

The Relief Food Aid and its Implications on Food Production and Consumption Patterns: A case study of Communal Farmers in Chigodora Community, Zimbabwe

Trylee Nyasha Matongerera, Shenelle Sewell, Romano Trent Lottering and Thomas Marambanyika

Abstract

The research study focuses on the effects of relief food aid on food production and consumption patterns of communal farmers in Chigodora Ward 15, Mutare District. The researcher adopted a descriptive research design. Data collection instruments used in this research study included questionnaires, interviews as well as published documents. Questionnaires targeted households in selected villages. The researcher used a cluster sampling strategy in selecting villages and random sampling technique was used to select households from the selected villages. Interviews targeted key informants such as the Agritex Extension Officer, Mutare Rural District Council Social Services Director, and Chitakatira Health Care leader, Ward 15 Councilor, Plan International Selection Director and The Village Heads. Key informants were selected using purposive sampling technique. Research findings from this study have established that relief food aid beneficiaries in Chigodora Ward 15 receive maize, beans, peas, cooking oil and porridge on a monthly basis. Plan international is the only humanitarian organization which supplies food in the community. Since the involvement of food aid agencies in Chigodora, the production of indigenous crops such as finger millet, sorghum and rapoko significantly decreased. The major factors driving the persistence of relief food are HIV and AIDS, climate change, lack of fair distribution of farming inputs, the restructuring of the agricultural system and high dependency syndrome. Short term impacts of relief food aid on food production and access include impacts on local taste, promotes laziness and compromises access to local foods. The long term impacts of relief food aided are; overall decrease in food production, disincentives on farmers to produce and exposure to low quality and unsafe products. The suggest the government of Zimbabwe needs to adequately assist and empower communal farmers to produce enough food from their fields through modern technologies as well as providing farmers with loans for inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and equipment to improve productivity.

Keywords: Communal farmers, Community, Dependency, Consumption, Food aid, Household.