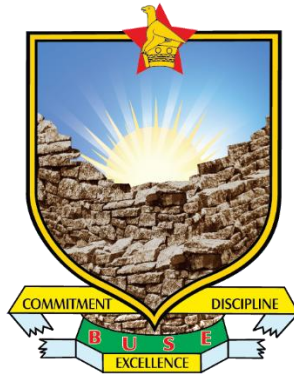


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The effectiveness of Community Targeting Strategy for Identifying Food Aid Beneficiaries in Rural Areas, Cases study of Chilonga FDP Chiredzi.

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN
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SUPERVISOR

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APPROVAL FORM

I certify that I supervised MELISA MUFAMBI (B211868B) in carrying out this research titled: The effectiveness of Community Targeting Strategy for Identifying Food Aid Beneficiaries in Rural Areas, Cases study of Chilonga FDP Chiredzi.in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science, Honours Degree in Development Studies and recommend that it proceeds for examination.

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DECLARATION

I solemnly declare that this research project is the outcome of my independent research and original work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for academic evaluation. I have properly cited and referenced all external sources of information, acknowledging the contributions of others to my research.

Student signature

Date 05/03/25

M Mfambi

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and my friends who supported me throughout.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to first thank God for giving me strength, hope, and endurance to complete this study. All gratitude is extended to University associates and accomplices who facilitated this study's carrying out and completion. DR Makambanga my supervisor must be applauded for giving me guidance and assistance during the entire study. I would like to express my appreciation to the Department of Social Services and the DA office in Chiredzi District which provided me with the platform to conduct the research. Special thanks to my industrial attachment mentors Mr. Tinarwo and Mr. Chivave for their guidance. I would like to thank my mother Mrs. T Mufambi, my father Mr. M Mufambi, my siblings, and my friends Bovern Hwezva and Fadzai Vhulengoma who supported me financially and emotionally during the whole course of this study. Thank you for encouraging me to be a hard worker and a center of excellence, I appreciate and love you dearly.

ABSTRACT

This study critically assesses the effectiveness of community targeting strategies for identifying food aid beneficiaries in rural areas, with a specific focus on the Chilonga Food Distribution Point (FDP) in Chiredzi. Utilizing qualitative methodologies, including in-depth interviews with key informants and community stakeholders, the research aims to evaluate the efficacy of existing targeting mechanisms in serving vulnerable populations. Key findings reveal both strengths and limitations within the current approaches, highlighting critical issues such as accessibility, inclusivity, and the sufficiency of allocated resources. Participants identified significant barriers that impede equitable access to food aid and emphasized the necessity for enhanced communication regarding eligibility criteria. The study also underscores the importance of fostering community engagement and improving collaboration among various stakeholders to optimize the targeting process. Ultimately, the findings contribute to the discourse on food aid effectiveness, offering evidence-based recommendations to refine targeting strategies and enhance food security for marginalized populations in the Chilonga region. Key recommendations include improving transparency and accountability, enhancing community participation, and adopting data-driven approaches to ensure more equitable and effective food aid distribution.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OR ACRONYMS

FDP:	Food Distribution Point
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
CBO:	Community-Based Organization
M and E:	Monitoring and Evaluation
SOP:	Standard Operating Procedure
RFS:	Rural Food Security
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization
UN:	United Nations
BPS:	Beneficiary Profiling System
WFP:	World Food Programme
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
CFS:	Committee on World Food Security
PDM:	Post-Distribution Monitoring
CAP:	Consolidated Appeals Process
IM:	Information Management

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Food aid in the village of Chilonga has become popular after a series of food crises, drought and economic crisis. The Food Distribution Point (FDP) serves as a critical hub for food aid in the Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe, where many households face food insecurity due to various socio-economic challenges. Organizations such as the Department of Social Development (DSD) and local NGOs are actively engaged in providing food assistance to vulnerable populations. The purpose of food aid in Chilonga is to alleviate hunger, improve nutritional standards, and enhance the overall well-being of community members, particularly during times of crisis. To maximize the impact of these programs, effective community targeting strategies are essential. These strategies aim to identify those most in need, ensuring that resources are allocated fairly and efficiently.

The effective community targeting strategies can significantly enhance food aid programs in several ways. Firstly, they foster community engagement, allowing local knowledge to guide the identification of beneficiaries, which often results in a more accurate assessment of needs. Secondly, such strategies promote transparency and accountability, building trust between aid organizations and community members. Thirdly, they ensure that resources are directed to the most vulnerable groups, such as children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities. Fourthly, these strategies facilitate timely assistance, helping to address urgent food needs before they escalate into crises. Lastly, community involvement in the targeting process can lead to more sustainable food aid programs, as local stakeholders are more likely to support initiatives they helped shape.

1.1 Background of the study

Chilonga, located in the Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe, is a rural area characterized by high levels of food insecurity due to socioeconomic challenges, climatic variability, and limited access to resources. The community relies heavily on agriculture, and many households face difficulties in producing enough food to meet their nutritional needs. According to the World Health

Organization (2024), in 2023 an estimated 735 million people globally faced chronic hunger, with sub-Saharan Africa bearing a disproportionate burden, where one in five people is undernourished. Southern Africa remains highly vulnerable to food insecurity due to recurrent droughts, economic instability, and conflict; in Zimbabwe alone, approximately 3.8 million people were projected to face crisis or worse levels of food insecurity between October 2023 and March 2024 (Dube, 2024). As a response to these persistent challenges, various food aid programs have been implemented in Chilonga and similar communities, aiming to alleviate hunger and support vulnerable populations

Community targeting strategies are essential for effectively identifying food aid beneficiaries in Chilonga. These strategies leverage local knowledge and community involvement, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of who needs assistance the most. The effectiveness of these strategies directly impacts the success of food aid interventions, as accurate targeting ensures that resources reach those who are truly in need, thereby maximizing the impact of aid programs. Poor targeting has been shown to reduce the efficiency of aid programs for example Sabates-Wheeler's (2022) review found that over 30% of social assistance benefits in low- and middle-income countries were received by non-poor households due to ineffective targeting. A study by the World Food Program (2021) in Ethiopia revealed that community-based targeting mechanisms improved beneficiary selection accuracy by 20% compared to centralized methods. Similarly, in Malawi, community-based targeting helped reduce exclusion errors in food aid distribution by up to 25%, ensuring that the most vulnerable households received assistance (Babu et al., 2018). These cases highlight the critical role that localized, participatory approaches play in enhancing the fairness and effectiveness of food assistance interventions making them particularly relevant in rural resource-constrained settings like Chilonga

The justification for this study is rooted in the need to enhance the effectiveness of food aid distribution in Chilonga. By evaluating the current community targeting strategies, this research aims to identify strengths and weaknesses in the existing processes. Insights from this study can guide improvements, ensuring that food aid reaches the most vulnerable populations more efficiently. Furthermore, understanding the dynamics of community involvement in targeting can foster greater trust between aid organizations and the local community, ultimately contributing to more sustainable food assistance initiatives. This study is crucial for informing policymakers and

practitioners about best practices in community targeting, helping to address food insecurity in Chilonga and similar rural areas in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Problem statement

In Chilonga, the challenge of food insecurity is exacerbated by various factors, including economic instability, climate change and limited agricultural productivity. The Chilonga Food Distribution Point (FDP) serves as a vital resource for addressing these issues, providing essential food aid to the most vulnerable populations. However, the effectiveness of food aid programs is contingent upon accurately identifying beneficiaries who genuinely require assistance. The problem investigated in this study is the inadequacy of current community targeting strategies used in Chilonga to effectively identify food aid beneficiaries. Many existing methods may overlook specific needs within the community, leading to misallocation of resources and leaving some vulnerable individuals without necessary support. The reliance on community targeting strategies is intended to mitigate these issues by incorporating local knowledge and participation, yet the effectiveness of these strategies needs thorough evaluation.

1.3 Justification

The purpose of this research is to assess the effectiveness of community targeting strategies at the Chilonga FDP in identifying food aid beneficiaries. By examining the methodologies employed and their outcomes, the study aims to provide insights that can enhance the targeting process, ensuring that food aid reaches those who need it most.

