

THEOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

**FOOD, FAITH AND LIVELIHOODS: A CASE STUDY OF WORLD VISION
MALAWI'S FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME IN CHATA ADP**

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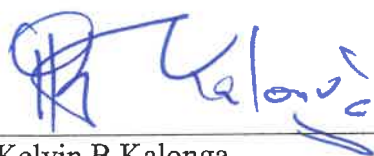
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DECLARATION

I, Kelvin Boston Kalonga hereby declare that this thesis, unless specified in the text, is my original work. I also declare that I have not submitted this research project for any other purpose at any other Institution or University.

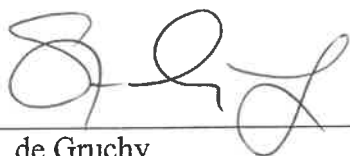


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As supervisor, I agree to the submission of this thesis



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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the extent to which Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and Churches are contributing to food security programmes in a way that enhances the livelihoods of the poor. This enhancement of poor people's lives and livelihoods is the fundamental principle that is at the hub of God's biblical vision of *shalom*. World Vision Malawi (WVM) which is one of the biggest and oldest FBOs in Malawi provides the case study for this thesis.

The study reveals that WVM has contributed significantly to the issue of human dignity and agency in Chata Area Development Programme (ADP). The farmers in Chata area are active participants in food security and Christian Witness programmes because WVM considers them as agents and subjects of development work. Since WVM values the farmers as equal partners in the quest to establish *shalom* in their households and communities, most people in Chata have improved their sense of dignity in the historical vocation.

God's desire for all people is to flourish and enjoy the biblical vision of *shalom*. However, *shalom* is achieved when the lives and livelihoods of the poor are enhanced. Thus, a vision of *shalom* ensures that the poor are not only food secured but also have access to safe drinking water, viable markets, loan schemes, fertilizer, transport, communication systems and many other aspects for them to be fully humans. Therefore, FBOs and churches should dialogue and co-work with the poor in sustainable food security programmes in order to achieve better lives and livelihoods as motivated by the biblical vision of *shalom*.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADD	Agriculture Development Division
ADMARC	Agriculture Development and Marketing Corporation
ADP	Area Development Programme
AEDC	Agriculture Extension Development Coordinator
AGREDS	Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CAC	Commitment Area Committee
CADECOM	Catholic Development Commission of Malawi
CARD	Christian Aid for Relief and Development
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
CSC	Christian Service Committee
DAPP	Development Aid from People to People
DDPRR	Department of Disaster Preparedness Relief and Rehabilitation
DFID	Department for International Development
DHAO	District Humanitarian Affairs Officer
DHFMR	District Humanitarian Field Monitoring Report
DMP	Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness
DoPDMA	Department of Poverty and Disaster Management Affairs
DRF	Drug Revolving Fund
EAM	Evangelical Association of Malawi
EBCM	Evangelical Baptist Church of Malawi
EIC	Emmanuel International of Canada
ELDP	Evangelical Lutheran Development Programme
EPA	Extension Planning Area
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning System Network
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GVH	Group Village Headman
HEA	Household Economy Approach
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IGAs	Income Generating Activities
LZ	Livelihood Zone
MICAH	Micronutrient and Health
MK	Malawi Kwacha
MoAIFS	Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Food Security
MRFC	Malawi Rural Finance Company
MT	Metric Tonnes
MVAC	Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee
NAC	National Aids Commission
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OPV	Open Pollinated Variety
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
RDP	Rural Development Programme
ROLEC	River of Life Evangelical Church
SC-UK	Save the Children (United Kingdom)
SGR	Strategic Grain Reserves
SLA	Sustainable Livelihood Approach
SLF	Sustainable Livelihood Framework
SSI	Semi Structured Interview
TA	Traditional Authority
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
ToR	Terms of Reference
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAC	Vulnerability Assessment Committee
WVM	World Vision Malawi

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Statement of the Problem

The study seeks to find out the extent to which Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and Churches are contributing to food security programmes in a way that enhances the livelihood of the poor. It looks at how these FBOs and churches are contributing to the lives and livelihoods of the marginalized to ensure that everyone enjoys a good relationship with God, other people and with nature, a notion that is enshrined in the biblical vision of *shalom*.

1.2 The Motivation and Significance of the Research

The increase in poverty levels which has resulted in food insecurity among rural people has prompted many Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and churches to come up with projects that seek to improve the livelihoods of rural people through sustainable food security programmes. The issue of food security has become very important on the agenda under discussion in many countries and organisations such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).¹ The government of Malawi has highly appreciated the work that some FBOs are doing in improving the livelihoods of poor people by introducing food security programmes in rural communities. As this cannot be the task of government alone, FBOs and local churches in Malawi have been urged to contribute towards food security programmes that enhance the livelihood of the poor. World Vision Malawi is probably the biggest and oldest FBO that is involved in food security programmes with twenty-nine Area Development Programmes (ADPs), seventy agricultural facilitators, and twenty agricultural coordinators in Malawi.² This is why this study seeks to find out the extent to which World Vision Malawi (WVM) is contributing to food security programmes among local people in a way that enhances their livelihoods. The study will follow the most recent version of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) which will be discussed in chapter 2.

¹ This was formed in October 2001 in Abuja. It is a pledge for African leaders based on a common vision to eradicate poverty and replace all countries on a path of sustainable growth and development.

² Daniel Kanyerere, *Food Security Strategy*, Food Security Section, WVM, March 2003 (Draft), p.2.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- Analyse the vulnerability, livelihood assets and strategies, policies and institutions that impact Chata community
- Give a theological reflection on food security and assess churches' involvement in Chata ADP
- Examine the impact of Chata ADP on livelihoods and food security both at micro and macro level
- Develop recommendations and lessons for FBOs and churches on food security programmes that enhance the livelihood of the poor

1.4 Limitations

WVM is probably the biggest and oldest FBO in Malawi with twenty-nine ADPs where food security programmes are being carried out. However, I have focused only on Chata ADP which is located in Lilongwe district and is one of the oldest ADPs of WVM. Again, Chata ADP has eight commitment areas where food security programmes are being carried out, however only seven commitment areas were studied for this research. I must also say that not all the villages in the seven commitment areas were studied but only those that were sampled randomly. The sampling was done by choosing about five villages that are extensively involved in food security programmes in each of the seven commitment areas. It must be stated that the limitation on Chata ADP and the seven commitment areas has helped me to be focused and do an extensive and a thorough research. The research has focused on the impact of the project from its inception in 1992 to September 2004.

1.5 Chapter Outline

The study shows that World Vision Malawi and churches have enhanced the livelihoods of the poor in Chata ADP and Malawi as a whole by ensuring that poor people have inner and outward peace. This is because many farmers now have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences. The study has highlighted the causes of food insecurity and has sought to find measures of addressing the problem based on both the findings from the Chata ADP and the theological analysis of food security. It has also analysed food security from a theological perspective thereby providing a biblical

basis for the church and FBOs to embark on sustainable food security programmes to ensure that all people enjoy God's vision of *shalom*.

The study is organized as follows: The introductory chapter focuses on the statement of the problem and examines the issue of food security in Malawi. It also provides the limitations, purpose, motivation and the significance of the research. A brief description of FBOs and churches that are actively engaged in food security programmes in Malawi is also provided in this chapter.

Chapter two examines the issue of food and livelihoods in theological perspective. It covers the following:

Shalom and Food: It links the theological reflection on food security to the broader vision of *shalom*. This also makes reference to people's lives and livelihoods.

Shalom and the Church: It provides an in-depth biblical and theological basis on why FBOs and churches should be engaged in sustainable programmes that seek to alleviate and eradicate the sufferings of the poor. This highlights the questions of the lives and livelihoods of the poor.

Shalom and the SLF: It provides a theoretical overview of the SLF and argues why it is a good development model to understand the livelihoods of the poor, as motivated by a vision of *shalom*.

Chapter three looks at World Vision Malawi's food security interventions in Chata Area Development Programme (ADP). First, it details the research methodology used in the collection of data. This includes selection and description of site and participants, data collection strategies (primary & secondary), data analysis strategies and how the results were presented to achieve trustworthiness. The chapter then gives a detailed historical background of WVM and Chata ADP, and provides a description of work that is being done in Chata ADP and the impact it is having.

Chapter four analyses how the food security programme is enhancing or eroding the livelihoods of the poor in the community based on primary and secondary data collected. It also analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the food security programme using the SLF as a benchmark.

Chapter five summarizes the findings and suggests direction (recommendations) for future action. Based on the findings, this chapter also provides contextual theological insights into the notion of *shalom*, and how it can impact upon the livelihoods of the poor in Malawi and Africa as a whole.

1.6 National Context

Malawi is a predominantly rural (85%) land-locked country in Southern Africa with a population of approximately 11.5 million. In the absence of a variety of other natural resources, the agricultural sector remains the most important sector of the economy. It provides more than 35 % of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employs about 80% of the labour force and contributes to about 90% of Malawi's export earnings.³ The majority of rural households in Malawi are smallholder farmers who are mostly reliant on a single harvest of maize for consumption but with chronic lack of access to seed and fertilizer. Other cereals being produced in much smaller quantities are rice, sorghum and millet.

Cassava is grown more widely in the less-populated Northern region while sweet potato production is increasing in the Central and Southern regions but still on a very small scale. Most smallholder farmers also produce groundnuts and other legumes during the year. Major cash crops include: tobacco and groundnuts in the North and Central regions, pulses and cotton in the South and vegetables in all the regions of the country.

Over the past 10-15 years, Malawi has shifted from being a nationally self-sufficient producer of Maize in non-drought years to being dependent on commercial food imports and foreign assistance to achieve a national food balance. The Malawi government has attempted to alleviate poverty through market liberalization and targeted rural development programmes. This has been done in order to support the agriculture production which remains the predominant production sector at the macro-level.

After two bumper harvests in most of the country in the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 agricultural seasons, smallholder farmers experienced significant production shortfalls

³ MoAIFS, *Terms of Reference (ToR) Impacts Food Security Policy*, 18 December 2003, p.2.

in the 2000-2001 agricultural seasons. The situation was exacerbated by low availability of maize and rapidly rising prices as well as late planting and erratic rains for the year 2001-02 agricultural seasons.

In October 2001, while updating their Household Economy Assessment (HEA) in three livelihood zones in Southern and Central Malawi, Save the Children-United Kingdom (SC-UK) realized that significant populations in rural Malawi were facing deficits in their annual food requirements. With prompting from SC-UK and after experiencing a dry spell in early 2002 during a critical stage of maize development, the Government of Malawi declared a food crisis.⁴

According to the July 2002 Family Early Warning System Network (FEWS Net) Malawi Food Security report, the final smallholder summer crop production figure (1.32 million tonnes) was 13% lower than the previous year. The final winter maize production estimates for 2001-02 were projected to be more than about 70% of the average of winter maize production from the past three years (about 120,000 MT). The FEWS Net report, however, stated that these higher winter production figures were likely to be over optimistic. In addition, it was estimated that a larger portion of maize than usual would be consumed or sold green.⁵

Apart from recurrent drought, HIV/AIDS is also contributing to the food insecurity situation in Malawi. HIV/AIDS infections in Malawi have increased rapidly over the past years. For example, the National AIDS Commission (NAC) reported that HIV/AIDS infections increased from 1.7% in 1987 to 14.3% in 1997.⁶ The awareness about AIDS in rural communities in Malawi is alarming because it is very low. Some communities spend more time taking care of the sick people than taking care of their crops. Thus, other household members are left to be more vulnerable to malnutrition and infection thereby causing some women and girls to indulge in prostitution as their livelihood strategy. The loss of human capacity and reduced time spent on agricultural activities therefore clearly links to the emerging food insecurity situation in Malawi.

⁴ Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC), *Malawi Emergency Food Security Assessment Report*, Lilongwe, 20 January 2003, p.7.

⁵ VAC, pp.7-8.

⁶ National Aids Commission, Annual Report, 2003.

1.6.1 Household Food Insecurity

At the household level, with decreased production and higher maize costs, smallholder farmers have become more vulnerable to food insecurity. This is mainly because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, decreased purchasing power, increased reliance on purchase of maize from the markets, deep poverty and gender related issues. Smallholder farmers have become more dependant on off-farm earning opportunities in the form of agricultural labour or *ganyu* as their livelihood strategy.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) defines food security as a state of affairs where all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. In Malawi where an estimated 65.3% of the population live below the poverty line on one dollar per person per day, the issue of food security as defined by FAO remains high on the national agenda.

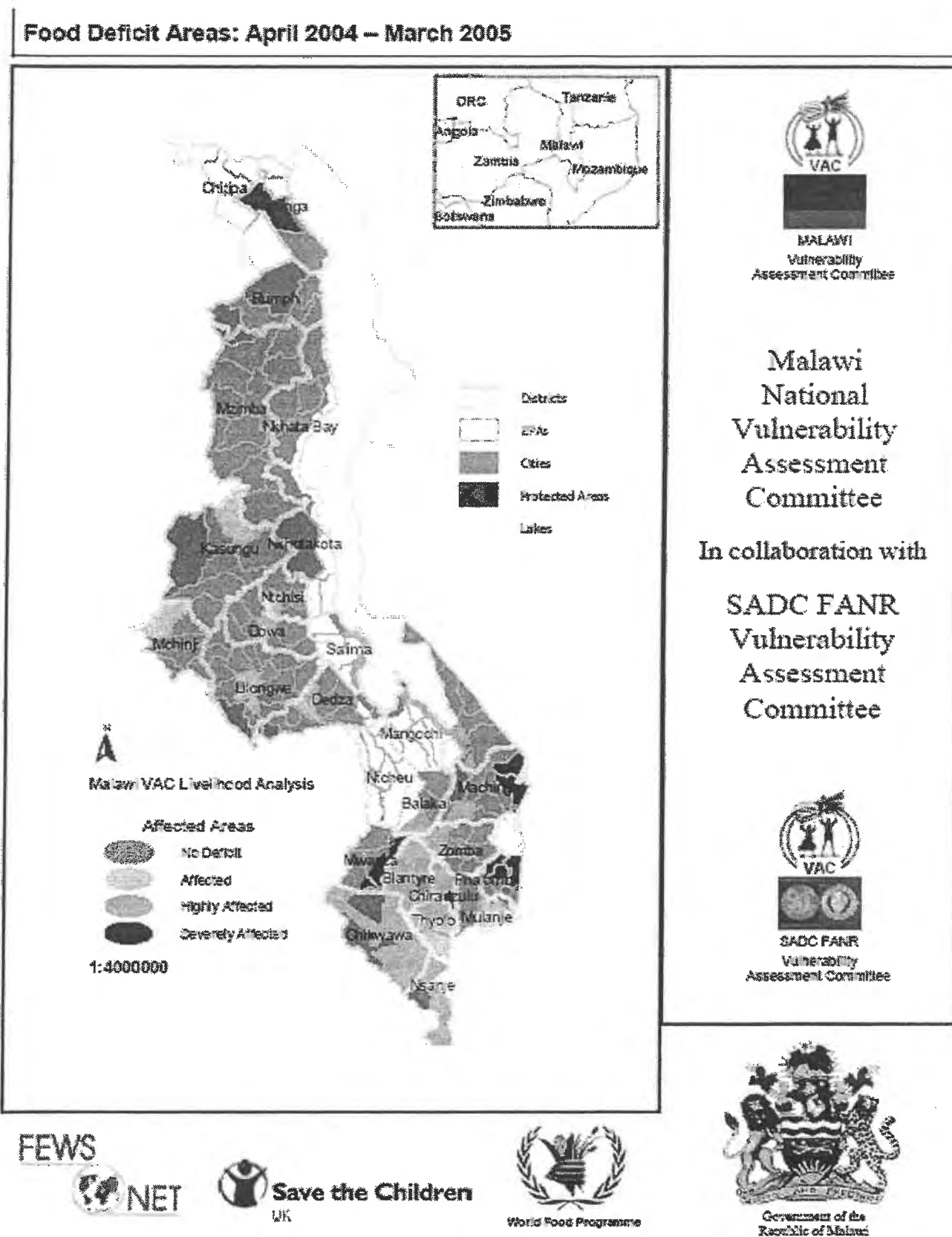
1.6.2 Current Food Security Analysis in Malawi

The information hereunder gives an overview of what would food security be like until the next major harvest in 2005 given the levels of production in various parts of the country at harvest time in April 2004. This information is taken from two reports namely: District Humanitarian Field Monitoring Report (DHFMR), February 2004⁷; and Food Security Monitoring Report - May 2004.⁸ Fig 1 gives an overview of areas that would be affected by food insecurity in Malawi during the period, April 2004 to March 2005.

⁷ This is a report based on District Humanitarian Situation and Activities reports submitted monthly by the District Humanitarian Affairs Officers (DHAO) who are supported by UNDP, to the Department of Poverty and Disaster Management Affairs (DoPDMA). The districts of Kasungu, Dedza, Mzimba, Thyolo and Mchinji are not included in this report due to pending placement of new DHAOs in those districts.

⁸ This is a report by the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) which is a consortium of organisations working to assess and reduce vulnerability in Malawi; it includes Government, UN Agencies and NGO's. The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development in the Government of Malawi chairs the MVAC. The MVAC conducts livelihood zoning exercises and Household Economy Approach (HEA) baseline surveys in its livelihood zones in Malawi. The livelihoods-based approach adopted by the MVAC aims to provide relevant information and analysis on food access and livelihoods to various Government Ministries, as well as to international organisations and civil society to inform early warning, rural development strategies, poverty reduction and safety nets programming, and food security policy formulation.

Fig 1. Map Showing Malawi's Food Deficit Areas



1.6.2.1 Northern Region

Chitipa District

Introduction

Chitipa district is divided into eight Extension Planning Areas (EPAs), namely: Lufita, Mwenemkumbwa, Kavukuku, Chisenga, Misuku, and Kameme. According to the District Humanitarian Field Monitoring Report (DHFMR), up to 47 % of households in Chitipa district experienced food shortages, representing 16,766 households. The lesser affected areas were Misuku EPA (which includes TA Mwenemisuku) which benefited from other sources of food and diverse eating habits, while Chisenga benefited from *dimba*⁹ maize in February 2004.¹⁰

Vulnerability Context

The lack of alternative cash crops or other Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and HIV/AIDS contribute generally to the vulnerability of households. Despite having enough maize from their gardens, many farmers sell most of their produce to meet their basic needs and help those infected and affected with HIV/AIDS in their communities. Since most of the maize is sold early when the prices are still low (as low as K3.00/kg), money realized from the sales is not enough to save, hence leaving most households prone to vicious circle of hunger.

Livelihood Strategy

Most people in Chitipa district are involved in firewood, mushroom and charcoal selling; beer brewing; *ganyu* (casual labour); selling small livestock; and receiving gifts from friends as their livelihood strategy to cope with the hunger. In Misuku EPA people resort to diversifying their eating habits as a coping mechanism.

Outcome¹¹

There would be an increase in casual labour for the poor households and the better-offs would utilize their livestock to earn income. There would also be a high demand for charcoal and firewood for the vulnerable people to offset losses, thereby posing an environmental threat.

⁹*Dimba* is a small piece of land that is naturally wet throughout the year because it is along river banks or streams. Since this land is usually fertile and moist, it is very conducive for winter cropping.

¹⁰ District Humanitarian Field Monitoring Report (DHFMR), February 2004, p9.

¹¹ An outcome is a complex word that describes the effects of a hazard on future access to food and income so that decisions can be taken about the most appropriate interventions. The rationale behind the use of 'outcome' is that a good understanding of how people have survived in the past provides a sound basis for projecting in the future. The word outcome in this context comprises three types of information namely, information on baseline access, information on hazard and information on response strategies.

Conclusion

The low production of crops due to poor rainfall means that poor people need to be targeted with food or cash based activities as a coping mechanism to alleviate their vulnerability.

Karonga District

Introduction

Karonga district has a total of eight EPAs and it has been demarcated as the Central Karonga Livelihood Zone by the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC).¹² Lupembe EPA is the worst affected area in the Northern region and it is drier than the rest of Karonga district. Cassava and maize are the major crops that are grown. Again, cash incomes are very low, however this situation is gradually changing because people have started growing cotton as a cash crop.

Vulnerability Context

MVAC has indicated that in this district there is going to be a partial failure of maize production due to prolonged dry spells during the 2003-04 growing season.¹³ However, this may be compensated for by an increase in the production of cassava. Rice production in the Northern part of Karonga may also help in reducing vulnerability to food insecurity although the price of rice may rise due to the scarcity of maize. One of the major causes of food insecurity in Karonga is floods. For example, Hara Area in TA Wasambo received heavy rains which damaged 826 hectares of crops affecting 1,677 households in 10 villages because of floods from Hara River.¹⁴

Livelihood Strategy

The poor people in this area, who own some livestock, hugely depend on *ganyu* and self employment which includes selling firewood, charcoal, vegetables, livestock, mats and fish.

Outcome

MVAC estimates that for the poor households, total food access is expected to drop to the range of 60-70% of minimum food requirements, giving a deficit of 25-40% in the

¹² MVAC has divided the country into Livelihood Zones. These are delineating geographical areas within which people share basically the same patterns of access to food, including crops and livestock and have the same access to markets. There are 17 Livelihood Zones in Malawi.

¹³ MVAC, Food Security Monitoring Report – May 2004, p14.

¹⁴ DHFMR, p13.

2003/04 growing season.¹⁵ Maize purchases are also going to be reduced because of lower earnings from *ganyu* and other crops. Winter cropping which helps in reducing household food insecurity will be affected greatly due to the reduction in the water table. As a result, people may indulge themselves in additional *ganyu* and this may affect their ability to grow their own crops. Affected households may also attempt to increase their earnings through selling of firewood which may adversely affect the environment.

Conclusion

Crop production is expected to decrease due to the erratic rainfall therefore emergency food interventions are required in order to mitigate the vulnerability of the affected households. This may be in form of food for work or cash for work.

1.6.2.2 Central Region

Kasungu -Lilongwe Livelihood Zone

Introduction

This zone comprises Kasungu, Ntchisi, Dowa, Mchinji, Lilongwe and Dedza districts. The Kasungu-Lilongwe plain is a relatively good productive area with tobacco and maize as the major crops. In an average year, the zone produces surplus food and maize, groundnuts, sweet potatoes and Soya beans are sold, mainly to Lilongwe. Tobacco is the single most important cash crop, providing 65%-85% of income for all wealth groups, and explaining why incomes in the zone are relatively high compared to elsewhere in the country.¹⁶

Vulnerability Context

Rains during the 2003/04 growing season were very erratic and unevenly distributed and this has affected most EPAs in the districts. In Dowa, a case in point is where one widow with five children, the youngest of 3 years, discovered to be eating *nsima* made of maize husks (*madeya*) three times a week, due to difficulties in production on her four acre plot of land.¹⁷ Dowa, Kasungu, Mchinji and Ntchisi are the most affected districts in the zone. Tobacco production which is mostly grown in these districts has been greatly reduced. In February 04, Ntchisi district experienced an outbreak of Semilorper Caterpillars which attacked 20 hectares of Soya beans in

¹⁵ MVAC, P14.

¹⁶ MVAC, P16.

¹⁷ DHFMR, p17.

Kamsonga Section, Malomo EPA and 4.4 hectares in Chipuka EPA. Both areas were sprayed in the same month.¹⁸ HIV/AIDS also continues to increase the vulnerability of many households to food insecurity in this zone. This is because most farmers spend much of their time and resources caring for those who are suffering from the scourge.

Livelihood Strategy

Ganyu which is done for food and is the most viable strategy for living in times of poor crop production may be affected. Thus, poor households have to work for cash at a low rate or seek to work in other less affected EPAs. Other coping mechanisms particularly in Lilongwe may include selling of tobacco locally, green maize, crafts, firewood, green vegetables and small livestock. However, the selling of livestock as a livelihood strategy for the better-off households indicates lack of employment for the poor. Migration to neighbouring EPAs and even Zambia may occur as a coping mechanism for better livelihoods.

Outcome

According to MVAC report, farmers' own crops are expected to cover just over half of the minimum consumption requirement for poor households in 2004, with the balance coming from *ganyu* (paid in food) and purchases. Incomes are also expected to fall this year because of the reduction in tobacco and other crop sales. The report continues to say that the balance of discretionary income will probably not be adequate to cover minimum food purchases, especially if prices rise. This is because the poor rely heavily on their own crops and on *ganyu* for food and these two sources will be hard hit, making it difficult for the vulnerable people.¹⁹

Conclusion

Most EPAs will be gravely affected in the 2003/04 growing season due to low crop production. Therefore, these EPAs will need assistance whether in cash or kind to reduce their vulnerability.

¹⁸ DHFMR, p22.

¹⁹ MVAC, p17.

1.6.2.3 Southern Region

Southern Lakeshore Livelihood Zone

Introduction

This zone comprises Salima district which is in the Central region, and it stretches from Central district of Nkhosakota to the North-eastern part of Mangochi district in the Southern region. Maize, rice, sweet potatoes, sorghum and groundnuts are the main crops that are grown in this area.

Vulnerability Context

The zone is a grain deficit area because most of the people in the zone are not farmers but fishermen. The rains for planting came late and were erratic with prolonged dry spells and worse still, they stopped earlier than expected. In Salima and Mangochi the most affected crops are maize and rice, in fact, farmers had to plant maize 2 to 3 times because of continuous withering of crops. Since rains were inadequate in most places, rice seedlings were not transplanted in the fields. Apart from low winter cropping production, poor rainfall also contributed to a reduction in fishing. This is because there was reduced fish food in the shallow waters. This reduction in the catching of fish means less income for the poor households hence they will find it difficult to purchase maize and rice for consumption.

