamentally transformative because it seeks to change the knowledge structure that erase the local voice and stories. Thus, the post-colonial theory seeks to document local voices in the transformative process and seeks to, "redo such epistemic structures by writing against them, over them, and from below them by inviting reconnections to obliterated presents that never made their way into the history of knowledge" (Shome and Hegde, 2002:250). Writing from below therefore challenges the Eurocentric knowledge production and enacts agency at a grassroots level. This point of drive therefore keeps material iniquities in check across the globe (Dutta 2008).

The culture-centred approach taps into the post-colonial studies as it also calls for theorising communication processes in the historical and geographical contexts of post-colonial politics, recognising the importance of dialogue in the co-creation of knowledge (Dutta 2011), the benefits of which were discussed in chapter two.

Subaltern Studies

Notably, the origin of the term 'subaltern' also highlights the power entrenched in the construction of its meaning. Subaltern discourse originated from military discourse, and the term in military discourse was used to represent a lowly ranked military officer. The term was first used by Antonia Gramsci (1971) to signify the workers with minimal authority in a state. The term was further borrowed and augmented into what is now known as the subaltern studies to denote a marginalised group of people. The societal ranking, as denoted in the

subaltern studies, describes the power relations and implication in a society (Guha 1988, Guha and Spivak, 1988).

Subaltern studies seek to interrogate the erasures in the dominant configuration of knowledge (Guha, 1988). It seeks to write history from below by listening to marginalised voices and stories. In so, doing subaltern studies aims at the reinvention of structures that record history from below (Dutta 2011). Erasure typifies the exclusion of grassroots voices from mainstream media. Erasures in exploring the power dynamics in class, race, gender and caste typically lead to material erasures, and creates a condition of subalternity. In the famous extract from Gayatri Spivak's (1988), *Can the subaltern speak*, she notes that if the subaltern could speak then they would not remain a subaltern.

The condition of subalternity is materially situated at the margins, and the subaltern cultures are created by powerful centres of knowledge production (Dutta 2008). This highlights the fact that, to understand the condition of subalternity and rectify marginalisation, there is need to understand the concept of power which sustains dominant hegemonies which disempower the community members. However, the knowledge of this concept is not enough to rectify marginalisation, thus the need for the redistribution of power to the marginalised groups.

Of significance is that subaltern studies offers an entry point to listening to the voices at the margins, and emphasises the fact that marginalisation can be challenged if the cultural communities enact their ability to challenge this marginalisation (Dutta, 2008). The questions which the subaltern school of thought seeks to address are listed by Dutta (2009; 2011): whose stories are in circulation? What agendas and desires get constituted in the stories? At what point are the stories told and desires get constituted in the stories? At what standpoint are the stories told and ultimately what are the narratives that get erased from the discursive spaces of knowledge creation?

As stated in chapter two, this study fits in the subaltern studies context. It seeks to examine the nature of participation and or non-participation in the ZCDA ISAL project, investigate the factors influencing the participation trends in the ZCDA ISAL project and to establish a trajectory of the 'types' of participation in the ISAL, from below. Thus, by writing from below and capturing the stories and voices of Ward 13 ISAL project participants, this study challenges the hegemony of ideology mainstream (Guha, 1981).

The motive agenda and interest of the dominant hegemony is exposed in subaltern studies by problematising that which is not included in the mainstream, such as the stories and voices of Ward 13 Gutu community members. The subaltern school of thought has its roots in the post-colonial studies, and as such it focused on the structures within which the 'other' strives, as well as the agency they embody within these structures, thus engaging in culturally constructed voices (Said, 1978). Dutta (2011) asserts that, subaltern studies seek to engage with the subaltern voices in seeking spaces for social change.

Culture-centred approach to Social Change: Negotiating Culture, Structure and Agency

The culture-centred approach to social change focuses on the interaction of culture, structure and agency, as highlighted in Figure 3.1 below. It aims to "transform social structures, and in so doing, it attends to the agency of the subaltern sectors in bringing about social change" (Dutta, 2011:39). The data analysis will include the sense-making of these three concepts in the context of the ZCDA ISAL project, and as they are conceptualised below.
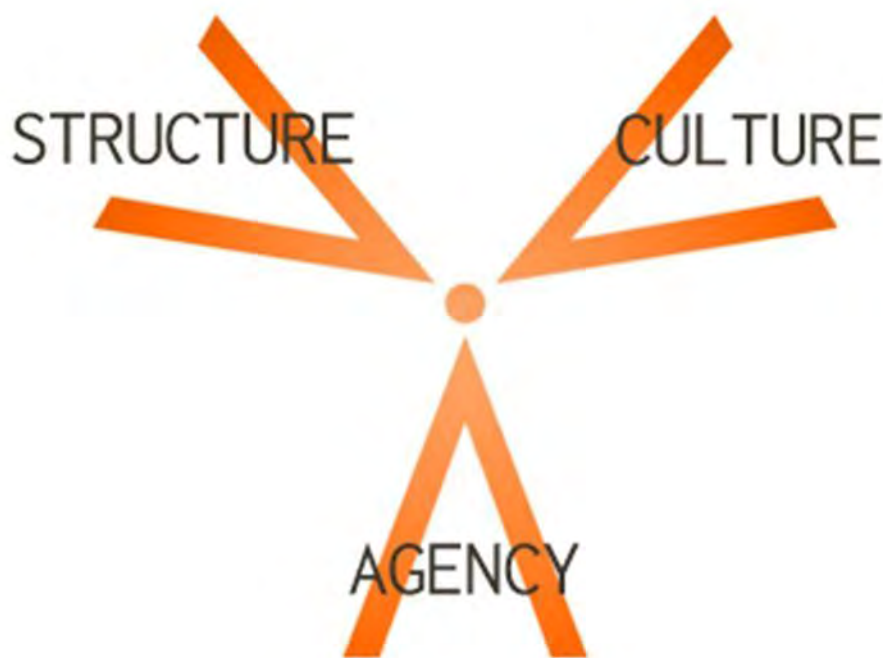
Figure 3.1 Culture-centred approach revolves around structure, culture and agency. (http:www.care-cca.comabo)

The culture-centred approach subscribes to the idea of culture as the local context (Dutta 2008, 2011). Thus, the culture-centred approach is anchored on the belief that through the expression, interpretation, and re-interpretation of culturally circulated meaning, agency

is enacted in individuals and community at large (Dutta, 2008). Agency therefore builds local capacity to enact choices that facilitate social change, and the ultimate negotiation of structures (Dutta 2008, Dutta 2011).

From a culture-centred approach, perspective meaning should be drawn from the grassroots, and this should be through a participatory framework that encourages dialogue. However, the culture-centred approach is cognisant of power which is entrenched in the mainstream discourse, thus the redistribution of power is viewed as only possible through engaging the 'silences' and the absences, using a participatory manner. Dutta (2011:11) notes: "What sets the culture-centered approach from the discursive approaches to power is its singular interest in understanding those conditions at the margins that have limited access to basic resources".

This study adopts a culture-centred approach as it investigates the cultural and social factors that may have hindered participation in the ISAL microfinance project among a group of people than can be considered marginalised, specifically due to their economic marginalisation.

More so, the culture-centred approach attempts to close the chasm that exists between the organisations that implement social change initiatives and the grassroots communities. The bid to augment the local voices in social change, mainstream ideally bridges the gap between "those with means to affect development and those who are the real subjects of social change" (Gumucio-Dagron, 2009:454). A culture-centred approach to social change is not a panacea to bridging the gap between communities and social change agents, because during a dialogical process there is a risk of divergence, which shall be discussed later in this chapter. A culture-centred approach taps into the local culture which aids contextualising development in the local cultural embedded meaning, thus highlighting the importance of local culture in social change projects.

Culture

Culture has recently been viewed as important in social change (Airhihenbuwa 1995, Dutta and Bergman, 2004a, 2004b; Dutta, 2011). This interest in a local culture's role in facilitating social change, as opposed to it being viewed as inimical to it, as was the case in the dominant paradigm, has opened up spaces of communication for the cultural voices in communities (Dutta, 2008). This also leads to many questions on what culture is and its value to social

change initiatives. Dutta (2008, 2011) asserts that culture is context. According to Quarry and Ramirez (2009:103) context is all encompassing and multi-dimensional:

> At the very least context is community – with its various interpretations. It is the organizations with which we work, ranging from small groups to established institutions. It is also the geography and history of the places we work. Context is people's culture, political systems, media and funding rules.

Thus, the culture-centred approach always emphasises the need to problematise development in line with the local community's culturally embedded meanings, for example, in this study it is important to understand how Ward 13 members conceptualise participation, as will be highlighted in chapter five.

The emphasis on looking into culture in the culture-centred approach is based on the constitutive and dynamic value and nature of culture (Dutta 2008). This is so because culture provides a communicative framework upon which locally produced meanings are produced and articulated (Geertz, 1994). Furthermore local contexts helps community members to understand social change from their lived realities, a context that is familiar with their cultural beliefs, values, and practices (Dutta, 2008).

In the culture-centred approach, "culture is the strongest framework for providing the context of life that shapes knowledge creation, perceptions, sharing of meanings and behaviour changes" (Dutta 2011:11). The culturally-situated voices open up areas of discovery. Engaging with the cultural voices is important because culture is always in a state of flux, thus bringing the need to constantly engage with the grassroots community, in order to attain understanding on what is culturally relatable and relevant.

Culture in the culture-centred approach acts as a channel through which local voices are validated. The creation of discursive spaces debunks the notion of the dominant epistemic discourse which marginalise and silence third world communities. In light of this, culture in the culture-centred approach directly challenges the modernisation paradigm which views culture as a barrier to social change (Dyll, 2009). Thus, if the social change agents give prominence to local culture, ideally the structure will support social change.

<u>Structure</u>

"Structure refers to the material realities as defined by policies and institutional networks that privilege certain sections of the populations and marginalise others" (Dutta 2011:12). Structure can be an enabling or disabling factor to social change, thus an investigation into the structure is important in this study as the study seeks to establish enabling and disabling factors to participation. Structure works in a dual manner, as it constrains as well as enables agency, for instance unavailability of funds to kick-start a microfinance project typifies how structure can be a disabling factor to participation (Dutta 2008). More so, structures are institutional, in that there are ways of organising rules and roles in mainstream society that constrain and enable access to resources (Dutta, 2011:9)

Structure thus relates to the tangible (machinery, crops) and intangible (information and expertise) resources available to communities (Dutta, 2008; 2011). Marginalised communities not only face being geographically removed from the centre but they also face political and economic marginalisation. Thus, it is imperative to investigate the structure upon which the microfinance project was laid.

"Structure is articulated through the discursive engagement with the members of the subaltern sectors" (Dutta 2008:62). For instance in the ZCDA ISAL project, discussions with the participants of the initiative using the culture-centred approach interrogate the structure and identify the reasons for participation and for non-participation. Self-exclusion, forced-exclusion and non-participation may be due to a lack or unavailability of resources or prioritisation of other basic needs before savings are contemplated by the community members.

Marginalised communities have little to no voice and agency in most social change communicative structures, however, the culture-centred approach (Dutta, 2008, 2011) places substantial value in the voices of the marginalised as a way to enact their agency. The structure should enable the marginalised members to freely and actively participate in the community activities.

Structure has a strong impact on communities, and it can further the vulnerability of a marginalised group by creating a condition of stigmatisation, which tags those at the margins as inferior, primitive and passive. Thus, participation must be empowering to enable access to resources. In line with the importance of structure in social change, Srinivas Melkote (2000:46) stresses that:

As long as societies distribute needs and power unequally between populations, it is unethical for communications and human service professionals to help solve minor/or immediate problems while ignoring the symbolic barriers created by societies that permit or perpetrate inequalities among citizens. Real change is not possible unless we deal with the crucial problem in human societies: lack of economic and social power among individuals at the grassroots.

The culture-centred approach seeks to investigate the underlying economic and polemical imbalances that negatively impact the community's agency. It therefore interrogates the role of access to resources and how it enables or disables social change. The discursive spaces, created in the exploration of structural factors influencing the agency of the subaltern communities, disrupt the hegemonic narratives of providing a platform for the community to tell their stories and become the leaders of their social change (Dutta 2011, Gumucio-Dagron 2009).

The culture-centred approach's exploration of structural factors also creates entry points for bringing out the fundamental elements of the dominant discourses that disrupts participation, which again challenges the dominant paradigm (Acharya and Dutta 2013), as will be observed in this study on the ZCDA ISAL project. Ideally, if social change agents tap diligently into the local culture, the structure will capacitate or enact the agency of local members.

Agency

Agency refers to the capability of individuals and communities to be active participants in determining their agenda and in setting up locally co-constructed solutions to the challenges they face (Dutta 2008). More so, it alludes to the capacity of cultural members to enact their choices and actively participate in negotiating the structure within which the community finds itself (Dutta 2008). In other words, agency typifies the potential of community members to influence the social change agenda, thus their ability to bring solutions to the drawing board. It is worth noting that community ability to act in this fashion is dependent on the resources available. Agency highlights the active interaction process through which individuals, groups and/or communities are involved in processes and actions which challenge the constraining structure (Acharya & Dutta 2013:225). This is so because the grassroots marginalised community members better understand their realities than any external agent (Gumucio Dagron and Tufte, 2006). The culture-centred approach recognises

the role of the external agents, but stresses the importance of the voice of the community; it therefore calls for the creation of discursive spaces that listen to the ignored voice. The researcher in the culture-centred approach should also be a collaborator with the local members and aid in the co-construction of knowledge, s/he should not be an anchor or overshadow the local community members. Agency is thus facilitated for both the researcher to conduct research of value, and for the community to be instrumental in positive social change.

Culture-Centred Approach and Participatory Communication

The culture-centred approach is informed by critical social science, as highlighted above, which seeks to address the issue of power and the conditions of the people living on the margins. Gutu Ward 13, ISAL project provides the case study upon which communicative process between the local community and the implementing partner (ZCDA) are examined. Using the culture-centred approach, the communicative process employed in the initiative will be investigated to ascertain the participation trends. Participation is of chief importance in the culture-centred approach, facilitated by dialogue.

