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**Table of Contents:     Volume 10     Number 8 October 2018**

## ARTICLES

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*Full Length Research Paper*

# The teaching Of Unhu/Ubuntu through Shona novels in Zimbabwean secondary schools: A case for Masvingo urban district

## N. Eunitah Viriri[1*] and Maradze Viriri[2]

[1]Department of Teacher Development, School of Education, Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe.
[2]Mutiusinazita High School, Buhera, Zimbabwe.

The study investigated the extent to which secondary schools contributed towards the promotion of *unhu* among secondary school learners through the teaching of Shona novels. It aimed at assessing teachers and learners' understanding of *unhu* and thereby establishing the extent to which they value the teaching of *unhu* through the Shona novel and ascertain the extent to which Shona teachers use prescribed texts to teach *unhu*. The study involved 16 Shona teachers and 20 'A' level Shona students from four secondary schools in Masvingo town. Data was gathered through questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. The study established that most teachers and learners had very limited knowledge on the *unhu* concept. As a result, Shona teachers appreciated the novel as a tool that can be used to impart morals not *unhu* in its broad sense. Some teachers therefore, unconsciously used fictional works to impart *unhu* values in learners. It was therefore concluded that despite the potential Shona novels in promoting unhu among Shona learners in secondary schools, teachers used them to a limited extent. This research is of the view that teachers' awareness of the *unhu* concept is of paramount importance for effective teaching of the values on pupils through the novel. Thus, there is need for *unhu* awareness workshops for professionals already in the field and the introduction of the *unhu* subject in teacher training institutions so that teachers can be effective implementers of the subject.

Key words: *Unhu/ubuntu*, Shona novels, Zimbabwean secondary schools, African world view, traditional education.

## INTRODUCTION

The teaching of *unhu* in the Zimbabwean primary and secondary school education came as a response to one of the Nziramasanga Commission's (1999) recommendations that *unhuism* be taught in all of Zimbabwe's cultures in order to curb moral decay in the Zimbabwean education sector. The promotion of *unhu* through the curriculum in both secondary and primary education sectors was introduced and effected in January

*Corresponding author. E-mail: eunitahviriri@gmail.com.

2017 when the 'new' curriculum framework anchored on *unhu* was launched. This is a pointer to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's desire to produce cultured citizens who abide by the ethos and values expected of them in Zimbabwe, which was key in the African traditional education.

*Unhu* has been central in the African traditional education where it was passed from generation to generation mainly through orature. The impartation of *unhu* among youngsters enabled pre-colonial African societies to live in peace and harmony as citizens thrived to uphold the cultural values in the different spheres of life. According to Marah (2006); Ociti (1973) and Sifuna and Otiende (2006), the chief business of the African traditional education was to equip generations with skills, ideals and truths for the society's success. Such an education had long been craved for especially in the secondary schools for ethical and moral formation of Zimbabwe's youths. Though the African philosophy has been introduced in the curriculum as a whole, the thrust of this study is finding out the extent to which the teaching of Shona literature, the novel in particular, carries the *unhu* impetus, especially, when curriculum planners have acknowledged that "literature is an ideological tool which is used to create self-awareness and promote community language and spiritual development, patriotism as well as *unhu/ubuntu/ vumunhu*" (Literature in Zimbabwean Indigenous Syllabus Forms 5-6 2015-2022). After all genuine literature must be seen mirroring the values and ethos of its recipients if it is functional. This implies that a complete Zimbabwean secondary school graduate should be identified by his/her culture as is dictated by Afrocentricity. Afrocentricity is "a pan-African idea of change which provides the proper education of children and the essence of an African cultural revival and survival" (Asante, 2015:1). The African commemoration of culture through education has been appreciated in the Zimbabwean school curricular which dictates that *unhu* be taught through various means, literature included (Viriri, 2017). The concept has been introduced as one of the topics to be taught through Shona drama, poetry and prose (novel) thus, written literature. In this respect literature is seen playing an important role in maintaining social order in society.

This study therefore seeks to answer questions such as: To what extent do the key stakeholders (teachers and learners) understand the *unhu* concept? Do secondary school teachers realise the importance of Shona novels in teaching *unhu*? and To what extent do teachers use these novels to promote *unhu* in secondary schools?

## Conceptual framework

*Unhu* is an African world view commonly known as *ubuntu* in the continent. Mukusha (2013) defines *unhu* as an African concept which represents and describes the way of life in African tribes. Thus, *unhu* presents communally set socio-cultural standards which people are expected to uphold. Among the Shona, *unhu* means the quality or attribute of being truly human or well-cultured (Furusa, 2002). One with *unhu* is referred to as *munhu* (person) meaning he/she carries with him/her the social-cultural values of the Shona society. *Unhu* binds the Southern, Central, West and East African communities of Bantu origin together in that, it is through the philosophy's belief that "I am because we are" and that they come to appreciate and recognise themselves as one (Ramose, 1999).The late former president of the Republic of South Africa, Nelson Mandela was a strong admirer of this ubuntu philosophy. He regarded *ubuntu* as a trait which makes Africans a unique and distinct among other races across the world. This worldview which is a binding cultural heritage is inherited and passed over generations among Africans (Mapara, 2013). The *Unhu* traits/attributes are also found among other nationalities outside Bantu origin. The concept (*unhu*) comes in different expressions (Samkange and Samkange, 1980: 77 cited in Sibanda, 2014). The commonness of *unhu* throughout the world is captured in Biko's (1978: 46) cited in Broodryk (2006) declaration "the great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great still has to come from Africa- giving the world a more human face". This discussion guides the current study in assessing how and to what extent the concept has been promoted through the teaching of Shona novels in Zimbabwean secondary schools taking in consideration its role in moulding an ideal citizen in society.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the mixed methods approach which enhanced thorough investigation and a deeper understanding of the promotion of *unhu* in schools as it combines the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods in data collection and analysis stages of a research. This study adopted the triangulation mixed methods design in which both quantitative and qualitative data was collected and given the same weighting so as to produce a thorough and well-validated conclusion on the promotion of *unhu* through the teaching of Shona novels. It involved 16 Shona teachers and 20 'A' level Shona learners from four secondary schools in Masvingo urban. In sampling schools and participants, the researcher considered mixed methods sampling. Thus, sampling methods were selected from the probability (quantitative) and non-probability (qualitative) designs. Probability sampling uses the random selection which is preferable for generalisation of findings to the larger population while the non-probability sampling approach is interested in the representativeness of concepts under study mainly for the purposes of illustration or explanation (Maree and Pietersen, 2007). The study mixed the sampling qualities from the two designs because it is concerned with the exploration and understanding of human behaviour in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations for all Shona secondary schools in Zimbabwe.

Data was gathered using questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. A detailed account of the methods, procedures and decision points in carrying out the study was provided as well

as enough description of the study context such that readers can be able to determine the extent to which their situations match with the current study. The use of quantitative research methods was meant for the generalisation of findings across secondary schools that teach Shona. Hence, findings can be transferred and applied by consumers of the research (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative data was grouped, summarised, described and discussed under thematic frames drawn directly from the research questions and emerging from participants' responses. Themes include: teachers' and learners' understanding of *unhu*, the use of novels in imparting *unhu*, ways used by Shona teachers to impart *unhu* through teaching novels and the extent to which Shona teachers use Shona novels to teach *unhu*.

Quantitative data was presented and analysed through lists, use of simple arithmetic and arranged in easy-to-draw tables to provide exact values of data collected through questionnaires. Data from the qualitative and quantitative sources was compared and information was combined and integrated to create consolidated datasets and come up with a coherent whole (de Vos et al, 2011).

No major problems were encountered except that; the researcher could not get in touch with a few teachers and groups of learners in time. They were busy preparing for their mid-year examinations. The researcher had to meet them during weekends. However, at the end, all teachers and learners sampled for the interview and focus group discussions respectively, were interviewed. Interviewing participants using English only was a challenge as the teaching and learning of Shona literature was done through the medium of Shona only. Both Shona and English languages were, therefore, used to mediate the interview process by both the researcher and the participants for easy communication and grasping of concepts.

## FINDINGS

The purpose of this section was to reveal the extent to which secondary schools contribute towards the promotion of *unhu* among secondary school learners through the teaching of Shona novels. These results might contribute towards the formulation of future policies regarding the teaching of Shona literature in secondary schools with the aim of promoting *unhu* among students.

## Teachers' and learners' understanding of *unhu*

The first questions in the questionnaire and interview guides sought to establish teachers' and learners' comprehension of *unhu* and their views towards the teaching of *unhu* through Shona novels in the schools.

Responses from group interviews revealed that most learners understood *unhu* as in distinguished attributes. Members of groups contributed different virtues they understood to be part of *unhu*. Views from the groups were as follows: **Group** 1 identified respect for children, respect for the marriage institution, *zviera* (taboos), traditional healing, decent dressing, self respect, respect for women, respect for traditional ceremonies such as *jakwara* (grain-threshing ceremony) and for respect for traditional politics; **Group** 2 outlined greeting elders, decent dressing, respect for elders, respect for each other in families, work places and schools, respect for African traditional religion and the different types of

marriages such as *kutema ugariri* (bride service); **Group** 3 pointed out peace, helping each other and traditional religion and **Group** 4 recognised respect for elders, helping the elderly, decent dressing, greeting others, sharing and perseverance.

Aspects from the learners' responses covered all the four categories of *unhu*, the political, religious, economic and social although the virtues under each category were not exhausted. The contributed aspects are grouped in the Table 1.

