DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Mulwayini Mundau hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made with full references, and it has not previously been submitted to any university or institution of higher learning for any qualification or certificate.

Signed

Date 15/04/2013
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Hope, my daughter Esther and Joel my son.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere acknowledgement goes first to the Almighty God the Creator, who gave me strength and inspiration throughout the study period, without Him this work would not have been possible. My humble appreciation also goes to Professor P. Tangwe Tanga, who was a guide, father and a support system throughout the period of study; his corrections, advice and availability were always enlightenment to me.

My acknowledgement cannot go without noting my wife Hope, Esther my daughter and Joel my son; your presence and support were always encouraging. Special thanks to my mom Elizabeth and Fidelis my dad, for all your unwavering support you gave me up until this far; your role in my life is incomparable.

I would also like to thank the University of Fort Hare and more specifically the department of Social work/ Social development for giving me such an opportunity to express my academic potential.

To my brother, friend and colleague Tatenda Manomano I say thank you so much; things would have never been so good without your unfailing love and support.
ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to carry out an investigation into the impact of donor-funded community empowerment projects on poverty alleviation. The data for this study were from the use of triangulation method of data collection which enhanced the assessment of the impact of donor funded community empowerment projects on poverty alleviation with specific focus on selected projects in the Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe. The findings of the study show the need for adoption of empowerment inclined practices by the local NGOs. There is need for community involvement in decision making, project ownership, and clear lines of communication with the NGOs, among others. However the findings also show the strength in linking project members with relevant institutions, and training, in order to ensure sustainability of community projects in ensuring community empowerment towards poverty eradication.
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<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREX</td>
<td>Agricultural Extension Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDWs</td>
<td>Community Development Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>COSATU</td>
<td>Congress of South African Trade Unions</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTDT</td>
<td>Community Technology Development Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>District Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBSA</td>
<td>Development Bank of South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRB</td>
<td>Deutche Research Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEDCs</td>
<td>Less Economically Developed Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRP</td>
<td>Land Reform Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCT</td>
<td>Malilangwe Conservation Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASW</td>
<td>National Association for Social Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPOs</td>
<td>Non-Profit Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEACE</td>
<td>Planning, Education, Agriculture, Community and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRAISES</td>
<td>Preparation, Assessment, Implementation, Systematic Evaluation and Sustainment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVO Act</td>
<td>Private and Voluntary Organisations’ Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACSSP</td>
<td>South African Council for Social Service Professions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>SANRAL</td>
<td>South African National Road Agency Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWC</td>
<td>Third World Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO Act</td>
<td>Welfare Organisations’ Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZCTU</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study by giving the background information of the study, the research problem, aim and objectives. Research questions and the importance or significance of the study to the community at large are also highlighted in order to show the impact of donor funded community empowerment. The chapter also entails the key terms that are used in the research and the organisation of the study into different chapters. The main purpose of the chapter is therefore to give a general overview or background of the study directed towards assessing the impact of donor funded community empowerment project aimed at poverty alleviation.

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Development in developing countries is highly characterised by immense donor funding of community based projects by local and international organisations due to high levels of poverty. According to Kabanda (2011), citizens grow poor and poorer, especially in the Third World Countries (TWC) with alarming scarcity of goods and lack of sufficient provision of services. This leads to the rise of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) becoming partners in development work. This is all done in an endeavour to empower the rural communities in order to be able to confront the adverse effects of poverty on their own since it is their greatest challenge.
Zimbabwe as one of the countries in the developing world has not been exempted from this scenario. The country has been characterised by a massive economic and political decline especially from around the year 2000. According to Clemens and Moss (2005), the purchasing power of the average Zimbabwean in 2005 had fallen back to the same level as in 1953 and for people in extreme poverty, a collapse like this translates directly into sickness and death. The causes have been attributed to a number of factors; according to Clements and Moss (2005), in many ways it seems obvious that Zimbabwe’s current economic difficulties are linked to specific government policy decisions. Among these are policies like the Land Reform Program (LRP) of 2000 and the government’s urban slum demolition drive. The government’s urban slum demolition drive in 2005 code named Operation Murambatsvina resulted in a negative impact on the economy. The land reform program saw the forceful removal of almost all the white farmers who were the main producers of the agriculturally based economy. The country was reduced from being the bread basket of Southern Africa to a begging basket. Coltart (2008) asserts that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined by about 43 % between 2000 and 2007, not surprisingly; every sector of the formerly diverse Zimbabwean economy was affected.

The country was further drawn into a political and economic crisis that almost brought the economy to its knees in 2008. According to Mugari cited in Coltart (2008:20), Zimbabwe’s economy was in a free fall and according to official government figures inflation was exceeding eight thousand percent (8, 000 %) a year. Respected economists believed that inflation was probably in excess of 150,000 % a year and the country with the next-highest inflation rate, Iraq, had a rate
of 53 % a year, which shows how serious the situation was. However the
government claims that the crisis began with the imposition of targeted sanctions on
selected members of the former government that ended with the formation of the
Government of National Unit (GNU) in 2009 and erratic rainfall patterns leading to
droughts (Clemens and Moss, 2005).

The political and economic downturn in Zimbabwe led to a huge humanitarian need
and this in turn opened the way for a number of local and international donor
organisations to embark on different programs and projects in order to avert the
negative effects of poverty on the rural populace. Among the local donor
organisations are Malilangwe Conservation Trust, CTDT, LEAP, SAFIRE, CARITAS,
among others. According to Nikkhah and Redzuan (2010), NGOs have become
increasingly important agents of the development process in the countries of the
South, in all of their areas of work such as long term development, relief policy
formation and advocacy. Chiredzi district was not spared with this development and
is located in the South Eastern low veld of Zimbabwe characterised by erratic rainfall
patterns and droughts. The impact of these NGOs in empowering communities to be
able to face the effects of poverty needs a closer assessment in order to find out
whether they are bringing the desired change in community empowerment. Tanga
and Fonchingong (2009), allude to the need for intervention by international and
local NGOs in the backdrop of an economic downturn and the declining role of the
state as a major development agent. The authors are of the impression that NGOs
can fill gaps by reinforcing and strengthening the capacities of communities in order
to fully participate in their own development. This is the case applicable to the
Zimbabwean situation that ended up calling for the intervention by NGOs in order to assist the communities in the fight against poverty eradication.

This study therefore seeks to unravel the impact of community empowerment that is brought by local donor organisations through rural community based projects in order to alleviate poverty. In order to achieve this, the study will discuss in detail the problem statement, give a preliminary review of related literature, research question, objectives, theoretical framework, significance of the study, and the research design and methodology to be used together with the ethical considerations for social work research and profession.

1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The efforts of donor organisations in empowering rural communities through projects that are meant to alleviate poverty are to a greater extent proving to be unfruitful. The projects are either left uncompleted and thus cannot continue once they are left in the hands of the community and also people's livelihoods are showing no improvement despite the efforts put in place. It is out of this light that some donor funded projects that are meant to empower communities in order to alleviate poverty are not really achieving their intended goals and objectives. There seems to be a missing link between the concept ‘community empowerment’ and the formulation and implementation of these projects since the projects would sometimes show signs of lacking a sustainable nature. Community empowerment was loosely viewed by Bartle (2007) as to increase the ability or capacity of a community to do things for itself. The unsustainable nature of the projects and their abandonment incapacitates the communities in their fight against poverty. This has led to poverty, starvation,
continuation of unemployment levels to go unabated with people crossing over to neighbouring South Africa due to the inability to fend for themselves despite the efforts put in place. It was therefore of paramount importance to have an investigation into the role played by local donor NGOs in empowering communities through poverty alleviation projects.

1.4. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of donor-funded community empowerment projects on poverty alleviation with the following specific objectives:

- To establish whether donor initiatives of empowering communities through projects are implemented within the empowerment paradigm.
- To assess the level of community participation and localisation of decision-making in the donor-funded projects within the communities.
- To establish the impact of community empowerment interventions by local organisations towards poverty alleviation
- To investigate through a literature study the issues regarding empowerment and community empowerment programs.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions for this study were as follows:

- How are donor-funded community empowerment initiatives implemented?
- What role and level of involvement does the community have in these projects?
- What is the impact of donor funded projects in empowering communities in order to alleviate poverty?
• What are the issues that could be attributed to the failure in effectively dealing with community empowerment through donor funded projects?

1.6. Significance of the study

This study was of significance in that it will lead to a demystification of the link between donor-funded rural community projects and the concept of community empowerment in community development. This will lead to an exposition of the most probable ways and best practices of community empowerment through donor funding of projects in order to alleviate poverty for the benefit of communities and community developers like NGOs.

The study’s findings and recommendations may also lead to formulation of informed policies in the field of community development through donor engagement. The formulated policies will be speaking to the empowerment of rural communities through donor funded projects in order to alleviate poverty. This will be necessitated by the findings of the study giving a highlight of the strength and loopholes of donor organisations and community engagement through projects in order to foster empowerment. This will be of benefit to development practitioners and the communities at large for it will contribute immensely to the knowledge base of community development and can therefore be used as a point of reference.

1.7. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

This part of the study defines the main concepts that were mainly used throughout the study. For the purpose of consistency, the researcher adopted operational definitions for the study.
1.7.1. Impact

The concept impact was defined by Yukl and Becker (2006) as the degree to which behaviour is seen as “making difference” in terms of accomplishing the purpose of the task that is producing intended effects in one’s task environment. It is of uttermost importance to realise that an impact assessment can either be positive or negative and the measurement can be both quantitative and qualitative in nature as this research study seeks to establish.

1.7.2. Empowerment

Empowerment is a widely contested multi-disciplinary field with many scholars viewing it from different angles depending on the field of study. According Aslop, Bertelsen and Holland (2006:1), “it is the process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes”. In doing so, people will gain the ability to achieve their highest personal collective aspirations and goals. For the purpose of this study this is the definition that shall be applied.

1.7.3. Community

There are many definitions of the concept “community” and these have also given problems on its demarcation depending on the focus of each discipline. This study will adopt the definition given by Weyers (1999) citing Ferrinho (1981) who defines a community as a social system which originates (system theory) when a population of individuals (demographics) localised in a specific geographic area (geography) establishes and utilises structures and relationships to deal with impediment (social
work, economy and political sciences) and at the same time develops a sense of communal thinking, feelings and activities (psychology and sociology).

1.7.4. Community Empowerment

According to Craig and Mayo (1995: 37) citing Wallerstein and Bernstein (1994), the term empowerment means “a social action process in which individuals and groups act to gain mastery over their lives in the context of changing their social and political environment”. The authors further cite the work of Paulo Frere referring to community empowerment as involving a participatory educational process in which people are not just the recipients of political, educational or health care projects but they become active participants in naming their problems and proposing solutions. This is the definition of community empowerment that shall be applied throughout the study.

1.7.5. Poverty alleviation

The concept “poverty alleviation” is conjoining of two words “poverty” and “alleviation”. The concept is multidimensional, hence given different definitions from different approaches like monetary, capability, social exclusion and participatory. According to Laderchi, Saith and Stewart (2003), a clearer and more transparent definition of poverty states it as an essential prerequisite of any development policy that puts poverty reduction at its centre. According to Cox and Pawar 2006, poverty represents the absence of some basic capabilities to function, a person lacking the opportunity to achieve some minimally acceptable level of these functions. This
definition is more inclined to the capability approach to poverty alleviation and is the one that shall be used for the purpose of the study.

1.8. ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This dissertation is made up of five chapters and these are as follows:

**Chapter One: Introduction**

Chapter one is the general overview of the study and it outlines the introduction, research problem and research questions, research aims and objectives, significance of the study, and the organisation of the dissertation that was adopted.

**Chapter Two: Review of Literature**

This chapter is the Literature review and it focuses on the review of related literature and this will include discussion of the concept of community empowerment, the theoretical perspectives of community empowerment among others.

**Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

In this chapter, the outline of the research design and methodology used in the research are described. This includes the research design entailing populations, the sample and sampling techniques, data collection methods and the data analysis techniques used in the study. This part of the research also includes a pilot study of the research that was conducted in order to test the validity and reliability of data collection tools.

**Chapter Four: Presentation, analysis and discussion of findings**

Chapter four focuses on the discussions, presentation of findings and analysis of collected data.
Chapter Five: Summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

In this chapter, the focus is on the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

1.9. SUMMARY

The chapter discussed the general overview of the study with the focus on highlighting the research problem, its aims and objectives and the significance of the study. It also focused on the appropriate methodology used for the study. The following chapter will focus on literature review discussing community empowerment in detail and issues that pertain to donor funding.
CHAPTER 2

DONOR-FUNDED COMMUNITY PROJECTS ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the research study is a built-up to the general overview of the study that was given in the first chapter and will focus on the review of literature that is related to the study. According to Fouché and Delport (2005), literature review is aimed at contributing towards a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified. In this case the identified problem is the failure of donor initiated projects to achieve the intended goals as in empowering communities in order to alleviate poverty. For the purpose of this study the literature review will focus on discussing the theoretical framework that informs community empowerment, the discussion of the concept “empowerment” in detail showing its emergence, main elements, its process and the theoretical perspectives that underpin it. The second part of the study will focus on the Non-Governmental organisations and the role they play, an overview of NGOs’ operations in Zimbabwe, effectiveness of donor funding through NGOs and the last part consisting of the community empowerment through donor funding. This will go a long way in the quest to establish the impact of donor funded community empowerment projects that are aimed at alleviating poverty.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to De Vos (2005), the nature of the conceptual framework is determined by the function that the framework has to accomplish. In this study the research will use a conceptual framework which fulfils a classificatory function but with its basic
function being discovering or 'exposing' certain relationships between concepts. This study therefore aims to give an exposition of the impact of community empowerment that is donor initiated and funded through projects that are meant to alleviate poverty and the conceptual framework to be used is the empowerment approach.

2.2.1. Empowerment model

The empowerment conceptual model that will be used in this study is the one designed by Lee (2001:30). The reason behind this choice of the model is that it focuses on an integrated approach to social work practice. This is also echoed by Lee who describes this empowerment model as “an integrated method of social work practice driven by unified personal, political construct and a commitment to the unleashing of human potentialities towards the end of building a beloved community where justice is the rule”. There are different forms of justice that a community may be favoured with and this may be economic, social or political justice. This model looks at professional purpose, value base, knowledge base and the method of empowerment as its main tenets.

a. Professional purpose

Professional purpose is one of the tenets of empowerment approach and is “based on a dual simultaneous concern for people and environments: to assist people who experience poverty and oppression in their efforts to empower themselves to their adaptive potentials” Lee (2001:45). The profession of social work is a critical source of sanction for social work practise. There are guidelines of educational requirements, ethical standards and registration with a professional body to foster accountability on one. Community workers should put this purpose in practice
through ensuring professionalism in service delivery, respect of self-determination and dignity of the community members.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is a professional body that gives sanction to practice in promoting standards of service delivery. In the South African context the South African Council for Social Service Profession (SACSSP) provides guidelines to practice, defines and promotes standards and content for social work education and practise in South Africa. This therefore implies that any empowerment exercise must bear in mind or realise the importance of professional purpose in the service rendering.

b. Value base

Value base is another tenet for empowerment approach and is viewed as preference for working with people who are poor, oppressed, and stigmatized to strengthen individual adaptive potentials and promote structural change through individual and collective action (Lee, 2001:46). The author further notes that values and ideology are inherent parts of any practice approach or theoretical base; hence they cannot be omitted in any empowerment drive. Ethical considerations are of paramount importance in maintaining a positive relationship between the practitioners and the community; everything must be based on values of practice. According to Pearce (1996), for social work practise to work with a dual mandate of delivering care while exercising control, individual practitioners must accommodate central social work values to guide their professional judgement.
According to Lee, the empowerment approach fills the gap of value base by placing a priority on practise with people who face oppression. Practise with people who face oppression directly implies that there is no violation of the ethic of impartiality. This therefore implies that clients must be served with no consideration of colour, class, gender, stigma or any form of differentiation. This tenet puts the responsibility upon each and every practitioner to put the oppressed or beneficiaries of the empowerment drive as the main priority.

c. **Knowledge base**

Knowledge base and theoretical foundation is concerned with theory and concepts about people: environment transactions in situations of oppression. According to Lee (2001:49) “the empowerment approach assists people who experience oppression in empowering themselves on three interrelated levels: the personal, the interpersonal and the political level” with each having its generic knowledge. This includes elements like what the author refers to as the multifocal vision of empowerment; history of oppression, ecological view and the ethclass perspective. The ethclass perspective focuses on the sharpening of our knowledge about the realities of racism and classes and their interplay. The other focal vision of empowerment is the feminist perspective which highlights the particular oppression of women and critical perspective, which is needed to critique all forms of oppression and develop strategies that link individuals and social change.

