

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PROLONGED FOOD AID PROGRAMMES ON
VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN ZIMBABWE. A CASE STUDY OF FOOD AID
PROGRAMMING IN WARDS 9 AND 10 OF MATOBO DISTRICT IN SOUTH WESTERN
ZIMBABWE**

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research study is my unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree in Master's in Disaster Management at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein in South Africa. I further declare that the work is submitted for the first time at this university/faculty and that it has never been submitted to any other university/faculty for obtaining a degree. I hereby cede copyright of this product to the University of the Free State.

.....

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On..... day of2011.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my wife, Patience, and my daughters, Gugulethu, Novuyo and Nondumiso

“.....for God has plans for you.....”

ACRONYMS

ACT	Action By Churches Together (Act Alliance)
AGRITEX	Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services
ARDA	Agricultural Rural Development Authority
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CCare	Christian Care
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CF	Conservation Farming
CPU	Civic Protection Unit
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DA	District Administrator
DCA	Dan Church Aid
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ERF	Emergency Relief Fund
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
Fewsnet	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
GOZ	Government of Zimbabwe

ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
IDPs	Internal Displaced Persons
IFRCRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
MC	Matobo Community
MRDC	Matobo Rural District Council
NAC	National Aids Council
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
ORAP	Organization of Rural Association of Progress
PAR	Pressure and Release
PRP	Protracted Relief Programme
SADC	Southern Africa Developmental Community
SAR	South African Rand
SLF	Sustainable Livelihood Framework
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WVI	World Vision International
ZIMVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee

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ABSTRACT

The study was an investigation into the impact of prolonged food aid interventions on households in the Matobo community. The problem was investigated qualitatively using the methodologies of document analysis, focus group discussion, and interviews for triangulation. The findings and results confirmed the theoretical thesis adopted in the study that the persistent vulnerability, poverty and dependency in the Matobo community was a direct result of protracted food aid programming. The study discovered deep seated and strained political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental conditions that have become a threat to achieving improved food security status in the district. In other words, the excessive food aid has tended to paralyse the productive capacities of the communities trapping them in increasing vulnerability, prolonged dependency and ultimately, poverty and outmigration. Consequently, the district is inundated with donors in competition against each other for both the food aid and the 'hungry'. While the programmes are meant to provide temporary insulation against hunger and starvation, their prolonged implementation has modelled a new mindset wholly dependent on food aid, to the extent that food aid is now a way of life to be proud of and commonly, the communities would fight to be included on food aid registers even if they do not qualify, as well as defend it against other alternatives. Given the wholesale entrenchment and contextualization of food aid, the people now firmly believe that they are vulnerable, poor, fragile, exposed and incapacitated. Little by little the food aid programmes rolled out year after year continue the exposure to poverty and dependency. Recommendations to improve the situation embraced mainstream agricultural activities mostly restocking and irrigation, and to a less extent mining and tourism. There is no doubt that more effective, lasting initiatives are called for if the communal community in Zimbabwe, and the Matobo district in particular, is to escape the food aid trap.

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God allowing, I dedicate to use my acquired expertise for the benefit of the poor in the Matobo Community and Zimbabwe in general.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale for the Study

Food is the basic need of all organisms with the demand becoming more complex among top carnivores like humans. With industrialization, humanity has developed complex food intake and consumption patterns from among the six major food groups, principally, to achieve a balanced diet of minimum three meals a day comprising proteins, starch/carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. Anything below this standard signifies food-related problems, especially malnutrition and its related preliminaries and aftermaths of hunger, starvation, famine and poverty.

Sadly, decadal evidence reveals how the food scourges have grown and multiplied in recent times with over a billion people going hungry everyday while 16 000 children die from hunger-related problems daily (FAO, 2011). Through the United Nations (UN) and other multilateral and bi-lateral endeavours, chiefly food aid or food assistance, humanity has responded with strong resolve to assist and emancipate the weak and vulnerable from the predicament of hunger and malnutrition. The bulk of the developing world, and more specifically sub-Saharan Africa, has over the past few decades fluctuated between food surplus and food deficit, with several examples like Somalia, Mali, DR Congo and Zimbabwe migrating to (near) permanent food shortages, necessitating prolonged food aid.

According to the Pressure and Release (PAR) model, food aid is an international phenomenon in response to the interplay of root causes, dynamic pressures and unsafe conditions, on the one hand, and natural hazards on the other, creating disasters and the associated risks, hazards and vulnerability in the process. Consequently, sub-Saharan Africa in general, and Southern Africa in particular, has witnessed an influx of international and national humanitarian agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Care International (CI), World Vision International (WVI), Action By Churches Together (ACT), the

Development Aid People to People (DAPP) to name but a few coming in to implement various food aid interventions in an attempt to save lives and reduce the negative effects of food insecurity (The Sphere Handbook, 2004). At local level, organizations like the Organization of Rural Association for Progress (ORAP), Khulasizwe Trust, CADEC and Christian Care (CCare) have played a significant role in food aid architecture.

In 2009 alone, the humanitarian aid agencies in Zimbabwe appealed for US\$718 million worth of food assistance. This was US\$92 million short of what government was asking for (Fewsnet, 2009). Food production in the past decade has been negatively impacted by economic and political crises as well as by natural disasters. Unprecedented hyper-inflation between 2001 and 2009 and subsequent economic collapse resulted in many public services virtually grinding to a halt (CCare, 2009:13). The commercial supply chain and retail marketing systems were severely disrupted, causing chronic shortages of food and agricultural commodities (Fewsnet, 2009). Along with these factors, recurrent drought and a series of very poor harvests, high unemployment (estimated at more than 80%) and a high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (13.7%) have all contributed to increasing levels of vulnerability, poverty and acute food insecurity in recent years (WFP, 2005). This situation has necessitated large scale food aid operations in the country in particular, in the most acute and drier regions like Matabeleland South and North, Masvingo, western Manicaland and southern Midlands (ZIMVAC, 2010). As a result, more and more vulnerable food aid recipients have become dependent on food aid as a major source of food.

Seven million people (about 80% of the population) were in need of food assistance in 2009. Of these, 47% were undernourished (WFP, 2009). This scenario was aggravated by very low harvests in 2008, which were the worst in the history of the country. This spurred an economic turmoil and increased food aid programmes in their various forms. Government efforts alone could not address the food insecurity in the country, and lost its honourable obligation to assist vulnerable groups. Non-governmental organizations (both national and international) changed the focus of their core-business and concentrated on food handouts as an interim measure to avert the complex disaster (CCare, 1999). What was earlier on a rapid and interim intervention, had seemingly turned into protracted relief efforts due to the compounding protracted disaster

prevailing in the country. According to Maunder (2006:13), *'food insecurity is a moral challenge, vulnerable starving populations have to be fed and yet the protracted relief programmes continue to make more people vulnerable and less productive'*. Questions are being raised as to the effectiveness of food aid programmes in their current thrust, and their appropriateness and sustainability in the advent of NGOs moving out of the affected communities.

1.2 The Concepts of Vulnerability, Poverty, Food Aid and Dependence

From the genesis and state of the problem, a package of chronic-related terms and conditions, embracing vulnerability, poverty, food aid and dependence, has come into the spotlight. The package is virtually synonymous with the weak, disadvantaged and marginalized. The study seeks to explore them in more detail to illustrate the impact of the food aid contagion.

The first is vulnerability, defined as the probability of an acute decline in food access or consumption, often in reference to some critical value that defines minimum levels of human wellbeing (WFP, 2002). Chambers (1993), on the other hand, defines it as “defencelessness, insecurity and exposure to risks, shocks and stress and difficulty in coping with them”. In other words, vulnerability is the inability of people, organizations, and societies to withstand adverse impacts from multiple stressors or shocks to which they are exposed. The impacts are due in part to characteristics inherent in social interactions, institutions and systems of cultural values. In short, the understanding of vulnerability can be summarized as *Vulnerability = Exposure to Risk measured against the Ability to Cope*. In general, the complexity of the food security problem is amplified through focusing on three distinct, but inter-related dimensions of vulnerability: aggregate food availability, household food access and individual food utilization. Exposure to hazards such as drought, conflict, extreme price fluctuations and others result in vulnerability, compounded by factors like the underlying socio-economic processes, which serve to reduce the capacity of populations to cope with those hazards.

The second is poverty, defined as a condition of deprivation or chronic shortage of resources. World Bank (2004) defines poverty as a multi-dimensional phenomenon where the poor suffer from various deprivations that include income poverty, education poverty, health poverty, personal and tenure insecurity and disempowerment. According to Mnkandla (1997), there are four main types of poverty. First, is absolute poverty, which is a condition of sheer need, consequently with many people surviving below the subsistence minimum; two, is induced poverty, which arises from an unjust economic system such as slavery, apartheid and colonialism, or from skewed decision-making that enriches some sectors of society while impoverishing others; three, is emergency poverty, which arises from hazards and disasters like wars, floods, droughts and earthquakes; and lastly, is relative or perceived poverty, which is a function of personal possessions or positional goods. Globally, both absolute and induced poverty are the most studied being the worst menaces since local conditions may lack the internal stimuli to overcome the poverty, although emergency poverty has increasingly become very problematic as well (Ibid.).

‘Need’ is the most pronounced determinant of poverty. Socially, the Bradshaw Theory of Needs (1972) talks of four broad categories of need, namely *normative* need, which is a knowledge-based standard ideally set, defined and desired by professionals, policy makers and technocrats against which everything and everybody else is compared. Those below it are then said to be poor and in need of support and special services to bring them up. Second, is *felt* need basically unconscious need equated to what the people want or what service users or potential users wish to have. It is common in marginalized groups and can remain latent indefinitely. Third, is *expressed* need defined as full blown demand with stakes raised over unmet need. Lastly, *comparative* need is relative need, perceived in terms of whether one has the same or worse characteristics as others receiving the service. Consequently, pseudo, spatial and actual needs develop, and it is the presence of all types that signifies real need and therefore poverty, deserving support. Of late, the term ‘human security’ has progressively replaced need to define the ambient conditions more succinctly and poverty permutations across SSA.

Figure 1.1 sums up the spectre of poverty as a crisis of deprivation or crisis of resource insufficiency otherwise enjoyed by other sectors of society. As Mnkandla (1997) puts it, whatever the cause, poverty starts off with the inability by the poor parents to support their offspring, whose lack of requisite skills exposes them to many disadvantages like unemployment, poor jobs, poor business skills plus more, which further generates more insecurity and vulnerability, slowly creating a vicious cycle of deprivation and vulnerability from one generation to the next, with cause and effect vicious cycle, strengthening itself until there is no beginning and no end (Atkinson, 1998). According to Chambers (1993), the poverty clusters comprise physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability, and powerlessness. When the five clusters interact, then they point to extreme poverty and increasing dependency.

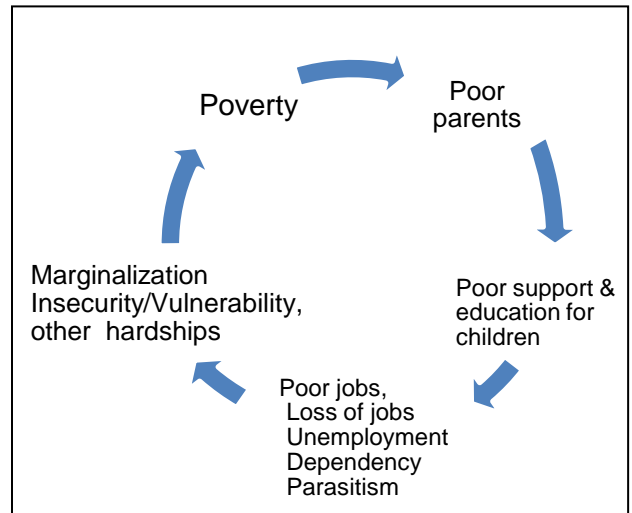


Fig 1.1 The Poverty Cycle
(Source: Mnkandla, 1997)

There are various methods used to measure poverty. They include the Human Development Index (HDI), the Human Poverty Index (HPI) for both developed and developing nations, Gender Related Empowerment Measures (Maxwell, 1998) and the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) by UNEP (2009). According to the HDI, extreme or absolute poverty is when a given population lives below US\$1 per day which is characteristic of the Matobo community. Such communities have come under the umbrella of food aid.



Fig 1.2 Africa's extreme

Three is food aid, defined by Maxwell (1982) as external help from foreign governments or originating from a donor country, while Young (1992) views it as “*all food-supported*

interventions aimed at improving the food security of people living in poverty in the short and long term, whether funded via international, national, public or private resources". Young's definition was adopted at The Berlin Conference on food aid for Sustainable Food Security in September, 2003. Throughout history communities have assisted and rescued each other during times of food shortages. The Bible provides examples of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt where the Jews sojourned following a great famine during the times of Moses and Jacob. Across Southern Africa, societies engaged in barter deals, while others such as the Ndebele engaged in violent raids for food. During the memorable hunger of 1947, for the first time, people across Southern Africa ate yellow maize, which has since then come to be known as Kenya; presumably it was relief from Kenya. Equally, rural-urban migrants are well known to support their source regions with massive food aid. However, of late, the phenomenon of food aid has intensified becoming big political and economic business, even fomenting threats of war.

In 2007, to boost food security, the UN came up with the '*New Deal for a Global Food Policy*' with specific highlights on:

- emergency measures to meet immediate food needs of people hit by crisis (through the WFP)
- social protection programmes, particularly for groups at risk
- supplying farmers with seed and fertilizer for the next planting season
- developing insurance systems for farmers
- abandonment of export restriction policies
- structural support for agriculture (through advice and research, post-harvest protection, irrigation, rural infrastructure, productive investment, etc)
- improving the investment climate to encourage the private sector, and boost retail and wholesale companies' value-added chains
- reviewing the bio-fuel policies in the G8 countries
- successful conclusion of the WTO Doha Round, and ensuring international transparency and coordination of national grain reserve policies.

The policy runs across the entire spectrum of food aid – emergency relief, project food aid and programme food aid. On the local landscape, increasing investment in food aid has been justified

given the total picture and magnitude of Zimbabwe's economic decay. NGOs have crafted programmes codenamed Protracted Relief Programmes (PRP) and Emergency Relief Fund (ERF), to ensure that more resources are channelled towards consumption in order to save lives and reduce suffering of the vulnerable communities (UN-OCHA, 2010). The argument then is whether the increasing resources be channelled towards food aid on a yearly basis or rather they be channelled towards the productive sectors of the economy. In short, this brings into question what really motivates increased funding for prolonged food aid programmes by humanitarian agencies.

Lastly, is dependency defined as a condition when the society's adaptive capacity is weakened, destabilizing its institutions and causing massive shifts in the livelihood dynamics, often reverting to less complex methods or child-like systems of survival using simple technology. Since colonial times sub-Saharan Africa has been labelled a philanthropic zone highly dependent on, and sustained by donor aid. For instance the withdrawal of British aid to Malawi in 2010 created a crisis that sparked riots as the poor country suddenly found itself short of balance of payment support. Equally, while it can be argued that Zimbabwe is out of the emergency phase, an increasing number of vulnerable populations, particularly in the drier regions of the country, continue to register for food assistance and government will continue to rely on programme support to offset the yearly food deficit. Accordingly, in line with The Sphere Handbook (2004), there is full dependence in the sense that the people have come to rely on, count on, bank on, and put all their faith and trust in the government and donors, which is the objective of humanitarian aid to save lives and alleviate suffering during times of acute risk to people's livelihoods. Given this understanding and appreciation, it would appear that being able to depend on assistance, being provided for is a good thing (WFP, 2006).

Characteristically, primary, chronic and progressive dependencies afflict the communities in varying magnitudes. Primary dependency is associated with seasonal shortfalls in food supplies creating comparative need. Although it can be treated, chronic dependency is a lifelong ailment with the people unable to exit food aid. Lastly, with progressive dependency, the physical, emotional and socio-economic problems associated with food aid simply get worse unless very

drastic measures are put in place. The society has sunk into perennial receivers. Their lives are determined by food aid without which they are lifeless. The Matobo community condition is one of chronic and progressive dependency, characterized by the influx of humanitarian organizations coming in to provide food aid under the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) schemes, Schools Feeding (SF) and the feeding of those living with Chronic Ailments (CFGB, 2007).

Summed up, the four variables dominate the food aid spectrum, driving and influencing each other in complex webs and relationships. As the analysis shows, notionally, the difference between them is razor thin. Nonetheless, vulnerability leads the pack, followed by poverty and food aid, which then breeds the dependence syndrome. The study considered them ideal indicators regarding the impact of prolonged food aid. The quartet reigns supreme across the sub-Saharan landscape creating depraved, colonised mindsets of hopelessness, perpetual cry-babies and debilitating consciousness tantamount to vassalage, and the Matobo district is no exception. Consequently, the people are less useful to themselves, perhaps by chance, they are more useful to other people or to whoever finds them. Among the many causes, bad governance, both local and national, stands above them all, constantly blamed as lying behind the depredation.

1.3 Delimitation of the Study

The study focuses on two wards in the Matobo district, ward 9-Bambanani and ward 10-Makhasa, both in ecological region 5, covering an area of approximately 350km² (see figure 1.3). The wards have experienced protracted food insecurity situation and rank as the worst affected wards and most vulnerable under the WFP food insecurity ranking (UN, 2004). For over a decade the wards continue to receive food assistance from numerous donors. For instance compared to the other wards in the district, ORAP claims their widest coverage of households receiving food handouts on a yearly basis is from the two target wards. It is the two wards that have suffered the highest number of HIV/Aids related deaths and increased outward movement

of able bodied groups. The two wards have witnessed a plethora of humanitarian agencies offering various forms of agricultural inputs over the years, but with very little change in terms of the food security situation. Christian Care, Dabane Trust and Khulasizwe Trust are other NGOs conduct various forms of food security programmes that include nutrition gardens and livestock restocking programmes. Besides a long history of food crises, the two wards experience uniformity of climatic and ecologic conditions, population distribution and the target area would therefore make it easier for the researcher to find a representative sample. This variable will enhance the reliability of results.

The study used the right points of entry, that is, the D.A's office, the C.E.O of the Rural District Council, the ward councillors, community leadership and also the current active programmes by humanitarian organizations namely, WVI, CCare, ORAP and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). The study confines itself to a time frame of eleven years from 1999.

1.4 The Research Hypothesis

The study's theoretical thesis was that the persistent vulnerability, poverty, and dependence in the Matobo community were a direct function of protracted food aid programming. Put another way, there is a strong relationship between poor methods of food production, eroded livelihoods, food aid and poverty perpetuation in the Matobo community. The excess food aid has tended to paralyze the communities into poverty, increasing vulnerability and prolonged dependence.

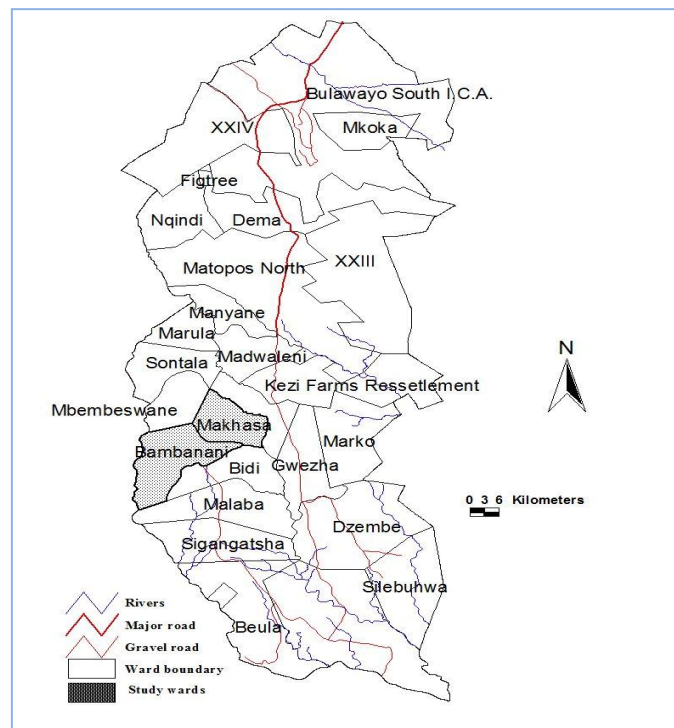


Fig. 1.3: the study area (Source, GIS Lab- ICRISAT)

1.4.1 Research questions

The following research questions were used to investigate the problem:

- What is the relationship between vulnerability poverty, and prolonged food aid in the Matobo community?
- What indicators show the positive and negative impacts of prolonged food aid programmes?
- What options are available to the communities to enhance their livelihoods?
- What are the views of donors and the communities on prolonged food aid programmes?
- What recommendations can be introduced to promote viable and sustainable options for communities?

1.4.2 Research objective

The overall goal of the research study was to explore the relationship between poverty and vulnerability on the one hand, and food aid interventions on the other, and to identify ways of reducing dependency on food aid by vulnerable households in the Matobo community.

