

Mutare Dissemination Workshop Report

Matimba Community Hall

Dora, Mutare

10th March 2014



Summary

Following the publication of a research on rural poverty in the previous year, the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT) in collaboration with the Mutare Residents and Ratepayers Association (MRRA) organized a dissemination workshop on the 10th of March 2014 in Dora, a rural area of Mutare. During this workshop, PRFT shared the research findings and policy recommendations with the local leadership which included ward 35 councilor, head men and local business men among others. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants not only to have an in depth discussion on key issues that emerged from the research, but to learn about PRFT's work. This report presents the deliberations from the workshop.

Workshop Proceedings

Introductions

The workshop was opened with a word of prayer from the Pastor Kudinha. Thereafter, the workshop facilitator, the Mutare Residents and Ratepayers Association Director, Mr. David Mutambirwa, led the introduction process. The introductions were followed by opening remarks and workshop objectivities from the PRFT's Executive Director.

Opening Remarks and Workshop Objectives by PRFT's Executive Director

In her opening remarks, PRFT's Executive, Mrs. Judith Kaulem welcomed all participants to the dissemination workshop. Before she proceeded to outline the objectives of the meeting, the Executive Director took an opportunity to give a brief overview of PRFT's work.

The PRFT is guided by the Poverty Watch Flagship, which encompasses research, dialogue and influencing formulation of pro-poor policies. The organization's current work is premised on its experience in producing the Zimbabwe Human Development Reports (1996-2007). PRFT's goal is to influence the formulation of pro-poor policies through carrying out research on poverty-related issues, engaging with policy makers, promoting broad-based consultative dialogue and processes as well as advocating for sustainable human development in Zimbabwe. Although PRFT's work is currently focusing on urban poverty which is an emerging, the Executive director indicated that PRFT was already expanding its work to rural communities in an effort to provide evidence based pro poor interventions. According to Mrs. Kaulem, the formation and implementation of long term and sustainable policies should be made based on wide consultations to make the policies people driven hence residents are key stakeholders in PRFT's research and policy dialogues.

Workshop Objectives

The workshop was premised on the following specific objectives;

- ❖ To present the research findings and policy recommendations generated from the report on rural poverty in Manicaland.
- ❖ To provide a platform for the participants, the local leadership to discuss in depth the research findings and offer further recommendations for addressing the socio and economic challenges being faced by the rural communities

PRFT's Basic Needs Basket (BNB) Project

The PRFT's program Officer, Mr T. Chiremba gave an overview of the PRFT's Basic Needs Basket Project. Guided by the Poverty Watch Flagship, which encompasses research, dialogue and influencing formulation of pro-poor policies, PRFT conducts regular BNB surveys as one of its initiatives. The BNB project is being implemented to generate regular and reliable statistical information of the basic cost of living for ordinary residents and push for policies and programs that cushion vulnerable households. The Basic Needs Basket (BNB);

- ❖ Is a tool that measures the cost of living for an average family of five
- ❖ Shows the monthly average cost of basic food and non food items required by a family of five to live a healthy and dignified lifestyle
- ❖ Is a snap shot of the socio-economic situation in selected locations across Zimbabwe

The BNB provides evidence for lobbying local and national government for affordable and accessible services such as housing, water& sanitation, energy, health care and food hence it can be used by civil society organizations and residents as a tool for evaluating government actions and hold each other accountable to pro-poor priorities and promises. At local level, the BNB can be used by various community groups as an entry point into evaluating the needs of their own community and determine best strategies to solve own problems. The BNB can also be used by church groups as a tool for uplifting the moral obligation of leaders to pay particular attention to the plight of the poor.

It can also be used by employers as a challenge to promote the common good of all employees by narrowing the gap in income between the lowest and highest paid workers as it presents a factual representation of the living conditions faced by an organization's employees at home. At household level, the BNB acts as a guide to household budgeting and tool for understanding how different policies such as a minimum wage can affect a family's basic needs. The tool can

also be used by policy makers in government as a guide to make economic policies that will address the household needs of ordinary Zimbabweans.