Rationale for Food Aid in Chilonga

Food aid is conducted at the Chilonga FDP to alleviate immediate hunger and support the nutritional needs of the community. Many households in the area struggle to secure sufficient food due to economic challenges and climatic factors that adversely affect agricultural production. The food aid programs aim to provide a safety net for these vulnerable populations, ensuring they have access to essential nutrients and reducing the risk of malnutrition. Community targeting strategies are employed in Chilonga to enhance the accuracy and fairness of the beneficiary identification process. By involving local community members in the selection process, these strategies aim to leverage local knowledge about who is most in need, thus improving the relevance of aid

distribution. This participatory approach not only helps in reaching the most vulnerable but also fosters community ownership and trust in the food aid programs.

1.4 Aim

The primary aim of this project is to evaluate the effectiveness of community targeting strategies in identifying food aid beneficiaries in rural areas, specifically focusing on the Chilonga Food Distribution Program (FDP) in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe.

1.5 General objectives

The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of community targeting strategies in identifying food aid beneficiaries at the Chilonga Food Distribution Point (FDP). Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Assess Current Targeting Strategies:** To analyze the community targeting strategies currently employed at the Chilonga FDP for identifying food aid beneficiaries.
2. **Identify Strengths and Weaknesses:** To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing targeting methodologies, focusing on their impact on beneficiary selection.
3. **Explore Community Perceptions:** To gather insights from community members regarding their perceptions of the fairness, transparency, and inclusivity of the targeting process.
4. **Propose Recommendations:** To develop actionable recommendations aimed at improving the community targeting strategies for food aid distribution in Chilonga, ensuring that the most vulnerable populations receive assistance effectively.

By achieving these objectives, the study aims to contribute to the enhancement of food aid programs in Chilonga and similar rural contexts, ultimately improving food security and community well-being.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What criteria are currently used in the community targeting strategies at the Chilonga Food Distribution Point to identify food aid beneficiaries?
2. How involved are community members in the beneficiary identification process, and how does this involvement impact the effectiveness of the targeting strategies?

3. What are the perceptions of community members regarding the fairness and transparency of the food aid targeting process?
4. What challenges do local leaders and community members face in implementing community targeting strategies for food aid distribution in Chilonga?
5. How can community targeting strategies be improved to ensure that food aid reaches the most vulnerable populations effectively?

Hypotheses

1. H1: The community targeting strategies used at the Chilonga FDP inadequately address the diverse needs of the population, leading to misallocation of food aid resources.
2. H2: Higher levels of community involvement in the beneficiary identification process correspond with increased perceptions of fairness and transparency in food aid distribution.
3. H3: Specific biases within the community targeting strategies negatively impact the identification of deserving beneficiaries, resulting in some vulnerable households being overlooked.
4. H4: Inadequate training and resources for local leaders hinder the effective implementation of community targeting strategies in Chilonga.
5. H5: Improvements in community targeting strategies, based on participatory feedback, will lead to more equitable and efficient food aid distribution in Chilonga.

These research questions and hypotheses will guide the investigation, helping to explore the effectiveness of community targeting strategies in identifying food aid beneficiaries in Chilonga.

1.7 Definition of terms

- Community Targeting: A decentralized method of beneficiary selection in humanitarian contexts, where community members are actively involved in identifying the most vulnerable households, utilizing their intimate knowledge of local conditions to enhance fairness and legitimacy (Grosh et al., 2022).

- **Food Aid:** Humanitarian assistance involving the provision of food or food-related resources (e.g., cash or vouchers) intended to prevent hunger, improve nutrition, and enhance food security among populations affected by crisis, poverty, or structural food shortages (Sassi & Sassi, 2018).
- **Participatory Approach:** A strategy in development and humanitarian work that involves local stakeholders especially community members in decision-making processes, ensuring that interventions reflect community priorities and build local ownership (Konyndyk & Worden, 2019).
- **Transparency:** The degree to which the processes of targeting, resource allocation, and food distribution are open, clear, and accountable to stakeholders, which is crucial for maintaining community trust and minimizing bias or corruption (Wong et al, 2021).
- **Local Knowledge:** Context-specific insights held by community members regarding the social, economic, and environmental realities of their area, which can be leveraged to improve the accuracy and social acceptability of aid targeting processes (Nogroho & Carden, 2018).
- **Food Distribution Point (FDP):** A designated site within a community where food aid is physically delivered and distributed to beneficiaries, typically managed by local actors or implementing partners in coordination with aid agencies (Sahinyazan, 2018).

These definitions establish a clear understanding of key concepts related to the effectiveness of community targeting strategies for identifying food aid beneficiaries in the context of Chilonga, Chiredzi.

1.8 Organization of study

This dissertation is structured into five chapters, each serving a specific purpose in exploring the effectiveness of community targeting strategies for identifying food aid beneficiaries at the Chilonga Food Distribution Point (FDP) in Chiredzi. The organization of the study is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research topic, outlining the background, purpose, and significance of the study. It defines the problem being investigated, presents the statement of

purpose, and establishes the general and specific objectives. Additionally, it includes research questions and hypotheses, as well as definitions of key terms relevant to the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews existing literature related to community targeting strategies, food aid distribution, and food security in rural contexts. It synthesizes previous research findings, theoretical frameworks, and best practices in beneficiary identification. The literature review highlights gaps in the current knowledge and positions the study within the broader context of food aid research.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology employed in the study. It describes the qualitative and quantitative methods used for data collection, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The chapter also discusses the sampling techniques, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations involved in conducting the research.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings from the data collection process, analyzing the effectiveness of community targeting strategies in identifying food aid beneficiaries in Chilonga. It discusses the results in relation to the research questions and objectives, highlighting key themes, patterns, and insights. The discussion also addresses the implications of the findings for food aid programs and community development.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter summarizes the key findings of the study and their implications for policy and practice. It provides recommendations for improving community targeting strategies in food aid distribution, based on the insights gained from the research. Additionally, the chapter identifies areas for future research and reflects on the overall contributions of the study to the understanding of food aid effectiveness in rural areas.

1.9 Chapter summary

By following this structure, the dissertation aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the effectiveness of community targeting strategies in the context of Chilonga, contributing valuable insights to the field of food security and aid distribution.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature on food aid distribution, community targeting strategies, and food security in rural areas. It aims to contextualize the study within the broader academic discourse, highlighting key theories, concepts, and empirical findings relevant to the effectiveness of community targeting strategies in identifying food aid beneficiaries. The chapter is organized into several sections, each addressing a specific aspect of the literature.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework guides the study by offering an outlook through which community targeting strategies' effectiveness can be evaluated. One of the important theories relevant to this study is the need based theories. Need-based theories provide a crucial understanding of human motivation by emphasizing the importance of fulfilling specific needs to drive behavior. These frameworks offer valuable insights for various fields, including psychology, education, and business, by illustrating how addressing outstanding needs can lead to improved motivation, engagement, and overall well-being.

2.1.1. Need-based theory

The effectiveness of community targeting strategies for identifying food aid beneficiaries in rural areas, particularly within the context of the Chilonga Food Distribution Point (FDP) in Chiredzi, can be comprehensively analyzed through the framework of need-based theories. This theory underscore the critical importance of conducting thorough assessments of the specific needs within communities to address the multifaceted nature of poverty and food insecurity, which are prevalent issues in many developing regions. Amartya Sen's capabilities approach (2018) serves as a foundational element in this discourse, asserting that poverty should not be narrowly defined by income deprivation alone; rather, it encompasses a range of dimensions including health, education, and social inclusion. This multidimensional perspective is vital when considering the diverse experiences of individuals within rural Zimbabwe, where various factors contribute to food insecurity. In the Zimbabwean context, numerous scholars have pointed out that traditional methods of targeting food aid often fall short in accurately capturing the needs of marginalized

populations. For instance, research indicates that the identification processes frequently overlook vulnerable groups such as female-headed households, the elderly, and those with disabilities. These studies emphasize the necessity of integrating local knowledge and community participation into the targeting process, suggesting that communities themselves possess valuable insights that can enhance the identification of those in greatest need. By involving community members in the assessment process, food aid programs can become more responsive and tailored to the specific circumstances of the population, thereby improving their effectiveness. Comparative analyses with other countries further illuminate the complexities involved in the application of need-based theories. In Bangladesh, for example, Rahman et al. (2017) conducted a study revealing that households with lower socio-economic status were often less likely to receive food aid, despite demonstrating a greater need for assistance. This finding underscores the discrepancies that can arise when needs assessments are not adequately adapted to local contexts, illustrating the potential pitfalls of a one-size-fits-all approach to food aid distribution. Conversely, the United States provides a contrasting example through its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which successfully employs a needs-based framework by integrating income assessments with qualitative data on household circumstances. This holistic approach aims to ensure that aid reaches the most vulnerable populations, demonstrating the effectiveness of need-based theories within a developed context where administrative structures are typically more robust. However, challenges persist even in well-structured systems. In rural India, studies conducted by Kumar & Singh (2019) highlighted how bureaucratic inefficiencies can severely hinder the effective targeting of food aid. Their findings reveal that despite having a framework that acknowledges the importance of needs assessments, the realities of local governance and administrative capabilities can significantly impact the implementation and success of such strategies. This suggests that for need-based theories to be effective, there must be strong governance and efficient administrative systems in place to support their application. In conclusion, the successful implementation of community targeting strategies for identifying food aid beneficiaries in Chilonga is contingent upon a nuanced understanding of local needs and the incorporation of community insights. By leveraging the capabilities approach and recognizing the broader determinants of poverty, food aid programs can enhance their targeting and distribution mechanisms. At last, fostering community participation and ensuring that local knowledge informs the identification process are essential for improving outcomes for vulnerable populations in rural areas. As such, the effectiveness of food aid

interventions in Chilonga and all FDPs will depend significantly on the commitment to understanding and addressing the complex realities faced by those in need.

