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AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SECURITY NGO'S: ARE THEY MAKING A DIFFERENCE  
IN ZIMBABWE?

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## ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe, a country in Sub-Saharan Africa, is struggling with food insecurity, partially stemming from agricultural problems and governmental failings, such as land redistribution and restrictions placed on non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In comparison to neighboring countries, it is worse off in many categories and is second in the world in the percentage of the population living under the poverty line (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). Non-governmental organizations are typically called on to assist when countries, such as Zimbabwe, face life-threatening food shortages. However, they often face challenges, including governmental resistance, limited funding, and poorly trained staff members who lack commitment. Internal difficulties cause them to be limited in their scope and the work that they are able to do. The demand by donors for quick solutions and easy success stories leaves little room for trial and error, causing a shortage of funds when projects need long-term support. Because of these challenges, many NGOs are not able to transition from immediate needs to more sustainable development solutions. Many development theories, both conventional and nonconventional, are often too abstract to offer much guidance. Ultimately, stories of localized successes do exist, but the reach of NGOs is very minimal. Better cooperation from governments and NGO improvements such as long-term funding, training, and better communication are needed if NGOs are going to reach all of those who need them in the world. It is also possible that NGOs themselves are simply unable to replace governmental policy and assistance. This thesis will explore whether NGOs are actually improving food security and agriculture in Zimbabwe. The methods I use are surveying NGOs, examining maize yields over time, and comparing Zimbabwe to other countries in the same geographical area.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

In the United States, it is not uncommon to be urged to donate to a hunger relief campaign or a non-governmental organization. I myself have donated in the past, and my family continues to support a specific child in an organization through child sponsorship. It is something that I have passionately pursued in the past since learning about the immense poverty throughout the world. My family sponsors a child in Zimbabwe, which sparked my interest in that country. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to visit the country in the summer of 2015 as part of a mission trip through a different non-governmental organization. In preparation for the trip I read a book that suggested that it is possible to actually hurt the people of these countries with the work that organizations come in to do, causing the situation to worsen rather than improve. From there, I developed an interest in the workings of these organizations and how they accomplish their tasks. Thus, a question emerged: are these organizations actually doing anything worthwhile? I wanted to know if they are having a positive effect, a negative effect, or none at all. This information is helpful for those who, including myself, donate to these organizations with the hope that their funds are making a difference.

These organizations are common with thousands of them in existence. They focus on everything from food security and agriculture to education and economics. However, although they are indeed very common around the world and work in a variety of countries, defining them has its own challenges. With so many areas of focus, it becomes difficult to determine what are

defining characteristics of a non-governmental organization (NGO). A problem is also seen in that not every organization evolves in the same succession or seeks to accomplish the same goals. Therefore, they present somewhat of a conundrum for those who are examining them. NGOs also have the task of determining the best course of action to take towards accomplishing their goals. There are numerous theories of development that offer valuable insights into what works and does not, many times from a historical standpoint. Case-studies are also available which document successes and failures of organizations. These are helpful resources when determining if NGOs as a whole are accomplishing their tasks.

Although many countries receive the services and aid that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide, Zimbabwe is a country with unique challenges that cause it to be in worse shape than many other nations in its region, let alone the world. Plagued with environmental misfortunes, poor governance, political unrest, and high poverty, it is desperately in need of the help that these organizations can provide. However, difficulties within NGOs make it hard for them to create any substantial change for the better. They also face further challenges in dealing with donors, the local government and the very people that they are trying to help. In this study, I will concentrate on NGOs that focus on food security and agriculture.

The common perception is that these NGOs are doing great work and are important in the fight against food insecurity. Although they certainly play a role, the extent of it is yet to be known. Millions of dollars are given to NGOs with the notion that the money will benefit the people, and it is important that donors and the public know how much of an impact they are making. Determining this will be beneficial in developing better strategies for combating the issue of food insecurity around the globe. Discovering the areas in which NGOs are struggling and identifying strength areas will prove to be beneficial going forward.

In this study, I will present a brief history of Zimbabwe, along with recent scholarly discussions about NGOs both in Zimbabwe and in the world. I will discuss NGO challenges, weaknesses, and strengths to provide a background on the issue at hand, as it is much more complex than what meets the eye. I will also discuss relevant theories of development and case studies. These insights informed the survey I conducted with members of NGOs in Zimbabwe, the results of which I will discuss in the results section. Lastly, I will offer insights directed at understanding the extent to which NGOs are making a difference in Zimbabwe.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

The following is a review of current literature relating to the topic. First, the review will compare Zimbabwe to other countries in the same geographical location. Next, the situation that Zimbabwe is in will be discussed, uncovering the problem that is at hand. Following, the current state of NGOs in Zimbabwe will be discussed, along with theories of development. Lastly, examples of NGO work will be presented for the purpose of gaining insight into initiatives that have already taken place.

Located in Sub-Saharan Africa, Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980 (Howard-Hassmann, 2010). It is a country with both contemporary and traditional aspects and a relational culture (Antonio, 2015). According to the United Nations, the population estimate in 2015 was 15.603 million people (United Nations, 2015). Being a country that has been plagued with many health issues, droughts, and government struggles, it is not surprising that the life expectancy in Zimbabwe is 59 for males and 62 for females (WHO, 2016a). The economy in Zimbabwe has also suffered. The GDP is 16.29 billion (World Bank, 2016).

According to several statistics, Zimbabwe is among the worse-off in the world in many indicators, but not very different from other African nations. As mentioned, the life expectancy for men and women is substantially lower than the global life expectancy, which is 69 for males and 74 for females. However, all African countries had life expectancies at 58 for males and 62 for females (WHO, 2016b). Botswana, Zimbabwe's neighbor to the west, has a life expectancy of 63 for males and 68 for females, making it one of the highest in the region. To the south,

South Africa comes in similar to Zimbabwe at 59 and 66, and Zambia to the north also comes in close at 59 and 65. Mozambique, its neighbor to the east, has a lower life expectancy of 56 and 59. Swaziland, a small country between Mozambique and South Africa has the lowest life expectancy in the general area at 57 and 61 (WHO, 2016a). As for GDP, Zimbabwe comes in as one of the lowest among its neighbors. Compared to Zimbabwe's 16.29 billion, just below is Botswana at 14.39 billion, and Mozambique at 14.8 billion. Zambia is a little higher at 21.15 billion. The lowest in the region is Swaziland at just 4.1 billion. South Africa, being more developed than the others, comes in at 314.57 billion. The global GDP was 74.15 trillion, while the Sub-Saharan African GDP was 1.59 trillion (World Bank, 2016).

Perhaps the most striking comparison is in respect to the percentage of the population under the poverty line. According to a 2012 estimate, the percentage of Zimbabweans that live under the poverty line is 72.3% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). This number is incredibly high, not only for Sub-Saharan Africa, but for the whole world. However according to the most recent estimates, the next closest Sub-Saharan African country is Swaziland at 69%. Zambia comes in at 60.5%, and Mozambique at 52%, according to a 2009. South Africa sits at 35.9%, and surprisingly, Botswana comes in even lower at 30.3%. Syria is the only country with a higher poverty rate at 82.5%, according to a 2014 estimate, which is the highest in the world. This means that Zimbabwe is second only to a country in the midst of a civil war (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016).

Another interesting comparison is that South Africa has 150,000 NGOs, whereas Zimbabwe has only 10,000 (Vivian, 1994). The difference in the number of NGOs may be impacting Zimbabwe's development. While South Africa is a country with, as mentioned, 35.9% of its population under the poverty line, Zimbabwe has over twice that amount, at 72.30%

(Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). Yet, there are 140,000 more organizations working in South Africa, therefore the countries with the greatest needs do not necessarily get the most NGOs.

### *What is the Problem in Zimbabwe?*

Given the statistics mentioned above, it is evident that something is not working well in Zimbabwe. From 1980 to 2000, Zimbabwe was considered to be prosperous compared to other African countries. The cause of this was the number of white farms that existed at the time (Howard-Hassmann, 2010). However, a dramatic shift then took place. Today, half of the population of Zimbabwe is considered to be vulnerable (Antonio, 2015). As mentioned above, the country is ranked second in the world when it comes to the percentage of the population under the poverty line (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). Most of the population also lives in rural areas, with only 20% living in urban parts of the country (Dibie, 2008). In countries where this is the case, agriculture becomes vitally important (Antonio, 2015). Zimbabwe also ranks 156 out of 187 on the Global Hunger Index, which is a measure of hunger relief progress (World Food Programme, 2016). Hunger, or food insecurity, is a vast issue in the country. It is estimated that 4.1 million people were food insecure during the 2017 lean season, largely due to a drought (World Food Programme, 2017). This accounts for roughly one fourth of the population.

Contributing to this problem, food prices in the country can change dramatically in just one season (World Food Programme, 2016). An example of this occurred in 2008, when it took only one day for prices throughout the country to double. One year later, 75% of 9 million people relied on the World Food Project to keep them alive. As a result, Zimbabwe had the highest percentage of people needing food in the entire world. However, the World Food Project lacked enough resources to relieve the problem, so rations were reduced to the point that the

citizens were receiving less than adequate amounts for survival. Because of this, people were desperate. They traded their livestock for maize, ate seeds that were designated for the next year's crops, and ate food that was not suitable for eating, which posed the risk for serious illness (Howard-Hassmann, 2010). In March of 2015, food prices rose again because of poor production in the south and parts of the north. Southern Zimbabwe experienced a drought, causing many people to lack adequate food from their harvest to feed themselves, much less contribute to others, and crops withered to the point that they could not be salvaged (FEWS NET, 2015). In a country where the population very much relies on subsistence agriculture for food, this is a serious concern.

As this information demonstrates, the country is one of much strife. As a result, it is no surprise that the conditions in the country have made their mark on children. Only 17% of children between the ages of 6 and 23 months receive the minimum amount of nutrition that is recommended to be sufficient. This chronic malnutrition that many children are facing has caused 28% of children under 5 to be stunted. Furthermore, of children between 6 and 59 months of age, 56% have anemia (World Food Programme, 2016). Unfortunately, these children will forever live with the impacts that malnutrition is having on their health. This is due to a continuous cycle that is difficult for them to break out of. "Hungry children cannot grow and learn to their full potential. Hungry adults cannot perform hard physical labor; they fall sick more often and are more likely to die young. They are also unwilling to undertake potentially profitable but riskier investments for fear of the consequences of failure. Even worse, hunger perpetuates itself when undernourished mothers give birth to smaller babies who start life with a handicap. A vicious cycle of hunger and poverty is thus created, from which it is difficult for the

poor and the hungry to escape without external help” (FAO, 2003 p.6). Therefore, the effects that the children are feeling will continue to be a challenge for years to come.

Many of these problems stem from the poor government in the country. At independence in 1980, Robert Mugabe became president and has been ever since. In 2005, Operation Murambatsvina was launched by Mugabe. This operation caused the destruction of homes and small businesses of Zimbabweans living in urban areas. The destruction affected 204 million people. It is believed that the cause may have been that they were part of the opposition. Because of human rights violations, an outflow of refugees began, and by 2007, there were 3 million in South Africa, 200,000 in Botswana, and others elsewhere. In the year 2008, Genocide Watch issued a politicide watch, which is a warning of political mass murder (Howard-Hassmann, 2010). One year later, in 2009, independent journalists were jailed because they were believed to support the opposition. As for women, if they were suspected to be part of the opposition or related to them, they were subject to gang rape. Mugabe also used food as a political tool, offering state-owned grain only to his supporters and depriving those who were thought to be against him (Howard-Hassmann, 2010). When elections occur, citizens feel intimidation from the government to vote for Mugabe (Dibie, 2008).

#### *Economic situation*

Mugabe has also been a detriment to the country’s economy. At the onset of the 1980s, the demand for available, unused, fertile land far outweighed the supply of it, which caused prices to rise. One year later, the government began land purchasing with funds that were raised at the international donor conference. Purchasing reached its peak in 1983. The goal of purchasing the land was to resettle 162,000 peasant families who had lost their land, with the deadline being three years. However, in six years, only 52,000 families were resettled. Land

shortages became an issue in rural areas due to the lack of land, which limited peasant contributions to their own and the nation's food supply. Due to this circumstance, white commercial farms became the source of most of the nation's food (Antonio, 2015).

