

# Reconstruction of natural resource management institutions in post-conflict countries

## MARENA Research Project

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*Above: The Chimanimani Mountains in Manica Province, Mozambique*

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### Summary

The Marena Project has sought to enhance the productive capacity of the renewable natural resource sector in post-conflict countries - on an economically, institutionally and environmentally sustainable basis. To do this, the research aimed to:

- identify the constraints and opportunities for reconstruction of sustainable and participatory renewable natural resource management institutions in post-conflict situations
- examine the role of these institutions in environmental rehabilitation

The intention is:

- to identify an appropriate framework for analysing renewable natural resource management institutions in post-conflict countries (see our [Working Paper no. 1](#))
- develop and promote more efficient and participatory policy and institutional models for local level management and regulation of renewable natural resources (see our policy [Briefings](#), as well as reports on regional workshops in [Chimoio, Mozambique](#) and [Addis Ababa, Ethiopia](#))
- identify regional constraints on renewable natural resource management in these countries, and promote appropriate policy responses (see our policy [Briefings](#), plus a report on our [workshop in Sussex](#))

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### Background to the research

It is now widely recognised that maintenance and enhancement of the natural resource base in sub-Saharan Africa is dependent not simply on population numbers, but crucially on appropriate social and financial investment strategies by local people and governments. In turn, it is increasingly clear that these investment strategies depend not only on knowledge and attitudes of individuals on the one hand, and economic incentives influencing their behaviour on the other, but also critically on the strength and nature of institutions, both formal and informal, which structure the relationship between rural populations, their

livelihoods, and renewable natural resources. Recent work at IDS Sussex on 'environmental entitlements' has focused on the central role of formal and informal institutions in mediating relationships between environment and society. Drawing on New Institutional Economics, this research is attempting to provide an analytical framework by which experience of institutions in one location can be applied to another.

This work seeks to separate analytically discussion of 'institutions' from discussion of 'policy' of government and agencies, stressing the opportunities, but also the limitations provided by community-level institutions concerned with RNR management. Thus whilst development policy in the RNR sector has tended to prioritise concepts of 'stakeholder participation' and 'community-level management' in recent years, both theoretical work on environmental entitlements, and practical experience of change in a number of sub-Saharan African countries, have called into question the notion of 'community', and the extent to which direct stakeholder participation is feasible and will contribute towards longer-term development goals (c.f. Leach and Mearns, 1996). At a local level, 'communities' are as often characterised by conflict, for example between different social groups, or between men and women (Harrison, 1995), as by co-operation.

In addition to these problems, the ability of both 'institutions' and 'policy' to promote RNR investment has also been made problematic in recent years by a series of protracted violent conflicts and complex political emergencies in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Across the region, there is concern not only with the role played by institutions in RNR management, but also crucially how to (re)construct and foster such institutions in situations where government structures have been under severe stress or have broken down completely, and large sections of the population have been displaced. Recent academic research and policy attention has reflected this concern with post-conflict reconstruction, and has analysed specific contexts in which there has been repatriation of refugees and displaced persons.

For example, since 1991 Executive Committee Meeting of the UNHCR, the High Commissioner has stressed the importance of considering repatriation as a 'durable solution' to humanitarian crises which can promote long-term development; whilst other multilateral and bilateral development agencies have increasingly turned their attention to the aftermath of war and conflict as the 'norm' within which development need to be promoted. The World Bank has recently completed a number of studies into post-conflict repatriation and rehabilitation in Africa, and has developed new lending operations specifically to assist post-conflict reintegration of displaced people. Meanwhile, at the end of the 1980s, UNRISD initiated a programme of research to investigate socio-economic aspects of rehabilitation in Africa. Ongoing research at IDS, meanwhile, is concerned with post-conflict reconstruction, notably within the context of the "Sustainable Livelihoods" and "Complex Political Emergencies" (COPE) programmes. However, within the general concern with 'reconstruction' and 'rehabilitation', the natural resource sector has remained something of a side issue, despite the central importance of this sector in contributing to local peoples' and returnees' livelihoods.