Livelihood Strategy

Since the Southern Lakeshore zone is the principle fishing area of Malawi because of the shallow waters, a lot of people earn their living from fishing. Poor households generate income from providing casual fishing labour for others while the better-off earn income from the fish sales. Other livelihood strategies mainly in Salima district include selling charcoal, firewood, brooms, baskets and transporting people using bicycles.

Outcome

The MVAC report states that if staple food prices remain at an inflation-adjusted rate compared with baseline (i.e. MK 23 per kg), then lower incomes realised from fishing-*ganyu* coupled with poor rice and maize production is expected to create a significant food intake deficit of around 20-30% for the poor. Therefore this suggests that the poor will need to be targeted with either food-based activities (the missing food entitlement is estimated at around 3,500MT) or cash-based activities (estimated

at around US\$752,200).²⁰ Also, the timing and performance of the coming agricultural season (2004-2005) will be a key to providing opportunities for cash and food through agricultural *ganyu*.

Conclusion

Since the onset of last season's planting was affected by erratic rains and prolonged dry spells, poor households would experience huge food shortages. Therefore, there is a probability of finding other sources of income for better livelihood. For example, there would be selling of livestock for the better-offs while the poor will benefit from charcoal burning and collecting firewood.

Shire Highlands Livelihood Zone

Introduction

This is a large zone covering the most densely populated areas of the country. Districts that are covered in this zone are: Mangochi, Zomba, Chiradzulu, Blantyre, and Thyolo. Landholding for agricultural production is very limited because of the large population in the area.

Vulnerability Context

Low rainfall, recurring dry spells and HIV/AIDS have caused the low production of crops in the zone. Reduction in maize production means low rate of *ganyu* payment thereby reducing poor household's accessibility to enough food due to low income. In Mangochi poor households were exhausting maize stocks as early as February 2004, and also cassava roots were becoming scarce. A District Humanitarian Field Monitoring report stated that Armyworms attacked five sections of Kuntaja EPA while other sections of the EPA replanted late with reduced access to farm inputs. Worse still, other sections like Chikuli, Chikowa and Dzunga planted early and farmers had already commenced harvesting semi dry maize by February 2004. This situation is likely going to result in early food insecurity in those areas.²¹

Livelihood Strategy

The major source of income for the poor in this zone is agricultural employment and purchasing is the largest source of food for the poor. Affected families in Mangochi resorted to reducing the number of meals as a livelihood strategy.

²⁰ MVAC, p19.

²¹ DHFMR, p25.

Outcome

There will be a reduction in maize production, *ganyu* payments and also reduction in purchasing power. As a result, the poor households will not be able to offset the reduction in production by increasing purchases due to low income. There might also be an early rise in the price of staple food as a result of high demand due to low production.

Conclusion

This zone, according to the MVAC report, has experienced a significant reduction in crop production, particularly maize, cassava and pulses. The report goes on to say that the poor in the zone will have a 25% food entitlement deficit, representing 8610 MT of maize for 154,200 people. If maize prices will rise from the projected high of MK22/kg between November 2004 and March 2005 to MK28/kg, the total maize-equivalent deficit could rise to 10970 MT.²²

Middle Shire Valley Livelihood Zone

Introduction

The Middle Shire Valley zone includes parts of Mwanza, Balaka, Blantyre, and Zomba districts. It also extends from Mpatamanga gorge in the South to the Southern end of Lake Malombe in the North. The area is dry hence crop production is relatively low. The main cash crop in the area is cotton which provides a reasonable amount of money.

Vulnerability Context

Poor rains due to frequent dry spells have contributed significantly to the low production of crops, except for cotton. Maize production is only 34% of the average in Lisungwi EPA and Mwanza EPA whereas in the other affected EPAs (Bazale, Phalula, Utale, Chingale, Lirangwe and Chipande) in the zone it is at 57%. Other crops that are equally badly affected are sweet potatoes, cassava, and pulses.²³ Poor households may also face difficulties in accessing food because of price hikes due to low crop production. Sad to say that many farmers have stopped growing the main cash crop, cotton, because of price fluctuations.

According to the DHFM report, Thambani EPA is the most affected area in Mwanza district with acute food shortages and 91% of families without food as of February

²² MVAC, p20.

²³ MVA, p22.

2004. The villages that were worst affected are Msembedzera, Phalira, Kanyani, Tsegulani, Mtitima, Chatambulala, Kamphilimo, Jeke, Kankhoma, Chimulango and Kayera. These villages are hilly and stony causing crop production to be poor almost every year.²⁴

Livelihood Strategy

The major livelihood strategy for these people is subsistence farming while those living near Shire river do small scale fishing. In Thambani EPA which is the most affected area in Mwanza, poor people go to neighbouring Mozambique which provides relief to farm families migrating across to work to obtain maize. Other strategies for living would be selling of charcoal, firewood and doing *ganyu*.

Outcome

Poor households are going to seek extra labour, produce more charcoal, and sell their livestock. The reduction in crop production will mean low purchasing power due to reduced *ganyu* payment rates. Increased cotton sales would help in providing some cash to offset other losses although it will not be enough for the poor households. The selling of charcoal and firewood would also pose a serious threat to the already depleted trees.

Conclusion

Most EPAs would face a serious drop in crop production mainly maize and therefore short term measures like relief aid need to be undertaken in order to offset the impending hunger situation.

Lake Chilwa and Phalombe Livelihood Zone

Introduction

This zone covers the area surrounding Lake Chilwa, and Lake Chiuta in Machinga and Zomba districts. It also extends as far south to the highlands of Phalombe plain in Phalombe district and parts of Mulanje, Thyolo and Chiradzulu districts in the Southern region. Maize, cassava, sorghum, and rice are the main food crops while tobacco and sunflower are grown as cash crops although by minority farmers. Rice is the major cash crop for households around Lake Chilwa. Livestock production is not necessarily a source of food but serves as a reliable source of income in times of hardship.

²⁴ DHFMR, 36.

Vulnerability Context

Dry spells during the 2003/04 growing season have negatively affected poor households, mainly in Phalombe and Chiradzulu districts. Again, floods that occurred in February 2004 affected over 640 hectares of land in all EPAs in Phalombe district. In Nkhulambe EPA, four people died, 1156 households were affected, 554 houses collapsed and 1200 households were displaced.²⁵ Another challenge in Machinga is HIV/AIDS and according to DHFM report in February 2004, up to 90% of patients indicated that their accessibility to food relied on donations from their relatives and children who carry out casual labour for cash or food. Consequently, agricultural activities have been severely affected as most farmers spend most of their time caring for the sick. It is worth noting also that Lake Chilwa has no outlet and therefore in a dry year like 2004, water borne diseases increase and this limits fishing.

Livelihood Strategy

Most of the households in the zone are subsistence farmers who sell part of their produce in order to access other basic needs including food. Small scale business and fishing are other economic activities from which households in the zone enhance their livelihoods.

Outcome

The above shocks will reduce accessibility of the poor households to food in all districts of the zone. The MVAC report says that due to low crop production many households will run out of food much earlier this season in 2004 (July/August) than they normally do (November/December). It continues to say that food prices, especially of maize, will rise to their high value much earlier than is normally the case, which may trigger an increase in the flow of maize from Mozambique.²⁶

Conclusion

The prolonged dry spells and HIV/AIDS in the zone have adversely affected the production of many crops. Households who depend on Lake Chilwa for fishing will also be severely affected because there would be a reduction in fish due to low water levels. In addition, there would be a reduction in livestock because many would be sold at a cheaper price as a coping mechanism against vulnerability.

²⁵ DHFMR, p40.

²⁶ MVAC, p26.

Thyolo-Mulanje Tea Estates Livelihood Zone

Introduction

This zone includes parts of Mulanje and Thyolo districts in the Southern part of Malawi. It is characterized by large tea estates which give little land for poor households. This deprives many farmers from having enough food crops to last them the whole year and consequently there is high dependence on the market for food. The zone also borders Mozambique and hence most of the food crops such as maize come from it. Tea is the major cash crop that is grown in the area. Other crops grown in this zone include bananas, pineapples, avocado pears and citrus fruits. Livestock production is very limited because household land is small (averaging less than one acre) hence there is no land for grazing since most of the land is used for tea growing. The zone receives light rains or showers long after the main rainfall season is over thus making the weather favourable for tea and fruit production.

Vulnerability Context

The zone would face low crop production due to low rainfall in the growing season 2003/04. Maize production is expected to be 50% of what is normally produced, affecting income, and other crops that provide either food or cash. In addition, self employment will go down as people lack the resources to do personal businesses, markets diminish and resources are diverted to purchasing food.²⁷

Livelihood Strategy

Many households earn their income from working in the tea estates and selling fruit thereby enabling them to withstand maize production shocks.

Outcome

Production of fruit and vegetables is expected to drop slightly because of the dry spells. There will be many people flocking to the estates to seek employment in order to feed their households. Food prices may rise thereby increasing the threat to household food insecurity.

Conclusion

Although the rainfall was generally lower than normal, most crops survived. However, poor farmers will face food deficits in the 2004/05 agricultural marketing period and hence will need assistance in cash or kind.

²⁷ MVAC, p27.

Lower Shire Livelihood Zone

Introduction

This is a hot dry lowland zone which is nevertheless relatively productive by the standards of Southern Malawi. Cotton is the major cash crop which is gaining popularity every day from many companies. Cattle holdings are very significant in this zone although they are mainly owned by better-off households.

Vulnerability Context

It must be underscored from the outset that HIV/AIDS, drought and floods have been the major shocks that have eroded the livelihoods of the people in this zone for the past five years. HIV/AIDS has reduced the quantity of labour in the households because of the sick farmers. In addition, other members of the households have been forced to care for the sick and attend funeral ceremonies instead of working in their fields hence increasing their vulnerability to hunger. The dry spells that occurred affected the formation of cotton buds which is expected to reduce cotton output immensely. Water levels in the Shire river have lowered thus negatively affecting *dimba* farming. There are also prospects in the rise of purchasing price for maize, a trend which is a threat to poor peoples' livelihoods. DHFM report says that there were floods in Nsanje at Nyachienda EPA in February 2004 which affected a total of 130 hectares of maize and sorghum involving 650 families. The report continues to say that a total of 380 houses were damaged.²⁸

Livelihood Strategy

Generally speaking, one third of the zone's income comes from the sale of food crops, one third from the sale of cotton, and one third from the sale of livestock-mainly cattle and goats. Another source of enhancing their livelihoods is households' good accessibility to neighbouring Mozambique which provides relatively cheap maize in both good and bad years.

Outcome

Despite an above average income from cotton sales, most EPAs will face a food deficit because the dry spells affected food crops such as maize and sorghum thereby making the poor vulnerable to hunger. The poor are expected to face a food deficit which means that there will be a missing food entitlement of approximately 10,780

²⁸ DHFMR, p39.

MT.²⁹ Maize prices would be very instrumental towards food security situation in the zone because they will cause further and wider food insecurity if they rise beyond inflation-adjusted levels.

Conclusion

Although crop production would be relatively lower than normal, households who are far from main markets are going to cope with this threat because the Lower Shire zone produces a variety of crops. Although rice, which is also an important income earner, did poorly, crops such as sorghum and millet performed normally thereby easing the extent of vulnerability to poor households.

This section has provided an overview of the food security situation in some of the most affected areas in Malawi. It has been observed that the household's access to food changes constantly. This is because of changes in sources of livelihoods such as food and cash crop production, *ganyu* availability and staple food prices. This section has also shown that vulnerability to food insecurity has been caused by many factors including decreased purchasing power, increased reliance on purchase of maize from the markets, chronic and deep poverty, erratic rains and HIV/AIDS. In particular, HIV/AIDS has aggravated the issue of food insecurity in Malawi. This is because not only has the quantity of labour been reduced in the household because of the sick individual, but also because other members of the household have been forced to care for the sick. In addition, the productivity of the community has been reduced because people spend time and money assisting the affected households and attending funerals. It has also been observed that the overall rainfall in all the livelihood zones was below average and was not evenly distributed across the country. The areas that received less than the expected rains were mostly in the Southern region, resulting in below average production. However, the coming agricultural season, 2004/05 is projected to be normal and on time.

Having examined food security situation in some of the most affected zones in Malawi, I now turn my attention to some FBOs and churches that are actively engaged in food security programmes.

²⁹ MVAC, p30.

1.7 Description of FBOs and Churches Involved in Food Security Programmes

Introduction

The multifaceted nature of food security issue has resulted in many FBOs indulging themselves in activities aimed at improving the food security status among people in Malawi. These FBOs are providing food security interventions to many poor families in areas that normally are not covered by the government's national programmes on food security. It is against this background that in this section I am going to look at different food security interventions that are being carried out by FBOs and churches in Malawi. Thus providing a context in which to look at the extent to which FBOs and churches are contributing to food security programmes in a way that enhances the lives and livelihoods of the poor.

1.7.1 Emmanuel International of Canada (EIC)

Background

The project has worked for ten years in relief, rehabilitation and development programming in Machinga and Zomba in the Southern region. EIC works in partnership with Evangelical Baptist Church of Malawi (EBCM) and in conjunction with the government of Malawi. The objective of EIC is to reduce hunger among the poor by addressing both the short-term effects and long-term causes of poverty and malnutrition.³⁰

Food Security Interventions

Supplementary Feeding: The project provides 30g beans and 15g oil per day per beneficiary. The beneficiaries are the vulnerable under-five children, pregnant and breast feeding women. The project also provides micro-nutrients supplement to the same target group of beneficiaries. These are Vitamin A and Iron tablets. Supplementation is done through health outlets. In addition, the project provides nutrition education, and administers Tetanus and Polio-immunization for women and children, respectively.

³⁰National Economic Council, Food and Nutritional Unit, *An Inventory of Non Governmental Organisations undertaking projects in the area of Food Security and Nutrition in Malawi*, June 2000, p9.

Food for Work: The project undertakes food for work activities to alleviate acute food insecurity in vulnerable female headed households. Construction of roads, dams, bridges and agro-forestry are some of the main activities.

Constraints

The main problem is low coverage due to the poor road network.

1.7.2 Christian Aid for Relief and Development (CARD)

Background

The programme started in 1994 with the aim of rehabilitating the environment and the livelihood of the people in the areas which hosted Mozambican refugees. CARD is operating in Mchinji, Thyolo, and Nsanje districts.

Food Security Interventions

Food Security and Nutrition: The project gives loans of Sunflower, Soya beans and maize seeds as well as fertilizer. The loans are given to farmer clubs at a 15% interest rate. Training on good farming methods is also provided using government and CARD's own extension workers. The project is also involved in crop diversification and small livestock production. Women are also trained in food fortification, Soya bean utilization, food processing and preservation. This is done in liaison with Agriculture Development Division (ADD) staff.³¹

Constraints

Acceptance of the idea of rehabilitation in the form of credit by the communities who were used to free handouts has been the major constraint.

1.7.3 Blantyre Synod Project

Background

The project is a service organisation of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Blantyre Synod and is based in the Southern region of Malawi. It was initiated in 1992 to respond to the socio-physical needs of the people of Southern

³¹National Economic Council, Food and Nutritional Unit, *An Inventory of Non Governmental Organisations undertaking projects in the area of Food Security and Nutrition in Malawi*, June 2000, p.10.

Malawi. The objective of the Blantyre Synod Project is to improve people's understanding of their role and the role of the church in people centred development; and to facilitate programmes and activities that seek to alleviate problems which are accelerating poverty in Malawi. Apart from food security initiatives, the project is also embarking on other programmes such as Development Education, Development through literacy, and Community Based Orphan Care programmes.³²

Food Security Interventions

Naming'azi Farm Training Centre: The farm seeks to be a resource to smallholder farmers in the Blantyre Synod. It is geared to promote sustainable integrated agricultural production by using local resources. This training centre was built to offer training to 25 surrounding villages. The project has demonstration plots where a variety of crops are grown.

Constraints

The project faces problems such as the rise in the number of orphans, lack of own infrastructure for the orphan care centres and transportation problems due to the lack of vehicles.

1.7.4 Evangelical Lutheran Development Programme (ELDP)

Background

ELDP is part of the Lutheran World Service and its central objective is to rehabilitate the environment in areas that have been degraded due to the impact of refugees. In Malawi, it started operating as a Relief Organisation in 1989 at the refugee camps. They started with the Environmental Rehabilitation Project. Thereafter, the Rural Community Motivation started in 1994; the latest project is the Agricultural Rehabilitation programme which focuses on issues of food security. Currently, ELDP is operating in all the three regions of Malawi.³³

Food Security Interventions

The project provides maize seed (MH 18 and PAN 63/63) and fertilizers on loan to the farmers with a 10% interest. ELDP also trains farmers on seed multiplication,

³² National Economic Council, p.11.

³³ Evangelical Lutheran Development Programme (ELDP) Annual Report 2003.

providing them with cassava cuttings. Farmers are also assisted to start Income Generating Activities (IGAs) by providing them with inputs like vegetable seeds and pesticides.

Constraints

The major constraint is that there is a lot of loan default.

1.7.5 Christian Service Committee (CSC)

Background

CSC exists to promote food security and nutrition at both household and community levels through the promotion of improved agricultural techniques and training.³⁴ The organisation is operational in the Southern region in Mulanje (Nalipili), Zomba (Thondwe) and Thyolo (Chonde). The project is also being carried out in the Northern region of Malawi.

Food Security Interventions

Activities under the food security component of CSC include the promotion of high yielding varieties, livestock production and soil fertility. There is also an extension training programme that focuses on soil fertility improvement and business skills. CSC has a revolving fund for rural women where there is provision of fertilizer, maize seed and animals on loan at the prevailing market interest rates.

Small grants are also given to women's groups to start up businesses such as small animal rearing or vegetable growing to enable them provide for their families. Soya bean production and utilization is also promoted by Christian Service Committee.

Constraints

Poor repayments of loans and limited resources are some of the problems that the organisation is encountering.

³⁴ National Economic Council, p.34.

1.7.7 Catholic Development Commission of Malawi (CADECOM)

Background

CADECOM is a development arm of the Roman Catholic Church in Malawi. It aims at creating awareness and empowering men, women and the youth at all levels to undertake development that is integral, gender and environmentally sensitive, sustainable and which promotes justice, human dignity and self reliance with active participation of the people themselves so that they take up the responsibility of their own destiny.³⁵ CADECOM operates in almost all the districts in Malawi. It operates through the diocesan structure.

Food Security Interventions

Crop Diversification: This involves training of farmers in Soya bean production, processing and utilization. It also provides farmers with Soya beans, groundnuts and kidney bean seeds for production depending on location. This component promotes participation of farmers in the Apip programme by providing poor farmers with Open Pollinated Varieties of Maize (OPV) and fertilizer.

Animal Production: Farmers are provided with chicks for rearing.

Supplementary Feeding: CADECOM provides *Likuni phala* to communities for feeding their children at community level.

Agro-forestry: CADECOM provides tree seedlings to farmers. This is done in conjunction with Concern Universal.

Constraints

Inadequate funding and the dependency syndrome by the communities are some of the major constraints being faced by CADECOM.

1.7.8 Nkhoma Synod Relief and Development

Background

The organisation is a development wing of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Nkhoma Synod. It started operating in Malawi in 1990 and it is operating in the Central region of Malawi. Nkhoma Synod Relief and Development concentrates

³⁵ Catholic Development Commission of Malawi (CADECOM) Statutes, 1st revised edition June 2004, p.2.

in four main domains. These are Food Security and Nutrition, Health, Education and Afforestation.³⁶

Food Security Interventions

This involves provision of 5kg of legume seeds such as Soya beans, groundnuts, and beans on loan for production at a 10% interest. Maize seeds and Irish potatoes are given on loan with 10% interest. The project also provides petty cash to women to start Income Generating Activities (IGAs).

Constraints

The project is facing financial and transport problems.

1.7.9 Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness Consortium (DMP Consortium)

Background

Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM) Consortium exists to serve Jesus Christ, working together in relief and development, bringing good news to the poor, building and demonstrating oneness in Christ. EAM, which is coordinating the consortium, is an umbrella body of evangelical churches and para-church organisations which believes that working together has the potential to reduce duplication of efforts and resources and to maximize impact. It is against this background that the Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness Consortium on Sustainable Livelihoods was born to help address the issue of food insecurity in Malawi. Amongst other things, DMP Consortium facilitates and strengthens coordination and dialogue among members to ensure that the joint response to DMP in Malawi is conducted in a most effective and efficient way. The consortium is open to all EAM members who are participating in holistic ministry encompassing relief and development.³⁷

Hereunder are some of the members of the DMP Consortium who are actively involved in food security programmes in Malawi.

³⁶ Nkhoma Synod Relief and Development Progress Report, May 2004.

³⁷ DMP Consortium Progress Report, May 2004.

1.7.9.1 Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services (AGREDS)

AGREDS is a development arm of one of the biggest Pentecostal churches (Assemblies of God Church) in Malawi. It is operating in the Central region and has food security projects in Msitu Extension Planning Area (EPA) in Mchinji district. There are 250 households who are the beneficiaries in the five villages of Nkhase, Chipata, Mlemba, Kachingwe and Mangwale.

1.7.9.2 Eagles Relief and Development Programme

Eagles Relief and Development is a development section of one of the fastest growing Pentecostal churches (Living Waters Church) in Malawi. One of its aims is to help the local church and community to develop sustainable food security programmes, reduce their future vulnerability and manage their own development. Eagles Relief is operating in the Southern region in Chikwawa in Mitale EPA. Chikwawa DMP project is helping people to address food insecurity and reduce their future vulnerability. Food for work, supplementary feeding, irrigation, agro-forestry and establishment of village/church food security committees are some of the interventions that are carried out in the area.

1.7.9.3 River of Life Evangelical Church (ROLEC)

As a member of EAM's DMP Consortium, ROLEC is carrying out food security programmes in Chididi which is one of the neglected areas in Nsanje district. ROLEC which established a church in Chididi three years ago is currently the biggest church in the area. It is working in partnership with other churches like Catholics and Presbyterians.

ROLEC is empowering the communities in food security issues by involving them in mitigation programmes. They provide people with seeds and fertilizer for development work in their area and they do not condone free handouts. They also have methods of enriching the soil to avoid dependence on chemical fertilizers, which is very expensive for the rural people. Good methods of preservation, saving and the empowerment to produce enough food for consumption are also promoted.

1.7.9.4 Pentecostal Assemblies of God Relief and Development

Pentecostal Assemblies of God is a lead partner of EAM and is implementing a food security programme in Salima. It is targeting 250 vulnerable families and is being carried out in T/A Kambalame which is located south of Salima district. Some of the activities that are being done include diversification of some drought resistant food crops; training of farmers in appropriate farming methods; improving harvest storage facilities at household level; improvement of utilization of harvest for food and commercial purposes; conservation and management of livestock; and envisioning of the church through trainings, workshops, and practicals.

Constraints

One of the major problems that the DMP Consortium faces is that some of the DMP partners are accused of playing double standards because of dealing directly with the donor of the consortium instead of EAM. This tendency undermines EAM's role of facilitation and coordination. Another problem that the DMP Consortium faces is different levels of knowledge on issues of food security among the members. Some members have a vast experience in issues of food security while others are just new comers in food security programmes hence they feel inferior and sidelined during consortium meetings.³⁸

1.7.10 Other FBOs

Other FBOs that have food security programmes include: World Relief Malawi which is working with the churches in Nkhotakota and Salima; Salvation Army, Every Child, and Evangelical Association of Malawi Relief and Development Programme.

1.7.11 World Vision Malawi (WVM)

World Vision Malawi is actively involved in food security programmes in the following categories: availability or production, access to food, utilization, asset creation, stability, and relief interventions. Some of the problems that WVM is struggling with in its projects are inadequate funding to carry out all the projects, poor coordination in food security sector hence duplication of efforts, erratic availability of seeds from research institutions and inadequate capacity to undertake all the activities.

³⁸ DMP Consortium Mid Evaluation Report, April 04.

It must be stated that WVM will be examined in great detail in chapter three and four since the organisation provides the case study for this thesis.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on the statement of the problem, limitations, hypothesis, purpose, motivation and the significance of the research. The chapter has also examined the issue of food security in Malawi where it has been observed that there are four categories of food insecurity namely, acute, seasonal, transitory and chronic food insecurity. In the same vein, I have shown that vulnerability to food insecurity is caused by many factors including HIV/AIDS pandemic, decreased purchasing power, increased reliance on the purchase of maize from the markets, deep poverty and erratic rains. A brief description of some notable FBOs and churches that are actively engaged in food security programmes in Malawi has also been given in this chapter. It has been observed that although these FBOs and churches are being faced with many challenges, they are still striving to embark on various food security programmes with the aim of enhancing the lives and livelihoods of the poor people.

Let me now move to the next chapter to discuss food and livelihoods in theological perspective so as to understand the linkage between *shalom* and food; *shalom* and the Church; and lastly, *shalom* and the SLF.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 FOOD AND LIVELIHOODS IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 SHALOM AND FOOD

2.1.1 Introduction

There is a close link between a biblical vision of *shalom* and a theological reflection on food security. For us to understand better this linkage, it is important to unpack these concepts separately. Therefore, in this section I shall firstly examine a broader vision of *shalom*, and secondly, I shall examine a theological reflection on food security. Thereafter, I shall discuss their relationship.

2.1.2 A Vision of Shalom

It must be stated from the outset that the word *shalom* is a Hebrew name for peace. However, it has deeper meaning to peace than English word, peace.¹ As it shall be seen in this section, *shalom* denotes material and physical well being; enjoyment of social relationships; moral character; and lastly, *shalom* has a theological dimension as found in the New Testament. Let me now explore these four elements that constitute a vision of *shalom*.

