



# **Land Governance in an Interconnected World**

**ANNUAL WORLD BANK CONFERENCE ON LAND AND POVERTY  
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**Security of Tenure Model: Its impact on livelihoods of small holder farmers in Zimbabwe following the Land Reform Programme. A case study of Chifundi and Elmily Park in Makonde District: Mashonaland West Province.**

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## **Abstract**

Zimbabwe has an agricultural based economy hence land is a fundamental pillar for economic growth and employment creation. Post-Independence, Government of Zimbabwe embarked on a Land Reform Programme which saw Zimbabweans who hitherto were landless now being owners of productive land. Tenure security (A1 Settlement Permits) issued to small holder farmers in resettled areas has contributed to increased productivity and substantial developments. Over the years, the level of productivity and investment at Chifundi and Elmily Park has improved significantly. Women in the study area have acknowledged land is an essential resource in their lives. As such, improved women's access to land through secured tenure rights have empowered women to support their livelihoods. Efforts by the Government to accord every land holder secure tenure should be strengthened as this influences not only the relationship between people and the land they occupy but also the level of investment the land owner will make and the financial assistance the land holder will receive which ultimately results in transformed livelihoods.

## **Key Words:**

Key words: Land Reform Programme, Productivity, Rural livelihoods, Small holder farmers, Tenure security.



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## 1. Introduction

This research study examines the extent to which tenure security impacts livelihoods of small holder farmers at Chifundi and Elmily Park farms in Zimbabwe. The two farms were resettled under the A1 farming model and are located in the western part of the country. Beneficiaries resettled on these farms were from marginalised communal lands where subsistence agriculture was their source of livelihood.

Zimbabwe has a total land area of 39.6 million hectares and of these, 33.4 million hectares are reserved for agriculture while the rest is reserved for national parks, forests and urban settlements. Pre-Independence, rights over land for most Africans was restricted, notably, 51% of the country was reserved as the European area, 22% was set aside for Native Reserves, 7.8% as Native Purchase areas, Forest areas 0.6% and 0.1% as undetermined area. The majority of black people were crowded in arid communal areas characterised by harsh, hostile climate and marginal soils of limited agricultural potential. There was therefore need to correct this injustice through the implementation of land reform. Land for resettlement was to be obtained from the Large Scale Commercial category of 15.5 million hectares.

Zimbabwe has an agricultural based economy hence land is a fundamental pillar for economic growth, employment creation and rural development. Agricultural land has become a source of livelihood for many Zimbabweans. To add on, the country predominantly has a rural population that derives its livelihood from agriculture and other related rural economic activities. These activities have since been supported by the Land Reform Programme.

## 2. Land Reform Programme

Post-Independence, Government of Zimbabwe embarked on a Land Reform Programme. The Land Reform Programme led to the adoption of two farming models; namely Model A1 and Model A2. Model A1 was meant to decongest the communal lands, while Model A2 created a new set up for commercial agriculture. A total of 245 044 beneficiaries have been settled since the onset of the Land Reform Programme (1980 to date) broken down as follows;



**Table 1: Number of beneficiaries resettled**

<b>PHASE</b>	<b>EXTENT (HECTARES)</b>	<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>
<b>PHASE I</b>	3,498,444.000	71,000
<b>PHASE II INCEPTION</b>	168,263.808	4,697
<b>MODEL A1</b>	5,979,000.000	149,743
<b>MODEL A2</b>	2,978,000.000	19,604
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><i>12,623,707.808</i></b>	<b><i>245,044</i></b>

Source: (Ministry of Lands, 2017)

### **2.1 Land Reform and Resettlement Programme Phase I (1980-1998)**

This Phase targeted to acquire 8.3 million hectares of land to resettle 162,000 families. By 1997 a total of 3,498,444 hectares of land had been acquired and 71,000 families were resettled. This was done under the willing-seller willing-buyer arrangement as stipulated in the Lancaster House Constitution. The seemingly slow pace was as a result of a number of challenges which limited the Government’s ability to meet the resettlement set targets.

### **2.2 Inception Phase of Phase II of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme (1998 – 2000)**

The Inception Phase of the Phase II of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme was essentially the beginning of Phase II. It commenced in October 1998 with a two-year Inception Phase where farms covering 2.1 million hectares were to be acquired for resettlement. It was the beginning of the compulsory acquisition process with Government paying full compensation (land and permanent improvements). This was also a period of active dialogue between the Zimbabwe and British Governments on the modalities of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme. An International Land Donors’ Conference was convened in 1998 as a way of seeking consensus and funding for the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme. The Government of Zimbabwe using limited resources, was only able to acquire a total of 168 263,808 hectares and resettled 4 697 families between October 1998 and June 2000.