The 'extended environmental entitlements' framework (Leach *et al.*, 1997) developed at IDS, and New Institutional Economics, provide an extremely useful basis on which analysis of post-conflict countries can be extended to address such environmental management issues. The former uses an extended form of entitlements analysis (after Sen) to explore the ways in which differently-positioned social actors command environmental goods and services. It aims to enhance current poor understanding of the dynamics of institutional arrangements in determining environmental outcomes. At the same time, theoretical advances of New Institutional Economics provide a basis for understanding how organisational arrangements, rules and patterns of behaviour, both formal and informal, affect access to and use of natural resources. The concept of transaction costs - the costs of obtaining information, searching out economic opportunities, and placing trust in other parties - is central to NIE. And yet transaction costs are almost inevitably higher in situations of risk and uncertainty (such as during and after conflict). In this context it is interesting to examine - both theoretically and practically - whether the rational response is to retreat from formal transactions and rely more on social arrangements, or whether the transaction costs implied within informal social institutions are themselves put under intolerable strain during and after conflict situations. Meanwhile, the displacement engendered by conflict situations provides an additional dimension to the community fragmentation noted above, by alienating 'stayers' from 'returnees', and often promoting policy which prioritises the latter whilst ignoring the former.

### ***Case study: southern Ethiopia***

In the case of southern Ethiopia, environmental degradation has been a concern of governments for decades, with some dating such problems to the conquest and occupation of the region by northern Ethiopian armies in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Land reform by the Derg government after 1975 was partly orientated towards addressing land insecurity and a highly unequal distribution of land, and after the 1984-85 famine, an Environmental Reclamation Programme based on food-for-work provided by external donors, though concentrated in northern Ethiopia, became the second largest such programme in Africa. However, such initiatives were criticised by small farmers as being 'top-down' and relying too heavily on government-controlled and imposed institutions and their leaders, and external evaluations were muted at best. Since the fall of the Derg government in 1991, there has been a new emphasis on 'participation' of local people in environmental programmes and in the development of a National Conservation Strategy (NCS) established with the assistance of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 1990).

Against this policy context, the period since 1991 has witnessed the return to Ethiopia of significant numbers of refugees who had fled to neighbouring countries during the Mengistu era. Major responses to this return movement have included the provision of funding by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the South Eastern Rangelands Project (SERP), which sought to increase capacity of absorption of pastoralists in eastern Ethiopia, measured in terms of increasing livestock productivity, food security, and

enhancement of sustainable use of natural resources in areas of reintegration. This project, as well as a series of 'Quick Impact Projects' (QIPs) in the south, which often had environmental components, aimed to attract returnees from transit centres to their villages of origin. However, such projects have remained relatively orientated towards short-term goals, and the context of returning refugees have arguably reinforced rather than reduced the top-down and technocratic nature of interventions.

### ***Case study: Mozambique***

The exodus of refugees from Mozambique from the mid-1980s onwards was, at that time, one of the most significant mass displacements of population that the world had ever seen. As the country collapsed into war, violence, and economic chaos, up to two million people were displaced outside Mozambique, and three million inside the country itself. The signing of a peace agreement in 1992 signalled the start of a return to peace and stability in the region, and by the time that democratic elections had occurred in 1994, a massive and voluntary repatriation of Mozambican refugees had begun from neighbouring countries.

Although the repatriation process as a whole was judged by a success by the international community, and it could be argued that with local exceptions, Mozambique suffers little serious environmental degradation, a number of problems of access to, and potential degradation of natural resources remain. First, it is important to note that in many cases, refugees were either unable to return to their area of origin, or it was difficult to say exactly where that 'area of origin' might be, given the high level of displacement during the war. This problem has been compounded by overlapping claims and confusion over rights to land and natural resources in the post-war period more generally. A series of 'layers' of land rights, and institutions regulating those rights, are connected to historical occupation and lineage membership, the colonial period, post-independence nationalisations and subsequent population redistribution during the war. This has been compounded by the allocation of land during and after the war to commercial companies as 'concessions' for agriculture, hunting or forestry has further undermined traditional rights to land.

