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NGO's AND FOOD AID IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL FOOD AID INTERVENTION STRATEGY IN GWANDA DISTRICT.

BY

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A research report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of a Master of Art in Development Studies

University of the Witwatersrand

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Supervisor: Professor Eric Worby

Abstract

The Zimbabwe food security situation has considerably worsened in view of the socio-economic and political climate at play in the country. It is argued in this research that food aid in the form of handouts, when administered to vulnerable groups, may temporarily insulate them from food insecurity problems. The study focused on the role and impact of food aid on the impoverished households of Gwanda District, in Matabeleland South Province in the southern part of Zimbabwe. An evaluation was needed to find out whether food aid has played a positive role on the livelihoods of the inhabitants of Gwanda District or otherwise. The study also wanted to ascertain whether government's approach to ensuring food security had produced the intended results.

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study and data was gathered through household interviews with food aid beneficiaries in two wards of Gwanda District. Interviews were also conducted with the World Vision district management team as well as the community leadership. The study revealed that food aid, when timeously distributed, can improve the dietary status, nutrition, and consumption of many households in Gwanda District. It has saved the loss of many lives as well as led to long term development. On the other hand food aid has had a negative impact on food security is so far as it has changed people's attitude towards self-reliance, and self-sustainability. It has creating a dependency syndrome and ushered a culture of negligence on the assumption that free food, will be administered even if one does not work in the fields , since the source of food it offers is easier to come by than by providing food oneself.

Declaration

I declare this research report is my unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of master of art in Development Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has never been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

……..

Leslie Ncube

Student Number: 329192

…….day of ……, 2010

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Dedication

To my mum and dad with appreciation.

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List of Acronyms

ADP	Area Development Program
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBP	Community Based Plans
C-SAFE	Consortium of Southern Africa Food Emergency
CSO	Central Statistics Office
FAO	Food Agricultural Organization
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
HIV	Human Immune deficiency Virus
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGP	Income Generating Project
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KG	Kilograms
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership For Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
PL	Public Law
PLWA	People Living With Aids
PRR	Productivity Ratio Requirement
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
TB	Tuberculosis
UNAIDS	United Nations AIDS

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
US	United States
USAID	United states Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WVI	World Vision International
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe Peoples Revolutionary Army
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
WADCO	Ward Development Committee

Key Terms

Food aid, food security, food insecurity, food sovereignty, poverty, drought, land reform, HIV/AIDS, food availability, food accessibility, food adequacy, World Vision, Gwanda District, Matabeleland.

CHAPTER 1

1.0 Background and Introduction of the study

The present level of poverty has led most developing countries to turn to non-governmental organizations to provide much needed sustenance, aid, and developmental projects, especially in the wake of political upheavals and natural disasters. The persistently high poverty rate in most African countries awakened the search for an alternative solution to those problems (Berg 1987). This is the case of most developing countries, Zimbabwe included, yet in spite of the increasing number of NGO's dealing with food aid in Zimbabwe, poverty and starvation is today still ravaging many households. This could cause one to wonder if NGO's are actually doing what they originally were set up for. My research seeks to examine the role played by NGO's in terms of food aid provisioning, support for rural livelihoods, and poverty alleviation in a single District (Gwanda) in the southern Zimbabwe.

In Gwanda District the situation of structural poverty has not improved. Climatic conditions of the District are such that the area is susceptible to regular droughts. The District has had eleven serious droughts since 1940 to date with the most recent drought being that of 2002. Realizing a potential human catastrophe at that time the Government of Zimbabwe declared Matabeleland South province, in which Gwanda is one of eight districts, to be a disaster area in terms of the food situation existing in February 2002. The Government then appealed for humanitarian food aid a few months later. This also meant that the province was to receive special support from both the government and the donors. The Government of Zimbabwe, through the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), launched a subsidized food aid distribution program targeted at vulnerable rural populations. Food aid was also distributed through the emergency operation program of the World Food Program (WFP) through World Vision International.

The issue of food unavailability, affordability and accessibility has featured prominently due to the successive droughts that the district has experienced in the past few years as well as the economic meltdown that the country has undergone. Crop production has suffered greatly. People have had to cut down on the number of meals from the normal three to either one or two while both the quantity and quality of the meals have suffered. With the recurrent land reforms,

multilateral relations with the West also deteriorated and that saw a complex set of external, internal and environmental factors interacting to increase hardship in Zimbabwe (Mackenzie, 1992:45). Land reform programs and the recurrent droughts saw a decline in agricultural productivity which further triggered the collapse of agro-based industries. The net effect was the shortage of basic commodities, worsened poverty and starvation. In a bid to manage the shrinking economy, the country approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank which then prescribed a series of structural adjustment programs (SAPs). These economic SAPs had a direct impact on poor households as they could not manage to procure food. The SAPs also led to retrenchments which eventually increased unemployment and also led to a decrease in remittances to the poor by the employed.

It became imperative that the Zimbabwean government look outside the national borders for food donor agencies such as World Vision International so that people could be administered food handouts for their survival. The international donor community responded by making available food packs for the chronically hungry as well as vulnerable groups. In the case of Gwanda District due to this humanitarian crisis, World Vision Zimbabwe, through funding from the Consortium for Southern Africa Food Emergency (C-Safe), World Food Program (WFP) and ECHO has been implementing a diverse food relief programme targeting vulnerable groups through schools based feeding, food support for the chronically ill and institutional feeding.

1.1 Statement of the problem

With the rising global food prices, increasing demand and the threat to climate change there is a danger that food aid will shrink and millions of children and people will suffer the consequences. Downing (1992) argues that the potential impact of climate change on food security has been examined for a number of countries including Kenya and Zimbabwe. The results point to a possible reduction of yields and deteriorating food security as global warming occurs.

Food hunger is a threat to life as it unravels the social fabric, the only form of “insurance” that poor people have (Narayan, 2000:38). Extreme poverty, which manifests as hunger has increased the number of school dropouts, as well as child morbidity and mortality to unprecedented levels.

Starvation has triggered myriad forms of social decomposition in Gwanda District such as prostitution, unwanted pregnancies, crime and a host of other socio-economic and political challenges. The poor have been forced to depend on food handouts from humanitarian organizations such as World Vision International. The broad question I wish to address is whether food aid can play a meaningful and sustainable role in the alleviation of poverty under circumstances of this kind.

In view of these multi-faceted challenges, this study sets out to establish the socio-economic impact of food aid on the people of Gwanda District. Addressing this problem may not only benefit the state but also those individuals whose livelihoods are hinged on food handouts. However, research has not been able to clearly come up with solid information on the extent, role and impact of food aid as a poverty alleviation strategy. Studies to date have also not questioned the viability and sustainability of food aid in Zimbabwe and what has sustained livelihoods in Gwanda District and the country while it has been under economic stress.

1.2 Research Questions

In order to address the broad question of whether food aid can alleviate poverty the study seeks to evaluate the impact of food aid on the livelihoods of the people of Gwanda District in Zimbabwe. The research seeks to address the following specific questions;

1. What changes in livelihoods, well-being and socio-economic status have there been in households receiving food handouts?
2. To what extent do food aid handouts undermine the capacity of households to provision themselves in the long term?
3. Does food aid improve access to the means of livelihood among households?

1.3 Aim of the study

It is against the above mentioned background that the overall aim of the study was to investigate the impact of food aid on impoverished beneficiaries at household level in Gwanda District. I hope that the findings of my study will enable me to make recommendations to policy makers,

governmental and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders who deal with food security issues in Gwanda District and other regions of endemic poverty and food insecurity.

1.5 Case study

Considering the fact that there are so many NGOs distributing food aid in Gwanda District, the study undertook a case study of World Vision International food aid intervention in the District. This NGO was chosen because it is the only food aid organization with the widest coverage in the District and because it distributes the largest volume of food.

1.6 Motivation of the study

The researcher's motivation to undertake research on the area of NGOs and food aid emanates from my personal desire to find out whether food aid has actually improved the livelihoods of rural inhabitants of the district where I was born and bred. It is my conviction that scarce resources such as food have a negative effect on the livelihoods of poor inhabitants. Due to the scope and duration of a structured master's thesis, I had to limit my study to one particular NGO paying attention to its strategy of food aid intervention. I hope, however, that my study will have relevance for the analysis of other food aid NGOs in other areas. In an era of unprecedented rising food prices, the issue of food insecurity has become a matter of life and death, for the poor and vulnerable.

1.7 Rationale of the study

In an era of unprecedented rising food prices, the issue of food insecurity has become a matter of life and death, for the poor and vulnerable. It is estimated that there are over 10 million hunger related deaths every year worldwide. The changing food production patterns, the rapid conversion of food into agro-fuels, and climate change, are all contributing to an already precarious situation. In Zimbabwe, the land reform of year 2000 characterized by farm invasion by state agents and war veterans crippled the country's agricultural sector which is the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy causing it to plunge into chaos. Climate change has become increasingly recognized as a contributing factor to food insecurity in Zimbabwe. In addition the

increase in droughts and floods, already a feature in other parts of Southern Africa aggravated the food shortages (http://uk oneworldnet/guides/food). This study will contribute to the understanding of food aid on the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people by focusing on the drought prone region of Matabeleland South Province where Gwanda District is located. Hence there will be need to situate the role of food aid in household livelihoods against the backdrop of economic collapse. All in all, this study seeks to contribute to our capacity to understand and evaluate the role of food aid to the livelihoods of the poor in a context characterized by hyperinflation, unemployment, and political tension whilst highlighting and evaluating the role of food aid.

1.8 Limitation of the study

The diversity of households limited the amount of time the researcher could spend at each household. The spread of households reduced the amount of time the researcher could spend at each household as most of these could only be accessed on foot as there were no road networks. The period in which the research was conducted was characterized by great political sensitivity due to the fact that the research period coincided with the controversial presidential run-off. The sample size was kept small for management purposes due to the limited time frame, pressure of work and scope of a structured master's thesis. The small sample size affected the representativeness of the findings and the generalization of the results on the impact and role of food aid in Gwanda District. A larger study sample would have been preferred to improve generalization of the findings. It was also not possible to meet respondents at the scheduled times as some were not at their home stations due to various reasons. Dates and times were rescheduled to cater for those who were not met.

1.9 Ethical considerations

Firstly permission was sought from the University of the Witwatersrand's ethics committee. In view of the fact that the researcher used a case study of World Vision International. I sought consent from management to conduct such a research as well as permission from the District Administrator's office which in turn introduced me to the local authority and to the chiefs of the community. The aims and objectives of the study were explained. All the participants had the

right of informed consent and right to anonymity. The right to confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants through the use of pseudonyms and the right to discontinue taking part in the research. Most importantly the study did not bring any harm to participants involved. The study observed all ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The International Food Policy Research Institute IFPRI (2002) defines food security as a situation in which all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for a active healthy life. Achieving food security continues to remain a challenge not only for developing nations, but for the developed world as well. The difference lies in the magnitude of the problem in terms of its severity and proportion of the population affected. In developed nations the problem is alleviated by providing targeted food security interventions, including food aid in the form of direct food relief. These efforts have directly and significantly reduced food insecurity in the regions.

Similar approaches have been employed in developing countries with varying successes. The discrepancy in the results may be due to insufficient resource base and shorter duration of intervention. According to World Hunger (2002), the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that one-third of the world is well-fed, one-third is under-fed, one-third is starving and over four million people die of hunger yearly. In addition, World Hunger (2002) reports that the UN's FAO indicates that one in twelve people worldwide are malnourished, including 160 million children under the age of five. Even in countries that have excess food, some people are starving. For example, in 2005, 35.1 million Americans, including 22.7 million adults and 2.4 million children, lived in households that were unable to afford the food they needed for the year. Food availability is affected by a complexity of factors these include social instability, natural disasters, inadequate education, absence of good governance and political environments which has been one of the major factors affecting Zimbabwe. These above stated factors contribute either to insufficient national food availability or insufficient access to food by households and individuals.

2.1 Food security in a global context

The recent rise in global food prices has sharply affected the capability of the poor to access food. Most people agree that the current world food price escalation has evoked a massive social and political "crisis". The dispute is over the sources of the increases. Some scholars argue that it reflects a supply mismatch in relation to global demand, and have attributed this to a range of factors, these include increased grain consumption in Asia; the reduction of 'Western' grain stocks due to bad weather-induced harvest failures especially with reference to Australia; the rise of farm input costs induced by oil price escalation; the diversion of grain utilisation to agro-fuels; and commodity speculation.

Analysis of the sources of the food price increase have attempted to distribute national responsibility for inducing price increases (Patnaik, 2007), as well as to balance the weights of the casual factors (Mitchell 2008). IFPRI (2008) argues that various explanations have been put across over the food crisis, the Asian overconsumption of grain being the problem, while others argue that prices more than doubled over the past two years due to the rising cost of oil hence blaming the OPEC countries. The depreciation of the US dollar and the prolonged drought in Australia have also been blamed for the global food crisis. The use of food for agro-fuel production and oil related increases in farm inputs prices are central to food price escalation. This is largely true because finance capitals commodity speculation has been an underlying driver. However, one will agree that the above crisis has not spared the poor developing nations and the SADC region is not an exception to this trend.

With the rising global food prices increasing demand and the threat to climate change, there is a danger that food aid will shrink and millions of children will suffer the consequences. Downing (1992) argues that the potential impact of climate change on food security has been examined in a number of countries including Kenya and Zimbabwe. The results point to a possible reduction of yields and deteriorating food security as global warming occurs.

2.1.1 Definition of food security

The most widely accepted definition of food security at the individual level is that from the World Bank which highlights the aspects of secure access by all people at all times to enough food for a healthy, active life (Steven et al 2002:2).

In 1996 the World Food Summit adopted the following definition of food security: "when all people, at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and safe healthy style". The problems of food insecurity are being felt in the poor developing countries of the world where up to 90% of household income is spent on food. Sanchez et al (2005:11) define food security as a term relating to the condition that exists when people do not have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious and culturally accepted food to meet their dietary needs to lead an active and healthy life. According to Sanchez et al (2005:11), access to food is closely related to poverty and lack of economic growth. The poor usually do not have adequate means to gain access to food in the required quantities.

Hubbard (1995:2) and Lado (2001:142) give rather a different definition from the above. They argue that it should be a scenario where people should have the economic right to be physically able to obtain the food they need to be healthy and active, wherever they acquire it and however it is provided. This definition gives clarity that people should be confident that adequate food will be available at all times. Sijm (1997:86) describes food security at household level as primarily peoples' access to food and the distribution of available food supplies among households and other members. In view of the above discussion, food security can be defined as all groups of people having the physical and the economic means to have access at all times to food in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their nutritional needs. This description means that as food becomes available, people have the means to obtain it at all times and use it to their benefit.

2.2 Components of food security

Food security has three aspects; food availability, food access and food adequacy (Pinstrup-Aderesen 2002),

2.2.1 Food availability

Food availability has to do with supply of food. Food should be sufficient in quantity and quality as well as a variety should be provided. Maziapita et al, (2004) regard food availability as the physical availability of food within the proximity of a household. Tweeten and McClelland (1997) view it as the supply of food present from production, imports or stocks. Food availability can also be debated to be the sufficient supply of food for all people at all times. Food can be available to a household or nation through individual production, procurement from markets and through food aid interventions. Food availability is a necessity, but is not sufficient to ensure food security for a household without access (Benson ,2004:8).

2.2.2 Food accessibility

Food access addresses the demand for food. It is influenced by economic factors, physical infrastructure and consumer preferences. Food availability, though elemental in ensuring food security, does not guarantee it. For households and individuals to be food secure, food at their disposal must be adequate not only in quantity but also in quality. Food accessibility also refers to the manner in which people acquire food. Food accessibility is the effective demand to acquire available food from earnings or as transfers from others. The problem may be caused by people's inability to access food even if they have the means to pay for it (Tweenten and McClelland 1997:226). Runge et al (2003) argues that people lack access to food due to wars, inadequate income and political advantage. Tweenten and McClelland (ibid) conclude that while food availability entails the supply of food at the national level and production and inventory at the farm level, food accessibility therefore means the effective demand and purchasing power of consumers.

2.2.3 Food adequacy

Food adequacy should ensure adequate, consistent and dependable supply of energy and nutrients through sources that are affordable and socio-culturally acceptable. Food security should translate to an active healthy life for every individual. This can only be achieved when a nutritionally adequate diet should be biologically utilized so that adequate performance is maintained in growth, resistance or recovery from disease or physical work.

Food security emphasises permanent access to sufficient food by all people at all times for an active, productive and healthy life. However, the following question remains: Why does the world experience food insecurity?

2.3 Causes of food insecurity

Debates concerning the causes of food insecurity in the SADC region remain polarized. Many scholars insist that "internal" policy weaknesses drive the food "crisis", while some recognize the external factors, especially since the recent global food "crisis" has been unveiled. The SADC countries food policies were initially based on strategies to attain national self-sufficiency. Since the adoption of the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in the 1990s, they became less interventionist. Bird et al (2002) points out that since the 2001-2003 food harvest failures, national policies became slightly more interventionist. Despite these policy changes, chronic food insecurity has persisted among at least 40% of the region's population and these being the extremely poor, both as a cause and effect of food insecurity.

There are various factors that can causes food insecurity in various parts of the world. These causes may be political, economic and socially motivated conditions. These may include natural disasters, population growth, land scarcity, lack of good governance. The discussion that follows will focus mainly on major causes of food insecurity in African countries. Africa's current food emergencies are the result of a combination of problems that range from drought, adverse weather patterns, civil conflict, to political–economic crises, HIV/AIDS and poor policy decisions. No single factor is uniquely responsible. That being said a key intervention in which we think about food insecurity came from Amartya Sen. His entitlement approach argues that famine is not due to shortage of food but due to failure of entitlements. He argues that a person

suffers from food insecurity when his entitlement set does not contain enough food to enable him to avoid starvation in the absence of non-entitlement transfers such as charity. Sen (1989) observes that famine is not so much the deficient food output as it is the absence of "entitlements" and the lack of "capability" for poor people without the means or political influence to exercise those entitlements. He points out those who die in famines succumb to disease, not to starvation. In analyzing the Great Bengal famine of 1943 and the more recent famines in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, Sen argues that Bengal military expenditures in urban areas and the consequent inflation in food prices were responsible for the famine. In conclusion Sen demonstrates that famine occurs not only from lack of food, but from inequalities built into mechanisms of distributing food. Amartya Sen has been credited with initiating the paradigm shift in the early 1980s that brought focus to the issue of access and entitlements to food. Food insecurity is no longer seen simply as a failure of agriculture to produce sufficient food at the national level, but instead as a failure of livelihoods to guarantee access to sufficient food at household level.

