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## The Effectiveness of Poverty Reduction Measures in Peri-Urban Areas of Zimbabwe: Case of Mutasa South Peri-Urban

**Abstract:** The question of “how effective poverty eradication measures being implemented in Zimbabwe are” has not been addressed in the context of peri-urban areas. This question must be addressed since the country has a high incidence of poverty and is working towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1 i.e. “No Poverty”. Using a case study of Mutasa South peri-urban, this research therefore sought to answer the question. It adopted an exploratory methodology and data was collected from residents in Mutasa South peri-urban area and key informants from NGOs and Mutasa Rural District Council. The study found that poor people in the study area experience different forms of poverty. Poverty reduction measures being implemented in Mutasa South peri-urban include food aid, education assistance, cash transfer, microfinance and farming programmes. The effectiveness of these measures was examined based on the extent to which the programmes cover the multiple dimensions of poverty found in the study area. As the study found, the programmes take into account all the dimensions of poverty but there are aspects of these dimensions that they pay less attention to and tend to exclude some of the poor.

**Keywords:** poverty, peri-urban, quality of life, poverty reduction, Sustainable Development Goals, Zimbabwe.

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## 1. Introduction

Zimbabwe is facing an acute poverty challenge. In 2017, about 70.5% of the country's population lived in poverty (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency 2019). Extreme poverty in the country rose, between 2017 and 2019, from 29% to 34% (Chingono 2020; Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency 2019), and further increased, in 2020, to half of the country's population owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic shocks (Chingono 2021; UNICEF Zimbabwe 2021; World Bank 2020). Although poverty in Zimbabwe is predominantly rural, it is rising faster in urban areas (Gweshengwe 2021; World Bank 2020; Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency 2019). Peri-urban areas in the country are not spared from this scourge. The quality of life in peri-urban areas is falling dramatically due primarily to unplanned urban expansion (Gweshengwe and Matai 2022). This is against the background in which Zimbabwe, like other United Nations signatories, is working towards eradicating all forms of poverty throughout the country, including peri-urban areas, by 2030 (Sustainable Development Goal 1).

Given the high incidence of poverty in Zimbabwe and the country's intention to meet Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1, how effective are poverty eradication measures being implemented in the country? This question has not been answered in the context of peri-urban areas in Zimbabwe. The aim of the current study is therefore to ascertain the effectiveness of poverty alleviation measures implemented in the country's peri-urban areas, based on a case study of Mutasa South peri-urban. The specific objectives are to shed light on the dimensions of poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban area and to examine the effectiveness of the poverty reduction measures implemented in the study area. This study is expected to make governmental and non-governmental welfare organisations aware of how they are faring in eradicating peri-urban poverty and how they could enhance the effectiveness of their poverty eradication efforts.

## 2. Literature Review

This section sheds light on the multidimensionality of poverty since it has been used in the study as the basis for examining the effectiveness of peri-urban poverty eradication measures. It also examines the global distribution of poverty and the nature of poverty in peri-urban areas. The section concludes with a discussion of some peri-urban poverty eradication strategies.

## 2.1. The Multidimensionality of Poverty

Poverty has multiple dimensions: financial, economic, material, social, environmental and seasonal (Gweshengwe and Hassan 2020; Kalinowski 2020; Chambers 2012). The financial dimension implies deprivation in terms of income, savings and access to loans from formal financial institutions (Kalinowski and Wyduba 2021; Gweshengwe and Hassan 2019; Banerjee 2016; Sen 1999). The economic dimension includes a lack of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, natural resources (land, water, forestry products), physical capital (markets and infrastructure) as well as human capital (being educated, skilled and healthy) (Gweshengwe and Hassan 2020; Kalinowski 2020; Brand 2002). The material dimension refers to undesirable living conditions caused by a lack of essential material goods and services, such as housing, means of transport, clothing, televisions, furniture, utilities, amenities and communication (Chambers 2012; Gordon 2010). The social dimension denotes deprivation in terms of social capital or resources (networks or relationships) and the inability to participate in communal activities (Gweshengwe and Hassan 2020). The environmental dimension covers environments in which poor people live, which are usually unhygienic, remote, lacking in basic infrastructure and communication systems and susceptible to disasters, prostitution, crime and drug abuse (Chambers 2007; Narayan et al. 2000). The seasonal dimension refers to poverty realities caused by changes in both climatic and non-climatic seasons (Gweshengwe 2020; Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler, Longhurst 2012). These realities include lack of income and food, indebtedness, debilitating sicknesses associated with the wet season and challenges caused by the schooling calendar and festivals (Gweshengwe 2020; Chambers 2012).

