

COPING WITH NEW CHALLENGES: THE CASE OF FOOD SHORTAGE AFFECTING DISPLACED VILLAGERS FOLLOWING DIAMOND MINING ACTIVITY AT CHIADZWA, ZIMBABWE, 2006-2013

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the problem of acute food shortage endured by displaced households of Chiadzwa Ward of Marange in Zimbabwe, following the establishment of diamond mining operations there in 2006. It examines how these people responded to new threats of food vulnerability at their new location, Odzi Arda Transau. Although food deficits were not uncommon in Chiadzwa before the ‘discovery’ of diamonds in the area, residents used various ‘sustainable’ coping mechanisms in order to meet their daily food requirements. However, after their relocation, these victim villagers quickly became impoverished and food insecure, having been far removed from their known traditional sources of livelihood. Initial attempts by both Government and mining giants like Mbada Diamonds, Anjin Investments and Marange Resources to serve each of the relocated households with monthly food hampers were abandoned a few months down the line under unclear circumstances, rendering innocent villagers vulnerable and clueless about what coping strategies to adopt. In some incidences, quite many households reverted to begging for food within and around the Greater Odzi Resettlement Area. Methodologically, mainly interviews with affected inhabitants in this new and challenging environment were carried out, in addition to which secondary literature on food security and sustainable development was consulted.

Keywords: Chiadzwa, Relocation, Begging, Food Shortage, Displaced, Diamonds, Sustainability.

Fig. 1. Map of Odzi, 24 km North West of Mutare, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe where new dwelling units have been erected to house displaced villagers.



Notes:

- The new location, Odzi Arda Transau, is off the Mutare- Harare main road.
- This area should not be mistaken with Odzi Township, 9km apart, which was established much earlier.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout life, the centrality of food to human beings cannot be disputed. The whole world would drift to a halt if one day its population found itself without any food to consume.¹ Due to this unquestionable role that food plays in people's lives, sustainable food provision is a critical preoccupation for individuals, households and communities. There are, however, some continents such as Europe and North America that have made far greater strides in guaranteeing food self-security than others like Africa. According to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP, 2007), there are shocking revelations of people around the world in dire need of food, given that they are living on less than \$1(USD) per day in a family of four to six members (Iliffe, 1990). The World Bank defines food security as "the access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, health life" (World Bank, 1986). Once the breadbasket of southern Africa before the 1990s, Zimbabwe was increasingly becoming a basket case and its growing food insecurity was, of late, causing immense discomfort amongst people.

¹ My own emphasis on the critical importance of food to human survival.

For many years on end, droughts, poor technology, climatic vagaries and inconsistent state policy impacted negatively on the capability of the country to tackle food shortage head-on. Of the ten provinces of Zimbabwe, both Manicaland and Matebeleland have almost always been hard-hit because of their hyper arid conditions (Zimbabwe Human Development Index, 1998). Regardless of Government efforts to curb food insecurity and poverty in these drier parts of the country, which include Marange and Zimunya Reserves of Manicaland, there seemed to be little tangible progress in that direction. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been hailed for many decades in the post-colonial Zimbabwe for their ameliorative role in contexts of emergencies, but persistent food deficits apparently demand a much bigger effort than just a mere gesture of donor funded intervention. This failure to engage with long-term and sustainable solutions to chronic food insecurity has been a major undoing for these organisations in recent years. And, indeed, for the hastily relocated Chiadzwa villagers trapped by famine, there appears to be a serious lack of insight into the problem by relevant stakeholders.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AT CHIADZWA

In as much as people who remained behind at Chiadzwa were deprived of their farm lands, those villagers who had already been relocated also perceived themselves as cursed due to a string of misfortunes affecting their destiny (*Interview with Fred Magwere*, 16 August, 2013). Ecologically, Chiadzwa lies in Region V because of its aridity (National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), S160/1P/S, Zimunya Irrigation Scheme, 1934). Its annual rainfall is not only low, but also erratic. Over a considerable period of time, inhabitants experimented with various coping strategies in order to tame their harsh environment. This included the identification of, and subsequent concentration on, the cultivation of drought-tolerant crops. They also collected wild fruits and carried out basketry in exchange for food (Tavuyanago, B, Mutami, N, and Mbenene, K, 2010). Before the discovery of diamonds in 2006, Chiadzwa was hardly as critical and special economically as it became thereafter. In fact, it was a neglected area since succeeding colonial and post-colonial governments could not plan for long-term projects such as irrigation schemes similar to those established at nearby Nyanyadzi or elsewhere in the country (Musiiwa, 1988). Infrastructural development was minimal, so were the area's agriculture in general and food security in particular.

