

To cite this output:

Cousins, B, *et al* (2011) *Livelihoods after Land Reform: The Poverty Impacts of Land Redistribution in Southern Africa*

ESRC Impact Report, RES-167-25-0037. Swindon: ESRC

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL IMPACT REPORT



For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This Impact Report should be completed and submitted using the **grant reference** as the email subject to **reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk** on or before the due date.

Completion of this Impact Report is mandatory. It will not be possible to edit this Impact Report at a later date, as it is designed to provide a statement of the impacts of your project to date 12 months after your grant ends.

Please note that the Impact Report will only be accepted if all sections have been completed in full. If a section does not apply to you, please enter 'n/a'. Grant holders will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this Impact Report. In particular, the notes explain what the ESRC means by 'impact'.

Grant Reference	RES-167-25-0037		
Grant Title	Livelihoods after land reform: the poverty impacts of land redistribution in southern Africa		
Grant Start Date	01/10/2006	Total Amount	£489 983.29
Grant End Date	31/03/2010	Expended:	
Grant holding Institution	University of the Western Cape, South Africa		
Grant Holder	Professor Ben Cousins		
Grant Holder's Contact Details	Address	Email	
	Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies, University of the Western Cape, P. Bag X17, Bellville 7535, RSA	bcousins@uwc.ac.za	
		Telephone +27 21 959 3733	
Co-Investigators (as per project application):		Institution	
Professor Ian Scoones		Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex	

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1. SCIENTIFIC IMPACT

A Please **summarise** below the scientific impact(s) your project has had. *[Max 250 words]*

The project's research findings and policy recommendations argue the need to re-think conventional notions of the 'economic viability' of rural land reform in southern Africa, given the variable and differentiated nature of demand for land, the specific character of smallholder and small-scale commercial production systems, and the positive impacts of land redistribution on livelihoods in some contexts (especially Zimbabwe). Project methodologies for assessing livelihood impact at different scales break new ground, and demonstrate the utility of holistic and multi-scaled approaches. The full scientific impact of the project will emerge more clearly once publication of outputs is complete and they begin to be reviewed, but an initial assessment is that it is influencing both scholarly assessments of the impacts of land reform in the region and conceptual approaches to understanding the impacts of land reform in general. Key empirical findings and the re-framing of the notion of 'viability' in terms of dynamic and socially differentiated livelihood pathways have been accepted or welcomed by many scholars of land reform and agrarian change in Africa and elsewhere, but not by others (including some economists). This is unsurprising given: (a) the highly politicised and controversial character of land reform in the region; and (b) the challenge that holistic livelihoods-focussed methodologies mount to key underlying assumptions of neo-classical economists as well as neo-institutional economists. In general, the scientific impact of the project has been earlier and higher than anticipated, mainly because of the high profile of the Zimbabwe component.

B Please outline the **findings and outputs** from your project which have had the scientific impact(s) outlined in 1A. *[Max 250 words]*

The study demonstrates the diversity of livelihood outcomes of land redistribution in southern Africa, the social and spatial differentiation of land reform beneficiaries, and the utility of a dynamic livelihoods pathways approach to the assessment of outcomes. The impact of land reform on inherited agrarian structure has varied greatly, as have district-wide impacts on economic linkages, employment and output. Positive impacts on livelihoods are more evident in Zimbabwe than elsewhere, because of greater flexibility in land use and livelihoods and the larger scale of redistribution. In South Africa, diverse trajectories of change in projects and livelihood pathways were identified, and several reasons for project failure were identified, including bureaucratic planning procedures that privilege conventional approaches to 'economic viability'. In Namibia, policies are focused on creating small-scale commercial livestock production units, but many beneficiaries do not desire to farm commercially, productivity is low, and few other land-use or livelihoods options are provided; positive impacts on livelihoods are few. In Zimbabwe, many beneficiaries are investing in farming and output is increasing, despite frequent droughts and poor availability of inputs. The main project outputs which have communicated these findings to the scientific community are: a book on the Zimbabwe component (Scoones *et al*, 2010, 2011), a long research report on the Namibia component (Werner and Odendaal, 2010), a journal article (Cousins and Scoones, 2009),

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two national workshops to present research findings (South Africa and Namibia, both in 2010), and several conference and seminar papers and presentations (Zimbabwe, South Africa and UK, 2010).