Summed up, as already highlighted, the theoretical thesis of the study is that there is a close relationship between poverty and increasing vulnerability levels versus protracted food aid in the Matobo district. Accordingly, the study sought to investigate the causes and impact of the prolonged food aid programmes as well as recommend viable and sustainable interventions that can both address poverty and vulnerability issues, while at the same time reducing acute dependence on food handouts.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study acknowledges the existence of a large body of knowledge and literature on the subject of food aid and dependency. It was the intention of this study to trigger further discussion and research and to contribute to the building of new knowledge on the subject matter. It is hoped that as a result of this study, further research would suggest more sustainable food aid

interventions that will not only reduce dependency, but would mitigate against future hunger, poverty and the negative effects of climate change.

The study would help challenge humanitarian agencies, government and local communities to begin to engage and interact for the common good of all citizens. Increased participation of beneficiary communities in programmes that are meant to benefit them is more likely to result in sustainable interventions. It is hoped the study will contribute to improved capacities and resilience of vulnerable communities against future drought and related disasters. The researcher's analytic skills necessary for the accomplishment of his humanitarian and developmental work will be enhanced by this study.

1.6 Assumptions

The study assumed that a friendly political environment would prevail right throughout the duration of the study to allow for free movement and interactions with the local population across the study areas. Communities would be open about their situations and the circumstances they found themselves in. Also assumed was the fact that food aid would continue normally whether justifiable or not.

1.7 Conclusion

The study sought to explore the currency and merits of prolonged food aid, to find out its dynamics and impact on the Matobo rural community. Thus far the evidence revealed that the food aid permeated the community system, was justified on the grounds of poverty and in turn, the community embraced it with open arms. That then, was the realm of the investigation which contextual purpose was to build an interpretative understanding of the issues of prolonged food aid and their implications for policy and livelihoods. The next chapter explores the subject further through an extensive review of the literature, which then guided the fieldwork.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Genesis of Food Aid

Throughout history communities have assisted and rescued each other during times of food shortages. The history of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia are classical examples of people moving to food aid resources in contrast to today when food aid is brought to the suffering. While some societies engage in barter deals others deliberately raid for food. The population versus food debate is generally accredited to Malthus (1766-1831) who set the alarm bells ringing in his *Essay on the Principle of Population* also called the ‘Malthusian Hypothesis’ or ‘Malthusianism’ or the ‘Malthusian Population Growth Model’. Malthus argued that the human population was reproducing faster than its means of subsistence (food, land, jobs, etc) upon which it was so dependent. Of major concern, therefore, was that food supply was limited as it only grew at an arithmetic progression compared to population growth which grew at a geometric ratio. With time the latter would catch up and overtake the former leading to untold human suffering from hunger, starvation, vice and misery. To avoid such a crisis of mass deaths, there were two alternatives centred on voluntary population control versus involuntary control. In the former the people willingly limited family sizes. If that failed then the only alternative was involuntary control through pestilence, hunger, disease, exposure and war. In his view, it was not necessary for populations to experience such a state of severe human waste.

Malthusianism generated further theory in the likes of Darwinism and Marxism. On one hand, Darwinism pushed the Malthusian Hypothesis forward, arguing that species were indeed involved in a continuous struggle for existence with those best ‘fitted’ standing the best chance of survival, failing they perish since they had a tendency to multiply much faster than nature could provide for them – the theory of evolution. On the other hand, to counter Malthus, Marx (1818-83) argued that the problem was not population growth, but the ownership of the means of production and relations of exchange. By creating a working class, the bourgeoisie deliberately

created shortages and thereby impoverished other people for the benefit of the few. He in turn advanced state ownership as the way forward to curb rampant capitalism and dominion by monopolies offering workers a fair share in the means of production.

The see-saw influence of the different philosophies has been far reaching with so much debate for and against each one of them having ensued over the centuries. The development agenda since the 1970s has intensified the population-resources debate. Wolfram (n.d.) sums up the controversy in terms of several perspectives:

- *The Developmentalist Perspective* which contends that rapid population growth obstructs development as valuable resources are diverted from productive expenditure to feed growing populations. Nonetheless, development is good as it solves the population problem. Hence, intensifying it will eventually establish the requisite eco-balance. For decades now, the dominance of this perspective has influenced many socio-environmental activities, including food aid.
- *The Redistributionist Perspective* which contends that only far-reaching social reforms addressing equity and other eco-social values will resolve the population-resources-environment problem.
- *The Limited Resources Perspective* which argues that there are insufficient resources to go round; the environment cannot sustain the large population numbers, hence catastrophes are bound to happen.
- *The Socio-Biological Perspective* which states that population growth is a pathological problem, a serious threat not only to the environment, but to health and lifestyles. It recommends strict immigration control from poor countries and questions the wisdom of stopping wars and cutting down the high mortality rates.
- *The People-as-a-Source-of-Instability Perspective* which again argues that rapid population growth poses a threat to global stability. The poverty breeds frustrations that lead to violent protests and potentially stimulates conflicts, wars and terrorism.
- *The Women and Human Rights Perspective* which argues that the high birth rates are directly linked to denying women decision-making and other essential human rights. It is not their

wish to have many children, but exclusion from power and from access to safe reproductive technologies forces them to do so.

- *The People-as-Problem-Solvers Perspective* which sees people as the wealth of the state, potentially able to stimulate economic growth and innovation. So, more people mean more problem solvers whose creativity is critical to overcome natural and human limits.
- *The Religious Pro-Natalist Perspective* which unequivocally argues for pro-creation as a God-given, fundamental right that should not be interfered with whatsoever. The high fertility rates are good for the South in particular to balance power relations and counter Western domination of global affairs.

Singularly and collectively, these perspectives enter into international, regional and national debates vis-à-vis the distribution and allocation of resources, in particular food resources, including food aid. While the Malthusian hypothesis was concerned with the consumer rather than a producer; with the belly rather than two hands; of a machine for eating rather than manufacturing, modern trends shifted to culturing *Homo Economicus*, to humanitarianism— the ethic of kindness, humaneness, benevolence and sympathy extended universally and impartially to all human beings. In indigenous parlance it means *umuntu*, *abantu*, *ubuntu/hunhu/boto*. In the former, it was feared that if pauperism was left unchecked, it would speedily devour all the national wealth, and turn nature into a wasteland. Today concern is on the collective interests and welfare of all people on earth.

According to Shaw (2001:67), food aid has become a global phenomenon with large quantities of food moving towards populations in distress as opposed to historical times where populations would move toward food sources. Historically, people secured food through basically two methods: hunting and gathering and through agriculture. These methods evolved over time due to population increase and pressures on resources. Today hunting and gathering have been replaced by the industrialization of the food industry by multi-national corporations that employ intensive farming techniques to maximize output and profits. Across Southern Africa, societies engage in barter deals or violent raids for food such as the Ndebele, and so on. During the memorable hunger of 1947, for the first time, people across southern Africa ate yellow maize

since then known as Kenya, presumably relief from Kenya. Equally, rural-urban migrants were well known to support their source regions with massive food aid. However, of late, the phenomenon of Food Aid had intensified becoming big political and economic business, even fomenting social conflicts (the politics of food).

2.2 International and Regional Rationalization of Food Aid

Founded in 1961, the World Food Programme (WFP) is a food aid branch of the United Nations and ranks the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger worldwide. According to WFP (2009), the organization feeds on average 90 million people per year (58 million of them children) in over 78 countries. WFP works with vulnerable populations that are not able to produce or obtain enough food for themselves and their families. According to FAO (2009), WFP works to achieve the following goals: i) to save lives in refugee and other emergency situations, ii) to improve nutrition and quality of life for the most vulnerable people in critical times in their lives and iii) to help build assets and promote self-reliance of poor people and communities. These are the very objectives of the Humanitarian Charter as stipulated in the Sphere Handbook (2004) that guide humanitarian agencies in responding to communities affected by disasters of various kinds. The right to food is a human right derived from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) that recognizes the '*right to adequate standard of living, including adequate food*' as well as the '*fundamental right to be free from hunger*' (ICESCR). WFP has the UN mandate to coordinate international efforts in distributing food aid to the neediest countries and populations.

Food deprivation leads to malnutrition and ultimately starvation and is connected to famine which is the entire absence of food in the affected communities. Starvation and famine have devastating effects on human health resulting in mortality. They have become a significant problem internationally with Africa the worst hit. According to Marcus (2003), corroborated by the FAO (2011), approximately 815 million people worldwide are undernourished and over 16,000 children die per day from hunger-related causes. Further, according to Shaw (2001), the WFP distributed four million metric tons of food aid to 87.8 million people in 78 countries at a

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cost of US\$2.9billion. Of these, 63.4 million were under emergency operations, which included victims of conflict, natural disasters and economic failure. The worst affected countries were Eritrea, Somalia, The Sudan and Zimbabwe to name a few. In 2009 the WFP reported that Africa remains the highest recipient of food aid, with The Sudan, for example, receiving US\$685 million to feed 5.5 million people, 2.8 million of them in the Darfur region alone. These alarming figures call for desperate measures, hence the prolonged and protracted food aid interventions particularly amongst the poorer nations like Zimbabwe.

While food can be procured from anywhere in the world, WFP works to build local economies by purchasing food aid from local farmers as part of its local community empowerment programme. It coordinates and cooperates with a number of official partners like DFID, Europe Aid, ECHO, CRS, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), FAO and others to distribute food globally. Resource limitations curtail the procurement of sufficient supplies often leading to cuts in food aid as happened to Liberia and Ivory Coast in 2007. Bilateral food aid transactions transcend UN agencies to include government agencies like AUSAID, USAID, CIDA, SIDA, DFID, and South Africa Aid, etc.

Across sub-Saharan Africa, the great Ethiopian famine of 1983-5 and the long Mozambique war (1975 – 92) were wake up calls regarding the emergence of a food crisis in Africa as a result of prolonged droughts and wars. Satellite imagery revealed hordes of severely emaciated women and children with many dying from exposure to hunger and malnutrition. The international community was shocked by the revelation and resultant emergency response was set in motion. As a result of droughts and internecine wars such as that in Mozambique and Liberia, the hunger-famine phenomenon has since escalated, accelerated by the phenomena of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), both of which desperately needed food assistance. The UN, through its agencies like the UNHCR, UNDP and the WFP in collaboration with state parties, and other multilateral and bilateral organizations, the international community responded to the crises with the requisite food aid resources. Recently in Somalia, the Great Lakes region and Zimbabwe, the vagaries of environmental disasters have condemned up to 17 million people to hunger and famine necessitating more food aid reaching the continent. This has borne what has come to be called the ‘Donor Aid Community’ (DAC) made up of countries like USA, the

European Commission (EC) and its member states, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Australia and South Africa who have become prominent donors responding not only to food crises, but also to numerous other emergencies across the globe.

This has placed food aid right at the forefront of the international arena where it is not only big political and economic business, but also an extensive humanitarian project among both the DAC and non-DAC. There is overwhelming concurrence on the notion 'need' as a basic human right and hence, as the most pronounced determinant of food aid. As indicated in the previous chapter, socially, the Bradshaw (1972) spectrum of needs is the most applied whereby the existence of all the four forms of need in a given situation qualifies for assistance. Food is a common feature in all four whether normative, felt, expressed or comparative needs. Those below the level, or without or agitating for the resource are said to be poor and in need of support and special services to support them. Sub-Saharan Africa, with widespread marginalized groups, is a cauldron of all the forms of need with high stakes over unmet need. Hardly a day passes by without a sad story about hunger and starvation in some parts of the sub-continent, and given the rising vagaries of both man-made and natural disasters, the hot spots are escalating rather than declining. The long and short of it is that poverty reigns supreme.

According to Harvey, *et al.* (2010), global food aid deliveries by governments, NGOs and WFP stood at 13 million metric tonnes in 1990, peaked at nearly 18 million Mt in 1993, dropped to 8million Mt in 1997, rose to 15 million Mt in 1999, and since then fluctuated down slope in much of the last decade reaching 7 million Mt in 2008. The USA is the leading donor or supplier of the food aid amounting to US\$2 billion in 1999, followed by the EC with US\$340 million, while the rest of the US\$5.4 billion came from the other top donor countries. Table 1 shows sub-Saharan Africa's major food aid recipients 2007-8. Ethiopia represents the opposite extreme where food aid is actually increasing, while Uganda seems to have registered a remarkable decline, although it is difficult to say whether this is on a sustainable basis. In the other countries aid fluctuates with demand and whether there are good or poor harvests. The food assistance instruments include direct food-based transfers (such as general rations, food for work, supplementary and therapeutic feeding, neonates and school feeding), subsidies, food stamps,

cash vouchers, food for training, asset programmes or agricultural and livestock support. Other instruments like provision of seed, fertilizer subsidies and extension services may or may not count for food assistance, and so too are aspects of nutritional intervention (Harvey, *et al.*, 2010). Both policy and practice are increasingly focused on quality and quantity of assistance provided, explicitly to address the immediate need of the beneficiary targets, usually the hungry or malnourished consumers.

TABLE 1: MAJOR RECIPIENTS OF FOOD AID (METRIC TONNES), 2008-2007

Country	2008 Mt (ooo)	%	2007 Mt (ooo)	%	% Change
Ethiopia	580	16	915	19	58
Sudan	491	13	673	14	37
Zimbabwe	157	4	344	7	119
Somalia	93	2	326	7	252
Uganda	238	6	159	3	-33

(Source: Harvey, *et al.*, 2010)

In Southern Africa, countries like Malawi, Tanzania, Mozambique, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe have all suffered various natural and man-made disasters that have necessitated food aid programmes to reduce suffering amongst the most vulnerable of the communities. For Angola and Mozambique mostly, the civil conflicts were responsible for increasing dependency on food aid, as communities were displaced due to protracted wars. For Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the trend has been a factor of both political and economic mismanagement by subsequent governments. Colonialism and apartheid systems crippled community safety nets and created dependent communities who even lost love of their staple food, and took on alien foods for their survival. Internal displacements, land tenure systems and governance structures all helped create communities too dependent on foreign aid than to produce their own food effectively. The countries referred to above are endowed with mineral and other forms of wealth, but surprisingly they are not in a position to feed themselves, because they do not control the means of production. All productive land was acquired by colonialism while local populations were driven out and concentrated on marginal and unproductive lands.

Zimbabwe, once a bread basket for the sub region has turned into a gross beggar and importer of food in recent years. Zimbabwe imported food quantities worth US\$ 383.17 million in 2006 and

the trend continues to worsen year after year. This figure constituted over 23% of total imports into the country. Food imports included maize, wheat, cereals, soya beans, sorghum, sunflower seed, dry beans and peas (FAOSTAT, 2006). Given the economic meltdown, government had re-engaged its obligation to feed its citizens resulting in a justified plethora of humanitarian agencies flooding the country with food aid to save lives and reduce suffering (FAO, 2006).

The international community and especially the UN agencies and international donor organizations have in the past five years described the situation in Zimbabwe as protracted and a complex emergency (Chipika, 2006). The population of Zimbabwe has gone through very difficult times in recent years due to protracted droughts, internal displacements caused by political violence and a food crisis deepened by the widespread shortages of agricultural inputs such as seed and fertilizers. As a result, the country's current food insecurity situation is one of the worst recorded in Zimbabwe's history (UN-OCHA, 2009). According to UN-OCHA (2009) Zimbabwean Report, this situation necessitates and justifies the need for emergency assistance to help increase the country's production of main cereals and pulses. OCHA argues in the same report that without emergency assistance, food insecurity will worsen with severe humanitarian consequences, necessitating increased Food Aid programmes for the country. This fulfils the humanitarian Charter which calls for the need to save lives in times of such crises (The Sphere Handbook, 2004).

The international agencies source food and provide food pipelines for distribution through national NGOs (their counterparts). Food pipelines from international donor agencies include WFP, UN-OCHA, FAO, Canadian Food Grains Bank (CFGB), USAID, Help from Germany, ORAP, CRS, and WVI. A local consortium of national or local NGOs that works with the international agencies include Christian Care, ORAP, Goal Zimbabwe, Christian Alliance Church, Khulasizwe Trust, Zimbabwe Red Cross Society, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Dabane Trust, CADEC, Sikhethimpilo, and Jairos Jiri Association, to name but a few.

Zimbabwe is a land-locked country whose economy was once agro-based (until the chaotic land reform programme, political mayhem and economic meltdown since 1999). Before then, the

worst devastating drought in Zimbabwe of 1992 left a trail of crippled livelihoods across the country. Agro-ecological regions IV and V, where Matobo District is located saw more than half the region's livestock decimated (MoLARR, 1989). Generally, the country is rain deficient and relies heavily on subsistence farming especially in agro-ecological regions IV and V where climate is characterized by aridity, long dry spells and unpredictable erratic rains due to the effects of climatic change.

Agro-ecological regions IV and V are characterized by erratic rainfall, long dry spells, increasing aridity year after year owing to the effects of the global phenomenon of climatic change. Crop production in regions IV and V is only possible under irrigation, but the economic collapse in the past ten years has seen very little improvement in infrastructural development in terms of dam construction. Annual rainfall in the two agro-zones range between 300-450mm per year and is unevenly distributed during the rainy season, and too low to sustain even drought tolerant crops like sorghum and millet (Ncube, 2011).

Over 75% of the population is rural based with limited arable land exposed to various types of natural, epidemiological and human induced hazards, which have occurred with increasing frequency in the past decade (FAO, 2004). Zimbabweans, particularly the poor, are vulnerable to shocks and hazards such as floods, droughts, epidemics and population displacements that are due to natural or human induced emergencies. The political and socio-economic landscape further compounds social vulnerabilities of the poor. More and more vulnerable populations are subjected to acute humanitarian needs, such as no access to safe drinking water and sanitation in rural areas, food insecurity and fragile livelihoods (Oxfam Canada, 2009). Zimbabwe's dependence on natural unprocessed resources and rain-fed agriculture makes the country highly vulnerable to climate changes (Fewsnet, 2009).

As reflected above, prolonged food aid has become a feature of Zimbabwe's rural areas of Manicaland, Masvingo, parts of the Midlands and Matabeleland North and South, while more sporadic in urban areas. The devastating droughts of 1982, 1992, 2002 and subsequently, 2006-2011, coupled with the worst economic collapse in the past ten years, have left a trail of crippled livelihoods across the country. While some regions have the capacity to spring back to

productivity, agro-ecological regions IV and V, which include the Matobo district, have been the worst hit with entire assets like livestock heads (cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys, etcetera) completely decimated (MoLARR, 1989; Mnkandla, 1997; Ncube, 2011). Matobo district failed to register any meaningful harvests for over a decade now because of the persistent droughts and effects of climatic change. In spite of crops like maize continuing to be total right-offs, the communities continue to grow them year in and year out, reaping the same results all the time. It is evident that the hard line attitudes contribute to the food demise and hence, the dilemma of food aid. The deterioration has continued with very little improvement in infrastructural development in terms of dam construction and irrigation schemes.

2.3 Synthesis of the Philosophy of Food Aid

The rationalization of food aid is based on three models, namely project food aid, programme food aid and emergency food aid (Shaw & Clay, 1993; Harvey, *et al.*, 2010). Each category has its own set of legislation procedures, sources of funding, and methods of operation (Ncube, 2010).

Firstly, project food aid is defined as food aid meant to support specific identified projects (Sijm, 1997: 465). This type may entail food for work (FFW) projects. It is clear then that this type of food aid is a precondition for sustainable development, nutrition projects for building capital. The question that arises is what motivates participation in the projects and who identifies the project to be developed? Another question that needs answers is: will participants continue to work on development projects if rations were cut or removed? *Cash for food* (a related concept to Project Food Aid) is money given to targeted beneficiaries for the purchase of food in the local markets. Money is paid after work on identified development projects. This method of food aid tends to enhance the local market (World Vision, 2011). Shaw and Clay (1993: 2) observe that Project Food Aid is aimed at transferring cash or income to the poor or satisfying their minimum national needs in normal years. This type of food is often distributed by NGOs and provided on a grant basis to specific beneficiaries selected from a given population. It assists to meet the additional demand for food generated by its support for development initiatives.

Secondly, programme food aid is another method or form of food aid. It can be described as food aid meant to support the balance of payments, government budget and the implementation of structural policy reform (Sijm, 1997:473). This type is provided as a grant or on a soft loan repayment terms exclusively on bilateral basis (government to government). For the United States of America (US), this food aid becomes a donation or credit sale of US commodities to developing countries and emerging democracies to support the democratization of institutions, and for private sector expansion. Once this type of food aid has landed at the recipient government, it is then sold in local markets and this process is also called 'monetization'. Monetization is simply the sale of donated food in order to obtain currency for other developmental programmes, including health, water, agriculture, HIV and Aids, microfinance or direct food security (USAID, 2006:1). The revenue generated through the sale of donated food is used to support developmental programmes and it does contribute meaningfully and positively to food security and long-term development. According to Sijm (1997), programme food aid has been the most popular over the years and between 1980 and 1992, it constituted 55% of global food aid.

