

Cultivating dependency. An analysis of the effects of
humanitarian food aid
on household behaviour in the uMzingwane District
(2006 to 2010)

by

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DECLARATION:

I hereby declare that the abovementioned treatise/dissertation/thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

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Abstract

The study was carried out in the uMzingwane District, a drought prone area in Zimbabwe's Matabeleland South Province. Motivated by the protracted food insecurity and requirement for humanitarian food aid, it investigated whether availability of humanitarian assistance in the form of food aid has affected households' responses and behaviour towards achieving their own food security. The District is characterised by frequent harsh droughts, resulting in high levels of impoverishment and food deficits, making it a prime target and perpetual recipient of food aid. The study therefore sought to understand if the vulnerable group feeding programme in uMzingwane had other negative impacts on beneficiaries. A qualitative method was adopted, using key informant and household interviews, in an effort to gather rich, genuine, descriptive and explanatory information on people's experiences and realities.

The findings concurred with the general theoretical underpinnings of the study, pointing to the significant success of food aid programmes in sustaining poverty, but also revealed an array of other negative impacts. Food aid provides an instant solution to hunger but fails dismally in alleviating poverty. Beneficiaries find themselves waiting on food aid and some even demanding food aid, which has cultivated a culture of dependency and further perpetuated poverty. Furthermore, the beneficiary selection process is fundamentally flawed. It is used as a political tool by local leadership to exclude those not affiliated to the same political inclination. The selection itself follows a rigid application of criteria leading to the exclusion of deserving beneficiaries, creating tension and conflicts.

Food aid fell short in alleviating poverty, and it was suggested that it should be paired with other developmental initiatives, which would enhance self-sustainability such as improving the availability of water and environmental rehabilitation, which would enable significant local food production to mitigate food insecurity. Striving towards self-sufficiency, people were seen to engage in several negative coping mechanisms. These included artisanal small-scale mining which was very lucrative, but with devastating effects on the environment. Prostitution, which had been blamed for the escalating numbers of HIV infections also gripped the District. HIV on its own became a big issue, negatively affecting the availability of labour when households have to care for the sick, further affecting households' ability to produce their own food. However, people also engaged in positive coping mechanism such as cross border trade and small scale selling in an effort to mitigate against food insecurity.

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List of Abbreviations

AGRITEX	Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services
CCARE	Christian Care
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ORAP	Organization of Rural Associations for Progress
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding programme
WFP	World Food Programme
WVI	World Vision International
ZIMVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Millions of people are suffering from hunger and humanitarian food aid through humanitarian agencies has been one of the mechanisms to fight hunger and food insecurity. While this human gesture is noble and its value is undisputed, there are instances where negative emergency food aid can generate negative dependency (Lentz 2005). This dissertation investigates the effect of food aid in the drought stricken uMzingwane District in Zimbabwe. In these drier regions, harvest failures resulting in food insecurity and humanitarian assistance in the form of food aid occur even when nationally there has been food self-sufficiency (Jayne, Zulu & Nijhoff 2006).

Food aid can be defined broadly as the transfer of food from food surplus countries to other countries experiencing food shortages. Although initially the concept of food aid was used as an avenue to dispose of food surplus, it is now used as a means to reduce hunger and poverty in vulnerable populations. Food aid can take the form of either food donations or low-cost loans (Barrett 2006; Thompson 2001).

Countries experience food shortages for different reasons and these are used to differentiate between the three types of food aid: programme food aid, project food aid and relief food aid. Relief food aid is used to provide assistance to those affected by natural and man-made disasters. Project food aid is used to support the long-term support of specific vulnerable, food insecure populations. Programme food aid involves an agreement between the donor and recipient government for the donor to sell low-cost food items in the recipient country. While relief and project food aid are given directly to the targeted people, programme food aid is given to the recipient government.

Food aid is a significant means of contributing towards a hunger-free world. Throughout the decades, the total amount spent on food aid globally has increased immensely from US\$ 211 million in 1965 to more than US\$ 4 billion in 2018 (OECD 2020). In 2018, more than 30

countries contributed towards food aid, the largest contributor being the USA, which accounted for more than 50% of global food aid spending.

It is not surprising that Africa is the largest beneficiary of food aid, with the highest allocation of net food aid assistance in 2018 (OECD 2020). The African continent is riddled with wars, conflict, droughts, famine, cyclones and economic meltdowns, all of which are increasing the incidence of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition in the African population. In 2017, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO 2018) reported that 30% (256 million) of the 820 million people who were undernourished worldwide, lived on the African continent. While on average 10% of the world's population were food insecure, Africa had the highest incidence with 30% of the population being food insecure. As a result, the need for food aid in Africa is very high (ibid).

The food aid model, despite its noble intentions of reducing world hunger, does not come without criticism and has always been perceived as controversial, hence forming the basis of debates in development contexts. At the micro-level, the issues raised include whether food aid is reaching its intended beneficiaries, and if food aid is causing dependency and undermining local agricultural production, livelihoods and food markets. One side of the debate argues that prolonged food aid has severe negative impacts, which, in the long term, undermine its effectiveness in improving food security. Shaw and Clay (1993) highlight the danger of the disruption of trade, reduction in local food production, and creation of dependence on food aid, noting that, in the long run, food aid creates food insecurity for beneficiary groups.

Dean (2004) suggests that food aid sustains poverty and leads to food insecurity in the long run as it creates dependency on donor countries. He contends that food aid consequently alters people's eating habits, negatively affects local crop production and leads to economic inefficiency and eventually crushes the local economy (ibid). However, literature from different parts of the world shows contrasting results with some evidence of food aid not having any negative effects on households and having reached its intended beneficiaries. Abdulai, Barrett & Hoddinott (2005) and Little (2008) found that prolonged food aid had not led to dependency, with food aid only constituting a small proportion of households' food

supply and consumption in Ethiopia's Humla District and South Wollo regions, respectively. Gautum (2018) also found that food aid had not led to dependency in Himalayan communities. Abdulai, Barrett and Hoddinott (2005) found that food aid beneficiaries, instead of finding disincentives to agricultural production and livelihood strategies, had increased their engagement in agricultural production; own businesses and wage work whereas Gautum (2018) found that crop diversity had increased.

The study sought to explore the impacts of protracted food aid, understanding its dynamics and effects on household behaviour in the uMzingwane District. Food aid has become a buzzword worldwide, more so in Africa. Many African countries experience severe droughts resulting in acute food shortages and malnutrition, which necessitates food aid, particularly from the West. Food aid has had both good and bad outcomes, many of which have been widely researched. However, the micro social impacts at household level remain under research and the study will focus on this element as observed in the uMzingwane District.

1.1.1 The Problem of Hunger

The second Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) is to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and to promote sustainable agriculture. It pursues sustainable solutions to end hunger in all its forms by 2030 and to attain food security. This SDG is premised on the belief that globally, 1 in 9 people are undernourished, the vast majority of which live in developing countries (FAO 2017). The overall objective is to ensure that people everywhere in the world have access to adequate good-quality, nutritious food, and necessary for them to lead a healthy life. To achieve this, there should be widespread promotion of sustainable agriculture to improve access to food for vulnerable populations (UN 2015). This entails improving the productivity and incomes of small-scale farmers by promoting equal access to land, technology and markets, sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices. It also requires increased investments through international cooperation to bolster the productive capacity of agriculture in developing countries

However, after a prolonged period of attempting to rid the world of hunger, dating as far back as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), hunger is still on the increase. In its latest

progress review, the UN (2019), reports that approximately 821 million people in the world have been undernourished in 2017. Africa is particularly vulnerable to hunger and poverty. The FAO report on “Food security and nutrition” (FAO, 2018) suggests that of the 257 million hungry people in Africa, 237 million are in sub-Saharan Africa and 20 million in Northern Africa. In South Sudan, according to the UN (2017), famine excessively ravaged the country, further exacerbating an already food-insecure country. In February 2017, the United Nations officially proclaimed a hunger emergency in South Sudan (UN 2017). The same article pointed out that people fled their homes because of violence and the country’s civil war (which had been raging for years), whilst farming was hampered by fallow fields (ibid). Furthermore, Somalia has, similarly been gripped by recurring droughts, chronic food shortages compounded by over twenty years of near catastrophic conflict (UNICEF 2011). Darcy, Bonard and Dini (2012) contend that the regional drought of 2011 and 2012 affected Somalia more than any other nation across eastern Africa, displacing millions and subjecting tens of thousands to untold hunger and starvation. To date, some two million people remain in crisis, with conflict and insecurity continuing to contribute to poor household food consumption and high malnutrition rates (ibid). In 2019 the United Nations (UN), published that it was procuring food assistance for 4.1 million Zimbabweans, which translated to 25% of the population. It further notes that the country was experiencing food shortages that were being exacerbated by runaway inflation and climate-induced drought, such that many Zimbabweans would be left foodless in a few months (UN 2019).

In the African continent, a number of issues are to blame for food insecurity. The continent is riddled with wars, conflict, droughts, famine, cyclones and economic meltdowns, all of which are increasing the incidence of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition in the African population (FAO 2017). As a result, the need for food aid in Africa is very high. The FAO (2018) reported that in 2017 30% (256 million) of the undernourished people worldwide lived on the African continent. While on average 10% of the world’s population were food insecure, Africa had the highest incidence of food insecurity with 30% of the population being food insecure. In an article titled ‘Hunger hotspots as a new decade dawns’, WFP (2020b) suggested that, on the African continent, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central Sahel region have been identified as global hunger hotspots in 2020.

In April 2020, the World Food Programme reported that the hunger crisis in Zimbabwe is increasing (WFP 2020a). Already severely affected by drought and recession, the country's desperate situation is further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. A study has shown that there are currently 4.3 million acutely food-insecure Zimbabweans. Of the 60 Districts, 56 have now been categorised as experiencing 'crisis' hunger (ibid). It is expected that half of the population — 7.7 million Zimbabweans — will experience food insecurity in 2020 (WFP 2020a). Yet, the Zimbabwean population has a long history of vulnerability to food insecurity going back to the era of the country's agricultural success that was referred to as a 'Green Revolution' (Eicher 1995). Literature has shown that the agricultural success was not distributed nationally and certain areas continued to experience agricultural failure (Jayne & Rukuni 1993; Jayne, Zulu & Nijhoff 2006; Stanning 1989). According to the FAO (2011), the majority of the developing world, especially countries in sub-Saharan Africa, has over the past few decades varied between food surplus and food deficit, with others such as Somalia, Mali, DR Congo and Zimbabwe reaching almost permanent food shortages, necessitating prolonged food aid.

1.1.2 Problem Statement

Despite many efforts to alleviate hunger, it remains a problem in many regions of the world, particularly in Africa, affecting millions of men, women and children. Food aid has become widely deemed to be a mechanism for addressing acute and chronic food insecurity in low-income and vulnerable communities. The primary objective of food aid has always been the temporary relief of unnecessary human suffering, in a world in which nearly half the population survives on less than US\$ 2/day.

Throughout the decades, the total amount globally spent on food aid has increased immensely from US\$ 211 million in 1965 to more than US\$ 4 billion in 2018 (OECD 2020). In 2018, more than 30 countries contributed towards food aid, the largest contributor being the USA, which accounted for more than 50% of global food aid spending. It is not surprising that Africa is the largest beneficiary of food aid, with the highest allocation of net food aid assistance in 2018 (OECD 2020).

The scourge of food shortages has been felt by the developing world for many years, with developmental efforts being hampered by the respective countries' inability to produce and provide sufficient food for the masses. As a result, food aid has always been the response of the West to food insecurity in developing countries, but is this the answer? Over the last two decades, the aid industry has been characterised by rapid expansion. Collinson and Duffied (2013) contend that this expansion has been characterised by an increase in the number of conduit organisations, the amount of funding granted and a widening of the geographical reach. However, although food aid has seen such a tremendous expansion, the critical question, which forms the basis of the study, is that of dependency. The question of aid dependence is crucial in the evaluation of the impact of food aid on vulnerable groups.

Despite its noble intentions of reducing world hunger, the food aid model does not come without criticism and has always been perceived as controversial, hence forming the basis of debates in development contexts. Many believe that food aid only manages the symptoms but does not solve the problem of hunger (Sanchez et al. 2005).

Moyo (2009) argues that international aid stifles development and sustainable economic growth of the recipient countries. Maunder (2006) supports this assertion pointing out that food aid perpetuates the need for food aid, resulting in dependency. Barrett and Maxwell (2005) and Little (2008) perceive dependency as a condition of the aid recipient population being unable to sustain on their own without external assistance, which they attribute to prolonged food aid. Moyo (2009, p. 47) goes as far as to state that "the problem is that aid is not benign, it's malignant. No longer part of the potential solution, it's part of the problem, in fact aid is the problem".

At the micro-level, the issues raised include whether food aid is reaching its intended beneficiaries, and if food aid is causing dependency and undermining local agricultural production, livelihoods and food markets. One side of the debate argues that prolonged food aid has severe negative impacts, which, in the long term, undermine its effectiveness in improving food security. Food aid may even sustain poverty and contribute to food insecurity. The evidence is not always clear as some studies show the benefits of food aid while others

argue against it. Chapter 2 will discuss the proposed benefits and disadvantages of food aid in more detail.

Research investigating the impact of food aid is critical because it influences the direction of food aid programmes. Highlighting its negative impacts and failure to achieve its objectives, some researchers advocate for its reduction or stoppage. However, apart from the conflicting results on food aid impacts on households, there is generally insufficient research on this topic (Harvey & Lind 2005). Harvey and Lind (2005) caution that without sufficient evidence to support the claims of ineffectiveness of food aid, agencies may withdraw, unnecessarily so, the much-needed food aid that improves beneficiaries' food security and wellbeing during times of crisis, worldwide leaving millions of people to suffer unnecessarily. Therefore, more research is required. This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to the body of literature investigating the social impact of food aid on beneficiary households and communities.

The study uses the case study of a rural society in arid uMzingwane District in, District in southern Zimbabwe, where agricultural failure and emergence food aid are perennial and have been normalised in these societies. Between 2006 and 2010, the District and the southern region have experienced severe weather patterns, droughts and floods and prompting intervention through emergency aid (Mavhura, Manatsa & Mushore 2015). The connection between, on the one hand, adverse weather patterns and crop failure and, on the other, emergency food relief in agro-marginal regions is well established. There were reported cases of agricultural failure and emergency food aid in these regions in the 1980s when other regions of the country were experiencing food self-sufficiency and marketable surpluses (Jayne & Rukuni, 1993; Jayne, Zulu & Nijhoff 2006; Stanning 1989). Bird and Shepherd (2003) explored the coping strategies of households in semi-arid Zimbabwean communities following the severe 1991/1992 drought and concluded that previous adverse weather events resulted in households drawing down on their assets, and in difficulties in coping with future droughts.

In the case of the Matabeleland South region, where uMzingwane District is situated, households were relying on food aid from donor agencies and government. Among the households in this District, droughts destroyed all crops, which affected households' food

security situation. Thus, emergence food aid is linked to the failure by households to cope with adverse weather patterns, and although weather patterns are known, ‘small grains can be produced economically and sustainably, maize is the mainstay of household food security’ (Jayne, Zulu & Nijhoff 2006). By highlighting this and how this has led to perennial humanitarian relief, the study hopes to capture the fluid line between agriculture failure and dependence, and therefore draw attention to Prof Dambisa Moyo’s pessimism about aid. The broad argument put forward in this dissertation is that the availability of aid from the humanitarian community provides a disincentive for households to engage on sustainable farming practices, which will guarantee food self-sufficiency even under harsh weather condition, knowing that they can always fall back on humanitarian aid receipt in the case of crop failure.

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

1.2.1 The Aim of the Study

The study sought to provide a fuller understanding of the impact of food aid on the community of uMzingwane. uMzingwane has been a repeat recipient of food aid and the study sought to contribute to the understanding of why there has been an urgent and recurring need to for food aid in the District. The study also explored the phenomenon of dependency on food aid, seeking clarity on how and why the area had become dependent on food aid and to further establish if there was a way out of such dependency and how community would cope without food aid. Generally, food aid affected people in different ways and part of the objective of the study was to explore and unpack the impacts that food aid had on the beneficiaries themselves and how it affected community cohesion and culture.

1.2.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study include:

1. To examine the drivers of food insecurity in uMzingwane District.
2. To assess the effectiveness of food aid. Does it reach the intended beneficiaries?

3. To obtain narratives of recipients' experiences in order to understand their experience of support and what makes them always require this kind of support.
4. To evaluate the link between food aid and dependency.
5. To map recipients' wider food insecurity coping strategies and the place for food aid within them.

1.2.3 Main Research Question

To what extent has the availability of food aid to food insecure households cultivated an over-dependency on food aid?

1.2.4 Research Questions

- What are the causes of food insecurity, which have led to perennial food aid?
- What form of aid is provided by relief organizations to prevent food insecurity? How are food aid beneficiaries determined?
- What category of households are perennial emergency food aid recipients? How do recipient communities perceive and behave towards food aid?
- What coping mechanisms do recipient communities employ in response to food insecurity?

1.3 Defining Concepts

1.3.1 Food Security

The FAO (1996) and Coates, Swindale and Billinsky (2007) contend that food security pertains to a state in which all people have physical and economic access to adequate, safe and nutritious food at all times. When persons are food secure, they have sufficient food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences to sustain a healthy and active lifestyle (FAO 1996). The Life Sciences Research Organization (1990) states that food security should entail access to food that is nutritionally adequate, safe and in socially acceptable ways. According to Stevens et al. (2000), food security underscores three critical elements of food, which are, the availability of food, accessibility of food and the usability of food.

1.3.2 Food Insecurity

Food insecurity, has been described as "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways" (Bickel et al. 2000). Households are regarded as food insecure if they significantly lack access to food - a problem affecting many households in Zimbabwe including the uMzingwane District. Sanchez et al (2005) suggests that food insecurity has severe implications for nutrition and health, consequently affecting the economic and agricultural productivity of those deemed insecure. Food insecure households fail to acquire nutritious or preferred foods, which can result in both poor physical and mental health (Carter et al. 2012).

1.3.3 Food Aid

Food aid, as conceptualised by AusAid (1997), can be defined as the provision of commodity-tied aid. Certain quantities of mainly food grains, edible oils and fats are available to food insecure populations at concessional terms, if not as outright gifts (ibid). Shah (2005) contends that food aid pertains to the handout of food to beneficiaries in emergency situations, or where there is perpetual scarcity of food, usually in Asia and Africa. Food aid is also common in countries with political instability and frequent emergency of natural disasters. It is a form of aid, which can directly address food insecurity in developing countries, the objectives of which can include, to reduce starvation, hunger and positively contribute to food security of a vulnerable people (AusAid 1997). In this study, food aid refers to humanitarian aid offered by United Nations Agencies such as the World Food Programme. This food is offered as dry rations in an effort to mitigate against food insecurity, which surfaces primarily as a result of droughts and famine which hinder effective food production.

1.3.4 Vulnerability

WFP (2002) defines vulnerability as the probability of an acute decline in a person's consumption or access to food. Chambers (1993, p. 33) defines vulnerability as the state of "defencelessness, insecurity and exposure to risks, shocks, stress and inherent difficulty in coping with them". Essentially, vulnerability refers to a person's inability to endure the negative impacts of various shocks, which they may be confronted with over a certain period.

In this study, the vulnerable households constitute two categories. The first category comprises those households where those adults are unable to provide an adequate livelihood for the household because of disability, illness, age or some other economic characteristic. The second category entails those whose resources are inadequate for them to withstand social and economic shock.

1.3.5 Poverty

World Bank (2004) suggests that poverty is a livelihood condition characterised by excessive deprivation and resource deficiency. It is multi-dimensional in nature, which entails income poverty, education poverty, health poverty, food insecurity and a perpetual position of disempowerment (ibid). World Bank (2015) defines poverty as a state in which a person is regarded as poor, with “his or her income level falling below some minimum level necessary to meet basic needs.” It sets this minimum level, or international poverty line, as living on less than \$ 1.90 a day. Two categories of poverty are evident, absolute poverty and relative poverty. Shaw and Clay (1993) postulates that absolute poverty describes a condition of complete need. This is a condition where a person does not have the minimum amount of income needed to meet the minimum requirements for one or more basic living needs over an extended period of time (ibid). Relative poverty on the other hand refers to what it means to be poor in a particular society. It measures a persons’ income or resources in relation to the minimum amount needed for a person to maintain the average standard of living in a particular society (Mood & Jonsson, 2016). Myers (1999) adds that poverty is an absence, a deficit or lack of access to social power, powerlessness and a lack of freedom to grow. The study perceived poverty as a state in which people survived with zero or limited resources, in terms of food, income or assets, which hindered their ability to self-sustain primarily through failure to engage in agricultural activities.

1.3.6 Dependency

In the study, dependency is used to refer to a state of complete reliance on or being controlled by someone or something else. In this case, it is a state being abnormally tolerant to and reliant on food aid, which has become psychologically or physically habit-forming in the

uMzingwane District. This is associated with seasonal food deficits, creating a gap filled by food and the subsequent progressive reliance on food aid. Protracted dependency becomes a lifelong disorder with the people unable to withdraw from food aid.

1.3.7 Hunger

Runge et al. (2003) suggest that hunger is linked to poverty: It holds back economic growth and limits progress in reducing poverty. Sanchez et al. (2005) perceive hunger as both the cause and the effect of poverty, noting that it is a state of severe lack of food, which causes suffering and may result in death. According to the O'Reilly, Shrestha and Flint (2013), hunger manifest itself in different ways as undernourishment and malnutrition.

1.4 Justification of the study

Food aid distributions have featured prominently in covering Zimbabwe's food deficits for over two decades. Food aid appeared following the government's appeal primarily to the international humanitarian sector for assistance, in the wake of acute droughts and erratic rains, which hampered the country's food production initiatives. Mabuza, Taeb and Endo (2008) further suggest that the severity and impact of droughts have been amplified by escalating levels of HIV/AIDS, which directly affects the availability of labour for communities to effectively take part in food production activities. As such, Zimbabwe's agricultural productivity has been declining, exacerbating poverty, hunger and escalating the need for food aid. UMzingwane has been part of food aid programmes for many years, with declining crop production; hence, the study to understand the impacts of prolonged food aid on households.

The study was conducted in the uMzingwane District in the northern part of Zimbabwe's Matabeleland South Province. UMzingwane is a semi-arid region largely populated by smallholder farmers who farm mainly for subsistence. UMzingwane District is one of six Districts in the drought-stricken Matabeleland South Province, with erratic rainfall and very high levels of poverty. The District covers a surface area of 2 820 km² and constitutes 20 wards (ZimStat 2012).

