

Painted hunting dog conservation through local education and development, Zimbabwe

A Darwin Initiative project of the Tusk Trust, Siren Conservation and the Painted Hunting Dog Research Project

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1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSES

Drawing from the original project proposal, the general purpose of the PRA was taken to be the following: to inform the approach and design of educational and sustainable livelihood activities by shedding light on relevant social, economic and environmental perspectives of importance to individuals in their local community and ecological contexts. This includes existing awareness of significance in their everyday lives of biodiversity and painted dogs in particular.

The project director also wished to know how the project as a whole is being received by local stakeholders, how different aspects of the project ‘fit together’, ie mutually supportive or not, and whether there is potential for Dog Project to enhance this.

Towards these purposes, particular attention is paid to:

- a. fit’ between local culture, people and ecology, and how this is changing under new influences on community desires**
 - ways in which community lives and local ecosystem have been mutually supportive in the past
 - the part played by cultural beliefs and values in mediating community-ecosystem relations, including recent changes
 - how community members now conceive of their relationship with the local ecosystem, and how they wish it to be, including reasons and motivations for doing so
- b. clues about how local culture and priorities might contribute to education, interpretation and sustainable livelihood** in ways that enhance painted dog conservation, sustainable relations (‘fit’) between community lives and ecosystem, and support community desires and wishes
- c. from a. and b. above implications for the fit’ between Dog Project and prevailing community desires, and past and emerging culture**
 - how the project is viewed and experienced by different community members as ‘fitting’ into and contributing to their lives
 - how community members *wish* to experience the project ‘fitting’ into and contributing to their lives

- possibilities and constraints for enhancing ‘fit’ between project and community lives - how project might best fit with local culture and community.

2. PROJECT ASSUMPTIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Conservation’is **value-laden term** reflecting the values and priorities of Darwin Initiative and the project partners. Painted dog conservation is their primary problem and objective. Stakeholders themselves do not always view it as such. **Conservation is often seen by them as a possible means of achieving other developments** in their favour - income, livelihoods, education, computer access and training, community facilities, etc – **and as an outcome of the latter**. The Dog Project itself recognises the need to link dog conservation to positive motivations and benefits that are experienced as direct benefits to stakeholders. To optimise relevance to stakeholders, it was necessary to draw out and explore how various stakeholders evaluate the importance of conservation, the dogs and the Project.

This report should be read as a descriptive and interpretative **snapshot in a longer-term emergent process**. The stakeholder views, interpretations and suggested implications gave a picture of apprehension and anticipation about their situation, which is uncertain and in flux. These views and interpretations should not be taken as static or definitive, especially given the limited time in the field available for this study.

3. METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL APPROACH

3.1 Systemic (or relational) thinking and practice informs the participatory methods, analysis and interpretation of results. This means:

- viewing interactions between ecological, social, economic, individual, cultural, psychological and other dimensions of the situation as an integrated and mutually dependent whole. This approach is resonant with the primary importance given by discussants to “continuity” in cultural and nature-culture relations.
- recognising that change in one part of the system affects all other parts in ways that are not always possible to know. This is as true for ‘invisible’ cultural and psycho-emotional dimensions as for the ‘visible’ ecological, social and economic
- recognising that behaviour with ecological, social and economic effects is rooted in underlying motivational and cultural factors
- emphasising stakeholders’ first-hand experience, beliefs and knowledge
- respecting all Dog Project stakeholders as experts in their own lives, contexts, needs and desires so that they are equal contributors to the inquiry, mutual learning and awareness-raising
- recognising that the take-up and effectiveness of decisions taken in the Project will be influenced by the extent to which they are experienced as relevant to stakeholders’ perceived needs, desires, interests and priorities
- recognising that the PRA research process itself, including presence of the research consultant, has an influence on the Project, its stakeholders and on capacity building. The research consultant is viewed as a member of the Project.

3.2 PRA to reveal underlying meanings, and discussant reticence

The report is essentially a descriptive account of what was found out from the PRA. However, in the consultant's view it was necessary to **probe beneath the surface** to gain insight into underlying stakeholder motivations, reasons and purposes. The **level of description is therefore somewhat deeper than a conventional PRA** would produce and goes beyond being a simple appraisal. PRAs generally employ methods such as diagramming, mapping, etc but these only elicits descriptive information of a relatively superficial nature. The main methods used here were **in-depth semi-structured dialogue, group discussion and participant observation**. These are designed to **reveal underlying values, interests, priorities, etc underlying stakeholder views**. Such 'deepening' methods do form part of the PRA 'toolkit' but are less frequently used than 'scoping' methods.

Furthermore, where considered helpful to the project, **explanatory, theoretically informed comment and interpretation of findings** is also given, as well as implications for the project. This decision was supported by the project director.

In keeping with the methodologies employed, flexibility and adaptability to stakeholder participant input was retained throughout. **Stakeholder relevance and meaningfulness is an important guiding principle in research as in education and policy-making.**

Given time constraints, most interviews were arranged by the Project Director and topics to be addressed were selected in consultation with him.

Discussants were often **reticent about speaking about their beliefs**. They did not believe that a white European could be genuinely interested, and considered it risky to speak openly about traditional beliefs and practices, or even to admit knowledge of them. European interest rarely extends beyond touristic curiosity and entertainment by performances, artefacts, etc.

The **consultant's interpretation of his brief**, however, required understanding the meanings and significance beneath cultural appearances, and also the influence they have on attitudes and behaviour.

3.3 Introducing Dog Project and its educational aims to discussants

In the first meeting with elders, the consultant gained their confidence by distinguishing between two types of religion and culture: that all religions aim to help people find, or understand, a purpose to being human. On the other hand, all religions are also abused for instrumental and expedient purposes. Agreeing with this, elders became more open to discussing their own beliefs and practices.

Once clear that the interest was genuine, responses were various - disbelief, surprise, amusement, pride, but also **sometimes suspicion about how the information would be used**, based also on negative historic experience of interaction with Europeans.

The project was **introduced to discussants as having the following concerns**:

- presenting local ecology, culture and wildlife as a whole system rather than separate and/or antagonistic
- conserving the painted dogs
- through the 'door' of dog conservation, enhancing general wildlife and environmental conservation

- generating sustainable livelihoods for local people
- providing educational and community facilities for local people
- interpreting the dogs, wildlife and local ecology through the 'screen' of the culture, beliefs and practices of local people, without mystification or condescension
- educating tourists about the value of local ecology, traditional beliefs and practices, and of seeing these as a whole system rather than separate and/or antagonistic
- through education, rejuvenating local culture to sustain continuity of culture and culture-nature relations
- through the 'door' of dog conservation, educating local people and tourists about ecology and human-nature relations
- generally educating local people and tourists about the dogs and conservation

PM presented himself as part of the Dog Project and described his own purpose as simply **to understand local beliefs and culture in relation to painted dogs, nature in general, and the project**. This was **with a view to developing education programmes and helping livelihoods in ways that are as relevant to local people as possible**.

3.4 Main participants in individual and group dialogues and interviews

- Painted Hunting Dog Research Project managers, office staff, site staff and volunteers
- Hotel worker, artisan (carver of tourist artefacts), expert on traditional beliefs mythology, practices, etc
- Trainee manager of a tourist safari lodge
- White farmer, hunter and breeder of 40 years residence
- Young researcher into traditional beliefs about conservation and medicine
- Two elderly hunters/poachers
- Regional chief
- Chief's Aide
- Elders of a local village

4. THEMES AND FINDINGS FROM DIALOGUES

Themes and findings are **selected and framed to reflect their implications for the main concerns of the project**: education, interpretation and sources of livelihood.

Before going into more specific detail about perspectives on the dogs, nature, conservation and the Project, it is important to be aware of some contextual background on general history and culture. Knowledge of this can help shape design of education, interpretation and livelihood options in ways that optimise relevance to local people. This can increase effectiveness and likelihood of take-up, and reduce chances of rejection or inaction.

4.1 Attitudes towards Europeans and Euro- Zimbabweans, and the colonial influence (see also section 6.1.1 on hunting and poaching)

The white colonialists and institutions appear to have had quite a **profound effect on black Zimbabweans' relationship with their own traditional beliefs**, values and culture in general. It has left a legacy of some ambivalence and uncertainty with regard to the legitimacy of their traditional cultures, identities and authority structures. This has also had **knock-on effects on relationships with the natural environment**, which, to a large extent, was mediated and regulated by these traditional beliefs and authority structures.

Colonial ethnocentrism and 'Christianity' has engendered a certain shame and embarrassment in admitting adherence to traditional beliefs, culture and practices, or even in discussing them. They were seen by the colonialists as 'evil', 'primitive', 'bad', 'nonsense', 'pointless', 'outdated', etc. The confusing experience of, on the one hand, being derided, ridiculed and oppressed for one's own beliefs whilst, at the same time, having to continue living in traditional ways informed by those same beliefs, has resulted in a certain cultural fragmentation and loss of continuity. It seems to have forced traditional belief and practice underground to a greater extent than in other African countries that were not settled by whites to the same degree. According to one discussant, villagers did not start adopting western habits such as mixing the sexes, wearing western clothes, etc until the mid 1970s. Yet cultural beliefs had already started to deteriorate. They had the "worst of both worlds" – discouraged from having their own beliefs yet with little opportunity to adopt western lifestyles. Memory and practice of traditional beliefs, knowledge, culture, etc has atrophied under European influence and knowledge of them often appears sketchy and limited. As an indication of what has been lost, a village elder born in 1905 was apparently unable to recall the creation myth of his own people, something at the core of most cultures.

At the same time, some people are well aware that the Bible contradicts many of the values, attitudes and actions expressed by the colonial administrators and missionaries who introduced Christianity. They are aware that the latter interpreted it in ways that justified their actions. One discussant, for example, understood that “Jesus came to help people be free and equal”. Some black Zimbabweans now consider themselves to have a truer and more accurate understanding of the teachings of Christianity than the colonialists had.

Christianity is now quite a strong force in Zimbabwe although many who call themselves Christians use it to justify actions in a way analogous to how the whites did. This tends to include justifying a detachment from nature. For others, Christianity is believed and practiced in ways that incorporate many elements of pre-Christian African religion, in which case the perceived relationship with nature seems to be stronger. For others still, ‘Christianity’ is adopted as a politically ‘respectable’ label beneath which is a much stronger adherence to traditional beliefs. The very word ‘religion’ is generally associated with ‘Christian’ or ‘Catholic’, not with traditional religious beliefs. This is illustrated by one discussant whose reply, as if by reflex, to a question about their religion was “Catholic of course!” Later conversations revealed this person to be much more aligned with traditional belief.

Optimistic **Dick Whittington’ type fantasies** prevail about the ‘the west’ – that life is always easy. Asked to imagine what England is like, one discussant responded by saying, “It’s like Heaven”. It is not unusual to aspire to come to the west, make one’s fortune, as a health worker or home-help for example, and return to Zimbabwe to buy a house. That there could be any negative aspects to living in the west tends to be strongly denied.

At the same time, some discussants are aware, but at a loss to understand, why **“the white man is destroying the world” and has no sense or value of cultural continuity**. A perspective, described by discussants as prevalent, was that “whites don’t have any culture”. They are only interested in other peoples’ cultures. Reasons for this view were that whites do not seem to value family bonds and relationships, they do not pass professions or crafts across generations, they **do not help each other** but are **always in competition** for what they are most interested in - money, power, and collecting things.

