

Improving people's well-being through urban garden farming.  
(Case of allotment gardens in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe)

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study seeks to understand the importance and relevance of Urban Agriculture (UA) in the form of urban garden farming for vulnerable groups of people in the city of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. The study is based on fieldwork which was carried out between June and August 2008 in Bulawayo. This was also the time of political uncertainty due to shameful presidential elections which were presided and followed by violence and intimidation of the civilians. The focus of the study is on how urban gardens contribute to livelihoods and well being of the beneficiaries.

The thesis employs the capability approach to address the research problem. The capability approach is modified and operationalised in a model that is relevant to this particular study. In the ensuing capability framework, gardens are treated as goods or services that enable beneficiaries to enjoy various capability sets.

The study reveals that urban gardens are important in providing livelihoods and improving well-beings in crumbling urban economies such as that of Bulawayo. Beneficiaries utilise the capability sets provided by gardens in an attempt to improve their well being. Capability sets which include food security, income generation, political participation and social capital related are also critically discussed exploring their relevance and significance in improving people's lives.

One of the important issues in this study has been to acknowledge the diversity that exists amongst people. Even though the capability sets might be the same, they are explored differently by different people depending on external and internal factors affecting an individual. This makes the capability approach a powerful tool in that it enables a realistic understanding of people's individual problems and potentials. In the Capability framework approach, various factors such as gender, physical condition, skill, education and institutions are discussed and their influence on what the beneficiaries can achieve from the gardens and the kind of life they want to choose to pursue thereafter is elaborated upon.

Beneficiaries from the same garden benefitted in a different way depending on how they used the capability sets. This thus tended to determine the kind of life they eventually could chose to live. It is thus important in development studies to pay particular attention to individual problems and abilities than to study people en masse.



## **DEDICATIONS**

I dedicate this work to my mother and late father for all the love they gave me.



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## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Zimbabwe's climate graph showing temperature and rainfall trends over years.

Fig.2: Bulawayo wards

Figure 3: Study area with respect to wards and sampled gardens in Bulawayo province.

Figure 4: A representation of a person's capability set and her social and personal context

Figure 5: Capabilities Approach frame work applied for a study on urban gardens in Bulawayo.

Figure 6: Figure 6. The majority of beneficiaries are women and children

Figure 7: Figure 7. Gardens in different high density suburbs in Bulawayo.

Figure 8. One of the boreholes used in the urban gardens (a) and A beneficiary fetching water from a sewage pond in Magwegwe North garden (b).

Figure 9. Fresh green vegetables are in abundance in most gardens.



## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Income that is earned by beneficiaries according to crops grown.



## **LIST OF BOXES**

Box 1 HIV/AIDS infected beneficiary.

Box 2. Female beneficiary.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGRITEX.....	Agriculture and Extension Services
AIDS.....	Acquired Immune deficiency Syndrome
AZJ.....	Association of Zimbabwean Journalists
CCF.....	Cities Farming for the Future
CIA.....	Central Intelligence Agency
CSO.....	Central Statistical Office
DFID.....	Department for International Development
FAO.....	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FPL.....	Food Poverty Line
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
GHC.....	Global Health Council
HDP.....	Human Development Index
HIV.....	Human Immunodeficiency virus
IMF.....	International Monetary Fund
MDC.....	Movement for Democratic Change
MDP-ESA.....	Municipal Development Partnership for Eastern and Southern Africa
MDP.....	Municipal Development Partnership
NGO.....	Non-Governmental Organization
RUAF.....	Resource Centre on Urban Agriculture and Food Security
RBZ.....	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
SADC.....	Southern African Development Community
TCPL.....	Total Consumption Poverty Line
UA.....	Urban Agriculture
UNDP.....	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF.....	United Nations Children's Fund
ZANUPF.....	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
WHO.....	World Health Organisation





<b>CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
ABSTRACT.....	i
DEDICATIONS.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
LIST OF BOXES.....	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vii
CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Background.....	1
1.1. Urban Gardening.....	1
1.1.1. Allotment Gardens in Bulawayo.....	2
1.2. Statement of the problem.....	2
1.3. Justification.....	4
1.4. Objectives of the study.....	5
1.5. Organization of the thesis.....	5
CHAPTER TWO: STUDY AREA.....	7
2.0. Introduction.....	7
2.1 Country profile.....	7
2.1.1 Geographical location and climate.....	7
2.1.2. Demographic characteristics.....	8
2.2. Economic situation.....	9
2.3. Development Partners and Government.....	10
2.4. Poverty situation.....	11
2.5 Vulnerability.....	12
2.6. UA in Zimbabwe.....	12
2.7. Study area profile.....	14
2.7.1 Demographic composition.....	14
2.7.2 Socio-economic characteristics.....	15
2.7.3 UA in Bulawayo.....	16
2.7.4 The policy document on UA.....	17
2.8 Conclusion.....	20
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL METHODOLOGY.....	21
3.0. Introduction.....	21
3.1. Research Methodology.....	21
3.2. Qualitative research methodology.....	22
3.2.1. Reasons for choosing qualitative research.....	22
3.3. Research design.....	24
3.4. Data collection methods.....	25
3.5. Interviews.....	25
3.5.1. Semi-structured interviews.....	26
3.5.2. Unstructured interview.....	27
3.5.3. Informal conversation interview.....	29
3.6. Focus group discussions.....	29
3.7. Direct observation.....	31
3.8. Selection of respondents.....	32

3.8.1 Purposive snowball sampling.....	32
3.9. Secondary data.....	34
3.10. Data analysis and interpretation.....	34
3.11. Challenges, reliability and validity.....	35
3.12. Conclusion.....	37
CHAPTER FOUR: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	39
4.0. General introduction.....	39
4.1. Alternative development paradigm.....	39
4.2. Capabilities Approach.....	41
4.3. Critique of the Capability approach.....	43
4.4. The application of Sen’s Capability Approach in context of urban garden farming.....	45
4.3.1. Food security.....	47
4.4.2. Income earning.....	47
4.4.3. Building community capital.....	47
4.4.4. Political participation.....	48
4.4.5. Education.....	48
4.5. Conclusion.....	49
CHAPTER FIVE: ALLOTMENTGARDENS, BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS.....	50
5.1. Introduction.....	50
5.2 Development of Allotment Gardens.....	50
5.2.1 Operation Murambatsvina.....	51
5.3 Competition and land conflicts.....	52
5.4 Crops grown.....	53
5.5 Stakeholders supporting allotment garden farming projects.....	54
5.5.1 World Vision.....	55
5.5.1.1. Inputs distribution.....	56
5.5.1.2. Training.....	56
5.5.2. Challenges faced by stakeholders.....	58
5.6. Beneficiaries.....	59
5.7 Gender issues in urban garden farming.....	62
CHAPTER SIX: GARDENS AND THE WELL BEING OF THE BENEFICIARIES.....	65
6.0. Introduction.....	65
6.1 Garden as a “Good”.....	65
6.2. Personal conversion factors.....	67
6.2.1. HIV/AIDS victims.....	67
6.2.2 Elderly.....	68
6.2.3 Orphans.....	69
6.2.4. Sex.....	69
6.3. Social conversion factors.....	70
6.3.1. Gender roles.....	70
6.3.2. Public policies.....	71
6.4. Environmental conversion factors.....	72
6.4.1. Climate.....	73
6.4.2 Geographical location.....	74
6.5. Capability sets.....	75
6.5.1. Income earning.....	75

6.5.2 Food security .....	77
6.5.3. Building community capital .....	80
6.5.3.1. Burial societies .....	81
6.5.3.2. Small-scale funds .....	81
6.5.3.3. Integration of HIV infected beneficiaries.....	82
6.5.4. Political participation.....	83
6.5.5 Education.....	83
6.6 Achieved functioning's.....	84
6.6.1 Income related achievements .....	84
6.6.2 Food security related achievements.....	85
6.6.3. Social relations related achievements.....	86
6.6.4. Political participation related achievements .....	89
6.6.4.1. Ward Councillors and the beneficiaries.....	89
6.6.4.2. Other forms of political participation .....	89
6.7. Conclusion .....	90
CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....	92
7.0. Introduction.....	92
7.1 Theory and Methodology.....	92
7.3 Findings and discussions.....	93
7.3.1 Exploring the development of urban gardens.....	93
7.3.2 Capability sets .....	94
References.....	98
Appendices.....	108



# CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## 1.0. Background

Urban Agriculture (UA) is the general term used to refer to a wide variety of food production practices in and around cities. It is widely practised in many of the world's urban areas today. This however is not a new phenomenon. Mougeot (1994a, 1994b) argues that in past historical eras, cities and city states included gardens for crop production in urban landscape often containing large populations of animals. In recent years the phenomenon has grown in magnitude and in scope. The United Nations development programme (UNDP) estimates that approximately 800 million urban residents were engaged in agricultural activities in the mid-1990s, commercial or subsistence (UNDP, 1996). In African cities, urban agriculture has become a permanent part of the landscape with over 70% of the urban population involved (Bryld, 2003). Over a decade many scholars and researchers have attempted to explain the growth of urban farming in many African cities: Nairobi (Freeman, 1991, 1993); Kampala (Maxwell and Zziwa, 1993; Maxwell, 1995); Harare (Mbiba, 1994, 1995a, 1995b; Drakakis-Smith *et al.*, 1995); Gweru (Rakodi, 1995) and many others. They all seem to agree that poverty and urbanisation are at the heart of this growth.

It is important to note that UA in most developing countries generally takes two forms. It is either practised haphazardly where people find open and unutilised pieces of land to be cultivated mostly during the farming season. This is often the case in African cities as farmers play cat and mouse with local authorities because cultivating on government land is prohibited. The other form of urban agriculture is practised in urban gardens which can be near farmer's houses and owned customarily or can be allocated by the local authorities whereby farmers only have user rights for certain period.

## 1.1. Urban Gardening

Urban gardening includes three types of practices: home gardens, allotment gardens and community gardens (Drescher, 2006). *Home gardens* are maintained – typically, but not always, near the homes – by individuals or households who have some access to land (either through customary or legal law). *Allotment gardens* are separate

parcels of land allocated to individuals or households for personal use. While contiguous, each household works on the parcels independently and the land is made available through either government action or private enterprises. The individual households are organized into self-governing associations. *Community gardens* are maintained by a group of individuals or households who produce agricultural goods collectively on a piece of land primarily for self-consumption (Ibid).

### **1.1.1. Allotment Gardens in Bulawayo**

In Bulawayo 12 allotment gardens were established in 2001 jointly by the Municipality of Bulawayo and World Vision (Mubvami and Munyati 2007). At the present moment, 21 viable community gardens have been established in the western high-density suburbs. These gardens are located in the following high density suburbs; Entumbane, Lobengula, Nkulumane, Pelandaba, Tshabalala, Luveve and Magwegwe and have a total of 1522 beneficiaries (World Vision, 2008). They are generally a new phenomena in the city compared to home gardens which have existed as long as people have settled in the city. Allotment gardens were established on municipality owned land and the beneficiaries only have access to the gardens but do not own the land. The beneficiaries of these gardens are the vulnerable groups such as HIV/AIDS-affected households, the elderly, widows and orphans. In order to minimise stigmatisation associated with HIV/AIDS, the gardens draw from a mixed group of beneficiaries as highlighted above. The main idea behind these gardens is to address the acute food shortages, nutritional imbalance and awareness on HIV/AIDS, improve people`s well being, thus generally building people`s capabilities (World Vision, 2008).

### **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Rapid urbanization and a decline in Zimbabwean economy have resulted in an increase in urban poverty and urban food insecurity (Hungwe, 2004). This has been exacerbated by a hyper inflationary environment which continues to relegate many people into poverty and vulnerability. With the current unemployment rate hovering over 80% (CIA, 2009), more and more people are turning to informal employment.

Bulawayo, once Zimbabwe's industrial hub, has lost most of its industries through closure and relocation to either the capital city or neighbouring countries. People's livelihoods are being severely threatened. Some are turning to urban agriculture

supplement their meagre incomes and diversify food sources (Mubvami, 2006). Recent research suggests that urban agriculture is potentially a socio-economic survival and livelihood enhancing strategy for poor urban dwellers (Sawio, 1993; Mudimu, 1996; Hungwe, 2004; Mavhumashava, 2006). However, even those traditionally considered as middle class such as civil servants are increasingly taking to this practice to supplement their livelihoods. This has resulted in attitude change towards urban agriculture through the establishment of allotment gardens mostly from Bulawayo municipality.

Bulawayo is now one of the cities that are in partnership with the Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (RUAF). The mission of the RUAF Foundation is to contribute to urban poverty reduction, employment generation and food security by creating enabling conditions for empowerment of male and female urban and peri-urban farmers (<http://www.ruaf.org/node/449>). An urban agriculture policy for Bulawayo was adopted by the Municipal Council in 1996 and has been supported by the RUAF foundation (Mubvami, 2006). Certain areas have thus been set aside for urban agriculture where allotment gardens have been established by the municipality in conjunction with World Vision.

However, even though urban agriculture is being viewed as a viable activity to complement food supplies and supplement livelihoods its contribution is still often underestimated (Maxwell, 1999; Mougeot, 2000). This could be because in most cases urban agriculture is practised in open spaces with very little control. In Bulawayo, however, the establishment of allotment gardens, meant to provide a livelihood to vulnerable groups, makes it possible to do a comprehensive study on how urban agriculture is building people's capabilities. The controlled nature of garden farming means that there is a better access to the farmers and information. The study thus seeks to understand the importance and relevance of urban garden farming in building the capabilities of those who are the beneficiaries of these gardens. The main question that this study seeks to answer is how the beneficiaries are using various capability sets presented by the gardens to improve their well-being?

However, it is important to note that with the current hyper inflationary environment, people who are formerly employed, mainly civil servants are finding their livelihoods threatened and many are being pushed into the vulnerable bracket. It would thus be

prudent to find out how the vulnerability concept is understood and applied by those responsible for selecting the beneficiaries.

### **1.3. Justification**

Zimbabwe's economy has been tethering on the brink of collapse for the past decade. Since the country's independence, living standards have been slowly going down. The past decade has witnessed the general collapse of virtually all important sectors of the economy. Urban centres have been severely affected as rural-urban migration has increased. This has been made worse by HIV/AIDS. The outcome has been increasing unemployment, threat on food security and general increase on poverty levels threatening the livelihoods of many people especially the vulnerable groups such as women, children, elderly and HIV/AIDS victims. Many of these people have turned to urban agriculture for survival. However, competition for land within the cities has meant that the most vulnerable often find themselves without anything.

There have been a number of studies done on urban farming in the major cities of Zimbabwe (Mudimu, 1996; Hungwe, 2004; Mavhumashava, 2006; Mubvami, 2007). These studies focused on unregulated urban agriculture, that is, uncontrolled by the local authorities. This study however attempts to research on urban agriculture within the allotment gardens. As stated above, Bulawayo is one of the three cities in East and Southern Africa under a pilot study of the Resource Centres on Agriculture and Food Security (RUAFA) foundation. RUAFA has functioned since 1999 as a global network of six regional organizations that share a common vision on urban development and poverty reduction and together implement an international programme focused on urban agriculture and food security. The Cities Farming for the Future (CFF) programme, in which Bulawayo is part of, has made contributions into urban garden farming in the city and it has various stakeholders which include the World Vision and Bulawayo municipality being the most active players. Cities Farming for the Future (CFF) programme is the brain child of RUAFA.

This study is also relevant to the field of development studies because it attempts to establish urban people's capabilities in the face of escalating economic hardships in Zimbabwe. It attempts to assess how urban farming in urban gardens has contributed in alleviating shocks and stresses faced by the urban poor.