## 2.2. Global Distribution of Poverty

Poverty, as discussed earlier, is multidimensional. In 2018, about 1.3 billion people across the globe were multidimensionally poor (OPHI 2018). Most multidimensionally poor people are from Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia; some are from Central Asia and the European Union (UNDP and OPHI 2020; OPHI 2018).

The poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are South Sudan and Niger, which register an incidence of multidimensional poverty of more than 90%, and South Africa, which at 6.3%, has the lowest levels of deprivation (UNDP and OPHI 2019). Intra-country variations are particularly pronounced between rural and urban areas. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, 71.9% of people in rural areas (466 million

people) are multidimensionally poor as compared to 25.2% (92 million people) in urban areas (UNDP and OPHI 2020). Burundi, Malawi, and Madagascar have the most striking rural-urban divides, with approximately 95% of poor people living in rural areas (OPHI 2018).

The significant deprivations affecting the multidimensionally poor in most Sub-Saharan African countries include deprivation in nutrition; education; and clean cooking fuel (UNDP and OPHI 2020; OPHI 2018). The environmental dimension of poverty is also acute in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the multidimensionally poor face at least one environmental deprivation (UNDP and OPHI 2020). Poor and disadvantaged people are more exposed to the adverse effects of environmental phenomena such as climate change and environmental degradation due to the numerous links between poverty and the environment (Godinot and Walker 2020; UNDP and OPHI 2020). Since many people living in poverty depend on ecosystemic services for their livelihoods and well-being, the degradation of the natural environment puts the livelihoods of these people at risk (UNDP and OPHI 2020). According to OECD (2007), for example, a 1% increase in biomass scarcity could reduce average rural household well-being in Malawi by 1%.

The environmental and health dimensions of poverty are also pronounced in Sub-Saharan Africa due to deprivation of basic water and sanitation services, and housing. The region has 418 million people without access to basic water services, and 779 million lacking basic sanitation services (UNICEF 2022). Water and sanitation deprivation is high in rural areas and informal urban settlements. According to A. Kofi Amegah (2021), Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest number of slum dwellers, with around 62% of the region's urban population residing in slums. There are several environmental exposures in slums, which increases vulnerability to diseases and ill-health in these settlements (Amegah 2021).

Only 2.3% of the Europe and Central Asia regions' 149 million people included in the survey were multidimensionally poor (OPHI 2018). The other major highlight from the Europe and Central Asia region were small levels of acute multidimensional poverty found in countries such as Ukraine, Serbia, Kazakhstan and Montenegro. However, the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index fails to adequately capture the higher poverty eradication aspirations of the European region (OPHI 2018).

The At Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion (AROPE) index is one of the commonly used measures of relative poverty in Europe. The AROPE covers three dimensions: relative income poverty risk; severe material deprivation; and low work intensity households (Yang 2017). In 2020, there were an estimated 96.5 million people in the EU at risk of poverty or social exclusion, which was equivalent to 21.9% of the total population (Eurostat 2021). The risk of poverty and social exclusion varies among groups according to age, gender, level of education and employment

status. Women, young adults, people with a low level of educational achievement and unemployed persons were, on average, more likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2020 than other groups within the EU population (Eurostat 2021). The trends over the last two decades show that the AROPE rate did not fall, as the trend line for most countries is relatively flat (Jenkins 2020). These trends represent a slight increase in poverty for most European countries over the two decades.

### 2.3. Nature of Peri-Urban Poverty

Many peri-urban areas in developing regions are characterised by multidimensional poverty (Méndez-Lemus and Vieyra 2014; Allen, Davila and Hofmann 2006), which is a result of the dynamic processes of socio-economic and environmental change caused by peri-urbanisation (Banu and Fazal 2016). Rapid land-use changes, especially the conversion of prime agricultural land to urban land use, greatly affect the livelihoods of the poor (Abdulai, Derbile and Fuseini 2021; Banu and Fazal 2016), who often have little resilience and less room to manoeuvre in the face of shocks and stresses from these rapid changes (Allen, Davila and Hofmann 2006). The urban expansion also creates livelihood opportunities for the peri-urban poor, which include opportunities associated with wage employment, trading markets and access to improved services and infrastructure (Banu and Fazal 2016).

The peri-urban poor include residents of informal settlements and residents of formerly rural areas who lived there before urban encroachment (Méndez-Lemus and Vieyra 2014). Most of these poor peri-urban households are characterised by a lack of regular incomes, inadequate access to natural resources, a high number of dependents, semi-skilled or unskilled members, and a high incidence of female-headed households (Allen, Davila, Hofmann 2006). The poor former rural residents are considered the most vulnerable since they are subjected to a livelihood transmutation while trying to escape poverty (Méndez-Lemus and Vieyra 2014).