Material and Physical Well-being

In a material or secular sense, *shalom* designates well-being, prosperity, or bodily health. The meaning is clear in the Bible when someone is asked to check the *shalom* of someone or something. For example, in Gen 37:14, Joseph is asked by his father Jacob to check the *shalom* of his brothers and of the cattle. In this scenario, Jacob is interested in knowing if they are all right physically.² Again, Psalm 38:3 shows that *shalom* can mean bodily good health.

Not only does *shalom* refer to the state of well being, an all-rightness, an “okayness,” but it also means prosperity or abundance.³ This is why it is used in wishes or blessing in Numbers 6:26 where the phrase, “may God give you *shalom*,” means that you should prosper and have a successful life. Lastly, *shalom* has a negative connotation

¹ It does not necessarily mean the absence of war as is normally perceived, it is more than that.

² See also Esther 2:11 and I Samuel 17:18 where David is sent by his father to the army camp to see if his brothers are safe and sound.

³ See Jeremiah 33:6, 9 and Psalm 73:3 where the RSV translates *shalom* as prosperity.

of being safe from physical hazards like floods, diseases, and famine (Jeremiah 14:3).

Perry Yoder states:

Shalom is marked by the presence of physical well-being, and the absence of physical threats like war diseases and famine....peace making as *shalom* making is striving so that those who do not now enjoy material *shalom* and physical well-being can do so.⁴

Enjoyment of Social Relationships

The second major realm, to which *shalom* is linked, is that of social relationships. This is whereby everyone regardless of status, race, colour, gender or nationality should act justly and enjoy freedom, rights and justice. Nicholas Walterstorff, says that *shalom* at its highest is enjoyment in one's relationships and it incorporates the following: right and harmonious relationships to God and delight in his service; right and harmonious relationships to other human beings and delight in human community; and lastly right harmonious relationships to nature and delight in our physical surroundings.⁵ Justice is the measure of the presence of *shalom* in any given society where liberated people enjoy *shalom* to the fullest. Therefore, to dwell in *shalom* means that everyone has the responsibility to ensure justice for all by acting justly. It also means freely enjoying living with God, neighbours, nature and physical surroundings, and enjoying life with oneself.

It is also important to note that *shalom* is seen from God as an act of salvation. In the Hebrew Scriptures salvation was primarily a political, material term since *save* refers to the liberation of people from physical and political oppression and from conditions of material distress like droughts and famine. Thus, salvation is liberation. This is a demonstration of *shalom* as God liberates the oppressed.⁶ Liberation therefore is an expression of *shalom* because it is based on meeting the needs of the poor out of love and not according to merit.

Moral Character

The third major arena to which *shalom* is applied is the moral and ethical sense. In this regard, *shalom* is understood as the opposite of speaking evil and lies. Therefore, a person of *shalom* is someone who is characterised by integrity, honest, and

⁴ Perry Yoder, *Shalom*, Faith and Life Press, 1987, p13.

⁵ Nicholas Walterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983, pp69-70.

⁶ The story of exodus also demonstrates God's grace by liberating the Israelites regardless of merit.

straightforwardness (Ps. 34:14, 37:37; Zech. 18:16). In the same vein *shalom* signifies that one is blameless or innocent; without guilt (2Ki. 5:19). Thus, the starting point in the quest for *shalom* rests on the individual repentance or conversion although the direction of *shalom* is consummated in the communities. Inner renewal is the prerequisite for a structural renewal of the society. The biblical writers were never romantic about *shalom*. For them, belief in God and moral action are one. They saw sin as humanity's way of abandoning a vision of *shalom* and the only alternative way was to call to repentance (Jer. 16:10-13; 18:11; 29:13-14; Is. 1:13-20; Amos 5:14; Joel 2:13). It is against this realization that only a changed individual can change a society. This is why the Apostle Paul calls on Christians to fight against the principalities and powers that constitute the root cause of evil in the society thereby wounding a vision of *shalom*. It must be noted that to some people this assertion may be regarded as visionary and impractical given the kind of world that we live in.

Theological Dimension (New Testament perspective)

The equivalent word for *shalom* in the New Testament is peace. The Greek word for peace is *eirene*. It must be pointed out from the outset that *eirene* as found in the NT is just the development of Old Testament *shalom*. This word is used much the same as *shalom* i.e. material and physical well-being, good relationships and moral character. However, there is one distinctive difference between *eirene* and *shalom*, this is a theological difference. Let me now look at the theological interpretation of the word peace (*eirene*) as found in the New Testament.

Firstly, the word *eirene* is used theologically to denote God. For example, the phrase, "the God of Peace" is found in several passages such as Rom. 15:33; II Cor. 13:11 and I Thess.3:6. The word is also used in the expression "the peace of God" and "the peace of Christ," as found in Jhn. 14:27; Philip.4:7 and Col. 3:15.

Another theological dimension of the word *eirene* is found in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This meaning found its consummation in the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ which consequently established the relationship between people themselves, and between people and God. As Paul writes in Rom 5: 1-11 and Eph. 2:14-17, God sent Jesus Christ to die so as to bring peace between people and to restore the relationship between people and God. This was important

because transformed human relationships are a prerequisite to human-divine relationship. In other words, there can be no peace between God and people if there is no peace between people themselves. The chief aim of life is not only finding peace with God, but also positive peace among people.⁷

2.1.3 Theological Reflection on Food Security

In this section I am drawing from the work of Steve de Gruchy in his paper, "Four Theological Theses on Food and Hunger". Here he argues:

Food is a central theme in the bible. From the apple that Adam and Eve shared in the Garden of Eden, through the last supper that Jesus and his disciples shared in the upper room, to the eschatological vision of the wedding feast in which we all shall share; food, feasts and famine are woven into its passages. This should not surprise us because the bible is a book about real life, and food is central aspect, possibly *the* central aspect of real life.⁸

The importance of the theme of food that is woven in the bible runs from the Old Testament all the way to the New Testament. Therefore, there is need to explore some theological reflections on the issue of food security. There is no uniform biblical theology about food, but the bible helps us to think theologically about the issue of food.⁹ It is against this background that I shall examine the following theological notions around the theme of food security: First, Food security and life; second, food security and freedom; third, food security and power; and fourth, food security and human labour.

Food Security and Life

Food is life, therefore food security is very important to people's lives and livelihoods. As John Madeley suggests, food is more than a commodity that is sold and bought. It is more than the nutrients we consume. Food is a unique and bonding resource that should be shared at every level: family, community, national and international.¹⁰ Again, Samuel Chingondole in his thesis observes that food is linked

⁷ Yoder, p.21.

⁸ De Gruchy, Four Theological Theses on Food and Hunger (Unpublished document, 2004), p.1.

⁹ De Gruchy, p.1.

¹⁰ John Madeley, "Introduction" in *Food for All: The need for a New Agriculture*, London: Zed Books, 2002, p. 2.

to life and livelihood, "Hungry people are angry people".¹¹ The importance of food security is seen in God's first creation story where God provides enough and accessible food to both the humanity and creatures of the earth (Gen 1:29-31). God knows that there cannot be life for human beings without enough food, hence he secured food for them to underline the fact that he cares for life.

In the second creation story we see God establishing an irrigation scheme in the Garden of Eden. God made sure that what was planted in the garden would continuously be sustained. In this first ever irrigation scheme in the history of the world, we see a river flowing out of Eden to water the garden and from there, the river had four branches filling out the entire garden with enough water for the sustainability of the plants. All this was to ensure food security for Adam and Eve so that they could have a healthy and productive life. This is a clear demonstration that God is the creator of food therefore there is need for a deep recognition of our dependence upon him for our food.

The religious custom of Israelites called upon all people to give offerings of first fruit to God as a thanksgiving. God was giving them enough food day after day and the only way of thanking him was through these sacrifices of first fruit (Exd. 23:16, Lev.23:9-10, Neh.10:35). This underlies the fact that God is the creator and provider of food, and therefore the sustainer of life.

De Gruchy argues that the reason why there is much emphasis on food in the two creation stories and in the religious rituals of Israel, is because food is life. God provides food because God is the author and sustainer of life.¹² This is why ensuring that everyone has economic and physical access to food should be an obligation of every Christian. Jesus asserts this premise when he shows his concern about the hungry people and calls all Christians to feed the hungry (Matt.25:35).

¹¹ Samuel Mpeleka Chingondole, "A Promise or A Threat? A Theological Critique of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnonology with particular Reference to Food Security and Sovereignty in Africa", Masters thesis, 2002.

¹² De Gruchy, p.4.

Food Security and Freedom

The Lord's Prayer which is very central to Christian faith reflects explicitly on the relationship between food security and freedom. "...Give us *this day* our *daily* bread". De Gruchy argues that this prayer that Jesus told his followers to pray, signals for us that food on a daily basis frees us from anxiety and want.¹³ Thus, the prayer gives peace of mind because people do not have to panic for tomorrow since they are food secured on a daily basis (*this day...daily* bread). This prayer is rooted in another outstanding illustration of food security and freedom that is embedded in the Exodus story of the Israelites (Exd. 15:2-8). In this story God could not allow the children of Israel to trade their freedom from Pharaoh's slavery with food. This is why God decided to provide them with food on a daily basis. Again, this shows that God desires everyone to be food secured. God knows that food security and freedom are indivisible and that food security is a prerequisite of freedom.

Several centuries later, Christ reflected on this event in the wilderness and said that although the Israelites ate bread, they still died. In other words, their freedom was limited hence he spoke of himself as "the bread of life" (Jhn 6:48). The manna that the Israelites received made them to be unfree because it gave them limited freedom but actual freedom which is demonstrated in food security of the people is metaphorically consummated in Christ as he declares himself as "bread of life", thus, bread that is accessible, safe and life giving to humanity. This is the bread that gives freedom of mind, body, and soul.

"...Give *us* this day *our* daily bread." In the same vein of food security and freedom the Lord's Prayer denotes that the issue of accessibility to food should not only be for few individuals or companies, but it should be for all humanity. This is a communal prayer meaning all people should have physical and economic access to food and freedom. If food security is achieved for all people then freedom for all could be achieved. This is what God is calling us to do, to make sure all people are food secured so that they all enjoy freedom.

¹³ De Gruchy, p.9.

Food Security and Human Labour

For de Gruchy, the Lord's Prayer underlies the connection between food production and human labour. "...Give us this day our daily *bread*".

It strikes me as significant that we ask God not for our daily water or cereals or fruit, but for our daily *bread*. Immediately we face the conundrum that whilst we can accept that God creates natural foods, he certainly does not create bread. *People* make bread, and it is a culturally limited task that makes use of available technology. Not all cultures and people make bread; some make porridge, others make chapattis or tacos, or pita. But in all cases it requires labour, fire and utensils. So when we pray to God for our daily bread we not only are acknowledging the providence of God (as we saw above), we are accepting that our labour is a vital component of God's labour in the world and thus affirming our role as co-creators with God.¹⁴

This is a reminder that people have a vocation as God's creatures. They have to creatively use what has been given to them freely, for example, natural food and make it more nutritious and sustaining.

God can provide rains for good and bumper harvest but it is up to us to make sure that there is food security. God has created and given us rivers therefore it is our duty to make use of simple but productive technologies like treadle pumps or river diversion (like that of Eden) for irrigation purposes in order to increase our produce and ensure food security. Bread is more nutritious than maize, therefore diversifying food consumption means promoting food security for the poor. It must be noted that God cannot drop bread from Heaven. Therefore, the prayer calls everyone to not just sit idly appreciating what God has freely provided, but calls every person to participate in co-working with God to ensure food security for all. *the Church could be*

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Food Security and Power

Food is power. Therefore, those who are in control of food security related programmes and those who have enough food are powerful both at micro and macro levels. This reminds us about the story of Joseph in Egypt (Gen 41:1-57, 42:1-38, 43:1-34; and chapters 44 and 47 of Genesis). The story shows how access and control of food can make a person to be powerful. Since Joseph was in charge of food reserves, he was a powerful and famous person in all Egypt and Israel. Even his own

¹⁴ De Gruchy, p.4.

father feared him. It is important to note that although Joseph was powerful because of his authority over food, he did not use the powers for selfish gains, rather he used his powers to help his kinsmen and the citizens of Egypt.

“Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely”. This saying has been fulfilled in Malawi where some cabinet ministers took the law into their own hands and misused their powers to illegally sell maize, plunder the Strategic Grain Reserves (SGR) and caused the collapse of ADMARC. These people sold maize, a scenario which resulted in the death of many poor people who died of hunger because these few “powerful” people sold the maize for their personal aggrandizement.¹⁵

De Gruchy argues that the issue of food and power is also reflected in the New Testament times where Roman Emperors knew that with “bread and Circuses” they could keep the poor masses happy and therefore keep themselves in power. Satan knows that power comes from control of food therefore he tempted Jesus Christ in the wilderness (Mtt.4:3, Lk4:3). Jesus knew that this was a manipulative request and his answer was that “humans do not live by bread alone”. Thus, Jesus pointed out that he does not rejoice in having manipulative power that oppresses others for personal benefit.¹⁶

The spiritual task of feeding and ensuring that people are food secured draws us into conflict and tension since we fight against evil powers and structures that are in control of food. This challenge is succinctly put in the words of the Brazilian priest, Dom Helder Camara who said: “When I gave bread to the poor they called me a saint. When I asked why they had no bread they called me a communist.”¹⁷

It is vital that Churches make clear their position in the struggle for food security and sovereignty, offering their concerns, knowledge, experience and ecumenical commitment to solidarity and life in community that is marked by justice, equality and the care for life.¹⁸

¹⁵ A Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry on Strategic Grain Reserves, presented to President Bingu wa Muthalika on Tuesday, August 24, 2004. See The Daily Times Newspapers, Wednesday, September 1, 2004. p.1 and 8.

¹⁶ De Gruchy, p. 9.

¹⁷ World Council of Churches, *Caring for Life: Biotechnology and Agriculture* (unpublished, background document), Geneva, 2002, p.2.

¹⁸ World Council of Churches, p.2.

2.1.4 The Relationship between Food Security and a Vision of Shalom

It is very clear that there is a close link between the theological reflection on food security and the broader vision of *shalom*. It has been noted that both the issue of food security and a vision of *shalom* are aimed at ensuring that people's lives and livelihoods are enhanced. Let me now reflect on the food security themes that I have discussed and examine how they relate to the broader vision of *shalom*.

Food Security and Life: As noted earlier, a person cannot live without food because food is life. This is why having enough food for one's consumption is paramount to a healthy life and this is what God desires for everyone as the author of life. Jesus' concern for the hungry in Mtt.25:35 is a clear indication that he cares for the lives of his people. This is what a vision of *shalom* is all about. *Shalom* is when people have good health. It is when people's lives are not endangered by physical harm like famine and floods which cause food insecurity. Therefore, *shalom* is only prevalent when people start to be food secure for the enhancement of their lives and livelihoods. God wants the people to have good physical and material well being because he cares for life. This is a notion that characterises a vision of *shalom* where people prosper and have enough food for a productive and healthy life.

Food Security and Freedom: The Lord's Prayer as we have seen signals for us to be free from anxiety. Again, the story of the Jews in the wilderness where God gave them enough food so that they should not lose their freedom points to the realisation that food security and freedom are indivisible. To God freedom is important to life and the livelihoods of humanity. In a vision of *shalom*, God wants everyone to enjoy freedom and one can be free only if one has physical and economic access to safe and sufficient food. It must also be noted that this freedom is not only for a particular individual as noted in the Lord's Prayer, but for everyone, "Give us this day our daily bread". This is the premise that is embedded in a vision of *shalom* where true freedom is not only for oneself but also harmonious relationship with God, nature and physical surroundings, and friends. Therefore, a vision of *shalom* ensures that all people enjoy freedom by having physical and economic access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food for better lives and livelihoods.

Food Security and Power: Food is power and therefore those entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring food security tend to amass power as noted in the story of Joseph in Egypt (Gen. 41, 42, 43, 44). We have seen in the bible and in our world how some people abuse their powers over food for personal gains. As the case with the story of Joseph, God wants us to justly use our powers over food to serve the people of God by ensuring that they have equal access to sufficient food. However, this is not an easy task because it involves risking our very lives fighting against these devilish powers and structures to ensure that justice reigns in the society as motivated by a vision of *Shalom*. *Shalom* is where justice that is moved by love is basic. Therefore, there is need to make sure that the power is not being abused by undermining poor people's access to safe and sufficient food, but it should be used justly so that other people should enjoy justice that characterises a vision of *Shalom*. This is because in a vision of *shalom*, God's justice is against the powerful and it benefits the weak and the oppressed. Thus, a vision of *shalom* is demonstrated by justice that enhances poor people's lives and livelihoods by ensuring that they are food secured.

With this in mind, I can turn to the church as God's representative community here on earth.

2.2 SHALOM AND THE CHURCH

2.2.1 Introduction

The Church and FBOs exist to fulfil God's vision of *shalom*. It must be underscored that there should not be a limitation to think of the 'Church' in abstract terms instead, people should recognize themselves as the Church. The Church's mission is to co-labour with the poor people in enhancing their lives and livelihoods as summed up by Jesus in John 10:10, "I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly". This is the heart of a vision of *shalom*. As it shall be seen, the Church and Faith Based Organisations are called upon by God to fulfil this biblical vision. Therefore, the Church and FBOs should actively be engaged in sustainable programmes that seek to alleviate and eradicate the suffering of the poor because of the following reasons: Firstly, it is God's mandate; and secondly, the Church is strategically positioned with power and potential. Let me now examine these arguments exhaustively.

2.2.2 God's mandate

Churches and Christian organisations are called to engage in enhancing the lives and livelihoods of the poor because this is God's mandate. This is a way of proclaiming the gospel in both word and deed. This premise is vividly illustrated in Mtt. 14:13-16¹⁹ where Jesus Christ is seen feeding 5000 people. This calls the Church not only to feed the spiritual lives of its members but also meet their physical needs. The Church should put in place mechanisms of assisting those who are poor and initiate sustainable programmes that seek to eradicate poverty within its community. The Church should know that its role is more than to preach the gospel. It is called to serve the local communities holistically. This biblical mandate as it shall be seen, calls the Church and FBOs to lead a prophetic role and promote the agency of the poor.

Prophetic Role

The prophetic role of the Church and Christian organisations calls them to an active and sustained involvement in the matters of bringing peace and justice to the poor and the marginalized.

The prophetic ministry of the Church in this direction is not only to be 'critical' as 'on-lookers' but more importantly as 'participants' to build up, to reconstruct, to sensitise, and to humanize peoples' movements and institutions that will recreate the community.²⁰

The biblical perspective confirms to the above sentiment in the sense that this is what the prophets did in their time and by implication this is what the Church and FBOs are supposed to do in this day and age. In so doing, the Church is transforming people's lives and relationships thereby improving the quality of their lives. For Christians, doing and ensuring justice is a prophetic role that God demands and is a central way of expressing faithfulness and commitment to God and God's will for the oppressed and the marginalized.

¹⁹ Matthew 14:16 say, "You give them food to eat". Here Jesus offers a challenge to his disciples in the story of the feeding of five thousand. When he was asked by the disciples to send them away because it was late, Jesus told them "give them something to eat".

²⁰ Nlenanya Onwu, "Biblical Perspectives for peace, Development and Reconstruction: Its Socio-Religious Implication for the Churches in Africa" in Phiri I.A, Ross K.A and Cox J.L, (Eds) *The Role of Christianity in Development, Peace, and Reconstruction: Southern Perspectives* (Nairobi: All African Conference of Churches, 1996), p. 40.

In the quest for better lives and livelihood outcomes, the Church and FBOs should not merely react to what has been started by government and other NGOs but should take a prophetic role by being proactive. Dr S Kobia in his paper, "In Search of a Participatory and Inclusive Society", argues that the Church should play a catalytic role in the rehabilitation, reconstruction and rebuilding of the society. Thus, the churches should not only seek to be the voice of the voiceless but rather enable the voiceless to have their own voice.²¹ This empowerment will enable the poor to co-work with God and fight against the social injustices thereby enhancing their lives and their livelihood objectives. Prof CS Banana²² seems to echo this thought when he commented:

The prophetic voice of the Church must be loud and clear. The timid tendencies of some churches should give way to a bold and unwavering stand on matters of social justice. The prophetic voice should turn the heat on and demand accountability from all public officials.²³

Jesus died in the most excruciating pain on the cross to reconcile people to God. In the same vein the Church and FBOs should dialogue with the poor struggling even unto death in order to achieve better lives and livelihoods as motivated by a vision of *shalom*.

Promotion of poor people's agency

De Gruchy in his paper, "Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation" argues that in as much as the gospel calls the Church and all Christians to translate their faith into works, it also addresses the poor to interpret their own faith into works. For de Gruchy, this is what is at the heart of James 2:26, "Just as the body without spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead". Therefore, the church's involvement in social development means recovering the theological vision of the vocation of the poor themselves, as a key element for a contemporary theology of development.²⁴

²¹ Dr S Kobia, "In Search of a Participatory and Inclusive Society" in Koegelenberg, R. (ed) *The Reconstruction and Development Programme: The Role of the Church, Civil Society and NGOs*, Cape Town: EFSA, 1995, p.274.

²² CS Banana was the former president of Zimbabwe. He was also the professor in the department of Political and Administrative Studies of the University of Zimbabwe.

²³ CS Banana, "Church and Development: An African Perspective" in Koegelenberg, R. (Ed) *Transition and Transformation: A Challenge to the Church*, Cape Town: EFSA, 1994, p.56.

²⁴ De Gruchy, "Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation: Seeking Some Commonalities between Theology and Development", in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 117(November 2003), p.23.

The churches and FBOs should not consider themselves as lead actors or subjects in quest of bringing *shalom* to the poor. There should be mutual realization that the poor people themselves are also agents and subjects in enhancing their own lives and livelihoods. This is because different forces, policies and institutions impact their lives making them to be under perpetual vulnerability hence forcing them to engage in different livelihood strategies in order to achieve their livelihood objectives. Thus, the poor are not just passive patients waiting to be healed by the church and other NGOs but they are actively striving to make sure that their lives and livelihoods are enhanced. Therefore, churches and FBOs should acknowledge that not only are the poor created in God's own image but they also have a vocation to be productive stewards in making the world a better place for living. Hence churches, FBOs and the poor should work together in ensuring that all people enjoy God's vision of *shalom*.

Thus, any vision of Christian involvement in social development cannot have as its assumption, as much of it unfortunately does, the faith and works of Christians and the Church over and against those who are poor and needy; but has to affirm, enhance and appreciate the faith works of the poor themselves. This is the message of the Gospel for the poor, that they are both made in the image of God and called to be actors in the drama of creation and salvation itself. They are not, and cannot be, simply passive objects of history, but are invited to be the subjects of their own history.²⁵

2.2.3 Strategic position and power

The Church and FBOs should not only be involved in enhancing people's lives and livelihoods because it is God's mandate, but also because of their strategic position and power. The Church is the most privileged institution in the society because it has a unique place. It is the only institution that has a large audience from all walks of life on a weekly basis. The Church addresses people who come to it on their own volition for fifty two Sundays a year, with bonuses of Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas and other special days. Therefore, the Church can be a powerful asset in transforming the lives of the poor because it has potential and capability. It is endowed with abundant resources which are found in its laity (doctors, engineers, police, teachers, politicians, etc); buildings; relationships and partnerships that it has with other people and agencies. This treasure makes the Church to be an institution that is powerful and

²⁵ De Gruchy, "Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation", p.24.

is strategically positioned to effectively enhance her local members' lives and livelihoods.

The imagined power of the Church lies in its captive structures, but its real power lies in the total mobilization of Christian women and men in all sectors of national life.²⁶

Therefore, the Church and FBOs have the potential to fulfil their defined mandate and calling of making sure that all people have life and have it even more abundantly as motivated by a vision of *shalom*.

In responding to this call to participate in the work of *shalom*, the church needs to work towards sustaining the livelihoods of the poor. Here the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) is a very helpful and appropriate tool.

2.3 SHALOM AND THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD FRAMEWORK

This section firstly provides a theoretical overview of the SLF. Then, it argues that this model is very important because it provides FBOs and churches with a coherent theoretical model for development praxis²⁷ that seek to enhance the lives and livelihoods of the poor as motivated by a vision of *shalom*.

2.3.1 The Sustainable Livelihood Framework

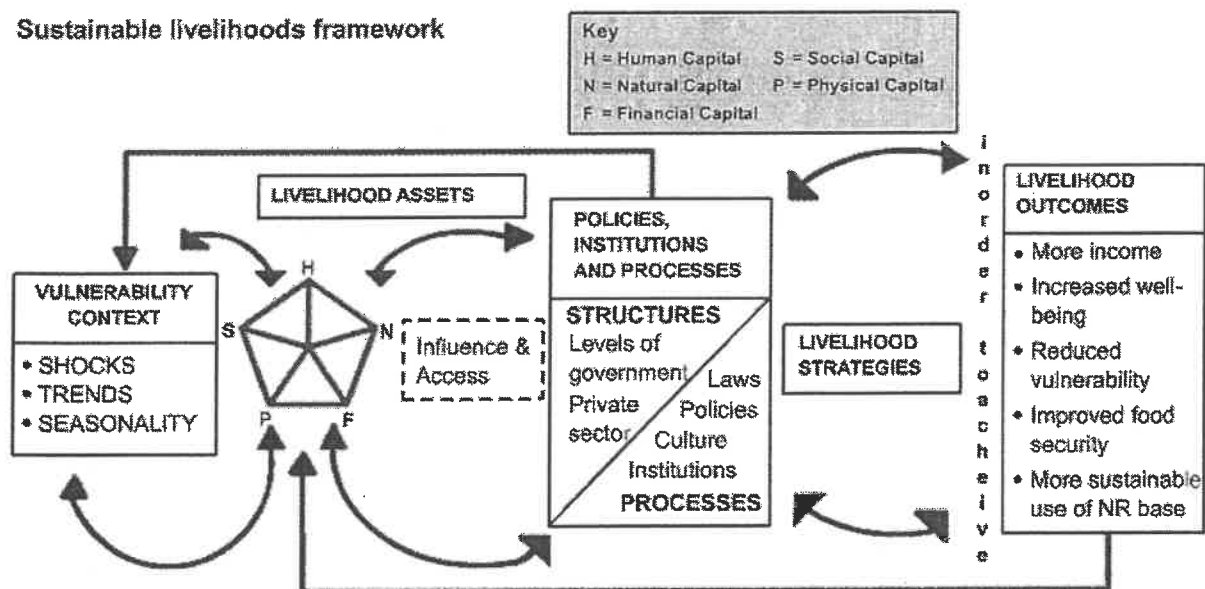
The Sustainable Livelihood Framework is a model that helps us understand how people live their lives, the resources they draw upon, the strategies they adopt and the outcomes that emerge. Although it does not give an exact representation of reality, it endeavours to provide a way of thinking about the lives and livelihoods of the poor — thereby stimulating debate and reflection. Fig 2 shows the most recent version of the SLF.²⁸

²⁶ CS Banana, pp.53-54.