#### **1.4. Objectives of the study**

The main aim of the study is to establish the importance and relevance of urban garden farming in improving the well-being of the beneficiaries. To achieve the above objective, the following specific objectives and research questions shall be used:

**1. To explore the history of allotment gardens in Bulawayo.**

- *How did allotment gardens develop in Bulawayo?*
- *Which are the organisations which support garden farming and how?*
- *How do they compete with other land use activities within the city?*

**2. To find out who is engaged in allotment garden farming.**

- *Who are the beneficiaries of allotment garden farming?*
- *What is the criterion used to select these beneficiaries?*
- *Is social capital an asset in the selection process?*

**3. To find out the effectiveness of allotment gardens as a “Good”.**

- *What capability sets have people attained through allotment gardens? (Income, social relations, political participation, food security)*
- *What are they able to do with these capabilities?*

**4. To identify and discuss other factors influencing beneficiaries’ capabilities.**

- *What are the institutions and social and personal conversion factors influencing the capabilities?*

**5. To discuss the applicability and practicality of Capability Approach in this study.**

#### **1.5. Organization of the thesis**

The thesis has seven chapters. The first four chapters deal with the general information which includes introduction, study area, theory and methodology. The last three chapters then deal with the main analytical part of the thesis. Chapter one introduces the study through the statement of the problem, justification of the study, objectives and research questions. This chapter also introduces the concept of allotment garden farming in Bulawayo and explains why Bulawayo was specifically chosen for this research. Chapter two covers general information including poverty levels, food security and vulnerability issues about Zimbabwe with particular interest

to Bulawayo which is pertinent to the study. Such information includes poverty levels, food security and vulnerability issues. There is also a brief review of urban agriculture as a livelihood strategy in Zimbabwe's cities. Chapter three dwells on research methodology that has been employed and justification for using it. The chapter also highlights issues of validity and vulnerability of the study as well as challenges encountered during data collection. The theory adopted in this study is reviewed and operationalised in chapter four. The analysis and discussion is presented in chapter five and six. The two chapters discuss capability sets available to the beneficiaries and achieved functions. Chapter seven summarises the findings through a brief discussion and concludes the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: STUDY AREA**

### **2.0. Introduction**

This chapter discusses background information about the study area. It describes the overall country profile in terms of geographic location, climate, socio-economic characteristics and demographic profile. The chapter then introduces the study area, the city of Bulawayo and highlights its characteristics in terms of demographic profile, socio-economic characteristics and geographical location. The socio-economic characteristics are of utmost importance because they explain the emergence and growth of agriculture within the city.

### **2.1. Country profile.**

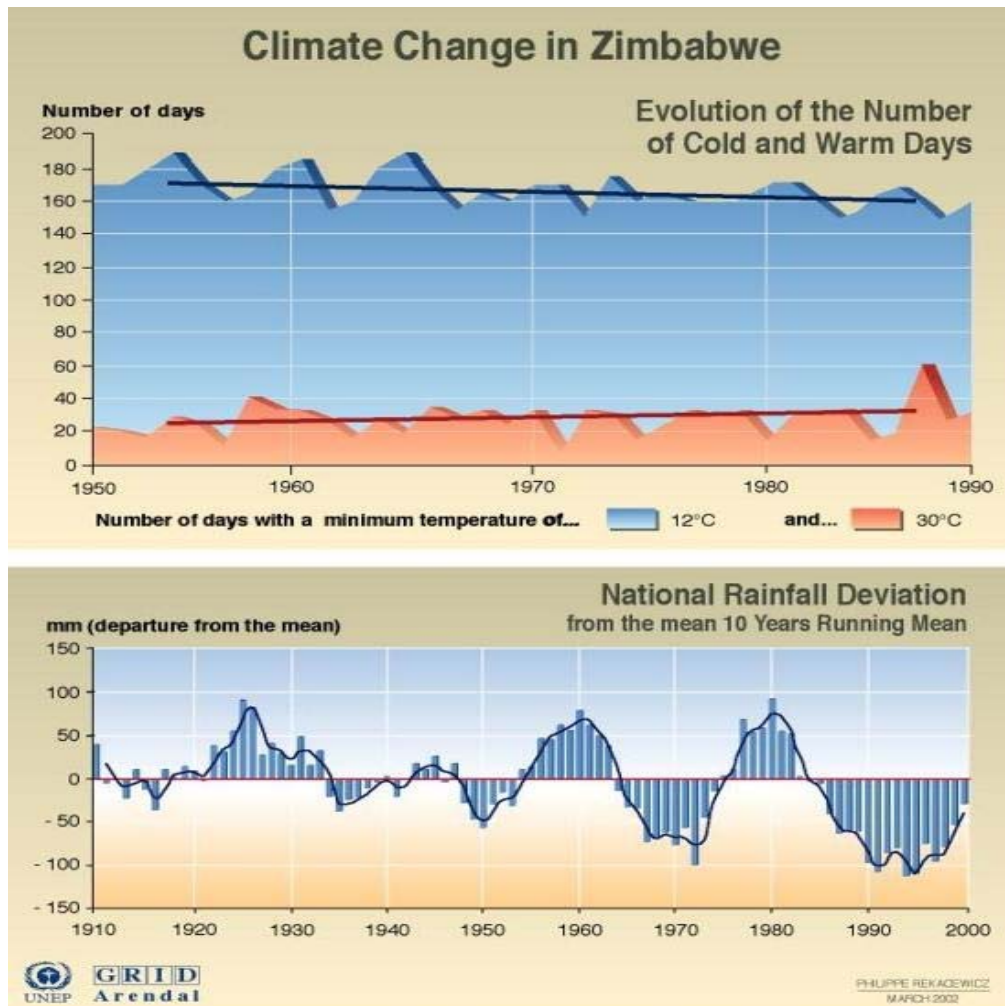
#### **2.1.1. Geographical location and climate.**

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in the southern part of the continent of Africa, between the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers. It is bordered by South Africa to the south, Botswana to the southwest, Zambia to the northwest, and Mozambique to the east.

Vincent and Thomas (1960) divided Zimbabwe into five main natural regions according to differences in effective rainfall. Rainfall patterns and crop production progressively deteriorate from Region I to V. Annual rainfall is highest in Natural region I which covers approximately 2% of the land area and lowest in region V. My study area is in region IV where rainfall is low and periodic seasonal droughts and severe dry spells during the rainy season are common. Crop production is therefore risky except in certain very favourable localities, where limited drought resistant crops are grown as a sideline.

Climate change also seem to be having negative effects in that the overall rainfall amounts are falling while temperatures seem to be slowly rising.

Figure 1 shows that Zimbabwe is experiencing more hot days and fewer cold days, and the amount of precipitation it receives is deviating from the mean more frequently. The first graph shows the number of days with a minimum temperature of 12 degrees Celsius and the number of days with a minimum temperature of 30 degrees Celsius from 1950 to 1990. The second graphic shows the amount of precipitation in millimetres that was a departure from the long-term mean amount for the time period 1910 to 2000.



**Figure 1 Zimbabwe's climate graph showing temperature and rainfall trends over years.**

### 2.1.2. Demographic characteristics.

Zimbabwe's population is estimated to be around 12, 3 million with a population growth rate of more than 1.3% (CIA, 2009). Life expectancy at birth varies according to the source but averages about 40 years. Death rates are quite high in Zimbabwe owing mainly to HIV/AIDS and possibly malnutrition in some areas. United Nations puts the child mortality rate at 132 deaths per 1000 live births.

The impact of HIV/AIDS has been severe. The prevalence among the 15-49 age group stands at more than 20, 1% (Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, Zimbabwe, 2005), with around one in seven adults living with HIV and an estimated 565 adults and children becoming infected every day (WHO, 2005). Average life expectancy for women, who are particularly affected by AIDS epidemic, is 34 - the lowest anywhere

in the world (WHO, 2006). With such statistics, UNICEF argues that the country might be having probably the highest number of orphans in the world. This is mainly due to their parents dying at a very young age (AZJ, 2006). This together with collapsing economy has increased the number of vulnerable people all over the country.

Urban population amounts to just over 35% with the majority of people still living in the rural areas (CIA, 2009). However, like any developing country, rural urban migration continues to add more people into urban areas creating more socio-economic problems in the cities.

## **2.2. Economic situation**

In the decade following independence, Zimbabwe's economic growth was strong, and living standards improved significantly. In the late 1990s, it began to slow down following a balance of payment crisis and repeated droughts. By 2002, the economy was in trouble as a result of poor macroeconomic management, political violence and the wider impact of a land reform program on food and export crop production, as well as the important links the commercial agricultural sector had with the financial and manufacturing sectors<sup>1</sup>.

The country has a dual economy consisting of once thriving urban industrial sector and rural agricultural sector. However the economy is mainly agro-based. Most of the population depends on agriculture and much of the country's economic demise is blamed on government policies particularly land seizures. Commonly known as 'Farm invasions', these seizures of mainly white owned productive farms crippled the agricultural sector as land was either given to poor Zimbabweans who did not have any capabilities in the form of inputs and farming implements for such big projects or high ranking government officers who did not have much interest in farming. With the fuel crisis and general lack of technical skills and knowledge, the farms became idle putting millions of Zimbabweans into risk of food insecurity. As agriculture was one of the major foreign currency earners in the country; such policies affected the country's foreign currency reserves.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://go.worldbank.org/RFP74M2PK1> Accessed on 14.02.2009

Zimbabwe boasts of a wide variety of valuable minerals ranging from gold, nickel, copper, tin, coal and recently, diamond. However, as is the case with the agricultural sector, mining is also facing problems which have resulted in the reduction of output. Gold production, which accounts for 52 percent of total mineral production and a third of the country's gross domestic product, is being affected by the on-going clampdown on small-scale miners (Mine Web, 2008). Small scale mines, contributing over 20% of gold production per year, are being closed down, rendering many people unemployed and thus disrupting their livelihoods in the process.

With the country's two major economic sectors (agriculture and mining) facing a decline, economic conditions have deteriorated, with real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) falling by nearly 35 percent in cumulative terms while inflation has skyrocketed, with official annual inflation rate reaching over 10 million percent by September 2008 as reported in local and international media. Various programmes that the government had tried to implement to turn around the economy have so far failed. This has mainly been due to adverse policies which are more political than economical. The future for the majority of ordinary Zimbabweans is bleak at the moment unless the recently agreed unity government between ZANU PF and MDC really takes effect and the international community come to the aid of the country.

### **2.3. Development Partners and Government**

Zimbabwe's relationship with the international community, especially Western countries, remains strained. The country has not been a member of the Commonwealth since December 2003. Most donors have scaled down or suspended their operations. The European Union, the United States and some Commonwealth countries have introduced measures such as restrictions on travel and asset ownership for select senior government officials. External financial support is now mainly confined to humanitarian assistance, including HIV/AIDS, social protection, and human rights. The IMF board suspended Zimbabwe's voting rights on June 6 2003 because of Zimbabwe's lack of cooperation in policy implementation and payments<sup>2</sup>. The government has responded by strengthening political and economic relations with some non-traditional partners, such as China and India.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://go.worldbank.org/RFP74M2PK1> Assessed on 1 March 2009

#### **2.4. Poverty situation.**

Poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon meaning many different things to different people. However it is generally understood that people are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society. Poverty is thus reflected in social ills such as low literacy levels, poor health, housing, sanitation, unemployment and many others.

According to the World Bank (2008) various dimensions of poverty makes it suitable for multiple ways of indicators which include levels of income and consumption, social indicators, and indicators of vulnerability to risks and of socio-political access. In Zimbabwe a common method used to measure poverty is based on incomes or consumption levels. A person is considered poor if their consumption or income levels fall below some minimum level necessary to meet basic needs. This minimum level is usually called the "poverty line".

The UNDP (2007/2008) reports that poverty increased considerably between 1995 and 2003. The proportion of households below the Food Poverty Line (very poor) increased from 20 percent in 1995 to 48 percent in 2003, representing an increase of 148 percent. The proportion of households below the Total Consumption Poverty Line (very poor and poor) increased from 42 percent in 1995 to 63 percent in 2003, representing a 51 percent increase. There has been an increase in urban poverty compared to rural poverty due to factors relate to the country's shrinking economy. Urban dwellers pay more for water, electricity, rent and transport than rural dwellers. In rural areas, some agricultural products are cheaper than in urban areas. While processed goods like bread, sugar and cooking oil are expected to be more expensive in rural areas, these form a small proportion of the budget of the rural poorest. As a result, the urban Food Poverty Line (FPL) and Total Consumption Poverty Line (TCPL) were higher than the rural ones.

UNDP further states that Female-headed-households have a higher poverty incidence than male-headed-households. However poverty is now increasing more among male

headed households than female headed households as males who traditionally depended on formal wage employment have been negatively affected by the deteriorating economic conditions.

Using the Human Development Index (HDI), a measure of life expectancy, literacy, education, and standard of living, Zimbabwe's human development levels fell from 0,654 in 1990 to 0,513 in 2005 (Ibid). This decrease shows clearly how Zimbabwean people are moving deeper into poverty. An estimated 80 per cent of adults in the economically active age-group are unemployed and over 85 per cent of Zimbabweans are now categorized as poor (Evans 2007). This has not been helped by the scourge of HIV/AIDS, with the prevalence rate estimated at over 20%. HIV/AIDS has resulted in the death of bread winners, pushing many households into poverty and multiplying the number of orphans within the country.

Most of the problems have been exacerbated by poor government policies which have tended to be more politically oriented.

## **2.5. Vulnerability.**

The Zimbabwean state has the institutional capacity to reduce poverty and increase wellbeing across all sections of the population, but has none of the political desire. Instead, increased repression, militarization and politicization have been the norm since at least 2000. This has pushed many people into poverty and has made them vulnerable to various kinds of uncertainties which include drought, food security, disease and unemployment. Vulnerable groups which are mostly likely affected in such an environment include children (particularly orphans), the sick, people with physical and mental impairments, widows and widowers, the elderly and the landless (Babirye 1999; Mijumbi and Okidi 2001).

## **2.6. UA in Zimbabwe.**

Different authors described urban agriculture in various ways on the basis of location or time of agricultural activities. Mireri et al. (2006) defines urban agriculture as any kind of crop or livestock production and agro-forestry or fuel wood production that is practiced within and outskirts of cities. Deelstra and Girardet (2004) describe urban agriculture broadly as any agricultural production such as horticulture, floriculture,



forestry, fishery, poultry and livestock mainly in public open spaces within or fringe of cities. UNDP (1996) considered urban agriculture as one kind of city industry where its produces are supplied to market to meet daily demands of urban consumers. It is important to note that this phenomenon is still widely viewed as an informal way of food production in city areas. However it has been a widespread strategy adopted by urban dwellers in many sub-Saharan African cities to cope with increasing poverty, caused by increasing population pressure and economic collapse. A 1996 report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) indicated that approximately 800 million people around the world were engaging in agricultural activities in urban areas. And in 1998, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) predicted that the food needs of urban areas would most likely go unmet if governments continued to rely on rural agricultural production alone. This phenomenon is also evident in Zimbabwe. In a context of widespread urban unemployment and poor living conditions, the formal support of UA activities could play an important role in alleviating urban poverty. It is becoming an important source of food for households (Rogerson, 1993).

In Zimbabwe, UA is mainly practiced in the city open spaces, along rivers and urban fringes where land is not suitable for building construction. It is quite intensive in Harare and Bulawayo, capital city and second largest city respectively. Women provide the bulk of labour and management inputs for urban agriculture with children weighing in as worthy assistants. However there have been an increasing number of men involved in urban agriculture as a resulted of increased unemployment (Mbiba, 1999).

UA in Zimbabwe involves both controlled farming, which takes place mainly in designated gardens and uncontrolled farming occurring at any open space that is accessible to the people. It is the uncontrolled urban agriculture which has resulted in increasing conflict between the urban poor and the authorities because of the latter's adherence to the implementation of policies controlling the cultivation of public land. When challenged as to the reasons for such policies, the authorities cite reasons of environmental protection. These include protection against soil erosion, the sedimentation of near-by water bodies; effects on local hydrology, and an increase in the provision of breeding sites for malarial mosquitoes (Drakakis-Smith et al, 1995;

Mbibba, 1999). While at times officials generally tolerate on-plot crop production, livestock rearing is strictly controlled.

## **2.7. Study area profile.**

The study area is Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city. It is located in Matabeleland, 439km south-west of Harare (20°10'S 28°34'E/ -20.167, 28.567), and is now treated as a separate provincial area from Matabeleland. The city sits on a plain that marks the Highveld of Zimbabwe and is close to the watershed between the Zambezi and Limpopo drainage basins. The land slopes gently downwards to the North and North West. The southern side is hillier and the land becomes more broken in the direction of the Matobo Hills to the south.

Due to its relatively high altitude, the city has a subtropical climate despite lying within the tropics. The mean annual temperature is 19.16°C. As with much of southern and eastern Zimbabwe, Bulawayo is cooled by a prevailing south-easterly airflow most of the year, and experiences three broad seasons: a dry, cool winter season from May to August; a hot dry period in early summer from late August to early November; and a warm wet period in the rest of the summer, early November to April. The hottest month is October, which is usually the height of the dry season. The average maximum temperature ranges from 21°C in July to 30°C in October. During the rainy season, daytime maxima are around 26°C. Nights are always cool, ranging from 8°C in July to 16°C in January. The city's average annual rainfall is 588mm, which support a natural vegetation of open woodland, dominated by Combretum and Terminalia trees among others. Most rain falls in the December to February period, while June to August is usually rainless. Being close to the Kalahari Desert, Bulawayo is vulnerable to droughts and rainfall tends to vary sharply from one year to another.

### **2.7.1. Demographic composition.**

Bulawayo is the second largest city in Zimbabwe, after the capital Harare, with a population of 676,000 (UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator, Zimbabwe, 2005), now estimated at 707,000. Bulawayo's population is growing at an annual rate of 5.0% (Bulawayo City Council, 1998b). Some 15% of the population are children o5 years old, and 3.6% are infants. About 49% of the population are below 15 years of age.

