

# ***An analysis of the food aid programme and its contribution to community resilience in Murehwa district in Zimbabwe.***

Presentation made at the Disaster Risk Reduction  
Conference.

University of Free State  
Bloemfontein  
South Africa

20-21 May 2008

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# Key words

- **Food aid:** *International transactions that result in the provision of aid in the form of a food commodity in a country deemed in need of receiving such aid.*
- **Resilience:** *The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure.*
- **Food Security:** Food security exists when all people, at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for healthy and active life.
- **Vulnerability:** A combination of factors that determine the degree to which someone's life and livelihood is put at risk by a discrete and identifiable event in nature or in society.

# The Context

- Devastating droughts and flooding common in southern Africa contributing to increased food insecurity.
- It is predicted climate change will cause more severe droughts and flooding and more people will experience food crisis
- Food Aid has been a popular way to mitigate the effects of droughts, natural disasters and other emergencies on food consumption.
- Despite a long history of droughts, human endeavour has not adequately adapted to the realities of food insecurity .
- Food crisis regarded only as a failure of agriculture to produce sufficient food at the national level, and not as a failure of livelihoods to guarantee access to sufficient food at the household level.



# The Problem

- **The inability of the food aid programme to build resilience to future food insecurity.**



Photo: WFP/Richard Lee

*U.S. corn on its way to Zimbabwe.*

# Objective & Aim of the Study

## Objective

- To determine whether the food aid programme implemented in Murehwa district between 2003 and 2005 played a role in building resilience to future food insecurity.

## Aim

- The findings of the study are to feed into the institutional memory of food crisis management as well as social development especially for the marginal communities thereby contributing to improved planning of future food crisis interventions.

# Methodology

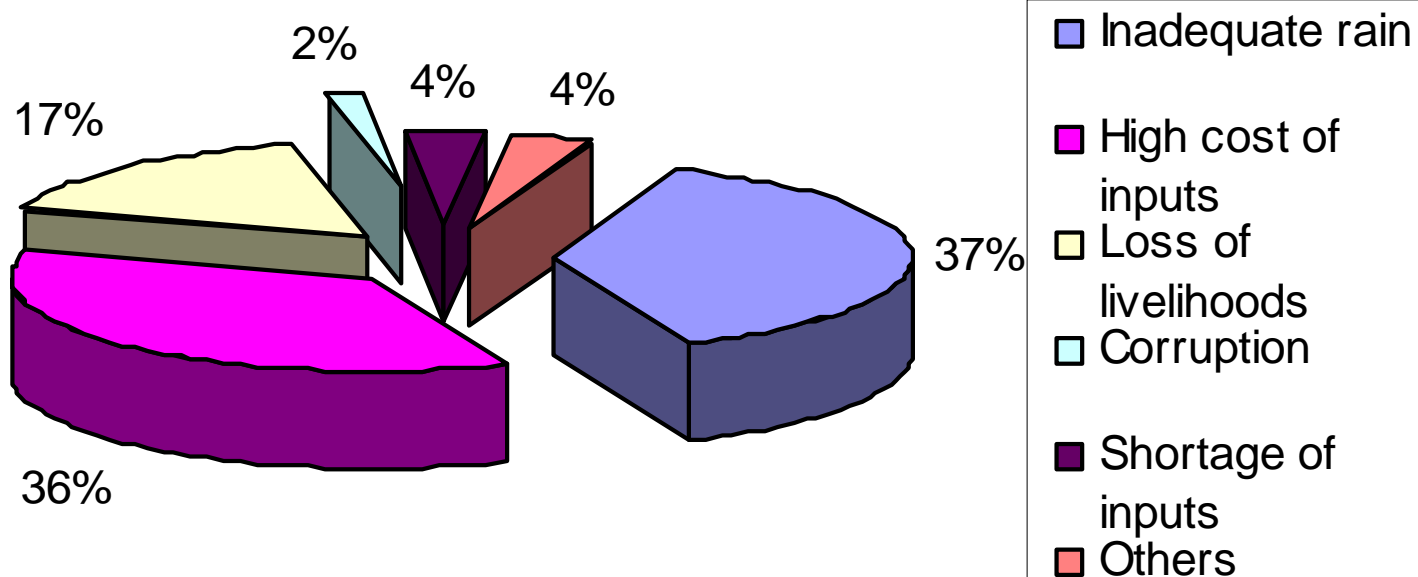
- The qualitative research design:- interviews, observations, interaction with study participants, use of secondary information, reports, official documents and print media.
- 180 people participated in the study through individual interviews and focus group discussions.
- The non-probability sampling technique was used in the selection of subjects for personal interviews.
- Data analysis involved inductive reasoning and then drawing inferences from data collected during interviews and from questionnaires administered