Rain-fed farming is widely practiced including rearing of livestock, mainly comprised of cattle, sheep, goats and chickens. It is for the most part rural with a small peri-urban centre. The District has formal structures of governance through nominated members of parliament and ward councillors but also has a very influential traditional system of governance through area chiefs and village headmen. UMzingwane is characterised by low rainfall, poor soils, communal lands (smallholder farmland held under traditional land tenure) and ranch lands, low population density and low household incomes. Typical weather phenomena consist of prolonged intense droughts, poor rainfall distribution and very high temperatures. The District is also characterised by other shocks such as health (human and livestock) and economic shocks. Water is a huge challenge, which has affected crop production and consequently necessitating food aid. The area has a population of 62 990 and the people are mostly Ndebele speakers (ZimStat 2012).

Droughts have wreaked havoc in the District, resulting in heightened food insecurity. Many in the District live in extreme poverty, making it difficult for them to survive without some form of assistance. Consequently, the District has been a recipient of food aid to ensure that its people do not starve. With the persistence of droughts, the District has witnessed escalating levels of need, which translate to recurring food aid. UMzingwane offered a classic example of protracted food aid, and hence was selected for the study to investigate the impacts of food aid on household behaviour.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The structure of this thesis follows six detailed chapters, taking the reader from the description of the problem, relevant literature around food aid, the case study and finally narrowing down the findings of the study and possible recommendations. The chapter outline is as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the research question, statement of the problem and research objectives. This chapter imparts to the reader the conceptualisation of the problem under study, giving insight into the general direction of the study, including what the study seeks to achieve. The chapter further explains key terms that shape the study and feature prominently in all the other chapters.

Chapter 2 presents a broad discussion on the provenance of food aid. It also offers insight into the perception of food insecurity and the need for food aid, drawing on international experiences and later zooming into the Zimbabwean situation. This chapter also highlights the impact of food aid, touching on pros and cons of food aid.

Chapter 3 exhibits the processes that were followed in data gathering. The methodology is discussed in detail, showing the methods employed in data collection including the sampling and identification of respondents to participate in the study.

Chapter 4 presents the first part of the findings. The chapter focuses on two themes. The first focuses on the phenomenon of food aid in uMzingwane, providing insight into the state of livelihoods and the need for food aid. Secondly, the chapter exhibits the impact of food aid, zooming into the food aid beneficiary dynamics and village politics, which emerge as a result of the food aid.

Chapter 5 constitutes the second part of the findings. It focusses on food aid dependency and its various elements. A discussion is also provided on how people cope without food aid and further provides insight into what the people perceive as viable alternatives to food aid.

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis with an overview of its main points, a summary of the findings and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter traces the provenance of food aid to give the reader insight into the foundation of this discourse. The intentions of food aid are widely contested. This chapter offers thoughts on how and why food aid came about. Food aid, from its inception has seen tremendous growth worldwide and most significantly in Africa. This chapter therefore takes the reader from the history of food aid, touching on the need for food aid in relation to worldwide hunger and finally zooming into the food aid discourse in Zimbabwe.

2.2 The History of Food Aid

Moyo (2009) suggests that aid was already planned in the 1940s as a response to Africa's woes from the inception of the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund). This ushered in the era of the Marshall Plan in the 1950s, which championed aid as a conduit to industrialization, eventually shifting towards aid as an answer to poverty in the 1970s (Moyo 2009). Scholars such as Makenete, Ortmann and Darroch (1998) and Murphy & McAfee (2005) have posited that the provenance of food aid dates back to the 1950s. Murphy & McAfee (2005) contends that food aid was born out of a need of developed countries to dispose of agricultural surplus. Major culprits are the United States of America and Canada, who disposed of their agricultural surpluses in order to mitigate against food insecurity in developing countries (Murphy & McAfee 2005). In 1954, the United States passed Public Law 480 (Food for Peace), which linked the United States farm policy to food aid as the disposal of grain surpluses (Bovard 1984).

In the United States, agricultural surpluses, mainly cereals, could not be consumed locally and storage of this produce became too costly (Makenete, Ortmann & Darroch 1998). Such a shortage of markets did not only affect the agricultural sector but had a domino effect on other businesses as well (Rupiya, 2004). This follows that the origin of food aid cannot necessarily be attributed to compassion for vulnerable developing nations, but rather it came as means of reducing storage costs for unwanted goods, hence the dumping of surplus

product in the guise of food aid (Rupiya 2004). However, the West themselves did not see a problem with this, as mentioned by Cochrane, Mackie and Chappell in a 1963 article, claiming that surplus agricultural products from the United States had enhanced the economic development of developing countries.

The concept of food aid therefore began in the 1950s as a way of disposing agricultural produce from surplus producers, largely from the United States, to countries experiencing food deficits. Over the years, the function of food aid evolved from being a disposal mechanism to a means of reducing world hunger by being responsive to the needs of its recipients. In 1961, the United Nations established the World Food Programme (WFP), a humanitarian division, which would be responsible for pooling, coordinating and distributing food assistance from different countries and donors to food aid beneficiaries around the world. The WFP is the largest distributor of food assistance worldwide, accounting for 50% of food aid and assisting more than 80 million people each year (WFP 2007).

Essentially, formation of the WFP established a framework for the provision of food aid, such that it became a default emergency response to food shortages, particularly in developing countries. Several countries in Africa have as a result received recurrent food aid in an effort to ease hunger. Kehler (2004) mentioned countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Haiti, and Swaziland having been part of food aid programmes since the early 1970s. However, it can also be noted that despite several decades of food aid, countries such as Ethiopia are still food insecure, with food shortages increasing and amidst relief food aid, which had become nothing more than an institutionalised response (Ferrière & Suwa-Eisenmann 2015).

The African Green Revolution, contends that low agricultural productivity coupled with dwindling environmental conditions, inevitably positioned Africa as a principal recipient of food aid (Jaka 2009). According to the 1996 World Food Summit, one of the pressing objectives was to reduce the number of people living in abject poverty by at least half by 2015, as espoused in the Millennium Development Goals (UN 2015). Shapori and Rosen (2004) observed that by 2004, eight years into the MDGs, no milestone had been reached as significantly reducing hunger was concerned. The developing world seemed to be even more susceptible to food shortages (*ibid*).

Relief food aid has been largely aimed at people in emergencies such as war and natural disasters, including countries experiencing chronic food insecurity (Perez-Exposito & Klein 2009). Barrett (2010) propound that from 1996 onwards political instability and natural disasters have led to a rapid rise in food aid to developing countries. They further contend that, faced with disasters – both natural and human-induced – relief aid will never decline. However, the effects of such protracted food aid on social behaviour of recipients, has not been sufficiently and effectively investigated.

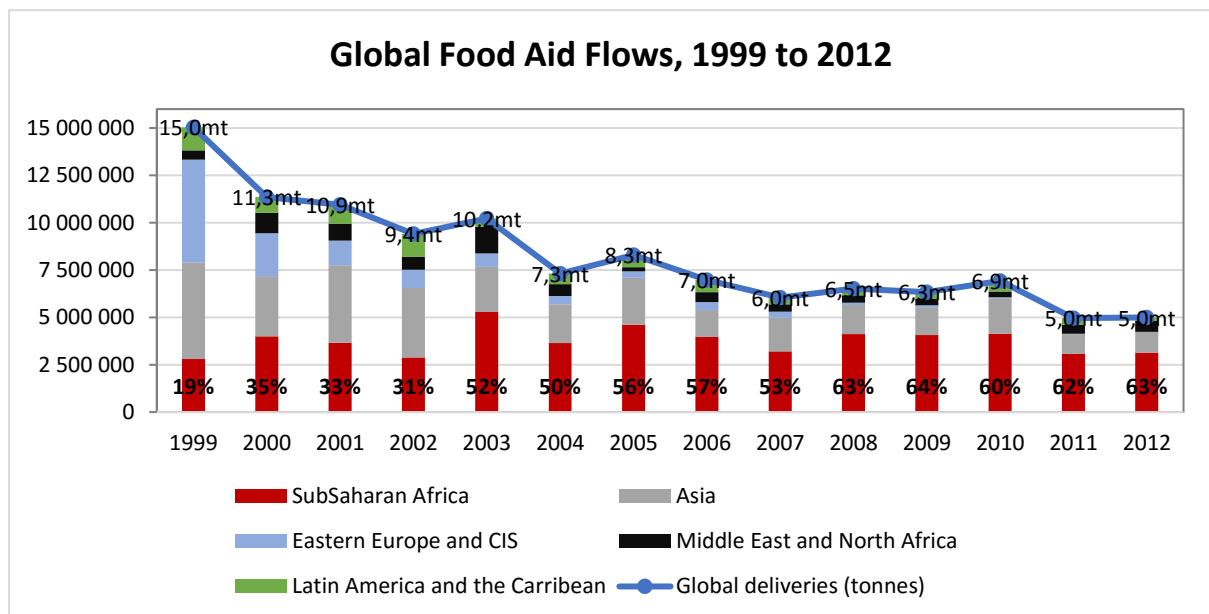


Figure 1 Global Food Aid Flows, 1999 to 2012 (WFP FAIS Database 2012).

Sub-Saharan Africa is the largest recipient of food aid, accounting for more than 60% of food aid deliveries in the last decade. An analysis of the global flows from 1999 to 2012 shows a growth in the share of food aid by the Sub-Saharan region (Figure 1).

In 1999, Sub-Saharan Africa was the third largest recipient after Eastern Europe and Asia, and only accounted for 19% of global food aid. By 2004, the Sub-Saharan African share of global food aid had increased significantly to 50% and has since continued increasing.

2.3 Impact of Food Aid on Beneficiaries – an International Perspective

Making generalisations about the effect of food aid is difficult, as it is compounded by many factors including the duration of food aid support (e.g. emergency food aid vs. long-term food aid), the type of support, the country and its political environment and the implementing agencies. Nevertheless, some trends including positive and negative impacts were noticed and will be discussed below.

2.3.1 The Advantages of Food Aid

The intended benefits of food aid include an increase in food security, better nutrition, alleviation of poverty and contribution to the development of poor communities. There is no doubt that food aid has the potential to fulfil the needs of those requiring food assistance during droughts, wars, famines, and in poor communities. Barret (2006) suggests that food aid improves food supplies at national or regional level and improves household access to food and other means of effective utilization of food at the individual level to meet human biological needs.

Lentz, Barrett and Hoddinott (2005) suggest that food aid is beneficial if it leads to positive dependency. This is a situation where an individual, household or community is assisted to meet their most basic needs when they fail to sustain themselves. They contend that in such cases the dependency would complement or become in itself a social safety net and afford food security for the vulnerable. Barrett (2006) concurred with the above noting that, faced with destitution, malnutrition and illness, dependency on food aid would not be a bad thing, especially for the most vulnerable populations such as the disabled who do not have the ability to self-sustain.

2.3.2 Potential Disadvantages of Food Aid

The main criticism against food aid is that it is potentially disruptive to communities that it seeks to assist, especially in the long run. However, it is often argued that prolonged food aid is undesirable because it creates dependency and disincentives to local agricultural production, undermines local livelihood strategies, distorts local food markets and economies and weakens local coping strategies. Shaw and Clay (1993) highlight the danger of the

disruption of trade, reduction in local food production, and creation of dependence on food aid, noting that, in the long run, food aid creates food insecurity for beneficiary groups. These potential negative effects will be discussed separately, although they are interdependent with one affecting the other.

2.3.2.1 Dependency

Food aid is mostly criticised for creating a dependency syndrome in food aid beneficiaries. Dependency means that food aid recipients rely so much on aid that they feel inclined to work for themselves, they abandon their food production strategies and even stop pursuing any other livelihood strategies to fulfil their food needs. The argument here is that, food, which is one of the main basic needs, is now fulfilled and recipients do not need to make any more effort to meet food needs for the future because they can depend on food aid. When dependency occurs, food aid becomes a major component of people's food supply, leading to recipients putting less effort and dedicating less resources towards food production since their food needs are met sufficiently, or largely so, through food aid rations. These changes in the livelihood strategies undermine the recipients' ability to survive and develop coping mechanisms to deal with food shortages under stressful circumstances without food aid (Harvey & Lind 2005).

Maunder (2006) supports this assertion pointing out that food aid perpetuates the need for food aid, resulting in dependency. Barrett and Maxwell (2005) and Little (2008) perceive dependency as a condition of the aid recipient population being unable to sustain on their own without external assistance, which they attribute to prolonged food aid.

Little (2008) investigated food aid dependency in Ethiopian farmers. Dependency was measured as socio-economic behavioural changes, attributed to the expectation of food aid. The study was conducted in the South Wollo region, a drought-prone area with both poor communities receiving food aid and better-off communities without food aid. Using a combination of surveys and informant interviews, a comparative study between food aid recipients and non-recipients was used to determine the impact of food aid dependency on recipients' socio-economic behaviour and food supply. The local people's insights regarding

food aid and the notion of dependency were also solicited. The study found that, contrary to common belief, food aid had not created any form of dependency on recipients in Ethiopia. The paper highlighted the need for empirical evidence to prove the claims that food aid was indeed inducing dependency or, as was shown by this study, that food aid dependency was only a myth and food aid only formed a much-needed safety net for the poor when they needed it.

2.3.2.2 Changing Local Food Consumption Patterns

Other harmful effects of food aid include changing the consumption patterns of beneficiaries from traditional local foods to foreign foods. This may be harmful to local livelihoods as the demand for foreign foods will increase in the long term, thus undermining local food crop production and local food markets (Barrett 2006).

Using a mixed methods approach consisting of key informant interviews and a survey, Gautum (2018) investigated the impact of food aid on Himalayan farmers, particularly if it had induced dependency in the food aid recipient households. The study was based on the Humla District, a predominantly semi-subsistence agrarian area and dependent on rain-fed agriculture and vulnerable to climate change. The Humla population is highly food-insecure and often requires food assistance. To answer the question on dependency impacts of food aid, the study investigated changes in local farming practices and diet patterns that could be attributed to food aid. The study found that crop farming diversity had increased. Local grains were the major dietary component of 65% of the total food requirement, whereas food aid constituted only 20%. The study concluded that food aid has not led to the negative dependency problem. Changes in food preferences in turn affect local food production and local markets.

2.3.2.3 Disincentive to Local Food Production and Local Markets

Food aid may have disincentive effects on local markets and local agricultural production decisions. The effect on local markets occurs when food aid increases the supply of food on the market and subsequently lowers food prices on the local market. Lower food prices

discourage local food production, which can be expressed either as reduced land or labour allocation to food crops, or as the actual reduction in food crops produced (Barrett, 2006).

A study by Ferrière and Suwa-Eisenmann (2015) also investigated disincentive effects of food aid on the local food market in fifteen Ethiopian villages by studying marketing behaviour of households over time. The study found that food aid had not undermined local agricultural production or the local food market because, although over time wheat production had decreased, the quantities of wheat sold on the market remained unchanged. Therefore they concluded the reduced wheat production was not due to the disincentive effects of food aid but rather a switch from wheat production to alternative crops.

Food aid has also been contentious because of its perceived impediments on agricultural development in recipient countries therefore also affecting economic growth.

2.3.2.4 Negative Effects on Economic Growth

Barrett and Maxwell (2005) posit that food aid contributes to economic development and enhances basic human rights, where the aid fills a severe food gap. Positive effects on economic growth were also reported by Abdulai, Barrett and Hoddinott (2005), who conducted a large study on more than 1 400 households in Ethiopia, which is the largest food aid recipient country in Africa. They found that food aid has neither led to dependency nor created disincentives in households' socio-economic behaviour. Instead, food aid has had positive impacts on the economic activities of food aid recipient households, who are now more engaged in agriculture, their own businesses and wage work.

Moyo (2009), however, argues that international aid stifles development and sustainable economic growth of the recipient countries. Abdulai, Barrett and Hazell (2004) also assert that food aid undermines food production, market development and international trade and therefore impedes economic development and human rights in recipient countries. Similarly, Dean (2004) contends that food aid alters people's eating habits, thereby negatively affecting local crop production and leading to economic inefficiency and eventually crushing the local economy.

2.3.3 The Effect of Implementation on the Success of Food Aid

Several studies refute the claims that food aid has negative effects on its recipients and propose that implementation of a food aid programme determines its success. Barrett (2006) conducted a review of literature on the impact of food aid and argued that the evidence supporting the negative impacts is weak and insufficient. The study argues that when done right — that is, when food aid is delivered at the right time and to targeted beneficiaries — food aid cannot lead to negative outcomes. He argues that more research needs to be done in order to evaluate the impact of food aid at household level.

A study by Sharaunga, Mudhara and Wale (2013) on the disincentive impacts of food aid and agricultural policies on agricultural production supports the argument by Barrett (2006) that food aid only leads to dependency and creates disincentives if it is not properly targeted or distributed. In this study, the disincentive effect was measured by the amount of land allocated to cereal production. Using multiple logistic regression, the study found that a reduction in land allocated to agricultural production among Malawian households was due to both food aid and agricultural policies disincentives.

Sharaunga, Mudhara and Wale (2013) reported that food aid had caused dependency because it was not properly targeted and was given over long-term periods, even in the absence of drought or famine. This study also showed highlighted that food aid impacts should be investigated in the context of existing local agricultural policies.

The motivation of the food aid implementing agency also has an effect on the success of food aid. It is widely believed that food aid is not a noble solution to food insecurity. Food aid might seem desirable and most welcome in combating chronic food insecurity but there remains significant dispute as to how effective food aid is in achieving this goal. Partially, the concern arises from the multiple objectives that underpin many food aid programs, sometimes provoking suspicion and scepticism, leading some scholars such as Shah (2005) to believe that the humanitarian face of food aid is merely a morally appealing disguise for inherently unpleasant subsidies.

2.3.4 Suggestions to Improve Reliability of Food Aid Studies

The methodologies applied to study the effect of food aid may affect the reliability of the results. A study by Abdulai, Barrett and Hoddinott (2005) conducted in Ethiopia, highlights that a study should not be based on simple statistics and regressions alone, without considering the role of characteristics used to target food aid recipients such as age, education and land size. The authors found that using only simple statistical measures such as regressions and comparison of means, led to an incorrect conclusion that food aid had led to dependency and disincentive outcomes in Ethiopia. However, once food aid targeting characteristics such as age, land size and education were taken into account, the results indicated otherwise. Thus, any interpretation of food aid dependency results should take into account the role of characteristics used for food aid targeting.

2.4 Zimbabwe and Food Aid

2.4.1 Food (In)Security in Rural Zimbabwe

Poverty, hunger, food deficits still underscore the way of life for many the world over, and even more so in Africa, such that the United Nations still prioritises the eradication of hunger as espoused in the Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2017). Between 2008 and 2011, Sub-Saharan Africa in particular experienced a staggering growth in the number of undernourished people, from around 215 million, in 2008, to nearly 240 million in 2011, owing primarily to the price shock and global economic recession of 2008 (FAO 2011). It is further noted that nearly half (45%) of those undernourished were less than 15 years old (FAO, 2006).

In 2011, FAO unequivocally reported that there was enough food produced worldwide to provide everyone with adequate nourishment (FAO 2011). This suggested that the availability of food was not necessarily the crux of the food crisis. Instead, the fundamental problem for many was access to food. Barrett (2010) contends that the phenomenon of access to food speaks to the type of food that is available and whether a household can afford to acquire that particular food. As such, this dissertation focusses on the lack of access to food which

has necessitated the need for food aid, and how food aid received consistently over longer periods of time affects household behaviour.

Zimbabwe is a developing country, with the majority — about 67%— of Zimbabwe’s population living in the rural areas and depending on rain-fed, subsistence agriculture for a living. In the last two decades, the levels of food insecurity in rural Zimbabwe have increased, owing to a combination of climatic, socioeconomic, health, and political factors such as recurrent drought and flood conditions, a widespread HIV pandemic, a deteriorating economy and failed input programme (Matongera et al. 2017). According to FAO database, the number and prevalence of undernourished people increased from average of 4.9 million people (40%) in the 1999 to 2001 period, to 8.5 million (51%) in the 2016 to 2018 period. The Food Poverty Atlas (ZimStat 2016) also found that on average about 20% of the population (2 million people), mostly located in the rural areas, are food poor and live below the food poverty line of 2 100 calorie daily requirement per person.

The contribution of climatic factors such as droughts and floods to food insecurity in rural Zimbabwe is well documented. In recent years, Zimbabwe has experienced an increased frequency of droughts and floods, negatively affecting agricultural production, leading to low crop yields, livestock losses and reduced livestock quality. Between 2010 to 2019, Zimbabwe experienced either a drought or flood in seven out of the ten years, while drought or flood frequency ranged between two and four years for the preceding five decades (Mavhura, Manatsa & Mushore 2015). Rural households, being dependent on rain-fed agriculture and being the least able to cope with the negative impacts of droughts and floods, are the most adversely affected. Studies from across rural Zimbabwe found that because of crop and animal losses, rural households are faced with high levels of food insecurity and an increased demand for food assistance (ibid).

Frequent droughts and floods, have, in fact, contributed to drought-induced poverty traps among rural households (Mavhura, Manatsa & Mushore 2015), further exacerbating the rural food security crisis. Droughts and floods lowered crop yields leading to household food shortages and higher food prices on the market. In order to purchase more food, households sold their livestock. However, the returns from sale of livestock prices were very low because

livestock were in poor condition and/or there was an increased supply on the market. Hence, households were unable to meet their food demands. To cope with food shortages, rural households were forced to rely mainly on food aid, and, to a lesser extent, on food-for-work programmes and selling wild fruit (Mavhura, Manatsa & Mushore 2015; Mazzeo 2011). The increased frequency of droughts and floods has in fact diminished rural household assets, leaving rural households more vulnerable, poor and unable able to cope with future crisis and food shortages (Mavhura, Manatsa & Mushore 2015; Mazzeo 2011).

Another major contributing factor to rural food insecurity is the HIV epidemic (Matongerera et al. 2017). The HIV epidemic, which affects 25% of the Zimbabwean population, has also had detrimental effects on rural livelihoods, agricultural production and vulnerability to food insecurity. HIV prevalence has led to a reduction in household labour availability for agricultural production, thus reducing agricultural production. The epidemic has led to an increase in child-headed households, who are left without proper means to fend for themselves and are adversely affected by food shortages. Mazzeo (2011) highlighted that HIV-affected households were more vulnerable to food shortages and less able to cope with future disasters because, when a food crisis occurred, HIV households depleted their assets faster than their counterparts did by selling off more cattle to survive. Therefore, they are more reliant on food aid than their rural counterparts.