2.3.1 Natural disasters

Natural disasters such as droughts, floods, cyclones usually fuel food unavailability. When natural disasters occur, vulnerable groups tend to be hit hard Somalia, a country located in the horn of Africa, is defined by some scholars as a "fourth world country", a country so poor in natural resources that it has no hope of developing. Somalia has a desert topography whose main exports are grapefruit and camels. Somalia has always been hard hit by famines as self sustainability in food security initiatives has proved impossible.

Climate change has been noted to be one of the key driving factors of food insecurity in Southern Africa (UNEP 2000). UNEP (2000) highlights that 1980 to 1990 and 2000 have been cited as difficult years for Southern Africa's food security because of the frequency of droughts. These are the most catastrophic natural events to cause widespread famine in Africa. Apart from drought, floods are natural disasters that have contributed to the food insecurity in parts of Southern Africa. The UNEP (2000) gives an example of the 1997-8 flood that affected parts of East and Southern Africa, with being hard hit hard hit Mozambique. The major impact of the

floods was destruction of crops, drowning of animals and the siltation of reservoirs. These have had a negative impact on food production, availability and food accessibility. Lado (2001) suggests the need for putting in place an early warning unit system as a disaster monitoring device of dictating impending disasters that cause food insecurity. Relief programmes that provide handouts should target vulnerable groups. It is of course crucial in the analysis of natural disasters to take into account Amartya Sen's entitlement approach.

2.3.2 Land ownership

The land issue has always been a thorny issue in Africa. Unavailability of land has always been pointed to be the major cause of food insecurity. In various parts of the world women, especially rural women have limited land tenure rights to own and control as well as use land. (Women and land in Southern Africa). According to NEPAD News (2006) women own 2% of the land globally. The control of land has always been problematic to women whilst at the same time they are expected to be the primary users and managers of the resources (FAO 2002). NEPAD News (2006) bulletin observes that the rural economy of almost all countries on the African continent depend on women, but they are deprived of the right to own land. Women and Land in Southern Africa a non-governmental organisation that seeks to ensure that women are empowered by being given land and land rights highlights and advocates that the Land Act in Zimbabwe should be gender sensitive and take women on board in order to create a vibrant agricultural sector of the country. The organisation further highlights that women are not property but have a right to own land.

In Kenya women have no rights to acquire land and own land. No title deeds can be transferred to the wife once the husband is deceased (NEPAD News bulletin, 2006). Instead the land is given to the in-laws until her sons are fully grown ups. Women's access to land is often limited by unfavourable marital and inheritance laws, family and community norms. In Uganda women account for the largest share of agricultural production but own only 5% of the land, and they often have insecure land tenure rights on the land they use. In Malawi widows can lose their land from land grabbing by the husband's family. In countries where women have the rights to land, for example in Mozambique, it is rather difficult for them to acquire it. Land ownership is

fundamental to women who intend to use land as collateral to secure bank loans and access resources for food production.

At independence, Zimbabwe inherited a racially skewed agricultural land ownership pattern where white large-scale commercial farmers, consisting of less than 1% of the population occupied 45% of agricultural land. This comprised the high rainfall area of Zimbabwe, where the potential for agricultural production is high. Dating back to the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, white settlers set aside 51% of land for a few thousand of them and prohibited the indigenous people from owning and occupying land in white settler areas and the commercial white settler areas. The aim of the land reform in post-independence was to redress past land alienation through promoting equal access to land for the majority of the population. Addressing the land question is imperatively important to promote natural food security, self-sufficiency and agricultural development through labour intensive small farmer production, optimal land productivity, and reform to capital investment. However, the land reform program was implemented in a haphazard manner and the net effect was the collapse of agro-based industries as well as the aggravation of the food insecurity problem persisting in the country to date.

2.3.3 Political Unrest

Politics holds centre stage in current regional dramas in sub-Saharan Africa. Political unrest leads to food insecurity; this highly affects food availability and accessibility and affordability. Armed conflicts in Angola, Sudan, Ethiopia and Liberia can be cited as examples. War inevitably disrupts agricultural production as well as destroys infrastructure and marketing channels that are crucial for food supply and distribution. Thrupp and Megateli (1999) highlight that continuous conflict and famine have wrought devastation and have disrupted human ecologies, resource use and access arrangements for millions of people over large areas; the collapse of the states of Rwanda, Somalia and Liberia being examples. Due to war many people are internally displaced, and have no time to work in their fields and therefore have no food harvest at all. UNEP (2000) has it that war removes able bodied men from agricultural production and places an extra burden on women. It diverts resources, directly and indirectly, from more productive and socially beneficial uses. As observed by Devereux (1993), war has

been the most significant factor explaining persistent famine in Africa. In Eritrea and Angola for example parts of the country remain inaccessible due to landmines. War has created devastating effects on food production, and has also given birth to refugees who have no entitlements to food. The end up being dependent on food aid as there are categorized a vulnerable group.

2.3.4 Good Governance

Many scholars have recently argued that good governance is essential for attainment of food security. In Zimbabwe, failure of good governance both through the lack of accountability and an opposition of democratisation and in particular, the way in which the land reform programme was instrumentalized and implemented has resulted in a severe undermining of the previously robust agricultural economy. It is important to note that political unrest is mostly as a result of failure to uphold principles of good governance which also entail the upholding of the rule of law. Food security can best be achieved and attained in a peaceful, corruption free environment.

Chazan and Shaw (1987:49) highlight that the problems of food insecurity have been a result of ineffective government policies, and institutions. It is therefore important that these inefficiencies be tackled in order to improve food security. In a bid to attain "food sovereign" states there is need to ensure good governance as a way of state building. The World Bank (1992), defines governance as the means in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. The concept of governance is the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented. The term governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international, national and local governance. Government is one of the key players in governance. Some of the players that may also be involved are NGOs, research institutes, religious leaders, political parties and cooperatives just to mention a few.

Areas of good governance include: 1) public sector management, that is, government's effective management of its financial and personnel resources through appropriate budgeting, accounting and reporting systems and by rooting out inefficiency, particularly in the parastatal sector; 2) accountability, i.e holding public officials responsible for their actions. This involves effective

accounting and auditing, decentralization, micro-level accountability to consumers and the role of NGO's. The legal framework for development that is there must be a set of rules known in advance, these must be enforced, conflict must be resolved by an independent judiciary body and there must be mechanisms for amending rules when they no longer serve their purpose. Good governance is then defined as sound management of a country's economic and social resources for development. What the World Bank terms sound is the holding of democratic elections. This helps in ensuring a peaceful environment that is suitable for agricultural growth. Thus good governance should entail an efficient public service, an independent judiciary system and legal framework to enforce contracts, accountable administration of public funds, an independent public auditor, responsible to a representative legislature, respect for the law and human rights at all levels of government; a pluralistic institutional structure and a free press. Three strands of good governance are identified that is systematic governance is broader than government, involving the distribution of both internal and external political and economic power.

The context of starvation, hunger and poverty in various African countries is intricately related to governance issues which cut across areas of political, economic, corporate and institutional governance which need extensive improvement for example ensuring democratic political governance. That is political governance refers to a state enjoying both legitimacy and authority, derived from a democratic mandate and lastly administrative governance involves an efficient, open accountable and audited public service which has the bureaucratic competence to help design and implement appropriate policies and manage whatever public sector there is. When there is good political governance war, which Devereux (1993) cites as the most negative factor explaining persistence of famine in Africa, is reduced and more time will be spent on food security, productivity and provision of safety nets to vulnerable groups. In a majority of cases sustainable food security measures need to be protected from volatile political interests of leaders. Good governance is critical for economic development and ensuring food security, countries which uphold good governance principles tend to perform economically better.

2.3.5 Inequitable policies

Inequitable policies have greatly affected the food security situation of the district. The problem arises when the focuses of government policies are not participatory at all, that is policies, structures and institutions are put above those of minority groups. When policies are not inclusive in their design they tend to handicap the exempted lot by providing barriers. One way this can take place is uneven development where particular regions within a country are preferentially developed for political reasons at the expense of others; this has been the case in Zimbabwe and Matabeleland region being a victim of that circumstance. Hence failure by government to provide safety nets for these vulnerable inhabitants left them with no option but to rely on food aid from World Vision international to complement its efforts.

2.3.6 Population growth

In 1798 the English political economist Thomas Robert Malthus put the proposition that population growth increased more rapidly than food supply. He explained this phenomenon by pointing out that population generally preceded expansion of the population services, in particular the primary resources of food. Malthus put forward a theory of population growth in his book, "*Essay on Population.*" There he argued that "population increases in a geometric ratio, while the means of subsistence increases in an arithmetic ratio". His argument as already mentioned was that the population of the world would grow faster than the worlds food supply. Barney (1980:1) highlights the fact that 90% of the population growth will occur in the poorest countries where the pressure on the environment and socio-economic resources is already severe.

Various scholars such as Madeley (2000) dispute the notion that population growth is a cause of food insecurity. They argue that there is no connectivity between the prevalence of hunger in a given country and its population. Madeley (ibid) further argues that population growth alone is not the main cause of food insecurity; the increasing threat of population explosion, especially in third world countries, is a contributing factor and partially causes the unsustainable use of resources and food. Wiebe et al (2001) puts across that the world's 1999 population of 6 billion is projected to be 9 billion in 2054, that at the current pace 78 million people are added to the

world population every year and that 97.5% of the increases in our population occur in developing countries.

According to Thrupp and Magateli (1999) high population growth rates are rooted in poverty, inequalities and lack of economic and educational opportunities for the poor. This notion is fully supported by the European Commission (2000) which highlights that population growth outstrips economic growth. It is however, important to control population growth as a sustainable method of ensuring food security. UNEP (2000) further elaborates that if the population continues to increase in the next century at the same rate that it grew this century, the earth will not be able to sustain the great number of people in view of the limited resources available

2.3.7 Poverty

Poverty is wide spread and endemic. It is not the misfortune of a few individuals, but is a social phenomenon. As a multidimensional phenomenon, poverty is defined and measured in a multitude of ways. Poverty can be conceived as absolute or relative, as lack of income or failure to attain capabilities. It can be chronic or temporary, is sometimes closely associated with inequality, and is often correlated with vulnerability and social exclusion. The concepts used to define poverty determine the methods employed to measure it and the subsequent policy and programs to address it (Bosrup, 1989:119-151). There are different philosophies around the main causes of hunger and poverty. According to the Marxist view, poverty is a product of unjust social structures and is the result of a history of slavery, colonialism and exploitation by the rich. Poverty does not result from the lack of only one thing, but can be attributed to many interlocking factors.

At its simplest level poverty refers to a basic lack of the means of survival: the poor are those who lack, even in normal circumstance, the ability to feed and cloth themselves properly and risk death as a consequence (Macpherson and Silburn, 1998:1). Poverty is defined differently by various disciplines (Majola: 1999:23). Economists look at aspects such as living wage, income and poverty line. Sociologists focus on social barriers, social problems, coping mechanisms, human organisations, gender aspects and education issues. Urban development planners in turn

tend to focus on physical manifestations of poverty, overcrowding, lack of service, unhygienic conditions and population movement patterns; however, there are not exhaustive approaches to defining poverty. Explaining why the poor remain poor in developing countries, Valdes and Mistiaen (2001) state: "most basically it is because they have few assets (both human and physical, including social capital) and also in quality (for instance, low levels of schooling are usually combined with poor quality of schooling). The low productivity of assets is a result of a combination of many reasons like government failure and imperfect or incompetent markets".

2.3.7.1 Approaches to the concept of poverty

Three approaches to define poverty were formulated during poverty studies in Egypt by Korayeam (1996), Kyereme and Thobecke (1991), and Van Praag and Baye (1990) which are relative income approach, sociological approach and basic needs approach.

The relative income approach defines poverty in terms of income per capita. This approach chooses the relative income (particular income level i.e. US$1 per day) as a poverty line and assumes that it satisfies the basic needs of the individual (Van Praag and Baye, 1990). The weakness of this approach is clearly from an economist's perspective of defining poverty as discussed above.

The sociological approach defines poverty as conditions of people recognized by society as deprived, who need social assistance by society. This approach may intend to offer assistance to a category of people such as old aged, the homeless, women, those in informal settlements and others (Korayem 1996). The above researchers acknowledge that the weakness of this approach is that social assistance may be given to people who are not deprived such as those from developed worlds. This approach is clearly from a sociologist's perspective of defining poverty.

The basic needs approach defines "income poverty line" by estimation of minimum food requirements needed for the individual and household such as intake of calories and protein. The approach also estimates basic consumption expenditure on non-food items and food items (Kyereme and Thobeck, 1991). However, the researcher acknowledges that this approach, whereas is more comprehensive, has weaknesses and problems which include the fact that prices

depend on many factors such as income, location and social status. Estimation of individual calorie requirements has complexities depending on age, sex, as well as biophysical dynamics.
The American liberalism which builds on "the idea that scientific knowledge holds the key to solving social problems" including poverty ignores the reality that poverty knowledge is profoundly political (O' Connor 2001). Mainstream poverty knowledge relies on long chains of assumptions so that it is always open to questioning. The assumptions that would eventually be accepted depend on value judgements by different specialists. The World Bank plays a key role in generating poverty knowledge focusing on the development of sophisticated measurements of income poverty. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund approaches to poverty battle against the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) human development approaches to poverty. The former with financial muscle are pushing their agenda in Africa through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) while the later with less resources works through broad international strategies such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the policy mainstreaming approach towards the achievement of sustainable development.

Amartya Sen's "capability approach" to poverty defines poverty as the absence or inadequate realization of certain basic freedoms (positive and negative), such as the freedoms to avoid hunger, disease, illiteracy to mention a few. The capability approach to poverty provides a conceptual bridge between the discourses on poverty and human rights. It refers to the non-fulfilment of human rights, but without de-linking it from the lack of command over economic resources, which is a key element of the concept of poverty. The relevant concept is not low income but the broader concept of inadequate command over economic resources, of which adequate personal income is only one possible source. What is emerging from these approaches are the two notions of poverty namely: public poverty (health, housing and education) and private poverty (inadequate personal income).

From a developmentalist point of view Chambers (1983) argues that the poverty situation of a rural household has many side-effects what he calls "clusters of disadvantage". These clusters constantly interact with one another to what leads to the "deprivation trap" where concrete and abstract clusters of deprivation strengthen each other and tighten the trap. Poverty can also be

described as a vicious circle where cause and effect follow each other until there is no beginning and no end, but just a continuous cyclical movement that perpetuates itself over and over again. According to Chambers the clusters of deprivation are poverty, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness. The diagram figure 1 below shows how the five clusters of disadvantage interact. As observed from the diagram you will realise that each arrow points in two directions. For example: the arrow between powerlessness and poverty show that it is not just a matter of powerlessness leading to poverty, but that poverty can, in turn lead to powerlessness.

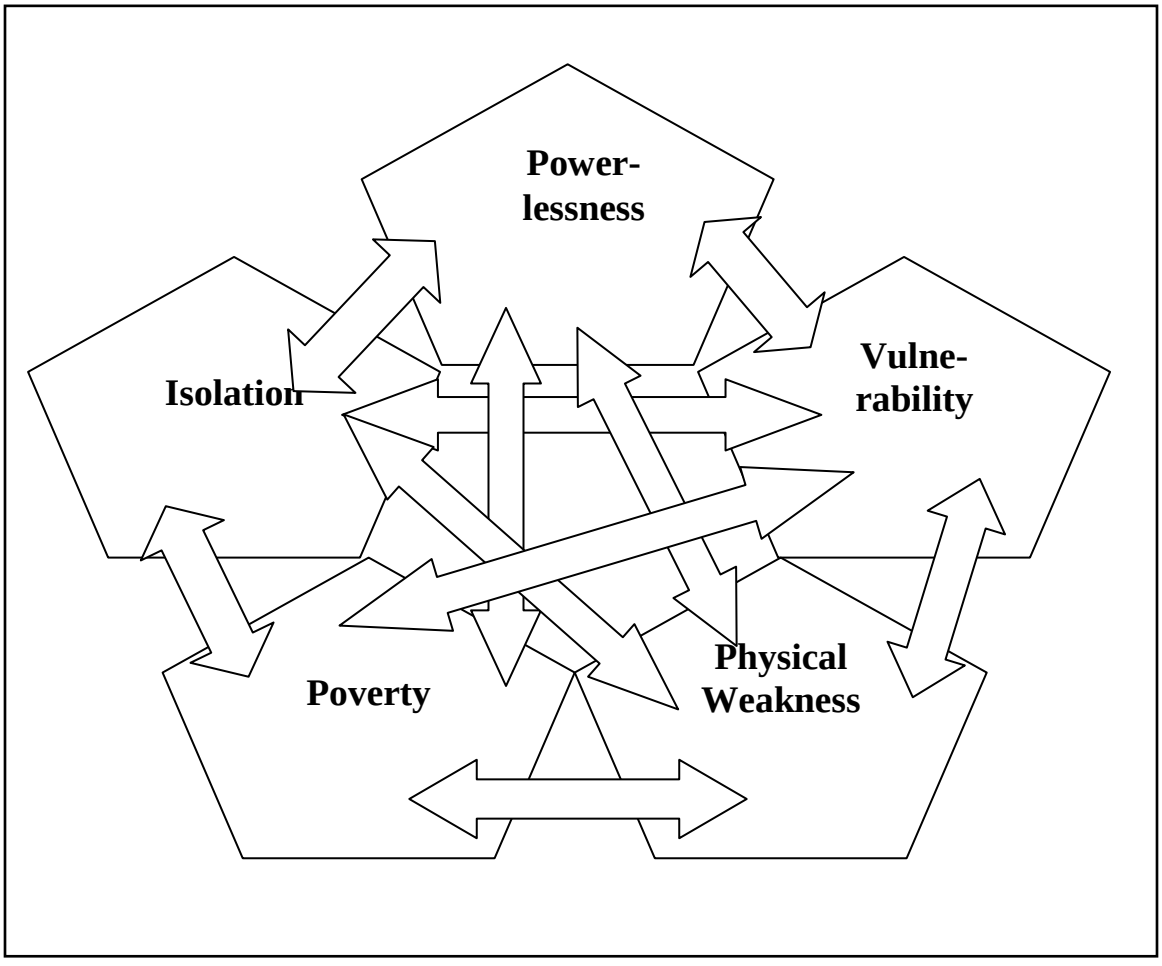


Figure 1: The deprivation trap, (Source ;Chambers 1983:112)

The World Bank (2004:1) views poverty as a multi-dimensional phenomenon where the poor suffer from various deprivations. The World Bank further identifies the following dimensions:

income poverty, health poverty, education poverty, personal and tenure insecurity and disempowerment. Wilson and Ramphele (1989) argue that geography determines the type of poverty endured by people. For instance the type of poverty experienced by people in good fertile lands with sufficient rainfall is different from that experienced by those in low fertile soils which receive sporadic rainfall. Wilson further elaborates on this matter by discussing the faces of poverty: which appear in forms of gender, age, race, urban or rural among other factors. Poverty is a complex issue because what maybe described as the causes of poverty may also be its effects. Many factors, whether local, national or international, influence poverty. These factors may include the local and international economy and policies, and also policies of international aid organisations and international associations. It is however important not to think of poverty solely as an economic phenomenon.