4.1.1 Attitudes towards the San/Koi-koi people

Black African attitudes towards the San and their culture are similar to those of the whites towards other African cultures. This is in spite of the ridicule experienced by the latter under white rule and their historical reliance on the San/Koi—koi for hunting expertise - a major form of subsistence in the area. Some comments went as far as to depict the San as less than human. As one discussant put it, **“they need to live like humans, not animals”** and to do so they have to be sedentarised and civilised. The San culture is now effectively extinct in the Hwange area: “they are kept (*sic*) at Main Camp.”

4.2 Traditional culture and beliefs - general

4.2.1 Cultural ambivalence

For reasons described above, the negative connotations surrounding African beliefs still persist amongst Africans themselves – that they are somehow less valid and functional than western beliefs and culture. Also, that westerners are only interested in traditional culture for its curiosity and

entertainment value. Whites are always expected to want to see traditional dance or artefacts, or hear music. This is in spite of the fact that many Europeans are now recognising the validity of beliefs, *per se*, and also the **positive ecological effects** that anthropologists, cultural ecologists and others have demonstrated them to have. The strong, though often ambivalent, tendency is for Africans to **aspire to western, consumer culture** instead. This is often underpinned by a utilitarian interpretation of Christian belief, although some Christians are, on the contrary, critical of economic, consumerist values, and their impacts on traditional ways of life, community and nature. There is also a **tendency to favour what is new and exciting** rather than what is tried and tested but 'boring', although pronounced dovetailing of old and new cultures is also evident (so-called 'syncretism').

4.2.2 Culture as continuity, continuity as survival

In spite of modernising influences and desire for what it brings, there is **anxiety beneath the surface 'about the loss of traditional culture'**. Asked what **culture** is, other than "the way we do things", the most repeated explanation given by discussants was that it **is about "continuity" passed from one generation to the next**. There is a **"power in continuity" and it is vital to retain it**. It provides identity, cohesiveness, knowledge and skills, all of which are necessary **for long-term survival - in other words for social and ecological sustainability**.

As one discussant put it:

"old culture is very important because it's intended by God. You will later find that you need it, when there are problems because you have done something against God's will. If you lose your culture, you will have great benefits at the beginning but later you will have problems, and you will not know how to deal with them because you will have lost your culture."

As cultural ecologists have pointed out, traditional cultures have underpinned societies and ways of life for thousands of years – longer than any urban-based civilisation. **This fact suggests that traditional, pre-industrial cultures are ecologically and socially functional and adaptive.**

One important way in which cultural continuity is maintained – and, importantly, approval from God and the Forebears - is by passing knowledge, skills, crafts, trades, professions, etc from one generation to the next (generally father to son). Just as important is the passing on of knowledge, skills and values that aid general survival. All these things are being lost, and to large extent have been already, with the attraction to western 'culture' based on **monetarisation and economically mediated relations rather than social relations**.

The **importance of continuity in nature** was also emphasised, so drawing **parallels between cultural and natural processes**.

Elders are aware that theirs is only one of many cultures all over the world that are disappearing and being replaced by one that emphasises selfishness, materialism, money, etc but that does not include many other necessary dimensions of culture such as **connection and continuity with community and nature which all people depend on**. This is seen as the absence of, or at best, a sort of partial culture.

Elders are aware that **young people are losing and letting go of their culture** and that, once the continuity is lost, it is **impossible to get it back again**. They also believe that it will compromise everyone's survival when the **attractive short-term benefits that come from cutting it bring problems in their wake**.

4.2.3 Importance of the ancestral Forebears

Asked what the **response of the ancestral Forefathers (who represent and require continuity)** think about people losing and/or ignoring their culture, a response, from a younger person this time, was similar:

“They would not like it. Losing culture at first will bring benefits but later on there'll only be problems. The Forefathers would be very unhappy/ disapproving about this.”

If it displeases the ancestral Forebears then it displeases God. God ‘speaks’ through them and cannot be known directly. **Ancestors are considered members of the family who have an influence and a view on what happens in the world of the living.** They can also make life difficult if they do not approve of the activities and motives of the living. It is, therefore, important to ask permission from the Forefathers before significant collective and individual decisions are made, eg before hunting and before building. This is why it is **important to consult with the local chiefs about the establishment of the Painted Dog Centre, and to invite them to important events.** In this way, they can, in turn “ask and discuss” it with the Forefathers, who have “given their approval”.

4.2.4 Role of the chief, ‘dis-integration’ and dispute resolution

The peoples in the vicinity of Dog Project have many different origins. During one key invasion, the Tonga Chief (Pashu?) surprised the invaders by **not** fighting back. Instead, he suggested a compromise whereby the 2 chiefs would share the land between them and found a new clan from both the local and invader's culture. This is the origin of the Dombe, combining the Tonga and Niais (Nambia).

From this foundation, a philosophy of dispute resolution exists based on “softness (or yielding) as strength”: **“to be soft and to seek understanding is seen as strength not weakness.** It results in becoming the advisor to the warrior chief.” This results in a win-win situation. Ignoring advice not to fight the “soft people” invariably leads to disaster. Discussion is seen as a blessing for all concerned.

This story illustrates **the mediating role of chiefs** in traditional society, and the fact that they are viewed more as **embedded within – and sharing - the interests of their local communities** society than modern-day politicians are.

The word **king** derives from the word **kin** and chiefs are more like kings than politicians or judges in the modern sense. As such, they are seen as **embodiments of the community(ies)** who recognise them as chief, and responsible to them. Rather than ruling over ‘their’ people, their role is more to **take care of the communities’ interests and welfare, including the trees and health of the environment** in general on which they traditionally depend for their livelihood. To do this they must have an effective overview of the community.

A discussant described chiefs as **like the point at which the roof struts of a traditionally built house meet and mutually support each other.** They see (should see) the community in a similar way, taking an **overview** of it as **whole system** – its needs, welfare, varying interests (individual and

collective), conflicts (actual and potential), etc **in both the short and the long term**. They can be effective and respected mediators of disputes precisely because of this **overview function**. Traditionally, their legitimacy, and their own welfare, depends on this. If they are seen to be unfair or unwise, or otherwise lose favour, their legitimacy and livelihoods are put at risk. Community members become less willing to consult them and bring gifts in exchange. The expectation to give gifts may also be important from another practical point of view in that it encourages disputing parties to try and sort out their disputes between themselves.

Clearly, given this account, the **authority of chiefs depends more on the prevailing values and priorities in the community than vice versa**. If these change in a de-legitimising direction, as they currently are towards western political-economic and market values, the **chief's position as a mediator and influencer can become compromised**, unless he too is willing to modify his role in line with a model of politician rather than a king. In practice, African politics tends to combine features of each, hence the frequent view of politicians as having divine rights. Either way, such changes are indications that more systemic social and cultural change is occurring.

In the final analysis, **chiefs are kin members and authority is ascribed to them permissively**. **They can be deposed** or even killed by the community if they are seen to be unfair or corrupt. It is a **finely balanced role in a finely balanced system** that depends on juggling many interests and points of view. It also largely **depends on the community continuing to view traditional beliefs, values and authority processes as legitimate and relevant to them**. This is deteriorating fast as western forms of political democracy and market culture take hold. Furthermore, the chiefly system is being **appropriated and incorporated** into the latter so that chieftainship is coming to be seen more conventionally as a 'job' rather than as a role inherent to the kinship system, seen as a whole. As traditional mechanisms of authority, respect and accountability decline, accountability and status are also increasingly seen in modern political-economic terms – through votes and salary. **The long-term perspective of continuity therefore also suffers**. As societal cohesiveness and integrity based on tradition fragments, so do opportunities for corruption (literally meaning to destroy or break) and pressure from political 'bosses' increase. Under the 'combined' chiefly and western political 'system', chiefs come low in the political hierarchy. It is difficult for them to say no to party politicians and authorities.

4.2.5 Symbols of culture and changes in attitude

Simple symbols illustrating culture and cultural change include:

- **Eating with hands from a shared bowl**: symbol of **unity, connection, continuity, trust, mutual dependence**
- **Knife and fork** (ie western introduction): symbol of **separation, fragmentation, individualism, lack of trust, quantified, measured portions**
- **Traditional roofs** and similar patterns symbolising the **unity underlying and cohering diversity, mutual support and continuity**. This can also be seen in the 'concentric' dependence of society on nature. (Note implications for **symbolic uses of the Centre**)
- Changes in eating habits and other processes represent and indicate general changes in values

Discussants, young and old, often expressed **fear and apprehension** about the consequences of losing local culture. At the same time, both were also excited about, and strongly desired, the **perceived newness, progress and benefits of western-style, economic, consumer culture**. The fact is that, under the combined influence of globalising values, and fantasies about what they will provide, the **erosion of historic cultures, beliefs and values** is well advanced and continues at a

rapid pace. As a result, so does the **sense of belonging**, connection between people with each other and their environments, **respect for traditional authority, social cohesion** and certain **safeguards against social and ecological disintegration** that are embedded within the culture(s).

4.3 Traditional culture, beliefs, attitudes, symbols relating to nature, ecology and the dogs (see also Appendix 1)

Attention to traditional culture and belief is of key importance to education and learning in the Dog Project. Although its importance to local people – especially the young – appears to be dwindling, it still forms the background to their psyches, thinking and worldview. **If traditional beliefs were given renewed legitimacy, partly through reinterpreting in ways that are experienced as more relevant to contemporary everyday life, they would be a powerful tool for both education and conservation.** This is an **important challenge** for the education programme and, in the consultant's view, a vital one. As reflection on one's personal experience shows, the most **effective and long-lasting learning occurs not through the presentation of facts and information alone, however rational and sensible, but when it resonates meaningfully, and usually emotionally, in the experience of the learner. Information that is not experienced emotionally as being relevant is quickly forgotten.** This is why some religious and political ideas can be such powerful vehicles of change. They are emotionally engaging.

4.3.1 Afro-Zimbabwean

4.3.1.1 Continuity in nature, and between people and nature

The importance of “continuity” as a defining and sustaining feature of local culture has been described in section 4.2.2. The same applies to **continuity in nature - and between nature and culture.** An old Malozi belief is that **“without nature there is nothing”**. Many elders understand this - that society is nested within and dependent upon ecological processes. They are also aware that all cultures in the world have it embedded within their beliefs in different ways.

Asked **what the Forebears think about the destruction of nature** and disappearance of animals – including the dogs – the response was always that they do not approve at all. This is one of the reasons that traditional hunting stopped. Too many people were being killed and this was taken as a sign to stop. They also do not approve of killing other than for food. Nevertheless, some people claim approval from the Ancestors in that if they make offerings prior to hunting and are successful, this must mean that the Ancestors were helping them.