This shows that the learners had a fairly distributed general knowhow of the *unhu* concept, giving an impression that they had, to a certain extent, studied aspects of *unhu* during their literature lessons.

After the researcher had explained to the learners that *unhu* meant cultural values *(tsika nemagariro)*, learners from **Group** 4 generated an interesting discussion. Learner P responded:

*Zvetsika nemagariro izvi isu hatitombozviziva...*

We are not aware of cultural issues], this did not mean that they knew nothing about culture, but she was acknowledging that they had very limited knowledge of the *unhu* aspects.

For that reason, learners called for proper teaching of *unhu* and sensitisation on its relevance to their lives.

Learner R said:

We should be taught the importance of culture, the importance of values. For example, *kumhoresa munhu, kwakakosherei? Ndikasamhoresa zvinosiyanei?*

[We should be taught about the importance of culture, the importance of values. For example, greeting a person, what are the benefits? If I do not greet someone, does it make a difference?].

This means that learners had recognised the cultural significance of narrative literature but they needed to be well-informed on the benefits so that they could meaningfully contribute in the learning of their culture. Highlighting the importance of ethics education has also been found effective in "developing pupils' character traits", providing the "foundations for strong academic achievement" and preparing young people for future citizenship in the United Kingdom (Walker et. al., 2017: 4). According to Mukusha (2013), such a move will enable learners to engage in a more dialectical, self-reflective manner in their day to day learning of *unhu*. After all a nation can only develop when it is comprised of citizens with desirable morals. In general, learners showed a positive attitude towards the promotion of *unhu* in secondary school learners through the teaching of novels.

**Table 1.** *Unhu* categories of learners' responses.

| Social | Economic | Religious | Political |
|---|---|---|---|
| Respect for children, respect for the marriage institution and marriage types, greeting elders, respect for each other in families, work places and schools, decent dressing, self respect, respect for women, helping the elderly and greeting others. | Sharing and perseverance. | Respect for taboos, traditional healing and traditional religion. | Respect towards the traditional politics only. |

Learners appealed to the teachers to help those who were not 'A' level Shona students appreciate *unhu* so that all the school children could be moulded into admirable citizens. He said:

Teachers are there to help us. *Isu vari kutidzidzisa kuShona asi vasingaiti* Shona *tinoshuva kuti vadzidziswewo vagova nehunhu.*

[Teachers are there to help us. They are teaching us (Shona students) but those who are not studying Shona should also be taught the *unhu* concept so that they can uphold *unhu*]

From this discussion, it can be concluded that learners demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of *unhu,* appreciated the teaching of the traditional values through the novel, expected more information on the concept and were convinced that it was important for other learners to be taught about *unhu* in order to have a better society. *Unhu* education becomes important to all because it cultivates good qualities in learners that enable them to make value judgements. Like in Hong Kong, their moral and civic education aims at equipping all pupils with positive values and attitudes to meet requirements of their future workplace and become sensible citizens (The Curriculum Development Council, 2017). With such an attitude, if the philosophy is effectively taught in Zimbabwean schools, *unhu* education can be a remedy to moral decay in citizens as learners can positively influence their communities. It is only through citizens who are morally upright that a society can move forward and realize meaningful development and this can only be achieved if the unhu philosophy is fully instilled in pupils through the teaching of literature.

As for the teachers, three of those who completed the questionnaire rightfully described *unhu* as *"tsika nemagariro ava Shona"* [Shona culture]. One of them further elaborated on what he understood as *unhu* in the following words:

These are positive traits which are expected from any

Shona person in society. For example honesty, hardworking, loving, caring and being able to socialise.

The teacher referred to the attributes which the Shona society expects from its members. Through the questionnaire, the other 13 respondents outlined respect for surroundings; self and for both young and old; good conduct; respect for gender roles; sharing; self-discipline; proper dressing; faithfulness; honesty; hospitality; greeting people; helping the needy; polygamy; forgiveness; compassionate; hardworking and good use of language as the positive traits expected among the Shona society.

From the responses above, it can be realised that most of the aspects were social, except for sharing, hospitality and hardworking. These responses in general show that many Shona classroom practitioners mainly regarded *unhu* as social cultural values only. Thus, the suggested inattentiveness by the teachers to the economic, religious and political ideals of the Shona society that may arise from the novels taught in class results in half-baked products as the *unhu* values cannot be taught independently. In this regard, Makaudze, (1998: 13) asserts that:

African people's cultural values cannot be understood in isolation from one another. This is because no single aspect of the African way of life makes sense unless its relationships with other aspects are explored. The African world is one. As a result ... such values interact and influence one another.

The above assertion implies that *unhu* values in various spheres of life are intertwined. As such, this research encourages that aspects from the different cultural spheres should be taught together for meaningful impartation of *unhu*. Teaching learners the values in isolation cannot bring proper understanding of the Shona culture as the values are intertwined. Moreover, with the listed values, the Shona teacher may not produce a whole person as is described in the Shona literature syllabi's aim "to expose learners to ideological, social, economic, political, scientific and technological issues in selected texts with a view to promoting an appreciation of their and other people's morals, values, attitudes and beliefs". Thus, the implementation of the aim ought to

produce a citizen who possesses the civil, political, social and economic rights of the Shona society (Graig, 1999).This is the same product that schools in other continents also wish to produce. America, for example, describes the desired morally mature person as one who "respects human dignity, cares about the welfare of others, integrates individual interests and social responsibilities, demonstrates integrity, reflects on moral choices and seeks peaceful resolution of conflict" (The America Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Panel on Moral Education: 1988: 6). They intend to mould students who fit well in their social, economic, political and religious spheres of life.

Thorough interpretation of events in novels is, therefore, desired in honour of such a "sound educational policy which enables learners to study the culture and environment of their own society first, then in relation to the culture and environment of other societies" (Ngugi, 1981:100). Thus, Zimbabwean Shona teachers are expected to be conversant with all aspects of *unhu* so that they can effectively use novels to achieve the system's aim. There is, therefore, need for the teachers to be equipped with key knowledge, skills and attitudes for *unhu* education. Like in some European countries, educational material which presents basic concepts and approaches to ethics education should be prepared to enhance mastery, practice and delivery of beliefs, attitudes and values among teachers (Curko et al., 2017). It is therefore mandatory that teachers must be fully equipped with the necessary knowledge on *unhu* philosophy which they will in turn relay to pupils when teaching literature. Literature therefore becomes a strong vehicle through which the virtues of *unhu* can be imparted on pupils.

## The use of novels in imparting *unhu*

The researcher sought to establish the use of Shona novels to teach *unhu* in secondary schools. Four responses from the interviewed groups indicated that Shona novels were, indeed, used as one way of imparting *unhu* in the secondary schools. For instance, Learner B indicated "Shona teachers teach *unhu* through novels and *ngano* (folktales)" while Learner F said: "*Topenengura ma*novel *tichidzidza tsika dzinenge dzichiitwa nevatambi*" [We analyse novels and learn morals from characters]. The third respondent, Learner L noted that "during Shona lessons *kunyanya dzenganonyorwa mudzidzisi vanotidzidzisa tsika vachititsiura*" [during Shona lessons mainly in novel lessons the teacher teaches us unhu reprimanding us]. Fourth respondent, Learner Q, pointed out that: "*Kuzvidzidzo zvenganonyorwa ndiko kumwe kunobuda zvetsika nemagariro*" [In novel lessons is where we also learn about culture]. These responses revealed that Shona novels were used to teach *unhu* aspects portrayed

in stories through content analysis and by drawing moral lessons from characters. Immorality was rebuked through the novel. Generally, it was noticed that in all the four schools selected for the study, Shona novels contributed towards the teaching of *unhu* though teachers used them to a limited extent.

The 16 Shona teachers who participated in this study indicated that they used the novel to impart *unhu* in learners. The following are samples of their responses through the questionnaire:

**Female Teacher A:** I also use novel analysis to impart *unhu*.

**Male Teacher A:** I use literature books, especially old world novels, for example *Tambaoga, Pfumo Reropa*.

**Female Teacher C:** I impart *unhu* through the teaching of set books.

These responses indicate that the Shona teachers appreciated the role of and used Shona novels in imparting *unhu*. The research, therefore, noted that the teaching of Shona novels was contributing towards the inculcation of "the requisite knowledge, skills and values deemed by society as key to the adult person, worker and citizen" (Mugabe and Maposa, 2013: 111). So Shona novels can be used as a key tool in imparting *unhu* among secondary school learners who study them.

Nine out of 16 teachers agreed that they recognised that the teaching of Shona novels contributed towards character building. Justifications to their view were provided. Table 2 shows the different explanations as provided in the questionnaires.

Generally, the data shows that teachers used characterisation in Shona novels to rebuke bad behaviour and mould good behaviour in students. This points to a positive attitude in most teachers towards the promotion of *unhu* through the teaching of Shona fiction.

On the contrary, three of the 16 teachers argued that teachers and learners had reservations on this motif. Table 3 shows their views.

These responses meant that although Shona novels are rich in *unhu* aspects, some teachers and learners did not consider using them for that purpose but concentrated on examined aspects of the novel. The responses show a negative attitude in some teachers towards the use of Shona novels to impart *unhu* among learners. One of the teachers indicated that this challenge emanated from the status accorded to Shona in schools. Female Teacher M said:

Most teachers especially those who are not Shona teachers do not even value the subject, so they don't realise how much it contributes to character building.