²⁷ Praxis is a thoughtful action. In other words, it is an action that is the result of reflection.

²⁸ This version is taken from the DFID Sustainable Livelihoods distance learning guide CD Rom produced by Institute for Development Studies, available on line at www.livelihoods.org/info_distanceLearning.html The difference between this version and the previous version is the change in the title of the third element, 'Policies, institutions and processes', which was previous called 'Transforming structures and processes'.

Fig 2. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework



As shown in Fig 2, the SLF has six basic elements of which five are identified with the headings and the sixth being the arrows that indicate the relationship between these elements. Let me examine these six basic elements of the SLF.

2.3.1.1 Vulnerability Context

This is part of the framework that describes the external factors that impact on people's lives and livelihoods. These factors either help to make or break the livelihoods of the people. The notion of vulnerability relates to the following:

Shocks: These are factors that come suddenly and almost always have a negative effect on livelihoods. These include human health shocks like sickness, injury or death in the family; natural shocks like floods and fire; economic shocks like rapid shifts in exchange rates or terms of trade; conflict; and crop/livestock health shocks like crop failure.

Trends: These are more predictable factors although there is little that can be done about them. These factors could have either a positive or a negative effect on livelihoods. It includes such things as trends in population, technology, government, social services, economic opportunity, and urbanisation.

Seasonality: This refers to shifts in things such as prices, health status and production of goods, health and employment opportunities. These make poor people vulnerable because they are less able to accommodate and plan for change than richer people.

It is very important to know the factors that make various groups of people vulnerable in order to understand their lives and their livelihood strategies.

Starting with the vulnerability context is an immediate recognition that we are dealing with people who are at risk, not because they are stupid or lazy, but because their livelihoods are subject to a range of influences that prescribe and determine the opportunities and choices that they have for their livelihood strategies. This vulnerability sets up a vicious circle, because poor people's livelihoods are less able to deal with these stresses, and therefore they become more vulnerable.²⁹

2.3.1.2 Livelihood Assets

These are core assets on which people's lives are built and sometimes they are referred to as the 'Asset portfolio'. There are five types of capital on which people draw in order to survive and flourish in the face of the vulnerability context. Below is the description of the five livelihood assets.

Take this to County

Human Capital: This represents skills, knowledge, good health and capacity to work.

This is a significant asset although not sufficient in itself, which helps people to achieve sustainable livelihoods.

Social Capital: This means social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihood objectives. It includes networks and interactions between people; membership of more formalized groups, and trust; reciprocity and exchange. Social capital can have both positive and negative aspects. For example, it helps people to work together; but hierarchical or coercive relationships and exclusion can also erode people's livelihoods.

Natural Capital: This is a term used for the natural resource stocks that are available to households in pursuit of positive livelihood outcomes. Natural capital includes a wide variation in the resources ranging from intangible public goods such as the atmosphere and biodiversity to direct resources used for production such as trees, plants and land.

Physical Capital: This comprises basic infrastructure such as transport, shelter, energy, water and sanitation, communication; and physical goods such as tools and

²⁹ Steve de Gruchy, *A Theological Appreciation of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework*, (Unpublished document), a paper that was delivered at the inaugural meeting of the Society for Urban Mission, hosted by the Institute for Urban Mission, Pretoria South Africa, July 2004, p5.

equipment that support livelihoods. Infrastructure is only an asset when it seeks to meet the needs of the poor. For example, an infrastructure is of no benefit if it does not support a service, or it is inappropriate, or it is not accessible by the poor.

Financial Capital: This refers to the money that is available to the people either in the form of stocks (such as cash, bank deposits, credit or liquid assets like livestock and jewellery); or in the form of regular inflows of money from wages, social security, pension, and other remittances. Financial capital is the one asset that tends to be the least available to the poor. However, it is the most versatile asset since it can be converted into other assets and hence can contribute directly to the livelihood outcomes like purchasing food and medicines, or by leveraging social and political influence.

2.3.1.3 Policies, Institutions and Processes

This refers to a range of structures in a society that influence people's access and utilization of assets in pursuit of their livelihood objectives. These policies, institutions and processes in principle and to a certain extent can be influenced by people. 'Policy' can be thought of as deliberate action designed to achieve particular goals or targets.³⁰ 'Institutions' covers organisations or agencies and how these organisations function and interact with each other. 'Processes' refers to the ways in which policies, organisations and institutions can change overtime as a result of other factors, and so open up a way in which various groups of people can participate in altering or influencing these policies and institutions which affect their lives and livelihoods. De Gruchy has argued that an important element would be the influence which culture and religion have upon this factor of the framework, although strangely, this has been given little attention by those who have worked with the framework.³¹

2.3.1.4 Livelihood Strategies

Livelihood strategies are a range and combination of activities and choices that people make by drawing from their asset portfolio in pursuit of their livelihood goals. People adopt coping mechanisms in times of crisis and, in less stressful times, the coping

³⁰ DFID Sustainable Livelihoods distance learning guide CD Rom. This reference is at DLG\SECT2\6\6_02.htm.

³¹ De Gruchy in his paper, *Theological Appreciation of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework*, p.7 observed that, of the 151 printed pages of the DIFID guidance sheets there is not a single reference to religion and only one reference to culture, and even that is to state that culture is not an area with which they will deal. Section 2.4.2.

strategies become adaptive strategies. Livelihood strategies are diverse, and their choice and flexibility depends on factors such as the assets that people have and the constraints or opportunities that are created by policies, institutions and processes.

The sustainable livelihoods approach stresses choice, opportunity and diversity since greater choice and flexibility yields greater capacity to survive or adapt to shocks and stresses from the vulnerability context.³²

2.3.1.5 Livelihood Outcomes

These are the results or achievements of livelihood strategies. These outcomes may either erode or enhance the livelihood assets of the household or the community. When examining outcomes it is important to take note that people make trade-offs between outcomes all the time. This is because people pursue a range of objectives and there may be conflict between livelihood outcomes within a household or a community.

The framework's reference to 'outcomes' instead of objectives is worth noting because objectives raise the question of who is setting the agenda. On the other hand, the word 'outcome' helps us to focus our attention on the results and the progress of the development work being carried out rather than just thinking of what people are trying to achieve. Again, 'outcome' indicates that our concern is on the sustainability of the people's objectives. Chambers and Conway argue that a livelihood is sustainable when it,

Can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term.³³

The UNDP sees sustainable livelihoods as those that are:

- Able to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses such as drought, civil war, policy failure through adaptive and coping strategies;
- Economically effective, or able to use minimal inputs to generate a given amount of outputs;

³² Butler, M and Greenstein R, *Sustainable Livelihoods: Towards a Research Agenda for the Church Land Programme*, Johannesburg: Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 1999, p.57.

³³ Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway, *Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21st Century*. Institute of Development Studies Discussion Paper 296. University of Sussex. 1992, p7.

- Ecologically sound, ensuring that livelihood activities do not irreversibly degrade natural resources within a given ecosystem; and
- Socially equitable, which suggests that promotion of livelihood opportunities for one group would not foreclose options for other groups either now or in the future.³⁴

It can be succinctly stated that the issue of sustainability to any development initiative is of paramount importance. The framework therefore seeks to have positive outcomes such as more income, increased well being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security and a more sustainable use of the natural resource base.

2.3.1.6 The Relationships within the Framework

The arrows in the framework show the ongoing complex inter-relationships that exist among different components in the framework. It would be very difficult without the arrows to diagrammatically show how people's lives do or do not relate to one another, how the external forces and factors impact their lives, and why they draw from the available resources for a positive livelihood outcome. De Gruchy argues that the linear scheme of the diagram seems to suggest that livelihoods are lived out in a conscious trajectory from vulnerability context through the asset portfolio, via livelihood strategies and policies, institutions, processes to livelihood outcomes. He therefore states that it is against this background that a more circular flow of livelihoods would be closer to reality, and this is what the arrows in the linear diagram are demonstrating.³⁵

There are two types of relationships between assets that are very important. These are sequencing and substitution. Sequencing means the way priority is given to certain assets when seeking to escape from poverty, for example, a good education (human capital) can help someone gain access to other types of assets and escape from poverty. Substitution refers to the way in which one type of capital may be traded for another as a livelihood strategy to achieve positive livelihood outcomes, for example, increased human capital can compensate for lack of financial capital.

³⁴ UNDP, *Sustainable Livelihoods: Overview*, At http://www.undp.org/sl/Overview/an_overview.htm (10 February 2003).

³⁵ De Gruchy, *Theological Appreciation of Sustainable Livelihood Framework*, pp.9-10.

Now let me examine the complex inter-relationships that exist within the Sustainable Livelihood Framework.

Vulnerability Context and Assets: Firstly, the vulnerability context has a direct impact on the livelihood assets. For example, shocks, trends and seasonal shifts may destroy people. On the other hand, people's access to certain assets may help to reduce the degree of vulnerability. A good example is floods which can destroy natural capital (land) thereby causing hunger. At the same time, people's access to financial capital can help mitigate hunger that may be caused by flood because they may be able to buy food in other areas.

Vulnerability Context and Policies, Institutions and Processes: Secondly, another relationship is between the vulnerability context on one side; and the policies, institutions and processes on the other hand. Shocks like retrenchment, death, eviction from land can be controlled by good laws and policies that protect the affected. On the other hand, it is also known that even such natural shocks as fire, floods and drought can be mitigated by good policies on disaster management like safety-nets. In addition, policies and institutions in the form of social security and welfare such as free basic health care, free water, or disaster relief measures can help to withstand shocks and trends thereby reducing the impact of vulnerability on the poor people.

Assets and Policies, Institutions, Processes: Thirdly, there is a relationship between the wider framework of policies and institutions, and the way household can access the assets. Policies can be put in place to create assets, or determine access or control over those assets through taxation or registration. It must be stated that this relationship is not just one way. Rather, it is a two way relationship because people change these policies and institutions through human agency. Thus, people can make use of human, financial, or social capital to bring about changes in the wider structures of the society. This shows that the greater the access to assets by the household, the greater the ability to exert influence on policy and institution. It must be noted however that although it is possible to alter public policy, it is difficult to influence the vulnerability context through human agency.

Policies, Institutions, Processes and Outcomes: The fourth relationship is between policies, institutions and processes; and livelihood outcomes. In this case, certain policies and institutions can determine the type of outcomes by enabling or prohibiting certain livelihood strategies available to the people.

Outcomes and Livelihood Assets: Finally, when people achieve their positive livelihood outcomes, their assets are enhanced to the extent that they may be able to invest further in other types of assets, possibly producing a 'virtuous circle of cause and effect'. This shows that as the assets increase due to positive outcome, the livelihoods become more sustainable, and so does the vulnerability context become less vulnerable thereby enhancing the lives and livelihoods of the households and the community. On the other hand, negative outcomes can add to the vulnerability context by further undermining the asset portfolio of the community and household. It must also be highlighted that people's ability to escape from poverty depends on their access to assets. Therefore, different assets are required to achieve different outcomes. For example, if a household would like to achieve an increased sense of well-being then they might want to consider social capital; or people in a rural area household might want to have access to natural capital for them to have improved security.

2.3.2 Theological Reflection on the SLF ✓

The description of the framework that I have looked at is relatively brief compared to its comprehensive body of theory and insight.³⁶ However, it is adequate for us to comprehend its basic thrust and therefore begin to appreciate that it is a good development model for us to understand the lives and livelihoods of the poor as motivated by a vision of *shalom*. Therefore, let me examine six of its core concepts from a theological perspective.

It has a holistic approach to life

Since the framework focuses on the lives and livelihoods of the poor, it recognises the wide range of assets that are held or not held by the households and the community. It also recognizes the multiplicity of factors and actors within the livelihood strategy

³⁶ For more information see the DFID *Guidance sheets* and the *Distance learning guide*.

and ways of how the strategies can either erode or enhance the lives and livelihoods of the poor and the marginalized. The framework's holistic view is seen in the sense that it does not only describe what is happening but it also prescribes ways of making life better, equitable and free. The framework thus helps us understand how people live their lives, the resources they draw upon, strategies they adopt and the outcomes that emerge thereby echoing the holistic approach to life which is the essence of God's vision of *shalom*. In addition, *shalom* does not only manifest itself in households and communities, but also in a wider socio-political and economic context where peace, justice and freedom are enjoyed by all, the marginalized and the oppressed inclusive.

It recognizes the value of life and livelihoods

The framework recognizes the poor and the vulnerable as active agents and not clients or recipients in their own development. It affirms the fact that all people are made in the image of God and therefore they have gifts, talents and skills which they use to the glory of God in the quest for better lives and livelihoods.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the SL approach is its recognition of the poor as agents in their own development, a commitment that is profoundly Christian because it recognizes that all human beings are made in the image of God, have gifts and abilities, and find their meaning in historical vocation.³⁷

Therefore, all people have a vocation and God has a calling on each person's life that requires them to be an agent and not a client. In the language of Kretzmann and Mcknight, it helps us move from a *deficit based* development approach to an *asset based* approach.³⁸ Thus, the approach solves the problems of other traditional approaches by development agencies that see vulnerable people as mere statistics, and perceives development in terms of interventions, programmes and projects usually with clear sectoral parameters depending on the funding agency. The fact that the framework recognizes the lives and livelihoods of the poor shows that it values prosperity, physical and moral well being of people, a premise that is at the heart of *shalom*.

³⁷ De Gruchy, p12.

³⁸ John Kretzmann and John Mcknight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. Centre for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, Chicago: ACTA Publications, 1993) pp.1-11.

It acknowledges the importance of relationships and partnerships

The framework's approach emphasises relationships and partnerships with the poor people through support and dialogue with other NGOs and community based organisations; partnerships with implementing agencies from both public and private sectors; partnerships with donors and research organisations that have interest in the Sustainable Livelihood approach. The approach does not make a distinction between the micro and the macro levels of development; rather it highlights the inter-linkages between livelihood systems at the micro level and macro policies which affect these livelihoods.³⁹ This idea of relationships and partnerships as articulated by the framework helps us to understand a vision of *shalom* which ensures that everyone at all levels enjoys freedom and harmonious relationship with God, other people, the environment and oneself. The SLF helps people to see that their relationship with the earth and livelihood assets that they have is deeply bound up with the choices they make in their day to day undertakings. Therefore, *shalom* as observed in the SL approach remains to be the vision and the goal as people work in partnership with others both within and outside the Christian fraternity to enhance the lives and livelihoods of the poor.

It supports the multifaceted notion of sustainability

At the heart of the SLF is the issue of sustainability (environmental, economic, social and institutional). It takes into account environmental sustainability, whereby the productivity of life supporting natural resources is conserved or enhanced for use by the future generation. Economic sustainability is whereby a given level of expenditure can be maintained over time by the poor. Another element of sustainability that is articulated by the framework is institutional sustainability. This is whereby prevailing structures and processes continue to perform over the long term. Social sustainability is achieved when social imbalances are minimised and social equity are maximised. The DFID guidance sheets affirm this notion by saying that the sustainable livelihoods approach values social sustainability, inclusion and equity and prioritises the interests of the poor.⁴⁰ Sustainability as the goal of the framework means that it seeks to ensure among other things that vulnerable people

³⁹ UNDP *Sustainable Livelihoods*.

⁴⁰ DFID, *Guidance sheets*, Section 2.5.

withstand and recover from external shocks and stresses, and can enjoy natural resources without jeopardizing its future use. The SL approach therefore helps us to think about the lives and livelihoods of the poor so that they should have a healthy, active and abundant life characterized by more income, increased well being and reduced vulnerability, improved food security and more sustainable use of the natural resource base. Thus, *shalom* is the 'abundant life' that the framework asserts and that Jesus Christ speaks of in John 10:10 where poor people's lives continue to survive and flourish over time.

It perceives development as a process

This is a very important concept because it reminds us that development is not the goal but the process through which people enhance their lives and their livelihoods. Development is not an end to be achieved, thus, an end that some countries have already reached, a view that is backed up by terminologies like 'developed', 'underdeveloped' and 'developing' countries. The implication of this view is that poor countries are challenged to 'catch up' with those that are in front.

Development is something that happens and goes on happening, unless there is decline. Therefore, development is not an end point that can be achieved but a process. This understanding of development is essential because it clears the misconceptions on the notion of development.

Furthermore, social evolutionary notions like 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' people, cultures or societies can be avoided, and the focus on lives and livelihoods provides a bench-mark against which different development initiatives and even paradigms may be evaluated.⁴¹

This is a very important insight from Christian perspective because there is nothing intrinsically Christian about the notion of 'development', but what is in the bible is about people's lives and their livelihoods. Therefore, Christians can affirm that the bible is a concern for people's lives and livelihood objectives. Furthermore, development as a process signals for us not to sit down with arms folded but to actively co-labour with God and get engaged in fighting against the powerful people and the structures that oppress and undermine the poor and the marginalized. As

⁴¹ De Gruchy, p.11.

agents of development, there is need to ensure that God's justice that is compelled by love is evident in the communities. This is because it is only justice that liberates and transforms poor people's lives so that they may reflect the biblical vision of *shalom*.

It is a dynamic and evolving model

The uniqueness of the framework is its flexibility. It recognizes that livelihoods and forces that shape people are constantly changing all the time. I can affirm the flexibility of the framework from a theological perspective. De Gruchy argues that the framework's open-ended nature enables it to hear criticism from other people thereby allowing it to evolve in response to new insights and perspectives without anyone claiming copyright or intellectual property rights over it.⁴² This important aspect of the framework helps those who are actively engaged in development work to develop the best development model that will stand the test of time in ensuring that poor people have good lives and livelihoods. This is the fundamental principle that is at the hub of a vision of *shalom*.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have shown that there is a close link between a vision of *shalom* and food security. It is very clear from our study that issues like life, freedom, human labour and power are at the heart of both food security and the biblical vision of *shalom*. It has been observed that God mandates churches and FBOs to actively engage in sustainable programmes that aim at alleviating and eradicating the suffering of the poor. Thus, the church is called upon to empower the poor by dialoguing with them so that they can be agents of their own development work in order to make a vision of *shalom* a reality. Lastly, this chapter has provided a theoretical overview of the SLF. It has argued that the SLF provides FBOs and churches with a coherent theoretical model for development praxis that seeks to enhance the lives and livelihoods of the poor as motivated by a vision of *shalom*.

Having looked at the linkage between a vision of *shalom* and food security; *shalom* and the church; *shalom* and the SLF, I now move to the next chapter to look at the methodology that was employed in the collection of data and the historical

⁴² De Gruchy, p.14.

background of WVM and Chata ADP. The chapter will also provide a description and impact of work that is being carried out in Chata ADP.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 WVM'S FOOD SECURITY INTERVENTIONS IN CHATA ADP

This chapter examines the food security interventions of World Vision Malawi in Chata Area Development Programme. To do this, use was made of oral sources through interviews with different people directly or indirectly involved in the programme, as well as relying upon written sources such as books and journals from various libraries such as University of Kwazulu-Natal, University of Malawi, National Library of Malawi, United Nations Resource Centre, internet and many other places.

3.1 Research Activities

I visited seven out of eight commitment areas because the facilitator for one commitment area (Nankhonde) had resigned by the time I was doing the research, hence I was unable to visit the area. I visited farmers from different villages (usually five villages per commitment area) and held semi-structured focus group interviews with them. It is important to note that the interviews followed a basic structure but not a questionnaire-type format. This is because the interviews were carried out in a way that encourages a probing enquiry where information is analysed, crosschecked and confirmed by the interviewer.¹ Any interesting developments were also explored, such as, cultural and gender related issues.

Using the Sustainable Livelihood Framework as a benchmark, the evaluation of the study was based on both primary and secondary data. Primarily, the research methods that were employed include: semi-structured focus group interviews and Key informant interviews.

3.1.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data was used in terms of the review of existing documents, Project Baseline Survey reports, newsletters and WVM progress reports. Books and journals from the internet; UN Resource Centre; Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Food

¹ This methodology was adopted because it was realised that with the resources of people and time available, it would not be possible to conduct any kind of standard sampling procedure.

Security (MoAIF); Malawi National Library; University of Malawi and University of KwaZulu-Natal libraries also substantiated the research.

This information was used for the assessment of the food security situation in Malawi and in analysing WVM's involvement in food security programmes. Secondary data also helped in gathering information on the historical background of WVM and Chata Area Development Programme.

3.1.2 Primary Data

Primary data was mostly qualitative and was collected using semi-structured interviews (SSI) and focus groups. I also took some time to visit the seven commitment areas just to observe for myself what types of food security interventions are being carried out. Since these commitment areas are large and far apart from each other, I was spending one day per commitment area.²

Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions comprised of people from different villages who discussed various issues according to the semi-structured questions that were prepared. These discussions were categorized into three groups. These are, Chata ADP youth club, Chata Christian Witness Committee and farmers focus group discussions.

Chata ADP youth club focus group comprised of leaders from the entire seven commitment areas under study (Balang'ombe, Chiponde, Mbavu, Kafumba, Chimwa, Mwanzeze and Chiwamba). Six boys and one girl were involved in the discussions. These discussions took approximately two hours. The purpose of this focus group discussion was to assess the impact of Chata ADP on the lives and livelihoods of the youth in Chata area.

Another focus group discussion involved Chata Christian Witness Committee. This focus group comprised of one member of the women's guild and a counsellor from the Church of Central African Presbyterian (CCAP); a member of women's guild from the Roman Catholic; a pastor from the Baptist church; an elder from the Independent Baptist Convention, a retired church elder and an evangelist from the

² It was taking me about 30Km to visit food security projects in one commitment area and the roads were muddy, dusty, stony and bumpy making driving very difficult and risky.

CCAP; a bishop from the African Abraham church; a deacon from the Baptist church; a catholic member who is also involved in issues of justice and peace; and a councillor from the CCAP. These church leaders were drawn from all the seven commitment areas in Chata ADP. The focus group discussions took about two hours. The objective of this focus group discussion was to assess the churches' involvement in Chata Area Development programme, and to get some theological reflections surrounding the theme of food security.

The last semi-structured focus group interview was conducted with farmers in five commitment areas namely, Chiponde, Balang'ombe, Mwanzeze, Mbavu and Chimwa commitment areas. Each of the five focus group discussions took approximately two hours. In each commitment area there were five villages that were randomly targeted, thus farmers from twenty five villages were involved in the discussions. The groups comprised men and women who are actively involved in different food security interventions and are being assisted in one way or the other by WVM. The aim of these focus group discussions was to analyse the vulnerability context in which these farmers find themselves; the livelihood assets that these people draw from; policies, institutions, processes that impact their lives; the livelihood strategies that they adopt; and their livelihood goals.

Key Informant Interviews

A total of eleven semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted. These interviews took about one and half hours each. It must be stated that the following interview outline does not necessarily follow a chronological order.

1. Interview with Mr Kanyerere, the Food Security Manager who helped me to get an overview of the food security programmes that are being carried out by WVM.
2. Interview with Mr M'mangisa, an Assistant Manager for Agriculture in Chata ADP who provided basic information on what the project is doing in the area of food security and the impact since its inception in 1992.
3. Interview with Kelvin Guta, a development facilitator. The purpose of the interview was to explore the impact of the project in his Chiwamba Commitment Area.
4. Interview with Ezra Chipanthenga, development facilitator in Chiponde Commitment Area who provided detailed information on what food security

programmes are being done, the vulnerability context of the people and their livelihood strategies.

5. Interview with Mr Hastings Banda, who is the manager for Chata ADP. He was very resourceful in providing the historical background of Chata ADP and strategies for future plans regarding his Area Development Programme.

6. Interview with Mr Gondwe, who is the Medical Assistant for Chiwamba Health Centre. The purpose of this interview was to know and analyse the contribution of Chata ADP's food security programme on the health of the people in the area.

7. Interview with Mr Jonas Chanodza, the Primary Education Advisor. The aim of this interview was to find out the impact of WVM's food security programme on education in the Chata area.

8. Interview with Mr Philemon, who is the Agriculture Extension Development Coordinator. This interview was designed to examine the extent of coordination between WVM and the government in the area of food security in Chata ADP. It was also aimed at finding out his perception on the strategy for the future.

9. Interview with Group Village Headman Kafulatira. The purpose of this interview was to find out the extent to which chiefs in his area are collaborating with World Vision staff in food security programmes and what impact this is having on the lives and livelihoods of the poor.

10. Interview with Mr Dzuwa, a farmer who outlined the impact of WVM on Balang'ombe Commitment Area. This interview was also aimed at examining the vulnerability context, livelihood objectives and livelihood strategies of the people in the area.

