

# An Analysis of the Contribution of Financed Socio-Economic Projects to the Food Security at Household Level: The Masvingo Case

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## Abstract

*In most cases, food safety and security is measured at national level without much care given at grassroot level or at household level. A country can be food secure at national level but at household level it would be insecure, South Africa is an example. This is a clear indication that food safety and security is measured through production of commercial farmers who contribute to the national granary and therefore results in food security and in most cases exports, whilst at household level people would be starving. This research, aimed to analyse the contribution made at household level by financed socio-economic projects such as the dam constructions which results in irrigation schemes and or the rural electrification projects which results in electrically produced products in rural areas. Such projects, changes people's lives and in many cases there are no measurement techniques. Thus, the objectives of this research were to analyse and evaluate the contributions of financed socio-economic projects to the food security at household level. People active in socio-economic projects were interviewed and questionnaires were distributed to extension officers and data gathered was presented through tables and graphs. The research findings were that most people active in socio-economic projects lives improved lives and they never lack in terms of food safety and they are food secure because of the money they generate from these projects.*

*The researcher recommended that, financed socio-economic projects should incorporate everybody, not to select some people in most cases along political divide, living others outside. This creates different levels of lives in rural areas.*

**Key words:** Socio-economic, food security

## 1.0 Introduction

In rural agricultural projects in Zimbabwe, we have two types which are the non-financed seasonal rural subsistence farmers and we have financed perennial rural irrigation schemes farmers. These are what this research is working on. They are financed in terms of donor agency who build dams and lay out the whole scheme together with tools and implements. Often, these small, financed socio-economic rural agricultural projects changes lives. These projects are those that may be insignificant at international levels but at local levels, they make differences. The ripple benefits of such projects are far reaching with major statistical contributions to the national domestic product. These activities highly motivated this research to take place.

## 2.0 Background

Small and medium scale rural agricultural projects are gaining wide spread acceptance as viable drivers of economic growth. They have tremendous impact on rural employment generation. Agriculture's direct, private contributions to farm households are tangible, easy to understand and simple to quantify. Rural households produce and consume food, sell commodities to earn profits and find farm jobs for wages. Many of agriculture's direct contributions to non-farm households, to urban centres and even to the national treasury are also easy to recognize and measure. Like other economic sectors, agriculture produces export earnings and tax revenues for public spending needs. However, several of these enterprises demise is not fulfilling expectations due to poor management arising from weak accounting structures (Olatunji, 2013).

Micro and Small Agripreneurial Enterprises (MSAE) plays important role in the economic growth of a country. Moore, Petty, Palich and Longenecker (2008) assert that Micro, Small and Medium-sized agripreneurial enterprises play important roles in the economic growth and sustainable development of every nation considering that the majority of the population is in rural areas.

The sector contributes to overall economic growth in many other ways, including supplying raw materials to

agricultural-based local manufacturers. As farm incomes increase, households save more and spend more, stimulating growth and investment in other sectors. Incomes of urban households benefit from the long term trends in falling real food prices. Such positive direct and indirect cross-sector linkages are mediated via market channels, in particular through lower prices, labour migration and capital flows from agriculture.

With the current legal and regulatory framework in Zimbabwe and with the increase in number of the indigenous people owning their pieces of land, the problem of funding for this sector has decreased (Economic Survey 2006). The problem that might require emphases in research would be the management of the MSAEs. Efficient managing of these enterprises involves accounting, a practice which is highly dependent on the record keeping of the business transactions (Maseko and Manyani, 2011).

There is a range of these non-market mediated agricultural benefits, including indirect and direct linkages as well as externalities, from environmental services to food security and social viability benefits. Take food security, for example. We know that when children are consistently well fed, they miss fewer days of school and they have much better learning outcomes. When parents are well fed, they have more productive days at work, they are healthier, stronger and can earn more income.

Aside from the private, direct return to these households, (increased earnings and even more money to spend on health care, education, and productivity enhancing investments), families with higher levels of food security provide indirect, public benefits. The health, well being and income benefits that come with greater food security enable parents to be better mothers and fathers. Farm families are able to participate more in local organizations, contributing to a more stable and thriving rural community. These outcomes yield significant benefits to others, not the least of which is a better chance for prosperity, peace and stable institutions. These food security benefits contribute to society in ways that cannot be measured easily by economic growth. (Mukaila and Adeyami, 2011).