In his presentation, Mr T. Chiremba highlighted that PRFT's BNB project has been quite useful towards advancing the organization's evidence based policy advocacy work since its inception in 2010. Through the BNB project which is now undertaken in five towns namely Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru and Shurugwi, PRFT has been able to expose the socio and economic challenges that ordinary urban residents are facing as a way of holding the policy makers at national or local level to account. The programs officer indicated that PRFT has already started to challenge the new government to deliver on its promises to improve the welfare of people through its monthly BNB reports accompanied by policy briefs.

Zimbabwe's Socio and economic environment by PRFT's Executive Director

According to Mrs. Judith Kaulem, the socio and economic challenges that ordinary residents are facing in Zimbabwe have their roots in the cumulative effects of the protracted economic decline that the country has experienced prior to the formation of the Government of National Unit (GNU) in 2009. The Executive Director highlighted that Zimbabwe recorded the highest level of poverty during the year 2008 which was witnessed by the collapse of social service delivery system, massive deindustrialization, company closure and high levels of unemployment. Zimbabwe has been rated a low income country as much of its wealth was lost during the peak of the economic crisis in 2008. According to the Executive director, the economic depression that the country experienced between 2000 and 2008 has increased the socio and economic marginalization and distress of disadvantaged groups.

Rural poverty - Research findings and Policy Recommendations

The PRFT's Executive director, Mrs. Judith Kaulem presented the key findings and policy recommendations generated from the research on rural poverty. The research was done to deepen the understanding of characteristics of rural poverty and unmask the coping strategies in Mutare rural specifically in Zimhunya, Dora, Marange and Odzi communities. Below is a summary of the research findings presented.

Causes of Poverty in Mutare rural

- ***The land reform Program and the resultant surge in unemployment*** – The commercial farms that used to employ thousands of farm workers are now less productive under

new owners who benefited from the Land Reform Program. For example, Kondozi farm used to employ 20 000 workers drawn from Odzi, Zimhunya and Marange.

- ***Lack of Employment opportunities/ Alternative Sources of income*** – Majority of residents in Odzi, Zimhunya and Marange are not employed as the only formally employed people are those in the public service sector. Very few people are engaged by the commercial farmers and mines in Marange.
- ***Poor Climatic conditions and Erratic Rainfall*** – climatic change in rural districts has become a major concern as it is adversely affecting rural development activities such as agriculture.
- ***Poor roads, Infrastructure development and communication*** – rural dwellers are facing challenges to transport their produce due to deteriorating road infrastructure.
- ***Lack of access to water and Sanitary facilities.*** Due to recurring droughts, water reserves have been reduced and this has led to lack of water to drink for the people and cattle. Families have been depending on water from polluted rivers of Odzi, Tsambe and Sakubva rivers.
- ***Food Insecurity-*** food insecurity has been accelerated by non availability of basic farm inputs, dysfunctional markets and the lack of rural finance.
- ***Lack of agricultural inputs and technical know how*** – weak government support services, weak technological advancement, lack of credit and acute shortages of essential inputs among others has led to fall in agricultural production and food security.

Coping mechanisms:

The following are some of coping mechanisms that have been adopted by most households to deal with rural poverty

- Cutting down trees and selling firewood to Mutare urban residents.
- Selling river and pit sand to Mutare urbanites
- Illegal diamond mining
- Prostitution

Recommendations generated during the research

- The government should strengthen its extension services to communal farmers so that they are aware of the crops to grow in their communities
- There is need to separate public service delivery and politics in rural areas so that there is no selective distribution of scanty food hand outs and inputs
- There is need for more coordination and pulling of resources between different government and development partners in particular rural areas so that poverty reduction strategies are successful
- People –centred participatory development is required to fight rural poverty in Zimbabwe
- Government should resuscitate and strengthen its rural electrification program as the provision of electricity opens the door to a variety of self jobs and projects needed by rural communities.
- There is need to come up with climate adaptation and mitigation strategies in rural areas to improve agricultural production. Some of these strategies include flood monitoring and forecasting, promotion of drought tolerant crops, water use and irrigation efficiency, improved land management and soil erosion control through planting trees and expanded rain water harvesting , water storage and conservation techniques

Plenary

Following the presentations, the dialogue was opened up to give the participants an opportunity to have an in-depth discussion on key issues that emerged from the report. A number of issues were raised during the discussion. For example, the local leadership bemoaned the water pollution that is causing water to become unsafe for drinking. According to residents, water is being polluted by urban industrial wastes being discharged into Sakubva river. The local leadership indicated that rural dwellers are losing their livestock as result of the cattle drinking polluted water. The discussion revealed that Environmental Management Agency (EMA)'s efforts to sue the City of Mutare which is responsible for the water pollution are not benefiting the communities as the penalties are not disbursed to the affected communities.

