

Reigniting the principle of *Ubuntu/Unhu* in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe in light of the Sustainable Development Goals.

By

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Abstract

In March 2019, Cyclone Idai struck Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. This paper foregrounds the extraordinary level of national solidarity exhibited by the Zimbabwean people in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by this cyclone. Drawing insights from the African ethic of Ubuntu/unhu, the paper chronicles the roles of various stakeholders who played a role in responding to the impact of Cyclone Idai. Clearly, Zimbabwe has faced natural disasters since the beginning of this millennium, for instance, Cyclone Eline in the year 2000, Cyclone Japhet in the year 2003, the Tokwe-Mukosi floods of 2014 and Cyclone Dineo in 2017. In the aftermath of these disasters, there have not been comprehensive studies exploring the role of humanitarian agents and other stakeholders foregrounding the aspect of solidarity which is an integral factor in helping affected communities to cope with their losses. Hence, this paper seeks to address this gap using the survivors of Cyclone Idai in Chimanimani as a case study to foreground how their resilience and tenacity is anchored upon the bonds of solidarity exhibited by various stakeholders. Drawing lessons from past natural disasters in Zimbabwe, particularly on the experiences of the Chimanimani communities affected by Cyclone Idai, the paper proffers practical insights on how various stakeholders can collaborate to mitigate further loss of lives and devastation of infrastructure if similar natural disasters befall Zimbabwe in future. In line with the four pillars of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) i.e. people, planet, peace and prosperity (the four Ps), this study explores how the interventions by the various stakeholders responding to the plight of the Chimanimani community affected by Cyclone Idai are conforming to the long-term goals of establishing sustainable communities. Insights from the three development frameworks; the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) framework and the People Centred Development (PCD) framework will help to assess the impact of solidarity initiatives put into place by the stakeholders responding to Cyclone Idai and other natural disasters that have befallen the Zimbabwean populace since the year 2000 and come up

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with propositions on how to utilize the locally available resources as a more durable measure in addressing the needs of the affected communities.

Key Words: Cyclone Idai, Chimanimani, Ubuntu/Unhu, Solidarity, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Introduction

Whilst other parts of Zimbabwe also experienced the impact of Cyclone Idai, this paper focuses mainly on Chimanimani and Chipinge districts which are on record for being severely affected. These two districts endured massive destruction of infrastructure with 339 recorded deaths and 349 people recorded missing. In total, 270 000 people were affected by the cyclone, including 129 600 children who either lost their parents, siblings, friends or their homes. In the absence of the spirit of camaraderie and solidarity that prevailed and continues to be present in the wake of the cyclone, the material losses, trauma and emotional turmoil wrought by Cyclone Idai would have been terrible beyond imagining. Using the lens of the Ubuntu/Unhu philosophy, the paper foregrounds the integral role played by various stakeholders resident in the Chimanimani and Chipinge districts as well as many more who poured in their support from different parts of the Zimbabwean community and from the global community. Whilst acknowledging the invaluable support offered by well-wishers who promptly responded to the plight of the Cyclone Idai survivors, the paper also highlights how some of the logistical challenges experienced during the distribution of the much-needed aid could have been avoided or reduced. The apparent lack of risk and disaster alleviation and management strategies before and after the outbreak of Cyclone Idai are some of the crucial concerns raised in this paper. Drawing insights from the field research conducted in Chimanimani and Chipinge districts in April 2019, the experiences of the numerous survivors of Cyclone Idai affirm the wisdom enshrined in the old adage, “prevention is better than cure.” In conclusion, the paper reiterates the importance of putting in place precautionary measures well before the occurrence of natural disasters rather than waiting for disaster to strike.