### **3.0 Objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

- 3.1 to identify small rural agricultural projects that contribute to household food security
- 3.2 to analyse the contribution made at household level by financed socio-economic projects

### **4.0 Methods/Methodology**

Due to the characteristic of this study, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were found suitable. Thus, a descriptive survey was used as a research design to support the quantitative and qualitative research methods.

#### **4.1 Population**

The population of this study was all the small to medium scale agricultural rural projects in Masvingo. There are many entities that are in this sector. These vary from formal small scale agricultural rural projects which are registered with the Agricultural Rural and Development Agency (ARDA) now under the Ministry of Agriculture, to informal small scale projects that are not even registered with the council. The actual number of small scale agricultural rural projects in Masvingo is not known. This is because these are people ranging from those who are in full-time irrigation schemes to those subsistence farmers who rely on natural rainfall to farm their lands or small wells to run their small vegetable or sugar cane gardens.

Every rural area is characteristic of these small agripreneurial projects. There are several notable irrigation schemes in Masvingo province which may total seven. Each irrigation scheme has approximately 50 households save for Mushandike which is the largest with approximately 500 households. Mushandike is one of the oldest and successful irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe. Its success story has been copied around the country. That is the reason why this study selected it as the target and accessible population for this study together with the Extension Officers working with the Scheme.

#### **4.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The total exact number of all the rural agricultural projects in Mushandike could not be precisely reached but statistics revealed that there are 500 families in the scheme. These families have been divided into 25 villages with 20 families/households in each village. The implementation of these small rural agricultural projects was divided into different phases with the first 20 families being allocated plots, followed by the other twenty until all the twenty five families have been allocated plots. This study purposively selected the first twenty families in the first village as its sample, together with two Extension Officers from Agriculture Rural Development Agency (ARDA).

### 4.3 Research Instruments

The research instruments for this study comprise the questionnaires to the Extension Officers and interviews to the Villagers.

#### 4.3.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were found to be appropriate in soliciting information from the Extension Officers because they are the one who can understand what it says and they have time to sit and fill it..

#### 4.3.2 Interviews

The villagers in village 1 are very busy people. Most of their time is spent in the field either preparing the land or harvesting. Their hectarage allows them to plant on one side whilst harvesting on the other in a rotational manner. Thus, the interview was found appropriate because the researcher would be busy in the field helping the farmers whilst learning and asking questions in a participative interview.

#### 4.3.3 Data Presentation Procedures

The simple Microsoft Excel Computer package was used to tabulate frequency tables and graphs used to present the data that was collected from the field.

## 5.0 Results/Findings

### Small rural agricultural projects that contribute to food safety and security

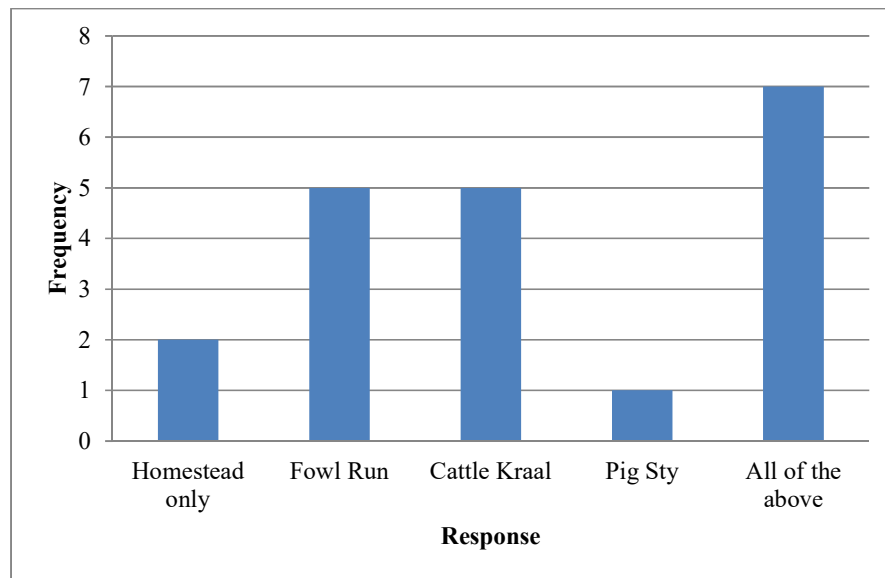
**Question 1:** *How many are you at your plot?*

