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Ending Extreme Poverty (SDG 1) in Chegutu District of Zimbabwe: An Analysis of Tsungirirai Welfare Organisation's Interventions

Itai Kabonga, Ernest Dube, Cowen Dziva, and Nyasha Chaminuka

Abstract

The study analyses the contribution of Tsungirirai Welfare Organisation's (TWO) interventions in ending extreme poverty (SDG 1) in Chegutu district, Zimbabwe. The study was qualitative in nature and data were collected using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and documentary analysis. In a bid to reduce extreme poverty, TWO is implementing activities that include economic strengthening, vocational training, healthcare provision and educational assistance to poor households. Internal Savings and Lending Schemes (ISALS) have increased financial income, allowing households to improve on indicators of health, education and food and nutrition. Households' capability to

acquire physical assets like wheelbarrows, scotch carts and ploughs has improved because of household income-generating projects. Vocational training has reduced unemployment of youths. The chapter argues that the TWO has contributed significantly to the reduction of extreme poverty although some challenges remain in the district and country at large. To address TWO's limited coverage, the study recommends partnerships with other NGOs and the private sector.

Keywords

SDG 1 · Tsungirirai Welfare Organisation · Poverty · Extreme poverty · NGOs

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1 Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a set of 17 common goals to meet urgent global environment, economic, social and political challenges by the year 2030. The SDGs substituted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 "with the objective of producing a set of common goals that meet urgent global environmental, economic, and political challenges by 2030" (Fofana et al. 2019, p. 4). Amongst other imperatives, the SDGs took off as

a global effort to address the indignity of poverty. SDGs focus on issues of wider and global implication relating to social, economic and environmental sustainability as well as pertinent aspects of peace, justice and effective institutions (Ankeroye et al. 2018). Mugadziwa (2012) sees the SDGs as an attempt to balance the three dimensions of development—economic, social and environment—in a manner that ensures sustainable use of resources to benefit the present and future generations.

This chapter focuses on the implementation of SDG 1—to end extreme poverty by 2030—by a non-governmental organisation (NGO), Tsungirirai Welfare Organisation (TWO) in Chegutu district. Poverty ranks as one of the major problems affecting the Chegutu district. Statistics show that in Chegutu district 72.4% of the people are living in poverty (Zimbabwe Poverty Atlas Map 2015, p. 4). Extreme poverty in the district is reflected by food shortages, homelessness, lack of clothing, sickness due to lack of medical attention and lack of income at the household level. Poverty at the household level in Chegutu has also led to an increase in child prostitution and teenage pregnancies. Many people are dying of avoidable diseases that can be easily treated. The growing poverty level in Chegutu district is related to at least two dynamics that occurred in the broader trajectory of Zimbabwe as a country. These include the neo-liberal stance that was adopted by the country in the 1990s. Contextualising it to Chegutu, the neo-liberal stance adopted by the government in the form of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) resulted in retrenchments and increased difficulties as the society could not cope with the increased withdrawal of the government in social spending. Compounding the situation was the Fast Track Land Reform Programme that resulted in the plunder and looting of the once viable farms like Hopedale. The land reform programme saw farmworkers plunged into poverty gravitating towards what Mowawa (2013) calls “sex panning”, an indication of growing levels of poverty. With the coming in of the “Zimbabwean Crisis”—a shorthand for complex state failure (Murisa 2010, p. 3)—

the general fall of the economy increased poverty across Zimbabwe and Chegutu district was no exception. Magure (2015) posits that as a result of economic challenges, most people in the district are in the informal economy doing informal trading, gold panning and prostitution as livelihood strategies.

TWO is tackling poverty through several approaches such as investing in education, health provision, social provision and economic strengthening to poor households. The chapter argues that TWO has significantly contributed to ending extreme poverty although some challenges remain in the district and the country at large. The organisation in its attempt to fight poverty is cooperating with other NGOs and the government, significantly aligning with one of the SDGs’ core principles of partnership. To achieve the SDGs, there is need for collaboration between governments, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector (Adjei et al. 2012). The fight against poverty is no easy battle as the organisation is facing numerous challenges such as donor dependency, shifting donor requirements and effects of structural economic conditions in Zimbabwe.