C Please outline **how** these impacts were achieved. [*Max 250 words*]

The project website (www.lalr.org.za) carried early overview papers on land reform policy debates in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, and was linked to the website of host institutions (PLAAS at UWC in South Africa and IDS at Sussex in the UK); this helped generate early interest in the project amongst scholars of agrarian change. A project Reference Group was established comprising prominent scholars and practitioners, who provided useful advice and guidance but also made other scholars aware of the project. A number of conference and seminar presentations on the conceptual framework of the project (e.g Cousins 2007, 2008; Scoones 2010) also generated interest. A debate on land and other issues amongst Zimbabwe scholars took place in 2008/2009 following an article in the London Review of Books of 4 Dec 2008, by Mahmood Mamdani, which cited early project findings. A working paper (Cousins and Scoones, 2009) was available on project and PLAAS websites; this was published as a journal article in early 2010. The scientific impact of the project was most in evidence following publication of the book on land reform in Zimbabwe in the UK and Zimbabwe in late 2010 and in South Africa in early 2011 (Scoones *et al*, 2010, 2011). The book was praised by leading scholars (e.g. as 'an outstanding contribution' by Henry Bernstein of SOAS) and achieved a high media profile in the UK, Zimbabwe and South Africa, and on the internet, making scholars aware of key findings.

D Please outline **who** the findings and outputs outlined above had an impact upon. This can include specific academics/researchers through to broader academic groups. [*Max 250 words*]

South Africa: Johan Kirsten (UP), Cheryl Walker, Kees van der Waal and Steven Robins (US), Lungisile Ntsebeza, Frank Matose, Christopher Saunders and Aninka Claassens (UCT), Peter Jacobs (HSRC), Ruth Hall, Andries du Toit and other researchers at UWC, Fred Hendricks and Kirk Helliker (Rhodes), Roger Southall, Samuel Kariuki and Eric Worby (Wits), Brian Raftopoulos (Solidarity Peace Trust), David Moore and Adam Habib (UJ), Rob Davies (and SA Treasury),
Zimbabwe: Sam Moyo, Walter Chambati and other researchers at African Institute for Agrarian Studies, Prosper Matondi and other researchers at Ruzivo Trust, Jeanette Manjengwa. Billy Makamuri, Lloyd Sachikonye and others at UZ), Mandebvu Rukuni (formerly UZ)
Namibia: Martin Shapi (University of Namibia), Justine Hunter, Daniel Motinga, Bertus Kruger, Legal Assistance Centre, Desert Research Foundation
UK: Henry Bernstein, Carlos Oya, Deborah Johnson, Jens Lerche (SOAS, London), Michael Lipton, Steven Devereux and other researchers at IDS (Sussex), JoAnn McGregor (London), Jocelyn Alexander (Oxford), Joost Fontein (Edinburgh), Lionel Cliffe (Leeds), David Hulme, Admos Chimhowu and Phil Woodhouse (Manchester)

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Netherlands: Marja Spierenburg and Bill Kinsey (VU, Amsterdam), Jun Borrás, Bram Buscher, Ben White and Bridget O'Laughlin (ISS), Paul Hebinck and Jan Douwe van der Ploeg (Wageningen)

USA: Pauline Peters (Harvard), Jim Ferguson (Stanford), Sara Berry (Johns Hopkins), Jean Comaroff (Chicago), David Hughes (Rutgers)

Canada: Tania Li (Toronto), Haroon Akram Lodhi (Trent), Richard Saunders (York), Henry Veltmeyer (St Marys), Blair Rutherford (Carleton)

Norway: Bill Derman, Poul Wisborg and Espen Sjaastad (Noragric)

Denmark: Amanda Hammar (Copenhagen)

2. ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL IMPACT

A Please **summarise** below the economic and societal impact(s) your project has had. [*Max 250 words*]

Societal impact has occurred in relation to: (a) public awareness, and (b) policy making. Public awareness of the complexity and differential impacts of land redistribution on rural livelihoods and poverty has been enhanced in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia through the widespread communication of research findings in popular media and consequent public debate (as evidenced in response articles, letters and blog pages on media websites). It is difficult to gauge precisely how public awareness has altered, but scrutiny of published responses suggests the following: (a) the largely unquestioned media stereotype that land reform in Zimbabwe has been an unmitigated failure with disastrous effects on the economy has been replaced by a growing realization that many beneficiaries are now engaged in successful small-scale agriculture; (b) debate on land issues in Zimbabwe is more informed by research evidence, although interpretations of the significance this evidence vary greatly; (c) there is a significant spill-over effect from the Zimbabwe findings onto debates in South Africa and Namibia, some responses indicating greater awareness of the potentially positive impacts of land redistribution on smallholder production and rural poverty. Some responses also exhibit resistance or hostility to research findings, i.e. a range of responses is evident. In terms of policy making, the impacts are similar, with both government officials, donors and NGO staff expressing great interest in project research findings and policy recommendations, but some being more positive or receptive than others. No direct impacts on country policies can be discerned as yet.

