THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Corporate Social Responsibility: Community Voices from Shurugwi, Mhondoro-Ngezi and Zvishavane in Zimbabwe

Tinashe Gumbo
Program Executive, Economic and Ecological Justice,
All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Zimbabwe

Abstract:
The main reason for the prominence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the mining sector is a result of the fact that, in general, the sector negatively affects local communities socially, economically, and environmentally. The sector is criticised by civil society, the Government, and local activists in the host areas. Hence, mining companies are forced to respond by implementing CSR programmes that address issues like education, health, environmental and infrastructural issues. Minerals are finite resources, and mining companies close operations once minerals are exhausted in a given area, leaving some potentially harmful damage to the communities in terms of the environment, animals, and social lives and livelihoods of the local people. However, the whole issue about CSR is volunteerism, where companies contribute to the social, economic, and environmental welfare of society without any mechanism to regulate their actions. Through participant observation, key informant interviews, and desk research, the paper discusses the community views with regard to CSR within the platinum mining communities in Zimbabwe. The paper attempts to link these voices to Carroll's (1979) pyramid on CSR. The general conclusion is that local communities are not concerned about the business factor of CSR. However, they feel that mining companies have an obligation to assist them from a purely social justice perspective.

Keywords: Corporate, social, responsibility, community, voices and volunteerism

1. Introduction

The world economy is increasingly becoming globalised as multinational corporations (MNCs) invest in countries where at times, there are limited regulations by State (Boerzel *et al.*, 2012). In the host countries, MNCs are expected to fulfil some CSR expectations. The concept of CSR has remained much advocated, but there has been no consensus on how the model should be defined and implemented (Kaman, 2015). A lot has been written by academics, civil society, and businesses, particularly with regard to the effects of mining on the environment and social and economic lives of the host communities. However, most academic work focuses on the business case of CSR without considering how the local communities view it. This paper thus argues that CSR is a social justice issue whose fulfilment has to be looked at from a social, economic, and environmental perspective. It discusses the various definitions offered to CSR by scholars and other stakeholders. In this paper, it is concluded that CSR is generally viewed from different perspectives by stakeholders. The study considered the platinum mining communities' views on CSR with particular reference to Shurugwi, Mhondoro-Ngezi, and Zvishavane, focusing mainly on the mining activities of Unki, Zimplats, and Mimosa, respectively. Community voices were captured and discussed with regard to the definition, regulation, impact, and nature of CSR and how it is linked to local content development and the social justice discourse. The paper further attempts to make use of community voices in validating Carroll's pyramid of CSR. The major aim of the paper is to contribute to the understanding of CSR in the mining sector, where it argues that it should be looked at mainly from a social, economic, and environmental justice perspective more than the business case.

2. Methodology

The paper used qualitative means of data collection and analysis. Existing academic work was reviewed, as well as available mining-related materials. Community activists from Shurugwi, Mhondoro-Ngezi, and Zvishavane provided critical insights on CSR through interviews. These were leaders of their respective Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), which advocate for CSR, among other issues in their areas. Three local authority officials and three traditional leaders were also interviewed from the target areas. Data collected by the author during attendance at Alternative Mining Indabas (AMIs), Parliamentary Public Meetings, and Summer School on Natural Resources Governance were also utilised. AMIs were lobby and advocacy platforms at provincial, national, and international levels conducted yearly that brought together stakeholders in the mining sector to discuss various issues that affect the extractives sector. The stakeholders included mining communities, Government officials, small-scale miners and mining companies, traditional leaders, national civil society organisations (CSOs), CBOs, individual activists, media, development partners, and others. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA), Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) have facilitated the AMIs since 2013. The platform was critical

for this paper as key informant interviews were carried out during such events, while much of the data was also collected from the stakeholders who attended through participant observation. A total of fifteen AMIs, nine engagement meetings in the three communities, two seminars on mining and local content development (LCD), and two Parliamentary Public Hearings on mining laws were attended. One summer school on mineral governance was also attended by the author. The units of analysis were the community activists, the Government, and the platinum mining companies of Mimosa (in Zvishavane), Unki (in Shurugwi), and Zimplats (in Mhondoro-Ngezi).