Weyers (1999) is of the idea that knowledge about the people to whom the work will be done is a necessary ingredient of community work and community development. The community workers or NGOs must have enough knowledge of all related levels
of intervention in community work. This will go a long way in enabling them to address the right issues that are negatively affecting the community in question. The author further alludes that social workers are only one resource people may use in empowering themselves in all the three levels. Social workers are a relevant resource in that social work skills have a special go-between and mediating role between client and community and between people and systems that oppress.

The practitioner’s knowledge was also viewed by Brown (1996) as of importance; the practitioners need knowledge to assist them in formulating a complex assessment of a client’s circumstances, experience and context. They should also be familiar with models of social work intervention and the process involved in intervention. The central aspect of the knowledge base of social work is the practitioner’s familiarity with the literature on skills and processes that are relevant to the intervention.

According to Lee (2001), empowerment practice places the responsibilities and possibilities of enlightened knowledge and action on each and every individual. A collectivist “social membership perspective” is what is needed for human survival. In an empowerment approach, the analysis of history, policy and social change is conceived of as a joint effort of all affected people. This therefore validates the need for exchange of knowledge and resources in order for one to be effectively of relevance in the empowerment process of any community.

d. Method of Empowerment
The last part of the empowerment model is the method of empowerment; according to Lee (2001), this entails principles, processes, skills and roles played by the social
worker in practise. The method of empowerment emanates from the values, purposes and the theoretical foundations discussed above.

i. **Principles of empowerment approach**

According to Lee, principles determine the structure of an approach and contain constraints that prescribe the limits of choice of action open to the worker. They are drawn from many sources which includes basic social work principles, South American theology, critical education movement as well as the works of scholars like Frere. The method of empowerment may be used in the one-to-one, group, or community relational systems and it rests upon the following eight principles:

- **All oppression is destructive of life and should be challenged by social workers and clients.** This implies that people need to unite against oppression without negating experiences of other groups for it may lead to the continuation of oppression or injustice that is perpetrated against them.

- **The social worker should maintain a holistic vision in situations of oppression.** There is need for a multifocal vision when dealing with oppression; practitioners should be able to see the forest and the trees, the wider scene and the individual picture. This goes against giving focus to only one aspect of the situation, but to note the situation in a wide view with all aspects in consideration.

- **People empower themselves: social workers should assist.** This principle goes beyond self-determination but moves on to self-empowerment which emphasizes the client’s rights to and responsibility in the process of human empowerment. The practitioner plays a facilitatory role in the empowerment process and the
responsibility for empowerment lies upon the beneficiaries to empower themselves.

- **People who share common ground need each other to attain empowerment.** This principle implies collectivism in the empowerment process and the worker’s role in assisting people in groups.

- **Social workers should establish an “I and I” (we) relationship with clients.** This principle indicates partnership in the struggle against oppression and at the same time appreciating each other.

- **Social workers should encourage the client to say his or her own words.** The worker must promote self-determination in the recreation of the client’s reality from oppression. Instead the worker should observe rules of equity to free the client.

- **The worker should maintain a focus on the person as a victor and not a victim.** It is of paramount importance to consider that no client can voluntarily choose to be oppressed but they can rise and challenge that oppression. This therefore implies that they must be helped to obtain the resources needed for action in order for the client to become a victor. Community empowerment in this regard is focused on the capacitation of the communities in order to meet their challenges on their own.
- **Social workers should maintain a social change focus.** This principle is directed towards the role of the client and the worker in working towards structural change, human transformation and liberation. The worker’s responsibility is to connect the client with wider knowledge of oppression (Lee, 2001).

In summation to the principles of empowerment approach, Lee (2001) admits that all these principles speak about having eyes to see and ears to hear the human situation that we enter in as the role of a social worker and not to depend upon the third ear of understanding from another individual. This implies that any community intervention initiative must be informed by the circumstances on the ground and may not be generalised.

### e. Skills of empowerment

The method uses specific skills in operationalizing the practice principles to address and promote action on all levels of living. In this study the principles apply only to community relational systems, the community workers must have a method of empowerment and any projects must be implemented in consideration of the principles, process and skills needed to foster empowerment. According to Weyers (1999), the method forms one of the ingredients of community work and development in that it entails the various processes and procedures that can be followed to attain the results.

The skills and processes that underpin the process for empowerment are relationship building skills, promotion of coping and adaptation, bolstering motivation,
empowering skills to maintain psychic comfort and self-esteem, to enhance problem solving and the promotion of social change.

According to Lee, the central processes of this approach are developing a critical consciousness in the context of relationship building through consciousness raising, strengthening individual capabilities, potentials and problem solving skills. Communities, groups and individuals must be developed to take action in order to change oppressive conditions in which they are living in. The creation of a helping relationship is basic to all social work processes and outcomes because it forms a bridge on which all work can take place.

f. Empowering Roles

The role played by a practitioner in the empowerment process is of paramount importance in the establishment of an empowered individual, group or community. The community worker in a social context is not necessarily personally committed to one specific objective; he or she adopts a number of roles in the empowerment process. Among these roles include being an enabler, collaborator, bridge builder, guide, and power equaliser. These roles are needed to enact the principles of an empowerment approach to social work practise. The roles played in empowerment are additional to those of mediator, advocate, resource broker, mobiliser, organiser, innovator, facilitator and organiser. The worker and client will be teaching each other what they know about presenting problem and about oppression faced (Lee 2001).

According to Napier (2011), the social work practitioner has four major roles that he or she is supposed to play in the empowerment process. These include being a resource consultant, sensitizer, teacher or trainer and a co-operator. As a resource
consultant the practitioner will link clients to resources so that it enhances their self-esteem and problem solving skills, it is a catalytic role that is assumed in this note. The role as sensitizer involves the helping of clients to gain knowledge necessary to take control of their own lives. The teacher trainer role places the practitioner as a manager of the learning process aimed at helping the client to find solutions for their situations. In this role the practitioner will be acting as a broker. As a co-operator the social worker will be linking groups, and a client is the one who will be self-determining in achieving self-efficacy and empowerment. The main part to be played is in the connection of an empowered person to others who share common histories, issues and barriers.

The theoretical framework is of value in any study, it is crucial in that it gives out guidelines to be followed in practice in order to produce positive results in any helping relationship. The subsequent part of the study will focus on the discussion of community empowerment and its main components.

2.2.2. Theoretical perspectives that underpin empowerment

The theoretical perspectives that underpin community empowerment are to be discussed in a detailed manner in this part of the study. These were noted by Lee (2001) as including the developmental perspective, ethclass perspective, critical perspective, feminist and the ecological perspective. This will be of great help in the assessment of the impact of donor funded empowerment with reference to the projects being focused on.
a. Ethclass perspective

Ethclass perspective broadly refers to the social participation and identity of persons who are confined in their own class and ethnic group due to oppression. It pays particular attention to the interplay of ethnic and social class influences in working with persons of any group (Lee 2001). According to Lee the term was coined by Gordon (1978). The perspective views the difficulties that are encountered by people in breaking the bonds of class when an opportunity is presented; this is necessitated by obstacles that are presented by ethclass membership especially for poor people of a certain color. This therefore implies that people must realize that they are “locked in” and marginalized by oppression through ethclass–sensitive practice in order to break the bonds of oppression. According to Lee, understanding the sociology of liberation which includes the sociology of class stratification and the sociology of movements is critical for the practitioner concerned with empowerment. This is mainly so because social class position is correlated with many variables of human behavior like life chances and life conditions.

The ethclass perspective infers to a unified concept that directs our attention to the compounded struggles of poor people of color. It gives particular attention to the interplay of ethnic and social class influences in working with persons of any group. Being poor speaks of class and this may expose an individual to be discredited, rejected and discriminated within a community or any society despite the fact that one does not choose to be like that or accept as part of his or her identity. According to Lee (2001) this is an economically caused status that must and can be changed. Poor people are very much vulnerable to the multifaceted nature of poverty in life threatening ways like health, mortality rates, lack of life coping resources and
abilities. The modern drive for women emancipation is meant to reverse the past injustices that were perpetrated against women in the society. Women were discriminated in the job market, denied the basic rights as in being treated as equal partners in a marital relationship by man.

According to Estes cited by Lee (2001), it is of great value for the practitioner concerned with community empowerment to have an understanding of the sociology of liberation, which includes the sociology of class stratification and the sociology of movement. This is so because social classes are correlated with many variables of human behavior especially opportunities in life and life conditions. The better class one is placed in the better life conditions and opportunities in life. The class that people are classified to usually goes in line with their income levels. The high, middle and low classes of people in a society do have differences in their income and skills levels hence posing differences in their chances in life and life conditions with the high class having higher chances than them all.

b. Critical perspective

The other perspective to examine issues of power and oppression is the critical perspective. This perspective goes beyond the observation and description of social conditions and transactions, it develops a critical and analytical view in order to identify and solve situations. The critical and analytical view is managed through questioning all forms of oppression and assisting in the development of alternative social forms. The essence of this perspective is learning to question “reality” rather than simply accepting things. According to Lee, a critical perspective is a process of inquiry brought about through dialogue in which the worker and client develop a
critical perspective and methodology together. Clients must not be seen as empty vessels with nothing to offer but through collaboration with the community development worker they should map out their way forward. The approach goes contrary to the usual way of practice where a practitioner must not tell the client what to do. According to the critical perspective it is incorrect to tell the client but inwardly we believe that we can tell people what is good for them and that they will do it Lee (2001). This perspective therefore realizes the importance of the practitioner in the empowerment process in considering their knowledge and skills that they can share with the community.

c. Feminist perspective

The other perspective of community empowerment is feminist perspective as according to Lee (2001). It consists of common consciousness and deconstruction of negative and disadvantaging definitions of reality. It involves the naming of new realities through identifying the consequences of established structures and patterns, trusting the processes within the group to reconstruct a new reality. The author further notes that Brandwein claims Jane Addams and the women of the settlement movement as the earliest examples of female community organizers.

The feminist perspective of community organizing integrates methods and strategies for action with feminist practice principles and has empowerment of women as one of its goals. According to Weil, cited by Lee, feminist ideology, values and principles must be used in a planning process where staff and clients are involved. The author further notes that rationality is not a sufficient basis for planning and that cultural and value issues should be kept in mind and women’s issues be included in socially and
economically oriented community development. This therefore implies the consideration of women is very crucial in order to foster real empowerment because of the previous history characterized by their marginalization.

d. The ecological perspective

The ecological perspective is heavily influenced by the science of ecology which studies relations between living organisms and their environments. This perspective can be traced back to the biological theories that explain how organisms adapt to the environments. According to Ungar (2002), the social work discipline has expanded this perspective to explain that an individual is constantly creating, restructuring, and adapting to the environment affecting them. The ecological perspective is an evolutionary, adaptive point of view that leads to philosophical conception of human beings as continually growing, changing and learning. This brings in a realization that people are born with some potentialities and the capacities to do things which can be realized later in life. There are sets of ecological concepts that flow from this perspective and these are adaptedness and adaptation, stress and coping, withholding of power as oppression and abuse of power as social and technological pollution and human relatedness, competence, self-direction and self-esteem (Lee, 2001).

The central action oriented concept of the ecological perspective is adaption and must not be confused with adjustment. Adjustment implies the passive accommodation of circumstances, even the ones that are aversive. Individuals, groups or communities must not accept oppression or poverty as a status quo, but they must make adaptations that will positively change their circumstances and
viewpoints. The situation of adaptation can be seen as when community members put all their efforts together in a bid to combat crime as their first priority as opposed to adjustment. This can also be applied against poverty in a situation where the community can commit itself and put effort towards the eradication of poverty than to adapt or get used to it.

Power (withheld and abused), oppression and pollution are the second set of ecological concepts, according to Germain, cited by Lee. The concept denotes person/environment relations that are unequivocally negative, impairing human growth and being destructive to physical and social environments. The remarkable June 16 uprisings of 1976 in South Africa during the Apartheid era were a powerful expression of accumulated rage by the black majority from the oppressive white minority rule. Oppression makes people to lose hope and meaning of life hence they can easily sacrifice their lives through collective action in a means of coping with oppressive life stressors and social pollutions (prejudicial discrimination or disempowerment of vulnerable groups).

Human relatedness, competence, self-direction and self-esteem are the positive person/environment relationships that occur across the life course of individuals. Lee, citing Germain, notes that relatedness appears first and remains central; it refers to the capacity of the human being to form attachments to other human beings. This gives a highlight on human development in that people bond for connection despite oppressive past experiences; relatedness is restorative and essential in life. It is therefore a prerogative of any community worker to enhance relatedness in practice.
Competence is also very crucial and needs to be enhanced by social workers or any development practitioner; it is an innate capacity for effectiveness or mastery that depends on the environment, according to White cited by Lee. It is a product of learning and practice doing away with the sense of inferiority brought by discrimination and prejudice. According to Brieger (2006) citing Cotrell, in a competent community, members are able to collaborate effectively in identifying their community needs, achieve a working consensus on goals and priorities. A competent community can therefore be very effective in ensuring community development in that they are able to identify their needs.

Self-direction goes beyond the concept of freedom from the demands of internal forces or environment but to social structure. However Germain, cited by Lee, also alludes that self-direction also connotes social responsibility and recognizes that disempowered persons occupy positions that block access to options, choices, resources and opportunities. This therefore implies that empowered people normally occupy positions that give them access to alternatives, resources and choices in life. The last positive person/environment relationship that occurs across the life course of an individual is self-esteem. It is a positive feeling about oneself and is acquired through experiences of relatedness, competence and self-direction across the course of life. This relationship starts from infancy with the incorporation of the caretaker’s perceptions and is potentially renewed in every other important relationship according to Mead and Germain, cited by Lee (2001). This shows how important a person’s upbringing is in the face of the challenges of life. If a child was always in the hands of good caretakers and around capable family members and community, the higher the chances are for that person to be potentially capable to confront the
challenges of life. This can also have implications at a community level; a community with a high self-esteem stands a high chance of confronting the adverse effects of poverty as compared to the low self-esteem one.

The above highlighted theoretical perspectives give a clear picture of the different scenarios that individuals, groups or communities may belong to. Any form of outside intervention will therefore need to consider having a thorough understanding of the community in order to be able to render the right kind of service in a way that will foster empowerment.

2.3. COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

This section of the study seeks to discuss in detail the concept of community empowerment with special reference to historical origins, the actual process of empowerment as well as the theoretical perspectives that underpin the conceptual framework of community empowerment within a development paradigm as highlighted by intensive review of related literature.

2.3.1 History of empowerment

The contextual historical realities of oppression directly set the foundation for empowerment practice. According to Lee (2001), the need for empowerment practice is rooted in the historic and contemporary treatment of people who are poor and oppressed, especially women, African-Americans, and all people of colour. The author further highlights the advantage of knowing this history because it will enable one to tune in to the experience of oppression and the need to deliberately raise
awareness on the need to take clients through an empowering process that unlocks the empowering journey.

Batliwala (2007) collaborates this view by tracing contradictions between oppression and empowerment through noting the fascinating nature of both the word and the concept of empowerment. The author is of the idea that according to one research into the origins and meanings of the term as noted by Gaventa (2002), it can be traced back as early as the Protestant Reformation in Europe, and reverberates through the centuries in Europe and North America through Quakerism and Jeffersonian democracy, early capitalism and the black power movement. The author further notes that this background of the origins of empowerment may differ with other linguistic equivalents where the concept is deeply embedded in many historic struggles for social justice. For the purpose of this study the researcher will adopt the historical roots of oppression as stated by Simon (1994).