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## **Briefings**

The Marena team has built up a series of policy *Briefings* aimed at policy-makers and others with an interest in natural resource management. Each briefing provides a narrative of a case study or particular policy, drawing conclusions from field experience in either Mozambique or Ethiopia. The following briefings are all available as [pdf documents](#) (downloadable documents do not include photographs, in order to limit their size). Paper copies of the *Briefings* can be sent out on request: please email [R.Black@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:R.Black@sussex.ac.uk)

**Ethiopia**

1. [Conflict, 'post-conflict', and Natural Resource Management](#)
2. [An overview of Natural Resource Management under the Derg](#)
3. [Migration, resettlement and return](#)
4. [Returnees and Natural Resource Management](#)
5. [Struggles over 'the land of the deceased'](#)
6. [Government, community and donor relationships in NRM](#)
7. [Participation: a dilemma for extension agents](#)
8. [Interpretation of user rights](#)
9. [Conservation and participation in 'community forests'](#)
10. [Characteristics of 'traditional' forest management](#)
11. [Conflict, transition and deforestation](#)
12. [Identifying the 'community' in a contested woodlot](#)
13. [Gender and Natural Resource Management](#)
14. [Inter-group conflict over land tenure](#)
15. [Participatory paradigms](#)
16. [Trends in irrigation management](#)
17. [Conflicts over communal grazing areas](#)
18. [Forest management in Desse'a](#)

**Mozambique**

1. [Conflict, 'post-conflict' and traditional authorities](#)
2. [Traditional leaders and CBNRM](#)
3. [Elephants: problem or opportunity?](#)
4. [Charcoal, hunting and fires](#)
5. [Spirits and Natural Resources](#)
6. [Individuals and innovations](#)
7. [Community representation in CBNRM: the case of Moribane](#)
8. [Community representation in CBNRM: the case of Tsetserra](#)
9. [Implementing CBNRM in M'punga](#)
10. [Conflicting perspectives on the natural resource base](#)

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**Workshop reports**

Two regional workshops have been held, in Chimoio, Mozambique, in September 2000, and in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February 2001. A workshop was held in Sussex to draw together the conclusions from the two case study countries, and will be followed by a joint policy workshop for senior-level NRM decision-makers in Johannesburg in September 2001 (to be held jointly with the 'Panrusa' project, University of Sheffield.)

To download reports on these workshops, please click below. These documents are in [pdf format](#):

- **Report on Workshop in [Chimoio, September 2000](#) (English version)**
  - **Relatorio dum workshop em [Chimoio, Mocambique, Setembro 2000](#)**

*(versao em portugues)*

- **Report on Workshop in [Addis Ababa, February 2001](#)**
- **Report on Workshop in [Sussex, March 2001](#)**
- **Information about [Marena-Panrusa workshop, Johannesburg, 10-11 September 2001](#)**

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## Working papers

The following Marena working papers are now available in downloadable [pdf format](#).

1. [Reconstruction of natural resource management institutions in post-conflict situations: a framework for analysis](#) (Elizabeth Watson, Richard Black, Elizabeth Harrison)
2. [Legitimacy of local institutions for natural resource management in Pindandanga, Mozambique](#) (Antonio Serra)
3. [Legitimacy of local institutions for natural resource management in M'punga, Mozambique](#) (Antonio Serra)
4. [Inter-institutional alliances and conflicts in natural resource management in Borana, Oromia Region, Ethiopia](#) (Elizabeth Watson)
5. [Enclosing or Individualising the Commons? The implementation of two user rights approaches to communal area management in northern Ethiopia](#) (Tarakegn Yibabie)
6. [State and community forests: Yegof, South Wollo](#) (Alula Pankhurst)
7. [Natural resource management policy in Mozambique: an overview](#) (Antonio Ribeiro)
8. Natural resource management institutions in Ethiopia: an overview (Alula Pankhurst)