Women, Children and the Elderly bearing the brunt of Cyclone Idai

In a disaster of such magnitude, the most affected are women, children and the elderly. One of the female survivors of Cyclone Idai in Ngangu, Chimanimani district narrated the ordeal that befell her family when disaster struck on that fateful night as follows:

When the mudslides and flood waters started surging into the house, my husband went outside to try and find out what was really taking place. Unfortunately, he was unable to return back to the house because of the ferocity of the downpour, the mudslides and the rolling boulders which were blocking the path. I eventually realized that if we had to come out of the house alive, I had to frantically awaken my children and my elderly mother-in-law

whom I had to literally drag out of the house. We held hands as we stumbled in the mudslides whilst scrambling to find a place of sanctuary in the nearby Roman Catholic Church building. Although all my family members were fortunate to make it to safety, we however sustained several body injuries because we were racing against time. We were fumbling in pitch darkness, stepping on stones and sharp metal objects which were being swept off by the raging waters and the mudslides.

The experiences of the cyclone reflected in the above excerpt as retold by one of the study participants helps to explain the available statistics of the Cyclone Idai carnage which indicate that women, children and the elderly comprised the majority of either those who were injured, reported missing or the deceased.

Another major blow suffered especially by the mothers whose children's lives perished during the disaster is the harsh reality of not getting any emotional space to deal with their grief, aggravated by the fact that the traditional burial and mourning rituals were not observed on behalf of their loved ones who died during the cyclone. One of the mothers who lost her three children in the cyclone's trail of destruction tearfully narrated her loss and her predicament as follows:

Whereas in our culture when death occurs, members of the community and family members from far and wide gather around the homestead to mourn and comfort the bereaved, unfortunately, for my three children none of that happened. Since our home had been swept off by the raging floods and mudslides, no one mourned them, no one gathered for them. Their bodies were lying in the church for three days together with several other corpses that had succumbed to the floods and the mudslides. All the surviving people were too numb and utterly shaken such that there was no space for mourning or grieving. Worse still, due to the inaccessibility of the roads and the bridges that had been swept off by the cyclone, it was impossible for the other family members and friends from outside Chimanmani to travel and join us during our time of bereavement.

The above sentiments shared by the grieving mother clearly show the heart wrenching trauma and the deep-seated sense of loss and up rootedness suffered by the surviving communities. Like in most African communities, under normal circumstances, the people of Chimanmani and Chipinge districts meticulously and religiously observe the death and burial rituals to honour and celebrate the lives of their dearly departed relatives (Chitando, 1999). On the other hand, the death and burial rituals are also intended to play a therapeutic role by providing space for the bereaved family members to be enveloped by the emotional and material support which is their source of comfort and solace (Mwandayi, 2011). The night vigil which is usually held before the burial of the deceased will be punctuated with singing, dancing, sermons, prayers and testimonies chronicling all the good deeds of the deceased. This is intended to give the bereaved family a sense of closure (Kamwendo and Manyeruke, 2017). The omission of such funeral procedures for most of those who perished during the Cyclone Idai catastrophe is therefore an added layer of anguish and distress for the bereaved families. It is painful enough for a mother to lose only one child even when the child would have gone through a long period of sickness which might have mentally and

emotionally prepared her for the imminent loss. Unfortunately, as for the study participant quoted above, nothing prepared her for the sudden death of her three children. To add salt to the wound, their homestead was completely destroyed and due to the crisis mode that the whole community was going through, the deceased children did not receive the usual death and burial rituals as per their culture.

Since the cyclone occurred whilst the first school term was in session, inevitably schooling was disrupted. All the schools in the affected Chimanimani and Chipinge districts were abruptly closed until the commencement of the second school term in May. Resuming school at the beginning of the second school term was a traumatic undertaking for both students and their teachers. For instance, at Dzingire primary school in Chimanimani, fifty students, three teachers and the headmaster died when disaster struck. Going back to school under such circumstances, coupled with the destruction of infrastructure such as classrooms, ablution facilities and learning materials has presented a mammoth task. Some of the children who lost their parents, siblings, friends, members of the extended family and their homes are finding it extremely difficult to come to terms with their losses. The encounters with some of the children during the field visit to Chimanimani and Chipinge districts was heart breaking. Patricia¹, an eight-year-old girl disconsolately retold her experience:

I still vividly remember the last time I saw my brother Peter.² He had always been a loving and protective brother. As the waters suddenly rose and threatened to overpower us, he lifted me up until I had found something to hold on to. No sooner had he rescued me out of harm's way he was swept off by the raging waters. Despite having been a really good swimmer, he could not withstand the intensity of the floodwaters. If it was not for him, I would not be here to talk about my near-death experience. What is most painful to me is that in the process of saving my life, my brother lost his own life! As if that is not enough, that same day, I lost two more siblings and a cousin. I do not understand how such a tragedy could befall my family. I feel lost and confused.

The above excerpt as narrated by an emotionally drained, intelligent and very brave eight years old girl reveals the intensity of the trauma and heart wrenching questions lurking in the minds of most children who survived Cyclone Idai. Whilst Patricia suffered such a heavy blow, she is better placed because both her parents also survived, hence, she still has parental support to help her in dealing with the trauma. The plight of numerous children who were orphaned and displaced by the cyclone is nerve-wrecking. An eleven-year-old girl, Evelyn³ shared her nightmarish experience in the following words:

¹ Not real name, all the real names have been replaced with pseudonyms in this paper to safeguard the confidentiality of the study participants

² Not real name

³ Not real name

My younger sister and I had visited our grandparents' place for the weekend before the gushing of the torrential rain. When the heavy rains started falling, we could not go back home because of the floods. Whilst we enjoyed spending time with our grandparents, we were also looking forward to going back home to be reunited with mum and dad. Unfortunately, when we finally made it back home, my whole world was turned upside down upon discovering that both mum and dad as well as our home had all been swept away in the floods.

Whilst Evelyn and her younger sister still have their grandparents to fall back on, the grandparents are however advanced in age and are therefore very limited in terms of their capacity to provide adequate material and emotional care for the orphans. It is also important to note that the same grandparents who are being counted upon as potential caregivers are also going through the process of grieving for their children who perished in the floods. Hence, they equally need emotional support to deal with their loss and grief. The tumultuous experiences wrought by the cyclone on the elderly people who are left to care for orphans can be gleaned from the following statement made by an emotionally drained and hope famished Mbuya (Grandmother) Sithole¹:

Our lives have been shattered. We have lost our loved ones, our crops, and our livelihoods. My children who were my pillar of support all perished in the flood waters. I have now been left behind to take care of my three grandchildren who were orphaned by the cyclone. I do not know how to console them and worse still I do not have the resources to provide for their basic needs. If only God or the ancestral spirits could be negotiated with, I would have asked to swap places with my deceased children. It would have been far better for me to die since I have seen better days rather than for my children to be snatched in the prime of their lives.

Clearly, the narration of Mbuya Sithole's agony and travail as presented in the above excerpt reveals how several elderly people who survived the cyclone are grappling to come to terms with their losses compounded by the added responsibility of orphan care. They also do not have any plausible answers to the burning questions raised by the children left behind as the children are wrestling to come to terms with their parents' brutal and sudden demise. Whilst intervention strategies to alleviate the impact of the cyclone seem to have focused mainly on the women, children and the elderly as the most vulnerable survivors of the cyclone, our field research conducted in Chimanimani and Chipinge districts also revealed that the male folk who survived the carnage seem to be getting the shorter end of the stick when it comes to accessing the humanitarian aid and the emotional support. It is to that aspect that we now turn to below.

The Male Folk Falling through the cracks in the Cyclone Idai Aftermath

A recurring and disturbing feature confronting us in all the temporary shelters housing the displaced communities was the glaring number of people, particularly men who were heavily intoxicated even in the early morning hours. In trying to get to the bottom of the matter, we then

¹ Not real name

discovered that most men including young boys were masking their trauma, futility and ineptness by drowning themselves in alcohol and drugs. It also emerged that due to the Shona people's patriarchal matrix which appraises the dominant masculine perspective, when a crisis such as the Cyclone Idai catastrophe strikes, men are expected to hold the fort and put up a brave face. As such, the counselling sessions and other psychosocial support services offered by humanitarian agencies tended to focus on all other groups except the men. Also, even though the service providers were open to offer men the emotional support, however, because of the dominant masculine script, very few if any men accessed such services. Consequently, they ended up with bottled up emotions and resorted to masking their sorrows through intoxicating themselves.