Soon after, in 1989, one of the worst HIV epidemics broke out, which added more financial strain on households. The effects were a massive burden on the healthcare system and on the agricultural work force. The economic situation continued to worsen in 1997 when Zimbabwe chose to intervene in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo without consideration for the economic cost that was involved. Also in 1997, the government elites took part in the looting of 450 billion Zimbabwean dollars from compensation funds for 50,000 war veterans. When exposed, Mugabe was forced to pay each one back, in addition to a monthly allowance. In the same year, Mugabe ordered that 1,500 farms be seized (Antonio, 2015).

One year later, Zimbabwe attended a donor conference held by the UNDP at which guidelines were set for redistribution of land in an organized manner. The biggest emphasis was that it must be done on a willing seller/willing buyer basis. Furthermore, the poor must be provided with capital, training, and support. In 1993, one of the first farms was taken, and government ministers also obtained some for themselves. In 2000, the government amended the clause in the constitution, paving the way for land acquisition without compensation. Clearly, this broke the guidelines set by the UNDP. Because they did not follow the guidelines, all support was withdrawn from the country. By the mid-2000s, 70% of the thriving farms owned by whites were confiscated. Some of the elites sent gangs to drive out whites, even after courts ruled it illegal. Mugabe did not consider the contribution that white farms had on the nation's food, and did not understand the consequences that would come from it (Antonio, 2015).

Mugabe's actions undermined commercial farming, which contributed to crashing the economy. Loans, aid, and investment to Zimbabwe were subsequently stopped. Those who took over the farms often had inadequate farming experience, which led to a decline in productivity and a selling off of much of the equipment. They had no seeds or equipment, nor did they have the means to obtain them if they so desired. Farm employees who did have the knowledge were abused and kicked off of farmland. Also causing chaos was the fact that the land did not come with titles. Instead the new owners were forced to lease it annually from the government because it was the sole owner of the land. Banks therefore held titles that were meaningless, and by 2004, 25% of banks found themselves to be in the middle of a financial crisis (Antonio, 2015).

Between 1998, just five years after the first farm was taken, and 2001, right after the height of land acquisition, foreign investment dropped 99%. By 2003, Zimbabwe lost all its foreign aid sources. Industry, especially relating to agriculture and farming, suffered. Because of the collapsing economy, the country had less access to foreign currency and fell behind on its debt payments to the World Bank. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe was no longer permitted to print money and a bank run resulted. All of these actions started the path to hyperinflation, and by March of 2008, hyperinflation reached 417,823% (Antonio, 2015).

### *The State of NGOs*

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are what many people would call on to help the situation in Zimbabwe. However, there is much disagreement about what NGOs are and how to classify them. There are many variations in definitions of NGOs, some of which include terms such as multidimensional, interdisciplinary, and evolving over time. One of the ways to describe NGOs includes orientation, or what types of activities that they engage in, and level of operation, such as national or regional. There are also many dimensions of NGOs. Some of these include

technical, or expertise in a field, resources, values, mission, interpersonal relationships, including friendships between workers and the movement between organizations, political life, and law (Antonio, 2015). NGOs are also implementers, as they mobilize resources so that they can provide services, catalysts, because they have the ability to bring about change and create inspiration, and partners, because they work together with others while sharing the risk or benefit of a joint undertaking (Lewis, 2009). NGOs often promote changes through the distribution of funds, of which they disburse three billion US Dollars per year (Edwards, 1992). Some estimate that NGOs are reaching 250 million people (Kang'ethe, 2014). There is growing evidence that sometimes NGOs can be effective in alleviating poverty and hunger (Bratton, 1989). The key word, however, is sometimes. Only sometimes are they effective. That means that sometimes they are ineffective.

### **Organizational Growth**

There is a progression that NGOs typically follow in their growth from a small organization to a more complex one. First, some NGOs enter an area to take care of immediate needs (Lewis, 2009). For example, they may come to distribute food or water. However, some organizations never move past this initial stage, and continue to focus on the initial need. The second stage is building small scale initiatives, in which NGOs begin to move beyond this initial need in a location and begin their own initiatives towards accomplishing their goals, such as providing farming education. Third, NGOs focus on sustainability. During this stage they focus on influencing policies through advocacy. Fourth, NGOs focus on linking their movement and objectives with those of wider national and international movements in an effort to make structural changes. Over time, following this progression, NGOs move into more developmental



roles. However, this structure can be criticized because not all NGOs necessarily move along this continuum (Lewis, 2009).

### **Donors**

NGOs are also called upon to fill the gap when governments do a poor job of relieving poverty, which can breed corruption (Lewis, 2009). They have a very limited ability to raise living standards (Bratton, 1989). The World Bank's structural adjustment policies contributed to these setbacks through imposed cuts to social services, causing NGOs to fill the gap either out of intent or out of necessity. Sometimes, they are the only ones that will come in to help. Shifts from state level to more privatized forms of development put a new reliance on NGOs. When donors are frustrated with governments, they turn instead to NGOs for a funding channel because they believe they provide a better chance for implementation and participation. Some donors, however, exaggerate the potential that NGOs have (Lewis, 2009). Governments also have little choice than to let responsibility for basic services rest in the hands of NGOs (Bratton, 1989). When governments do allow the flow of funds from NGOs, it strengthens their international reputation (Dupuy, 2016). In some ways, NGOs can be an extension of government power because there have been times when they have been contracted by governments and donors to carry out specific tasks in exchange for payment (Lewis, 2009). Governments can only focus on one thing at a time if it is a weak government in a country that has many issues. In Zimbabwe, political instability and corruption have inhibited development. Because government is not effective in helping the situation, NGOs have become the voice and defense of the needs, interests, and values of Zimbabwean citizens (Dibie, 2008).

### **Challenges**

NGOs are not exempted from their share of challenges. Considering government shortcomings, NGOs themselves will never be enough to secure lasting improvements for the poor. They need the government on their side to make lasting contributions to development (Edwards, 1992). In the mid-1990s, some governments started to restrict the funding to NGOs while operating in their territory.

The laws that restrict aid can limit and regulate foreign money flow to NGOs. For example, Zimbabwe law prohibits the use of foreign funding for voter education. In fact, Zimbabwe's NGO laws are some of the more restrictive. The reasoning for restrictive laws is political, as NGOs often have a strong influence. For example, governments have a media monopoly, and NGOs can help to break that down. Even when NGOs are not directly tied to the opposition, speaking out against what the government is doing often helps the opposition. NGO resources also have this effect. In times of political unrest and competition, governments are especially hesitant to accept aid (Dupuy, 2016). NGOs have to be very careful what they do, as governments can just push them out. Governments may see NGOs as interfering, and funders fear the lack of trust, transparency, and accountability in governments (Antonio, 2015). Because the government has so much influence, it makes sense that NGOs should work with them so that the effects trickle down to the people. However, this is typically a slow process (Edwards, 1992).

Local organizations often do not have as much access to funding as NGOs (Antonio, 2015). Shockingly, "foreign aid flows from donor countries have amounted to an average of 10% of the GDP of aid-receiving countries between the mid-1990s and 2012. However, in the last two decades, 39 of the world's 153 low- and middle-income countries risked their international reputations as well as potential reductions in foreign aid by restricting overseas financing to domestically operating non-governmental organizations" (Dupuy, 2016 p. 299). The number of

NGOs that are supported by a foreign country has grown dramatically. Donors have now realized that NGOs cannot easily access funding in countries that are very resource poor. International donations are one way to strengthen domestic NGOs and support international NGOs (Dupuy, 2016). Donors can have a substantial impact on development efforts because they can discontinue funding if they are unhappy with the approach (Antonio, 2015).

One challenge for NGOs is the demand made upon them to find simple, neat solutions to problems. It is assumed that they are better able to reach isolated people and address problems. “One study concluded that a very generous estimate would put the percentage of Zimbabwe’s population reached by NGO income generating projects (by far the most common type of NGO activity) at less than one percent” (Vivian, 1994). This study asserts that NGOs are not working on a large scale, and if there are impacts, they are small, localized, and not tackling the problem at a national level. Thirty years after their emergence, NGOs still had not accomplished any substantial change in the country (Yu, 2013). This means that they either do not work, their progress is extremely slow, or both.

NGOs can only have so much influence, and the same things that keep poor people out of the reach of development is what keeps them from getting help from NGOs. NGOs are often considered to think for the people, but often, community members are presented with a range of options from which to pick, and choices are often overruled by staff. Participatory approaches are not always best, though. People are often at a loss when it comes to evaluating the situation themselves. Some of the people thought that they were basically being told to develop themselves. The people have next to nothing, with little food, resources, water, tools. As one woman puts it, “we have only our hands. You ask us to help ourselves: we are willing to work all

day with our hands, but with no resources, all our efforts simply turn into dust in front of our eyes” (Vivian, 1994, p. 185).

NGOs are typically subjected to unrealistic expectations. Often, donors pressure them to keep staff expenses to a minimum, therefore causing staff to be overworked. Also, donors tend to prefer funding only the safest and most appealing projects. Therefore, funding is less likely to be given to innovative projects. NGOs are expected to have the magic bullet, but they absolutely cannot reach all of the people that need help and problems are often complex (Vivian, 1994). Donors, however, look for projects that will have inspirational successes, are appealing to the press, and that are premised upon simple answers. All of these factors influence just how much NGOs are able to do. NGOs are able to be flexible, but sometimes they are called upon to do more than they are able. Situations arise in which evaluations take place, but are not circulated and information is falsified to exaggerate the magnitude of the impacts. However, NGOs are advised not to talk about failures, for fear of disappointing donors (Vivian, 1994). It is essential that donors are awarded the flexibility to figure out what works best through trial and error, because much can be learned from a failed project. Donors call the shots, which causes NGOs to be limited in their effectiveness. They can be creative, but only as much as donors support it. Continuing to do the same things that they have been doing will not do any good if they are not working (Vivian, 1994).

One way that donors exercise their influence is through monitoring and evaluation. This is not all bad, since it may encourage teams to run projects effectively and work towards the desired results. Sometimes the beneficiaries continue to have problems with food security after the teams leave, therefore, projects must be carried out wisely. Teams must carry out their current projects well before they abandon them in order to move on to another. Community

involvement in monitoring and evaluation can also undermine success. Stakeholders' participation and feedback has been credited with some higher success rates (Kimweli, 2013). However, just because a project is monitored and evaluated does not mean that it is guaranteed to succeed. The goal of monitoring and evaluation is assessing the goals and whether they are being met, in addition to meeting the needs of the people. It is crucial, however, that the community determines their own needs, objectives, and implementation, as they may look differently than what the outsiders think the community needs. Leaving out the community lessens the chances of the projects meeting actual needs. Some of the problems with monitoring and evaluation, however, are that they can be expensive, time consuming, and require additional training and skills. Sometimes, it is not even known that tools for it exist and guidelines are not followed (Kimweli, 2013).

Evaluating the successes and failures of NGOs is complex. One of the ways that this is done is through the evaluation of individual programs launched by organizations. Program evaluation is "a systematic process of collecting information and applying approaches, techniques, and knowledge to analyze, research, and assess the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of a program to document its accomplishments and to improve the planning, implementation, and effectiveness of these programs" (Yu, 2013, p. 25). Impact assessment is "the systematic process of analyzing significant changes, whether positive or negative, intended or unintended, as a result of a particular planned activity, program, intervention, or project, on people's lives" (Yu, 2013, p. 25). However, it is important to point out that this definition only includes situations in which the changes are significant. Impact assessment focuses more on the effects of an intervention on people's lives than the project itself. It is about "understanding change and the key processes that led to that change" (Yu, 2013, p. 25). In for-profit

organizations, success is determined by revenue, whereas in NGOs, success is harder to determine because it stretches far beyond revenue. International NGOs work in systems that are unstable and subject to change, meaning that impacts are likely due to a number of different sources, not just the project that was implemented. There are also some things that cannot be measured, and many times, more energy goes into how the results will be measured than actually getting the results, making the impact hard to measure (Yu, 2013).