11. Interview with Paramount Chief Chimutu, who is overall in charge of the whole Chata area and beyond. The objective of this interview was to find out what policies and institutions are affecting food security programmes thereby either eroding or enhancing the lives and livelihoods of the poor in his area. The interview was also aimed at finding out some cultural norms that are affecting food security programmes and how this is either enhancing or undermining the lives and livelihoods of the poor in Chata area.

3.1.3 Problems Encountered

I had a very good field research work with friendly and cooperative facilitators who accompanied me to their commitment areas. However, I had a few minor problems.

The first problem was that I failed to conduct focus group interviews in Kafumba Commitment Area because of a funeral. When I arrived in the area, I was told that all people had gone away to attend a funeral ceremony. I should state that Chata area is deeply attached to Chewa cultural beliefs and one of their customs is that people are mandated to attend all funeral ceremonies. Although I failed to hold focus group interviews, I managed to talk to a certain farmer whom I met in the area who was also heading to the same funeral. It was the facilitator for that area who directed me to this farmer. The same reason of a funeral also applies to my failure in meeting the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) on the scheduled date. We failed to meet as scheduled because I was told that he had gone to attend a funeral service. However, we managed to hold the interviews the next day.

The other problem that I encountered during my field research is that we were starting some of the focus group interviews late (in particular, Chata Christian Witness Committee, and Chata Youth Club). This is because people had to come to Chata ADP field office since it was considered to be convenient and central place. This meant that people had to walk long distances (some as long as 40km) to attend the focus group discussions.

The topography of Chata area is generally hilly coupled with very bad roads particularly in areas where I was meeting with farmers. Although I was using a four-wheel drive car, I struggled a lot to reach some remote areas. In fact, in some areas I had to leave the car somewhere and walk for about 5km with the facilitator to meet the farmers and see their food security programmes.

3.2 Historical Background of WVM and Chata Area Development Programme

3.2.1 Introduction

World Vision Malawi is one of the oldest and biggest FBOs in Malawi and it started its operations in 1982 as a relief agency.³ However, prior to the establishment of its national office in 1982, World Vision's work in Malawi dates back to 1975 whereby it supported medical work and the care of children in a residential school. In 1986

³ National Economic Council, Food and Nutritional Unit, *An Inventory of Non Governmental Organisations undertaking projects in the area of Food Security and Nutrition in Malawi*, June 2000, p16.

WVM began relief assistance to a rapidly rising population of refugees from Mozambique and by 1989 it was assisting more than 400,000 refugees in their camps in six districts.⁴ The organisation was also actively involved in distributing emergency relief aid to vulnerable people in the country who were affected by floods and drought in the years 1991, 1994 and 2002. WVM's first national office was situated in Blantyre but was later moved to Lilongwe in mid 2004.

World Vision Malawi exists with a vision of bringing hope to children and the poor while its purpose is to facilitate and empower communities to transform the lives of their members within a sustainable environment, to promote justice and to proclaim the kingdom of God. The strategic goal of the organisation is that poor children and their families will have improved food security, health and education. According to WVM's constitution, its mission is to follow our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed, to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the good news of the kingdom of God. This mission is pursued through integrated, holistic commitment to:

- Transformational Development that is community based and sustainable, focused especially on the needs of children;
- Emergency Relief that assists people afflicted by conflict or disaster;
- Promotion of Justice that seeks to encourage peaceful change of unjust structures affecting the poor among whom we work;
- Strategic Initiatives that serve the church in the fulfilment of its mission;
- Public Awareness that leads to informed understanding, giving, involvement and prayer;
- Witness to Jesus Christ by life, deed, word and sign that encourage people to respond to the Gospel.⁵

Currently, WVM is undertaking development work in almost every district in Malawi through CBOs and ADPs (see Fig 3).

⁴ Malawi, *Country Fact-file*, http://www.worldvision.co.uk/our_work/Malawi.htm

⁵ World Vision Malawi, *Constitution*, Blantyre, Malawi, June 1999.

Fig 3. World Vision Malawi's ADPs



3.2.2 WVM's Food Security Programmes

The department of Food Security in WVM was established in October, 1998. It aims at addressing food security at household and individual levels in rural areas through the improvement of the following components: availability (production), access to food, utilization, asset creation, stability and relief interventions.⁶

Availability (Production)

This is aimed at boosting the agricultural production in rural areas through the following: transferring of technologies such as improved seed, crop/animal management practices and appropriate farm tools; pest management (weeds, field, and storage pests); development of community-based small scale irrigation schemes and equitable and sustainable irrigation management; upgrading the knowledge of extension workers, working directly with farmers and networking with lead farmers; environmentally-friendly farming which involves interventions to combat soil degradation and desertification that will promote profitable agronomic and farming practices; advocacy for food security related policies; and agricultural recovery that involves food/commodity aid distribution, seed/tools distribution, crop multiplication, and livestock/poultry restocking and husbandry.

Access to Food

This component focuses on market analysis, skills training, off-the farm employment, market assistance/market spots (developing farmers into groups, associations and cooperatives), credit and saving schemes, farm-focused facilitation of rural enterprises which also involves IGAs; and road rehabilitation to ease transportation of agricultural inputs and commodities, this may be in form of food for work, income for work or inputs for work.

Utilization

This component makes sure that food is available in the required quality and quantity at household and individual levels. Activities that are incorporated under utilization are: promotion of post harvest activities such as processing, storage, food preparation, and consumption; health and nutrition related activities such as the provision of clean

⁶ Interview with Mr Daniel Kanyerere, Food Security Manager of WVM (20 July 2004).

drinking water, balanced diets especially for children; promotion of micro-nutrients as necessary (Vitamin A, iron, iodine etc); ensuring gender equity and women's issue in food security in general; training and education on agricultural production, health and nutrition; and dealing with some unhelpful customs or traditions, for example, customs that forbid pregnant women from taking certain foods such as eggs.

Asset Creation

Under this component, the goal is to create assets that can be turned into food whenever necessary. It includes such issues as contribution to household assets; alternative employment; community and commercial saving; loan institutions; animal restocking and husbandry; and enough assets that can be liquidated for food to last for one or more years.

Stability

This component ensures stable and sustainable food supply through agricultural recovery schemes and construction of grain banks. It is also aimed at promoting stable agricultural levels.

Relief Interventions

This is done in times of disaster to help the vulnerable people. Interventions like free food distribution and rehabilitation activities such as food for work are carried out under this component.

3.2.3 Chata Area Development Programme

3.2.3.1 Introduction

Chata is one of the oldest ADPs of WVM and it started in 1992. It is divided into eight commitment areas namely; Chiponde, Balang'ombe, Nankhonde, Chimwa, Mbavu, Mwanzeze, Chiwamba and Kafumba Commitment Areas. Each commitment area has one development facilitator who works with farmers as an advisor. Programmes that are being carried out include: education, agriculture, food security, health, and micro enterprise development.

It must be highlighted from the outset that the word 'Chata' is worth noting. It refers to the whole area that stretches from Chimwa all the way to Mgazamaya in

Balang'ombe (see Fig 4). The word 'Chata' has a *nyau* tradition⁷ connotation. According to Mr JP Baluwa,⁸ when a large group of *nyau* were coming from the graveyard into the village, those escorting were ululating and saying '*chatacho, chatacho*' meaning there comes *nyau*. This tendency spread out to many areas. This is why the whole area from Chimwa to Balang'ombe is now known as Chata. Therefore, it is against this background that Chata ADP derives its name.

3.2.3.2 Project Location

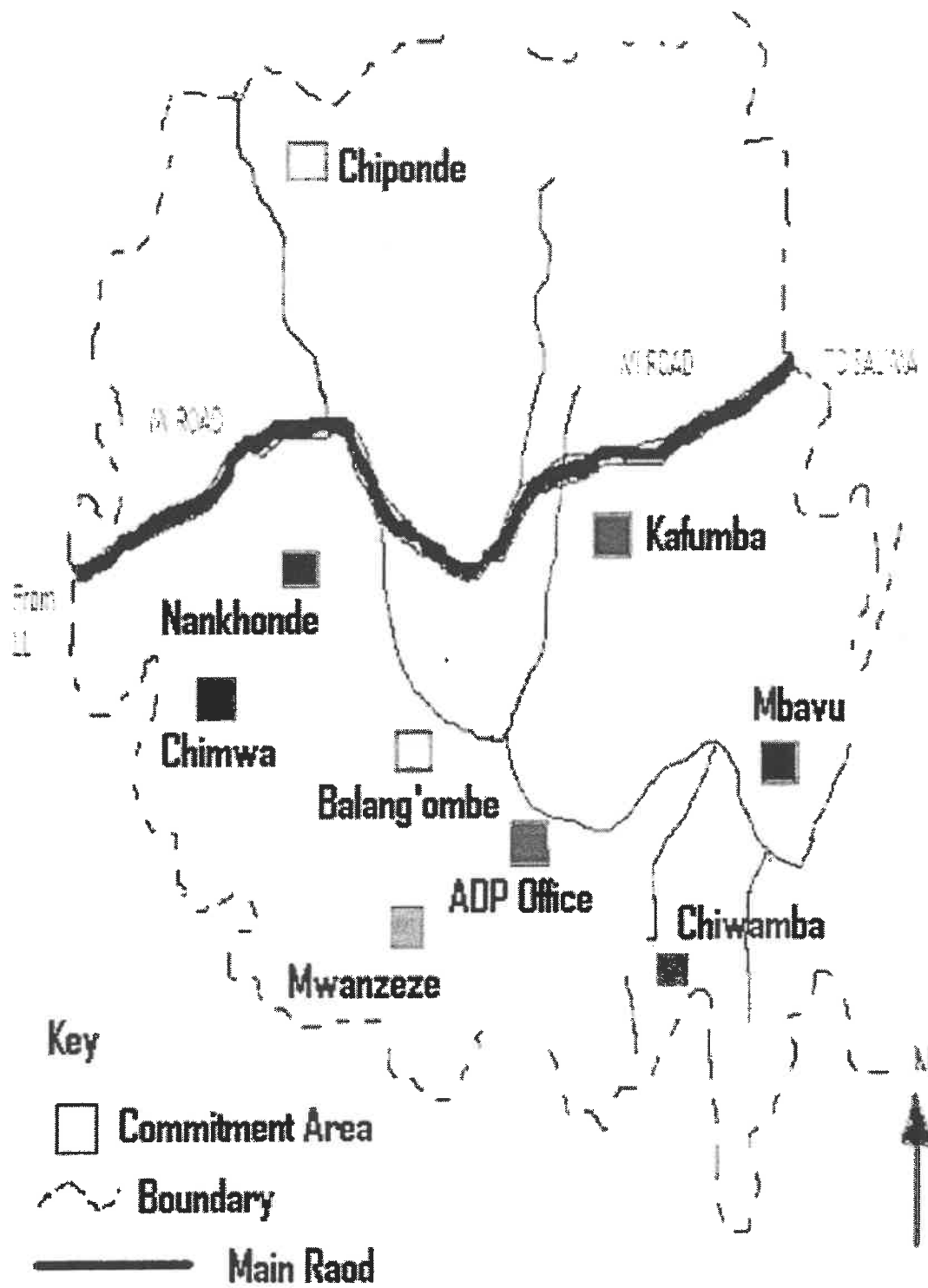
Chata ADP is located within Chiwamba Extension Planning Area in Lilongwe rural. The project office is situated in the industrial site of Kanengo whilst the field office is located in Balang'ombe which is about 7km away from Lilongwe-Salima main road. The total distance from the city centre to the field office in Balang'ombe is about 30 km. Chata ADP covers half the area of Traditional Authority Chimutu (see Fig 4). Geographically, it is a relatively hilly area with mountains like Chiwamba, Mbavu, Nkhoma, and Thuma. According to Chata ADP Manager, Hastings Banda, Chata is on the leeward side of the mountains that are along Mvera area and as such, it receives very little rainfall.⁹ Chewa is the predominant tribe in the area while the Ngonis who are mainly found in Chiponde Commitment Area are in the minority.

⁷ This is the tradition that characterizes the Chewa people. Members of *Nyau* tradition wear masks, smear mud or ashes on their bodies. Sometimes they move around naked, particularly during the night. Members of this tradition are known to be ruthless and can curse or kill anyone. Membership is by force, for example, if you meet them whilst in their masks (*nyau*) on the way and they realize that you are not their member (*wometa*) through the questions that they ask, they may take you to the graveyard (*dambwe*) where they meet and wear their masks. At the *dambwe*, you are forced to either join their tradition or pay dearly. They conduct traditional dances during funerals of their members and during other traditional festivals. A lot of people, particularly chiefs, in Chata area belong to this tradition. Some people particularly Christians associate *nyau* tradition to a cult.

⁸ Interview with Jeremiah Paulos Baluwa, deputy chairman of Chata Christian Witness Committee (9 September 2004).

⁹ Interview with Hastings Banda, Chata ADP Manager (29 September 2004).

Fig 4. Chata ADP Map



3.2.3.3 Description and the Impact of Food Security Programme

WVM is doing a lot of work in ensuring that people in Chata ADP are food secured. According to the Assistant Manager for Agriculture, Michael M'mangisa, the greatest impact that Chata ADP has made is in the area of small scale irrigation and the growing of cassava and sweet potatoes.¹ Hereunder is the description and the impact of food security programmes that are being undertaken in six commitment areas of Chata ADP. It must be highlighted that the discussion in this section will follow the categories of WVM's food security components namely, availability (production), access to food, utilization², asset creation, stability and relief interventions.

Chiponde Commitment Area

Introduction

The area has a total of fifty seven villages. Beneficiaries are selected from all those villages depending on the need. Usually not less than seven poorest of the poor are assisted in each village with farm implements, seed, sweet potato vines and cassava cuttings.

Availability (Production)

Farmers are taught about multiplication of foods like sweet potato, cassava and groundnuts seeds like CG 7. Farmers are also encouraged to do simple irrigation by diverting rivers so that they should not only depend on rain fed farming but should be involved in *dimba* farming so as to harvest two or three times a year. Some farmers also undertake tobacco farming as an income earner although WVM does not support such farming. Furthermore, farmers are also involved in livestock production which helps them with food and income. WVM also helps people in afforestation programmes whereby it organises training and provides tree seeds and polythene tubes to farm clubs.

¹ Interview with Michael M'mangisa, Assistant Coordinator for Agriculture in Chata ADP (28 July 2004).

² It must be stated that utilization in this context does not only mean utilization of food but as discussed in section 3.2.2, it also incorporate things like health and nutrition related activities such as provision of clean drinking water, gender equity and women's issue in food security, training and education on agricultural production, just to mention a few.

Access to Food

Farmers in Chiponde Commitment Area are given farm implements on loan with low interest. Chiwamba Root and Tuber Farmers Association has been formed to assist farmers in production and marketing of their commodities. Currently, farmers sell their produce within the area and sometimes organisations come to buy sweet potato vines and cassava cuttings. Plans are underway to turn the association into a cooperative so that the farmers can continue to find their own markets and sell their produce easily. The community in collaboration with Care International has embarked on road construction from Lumbadzi to Msambo thus easing communication and accessibility. This is being done under food for work Care project.

Utilization

In a bid to promote water and sanitation hygiene, WVM has drilled seven boreholes and has put in place management and maintenance committees for those boreholes to ensure that there is proper sanitation and care.

Asset Creation

Farmers have benefited a lot from the selling of sweet potato vines and cassava cuttings to the extent that some have bought radios, bicycles and fertilizer.

So right now I can tell you that people have been helped in finding money through farming of sweet potato vines and cassava; they are selling the potato vines thereby finding money to buy goats, radios and bicycles. Other farmers have bought fertilizer which they could have had problems to get on loan and be burdened with interest.³

Stability

WVM has initiated some grain banks where farmers store crops to ensure stable seed and food supply.

Mwanzeze Commitment Area

Introduction

Mwanzeze Commitment Area has thirty-two villages. It is also blessed with six rivers namely, Nafumu, Msangu, Chitentha, Mvumbu, Chimwa and Kankhanana rivers.

³ Interview with Ezra Chipanthenga, development facilitator, Chiponde Commitment Area (25 August 2004).

These rivers are close to each other and have adequate water most of the time thus helping farmers to do small scale irrigation schemes.

Availability (Production)

Most farmers in the area use river diversion irrigation whereby they make canals to help them grow crops such as maize, cassava, Irish potatoes, tomatoes, beans and vegetables. WVM helps the farmers in some areas with Vetiver Hedgerow and Tephrosia Vogelli which are inter-planted with maize in order to improve soil fertility and conserve water. Afforestation is also being encouraged in the area.

Access to Food

WVM helps the farmers by training them on how to make compost manure. Most farmers have undergone thorough irrigation farming training which is helping them a lot in their farming. One of the farmers commented:

I was taken to Chingale for training on irrigation farming. I started teaching my friends when I came back and that is why we have clubs like Msangu, Chitenth and others. We are 12 in number in our club who are doing irrigation farming as of now. I have benefited in such a way that I harvest 3 times a year.⁴

Other farmers, particularly women, are involved in Income Generating Activities (IGAs) whereby they sell doughnuts, groundnuts and tomatoes. Food for work programme is also being done by Care International through the rehabilitation of a road.

Utilization

Micah project⁵ trains farmers, particularly women, to cook balanced diet food in their homes. The women have been taught how to cook vegetables, Pigeon peas, Soya meat and pumpkins in order to diversify their dietary preferences. WVM has also helped some farmers with cement to build slabs for them to have good and hygienic toilets. There are five boreholes that have been installed, two in Kawale, one in Muwawani, one in Ng'ombeyayera and one in Fupa village.

⁴ Interview with village headman Chikonyani (26 August, 2004).

⁵ It is a Food and Nutrition arm of WVM and it derives its name from prophet Micah of the bible. 'Micah' stands for Micronutrient and health.

Asset Creation

Irrigation farming has helped a lot of farmers in the area because some have bought cattle, pigs, goats and oxcarts. Some farmers are now living in iron roofed houses and have farm inputs like fertilizer, sprayers and wheelbarrows. Fig 5 shows a farmer in Mwanzeze Commitment Area who has bought cattle through the asset creation programme.

Fig 5. A Farmer in Mwanzeze Commitment Area



Mbavu Commitment Area

Introduction

“Mbavu” is a name of a mountain and the area is mountainous. Mbavu Commitment Area has fifty three villages. The smallest villages have only ten households whereas big villages have more than eighty households, for example, Thunga, Njira, Kapazila and Akukhola villages.

Availability (Production)

People in the area grow CG7, Irish potatoes, Soya beans, cassava, sweet potatoes, maize and vegetables. Livestock integration involves rearing of goats, guinea fowl

and rabbits. Farmers who rear livestock also benefit from animal manure. Some farmers are also involved in tobacco farming, although this is not supported by WVM. River diversion for *dimba* farming is done, although not all people benefit from it, but only those whose gardens border rivers and those who have money to borrow land for *dimba* farming. They also benefit from agricultural recovery where farmers are given 5kg maize seeds and they are supposed to give back one pail-full of seeds which is approximately 18kg. The seeds that are collected are kept for distribution the following year to other farmers. Fig 6 shows maize agricultural recovery in Mbavu Commitment Area.

Fig 6. Mbavu Agricultural Recovery



Access to Food

Farmers in this area have access to fertilizer loans from WVM. Most of the farmers who are involved in rearing guinea fowl have undergone training with the help of WVM. Cassava association and agricultural recovery programme are helping farmers in production and accessing markets thereby generating income for their livelihoods.

Utilization

World Vision Malawi, through the Micah project, helps women and children with iron tablets to supplement their diets. It also helps in training people on how to make home gardens for growing vegetables which protect against diseases. WVM also helps farmers with slabs for their toilets by providing them with cement. Farmers who raise rabbits are encouraged to eat them and not just keep them because they have high protein value. They are also encouraged to grow Soya beans because of its high nutritive value. A certain farmer said,

Here in Mbavu, when this soya project was starting, each commitment area was given free will and choice. Here in Mbavu we accepted this project in which 46 families grow soya. We also grow for seed multiplication so that the soya can help other people. There is a huge profit in soya especially when selling and using for consumption... in soya there are all necessary nutrients that are needed in one's life.⁶

There is one borehole in the whole area of Mbavu which helps people with clean water.

Asset Creation

Most farmers have invested their money in houses, livestock and bicycles which help them achieve their livelihood goals.

Stability

Farmers in the area have an agricultural recovery scheme which helps in ensuring stable seed and food supply. Sometimes some of the maize is sold and the income is used for the promotion of the association's programmes.

Chimwa Commitment Area

Introduction

Chimwa Commitment Area derives its name from a river and it has a total of twenty six villages. Most people in these villages are involved in food security programmes.

⁶ Interview with McDuff Mataka, chairman of seed multiplication of cassava and sweet potato and also one of the farmers who is rearing livestock (27 August, 2004).

Availability (Production)

Winter cropping is done whereby farmers grow maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, tomatoes, Irish potatoes and vegetables. Some farmers have access to treadle pumps which they use for irrigation while others just use watering cans. Tree planting is also done to replace those that have been cut. WVM helps the farmers with maize seeds, sweet potato vines and cassava cuttings. Fig 7 shows one of the farmers who has benefited a lot from winter cropping in Chimwa Commitment Area.

Fig 7. A Farmer in Chimwa Commitment Area



Access to Food

Farmers sell tomatoes and vegetable to pay school fees, buy fertilizer, manure and other basic needs in their houses. Since the area is near the industrial site of Kanengo, other farmers go there to work as guards for them to earn extra money for the enhancement of their income base. WVM has also helped the farmers with loans to buy treadle pumps, seeds and fertilizer.

Utilization

Eating vegetables in the area is helping the farmers to be protected against diseases and some of them buy beef after selling their produce thereby increasing the protein

value in their diet. People in the area do not have boreholes, hence they use rivers for drinking water.

Asset Creation

Most people in the area buy cattle, goats and other household assets as a way of investing their money. This is what the vice chairperson of Chimwa Commitment Area Committee (CAC) had to say,

When we sell our produce we buy cattle and other household items because they help us when we need money since we just sell them and have the money. We are afraid of keeping the money in the house for the fear of natural disasters like fire. Also, we do not keep money in the bank because it requires a lot of money to open an account. We just keep a little like K3000 for emergencies like sickness.⁷

Chiwamba Commitment Area

Introduction

Chiwamba Commitment Area takes its name from Chiwamba Mountain. Cassava and sweet potatoes are the most grown crops in the area.

Availability (Production)

WVM in Chiwanba facilitates farmers to do agricultural recovery where they combine grain banks and seed multiplication. In addition, farmers are encouraged to go for drought tolerant crops like cassava and sweet potatoes. Farmers have also embarked on CG7 seed multiplication, Soya seed multiplication and bean multiplication. However, because the climate of the area is not conducive for beans, the farmers have been asked to choose other crops which they think can replace beans. Forest clubs are helping in afforestation programmes while agro-forestry clubs are helping a lot in agro-forestry programmes in Chiwamba Commitment Area. Again, farmers are involved in programmes such as fruit tree propagation and fruit tree growing which also helps in afforestation.

Access to Food

Titukule Farmers' Cooperative Society and Chiwamba Root and Tuber Farmers Association are helping farmers greatly in finding markets for their produce and

⁷ Interview with Ester Chilenje, vice chairperson, Chimwa CAC (25August 2004).

providing them with farm inputs. WVM gives loans of farm inputs to farmers through farm input loan clubs. These clubs are run by the farmers themselves while WVM only facilitates in giving them training on credit management. Farmers are also involved in rearing of rabbits. The rabbit production is helping farmers as a source of food and income.

Utilization

Farmers in Chiwamba are taught how to process and utilize cassava. They grind cassava for flour and make cakes or doughnuts and other food stuffs which help them to supplement their dietary needs and of course, selling them to generate money so as to buy basics like soap, clothes and paying for school fees. Soya helps the under five children to have healthy growing bodies. This crop, when it is harvested, is ground and is mixed with beans and groundnuts flour to make porridge for children called *likuni phala*. This is a highly nutritious porridge which helps to prevent malnutrition in young children. Iron tablets and iodine are given to mothers and children as supplements to their diets.

In terms of sanitary facilities, there is a sanplat programme whereby a sanplat (slab) is put into the toilet. This programme helps the community to have modern toilets. This programme also helps in conserving the environment because people no longer cut trees for their toilets.⁸

Asset Creation

Farmers in the area have benefited a lot from irrigation farming and some have bought cattle, goats and have built iron roofed houses with burnt bricks. Others have even bought luxuries such as television sets which help them to be updated on issues of food security, agriculture and current affairs.

In Chiwamba there are four people with TVs, but in the whole Chata ADP the number of farmers with television sets can reach twenty. Since there is no electricity in the Chata ADP, farmers use car batteries to generate power for their TVs.⁹

⁸The types of toilets that are used in the villages are Pit latrines. These latrines require many poles in order to have very strong floors thus contributing to deforestation.

⁹ Interview with Kelvin Guta, development facilitator for Chiwamba Commitment Area (27 August, 2004).

Stability

Agriculture recovery helps farmers in Chiwamba Commitment Area a lot. This is because in times of drought, farmers have easy access to buy food or seeds without walking long distances.

Balang'ombe Commitment Area

Introduction

Almost all the villages in Balang'ombe Commitment Area are doing food security programmes. The major crops that are grown in the area are cassava and sweet potatoes.

Availability (Production)

Most farmers have embarked on surface irrigation whereby they grow Irish potatoes, tomatoes, onions, cassava, sweet potatoes and maize in the quest to promote crop diversification. Some farmers benefit from their orchards. One of the farmers who owns a fruit garden commented,

I have grown a lot of fruit trees like oranges, tangerines, apples, peaches and pears; all these I have them here at Balang'ombe and I have benefited a lot from them. I do not allow birds to be killed here because I play with them. I call this place Eden. I want to increase growing fruit and therefore I ask God to give me strength because am getting old.¹⁰

Other food security related programmes that are being done in the area include, soil fertility improvement, seed multiplication, livestock integration and afforestation.