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## Field Sites

### *Ethiopia*

#### North Wello

- Meket
- South Wello
- Yegof
- Tehuledere
- Kutaber
- Tigray
- Desse'a
- Borana



### *Mozambique*

#### Manica Province

- Tsetserra
- Moribane
- Mahate
- Pindandanga



- ***Moribane Forest Reserve***

Right: Centro de Experimentação Florestal runs a field station in the Moribane Forest Reserve, from where our research is based





The Forest Reserve of Moribane was first gazetted by the Portuguese colonial government in 1950, covering an area of 53km<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of the reserve was to protect a watershed area from deforestation. During the war between the government and Renamo, the Moribane area became an important Renamo base, and there was considerable fighting and displacement in the area. Since the war, some former Renamo soldiers and others brought into the area have remained inside the reserve to farm, whilst others who had fled during the war to government-controlled towns and nearby Zimbabwe have returned.

Currently, the major issues for the Forestry Service under which Moribane falls are what are seen as uncontrolled burning of forest (especially for hunting, but also for collection of honey and other purposes) and the opening of forest land for agriculture, both of which are seen as presenting a threat to biodiversity of the forest. For populations who remained inside the reserve after the war, a major issue has emerged concerning the destruction of fields and crops by elephants, who have also returned since the war. The reserve lies to the south of Sussundenga, an area of high agricultural potential that also appears to have attracted some new settlers in the post-war period (Sussundenga was also a major area of settlement by Portuguese farmers in the 1960s).

Currently, the provincial Forestry and Wildlife Service, working with our research partners, CEF, are seeking to re-establish a management regime for the Moribane reserve, working with local communities. The reserve is seen as having suffered greatly both during the war and subsequently as state-sanctioned and traditional rules on management of the forest have been disregarded by forest dwellers. In practical terms, our research hopes to contribute to the development of a sustainable and participatory management regime in Moribane, by subjecting to critical scrutiny the assumptions on which this new community-based approach is founded. We will examine management and use of the forest in historical perspective, and the emergence of discourses on these processes at both community and state level. We are interested in the extent to which traditional forms of authority (principally the structure of chiefs, or *régulos*) have, or have sought legitimacy over RNR management.

## • ***Pindanganga***

The village of Pindanganga lies within Gondola District that lies on the edge of the so-called 'Beira Corridor' - a 'safe' area protected by government and Zimbabwean troops during the war in Mozambique. During colonial times, a forest reserve was proposed in the Pindanganga area, although it was never given legal status. Subsequently, there have been various pressures on the forests in this area. First, during the war, along the Beira corridor itself, a 3km strip of land was clear felled as a precaution against attack by Renamo forces. In the post-war period, Pindanganga has witnessed return of displaced populations, as well as pressure on its forests from the production of charcoal for the urban market of Chimoio.

Within the Pindanganga area, there is currently a pilot initiative to develop a resource

management regime based on definition of a community area using participatory mapping. As part of a national initiative funded by the Dutch government via FAO, a training exercise in participatory mapping was undertaken in Pindanganga in February 1999, followed by the elaboration of a community map using GPS technology. This process aims to provide a technical annex to the new Land Law on how to define community areas for CBNRM projects. The community area defined in Pindanganga - which corresponds broadly to the area controlled by an individual *régulo* - is now awaiting approval by the government Geography and Mapping Service. Locally, a range of NGOs and government agencies were involved in the mapping process, which seeks to provide local communities with a basis to protect their resources against outside interests.

In addition, a northern NGO has been working in Pindanganga since 1996, implementing an integrated rural development programme. This programme has included the development of community interest groups to promote economic activities. Groups have been established, including women's groups, groups for the raising of livestock, and a group of charcoal producers. The latter group has obtained a group licence for charcoal production, although a number of individual producers continue to make and sell charcoal illegally.

Pindanganga appears to represent an area where there is considerable pressure on natural resources, both from population growth, and from demand for wood and charcoal for the urban market. Unlike Moribane, it has witnessed various outside interventions, from agencies that have engaged with 'community' structures in different ways. We plan to examine the process of interaction between external agencies and different forms of community institutions, paying particular attention to the felling of trees for firewood and charcoal.

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