A cross-case analysis was applied since it was multi-site case research. The researcher looked for similar patterns among different case sites, which led to the identification of some key similarities and differences regarding the behaviours of the targeted units of analysis in the three communities. The focus was on the themes captured in the observational schedule and reflected through the interview guide. The exercise helped the researcher identify the major issues that consistently came up from all communities regarding CSR.

3. Defining Corporate Social Responsibility

Carroll (2016) attempts to trace the scholarly perspective on the initial definitions of CSR and its early conceptualisation in terms of theory and practice to the 1960s. He, however, explains that the growing perfection and use of CSR emerged later on, when the social struggles of the 1960s, which included the environmental, civil rights, and women's movements (Carroll, 2016). Dahlsrud (2006) identified and analysed thirty-seven definitions of CSR, but still, the list was not exhaustive (Carroll, 2016). Ado (2014) notes Waagstein's (2010) observation of the growth in the scholarly interest in CSR. Nevertheless, it is also indicated that, for over two decades (to 2010), the main work had been around defining the concept (Ado, 2014).

For Kercher (2006), the concept is linked to the behaviour of the private sector as to whether it is accountable to stakeholders or shareholders (Kercher, 2006). Crowther and Aras (2008) have also defined CSR as focused on what is or should be the connection among MNCs, Central Government, and local communities. European Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility (2004) is cited in Ado (2014:209) as having defined CSR as the "voluntary integration of environmental and social considerations into business operations over and above legal requirements and contractual obligations." The issue of the environment also emerges as another crucial matter in the discussion. This is because the host communities often complain about the negative environmental impacts caused by mining actions. Furthermore, the same definition shows that CSR is not enforceable as it is voluntary. Indeed, the current study established that community activists and Government officials had challenges in monitoring and enforcing the implementation of the CSR programmes in Zimbabwe due to its legal non-enforceability as there is no specific regulatory framework.

For many years, the debate on CSR has been infused into the agenda of social and economic development at the local level (Siyobi, 2015). However, academic work has failed to interrogate the real social impact of CSR on local communities. Concentration has always been in the business case of CSR. However, the local people within mining communities felt that the definition of CSR should be hinged on the social and economic impact that mining has on the environment and society.

Globally, the linkage between social obligations and business ethics is now an undisputable issue, and this has informed the debates regarding the private sector's supposed role in a given society. The concept of CSR is now being viewed in light of the need to promote development, protect the environment, and promote, protect, respect, and defend human rights. The discussion around the concept has now included other phrases like 'socially responsible investment,' 'sustainable development,' and 'corporate accountability' (Siyobi, 2015). As a result, different companies, Governments, and individuals interpret CSR differently. Hence, it has become a context-specific definition. The 'socially responsible investment' appears to be sensitive to the social needs of the local people where the economic activity will be carried out. However, the 'sustainable development' call might have been influenced by the general global call to do mining in a way that guarantees future generations' benefit. For the current researchers, the most appealing one to the local communities will be the 'corporate accountability' call which seems to give the locals the authority to demand some answers from the mining companies where certain expectations would not have been met.

According to Siyobi (2015), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) is said to have reviewed its understanding of CSR. Originally, CSR was regarded as the continued commitment by the private players to ethically behave and contribute to economic development while at the same time ensuring the improvement of living standards of the labourers and their families but also that of the host communities. However, the definition is said to have gradually changed to a business commitment to contributing towards sustainable economic development, thereby guaranteeing the improvement of the lives of the local people, including the workers and their families. The International Council on Mining and Metals also encourages its membership to ensure that they promote sustainable development which in turn is expected to promote value among the shareholders (Siyobi, 2015).

Hamann and Kapelus (2004) presented CSR as a means to increase production efficiency as they see it as an effective way of managing the environment and leading to increased production efficiency as less energy and materials would be needed leading to an increase in bottom line profits, for a given business. However, some CSOs argue that indeed the most environmentally polluting companies are the ones that are the loudest in calling for CSR. This is because they have the resources to publicise their messages that portray them as good neighbours to the host communities. Thus, most of the CSR programmes are meant to window-dress the negative impacts of the mining projects in the host communities.