According to Simon, the intellectual and political foundation of the concept of community empowerment are categorised into three periods, namely, the early period (1893-1917), the War time and inter war years (1917-1945) and lastly the recent years (1945 to date).

a. Early period 1893-1917
Simon (1994) characterises influences that defined empowerment as populism, social gospel, unionism, feminism pragmatism, and the Du Bois and Niagara Movement as the driving ideological preoccupations of the proponents of such influences.
i. **Populism**

The populism influence goes for the fact that the majority should mobilise and resist the monopolistic holding of power and control by the central government and the elite. It vies for force power and resources to be transferred to the common people. This has been noted in mass demonstrations waged against governments and also in many African countries where liberation movements were mobilising people to resist white minority rule against the black majority.

ii. **The Social gospel**

According to the social gospel, in order to fulfil Christ's promise of heaven on earth people should work cooperatively in abolishing all forms of capitalism and its features of poverty, homelessness, crime, private ownership among others.

iii. **Unionism**

The unionism influence of empowerment refers to the brotherhood movement of workers who mobilise to improve their working conditions. Their togetherness is strengthened by their slogan "an injury to one is an injury to all" when they mobilise to make common claims. In the Zimbabwean context this is championed by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) for the South African context.

iv. **Feminism**

The feminism influence implies the sisterhood movements which mobilise to resist institutions that discriminate people by virtue of their gender, race, age and class.
v. **Pragmatism**

The pragmatism influence emanates from the idea that there is a transitive relationship between man and his environment and therefore the wellbeing of man is dependent upon the healthy community life. Individuals should improve their communities in order to benefit problem free lives from their environments.

vi. **Du Bois and the Niagara Movement**

The Du Bois and the Niagara movement's influence vie for the idea that people should develop their substantive institutions which should be contributory to the larger society. They should learn to improve their conditions even when they are living in a society that is hostile and indifferent to them. People must not simply accept situations as they are presented but they must raise their voices for their betterment.

b. **War time and inter war years (1917-1945)**

The second phase of the emergence of empowerment as according to Simon (1994) is the war time and the interwar years (1917-1945). The emergence of empowerment in this period got its influences from Freudianism, Marcus Garvey and Black Nationalisation, existentialism, Marxism and Socialism.

i. **Freudianism**

The Freudianism as an influence to empowerment emanates from the work of Sigmund Freud who was a psychologist. According to Freudianism, social work practitioners should attempt to understand the totality of a client’s inner experience. Clients should be encouraged to define themselves in detail, their environment and
how they intent to improve the environment through what Sigmund Freud refers to as the “talking cure”.

ii. Marcus Garvey and Black Nationalisation
The influence by Garvey and Black Nationalism fought for the total emancipation of blacks from capitalism. It calls for blacks to mobilise and resist the racial taboos that see whites as superior over blacks. The movements strive to decolonise the African black people’s minds through the changing their consciousness.

iii. Existentialism
The existentialist philosophies and novelists inspire individuals with the assistance of the social work practitioner to direct their strength into securing their meaningful lives.

iv. Marxism and Socialism
The Marxism and Socialism influence is of the opinion that people mobilise and resist private ownership of resources by the minority. Mass power organisations must be the mouth piece of the local grassroots people. During this period in time people were influenced to strive for their meaningful life, be involved in their own development and mobilise and redress their environment.

c. Recent period
The final period of empowerment development is noted as the recent period and it took place between 1945 and today, as according to Simon (1994). Empowerment development during the recent period is influenced by the ideas, beliefs and movements of Ghana, Chinese Consciousness raising, African Independence Movements, Paulo Frere, the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, Maximal
feasible participation, Liberation theology, the New left self-help movements, gay and lesbian liberation, feminism and the disability rights movements.

i. **Ghana**
Ghana is the first African country to gain independence and this ignited the vision and possibility of liberation in other African countries that were still under white minority rule. The ideas and beliefs from this influence are that people in the Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) should resist colonialism and learn to rule themselves, as was led by Ghana as an example.

ii. **African Independence Movements**
The African independence movements include the influences from Memo, Fanon and Nkrumah that inspired people in the LEDCs to resist colonialism, racism and capitalism from the developed countries.

iii. **Frere**
According to the influence from Frere people should have increased awareness of their socio-economic and political realities and they should take action in transforming these realities to their own benefits. Paulo Frere, an educationist by profession, viewed human beings as subjects, independent beings that are able to transcend and recreate the world. Craig and Mayo (1995) therefore claim that according to Frere empowerment involves a participatory educational process in which people are not just the recipients of political, educational or health care projects but become entire participants in naming their problems and proposing solutions.
iv. The Civil Rights and Black Power Movements
The influence vies for the blacks to have confidence in their inherent power that could be positively and peacefully utilised to resist all forms of racial discrimination in their societies.

v. Maximal Feasible Participation
The maximal feasible participation is for the idea that the disadvantaged should have access to the planning and implementation of their own developmental programs. Projects should be controlled by the local community people.

vi. Liberation Theology
Societies should scrap classes that put more resources in the hands of the few minorities, the state, the church and the elite, among others.

vii. The New Left
Participatory democracy should prevail in that poor people should be given the opportunity to improve their own conditions.

viii. The Self-Help Movement
The movement mistrusts experts and larger institutions. Disadvantaged individuals should utilise their own strengths, those from their immediate group supporters and from the larger community without dependency on professionalism.

ix. The Disability Rights Movement
The disabled should be accessed to socio-economic and political control of their communities like other members of the society.
x. **Feminists**

Feminists are divided into three; these are radical feminists who are against the women’s subordination to men, the liberal who question the social, political, legal, religious and cultural set up of communities which discriminate against people due to their sexual orientation and the social feminists who propagate that societies should be classless. This movement has gained momentum of recognition in the turning of the twenty first century with more organisations standing up for the rights of women against oppression and segregation by their male counterparts. This was mainly fostered by the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2010). Goal number three of the MDGs has as its aim to promote gender equality and women empowerment with the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education, no later than 2015 (UN, 2010).

### 2.3.2. Empowerment process and the Social Worker’s role

This section of the study will focus on the process of empowerment and the different roles that a social work practitioner will assume. It is widely accepted that there is no common approach to empowerment process; Schwerin (1995) as cited in Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) are of the idea that there is no one optimal path to empowerment. Empowerment is both a process and an outcome of community developmental process; therefore for the purpose of this study the researcher will adopt the community development process in a bid to elaborate empowerment process due to their simultaneous nature in operation.

According to Miller (1993), community development should not be defined as services that are provided; the services are tools for implementing the fuller definition
of community development. The author notes that the question is on how the services are utilized in the development process and many times the process is bypassed, overlooked or started somewhere other than at the beginning. This also goes in line with the empowerment process, it must not be solely the rendering of services to the marginalized communities but services must be offered with consideration of the relations or contribution in the empowerment process.

The study will adopt the community development (empowerment) process given by Gray (1998) as the empowerment process. The process by Gray has five stages of the project life and these are: Preparation, Assessment, Implementation, Systematic evaluation, and Sustainment with the acronym ‘PRAISES’. According to Gray, the process is people-centered, self-planned development, as opposed to technocratic planned development where external planners attempt to reshape the communities according to predetermined plans. The phases are not sequential and may end up overlapping each other. However Lombard, Lombard and Schoeman (1991) posit that in order for a social work practitioner to successfully improve the physical, social, economic and political development of the community there should be an arrangement of tasks in a sequential manner.

a. Preparation

The preparation stage involves the preparatory work that needs to be done to facilitate access to the community and paves way for effective community involvement; it is when contact with the community is established (Gray, 1998). The author further alludes that the stage comprises of three steps and these are as follows:
- Getting to know the organization under whose auspices the community development work will be carried out.

- Getting to know the community in which it will be undertaken.

- Assessing the particular knowledge, values and skills the social worker brings to the situation.

The PRAISES model as mentioned earlier is based on self-planned development which is a form of development that is formulated with participation of the people defining their needs as felt and perceived by them. This conception is based on the belief that people do have the basic capabilities to improve their quality of living and they can overcome challenges through their efforts with the assistance of the social worker. According to Gray (1998), the preparation stage is based upon the notion that the strength of a community lies not in the amount of assistance poured into it, but in cultivating the capabilities and potential of the people living in it for their own development i.e. empowerment. This justifies the role played by a social worker in the process as an enabler and supporter instead of being a leader in the empowerment process. This further supports the assertion by Weyers (1999) that social workers are a relevant resource in community development in that they have a special go-between and mediating role between client and community and between people and systems that oppress.

b. Assessment

Assessment is the second stage of the process of empowerment; it is the collection of detailed information about problems which will then lead to the establishment of specific goals and a strategy for action. It is the stage were preliminary ideas about
community problems are formed, fact-finding is conducted and plans on how the projects might develop are drawn (Gray, 1998). This is a very crucial stage in any empowerment drive; a practitioner needs to have detailed information of challenges that the community is facing in order to come up with the right kind of intervention. Gray is of the opinion that the assessment stage involves four steps in it and these are fact finding, data analysis, goal determination and lastly planning and programing.

i. Fact finding

Fact finding involves the gathering of information that is very useful in order to have a clear understanding of the problems that are affecting the community, analysis and evaluation of the community needs. This will also be helpful in the formulation of plans to guide actions that are meant to address the needs and problems of the community.

ii. Data analysis

The data analysis stage implies the analysis of information that would have been collected which will assist in the making of informal decision to guide the development program. According to Gray, actions resulting from decisions which are made on the basis of valid and more reliable data collected from community have more chance of succeeding than those which are based on the whims and fancy of a small group of people. Data analysis seeks to answer the question: What is the nature of the problem and what is to be done about it?
iii. Goal determination

The third stage of assessment is goal determination; it is an outcome of the analysis of collected data. The main objective of goal determination is to set realistic goals which reflect what people want, to address felt needs as perceived and defined by the community which will give a realistic chance for success. Goal determination is essential in ensuring that correct things are addressed or dealt with in the intervention exercise than to waste effort on the wrong intervention that does not speak to the demands of the community.

iv. Planning and program development

The fourth step of the assessment stage is the planning and program development; this step involves the outcome of goal determination of well set goals and people having a clear idea of what they hope to accomplish. Planning and program development step brings about how the work is to be done involving decisions on an implementation strategy and planning a program of activities or drawing up a work plan to follow. This is the step that brings in the activities that can be monitored in the program process in order to note whether the program has achieved the community empowerment that it was intended for or whether it is being implemented in line with the planned objectives.

c. Implementation

The third stage of the empowerment process is the implementation stage; this is the stage at which the main work is carried out. According to Gray (1998), it is where goals are tested and revised as and when necessary, people are encouraged to participate and all the community worker’s skills are put into practice. The strategies
to be used in this stage will depend on the aims of the project, the resources available and the size of the target community.

There are important steps to be followed that common projects will have in common and these are:

i. Group formation and development

The stage of group formation and development entails the formation of the group and goes through its development process; the group in this case is the context, the source and the means for change. There is a use of group procedures in order to encourage and ensure the interest and involvement of community members in the development process. People are brought together for participation in the project and act on their problems.

ii. Group planning for action

The formed group moves further to planning activities which will ensure that it achieves its goals. The main role played by any development worker at this stage is to help people to develop the vital skills needed to assist them in their efforts to change. The skills needed at this stage include: interpersonal skills, skills in resource usage, administrative skills and organizational skills, among others.

iii. Group process

Group process is the core stage of the development process, it is when the actual work of the project has been accomplished, plans have come to fruition, goals have been attained and progress is monitored. There are crucial functions that must be put in place in order to ensure the successful outcomes of goals and plans; these
include sound leadership, attention to important group procedures and the use of the problem solving process.

d. Systematic Evaluation

Evaluation is one of the most essential parts of community development process; it is the stage that involves monitoring and keeping track of events throughout the project. According to Ross, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004), evaluation means to ascertain the worth of or to fix a value on some object. It is mainly done for practical reasons as in making decisions concerning whether programs should be continued, improved, expanded or curtailed and to increase effectiveness of program management. Evaluation is not a once off thing but it is systematic, it is an on-going activity which is not stage specific (Gray, 1998). The author further posits that evaluative procedures must be systematically built into the project if questions relating to effectiveness are to be answered. Its main goal is to answer the question: Is what we are doing working or not? It is of relevance at this point in time to note that failure to realise the value of evaluation in any program venture is a serious risk of resource and time wastage by an individual, NGO or government.

The process of evaluation occurs on a number of levels:

i. Evaluation of goal achievement

This level of evaluation involves the drawing of conclusions in relation to the different types of goals. These are task goals, they focus on what concrete aims have been achieved in the project? Process goals focus on what were the effects of the project for those involved? Did they gain anything? Are they ready to confront future
problems together? Lastly it is relationship goal; this goal looks at whether the change in relationship pattern has been achieved.

ii. Evaluation of each stage

There are very important questions to be asked at this level of evaluation and these are:

- What effects are our efforts having?

- What has changed?

- Are we using our time and resources as economically and constructively as possible?

- How can our intervention strategies be improved?

- What barriers are hampering our progress?

iii. Evaluation of the overall project

Evaluation of the overall project is very crucial in any setting, although at the end of one program in the field of community development it is usually the precursor to the next, as change occurs in an incremental way raising a need for the evaluation of each and every program or project. The questions that are used in the evaluation of the overall project are similar to the ones in other levels of evaluation. Project records are of importance at this stage for the provision of valuable information for evaluation, they also add to the local literature on community development.
**e. Sustainment**

Sustainment is the fifth stage of the empowerment process; it is the main concern when concluding one’s involvement in a project (Gray, 1998). It can be viewed as initiation and implementation of projects that can meet the needs of the project members at the present time without compromising the ability of future generations in meeting their own needs. The main purpose of Community Development Workers (CDWs) is to impart their knowledge and skills and work them out so that community members become self-sufficient and capable of independent action. According to Gray a project’s sustainability hinges on community ownership of the program rather than on the absence or presence of the community worker. This therefore implies that adequate plans must be put in place in order to ensure that the project will continue and progress is maintained. Gray gives a suggestion of common characteristic features of self-sustaining projects and these are; that the projects be owned by the community, income generating as the major factor relating to sustainability, managed by trained personnel, organized and are recognized by other community organizations.

Gray cites a sustenance acronym “PEACE” (Planning, Education, Agriculture, Community and Environment) that was coined by Tager (1996) in capturing crucial factors on ensuring sustainability. The PEACE acronym stands for the various aspects of planned, holistic and integrated community development. It is both a development construct and a strategy for community development. Planning brings in the technological know-how of architects, engineers and land surveyors among others. Educational component brings in preschool teachers, primary school, adult educators, trainers, and health educators. Agricultural aspect involves the coming in
of agricultural extension workers and established farmers. Community component implies the representative groups, existing networks, community leaders and land owners. There is also a need to bring in the Environment as the last aspect of the construct. It involves people that are in ecotourism, recycling protection and reclamation and forestry.

It is of paramount importance to note that sustainment as a stage of community development process is not only considered at the end of the project but needs to be a major consideration from the onset of the project. Project sustainability according to Gray can be measured by indicators like the degree to which the community owns the project. Project ownership can only be achieved if the community was involved in the project from the beginning of the project. This implies that the community will be well aware of what needs to be done with the guidance of the community developer. The elements of sustainability ensure the continuation of the project venture even after the withdrawal of the CDWs leaving the community to effectively manage the project on its own.

2.4. DONOR AGENCIES AND THEIR ROLE

This section of the study seeks to give a clear picture of the role that the NGOs or donor organisations are doing in the quest to eradicate poverty, especially committed to the Less Economically Developing Countries (LDCs). The role played by NGOs in development needs a closer look so as to be able to appreciate their positive contribution in community development and hence be able to positively empower communities through their interventions. Community empowerment is a very crucial factor to be considered in any community development intervention, a positively
empowerment community will independently meet the challenges of poverty with limited assistance from outside. According to the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA, 2010), communities are key partners in development by themselves and they do have both the agency and the need to uplift themselves, while often lacking the access to resources and skills to achieve the much desired development.

According to Davis (2007:9), “the majority of official donor agencies, including the World Bank, claim that the focus of their work is the achievement of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), set in 2000 and looking toward 2015”. The last of the eight MDGs that were noted by the UN is to “develop a global partnership for development. This has led to a massive influx of local and International NGOs into the developing world in order to achieve this goal of poverty eradication. The most effective way of eradicating poverty through NGOs is to empower communities so that they can be self-sustainable.

The poor functioning or failure to deliver by the states in the LDCs has also contributed towards the growing need for NGOs. Sengeeta (2003) is of the idea that liberals consider civil society as the countervailing force against an unresponsive, corrupt state and corporations that disregard both environmental issues and human rights. According to the author these NGOs have been aided to gain a positive image due to their self-organising capacity and the consequent redundancy of the state. They fill in a growing void that is created by the state by responding to the needs and demands of the poor and marginalised sections of the society.

