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**RURAL RESPONSES: FROM NARROW,  
SHORT-TERM, REACTIVE AND RELIEF  
ORIENTATIONS TO SUSTAINABLE RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

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## **RURAL RESPONSES: FROM NARROW, SHORT-TERM, REACTIVE AND RELIEF ORIENTATIONS TO SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Introduction**

During the epoch of early major national reforms following the country's independence from British rule, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda had this to say:

What should it be like to live and work in the rural areas by 1980? The first and most important aspect is that in most parts of the rural areas it should be possible for the man [and woman] of average talent and who is prepared to work hard, to earn from the sale of produce an income that is comparable to what is now being earned on the line of rail. The second basic aspect of rural life by 1980 is that our people should have easy access to a substantial service centre ... At these ... we will aim to provide by 1980 a health centre, a well stocked shop, an agricultural depot where there will be implements, an extension office ... for crops, livestock or fishing, a community development office, together with ... facilities to improve the cultural amenities of the region... Our aim ... for the primary schools will be to have them so spread around the country that not only do we maintain the 1970 target of universal primary education but we also make it unnecessary for any school child to walk more than three miles to school. Also ... we will aim at providing clean and reliable water supplies within a maximum of one and a half miles of the villages. Nutritional aspects ... should be the third fundamental part of rural life by 1980 ...

From the above (a quotation from "Basic Needs in An Economy Under Pressure: Findings and Recommendations of an ILO/JASPA Basic Needs Mission to Zambia," ILO, 1981), first we see that Zambia's socioeconomic problems have always been well identified and presented. Second, we see that there has not been much lessons learnt from initial rural development interventions or to build on previous efforts. The current "mantra" of the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are to some experts similar to the above quotation.

But this quotation is striking about its truth to the present day of Zambia's long historical struggles with improving living conditions of the people being more evident in rural areas.

Moreover, from pre-independence times up to the present time, Zambia's approaches to development have weighed heavily in favour of urban areas. Yet

it is in Zambia's rural areas where the challenge of development is even more pronounced and therefore requiring *unprecedented, holistic and creative* efforts in addressing them.

This is because, for example, to attain household food security in the Zambian context, a number of equally pressing issues including infrastructure development, health and education, people's attitudes, etc., need to be simultaneously attended to with uniform levels of intensity.

It is not to overstate the fact on the ground to suggest that there is an urgent need in Zambia to re-focus on rural development. For example, the 2006 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey Preliminary report of the Central Statistical Office (CSO) indicates an increase in rural poverty from 78% to 80%. Recurrent cries for rural infrastructure, food security problems characterised by – among other things – very narrow diets, human-animal conflict, weak local institutions of development, etc., all add up to the rural poverty situation.

Given the historical and current circumstances, there is need to not only reinstate the rural development agenda, but to move even beyond previous historical agendas in terms of expressions but also in terms of practical orientations. Hence the JCTR offers this *Social Policy Brief*, "Rural Responses: From Narrow, Short-term, Reactive and Relief Orientations to Rural Development".

**Current Approaches to Rural Development:**

It is recognisable that, by and large, many of the current approaches to rural people's concerns are of *narrow, short-term, reactive* and *relief* orientations as opposed to being development oriented. The approaches have these characteristics in the sense that they are piece-meal and designed to only address issues or problems mainly reactively, in the short-term and only in a few instances, in the medium term. They take the form of, for example, fertilizer subsidies, relief food supplies, local trade imbalances, etc.

These characteristics are also very dominant in education and health, where the characteristic feature is the presence of inadequate personnel and other resources. The generally poor conditions of the rural areas motivate incessant migration of young people who have acquired some skill to urban areas. This *narrow, short-term, reactive* and *relief* oriented approach is also expressed in the political landscape where appeasement, rhetoric, etc., occur at the expense of issue oriented debates, and honest and genuine responses to hard situations.

Development oriented approaches on the other hand would take the form of an emphasis on the future and creation of appropriate institutions devised to attain

structural changes while naturally taking care of the immediate needs of the people.

### **Redesigning and/or Reinvigorating the Rural Development Agenda**

It would be difficult to achieve desirable results without first of all reinvigorating or reawakening the rural development agenda. This agenda must be looked at from a three dimensional perspective:

- *The Expressive*: this is the starting point in the whole approach to reinvigorating  the rural development agenda. It is to be found in public documents and  discourse, institutional frameworks, in setting priorities -- political, economic  and social.
- *The Operative*: this part of the approach addresses for whom the programmes  or activities are designed, particularly paying attention to those areas and  targets that require attention. The operative would be sensitive to gender  considerations; income disparities within and across families, communities,  nations, etc.
- *Evaluative*: this is about examining progress and the kind of criteria being  employed. Is growth in the economy on “paper” or it is translating into actual  improved living conditions of the people? What sections of society need  particular interventions?