It is also important to take into consideration the differences between countries. Global development goals are important, but it may also be beneficial to set more individualized goals for African countries specifically, because development needs are different in different areas (Vivian, 1994). This is the problem with one-size-fits-all planning. Just because something is effective in one place does not mean that it will be effective for every country. Global poverty is going down, but African countries are making slower progress. This may partially be due to unrealistic goal setting (Vivian, 1994). It is difficult for NGOs to think both micro and macro at the same time (Edwards, 1992). There are often assumptions that micro-level things are generalizable, but that is not always the case (Vivian, 1994). One project focused solely on increasing rice production in a specific region may produce impacts that are very localized (Yu, 2013). Things may make a difference for one, but not necessarily the whole. Much of the reason that there are obstacles to successful projects is that case studies are usually assessed within a framework instead of the broader level. However, because of limited resources and staff, NGO projects tend to be limited in scope, and in some situations there may be no possible way for regional or national challenges to be met (Vivian, 1994).

The economy is another challenge for NGOs. Since they are non-profits, economic conditions can fluctuate and make them unstable. Some organizations also have leaders that are

misusing funds for their own personal benefit. Workers are usually there only temporarily as a precursor to gain experience for bigger and better things. They also rarely attract a skilled labor force because skilled employees commonly abandon work with an NGO for something better (Vivian, 1994). However, it is important for employees to be committed to the mission and want to put in the long-term effort that is necessary.

Communication is also sometimes an issue for NGOs. Research has found a gap in communication between workers in head offices and staff members at the local level. Staff on the ground do not place enough emphasis on evaluation, and volunteers are likely not trained in how to collect data. Retrospective data is commonly the only way to evaluate, and that is not the most accurate way to do it. Evaluations were also not shared back with the staff, and updates really only come at the rollout of campaigns (Yu, 2013).

Another challenge is the environment. Many people assume that environmental degradation is bad and worsening in developing countries, especially in Africa. The most common environmental issues in Zimbabwe are soil erosion, deforestation, drought, and wildlife conservation. Over 10% of land is eroded, mostly in communal lands, and 23% is significantly eroded. Soil loss, which is also occurring, affects the productivity of the land. Loss of trees makes soil more vulnerable to erosion, loss of forest products means less socioeconomic impact, and fewer trees means worse water retention, which is important during droughts. Small farmers all consistently mention water supply as an environmental concern (Vivian, 1994). Because there are so many restrictions on how land is to be used, prime land is underutilized. Part of the reason that there is a downward trend in maize production is because large-scale farms started switching from maize to other crops.

*Development*

Development has many different definitions, one of which is a process of continuing change (Corbett, 2009). It can also be defined as making people's lives better (Peet 2009). However, perspectives on what constitutes a better life also vary among people (Peet, 2009). For some, development starts at the grassroots with individuals and their communities, where individuals and communities must decide what they want and then work towards it. Development is also continuous and requires time and financial resources. An important part of development is the long-term commitment to communities, and having the meaningful skills which allow people to take care of themselves long-term (Antonio, 2015). Short-term is considered to be anything from one week to two years (Corbett, 2009). Therefore, long-term commitments would generally mean that a development effort must stay in an area for a minimum of two years.

It is important for poverty relief efforts to figure out what the biggest need of an area is, whether relief, rehabilitation, or development. It is possible for an organization to be better at one of these needs than the others. Relief is "urgent and temporary provision of emergency aid to reduce immediate suffering from a natural or man-made crisis" (Corbett, 2009, pp 99-100) Relief is aimed at "stopping the bleeding" (Corbett, 2009, p. 100). The receiver of relief is someone who is unable to help themselves at the time. Rehabilitation "seeks to restore people and their communities to the positive elements of their pre-crisis conditions" (Corbett, 2009, pp. 100). It is possible to do relief and rehabilitation in a developmental way if an initial assessment is done to understand the situation and the best way to respond to it (Corbett, 2009). It is very important that an organization addresses the actual needs of a country. Trying to tackle something that is not actually the biggest problem is detrimental to the efforts and will not create change. It is important that the right strategy is chosen, and then that it is implemented in the right ways.



Ultimately, it is important to work with the victims to help them bounce back. It is not done to or for people, but with people. NGOs should not do things for people that they can do for themselves (Corbett, 2009).

Asset-based community development takes into consideration what people can do for themselves, as it focuses on what the community is already good at and the resources that they have. The opposite of this is a needs-based approach that focuses on what people lack. Sometimes, showering people with outside resources just leaves them feeling more helpless and keeps them from being good stewards of their own resources. However, there are different levels of involvement by the poor, and that involvement can take place through coercion, compliance, consultation, cooperation, co-learning, and community initiated. Coercion involves outsiders determining the plans and implementing them without input from the poor. Compliance involves outsiders creating an agenda and the poor being assigned roles within it, often for an incentive. Consultation involves outsiders creating a plan based on an assessment with the poor to determine their opinions. Cooperation means the poor and the outsiders come together to determine the path forward, but the outsiders still direct the process. Co-learning is when both the outsiders and the poor share their thoughts with each other, from which a plan is made, executed, and evaluated. Community-initiated involvement means that the poor create the plan and then carry it out on their own. With all of the different levels of involvement, it is important for organizations to understand what happens when cultures collide (Corbett, 2009). For example, Zimbabwe tends to be understood as relational, so building relationships of trust and commitment are important aspects of their culture (Antonio, 2015).

A major recent development objective was created at the Millennium Summit in September of 2000. Held at the United Nations, it was the largest gathering of world leaders in

history. Out of it came the Millennium Development goals, which were aimed at reducing extreme poverty by the target date of 2015. Among those goals were to totally eliminate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve better maternal health and less childhood mortality, have a sustainable environment, and develop a global partnership that is focused on development (Peet, 2009). However, as of 2015, the goals have not yet been reached.

There are many competing theories as to why development efforts work and do not work. Two main categories of development theories are conventional and nonconventional theories. Conventional theories see the unequal distribution of wealth as progress in development, and the inequalities that stem from it as the unfortunate price of it. Nonconventional theories tend to be more critical of capitalism and favor democratic intervention. The conventional theories I will discuss are modernization, classical economics, neoliberal economics, Keynesian economics, and Neoliberalism. The nonconventional theories I will discuss are Marxism, socialism, and feminist theories (Peet, 2009).

## **Conventional Theories**

### *Modernization Theory*

Modernization theory stands on the premise that in order to develop, a country must be like the west, and that development in other countries always copies the west. It very much considers how similar a society is to modern society, and what is keeping them from being more like industrialized countries. It asserts that the more tradition is abandoned, the more progress towards adopting a modern society. Modernization highlights urbanization, flexibility, the spread of democracy, weakening of the elites, secularization, and modern communication. The assumption is that countries that have many entrepreneurs with a drive to achieve will spur on development. Education is also emphasized (Peet, 2009). In the article *Democracy and*

*Economic Development*, Zehra Arat mentions that in one survey, urbanization, education, and communication were essential for development. Arat also states that industrialization is an important part of development, particularly in democracy (Arat, 1988).

According to this theory, modern societies are better able to handle change and, therefore, ensuring their growth. By contrast, traditional societies are very low in terms of modernization. Embracing technology and innovation is the key. Cities are considered to be where modernization occurs because of innovations that trickle out of them, and the traditional countryside is not. However, it is important that innovations must diffuse from cities to the countryside. Because of this belief, power should be with people who are modernizers, rather than the countryside's traditional leaders.

Modernization theory does, however, have its faults. First off, it assumes that non-industrialized parts of China, Australia, Africa, Central America, and even parts of Europe are all the same and are all backward. It suggests that there is only one end stage and path to development, but that would require history repeating itself. However, the development of Europe did not follow such a clear path. Therefore, history will not necessarily repeat itself, following along a predictable progression to development. It suggests that developed countries have a history and that underdeveloped countries do not, which is very wrong. Each country must base its economic policy off of its specific history, not off of the history of the west. It is also extremely ethnocentric, stating that everyone must be like the Americans and English (Peet, 2009). It does not at all support diversity or appreciate the rich cultural differences among countries that are different from the west. Modernization, with its focus on high mass consumption being the end point of development, completely neglects to consider people who

want to live well without indulging in overconsumption and worshipping money in order to secure a bright future for themselves (Peet, 2009).

### Classical Economics

The next theory to be discussed is classical economics. Classical economics dominated thinking about development for a period of time spanning 72 years, mostly between the publication of *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith in 1776 and the publication of *Principles of Political Economy* by John Stuart Mill in 1848. Smith believed that people have an inner urge to trade, which is driven by self-interest, and that economies work best when they are set up to enable the interactions of these self-interested people. Therefore, self-seeking people indirectly produce wealth and growth. He believed that worth emerges from the labor put into it and that capital results from these revenues. As a result, more workers can be hired, and the virtuous cycle continues. He suggested that prices have three parts: wages that are paid to the workers, profits that go to factory owners, and rents that go to landlords. Economic growth, then, depends on capital accumulation, which results from revenues (Peet, 2009).

Smith attempted to explain why some countries do well economically while others do not. He pointed to the division of labor, which refers to the different ways that labor is divided up in a country (Peet, 2009). By doing this, skills were increased, labor time was saved, and machines were created by those who knew the intricacies of how something worked. As market price increased, this progression also increased, and both increased as a result of improved transportation. Also, money began to be used instead of bartering, which also added to economic growth. He believed that a just economy must include high wages, allowing free trade to lead to an efficient allocation of resources. However, he believed that there had to be something regulating it, which he believed was the competition between people buying and selling (Peet,

2009). For example, if someone is asking too high of a price for something, nobody will buy it. The consumer would instead look to find it somewhere else. Competition would regulate prices, which means that the state would not need to be in the picture. The market, therefore, drives innovation, invention, and risk taking, and all levels of society will benefit from the self-regulating market (Peet, 2009).

Geography has an effect on all of these factors. With globalization, competition is opened up across the globe. However, countries which have higher productivity and efficiency will win out in these competitive scenarios. Additionally, the prosperity of a location will be influenced by the productivity, and then also the ability of its industries to compete. This can cause inequalities in the wealth of countries. Countries with more skilled workers and more efficient use of resources will prosper more than countries with less skill and less efficiency (Porter, 1998).

David Ricardo, another name in classical economics, believed that wealth was driven by a surplus of supply (Peet, 2009). He asserted that workers are paid and, with their wages, they go and spend, which creates demand. Potentially his biggest contribution was his observation that free trade between nations was based on the principle of comparative advantage. By this idea, there are many benefits that come from free trade among countries. For example, each country has something that is their strength in the market. Therefore, they will trade what they are good at with other countries, causing each country to have their own specialization (Peet, 2009).

In addition to the ideas presented by Adam Smith and David Ricardo, John Stuart Mill added that there is an ethical side to economics, which comes from countries being able to choose how their money is distributed. He believed that this is a more ethical approach that produces a different kind of economic growth. He also believed that the government should

abstain from involvement in economics, except for a few situations. For example, he thought that government interventions to help the poor through welfare and by setting laws, such as working conditions and prohibitions against child labor, are acceptable (Peet, 2009).

Like modernization, classical economics also has its downfalls. First off, it assumes that people are self-interested and competitive, which is not always true. Some people may choose not to be engaged in competitive exchanges out of other motives. A critique of Smith's beliefs points out that wages, profits, and rents are not always equal because wages can be much lower than profits and rent. Classical economics also favors capitalists, which may not be good for everyone all the time. Another critique to mention is that it is impossible for specialization to naturally happen when other forces are continually intervening because everything is politically and socially influenced. Also, the effects of economic growth are disastrous for the majority of the people of the world. According to Peet (2009), classical economics allowed to happen was the creation of inequalities due to wealth distribution that has resulted in billions remaining in poverty. "the implications for the direction taken by economic growth are catastrophic for most of the world's people. What classical economics legitimated and, given its role in policymaking, according to Peet (2009: page?), helped to construct was an unequal world that has kept billions of people in poverty by concentrating wealth in a few places and in the hands of a few people."