Lastly, emergency food aid is food aid provided in response to a sudden, major shortfall in food production due to natural or man-made disasters such as droughts, floods or wars. Emergency food aid is defined as food used for humanitarian disasters or conflict (Young & Abbott, 2005:1). It constitutes immediate relief actions by implementers and has become the most important category of total food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa in recent years (Sijm, 1997:469). In Zimbabwe, it has actually been christened Protracted Relief Programmes given the complexity of the hazards facing the country. The country remains in an emergency situation after several years of food aid, hence the term 'protracted relief operations'. The other term that best describes this type of food aid is 'In-kind commodity' (WVI, 2011). It is the physical food procured and delivered to vulnerable populations. According to US policy and understanding, emergency food aid means the supply of agricultural commodities to meet emergency food needs. This initiative may be carried out on a government to government basis (bilateral agreements) or through private and public institutions or intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations like UN agencies (USAID, 2006). The disturbing development in the past decade has been over reliance on this

type of food aid. By 2004, about 75% of all food sent to sub-Saharan Africa was emergency food aid (Maunder, 2006: VI). The fact that this type is supposed to be short term assistance means that protracted emergency relief is likely to breed dependence, and contribute to the paralysis of sustainable livelihood systems and options.

It is critical to understand these forms of food aid and in the light of the above analysis, it is incumbent upon governments to promote food aid policies that will reduce dependence on food aid, and promote and motivate home grown solutions to tackling food insecurity. Zimbabwe, once an exporter of food surplus, is today dependent on food aid, an undesirable state of affairs that must be interrogated for meaningful interventions to occur in a bid to create a conducive climate to produce sufficient food for all citizens and surplus for export. The ‘humanitarian’ system must be overhauled so that it is truly able to deliver prompt, effective assistance on the basis of need. Aid must support people’s livelihoods as well as meeting the immediate needs of the hungry (Oxfam International, 2006). The stop-start approach as happens in Zimbabwe year after year must give way to longer term support, wherever possible delivered through governments as part of their wider social protection programmes, backed of course by reliable funding. It would appear governments of poor nations including Zimbabwe have reneged on this issue as evidenced by lack of clear cut policies to promote food security.

Paramount is that the quality given should be of higher nutritional value, traditional comprising cereal, pulses and oils. Cereals may be distributed as grain that requires milling or it may be distributed in its processed form (flour). For special groups like school children, malnourished children or chronically ill beneficiaries, it may be distributed as wet rations. Cereals are rice, barley, maize or wheat depending on the cultural preferences of the host beneficiary country. This line of thought has over the years been violated by donor nations, who provided cereals culturally unacceptable to recipient communities (ORAP, 2010). ORAP in Matobo district distributes barley instead of maize resulting in some beneficiaries using it as chicken feed because it is considered unpalatable and unsuitable.

2.4 Criticism of the Food Aid Discourse

The rationalization of food aid has translated into more democratization of the resource to ensure sustainable livelihoods. According to Chambers (1993) livelihoods comprise the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. As he puts it, a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope and recover from stress and shocks. Carmey (1998) extends the argument by noting that sustainable livelihoods should therefore maintain or enhance their capabilities and assets both now and in the future. As a means of thinking about the objectives, scope and priorities for development, the sustainable livelihoods approaches place people and their priorities at the centre of development. They focus on poverty reduction and interventions on empowering the poor to build on their own opportunities, supporting their access to assets and developing an enabling policy and institutional environment. Carney and Farrington (1999:26) suggest that the variables constitute the core principles behind the livelihoods approaches and underpin best practice in any development intervention. However, in general and in tandem with this view, livelihood approaches are premised on the following conceptual framework principles:

- The priorities that people define or perceive as their desired livelihood outcomes.
- Their access to social, human, physical, financial and natural capital or assets and their ability to put these to productive use.
- The different strategies they adopt and how they use assets in pursuit of their priorities.
- The policies, institutions and processes that shape their access to assets and opportunities.
- The context in which they live and factors affecting vulnerability to shocks and stresses.

Numerous models such as the Pressure and Release model (PAR) and the Turner Model have been designed to enlarge the food aid network. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) is the work of various international agencies that include Oxfam and others. It was adopted by the Department for International Development (DFID) in 1990

after building on the work of other agencies. It can be adapted to suit a variety of contexts, issues, priorities and applications. The DFID Sustainable Livelihood Framework, shown in figure 2.1 below is one such example. It is a tool to improve our understanding of livelihoods, particularly the livelihoods of the poor (DFID, 1990). It links sustainable livelihoods to basic human needs, food security, sustainable agricultural practices and general poverty reduction (Carmey, 1998). As figure 2.1 shows, several variables come into play. They include the vulnerability context of the poor marked by shocks, trends, seasonality which drive the livelihood assets (human, social, physical, natural and finance/capital) whose influence and access help in transforming structures and processes like governance systems and social institutions.

From here livelihood strategies emerge in order to achieve the desired livelihood outcomes of more incomes, increased wellbeing, improved security and so on. The advantage of the SLF is that it provides a holistic framework to assess the sustainability of livelihood strategies adopted by poor people like those resident in Matobo district. People come first and are at the centre of development, hence the need to support their livelihood strategies. It also helps identify other strengths, which can be present within the community that can be developed and utilized for the good of the community instead of depending on food aid from humanitarian and government agencies. Further, it is ideal for planning interventions, reviewing and evaluating projects, research, policy analysis and development. It has been adapted in the investigation of the problem as the analysis below indicates.

According to the DFID SLF, the vulnerability context in the Matobo district comprises the small population of 110,000 according to the 2002 census, the majority of whom have migrated. Geographically it lies in agro-ecological regions IV and V characterized by low and erratic rainfall averaging 344mm/annum. Typical weather phenomena consist of prolonged, intense droughts, poor rainfall distribution, very high temperatures and increased evaporation rates. Vegetation is mainly acacia savannah with of low and limited carrying capacity. As a result, wilting vegetation, dwindling water tables, heavy siltation, and significant damage to the local economy are very pronounced. Like other communal areas, the district is open to numerous shocks, chiefly, human health shocks, natural shocks, economic shocks, crop/livestock health

shocks and political shocks. For instance, tens of thousands of the people drink from unprotected water sources which situation, taken further, means that if getting clean water is so difficult, water for crop productivity, which is needed in large quantities will be even more difficult to access.

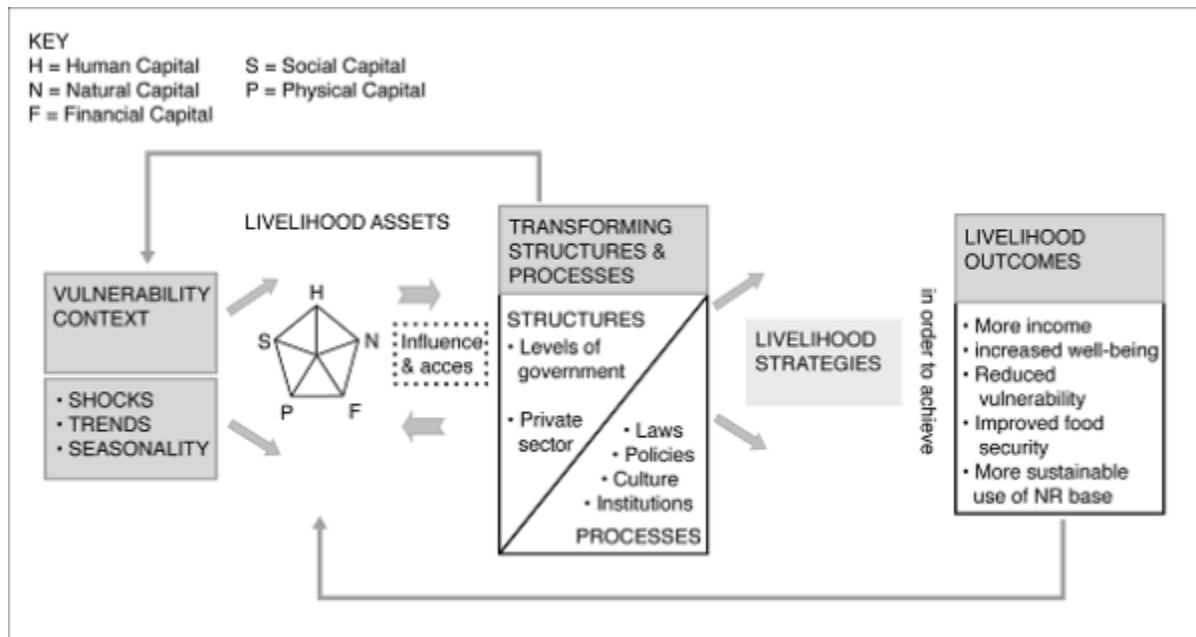


Fig. 2.1: DFID Sustainable Livelihood Framework (Source: DFID, 1999)

The long and short of figure 2.1 is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. Suffice to say, the state-run Grain Marketing Board (GMB), the sole procurer of grain, has over the past ten years lacked the necessary resources to meet the food needs of Zimbabweans. In 2002 the USAID alone provided 217,000 MT of food aid at a cost of US\$111.6 million. In the same year CFGB provided food aid worth USD\$400,000 in Matabeleland alone (UN, 2004). The trend has been such that the amount of food aid has been increasing over the years as the situation became more precarious and fragile, rendering many people vulnerable and in need of food assistance. The gravity of the demand for food aid is shown in figure 2.2 and the way hunger seasons have tended to recur and overlap every season. The main season harvest has become shorter compared with the hunger season, *ad infinitum*.

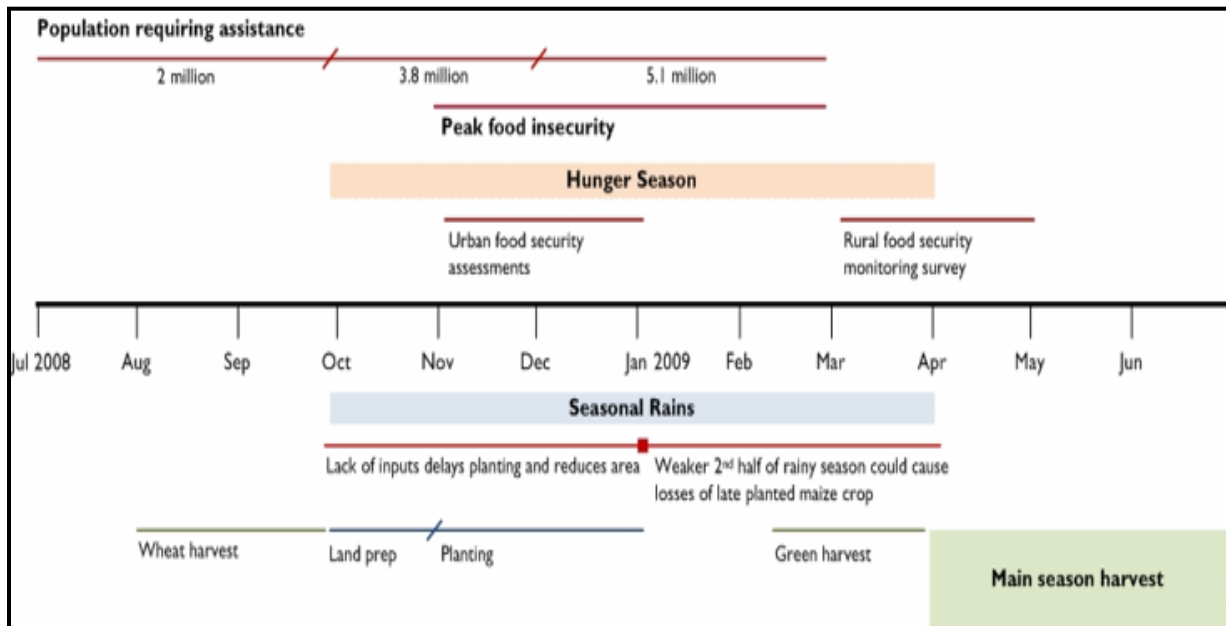


Fig. 2:2: Seasonal calendar and critical events timeline (Source: FEWSNET, 2008)

In Zimbabwe, usually Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) is offered for four months (January to April) during the hunger period, but the subsequent complexity of the disaster has necessitated otherwise. Nine months of VGF speak of a nation failing to feed its own. For the 2011-2012 seasons WFP estimates that it will be responding to the needs of approximately 1.4 million people at a cost of US\$83 million (WFP, 2011). USAID has already provided US\$18.5 million to meet Zimbabwe's food needs (ZIMVAC, 2011). According to Famine Early Warning Systems Network (Fewsnet, 2011), Zimbabwe's food security outlook for July through to December 2011 will need to be monitored closely especially the arid districts as they have localized food deficits and their current crop production has been heavily compromised by the dry spells. The districts in question include Binga, Kariba, Matobo and Zvishavane.

In general, the pressures have proved too much for the people who have failed to generate livelihood strategies to realize more and better livelihood outcomes. Negative coping mechanisms like prostitution, child labour, sale of assets and animal rustling, poaching, and deforestation are on the rise as alternative livelihood options as well as employment opportunities available given lack of industrialization in the district. Not enough food is

produced and communities depend on food aid or handouts from WVI, CCare and CADEC. The practice has created a dependence syndrome and undermined other traditional coping strategies. Meanwhile, some relief programmes have slowly replaced direct food handouts with more market oriented strategies that include credit programmes requiring recipients to deliver a portion of their harvest in exchange for inputs or vouchers redeemable for inputs sold through retail shops or seed and other agricultural produce shows or fairs where commercial farmers and informal traders exchange vouchers for seed supplied (Gabella, 2010).

Food aid has become a legitimate aspiration, signifying multiple targets to meet the revolution of rising expectations for secure livelihoods. International humanitarian trends point towards a new dispensation driven by supply-need chain from the donor community to the famine riddled sub-Saharan African spots. Food aid is part of the international strategy to save lives as well as empower the disadvantaged. For the hungry to enjoy good health, a better standard of living democracy, freedom and other universal values, they need nutritional supplements to improve and increase sustainable livelihoods. Food aid, therefore, represents the actualization of both the humanitarian and development agendas. It is the philosophy as well as technology of translating, linking and extending the theoretical and practical aspects of globalization into sustainable development and socially just societies.

Naturally, the food aid landscapes, given the conceptual marriage of vulnerability, poverty, food aid and dependence, need intense governance and regulation or mediation and intervention. The DAC in partnership with state parties is fully equipped to respond to the facts, aspirations, technology, conclusions and predictions, while articulating the strategies for valid decisions and solutions to the problems. Given the categorical imperatives, spurred on by humanitarianism, it is poignantly clear that food aid has become the acclaimed obligation of the people, governments and the international community to address and redress, in both principle and practice, shocks and stressors inimical to *Homo Economicus*.

From the critical audit, several policy landmarks can be deduced. First, is *policy and regulatory control*, which refers to the various official, legal sanctions, including policy on food aid

designed to provide total guidance and direction on food aid and social wellbeing. Second, is *democracy and human rights* which are the level of grassroots empowerment, choices, privileges and obligations for quality and competent service delivery to promote socio-environmental wellbeing. Three, is *social security and stability* which is the peaceful and successful interplay between governance, institutions, and science and geography to build assets that eliminate poverty, disease, HIV-Aids, poor governance, and civil strife, and so on to achieve the desired sustainability dividends. Four, is *property rights* which is the extent to which the citizens interpret issues of private, public and communal resources, the measures they take to sustain such resources, and the way they extend such measures to environmental up-keep. Last but not least, is *ecological accountability* which is the capacity of the local institutions to clearly articulate rational, bio-physical programmes, projects, choices and obligations that build socio-environmental assets and other ecologically sound land use practices. Lastly, is a *corruption-free environment* which is the extent to which public resources are disabused of personal aggrandisement, graft and such like vices.

Organizing such a paradigm is a big challenge most countries can ill afford. In 1998 Zimbabwe put together a special response mechanism in the form of the National Policy on Drought Management (NPDM) in conjunction with the Policy on the Operations of NGOs in Humanitarian and Development Assistance. Its focus is the implementation structures from national to village levels and the roles of different stakeholders such as government, local authorities, traditional leaders, NGOs, donors and households (ECA, 2007). Encouraged in the policy is the need for the country to remain prepared to deal with food security threats while increasing productivity. The policy downplays the emphasis on the provision of food aid in favour of development of sustainable social and economic strategies to help families cope with the effects of droughts. NGOs are meant to play a pivotal role in complementing government and local authority efforts in empowering communities to manage the distribution of relief assistance (Chipika, 2006). Its impact, though, has been hampered by political considerations and the economic meltdown.

In total, food aid reflects the expanded levels of terrain consciousness to build human activities that are compatible with the environmental equilibrium. This is against the backdrop of a world

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that remains hungry when there is 10% surplus produced every year (FAO, 2011). Many a government is guilty of dereliction of duty, continuously failing to provide adequate food for their citizens and instead, increasingly opting for food assistance from the international community to feed segments of their hungry citizens. Other challenges abound, one of which is the extent to which food aid represents technological imperialism in the sense that it is failing to yield the right results as, apart from increasing imports and running costs, it is 'uneducative' since both the theoretical and practical development and testing of the food science are carried out elsewhere and only come as a given, leading to massive dependence. Another example is the inability to apply local research practically. As is to be expected, government and NGOs continue to distribute maize seed varieties that need a lot of water in violation of the climatic trends in the district. Relevant institutions fail to take advantage of the existence of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) at Matobo Research Station (MRS) that specializes in the research and production of small grain varieties that are better adapted to the dry conditions (drought resistant crops like millet and sorghum). A taste for maize is literally compounding the food insecurity situation in the drier districts of the country. According to Homann (2011), a specialist at ICRISAT, Matobo Research Station, a great deal has been done by way of research in both livestock and crops to drive the Matobo communities out of their chronic poverty and vulnerability. She implores that whatever livelihood programme meant for the district, should be accompanied by sufficient software packages (training and knowledge sharing or capacity building) to motivate communities in order to wean them from the dependence syndrome.

Such is the nature and scope of food aid articulated as a universalizing paradigm or optimization imperative ideal for proper social synthesis in the emancipation of humanity. While the rationalization of food aid reveals immense efforts to bring nutrition to the people, dissenting voices have emerged with questions being asked on whether its high rates of growth have benefited or hurt the beneficiaries or conversely, it has increasingly benefited only the rich and elite. Whether it is being executed with unequivocal transparency and whether there are possible thresholds beyond which it undergoes an inevitable backlash are questions that need to be investigated. The following discussion will attempt to provide answers and views to these and

other questions.

According to Rohrbach, *et al.*, (2004) the challenges facing food aid embrace:

- Beneficiary double dipping whereby beneficiaries benefit from more than one humanitarian agency.
- Errors of inclusion/exclusion where non-deserving cases or households are included or deserving ones are left out during the beneficiary identification and selection phase.
- Lack of necessary skills and knowledge by the recipient farmers to effectively utilize the agricultural inputs distributed.
- Lack of transparency and accountability, coupled with corruption among officers and community leaders conducting the distributions who often sell food aid items meant for the vulnerable communities.
- Exorbitant administrative and transport costs to manage and ferry the food aid to beneficiary communities.
- Cultivation of the donor dependency syndrome.

To these we can add the politics of food, the GMO controversy and the dilemma of climate change. As the challenges read, the bulk of them devolve around ‘management’ whether effective and efficient plans exist to deal with emergencies, abnormal conditions and capacity building needs. The food security in Zimbabwe and in Matobo District in particular still remains a pressing issue in 2011, with the humanitarian situation remaining fragile, and with food security, water and sanitation of serious concern (Tembo, 2006). In other words, the food resources are extremely inadequate, which coupled with lack of effective coordination between government agencies and NGOs as well as adherence to policy guidelines, render events on the ground untenable. This is exacerbated by the politicization of the food assistance, which has culminated in sad community polarization. Tens of thousands of people drink from unprotected water sources, which compromise their health in the process. The result is poor health and as usual, an unhealthy community cannot produce food for itself.

Meanwhile, if getting clean water is so difficult, water for crop productivity which is needed in large quantities, will be even more difficult to access. It is increasingly realized that protracted emergencies demand very comprehensive disaster preparedness plans to ensure communities trapped in emergency situations do not remain entangled in prolonged food aid programmes. Natural disasters like protracted droughts, floods and climate change effects create conditions of acute food insecurity especially in situations where preparedness plans are either non-existent or if resources are not adequate to execute the preparedness plans, hence poor nations tend to remain within the relief domain of the Disaster Continuum, instead of developing into recovery and mitigation phases.

In many instances, humanitarian agencies are hesitant to provide food and other aid forms for extended periods of time because of fears that this may create “dependence”. As Harvey (2005) notes, the risk of creating dependence appears to inform a wide range of programme decisions. Available literature plays down or tends to suggest that dependence on food aid is a myth. The argument is that people are not in fact, dependent, but that there is both negative and positive dependence. UNHCR’s community services programmes, for example recommend that ‘reference to dependence should be purged from the UNCHR lexicon’ (CASA Consulting, 2003:123). What prevails on the ground points to a different picture altogether, because most vulnerable communities especially in Africa simply wait for food handouts year in and year out due to protracted wars, droughts and the effects of climate change. Humanitarian agencies have done little to build the capacities of vulnerable communities to produce their own food, but instead are quick to provide humanitarian assistance in the form of food aid. Dependence cannot be simply dismissed on the basis of saving lives and reducing suffering (Barrett, 2006:2). What is evident is that livelihoods have been disrupted in the process as food aid has possible impacts on markets, and the fact that some ways of providing food aid or relief encourage passivity and failure to make accountable progress by the beneficiaries.