The prevailing unfavourable economic climate also plays a role in undermining food security in Zimbabwe's rural areas (Gandure, Drimie & Faber 2010). High levels of unemployment and poverty undermine people's ability to meet their daily needs. About 60% of the Zimbabwean population lives in poverty. According to the Poverty Atlas (ZimStat 2015), poverty levels vary across provinces, from as low as 36% in Harare to as high as 85% in Matabeleland North province. The report also highlights that the level of poverty is higher in rural compared to urban areas. Unemployment is also rife, further reinforcing high levels of rural poverty and inability to meet food demands. Zimbabwe also faces a hyperinflationary environment, which has resulted in high costs of living that are unattainable for the rural poor. A shortage of foreign currency, cash, fertilizer and agricultural inputs all contribute to failing agricultural production and limited input support for the rural poor. Cash shortages also make it difficult for rural households to meet their daily needs, including food requirements.

2.4.2 Food Aid in Rural Zimbabwe – Importance and Challenges

Zimbabwe's greatest developmental challenges since the early 2000s have been entrenched in its high levels of poverty, recurring food insecurity and widespread malnutrition. These three social phenomena are inextricably linked because poorer households do not have access to sufficient food for their health requirements, cannot get a suitable income from their own agricultural production, and consequently suffer from malnutrition. A global response to such a crisis has therefore been an increase in relief food aid as means of addressing and mitigating the effects of acute food shortages and malnutrition among vulnerable groups.

Food aid is an important part of the livelihoods of rural households across Zimbabwe. Studies across Zimbabwe revealed that, in response to the recurrent food crises in rural areas, food aid is the main coping strategy and lifeline for food-insecure rural Zimbabweans (Gandure, Drimie & Faber 2010). Other strategies have included selling off cattle, food-for-work programmes, input programmes and selling wild fruit but food aid is, by far, the most common source of food for most rural household during food crisis.

The impact and role of food aid is well documented. In 2009 alone, USAID (2009) observed that humanitarian aid agencies in Zimbabwe appealed for US\$ 718 million worth of food assistance. Food production in rural Zimbabwe has been adversely impacted by economic and political calamities, notwithstanding the dismal effects of natural disasters. The unprecedented hyperinflation experienced between 2001 and 2009 and the subsequent economic collapse resulted in significant interruption of public service delivery (Christian Care 2009). Fuel shortages surfaced, disrupting the commercial supply chain and consequently resulting in chronic shortages of food and agricultural commodities (USAID, 2009). Recurrent droughts ravaged the country leading to a series of poor harvests, increased incidence of unemployment (estimated at more than 80%) and a high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (13.7%) as noted WFP (2005). The above factors undoubtedly contributed to spiralling levels of vulnerability, poverty and acute food insecurity (WFP 2005). Such an appalling situation, characteristic of rural Zimbabwe, has necessitated large-scale food aid operations particularly

in drought prone areas such as Matabeleland South and North, Masvingo, western Manicaland and southern Midlands (ZIMVAC 2010).

Many house households in most parts of rural Zimbabwe experience different levels of food insecurity and vulnerability. Such rural livelihoods are characteristic of, and perpetuated by a failing economy, political mayhem, harsh weather conditions and a deteriorating environment (Gandure, Drimie & Faber 2010). HIV/AIDS is also prevalent in rural areas, which has further exacerbated poverty and suffering. The humanitarian sector has consequently responded to this appalling state with the implementation of various food aid interventions in an effort to alleviate food insecurity, hunger and poverty.

According to Christian Care (2009), female headed, child-headed households and households headed by the elderly constitute the most vulnerable and food insecure, further contending that the gross inaccessibility and unavailability of food significantly contributed to the soaring levels of malnutrition in many areas of the country. This is corroborated by UNICEF, which suggested that acute protein-deficiency related malnutrition and related illnesses have been a huge concern in the southern part of Zimbabwe, with levels above 7% among children aged 6 to 59 months (Food and Nutrition Council, SIRDC & UNICEF 2008). The Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (CSO & Macro International Inc. 2007) notes that chronic malnutrition, associated with poverty and poor socioeconomic conditions, has been increasing significantly since 1994, with a spike in stunted growth among children below the age of 5 years.

2.4.3 Types of Food Aid

According to the Bread for the World Institute (2000) food-aid serves various purposes and is supplied in different forms including emergency food aid, project food aid and programme food aid. All three models operate differently with each being guided by its own set of legislation procedures and sources of funding (Ncube 2010).

2.4.3.1 Project Food Aid

Project food aid primarily supports specific poverty alleviation and disaster prevention activities and usually targets specific beneficiary groups (Sijm 1997). This form of food aid is an integral part of precise development projects such as food-for-work projects, food aid for mothers and pre-school children, public health programmes, community development and self-help projects. Project food aid is provided as a grant, which can be construed as an income transfer to the poor and needy people primarily living in rural areas (Shaw & Clay 1993). The core objective of this type of food aid is to enable vulnerable people to meet their basic nutritional needs and to eliminate their food deficit. The commodities are provided on a grant basis and are usually channelled through multilateral agencies such as the WFP or through international NGOs.

2.4.3.2 Programme Food Aid

Sijm (1997) describes programme food aid as food aid directed at supporting the implementation of structural policy reform in developing countries. Like project food aid, this is also provided as a grant or as a loan with significantly relaxed repayment terms, exclusively on bilateral basis (government to government). Programme food aid is donated exclusively through bilateral donors, serves as an un-targeted, unrestricted and indirect form of financial assistance. Once this type of food aid has landed at the recipient government, it is then sold in local markets and this process is called 'monetization', which replaces commercial imports in recipient countries enabling them to save foreign exchange leading to balance of payment support (Shaw & Clay 1993). Monetization therefore relates to the sale of donated food in order to obtain currency for other developmental programmes including health, water, agriculture, HIV/ AIDS, microfinance or direct food security (USAID 2006). This form of food aid has been the most common worldwide, dating back to the 1990s, and accounted for 55% of global food aid (Sijm 1997).

2.4.3.3 Relief/Emergency Food Aid

This is food aid provided in response to sudden, major shortfalls in food production resulting in excessive hunger. Relief food aid is mainly targeted at victims of natural or man-made

disasters, and food rations are distributed at no cost to the beneficiary throughout the disaster period (Shelton 2005). It relates to immediate, life-saving humanitarian assistance. Young & Abbott (2008) caution that, where disasters are prolonged threatening long-term food security, relief aid has usually been extended to accommodate the prolonged disaster. Clay and Singer (1985, p. 62) add that it serves as a "response to urgent situations created by an event which the affected people and their governments lack the means to remedy". In the last few decades, this type of food aid has become commonplace in Sub-Saharan Africa, which the WFP has categorised as Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRROs). However, Maunder (2006) observed a disturbing pattern developing in Sub-Saharan Africa from the late 1990s, where there was a progressive reliance on this type of food aid. It is further noted that in 2004 about 75% of all food sent to Sub-Saharan Africa was emergency food aid (ibid).

This study focussed primarily on relief food aid. Zimbabwe has been subjected to acute droughts and chronic food shortages. This has undoubtedly prompted response from the humanitarian community in the form of food aid. As a result, food aid became more persistent given the dire economic and weather conditions; hence, the study to investigate the impact of prolonged food aid.

2.4.4 Types of Food Aid and the Zimbabwean rural context

Rural Zimbabwe has experienced protracted food insecurity for many years, which escalated in the early 2000s (Gandure, Drimie & Faber 2010). Most rural areas have experienced severe food insecurity such that the 2017 Global Hunger Index ranked Zimbabwe 108th out of 119 in terms of food insecurity. These high levels of food insecurity have been attributed to widespread poverty, HIV/AIDS, lack of adequate employment opportunities, liquidity challenges, lack of education, recurrent climate-induced shocks and economic instability, which have all contributed to inadequate access to food. Undoubtedly, food insecurity in Zimbabwe and rural Zimbabwe in particular, has been at crisis levels for a long time which has rendered relief food aid the most appropriate.

Relief food aid enhances short-term food security by offering an immediate food solution to households. According to Murphy (2017), food is a basic human need and right. As such, relief

food aid becomes one of the most immediate forms of achieving this basic human right. Food aid can be an important resource for furthering the development of poor food insecure communities provided that it is rolled out in a manner that enables development and integrated into other programmes with the goal of addressing the underlying causes of hunger.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

In 2010, the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC), suggested that around half a billion people worldwide lived in chronic poverty, which has been inter-generational, noting that progress against poverty has not only been imbalanced but also regrettably slow in many areas, especially Africa (CPRC, 2010). As such, to understand the impact of food aid, as a facet of development on recipient communities, this thesis is conceptualised on the work of Professor Dambisa Moyo, which contends that development has failed to put people first, with poverty intensifying and inequities widening (Moyo, 2010). Likewise, with food aid, the perception is that food aid enhances the well-being of the chronically hungry, however, in practice, food aid alters mindsets and cultivates dependency which defeats the phenomenon of development. According to Moyo (2010), international aid stifles development and sustainable economic growth of the recipient countries, and I believe that this assertion is transferable to food aid.

However, the thesis does not simply chronicle the failures of food aid, but rather examines the impact of food aid on the livelihoods of individuals and households. This can be negative or positive depending on one's assets or access to assets, physical capacity, skills, gender, values and attitudes, to mention but a few. It is therefore conceptualised that, households with labour power, have the physical ability to generate income or engage in other activities to sustain their own livelihoods. In theory, the impact of food aid on such households would be positive, such that, food serves as a safety net or supplementary provision. The opposite is also true. For those without any resolve and no livelihood strategies, food aid would therefore have negative impacts, serving as the only source of livelihood and consequently cultivating dependency.

The thesis further acknowledges the extent of food insecurity in the uMzingwane region, which has been a consequence of a myriad of factors, ranging from climate to politics. However, for food aid to achieve food security, it should be founded on sustainability, which then advocates for and for and guarantees empowerment and development of the recipients.

2.6 Chapter Summary

Nearly half of the world's population lives on less than US\$ 2/day, which spells out poverty, deprivation and hunger. Developing countries in particular, are home to two thirds of the world's most food insecure, which undoubtedly justifies the need food aid to alleviate food insecurity. However, though food aid serves as a safety net against hunger and starvation, its micro-level social impacts on beneficiaries, remains inadequately researched.

The chapter considered a broad range of literature on food aid. It explored the history of food aid, which dates back to the 1960s when food aid was initially implemented as means of surplus dumping by Western countries on developing nations. The literature also suggests that food aid has now become a default response by Western countries to hunger, famine and other natural disasters, which may cause discomfort in developing countries. Food aid has been channelled through to developing countries for a long time, and the common theme among many recipient countries is that food aid persisted for many years, even decades, yet there was no material change in their food security.

Potential disadvantages and advantages of food aid were also traced, reflecting that the cons far outweighed the pros. Experiences across a multitude of recipient countries reflect that food aid adversely affected them more, with disadvantages ranging from negative effects on economic growth, reduced local food production, changing local consumption patterns and ultimately, dependency on the food aid. On the contrary, the most significant advantage of having food aid speaks to the immediate relief of hunger, which has been attributed to literally saving lives in emergencies.

The chapter further explored the phenomenon of food aid in Zimbabwe, which has been necessitated by the primarily poor economic conditions, harsh weather patterns resulting in famine, hunger and starvation. Droughts have persisted in Zimbabwe, and food aid became

protracted. As such, the objective of this study is premised on the above, seeking to explore how prolonged food aid affects the very households benefitting from food aid. The next chapter gives a detailed account of how the researcher went about acquiring data in uMzingwane District, which will be later analysed to draw conclusions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study was guided by Professor Dambisa Moyo (2009, p. 47), who suggested that aid “is no longer part of the potential solution, it is part of the problem, in fact aid is the problem”. The study therefore asked critical questions regarding the aid recipient community, coping strategies and aid dependency. The methodology employed in this study is therefore guided by the purpose of the study and the questions that the study seeks to provide answers to.

As such, this section explains the procedures and techniques employed in conducting this study. The study was carried out in the form of qualitative research in an attempt to attain conclusive results on the need for food aid, including why some recipients had become perennial recipients of food aid, to understand how people cope without food aid and the possible alternatives to food aid that would lead to economic emancipation and self-sufficiency.

The study firstly involved an in-depth literature review on the impacts of food aid internationally, in Zimbabwe and more specifically in the uMzingwane District, which has been presented in Chapter 2. The literature discusses the elements of food security, the structure and impact of food aid on recipient communities. Thereafter, key informant and household semi-structured interviews were used to gather data from the field. A total of 100 households, and eight key informants constituting community leadership, NGO representatives and government extension workers, participated in the study.

3.2 The Research Design

3.2.1 Case Study Design

This research was primarily centred on a case study design. This study did not seek to determine cause and effect, nor to make predictions, but rather to focus on the exploration and description of the social impacts of prolonged food aid as felt by the recipients. Bernard (2012) suggest that case studies are typically qualitative in nature, resulting in a narrative

description of behaviour or experience, which is at the core of this research, hence the choice of a case study design. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context in a natural setting (Creswell & Creswell 2017). This allows for acquiring in-depth data, and informing on confidential matters, which have a direct bearing on the research area. Essentially, a case study design allows for a clearer understanding of the perceptions of the respondents, their opinions and interpretations on how and why the persistence of food aid affects various social phenomena in the uMzingwane District.

The case study design was employed as it proved to be the most effective as the objective was to study the impact of certain phenomena on a particular population. Yin (2003) posits that case studies enable the examination of data within the context of its use, that is, within the situation in which the activity actually takes place. Neuman (2014) further suggests that case studies can be used effectively where descriptive accounts of behaviour are sought, which bonds well with the objective of this research. He goes on to note that the detailed qualitative accounts often produced in case studies not only help to explore or describe the data in real-life environment, but also help to explain the complexities of real-life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research (ibid). A case study design was therefore selected for its relevance to the study.

3.2.2 The Study Site

The uMzingwane District is located in the north of the Matabeleland Province approximately eighty kilometres from the Provincial Capital, Gwanda, and about forty kilometres from Bulawayo (Robins 1994). The District is composed of 20 wards. Thirteen wards are communal lands whilst five are resettlements. Elected councillors, together with chiefs and headmen, lead all wards.

The uMzingwane District is prone to droughts, which have been blamed for the escalating levels of poverty and food insecurity. As a result, the District suffers from high volumes of youth migration, as they seek better livelihood opportunities in neighbouring South Africa and Botswana. Small-scale artisanal mining is quite rampant which has seen the mushrooming of illegal settlements. Prostitution, attributed to illegal gold mining, is also

seen, particularly in Esigodini, the District centre. Droughts in the region have rendered uMzingwane very poor, resulting in an appalling state of hunger, poverty and an amplified need for relief food aid. Food aid programmes have targeted uMzingwane since the 90s because of these prolonged droughts. As such, the area presents an appropriate case study for this research. Figure 2 depicts the map of uMzingwane, identifying all villages from which respondents were drawn.

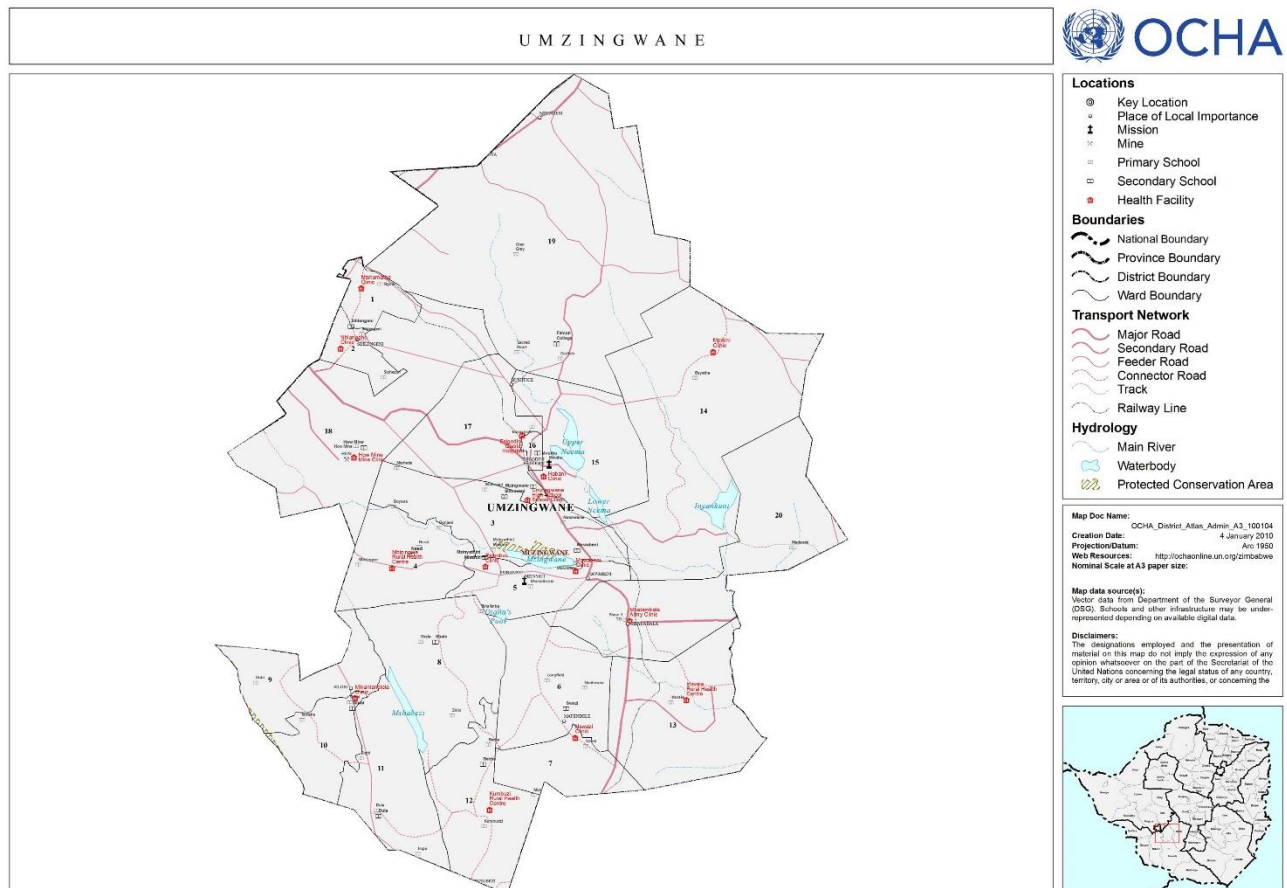


Figure 2 The Map of uMzingwane – Adapted from The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

UMzingwane District falls under Agro-ecological Region IV, and generally seen as suitable for animal husbandry. As such, livelihoods have traditionally relied on livestock herding, while crops could be grown with some degree of success. The land is regarded as being of better quality than in other regions, but fertility has declined with time. Climatic conditions are generally uncertain and variable, and droughts are prominent, which undermines the sustainability of natural resource-based livelihoods.

The region is located in the low-lying areas in the north and south of the country. It is characterised by severe dry spells during the rainy season, and frequent seasonal droughts. It is generally considered unsuitable for dryland cropping, however, smallholder farmers grow drought-tolerant varieties of maize, sorghum, pearl millet and finger millet, which barely scratches the surface in terms of achieving food security (FAO, 2006). Theoretically, the area is suitable for livestock production which also fails as the animals succumb to the harsh climatic conditions.

From the early 2000s, uMzingwane experienced souring food shortages for many years, with developmental efforts being hampered by the community's inability to produce and provide sufficient food for the masses (IFAD 2010). According to ZimVac (2006), Mzingwane had the highest rate of poverty in Matabeleland South at 89% in 2005. Poor rainfall and drought results in poor grazing, water shortages and disease outbreaks. Livestock makes a significant contribution to the livelihoods of many households, but, during droughts, they perish exacerbating food insecurity and vulnerability of the locals (Mudzonga & Chigwada, 2009). As a result, the area has been targeted and became a recipient of aid in the form of food relief.

3.3 Data Gathering

Yin (1984) contends that case studies investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and carry the advantage of using multiple sources of evidence. In this study, a qualitative design was employed to explore the social impacts of food aid on the study group. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) contend that a qualitative approach that “enables the researcher to learn first-hand about the social world they are investigating by means of involvement and participation in that world through a focus upon what individual actors say and do”.

Qualitative methods were employed in order to understand social phenomenon relating to the dynamics of food aid in the uMzingwane context. The study relied mainly on beneficiary experiences, feelings and opinions, hence the use of a qualitative design. Such a design allowed for a certain level of flexibility, enabling to the researcher to follow information leads of interest to the study through semi-structured interviews, with carefully selected key

informants and households who benefited from food aid programmes during the period in question. This approach also allowed for in depth discussions on issues of interest and related phenomena, hence being advantageous considering the diverse nature and sensitivity of issues that were being tackled.

Food Aid for households in uMzingwane had been delivered through the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) and therefore all respondents interviewed were beneficiaries of VGF. The food aid distribution was usually done over a four-month programme, that is, January to April. However, this was subsequently increased to nine months, attributed to prolonged droughts, which escalated the levels of hunger and starvation.

The data was collected from the 18th November 2019 through to the 1st of December 2019.

3.3.1 Key Informant Interviews

Devine (1995) theorises that a key informant interview is a conversation with people who have specialized knowledge about the topic one wishes to understand. He goes on to note that key informant interviews let you explore a subject in depth (ibid). Bernard (2012) complements this by suggesting that such interviews can result in the discovery of information that would not have been revealed in a survey.

All informants identified for the study were carefully selected, with all of them possessing vast experience on the impacts food aid in the uMzingwane region. Bernard (2012) argues, “Good key informants are people to whom one can easily talk to, who understand the study information needs and who are glad to give information to the researcher”. In selecting NGO officials, particular attention was paid to how long the respondents had been part of the food aid programme. Informants who had been in the programme for a number of years would have more valuable information to offer on how food aid had affected their way of life. Informants were also selected for their familiarity and understanding of the environment, its people and the natural environment. Government officials including agricultural extension officers and social welfare officers were also contacted for their inputs. At the local level, a number of local councillors were identified, who were perceived to be valuable informants since all interventions are communicated through local leadership.

The key informant interviews were conducted by the principal investigator. The interviews focused primarily on trying to understand why there is a need for food aid in this region. Key informant interviews helped the researcher understand social structures and phenomena that cannot be observed directly. This includes information on how food aid had altered local consumption patterns and how it had affected farming practices of the locals. It is also through these interviews that the researcher discovered how and why this region had become a perennial recipient of food aid.