This is the framework that needs to be employed to achieve high levels of efficacy in implementation of programmes and therefore achieving desirable results. But the question that will naturally follow is: What will motivate this agenda of rural development re-invigoration and redesign in the Zambian context? Here we need to consider a couple of factors.

*Moral/ethical imperatives*: that rural areas experience intensive and pervasive poverty is itself a compelling factor for both government and wider collective action (e.g., civil society) to respond to the needs of rural people. “It is the belief of the JCTR that it is an all time truth that every human-being desires to lead a life of full access to food, housing, clothing, education, social inclusion, psychological serenity, health, etc., and therefore it becomes the fundamental principle upon which every society’s approaches to policy design and response to crisis situations should be based. For any lack of realisation of this fundamental principle and the consequential effects is in itself a denial of the humanity that is inherently in each one of us.”

*Balanced development*: arising from the above imperative, it is a matter of great

need in the current circumstances of Zambia to achieve balanced development within and across urban and rural divides. But even beyond equity questions is the need to recognise that in rural Zambia are huge resources for national development and within this huge diverse development resource, the foremost are the people.

**An “Expressive” Response to the Rural Development Question: The JCTR *Rural Basket***

That the rural development agenda needs uplifting cannot be contested. That is why the JCTR – motivated by what has been highlighted above – came up with the concept of the *Rural Basket*. It is an initiative that fits well with the three dimensional perspective referred to above.

The *Rural Basket* is a depiction of various facets of the rural household situation – indeed general rural situation – that include prevailing food availability and consumption patterns. In addition, it highlights the cost of non-food essentials such as cost of soap, matches, cost of milling maize, sorghum, millet, etc. *It is primarily designed as a tool for assessing living conditions of the people in rural areas and on the basis of it to work with other stakeholders to raise the profile of rural areas to feature more prominently in policy designs and debates. In that regard, the Rural Basket is a tool for attaining structural change that encourages investment in sustainable development, away from short-term relief orientations.*

In constructing the *Rural Basket*, a rigorous pilot phase was followed – this featured, among others, intensive interviews with select households on a monthly basis. The interviews took place over more than twelve months in the three areas of Chief Malama’s area in Mambwe district, Matushi in Mufumbwe district and Saka in Masaiti district. The intention of the pilot was to understand the context, to draw lessons aimed at improving the methodology, to understand consumption and food availability patterns through compilation of food calendar, to gather other qualitative socio-economic information on, for example, health, education, agriculture practices, markets and infrastructure.

The *Rural Basket* (attached as an appendix) is presented in five sections. Sections A, B, C, D and E. Sections A and B, respectively, present basic food items and essential non-food items for an average household size in a particular area and each of the two sections has two columns. One column represents what people expressed could be the ideal foods available and desired for consumption in a particular season. This expressed ideal food available and desired for consumption was then subjected to nutritional analysis to establish amounts necessary for consumption for the recommended calories which averages 2,400 calories per person per day. The column on the right presents the food that was actually

consumed on average in a particular month. The difference between the recommended calorie requirement in the first column and the actual calorie derived from the food that was consumed represents the level of *calorie attainment* or *deprivation*. It should be noted that among other things, deprivation in calorie intake affects growth in children and also active economic engagement in adults. In a similar way, section B has two columns. One depicts the kind and level of the required non-food items and other things that households are actually affording. Again, the difference between these columns represents the level of *attainment* or *deprivation* in relation to *decent and healthy living conditions*.

Section C is distinct from the first two sections of A and B in that it gives a picture of available social services. The section highlights the situations of water, education, health, agricultural extension services, etc. This broader inclusion is meant to bring into perspective the whole question of rural development.

Section D is linked to section A in that it demonstrates the minimum level of agricultural production in order to achieve food security. It highlights the required cultivation area and levels of inputs in a particular area for meeting food production (e.g., maize, cassava, beans, groundnuts, etc.) necessary to achieve food security. Keeping in mind that to achieve sustained household well being, there is need for surplus production.

The last section, E, is about sources of livelihoods. As has already been observed, the main source of livelihood in the rural areas is agriculture. Only in a few instances do households engage in non-agricultural based income generating activities such as beer brewing or earning a wage through some form of casual employment.

#### **The Rural Basket: Some Broader Challenges**

In carrying out research on the *Rural Basket* and the urban *Basic Needs Basket* – both of which are oriented towards structural changes in society – the JCTR takes strong cognisance of the challenge such research poses in actually ensuring that the people who have experienced and endured incessant studies and promises of development see tangible outcomes in the shortest time possible.

