

# **AREA LAND REFORM INITIATIVE**

**A PROJECT INITIATED BY NKUZI IN THE MAKHADO  
MUNICIPAL AREA**

**Land Reform from below? – Decentralised Land Reform in  
Southern Africa**

**PLAAS Conference 22 – 23 April 2008**



**NKUZI** DEVELOPMENT  
ASSOCIATION

# Nkuzi

- Nkuzi is a land reform support organisation that has worked on land reform and land rights issues since 1997.
- Nkuzi has had successes in settling land claims in rural areas and defending the rights of thousands of farm dwellers.



# The Challenge

- To deliver land at scale in a way that enables the effective use of that land for development/improved livelihoods
  - The rural poor to become drivers of land reforms to meet their needs and build on their skills and resources
  - Escape the current bureaucratic, unresponsive, disempowering, and compartmentalized approach
  - Create environment for success on land and for development in the area



# Strategy

- Facilitate landless communities in developing plan for land and agrarian reform in the area.
- Work with Land Forum (local LPM) and Municipality.
- Get support from key stakeholders
- Integrate plan with Municipal IDPs
- Coordinate delivery of services at area level, rather than project - post and pre settlement interventions



# Strategy

- Decentralization of resources and decision making powers.
- Communities to hold government accountable for delivery
- Nkuzi worked in Nzhelele (part of Makhado) due to history of work in the area and the interest of the land forum and Municipality.
- Nkuzi as a facilitator



# Activities

- Planning and setting up the project
- Stakeholder consultation. Management Committee with LPM, Municipality and Nkuzi
- Set up an office in the area. Appointed full time project manager
- Facilitated community consultation to get information/inputs and promote the project.
- Consultations with the Land Reform Forum (Local LPM).
- Gathered information from government departments like RLCC and DLA



# Activities

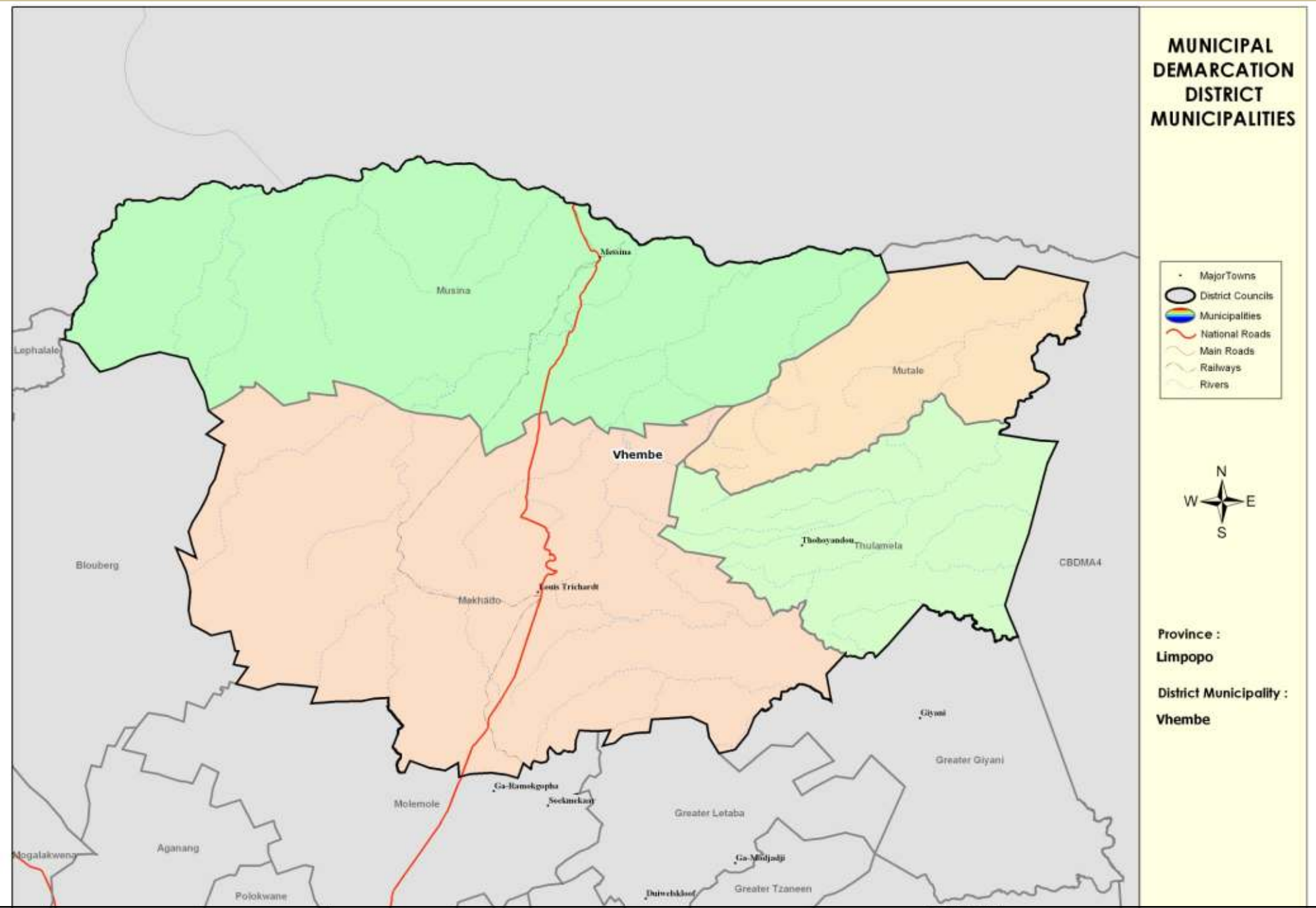
- Ran workshops for the Councilors and the leadership of the Land Forum (Livelihoods, Development, Land Reform, Planning)
- Identified other resource organizations
- Facilitated workshops with marginalized groups from the community i.e. women and youth.
- Mapping all claims and projects
- Documentation of the findings
- Dealing with all sorts of land issues that arose along the way.