Peri-urban areas are too often neglected as peri-urbanisation is associated with increasing marginalisation, access deficit and environmental degradation (Marshall and Randhawa 2017). As a result of this neglect, most peri-urban areas experience water poverty. According to Adriana Allen, Julio Davila and Pascale Hofmann (2006), many peri-urban inhabitants are “water poor” as they lack access to sufficient water and adequate sanitation facilities to meet their needs (Allen, Davila and Hofmann 2006). Water poverty in peri-urban areas is not necessarily restricted to low-income households. However, low-income residents tend to be more vulnerable than higher-income ones due to a lack of capacity to improve their access to affordable water and sanitation services (Allen, Davila and Hofmann 2006).

## 2.4. Strategies for Eradicating Peri-Urban Poverty

The dynamic processes of peri-urbanisation have an impact on the opportunities of, and constraints faced by, different groups in their access to livelihood assets and strategies (Banu and Fazal 2016). The choice of poverty eradication strategies by the peri-urban poor is determined by their access to resources, such as land and skills, and their ability to address the constraints associated with urban encroachment on peri-urban agricultural lands (Abdulai, Derbile and Fuseini 2021). This suggests that the loss of farmland may have a considerable effect on the choice of household livelihood strategies (Wegedie 2018). In the peri-urban context, what often distinguishes the poor from the very poor is their ability to utilise urban opportunities since peri-urban livelihood strategies are strongly driven by urban markets (Allen, Davila and Hofmann 2006). Poverty eradication strategies in peri-urban areas in developing countries across the globe include as following below.

**Microfinance** has been identified as one of the major poverty eradication strategies adopted in peri-urban areas (Adu-Okoree 2012). It refers to financial services for the poor and low-income beneficiaries (Abdul Razak, Donkoh and Ansah 2015) and includes micro-credit, micro-insurance and micro-savings (Adu-Okoree 2012). Studies (e.g. Abdul Razak, Donkoh and Ansah 2015; Adu-Okoree 2012; Siddique 2010) have shown the effectiveness of microfinance as a poverty eradication strategy in peri-urban areas. In the peri-urban areas of nine districts of Pakistan, for instance, NGOs have made successful efforts to sustainably reduce poverty by providing affordable micro-credit facilities (Siddique 2010). According to Benzies Isaac Adu-Okoree (2012), micro-credit improved living standards in ten communities in Ashaiman Municipality (Ghana) peri-urban areas. Another study in Ghana by Roslida Abdul-Razak, Samuel Donkoh and Isaac Ansah (2015) revealed that microfinance is an important building block in the empowerment of peri-urban women. However, its effectiveness was affected by the lack of inclusiveness, as it only targeted women considered economically deprived and deserving.

**Irrigation Cooperative**, which is one of the poverty eradication strategies being implemented in Zimbabwe's peri-urban areas by NGOs such as Plan International. Here, irrigation cooperatives receive irrigation assistance in the form of water pumps, pipes and related accessories. As Livinia Binala (2016) points out, irrigation cooperatives have proved to be effective as a poverty alleviation strategy since they promote self-reliance, as is seen in the case in Epworth, a peri-urban area of Harare, Zimbabwe.

**Co-production of services:** many peri-urban inhabitants are “water poor” as they lack access to sufficient water and adequate sanitation facilities to meet

their needs (Allen, Davila and Hofmann 2006). Conventional models for water and sanitation service provision, based on monopolistic and centralized public and/or private sector solutions, have proven to have their shortcomings (Moretto et al. 2018). Co-production has been adopted as a water poverty eradication strategy in several peri-urban areas namely Hanoi (Vietnam), Cochabamba (Bolivia), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) (Faldi et al. 2021; Allen et al. 2017; Allen, Davila and Hofmann 2006). Where Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) is concerned, service co-production involves decentralized community-based systems operated through regular long-term collaboration between state actors and communities during some or all the stages of the service provision cycle (Faldi et al. 2021).

Several studies (Faldi et al. 2021; Moretto et al. 2018; Allen et al. 2017; Allen 2010) have shown the effectiveness of co-production as a strategy for eradicating water poverty in peri-urban areas. As a result, interest in service co-production has recently increased, and it is now recognized as a way to ensure sustainable access to WSS services, especially for the poorest inhabitants (Faldi et al. 2021). According to Allen (2010), co-production allows users and communities to supplement government provision in instances where a particular service is not reaching certain groups or individuals. The co-production strategy improves the equity and efficiency of provision while contributing to citizen empowerment and local government effectiveness (Faldi et al. 2021; Moretto et al. 2018).