The challenge of social science research in Zambia today relates to its benefits being seen tangibly by wider society and in particular by the people directly participating in it. Obviously collection of such information that is designed for structural changes in society in economically depressed environments poses even a larger challenge. This is because people are constantly living on margins of survival and therefore are in a hurry to see benefits accrue of any development initiative.

Quite understandably, expectations are very high with regards to what this activity will do to lift up living conditions of the people in Malama, in Matushi, in Masaiti. Expressions such as “since you started collecting this information, there is nothing we have seen as outcomes, benefits,” are and will be common. Of course this concern is buttressed not only by immediate needs of food and other non-food items but also by failed development both at the local and national levels over the years. Activities that are not relief per se in orientation will always be subjected to such questioning, especially seen in the history of non-existent or underachievement in development outcomes. Undoubtedly, this is one of the challenges that the FNDP faces as it seeks “enhancing agriculture and rural development” (See page 3 of summary of the FNDP).

#### **So What after the *Rural Basket* is Produced?**

The *Rural Basket* is premised on raising the profile regarding living conditions of the rural people. Given the situation of historical failure of rural development and the renewed energy expressed in the FNDP and MDGs, it is important that all stakeholders of rural development, in particular the government as duty bearer, are held accountable to the promise of bringing development to rural areas. This process of holding stakeholders accountable will obviously benefit in significant ways from the JCTR *Rural Basket* as a tool for knowing the existing situation and measuring the extent to which development is being realised. Under this score, the implications include:

- *Different levels of participation and policy influence:* the voice of the people themselves needing development must be heard. But it must be heard in a structured and empirically backed way or must be evidence-based. This means that the *Rural Basket* must permeate households, the community -- including local and national level institutions of governance and development in raising rural development concerns.
- *Establishment of linkages:* this effort will be directed at establishing links with groups or organisations that have some *poverty alleviation* orientation in terms of development interventions. This is because redress of structural aspects in our current context is perceived to be futuristic in orientation – takes time to achieve changes – but promises sustainable development. On the other hand paying attention to people’s immediate needs builds trust and facilitates their effective participation in any development initiative.

#### **Conclusions**

- The rural development agenda requires immediate attention and must feature expressively in policy documents, institutions of political, social and economic governance, including national debates at various levels of society. This is

why the JCTR strongly believes the inclusion of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) in a new Bill of Rights of the new Constitution, and establishing ways of making them justiciable has the potential of contributing to avoiding deeper inscription of inequitable features in the nation's development process.

- □ Rural development must, by its nature and as revealed by the *Rural Basket*, have a comprehensive approach because of the inter-relatedness of the issues requiring redress.
- □ Even more important, the nature of programme implementation must be long-term in nature with mechanisms that are sustainable.
- □ This agenda must feature *trust* as its bedrock in order that people, among other things, are genuinely brought on board in its support, have their desperation and therefore indifference reduced, etc.

These are just preliminary and select *expressive* oriented recommendations about rural development which is about an array of issues to be paid attention to. The second Quarter *Social Policy Brief* will present some specific policy recommendations for rural development, the *operative*.

The JCTR Social Conditions Programme will be very pleased to receive comments, questions and suggestions on our analysis and recommendations. (email: [socialjctr@jesuits.org.zm](mailto:socialjctr@jesuits.org.zm) or [basicjctr@jesuits.org](mailto:basicjctr@jesuits.org))