The local leaders also indicated that the deteriorating road infrastructure is an issue of great concern. According to the participants, the deterioration of the road infrastructure is being accelerated by the heavy lorries transporting river and pit sand to Mutare urban. It is the view of the local leadership that the transport companies should seek permission from the Mutare rural district council and pay a certain amount of money that can be used to maintain the roads. However, some participants felt that District Development Fund (DDF) is contributing to the status of the roads. Instead of adding gravel to the roads, the participants indicated that

DDF is grading down the roads up to the loose levels, which can be quickly washed away by the rains.

During the discussion, the local leadership raised a concern over high levels of unemployment in their communities. According to the participants, there are very few employment opportunities especially for the youth as only very few local people are working in the mining companies. The local leadership indicated that people are earning a living through ways that are harmful to the environment because there are no other options. For example, tree cutting in Dora area has been revealed to be causing soil erosion and land degradation but people are still cutting down trees. Besides the lack of enough employment opportunities, the discussion also revealed the lack of transparency and accountability in the Zimunya- Marange Community ownership scheme which has led the communities to remain underdeveloped. For example, the local leadership felt that they were duped as there are now rumors that the original allocation of \$11000 (eleven thousand) which their ward was supposed to get through the Marange Zimunya Community Ownership Scheme has been reduced to \$5000 (five thousand), a figure which the participants have indicated is not enough to finance the developmental projects that are needed in their communities. According to the participants, nothing so far has been disbursed. The participants felt that the Community Ownership Scheme funds are being abused and politicized.

Way forward

At the end of the discussion, the local leaders were able to come up with action points which they committed to implement. To mitigate the environmental effects which have already manifested such as gullies, the local leaders suggested to plant banana trees as a way of covering up the gullies. The communities also saw an opportunity to raise income from the sale of the bananas while at the same time boosting their nutrition from the consumption of the bananas. The local leadership also suggested a plan to seek permission from the Mutare Rural District Council to collect money from river and pit sand transporters so that the money can be used for maintaining the roads.

The PRFT's Executive Director highlighted that while PRFT's mandate does not extend to implementing projects, PRFT will make efforts to link the Dora community to organizations such as Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association (ZELA) as well as Chiadzwa Community Development Trust (CCDT) on issues regarding water pollution by City of Mutare. Mrs Kaulem challenged the community leaders to take initiative towards improving their situation instead of always waiting for outside help. She highly applauded the suggestion to reclaim gullies through planting bananas as a first step towards local empowerment. The Director also urged the local

leadership to demand transparency and accountability in the Community Ownership Scheme funds and mining contracts especially regarding the employment of locals. Mrs Kaulem also urged the residents to take advantage of the call in radio platform that PRFT was facilitating and make their contributions. The radio dialogue series on SFM were held in collaboration with ZELA and ZIMCDD and focused on the nexus of poverty, natural resources governance and tax justice.