Food aid comes in various packages and forms. Some food stuffs are labelled from where aid is coming. Some of the food is stolen and sold in the market place in some countries especially in Africa. People view the market as a more efficient way of distributing the food

than humanitarian agencies. It is also regarded cheaper to distribute through the market. The economics and politics of food aid continue to put such humanitarian efforts in a bad light. The cost of shipping American maize flour, for example, from America to Africa, is huge and many a time an unnecessary expenditure. The same food could be purchased locally at less than a third of the prize. Therefore, questions arise, given such trends within humanitarian field. While it is humanely okay to feed the world, the major question to ask is how we do that (Renton, 1987:36).

There is enough food in the world to feed every mouth. In fact, statistics shows that the world produces 10% more food than it needs, and one wonders why certain populations go hungry every day. The habit of sending the rich world's food and drink to help the hungry borders on lunacy, miscalculations and rhetoric. In 1985, for example during a great famine in Sudan, a ship loaded, was stuck in the Red Sea ports laden with a quarter of a million half-litre bottles of Italian mineral water past its shell life (sell-by-date). The ship was an Italian gesture of goodwill by Italians who thought the poor thirsty Sudanese needed water. How food aid interventions are planned makes one wonder whether there are any consultations with the vulnerable, affected populations before aid is sorted out. Participation of the vulnerable communities in the planning of food aid programmes leaves a lot to be desired, let alone the quality and type of food provided. The Italian mineral water and shipping cost a lot of money that could have been used to drill boreholes, construct dams and fund other water source development initiatives that could have gone a long way in injecting into the economy a life line in addition to reviving livelihoods for the poor.

Barretti (2009), an American economist, is concerned that while the American governmental food aid feeds over 70 million hungry people per year at a cost of over US\$2 billion, the process is *"slow, often ineffective and madly expensive and it may do more harm than good in many countries it goes to"*. One begins to question food aid policies of certain countries, and given the American example above, one is tempted to interrogate its 1954 Bill that started the programme, *"to develop and expand export markets for United States agricultural commodities"*. Given this drive, hidden under the humanitarian label *"A gift*

from the American People”, it can be argued that America is subsidizing its farmers and not necessarily helping out the hungry people of the world. It is one way of getting rid of its surplus maize, wheat and rice. If America was helping, then such great expense would be spent buying food aid in host countries or investing in food production activities or interventions in countries hard hit by food insecurity and dependency on food aid. Protracted food aid interventions have a damaging effect on local farmers and traders in the countries food aid is sent to, and this damaging effect sets in motion the wheels of the next famine and propels the vicious cycle of dependency and poverty (Oxfam, 2003). Food aid is addictive in nature and the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa scenarios are good examples. Could it be an issue of creating and maintaining jobs for expatriates from donor countries?

Ethiopia and North Korea are the largest consumers of food donations in the world. The current figures for Somalia stand at seven million people who were in dire need of food assistance in 2011. Food aid has no long-term effect on the feeding of the vulnerable as evidenced by high rates of malnutrition in Southern Sudan, where an entire generation has grown up from the handouts of the rich world. Their situation has not improved in the past twenty years (Renton, 2005). According to Geldof (1985), the world must “*feed itself in a way that helps it to feed itself*”. The long and short of this argument is that we need to teach man how to fish, thus building man’s capacity to feed himself, and not to rely on food handouts from ‘well-wishers’. Geldof (1985) further argues that such misplaced food interventions have seen the rich world spending US\$100 billion, and spending it in the wrong way.

What is happening in the world today is a situation where the rich continue to get richer at the expense of the world’s poor who suffer not only poverty, but abuse and erosion of dignity resulting from food aid interventions. The rich world is quick to dispatch its team of ‘experts’ to properly assess not the community’s needs, but the donor’s needs. After a draft report, a workshop is soon organized and then the programme mainstreams gender, HIV and Aids, human rights and other so called ‘cross-cutting issues’ to further justify the need for irrelevant food aid interventions. Food aid in Sub-Saharan Africa has increased in recent

years and has helped save many lives. It is, however, often still too little too late and there remain gross inequalities in the distribution (Oxfam, 2006:2). The timing and scale of response are often driven more by political interests and media exposure than by objectively assessed humanitarian need. The type of donation is still inappropriate. It is not fair or not right that 70% of food aid distributed by the United Nations (UN) is still the produce of the developed world. Food aid should not be a means of subsidizing or supporting farmers in the developed world. Then it stops being food aid, and becomes the 'politics of food'.

From this analysis, it can be argued that the hungry nations or vulnerable communities do not need food aid. Donor agencies should give them the money instead, and such capital injection will enlarge the economy and help improve sustainable food security programmes in poor communities. When hunger is caused by lack of access to food as a result of poverty, rather than food shortages, providing cash can be a more appropriate, faster and less expensive response. Focus should be on strategies and efforts to restore the vulnerable people's livelihoods.

It can be argued that Zimbabwe has created its own food crisis (Harman, 2002:3). Harman argues that there are various factors that have combined to make populations so vulnerable that they cannot cope with any new crisis. Failing to cope becomes another long-term emergency situation (an emergency within an emergency), hence protracted relief programmes in Zimbabwe. Owing to the chaotic land reform programme, Zimbabwe, once an exporter of grain and beef even during drought periods, cannot afford to sustain itself now. Farm invasions in Matobo continue to date with the latest invasion reported in January, 2011 (Newsday, 2011). Such continued farming disturbances have a negative bearing on preparedness strategies by the few commercial farmers in the district and Zimbabwe in general. Some 7, 2182,000 people (52% of the Zimbabwean population) required food aid totalling 345,000 MT in 2003 (ZIMVAC, 2002).

Agricultural inputs continue to be politicized in Zimbabwe (Oxfam, 2008). Lists of supporters for the former ruling party are submitted to the GMB by headmen for the

purposes of ensuring that agricultural inputs are accessed only by the party faithful to the government. There is no distinction between government and party structures in Zimbabwe, and this phenomenon is responsible for undermining the normal functioning of these party supporters that are immune from persecution if they fail to pay back to government. Year after year, seed and fertilizer (Compound D and Ammonium Nitrate) inputs are channelled in this way, lacking accountability and draining the fiscus, creating indirectly a dependency syndrome.

Traditional knowledge of seed selection and preservation has died out as communities await seed inputs from government. The same can be said when it comes to the restocking exercise by government. It is done on party lines, hence it lacks sustainability and projects are turned into white elephants. Perceived opposition party supporters are left out of the free distributions (Saxon, 2011), and yet the so-called inputs are purchased using government funds from the Ministry of Finance under the programme of farm mechanization. The distributions are jointly controlled by GMB, the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA), the local community leadership and senior party officials who use such platforms for political electioneering. District Administrators are also aligned to Zanu (PF) and are appointed on political correctness and are in charge of distributing farm implements including hoes, ox-drawn ploughs and disc harrows among others. The painful thing is that beneficiaries who are war veterans will sell these inputs for a song, thus depriving other villages of access to the much needed agricultural inputs.

After selling the inputs, the individuals are first to register for food aid, thus a culture of dependency is created, people do not want to work anymore as evidenced by the selling of distributed inputs. It is the same war veterans that bar perceived opposition members from accessing inputs especially from the state-run GMB as they claim that the land reform exercise is a ZANU (PF) initiative. Surprisingly, the local leadership, the chiefs and headmen are caught up in the political maze, and despite being offered agricultural inputs over the years; the country has continued to produce poor harvests.

Lentz, *et al.* (2005) argue that an individual or household exhibits dependence when it cannot meet its immediate basic needs without external assistance. The intention of food aid is morally excellent, and yet the unintended consequences of food aid can be labelled “dependence”. According to Harvey and Lind (2005) over-relying on food aid results in the erosion of the individual’s initiative, and that many a time aid undermines local economies. So, in actual fact, what comes out is that dependence is both desirable and undesirable and that each condition can be explained and justified in context. For individuals and households that cannot support themselves, such as those without able-bodied adults, dependence on external aid compares well to a welfare enhancing programme, because the alternative would mean destitution or a worst case scenario. Households headed by children or chronically ill individuals would automatically fall within this desirable range or positive dependency that must be fostered, as it aims at saving lives.

The undesirable or negative dependence then arises when meeting the needs comes at a cost of reducing beneficiary capacity to meet their own basic needs in the future without external assistance. In such situations aid tends to stigmatize the recipients (Dean, 2004). This type of dependence results in change of behaviour when an individual or community alter the way they think or act in response to the provision of assistance that creates disincentives to undertake desirable behaviour, for example growing crops. Food aid programmes should therefore be cognizant of their intended and unintended consequences if milestones in development are to be achieved.

There is also the argument that food aid is a deliberate ploy by the donor countries to justify the subsidies they give their farmers through disposing of the excess produce. While such farmers are kept in business, the effect is devastating to the food aid farmers who are deliberately denied markets for their produce. Worse still, barley and beans dominate the spectrum which the consumers resent and regard as non-nutritious and very unhealthy for them and their children. So food aid is healthy for the donor farmers, but a necessary killing mechanism among the recipient farmers. It is the ‘subsidy-aid’ game that has dogged the WTO Doha Round.

Another problem relates to food aid and GMOs. The bulk of the food aid consists of GMOs whose long-term effects have not been fully researched. As a result many recipient countries have not accented to GMO foods, which are being forced on them. There is strong suspicion that the food is unsafe for human consumption. Countries like Zimbabwe have been known to refuse such aid (have even turned it back) in fear of their populations and the environment. At times, good policies are never implemented well, due to corruption tendencies and political interference necessitating the unnecessary need for food aid interventions.

Paradoxically, war-ravaged-extreme-weather countries in sub-Saharan Africa survive on food aid, which they promote for the maintenance of peace and stability as the hungry populations are too weak to make extra demands other than food.

To address these challenges there is a need for a broader consultation during the policy making process, increased participation of vulnerable groups, good governance and livelihood diversification. Livelihood options and policy options must take into account prevailing climatic conditions and such information should inform what items could be included in 'agricultural inputs'. There is a tendency by both governments and humanitarian agencies to think that agricultural inputs should consist of seed and fertilizer. The type of seed provided should suit the climatic conditions of the areas where vulnerable populations are found, for example it is foolhardy to distribute maize seed and fertilizer in the drier parts of Matobo district in Zimbabwe, given the aridity. Furthermore, decisions should include a shift from free food distributions to public works programmes (food for work or food for cash or food for assets interventions). An appropriate move will be generally, more shifting from relief provision to more recovery, mitigatory and preparedness developmental approaches, which explicitly aim at some form of sustainability where relief assistance may be stopped or cut back when it is still needed. Such approaches will cultivate a culture where vulnerable communities take the initiative to fend for themselves and not rely on food handouts.

Lastly, livestock should be considered as well as seed inputs, given that the majority of populations in drier regions depend on livestock as a livelihood activity. Again, dishing out such inputs without the appropriate software packages (training and knowledge development) means

such efforts go down the drain as vulnerable communities lack the necessary incentive to utilize the inputs. It is also important to promote indigenous knowledge to enhance participation of vulnerable communities, as alien knowledge does little to change critical attitudes to positive development.

2.5 Implications for the Study

The impact of prolonged food aid was problematized to investigate the extent it breeds downgrade processes and ideals like vulnerability, poverty and dependence. The literature review provided background information and details regarding food aid in general, and food assistance in particular with respect to the Matobo community. It therefore guided the study in many respects. First and foremost, it helped amplify and consolidate the research hypothesis and research questions. Indeed the Matobo community is a philanthropic zone, open and ready for food assistance wherever and whatever the source. For instance, the HIV and Aids epidemic has devastated the district, with the active and productive age group the most vulnerable. Over 2,500 people die each week due to HIV related illnesses (National Aids Council Quarterly Report, April, 2010). The elderly and orphans are left with the burden of fending for their grandchildren and siblings. The direct negative impact has been loss of labour in food security activities and the continued cycle of poverty, vulnerability and dependence triggering emergency food aid. In addition, the political polarization associated with the *Gukurahundi* era (1983-87) left the district traumatized, apprehensive that the government has an unwritten agenda of isolation and marginalization of the district and the province in general. During the civil unrest, communities lost property, livestock, labour and experienced untold suffering and displacements. Their capacity and propensity to be productive was undermined and eroded rendering them ill-prepared to withstand the aftershocks and hazards.

Secondly, not only was it used to craft the themes for discussion, but it also enriched the interpretation of the results and how food aid has turned into an assault weapon masquerading as a gift. The rationale is that a clearly articulated food aid policy at both macro- and micro-levels is critical if food assistance is to work towards a positive impact on the individuals and wider

society. As the situation stands, there is no clear-cut national policy to guide food assistance. Everything depends on the practical realities of the situations. As a result donors and NGOs often fail to focus their efforts adequately, let alone linking them up with and adequately articulate national policy. Since food aid is meant to meet the immediate nutritional needs of the vulnerable, a clear policy is paramount. The quest, then, was to explore the spectre of prolonged food aid as a national prerogative to verify whether it was definitively articulated with a positive impact on all stakeholders. In the process, the literature review offered the requisite breadth and depth for a comprehensive interrogation of the prolonged food aid construct to establish its purpose, its acceptability to clients and users, and its potential for negative change.

Thirdly the literature review guided the research design, presentation and analysis of the findings details of which are given in the next chapter.

2.6 Conclusion

Food security is construed the cornerstone of the national vision to build a better Zimbabwe, with food aid playing a pivotal role in that vision to uplift the health profile of the nation for more and better social well-being. On the one hand, food aid is a window of hope, and on the other, a ‘debt burden’ for the majority who fail to access its true therapy. This is against a backdrop of a rising cycle of disvalue, food aid characterised by vicious episodes, and experiences inimical to human development and self-reliance.

The next chapter details the methodology used to gather data to gain the necessary explanatory insights into social and public thinking on food aid. From the evidence gathered so far, it is the study’s theoretical thesis that some conceptual rethink will be quite judicious so that food aid acts, and is both seen and taken, as the process of adaptation through organized and sustained assistance, to promote the values and virtues enshrined in the Food Assistance Convention to foster the autonomy of the individuals to cope within their cultures and spaces.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Once the problem had been identified, preliminary work began involving review of the literature and the research design. The latter involved determining the participants, researcher roles, the instruments to be used, field approaches, the method of data analysis, and the resources to be used. According to Mouton and Marais (1990), while varying with studies, in interpretive frameworks 30 to 50 participants were considered a valid population. A total of 54 respondents made up of food aid beneficiaries, community leadership, church leaders, NGO workers and government extension workers, participated in the study, representing the stakeholders. The nature of the problem required cross-sectional representations, horizontally across the community and vertically across social structures, which then guided the selection of the sampled participants.

The researcher and the three research assistants (all field officers), did the gathering of data. They had the requisite qualifications, and vocational advantages, and were trained for the purpose. Research Assistant 1 holds a Diploma and Degree in Agriculture and is employed as a Field Officer by CCare. Research Assistant 2 holds a Social Science degree and is a Livelihood Officer with Khulasizwe Trust in Matobo district as well, while Research Assistant 3 was a student attaché with CCare and was studying for her Degree in Development Studies with the National University of Science and Technology, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. They were used to enhance the validity of the study through having the practitioners themselves observe, reflect and comment on their own and their colleagues' practical actions. The fact that they were physically there in the situations and not detached from them, rendered them all the more qualified, and all the more capable to research the system and the actions of their colleagues to bring out the what, why, how and when of Food Aid.

The problem was explored using core questions across all the methodology to contextualize the construct in the Matobo Community. The choice was guided by the principle that the

methodology must be usable and allow for critical, balanced, inter-subjective and controllable investigations and interpretations, and that it must be dialogical in the sense that the investigation and the emergent knowledge are not the prerogative of the researcher alone, nor is the research a matter of subject and object becoming identical, but of all parties entering into a necessary dialectical relationship (Mouton & Marias, 1990). Hence, the wider methodology ensured triangulation and minimized the negative consequences of the researcher, participant and measuring instrument effects.

3.2 Research Design and Data Collection Procedures

Once the problem had been identified, preliminary work began involving review of the related literature and the research design. The latter involved the determination of the researcher roles, the participants, the instruments and the resources to be used, fieldwork, and the method of data analysis. The following account gives details on these aspects with the exception of data analysis which is discussed in Chapter 4. The detail covers the rationale for the selection of wards and participants, for the construction and application of each method used and validation of the related instruments, and is concluded with the discussion on the general validity of the study. There is a great deal of overlap between the methods, and to avoid unnecessary repetition, cross-referencing is made accordingly.

3.3 Researcher Roles

After getting the research topic approved, the researcher sought permission from the University of the Free State ethics committee and DiMTEC to undertake the study as elaborated in the preceding chapters. Consent was also sought from the District Administrator and the Chief Executive of the Matobo Rural District Council to conduct the research in the study area. This was to ensure all protocol was observed and to fulfil the political correctness in the district. The authority from the two offices then mandated the researcher to approach both community leaders and the local ward councillors to explain the scope of the research, and to solicit their support during the process. The aims and objectives of the research study were explained to the chiefs and community leadership and villagers during village and ward meetings. Community leaders were asked to mobilize target audiences on behalf of the researcher and his assistants.

Participants in the programme were informed of their right of informed consent and right of anonymity and confidentiality. All that was meant to ensure no harm came to communities as a result of the study (Mthys, 2004).

It was the researcher's duty to train his assistants on data collection instruments and data capturing. The researcher took advantage of the Matobo District NGO Forum, where he sat as a committee member to solicit NGO support in the research work and to apprise NGO management on the scope of the study and to make appointments for interviews. Besides providing logistical support, such as printing services, recording equipment, transport, paying allowances to research assistants and refreshments during focus group discussions, the research interacted with the community for a period of nine months, observing daily community livelihood activities, attitudes, patterns of behaviour and visiting some projects implemented by various humanitarian organizations in the study area. Through this approach, the research got to appreciate life among the most vulnerable communities, and lessons were learnt relating to the subject under study.

In addition to reviewing literature, the researcher crafted research instruments, administered the instruments and ensured timely capturing of data. The researcher monitored the data collection process, analyzed the data and interpreted the results and findings and recommended the way forward. The compilation of this document and consultations with the supervisor, sending the document for editing and proof reading, binding and submitting the document to the university as required was the sole responsibility of the researcher. The researcher kept close contact with the study supervisor to ensure that a professional report of excellent quality was produced.

3.4 The Participants/Respondents

Two wards, with a total population of 6,072 were chosen for the conducting of this research work (ORAP, 2011). Each ward has four villages and 1,865 households in total. The sample size for food aid beneficiaries was 20 households (ten from each ward). Makhasa ward had a councillor who chaired the Social Services Committee of Matobo Rural District Council and presided over the committee responsible for allocation of food aid in the district and other development packages. The other ward was selected because, besides the uniformity in climatic

and ecological conditions, the ward was led by a councillor who did not chair any of the Rural District Committees and neither sat in any sub-committee. The approach assisted in giving a balanced analysis of the impact of food aid programmes. Four focus group discussions were held with community leaders (two in each ward).

Two villages in each of the two wards were selected for the purpose of this study using a systematic random sampling method. The villages were chosen on the basis of which one came first in the alphabet. In each village the researcher interviewed five households and those were selected by picking every fifth household from an ORAP food aid beneficiary register. Ages were not a priority during the selection; one was selected on the basis of being either a household head or representative in the absence of the household head. Age became an issue during data collection and this became a factor during the analysis stage.

Five management officials from each of the five organisations (ORAP, Christian Care, Khulasizwe Trust, World Vision International and CADEC) working in either food aid or agricultural input distribution schemes were interviewed. In addition, five government line ministries or departments that work directly with communities, Agricultural Technical and Extension Services, Social Welfare, Education, Matobo Rural District Council and the DA's office) were interviewed separately. The officers shed light on, and gave their views on the impacts of poverty, vulnerability and the prolonged impact of food aid programmes on impoverished and vulnerable communities in the Matobo Community. Purposive sampling was brought in at a contingency level, to be used as a back up in order to select underrepresented would-be respondents in cases where the proportion of male to female respondents in a sample did not match that of the existing baseline information for the district.

TABLE 2: RESPONDENTS' BIO-DATA

Age	FA Beneficiaries		NGO/GOV		Com. Leaders		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
<30	1	0	0	2	1	0	4
31-40	1	6	2	0	4	6	19
41-50	2	2	3	2	4	5	18
51-60	2	5	0	1	1	2	11
>60	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Total	7	13	5	5	11	13	54

The majority of the respondents were females with a highest frequency of 29 out of the total 54 respondents drawn from food aid beneficiaries, NGO and Government personnel and community leaders. Of interest was the number of participants <30; there was one male food aid beneficiary, two females from the NGO/GOV sector, and one male community leader.

All participants were drawn from the district, their ages, gender, and qualifications were considered to gauge the levels of understanding and appreciation of the concepts under study. These constituted the major stakeholders and sources of very useful secondary data. Primary data sources comprised of 20 vulnerable household heads or representatives (food aid beneficiaries) and 24 community leaders, 12 from each ward. Food aid beneficiaries were selected from ORAP food distribution registers for two villages in each ward.