In this study, seven key informants were identified and interviewed. Respondents were drawn by means of purposive sampling. Ezzy (2002) contends that purposive sampling provides clear criteria or rationale for the selection of participants, places to observe, or events that relate to the research questions. Purposive sampling enables one to make strategic choices about whom, when, where and how one does one's research (Palys 2008). The following key informant interviews identified and perceived to be in a position to provide vital information for the study:

Table 1 Key informants

Category	Number
NGO officials	2
Agricultural extension workers	1
Social welfare official	1
Local Governance (Councilor)	1
Local Chiefs	2
Nutritionist	1

Key informants were interviewed at their preferred locations, mostly at their places of work. Permission was obtained and appointments scheduled two weeks in advance. This was done through emails and telephone calls. For emails, the following was attached:

- Letter of research approval from the Ethics Committee
- Copy of the proposal
- The relevant interview guide

- Copies of the relevant permissions to conduct the study from both the Regional and District administration offices.

Some interviews were scheduled via telephone and in such cases all the documents noted above were printed out and handed over before the interview started. Once the informant had read and understood everything, the consent form would be signed and the interview would commence. All key informant interviews were guided by an interview guide with open-ended questions (Appendix A). This enabled the researcher to probe, following up on information leads of particular interest. According to Devine (1995) open-ended questions are used to allow the interviewee to elaborate on their observations or opinions. The researcher also consistently took field notes and recordings, which McNabb (2010) suggests are integral to qualitative research.

3.3.2 Households: Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with selected households in uMzingwane District. The interviews were carried out by research assistants, together with the principal investigator, using an interview guide schedule (Appendix B). Four fluent Ndebele speaking research assistants were employed for the duration of the study. In preparation of the fieldwork, research assistants went through a three-day training course on what they were expected to do. The course, facilitated by the principal researcher, entailed the description of the study and the study area, explanations on the tools should be used, and explanations concerning how to ask questions and how to record the responses. On the ground the research assistants operated in teams of two, that is, an interviewer and a note taker, with the principal investigator supervising and monitoring quality control.

Research assistants visited each household in their designated area once during the course of the study. A few repeat visits were made in cases where the research assistants felt they needed to do so. During each household visit, interviews were conducted with the household heads. The interviews concentrated largely on the experiences of the different households regarding food aid. The objective here was to gain an understanding of how the local beneficiaries felt about food aid and to gain insight into the intricacies of beneficiary selection,

especially, opinions on the selection process and whether Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme (VGF) ultimately reached the intended beneficiaries or not.

All households that participated in the study were randomly selected on the field using simple random sampling. Thereafter the researcher used cluster sampling to determine the sample size, in a two-stage process. Firstly, each village/ward in uMzingwane was treated as an individual cluster and eight clusters/villages were selected by means of drawing names from a box. Thereafter, the researcher proceeded to the second stage where households were randomly selected on the field. Twenty households were randomly selected from each cluster, such that a total of 100 households were interviewed.

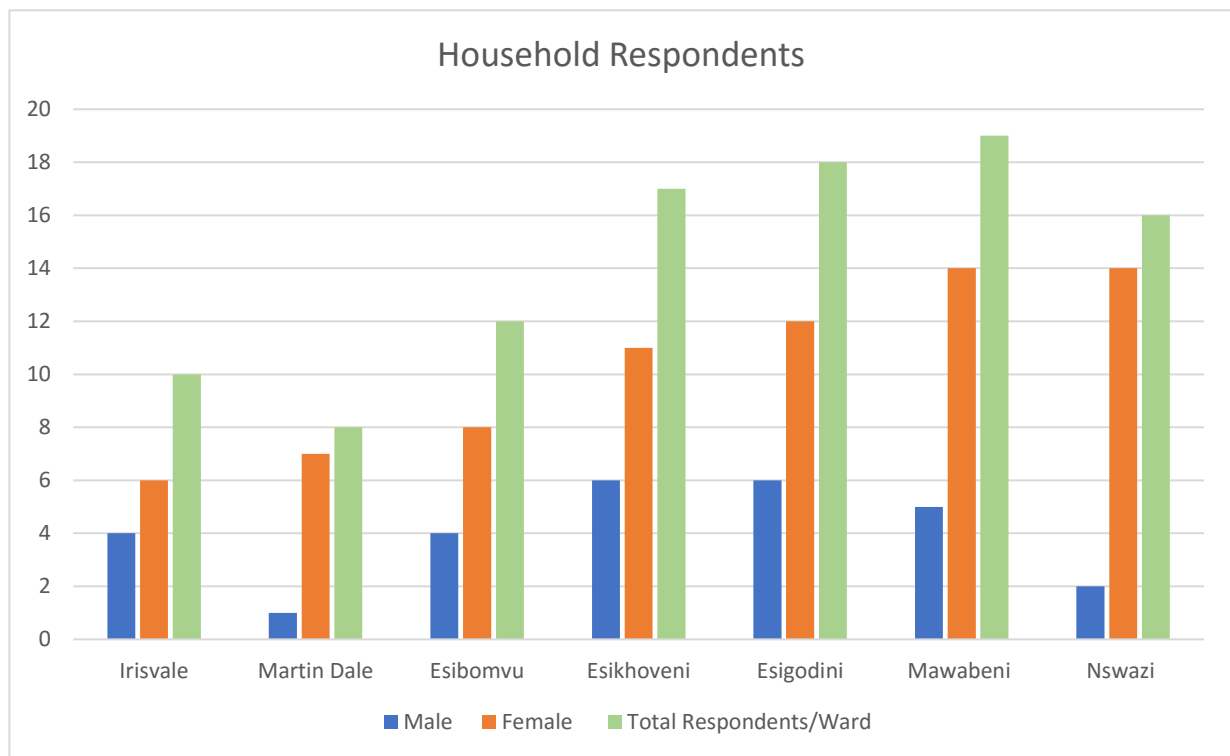


Figure 3 Household respondents by gender.

3.4 Justification of the sample

The sample consisted of 8 key informants and 100 households. The sample was thought to be adequate in order for the researcher to go beyond saturation to ensure that no stone was left unturned in terms of the variability of data that had to be collected. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) propose that saturation often occurs around 12 participants in homogeneous groups. To ensure that one attains saturation one has to go beyond the point of saturation to

make sure no new major concepts emerge in the next few interviews or observations. Consequently, 15 as a minimum for most qualitative interview studies works very well when the participants are homogeneous. They go on to suggest that, if one is interviewing different types of participants then 15 to 20 respondents of each type should be interviewed in order to reach saturation (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). As such, the researcher settled on 20 households per cluster for the 5 clusters.

3.5 Data Analysis, Ethical Considerations and Limitations

3.5.1 Data Analysis Approach

The data analysis was carried out in order to structure and break down raw data into manageable bits and reorder in a logical and thematic manner. Notes from live interviews were recorded on paper and transcribed from tape recordings. Thereafter, data was coded and common threads placed in chunks, where after common themes were drawn. Grouping data into themes made the analysis of data easier and more manageable and brought meaning, which paved the way for findings to be drawn.

3.5.2 Ethical Considerations

This study was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria (Appendix F). The Matabeleland South Provincial Administrator and the uMzingwane District Administrator granted further approval (Appendices G and H). Written informed consent was received from every respondent prior to commencement of interviews (Appendices C and D). At the beginning of each interview, the principal investigator together with research assistants informed the respondent about the purpose of the study. They were also informed that their participation in the study was completely on a voluntary basis and that they had the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. The consent form also spelt out that all responses were going to be recorded, stored, processed and reported in confidentiality. The researcher affirmed a commitment not to harm participants in any way through the consent form and this was communicated verbally to respondents in their preferred language - Ndebele.

Every effort was made to ensure that the identity of everyone who participated in the study is protected by using pseudonyms. No names used in the study are those of actual respondents. The data gathered was stored in a password-protected computer to enhance security, and this was accessed only by the researcher throughout the study. The data was only shared data with the supervisor, and no other third party had access to the data. The information gathered will be published in the form of a dissertation, which may be disseminated in both hard and soft copies to a broader audience, including, but not limited to, local and international forums, including conferences. The voice recordings from the interviews will not be broadcasted on radio, television, Internet or on social media, and together with the data, will be stored in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology for at least 15 years.

3.5.3 Limitations of the Study

The study setting was in a rural area and accessibility of households proved to be a major limitation in terms of time. The researcher and research assistants had to walk in order to access some remote households and this took up a lot of time. As such, the researcher had to stay in the field longer than expected in order not to compromise research findings.

The research topic seemed to be very politically sensitive. Some respondents targeted initially in the planning phase, declined to be interviewed citing political impartiality. These were mostly high-ranking officials in public office. However, the researcher was successful in getting good replacements for those who declined.

3.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 provided a detailed description of how the study was carried out. This entailed an explanation of the methods employed including a detailed guide to the data gathering process and an in-depth description of the study area. Apart from making reference to broad literature, data was primarily gathered through semi-structured interviews. An interview guide was used during the interviews, and this was mainly to allow the researcher to probe in search of rich, thorough and genuine information on the respondent's opinions, experiences and reality. Respondents constituted key informants and households. Key

informants were meticulously selected based on their experience and knowledge on the field of study whilst households were randomly selected. The study was carried out in the uMzingwane District in the Matabeleland South Province of Zimbabwe. This is a highly food insecure area because of droughts and harsh weather conditions. Consequently, uMzingwane has been targeted for food aid programmes, which have persisted over a number of years.

Data was successfully collected without any major setbacks and the researcher was satisfied with the process in its entirety. Strict ethical guidelines were followed in data collection, such that all respondents were made to understand that participation was voluntary. As such, all respondents participated at their own will and all interviews proceeded without any glitches. The next chapter therefore provides an analysis of the data gathered including a discussion of the findings as it were.

Chapter 4: Food Aid and its Effectiveness in uMzingwane District

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 constitutes the first part of the study findings. It provides the context and background. It provides an analysis of the study area, drawing on its characteristics, which are later reconciled with the need for food aid. The first section introduces the reader to the specific agricultural and livelihood practices, based on community experiences as gathered from fieldwork. This further sets the scene to understand what necessitated the need for food aid in the District and why the area became a perennial beneficiary of food aid.

Secondly, the Chapter touches on relevant food aid programmes, which were commissioned in the study area during the specified period. These were programmes commissioned by the United Nations World Food Programme and implemented by partner NGOs throughout the District. Furthermore, the Chapter draws on beneficiary experiences to highlight the impact of these food aid programmes, reflecting their perceived (in)effectiveness and relevance in the uMzingwane District.

4.2 UMzingwane and the Need for Food Aid.

4.2.1 Background to Food Aid: Livelihoods and Agricultural Practices

Community livelihoods in uMzingwane District are fundamentally dependent on agriculture and the availability of water (USAID 2011). Most respondents revealed that they engaged in either crop or livestock production, or some in both. However, they further noted that their farming activities are heavily dependent on rainfall. UMzingwane has been experiencing extreme weather patterns such as droughts, which according to the respondents had negatively affected the successful engagement in agricultural practices. An Agricultural extension services of Zimbabwe's Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Climate and Rural Resettlement (Agritex) officer pointed out that,

Irrigation agriculture is a good alternative, but this is not accessible to everyone. Rainfall is very little, and if irrigation systems were accessible to everyone, it would help improve our yields and boost food security in the District.

Rainfall supply is very poor resulting in mid-season droughts, making it difficult for the majority of households and small-scale farmers alike to secure adequate food to support decent livelihoods. ZimFact (2018) report supports the above assertion suggesting that only 37% of the country receives adequate rainfall to support rain-fed agriculture and in the dry regions, only two out of every four or five seasons produce a successful yield. This is markedly insignificant to afford everyone a decent food secure livelihood, especially in drier regions such as uMzingwane.

In uMzingwane, crop production primarily constitutes maize, groundnuts and small grains such as sorghum and millet. The most grown crop is maize, which is not particularly suited for the climate in uMzingwane. People continue growing maize out of habit and resistance to changing their staple diet. Poor rainfall and the excessively high temperatures negatively affect maize production. The study also confirmed that livestock, as a livelihood feature, have conventionally been utilised as insurance against seasonal crop failures for small-scale farmers and the community at large. A village head in Esigodini suggested that livestock could be used to provide food for the household during poor harvest. He also noted that;

Many people sell their goats and cattle to purchase food and pay school fees. They also use the money to buy stock for resale from South African or Botswana.

However, he further noted that in uMzingwane District droughts had increased in both intensity and frequency, such that the District had become synonymous with a lack of livestock feed and excessive deaths of livestock. UMzingwane District witnessed severe droughts between 1996 and 2006. An Agritex officer painted a grim picture of the period in question noting that it got so bad, that “poor rainfall and excessive heat made it difficult for and crop to survive”.

Water sources literally dried up and grazing land was greatly diminished prompting community members to walk their cattle up to about 15km in search of pasture. He further notes that, this was detrimental for both the people and livestock, and many livestock perished on the way due to hunger and dehydration.

Livestock in uMzingwane fare better than crops. Respondents noted that, cattle in particular, have multiple uses such as draught power for farming and provision of milk, meat and eggs in the case of chickens. Livestock rearing in the District includes primarily cattle, donkeys and goats. Most households prefer to keep cattle, which are perceived as a symbol of wealth and prestige. However, the majority of households have very few livestock, which translates to very many households deemed poor.

A striking feature from the study was that it is becoming increasingly evident that agrarian livelihoods are part of a diversity of livelihoods in the uMzingwane District. Although land preparation and small-scale subsistence farming continues, together with livestock rearing in an effort to sustain their livelihoods, other mechanisms of living have progressively been adopted. One cannot simply suggest that the community in uMzingwane base their livelihoods on agriculture alone but also scrape together a livelihood from other activities such as gold panning, migrant remittances, cross border trade and assistance from extended family in other towns. In Chapter 5, the above-mentioned emerging livelihood strategies, which also feature as alternative coping mechanisms to food aid, will be discussed in detail.

4.2.2 The Need for Food Aid and the Drivers of Poverty in uMzingwane.

4.2.2.1 *Increased Frequency of Droughts*

Households in all the wards visited for the study, indicated that their livelihoods depended primarily on rain-fed agriculture and reveal that unpredictable, erratic rainfall and persistent droughts topped the challenges they encountered, which compromised their ability to build sustainable livelihoods. The lack of rainfall affects farming and crop productivity. It also affects livestock rearing and management, which according to the respondents, resulted in lower food production, making them more vulnerable, food insecure and in need of food aid for survival. During one of the key informant interviews, an Agritex officer revealed that grazing lands had diminished to such an extent that livestock required supplementary feeding. This meant the purchasing of commercial stock feed, which many households could not afford. Extremely high temperatures also decreased the quality of soil through excessive loss of moisture, resulting in crop failure.

As such, the increased frequency of droughts compromise households' efforts to build sustainable livelihoods and progressively erodes their resilience against harsh climatic conditions, leaving them in dire need of food aid. An Agritex officer noted that:

Droughts are wreaking havoc in the whole of Matabeleland South. We have poor rainfall and very high temperatures. Though we encourage people to adopt drought resilient farming strategies, such as intercropping and delaying the planting period, it has been futile as harvests remain too little as a result of the soaring high temperatures.

Ethiopia bears a striking resemblance to this experience. As detailed in a report by FAO (2009), drought and famine are the major drivers of food aid flow to Ethiopia. It has been noted that, droughts and famine resulted in insufficient food production and recurrent food shortages in Ethiopia, leaving the country dependent on food aid for decades with more than five million people directly dependent on food aid annually (ibid).

4.2.2.2 Water Scarcity

Water, an essential part of human life, has become a scarce resource in uMzingwane District owing primarily to poor rainfall and protracted droughts. Interviewed households indicated that water shortages are compounded by the unavailability and uneven distribution of water sources. They further noted that the District has few dams, which tend to dry up long before the onset of the rainy season around July to August. This creates significant pressure on boreholes and eventually fails to meet all the households' water requirements. A village Head in Nswazi pointed out that

The community is forced to rely on food aid as we cannot manage to sustain ourselves. There is no water and the boreholes are not enough to cater for the whole community. Our people cannot grow their own food and this is what is making us more vulnerable. The people would not survive without food aid.

4.2.2.3 *Lack of Education*

Respondents in most of the wards targeted in the study pointed to the fundamental lack of education as a significant contributor to their poverty and therefore, one of the reasons why they require food aid. Eighty percent of households interviewed noted that they dropped out of school before completing their Ordinary Level Certificate (O'Levels), which makes them unemployable in neighbouring towns where they could have potentially earned more, such as in Bulawayo and Gwanda. They largely attributed their inability to attend school to already existing poverty, where households could not afford to take all their children to school. This perpetuated poverty as the children of poor people fell in the same poverty trap, where children are born into poverty and by default, grow up to be poor. The respondents further noted that failure to secure a decent education meant their hopes of being employed in the high wage sectors were nothing but an unattainable fantasy and were relegated to low paying manual jobs.

Nathando from Esikhoveni gave insight into her life story. Teary eyed in a trembling voice she said:

I dropped out of school in Grade 7 because my father could not afford to keep me in school. We were very poor, and I had to marry at a young age so that my father would not worry about feeding me as well. My husband, who also came from a poor family, passed away and left me with four children, which I cannot afford to take care of. Like me, they don't attend school and I know they will die poor like me.

The respondents generally acknowledged the value of education and the impact it had on livelihoods. However, some household respondents suggested that unaffordability was coupled with other factors. They noted that schools were spread far apart, and some children had to walk very long distances to get to school. One village head noted that children from poorer households had to walk those long distances on empty stomachs, and there were incidences of children fainting because of hunger on their way to school. Such children cannot concentrate at school. They perform poorly, drop out, missing education and perpetuating the cycle of poverty within their households.

4.2.2.4 *The impact of HIV/AIDS*

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has ravished many countries and communities the world over, and uMzingwane bares testimony to the ruthless impacts of the disease. A key informant from the Ministry of Social Welfare noted that HIV/AIDS had become too rampant in the uMzingwane District. He suggested that one could hardly find a household that has not been affected by the pandemic. An Agritex officer concurred with the above suggesting that HIV/AIDS diminishes the much-needed labour required for agricultural productivity. Interviewed households also noted that HIV/AIDS attacked the more productive members of farming households. They get too ill and eventually die leaving the household even more impoverished due to costs incurred in purchasing drugs, prescribed special foods, time, transport to and from hospital, which is exacerbated by their inability to be agriculturally productive.

MaMthombeni noted that her husband, who was the sole provider for the family fell ill with HIV and she struggled with hospital bills.

I sold many of our goats and only cow, so that I get money to send him to hospital and get him the food that was suggested by the Doctor. I sold almost everything, but my husband died leaving me with nothing to survive on and with a lot of debt.

During a key informant interview, the interviewee indicated that the pandemic primarily affected sexually active individuals who were also productive in various sectors of the economy. He revealed that these individuals were economically active and were the pillars of their respective households. They earned money, which supported their farming practices through the procurement of farming implements. The disease also kills after a very long time and that by the time the infected die, substantial amounts of expenses would have been accumulated, sadly, to the detriment of the remaining members of the household, mainly women and children. Accumulation of these unaffordable expenses usually meant the accumulation of debt, which made people even more vulnerable.

Essentially, the study revealed that communities in uMzingwane became poorer because of the impacts of HIV/AIDS. As noted by the village head in Esigodini, the disease did not only

affect the infected, but everyone in the household. He noted that households had to forego their fields so that they care for the sick, and as a result could not do without food aid, hence the need for food aid.

4.2.2.5 Crop Damage from Birds

The impact of granivorous birds on crops has been a major cause of food insecurity, which has necessitated the need for food aid. Droughts have become a persistent occurrence in the District and the communities had to adopt other farming strategies to mitigate against the impacts of droughts. An Agritiex officer mentioned that they had encouraged households to resort to the planting of small grains such as sorghum and millet, which were more drought resistant. Interviewed households pointed out that though they had adopted such practices to mitigate against the effects of droughts, granivorous birds ate the soft small grains.

These birds, mainly, doves, finches and red billed queleas, generally feed on grass. However, the respondents mentioned that in the absence of grass, they attack small grain crops. As a result, harvests are drastically reduced leading to inadequate food being produced and consequently amplifying the need for food aid. Mr Mthimkhulu from Esibomvu noted that;

We have been advised to plant small grain but these birds eat it all up. We do not know what to do now because there is no other way of surviving. Thanks to ORAP, we can still eat. We would have died if they had not given us food.

4.2.2.6 Prevalence of Female-headed Households

The study also uncovered the dynamics of gender in relation to poverty and the need for food aid. According to the study, female-headed households were found to have a marginally higher incidence of poverty than male-headed households, as suggested by the 80% of respondents who revealed that female-headed households are much poorer than male-headed households are. This revelation is supported by the 2011 ZIMVAC report, which concluded that female-headed households earned significantly lower income than male-headed households. According to the people of uMzingwane, the high incidence of female-headed households leaves many households living under extreme poverty. Sixty percent (42)

of all female respondents represented female-headed households. All female heads interviewed indicated that they were unemployed and primarily survived by doing casual work for other households and selling roasted maize cobs and fruits along the highway connecting Bulawayo to Beitbridge. They also indicated that they did not have any assets of value; most of them did not own a single head of cattle, but had a few chickens, and a handful of them had between one and three goats.

A village head interviewed in Martin Dale, further indicated that there were too many female-headed households in this area, who are in need of assistance with food at any given time of the year. He further suggested that most of the female household heads were also widowed which compounded their poverty, taking cognisance of the traditional role of males as breadwinners. Many other respondents indicated that numerous males had perished in illegal mining activities or because of HIV/AIDS, leaving their wives as primary caregivers to their children, with the added responsibility of fending for their families. This poses as a major driver of poverty and the need for food aid in the District.

4.2.2.7 Lack of Employment and other Income Generating Opportunities.

Unemployment is one of the most significant drivers of poverty in uMzingwane District. Formal employment is scarce, with the majority surviving on agriculture and livestock rearing. Of the 100 households interviewed, 74% indicated that they did not have a single member of their households in permanent formal employment. Most of the respondents indicated that the closest they get to employment is self-employment in the form of small-scale vending of various commodities including roasted mealie cobs, vegetables, second-hand clothing and firewood. Other income generating activities they engaged in included knitting, basket weaving, sculpting curios, shoe repairs and food vending. All of these are regarded as low-value and low-income generators. This suggests that economic activities that support a household are a huge determinant of household poverty, which drive the need for food aid.

There is no employment here, which is why people are so poor. Many rely on small-scale farming which has not been taking off because of these droughts. Now many are

surviving on food distributions from the Social Welfare or from the NGOs”, said one Councillor during a key informant interview Mawebeni.