This negative attitude of teachers towards the significance of the Shona subject in the curriculum also affects the learners they teach. Learners end up viewing

**Table 2.** Contribution of the novel towards character building.

| Respontent | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Female Teacher A | Pupils are taught bad and good characters in the novels |
| Female Teacher B | Learners emulate good characters in stories and sometimes nickname each other using names of characters from the story e.g. Matamba, Muchaneta, |
| Female Teacher C | Because in some legends like Mweya waNehanda, through the courage and bravery, learners are inspired to do the same to serve their nation. Hence, the character of Nehanda teaches the youngsters what is *unhuism.* |
| Female Teacher D | A number of characters are given and pupils and teachers benefit through character analysis. |
| Male Teacher A | Some pupils and teachers do appreciate the character of certain personalities depicted in novels. |
| Male Teacher B | Pupils can actually see bad and good behaviour in characters in the novel |
| Female Teacher E | *Humwe hunhu hwaiitwa kare hunobudiswa mu*literature.[some aspects of the traditional values are portrayed in literature books] |
| Female Teacher F | Because in literature we come up with lessons that can help people nowadays. |
| Female Teacher I | Whenever pupils are rebuked of bad behaviour they are always asked if they study Shona being the indication that Shona is known for its good morals. |

**Table 3.** Views against the use of novels in character building.

| Respondent | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Male Teacher C | Teachers and pupils just do novel analysis for examination purposes only. |
| Female Teacher J | Mostly, children are taught literature for exam purposes and not for character building purposes. |
| Female Teacher K | Shona is just a subject that needs to be passed like any other subject. *Unhu* is not tested at exam. Teachers are results oriented. Teaching of untested aspects is a waste of time. |

**Table 4.** Relevance of Shona novels in imparting *unhu.*

| Learner | Explanation |
|---|---|
| C | Yes *anobatsira nokuti hunhu huri kuchinja nekudzidza ma*novel. [Yes the novels help us because our behaviour is changing through studying novels]. |
| O | Literature is helping in disciplining the youths at school. |
| M | *Nyaya dzatinoverenga dzine zvizhinji zvinotowira vamwe vanhu tobva tatodzidza zvakanaka.* [Stories that we read have a lot of things that are faced by many people and from these we learn what is good]. |

everything taught in Shona as unworthy learning, hence the impartation of *unhu* through the novel becomes difficult. In an earlier study, Chimhenga and Chivhanga (2013) also gathered that Shona was taken as inferior to other subjects and, as a result, teachers and learners were demotivated to teach and learn the subject, respectively. Consequently, the outcome of the teaching and learning process would be unfavourable. Hence, this research calls for a close supervision of curriculum implementation, particularly  on the promotion of *unhu*

since most teachers teach the concept unconsciously.

On the other hand, three focus groups of learners agreed that the learning of Shona novels was relevant in inculcating *unhu* in them. They explained that they were noticing character change after the literature lessons. Stories in different novels groomed them into better citizens as they read about a lot of things they faced in their day to day living. Their responses are shown in Table 4.

From these remarks, it can be concluded that Shona novels have really assumed the role of oral literature of educating citizens on the values of society and changing of lives for the betterment of everybody. They carry the necessary *unhu* lessons. This is what Furusa (2002) means when he notes that literature is expected to actively produce cultural values, preserve and pass these ideals from generation to generation. This is also supported by Mufanechiya and Mufanechiya (2015) who purport that the Shona novel must be a chief source of moral and cultural values. The fictional works contain the values of *unhu;* hence focus now should be on the teachers' abilities to use them for the learners' gains.

During the focus group discussions with students, the 4th group rated the novel as a key player in moulding their characters as they have managed to apply what they learn during lessons in life. This is captured in Learner P's response:

Novels are playing a major role in imparting *unhu* to us; Content analysis *inotidzosera kuunhu hunotarisirwa, tobva tazviita.* [Novels are playing a major role in imparting *unhu* to us. Content analysis helps us uphold the expected *unhu,* and we implement].

This response points to the fact that the novels recommended for study at 'A' level during the year in question portrayed the expected values and vices which helped the learners in behaviour change. There is therefore a need for consistence in the selection of novels into the syllabi for all secondary school levels. Shona as a subject can therefore meaningfully achieve its main aim of moulding learners who abide by *unhu* – ideologically, socially, politically, economically scientifically and technologically year in and year out.This implies that books that uphold the Shona culture are prescribed texts in schools. Those containing indecent elements should not be selected to keep with the traditional idea of teaching future citizens (Kahari, 1990). Learners also need to be well-informed that the main purpose of studying novels is to learn the societal values so that they gain humanity, identity and dignity. Novels are not only meant to entertain but for learners to gain knowledge that should be later applied in life. Thus, this is in line with the African view that there is no art for art' sake.

Learners from Group 2 observed that they even shared with their peers, the knowledge attained from novels so that their peers also fit into the society. Two learners asserted:

Learner F: We apply what we read and *tinotoshamwaridzana nevanhu tichitovadzidzisa zvatinenge taverenga.* [We apply what we read and we also befriend other learners (who do not study Shona) teaching them what we would have read (from the novels)].

Learner I added: Yes, we preach the gospel to peers. In addition, Learner H reminded others that they usually perform dramas on narratives under study so that the whole school could benefit. These statements suggest that in schools, the teaching of *unhu* through Shona novels did not benefit Shona learners only but also benefited those befriended from other classes and those who attended the drama shows. However, this is not enough since the call for the teaching of *unhu* is aimed at developing all learners into cultured citizens, citizens with *unhu* (Furusa, 2002) and not only those who get in touch with Shona lessons or learners.

Through focus group discussions, study also realised that some learners were worried about their teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of *unhu* through novels.
Group 4 learner P noted: zvet*sika nemagariro takazviwanira ku'*A' level *zasi uko* it's not taught (We met these cultural issues at 'A' level; At lower levels, it's not taught).

From Group 3 learner K indicated: *ku'*O' level *zvaingotaurwa* just in passing (At 'O' level *unhu* aspects were mentioned in passing).

From Group 4 learner S said: *ku'*A' level *ndokwazvinobudiswa nokuti* there is a section *inofanira kudzidziswa yetsika* (This is taught at 'A' level because there is a section on culture that should be taught).
From these responses, it was found out that although the Shona syllabi stipulated compulsory teaching of Shona novels and the *unhu* aspect at all secondary school levels, in some schools, the aspect of *unhu* was partially or never taught at Z.J.C and 'O' levels. Generally, the sentiments suggest that some teachers were either ignorantly or intentionally not committing themselves to using literature in promoting *unhu* among learners. Lack of dedication has also been found to be a key constraint in the teaching of character education in Britain. Although the education is a priority in the country, findings indicate only a quarter have dedicated lead for it (Walker et al., 2017). This is disturbing as such an education is meant to develop in youngsters values, attitudes, skills and behaviours crucial in the development of, success in school and in adult life (ibid). Earlier studies have found out that *unhu* and citizenship education are necessary as from grade zero to university (Muropa, Kusure, Makwerere, Kasowe and Muropa, 2013). Samkange and Samkange (2012: 458) had earlier highlighted the importance of *unhu* noting that "*unhu* philosophy is a tool used to define 'educatedness' among the Zimbabwean societies, and if one lacks these values he/she is viewed as not educated." Authors imply that *unhu* education is a prerequisite for every learner to be regarded as educated. This means that all learners need the philosophy of *unhu* to substantiate the attained knowledge. Just educating a person without *unhu* is not beneficial to the society. In fact it becomes a waste of time and resources. This latter position is justified by learner Q from Group 4 who raised a cause for concern

in some pupils which he sees as a hindrance to the learning of culture through Shona novels. He said:

*Vazhinji vedu havaiti* Shona *chaiyo asi vanodzidza zvokuti vapase* (most of us do not study Shona to attain knowledge but in order to pass examinations).

If learners only learn Shona for the sake of boosting their points in the examination, then, there is a real problem as the whole purpose of including the subject in the curriculum is defeated. Shona is expected to refurnish the learners with *unhu* values especially through literature which has since time immemorial been regarded as a preserve of and key instrument in imparting culture among youngsters. Research has indicated that the Zimbabwean young generation is failing to make culturally appropriate and rational decisions in life (Makuvaza, 2014) because it is not taught the principles of life as expected by society and enshrined in the *unhu* philosophy. The highlighted erosion of *unhu* in Zimbabwe can be meaningfully addressed by taking *unhu/ubuntu* education seriously in schools (Matereke, 2011).This implies that Shona teachers are also expected to take the teaching of *unhu* through Shona novels seriously so as to produce rational citizens who respect and apply cultural norms and values socially, economically, religiously and politically. Thus, judicious teaching and learning of *unhu* values through Shona novels can play a part in rescuing this lost generation as suggested in learner Q's utterances.

On the question regarding the category of prescribed novels that best promote *unhu*, most learners in Groups 1, 2 and 4, favoured novels in the new world category. Their responses are quoted below:

**Group 1** Learner B *Tinonyanya kudzidza unhu muma*book *echizvizvino sea*Mungoshi naMabasa (We learn most of the *unhu* aspects from new world novels like Mabasa and Mungoshi's).

**Group 2** Learner H *ma*new world novels *anonyanyonzwisisika pane zvetsika* (new world novels are comprehensible on cultural issues).