2.2. Conceptual framework

2.2.1. Food aid distribution

Food aid distribution encompasses various methods, including in-kind assistance, cash transfers, and food vouchers. Each method has its advantages and challenges. In-kind assistance ensures that food reaches beneficiaries directly but may not always align with local dietary preferences or cultural practices. For instance, Gentilini et al. (2016) observed that providing rice in communities that primarily consume maize led to waste and dissatisfaction among beneficiaries. Cash transfers, while providing beneficiaries with the flexibility to purchase food according to their needs, require functioning local markets and can be subject to inflationary pressures. A notable example can be found in Kenya, where cash transfer programs improved food security but also faced challenges due to fluctuating market prices (Hoddinott & Bassett, 2018). In contrast, food vouchers combine elements of both in-kind assistance and cash transfers, allowing beneficiaries to purchase food from designated vendors while ensuring that aid is used for its intended purpose. This hybrid model has shown promise in countries like Jordan, where food vouchers helped to stimulate local economies while addressing immediate nutritional needs (Gentilini et al., 2019).

2.2.2. Community targeting strategies

Community targeting strategies involve local participation in identifying beneficiaries for food aid programs. Various methods, including community-based participatory approaches and geographic targeting, enhance the accuracy of beneficiary identification. Community-based participatory approaches emphasize local knowledge, leading to improved legitimacy and acceptance of food aid programs (Bennett et al., 2016). A study in rural Binga demonstrated that community involvement in beneficiary selection enhanced program acceptance and reduced conflicts over resource allocation (Mutana 2018).

2.2.3. Geographical targeting

Geographic targeting relies on data such as poverty rates and food availability to prioritize regions for aid distribution. It may take place between countries, regions, districts or villages (ENN, 2015). Research in Ethiopia demonstrated that geographic targeting based on food insecurity indicators

significantly improved the efficiency of food aid distribution, ensuring that assistance was directed to the most affected populations (Devereux, 2016). However, this method may overlook vulnerable individuals within more affluent communities, highlighting the need for complementary strategies that consider intra-community disparities.

2.3. Literature review

2.3.1 Global perspectives on food aid distribution

Globally, food distribution is a critical component of efforts to combat hunger and build resilience in vulnerable communities. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2023) defines food security as a condition where all individuals have consistent access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for an active and healthy life. Yet, despite global advances in food production, an estimated 735 million people remained chronically undernourished in 2023 (FAO, 2023). The World Food Programme (WFP, 2023) reported that 345 million people across 79 countries were facing acute food insecurity, largely driven by conflict, climate change, and economic shocks. Organizations such as UNICEF highlight the impact of food insecurity on child development, noting that in 2023, 45 million children under the age of five suffered from wasting—a severe form of malnutrition (UNICEF, 2023). Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO) underscores that hunger-related health challenges contribute to nearly 45% of child deaths globally (WHO, 2023). These statistics illustrate the urgency for efficient and equitable food distribution mechanisms, particularly in crisis-prone regions.

Development and humanitarian actors stress the importance of integrating food aid with broader socioeconomic development. For instance, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2022) emphasizes that food aid should be part of rural development strategies that include investment in smallholder farming, climate adaptation, and gender equity. Action Against Hunger promotes community-based management of malnutrition and reports that integrated food assistance has improved recovery rates in several Sub-Saharan African countries (Action Against Hunger, 2022). Oxfam (2023) criticizes unequal global food systems, advocating for policy reforms that prioritize local food sovereignty and reduce dependency on external aid. CARE (2022) supports gender-sensitive food aid, highlighting that empowering women in food distribution processes enhances household nutrition outcomes. Heifer International works to provide long-term solutions through livestock and agricultural training, helping over 42 million

families increase their food security sustainably (Heifer International, 2023). The Hunger Project and Bread for the World both promote community-led development models, while the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2023) warns that rising global debt and inflation continue to constrain national budgets for food subsidy programs. Complementing these efforts, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) integrates food security within its broader human development framework, aiming to address the root causes of poverty and hunger. Lastly, Save the Children has focused on delivering emergency food assistance in conflict zones like Syria and Sudan, while also working on long-term child nutrition programs (Save the Children, 2023). These diverse organizational perspectives converge on the critical need to improve targeting, coordination, and accountability in food aid distribution globally.

2.3.2. Regional perspective of food aid distribution

Across Africa, food aid distribution is shaped by a combination of socio-economic, political, and environmental factors. A growing shift toward Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) has emerged as a strategic approach in humanitarian food assistance. LRP allows for the sourcing of food from within the region or country where it will be distributed, helping to reduce delivery times and support local markets. Coulter et al. (2020) emphasize that in West Africa, LRP has had a dual benefit improving food security while stimulating agricultural economies by purchasing from local smallholder farmers. However, the effectiveness of LRP can be constrained by factors such as supply inconsistency and price volatility. For example, in Eastern Africa, large-scale procurement efforts during crisis periods led to significant price spikes, disrupting local market stability and reducing the purchasing power of non-beneficiary households (Coulter, 2017). Nonetheless, in countries with relatively stable supply chains and strong agricultural networks, such as Zambia and Malawi, LRP continues to show promise as a model that aligns emergency assistance with long-term development goals.

Regional institutions and civil society organizations are playing an increasingly important role in shaping sustainable food aid and security policies across Africa. The Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU), representing national farmer organizations in the region, has advocated for farmer-inclusive policies and regional integration to strengthen food systems and enhance resilience to climate shocks (SACAU, 2022). Similarly, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) promotes agroecology and community-based food systems,

opposing heavy reliance on external food aid by encouraging local food production and self-reliance (AFSA, 2023). These perspectives are gaining traction in policy circles, especially amid concerns about the long-term sustainability of aid-dependent models. Meanwhile, the Hivos Food & Lifestyle Fund takes a development-focused approach, investing in innovative, sustainable food businesses and agro-entrepreneurship initiatives in East and Southern Africa, which contribute to local food security and reduce reliance on aid (Hivos, 2023). Together, these regional actors highlight a growing emphasis on sovereignty, sustainability, and inclusive development in the discourse on food aid and distribution in Africa.

2.3.3. Local perspective of food aid distribution

At the local level, food aid distribution in Zimbabwe is shaped by a combination of socio-economic vulnerability, political dynamics, and institutional capacity. Nationally, approximately 5.4 million people were food insecure in 2023, including both rural and urban populations, largely due to prolonged droughts, economic instability, and inflation (ZimVAC, 2023). Major urban centers such as Harare, Bulawayo, and Mutare have also seen increasing levels of food insecurity, driven by high unemployment and rising food prices. According to the World Food Programme (WFP, 2023), food insecurity in urban areas now affects nearly 30% of households, many of whom rely on informal markets and lack access to formal assistance systems. Although the government and international NGOs coordinate food aid programs, issues such as underfunding, politicization, and administrative bottlenecks often hinder effective distribution. In several instances, including in areas like Marondera and Gweru, reports have emerged of food aid being distributed preferentially to supporters of the ruling party, with opposition-aligned households allegedly being excluded (Human Rights Watch, 2021). These challenges highlight the need for more transparent and depoliticized mechanisms to ensure equitable food distribution across diverse socio-political settings.