# Definition of Food Insecurity

- Shortage of maize meal
- Lack of adequate food for household to have 3 meals a day
- Lack of food on the market
- When there is inadequate cereal or maize at the Grain Marketing Board
- When prices of food are so high that we can not afford to buy it.

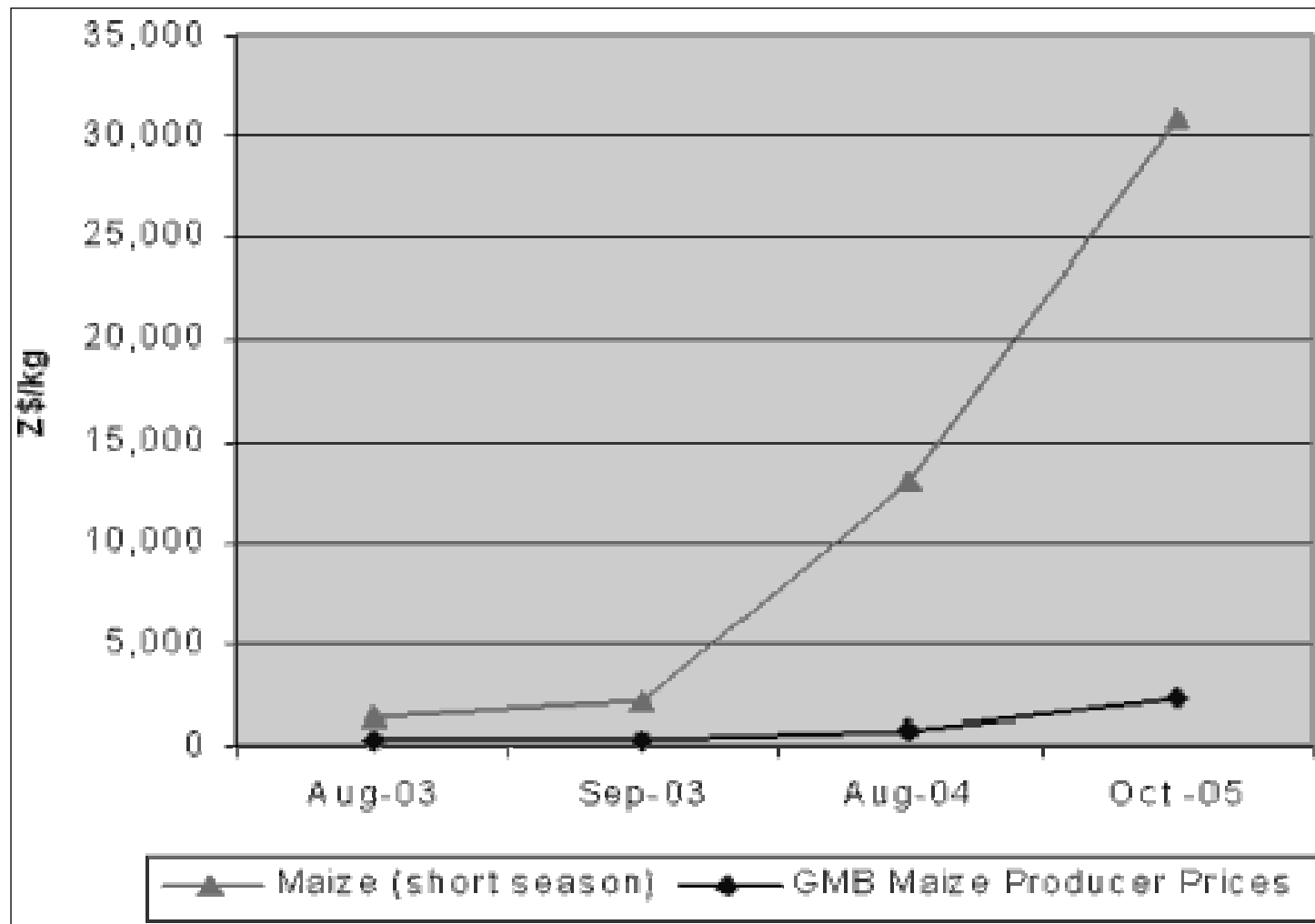


## Causes of food crisis by percentage of respondents





# Cost of seed compared to maize producer prices

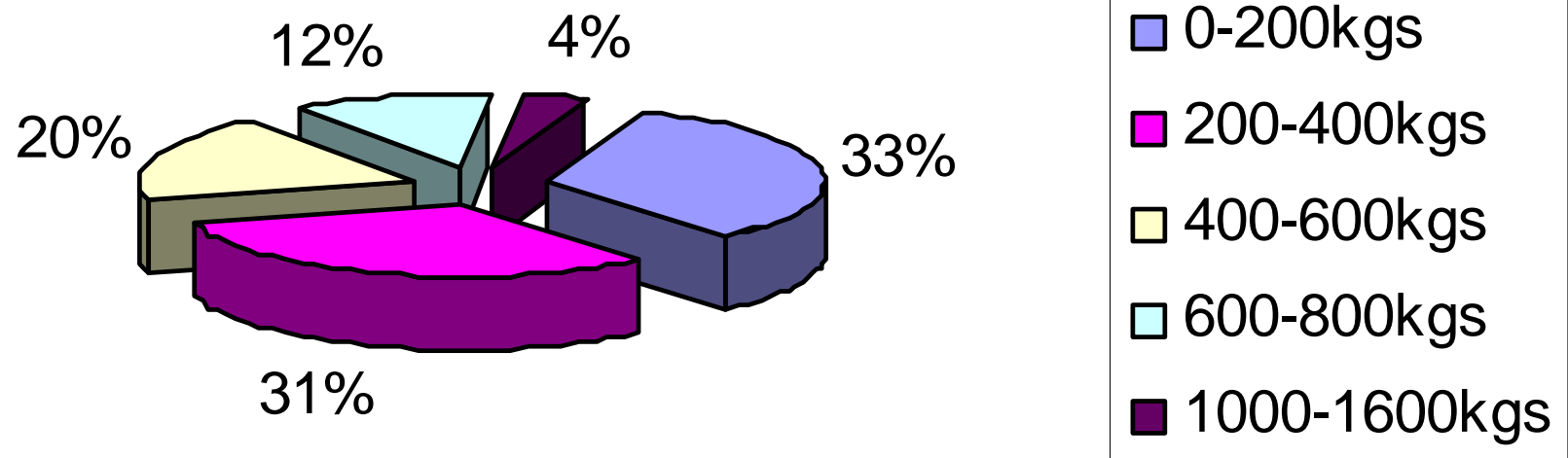


# Other causes of food crisis

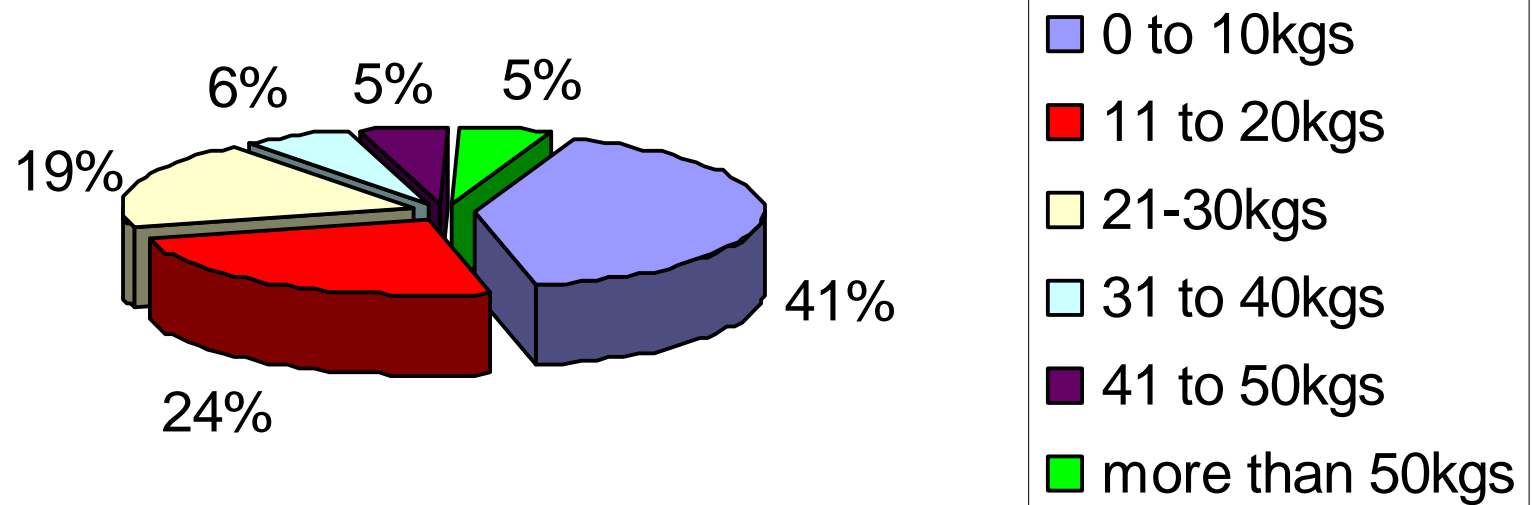
- Delays in the deliveries of agricultural inputs.
- Delays in paying farmers who deliver their harvest to the GMB.
- Corruption in the distribution of agricultural inputs and sell of the inputs on the black market



## Quantity of fertilizers in kgs by percentage of respondents



## Quantity of seed used by percentage of respondents



# Food Aid Objectives

- To support people living with HIV and AIDS and elderly and OVCs.
- To assist people in need.