While SDGs are global goals that nations must achieve by 2030, there is an absence of micro studies on how NGOs are contributing to the ending of extreme poverty in the context of sustainable development. The academia, policy crafters and development practitioners are in the dark regarding the strategies and activities used by local level NGOs to end extreme poverty. CEEWeb for Biodiversity (2017) argues that NGOs play an important role in the implementation of SDGs. To achieve goal number 1, NGOs’ roles include suggesting improvements to policies aimed at reducing poverty, critical analysis of public policies, holding governments and the private sector accountable through position papers, practical implementation of poverty reduction projects and involvement of the people in such projects (CEEWeb for Biodiversity 2017; Hege and Demailly 2018; Schaefer et al. 2018). Up to now, NGOs are doing the most in advancing the SDGs, whereas governments are hesitant and making the poorest contribution in advancing

the SDGs (Globe-Scan Sustainability Survey 2019).

The objectives of the study are (1) to analyse activities implemented by TWO to reduce extreme poverty, (2) to analyse the contribution of the activities to ending extreme poverty and attainment of SDG 1 and (3) to document challenges faced by NGOs in attaining SDG 1. The chapter is organised into different sections. The first section is the introduction that details the focus of the study. This is followed by an empirical literature review that traces the contribution of NGOs to ending extreme poverty in the context of SDGs and a section on the conceptualisation of key terms. This is followed by the methodology section. Lastly is the presentation and discussion of findings using a thematic approach.

2 Literature Review

2.1 NGOs' Contribution to Ending Extreme Poverty by 2030

Poverty levels in Africa, Zimbabwe included, have worsened of late. Whereas over 1 billion people are living in poverty in the world (Suharko 2007), there is consensus that poverty is increasing at a faster pace in Africa compared to other continents (Kange'the and Chivanga 2015). The rhetoric of "Africa Arising" has been debunked by the fact that more than half of the extreme poor live in sub-Saharan Africa. The number of poor in the region increased by 9 million, with 413 million people living on less than US\$1.90 a day in 2015, more than all the other regions combined. If the trend continues, by 2030, nearly nine out of ten extreme poor will be in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2019). This reality paints a gloomy picture in terms of the desire to achieve goal number 1. On the other hand, this reality calls upon the involvement of all stakeholders in fighting poverty, NGOs included. In Zimbabwe, the involvement of NGOs cannot be overemphasised given the threat of poverty.

Though there have been attempts to reduce poverty using the SDG framework, Zimbabwe is

facing poverty problems of great proportion. Nhapi (2019) blames Zimbabwe's prolonged dictatorship and associated disorder as having disrupted social well-being. United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) (2011) claims that about 250,000 households, inclusive of approximately 700,000 children in Zimbabwe, live in extreme poverty. Poverty in Zimbabwe is believed to be higher in rural areas than in urban areas (Machingura and Nicolai 2018). Even the rapidly growing urban slums are not any better. Income insecurity has worsened the situation, particularly in rural areas though the urban zones are scarcely any better. Nhapi (2019) argues that based on the Total Consumption Poverty Line (TCPL) 62.6% of households in Zimbabwe are poor, whereas 16.2% of households are extremely poor. Rural poverty is driven chiefly by low income from farming activities and "very low prices for the goods sold at the market" (Nhapi 2019, p. 159). Even the political changes predicated in the ouster of Robert Mugabe and the coming in of the new president have seen little prospects in terms of poverty reduction. The new regime's approach to economic development is criticised by Bond (2019, p. 1) because of "a more brutal fiscal policy plus an even tighter state squeeze on hard currency". Given this reality, at least for now, the drive to end extreme poverty in all its forms is in serious jeopardy. This reality is even manifested at the global level where "of the world's people, 1 in 12 is living in extreme poverty. One in nine go hungry. Half lack essential healthcare. Half are not covered by social protection. One in five children is not attending school" (Manuel et al. 2019, p. 2). However, despite the pressures and weaknesses of Zimbabwe's drive towards ending extreme poverty, it is important to document the NGOs' strategies in the fight to reduce extreme poverty.

NGOs in Zimbabwe can play important roles in the implementation of SDG 1. While advocacy is not foreign to the functions of NGOs, NGOs are expected to hold governments accountable since governments are signatories to the SDGs (CEEWeb for Biodiversity 2017). This is important because without the pressure from NGOs, governments are less likely to prioritise SDGs

(Hege and Demailly 2018). Thus, the role of NGOs also involves monitoring of governments' incorporation of SDGs in the country's development policies. To successfully play the advocacy role, Hege and Demailly (2018) recommend that NGOs should form alliances and strategic partnerships with other NGOs. This can be through joint position papers, conferences and progress reports on the achievement of SDGs. NGOs are not only mandated with holding governments accountable, but they can also hold the private sector accountable through indirectly pushing for government action or directly aiming at the profit sector. The private sector has a role in achieving the SDGs, particularly through their voluntary commitments. Part of the NGOs' role is, therefore, to monitor that the private sector delivers on the principles of commitment and transparency in the processes.