### Neoclassical Economics

Another conventional theory of development is neoclassical economics, which is a shift in approach from the accumulation of wealth to how the resources are distributed. The total utility, or pleasure, of consumption lessens with increased consumption. This theory served as the foundation for a critique of wealth inequality. Therefore, distributing wealth more equitably would enhance utility because a dollar is more valuable to a poor person than to a rich person.

The outcome would be maximum utility, provided that consumption is balanced appropriately (Peet, 2009). Alfred Marshall's view of economics is more scientific. He bases his theory on everything working towards homeostasis. Homeostasis, therefore, is defined by historical factors (Foster, 1993). Marshall believed that an economy works towards the most optimal state. If supply is low, prices rise, and therefore more can be produced and sold at the lower price again. Assumptions of this theory are that markets are competitive and do not promote monopolies. Left to their own, markets will result in optimal production and distribution. As for government, neoclassical economics suggests that governments should not intervene, except for encouraging and providing schooling and infrastructure (Peet, 2009).

Like the other theories, there are many critiques to neoclassical economics. It assumes that people are rational, which is not realistically the case. It is very mathematical and scientific, but its models are premised on assumptions about humans being rational, making it very unrealistic. Furthermore, supply and demand are seldom in balance in a capitalist economy. In this type of economy, it is very likely that there will be some kind of crisis, such as a lack of demand which can come from underconsumption by underpaid workers. There could also be uneven growth in different parts of the economy (Peet, 2009).

### Keynesian Economics

A fourth conventional theory is Keynesian economics, founded by John Maynard Keynes. According to him, economics do not tend towards the optimal state. The Great Depression provided the foundation for the application of Keynesian development, when markets could not manage to keep people employed, let alone function at an optimal state. According to Keynesian theory, investment is important because it stimulates the rest of the economy. Investment can only happen when an investor takes a risk. Expectations are important because

one must weigh the cost and the current interest. Investors buy machines, hire workers, and spend money, which helps the economy through the multiplier effect, which is the amount of growth in the economy from an initial investment (Peet, 2009).

Also unlike the previous theories, Keynesianism recognizes a role for the government to have some influence through interest rates, policies, changing the equilibrium, and creating higher employment levels (Peet, 2009). Keynesian economics places an emphasis on the need for capital to be controlled to some extent. If left unregulated, capital will tend toward the already advantaged and create more inequality. Therefore, governments are needed to move the economy towards more equality and opportunity so as to prevent power from becoming too concentrated (Kirshner, 2009). When the government sees that the economy may be moving into a recession, the central bank can lower interest rates, causing private banks to do the same, which encourages the borrowing of money to be spent on things such as machinery and goods, which again causes the multiplier effect. This process creates increased demand and pulls the economy out of recession. Then, investment happens again because of business confidence, called the accelerator effect. Interest rates are a key player in business confidence. Fiscal policy is also an important part of this theory. The government spends more than it brings in through taxes, which causes increased demand, which in turn helps the economy. This theory claims that spending can be used for things such as education and social services. Keynes thought that government spending was crucial, and that fiscal deficits are necessary to keep capitalist economies working.

The downfall of Keynesian economics began in the 1960s and 1970s when productivity declined and inflation rose. Productivity is essential for economic growth. If productivity declines, the economy becomes stagnant. This situation causes low growth and high unemployment, which was the case in the 1970s. Keynesian economics became problematic,



according to some, because lowering interest rates to help the economy and deficit spending does not help the economy under all circumstances. In some cases, they can lead to inflation (Peet, 2009).

### Neoliberalism

The next conventional theory to be examined is Neoliberalism, of which Ludwig Von Mises was the founder. He believed that government interventions do not work, as economies can never be socially designed. Friedrich von Hayek also believed that the government should intervene in the economy as little as possible. Von Mises held to the theory of laissez faire, which is free market economy, and argues that there is harmony rather than conflict in the market (Peet, 2009). He believed that consumer interest is the most important, and that market forces bring all interests into harmony, which is what he calls consumer sovereignty. Through this, state power is minimized (Peet, 2009). Some of the goals of neoliberalism are privatization of state enterprises and cuts to social services, further emphasizing the decrease in governmental and state power that is encouraged in neoliberalism (Duggan, 2014).

As mentioned above, von Mises opposed government interventions. He thought that fiscal deficits are not a good thing and that they are proof of a policy failure. He thinks that the tax base should be broadened, tax administration improved, and marginal tax rates cut. Also, interest rates should be market-determined. Exchange rates should be competitive so that there is growth in nontraditional exports, causing an outward-oriented economy. Quantitative restrictions on imports should be eliminated and foreign investments should be encouraged in order to bring about capital. State enterprises should be privatized and state controls should be reduced because he believed that private enterprises are more efficient.

However, neoliberalism does not escape without critiques. The theory suggests that people are egotistical and self-interested, and that markets and price systems are spontaneous rather than planned. Karl Polyani argues that there is nothing spontaneous about markets because the state creates markets through the establishment and protection of property rights. Markets need rules and regulations to come into existence and to be effective. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the states with the most government regulation grew to be the most powerful, going against what the theory suggests (Peet, 2009). The theory also assumes that problems can nearly always be solved by privatization, the market, and the right prices, but it ignores real-world situations and social processes (Peet, 2009).

### **Nonconventional Theories**

#### Marxism

The first unconventional theory I will discuss is Marxism, also known as historical materialism, which was founded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. They saw modernity as a movement that was led by the rich and motivated by the accumulation of capital, which tended to yield unequal benefits. They put a special emphasis on social relations, and believed that employees tend to be exploited (Peet, 2009). Marx also divided people into classes, and placed an emphasis on it. He split up society into classifications, partially based on power, with capitalists having more power than laborers (Wolff, 1986).

Marx also took a stance on commodities, which are things people make to sell in the market. There are three aspects of a commodity: use value, exchange value, and labor value. Use value refers to the material needs that a good satisfies. The exchange value is the basis for market price. A good's exchange value is determined by what people are willing to pay for a good, which depends on its abundance in relation to the number of other people seeking that same

good. Labor value refers to the amount of labor time invested in the production of the good. This may seem similar to classical economic theory because Marx built his critique on that classical economic theory. Where Marx differed with classical economic theory is in the relationship among these three elements of a good. Classical economic theory assumed that a good's use value, exchange value, and labor value would generally achieve an equilibrium. Marx countered, however, that competition, power, and exploitation disrupt the equilibrium so that labor can invest more time in producing a good than they earn from producing that good. Therefore, they are unable to buy that good, even though they may need that good to survive. Marx claimed that development involves a process of capital accumulation, and through this, different classes accumulate that capital unevenly. He also claimed that exploitation happens when products are taken by elites from the laborers. Marx believes that the capitalist state is just a functional branch of economic elites. Development, according to Marx, happens when production is built up through tools, machines, and labor, which increases production and productivity, causing more product to be made (Peet, 2009).

The critiques of Marxism are many, starting with the claim that it can no longer be taken seriously after the collapse of the Soviet Union. David Booth claims that in the 1980's, Marxism came to a halting point because of its unwavering belief that historical events resulted from capitalist laws. "Marxist sociology of development reached an impasse in the 1980's related to generic difficulties in its underlying social theory. The basic problem with Marxist theory was its metatheoretical commitment to demonstrating that historical events were the necessary results of the objective laws on the teleological unfolding of capitalism" (Peet, 2009). Marx asserted that real-world events naturally emerge according to the laws within capitalism. Development

problems may be explained by their incorporation with capitalism, or maybe that socioeconomic processes in some way contributed to capitalist accumulation (Peet, 2009).

### State Socialism

The next nonconventional theory to be examined is socialism, which was perhaps most commonly associated with the Russian communist economy of 1917-1989. Furthermore, the theoretical foundations for this state socialism can be found in Marx's work. In 1917 the popular revolution overthrew the czar. After the revolution, the country was said to be owned by the people. The economy consisted of five-year plans instead of market forces. The development goals were set by a hierarchy. State enterprises were also part of the administration and they determined the economic strategies that would be used in them, the timeline of competition, and wholesale and most retail prices. Everything went through a planning process. Enterprises were places of work, but were also responsible for many aspects of social welfare. The industrial effort of socialism focused largely on machinery and chemical industry, in an attempt to work towards industrialization of the USSR, which did happen. From industrialization came better social services, better health, since socialism sees healthcare as a basic human right, and better labor productivity (Peet, 2009).

One description of socialism says that it “denies individual private property and affirms that Society, organized as the State, should own all wealth, direct all labor, compel the equal distribution of all produce” (Allen, 1912, p. 38). John Stuart Mill describes it as “any system which requires that the land and the instruments of production should be the property not of individuals, but of communities, or associations, or of the government” (Allen, 1912, p.38). Ultimately, it puts great power in society, rather than individuals (Allen, 1912).

As for the critiques of socialism, when the economy became more complex, the system of planning became more ineffective due to the overwhelming number of decisions that needed to be made because everything had to go through the committee first. By the mid-1970s, managers wanted more freedom to deal with things on their own. There was also no democratic decision-making. The people were suppressed due to the communist party being composed mostly of a small group of elites who were distant and privileged. They were very out of touch with the people. “The Soviet Union was an elite society that used ‘communism’ to control the masses” (Peet, 2009). There was not much effort put into finding what the consumers wanted, which meant that there was little supply where there was much demand, and sometimes the products were of poor quality. There was also a huge black market that undermined the proper functioning of the official economy. All of the spending that occurred to become a superpower could not be supported, and socialism saw its end in communist Russian in 1989. The effects included a drop in human wellbeing and a worse GDP (Peet, 2009).

### Feminist Theories

Next to be examined are feminist theories, which focus on gender inequalities and the subordination of women. The feminist movement began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with a focus on equal rights and the opposition to married women being under the ownership of their husbands. In the 1960s to 1980s, the focus turned to capitalism, which was seen as biased and discriminatory. In the 1990s, the focus shifted to a more complex understanding of gender issues and to race issues. Feminist theories generally consider development to be masculinist. Catherine Scott argued that modernization theory contrasted men as the modern, forward-thinking side, while women represented the traditional, backward side. Men were ultimately the ones that could push a society into modernity, and women were considered to be backward. Modernization,

therefore, meant abandoning the traditional, feminine things. Now, more women are working, which makes up 40% of the world's workers, and in developing nations, the number is higher, as women do most of the labor. Therefore, they argue, development theory should be more concerned about women. Feminist thought seeks to combine work and home, whereas development theory has traditionally focused more exclusively on work.

Feminist theories greatly tie society into development and they recognize that the role of women varies between cultures. There is also a difference between women's roles in rich and poor countries. Another area of interest for feminist theorists is the distribution of power, which has historically been with men. Women have not always been adequately represented, and in some cultures, still are not. Therefore, justice has also become a key issue in feminist theory of development (Verma, 2004).

Like the other theories, there are critiques of feminist development theory. Feminist theory tends to think in opposite terms, and it does not consider that it is impossible to simply reverse male-centeredness. It tends to rely on inconclusive knowledge and there is no strong discourse on the topic. It relies on just a few strong points and is very fractured. According to Peet (2009), it is too focused on strategy. Feminist development theory is an overreaction to the criticisms that were presented by early feminist women in the developing world. Peet (2009) argues it needs more coherent arguments and needs to think for women everywhere, and reconsider the fundamental issues that it involves. There is nothing revolutionary about its ideas. The theory can be seen as oppressive, because not all women share the same thoughts and feelings, as the ideas of Western middle-class academia are the predominant views. It is not unified, and instead focuses on differences (Peet, 2009).