**Group 4** Learner R *ma*new world novels *ndiwo anonyanya kutibatsira* (new world novels help us better).

From the results, it is understood that most learners preferred new world narratives to the old world novels because they are understandable. However, they did not dismiss the contribution of old world literature towards the promotion of *unhu*. For example, learner G from Group 2 explained:

*Ma*novel *ekare awa ane zvetsika zvakawanda asi haazonyatsotibatsira nokuti ane ChiShona chakaoma.*

(These old world novels have various cultural aspects but they fail to help us fully because the Shona is too difficult to understand).

Learners acknowledged that though the old world novels are richer in traditional values the medium used was too difficult for them. The old world novels are characterised by devices such as idioms, proverbs and metaphors. To these learners, the new world novels use more comprehensible language and settings which enable them to grasp the portrayed aspects. Examples, highlighted include the use of slang, code-switching, satire, irony and modern settings such as urban areas and education institutions.

Learners also applauded the selected modern world fiction authors such as Mungoshi and Mabasa for depicting the realities of their day which are applicable to their lives. This confirms Kahari's (1990: 38) observation that "the new world novels satirise the modern individual with a clear didactic and moralistic message geared to school children who form the main bulk of the reading public".

Learner S noted that: *A*Mabasa *aya saMapenzi naNdafa Here? anonyatsobata zvatiri kusangana nazvo chaizvo.* [Mabasa's novels *Mapenzi* and *Ndafa Here?* touch on exactly what we experience]

Learner G. said: *Ini hangu* Mungoshi *anondinyorera zvandinonzwa semunaKunyarara Hakusi Kutaura? naNdiko Kupindana Kwamazuva* (As for me, Mungoshi writes stories that I understand especially in *Kunyarara Hakusi Kutaura?* and *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva*).

This does not mean that old world novels do not contain cultural values worth learning. They were in fact praised by 15 teachers for containing all cultural aspects. Only pupils in Group three concurred that novels from both the old world and the new world play a role. This is captured in learner L who said: "Both worlds *dzinongotibatsira pakudzidzisa unhu*" (Both worlds promote *unhu*). These results therefore, may encourage teachers to simplify the narrative accounts in old world novels, focus on the values they intend to teach and incooperate the children's views on *unhu* aspects as both literature worlds socialise young children into acceptable citizens.

Female Teacher C who happened to be Head of the Shona Department at one of the schools, argued in the interview that the teaching of *unhu* through Shona novels would not be effective because the prescribed novels were never bought in time year after year, and in some cases, only a teacher's copy was provided. Another worry was on the domination of modern technology, especially media in pupils' lives which confirms Nziramasanga's (1999) observation that media is the most influential tool in the youngsters' lives. The same sentiments were raised by Chiyadzwa and Dube (2014) in a related study

**Table 5.** Techniques employed in teaching *unhu* through the novels.

| Respondent | Technique |
| --- | --- |
| Female Teacher A | Explaining the aspects as portrayed in texts and the importance and dangers if they are not properly followed. |
| Male Teacher A | By encouraging pupils to emulate characters in novels who display these good aspects of *unhu*. |
| Female Teacher B | By emphasising the aspect of good behaviour in characters (role modelling). |
| Female Teacher C | I often ask pupils to list the aspects of *unhu* and discuss their importance in our daily living |
| Female Teacher D | I task pupils to give presentations, let pupils dramatise during lessons, pupils to draw lessons from *unhu* displayed by characters in literature books. |
| Female Teacher E | Through class discussion and tours to resource persons. |
| Female Teacher F | Drama, analysing character by character's cultural attributes and *unhu*. We also critique characters who cause problems in novels. |
| Male Teacher B | By analysing the characters and what they do regarding these aspects of *unhu*. |
| Female Teacher G | Making pupils analyse and describe characters, drawing lessons from the play, through themes-identification of themes etc |
| Female Teacher H | Dramatisation. |
| Female Teacher I | By dramatising. |
| Female Teacher J | Through the analysis of Shona novels. |

**Table 6.** The extent to which *unhu* values are taught through analysis of Shona novels.

| View | Explanations |
| --- | --- |
| To a lesser extent (50%) | *Unhu* is taught only as a topic in literature that needs to be known by pupils so that they can answer the question if it appears in the exam paper. |
| | *Unhu* is imparted just by teaching lessons drawn from the stories and characters. |
| | *Unhu* is taught just during lesson delivery. |
| | Not everything taught in literature is about *unhu*. Hence, the aims of some of the lessons will not only be about *unhu* and so, tend to concentrate on other issues. |
| | The attributes of *unhu* are partly given in literature, as teachers, we tend to deal only with those attributes highlighted in set books. |
| To a greater extent (50%) | Through analysis of novels which builds pupils' characters. |
| | Because good characters in literature usually receive rewards and bad characters are punished. |
| | By encouraging good behaviours displayed by some characters in novels and censuring bad behaviour portrayed by other characters. |
| | Emphasising on *unhu* aspects when teaching moral lessons from poetry and literature books. |
| | Because pupils get a clear picture of the punishment meted to some characters. |
| | Literature books portray aspects of *unhu* especially old world novels. |
| | Shona novels deal with what is happening in real life situations. |

that showed that the social media has eroded the cultural values and norms of the Shona people, especially among the youths. As such, the study calls for efforts from various Shona teachers to make an impact on learners' morals through the teaching of Shona novels with the necessary support from the school authorities. This points to the need to make available adequate primary and secondary sources for an effective implementation of the curriculum.

**Ways used by Shona teachers to impart *unhu* through teaching novels.**

Although all the interviewed Shona teachers confirmed that they used novels to teach *unhu* to some extent, only 12 indicated the different ways they employed. Table 5 shows the various techniques.

The various techniques identified add evidence to the fact that there are many ways through which Shona

novels can be used to impart *unhu* in secondary schools. However, teachers can employ more instructional strategies that motivate learners, enable them to be independent and strategic, organise information in a way that enhances understanding and remembering and necessitate meaningful continuous assessment. These teaching methods include: cooperative learning, group discussions, independent study and research on *unhu* aspects, integrating technology, summarising and note taking and role play so that learners enjoy *unhu* lessons. Above all, teachers need to exemplify and communicate encouraged behaviour through interaction with colleagues, learners, employers and the community at large (Walker et al., 2017).

**The extent to which Shona teachers use Shona novels to teach *unhu***

Teachers evaluated the degree of their contributions towards imparting *unhu* in learners through the use of or analysis of fictional works. Of the twelve teachers who responded to the questionnaire, six teachers indicated that they taught *unhu* values through the novel to a greater extent while the other six did to a lesser extent. Table 6 reflects the questionnaire results on the extent to which Shona teachers use novels to teach *unhu* values.
Information on the extent to which traditional values are taught through novels was also solicited from learners. While three groups indicated that Shona literature novels were helping them in learning their culture to a greater extent, learners from Group 4 argued that the lessons have not been very helpful as they were just taught for examination purposes so that they pass and proceed to university. Learner P explained:

*Kunyangwe zvazvo dzirimo, tsika hadzisi kunyatsobudiswa. Tiri kungodzidziswa kuti tipase tiende kunana university. Havana nguva yekutsimbidzira zvetsika.*

[Although the Shona novels carry the different cultural values, teachers are not using the novels to impart *unhu.* We are being taught to pass so that we qualify for University education. The teachers have no time to thoroughly teach traditional values].

The above view was further concretised by results from an interview with one of the teachers. It was established that teachers were more concerned with the pass rate more than with what a child gains as a citizen. Female Teacher C said:

*Kuticha unhu tinenge tichida asi tinenge tichimhanyidzana nema areas anouya mubvunzo nokuti tinopiwa mari zvichienderana nekupasa kwevana.*

[We want to teach unhu but we concentrate on areas that are examined because we are given money depending on the pass rate.]

The response shows that there was a certain percentage of teachers who were aware that Shona novels can greatly contribute towards the promotion of *unhu* but were let down by the system. They were forced to abandon the unexamined areas so that they have enough time to work on popular questions in the question paper. The more their learners passed the exam, the more they were rewarded. Whilst it is motivating that teachers are incentivised for excellent performance, the research noticed that *unhu* education, which aims at producing cultured citizens, is being compromised in pursuit of awards and fame. Zimbabwean secondary schools might end up producing very learned but immoral graduates.

Asked whether there were really no examination questions on culture, Male teacher A responded:

*Mibvunzo inoda kuti mwana aburitse zvetsika nemagariro inouya pano neapo. Dai yaigara ichiuya maticha aizvidzidzisa.*

[Questions which demand the pupil to outline cultural aspects from a novel are rare. If they would frequently feature, teachers would teach *unhu*].