However, the discovery and subsequent mining of alluvial diamonds at Ushonje, a long mountainous belt covering both western and eastern boundaries of Chiadzwa, brought unprecedented hope to local inhabitants, particularly with regards to food security (*The diamonds had long been discovered by De Beers in the colonial period, although this was only made public in June 2006*). Residents looked to the state to erect infrastructure to tap the diamonds and direct some of the much needed proceeds to the area's food needs. Expectations were high that since Chiadzwa lay within the confines of two major rivers, Save to the West and Odzi to the East, revenue from diamond mining would be channelled into water harvesting schemes from these sources to boost agricultural productivity, rather than relying only on rain-fed cultivation. But by the end of 2007, signs were already showing that all was not well as the state initially let artisanal miners, commonly known as *gwejas* (male miners) and *gwejelines* (female diggers) to illegally scrunch up for diamonds. Already, some physically challenged, elderly, blind, maimed and young people could not benefit directly from this approach as it was an issue of "survival" of the fittest.

In addition to artisanal miners trampling on people's fields, damaging crops as they traversed the length and breadth of Chiadzwa, the militarisation of the area in October 2009 sealed off people from freely accessing their fields (Nyamunda

and Mukwambo, 2012). By 2008, the area was carrying far too many people than it could naturally afford; something which was of serious environmental concern. Cultivation of crops became impossible and it was suspended. In fact, the state, through the Office of the District Administrator, and soldiers manning diamond fields, warned people against planting crops in order to pave way for the nascent mining operations. Several meetings with villagers were held, largely with the agenda of preparing them for the impending relocation and testing the waters to check the level and possibility of resistance since virtually no compensation for victim migrants was guaranteed (*Interview with Chief Chiadzwa*, 15 August 2011). Villagers were further treated to propaganda about the worthiness of relocation to a disused Agricultural Rural Development Authority (ARDA) farm at Odzi in order for mining operations to sufficiently expand their exploratory and mining ventures. In a well calculated plan to ward off potential resistance to relocation, village heads and a few influential people were bussed to Odzi to 'inspect' their newly built premises. The motive was to convince them about the 'beauties of relocation' and to provide the necessary 'positive' feedback and encouragement to the rest of the villagers at Chiadzwa who might have been apprehensive about relocation. Companies that were authorised to exploit the Chiadzwa diamonds were Mbada Diamonds, Anjin Investments, Marange Resources and Diamond Mining Company (DMC) (*Zimbabwean Situation*, 13 March, 2013). Their Corporate Social Responsibility included building houses for families facing resettlement and to provide monthly food hand-outs while setting up irrigation facilities in the long-term.

This article contends that the provision of accommodation was a positive move on the part of Government and mining companies, but the question of livelihood was scarcely tackled. Indeed, by 2010, several families had been relocated into the newly-built housing units. At first, the affected people expressed optimism that the mining companies were sincere, especially owing to the apparently decent accommodation at the new site plus the promise of food aid. No sooner did people settle than they were already accusing the state and mining companies of renegeing on their undertaking to feed them. Most of the promises proved to be paper commitments which hardly went beyond mere expression of sentiment as they were not transformed into practical action (*Zimbabwean Situation*, 23 October, 2013). The facilities at Odzi were widely condemned because they lacked alternative means of livelihood compared to those at Chiadzwa where sustainable options such as fruit collection, basketry and animal rearing were readily available to complement crop cultivation. This placed the newly-resettled inhabitants in an invidious and precarious position as they were confronted with a hugely compromised food and water supply situation. Villagers' attempts to approach relevant authorities for clarification failed to yield positive results as those stakeholders were not only evasive, but also arrogant and unwilling to shed light on the rapidly changing economics of relocation (*Interview with Magwere*).