The contribution of the all partners to a social change projects, including external agents and local members is of importance in the culture-centred approach (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). This study thus collaborates with both sets of partners in the co-creation of meaning. This approach is anchored on the belief that true human development can only be achieved if the grassroots community members actively participate and their stories are included in the social change initiative (Dutta 2008, 2011).

Participatory communication is regarded as the ideal way upon which community development can be achieved, due to how its principles and practice set out to involve the community in the social change process. The term participation has become part and parcel of the word development, and in light of this, most donor organisations have shown increased interest in funding projects that are participatory (White *et al.*, 1994). The earnest interest in funding projects that are people-centred and foster participation has, however, not solved the participation challenges as in practice, participation differs in nature depending on one yielding the power, as the lexicon 'participation' may be used to rubberstamp anti- participatory actions (White et al., 1994; Gumucio Dagron and Tufte, 2006). This therefore calls for a culture-centred approach, investigating participation, lending an ear to the

subaltern, documenting their stories and considering the local context and its inhibiting or facilitating role to social change.

Geographically, Gutu Ward 13 (Mazuru) is located 250km away from Masvingo, the active economic hub. This highlights the idea of access (as discussed above with reference to the concept of structure) considering the fact that Zimbabwe is highly centralised. The culture-centred approach questions the structure in terms of resource allocation. While there is a call for the full participation of the marginalised groups in social change, there is need for an enabling structure, one that facilitates participation. Thus, there is need for this study to engender the voices of the Ward 13 ISAL participants, as well as to explore the opportunities and challenges of the culture-centred approach in practice.

The driving point of the culture-centred approach therefore questions the universal narratives and advocates for locally situated and constructed narratives. Dutta (2008) asserts that, there is an increasing awareness of the need to open up spaces of communication to the voices of cultural communities. The culture-centred approach calls for a more people-centred drive which envisions discursive spaces of culture for the ultimate end result of culture specific social change solutions (Dutta 2008, Dutta and Bergman 2004a, 2004b)

Theoretically, the MM2[19] microfinance model, as highlighted in chapter two, exemplifies a typical culture sensitive approach to social change, because it involves the community members' participation in all the phases of the project cycle. This model, in theory, allows the local community members to harness the microfinance initiative as it facilitates local agency by giving power to the local members to tailor-make the initiative to their liking. However, due to the diverging application of participation in practice, this calls for a practical investigation to investigate the exact nature of the assumed community participated in ZCDA ISAL project.

The role of culture is unalienable in the culture-centred approach. Through it, meaning is co-constructed. In this study, the context that shapes the co-construction of knowledge pertains to the participation trends in Gutu Ward 13. The importance of culture is highlighted by Dutta and Bergman (2004a:241):

Culture here is conceptualised as both transformative and constitutive, providing an axis for theorizing the discursive processes through which meaning are socially

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[19] ZCDA ISAL project falls under the MM2 Microfinance model as highlighted in chapter two

constructed by members. This process is considered to be a didactical one…the didactical approach captures meaning construction as a dynamic cultural process with the possibility for coexistence of multiple, and often contradictory, meanings. The objective is to develop an understanding of the complexity of meanings constructed.

Rebecca Tamara de Souza (2007) notes that, not only is structure and agency mutually constitutive, but the culture in the culture-centred approach is also constitutive through the discursive processes and practices of cultural participants.

Ward 13 in Gutu is an appropriate site to investigate development from a culture-centred approach as the microfinance model theoretically valorises participation and Gutu's existence stems from the history of colonial displacement. In addition, over the past few years, Ward 13 in Gutu has witnessed a hive of activities from different developmental agents (Gutu Ward 13 Plan, 2011). Listening to the voice of the marginalised sectors in Ward 13 may work towards encouraging a redistribution of power. Dutta and Bergman argue:

> When the culture-centered approach becomes the conduit for legitimate theory building…social change is achieved through the presence of the marginalised voices and through the presence of the marginalised voices and through the participation of these voices in changing policy, securing resources and achieving redistribution justice; those systems of domination that privilege certain forms of meanings over others are exposed and challenged (2004b:234).

The culture-centred approach is of importance to this study, as it interrogates access, and this is crucial in this study as access to resources affects the way and nature of participation. Empowerment and sustainability are of great importance in the culture-centred approach; this is so because the former leads to the later and vice versa. Some developmental agents subscribe to the modernisation paradigm and, in this respect, participation is mostly used as a term to authenticate the anti-participatory practices in the initiatives. This is evidenced by the fact that some social change organisations view communities as being in a state of helplessness, without hope, and the ability to contribute to solving the socio-economic and political challenges they face. Empowerment tends to be linked with the patronising phase, 'I shall empower you to do this'; this highlights the silencing of the local voices in the social change process as the communities are regarded as needing an 'expert' guide in the social change process (Labonte, 1994).

In light of the above observation, this study seeks to track ZCDA ISAL project to explore the relationship between the social change agent and the communicative processes used in the microfinance project. Using the CFPD model, the level of community participation and centeredness can be ascertained in this study. This will aid in investigating if ZCDA facilitates the creation of communicative spaces of social change, and how the communicative process in the ISAL project occurred. Dutta and Bergman (2005) argue that civil societies provide the platform for voice to be articulated and facilitate the participation of citizens. The key question emanating from this is: how did ZCDA create the platform for community voices to be heard? As highlighted in chapter two, participation is a categorical term for citizen power (Arnstein, 1969). In this study it is of chief importance to investigate the power relations in the microfinance project. In this study, power is conceptualised in the nature of the participation by the citizens. The culture-centered approach postulates that the grassroots should be actively involved in social change, thus they should have the agency to facilitate social change. The role of the community in local projects is thus theorised as facilitating agency.

Dialogue, power and voice

Participatory communication places value on people's ability and thus calls for the inclusion of local voices in defining local development (Freire 1970; Melkote and Steeves 2001; Bessette 2004; Servaes, 2000). Dialogue is situated in the social change process and through it, communities are ideally able to harness the communication process and ultimately champion the social change process. This will render their stories heard in the programme cycle by the external agents, thus influencing the decision making process that lead to social change, and positively impact their community (Gumucio-Dagron, 2009).

The culture-centred approach downplays the over-emphasised notion of the importance of information in social change. Information alone cannot prevent marginalisation, political, economic and social imbalances. Gumucio-Dagron (2009:455) asserts that, "information may simply make the poor realize their marginality". Knowledge of marginality alone will not catapult the marginalised groups from their exclusion but may even further make them lose hope of restoration. Marginality is maintained by power and structure, thus the knowledge and understanding of power alone cannot rectify the condition of the powerless and those at the margins, as mentioned above. Marginality is closely intertwined and supported by power, and this notion highlights the failure of the diffusion of

information to address social change. In line with this argument Gumucio-Dagron (2009), asserts that information alone cannot effect communities' ability to exercise agency

The culture-centred approach recognises the creation of the margins; the margins are not naturally constructed but are man-made, hence showing the interplay of power in maintaining the marginality. The approach interrogates the dominant structures that sustain and maintain marginality (Dutta 2008, 2011). This is so because the dominant structures thrive on the erasure of the voice of the marginalised groups or sectors, thus rendering them powerless due to the erasure of local stories and voices. More so, the dominant structure is characterised by overwhelming power (Deetz and Simpson 2004), thus highlighting the need to investigate the power relations of participation in the ZCDA ISAL project in Ward 13, Gutu.

Gumucio-Dagron (2009) asserts that there is a tug of war between the western aid agencies who have power and the communities who want a share of the power. John Thompson (1990) opines that power alludes to the ability to act in line with one's aim and interests. Thus, the interaction of culture, structure and agency provides a platform upon which domination and marginalisation may be challenged.

The culture-centred approach seeks to unearth material realities (Dutta 2008, 2011). This is so because material realities highlight power distribution. More so, it's worth noting that the approach also seeks to amplify the voice of the marginalised groups in a bid to address the structural inequality which can be found in the material reality of a community. The use of participatory practices in social change is an effort to redistribute access of power from the dominant structures to the community members (Acharya and Dutta 2013, Dutta 2011).

Third world communities have been heavily affected by neo-liberalism as, ironically, the free markets constrict the spaces for rural community development and widens the chasm between the rich and the poor classes in the society. Neoliberalism has been critiqued as a colonising tool that protects the interests of the dominant classes to maintain class power (Harvey, 2005).

Dutta (2008) asserts that, in neo-liberalism rhetoric the centre oppresses and controls the periphery, using the same logic of 'development' and 'enlightenment', which has been historically used in the colonisation context. Neo-liberalism is entrenched in the discourse of globalisation and it exposes how third world spaces are constricted as it serves the interests

and power of the first world. The culture-centred approach problematises neo-liberalism by questioning the power undertone of globalisation which renders the third world communities voiceless (Dutta 2008, 2011).

At a structural level, globalisation policies perpetuate subalternity through oppressing the poor, erasing them from discursive spaces. The poor remain at the margins as they are not included in the policy-making and implementation. The series of lack of access to resources reinforces systems that carry out the cycle of poverty (Dutta, 2008); this study is cognisant of structural marginalisation. This highlights the need to examine the participation dynamics in the project implemented by ZCDA, thus in a way ascertaining if microfinance is a valuable micro-solution for the marginalised Gutu community. The marginalised communities suffer structural violence from the dominant forces. "Structural violence is defined in terms of violence enacted in the form of in-access to resources and the fundamental inability to have access to the basic capabilities of life" (Dutta 2008:58). This outlines the power play in the maintenance of marginality and Dutta (2008:58) further stresses this notion:

> It is violence when a child does not have enough food to eat. It is violence when the basic access to healthcare is not accessible in a community. It is violence when families have to live on the streets. These forms of violence are structural because they are rooted in the social structures that defuse the terrains of society.

As discussed in chapter one, structural adjustment programmes further marginalised the third world communities, by disturbing the livelihood of the third world local populace. The underlying weight of globalisation is the creation of a dominant social class that exerts power over the other and controls all the social, economic and political processes across the globe, thus ultimately disenfranchising the lower class from social, economic and political processes (Dutta 2008). Theoretically anchored on the culture-centred approach, this study will make use of the Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) model by Kincaid and Figueroa (2009), in investigating the participatory process in the ISAL project.

The Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) model

Development communication models have evolved from the linear approach (Shannon and Weaver, 1949), such as top-down diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1962) to models that are cognisant of participatory communication strategies (Piotrow *et al.*, 1997), such as the Rockefeller foundation's communication for social change model (CFSC) (Figueroa *et al.*, 2002). However, due to the increasing application of participatory

development, this model was updated to a new version renamed Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD), by Kincaid and Figueroa (2009)

The two models share similarities in principle, and the difference can be noted in the end result of social change. CFSC depicts social change as the end result and Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) model posits human development as the end result of participatory development (Kincaid, 2010). Thus, from that standing, CFPD places substantial value in the process towards change.

CFPD is anchored on Paulo Freire's (1970) work, which stipulates that development should be participatory. Drawing from the Freirean pedagogy, the model places substantial value on the input and contribution (collective action) by the local community members. Participation as highlighted in chapter two should be people-centred and accord 'power' (Arnstein, 1969) to those marginalised groups and sectors in a community, thus this model not only works as a framework upon which to measure participation but also aids in the conceptualisation of participation as highlighted in the previous chapter.

The CFPD model describes how social change can be attained through communication for participatory development. In this study, the model will be a benchmark upon which to analyse the participatory trends in the ZCDA ISAL project implemented in Gutu Ward 13, Masvingo province in Zimbabwe. The model enables a practical synthesis of the concept of participation in practice, thus asserting the level of community participation and at what stage the community members were involved. The model also highlights how applied communication research can be theory-based as well as pragmatic (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009).

This model is cognisant of communication for participatory development principles as highlighted below (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009:508):

1. The concept of development needs to be reformulated in a manner that applies to human development in local communities, as well as the traditional focus on national development

2. Participatory development requires dialogue, a symmetrical, two way process of communication, but many prevailing approaches to development communication use an asymmetrical, one way process of communication.

3. No model of development process reconciles the demand for social change at the community level and the need for requisite changes at the individual level.

4. Scholars and practitioners agree that community members should determine the goals of development themselves, but the problem-specific nature of funding often means that external change agents impose development goals on communities. External change agents can play the valuable role of catalyst and facilitate the process, but motivation and leadership needs to come from within a community itself.

5. The role of conflict in communication generally is ignored in participatory development, even though it is common feature of most communities. Therefore, a model of the process needs to recognise conflict and suggest methods to manage it.

6. Ownership, self-determination, and social change are considered necessary to build community capacity and to sustain the process of development without further outside stimuli.

7. Communities should have access to local media, such as community radio, posters/billboards, traveling theatre groups, and even cell phones, to produce content for their development objectives rather than rely on content originating from external sources that primarily serve the purposes of those sources.

8. Self-assessment needs to guide the process and motivate sustained, collective action.

The CFPD model aids in addressing the above mentioned issues. More so, it provides a tool useful in research and practice to describe how a communication for development project is applied. The model also valorises the recognition of local culture, and thus investigates entrenched power relations, structures, equitable participation, sharing of beliefs, community factions and styles of leadership that may enable or disable participation and collective action. The CFPD model adds value to the study as it does not treat participation and collective action in a simplistic manner, such as equating participation to the number of people in attendance and other demographics (Bessette, 2004). The model is cognisant of moments of disagreements and divergence in a social change process, thus fracturing the overly-idealistic stance offered by many models.

The CFPD model has been applied in measuring the success and failures of social change initiatives (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009; Dyll-Myklebust, 2012; Sibisi, 2010). The use of the CFPD application in investigating the success of other projects highlights its importance in this study as it will aid in the investigation of participation in all the stages of social change in the ZCDA ISAL a microfinance project implemented in Zimbabwe, Gutu District.