B Please outline the **findings and outputs** from your project which have had the economic and societal impact(s) outlined in 2A. [*Max 250 words*]

The findings that have had observable societal impact are the same, for the most part, as those in relation to scientific impact (see above). The key findings are that many land reform beneficiaries in Zimbabwe have become productive small-scale farmers, and that land redistribution has the potential to reduce poverty. Bureaucratic approaches that privilege mainstream approaches to 'economic viability' in agriculture have constrained

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this potential in South Africa and Namibia. In terms of public awareness, project findings in relation to production and livelihoods after land redistribution have been the main focus of debate and discussion. Government policy makers, donors and NGO staff have also focussed on findings and recommendations in relation to the institutional aspects of land redistribution in the three countries (e.g. tenure arrangements, government support programmes, credit, inputs supply). The outputs that have had most impact on public awareness are newspaper articles, public seminars, book launches and the book on Zimbabwe. In relation to policy making, project workshops, policy briefs (in the case of Namibia), and summary presentations of research findings have been the most important outputs.

C Please outline **how** these impacts were achieved. [*Max 250 words*]

The project has employed a wide variety of communication and dissemination strategies, and researchers have worked closely with specialist policy dialogue and communications staff from their host institutions in developing and implementing these strategies. In all three countries a number of newspaper articles were written, leading to editorials in some cases (e.g. in *Business Day* in South Africa). Online media were used to good effect, and generated a very large number of online articles and reports on the Zimbabwe study in particular. Several blog pieces proved highly effective in generating discussion, and sites hosted by IDS and PLAAS, as well as newspaper websites, attracted a great deal of attention. Radio and television interviews with researchers (e.g. with Ian Scoones on the BBC and SABC), online videos, and well attended book launches and public seminars in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, the UK and the Netherlands also proved effective. In terms of policy making, the key activities responsible for impact have been presentations of research findings at workshops or conferences, some of them attended by senior officials or cabinet ministers (as in Namibia); the dissemination of policy briefs in Namibia; presentations to the relevant parliamentary portfolio committee and senior officials of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, in South Africa; presentations to donors in Zimbabwe; and discussions with DFID staff in Harare and London.

D Please outline **who** the findings and outputs outlined above had an impact upon. This can be at a broad societal level through to specific individuals or groups. [*Max 250 words*]

South Africa: Mdu Shabane, Director-General, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, together with other senior officials; Langa Zita, Director-General of Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries; Richard Levin and Neva Makgetla, Director-General and Deputy Director-General, Department of Economic Development EDD; Prof Karl van Holdt, National Planning Commission; several land and rural development NGOs such as Surplus People Project, Trust for Community Outreach and Education, Association for Rural Advancement, the Land Access Movement of South Africa, and Women on Farms Project.

Namibia: Minister of Lands and Resettlement. Mr Alpheus !Naruseb; staff of the

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Department of Lands and Resettlement; the Namibian Agricultural Union; Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ); Kreditanstalt fuer Wiederaufbau (KfW); the European Union Delegation to Namibia

Zimbabwe: technical officials in the ministry of agriculture (e.g. N. Pambirei, head of agricultural extension), plus, via the media exposure, various actors in civil society, NGOs, politicians and donors (notably DFID, the World Bank, the FAO, via the donor coordinating group).

UK: the findings have been shared the All Parliamentary group on aid and the specialised group working on Zimbabwe; senior officials in DFID; indirectly with the FCO; and through media exposure, meetings and talks with a wider group of academics and the interested public, including Zimbabwe diaspora groups.

3. UNEXPECTED AND POTENTIAL FUTURE IMPACTS

A Unexpected Impacts

Please note which, if any, of the impacts that your research has had were *unexpected* at the outset of the research, explaining where possible why you think this was the case. *[Max 250 words]*

None

B Potential Future Impacts

If you have a clear idea of the impact your research is likely to have in the future please detail these below. *[Max 250 words]*

The potential impact of the South African component of the study on scholarship, public awareness and policy making in South Africa has been constrained by delays in publishing the final research report, and thus delayed the production of policy briefs and academic journal articles that the report can form the basis of. Publication of the report is now expected in mid-2011, policy briefs in late 2011, and journal articles in 2012. Given the current hiatus in South Africa's land reform programme, and high levels of uncertainty over the direction of policy, it is unclear whether or not the report and policy briefs will have much impact on policy, but the potential for them to do so is clear.

