

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to understand the impact of protracted food aid on household livelihood strategies. It assesses the negative impact of food aid on recipients which could also be called the disincentive effects or unintended effects. There has been a notion in the development discourse especially by donor organisations, governments and development agencies that donor aid can lead to negative dependency. Such arguments have been used to withdraw, or reduce aid. On the other hand the study assesses whether the design of food aid promoted livelihood strategies as a way of building resilience to further shocks. A qualitative research design which used a number of methods was utilised. It made use of focus group discussions with local authorities of Chipinge district, local traditional leaders, government field workers and villagers as well as questionnaire interviews with individuals while observations became an integral part. A two stage sampling design was chosen in order to systematically sample the wards and then randomly sample individuals from those wards. A lot of secondary information was also obtained mostly from the World Food Programme and Christian Care.

The study found out that negative dependency on food aid does not occur because aid is given over a long period of time to the same communities. Rather it may occur if; (i) rigorous assessments are not done prior to implementation; (ii) it does not target the most vulnerable thereby including undeserving cases and excluding deserving cases; (iii) it is implemented at the wrong time and (iv) if the quantities given are more than the requirements.

It is concluded that the food aid which was implemented by Christian Care and World Food Programme from 2002 to 2009 was designed properly such that it did not encourage negative dependency. However, it fell short of attaining the objective of promoting or strengthening livelihoods.

In order to attain the objective of food security for the local people of Chipinge South it is recommended that both the public and private sectors revamp and expand the irrigation

iv
developments in the region. Drought resistant crops such as millet and sorghum should be promoted. New farming technology of conservation farming is highly recommended to improve on crop yields. Finally it is recommended that food aid be combined with input support as a way of directly promoting production.