The **perceived importance of these links has eroded** as cultural changes have been shifted perceptions from prioritising the land as the physical source of survival and sustenance to prioritising money as the means – through trade, business, imports, etc. The increasing sense of separation and disconnection from nature may additionally be underpinned by Christian beliefs that are less grounded in the local physical environment than traditional beliefs. The nature-ancestor link, including the need to seek approval of the ancestors for various actions, is being replaced with an arguably even more superstitious (because de-linked) belief that “everything will be OK because God will take care of it”. This is an example of how incoming beliefs have adversely affected traditional belief. As already mentioned, simple changes in behaviour are associated with this de-linking in some people's minds, for example the shift from sharing meals from the same bowl and eating with the hands (symbolising

unity) to individual eating with a knife and fork (symbolising separation and individualism). Such changes in eating habits lead to, reflect and reinforce changes in values.

The idea that humans are separate from nature is very prevalent, even amongst those who work in the wildlife tourism industry. For example, asked why **logs are laid as symbolic boundaries at safari lodges** between the lodge itself and the wildlife waterholes, a young employee replied as follows:

“It (the boundary) separates people from nature. People aren’t part of nature in some ways (as the animals are). People always want more money, though different people do respond differently. It’s a mystery why some people respond to nature and others don’t, but I think it’s because of genetics. Like my brothers. We just think differently so we don’t spend much time together”.

This young man’s view was in spite of a conscious decision to return to the bush from the city because:

“I like a simple life, love the animals and love the way they ‘match’ (ie ‘fit into’) the ecosystem (like pieces in a jigsaw).”

Reflecting on the lure of the city, he continued:

“They (my brothers) just want to stay in, or go to, the city, like 30-40% of people who’ve experienced it. The rest don’t ‘want’ to go simply because they’ve never experienced it and don’t know anything different. If they had, they’d want to go too. Once they’ve experienced the city, it’s really difficult to change their city lifestyle habits. It was also difficult for me at first. But anyone can change if - when they’re exposed to something different - their hearts change. City people lose the connection”.

He went on to describe his managerialist **view of the relationship between humans and nature:**

“Humans fit in (into nature) through management. We create the waterholes for the animals. That’s how we fit into the system. Then there are more animals, which leads to more tourism but also more hunting (legal and illegal) so more need for conservation awareness. But also more need to keep the animals in balance – like the elephants”.

Population and consumption (touristic and general) are thus linked in a self-perpetuating circle.

4.3.1.2 Symbolic geography of ‘old’ religion (related to nature and ecology)

Mythological geography provides insights into the human relationship with nature in the Hwange region, from the traditional perspective.

God – the Creator of the universe – cannot be spoken to directly but only through the ancestral Forefathers. These are consulted in sacred places – characterised by special features such as mountains, hot springs, gas exuding rocks, etc – where the Forefathers are consulted and asked for help. Many discussants mentioned them but most had never visited them for fear of what might happen. Only chiefs, spirit mediums, certain elders and other special people are permitted to go there and, even then,

only at special times and for special purposes. Different clans have different sacred places and praying there renews their significance, sacredness and power.

One grove called *Bumbus* was described as “**a place in the forest where all culture is**, and has been for thousands of years. It’s where they (chiefs, spirit mediums, etc) go if the rains don’t come to ask the Forefathers for advice.”

Mntolo is another place where “you ask spirits for rain.”

Chingahari/Changuina Gorge, at Kamatiri tin mine, is where there are “big white mountains that are husband and wife.” There is a white monkey there, which one chiefly discussant insists he has seen, who can tell you important things about the future.

Njelele is a place where “there are two hills to the east and south where the Forefathers speak through a voice without a body and give advice about drought, war, and other major decisions. There is a hollow rock where *Nyangas* (spirit mediums/witch-doctors, etc) go to train, to pray for rain, to treat people, etc. ‘Trainees’ are frequently selected because they have been “taken with spirit”, ie have shown a particular sensitivity towards subtleties of nature and/or communicating with the Forefathers. Sometimes they are identified through having miraculously recovered from a life-threatening physical or psychological sickness. At *Njelele*, a “person” on a Rock tells participants what specific roles are intended for them, eg healing, etc. This “person” must not be looked at directly and it is very dangerous to do so. It is therefore forbidden to look at the top of the rock.

There is a (possibly hierarchical) relationship between *Bumbus*, *Chingahari* and *Njelele*. At these places, advice may be given by a spirit – *Mpande* – to go also to the other places to seek advice there as well. The town of Lpote was founded when two brothers quarrelled and went to *Bumbus* for advice. One was advised to go and found Lpote.

4.3.1.3 Animal symbolism, traditional psychology and muti (medicine)

Animal symbolism is extremely important in the local culture. A great many family names are animal names. Dreaming of certain animals carries significant meanings and messages for the dreamer. And, often associated with these meanings, *muti* from animals is seen as passing on the qualities of those animals to the person using or taking the *muti*. It refers not only to substances and practices with curative properties but also to those that, through physical, ‘subtle’ or ‘magical’ means, provide strength, stamina, power, wealth, courage, health, protection or many other such benefits to the user. It is also used to weaken, ensnare or otherwise hurt other people.

Muti and animal symbolism are aspects of the complex web of dynamics and relations of psychology and belief that pervade society and are constantly on people’s minds, both consciously and unconsciously. Suspicion, jealousy, fear, anxiety and other such emotions all feature significantly in social and interpersonal relations.

Belief in *muti* is extremely strong, due to its connection with psychology and gaining advantages. For example, it is said that “you can’t defeat a bad person unless you’re given, by a healer, a certain medicine to defeat the bad person’s power so that he feels weak.” This creates a vicious spiral of *muti*-mediated conflict feeding the demand for *muti* which becomes increasingly rare and expensive.

Because animals killed for *muti* are so precious, rare and in demand, they are traditionally protected by kings and chiefs, and their exploitation controlled. This is achieved not only by this control over who kills these animals but also because kings and chiefs traditionally used and distributed their products very slowly which made it unnecessary to kill many or often.

Below are some examples of animal symbolism, their meanings, psychology and associated *muti*, as described by discussants. Much of the symbolism is associated with the mythical figure, Sikalela, who was a hunter who lived away from home, in the bush. He spent all his life in the bush, only killing enough to eat and no more (*kud*), unlike today's poachers (as the discussant pointed out). Sikalela works with the animal spirits, not against them.

According to Sikalela:

- Certain animals were, and are, **permissible to kill to feed the family**. These are buffalo, eland, sebo, waterbuck, kudu, and small animals such as impala, warthog and duiker
- **Very small animals** such as springhare are used for clothes, and to eat, but only roasted. Impala is also used for clothes
- **Certain animals (especially carnivores) should not be killed** except with the permission of the Chief, only for *muti* and, even then, only occasionally. There is an implicit (sometimes explicit) recognition of the relative rarity of animals such as leopard, python, lion, antbear (anteater), vulture, Bateleur eagle (*Ingququlu*)
- **Elephants** are too big to kill. If you dream about fighting with an elephant, and the elephant gives up, it indicates that you have conquered a problem. If, however, you dream that you are killed by an elephant it indicates that you will die (see also leopard).
- **Python**. In dreams, when it is coiled, it is the spirit of protection, especially protection of the family. If it is cut into pieces, or straight, it shows that protection is leaving the family and may be warning of approaching danger
- **Leopard**: In dream, the spirit of being a hero. Leopards attack unpredictably (and without fear) therefore they are *ulaka* (strict, harsh). When living in the bush, you need the spirit of leopard. San Bushmen, for example, have it. It helps to fight for survival and to be the fittest. If you dream about fighting with a leopard, it indicates that you have conquered a problem (the same meaning applies when you dream of fighting with an elephant that gives up). If, however, you are killed by a leopard, it indicates that you will die.
- **Antibear**: This should not be killed because it digs holes that can help you survive if you need shelter, protection, etc in the bush, where you could otherwise be extremely exposed. Animals such as warthog and duikers can also hide there if they are being chased. Antibears also break up the soil which is good.
- **Lion**: Because it is the spirit of (*In*)*Amaloz*i or *muzimo*, if you dream of fighting with a lion it indicates that you have done a bad or a wrong thing, or that something is not going well in your living with other people, especially the family/community. When you dream of fighting a lion, it is the Forefathers you are fighting. They are showing their disapproval of what you are doing in relation to other people

- **Vulture:** spirit of helping powers of king to dream power dreams and make sure that all that is dreamed is actually true. The vulture only dreams true things. Used when the Mambo (king) is troubled.
- **Civet cat:** skin used for the arm band that hunters wear on their right upper arm to give their throwing arm strength. This *muti* is called *intebe* (a protective charm). Civet tails used for headdress to indicate to other people how brave you are. Also used for other *muti*.
- **Hyena:** not on the side of the King (ie of the ‘good’) but of the evil spirits. Finding a hyena, whether dead or alive, means either that you’re gambling or you like to gamble. **Nose, ear and other parts** used as *muti* to help gambling, money-making and making people commit adultery. The tail was used by hunters in a pillow to help them dream of where they could find animals, and a *muti* from the nose was taken to improve tracking skills.
- **Painted Dog.** No specific symbolism was mentioned associated with dreaming about the dog. However, *muti* from them does have significance. According to discussants, “traditionally, dogs have to be killed for medicine. They’ve never thought that dogs really matter except for power for men and domestic dogs in the teeth. There’s a substance in the (canine) teeth that is mixed with herbs, seeds, etc, and drunk”. Teeth, feet and the end of the nose are mixed with “medicine” from the roots of particular trees and bushes, one of which is *mbanje* (marijuana, or ‘green tobacco’).
 - **Foot muti** is especially important for making both hunters and their dogs stronger, to give them more stamina when running or walking so as not to get tired when chasing animals.
 - **Nose muti:** works with the hunter’s spirit when sleeping. It improves the sense of smell and ‘sniffs out’ likely future dangers during sleep and presents them in dreams.
 - **Tooth muti:** this is also mixed with civet cat skin incorporated into an armband or mixed together to take as a medicine. It gives the hunter a strong hold, like the dog when it is holding onto prey. (One name for the painted dog means “eating prey while it still alive”).
 - **Heart muti** also used.
 - **Ligaments and/or tendons** are used to make a very strong thread for sewing the clothes of hunters and warriors, armbands, etc.
 - **All painted dog muti** has also been used in battles when warriors sniff it as a powder (also in combination with marijuana).
 - Sometimes **dog muti is mixed with hyena, python and leopard muti** to engender fear in bad people. Dogs are considered stronger than hyenas, however, because they defeat the hyena.
- **Human muti:** not much was said about this except: “if you take the small finger of a dead man, you will be able to use his powers and have his spirit under your control. You will become like him. Like a shadow”. Similarly, “I have seen Indians in Zambia kill a healthy child and take a part of them to heal a sick child. That’s hard to understand.”

4.3.1.4 Other beliefs and perspectives on painted dogs

- One name for the dog is **izelapezu**. This means “it eats animals while they are moving”.

