

An Analysis of Nyaradzo Funeral Service's Tree Planting Programmes in Rural and Urban Areas: Insights from Zvishavane Urban and Chivi Rural Communities

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Abstract

The study sought to establish the perceptions of communities on tree donations, with specific reference to Zvishavane urban and Chivi rural areas. Through interviewing a sample of 60 households in Zvishavane Urban District and Chivi Rural District communities, this study analysed Nyaradzo Funeral Services' (Friends of the environment-FOTE) tree planting programme. The study contends that despite the negative belief associated with tree planting by the deceased families, the practice is now being overwhelmingly endorsed by both rural and urban communities. Results from the study indicate that apart from the Environmental Agency of Zimbabwe (EMA), the FOTE Programme by Nyaradzo Funeral Services (NFS) has probably become the single largest private sector player in environmental issues and that NFS often give a tree to bereaved families as a symbolic gesture of condolence and remembrance. The study also established that NFS's tree planting gesture is overwhelmingly positive. Many people in Zimbabwe view it as a thoughtful and meaningful way to honour the deceased, while also contributing to the wellbeing of the environment. Overall, the gesture is seen as a beautiful way to celebrate the life of the deceased while also giving back to the community and protecting the environment. In light of these findings the study recommends the expanding of tree species to cater for different environmental conditions and cultural preferences, community engagement to foster ownership and ensure long term sustainability. The study further recommends for the development of a system to regularly monitor and maintain the trees to ensure their health and survival.