The effects of unemployment are well articulated by USAID (2011) which alluded to the gross disruption of the economy leading to massive unemployment across Zimbabwe and consequently chronic shortages of food. WFP (2005) further noted that this exacerbated levels of vulnerability, poverty and acute food insecurity, necessitating extensive food aid operations in most of rural Zimbabwe.

4.3 Food Aid Programmes in uMzingwane

Food aid programmes in uMzingwane took two forms: those commissioned by the WFP (Vulnerable Group Feeding) and the Government programme implemented by the Ministry of Social Welfare. The Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme was initiated by the WFP in 2005 across food insecure regions of Zimbabwe (WFP 2005). At that time, the programme was designed to cushion more than 3.4 million food-insecure Zimbabweans (ibid). The programme was implemented by NGOs such as ORAP, WVI and Christian Care as separate programmes. The programme ran for three months every year from 2002, which was eventually upgraded to every month throughout the year. Such NGO programmes commissioned by the WFP targeted the poorest of the poor, who had to comply with vulnerability criteria set by the WFP. The criteria are discussed in detail in section 4.3.2.3. The food basket distributed under this programme included beans, oil, maize and rice, calculated per person within every qualifying household.

The Social Welfare Programme was commissioned by the State. This was implemented by the uMzingwane Ministry of Social Welfare in partnership with the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). Like the NGO programmes, the Social Welfare programme also target vulnerable households who had to register with their local chiefs and councillors to be part of the programme. The programme focussed on maize distributions, which were delivered by the District GMB on a monthly basis, and distribution was handled by social welfare officials. Maize rations were premised on the rational that 10kgs of maize meal was sufficient to sustain an individual for the entire month.

The study revealed that the VGF programme was the most well-known and preferred food aid programme in the District. All 100 interviewed households exhibited knowledge of the food aid programmes during the period in question. Respondents revealed that they benefitted from food aid programmes delivered by NGOs (ORAP and World Vision), the government through the Social Welfare Department and the food aid programme delivered through the Catholic Relief Services. According to the respondents, they preferred the VGF programme delivered by ORAP, citing that ORAP was more lenient and covered a wider pool of recipients compared to other programmes.

Gogo MaNdlela pointed out that,

There used to be food assistance from ORAP, World Vision and Social Welfare. We like ORAP, they gave to many of us and we never went hungry.” A village head also added that “ORAP was the first food aid programme in the District, which came at a critical time of need. ORAP used to distribute over four months only but later increased it to nine months in a year.”

The study further revealed that the VGF offered through ORAP was more popular as it covered a wider area within the District. MaMoyo from Irisvale mentioned that “we knew about ORAP and WV giving food in the area, but we only managed to get from ORAP and not World Vision”. This shows that some NGOs such as WVI did not cover many areas, whereas ORAP distributed covering a lot more wards including resettlements such as Irisvale, which were perceived to be a lot more affluent.

The Social Welfare programme was a state sponsored programme, which also targeted the poor in uMzingwane. However, the study revealed that many had different perceptions on what the programme was and whom it should benefit. Some respondents revealed that the Social Welfare was targeting people affiliated to a certain political party and not just everyone in need. Mr Nzimande from Mawabeni noted that they believed Social Welfare was more for those who were affiliated with the ruling party. The study also revealed that this was used as a political tool by local leadership, who manipulated a state instituted programme to perpetuate selfish political gains of a few.

According to the study, the Social Welfare was not very popular with the communities as it had a number of problems in its implementation. During a key informant interview, a village head shed some light on why the Social Welfare programme was unpopular. He noted that “At times the trucks came and at times they did not”. He also pointed out that major downside of the programme was that it only distributed maize.

According to the study, this reflected a gross unreliability of the Social Welfare programme, which in itself was dependent on the GMB sending consignments in time. Delays were commonplace, which meant that at times distributions skipped the whole month. NGOs on the other hand, through the VGF programme, offered a lot more, which included maize, lentils, beans and oil.

4.3.1 The Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme

The Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme was implemented by NGOs, dubbed the ‘Implementing Partners’ that is, implementing the programme under the direction of WFP, the donor. In theory, the WFP humanitarian food aid distribution programme was based on the ‘poorest and most vulnerable’ principle, but accounts from respondents in the field told a different story. The findings are discussed in the next section. Most respondents revealed that the VGF was a food aid programme for “poor families, orphans, widows, the elderly, disabled and the sick.”

They understood the programme to be only for people who could not take care of themselves. The respondents also mentioned that they believed they were included in the programme because they complied with the set criteria. Mrs Nkala mentioned that “the food distribution programme was for people like me, who did not have anything. Poor people like me who are old and cannot look after themselves.”

The study confirmed that VGF food commodities were issued as dry rations, distributed through local leadership structures and traditional leaders to the most vulnerable people in the community. A woman interviewed in Esikhoveni revealed that the food consignment for the month was composed of “20kg maize, 2kg of beans, 2kg of Lentils and 2 litres of oil per person per month.”

Essentially this reflects that VGF quantified food rations per person, and distributed as per the number of people in every household. Technically, the larger the household, the more food they received. Respondents further revealed that VGF was offered over a 4-month period, from January to April, this, being considered the hunger period. The study found that at first, the VGF distributed food aid from January to April and as noted by the respondents, they went back to going hungry after the food distribution ended. As a result of the hunger experienced in the District, food distributions were extended so that the beneficiaries received food aid throughout the year. An elderly woman, who had benefitted from the programme every year between 2006 and 2010, gave this account.

A NGO official said that the extension of the food aid distribution through the VGF was primarily because of the realisation of the appalling state of poverty, not only in the uMzingwane District, but also in most parts of rural Zimbabwe. This follows that, given the socio-economic conditions prevailing at the time, the VGF became more relevant and well received by the vulnerable in uMzingwane District.

4.3.2 Stakeholders and their Roles.

4.3.2.1 Local Leadership.

Local leadership constituted chiefs, village heads and councillors. Chiefs and village heads are traditional leaders whilst a councillor is government official responsible for coordinating governance issues at ward level. Local leadership played a pivotal role in food aid programmes. The study established that local leadership was very influential in beneficiary selection, largely being responsible for verifying beneficiary lists to ensure that the targeted beneficiaries were reached. However, respondents also noted that local leadership abused their authority, engaging in corrupt practices to swindle food for themselves and their cronies. It was also revealed that local leadership were also instrumental in the dissemination of information regarding food aid programmes, such as registration dates, including setting up venues which were easily accessible to all. Furthermore, the study revealed that traditional leadership was also responsible for keeping their communities under check and quell tensions and conflicts which might arise during food distributions or as a result of food distributions.

4.3.2.2 *Non-Governmental Organisations*

NGOs were at the centre of the food aid programmes, perceived by many respondents as the benefactors. According to an NGO official, food aid programmes in uMzingwane and other parts of the country were commissioned by the United Nations World Food Programme, and implemented by NGOs such as ORAP and World Vision. WFP provides food products as the donor, whilst other NGOs such as ORAP and WVI (also known as the Implementing Partners) managed the distributions to targeted beneficiaries. The implementing partners played a crucial role by putting in place protocols for identification and verification of beneficiaries, including managing the logistics for food distributions on a monthly basis. The implementing partners were the faces of food aid and many respondents believed they were the actual donors. To substantiate the above, an NGO official remarked that the beneficiaries behaved as if the food they were receiving was being personally donated by the NGO officials themselves. He added that beneficiaries would also offer them gifts (live chickens and sour milk) but they would always reiterate that they were simply conduits responsible for ensuring that food aid reaches the intended beneficiaries.

4.3.2.3 *Targeted Beneficiaries*

Targeted beneficiaries were primarily the vulnerable, poorest of the poor. These people could not in any meaningful way sustain their own livelihoods. They were highly food insecure households, who would never survive with help from their neighbors, the government or NGOs. Respondents indicated that the following have made up the beneficiaries for food aid:

- Poor people – these were regarded as people who had no means of sustaining their livelihoods. They had no income, no livestock and no assets. Most respondents pointed out that such people were those who were always at the mercy of other community members, relying on handouts for their next meal.
- It was also revealed that food aid programmes targeted people living with disabilities. Such people were already vulnerable by virtue of their disabilities. Rural life in uMzingwane is mainly sustained through hard labour, which effectively disqualified the disabled from producing their own food, thereby exacerbating their vulnerability.

- Furthermore, food aid programmes targeted child-headed households and the elderly. According to a village head in Esikhoveni, such households did not have the capacity to provide for themselves. He added that this was a relevant criterion noting that there were many children who had been orphaned particularly by HIV/AIDS and left to fend for themselves. Likewise, the elderly could no longer take care of themselves and had to be assisted with everything - some even had to be helped with the preparation of food they receive from the food aid programme.

4.4 Beneficiary Dynamics and Village Politics.

4.4.1 Abuse of the Selection Process

Beneficiary dynamics reflect the most pertinent social impacts of food aid on the beneficiaries themselves. Nearly everyone who participated in the study pointed out their dissatisfaction with the selection of beneficiaries, which seemed to create tension amongst beneficiaries themselves and the broader community.

Selection of beneficiaries was largely carried out by councillors, other local leadership structures and the community. Since councillors oversaw the selection process, most beneficiaries felt that the process was flawed, and that food aid was used as a tool to gain political mileage. Those presumed to be of a certain political party usually did not benefit, as the councillors tended to favour those of the same political inclination. As a result, many people felt that food aid ended up reaching undeserving beneficiaries. Chiefs and village heads played a prominent role in identifying beneficiaries in their villages, which offered them an opportunity to assert their brittle authority on a very vulnerable audience. A key informant interviewed suggested that local leadership fundamentally abused their authority in the distribution process, punishing nonconformists by excluding them from the beneficiary list and rewarding their followers by including them in food aid registers.

The study also revealed that the food aid distribution system was easily manipulated and abused by local leaders. Local leaders were responsible for the registers, which they tweaked to include unverified beneficiaries. MaZulu, one of the long-standing beneficiaries of food aid in uMzingwane mentioned that:

One year, a village head was accused of including names of deceased people on the list of beneficiaries, and taking that food himself on their behalf. They would also use this food to pay for casual farm work.

This follows that casual farm workers, who are often poorest and most vulnerable, would at times fail to access food aid, and only manage to access it as payment for their services from people who did not deserve to benefit from the food aid programme.

According to the respondents, the system was also manipulated by people who moved from one village to the other. It was noted that some people failed to make the list in one village and quickly moved to another where they were not known to benefit from food aid. Some would move to new villages and still benefit in their previous villages, benefitting twice from the same programme in one distribution cycle.

Furthermore, the study pointed towards a general belief that selection was also dependent on whether you are liked or not, feared or respected and not necessarily on need. Some respondents indicated that there were beneficiaries who only made it to the list because they were feared by the community. Nokubonga from Ward 4 mentioned that some beneficiaries were believed to be practicing witchcraft and therefore no one dared to cross them by removing them from the food aid registers. As she pointed to a beautiful house made of face brick, she said:

Leya yindlu yabathakathi, meaning, “That house belongs to witches.” “They are have always benefitted from the programme but they are rich. No one can stand against her because she will bewitch you.”

In support of the above suggestion, it was gathered during the study that there was a well-known case where an angry community member, who had been removed from the food aid register claiming that she had sold her out, cautioned a woman. She was threatened that, “This food you have taken away from my mount, will be used at your funeral.” The woman died a short while thereafter, further enhancing the communities’ superstitious belief relating to witchcraft and the power it purportedly exerts over them.

Essentially, this revealed that the selection process was clearly compromised by the perception of one's supernatural powers. Many respondents concurred with what was suggested by Nokubonga above, stating that they were happy to vouch for people who did not qualify for VGF because of their fear of being bewitched. In such cases, fear instead of need determined who makes it into the programme.

Closely linked to the above, a village head noted that community members formed cliques and alliances during the beneficiary verification process. Beneficiaries were selected through a rudimentary process in which the villagers identify and vote for those whom they thought to be worthy to be part of the programme. Evidently, those who were liked were voted into the programmes, in the hope that they would reciprocate at some point. "It was commonplace for those voted for to offer a portion of the food they received to those who voted for them," said a village head. This also provided a classic example of how communities themselves conspired to enable undeserving people to benefit from the food aid programme.

The method of verification was questioned by some of the respondents participating in the study, dubbing it "dubious and divisive." The first part of verification was done in a meeting called by NGOs, which usually took place in an open field under a tree. This entailed people disclosing private information in order to qualify for food aid. For instance, community members were forced to disclose their health status (mostly HIV) in public in order to be included in the programme, making them more vulnerable and subject to prejudice and discrimination in the community.

HIV during the period under study, carried a huge stigma as it still does today. However, people living with the virus were given preference during registration for food aid because of their compromised state of health, such that, HIV-positive people felt compelled to disclose their statuses when asked how they complied with the selection criteria. Mrs Ncube from Irisvale cited an example where people were treated differently after disclosing their HIV status in public. She noted that a well-known couple was ostracised by the community after learning of their HIV-positive status during one of verification sessions. They were deliberately excluded from community celebrations and gatherings, and when one of them came to a water point to draw water, people would disperse. They were treated as if they were lepers.

4.4.2 Rigid Application of Selection Criteria

Several respondents mentioned the problem of inflexibility in the application of selection criteria, which they claimed more often than not, resulted in many deserving people left out of the programme. Respondents noted that food aid recipients generally constituted the most vulnerable and poorest of the poor, who had to comply with the following criteria:

- Vulnerable households with between 0 and 3 head of cattle.
- Households headed by children, chronically ill or disabled persons.
- Households headed by widows and the aged.
- Households taking care of chronically ill people.
- Households with a high number of orphans.

As such, these criteria were reported to be applied rigidly without probing individual circumstances of community members. According to a chief in Ward 8, many people who at face value would not qualify for food aid, as a result of being perceived as wealthy, were left out yet, in actual fact, their circumstances had changed. Households with any significant measure of affluence such as solar power, a vehicle and big houses with tile roofing were automatically excluded from the programme, yet upon probing it would be discovered that their circumstances had changed. For example, the breadwinners had returned mainly from South Africa where they earned a living and no longer had an income but still had the assets they had acquired while they had been employed.

MaKhumalo from Esigodini, visibly troubled protested bitterly for being consistently voted out of the VGF programme.

We suffered during the food aid distribution period, paying for the good old days. My husband and I worked hard to build our beautiful house. My husband made curios and I would travel to South Africa to sell them. That way we made enough to build a house for our children and furnish it. Things got bad when he got sick and could not make any curios, meaning there was nothing to sell. We had no money, but had a beautiful house, which the neighbours were jealous of and therefore voted us out of the VGF programme.

In essence, respondents seemed to understand and believe that the circumstances which people found themselves in leading to poverty were heterogeneous, yet the outcome (the actual poverty) was homogeneous. Generally, respondents were unhappy with the blanket application of criteria, which made them dislike and end up hating each other.

Furthermore, 80% of the respondents reiterated the extensive deprivation and miserable conditions prevailing in the District. Starvation, famine, malnutrition, poor incomes and ultimately, vulnerability and poverty underscored life throughout the District. As a result, people felt everyone was in need of food aid and the criteria should have been relaxed to accommodate everyone in the community. Food aid was thus perceived as discriminatory, accessible only to a few. Failure to secure one's name in the food aid register bred potential conflicts at community level, disrupted community cohesion and created animosity. Many people were hungry and poor, even though they may have owned a few head of cattle or had nice houses. As such, respondents felt that the food aid programme should have been offered to everyone regardless of what they had as a perceived symbol of affluence.

MaMkhwananzi noted, "Everyone is poor in this village, but the programme left many people out. After every distribution, those who did not get accused us of conspiring with village heads to leave them out of the programme and stopped talking to us." Khulu Ndema reiterated the magnitude of poverty in the village, saying "only a few people are given the food from ORAP but everyone needs help. Those who are part of the programme, always give some of their food to those who did not qualify to be part of the programme."

4.4.3 Effects of Double-Dipping

Communities seemed to enjoy their poverty status because then they were enabled to be registered for food aid, which saw them benefiting from more than one programme at the same time, as all programmes prioritized the same criteria. Double dipping became a common occurrence, on the one hand reflecting the entrenchment of food aid in the District, and on another, dividing the community when some people are left out, whilst some benefited from multiple programmes. Several NGOs saw it fit to implement food aid programmes in the uMzingwane District, which undoubtedly spelt out an entrenchment of food aid, a clear signal of a community unable to feed itself.

The majority of interviewed households indicated that they had benefitted from more than one food aid programme. A total of 71% of respondents noted that between 2006 and 2010 they had benefitted from at least two programmes at the same time. During a key informant interview, a representative from the Social Welfare Department suggested that the Social Welfare share their beneficiary lists with NGOs offering food aid. As such, he confirmed that many beneficiaries benefitted from the Social Welfare programme and from either ORAP, WVI or both. According to a village head in Nswazi, such incidence of double-dipping bred conflict and tension amongst community members. Those who did not benefit from any of the programmes cried foul and turned their anger towards local leadership to vent their disgruntlement. He pointed out that those who did not qualify based on the criteria presented by NGOs did not understand why they would be excluded from the programmes whilst their neighbours benefitted more than once every month.

The village head further noted that in 2007, a man who had been left out of the ORAP programme because he had five head of cattle (yet the cut of was three head) was very angry when a he discovered that his neighbour had benefited from both WVI and ORAP. He became so angry that he stormed out of his house and headed straight to his neighbour's house. At the neighbour's house, an altercation ensued and a fistfight literally broke out. The village head noted that when he got to the house, the fight had stopped. The disgruntled man who had started the fight was still angry and went for the village head. After he was apprehended, the man said:

I do not understand why this man who has three head of cattle is receiving food from three programmes yet my family starves. This drought is bad for all of us, but because we have a few more head of cattle, we have to suffer and die of hunger.

4.4.4 Effects of Food Aid on Internal Household Relations

Food aid was seen as adversely affecting internal household relations. This proved particularly true for households, which had some form of remittance from family members or those who received regular assistance from their extended families. Knowledge of the vulnerable receiving food aid meant assistance from family members was withdrawn. There was a general assumption that once people made it onto food aid registers, all their problems had

been solved and that they did not require assistance from their families anymore. Some respondents indicated that they actually preferred to be dependent on their families who gave them better support than what they received from food aid.

Many households complained that their extended families were relieved when hearing that they will be receiving assistance through food aid programmes. They noted that when they turned to their relatives for assistance, they were turned away empty handed because of food aid. Though they explained that food aid was not enough, the relatives did not help them and cut them off. Some noted that their relatives became bitter and upset with them when they asked for help, calling them inconsiderate and greedy. Subsequently, this created tension within families. Some respondents mentioned that it led to them drifting from their family members.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The Chapter explored the ethics of food aid in the uMzingwane District. It offered an insight into the need for food aid based on beneficiary experiences and accounts gathered from key informant interviews. Essentially the chapter reflected partial findings of the study, concentrating primarily on why the District was in need of food aid year after year. UMzingwane emerges as a region severely affected by harsh and frequent droughts. This has been identified as the major reason attributed to the poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity experienced in the District. Livelihoods in uMzingwane have been dependent mainly on the availability of rain, required to sustain rain-fed agriculture. However, droughts have been experienced frequently, increasing in severity and rendering agricultural activities futile. As a result, food production plummeted, escalating food insecurity leaving the District in need of food assistance.

Food insecurity in uMzingwane has been further exacerbated by the scourge of HIV/AIDS. The pandemic affected mostly the younger, economically active people, often resulting in the death of breadwinners, or people considered as viable labour. HIV/AIDS did not only diminish household labour, but also resulted in households losing a lot of money and incurring huge amounts of debt for the cost of caring for the sick, which included medical costs,

transportation to and from hospital and special diets for the sick, eventually increasing the need for food aid.

Furthermore, the chapter offered findings on the people's understanding of food aid in the region. This revealed that it was well understood that there were multiple food aid programmes during the period under study offered by NGOs and the Social Welfare Department. Zooming into the programme offered by NGOs, the vulnerable Group Feeding Programme (VGF), revealed that, though well intended, it brought many ills, particularly looking at the micro impact at individual and household level.

Food aid impacts as felt by households, spoke to the flawed implementation of the programme. Beneficiaries cited, among other things the rigid application of criteria and the abuse of selection process, which saw many deserving households left out of the programme. Such practices created a lot of tension and conflict within the community, as people shunned local leadership for nepotism and politicising the selection process to push their own selfish agendas. Many respondents questioned the selection of beneficiaries, dubbing the process unfair, discriminatory and divisive. Generally, both local leadership and beneficiaries themselves manipulated the food aid programme. Some beneficiaries fabricated information relating to their circumstances, which caused conflict with other beneficiaries who knew that those who lied during verification started receiving more food than they were receiving.

Essentially, the chapter, through household and key informant interviews, provided a background to the need for food aid in uMzingwane, touching on the cultivation of dependency on food aid, the findings of which are discussed in detail in the following chapter. Many people had become dependent on food aid and the next chapter gives insight into how dependency had been cultivated, zooming into respondent's understanding of their dependency on food aid.

Chapter 5: Cultivating Dependency and Survival without Food Aid

5.1 Introduction

This chapter constitutes the second part of the findings. It specifically tackles the issue of dependency, a narrative that had become ingrained in the culture of uMzingwane. The previous chapter provided a forerunner to food aid, engaging with the reasons for the need. This chapter picks up from that point delving into how having food aid over a protracted period cultivated dependency on the food aid. Undoubtedly, food aid significantly reduced starvation, and as indicated by most respondents, literally saved the lives of many vulnerable people. It filled a void created by the protracted droughts and famine, which eroded community and household livelihood activities leaving them in dire poverty. However, the chapter suggests that food aid failed to alleviate poverty, but simply managed a symptom of poverty, hunger, and if left alone, the vulnerable would never be freed from poverty and will always be dependent on food aid.

Furthermore, the chapter moves on to exhibit how people in uMzingwane coped with food insecurity apart from relying on food aid. Mitigating against food security was not the default setting, but many proved to be more resilient and worked much harder than others to change their circumstances. The chapter concludes by looking at what and how the people felt would break the cycle of dependency on food aid.

5.1.1 Impact of Food Aid on Self-Sufficiency

One theme that came up consistently during the study was the impact food aid had on the beneficiaries' mindsets regarding self-sufficiency, essentially indicating that food aid fundamentally discouraged self-sufficiency. Community members who participated in the study claimed that the Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme (VGF) made people too relaxed. They pointed towards a shift in mindset, from the belief that they have to actively fend for themselves to survive, to the passive acceptance of food aid as a permanent solution, in place of self-sufficiency.