**(A) BASIC FOOD ITEMS FOR AVERAGE SIZE FAMILY OF SEVEN IN SAKA AREA  
MASAITI**

Monthly Food Needs “Jan - March Ideal”		Average Actual Food Consumed – “Prevailing Situation”		
Item	Quantity	Item	Quantity	Common Means of Access
Maize Grain	100Kg	Maize Grain	46 Kg	Harvest/ K5,000 per 4.2 Kgs
Cassava Tubers	20 Kg	Fresh Maize	19 Kg	Harvest
Eggs	300g	Chicken	4 Kg	Reared
Chicken	5 Kg	Fresh Fish	7 Kg	Fishing
Sweet Potatoes	10Kg	Dry fish	2 Kg	Fishing
Dry Fish	1 Kg	Beans	1 Kg	Harvest
Beans	5 Kg	Groundnuts	5 Kg	Harvest
Groundnuts	5 Kg	Pumpkins	6 Kg	Harvest
Tomatoes	10 Kg	Cassava	3 Kg	Harvest
Onions	2 Kg	Sweet Potatoes	9 Kg	Harvest
Mushroom	2 Kg	Tomatoes	6 Kg	Harvest
Cassava Leaves	1 Kg	Rape	1 Kg	Harvest
Sweet Potatoes	2 Kg	Pumpkin Lvs	3 Kg	Harvest
Pumpkin Leaves	6 Kg	Sweet potato Lvs	1 Kg	Harvest
Pumpkins	5 Kg	Garden Eggs	3 Kg	Harvest
Wild Spinach (Bondwe)	2 Kg	Okra	100 g	Harvest
Mango	10 Kg	Chinese Cabbage	400g	Harvest
Loquat (Masuku)	3 Kg	Imyungu	6 Kg	Harvest
Sugar	2 Kg	Mangoes	4 Kg	Picked
Salt	1 Kg	Munkoyo	3 litres	Brewed
Cooking oil	2 litres	Sugar	1 Kg	K5,000 per Kg
		Salt	500 g	K2,000 per 500g
		Cooking oil	2 liter	K8,500 per 750mls
<b>Avg. Calories / person / day</b>	<b>2400</b>	<b>Avg. Calories / person / day</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>Deficit (-1000)</b>

**(B) ESSENTIAL NON-FOOD ITEMS**

Monthly Non-Food Needs			Average Actual Expenditure on Non-Food Needs		
Item	Quantity	Cost (K)	Item	Quantity	Cost (K)
Paraffin	750 mls x 2	16,000	Paraffin	1.5 litres	8,000
Matches	5 boxes	750	Candles	1	700
Bath Soap	4 tablets	14,000	Matches	7 boxes	1,050
Wash Soap	2 x 400g boom	6,000	Bath Soap – Geisha	2 tablets	5,000
Vaseline	1 x 500 mls	4,500	Wash Soap – Boom	1 x 400g	2,500
Lotion	1 x 400 mls	2,800	Milling	46 kg	23,000
Milling	100Kgs	13,500	Glycerine	50mls	1,200
			Lotion- Clare	1 x 400mls	2,800
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>K57,550</b>	<b>Average Expenditure</b>		<b>K44,250</b>

### (C) ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Service	Cost	Distance	Comment
Water	Time	-	Borehole is broken down/ households drawing water from unprotected wells
Saka Basic School	Free	Local	Saka Basic has now enrolled grades 8 / However, the school is drastically understaffed with only 5 MOE teachers and 1 volunteer teacher catering for 600 pupils. There is no qualified secondary school teacher
Secondary Sch. (8-9 / 10-12)	K60,000 -100,000 / K190,000-250,000	30 km	There is no senior secondary school education/ Pupils who qualify to grade 10 must attend boarding school in Luanshya
Lisomona Clinic	Free consultation	15 km	Catchment area of 7,000 people / No qualified medical personnel / CDEs diagnose patients and prescribe drugs / Coartem shortages are common
Ibenga Hospital	Free consultation	25 km	Severe cases are referred to Ibenga Hospital
Transport	K10,000 - K20,000	-	Cost of renting bicycle for 1 day/ Bicycle common transport to Luanshya
Community Development	-	-	Bridge linking Area to Luanshya not yet constructed. Each rainy season the makeshift bridge collapses, leaving pupils cut off from school/ The campaign against charcoal burning in the district has been intensified. A number of checkpoints on the main road have been mounted to curb this activity

### (D) MINIMUM ANNUAL FOOD PRODUCTION FOR HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN SAKA, MASAITI

	Maize	Cassava	Beans	Groundnuts
<b>Total Quantity</b>	1200 Kg (13.3 x 90 Kg bags)	240 Kg	60 Kg	60 Kg
<b>Cultivation area</b>	2.4 Lima (1.5 Acre)	0.32 Lima (0.2 Acre)		0.2 Lima (0.125 Acre)
<b>Required Inputs</b>	12 Kg Seed / 240 Kg Fertiliser	800 x 30 cm Cuttings		3.75 Kg Groundnuts
<b>Total Input Cost</b>		Recycled Seed		Recycled Seed

**(E) PREVIOUS LIVELIHOODS OF SELECT HOUSEHOLDS IN FEBRUARY**

	<b>Charcoal Sales</b>	<b>Goat sales</b>	<b>Remittance</b>
<b>Input Costs</b>	-		
<b>Sales</b>	18 bags of charcoal packaged in 25kg bags @ K12,000 each	2 x K162,500	
<b>Profit / Wage</b>	<b>K216,000</b>	<b>K325,000</b>	<b>K140,000</b>

*This survey was conducted during the first week of **March 2008** by the Social Conditions Programme of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection. Average calories were calculated on the basis of food consumption from randomly selected households within Saka Area. Additional information was collected from rural health centres, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, schools etc., within Masaiti district.*

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