Only 2% of the city's population is over 65 years of age (CSO, 2002). These are characteristics of a population with a high growth potential. Life expectancy and death rates are similar to other cities around the country as mentioned in the above sections of Zimbabwe. The city is multi-ethnic with virtually every tribe found. However, the Ndebele form the largest group followed by the Shona and Karanga who continue to migrate into the city. Over 80% of the population reside in the high-density suburbs while the remainder reside in the medium and low-density areas and the city centre (Gwebu, 2002).

### **2.7.2. Socio-economic characteristics.**

The prevailing depressed economic climate has been widely felt in Bulawayo since the mid- 1980s there has been minimal investment as demonstrated by the lack of new buildings in the central business district as opposed to Harare which completely changed its skyline. Once Zimbabwe's industrial hub, the city has lost most of its major industries, through outright closure or relocation to Harare. The city is thus home to a relatively poor urban population, compared to the population of Harare. As there has been little formal investment people have had to be innovative and engage in informal activities, both legal and illegal. Informal activities include vending, flea markets, backyard manufacturing, UA, cross border trading and dealing which encompasses any activity which generates income and is illegal. However this informal sector is recognised as a key component to economic development of Bulawayo and thus the city has been actively involved in the promotions of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SME). A number of business incubators or factory shells are operational in the Kelvin industrial areas. These are specifically targeted to be used by small budding entrepreneurs who do not have the resources to set up their own establishments. They are meant to give them time to build up their resources for over a short period before they are expected to stand on their own feet and leave space for new individuals. The incubators are designed to be flexible in order to accommodate any type of industry and occupants pay a nominal rental.

With reduced municipality resources, public private partnerships have emerged where services which were previously supplied or run by municipality are being taken over by the private sector. The most significant field has been in the provision of low cost housing.

The major threat has been HIV/AIDS which has increased mortality rates in the city. The current macroeconomic climate has also affected health delivery services in Bulawayo. With shortage of drugs and expensive consultation fees and movement of staff to greener pastures, the health sector has been adversely affected.

Lack of employment and poverty has seen a mass exodus of young people, especially economical active group, 15-45, to neighbouring South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. This has further drained the city of much needed skilled and active personnel.

### **2.7.3. UA in Bulawayo.**

UA in Bulawayo is as old as the city. It is practiced by people from various social and economic groups and for a variety of reasons including subsistence, economic development and hobby.

Historically, authorities and legislation have been hostile to the practice, regarding it as an insignificant and trivial activity. However, official attitude has since changed from the negative one of the past to a positive one of recognition and attention. In Bulawayo UA takes place anywhere there is idle land.

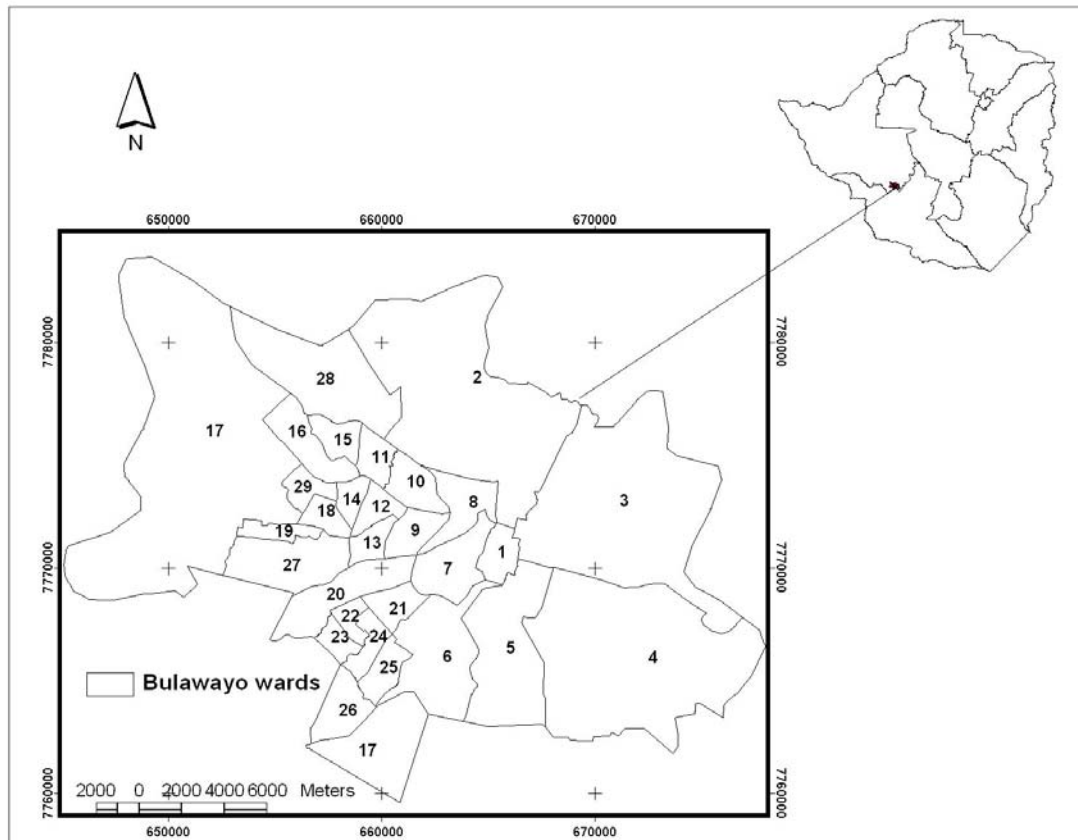
People take advantage of open spaces that lie idle to cultivate mainly maize crop. Farming increased rapidly towards the late 90s as economic decline began to affect many people. However UA in Bulawayo, though still perceived as illegal by some, is unique in that the local authorities have since taken it upon themselves to promote it. This has been done through enacting of policies that support urban farming and sees it as a vital economic strategy that could alleviate poverty and contribute to food security. The city has been developing a policy framework for urban agriculture since 1996. The municipality sought to improve urban agriculture in terms of increasing the area under urban agriculture activities and also the intensity of production per given area in a manner that would not harm the environment. In 1998 it set up an inter-departmental committee that was mandated to develop draft policy on urban agriculture (Mubvami, 2006).

#### **2.7.4. The policy document on UA.**

The policy document defines UA as “a system of land use for agricultural purposes within the urban environment for crop and animal husbandry” (Mubvami, 2006). It recognises UA in its broad sense and does not limit it to crop cultivation. The policy also recognises that UA is widespread in the city and is a major land use activity with immense socio-economic benefits to the residents. It recognises the practice as an industry that should be supported and organised. The intention of the policy is to legalise the activity in certain designated areas within the city. Mubvami, (2006) further notes that the objectives mentioned in the policy document are to identify suitable land and allocate it to deserving people (i.e. the elderly, women and youths), promote the utilisation of urban wastewater, support the activity (with proper extension services, finances and project appraisals) and above all to make sure that the activity is properly coordinated.

A number of agricultural projects are being implemented within the city and its periphery. Most of these projects include gardens which are multiplied as a result of the policy on urban agriculture in the city. According to Mubvami (2006), the beneficiaries are mostly the elderly and the destitute. The city manages the Gum Plantation Allotment, a massive community garden project on an estimated four and a half square kilometres. It has been estimated that about sixty percent of the vegetables are sold in the city and the rest in Francistown in neighbouring Botswana (ibid).

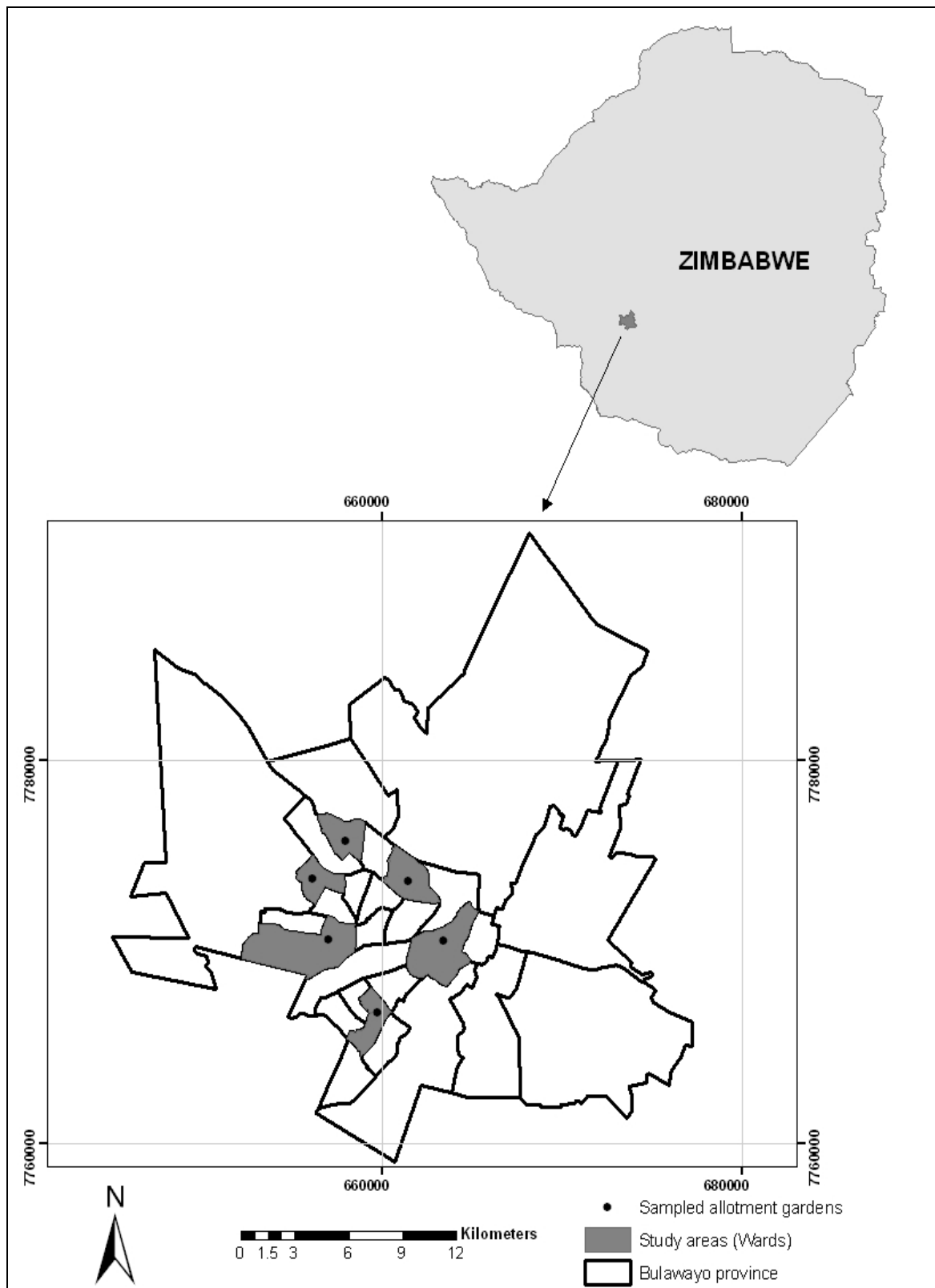
**Figure 2. Bulawayo Wards**



UA in Bulawayo is also unique in that the city is being intensively supported by Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (RUA Foundation). This is a foundation that has functioned since 1999 as a global network of six regional organisations that share a common vision on urban development and poverty reduction and together implement an international programme focussed on urban agriculture and food security<sup>3</sup>. The mission of RUA Foundation is to contribute to urban poverty reduction, employment generation and food security and to stimulate participatory city governance and improved urban environmental management, by creating enabling conditions for empowerment of male and female urban and peri-urban farmers and by facilitating the integration of urban agriculture in policies and action programmes of local governments, civic society organisations and private enterprises with active involvement of the urban farmers, livestock keepers and other relevant stakeholders.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ruaf.org/node/449>. Assessed on 14 February, 2009.

**Figure 3 Study area with respect to sampled wards and gardens in Bulawayo province.**



## **2.8. Conclusion.**

This chapter gives an overview of the country's background in terms of geographical location, demographic and economic characteristics. It gives a general description of the economic and social problems the country is facing which culminates in general poverty amongst the majority of the people. The chapter also describes the study area, Bulawayo, once an industrial hub but now disappearing into oblivion due to economic and political problems affecting the country. Poverty seems to be widespread in Bulawayo compared to the capital city Harare due to the fact that many industries have relocated from Bulawayo to the capital city. Urban agriculture is also briefly described highlighting the policy which recognises it as a vital source of livelihood to the urban population. This policy has resulted in various agricultural programmes such as allotment gardens, which exist in all the wards around the city of Bulawayo.



## **CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0. Introduction**

This chapter is designed to explain how data was collected, analysed and interpreted through the stages of research work. This section also presents the researcher's choice and rationale of methodological approaches to the study and provides a critical analysis of qualitative techniques used, looking at both their strengths and their weaknesses as data collection tools. The chapter further describes the sources of data, mainly primary and secondary and attempts to evaluate the fieldwork, discuss the problems encountered, as well as solutions and techniques enacted to counter those problems. Techniques for data analysis are also discussed and so are issues of validity and reliability.

### **3.1. Research Methodology**

According to Strauss and Corbin (1980) methodology is a way of thinking about and studying a social reality. It thus gives a vision to what the research should involve and how it should be carried out. To some scholars such as Kitchen and Tate, (2001), it is a coherent set of rules and procedures which can be used to investigate a phenomenon. This line of argument is supported by and Shurmer- Smith (2001) who adds that methodology is then a theory of how inquiry should proceed. It is therefore not a matter of practicalities and techniques but combines theory with practice in research. Methods on the other hand are a set of procedures and techniques that can be used for gathering and analysing data. Through these techniques, researchers are able to see the ordinary and thus can arrive to new understanding of a social phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1980).

The choice of methodological approach to be used in a research generally depends on the nature and purpose of the study. In most cases it is largely determined by the research question to be investigated and to a smaller extent by available time and interest of the researcher. In the following subsections I shall present qualitative research methodology as my main choice. However, quantitative methodology shall be used in some cases to augment qualitative methodology. I will thus give a detailed critical analysis of qualitative approach and the methods and techniques that were

used for data collection. Reasons for the choice of this approach are also discussed below.

### **3.2. Qualitative research methodology**

Kvale (1996) observes that qualitative research has come to be regarded as progressive research because over the last decade there has been an expansion in the use of qualitative methods in research especially in the field of Geography. Crang (2002) supports this view and argues that finally qualitative methods have arrived and been accepted as established approaches in research. With a need for in-depth understanding of human behaviour and needs, qualitative methods have come in handy and are being used extensively. Kvale (1996) adds that this type of methodological approach is very sensitive to human situation and involves emphatic dialogue with studied subjects. Unlike quantitative approach where there is not much connection between the researcher and those researched, qualitative approaches seeks to understand phenomenon in context specific settings with emphasis on a close relationship between the researcher and the subjects. Patton (2002) qualifies this idea by arguing that in qualitative research the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the issues of interest but seeks to understand the behaviour and feelings of the respondents.

Qualitative methods give the intricate details of phenomenon difficult to convey with quantitative methods. Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that this is because qualitative techniques tend to emphasize quality, depth, richness and personal understanding of people's feelings and behaviour. Qualitative methods thus become very useful when the researcher is interested in multiplicity of meanings, representation and practices.

#### **3.2.1. Reasons for choosing qualitative research**

It is important to note that qualitative and quantitative methodologies are not simply different ways of doing the same thing. They have different strengths and weaknesses and are suitable for different set of research questions (Maxwell 1996). There are however many reasons for choosing qualitative research over quantitative research. These reasons stem from preference, prior knowledge and experience with the methodology to nature of the research problem often it is the nature of the research problem together research questions and theoretical framework used through the

research that has a strong bearing on the methodology likely to be used in research. Maxwell (1996) further adds that the strength of qualitative research is in its inductive approach and its focus on people than on numbers and statistics. This is in line with my research problem and research questions discussed in chapter one and the theoretical approaches that are applied in my study. As discussed in chapter one, the research problem attempts to highlight how poor people in an urban setting, engaged in urban agriculture, have managed to improve their livelihood and wellbeing in their community. Using the capabilities approach theories, the study attempts to find out how urban farming has helped in building poor people's lives from access to basic needs to asset building and development. In order to get such detailed information there is a need for a close contact with the subjects. Information which relates to personal views, beliefs and feelings about urban farming as a livelihood strategy can be obtained in detail through use of qualitative methods. Quantitative methods can also be used for such a study but they will limit the research in that they will not give adequate information on people's feelings and beliefs about urban agriculture having a positive or negative impact on their lives. Qualitative research is also characterised by flexibility. The researcher can change the research questions to suite the information that is investigated. This flexibility ensures that complex and seemingly sensitive questions can be investigated without making the subjects uncomfortable.