The respondents acknowledged and accepted that droughts and prevailing climatic conditions unsuitable for farming negatively affected their ability to produce their own food, yet they further noted that the beneficiaries themselves perceived food aid programmes as a more convenient source of food which was easily accessible. This can be seen from the following excerpts, which depict the need for food aid to bridge the food insecurity gap:

Barrett (2006) states “the core intent of food aid today is plainly to relieve human suffering”. He points out that about 800 million people go to sleep hungry on any given day throughout the world and would perish without interventions such as food aid. He further contends, “Food aid today is widely and accurately considered an instrument for addressing acute and chronic food insecurity in low-income communities” (Barrett, 2006).

Food aid interventions “have a role in limiting suffering and the damaging impacts of a shock on livelihoods” (OECD, 2005).

“Food aid improves food security by providing a means of protection and a way to raise the dietary status, nutrition and consumption of the poor” (Makenete, Ortmann & Darroch 1998).

As such, the majority of respondents noted that it made better sense for them to just wait for food aid. In 2009, most food aid recipients treated food aid as a right and expected to be included in the food aid list. Some of these households have been perennial food aid recipients, and complain when a food aid programme passes them by. MaNdiweni, a 66 year old resident who was married and living with a husband, complained about the food aid programme, which was targeted at women-headed households and orphaned:

They say it is for orphans and widows. How about people who have husbands but also need assistance like us? You see, the head of this household is unemployed, there are no jobs and without any jobs, we are going to die of hunger. We have asked the community councillor, but he is not helpful. Only widows and orphans are benefitting, while we starve and the community councillor does not even care. We

are poor just like them, but we are excluded from the programme because our husbands are still alive.

Local leadership interviewed as part of the study generally concurred with the above assertion. A chief indicated that while food aid programmes were most welcome and yield desirable outcomes in the short term, the problem surfaces when food aid is drawn out over extended periods. Two distinct issues were evident. Firstly, they noted that the longer vulnerable people stay as recipients of food aid, the more they get used to food aid, expect food aid and eventually demand food aid. This practice has tended to promote a culture of dependency, which inherently worsens the vulnerability of the local community.

Consequently, people in uMzingwane became poorer during times of food aid assistance, without any significant recovery and nothing in place to break the vicious cycle of poverty and dependency. It was noted that many food aid recipients became lazy knowing that food would be given to them without lifting a finger to work for it. Mrs Nkala, a 72-year-old resident of Esibomvu, presents a good example of the above. She explained that she got into the programme initially because she was a widow. Her husband, who had been self-employed, working as a cobbler and had been the sole provider for her and their four children, had died in the middle of 2004. She was left with the huge task of fending for her family. She smiled as she explained that she had been lucky to make it to the food aid register in 2005. This provided the much-needed sustenance for her and the kids. She notes that she tried to continue farming, but without any money for farming implements, it was easy to forgo that activity, because at least they had food from the feeding programme. She notes that;

My two older children tried to follow in their father's footsteps so that they uplift the family, but as time went by, they just stayed home, joined some friends in the community and spent hours on end everyday drinking traditional beer.

She goes on to mention that they received food aid every year and for three consecutive years, benefitted from two programmes. She revealed that;

Food never became an issue, but the programmes became the only source of food for them. There was nothing else we could do and we just waited for the distributions.

We had enough food and my children did not see the need to farm. The younger children also became lazy, dropped out of school because of lack of funding, and they just followed their brother's footsteps as the local drunkards.

She believes they would have been in a better position if they had not been guaranteed of food aid, as they would have been forced to engage in more sustainable activities like subsistence farming or selling.

This follows that food aid beneficiaries stopped trying to sustain their own livelihoods and therefore their food insecurity status did not change. They remained poor and even more food insecure, refusing to make ends meet, waiting only for temporary relief offered by food aid. According to an Agritex officer, food aid recipients did not see the value in sustaining their own livelihoods, noting that there is always food from donors. Mr Dungeni from Esikhoveni, a perennial recipient himself, painted an explicit picture of the dependency created by protracted food aid. He began by acknowledging that he himself was testimony of the reluctance to self-sustain during food aid. "How can I turn my back on free food?" he asked as he tried to justify his position. He noted that he had received food aid every year during the period in question, suggesting that there was no way he would spend time trying to eke out a living through hard labour when he could relax at home and still receive free food every month.

In Ethiopia, a similar occurrence was discovered in a study by Frankenberger et al. (2012), who noted that the dependency syndrome emerged as a direct effect of prolonged food aid, which showed that local people had lost all hope for a better future. They added that people fundamentally lacked the systematic pro-active effort to work towards a better future, implying a passive acceptance of their poverty and vulnerability (ibid). Berhane et al. (2011), further note that is why the Ethiopian government introduced the Productive Safety Net Program, which prevented able-bodied individuals from receiving food aid without engaging public works initiatives. This was implemented in an effort to curtail the dependency on food aid.

The study also revealed that to the majority of respondents food aid had become a default setting, and with it dependency on food aid. People were too vulnerable and did not have any means of self-sufficiency. A Social Welfare official cemented the above assertion noting that dependency was inevitable especially for the poorest, who were faced with numerous dimensions of poverty such as food insecurity, absence of an income, persistent ill health and the lack of assets. The burden of ill health had a shattering effect on a household's budget and on household labour both in terms of the caring burden and the lost opportunity for productive work.

Furthermore, in Ndebele culture, a household without cattle is regarded as being very poor. Of all households that participated in the study, only 15% indicated that they owned cattle, signifying very high levels of poverty. The devastating droughts of 1992, 1996 and 2002, 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. Mr Ncube from Nswazi exclaimed that his household was literally impoverished by the drought. He used to work in Bulawayo and had managed raise about 16 head of cattle. When he was retrenched in 1994, he relocated back to his hometown in Nswazi to look after his cattle and family. He noted that, during the 1996 drought, his cattle perished one by one because of lack of pasture. Cattle became sick, too thin and died. Some, he had to slaughter in order to preserve the meat as the cattle would have died on their own in any case. Eleven of his cattle perished as a result of the drought and he was forced to sell the remaining five to pay for other expenses such as school fees.

The absence or shortage of cattle meant that there was no food, no manure, no income, no draught power, leaving communities exposed and highly susceptible to the dehumanizing, incapacitating effects of droughts and famine. These protracted droughts had devastating effects on the socio-economic state of the District, driving the majority of residents into a state of perpetual hunger, starvation, vulnerability and poverty. Consequently, this forced multitudes to turn to food aid for survival. Food aid became ingrained in the culture of uMzingwane to such an extent that, for the majority of respondents, food aid became the only source of livelihood, with the subsequent dependency attributed to the people's perpetual need for and reliance on food aid.

5.1.2 Poor Management of Resources

Another interesting psychological phenomenon surfaced, pointing to the poor management of resources. Chiefs from a few wards noticed that food aid greatly affected behaviour, noting that many people were no longer as frugal as they used to be without food aid. They reported that, though at times some people realized good harvests, they were careless and very extravagant in how they used food. It was noted that some beneficiaries started paying for services, which they had never paid for before. This was especially true for those who were fortunate enough to be part of multiple programmes. For example, Mrs Sibanda from Mawabeni remembered an incident involving one of her neighbours, also a beneficiary. She pointed out that her neighbour, a man who had a minor disability in one of his legs, was benefiting from both ORAP and WVI. As soon as he started receiving food aid, he stopped fetching his own water and would always pay somebody else in food to fetch him some water, she pointed out that, before food aid, he would always fetch his own water, adding that his disability had never been a deterrent.

Though she was also a beneficiary, she reiterated that she really believed that such behavioural changes and wasteful tendencies were triggered by prolonged food aid.

“People became very wasteful, knowing that ORAP was there to give them food,” said one Chief, noting that such behavioural changes only came about because of the availability of food aid, eventually leading to people being dependent on food aid. The uMzingwane vulnerable community believed it was their distinct right to receive food aid every year, thus became lazy and unwilling to do productive work resulting in outright dependency on the food aid.

Food aid provided a false sense of food security to those who became perennial beneficiaries. It was revealed that such beneficiaries had guaranteed food throughout the year, which, resulted in a shift in mindset as they started behaving as if they had no food security problems. According to the study, many such beneficiaries cooked more than they had to, more than they could eat, only because the food was available.

A village head in Nswazi told that during food aid, many beneficiaries, especially those who were also lucky and had some significant harvest, started wasting food. He noted that they would cook meals, in between the traditional meal schedule in the District. An additional meal would be prepared between breakfast and lunch, and/or another between lunch and dinner. According to him, this was unnecessary if people had followed the culture of the District, where they spent time in the fields, normally preparing meals in the mornings and evenings. He added that people who received food conveniently forgot about the need to produce their own food, and stayed at home when the rest of the community went to their farms. He attributed this change in behaviour to the availability of food through VGF. He pointed out that “they stay at home and eat all day because they know that their food is guaranteed.”

5.1.3 Impact of Food Aid on Local Food Production

Data obtained from a study on the type of crops grown in uMzingwane revealed that the most dominant crop grown is maize. The majority of respondents confirmed that before the arrival of food aid they produced maize on a large scale, followed by crops such as wheat and small grains on a smaller scale. Research has shown that due to changes in climate, yields have been constantly decreasing. It was also revealed that after the coming of relief food aid there was a significant decrease in maize production, owing to the shifts in consumption patterns in the community and dependence of beneficiaries on food aid. Food aid beneficiaries became used to rice and barley, and even maize, which was distributed through the food aid programme. Consequently, beneficiaries did not want to spend more time growing maize, which they were guaranteed to receive through food aid. This saw them growing more of other crops to supplement their diets. They started growing more vegetables, green peas in pods and lentils, which they would use as relish for the rice and maize they would get during food aid. The green peas in pods proved to be very popular in local food production, as this was perceived as a 2-in-1 crop. The peas were cooked as a relish, made into a soup, whilst the leaves were dried and cooked as a separate relish.

Although the majority of respondents indicated that there had been a change in production of indigenous crops, they emphasised that indigenous crops were not completely ignored, but the level of production had been reduced. They believed that food aid offered a variety

of products and less attention had consequently been paid to the production of maize, leading to its significant decrease. Indigenous crops take up too much time to produce and post-harvest processes are said to be too laborious. A woman from Ward 4 was quoted during the interview saying “we could no longer spend our time on growing maize and sorghum. They need too much attention and now we had a variety of options from ORAP (NGO distributing food aid).”

This was one of many responses pointing to how food aid had affected local food production at community level. Peas were introduced to supplement their diets. Many respondents reported that early maturing varieties of peas had become more popular with the arrival of food aid. Changes in crop production were verified by the Agritex extension officer who confirmed that maize production had decreased with a spike in the production of peas and vegetables. He suggested that more and more people were seen to be spending less time in the fields as a result of food aid and Agritex advised them to adopt early maturing varieties of peas to improve their food security. The Agritex extension officer noted changes in crop production when she explained that yields of cereal crops are constantly decreasing. According to her, food aid was in direct competition with agriculture, and with protracted food aid, agriculture was on the losing front. Though maize farming had decreased, very many people continued farming maize failing to replace it with small grains such as millet and sorghum. The community was regularly advised by the Agritex office to shift towards small grains, which were more drought resistant, but people still planted maize, which constituted their staple diet. A village head noted that people did not want move away from their staple food and at this point, yields were not a priority but consumption preferences became key.

5.1.4 Impact of Food Aid on Consumption Patterns

The study revealed that food consumption patterns changed significantly in uMzingwane District with the arrival of food aid. This was evidenced by the number of people who are managing to have three meals per day. It could be gathered from the study that only 10% of the respondents managed to have three meals before the era of food aid. With food aid, 75% of respondents indicated that they had three meals every day. This change in food consumption has been attributed to food aid, with the majority of beneficiaries indicating

that food aid improved the availability and access food aid. One woman from Ward 6 said “I have never had as much food as I had during food aid.” This follows that food aid enabled beneficiaries to change their culture, both in terms of what to eat as well as the frequency of meals. What they ate had been dictated by what was available. For many, this was only what food aid provided (rice, lentils and beans). The frequency of meals increased because finally, people had enough to eat without sparing a thought for tomorrow. The majority of respondents suggested that during food aid, food received from the various food aid programmes had become their staple diet. They noted that they started having more rice than the traditional thick porridge made from maize meal.

Admittedly, to most beneficiaries, food aid did not provide everything they required, but it did fill a huge gap. Those who continued producing had enough to feed their families and engage in barter trade for other products. Similar consumption patterns were noted in the period just before food aid and after food aid. Most respondents indicated that they had fewer than three meals a day before food aid, at least three meals a day during food aid, and less than three meals after food aid. The general suggestion from respondents was that, the period after food aid was the worst in terms of food insecurity. Figure 4 provides a summary of consumption patterns.

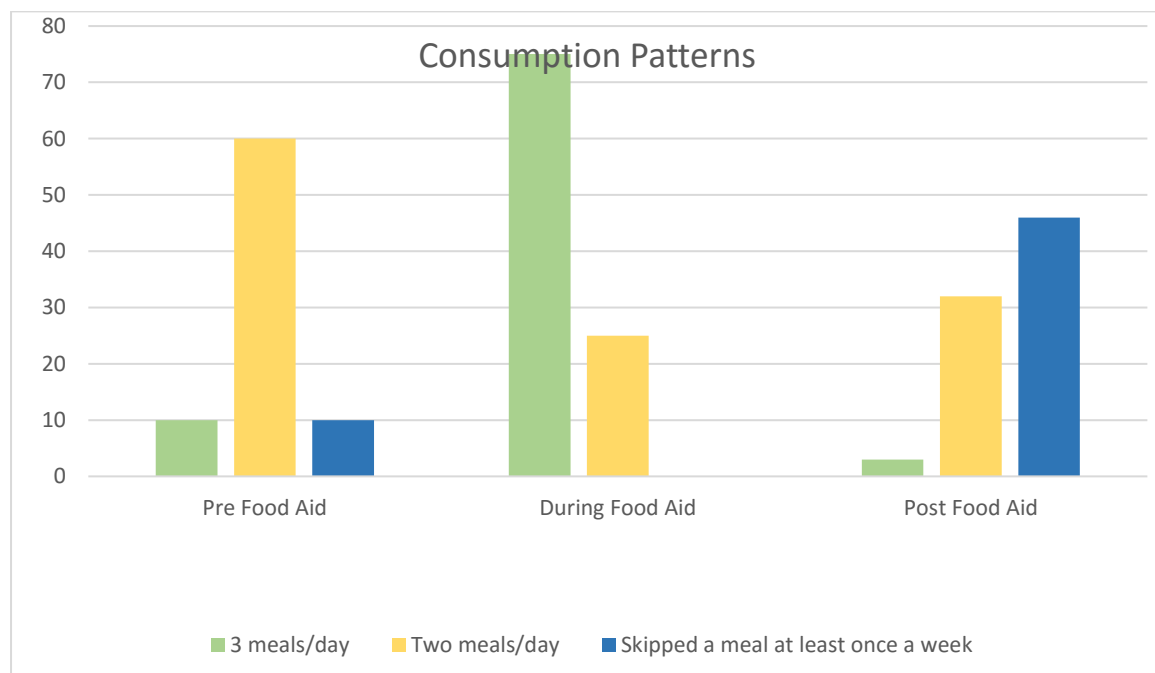


Figure 4 Consumption Patterns before, during and after food aid availability reported by respondents.

Figure 4 shows that food aid significantly increased access to food for the majority of respondents, whilst post food aid witnessed an increase in the number of people going at least one day a week without a meal.

5.1.5 Impact on Nutrition

The positive change in consumption patterns had other spinoffs as well. The nutritionist suggested that food aid resulted in people generally having more to eat, which in turn resulted in a sharp improvement on the beneficiaries' health status. She indicated that food aid was deemed nutritious and this was evidenced by the decline in the number of people who presented with nutritional deficiencies. "The community was healthier and happier during food aid," she said, suggesting that the community would really benefit from more food aid, which also speaks to the cultivation of dependency on the food aid.

Studies from other food insecure countries seem to concur with the above observations from the nutritionist in uMzingwane. Hopkins (1996) studied the impact of food aid in Peru and revealed that food aid improved the nutrition of the vulnerable groups through targeting food to the poor. Essentially, the study found that food aid is more effective if targeting the most vulnerable and achieves both improved nutrition and food security. This, 'targeting the neediest', is also what the VGF sought to do in uMzingwane.

An Agritex officer added that the uMzingwane District is located in a semi-arid region, and therefore the production of vegetables and fruits throughout the year is not possible for most households because of scorching climatic conditions and scarcity of water. Vegetables and fruits, he added, is a good source of vitamins and is deficient in most household's diets. These are only partially provided by food aid. It was further noted that VGF food distribution was fundamentally designed for populations with other sources of food, such as livestock and incomes to supplement food aid. However, VGF targeted the poorest of the poor, who did not have a source of income, livestock or were physically fit to fend for themselves. As such, the consensus was that VGF on its own was not enough to make a significant impact on their nutritional status.

This suggests that food aid does not significantly improve the nutritional status of the beneficiaries, which is supported by the high rates of malnutrition in Southern Sudan, where an entire generation literally grew up with the help of food aid (Renton, 2007). Their nutritional status did not advance despite several years of food aid (ibid).

Another village head cautioned that other social ills such as poor sanitation and diseases, countered the marginal nutritional gains received from food aid. He noted that there is generally poor sanitation in the area, which creates a breeding ground for diseases. Many people got sick, even though they ate well during food aid and this was attributed to poor sanitation. Though food aid guaranteed a semblance of food security, leading people to be dependent of food aid, there were other factors that affected the community's health and wellbeing.

5.2 Mitigating against Food Insecurity

The research revealed that in the period under review, i.e. 2006 to 2010, poverty had permeated every ward in the uMzingwane District. Many people, especially the elderly-, child- or disabled-headed households, had turned to food aid as a coping mechanism against the growing food insecurity in the District. This category of the population could not fend for themselves and food aid was a godsend to them. They thus easily became dependent on the food aid. Food aid prioritizes this category of beneficiaries, and this became their only coping mechanism against the devastating effects of drought, climate change, economic and political instability which had ravaged many parts of Zimbabwe, relegating many citizens to the doldrums of poverty, characterized by untold suffering, hunger and starvation.

Mr Matshazi, a visually impaired perennial beneficiary of food aid demonstrated how he had become dependent on food aid. He noted that he stayed alone without any family. "Even if I wanted to fend for myself, I could not as I cannot see. There was nothing I could do besides relying on food aid." Mr Matshazi evidently used food aid to cope with his reality of food insecurity and dire inability to self-sustain. A Social Welfare official corroborate the above contending that there were many such cases throughout the District. People, who by virtue of the physical challenges, could not fend for themselves and therefore completely relied on

handouts either from Social Welfare, NGOs or well-wishers. He further suggested that there was no other way such individuals and households could survive apart from food aid programmes and to him dependency on food aid was not bad as a coping mechanism under such circumstances.

With droughts having ravaged the District, the study also revealed that abject poverty became a reality for nearly everyone, yet food aid only caters for a small percentage of the population, leaving many to their own devices. This, according to chiefs in a few wards, compelled people to seek other ways to mitigate against the poverty they were experiencing. Negative coping mechanisms were an easier way to improve one's livelihood. Such negative coping mechanisms included activities like prostitution, gambling and illegal gold panning.

5.2.1 Negative Coping Mechanisms

5.2.1.1 Prostitution

Many respondents noted that poverty in the District bred other social ills that precipitated the spread of HIV/AIDS. Prostitution was seen as an easy fix, with hot spots in Ward 1, the Central Business District of uMzingwane. Truck drivers, civil servants and illegal gold miners constituted the most regular clients, making prostitution very lucrative. HIV/AIDS soon gripped the District, with many people falling ill, especially the younger people, who often were the breadwinners of households. This resulted in reduced household and community labour force to fend for themselves, further perpetuating dependency on food aid. Socially, prostitution had significantly contributed to the erosion of the moral fibre in the community. There was a lot of tension and conflicts, with many households accusing known prostitutes in the community of destroying their marriages. There was also finger pointing when people started getting sick, even more so when households lost their breadwinners to HIV/AIDS.

One village head interviewed for the study recalled a case of coping through prostitution. He noted a household in his ward suffered the death of the father and husband who was working in neighbouring South Africa. When he died he left behind his wife and three daughters, who had been accustomed to a certain lifestyle. After being excluded from the food aid programme because of the perception of wealth based on what they still owned, the mother

turned to prostitution for survival. They had no capital reserves that they could use to sustain their livelihoods and selling their bodies was the only way. At first it was the mother, then the twins, joined and it became a family of prostitutes.

A councillor added that many other women, who qualified to be part of the food aid programme, engaged in prostitution because it was a lot more lucrative than just receiving food aid. He noted that prostitution was growing especially in Esigodini where the demand was high.

5.2.1.2 Small Scale Artisanal Mining

Artisanal Mining (AM) also known as illegal gold mining or locally as Ukutsheketsha, surfaced as a coping mechanism, mostly by able-bodied young men. Gold panning was very lucrative and supplemented other coping mechanisms such as prostitution. Though lucrative, gold panning did not come without its own pitfalls, which further perpetuated poverty.

Respondents identified specific challenges associated with AM, including epidemics, gullies, unsafe open trenches, siltation, land degradation, deforestation and veld fires. Huge open trenches were a common sight in uMzingwane, an occurrence that not only triggered environmental degradation, but also affected the grazing area and negatively affected the livelihoods of livestock. Many cows, goats and donkeys would fall into the trenches and suffer severe injuries or death. Livestock in rural communities, primarily cattle, symbolize wealth. When people lose livestock, they do not only lose potential income, but also labour. Cattle- or donkey-drawn ploughs are used extensively in the fields and loss of either affects how one ploughs, which in turn affects food production. Eventually this leads to very low yields and consequently, poverty. Evidently, the poor become both the victims and agents of environmental degradation as they are forced to engage in unsustainable activities to meet short-term survival needs.



Figure 5 Land excavation in Mawabeni.

Some respondents mentioned that veld fires resulting from artisanal mining were the most destructive as they caused widespread damage to the local environment. Though this was a coping mechanism, many community members conveyed discontentment at the environmentally unfriendly activities and pointed out that grazing areas were burnt, and cattle had nothing to feed on. As a result, local livelihoods were compromised in the process, leaving many without a choice but to rely on food aid to survive.



Figure 6 Huge area burnt by Artisanal Miners resulting in loss of grazing land.

Illegal mining processes on the riverbanks also results in the discharge of huge amounts of loose silt and heavy metals into the river system. Eventually these are washed into the dams, increasing the risk of siltation, flooding and drying up of water reservoirs. Figure 8 exhibits artisanal mining activities near the uMzingwane Dam. The miners usually dig in riverbeds especially during the dry season and once the rains come the loose soil is washed away and finds itself in dams, thereby causing massive siltation.