Kaman (2015) examines a number of models that were developed on CSR. However, the author notes that little has been done to establish the linkages between CSR and environmental concerns. However, Kaman's (2015) analysis seems to also fall into the same trap of overemphasising certain aspects of CSR at the expense of others. The analysis is

biased towards the environment, thereby also undermining other aspects like economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic criteria (Okan, Perker, and Demirelli, 2015).

Okan *et al.* (2015) also examine the varying views held by key mining stakeholders (on CSR) - the government, mining companies, and the local communities, as well as the academics and civil society. They conclude that there are different interests among these stakeholders in the mining sector. The government's main interest is in the 'legal criteria.' Mining companies concentrate on 'economic criteria.' At the same time, the rest of the stakeholders are focused on 'environmental criteria' (Okan *et al.*, 2015:9). The authors undermine the social criteria. However, the local communities regard that as the main issue that CSR needs to address on top of the environmental issues.

4. Community Perspectives on CSR

The study established that the host communities in Shurugwi, Mhondoro-Ngezi, and Zvishavane view CSR as a social justice matter that should be addressed purely from that angle. A community activist (female aged 42 years) from Shurugwi had this to say:

CSR is not a business issue for us. We demand that the mining companies fulfil this because they are responsible for the social and environmental challenges that we currently face. That alone is enough reason for us to be compensated by the companies through CSR programmes (Interview, 7 July 2017).

Another male community activist in Mhondongori village in Zvishavane also argued that:

CSR is the only fair deal. It allows us, as local people, to benefit from our natural resources. By the way, these resources are the only thing we inherited from our ancestors. Thus, Mimosa and other companies should ensure that we benefit socially. Look at how our environment has been disturbed by these mining activities… (Interview, 3 June 2017).

The above demand by the communities resonates well with the United Nations' view on CSR. The United Nations holds that CSR aims to examine the role of the private sector in a given society and to maximise the positive outcomes of business in society (United Nations, 2007).

A traditional leader from Mhondoro-Ngezi's Ward 6 charged that:

Zimplats has failed to improve the road network from Turf to Masvingo road yet it extracts our platinum and makes huge profits outside Zimbabwe. As traditional leaders, we should stand up and defend the interests of our subjects. Our people should benefit from our resources (Interview, 25 May 2017).

For this traditional leader, it is all about sharing the mineral proceeds with the mining companies. The fact that the mining companies make huge profits from the local resources makes them liable to fulfilling social responsibilities like constructing roads for the local communities.

5. The Non- Regulation Factor

The main challenge with regard to CSR is the fact that it is not regulated. As a result, it is implemented based on the ability and wishes of the companies, yet they (companies) are not even accountable for their actions that affect the local people, rendering CSR a greenwash (Hamann & Kapelus, 2004). A Chief Executive Officer with one of the target local authorities indicated that:

…the reason why the CSR programmes are not effective is the lack of consultation among the local authorities. Since there is no specific law or policy to regulate the programmes, mining companies just give us what they want in the quantities they want… However, as local authorities, we are expected to be leading in terms of local development. The mining companies just deal with the central government, and for me, this is not an effective way of doing things. (Interview, 3 June 2017).

The local authorities do not have the power to determine the kind of CSR to be implemented in their areas of jurisdiction. This was echoed by a local activist (a teacher at a local school and a leader of a CBO) in Mhondoro-Ngezi during the AMI (4 October 2017), who argued that while Zimplats had done a lot in renovating his school (renovation of the classroom blocks), the same company had failed to address the environmental challenges caused by the mining activities in the area. The figure below shows one of the dumpings at Zimplats in Mhondoro-Ngezi. The local community activists were concerned that the company was failing to address environmental challenges, yet they presented themselves as good neighbours to the host communities through the media.

Figure 1: One of the Dumping Sites Near Zimplats in Mhondoro-Ngezi
Picture: By the Author

6. Why Is There Little Impact?

Scholars have attempted to discuss some implementation challenges that affect the success of CSR initiatives. Lack of coordination of the programmes and their non-alignment with the host government's development strategies emerged as some of the main factors affecting the CSR programmes. Furthermore, the programmes are not being well-monitored and evaluated at the local and national levels (Siyobi, 2015). The community activists cannot effectively monitor the programmes because they do not have a benchmark to measure the achievement of the CSR initiative implemented by given mining companies. There is no legal framework against which the activists could have measured them. A female leader of one CBO in Zvishavane's Mhondongori village held that:

> …it is difficult even to measure the achievements of our success in CSR because, as a country, we do not have any law to refer to. We are beaten hands down by the mining companies in that regard… They have the capacity to present their images in a positive way, yet we cannot counter them because we do not have any legal framework on which to base our arguments (Interview, 2 June 2017).