Another challenge faced by the men who survived the catastrophe was an overarching sense of guilt and self-blame. In light of the fact that the majority of people who perished were women and children, there are high chances that several of the men who survived lost their wives and children or at least some members of the family. These sudden and heavy losses incurred by the men, left them in emotional turmoil. Naturally, men in Shona culture are expected to safeguard their family's and community's safety and security. Hence, they felt defeated and betrayed by the sudden turn of events whereby families and the community at large suffered devastation in their midst. One of the male participants whom we interacted with at a temporary shelter expressed his struggles in the following words:

I lost my wife, three children, my house and everything that is dear to me in a twinkling of an eye. I was employed at the Bridal Veil Falls and I was on night duty when disaster struck. Going back home the following morning, I found a heap of stones covered in mud where my house used to be. We have been digging and searching all over the place and up to now, only my wife's corpse and that of only one of my three children have been found. The other two children are still missing; I doubt that they will ever be found alive. If only I could find their corpses and accord them a decent burial, I would feel much better. I am in so much distress; I can barely fall asleep. I have stopped going to work, I cannot bear the thought of passing through the playground nearby my workplace where I used to take my children for a family outing. I do not have any will power to continue working because the family that I was working to sustain is all gone. I try to find solace in drinking my pain and sorrows away, it is all like a dream, I wish I could wake up one morning to find that this was just but a terrible nightmare!

The above excerpt is testimony to the numerous challenges that male survivors of the cyclone are battling with. With no other outlet in sight, most of them have resorted to excessive consumption of drugs and alcohol which unfortunately is not a viable solution. There is a danger that many of them will end up being alcohol or drug addicts.

Another fairly susceptible and often neglected group are the young men whose livelihood was anchored upon informal employment such as artisanal mining and cash crop farming, most of

which was either destroyed or disrupted due to the flash floods and the mudslides. One of the young men shared his travail as follows:

The common source of livelihood which attracted most of us young men to come here is *chikorokoza* (artisanal mining). However, the down pours of rain have rendered our work practically impossible for now. Since the time when tragedy struck our community, we have been spending most of the time helping families to search for their loved ones by digging and skimming the mud-covered places and turning the boulders scattered all over to search for the remains of missing persons. It is an emotionally and physically draining process. When the truck loads transporting donations in the form of clothing and food items are delivered in our community, it is us the young men who are called to off load the trucks. However, when they distribute the donations, we are never included on the list of beneficiaries because we are not considered as being needy. Priority is often given to those who have either lost their loved ones or the household owners whose homes collapsed. Those of us who were renting in houses that collapsed or those whose source of livelihood was destroyed have been pushed to the periphery. There are also numerous irregularities, favoritism and rampant corruption in the distribution of donations.

The views raised by the young men quoted in the above extract aptly summarize the numerous voices of discontent emerging from the various young men we interacted with during the field visit in Chimanimani and Chipinge. Clearly, these critical concerns needed to be urgently addressed in an appropriate manner because there is the danger that besides reverting to abusing alcohol and drugs, the young men might end up being forced to engage in criminal activities. Writing in the context of the HIV epidemic, Chitando and Chirongoma (2008; 2012) reiterate the fundamental importance for nations, communities and institutions to include men in any prevention, care and support programs. Resonating with Chitando and Chirongoma (2008; 2012), this paper makes a call for the inclusion of men who were equally affected by the Cyclone Idai tragedy. If men are excluded, surely, the well intentioned and effective intervention strategies will be counterproductive and they will remain a mere pipedream. Having articulated the various vulnerability contexts encountered by the different categories among the survivors of Cyclone Idai, below we now turn to an exploration of the Ubuntu/Unhu ethic as an essential resource igniting the responses to the humanitarian crisis situation.