In Chilonga, a rural area within Chiredzi District, food aid distribution reflects the broader challenges experienced across Zimbabwe but with added complexity due to geographic and infrastructural limitations. The region is highly drought-prone and relies heavily on rain-fed subsistence agriculture, leaving many households vulnerable to crop failure and chronic food shortages. According to the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC, 2022), more than 60% of households in Chiredzi District are food insecure during lean seasons.

Community-based targeting is commonly used to identify aid recipients, with village heads and local leaders playing key roles. While this approach can promote local ownership, it is not immune to manipulation

2.4. Factors influencing food aid effectiveness

Several factors influence the effectiveness of food aid distribution like socio-economic status, local governance and community engagement.

2.4.1. Socio-economic status

Socio-Economic Status is a critical determinant of food security. Households with lower income levels, limited access to resources, and higher dependency ratios are more likely to experience food insecurity (FAO, 2019). Research across various contexts highlights that socio-economic disparities can significantly impact food aid effectiveness, for example, in Zimbabwe, low-income households faced barriers to accessing food aid despite being in greater need (Rahman et al., 2017). Targeting strategies must consider these socio-economic factors to ensure that aid reaches the most vulnerable populations.

2.4.2. Local governance

Local governance structures play a significant role in the implementation of food aid programs. Effective governance can facilitate coordination among stakeholders, enhance transparency, and build trust within communities (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2016). Strong local governance has been linked to improved food security outcomes in various contexts, as seen in Brazil, where effective local leadership contributed to the success of the Zero Hunger program (Leroy et al., 2015). However, weak governance can lead to corruption, misallocation of resources, and inequitable distribution of aid, as evidenced by a study in Zimbabwe that highlighted how governance issues diverted food aid away from intended beneficiaries (Zinyemba, 2018).

2.4.3. Community engagement

Community engagement is essential for the success of food aid programs. Involving community members in planning and implementation enhances the relevance and effectiveness of interventions (Chambers, 2017). Engaged communities are more likely to support food aid initiatives. For example, a participatory assessment in rural Mutare revealed that community involvement in food aid distribution led to increased transparency and reduced instances of

corruption (Chikozho & Moyo, 2019). Furthermore, community engagement fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, contributing to the long-term sustainability of food aid programs.

2.5. Challenges in community targeting

Despite the potential benefits of community targeting strategies, several challenges can hinder their effectiveness bias, favoritism, capacity limitations and data limitations.

2.5.1. Bias and favoritism

Community targeting can be susceptible to biases, as local leaders and community members may favor certain individuals or groups over others. This favoritism can undermine the fairness of the targeting process and lead to the exclusion of the most vulnerable populations (Devereux, 2020). A study in Chimanimani found that community leaders often prioritized their relatives or friends when selecting beneficiaries for food aid, resulting in inequitable distribution after the cyclone occurred (Mukwereza, (2019), hence ensuring transparency and accountability in the selection process is crucial to mitigate these risks.

2.5.2. Capacity limitations

The capacity of local organizations and community members to implement targeting strategies effectively can vary significantly. Limited training, resources, and experience can hinder accurate beneficiary identification and food aid distribution (Mansuri & Rao, 2015). For instance, a study in Malawi highlighted how inadequate training for local implementers led to misidentification of beneficiaries and inefficient resource allocation (World Bank, 2020). Therefore building the capacity of local stakeholders is essential for improving the effectiveness of community targeting through training and technical support.

2.5.3. Data limitations

Accurate data is vital for effective targeting; however, many communities lack reliable information on socio-economic conditions and food security status. Inadequate data can lead to misidentification of beneficiaries and ineffective allocation of resources (Hoddinott, 2016). A study in rural Malipati found that the absence of comprehensive data on household income and food consumption patterns resulted in significant errors in beneficiary selection (Moyo et al., 2018). There should be investing's in data collection and analysis, such as utilizing mobile surveys and geographic information systems (GIS), is crucial for enhancing targeting accuracy.

2.6. Research gap

The examination of community targeting strategies for identifying food aid beneficiaries in rural areas, particularly in Chilonga, reveals several critical research gaps. Existing literature predominantly generalizes findings across diverse settings, neglecting the unique socio-economic, cultural, and geographical contexts of Chilonga, characterized by high poverty levels and reliance on subsistence agriculture. Local dynamics such as seasonal droughts and land tenure issues significantly impact food security (Devereux et al., 2016). Furthermore, while participatory approaches are acknowledged for their potential to enhance targeting efficiency, empirical evidence assessing their implementation and impact in localized studies like those in Chilonga is scarce. Community consultations in Chilonga have often been limited to a select group of individuals, resulting in a lack of representation for marginalized voices (Mastorillo et al., 2016). The role of social capital is also underexplored, community networks could play a crucial role in identifying the most vulnerable households, yet research on how these networks influence beneficiary identification remains limited (Woolcock & Narayan, 2020). Current targeting strategies often rely on predefined vulnerability criteria, which may overlook the complexities of food insecurity specific to Chilonga, such as the impact of family size and health status on food needs (O'Brien et al., 2018). Moreover, most studies employ cross-sectional analyses, overlooking the long-term effectiveness of targeting strategies. Changes in household circumstances due to economic fluctuations have not been adequately tracked over time, highlighting a need for longitudinal research in this context (Hossain et al., 2017). The intersection of gender dynamics with food aid targeting is also under examined in Chilonga, women often bear the brunt of food insecurity, yet their experiences and needs are frequently marginalized in the beneficiary identification process (Kabeer, 2015). Lastly, the integration of technology in enhancing community targeting remains largely unexamined, for instance, the potential for mobile data collection to capture real-time information on food security in Chilonga could significantly improve the accuracy of beneficiary identification (Bennett et al., 2019). Addressing these gaps could substantially enhance the effectiveness of food aid programs in rural areas like Chilonga, ultimately contributing to improved food security outcomes.

2.7. Summary

In conclusion, this literature review emphasizes the importance of integrating theoretical frameworks with empirical findings to enhance the effectiveness of community targeting strategies

in food aid distribution. By adapting approaches to the socio-economic and cultural contexts of communities, stakeholders can improve targeting accuracy and foster sustainable food security outcomes. As demonstrated through various global examples, successful food aid programs must prioritize community engagement, local governance, and the unique needs of vulnerable populations to ensure equitable and effective distribution of resources.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research adopted a qualitative approach in collecting and analysing data. Data was collected from the selected ward Chilonga, where some NGOs provided food assistance/ aid. Again, document analysis assisted the authors to compare studies conducted elsewhere in terms on NGO beneficiary selection data. Sources in the form of texts and documents provide a great deal of data about society, both historically and of the present (Walliman, 2011). The authors used their experience of staying in Chiredzi as a starting point to compile their research. The researcher had access to the procedures used by the selected NGOs in selecting the target population in food aid and distribution. This assisted in interrogating the experiences with responses from research participants. The researchers also adopted the observation method. They observed the selection and registration process and the distribution procedures at the community level. Non-scheduled informal discussions were also used to gain more relaxed responses from research participants in every category. All such procedures were carried out to provide high quality evidence and sound logic in answering the research questions. No names of data providers were recorded during data collection.

3.2 Research design

According to Creswell (2014), a research design is "the plan or proposal to conduct research, involving the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods." In this study, a mixed-methods research design is employed, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of community targeting strategies in food aid distribution. The quantitative component involves the collection and statistical analysis of numerical data through structured questionnaires administered to selected beneficiaries and community members. The qualitative aspect complements this by capturing in-depth perspectives through focus group discussions and key informant interviews with local leaders, aid workers, and other stakeholders. This methodological triangulation enhances the validity and reliability of the findings by allowing cross-verification and a richer interpretation of the data, particularly in a complex socio-political context like Chilonga.

3.3 Study area/setting

The study was conducted in Chilonga ward 7, which is a rural community in Chiredzi district of Masvingo Province located South Eastern Zimbabwe.

3.4 Sampling methods

This study employed a two-stage sampling design to ensure broad representativeness while accommodating the logistical realities of rural Zimbabwe. In the first stage, systematic sampling was used to select villages in Chilonga. This approach was instrumental in capturing a diverse cross-section of communities with varying physical and socio-economic characteristics, thereby minimizing location-based bias and enhancing the inclusiveness of the sample. In the second stage, non-probability convenience sampling was used to select households within the sampled villages. Enumerators interviewed respondents who were readily available at the time of the visit. Sampling, as defined by Kumar (2011), is "the process of selecting a few individuals from a bigger group to become the basis for estimating or predicting an unknown situation or outcome for the entire group." While random sampling from a food aid beneficiary register might have been statistically ideal, it was not practical in Chilonga due to the lack of formal addressing systems, such as street names and stand numbers. In this context, convenience sampling provided a feasible alternative, allowing enumerators to reach respondents quickly and efficiently. Although this method may limit statistical generalizability, efforts were made to include a range of household types to reduce potential sampling bias. Overall, the two-stage sampling design aimed to balance methodological rigor with fieldwork practicality in order to produce reliable and context-sensitive findings.