It can be argued therefore that for researches who seek to understand the behaviour, attitudes, feelings and perspectives of people, qualitative methodology is superior to quantitative methodology. It is always argued that qualitative research is sensitive to the human situation involving a close dialogue with the subjects. It allows the subject to convey to the researcher their situation from their own perspectives. Limb and Dwyer (2001) thus argue that qualitative research is very powerful in that it does not start with the assumption that there is a pre-existing world that can be known. It sees the world as always constructed through interaction of culture, economic, social and political processes. This means that qualitative methods recognise diversity and acknowledges voices of those who are powerless in the society. Similar sentiments are supported by Smith (2001) who observes that qualitative methods try to recognise the relevance and importance of 'lay or folk' perspectives on the practicalities of everyday lives.

However, just like in any other research methodology, qualitative research has its limitations. There is a high possibility of biases from the researcher through the interpretation of responses. It is quite often easy for a researcher to interpret the responses in the way that he or she wants the responses to be which might not be a true reflection of reality on the ground.

Nevertheless, I chose to use qualitative methodology in my study to answer my research questions which seek to acquire information on how UA shapes people's lives in the communities they live in. I wanted to get information directly from the subjects and thus get their own perspectives, feelings and attitudes about garden farming as a way of life. I wanted to understand how these people working in the urban gardens perceive themselves as farmers in an urban society dominated by industrial activity and to what extent they are able to create livelihoods from these gardens. I also wanted to find out the individual life experiences of the farmers before and after their involvement with urban garden farming, the response by the local authorities and community. As a social scientist, I want to pursue a career that would involve a close understanding of how people survive in difficult economic situations. In order for me to contribute effectively in issues of vulnerability and poverty reduction it is important that I exercise my skills of qualitative research as it involves a close understanding of people's well-beings.

### **3.3. Research design**

This is a structure of ideas that guide the study. It sets the parameters for the understandings of the meanings by specific methods and methodologies. Maxwell (1996) thus argues that research design is like a philosophy of life; no one is without one but some people are more aware of theirs than others and can thus make more informed decisions. In qualitative research, research design is an iterative process involving 'tacking' back and forth between the different components of the design, assessing the implications of purpose, theory, research questions, methods and validity threats for one another (Ibid).

This study is based on an analysis of urban gardens scattered around Bulawayo. The idea behind this study is an attempt to bring out issues of asset building, perceptions and attitude towards urban farming. Food security issues which cannot be ignored as

they are interwoven inside the whole concept of survival strategies are also explored. The study also involves brief investigations into the role of various NGOs involved in urban garden farming and in this case World Vision stands out. World Vision Zimbabwe is active in ensuring that urban gardens function properly through provision of inputs as well as capacitating farmers through various technologies necessary for low cost agricultural activities. This active involvement of World Vision ensured that more attention is given to this organisation so as to understand the functioning's of the urban gardens and also to get their views on the different capabilities made possible by urban garden farming.

### **3.4. Data collection methods**

Different data collection methods were used in order to increase the validity and reliability of the research. All these methods are qualitative and were chosen because of the nature of the research questions that demand certain kind of information. It is important to note that qualitative methodologies have various data collection techniques. Limb and Dwyer (2001) outline them as follows; first there are in-depth open-ended interviews which can be conducted with individuals or groups. Then there are group discussions which may be single meetings, focus groups or consecutive meetings. There is then the participant observation and lastly interpretations and analysis of a wide variety of different kinds of text. From these techniques I chose to use the ones that will be discussed below. These discussions will attempt to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of these techniques and give the reasons for them being chosen. Some secondary sources such as library documents were also used to verify and supplement data from the field.

### **3.5. Interviews**

Qualitative interviewing is a kind of guided conversation where the researcher carefully listens so as to understand the meaning of what is being conveyed. Kvale (1996) supports this line of argument and argues that most often qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to get the meaning of people's experiences and uncover their lived world before scientific explanations. This allows the researcher to produce a rich and varied data set through a thorough examination of experiences; feelings and opinions that closed questions

could never hope to capture (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). This makes interviews very appropriate for my study as they provide information that relates to people's experiences, opinions, feelings and, expectations.

There are different types of interviews. Patton (2002) mentions informal interviews, general interview guide approach, standardized and open ended interviews. I used general interview guide approach or semi-structured interviews, open-ended or unstructured interviews on key informants, focus group discussions, informal interviews and participation observations.

### **3.5.1. Semi-structured interviews**

This type of interview consists of a sequence of themes to be covered. This is in the form of an interview guide. According to Dunn (2000) in Hay (2000), it is called a content focussed technique because it focuses on the content. This technique allows for in-depth study of the subjects and is flexible in that there is openness to changes of theme sequence in order to follow up the answers and stories told by the subject. This is the strength of this technique because it enables the research subjects to talk about issues in a sequence that is comfortable for them. An interview guide specifying topics related to the research objectives and questions of my study was used. Using this technique I conducted in-depth interviews with selected respondents and attempted to get their views, attitudes and experiences with urban farming as a livelihood strategy. The interview guide attempted to highlight topics that are related to people's participation in urban farming and capabilities that have been made available to them including quantitative information such as income gained and yields realized as a result of the farming activities. The interview guide and questions were thus linked to the development theories that are used through the study.

During semi-structured interviews, I interviewed twenty people of mixed sex, age and various other characteristics such as illness, age, orphan hood for comparative purposes and to reduce variation of information. The information gathered was quite varied depicting the different characteristics of the respondents and also revealing different perceptions towards urban garden farming. However, the responses were convenient to transcribe, analyse, interpret and discuss.

The majority of the respondents interviewed tended to compare their lives before and after involvement in urban gardens. This became a very important dimension to the study as it gave me a clear idea of the importance of these urban gardens in the respondent's lives. Through the narration of their life histories, I was able to get as much information on the type of capabilities they have acquired and on how they have managed to use urban gardens as their sole source of livelihood.

The nature of the questions and the way they were structured made it possible to gather as much information as possible from the twenty people I managed to get. It is important to note that it was very dangerous and difficult to get respondents as many people were afraid of being victimised by the ruling government. Interviewing more than ten people under the dangerous political environment prevailing in the country was a fair effort and the semi-structured questions ensured that it was detailed. However, it is important to note that semi-structured interviews can be problematic in the sense that one can easily be swayed away from the main issues of the research to aspects being brought in by the interviewee. This happened to me several times in the field where respondents would twist the conversation into what they wish and hope I could do for them. This was typical of those suffering from HIV who thought I could help them acquire some other assistance from Donors. Many a times I had to redirect the conversation but with a lot of difficulty and fear of upsetting my respondents. This resulted in a lot of data which I had later to later on discard as it was not very relevant to my objectives. My experience in the field is supported by Mikkelsen (1995) who notes that though the semi-structured interviews is a technique developed to optimise the knowledge, attitudes and practise of different individuals, it has a weakness in that interviewer flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can result in substantially different responses. This reduces the comparability of the responses.

### **3.5.2. Unstructured interview**

This is an open and informal conversation which tends to be informant focussed. This technique was used aiming to obtain information from key informants. Unstructured interviews are usually based on open-ended questions giving. Open-ended questions allow respondents to express themselves as much as possible in relation to questions addressed and this is helpful since they are key respondents as they will provide much valuable expert knowledge. The key informant is regarded as an expert who imparts

important information about certain subject to the interviewer. Usually the assumption is that the key informants know the subject at hand very well and this is determined after a preliminary survey or informal talk with relevant people. My choice of key informants is backed by Nichols (1991) who describes them as members who are particularly knowledgeable and reliable about factual matters in the community. I considered informants such as the city engineer and city planners from Bulawayo municipality. These were relevant for my study because they are responsible for the city's land use functions and service delivery. Other key respondents were Ward Councillors, Chairpersons of the gardens and World Vision field officers responsible for UA and livelihoods in the city. Local councillors and Chairpersons provided much valuable information as they worked with the farmers' every day. They were thus in a position to explain in detail how they think urban gardens have benefitted the farmers working in them. The interviews were mainly focusing on the history, organisation, NGO and municipality involvement and general effectiveness of urban garden farming as a way of providing livelihood and ensuring food security to the disadvantaged in the community. Other key respondents were determined after a preliminary survey with relevant people especially farmers themselves. It also important to note that selection of key respondents is a flexible exercise and some of the farmers might turn out to be useful key respondents. This idea was derived from Yin (1984) who argues that the more a respondent provides information about a phenomena under study the more he becomes an informant rather than a respondent.

The key respondents also helped in restructuring some of the questions meant for the other respondents. I had to add some other issues which they felt were very important and would help open up the respondents.

Unstructured interviews generated a lot of information. Respondents were eager to talk and express themselves. The Chairpersons of different gardens around Bulawayo were proud to express the successes of their work and were eager to explain the problems they are facing, perhaps in the hope that they will get something out of it. The open ended questions also meant that I did less of the talking. This kind of interview proved to be quite helpful for my study as I got the opportunity to explore deeply my objectives. Moreover, I made sure that I allocated each Chairman more hours for the interviews compared to the semi-structured interviews. Other key



respondents such as Bulawayo municipality authorities and NGO officials were not easy to locate and when I finally got the opportunity to interview them, I was allocated a certain amount of time because they were busy at work. Nevertheless they also provided much valuable data.

However, the amount of data gathered also became a problem during transcription and analysis. I had to spend a lot of time screening and categorizing it. This is one weakness about open-ended questions that I later realised.

### **3.5.3. Informal conversation interview**

According to Kitchin and Tate (2000) this is an unstructured format of interview which can occur spontaneously in the course of field work. Respondent may or may not know that an interview is taking place and this allows respondents to talk about a topic in a way that is suitable for them. This kind of interview is individualized and is relevant to that interviewed individual. I used it to augment information obtained from key informant interviews. I noticed that informal interviews especially with councillors were very informative. The fact that I was not writing anything down somehow could have made them open up and say what they thought and felt without fear of being miscounted. I conducted this kind of interview usually in the evenings when the Councillors did not have much work to do. The Councillors I interviewed spoke at length about these urban gardens and they were proud of some the successes since they were also involved in their inception. These discussions helped me understand the problems affecting many people in their communities. Of these problems, food security and HIV aids were the main threats affecting the low income urban dwellers and urban agriculture seem to provide some sort of reprieve to a few who are working in them.

### **3.6. Focus group discussions**

This method was chosen to supplement in-depth interviews already discussed above. According to Lewis-Beck et al (2004), a Focus Group Discussion is a research interviewing process specifically aimed to uncover insights from a group of individuals. This is usually guided by a set of questions deliberately sequenced to lead discussions towards issues of interest to the researcher. Bedford and Burgess (in Limb

and Dwyer, 2001) express similar sentiments in that focus groups are brought to discuss particular topics chosen by the researcher.

In my study I used focus group discussions to understand perspectives, attitudes, behaviours and concerns of different groups. Focus groups were also used to identify key respondents from the information gathered from the group members. I did three focus group discussions, one for women, one for men and one for HIV/AIDS victims. Respondents were selected with the help of Chairpersons of the gardens who understood their different capabilities. However, upon reflection, the use of Chairpersons in the selection of focus group respondents could have compromised the quality of the data as it is likely the Chairpersons chose the people they felt would be able to represent them better. The separation of sexes was done to ensure that there is no dominance of one sex over the other. This idea was taken from Limb and Dwyer (2001) who argue that factors such as age, gender, socio-economic class, religion and race are likely to affect the ways the individuals interact with each other thus affecting the flow of information. Moreover, it is a fact that culturally women in Africa find it hard to express themselves in the presence of men. Quite often they go along with what men say even if they do not agree with it. Helmore and Singh (2002) further add that women and men's roles are usually imbued with different meanings in different societies since men and women experience life differently.

However, I should point out that even after separating my respondents according to gender, I still experienced some problems within the groups. Naturally there are some people who are outspoken and they tend to dominate the discussions. Such people tend to be either formal or informal local leaders. They responded to every question that was asked. Amongst women groups, this was quite prevalent. It was very difficult to control such situations without denting their egos. Mikkelsen (1995) observes that formal or informal leaders may influence and tacitly direct other participants' response patterns. However, I devised a method where I asked each and every member to give their own views so that I get everyone to talk. This way I managed to get varied ideas even though the dominant voices still controlled the flow of the discussions. It was very ironic in that the most dominant among women were the HIV victims who by the virtue of their status probably felt they had to speak more in case they get some form of assistance. Discussions with men were not as explosive and

tended to divert into current politics, a subject which I feared to dwell on because the uncertainties and unforeseen dangers that could befall me and my respondents. The HIV/AIDS focus group was however mixed because I could only manage to get two men and three women. Combining them made sense to me in that it increased their confidence and ability to speak freely.

I found focus groups very useful as a data gathering technique. A lot of information comprising different views, beliefs and perceptions was gathered within a short space of time. Some people have confidence when they have the comfort of other members.

### **3.7. Direct observation**

Observation is an inductive method of data collection (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). There are two types of observation, direct and participant observation. In participant observation, the researcher becomes part of the community learning to act in such a way as to blend into the community so that its members will act naturally, then removing oneself from the setting or community to immerse oneself in the data to understand what is going on and be able to write about it (Bernard, 1994). In direct observation on the other hand the researcher takes a passive role while noting the behaviours and activities of people under study. Observation is very essential in all stages of the study as it provides additional information which could not be obtained through other methods such as interviews. This view is supported by Frankfort-Nichanias and Nichanias (1996) in Kitchin and Tate, (2000) who argue that in observation directness is the major advantage. Researchers are able to watch their respondents do and to listen to what they talk about rather than asking for their views and feelings.

I found direct observation valuable in documenting activities, behaviours and other social aspects of the respondents without having to talk to them. I observed the working environment of the farmers in their gardens, the way they associate with each other and the effort they put in their work. This helped in understanding the importance and value they attach to their work. It was also essential to observe the duration of work each day as this gave me an idea of how important urban gardening is to the beneficiaries. I also managed to observe the farmers the frequency of people

who visited these gardens to buy the products. This gave me an idea of the importance of these gardens to the wider community of Bulawayo.

It is important thus to state that in an effort to assess the contribution of urban garden farming to people's livelihoods in Bulawayo, observation became very relevant to this study. It revealed social political and economic challenges and opportunities which enriched the study and contributed immensely in providing validity and reliability of the findings. I was able to compare what I observed to what I gathered during interviews and this helped in affirming consistency.

### **3.8. Selection of respondents**

According Mikkelsen (1995) the critical and controversial areas in the use of qualitative methods is selection of respondents and sampling. Normally in such studies the number of selected research subjects is small and the selection procedures are not random as to give everyone equal chance of being included. Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases. However the issue of small samples have been criticised as not being a reason enough for generalisation of findings (Kvale, 1996). Nevertheless no matter how small the samples are, there is a great need from researchers to get suitable respondents in suitable numbers so as to gather credible and reliable data. Sampling becomes critical in this sense as Maxwell (1996) would argue that even single case studies involve a choice of this case as well requiring sampling decisions within the case itself.

As a qualitative study my research did not have a large sample because it was driven by a desire to obtain deeper insights on people's wellbeing. This can be achieved efficiently through a close and detailed study of a few respondents. As such, purposive snowball sampling was done in the selection of a few key respondents while snowball sampling was used for other respondents.

#### **3.8.1. Purposive snowball sampling**

Purposive sampling, as the term suggests, involves selection of respondents based on a deliberate criterion in order to acquire specific set of data. Patton (2002) argues that the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. He further notes that Information-rich cases are those from which

one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research.

In this study purposive sampling was used to in the selection of key respondents. The first person I spoke with was the director of Civil Engineering in the Bulawayo municipality. This was the time when I was seeking permission to talk to people working in the gardens and also municipality officials responsible for urban farming. The director referred me to the Councillors of the wards where the gardens are and also to the different Chairpersons of different gardens. The director also referred me to the junior officials who deal with urban farming though it later became very difficult to get interviews with them. I also used purposive sampling to locate NGO officials who work directly with farmers in the gardens.

I also used snowball sampling for other respondents which were not key informants. Snowball sampling is when one subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provides the name of another and so on (Patton 2002). The first people I interviewed were Chairpersons of the different gardens spread around the city. The Chairpersons then referred me to ordinary beneficiaries or farmers who work in the gardens. I relied a lot on the Chairpersons as they seemed to know well the type of people who would give me information I needed. Of the twenty respondents I managed to get through the Chairpersons of the gardens, fifteen were females and five were males. Females constitute the highest number in the gardens hence this high proportion. Four of the female respondents were HIV positive and two of the men were. Eight respondents were the elderly, above fifty five years. Only two orphans were interviewed. I discovered that most of the orphans were at school and their duties in the gardens were being done by relatives. While this idea was convenient for me and my research, it is also possible that the Chairpersons referred me to the people they knew would give 'politically correct information'. This is a bias I had to deal with hence I also attempted to interview anyone that I met in the gardens. HIV victims were so eager to be interviewed and through snow balling, I managed to talk to a number of them as they knew each other through various support groups they came from. I did not get the opportunity to talk to orphans who are some of the beneficiaries of these gardens. They were either at school or there was someone who stood for them in the gardens. Moreover, for some reasons which I failed to

understand, the Councillors and the Chairpersons were not so keen on children being interviewed. I had to rely on relatives of these children to understand the impact and influence of urban gardens in these children's lives.