- Although many people **believe** that dogs are believed to kill livestock, and stories abound about it, only one discussant was actually an eyewitness, and this was a weak cow that had strayed away from the farm. Another, a villager, recalled having seen a dog circling the village but it was not bold enough to attack livestock within it. Other discussants explained how the dogs were helpful, especially in times of food shortage in that they make food available to people – they are easy to chase away from carcasses that they have killed.
- Through *muti*, dogs give their ‘users’ strength, stamina, vitality, etc. This is a utilitarian, magical – one could even say, ‘consumerist’, use of dogs. A belief mentioned more than once is that “there is life through the dogs” and it is therefore important to protect them.
- The previous magical meaning of dog as protector may conceal another important **belief connected with the dogs that has faded over time**. Taboos against killing painted dogs were not mentioned by discussants in the same way as they were in relation to other carnivores. It was mentioned, however, that the dogs are sometimes seen as a “protector”. **Whereas the python protects the family, the dogs protect nature**. A rationale implied for this is that the dogs fight off and defeat the lion so, if dogs are present, the ecosystem must be very healthy. **Far from being utilitarian or magical, this belief suggests a culturally embedded awareness that life, health and vitality depends on a healthy ecosystem**, that the presence of large animals is an indicator of such health, and that the presence of dogs indicates the healthiest ecosystem. The painted dog as protector of nature is also strongly suggested by the Egyptian tablet found by Greg Rasmussen at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (see Figure 1, below).

Figure 1. Painted dog palettes from the main deposit at Hierakonpolis, Egypt. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.

4.3.2 European and Euro-Zimbabwean

Opportunities to speak with white Zimbabweans were very limited. However, although he contributes much to conservation and has been involved with it for decades, the main discussant's view was that the **major incentive is economic and without this there is no point in conserving wildlife**. This economic incentive comes from managing and providing for the 'rich man's playground' through safaris and hunting, and, perhaps in the past, from animal products such as ivory. Without this incentive, there'd be no reason to conserve the wildlife. He said that he has only been a hunter 'out of necessity'.

4.3.2.1 Touristic and conservationist

Asked what motivates white conservationists, an interesting response from black Zimbabweans was that they view **wildlife a bit like totems since conservation projects tend to be focused on particular species, as if they are members of the family – dogs, hyenas, lions, rhinos, etc.** There is less emphasis on conserving nature/the ecosystem as a whole. Projects work more or less independently in parallel with each other but are still competitive. More links, relatedness and integration between the various projects would help address this problem resulting, metaphorically, in a more **related "ecosystem" of species-orientated projects.**

4.3.2.2 White man's muti? (see also Appendix 1)

In discussing the significance of African wildlife to Europeans, the notion of "white man's *muti*" emerged. For example, whether it be through the "thrill of the chase" and "collection" of species pursued through conservation, or more overtly, through touristic photography, hunting or simply tick-lists of animals seen and places seen and visited, wildlife was seen as having analogous mystique, meanings and functions to *muti*. If only symbolically, psychologically and socially, such "trophies" convey a certain power or status on their possessors. As such, their significance is often as "things" rather than as mutually dependent parts of an encompassing - ecosystemic – set of relationships. This is reflected in the design of safari lodges mentioned earlier whereby the wild world is kept at a symbolically "safe" distance on the other side of the log-barrier. Animals and nature are "other", "out there", as if on a cinema screen or theatrical stage. A dialogue between two "spectators" illustrates how the spectacle consumed can become more "real" to people than the animals themselves:

S1: "Aren't the elephants wonderful, beautiful?"

S2: "Yes. They're like statues, aren't they?"

S1: "Well, yes, but except they're alive and real"

S2: "Yes, but they're just like statues!"

The "colonisation" of Africa by European attitudes to land and nature, together with structural and legal changes, has led to local people being dispossessed of it. It has also affected their relationship to it. The process of marginalisation bears comparison with the Enclosures in England and the Highland Clearances in Scotland. This could be used as an **interpretative device** to convey the repetition of patterns of colonialism throughout history and to help dispel the "Dick Whittington syndrome" that all is easy, just and wealthy in the west.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR ECOLOGICAL LEARNING, EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

For reasons explained below, this section emphasises the importance of incorporating traditional beliefs wherever possible to enhance relevance, discourage the tendency to reject them and to encourage a general worldview that is integrative and sustainable rather than fragmenting and destructive. Ecological/conservation education is not merely a matter of using techniques or tricks to stop people damaging particular species or nature in general. If the effects of learning are themselves to be sustainable, it is also about encouraging adoption of worldviews and attitudes that are emotionally engaging enough for people to **want** to behave pro-sustainably as a matter of course – in other words encouraging a sustainability orientated culture.

5.1 Attitudes to educational centre

Local people are largely in favour of an educational centre, especially as it will be serving, and providing facilities for, the local community directly as well as drawing in tourism and generating other forms of income. This is welcomed but arouses some **ambivalent attitudes** which it is wise to bear in mind:

- Colonial memory is in the background. Based on historic experience of development and conservation projects, there is some **scepticism that expectations raised by Dog Project may not be fulfilled, and about genuine commitment to local interests** - once the Project is in full swing, will priorities shift towards non-local interests once it has benefited from local support to get it established?
- A major development like Dog Project inevitably **arouses jealousies, rivalries and competition** between different local groupings and individuals. Many have their eye on what benefits they could accrue from it. There have been instances of employees consulting herbalists to find out if they have been hexed. There is some political jostling going on between, for example, state functionaries and those holding positions of traditional authority
- There is ambivalence about the respective importance of **promoting the traditional and valuing the new**. There is a hope that will be possible to benefit from new technology, skills, ideas and opportunities without their impacting too harshly on traditional values
- The sense that the Centre and Dog Project as a whole are seen as *faits accomplis* may skew attitudes towards it and inhibit criticisms or perspectives that could be helpful to the ongoing success and development of Dog Project
- There is significant enthusiasm about the facilities to be provided by the Centre – computers, training, community activities, etc, plus the economic knock-on effects of tourism, etc. This may be based more on fantasies about its benefits – analogous to the more magical properties of *muti* – than on realistic expectations
- Cultural education to rejuvenate traditional values is seen as a good thing, especially by elders. Some elders, however, may be enthusiastic about it due to fears about how their influence decreases as traditional authority and other structures and customs lose legitimacy amongst young people. There are perhaps fears about losing control and the consequences of social

dis-integration as western ways are adopted.

- Inclusion of education and interpretation for tourists about local culture and beliefs relating to nature is welcomed.

5.2 General approach to learning, education and interpretation

- It is important to emphasise both **first-hand, sensory experience** combined with **understanding of relations within and between ecology, society, culture and person**. Experientially based understanding and meaning results in **more long-lasting learning and behaviour change**. **Depth as well as breadth** of personal experience results in deeper rooted learning. Breadth refers to the range and diversity of activities. Depth of experience refers to the extent to which these activities, and their interpretation, is experienced as meaningful to participants. The more that an activity or interpretative device resonates meaningfully with participants, and/or the more it triggers an association with a participant's past experience, the more powerful and effective will it be educationally. The likelihood of achieving this is largely a function of the **designers' ability to empathise with learners' needs** and shape the activity or device to speak to those needs. This, in turn, requires not only an intellectual knowledge of local cultures but also an **emotional openness and ability to enter into the logic, beliefs, 'wavelengths', aspirations, etc of the learners**.
- To **re-frame, re-new and re-legitimise traditional nature-related beliefs and practices** would be an important strategy for conservation/ecological education and interpretation. It would also help rejuvenate interest in and pride in culturally embedded ecological and social knowledge. The equivalent of this in the west has largely been lost. Such education would communicate ecology and conservation by interpreting and framing it in terms of beliefs and meanings, rather than facts or information alone which are rarely experienced as relevant in themselves and therefore less effective at influencing behaviour. In this way they would stand a better chance of being assimilated and integrated in such a way that they support and inform everyday life, attitudes and behaviour that are sympathetic to the dogs and to nature in general.
- Enjoyment of wildlife is not necessarily synonymous with conservation and ecology. It is often (usually?) **consumed touristically, televisually, virtually, aesthetically, voyeuristically, etc**. The educational challenge is to make the relational links to conservation, ecology or the experience of 'being part of' rather than 'separate from' it in as enjoyable a way as possible.
- Related to the previous point, methods are needed that take conservation and the dogs to be the 'doors' through which the relational links are understood and experienced. In this way, **pro-conservation behaviour becomes an emergent property of more deeply embedded, emotional and meaningful experience** rather than a purely rational prescription from 'outside'. Experiencing oneself as part of ecosystem relations can then give rise to understanding that well-being is not simply a function of material acquisition and consumption. Again, drawing on ways in which this is or has been expressed in local culture could be helpful vehicles.
- Beliefs and meanings relating to **"non-material" wealth and sources of well-being** are particularly important. The PHRD Director has expressed the view that **conservation is in**

the business of increasing the fit between people, their priorities, beliefs, purposes, etc and their flexibility within the general systems that support them, so that all can persist into the future. The assumption that that maximising material wealth equates with maximising happiness and well-being is not only ecologically damaging, it is also untrue. “Why maintain a large house when a small house will do?”. There is a need to educate for less materialistic values, perhaps using **nature and dog relations as models**, not just for conservation’s sake but also so that young people in particular do not set themselves on paths that will be disappointing and more troublesome than they realise.

- There is a need to stimulate meaningful learning about the importance of **continuity, coherence, unity, integrity, relationship, etc**, as elders and some younger people have stressed, both within society and between society and nature/ecology. This includes a need to learn about cultural differences and values, and how people all over the world have to grapple with similar human problems. “We’re all human, rich and poor” said one discussant. These concepts of unity in diversity, continuity, etc are **stronger in traditional culture** and still are amongst local Hwange people in general. There is also, however, a pervading of sense of not being aware how much these values are fragmented by western style individualistic values which are so appealing. A difficult but vital challenge is to nurture and encourage traditional values, again, perhaps by re-legitimising traditional values and articulating them in a new more relevant context. Parallels could be drawn out with the **consequences of having lost this continuity in Europe** where the down-sides of consumer culture are increasingly experienced as frustrations, anxieties, insecurities, loss of a sense of belonging and the general inadequacy of material wealth to generate well-being as fully as expected. Having cut the thread of social and ecological continuity, it is very difficult to get them back again. The negative aspects of western lifestyle could be shown as **evidence of the importance of cultural and ecological continuity** as many discussants describe it. Once short-term benefits of cutting these links fade, people don’t know how to survive and look back to their own culture for meaning, etc. However, it is hard to re-institute the continuity of ‘old ways’ once it has been forgotten.
- The legacy of white rule means that the extent to which traditional beliefs and practices inform people’s day-to-day lives has deteriorated significantly and continues to do so. Even when they are still considered legitimate and having something to offer, people are often embarrassed to admit this, especially to outsiders, feeling them to be backward and unprogressive. On the other hand, there are growing movements of **political nationalistic and tribal identity**. These tend to understate many beliefs and practices – such as traditional authority structures - where processes were embedded that helped to regulate over-exploitation of wildlife and the environment. Instead a broadly western, political-economic, utilitarian model is adopted. Nevertheless, this may still be a fertile **context in which to rejuvenate atrophying values**. One young person connected with such movements was particularly insistent that today’s ecological problems arise from the conversion of everything into monetary terms: **“Monetary culture makes people not care about conservation – it makes everything the same”**. It makes everything comparable with everything else. It **suppresses the differences** and relative survival values between any one thing and another. This is a very important point for understanding (non)sustainability and to convey it educationally/interpretatively.
- Revaluing local culture and its relation to ecology, and **comparing long-term functionality of past and present cultures for community and ecosystem integrity**. One might ask, in comparing the following scenarios, which cultural values, beliefs and knowledges are more socially and ecologically functional, given that type b) has survived for thousands of years (in

different forms all over the planet) whilst type a) is recent but already endangering life-support systems.