# Limpopo Province



# Vhembe





# Findings

- 130,000 people in Nzhelele Valley with 60 land claims covering over 90% of land in Makhado (490,000 total pop, 1,600,000ha)
- Over 10,000 farm workers on farms, most of which are claimed
- Agriculture is mainstay of local economy, accounting for 60% of Municipal Revenue.
- Claimants want land and benefits, workers want jobs and tenure security, the economy has to be built.



# Results

- The Power of seeing the whole picture
- High level of interest
- Stakeholders want project to look at whole of Makhado
- Clustering of claims into five groups - building organization.
- Some youth and woman organizing
- Clarity on the need to move from project thinking to programme thinking. The Need for a **Vision**.



# Results for emphasis

- Land Reform cannot be handled as a number of projects and cases that must be dealt with through a narrow technocratic process.
- It will be the fundamental transformation of property rights and the economy and society of the area.
  - What will that transformation create?
- The current policies are inadequate, power of using real situation for advocacy



# Activities cont...

- Documentation, promotion and learning.
- Research partnership with NRI on territorial approach
- Development and promotion/marketing of the concept and proposed solutions.  
Workshops, meetings and land conference (landless, govt, farmers, business, etc...)
- Structure plan and projects to be able to fit with IDPs



# Results

- High level of interest generated
- Minister attends conference and mentions project in Parliament.
- Senior Local, National and Provincial Officials support project.
- Municipality bulldozes farm gate
- Clarification of roles to be played, including plan for local project implementation unit
- At key point of trying to get resources committed, will they?? They have not....Yet!



# Risks

- Project could become too technocratic.
- Community structures still weak
- Marginalized groups, remain marginalized  
e.g. women
- Lack of capacity in Nkuzi and little provided from elsewhere
- Still real difficulties of owner resistance and govt.. failure to act
- Decentralization good, but we still need a strong state.



# Way Forward?

- We need to keep working, learn, and think more strategically.
- Nkuzi to focus on community organizing and empowerment especially marginalized groups.
- Need to be dealing with HIV/AIDS.
- We hope government builds on this initiative to deliver.
- If government fails communities must push for action.



# State's Response

- State fails to commit resources – despite positive rhetoric
- Instead co-opts “area-based” concept
- Develops centralised technocratic approach –still on paper
- Top down approach - communities at the bottom with no decision-making power



**STOP NOW TERESA YOU HAVE GONE  
FAR OVER YOUR TIME.**

**THANKS FOR LISTENING**



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ASSOCIATION



**Jurgen Schadeberg**