### **Development in Zimbabwe**

As this review of competing theories of development indicate, there is tremendous disagreement over how development is to take place, the signs of it, and the implications of it. Even the definition of the term itself produces debate. From conventional to nonconventional theories, there are many views on what approach is best. Upon reviewing each theory, the conclusion is clear that development is not simple. It is not something that can be achieved easily, but requires a great deal of thought. Even this is difficult because of the previously mentioned array of approaches. It is also important to mention that what works in one country may not work in another. There is no one theory that when applied will work 100% of the time in any country. Therefore, it requires consideration of the individual country in focus and its qualities that would make one developmental approach superior in effectiveness. Nevertheless, this thesis offers an opportunity to test whether one or more of these theories are more valid than others.

Zimbabwe has been through many shifts in developmental strategies such as neo-classical, modernization, Keynesian, and Marxism. More recently, global development institutions, like the World Bank and IMF, have imposed neo-liberalism on Zimbabwe and many other developing nations. Neo-liberalism suggests that government intervention does not work and that governments need to be involved as little as possible. Therefore because of this, NGOs are needed to ensure that development happens. The theory assumes that they are able to fill the gap that low government involvement creates. However, this theory does not take into account real world situations and the reality that NGOs are unable to take the place of governments.

This thesis asks whether the strategy of promoting less government intervention and more NGOs is capable of filling the gap left by the decline in government involvement. Are NGOs achieving everything that they would need to in order to replace the government? The answer to

that question will enhance understanding on whether global neoliberalism, especially in a nation plagued by poor leadership, is likely to address Zimbabwe's problems. Even if NGOs were working efficiently, they are likely to have a long road ahead to make progress. However, I will begin to explore the impact that NGOs are having through case studies examining their effectiveness. The following case studies are included to give an overview of actual efforts taking place and to show the effects of those efforts.

#### *Examples of Successful Development Efforts*

In Niger, a food security initiative called Food For Work (FFW) carried out three strategic objectives (SO) with the goal of improving food security and nutrition. The goal of SO1 was to better equip the community to handle food security. It was based on training and education, along with implementing committees. It improved social solidarity, and people became more aware of their potential to help themselves. They were also educated in an array of areas. One participant states that they previously did not know how to manage their own food security, but with the program are now able to (USAID, 2005). With this outcome, it is evident that the impact is localized. It is something that is affecting a single community and is not necessarily having a wide-spread impact.

Food For Work in Niger also aims at improving food security during the hungry season, which is May to July. Part of the initiative is giving participants the ability to implement their own food security activities, and to provide them with food for two to three months. Some of the activities that were implemented were rehabilitation of land, infrastructure construction and repair, the construction of community buildings, and the making of livestock corridors. These initiatives improve food security and rehabilitate natural resources. It also allows the poor to invest in their own fields, rather than working in someone else's for money. They also no longer



need to take credit during the hungry season and repay it with the food that they do harvest (USAID, 2005). This strategy emphasizes local empowerment, but also government intervention in the form of infrastructure construction and repair.

Staff members in these projects said that they need more training and even more staff. Part of the training that is needed is in monitoring and evaluation. They have found that their staff are overloaded, so they are not as available and cannot keep on schedule. Activities are not completed on time, and there is not enough time for the activities to be done well. These issues show the need for more staff members, which is a common problem among NGOs. Volunteers are useful, but they will eventually drop off if they are unpaid. Dedicated staff are needed, especially due to the fact that raising awareness and changing behaviors is slow and takes time (USAID, 2005).

These cases and others indicate that there have been small achievements by NGOs. Some of these include educational films being translated by locals into different languages, drilling boreholes and ferro cement tanks which allow for gardens, installation of toilets and handwashing facilities, and providing food at school, which leads parents to encourage their children to go to school, water schemes that allow locals to plant all year round feed themselves, and sell surplus, schools and orphanages that have been built from the ground, and the distribution of seeds (Antonio, 2015). However, such small-scale successes are the equivalent of an island in an ocean (Edwards, 1992). Case studies overall have not been effective at establishing how successes on the micro level contribute to development on the macro level (Vivian, 1994).

The local reaction to efforts by NGOs have been mixed. Some say that they have no funds to start off and that their training is not thorough enough. They say that they need mentors

because they lack skills. They also cannot find funding for projects and wish the government would help. They live in a constant fear of the economy reversing backwards, and starting small businesses is difficult because nobody has money. However, successes are communal. There have been achievements such as being able to feed, clothe, and care for a family. Overall, their life has improved. They can pay for school fees, and purchase goods such as blankets and refrigerators. They also highlight the importance of supporting each other. They value the knowledge they have been given because it can help their families and marriages (Antonio, 2015).

There have been some positive impacts, but they are very localized. Larger, nation-wide impacts are going to have to be seen in order to see real developmental change. Although there may have been some limitations with the Keynesian and Marxist ideas about the need for state intervention, it is difficult to see how such national-level successes could be achieved without a strong and competent state. What makes the situation difficult in for Zimbabweans is that their government is poorly led and poorly run and they will have to continue to suffer in the wake of poor developmental strategies. Their quality of life is likely not going to improve under the current structure. There will still be people who continue to starve, have unsafe drinking water, and continue to be oppressed under Mugabe's regime. Therefore, it is likely that another developmental strategy will be needed, especially one that works better with the governmental shortcomings.

### *Conclusion*

It is evident that Zimbabwe has many challenges that are making the work of NGOs more difficult, including hyperinflation, and land redistribution. Statistics show it is worse-off when compared to most of its neighbors on many markers. The challenges that NGOs face come from

a variety of causes, including donors, training, staff, communication, environmental factors, and lack of monitoring and evaluation. There are many development approaches for them to take, but it is not yet clear what will work to improve food security and agriculture in Zimbabwe. As the examples that were mentioned show, there have been some impacts in localized areas, but few that have been successful at tackling the issues at the broader national level. For broader impacts to be made, NGOs will have to figure out what strategies work, and how to implement them country-wide, which is difficult to envision without the existence of a strong, functioning state.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methods**

I gathered data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank, World Food Programme, and FEWSNET. I analyzed the data in order to compare Zimbabwe to other countries to determine if the challenges they are facing spread further than just their country borders. I also sought to determine if the crop yields in Zimbabwe have improved because of NGO work. The question that I am seeking to answer with the help of this data is whether food security and agricultural NGOs are making a difference in Zimbabwe.

I also gathered data from NGOs themselves. To do this, I sent a survey, found in appendix A, to 48 non-governmental organizations working in Zimbabwe in the areas of food security and agriculture. I used Google Forms to create the survey. Its purpose was to ask representatives from the organizations what their structure is, the problems that they are facing, where they get their funding, and other important questions so that I could become familiar with their work. Many questions were in a short answer format. However, I also asked three questions that required respondents to rank on a scale between one and five, and one question had a yes or no answer. Prior to sending the survey, I secured approval from the Pennsylvania State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) on August 6, 2016 to obtain permission to continue with the survey. The research was deemed Non-Human Subjects Research and therefore needed no further IRB action.

I sent the survey, asking organizations to give their input in the research study, to all potential participants between September 7<sup>th</sup> and September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016. I chose potential participants based on the following criteria:

1. Organization is a Non-Governmental Organization
2. Organization is currently working in Zimbabwe
3. The work of the organization partially or in total pertains to food security and/or agriculture
4. Contact organization for the organization was accessible on a website or through other means using the internet.

To generate a list of initial organizations to survey, I used a directory of NGOs in Zimbabwe, which I found on the website of Investigative Africa. On that site, I found the contact information for the organizations, if provided. If not provided, I utilized the organization's website. Also provided on the website was the mission statement of the organization, along with objectives and sector focus. I used these measures to determine if the organization fit the criteria listed above. Once I deemed them as fitting the criteria, I transferred the organization's information to a spreadsheet containing all the contact information for all organizations. Initially, I found 41 organizations using the directory. I conducted further research using the Google search engine to identify six other organizations. Keywords that I used to search were: hunger relief, non-governmental organization, Zimbabwe, poverty relief, and agriculture. I visited the websites and analyzed the organizations based on the above criteria to determine if they were fit for inclusion into the list.

After sending the survey, 34 of the initial 41 emails sent had errors in the sending process. For each faulty email address, I used the website of each organization to attempt to find

another address that was valid. After visiting every website, 16 of the addresses were either updated or an entry was submitted via the organization's website. Ten of the websites indicated that the organization did not meet some portion of the criteria, so they were excluded. For the remaining eight organizations for which the emails were returned, no further contact information could be found, thus excluding them from the study. Of the organizations for which the emails were not returned, one responded with a different email address to send the survey to, three were further investigated and determined that they did not meet the criteria, and eight never responded. One organization did respond to the email, indicating that they no longer work in Zimbabwe because of the political situation. One responded indicating that they were unable to participate because of the high volume of requests that they receive, and another that they are unable to participate but did not provide further reasoning. One other responded to ask for verification that the email was not spam and stated that it was forwarded to another staff member to handle, but that internet reception was poor. This organization never responded. In total, five organizations did take the survey.

The survey responses were themselves significant, because they showed the ever changing nature of NGOs and the lack of good communication. For example, NGOs fluctuate greatly. Since some had incorrect or outdated information on their websites, it shows that their efforts span only as far as funding allows. If they do not have the funding to continue work, they must restructure or cease to exist. Therefore, missions and programs change often. The lack of responses shows that work needs to be done in the ways that communications are handled. Funding is less likely to come in if an organization lacks good communication. Some of the communication information was also incorrect, meaning that potential donors would have a hard time contacting them even if they wanted to.

Due to the lack of responses, it is also impossible to draw generalizations about organizations. A variety of organizations responded, but the number was not high. However, since I gathered other data, too, it is possible to gain valuable insights from the organizations themselves. It also allows for an inside look into the work that they are doing, which can work to strengthen the results found in the data and also provide possible explanations for it. Ultimately, the information gathered through the survey serves primarily as insight rather than definitive results from which to draw conclusions.

I research question I seek to answer is whether NGOs are making a difference in food insecurity and agricultural production. They were established during the emergence of neoliberalism in order to supplement government efforts in improving agricultural production, but I will be discussing whether they have been successful in doing so. I will also be examining whether NGOs are even capable of overcoming the obstacles that present themselves in neoliberalism and the problems that come with insufficient government policies and programs. As was previously discussed, governments can even be obstacles to NGOs accomplishing their goals. Therefore, it is important to consider whether NGOs can be successful even with a coherent government in place. .

## Chapter 4

### Results and Discussion

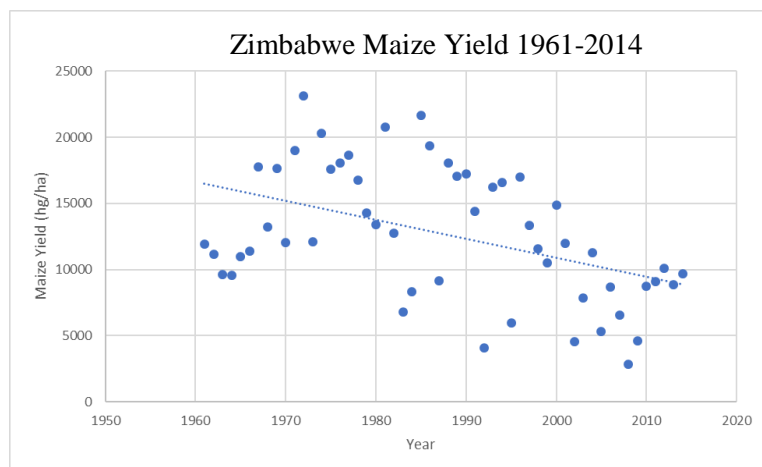


Figure 1. Zimbabwe Maize Yield 1961-2014

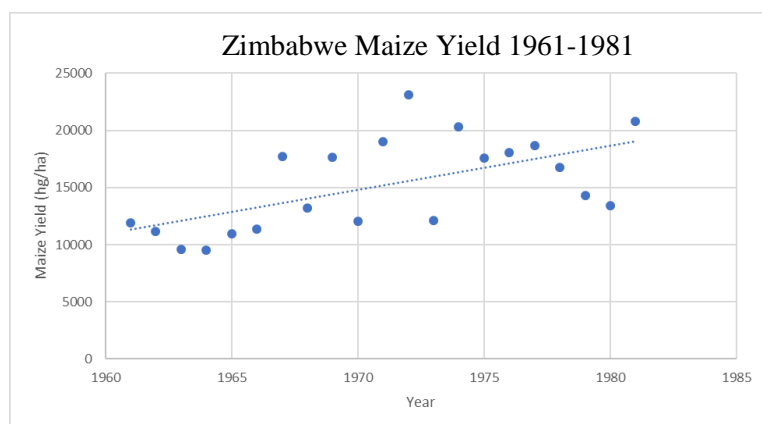


Figure 2. Zimbabwe Maize Yield 1961-1981

As seen in figures 1 and 2, the yield of maize, Zimbabwe's staple crop, increased from 1961 until 1981. However, after 1981, it began decreasing steadily. A possible cause of this could be that this was also around the time of independence. Therefore, Mugabe was in power. However, with the proliferation of NGOs in the region, some might expect yield to at least hold steady. In comparison to the rest of the region, Zimbabwe has surprisingly low yield. For the same

time period, all of Southern Africa had a steadily increasing yield, as seen in figure 3. Especially since around 2005, the yields have been increasing. Zambia and South Africa also showed an increase, and yields have been increasing in Mozambique since 1990. Botswana is the only other neighbor that has not had yield increases.