Community leadership was made up of the kraal heads, village heads, headmen, councillors or chief, church leaders, projects committee leaders, youth leaders and change agents or opinion leaders. Community leaders from two villages constituted a focus group for the purposes of facilitating discussions. Lead questions tackled food aid impacts, dependency, capacities, poverty, productivity, extension services, and challenges faced by communities and the way forward out of poverty. Twelve such leaders were selected from the two concerned villages in each ward including a youth leader and women groups. In total, 58 respondents were selected to participate in the study. NGO, government personnel and household heads or representatives were interviewed while community leaders engaged in focus group discussions. In addition to being interviewed, NGO personnel went on to provide documents for analysis.

Nine out of twenty households (FA beneficiaries) had been involved with FA for a period of two years and below. The average number of years participants had been on FA was three years. The majority of respondents had more than three years experience with FA. Two respondents had an experience of FA for six years, and indicators confirmed entrenchment or contextualization of FA in the Matobo Community.

The study was qualitative in nature and adopted a case study research design approach. According to Merriam (1998), qualitative research emphasizes the use of words rather than

numbers as compared to quantitative research design. The interest of the study was to understand and appreciate how participants (the impoverished and vulnerable populations in the two wards of Matobo) made meaning of their situation and environment. The outcome of the study was therefore descriptive (a descriptive survey to collect and analyze data). The study attempted to interpret data collected and endeavoured to draw meaning and conclusions from observations made. 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 yielded a clear understanding of reality and brought home the experience to those who had not experienced it (Walker, 1995).

Of note is the fact that the descriptive survey approach involves the selection of a small sample (participants or population under study) for data collection purposes. An attempt was therefore, made to ensure that balanced representation was achieved, that is, the selected individuals or households or group represented the characteristics of the whole Matobo population. According to Babbie (1991), *“...representativeness therefore is the quality of sample of having the sample of the same distribution of characteristics of the respondents.”*

The chosen design assisted the researcher to gather relevant data on the impacts of prolonged food aid and how such programmes influence the livelihoods of vulnerable groups in Matobo district (Chikoko & Mhloyi, 1999:63).

3.5 The Data Collection Process

Three methods were used to collect data and information, namely document analysis, focus group discussion and interviews for triangulation to enhance the validity of the findings and results. Instruments were designed for each method. Photographs and maps were generated through participant observation to enhance the validity of the study. Following below are detailed descriptions of each of the three methods used to collect data from the different participant groups.

3.6 Document Analysis

Briefly, document analysis was embarked upon to widen scope and familiarity with Food Aid so as to represent it more accurately, while focus group discussion and interviews were employed to ensure a closer cooperative interaction with the social actors as they lived and constructed their world. As Ary and others (1990:48) observe, in social research:

‘the investigator is never quite sure just what will be learned in a particular setting since everything depends on the nature and types of interactions between the inquirer and the people and setting and those interactions that are not fully predictable, and because important features in need of investigation cannot be known until they are actually witnessed in the field’.

While official documents are socially produced, they are intended to be read as objective statements of fact. The study relied on sources available, ranging from public records from Matobo Rural District Council, baseline survey reports, quarterly, annual and evaluation reports from various humanitarian agencies and consultants hired by these agencies. The media was awash with poverty and vulnerability or disaster issues and was consulted wildly, especially the private media, online reports and journals. Visual documents like photographs and videos were also consulted to sample and appreciate life amongst the vulnerable communities in Matobo district. The fact that the researcher chairs the NGO forum in the district provides an excellent opportunity for easy access to the documents from humanitarian agencies and government departments. The content scanned from the various documents was then analyzed using the identified context codes, interpreted and meaning deduced. Questions arising from the documents were debated with relevant authorities to seek further clarifications. The following questions guided document analysis.

- What is the status of food aid in the Matobo Community?
- What indicators reveal a relationship between vulnerability, poverty and food aid in the Matobo Community?
- What are the targets of food aid in terms of livelihoods of the Matobo Community?
- What alternatives to food aid exist or have been recommended to the Matobo Community?

3.7 Interviews

An interview is a face-to-face interaction used to gather data (Chikoko & Mhloyi, 1999:80). This technique is preferred to questionnaires given the high illiteracy levels in the MC particularly amongst the vulnerable communities, many of whom cannot write and constitute more than three quarters of the respondents. The tool gave the researcher an opportunity to rephrase questions again and again when perceived as vague by respondents. The researcher was then able to clarify certain issues to enable the collection of useful and rich information. The atmosphere created, allowed for freedom on the part of the respondents who were free to speak about their experiences without being limited to what was written down. The tool provided for further probing and follow-up on new ideas and issues. The interviews were guided by the following questions:

- Define the term FA.
- For how long have you worked with the Matobo Community on FA?
- Indicate your views and observations on the impact of FA with respect to the following in the Matobo Community:
 - i) Starvation
 - ii) Famine
 - iii) Nutrition
 - iv) Incomes
 - v) Affluence/capacity to work/produce
 - vi) Vulnerability
 - vii) Poverty
- Are vulnerability, poverty and FA now fully contextualized in the Matobo Community?
- Are there any other views you wish to bring to the attention of the study regarding FA in the Matobo Community?

3.8 Focus Group Discussions

According to Hennink and Diamond (1999) a focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of participants are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a product, service or concept. Questions were asked in an interactive group setting where participants or respondents were free to talk and give views on various aspects of food aid.

The interviewer as the moderator used guiding questions to direct the flow of discussions and to monitor time. Four community level discussions (two per ward) targeted community leadership in the two wards as outlined above. The Focus Group Discussion was guided by the following schedule:

- There is too little as well as too much FA in the Matobo Community. Conduct a PESTLE analysis.
- Vulnerability, poverty and FA are now contextualized in the Matobo Community. Discuss.
- What recommendations can you give the Matobo Community to secure its livelihoods besides FA?
- Are there any other views you would wish to bring to the attention of the study regarding FA in the Matobo Community?

3.9 Validity of the Study

The validity measures include triangulation, the use of multiple observers and multiple sources of data, and periodic consultations with the supervisor. These enhance the reliability of the procedures and thus, the results can be described as logically coherent with, and grounded in the adopted format and the data collected. In addition, the use of specific criteria as opposed to general impressions reduces the problems of the halo effect, the generosity error and the error of severity, while improving standardization. Events are represented as they were whether or not they were specifically ‘prepared’ answers. It was possible to detect falsehoods. The role of the assistants in particular, being residents NGO workers, gave the study the necessary trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility arising from conditions akin to action research.

3.10 Limitation of the Study

Households spread over the areas targeted, robbed the researcher of the time he spent with each household. Some households were not easily accessed. Owing to a poor road network, one had to walk and so it took rather too much time. Each household was unique in its own right, and that added to the time challenge the researcher experienced. Given the sensitivity of the subject matter in Zimbabwe, it was, however, wise to keep the sample small for manageability purposes.

The small sample size, however, affected the representativeness of the findings and the generalization of the results on the impact of prolonged food aid on poverty, vulnerability and dependency. Dates and times for meetings had to be rescheduled to cater for those who were not at home during the initial appointments. The PESTLE analysis was difficult to administer at first, with community leadership not keen to discuss the political situation, but later opened up after further assurances that their names would not be published anywhere in the document.

3.11 Conclusion

Three major data collection instruments, namely data analysis, focus group discussion and interviews were identified as appropriate in approaching this social science study. Guiding questions for each method identified were also established in this chapter. Explained in detail are the researcher and the participants' roles in the study including a respondent's bio data. The appropriateness of the chosen research design answered to the fact that the study bordered more on the social aspect of research, that is, the study attempted to measure attitudes, feelings, interpretations, value systems and behavioural traits.

Finally the data was collated, analyzed and synthesized ready for interpretation, discussion and conclusion drawing. This entailed reducing the massive volume of information, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed or in simple terms, organizing it, describing it, and categorizing it according to sources of verification or questions. This proved an invaluable exercise with the shared experiences facilitating the explanation and interpretation of the results. Details are discussed in Chapter 4.

4.1 Introduction

The study was mainly qualitative in nature and therefore qualitative analysis was used to interpret and find meaning from collected data. ‘What are the participants saying and doing about as well as receiving from Food Aid?’ sums up the essence of data presentation, analysis and discussion. Content analysis involving data reduction and refinement, as well as describing and analyzing the coded information for further discussion and interpretation, was the basis for data presentation and analysis. Raw data and information gathered from fieldwork were processed using the scientific tools of inductive and deductive analysis and criticism into higher-order constructs for further interpretation.

4.2 Data Presentation

Guiding indicators for all the three study methods and the three groups of respondents were determined before the administering of the questions to guide the data collection process. Gathered data is presented in tables, graphs and photographs in order to appreciate a visual comprehension of results. In some cases, responses were converted to percentages in order to establish frequencies and variations.

4.3 Results and Findings

The tables that follow present the findings from the different sources of verification. Firstly, the data was refined, aggregated and categorized more accurately, frequencies determined where applicable, and open response text included supporting criteria. Since the questions had been pre-coded, data reduction proceeded quite smoothly. It was by and large an on-going process soon after fieldwork while events were still fresh in the mind. Procedurally, any element of the open response text was accepted only once, according to ‘best fitness’. Although the answers varied,

they mainly fitted with the questions such that few problems were experienced during final coding. Details tabulated in Tables 3, 4 and 5 indicate aggregated responses to a given question. Absolute frequencies (actual number of occurrences) are only done for interviews, while the rest show relative frequencies (the occurrence of different events).

TABLE 3: RESULTS FROM DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Source of Verification	Responses
What is the status of Food Aid in the Matobo Community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households receive 60kgs of barley, 10kgs pulses and 2 litres of oil per month (720 kgs of grain per year) • Primary schools feeding programme on the rise(corn soya blend- supplementary feeding) • Vulnerable Group Feeding has been the major thrust with seemingly well-to-do households qualifying for grain loan scheme and accessing it through the Grain Marketing Board (never paid back) • Harvests were poor, on average households got 100 kg of grain except for those that were into conservation farming (300-500 kgs of grain per year), those got enough to last them 6 months or more on average (are almost food secure). The trend has been the same 2006 farming season. • High food insecurity evident, hence food aid was spread across all the wards including former commercial areas that were taken over by new farmers during the land reform era. • More than 80% of households were on Food Aid.
What indicators reveal a relationship between vulnerability, poverty and Food Aid in the Matobo Community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority have plots less than a hectare in size, poorly fenced and underutilized, some have been abandoned • 20% of vulnerable households have no pieces of land for cropping. • 45% have draught power, with the majority using donkeys while 55% depend on neighbours for draught power. • 20% had enough food to last for three to six months. • 1992 and subsequent droughts depleted the livestock head, over 80% of vulnerable household had no cattle (the mainstay livelihood). • No matter how vulnerable, there was no household without chickens, numbers varied from 3 to <20. • Majority of households had no goats/sheep; these were easily disposed off or exchanged for food. • Disposing of productive household assets like ox-drawn ploughs, livestock, fence material, seed and fertilizer inputs; chairs and clothing a common trend. • About 35% washed off chemicals from preserved donated seed and use as food. • No employment opportunities, the few that worked were into buying and selling or did menial jobs in South Africa and Botswana. • Family labour depleted due to outward migration and chronic illnesses. • Over 25% of households took care of at least one chronically ill family member(energy and resources diverted towards care for the sick). • Food Aid beneficiaries did not want to be weaned off programmes and were not interested in other programmes that required them to produce, e.g. seed and market linkages.

Source of Verification	Responses
	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>continue</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% of communal farmers had either Master Farmer skills or had been exposed to these farming skills; the majority worked on inherited/trial and error approaches to farming, hence the little interest paid to crop production.
What are the targets of Food Aid in terms of livelihoods of the Matobo Community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable households with less than 3 cattle or none. • Child headed households/Orphans and Vulnerable Children. • People Living with HIV/other chronic conditions. • Families with increased numbers of orphans and vulnerable children. • Widows and the aged. • Household headed by chronically ill and disabled persons. • Households taking care of chronically ill and disabled persons.
What alternatives to Food Aid exist or have been recommended to the Matobo Community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash transfers, food for work /assets. • Makert linked or related programmes (commercial approaches to all forms and types of programmes). • Improved consultations with communities on the crafting of programmes meant to benefit them/Inreased participation of vulnerable communities. • Mainstreaming climate change and disaster reduction initiatives. • Capacity Building for local communities/advocacy and developmemtal education. • No agricultural inputs without training (software packages). • Establishment of vocational skills training insititutes and other tertiary colleges. • Small and bigger Livestock management training and livestock seed. • Livestock infrastructure development e.g dip tanks, water points and paddocking. • Commercialization of livestock breeding and production techniques. • Vocational training for young people to reduce outward migration; improve and widen livelihood options. • Adoption of appropriate and cheaper techonologies like Conservation Farming. • Water haversting (dams, water shades and tanks). • Promotion of smaller grains e.g millet and sorghum varieties. • Rationalization of departments like Grain Markerting Board, Agritex, Mechanization, Ministry of Youth Developmet and other politically created community structures that seemed not to promote development. • Policies that promoted local industrilization e.g Mopani worm processing. • Disbanding of free agricultural inputs in favour of initiatives that trigger economic development.

TABLE 4: RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Sources of Verification	Responses
There is too little as well as too much Food Aid in the Matobo Community. Conduct a PESTLE analysis	<p>Political</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matobo was neglected, unequal development/Government promoted poverty and food insecurity through neglect. • Too much talk by politicians but less action, citizens not free to air views and express themselves. People from outside the district were given farms and their activities were not improving food security, many of the farms lie derelict. • Fear entrenched from the days of Gukurahindi/mistrust and feelings of tribal and ethnic discrimination, many “foreigners” take away jobs and other resources from locals hence poverty worsened. • Increased polarization, political violence/threats, uncertainty, unpredictable hostile environment and this disrupted food security activities. In fact, youth had abandoned farming as a livelihood option and resorted to forced and paying political activities to earn a living. • Politicians were regarded as cheats, were corrupt and intimidated citizens, they lined their pockets at the expense of the common citizens. They bought grain, seed and fertilizer from GMB and sold these subsidized products at exorbitant prizes to local communities, taking advantage of community transport challenges. • Politicians exchanging sub-sidised grain for cattle and smaller livestock, helping to make poor people more poorer (creating a dependency culture amongst the most vulnerable). • Resource distribution, especially from government institutions like GMB, is done on political lines. Grain produced from Antelope Estates in the district was first transported to Harare leaving communities desperate for food. • Maize a specified commodity, made it too difficult to access and GMB given the monopoly on grain acquisition. Communities forced to sell to GMB at very uneconomic prices and were paid back in material form (inputs) and that was not favourable to communities. • Fertilizer and seed input schemes werenot only inappropriate but delayed (political and corrupt practices) so that communities failed to access them. Then politicians working with civil servants manning such departments later claimed that the Matobo community did not want free inputs and these were transported overnight out of the district for sell elsewhere. Agricultural inputs did not take into account climatic variations (same across communities) <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy was “dead”, unemployment high and drove out the active population including females, leaving the aged and young who were either too weak/old/sick or too young to engage in any productive activity, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty, vulnerability and dependency. • Gold panning, poor technologies used, dangerous and panners were exposed to unhealthy conditions/seasonal employment and less paying in Antelope Estates (outside and within 40km of the study wards) in an effort to get

Sources of Verification	Responses
	<p>food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dysfunctional, unfriendly economic climate, no industries, difficult to get foreign currency ever since the dollarization, hence little food available. • Only one bank existed, underutilized because vulnerable households had no collateral security as they did not have title deeds and therefore to them the only bank was just as good as no bank at all. • Some had remittances from the diaspora, especially South Africa (in the form of cash and food items). • Human trafficking and abuse rampant. • No tertiary institutions to offer livelihood skills and research; could be the reason behind lack of development and community initiatives and creativity to address poverty, vulnerability and dependency issues). • Owners of livestock did not determine prices for their stock, they were at the mercy of the middle men (exploitation of the most vulnerable). • Seed inputs from government were never paid back and were distributed on party lines/no production, inputs (seed, fertilizer) were sold by recipients to commercial farmers at give-away prices or exchanged for small quantities of food. • Mopani worms bought by people from outside at low prices and some exchanged for food items (barter trade). <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent community relations, communities willing to assist each other, lend to and borrow food from neighbours • Group approach to livelihood work, e.g conservation farming a community asset/strength/capacity. • Extended family can no longer meet family needs hence over-reliance on foreign food aid (NGOs). • Decay of social safety nets. • Adoption of negative coping mechanisms like prostitution, gambling, disposal of household assets to buy food and becoming poorer in the process. <p>Technological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor Transport and communication services/ No internet facilities, poor cellphone reception; one has to go up a tree to access network resulting in failure to order or secure food. • Roads were inaccessible, expensive and difficult to move from point A to B. • Boreholes broken down, communities too poor to afford spare parts resulting in them drinking from open water sources like dams and rivers (increased likelihood of diseases). • Nutrition gardens were run down, turned into white elephants/ underutilized owing to water challenges. • 20% of farmers had adopted conservation farming techniques to improve household food security. • The same farmers learnt how to process crop stover and preserve it for livestock feed during lean years (these were more or less food secure households).

Sources of Verification	Responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Untapped and underutilized indigenous knowledges e.g ethno vets, pest control and food preservation present but lacked coordinated efforts to effectively put them to use. <p>Legal Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The right to food was understood in the context of the right to appear in the food aid register. Did not know whether they were entitled to other related human rights besides the right to food. Law applied selectively, beneficiaries had no power or means to contest unfair food aid and agricultural inputs distribution practices. Trust their traditional legal systems, safeguards by village heads and chiefs, but the current scenario was that traditional leaders were used by politicians to pursue political party agendas. <p>Environmental Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change effects, protracted droughts, drying water sources, lowering water table, diminishing food reserves, unpredictable weather patterns and changing cropping seasons. Overgrazed pasture, environmental degradation, soil erosion, bad land/gullies and desertification. Increasing flash floods, storms and increasing temperatures. Quella birds caused a lot of crop destruction, foot and mouth and blackleg outbreaks affecting livestock. Littering around business centres, deforestation, defecating in open areas, water/land pollution from panning activities (environmental hazards).
Vulnerability, poverty and Food Aid are now contextualized in the Matobo Community. Discuss.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Aid benefited the less deserving, once in Food Aid register communities considered it their right to appear year after year. Double dipping, a common feature, people had become lazy and some had abandoned their usual livelihood options. Food Aid had become a major source of food for the majority, the haves felt it was their right to access Food Aid so that the less privileged could fall back on them in bad times, some haves saw an opportunity to make money by converting donated grain into stock feeds. Food Aid deeply entrenched, a part of life, the poor got food aid, so it was good to be poor, some complained after testing HIV negative because it meant they would not access Food Aid. The absence of granaries a clear sign of vulnerability, poverty and food aid entrenchment or contextualization.
Besides Food Aid, what recommendations can you give for the Matobo Community to secure its	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Generating Activities like welding, poultry, piggery, small livestock breeding. Community and household nutrition gardens and related skills training. Loans from banks and NGOs.

Sources of Verification	Responses
livelihoods?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs to change their selection criteria to include capable households in their programmes. • Food for assets/for work.
Are there any other views you would wish to bring to the attention of the study regarding food aid in the Matobo community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mineral wealth e.g gold in abundance in the district. • ICRISAT-the research Institute. • Big rivers and a few dams. • River sand for the construction industry. • Few irrigation schemes. • Tourism & Cultural Heritage sites (Matopos National Park, Njelele Rain making Shrine, mountains , rich and diverse culture, wild life. • Livestock (small and big), farms and rich range land. • Solar energy (promoting industrialization and improved livelihoods). • Remittances from the Diaspora. • Rich missionary establishment (churches, hospitals and schools).

TABLE 5: RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS

Sources of Verification	Responses
Define the term Food Aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving people food/Assistance to hungry people. • Food assistance to save lives during drought years. • Drought relief/Giving hungry people food/Giving poor people seed packs and fertilizer.
Indicate your views and observations on the impact of food aid with respect to the following in the Matobo Community:	
Starvation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Aid does not reduce starvation, it actually creates dependency of the vulnerable communities. • Food Aid basket is never adequate in terms of quantities, recipients still borrow food before the next distribution cycle. Pay back the food in the next distribution cycle (always in food debt). • Temporary relief from hunger, it saves lives and reduces suffering. • Food is a right, even if it is too little and unpalatable, communities insist they should have it.
Famine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without accompanying sustainable development interventions, Food Aid would not mitigate against famine. • Lack of water meant food shortages worsened. • Scarcity/shortages even in shops/ Food Aid commodities were secretly sold in some shops. • Animals (livestock) like goats and cattle perish during famine, worsening the food situation. • Corruption breeds fast, the food recipients often did not get the food meant for them, as it was diverted to other destinations.
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While some sections claimed Food Aid was nutritious, the majority of vulnerable households insisted Food Aid was not nutritious, especially barley. • Claimed it was food originally meant for livestock, but had no choice except to consume it. • Preferred pulses and oil and deemed these nutritious. • Some exchanged barley for maize.
Incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sold agricultural inputs like seed and fertilizer to purchase food. The less deserving of Food Aid sold barley or exchanged the commodity for agricultural inputs and small livestock. • The less deserving used Food Aid as payment for labour sourced from vulnerable households in addition to using it as livestock feed, these realized wealth creation and would want food aid to continue. • Food Aid did not improve incomes of the vulnerable households. • Some produced vegetables on a small scale due to water challenges and exchanged these for maize meal.
Affluence/capacity to work/produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reversed conditions of affluence as the vulnerable people disposed of their household's assets to buy food and other family requirements. • All wealth created over time diminished together with material comfort. • Recipients became lazy and expectant of food aid year after year. • Creation of a dependency syndrome, capacity to be productive was weakened and eroded.