While some approaches recognise that poverty is a construct, that is construed in different ways by different actors and that these constructions are profoundly political, there seems to be continuity between analyses of poverty and the prejudices of social élites about the poor. Green and Hulme (2005) perceive poverty as the outcome of the behaviours of those who are affected by it. That is it has to be eliminated to maintain social functionality. The mainstream approaches to poverty lack research based analysis of the structures and relationships that give rise to the effects that are given to define poverty. The account of poverty remains a characteristic of individuals or households and the effects of poverty are sometimes represented as causes.

2.3.7.2 Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation maybe defined as a process that improves the conditions under which the poor live (Wilson and Ramphele: 1989). It should however, be noted that this is not the same as poverty eradication, which may imply a complete removal of poverty within a given community. Whereas poverty can be defined in a number of ways, those ways dictate the ways of intervention in approaching the problem of poverty (Africa Governance Forum, 2002). From an economic approach alleviation may look at options such as employment opportunities and programmes of job creation. However, a sociological approach may include social assistance to the marginalized groups, such as provisioning of social grants, food aid which may come in the

form of handouts and other social welfare activities. Under this approach, provisions such as free education, health care and subsidized housing also count. In Zimbabwe, poverty alleviation measures have been related to macro-economic strategies, the coming in of non-governmental organisations to complement government efforts, has also been ways of alleviating poverty through provisioning for the poor by giving them food handouts, and coming up with developmental projects such as income generating projects (IGPs), redistribution of land which however, many scholars argue as having yielded the opposite results and exacerbated poverty.

In South Africa poverty alleviation has also been related to macro-economic strategies. These include the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). The goals of the two projects aimed at improving the lives of the poor by providing decent housing, electricity and access to land. All these social amenities were measures towards poverty alleviation by assisting people with deprivations.

2.4 Non-Governmental Organisations and Food Aid.

The present level of poverty has led most developing countries to turn to non-governmental organizations for much needed sustenance, aid and development– political upheavals and natural disasters. The general poverty rate in most African countries awakened the need for an alternative solution to those problems as various governments had failed to come up with mitigatory interventions.

2.4.1 Definition of NGO

A NGO is a non-profit making, non-government, voluntary organisation entity comprising of a group of people who come together with a common vision and mission to respond to or perform a service or function in their community or society at large (Boulle et al 1993:1). Sarah J et al (1994) define the term NGOs as typically non-profit, non-official, organizations that are actively involved in the process of socio-economic development. She further states that these organizations can be local, national, or international in scope, and they rely on donations or grants for their operations.

Non-governmental organisations are non-profit making organisations (NPO) or not-for-profit organisation whose major thrust is to support an issue or matter of private interest or public concern for non-commercial purposes. NGO's funding is mainly dependent on private donors. They operate under various thematic areas which map their operational direction. One of the key arguments in NGO's discourses is that most NGO's have had to change their operations to comply with funding conditions. Morrow (2003:2), further argues that NGO's that have survived have done so by becoming, or extending their role as service providers, now in collaboration with government rather than in opposition to it. However, it can be argued that some NGOs may go beyond these moves and perhaps it is due to factors such as good NGO administrative skills, being in position to utilise funding from donors along stipulated work plan budget guidelines and also being in a position to acquit funds from donors within the stipulated time frame.

Another characteristic of NGO is that in most cases they depend on donations for resources required to perform their functions. The donations may come from the government of the country in which the NGO operates, or foreign governments, foundations and businesses. In my discussion the phrase non-governmental organisation means any group of people who have a common mission to meet a particular need in their society or community, are not controlled by government and are non-profit making in the process. Throughout the world groups of people identify needs in their communities which government institutions are either not designed to meet or which government institutions are unable to meet because of unavailability of resources, and government having other priorities. This is particularly the case in poor countries and Zimbabwe being no exception to this scenario.

2.4.2 NGO Concept

Worldwide there has been a boom in the number of social institutions operating within the market economy, but outside the state. These institutions are also known as NGO's or "non-profit," "voluntary," "civil society," and even the independent sector. The major thrust of these institutions is to address social issues which may encompass human rights organisations, environmental organisations, HIV and AIDS care and prevention organisations and food aid organisations (Salamon, et al 1991:3). While it has remained difficult to exactly know when

these social institutions came into existence, (Clark 1990) highlights that voluntary organisations in different forms existed well before the 20th century. Sarah et al (1994) argues that NGOs have a rich history that stems from the sixteenth century when missionary societies joined voyages of discovery and colonization. She further notes that NGO's have gained reputations for being in touch with local conditions in villages and rural areas and for having operational structures conducive to success at the local level. NGO's are important development project implementers who often act as intermediaries between donor and recipient agencies; this is so because they are flexible, humanitarian-oriented organizations. The term NGO however, as referred today is a new phenomenon. Wikipedia, (2006) traces the oldest NGO in the world to 1863 when the first international committee of the Red Cross was founded.

Korten (1990:118) argues that NGO programs have evolved in what he refers as the three generations; The first generation being that, typical development of NGO's focus on relief and welfare type of work which delivers services, such as food, health or shelter directly to beneficiaries. The second generation is focused towards small-scale, self-reliant local communities to meet their needs. The third generation being has those that he refers to as sustainable systems of development, on which NGO's try to advance changes in policies and institutions at local, national and international levels.

Whilst the number of NGO's continues to increase world wide in Kenya alone at least has some 240 NGO's that come into existence every year (Wikipedia 2006). Wikipedia (2006 ibid) states that there are 29, 000 international NGO's worldwide. The assumption may also be that the number is higher with reference that the United States of America which alone has 2million NGO's, most of which came into existence in the last 30years. Russia alone has 65, 000 NGOs and India alone has 2million NGOs. Ball and Dunn(1995:8) highlights the total number of people reached by NGO's through their services or either as beneficiaries in the developing countries across the world is roughly 250million and argues that this number has a potential to increase in future.

The World Bank (1990) defines NGO's as a group and institutions that are entirely or largely independent of government and have primary humanitarian or co-operative rather than commercial objective. They are private agencies in industrial countries that support international development, indigenous groups organized regionally or nationally; and member groups in villages. NGO's include charitable and religious associations that mobilize private funds for development, distribute food and family planning services and promote community organizations. They also include independent co-operatives, community associations, water-user societies, women's groups and pastoral associations. Citizen groups that raise awareness and influence policy are also referred to as NGO's.

In light of the numerous definitions and varied classifications of NGO's, it is also important to note that their sector is also diverse. Their operations fall under various thematic areas. Due to the above mentioned complexities in operations, and classification defining NGO's also becomes a tricky task.

2.5 FOOD AID



Figure 2: World Vision Food Aid Warehouse – Gwanda District 2008

Maxwell (1982:259) defines food aid as external help from foreign governments or originating from a donor country. This emergency aid is used to target beneficiaries particularly groups, that are affected by a humanitarian crisis and natural disaster, as emergency aid and protracted relief and recovery assistance. The problems of food insecurity have been a result of ineffective government policies, and institutions. These inefficiencies must be tackled in order to improve food security (Chazan and Shaw: 49). Aid for the purpose of this study is defined as assistance given to an individual, family, community or nation in need. This aid can come in the form of money or be in kind, such as food, clothing, medicine and equipment.

The Berlin conference on food aid for sustainable food security, issued in September 2003 at an international workshop , agreed on the definition of food aid as "all food–supported interventions aimed at improving the food security of the poor in the short and long term, whether funded via international, national or public and private resources".

2.5.1 Forms of food aid

Food aid comes in different forms. It may be given to beneficiaries as grain that requires milling, or it may be given in processed form such that it is ready for consumption at times it can be given as wet ration especially the schools feeding program administered to malnourished children. For example the past 40 years, the WFP has been providing free schools feeding programs, in 2005 alone this program had benefitted 21.7 million children in 74 countries (WFP 2007). Waves (2004) highlights that various countries receive food aid under different circumstances which at times may be unclear. He cites the example China that received wheat between 2000-2002 so as to finance development projects; however during the same period China was in position of donating food to North Korea and several other African countries in the form of wheat, rice, corn and oil. The circumstance in which food aid is given is determined by both the donor and the recipient government as outlined in their bilateral relations. Waves, (Ibid)further highlights that where necessary donors may shift from providing food aid for development purposes to administering emergency relief.

2.5.2 Categories of food aid

Shaw and Clay (1993:1-2) categorize food aid according to three types: project, programme and emergency food aid, each has its own set of donor legislation, procedures, and sources of financing and methods of operation. Sijm (1997:465,474) defines project food aid as food aid meant to support specific projects. It particularly includes food-for-work (FFW) projects and supplementary feeding\nutrition projects for young children and other vulnerable groups. Clay and Stokke (1991:3) define project food aid as the supplying of food as a precondition for sustainable development, nutrition projects for building capital.

2.5.2a Project Food Aid

Project food aid is mostly distributed directly to the participants involved, but occasionally it is monetized to finance some, or all, local project cost. Project food aid, as observed by Shaw and Clay (1993:2), is usually aimed at transferring income to the poor or at satisfying their minimum national needs in normal years. According to Young and Abbott (2005:1), this type of food aid is often disbursed through NGO's and is used to support school feeding programs or FFW schemes. This food aid is provided on a grant basis to specific beneficiaries and development projects. It helps to meet the additional demand for food generated by its support for development projects. This type of food aid has been used mainly in FFW programs and for aid for human resources development.

2.5.2b Programme Food Aid

Programme food aid can be described as food aid meant to support the balance of payments the government budget, the implementation of structural policy reform, of recipient countries (Sijm 1997:473). It is provided as a grant or on soft loan repayment terms exclusively on bilateral government–to–government basis. The US government provides this food aid as a donation or credit sale of US commodities to developing countries and emerging democracies to support democracy and the expansion of private enterprise. According to Young and Abbott (2005:1), programme food aid is usually provided to government who subsequently sell it on local markets in a process called "monetization". This view is supported by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) (2006:1). The latter adds that the donated commodities are sold in the

recipient country and the revenue generated is used to support economic development programmes. This category of food aid can contribute positively to food security and long term development. According to Sijm (1997:473-474) world-wide programme food aid was the most important category of total food aid with an average of 55% between 1980 and 1992.

2.5.2c Emergency food aid

Emergency food aid is usually defined as food aid provided in response to sudden, major shortfall in food production due to natural or man-made disasters such as drought, pests, disease, floods or wars. Young and Abbott (2005:1) define it as food used for humanitarian disasters or conflict. It is generally related to immediate actions and relief operations of assistance provided for refugees and displaced people. According to Sijm (1997:469), this type of food aid has become the most important category of total food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa.

In US terms, emergency food aid means the supply of agricultural commodities to meet emergency food needs. These maybe provided under government to government agreements or through public and private agencies or intergovernmental organizations such as the UN's WFP and other multilateral organizations (USDA 2006). According to Maunder (2006: vi), a remarkable global shift has taken place from programme and project food aid to emergency flows providing short-term relief. He points out that by 2004, about 75% of all food sent to sub-Saharan Africa was emergency food aid.

The above analysis clearly shows that an understanding of different forms and categories of food aid is critical for any recipient government or NGO as it requests food aid and develops its food security policies.

2.6 Food challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa

While the rest of the world has made significant progress towards poverty alleviation, Africa, in particular Sub-Saharan Africa continues to lag behind. Food insecurity remains the major challenge towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the United Nations Report (2006) between September 2002 and March 2003, more than 14million

people in Southern Africa needed food aid amounting to 1,051,000 metric tonnes in order to avoid starvation. Projections have shown that there will be an increase in this tendency unless preventative measures are undertaken. Food security has worsened on the continent since 1970 and the proportion of the malnourished population has remained within the 33 to 35% range in Sub-Saharan Africa Rosegrant et al (2005).

Food is the back bone of life. Its importance therefore cannot be underplayed. Access to food stands as a fundamental right as enshrined in the bill of rights. In September 2000, 189 world leaders attended the United Nations millennium summit and made commitments on pressing development needs. One of the key objectives of the MDGs is the eradication of poverty, hunger and halving the population living in hunger by the year 2015. While it has been agreed that food aid plays a significant role in alleviating poverty, food shortages and emergencies, the importance of food aid can only be undermined when its allocation is based on political linkages. Webb argues that food aid is in a position to save countless lives during emergencies and can enhance the ability of the poor to build sustainable livelihoods. Carment (2003:1-2) rightly puts it that food aid has a positive impact on reducing the number of people who are suffering hunger. The United Nations charter on the international convention of economic, social and cultural rights (Article 11) stipulates that all member parties adhering to the convention have a mandate to recognizing the right to adequate food through developing or reforming agrarian systems in a way which ensures achievement of the equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to needs. Member states further committed themselves that food should not be used as an instrument for political advantage. Zimbabwe was no exception to this declaration. Clay et al (1998:1) defines food aid as an intervention program that includes only those intended to benefit from an intervention.

2.7 Politics of food aid

Cheryl Christian (2000) points out that the modern era of food aid was instituted in the United States in 1954, with the passage of the US Public law (PL) 480. Since that particular time food aid has been an important feature of US assistance to developing countries, though its role has changed overtime. In the 1950's food aid accounted for nearly a third of US agricultural exports,

whereas in the mid 1990's it was closer to 6%. Food aid under the PL480 is given under different categories of assistance. Title 1 is government to government and is in the form of concessional sales of assistance. Title 2 is granted food aid distributed in emergencies, and such can be distributed via NGO's and the WFP. Title 3 is government to government grant of food aid for development (USAID: 1995). The US government has even gone further to amend PL 480 in the 1960's to explicitly tie the donation of food aid to political goals and agendas, in particular giving favour to non-communist countries (Mitchell Wallerstein, 1980).

2.8 NGOs and the Food Aid Concept

The NGO food concept falls under the international donor community, led by the World Food Programme of the United Nations, which has teamed up with international, national and local NGO's to distribute relief aid to the vulnerable. NGO interventions in developing are necessitated by a call from respective governments for external assistance to compliment its efforts in addressing the food problems facing the country. The NGO concept has been used to mean any grouping of people, who have a common mission to meet a particular need in their society or community, and are not formed or controlled by government.

Throughout the world, groups of people identify needs in their communities which government institutions are either not designed to meet or which government institutions are unable to meet because of the unavailability of resources, and government's having other priorities. This is particularly the case in poor countries (Clark, 1991: 40). It does, however, happen that some citizens are compelled to organize themselves to meet certain needs because government is not willing to address these needs, even where resources may be available. It could also be the initiative of people out of that community who come up with the initiative of forming an organization which are referred to as local NGOs. NGO's are undertaking a variety of development activities to alleviate poverty and are using various approaches and implementing a number of strategies and one of them being the food aid concept.

2.9 The Socio-economic context of food security and food aid in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe has not been spared from high levels of poverty and HIV and AIDS prevalence. These have posed great challenges to the development of the country. Culturally embedded in patriarchy, gender inequality underlines the continuation of gender stereotypes, which impact negatively on women in all spheres of life, particularly higher and tertiary education, the labour market and the political sphere. The declaration of sanctions by the West on Zimbabwe manoeuvred a further complex economic terrain for the ordinary Zimbabwean to survive. The context of starvation, hunger and poverty in Zimbabwe is intricately related to governance issues which cut across areas of political, economic and corporate and institutional governance which need extensive improvement for example ensuring democratic political governance.

Zimbabwe is predominantly a agriculturally based economy; it has negatively been affected by climate changes, which have resulted in droughts. This has resulted in the country being susceptible to high food insecurity of humanitarian proportions since 2000 to date. The historical structural rigidities in the economy have persisted and the economy has not optimally diversified to become a dynamic economy. This economic context has generated and sustained high levels of poverty in the country. The recent experience of economic recession in the agricultural sector in the country is sobering; the net effect of the ill-advised agrarian reform is that the has experienced stagnant and declining export earnings and this has all culminated in a severe balance of payments problem and declining economic growth.

The declining economy of Zimbabwe has worsened the situation of Gwanda District where poverty has become chronic and cancerous. The province of Matabeleland has been experiencing a complex interplay of structural chronic poverty combined with transient poverty. It's multifaceted social phenomenon that includes lack of access to productive assets, adequate food, health, education and other basic social amenities, all of which have characterised the prevailing atmosphere in the district.

The social challenges characterized by high levels of poverty, malnutrition food insecurity and HIV and AIDS pose a challenge towards attainment of a "food sovereign" district. With the erratic rainfall that the district receives, a humanitarian crisis that demands immediate action

became clearly evident and hence there was need for World Vision International to provide for the district.

2.9.1 History: War and underdevelopment of Matabeleland.

Zimbabwe attained political independence from Britain in 1980 through a war of liberation. Both the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) took part in the liberation war. Both forces were aligned to ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU parties respectively. ZANLA was highly dominated by the Shona people while ZAPU largely comprised of the Ndebele people from the Southern part (Matabeleland). ZANU was under the leadership of the likes of Robert Mugabe and ZAPU was under the command of General Joshua Nkomo.

Upon attainment of independence misunderstandings broke up between the two major political parties. These were necessitated by power struggles between the ZANLA and ZIPRA forces. These combatants were aligned to the respective two political parties. The division compromised ZANU-PFs position of power. ZANU then responded by sending the 5th brigade (North Korean trained militias) of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces(ZDF) to quell the uprising on which ZIPRA forces were viewed as the aggressors.

In 1983 a spate of attacks on the Matabeleland people began. The operation was code named *Gukurahundi* (Matabeleland massacres). The notorious 5th brigade was respectively deployed to Matabeleland and the Midlands, where it leashed unprecedented levels of violence against civilians and ZAPU officials who were accused of supporting dissidents. Alexander et al (2001) puts it that people of the Matabeleland region protested that the unity accord had brought them nothing and the fact that there had been no major development driven into the region. The people of Matabeleland had high expectations after the signing of the Unity accord in 1987; they expected to catch up in terms of development with other provinces but nothing materialised. What they only appreciated from the unity was peace; however, it did not deliver development (Alexander et al 2001).