This trend suggests that NGOs are not filling that hole left by governments, as mentioned previously. With neo-liberalism being used as the development strategy, it is evident that it is not



working in Zimbabwe. If it were, yields of the staple crop would be increasing or at least holding steady.

However, these data indicate that Zimbabwe is different from its neighbors. The combination of a very weak government and neo-liberal

challenges are causing it to produce less than its neighbors. If there were other factors to blame, most other countries would show the same trend. Examining this is further evidence that something else needs to be done in order for development to take place.

As seen in figure 4, the infant mortality rate (IMR) of Zimbabwe has been decreasing since 1960, when it stood at around 92 deaths per 1,000 live births. A slight upward trend was

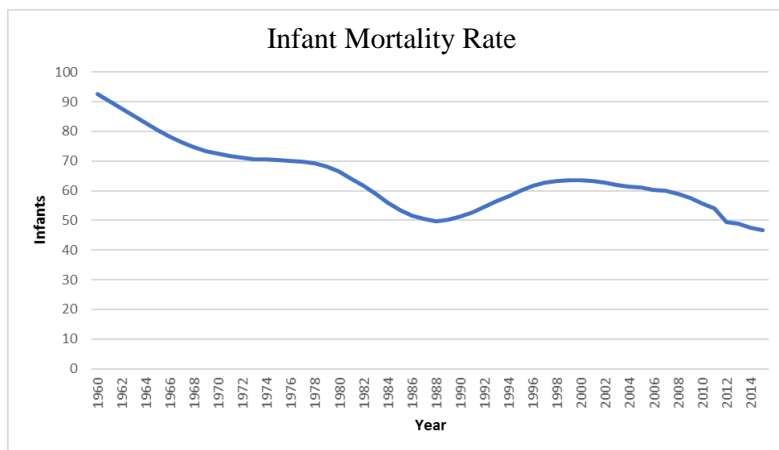


Figure 4. Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1,000 Live Births)

seen between 1988 and 2000, a time period in which the HIV epidemic broke out and Mugabe ordered farms to be taken over (Antonio, 2015). Because this is a good indicator of health status in the country, it is very positive that there is a downward trend. The number does still stand at around 45 infants out of every 1,000 which is relatively high, but it is improving somewhat. The significance of this graph is that it suggests that little progress has been made in addition to agriculture and food. Once again, if NGOs were truly moving the country towards development, one would expect more rapid

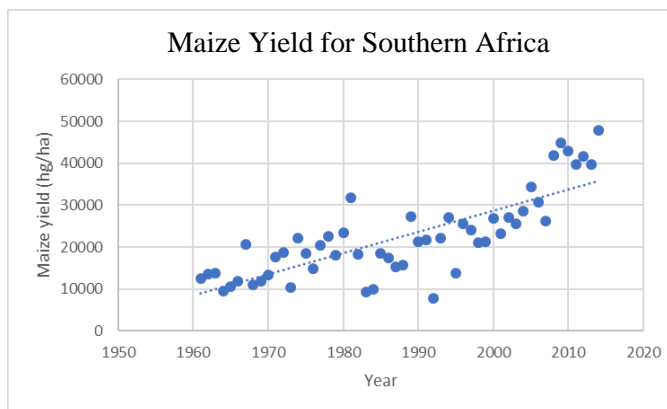


Figure 3. Maize Yield for Southern Africa

seen between 1988 and 2000, a time period in which the HIV epidemic broke out and Mugabe ordered farms to be taken over (Antonio, 2015). Because this is a good indicator of health status in the country, it is very positive that

progress to be made. NGOs have been working for close to 40 years, and yet the IMR is barely budging. The progress being made is likely not significant enough for the country to make any meaningful progress.

My analysis of the survey data offers insights into how NGOs in the country are operating. To protect the identity of the organizations, each has been given a number from 1-5, which will be used to distinguish between them. Of the organizations that responded, each was unique and had a different structure from the others, which provided a useful sample of different NGOs. Although there were only five that responded, it was useful to get information about how they function to gain a better understanding of their work. As mentioned previously, all five of the organizations that responded are run by Zimbabweans. Since I did not get responses from NGOs run by Americans or other nations, I am unable to make a comparison. The organizations also range in year of establishment, ranging from Organization 3 being established in 1983 to Organization 5 being established in 2014. Organization 4 was established in 1980, the year of Zimbabwe's independence, and Organization 1 was established in 1993. Organization 2 did not provide this information. With such a wide range of years each NGO is at a very different place, especially as Organization 5 has just recently been established.

Three out of the five organizations, Organizations 1, 2, and 5, work on a country-wide scale, while Organization 4 works on a regional scale in four out of the ten provinces, and Organization 3 works mostly in the eastern part of the country, with a large concentration of the work being around the Manicaland Province and Chipinge town. Organization 2 also began expanding its work to include other African locations, such as Ethiopia. Working on a country-wide basis could be beneficial to the problem of food insecurity as a whole in that the focus is not just on one location and the work is being distributed around the country. This could allow

for a more equitable and helpful distribution of efforts. However, a drawback to working on a country-wide scale could be that for organizations that already have limited funding, more travel is required to cover the whole country, and the funds are being stretched thinner because they are being used on a national scale. Focusing on a smaller region could mean that more improvements are made in that specific location because there is more of a focus.

I also asked each organization to provide their mission statement. Organization 1's mission statement is "to be a lead organization working with smallholder farmers to attain food self sufficiency in Zimbabwe and Africa at large." Organization 2 did not provide a mission statement, but did mention that a holistic context is used in all management. Organization 3 stated that its mission statement is "to provide an Organization through which Christians can work together in local and national groups to be an effective part of the body of Christ in action in Zimbabwe." The mission statement of Organization 4 is "to fight all forms of poverty, principally among the rural communities of women, men and youth through the empowerment of people by facilitating their development in the cultural context." Organization 5 also did not provide a mission statement. These statements show the uniqueness of each organization and the different focuses that they have. To be considered for the study, each organization had to have a focus on food security and/or agriculture. Each of these organizations met these criteria, although some do have focuses in other areas also.

I also asked about goals and objectives for each of the organizations. Organization 1's goals include "achieving a community that is food secure, environmentally sound, culturally sound, and economically empowering in the areas of food security, biodiversity, conservation and sustainable use," while also being "gender sensitive." Organization 2's goals were "essentially to empower people and NGOs to reverse desertification because almost all problems

faced are symptoms of desertification.” The goals of Organization 3 are “results based evangelism for church growth, providing exceptional health care to our community and the Nation, preparing our children for a better future through quality education, food security through improved productivity in the Mission/Church Farms.” Also mentioned was the goal of improving the quality of life in communities. The goals of Organization 4 are “to see rural communities of women, men and youth enabled to plan, implement and manage poverty alleviation strategies on a sustainable basis.” Lastly, the goals of Organization 5 are to “promote sustainable agriculture in small scale farming communities, organize workshops and seminars to facilitate interaction and sharing of ideas.” Another goal of this organization is to carry out research as a way to improve agricultural productivity. Each organization was asked how important food security and enhancing agricultural production were to their goals, on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the most important. Every organization answered a 5 for both, except for Organization 1 answering a 4 for the importance of food insecurity.

I also asked organizations to list as many as five obstacles to achieving food security, from their perspective. The most common answer was climate change, followed by the high cost of inputs, recurrent drought, and the lack of resources. Other obstacles that were given were the lack of access to quality seed, political instability, the devaluation of local currency, a resistance to change current poor practices and slow adoption of emerging practices, inadequate water supply, lack of coordination between all actors in the food security sector and weak policy implementation, lack of expertise among farmers, and declining soil fertility levels, mostly seen in rural areas. It is notable that some of these factors, such as drought, climate change, and declining soil fertility, are environment-related issues. However, some issues stem from economic and political challenges, such as political instability and the devaluation of currency.

I also asked them to list the top five obstacles to enhancing agricultural production in Zimbabwe. Some common answers were the high costs of inputs, droughts, and climate changes. Organizations also said that there is not adequate planning and forecasts are not disseminated to farmers, causing a lack of knowledge. The lack of modern equipment is another challenge, along with political interference and a weak economy. There are also few incentives to enhancing production. Many of the challenges are also standing in the way of food security, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the two. Once again, it is seen that environmental concerns play a large role, along with the lack of governmental support to farmers and agriculture.

To gauge the influence that NGOs are having, the organizations were next asked what their impacts have been in the country and also how they measure those impacts. Organization 1 has promoted conservation agriculture and crop diversification. Because of this, they have seen increased crop productivity. The measure of their impact was determined by the number of hunger months, which they have reduced from 9 to 3 per season. It is unclear whether crop productivity is measured and if so, how it is measured. The organization does work country-wide, so the reduction in hunger months would be seen across the whole country. However, many other factors likely played a part in this, as it is very unlikely that one single organization has had such a profound impact.

Organization 2 stated that they ran a policy workshop for law-makers which focused on land and agriculture. A policy was created that, if enacted at the government level, would allow Zimbabwe to export food again, increase farming jobs, and have clean food growing on regenerated soil, among others. The organization has also provided training on a holistic approach, which has led to other hubs being established in other Sub-Saharan African countries and others. The organization uses third parties to monitor and gather social, economic, and

environmental data. It is positive that monitoring and evaluation are being done by a third party. By this means, it is hoped that accurate data is being gathered by an unbiased source. As mentioned previously, it is very important that organizations regularly allow for monitoring and evaluation so as to monitor their impacts and stay on track to achieving their goals. However, many do not adequately do this.

The impacts of organization 3 in the areas of food security and agriculture have been self-help income generating projects that have reduced, enhanced caring for orphans and children, and improved farming and the production of food. The organization monitors their impacts through counting the number of households being assisted, the number of orphans being referred to the orphanage, and the increase in farming land area and production. Although these monitoring techniques are beneficial for the organization to know what their scope is, it may not be efficient in measuring the actual impact of the organization in regards to food security and agriculture. Although there are households being assisted and orphans being cared for, higher numbers may mean that there are more people needing the assistance, which would not indicate that the problem is getting better. Therefore, the organization may be mediating the effects of the problem, but not getting to the root of the issue and improving it.

Organization 4 listed many impacts that they have had. They have reached over 100,000 households, along with providing schools with supplies, training 50,000 small holder farmers in agricultural practices, establishing and supporting over 200 community gardens, drilling 100 boreholes and rehabilitating 130 more, rehabilitating 10 dams, providing emergency food assistance to over 100,000 households, training community mobilizers, and equipping home-based care givers. These impacts have been measured through monthly monitoring and evaluation for each project, organization and program review exercise that is held every other

year, and community feedback from direct and indirect beneficiaries. As mentioned previously, getting involvement from the community is an essential part of projects that is often overlooked. Like organization 2 this organization also has regular monitoring and evaluation, which is another important aspect of impact assessment that many organizations do not do well. Although it is unclear exactly how this is done in organization 4, it is positive that it is something that is done.