Sources of Verification	Responses
Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Aid did not reduce vulnerability, household remained susceptible and exposed if they had to borrow food for many days before the next distribution cycle. People were worse off than they were before the advent of Food Aid. No food reserves. Some phone and continuously inquire when food aid distribution would start on a yearly basis. They knew their crops would fail before they even started planting and so the attitude was why bother, hence little or no activity in their plots or fields. No other sources of income and therefore failed to buy food from shops when it was available. A few got remittances from South Africa and Botswana.
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Aid did not reduce poverty, instead it worsened the poverty situation amongst the most vulnerable. There was talk of some families marrying off their daughters at an early age because they wanted food. Unemployment/ no other sources of income. Loss of livestock and household assets. School dropouts increased as children were sent on food hunting sprees. Prostitution and child abuse manifested as a result of poverty (child labour and sexual exploitation). Family or domestic disputes emanated from poverty and lack.
Are vulnerability, poverty and Food Aid now fully contextualized in Matobo community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many complained when left out during registration, community conflicts arose and social relations turned sour during registration for food aid. Even the less deserving complained when left out, they claimed that they needed to be recipients so that they could give to the less deserving when they came for help rather than deplete their original reserves. Government must give people food, all people are hungry, Matobo is perpetually drought stricken. All households needed food because they select others and leave out others, and then they would be denied draught power by neighbours.
Are there any other views you wish to bring to the attention of the study with regard Food Aid in the Matobo Community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income generating projects like goat, bees keeping and poultry. Women's clubs and makerting. Nutrition gardens, food for assets though it disturbs our other livelihood options. Fishing. Training in Conservation Farming and Livestock Management.

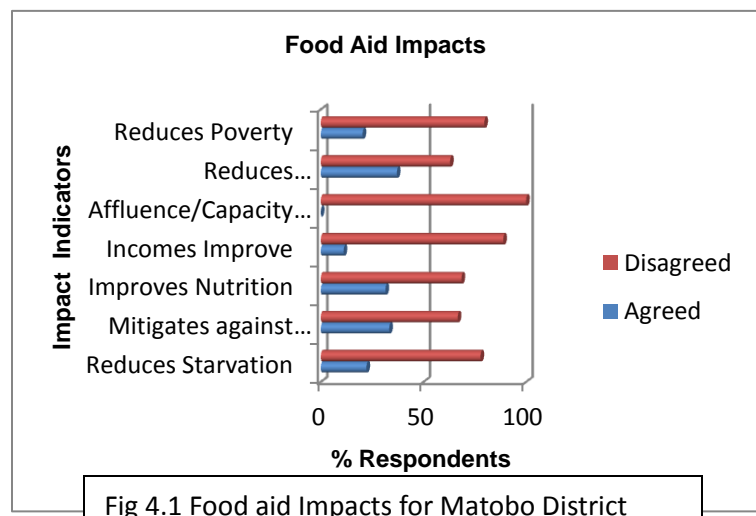
4.4 Findings and Data Analysis -Discussion

Discussion is defined as the process in research which seeks to make sense of the data by reaching out for understanding or explanation beyond the limits of what can be explained with a degree of certainty. Best and Kahn (1993:203) further indicate that data interpretation *“involves explaining the findings, answering the why questions, attaching significance to particular results, and putting patterns into an analytic framework”*. In that vein, the study undertakes the following interpretation and discussion to evaluate the results for regularities, patterns, explanations, causal relations, configurations and propositions, extending to their significance and implications. It will be according to the main four principal questions used in the fieldwork.

4.4.1 Status and Impact of food aid in the Matobo community

The public service delivery system had been eroded over the past ten years. Where extension workers were available, they lacked appropriate skills and were poorly resourced to effectively service the poor farmers. For example, they had no transport and fuel, and had to rely on NGOs for these basic tools of their jobs, implying they were out of touch with communities they ought to be serving. The police too, were hard hit by transport challenges and failed to attend to political and livestock crimes. Generally, the whole civil service was ineffective and in shambles having suffered brain drain due to poor remuneration and low motivational levels. There were no banks and private sector to write home about in the district, except for retail outlets and bottle stores that sold goods priced beyond the capacity of what the local people could afford.

The Matobo community had a basic working understanding of the definition of food aid. For the communities, their deprivation and miserly conditions qualified



them for food assistance. *“Everyone knows Matobo*

is dry, we need food”, was a common reminder across the study areas. People thought they qualified for sympathy; they wanted outsiders to think and understand on their behalf. High incidences of starvation, famine, malnutrition, poor incomes which resulted in increasing vulnerability and abject poverty were a common pattern in the district. The graph in Fig 4.1 portrays a relationship between vulnerability, poverty and food aid, and is discussed in detail below.

From their definition of Food Aid, the respondents echoed the extensive deprivation and miserly conditions prevailing in the district. Starvation, famine, malnutrition, poor incomes and ultimately, vulnerability and poverty scorched the landscape. Forty-three out of 54 respondents indicated that Food Aid did not reduce poverty while 34 thought it did not reduce vulnerability. All respondents (100%) concurred that Food Aid did not yield affluence, but rather resulted in increasing lack of material comfort as households disposed of their livelihood assets. According to the majority, the type of food distributed was of poor nutritional status, especially barley. Except for the few well-to-do individuals who exploited the food aid facility, for the majority food aid did not improve their incomes.

Incomes from sold agricultural inputs were menial and used to meet basic family needs outside food. Food Aid was highly entrenched and therefore had become contextualized in the Matobo community. This was evidenced by increasing cases of double dipping, threats/conflicts when others were left out of food aid registers. Communities seemed to enjoy their poverty status because then they were enabled to be registered for Food Aid. Failure to secure one’s name in the Food Aid register bred potential conflicts at community level.

The results indicated that food aid was the lifeblood of the Matobo community. In line with the definitions of vulnerability, poverty and dependency, up to 80% of the households were on Food Aid registers and therefore considered both vulnerable and poor according to World Food Aid selection Criteria (WFP, 2006). Food aid recipients had challenges with their livelihood opportunities and capacities and constituted the following target groups:

- Vulnerable households with less than 3 cattle or none

- Households headed by children, chronically ill and disabled persons
- Households headed by widows and the aged
- Households taking care of chronically ill persons and those with an increased number of orphans

The selection criteria adopted was not however cast on stone in that it took into account cultural variations and interpretations of poverty as explained by cultural and traditional leaders. In terms of own production in the past five consecutive years, communities have harvested on average 100 kg of grain per farming season with the exception of at least 15% of farmers that have adopted Conservation Farming (see photograph 4.1 below), these harvested on average half a tonne of grain to last them at least for a period of four to six months. A very high food insecurity situation obtained in the target wards, hence reliance on food aid was highly pronounced including in areas or wards that were formerly commercial areas until the advent of the land reform exercise. In the past three years, food aid took the form of Vulnerable Group Feeding, while Supplementary Schools Feeding (wet feeding) continued for protracted periods. Each household received 720 kg of grain, 120 kg of pulses (beans) and 24 litres of vegetable oil per year.

Table 6 shows food aid patterns over the past five farming seasons (2001-2009) for the key NGO players in the district.

TABLE 6: QUANTITIES OF FOOD AID TO BAMBANANI & MAKHASA WARDS (*Metric Tonnes-Mt*)

Agency	2001/2002	2003/2004	2005/2006	2007/2008	2009/2010
CCare/CFGB	45.616	0.0	10.90	70.08	0.0
WVI/WFP	23.07	46.257	26.35	0.0	0.0
ORAP/USAID	0.0	23.07	23.07	0.0	69.37
Deficit (MT)	-14.47	-3.82	-13.76	-5.0	-5.71

(Source: CCare Evaluation Report, 2009)

The CFGB, WFP and USAID have remained food pipelines for the partner agencies working directly with the communities in the study area. The quantities of food indicated reflect only food aid that went to Bambanani and Makhasa wards, and these trends were a total picture in the district. There has always been food aid deficit as indicated in Table 6. Food aid has not always been enough. The selection of beneficiaries, though more or less the same across the wards, differed on

the emphasis and prioritization, for example CCare and World Vision prioritized the chronically ill, the aged and widows, while ORAP prioritized those that could do some meaningful community work. A school feeding programme was not factored into the table as it was considered supplementary to the main food aid programme. Also not factored are figures from GMB (the government parastatal targeted with ensuring improved stocks of grain, particularly the specified maize grain). Figures could not be obtained from the department owing to its sensitivity. It is common knowledge that there were many beneficiaries from the GMB, but again figures could not be obtained. It is clear from the table that a clear case of double dipping was evident as food aid had become a culture for the Matobo community.

While food aid programmes have yielded desirable outcomes in the short term, the prolonged and recurrent droughts since 1999 and the economic and political decay since 2000 have meant continued and prolonged implementation of food aid intervention in Matobo district in particular. This practice has tended to promote a culture of dependency which continues to worsen the vulnerability of the affected populations. Thus people have become poorer in the past ten years, with no tangible and meaningful recovery, mitigation and preparedness interventions in place to break the vicious cycle of poverty and dependency. Government over the past decade has used food handouts for political mileage and expediency (the politics of food). Humanitarian agencies continue to inform populations that they were vulnerable so that they continued receiving more funding.

Communities believed they were vulnerable and did nothing to change their situation except to ask for more food aid from donor agencies. In the process, vulnerable communities were de-capacitated; their livelihoods crippled and they were caught up in a cycle of poverty that became too difficult to break as they remained too dependent on food handouts. Community and household livelihood capacities had been eroded overtime hence increasing dependency on food aid and that the dependency syndrome had been compounded by cheap politics of food handouts from mostly the Western nations and governments. According to Renton, (2006) as observed in Chapter 2, the rich/donor nations compounded the problems of dependency on food aid in poor nations by continuing to invest in food aid programmes at the expense of investment in the more productive

sectors of the fragile economies in Third World countries. After the folding up of numerous food aid programmes by both government and humanitarian organizations, communities were seemingly failing to recover from disasters like droughts and famine; hence without outside assistance they have remained vulnerable to persistent droughts and food insecurity.

Only 15% of the households participating in the study owned cattle signifying very high poverty levels, given that cattle have historically always been the economic mainstay of the communities. In Ndebele culture, a household without cattle is regarded very poor. The debilitating 1992 droughts, the effects of climate change on pasture, water source challenges, and poor livestock management have been cited as reasons behind such low numbers of cattle in the study area. Without cattle, there was no food, no manure, no income, no draught power, no social protection nets and communities were highly exposed and susceptible to drought and famine shocks.

The protracted droughts resulted in a state of perpetual hunger, starvation, vulnerability and poverty, forcing increasing numbers of households to turn to Food Aid for survival. The Matobo communities had accepted their poverty status and were proud to appear on Food Aid registers. Food aid had become part of family life, a common trend that according to NGOs operating in the district, had become a deep seated, newly found culture that would become too difficult to change or break. NGOs had been telling communities that they were poor during the registration process, and vulnerable communities had come to believe their new status of vulnerability. They accepted their status as God ordained. The Matobo community believed it was their defined right to receive food assistance every year, thus had become lazy to do productive work resulting in acute food security situation.

A household received 60kgs of barley, 10kg of pulses and 2 litres of cooking oil against a backdrop of 100kg of cereal production in the current season. A 100kg of grain lasts an average family of five members two months, meaning households heavily depended on food aid for their daily food needs. Over 80% of households were on food aid in the district, implying a very high deficit of grain in Matobo (acute food insecurity). On average, communities have been on food aid registers for three years with about 24% indicating they had been recipients of food aid for six years, firstly from

World Vision, Christian Care and currently ORAP. The majority of the participants were not happy with the current food for assets programmes where beneficiaries have to work to get food at the end of the month. They were used to a situation where free food and agricultural inputs from NGOs and the Grain Marketing Board were distributed. They felt robbed if they had to work to get food. For years, government had been rolling out free seed packs to gain political mileage and now communities felt bothered and exploited if they had to work for food. The politics of patronage had wreaked havoc and turned communities into lazy people who were reluctant to work for themselves. A culture of theft had crept into the community, with cattle rustling (livestock theft) the most common crime.

The right to food was a misnomer; communities spoke more of the right to be included in food registers. Government had lost its moral responsibility to provide food and basic services to its citizens, leaving this responsibility to both international and local NGOs, whom they accused of promoting opposition politics during food distributions. The NGO Bill ruffled feathers in the NGO community and citizens in 2007-2008 when NGOs distributing food were temporarily banned as they were perceived to be promoting the opposition agenda.

Pestle Analysis

According to results from Focus Group Discussions the food insecurity situation had compounded the rather unfriendly **political** environment. Local communities felt betrayed by corrupt local and national level politicians who abused political office to loot national and local resources to enrich themselves at the expense of the generality of the poverty stricken population and therefore were not keen in advocating for respect of political and related rights. Such group of leaders were cited as reasons behind district neglect, unequal development while government was cited as promoting poverty and food insecurity in Matobo district directly and indirectly. A feeling of mistrust and fear ruled in the air as communities were not free to choose their political parties, leaders and freedoms of association and assembly were greatly undermined. Politics had taken centre stage; institutional polarizations disrupted and continued to negatively impact on efforts aimed at reviving improved food security activities. Resource distribution was done along political lines. One had to belong to a political party to get a farm, agricultural inputs or buy subsidized grain from the Grain Marketing

Board. The widespread uncertainty and mistrust crippled and compromised service delivery with no meaningful extension work being done leading to lack of productive capacities at community level.

Economically, the district had suffered neglect since independence, there was gross underdevelopment and the momentum and propensity for growth and development was not part of the development matrix. The economy remained dysfunctional, unemployment was high and this drove the active and productive population out of the district into the Diaspora, leaving behind old and young people who were either too young/old or too weak to do much productive work. On average, there were four members per household out in the Diaspora with 15% of households having both mother and father out in the Diaspora. The few (7%) able-bodied men and women left behind, especially in Makhasa ward engaged in gold panning and some turned to seasonal employment in the ARDA Estates outside the study wards, again bringing home no tangible benefits as wages were too meagre. In the ARDA Estates, casual labour had gone for four months without pay with management citing electricity challenges/sages that hampered production. Traditional leadership cited dishonest, tribalism and corruption as reasons behind electricity cuts and failure to pay workers. Prices at cattle sales pens were determined by middle men who exploited the situation offering ridiculous below-market prices. This had perpetuated vulnerability, poverty and increased dependency on food aid in the Matobo community.

Well-connected individuals (connected to politicians) exchanged grain that they bought from the local GMD depot for livestock, with 100 kg of maize grain, equivalent to a heifer. They capitalized on the protracted disaster situation by pretending to facilitate the recapitalization of households yet promoting a culture of disposal of households assets – a dehumanizing experience for the Matobo community. Such unethical economic practices did not only disempower local communities, but they further entrenched food aid in the district, and made vulnerability and poverty acceptable ways of life. The only agricultural financing bank, Agri-Bank, did not offer loans to communal farmers because they did not have collateral in the form of title deeds.

Socially, the most frequented entertainment places were beer outlets (there were more bottle stores than other economic active points). Anti-social behaviours like alcohol abuse were rampant across all age groups. While community social relations remained strong; communities had suffered in

their collective desperation. They encouraged each other to participate in food aid and engaged NGOs collectively to ensure timely food distributions. Double dipping in food aid programmes was a common characteristic in the Matobo community as households hopped from one NGO to another registering and receiving food aid items, an indication of the entrenchment of food aid programmes. Conflicts arose when some people were left out during the selection process. Social safety nets in the form of the extended family had been eroded, with nothing concrete worth talking about.

Negative coping mechanisms like prostitution, gambling and continued disposal of household assets continued to erode the family fabric, and ushered in a vicious cycle of poverty. Poverty bred other social ills that precipitated the spread of HIV and AIDS, resulting in reduced household and community capacities to fend for themselves, thus further perpetuating the dependence syndrome. Instead of using the eroded community resources for improved productivity, household spent too much time, energy and resources in attending to the chronically ill family members. Indigenous knowledge had been parked, having proved insufficient in the face of acute food insecurity. The Matobo community had lost faith in themselves and traditional ways of life, and imbedded in their new belief systems was that their sustainability would only come from outside (a clear dependency syndrome mentality). Such was the sad story of communities having abandoned their livelihood options to wait on food handouts.

Technologically, the road transport systems and networks remained poor rendering communities inaccessible. Delays in transportation and distribution of food aid items and other commodities was a common phenomenon. The scarcity of goods and services thereof further traumatised communities resulting in increased cases of malnutrition amongst children and compromising of the nutritional status especially of the chronically ill persons and the aged. In Hlababomvu village, eight out of ten boreholes had broken down seven years



Fig 4.2 Unprotected water sources

ago, and communities had no capacity to repair them. Government through DDF failed the citizens

resulting in communities drinking from open water sources and sharing water with animals (dams and rivers) as shown in Fig 4.2. The photography shows a woman drawing water from Semukwe river bed in Bambanani ward where they share the source with animals, a common site in Matobo district.

Communities lost faith in the **legal systems** where the law was selectively applied. Worse still, what used to be proper legal safe guards – the traditional legal system had been poisoned by the politics of patronage, militarization of state institutions, corruption and violence. Traditional chiefs, their headmen and village heads were used to politically subjugate their subjects, hence the increasing political polarization. The land reform exercise took place within a climate of lawlessness and violence creating in the process a community characterised and ravaged by fear. Not only did communities lose their grazing areas in the process, the perpetrators of violence were

beyond the law and communities were powerless to seek redress from the constituted legal system.

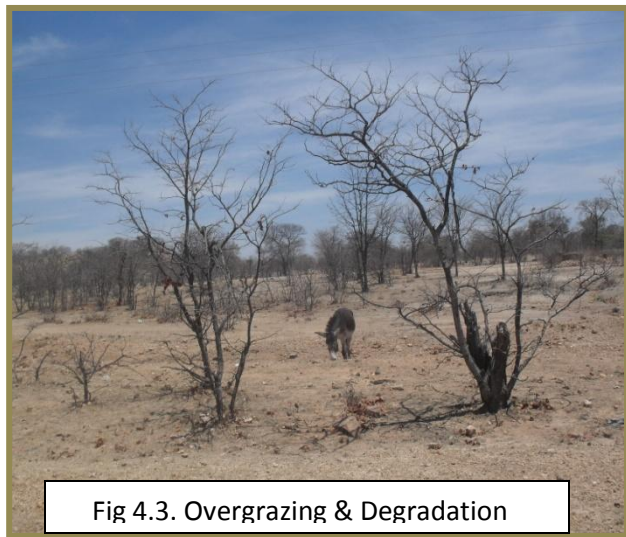


Fig 4.3. Overgrazing & Degradation

Environmental degradation was characterised by accelerated soil erosion, heavy siltation of dams and rivers, deforestation and gully formation. These were a result of mismanagement of community resources, the ravages of climatic change, incessant droughts and other human factors. Poor management of

rangeland was evidenced by overgrazing, for example Figure 4.3 shows environmental concerns that had befallen communities in both Makhasa and Bambanani wards. Ngadi Dam (Fig 4.4) in Bambanani ward was heavily silted as a result of deforestation and accelerated soil erosion. The dam could not be used for watering nutrition gardens anymore, neither was it adequate for watering animals. Such were common environmental features in the study area. Pasture land had over the years been degraded, hence the low numbers of livestock in the two wards. Figure 4:3. shows what remained of some of the pasture land in Makhasa ward. Soil cover was very acute, no grasses grew anymore and communities had to make do with this magnitude of environmental degradation. There

were probably more donkeys than cattle in the study area, an indication of a creeping and encroaching desert (desertification) in the Matobo community, and if not checked would greatly undermine and totally erode what remains of the few livelihood options in the district. Participants alluded to drying boreholes and rivers as the water table characteristics were changing in the wake of the devastating climatic change effects. Deforestation increased flash floods during the short lived rainy season and worsened erosion rates.



Fig 4.4 Heavily silted Ngadi Dam

4.4.2 Relationships between poverty, vulnerability and Food Aid

Results indicated an acute food insecurity situation in the Matobo community as evidenced by 80% of households appearing in food aid registers. This showed a high degree of poverty, vulnerability and dependency. Food aid had become the major source of food for the majority. Food debts were a common characteristic of the worse off households who were continuously paying back grain during every distribution cycle.