3.5 Data collection instruments

The study on the effectiveness of community targeting strategies for identifying food aid beneficiaries in the rural area of Chilonga FDP, Chiredzi, three primary data collection instruments were employed, questionnaires, focus groups, and key informant interviews. The questionnaires were designed to gather quantitative data from beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries about their food security status, socio-economic conditions, and perceptions regarding the food aid program. This instrument allowed for the collection of standardized data that could be statistically analyzed. Focus groups provided a qualitative perspective, allowing participants to discuss their experiences and opinions in a group setting, which facilitated a deeper understanding of community dynamics and the collective views on food aid targeting strategies. Key informant interviews were conducted

with local leaders and stakeholders to gain insights based on their experiences and knowledge about the food aid program, ensuring that the study captured expert opinions and contextual factors influencing the targeting strategies. Together, these instruments provided a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the community targeting strategies in the specific context of Chilonga.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Primary data was collected using individual questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered to 100 respondents. One on one interview method was used in the administration of questionnaires. It involved moving from one village to the other to meet the respondents. In this case face questionnaires remained the only option although they were very expensive. The method provides an opportunity for the interviewer to explain any question which may not be understood by the respondent easily or which may be ambiguous. The interviewer may also make follow up questions and is able to make assessments from the facial and other expressions of the respondent as well as make observations of the area. Structured questionnaires gather quantitative data from participants. The questionnaires include closed-ended questions to facilitate statistical analysis, alongside a few open-ended questions to allow for additional insights. The questions focus on various aspects of the community targeting strategy, including awareness, satisfaction, and perceived effectiveness. The questionnaire contains 10 questions, some of the questions asked, how satisfied beneficiaries are with the food aid received and what improvements would they suggest for the food aid targeting process.

3.5.2 Focus groups

Focus group discussions were held with community leaders comprising of councilors, kraal heads, village heads, village community workers, and social workers from DSD, AGRITEX workers, business people and other influential people. Issues for discussion centered around the main livelihood activities in their areas, the change in the range and magnitude of these activities since the introduction of food aid, reasons for such change, and suggestions on how food aid can be designed to support livelihood strategies. Focus group discussions were used as a quick way of gathering data in order to establish trends and perspectives especially from the view point of community leadership. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Christian Care and WFP staff as professionals who implemented the programmes over the years and have observed and

established trends in community behavior towards livelihoods. District level officials such as the District Development Coordinator, Development practitioners from the Department of Social Development, the Chief Executive Officer, and the District AGRITEX Officer were also engaged in Focus Group Discussions separately.

3.5.3 Key informant interview

Key informant interviews are conducted with stakeholders involved in the food aid program, including local government officials, NGO representatives, and community leaders. These semi-structured interviews allow for in-depth exploration of the operational aspects of the community targeting strategy, challenges faced, and recommendations for enhancing effectiveness. The insights gained from these interviews contribute to a holistic view of the program's impact.

3.6 Data analysis procedures and presentations

Content analysis and comparison techniques were used to analyse data from secondary sources. Collating and interpretations were used for focus group discussions as well as responses on open ended questions in the questionnaire. Quantitative data generated through questionnaires was analysed using an electronic data analysis package called excel.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Informed Consent

Informed consent ensures that participants voluntarily agree to take part in a study based on a clear understanding of its purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. In this study, informed consent will be obtained verbally or in writing before participation. The researcher will explain the purpose of the study, how the data will be used, and the participant's right to decline or withdraw at any time without penalty. This is especially important in rural contexts like Chilonga, where literacy levels may vary; therefore, the information will be communicated in the local language to ensure comprehension.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality involves protecting the privacy of participants by ensuring that the information they provide is not disclosed in ways that could identify them. In this study, all responses will be anonymized during data transcription and analysis. Identifying details such as names or household

information will be excluded from any public documentation or reports. Data will be securely stored electronic files will be password-protected and physical records will be kept in a locked cabinet. Only the principal researcher and academic supervisor will have access to raw data. These measures aim to build participant trust and encourage honest responses.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval is the formal authorization granted by an institutional review board or ethics committee, confirming that a study meets the required ethical standards. For this research, ethical clearance will be sought from the relevant university ethics committee and where necessary from local authorities in Chilonga. This process ensures that the research design, methodology, and engagement with participants align with national and institutional ethical guidelines. Securing approval also validates the research's commitment to respecting human rights and upholding academic integrity.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research methodology employed in the study, detailing the research design, sampling methods, data collection instruments, analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. By employing a mixed-methods approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the Community Targeting Strategy in identifying food aid beneficiaries in the Chilonga area. The subsequent chapters will present the findings and discuss their implications for policy and practice.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

The literature reviewed in chapter 2 had consensus and it was concluded that food aid is a human right, necessary to curb starvation and can yield positive results when community targeting strategies are employed. This chapter presents the findings of a survey conducted at Chilonga Food Distribution Point (FDP) in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe. The study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of community targeting strategies for identifying food aid beneficiaries in rural areas. The survey employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods.

4.1. Current targeting strategies used at the FDP

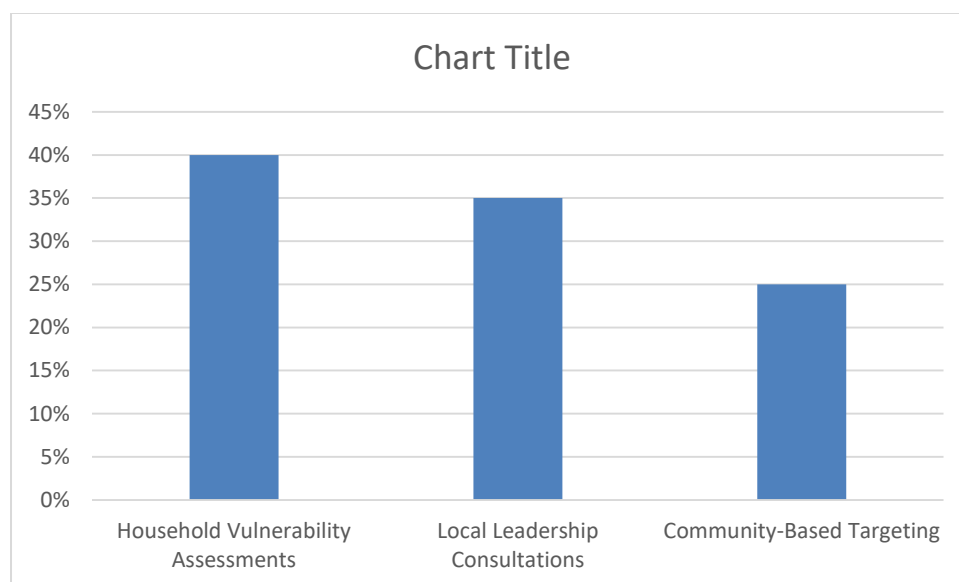
The current targeting strategy used at Chilonga FDP is based on a combination of factors, including means testing, vulnerability assessment, and community-based targeting. Means testing involves assessing the income and assets of households to determine their eligibility for food aid. Vulnerability assessment involves identifying households that are vulnerable to food insecurity due to factors such as poverty, illness, or disability. Community-based targeting involves relying on community leaders mostly.

The distribution of responses is illustrated below. Household Vulnerability Assessments: 40%

Local Leadership Consultations: 35%

Community-Based Targeting: 25%

Figure 4.1: (A bar graph showing percentage distribution of respondents identifying each strategy.)
(source : Research Data)



Below are the responses of the participants.

Key Informant 1, a FDP manager, noted: "We use a combination of means testing and vulnerability assessment to identify beneficiaries. However, we also rely on community leaders to identify households that are in need. This approach has been effective in ensuring that food aid reaches the most needy households."

However, some respondents raised concerns about the effectiveness of the current targeting strategy. **Respondent 23**, a community leader, noted: "The current targeting strategy is good, but it can be improved. Sometimes, households that are not in need receive food aid, while those that are in need are left out. This creates tension and conflict within the community."