The people of Matabeleland generally viewed the Unity accord as a marriage of unequal's and that ZAPU had been absorbed in the process; to them they only became ZANU for their own safety (Alexander et al 2001). After the death of Joshua Nkomo in July 1999 ZANU-PFs strength in the region suffered a major blow the regions support to ZANU-PF was popularly seen as loyal to former ZAPU leaders incorporated to ZANU-PF (Alexander et al 2001). After the death of Joshua Nkomo, ZANU-PF found itself a widower as the Unity accord was commonly described as a marriage in the region. A new political party the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was formed in 1999 soon after the death of Joshua Nkomo. The parliamentary elections held in 2000.In Matabeleland as a whole, ZANU-PF won only two of the 25 parliamentary seats. Mugabe responded to these defeats by labelling them tribal (Alexander et al 2001).

It became clear testimony that government had failed to deliver in the region the Matabeleland Zambezi water project and other development plans had failed to materialise and had remained on the drawing board for ages (Alexander et al 2001). The Matabeleland genocide was made against the ZIPRA forces, its leadership and the general defenceless people of Matabeleland who were accused of planning a coup on the ruling party further angered the Ndebeles (Blair 2002:29). The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) indicates that an estimated 20 000 Ndebele speaking people were massacred. Up to this very moment President Mugabe has not apologised for the victims of the 5th Brigade (Alexander et al 2000). It is against this background that the people of Matabeleland have always given a protest vote on Mugabe's ZANU-PF led government. It is also against this backdrop that the province of Matabeleland South lag behind developmentally as this is largely viewed as tribal. The general feeling of the inhabitants of Matabeleland is that they are not enjoying a far share on the nations cake.

2.9.2 Political Context

Sobhan (1990) has it that in times of food scarcity, food should be distributed fairly on grounds of needs assessment; however he notes that political forces still operate on households entitlement to food. This has been one of the major causes of concern in Zimbabwe, with the ruling party ZANU-PF accusing the main opposition party the Movement of Democratic Change (MDC) of using food aid to win elections and vice versa.

The recent ban on NGO's food aid programs in Zimbabwe comes as clear evidence that the state has chosen to involve itself in the distribution of food. This reflects the role of political decision making. Shapouri et al (2001:2) argue that in cases where the distribution of food is either imported or donated, the politics of global food distribution comes to play. However, some schools of thought point out that the removal of political objectives associated with the allocation of food aid could reduce the support of interest groups and can lead to negative consequences on food aid budgets.

Mano et al; (2003:6) has it that in Zimbabwe reports indicate that food aid assistance from the donors may have been constrained by the cause that the ruling party ZANU-PF governments political agenda could interfere with food and distribution. Sobhan (1990:84) highlights that governments which are mainly concerned with regime survival give preference to their interests rather than citizen needs. Regimes which seek votes from the rural population are therefore likely to abuse food distribution registers because doing so would serve their interests in recovering votes. Jayne et al (2002:5) argues that income should be the best indicator for targeting needy households and food aid targeting to the poorest groups of the society should remain the major objective of food aid.

Studies in Zimbabwe on the role and impact of food aid have to a larger extent been conducted by the implementers or donors of the food aid program. It has however been pointed out that there is still insufficient evidence of empirical research on food aid targeting its impact on beneficiaries (Molla, et al 1998:1). The research therefore aims to depart from sensationalized allegations pertaining to role of food aid and its impact to beneficiaries and move towards scientific empirical testing. It is against this background that the findings of this study will contribute to the policies dealing with the allocation and food security initiatives, with the aim of not only protecting the right to food, but also improving the food security of the most vulnerable groups for the purposes of development.

2.9.3 Community Leadership

The study also focuses on analysing the role of traditional leaders and councillors, for the understanding of the study it is of paramount importance to define the role of traditional leaders and councillors respectively as they reside in a rural community. In Zimbabwe traditional leaders execute their authority through the provisions of the Traditional Leaders Act. A traditional leader is defined as a legitimate ruler of the people by virtue of their claim of ownership of a particular area of land. The legitimacy of traditional leaders is based on a shared value system as is also derived from kinship and decent. In reference to Zimbabwe traditional leaders are Chiefs, Headman and kraal heads these are also known in vernacular as *Induna, Umlisa and Sobhuku*. Their authority and seniority vary according to their titles. A village head has jurisdiction over one village (on average a village has 40 households) whilst a Headman has jurisdiction over four wards or more and that can be approximated to roughly 32 villages. A chief is then the overall custodian of the people who are referred to as his "subjects". He assumes the role of being a fatherly figure over wards and villages and at times even the entire district. According to the traditional leaders Act a traditional leader is expected to work towards maintaining the moral values of the society and guard against cultural decadency. Traditional leaders are normally looked upon as moral leaders, and hence draw a lot of respect from their people who are referred to as "subjects". Traditional leaders are not expected to discriminate or become partisan to a particular group of people.

The authority and legitimacy of traditional leaders was however, altered after independence with the introduction of a new local government structure. Elected Village Development Committees (VIDCO's) and Ward Development Committees (WADCO's) came into being. The VIDCO is headed and presided over by a village head whilst the WADCO is under a councillor. Mamimine and Mandiveregei argue that the structures were more political in nature than administrative. *Human Rights Watch* (2005) has it that the interaction of the government institutions (local government) has led to a compromise in the legitimacy of leaders which has resulted in them becoming political party agents. It is against this background that after independence in 1980 the ruling ZANU-PF party through the usage of its state machinery introduced monthly allowances to benefit traditional leaders in the country. Just after the disputed 2000 elections parliamentary

elections chiefs were allocated lucrative vehicle schemes and, benefited from the fast track rural housing and electrification programme spearheaded by the Ministry of Rural and Social Amenities. It became clearly evident that the ruling party wanted to ensure that traditional leaders remain loyal to the ruling party. With the lucrative schemes before the traditional leaders a majority of them have vowed not to allow any form of ruling party opposition in their areas of jurisdiction.

A councillor is a local government official responsible for co-ordinating governance issues at ward level. A councillor is bound by the Rural and Urban Councils Act depending on the constituency that they represent. A councillor is voted into power on a political ticket and his position is not necessarily based on one's proven capability of executing government task but on political muscle. Traditional leaders and councillors play an important role in NGO programmes. They are instrumental in the dissemination of information concerning food and programmes, such as the dates of registration into programmes and those of food aid deliveries. As observed in the research findings in Gwanda District, traditional leaders play an influential role in the selection of beneficiaries at village levels. The involvement of the traditional leaders and councillors in the identification of beneficiary households can therefore be argued as involving political connotations.

2.9.4 Land Reform and its Impact

Land possession has been a major area of dispute for whites and blacks in Zimbabwe for decades. The white Rhodesians seized control of the majority of fertile land within the country and forced blacks to use the poor and unproductive land. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930, which set aside 51% of land for a few thousand white settlers, prohibited the indigenous people from owning and occupying lands in white settler's areas and the commercial white settler's areas. The indigenous reserves became re-christened as Tribal Trust Lands following the gazetting of the Act in 1965, whose title was later changed to communal areas in terms of the Communal Lands Act of 1981. This situation therefore witnessed the creation of three separate categories of land classification in Zimbabwe namely the communal areas, small commercial and large scale commercial areas.

At independence, Zimbabwe was confronted with the problem of equitable distribution of land among racial groups, of productive resources. Approximately 6000 white farmers controlled over 15.4 million hectares of the best and most productive land of region 1, 2 and 3. They moreover benefited from extension, credit, marketing and infrastructural facilities. The communal areas cover 16.3 million hectares of mostly inferior land (natural region 3, 4, 5) and these suffer from unfavourable climatic conditions, environmental degradation, low and very variable rainfall, poor social and physical infrastructure and limited off farm employment opportunities.

The land reform program that the government of Zimbabwe embarked upon in the year 2000 saw multilateral relations with the West deteriorating and saw a complex of external, internal and environmental factors interacting against Zimbabwe (Mackenzie, 1992:42). The land reform undertaken by the government as observed by many scholars is highly to blame for the decline in agricultural productivity which led to the collapse of agro-based industries. The Zimbabwean government undertook a land reform program which (partially) aimed at equitable distribution of land from the minority large scale farmers to small farmers and poor landless peasants in the country.

Over the past 10 years, there has been increasing political and social tension in Zimbabwe over land-distribution and compensation. In July 2000, President Mugabe stated that he would adopt a "fast-track" land reform process in Zimbabwe where a national land identification committee, would identify tracks of land for redistribution. This fast-tracks model consisted of two approaches: model A1, to benefit 160,000 of the poor from the general landless population; and model A2 aimed at creating 51, 000 black commercial farms. This process, however, has been noted as an inefficient and inconsistent method of allocating land. There were also increasing concerns that these methods were not monitored by the judicial system.

The aim of land reform in post-independence Zimbabwe was to redress past land alienation through promoting equal access to land for the majority of the population, promoting economic growth and promoting food security, self-sufficiency and agricultural development through

labour intensive small farmer production, optimal land productivity, and return to capital investment.

However, the program was rolled out and implemented along partisan lines and in a haphazard manner. This triggered the collapse of the country's commercial agricultural sector as well its agro-based industries. This negatively impacted on the food security situation in the country and the net effect was the severe shortage of basic commodities, worsened poverty and starvation to the ordinary Zimbabwean.

Bird et al (2003:24) argue that the agrarian reform in Zimbabwe was a ploy by the ruling party as a means of clinging on to power as well as a tool for garnering political support instead of addressing the genuine land question that characterises the land historic imbalances of the poor people. It became clearly evident that land in Zimbabwe failed to articulate a comprehensive land reform programme in which the main agricultural sub-sectors are linked and local communities genuinely participate in the restructuring process.

2.9.5 The Impact of HIV/AIDS on individual, household, community and the economy.

Disease and infection continue to plague the African continent. HIV/AIDS not only reduces the man-hours available to agriculture and household acquisition, but also increases the burden of households in acquiring food. The rapid spread of the epidemic is both a reflection of poverty, which does not cause it but certainly aggravates it and it in turn drives a ruthless cycle of impoverishment, resulting in a rapid increase in the number of poor and destitute families, reversing decades of development. The current food crisis is inextricably linked to widespread HIV that has deepened the crisis (Clover, 2003). In Sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS is the leading cause of adult mortality and morbidity. The region remains the epicentre of HIV and AIDS with prevalence still recorded in the double digit in Zimbabwe and other SADC countries (UNPFA: 2005). Rosegrants et al (2005) has it that the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations(FAO), estimates that by 2020 the epidemic will claim the lives of 20% or more of the population working in the agricultural sector in many of the Southern African countries. More than two thirds of the population of the 25 most affected countries resides in rural areas, affecting agricultural production as well as farm and domestic labour supplies.

According to the figures released by the World Health Organisation on 1 August 1990, 25% of all reported cases of HIV/AIDS are in African countries. However, the WHO is of the opinion that only 10% of all cases in Africa are actually reported (Whiteside 1990). Demographers predict that if the above figure is correct, the rise in mortality rates will result in slowing down population growth and possibly even a decline in population figures for the next two decades. One of the outstanding characteristics of HIV/AIDS is that it hits people in their productive years and can therefore seriously damage the economy (UNDP 1990:40). Whiteside (1990) goes on to explain the possible implications for agriculture and that research conducted on peasant agriculture in Rwanda and Uganda had findings that suggest that there would be a shift in cropping patterns. This will involve a move to less labour intensive crops, and in particular cash crops. Labour losses will lead to a fall in production and a loss of control over ecological systems.

Agriculture is the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy. It is mandated to provide food security for all Zimbabweans. The negative impact of HIV/AIDS on the sector is of great concern. Jackson (2000) cited in the Zimbabwe Human Development Report (2003) puts it that HIV and AIDS possess serious threats not only to nutrition, but to food security in general. When a family member has Aids, the average household income falls by a range of 52% to 67% and health costs quadruple. A study that was commissioned by the FAO in March 2003 revealed that of the 193 farmers interviewed, 70% indicated that HIV and AIDS had severely reduced their farming activities, whilst 50% claiming that both crop and livestock production had been severely affected by the impact of the disease (Zimbabwe Human Development Report, 2003).
According to FAO (2002) cited in the Zimbabwe Human Development Report argues that HIV and AIDS-affected households generally experience a decline in agricultural production as compared to non-affected households. At the core of the HIV and AIDS impact is the loss of potential able bodied adult labour, loss of skill, time diverted from agricultural activities to care giving and attending funerals and decreased financial capital to hire casual labour when needed. The Food and Agricultural Organisation, further elaborates that there is a tendency of HIV and AIDS affected households to change their cropping pattern, preferring crops that are less labour

intensive, have shorter lengths of time for returns and require less capital inputs. Lack of resources also makes it more difficult for HIV-affected households to supplement their diet through the purchase of more nutritious and varied foods.

Zimbabwe has not been exempted from the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS, but notably remains one of the leading countries in terms of prevalence globally (National Aids Council Zimbabwe 2007). The World Health Organization (WHO: 2004) illustrates the point that HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe affects approximately 27% of the adult population. UNAIDS estimates for Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe indicate, that HIV/AIDS has reduced life expectancy for men and women by up to 20 years. With reference to Zimbabwe HIV and AIDS is also straining the capacities of the health-care delivery system that is in the verge of collapse. A decrease in crop production in the country has also been associated to the HIV/AIDS impact, such as reduction of labour due to deaths (Future Group International). It therefore goes with explanation that HIV/AIDS continues to short change the agricultural sector in terms of productivity.

The high levels of HIV prevalence rates in Zimbabwe have been fuelled by poverty. Gwanda District has not been spared from the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS. The epidemic in the district which is characterized by poverty has disproportionately affected the inhabitants of the district while children have also not been spared by the disease and hunger. The District Medical Register indicates 86% of deaths are HIV/AIDS related and the most affected groups are being the 18-45(Demographic Health Survey). Due to the poor food security situation of the district this has increased the progression to AIDS and deaths due to malnutrition and other opportunistic infections. The net effect of the pandemic in the district has forced the World Vision International to intervene and administer food aid to the community.

2.9.6 Livelihoods

In the study, livelihoods are understood to be the means to gain a living including livelihood capabilities, tangible assets and intangible assets (Chambers, 1995). Employment can provide a livelihood but most livelihoods of the poor are based on multiple activities, source of food,

income and security. This implies that a household depends on multiple sources of livelihoods thus livelihoods activities are not only activities that bring money and food, they are all other activities that the household undertake to survive and reproduce it self (Beall and Kanji, 1991, de Satge, 2002). A family engages in many livelihood strategies such as brick moulding, engaging in informal cross-border trade and other informal trades in order to improve incomes reduce vulnerability and improve the quality of their lives (Chambers, 1995). Empirical evidence shows that households employ complex and varied activities that not only enhance household income but also food security, health, social networks and savings (Chambers 1995). The concept "livelihoods" has moved analysis away from parameters such as production, employment and income to a more holistic view which embraces social and economic dimensions reduce vulnerability and environmental sustainability (Shackleton et al 2000, de Satge, 2002). Chambers (1995) argues that households' livelihood strategies often involve different members in diverse activities and sources of support at different times of the year. De Satge (2002) has it that household security is often influenced by the ability of the household to diversify its livelihood sources. By so doing there will be attempting to reduce their vulnerability by having more than one livelihood activity. This means using a variety of strategies so that the household does not depend on only few sources of livelihood (de Satge, 2002). He also argues that households may depend on a combination of cash remittances from family member who have a formal job.

Remittances, or migrants sending money home, are an important part of many people's lives around the world. Globally remittances are worth hundreds of billion of dollars. This means that they are substantially larger than flows of foreign direct investment and aid (Mohapatra et al 2006). Remittances go directly into family incomes, thus have an immediate and direct impact on the livelihoods of recovering households. In countries affected by long term crises, migration is often a key coping or survival strategy leading to large diasporas which play an important role in sustaining the livelihoods of those who remain.

2.10 Gwanda District – Background and General Features

2.10.1 Demographic data

Gwanda District lies in Matabeleland south province. The district is bordered by Umzingwane district in the north and Insiza in the east, Beitbridge in the south, Kezi, Matopo district in the west and the Republic of Botswana in the southwest. The district is in region 4 and 5 where rainfall patterns are erratic. The district's economic backbone revolves around livestock rearing, small and large gold mining and subsistence farming. The district consists of 24 wards with a population that stands at 141 826 (Central Statistics Office; 2002). The district is faced with multiple socio-economic and developmental problems, one of them being the ever-escalating rise in people who need food aid.

2.10.2 Overview of the climatic conditions

Climatic conditions in the country are mainly subtropical with one rainy season between November and March and this is the season when agricultural activities are at peak. The country has five natural regions with varying degrees of annual rainfall and production potential. Gwanda District lies in natural regions four and five comprising of the following climatic conditions. The map below reflects the location of Gwanda District as well as the agro-ecological zones of Zimbabwe.