Fig 4.5 shows Matobo as a community devoid of community assets or capacities. There was an increasing loss of family labour due to outward migration and the effects of HIV and AIDS, lack of draught power and absence of appropriate farming skills in the face of changing climatic patterns. These trends impacted negatively on food production capacities, hence the increasing food aid programmes in the district

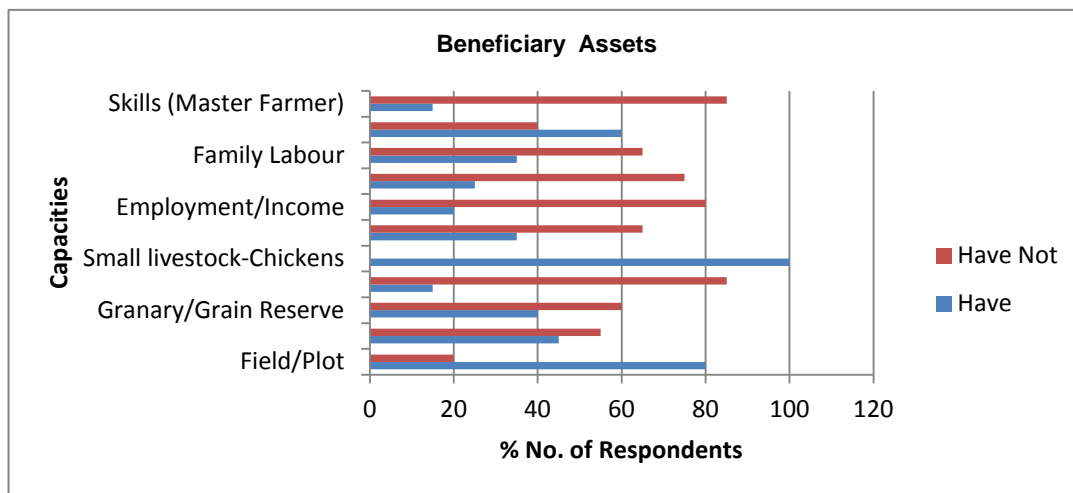


Fig. 4. 5: Beneficiary assets assessment

The identified food aid targets were deprived of many basic infrastructures and necessities of life – arable land and draught power, livestock like cattle, goats and sheep and employment opportunities. Rather, desperately, households sold the agricultural inputs (seed and fertilizer) they received from donor and government agencies to purchase food. There was massive dependency on food aid, extending to other negative coping mechanisms like depletion of household assets, prostitution, reduced meals per day and borrowing of food.

The aged, disabled, child headed households and other households with fewer than three cattle were the worst affected and, hence, the targets of Food Aid programmes. The Food for Assets Programme brought in the dimension of capability to work, in which case the aged fell out, but were in some cases assisted by neighbours who ensured they received food. They were so dependent on NGOs to the extent they identified with NGOs that worked with them.

According to the findings, it was apparent that starvation, famine, malnutrition, lack of income, incapacity to work/produce, vulnerability and poverty dogged the Matobo community in many respects. The community's livelihoods and the availability and access to assets were factors of critical concern, with the people subject to shocks over which they had limited control over. The dynamics included population trends, availability and access to resources, governance issues, technological developments and the national and international economic trends. The able-bodied young men and women migrated to South Africa, Botswana and overseas for greener pastures, to

seek opportunities for education and development given the persistent droughts, lack of employment opportunities and political instability back home. The disturbing effect of such trends was reduced farm labour which then translated into increased food insecurity, malnutrition and depletion of household assets, as the old women and children were either too weak to engage in productive food security activities.

The major challenge of food security in Matobo district was the underdeveloped nature of its agricultural sector that was characterized by its over-reliance on primary agriculture against the backdrop of infertile soils, minimal use of external farm inputs, environmental degradation and significant crop loss both pre- and post-harvest (Ncube, 2010). Suffice to say food production in the district was vulnerable to the adverse weather conditions. The district had an overall decline in farm input including seeds, fertilizers and new technology. For example, adoption of Conservation Farming techniques was limited to a few households. Livestock numbers had been greatly reduced in the past decade with fewer than 800 000 cattle in the whole district (Veterinary Services, 2011).

The toll from HIV and AIDS pandemic had added to the woes of the community and it was the active and productive age group that was the most vulnerable. The 19.5% HIV prevalence rate was compounded by food insecurity as community members engaged in prostitution for a living. Loss of labour was a direct impact of prolonged food aid as some community members migrated as they would not stand the de-humanizing effect of lining up for food aid. The aged, the sick and children were left at the mercy of food aid agencies. About 5% of cases with family members in the Diaspora reported that their migrated family members did not provide for them by way of remittances and that they never came back home. Persistent drought shocks forced vulnerable households to dispose of household assets such as farming tools, livestock and certain equipment, thus undermining their capacity to be productive. Loss of assets exposed them further to other shocks, hence their yearly expectation of food handouts from both government and NGOs. Lack of economic opportunities coupled with skills migration meant reduced or no incomes for vulnerable households. Child labour, especially in cattle ranching business increased as a result of reduced or decayed livelihood activities for individual households at risk. The economic decay since 2000 resulted in internal displacements of the poor. The mining potential in the district was hampered by lack of investments and gold panning did not attract large numbers of able-bodied men and women,

who preferred to skip the border than spend days digging for gold. In general, employment opportunities in the district were very minimal as there was no fresh investment into the district owing to the unstable political climate, poor road infrastructure and lack of appropriate policy framework to lure industrial development.

Increasing depletion of household assets through disposal to buy food resulted in affluent conditions becoming reversed. All wealth created over years of hard work diminished together with the material comfort. Over time food aid recipients became lazy to work for themselves. The argument was, *“Why work when food will surely freely come?”* A common question to NGO staff driving around the communities was, *“When are we getting food this time around?”* Communities were always expecting food year after year; food aid had become part of their lifestyle. The capacity to produce had been eroded resulting in the entrenchment of a dependency syndrome. The constrained political and economic environments were not motivators for productivity.

Besides new bottle store buildings, there was hardly any economic activity of note, save for the limited irrigation schemes that relied on and attracted casual and seasonal labour. The lack of permanent water bodies like dams resulted in limited irrigation potential, another challenge that exacerbated food shortages. Ncube (2010:46) argues that this had left small peasant farms in the communal lands vulnerable to unfavourable rainfall conditions. The few irrigation schemes in the district were operating at reduced capacity owing to lack of foreign currency to service machinery like water pumps. In many instances there was no water in these irrigation schemes, thus turning them into white elephants and robbing communities of improved food security.

Crop production declined in the past few years, given the lack of adequate soil moisture to support plant growth. Over the decades maize replaced small grain production as favourite for the communities as they abandoned small grain that was drought resistant and that

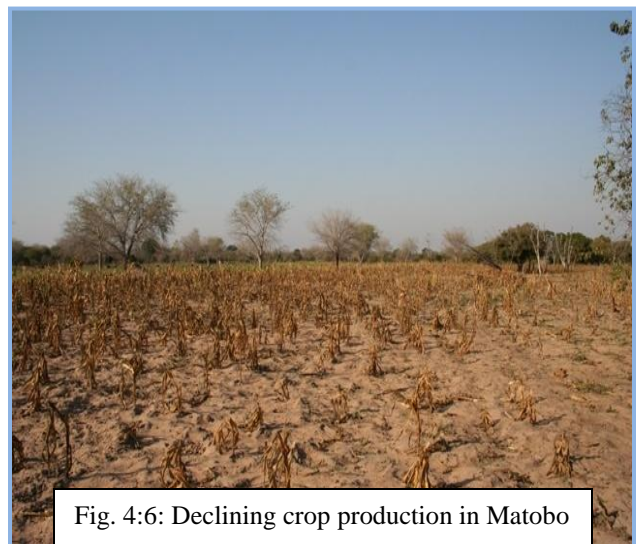


Fig. 4:6: Declining crop production in Matobo

worsened the food security situation in the district. The weather patterns did not yield adequate moisture levels for maize growth (Fig 4.6-wilted maize crop) hence reduced yields year after year. Maize could only be grown under irrigation. The Veterinary Department was underfunded and failed to prevent and control livestock diseases like tick borne, anthrax, foot and mouth and black leg, resulted in accelerated loss of livestock. Reduced livestock meant reduced incomes and increased food insecurity.

Political instability and polarization along party lines created a very complex conflict sensitive situation in the district. There was a lot of mistrust, internal displacement and insecurity. Memories of the political past (political instability in the early 80s) still haunted the district as communities were not sure what might befall them and such insecurity hampered and delayed development in the district. Matabeleland South, in particular Matobo district where the former President of ZAPU, Dr. Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo hailed from, suffered the brunt of the 80s political disturbances and since then, communities in the district exhibited a feeling that government had an unwritten policy of isolation and marginalization of the district and the province in general. During the civil unrest in the 80's, communities lost property, livestock, labour and experienced untold suffering and displacements. Their capacity and propensity to be productive was undermined and eroded rendering them ill-prepared to withstand current and future shocks and hazards.

Seasonality of prices, production, rainfall patterns, and health and employment opportunities were the third variation of the vulnerability context compounding vulnerability in Matobo district. Climate change continued to worsen the vulnerability context in the district. Yearly food production levels declined, increasing vulnerabilities especially for women, children and those living with HIV (both the infected and the affected). The dwindling water table contributed to the wiping out of certain plant species as they succumbed to dry weather patterns. Deforestation came into play and resulted in people cutting down trees for crafts to generate income to purchase food items.

Livelihood assets that included the human, social, physical, natural and financial capital continued to change over time in the district under discussion. Skills migration across borders left the district with minimal technical human capital to exploit the resources, and turn them into economic and social products. The decay in the education sector further paralyzed the district in that schools

produced half-baked individuals that were a liability to the Matobo community. Teachers and agricultural extension workers had either left their offices or were incapacitated to be of meaningful assistance to communities. Indigenous knowledge on herbs, livestock disease control, food preservation and many others remained undocumented, but were present through the elderly and unused to safeguard food security. Lack of vocational skills training establishment meant the district would continue to suffer for a long time to come.

The financial capital was constrained by lack of banking facilities and lack of economic prospects to attract the banking business in the district. That meant communities had no access to financial capital for investment as they lacked collateral. Lack of marketing strategies and knowledge resulted in poor marketing of the community's livestock potential, which some households had as



Fig 4.7 Promising Livestock potential - Ward 10

available stock. Remittances from South Africa were liquid capital used daily to meet food needs, restocking, medical expenses and other non-food items like sanitary ware, clothing and blankets.

Fig. 4.7 shows some raiment of good livestock still found in the district, especially in Matobo South. The resource opposite (cattle) could be capital that could be used to revive livelihoods and would act as part of the

community's transforming structures when the Pressure and Release model is used to reverse conditions of vulnerability, poverty and dependency (DFID, 1999). The climatic conditions are such that cattle or general livestock were a promising potential, a livelihood that needs further scrutiny and promotion. Not only do cattle provide milk, there are meat, income through sales, manure, draught power and insurance cover.

The majority of the households were vulnerable, 60% argued against food aid as reducing their vulnerability – the more they remained in need the more vulnerable they became; it had become a

way of life. If you were not vulnerable then you were stigmatized and accused of driving the humanitarian organizations away, and you drew the wrath of the communities. You needed to play vulnerable at all cost or you risked being labelled a “witch”. Poverty ruled and reigned in the communities. Famine conditions were the order of the day, both food and water were a scarcity. Lack of water meant serious food shortages. Without accompanying sustainable development initiatives and economic growth food aid did not mitigate against famine. Less than 30% of respondents thought food aid militated against famine, these were the enterprising individuals who sold food aid to the rich as animal feed or exchanged it for desired staple food like maize. Those were the less deserving of food aid as they had alternative sources of food like remittances from South Africa, but still registered for food aid so that their resources were not quickly depleted by neighbours that came to ask for food.

When the have-nots asked for food they were given from the food aid stock. At least, some semblance of **strong social networks** was evident, when participants queued to receive food that they would give out to the needy. Income generated was used to buy other household requirements like salt, soap and fees, which were not included in the food aid basket but were equally essential. The effects of climate change were evident given crop failure year after year. Worsening poverty, in addition to the effects of unfavourable weather conditions and results of breakdown of service delivery by government pointed to failure by central government to address the protracted challenges faced by communities. Continued food shortages and water scarcity were reminiscent of a really disastrous and distressful situation in the Matobo community.

In Zimbabwe, the prolonged food aid programme, while it reduced suffering and saved lives, its protracted implementation had not realized an increase in household asset build up in the past ten years, but rather, the vulnerable households continued on a downward slide into the deprivation trap of poverty and increased vulnerability as observed by Chambers, 1993. The other unintended food aid impacts had been the creation of a perpetually hungry food aid recipient who was apparently developing a dependency syndrome. The potential impacts of food aid could be categorized into intended (short term) and unintended (long term) effects (Barret, 2006). The long term impacts should result in increased food availability, improved health and social outcomes, increased

business activities linked to food aid (milling and transport) and improved trade capacity through triangular purchases (Barret, 2006).

Poverty, a vicious cycle where cause and effect follow each other until there is no beginning and no end has been highly entrenched in the Matobo Communities. Poverty is a cyclical movement that perpetuates itself over and over again (Ncube, 2010). According to Chambers (1993), clusters of deprivation are poverty, physical weakness, isolation; vulnerability and powerlessness. When the five clusters of deprivation interact, then they point to extreme poverty and increasing dependency (Chambers, 1993). World Bank (2004) views poverty as a multi-dimensional phenomenon where the poor suffer from various deprivations that include income poverty, education poverty, health poverty, personal and tenure insecurity and disempowerment and these characterize the Matobo Community.

Given the above analysis, it was evident that it was still a long walk to Zimbabwe's agricultural sector recovery. Indeed, the combined impact of the five consecutive failed crop seasons (2001-2009), HIV/AIDS effects and both internal and external population displacements justified the continued reliance on emergency food aid albeit not the best of the alternatives. Assistance from the international community was greatly appreciated, but Zimbabwe had to put in place policies that would usher in a culture of work and productivity, policies that would increase motivation levels for vulnerable groups to want to produce for themselves, and policies that would map out the road to total agricultural recovery, reduced vulnerabilities, reduced dependency of food aid and sustainable development.

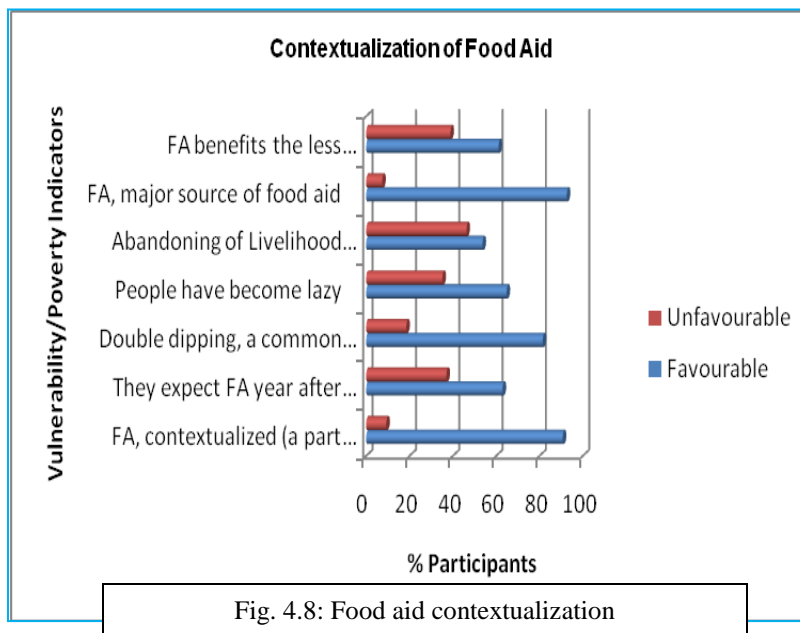
4.4.3 Views of communities and donors on prolonged food aid

Community views on the impact and contextualization of food aid were varied. 60% of respondents felt food aid benefited the less deserving while 40% felt everyone remained vulnerable in the face of natural disasters and human induced factors that contributed to reduced capacities to produce own food. Appearing on food aid registers was considered a right by more than 80% of the respondents. The Matobo community could not make do without food aid, conflicts arose and some social relations turned sour when some were registered and some left out. The food aid basket was never and will never be adequate; recipients still borrowed food

hoping to pay back in the next distribution cycle. Food debt cases were increasing each and every month and at times resulting in some serious skirmishes when some refused or were not eager to pay during distribution periods. Food aid was the major source of food in the target wards, the haves felt it was their right to access food aid so that they could be cautioned as well since they gave food to the most vulnerable. The less privileged tended to fall back on the haves during lean times. Some saw food aid as an opportunity to make money by converting grain, especially barley into stock feeds.

While food aid did not reduce starvation according to beneficiaries, community leadership, NGO workers and government sector representatives felt food aid created dependency and bred laziness amongst the vulnerable recipients. While double dipping was a common phenomenon, the donor community felt they could not contain the syndrome, given some community dynamics that included the involvement of community leaders and politicians in the practice. Food aid was deeply entrenched and had become a part of life of the local population. While food aid provided a temporary relief against hunger, the situation in Matobo was such that it was the only source of food hence it seemed good to be poor because then communities could access food. Some complained after testing HIV Negative, because then it meant they could not be registered for food aid. It was clear that some had abandoned their other livelihood activities, opting to rely on food aid. Matobo district is a drought prone area and as long as government did not prioritize development, the people will remain hungry, hence the need for protracted emergency response mechanisms by donor communities. Donors argued they needed to save lives and reduce suffering (Sphere Handbook, 2004). The absence of granaries in households was a clear pointer to increased vulnerability, poverty and entrenched or contextualization of food aid. Humanitarian workers concurred with development practitioners that they needed to be accompanying sustainable development interventions to food aid for the Matobo community as food aid alone failed to mitigate against famine and starvation.

There was cancerous corruption amongst leaders that often manifested in the diverting of food aid from the intended beneficiaries. According to NGOs operating in the district and some government officials, politicians tended to interfere with food aid programmes to further their political mileage. One would find food donated to a particular community being sold in certain shops. Like in most parts of Africa, food aid has for a long time been used to further political ambitions (the politics of food) and Matobo district in particular, was no exception. While NGOs worked to reduce suffering and saved lives, government used food aid to win political votes and in 2007/2008, the humanitarian agencies working on food aid had their activities curtailed by government, because they were thought to be using the food resources at their disposal to further the interest of opposition political parties. The Grain Marketing Board was used by government to distribute food, seed and fertilizer to vulnerable



communities, but such resources were then turned into a political tool and distributed according to party affiliation (Crisis Zimbabwe, 2008). It happened in spite of the existence of a sound national policy on drought management. The declaration of a drought disaster was currently the sole responsibility of the local government Minister. Maize had been turned into a specified commodity and drought and

hunger issues turned into sensitive political topics (CCare, 2009).

The 1998 Zimbabwe National Policy on Drought Management (NPDM) worked in conjunction with the Policy on the Operations of NGOs in Humanitarian and Development Assistance that provided guidance on food aid. The policy addressed the implementation structures from national to village levels and the roles of different stakeholders such as government, local authorities, traditional leaders, NGOs, donors and the households (ECA, 2007). Encouraged in the policy is the

need for the country to remain prepared to deal with food security threats, and the policy is designed to increase productivity. The spirit of the policy had been hampered by political considerations and economic meltdown. The policy though, downplays the emphasis on the provision of food aid in favour of development of sustainable social and economic strategies, which helped families to cope with the effects of drought. NGOs played a pivotal role in complimenting government and local authority efforts, as well as empower communities to manage the distribution of relief assistance (Chipika, 2006).

The challenge, however, has been lack of effective coordination between government agencies and NGOs in humanitarian assistance and adherences to policy guidelines, and the inadequacies of resources. The other challenge has been the politicization of the food assistance programmes and community polarization. The food security in Zimbabwe and in Matobo District in particular, still remained a pressing issue in 2011, with the humanitarian situation remaining fragile, with food security, water and sanitation a serious concern (theindependent.co.zw). People were drinking from unprotected water sources and their health compromised in the process. An unhealthy community could not produce food for itself. If getting clean water was so difficult, water for crop production which was needed in large quantities would be even more difficult to access. According to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Regional Integration (August, 2011), WFP reported that following extensive crop failure in the current season, and lack of other food or livelihood, some districts in the country required immediate food assistance for nine months instead of the traditional four months during the peak hunger period.

In Zimbabwe, Vulnerable Group Feeding is usually offered for four months (January to April) during the hunger period, but the subsequent complexity of the disaster has necessitated otherwise. Nine months of VGF speak of a nation failing to feed its own. For the 2011-2012 seasons WFP estimates that it will be responding to the needs of approximately 1.4 million people at a cost of US\$83 million (WFP, 2011). USAID has already provided US\$18.5 million to meet Zimbabwe`s food needs (ZIMVAC, July, 2011). According to Famine Early Warning Systems Network (Fewsnet, August, 2011), Zimbabwe`s food security outlook for July through to December, 2011 will need to be monitored closely especially for the arid districts as they have localized food

deficits and their current crop production was heavily compromised by the dry spells. The districts in question include Binga, Kariba, Matobo and Zvishavane.