- a) Present, Euro-American globalising culture of individualism-economicism. This results in the levelling and the homogenisation of the value of everything. When value is expressed through money, everything comparable to every other thing regardless of their ecological function or survival value. A forest, for example, may be given the same ‘value’ as a warehouse of computers or whatever. This perception, in turn, allows people to exceed eco-social limits of long-term survival. It is a mentality, that finds ever more ingenious ways of fragmenting and entropising the world.
 - b) On the other hand, past subsistence and collective-socially (ie not economically) organised societies sustained themselves more through values based on gift-giving, reciprocity, continuity, respect for Forefathers, continuity of dynamics between nature, culture, psyche and person, community, ecology (cybernetic, functionally integrated cultural ecology). There was a frustration of wanting more because it was less possible to exceed eco-social limits to such an extent
- A major educational challenge is to convey an understanding of **human ecology**, including the roles that money, economics, individualism and other aspects of western culture play within the overall ecological dynamics. Interpretative devices such as **shadow ecology, ecological footprint, conceptual parallels between ecology and economics**, linked with equivalent traditional understandings of them, would be helpful here. Findings from systems analysis, and ecological anthropology and psychology would add rigour to this process. Also important is to convey a more **realistic picture of ecology and life in the west** to counter prevalent ‘Dick Whittington’ type fantasies of individual- economic culture. To help re-establish the value of traditional practices and beliefs, parallels could be drawn between them and growing awareness of what has been lost in the west as a **result of losing the continuity with equivalent practices and beliefs here**. The contradictions inherent in both valuing old culture yet yearning for “the new” could be drawn out.

This could be linked with cross-cultural education and the stated importance of improving “understanding of others’ likes and dislikes” and “valuing difference and equivalent values in different cultures”. Parallels and differences could be drawn out about how different people deal with same human problems, perhaps through school or community group twinning schemes (as between Gunjur in Gambia and Marlborough, England – an active community twinning of 30 years standing).

- Remembering the pervasive view that “white people don’t have any culture?” (ie sense of continuity, spirit, mutual helping, etc) discussants were pleased to discover that white people can relate to spirit and religion in similar ways to themselves. This stimulated recognition, connection and enhanced communication. If aspiring to and imitating western lifestyles and values is the major force that it appears to be, then **to demonstrate genuine western concern and understanding (backed up by action) of non-consumerist, non-material wealth** could well encourage pause for reflection on the wisdom of pursuing such a course. Perhaps could have a restraining effect. It is important not to underestimate the **power of equivalent western beliefs in communicating and re-legitimising existing local values and concepts** that are conducive to education & learning for sustainability. Demonstrating them would help defuse the tendency to de-value local beliefs many of which are more conducive to sustainability.

- It is important not to forget the **diversity of religious practice and churches** in the area. There are many adherents whose lives are strongly informed by them, though this is rarely spoken of. Nurturing relations with the churches could prove helpful educationally and otherwise. It is in the churches that much of the sense of continuity is now felt and expressed, as well as engendering of values and ethical positions.

5.4 Context: cultural shift from traditional culture to western culture

Designers might like to keep in mind that **in traditional culture, the social-collective world is primary, not the economic-individual**. In common with many other pre-industrialist cultures, decisions tend to be made collectively, the Chief embodying this collective mindset. Individuals, particularly if they are seeking to escape the confines of traditional social structures, might describe their experience of this as oppressive, selfish on the part of chiefs, or grounded in control through fear, etc. This may be partially true but does need to be seen in the context of cultural change and the growing aspiration to adopt what are seen as the benefits of ‘western’ values and lifestyles.

On the other hand, individualism, underpinned by the economic organisation and priorities that are displacing traditional social organisation and authority, is a force that is hastening fragmentation and discontinuity both in society and nature. **The tension between traditional and modern culture/lifestyle is a potentially major source of conflict.**

Any process of **cultural change entails overlaps, fuzzy boundaries and syncretism between old and new**. In this context, there is a tendency to reject old beliefs that are seen as having no grounding in empirical fact and/or which relate to collective interests and are therefore less in tune with modern consumer culture. However, belief is very powerful and there is a reticence to reject tradition if there are perceived to be individually damaging repercussions involved, eg from the Ancestors. Individuals might test out their hunches, eg **not** ask the Ancestors before poaching, to see what happens. Or perhaps, they will be asked but their disapproval ignored. Such actions against the Ancestors might be frightening at first but if, for example, a poacher makes good catch and there are no nasty repercussions, it may then be seen as a ‘risk’ worth taking. In this case, the Ancestors may be interpreted as approving of the action after all. In a sense, it becomes possible to outwit the Ancestors. Some vestige of fear may still remain, however. Such responses could be harnessed to conservation and ecological education.

On the other hand, beliefs that are not grounded in empirical fact are often retained if they are considered to be of benefit to the individual (and therefore in some way compatible with consumer culture). These include talismans, totems, medicines, etc that, as in the west, are believed to bring good luck, protection, etc.

There are **two ways in which the Ancestors are consulted in everyday terms, both of which could be harnessed for educational purposes**. They are somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, the Forefathers are said not to approve of the destruction of nature and disappearance of animals – including the dogs. This is one of the reasons that traditional hunting stopped. Too many people were being killed and this was taken as a sign to stop. Neither do they approve of killing for reasons other than for food or livelihood. On the other hand, some people continue to claim approval from the Ancestors when, having made offerings prior to hunting, their hunt is successful. This is interpreted as meaning that the Ancestors were helping them.

Elders in particular, though not solely, have expressed concern and unease about the colonisation of western individualistic and economic values, and especially its effect on young people. They were

pleased to learn that Dog Project, seeing local culture as part of the overall human ecological context, aims to include traditional values and culture within its education programme, both to inform tourists but also to (re)sensitise young people to the value of their own ancestral values and beliefs. Elders expressed interest in offering their services for cultural workshops for young people.

By harnessing local culture as a living vehicle of ecological/conservation education the danger of presenting it as a quaint but dead historical curiosity should be avoided if local people are to be respected and encouraged to support Dog Project actively. Incorporating local beliefs would also avoid the danger of white/European perspectives being the only (or primary) ones being offered in ecological/conservation education and in arguments for ecological/wildlife conservation in general.

Culturally grounded learning supports a basic tenet of environmental education – and effective education in general – **to start where the learner is**. The deepest rooted learning, and therefore the most long-lasting and sustainable, occurs when the topic concerned is experienced as meaningful and relevant to those who are the intended learners. When this happens, learning is internalised and results in a **desire to change rather than a subtly coerced change in behaviour** for motives other than those intended by the educator. The latter type of ‘learning’ is more ‘conditioned’, in the ‘Pavlovian’ sense. ‘Learners’ are responding to incentives or regulations but their hearts are not necessarily changing for the reasons intended. Such a dynamic was recognised by discussants when referring to the effectiveness (or rather ineffectiveness) of punishment in changing deep-seated motivations for particular behaviours. Heartfelt learning resonates meaningfully with the learner in such a way that they want to change ‘from the inside’. In such learning, assumptions and mindsets underlying behaviour also change. This should be the aim of conservation/ecological education since, when it occurs, inner structures change in the person who no longer wishes to behave as they did before. It is therefore more long-lasting and self-generating of pro-sustainability attitudes and behaviour.

There are various ways in which local culture can be incorporated into education and learning, from design of the Centre itself and its uses to the use of cultural representations in exhibitions, materials and activities.

5.5. Design of Dog Project Centre

A major opportunity for culturally grounded learning is presented by the **importance of “continuity and connection”** both for a healthy society and healthy relations between humans and nature.

This theme could be interpreted metaphorically by using the structural design of the centre and in the uses to which different parts of the centre are put. One discussant actually pointed to the concentric circle design of the Centre to illustrate his explanations of continuity. It could be used to compare 1. different scenarios of human-nature relations - one showing sustainability through respecting necessary dependences and continuity, the other showing the fragmentation that comes from not respecting them; and 2. indicators of a healthy human ecology (ie ‘home’) and a sick human ecology. The healthy scenario approximates to that of traditional culture while the second scenario comes closer to the impacts of western culture that breaks the continuity.

5.5.1 The Centre as symbol of continuity and long-term survival/sustainability

	(Collective survival & well-being by...)	(Systemic, long-term...)
	...Mutual dependence	...Health indicator
Centre of centre	Individual/person	Many/healthy dogs
	RESPECTS BECAUSE DEPENDS ON	INDICATES
Middle circle	Family/community	Many/healthy herbivores
	RESPECTS BECAUSE DEPENDS ON	INDICATES
Outermost circle	Society	Many healthy plants
	RESPECTS BECAUSE DEPENDS ON	INDICATES
Outside Centre	Ecosystem Nature Creation	Much/healthy soil, air, water, etc therefore food
	RESPECTS BECAUSE DEPENDS ON	INDICATES
Roof struts & Apex of Centre	Ancestral forefathers Creator God	Pleasure & approval of Forefathers and God

WHOLE/INTEGRATED SYSTEM INDICATES/BODES WELL FOR

**continuity/sustainability/well-being
&
conditions for long-term collective survival**

5.5.2 The Centre as symbol of discontinuity, fragmentation and long-term unsustainability

	(Individual, short-term riches/well-being by...)	(Systemic, long-term...)
	...Collective/mutually assured destruction	...Sickness indicator
Centre of Centre	Individual/person	Fewer/sicker big carnivores especially dogs
	NEGLECTS EXPLOITS DENIES CONSUMES	INDICATES
Middle circle	Family/community	Fewer/sicker herbivores
	NEGLECTS EXPLOITS DENIES CONSUMES	INDICATES
Outermost circle	Society	Fewer/sicker plants
	NEGLECTS EXPLOITS DENIES CONSUMES	INDICATES
Outside Centre	Ecosystem Nature Creation	Deteriorated/unhealthy soil, air, water & therefore food
	NEGLECTS EXPLOITS DENIES	INDICATES
Roof struts, Apex of Centre	Forefathers <i>God</i> <i>(both displaced by people)</i>	Displeasure & <i>disapproval of</i> <i>Forefathers & God</i>

DIS-INTEGRATED 'SYSTEM' INDICATES/ BODES BADLY FOR

**continuity/sustainability/well-being
&
conditions for long-term collective survival**

5.6 Learning from the dogs

A primary aim of the education programme is to rehabilitate the reputation of the painted dogs in people's minds. There are various ways to approach this through various types of activities from bush camps to display boards. It is good practice not just to warn about the dangers of certain attitudes, of degradation, etc but also to offer positive ways of changing how we think about the causes of the problems.

- **Story-telling** as a pedagogical method should not be overlooked as this is a **traditional way of teaching and learning**. Each village has its own story-teller.
- **Dispel erroneous beliefs about the dogs** that originate both in traditional culture and in white colonial culture (though it has to be said that some views considered 'traditional' seem to be incorporations of western attitudes). The story could be told in various ways as to **how and why Europeans thought badly of the dogs**, how they developed **demonic images** of them and how and why they encouraged people to kill them (and other animals) in the name of colonialism. This relates to the "need" and policy to create a resource and income stream **to encourage Europeans to settle**.