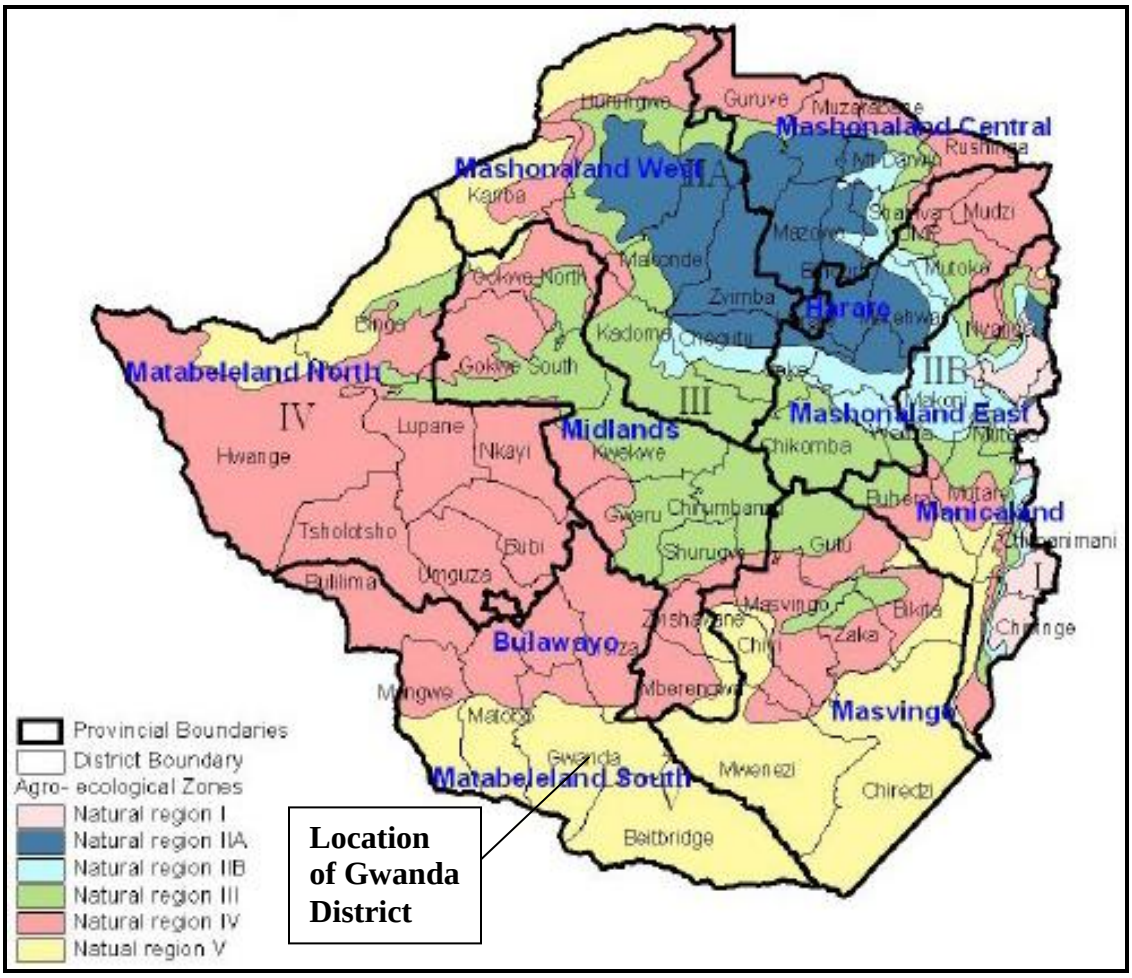


Figure 3: Location of Gwanda District, and Agro-ecological zones of Zimbabwe.
Source: http://www.mediamaps.com

2.10.2a Region Four (IV) and Five (V): Intensive to Semi-extensive farming

The region receives too low and erratic rainfall to sustain even the most drought resistant crop. Annual rainfall is between 450 and 650mm, covering about 147 800 square kilometres (38% of the total area), this area forms the largest part of the geographical regions in the country yet it has next to the least favourable climatic conditions for agricultural purposes. The specialization of this region is mainly extensive livestock breeding and production of drought resistant crops such the grains millet and rapoko.

The main agricultural activities in this area include extensive cattle and game ranching and covers 104 400 square kilometres which constitutes 27% of the total land area. The natural regions one and two which are mainly for communal farmland have been unproductive for almost a decade ever since the illegal farm invasion by the government sponsored war veterans. The bulk of the land lies in the low potential natural region four and five. Zimbabwe remains one of the worst affected countries in the region in terms of food availability. The climatic phenomenon of the region has exacerbated food insecurity and hunger in the district. This becomes clear testimony that the district of Gwanda has unfavourable climatic conditions which impacted negatively on food productivity of the entire district leaving the community inhabitants with no option but to depend on food handouts from World Vision International.

2.10.3 Ecological characteristics of the District



Figure 4: A field in a semi-arid area of Gwanda, Zimbabwe

A visual appreciation of the agro-ecological characteristics impacting on the agricultural productivity of Gwanda District is presented in figure 4 above.

2.10.4 Agricultural sector

The major challenge of food security in Gwanda District is the underdeveloped nature of its agricultural sector that is characterized by the over-reliance on primary agriculture, low fertility soils, minimal use of external farm inputs, environmental degradation, and significant crop loss both pre-and post- harvest. Almost 95% of the food in Matabeleland is grown under rain fed agriculture and hence food production is vulnerable to adverse weather conditions. The district has an overall decline in farm input including fertilizers, seeds, and technology adoption. Further to compound the problem of underdeveloped agricultural sector in Matabeleland has been the poor government policies that have always had an element of marginalising the provinces of Matabeleland.

2.10.4.1 Irrigation schemes

Another problem that has exacerbated food shortages in the district is lack of irrigation schemes to boost agricultural production. This has ultimately left small peasant farms in the communal lands vulnerable to unfavourable rainfall conditions. Though the government of Zimbabwe has tried to commission several irrigation schemes in the district its efforts have been brought to a stand still due to lack of foreign currency to service machinery and water unavailability.

The rural population of Gwanda District has not been spared from food shortages that the country is experiencing; however the problems of food shortages have worsened in natural regions four and five where the district under study lies. Household poverty is at its extremes as a result of the low agricultural potential of the land in the district (Central Statistics Office, 1998:52). Due to the above mentioned problems food aid intervention from humanitarian agencies such as World Vision International are therefore concentrated and prioritised on this area.

With the above mentioned background, it becomes clear that there are various factors contributing to the looming food shortages in Zimbabwe and Gwanda District respectively; and this renders food aid intervention inevitable. It is also of importance to articulate the political climate that characterise Zimbabwe during the period understudy and how food has been labelled by the two conflicting political parties, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the ruling party ZANU-PF.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology applied in the research study. The focus of the study is to investigate the impact and role of food aid on the impoverished households of Gwanda District. The research method discusses the research design, the population under study and the sampling procedures. The research instruments to be used, the data collection plan and the analysis plan will also be highlighted. The research methodology is described in terms of the sections discussed below.

3.1 Research method

To better understand food aid in Gwanda District, an empirical study is going to be carried out. The research is aimed at exploring the impact and role that food aid has played on the livelihoods of the impoverished and vulnerable households of people in Gwanda District. This is going to be a case study that shall adopt a qualitative research design. Qualitative research emphasizes the use of words rather than numbers as compared to the quantitative research style. In qualitative research, Merriam (1998) states, a researcher is interested in understanding how participants

make meaning of a situation or phenomenon. This meaning is mediated through the researcher as an instrument. The strategy is induced and the outcome is descriptive. The study already mentioned will use the descriptive survey to collect and analyze data. A descriptive survey design is a method of research that attempts to describe what the researcher sees. In the descriptive survey approach the researcher is expected to draw conclusions from his/her observation. According to Mouton (1996:169) "In a qualitative research, the investigator usually works with a wealth of rich descriptive data, collected through methods such as participant observation, interviewing and document analysis''. A qualitative approach to research brings about a clear understanding of reality and, it "brings home the experience to those who have not experienced it" (Walker, 1985).

The descriptive survey approach involves selecting a small group or a sample from a population under study for data collection purposes. During the selection, an effort is made to make sure that the selected group represents the characteristics of the whole population. Babbie (1991) cited in Chikoko and Mhloyi (1995:63) states that "representativeness therefore is that quality of sample of having the sample of the same distribution of characteristics of the population from which it is selected". The descriptive design may help the researcher gather relevant information on what role food aid has played on the impoverished livelihoods and vulnerable households of Gwanda District.

3.2 Study area

The area under study is World Vision International's food aid intervention strategy in Gwanda District, Zimbabwe as show on the map in figure 3.2 below. The researcher chose this area because of its food crisis history and the long-term relationship that has been established between various humanitarian organizations and Gwanda District. The uniformity of population distribution and climatic and ecological conditions would make it easy for the researcher to find a representative sample hence enhancing the reliability of results even in cases of extrapolation. This area has been selected because World Vision International has the widest coverage of food distribution in terms of wards, as well as the fact that they distribute the largest volume of food handouts in this District.

3.3 Overall approach

The main aim of the study is to explore the importance food aid in household livelihoods in a wider context of social and, economic deterioration and political conflict. Furthermore the study seeks to situate and evaluate food aid as a livelihood strategy of the people of Gwanda District. These questions are therefore concerned with understanding the experiences of households in relation to food aid intervention, thus necessitating a qualitative approach

3.4 Research techniques and data collection methods

The researcher will carry out the following:

- Focal Discussion Group with community leadership
- In-depth Interviews with World Vision Management
- Will systematically randomly sample a population of 20 households and interview these.

The researcher has designed three sets of questions for each category of people interviewed or those of which discussions were conducted with them. By the end of each discussion/interview, all the questions should be answered and then the researcher will seek to present as much of the data/information gathered as an aid to the visual appreciation of what the results on the entire community are like. I am going to specifically design and use in-depth-interviews and focus group discussions as my sole data collection instruments.

3.4.1 In-depth Interviews

An interview is a face to face interaction. It is a technique of gathering data. The respondents respond to questions verbally in the presence of the researcher. Chikoko and Mhloyi (1995:80) define an interview as a “face to face questionnaire”. An interview is the most suitable technique of gathering data when dealing with illiterate people who are going to constitute three quarters of my respondents. The interview gives the researcher the opportunity to rephrase some of the

questions that may sound vague to the respondents. An interview allows the researcher to clarify some issues which may not be clear.

In this study the researcher will use interviews because they are adaptable and can enable the researcher to obtain rich and useful information. They allow interviewees to speak freely about their experiences without being limited to what is written down, as compared to a questionnaire, for example interviews are also useful because they enable the researcher to probe and follow up on ideas and issues raised in the response.

With regards to in-depth interviews, Weiss (1994), in trying to answer why we interview, points out that through interviewing, we can learn about what happens in families or in other settings. In a way interviewing can inform us about the nature of social life. Weiss (1994) also adds that research aims should dictate research methods and that interviewing is necessary when trying to develop descriptions and trying to learn how events are interpreted. One advantage of interviews is that they are focused and discursive in a way that allows the researcher and the participant to explore the issue of food aid explicitly and in depth.

Interviews allow the researcher to further investigate the motives and "feelings" behind certain responses which could otherwise not be possible with surveys or other methods. Bell (2005:157) argues that in interviews "the way in which a response is made-tone of the voice, facial expression, hesitation, etc- can provide information that a written response would conceal." Interviews are therefore considered the best method to obtain quality data for this study.

Interviews have an advantage over the questionnaire in that all questions in an interview are likely to be answered. The interviewer may clarify questions that sound vague to the respondents. The interview also gives the interviewer room to change the interview question when need arises. This is not possible with the questionnaire as it is rigid. An interview may give the researcher a chance to read between the lines and probe further with new questions as the respondents give their views. During the interviews the interviewer can interpret non-verbal

communication. Leedy (1980:111) states that "the interviewer has access not only to what people say but how they say it".

The interview has its own weaknesses. The respondent may feel uneasy and choose to avoid the interviewer if questions are sensitive and dwell on complex and emotional matters. During the interviews the respondents may get carried away and end up bringing issues that are irrelevant. This can be avoided by encouraging the respondents to concentrate on the core questions that are relevant to the study. If at anytime during the interview, a respondent exhibits discomfort in answering questions, Il assured them that they need not answer. I also assured respondents that they are free to withdraw from the interview at anytime.

3.4.2 Focus group discussion

I will be holding focus group discussions with the community leadership. This will be geared towards examining the strengths and challenges of food aid and how the community perceives it. Focus group discussion is an in-depth examination of one particular topic or concept and consists of eight to twelve participants; they are led by a moderator whose aim is to learn and understand what people have to say and why they need to do so. According to Wikipedia (2006a:1), a focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their attitude towards a product, service, concept or idea. In this study the community leadership will be asked about their understanding of the role, and evaluating the impact of food aid on the livelihoods of vulnerable households. The questions will be asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk to each other.

According to Hennink and Diamond (1999), the aim of focus group discussions is not to gather information about individuals as with in-depth interviews but to get a feel of the communities' response to certain topics. As such, focus group discussions allowed group members to contribute freely about their experiences in relation to food aid.

This will give me the opportunity to find out whether the intervention strategy being pursued by World Vision International is in accord with the priorities of its beneficiaries. This is because one

of the problems which Hurley (1990: 3) points out is occurring in intervention programs is that beneficiaries and interveners often have different or confused objectives and agendas. Based on the challenges raised, we can together try to discuss on what can be done and how to go about it.

3.5 Population

The population under study will comprise two rural wards in the District of Gwanda. The population will comprise household beneficiaries of food aid from World Vision International, community leaders as well as World Vision International district management staff

3.6 Sample size

The sample size for this study is 20 households. The researcher will choose two wards to conduct the research. One of the wards will be that under the chairperson of the social services councillor who presides over the committee that is responsible for the allocation of food aid to all the wards of the district. The second ward will be selected amongst those that are not under the leadership of a councillor in the main social services committee as well as its sub-committees. This will help give a balanced analysis of whether some wards are receiving a lion's share of food aid as compared to the others. Two focus group discussions with the community leadership are going to be held within the two respective wards.

Systematic random sampling will be used to select two villages in each of the two wards from a comprehensive list of villages. From the two selected wards the villages will be then randomly selected with two villages being selected per respective ward. In each village the researcher will interview five households and these shall be selected by going to every fifth household until five households have been interviewed in a village. Two management officials from the World Vision district office will also be interviewed. These officials will be expected to provide their views on how food aid has impacted on the livelihoods of the impoverished households in the district. Purposive sampling will be utilized as a back up in order to select underrepresented participants if the proportion of male and female households in the sample does not match that of existing baseline data for the District

3.7 Sampling procedure

A probability sampling method will be utilized. It is defined as any method of sampling that uses some form of random selection of participants. Probability sampling is necessary for this study so as to determine the proportion of households that actually receive handouts. However since part of the study wants to understand and evaluate the impact of food handouts on the different beneficiary households, with different characteristics some techniques of non-probability sampling will be used in to make sure that both male and female headed household are represented. Snowball sampling will be used for this purpose. That is both systematic random sampling and snowball sampling will be used.

3.8 Data collection plan

The researcher interviewed the food aid beneficiaries and also conducted focus group discussions with community leadership. The interviews were conducted within four days.

3.9 Data presentation

The data gathered would be presented in tables, bar graphs and pie charts so that an overall picture of the results of the study is made visible at a glance. The responses would be converted into percentages in order to establish the highest frequency.

3.10 Data analysis

According to Miles and Huberman, (1994:10) data analysis is used to look for patterns and relationships in the data that is collected. Overall, data analysis involves organizing data that has been collected so that you make sense of it (Smit 2002). Data analysis as a two way process as first it involves the selection of relevant data and then secondly the categorization or coding of data (Smit 2002). Once data was collected from the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions, the participants' responses were transcribed verbatim to allow for easy analysis of the text. Thematic data analysis was utilized to analyze the data. Thematic data analysis is highly inductive as the themes that emerge from the data are not in any way imposed by the researcher (Braun and Clark 2006). It involves the application of codes to data collected. Closely related to

this method is comparative analysis which was used to compare and contrast data from different people (Tere 2006).

The first step of the analysis involved multiple readings of the raw data to identify perceptions, experiences, feelings and attitudes. Responses that were deemed important for the study were categorized into themes that were commonly used by participants. Also categorized were words and phrases, which held particular meaning in the answering of the research question. Words and phrases with similar meaning were coded into themes thereby reducing responses into manageable units (Smit 2002). With comparative analysis, the researcher moved backwards and forwards between the data (Tere 2006). Themes that were not relevant to the study were not discarded as they allowed for surprising findings. The categorization of data was used until the researcher was satisfied that no new themes emerged from the raw data. Themes were then categorized according to the interview questions although not exclusively as there was a tendency to overlap.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research design to be used. A qualitative research method was discussed at length as having been the most appropriate approach for the study. The research instruments which include in-depth interviews have been discussed. The chapter has also highlighted the population understudy, sampling procedures and the data presentation plan as well as the data analysis plan. The next chapter will present, and discuss the findings.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of data from the research. Specialised attention will be given to the presentation and analysis of data collected by the researcher from the sampled household population within the study area. Also discussed here will be the findings of the focus group discussion and the face to face interview with World Vision Management.

4.1 Overview of research findings

The persistence of the drought situation within the Gwanda region has seen people literally failing to harvest anything for years. To date World Vision International has been operational in the district for nine years providing humanitarian assistance. The focus group discussion on community leadership perceptions on food aid and food security highlighted the fact that food handouts have become a norm in the district of Gwanda since 2002. The community leadership emphasised that due to the chronic nature of the drought it had become evident that food aid was inevitable.

It was also highlighted that the rollout of the *dollarization* program in the country was an impediment, impacting negatively on the livelihoods of the poor who do not have any source of foreign currency, as all shops in the country were trading in foreign currency for procurement of

commodities. The survey took note of this current agricultural season where it was realised that the entire community was unable to plough productively on time owing it to the unavailability of agricultural inputs that were nowhere to be accessed in the country. They also expressed the challenges of farming inputs and implements as the prime set back to rural communities in terms of attainment of food sovereignty at household level. The survey gathered that World Vision food aid programme started its operations in 2002 in Gwanda District. The volatile and the politically charged environment however affected the smooth flow of food aid programs. Taking into account the socio-economic hardships that were triggered by the political atmosphere gripping the country, the survey discovered that three quarters of the households were failing to procure basic commodities due to a hyper-inflationary environment coupled with the dollarization surge.

The survey discovered that a majority of households are male headed which is in line with the understanding that culturally, the head of an African household is usually a male figure except in the event of death of the father, when women usually take over as head of the family. Among other causes like migration, divorce etc, the impact of HIV/AIDS on the community has resulted in a substantial number of households being either female-headed, child-headed or headed by grandparents.

Table 1: Household Head*Household size Cross-tabulation

		Household size			Total
		1-4 Members	5-10 Members	10 and Above	
Male headed		2	5	2	9
	% of Total	10%	25%	10%	45%
Female headed	Count	1	2	3	6
	% of Total	15%	10%	5%	30%
Child headed	Count	0	1	0	1
	% of Total	0%	5%	0%	5%

Grandparents headed	Count	1	2	1	4
	% of Total	5%	10%	5%	20%
Total	Count	4	10	6	20
	% of Total	20%	50%	30%	100%

Of the total households surveyed, 20% of the households visited had between 1-4 members and 50% had between 5 -10 members and 30% of the households had above 10 members. Table 4.1 above provides a household head and household size crosstabulation. The table shows that 45% of the interviewed households heads were fathers, 30% were mothers, 5% were child headed households and 20% are those headed by grandparents.

The variation in family sizes is due to a number of reasons. Socio-economic hardships have forced the economically active members of society to migrate to neighbouring Botswana and South Africa. This has resulted in a substantial number of families having less than 5 members (20%). A general observation is that the entire community comprises mainly of the old aged and children below the age of 15. The greater percentage of households was made up of between 5-10 members and even in these the greater proportion of family members are children. Normally African rural families are big and one would expect to have a greater number of households amounting over ten members. This is not the case with the observed community. The relatively low population of such households is attributed to the exodus of masses in search of better economic and social opportunities in neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Botswana.