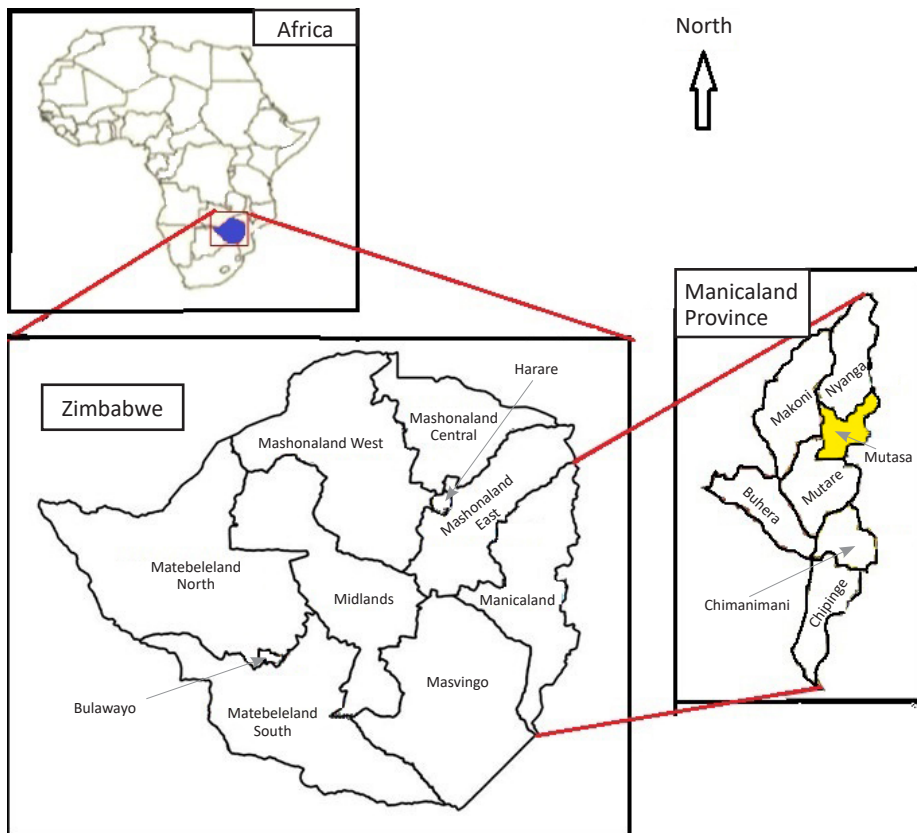
In Dar es Salaam peri-urban area, co-production of WSS involves shared water networks funded by the local authority and operated by water user associations, and decentralized wastewater systems, owned by the local authority and operated by private intermediaries (Faldi et al. 2021). This arrangement shows that the public sector is taking a pragmatic approach to engage with poor communities in some form of cooperation to solve existing water and sanitation problems (Allen et al. 2017). However, the sustainability of this intervention is adversely affected by limited public sector involvement, which focuses mainly on the initial stages of setting up public facilities, which are then handed over to local communities to operate (Allen et al. 2017).

### 3. Study Area and Methods

Zimbabwe is a low-income country in Southern Africa. In 2020, it had a Gross Domestic Product of United States Dollars 1 214.50 per capita (World Bank 2022). According to the 2017 estimates, the country has a total population of 13.5 million (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency 2019). The study area, Mutasa South peri-urban, is situated in the eastern part of Zimbabwe (Figure 1), on the fringes

of Mutare City, the country's third largest city. Most people in Mutasa South peri-urban are involved in artisanal mining and farming. The choice of Mutasa South peri-urban as a study area was influenced by two factors. Firstly, the researchers had been well exposed to poverty realities and livelihood activities in the area. Secondly, researchers are familiar with the organisations involved in poverty-reduction efforts in the area, and one of the researchers has been directly involved in some of the poverty reduction measures implemented in the area.

The study adopted the exploratory method. This was influenced by the dearth of knowledge on the impact of poverty reduction programmes in peri-urban areas of Zimbabwe. Thus, the exploratory method was deemed appropriate for the study



**Figure 1.** Location of the study area  
**Rysunek 1.** Lokalizacja obszaru badań

Source: own study.