Another respondent stated: "The committee members go door to door to verify who qualifies based on income levels, household size, and the presence of vulnerable members such as the elderly or orphans."

During focus group discussions, some participants expressed concerns about the consistency of the targeting process. **A participant remarked** "Sometimes the criteria are clear, but other times, personal biases come into play, and deserving families are left out."

Experts' Views: Key informants, including program coordinators, emphasized that CBT is cost-effective and leverages local knowledge. However, one key informant highlighted a critical

limitation “While the strategy theoretically promotes inclusivity, it heavily relies on the integrity of local committees, which can sometimes be compromised by favoritism or nepotism.”

From an interview one of the respondents said, ” inini gore negore handinyorwe mwanangu panopiwa vanhu chikafu nekuti vanonditi ndiri webato rinopikisa ndiyo nhamo yandinayo muno ”

4.2. Strengths and weaknesses of current targeting strategies.

Respondents identified several strengths and weaknesses of the current targeting strategies. The strengths include

- Community-based targeting allows for more accurate identification of beneficiaries.
- Means testing and vulnerability assessment help to ensure that food aid reaches the most needy households.
- The current targeting strategy is flexible and can be adapted to changing circumstances.

However, the weaknesses include:

- The current targeting strategy is often subjective and prone to bias.
- The process of identifying beneficiaries can be time-consuming and labor-intensive.
- The current targeting strategy may not be effective in reaching all vulnerable households.

The survey explored respondents’ views on the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies. The results are summarized in a pie chart.

Figure 2: Perceived Strengths of Current Strategies

Transparency: 30%

Community Involvement: 45%

Efficiency in Resource Allocation: 25%

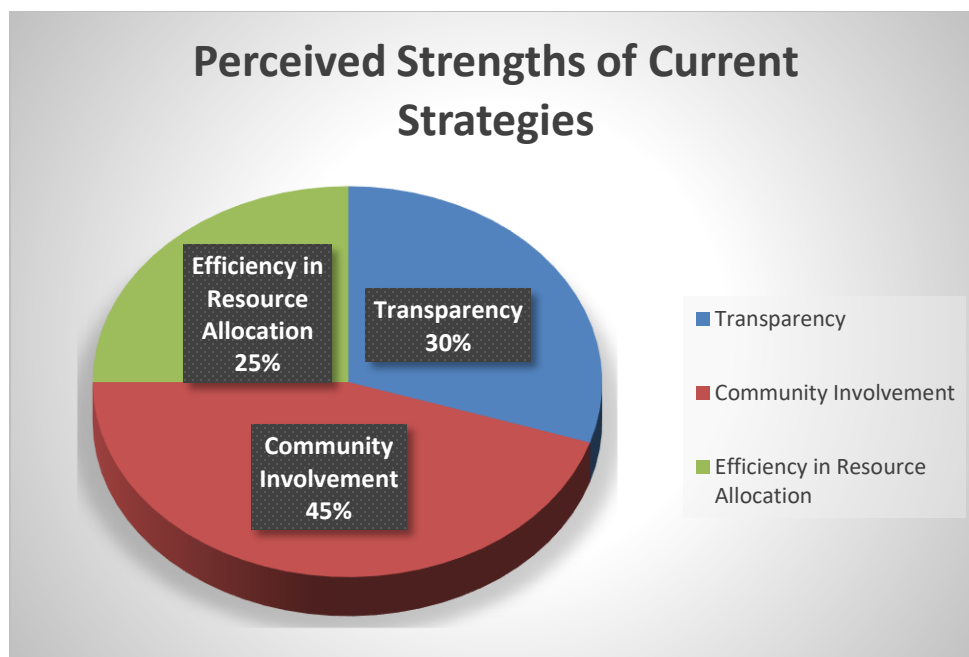


Figure 4.2: Perceived Strengths of Current Strategies

Risk of Favoritism: 40%

Inadequate Coverage: 35%

Insufficient Verification: 25%

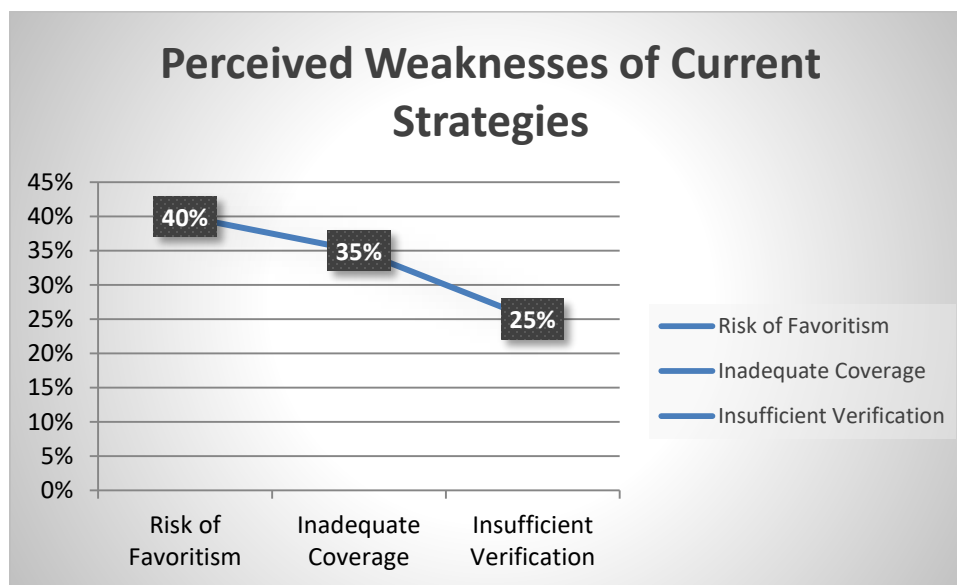


Figure 4.3: Perceived Weaknesses of Current Strategies

Below are the responses

One respondent pointed out: *“Some families manipulate the system by hiding assets or splitting households to qualify.”*

Focus group discussions revealed mixed opinions. One participant acknowledged the strength of the verification process:” The verification visits are helpful in ensuring that only the most vulnerable are selected.”

Nevertheless, others criticized the lack of uniformity in applying the criteria.

A participant stated: *“Some leaders are influenced by bribes, which undermines the fairness of the process.”*

Experts’ Views. *Experts identified strengths such as reduced administrative costs and community involvement. However, one expert flagged the weak grievance mechanisms:”Complaints about exclusion or unfair targeting are often not adequately addressed, leaving affected households without recourse.”*

A key informant from the DsD *emphasized need to employ a down go to top approach because the beneficiaries are complaining that they are being given food which does not meet their dietary needs.*

From the interview, most woman, emphasized that issue of diet with one saying (chikafu chatiri kupiwa kuno ndizvo hazvoo mwanangu hatingashoori asi tinodawo zvinovakaa muvirii nekuti chikafu chakaita semapfunde zvatiri kupiwa hazvigone kupedzaa zhara yatinayoo kuno ,pakuenda kuchimbuzi idambudziko chairo.)

4.3. Community perceptions of targeting strategies

Respondents expressed mixed views about the effectiveness of the current targeting strategies. Some respondents felt that the current targeting strategy is effective in reaching the most needy households. However, others felt that the current targeting strategy is biased and prone to error. Views are as following;

Strongly Agree: 20%

Agree: 35%

Neutral: 15%

Disagree: 20%

Strongly Disagree: 10%

Figure 4: Community Perceptions on Fairness of Targeting Strategies

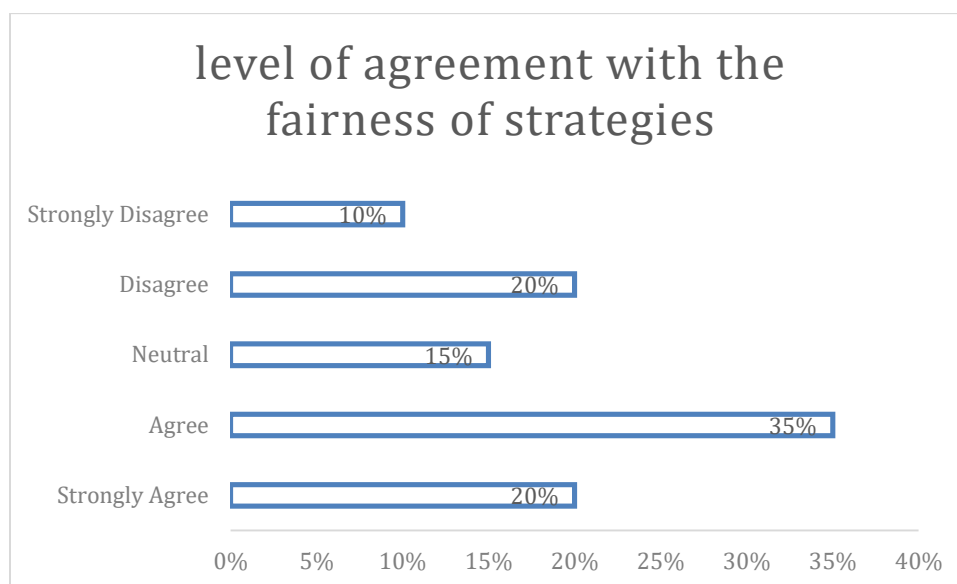


Figure 4.4: (A bar graph showing the level of agreement with the fairness of strategies.) (source : Research Data)

Below are the responses given by participants .