Partnership as a function of NGOs in delivering the SDGs is not a new principle since it is part of NGOs' day-to-day activities (Lewis 2010). This involves NGOs establishing coalitions amongst themselves and across sectors, resulting in partnerships with the government and the private sector (Hege and Demailly 2018). Partnerships help NGOs to broaden their voice and position. However, for a partnership to produce the desired results, the silo mentality or particularism inherent in the NGO sector requires decimation to facilitate the sharing of ideas, knowledge and experiences (Hege and Demailly n.d.). Examples of partnerships like SDG Europe Watch and Alliance SUD are good practices of holding governments accountable in the implementation of SDGs. Adjei et al. (2012) submits that a close collaboration between governments and non-state actors is a workable framework to achieve poverty reduction. To achieve SDG 1, partnerships are imperative since it is one of the core principles of SDGs (Schaefer et al. 2018).

A direct role of NGOs in the achievement of SDG 1, which resonates with what TWO is doing in Chegutu district, is practical project implementation. Practical implementation involves NGOs carrying out projects, or supporting communities or other organisations in carrying out projects (Hege and Demailly 2018). Projects by

NGOs need not necessarily be SDG projects, but NGOs rather strive to use the goals and targets in pre- and post-evaluation of projects to ensure that they are well aligned with the SDGs, positively contributing to some and not negatively affecting others (CEEWeb for Biodiversity 2017). Bangladesh Rural Advanced Committee (BRAC)'s practical projects to end extreme poverty in Bangladesh include supporting agriculture, microfinance and food security programmes (Hassan and Forhad 2013), whereas in Zimbabwe practical projects by NGOs to end extreme poverty include savings groups, provision of inputs to farmers, income-generating projects and provision of social services (Chimire and Chitongo 2018; Kabonga 2016). SOS Children's Villages (n.d.) submits that the organisation's activities support the achievement of goal 1 through building the capacity and resilience of families in order to break the cycle of poverty. Elsewhere, NGOs such as Plan International, World Vision, Save the Children and CARE International have over the years been building traction and strong foundations around goal 1 of ending extreme poverty.

2.2 Conceptualising Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)

The concept of NGOs by far embodies contestations as there are disagreements on what NGOs are. The simplest definition of NGOs is that they are organisations that operate independent of governments and they do not exist for profit-making (Lewis and Kanji 2009; Lewis 2010; Willetts 2002). Even though the above authors view NGOs as independent of the government, the reality is that there are NGOs that are fronted and funded by the government called government-controlled NGOs (GONGOs). Hence, Antonio (2015) concluded that not all NGOs are non-governmental.

An attempt to understand NGOs shows that there are a diversity of organisations that fall within the category of NGOs, from small community-based organisations to large interna-

tional NGOs (Banks and Hulme 2012). Within this pendulum, it is abundantly clear that NGOs can be formal or informal, registered or unregistered (Dar 2014). For Salamon and Anheier (1992) NGOs can be conceptualised using a three-pronged approach. First, NGOs can be understood from a legal perspective. This view argues that NGOs are a legal entity since they are formed and guided by a certain legal provision. In Zimbabwe, NGOs are guided by the Private Voluntary Organisations Act (17:05). Second, the financial and economic perspective notes that NGOs are those organisations whose funding is less than 50% from the government and finally the structural and operational perspective defines NGOs from a characterisation perspective. NGOs are formal, implying that they are institutionalised; private, meaning they run independently of the government; non-profit-making, meaning NGOs do not exist to make a surplus; and voluntary, meaning that there is some form of free participation. For Willetts (2002) these boundaries are nebulous as one can find NGOs generating profits from lending out properties and sale of products from their projects.

Lewis (2010) locates three functions of NGOs. NGOs are implementers (they implement development projects), catalysts (they speed up development) and innovators (they come up with new approaches to development). Activities by NGOs to reduce extreme poverty are located within the implementers' function.