Źródło: opracowanie własne.



since it is used, as Chris Gratton and Ian Jones (2010) argue, for studies that examine a phenomenon with little or no prior knowledge available. The exploratory method is, moreover, flexible in that it allows features of a subject under study to be considered as they appear (McNabb 2010). Accordingly, the exploratory method was considered suitable for the study, which sought to capture the respondents' varied perceptions, feelings and experiences regarding poverty and poverty reduction programmes in Mutasa South peri-urban.

Data was collected from two sources, namely residents of Mutasa South peri-urban and key informants. 45 residents were purposively selected for the study. In selecting the residents, the researchers made use of their in-depth knowledge of the characteristics of the inhabitants of the study area and their livelihood activities. In-depth interviews and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were used to collect data from residents. The study also purposively selected 5 key informants – 3 from the NGO sector and 2 from Mutasa Rural District Council. The study used semi-structured interviews to collect data from these key informants. From both sources, the study collected data on the nature of poverty in Mutasa south peri-urban, poverty reduction programmes and their effectiveness, and the factors adversely affecting poverty alleviation efforts in the study area.

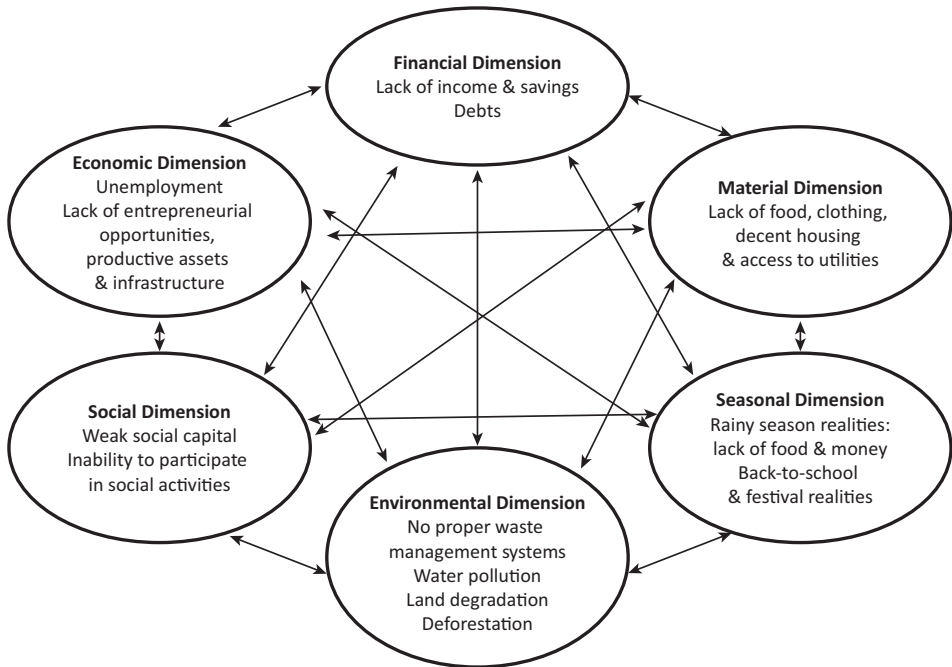
## 4. Results

As highlighted earlier, this study examines the effectiveness of poverty reduction measures based on the extent to which the measures address the multiple dimensions of poverty. This section therefore firstly examines the dimensions of poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban. It then analyses the effectiveness of the poverty reduction measures implemented in the area.

### 4.1. The dimensions of poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban area

As the study found, the area experiences multiple dimensions of poverty, which are financial, economic, material, social, environmental and seasonal in nature (Figure 2). As shown by the double arrows in Figure 2, these dimensions interconnect and reinforce each other in a way that makes poverty complex. The dimensions are described in detail hereafter.

In the study area, **the financial dimension of poverty** is characterised by a lack of income and indebtedness. The lack of income is mainly attributable to the loss of jobs or unemployment and Zimbabwe's currency crisis. Most people in Mutasa South peri-urban used to be employed by mining companies in the area but lost their jobs due to downsizing (Key informants 1; Residents 1). As the study found,



**Figure 2.** The multidimensionality of poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban  
**Rysunek 2.** Wielowymiarowość ubóstwa na przedmieściach Mutasa South

Source: own study.

Źródło: opracowanie własne.

those who were fortunate enough to keep their jobs have experienced a significant drop in income. Resident 2, for example, said: “as a result of the downsizing of our company, I am now earning USD 25 per month from USD 500.” By implication, Resident 2 earns USD 0.83 a day, which is below the international poverty line of USD 1.90 a day. Some residents are formally employed or have other income sources, but the value of their salaries or income has been eroded by the country’s currency crisis, which has caused goods and services to be charged in United States Dollars or local currency equivalent, within an unstable exchange rate environment (Key informants 2; Resident 1, 4, 15, 27). Due to lack of income, some residents borrow money from registered and unregistered money lenders and struggle to pay it back (Key informants 3; Resident 6, 7).