Journal articles that report findings from Namibia and Zimbabwe are in preparation or have been submitted to journals, and these should appear from 2012. The scientific impact of the study can thus be expected to expand in 2012.

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4. IMPACT LIMITATIONS

A Limited scientific impact

Please state below any major scientific difficulties that have limited the scientific impact of your research. The statement should refer to an effect on *impact* rather than simply detail research difficulties. [*Max 250 words*]

Delays in publishing the research report and journal articles that report the findings of the South African component of the study have limited their impact.

Some key findings (e.g. on Zimbabwe, or critiques of conventional assessments of 'viability') have met with resistance or aroused controversy. This is to be expected given: (a) the politicised character of land redistribution in southern Africa; and (b) the challenge that the project's methodologies (which emphasize holistic, livelihoods-focussed assessments of impacts) mount to more mainstream approaches favoured by neo-classical economists and neo-institutional economists.

B Limited economic and societal impact

ESRC recognises that some of the research it funds will not have an economic or societal impact in the short term. Please explain briefly below if this is the case for your project, and refer to your grant application where relevant. [*Max 250 words*]

The direct impacts of the study on policy making in all three countries has been lower than anticipated. This is largely the result of the difficulties currently being experienced in South Africa's, Namibia's and Zimbabwe's land reform programmes, and associated challenges for researchers attempting to engage with policy makers in government. In South Africa, researchers have experienced a sharp decline in the past two years in the willingness of senior officials in the relevant line department to discuss policy-oriented research findings on land reform. The relevant parliamentary committee has been more open to discussion of project findings, but its influence on the Ministry of Rural Development and land Reform or senior officials in this department appears to be limited. The recently-appointed Director-General, Mr Mdu Shabane, may adopt a different approach. In Namibia, the focus of land reform policy at present appears to be on communal tenure reform rather than the land redistribution programme. Although a new integrated Land Bill is now under consideration, no policy debates have preceded its introduction. In Zimbabwe, land policy has received limited attention during the life of the Government of National Unity, which is characterized by a stand-off between the three main parties; and the current impasse around a national land audit has stalled discussion of other land policy issues such as land administration, land tenure, and compensation.

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C No impact to date

N/A



Please note that ESRC projects are evaluated on the basis of their scientific and/or economic and societal impact. Grant holders are expected to report any future impacts as they occur using the Impact Record, downloadable from the ESRC website.

If you have no impacts at this stage, please give reasons below. *[Max 250 words]*

N/A

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5. DECLARATIONS

Please read the statements below. Submitting this Impact Report to **reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk** confirms your agreement.

- i) This Impact Report is an accurate statement of the impacts of the research project to date. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.
- ii) Details of any subsequent impacts will be submitted via an Impact Record as they occur.

Thank you for completing this Impact Report. Your Impact Report will be considered along with your End of Award Report in the evaluation of your research.

You are now invited to complete the confidential Nominations form, which will assist with the evaluation of your project.

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NOMINATED OUTPUTS

Please nominate a maximum of two outputs from your research which you would like to be considered as part of the evaluation.

Output type (eg journal article, book, newspaper article, conference proceedings)	Publication details (eg author name, date,, title, publisher details)	Uploaded toESRC website? (Yes/No)
Journal article	Cousins, Ben and Ian Scoones, 2010. "Contested paradigms of 'viability' in redistributive land reform: perspectives from southern Africa". <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i> 37 (1): 31-66.	Yes
Book	Scoones, Ian, Nelson Marongwe, Blasio Mavedzenge, Jacob Mahenehene, Felix Murimbarimba and Chrispen Sukume, 2010. <i>Zimbabwe's Land Reform. Myths and Realities</i> . Woodbridge, Suffolk, Auckland Park, South Africa and Harare, Zimbabwe: James Currey, Jacana Media and Weaver Press.	No (not possible for contractual reasons). A copy can be supplied for review purposes from i.scoones@ids.ac.uk if required.

Please email your completed Impact Report with electronic copies of your nominated outputs to reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk, using your **grant reference number** as the email subject.