Data from World Vision records indicates that 122 506 households were being assisted under the food aid safety net feeding program. Under the schools feeding programme, 33 243 pupils were being fed throughout the entire district. 1019 adults are responsible for preparing this food on behalf of the children; these adults are merely doing voluntary work however, they are also allowed to feed themselves simultaneously with pupils.

Amongst the surveyed population, the observation was that there were variations in household consumption patterns of meals administered per day. Among other reasons for such variations are the socio-economic status and the ability of a household to afford enough food for a particular day. The observed variations are displayed in Figure 5 below.

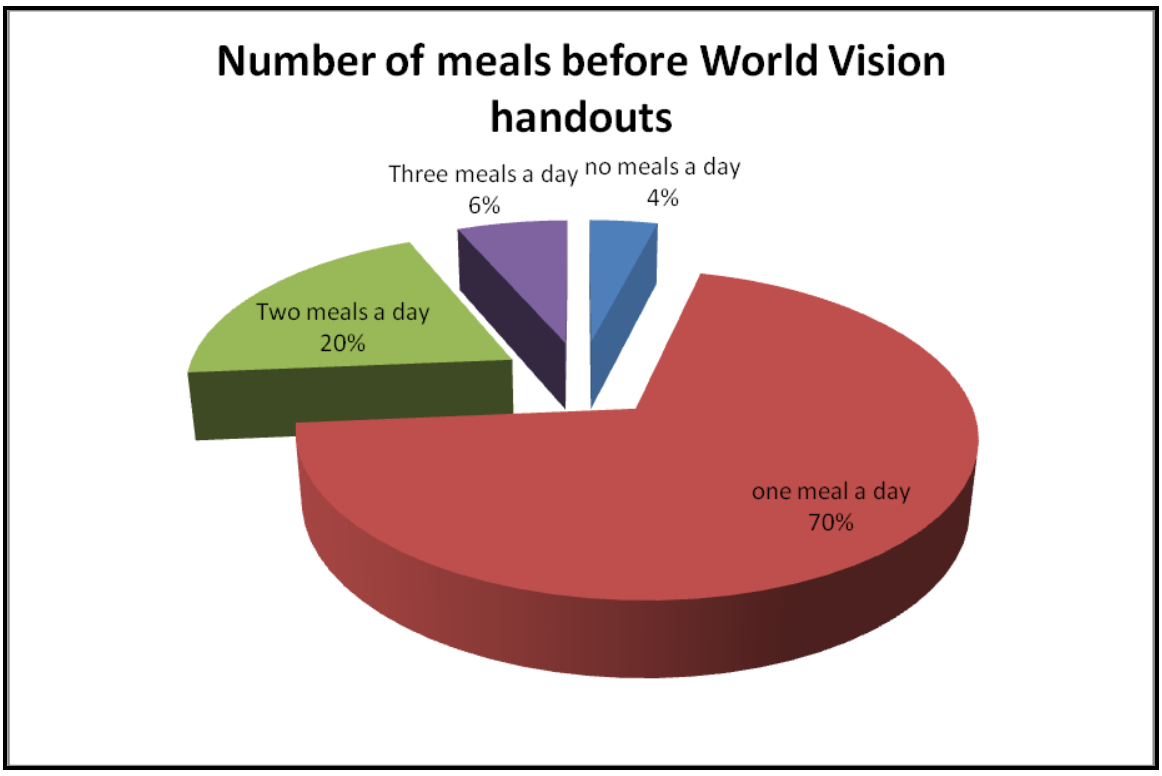


Figure 5: Number of meals before the arrival of World Vision handouts

Figure 5 above details the percentage number of people who could afford no meals, one meal, two meals and three meals before the arrival of World Vision food aid. The survey revealed that before World Vision intervention, over three quarters of the entire community households could not afford three meals a day. Figure 5 above shows that 4% of the sample population was completely failing to afford a meal. 70% of the households could only afford a single meal. 20% could afford two meals and the remaining 6% could afford 3 meals a day. 4% of the population was completely failing to fend for itself. Besides temporary jobs in exchange for food, this fraction of people depended on donations from the few elite in the community, churches, and

members of the business community. The majority population could afford a single meal due to the general unavailability of food in the area. Only a few households (20%) could consistently afford two meals per day. Having two or one meal per day comes down to food rationing, which is one coping strategy for the people of Gwanda District as they could not access enough food for the number of meals they desire. Those who could access three meals a day were mainly households with family members in the diaspora and these could afford remitting to their loved ones on a regular basis.

As observed in figure 6 below, the number of households that could not access a single meal after World Vision began distributing food had declined to 0%. 16.5% could access at least one meal per day. Approximately three quarters of the population could access two meals and the remaining 10% could access three meals a day. The arrival of food handouts from World Vision marked a positive change and drastic improvement on household's access to food.

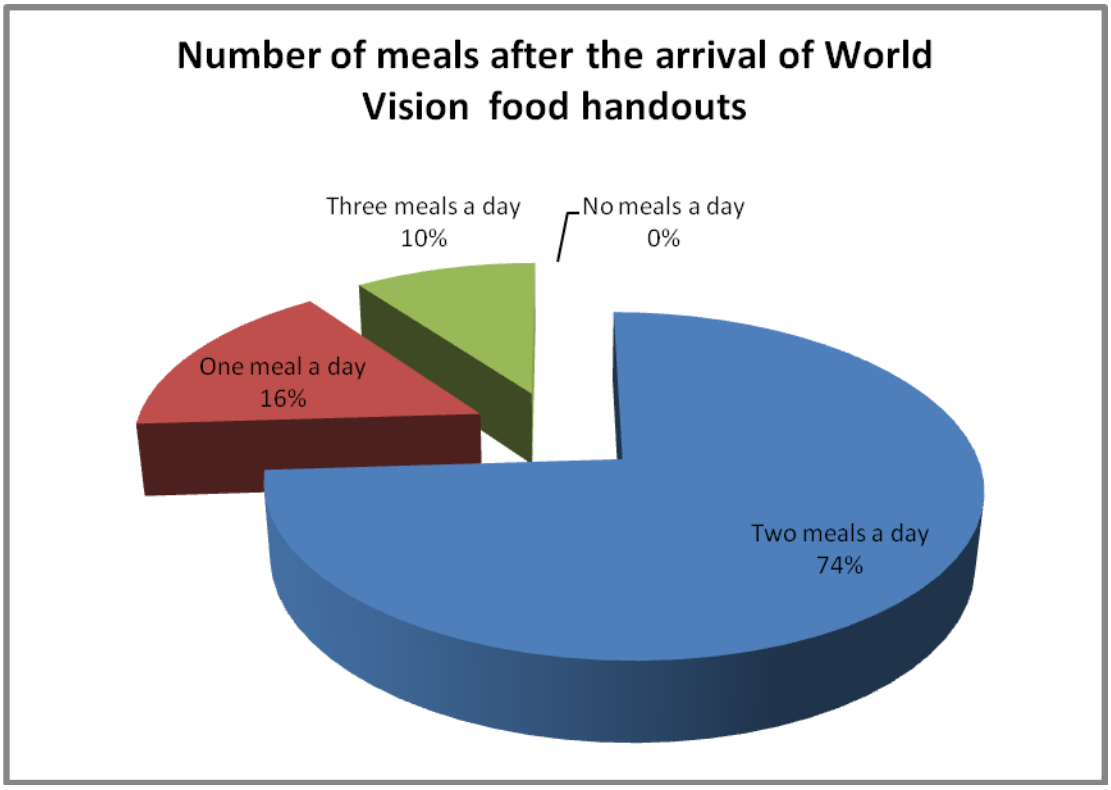


Figure 6: Number of meals after the arrival of World Vision Handouts.

The study wanted to determine whether the quantity of food aid allocated to respective Ward is influenced by the position of responsibility that a councillor holds within the local authority for example being the a social services chairperson. The survey revealed that councillors had no powers and influence of determining and soliciting the quantity to be allocated to his or her Ward in terms of metric tonnes. The survey found that whilst councillors in the social services committee had the mandate to advise World Vision on perhaps targeting the most deserving Wards, they had no actual power to determine how much food went to a particular area. The social services committee was in a position of helping to avoid duplication by co-ordinating their activities in the event that there might be already another organisation provisioning a Ward. The survey also revealed that even in instances where the local authority social services advised on food aid allocation World Vision would conduct their own baseline survey to guide their intervention program. While a social services chairperson might have wanted to have an upper hand in terms of having a large chunk of food aid allocated to his ward by virtue of chairing that committee, it was noted that World Vision has laid down procedures for food aid allocation and distribution that are followed regardless of one's political administrative influence.

4.2 Nature of food aid packages

The food aid program consists of both food handouts as well as other supplementary initiatives aimed at improving household livelihoods. As of the 16th of December 2008 1,634,456 metric tonnes of nutritional assistance had been administered to the entire community of Gwanda District. Apart from the mega tonnages of food World Vision distributes to the district on a yearly basis, World Vision International implemented sustainable measures to ensure community self-reliance with regards to food security at household level. Communities in the respective wards were undergoing training in conservation farming methodologies with a view of helping them harvest in dry spells. The organisation is instrumental in rehabilitating some dams and irrigation schemes in a bid to attain sustainable irrigation farming as well as ensure sustainable food security. The organisation is also assisting with provisioning agricultural input especially to those beneficiaries involved in the conservation farming project.

When management key informants were asked about the food contents of the food handouts, they highlighted that there were administering cereals such as bulgar wheat, corn-meal (yellow mealie meal), maize, pulses which are also known as pinto-beans, lentils, yellow peas and vegetable oil. They however highlighted that in the last seven months they were provisioning what they had in stock:

- Bulgar wheat, with each member of the household being entitled to a quantity of 10kgs each,
- 0.6 litres of cooking oil per person,
- 3kgs of sugar beans per person.

The above quantities stood as their monthly ration. Inquiring from the beneficiaries what they would have liked included on their monthly food allocation they implored that they would be delighted if salt and sugar was also provisioned to them on a monthly basis. This was against the backdrop that salt and sugar are scarce commodities in the country.

4.3 Impact of food aid on livelihoods of beneficiaries

Respondents unanimously contended that food aid played a pivotal role in preventing loss of life; without it they could have died due to starvation. The survey also established, as shown in figure 5 that 70% of the households could now access two meals per day. Moreover, schools marked an improved class attendance as pupils took delight in the food aid scheme thus improving the pass rates as well as their level and standard of concentration; however; in some schools pupils bemoaned the non-availability of teachers owing to the industrial action teachers had taken and that appeared indefinite. The survey also discovered that chronically ill patients such as people living with Aids and tuberculosis patients had greatly been assisted as they did not have the strength to fend for themselves. Orphans, especially those in child headed-households were also been catered for. However, concern has been raised as some beneficiaries were perceived to have developed laziness and a dependency syndrome, meaning that they cannot venture into other livelihood sustaining initiatives.

The survey established that with the arrival of food aid, rates of malnutrition recorded a significant drop, with kwashiorkor prevalence dropping by approximately 90% (District Medical Register 2007- 2008). The respondents also alluded to a balanced diet to be the pathfinder of a healthy lifestyle; for example it was noted that barley constitutes a higher portion of carbohydrates, beans helps in the provision of proteins, cooking oil also constitutes vitamins and fats hence affording them a balanced diet at their door step. The discussion revealed that vulnerable groups such as orphans, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWAs) as well as chronically ill patients who may have lost their lives due to poor nutrition and hence poor response to medical assistance, have been rescued by the arrival of food aid.

In relation to access of income the study revealed that where households were in a position of accessing food from World Vision they could energetically afford to plough their fields as well as nutritional green gardens as income generating projects. The study also revealed that household incomes were saved for other purposes such as payment of school fees and payment of grinding mill services. It was noted that households were getting enough food for their daily consumption. The study found that some households would have exhausted thier monthly allocation before the end of the month. After World Vision intervention, the study revealed a tremendous and remarkable shift of many households towards accessing decent food on the table each day. As seen on Figure 6, above, the number of households that did not have access to a single meal had declined to 0%. 16.5% could access at least one meal per day. The reason why some households despite the provisioning of food handout were still having one meal was due to lack of alternative sources of livelihoods leading to them having to solely depend on food handouts. Approximately three quarters of the population could access two meals while the remaining 10% could access decent three meals per day. The arrival of food handouts from World Vision therefore marked a positive change and drastic improvement on household's access to food.

4.4 Comparison of the household access to meals before and after the arrival of food aid

Before the provisioning of food aid, initially 4% of the population in the district was completely failing to access a meal. This figure drastically dropped to 0% which marked a positive change

on the livelihoods of those living in abject poverty and could not access food and fend for themselves. Initially, before the arrival of food aid, 70% of the household surveyed which stood as the bulk of the population could only access one meal however, with the arrival of food aid the figure dropped to 16.5% since most of the population in this category had shifted to the two meals per day category. Initially 20% of the population accessed two meals a day, however after the arrival of food aid the figure increased to 74%. This clearly was a remarkable improvement on household access to food.

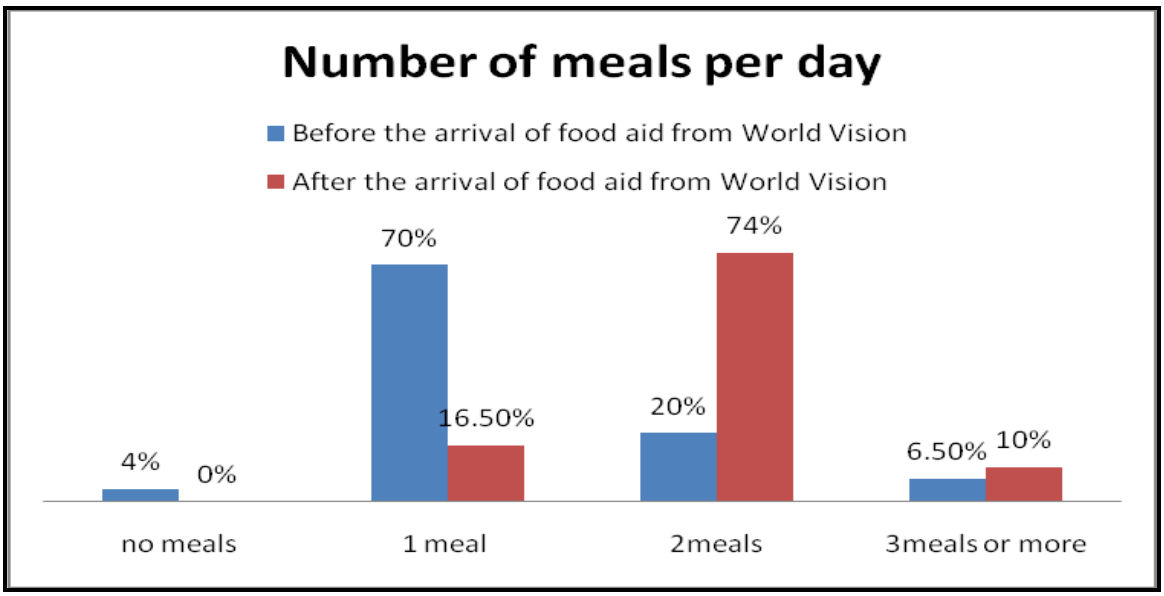


Figure 7: A comparison of the household access to meals before and after the arrival of food aid.

Those that could afford three meals initially accounted for 6.5% of the population however, this figure moderately improved to 10%. This fraction of the population mainly comprised of the well to do. The survey noted that very few people in Gwanda District have full-time jobs, perhaps because this is a rural area and not many jobs are available and hence rendering the community dependent on food handouts. The survey realised most of the households that access three meals a day had family members in the diaspora, that is either in South Africa or overseas and they were always in a position of remitting to their loved ones on a regular basis.

4.5 Implementation of the food aid program

4.5.1 Selection of beneficiaries

In this study it was noted that since November 2008 due to the severity of the drought in the district, World Vision International classified all households as needy. This was in line with the government's declaration of the region's drought situation as a national disaster. However, the normal procedure of being eligible for food was through a thorough vetting exercise conducted by World Vision staff in liaison with village committees to determine and ascertain the most needy recipients. They normally take into consideration assets that a household is in possession of as a yardstick of determining their extent and degree of need.

According to a key informant from World Vision International rigorous mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that deserving beneficiaries receive food handouts and management expressed great sensitivity on this matter. According to management, one of their key thrust was to ensure zero tolerance on duplication and 'ghost' beneficiaries. Ensuring that food handouts are received by the deserving beneficiaries was reported as very critical and important key result area for the organisation. On a monthly basis, the organisation undertook a verification exercise to ascertain that beneficiaries were vetted in line with their laid down procedures that is 5% of the beneficiary population was reached every month on a random sample technique.

Beneficiary selection was done procedurally. 100% of the households interviewed underwent a vetting process prior to the government's declaration of the region as a red zone. The selection mechanism was done through a local village committee responsible for vetting "would be" beneficiaries into different categories. The committee took into account such aspects such as the household size, assets in terms of livestock, land tenure, utilisation, income levels, death cases and also vulnerable groups such as orphans, widows, and widowers as well as the general impoverishment of a particular household. In view of the Presidential declaration of November 2007 which declared Matabeleland region as a "national disaster", the trend then ushered the "one-size fits all" phenomenon which categorised all households as in need of humanitarian assistance. World Vision international adhered and complied with this declaration and registered and incorporated all households in the district to be eligible for food aid under its scheme.

On ascertaining whether beneficiaries were receiving food handouts from the government and any other organisation prior to the arrival of World Vision International, the survey gathered that beneficiaries in Ward 2 used to receive similar food handouts from the Red Cross Society of Zimbabwe; however, its coverage was not broad as it only targeted people living with HIV/AIDS as well as orphans and vulnerable children. Although Red Cross society was doing its best to try and provision food handouts for PLWAs, orphans and other vulnerable children it was of importance to note that the organisation fell short of resources to cover a wider surface area. Ward 13 beneficiaries highlighted that they had never received any food handout from any organisation before and that World Vision was the pioneer non-governmental organisation to provision them with nutritional assistance.