### **3.9. Secondary data**

Secondary data is data that has been collected by researchers and agencies on similar subject as my study. The collection of secondary data began on the inception of the study problem and continued up to the end of the study. The idea is based on Mikkelsen (1995) who points out that secondary data sources provide a wealth of information from different studies which can be utilised to shape the study. Secondary data was thus collected through literature review on urban agriculture studies in developing countries particularly Zimbabwe. Published and unpublished books and journals, Government and International reports, magazines newspapers and the internet sites were used as sources of most of the secondary data gathered. Some of the valuable secondary information was obtained in the field from Chairpersons of the gardens visited, Bulawayo municipality and from NGOs such as World Vision and God's Loving Hand which are working with the farmers in their gardens. This information was very critical because it made it possible to verify and in some cases to augment what the respondents gave in the interviews. Thus this information helped to conceptualize and contextualize the study.

### **3.10. Data analysis and interpretation**

There are different ways to approach the analysis of data produced. According to Kitchin and Tate (2000), these include use of interpretative approach which emphasises the role of patterns, categories and descriptive units; grounded theory approach, which emphasizes different strategies of data coding and quasi-statistical approach which seeks to minimise interpretative analysis and introduce a prescriptive approach to analysis. Dey (1993) however argues that despite the differences in emphasis the various approaches all seek to make sense of the data produced through categorisation and connection.

In this study, Dey's (1993) approach which seeks to combine different aspects of other approaches was employed. This approach is prescriptive in nature as it provides a clear set of guidelines for analysing data. It has been recommended by Kitchin and

Tate (2000) for researchers not yet familiar with qualitative data analysis. Under this approach the core of qualitative analysis consists of the description of data, classification and connection of concepts.

Data analysis in this study thus followed a prescriptive approach. It started by data transcription, then categorisation, description and classification to facilitate interpretation while also seeking connections which were useful in identifying relationships and associations. I developed an analytical framework adapted from Robeyn's (2005) Capabilities Approach. This framework was used intensively in the classification and description of data. Data was described in different categories which form parts of the framework. These include capability sets, conversion factors, institutions, resources and achieved functions. The framework analysis model also helps link the methodology chapter with the rest of the chapters.

### **3.11. Challenges, reliability and validity**

Doing a social research is a challenging task that as it involves analysis of data in a more subjective manner that opens the research to a lot of criticism. Issues of reliability and validity thus become of paramount importance if the study is to be accepted as credible. According to Kvale (1996), in research, the term reliability refers to the consistency of the research findings. It should start from the inception of the study and be maintained up to the presentation of the work. Silverman (2005) argues that reliable work has to show a certain degree of independence of the findings from any accidental circumstance. Moreover, it has been argued by Kitchin and Tate (2001) that not only the findings should be reliable but also the methods and procedures followed in the field during data collection should be reliable enough to guarantee the integrity of the whole study. Validity on the other hand concerns the soundness, legitimacy and the relevance of a research theory and its investigation. Qualitative studies should thus be much more than 'telling convincing stories' but be vigorous in nature so as to have conclusions accepted (ibid).

Quite often the methods that a research uses in the field tend to affect the credibility of the work produced. This is because reality on the field differs from the plan that a researcher usually makes prior to fieldwork. The field is often littered with unexpected problems and situations. In this study I encountered quite a number of

challenging situations which threatened the credibility of my research. I conducted fieldwork during the time when Zimbabwe was in the middle of a violent presidential election. The atmosphere was very tense and people were afraid to talk to anyone they deemed suspicious. This sudden reality threatened the entire fieldwork as I had to re-plan and re-engage those influential people who would guarantee my own protection of that of my respondents. The situation was so dangerous that being seen going around with some book talking to people was tantamount to civil mobilisation and was punishable by being thrown into jail. Moreover the respondents themselves did not trust anyone they did not know. I had to turn to the local councillors who convinced the respondents that the work I was doing was only for academic purposes and they would not be harmed.

The very nature of my study was also a problem in itself as it touched on the issues of land, food availability and NGOs. These were some of the very sensitive issues which the ruling government was not comfortable with especially if they were to be documented for whatever purpose.

With such daunting problems, the very existence of my study was threatened. I had to apply to the police for clearance and had to take my interview guide for inspection. Some of the questions which I had planned were removed, especially those that concerned respondents' opinion of the government's contribution to garden projects. With the police clearance I was thus able to move around the City conducting my interviews.

The other issue which threatened the reliability of my study was a general meltdown in the economy making cost of living beyond reach of many. Inflation at the time was the highest in the world, more than 11 million percent. Cost of basic commodities such as food, transport and fuel was rising on a daily basis. This curtailed my mobility because the gardens are spread all over the city. As a result I had to select a few that were accessible.

Moreover, because of poverty, some of my respondents were making emotional pleas to help them get assistance from donors. Poverty and suffering has made people believe that anyone coming from a European country must be rich and should be able to assist them somehow. I had a feeling some of the responses I was getting were far



too exaggerated and needed verification. I had to do this verification with the Municipality of Bulawayo and World Vision, the two organisations actively involved in these garden projects. Likewise I also had to check with the beneficiaries to verify the responses I was getting from various institutions working with them. During the analysis I realised that the general trend of the responses from the beneficiaries portrayed World Vision as a faultless saviour and the Municipality as incompetent. While there could be some measure of truth in that, such responses also showed political inclinations of the respondents as most people in Bulawayo support the opposition MDC party which is also widely supported by international NGOs like World Vision. The municipality on the other hand is viewed as an extended arm of the government which again many people are against. I made sure that I was critical enough in the analysis so as to present a balanced and credible argument.

Moreover the flexibility of the methodology used helped in overcoming some of the unforeseen difficulties of my study. Some of the information that I could not obtain on one to one interviews, I managed to get through focus group discussions and observation. In some cases respondents were reluctant in discussing issues which involved the government on one to one interviews. However they were quite open to talk as a group as this somehow provided some form of protection and combined responsibility. I was thus able to gather data with minimal exaggeration and bias.

### **3.12. Conclusion**

This chapter discussed and explained in detail the methodology used in this study. Qualitative research methodology was critically examined by discussing its strengths and weaknesses in general and relative to this study. This methodology was employed to acquire information that relates to the use of different capability sets presented by urban garden farming. Issues such as perceptions, feelings, attitudes, hope, social relations and many others were best captured using this approach. Various data gathering techniques used in qualitative research were also explained and discussed. The choice of these techniques was very essential as they determine the validity and reliability of the data gathered. The issues of reliability and validity were thus also discussed as they have a significant bearing on the credibility of this study. It was argued in the chapter that challenges such as political tensions that prevailed in

Zimbabwe during the time of data collection significantly influenced not only the techniques later used for data collection, but also how those techniques were applied.

The next chapter discusses the main theories guiding this study and bridging the gap between the methodology used and data analysis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **4.0. General introduction**

This chapter reviews the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of this study. The theory reviewed give the entire study the scientific value that enriches it and makes it to be understood within a certain context. The research has been done under the context of alternative development theory, particularly Capabilities theory. The chapter begins by giving a general discussion on alternative development. This is followed by a critical discussion of Capabilities Approach. This approach is very critical in the study as it operationalizes it and builds the bridge between methodology and analysis.

### **4.1. Alternative development paradigm**

Alternative development paradigm have emerged as a reaction to the inadequacy of classical and structuralist development theories, herein referred to as mainstream development theories in changing the lives of the poor around the world. According to Pieterse (1996 and 2001), dissatisfaction with mainstream development resulted in the gradual emergence of an alternative people centred approach to development. This approach is geared to the basic needs, is endogenous and is self reliant. Friedmann (1992) and Martmusen (1997) note that alternative development must be seen as a process that seeks empowerment of households through involvement in socially and politically relevant actions. There is an emphasis on community participation as opposed to top-down approach by the mainstream development.

Nerfin (1977) has argued that alternative development is the terrain of `Third system`, an alternative to failed governments and economic power. Emphasis is put on development from below. This argument is supported by scholars such as Hettne (1995) with concepts such as self reliance; Schumacher (1973) and Friedmann (1993) with "small is beautiful." The emphasis is on people's knowledge system and values. According to Nerfin (1977) Alternative Development should encompass the following aspects;

- Endogenous- stemming from the heart of each society, which defines its sovereignty and its values.
- Need-oriented- being geared towards meeting human needs, both material and non material.
- Self-reliant- implying that each society depends on its own strength and resources in terms of its supplies of basic needs.
- Based on structural transformation in order to realise the conditions of self-management and participation in decision-making by all those affected by it.

Following the points highlighted above Alternative Development is thus an approach geared towards finding solutions to poverty through the use of the people as the agents. The process of empowerment allows the poor to re-examine their lives, discover the structures, sources of power and subordination, discover their strengths and initiate action (Friedman, 1992). The poor thus become very active in shaping their own destiny. According to Lund (1994) this means that Alternative Development does not perceive the local people as passive of aid but as active participants who should be involved in the decision making process on issues of development in their areas.

However it must be stated that Alternative Development is not that simple and has been widely criticized. Pieterse (1996 and 2001) questioned whether alternative development represents a shift away from mainstream development to warrant the status of paradigm. It is not clear whether this approach was meant to be an alternative practice of development or it was to change mainstream development. Values of alternative development such as equity, environmental sustainability and participation; concerns the 'how to' of development rather than the nature of development (Ibid). Moreover these values are now being embraced in mainstream development. Lund (1994) also supports this assertive arguing that alternative development as a theory tends to pay inadequate concern to the role of external factors and processes of globalisation. Parpart et al (2002) adds further that growing power of global corporate and financial forces is inspiring new thinking about potential solutions to the marginalised people around the world.

Further criticism of alternative development suggests that this approach tends to suggest far more than it can deliver (Pieterse, 2001). This argument is supported by Lund (1994) states that alternative development approach over-emphasizes the poor's consumption needs rather than their productivity and capacity to generate surplus. A counter argument from proponents of alternative development has been that the theory does not ignore need for continued growth but advocates for a position that considers local people in economic growth (Friedmann, 1992).

Nevertheless, alternative development has grown over the years and has been extensively applied in developing countries. It can be authentically argued that this theory has been driven mainly by non-governmental organisations, especially those working in developing countries (Pieterse, 2001). NGOs now play a key role on the ground and many purport to be involved in local development with emphasis on local people. In this study, this argument has been proved correct by the critical involvement of World Vision in Bulawayo's allotment gardens. As such, Alternative Development theory is suitable for this study which seeks to investigate capability strategies of the urban poor involved in urban garden projects in Bulawayo.

#### **4.2. Capabilities Approach**

There has been a shift in international development thinking from a main focus on nations and economic growth to a more focus on non-economic issues and on human beings as proper referent objects of development. This shift can be seen most clearly in the introduction of the human development agenda by the UNDP in the early 1990's. Human development has thus been influenced by several different approaches to development: the basic needs approach, the capability approach and most recently, views about human rights and development.

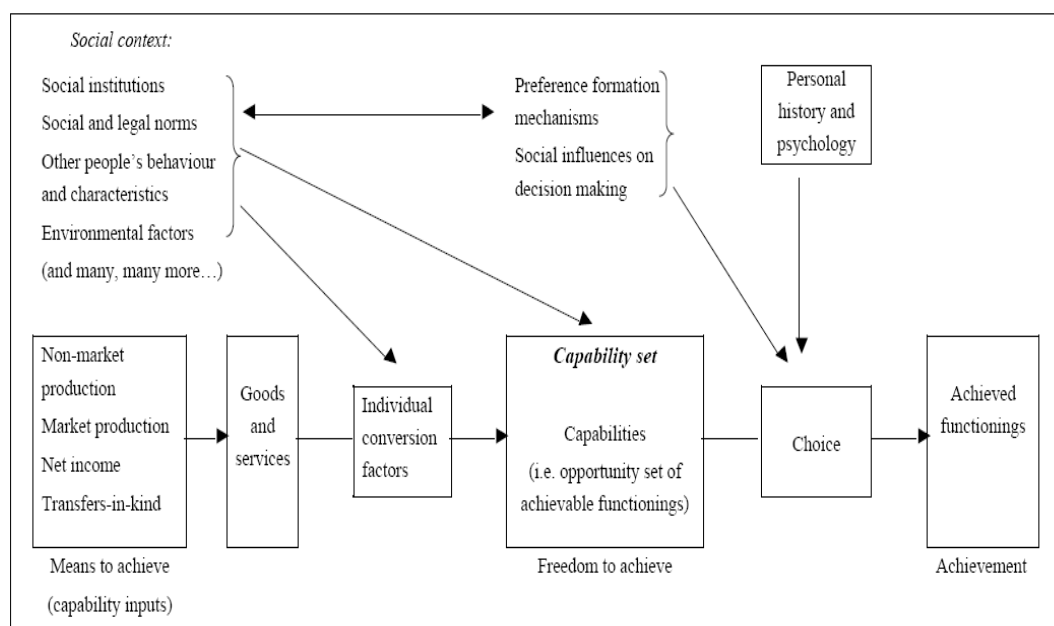
The capability approach has been developed by Amartya Sen from a critique of other 'spaces' in which to measure equality notably welfare and resources. Later the philosopher Martha Nussbaum has also become a prominent advocate for the approach (Dowding, 2006). Sen's critique was aimed mainly at the basic needs approach which he pointed out to be narrow and does not state why people are in need of the basic necessities in the first place (Schischika, 2002). The capability approach in itself is a broad framework for the evaluation and assessment of individual well-

being and social arrangements. Robeyns (2005) states that the approach can be used to evaluate several aspects of people's well being such as inequality, poverty, the well-being of an individual or the average well-being of the members of a group. It has been argued however that the capability approach is not a theory that can explain social issues such as poverty, inequality or well-being but it provides a tool and framework within which to conceptualize and evaluate these issues (Robeyns, 2005). However some scholars (Fukuda-Parr, 2003; Fukuda-Parr and Kumar, 2003) argue that the capability approach has provided a theoretical foundation of the human development paradigm. In this study, the approach will be used both as a theory and as a frame work for evaluation.

The main concepts of the capability approach are the functionings and capabilities. Sen (1999) defines functionings as an achievement of an individual in terms of what one can manage to do. Functionings consist of the individual's activities and the state of well-being. These may include being healthy, educated, having good standard of living, freedom of movement, self respect, participation in politics and economic affairs and access to resources. Capabilities on the other hand refer to the substantial freedoms one has in order to achieve various lifestyles or the opportunities one has in a society (Ibid). Nussbaum (2000) similarly notes that capabilities are what people are actually able to do and be. According to Robeyns (2005) Sen argues that our evaluations and policies should focus on what people are able to do and be, on the quality of their life, and on removing obstacles in their lives so that they have more freedom to live the kind of life which they can value. Poverty in this sense is defined as capability deprivation and as Dowding (2006) observes, inequality or equality of groups in a society can be measured by the equality of capability sets. The relation between means and functionings to achieve certain beings and doings is influenced by conversion factors as shown in figure 3.

Robeyns (2005) describes conversion factors *personal/individual conversion factors* (e.g. physical condition, sex, reading skills etc.), *social conversion factors* (e.g. public policies, social norms, gender roles, power relations), and *environmental conversion factors* (e.g. climate, geographical location). Figure 3 also shows that there are other situations like personal history, psychology and social influence of decision making which can influence the choices that people make from the capability set. From the

choices that people make, they are able to live the kind of life they want, herein referred to as achieved functionings.



**Figure 4: A representation of a person's capability set and her social and personal context according to Robeyns (2005).**

### 4.3. Critique of the Capability approach

The capability approach has been criticised from different sectors. Robeyns (2007) argues that the approach has been criticised for focusing heavily on the metric of justice and human diversity in the conversion of resources into capabilities. This seems to draw attention away from huge inequalities in terms of resources (income, wealth). Pogge (2002) has further argued that the capability approach overemphasizes the role of national and local governments in discussions of global poverty at the expense of injustices created by globalisation. However Robeyns (2007) counters this argument by observing that though Pogge might have a point in his criticism, it is also important to understand that since most capability theorist are concerned with human well-being, they should invest their energies in addressing the urgent cases of injustice by investigating the underlying causal processes and mechanisms.