### **2.3 Phase II (Fast Track Phase) 2000 – To date**

Given the complications of the Inception Phase of the Phase II, a Fast Track Land Reform Programme of Phase II was launched on 15 July 2000 to speed up the pace of land acquisition and resettlement. A criteria was established for identification of farms for compulsory acquisition under Phase II of the Land Reform Programme guided by the following principles:

1. Derelict land
2. Under-utilised land
3. Land under multiple ownership
4. Land near Communal Areas

### **3. Tenure models in Zimbabwe**

The Zimbabwean land tenure system dates back to the colonial era with the arrival of the colonial settlers in the late 1890s (Paradzayi, 2007). The first foreign settlers who came to Zimbabwe were interested in mining. This interest however changed as the returns were not as expected. Increasingly, white settlers then came into the country now with the aim of starting up farms, a trend which the British government quickly took into account (Blume, 1996). During this time land was customarily owned. African farmers were then driven out of their best fertile land. This displacement was supported by the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. The Act supported the formation of the European Crown land and the African land. The “Crown” land accounted for about 50% of the total land area and was granted to white farmers in form of freehold system (Blume, 1996). However, the sale, leasing and other forms of land transfer in the “Crown” land to the native people was prohibited.

In 1980, Zimbabwe inherited a land tenure system which recognized both public and private ownership of land. FAO (2002), defines land tenure as the relationship, whether legally or customarily defined, among people, as individuals or groups, with respect to land. It defines how access is granted to rights to use, control, and transfer land, as well as associated responsibilities and restraints. Multi-forms of tenure structures in Zimbabwe therefore now exist with each resettlement model being awarded separate tenure model. The following forms of land tenure are currently operational in Zimbabwe:



### **3.1 Freehold tenure:**

These are issued to beneficiaries of small scale commercial farms who were issued land way back before the Land Reform Programme and obtained leases with option to purchase. Upon payment of purchase price and having made substantial developments the lessee is awarded a Deed of Grant. After having been issued with a certificate of no present interest such land can therefore be transferred. Holders of freehold title are entitled to a whole basket of rights that include the right to: occupy, use, sale, lease, bequeath, hypothecate, donate, inherit and mortgage land.

#### **Benefits associated with deed of grant**

- It is registered at the Deeds Registry
- Can be used as collateral
- It recognized spouses and can be issued to spouses jointly
- It promotes investments on farms
- It is transferrable
- Ownership is guaranteed

### **3.2 Leasehold tenure**

Leasehold tenure refers to all land occupied in terms of an agreement of lease. These are issued either as short term (5-year lease), medium term (25-year lease) or long term (99-year lease). 25 year leases are issued to applicants who venture into projects that are not related to agriculture in rural areas. Such enterprises include solar power generating projects, establishment of schools among many other projects. On the other hand, 99 year leases are issued to A2 land beneficiaries of the Land Reform Programme.

#### **Benefits of 99-year lease agreements**

- Can be used as collateral
- It recognized spouses and can be issued to spouses jointly



- It guarantees ownership for a period of 99 years
- It encourages/ promotes investments on farms
- Title surveys attached to the lease document assures the plot holder of the farm boundaries.
- It is registered at the deeds office
- The lease has obligations which encourages proper land management
- Security guaranteed by the lease document promotes increased production on farms

### **3.3 Customary tenure:**

Refers to land rights which are acquired and held in terms of customary law and exist in the communal areas of the Country.

#### **Benefits of customary tenure**

- Every adult member of the community is a potential land owner
- Land ownership is usually at little cost

### **3.4 A1 Settlement Permits**

These are issued according to Statutory Instrument 53 of 2014 to land beneficiaries who are small holder farmers (A1). Initially these farmers are issued temporal permits issued by District Lands Committee which eventually graduates into A1 Settlement Permit. A1 Settlement Permits are open ended hence they are considered to be issued for a life time.