Organization 5 is relatively new, and therefore does not yet have many impacts that have been measured. However, they have noticed that there has been an adoption of conservation agriculture principles by some community members. They are also looking to partner with another organization that deals with agriculture. Another impact that has been seen thus far is helping members of a project to increase their profits from dried fruit and vegetables by providing them with marketing strategies. To measure these initial impacts, the organization looks at socio-economic and environmental benefits and measures them on a 1-5 scale. For the marketing venture, the organization monitored the increase in profits over a month. Because the organization is so young, it is difficult to determine if their impacts are substantial yet and if they

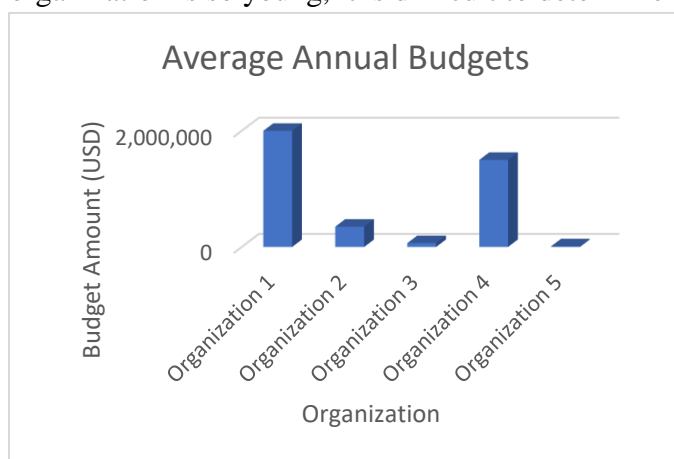


Figure 5. Average Annual Budgets

are effectively measuring them.

I asked each organization about their average annual budgets. As seen in figure 5, the budgets of the organizations vary tremendously. Organization 1 has a budget of \$2,000,000, while Organization 5, being newer and less established, has a

budget of only \$12,000. The three other budgets are in the middle at \$350,000, \$67,000, and

\$1,500,000. This information is useful in showing the different ranges of budgets that organizations have. With smaller budgets, it is more difficult to carry out projects and to hire full-time staff. Compared to Organization 1, Organization 5 very little to work with.

As seen in Figure 6, organizations also have varying funding sources. The most common sources are USAID, private individuals, and religious organizations. Some also get funding through the European Union and through services that they offer. It is interesting that much of the funding for these organizations comes from private individuals.

Funding from this source would be very limited, as compared to funding from large donors and foundations.

Relying on individuals to fund an organization is likely to be less stable

and more risky. Being that much of

the funding comes from those sources, it could be contributing to the struggles that the organizations face in regards to stability and work that is able to be done.

Since all of the organizations have differing funding sources and budgets, it is important to determine where the money is going and what it is being used for. One of these avenues is project implementation, which is ultimately what the organizations exist for and what donors hope that their donations are spent on. A low amount spent on project implementation would

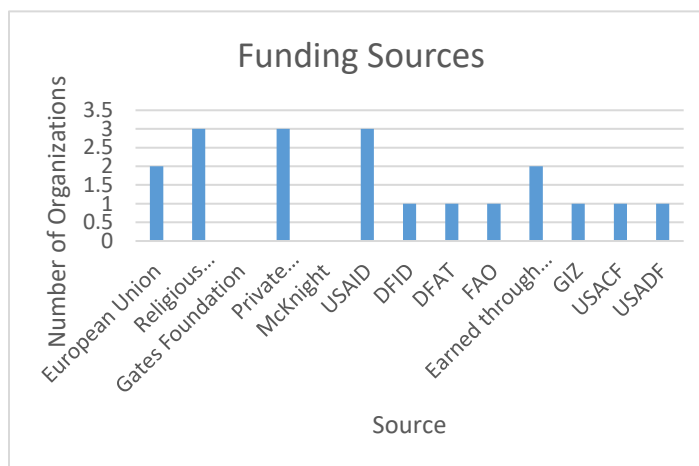


Figure 6. Funding Sources



mean that most of it is going towards other avenues within the organization and would severely limit their capacity to bring about change. As seen in Figure 7, the organizations also have

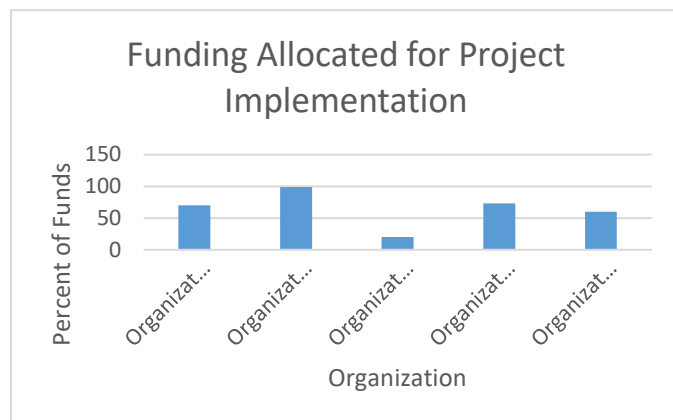
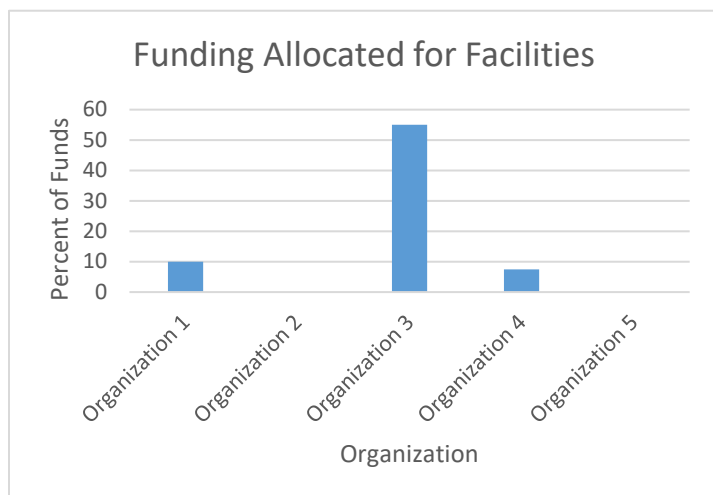


Figure 7. Funding Allocated for Project Planning

varying levels of funding allocated towards this area. Organization 2 actually allocates 100% of its funding towards project implementation. However, it does have full-time employees, so it is unknown whether they are paid out of money that has been donated or from some other

source of income. However, donors would be encouraged that the money that is donated is going towards the implementation of projects and not simple upkeep expenses. Organizations 1, 4, and 5 all have around 60 to 75 percent of their funding being allocated towards this area. This is a reasonable amount, being that there are other expenses that they have. It is important to note that Organization 5, although being newer, still allows 60% of its funding to go towards project implementation. Since they are so new, they likely have start-up expenses that would also be part of the budget. Organization 3 only allocates 20% of its funding towards project implementation. This is very inefficient. Since the goal is to carry out projects to obtain better outcomes, it is discouraging to see that so much of the funding is being used for other areas, and donors are probably less likely to donate to an organization that uses most of the funding for other areas and not on a direct impact.



**Figure 8. Funding Allocated for Facilities**

I asked organizations about other areas to which funding might have been allocated. As seen in Figure 8, organization 3 allocates 55% of its funding towards facilities. This is likely much of the reason why only 20% is used for project implementation. However, compared to

organizations 2 and 5, which have no funding allocated towards this area, it is a substantial amount. Organizations 1 and 4 allocate 10 or less percent towards this area, which shows just how much more Organization 3 is spending in this area. Facilities costs would ideally be kept to a minimum to allow for more money to be spent on projects. Equipment is another area for which funding is allocated for the organizations. Once again, Organization 3 is a higher spender in this area than any of the other organizations, accounting for 25% of its funding. Organizations 4 and 5 allocate between 10% and 20% of their funding towards this area. Organization 2 uses little to nothing on equipment, and Organization 1 uses 5%. It is important to note, however, that Organization 1 also has a much larger budget, which could mean that even though a smaller percentage is being spent in these areas, it could be a substantial amount of money. Spending on equipment does directly relate to project implementation, especially in the agriculture field where equipment is expensive and necessary.

Another area of allocation for funds is permanent staff. This is an important area to consider. Organizations that have well-paid staff are more likely to keep their staff, but organizations that are able to get by without full-time staff save money in this area. Without paid

staff, turnover rate is likely to be high and commitment to the mission low. Organization 1 allocates 10% of funding towards permanent staff, and Organization 4 allocates 5% to this area. The other organizations do not allocate funds for this area. As previously mentioned, Organization 5 is relatively new, which may mean that it does not yet have the capacity for permanent staff until it is more established.

Lastly, organizations were asked what percentage of their funding is allocated towards other areas that were not included in previous questions, noted in Figure 9. Interestingly, organization 5 allocates 20% of its income to this category. It is hard to know what this money is being spent on when it does not fall into the other categories. It is also a relatively large percentage of their budget.

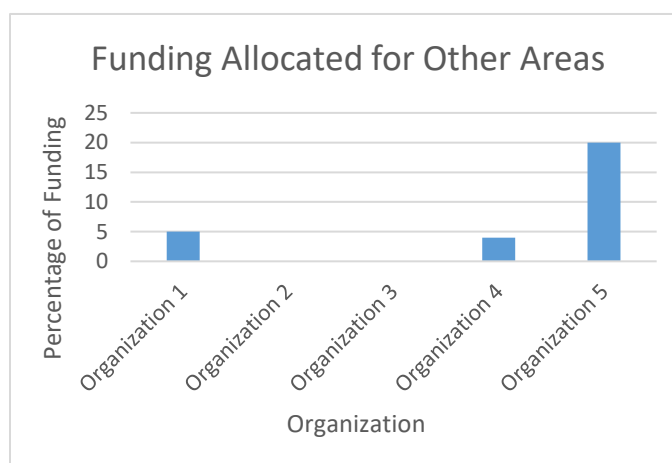


Figure 9. Funding Allocated for Other Areas

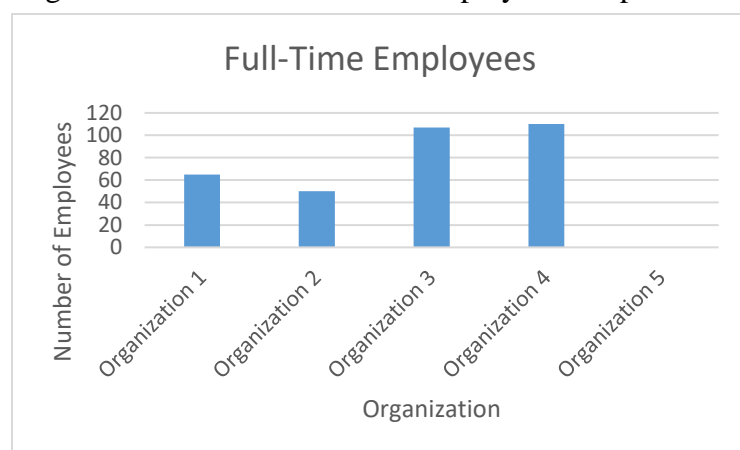
Organizations 1 and 4 both spend 5% or less in this area, which is reasonable

being that there may be few miscellaneous expenses that arise. Organizations 2 and 3 do not spend any money in this area. It is interesting that even though these organizations are similar in many ways, allocation of funds is so different between them. It is likely that this indicates differences in structure of each of the organizations and different kinds of projects being implemented, which may require more equipment or larger facilities.