4.4.4 Recommendations to promote sustainable livelihoods for the communities

Appropriate technologies like **Conservation Farming** were being promoted to drive communities out of the food insecurity situation and poverty. The photograph below, Fig 4.1., shows a sorghum crop (small grain and drought tolerant) being promoted in Bambanani Ward using **conservation farming principles** (CCare, 2010). Unfortunately, such improved food production technologies, while having a lot of potential, only reached to a few households (23%) at the time of this research work.

These were however positive developments likely to challenge the negative impacts of climate change and reduce dependency on perennial food aid programmes. Conservation farming members had adopted a group work approach to working their plots (the advantage of numbers). The



Fig 4.9 Excellent sorghum crop under CF

approach had seen increased outputs and outcomes resulting in increased food production while the majority of households remain without food for the rest of the year, save for what they get from NGOs. Figure 4: 9. shows an excellent crop during the 2010/2011 farming season, the most devastating of the farming seasons. Fifteen per cent of the farmers that adopted conservation farming techniques managed to get food to last them for six months or more – those were food

secure households. However one farmer in Bambanani ward managed to harvest half a tonne of sorghum and was food secure until the next harvest season. However, with increased mulching, the conservation farming technique could double current yields and usher in food secure households.

Fig 4.10 is a contrasting scenario to an earlier photograph (Fig 4.6) where dependence on rain fed agriculture can be complemented by increased utilization of **irrigation** and the adoption of other appropriate water conserving technologies. Humanitarian Agencies like CCare, Khulasizwe and CADEC have begun to initiate a move away from food distribution to mainstreaming other livelihood interventions meant to increase productivity and reduce dependency on food handouts (CCare, 2009). Besides increased irrigation, conservation farming techniques and agricultural input support in the form of seed and fertilizer were some of the programmes attracting little funding currently, and yet they do have the potential to reduce dependency and vulnerability. Farmers were given 2 kg of millet, 5 kg of sorghum, 10kg of maize and 25 kg of each Ammonium Nitrate and Compound D. While the amount of agricultural inputs were adequate to drive communities out of poverty, inputs were never fully utilized, some simply sold off the commodities, while some washed chemicals and consumed the products. The feeling was someone should do it for them or



Fig 4 10 Thriving crop at Shashane Irrigation Scheme- Matobo

provide ready food rather than inputs, a clear sign of deep seated dependency.

Can Matobo district feed itself if proper planning and harvesting of the few major rivers (Hove, Shashani, Semukwe, Mwewe, Malalatau, Shashi) were dammed to provide irrigation water? The photograph in Fig 4.8 shows what can happen if only increased investment in water development in the drier regions could be prioritized. The irrigation scheme used water from a dam across Shashani

River. There were three such schemes in the district, but poor management had turned them into white elephants leaving populations vulnerable, starving and dependent on food aid.

Zimbabwe had no clear drought policy in place to mitigate droughts. *The Civic Protection Act* of 1996 did not provide for effective disaster risk reduction, and gave too much power to the Minister of Local Government at the expense of the local authorities, making it too difficult to facilitate decision-making at local level. Besides, poor funding and lack of skills weakened the good intents of the Act. In other words, political commitment to developing the district was rather questionable.

Land was inadequate, especially pasture land. This had caused a lot of conflicts amongst communities. Food aid selection criteria for beneficiaries by WVI have further created tension amongst communities as those with more than five cattle were excluded, and yet they too were food insecure. Such exclusion had impacted negatively on **social safety nets** as the excluded then refused to provide draught power to their neighbours without cattle, thus undermining community coping mechanism against drought impacts. Communities argued that to mend social relations and promote peace and tranquillity in Matobo, there was need treat all people alike to promote total development of the community.

Access to food aid through government structures had been done on political lines through the state-owned Grain Marketing Board. There were also reports of corruption within the parastatal where officers exchanged grain for livestock, much to the detriment of community development. Transport to the grain marketing Board facilities in Maphisa Growth Point was another poser for poor communities. Councillors elected on party tickets took advantage to sell grain either at exorbitant prices or on party lines. There was need for advocacy for the **establishment of democratic governance structures** through community empowerment outreach programmes.

The DFID Sustainable Livelihood Framework Model was used to try and map up what communities made of livelihood assets in their wards. Only the section that dealt with livelihood assets was of interest in this study (human, natural, social, physical and financial capital). Suffice to say that given the dark picture of vulnerability and poverty in the Matobo community, communities thought they should be ploughed back to revive their motivation; major of which was the renewal and stability in the political front and **investment in productive assets**.

Community participation in programmes meant to benefit them was cited as the cornerstone to ushering in a developmental phase and a culture of work. NGOs and government programmes tended to have a top-down approach and have turned into white elephants as a result. Communities needed to own programmes; they needed to be actively involved from the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases. Communities needed a voice, to be respected especially regarding their culture and indigenous knowledge, for poverty to be driven away.



Fig. 4:11. Community capacity building-Ward 9

Capacity building through training (software packages) to provide the necessary skills, attitudes and resources to promote sustainable development was a necessary pre-requisite. Communities felt they needed to be consulted in all the project planning phases for them to drive their own development. They felt dehumanized, for example to be forced to eat what they did not culturally eat, but had

to because they had no choice. The communities wanted their choices back and believed they could be their own bosses. The photograph in Figure 4.11 shows women participating in a livestock management workshop where local knowledge were reinforced and promoted much to the delight of the participants. Training and more training was necessary before inputs could be distributed. In fact, communities should be motivated through training to begin to demand relevant and appropriate inputs. For example, communities in the Matobo community spoke of livestock rebuilding as “livestock seed”, better than grain seed that did not do well given the climatic change effects. Training in the Master Farmer programme should be brought back to target all households as part of community capacity building. Young people also needed to be trained in relevant skills like agriculture, welding, small scale mining, fishing, nutritional garden and livestock management and marketing. Those programmes should link communities with the appropriate markets close and afar. Product value addition must be promoted during agricultural shows and field days at community level. Programme participants must be trained through exposure visits to related

programmes (both the failed and successful programmes for learning purposes). Participants from exchange visits would then feedback to their communities during farmer study circles. Beneficiary livestock households continued to pass on heifers to respective beneficiaries year after year. Heifers were passed on as seed and the belief was that training would provide the impetus for project sustainability and ownership. More training and more training had become the song of late as a measure to ensure communities are driven off the dependency train. A few participants in the food for assets programme resigned from their programme, and opted to dedicate more time to Conservation Farming plots, because they believed food aid would waste their valuable productive time.

The selection criterion was one area that needed addressing. It was felt that the vulnerable were not the right people to receive agricultural inputs or to benefit from developmental programmes. Such programmes must target the rich and able, who in turn will pass on the skills to their CF counterparts. Such an approach meant they would be respected and listened to in their communities. Targeting then should consider the haves for sustainability purposes. It is the haves that will try new foundation seed, and not sell it. It is the haves that will keep donated chickens for profit, and not

consume them all and claim they were poisoned



Fig 4.12. Planting Stations - Ward10 , 2011

New and appropriate technologies that promote increased productivity ought to be researched upon and encouraged. Conservation Farming is one such technique that is set to gain momentum in the Matobo community. The practice does not require draught power that is already absent in the community, but relies on traditional knowledge of digging planting stations and ensuring little

disturbance of the soil. Mulching is then done to reduce loss of water from the soil. Only a small plot (say 50 x 50m) is used to generate adequate food for an average family for a year. A

development worker with CCare (Figure 4:12) demonstrates the digging of planting stations and sheds some light on what happens with this type of approach. Planting stations are micro-dosed using compost, kraal manure for fertilizers to ensure improved soil fertility. For most poor households without manure, compost manure can be easily made out of the vegetative materials found locally. Manure and composts are locally available at no cost to the community and therefore most appropriate to the vulnerable. A small field becomes very productive, and if adopted, dependency on food aid would become history. In fact, conservation farming participants would become donors of food aid in future as already evidenced by the capacity to select seed from a plot in the photograph in Figure 4.9 above, storing the seed for use during the next cropping season, reducing dependency on food aid. A group of 12 farmers selected and stored enough seed to share with the vulnerable in their community in Bambanani ward and that seed was kept with the Headman who had an appropriate granary and agreed to store seed on behalf of his community.

In the photograph below (Figure 4.13), Christian Care Officers discuss their research findings on a Conservation Farming Plot during a research study visit to Bambanani ward. What was striking was



Fig 4.13. Thriving Crop under CF Practice, 2010

that while the majority of farmers lost out due to a long dry spell, this particular plot yielded close to a tonne of sorghum.

Many farmers argue that the former staple food, sorghum and millet, were difficult and annoying to process, hence they changed their taste to maize that demands large volumes of water and therefore not appropriate for the district. Such small grains could be

promoted and then farmers linked up with markets (market linkages) so farmers can sell their product at competitive prices and use the money to buy their maize meal. This made excellent economic sense given that the district suffered persistent dry spells. The dry spells could be turned into an asset if communities were trained to think in other ways, and to use their terrible weather

conditions to their advantage. The changing climatic conditions could be turned into productive elements only if communities were capacitated to think beyond their current circumstances.

There was need to commercialize every aspect of life and to help communities to think in business terms in whatever ventures they undertake. Beer Companies like Chibuku and Ingwebu in Bulawayo would be keen to partner with communities that are willing to assist them. Contract Farming, where such companies provide seed and other support services could promote livelihood diversification and later industrialization of Matobo District. Companies or individuals can do this with all forms of livestock and vegetable crops to produce for a ready market as a way of reducing dependency on food aid.

Free agricultural inputs and food aid should be abandoned in favour of cash transfers, food for assets or contract farming. The huge rivers like Semukwe in Bambanani and Mhwabhinyani in Makhasa wards could be harnessed and dammed for irrigation purposes, fishing and tourism ventures in the district. Rural tourism would provide the necessary employment opportunities for the many young people that flock south for better opportunities on a yearly basis. The Mopnai worms provided yet another opportunity for industrialization of the district if value addition could be promoted.

Capacity building through training in various livelihood skills like the Master Farmer Programme, Nutrition garden and livestock management, project and conflict management, IGPs and market linkages and conservation farming techniques would reduce dependency and address poverty and vulnerability issues. Food Aid should be in the form of food for assets and inputs should never be freely distributed.

4.5 Conclusion

Food aid is one of the intervention strategies in mitigating the negative effects of drought, food insecurity and related disasters in Zimbabwe. While food aid programmes have yielded desirable outcomes in the short term, the prolonged and recurrent droughts since 1999 and the economic and political decay since 2000 have meant continued and prolonged implementation of food aid

interventions in Zimbabwe and in Matobo District in particular (Fewsnet, 2009). This practice has tended to promote a culture of dependency and worsen the vulnerability of the disaster-affected populations. People have become poorer in the past ten years, with no tangible and meaningful recovery, mitigation and preparedness interventions in place to break the vicious circle of poverty and dependency. Government over the past decade has used food handouts for political mileage and expediency (the politics of food). Humanitarian agencies continue to inform populations that they are vulnerable so that they continue to motivate their funding (Hove, 2005).

The resultant effect has been that populations now believe they are vulnerable and do nothing to change their situation except to wait for food aid from donor agencies. In the process, vulnerable communities are decapacitated, their livelihoods are crippled and they are caught up in a cycle of poverty that becomes too difficult to break as they remain too dependent on food handouts. The consecutive droughts since 1999 have eroded community and household livelihood activities, assets and their dependency syndrome has been compounded by cheap politics of food handouts from mostly the western nations and government at the expense of investment in the more productive sectors of the fragile economy (Renton, 2006). After the folding up of numerous food aid programmes by both government and humanitarian organizations, communities are seemingly failing to recover from disasters like droughts and famine, thus without outside assistance, they have remained vulnerable to persistent droughts and food insecurity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The assessment on the impact of prolonged food aid programmes on the Matobo community took place when there was still some bickering in the political circles. It was at the height of the Food for Assets programme being implemented by ORAP and covering the whole Matobo district. Surprisingly, former commercial farming wards 22-25 were also benefiting from the food aid programmes, implying that the fast track, land reform exercise resulted in more unintended negative consequences than were previously envisaged. Three other irrigation schemes had been abandoned owing to power sages, and ultimately were cut off three years before because beneficiaries could not afford electricity charges in the language of the politicians.

NGOs like World Vision, CCare, Khulasizwe Trist and CADEC, while implementing targeted food aid programmes, were beginning to move away from free food handouts to embrace some aspects of agricultural inputs, distributions, and some form of developmental programmes. The 2010/2011 farming season had yielded very minimal harvests given the unfavourable dry weather conditions, and long dry spells that devastated the staple crop, leaving the majority of the households dependent on food aid. Many of the study participants were not readily available given that they spent many days in a month being busy with food for assets programme. Interviews had to be rescheduled as a result, to ensure they were reached out to.

Chapter 1 introduced the statement of the problem, background and rationale of the study, research questions, the significance of the study and assumptions. Literature review and some key terms were dealt with in detail in Chapter 2 of the study, while Chapter 3 covered the research methodology. Results, findings, discussions and analysis were presented in Chapter 4. This chapter then (Chapter 5) attempted to suggest possible solutions and recommendations to reducing dependence on food aid programmes in Matobo district.

5.2 Recommendations

Central and local government needed to address certain pertinent issues not only to facilitate transforming structures, but also to enable a favourable political and economic climate to allow for increased investment in development and poverty reduction strategies. In complimenting government, humanitarian organizations should adopt pro-development policies and compliment efforts by government to reduce vulnerabilities and improve food security. Recommendations that follow below are drawn from the main findings tabulated above:

- Zimbabwe is currently ill-prepared for disaster response. The Disaster Management Unit (Civil Protection Unit) in Zimbabwe is dysfunctional and needs a radical review by Parliament to ensure its active preparedness and response to current and future disasters. Given the increased scale of needs and vulnerabilities, there is need for a radical shift in attitude and working practices to integrate anticipation, disaster risk reduction, preparedness and resilience into both humanitarian and developmental programmes by both state and non-state actors. The line between humanitarian and development work has become increasingly blurred necessitating the need for humanitarian actors to do a better job of advocating preparedness.
- Participatory and preventative approaches focusing on long-term crisis should be a pre-requisite for sustainable development. Without investment early on, youth remain trapped in situations of poverty and dependency. To ensure youth are not co-opted into criminality, social conflicts, and patterns of inter-generational violence and continued mass migrations, there is need for increased investment on youth and their positive engagement and participation in humanitarian aid and development work.
- Government to grant communities title deeds for their pieces of land to use as collateral so that they can access the much needed capital for development, and ensure food security for their households. Communal land tenure and the unending land conflicts negatively affect productive investment. Industry needs to begin to diversify and provide insurance cover for the few livestock (chickens, goats, sheep, donkeys and cattle)

available to vulnerable communities, so that the poor community's collateral base is widened in scope.

- Droughts are natural to region 4 and 5 and in Matobo district in particular, therefore government should commission more irrigation schemes to increase food security and get Zimbabwe working again as the bread basket of the region. With increased irrigation, Matobo should be able to feed itself and beyond. At least, a minimum of five big irrigation schemes for the district will work towards meeting the food security objective.
- The private sector needs incentives by way of tax holidays to encourage the industrialization of Matobo district. Private companies should then be encouraged to invest in dam construction, road infrastructure and communication development, livestock re-breeding and marketing, mining, tourism sector, irrigation and education and training to provide a basis for economic revival and development.
- Alternative food security strategies like programming in small and bigger livestock have to be intensified. Given the prolonged droughts, emphasis on livestock production should be intensified. Thus, in this respect, government should provide scope and direction to humanitarian agencies so that their programmes prioritize or mainstream livestock production for sustainability. With regards to livestock and environmental management, the concept of Holistic Land and Livestock Management should be mainstreamed in all developmental programmes in Matobo, given that livestock has been the mainstream livelihood over historical times. The practices will promote the resultant field and veld animal impact thereby increasing and promoting both pasture rejuvenation, environmental/land healing and increased crop productivity
- Parliament and other government offices should be decentralized (devolution of power) to allow for speedy and effective decision-making at local level. Decisions made in Harare remain hostile and unfavourable to local communities. Devolution will allow for a fair share of the region's resources and ensure they are ploughed back into the communities that generate them. Communities in Matobo feel alienated and that they are

never regarded as full citizens of Zimbabwe, hence the underdevelopment of the region. People should feel that government attends to their concerns, and that they need a say in how they should be governed. Governance issues then need a re-look if Zimbabwe has to remain a united nation and not divided into tribal zones.

- Matobo district has no vocational skills training establishment 30 years after independence, and this should be a concern to central government. Agricultural and related tertiary colleges should be established with a focus on the current and future needs of the district. This then should provide remedies to outward migration and skills flight concerns.

5.3 Conclusion

The persistent vulnerability, poverty and dependency in the Matobo community were largely a direct result of protracted food aid programmes. The situation was compounded by lack of purposive developmental initiatives by both local and central government. Also evident from the research findings were the deep seated and strained political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental conditions that have become a threat to achieving improved food security status in the district. In other words, the excessive food aid tended to paralyse the productive capacities of the communities trapping them in increasing vulnerability, prolonged dependency and ultimately, poverty and outmigration. It is time the humanitarians realised that emergency response alone was not adequate if communities are to escape the food aid or emergency response trap, but that they should think in terms of preparedness and sustainability of their programmes. Humanitarian aid policies should change to embrace the fact that communities have the capacity to uplift themselves and that programmes should work to the empower communities they seek to assist.

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APPENDIX I: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (INTERVIEWS)

Date:/...../ 2011

I am Everson Ndlovu, a student with the University of the Free State. I am currently conducting research for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements for obtaining a Masters degree in Disaster Management. In my research study, I investigate the impact of prolonged food aid programmes on vulnerable households in Matobo District.

To achieve my research objectives, I will be grateful if you would allow me an opportunity to interview you. The interview will last approximately one hour fifteen minutes and will be both recorded on tape and some responses written in my notebook. Your participation in this exercise is voluntary and strictly confidential. I will keep your views and information about you confidential and will use the information for academic purpose only. Please feel free to participate in this exercise as no names will be quoted on the production of the document. You have the legal right to withdraw at any time if you are not happy with the process. Please note that, there are no ethical implications or risks attached to your participation.

I will contact you next week in order to discuss your participation and arrange for the interview. For any questions concerning the interview, or any inquiry, please do not hesitate to contact me on 09-65804.

The research is important in that it will contribute to improving the food security situation and livelihood options for communities in Matobo district. Thank you

Kind Regards

APPENDIX 2 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS)

Date:/...../ 2011

I am Everson Ndlovu, a student at the University of the Free State, and currently conducting a research study for the purpose of obtaining a Masters Degree in Disaster Management.

The purpose of my study is to investigate the impact of prolonged food aid programmes on vulnerable communities in Matobo district. The research is important in that it will contribute to improving the food security situation and livelihood options for communities in Matobo district.

To be able to complete my study, I would be grateful if you would be part of the Focus Group Discussion. The discussions will last approximately one hour and thirty minutes. Your participation in the discussion is voluntary and strictly confidential. There are no risks on your person and household. I will keep personal information from the discussion confidential and will use it for academic purposes only.

Thank you,

Kind Regards

APPENDIX III

INFORMED CONSENT CONTRACT FORM

I consent to being interviewed by Everson Ndlovu for his research study on investigating the impact of prolonged food aid programmes on vulnerable households in Matobo District. I am fully aware that:

- Participation in this exercise is voluntary and confidential
- The interview will be both tape recorded and responses written down
- I may withdraw from the interview at any time
- My responses will remain confidential
- No information will be tied on me
- All information presented will be used for academic purpose only.

Name:.....Date:.....

APPENDIX IV QUESTIONS GUIDING DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

What is the status of Food Aid in the Matobo Community?

What indicators reveal a relationship between vulnerability, poverty and FA in the Matobo Community?

What are the targets of FA in terms of livelihoods of the Matobo Community?

What alternatives to FA exist or have been recommended to the Matobo Community?

APPENDIX V QUESTIONS GUIDING INTERVIEWS

Date:...../...../2011 Household Number:..... Ward..... Village.....

Bio-details:

Age..... Sex..... Total Household..... Occupation.....

Consumption patterns.....

Guiding Questions

Define the term Food Aid?

For how long have you worked with the Matobo Community on Food Aid?

Indicate your views and observations on the impact of Food Aid with respect to the following in the Matobo community:

- i) Starvation
- ii) Famine
- iii) Nutrition
- iv) Incomes
- v) Affluence/capacity to work/produce
- vi) Vulnerability
- vii) Poverty

Are vulnerability, poverty and food aid now fully contextualized in the Matobo community?

Are there any other views you wish to bring to the attention of the study with regard food aid in the Matobo community?

APPENDIX VI QUESTIONS GUIDING FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Date:...../...../2011 Ward..... Villages.....

Questions:

There is too little as well as too much food aid in the Matobo community. Conduct a **PESTLE** analysis (political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental issues).

Vulnerability, poverty and food aid are now contextualized in the Matobo community. Discuss.

What recommendations can you give the Matobo community to secure its livelihoods outside food aid?

Are there any other views you would wish to bring to the attention of the study with regard food aid in the Matobo community