The need for a constant touch with the community or the people served has also contributed towards the growth in the need for local NGO engagements in
development work. According to Sengeeta (2003), local NGOs’ nature of work requires them to interact with local communities on a daily basis, building relationships of cooperation and trust to understand local needs and tailor projects that respond to those needs. This has prompted some donor organisations like United Kingdom (UK)’s Oxfam, W. K Kellogg Foundation, among other prominent funders, to be so eager to funding NGOs instead of governments of the developing countries due to their effectiveness in reaching the poor (Sengeeta, 2003). Governments’ operations especially in the LEDCs are characterised by excessive bureaucracy or red taping which may reduce its impact / effectiveness in responding to the plight of the people as compared to local private NGOs.

The other factor giving impetus to local NGOs’ performance is the adoption of more developmental oriented approaches to development. Narayan (2002) is of the idea that empowerment also implies more participatory, bottom-up approaches to working toward development objectives. The author further indicates that there is more than enough evidence to support that such approaches give poor people far more freedom to make economic decisions, enhance development effectiveness at a local level in terms of design, implementation, and outcomes. This makes the best preference as compared to governments as far as development is concerned.

2.4.1. An overview of NGOs’ operations in Zimbabwe

This part of the study seeks to give a general overview of how Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are operating in Zimbabwe. This is meant to give a clear picture of the general environment, nature of work and the legislative framework in which they operate within the country. This part is of vital importance in that it will
determine their level of impact to the community as far as instilling community empowerment is concerned. According to Edwards and Hulme (1998), the perception of NGOs as service providers is common among governments in the LEDCs as documented for example in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines, Zimbabwe and Ghana. There are a number of Local and International donor organisations that are involved in development work in the country. According to Bogja (2006) citing Fisher (1998), local NGOs comprise of the so called people’s organisations or grassroots organisations which originated in local communities and aim at serving their members. They come in to assist the government in development work and other areas of need. Their service provision only comes under scrutiny in assessing their impact in capacitating the communities they will be working with in dealing with the challenges facing them.

An NGO in Zimbabwe is viewed as an organization that is not profit oriented as according to the Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) Act (Chapter 17:05, 1996) of the Republic of Zimbabwe (Mukute and Marange 2006). The National Association of NGOs in Zimbabwe cited in Mukute and Marange, (2006) estimates in excess of 2 000 NGOs that are engaged in a wide range of development work. The work provided by these organisations stretches from children’s rights, advancement of women, disabled persons, HIV/AIDS, environmental protection, democracy and governance, vocational skills training, poverty alleviation to human rights, humanitarian aid and rural development. Their operations in Zimbabwe can also be questioned or scrutinised; scholars like Edwards and Hulme (1998) argues that studies of NGOs performance in Africa by a number of researchers have questioned
many of the accepted wise
doms about the levels of poverty-reach, cost-effectiveness, 
popular participation and innovation among NGOs.

The historical development of NGOs can be traced from charity and welfare work that was inspired by the need to help the disadvantaged. The general origin of the NGOs in Zimbabwe can be viewed from three phases of generations. These types can be summed up as the first generation of NGOs, second generation and third generation type of NGOs with each having its own focus areas and circumstances behind its emergence.

a. First generation type of NGOs
The first generation of NGOs in Zimbabwe was heavily influenced by charity and welfare and hence they were referred to as welfare organisations. According to Mukute and Marange (2006), the first NGO law in Zimbabwe was enacted in 1968 and was known as the Welfare Organisations Act (WOA). The first generations of NGOs in Zimbabwe operated under this Act and were mainly focusing on relief and welfare. These organisations were formed by religious groups as part of their religious teaching practice and beliefs. A lot of their work was on giving hand-outs and taking care of the needy like orphans, abandoned babies, the disabled people, the homeless and the elderly.

b. Second generation type of NGOs
The second generation of NGOs were mainly focusing on development work; it was concerned more with long term development issues, beyond relief services. This generation of NGOs emerged with the attainment of independence in 1980. These
NGOs came as a need to complement the efforts of the newly independent black majority rule from the white minority rule in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country as it was coming from the liberation struggle. According to Mukute and Marange (2006), this support was only given from the first two to three years after independence and then moved to development work which was in line with a series of government transitional development plan. These development plans were mainly in line with provision of support to resettled people, agricultural skills in rural areas, programs for advancement of women, local income generating projects, natural resource management and the integration of disabled people into communities. The third type of NGOs was characterised by a lot of infrastructural development in terms of construction of dams, clinics and schools. These massive development projects were not only implemented by local NGOs but were also aided by International NGOs that came to assist in the newly independent state of Zimbabwe.

c. Third generation type of NGOs

The third generation type of NGOs came during the period when the country was shifting from socialist inclined policies to market driven policies around the 1990s. These organisations were focusing on policy advocacy activities mainly due to the failure of public policies from the mid-1990s. Zimbabwe started to participate in a lot of United Nations Global Conferences on children, environment, women, population and human rights. Mukute and Marange (2006) are of the opinion that whilst not all NGOs are doing policy advocacy, there is a strong drive towards a rights based type of development work in the third generation of NGOs. The current state of the Zimbabwean NGOs sector is characterised by a variety of services being rendered and among these are developments which includes children’s rights, advancement
of women, disabled persons, HIV/AIDS, environmental protection, democracy and governance, vocational skills training, poverty alleviation to human rights, humanitarian aid and rural development. This makes the environment in which the NGO are operating in to be very much more challenging and hence putting more pressure on them to practise good governance.

2.4.2. Effectiveness of donor funding through NGOs

This part of the study seeks to shed light on the effectiveness of donor funding that is rendered by local NGOs to the community towards poverty alleviation. Its effectiveness comes as a mixed bag of positives and negatives due to a myriad of factors within their control and those beyond their control as will be explored in this section. Donor funding by local and international organisation is a common feature of the Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs). It is a feature that is generally characterised by bearing positive and negative impact on its recipients. According to Kabanda (2011), researches undertaken so far suggest that most governments in the LEDCs are not only backing away from the traditional responsibilities, but have completely failed to deliver. The author further claims that this has prompted NGOs to work in partnership with these governments in the planning process by offering expertise, experience and resources. They are agents of change but their ability to effect change rests on organizational independence, closeness to the poor, representative structures and a willingness to spend large amounts of time in awareness-raising and dialogue. This therefore implies that the interventions outcome by local NGOs is dependent on internal and external variables that may contribute either positively or negatively on the beneficiary communities.
According to Edwards and Haume (1998), NGOs are viewed by many as more efficient and cost effective service providers than governments, giving better value-for-money, especially in reaching the poor people. This has led official agencies to channel increasing amounts of money to them and through them in order to bring about community development and the eradication of poverty. NGOs’ interventions are characterised by less bureaucratic tendencies that are normally characterised with the government sector of the economy hence yielding more positive results. However the impact of donor engagement can also be viewed as having a negative impact on community development as noted by other scholarly sources. Conyers and Mellors (2005) are of the idea that there is substantial evidence to suggest that, while the problems of capacity in African countries are great and cannot be ignored, the manner in which aid is delivered is a problem. The authors further cite Van de Walle and Johnston (1996) who discovered from an empirical study of aid effectiveness in seven African countries how aid often weakens rather than strengthens local institutions. These agencies have often lacked the technical experience, local knowledge, staff, and appropriate processes to manage such projects and programs effectively (Conyers and Mellors, 2005). The services rendered by these local NGOs can be compromised by lack of capacity building experience, knowledge of the community they are serving and of the interventions they are rendering. This may be one of the reasons leading to a poor performance in service delivery by local NGOs.

Accountability to the community is also one of the factors that foster the capacitation of community in the face of poverty. According to Kilby (2006), it is the NGO’s “downward” accountability to their constituents (the beneficiaries of their work) that is
important in their effectiveness as empowerment agents. Furthermore Kilby admits that the lack of essential incentives poses immense challenges for NGOs’ accountability because they are values-based public benefit organisations. If an organisation lacks accountability to its constituency it opens a way for compromise in service rendering hence the failure to achieve the target goal.

The controversies surrounding the impact of donor funding on recipients also threatens the concept of community empowerment through donor funded projects in order to alleviate poverty. This therefore raises the need to assess its impact with special reference to studies of selected projects in order to establish whether they are really empowering communities.

2.4.3. Community empowerment through donors

This section of community empowerment seeks to give a review of literature on how community empowerment can be achieved through donor funded projects. This transcends beyond the distribution of resources to the community to ensuring the capacitiation of the community with the desperately needed capabilities to confront the adverse effects of poverty. There are certain conditions that can bring about the effectiveness of donor funded projects in empowering the communities in the battle against poverty; it is local ownership and commitment to the initiative by the local community. According to Conyers and Mellors (2005) ownership means that the recipient has not merely agreed to an externally supported intervention, but is genuinely committed to it. The authors further substantiated their claim by giving reference to a case noted by Conyers and Cumanzala (2004) of an NGO-funded community development initiative in Binga District of Zimbabwe; the project highly
demonstrated the importance of ownership at a community level. Bartle (2011), is of the idea that if a community group is not permitted to own a hand pump that it builds, then that community is weakened, and hindered from being self-reliant. If a local authority is not permitted to open and run a bank account, then its ability to serve the needs of a village is hindered and village capacity is restricted. The effectiveness of local donor agencies in empowering lies in the ability to be able to inculcate a sense of ownership of the project to the community.

Project ownership by the local community is very much vital in community empowerment. It becomes a necessity for NGOs to ensure that ownership is enhanced in order to foster sustainability. According to van de Walle and Johnson cited by Conyers and Mellors (2005), from a sense of ownership flows the willingness to commit real resources to ensure the activity’s success, to solve problems that emerge during implementation, and to sustain the activity after the withdrawal of aid. The authors further note that although ‘the importance of ownership is widely acknowledged [by donors] as essential to the success and sustainability of development efforts’, in reality they ‘still tend to dominate the project cycle and pay inadequate attention to the preferences of the government or project beneficiaries’.

The need to meet the desires of the mother donor organisation also compromises local NGOs’ stance on effective service delivery. NGOs normally change their goals and objectives to suite the demands by their donors instead of striving to meet the demands of the communities. According to Sengeeta (2003), the influx of money, combined with pressure to lead when the state is absent, has forced NGOs in
particular to restructure their operations to suit the new partnership with First World
donor agencies. The author further alludes that in this process, the organisational
ethic that distinguishes them as democratic and more representative of the popular
will is being dismantled. Michael (2004) is also of the idea that donor agencies
influence the organisational strategic planning and project development in their local
NGO partners. They can dictate reporting, monitoring and evaluation procedures and
performance measures, determine the size, scope and duration of funding contracts
and have an ability to bring an immediate end to their funding commitments to
NGOs. Michael suggests that, by trying to encourage local donor NGOs to adopt
what they see as sustainable behaviours they have also encouraged unsustainable
NGO practices. Masud and Yantcheva (2005) sum up this as the “pursuance of a
different underlying agenda” in the allocation of aid and no positive impact in terms of
growth or poverty alleviation should be expected.

Problem identification is one of the most crucial factors in any project venture that
NGOs need to take into consideration. According to Touwen (2001), NGOs
oftentimes come to an area because of overwhelming problems that would have
come to the attention of the outside world. It is essential to find out what is perceived
as the real problem locally, how problems interrelate, how they have evolved, and
which of the problems are considered most urgent. This is all covered under the
baseline and situational analysis of the project. A baseline study and situational
analysis is of utmost importance in any project; its main aim according to Touwen is
to describe problems and needs within an area, and charting the local resources
available to do something about them. The author further alludes that a good initial
situation analysis is good for project implementation because goals, activities and
resource inputs are all meaningless without a clear understanding of the context of the target group’s environment, values and relationships. Planning will be based upon knowledge of the real situation, and of the various factors which have formed it and this will link planning and the implementation of the project and not to be based on assumptions.

Community participation is also a very necessary ingredient in community development that cannot go unnoticed. It is also a vehicle through which empowerment can be achieved for the benefit of the local communities through projects. Community empowerment is both a condition and goal of co-management (Jentoft, 2005) cited by Toufique (2005). Paulo Frere views community empowerment as involving a participatory educational process in which people are not passive recipients of aid or projects but become entire participants in naming their problems and proposing solutions (Craig and Mayo, 1995). Once the conditions have been met community development geared for community empowerment can be assured. According to Palacios (2008) citing Lane (1995), participation in development is the only way to enhance the quality of life. Through participation the community become their own agents of change by engaging in the process of development. The author further cites White and Nair (1999) regarding the view that empowerment builds a sense of independence through interdependence. Dialogue can generate self-esteem, respect, self-confidence and self-definition for an individual.
2.5. SUMMARY

In a nutshell the chapter discussed the different concepts of community empowerment giving an outline of its elements; the historical development of empowerment was stressed. The chapter also focused on the theoretical perspectives of community empowerment and the roles played by social workers in the empowerment process. The discussion of the effectiveness of donor funding in community empowerment process, donor organisations and their role and a general overview of NGOs operations in Zimbabwe could not go unnoticed in a bid to unravel the impact of donor funded community empowerment through projects in a bid to alleviate poverty. The following chapter of the study will give focus to the research methodology and design.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter of the study was focusing on the review of literature that is related to the study. It also looked into the effectiveness of donor funding and the role played by local NGOs and the challenges associated with them. This chapter of the study gives focus to the research methodology and design of the study. Welman, Kruger and Mitchel (2005) define research methodology as a philosophy of the research process which includes assumptions and values that serve as bases of research and standards that the researcher uses in interpreting data and reaching conclusion. This chapter therefore outlines the research method followed and the research design that has a discussion population and sampling with sample size and sampling procedure. The section also focuses on data collection which entails the method of data collection, instruments used in the collection data and its administration. The discussion of data analysis and the ethical considerations in the research process are also covered in this part of the study. The research methodology and design is done in an endeavor to show how the quest to investigate the impact of donor funded community empowerment projects on poverty alleviation was carried out.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

It is a prerequisite for any scientific research endeavor to require a plan that tabulates all the activities which are to be used in order to answer the research problem. A research design is defined by Babbie and Mouton (2001) as a plan or a
blueprint of how one intends conducting the research, the process of focusing one’s perspective for the purpose of a particular study (Babbie: 2007). Its main focus is the end-product, the kind of study planned and the kind of results aimed at. De Vos (2005: 389) viewed it as “a logical strategy of gathering evidence about knowledge desired” and this should be methodologically precise and acceptable to the parties involved such as instruments, tools and units of analysis. According to De Vaus cited by Mamia (2006) its main function is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables one to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible.

This research adopted a triangulation method; De Vos (2005) defined triangulation as the use of more than one approach in the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. There is a vast difference in the underlying discourse in any data collection exercise and what one can gather using structured survey instruments. According to Jick (1979), the effectiveness of triangulation rests on the premise that the weaknesses in each single method will be compensated by the counter-balancing strength of another. The type of triangulation adopted for the purpose of this study is a methodological triangulation which is defined by Denzin (1970) cited by Jick as the use of more than one method in the gathering of data. Neuman (1994:319) also alludes to the same note by claiming that “the research methods or strategy for research can either be a combination of methods that will best enable one to achieve the research objectives or one method”. The research therefore used both quantitative and qualitative designs in the collection of data.
This study utilized a quantitative-descriptive (survey) research design to investigate the impact of donor-funded community empowerment projects in poverty alleviation from the project members. According to Fouché and De Vos (2005) this design requires questionnaires as a data collection method with a randomised selection of respondents. A structured questionnaire was therefore designed and administered to meet the quantitative nature of the study. Alston and Bowles (2003), are of the impression that quantitative research is based on the idea that there is an objective ‘reality’ which can be accurately measured, and which operates according to natural laws which can be discovered by rigorous, objective research. The design is advantageous in that any other researcher who studies the same social phenomenon using accurate research instruments would come up with the same findings.

The study also adopted a qualitative approach in the investigation of the impact donor funded community empowerment intervention with local NGOs. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), qualitative approach is the generic research approach in social science according to which research takes its departure point as the human action from the insider’s perspective on social action. The qualitative research design type adopted for the purpose of this is a case study. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) it is an intensive study of a single unit interacting with its context. The authors further suggest that the qualitative researcher’s emphasis on studying human action in its natural setting together with a detailed description and understanding phenomena within the right context already suggests the type of design that is methodologically relevant. The researcher carried out some in-depth
interviews with the local NGOs in order to establish the impact of the projects in empowering the communities.