THE MECHANICS OF RELOCATION

This study further argues that the key problem confronting these villagers was the sheer absence of mechanisms to halt the rapidly declining food security. This was particularly caused by the haphazard nature of the relocation programme which was hurriedly prepared and insufficiently thought through. The focus of this programme was largely on moving people as urgently as possible into Odzi in a style suggestive of companies under pressure to exploit the gem before possible changes to the legislative framework of their operations could be proposed. It appears that since the award of mining contracts was itself shrouded in secrecy, coupled with the state's shifting position on the *modus operandi* of mining capital, companies, especially Anjin, adopted a migratory acquisition approach, fearing that anything could disrupt their mining activities (*The licensing procedures for the companies operating in Chiadzwa were a preserve of the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation (ZMDC) which was not at liberty to prove transparency*). This could have been the reason why those companies quickly embarked on day and night shifts in order to accumulate as much alluvial diamond as possible within

the shortest possible time. At Odzi, the cultivable area could have been increased in order to give room for families to continue with growing of crops for their own survival without anticipating getting it all the time from the companies. Critics of this relocation policy condemn it on grounds that it resulted primarily in the alienation of villagers from their means of production.

In addition, a large number of relocated people, particularly those from the Nechirasika area of Chiadzwa, were members of the Joanne Marange Apostolic Sect that approved of polygamous marriages. This meant that each of the wives of a particular family head and numerous children were supposed to get their own house, something which was strongly resisted by the mining companies because some men had up to ten wives each under this religious dispensation. On allocating houses and plots, little or no consideration was given on the need to accommodate these people in separate dwelling units for reasons of decency and avoidance of disputes among family members (*Interview with Itai Gwite*, 5 December, 2012). Especially given that some households had over sixty children requiring nourishment, owing to the fact that birth control measures were taboo to the disposition of this religion, the plots allotted to them were grossly inadequate in meeting desired results in so far as food production was concerned.

The critical water shortage at Odzi was equally frustrating as it failed to match demand. The villagers could fetch water from a common borehole situated some very long distance away from their homes (*Interview with Alice Tanaka*, 16 August, 2013). This explains why it was becoming increasingly difficult for the inhabitants to embark on gardening and other related food-producing enterprises requiring a reliable supply of water. At Chiadzwa, people had the option of sinking their own boreholes, wells and dams where they felt they could erect fences for gardens and use the water all year round for their vegetables, tomatoes, onions, cassava and other greens for both consumption and sale. Conversely, the waterholes at Odzi were not only inadequate, but the resources to drill more were unavailable. The space to expand farming activities was just not there as well, hence, compounding the livelihood challenges of the new population. The greater part of their precious and productive time was, therefore, taken doing virtually nothing to reverse food shortage through innovativeness. They were tied hands and feet against progress due to the unavailability of appropriate and sustainable infrastructure to produce food.

Another serious concern that the relocated villagers raised was the widely promised irrigation equipment during the pre-relocation meetings with local government authorities which was never availed (*Interview with Chief Chiadzwa*). The Governor and Resident Minister for Manicaland Province, Christopher Mushowe, ironically hailed Government for resettling those villagers, but in the process missing the point that the provision of housing units had to be matched with structures that consistently guaranteed food security. People require food at all times and all other needs pale into insignificance if this equation is improperly balanced (Sen, 1981; Devereux and Maxwell, 2001). The provision of houses, regardless of their attraction, could not address basic food requirements for households occupying them, particularly against the background of the usurpation of their traditional means of livelihood. The soils at Odzi were far more fertile than those at Chiadzwa, meaning that they could support crops such as maize, but the acreage was limited. One villager argued that, at least the setting up of irrigation infrastructure as envisaged would have strengthened people's resolve to produce sufficient food by fully utilising those small plots throughout seasons (*Interview with Farai Chirasika*, (16 August, 2013).