2.3 Conceptualising Poverty

Conceptualising poverty remains contested in social sciences. While there are many definitions of poverty, many scholars converge on the idea that poverty entails deprivation of basic human needs (Dube 2019). Argued from a basic needs approach, poverty is a shortage of important basic needs: water, food, clothing, shelter and a clean environment. Dominant definitions of poverty in the past tended to view poverty as a lack of income, wealth, assets and material possessions (Julius and Bawane 2011). According to Dube (2019, p. 50), "contemporary thinking recognises

poverty as a multidimensional concept that includes lack of access to education, lack of access to health care and infrastructure, the denial of opportunities and choices to take independent decisions, denial of the respect of others, and even remoteness to political power". This view of poverty is also supported by Adeyemi et al. (2009) who viewed the multidimensionality of poverty as insecurity, lack of material well-being, lack of freedom of choice, low self-confidence, psychological distress, social isolation and not believing in oneself. There are many "poverties" in society; hence, one can refer for instance to education poverty, health poverty and infrastructure poverty. The authors agree with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2005, p. 14), that "while poverty has many dimensions, its two fundamental aspects are the lack of economic power owing to low incomes and assets, and the lack of socio-political power, as reflected in the limited access to social services, opportunities and information and often in the denial of human rights and the practice of discrimination". Though there are many debates on what poverty is and what it is not, there is consensus that poverty is unwanted in human societies, hence the emphasis on SDG 1 of ending extreme poverty in its forms everywhere.

2.4 Theoretical Framework: Sustainable Development Goals

This study is guided by the Sustainable Development Goals framework. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comprise 17 goals as opposed to the 8 MDGs that ended in 2015, but the targets set for the SDGs were developed in a more complementary manner, highlighting the interconnected nature of the goals and calling all countries to action (CEEWeb for Biodiversity 2017; Ankeroye et al. 2018). The SDGs represent the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and were adopted by 193 members of the United Nations (UN) in September 2015. The goals act as a guideline for national and international decision-making until 2030. Aligned to the SDGs

Table 4.1 The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

SDG goal	Narration of the goal
SDG 1	No poverty
SDG 2	No hunger
SDG 3	Good health and well-being
SDG 4	Quality education
SDG 5	Gender equality
SDG 6	Clean water and sanitation
SDG 7	Affordable and clean energy
SDG 8	Decent work and growth
SDG 9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure
SDG 10	Reduce inequality
SDG 11	Sustainable cities and communities
SDG 12	Responsible consumption and production
SDG 13	Climate action
SDG 14	Life under water
SDG 15	Life land
SDG 16	Life on land
SDG 17	Partnerships for the goals

Source: Nour (2017)

are 169 targets that outline specific actions that governments and other bodies including NGOs should take to realise the SDGs (Jaiyesimi 2016). Unlike the MDGs the SDGs are more holistic and collaborative, integrating environmental, economic and governance aspects. The SDGs represent a cross-cutting approach to ensure that economic, social and environmental problems are addressed together (Schaefer et al. 2018). People, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships are the five core dimensions of the SDGs. In many aspects, the SDGs are the quintessence of the problems that the world faces today. The 17 goals are shown in Table 4.1.

3 Materials and Methods

In this study, the qualitative research design was adopted as the strategy of inquiry. According to Jackson et al. (2007) qualitative research relies on non-numeric data, usually in the form of words. Qualitative research is underpinned by a desire to understand a phenomenon in depth from the perspectives of those with lived experiences or who would have witnessed an experience. This study was premised on understanding in depth from the perspective of beneficiaries and officials

the contribution of TWO to attaining SDG 1. The advantage of the qualitative research approach is that it allowed probing in areas that required clarity. This was the case during the in-depth interviews conducted with NGO officials and TWO's beneficiaries.

The study used a case study design to unpack the contribution of TWO to achieving SDG 1 of ending extreme poverty in the Chegutu district. Cresswell (2003) explains that when using a case study, the researcher explores a programme, an event, an activity, a process or one or more individuals in depth. This case study was bounded by activity and time. In terms of time, the researchers focused on projects currently being implemented whereas in terms of activities the research focused on various activities constituting projects that bring socio-economic development to Chegutu district as part of initiatives to end extreme poverty. The use of a case study design enabled the researchers to use several data collection methods (Jackson et al. 2007). Case studies are normally used when there are theoretical inadequacies in an area. A case study in this instance was applicable because currently there is a lack of academic inquiry into the contribution of NGOs to the achievement of goal number 1 in Chegutu district.

In the study, the researchers used purposive sampling because it allowed the inclusion of respondents useful to the study. The researchers sampled 15 community members benefitting from NGO projects. These were sampled from TWO database of beneficiaries. These community members participated in in-depth interviews and FGDs were conducted. The respondents were considered information rich and of value to the study. Purposive sampling allowed the exclusion of elements of less value to the study.

The study used several data collection methods. These include in-depth interviews in which respondents shared their views, opinions and lived experiences. The in-depth interviews were held with 15 beneficiaries of TWO activities and 2 staff members involved in poverty reduction programming.