From the work of Paulo Freire (1970) the CFPD model conceptualises communication as dialogue that is following a horizontal trend (rather than a top-down flow of communication), and also that participation should create "cultural identity, trust, commitment, ownership and empowerment" (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2002). Thus, value is placed on dialogue rather than monologue, horizontal rather than vertical information sharing, equitable participation, local ownership and empowerment (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001; UN Population Fund, 2001).

The model can be an effective tool for investigating and producing social change (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009) as it is both descriptive and prescriptive. Although it notes the existence of disagreement, it does not address conflict management in the social change initiative which is something that needs to be considered, as during dialogue, conflict may arise. This model does not highlight if the excluded stakeholders can later on be included in social change. This study will aid in filling this gap by documenting 'forced' and self- exclusion among other disabling factors to participation of the Gutu Ward 13 residents in the ZCDA ISAL project. It is through documenting the reasons for self-exclusion that the challenge of exclusion and inclusion during the project cycle can be handled, and possibly mitigated. The role played by ZCDA in the ISAL project as an external agent therefore calls for an investigation of the roles of a catalyst in social change projects.

Catalysts in the CFPD model

Kincaid and Figueroa's (2009) CFPD model highlights the role played by catalysts. Six catalysts are named in the model: internal stimuli, change agent, innovation, policies, technology and mass media (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). However, the model does not clearly state when an issue becomes a problem if it is viewed as a norm in a community (diaz-Bordanave, 1998).

Notably in Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation (1962) the role of catalysts is also viewed as of importance, however the roles of the catalyst in the diffusion of innovation differs from the role of the catalyst in the CFPD model. In the diffusion of innovation, the catalysts were change agents, mass media and opinion leaders who influenced the adoption of new reforms through persuasion, however, "participatory communication differs substantially from conventional interventions that use media as a means for exercising persuasion and power" (Casmir, 1991:310). In the CFPD model, the catalyst stimulates dialogue, and their role must be that of achieving mutual understanding (Freire, 1970). Local community and the external agents should have a co-equal knowledge-sharing relationship to limit manipulation and imposition; the catalyst must believe in the potential of the local people and be willing to learn from them (Melkote, 2006; White, 1994). As highlighted above, the catalyst should stimulate dialogue to achieve mutual understanding, which highlights the importance of dialogue in social change.

Dialogue in the CFPD model

The CFPD model is based on dialogue, information sharing, mutual understanding, and collective action. Dialogue occurs between two or more participants and it aids in clarifying what one believes and thinks (Kincaid Figueroa, 2009). Dialogue can lead to convergence or divergence (Everett Rogers and Kincaid, 1981; Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). Convergence does not necessarily mean consensus, but specifies the path at which dialogue goes through when it is effective (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). Over time most groups converge towards a greater state of uniformity, or what is termed 'local culture' (Kincaid, 1988; 1993).   Kincaid and Figueroa (2009) notes that this does not mean a unison in participation, but rather the coming together of people sharing a vision, as in divergence, some stop participating, thus bringing the need to document and be cognisant of non-participation and self-exclusion in this study.

In divergence, the build-up phase ends without a resolution and the process enters into a climax stage as highlighted in the diagram. Conflict may arise due to divergence, however, this does not undermine the importance of dialogue because through it, conflict may also be resolved and convergence continues in the dialogical process.

It is through dialogue that equitable sharing of knowledge can be accomplished, emotional involvement reached, voices documented and other positive results of social

change, such as agency, enacted. However, dialogue also brings debate and divergence thus, the role of the catalyst is therefore to, "apply their knowledge in the context and to the benefit of those locals" (Servaes, 1996:24).

Participatory communication values the involvement of the affected members of the community more than that of external agents (Bessette, 2004; Gumucio-Dagron, 2001; Servaes *et al.,* 1996; White, 1994). Dialogue enables the community members to have shared objectives, thus, a shift in perception over 'what the project is for me' to 'what is the project for all of us' (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). Theoretically guided by the culture-centred approach, this study will use the CFPD model to investigate the nature of community participation in the ISAL project from its formative stage to the final stage of assessments and evaluations. The CFPD model is diversity-tolerant, which goes hand-in-hand with the guiding principles of the culture-centred approach in merging cultural norms and values in social change.

This is essential in social change because, "without adequate, positive change in the social-political system the poor will remain poor and voiceless will remain without voice" (Carnegie *et al.*, 2000:191). The CFPD model is useful in describing the expected ending of a successful participatory process yielding outcomes such as: improved leadership, increase in the degree of participation, information equity and ownership (Kincaid and Figueroa 2009). Thus, a successful participatory project gives power to those rendered powerless, as exemplified in the model.

Conclusion

Notably, participation is valued in the CFPD model as it is also instrumental in producing the outcomes than can be harnessed when community members are comprehensively involved (Lubombo, 2011). The model perceives the importance of the communities' participation in the stages of the social change. The culture-centred approach also values listening to the marginalised voices; in other words it values engaging with the community members in the process of participatory development.

Furthermore, the CFPD model views participation as an unalienable right of the community members in all the stages of social change, that is, from the project development to the final evaluations and assessment. Dialogue in the model is conceptualised as a means

to reach human development; through a converging dialogical process, a local culture is established (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). Genuine participation is of paramount importance in the culture-centred approach, because this approach seeks to augment the voices of the marginalised community members from below. Genuine participation facilitates change and it is through engaging with the local voices previously removed from the mainstream that agency is enacted and supported (Dutta, 2008; 2011)

Collective action and dialogue are key in the participation of the community members. The local people, from a culture-centred approach perspective, are the experts, thus their input is of paramount importance in the process of achieving change. This highlights that the CFPD model and the culture-centred approach, though different, will complement each other as far as investigating participation in the ZCDA ISAL project.

The CFPD model is cognisant of power relations and undertones in social change. The possibility of power-related conflicts is indicated when community members converge in dialogue. In the culture-centred approach, agency underlines the concept of power in social change. If the structure enables community members to participate freely and actively, their agency is enacted (Dutta, 2008, 2011); in other words agency, is another term for citizen power. More so, the interaction of structure, culture and agency indicates equitable power sharing essential for human development.

Dialogue is an overarching matter in the CFPD, model and the culture-centred approach. In the CFPD model, dialogue is essential to reaching social change (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). In the culture-centred approach, the importance of dialogue is indicated by the emphasis in listening to the voices from the margins (Dutta, 2008 and 2011). Communication as a two way process which requires turn-taking; Dutta (2008, 2011) highlights that the erasures of the local voices in social change typifies their economic erasures, thus engaging the marginalised in dialogue empowers them and facilitates human development. This chapter presented an in-depth overview of the culture-centred approach and its application to social change. To gain detailed insight into the culture-centred approach, this chapter tracked the evolution of this approach by introducing the foundational theories upon which the culture-centred approach is based, including subaltern studies and post-colonial theory. More so, this chapter also discussed the CFPD model (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). The model's strengths and weaknesses were also highlighted. Notably this model will be used as a benchmark upon which participation in the ZCDA ISAL project will

be analysed in this study. The next chapter will focus on the methodological overview of this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The previous chapter delved into the culture-centred approach (Dutta, 2008, 2011) as the theoretical approach within which collected data will be rationalised. The Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) model (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009) was also discussed as the model to be employed as the benchmark upon which the data collected will be analysed in the investigation of participation in the ZCDA ISAL project in Ward 13 Gutu, Masvingo in Zimbabwe. This chapter is therefore an account of the methodology employed in the data collection for the above mentioned analysis.

The CFPD model guides this research in that it seeks to investigate if the Ward 13 community members participated in the formation of the ISAL project, and during all the stages of the project cycle. In doing so the research seeks to investigate how participation was negotiated and implemented in the ZCDA ISAL project from its formative stages to the final evaluation stage.

Positioning the research

Qualitative research approach

This study adopts a qualitative approach as it is chiefly concerned with understanding human phenomena and the meanings that societies assign to these phenomena and events. Qualitative research aids in gathering information about the human side of a study, such as behaviour, attitude, perception, opinions, power relations and beliefs. Qualitative research helps in identifying such factors that are not tangible, for example behavioural aspects such as religion, societal standing, cultural values and gender issues which cannot be quantified (Mack *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, it emphasises the socially constructed nature of reality and the context that influences the inquiry (Mack *et al.,* 2005). In light of the above, this approach aids in investigating and assessing the forms of participation and non-participation in Ward 13 with regards to the ZCDA ISAL project.

Using a qualitative approach, the research seeks to investigate Ward 13 community members' participation in the ISAL project. In so doing, the study investigates the role of the community participants in the project cycle. This research adopts a case study research design which is qualitative in nature; the research design and the data collection methods used in the

data collection procedure are discussed below. A qualitative research aids in investigating the 'human' side of a research.

This study seeks to investigate participation and in so doing, issues such as attitude, perception and cultural factors will be discussed. Most importantly a qualitative research allows a researcher to engage with research participants on a human level and allows an investigation into patterns of human interaction (Mack *et al.* 2005).

Most importantly a qualitative research gives meaning to life, in that it attempts to explore lived experience in a real life context, for example in this study how the community members make meaning of participation in social change (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). In line with that, investigating the contextual setting of the problem is essential in order for a researcher to understand his/her research participants' views, beliefs and meanings (Mack et al, 2005)

Interpretivist research paradigm

A paradigm is a worldview that aids in the presentation and defining the social world linked to the sources of data and the appropriate methods to tap into these sources (Ulin *et al.*, 2004). This research falls under the interpretivist approach; this approach is identified as a framework upon which qualitative research is conducted (Sarantakos, 2005). The interpretivist paradigm emphasises the importance of observation and interpretation in the quest to gain knowledge of the social world (Snape and Spencer, 2003).

With interpretivism, meaning is drawn from perceptions, lived experiences and actions in a given social context (Ulin *et al.*, 2004) and the researcher is an important tool in the research exercise. The researcher should interact with the research participants for a fuller understanding of the phenomenon (Snape and Spencer, 2003). The researcher should actively engage with the people, "who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest" (Patton, 2002:140).

In this research, the Ward 13 ISAL participants are the research participants. Thus, based on interpretivism concomitant research tools, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informants interviews (KII) were used as data collection methods in order to investigate the participation in the ISAL project, as will be discussed below. Therefore, the interpretivist approach aids in the understanding of the people of Ward 13's cultural beliefs, perception and attitude towards participation in the ISAL project implemented by ZCDA.

This interpretivist approach is best suitable for this study because it gives Ward 13 ISAL participants a voice and augments their real life stories, thus helping in the fuller understanding of participation. More so, both the researcher and the participants work together in the co-creation of knowledge – a move which syncs with the theoretical underpinning of this study, as discussed in chapter three.

Case study research design

This study adopts a case study design. Case studies are identified as an example of an interpretive research practice (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). A case study is an object or unit of analysis about which researchers collect information to comprehend ideographic, as well as nomothetic[20], descriptions of phenomena (Patton, 2002). The unit of study might be an individual, organisation, place, decision, event or even time period (de Vaus, 2001: 220). In the study, the unit of research is the Gutu Ward 13 ISAL project participants and the forms of participation between it and its intended beneficiaries.

A case study aids in singling out the concerns of the research, such as attitudes, perceptions and cultural beliefs that influence participation. In this research the researcher is cognisant of the research participants' perceptions, attitudes, and cultural beliefs towards participation. Despite ZCDA having conducted ISAL microfinance projects in different wards in Gutu, namely Wards 13, 14, 15 and 17 and other communities in Midlands, Mashonaland West and Harare, a single case study was chosen for this study. The reason for choosing a single case study (Gutu Ward 13) rather than multiple sites the limited time frame and resources available to conduct the study.

Sampling

Sampling method

Sampling refers to the format that is employed in the process of choosing participants in research. Theoretical sampling was used for both the focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) as a means to attain a rich data based on the researcher's knowledge of the research population and as per the purpose of the study. Theoretical sampling means sampling on the basis of concepts that have proven to be theoretically

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[20] Ideographic approaches refer to those methods that highlight the unique elements of the individual phenomenon (the historically particular) as in much of history and biography. Nomothetic approaches, in contrast, seek to provide more general law-like statements about social life, usually by emulating the logic and methodology of the natural sciences (Marshall, 1998).

relevant to the purpose of the study (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In theoretical sampling, the researcher selects a sample where the phenomena of interest exists (Coyne, 1997).

In this study, due to the nature of research and geographical considerations, the research is limited to the sample from the members who participated in the ZCDA ISAL project conducted in Ward 13. Theoretical sampling was suitable for this study as it provided rich data due to data saturation, facilitated by theoretical sampling (Coyne, 1997). This also highlights the effectiveness of theoretical sampling in this study through strengthening rigor of the study. Rigor in this research will be discussed later in this chapter. Theoretical sampling is also flexible; the selection criteria of the research participants depends on the theoretical underpinnings of the study. For instance, in this study, how participation is conceptualised depends on the theoretical mould of the study.

In this study the FGDs provided the most useful data, due to data saturation during the FGD exercise, and also this study sought to write the Ward 13 stories from below. As mentioned earlier on, the research participants in this study are group members and non-members who received ISAL training in the ZCDA ISAL initiative. All the participants are Gutu Ward 13 community members. However, theoretical sampling requires much time and is not an easy way out (Coyne, 1997). In this study, the data gathered, especially during FGD was of large volumes and it was challenging analysing this data.

Ethical consideration and research participants

The researcher took cognisance of ethical consideration in the research process as a means to value the human aspect of this study, as well as to maintain the dignity of the participants. Research should not harm or disregard the human values of the research participants, and in line with that, consent was sought prior to engaging the participants in the interviews and FGDs.

Consent was sought in this research by the use of an informed consent form which the researcher designed prior to the data collection exercise (see appendix 5) More so, the researcher went through the consent forms with the participants to aid the semi-illiterate research participants before they could fill in the consent forms. This was done to ensure that they had understood the contents of the informed consent form and that they wanted to participate in the research. A gate-keepers' permission was granted from the ZCDA prior to undertaking the research (see appendix 1).

Data collection

Participant observation

Allan Bryman (2008) opines that participant observation is a process where the researcher immerses him/herself in a group of people over an extended period of time, observing their behaviour, listening to what is said and asking questions. During data collection in this study, my initial objective was to orient myself with the participants' way of life and to absorb as much as information as possible. This is important because every social setting has differences which a researcher needs to get acquainted with.