In his opinion if such questions would frequently feature in the question paper, teachers would be forced to thoroughly teach *unhu.* So his response suggested that the Shona literature question paper should oftenly examine issues regarding *unhu.*

The positive responses that show teachers engaging the novel in imparting *unhu* in learners suggest teachers recognised the fact that novels selected as set books promote *unhu.* This is an indication that teachers are convinced that literature, the novel in particular, which is taught in schools, can contribute towards the achievement of *unhu* education. Hence, the Shona novel can be used to a larger extent in promoting *unhu* in secondary schools, thus, enabling the passing on of the Shona culture to younger generations. The teachers' observation that Shona novels selected for study in secondary schools carry the different aspects of *unhu* is supported by Kahari (1990) who asserts that only books with moralistic and didactic themes act as prescribed texts in schools. Those considered indecent and crude do not find their way into the classroom to keep with the traditional idea of teaching future citizens. Thus, such efforts buttress the African view of fiction as a preservation of traditions through which the young can be taught the *pasichigare* society (Chiwome, 1984). In their responses to the questionnaire, the majority of teachers

**Table 7.** Effectiveness of teachers in teaching *unhu* through the novel.

| Respondent | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Female Teacher A | Teachers are well equipped with the knowledge of analysing Shona novels so as to extract relevant *unhu* aspects from the novels |
| Male Teacher A | Teachers can teach effectively because most of the teachers, in most cases, live what they teach |
| Male Teacher B | They can because Shona novels deal with what is happening in real life situations. |
| Male Teacher C | Teachers can effectively use novels to teach *unhu* because literature books portray aspects of *unhu* |
| Female Teacher B | If given the platform in schools, more time, Shona drama clubs dramatising literature books, *unhu* could be promoted |
| Female Teacher C | If *unhu* can be made a major topic in Shona literature, teachers can effectively teach the aspect |
| Female Teacher E | Teachers can use the novel to promote *unhu* since Shona literature is now taught as a subject hence there is enough time to analyse the novels |
| Female Teacher F | They can because of the cultural aspects ferried in some of the novels |
| Female Teacher G | Through teacher education training, workshops in different clusters and maximum pupil participation, *unhu* can be effectively taught |
| Female Teacher H | Because the element of *unhu* is vivid in all old world Shona novels |
| Female Teacher I | If fully conscientised, teachers can effectively use the novel to teach *unhu* |

were very confident that Zimbabwean secondary school teachers can effectively use Shona novels to promote *unhu*: They provided the following responses.

The above responses show Shona teachers' confidence in themselves in using the novel to uphold *unhu*. They highlighted competency in both theory and practice. The capability of teachers was also found to be very crucial in the promotion of holistic development in Finland students. According to Rissarien, Kuusisto, Hanhimaki and Tirri (2018) teachers need competences in both their character and conduct if they are to promote moral education. The teachers' views draw attention to their capability, the richness of Shona novels in *unhu* values and the need for positive conditions as important factors in the teaching of *unhu* through novels.

The responses also suggest that Zimbabwean secondary school Shona teachers cannot effectively teach *unhu* through novels, when it is still a sub-topic in the Shona syllabus (Table 7). Also, as was gathered by Mudzanire and Mazuruse (2013), University graduate teachers highlighted that their delivery was crippled by the use of Shona as a medium of instruction in the schools, whilst they would have learnt literature through English. Such an anomaly where the language of teaching in teacher training institutions is different from the medium in schools is costly, especially to teachers as they have to linguistically adjust. This implies that the teaching of *unhu*, an indigenous philosophy, was compromised since it can only be best explained through the indigenous language. Hence, this research confirms the need for ChiShona as the medium of instruction in teaching ChiShona subject throughout the education system.

The potential in Shona teachers to promote *unhu* through Shona novels was affirmed by all the groups of learners, except for one learner. Explanations were got from learners K in Group 3 and learner H from Group 2 who said:

Learner K: *Vadzidzisi vose vanokwanisa kudzidzisa unhu* (All Shona teachers can teach *unhu*).

Learners H: *Mateacher echikadzi ndiwo angatonyatsodzidzisa zveunhu* (Lady teachers can teach *unhu* aspects better).

Learners meant that their teachers were able to effectively teach *unhu* through novels although some viewed lady teachers as better practitioners on the area than male teachers. The potential in some male teachers' was questioned due to ill conduct. He said:

*Vamwe havakwanisi nokuti havatorinawo hunhu hwacho, vanonyenga vana vechikoro.*

(Some cannot teach because they do not have the unhu qualities, they propose love to school pupils).

The same feelings were advanced in a related inquiry by the Nziramasanga Commission (1999) indicating that teachers were not leading by example. Instead they were involved with learners in drinking, smoking, as well as indulging in drugs and sexual relationships. This led to loss of respect for teachers. This implies that such teachers cannot instil values and ethics that can positively affect learners, their families and the nation at large as is expected by the school curriculum. These teachers cannot be effective promoters of *unhu* since

most learners' character is moulded by what they see their teachers doing rather than what they hear from them. This also means that when teaching *unhu,* teachers' lives must demonstrate what they say. Based on their study in Nigerian schools, Lawal et al. (2010) also believe that the personality of the teacher affects pupils' morality. For effective teaching of morality, they highlight that the teachers should be "reliable and co-operative, sincere and honest, patient, firmed, kind and courteous, able to communicate effectively and should have a pleasant appearance" (p: 24). As such, from this study, all the 16 teachers realised the need for urgent attention from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education so that learners can confidently learn the taught *unhu* aspects from their teachers.

## Conclusion

The research findings portrayed that most secondary school Shona teachers appreciated the novel as a tool that can be used to impart morals not *unhu* in its broad sense. In addition, although some teachers recognised that Shona novels are rich in *unhu* aspects, they did not consider using them for imparting *unhu* as they concentrated much on examinable aspects of the novel. Thus, the study revealed that although the novel can be effective in cultivating societal values, the negative attitude, combined with unawareness of the concept among key implementers can hamper the promotion of *unhu* through the teaching of novels.

The study revealed that some teachers unconsciously used fictional works to impart *unhu* values in learners while others never taught cultural values during literature lessons despite the fact that the promotion of *unhu* is one of the syllabus aims. Teachers taught *unhu* by encouraging good behaviours and discouraging bad behaviour displayed by characters in novels when teaching moral lessons (*zvidzidzo*) from literature books. As such, learners learnt good morals without knowing that it was part of *unhu.* Key challenges in using the novel to impart *unhu* were therefore highlighted. These included lack of detail on the *unhu* concept in the syllabus, discomfort among most teachers in teaching *unhu* and portrayal of limited *unhu* attributes in set books. The study concluded that these challenges can compromise the full potential in literature of imparting *unhu* in the classroom if not attended to.

Research findings highlighted that teachers were confident that, given the necessary training they were capable of using Shona novels to promote *unhu* in learners. Furthermore, the study revealed that teachers had the basic skills of analysing Shona novels which they could apply in using the novel to promote *unhu*. However, male teachers' capability was questioned by learners due to their ill conduct. It was therefore, noted that for the teaching of *unhu* to be effective among learners, Shona teachers should be models in character building. Thus,

cultured teachers with good teaching skills coupled with the richness of Shona novels in cultural values may lead to meaningful impartation of *unhu* in secondary school Shona learners.

Furthermore, it was observed that although learners pointed out that they were noticing character changes after literature lessons, some had negative attitudes towards the teaching of *unhu* through the novel. Learners indicated that they needed to be well-informed first especially on the benefits of learning *unhu* which was not examinable so that they could meaningfully contribute during the teaching-learning process. Moreover, a bias towards new world novels over old world ones among learners was revealed. Most of them preferred new world narratives claiming that their language and settings are more comprehensible than those of the old world novels since they depict realities that are applicable to their lives. The learners argue that old world novels were detached from reality since most of them were factious. The findings therefore suggested that the teaching of *unhu* through novels may not be effective if one type of narrative is used as the different categories are meant to complement each other. In fact, the old world novels may be richer in cultural values than new world ones. Thus, the study concluded that there is need for teachers to be creative in teaching *unhu* through old world novels so that learners can benefit from morals and values instilled by different types of texts. Cultural values should be evaluated in relation to today's life situations and cultural changes should be debated on.

## Recommendations for future practice

From the key findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The novel can be effective in imparting *unhu* but poor teaching can affect its contribution. Therefore, there is need for a clearly explained *unhu* section in the syllabus, communicated through Shona which should always guide the teachers. Teachers should employ relevant analysis approaches such as Afrocentricity and Africana Womanism and be critical on authors' portrayal of cultural issues as the syllabus recommends. Various techniques such as dramatisation, debates, participation in cultural festivals, research, tours and use of resource persons should be used so that learners get interested in the subject matter. Relevant authorities should therefore make follow-ups to ensure correct implementation.

2. Teachers' awareness of the *unhu* concept is of paramount importance for effective teaching of the values through the novel. Thus, there is need for *unhu* awareness workshops for professionals already in the field and the introduction of the *unhu* subject in teacher training institutions so that teachers can be effective implementers of the subject.

3. Calling for the teaching of *unhu* through literature without examining the concept is not enough to ensure implementation. Teachers and learners tend to concentrate more on examinable content. Therefore, more literature examination items on *unhu* elements should be set so that the teaching and learning of *unhu* through literature can be taken seriously.

4. The way *unhu* elements are portrayed in novels determines the effectiveness of that piece of work in promoting *unhu*. The Curriculum planners should therefore thoroughly select novels for the *unhu* component of the syllabus. The novels should positively capture the Afrocentric characteristics which are pertinent in teaching the younger generation their identity. There is therefore, need for consistency in the selection so that Shona literature can meaningfully achieve its mandate of imparting *unhu* year in year out.

5. Due to the call for the teaching of *unhu* through literature, Shona artists should positively present their culture bearing in mind that their works are a key source of *unhu* lessons for youngsters. They should also encompass the whole range of *unhu* values so that future generations can benefit from their narratives.

6. To enhance the quality of secondary school products, learners from different secondary schools should study uniform works to gain uniform *unhu* values. The syllabus should therefore give no room for schools to select from a list. This implies that a manageable number of novels should be prescribed for the syllabus each year.