Siyobi (2015) argues that, generally, CSR programmes are hinged on objectives that are oriented toward the business, but these are not linked to the host country's development programmes. This is particularly true when one considers that the local authorities are not consulted. Yet, they could have advised on appropriate development priorities and how to link the CSR initiative to the local development plans.

7. Non-Consultation of Host Communities

Traditionally, CSR is regarded as an initiative that helps address poverty challenges emanating from poor health, education, and general environmental needs (Siyobi, 2015). In this case, the private sector becomes a real necessary development partner. However, this study discovered this is not the case in most cases, as the local people's aspirations are not captured. The people are not consulted in crafting the programmes. In the case of Zimbabwe, the programmes are not even regulated; hence the private sector is not obliged to consult the local people.

Hamann and Kapelus (2004) hold that CSR's main aim is supposed to be the alignment of the private sectors' policies and practices to the host countries' sustainable development frameworks. Such an effort will guarantee that the companies' reputation is maintained while also allowing easy access to the necessary support in terms of capital, markets, and land for use. In Zimbabwe, the Platinum mining companies in Mhondoro-Ngezi, Zvishavane, and Shurugwi implemented the CSR programmes with little input from the communities. Some community members were concerned that their relatives' graves were being destroyed in the process of implementing mining projects. Had the communities been consulted, this could have been done more properly. One Chief Executive Officer from one of the local authorities under study summed it up by saying:

> The mining companies do not consult us on critical CSR programmes. As a result, they attempt projects which are detached from our local plans. My fear is that they end up leaving the projects unfinished once the mineral is exhausted. Once they do so, it will always be difficult for us to align their projects to our plans since we would not have been involved in the first place (Interview, 3 June 2017).

8. Corporate Social Responsibility and Local Content Development

This study also established that the mining communities in Zimbabwe cannot distinguish between CSR and LCD. For community activists, CSR and LCD should be treated in the same way. The literature reviewed for this paper indicates that, indeed, CSR and LCD both attempt to promote welfare, economic growth, and sustainable development for resource-rich countries (Ado, 2014). However, basically, the difference lies in the sense that CSR is a voluntary based programme that focuses on philanthropic and environmental matters. On the other hand, LCD is often mandatory (although in Zimbabwe, there is no policy or law to regulate it), and it includes employment creation, technological transfer to the locals as well as enterprise development supported by sourcing of local inputs by mining companies (Ado, 2014). However, the traditional leaders and the CBO leaders in the study areas cannot separate the two concepts with regard to mining, and they do not even attempt it. A traditional leader in Chironde Village in Shurugwi area had this to say:

We are not worried about the technical terms that you use; what we want is employment for our children by Unki Mine. There is a tendency to bombard us with terms like social responsibility or local content. We just want our community to benefit from our resources (Interview, 7 July 2017).

During the AMIs that one attended, community activists always raised concerns that platinum mining companies always hid behind the CSR programmes for failure to fulfil some LCD initiatives. A male participant at the national AMI (4 October 2017 in Bulawayo) shared that:

Unki always argues that they should not be expected to fulfil LCD requirements because they contribute to community development through CSR programmes. That is why we continue to request our government to regulate CSR so that these companies do not cheat us. Our government should really help us.

9. Corporate Social Responsibility as a Social Justice Issue

While some scholars have emphasised that CSR is primarily hinged on a business case, there are others who hold some critical perspectives. They argue that CSR is mainly about greenwashing. The critical school of thought argues that mining companies will only aim to present themselves as caring institutions. However, generally, their actions do not influence any major positive social and environmental change in their host communities. Hamann and Kapelus (2015) argue for what they call an accountability case. They identify accountability, emphasis on identification and mitigation of the impacts of the actions by the private sector as well as fairness to the vulnerable groups as the guiding issues that should be used to assess the impact of CSR programmes. Through a discussion of the South African and Zambian cases, the authors argue that there are still some major gaps between CSR programmes and accountability and fairness on the other hand. In the mining sector, the host communities are the vulnerable party that needs fair treatment from the private sector.