Unique to this tenure model is the fact that it clearly spells out the owners of the land together with their spouses and also that the permit's lifespan is indefinite. It recognises polygamous marriages which has been a major cause of contestation in some families. Worldwide, tenure problems usually arise because of weak governance. However, for Zimbabwe the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement has been able to address tenure problems that arise as a result of inheritance in small scale farms through the issuance of A1 settlement permits. The permits compel spouses to have joint ownership with equal and undivided shares. It further ensures that all children of both sex have equal tenure rights and access to land.



## Benefits of A1 Settlement Permits

- They are issued to spouses jointly
- Can be used as collateral
- Layouts attached to the permit show the plot boundaries hence reduce boundary conflicts
- Provides security which encourages investments, hence increased production on farms.

Secured access to land as a resource is a critical component for rural communities to escape poverty. In this regard, Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement provides security of tenure documents that can be used as collateral by farmers. Notably, the deed of grant, A1 Settlement permit and the 99-year lease document are being used to source funding from financial institutions thus encouraging investments on farms and in turn boost production levels. Usually when a farmer is secure that farmer tends to develop and invest on the farm. Ultimately, production increases and the farmer produces not only for their own sustenance but with surplus produce that can be put at the market.

## 4. Issuance of A1 Settlement permits

A total of 1 679 A1 land settlement permits have been issued since 2014 to date. For a farm to be considered for issuance of A1 permit the farm has to be dispute free. Additionally, the number of beneficiaries on the farm should not exceed the farms carrying capacity. Data forms with information of farm beneficiaries and that of their spouses are used for the production of Settlement Permits. These permits are accompanied by farm layouts generated by the planning division within the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement. GPS machines are used for capturing coordinates of each plot. The permits are signed by the Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement before they are signed by the beneficiaries and issued.

Zimbabwe recognizes the one family, one farm policy. Additionally, the Constitution of Zimbabwe makes it clear that all resources in the country including land should be distributed equally between men and women. As a result, women can have access to land either in their own right or jointly with their spouses. All tenure documents issued to land beneficiaries have a provision of including both spouses; hence they can be registered in both names. In cases of death the inheritance laws of the country are used and women can inherit land in their own right.



## **5. Study area and methodology**

Chifundi and Elmily Park are A1 farms neighboring each other measuring 832 hectares and 1132 hectares respectively. These farms were established in 2000 at the onset of the Land Reform Programme. A total of 44 families were settled at Chifundi and Elmily Park is home to 35 settlers. Each small holder farmer is allocated 6 hectares arable land, 1 hectare for the establishment of a homestead and 13 hectares of grazing which is shared communally. This will translate to each individual farmer having access to a total of 20 hectares.

27 farmers from Chifundi farm formed a cooperative to pool their resources together (Chifundi Agro-dealers). The study also explored the contribution from the proceeds of the cooperative to individual household income.

Chifundi and Elmily Park were considered as case study areas because they were the first farms to be issued A1 Settlement Permits in 2014. Before, they had been issued with certificate of occupation by the District Lands Committee. For 14 years they utilised the land allocated to them but without guaranteed security. With the introduction of A1 Settlement permits it has become clearer that the land allocated to them was for a life time so they could invest on the land.

Random sampling was used to identify beneficiaries interviewed during the research. 37 beneficiaries from both Elmily Park and Chifundi farm were interviewed. Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions.

## **6. Discussion and Findings**

To determine the impact of the security of tenure model on livelihoods of small holder farmers under the Land Reform Programme this study uses data from the past four farming seasons that is from the 2012-2013 agricultural season to 2016-2017 season. Since the A1 Settlements permits came into effect in 2014 the seasons mentioned above gives a substantial basis for comparison. The contribution of the tenure security in relation to productivity and its impact on livelihoods of small holder farmers in the study area is examined. The findings will elaborate the status of livelihoods both at household level and community level. It is also important to note that the hectarage allocated to each individual farmer for crop production are being used to full capacity. Since livelihoods of the rural population are based on secure and equitable access to land the study also explored the extent to which A1 Settlement Permit, a tenure model for small scale farmers, has guaranteed secure rights to farmers.