Access to Food

In Chiwamba Commitment Area farmers are involved in different IGAs and they also sell commodities like cassava cuttings and sweet potato vines to buy other basic necessities. Through different clubs and association, some farmers have access to bigger markets like Shoprite where they sell their produce. WVM helps many farmers with loans to buy farm inputs like fertilizer and it also takes many farmers to different places in Malawi where irrigation projects are being carried out. This is done with the aim of helping farmers to increase their knowledge in irrigation farming methods.

¹⁰ Interview with Mr Dzuwa, a farmer (25 August, 2004)

WVM also organises training on credit management and irrigation management so as to increase farmers' capability in irrigation farming.

Utilization

Activities under this component include: promotion of post harvest activities such as processing, storage, food preparation and consumption. Currently, many farmers have been taught how to process cassava so that they can diversify their eating habits. There is also promotion of micro-nutrients such as provision of iron tablets and iodine. Again, health and nutrition related activities such as balanced diets especially for children, are promoted in the area.

Asset Creation

Under this food security component, farmers are encouraged to create assets that can be turned over for food when necessary. Many farmers in Balang'ombe have benefited a lot towards their household assets by building strong houses with iron sheets and buying farm inputs, livestock and bicycles.

3.3 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have looked at the kind of research methodology that was used in data collection and problems that were encountered during the collection of data. The chapter has provided a historical background of WVM and Chata Area Development Programme. It has also provided a description and impact of work that is being carried out in Chata ADP.

Having looked at the research methodology; historical background of WVM and Chata ADP; the description and impact of Chata ADP's work, I now move to the next chapter to analyse the findings. The analysis of findings will be done using the SLF as a benchmark.

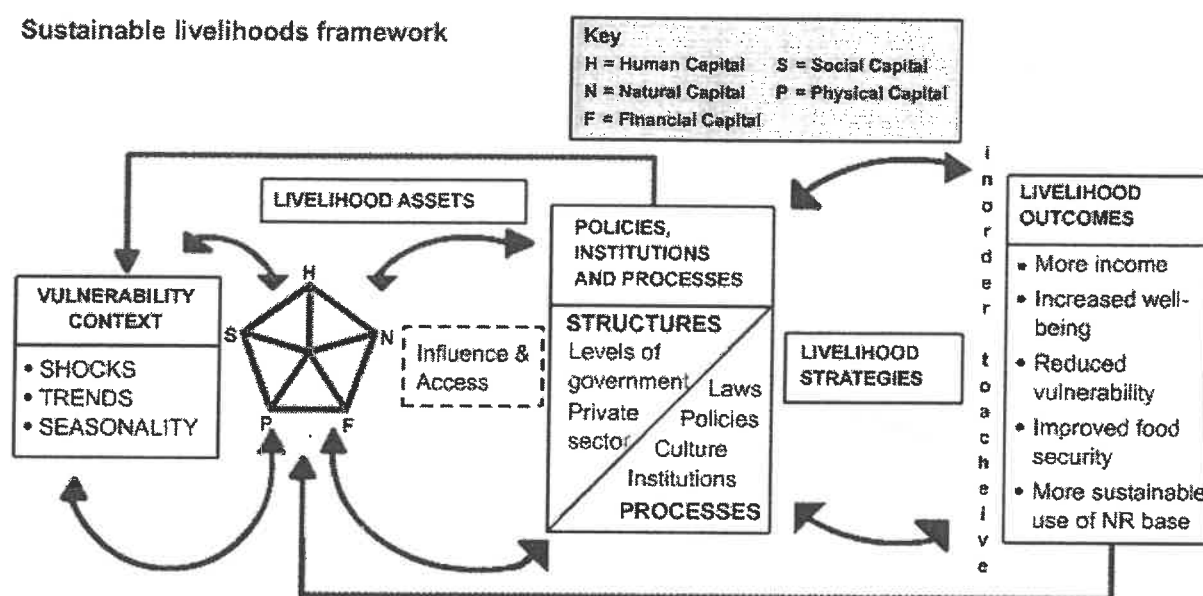
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 ANALYSIS OF WVM'S FOOD SECURITY INTERVENTIONS IN CHATA ADP

4.1 Introduction

Using the SLF as a benchmark (see Fig 8), this chapter analyses how Chata ADP's Food Security programme is enhancing or eroding the lives and livelihoods of the poor in the community, based on the primary and secondary data that was collected. It also analyses the strengths and gaps in livelihood support that need to be addressed so as to achieve sustainable livelihoods. It must be stated that in this chapter, I will integrate the work of WVM in the analysis of findings as I go through the elements of the SLF.

Fig 8. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework



4.2 Vulnerability Context

The major shock that Chata area experiences is drought. It receives persistent erratic rains almost every year because geographically it is on the leeward side of mountains that are along Mvera area. Since it is located in the rain shadow area, most times it receives just rain drizzle. Consequently, many people who depend on agriculture for

their livelihoods suffer from crop failure almost every year. The lack of trees in the area has also contributed to the lowering of the water table making it difficult for farmers to access quality drinking water, a trend which has made a lot of people resort to drinking unsafe river water. Again, the lack of trees in the area particularly along river banks has caused many rivers in the area to flood at times. This also affects many farmers who do *dimba* farming along the river banks. A case in point is the occurrence of heavy floods which destroyed a lot of farmers' gardens in 2002 leaving many people without food. Agriculture Extension Development Coordinator (AEDC) commented,

...Rivers do flood. Like in 2002 many crops were carried away by Lilongwe and Lumbadzi rivers. This affected many farmers and they had problems having food and cash.¹

Price fluctuations, especially for maize, affect farmers a lot since they depend on maize both as a source of food and income. For example, during the months of May, June and July when farmers have harvested, the maize price goes down almost by 40%. On the other hand, during the months of October, November, December, January, February and March, the prices rise. This is the period that farmers need money most to buy food, farm inputs and pay school fees. Unfortunately, during these months, their crops are still in the fields hence they have no source of money for their livelihoods. This variation in prices becomes a vicious circle that reinforces their poverty thus making them vulnerable almost every year. As a coping mechanism, these farmers resort to doing casual labour (*ganyu*) thereby spending less time in their fields and hence increasing their vulnerability.

In October until March we starve because of lack of food and some think that they should go somewhere looking for food. They leave their fields though rains are coming; the consequence is that they cannot harvest more maize. This is because instead of working in their fields, they are busy looking for food.²

The hungry period in the area starts from October and runs to March. This is because during this time crops are still in the fields, hence they do not have food and money to buy basic necessities for their families. However, to most farmers the hungry period is decreasing because of winter cropping which WVM is encouraging. Farmers now

¹ An interview with Mr Philemon, Agriculture Extension Development Coordinator (7 August 2004).

² James Undi, Mbavu focus group discussions (27 August 2004).

grow cassava and sweet potatoes which help them reduce their vulnerability to hunger.

Most farmers in the area do not have access to appropriate financial service institutions to enable them save for the future. Most institutions like banks, where farmers would keep their money, are located faraway in town where many farmers cannot reach. The other reason why farmers do not save their money in the bank is that most of them do not get enough money from their sales. Only a few farm clubs have accounts with the banks in town. The notable lending institution that is helping some farmers, particularly in Chiwamba and Balang'ombe Commitment Areas, is Malawi Rural Finance Company. To mitigate the problem of insufficient lending institutions in the area, WVM has encouraged farmers to save their money through asset creation whereby they buy livestock, inputs, or build houses.

4.3 Livelihood Assets

4.3.1 Human capital

Education indicators

Generally speaking, education standards in Chata ADP are very low. This is the reason why there are few retired people who receive pensions from government or companies in town. TA Chimutu in which Chata ADP falls is divided into two zones namely, Malikha and Balang'ombe zones. Malikha zone has twelve primary schools and two community day secondary schools, while Balang'ombe zone has eighteen primary schools and two community day secondary schools.

A lot of people who pass their primary school have limited access to secondary schools because there are just four community day secondary schools in the whole of Chimutu area. Furthermore, those who are selected to go to a secondary school, which comprises twenty five boys and twenty five girls, do not finish school due to lack of school fees. Thus, about 50% of those who are selected to go to a secondary school drop out before finishing form four. This has an adverse short and long term repercussions on people's lives and livelihoods in the area.

Lack of school materials, school rooms and teachers' houses are also contributing to the low standard of education in the area. In some schools, there are just four teachers

for eight classes, while in other commitment areas - because of insufficient classrooms - pupils learn under the trees which unfortunately are also few and it is risky.³ This is affecting the children badly because they do not have the incentive of going to school, because they know that either they will not learn or they will learn outside. This is most problematic during rainy season when most times classes are disbanded because children cannot learn outside.

Another factor contributing to the dwindling of education is the lack of seriousness by some teachers. Some parents bemoaned the tendency of some teachers who instead of teaching, just concentrate on their personal businesses like selling charcoal and farming, while some are just drunkards. This tendency is making some parents lose trust in the teachers and consequently they stop their children from going to school.

Some children do not attend school not because they are lazy or their parents are against it, but because of long distance. In some commitment areas like Mwanzeze the primary school is located very far for the children to access. Sometimes the children are afraid to travel such long distance because they are afraid of meeting *nyau*⁴ which chase them. During the rainy season, children cannot travel because they have to cross rivers.

What 2 do

Chata ADP is trying its best to improve the quality of education in the area. It has built and renovated many schools to encourage more children to attend school. The Bob Pierce trophy⁵ which was introduced in Chata ADP is also helping children in the primary schools. Through the trophy, some schools have benefited with school uniforms and other materials. Although WVM has limited personnel (one facilitator per commitment area, some of whom have over fifty villages), it has contributed a lot towards the improvement of education in Chata area. The development facilitator for Chiwamba Commitment Area said,

³ An incident happened last year in Lilongwe where pupils were learning under a big tree and suddenly it fell down killing one child.

⁴ Sometimes referred to as *gule wankulu* (big dance). It is a cultural tradition which wears masks and dances during certain festivals. The problem is that they chase people so that they should be their members (*kumeta*) hence children are encouraged to run away whenever they meet *nyau*.

⁵ This is a football trophy that was initiated in honour of Bob Pierce, the founder of World Vision International. It is a league that is competed annually by primary schools in Chata ADP.

World Vision engaged in building school blocks and teachers' houses and it has done that for almost all the fourteen primary schools which are within Chata ADP to help children learn in a conducive environment. WVM has managed to win the hearts of parents through sponsorship programme where children are being sponsored. This is a sponsorship project whereby donors provide money which assists the vulnerable children with learning materials such as text books which also help the teachers.⁶

Health indicators

Health is a very serious problem in the area. It is very sad to note that the whole TA Chimutu has one government clinic (Chiwamba Health Centre) which is located in Balang'ombe Commitment Area and is responsible for helping about 55,000 people. People travel as far as 40km to reach the hospital for them to get medication and sometimes they get little or no help due to the lack of medicine at the health centre. The hospital has no ambulance so it relies on an ambulance which is also responsible for seven health centres in town. This makes it difficult to refer serious patients to Kamuzu Central hospital. Pregnant women find it difficult to travel long distances to come to the hospital hence they prefer going to traditional birth attendants (TBAs) in their localities.

One of the diseases that is affecting people's lives and livelihoods in the area is HIV/AIDS. Although WVM is doing a lot on AIDS awareness campaigns through its anti-AIDS clubs, a lot needs to be done on behavioural change if the battle against HIV/AIDS is to be won. The Medical assistant for Chiwamba Health Centre lamented,

Many people in this area are dying of AIDS. Although WVM is doing a lot on AIDS awareness campaigns through its anti-AIDS youth clubs, there is still need to concentrate on behavioural change. It is very sad to see teachers and parents dying of AIDS leaving children without care and support.⁷

The disease is affecting rural communities by eroding social security networks hence spreading the burden of caring for the sick and orphans within the community. Thus, the capacity of households in the area to absorb orphans is being stretched to the limits thereby increasing the vulnerability of girl orphans to abuse and early

⁶ Interview with Kelvin Guta, development facilitator, Chiwamba Commitment Area (27 August 2004).

⁷ Interview with Mr Gondwe, Medical Assistant, Chiwamba Health Centre (7 September 2004).

marriages. In addition, the productivity of the community is reduced as people are spending time and money assisting the affected households and attending funerals of those who die of HIV/AIDS. Again, some teachers in the area are dropping out of school either because of infection or to take care of the sick family members thus undermining the quality of education in the area.

It must be stated, however that WVM is helping a lot to reduce the vulnerability of people to health related issues. It has several anti-AIDS clubs which help to bring awareness about HIV/AIDS. WVM is also collaborating excellently with Chiwamba Health Centre in treating diseases such as malaria, cough and cholera outbreaks which mainly come during the rainy season. WVM in collaboration with the health centre have established Drug Revolving Funds (DRF) which assist the community by providing treated mosquito nets, fansidar and other drugs in the villages to mitigate the problem of travelling long distances to the hospital.

We are thankful to WVM in their health issues, they help us a lot with different medicines. As of now, two solid years have passed without severe cholera cases because of the medicines and other help which WVM gives us. A hospital is an important thing which we need since we are suffering a lot from other diseases because the hospital is just too far.⁸

Since most pregnant women prefer going to TBAs because of long distance to Chiwamba Health Centre, hospital personnel have committed themselves to training these TBAs. However, there are still some TBAs in the villages who are not trained and their services are detrimental to people's lives. Medical assistant for Chiwamba Health Centre had this to say,

We have many TBAs but they are in two groups. Some are trained while others are not. The most dangerous ones are those that are not trained. Those that are trained know the rules of their profession and this is helping a lot in the villages.⁹

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Although other organisations like WVM, Development Aid from People to People (DAPP) and Lutheran Mobile Clinic are doing their best to reduce the impact of health hazards in the area, a lot still needs to be done, particularly on HIV/AIDS, if the battle on health is to be won. The deteriorating health situation of the people in

⁸ Focus group interviews, Mbavu Commitment Area (27 August 2004).

⁹ Interview with Mr Gondwe, Medical Assistance, Chiwamba Health Centre (7 September 2004).

the area is contributing a lot to their lack of participation in food security programmes thus eroding their lives and livelihoods.

4.3.2 Physical capital

Transport systems

The transport system in the whole Chimutu area is very poor. All the roads in Chata area are not tarred hence it becomes very difficult to travel during the rainy season because most roads are slippery. Worse still, there is no public transport that goes to the area. It is only vehicles that belong to organisations that are working in the area. People always travel on foot and those who are privileged, use bicycles. This has a negative effect on people's lives particularly patients who have to travel long distances to reach the hospital. World Vision tried to ease this transportation problem by providing bicycle ambulances for patients. Unfortunately, these bicycles are no longer working because they broke down. The medical assistant for Chiwamba Health Centre lamented,

Transport is a very big problem particularly for patients. They travel long distances from different villages to this place, for example 32 km from Mbavu. World Vision tried its best to distribute bicycle ambulances after they saw the problem. Right now, the bicycles have broken down and people are not repairing them, as a result WVM's help is no longer working.¹⁰

Not only is the problem of the transport system affecting patients but also farmers. Although the farmers have benefited a lot from the food security programme, they lack transport to ferry their produce. Most crops that they produce end up in the villages leaving the farmers with no profit thereby eroding their lives and livelihoods. In some areas roads are relatively good but the problem is bridges. This also affects farmers because they cannot access good markets. For example, the poor condition of Lilongwe bridge between Mazengera and Chimutu hinders farmers from selling their produce to Nkhoma. Chiwamba is undoubtedly capable of feeding Lilongwe city but the poor road network is hindering this possibility. This is because instead of going to Chata area, businessmen and other traders prefer going to Lizulu in Ntcheu to buy agricultural produce since roads are very good, thus undermining farmers' earnings in Chata.

¹⁰ Interview with Mr Gondwe (7 September 2004).

Efforts are being made by some organisations in the area to solve this problem of the road system through road rehabilitation and construction. For example, Care International is helping in the rehabilitation of a road from Mchenzi through Chapatu to Kawale in Mwanzeze Commitment Area. The same organisation is also helping communities in Chiponde Commitment Area to construct a road from Lumbadzi to Msambo through a food for work programme. These roads are essential and strategic and will help farmers to sell their produce to prospective buyers who might be coming to the area because of good roads.

Communication system

The communication system in the whole of Chiwamba area is very poor. The last time a telephone was installed was in 1993-1994. Since then there has been no public phone in the area. Mobile phones have just arrived in the area although they are only accessible to those with money, particularly those working with different NGOs. Worse still, the post office no longer works, so people have to travel long distances (30km or more) to town to post their letters.

This problem is adversely affecting people's lives and livelihoods. They cannot send or receive messages of funerals from their relatives in town. They are confined in their own communities and cut from the outside world. It is also difficult to send messages of sick people to hospital due to lack of communication. Although they may have access to adequate food, their unfreedom to communicate with their friends and relatives or establish market contacts in other areas increases their vulnerability, thus eroding their lives and livelihoods.

Water supply and Sanitation

Water is life, therefore denying one access to safe drinking water is denying that person existence which depends on water. One of the biggest problems in Chata area, and of course the whole Chimutu, is lack of access to good quality water. Many people in the area drink bad and contaminated water because they do not have boreholes in their areas. A case in point is Balang'ombe Commitment Area where a

certain farmer has stayed for over 18 years without access to good water but only dirty river water.¹¹ Sadly, this problem is even affecting young children in schools.

Concerning this Mbavu School, it is a very pathetic situation, if I can take you to where these teachers and pupils drink water; you cannot like the water because goats, cattle, pigs, all drink at this same water source. It is a shabby rocky place where we even struggle to find water.¹²

Although boreholes have been drilled in some commitment areas, they are not enough. For example, in Chiponde Commitment Area, there are only seven boreholes out of fifty seven villages while in Mwanzeze there are five boreholes out of thirty two villages. This is a very big problem that needs urgent attention or people's lives will be jeopardized.

One of the contributing factors to the lack of boreholes is that the area is hilly and the water table is very low, hence those who drill boreholes find it difficult to get water. One farmer who once accompanied some of these borehole experts had this to say,

I went with those who measure water in Kapazira village, there I was told that water here is found at a depth of 750ft. According to what I saw, the main problem is not that their machines are weak but those who come to drill boreholes are lazy. They want that by 3 hours water should be found as if it is a sandy place, but this place requires a person to drill water for about one week using the same compressor because it is a hilly place.¹³

The other problem with boreholes in many areas is that they are not working because some people steal spare parts. This is mainly the case in areas that are close to town like Mwanzeze where people come to vandalize the boreholes and sell the spare parts in town where markets are readily available. Again, although the people were trained in repairing the boreholes, they cannot find money to buy spares because they are expensive.

Although water drilling problems may be true, the fundamentality of water still stands. People can have enough food or they can have good education and infrastructure but if they do not have water, then their lives are incomplete.

¹¹ Interview with Mr Dzuwa, a farmer, Balang'ombe Commitment Area (25 August 2004).

¹² BJ Chimbalame, Chairman of Agriculture Recovery, Mbavu focus group discussion (27 August 2004).

¹³ Mataka, chairman of seed multiplication, Mbavu focus group (27 August 2004).

Therefore, there is a need to ensure that all people have fresh water so that they can contribute effectively to community development thus enhancing their lives and livelihoods.

Other items

Through the food security programme of WVM, a lot of farmers have enhanced their physical capital by buying things like bicycles, furniture, radios, oxcarts, TVs and other household items. These things have helped a lot of farmers to improve their lives and livelihoods in the villages because now they can listen to programmes that affect their lives and livelihoods on radio. Farmers also transport their produce using bicycles and oxcarts. Some farmers even watch agricultural and entertaining programmes on TVs thereby enhancing their lives.

4.3.3 Natural capital

Chata area is very privileged to be endowed with different natural resources such as mountains, rivers and arable land for farming. This richness in its natural capital makes Chata to be one of the best irrigation areas in Lilongwe district.

Mountains and rivers

Although the mountains make Chata to be in the rain shadow area, these mountains are also the major source of rivers in the area. These are the rivers that enable people to do irrigation farming in the area. For example, Mwanzeze Commitment Area has six rivers which provide plenty of water for irrigation farming while Chiponde Commitment Area benefits from five streams and Lumbadzi river which divides Lilongwe and Dowa districts. It is clear that these rivers, whose waters run almost throughout the year, mitigate the problem of erratic rains which are persistent in the area. This is why most farmers in the area are benefiting a lot from the food security programme of WVM because they are able to diversify their crops through irrigation farming thereby enhancing their lives and livelihood outcomes.

Trees

One big problem that Chata and the whole Chimutu area face is the scarcity of indigenous trees in the land. It is very pathetic to see most of the land lying bare without trees. History is told that in the late 1970s, there were a lot of trees but things started to change because of high demand of burnt bricks by industries in town.

Consequently, a lot of people started to cut trees for burning bricks so that they would increase their financial capital and thus leading to the erosion of their natural resource base.

Indigenous trees have almost gone because of the issue of moulding bricks. The people here used to burn bricks for the town people and industries. They used to come to buy large quantities of burnt bricks to build their houses and companies in town.¹⁴

According to the development facilitator for Chiwamba Commitment Area,¹⁵ the other reason why the area is devoid of indigenous trees, like mango trees, is because of cultural quarrels over chieftainship that were there between the current TA Chimutu and his relatives. For example, the home village of the incumbent TA Chimutu had an admirable forest of indigenous fruit trees but they were carelessly cut by his opponents who were against his kingship. This made other local people to take advantage of the cultural misunderstandings and they also started to cut trees for burning bricks or firewood for the town people.

Another contribution to the scarcity of trees in the area is the selling of charcoal. Chiwamba is considered to be one of the greatest producers of charcoal in Lilongwe. Selling of charcoal is one of the major livelihood strategies for many people in the area beside agriculture. The problem is that not only farmers are involved in this dubious business, but also some government employees such as teachers.¹⁶ Although efforts have been jointly made by the government, TA and other NGOs, the problem still remains. Unfortunately, there is a high demand for charcoal in town because most people cannot afford to cook using electricity since it is very expensive. Again, electricity is undependable due to frequent blackouts, thus leading the problem into a vicious circle. It may also be true that a lack of lending institutions in the area is contributing to selling of charcoal because this may be the only viable way of sustaining their lives. Thus, the presence of lending institutions (financial capital) in the area might help to diversify people's livelihood strategies by giving farmers loans to embark on income generating activities instead of selling charcoal.

¹⁴ Interview with E Chipanthenga, Chiponde Commitment Area (25 August 2004).

¹⁵ Interview with K Guta, Chiwamba Commitment Area (27 August 2004).

¹⁶ This concern was raised during the focus group discussions in Mwanzeze Commitment Area (26 August 2004).

The scarcity of trees in the area might also be the contributing factor to persistent erratic rains thus making it difficult to find water when drilling boreholes. However, telling the people to stop cutting trees for charcoal is not a sustainable way of solving the problem. This is because it will undermine their livelihood strategy thereby eroding their lives and livelihoods. It is against this background that WVM has embarked on an afforestation campaign. It has encouraged the community to make sure that whenever a tree is cut there should be a replacement. Thus, WVM is providing training on forest management and is providing tree seedlings and polythene tubes to farmers through forest clubs which it has initiated. This is the right direction towards bringing back the lost glory of trees so that people can once again enjoy their environment. However, it cannot be done within a single day and it requires the cooperation of all stakeholders, including the buyers of charcoal in town.

Land

Land in Chata area is passed down from generation to generation as an inheritance. According to the Agriculture Extension Development Coordinator (AEDC), the average farmer in the area has about 1.5 hectares of land.¹⁷ Since there is plenty of land for farming in the area, some of it is rented to friends, business people and even those working for NGOs and government in the area. However, the renting of land follows a cultural procedure whereby a chief, community leaders and owners of the land are involved in the renting process. Renting of land to other people has increased the level of produce in the area because most of the cultivatable land is now being used, hence increasing agricultural output and reducing food insecurity in the area. The land is generally fertile although in some areas the fertility has been lost due to persistent use of inorganic fertilizer. The farmers are encouraged to use composite and animal manure which have a long term impact on the improvement of soil fertility. Animal manure is not a big problem because most farmers in the area rear livestock as part of WVM's asset creation programme.

Impact of gender on assets accessibility

Chata area has a predominantly Chewa cultural heritage and as such the subordination of women and the dominance of men are considered natural and eternal. The

¹⁷ Interview with Mr Philemon, AEDC, (7 August 2004).

inferiority of women in Chata area is observed in the following areas: access to land, water collection and education.

Land: Although households in the area have access to land for farming, the land is owned by the husband. In other words, the husband has full control over the land and he can sell or share it with his relatives without prior consent from his wife. Since wives are culturally considered aliens they follow whatever their husbands have to say on issues of land since husbands receive land through inheritance. The problem with this tendency is that when the wife has been divorced or her husband has passed away, she is forced to go to her home village where unfortunately there is no land for farming. Thus, the widow's vulnerability to hunger is increased since land is the greatest asset that is the source of livelihood in the area. Again, this tendency of chasing women retards development work because the wives are frustrated to contribute towards development since they know that one day they will be chased out of the village. Group Village Headman Kafulatira echoes this sentiment:

I feel that the tendency of chasing women should be stopped. If we tell them to move, we discourage development work because they become lazy in doing development on the land since they know that one day they will be chased away.¹⁸

Water: As noted in our study, safe drinking water is one of the greatest problems that is affecting people in Chata area. Unfortunately, the people that are suffering most are women. They walk long distances to fetch water and when they come back they are expected to prepare water for the husband to bath. Thereafter, they are expected to go with the husband to the field and when they come back, they are the ones who are supposed to cook for the family while the husband is resting. This makes the wives to be overburdened with work, a tendency that is also hazardous to their health.