**Economic dimension of poverty**, in the form of lack of productive resources, infrastructure, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, was also noted in the Mutasa South peri-urban area. The area lacks employment and formal entrepreneurial opportunities such that many residents resort to

precarious livelihood opportunities such as illegal mining, vending, piecemeal jobs and prostitution (Key informants 2; Resident 4, 8, 9). Unemployment was worsened by the retrenchment carried out primarily by mining companies in the area (Resident 9). The restrictive economic environment is also another form of economic poverty found in the study area. The monetary crisis currently ravaging the country has not spared people in Mutasa South peri-urban. The use of the three-tier pricing system, which is comprised of Zimbabwe dollar banknotes, electronic money and the United States Dollars, has exacerbated the economic deprivation of people in Mutasa South peri-urban. It is therefore difficult to generate income in this environment (Key informants 3; Resident 3, 5, 10).

**Material dimension of poverty:** the study found that poor people in Mutasa South peri-urban lack food, clothing, decent housing and access to utilities (Resident 1, 26, 30, 45). It noted that poor people lack basic needs such as food, utilities and decent housing. With regard to the lack of decent housing, Resident 11 said: “most people in this area lack financial resources; hence, they cannot afford stands and building decent houses. That is why this area looks like a shanty settlement.” In the same vein, Resident 12 stated: “our housing condition is in a sorry state, most of the houses, as you can see, are of poor conditions as they are built using substandard materials like farm bricks and boards offcuts.”

**Social dimension of poverty**, as defined earlier, refers to a lack of social capital, and the inability to participate in social activities and take up responsibilities that are important in society. Social capital in Mutasa South peri-urban is weak due to the urban-like culture and divisions caused by different political affiliations (Resident 13, 16, 30). Lack of education is another form of social poverty in the area. The area has school dropouts and people with a low level of education (Resident 10, 15, 17). Social poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban was also noted as ill-health associated with typhoid, malaria and HIV/AIDS (Resident 8, 18, 20, 44).

**Environmental dimension of poverty** is also a common dimension of poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban. The living environment lacks conditions for human habitation, as there is no proper waste management system in place. Furthermore, water pollution, land degradation and deforestation are rampant in the area, primarily due to illegal mining activities (Key informant 2, 3; Resident 13, 20, 31). Some people in the area are forced by poverty to cut down trees for firewood for personal use and sale (Key informant 3). Thus, conditions of poverty have a great impact on the natural environment.

**Seasonal dimension of poverty:** poor people in the study area also experience seasonal realities. The most common realities reported were those associated with the rainy, festive, and back-to-school seasons. The respondents indicated that the rainy season is associated with realities such as lack of income, indebtedness and shortage

of food (Resident 3, 6, 20). The festive season, a celebration of the Christmas Holiday, is also a challenging time for some poor people in the study area, as they struggle to meet the expenses – such as buying new clothes and food – associated with this season (Resident 6, 14, 32). Back-to-school realities experienced in the study area include financial stresses associated with the lack of money for school fees, uniforms and stationaries (Resident 10, 22, 28).

#### 4.2. The Nature and Effectiveness of Poverty Reduction Measures

In a bid to address poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban, governmental and non-governmental organisations have implemented food aid, education, cash transfer, microfinance, health and nutrition as well as farming inputs programmes. The poverty dimensions addressed, or being addressed, by these programmes are examined hereunder. An effective poverty measure is considered as that addresses the multiple poverty dimensions found in Mutasa South peri-urban.

**Food aid** for poor and vulnerable groups – being implemented by different NGOs in the form of rice, mealie meal and cooking oil, among other basic food items – has positively impacted poverty reduction in Mutasa South peri-urban area. Key informant 1, for example, revealed that “before food aid, most families could go for a day with a single meal; food aid has dramatically increased the number of meals in a day for many families.” Food aid has also been of enormous help during the hungry season (Resident 12, 22, 34). However, it rarely covers all poor and vulnerable households, especially during the hungry season (Key informant 3). Moreover, as this study noted, food aid has created a dependency syndrome among the people in Mutasa South peri-urban area.