## 6.1 Livelihood status of small holder farmers

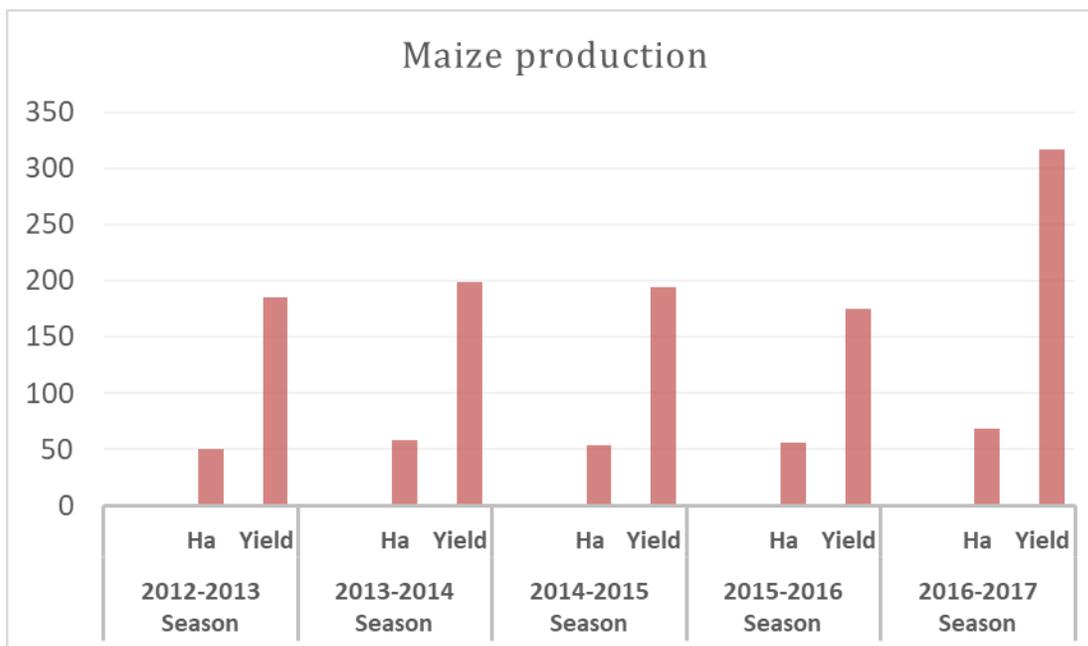
From the 37 households sampled it is evident that they are accumulating wealth and thereafter investing on and off the farms. The activities by the cooperative at Chifundi has had a positive impact on the economy stimulating demand for services.

## 6.2 Productivity levels

Responsible governance of tenure of land and resources related to it promotes adequate and secure tenure rights. Pursuant to the issuance of A1 Settlement Permits in Chifundi and Elmily Park productivity levels have improved. This has been buttressed by the fact that when security of tenure is guaranteed the best out of the land is realised. Land beneficiaries in the study area specialise in production of maize, soybeans, wheat and other horticultural crops.

There has been evident growth in the production of maize as a cash crop as illustrated below

**Figure 1: Maize production**



Source: Author, 2018



**Figure 1** illustrates the trend in the production of maize by smallholder farmers in the area of study. It clearly shows that the yield for maize production has increased over time. This has been as a result of many factors among which is the fact that maize is the staple food in the country. Furthermore, these farmers also managed to access inputs from schemes such as Presidential input scheme. Off late, the Government during the 2016-2017 agricultural season introduced a Special Maize Programme for Import Substitution. This programme coupled with the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Mechanisation Scheme has availed farm implements on a loan basis to farmers resulting in a rise in hecterage committed to agriculture and a sharp rise in the production level. With these programmes, farms in the study area were assisted with farming implements, inputs that include fuel, seed, herbicides and fertilizer with their tenure documents as guarantee for the credit facility hence the maximum utilisation of arable land was realised and yield has increased as noted in the 2016-2017 season. As a result, the standards of living of small holder farmers in the study area has improved through their earnings from agriculture.

### 6.3 Household income per agricultural season

Data obtained from the farmers interviewed was consolidated for each season and total income for the respective season was calculated as illustrated in table 2. Household incomes from the sale of maize and soya beans were combined to get an average household income per season.

Table 2 shows a comparison between the average monthly income and the country's poverty datum line as prescribed by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency. From the sample a total of 17 households who grew both maize and soya beans were considered in the analysis with the view of establishing the income generated from the two crops over the specified period in relation to the monthly poverty datum line. Except in the 2013-2014 season the proceeds from maize and soya beans for the remaining four seasons gives evidence that the small holder farmers lived above the poverty datum. The 2016- 2017 season had an average monthly income of \$674.66 whilst the poverty datum line for the country had an average of \$579.15. Thus, the living standards of small holder farmers were transformed.