Martha Nussbaum (2003) has argued that Sen should endorse one definite list of valuable capabilities if capabilities approach can be applied to social justice and gender inequality. Nussbaum (2003a) further adds that as long Sen does commit to a

particular list of capabilities, any capability could be argued to be valuable, for example, a capability to abuse one's power. To further explain herself, Nussbaum has proposed her own list of capabilities in her version of the capability approach. Nussbaum's criticism has been disputed by Robeyns (2003) who argues that Sen's capability approach is quite different from Nussbaum's approach. Sen makes broader and less specified claims hence there cannot be one catch-all list. A list of capabilities must be context dependent, where the context is both the geographical area to which it applies, and the evaluation that is to be done (Robeyns, 2003). Sen (2004b) has also responded to the criticism by arguing that the problem is not with listing important capabilities but with endorsing one predetermined list of capabilities.

Capability is supposed to provide space by which people can be compared for equality. This however has been criticised by Dowding (2006) who has queried what exactly it is that has to be equalized. He argues that it is not possible to give everyone the same capabilities or abilities because some people have inherent abilities that others do not have. Ensuring that everyone has same capability would mean that those who have inherent abilities cannot develop them and that is tantamount to infringing on their freedom. Robeyns (2003) points further that the capabilities approach has been criticised of being too individualistic. This means that it does not consider individuals as part of their social environment, socially embedded and connected to others. Robeyns (2003) however argues that individualism has to be understood in the sense of ethical, methodological and ontological individualism before capability approach can be criticised. He argues that ethical individualism makes a claim about who or what counts in our evaluative decisions and thus postulates that individuals are the units of moral concern. Methodological individualism is a view that everything can be explained by reference to individuals. Ontological individualism on the other hand states that only individuals and their properties exist and that all social properties can be identified by reducing them to individuals. Robeyns thus argues that the capability approach embraces ethical individualism and at the same time accounting for social relations and constraints and opportunities of societal structures on individuals. Looked at this way, it does seem that capability approach is not as individualistic as has been argued.



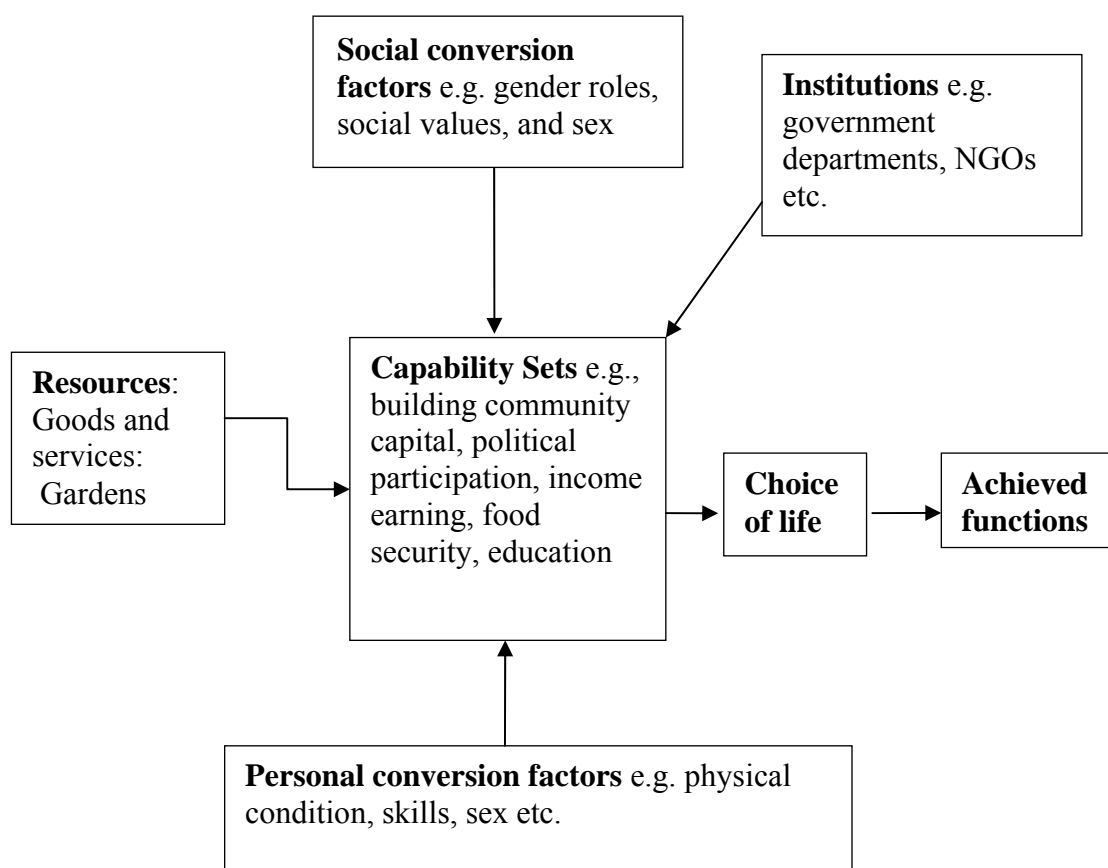
#### **4.4. The application of Sen's Capability Approach in context of urban garden farming.**

I have selected the capabilities approach in my study because I would like to find out how urban agriculture in allotment gardens has equipped the urban poor with necessary capabilities which they could use to improve their well being. Evaluating capability sets available to the beneficiaries gives information about what a person is free to do 'herein achieved functions'. The capability sets and achieved functions are analysed in detail in chapter six. Capability approach is vital in mapping, interpreting and evaluating the beneficiaries' well-being in a broader political, economic and social framework in Bulawayo.

However, since the capability approach is a broad framework, I have attempted to operationalize it so that it suites my study (Figure 4). I adopted my framework from Robeyns (2005). The strength of Sen's capability approach is in broadening the informational base of evaluation, refocusing on people as ends. It recognises human heterogeneity and diversity, drawing attention to group disparities (such as those based on gender, race, class or age). My framework attempts to highlight this.

The study explores different concepts of the model as seen in figure 4. The analysis uses the garden as a good that enables beneficiaries to achieve certain capability sets that they use to achieve certain developmental goals in their communities. A good has certain characteristics which make it of interest to people. These characteristics enable a functioning. Urban gardens are of interest to the beneficiaries mainly because of what they bring to them. This could be financial rewards, political participation or general social development.

The relation between a good (urban gardens) and the functionings to achieve certain beings and doings is influenced by different conversion factors. Personal factors which could be physical health, skills or sex can influence how a person can convert the characteristics of a good into a functioning. Garden farming generally involves hard work and long hours. Those beneficiaries not in good physical condition such as some of the HIV/Aids could be affected hence affecting their functionings to achieve certain choices they need. Farming skills could be an advantage for some and could result in better yields.



**Fig.5. Capabilities Approach frame work applied for a study on urban gardens in Bulawayo. Adapted from Robeyns (2005) figure 3.**

Social conversion factors can also play an important role as argued by Robeyns (2005). Gender responsibilities are very important in most African societies. Would the gardens be more important to women who often take the responsibility of day to day functioning of their households and ensure that everyone is well fed? How do they handle their domestic chores with work in the gardens and what are men's perceptions of urban gardens? These questions are very important because they determine the success or failure of the gardens in providing the functionings that would help the beneficiaries achieve the kind of well-being they desire.

Environmental conversion factors are also vital. Bulawayo is a drought prone region and often receives low rainfall amounts. This has resulted in severe shortages of water for both domestic and industrial use. It would be interesting to find out how urban gardens cope with this environmental factor which can potentially affect beneficiaries' functionings hence desired well-being.

Conversion factors and institutions introduce a broader understanding of the development issues affecting garden beneficiaries. These factors help us understand that developmental issues are very complex and are interwoven in the day to day functioning of the society.

My choice of the capability sets used in this study and found in my model in figure 2 are subjective but based on the prevailing conditions in the country. I attempted to discuss those capability sets that I felt were pertinent at the moment considering economic collapse and political uncertainty in the country. One weakness with the capability approach is that it does not specify the capability sets that are to be used. According to Robeyns (2005) there is a need of specification before the approach can be applied. Below is a brief discussion of the capability sets selected.

#### **4.3.1. Food security**

This is an important capability set in that it helps understand how urban gardens are contributing in food security for both beneficiaries and their communities. Zimbabwe is currently going through a difficult economic situation and there is a massive shortage of food. This capability set is thus very relevant and important because exploring it will give a comprehensive picture on how important the urban gardens are in Bulawayo.

#### **4.4.2. Income earning**

In a country where finding formal employment is increasingly becoming a myth for many ordinary people, the question being asked in this study is; Can urban gardens contribute significantly to income generation for the beneficiaries? Analysing this capability set will show what kind of achieved functions beneficiaries can have. Money is very essential in that it tends to open up choices.

#### **4.4.3. Building community capital**

Community capital refers to the natural, human, social and built capital from which a community receives benefits. How important are urban gardens in promoting this capability? Social capital for example is essential in helping people recover from shocks and stresses associated with their vulnerability in their communities. Do urban gardens improve this social capital and how? According to Robeyns (2003) social

relations; also meaning social capital; combine two major aspects the social network and the social support. Social network stands for the number of people you have in your network, the frequency of contacting them and group membership. The dimension of social support is related to the type and amount of support someone receives.

#### **4.4.4. Political participation**

This capability set is relevant and essential in this study mainly because of the deteriorating political conditions prevailing in Zimbabwe. There is wide spread political violence, oppression and intimidation to those who are anti-ZANU PF. It would be interesting to find out how urban gardens are functioning under such an environment. Do they empower beneficiaries to have a voice in the local politics? It would also be interesting to find out the importance of the gardens to local politicians such as ward Councillors and also to find out how NGOs are working with the garden beneficiaries in a political environment that is not conducive for them.

#### **4.4.5. Education**

Farming requires skill and technique for one to be successful. From this capability set it would be interesting to find out if beneficiaries are acquiring any skills and how they are using these to increase production. Moreover the association of HIV infected beneficiaries and those who are not provides an opportunity for people to learn and understand more about HIV/AIDS. This could reduce stigmatisation which is still rife in Zimbabwe. The important issues would be to find out if there is any knowledge transfer between the infected and not infected beneficiaries.

As the capability approach evaluates policies according to their impact on people's capabilities, it asks for example whether people are being healthy and whether the means or resources necessary for this capability are present, such as clean water, access to doctors, protection from infections and diseases. Robeyns (2005) argues that for some of the capabilities, the main input will be financial resources and economic production, but for others it can also be political practices and institutions, such as guaranteeing and protection of freedom of thought, political participation, social or cultural practices, social structures, social institutions, public goods, social norms, traditions and habits. In the allotment gardens, most of these issues have been factored

in so as to come up with a well analysed scientific understanding of the impact of capability sets available to the beneficiaries. This indicates how flexible capability approach is as it covers all dimensions of human well-being. It also links material, mental and social well-being, or to the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions of life (Robeyns, 2005).

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed some relevant theories that are pertinent to this study. The Capability Approach and Participation theories were discussed to contextualise the study and develop an analysis framework. The Capability Approach is a holistic approach emphasizing issues that affect people's capability sets and their achieved outcomes. It assesses other factors affecting people's ability to use their capability sets. These factors include available institutions and conversion factors (social and physical). This approach provides a framework to the analysis conducted in the following chapters.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: ALLOTMENT GARDENS, BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter introduces the analysis part of the research. It covers the concept of allotment gardens, their historical development and the stakeholders that support them. The chapter is thus divided into basically two sections. The first section deals with the history of allotment gardens, how they developed and whose idea they were. This section thus highlights the responses of various local authorities within the city of Bulawayo. The second section deals with the stakeholders involved in allotment garden projects. These are stakeholders which either facilitated the inception of allotment gardens or they continue assisting in the day to day activities in the gardens. The last part looks at the beneficiaries and discusses the criterion used to select these people.

### **5.2. Development of Allotment Gardens**

It is not clear exactly where the idea of allotment garden projects emanated from. The former Ward Councillors who were elected in the 2000 elections claim that they initiated the establishment of the projects. The councillors argue that upon realising that vulnerable people in their communities were struggling to survive in a shrinking economy, they had to approach the city council for pieces of land that could be used for farming activities. The former councillors, who formed part of the key respondents, then argued that they had to identify suitable beneficiaries who would work in these gardens. Various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as World Vision and RUAF then later came with assistance in the form of inputs and expertise.

However, on the other hand, the Bulawayo municipality and World Vision claim that the genesis of the idea came from them. According to World Vision, allotment garden projects started after Operation Murambatsvina in 2005, a government initiated clean up exercise that destroyed people's livelihoods and left many urban dwellers in serious need of assistance. World Vision argues that it identifies fallow pieces of land

which they then apply for to the municipality. Together with residents and Ward Councillors, they then identify target people.

This confusion and seemingly veiled conflict on the origins of allotment gardens highlights their importance. To the Ward Councillors the gardens are more than just projects but mean popularity and thus re-election. To the other stakeholders they also mean popularity, more funding and perhaps more projects.

Nevertheless, in spite of lack of clarity on the inception of the gardens, it is apparent that there is involvement of various stakeholders which include the residents/beneficiaries, municipality and NGOs. The development of these projects seems to have benefitted immensely from Urban Agriculture policies passed in 1996 in Bulawayo. As already has been stated in the previous chapters, this policy recognises urban agriculture as an industry that should be supported and organised (Mubvami, 2007).

#### **5.2.1. Operation Murambatsvina**

This is a very important event that happened in Zimbabwe in May 2005. It was a government `cleanup operation` meant to restore order in the cities by destroying the informal sector. According to Tibaijuka (2005), the destruction and demolition targeted so-called shanty towns in high density suburbs and informal vending and manufacturing operations. The immediate effect of this operation was that many people were left homeless and without any viable form of livelihood. Many traders in the informal sector, including vulnerable groups such as people living with HIV/AIDS and widows with disabled children, had their stock confiscated or destroyed (ibid). It is quite clear that this particular event in the history of Zimbabwe affected many lives of urban people and forced many of them into alternative livelihoods like urban agriculture. However the more vulnerable groups such as HIV/AIDS victims, widows and disabled children needed assistance, and hence the development of allotment gardens in Bulawayo. `Murambatsvina` is thus a very relevant event in this study as it adds to a better understanding of the development of the gardens in Bulawayo.

### 5.3 Competition and land conflicts

Urban gardening in Bulawayo faces a lot of competition from other land use activities. Construction is the main threat as residential areas are ever increasing as the population increases. According to the municipality, urban gardening is a temporal measure in terms of pieces of land being allocated. Land can be repossessed anytime it is needed. Since urban gardening is done on leased land, it is viewed as a secondary land use activity compared to other urban land uses. Historically, municipal governments planning processes have looked upon agriculture as incompatible with urban development and as a relic from rural-urban migration that dwindles as cities and urban economies grow. Planners in most Zimbabwean urban centers view urban open space cultivation as standing in the way of urban development (Chaipa, 2001). Furthermore, the promotion of free markets operations in the distribution of urban land entails the poor and powerless being completely pushed out of the urban economic operations.

Moreover, the beneficiaries of these urban gardens or organizations such as World Vision cannot buy these pieces of land permanent. The municipalities always have a final say on the kind of activity the land within the city has to be used for. Some councilors expressed fear and uncertainty;

*“These gardens are helping feed many families but every day we wake up worried that the City Council might decide to reposes the piece of land and we will be forced to start all over again, perhaps somewhere very far from where we live.” (Mahlangu, former ward 23 councilor).*

Recently the city council has announced that it plans to expand and build new cemeteries even in areas where gardens have been in existence for more than 15yrs. The Bulawayo mayor was quoted in the daily paper saying this about gardens in the high density suburb of Luveve;

*“We will be expanding the cemetery to encompass the side where there are welfare gardens for the elderly. There has been some misunderstanding between the city council and the elderly gardeners operating from there,” he said. “They feel that the council just wants to evict them from the area which they have*



*been operating from for many years. The problem here has been lack of communication.*

*What is happening is that we will not force them out but we are going to relocate them to a place on the other side of the cemetery. The problem is that the residents have enriched that soil over the years and they are reluctant to be moved elsewhere.” (Moyo, Bulawayo mayor).*

There is a stand-off between the municipality and the beneficiaries over the idea of relocating the beneficiaries and the expansion of the cemetery. This has resulted in conflicts that in some cases degenerate into running battles. At one time, the residents chased away gravediggers they accused of encroaching on their gardens. There are more than 500 elderly residents practicing small-scale market gardening in the area. This shows how vulnerable urban gardening is as it is not considered as important as other land uses. Beneficiaries are not certain of their continued existence and they do not have any legal rights to challenge the municipality other than violence. The above conflict which is developing in Luveve suburb is likely to occur in other suburbs where residential stands have encroached and displaced very efficient gardens. Relocating the beneficiaries is always a time consuming and an expensive project for the municipality while it is traumatic for the beneficiaries who have worked so hard for many years to enrich the soils of their gardens.