THE PLACE OF DIAMONDS IN THE FOOD QUESTION

The proceeds from diamond mining at Chiadzwa did not help matters either in the period under review. By 2012, it was difficult, not only for ordinary people within the vicinity of Chiadzwa, but also in the rest of the country, to believe that there were any profits being yielded from the mining operations because no tangible dividend reached them. Evidence was there of vast mining work at Chiadzwa being carried out round the clock, with caterpillars, graders, excavators and haulage trucks laden with raw ore being spotted all over the mining area; a fact which suggested that something seriously economic was taking place. Seven years of continuous activity, however, showed no material difference in the lives of the supposed beneficiaries (*Zimbabwean Situation*, 10 November, 2013). When the Government of National Unity (GNU) between President Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African People's Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and Prime Minister Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) parties was conceived in 2009, economic programmes of this new political arrangement were expected to be firmly anchored on revenue from Marange diamonds². However, it turned out that, hiding behind the facade of sanctions imposed by the West and the United States of America, Mugabe defended the opaque nature of mining and sale of diamonds by arguing that western 'detractors' would interfere with the processes. When pressed by the MDC-controlled Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to justify the trickles of revenue reaching Government coffers, his Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Obert Mpofu, maintained that the operations at Chiadzwa had to remain shadowy as a sanction-busting measure (*Interview with MDC Councillor for Chiadzwa Ward*, 23 August, 2013; Sokwanele, 13 February 2013; Chindori Chininga Report, June 2013; Partnership Africa Canada, 2012). The emphasis was that it was ideal to shroud diamond operations in secrecy in order to shut out those 'enemies' while ensuring that food security, among other areas of Government priority, would be guaranteed.

The Kimberly Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), a body responsible for regulating against the sale of conflict diamonds, and to which Zimbabwe is signatory, subdued to mounting pressure from various interest groups and the Zimbabwean state to certify Marange diamonds as fully compliant with its provisions. The idea is to stop "conflict diamonds" from going into mainstream marketing of diamonds. All diamond producing areas should seek certification before selling gems onto the market for reasons of accountability and transparency. But this was happening at a time when there were strong indications that human rights in Chiadzwa were trampled upon. The Government was slow in removing its security forces from Chiadzwa who were argued to be the chief perpetrators of violence that ripped through Chiadzwa, especially following *Operation Hakudzokwi* Phase 1 on 27 October, 2008 (Nyamunda and Mukwambo, 2012). With increasing numbers of artisanal miners in Chiadzwa, Government responded by unleashing the army on the civilian population, resulting in casualties and deaths.

Meanwhile, locals were neither employed by the mining companies, nor benefitted from the Marange-Zimunya Community Share Ownership Trust set up to provide them with the requisite loans for income-generating projects.³ At its launch in 2012, this Trust was earmarked to receive upwards of \$50 million from the various mining companies operating in Chiadzwa as part of their corporate social responsibility. However, since its inception, no serious commitment had been shown to fulfill this obligation since only about \$400 000-00 was said to have been received, with Mbada Holdings having remitted no single cent towards this otherwise critical gesture to assist those communities resident within the mining areas (*Newsday Zimbabwe*, 2 December, 2013). In fact, the idea was theoretically sound as residents hoped to reorganize their

economic lives through putting the money held in trust to good use. Practically, nothing of the sort happened in spite of glaring evidence that the companies were obviously making money (Global Witness, 2013). From Government's point of view, food scarcity at Odzi arose mainly from 'unforeseen' circumstances in the relocation exercise that needed to be appreciated in their own context. The state maintained that the transfer of people to areas far away from Chiadzwa was done above board and in the national economic interest (*Interview with Batsirai Betera*, 24 August, 2014).

Considering also the environmental and health risks posed by mining operations, the need to relocate villagers was critical. Indeed, this was undeniable given the level of water pollution at Odzi River where initial washing of rubble from the mines was carried out before further processing of the ore took place. Downstream users of these waters, including the animal population, were seriously threatened by the unfolding environmental risks as the resultant dirt from these processes was dumped into the river. Some people were being diagnosed for new infections arising therefrom. In its *Report on the Scientific Investigation of the Impact of Marange Diamond Mining Operations on Water Quality in the Save and Odzi Rivers* (2012), the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association points out that "the problems of water quality and environmental degradation need to be addressed in the Marange area before there is irreparable damage to the environment and people's livelihoods". In addition, the heavy drilling and blasting machinery caused so much unbearable noise. This increased the urgency for the relocation programme to take off, hence, pushing inhabitants off their ancestral lands with which they had huge sentimental attachment.

However, a closer look at the main reason for the villagers not to resist Government efforts at relocating them was to do with the increasing torture perpetuated on them by state security agents (*The Daily News Zimbabwe*, 17 July, 2013). In the period June, 2006 to September, 2008, it was the police chasing after artisanal miners, with a number of these *gwejas* and *gwejelines* getting seriously injured. With time, some of these miners sought refuge amongst the locals, seeking to be identified as bona-fide villagers of Chiadzwa. This prompted the police, and later the military, to carry out often violent search operations within and around local villagers' homes; hence, unsettling them in the process. Since the deployment of the military towards the end of 2008, "communities living in the Chiadzwa district, either on or near the diamond fields, have been forcibly relocated without being adequately consulted about the relocation site or the timing of the relocation; without receiving adequate compensation and without the relocation site having been adequately prepared"(Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2011). Regarding food security, this forced migration had the direct consequence of tipping the already extremely tense situation over the edge, considering that the local people had long been forbidden to cultivate lands closer to the diamond mining area, pending relocation.