3.2.1. Justification of the research methods

The researcher chose a triangulation research method because of a number of factors which range for the conditions and the context of the study. According to Epstein and Schurink (1998) cited by Matube (2005), the conditions under which quantitative methods are used is when there is prior knowledge of the culture and the environment under which the study is conducted. Qualitative research methodology on the other hand is used or adopted when one is in unfamiliar environment. The research methodology is tallying with the nature and scope of this study in the sense that prior knowledge of the culture and environment under which the study is conducted is studied and familiarized with. The environment encompasses the factors that bring in the interventions by NGOs and the context of the members and communities focused on. However there was a need to get more detailed and comprehensive background and contextual information from the NGOs operations. This therefore called for the use of a qualitative design in this study resulting in multiple methods being employed in the research study.

The easy access and high level of legitimacy being a prerequisite in quantitative methods because of the intrusive nature of data collection has been one of the factors that led to the consideration of a quantitative design as an option. The respondents in this study were the beneficiaries of donor-funded community projects by local NGOs in the Chiredzi District of Zimbabwe and the local NGOs also. However the need to gather in-depth information underlying the implementation of
the projects by the local NGOs has contributed to the adoption of both methods, hence triangulation was an alternative option.

The reason for the choice of triangulation is the complementary nature of quantitative and qualitative research methods that had made it a choice of preference. The strength with quantitative design lies in numbers. According Muller (undated) the strength in numbers characterizes the many advantages of quantitative research and can therefore be used in the measurement of beneficiaries’ attitude, behavior and performance. Qualitative designs are best in in-depth of data gathering from project beneficiaries’ attitude, behavior and performance; hence a mixed approach proves the best alternative. According to Jick (1979), qualitative and quantitative methods should be viewed as complementary rather that as rival camps and the desirability for the mixed methods is also centered on the strength and weaknesses in single method design.

Triangulation is not a perfect panacea to research designs and their outcomes; it is also coupled with challenges just like other designs. The outcome of any study does not solely depend upon the design but also upon the research questions that are designed correctly. In such a case of “wrong” questions or theoretically not clearly focused research the triangulation method is of no use, it will also produce wrong results. The duration that is taken when carrying out triangulation cannot go unnoticed as a limitation on its own. It takes a lot of time as compared to single methods.
3.3. POPULATION

Babbie and Mouton (2001) describe a population as that group of people about whom conclusions are drawn. It is also described by Dane (1990:289) as “all possible units or elements that will be included in the study or research report”. In this study the population refers to all the people and organizations that are engaged in the poverty alleviation projects.

The population of the study comprised of the communities within Chiredzi district that are engaged in poverty alleviation projects and for the purpose of this study the district was demarcated into six tribal communities headed by paramount chiefs. There are about ten (10) officially recognized local NGOs within the district that are engaged in poverty alleviation projects and a sample of these NGOs constituted part of the population for the study. The population of the study was also constituted by the local community members that are beneficiaries of these donor funded projects from the same district. The average number of beneficiaries per project is estimated to be around forty (40) and this will give a total estimated number of four hundred (400) members who are recipients of the intervention. This therefore implies that the sample of the study was drawn from these populations stated above.

3.4. SAMPLING

A sample is defined by Strydom (2005:319) citing Arkava and Lane as comprising of elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study or a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which we are interested. It is the taking of any portion of a population or universe as representative of the total population. This is meant to reduce the time to be consumed and amount of data to be processed; all
communities that have donor funded projects, local donors that are having projects and all project members in Chiredzi District cannot be studied and therefore it is necessary to choose a sample. De Vos, Fouché and Venter (2005) concur with this assertion when they state that we are not able to study an entire population owing to limitations of time and cost and we are therefore obliged to draw a sample. In this study two communities were chosen, one project was chosen from each of the two, two organisations and fifty members from the two chosen projects have constituted the sample.

3.4.1. Sampling Method

The sampling method that was adopted by the study is a probability sampling method which is based on randomization. A random sampling technique is that method of drawing a sample of a population so that all possible samples of fixed size \( n \) have the same probability of being selected (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Simple random sampling method gives each individual case in the population theoretically an equal chance of being selected for the sample (Strydom, 2005). This sampling method has also been of choice in that it produces results that can be extrapolated to a wide population, better supervision and processing and provides data in a timely fashion than enumeration but though it tends to be expensive and dependent on the goodness of the sampling frame (Guzman: 2009). This therefore implies that all NGOs that funded these projects, communities that have received donor funded projects and the project members had an equal chance of being chosen to be part of the study.
3.4.2. Sampling Procedure

The figure below shows a diagrammatic illustration of the sampling process flow from the first step to the last step.

![Figure 3.1: The sampling procedure](image)

The first step that was used in the sampling procedure for this study was the decision on the population of interest or the target population. This is the population where the findings about the impact of donor funded community empowerment project are coming out from. These are the beneficiaries and Local NGOs operating in the District in a bid to alleviate poverty. The second stage is the establishment of a sampling frame (listing of all units in principle, e.g. according to geographic frame. A sample was selected from this frame using a probability algorithm with every element of the frame having a chance of being selected. The third stage of the sampling procedure as shown in figure 3.1 above was the determination of how to select sample members and in this case it implies among the project members and the local NGOs that engaged in the implementation of these projects. The last
component of the sampling method is the conversion of the sample of the sample estimates into a population. This entails the coming with the exact figures for members and NGOs that are to be involved in the research process. Stage number 4 involves the selection of 52 community members that are project beneficiaries which were selected from two communities and two NGOs constituting the research population for the study.

### 3.4.3. Sample size

There are a number of ways used to identify the sample size of the population in a research study. These ways of sample size identification range from statistical significance, confidence interval and on the fly method among others (Hopkins: 2008). For the purpose of this study the researcher adopted a confidence interval or confidence limits approach to sample size estimation and estimation of outcomes. The approach is more accessible and simply wants enough subjects to give acceptable precision for the effect one is studying (Hopkins: 2008). This therefore implies thirty members out of the total forty per project are reasonable enough to give confidence on the research findings.

The sample size of the NGOs was constituted by two (2) randomly chosen NGOs of the ten local NGOs involved in community projects aimed at poverty alleviation. The projects were each made up of forty members per project and thirty out of the total population were randomly selected to be participants in the research process. This makes a total number of fifty (50) research participants that were chosen to represent the sample for the recipients of donor funded community projects aimed at empowering them towards poverty alleviation.
3.5. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The research instrument that was used in the collection of data from the project members for the purpose of this study is a survey instrument. According to Cournoyer and Klein (2000), survey instruments are intended to gather general information from a sample for the purpose of developing a profile of a population. The survey instrument that was used in this study is a structured questionnaire (see Appendix 3). These are carefully worded questionnaires which are administered with the main emphasis to obtaining answers to carefully phrased questions (Wildschut: 2012). Deviation from the question wording in this type of interviews is minimal in order to ensure uniformity of interview administration.

The study also used a semi structured interview schedule as a research instrument in the collection of data from NGOs. This is meant to fulfil the qualitative nature of the research design with the intension to gather detailed or collect in-depth information in line with the impact of donor funded community empowerment projects in poverty alleviation.

3.5.1. Questionnaire

Structured questionnaire has been a choice for the collection of data in this study. Babbie and Mouton (2001) define a questionnaire as a collection of questions and they further allude that if they are carefully constructed standardized questionnaires may provide data in the same form from all respondents. Delport (2005) defines it as a set of questions on a form which is completed by the respondents in line with the research study with the objective of obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon and people who are informed on a particular issue. The questions can be open or
close ended, in open ended questions the respondent is asked to provide his or her own answer to the question and in close ended questions the respondent is asked to select an answer from among a list provided by the researcher. However for the purposes of this study the questionnaires used were structured questionnaires which were designed with close ended questions for a quantitative research method.

Structured questionnaires are highly advantageous than semi structured and unstructured questionnaires in that they provide a greater uniformity of responses and are more easily processed for computer analysis hence very popular according to Delport (2005). There is also no need for a high level of competency in conducting a structured interview as compared to semi-structured interview schedules and unstructured interviews. They are therefore easy to administer even with inexperienced interviewers with also less time spent with the collection of data since the responses are structured.

The composition of the structured questionnaire as in Appendix 3 is in three (3) sections and among these are:

1. Section A: Biographic information of the respondent.

2. Section B: Questions in line with project implementation.

3. Section C: Questions in line with the impact of the project.

The first section of the study Section A gave coverage on the background and biographical information which included questions on age, gender, marital status, level of education achieved and the community of origin for the respondent. Section B of the research instrument gave focus to the question in line with how the project
was started, project selection, implementation, skills capacitation for the project, project ownership, among others. Section C of the research instrument dealt with the impact of the project in the project members’ lives. This entails whether the project managed to improve their levels of income, capacity in making decision, skills gained from the project, ability to meet their daily needs, among others.

3.5.2. Semi-structured interview schedule

Semi-structured interviews are defined by Rubin and Rubin (1995:6) cited by Wildschut (2012) as the type of interview where the interviewer is interested in the understanding, knowledge and insights of respondents and so content, flow and choice of topics changes to what the respondent knows and feels. The researcher used this type of interviewing to the local NGOs that are delivering community empowerment projects in Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe in a bid to alleviate poverty. In this type of interviewing the interviewer introduced the topic and then moved on to guide the discussion with specific set of questions in place. There is no limitation to the interviewer on the precise questions to be in a set order despite the fact that a number of issues are covered in the interview session. This type of interview does not restrict on the mixture of the closed and open ended question and also gives room to probing on necessary issues hence making it more advantageous. The composition of the semi structured interview schedule as shown in appendix 4 is made out of mainly open ended questions.

3.5.3. Administration

The data collection tool for project members was administered face-to-face to the respondents. The reason behind this choice of administration for data gathering tools
is the consideration of literacy levels of the respondents. The sample of the population is drawn from the rural communities where chances to find people that cannot read or write on their own are very high. In this type of administration the interviewer will ask the questions orally and record respondents’ answers on the questionnaires. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), it is of paramount importance to ensure that interviewers are able to speak the local language and preferably be from the same area but not necessarily from the same village as some of the most important issues for consideration to fieldworkers when doing face to face interviews. For the purpose of this study both the interviewers were Shangaan speakers since it is the local language used by most of the respondents from the chosen communities.

The administration of the semi structured interview schedule was telephonically done due to the inaccessibility of the places where the NGOs are located. This type of interviewing involves the interviewer and the interviewee conversing through a telephone, with the interviewer asking questions via the phone and the interviewee giving responses. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), telephonic interviews have many advantages that are clearly contributing towards the popularity of the method with its greatest advantage being on savings of money and time. Owens (2005) also weighs in by noting that telephonic interviews do have a shorter data collection period than face to face interviews.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Data analysis is the categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing of data in order to obtain answers to the research questions and these answers in quantitative
research designs are found through interpretation of the data and the results (De Vos, Fouché and Venter, 2005). For the purpose of the study the quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) method of data analysis and was presented using graphs, tables and pie charts. These graphic presentations make the presentation of data clear and precise making it easier for meaningful interpretation. SPSS is advantageous in that it offers excellent graphical display options for data analysis, comprehensive data management tools for data entry for analytical purposes (Simon: 2011). According to Bryman and Cramer (2005), the method is also applauded for being able to score and analyze quantitative data very quickly and in many ways.

Qualitative data analysis is defined by Babbie and Mouton (2001) as all forms of analysis of data that was gathered using qualitative techniques. The analysis of qualitative data for the study was done using content analysis with the thematic approach to qualitative data analysis as the choice. This approach was noted by Babbie and Mouton (2001) as involving the examination of words within a range of texts and then inferences are made about the underlying philosophical assumptions. This research focused on the transcriptions from the data that were gathered from the NGOs participants.

Pamquist (1993) cited by Babbie and Mouton (2001) is of the impression that there are eight steps to be followed when one is carrying out a conceptual analysis of qualitative data. Among these stages are:

i. Deciding on the level of analysis

ii. Deciding on how many concepts to code

iii. Deciding whether to code for the existence of frequency of a concept
iv. Deciding how to distinguish among concepts
v. Developing rules for the coding of texts
vi. Deciding on what to do with irrelevant information
vii. Coding texts
viii. Analyzing results

The researcher started by looking at a string of words on specific topics as guided by the semi-structured interview guide (see appendix 4). This was for the benefit of deciding before on how his code set would be looking like. The data were now converted into a written document with no interpretation given to it. The researcher then organized data into meaningful themes that ranged from background of the project, project management, project delivery and the impact of the projects on beneficiaries. Analysis of data was now done from the different themes that had been drawn for the participants. This main reason for the qualitative component of the study is to complement and give an in-depth understanding on the impact of the projects on the beneficiaries.

3.7. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Research validity and reliability are very crucial in each and every research exercise; this research therefore strives to present research findings that are valid and reliable or else the entire work will lose meaning and purpose.

According to Delport (2005), reliability refers to the stability or consistency of a measure and in this case the research instrument (structured questionnaire) will be considered reliable if the same results are repeatedly obtained if it is to be re-
administered. Research reliability can be directly linked to the thermometer reading that must have consistency of the resultant outcomes whenever used.

Validity is defined by Babbie (2007) as referring to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration. For the purpose of the study this implies the extent to which the structured questionnaire can measure the impact of donor funded community empowerment projects on poverty alleviation. This can directly imply the right use of the instrument as a thermometer that cannot be used to measure blood pressure.

In order to ensure that research findings are valid and reliable certain measures have been put in place for the purpose of this study. According to Muller (undated:6), these are the adherence to the protocol for quantitative questionnaire design, protocol while administering a questionnaire, measures to ensure data integrity, measures to ensure reliability and validity at the data analysis stage of the study. The adherence to the above measures has rendered the research findings to be valid and reliable.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Strydom (2005) defined ethics as a set of moral principles which are suggested by an individual or group widely accepted, and offers rules and behavioral expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents. The ethical issues are as follows:
3.8.1. Avoidance of harm

Among the ethics considered in the research process is avoidance of harm, Strydom (2005) notes that subjects can be harmed in a physical or emotional manner. The responsibility for harm avoidance therefore rests with the researcher in ensuring maximum protection of respondents from harm throughout the research process. The researcher therefore avoided harm through adherence to research ethics and respect of human worthy and dignity to respondents and participants in the research process.

3.8.2. Informed consent

Informed consent calls for emphasis to be placed on accurate and complete information, so that subjects will fully comprehend the investigation and consequently be able to make a voluntary, thoroughly reasoned decision about their possible participation (Strydom, 2005). This then called for proper detailing of the research process and what is expected from the respondents in the letters of consent (see appendix 3 for the consent form).

3.8.4. Deception of subjects

Babbie and Mouton (2001) describes the deception of subjects as deliberately misrepresenting facts in order to make another person believe what is not true. For the purpose of this study the researcher ensured transparency when dealing with subjects or respondents in order to avoid deception. This was done through the explanation of the entire research process and letter of consent signed.
3.8.5. Violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality

Privacy is that which normally is not intended for others to observe or analyze, it implies the element of personal privacy, while confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner, whilst anonymity refers to privacy of the subject, (Babbie and Mouton 2001). For the purpose of this study the information of the respondents or subjects will be kept private from public viewing or observing.

3.8.5. Release or publication of findings

Strydom (2005) emphasizes that the research findings of the study must be introduced to the reading public in a written form; otherwise even a highly scientific investigation will mean very little and will not be viewed as research. The researcher in this study will therefore ensure the compilation of a report in an accurate and objective manner.

3.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There have been a number of limitations that have been encountered in as far as the fieldwork was concerned. Among these challenges are the issues of privacy, accessibility and the fear of victimization by local leadership as shown below. The other limitation to the data collection process is the criticism of traditional local leadership. In a situation where the traditional leadership might have appropriated the project resources for their own benefit the participants would choose not to talk about that. This showed the deeply embedded cultural practices in respect of traditional leadership where community members cannot share any negative comments about their community leadership due to respect. High level of confidentiality, anonymity and freedom of expression were assured and emphasized
so as to manage the case of the local leadership influencing negatively on the smooth running of the project.

Accessibility of local NGOs was one of the limitations threatening to compromise the outcome of the study. One of the local NGOs offices is situated in a natural conservancy area which is difficulty to access. In order to handle this challenge contacts were made telephonically and electronically to the responsible individuals within the NGO. Some NGOs were not comfortable with giving responses to questions that might seem sensitive to them, citing the confidentiality code of their organization. This concern is however, considered as an ethical right for any individuals or organization not to respond to any question that might be sensitive to them as noted in Appendix 1 of the introduction letter of the research instrument.