**Table 1** Number of people in a family

Number of People	Frequency of Homesteads	Percentage (%)
0 – 5 members	1	5
6 – 10 members	3	15
11 – 15 members	6	30
16-20 members	3	15
21 ++ members	7	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 above shows that 7 (35%) families had more than 21 family members, 6(30%) families indicated that they had between 11 and 15 members, 3 (15%) indicated that they had between 16 and 20 members while the other 3 families indicated that they had 6 to 10 members and only one family indicated that they had upto 5 members. This may mean that other large families are employing several families who will be staying at one household.

**Question 2: What is the composition of your homestead?**



**Figure 1 Composition of homestead**

Fig 1 above shows that 7 (35%) families indicated that they had a homestead, fowl run, cattle kraal, pig sty and other agricultural projects running concurrently with the farming activities which is the major project. Five (25%) families have only fowl runs and the other five (25%) families indicated that they had only cattle.

**Small Agricultural Projects at one homestead**

**Question 3: What other agricultural projects are you undertaking than farming?**

**Table 2 Other agricultural projects than farming**

Small Project	Frequency	Percentage
Vegetable garden at home	10	50
Poultry Production	3	15
Cattle Fattening	4	20
Pig Production	2	10
Beekeeping	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 above shows that 10 families indicated that they have small vegetable gardens at home, 4 (20%) indicated that they do cattle fattening, 3 families indicated that they do poultry as a business, 2 (10%) indicated that they do pigs and only 1 family keeps bees..

**Question 4:** *What benefits do you get from these projects?*

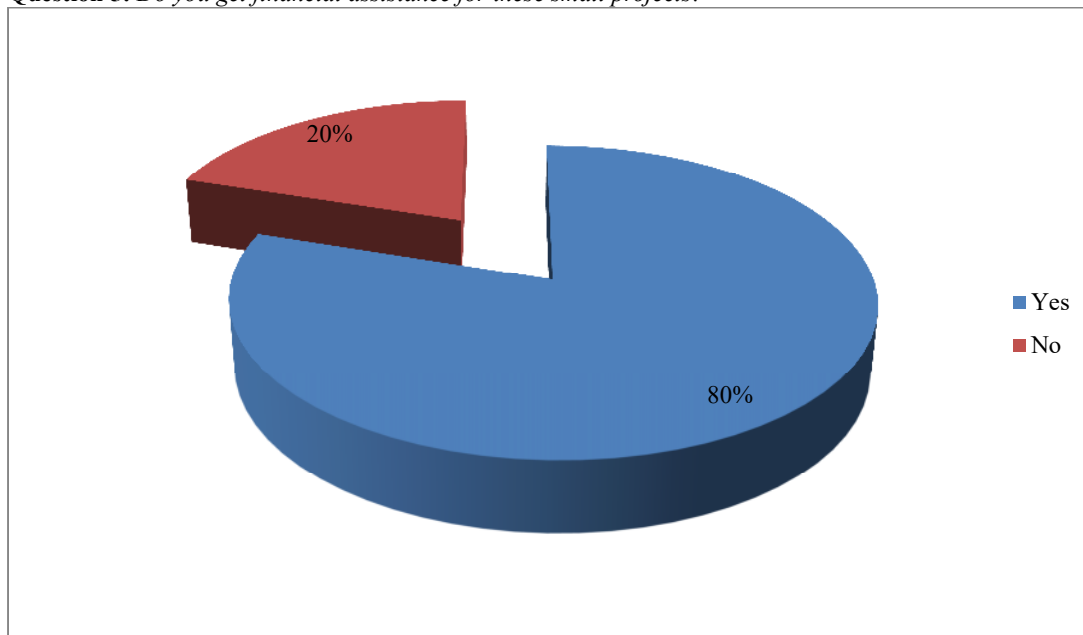
**Table 3** Benefits from small projects

Benefits	Frequency	Percentage
Household food security	12	60
Extra Income	3	15
Soil Conservation	1	5
Bio-diversity	1	5
Fees payments	3	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 above shows that 12 (60%) households benefits from food security, 3 families from extra income while the other three from fees payment, one indicated biodiversity and the other soil conservation.