Key Informant 2, a community leader, noted: "I think the current targeting strategy is effective in reaching the most needy households. However, I also feel that the process can be improved. Sometimes, households that are not in need receive food aid, while those that are in need are left out."

Community members generally viewed the strategies as beneficial but flawed. **A respondent expressed:** "We appreciate the food aid, but the process sometimes feels unfair when some families who are not poor get included."

Others were more critical, with **one respondent stating:** "It is disheartening to see those who have connections benefiting while we struggle."

*Focus groups revealed that trust in the targeting process varied. **One participant remarked:** “When local leaders are transparent, we trust the process. But when there is secrecy, we suspect foul play.”*

Another participant emphasized the need for more community involvement: “We want regular updates and more opportunities to question decisions.”

*Key informants acknowledged these perceptions. **One expert observed:** “Building trust is essential. Transparency measures, such as publishing lists of beneficiaries and holding public meetings, can improve community buy-in.”*

***One village member from the FDS** said politicisation of food distribution is not good especially in some of the villages like Basopani and Masenyani, let’s have a spirit of equity and equality as we are all humans...*

One of the leaders in the community also seconded that saying the key political players are the one which give us directives to follow, leading us to be selective, which is not good at all.

4.4 Effectiveness of food aid in Chilonga through the community targeting strategy

The need to aid the beneficiaries has been commonly recognized universally. Kinsley (2010) noted that feeding the needy when one has resources to do so is the most obvious of all human obligations. It is necessary for a transition to a state of human society in which people will not suffer from hunger. Food aid in Chilonga has brought a lot of benefits in the area. Of much importance is the ration offered by the donor to the people in the area under study. The people received cereals in form of maize and beans and cooking oil. This had a major impact on the people’s diets since it means that the little money obtained from selling and working can no longer be used to buy cereal but rather other food items thereby ability to have a balanced diet which, according to Government of Zimbabwe (2005) is essential for a healthy life. In addition, food aid enabled people in the study area to regain their lost meals. Prior to food aid, people in Chilonga have been having mostly one meal a day. This situation was improved by food aid which saw a lot of people regaining their three meals a day that have previously been stolen by the prevalence of hunger.

4.5. The effective targeting strategy contribution towards household food security

Food security, as defined by Kinsley (2010) is a measure of ensured access to essential nutrition. It refers to a household's ability to provide future physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that fulfills the dietary needs and food preferences for living an active and healthy lifestyle. It is a measure of resilience to future disruption or unavailability of critical food supply due to various risk factors including droughts, shipping disruptions, fuel shortages, economic instability and wars among other factors. According to ZimVac (2012), the nation's annual food insecurity levels were high thus more than 1.6 million Zimbabweans were unable to access sufficient food during the peak hunger period, January – December 2024. This is the highest level of food insecurity in the past three years. WFP responded with a Seasonal Targeted Assistance programme to help food insecure households in 40 of the country's 60 rural districts in which Chiredzi is one of them. According to ZimVac (2012) the programme is an emergence humanitarian assistance that helped people to escape the trap of hunger. Food aid beneficiaries were able to regain their number of meals that have been disrupted by lack of food. The Department of Social Development also responded with a Drought Relief Program in all rural areas in Zimbabwe. Most of the beneficiaries were able to regain their food security status which they had lost due to the prevalence of hunger. It was noted that half of the respondents twenty three (23) highlighted that food aid has contributed about 100% towards their household food security. This shows the significance of food aid in hunger alleviation. However as noted by Moyo (2009) one of the disadvantages of aid is that it serves a specific purpose at a specific time leaving people vulnerable to more problems during its absence in the future.

4.6. Discussion

The findings of this study align with previous research on community-based targeting in food aid programs, which emphasize the importance of local participation, transparency, and the consideration of community dynamics in the targeting process. However, the findings also highlight several challenges that are common in rural food aid programs, such as bias, exclusion, and data inaccuracies. The high level of community participation in the targeting process in Chilonga FDP contributed to the relevance of the strategies, but the subjective nature of some community assessments, along with incomplete data, reduced the overall accuracy and fairness of beneficiary identification. The results also point to the need for more robust data collection methods and more effective monitoring systems to ensure that the most vulnerable populations are

accurately identified and supported. Moreover, while community-based strategies provide the advantage of leveraging local knowledge, they also require careful management to mitigate the risks of bias and political influence. Addressing these challenges through more transparent selection processes, regular training for community leaders, and enhanced community communication could improve the overall effectiveness of food aid targeting in rural areas.

4.7. Chapter Summary

An effective strategy used for food aid is effective for implementing food security mostly in rural areas. The community targeting strategies employed at the Chilonga FDP were generally effective in identifying food aid beneficiaries, particularly in terms of relevance and inclusiveness. Future food aid programs in rural areas can benefit from a more transparent, objective, and data-driven approach to ensure that aid reaches the most vulnerable populations efficiently by using such strategies. Food aid has also been seen promoting unity in the recipient community through working together. However, issues such as political bias, inaccuracies in data collection, and challenges in communication highlighted the need for improvements in the targeting process.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the key findings from the study, discusses the implications of the results, and provides recommendations for improving community targeting strategies for food aid distribution at the Chilonga Food Distribution Point (FDP).

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study revealed that the current targeting strategies employed at the Chilonga FDP have both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths include the use of community-based targeting criteria, which allows for local participation and context-specific decision-making. However, the weaknesses include a lack of transparency, inconsistent application of targeting criteria, and limited accountability mechanisms.

The study also found that community members perceive the targeting process as unfair, non-transparent, and exclusive. The majority of respondents felt that the current targeting strategies do not adequately address the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

5.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study highlight the need for improved community targeting strategies that prioritize transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. The use of community-based targeting criteria is a positive step, but it must be accompanied by robust accountability mechanisms to prevent biases and ensure fairness.

The study's results also underscore the importance of community participation and engagement in the targeting process. Community members must be involved in decision-making processes to ensure that their needs and concerns are addressed.

5.4 Recommendations

To the Government and Policy Makers:

1. **Improve Transparency and Accountability:** Establish and enforce clear, standardized food aid targeting criteria across regions. Introduce formal accountability systems, such as

periodic independent audits and grievance redress mechanisms, to monitor the fair implementation of food distribution programs.

2. **Adopt Data-Driven Approaches:** Utilize national-level data such as poverty maps, vulnerability indices, and real-time needs assessments to guide the allocation of food aid resources. This will help ensure support reaches the most at-risk populations efficiently.

To Local Authorities and Implementing Agencies (e.g., NGOs, FDP staff):

3. **Enhance Community Participation:** Involve local communities more actively in targeting decisions by holding regular community forums, focus group discussions, and feedback sessions. Local knowledge can improve the accuracy and fairness of beneficiary selection.
4. **Provide Training and Capacity Building:** Offer continuous training for Food Distribution Point (FDP) staff, local leaders, and aid workers on targeting principles, ethical distribution practices, and effective communication strategies to build local capacity and improve service delivery.

To Community Leaders and Structures:

5. **Strengthen Local Oversight Committees:** Empower community-based oversight committees to monitor aid distribution, resolve conflicts, and act as liaison points between beneficiaries and aid providers, enhancing local accountability.

To Community Members and Beneficiaries:

6. **Promote Awareness and Engagement:** Encourage community members to actively participate in information-sharing meetings and report irregularities. Understanding eligibility criteria and distribution schedules can reduce misinformation and increase trust in the system.