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**Table 2: Household income vs Zimbabwe Poverty datum line**

Season	Total maize Yield from sample of 17 households	Price of maize per tonne	Average income per household for maize	Total Soya beans yield	Price of soya beans per tonne	Average income per household per season for soya beans	Average Seasonal Income per household (maize and soya beans)	Average Monthly Income per household	ZIM Poverty Datum line
2012 / 2013	185	\$388	\$ 4 222.35	63	\$500	\$1852.94	\$6075.29	\$506.27	\$504.03
2013 / 2014	199	\$390	\$ 4 565.29	36	\$500	\$1058.82	\$5625.11	\$468.67	\$506.23
2014 / 2015	212	\$390	\$ 4 863.53	45	\$500	\$1 323.52	\$6187.05	\$515.59	\$491.26
2015 / 2016	175	\$390	\$ 4 014.70	65	\$500	\$1 911.76	\$5926.46	\$493.87	\$478.90
2016 / 2017	317	\$390	\$ 7 272.35	28	\$500	\$823.52	\$8095.87	\$674.66	\$579.15

Source: (Zim National Statistical Agency, 2016) (Zim Statistical Agency, 2017), Author

According to the interviews conducted, farmers indicated that the proceeds from the crops sold have been a source of revenue to support their livelihoods. They argue that their standard of living has changed as they are able to secure food for 3 meals a day which is an indicator of poverty reduction. Additionally, they can now afford to pay for their health services as well as to secure decent accommodation within the farms. Of importance to note is also that the Government has provided a ready market for maize through the Grain Marketing Board hence the proceeds from farming are easily realized. The secured access to agricultural land that has been guaranteed by the A1 settlement permits has proved to be of fundamental importance with regards to improved rural livelihoods. This has been viewed by the small holder farmers as a crucial contributor to the income earned from land.



#### **6.4 Community resources**

The form in which land is owned determines the level of investment the land owner will make and consequently the financial assistance the land holder can receive. Likewise, Chifundi Agro-dealers in 2014 managed to secure a loan amounting to US\$ 79 000.00 for winter wheat production from one of the financial institution in Zimbabwe. Since the area under the cooperative is irrigable they have been engaged in winter wheat ploughing since 2014. Remarkably, they managed to pay off the loan after harvest and was granted another US\$100 000.00 for summer cropping. The cooperative has been successful to the extent that they managed to secure a centre pivot.

Small holder farmers who are members of the cooperative have confessed that they made massive investments in their lives after sharing the proceeds. These investments have come in form of vehicles, tractors and associated farm implement, construction of houses in urban areas among many other developments. With this in mind it can therefore be proven that standards of living for small holder farmers under the Land Reform Programme in the study area have improved.

#### **6.5 Investments by the small holder farmers**

According to (Scoones., 2009) livelihoods comprises of the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities for a means of living. In this regard, this research study sought to establish the investments and assets gained by the small holder farmers after having been issued with secure tenure.