The advantage beneficiaries have in most of the gardens however is that the gardens are located within the residential areas. This means that there are no transport costs incurred for the beneficiaries. According to the World Vision, most beneficiaries live within a radius of 1 km which is a good walking distance. Re-location to other areas, which most likely could be peripheral areas, might mean long walking distances for the already hungry beneficiaries. HIV/AIDS victims might be affected the most as some of them are in a poor health.

#### **5.4. Crops grown**

Crops grown in most allotment gardens vary from vegetables to maize. However, due to a number of reasons vegetables are the main crops grown now. A wide variety of vegetables can be found in most gardens. They range from green leaves such as

chomoliar, rape, cabbage and spinach to tomatoes, onions, peas and beans. These are grown in a rotation and in some cases depending on whether it is winter or summer. Green vegetables are usually grown throughout the year while tomatoes thrive in summer when temperatures are moderate. Vegetables tend to grow and mature within a short time and beneficiaries quickly realize the outputs compared to other crops such as maize which take a couple of months. So the invested capital returns rapidly to the grower and creates a regular income. Moreover, vegetables which grow all year round give a high-value food rich in vitamins and minerals (Municipal Development Partnership (MDP), unpublished). Vegetables also tend to fetch higher and immediate prices over a short period of time than maize or other cereals that could be grown. They are always in demand hence they are good for income generation. Maize, which is grown on a small scale, tends to take much longer time to mature. The beneficiaries cannot afford to wait for a long time as their dire state means that they have to get something out of the gardens much quicker. Vegetables usually mature early. Moreover, the World Vision argued that maize demands a lot of water and fertilizer over a long period of time compared to vegetables. Bulawayo has a history of water shortages hence the use of boreholes for watering the gardens. Most of the boreholes do not yield much water to sustain a crop like maize.

### **5.5. Stakeholders supporting allotment garden farming projects**

There are a number of stakeholders supporting garden projects in Bulawayo. These include Municipal departments of Health, Town Planning, Housing and Social Welfare and the Town Clerk of the Bulawayo municipality, World Vision, the Environmental Management Agency, the National Department of Agriculture and Extension Services (AGRITEX) and the Department of Physical Planning (<http://www.ruaf.org/node/503>). However World Vision is the most active stakeholder as it is the major partner. The Bulawayo municipality also works very close with World Vision especially in availing land used for garden farming. Bulawayo is also one of the pioneer cities for Resource Centre on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (RUAF), a global network for regional organisations that seek to contribute to urban poverty reduction, employment generation and food security. Through the Municipal Development Partnership for Eastern and Southern Africa (MDPESA), RUAF, supports urban farming in Bulawayo through the provision of

finances which are used for technical assistance such as research on low input techniques for urban gardens and training of farmers. There are a few other allotment gardens which are owned by private organisations but still serve the same purpose as the other gardens. For example, a garden known as Farming God's Way, is a project owned by Seventh Day Adventist organisation known as God's Loving Hand. It is found in one of the high density suburbs, Nketa, and serves the local community in the suburb.

#### **5.5.1. World Vision**

World Vision under the auspices of the Department for International Development (DFID) protracted relief programme phase 2 is engaged in differential intervention that seek to improve urban household livelihoods and their resilience to shocks (World Vision, 2008). These vulnerable households are affected by the negative impact of HIV/AIDS, food insecurity and the ailing economy. The programme aims to address the acute food shortages, nutritional imbalance, and awareness on HIV/AIDS and to cushion household in this hyper inflationary environment by micro-financing activities that generate income through the urban livelihood programmes. These projects range from community kitchens, urban gardens to micro-finance activities. Food security is the mandatory role of the department and hence the establishment of urban gardens programme in Bulawayo since January 2006.

World Vision, works closely with Bulawayo municipality. The organisation became heavily involved in urban garden farming in Bulawayo from 2006. It provides a various services in the garden projects such as rehabilitating boreholes. This of course is a responsibility of the municipality which does not have the capacity to carry out these services because of lack of money and exodus of skilled personnel. All municipalities in Zimbabwe depend on the central government and its residents for financial support. Economic meltdown has severely affected these sources of money leaving the municipalities struggling to provide even the basic of services to their residents.

World Vision also provides start up inputs such as seeds and fertilisers as most beneficiaries are so poor to afford them. Moreover such inputs are not available on the market and only NGOs such World Vision can afford to import them in bulk.

However, with the high number of beneficiaries involved, these inputs are rarely enough. World Vision also has the capacity to hire other technical departments such as Agricultural Technical and Extension Service (AGRITEX) with technical expertise such as low input techniques and other farming skills.

Below is a brief description of the main activities of World Vision:

#### **5.5.1.1. Inputs distribution**

World Vision distributes start up inputs in the form of seeds and fences for free. The seed distribution involves indigenous seeds as well as high yielding varieties. After giving start up seeds, World Vision does not continue providing more seeds. Beneficiaries are expected to use the produce from the initial inputs to sustain any further farming activity. This, according to World Vision, reduces dependency syndrome and creates a sense of ownership, responsibility and sustainability. The beneficiaries are encouraged to use organic fertiliser in the form of dried grass because fertiliser is very expensive. World Vision rarely supplies it.

The hyperinflationary environment and continued shrinkage of Zimbabwe's economy has pushed prices of most commodities beyond reach of ordinary people. Farming implements are either too expensive or unavailable on the market despite the country being agro-based. Those who can afford them have to cross the border to either South Africa or Botswana just to buy basic inputs such as vegetable seeds. However, for the vulnerable groups who live from hand to mouth, such opportunities are not possible hence World Vision had to come up with this aid plan of seed distribution.

#### **5.5.1.2. Training**

World Vision field officers are responsible for organising and facilitating training courses. Training is conducted with the help of other technical department such as the Agricultural technical and extension service (AGRITEX). The world vision provides the financial and logistical support such as transport and food for training officers while the AGRITEX provides the expertise. The main skills imparted to the beneficiaries involve techniques of land preparation, planting, weeding as well as harvesting. Beneficiaries are also taught different methods of low cost farming and irrigation of their crops. Persistent shortage of water in Bulawayo means that the beneficiaries have to use available water sparingly but with high production. In one of

the privately owned garden, Farming God's Way Project, beneficiaries are taught conservation farming.

Conservation farming thus involves land preparation using minimum tillage systems, crop residue retention, seeding and input application in fixed planting stations and nitrogen fixing crop rotations. This is a very important technique in the above named garden as it helps to nourish the soil since artificial fertiliser is rarely used as it is very expensive. Moreover the beneficiaries use simple personal farming tools such as hand hoes, picks and shovels. Conservation farming ensures that such implements, though not sophisticated, are very useful if used properly. Beneficiaries in all gardens use these simple implements.

*“Conservation farming is very essential for poor people who cannot afford to be buying inputs every time. The technique is about saving little inputs that the farmers have at their disposal. Micro-dosing, a technique of applying fertiliser where the crop is, is a good way of conserving fertiliser and seeds, and is quite appropriate for the poor who cannot afford to buy them in large quantities.” (World Vision field officer, 10/07/08).*

Training given to the beneficiaries of the garden projects is not expected to end with just production in the gardens. It is also aimed at building capabilities that would help the beneficiaries to become independent human beings who would be able to survive in farming without any assistance. Some of the beneficiaries revealed that they are now using some of the skills they learnt to produce a lot of vegetables in small backyard gardens.

*“When we started this garden project I had a lot of doubts about its success. This is because the majority of us did not have any idea about cultivation, could not afford any inputs and did not have any farming implements. Now I am so happy because with the little we have we are able to produce a lot of vegetables and maize sometimes. I can now teach a few people about effective farming”. (HIV/AIDS victim, 20/06/08).*

The statement above shows that not only has training provided an increase in production, but it has also given confidence to some people who probably did not see

themselves as worth living. The woman above shows that she is proud of her achievements and is willing to pass her skills to some people. She does not see herself as a helpless individual anymore.

### **5.5.2. Challenges faced by stakeholders**

There are quite a number of challenges faced by organisations working with urban garden farmers in Bulawayo. The Bulawayo municipality which is supposed to be the overseer of these urban gardens is seriously incapacitated. The council lacks basic resources such as manpower to deal with such simple issues as pegging land identified for urban gardening. This has been due to a massive labour turnover in the Engineering and Planning departments as workers seek greener pastures elsewhere. The economic meltdown has left most local governments financially crippled hence they are failing to provide competitive salaries for their workers. Some councillors' interviewed felt that the municipality was always a draw back in their efforts to provide efficient functioning gardens for their communities.

*“Our people have been working very hard in our garden but thieves are causing havoc. This is because the city council has failed to peg the perimeters of our garden so that the World Vision can fence it. We have asked them repeatedly but all we get is there is no in their planning department to do that simple job. It is really frustrating to work with those people.” (Councillor for ward 15, 16/07/08).*

The above statement shows the deep seated challenges that affect the smooth functioning of urban gardens. Bulawayo municipality officials interviewed also revealed that there is a general lack of motivation among their staff. Some of them would rather spend time of work looking for foreign currency in the city because that is better paying than their official jobs.

NGOs however face a different problem. They do have the capacity in the form of financial and human resources. However, the political environment has been a deterrent of late. The Zimbabwean government is very suspicious of International or local private organisations working with the local people. Towards the run up to March 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections, NGOs were completely banned from operating in the country. World Vision thus stopped its activities in urban gardens. The government saw NGOs as an extended arm of Western influence in the

country's internal affairs. This consequently affected farming activities as the beneficiaries could not get the much needed assistance from NGOs.

Though the ban on NGOs has since been lifted, the government still views them with a suspicious eye and continues to meddle in their affairs. The government for example insists that donations that come to the local NGOs must go through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ), where they are unnecessarily held for a long time before they are realised. This has consequently reduced donor funding and thus limiting the activities of the NGOs.

## **5.6. Beneficiaries**

Beneficiaries of urban gardens can be classed under vulnerable groups of people. They are mostly poor people who range from widows, orphans, HIV/AIDS victims and elderly. These are people who were severely affected by Murambatsvina and general decline of the economy in the country. Aids have resulted in widespread suffering of many culminating into many orphans and widows. The prevalence among the 15-49 age group stands at about 20% (Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, Zimbabwe, 2005), with around one in seven adults living with HIV and an estimated 565 adults and children becoming infected every day (WHO, 2005). With such statistics, UNICEF argues that the country might be having probably the highest number of orphans in the world. This is mainly due to their parents dying at a very young age (AZJ, 2006). This together with staggering economy has increased the number of vulnerable people thought the country.

From the five Ward Councillors interviewed, the beneficiaries were selected at ward level with the help of the local community. In most occasions, meetings are called and then the community choose people that they feel are the most vulnerable within their communities. In most cases most of these people are women and orphans. It is important to note that once selected, it becomes an individual's choice to be part of the projects or not. In this case men usually do not want to be beneficiaries. This could be attributed to the fact that traditionally men have been mainly engaged in industrial jobs and they see farming, especially in gardens, as more of a feminine activity.

**Box 1. HIV/AIDS infected beneficiary.**

*My name is Bruce Ndlovu (not real name). I am 45 years old and HIV positive. I live with my mother and my 4 children in my mother`s house. I am not employed and so I depend on these gardens for food and a bit of some money. I was diagnosed of HIV 3 years ago and my wife passed away last year. I used to work in a car garage in town as a handy man but was laid off because of my status. I could not get any other job and this made life difficult for me and my family because we could not afford to pay rent and buy food. We later moved in with my 72 year old mother who takes care of me when I get sick. I am happy now that I am also part of this project because I can provide a little for my children. However, only 2 of them are attending school because I can't afford to pay school fees for all of them. (03/07/08)*

However, it is also important to note that the selection of beneficiaries has not been as smooth as it sounds. The sheer number of people found in the high density suburbs of Bulawayo, more than half the city's population, also means that there is also a very high number of people who fall under the vulnerable bracket. Not everyone who is eligible to be selected gets the chance. This has created accusations and counter-accusations especially from those who feel that they were deliberately omitted. Most of the councillors interviewed stated that the selection of beneficiaries for new gardens has suddenly become a thorny issue.

There are now so many people who need help and HIV/AIDS scourge is not helping at all as it keeps churning out AIDS victims, widows, widowers, and orphans who have to be assisted.

*“Can you imagine a situation where you your house have got a rotting roof; you plug one hole in the roof and thousand more appear the next day? Thus the situation we are facing now.”(Mahlangu, former councillor for ward 23, 16/07/08).*

This statement sums up the difficulty facing those responsible for selecting the deserving beneficiaries because every day they keep multiplying.



A quick interview with some people who are not beneficiaries of these garden projects revealed some bitterness and anger towards councillors and garden beneficiaries.

**Box 2. Female beneficiary.**

*My name is Nobuhle Mhlophe (name not real) and I am 52 years old. I am a widow with 7 children. The youngest is 8 and the oldest is 30. Three of my children are HIV positive and I now live with them at home. Fortunately we have a house but we have been struggling to survive. I never went to school and my husband was an informal worker selling fruits in town. Before joining this project I used to go to South Africa and Botswana to buy goods for resale. This was very difficult because at times I did not have enough money to even apply for the visa. Some of my daughters also used to buy some vegetables from the market in town for reselling in our neighbourhood. I couldn't afford to send them to school and two of them got pregnant in their early twenties. I was very grateful*

Some of these unfortunate people believe that you have to be socially connected to someone at the top in order for you to become a beneficiary.

*“Some of us can never dream of directly benefitting from these gardens since we are not known and we do not know any influential people who can connect us. Every time a new garden is formed, there are already people earmarked for it.” (A woman vendor at Magwegwe North high density suburb, 14/07/08)*

Such allegations were denied by the councillors and World Vision officials. It is important to note however that in any organisation or grouping of people, social asset is always a factor to be considered. This has made ward councillors' powerful people because they have a strong say in who benefits from these gardens. Moreover, with such high cases of corruption in Zimbabwe, chances of nepotism or favouritism cannot be entirely dismissed.

In some wards however, there is a more deliberate bias towards HIV/AIDS victims who are given priority over other vulnerable groups. However because of the stigmatisation associated with HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe, there are many people who

still do not take advantage of these garden projects. The councillors noted that it is very difficult for them to select people who are suffering from the disease unless they openly accept that they are ill. As such most of the HIV/AIDS victims working in the gardens come from HIV/AIDS support groups and these are people who have accepted their status and are willing to help themselves.

### **5.7. Gender issues in urban garden farming**

Urban poverty is an increasing problem. Around 70% of the world's poorest people are women, many of whom are widows or single mothers who are burdened with the full responsibility of feeding their children and older relatives (Chancellor, 2000). Small scale food production as part of a range of opportunities is vital to the livelihoods of poor people and poor women in the city.

It has been documented that Third World women's access to resources, employment and social amenities is often restricted by written laws, social convention and competition for limited opportunities from male counterparts (Grown and Sebstad, 1989; Bell 1991). Sen (1987) further adds that limited success is due to the difficulties of overcoming traditional cultural attitudes and prejudices regarding women's participation in economic and social life.

Always there is an inter-linked crisis of growing impoverishment, food insecurity, environmental degradation, and growing demographic pressure that have worsened their problems. However in response to the above, Moser (1989) has argued that a gender perspective is needed in the planning of human settlements and housing , particularly given that women, as mothers and wives are primary users of space both within the home and in local community. In Bulawayo the municipality and World Vision officials interviewed argued that the issue of gender is emphasized though there is no written law or regulation promoting it.

In Bulawayo, like many other African cities, women tend to suffer more than men. They bear the brunt of ensuring that their families have something to eat on a day to day basis. According to World Vision, there are only 298 men compared to 1522 women working in the garden projects around the city. This disparity however was

not intentionally created though it is widely accepted and appreciated by various stakeholders and individuals.

One of the chairpersons interviewed in one of the gardens argued that the high number of women who are beneficiaries in the garden projects is actually a blessing as most often they are the ones who carry the burden of providing food every day;

*“The fact that there are many women than men in these gardens is a blessing in disguise. We all know that in our society if we give women means to acquire food, we will be feeding many households. Men’s priorities are quite different.” (Moyo, chairperson of Farming God`s way garden, 04/07/08).*

Moyo underlies the critical traditional role of women in Sub-Saharan Africa. Women are often responsible for food security issues in many households (Mudimu, 1996). As urban populations have expanded in an environment of stagnant economic growth, unemployment and deterioration of urban services, women’s burden to provide food, fuel, water and shelter for their families have increased.