Two FGDs comprising eight participants each were conducted. In all the FGDs the males

were four and the females were four. There was a need to balance gender so that no gender category dominates in the discussion. All the participants were adults with their ages ranging from 20 years to 40 years. Education-wise, the respondents had varying educational level attainment. Those that had the lowest education attainment had a primary level with highest education attainment being tertiary level. The interaction within the groups enabled the respondents to influence each other with their responses.

Data were also gathered through documentary review. The review of literature mainly journals, books, book chapters and conference papers shaped the orientation of the study. The researchers reviewed the organisation's documents such as narrative reports, strategic plans and meeting minutes. These documents outlined the focus of TWO, achievements and challenges. Data used in this study were collected from 2017 to 2018 during the period in which one of the researchers worked in the Chegutu district.

The study employed triangulation to increase the dependability of the research. Different data collection methods were used and these are in-depth interviews, FGDs and documentary reviews. Triangulation ensured corroboration allowing the researchers to move away from relying on a single data point. Interview techniques such as probing were used by the researchers to ensure rigour. The researchers probed on areas that required clarity. The credibility of the study was enhanced through the use of member checking. The interpreted findings were taken to respondents to confirm the findings before the writing of the paper.

4 Presentation and Discussion of Results

4.1 TWO Activities to Reduce Extreme Poverty

TWO activities to end extreme poverty are discussed below. The organisation is using economic strengthening, vocational training,

educational support and healthcare support to end extreme poverty. After the presentation of activities used by TWO to fight extreme poverty, a deeper analysis of the contribution of the activities to poverty reduction follows.

4.1.1 Economic Strengthening

To counter extreme poverty emanating from lack of income, TWO is using Internal Savings and Lending Schemes (ISALS) to fight off extreme poverty. According to the respondents, the organisation since 2015 has trained over 6000 people emanating from over 5000 households. The trained household representatives are making monthly savings and spearheading household income-generating projects like gardening, buying and selling and small shops (tuckshops). Explaining the organisation's ISALS approach, respondent 1 said "... we have realized that many aspects of poverty emanate from lack of income. Consequently, our organization is using the ISALS approach to ensure that households have access to financial income". Some studies in Zimbabwe concur with the use of the ISALS methodology to fight poverty (Machokoto 2014; Zimunya 2015). In Ghana, Adjei et al. (2012) found out that a strategy used to reduce poverty is expanding the economic activities of the poor. Many NGOs in Zimbabwe such as Care International, World Vision, Plan International, GOAL Zimbabwe and International Rescue Committee (IRC) prioritise the ISALS approach in fighting poverty (Muchenje 2018). It is important to note that TWO's economic strengthening activities are integrated with other activities. For instance, the households being assisted with school fees participate in ISALS. The savings made on education are supposed to be used to start ISALS savings. From participation in ISALS, the household representatives are expected to start household income-generating activities based on a market analysis done with assistance from TWO. This integrated approach shown in Fig. 4.1 resonates with the SDG framework where several challenges are addressed together (Schaefer et al. 2018).