There other challenge encountered was the lack of equal gender representation among the respondents. Most of the respondents were females and few males that were represented mainly because of the nature of the projects that were chosen for study.

3.10. SUMMARY

The chapter gave a detailed discussion of the research methodology and design that was adopted in the study, data collection method and the procedure followed. There is a clear indication that the more clearer and practical the methodological considerations are the easier the implementation process becomes. The following chapter of the study will focus on the presentation of research findings and discussions.
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous section of the study was dealing with the research methodology, giving a clear plan or a logical strategy of the gathering of evidence about the impact of donor facilitated empowerment programs in order to alleviate poverty. This section of the study focuses on the presentation of quantitative and qualitative findings from the collected data and then gives a discussion of the findings on the impact of donor-funded community empowerment projects on poverty alleviation.

4.2. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM PROJECT MEMBERS

In a bid to establish the impact of donor funded projects on poverty alleviation the research used a structured questionnaire as a research tool for the collection of data from the project members. The collected data were then analysed quantitatively using SPSS software for quantitative data analysis. The findings from project members that presented in this section of the study covers the biographical details of the respondents, information with regard to the implementation of projects and information in line with the impact of these projects in the livelihoods.

4.2.1. Biographical information of the respondents

a. Gender

The findings from the biographical details of the respondents show that 73% of the interviewed project members was made up of women making it the large proportion
of respondents as compared to males that made up 27% of the total number of respondents.

b. Age

The respondents were also asked about their age and findings of collected data give an indication that there are more respondents within the 20–30 years category with 19%. Figure 4.1 shows that the 20–30 years category is seconded by those within the 31–40 years and 41–50 years category with 17% of the total percentage of respondents. The 60+ years’ category constitutes the least among the categories with 8%.

![Figure 4.1: Age distributions of respondents](image)

The biographical data of respondents in terms of age can also be characterised as according to the two projects and the age category of the respondents. Figure 4.2 shows that the Income generation project was meant to benefit the youth or the young generation of the 20–30 year category constituting 17% of the total number.
The project on food security is dominated by those within the 30 – 40 age categories with 19%.

Figure 4.2: Age distribution according to project

The research findings also show that there are more respondents falling in between the age range of 31-40 years for both projects, this constitutes a total number of 16 as compared to other ranges, with more of the respondents being from Food security project as indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Project type and age distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>20 - 30 yrs</th>
<th>31 - 40 yrs</th>
<th>41 - 50 yrs</th>
<th>51 - 60 yrs</th>
<th>61 + yrs</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food security</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income generation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. Marital status

Marital status of the respondents is one of the questions that were asked in the research questionnaire. The research findings show that the married category constitutes the highest number of respondents with 77% followed by 12% for the widowed. The least category for the marital status of the respondents is the divorced ones that constitute 4% of the total percentage of respondents.

Figure 4.3: Marital status

d. Educational qualifications

The respondents were asked about their educational qualifications and the demographic representation shows that the highest number of respondents was having primary level of education with 34%. Figure 4.4 shows that the second highest category of the level of education is those with ordinary level of education and constitutes 31% of the total number of respondents. The least category from the list is for those with primary education and university qualifications with 2% each.
4.2.2. Project implementation

The information gathered in line with the implementation of the project in relation to the position that a member occupied in the project is showing a representation in the different positions that are normally held in projects. Among these are the chairperson, vice chairperson, secretaries, committee members and ordinary members. The findings as indicated in Table 4.3 are showing that 73% of the respondents are ordinary members in the project constituting the highest proportion of the respondents.
Table 4.3: Position in the project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Chairperson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee member</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary member</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other question that was asked for the purpose of the research study is on whether the members were consulted in the formulation of the projects. Information on consultations is of relevance in determination of the level of the members’ involvement in the projects especially when committed to the empowerment of project members. The findings are showing that 42 respondents of the 52 interviewed members have been consulted in the formulation of the project. It can also be noted that most the respondents that indicated that they were not consulted are from the gardening project constituting 17 % as shown in Table 4.4.
Table 4.4: Project consultations as according to project type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation</th>
<th>Food security</th>
<th>Income generation</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.5 shows the graphical representation of project members’ responses on consultation in project formulation and also showing as according to project type. The graph shows that few of the members constituting 19% have indicated that they have not been consulted by the local NGO in project formulation.

Figure 4.5: Frequency distribution of respondents and project type
The follow-up question to consultations is on whether those views were taken into consideration in the implementation of the projects. The responses to the question indicate that all the respondents who have indicated as having been consulted on project formulation have their views considered in the project of choice.

The other information gathered was on what can be done in order to improve the performance of the projects. The findings on this note show that there is a need for the monitoring of all the projects. There are 63% of the respondents that have indicated that the projects need constant monitoring in order to improve performance. The other issue that was captured from the findings is the need to improve on time management of the projects and this amounted to 29% of the total number of respondents. The need for consultations is also shown as one of the measures that are needed in order to improve the performance of the projects, as indicated on figure 4.6 constituting 8%.

![Figure 4.6: How to improve the projects](image)

- 63% Monitoring
- 29% Time management
- 8% Consultation
The results gathered in line with the training of project members show that most of them did receive training on project implementation with 63 % of the respondents having received training as shown on Table 4.5. The remaining 37 % did not receive training for the projects. It is also necessary to look into those who received training according to project type; the findings show that most of the respondents that received training are from the income generation project. The proportion of the untrained project members is composed of those who would meet the demands of the project through their past experiences with 19 % and 17 % of the total number of respondents being for those who had to learn from their colleagues.

Table 4.5: Whether respondents were trained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trained</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an endeavour to assess the impact of donor funded community empowerment projects in poverty alleviation the information gathered in line with the implementation of the project also included project ownership. The responses as indicated in figure 4.7 show that 48 % of the respondents have indicated that the projects are owned by the community, 42 % noting them as owned by certain individuals in the community, and 10 % attributing project ownership to the community. This implies that 52 % of the respondents have noted that the projects are not owned by the community but by either individuals or local leaders in the community. The overall indications are that most of the respondents that noted the projects as not being
owned by the community are those from the Tshovani community focusing on the food security of food gardening project.

![Figure 4.7: Project ownership](image)

The frequency distribution of the level of communication between the project members and the local NGOs show that 46% of the respondents have noted the communication as poor with 40% having noted it as good. The rating on the quality of communication as presented on Table 4.6 shows a decrease with the increase in the quality of communication; there are 12% of the respondents who reported their communication as better with 2% as best.

**Figure 4.7: Project ownership**
Table 4.6: Quality of communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3. Project impact

The findings in line with the involvement of community members in the projects show that 45 % of the respondents have indicated that they are no longer involved in the project than from the beginning. The Table 4.7 shows that there are 55 % of the respondents that have indicated that they are still involved in the project, with 45 % having indicated that they are no longer involved. Among the 45 % of the respondents that are no longer involved in the project as from the beginning 35 % have cited discouragement in the project process as the reason behind their withdrawal. The other 10 % of the respondents have shown that they are no longer involved in the project as compared to the beginning is due of other commitments as shown in Table 4.7. The table also shows that there are more members from the Food security project that have registered discouragements from the projects as compared to those form the Income generation project.
Table 4.7: Reasons for non-involvement in the project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>Discouragements</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Other commitments</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food security</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income generation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research data shows that 58 % of the respondents do not have any other source of income outside the project. Among those that were having other sources of income in the project 27 % were having below $250-00 per month as shown in Figure 4.8. The figure also shows that 13 % of the respondents were earning between $250-00 - $500-00 per month with the least among the categories being those with above $750-00 per month constituting 2 % of the respondents.

![Figure 4.8: Income level outside the projects](image-url)
The findings on how helpful are the projects are to the members show that the projects are very much helpful to them. The findings of the study show 46 respondents, who make up 88 %, have acknowledged that the projects are very much helpful to them in meeting their daily needs. There are 12 % of the respondents that have indicated that the projects are not helpful at all in meeting their daily needs.

The findings in meeting the needs show that 52 % of the respondents have indicated that they are fairly meeting their needs, with 32 % of the respondents expressing it as good in meeting their daily needs because of the project. The least among this category as shown on Figure 4.9 is those that are saying that the projects have moderately helped them in meeting their daily needs, with 6 %.

![Figure 4.9: Ability to meet daily needs](image-url)
The findings as indicated on the Table 4.8 show that 71% of the respondents maintained that the project did not lead to an increase in their levels of income. It is of importance to note that most of the respondents who indicated that there was no increase in their income are from the food gardening project with 40%. Table 4.8 shows that there were 31% of the respondents from the Income generation project that gave NO as their response.

**Table 4.8: Whether income level has increased according to project type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food security</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income generation</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings on Table 4.9 show that 54% of the respondents have responded positively on being able to make their own independent decisions from the experience gained from the project venture. The Table also shows that 44% of the total number of respondents indicated that they are not able to make an independent decision because of their involvement into the projects.

**Table 4.9: Capacity of project members in making independent decisions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity on decision</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM THE NGOS

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of donor-funded community empowerment projects on poverty alleviation with one of the objectives as to establish whether donor initiatives on community empowerment are implemented within the empowerment paradigm. This research also utilised an in-depth interview using a semi-structured interview schedule to gather data from NGOs that are engaged in community empowerment projects. The in-depth gathering of responses from NGOs together with the project beneficiaries’ responses will give a clear picture of the impact of donor funded community empowerment projects on poverty alleviation.

4.3.1. Background information of the organisations

The research saw the random selection of two Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that are engaged in community development projects that are aimed at empowering local communities in a bid to combat the adverse effects of poverty. Among these organisations are Malilangwe Conservation Trust and Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT).

The Malilangwe Conservation Trust (MCT) is a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) located in the south eastern part of the district and is situated within a game reserve. The main focus area of the organisation is wild life game preserving. However the organisation is implementing community development projects within the surrounding communities as a poverty alleviation drive. The project of focus from this organisation is a gardening project that was initiated within the Tshovani community in village number 8. The name of the project is The Chuvukelo (Expectation) Sustainable Wa-
The project is funded by the French embassy in Zimbabwe through the “assistance to underprivileged rural populations” program as captured by the project billboard on the site. The Malilangwe Conservation Trust is a local NGO that is overseeing the implementation of the project. The project is composed of forty (40) women that are operating food gardens on a one (1) hectare piece of land that is subdivided into small plots for each of them.

The other NGO that was randomly selected for the purpose of the study is the Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT). The main aim for the CTDT’s project is on food security with the objective to increase household food security among the communities. The information gathered from the organisation’s website clearly states that the organisation is meant to support development of appropriate agricultural technologies, farmer innovations, local knowledge systems and sustainable natural resource utilisation in order to alleviate poverty. The organisation’s major thrust is to address food insecurity caused by recurrent droughts and climatic change, targeting beneficiaries affected by HIV/AIDS pandemic in different aspects of relief, rehabilitation and development programs. The climatic conditions for the area are characterised by droughts to low rainfall patterns and high temperatures during the summer season. Therefore, the place does well for drought resistant crops like sorghum, millet, among others, and animal husbandry. The project of focus for the purpose of this study is the income generation project through small livestock breeding. CTDT had to venture into a small livestock program for food security due to the existing climatic conditions. The organisation ventured into a goat and chicken distribution project on a rotational level. One project member will receive the small livestock and rear them and after they have reproduced, the livestock will be redistributed to other members.
on a cycle basis. The project was initiated as a youth empowerment program, targeting the young generation of school leavers consisting of forty (40) members.

Factors leading to the initiation of the projects

The qualitative information gathered on the factors that have led to the initiation of the projects has indicated that donor availability has been of great influence, according to the data that has been gathered from NGOs. The findings from the in-depth interviews have also indicated that all of NGOs interviewed having moved towards the implementation of these projects to the communities because there were funds that were readily available for use from the donors. The project manager for the Income generation project stated that:

…normally we depend on donors, the NGOs approach us or we even apply to them for funds, but in this case there were already having funds that had we received from donors for this project. On our own its difficulty to manage the funding of the projects, yah-, so that’s how we start, you cannot start without funds….

The findings also show that the main reason behind the projects is to empower the communities. Despite the availability of funds from donors, as noted earlier, the responses gathered show that the NGOs had empowerment of communities in mind. The MCT’s aim is to empower women to be able to produce supplementary foods on their own. The CTDT project is aimed at empowering the youth, with a specific focus being given to school leavers.

One of the participants from MCT reported that:

…Yah we had to start these in order to improve their lives, they needed help, we thought of empowering them, they must be able to do these project on their own, it’s not difficult, but with our help it will be easy because we are joining hands together to improve their lives..
Funding
The findings from the study show that most of the local NGOs depend on external funding for their projects. Malilangwe Conservation Trust (MCT) is being funded by the French embassy and its responsibility is to ensure the implementation of the project. The follow-up question to funding is the influence of the funder on the operations of the project. The findings from the data gathered show that donors are having an influence as to how the projects must be run and what they must address. The findings from the MCT participant are showing that the funder wanted to fund a project aimed at empowering women alone, the food gardening project was meant for women alone. The project with CTDT indicates that the donor has influence in the field work, on how work is supposed to be done and the evaluation of the project.

Model adopted by the organisation
One of the questions that were asked from the NGOs was whether the organisations were having a model of adoption in the implementation of the poverty alleviation projects. The findings from the data collected show that the project manager from the CTDT indicated that they use a model on project implementation that was approved by the Department of Agriculture that also approved their operations in the district.

The participants reported that:

... yes, we are registered with the Department of agriculture, that is the first step in the district and we must submit proposals and they will approve, we operate as they want, so that is the model that we follow

The response from MCT did not indicate having any model of adoption in the implementation of the gardening project. Their response as to how they had implemented
had depending on the knowledge from the agricultural extension officers that were offering the technical expertise for the project.

**Project evaluation**

Regarding the evaluation of the projects the findings show that CTDT did have summative evaluation in place, this is evaluation that is done after the completion of the project cycle in order to determine whether the project expectations were met. The information gathered from the other organisation (MCT) shows that no evaluation of the project was done or proposed by their planning. The organisation is only monitoring the implementation of the project. Project evaluation is of vital importance and is meant to establish value as to whether the program is or has succeeded in meeting the expected outcomes or not.

**Project sustainability**

The findings on sustainability show that all the respondents have indicated training as one of the areas they have focused on in order to ensure that the projects are sustainable. Sustainability is defined by Gray (1998) as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is therefore of vital importance for community project to be sustainable in nature in order meet the needs of future generations after the local organisation’s funding and management of the project.

One of the participants reported that:

… we always ensure that we train the project leadership before they start the project, we train them on how to manage a project, how to market their products. Outside training we also take them to a sight visit of other successful projects so that they can learn and influence others, that’s what we do.
With CTDT’s income generation project through livestock production the farmers are trained to keep animals and treat them whenever necessary. The CTDT project also involved the training of what they called “lead farmers”, these are project members that are trained to lead their colleagues by example or by being role models at a ratio of 1:10. The food gardening project had only the project leadership trained on project leadership, business management and marketing. The organisation have also ensured sustainability through linking the project members with the local Agricultural extension Service Officers (AREX) to help the in the gardening project with the technical expertise needed.

4.3.2. Project management

One of the research’s objectives was to establish the level of participation and localisation of decision making in the donor funded projects. Decision making is one of the central factors in measurement of the impact of empowerment. The findings from the gathered data shows that the income generation project of CTDT had itself as involved in the making of any decision in line with the project with limited involvement of members. The MCT project has its decision centred on the individual members, local leadership and the NGO itself.

Community consultation is one of the questions that were asked in line with project initiation. The findings obtained from the study show that all participants have indicated that they have consulted the communities before the implementation of the projects on what projects they want. One of the organisations, CTDT, indicated that they started by consulting and carrying needs assessment with the District Administrator (DA) which will refer them to the local councillors and then gain access to the
community. This was given in response to the question of how they consulted with the community. MCT also indicated they consulted with the community meetings with the local leadership and meetings with the people in the community.

One of the participants stated that:

…before we started any activities for the project, we met the DA (District Administrator) for the council, we signed a MoU with the rural district council getting needs that the council is having, that gave us permission to meet the local councillors, form the local councillors we would meet the local leadership of the community and their members.