As a result of siltation of rivers caused by illegal mining and deforestation, the area experiences water shortages which has a domino effect, negatively affecting farming activities, threatening food security and leading to the need for food aid. This follows that the assumption here is that, if the environment is rehabilitated and well take care of, going forward, people will produce enough to sustain themselves, without the need for food aid.



Figure 7 *Artisanal Mining Activities near the uMzingwane Dam.*

5.2.2 Positive Coping Mechanisms

5.2.2.1 *Local Small Scale Vending*

Selling is another popular means of coping with poverty. People mainly sell firewood, vegetables, sweets, fruits and ice-lollies as well as their own assets to make ends meet.

A village head in Mawabeni suggested that there were many people who engaged in selling as means of sustaining their livelihoods. Most of the products sold were stocked from Bulawayo, which is about 35km away from uMzingwane, and sold mostly along the main road, connecting Bulawayo and Beitbridge, en route to South Africa.

Selling also included firewood, which according to local chiefs, had become very popular in Bulawayo. People worked with their relatives in Bulawayo. They would cut down trees for firewood in uMzingwane and transport it in buses to be received by their relatives in Bulawayo. The relatives would then sell the firewood and send proceeds from sales via buses as well. A councillor however noted that cutting of trees for firewood was practiced across the District, without any new trees being planted. Deforestation has consequently ravaged the District, with subsequent siltation of dams and rivers.

5.2.2.2 *Cross Border Trade*

The study further revealed that cross border trade emerged as another coping mechanism against the effects of droughts and food insecurity. This involved crossing the border, mainly the South African border for trading purposes, usually circumventing the official immigration systems due to lack of documentation. Respondents noted that cross border traders brought back products that were in high demand such as cooking oil and soap. They also traded in second hand clothing, known locally as 'amabhele.' This was mainly sold in Mawabeni and Esigoni Wards, which had flea markets.

One participant gave insight into cross border trade by sharing the experiences of her neighbour who, at the time of the study had passed away. She noted that her neighbour always talked about how physically and mentally draining each trip was. They always had to be on their toes when crossing the border, risking being imprisoned if negotiations for entry

did not go well at the border. This was compounded by the long distances they to walk across the border which took a toll on their health. Upon her return from the arduous trips, she was still expected to continue her role as a mother, wife and caregiver for the sick. However, she would always mention that like all the other women in cross border trade, she could not stop doing otherwise the family would go hungry.

5.2.2.3 Remittance from the Diaspora

The study further revealed that remittances from migrant workers had become an essential coping mechanism against poverty and hunger in the District. Many youths, especially young men had left the country to seek employment opportunities in neighbouring South Africa or Botswana in order to be able to take care of their families. They would send cash, clothes and groceries to their loved ones in an effort to save them from abject poverty and starvation. A Councillor in Mawabeni noted that this sort of youth migration had steadily increased over the years, and had become an integral part of livelihoods in the District. The above assertion is substantiated by various studies carried out across Zimbabwe, such as Mishi (2012), who observed that remittances from the diaspora had become an essential coping mechanism against the rising poverty that had reached crisis levels in Zimbabwe. Evidently, what the research found in uMzingwane District was echoed across Zimbabwe.

All the above essentially point to the inadequacy of food aid which necessitated engagement in several coping mechanisms, positive and negative. While the majority of interviewed households acknowledged the importance of food aid in mitigating against food shortages, they revealed that food aid failed to address their critical needs at household level, arguing that food aid did not empower them to achieve self-sufficiency. Sixty percent of interviewed households indicated that they had received food aid for more than five consecutive years since 2006. One interviewee in the Mawabeni area said, “however, it was never enough to cover all our food requirements. We always had to supplement food aid through other sources.”

5.3 Undoing the Dependency curse: If not Food Aid, then What?

5.3.1 Addressing Water Scarcity

The study revealed that water in the uMzingwane District had become a very scarce resource. Most respondents in different wards emphasised the scarcity of water, highlighting that they even drank from unprotected water sources and that there was hardly any water to meaningfully carry out cropping activities. As such, they believed that having access to water could help them mitigate against the harsh effects of droughts and poor rainfall. The respondents suggested that with enough water, they would be able to grow their own crops and be able to sustain themselves without the need for food aid. It was mentioned that there were very few water points such as boreholes, and that some people had to walk very long distances to draw water. They reiterated that they would prefer to get more boreholes spread across different areas. The need for irrigation systems was also often raised, with the general assumption that it would make crop production more efficient.

A village head in Nswazi suggested that they had become dependent on food aid primarily because of the scarcity of water. He added that people of uMzingwane are generally not lazy people, “but we are in this mess because there is not enough water for us to be able to grow our own food”.

Essentially, the study learned that water was a pressing and urgent need in the District, which the community believed was the only way they could free themselves from their dependency on food aid.

5.3.2 Livestock Projects

It was also suggested that animal rearing projects would have been a better substitute for food aid. Some respondents felt that uMzingwane being prone to droughts and poor rainfall, was not well suited for crop production. Instead, they suggested that they could have benefited more from animal rearing projects, particularly goats and chicken. Many respondents noted that had a multiplicity of uses, which could benefit them better than simply receiving food. They suggested that livestock could provide food in the form of meat,

milk and eggs. They could also sell the products to generate income, which they could then use to satisfy other needs, such as buying clothing and paying school fees.

However, they declared that in order for such projects to be successful, it should not be just the provision of livestock, but also stock feed and medicines. Margaret, interviewed in Ward 6, mentioned that they had been given chickens to start their chicken projects in the past. However, the chickens had all perished due to illness. She added that the majority of people are poor and they had no money to buy medicines or feed for the chickens. Furthermore, they had not been fully trained on how best to rear chickens for profit. Consequently, the project failed.

As such, the respondents emphasised the need for complete wrap-around livestock projects, ensuring they have the necessary knowledge, feed and medicine, to make a success of the projects. This way, they would be able to self-sustain their livelihoods without the need for food aid.

5.3.3 Environmental Rehabilitation

Gogo MaNyathi, a resident of Ward 3, suggested that they could never do anything to stop the drought, but could only try to do their bit to mitigate against its effects. However, she pointed out that environmental degradation was one of the most devastating elements experienced by the community of uMzingwane and something should be done to prevent it. She highlighted that the environmental degradation resulting from artisanal mining had severely affected their way of life and that, in her opinion, continued to make people poor. Too much livestock is lost falling into open trenches left by artisanal miners, and it is widely believed that environmental rehabilitation is required more than food aid. The above is concurred by Barrett (2002) on his observations in Ethiopia, asserting that sometimes what the poor most need to insure their food security is not food, or at least not the type of food being provided through local food aid distribution, but rather health care, clothing, shelter or water and other essential goods and services.

Respondents emphasised the importance of livestock and the need to rehabilitate the environment in order to save their livestock. Mr Ndaba added that the environment had

extremely deteriorated. Scorching temperatures and lack of rainfall meant that everything was drying up which had diminished grazing land. Like Mr Ndaba, many respondents believed rehabilitating the environment would improve their way of life, further suggesting that livestock was integral to their livelihoods.

5.3.4 Cash Transfers

Cash transfers is also seen as an alternative or supplement to food aid. Food aid has been viewed as effective in reducing hunger and starvation. However, the study showed that food aid only addressed one component of the people's vulnerability, which is hunger. Respondents interviewed in the study mentioned that they still had many other responsibilities, which could not be addressed by food aid, such as school fees for their children, farming implements and other household requirements. As such, they suggested that cash transfers seemed to be a more relevant alternative to food aid. A village head substantiated the above, saying that during food aid there were many cases of food aid recipients selling part of the food they received to raise funds for other necessities, such as clothes and stocking merchandise, such as sweets, fruits and alcohol for resale. He added that cash transfers would empower the vulnerable people to plan more effectively, with more options and to be better equipped to mitigate against the effects of poverty. Everything requires money and the community felt cash transfers would serve them better than food aid. There were unconditional cash transfer programmes in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia, which all resulted in less hunger reported in the households (Adato & Basset 2009). Ntata (2010) also reported on a cash transfer programme in Malawi that "made a substantial positive impact on the food security situation." It is reasonable to believe that if cash transfers were successful throughout the region that cash, as a form of assistance, could also be successful in Zimbabwe and help counter food insecurity.

Many respondents made reference to a cash transfer programme implemented by Caritas, an NGO in Zimbabwe in 2018. They suggested that such a programme would have been a better alternative to food even during the period understudy. Caritas offered vulnerable households US\$ 10 per individual. MaSiziba, who had benefited from both food and the cash transfers from Caritas, noted that

“We were much better off when we received money from Caritas, it helped us to plan our lives better and we could afford a lot more. I managed to buy groceries at home and still have extra for other things such as farming implements. We want the programme back; it was so much better than food aid.”

Clearly, this depicts an account from someone who was satisfied with cash transfers, confirming that such a programme is a formidable alternative to food aid. However, it is also worthy to note that this programme was discontinued by the Government a few months after its inception. People received US\$ 10 per person, for everyone in the household. As such, there were instances of beneficiaries with bigger households earning more than civil servants on a monthly basis, prompting its closure.

However, although most of the respondents provided a wish from their own wish lists as far as alternatives to food aid were concerned, the general consensus was that food security was the most immediate need. Everyone who participated in the study concurred that the overall objective was to ensure that they become self-sustainable, however, they still need food first, as they embark on their quest for self-sustainability. One of the village heads, Nswazi, mentioned that at some point before food aid, the community was given farming inputs such as maize seed to boost food production. However, because of the droughts and shortage of food, many recipients of maize seed actually washed off chemicals from the seed and used it for mealie meal. Though very noble, such programmes were not very well thought out and failed to address the needs of the community. It follows that, food aid programmes such as the VGF, were still relevant and people required alternative projects to run concurrently with food aid.

5.4 Chapter Summary

Food aid was widely appreciated in uMzingwane, and was seen as a lifesaver when it came to hunger and starvation. However, though food aid had gained popularity, it did not come without its drawbacks. The chapter showed how food aid had cultivated dependency in the uMzingwane District. Given the incidence of droughts, food aid came in as a safety net to mitigate against hunger. As droughts increased in frequency and severity, food aid became the more convenient option for many leading to complete dependency on food aid. The availability of food aid compelled some to neglect their responsibility to self-sustain. Engaging in own food production was viewed by many as a futile exercise, opting to rely on food aid which came for free. Such people had become completely dependent on food aid and the majority of them had were perennial recipients of food aid.

The chapter also pointed to the positive effects of food aid. Though many people had become dependent on food aid, they had enough food to improve their consumption patterns. People had enough food to eat three meals, which they had never done before. However, this had its own positive and negative spin offs. A clear negative is that with the advent of food aid, people failed to manage their resources effectively. They became reckless and wasteful, which contradicted their culture of frugality. They ate more than they had to, and, because food was there, they started paying for services, which they otherwise would have done on their own.

Furthermore, the chapter referred to the fact that not all hope was lost when it came to droughts, poverty and vulnerability. Though some people used food aid to cope against the effects of droughts, it was noted that many engaged in other coping mechanisms in an effort to sustain their livelihoods. People engaged in small-scale artisanal mining, prostitution, small scale vending and cross border trade in a bid to eke out a living for their households. Artisanal mining and prostitution emerged as the most lucrative, but both with dreadful effects on the community. Artisanal mining significantly damaged the environment, negatively affecting the livelihoods of everyone in the community, yet financially benefiting a minority. There was heavy disgruntlement on the practise of prostitution, viewed by many as immoral and constantly blamed for the escalating rate of HIV/AIDS infections in the community.

Many acknowledged the role played by food aid in mitigating against hunger, but further noted that it grossly failed to alleviate poverty in the region. As such, there was a general call for more sustainable programmes, which would empower the community and make them more self-sufficient. This was thought to be a way of breaking free from dependency on food aid. Local food production was primarily by rain-fed agriculture and with the backdrop of severe droughts; this became impossible, negatively affecting food production. People suggested that addressing water scarcity was a sure way of ensuring that they engage in successful agricultural activities, which would drastically reduce the need for and dependency on food aid. In addition, the community suggested that they would be able to sustain their livelihoods without food aid if significant efforts were made towards rehabilitating the environment and initiating livestock projects.

Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusion and Policy Implications

6.1 Introduction

The study set out to investigate the social impacts of prolonged food aid on household behaviour in the uMzingwane District in Zimbabwe. Data collected from the field was analysed and interpreted, resulting in the emergence of five key themes, gathered from trends in responses. The study was necessitated by the insufficient research and literature on how food aid affects household behaviour. Food aid has been regarded as a lifesaver in the uMzingwane District, especially during time of droughts and famine, where the most vulnerable in the community experience acute and chronic hunger. However, the study suggested that the longer people stayed on food aid schemes, the more poverty became entrenched, resulting in a perpetual need for food aid. Recommendations on rethinking and remodelling food aid programmes and other elements that can be integrated to reduce the negative social impacts of food aid are also presented below.

6.2 Discussion of the Thematic Areas

Food aid had noble intentions of trying to alleviate hunger and starvation in uMzingwane. However, as introduced in Chapter 1, the study proved that the negative social impacts of food aid far outweighed the positive impacts of food aid. Evidently, the short-run objective of food aid deals only with the symptom of food insecurity but fails to address the structural causes of food insecurity. By focussing on the symptoms of food insecurity, food aid eventually cultivates a culture of dependency on food aid. More importantly are the spin-off unintended social consequences of food aid which surfaced. Social relations are strained as a result of the discriminatory nature of food aid. This has eroded social cohesion and created conflict in the community.

6.2.1 The Need for Food Aid in uMzingwane

Several factors contributed to the need for food aid in uMzingwane. The area is prone to droughts, which had become more intense and frequent. Severe dry spells and scorching temperatures meant farming activities could not be sustained, directly affecting the people's

ability to produce their own food. Levels of poverty escalated, characterised by acute hunger, deteriorating nutritional status and ill health, necessitating large-scale food aid operations. The World Food Programme, which stated that recurrent droughts and a series of very poor harvests, as well as the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, contribute to increasing levels of vulnerability, poverty and acute food insecurity (WFP 2005). Similar situations are found in other parts of the world. FAO (2009) observed that drought and famine were the primary drivers of food aid in Ethiopia. Droughts in Ethiopia created a huge need for food aid and further exacerbated poverty.

HIV/AIDS was rampant in the District, escalating at an alarming rate. This was suggested to be another cause of vulnerability in the District, also necessitating the need for humanitarian food aid. The disease had devastating effects on household dynamics. The sick had to be cared for, which meant money had to be channelled towards medication, settling of medical bills and the cost of special diets necessary to build and boost the immune system. The challenge was that the disease, after long periods of medical attention, almost always resulted in death. This left the household drowning in debt, poor and hungry after the passing of their loved ones. Furthermore, living with and caring for the sickly, meant household labour for farming was significantly reduced, with a direct correlation to lower food production. Without a doubt, such circumstances positioned people for external food aid, hence the food aid flow to uMzingwane District. Matondi (2008) confirms the above, suggesting that at the macro-economic level, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has significantly reduced the number of capable agricultural professionals and labour both through death and morbidity, compelling donor agencies to consistently supply food aid to affected areas.

6.2.2 Beneficiary Dynamics and Village Politics

By far the most striking impact of food aid on household behaviour is witnessed through beneficiary dynamics. Beneficiary selection appeared to have been an extremely flawed process. Local leadership was primarily responsible for the final selection of beneficiaries, and they manipulated the process to exclude those community members who did not subscribe to the same political inclination. This was compounded by corrupt practices, which entailed the allocation of food to 'ghost beneficiaries'; food which ultimately landed in the storerooms

of local leadership. Many deserving beneficiaries were excluded, defeating the object of the programme and undermining its impact. Harvey and Lind (2005) believe that food aid is lacking transparency and accountability, and go on to suggest that it diminishes the efficacy of food aid. Undoubtedly, this situation caused a disgruntlement, tension and conflict among beneficiaries and the community at large.

Furthermore, there was rigid application of criteria, which proved to be discriminatory. Corruption and nepotism surfaced as well, as the process continued to be manipulated by local leadership to drive their own selfish agendas. As a result, food aid reached undeserving beneficiaries, leaving out many who qualified for the programmes. Such people remain in perpetual poverty, characterised by lack of food, ill health and compromised nutritional levels. Barrett (2006) weighed in on this and concurred that exclusion or the inadvertent omission of intended beneficiaries often led to “unintended, adverse humanitarian impacts associated with poor health and nutrition of vulnerable subpopulations.”

Double dipping also emerged as an unintended consequence of the rigid application of selection criteria. Multiple food aid programmes in the District provided similar criteria to which beneficiaries had to comply. As such, it was very easy for community members to be included in multiple food aid registers whilst some did not make to even a single list. Such occurrences did not bode well with many, resulting in tensions, hatred, jealousy and at times fistfights. Some people were very poor and marginally missed the cut-off criteria. As such, they did not understand why they should be excluded from the programmes whilst some, in pretty much the same circumstances, benefited from more than one programme.

6.2.3 Dependency on Food Aid

Food aid had become embedded in the culture of uMzingwane. While food aid provided a temporary relief against hunger, for many, it had become the only source of food. The people of uMzingwane may not be able to escape from poverty without any sustainable development interventions.

Protracted food aid undoubtedly resulted in a culture of dependency on the food aid. However, it can be noted that dependency on food aid was neither the intention of food aid

donors nor the desire of the beneficiaries. Barrett (2006) refers to the ‘unintended consequences of food aid’ and concurred with the above notion that dependency on food aid was not intended. UMzingwane is a drought-prone region and dependence on food aid was an inevitable result. If people are unemployed and vulnerable and do not have food while the environmental conditions are un conducive for them to produce their own food, they will rely on handouts, which in this case was mostly food aid. The above scenario depicts what had become normal in uMzingwane. Food was scarce during the period under study and food aid presented a temporary solution at first and then became the only source of food for the vulnerable as the severe droughts persisted. Droughts also meant water availability was greatly compromised and even if people wanted to produce their own food, they could not, hence the dependence on food aid.

Food aid eventually became a more convenient source of food. Those who still had the means to produce their own crop, ceased putting much effort into farming. The study revealed that significantly less local food was produced while food aid was available. This was attributed to the fact that many people tended to relax. There were better prospects in waiting for guaranteed food, which one did not have to work for as opposed to putting too much effort in farming, without a guarantee of harvests. This is perhaps the most severe and frequent criticism directed at food aid, that it creates ‘food dependency’ as it motivates recipients to use food aid as an alternative to the much more difficult task of increasing food production (Raffer and Singer 1996). Abdulai, Barrett & Hoddinott (2005) corroborate the above from their study in Ethiopia, which found that there was indeed a negative simple correlation between household-level food aid receipt and on-farm labour effort. Laziness sets in decreasing food production as people sit back and wait on the next distribution cycle of food aid.

6.2.4 Coping Mechanisms

For many, food aid became a means of coping with the impacts of droughts and starvation. However, food aid did not provide everything that the vulnerable required. As a result, people engaged in other coping mechanisms to mitigate against the impacts of droughts. Prostitution, artisanal small-scale mining, selling of goods (vegetables, alcohol, fruits) became

popular. Some people benefited from these strategies, which also came with their own social ills. Prostitution was identified as causing tension in the community, with many prostitutes being accused of breaking up happy homes. Artisanal mining on the other hand severely damaged the environment. Miners left huge trenches and pits which claimed the lives of many wildlife and livestock when they fell in. Siltation of rivers compromised the availability of water, exacerbating poverty and the need for food aid. Evidently, although people tried to cope on their own, their strategies created more harm than good for the greater community.

6.2.5 The Alternatives: If not Food Aid, then What?

Lastly, it is worthy to note that though food aid was greatly welcomed in uMzingwane, there are many other programmes the community desired over food aid. The people of uMzingwane were starving, but they proved to be a people with a mindset of self-reliance. Instead of food aid, they suggested programmes that would be more sustainable such as the establishment of irrigation schemes to aid food production, increasing water sources by drilling more boreholes, engaging in livestock rearing projects, rehabilitation of the environment and training on better farming technologies. The availability of water in uMzingwane District was affected by poor rainfall experienced in the region because of droughts. Water became very scarce, negatively affecting any decent efforts at farming for food production. This follows that, addressing the water problem would present a more permanent solution to food aid, as people are enabled to put more effort in farming activities, with a better chance of success at producing their own food. Rehabilitation of the environment was also seen as complementary to improving the availability of water. Apart from rejuvenating the ground for farming activities, environmental rehabilitation also meant the closing of pits left by artisanal miners. This would save animals from falling into pits, leading to preservation of wealth by the locals (in the form of cattle) and improving the availability of draught power. As such, one popular adage proves true here, which would lead to greater sustainability and self-sufficiency and that is, *“Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime”* (Chinese Proverb).

6.3 Conclusion

Food aid, by no means intentionally seeks to disadvantage its recipients, but, as revealed by this study, negative social impacts at household level far outweigh the gains. Many social ills emerged which have been attributed to protracted food aid. Food aid in the uMzingwane has had phenomenal results as relief aid, to the extent that it has been credited for virtually saving lives. This relates primarily to the success of food aid in mitigating against the dreadful effects of droughts and hunger. However, as clearly exhibited in Chapter 4, the implementation of the programmes (VGF) has been questionable, particularly when one zooms into the beneficiary selection process, which has overshadowed any gains of food aid. Food aid was criticised for its flawed selection process, leading to aid not reaching its intended beneficiaries. Corruption and favouritism have been cited as reasons for targeting unintended beneficiaries, resulting in conflicts among community members. Such practices breakdown the moral fibre in the community, leading to hatred of one another and diminishing community cohesion. Double dipping on programmes has been a common occurrence, together with the cultivation of dependency on the food aid as more and more beneficiaries rely on food aid. This follows that the availability of food aid has shifted people's mindsets to believe that they cannot do without food aid. Such changes in mindsets have been counter-productive in terms of community development, which has led to the neglect of self-sustainability activities such as engagement in agriculture to bolster local food production. For many, food aid became an end in itself, as they found themselves in positions of absolute poverty. With the passage of time and consistent receipt of food aid, beneficiaries became too relaxed, some even too lazy to sustain their own livelihoods. As such, a culture of dependency was cultivated, where people waited on food aid to the extent that they demanded food aid as their right. This reflected a complete shift in mindset, from a people who traditionally work the fields to produce their own food, to a mindset of not finding value in the prospect of producing one's own food. Evidently, the availability of excessive food aid significantly diminished the productive capacities of the communities, leaving them trapped in vulnerability, poverty and completely dependent on the food aid.