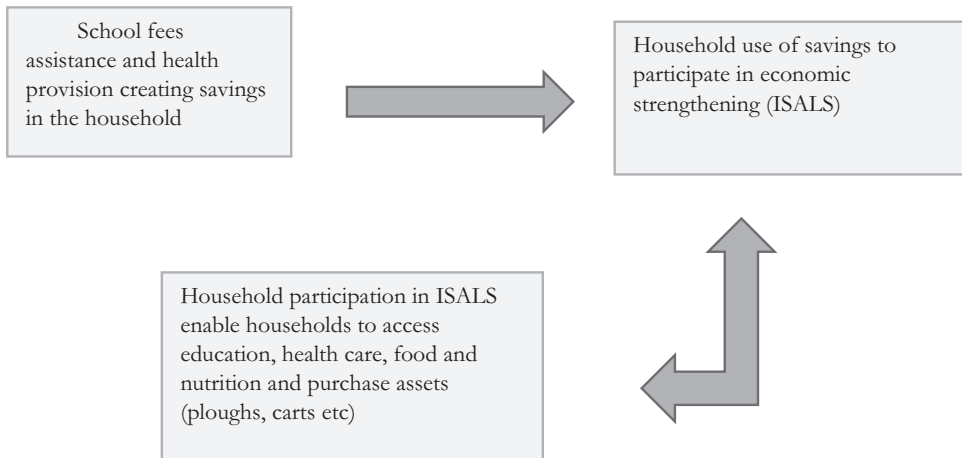


Fig. 4.1 Integration of TWO economic strengthening activities. Source: Authors

4.1.2 Vocational Training for Youth

As a result of poverty, over half of in-depth interview respondents mentioned that many young people in Chegutu district are resorting to antisocial behaviours like engaging in prostitution, alcohol abuse and drug abuse. “Many of our young people because of poverty end up abusing drugs, involved in theft and many other social ills”, reiterated respondent 3. To counter poverty amongst the youth, TWO is spearheading vocational training. The organisation is sending young people to Mashayamombe Training Centre and Chibero College to pursue farming, hairdressing, dressmaking, welding, carpentry and cosmetics. Literature shows that vocational training is not affordable for many households no wonder non-state actors like TWO chip in (Pindiriri and Muhoyi 2011). Respondent 3 who is an official of TWO highlighted that “... we are sending young people normally 16 years to 24 years who have just completed secondary education to vocational training centres to enable them to be able to take care of their needs be it financial or otherwise after the completion of the training”. Thus far the organisation has managed to send 25 young people to vocational centres. The organisation is focusing on those who have completed ordinary level studies. Studies have shown that as a result of poverty, this age group is keen to experiment with drugs and prostitution endangering their lives. This age group in many societies

marks the transition into adulthood. Thus, the need for self-reliance is important. As the SDGs prioritise inclusivity, vocational training offers the opportunity to include youth in mainstream development.

4.1.3 Education Provision

TWO is fighting education poverty through education provision. According to narrations from the respondents, the organisation is assisting orphans and vulnerable children with school fees payment and stationery support. Many studies agree that education is the pathway to success (Julius and Bawane 2011; Palmer et al. 2007). For Mihai et al. (2015, p. 856) “in the nowadays economy, to complete a post-secondary education can make the difference between a life of poverty and a secure economic future”. Adjei’s et al. (2012) study shows that the provision of educational assistance to needy households is a common strategy used by NGOs to fight education poverty in poor households. The organisation’s educational support fights poverty on two fronts. Firstly, paying school fees for children drawn from struggling households allows the households to make savings and channel the funds to other household needs. In the context of TWO, the savings made on school fees are supposed to be channelled towards ISALS and household income-generating projects. Respondent 1, an official of TWO reiterated:

“Educational assistance allows households to make savings and direct the money saved to other households needs. Savings made must be channelled to ISALS to enable households to generate the financial income needed to afford household basics such as food and health care”. Secondly, there are better individual prospects for an educated individual (Julius and Bawane 2011). TWO’s activities are in line with the SDGs, which seek to eliminate poverty and provide quality education by 2030.

4.1.4 Health Provision

TWO health provision activities in Chegutu district include HIV risk assessment, Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP) and Early Childhood Stimulation (ECS). Respondents stated that in the recent past before the decentralisation of anti-retroviral therapy (ART), the organisation used to provide transport to children to enable them to access drugs. Respondents further narrated that these activities, just like in supporting education, allow households to make savings on funds that could otherwise be spent on health care. For sustainable community development to take place, health communities are an essential component; hence, the SDG framework places “People” at the centre of development. Provision of health is not a new activity for NGOs. In Africa health activities by NGOs include sexual reproductive health (SRH), family planning, fighting HIV and AIDS, supporting immunisation programmes and distribution of mosquito nets (Adjei et al. 2012).

4.2 Analysis of the Contribution of TWO Activities in Ending Extreme Poverty

Some households participating in household economic strengthening activities like ISALS reported that ISALS has ensured improved access to financial income. During an FGD, respondent 9 said that “... because of loans and share outs I am getting from ISALS, my financial position has improved. I purchased assets like ploughs, scotch carts, axes and wheelbarrow thanks to

ISALS”. This shows that economic strengthening like ISALS plays an important role in asset accumulation. Zimunya’s (2015) study in Zimbabwe shows that participants of village saving groups accumulated durable assets like scotch carts, ploughs and other assets. Poverty has been, in many instances, conceptualised as lack of assets. Other respondents in the study reported the ability to send children to school, purchase food and pay for medical care. For instance respondent 15 submitted that “... ever since I started participating in ISALS, I have managed to provide decent meals to my children and pay for their school fees” and yet other respondents cited the ability to purchase food for household consumption eliminating food poverty. “... Chegutu district has been experiencing severe droughts for the past years, thus food shortage is a reality for many households. As a family, we have survived because the income from ISALS is helping us to buy maize and other food requirements for the family”, said respondent 6. Studies in Africa such as those of Anyako et al. (2007), Harelimana (2018), and Mwansakilwa et al. (2016) show that participation in savings groups leads to improved access to food, ability to pay for school fees and medical needs for the household. In a study by Zimunya (2015), households in savings groups escaped malnutrition as they were able to afford a balanced diet. These indicators on food, education and health care are important because they denote the presence of poverty or lack of it. A similar study on village savings also discovered that “members invested in the business, which had increased households’ disposable incomes and enabled them to continue building their savings base and expanding or diversifying their business” (Anyako et al. 2007, p. 15). To ensure the sustainability of well-being, households are engaging in income-generating activities (see above paragraph) as an offshoot of ISALS. ISALS were found to be helping many households reduce many “poverties” they face like food poverty, education poverty and asset poverty.