Some of the observations prior to the actual data gathering in focus group discussions were helpful in laying the foundation for the study as well as augmenting the study in the cultural perspective of Gutu Ward 13. The first day in the field proved very essential in getting to know the community cultural perspectives and way of life. After being introduced to the ward leadership, I was invited to attend one community meeting which the *sabhuku* (village head) was conducting. During this meeting I observed that the community honoured the royal family bloodline and their ancestors before engaging in the business of the day. This is an essential cultural norm as in every gathering in the ward, the community members perform this cultural rite. During the FGD as the group discussion leader, I also led the community in their cultural rite of honouring the royal bloodline and their ancestors. For the FGD participants it was a noble gesture and even after data collection, the village head personally testified how delighted he was that a 'foreigner' had respected their cultural rites. This type of observation of the research environment is known as "descriptive observation" (Flick 1998:142).

Participant observation also aided in attaining rich data in the key informants interviews and focus group discussions. This purposeful type of observation is known as "focused observation" (Flick 1998:142). During the pre-planning meetings prior to the FGDs there was a constant referral of Gomba[21] as the ISAL project hotspot, this was recorded in the field notes and proved a vital point in the study as this hinted at the participation dynamics in Ward 13, which will be discussed in the next chapter. I was introduced to the community as a researcher and this made my status known to all, however, I avoided sending the 'I am watching you' message to the participants and community members. This meant collating my

field notes away from the public gaze of the community and research participants, and this

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[21] Gomba is Ward 13 Centre and is the hub of most activities in the Ward.

aided in maintaining a more natural lifestyle. At one point, when I felt I couldn't rely on my memory, I excused myself from the community meeting and quickly jotted down some information in the bathroom.

With a full understanding of the importance of field notes as an integral part in qualitative research (Flick, 1998), Spradley's (1980) guiding principles to writing field notes were of great value in this study. As noted by Spradley (1980), the principles which were considered in participant observation were 'space', which alludes to the physical setting where the people involved act in a fashion they do. The event, time, goal and ultimately human feelings were considered in participatory observation. The highlighted principles above. aid in research by making note-taking systematic as well as authentic and as representative of the actual occurrence as possible (Wolfinger, 2002). Nicholas Wolfinger (2002:91), postulates that, "this can aid in the recall of details that might otherwise have been forgotten".

Researchers should be objective during the observation process (Mack *et.al*, 2005). At first being objective was a struggle, I realised this was caused by the fact that I thought I knew the participation trends and dynamics in Ward 13. As the data collection exercise started, I realised that most of my assumptions were wrong and that I needed to learn from the Ward 13 ISAL participants. The early realisation about my wrong assumptions maintained my objectivity in participant observation as well as during the data collection exercise. FGDs and KIIs were used in data collection.

Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were used to attain rich qualitative data because FGDs resemble the social and group dynamics of everyday social life and discourse (Lindlof, 1995). FGDs provide data that is rich in ideas and provides opinions and attitudes from the subject's point of view (Du Plooy, 2002). The rise in the use of FGDs in social science research was influenced by the shortcomings of traditional interviews, where the influence of the interviewer inhibits the spontaneous responses from the interviewee due to close up questions (Krueger, 1988; Dennink, 2007).

FGDs entails the researcher meeting a small group of approximately twelve participants and issues relating to the topic at hand are discussed (Kumar, 2005). In this study, two FGDs were conducted by the researcher. The role of a researcher during a FGD is to listen and gain knowledge about how the people feel, their attitude, perception and in this study, gain

entrance into the cultural sphere of Ward 13 in Gutu Masvingo. The success or failure of FGD can occur during four phases:

i. Recruitment and Sampling

ii. Preparation of FGD guide

iii. Facilitation during a FGD

iv. Transcription and analysis of FGD data

The researcher invited fifteen ISAL participants per each FDG meeting; the reason for inviting fifteen was to cater for the potential decline in attendance. In the first FGD twelve participants were present and during the second FGD eleven people participated. Most authors advocate that men and women should be interviewed separately and that the age difference among the participants should not be more than fifteen years (Berger, 1998; Greenbaum, 1998; Krueger,

1988).

Initially the researcher wanted to conduct two FGDs, one comprising of men and the other women. The purpose of this was to eliminate any gendered power dynamics that may influence responses from either men or women. However, the societal participation dynamics on the ground made this arrangement impossible as the researcher could not get enough willing men to participate in the FGD exercise, thus the few available men were ultimately mixed with women in the FGD groups. This challenge actually provided an insight into the participation dynamics in Ward 13 which shall be discussed in chapter five. Despite the above mentioned challenge, the FGD participants in both groups participated well and were highly interactive.

The FGDs were conducted in an open space as opposed to the classroom that had been offered to me. This was per request of the participants. following the suggestion. The suggestion was logical considering the fact that the suggested place was central and closer to most of the participants. At first I was sceptical about the setting, but later realised that conducting the FGD at the school classroom might not have given the desired results considering that the participants would be forced to walk five kilometres on a hot day to the venue; the mental associations of the classroom setup might also have prevented some from expressing their views freely (Hinton, 1995). Despite being an outdoor FGD, we maintained a circle seating arrangement as highlighted in Fig 4.1 below, and this setting allowed the participants to talk freely since it was their usual meeting place. The FGDs were all conducted not in a formal

structure but under a tree and *Mangisi[22] was* served as refreshments instead of 'foreign' beverages as per their custom and proposition.

Figure 4.1 Showing Focus Group Discussion 2 participants and the researcher, during a focus group discussion (consent was provided for the capturing and the use of pictures)

The researcher in this study prepared a FGD guide which comprised of open-ended questions (see appendix 3), however some questions not included in the guide were asked when the researcher deemed an interesting aspect needing clarity and specificity, or to solicit more information. The researcher also guided the FGD flow and prevented the discussion from falling into personal issues, as personal questions should be avoided in the focus group discussion, due to group dynamics (Kumar, 2005).

Cultural aspects in Ward 13 were respected and observed in this study during data collection. For example, the ward's custom of honouring their ancestors and the royal blood line *(kuwuchira ishe ne midzimu)[23]* was observed prior to opening FGD discussions as per the custom in the ward. More so, to gain the trust and encourage a smooth flow of the discussion, the researcher started each discussion with small talk and personal introductions. Proportional pilling was used in this study as a way to gain insight into the participation dynamics in the Ward. Proportional pilling is a technique used in research to get people's views on issues and events in a community (Jones, 2014). As will be highlighted in chapter five, been seeds were

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[22] Mangisi is a popular beverage in Gutu, it's locally brewed using maize and sorghum by the community members.
[23] This short ceremony is conducted prior to starting an event of gathering in Gutu, the ancestors and the royal bloodline is honoured prior to any public event or gathering. The community members honour the ancestors and the royal blood line by reciting the Madjira (leg) totem and clapping their hands as a sign of homage.

used to represent the ISAL participants and the involvement of men and women was asserted during the FGDs by the use of this method.

Due to the length and volume of the data associated with FGDs, the discussions were video and voice recorded. Using more than one device to capture the FGD proved essential during FGD 2 when the video recorder malfunctioned during the discussion. Had one device been used this challenge would have negatively impacted this study. On average, each FGD lasted for thirty eight minutes. Community profiling and mapping was also done during the FGD, a group discussion on the mapping aided in involving the participants in map drawing, narrowing the study to Ward 13 only, and, more so, brought to light some important participation dynamics in Ward 13 which shall be presented in the next chapter. "Community profiling is a tool for community development", as it highlights a community's needs, interests, resources and is carried out by community members themselves (Henderson and Thomas, 1987; Milson, 1974). Community profiling in this study entailed listing down the socio-economic groups in Ward 13, interest groups and the demographics, which highlighted the convergence and divergence of Ward 13 members; the impact this had on participation is also discussed in the next chapter.

In a FGD the researcher should maintain, "interaction among participants…and must encourage to maximise the quality of the output from the session" (Greenbaum, 1998:66). As the facilitator this meant that I had to harness the flow of discussions, which meant allowing the participants to freely express their views without being interrupted and also maintaining track of the discussion. There were times when the more vocal participants, especially in FGD 1, would jump to answer every posed question; as the researcher I stepped in to give a chance to the retiring participants and encouraged them to air their views. I attempted to do this in a manner which did not offend the vocal participants, without undermining the retiring participants.

The rich data video and audio recorded from the FGDs was transcribed. The process of transcription was essential, as the more I listened to the audio the more the data gave rich meaning and added value to this study. Using the Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) model as the schematic benchmark, the data gathered was analysed and the findings and analysis thereof is presented in the following chapter.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Interviews are a qualitative research method that allows active verbal engagements with the research participants (Bailey, 2007). Semi-structured key informants interviews (KII) were also conducted; using semi-structured interviews helped in creating a casual atmosphere and also in exploring areas that proved of interest to this study. This is so because semi-structured interviews are not about order and structure but are about exploring values and attitude (Neuman, 1991).

KIIs in this study provided in-depth qualitative data from carefully selected informants who possessed rich data about the participation of Ward 13 members and the work done by ZCDA during the ISAL project. From within the Ward 13 community, the researcher approached the village development workers who were directly involved in the project or who held prior knowledge about the ISALs project. In this study the agriculture extension (Agritex) officer of Ward 13 was interviewed in his capacity as the ward agriculture development worker who was involved in the ISALs trainings, and he is involved with many other social change projects happening in the ward. As mentioned in chapter one, the main source of livelihood is farming, thus making him a key informant in this study.

The ward councillor and the village head were identified as key informants prior to undertaking this study, however efforts to get hold of the ward councillor were fruitless due to his busy schedule. The village head expressed lack of in-depth knowledge about the project leading to his omission as a key informant. Out of the five intended key informants identified, only three key informants were interviewed, two of which were by ZCDA stuff members and the other was the Agritex worker.

The ZCDA project manager and the monitoring and evaluations (M&E) officer were interviewed as the external agents who spearheaded the social change exercise and facilitated the ISAL trainings and evaluations. The KIIs were voice recorded and the rich data attained was transcribed. The key informants interviews were all conducted using English due to the fact that all the key informants were comfortable with using the language.

Data analysis

The Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) approach has been introduced above and discussed in-depth in chapter three. CFPD is a descriptive model that provides steps that may explain why community projects are successful or unsuccessful. It is

also a prescriptive model that can be used by external change agents and local leaders to increase the likelihood that development projects succeed (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009).

In this study, the CFPD model will be used as a schematic descriptive benchmark against which to analyse the ZCDA workshops in Ward 13, Gutu and the different stages or manifestations of participation and non-participation. More so, through engaging in dialogue with the participants and non-participants in the microfinance project, the factors influencing participation will be extracted. Thus, the CFPD model will aid in establishing the nature of community participation with regards to the ZCDA project, as highlighted in chapter three.

The model is subdivided into different components which highlights a trajectory for participatory social change. The first component is the catalyst; this model is cognisant of the role played by a stimuli which can either be internal or external. The second component is community dialogue, which provides a sequential dialogical process to overcoming the social problem. The third component is collective action; this phase emphasises the need for collective execution of the action plan devised in the second component. The last component is individual and social change; a participatory social change process should ideally produce positive results. This, therefore, highlights how this study is cognisant of the recommended actions for social change highlighted in the CFPD model, thus, participation in the ZCDA ISAL project will be analysed using the CFPD framework.

Findings from this research might go a long way in aiding future project planning, implementation and evaluation in terms of participation; more so, this study might also influence adoption of projects that are culturally sensitive and that sync with the local cultural lifestyle and beliefs.

Research trustworthiness

The researcher dealt with the issues of rigour through observation and taking personal notes of the daily activities basing on the concepts under study. Rigour was also established through operational in-depth data collection and analysis. Adequate time was spent collecting data to the point of saturation. Checks for bias through prolonged engagement with the subjects aided credibility.

The key informant interview schedule and the FGD guide were dealt with through pre-testing these instruments to eliminate any ambiguity that may have caused varying interpretations. The researcher made sure that the data collected is not of a biased

predisposition, this was done through recording the focus group discussions and key informant interviews for future review and reference.

In this study the researcher used credible research methods and information was sought which makes the research dependable. Validity in research is attained by using research methods that have been tested before and have proved to work (Biggam, 2008). Reliability is confirmed when a different researchers analyses the same data provided and comes up with the same research findings as the former research (Kirk and Miller, 1986). In this research credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability was maintained in the following ways:

Credibility

A credible study is one which reflects the real phenomena as portrayed by the research participants (Babbie and Mouton, 2004). In this research, the participants' views and issues are presented in the findings as they are; these are also analysed, giving quotations from the participants, as it follows a culture-centred approach (Dutta, 2008).

Dependability

The, "dependability refers to the degree to which the reader can be convinced that findings did indeed occur as the researcher says they did" (Durrheim and Wassennar, 1999:64). Spending more time transcribing and analysing data maintained dependability in this study. The sample was purposively selected to the point of saturation and accuracy in administering the interviews was maintained. Field notes aided in accounting for every step of the research, this enabled recovering field memory.

Conformability

Conformability highlights the degree the findings are as a result of the research focus when compared to the researchers' bias (Babbie and Mouton, 2004). In this study this was achieved by maintaining a focus on the initial proposal and maintaining a focus on the research objectives and research questions

Transferability

Transferability "refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents" Babbie and Mouton (2004:277). A rigid adherence to the research tools was done to ensure transferability. The research also clearly describes the research context and assumptions, thus making transferability possible after one undertakes a sound judgement based on contextual background.

Limitations

This study is centred on Ward 13, thus it will not give a comprehensive analysis of the whole ISAL project as conducted in different provinces due to different geographical socio-economic variables. The focus of this study was limited to one ward due to logistical and financial availability. This study also focused on the ISAL in Ward 13 only, the deliberate omission other wards maintained focus of this study, but that also has its shortcomings in terms of research transferability.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research paradigm, positioning and process. The research design, methods of data collection and data analysis was discussed. The following chapter will present the research findings and the analysis thereof.