Asked to elaborate on their selection procedure of beneficiaries the interviewee from World Vision management was quick to highlight that their selection mechanism is community driven and people centred. The survey revealed that a vetting committee comprised various stakeholders including community leadership is enacted and mandated by the community and World Vision to identify and register households and individuals for food aid eligibility. They then use a vulnerability assessment form which leads them through the process. This form takes into account the nature of assets a household is in possession of, for example the number of cattle owned by a household as a yardstick of categorising their vulnerability. Further probed on why part of the committee has to be from the community, the World Vision technocrats highlighted that World Vision is a humanitarian organisation which subscribes to the *Participatory Rural Appraisal* approach methodology; that is, communities know themselves and the way they live. This makes them better placed to group themselves according to their needs and vulnerability levels. A productivity ratio requirement (PRR) questionnaire is also administered. The essence of this questionnaire is to determine the productivity capacity of household taking into account land utilization. In this instance, the lower the productivity ratio, the higher the chances of a household being eligible to become a beneficiary. The survey also spelt out that kraal heads of a village were the sole entry point into the village; this helps them to control and manage the crowds during food handout distribution.

4.6 State intervention in food aid

The community noted that the last time the government parastatal, Grain Marketing Board, dispatched maize meal in Ward 2 was a period dating back to 14 months earlier whilst in Ward 13 it has been two full years since GMB food had been received. The survey revealed that even though the GMB tried to constantly supply the community with maize, there were irregularities and inconsistencies brought forth by the GMB institution. This has been evident in the study as the government went to the extent of banning the operations of NGO's. Beneficiaries highlighted concerns such as corruption and fraudulent practices by the local political leadership aligned to the ruling ZANU (PF) party being rampant and made, evident by the diversion of maize intended for the community for their own personal aggrandisement. Moreover, 80% of the beneficiaries highlighted that GMB food aid was expensive to procure hence making it out of reach for the ordinary poor in light of the socio-economic hardships gripping the country. Only the remaining 20% were in a position to buy from the GMB. Apart from the above mentioned challenges, beneficiaries were further required to provide their own transport to ferry their maize meal from the GMB depot to their respective wards a distance that approximates 200km. Transporters are also charging in foreign currency which in this case makes it impossible for impoverished households to raise. The informants at household level argued that given the average household size of 5-10 members, GMB's inconsistent dispatch of a ration of 50kg per household was insufficient to meet the recommended calories required by human beings, even just for a week. Informants aligned to the MDC lamented that the GMB food aid was politicised by the traditional leadership and councillors making it more difficult for them to benefit from the scheme.

On the political implications of food aid provision, the position of World Vision International remains non-partisan. It was further emphasised that the organisation concentrates on its core business and that it has never diverted into any activity other than its key thematic areas enshrined in their memorandum of understanding with both central and local government. However, if politically motivated problems were encountered, these were settled and resolved

through credible institutions such as the District Administrator's office in liaison with the local authority.

4.7 Community Leadership Opinions on State Intervention in Food Aid Distribution

Inquiring on whether government was doing enough to alleviate the problem of food shortage in the area, community leaders vehemently accused and castigated government as a complete failure due to their ineffective policies. Chazan and Shaw (1997:49) concurred with the community leaders as they argue that problems of food insecurity have been a result of ineffective government policies, and institutions. Of special note the business community and civil servants criticised the Mugabe led government as having plunged them into sanctions which have further exacerbated the problem of food shortages in the country. They fumed over the ZANU (PF) government and opposition MDC for engaging in partisan politics at the expense of their livelihoods. Suggesting ethnic or tribal prejudice they took a swipe at the ruling government for not being considerate and negligent of their plight in the Matabeleland region. They revealed that the government parastatal the Grain Marketing Board(GMB), had last dispatched them 50kg maize some two years ago and the fact that each household is responsible for procuring, sourcing and transporting their maize consignment which proved too expensive and out of the reach of many impoverished households. They openly lamented that they were regarded as second citizens in their native country as they were not being accorded a fair share of the nation's cake in all respects.

In view of the voting pattern in the 2002 and 2008 harmonised elections which largely turned favourable to the opposition MDC the community felt that they were being punished by government for expressing their democratic right thus voting in favour of the MDC. They accused the ruling party political leadership for threatening them with starvation to death for their alignment with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In a nutshell the community leaders expressed disappointment at government as having failed them.

Insisting on what government should do to alleviate their problem, they came up with the following suggestions;

- Firstly, the government should stop intimidating NGOs who are provisioning them with food handouts.
- The government and NGOs must establish a hand and glove relationship in a quest to alleviate hunger as their thematic mandates should be complimentary.
- The government should be considerate and rational in make informed decisions. This was in view of the ban and interfering into the operations of NGOs evident during the 2008 Presidential elections which negatively affected chronically hungry households and, chronically ill patients whose livelihoods are dependent on food aid.
- With the agricultural season at hand most communal farmers have failed to access agricultural inputs; this has made it rather impossible for them to plough on time with some totally failing to do so.
- The government was urged to address the challenges of smallholder and communal farmers by provisioning them with agricultural inputs as well as implements. They noted that the recent rollout of the government agricultural mechanisation program had not benefitted them with the exception of a few ZANU (PF) cronies who are aligned to the ruling party.
- Locals should be educated to grow drought resistant crops such as sorghum and millet and also be encouraged to consider dry planting.
- The government should commission more irrigation schemes, build dams and help the community to restock livestock. They noted that livestock farming as a project was viable in this part of the country and that a needs assessment has been conducted with that regard.
- They also unanimously challenged government to plan critically and work hand and glove with the SADC early warning unit to be knowledgeable of any impending catastrophic disasters which have brought untold suffering to the poor who are the focus of this study.

4.8 Role of community leadership in food aid distribution

Figure 8 below gives the composition of the community leadership that participated in this focus group.

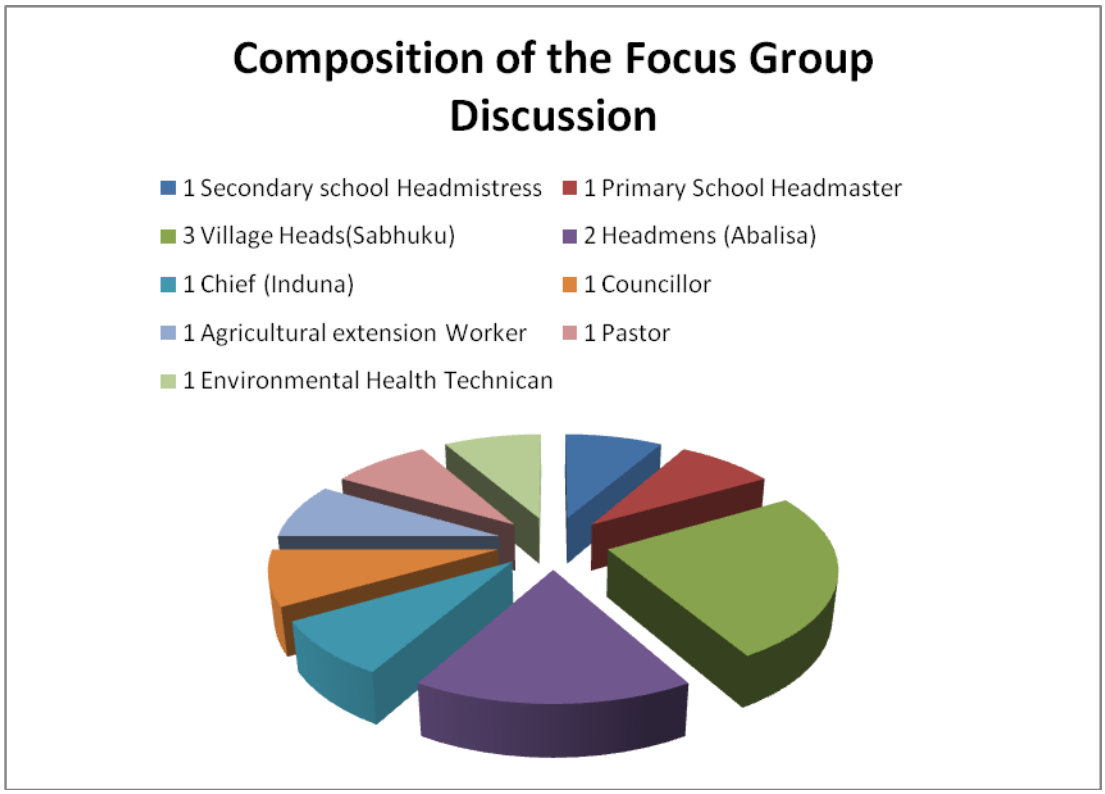


Figure 8: Composition of stakeholders who participated in the Focus group discussion

Further probing on what projects can be implemented to ensure food security and that communities become self reliant, the survey discovered that the leadership comprising mainly traditional leadership namely village heads, headmen and chief mourned the non-availability of irrigation schemes in the district. They noted that even those that existed were non-functional due to a breakdown of machinery as well as non-availability of spare parts. This has largely been caused by the negative socio-economic and political environment prevailing in the country. The traditional leaders proposed that commissioning of dams and irrigation schemes was one of the most noble ideas of ensuring self reliance in the event that World Vision pulls out of the community. They took into account the recent NGO ban by the government during the 2008 Presidential elections and how this negatively affected people's lives whose livelihoods hinge on food handouts.

The findings clearly suggested that no household was reportedly either selling food handouts or receiving excess food. This clearly pointed that all households were effectively allocated a ration that would take them through out the month.

When the community leadership was asked as to whether they are involved in the selection of food aid beneficiaries community leaders expressed mixed feelings ranging from average satisfaction to absolute dissatisfaction (see Figure 9 below). The traditional leaders (Village heads, Headmen and the Chiefs) highlighted that as part of the various village committees that they were actively involved in the selection of 'would-be' beneficiaries. They generally expressed satisfaction in the part they played in the recommendation of critical household cases to be eligible for food handouts. They also stood as the entry point into the community with their main roles involving beneficiary identification, mobilisation and management of crowds at distribution points.

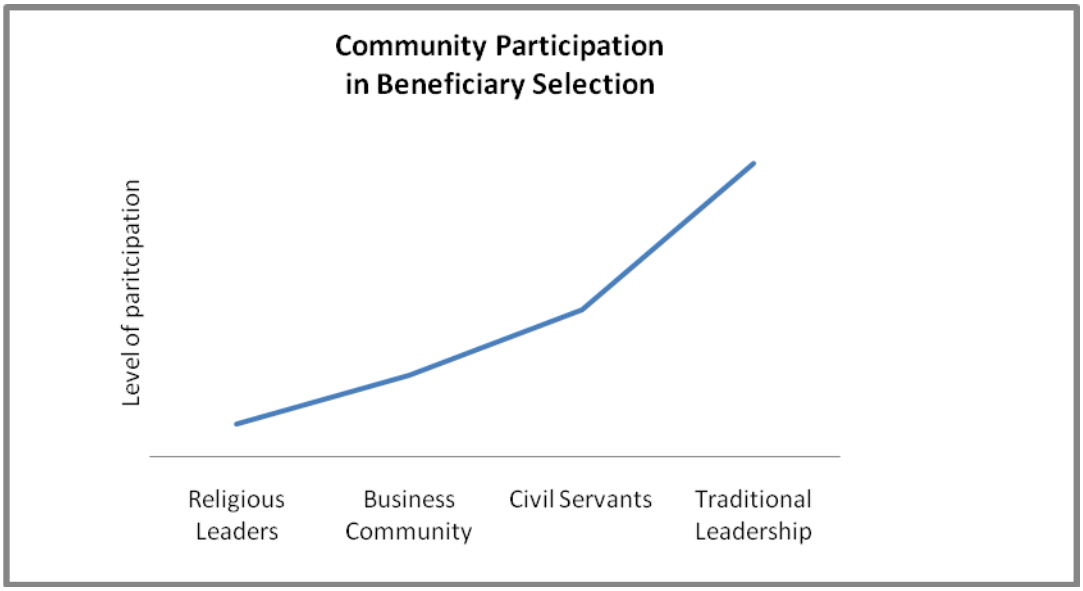


Figure 9: Community leadership participation in food aid beneficiary selection.

The traditional leadership lamented the people's change of attitude towards self-reliance as witnessed in some circles of the community where laziness and dependency had become the

order of the day as some people were literally failing to come up with innovative ways of being self reliant. They added that the government had become relaxed and negligent on its duties of taking a lead in ensuring national food security.

4.9 Views by the traditional leadership on the impact of food aid on beneficiary livelihoods

On the analysis of difference that food aid had played, the traditional leaders in their various capacities concurred and were quick to spell out that the general livelihoods of the community had improved as indicated in improved attendance and performance in schools, decline in malnutrition related health issues and reduced hunger-related mortality rates. A headman who usually presides over the customary court within the locality noted that theft was on the decline and that the community was energetic enough to focus on other community development projects. It is apparent that there was a shift towards healthy living as a local Environmental Health Technician hinted that ever since the arrival of food aid, cases of malnutrition had not been recorded at his rural health centre.

Probing on whether there were some members of the community who are receiving food aid who do not deserve it, the survey highlighted that such problems at this particular juncture did not exist. This is in line with the researcher's findings on the sampled population, where all of the twenty households were recipients of food aid. The chief highlighted that due to the severity of the current drought in the district all households were categorized as vulnerable and hence there were no loopholes that render food aid vulnerable to abuse through fraudulent practises.

The traditional leaders expressed fear that if World Vision withdraws its aid the entire community would perish. Of interest to note was the response from an Environmental Health Technician who highlighted that social ills such as prostitution would be rampant and that there would be a rise in kwashiorkor amongst the under five children due to malnutrition. Although it was realised that food aid has contributed to people's change in attitudes towards self reliance, the severity of the drought situation of the region made it unquestionable that food aid remained a necessity. The entire traditional leadership welcomed and encouraged more humanitarian aid in their community as they believed the community can not do without it.

4.10 Views of community leaders on the impact of food aid

When asked to detail their personal opinion on the impact of food aid, community leaders regardless of their background expressed their sincere gratitude to World Vision International for its kind gesture which has averted a humanitarian crisis. They highlighted that had it not been for the food aid that they were receiving from World Vision they could have perished. Above all they raised the fact that food aid was alleviating poverty in the entire community. It was also of special note that the entire leadership conformed to the fact that food aid has led to improved community health. They further commended World Vision for making accessible to them food handouts within a reasonable proximity as compared to food aid from government which is never transported to the convenience of recipients. It was however mentioned that food aid has contributed to peoples change in attitude towards self-sustenance. The conclusive evaluation on the impact of food aid was that it had contributed meaningfully to sustain livelihoods in the poverty stricken district of Gwanda.

In view of whether there were people who are still chronically hungry ever since the arrival of food aid. The understanding from the community leadership was that the problem was now history. Though they suggested that it was entirely difficult to satisfy everyone's needs it was of paramount importance to note that the situation of starvation had drastically improved for the better. However, they lamented the *dollarization* program rolled out by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe as it undermined the livelihoods well being of the poor who depend on food aid. This particular group of people could not afford to procure anything from the shops, even basic necessities such as salt and sugar. The survey also took special mention of those who are chronically ill as having been afforded a food basket for their dietary needs; especially those undertaking medication with specific dietary requirements including HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and diabetes, hence impacting positively on their health.

4.10.1 Role of the business community, civil servants and religious leaders in food aid distribution.

Representatives of the business community leaders highlighted that they were not involved in any formal way in the process of vetting of "would-be beneficiaries". They pointed out that the whole process was hijacked by councillors who often use their political muscle to include their undeserving political power base. Civil servants (Heads of schools, community health representatives and agricultural extension workers) felt that they were not fully integrated into community development initiatives as they are perceived as outsiders as they do not originate from this community. The community religious leadership was not at all involved in beneficiary identification as they were expected to confine their duties to the altar. It was realised that this group of people was marginalised by the traditional leadership in taking an active role in food aid distribution as they viewed them as agents and loyalist of the opposition MDC.

The marginalisation of other interested parties such as civil servants, religious leaders and members of the business community created tension that compromised the much needed cooperation. Such misunderstandings created room for divided opinions on the impact of food aid. This conflict of interest affected the smooth flow of food programming and hence impacting negatively on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries. The conflict of interest impacted heavily on the dissemination of crucial information as some individuals withheld valuable information on improving the food aid distribution. In conclusion the leadership felt that there was need to engage with the local authority to educate them on their roles and mandate a multi-sectoral team of community leadership if food aid program was to improve.

4.10.2 Role of schools in food aid distribution

In view of the role food aid has played, the entire leadership was quick to point that it has made them survive death and starvation. They highlighted the fact that had it not been for the food handouts from World Vision, they projected three quarters of them could be no-more. School Heads concurred that the initiation of the schools feeding program had made it possible to retain pupils at schools with full concentration in their academic studies. The headmaster of a local primary school gave an account of a grade five pupil that he interviewed, that she only gets to eat

to her fill at school where World Vision has a schools feeding programme. These made her feel eager to go to school everyday and dread the weekends because it was a time when she felt like fainting of hunger. He also reported that before the schools feeding program was implemented by World Vision a series of pupils were absconding from school as well as fainting during school hours, as there claimed that they had last had a decent meal some days ago.

4.11 World Vision Management perspective on food aid

In-depth interviews with World Vision management were conducted, respondents being the District Co-ordinator and a food aid field officer respectively. The District co-ordinator gave an overview of their program that in response to the humanitarian crisis, World Vision Zimbabwe, through funding from the consortium for Southern Africa Food Emergency(C-Safe), World Food Program (WFP) and ECHO implemented a diverse food relief programme targeting vulnerable groups through schools based feeding, food support for chronically ill, institutional feeding, safety net feeding and food for assets intervention.

Inquiring to management on their opinion over the impact of food to the district, the interviewee was quick to underline that food was a fundamental right as enshrined in the bill of rights. Giving a flashback on the socio-economic and political melt-down in the country due to the sanctions the country has endured for a decade, it was unequivocally cited that food aid in this district was alleviating poverty, prevented people from mass starvation and death. The interviewee further acknowledged that food aid has impacted positively to various beneficiaries for example the schools feeding program made it possible for pupils to attend classes consistently and with improved performance. To the under five age group, malnutrition which manifests into kwashiorkor has been on the decline. To the adult population food handouts have been received with overwhelming appreciation. Amongst this population are people who are chronically ill as well as those living with HIV/AIDS. Food handouts have tremendously complemented their dietary needs, which is of importance to them in complying with their respective medication.

The survey further revealed that with the coming of food aid community members have since become participative in other developmental initiatives on a voluntary basis with some members

joining the neighbourhood watch committees meant to curb crime. The interviewee cited that the status and dignity of women in general has been uplifted. It was revealed that social decomposition was previously on the increase as seen in the widespread crime, prostitution gender-based and domestic violence largely due to the socio-economic hardships. However, with food aid at hand the status of women has been uplifted convincingly as women-headed households are given top priority during beneficiary selection.