The entry into Chiadzwa of armed forces also worsened the already deteriorating human rights situation as excessive abuse of artisanal miners and villagers was intensified. Reports indicate that over two hundred people died in these circumstances (*Interview with Chief Chiadzwa*, 2011). One of the cases recorded at the High Court of Zimbabwe involved the gruesome death of a villager, Tsorosai Kusena of Betera Village near Chiadzwa in 2009, at the hands of Joseph Chani, a Chief Superintendent of Police stationed at Chiadzwa. He was beaten along with his two brothers, Onesai and Pikirai, and their uncle, John Gwite, after being suspected of scouting for diamonds in their own maize field where they were digging a waterhole. Although this senior police officer was jailed for eighteen years, it could still be argued that this was a tip of the

iceberg as many villagers were too afraid to raise complaints against torture.⁴ With many heart-breaking events happening in their locality, the necessity to move out of Chiadzwa could not be left to conjecture any more. The level of intimidation was so high that villagers were stripped of their ability to voice their concerns about compensation and their future at Odzi (*The Manica Post*, 22 July, 2011)

Juxtaposed with the pull factor of 'good' housing structures at the new site, some villagers tended to support the relocation programme in spite of the uncertainties of new sources of livelihood. Ironically, those people who had never owned brick houses all along quickly embraced relocation, opting to leave food security and other livelihood concerns to chance. It appears that the state failed to consider the fact that the villagers were not homogenous because some of them were well-to-do families who had far bigger and better accommodation than the structures at Odzi. The survey that was carried out to determine property values for purposes of compensation was not considered at the time of relocation as everyone, rich or poor, received only USD\$1000-00 once-off payment. At the promise of further reimbursements and the provision of the initial food hand-outs, it appeared as if everything was on course; hence, people's speculation for worst-case scenarios was curtailed. But, the reality of hunger and starvation was beginning to be felt as the stipend was clearly inadequate to meet the new cost of living being experienced.

VILLAGERS' RESPONSE STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVAL

When villagers were getting cosy in their new environment, the mining companies were gradually withdrawing their attention from them, arguing that it was no longer within their interest to continue meeting the food needs of these people beyond what they had done (*Zimbabwean Situation*, 23 October, 2013). Villagers were left to scratch from nowhere in their new environment for survival. The situation was compounded by the fact that very few of them got work opportunities at the mines as there appeared to have been a deliberate scheme to shun local villagers when the companies recruited labour. Many people from provinces as far afield as Mashonaland provinces inundated the mines for menial jobs that included building, providing security and operating dampers, front-end loaders and so on. While this was largely true of Mbada Diamonds, Marange Resources and DMC, the Chinese controlled Anjin Investments hired most of its labour from China, even for jobs requiring minimal skills. All this weighed heavily against villagers' aspirations to benefit both directly and indirectly from the diamonds being mined in their area.

Many able-bodied men and women at Odzi were idle, especially because, after failing to secure jobs at the newly established mines, they could not turn to crop cultivation since the available acreage was just too small for that. Even the collection of wild fruits such as *nyii*, *shumha*, *mauyu* or *mandidwe* that used to be sources of additional nutritious food was no longer practised at Odzi because the fruit trees were unavailable (Tavuyanago, *et al*, 2010). Hunting, which the younger men were generally accustomed to at Ushonje in Chiadzwa, was also not feasible. Virtually, the state inadvertently created hopeless individuals with nothing to look up to, save for just becoming owners by default of five-roomed core houses. The housing units were themselves planned in a manner suggestive of a town set up. Normally, the assumption is that people in towns would be employed in the industries and factories; hence, would afford to purchase their food. At Odzi, no known economic enterprise was envisaged other than the small plots meant at best for gardening purposes. People were impoverished overnight since no provision was made for them to remain responsible for their own upkeep except to look

to Government and mining companies back at Chiadzwa to feed them. However, by nature, human beings are gregarious and innovative in the face of renewed threats against their survival (Ranger, 1985).