<center>**CHAPTER FIVE**</center>

<center>FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS</center>

Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of participatory trends in the ISAL project conducted in Ward 13, Gutu Masvingo Zimbabwe. Theoretically premised on the culture-centred approach (CCA) (Dutta, 2008, 2011) and participatory communication as envisaged in the Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) model (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009), this study explores how the community participated in the ISAL microfinance project implemented by Zimbabwe Community Development Association (ZCDA).

The CFPD model will be used as a schematic descriptive benchmark against which to analyse the ZCDA workshops and the different manifestations of participation and non-participation. This is supplemented via the use of the CCA approach in order to make sense of structure and agency in the project. Structure is represented by the ISAL project implementing agent ZCDA. Structure also encompasses the District Administration authority which worked closely with ZCDA in the ISAL project. Agency translates into the capacity of Ward 13 members to interact with the project implementers and their capacity to actively participate in the ISAL project. The CCA emphasises the need to listen to the grassroots stories in order to understand how they participated in the ISAL project and also how they conceptualise participation (Dutta, 2008**).**

From the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), this study solicits views and stories of Ward 13 members' participation and non-participation in the ISAL initiative. A scholarly outlook the importance of participation has been discussed in the previous chapters, and this chapter seeks to document and explain factors influencing and hindering participation and non-participation in Ward 13 Gutu, Masvingo in the Zimbabwean context. In so doing, the study is cognisant of the research participants' perception which are of importance in the culture-centred approach (Dutta, 2008, 2011).

Tracing participation in the ZCDA ISAL project

Lawrence Kincaid and Maria Figueroa's CFPD model (2009) aids this study as a benchmark upon which the ISAL workshops will be analysed in this study. First, the CFPD model emphasises the importance of a catalyst in a social change process, as highlighted in

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Figure 5.1 below. In literature it is not clear when and how an issue becomes a problem and needs to be addressed in a social change project (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). The CFPD highlights the importance and role of a catalyst, hence fills that gap in literature.

As noted in previous chapters, "participation as praxis is, after all, rarely a seamless process: rather, it constitutes a terrain of contestation, in which relations of power between different actors, each with their own 'project' shape and reshape the boundaries of action" (Cornwall, 2008:276). Using the CFPD model, the process of participation is presented and analysed as highlighted in Figure 5.1 below.

Using the CFPD model enables a step-by-step tracing participation, its forms and investigate self and forced exclusion in the project as presented in Figure 5.1 below. This therefore allows what Andrea Cornwall (2008:281) calls, "clarity through specificity", which ultimately adds value to the study by "spelling out what exactly people are being enjoined to participate in, for what purpose, who is involved and who is absent" (Cornwall, 2008:281).

ZCDA is the catalyst, as it also identified the problem of lack of lending and savings for rural communities, thus a need for a self-sustainable micro-finance institutions for rural communities. ZCDA worked closely with the Gutu District administrator, local leaders and the community members as key stakeholders identified in the ISAL project. Workshops were run in Ward 13 and it was during these workshops that ZCDA clarified perceptions pertaining their role and the expectations of the community members. Most community members thought ZCDA would give financial aid when they were invited to participate in the workshops. After a series of workshops spearheaded by ZCDA in Ward 13, the community members who shared interests self-selected themselves into groups of not more than ten and started their microfinance internal savings and lending.

In these groups the members drafted their constitutions which encompassed their visions, objectives, action plan and set leadership structures as well as the roles assigned to the members. Their constitutions were stamped and signed by Zimbabwe Republic Police authority for legal protection. This marked the start of the internal savings and lending as a way to mobilise resources; this was done in their respective groups and ultimately after a period of one year, ZCDA conducted an evaluation exercise. Following the evaluation exercise the ISAL groups conducted their self-funded graduation ceremony and the success stories recorded indicated improved individual and societal development. Tracing the participatory trends in the ISAL project, Figure 5.1 highlights the schematic overview

of the participation of Ward 13 members in the ISAL project. In this study not all steps from the CFPD will be discussed because one of the main research objectives is to establish reasons for participation and non-participation. More so, the ISAL groups operated independently, thus accounting for every phase of the CFPD model would bring diverging responses. This therefore highlights why much of the analysis in this study is centred on the following phases of the CFPD model:

- Catalyst
- Recognition of a Problem
- Identification and Involvement of leader and Stakeholders
- Expression of Individual and Shared Interest
- Convergence and Divergence

In tracing participation in the ZCDA ISAL project, community dialogue played a vital role. Through it discussions on socio dynamics influencing participation were conducted. Community dialogues allowed the data to emerge on various aspects as highlighted above.

Identifying Catalyst
ZCDA identified the need for a project that would run without external funding

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Recognition of a problem
The need for Loans identified by ZCDA

Identification & Involvement of leaders and stakeholders
District admin + Ward leaders + Ward 13 members

Clarrification of perceptions
Done in the ISAL workshops by ZCDA

Expression of Individual & Shared Interest
done by ISAL members in their respective groups

Vision of the Future
Each ISAL group had its own vision

Disagreements — conflict-dissatifaction

Action Plan
Internal Savings & Loans/ week or Month as per group

Consensus for Action
Group specific according to their Constitution

Options for Action
Group Specific *IGA etc

Setting Objectives
Objectives Set in Groups

Assessment of current status
Done in Respective ISAL Groups

COLLECTIVE ACTION

Assignment of Responsibilities
Group Leadership set

Mobilisation of Resources
Through income generating activities

Implementation
weekly / monthly meetings as per set dates

Outcome
*Group Cohesion *Access to Loans *IGAs

Evaluations
Participatory Group Maturity Index

Outcome vs Objectives

Value for Continual Improvement

External Constraint: Those who did not join the ISAL groups discouraged the ISAL group members

External Support: ZCDA provided training and workshop material for the participants, more so monitored the ISAL group progress.

INDIVIDUAL CHANGE
> Increased Income
> Self Reliance
> Increased accountability
> Improved Decision making
> Improved societal status

SOCIAL CHANGE
> Group cohesion
> Income generating Activities
> Infrastrusture development
> Collective efficacy
> Elevated society

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Figure 5.1 CFPD model from Kincaid and Figueroa (2009), adapted by author

Catalyst

In the CFPD, model the catalyst represents something that triggers community dialogue, which ultimately may lead to collective activity (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). In this study the catalyst is ZCDA. The CFPD model acknowledges the importance of external organisations in starting dialogue in participatory development (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). When the community members who participated in the FGDs were asked about the role of the catalyst in the ISAL project, the FGD participants agreed that ZCDA acted as the catalyst of the ISAL project. Respondent number 4 (FGD no. 1, 23 July 2014) stated; "ZCDA brought the ISAL project to us in Ward 13 and we were invited to participate in the workshops that ZCDA conducted at the local primary school".

More so, ZCDA monitoring and evaluations (M&E) officer, Mr Kanda reiterated that, "ZCDA introduced the ISAL in Gutu" (Kanda, key informant interview, 11 August 2014). Furthermore, ZCDA Programme Manager, Ms Felida Nkoma (Nkoma, key informant interview, 4 August 2014), highlights that:

> [the] way it was designed was to be the backbone of the PRP program which was going on for four years; we needed to have and exit strategy for all communities which were participating in the project (water and sanitation)…we looked at various exit strategies because it had to be sustainable meaning that even if the organisation left, the community had to carry on doing whatever it is, whatever it is in terms of the project or even adding on in terms of activities.

ZCDA is the catalyst and the organisation identified the problems of dependency and lack of access to credit and saving facilities, and they rolled out the microfinance ISAL project in Gutu Ward 13 as a way to curb the identified problems. The agriculture extension officer confirmed the programme manager's sentiments when he said that "[t]he intention was to try to make these people work on their own and to do things on their own [pause] and it's like giving them a rod to fish not the fish to eat (Mudhefe, key informant interview, 4 August 2014).

ZCDA aimed to foster sustainability and increase household income. This explains why they chose an intervention which would work for the community with minimal supervision as it was also part of their exit strategy after years working in the community doing other Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) projects. The work of the catalyst is mostly in opening up a dialogical process which begins with a recognition of the problem.

Recognition of a problem

As a result of the work of the catalyst trigger effect, community members engage in dialogue and can be aware of a problem in the community (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). According to Paulo Freire (1970), the people should own their problem before social change should be triggered and this leads to owning the solutions, and ultimately leading to sustainability. It can be argued that by excluding the community members in the initial stages of project identification, ZCDA denied the local members a chance to harness the programme from the start. This is so because the success of social change initiatives lies in them being in sync with the social-cultural beliefs of a community (Airhihenbuwa, 1995, Dutta 2008,

2011). The decision to not engage with the community regarding the introduction of the social change project, could affect their participation in the latter implementation stages of the project cycle (Dutta, 2008, 2011). However, this aspect is highlighted in the CFPD model. The lack of community involvement at the initial stages does not necessarily have to be viewed as outright exclusion, as ZCDA alerted the community to the problem, and offered a solution. Lawrence Kincaid and Maria Figueroa (2009) opines that as a result of the work of the catalyst, the local community members can become aware of the existence of a problem within their community.

There was no participation of the community in the initial stage of the project design, as the ISAL methodology was designed without any local input. From a CCA point of view (Dutta, 2008, 2011), the lack of participation of the grassroots community in the project design leads to projects that are not culturally embedded in the local culture. This poses a serious threat to ownership; on an individual and community level, Ward 13 community members were denied the chance and opportunity to own participation in the ISAL project. Thus, according to social change literature, this lack of participation can be noted as failure of ZCDA to augment the local voice in the project design (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001).

The detachment of the local members in the project development is evident by the fact that the local Ward 13 members were invited to participate at a later stage of the project cycle. Andrea Cornwall (2002) argues that community members should invent participation, and that this happens when their agency is enacted through active interaction with the structure during the initial stages of project design from a CCA point of view. Invited participation can be the cause of many community members' self-exclusion in the ISAL project at a later stage because they did not own the project. Faranak Miraftab (2004:1) opines that "[i]nvented spaces are those, also occupied by the grassroots and claimed by their collective action, but directly confronting the authorities and the status quo". When the community members are engaged in the project planning stage, ideally they will have power to challenge the status quo and resist dominant power relations.

In FGD one participant notes that "We were *invited* to participate at the workshops that ZCDA conducted at the local primary school" (Participant 4, FGD 1, 23 July 2014) .When community members are invited to participate, they may at a later stage draw back and choose not to continue participation as they do not own the means, unlike when they invent participation. When asked about the role of the community members Participant 7

(FGD 2, 23 July 2014) reiterated that; "[we] accepted and adopted the project". In FGD 1 (23 July 2014) the participants in unison responded that the community role was to "accept the project". "ZCDA brought the ISAL project and we accepted, and they weaned us and we continued with the knowledge and expertise we got from them" (Participant 9, FGD 2, 23 July 2014). The lack of participation of the local community members at the project development stages typifies pseudo-participation. This does not empower the community members to challenge the dominant power relations as their stories and voices are not included in the project design. During this form of participation the community members are simply told how the project was programmed for them, and how it will be managed by those in power. Thus, power is not moving from those who have it, to those who do not. Freire (1970) argues that this does not conscientise the community, and as such, the oppressive relationship between those with the means and those without is fostered by this pseudo- participation.

Participatory development places value in the local people from the formative stages of any project design. Thus, the structure (ZCDA) does not enact agency in the community members, because the local voices were not considered in the project design. However, non-participation in the initial stages of the project design can also be attributed to the fact that most local NGO budgets are not flexible enough to implement project designing with the local community members. The programme manager of ZCDA, Felida Nkoma, notes that;

> The low participation [during project design] is not because of the communities themselves but because of the time and the cost of doing the assessment, that's why we cannot reach out to a lot of community members, so this is why there is low participation (key informant interview, 4 August 2014).

ZCDA identified the need for an increase in household income as well as a project that would facilitate their exit after their Water, Sanitation and Hygiene project which they implemented in the ward. The community leaders were involved in the initial briefing of the project, however the project methodology was solely designed by ZCDA. Following the leaders debriefing, ZCDA facilitated the ISAL training workshops. Although community members had the voice and were to choose their own objectives per group, ZCDA encouraged the community members to adopt Water Sanitation and hygiene (WASH) objectives in their groups. ZCDA only provided aid in the form of knowledge resource on savings, loans appraisal, leadership and good governance. However, after the community becomes aware of

a problem, there comes the need to engage opinion leaders and the relevant stakeholders so that they assume responsibility to fight the problem.

Identification of Leaders and Stakeholders

In the CFPD model, the stakeholders are the community members who are most affected by the problem (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). In this study, the researcher further asked the participants to highlight 'risky' areas in terms of participation – those areas where people participate less and were at risk of falling out of community activities; the researcher asked the FGD participants whether there are areas or villages that participated differently from others. Participant 8 (FGD no. 1, 23 July 2014) responded, "People who stay at the centre participate more than those who stay in the surrounding areas". This exposed the relationship between the 'centre' and the 'other' (Said, 1978). Participant 7 (FGD no. 1, 23 July 2014) reiterated that, "We can safely say that the people from Gomba centre participate more than others".

Historically, Gomba has been privileged by a lot of infrastructure, contributing to the growth of the ward; this phenomenon was brought out during the community mapping exercise as highlighted below in Figure 5.2 below. The researcher asked the FGD participants to draw a map of the wards and highlight the infrastructure demographics in the ward. Community mapping helped develop a clearer picture of the ward's boundaries and kept the researcher and the participants focused on Ward 13; this focus was important because ZCDA conducted the ISAL project in other Wards in Gutu.   Ward 13 is subdivided into Five VIDCOs[24], and Gomba falls in VIDCO. VIDCO Five has been high in project uptake as compared to the other VIDCOs in the Ward. Participant 7 (FGD no. 1 23 July 2014) notes that:

> This centre became the hub of all activities following its central location. Long ago there used to stay the Gomba family here [pointing at the ward centre] and the name of this centre became known as Gomba centre. So when they wanted to construct a clinic in Ward 13, the community members in the ward said we cannot construct it anywhere else other than at Gomba because it's the centre of the ward so being the centre of the ward, it is accessible to everyone.