7. This study also proposes effective teaching of *unhu/ubuntu* in other indigenous languages taught in Zimbabwean secondary schools through written literature.

## Recommendations for future research

1. The study looked at the promotion of *unhu* in secondary schools through written literature and found out that the teaching of novels can be effectively used to promote *unhu* in learners. However, future research can select from Shona drama and poetry taught in schools to assess the extent to which written literature as a whole can be used to promote *unhu* in learners.

2. Future research can investigate how orature can also be evaluated to ascertain the role of Shona literature in promoting *unhu.*

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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# Stakeholders' engagement at Magozi Rice Irrigation Scheme: Case study of moving from food-aid dependency to food self-sufficiency in Tanzania

## Francis Mwaijande

Department of Administrative Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Mzumbe University, United Republic of Tanzania.

This article examines stakeholders' engagement in attaining food security and reducing poverty in the rural areas endowed with water natural resource. The main purpose of the article is to find evidence of appropriate approaches to overcome food insecurity and poverty in areas having abundant natural resources but engulfed with food and income poverty. It reviews the principles of stakeholders' engagement to examine the extent to which Magozi village leadership applies in agricultural transformations. Data were collected using ethnographic techniques of key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary review. Findings from the study show that Magozi village has moved from food-aid dependency to food self-sufficiency by engaging stakeholders in the entire process of problem definition (recurring hunger and poverty), planning, resource mobilization to implementation. The main finding is the success stories of moving from food-aid to food self-sufficiency attributed to the irrigation scheme that came as a result of engaging various stakeholders including the Anglican Church, Tanzania Social Action Fund, Local Government Authority, and the community. The article recommends the adoption and implementation of many irrigation schemes for transforming rural agriculture in Tanzania

**Key words:** Food security, irrigation, poverty reduction, stakeholders' engagement.

## INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays an important role in the Tanzania national economy. It employs 70% of the national work-force, contributes 25% of GDP, the source of 30% of foreign income and provides 65% of raw materials for the local industries (URT 2016). Despite its importance, agricultural productivity has remained low. Rice (paddy) production in Tanzania is 70% predominantly rain- fed in

lowlands, irrigated rice is 10% and upland rice of 20% is grown by smallholder farmers with an average farm size of 1.3 ha (MAFC, 2015). Data for Old Irina region from 2005/06 – 2009/10 produced 183.05 tons; whereas Irina D.C produced 137.84 tons (75%) of the regional production. Amongst the many challenges facing agriculture sector include low use of irrigation in farming.

Out of 29.4 million ha potential land for irrigation, only 450,392 ha (1.5%) is utilized for irrigation (URT, 2016). The effect of low irrigation in many ways contributes to low food production, food insecurity and poverty amongst rural farming communities Magozi village inclusive. This paper draws evidence of irrigation schemes that emanated from the farming community and engaged other stakeholders to become self-food sufficient.

## Background of Magozi Irrigation Scheme

Magozi Irrigation Scheme is located in Magozi village, Ilolo Mpya Ward Iringa Region in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. The village is endowed with Ruaha River and fertile 1300 hectares low land suitable for paddy irrigation. The irrigation scheme covers three villages of Mkombilenga, Magozi and Ilolo mpya. It is registered under the Ministry of Home Affairs with registration number SO 14034 of 2005 and Cooperative Society Ltd. with registration No. 197 of 1995 with 522 farmers. The scheme has also acquired water user permit from the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. It is a requirement by the National Irrigation Act of 2013; owners of irrigation infrastructure or farmers initiated irrigation schemes and privately owned commercial irrigated farms to get water use permits (URT, 2016).

The recurring drought climatic condition in this area has made the communities to depend on food aid from the government and the Anglican church. Drought is one of the causes of low crop productivity in many rain-fed-agriculture areas in Tanzania. In the year 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, through its programme known as Participatory Development and Empowerment Project (PADEP) implemented in district council, conducted a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) applying the Opportunity and Obstacles to Development (O&OD) techniques; it enabled Magozi villagers to identify Ruaha River Irrigation as their primary resource for addressing food insecurity and poverty reduction in their community. The Magozi village leadership engaged various stakeholders in the construction of the irrigation scheme. They sought for support from the central government, local government authorities, and religious organizations. Eventually the irrigation scheme infrastructure was constructed with head works off gate of 1000 l/s, excavated main canal of 8000 m, main canal lining of 5400 m, 22 division boxes, cross drainage structures and retaining walls of 50 m height.

## Study objective

The objective of the study is to find out the effect of irrigation farming on food security and poverty reduction. This paper draws evidence of irrigation schemes that emanated from the farming community and engaged other stakeholders to become self-food sufficient.

## Theory of stakeholders' engagement

A stakeholder is defined as any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the achievement of organizational objectives (Griffiths et al., 2008). The theory of stakeholders' engagement is the participation of stakeholders in planning, decision-making, and implementation to integrate their knowledge, resources, and values in a particular project, policy problem or intervention. The literature on stakeholder engagement reflects stakeholders as having power to object development programmes and policies, and also having interest in development programmes and policies to get the desired objectives. In the same vein, stakeholders are "those people who are affected by or can affect a decision" (Talley et al., 2016).

The theory of stakeholders entails that when concerted efforts of stakeholders are needed for resolving a policy problem, it requires identifying stakeholders that have interest and power. Stakeholders' engagement can be better understood as structured processes based on principles of participation in particular complex development issues (UNDP, 2006). Attaining food and nutrition issue is complex because there are many processes involved such as planning of what needs to be done, identification of stakeholders and resources, mobilization and implementation. It became, therefore the role of the Magozi leadership to identify stakeholders with power and interest in resolving food security and poverty.

Stakeholders' engagement as a theory and strategy for development emerged in the 1960s from pioneering work at Stanford Research Institute; it argued that managers needed to understand the concerns of shareholders, employees, lenders and suppliers, in order to develop objectives that stakeholders could support (Sinclair, 2011; Mitchell et al., 1997). It is built on stakeholders, who are defined as individual persons, groups, or institutions that have interest, can affect or be affected by activities of a main organization (Barney, 2003).

Stakeholders' engagement has found deep roots in strategic development management, public policy implementation, and business models. Stakeholder theory based on business examines the capacity of a firm to generate sustainable wealth over time, and hence its long-term value, is determined by its relationships with critical stakeholders of common interest (Rhodes et al., 2014; Menoka et al., 2013).

Literature shows that broader participation, including the identification and inclusion of stakeholders who are relevant to the objectives and context of the participatory process can improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of the engagement itself as well as the outputs and outcomes of the process" (Marthur et al., 2008;Talley et al., 2016). Magozi leadership and the community identified their stakeholders in resolving food insecurity and poverty in their area (Figure 1).
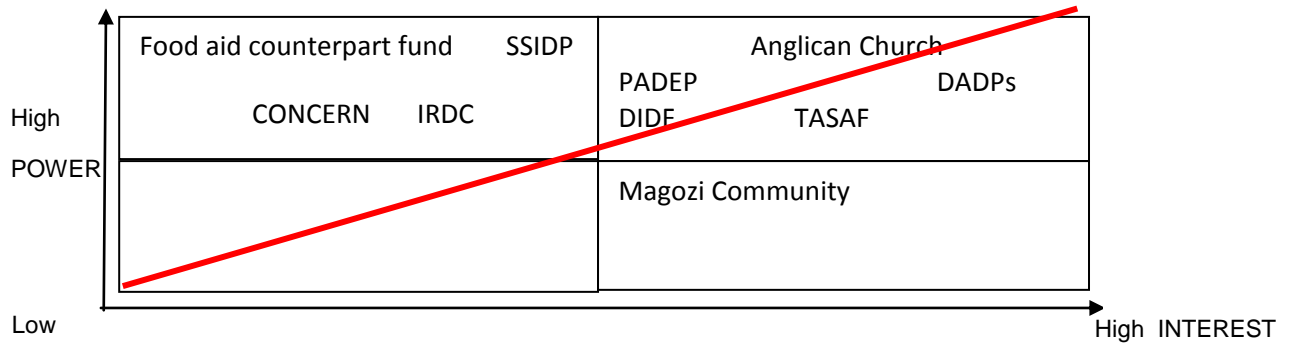
**Figure 1.** Magozi stakeholders for food security. DADPs: District Agriculture Development Programs; IRDC: Iringa District Council; PADEP: Participatory Development Empowerment Project; TASAF: Tanzania Social Action Fund.
Source: Author's construct.

Stakeholder engagement is therefore a techniques and process of bringing in and involving individuals, groups and institutions that affect or be affected (Sloan, 2009), have interest and power in the development policy and programme. As a process, Stakeholder engagement (SE) involves identifying and listing all stakeholders in the development issue at hand. The list should be exhaustive enough to include beneficiaries, supporters in the government, non-governmental organizations, private sector development partners, etc. The process also includes identifying their levels of interest and power (High or Low), as well as justifying why they should support the development programme or issue. Griffiths et al. (2008) generalize the basic reasons why stakeholders feel they should be engaged; "altruism", that they engage because they believe it is right to do so; "investment", that they perceive there would be return to investment; "compulsion", that they engage because they have been asked to do; and potential benefit, that they engage because potential benefits for engaging are greater than not engaging. This implies involving people and organizations in local government development programmes and service delivery requires keen analysis of not only stakeholders' interest and power, but also managing stakeholders' expectations. Figure 1 shows stakeholders with High power and interest (Anglican Church, PADEP, DIDF, TASAF, DADPS) all closer to the alignment line of the argument that the potential benefits for engaging in Magozi rice irrigation scheme are greater than not engaging in it. Given the fact that these stakeholders have been providing food aid, it makes more sense to support the community to become self-food secure.