Essentially, the study concluded that there are many social impacts of food aid, which go unnoticed, yet significantly affecting the everyday life of people in uMzingwane. People respond

to food aid differently. Largely, the uMzingwane population felt there was a lot more that could be done, not necessarily apart from food aid, but concurrently with food aid. Food aid is generally viewed as a safety net for emergency or disaster situations and should be implemented together with other programmes. The general consensus was that the people of uMzingwane want to be self-sufficient and more empowering, developmental programmes should be implemented, such as, improving the availability of water through irrigation and land rehabilitation, which would enable them to engage in more productive farming towards self-sustainability. A focus on livestock should also be prioritised, which the study revealed who be better suited for the prevailing climatic conditions in the region. Rethinking aid and development to include such projects would undo the culture of dependency created by food aid, and pave the way for a new chapter of self-reliance, albeit in the face of droughts.

6.4 Policy Implications

A few gaps were identified in the study, which may be used to influence policy going forward. Food aid serves a noble purpose among vulnerable populations, but it can be implemented better to curtail some of the negative effects as discussed above. Some policies regarding food aid have to be amended to reflect clear and precise measures to be followed by NGOs when implementing programmes. Furthermore, whilst food aid undoubtedly bridges the food insecurity gap, policies can be introduced to direct aid towards developmental elements that would eventually lead to self-sustainability of vulnerable populations. Below, six broad policy implications are presented to be considered towards the betterment of vulnerable in uMzingwane District.

6.4.1 Improvement of the Beneficiary Selection Process

The beneficiary selection process can be improved significantly to ensure appropriate and fair distribution of resources. The following is suggested:

- Selection should be done independently by the implementing NGOs rather than by local leadership and be based on Social Welfare records, and not necessarily by local leadership to prevent political interference.

- Verification of food insecurity status should be done at household level rather than community level to prevent unnecessary sharing of private information.
- Beneficiary circumstances should be evaluated based on individual merits and rather than rigid application of selection criteria.

6.4.2 Implementation of Collective Food Programme

It is important to prevent double dipping and other social ills that spin off from disgruntlement of people benefiting from many programmes concurrently, whilst others do not benefit from a single programme. The following is recommended to ensure that more people benefiting from food aid programmes:

- Donors should implement food programmes collectively, e.g. ORAP and WVI could implement the VGF programme together as opposed to individually.
- A centralized database of vulnerable people in the community should be created for the selection and verification of need.

6.4.3 Improvement of Water Availability

Prolonged periods of drought is one of the main reasons for the dependency on food aid in the uMzingwane District. By addressing water shortage, rather than food shortage, dependency on food aid can be prevented. Provision of inputs to enhance people's self-sufficiency would be much better than providing food product, which cultivates dependency in the long run. It is recommended that

- Government, in partnership with NGOs. should establish several irrigation schemes across the District in an effort to increase the availability of water.
- More boreholes be drilled and water made available.

6.4.4 Training to improve Farming Techniques

The application of appropriate farming techniques can improve yields under dry conditions. It is recommended to

- Train the community in appropriate farming techniques such as conservation farming which minimises tillage and thus soil erosion and the need for draught power.
- Train the community to use techniques such as mulching, pragmatic mixing and rotation of crops to improve water retention capacity of the soil and improve yields.

6.4.5 Rehabilitation of the Environment

The District has suffered severe land degradation, which leads to death of livestock and impacts the availability and quality of the scarce water resources. It is recommended that

- Artisanal miners have to be traced and instructed to backfill their excavations to prevent livestock from falling into pits.
- Illegal mining should be controlled and hefty fines have to be levied against offenders, which should be channelled back into the community through the implementation of development projects to reverse the effects of water pollution, deforestation and land degradation.
- Where wood is harvested, new trees or shrubs should be planted.

6.4.6 Introduction of Community Programmes

Community programmes can be introduced to restore a sense of solidarity and enhance cohesion in the community. This spells empowerment for the locals, which also represents sustainable development towards self-reliance. Such projects should be crafted in consultation with the community and implemented by the community for the community. The following is recommended that

- Cooperatives be started in an effort to cultivate entrepreneurship.
- Relevant training programmes be offered to ensure that the community is adequately equipped and enabled to benefit from entrepreneurship.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE – KEY INFORMANTS

Record the time the interview BEGINS	____ ____ : ____ ____ HOUR: MINUTE
--------------------------------------	------------------------------------

FOOD AID

1. Which food aid programmes were you familiar with in this area?
2. When did the food aid programs start?
3. How do you think the local people appreciated these projects?
4. Was food aid relevant?
5. Was food aid necessary?
6. Were you aware of any other projects that complimented food aid distributions?
7. What were these projects (If any)?
8. Who commissioned them?
9. What difference did they make?
10. What else would you like to see in the District besides food aid?

BENEFICIARIES

1. Who were the beneficiaries of this programme?
2. How were they selected?
3. What criteria was used?
4. Were you satisfied with the selection process?
5. Is there anything you would have changed in the selection process?

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

1. How was the state of local food production?
2. Did you witness any changes in food production in the past few years?
3. What would you attribute the change to?
4. What could have made it better?
5. What is usually produced in this area?
6. What are the average quantities per annum?
7. What do you think can be done to improve the current levels of food production?
8. Is there anything else you wish could be done by NGOs/the Government in this area?

CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

1. What forms the staple diet in this District?
2. Do you think everyone had enough to eat?
3. Did you notice a change in consumption patterns of the food aid beneficiaries?
4. What can you tell me about the nutrition levels of people in this area?

PERSISTENCE OF FOOD AID

1. How long has the area been a recipient of food aid?
2. How often are beneficiaries screened?
3. Do some fall off the list at times?
4. Do new beneficiaries get added to the list?
5. Are there beneficiaries who were always on the recipient list?
6. Why were some recipients always recipients of food aid?
7. What were the causes of food insecurity in the District?
8. Was the government/NGOs doing anything to help alleviate poverty?
9. Did food aid affect their ability to self-sustain?
10. Do you think there was need for continued food aid?
11. Is there anything that can be done for perennial beneficiaries?

12. If not food aid, then what?

COPING MECHANISMS

1. Apart from food aid, where else did people get food?
2. How did people cope with increasing food shortages?
3. How did communities mitigate against the effects of draught?
4. Did the Government and NGOs provide any other assistance to fight poverty in the region?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE – HOUSEHOLDS

Record the time the interview BEGINS	____ ____ : ____ ____ HOUR: MINUTE
--------------------------------------	------------------------------------

FOOD AID

1. What is your understanding of the vulnerable group feeding (VGF) programme?
2. How often did you receive food aid?
3. What did you get during each distribution?
4. Were you happy with the quantities you received?
5. How many meals were you able to prepare on a daily basis?
6. Did your children carry some of it to school?

BENEFICIARIES

1. Please tell me about the beneficiaries of the programme. How were they identified?
2. Were you happy with the process?
3. Were you involved/consulted in the selection of beneficiaries?
4. How many people were selected for each distribution?
5. Was it always the same beneficiaries?

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

1. Did you do any farming with your household?
2. How big were your fields?
3. What did you generally plant?
4. When last did you have a good harvest?
5. How much time did you spend in the fields?

Note: these questions were asked strategically to establish if there had been any differences in food production, pre-food aid and during food aid distributions.

CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

1. What would you say is your stable diet?
2. Why did you eat more of this?
3. How frequent were the meals?
4. Have you skipped meals previously?
5. Why did you skip meals?
6. What can you tell me about the quality of your current diet?

PERSISTENCE OF FOOD AID

1. Why do you think your village was part of the feeding programme?
2. How long has your household been part the feeding programme?
3. How important is the feeding programme to you and your household?
4. Why is it important to you?
5. Would you like the programme to continue?
6. Is there anything that you would like NGOs to do for you instead of food aid?

COPING MECHANISMS

1. Can you please tell me about your other sources of food besides food aid?
2. Have you ever experienced a year with drought and no food aid?
3. If yes, how did you manage to feed the household?
4. Were you able to source sufficient food?
5. Would you like to continue having food aid organisations in your area or not?
6. Why?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – KEY INFORMANTS



Informed Consent – Key Informants

You are being asked to take part in a research study by Mr Alson Maphosa, an MSocSci in Development Studies student, in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Pretoria. Please read the following information carefully and ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

This study is expected to collect information on humanitarian aid and households' responses in mitigation of food security.

Research study title

An analysis of the effects of food aid on household behaviour in the Mzingwane District between 2006 and 2010.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and the data collected will be discarded.

What will happen in the study?

The study will involve interviews with you at a time and place of your convenience. The interview will take approximately one hour and with your permission, may be voice recorded so that I do not miss any important information that you may share. You can choose to have the interview session in English or Ndebele.

Risks and discomforts

There will be no danger/harm to you. It may however be difficult for you to share some information, and you will be free not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. If you experience some level of discomfort after joining the study, and you would like to stop participating, please feel free to let me know. You will be allowed to stop participating at any time without prejudice and the data already collected will be discarded.

Are there any benefits for joining the study?

Your participation in this research does not carry any reward in cash or kind. Your contributions will assist me in developing a dissertation for my qualification, but it may also benefit the community and other organisations indirectly through findings that may assist in finding better ways of doing things.

Confidentiality

While every effort will be made to ensure that the information you share is not linked to you, it may be difficult in some cases due to the position you hold in the organisation or in the community. However, other methods will be employed such as pseudonyms and codes to enhance anonymity.

The data/information you provide will be shared with my supervisor at the University of Pretoria, but the data will be stored in a password protected computer, accessed only by the researcher. After the study the data will be stored in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Pretoria for at least 15 years.

The results will be produced in the form of a dissertation and scientific article, and may be disseminated at local and international forums, like conferences and symposiums. The voice recordings of the interviews will not be broadcasted on radio, television, internet or on social media but will be utilised to make findings for the study.

Any questions?

If you have any questions or require further clarification, you are welcome to phone or text me on +27814116335. You can also send me an email on the following address: alson.maphosa@up.ac.za

CONSENT DECLARATION

I _____ hereby agree to participate in this study.

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – HOUSEHOLDS



Informed Consent – Households

You are being asked to take part in a research study by Mr Alson Maphosa, an MSocSci in Development Studies student, in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Pretoria. The purpose of the study is to gather information on humanitarian aid and households' responses in mitigation of future food security. Please read the following information carefully and ask questions if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

Research study title

An analysis of the effects of food aid on household behavior in the Mzingwane District between 2006 and 2010.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and the information already gathered from you will be discarded.

What will happen in the study?

The study will involve interviews with you at a place of your convenience. The interview will take approximately one hour and with your permission, may be voice recorded so that I do not miss any important information that you may share. You can choose to have the interview session in English or Ndebele.

Risks and discomforts

There will be no danger/harm to you or your household. It may however be difficult for you to share some information, and you will be free not to answer any questions that may make you uncomfortable. If you experience some level of discomfort after joining the study, and you would like to stop participating, please feel free to let me know. You will be allowed to stop participating at any time without prejudice and the data already collected will be discarded.

Are there any benefits for joining the study?

Your participation in this research does not carry any reward in cash or kind. Your contributions will assist me in developing a dissertation for my qualification, but it may also benefit the community and other organisations indirectly through findings that may assist in finding better ways of doing things.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure that your identity and that of your household is protected by using pseudonyms. The data gathered will be stored in a password protected computer accessed only by the researcher during the study. The data will be shared with my supervisor, and no other third party will have access to the data. The information gathered will be published in the form of a dissertation that will be disseminated in both hard and soft copies, journal article accessed by a broader audience, and may be disseminated at international forums including conferences.

The voice recordings from the interviews will not be broadcasted on radio, television, internet or on social media, and together with the data, will be stored in the department of Anthropology and Archaeology for at least 15 years.

Any questions?

If you have any questions or require further clarification, you are welcome to phone or text me on +2781 411 6335. You can also send me an email on the following address: alson.maphosa@up.ac.za

CONSENT DECLARATION

I _____ hereby agree to participate in this study.

APPENDIX E: RESEARCH ASSISTANTS' CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT



Research Assistant Confidentiality Form

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions.

I have discussed the research protocols with the researcher and I understand what will be required of me as a research assistant working on this project.

I agree to abide by the research protocols established by the researcher including, but not limited to:

- the naming of files;
- strict use of pseudonyms for participants and their organisation or households;
- separation of real identities from pseudonyms;
- editing identifying characteristics or data to minimise risk of identification;
- and the transfer of raw data, transcripts, and analysis records between the researcher and my place of work.

I understand that all data, information or opinions provided to me must be kept confidential and that I must ensure that this information is not divulged in conversations, draft reports or publications of the findings.

I understand my responsibility to securely store all data collected for this study and that final copies of this will be kept electronically in secure facilities at the University of Pretoria and will be destroyed after 15 years.

I understand that if I require further information or advice related to this confidentiality agreement, I can contact the lead researcher, Mr Alson Maphosa (Cell: +27814116335 or Email: alson.maphosa@up.ac.za).

If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair, Research Ethics Committee (Humanities), at the University of Pretoria, Corner Lynnwood Road and Roper Street, Hatfield, PGHumanities@up.ac.za

By signing below, I agree to abide by the confidentiality requirements specified in this agreement:

Name _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Email address _____

Contact Number: _____

APPENDIX F: RESEARCH APPROVAL – RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE



28 February 2020

Dear Mr A Maphosa

Project Title: An analysis of the effects of food aid on household behavior in the Mzingwane District between 2006 and 2010.
Researcher: Mr A Maphosa
Supervisor: Prof V Thebe
Department: Anthropology and Archaeology
Reference number: 17218234 (HUM015/0919)
Degree: Masters

I have pleasure in informing you that the above application was **approved** by the Research Ethics Committee on 28 February 2020. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pikirayi'.

Prof Innocent Pikirayi
Deputy Dean: Postgraduate Studies and Research Ethics
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: PGHumanities@up.ac.za

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof I Pikirayi (Deputy Dean); Prof KL Harris; Mr A Bizos; Dr A-M de Beer; Dr A dos Santos; Ms KT Govinder; Andrew; Dr P Gutura; Dr E Johnson; Prof D Maree; Mr A Mohamed; Dr I Noomé; Dr C Puttergill; Prof D Reyburn; Prof M Soer; Prof E Tsalard; Prof V Thebe; Ms B Tsebe; Ms D Mokalapa

APPENDIX G: APPROVAL LETTER – MATABELELAND SOUTH PROVINCIAL
ADMINISTRATOR

**The Provincial Development Coordinator
Matabeleland South Province
P O Box 146
Gwanda**

18 November 2019

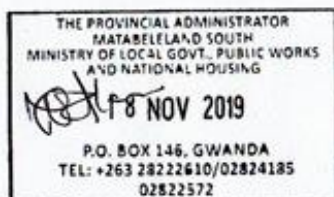
Mr Alson Maphosa
University Of Pretoria
Pretoria, South Africa

Re: Proposed Food Aid Study

The Umzingwane, office of the Provincial Development Coordinator has reviewed and discussed your application to conduct the above mentioned research in the District. We have found no irregularities with the proposed research and approve the research to be conducted.

We find such studies to be very relevant and key to crafting context specific development strategies.

Yours Sincerely



[Signature]
Provincial Development Coordinator

APPENDIX H: APPROVAL LETTER – UMZINGWANE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PUBLIC WORKS AND NATIONAL HOUSING

MATABELELAND SOUTH PROVINCE

TEL: (0288) 227/314/578

FAX: (0288) 227/314/578
All communications should be
addressed to:

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR



Reference:
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR
MATABELELAND SOUTH PROVINCE
P BAG 5813
ESIGODINI

ZIMBABWE

Date 18 November 2019

To whom it may concern

PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH IN UMZINGWANE
DISTRICT: Alcon Maphosa (MR/MRS/MISS)
STUDENT NO: 17218234 (UNIVERSITY OF
THE Pretoria, South Africa)

The office of the District Administrator in Umzingwane has no objection to Alcon Maphosa carrying out a research in the district for his Master in Development studies. Currently he/she is Working as a Development Officer at the University of Pretoria. The research is on the Analysis of the effects of food aid on Household behaviour in Umzingwane District between 2006 and 2016

May you please assist him/her carry out his/her research. Permission is also granted to him to visit areas under our Chiefs, jurisdiction hence there is no need for him to get written permission from Chiefs.

Thank You

PP P Mahlatini

District Administrator (Umzingwane)



APPENDIX I: TYPICAL DATA COLLECTED FROM THE FIELD

INFORMATION AREA	TYPICAL RESPONSES
ABOUT FOOD AID AND THE NEED FOR FOOD AID	
What is your understanding of the term Food Aid?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giving people food/Assistance to hungry people. - Food assistance to save lives during drought. Many people are suffering. - Drought relief/Giving hungry people food/Giving poor people seed packs and fertilizer.
What food aid programmes were you aware of during this period?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vulnerable Group Feeding has been the major food aid programme. - Primary schools feeding programme also present - supplementary feeding (one meal at school every day)
Organisations distributing food during study period?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ORAP - WVI - CRS - Social Welfare
What did you receive via the programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Households received maize, barley, lentils and oil every month. Quantities determined by the number of people in the household.
Why do you think you required food aid during this time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor rainfall, poor harvests, droughts. There was very little food and people were going hungry, kids malnourished. - High food insecurity was evident, hence food aid was spread across all the wards including resettlements. - More than 80% of households were on food aid. - High rate of HIV/AIDS. - Very many households headed by the elderly.

The Relationship between vulnerability, poverty and Food Aid in the uMzingwane Community?

- Most of the respondents had plots or farming land of less than a hectare in size. These were scantily fenced and grossly underutilised, some had been completely abandoned.
- About 15% of vulnerable households interviewed, indicated that they had no farming land during this period.
- 60% of respondents indicated that they did not have any draught power and relied on neighbours for draught power, which generally came at a price.
- Only about 20% indicated having had enough food to last them three to six months. The majority lived from day to day.
- The drought experienced in 1992 and subsequent droughts depleted livestock, leaving many vulnerable people without livestock.
- Incidence of some vulnerable people washing off chemicals from preserved donated seed and used 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 also depleted due to outward migration and chronic illnesses.
- Most households took care of at least one chronically ill family member.
- 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. This created perennial beneficiaries, and consequently 'Dependency' on the food aid.

Food Aid and Dependency

- Food aid discourages self-sufficiency.
- Many people desist from engaging in other ways of sourcing food. They wait on food aid, knowing that as long as they are on the list, they will receive food.
- Promotes laziness.
- The way of life and day-to-day living is affected. People are no longer as frugal as they used to be without food aid. Though at times some people realise good harvests, they are careless in how they use food, very wasteful, knowing that food aid is there.
- Environmental hazards created by illegal gold panning perpetuates dependency on food aid.
- Many beneficiaries of food aid are the elderly, who cannot source food in any other way hence become dependent on food aid.
- Incidence of people demanding food aid as if it is a right.
- Perennial beneficiaries from different programmes – do not see a need to work or fend for themselves.
- Food aid does not provide enough to create dependence.

Local food production.

- Droughts take too long. People do not see the point of spending too much time in the fields, which affects what, and how much is produced.
- Climate change affects harvests. People feel they might not have good harvests even if they put a lot of effort in farming. Therefore, it is better for them to wait on food aid instead of putting too much effort on a futile exercise.
- As a result of droughts, people move away from ploughing the fields to their yards. This reduces food production and increases the need for food aid.
- Food aid competes with agriculture. Communities tend to rely on food aid (more convenient option) instead of working in their fields.
- A rise in illegal gold panning because of droughts. They leave many open holes, and cattle fall in (getting seriously injure or killed).
- Droughts affect animals as well, such that, even if people wanted to farm, they cannot, as their animals are not in good condition for hard labour.

Beneficiaries and beneficiary selection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Selection of beneficiaries is done by local leadership and the community.- Most people feel it is dependent on whether you are liked or not, and not necessarily on need.- Negatively affects cohesion – Talks of favouritism and corruption.- Ghost beneficiaries – to benefit local leadership.- Method is questionable and divisive: People forced to disclose their status and other personal information in public in order to make the cut.- Viewed as discriminatory.- Rigid application of criteria – (people left out because of Age and perception of wealth). E.g. deserving people left out of the programme because of a nice house, solar panel, TV, even though such was acquired when they still had other sources of income.- Double dipping – food aid programmes generally look for the same beneficiary.
Apart from food aid, how do people survive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Gold panning – though with serious environmental effects.- Selling firewood in towns, which also results in deforestation as more and more trees are cut for firewood.- Prostitution (mainly because of gold panning).- Selling (anything, mostly vegetables, fruits and alcohol)- Those who have, employ others.

If not food Aid, then what?

- Water: very few water points. This could aid food production.
- Rehabilitation of the environment.
- Animal rearing (goats and chickens).
- More clinics – Improved healthcare.

CONSUMPTION PATTERNS	
Before Food Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Droughts were already being experienced which affected food production. - 60% of respondents indicated that they two meals a day (soft porridge or dried mealies in the morning and hard porridge with relish in the evenings). - 30% of the respondents only had one meal a day. - 10% of respondents went at least one day every week without anything to eat. - Children went to school without carrying anything to eat. - Diet mostly comprised mealie meal, vegetables and sour milk (Amasi). Meat was rarely eaten.
During Food Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - About 75% of respondents indicated that they had three meals a day, with adequate quantities. - 15% of interviewed households noted that they managed to engage in barter trade so that they supplement their diets with vegetables and meat. - Most beneficiaries indicated that through food aid they were able to cook more during dinner so that children would also carry leftovers to school.
After Food Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food became very scarce, with the prevailing environmental and economic conditions. - 30% of households indicated that they have spent at least one day a week without food. - The majority of respondents survive on one meal a day.

Views and observations on the impact of food aid with respect to the following in the uMzingwane District.

<p>Starvation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food aid partially alleviates starvation, as it actually creates dependency of the vulnerable communities. - Food aid is never quite adequate in terms of quantities. Beneficiaries still borrow food before the next distribution cycle and pay back the food in the next distribution cycle (they are always in food debt). - Provides temporary relief from hunger, saves lives and reduces suffering. - Food is necessary, even if it is too little at times, communities insist they should have it.
<p>Food security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the absence of complementary sustainable development interventions, Food aid would not mitigate against food insecurity. - Lack of water in many parts of uMzingwane, exacerbates food shortages. - Livestock perish during droughts, affecting food production resulting in food shortages.
<p>Nutrition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nutritional levels evidently improve during food aid. - The majority of respondents affirmed that Food aid was nutritious, especially the porridge and lentils. - A small minority doubted the nutritional levels, especially that of barley, which they disliked the most. - Some exchanged barley for maize – trading particularly with those who were not of the food aid programme.