Ubuntu/Unhu Ethic as an essential resource for responding to the Cyclone Idai disaster

In a very unique manner, pain and suffering spur our human hearts into action. Whenever we are confronted with brokenness and vulnerability, we instinctively become sympathetic, tender, warm and protective towards those who are afflicted by life's trials and tribulations. Granted, the Cyclone Idai carnage wrought all sorts of wounds, the survivors were inflicted with physical, psychological and spiritual scars. All these indelibly etched lacerations loudly cry out for healing and restoration. Individuals, organizations, institutions and nations from far and wide

have been and continue to rally behind the survivors of Cyclone Idai. These numerous interventions in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the cyclone resonate with the ubuntu/unhu ethical principles. Various scholars have expounded on the ubuntu/unhu philosophy. Suffice it to say that the principle of ubuntu/unhu is enshrined in “an understanding of what it means to be human and what is necessary for human beings to grow and find fulfilment” (Shutte, 2001:2). Thus, the ubuntu/unhu ethic moulds human behaviour in such a manner that one “seeks to promote and enhance the well-being of others” (Chirongoma and Manda, 2008:194). Archbishop Desmond Tutu summarizes the essence of ubuntu in the following words:

A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others... he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are (Tutu, 1999:57)

Putting it across differently, Tutu articulates the essence of Ubuntu as follows:

We are wired to be caring for the other and generous to one another. We shrivel when we are not able to interact... We depend on the other in order for us to be fully who we are. (...) The concept of Ubuntu says: A person is a person through other persons (Dalai Lama, Tutu and Abrams, 2016:46).

The above exposition on Ubuntu/Unhu dovetails with the spirit behind the various stakeholders' responses to the devastation and the humanitarian crisis caused by Cyclone Idai. Moved by the plight of the Cyclone Idai survivors; countless individuals, local community leaders and humanitarian aid agencies such as UNICEF, UKAID, AFRICAID, Christian Aid, the Red Cross Society and the WHO are assisting the affected communities. Intervention strategies such as the provision of makeshift shelter, food, clean water and sanitation facilities for the displaced communities are continuously being implemented. Psycho-social support for those who lost their loved ones, their homes and all their belongings is another crucial component of the intervention measures.

Cognizant of how the destruction of homes and medical facilities has exacerbated vulnerability to communicable diseases such as cholera, malaria, measles, and malnutrition to the Cyclone Idai survivors, the humanitarian aid agencies are making frantic efforts to provide emergency medical kits as well as ensuring that the temporary shelters are insulated from disease outbreaks. UNICEF has already provided more than 60 000 people with critical information to prevent waterborne diseases and is distributing hygiene kits, soap and water purification tablets, they are also rehabilitating water systems. Since most of the medication and medical records were swept off by the floods, another major concern is the high likelihood for the HIV infected to develop resistance to ARVs due to the disruption in uptake of medication. Adherence to ARVs also becomes compromised especially for the displaced population. Over 175 000 people have been displaced

by Cyclone Idai and about three million people are in dire need of assistance. With UNICEF's support, 12 678 children and adolescents living with HIV have been traced to ensure that they have continued access to treatment. Overcrowding also brings its own challenges, such as an increased risk of infections like hepatitis A and typhoid being spread. Mental health issues triggered by the trauma compounded by substance abuse are also commonplace (UNICEF, 2019).