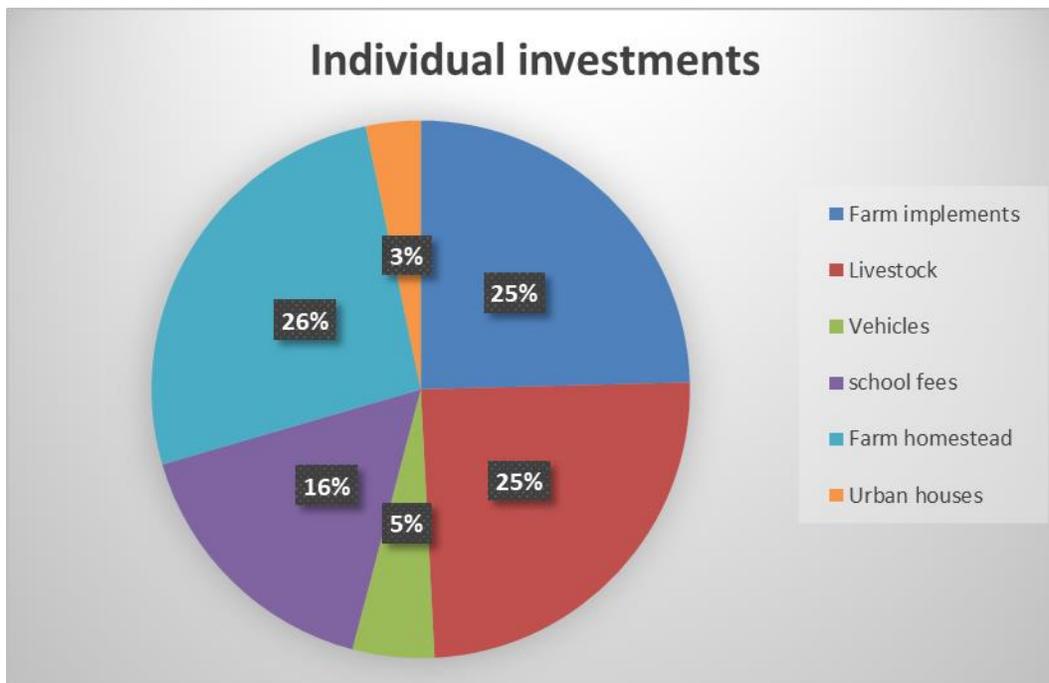
It was noted during the research that when the small holder farmers took over occupation of the farms, there were no infrastructural developments to accommodate them. In the year 2000 the study area was characterized by temporary round huts made from pole and dagga. Besides the limited financial resources they had at that time, the construction of temporary shelter could had also been as a result of the uncertainty of the land ownership. Their livelihoods were poor during this era. However, with the introduction of the A1 settlement permits which are for an open ended lifespan the smallholder farmers realized that they were there to stay hence the need to construct permanent structures. Also, their level of commitment to farming and the assistance they received for their farming activities made it possible for them to start investing in their lives as farmers.

All the farmers interviewed during the research have developed basic accommodation on the farms and some with even developing more accommodation in the towns nearby. Some of the homesteads at the



farms have been electrified and some having protected wells as their source of water. In other cases boreholes have been drilled to provide water sources both for domestic use and irrigating their fields. Figure 2 illustrates the types of investment done at household level and the extent to which these investments were done.

**Figure 2. Individual Investments**



**Source: Author,2018**

From the data collected it is evident that substantial investments were done to date. Major investments done by land beneficiaries include farm homesteads with 26%, farm implements with 25%, and livestock with 25%. Off farm investments that include securing houses in urban areas and schooling of dependents to the beneficiaries were also part of the investments.

## 6.6 Women and tenure security

The research findings indicated that women in polygamous marriages felt more confident and secure with the introduction of A1 Settlement Permits. They believe the tenure security supported their commitment to farming hence to maximum utilisation of the arable land was realised. Widows also welcomed this tenure system as they could now hold land in their own right. With temporal permits widows were often



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oppressed by the relatives of their late husband as they inherited such land leaving the widows with no source of income and as a result it was difficult for them to cater for their families. The A1 settlement permit however recognises that the land be registered in both the husband and wife or one of the surviving spouse. The transfer of ownership in the event of the death of the original holder is catered for in the permit. This has had a great impact in livelihoods of families headed by widows as they can afford to continue farming and taking care of their family needs.

## 7. Conclusion

Land ownership is a critical determinant of economic wellbeing, social status and political power. Furthermore, it is fundamental to know that the success that comes along with a Land Reform can be attributed to a number of factors which include the existing tenure structure as well as the adequate institutional infrastructure supporting the reform (Deininger, et al., 2009). The form in which land is owned determines the level of investment the land owner will make and the financial assistance the land holder will receive among many other rights.

As evidenced from the study area it can therefore be substantiated that a secure tenure model plays a crucial role in livelihood status of a household and the community as a whole. Over the years, the level of productivity and investment at Chifundi and Elmily Park has improved making the Land Reform Programme a success. Improved women's access to land and secured tenure rights have empowered women not only to meet their needs but also that of their families. Zimbabweans who hitherto were landless and waged a liberation war to regain land are now owners of productive land which has significantly contributed to a change in their livelihoods.

Secure access to land has improved the livelihoods of most Zimbabweans especially those of the rural community. The production of cash crops such as maize, tobacco, sugar beans, sugarcane and the rearing of livestock has been a source of income to most farmers. Thus, the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement has since played an important role through provision of a secure tenure model to ensure that land as a resource is used productively for the improved livelihoods of the rural community and also ensuring food security for the whole country. Efforts to accord every land holder proper and secure tenure should be encouraged as this influences the relationship between people and the land they occupy.



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