To argue that all households have experienced poverty reduction as a result of participating in ISALS belies reality. This is because the extremely poor, even after making savings on

education and health care, are unable to participate in ISALS nor to establish IGAs. Even when coerced by TWO to join ISALS as per programme design, the extreme poor are not able to join or when they join, they find it difficult and become inactive. This approach instead of eradicating poverty has increased the vulnerability of the poor because when the extremely poor join ISALS instead of actively using loans borrowed from groups, they again borrow to service the loan, impoverishing themselves further.

The youths that have managed to start small businesses after vocational training have managed to create a niche for themselves particularly in rural areas. An interviewed respondent 11 reiterated that "... I was fortunate to get capital from a relative and I am running a small dressmaking business. Many of my clients are parents who place an order for uniforms. I cannot complain, as the money I am getting is better than nothing. I can afford to take care of myself as well as contributing to the welfare of our household". Asked how the vocational training has enabled them to escape extreme poverty many youths framed their responses in terms of employment creation vis-à-vis growing unemployment in the country. Respondent 15 submitted that "... I can say that at least I am getting some few dollars from my farming business. I can buy food, clothing and airtime for myself. It is better than doing nothing given high unemployment levels amongst the youth in the country". Vocational training has only worked for the youths who accessed capital after their training. Prosperity, a key component of the SDGs, has been witnessed in some youths. However, those youths who finished their training and lack access to capital continue to wallow in poverty. This finding concurs with a study by Pindiriri and Muhoyi (2011) who argue that young people who went through vocational training have difficulty setting up businesses largely due to lack of capital. In addition, SNV's (2009) study propounded that vocational training is failing to produce desired results in Zimbabwe due to lack of toolkit provision for the trainees. With rapid deindustrialisation since 2000, getting employment is even a bigger challenge. This reveals a gap in TWO programming; the youths

that finish vocational training must be linked to sources of capital to enable them to put into practice their vocational training skills.

The causality relationship of education and poverty is clear—educated people earn more than uneducated people in wage employment (Palmer et al. 2007). Mihai et al. (2015, p. 857) concur that "lack of education perpetuates poverty and poverty limit access to education". A longitudinal study is required, unlike this study that only covered the period from 2017 to 2018. This is because in the long term, education enhances skills and the productivity of poor households in as much as it also increases the wage level and overall welfare of the population (Julius and Bawane 2011). Having children attend school is important because "inadequate education can be considered a form of poverty" (Julius and Bawane 2011, p. 72). In Chegutu, the savings made on education and health care have enabled households to participate in ISALS which improved access to income, food and nutrition and enabled households to acquire assets such as wheelbarrows. However, for labour-constrained households and extremely poor households even with savings made on education and health care, participation in ISALS, a gateway to poverty reduction, is an overwhelming task. TWO health and education activities, despite contributing to poverty reduction, are contributing to achieving SDGs on health and education (Manuel et al. 2019), a reflection of the holistic and integrated nature of the SDGs.

4.3 Challenges for the Attainment of SDG 1

4.3.1 Donor Dependency

The greatest criticism levelled against NGOs in development work is their over-dependency on donors. Brown and Kalegaonkar (2002) submit that organisations that depend on international funders are forced to pursue the interests and priorities of the funders. Concurring is Moyo (2001) who argued that NGOs end up doing something completely new outside their vision and aims. TWO is dependent on Hospice Palliative

Association of Zimbabwe (HOSPAZ) and USAID for funding. This means that the organisation's approaches are determined by its funders. Low-level solutions to poverty horned over the years are superseded by donor requirements. In the context of SDGs, the funding arrangements must be flexible, to avoid creating donor dependency, which is characteristic of current donor-NGO funding arrangements.