**Education assistance** is another poverty reduction intervention being implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe and NGOs in Mutasa South peri-urban. Through the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) programme, the government pays school fees for children from poor and vulnerable children (Key informant 2, 4; Resident 4, 16, 17). NGOs are assisting in the form of school fees and meals (Key informant 3, 5). More children from poor households attend school due to the availability of education assistance (Key informant 3). In fact, the cases of school dropouts in Mutasa South peri-urban have decreased (Key informant 1, 2). However, the BEAM programme is facing challenges nationwide, such as the late disbursement of funds and policy inconsistency, which are likely to affect the programme’s effectiveness in addressing poverty, especially in the future (Mutasa 2015).

**Cash transfer** is another poverty reduction measure implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe and NGOs in Mutasa South peri-urban,

and the beneficiaries of the programme use the money for income-generating projects, such as poultry projects as well as buying and selling consumer goods (Key informant 1, 3; Resident 10, 15, 26). However, this study found cash transfer to be less effective in addressing poverty in the area. Due to corruption, a few people in the area have benefitted from the programme (Resident 10, 15, 45). Moreover, savings made and employment created through this programme have not been meaningful (Key informant 3).

**Microfinance:** some NGOs in the Mutasa South peri-urban area are giving loans to poor and vulnerable people, particularly the youth, for projects that could increase household income and address unemployment (Key informant 1, 2, 3; Residents 25, 32, 40). According to Key informant 3, microfinance has lifted beneficiaries out of debt traps and improved livelihoods in the area. As Residents 1, 14, 18 and 39 reported, microfinance has improved their income level and social status. However, microfinance programmes have excluded some of the poor and vulnerable people in the area. Such programmes demanded collateral security and some of the poor people in the Mutasa South peri-urban area, a requirement that could not meet (Resident 18, 25, 32). Moreover, the programmes have been adversely affected by undisciplined beneficiaries and weak administration (Key informant 3).

**Farming inputs and training:** some poor and vulnerable households in the area have received seeds, fertilizers and equipment as well as training on best farming practices from the government and NGOs (Key informant 3, 4, 5; Resident 7, 29, 41). This form of assistance was provided in order to improve food security and reduce households' dependency on food aid (Key informant 3, 4). According to the Key informants, the farming intervention has, by and large, achieved its intended objectives in terms of improved farming knowledge and food security, as well as decreased food aid dependency among the interventions' beneficiaries.

**Health and nutrition programmes** are other forms of poverty alleviation being implemented in the Mutasa South peri-urban area. These programmes, which governmental and non-governmental organisations are also implementing, cover the construction of health facilities, the provision of health services and the provision of nutritional supplements to pregnant and lactating mothers and under-five children (Key informant 2, 4, 5; Resident 5, 16, 28, 37). According to Key informant 5, the health programmes have improved access to health facilities and services in the area. The provision of nutritional supplements has significantly reduced the mortality of newborns and those under five (Key informant 2, 4).

## 5. Discussion and Recommendations

The study found that Mutasa South peri-urban experience multiple dimensions of poverty. This observation affirms the claims by Robert Chambers (2012) and Blessing Gweshengwe and Noor Hassan (2020) that poverty, in any context, is multidimensional. The multidimensionality of poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban is not unique. In Gweshengwe and Jeofrey Matai's (2022) study of the quality of life in Domboshava peri-urban (an area on the fringes of Harare City), people who reported a low level of quality of life experienced similar forms of deprivations. Furthermore, Hungwe (2014) and Maoneni (2014) have reported similar findings in their study of peri-urbanisation and livelihoods in Zimbabwe. Therefore, poor people in the peri-urban areas of Zimbabwe experience multiple dimensions of poverty, all of which deserve the attention of welfare agencies.

Both governmental and non-governmental welfare agencies are implementing various poverty eradication measures in Mutasa South peri-urban area, including food aid, education assistance, cash transfer, microfinance, and farming and health programmes. The study found that programmes have mixed results as far as addressing multiple dimensions of poverty is concerned. According to Kirwan and McMillan (2007), food aid is indispensable for poverty reduction. This observation holds in our study, where food aid contributed significantly to a reduction in material and financial poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban. The positive effect of food aid on poverty reduction was also observed in Ethiopia by Mulubrhan Amare Reda and Germán Calfat (2020), where food aid alleviated the impact of shocks and liquidity constraints, which fueled poverty within the country. Furthermore, education assistance is contributing enormously to reducing the incidence of school dropouts. This is a success, as per World Bank (2020) guidelines, which state that the success of education assistance programmes is reflected in the reduction of school dropouts, among other indicators. This is having a positive impact on the incidence of social and seasonal poverty within the study area. Moreover, microfinance programmes are reducing economic and financial poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban while farming programmes are improving food security and reducing aid-dependency. However, the poverty reduction measures overlook certain aspects of poverty's dimensions. Debts and lack of decent housing, improved infrastructure and access to markets are some of the poverty realities that are not accorded sufficient attention in efforts to eradicate poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban. Moreover, most of the programmes exclude deserving poor people. Some programmes are also failing to achieve their intended objectives. Although, for example, cash transfer

evidently reduces poverty since it improves savings and investments, creates employment and improves school attendance (Hagen-Zanker et al. 2016), this study found that due to corruption and low coverage, cash transfer programmes are failing to make a significant contribution to poverty reduction in Mutasa South peri-urban.