After having been satisfied that they had been dumped, some people embarked on buying and selling of wares in nearby City of Mutare. Some women organised to cross borders, especially into Mozambique and South Africa, to buy food items and other goods for sale. One or two men who owned small trucks plied the Odzi-Mutare route, ferrying travellers. Others went to crop-producing areas of Nyanga, Honde Valley and Mutasa to seek domestic work as means to eke out a living. The elderly and the disabled people, however, bore the brunt of these complexities of relocation as it was increasingly difficult for them to come to terms with their new environment and to make plans on how to keep alive. When they were still at Chiadzwa, they could depend on their livestock as well as income-generating projects long established at their homes such as running chickens, tending gardens or weaving. All these activities were untenable at Odzi. The cattle population declined fast due to stock theft rampant at Odzi and the absence of sufficient grazing land to allow for their reproduction at the rate comparable to Chiadzwa. A good number of cattle and goats were traded through barter exchange as people's desperation and vulnerability in the face of extreme food shortage was being taken advantage of by unscrupulous traders.

Following 'firm' pledges made by mining companies to support people's livelihoods, NGOs that used to provide food aid at Chiadzwa were no longer doing so. For example, Plan International-Zimbabwe, which established its offices in Mutare in 1986, ran a food aid programme as an Implementing Partner of the WFP (*Interview with Chief Chiadzwa*). This eased pressure, especially during those agricultural seasons when harvests were poor. In some instances, school pupils and even adults went on a feeding programme. In fact, Plan International's assistance programmes extended to construction of classroom blocks and teachers' houses in most schools in Marange. Distances walked by pupils to schools had also been significantly reduced when several new schools had been built at the donation of whole infrastructure by Plan International, including a systematic school feeding programme for the children (Kusena, 2010). However, at Odzi, things changed. The distance to the only two schools serving the newly established communities increased with the expanding housing programme as people were being relocated in batches, pending completion of construction work in progress. While at Chiadzwa pupils received *maheu*, porridge and beans during tea break, courtesy of NGOs, at Odzi, the companies were unable to do likewise in spite of their promises, prompting many pupils to drop out of school as they almost always went out hungry (*Interview with Magwere*). The Government, ironically, pretended as if all was well.

CONCLUSION

The article has attempted to reveal the extent of suffering experienced by victims of displacement and the overall picture that emerges regarding food security is one of desperation. The seemingly noble reasons for relocating people from Chiadzwa to ARDA Transau, Odzi, following the new diamond find, were fast overtaken by events. Food scarcity was rife. Many unforeseen shortfalls of the relocation exercise were unfolding and particularly the problem of food shortage was proving to be insurmountable, at least in the short term, as Government remained virtually silent about how to get an effective and lasting solution to the plight of the new immigrants. The means through which to raise food were unavailable. Like the biblical exodus in which Israelites were being moved out of Pharaoh's bondage to the 'Land of Honey and Milk' of Canaan, the newly resettled villagers at Odzi were yearning to return to Chiadzwa after experiencing the worst food crisis in their memory. There was increasing evidence that their food security concerns were being neglected by both the state and the mining companies.

Nevertheless, the call to be relocated back to Chiadzwa by people at Odzi was quite unfortunate given the new state of affairs then obtaining there. As soon as they left, the mining companies immediately ripped into their former fields, doing great harm to the environment in the process. As noted already, the results of the study by Zela on the Odzi-Save water quality clearly showed “the environmental and potential health risks to people and their livelihoods as a result of poor mining practices in the Marange diamond region” (Zela Report, 2012). Confirming these reports were the testimonies given in Parliament by the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs in Manicaland, Mushowe, who emphasised that, “People have no food, not because they are lazy but because their fields have been turned into mining gullies by the (mining) companies. They have no fields”. (*The Herald*, 24 April 2014). All this helps to buttress the conclusion that the mining operations at Chiadzwa were hastily embarked upon without taking into consideration questions of sustainability and sustainable development, particularly at the level of food security. It should be stressed, however, that every effort was being put by villagers themselves to make do with their new situation by embarking on a wide range of activities aimed at restoring their food security, although this proved to be very difficult. Residents were keen to engage and implore Government and humanitarian organisations to look into their case with the urgency it really deserved.

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