**Accountability on project outcomes**

The ensuring of project accountability is one of the aspects discussed in the interview process with the NGOs. The findings from the income generation project show that it is the NGO’s sole responsibility is to ensure that the project was a success and positive results are attained. This was however different from the food gardening project that indicated that there is a collective effort in ensuring the attainment of positive results from the project.

**Involvement of local leadership**

One of the objectives of the study was to assess the level of community participation and involvement in the project. The findings from the information gathered in line with the involvement of local leadership in the formulation and implementation of the project shows that all organisations approached the local leadership. The follow-up question to this one is on how they are involved; this gave different responses from the interviewees. It was further revealed that the income generation project of CTDT involves the local leadership through consultations and the food gardening project
involves them as part of the project management, as the overseer of the project above the project chairperson.

4.3.3. Project delivery

The other question captured on the interview schedule was focusing on how the project is delivered. Among other issues discussed under this question involved how community members are brought into the project, challenges or obstacles to success and the critical issues towards project delivery and how those challenges can be mitigated.

How people are involved in the project

The findings on the way how project members were involved into the project by the local NGOs show that all project members from both the organisations have voluntarily chosen to be members of the project. Despite voluntarism in project membership the local NGO would also select on the basis of vulnerability for suitable candidates. The participant from CTDT maintained that “… we don’t force people to come and join the project, but still we select on vulnerability, the most vulnerable groups are the ones that we go for, but all of our people are from the community…”.

Barriers to the success of the project

The information that was gathered from one of the Project supervisors of the food gardening project shows that the main obstacle to effective project delivery is a lack of commitment from the project members and shortage of resources, more specifically on the funds for the running of the projects. The participant for the income generation project under CTDT has indicated that the barriers hindering the success of
the project are a short time lag for the implementation of the project. This is mainly
due to the end of the project’s time frame and also due to seasonal changes be-
cause people will be becoming busy during the farming season. The other reasons
cited are the changes to key personnel in the local community and that new staff will
always coming in. The project manager of CTDT was saying that “… there is need for
more time to implement the project, usually the life time for the project is one (1) year
and that’s too short to achieve our targets, because it is a process.”

Critical matters towards success of project delivery
The findings gathered on the critical matters towards the success of the project from
MCT participant shows the most important aspects towards the success of project
delivery as openness and transparency to all citizens starting from the project design
stage. Gender balance and role differentiation in project implementation was also
noted as of relative importance in the success of the project as noted by CTDT in
one of the responses. It can be noted that when there is a balance in gender they
can influence each other in roles and collective decision making process and there-
fore distorting the stereotypical gender differentiation of roles.

One of the participants reported that “…people always think that gardening is for
women alone, man can also do well in gardening together with women”

4.3.4. The impact of the project
The findings gathered from the income generation project of livestock rearing by
CTDT on the attainment of immediate measurable results for the project is the show-
ing of an increase in the level of participation by the project members, especially
women who have proved themselves to be more committed. Men are also gaining
interest and motivation because of seeing what women are doing. The response from MCT indicated an improvement of skills on gardening as the immediate measurable results of the project and men are now assisting women in the project.

**How the project managed to change the behaviour of the beneficiaries**

The findings on the impact of the project in managing to change the behaviour of the beneficiaries show that for CTDT there has been a change in the level of participation by the members. The food gardening project by MCT is showing that there is an improvement on the appreciation of the needs for others in the community due to working together.

**How it managed to change the wellbeing of the members**

The research findings also show how the projects managed to change the wellbeing of the community members through the project venture. The findings gathered for the project supervisor of MCT’s gardening project show that the project members are now able to start their own food gardens with minimum supervision due to experience they got from the project venture. The other participant for the Income generation project has noted an increase in the project members’ level of participation in project activities. This implies that they are happy with their involvement in the project exercise hence they were participating more.

**The possible long term change that is likely to be brought by the projects**

The other issue that was noted in the interviews with the local NGOs leaders was on possible long term changes that might have been effected by the project venture towards poverty alleviation. The project manager of CTDT has given an impression
that that there is an increased trust in NGOs and their operations by the community members and they can therefore commit themselves to work more with them hence giving more room for development to take place. The participant from MCT has also noted that there is an increased standard of living and skills attained by the project members as a long term change due to the project.

**Unintended outcomes**

The findings on unintended outcomes are showing that with CTDT there has been a shortage of funds thereby affecting the NGO’s operations. The findings from the MCT’s food gardening shows project members were now abandoning the project due to the shortage of critical resources like water; drilled boreholes could not supply enough water for the one hectare gardening project.

4.4. **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Community empowerment is viewed as one of the pillars of community development towards poverty alleviation and the two are deemed to be happening simultaneously, according to Laverack and Wallerstein (2001). Empowerment is viewed as both a process and an outcome of community developmental process. There have been a lot of donor initiatives to empower communities through community development projects, but the effectiveness by local NGOs’ projects has left a lot to be desired as far as achieving community empowerment. This has therefore called for this study focusing on the impact of donor funded community empowerment projects on poverty alleviation, focusing on selected projects in the Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe.
The findings of the study show that the organisations depend on funding from outside. This funding normally comes with strings attached to it, the donors will likely dictate the terms and conditions for the use of the funds and this is likely to go against the organisation’s mandate on community empowerment through that project. These local NGOs do not have models for adoption in the implementation of their projects, this has led to a lack of direction in ensuring that their project members are empowered or capacitated through the project ventures. The research finding shows that the objective of establishing whether the projects were implemented within an empowerment paradigm was positively met.

Consultation was done from top coming down to the grassroots level; the Top-down approach is likely to give problems on the carrying out of the needs assessment or analysis of the community. The needs assessment that was carried out by CTDT started from the District Administration where they were given the main priority areas to be focused on within the district. They then moved down to the local councillors who presented them to the community members to present their area of focus for the project. This approach is opposed to the Bottom-up approach which starts from the grassroots and then moves up. The people in the community are the disempowered people that are in need of being empowered and they can best decide what is best for them than being presented with a project for adoption. The DA may present what is essential to local municipality which may be out of touch with reality on the ground from the community. This research finding goes in line with the objective of the assessment of the level of community participation and localisation of decision –making in the donor-funded projects within the communities.
This outcome of the findings in line with consultations can be attributed to a number of factors especially when taking into account the level of income of the respondents. The findings on the other sources of income outside the project are showing that 58% of the respondents have indicated that they do not have any other source of income; therefore the projects might have been their sole project of focus in order to earn a living given the limited options other than accepting what was on the table.

Training and education are very essential for any project venture especially when committed to community empowerment. According to Mamburu (2000) citing Nkuhlu (1994) training and education are categorised under capacity building whilst Frere (in Mondros and Wilson, 1994:228) terms it conscientisation to denote a learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality. Training in itself entails the enhancement of community knowledge, skills and attitudes. Training is one of the factors that ensure a sustainable nature of a project as also shown in the PRAISES model discussed under the review of literature related to the study. Untrained members may not perform well in the project due to the lack of skills. The findings show that no members have been trained for the project they are to undertake especially with gardening project only the leadership were trained.

Decision making process needs to be inclusive than exclusive of the project members for they are the beneficiaries to be empowered in independent decision making without the local NGOs' involvement. This is the true spirit of empowerment that is focused on enabling the community members to be able to make their own independent decisions and be able to claim ownership of the project.
The involvement of the local leadership is of uttermost importance in bringing cohesion within the community. Community leaders are directly in contact with their communities and can easily be of positive influence on development matters. However there is a need to balance it with the community members because some community leadership may end up appropriating the project resources and ownership of the project at the expense of the community. The findings show that some of the respondents claims project ownership to local leadership instead of the community at large. It is also of importance to note that the participant from CTDT NGO claimed that they first met the local municipality and then met the local leadership who then directed them to the entire community. This finding positively meets the research objective on community participation.

The findings from the study show that 33 % of the respondents have indicated both projects as to be of no importance in improving their wellbeing, with 13 % noting the improvement in the living standards due to the project and the rest showing an improvement in local services and community cohesion. The wellbeing of the community can also be measured according to the income generated by the project members; from the findings of the study there are 71% of the respondents that have indicated a no increase in their level of income from the project venture. This finding positively confirms the research objective on establishing the impact of community empowerment interventions by local organisations towards poverty alleviation.

The other aspect for discussion from the findings is on income generation. There is a need for projects to be income generating in order for them to be successful and sustainable with little dependence on funding from external sources. The findings
from the study indicate that both projects encountered some unintended outcomes due to shortage of funding for the operations. They seem to heavily depend on donor agencies instead of self-dependence. The income generated as shown by the findings was too small to keep the projects running in case of funding shortages. As highlighted by Gray (1998) in the literature review income generating projects are self-sustaining and therefore it is vital for a project to generate income if it is to be sustainable.

The main reason behind the initiation of any social, economic or political intervention programs is to produce positive results. In order to establish value as to whether the program is or has succeeded in meeting the expected outcomes or not one needs to carry out an evaluation exercise. The responses for project evaluation were ranging from clarificatory, formative, process and summative evaluation or it was not done at all during the project cycle. The organisations have given mixed responses on this note, with one doing outcome evaluation at the end of the project cycle and the other one with no evaluation at all. The findings from the project members also show that there was no proper monitoring that was done in order to achieve the outcomes or objectives of the projects, with 63% of respondents having indicated that there is need to improve on the monitoring of the projects.

It is plausible to acknowledge the positives that the projects have managed to achieve, and among this is on training. The indications from the data gathered from both the project members and the NGOs are showing a positive outcome. The findings from the project members are showing a 63% of the respondents indicating that they have been trained. This is tallying with the information gathered from the NGOs
that shows that they are committing themselves into the training of the project members either directly or indirectly. Training is part of the tenets that are captured under the sustenance part of the PRAISES model. It is a vital tool towards empowerment. However one needs to consider the outcomes of the trainings and the indicators of such in order to be able to give a balanced evaluation of the impact of this kind of training in the implementation of these projects. The findings on how helpful the projects are to the community members show that they highly valued the help from the projects. This is most probable with the communities mainly rural in nature where there are no other economic activities for income generation outside subsistence farming. These projects are therefore of uttermost importance to community members but the addressing of the empowerment issue is another.

4.5. SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the presentation of the findings from the study of the impact of donor-funded community empowerment project with the aim to alleviate poverty. The findings are a product of quantitative and qualitative data from project members and local NGOs that were involved in the implementation of the projects. The chapter also gave brief discussions of the findings from the project members and the Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs). There is a need for mutual engagements between the community members and the NGOs with the latter spear-heading the process of empowerment in order to reach out to the community through these projects. The findings show a serious need on the part of the local NGOs in order to be able to foster empowerment in the communities.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION
The previous chapter of the study gave focus to the presentation of research findings and discussion of the research findings. The main purpose of this chapter is to focus on the summarization of the findings, conclusion of the research and giving of recommendations. This section of the study will be of value in that it will also highlight the relevance of the study and possible areas that may need to be given attention in further researches.

5.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
Craig and Mayo (1995) citing Wallerstein and Bernstein (1994) define community empowerment as a social action in which individuals and groups act to gain mastery over their lives in the context of changing their social, economic and political environments. This section of the study focuses on the summarization of findings from the research study.

The measurement of the impact by the projects to the beneficiaries in fostering community empowerment can be established through the use of different models. According to De Vos (2001) the concept of impact assessment implies a set of specified, operationally defined objectives and criteria of success. Measurement of NGOs’ impact on communities can be viewed form the Business Community Model's principles that are measured against a “triple bottom line” as cited by Matube (2000:249). The model stipulates five principles that impact performance of NGOs can be meas-
ured from and these are community issues, stakeholder consultations, management and information systems, developing action plans and reporting.

The impact measurement can also be assessed from the principle of community issues according to Matube (200). The author notes that impact analysis must focus on the donor’s values and policies in practice. It can therefore be noted from the findings shown that there is no proper planning in the organisations’ side in order to ensure that the community members are empowered. Failure to have a model that defines their operations is a sure sign of facing challenges in the project implementation phase on the critical factors that enforce empowerment of the beneficiaries. Lack of communication between the local NGOs and the community members is of great concern to the projects especially when committed to empowerment. The findings show that 46 % of respondents classify their communication with funder as poor, as against 2 % of the respondents who say it is best.

The measurement of stakeholder consultation gives focus on how many stakeholders are involved and consulted by the organisation. The findings show that there has been a link with other service providers like the Agricultural Extension Services in trying to empower the community members with necessary skills in their field of practice.

The other aspect of impact measurement that can be drawn from the findings of the study is the management and information systems of the organisation. The local NGOs leadership and transparency would be determined by how they communicate with project members and many make their every activity transparent. The findings
show that there is a clearly defined bureaucratic tendency of reaching to the project members by the local NGOs. This may pose a serious threat or hindrance to effective communication between the NGOs and the project beneficiaries. The great need for project monitoring as reflected by the findings is another sign of a need for management and information systems.

It can therefore be concluded that the objectives of the study have been met as indicated in the findings. The organisations did not have a model of adoption in the implementation of projects for community empowerment. It is also evident from the findings that the involvement of the communities was at a secondary level because the adoption of a top-down approach and therefore meeting one of the objectives for the study on the level of community participation. The projects did not manage to attain a positive impact on the lives of the beneficiaries hence positively addressing the research objectives.

5.3. CONCLUSIONS

The main thrust of the study was to establish the impact of donor-funded community empowerment projects that are aimed at poverty alleviation with focus on two selected projects in the Chiredzi district of Zimbabwe. Local NGOs are agents of change in assistance to the government efforts in fostering community empowerment to the communities.

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of donor-funded community empowerment projects in poverty alleviation. The objectives of the study were to establish whether donor initiatives of community empowerment are implemented
within the empowerment paradigm, assessment of the level of community participation and decision making, establishment of the level of impact by the projects towards community empowerment. The outcome of the study is intended to provide NGOs with improved practices in the delivery of projects that are aimed at empowering communities.

The first objective of the study was to establish whether donor initiatives of empowering communities through projects are implemented within the empowerment paradigm. The concept calls for the capacitation or enhancing an individual or group’s capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. It therefore calls for community involvement and participation in the project process in order to be capacitated. The findings show that there has been limited involvement of the members in the needs assessment and decision making processes of the project. The involvement of the project members in choosing a project was the last priority with those on top in leadership having more say on what projects to be given to the communities. Project members must be key decision makers with guidance of the local NGOs management in order for them to gain experience hence be capacitated. Project ownership as one of the pillars of community empowerment has fallen short from the gathered responses. The research findings show that 52 % of the respondents claimed that the projects are owned by individuals and local leadership.

The second objective of the study was to assess the level of community participation and localisation of decision-making in the donor-funded projects within the communities. Its findings also partly alluded to above shows that the participation of
the members is limited and this will end leading to withdrawal, feeling discouraged and out of the mood to continue with the project by some project members. Community involvement in decision making and management of the project is very vital from the onset of the project.

The third objective for the study was to establish the impact of community empowerment interventions by local organisations towards poverty alleviation. The main aspects covered by this study on this objective are a look into the change brought by the project in wellbeing. According the Bergeheim (2006) of the Deutscher Research Bank (DRB) there are many measurements of a community’s wellbeing outside its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) though they cannot replace it. Among these is happiness, which includes community ties, family activities and friends among others. The other aspects for wellbeing are living conditions and the economic wellbeing. The study has shown that the project beneficiaries are fairly meeting their needs with a 33 % indicating that the project has not been helpful to them. There is little increase in the income levels due to the project venture, according to the findings 71 %, indicating no increase in their income from the projects.

According to Haughey (2010) the key to a successful project is in the planning and the creation of a plan comprises the first phase in the undertaking of any project venture. Planning before any project venture is of absolute necessity because it sets out the phases, activities and tasks that are needed to deliver a project. The project plan is of value into both the local NGOs and the project members in saving time, money and problems likely to be encountered. This can be concluded from the
findings that MCT and CTDT did not effectively plan their work before starting the projects or else they did not implement their activities according to plan. The MCT gardening project faced challenges of water shortage, which is a very important resource for the success of the project, hence compromising the empowerment of the community through this project. This happened despite all the resources that have been invested into the project and will render the entire venture fruitless. It can thus be argued that there was no real commitment on the part of the locals to ensure the success of the project other than receiving funds from the French embassy and then starting something that is not sustainable. CTDT also did not effectively put in place in their planning the seasonal variations in this mostly hot and dry area; this therefore led to some of their goats dying due to shortage of pastures or eating poisonous plants during the summer seasons that are dry. They should have considered the use of supplementary feeds for the dry season.