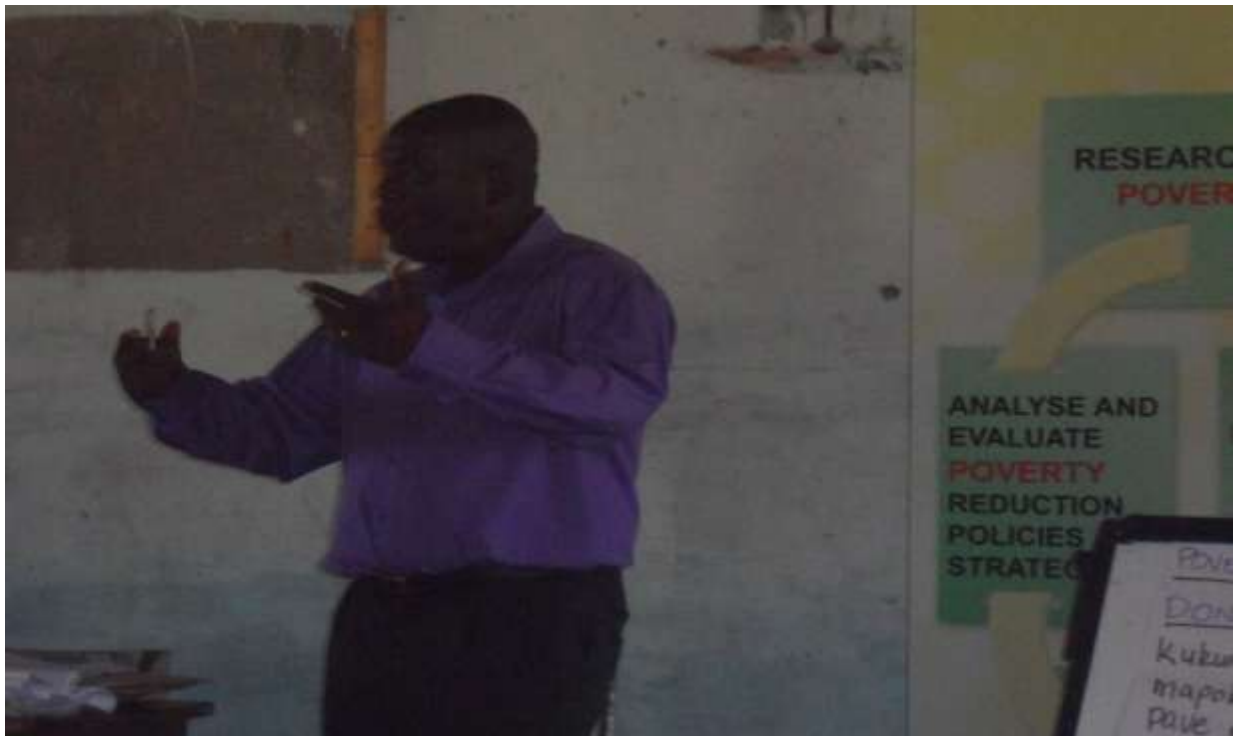
Closing Remarks

The ward 35 Councilor, Mr Abu Masimbango gave the closing remarks. In his remarks, Mr Masimbango called for residents to unite together in community developmental initiatives that should transcend party lines and interests. The Councilor also appreciated PRFT's work that had provided a platform for the ordinary residents to discuss livelihood challenges in their communities. The dissemination workshop was closed with a prayer from Pastor Kudinha.

Mutare Dissemination Workshop in Pictures







Dialogue meeting participants

Name	Ward /suburb	Designation	Contact details
K. Mahundi	Ward 35	Environmental health worker	0714 4582213
B. Mandiringa	Ward 35	Headman – Kuhudzai village	
C. Mutsenge	Ward 35	Headman	0774311094
A. Masimbango	Ward 35	Ward 35 Councilor	0776 973 566
T. Ncube	Ward 35	Resident	0773 264428
M. Shepherd	Ward 35	Resident	0773 697758
R. Chisamba	Ward 35	Resident	0773020499
D. Mutasa	Ward 35	Resident	0776 109 148
E. Mukute		Resident	0773408468
J Chikudza	Ward 35	Resident	0773 682 454
M. Chipunza	Ward 35	Resident	
B. Makukutu	Ward 35	Resident	0777688031
Z. Hambirepi	Ward 35	Resident	0713836405
E. Murimwi	Ward 35	Resident	0773 851334
E. Chaoma	Ward 35	Resident	0737345299
S. C nhachi	Ward 35	Resident	
C. Chigwiza	Ward 35	Resident	0778 052962

Darare	Ward 35	Headman	0735770559
T. Kudinha	Ward 35	Resident / Pastor	0776 978720
F. Muringa	Ward 35	Resident	0772 535015
D. Mutambirwa	MRRA	MRRA Chairperson	0772273176
P. Muusha	PRFT	PRFT Enumerator	0776476601
C. Chitiyo	Ward 35	Resident	0775 917683
C. Mareyanadzo	Ward 35	Resident	0714 517119
M. Murengami	Ward 35	Resident	0775582579
P. Manzinde	Ward 35	Resident	0771300074
M. Chidodo	Ward 35	Resident	0775084211
R. Zimhunya	Ward 35	Resident	
A. Maverevedze	Ward 35	Resident	0734147813
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T. Matambo	Ward 35	Resident	0777873298
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