On the contrary, and this seems to be acknowledged in some traditional beliefs, there is much that individuals and society can learn from the dogs as a **model of group cooperation and mutual helping** - qualities that are valued but being increasingly lost with the adoption of western culture. Some local people already see the dogs in this way.

- Similarly, the old magical significance of dog as protector (through traditional *muti*) may conceal other important beliefs connected with them that have faded over time but which could be usefully rejuvenated and re-legitimised. They seem to have been associated in the past as protectors, or **guardians, of nature and/or indicators of a healthy ecosystem**. A rationale implied for this is that the dogs fight off and defeat the lion. If both dogs and lions are present, the ecosystem must be very healthy. The dogs are indicators of a healthy ecological (ie "home") system/ life support system due to their place at the top of the food chain. Far from being utilitarian or magical, this belief suggests a **culturally embedded awareness that life, health and vitality depends on a healthy ecosystem**, that the presence of large animals is an indicator of such health, and that the presence of dogs indicates the healthiest ecosystem. The schema for the Centre above shows one way in which these associations could be capitalised upon educationally. The Egyptian palettes showing dogs apparently acting as protectors are another example of how the **dogs fitted into previous cosmologies**.
- In more immediately practical terms, the **role of dogs in helping people obtain food** could be emphasised – for example, stories about how the dogs are easily scared off their kills by humans who can then appropriate the meat. This story could also be associated with what humans can learn from dogs scaring lions away from their kills.
- **Diminishing respect for traditional authority** means that it has far less of a moderating influence than it used to. As mentioned, monetised, consumer culture is undermining community structures, processes and values, that once **regulated behaviour and helped ensure social and ecological integrity**. It is replacing them with a simple individualistic market mechanism that measures value purely in terms of monetary value and does away with the restraining influences on exploitation of carnivores for *muti*.

This has **important implications for ecological learning**. If alternative ways could be found of providing the psychological benefits of *muti*, rather than just focusing on its problems or alleged ineffectiveness (though psychological/psychosomatic effects of belief are known to be very powerful), this could reduce demand for it. For example, just as *muti* gives “life through the dogs”, so does the Painted Dog Project itself. Directly, it provides those who work for it with livelihoods (and generates jealousy from other people) and, indirectly, it attracts people to visit the area so generating business, economic and social knock-on effects. Instead of dogs ‘providing’ power, prowess and status through *muti* (primarily for hunting and warfare which are no longer so relevant), they **now contribute to human power and well-being through the project itself** in ways that have not been possible before – and in ways that depend on the dogs living and thriving. In effect, the project is transforming dog *muti* into something new and living. Once, competition for medicine and other know-how was needed for subsistence (eg for ‘Koi-koi’ knowledge of plant *muti* for arrows that was lost when they went to Botswana in early 1980s). Now, competition (and cooperation) focuses on involvement in projects and enterprises. Discussants recognise these changes but had not made the connection with their own historic beliefs about the dogs and *muti*.

- Traditionally, large carnivores – from which *muti* is obtained – are under chiefly protection. However, they are protected less for themselves than for their symbolic association with chiefly status, etc. As with myths and stories, their **protection is encoded within the cultural belief**. Association of animals with status and prestige suggests an unconscious symbolic connection between the rarity of chiefs and the rarity of certain animals. Both are, as it were, at the top of pyramids, the former socially, the latter ecologically. From this, it is not a big step to **associating animals and conservation with new forms of status in ways that could be conducive to their conservation in a modern context**. Effectively, this is already happening since conservation workers associate wildlife with their relatively high status positions. Such symbolic value has knock-on effects that are beneficial ecologically, discouraging their over-exploitation.

Similarly, the view of dogs as protectors of the ecosystem was not necessarily a result of conscious ecological knowledge. This too was probably **symbolically encoded** by other meanings.

To re-articulate the effects encoded in traditional beliefs and stories could be valuable educationally in that it could (re)generate a sense of pride in indigenous knowledge and beliefs that have been denigrated as ‘primitive’ and dysfunctional for decades. This could, in turn, help to raise awareness about the importance of conservation – both of the dogs and more generally.

5.7 How do people learn, change what they value and express it in their behaviour?

Discussants were asked directly about how they think people learn most effectively and irreversibly. They were asked for examples, from their own experience, of learning that they felt had really changed them - their perspectives, lives and behaviour - in a fundamental ways. The purpose here was to find out what was involved in people learning in emotionally engaged ways (rather than through obeying rules, etc). The following quotations are from one discussant who was particularly forthcoming on this. He is now in his 40s or 50s.

At about 6 or 7 years old, this discussant caught and killed 3 small birds and brought them home for his mother. His mother asked him a series of questions: “How many of the birds did you take? Did you leave any behind alive?” Discovering that he had killed all the birds, his mother then added:

“Imagine if someone came and burned down your house with everything in it, including all your relations. How would you feel? What would you do? It’s exactly the same with the birds. That’s what you’ve done to them.”

The lesson this discussant learned from this experience, still remembered decades later, was that,

“true learning comes when there is a spark of spirit inside. It leads to learning. It’s important to **think** about things and about what you do, not just buy and think later. Like with computers, supermarkets, etc. When there are no computers, we will have start again and remember how to survive but if culture and nature are lost we won’t know how to.”

Another life-changing experience was,

“...at a time of life when I was drinking a lot when I met an old man at bar. I don’t know why he chose to start talking to me but he did. He asked me why I was wasting my life like this. He said, ‘Although a great many seeds are sown at ploughing time, only a few grow and become crops to provide the seeds for future generations. It’s the same with people. There are many people in the world but only a few are chosen to help future generations.’ After this experience, my life changed. I chose to change my life.”

There can be no guarantee that particular scenarios, materials, information, expeditions, or other vehicles of conservation education will inevitably and always result in such experiences or, indeed, in learning of any type. However, these examples do illustrate how powerful it can be and how important it is to provide opportunities, and a facilitating environment, for such experiences. Also important is to provide frameworks that can help individuals interpret their experiences and transform them into meaningful learning.

5.7.2 Other vehicles and ideas for culturally resonant learning

Other discussants mentioned the following “ingredients” for effective learning. More research on many of the following and their educational/interpretative potential would be valuable.

- Time: people learn over time. It can take a very long time to learn what it most important because these are things that people often resist the most
- First-hand experience of nature and of the value of simple lifestyles

- Repetition: “it’s like hearing music – the first time you hear it you’re not sure you like it. But second time round you get to know it and get to like it.”
- Identifying/ recognising “variations on a theme” - the principles behind things that seem very different but are related or united by these principles. As one discussant put it:

“Many things can be spoken about but often they all relate to only one thing. Like a home (or the Dog Centre, or a person): many things are needed to make a home. Some are material and visible. Some are not. Many things go into creating one thing: a person, a family, a community or village, a clan, a country, nature/ecology, the world and more. ‘Connections’ is how we need to live. And the dogs are indicators of this.”

An activity suggested by this is to ask students “what is needed to make all these things (eg products)? Which of these things do you need to exist? And which of them do you need to be happy? Which of these things ‘protect’ you? And which do you need to protect and why?”

The depth to which educational designers can observe and **get to know local culture in an empathic way** is, clearly, very important if ecological and conservation education is to be translated and conveyed in culturally appropriate (and therefore resonant) ways. This will not only optimise the effectiveness of materials and programmes for local people but also enhance their originality and interest for outside visitors. **Culturally appropriate vehicles for education** suggested by discussions with local people include:

- **Parables and stories. Story-telling** is the traditional way in which culture, beliefs, values, etc are passed on, and it is still a powerful and important medium. They are not necessarily rational in a western sense, or consist of raw information or prescriptions about right and wrong, etc. On the contrary, the latter are not seen as particularly effective in learning. Instead, stories, myths, etc embody in a sort of code the information that is important to social, personal and ecological dimensions of life, generally always with reference to non-human powers and authorities. In this way, **traditional education is charged with emotion and meaning that information alone would not ‘contain’**. The effectiveness of this can be seen in religions of all sorts, including ‘western’, or in comparing the influence that films, advertising and other modern-day myths and fashions have over people’s behaviour compared with that of fact-based ‘education’. It is therefore important to try and create or re-create new myths, messages and beliefs that give rise to behaviours conducive to sustainability. These do, of course, need to be culturally resonant and meaningful, which suggests a need to **involve local ‘cultural advisors’ in the design** and dissemination of educational materials and programmes.
- **Names are important vehicles of continuity.** Ancestors are part of the family and represent active continuity. So too is one’s totem animal to the extent that it forms part of one’s name. There is also a sense in which nature is part of the family. Many of these associations are contained within names in a similar way to how many European names indicate geographical, cultural and/or class origins of the person, or refer to the family trade - as in Archer, Butcher or Smith. What is ‘recorded’ or ‘embedded’ within African surnames is far more complex (or perhaps just better remembered) and contains the history of the person’s family, significant achievements or roles they have played, status, geography, movements, animal associations, psychological features and other characteristics of the family and clan. The history and characteristics encoded in the name are generally accessible/knowable only to those people who are also part of the same web of history,

geography and beliefs. **Names relate their owners' to their historical, cultural and ecological contexts in more than scientific/utilitarian ways.** They are **poetic** and important foundations of identity. Rather than the person 'owning' the name, it is more that **names place the person in context.**

Metaphors that help to understand the complexity of names, and could be used as interpretative devices to convey continuity, are the following:

- Computer disc accessible only to those who have the 'password' obtained by being connected with the family/clan/culture of the person concerned.
- (Invisible) map: showing the historical and cultural 'geography/ topography' of a person, their family and their clan.
- Keyhole or door: that gives access to invisible knowledge
- Condensed epic poem or story

Often, but not always, totems and surnames indicate animals which are considered to be part of that individual's family and, therefore, to be respected. Examples are Crocodile, Eland, Goat, Python, Baboon and many others. They can have more than one meaning depending on the locality and/or sub-culture. For example, Chuma/chiuma/tshuma means goat but can also mean black ants, both of which have particular symbolic features attached to them.

Various taboos and practices are attached to these, which can have **ecological implications.** For example, it is often forbidden to eat the animal whose name you bear. It is a member of your 'family'. Other times, it is permitted to eat it but only after ritualistic preparation. For example, some Chuma men can only eat male goats that they have killed themselves and castrated with a knife beforehand. If this is not done, the belief is that the person's teeth will fall out - also, if they eat the testicles. These prohibitions, together with the emotion of witnessing the pain, discourage people with this name from eating goat-meat. Female goats are rarely eaten because they are more valuable.

Much more is concealed within names than is known consciously. Some meanings have been forgotten or de-selected because they are not as relevant or meaningful as other 'more practical' meanings.

The significance of animals and nature in names may be declining but a potentially productive educational and interpretative vehicle would be to **re-stimulate memories of links between nature, culture, family and the person that are deeply embedded within the invisible records' of names.**

This exercise could then be extended to demonstrate the **roles the various animals play in the ecosystem,** thereby stimulating a sense of ecological identity and responsibility.