Effective stakeholders' engagement requires clear objective of the development policy or programme before seeking for stakeholders' support. Involving stakeholders at every stage in the development which includes informing them of the development goal, targets, and challenges prior to and after implementation is the key to enhancing and gaining high alliance. Many articles have

looked into the typologies of stakeholders, but the important questions when considering stakeholders' engagement in development policy are; how do you get a particular stakeholder engaged? What value would that stakeholder feel for getting involved? How can stakeholders be engaged effectively? UNDP (2006) and Griffiths et al. (2008) argue that effective multi-stakeholder engagement needs active participation in a "continuum" from early stages of the process of problem identification, resource mobilization, implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

At any given moment in the "continuum" there should be dialogue and consensus building because they assure transparency, accountability, and ownership to development issues (Barney, 2003).

Crop irrigation is one of the necessary and needed transformations in the agriculture sector and for ensuring food security that requires concerted efforts of multi-stakeholders. The government of Tanzania has put in place irrigation policy with the aim of ensuring sustainable availability of irrigation water and its efficient use for enhanced crop production, productivity and profitability that contribute to food security and poverty reduction. Tanzania has 29.4 million ha potential for irrigation; however, only 1.5% is under irrigation (URT, 2013), and Magozi Irrigation Scheme is one of the few community based initiated irrigation scheme located in Iringa Region that utilizes its land for crop production. Prior to 2008, Magozi community was characterized as food insecure and high poverty leading to poor livelihood conditions.

Empirical evidence shows that there are multiple positive effects of irrigation on crop production, farm and non-farm employment, and food security (Hussain and Hanjra, 2004). Crops irrigation tends to reduce risks of crop failure and therefore contributes to assured yield and productivity (Ibid).

The objective of this article is to find out the effect of
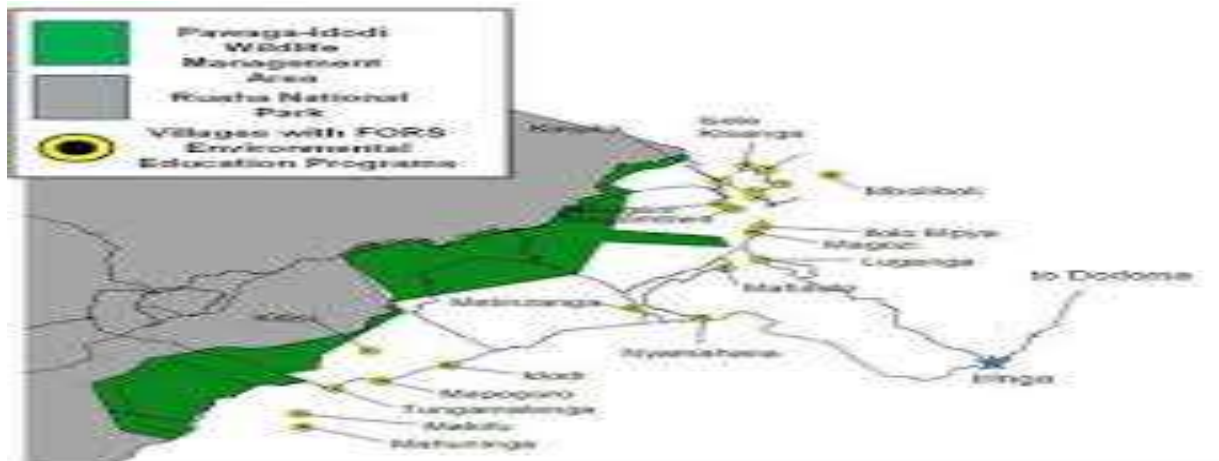
**Figure 2.** Map of Magozi village.
Source 1: Google map.

Magozi irrigation on communities and drawing lessons for advancing irrigation schemes.

## Study area

The study area is Magozi village (Figure 2), located in Iringa Region, Southern Tanzania. The village is endowed with Ruaha River and fertile low land suitable for paddy irrigation. Magozi Irrigation Scheme is situated in Iringa District in Ilolo mpya ward. The scheme includes 3 villages, Mkombilenga, Magozi and Ilolo mpya. The scheme is registered as Mkilima under ministry of home affairs with registration number SO 14034 of 2005 under the Cooperative Society Ltd. with registration No. 197 of 1995 with 522 farmers. The scheme has already acquired water user permit.

## METHODOLOGY

The article uses case study design for an in-depth understanding of Magozi Irrigation Scheme; it examines the goals and strategies used for moving away from food aid dependency. The researchers approached the village by gaining entry from Iringa District Council to the village leaders. The food condition of the village was narrated; it was found out that the villagers were suffering, having food aid that could not sustain them before the Magozi Rice Irrigation scheme was created. The study used interpretive methods (Geertz, 1994) which helped to why stakeholders' engagement was necessary for Magozi villagers in resolving food aid dependency, and how stakeholders' engagement was practiced to utilize irrigation for attaining food security. This is guided by the main question; what is the linkage between stakeholders' engagement, irrigation and food security? The specific questions were:

(1) How can stakeholders' engagement theory be used to realize Magozi Rice Irrigation Scheme goals?
(2) What role does stakeholders' engagement play in Magozi Rice Irrigation Scheme?

(3) What lessons can be drawn from stakeholders' engagement in Magozi Irrigation Scheme?
(4) How has the scheme improved food security and poverty among communities in Magozi village?

## Data collection

Qualitative approaches of focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews were used for data collection. Two FGDs comprising village leaders and farmers were conducted in December 2017 to get information and data on production, food security, and poverty before and after the irrigation scheme. The participants of FGDs narrated the state of food insecurity prior to the commencement of the irrigation scheme in 2008. They disclosed that people used to get food aid from government and churches (the Anglican Church). FGD participants described the key steps that village leadership took to engage stakeholders in addressing food problem.

Four key informant interviews were conducted in the village followed by two supplemental interviews with District Agricultural Officers using an interview guide. Participants were selected from amongst farmers based on the criteria of rich information and the key role they performed in the scheme. The interviews were conducted for gaining an in-depth understanding of the Magozi Rice Irrigation Scheme. Data collected included the historical background of Magozi Irrigation Scheme, food insecurity, income and poverty level before and after the scheme. The data collected from interviews were triangulated with the Iringa District Agricultural and Irrigation Council Officers and desk reviews. The data were detailed on stakeholder engagement, livelihood in the village, success stories and challenges. In addition, online library search was completed to triangulate the information obtained from FGDs and interviews.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Stakeholders' engagement literature (Mitchell et al., 1997; Sinclair, 2011) describes stakeholder engagement process from problem definition, planning, resource mobilization and implementation. Magozi village as the

primary stakeholders were involved in the problem identification. They were also engaged in identifying Ruaha water resources to overcome their problem.

## Stakeholders' identification and engagement

Knowing their economic status, communities in Magozi convened a meeting and deliberated to visit various stakeholders requesting for financial support in the construction of the scheme. A number of stakeholders identified included: Non-governmental organization called CONCERN Worldwide, Faith based organization called Anglican church, local government authority and Central government through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food security and cooperatives. Other stakeholders include the River Basin Management and Smallholder Improvement Project (RBM SSIP) and the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF)

## Faith based organizations contribution

Communities in Magozi village used to get food relief from Anglican Church. The church through it partners organizations used to solicit fund for Magozi communities. The idea for Magozi Scheme was conceived by the villagers. The village councilor approached the Bishop and introduced the need for constructing the irrigation scheme; he said,

*"We thank the church for continuous support, however, we think that it is time to give us fishing nets to engage in fishing rather than giving us fishes"*.

The bishop accepted the request and promised to solicit fund from the church partner organizations. The church contributed about 120 million shillings to the scheme.

It was reported that, "in the year 2000 the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives through its programme known as Agriculture Sector Development Program (ASDP), conducted a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in the village and listed village requirements. In the list of priorities, irrigation scheme scored number one and hence they promised to fund it". PADEP agreed to contribute 105 million shillings and the Iringa District Council contributed 40 million shillings for the irrigation scheme.

## Stakeholders' engagement in practice

Taking an example of Magozi Irrigation Scheme, the ward leader took the initiative of mobilizing the community towards construction of the irrigation scheme. When asked how difficult it was in mobilizing communities towards irrigation, he replied that, communities in Magozi were tired of being poor and persistence food insecurity for about 27 years, therefore, it was easy mobilizing them.

The ward leader at Magozi called up on the first meeting to list down all the available opportunities in their village, including land and water for irrigation. After knowing their opportunities, they agreed to participate in the construction of the scheme. Engaging community in construction of the scheme was easy because they were tired of poor economic status. Based on high poverty level of the people, their contribution was mainly in kind. During focus group discussion, participants revealed that they collected about 452 trips of stones as their contribution. One of the participants was quoted saying:

*…… "We knew that stones will be required for construction of the scheme, each one of us participated in collecting stones as we had no money to contribute……"*

Another participant added that:

*….although the role of collecting stones was a bit tough, it was worth doing it as we were very eager to have our own irrigation scheme. We were tired of working as laborers in our neighbor's farms (Luganga and Mlenge schemes). They used to call us as" power tillers" because we worked hard and finished our portion in a very short time. This was because we wanted to work on large portions so as to get more money.*

In view of this, engaging communities in the construction of irrigation scheme was very easy as this was their felt need, they wanted to see changes in their village with respect to high productivity and improved income at all levels. The ward councilor when asked as to whether he encountered challenges in engaging communities in the project, he said that there were no challenges at all; everyone wanted to see changes in terms of food security and income. The ward councilor added that, communities were not able to transfer the collected stones to the construction site and therefore they requested support from the Iringa District Council.