On ascertaining the progress of food aid distribution in the district, the interviewee put the record straight that all was in order however, they often encountered logistical problems such as non-availability of fuel, and of haulage trucks to get their consignment to the intended Ward distribution centres timeously. Regularities in obtaining cash in local and hard currency from the banks to enable the smooth flow of their program activities was cited as a set back. It was further cited that the prevailing socio-economic hardships posed obstacles to programmatic activities however; management assured that they were working flat out to ensure that targets were met.

Inquiring what the general attitude of people is like towards food aid, management revealed that beneficiaries were more than happy and greatly appreciated this form of aid. However, he emphasised that in the Ndebele culture it is rather unheard-of to merely receive food handouts. This is entirely against their ethics. Above all beneficiaries are positive but would have preferred to be self-sustainable. Taking into account the chronic nature of the drought in the District it made it difficult for them to survive without food aid from World Vision. He expressed the view that government was not adequately targeting this district through the Grain Marketing Board. The interviewee also revealed that what made them more appreciative was that food handouts were administered in a reasonable proximity to their households and that they were assured of a constant supply of food on a monthly basis. The conclusive evaluation of management on the impact of food aid was that it had contributed meaningfully to sustain livelihoods in the poverty stricken district of Gwanda.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction:

This chapter concludes the research study. The study introduced the background, statement of the problem, aims, motivation, and rationale of the study in chapter 1, explored the literature, theories, defined terms and the general concepts of food aid. Chapter 3 outlined and discussed the research methodology; chapter 4 presented and discussed the findings. This chapter therefore tabulates the findings, and makes recommendations and concludes the study.

The study on the role and impact of food aid on the impoverished households of Gwanda District in the southern part of Zimbabwe in Gwanda District was undertaken. The district was an ideal choice for the study due to the fact that it has had eleven successive droughts, and that the district has been dependent on food aid for a long time.

5.1 Summary of the Main Findings

The main findings which were discussed and presented in chapter 4 are summarised and presented below and are followed by recommendations and a conclusion.

- The political climate at play in the country has not been conducive for the operations of NGO's especially those dealing with food aid as there were numerous episodes of allegations of food aid politicisation and militarisation.
- World Vision has been the main source of food aid distribution, with the largest volume of food handouts given to beneficiaries as well as the widest ward coverage in the entire District of Gwanda. The district has been receiving food aid for more than 9 years from World Vision International.
- The study revealed that despite the fact that he chaired the powerful social services committee; a councillor had no authority of determining and influencing the quantity of food aid to be allocated to his or her Ward in metric tonnes.
- Due to the sporadic rainfalls that the District receives members of the community do not harvest enough to make themselves food secure throughout the year. Hence food aid is of

importance and is highly appreciated by the community beneficiaries and its community leadership.

- Food aid has been of tremendous help to the district inhabitants in times of emergencies. It has saved lives, as well as improving the nutritional status of children which the organisations main thrust and vision is centred upon. It has also helped a wide range of beneficiaries, especially those who are terminally ill, old aged and orphans at a critical moment when the country is undergoing economic melt-down.
- Food aid has created jobs for the locals on various capacities such as food monitors. In this way, it has enhanced livelihoods.
- In some parts of the district food aid has impacted negatively by undermining the capacity of locals to provide food for themselves. It has contributed to change in people's attitudes towards self-reliance and self-sustainability. It has created laziness, a dependency syndrome and ushered a culture of negligence on the assumption that free food, even if one does not work in their fields, will be administered to them.
- In some instances where individuals are not eligible according to the selection criteria, some people have put themselves in vulnerable and risky positions to become eligible for food handouts. It is interesting to note that one interviewee believes that being HIV positive is advantageous as one can be assured of a constant supply of food on a monthly basis.
- It was noted that food aid creates divisions, enmity, enhances personal vendettas in the community and hinders community development projects. People who have been omitted or do not meet the beneficiary selection mechanism become bitter and vow not to participate in other development initiatives that take place within their locality.
- The recent ban by government on the operations of NGOs on the eve to the run up of the disputed Presidential elections has had negative effects on those households whose livelihoods hinge on food aid for survival. To those who are terminally ill, i.e. HIV/AIDS and T.B patients, lack of continuity on nutritional assistance was life threatening in the sense that some beneficiaries developed drug resistance and died prematurely as a result.
- In view of the fact that selecting beneficiaries involves a community centred approach, community leaders expressed lack of understanding and amongst community members who have largely believed that some members of the community who have been tasked with roles

of selecting have failed to raise above partisan politics and used the food selection process to settle personal scores conceptualised as ruling and oppositional politics.

- Community beneficiaries expressed interest in having a word on what items their food basket contents should comprise. The study also revealed that beneficiaries were happy that food handouts were administered to them within reasonable proximity to them as compared to that of the Grain Marketing Board.

5.2 Impact and role of food aid on food availability.

- Food aid has had a positive role and impact on food availability. It has significantly contributed to food availability for the vulnerable and impoverished in an environment that is characterised by limited availability of food stuffs and basic commodities.
- In view of the challenges that local production is facing, food aid has created food availability in sufficient quantities and nutritional value within reasonable proximity to the people.
- Apart from food aid distributed by other organisations, World Vision International in partnership with WFP has distributed 1,634,456 metric tonnes of food aid in Gwanda District in the year 2008.

5.3 Impact and role of food aid on food accessibility

- Food aid has played a significant role in making food accessible to impoverished and vulnerable households in Gwanda District.
- Food aid has impacted positively by making accessible nutritional assistance to vulnerable groups, especially terminally ill beneficiaries who cannot fend for themselves by accessing a good and healthy diet normally prescribed for them. The helpless elderly, child-headed households as well as children living under difficult circumstances and the orphaned have been afforded the chance of realising at least three meals on their doorstep. This is in line with the organisations vision and core values of being child-focused. It is also the vision of World Vision to ensure that children reach their full potential by attaining all necessities prescribed by UNICEF, such as affording them a balanced diet, attaining a decent education

by providing funding for their educational necessities as well as ensuring that orphans and vulnerable children are catered for in all respects.

5.4 Impact and role of food aid on food utilisation

- Sustaining food security, through provisioning food handouts is questionable in Gwanda District. This is in view of the fact that able-bodied household members spend most of their time doing piece-jobs instead of purposefully working in their fields.

5.5 Recommendations

Recommendations are made on the basis the findings. Most of my recommendations are derived from participant's comments when they were asked what they would like to see World Vision do to improve their livelihoods.

5.5.1 Recommendations to Central Government

As outlined in the findings there are a number of issues that central government needs to address if humanitarian programs are to be effective and have an impact on livelihoods.

- Government should desist from making ill advised decisions such as the ban on NGO operations without factoring the negative effects on the impoverished, vulnerable and worse, on terminally ill tuberculosis patients who may develop drug resistance.
- Government should timeously facilitate provisioning communal farmers with agricultural inputs as well as draught power in a bid to ensure sustainable agriculture and food security.
- In view of the persistence of droughts in the district, government should make it a priority to commission more irrigation schemes so as to ensure and boost food security in this part of the country. This can be one of the permanent initiatives towards empowering the community to be self sufficient in food production at household level.
- Government should explore other alternative food security initiatives which in this case may be intensifying livestock production against the background that region 4 and 5 are most suitable for livestock production.

- There is need for government to establish relations of trust and effective operation with NGOs that will enhance the smooth flow of their intervention programs. This is in view of the fact that NGOs are complimenting government efforts.
- Central Government should always read, listen, evaluate and be sensitive to reports from local authorities on what the community thinks is best to alleviate their poverty and as well as to enhance food security. Central government has always been blasted for imposing development initiatives on districts without consultation as well as for failing to adopt participatory approaches.
- Central government should task Provincial governors to take responsibility for food security, grain production, and the balance of demand and supply in their respective provinces. They should be given a dedicated budget allocation for this purpose.
- Government should take the plight of people living with HIV/AIDS seriously. One of their biggest challenges is attainment of food. In light of the ban of NGO operations this vulnerable group was nutritionally short changed with some dying due to starvation whilst those who were on tuberculosis treatment could not afford taking their tablets due to unavailability of food, with the end result that some developed drug resistance.
- In light of the fact that food shortages in the country were to a large extent due to the haphazard land reform program, it is once more advisable that government should plan and co-ordinate its activities well. In future reforms to be held government is advised to do things in a systematic manner and desist from making blunders that have a negative effect on the livelihoods of people.
- Government seriously needs to provide enough skilled human resources especially in the agricultural sector and retain them, especially extension workers to support and educate rural communities on agricultural techniques.
- Government should prioritize and take into consideration the needs and concerns of the people of Matabeleland. There is a general feeling amongst the inhabitants of Matabeleland that they are not accorded full citizen status and that central government has never taken their plight seriously. Lastly they argue that they are not enjoying a fair share of the nation's cake.

5.5.2 Recommendations to Local Government

As outlined in the findings there are key issues that local government authorities need to address to ensure the smooth flow of humanitarian programs within their localities.

- Councillors should be capacitated to understand their roles and mandates as an elected leadership as well as acquaint themselves with the Rural and Urban Councils Act. This will enable them to understand that they need not politicise food aid in their respective wards.
- Local authorities should create an enabling environment and atmosphere to ensure that NGO's operate smoothly within their areas of jurisdiction without victimising and threatening to deregister them.
- As the planning organ of the district, local authorities are supposed to co-ordinate and supervise all government sector ministries whose main thrust is to ensure attainment of food security and food sovereignty at household level by making sure that they advise, train and capacitate communities on relevant farming techniques.
- Local authorities should encourage their constituents to come up with community based plans (CBP) that have input on food security as a thematic area.
- In view of the land reform program undertaken in the district, Gwanda Rural District Council, as the responsible local authority, should ensure that beneficiaries of the land reform process are capacitated to farm productively to ensure food security in its totality. That is, local authorities should institute an audit to ensure meaningful utilisation of land for sustainable agriculture and food security.
- Local authorities as the planning organ of the district should supervise the GMB and ensure that its maize distribution reaches the intended beneficiaries without being hijacked by politicians.

5.5.3 Recommendations to World Vision

The research findings suggest some key issues that World Vision and other Non-governmental organisations might need to take into account when administering programs in the District of Gwanda.

- In light of the fact that selecting beneficiaries of food aid normally divides the community, care should be taken to choose the most deserving beneficiaries. These divisions can be minimised by training locals involved in the selection process to avoid using food aid as a platform for settling personal scores. On the other hand food monitors should also be trained to rise above partisan politics and focus on programmatic deliverables.
- There is need for the organisation to constitute a monitoring and evaluation team that is participatory in composition (i.e accommodates locals) to audit its programs as well as verify recipient beneficiaries on a regular basis.
- World Vision should use other approaches to food distribution such as people working for assets or being given animals to plough since livestock does well in the area.
- Whilst people are appreciative of food aid in times of crisis, they would rather prefer to be empowered to be self-sustainable in the event that thier operation is stopped, citing the recent ban on NGO operations in the country.
- In view of the high HIV/AIDS prevalence in the District and its negative impact on food security, it will be of importance for World Vision to mainstream HIV/AIDS awareness on all program activities.
- NGO's and other humanitarian organisation working on food security initiatives should endeavour to maintain a stance of political neutrality in order to ensure that their organisation's image is not put in disrepute.
- WV should explore the informal cross border trade initiatives which appear to have a potential for empowering locals in this district. This may be through capacity building as well as making loans available on a rotational basis.
- Communities hinted at the need for income generating projects that are community centred. It will always be of importance for the organisation to revisit each and every ward community based plan (CBP) to evaluate what the community wants as an empowerment initiative. Communities alluded to the fact that they make ward community based plans on a yearly basis outlining what they think will be best for them.

5.5.4 Recommendations to food aid beneficiaries in Gwanda District

- Community members need to change their mind set and attitude about food aid and work towards self-sufficiency.
- Community leaders should encourage their people to work hard in their fields, encourage them to adopt new farming techniques/practises and adhere to modern farming methods such as applying fertilizers and manure in their fields.
- Households should learn not to sell everything when they harvest and think of the future.
- Community beneficiaries should take the initiative of coming up with various innovative ways of improving their livelihoods and should not wait for someone to do it for them; for example the community member should explore venturing into informal cross border trade as an avenue towards self sustainability and empowerment.
- Beneficiaries should be innovative to come up with home grown project proposals with an intention of spelling out what they intend to do. They are also encouraged to form co-operatives in order to carry forward various initiatives.

5.5.6 Recommendations for further research

- Efforts should be made to develop sustainable agricultural and productive farming approaches suitable for Gwanda District.
- Ways of helping the people of Gwanda District to become food sovereign at household level should be investigated.
- Additional food aid distribution mechanisms and approaches should be explored that would be suitable for the District of Gwanda.
- Further solutions to food insecurity in Gwanda District should be devised.

5.6 Conclusion

As outlined in Chapter 1 Gwanda District was chosen as a case study and the result of the findings do not necessarily relate to the whole of Zimbabwe. It is likely, however, that on many respects, the study has broad applicability in other parts of the country.

The research study employed a qualitative research methodology. In-depth interviews were administered to food aid beneficiaries and World Vision management. Focus group discussions were conducted with the community leadership. The findings of this study in chapter 4 are interesting to note. Food aid has had both a positive and a negative impact on food security in the district. The impact of food aid in Gwanda District has been extremely positive, especially in times of crisis. Food aid has helped save and improve many peoples lives, especially those who are terminally ill, the old, child headed households and orphans in general. Food aid has provided energy to the many people in the Gwanda District to work in their fields. Food aid has also created jobs for locals as distributors and in other related roles.

The negative impacts of food aid on food security in Gwanda District include its encouragement of laziness, food aid dependency and low food production in the fields. Food aid has also tremendously contributed to people's change in attitude towards self-sustenance. On the other hand central government has become reluctant and negligent of its mandate because there are assured that something is being done: food is being distributed to the needy. However, the general consensus of the people feel that government should do something more to alleviate the problem of food shortages in Gwanda District and the Matabeleland region as a whole.

The research objectives of the study were to understand the impact and role of food aid on the impoverished households of Gwanda District. The study entailed investigating the causes of food insecurity; determining the factors that led to food aid distribution in Gwanda District, as well as evaluating its role and impact on food availability, accessibility, and utilization. The primary research problem was that food aid from World Vision International has been used as a solution to food insecurity in Gwanda for a long time while no substantive research has been done into whether the approach to food insecurity is suitable for the district.

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Appendix 1

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH FOOD AID BENEFICARIES.

1. Who lives here in this household?

1b.Who is the head of the household?

2a.How many, meal were you having before receiving food aid from World Vision?

2b.How many are you now having after receiving food aid?

3a. How was your household selected to receive food aid?

4. Did you receive any handouts from government or other organizations prior to World Vision in the past (Give details).

5. When did you first begin to receive food handouts from World Vision?

6a. what effects has food had in your life and members of the household?

6b.Has it improved your health?

6c. Access to income?

7a.Do you ever have extra food? Do you sell it and to whom?

8. What are the food contents you are receiving?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE WITH COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

1. How long has been the community receiving food handout?

2. What projects can be put in place to ensure food security and that the communities become self reliant in the event that WV pulls out?

3. As the custodians of the people are you involved in the selection of food beneficiaries? How are you involved in the selection of beneficiaries?

4. What role has food aid played?

5. Before food aid began and after what differences has food aid made?

6. Do some people get foods, who do not need it?

7. If food aid had to stop what do you think will happen?

8. Would you encourage food aid distribution?

9. In your own opinion, what is the impact of food aid in your area?

10. Since the arrival of food aid are there people who are chronically hungry? Yes/No explain?

11. Do you think government is doing enough to alleviate the problem of food in this area? What else do you think government should do?

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH WORLD VISION MANAGEMENT

1. What are the contents of the food handouts?
2. How many households and people are on your beneficiary register in the entire District?
3. How many metric tonnes of food have you distributed this year?
4. What measures have you put in place to ensure food security at household level in the event that you pull out of the community?
5. What mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that deserving beneficiaries actually receive food handouts?
6. In your own opinion, what is the impact of food in the District (Descriptively)?
7. How is your food distribution going?
8. What do you think is the attitude of people is like towards food aid?
9. How do you select beneficiaries? Take me through the process step by step?

APPENDIX II



Date:…../……./2008

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS)

My name is Leslie Ncube. I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a masters degree in Development Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. The purpose of my study is on exploring the role and impact of food aid in the impoverished households in the district of Gwanda. The research is important for the assessment of the viability food aid programs in Gwanda District.

To be able to do this we I would be grateful if you could allow me to interview you. The interview will last for approximately an hour and thirty minutes and will be tape-recorded. Your participation in this exercise is strictly voluntary and confidential. I will keep personal information about you confidential and will use the information for analysis only. Your name will not appear in any report and no reports will allow anyone to relate the results to you. You have the right to withdraw at any time, if you are not satisfied with the process. Please note that there are no ethical implications or risks attached to your participation.

I will be in touch within a week in order to discuss you participation and arrange for the interview. If you have any questions concerning the interview, or any inquiry, please do not hesitate to contact me on 071 277 0723.

The research will contribute to understanding the role and impact of food aid on the impoverished households of Gwanda District.

Thank you very much for your help.

Kind Regards

APPENDIX II

Date:…../……./2008

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS)

My name is Leslie Ncube. I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a masters degree in Development Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The purpose of my study is on exploring the role and impact of food aid in the impoverished households in the district of Gwanda. The research is important for the assessment of the viability food aid programs in Gwanda District.

To be able to do this we I would be grateful if you could be part of the focus group discussion interview. The discussions will last for approximately and hour and thirty minutes. Your participation in this exercise is voluntary and confidential. There are no risks on you. I will keep personal information from the discussion confidential and will use the information for analysis only. Your name will not appear in any report and no reports will allow anyone to relate results to you. You have the right to continue with the discussions and you can withdraw at any time, if you are not satisfied. Please note that there are no ethical implications or risks attached to your participation.

I will be in touch in a week in order to discuss you participation and arrange for the interview. If you have any questions concerning the interview, or any inquiry, please do not hesitate to contact me on 071 277 0723.

The research will contribute to understanding the role and impact of food aid on the impoverished households of Gwanda District.

Thank you very much for your help.

Kind Regards

APPENDIX III

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I consent to being interviewed by Leslie Ncube for his study on evaluating the impact of World Vision food aid intervention strategy on the impoverished households of Gwanda District. I am fully aware that:

- Participation is voluntary and confidential
- The interview will be tape recorded
- I may withdraw from the interview at any time
- My responses will remain confidential
- No information will be tied to me
- All information presented will be used for analysis only

Name:…….

Date:……

Signature:…….