5.5 Conclusion

This study has highlighted the need for improved community targeting strategies for food aid distribution at the Chilonga FDP. The recommendations proposed in this chapter aim to enhance transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the targeting process.

In the context of heightened political upheaval and economic uncertainty in Zimbabwe, the use of food aid is becoming more widespread as many individuals in rural areas are struggling to meet their basic food requirements. For an appropriate distribution of food aid and resources, sound intervention strategies are crucially needed. Food requirements in rural areas can be met through targeting of food aid. The main aim of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the food aid community targeting strategies used in identifying food aid beneficiaries in rural areas.

Food for work targeting strategies and some additional community targeting strategies were found to be not effective in identifying food aid beneficiaries in the Chilonga FDP. Therefore, it is recommended that alternative food aid targeting methods that help identify the intended food aid beneficiaries should be devised. Based on the findings, the research suggests that food aid distribution systems should be partially decentralized ensuring the inclusion of community targeting in the distribution chain. Clearly, further research is required to identify the most effective

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE FOR THE PEOPLE RECEIVING FOOD AID IN CHILONGA

My name is Melisa Mufambi. I am studying Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Development Studies at Bindura University of Science Education. I am required to carry out research in my final year for the completion of my program. I am researching “**The effectiveness of Community Targeting Strategy for Identifying Food Aid Beneficiaries in Rural Areas, Case study of Chilonga FDP Chiredzi**”. The information collected in this research will be kept confidential and used for academic purposes only. Names will not be included in the write-up. Your participation will be greatly valued.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender: tick

a. Male	b. Female	c. Prefer not to say
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2. Age: tick

a. 20-24	b. 25-30	c. 30-34	d. 35-39	e. 39 and above
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3. Name of household members.....

4. Relation to household head.....

Section B: Assess Current Targeting Strategies

5. Are you aware of the food aid program, have you participated in it?

Yes	No
-----	----

6. How were you selected for these programs?

.....

.....

7. Were you informed about the selection criteria? If yes, how?

Yes	No
-----	----

8. What do you think are the strengths of the current targeting strategies?

.....

9. What weaknesses have you noticed in the targeting process?

.....

10. Do you believe the targeting process is fair? Why or why not?

11. How transparent do you think the selection process is?

.....

12. Do you feel included in the decision-making process regarding food aid?

Yes	No	Not sure
-----	----	----------

13. Have you or anyone you know been denied aid? If so, why do you think that was?

14. What changes would you suggest to improve the targeting process?

15. How can the community be better involved in the selection of beneficiaries?

THANK YOU

APPENDIX 2

Key Informant Interview Questions

Introduction:

Welcome, and thank you for participating in this interview. The purpose of this session is to gather valuable insights and expertise from key informants regarding food aid targeting strategies in Chilonga. Your perspectives will help us understand the effectiveness of these strategies and develop recommendations for improvement. Please feel free to share your thoughts openly and honestly.

1. Background and Expertise:

- Can you please introduce yourself and provide a brief overview of your role and experience related to food aid services in Chilonga?

2. Awareness of Services:

- What food aid programs are currently available in Chilonga?
- How these programs are promoted and made accessible to the community?

3. Utilization of Services:

- In your experience, how often do community members utilize these food aid services?
- What factors influence their decision to access or not access these services?

4. Accessibility and Inclusivity:

- How accessible are the food aid services for various community members in Chilonga? Do they cater to specific needs?
- What barriers or challenges do community members face in accessing these services?

5. Service Quality and Resources:

- How would you assess the overall quality of the food aid targeting strategies in Chilonga?
- Are these services inclusive and respectful of the rights and dignity of community members?
- Are the resources (financial, human, and logistical) allocated to food aid in Chilonga sufficient to meet community needs? If not, please elaborate.

6. Improvement Suggestions:

- In your opinion, what are the key areas that require improvement in the food aid services provided in Chilonga?

- Do you have any specific suggestions or recommendations for enhancing these services?

7. Collaboration and Coordination:

- How effectively do different organizations and stakeholders involved in food aid collaborate and coordinate their efforts in Chilonga?
- Are there existing mechanisms for coordination, and are they effective in addressing the needs of food aid beneficiaries?

8. Closing Remarks:

- Is there anything else you would like to add or any further concerns you would like to raise regarding food aid targeting strategies in Chilonga?

Thank you for your valuable participation and for sharing your insights. Your input will be instrumental in our efforts to improve food aid services in Chilonga.

APPENDIX 3

Focus Group Discussion Questions

Introduction:

Welcome and thank you for participating in this focus group discussion. The purpose of this session is to gather valuable insights and experiences from community members regarding food aid targeting strategies in Chilonga. Your perspectives will help us understand the effectiveness of these strategies and develop recommendations for improvement. Please feel free to share your thoughts openly and honestly. There is no right or wrong answers. Let's begin:

1. Icebreaker

- Please introduce yourself by sharing your name and any relevant experiences related to food aid in Chilonga.
- Share a brief background of your experiences accessing food aid services in the community.

2. Awareness of Services

- Are you aware of any food aid programs available in Chilonga? If yes, please elaborate on the types of programs you know about.
- How did you become aware of these programs? Were they actively promoted or easily accessible?

3. Utilization of Services:

- Have you personally utilized any of the food aid services available in Chilonga? If yes, please describe your experience.
- If you have not utilized any services, what were the reasons for not accessing them?

4. Accessibility and Inclusivity:

- How accessible are the food aid services in Chilonga? Do they cater to your specific needs?
- Have you faced any barriers or challenges in accessing these services? If yes, please share your experiences.

5. Service Quality and Resources:

- How would you rate the overall quality of the food aid targeting strategies in Chilonga?
- Are the services inclusive and respectful of your rights as a community member?
- Are the resources (financial, human, and logistical) dedicated to food aid in Chilonga adequate? If not, please explain.

6. Improvement Suggestions:

- In your opinion, what are the key areas that require improvement in the food aid services provided in Chilonga?
- Do you have any specific suggestions or recommendations for enhancing these services? Please share your ideas.

7. Support Networks and Community Engagement:

- Are there any support networks or community-based organizations that have helped address food aid needs in Chilonga?
- How can community engagement be improved to better support food aid beneficiaries in Chilonga?

8. Closing Remarks:

- Is there anything else you would like to add or any further concerns you would like to raise regarding food aid targeting strategies in Chilonga?

Thank you for your valuable participation and for sharing your insights. Your input will be instrumental in our efforts to improve food aid services in Chilonga.

APPENDIX 4

An approval letter of research from the university and Ministry of Local Governance and Public Works, Chiredzi District

SCHOOL OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES, DISASTER & DEVELOPMENT
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



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BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

CHAIRPERSON'S OFFICE

Thursday 03 April 2025

TO WHO IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir or Madam

RE: RESEARCH SUPPORT LETTER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STUDENT

I am writing on behalf of the Sustainable Development Department requesting your collaboration on the research of our fourth-year student, MELISA MUFAMBI REGISTRATION NUMBER B211868B.

The student is studying for a 4-year Bachelor of Science (Honours) Degree in Development Studies (HBSc.DG). During the fourth year of study, students are required to do field research which require them to do their data collection for research purposes.

We will be highly obliged to furnish you with additional information about the research project if our request meets your favorable consideration.

Yours faithfully,


 Dr. J. Bowora
 (Chairperson)

CHAIRMAN
 GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT
 FACULTY OF SCIENCE

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR
 MIN. OF LOCAL GOVT. & PUBLICWORKS
 CHIREDDI DISTRICT
 11 APR 2025
 P.O. BOX 139, CHIREDDI, ZIMBABWE
 TEL: 011 231 2372/2373/2405

*Permission is granted.
 Engaging local leadership
 during the course of study
 is highly encouraged
 Chirindiro
 KZ*

APPENDIX 5: PLAGIARISM REPORT

FINALE.docx			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
14%	12%	3%	8%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	natagri.ufs.ac.za Internet Source	4%	
2	onlineresearchjournals.com Internet Source	2%	
3	liboasis.buse.ac.zw:8080 Internet Source	<1%	
4	ir.msu.ac.zw:8080 Internet Source	<1%	
5	ir.knust.edu.gh Internet Source	<1%	
6	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1%	
7	Submitted to University of Lay Adventists of Kigali Student Paper	<1%	
8	Mohamed, Mohd Elhaitham. "Assessing Health-Promoting Behaviors Among Members of the Arab Community in Ottawa: A Quantitative Analysis.", Adler University	<1%	