## Outcome of stakeholders' engagement

Communities through their leaders were able to construct an irrigation scheme and therefore increased area for cultivation by 51%, from 264,388 ha in 2006 to 399,775 ha in 2012. The number of people using irrigation increased from 33,000 in 2005 to 1 million in 2012. The average paddy yield is 5 tons per hectare (Figure 3). The agricultural success is the result of Magozi irrigation development in the villages through various projects
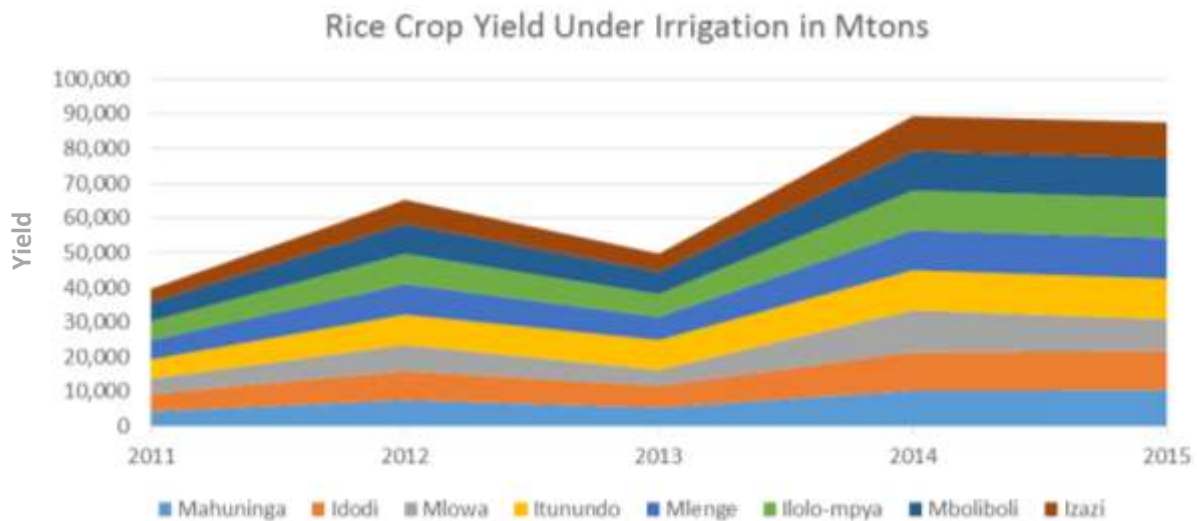
**Figure 3.** Effect of irrigation on rice crop yield.

financed by the International Development Association (IDA) in collaboration with other development partners throughout the past decade.

**Narratives of food security from 2008-2017**

It was narrated that there is no more food aid dependency. Villagers are able to produce enough food for household consumptions and surplus for sale. This has caused change in the livelihoods and improved iron thatched houses. One of the focus group discussant was quoted saying:

*"We were beggars as we used to beg food from the government. Some of our men abandoned their family looking for green pastures"*

Another key informant broadly said,

*"We depended on food aid from the government, as it is known, food aid offered by the government is only a single or two-day meal, and the family cannot depend on such a source of food. For us (men) we had no respect from our wives, our livelihood status was poor, there was no even a single house roofed with corrugated iron sheets. There was no any single shop in this village"*

The focus group discussant added that:

*"We experienced high rural urban migration of youths who are energetic and can engage in agriculture. Our children moved to town where they were employed as wapiga debe at the bust stand! While our girls worked as house maids…….."*

**Success stories from the implementation of Magozi Irrigation Scheme**

Magozi villagers appreciate the introduction of irrigation scheme in the area when referring to the change in their livelihoods. A specific reference is pointed to an old grass thatched house (Figure 4) in the village that existed before 2010 and the first improved iron thatched house in 2010 (Figure 5), which was inaugurated by the National torch race leader, who also awarded five power tillers in recognition of promoting irrigation for increasing agricultural productivity.

Through DADPS and private owners, the village has a total of 45 power tillers used for cultivating farms in the village. This is a transformation from hand-hole to small-scale mechanization in rice farming.

The outcome is "No more food dependency". Food aid was nicknamed "*Mbochero*" which is translated in the local vernacular as "shameful" for them because they have land, water (resources) and able-bodied people, yet they lived on food-aid. Eventually, this was transformed with the irrigation scheme; they are proud that they are no longer dehumanized by food aid. They can now afford 3 meals a day and pay for health and education costs for their households. Furthermore, some have bought motorcycles for small scale transportation business.

The unintended outcome is the reduced rural-urban migration. It was noted by the villagers, that they are proud of their young men and women staying and working on farms. They no longer migrate to urban centers as it used to be, because agriculture has attracted many youths to the irrigation scheme.

**Figure 4.** Magozi house before irrigation scheme.



**Figure 5.** Magozi houses after irrigation scheme.

## Challenges in the implementation of Magozi Rice Irrigation Scheme

The challenges of rural irrigation schemes such as the Magozi rice irrigation include lack of technical expertise for managing water resources. This is for the government irrigation engineers as well as for the local community knowledge on water management (Dungumaro and Madulu, 2003). This was reported in the interviews with the key informants that the phase I construction of Magozi irrigation scheme had technical problems of narrow water intake and canals, which did not allow adequate water flows to farms. This was corrected by phase 2 at extra costs (Figure 6).

Another challenge is the scarcity of water resource during dry season. There are prolonged dry spell due to climate change. Although there are success stories, multiple challenges were noted as follows:

(1) Water irrigation scheme requires maintenance and so to speak, the scheme does not have sufficient financial capacity (money) for maintenance. This challenge threatens the sustainability of the rice production and therefore food security.
(2) There is a challenge of failure to abiding to the requirement of the National irrigation policy of paying 5% water user fee. First of all, farmers and water users are not aware and not willing to pay water user fee.
(3) There is also a challenge of adopting improved seeds SARO 5. Many farmers prefer rice varieties [Faya dume, faya jike, Zambia] which the business market wants
(4) Low level of using harvesting technology for cultivation, use of improved seed, fertilizer and weeding
(5) Post-harvest loss is also a challenge due to poor storage, transportation from farms, and drying
(6) Marketing- of rice is a challenge because during high demand season 100 kg bag sells at Tanzania shillings

**Figure 6.** Magozi reconstructed water intake.

120,000, but during harvest time price goes down to Tanzania shillings of 70,000 per 100 kg bag.


**LESSONS, CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION**

The study provides lessons that stakeholders' engagement in development policy and food security programmes in particular has potential powers to overcome problems. Given the complexity, challenges and dynamics in development policy like addressing food security and poverty reduction, stakeholder engagement is very important. The Magozi Rice Irrigation Scheme represents a prototype of the required agricultural transformations that uphold stakeholder engagement. It also provides possible ways of restructuring and eliminating poverty in various Tanzania's district councils that have similar conditions for irrigation. It is important for the Agricultural sector led ministries in Tanzania that include the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Irrigation, and President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government to engage stakeholders working on community based irrigation schemes for food (rice, maize, beans) and cash crops (tea, sugarcane, coffee, etc).

The study sheds light to other African countries with similar food security and poverty problems that it is extremely important to engage various NGOs operating across the continent to work with communities to address food and nutrition security using water resources for irrigation. The use of community mobilization, government and private engagement in irrigation schemes provides solution to the food insecurity in the continent.

The government of Tanzania agricultural transformations should therefore include the strategies for enhancing and supporting community driven irrigation schemes while engaging multi-sectoral stakeholders in the public and private domain. Despite having the policy framework and development framework including the National Irrigation Strategy (2016), Five Year Development Plan 2015/2016-2020/2021 and the newly launched Agricultural Sector Development Plan (ASDP-II) 2017/2018-2027/2028, irrigation development in the country (both small and large scale) is very low. This is attributed to the low-budgetary allocation for irrigation schemes, low research and development and underutilization of extension officers as technical support.

We also learnt that where stakeholder engagement on irrigation has started, there are positive indicators for great success of increasing food security. For effective stakeholders engagement and results, having clear policy goals is very crucial. Leadership must play role in setting up clear vision and goals as well as sharing it well with all stakeholders. This is the case of Magozi irrigation scheme, which had set a vison of eliminating food aid dependency and now is producing rice to feed Iringa region and beyond.

The sustainability of the Magozi irrigation is very important that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet

their own needs (United Nations, 1987). The environment protection and conservation of Ruaha water sources should be in the village, district and national plans. Human kind socio-economic activities should be controlled in accordance to the Environmental Management Act, 2004 and reinforced by law. Villages should also enhance by enacting by-laws for protecting the environment and water sources. In addition, a special fund for development and maintenance of the water management in the scheme should be established by farmers and water users to make annual subscriptions at an agreed and reasonable rate.

This paper concludes that attaining food security and poverty reduction in areas with water resources for irrigation is a choice of success while implementing agricultural transformations. The lessons from Magozi irrigation scheme of stakeholder engagement should be expanded in the existing framework of public-private partnership policy.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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