Residents of Chimanimani and Chipinge have not only had to contend with high winds and devastating flooding, the cyclone also brought with it mudslides and rockfalls, wiping away bridges, homes, entire communities and their livelihoods. In Zimbabwe, more than 270 000 people are estimated to have been affected, including 130 000 children. Officials in Zimbabwe estimate that more than 2 250 houses were washed away or damaged, leaving more than 4 000 people displaced. Entire sections of settlements have completely disappeared, with massive rocks where houses had stood. Many families were camping out in schools, churches, and public buildings. Women and children crammed into temporary shelters were at heightened risk of violence and abuse, while children orphaned by the cyclone or separated from their parents were in urgent need of support. The increasing number of unaccompanied, orphaned and other vulnerable children who are either homeless or are living in crowded spaces is another emerging crisis. Flooding has also led to significant numbers of children being separated from their families, and tracing is an urgent priority. According to a child protection officer working with a UNICEF-supported partner organization, in Ndakopa alone, among the almost 240 children estimated to have lost at least one parent; about 70 children lost both parents. In this light, UNICEF has been providing a child friendly space in the affected areas, but the future remains uncertain for most of the affected children. Their major concern right now is that they be assured of a safe home and that continuing their education is guaranteed. With support from partners across the globe, UNICEF is working hard to assist the children and affected families in a bid to alleviate their suffering. UNICEF and partners have supported the deployment of dozens of social workers to bolster social services in cyclone-affected areas in Zimbabwe, so far reaching nearly 3 000 children with protection services. The incoming social workers are focusing on providing psychosocial support to separated children, and UNICEF has also reached thousands of children through child friendly spaces (UNICEF, 2019).

After discussing the various intervention strategies that were implemented in response to the plight of the Cyclone Idai survivors, below we proceed to reflect on some insights that can be drawn from the SDGs and the three development theories (ABCD, PCD and SLF) in an endeavor to alleviate the devastation caused by ecological tragedies such as Cyclone Idai.

SDGs and Development Theories as lenses to reflect on the Cyclone Idai Carnage

The wreckage caused by Cyclone Idai brings to mind the key issues raised in the post-2015 development agenda which set 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comprising of 167 targets. Over a period of 15 years, these goals and targets are expected to stimulate action in five

pivotal areas: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership [the five P's]. These are conjoined and they seek to balance the three crucial dimensions of sustainable development, i.e. economic, social and environmental. The first SDG emphasizes poverty eradication by the year 2030. Clearly, the debris surrounding Cyclone Idai exposed most if not all the survivors to poverty and destitution. Hence, attaining this SDG should entail finding practical and realistic measures of capacitating and empowering the affected communities to rise from the doldrums of poverty caused by the aftermath of the cyclone. In this light, the principles enshrined in the ABCD approach become instructive. According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), the development philosophy behind the ABCD approach is that each and every community, no matter how poor and how vulnerable, is endowed with skills, resources and capabilities. In essence, the ABCD approach perceives each and every individual as an asset and as an agent, hence those assets must be tapped into for the individual's and community's benefit. From this perspective, the cyclone Idai survivors must be capacitated to become self-sufficient rather than relying on aid for their sustenance.

SDG 2 focuses on eradicating world hunger by the year 2030. Granted, Cyclone Idai destroyed people's livelihoods, their crops, fruit trees and their food reserves were swept off by the floods. There is therefore need for establishing means and ways to ensure that those who survived the Cyclone Idai disaster do not perish due to hunger, malnutrition and starvation. SDG 3 envisages provision of health and well-being for all by the year 2030. The destruction of health care facilities, the death of health care practitioners, the injuries and the trauma suffered by those who survived Cyclone Idai impact heavily on the achievement of this goal. As such, there is urgent need for lasting solutions to address the various threats to people's health and well-being in the wake of Cyclone Idai. SDG 4 calls for provision of inclusive and quality education by the year 2030. Unfortunately, the cyclone impacted negatively on the education sector by demolishing the educational infrastructure, teaching and non-teaching staff perished and some of those who survived have sought transfers from the affected districts. All these misfortunes have far-reaching repercussions on the quality of education, hence posing an obstruction in achieving this goal. SDG 5 emphasizes achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by the year 2030. As has already been noted above, women and girls who survived the cyclone have been made vulnerable to abuse and exploitation which further disempowers them. The above discussion also noted the various ways in which men have been negatively impacted by the Cyclone Idai catastrophe. Hence, attaining this goal entails intentionally focusing on various ways in which the vulnerabilities of men and women can be effectively addressed.