- **Rejuvenating sacredness.** Continuity as a core notion in traditional culture has still wider ramifications than that symbolised by the poetry behind names. It is just one expression of an all-encompassing continuity that includes continuity with nature symbolised by ancestrally important sacred places. Sacred places have special features, eg mountains, hot springs, gas coming out of rocks, etc. Praying there and honouring them sustains their power. Such reverence also has the effect of conserving these places. It could be called **culturally intrinsic conservation.** This is another cultural feature that could be harnessed to conservation education. However, **caution is needed to ensure that these sacred places do become**

mere tourist attractions, as has happened throughout the world. This empties them of their meaning and hence the power and significance of culture-nature continuity is lost.

Sacred objects also present opportunities for conservation and cultural education. Particular spears, axes, horns, drums and other objects symbolise cultural continuity as well as functions essential to the needs and activities of a sustainable society. Different drums and horns symbolise death, celebration and help. Spears are associated with animals and fighting. Opportunities exist for elders and chiefs to explain the functions of these objects. As with names, they are not 'owned' so much as **symbols of the context of life and sustainability**, and the integration/continuity between society and nature.

- **Cultural advisors', story-tellers**, etc who can authentically convey educational messages. Village elders expressed an interest and willingness to be involved in workshops that would help safeguard and rejuvenate traditional beliefs
- Dogs as models of sociality, mutuality and mutual dependence, non-selfishness (cf corporate/group purpose of going to places like Mntolo to ask the Ancestors for rain). Perhaps **new stories and myths could be devised that depict dogs as guardians/protectors/guardian angels of ecology and therefore of society**. If God and the Forefathers respect and care for the dogs, then so must society and individuals in order to protect themselves.
- A **glyph of a painted dog** with particularly clear and bold patterning could be designed as a **map depicting the nestings, niches and interrelationships that make up the whole eco- (ie home) system** (cf the depiction of dogs as protectors on the Egyptian palette).
- **Music, dance, feeling and other cultural expressions of 'resonance' as vehicles for an ecological education emphasising "continuity"**. It was not possible in the time available to inquire into the significance of sound and music in traditional life. Nevertheless, research found as this report was being written (**see Appendix 1**) suggests it is very important and has potential for education and interpretation – especially for **ecological education** focusing on human – nature relations rather than species conservation *per se*. The former, according to this research, is more closely akin to traditional, pre-industrial ways of relating with nature wherein humans – including culture and psyche - are an intrinsic, part of the overall system and experience themselves as in continuous 'resonance' with it in an emotional, affective way. Conservation, on the other hand, is more akin to the western visually orientated mentality, which is a result of western mode of 'seeing' humans and nature as separate, and species and nature as 'things' to be conserved. Extracts from the research are quoted in Appendix 1.

6. LIVELIHOOD-RELATED ISSUES AND ATTITUDES TO DOG PROJECT

This section includes sub-sections on **hunting and poaching**, and attitudes to **CAMPFIRE**. They are included because hunting constituted such an important historical activity in relation to livelihood and general culture. Hopes raised by *CAMPFIRE* have been disappointed. Legislation and other attempts to control traditional hunting have been experienced as official appropriation of hunting rights for commercial interests, and as criminalisation of tradition. As well as forcing hunting underground, this has encouraged snaring as a quieter form of hunting less likely to attract attention. Furthermore, the influence of economic and consumer values has encouraged hunting (ie poaching) for profit rather than subsistence, a distinction that should be remembered.

6.1 Contexts of livelihood

Questions of livelihood need to be seen in the context of increasing tensions between traditional and modern culture/lifestyles - a potentially major source of conflict, both between younger and older generations, and psycho-emotionally within individuals. Traditional subsistence lifestyles are under extreme pressure from monetarised market economy/society and the gap between monetarily rich and poor is increasing fast as a result. The traditional context of social and kinship relations, though it constrains individuals, effectively acts (or acted) as insurance against extreme hardship. An aspect of cultural continuity is (or was) that community members on the whole looked after each other. The modern context of economic and individualistic relations erodes these systems and aggravates insecurities and anxieties.

The current situation is still one of transition from traditional-social to a market system on the western model. Just as religious beliefs overlap and to some degree merge, so do beliefs, values and practice relating to livelihoods and community. Hence, though the long term trend seems to be towards individualism, new forms of alliance and politicisation, immediate kinship bonds are still strong.

The particular circumstances that existed under white government are also important to consider for their influence on assumptions and expectations. The black population worked for whites in a sort of wage labour-cum-patron-client system of relations. For example, every week between 1969 and 1979 the white settler-managers of Hwange Park used to give five cages of beans, fresh buffalo meat, 50kg of mealy-meal, plus sugar to every employee of the Park. Socially and politically, however, life was still lived along traditional lines. White/European/economic culture had relatively little influence. As a discussant said, *it is only since the 1970s and 1980s that traditional lifestyles and values have only started to change to any great extent. Since simultaneously, economic circumstances have deteriorated no more food provided by the Park authorities, for example - not everyone is happy with these changes.*

In such a transitional period, organisations such as Dog Project may be seen and experienced in social/kinship terms a place to belong and find status - as well as economic terms for jobs, income, economic generators, etc .

6.1.1 Hunting and poaching (see also Appendix 1)

The case of hunting and poaching offers a poignant illustration of the effects of social, economic, political and legislative changes overall.

As an illegal activity, poaching is a taboo subject to talk about, especially with white people. As with other topics, empathy proved to be the key to approaching this anxiety-provoking and controversial issue. However, as expected it was **very difficult to get far beneath the surface to the motivations for, and extent of, bush-meat snaring**, still less what would be required to stop it. **Poaching** – which is simply considered now to be a new **derogatory term for “hunting by the poor who can’t afford licences”** - is extremely deeply rooted in the culture of livelihood. Even a wildlife worker (did not say “conservation” worker) said that if they lost their job they would poach. To this person, the **only reason for saving the dogs is for income and work**. This is not an uncommon sentiment (though it may sometimes be said to hint at what might happen if employment was reduced!)

Due to the poor soils and abundant large animals, **hunting is an ancient form of livelihood in the Hwange region**. The experts were the San ‘Bushmen’ or ‘Koi-koi’ and they appear to have been mentors to the other peoples who arrived later. For example, the poison *muti* needed for spears and arrows, which is needed to kill an animal was a secret of, and bought from, the San. Apparently, the formula is still only known by the San. The San are now effectively extinct in the area, due to social/political pressures to migrate, and having been treated in similar ways to how blacks in general were treated by whites in the past. As was said, they “needed to be settled so that they can become properly human”.

There is a history to poaching that is intertwined with the culture and values of colonial rule.

The word ‘poaching’ describes what used to be known as ‘hunting’ by those for whom it has for centuries been an everyday part of life but who cannot afford the dollars now needed to buy a permit. “Hunting” is now essentially rich-man’s play whereas “poaching” is hunting by those without so much money. **“Hunting” is now a commodified activity whereas “poaching” refers to stealing that “commodity”**. Before the National Parks, there was only “poaching”, but in those days it was called “hunting”. Whole hunting villages were forced to move to make way for the Parks. There are parallels here with Enclosures in England and the Highland Clearances in Scotland.

However, there are also other changes that have emerged with the transition to a monetised, economic culture.

Hunters used to be **“hereditary”**, ie inherited their craft from their fathers along with a respectful culture of hunting. Nowadays, there is another type, the **“job” hunter**, who hunts for profit.

Hunters were respected people and, in turn, were respectful of animals as beings in their own right. Rather than seeing them as commodities to buy and sell, as is often though not always the case today, hunting used to be only for meat (and direct exchange). It was an intrinsic part of the wider culture. **Meat and maize in the past were “for relish not for business”**. Bows and arrows (and, if possible, guns) were used, tracking skills developed and the physical chase was an important part of the hunt.

Forefathers were always asked for approval before a hunt by offering them “snuff and water”. Without this, the hunt would fail.

Hunting was **regulated by custom and taboo** on killing certain types of animals. Killing more than you needed was wasteful because it would start rotting. Animals always had to be shared (also to avoid it going bad), and it was hard to catch large numbers using bow, arrow and spear. There was a **general acceptance that killing more than you need is simply unnecessary**. It was certainly disapproved of by the Ancestors.

These constraints have been largely superceded, abandoned or rationalised away, with the ‘help’ of new cultural influences and technology. **Today, offerings are rarely made, hunting is mainly for monetary profit (though also for food, especially during food shortages), snares are used instead of bows and arrows or guns, and ease of catching animals is valued above the chase. Another very important factor in the changes is the shift from cultural constraint to legal constraint imposed by a market orientated culture.** This made it illegal and dangerous to hunt using traditional methods, which turned ordinary village hunters into “poachers”. The **threat of punishment by the authorities pushed hunters to use snaring much more widely by the 1980s.** Traditional hunting with dogs was too noisy and attracted too much attention. Trapping with snares was much quieter and required less effort for more monetary return (now needed more due to the shift from subsistence to monetised economy). The growth in trading bushmeat for money provided the market.

Another lesser factor was the disappearance of the Koi-koi/San/Bushmen who held the secret of the *muti*-poison that made arrows and spears fatal so that animals died quickly. Without being able to obtain it from them, more non-San were being killed by animals, and this was interpreted as indicating that the Ancestors no longer approved of this form of hunting – and, by implication, approved of trapping, though not of killing too many animals.

Life has become much **more expensive and money-dependent** than it used to be. This also creates pressures for poaching for profit. The poor are being squeezed on all sides.

Inner conflicts are felt by some hunters, especially some older ones who used to hunt with respect. **It may be worthwhile identifying such hunters and harnessing their skills, knowledge and ethics to the Project.** They do not like the fact that snaring kills many animals and that no effort or conscience is involved. It is greedy and disrespectful of the Forefathers who are rarely consulted before a hunt anymore. **Psychologically, consulting the Forefathers causes the person concerned to stop and see what their conscience says about what they are about to do.** The Forefathers are not happy when poaching kills too many animals as it is now, and would advise not to snare when numbers are low. The fact that individual success pleases the Forefathers, while collective destruction displeases them seems to place some responsibility on the conscience of individual hunters themselves to exercise restraint. On the other hand, some people who seek help from the Forefathers for personal gain, interpret the mere fact of success in hunting/poaching, and/or increase in prices obtained, as a sign of Ancestor support for their activities.

Once again, **one poacher warned that if the young people lose their culture, they themselves will be lost eventually.**

A second poacher, who had become rich from poaching and now has a farm and herds of cows, had become angry with snaring saying, **“a cow in a snare makes a poacher into a dog”**. Snaring had hurt his cows.

His view was that bad people should be “beaten to teach them”. Yet also recognised that “you can’t beat the heart” and people will continue to find ever more covert ways of continuing what they do until they change in their hearts.

This same poacher was also convinced that painted dogs attack cows and asked “**what are you (Dog Project) going to do to stop the dogs eating the cows?**”.

6.1.1.1 CAMPFIRE

Intended to help redress the balance so that local communities benefit from wildlife conservation and the safari trade and compensates them for no longer being allowed to hunt, Campfire is not at all popular with local people. Expectations were raised but they feel their good faith has been abused and that they have been betrayed: The dollars from hunting and tourism are not distributed and there are no mechanism to ensure that there are enough animals for the villagers. Only the traditional pangolin customs did it (ie ensured enough for the villagers) and now no-one believes in them anymore .