In the case of South Africa, after the coming of the new democratic regime, CSR began to be regarded as an engine guaranteeing the sustenance of restorative justice to address the negative legacy of apartheid (Siyobi, 2015). This study established that while the platinum mining companies embarked on CSR programmes, there was still a need for the government in Zimbabwe to legislate CSR to allow stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the actions of the companies. Through technical and financial support from some national CSOs, the community activists managed to challenge the platinum mining companies in various ways regarding CSR programmes. However, their advocacy was weakened by the fact that the programmes were not legally enforceable. Community activism is thus pursued from purely a social justice perspective. For activists, CSR is a social justice concept. They argued that natural resources should be extracted in such a way that future generations will benefit. The host communities have the right to enjoy benefits from their platinum as they are directly affected by the mining projects socially and environmentally. Recommending the need to legislate CSR programmes, an activist from Mhondongori (a male CBO leader) argued that:

We have been advocating for improvements in handling CSR programmes by Mimosa and other mining companies here. However, we will not win this struggle as the government is not in support of what we are crying for. We have been expecting the government to put in place a legislative framework that we can use to ensure that communities have a stake in the governance of our resources. Right now, a lot of resources are channeled towards CSR programmes that benefit other districts, yet, the people here who are exposed to social and environmental challenges due to mining projects are suffering. Let us have laws and policies that regulate CSR then we can enforce them from here by ensuring that these programmes are implemented on our terms (Interview, 3 June 2017).

Community perspective on CSR seems to resonate well with how Carroll (2016) categorised the concept, particularly with regard to the ethical responsibilities of a mining company. I, therefore, discuss Carroll's work on CSR below.

10. Carroll's Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility

Carroll is one scholar who contributed a great deal to the debate on CSR. The author indicates that the concept should be understood from four perspectives which can be presented in the form of a pyramid. In his various works, Carroll, thus, defines CSR as one that comprises the legal, ethical, economic, and discretionary (philanthropic) aspirations of society (Carroll 1979, 1991, in Carroll, 2016:2.

Carroll (2016) reviewed earlier work and indicated that it should be borne in mind that the legal and economic considerations are 'required' of the private sector by the host communities. The mining communities in the study areas held that the platinum mining companies have to fulfil CSR based on the legal and economic requirements of the latter. As for the ethical responsibilities of the companies, the business is 'expected' to fulfil certain obligations in the same way as they fulfil philanthropic responsibilities. Society goes beyond expectations as it also desires to see the business fulfilling them (Carroll, 2016:4). Economic responsibilities ensure that a given company makes adequate profits through the extraction of minerals, while the legal category instructs the same to submit itself to local laws and regulations. One can argue that ethical responsibilities accomplish society's expectations for justice and fairness in business operations. The author argues that the ethical issue is clearly linked to social justice. The company is expected to avoid doing any individual or collective harm to the host communities, either environmentally or socially. In the philanthropic responsibility category, society expects and desires to see a good corporate citizen represented by company actions. The figure below is the pyramid that Carroll developed in attempting to define CSR. It shows the four categories (responsibilities) that a CSR programme will attempt to address.
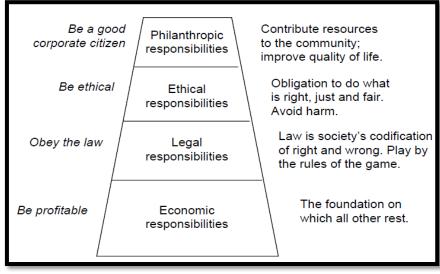
Figure 2: Carroll's Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility
Source: Nalband and Kelabi, 2014