- To assist the sick, and the elderly
- To assist the poor
- To assist everyone.
- To eradicate hunger and poverty
- To assist the elderly, those without farm implements and youths
- It is government's role to provide food

# Findings

- 84% of respondents experienced food crisis.
- 75% of the people interviewed received food aid.
- When food aid was introduced, 52% of respondents increased the number of meals they had, twenty-eight 28% reported no change 20% no response.
- 95% of respondents relied on rain fed agriculture for their livelihoods and food supplies.
- 91% of the respondents produced inadequate food in the 2005-2006 agricultural season.
- 18% had access to adequate agricultural inputs
- Food aid had a multiplicity of objectives
- 73% of respondents indicated that food aid was good while twenty-seven 27% said it was bad.

## Why food aid was considered good

- Prevented people from starving
- Assisted people in need of food because of the poor rainfall
- Targeted the elderly, orphans, school children
- Assisted the poor and unemployed and those displaced in urban areas

# Why food aid was considered bad

- Food aid built dependency syndrome
- Food aid benefited those not in genuine need
- People must be taught how to fish and not given fish
- Food aid must given when necessary not to please people as this builds dependency syndrome
- People should be encouraged to work
- Income generating projects should be encouraged because they are long-term
- Agricultural inputs and other assistance that leaves people self-sufficient are better
- Food gets finished quickly because of large families



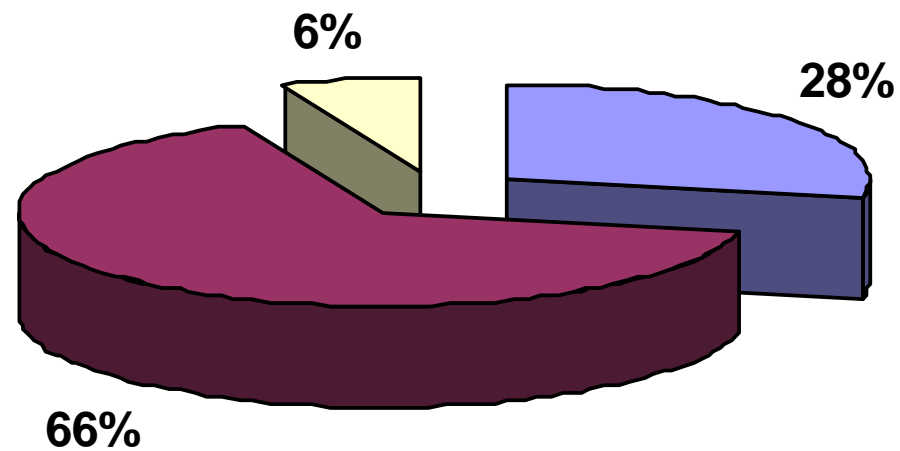
## Beneficiary targeting

- People in need were provided for but others were missed
- There was no proper beneficiary selection
- Food aid was based on age, not on need
- Some people who did not deserve assistance received food aid.
- Some organizations gave everyone food while other organizations only distributed to the needy.

