

ABSTRACT

The Fast-Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe was a major and unique economic revolution on the African continent which accounted for milestone changes in land ownership, which had been skewed in favour of whites by colonial processes and programmes. The manner in which the programme was carried out was emotionally charged to the extent that in many cases ecosystems and the environment in general suffered. Once over, there was a need to put environmental sustainability ahead of revolutionary emotions for the good of 'our common future' hence the establishment of custodian organisations like Sebakwe Conservancy and Education Centre (SCEC). This study sought to identify conflicts between the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy (MBRC) and resettled communities adjacent to MBRC, establish measures initiated by SCEC to ameliorate these conflicts and to assess the effectiveness of these measures. Lecture presentations by experts, interviews with beneficiaries, field observation and focus group discussions were used to collect data for this paper. Results identified crop destruction as the most prevalent form of human-wildlife conflict in Sebakwe communities near MBRC. Other forms of human-wildlife conflict included poaching, predation of domesticated animals by wild animals and fatal attacks of humans by animals. The measures initiated by SCEC to improve human-animal relations include projects like the tsofso stove, Chipembere nutritional garden, education incentives and poultry and piggery projects. This 'project initiative' enabled the SCEC to reach out to the resettled communities to sensitize them on the need and importance of environmental conservation. The 'connecting people with wildlife' philosophy being employed at Sebakwe is an important innovation, which can significantly reduce human-wildlife conflict in conservancies, national parks and safari areas under threat from newly resettled farmers across the country.