

# **Grappling with the inherent contradictions and tensions in the TFCA model: a case-study from the Chimanimani TFCA**

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## **Structure of the presentation**

- Conceptual framework – the era of neoliberalism
- Tensions at the heart of the TFCA 'model'
- Eco-tourism
- Chimanimani TFCA – a case-study
- The work of MICAIA Foundation and Eco-MICAIA Ltd – how are we doing?

## Neoliberalism

- The dominant ideology of our times and the principal 'technology of governing'
- Three modes of neoliberalism:
  - Consensus
  - Anti-politics
  - Marketing



## The TFCA Model – Issues and Tensions

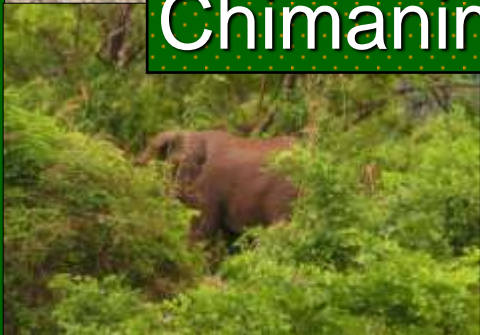
- The triumph of science-led ecoregionalism and a return to top-down agenda-setting
- Issues of governance – token 'participation' on the ground and disempowerment of the State by non-state actors
- CNBRM – from an approach to a component; how CNBRM got cosy with neoliberalism and in so doing lost its soul
- TFCA's as 'models of meaning' – where the symbol is more important than reality

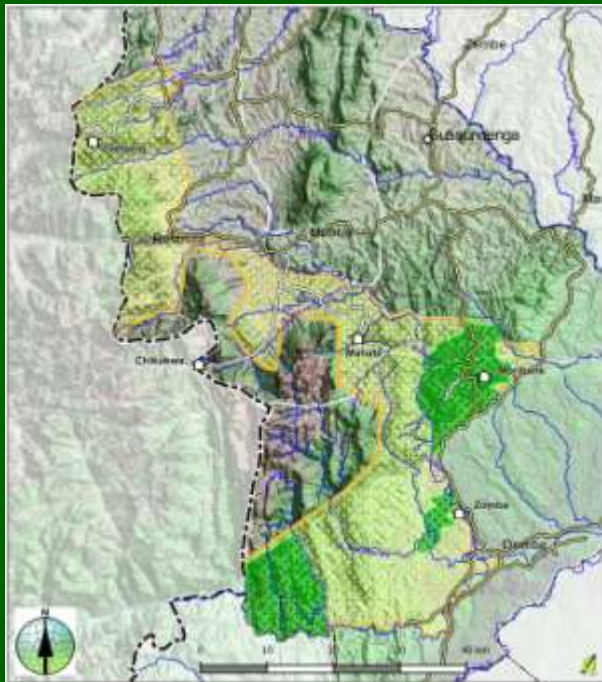
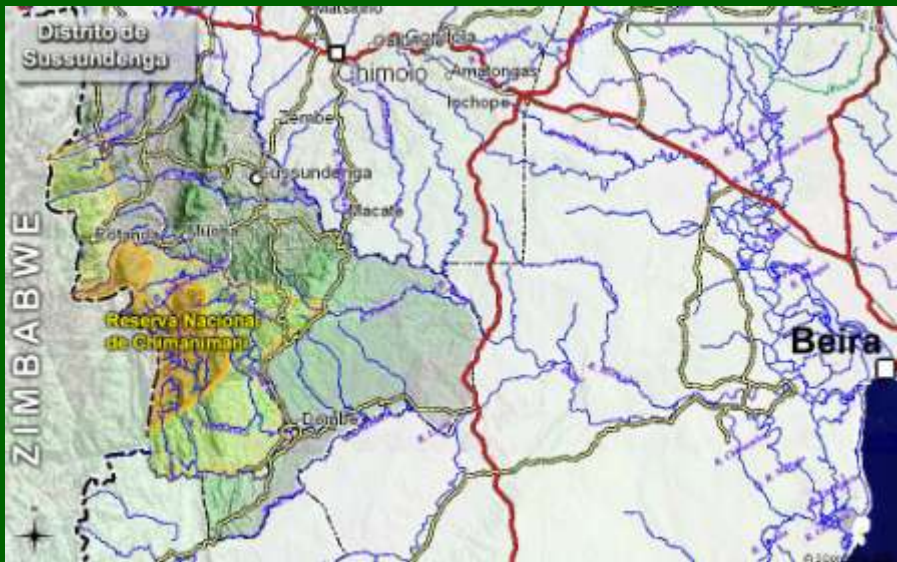
## Eco-tourism: love child of neoliberalism and conservation

- A juicy 'carrot' to dangle in front of communities
- Market-based
- Decentralized control of resources
- Generates lots of lovely images and narratives
- Multiple models – very varied returns for communities



## Chimanimani TFCA





**Chimanimani  
National Reserve  
625 km<sup>2</sup>**

**Buffer Zone  
1740 km<sup>2</sup>**

## The Chimanimani National Reserve and buffer zone

- The most varied, beautiful and bio-diverse region: from mountain wilderness to dense forests
- Amazing diversity of birds, wildlife and plants
- Ancient history and multiple cultural influences – the basis for marketing and ecotourism
- A land in which spirits and customary law mix uneasily with legal frameworks
- Highly charged and complex political environment

## The Chimanimani National Reserve and buffer zone -

- The (draft) Management Plan enshrines 'consensus rhetoric' and anti politics
- Top-down governance, management and planning leaves communities unaware and generates 'action plans' with no local buy-in or serious research
- In a politically contested space the system of rewards and patronage take precedence over any 'management plan'

## MICAIA's work in the Chimanimani TFCA

- Moribane, Zomba, Nhaheze:
  - Land use planning & delimitation
  - Associations and committees
  - Diversifying the local economy – natural products, nursery and tourism (Ndzou Camp)
  - Built on 2 years+ interaction and learning (Moribane)



## NDZOU CAMP



## NDZOU CAMP



### Principal Features:

- Joint venture development involving the Mpunga community (60%) and Eco-MICAIA Ltd (40%)
- Situated in Moribane Forest on a 5.5ha site allocated by the community
- 18 beds in 4 rondavels, a 3-bedroom family lodge and 2 fixed tents
- 8 prepared & serviced campsites (ablution block, cooking areas)
- Restaurant and bar serving creative locally inspired dishes making the most of seasonal produce



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## NDZOU CAMP



### Attractions:

- A growing population of elephants; we offer guided elephant tracking as well as visits to viewing sites
- Excellent bird watching
- Exploring on foot some of the 120 sq km of the forest reserve, with themed walks and nature trails



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## NDZOU CAMP

### Attractions:

- Eco-learning centre with information panels, active conservation and regular opportunities to learn forest lore and skills
- Visits to sacred sites with the community
- A great place to relax!



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## Challenges and issues

- Making the tourism business work! – being realistic about enterprise while meeting community expectations
- Managing conservation areas – charting a course between local political practicalities, tensions in TFCA management structures and roles, and legal hurdles
- Telling and selling it as it is - avoiding symbolism
- Trying to 'disrupt' the consensus whilst still 'getting things done'