While Carroll's pyramid has been regarded as one of the most popular frameworks in the discussion on CSR, Kaman (2015) argues that environmental issues were not given the attention they deserve. Indeed, the community activists in the three areas of study also emphasised the role of mining in the destruction of the environment. In that case, therefore, Carroll's analysis of CSR does not seem to address the aspirations of the local communities in the mining sector.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper has attempted to discuss CSR in the mining sector, particularly concerning local people's roles and aspirations. It has been argued that while different scholars hold that CSR in the mining sector is mainly a business issue, host communities view it as social justice matter meant to compensate them for the social and environmental loss caused by mining activities. The paper managed to capture some community voices from the platinum mining communities of Zimbabwe to validate one's arguments. It has emerged that CSR programmes in Zimbabwe are ineffective because they are not aligned with local plans and result from companies' strategies without input from the local people. The paper has also shown that advocacy around CSR is not effective because the activists do not have any legal framework to measure their efforts against. Based on the author's conclusion, it is recommended that Zimbabwe should consider regulating CSR programmes within the broad mining legal framework to hold MNCs legally accountable to CSR. This will allow the local authorities, the traditional leaders, CBOs, and host communities, in general, to contribute to the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the CSR programmes at the local level. This will further enhance the coordination of the programmes more efficiently and effectively.

12. References

i. Ado, R., (2014), In Search of the link between local content (LC) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), in Petroleum operations, *International Journal of Business and Management Studies*, CD-ROM, Volume 3, Issue 1, 207–218.
ii. Boerzel, T.A, Hoenke, J. and Thauer, C.R. (2012), 'Does it really take the state?' *Business and Politics*, Volume 14, Number 3, 1–34., 10.1515/bap-2012-0023.
iii. Carroll, A.B., (2016), Carroll's pyramid of CSR: taking another look, *Carroll International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility*, Volume 1, Number 3, 1–8, Cross Mark.
iv. Crowther, D., and Aras, G., (2008), Corporate Social Responsibility, Ventures Publishing Aps, Book Boon. http://mdos.si/Files/defining-corporate-social-responsibility.pdf, Accessed 23 September 2016.
v. Hamann, R. and Kapelus, P., (2004), Corporate Social Responsibility in Mining in Southern Africa: Fair Accountability or just greenwash? *Development,* Volume 47, Number 3, 85–92, Local/Global Encounters.
vi. Kaman, Z.K., (2015), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Models: An Approach to Environmental Perspective, *International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology (IRJET)*, Volume 02, Issue. 7, 5–9.
vii. Kercher, K., (2007), Corporate Social Responsibility: Impact of globalisation and international business, *Corporate Governance e-Journal*, Volume 4, Number 12, 1–12, e-Publications @bond, Bond University.
viii. Nalband, N.A. and Kelabi, S. A., (2014), Redesigning Carroll's CSR Pyramid Model, *Journal of Advanced Management Science*, Volume 2, Number 3, 236–239.
ix. Okan, T., Perker, I., and Demirelli, S., (2015), A Corporate Social Responsibility Framework for Mining Sector Using Analytic Network Process, *International Business Research*, Volume 8, Number 12, 9–25, Canadian Centre of Science and Education.
x. Siyobi, B., (2015), Governance of Africa's Resources Programme, Policy Briefing 142, SAIIA.
xi. United Nations (2007), Sustainable Development, Innovation Briefs, Issue 1.
xii. Anonymous Traditional Leader, Mhondoro-Ngezi, Interview, 25 May 2017.

xiii. Anonymous Chief Executive Officer, Local Authority, Interview, 3 June 2017.
xiv. Anonymous Chief Executive Officers, Local Authority, Interview, 2 June 2017.
xv. Anonymous Chief Executive Officers, Local Authority, Interviews, 7 July 2017.
xvi. Anonymous Traditional Leader, Shurugwi, Interview, 7 July 2017.
xvii. Anonymous Traditional Leader, Zvishavane, Interview, 2 June 2017.
xviii. Mhondongori Resources Community Development Trust, Committee Member, Interview, 28 September 2016, Bulawayo.
xix. Mhondongori Resources Community Development Trust, Committee Member, Interview, 2 June 2017, Zvishavane.
xx. Shurugwi Community Development Trust, Committee Members, Interviews, 28 September 2016, Bulawayo.
xxi. Shurugwi Community Development Trust, Committee Members, Interviews, 7 July 2017, Shurugwi.
xxii. Turf Resource Conversation Trust, Committee Member, Interview, 25 May 2017, Mhondoro-Ngezi.
xxiii. Turf Resource Conversation Trust, Committee Member, Interview, 29 September 2016, Bulawayo.