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[24] Ward 13 is subdivided into six village development committees (VIDCOs)

Figure 5.2: Ward 13 Map; Drawing by FGD participants (FGD no. 1 participants, 23 July 2014)

In FGD 2, when the participants were asked to define participation, one lady replied that: "Where we are is called Gomba and Gomba is the place where people meet to participate in all the activities and projects" (Participant1, FGD no. 2, 23 July 2014). Participation is influenced by Gomba's accessibility and central location in the ward.

Gomba is the ward centre, and has become synonymous with human activities and development in the ward, thus the close proximity of VIDCO 5 community members has influenced their active participation in the ISAL project. Community members in VIDCO Five participated more than other members in other parts and because of that they have benefited more than those at the 'margins'. Gomba VIDCO 5 is geographically central in Ward 13, however there is need to include people from the margins to participate in their developmental activities. This is so because participation is power (Arnstein, 1969) and there should be equity of power distribution in the ward for social change initiatives to better the position of those previously excluded from participation mainstream. As discussed in chapter four (methodology), proportional pilling was used in this study to investigate the participation trends in ZCDA ISAL project. As discussed in chapter three, proportional pilling is a method used in research to allow people to express events in their community. In this study bean

seeds were used to give a proportional representation of participation trends in Ward 13. Using proportional pilling data from the research findings, the pie chart below (Fig. 5.3) highlights the participation trends per VIDCO in the ZCDA ISAL project.
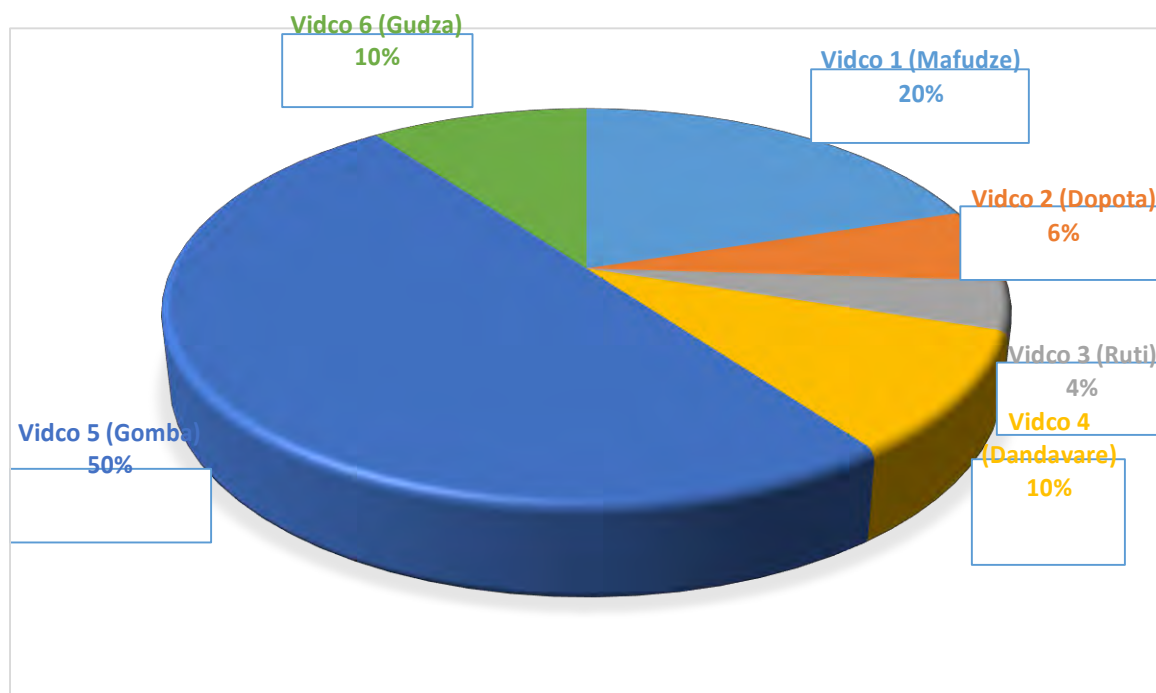

Figure 5.3 Ward 13 Participation in ZCDA ISAL Project

Although participation cannot be naively equated to numbers only, the overwhelming disparity recorded in the involvement of the Gomba VIDCO 5 over other VIDCOs typifies the lack of equity in participation, which is the distribution of power from those previously excluded, and a tip of the iceberg in the distribution of power in the ward. Thus, the people at the, margins might feel left out in the social change process. The structure in terms of the close proximity to the hub makes participation of the Gomba community members more easily attainable for them. This was highlighted by the ZCDA Programme Manager, Ms Felida Nkoma, who when asked about the target group of the ISAL reiterated that:

> Our target group was the whole community…we were working with farmers, farmers groups…these are the people who were working in the garden project, these are the people who were doing the livestock project and crop production, so it means almost the whole community because they were already in groups (Nkoma, key informant interview, 4 August 2014).

The abovementioned factor highlights how the structure contributes to the overwhelming participation of VIDCO 5, this is so because the ISAL project was open to everyone but not everyone could participate. The structure favoured those at the centre since they are the ones

who are actively involved in other projects and engaged in other groups which were already in existence. For someone who was not involved in other income generating activities, participation in the ISAL project was problematic since the structure did not provide alternate mechanisms to rope in those previously excluded in other projects and groups. The lack of equity in power sharing and distribution was also noted during the FGD. The researcher conducted the FGDs close to the Ward centre and the same people involved in the garden and ISAL project were also those who were digging a pond for a fish farming project. This highlights the structural marginalisation of those at the periphery (Dutta, 2008, 2011).

In the key informant interview, the programme manager also stressed that the ISAL methodology followed the criteria of member self-selection. Ideally, this aids in the project by making those with shared interests work together, but without a mechanism to include the poor who are termed 'risky borrowers', this serves no purpose but to further alienate them from social change. This stresses reasons behind the non-participation and self-exclusion of the poor and those previously excluded in other groups. Thus, those previously included in other projects, 'the centre', found it easy to participate than those previously excluded, 'the margins'. The majority of the ISAL participants are members of the garden groups in the Ward.

Participant 11 (FGD no. 1, 23 July 2014) notes that, "[they] have a strong bond as garden group members". Notably, this garden group is also in VIDCO 5. Thus, the lack of participation from the stakeholders at the margins might also be attributed to the 'centralised centre' created and maintained by developmental organisations, who, in their bid to attain their set goals, work with those already actively involved, whilst neglecting those at the margins. This typifies the relationship between the centre and the margin (Said, 1978) and how participation is used by social change agents to reach their developmental targets but without it serving the equity in the distribution of power. The centre, in most cases, presents itself as having knowledge over the other (Spivak, 1995)

The focus group discussions attempted to uncover why those stakeholders at the margins of the ward did not participate in the ZCDA ISAL project. The researcher went further to inquire if they knew about the project and if they were invited. Varying responses were given and one of the response that was intriguing was from Participant 4 (FGD no. 1, 23 July 2014):

In relation to you NGO's [pointing at the FGD leader] when you came what brought you was the community gardening, meaning that you looked at a place where you could find people together [pause] again when Oxfam came, they looked at a place where they could find many people in a single place, so they came here at the garden [pointing at the community garden close to Gomba Centre]. So they (NGOs) realised that the garden was a place to start projects that flourish. So I feel that the dam close attracts such projects.

In line with the above another captivating response came from Participant 3 (FGD no. 2, 23 July 2014):

These projects are brought to where people are gathered. Many organisations come here at the centre, we accept the projects and are diligent. The same way you have come here with your research.

This highlights how the centre becomes further centralised, and how other stakeholders at the margins are excluded and the reason they did not participate in social change projects. The structure is created and maintained by the social change agents that facilitate participation in the centre. In as much as the targeting criteria was said to be all encompassing, the centre had an upper hand than the margins. Arguably, if participation was influenced by the dam and natural resources alone, VIDCO 3, Ruti, would record high levels of involvement since there is a larger dam there. The monitoring and evaluations officer Mr Kanda in the key informant interview (11 August 2014) also brought out how the structure facilitated the participation of certain stakeholders.

The targeting criteria was all encompassing, we were not choosy, it was targeting all men, women even boys and girls, the widowed, all social excluded groups were much welcome. We were not targeting specific group or groups of people but more important was that we wanted to make sure we build up on other projects.

As much as the ISAL was all encompassing and all were invited to participate the project, structure favoured those in the garden groups and those who were actively involved in other projects. This therefore highlights the reasons for non-participation and self-exclusion of some stakeholders.

<u>Self-exclusion</u>

Understanding how the Ward 13 conceptualised participation was essential in understanding self-exclusion in this study from a CCA perspective. Participation from the FGD findings is working together (kushanda pamwe), doing what others are doing (kuita zvinoitwa nevamwe), and physical presence (kuvepo). From the above concept of participation as per the FGD participants, participation in the ISAL project was a collective effort influenced by group cohesion.

Thus, participation from that perspective maintains social interaction, and this typifies the reason behind the involvement of the same group of people in the gardening project, fish project and the ISAL project and self-exclusion of other sectors in the ward. Participant 6 (FGD no. 1, 23 July 2014) highlights that, "[they] are the same people in the garden project and we are also the same people digging that fish pond you see over there". This, draws attention to those not included and structural marginalisation contributing to self-exclusion. The structure is not including all the community members to participate in social change.

More so, participant 9 (FGD no. 2, 23 July 2014) in line with self-exclusion notes that, "ZCDA has a group of people they have been working with, that is what it is and what it has always been". That further explains reasons for non-participation and self-exclusion in the ISAL project as some community members felt that they did not belong with those who participates. In FGD no. 1 (23 July 2014) participant 2 notes that; "[she] attended the ISAL training workshops from the first day, but my major challenge was that I do not have the capacity to be part of the ISAL group…I am a single mother and I cannot handle that savings projects when I barely have food to eat on a daily basis". This highlights another key reason for self-exclusion and non-participation, despite having undergone the training, participant no. 2 self-excludes herself because of poverty.

The findings from the study also highlight that there are different interest groups in Ward 13, which form some communities within the Ward 13 at large. Some of the interest groups mentioned during the FGD are gardeners, fishers, traders and the business people. Of the interest groups mentioned, the gardening groups comprised the highest numbers in the ISAL project. ZCDA has been working with the gardening groups before the introduction of the ISAL project, which possibly highlights the reason behind their high participation in the later project. Thus, the structure failure (ZCDA and other NGO's) to include all sectors is

reason behind the self-exclusion of other interest groups. Therefore, ZCDA should foster ways which are all inclusive, when launching new projects to curb self-exclusion.

From the FGD findings participation is viewed as a collective idea; it is influenced by group cohesion. Therefore, there is need for the creation of discursive spaces among all the interest groups in Ward 13 to improve participation trends. The assumption would be that the garden group members participated because they had the cash returns from the selling of their garden produce; this notion is debunked by the idea that the fishers in the eastern part of the Ward (Ruti) did not participate, despite the fact that they thrive on fish selling which makes them better equipped for a savings project.

From the findings, interest groups in Ward 13 make a collective decision to participate. There is a tendency of structural marginalisation; social change agents over a period of time work with certain groups such as the garden group to get comfortable working with the same group of people, which to them becomes easy to access. Thus, the ISAL project has been deemed as a project for the garden group, and though the project was open to everyone, the structure did not support the inclusion of all interest groups in the ward.

CCA questions the dominant ideology, especially if the interest of those wielding power are favoured in a social system (Dutta, 2008). The self-exclusion of the peripheral members and interest groups are notably exercising their agency as they strive to protect their social-cultural interests, such as fishing in this context. A transect walk across the ward highlighted that those geographically living away from the ward centre score less on the socio-economic scale as compared to those who stay close to the centre. Despite being invited to participate and the ISAL being open to all, there was low participation from those on the outskirts of the ward, possibly due to the fact that they have immediate primary needs such as food needs. Needs priorities are a reason which made other stakeholders in the ward not to participate in a savings and lending project.

The ISAL methodology ensured that the local members contributed wholly to their savings, without any form of aid from the implementing agent; some members might have withdrawn their participation due to extreme poverty and failure to raise funds for savings. Participant 7 (FGD no. 1, 23 July 2014) said that "There has always been a huge difference from the households which participated and those who did not participate, even if we are to go with you to our homesteads you will see that we are different."

Dialogue with those sectors who self-excluded themselves from the project is essential, as it aids their future uptake of social change agents. There is need for a structure that supports the participation of all sectors. The inclusion of everyone in a social change project is not possible, however the sharp contrast in the participation of other sectors in the ISAL project highlights the shortcoming of a structure which does not support the inclusion of every sector. Participation of all sectors aids the agency of the people, which, according to the CCA is the "capacity of human beings to interact with structures in order to create meanings; such meanings provide scripts for interacting with structures, for sustaining these structures, and for transforming them" (Dutta 2008:61)

Participation of community members in social change interventions is important (Laverack, 2004). From a CCA perspective the conscious self-exclusion can be viewed as an act of exercising agency against a structure that does not support the cultural identity of the people. Participation of the grassroots community members in all stages of a programme is of great importance, as it makes programmes to be culturally appropriate. Thus, a structure which encourages free participation of all members enacts agency and adds in the creation of discursive spaces. More so, such a structure is cognisant of the importance of augmenting the grassroots members' interests in programming.

Individual and shared interest

It is of uttermost importance that all the affected members get a chance to express their views and needs (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter after a series of workshops conducted by ZCDA in Ward 13, the community members who shared interests self-selected themselves into groups of not more than ten members and started their microfinance internal savings and lending. The participants collectively devised their vision and the supporting objectives. As expressly noted in CFPD model, and literature, is that community projects should be aware of the involvement of community members that are disadvantaged in the community (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009).