Based on the findings, the study offers two recommendations. Firstly, there is a need to improve the targeting and coverage of poverty eradication programmes. More poor people need to be included in the programmes where targeting is concerned. Moreover, programmes should have clear targeting criteria and indicators so as to avoid the admission of numerous ineligible people, and the continuous assessment of eligibility should be undertaken so that those undeserving beneficiaries who get into the programme are weeded out. The second recommendation relates to the cash transfer programmes. There is a need for follow-ups on the use of the money by the beneficiaries and to ensure that the money is used for the intended purpose. Furthermore, the amount for the cash transfers should be adequate for the basic needs of the beneficiaries.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study examined the nature of poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban and the poverty eradication measures implemented in the area. The study was carried out based on the realisation that the effectiveness of poverty eradication efforts implemented in peri-urban areas of Zimbabwe has not been subjected to scholarly examination. It was therefore necessary that this should be addressed given the persistence of poverty in the country and the country's intention to leave no one behind in achieving the SDG1.

As the study found, poverty in Mutasa South peri-urban area is multidimensional and complex. It is characterised by financial, economic, material, social, environmental and seasonal dimensions, which interconnect and reinforce each other. Addressing all these dimensions of poverty ensures the success of Zimbabwe's poverty eradication efforts. The dimensions of poverty evident in the study area are common in other peri-urban areas within the country. For peri-urban poverty reduction measures to be effective, they should address all the poverty dimensions.

Poverty reduction measures being implemented in the area include food aid, education assistance, cash transfer and microfinance. The measures have mixed results for poverty eradication. Although they cover all the dimensions of poverty, there are certain aspects of dimensions that are being overlooked. By way of example, debts under financial poverty, pollution and land degradation under environmental poverty and lack of decent housing and improved infrastructure

under material poverty are not fully addressed. Furthermore, most of the poverty eradication measures observed in the study have low coverage and many deserving poor people are excluded. To address these shortcomings, the study recommended improving the design of the programmes.

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## Skuteczność środków ograniczania ubóstwa na obszarach podmiejskich Zimbabwe na przykładzie regionu podmiejskiego Mutasa South

**Streszczenie:** Zagadnienie zawarte w pytaniu: „Jak skuteczne są środki walki z ubóstwem wdrażane w Zimbabwe?” nie było dotychczas poruszane w kontekście obszarów podmiejskich. Należałoby jednak je rozważyć, ponieważ kraj ten charakteryzuje wysoki wskaźnik ubóstwa, a jednocześnie władze i społeczeństwo Zimbabwe dążą do osiągnięcia Celu Zrównoważonego Rozwoju nr 1 z „Agendy 2030” ONZ nazwanego: „Koniec z ubóstwem”. Wykorzystując studium przypadku podmiejskiego regionu Mutasa South w Zimbabwe, niniejsze badanie miało na celu znalezienie odpowiedzi na postawione wyżej pytanie. Przyjęto metodologię eksploracyjną i zebrano dane od mieszkańców Mutasa South oraz od kluczowych informatorów z organizacji pozarządowych i Rady Okręgu Wiejskiego Mutasa. Z badania wynika, że ubóstwo przybiera tu różne formy. Środki ograniczania ubóstwa wdrażane na obszarze będącym przedmiotem badania obejmują pomoc żywnościową, edukacyjną i gotówkową, a także mikrofinansowanie i programy rolnicze. Skuteczność tych środków została zbadana na podstawie zakresu, w jakim programy obejmują wielorakie wymiary ubóstwa występujące w regionie Mutasa South. Jak stwierdzono, programy uwzględniają wszystkie wymiary ubóstwa, ale są też ich pewne aspekty, którym poświęca się mniej uwagi, stąd mają one tendencję do wykluczania niektórych ubogich z programów pomocowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** ubóstwo, strefy podmiejskie, jakość życia, ograniczanie ubóstwa, cele zrównoważonego rozwoju, Zimbabwe.