SDG 6 envisages a world with access to clean water and sanitation by the year 2030. As has been reiterated above, the Cyclone Idai carnage destroyed clean water sources and sanitation facilities were demolished in the trail of destruction. Living in overcrowded temporary shelters compromises the survivors' access to clean water and sanitation facilities. This calls for prompt measures to be put into place to ensure that the affected people have permanent shelter and that

their water sources and sanitation facilities are rehabilitated as a matter of urgency. SDG 7 advocates for the provision of affordable and clean energy by the year 2030. It is important to restate the fact that whilst Cyclone Idai aggravated the problem of power cuts in the affected areas due to the destruction of some equipment, however, Zimbabwe had already been battling with providing its citizens with an uninterrupted supply of electric power. Hence, instead of hiding behind the finger and blaming Cyclone Idai for the power cuts, as the people of Zimbabwe, we need to be more creative and innovative in finding alternative power sources. Investing in solar energy as a country will go a long way in addressing the ecological crisis and the financial constraints caused by an overreliance on electric power. This is interlinked with SDG 11 which calls for sustainable cities and communities and SDG 12 which advocates for responsible consumption and production. According to the information provided by some of the Cyclone Idai survivors whom we interacted with during the process of field research, the other factors that could have precipitated the gravity of the cyclone's impact have to do with the wanton allocation of residential stands along waterways and the rampant artisanal mining activities around Chimanimani and Chipinge districts. Such activities exert pressure on and damage the environment whilst exposing the land to the vulnerability of ecological disasters such as the Cyclone Idai disaster.

The attainment of the above- mentioned goals might become a reality if the government of Zimbabwe, development practitioners, aid agencies and the people of Chimanimani and Chipinge districts take a leaf from both the ABCD and the SLF development approaches. As mentioned above, the ABCD approach hinges around the concept of assets, tapping into the various and often times intangible assets for the betterment of the community. Responding to the Cyclone Idai carnage through the ABCD lens would go a long way in capacitating and empowering communities to use their locally available resources and skills to cope with their vulnerability contexts. The ABCD development approach also shares similar principles with the SLF development approach. According to Chambers and Conway (1992), the SLF development approach emphasizes the need for pursuing livelihoods which are sustainable. It concurs with the ABCD development approach in acknowledging that each and every community no matter its deplorable conditions, possesses invaluable assets which exist in varied forms. As such, it propounds the need to identify these assets and put them to good use by capacitating communities to pursue sustainable livelihoods. In the case of Chimanimani and Chipinge districts, there are vast expanses of land with rich soils and abundance of rainfall making the area conducive for cash crop farming, animal husbandry, plantations and fruit farming. If they are to be equipped with skills and implements, they would be able to be productive and pursue sustainable livelihoods that will release them from the bondage of relying on relief and welfare.

The above discussion leads us to an exploration of the PCD as another crucial development approach that might offer important insights in dealing with the crisis in Chimanimani and Chipinge districts. The think-tank behind the PCD as a development approach is David Korten. In