Figure 5.4 below highlights the different ISAL outcomes as per the shared group interests. One group had an interest in retailing and from their savings proceeds, they procured cement and building material and constructed a retail shop and have since embarked in retailing as a group, whilst other groups, with their first year's savings, bought blankets, cooking utensils and many other household appliances as per their group interest and their set vision and goals. ZCDA recognised the need for the community members to express their

interests and dovetail the microfinance institutions to their cultural and socio-economic needs.

Working in groups of people with shared interests ideally aids in augmenting the local voice in the project, it also enabled the full participation of community members when they were working in groups. The ISAL project was cognisant of individual community member's needs, as the ISAL groups could lend money for their individual needs. From the research findings, the gender imbalance in the ISAL participants highlighted a trend of participation in the project. Figure 5.4 is highlights a high involvement of women compared to men in the ISAL project and is representative of the participation trend of men and women in the ISAL project.

Figure 5.4 Depicting four ISAL groups in Ward 13 Gutu and their respective shared group interests

Gender and Participation

In the key informant interview, both Ms Felida Nkoma, the programme manager of ZCDA, and Mr Kanda, the M&E officer, notes that the ISAL project in Gutu Ward 13 was open to both men and women in terms of the project target criteria, however women were more greatly involved than men in the project. In an interview the ZCDA M&E officer Mr Kanda (key informant interview, 11 August 2014) notes that "the challenge was that it [ISAL] was

construed by the community as a project for women, although in all mobilisation issues and targeting we encompassed all men and women in Ward 13".

The researcher used proportional pilling in order to account for the disparities in the participation of women and men in the ISAL. In this study, bean seeds were used to represent proportionally the people who participated in the project. After a lengthy deliberation amongst the FGD participants agreed that 1 bean seed represented men's participation and nine represented women's. Therefore using that data, the average percentage of men and women's participation was ten percent and ninety percent respectively. As highlighted in the literature, participation should not be naively equated to numbers, however the high disparity between men and women's involvement could not be ignored in this study as this highlights the participation dynamics in Ward 13 Gutu. In the FGDs the community members highlighted that the disparity was quite normal and representative of the participation trends in other projects as highlighted in Figure 5.5 below.
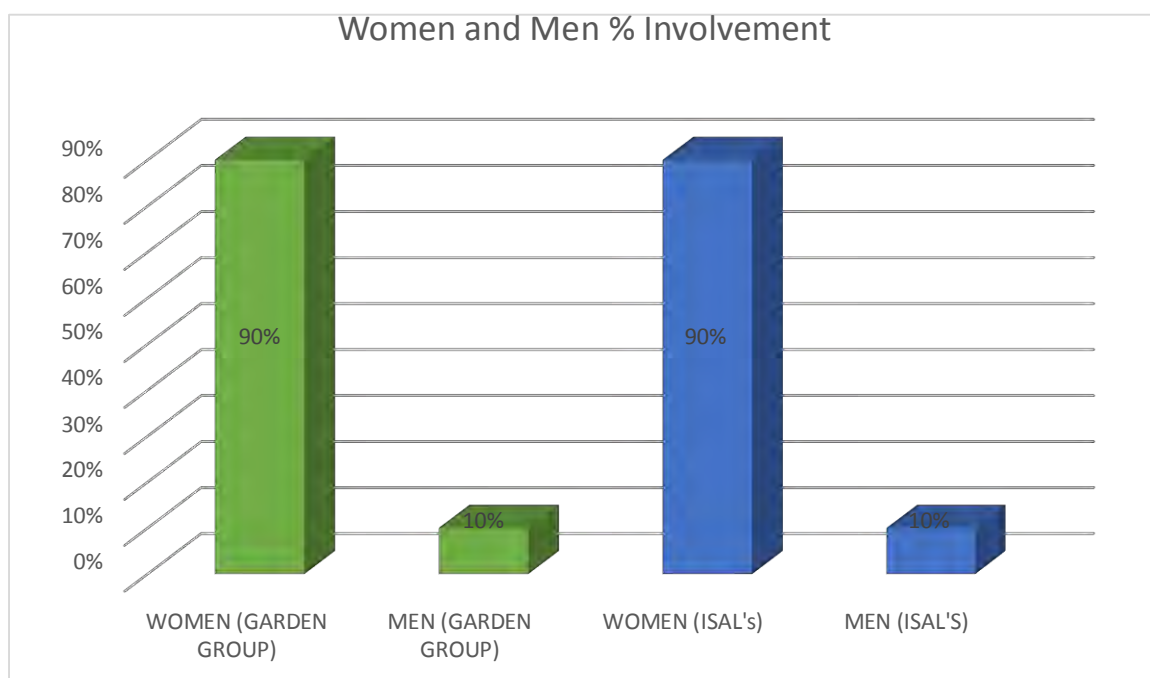
Figure 5.5 Highlighting the Involvement of men and women in the ISAL project and gardening project

The FGD also confirmed that women participate more than men in Ward 13 Gutu. When the researcher posed a question about the background and history of the ward, participant 3, a woman responds, "Mr Bhutisi (not real name) should respond to that question since [he] knows much about this ward" and Mr Bhutisi replies "have all the women fail[ed] to answer that?" Ultimately he answers the question but this kind of approach to participation of men in

the FGD replicated the same level of their involvement in social change projects as highlighted in Figure 5.5 above, as men in both FGDs were withdrawn and most of the invited men did not attend the FGD. Ms Felida Nkoma (key informant interview, 4 August 2014) notes that, "men have high objectives" and participate in what they deem women have failed to achieve as hinted by above.

In attesting the factors influencing participation, the researcher probed the role of men and women in the ISAL project. The ZCDA programme manager notes that:

> We had two groups of men because the ISAL were anchored on water and sanitation…but the two had big business ideas and that is the difference between men and women, men have higher objectives while women have practical objectives; men go for the higher objectives and they achieve them. With men it is an issue that society has constructed it (Key informant interview, 4 August 2014).

The above notion highlights that the project was designed by ZCDA for the community to suit their WASH project objectives. ZCDA introduced the ISAL project as their exit strategy following their Protracted Relief Programme (PRP), the Water Sanitation and Hygiene project. Ward 13 is a typical rural setup, and gender roles are highly considered; the water, sanitation and hygiene aspects at home are regarded as women's duties, in both FGDs the phrase 'musha mukadzi' (The home is the woman), was echoed. Thus indicating that the project methodology being rooted in water, sanitation and hygiene influenced a higher participation of women from Ward 13 cultural perspective. The Agriculture Extension worker, who works and is stationed in Ward 13 reiterated that;

> In Zimbabwean setup, usually the home or any other problem that is at home, is associated with women…it is the woman at home who should see that the kids are going to school, what the family has eaten, it is again the woman who should see that the children are dressed so you find that all these tasks are for women. This is why they would participate more than men to improve their livelihood (key informant Interview, 14 September 2014)

This dovetailing of the WASH project might have prevented men from participation in the ISAL project. Because the groups' initial vision was anchored on improved water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and household renovations, culturally, men were excluded from this. This highlights that gender roles influence participation of men and women. This also brings the need to include all the community members in the project design process, because the

PRP water sanitation and hygiene project might have prevented men from participating in a microfinance due to the water sanitation and hygiene background ZCDA had, working in the Ward.

Figure 5.6 Mrs Machapa posing for a picture in front of her Blair Ventilated Improved Latrine (BVIP) constructed with proceeds from the ISAL savings

As highlighted in the literature, there are other reasons for self-exclusion and lack of participation such as timing and other productive activities. The researcher asked the FGD participants to account for time usage in a day by both men and women in Ward 13. Table 5.1 below highlights the average time usage per day by men and women respectively, as per the findings from both FGDs.

MEN		WOMEN	
7am	Wake up and ask for breakfast	4am	Wake up and cleaning the house
	Listening to the radio	5am	Prepare the kids for school
12pm	At the centre with friends drinking beer	6am	Preparing breakfast
2pm	Having Lunch at home	8am	Fetching water/firewood
	Drinking beer with friends	12pm	Preparing lunch
8pm	Supper at home	4pm	Watering the garden
		6pm	Preparing supper

Table 5.1 Average Time usage by men and women per day

The table highlights that women have more roles to perform than men in Ward 13, despite being active participants in social change activities. Thus, this hints at the fact that participation in the ISAL was deemed by men as one of the gender roles for women. When asked why men did not participate in the ISAL despite having more free time, participant 2 (FGD no.1, 23 July 2014) responds that, "If I don't work hard enough the family will collapse".

Proactivity, therefore, is a contributing factor to participation; the ISAL methodology did not accord the participants cash hand-outs thus, there was need for proactive engagement in the groups for the success of the group. This factor might have contributed to the self- exclusion of some sectors who want freebies and hand-outs, as noted by the high turnover of participants during the first day of the workshop and a decline in numbers after the ISAL methodology was laid bare and perceptions were clarified during the workshop.

Action plan/Consensus for action

The more a community actively participates and perceives the proposed project as theirs, the more likely that they will be to take action. The more the community members are involved, the higher their empowerment is, along with a sense of collective self-efficacy that the community will develop (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). The major action plan for all the groups was conducting a self-funded savings and lending microfinance fund, and supporting it by income generating activities such as retailing, poultry, piggery and pottery. All the formed groups registered themselves in ZCDA database which was used for the basis of evaluations and to provide further expertise when deemed necessary. Without external funds and the minimal external interference, the growth of the microfinance groups was heavily depended on the active participation of the members. At this stage the ISAL participants recorded a higher degree of participation

The ISAL methodology facilitated the active participation of the members due to the fact that there was minimal involvement of those not in the groups and less external support. The programme manager noted that, *"the highest participation was recorded in the implementation stage followed by the monitoring and evaluation stage"* (key informant interview, 4 August 2014). The AEO further stresses that "there was very high overwhelming participation during the implementation stage" (Key informant interview, 14 September 2014). From the research findings, it can be noted that pro-active community members may participate more when there is less external influence. From a culture-centred perspective this can be attributed to the fact that local people know their lived experience, hence external agents should learn from them. More so, this typifies the essence of genuine participation without the overarching 'all-knowing' hand of external agents. Spivak's assertion that, "if the subaltern could speak then they would not remain a subaltern" (Spivak, 1988) is applied in this situation: if the poor sectors are allowed to freely participate they will not remain poor.

Working in smaller groups created and maintained cohesion and encouraged active participation of the group members which were involved in different IGAs and savings methods. Some groups collapsed but the majority of the microfinance groups stood the test of time and scored high on the group maturity index, a self-evaluation process which was facilitated by ZCDA. Dialogue was essential in this project from the onset, mostly due to the fact that the group members were encouraged to participate in the whole process, from their leadership, creating their constitution and coming up with all the ground rules.

Convergence and Divergence

In the CFPD model, convergence is a key term as it represents communication in social change as a horizontal process of sharing information between participants that leads to social outcomes (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). This therefore does not always mean consensus but the progression and the flow of the social change process when there is effective dialogue (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). Divergence relates to the formation of subgroups within a local culture thus, the existence of subgroups in a community typifies the process of convergence within the respective subgroups and divergence between the subgroups in the community (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). The greater existence of subgroups in a community means there might be less social cohesion, and this may negatively affect a community's participation. The boundaries that separate the subgroups in a community highlights who is included and excluded in a social change process.

From the research findings it was noted that there are communities within the Ward 13 community. The way the groups within Ward 13 relate influenced their participation in the ISAL project. Thus, participation in the ISAL project was influenced by their way of lives and how the groups converge. According to the French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), social cohesion is the glue that binds society; in the CCA, social cohesion is viewed as social capital (Dutta, 2008). In this study the Agriculture Extension Worker (AEW) (key informant interview, 14 September 2014) was interviewed and he notes that;

> The way of life influences participation mostly because from our Zimbabwean culture; usually when you have some problems and even during the merry times, people usually come together for example during a funeral. If it's a funeral, it's a funeral for everyone. So in that way group cohesion is edified by living and working together. This also helped them to work together in the ISAL groups because they were used to being together and because of group cohesion people participated well.

Group social cohesion also positively influenced the groups who participated in the ISAL project this is reiterated by participant 8 (FGD 2, 23 July 2014), "It was easy to participate in the ISAL project because we have been together for a very long time and we know each other". Ms Nkoma the programme manager (key informant interview, 4 August 2014) notes that, "those who participated in the ISAL project participated very well, due to the fact that they had the culture of working together in their garden and health club groups". The CFPD is cognisant of the fact that over time, convergence a group of people enter into a state of uniformity or what can be termed 'local culture' (Kincaid, 1998, 1993). This further stresses that the way people participate in social change initiatives is influenced by the way they relate as a community or a small group. This, therefore, highlights the need to foster community centeredness in project planning, implementation and evaluation in order to foster cohesion and the betterment of participation in social change initiatives.

The M&E officer (Kanda, key informant, 11 August 2014) notes that, "the way the community participated was influenced by the cohesion that existed in the ward". Participant 5 (FGD 1, 23 July 2014) emphasised that, "our friendship and union started in the garden group project and developed into a deeper relationship". Participant 2 (FGD 2, 23 July 2014) furthermore stresses that, "[we] are used to being together, so for us this is our life…together forever". The nature of the project required a degree of transparency and integrity, this also influenced the participation of those groups who were working together and knew each other

well. During the course of the interview, I observed that the same people who were in the garden group were also the same people in the ISAL project and other social change projects such as the fish farming and health clubs. This is illuminated by Participant 1 (FGD no.1, 23 July 2014) who asserts that, "we have been working together and we have seen it fit to continue working together".

Furthermore, the researcher probed why the same people were in all projects. Participant 2 FGD 1 noted that they have learnt to work together, thus highlighting that participation is enhanced by working together and group cohesion. The FGD participants stressed that participation is influenced by group cohesion and unity. Participant 4 (FGD no. 2, 23 July 2014) opines that:

> People from further up in Mukandatsama[25] did not participate, because they are not united…they have their own reasons of not wanting to be part of us. Maybe they see us at the centre as the elephants of the jungle [burst into laughter].

This highlights the attitude and perception towards the group of people who participate and those who did not participate, thus the need for a structure which supports inclusion of all and the equity in the redistribution of power and resources.