Project ownership is very crucial in order to instill community empowerment for the community. It can therefore be concluded from the findings that most of the participants did not own the project but individuals were actually in-charge. This is in direct contrast to one of the pillars of empowerment and capacitation of individuals with skills and knowledge in order to be able to make their own independent choices and decisions in life. There was a serious compromise of project ownership in this respect hence causing a lot of withdrawal and discouragement among members.

The organisations are also given credit for ensuring sustainability through linking with other institutions. Sustainability issues should be thoroughly put into consideration in order to effectively empower the communities through development projects that are
aimed at poverty alleviation. According to Gray (1998), citing Tager (1996), notes that for any project to be sustainable it must be well planned, involve education/training, links with the relevant departments e.g. agriculture, deeply rooted into the community, having environmental considerations and the generation of income. These will keep the project in motion with less challenges hindering success.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the research, as mentioned in the introduction will cover the suggested recommendations for the future research, specific agency management, practice and the implications on community empowerment as a method of practice towards poverty alleviation.

5.4.1. Recommendations for practice

The following are suggested recommendations to practice in order to achieve community empowerment through donor funded projects:

1) One of the noted areas of concern for recommendations is on-going mentorship; there has been a lack of mentorship and follow-up to project activities by the NGOs and also monitoring of the project on whether it is being implemented towards the planned direction. According to DBSA (2010), mentorship services can be rendered on an ongoing medium to long term in respect of the business plan and financial plan for a specified period of time.

2) It is always of importance to realize that any project venture and its progress requires much patience, resolve and diligence in order to overcome the challenges of the local conditions of constraints that are associated with poverty,
culture, lack of education and internal politics. It has been noted from the interviews that some members feel discouraged by some circumstances, feel disengaged in these projects and were never given an opportunity to own the project. This therefore implies that despite constant monitoring that can be offered to the project they may still go through a series of bounds that may require patience, proper and careful attention from the funder and the project beneficiaries. It is therefore necessary for project members to consider the challenges to be encountered in the project cycle even with some of the external factors beyond their control.

3) It is also of uttermost importance for organisations to show a greater commitment to the ensuring of community empowerment. This can be achieved through coming out with a comprehensive organisational empowerment models that will suit the area in which the project is being implemented in. An example of an organisation’s commitment to empowerment through community development can be seen with the case of the South African National Road Agency Limited (SANRAL) which developed community empowerment approach for adoption. SANRAL has noted the need for community development and empowerment as enormous in South Africa, and it demands a prioritisation process which enables one to define the areas of greatest need. The model realises the need for pre-project study on empowerment impact assessment, monitoring and socio-economic evaluations.
4) Community empowerment is not all about resource allocation but resource utilisation in the most effective and efficient way that will convert the resources or efforts invested into capabilities. Malilangwe Conservation Trust (MCT) could not monitor its resources after allocating them to the community for
utilisation in the project. This is of necessity in ensuring that there is proper utilisation of resources in a way that will benefit the community at large and not individuals.

5) NGOs should not engage themselves in projects that they are incapacitated to manage for the sake of pleasing the funder. MCT was incapacitated to monitor its operation until the project could not continue because of the shortage of water for the food garden.

6) There must be originality (organic nature of NGOs) with the NGOs’ operations in that they must not always depend upon the funders on what they want or else they will end up lacking a lot in addressing the real cause of poverty or disempowerment. The funding organisations received funding from donors; it is the tendency for the donors to dictate on how operations are to be done. According to Shah (2005) this is equal to undermining of the ability of local organisations to be able to set their own priorities and agendas to vocalise their own imaginations of social change. Michael (2004) asserts that one of the most widely acknowledged problems of donor-funded interventions is that donors have their own procedures of designing, approving, monitoring and evaluating the activities that they fund. These procedures may differ from those of recipient organisations hence more time and effort might be spent on following the requirement procedures.

7) Culture and knowledge of the people serve as of prime importance in community development especially when committed to empowerment. According to Shah (2005) citing Howell and Pearce (2000), civil society cannot really be grown from “outside” it must come from within society, with this it will be able to react to the specific historical, social and cultural contexts.
8) There must be a more decentralised system of empowerment; group projects do not always yield the best results, and may best work when they are being done individually. Food gardens can be done individually in order to promote project ownership, as can be seen from the findings that the projects are owned by individuals instead of the entire group. The MCT food gardening project was started on a private owned plot which gives room for the plot owner to evict or gain advantage over the project members. This can be done on individual plots with each and every member focusing on her own progress with the assistance and guidance for the local NGOs.

5.4.2. Recommendations for specific agency management

1) Malilangwe Conservation Trust (MCT) must ensure the proper management of the project for the benefit of the community through these donor funded initiatives that are aimed at community empowerment. This will greatly be of help in helping MCT to be able to evaluate the progress in the accomplishment of target objectives for the project in order to improve or maintain the standard of services rendered.

2) NGOs should guard against monopolisation of the project by individuals who wield power within the local leadership; this will pose threats to the achievement of project ownership by the project members.

3) Partnership with local municipal authorities is of vital importance when committed towards sustainable projects that will foster empowerment of the communities. This is of value especially considering that municipalities and their structures are there to stay as compared to NGOs that come and go. Partnerships will go a long way in ensuring sustainability on the projects. Lombard (1991) views this as the
main aim of community development, to enable and encourage communities to become more involved with necessary support from the private and government sectors in improving and managing their own living conditions in all areas of development. Craig and Mayo (1991) argue that in order for NGOs to move to a more strategic approach in their interventions they need to press and negotiate with local, national government structures and private sector to working in partnerships with them.

4) In order to promote sustainability, projects must have an income generation element; it can be realised that both projects could not generate income for their beneficiaries. The project by CTDT of livestock production takes time to generate income hence the impact might be long term and therefore compromising the alleviation of poverty.

5) The location of the projects plays a big role in ensuring the success of the projects; the projects for the study are all located in the rural communities. This gives a direct contact of the local NGO and the beneficiaries and this vantage point must be well considered for benefit. Shah (2005) supports this assertion when he points out that working at the grassroots helps to provide assistance directly at the source and NGOs can be more effective and have more positive results if they work with actual communities and help them to empower themselves. Therefore, it can be recommended that local NGOs must take advantage of the grassroots location for their benefit.

6) NGOs invest a lot of resources from the donors but are incapacitated to monitor and manage the utilization of these resources for the benefit of the project members. CTDT has shown itself to be more organized in their utilization and proper management of resources. This can be attributed to their field workers that are
usually monitoring progress on the project members. However MCT fell short in capacitation to properly manage its resources for effective use by the project members.

7) There is a need for a Bottom-up approach adoption for consultations or in carrying out of needs analysis by the organisations. CTDT started from up to the ground; it normally encourages lack of ownership of the project.

8) The other recommendations gathered from the project members is the need for the gardening projects to be initiated for individuals and not for a group from the same community within the same small privately owned piece of land. This will improve on accountability towards any failure or success to the individual member than a collective effort. This has emerged in line with the gardening project for MCT where individuals were having their small portions of land divided from the same piece of land for the forty members. The land where the project operated belonged to a local leader who ended up appropriating the project resources for his benefit.

5.4. Suggestions for further studies

The research used a triangulation method through combining quantitative and qualitative research designs. Quantitative research study has some limitations in itself and therefore there is a need to carry out a qualitative study through in-depth interviews in order to unravel the deep underlying thoughts of the respondents than solely depending on a quantitative paradigm. A qualitative paradigm seeks to describe and understand social action in terms of specific context rather than attempting to generalise through explanations and prediction of human behaviour to some theoretical populations (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).
The research study covered the Chiredzi District of Zimbabwe in the Masvingo province; there might be need to extent the study to cover up the entire province outside the generalisation of quantitative research findings. This may show some disparities in a myriad of variables like social, economic, political positioning of the people among others leading to different findings for the province and the country at large, so there is a need for more research on that note.

5.5. POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS ON POLICY CHANGES

There is need for a decentralisation of NGO operations’ regulation as per district in the country. The districts must be given room to craft by-laws to monitor NGOs’ operations and not only approve their operations and restricting on the model of operation, this may pose a serious threat to empowerment.

There is also a need for a review of the legal statutes that guide the operations of NGOs in Zimbabwe in order to promote a wholly independent NGO sector that is free from manipulation and commandeering by the government. The legal statutes guiding the operations of the NGOs are currently the PVO Act which was crafted form the Welfare Organizations’ Act 93 of 1967. This Act was enacted when Zimbabwe was still Rhodesia before the gaining of independence. The general nature of colonial governments was restrictive and oppressive and this may imply that the continued use of the same instruments in this modern democratic world might render them out of touch with reality. The current environment for NGOs’ operations is versatile, as has been noted in the banning of 29 NGOs in Masvingo province in February 2012 by the provincial governor (Newzimbabwe.com, 2012). Saki (2010) posits that with the increased demand for democratic space and reforms
in Zimbabwe, NGOs became targets of state harassment through increased legislative and administrative interference. It can therefore be envisaged that the creation of an even platform for NGOs’ operation through non-oppressive and apolitical legislations may foster sustainable community empowerment initiatives through donor funded projects.

It is of great importance to realise that it is insufficient for poverty alleviation to only deliver services, develop infrastructure and to raise the levels of income without effective and sustainable development means. This is achieved through the designing policies and interventions that will both build the stocks of assets people have at their disposal and ensure that the rules of the game operate in order to allow the transformation of these assets into poverty reducing benefits (Aslop, Bertelsen, &Holland: 2006). The MCT project saw a lot of resources being channelled into the project, land preparations for gardening thoroughly done, tools for the garden infrastructure put in place, but there was no conversion of those resources into poverty reduction means for the benefit of the community.

5.6. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The main purpose of social interventions according to the empowerment model cited by Lee (2001) is a creation of an integrated method of social work practice that is driven by a unified personal construct and a commitment to the unleashing of human potentialities towards the end of building a beloved community where justice is a rule. This implies that the principle of the maintenance of a holistic vision in situations of oppression should be upheld by social workers if integration in the field of practice is to be attained.
The empowerment model adopted for the purpose of this study looks at professional purpose, value base, knowledge base and the method of empowerment as its main tenets of empowerment. This therefore implies the need to uphold these tenets by the social workers or community development practitioners. There is a need to have enough knowledge of the context and environment of the community in which the project is being implemented in. The failure to consider the need for supplementary feeds during the dry season of the year has led to death of some of the livestock for the CTDT project; proper planning with thorough knowledge of the environment should have catered for the seasonal variations and measures already put in place.
6. REFERENCES


Date accessed: 09-11-12.


Date accessed: 15-10-11.


Available at: http://www.projectsmart.co.uk/project-planning. Date accessed 06-12-12.


Napier 2011


Date accessed: 03- 07- 12

Accessed on 28-04-2011


Private Voluntary Organizations Act [Chapter 17: 05], Republic of Zimbabwe Available at: www1.umn.edu/humanrts/research/Zimbabwe-NGO%20laws.pdf
Date accessed: 26 - 04 - 2011


7. APPENDICES

7.4. APPENDIX 1: INTRODUCTION LETTER

THE IMPACT OF DONOR-FUNDED COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION: A CASE OF SELECTED PROJECTS IN CHIREDZI DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE.

INTRODUCTION LETTER

- I am a University of Fort Hare Master of Social work student who is undertaking a research on the impact of donor-funded community empowerment projects on poverty alleviation focusing on selected projects in Chiredzi District of Zimbabwe. You have therefore been randomly selected to be one of the participants in this research.

- There are no direct benefits in line with your participation but it might be of help in future implementation of project of the same nature and may also provide a basis for future policy formulation.

- Your participation in this exercise is entirely voluntary and therefore you are at liberty to decline giving responses to any questions that may be sensitive to you in any respect. You are also free to call off the interview session whenever you
feel you cannot continue with the exercise. If you agree to participate in this research you need to indicate through signing this informed consent form.

- In this interview you will be asked different questions by a trained interviewer, the questions to be asked will relate to your biographical information, your involvement in the project and how the project impacted on your life. Some of the questions might be sensitive but they are very crucial for assessment. The interviewer will take an average of 30 - 40 minutes to complete the interview. The information to be gathered will be highly confidential and anonymous, not even the name of the project will be mentioned, therefore feel free to ask any questions for clarity.

Should you require any additional information on this study you are welcome to contact Mr. Mulwayini Mundai at (0027) 73 985 965 7
7.5. APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM

THE IMPACT OF DONOR-FUNDED COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION: A CASE OF SELECTED PROJECTS IN CHIREDZI DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE.

CONSENT FORM

Respondent ID Number: __________________ Area ID Number: ________________

RESPONDENT:

I, ____________________________________________________________________________

[FULL NAME OF RESPONDENT IN BLOCK LETTERS]

- have read and understood all the information above;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- was given an opportunity to discuss the information and to ask questions;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
• volunteer to take part in this study;

YES

NO

• Confirmed that I have received a copy of this consent form.

YES

NO

Signature of respondent: _________________________ Date: ________________

[ or of parent / guardian, if under 18 years]

Respondent cannot write _________________________
APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE TO PROJECT MEMBERS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

THE IMPACT OF DONOR-FUNDED COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION: A CASE OF SELECTED PROJECTS IN CHIREDZI DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE.

Instructions: Please indicate the correct response / s by ticking in the relevant box /es shown spaces provided per each question.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Age:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+ years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Gender:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Marital Status:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Name of Community Area:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tshovani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chisa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gudo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilonga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. What is your highest level of education?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not educated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Certificate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION B: QUESTIONS IN LINE WITH THE PROJECT BACKGROUND

**Instruction:** Tick in the box/es for correct response/s

6. Project type:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income generation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Others, specify..................................................................................................................

7. Position in the project;

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Chairperson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Have you been consulted in project formulation?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your answer is Yes on question 8 were those views considered?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Is this project the one that you wanted?

| YES | NO |

10. What do you think can be done to improve projects that are done for the community? More than one response is allowed.

- Consultation
- Monitoring
- Time management
- Others, specify ……………………………………………………………………………………

11. Did you receive any training on the kind of work you were to do from the beginning?

| YES | NO |

12. If NO on question 13 then how do you manage without training?

........................................................................................................................................

........................................................................................................................................
13. Who is in charge of the project? Indicate by marking the correct response/s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Do you feel as if you own the project

YES [ ]

NO [ ]

15. If you answer is NO on question 17, who do you think is the owner of the project? More than one response is allowed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. How are the communication lines between you and your donor?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. How helpful is the project in helping you to meet your daily needs?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very much helpful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly helpful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not helpful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. Are you still feeling involved in the project like in the beginning?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. If your answer is No on question 19, what could be the reason? Indicate by marking the correct response/s.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discouragements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other commitments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Others, specify ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
20. Who are the main beneficiaries of your project? Indicate by marking the correct response/s.

- None
- Individual leadership
- NGO
- Community

21. Were you given chance to know the organization you will be working with from the beginning?

- YES
- NO

**SECTION C: QUESTIONS IN LINE WITH THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT**

22. Do you have any other sources of income outside the project?

- YES
- NO

23. If yes, how much do you get on average? Indicate the range.

- Nil
- Below $250
- $250-$500
- $5000-$750
- above $750
24. Are there any possible long term changes that are likely to occur because of the project venture? Indicate by marking the correct response/s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Better local services</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased levels of trust in local NGOs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced levels of community cohesion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Others, specify ........................................................................................................

25. Has the project been so helpful to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6. If your answer is YES on question are you now able to meet your daily needs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fairly</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7. Are you now able to work on your own with the same project since you have been involved in this project?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
29. Did you learn any new skills in the project?

| YES | NO |

30. If your answer is YES on question 28 do you think those skills can help you on future project of the same nature?

| YES | NO |

31. Is there an increase on your monthly income due to the project?

| YES | NO |

32. Do you feel more capacitated to make your own independent decision because of your involvement in the project?

| YES | NO |

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH
7.7. APPENDIX 4: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR NGOs

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

THE IMPACT OF DONOR-FUNDED COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION: A CASE OF SELECTED PROJECTS IN CHIREDZI DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE.

1. What is the background surrounding the initiation of the project?
2. How is the project delivered in order to meet the expected outcomes?
3. How is the project being managed?
4. What type evaluation is there for the project?
5. How do you ensure sustainability of the project?
6. What are the challenges being encountered in the project.
7. How is the impact of the project on the community members?