# Food aid distribution

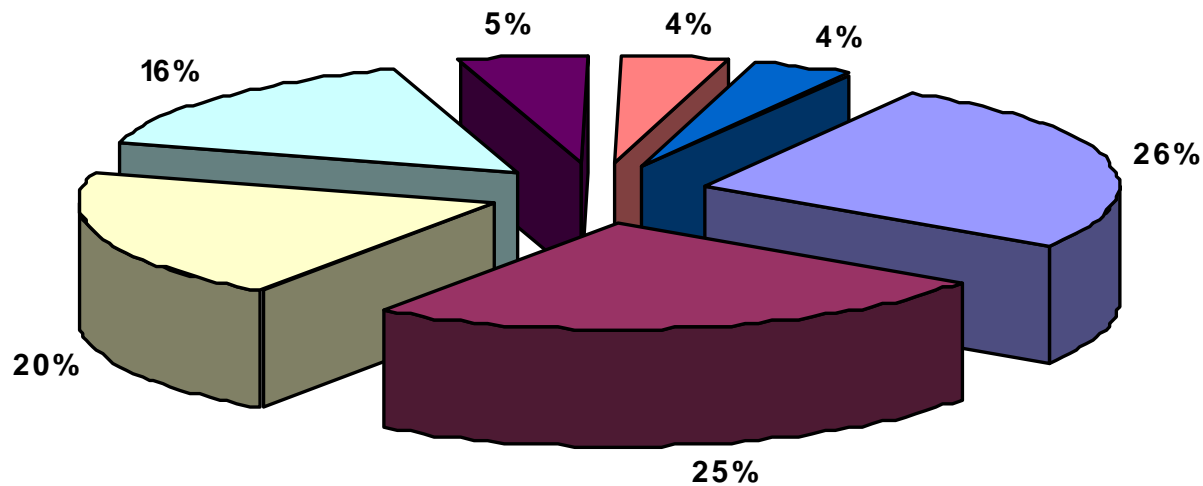
- Quantities of food distributed varied with each food aid implementing agency.
- Some agencies used the number of people per household while others simply distributed quantities depending on the amount of food available.
- There were inconsistencies in the distribution of food aid and it was difficult to predict when the next food distribution was going to occur.
- Food aid distribution could not be relied on and thus did not lead to additional consumption for a significant proportion of those in need.





# Preferred Food Assistance



■ Free food ■ Food for Work ■ Food for Cash

# Preferred non-food assistance



- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Fertilizer                 |  Seed           |
|  Income generating projects |  Financial Loan |
|  Water & Sanitation         |  Health         |
|  Payment of School fees     |  |

# Conclusion

- Food aid did not lead to improved capacity for communities to be resilient to future food insecurity neither did it result in additional consumption

# Recommendations

- Food aid should be integrated into development processes to ensure sustainability.
- Pricing and marketing systems for agricultural inputs and produce should be designed to increase access by the vulnerable.
- Provision of agricultural inputs and stringent monitoring of use should be preferred against food aid.
- Intervening years of good rainfall should be an opportunity to support improved food production.
- Support of non-agricultural livelihoods activities..
- Food aid implementing agencies to adhere to the principles of food aid when targeting beneficiaries.
- Reinforcement of positive traditional cropping and seed conservation.
- Food crisis interventions should be focused on risk reduction informed by comprehensive pre-crisis assessment and situation analysis.
- Rural farmers should be encouraged to produce more food through appropriate agricultural producer pricing structures and technical back up.

*“True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the ‘rejects of life’, to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so these hands—whether of individuals or entire people—need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world.”*

*—Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1970.*