In other words, *CAMPFIRE* has brought about a severe loss of trust and legitimacy of both traditional authority and state-sponsored schemes.

6.2 Other implications of economic and social change for conservation projects

Other implications for conservation projects include the following:

- **Conservation (or at least the form that it generally takes) is mostly seen as a white concern and activity, with the associations this brings with it of wealth and abundance.**
- **This association continues regardless of the fact that conservation organisations have so much less funding and resources than in the past**
- **Consequent high material/economic and other expectations of conservation projects, especially given increasing economic/material expectations in general and more monetarised labour market**
- **A dilemma arises from the fact that wildlife workers are not necessarily motivated by commitment to conservation. Wildlife is seen as bringing economic and social benefits. As one worker stated, If I lost my job, I would become a poacher . Hence, those who work in wildlife also acquire a good knowledge of poaching and how to avoid being caught.**
- **Paradoxical situation of pressures building to give economic/monetary value to conservation, simultaneously as need to recognise non-monetary value of ecosystems.**

- **Paradoxical pressures of employing people on conservation whose main concern is economic, and for whom economic pressures are increasing constantly**
- **Tensions arising from white -sustained wildlife and conservation business that is perceived as appropriating traditional hunting, and generates money that does not necessarily reach local communities in compensation (cf *CAMPFIRE*). There is a suspicion or worry that Dog Project will be no different**
- **Challenge to conservation (white culture -based) is to help develop an emergent conservation culture founded on black culture and beliefs.**
Aspiration and success in this could be an important way in which conservation business could differentiate itself (and, importantly, be seen to be different) from the wildlife/safari business

6.3 Discussants' livelihood-related hopes and fears regarding Dog Project

The benefits described were almost without exception related to modernisation and aspirations to a western lifestyle. This was predictable, however. As mentioned elsewhere in the report, there are contradictions involved in the strong desire to develop and consume along western lines and, for some people, the equally strong fear about losing traditional values, lifestyles, etc. This contradiction was not resolved by any of the discussants. It may be that it simply expresses a hope that it is possible to have cake and eat it , without understanding, or wanting to accept, the inevitably destructive effects of individualistic -economic culture on collective -social culture.

6.3.1 Benefits mentioned

- Work, eg jobs in tourism, research, conservation, etc, and possibly also outlets for bush-meat. Conservation workers are not necessarily as motivated by conservation *per se*: "...now I can get any job in the wildlife industry"; "If I lost my job in wildlife I would become a poacher".
- **Money and status (forms of *muti*?) from working in the project: Dog Project as providing power through the dogs . Also, culturally wildlife and wildlife products in general, and knowledge of them, have a certain status value**
- **Opportunities for safeguarding, encouraging and rejuvenating respect and practice of traditional values, thereby sustaining cultural (and culture-nature) continuity**
- Computer and skills acquisition that will help young people in modern society
- **Community facilities**
- Attraction of tourists with multiplier effects on local economy through the artisanal curio industry – basket weaving, carving (preferably in stone according to chief because of impacts on trees), displays, entertainment (such as folkloric dancing and music), bee-keeping, rabbit and guinea fowl breeding, and any other form of money generation

- A novel possibility for curios that has not been exploited as yet is to craft imitation animal “*muti*” such as teeth, feet, armbands, etc as amulets, carvings, etc.
- Opportunities for generating tourism of sacred places.
Caution needed however: there are trade-offs involved, and a balance to be struck, between direct conservation through the medium of markets, money and legislation - which destroys the cultural encoding or sacredness that maintains biodiversity in non-monetary ways - and facilitating it indirectly by supporting these cultural processes. (Conservation in the first case rarely occurs purely on the basis of conservation values. There is invariably money, power, or other human interest involved in the background, eg “the point of saving wildlife is for money and work...”)
- **Contact with other parts of the world, especially for children, so that they can have opportunities and other people will know how nice Zimbabwe is so that more will visit as tourists**
- Opportunities for cross-cultural understanding and trade. Understanding each others’ likes and dislikes so that it becomes easier to tolerate differences, and to deal with bad influences, so that world can be a better place
- **Twinning of villages and schools with other countries (eg Nichilivi School twinned with Swedish school)**

6.3.2 Problems mentioned

- People practicing some ‘traditional’ ways of earning income, eg hunting/ poaching/ snaring are now in competition with conservation. But conservation – so long as it remains viable – offers many livelihood benefits to others that are becoming less feasible through hunting
- Ambivalence about influence of computers, etc and the influences they bring. Dog Project is part of the westernisation trend, which brings bad things. Eg. “today, on TV, there’s so much horror, etc. Why do people do it? And why do people show it to other people? Just as you can’t see the damage TV can do without a special power or feeling (sensitivity?), so you can’t do or see certain things with ‘spirit’ for the same reason. Will Dog Project help us see things well or badly?”
- Increasing the pressures of individualistic/monetary/consumer culture. Fear and uncertainties about the impacts of this, but also anticipation and excitement
- Increases in jealousies: “the point of saving wildlife is for money and work...now I can get any job in the wildlife industry”. Fear of being hexed and threatened as a result.
- Fear that Project will not live up to expectations or provide enough benefits for enough people.

Appendix 1

Quotations from “**Nature and Psyche**” by D.W. Kidner (2001, SUNY Press).

On contrasts between experience and relatedness with nature in pre-industrial and industrial cultures. These contrasts have important implications for approaches to ecological and conservation education. References to how “sport hunters” engage with the natural world in a schismatic, technological way can be taken in what follows as analogous with a more general western approach, including some orientations to conservation and tourism. References to the orientation represented by “resonance” are more akin to the “continuity” described by discussants in this report as so fundamental to their worldviews and integrity of nature and culture. The latter’s culture – through music, dance, myth, Ancestors, etc, which are eroding rapidly – are to some degree expressions of this relatedness and, for this and other reasons, have great potential as vehicles for ecological education that sustains and rejuvenates the such human—nature relations and experience.

The first quotation relates the above to the attraction, purpose and consequences of western wilderness, wildlife and conservation tourism.

...The perspective of the “restorative environment” (implies, for westerners) that the function of wilderness is to counterbalance the harmful effects on individuals of a pathogenic society. “Difficulties abound,” say the Kaplans (researchers on wilderness experience), even in an affluent and enlightened society like ours...Current levels of family trouble, child abuse, and homicides are painful clues that much is not as it should be...Restorative environments offer a concrete and available means of reducing suffering and enhancing effectiveness.”

These are worthwhile and important points. Nevertheless, there is a danger that the availability of the restorative environment will perpetuate destructive lifestyles in the same way that that sleeping pills can enable people to ignore the fundamentally unhealthy way they are living. If wilderness is viewed anthropocentrically as a crutch to prop up an otherwise insufferable lifestyle, then the availability of wilderness in effect maintains practices that are destructive to wildness, both within ourselves and in the world outside. If the fact that wildness exists in particular “reservations” allows us to abandon its necessity in the remainder of the world, including our own lives, then we are reducing it to a sort of health farm that we can visit occasionally to obtain those intangible and indefinable benefits that industrialism cannot provide. Just as sixteenth-century adventurers sought minerals, plants and slaves to bring back to Europe, so wilderness today has to justify its existence as a source of relaxation, tranquillity and restoration. Within this framework, wilderness exists for anthropocentric reasons, to restore human well-being. While these purposes are not trivial or wrong, if they are allowed to exclude *other* justifications for the existence of wilderness, then wilderness becomes just another human resource, having no intrinsic value and existing for no other purpose...However, any radical environmentalism must insist that the reasons for the preservation of wilderness, while they may include human needs, extend far beyond these needs. The threats and attractions of wilderness derive partly from its embodiment of what *is* outside human understanding and human control; and one of the paradoxes thrown up by the limitations of our own rationality is that a nonanthropocentric appreciation of the world is ultimately necessary for our own well-being.

(p.54)

The second quotation contrasts the orientation and relatedness of traditional hunters to the western orientation in hunting, science and, by implication, conventional approaches to conservation and environmental education.

... The traditional hunter, if he is to be effective, needs an awareness that is part of the natural system he inhabits. He must be attuned to, and resonant with, the character of the landscape, the psyche of the prey and of the other animals, and the relations among them. On the other hand, the “sport” hunter *may* rely for his “success” more upon a high-powered rifle and expensive binoculars than on such intimate knowledge of the natural world. Sport hunters may, although not necessarily, have little resonance with the landscape; and in this case, the prey becomes a “thing” rather than a nexus of relation. We can see this scenario at its most grotesque in the behaviour of those affluent individuals who “buy” the “right” to shoot a lion or an elephant in certain African countries, approaching the animals in their 4X4’s and shooting them at close range. For some traditional hunters, the relation embodied in the eating of meat is only one part of a more general relationality; while at the other extreme, a literalization occurs in which the only form of relationality becomes that of killer/killed – perhaps the most extreme expression of a colonialist mentality. Whether hunting can be regarded as healthy then, depends as much on the “eco-spiritual” condition of the specific hunter-in-context as on overt behaviour or conventional ecological criteria; and to assess the ethical status of any specific form of hunting *only* by means of the analysis of population dynamics is to adopt a sort of ecological behaviourism that ignores the subjective and structural characteristics of nature. “Eco-spiritual” concerns, obviously, must ultimately refer to the same world as the material and biological processes more familiar to science, although the conventional dissociation between them makes the unity hard to perceive. And conversely, it is possible to demonstrate that... “wilderness experience”... will have certain measurable psychological effects; although... an adequate understanding of these effects will require that we go beyond a purely scientific frame of reference.

Such a transhuman subjectivity, of course, will not simply be intellectual. The expulsion of passion from academia and science has played a prime role in distancing us from the natural world, and so we will need to restore these emotional links if we are to recover our capacity to participate in the world. But this is not simply a matter of adding a measure of emotion to our intellectual activities: rather a whole natural world would be one in which affect and intellect are functionally intertwined, combined into a passionate intelligence or, if you prefer, an intelligent emotionality. Such a suggestion may seem bizarre within the industrial world but is often unremarkable outside it.
(pp. 302-303)

The third quotation compares the implications of the primarily visual, fragmenting, individualistic orientation to nature with the more resonant , integrative and participatory orientation of many pre-industrial cultures. The description of Aymara culture is reminiscent of the features of continuity described and alluded to by many discussants in this report.

... The technological world’s bias toward *visual* representations predisposes us toward fragmentary understanding. It is not easy to imagine the intertwining of visual images in ways that define a whole; but auditorily, this is an everyday experience, as we listen to the interwoven harmonies of a song or a symphony. ... Resonance is an auditorily-derived notion, since an over-reliance on visual perception is an initial step in the process of destruction, fragmenting the world in a way that makes its subsequent physical fragmentation seem quite

unremarkable, and leading us toward a world populated only by “things.” In contrast, the metaphor of resonance is a fundamentally integrative notion, since resonances occur *between* things, expressing relation rather than independence, interaction rather than autonomy, and dynamism rather than stagnation, as in Michael Taussig’s depiction of Aymara culture: “the enchantment of nature and the alliance of its spirits with mankind form an organic resonance of orchestrated social representation. The organisation of kith and kin, political organisation, use of the ecosphere, healing, the rhythm of production and reproduction – all echo each other within one living structure that is the language of the magical landscape.” (pp.304-305)

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