Conclusion

From a culture-centred approach perspective, participation of all cultural members in social change project is essential because it allows community members to harness the power of decision making. This chapter highlighted the high project uptake of certain sectors in Ward 13. Issues about self-exclusion where also discussed highlighting, the reasons for self-exclusion. From a culture-centred perspective, cultural members should discuss with external aid organisations and authorities in order to change and formulate policies that improve participation and impact their lives. This therefore highlights the need for ongoing interaction of structure, culture and agency, as discussed in chapter three. More so, active involvement of all interest groups in dialogue during a social change programme allows for knowledge co-creation and fosters meaning sharing. Finally, participation of all sectors promotes agency and allows for discursive spaces to be created in order to fight the erasure of the minority group's voice.

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[25] Mukandatsama is a village in Ward 13 Gutu, it is located at the eastern margin of the Ward.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study investigated the participation of Gutu Ward 13 community members in the Zimbabwe Community Development Association (ZCDA) Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) project. The forms of participation, self-exclusion and non-participation thereof were highlighted. This study is framed within the principles of participatory communication and the culture centred approach (Dutta, 2008; 2011). The Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD) model was employed as a benchmark upon which the participation in the ZCDA ISAL microfinance project was analysed. Theoretically anchored on the culture- centred approach (Dutta, 2008; 2011), the centrality and interaction of culture, structure and agency was of importance in understanding the dynamics of participation.

A culture-centred approach emphasised the need for investigation into the intricate societal structure that provided the context which enabled or disabled participation in the ZCDA ISAL project. As highlighted in chapter three, culture is the communicative process upon which meaning, beliefs and practises get produced (Geertz, 1994). Structure represents material realities that are defined by institutions, such as ZCDA, which may privilege certain sectors and marginalise other sectors (Dutta, 2008, 2011). Agency relates to the capacity of cultural members to make their choices that influence social change (Dutta, 2008).

This research listened to and augmented the voices of Ward 13 community members in a bid to write from below using a participatory framework. This is so because social change projects should be cognisant of the local people's cultural frameworks (Airhihenbuwa, 1995; Dutta, 2008; 2011). This chapter provides a detailed summary of the research findings, conclusions reached, and provides recommendations on participation in similar social change projects. The CFPD model emphasises the key role played by a catalyst in a social change process. In this study ZCDA is the catalyst. As highlighted in chapter two, participation is not a seamless process, and it constitutes a terrain of contestation in which power relations come into play (Arnstein, 1969; Cornwall, 2008). The CFPD model presented a schematic step by step means of analysis into the participation of Ward 13 cultural members in the ISAL project, as briefly summarised below.

Summarising Research Findings and Implications to Study Objectives

This chapter summarises the research findings. This will be done by summarising the research findings in line with the research questions and objectives as highlighted in chapter one of this study.

Nature of participation and non-participation

The research findings highlight that there was non-participation of the community members in the project formation stage. The Ward 13 community members were excluded during the project formulation stage. From a culture-centred perspective, excluding the local members highlights a lack of people-centeredness during the social change project (Dutta, 2008; 2011). As highlighted in chapter five, this denied the local members a chance to harness the social change process from the start. However the lack of involvement of community members at the beginning of the project cycle cannot be viewed as outright exclusion, as ZCDA brought to the community's attention the problem. The work of the catalyst can alert the community members to an existing problem in the community, and propose a solution (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009).

Inclusion of some local opinion leaders such as the village head and the community leadership during this stage embeds the social change project in the local culture. Participatory development values the inclusion of local community members during the project formative stages. High citizen control was recorded during the project implementation stage. However, the notion of total citizen control is debatable, as community members should have a degree of control over a social change project (Arnstein, 1969). Minimal interference from the ZCDA gave the local members a chance to exercise their agency, thus, this stage recorded a high level of participation.

The ISAL groups recorded the highest level of participation when they work independently in their groups. This is exemplified by the groups' remarkable growth due to collective action and because of that most of the groups reached their goals, as witnessed during the ISAL graduation ceremony which the ISAL groups in Ward 13 planned. The ISAL groups scored high, according to ZCDA Group Maturity Index[26] (GMI). The participating groups had well-articulated visions and a legally binding framework in the form of a self-

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[26] GMI is an evaluations tool designed by Zimbabwe Community Development Association (ZCDA) to measure the growth of the Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) groups

drafted constitution which protected the members' savings from bad debtors as collateral measures were included in the constitutions.

ZCDA only provided trainings and the community members implemented the project. This emphasises that the grassroots members facilitated their social change agenda effectively, when given the capacity. This also typifies the empowering process of participation or what is termed genuine participation (Kinyashi, 2006; Bessette, 2004): one which accords power to those previously denied power. To present day, the existence of a shop and ISAL groups almost maturing to village banks in Gutu Ward 13, highlights the true value of participation in social change projects. Mohan Dutta (2011:88) postulates that:

> Essential to the dialogue stance of the culture-centred approach is the emphasis on understanding the agency of subaltern participants in local communities across the globe as they challenge the inequitable structures, work within them, and aspire to find avenues of living in their daily negotiation of these structures.

This also verifies the importance of a project that provides structure and training to address a community problem, but that allows community members the agency to operate almost autonomously within it once the project becomes operational. This also highlights the need to investigate the enabling and disabling factors to participation in social change projects. Key enabling factor to participation was group cohesion, this is also noted in literature (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009; Dutta, 2008; 2011). Disabling factors to participation were noted as being; structural marginalisation and poverty.

Factors influencing participation trends in the ZCDA ISAL project

In the CFPD model, the project beneficiaries are members most affected by the problem. More so, the culture-centred approach prioritises the inclusion of all grassroots sectors. From the research findings, VIDCO 5 members participated more than other members in Ward 13. VIDCO 5 is the ward centre and its immediate surroundings. The centre is a hive of many income generating activities (IGAs) as highlighted in chapter five. More so, due to accessibility factors and out of convenience, the people living close to the centre have access to participation in social change projects. This trend in participation highlighted a divergence (Kincaid & Figueroa, 2009) between the people of VIDCO 5 and those at the margins. Divergence typifies the formation of factions or subgroups within a community and this reduces the capacity of a community at large to solve mutual problems through collective action (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009).

Convergence does not mean agreement but typifies a positive direction of movement (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). Social cohesion facilitates the convergence of the ISAL participating group members, which comprised mainly those living at the centre. There was high mutual understanding and cooperation of VIDCO 5 members in the ISAL groups. From a culture-centred perspective this participation trend exposed structural marginalisation (Dutta, 2008, 2011). From the community-mapping exercise, the ward centre (Gomba) has been privileged by a lot of infrastructure and developmental activities. This contributes to a lot of income-generating activities happening within the proximity of the ward centre. As much as the ISAL project was open to everyone, structural imbalance favoured and facilitated the participation of those staying close to the ward centre. The simultaneous process of divergence and convergence determined those included and those excluded in the participation process (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009).

This therefore highlights the disabling factors to participation of some sectors in the ward. Due to structural marginalisation, some sectors at the margins self-excluded themselves from participating in the ISAL project. During the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) the participants listed interest groups in the ward, and out of the listed groups the gardeners scored high in their participation in the ISAL project. As highlighted by ZCDA programme manager in chapter five, the ISAL methodology was an addition to other projects which ZCDA had previously conducted in the ward. ZCDA had worked with the gardeners, thus highlighting their high participation.

In the ward, women participated more than men in the ISAL project. The high involvement of women in the ISAL project can be attributed to that fact that the project was construed as a project for women (Mr Kanda, key informant interview, 11 August 2014). This again highlights the importance of engaging the local cultural members in the project design. Arguably what geared the project towards women was the powerful water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) component in the project and the communal gender roles mentioned in chapter five. Thus, the lack of participation by men may have been caused by the failure by ZCDA to cooperate and augment the cultural perspective in the project design and clarification of perceptions during the project design (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). Ms Felida Nkoma (key informant interview, 4 August 2014), in line with that, asserts that, "men have high objectives, while women have practical household objectives". Participatory development places great importance in inclusion of all sectors in a community. The participation of everyone in a social change project is unrealistic, but the high disparity in

men and women's participation in the ISAL project highlights a lack of stakeholder inclusion, despite the fact that participation cannot be naively equated with numbers (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009).

Recommendations

This section gives recommendations for projects similar to that of the ISAL conducted by ZCDA in Gutu Ward 13. These types of projects also face challenges which make the inclusion of all members difficult and unattainable due to time limitations, and the costs for so doing. However, there is need for optimum participation of all community members in social change projects. Project planning phase should use a participatory framework, one which values the grassroots members to engender their own change. This allows for participation which is empowering. The structure is an important part of the participatory process, hence social change agents should include training and knowledge and a 'project infrastructure' to facilitate operations. More so, it is important to educate the local people about their right of participation, as participatory democracy endows people with the right to accept or deny social change projects on offer by NGOs. This therefore engenders the agency of local community members.

Areas of further research

The research was premised on the participation of Ward 13. The researcher highlights the following areas for further research. There is need for more research on the participation of men in microfinance projects. Despite microfinance institutions having been successful in mitigating poverty and giving access lending and savings facilities for rural communities (Fotabong, 2011; Kanda, 2011), the participation of men remains an Achilles heel to the success of microfinance institutions in terms of gender inclusivity. As highlighted in literature, collective action facilitates social cohesion which capacitates the agency of community members, ultimately leading to the creation of a local culture (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009). It is also important that there should be research on the supporting frameworks to participation of rural communities other than Gutu Ward 13, such as access to resources, inclusivity and people-centeredness. Notably, a study which is cross-cutting and inclusive of more than just one ward or province and the influences of their wider environment would enable such a social ecological and comprehensive understanding (McLeroy, *et al.,* 1988; Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Stokols, 1996). Furthermore, dividing a social environment into analytic levels (Brofenbrenner, 1999) that can be used to identify the

varying types of social influences particular to *each* level, may assist in developing appropriate interventions for a specific community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Zimbabwe Community Development Association
1 Salix Road Ridgeview
PO Box HR 8885
Harare
Zimbabwe
Phone: 758269 | Email: zcdainfo@gmail.com

PVO Number: PVO 30/2010

9 May 2014

Dear Clive Shembe

RE: Application to Conduct a Research on ZCDA Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) project

Thank you for showing research interest in our ISAL project as indicated in your request letter. ZCDA management wishes to inform you that they have granted you permission to conduct your research and to access all the necessary information from our staff workers and our resource library. For any inquiries don't hesitate to get in touch with the ZCDA team.

Kind Regards,

Felida Nkhoma

Programs Manager-ZCDA

09 June 2014

Mr Clive Shembe (214584115)
School of Applied Human Sciences – CCMS
Howard College Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0588/014M
Project title: Participation in the Zimbabwe Community Development Association (ZCDA) ISAL project: A development communication perspective

Dear Mr Shembe,

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application dated 02 May 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Lauren Dyll-Myklebust
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor D McCracken
Cc School Administrator: Ms Ausie Luthuli

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

Appendix 3

<u>**KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW**</u>

Participation in the Zimbabwe Community Development Association (ZCDA) ISAL project: A development communication perspective

1 Key Informant name		2 KI-Sex	1=Male 2=Female	
3 KI-Position	1=Village heard 2=Wadco chair 3=Vidco chair 4=councilor 5=RDC representive 6=ZCDA representative 7= Other			

DISCUSSION POINT	RESPONSE
With particular reference to Ward 13, what specific services are you actually involved in for or with this community	
What is the actual involvement/participation of the stakeholders in specific services that you offer to the community	
With regards to ZCDA ISAL project what can be said about the level of community participation	
What do you think are the reasons behind self-exclusion and low participation of men in the project	
In what ways did the way of life of the Ward 13 villagers influence their participation in the ISAL project	
What role does culture play in influencing participation and what was the nature of the influence during the ISAL project.	
At what stage of the project cycle is there high participation and at what stage is there low participation. Account for the variance if there	
1 Assessment	
2 Planning	
3 Implementation	
4 Monitoring and Evaluation	

Appendix 4

<u>FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE</u>

Participation in the Zimbabwe Community Development Association (ZCDA) ISAL project:
A development communication perspective.

1. Welcome
   - Introductory remarks
   Review the following:

   - Who the researcher is and what's the aim of the research.
   - What will be done with this information
   - Participant set the ground rules

2. Setting the mood for dialogue
   - Open the flow for questions that the participants may have first
   - Small talk

3. Community Mapping
   - Ask a participant to draw a rough geographical map highlighting human concentration
   - Historical Background to the settlement
   - Participants identify 'risky areas' (low participation) probing why the the people do not participate

4. Community Profiling
   - What are the socio groups found in Ward 13
   - Which group participated the most and which one participated the least in the ISAL project (Group ranking according to their participation)
   - Assessing why other groups participated more than other group
   - Ascertaining level of cultural diversity

5. Social Structure
   - What are the existing social structure in the community eg:
     - Interest Groups
     - Project Group
     - Religious sect
   - Ascertaining community membership in the social structures (proportional piling)
   - Probe and assess a 'community within a community'

6. Gender and Participation
   - Ask 2 participant (male and female)to account for time usage by women and men respectively (Discussing the time allocation with the group, if its representative of time usage by both sexes in the community)
   - Exploring gender roles
   - In what ways is socialization an enabling/disabling factor to participation
   - Discussing self-exclusion

Appendix 5

Consent for Participation in a Focus Group Discussion:

Participation in the Zimbabwe Community Development Association (ZCDA) ISAL project: A development communication perspective.

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Clive Shembe. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about factors influencing participation.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participating at any time without penalty.

2. I understand that most focus group discussions are interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.

3. The Focus Group Discussion will last approximately 60 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the group discussion and subsequent dialogue will be made.

4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this Focus Group Discussion, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.

5. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Council of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

7. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

8. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

_____   ____/____/2014

 My Signature   (Respondent)   Date

_____   ____/____/2014

Clive Shembe (Researcher)   Date

For further information Contact: Dr Lauren Dyll-Myklebust Tel: 031-2602298 Email address: dyll@ukzn.ac.za