As the study reveals, although many husbands bemoan the scarcity of water in the area, they are not ready to help their wives to fetch water because such a job is considered to be a woman's work. A certain farmer said,

¹⁸ Interview with Group Village Headman Kafulatira, (9 September 2004).

We have a very big water problem here in Mbavu area. Our wives struggle a lot to fetch water for *us to bath, drink and even cooking for our families*. I wish we had many boreholes in this area in order to ease the problems that our wives are facing.¹⁹

Education: Another sector that is being affected by the gender imbalance is education. Many parents prefer educating boys to girls. Boys are educated because culturally they are considered to be breadwinners as compared to girls who are regarded as mere house keepers under full subjection of their husbands. As a result, many girls in Chata have been forced to get married at an early age because parents do not realize the impact of education on the girl child. This is another tendency that is undermining development in the area because many women are illiterate hence they cannot grasp easily the importance of community development. Mr LG Chanodza commented:

The picture that I have is that there are very few educated people in Chiwamba particularly women. This illiteracy makes it difficult to communicate any development initiatives in the area and most times they are resistant to change old habits, for example, they always come late for meetings and sometimes they do not even attend school committee meetings because to them such meetings are not important. This is hampering education of pupils particularly girls.²⁰

Therefore, there is a need to stress the importance of education for both the boy and girl child if any meaningful development is to be achieved in Chata area. Again, a change towards a more egalitarian society is needed in order to utilize the full potential of all human beings (women and men). Thus, unless this gender balance is achieved, the biblical vision of *shalom* remains far from reality.

4.3.4 Financial capital

Financial services and instruments

There is no bank in the area and the only notable lending institution is Malawi Rural Finance Company (MRFC) which assists farmers with loans to buy farm inputs and Bemayo which is a youth group that lends money only to the youth so that they can engage in income generating activities. In the past, farmers had access to loans from the European Union which was disbursing funds through WVM but unfortunately it has stopped. Some farm clubs have closed down because the farmers failed to pay

¹⁹ Interview with McDuff Mataka, chairman of seed multiplication, Mbavu Commitment Area (27 August 2004).

²⁰ Interview with Mr LG Chanodza, Primary Education Advisor in Balang'ombe zone (11 September 2004).

back the loans they received from MRFC. Although WVM assists some farm clubs with input loans, it is not enough to cater for all the vulnerable farmers in the area. Furthermore, some farmers do not even have the information as to how and where to get loans. Lack of these financial services and accessibility has crippled farmers' efforts of improving their farming methods and marketing strategies. This is because most of the farmers do not have financial capital to effectively diversify and improve their farming methods. The Agriculture Development Coordinator for the area lamented over the situation,

MRFC is not enough because of the growing population in Chimutu. MRFC cannot reach out to all people. If there can be another organisation to lend people money and fertilizer, this can be good. There are some people who have never gone to MRFC to borrow money or fertilizer. Worse still, they do not have that chance.²¹

Savings behaviour

The most notable way of saving in the area is through asset creation. This is whereby WVM encourages farmers to buy assets as a way of saving money. This has helped a lot of farmers in the area because they now have livestock such as pigs, rabbits, cattle, goats and poultry. Some have bought TVs, houses, furniture and farm inputs. Other privileged farm clubs have opened accounts with the National Bank of Malawi and Stanbic Bank in town thereby increasing their financial capital through accumulative interests. However, the problem of saving through asset creation is that houses may be burnt; or farm and household equipment may be stolen. Again, livestock may be affected with diseases in rainy season, or in times of drought they may be sold or exchanged at a very low rate. Furthermore, these kinds of savings cannot be readily converted into cash in times of shocks like sicknesses or deaths thereby making the savings counterproductive. Thus, these types of savings may also increase the vulnerability of the poor farmers.

The existence and effects of flows of remittance income

The lack of educated people (human capital) has contributed a lot to the low flow of remittance income in Chata area. Only a few people in the area receive regular pensions. For example, Chiponde Commitment Area which has a total of fifty seven villages has only one notable person, an ex-District Education Officer, who receives a

²¹ Interview with Mr Philemon, AEDC (7 August 2004).

pension from the government.²² There are also a few people who get monetary help from their relatives and children who work in town. The lack of flow of remittances in the Chata area has also contributed to people's inability to enhance their lives and livelihoods because among other things, they struggle a lot to buy fertilizer and other inputs to improve their agricultural production which is at the heart of their livelihood.

4.3.5 Social capital

Traditional culture

In Chata area the predominant tribe is Chewa which follows a maternal culture. However, this cultural tradition is characterised by male dominance which is reflected in its social networks, family structure and local decision making. *Nyau* tradition characterises the cultural heritages of Chewa culture. It must be noted however that there is a minority Ngoni tribe in Chiponde Commitment Area.

There are four Chewa customs that have a direct impact on people's lives and livelihoods in Chata area and the whole Chiwamba. These are, unveiling of tombstones (*mwambo wa zipirara*), clearing of the graveyard (*dambule*), *Nyau* festival (*gulewankulu*) and funeral ceremonies. These customs are at the heart of Chewa culture and they are not necessarily bad in themselves. For example, building of tombstones shows an honour to the one who passed away and it unites the social fabric; *Dambule* which involves clearing of the graveyard shows respect to the people who died by making the grave clean and it is also a uniting symbol since all people from the whole village come together to clear the graveyard; *Nyau* festival (*gule wankulu*) helps people remember and enjoy their cultural heritage through dancing, also *nyau* tradition teaches young people about good morals; lastly, the funeral ceremony is a symbol of solidarity in times of deaths whereby the deceased are comforted and helped.

However, the problem with these deep Chewa customs, including traditional weddings, is that they are contributing to the food insecurity in the area. These customs require a lot of food for them to happen. Some of the customs like *zipirara* and *gule wankulu* festivals happen soon after the people have harvested their produce.

²² Interview with E Chipanthenga, Chiponde Commitment Area (25 August 2004).

Sometimes they do not even care how much one has harvested. People are culturally mandated to brew a lot of beer and cook *nsima* for the functions. The same is true for funerals which even demand the family of the deceased to provide food for those who have come for the function. Thus, instead of the culture being an admirable asset, it becomes an encumbrance which erodes people's livelihood assets thereby increasing their vulnerability. The problem is that although these customs may be perceived as undermining people's lives and livelihoods, it is difficult to stop them because they are deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of the Chewa society hence many local people do not see any problem with these festivities. TA Chimutu when asked of his opinion on the matter he said,

It is not true that we waste food during *zipirira* and *gulewankulu* festivals. This is our culture, in memory of our friends who died. This is like a memorial ceremony so people have to eat therefore we cannot and we will not stop no matter what and how the circumstance is.²³

The other problem with these customs is that people spend a lot of time attending to these customs instead of working in their fields. For example, due to the high prevalence of funerals, most farmers spend their time attending to funerals and *zipirara* ceremonies instead of working in their fields, thereby allowing livestock such as goats and cattle to eat their crops in the *dimbas*. This has a negative effect on people's lives and livelihoods because the level of agricultural production is being reduced, thus subjecting the farmers to threats of food insecurity. A certain advisor on nyau tradition (*wakumadzi*) had this to say,

Honestly speaking, these customs are destroying our food because we are spending much time attending *dambule*, *zipirira*, funerals and *gulewankulu* thereby leaving our gardens with no one. As a result, our crops are being destroyed by cattle. Usually these functions need our attention and we are forced to attend these ceremonies because it is the chief who gives the directive.²⁴

Networks, membership of groups and relationships of trust

WVM in Chata has encouraged farmers to form clubs, associations and even cooperatives. These groups are very essential because through networks and collaboration, farmers share skills, knowledge and experiences. Other farmers in the area are benefiting from irrigation farming because through the establishment of farm

²³ Interview with TA Chimutu (9 September 2004).

²⁴ Kantene Ntola, focus Group interview, Mwanzeze Commitment Area (26 August 2004).

clubs they are able to access land for irrigation farming. Farmers also have access to input loans because they are in groups, for example, Agricultural Recovery helps farmers to access seeds thus enabling them to plant early and yield bumper harvests.

Big farm groups like Root and Tuber Farmers Association and Titukule Farmers Cooperative Society have helped farmers in the area to network with other farmers and businessmen outside the Chata ADP thereby establishing markets for the members. Again, other clubs like forest clubs have helped a lot in promoting the afforestation campaign in the area and the fruit of their labour is now becoming visible in Chata ADP. This is because there are now some trees in the once heavily deforested area. Furthermore, membership of farm groups has brought a sense of belonging, security and trust because farmers are being helped by their friends in the clubs in times of shocks. However, it is also important to note that although these farm groups are fundamental to the enhancement of people's livelihoods, they may also alienate individual poor farmers thereby eroding their lives and livelihoods.

4.4 Policies, Institutions and Processes

The effects of market liberalization are affecting people's lives and livelihoods in Chata area. Since the area has very few shops, the owners of the shops charge exorbitant prices for basic commodities such as salt and paraffin in the name of market liberalization. This has affected many farmers who rely on these commodities. Consequently, they are depleting their limited income which they get after selling their crops.

The major blow to farmers in Chata area is the lack of markets. Although through WVM farmers have increased their agricultural production such as cassava and sweet potatoes, they do not have proper markets where they can sell their produce. Consequently, most farmers sell their commodities at a very low price to local market vendors who come to buy agricultural produce, while other farmers spend most of their time walking long distances to reach markets. This erodes farmers' lives who sweat for better lives only to be rewarded with little or no profit at all. One farmer lamented,

We struggle very much to get markets for our produce; therefore, we just sell the produce at low prices to vendors to avoid rotting of our commodities. It is these vendors who are benefiting while we producers are suffering. We are pleading with our extension worker from WVM to find us markets to sell our produce.²⁵

The retrenchment of civil servants which government did as a budget cutting mechanism following instructions from its donors, has led to the decrease in the number of government extension workers in the area. This has led many commitment areas to have only one extension worker from WVM. For example, in Chiponde Commitment Area, there is only one extension worker from WVM who looks after fifty seven villages. This has increased his workload and therefore reduced output because he cannot efficiently visit farmers in all these villages. The Development facilitator for Chiponde Commitment Area commented,

We have a problem in this area because we do not have an extension worker from the government. This makes my work very difficult because I do not have anyone who has the agricultural expertise to collaborate with and besides, my area is very big for one person to handle.²⁶

Government's policy on decentralization has also contributed to the improvement of people's lives and livelihoods in the area. This is because people in the area are now fully participating in their development work since the policy empowers the local people to own the development programmes. This is also the reason why WVM and other NGOs operating in the area do not find any difficulties in mobilizing the communities to embark on any development work such as food security, road and school rehabilitation programmes. Again, the new government has decided to subsidize fertilizer, causing the fertilizer price to reduce by about 50%, starting from this 2004-2005 growing season. This is going to boost farmers' efforts in food security programmes and other sectors. This is because their financial capital which was being heavily eroded by exorbitant fertilizer prices will now be enhanced. Thus, they will be able to use the money for other purposes like paying school fees (human capital) thereby enhancing their lives and livelihoods.

²⁵ Biwi, Village headman, Mwanzeze focus group discussion (26 August 2004).

²⁶ Interview with E Chipanthenga, Development facilitator for Chiponde Commitment Area (25 August 2004).

In Chata area, the proportion of boys and girls in school varies. For example, in primary schools, there are more girls than boys in standard one to five. On the other hand, in standard six to eight there is more enrolment of boys than girls. This is also the case with secondary schools where few females finish school as compared to males. The main reason for the drop out of girls in high classes (standard 6, 7, and 8) is because by this time they are considered to be grown ups since most girls have reached puberty. Therefore, their parents encourage them to get married so that they can receive support. Lack of school fees and early marriages also contribute to low turn out of girls in secondary schools since by this time they are considered to be literate because they know how to read and write. The Primary Education Advisor (PEA) lamented over this situation in Chata,

It is unfortunate that some cannot afford because of school fees but we get disappointed to see some selected girls getting married. You find that they are selected but they cannot start or continue with school because they are pregnant and get married. Early marriages are making girls in this area to be behind in education.²⁷

The absence of a police station in the area has contributed to the losing of people's assets (such as livestock) through theft. Although the coming of WVM in the area has improved people's lives as evidenced by large number of livestock people own through the asset creation programme, the abundance in livestock has also attracted a lot of thieves who come to steal cattle, pigs and goats in the area. These thieves are not afraid because there is no police station in the area. Some of the affected farmers have to walk for more than 40km to report the matter to the nearest police station in Kanengo. This problem is undermining people's lives by depleting the resources which are at the heart of their lives and livelihoods. The people have tried their best to mobilize themselves (social capital) in order to catch or even kill these thieves but little has been achieved. That is why the presence of a police station in the area is paramount because it is going to enhance security thereby improving people's lives and livelihoods.

Asset creation which has improved people's lives through the increase of livestock, also poses a threat to irrigation farming in the area. This is because after harvest, herds of cattle and goats are left to wander freely and eat in the fields. The problem

²⁷ Interview with Mr LG Chanodza, Primary Education Advisor (11 September 2004).

with this tendency is that these flocks are destroying crops in *dimbas* forcing people to spend the whole day in their gardens chasing livestock. Since people do not spend all their time in the fields, because of many funeral services and other customs like *zipirara*, herds are destroying crops thus undermining people's livelihoods. It is against this background that most irrigation farmers would like TA Chimutu to introduce a strong law which will aim at punishing the culprits in order to mitigate the problem of crop destruction by livestock.

4.5 Livelihood Strategy

Agriculture is the main livelihood strategy of the majority of people in Chata area. They do simple irrigation schemes where they divert rivers and make canals to water their plants. They grow and sell different crops such as maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, tomatoes and other vegetables. Maize is the major staple food while cassava and sweet potatoes are the greatest income generators that help farmers to mitigate the impact of drought conditions in the area. It must be highlighted however, that not all farmers have access to *dimba* farming. It is only those whose fields border river banks. Those who have plenty of land for *dimba* farming lend it to other farmers usually through farm clubs. This has enabled many farmers to have access to *dimba* farming thereby reducing their vulnerability to food insecurity.

It must be noted also that there are other farmers who do not want to join irrigation farm clubs and do not allow water canals to pass through their fields to help other farmers because of petty jealousy. A certain farmer bemoaned this tendency,

There are other farmers who are jealous and do not allow irrigation to pass through their fields. TA Chimutu should intervene immediately by disciplining these people so that this irrigation farming should benefit the whole Chimutu area.²⁸

Another livelihood strategy that people engage in is the selling of charcoal. People sell charcoal in town and along the Lilongwe-Salima main road. Charcoal selling is a hot business and a very reliable source of income in Chata area. Unfortunately, it has also contributed a lot to the depletion of trees in the area. Chata area is one of the most deforested areas in Lilongwe. Although this strategy is enhancing their financial capital, it is also eroding the natural capital thereby adversely affecting farmers' lives

²⁸ Village headman Biwi, Mwanzeze focus group discussion (26 August 2004).

and livelihoods which solely depend on rains for farming. Although the TA has tried his best to discourage this tendency, nothing seems to be working because more people are still involved in the seemingly lucrative business. People who live in good houses with electricity in town, some of whom are top government officials, are also to blame for buying charcoal because they are contributing to environmental degradation in the Chata area and Malawi as a whole. WVM has intensified its efforts of afforestation programmes in order to mitigate the problem of deforestation. The organisation is therefore encouraging people to plant trees in their fields, river banks and around their houses.

Other farmers who live near the industrial site of Kanengo, which is also a tobacco depot (Chimwa Commitment Area), are involved in irregular labour like guarding to enhance their financial capital. However, this is undermining the lives of their households because women and children are left alone to work in the fields thereby reducing agricultural output which is the major source of livelihood. There are some women particularly in Mwanzeze Commitment Area who are involved in small scale businesses and are helped by the Micah project. In times of hunger many farmers resort to selling their livestock like goats, pigs and cattle as a coping mechanism.

4.6 Christian Impact

Chata ADP has made great impact on the spiritual lives of the people in the areas where it is working. It is the only FBO in the area that has an integrated holistic approach to development programmes. A culture in which churches were dead is now alive. Different churches in the area have sprung up and are transforming the spiritual lives of many people as a result of WVM involvement in spiritual matters. The establishment of Chata Christian Witness Committee in 1996 by WVM in the area has contributed a lot to the improvement of people's spiritual lives. This is a spiritual arm of Chata ADP which comprises different churches in the whole ADP and it has committees in all the villages where Chata ADP is working. Most people in these areas now belong to a church and are actively involved in their churches' activities because of the work of Chata ADP Christian Witness Committee. The following are some of the notable highlights of Chata ADP's Christian impact on the community: church coordination and unity; bible studies and evangelism; and cultural synthesis

Church coordination and unity

In the past, before WVM came to Chata in 1992, there was no coordination and unity among the few churches that were there. Each church was doing its own programmes without any collaboration with others. This led to rivalry among different churches and also caused many people to be indifferent to church affairs. This led to an increase in the number of non-believers, as compared to Christians in the area. Since the coming of WVM, there has been great improvement because different churches now coordinate when they are doing different programmes such as mass rallies and even funeral services. This has led many people to join different churches because they see unity and love among the churches and church members. The chairman of Chata Christian Witness Committee remarked,

When we talk of Chata Christian Witness, we are talking about coordination of different churches, whereby we discuss things that can develop Chata spiritually. Most people were ignorant and churches were not united. When WVM came here, it united all the churches in such a way that we now do things together. We do meetings together and WVM has brought unity between churches and Christians. Because of this, Christianity in Chata has progressed.²⁹

Bible studies and evangelism

Bible studies which have been introduced in primary schools and villages have helped towards the spiritual growth of many people. For example, bible studies in primary schools have made many children to start going to church and stop joining gulewankulu (*kupita kudambwe*), a tradition that is at par with Christianity because among other things, it advocates speaking of abusive language. Evangelism through mass rallies, bible distribution, the Jesus film, door to door visits and sports ministry has helped to transform people's spiritual lives for the better. WVM conducts one mass rally each year in one of its commitment areas where different churches in Chata area participate. In fact, it is the churches through the Christian witness committee which organise the rallies and WVM just helps with the role of facilitation. Women are also actively involved in preaching and counselling in the villages.

The Bob Pierce trophy which is competed for among fourteen primary schools that are being helped by WVM has helped many youth to be Christians through the

²⁹ Dyson Chagwira, Chairman Chata Christian Witness Committee, Focus group discussion (9 September 2004).

messages that are preached during the football matches. Furthermore, members of the Christian witness committee are invited to preach at food security meetings that WVM organises. Thus, WVM has made an indispensable impact on the spiritual lives of many people in the area through evangelism programmes and bible studies. This is vividly evidenced in the increased number of Christians as compared to non Christians in Chata and the whole of Chimutu area.

Cultural synthesis

The spiritual component of Chata ADP is not aimed at invading the Chewa culture. It is aimed at building the culture that people in the area identify with and this is why WVM's staff have been integrated into the culture of people, thus becoming co-actors with the people in the development work. It is against this background that Chata ADP has managed to sensitise the people that there is nothing wrong with their culture but that there are a few elements in their culture that are eroding the lives and livelihoods of the people such as *nyau* and *zipirira*. The people in the area have realized the dangers of some of their cultural values and have since stopped as evidenced by large turnout of Christians in the area. In the same vein, Chata ADP has managed to bring unity among two tribes (Chewa and Ngoni) in Chiponde Commitment Area who used to be involved in cultural conflicts.³⁰ Now these two tribes live harmoniously because of the impact of Chata ADP's Christian witness programme in the area. Again, since WVM is trusted by local people and chiefs, sometimes members of the Christian witness committee are invited to share the word of God in courts before settling disputes. This shows how much breakthrough Chata ADP has made towards transforming the spiritual lives of the people in Chata.

4.7 Analysis of Strengths and Gaps in Livelihood Support

4.7.1 Strengths

Based on the SLF, it can clearly be argued that Chata ADP's food security programme has contributed a lot towards the enhancement of people's lives and livelihoods in the area. The study underscores the following notable strengths of the programme:

³⁰ Interview with E Chipanthenga, Development facilitator, Chiponde Commitment Area (25 August 2004).

The key strength that WVM has contributed in Chata ADP is the issue of human dignity and agency. The study shows that the farmers have increased their sense of dignity because WVM considers them to be agents, hence the farmers are active participants in food security programmes. As the research reveals, the farmers' involvement in different associations and training as actors and subjects has helped them to gain skills and knowledge (human capital) in irrigation farming methods and credit management. Consequently this has enhanced their sense of agency and dignity thereby improving food security at both household and community level.

The study reveals that Chata ADP has reduced farmers' vulnerability to food insecurity through production of drought resistant crops which are cassava and sweet potatoes. Currently, Chata ADP is one of the highest producers of cassava in the central region. The farmers have formed Chiwamba Root and Tuber Farmers Association and Titukule Farmers Cooperative Society which help them to transact on their own in accessing training, loans and markets.

The study shows that the food security programme has improved the lives of the poor farmers through simple irrigation farming whereby they are diverting rivers to water their gardens. The farmers have now increased their crop production by growing crops twice a year through winter cropping. This has helped farmers to have access to sufficient food and income thus reducing their vulnerability to hunger.

The study reveals that small scale livestock production (rabbits and guinea fowls) has been a success in the area. The number of households who have benefited from small scale livestock production has increased over the years and the farmers are even supplying rabbits to other ADPs and communities outside Chata ADP, thereby increasing their financial capital. Rabbitry and guinea fowl production has also helped farmers to improve their health because rabbits have a high nutrition value. Furthermore, the farmers have improved their crop production through organic manure which they get from the small scale livestock production, thus improving their lives and livelihoods.

The research also demonstrates that farmers have increased their income base through the asset creation programme. Many farmers have increased their income through

selling of their livestock like cattle, goats, pigs and poultry. This increase in their financial capital means an increase in their well being because they now have improved their self esteem. Their health status has also improved since they are now able to diversify their food and dietary preferences as a result of more income and the availability of meat.

The study reveals that afforestation and agro-forestry programmes have helped to replenish the natural resource base by improving soil fertility and the environment. Many farmers have planted trees around their houses, along river banks and in their fields. These trees are also helping people with firewood and poles for housing and helping water conservation in the rivers, thus enhancing people's lives and livelihoods in the area.

The research also demonstrates that the promotion of unity, coordination and active participation of the churches by WVM in the area has helped in the transformation of people's spiritual lives. There are now different churches and more Christians in the area compared to the past. These churches are also actively involved in WVM's development programmes in the area because they see themselves as main actors in the vocation of enhancing people's lives and livelihoods.

4.7.2 Gaps in Livelihood Support

While the study has revealed the success of Chata ADP, on the other hand, it identifies some gaps that still need to be addressed so as to ensure livelihoods that are more sustainable.

Although a lot is being done on HIV/AIDS awareness in Chata, the disease is still negatively affecting food security programmes because farmers are either infected or affected by the pandemic. Thus, instead of working in their fields, they spend time and resources caring for the sick and attending funeral ceremonies thereby increasing their vulnerability to food insecurity.

The research also demonstrates that there is no security for the assets, particularly livestock of farmers as many flocks are being stolen thus eroding farmers' lives and livelihoods. One of the reasons for the lack of security is the absence of a police

station in the area and as a result, thieves find the area very conducive for their robbery. People travel long distances to seek help from Kanengo police station where sometimes help is not imminent. This is frustrating many people who are no longer going to the police station thus increasing the insecurity of the people in the area.

The study reveals that some customs are eroding people's lives and livelihoods. Customs such as *nyau*, *zipirara*, *dambule* and funerals demand a lot of food and time for them to happen. Thus a lot of people in the area, instead of spending time in their fields, get busy finishing their limited food stocks. Unfortunately, these customs are at the heart of Chewa culture hence many people are depleting their food resources soon after harvest thereby increasing their vulnerability to food insecurity.

The study also displays that there is no law or policy on protecting farmers' crops against livestock that are left to wander and eat crops in the *dimbas*. This is making farmers vulnerable to hunger because the tendency is leading to food insecurity in the area. Sadly to say that many farmers have lost their crops and nothing has been done to help them, because there is no strong law that punishes those whose livestock have destroyed other people's crops.

The research notes that deforestation is still on the increase because charcoal selling is one of the major livelihood strategies for the people in the area. This shows that people are seeking access to cash income, and therefore there is need to diversify livelihood strategies so that people can have access to such cash. For example, the promotion of IGAs through the provision of loans may mitigate the problem of charcoal selling.

Many farmers lamented through the interviews that poor roads, communication systems and markets are undermining their ability to improve their lives and livelihoods. This is because among other things, they fail to transport their produce, communicate and establish viable markets for their agricultural products. Consequently, they resort to selling their produce locally and at a cheap price thus increasing their vulnerability to food insecurity.

The research reveals that there is an unavailability of banks and lending institutions in the area. This has a devastating impact on people's lives and livelihoods because farmers have difficulties in accessing loans to buy inputs and improve on their irrigation farming methods. Furthermore, the lack of banks and lending institutions in the area has prompted many farmers to rely on asset creation as the sole means of saving. This means of saving unfortunately undermines farmers' lives and livelihoods because assets like livestock cannot be readily converted to money in times of shocks such as sicknesses or deaths, or may be stolen, or the livestock may even die of seasonal diseases.

The study also shows that a lack of access to health facilities and good water in the area has led farmers to drink poor and contaminated water in shallow wells and rivers. The presence of only one health centre in the whole Chimutu area is very pathetic and detrimental to the lives and livelihoods of the poor farmers in the area. Again, the lack of access to safe and sufficient drinking water is very harmful to people's health in Chata and the whole Chimutu area.