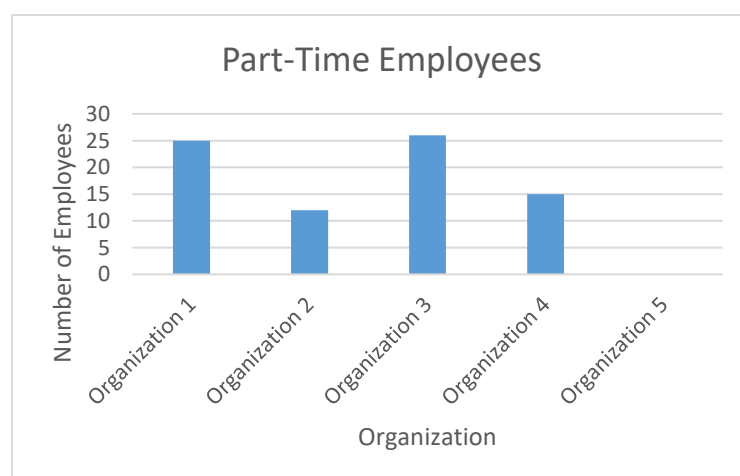
Organizations were next asked about employees, both part-time and full-time. As seen in Figures 10 and 11, Organization 5 has zero employees. As mentioned previously, this is likely to be at least partially because of their more recent establishment. As for the rest of the

organizations, Organization 1 has 65 full-time employees and 25 part-time employees.

Organization 2 has 50 full-time employees and part-time employees that vary by the season but



**Figure 10. Full-Time Employees**



**Figure 11. Part-Time Employees**

rarely exceed 12. Organization 3 has 107 full-time employees and 26 part-time employees, and organization 4 has 110 full-time employees and 15 part-time employees. Higher numbers of full-time employees likely indicate more commitment to the organization and its mission. It is interesting to note that although organization 3's budget is significantly less than organization 1's, they have substantially more employees. Once again, the differences in organization structure and function can be seen here. Some organizations may

require more equipment, but sheer amount of labor is not as important. Others may not have the funds to spend on adequate staff or aim to spend more on projects than areas such as this.

I asked organizations about the nationality of their employees in order to get a picture of how the organization is being managed. Surprisingly, all of the organizations stated that all of their employees, including their primary director, are Zimbabwean. This is surprising because they are carrying out these functions on their own without the help of Western nations, except

through funding. By helping in their own country, they are likely to know more accurately what works and cultural concerns, rather than Westerners coming in and trying to implement policies that may not work in a country that is so different.

Next, I asked organizations about the percentage of women employed in their organizations. This question also elicited varying answers. As seen in figure 12, the highest

percentage of employees that are women came from Organization 4, with 55%. Next was Organization 1 with 44%, and Organization 3 at 26%. Organization 5 does not have any employees, so therefore would

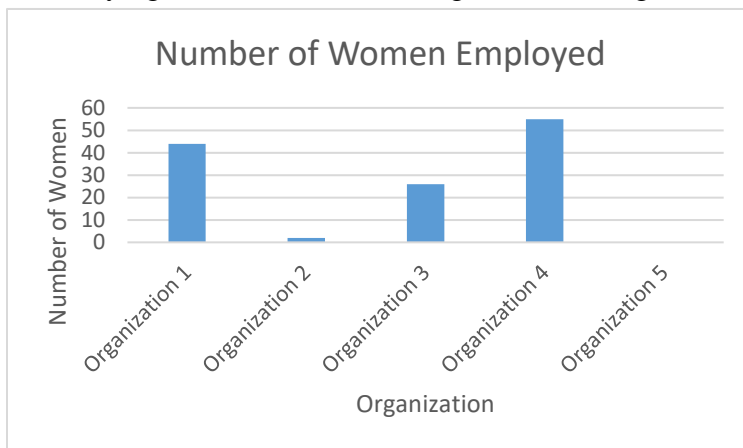


Figure 12. Number of Women Employed

not have any percentage to cite,

and Organization 2 has few women, but noted that they find that women are the best leaders and are the most concerned. As seen in figure 13, Most of the organizations also stated that they



Figure 13. Importance of Volunteers and Mission Teams

utilize volunteers and mission teams, which are helpful but rarely effective in the efforts as a whole because temporary workers are probably less committed. Organizations 3 and 4 only use volunteers and mission teams sometimes to very little.

Organization 4 does, however, use local university interns because they found that overseas

volunteers require too much management, which creates a distraction. Organizations 1 and 4 indicated a 0 on a scale of 1-5 of the importance of volunteers and mission teams, Organization 3 indicated a 1, and Organizations 2 and 5 indicated a 2. These teams are not as important to organizations as many would perceive. It is likely due to the great amount of difficulty and hassle that goes into using mission teams. Volunteers can be beneficial, but as mentioned, they are rarely around for long and not as committed to the mission because they are not paid. Full-time paid staff are likely to be much more effective, and it seems as if the organizations are moving towards and aiming for that direction.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

Zimbabwe has clear challenges. It is a country with much food insecurity, poor agriculture, political unrest, and droughts. Under the oppressive government, the country is falling behind in comparison to its fellow Sub-Saharan African countries in many important indicators, such as maize production, the percentage of the population under the poverty line, GDP, and life expectancy. It is a struggling country, due in part by the lack of the government to protect and provide for its people. It is making no effort to improve the quality of life, and Mugabe continues to pursue his own agenda as his main priority, as he showed with his land redistribution and rationing of grain to elites.

Although NGOs are commonly considered to be important in relieving some of the wrongs in countries such as Zimbabwe, they have their own struggles that hinder their ability to do so. Government restrictions, environmental challenges, poor communication, lack of committed staff, and donor and funding roadblocks all cause their efforts to be hampered. Donors hold much weight when it comes to the scope that NGOs have, and when trial and error is a must to ensure the best road ahead, donors retreat in search of quick, easy solutions and projects that have a faster, more successful turnaround. This restricts NGOs' ability to carry out projects that are potentially in the best interest of beneficiaries because of pressure to do what will offer them the most funding instead. NGOs also often fail to invest time, money, and effort into proper monitoring and evaluation, which is essential to being able to disburse information

about the progress of the organization to the public and determine whether goals have been reached and impacts have been made.

The evidence does not necessarily support any of the development theories outright. Neoliberalism is likely harming development efforts, but comparing Zimbabwe to its neighbors indicates that neoliberalism is not undermining them equally. NGOs may be drawing on elements from many of the theories, including neo-classical economics, modernization theory, socialism, and feminist theories, given the emphasis of some on local empowerment and women's involvement. Each theory has limitations, but NGOs may use them to consider the best approach to tackling a particular issue. Many times, a combination of many different approaches may be used, and ideas from multiple theories drawn upon. NGOs are not the only avenues through which these theories are applied, as country governments also use them, knowledge of which is beneficial to NGOs seeking to work with governments.

Examples do exist in which NGOs have had impacts although they are typically extremely localized, in some cases impacting only individual families. Locals are likely to praise NGOs for the work that they have done because their lives have been impacted greatly, which does show that small, localized impacts are being made. Although these impacts are important and obviously praised by the beneficiaries, they are not enough to make a difference in the larger picture on a country-wide scale. Impacting one community is going to be excellent for them, but if the larger problems of food insecurity and poor agricultural production are to be conquered, a broader approach is needed to accomplish such a large task.

When I contacted the organizations to ask them to complete the survey, they were largely unresponsive, with only five organizations completing the survey. Many even had misinformation on their websites, or did not have up-to-date contact information. This points to



an issue in itself, as organizations need to be easily accessible and their information reliable in order to be respected. Out of the five that responded, all were Zimbabwean organizations with varying sizes, budgets, dates of establishment, employees, and impacts. All of the organizations did have some kind of impact in the country, but many had means of measuring those impacts that were unreliable or unclear, meaning that sufficient monitoring and evaluation is not done. All organizations did have a focus on food security and agriculture to some degree, although some are seeking to tackle the issue on the broader scale and some are simply treating the effects. However, no organization had more than minor impacts, and, as was found in case studies that I examined, most of those impacts are localized. When looking at data of decreasing maize production in Zimbabwe, the organizations seem to be having only minor impacts. Given the lack of support by the government, I believe that it is safe to conclude that NGOs are not likely to make substantial impacts without support from effective and comprehensive government policies.

In moving forward, it is reasonable to focus on the government as a key to improving food security and agriculture in Zimbabwe. If the government is on board with efforts, allowing NGOs to carry out their missions as they see fit and itself taking strides to better its people without pushing the agendas of a few politicians, it is likely that improvements can be made. However, if the government continues as an obstacle to NGOs and continues to use politics to manipulate its citizens, little headway is likely to be made. NGOs alone are not able to conquer the problems and find real solutions. It might be beneficial for NGOs to focus on making change at the government level by advocating for better policies and empowering citizens to stand against the oppressive government. Change may happen, but it is going to have to happen at the

government level if Zimbabwe is to be transformed into a country with thriving agriculture and free from food insecurity

## Appendix A

### Survey

#### NGO Work in Zimbabwe

This survey will be used to improve understanding of the effects of Non-Governmental Organizations on agricultural production and food security in Zimbabwe. The hope is that your answers to the questions will enhance future programming and development efforts. The data will be used to write an academic thesis and may subsequently be used in a journal article. Although your answers will be used in the analysis, you and your organization will remain anonymous. There are 25 questions in the survey.

Organization Name

What year was your organization established in Zimbabwe?

How would you describe your geographical area of focus in Zimbabwe (A specific region, city, town, country-wide, etc.)

If your organization has a mission statement, please state what it is.

What are your organization's goals and objectives?

How important is food security in your organization's goals?

Not important    1    2    3    4    5    Very Important

How important is enhancing agricultural production in your organization's goals?

Not important    1    2    3    4    5    Very Important

Please list as many as five important obstacles to achieving food security in Zimbabwe, from your organization's perspective

Please list the top five obstacles to enhancing agricultural production in Zimbabwe, from your organization's perspective

Please explain what your organization's impacts have been in Zimbabwe

How do you measure those impacts?

What is your annual budget?

Please list as many as 10 of your funding sources. Use the other option to continue your list.

- Gates Foundation
- European Union
- Religious Organizations
- McKnight
- Private Individual Organizations
- Other...

What percentage of your funding is allocated towards project implementation?

What percentage of your funding is allocated towards facilities?

What percentage of your funding is allocated towards equipment?

What percentage of your funding is allocated towards permanent staff?

What percentage of your funding is allocated towards other areas?

How many people are employed full-time in your organization?

How many people are employed part-time in your organization?

How many employees are Zimbabweans and how many are from other countries?

Is your primary director Zimbabwean?

- Yes
- No

What is the percentage of women employed in your organization?

Does your organization utilize volunteers, mission teams, etc.?

How important are volunteers and mission teams in achieving your mission?

Not important    1    2    3    4    5    Very Important

Thank you for completing the survey!

Your participation is greatly appreciated as it is extremely helpful in collecting data for  
this project.

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**Academic Vita of Jordyn Skacel**  
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Education

Major(s) and Minor(s): Major in Biobehavioral Health

Honors: Community, Environment, and Development

Thesis Title: Agricultural and Food Security NGOs: Are They Making a Difference in Zimbabwe?

Thesis Supervisor: Leland Glenna

Work Experience

Date: July 2017- present

Title: Campus Field Staff

Description: As campus field staff, I am a missionary to the Penn State campus. I mentor students, coach students in leadership roles, lead small group Bible studies, serve as a resource to students when they have a question pertaining to the Christian faith, and participate in strategic planning to reach the campus.

Institution/Company: Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ International)

Supervisor's Name: Thomas Sperlich

Grants Received:

- Travel grant for a trip to Zimbabwe with VisionTrust International for a mission opportunity working with vulnerable orphans and school children received from the Schreyer Honors College, summer 2015.
- Travel grant for a trip to the Dominican Republic with VisionTrust International for a mission opportunity working with school children received from the Schreyer Honors College, summer 2016.

Community Service Involvement:

- Pregnancy Resource Clinic of State College, volunteer, spring 2016
- Operation Christmas Child participant