**Small Agricultural Projects Contribution at household level**

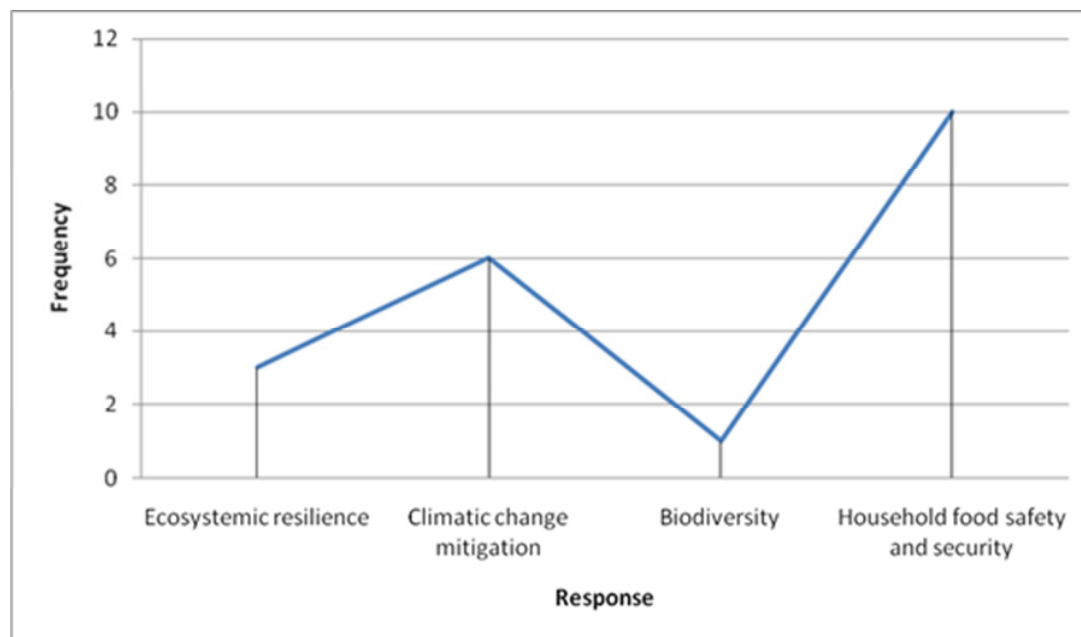
**Question 5:** *Do you get financial assistance for these small projects?*



**Figure 2** Financial assistance

Figure 2 above shows that 80% of the twenty participant families indicated that they borrow money to finance the socio-economic projects while 20% indicated that they do not borrow, they rely on savings.

**Question 6: What specifically do they help you at your household?**



**Figure 3 Help at household level**

Fig 3 above shows that 10 (50%) families indicated that the projects help them for household food security while 6 (35%) families indicated that the irrigation scheme is helpful since the climatic changes leads to droughts and unreliable rainfall patterns.

## 6.0 Conclusion (s)

- 6.1 From the research findings, the researchers concluded that there are families ranging from five family members to more than 21 who rely on these small agricultural projects for sustenance.
- 6.2 The researchers also concluded that these socio-economic projects are handy during droughts and also generate incomes for sustenance but above all they guarantee food safety and food security.

## 7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Based on the research findings and conclusions above, the researchers recommends that there should be proper bookkeeping and accounting systems to guarantee employment created.
- 7.2 The researchers also recommend that there should be provision of proper extension services that promote implementation of these small agricultural projects.
- 7.3 The researchers also recommends that there should be systems regulating amount for household use and consumption and amounts for selling, otherwise farmers just sell everything because of money.

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