The study also illustrates that a lack of transport and insufficient field staff in Chata ADP is hampering the food security programme. For instance, there is only one facilitator in each commitment area who has to cycle long distances on poor roads to meet farmers, consequently he does not conduct his work efficiently since most of the times he is tired after long hours of cycling his bicycle. The transport problem is also affecting the work of Christian witness committee members who fail to meet regularly because of distance. Most of them have to walk about 40km to reach the ADP field office for meetings or visit other commitment areas to conduct prayer meetings or bible studies. This is not only decreasing the morale of Christian witness committee members, but also hampering coordination among church leaders and Christians in the commitment areas.

4.8 Conclusion

As the study demonstrates, WVM has done commendable work towards the improvement of lives and livelihoods of the poor in Chata. Some farmers in the area now have reduced their vulnerability through winter cropping which has enhanced food security at both household and community level. Chata ADP has also improved

the spiritual lives of many people in the area as evidenced by the large number of churches and active Christians in the area. However, a lot needs to be done in the areas of spirituality, customs (*nyau*, *dambule*, funerals and *zipirara*) water and sanitation, communication, road network system, health, security, lending institutions, deforestation and markets in order to achieve better lives and sustainable livelihoods of the poor in Chata and Chiwamba as a whole.

Having analysed how the food security programme is enhancing or eroding the livelihoods of the poor in Chata, I now move to the next chapter to discuss contextual theological insights into the notion of *shalom* and how it can impact upon the livelihoods of the poor in these communities and Malawi as a whole. The chapter also provides recommendations for future action based on the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 STRATEGIC POSSIBILITIES FOR WVM IN CHATA ADP

5.1 Introduction

Based on the findings of the study, this chapter provides contextual theological insights into the concept of *shalom* and how it can impact upon the lives and livelihoods of the poor in Malawi. The chapter also suggests recommendations for future action in order to achieve better lives and livelihoods.

5.2 Contextual Theological Insights into the notion of Shalom

5.2.1 Freedom is the manifestation of Shalom

The indivisibility of freedom and *shalom* should be at the centre of our development work in the communities. This is because from God's perspective, freedom is paramount to life and therefore no one can enjoy *shalom* without being free. Therefore, it is important to make sure that everyone in the community benefits from our development work.

Chata ADP case study reveals that those who seem to be enjoying the food security programmes are those who belong to different farm clubs while other independent farmers remain in bondage to food insecurity. Unless everyone enjoys the fruit of the programmes in that community, one cannot claim to have established *shalom* in that particular area. As it has been observed, *shalom* also denotes peace of mind, hence it is important for the churches and FBOs to ensure that all people are liberated from the bondage of unfreedom to access good water, health services, education and food security. As our study of Chata ADP shows, people may be food secured but if they do not have access to good health services, education or safe drinking water then they are not free hence they are denied *shalom*. The Church and FBOs need to know that as they seek to bring *shalom* to the poor they need to make sure that everyone at all levels in the community is fully liberated and enjoys harmonious relationship with God, neighbours, the environment and oneself. This is the fundamental principle that signifies the biblical vision of *shalom*.

5.2.2 Holistic approach to life echoes a vision of Shalom

Shalom does not only manifest itself in households and communities, but also in a wider socio-economic, political and spiritual context. Therefore as *shalom* makers, the Church and FBOs should seek to understand how people live their lives, the resources they draw upon, the strategies they adopt and the outcomes that emerge in order for them to create, sustain and restore *shalom* to the people. This understanding of *shalom* will help the church to make sure that people's lives are not compartmentalised but that their lives are shaped by a number of factors and are hence holistic. Therefore, churches and FBOs would be able to focus at all the areas that affect poor people in order to establish *shalom*. A case in point is Chata ADP which is doing an excellent job in the area of food security. However, as the study has demonstrated, *shalom* cannot be present if people have only enough food but no markets to sell their food. Furthermore, people cannot enjoy *shalom* if they have school blocks but not enough qualified teachers to teach. *Shalom* helps the Church and FBOs to think holistically in order to alleviate people's problems in a community.

The holistic concept of *shalom* helps the Church and FBOs to be involved in caring for both physical and spiritual life. Chata ADP provides a clear demonstration on how the Church and FBOs may take a leading role towards transforming people's physical and spiritual needs. Many people in Chata area are enjoying life in all its fullness because their physical lives are being nourished through food security, education and health programmes. Again, people's spiritual lives are flourishing through the Chata Christian Witness Committee which is committed to nurturing their spiritual lives. This resonates with Jesus' work and ministry¹ whereby he incarnates God's work of *shalom* through healing, liberating, caring and restoring of life. Therefore, the Church and FBOs are called upon to bear faithful witness to the God of life by being involved in the works of life such as healing; restoring; caring; fighting poverty, environmental degradation, oppression and food insecurity. This is Jesus' highest calling for the Church and FBOs so that the desired vision of *shalom* in which life in all its fullness flourishes should reign over our homes, communities and countries.

¹ See Jesus' manifesto in Lk.4:18-19, Jhn. 10:10 where Jesus speaks of himself as the "abundant life", and Jhn. 14:14 where Jesus declares himself as 'the way, truth and life'.

5.2.3 Agency and dignity are the essence of Shalom

At the heart of *shalom* is the recognition of poor people's agency and dignity. The churches and FBOs should not consider themselves as actors or subjects in *shalom* making. Rather, there should be a recognition that poor people are also agents and actors in the historical vocation of bringing *shalom* to the communities. The needy and the marginalized are not just created in the image of God for nothing, rather they have a vocation as co-labourers with God in making the world a better place for living. Thus, the poor are not just passive objects or patients waiting to be healed or fed by the Church and FBOs, but they are invited to be subjects and actors of their own history in enhancing their lives and livelihoods as prescribed by a vision of *shalom*. All people are made in the image of God and therefore have gifts, talents, abilities, and find their meaning in the historical vocation where all human beings are co-workers with God in making a vision of *shalom* a reality. Therefore, God's desire for the poor is to see them as active participants in building *shalom* so that their own sense of dignity and purpose is materialized.

Chata ADP provides tangible evidence on the importance of regarding the poor as active agents and not mere recipients of development work. The people who were once regarded as uneducated, unskilled and untalented have proved to be the agents of development work in Chata area. The area which was previously prone to food insecurity now shines as one of the highest producers of cassava in the central region of Malawi. The people now have improved their sense of dignity in the society because WVM values them and takes them as equal partners in the quest to bring *shalom* to their households and communities. As the study reveals, most people in Chata now feel better about themselves as they co-labour with God in food security programmes that are enhancing their lives and livelihoods.

Shalom thus calls the Church and FBOs to desist from perceiving poor people as beneficiaries, clients, or patients. Rather, the poor and marginalized should be considered as subjects and actors in the vocation of building *shalom*. James' statement that, "Just as the body without spirit is dead, so the faith without works is also dead", (James 2:26) underscores the fact that it is not only the *works* of the Church or FBOs, but also the *works* of the poor who are always engaged in struggles

for better livelihoods.² Thus, God also values their faith praxis. Therefore, FBOs and the Church should seek to engage and dialogue with the poor in the quest for making a vision of *shalom* a reality to all people.

5.2.4 Sustainability is the foundation of Shalom

Shalom aims at ensuring that poor people have the abundant life that Jesus speaks of in John 10:10. This means that poor people's lives and livelihoods should continue to survive and flourish from time to time. Therefore, churches and FBOs in their quest to enhance poor people's lives and livelihoods should ensure that the poor maintain a healthy, active and abundant life that is characterized by more income, increased well being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security and more sustainable use of the natural resource base. This is what underlies a vision of *shalom*. It is a wake-up call to the churches and FBOs to ensure that *shalom* continues to reign by making sure that the structures that they build like hospitals, school blocks, bridges and many others are strong enough to benefit even the future generation.

It is interesting to note that Chata ADP is doing asset creation with the aim of ensuring economic sustainability of the people in Chata. This has helped many farmers to enhance and sustain their financial capital. Chata ADP has also plans of establishing community based structures so that its current programmes should continue to benefit the poor when the ADP phases out in 2012.

The Church and FBOs are supposed to carry programmes that have long term positive impact on people's lives and livelihoods. This may be done through the establishment of sustainable programmes, structures and also building the capacity of the poor people so that they can have the capability to continue enhancing their lives and livelihoods even when the programmes phase out. This is what *shalom* advocates for, to ensure that poor people's lives and livelihoods continue to flourish. Therefore, God's desire for the Church and FBOs is that they should establish long term development programmes that are aimed at enhancing people's lives and livelihoods

² For more information on the exposition of James 2:26, see the essay of Steve de Gruchy, "Of Agency, Assets, and Appreciation: Seeking some Commonalities between Theology and Development", *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 117(November 2003), p.21-26.

so that a vision of *shalom* may be evidenced in our communities and countries as a whole.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Water

There is a high demand for safe drinking water in the area. Although WVM's main focus is on food security, the issue of drinking water is fundamental if people's lives and livelihood objectives are to be met. There can be little impact on people's lives if they achieve food security but have no access to safe water. It is against this background that WVM needs to critically focus on embarking on programmes that seek to provide the people in Chata area with safe drinking water in order for the people to attain better lives and livelihoods.

5.3.2 Markets

The farmers in Chata area struggle very much to find markets for their produce. WVM is strategically positioned to assist these farmers with viable markets. Efforts are being made by Chata ADP to develop farmers into associations and cooperatives in order for them to establish their own markets. However, WVM should extend its help by connecting these farmers to other markets in town or even outside the country. Since these farmers produce a lot of quality cassava, markets cannot be a problem if WVM (which is well established in Malawi) can take a leading role to find good markets for the farmers. Again, WVM should facilitate the farmers to sell the cassava cuttings and sweet potato vines to other ADPs which are spread throughout the country. This would help ease the problem of markets unavailability since farmers would no longer travel long distances in search of viable markets for their produce.

5.3.3 Loans

WVM should consider extending loan schemes to many farmers who are currently failing to access loans because of the few lending institutions in the area. This is going to help many farmers who are struggling to get money in order to improve their irrigation farming. These loans for example, would help many farmers buy treadle pumps or machines for their irrigation farming thus increasing food security at both household and community levels. Again, provisions of loans would help many people

start micro development enterprises. This means that many people would diversify their livelihood strategies and therefore, dependence on charcoal selling which is the major cause of deforestation in the area, would be minimised considerably. This is because people would have different small scale businesses which would help them increase their financial capital.

5.3.4 Christian Witness

WVM whose mission statement is based on Christian values needs to continue focusing seriously on the spiritual transformation of the people in the area. As the research demonstrates, the spiritual lives of many people in Chata have improved tremendously. In order to further improve the spiritual lives of people in Chata, there is need for Chata ADP to increase the number of training programmes and events on the part of the Christian Witness Committee and also increase the number of Christian programmes in the area such as bible youth clubs. The level of spirituality in Chata may also be improved through holding mass rallies two or three times a year in order to improve and strengthen people's spiritual lives. It should be stated that the success of the integrated holistic commitment to development by Chata ADP is not only based on the number of food secured households in the area, but also on the level of spiritual transformation of the farmers and WVM's staff in Chata.

5.3.5 Fertilizer

Chata ADP needs to seriously consider finding alternatives to inorganic fertilizer. Although fertilizer has been reduced by almost 50%, some poor farmers will still find it difficult to buy the fertilizer. Again, although these inorganic fertilizers bring quick and bumper harvest, they destroy soil fertility by increasing acidity in the soil thereby making farmers perpetually dependant on these inorganic fertilizers. Therefore, WVM should extend and intensify its programmes on compost manure and agro-forestry technologies. Not only do organic fertilizers help in yielding bumper harvests but they also improve soil structure and texture. WVM should ensure that every farmer is making maximum use of organic manure which can easily be obtained from the livestock that they are rearing through the asset creation programme. WVM should also make sure that many farmers in the area are benefiting from the agro-forestry technology programmes by providing them with these soil enriching trees which have proved to be excellent in ensuring long term soil fertility improvement.

5.3.6 Community Based Organisations (CBOs)

Since Chata ADP will be phasing out in 2012, there is a need to focus on establishing community based organisations (CBOs) in the area to ensure that the current programmes are continued even when WVM pulls out. There is great danger that once WVM pulls out of Chata area, many farmers will have nowhere to go for help since they rely heavily on WVM. Therefore, WVM should make sure that it establishes CBOs, so that these organisations should take a leading role in helping farmers in the area when WVM leaves. These CBOs may be formed in every programme that WVM is doing, for example, irrigation farming and livestock production. Many farmers would benefit from these CBOs because they would be owned and run by farmers themselves and not by outsiders. WVM would just come in to help with technical expertise. Therefore, these CBOs would help in ensuring the sustainability of the programmes that are being carried out in the area and hence reduce over dependence on WVM.

5.3.7 Transport

As the study shows, WVM development facilitators face transport problems to carry out their work efficiently. It is important for WVM to consider buying each facilitator a motorbike to ease their work. The motorbikes would help the facilitators visit more farmers in the villages therefore enabling many people to benefit from their technical expertise, hence enhancing farmers' lives and livelihoods. WVM should also consider buying each commitment area a bicycle if the Christian witness committee is to make any meaningful impact upon people's spiritual lives. It is sad to note that God's work in the villages is being undermined because members of Chata Christian Witness Committee cannot afford to visit all the villages in the commitment areas since the villages are far from each other. As a result, many people in the village do not receive the word of God thereby deteriorating their spiritual lives. These bicycles would help a lot in the mobility of Chata Christian Witness Committee members who will have ample time to preach, teach and counsel people in the villages thereby improving people's spiritual lives.

5.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined some contextual theological insights into the notion of *shalom* and how they impact upon people's lives and livelihoods. Thus, I have

discussed the core issues that are at the heart of *shalom* namely: freedom; holism; human agency and dignity; and lastly, sustainability. The chapter has also developed some recommendations for future action in the following areas: drinking water, viable markets, loan schemes, Christian witness, fertilizer, CBOs and transport.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this thesis I have examined the issue of food security in Malawi. The study has provided an overview of the food security situation in some of the most affected districts and has also described food insecurity categories in Malawi. I have also looked at different food security interventions that are being carried out by FBOs and churches in Malawi. This has helped in providing a context in which to look at the extent to which FBOs and churches are contributing to food security programmes in a way that enhances the lives and livelihoods of the poor. With World Vision Malawi being the case study, the thesis has provided the historical background to WVM's Chata ADP and its impact on people's lives and livelihoods.

6.2 Food and Livelihood in Theological Perspective

The thesis has discussed the issue of food and livelihoods in theological perspective. In this vein, I examined the broader vision of *shalom* and the theological reflection on food security. Thereafter, I discussed their relationship. The study also shows that the Church and Faith Based Organisations are called upon by God to fulfil the biblical vision of *shalom* by actively engaging in sustainable programmes that seek to alleviate and eradicate the suffering of the poor. As it has been seen, the biblical and theological basis for the Church's involvement in sustainable programmes is two fold namely, it is God's mandate; and secondly, the Church is strategically positioned with power and potential. The study has not only given reasons on why the Church and FBOs should dialogue with the poor in enhancing their lives and livelihoods, but it has prescribed how they should respond. This is why the thesis argues that the Sustainable Livelihood Framework provides FBOs and churches with a coherent theoretical model for development praxis that seek to enhance the lives and livelihoods of the poor as motivated by a vision of *shalom*.

6.3 Analysis of Findings

The analysis of findings shows that WVM has done commendable work towards the improvement of lives and livelihoods of the poor in Chata. The key strength that WVM has contributed in Chata ADP is the issue of human dignity and agency. The

study reveals that the farmers have increased their sense of dignity because WVM considers them to be actors and subjects in development programmes, hence the farmers are active participants in food security programmes. Some farmers in the area now have reduced their vulnerability to hunger through winter cropping which has enhanced food security at both household and community level. Chata ADP has also improved the spiritual lives of many people in the area as evidenced by the large number of churches and active Christians in the area. However, a lot needs to be done in the areas of spirituality, customs (*nyau*, *dambule*, funerals and *zipirara*) water and sanitation, communication, road network system, health, security, lending institutions, deforestation and markets in order to achieve better lives and sustainable livelihoods of the poor in Chata and Chiwamba as a whole.

6.4 Strategic Possibilities

Lastly, I have examined some contextual theological insights into the notion of *shalom*, and how they can impact the lives and livelihoods of the poor and marginalized in Malawi and Africa as a whole. Thus, I have discussed the core issues that are enshrined in the biblical vision of *shalom* namely: freedom; holism; human agency and dignity; and sustainability. The thesis has also suggested some recommendations for future action in order to achieve sustainable livelihoods. The areas that need attention are: drinking water, viable markets, loan schemes, Christian witness, fertilizer, CBOs and transport.

6.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the enhancement of poor people's lives and livelihoods is the praxis of God's biblical vision of *shalom*. The challenge for the Church and FBOs today is to co-work with the poor as equal partners created in the image of God in the struggle against people and powers that seek to wound *shalom*. God's desire for all human beings is to enjoy the biblical vision of *shalom*. However, *shalom* making requires perseverance and commitment, therefore there is need to strive in making sure that *shalom* in our communities and countries is reigning. It is imperative to embark on food security programmes that are aimed at enhancing the lives and livelihoods of the poor in order to make a vision of *shalom* a reality in our households, communities and country as a whole.

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Key Informant Interviews

Name	Title	Date
D. Kanyerere	Food Security Manager (World Vision Malawi)	20 Jul 2004
M. M'mangisa	Assistant Agriculture Manager (Chata ADP)	28 Jul 2004
E. Chipanthenga	Development Facilitator (Chiponde Commitment Area)	25 Aug 2004
Dzuwa	Farmer (Balang'ombe Commitment Area)	25 Aug 2004
K. Guta	Development Facilitator (Chiwamba Commitment Area)	27 Aug 2004
C. Gondwe	Medical Assistant (Chiwamba Health Centre)	7 Sept 2004
Philemon	AEDC (Chimutu Area)	7 Sept 2004
TA Chimutu	Traditional Authority (Chimutu)	9 Sept 2004
Kafulatira	Group Village Headman	9 Sept 2004
L. G. Chanodza	Primary Education Advisor (Balang'ombe zone)	11 Sept 2004
H. Banda	ADP Manager (Chata ADP)	24 Sept 2004

Focus Group Discussions

Chimwa Commitment Area, 25 August 2004

Name	Title
G. Captain	Chairman (Chimwa CAC)
L. Eliya	Farmer
M. Chilinda	Farmer
E. Chilenje	Vice chairperson (Chimwa CAC)

Mwanzeze Commitment Area, 26 August 2004

Name	Title
C. Senti	Farmer
V.H. Biwi	Village Headman (Club Chairman)
K. Mtola	Farmer
VH Chikonyani	Village Headman
Linesi	Chairperson (Women's cookery group)

Mbavu Commitment Area, 27 August 2004

Name	Title
F. Mbozi	Chairman (Mbavu CAC)
Kaphuka	Committee Member
B.J. Chimbalame	Chairman (Agriculture Recovery)
M Kanono	Secretary (Mbavu CAC)
M Mataka	Chairman (Seed multiplication)
Bikitoni	Farmer
James Undi	Farmer

Chata Christian Witness Committee, 9 September 2004

Name	Title
L. Jericho	Counselor and women's guild member (Balang'ombe CCAP)
C. Mnyontho	Adult Literacy teacher (Catholic)
L. Dete	Pastor (Kafumba Baptist Church)
D. Chagwira	Church Elder (Independent Baptist Convention)
J.P. Baluwa	Retired Church Elder (Chimwa CCAP)
F. Spider	Bishop (African Abraham)
W. Soko	Counselor and Retired Church elder (CCAP)
S. Malinga	Justice and peace Coordinator (Catholic)

Chata ADP Youth Club, 10 September 2004

Name	Title
H. Kalembo	Chairperson (Balang'ombe youth)
D. Maseko	Discipline master
M. Tambalasajiwa	Chairman (Chiponde youth)
G. J. Mwale	Treasure (Balang'ombe youth)
C. Chakuta	Secretary (Chiponde)
H. Chisale	Peer Educator (Mbavu youth)

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APPENDIX 1:

INTERVIEW SHEET

Name of Commitment Area _____

Interviewee: _____ **Title:** _____

VULNERABILITY CONTEXT

Which groups produce which crops?

How important is each crop to the livelihood of the groups that produce it?

Is the revenue from a given crop used for a particular purpose – e.g. If it is controlled by women, is it particularly important to child health or nutrition?

What proportion output is marketed ?

How do prices for different crops vary throughout the year?

How predictable is seasonal price fluctuation?

What proportion of household food needs is met by own consumption and what proportion is purchased?

At what time of the year is cash income most important e.g. school fees might be collected one or more times during the year? Does this coincide with the time at which cash is most available?

Do people have access to appropriate financial service institutions to enable them save for the future? Does access to these vary by social group?

How long is the hungry period?

What effect do the “hungry period” and other seasonal natural events (e.g. the advent of the rainy season) have on human health and the ability to work?

Has the length of the “hungry period been increasing or decreasing”?

How do income-earning opportunities vary throughout the year? Are they agricultural or non-farm?

How does remittance income vary throughout the year (e.g. falling off at times when it is most needed because of food price rises)?

- ✓ What disasters do you face and how do they affect your families?
- ✓ What do you think are the causes of such disasters?
- ✓ What mitigation measures have been put in place against the effects of such disasters?

LIVELIHOOD STRATEGY

How positive are the choices that people are making? (e.g. would people migrate seasonally if there were income-earning opportunities available closer to home or if they were not saddled with unpayable debt? Are people bonded in any way (to particular employers or creditors)? Are women able to make their own choices or are they constrained by family pressure/local custom?).

- ✓ Mention livelihood strategies that people do. Which is the most common one? Why?

What are some of the cash and food crops that are grown in the area?

- ✓ Which livelihood strategy appears to be working best?

Which livelihood objectives are not achievable through current livelihood strategies.

POLICY, INSTITUTIONS, PROCESSES

- ✓ What can you say about the following and how they impact people's livelihoods:

- ✓ ➤ Local and central authority
- ✓ ➤ Public service delivery
- ✓ ➤ Legislation
- ✓ ➤ Governance
- ✓ ➤ Policy formulation and implementation
- ✓ ➤ Participation
 - Institutions (regulations, interactions, laws and markets)
 - Organizations (NGOs, state agencies, the private sector, CBOs, etc)
 - Politics
- ✓ ➤ Cultural factors (Which may account for 'unexplained differences' in the way things are done in different societies).

To what extent are laws/policies affecting the Chata ADP

LIVELIHOOD ASSETS

What can you say about the following assets:

Human Capital:

Education indicators

- Access to basic primary education
- Access to secondary schools
- Quality of school infrastructure and education offered
- Comparison of male and female school attendees

Health indicators

- ✓ ➤ What are the main diseases in the area?
- ✓ ➤ What can you say about the impact of health services in the area if any?
- What about traditional healers and birth attendants i.e. did they receive any professional training in nutrition practices and attending births:

Social Capital:

What can you say about the customs and traditions in the area and how they impact the livelihoods?

What can you say about the civic relations within the community or neighbourhood and beyond (for example, links outside the immediate area)?

What is your comment on social resources (labour exchanges, kinship networks, etc) on which people rely?

Which groups are excluded from social benefits?

To what extent do people rely on social resources to see them through in time of crisis?

Physical Capital:

What can you say about basic infrastructure and physical goods that support livelihoods? Namely:

- affordability of transport systems
- water supply and sanitation (of adequate quality and quantity)

- energy (that is both clean and affordable)
- good communication and access to information
- items that enhance income (e.g. bicycles, sawing machines, agricultural equipment, household goods and utensils and consumer items such as radios and refrigerators)

Natural Capital:

- What can you say about the types of natural assets that are present (e.g. land, trees, water-rivers, streams etc)
- How about the ease with which groups of people can access these natural assets
- The quality of the natural assets and how this is changing over time
- How the assets combine with each other (for example, fertile land is a better asset for cultivation than stony land, but its full potential will not be realized without adequate access to water)

Which groups have access to which types of natural resources?

How productive is the resources? (soil fertility, structure, value of different tree species, etc) and how has this been changing over time? (E.g. variation in yields)

What is the nature of access rights (e.g. private ownership, rental common ownership, highly contested access): How secure are they? Can they be defended if threatened?

Is there evidence of significant conflict over resources?

How versatile is the resource? Can it be used for multiple purposes? (This can be important in cushioning users against particular shocks)

How is the resource affected by the external factors (e.g. biodiversity being damaged by intensive agriculture, value of fisheries being dependant on number of users who have access and choices about their catches?)

Financial Capital:

Financial services

- Which types of financial service organization exist (both formal and informal)?
- What services do they provide, under what conditions (interest rates, collateral requirements, etc)

- Which groups or types of people have access? What prevents others from gaining access?
- What are the current levels of savings and loans?

Savings behaviour

- In what form do people currently keep their savings (livestock, jewel, cash, bank deposits, etc)?
- What are the risks of these different options? (e.g. livestock are vulnerable in times of drought, savings held in the banks are vulnerable if the banks themselves are not reputable, etc)
- How readily can they be converted to cash? Is the value likely to change depending upon when they are converted? (E.g. the value of livestock tends to alter by season)

The Existence and effects of flows of remittance income

- How many households receive regular pensions? When in the household cycle are these received? (At what age or after what event)
- How many households (and what type) have family members living away who remit money?
- How reliable are remittances? Do they vary by season? How much money is involved?
- Who controls remittance income when it arrives? How is it used? Is it reinvested?

RELIGION AND CULTURE

- ✍ What can you say about the impact of the church on people's lives and livelihoods? Any relationship with different churches. How is this affecting the livelihood of the people?
- ✍ What can you say about the impact of customs and traditions on the lives and livelihoods of the people?