his seminal work, Korten (1990) articulates the fundamental need for individuals, communities, institutions and development agencies to gradually shift from relief and welfare to people centered development. This entails developing their communities based on the locally available resources and skills. According to Korten (2015), the ideal is to reach a point whereby individuals and communities literally shake off the dependency syndrome and begin to actively work towards pursuing livelihoods which are sustainable and ecologically friendly. Whilst Korten acknowledges the need for partnership with other experts and others who are better equipped, the driving force behind development initiatives should be the resilience and the tenacity of the local community who take ownership for addressing their community needs. In unison with the principles of the PCD framework, our recommendation is that whilst the countries' governments and international aid agencies are coordinating relief efforts in response to the humanitarian crisis confronting the survivors of Cyclone Idai, it is however important that these don't just focus on the short-term effects of the floods and the devastation. Rather, it is crucial to look ahead and try to guard against major health crises, food shortages and the numerous other existential challenges bedeviling the survivors as listed above. There is a pertinent need for capacitating and empowering the affected communities to stand on their feet once again. The sage wisdom on desisting from giving people fish which will feed them for only one day and focusing on teaching them how to fish so that they can feed themselves for a lifetime rings true here. Having explored the nexus between the selected SDGs and the three development frameworks in the wake of the Cyclone Idai catastrophe, the next section of our paper focuses on highlighting the apparent lack of risk and disaster management which heightened the plight of the affected communities.

Cyclone Idai revealed the need for risk and disaster preparedness and management

SDG 13 raises a clarion call for taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Cognizant of how climate change causes ecological disasters such as drought, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods and tropical cyclones such as Cyclone Idai, the focus of this goal revolves around strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries. Furthermore, it propounds the need to integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning. It also emphasizes the importance of improving education, raising awareness as well as enhancing human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

The events surrounding the occurrence of Cyclone Idai in Zimbabwe are a replica of the various cyclones and floods which have struck us totally unprepared. If only the people of Chimanimani and Chipinge had been sensitized about the crucial need for evacuating the areas that would have been identified to be susceptible to the cyclone and if efforts had been made to promptly evacuate them, surely, we would have a different story to tell. Granted, the cyclone could not have been averted, however, the traumatic losses of lives and injuries could have been prevented or drastically

minimized. Furthermore, rather than neglecting the survivors of the cyclone who remained cut off from the rest of the country and the world at large for more than three days, if rescue operations had been arranged ahead of time, the numerous deaths due to untreated injuries, starvation and exposure to the rain and the cold weather could have been mitigated. The fact that the Zimbabwean government declared Cyclone Idai a national disaster and appealed for international support to deal with its impact also shows lack of risk and disaster management and preparedness in national disaster policy and budgeting. With proper planning, using technology to notify people in the affected areas about the looming disaster and timeously evacuating them, the devastating impact of the Cyclone Idai catastrophe would have been mitigated. Some of the resources that were used and continue to be utilized in an endeavor to rehabilitate and bring a sense of normalcy to the communities affected by Cyclone Idai could have been channeled towards risk and disaster preparedness. Rather than waiting for disaster to strike, it would have been far better to alleviate its impact. The next section of the paper draws our discussion to a conclusion.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has noted how the survivors of Cyclone Idai in Chimanimani and Chipinge districts suffered heavy material and emotional losses. The discussion also illustrated how the outpouring of solidarity and support offered by various stakeholders in response to the humanitarian crisis is reminiscent and reflective of the Ubuntu/unhu ethic. The paper also acknowledged that in the absence of relief and welfare services provided by several well-wishers, the impact of the cyclone would have been very severe. Whilst acknowledging the fundamental significance of all the seventeen SDGs, the paper focused on discussing specific SDGs which are more directly linked with the occurrence of Cyclone Idai. The interface between these SDGs and the three development approaches in relationship with the Cyclone Idai catastrophe was also foregrounded. The crucial need for Zimbabwe to make intentional efforts to be better equipped and better prepared in terms of risk and disaster management particularly the natural disasters such as Cyclone Idai was restated. This paper is being written six months after the Cyclone Idai carnage hit Zimbabwe, unfortunately, most of the displaced people are still living in overcrowded temporary shelters exposing them to all weather elements. They have endured the biting winter and their future remains uncertain as a new rainy season is setting in. With better national policies and proper planning for disaster mitigation in place, most of the Cyclone Idai survivors would have been settled in permanent homes by now. In conclusion, the lessons learnt from the Cyclone Idai carnage should be illustrative not only for the Zimbabwean people but for all developing countries grappling with the impact of looming ecological crises.

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