Related to donor dependency is the particularism of the NGOs. Particularism refers to a scenario where NGOs cannot do something outside their work plans, budgets and proposals. This finding agrees with Brown and Kalegaonkar (2002, p. 235) who found out that "NGO particularism can also be a sectoral weakness when NGOs fail to respond to interests outside their narrowly defined constituency". As a result of restricted focus, TWO has failed to respond to poverty using other well-known tools of fighting poverty, that is, advocacy and being a watchdog over the Government of Zimbabwe. Failure to watchdog over mismanagement of the country by NGOs, TWO included, explains why economic structural problems that dwarf local level achievements (see below) persist. To deal with poverty TWO must move away from concentrating only on service provision and engage in advocating for pro-poor policies. At present, because of particularism determined by proposals, the organisation cannot do that.

4.3.2 Economic Structural Challenges

Since the year 2000, Zimbabwe has been experiencing economic problems of great proportion (Murisa 2010). These problems include inflation, unemployment, liquidity problems and poor economic performance (Bond 2019). These economic problems have affected TWO's efforts towards poverty reduction in two ways. Firstly, the operating environment for the organisation is difficult. Due to liquidity problems, obtaining cash from banks to spearhead activities is a difficult task. This has delayed the implementation of poverty reduction activities. Shortages of basic requirements like fuel have also made Zimbabwe a difficult operating environment. This finding converges with Brown and Kalegaonkar's (2002)

finding that material shortages pose a difficult choice for NGOs, hence the dependence on donors which creates further problems.

Secondly, the macroeconomic difficulties tend to erode poverty reduction gains made at the household level. Other studies are instructive in that poverty in the villages transcends households to encompass the entire community, where inadequate stock of physical and social infrastructure within the communities provides a weak foundation to support individual households that are trying to make strides out of endemic poverty (Adjei et al. 2012). Macroeconomic conditions in Zimbabwe do not support households' efforts to escape from poverty. Inflation is the biggest contributor to the erosion of gains made in the attempt to lift households from poverty. This finding reveals that efforts by NGOs alone may not end poverty without enabling macroeconomic conditions. Attaining SDG 1 ought to be a holistic drive, underlined by both state (macro) and NGO (micro) efforts. The NGOs' drive to attain prosperity for the poor is being severely undermined by broader economic constraints like inflation.

4.3.3 Limited Coverage

While TWO is playing important roles in ending extreme poverty, limited coverage is limiting its impact. Because of donor requirements, the organisation has targets, which means that some of the poor households that could benefit from the organisation activities are excluded. For instance, in Chegutu district there are so many young people being affected by poverty and in need of vocational competencies. So far, the organisation has only assisted about 25 young people with vocational training. Added to that, the education assistance being offered by TWO suffers from limited coverage. With over 16,000 OVC in the district (National AIDS Council 2018 statistics), the organisation's assistance covers slightly above 1.5% of OVC. Limited coverage by NGOs is also reflected in their "piecemeal style" (Kabonga 2016, p. 91) where they cover certain wards in the district without saturating the district. Thus, with this approach, a universal reduction of poverty in the Chegutu district remains a daunting task.

5 Conclusion

There are limited studies that assess the contribution of NGOs in attaining SDGs in Zimbabwe, more so, on how NGOs are contributing to ending extreme poverty. This knowledge gap underlines the focus of the study on the contribution of TWO to end extreme poverty. Given the reality of poverty in the Chegutu district, TWO is responding to the poverty dynamics mainly through project implementation. Activities implemented to end extreme poverty include vocational training, education assistance, health provision and economic strengthening through the ISALS component. Vocational training has worked for the youth who managed to get capital after skill training. Income generated from ISALS has helped households to pay school fees for children and pay for medical care and accumulation of household assets. Assistance rendered on education and health care, besides contributing to the attainment of SDG goals on education and health, is reducing poverty through relieving households so that they can direct savings to needy areas. The chapter argues that TWO is making a significant contribution to ending extreme poverty though there are both internal and external challenges hindering progress.

Externally, the macroeconomic constraints in Zimbabwe tend to erode benefits made at the local (micro) level. Donor dependency as another challenge that confines the organisation's poverty reduction strategies to the dictates of the donors superseding micro level strategies perfected over time. Given the limitations of TWO, the study recommends the following:

- To address limited coverage inherent in many NGO operations, NGOs must partner with the private sector. Such partnerships are important in broadening coverage. Such partnerships are bound to work since the private sector has obligations to contribute to the attainment of goal 1.
- A weakness observed with TWO's contribution to attaining goal 1 is confining itself to project implementation, neglecting a greater role of advocacy. A greater role that NGOs

should adopt is holding the government accountable. The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has over the years exhibited a hesitant approach in prioritisation of SDG implementation.

- GoZ must implement favourable policies to achieve the SDGs. Currently, macro-level policies like the tight fiscal policy of the current government tend to erode the strides achieved at the local level by NGOs.

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