**Figure 6. The majority of beneficiaries are women and children. Source World Vision (2008).**

Not all women who are beneficiaries are widows. Some are married but their husbands rarely set foot in the gardens. From the interviews done it was evident that urban farming does not appeal to most men. It is seen as women’s task while men would rather do piece jobs here and there or move to South Africa or Botswana. However the World Vision officials argued that as the economic situation continues to

press, more and more men are coming forward either to help their spouses or to become beneficiaries themselves.

## CHAPTER SIX: GARDENS AND THE WELL BEING OF THE BENEFICIARIES

### 6.0. Introduction

This chapter attempts to explore and discuss how urban gardens influence and affect the well-being of the beneficiaries. Using the operationalized Capabilities Approach framework (Figure 2) discussed in chapter two, this chapter introduces urban gardens as a resource available to the beneficiaries and influencing the capabilities or opportunities available for the beneficiaries. These opportunities are analysed with reference to their link to the gardens. Factors which affect and influence the opportunities available to the beneficiaries in the gardens are described and discussed.

### 6.1 Garden as a “Good”



Figure 7. Gardens in different high density suburbs in Bulawayo. Source Word Vision (2007) and researcher (2008)

Urban gardens are an essential good or resource to vulnerable people in Bulawayo. To most of them, this is the only source of livelihood. According to Robeyns (2005), a 'Good' has certain characteristics which make it of interest to people. Urban gardens also have such characteristics. According to the former councillor of Magwegwe North high density suburb, Mr Mahlangu, urban gardens are now attracting too many people than can be accommodated. Initially the gardens were unpopular and seen as a rural traditional land use concept in an urban setting. Those farming in these gardens were looked down upon and considered very poor by the general society.

*"It is so funny how a few years back the society used to despise those farming in these gardens. We all saw them as poorest in the community and nobody wanted to be associated with them. Most of us were doing modernised jobs in industries. Now the gardens are in demand. Everyone wants to be a beneficiary, even myself. Thus how important these gardens have turned out to be". (Mahlangu, former ward 23 councillor, 15/07/08).*

This increased interest in urban gardens has been fuelled by the massive decline of the Zimbabwe's economy which is pushing many urban dwellers into poverty. Sources of livelihood are fast diminishing each day hence the emergence of urban gardens as a very vital sort after resource in most high density suburbs. Those who are already beneficiaries of these urban garden projects could not hide their excitement on the importance of these gardens as a livelihood resource.

*"I really do not know where I would be without this garden. I am a 60 year old man and have 6 children to take care of. I was retrenched from the company I used to work for and my wife passed away soon after. I got sick and had no money to start anything. This garden was like a blessing to me because I was really desperate, with no food, money and children not attending school anymore. So to us beneficiaries this garden is a very important resource that we want to treasure and guard jealously for a long time. Thus the only way we can survive in Zimbabwe." (HIV/AIDS victim, 16/07/08).*

The quotation above shows how important the beneficiaries now value these gardens. To them it is no longer just a livelihood strategy but a resource that should be treasured for many years to come. Using the Capability Approach framework, I treat

the gardens as a 'good' that is available to the beneficiaries. This 'good' influences capability sets such as income earning activities, community participation, political freedoms and many others to be discussed later in the chapter. However, before discussing possible capabilities and achievements made by the beneficiaries, it is important to analyse some of the external factors that influence and affect the beneficiaries' attempt to achieve the lives they want to live through garden farming. Robeyns (2005) argues that the relationship between a good and what people achieve at the end is influenced by conversion factors. These factors can be personal conversion factors (physical condition, sex, reading skills, and intelligence) which influence how a person can convert the characteristics of the good into an achievement. Social conversion factors (e.g. public policies, social norms, discriminating practices, gender roles, societal hierarchies, and power relations) and environmental conversion factors (e.g. climate, geographical location) play a role in the conversion from characteristics of the good to the individual functioning (Ibid).

## **6.2. Personal conversion factors**

These are factors which pertain to a person's physical body (they are very important in determining how an individual can use a resource at their disposal). Personal factors play a critical role in determining how the beneficiaries of the gardens convert the gardens into a useful achievement. As has already been stated in the previous chapters, beneficiaries of these garden projects are vulnerable groups of people who range from HIV/AIDS victims, orphans, some of who are very young children, to the elderly.

### **6.2.1. HIV/AIDS victims**

HIV/AIDS victims are in a very difficult situation in the gardens. They constantly have to deal with opportunistic diseases which reduce their effectiveness and farming is an intensive activity which needs daily attention. Vegetables are watered almost on a daily basis. However, some of the AIDS victims are too weak to work every day and this puts too much work on other members who have to help in watering or weeding their beds. The chairman of a garden called "Farming God's Way" located in Nketa high density suburb lamented on the problem they face about HIV/AIDS victims:

*“AIDS victims go through a lot of difficulties especially when they start succumbing to some opportunistic diseases. Some stop coming to work for up to a week or so and this affects their vegetable beds a lot. We try to help but it’s always not the same as when they are working themselves. They usually don’t get as much produce as those who come every day and they obviously make less money when they sell the produce.”* (Mr Moyo chairman of Farming God’s Way garden, 27/06/08).

The problem of HIV/AIDS victims is not helped by some ill-timed government policies such as the banning of NGO activities in the country. This meant that those suffering from the disease could not get much needed retroviral drugs while those who were on the course had to stop midway, a dangerous health implication. Even though NGOs are now allowed to operate they are still failing to meet the demand from HIV/AIDS victims. Health therefore has become a major convectional factor in some of the gardens and it is quite clear that the physical demands of farming needs a healthy person in order to realise high produce.

#### **6.2.2. Elderly**

Urban garden farming is a physical job that requires digging, weeding and watering crops using buckets. It needs able bodied personal. Some gardens however have very old people who are finding it hard to do strenuous work. Those who are fortunate enough bring some of their family members to help. There are some who have to do it themselves or ask for assistance from other members of the group. Just like HIV/AIDS victims age also tends to determine the level of production hence the final output. The interviews revealed that those still strong enough to work whole day everyday tended to produce more and thus realized more in terms of output. Those who were frail produced less. However, the research unearthed an interesting scenario. Some of the very old and frail, who did not produce a lot and did not have any dependents at home, were still quite happy and content with what they had.

*“With these two beds of mine I get enough vegetables to eat and sell a bit so I can buy small things I need. I do not need much now because I am old, only food is ok. So far these beds have been a blessing to me and I am very happy with them. Some people have many beds and they get a lot but for me what I have is okay.”* (65 year old lady from Mthombowesizwe garden at Ntumbane high density suburb, 16/07/08).



This old lady is an exception in that she happens not to have any dependents, a rare scenario in a country torn by HIV/AIDS and with number of orphans increasing each day. This lady however reveals a very important aspect of well being in that people find happiness in different things. Even though she does not produce as much as her colleagues, she is still happy and content with what she has. She can live the life that she presumes is good for her.

### **6.2.3. Orphans**

Orphans found in some of the gardens vary in age from as young as 8 to around 20 years. For the very young, farming is a very difficult job to do. In most cases it is the relatives who come in to help when they have time. Moreover, orphans of school going age rarely have time to work in the gardens except during weekends. This at times creates problems in some of the gardens as their beds go for days without being attended to. Some garden members do help with watering but the care is not always the same. Relatives who sometimes help out also have other things to do. The chairman of the garden “Farming God’s Way” in Nketa added that at times he remains behind late in the evening trying to weed or water some of the beds, especially those of the orphans. As a chairman, it is his responsibility to see to it that all beds are well taken care of but at times this becomes too much for him as well. Thus the fact that some orphans are very young and have to balance schooling and farming tends to affect the output of their beds. At the end of the day they get enough to eat at home and not much to sell. They still have to be assisted with other basic commodities such as mealie meal, Zimbabwe’s staple food, school fees and general upkeep.

### **6.2.4. Sex**

Sex of the beneficiaries barely has a negative influence on their achievements except in the initial stages when the gardens were being formed.

*“The initial stages were quite tough and needed someone very strong. Some of the women we had selected dropped out not because they did not want to be part of the projects but because the work was very difficult. People had to cut down big trees and then dig them out. Those with man could do it but widows struggled a lot.”*  
(Mahlangu, former ward 23 councillor, 15/07/08).

However after the initial stages of digging, the work became easier for any able bodied person. Sex is no longer a negative factor now as the majority of beneficiaries are women. I also realized that it is much easier for women to sell their produce on the streets than it is for men. It seems vending, especially of vegetables is still more of a women activity. Some of the male beneficiaries thought it was degrading for them to be seen on the streets selling vegetables. They would rather look for a woman to do that for them or they sell their produce directly from the gardens. Women however do not have any problems with that and they argued that doing the vending was part of the garden job and they were very much happy to be in control of their product up to the end.

*“I don’t want anyone to do the selling for me because I work hard in this garden. I want to see how people buy my vegetables because someone else might too lenient to customers or even steal some of my hard work.” (Beneficiary from Farming God’s way garden project, 20/07/08).*

### **6.3. Social conversion factors**

These factors relate to the social set up of the community, the norms, beliefs and values followed by everyone. They also include public policies imposed by an authority within that society. Achievements of the urban garden beneficiaries are influenced by some of these social factors as shall be discussed in the following sections.

#### **6.3.1. Gender roles**

Gender roles are not so much visible in the gardens but in the households of the beneficiaries. In the gardens, most beneficiaries are women. In some gardens they are in control of the day to day functioning of the project as the chairperson could also be a woman. However, some of the beneficiaries complained that their work in the garden is affected a lot by their other roles at home as they have to take care of the daily chores of the house. This includes feeding the children, cleaning, washing and other activities. In African traditional societies, women have the primary responsibility for providing family sustenance (Mudimu, 1996). This means that women beneficiaries have to balance between family and gardening. Even those women who are living with their husbands argued that their men often refused to stay

home with the children stating that it was unmanly to do so. As a result some of the women argued that they could be more effective in these gardens if they were to share some of the household chores with their male partners. In some gardens young children were visible either on their mothers' backs or playing around. Gender roles thus seem to be negatively influencing the achievements of some of the female beneficiaries. They could be spending more time in their gardens and thus producing higher yields which would go a long way in meeting most of their basic needs.

### **6.3.2. Public policies**

Public policies seem to play a very important role in determining the achievements of beneficiaries. It has been argued in the previous chapters that NGOs are vital to the functioning and continued existence of most urban gardens in Zimbabwe. Their much needed support in the form of inputs and expertise has been hailed by the beneficiaries as the major reason that they are still in the gardens. However due to political interference by the government's ill-timed policies, NGOs are continuously threatened of being banned from operating freely around the country save for those involved in food distribution. This means that beneficiaries at times do not get much needed inputs and technical expertise and this has affected their production. World Vision officials interviewed pointed out that their activities have been curtailed by government policies:

*“Some gardens have gone for months now without fencing solely because we cannot do anything since the government does not allow us to work with the people anymore. Beneficiaries are losing a lot of their produce to thieves and they have resorted to hiring security guards who have to be paid with the money they do not have. It's really an unfortunate situation.” (Ncube, World Vision official, 16/07/08).*

The government's fight with the Western countries has directly impacted negatively on the urban garden beneficiaries. Moreover, the economic meltdown in the country has resulted in massive shortage in basic inputs such as vegetable seeds. Without the help from NGOs, beneficiaries at times have to travel to neighbouring Botswana to get inputs. This has always been a very expensive strategy since beneficiaries have to change Zimbabwean dollar into Botswana pula.

The ban on NGO activity also meant that HIV/AIDS beneficiaries who were getting Anti-retroviral drugs for free were suddenly denied the much needed life enhancing drugs. According to the chairman of “Farming God’s Way” garden in Nketa, since the ban of NGO activity, some of their HIV/AIDS affected members have been getting sick more often and haven’t been coming to work at all. Such individuals have not achieved the kind of life they desired as shall be demonstrated in the sections that follow below. However, World Vision has started operating again albeit in a limited capacity.

Another public policy which has affected the connection between gardens as a resource and final outcomes or achievements relate to land tenure system. All urban gardens in Bulawayo operate on leased land. The city council has the right power of repossessing it anytime they deem necessary. A good example has been discussed in the previous chapters where the city council is threatening to reposes land which has been used for urban gardening for more than ten years. The city council intends to expand the existing cemetery so that it encompasses the piece of land which was once a thriving garden. This tends to create uncertainty amongst the beneficiaries and NGOs working with them. Beneficiaries who have been involved with garden farming for many years have developed emotional attachment to their projects and attempts by the city council to reposes the land has been met with defiance and violence in some areas like Luveve high density suburb. Some beneficiaries interviewed stated that lack of title deeds in the gardens affects their commitment as they are not certain how long they will still be in the garden projects. Similar sentiments were mentioned by some NGOs such as World Vision who argued that uncertainty on land ownership means that investments in the gardens are kept a minimum at best.

Lack of title deeds also means that the beneficiaries cannot use their gardens to acquire loans from the banks. Their farming activities thus remain basic with basic inputs and operating on a small scale.

#### **6.4. Environmental conversion factors**

Environmental conversion factors also play some role in determining the link between urban gardens as a resource and the final achievements for beneficiaries.

#### 6.4.1. Climate

Bulawayo is located in Zimbabwe's natural farming region 4 with average rainfall of as low as 500mm. The city has been facing severe water shortages as the supply dams (Insiza, Lower Ncema, Upper Ncema, Umzingwane and Inyankuni) have failed to hold sizeable volumes in the last few years. Water shortages have thus become a perennial phenomenon and maintaining a sufficient water supply has always been a challenge. Municipality authorities usually put water rationing measures in place to limit water usage. The city council has resorted to using various sources of water for urban agricultural purposes (Mubvami, 2008). These include boreholes and treated waste water. Unfortunately, the municipality is now finding it expensive to treat waste water because of foreign currency shortages. Urban agriculture tends to suffer the most in water allocation and usage because of the city's policy that guides the use of clean water. The municipality has made it clear that the primary use of water is for domestic purposes. When there is a good rainy season, boreholes are solely used for garden irrigation but when the rainy season is poor, water from the boreholes is diverted to home consumption. Beneficiaries have suffered a lot during poor rainy seasons because they cannot irrigate their crops. Some of the boreholes dry up because of overuse and beneficiaries have to resort to unsafe sewage water.

Use of raw sewage water is a health hazard which the beneficiaries seem not to be aware of. The municipality officials interviewed raised this concern:

*“The shortage of irrigation water has resulted in some gardens using untreated sewage water. This is a health hazard waiting to happen. However, it is difficult for us to stop beneficiaries from using this water because they are hungry and they need to grow something. It is a catch 22 for the municipality” (Ndlovu, municipality engineer, 22/07/08).*

The country is currently experiencing cases of cholera with a number of deaths already reported in the daily papers. The outbreak has been attributed to burst sewage pipes and general use of sewage water. This is a worrying situation for urban garden beneficiaries using this untreated water. With the country's deteriorating health system any outbreak of the disease will be catastrophic to the beneficiaries, who cannot afford private health care.



(a)

(b)

**Figure 8. One of the boreholes used in the urban gardens (a) and A beneficiary fetching water from a sewage pond in Magwegwe North garden (b). Source: World Vision Bulawayo 2007.**

Water access and availability has thus been a major environmental convection factor in the gardens. The shortages seem to be getting even more severe as the years go by as the climate is changing and average rainfall seems to be declining consistently.

Thus the continued existence and production of these urban gardens hinges mainly on the availability and access of safe water to the beneficiaries. Presently water is not enough in some gardens and this has hampered their development and production.

#### **6.4.2 Geographical location**

Geographical location of most of the gardens has been an advantage to many beneficiaries. Most gardens are located within the suburbs in the pieces of land pockets which are not developed. There are no transport costs and for most beneficiaries the gardens are within 1 km radius of their houses. This is an advantage to the beneficiaries because most of them would not afford longer distances, especially those that would require financial resources. The elderly and HIV/AIDS victims need to conserve as much energy as possible by not walking long distances since some of them are not strong enough.

*“We hope the city council does not relocate our garden to faraway places because some of us cannot walk long distances. At the moment we are happy with the location of our garden because we can afford to come here, do some work, go home for lunch*

*and come back again in the afternoon.” (An elderly beneficiary from a garden in Luveve, 06/07/08).*

## **6.5. Capability sets**

Using the Capabilities Approach framework, capability sets refers to those opportunity sets available for people in order for them to make choices on the kind of life they want to live. It is however important to note that there is a very thin line between capabilities and achieved outcomes. In this analysis, capability sets are opportunities, which determine the choices beneficiaries have and thus the kind of life which they lead eventually, herein achieved functionings.

There are many capability sets which are now available to urban garden beneficiaries. I shall analyse these sets ranking them according to the importance they have to the beneficiaries.

### **6.5.1. Income earning**

This is one of the most important opportunity set that has been presented by garden farming. It is important to note that one of the most important ideas behind the urban garden projects was to create a quick income generating facility for the vulnerable groups of people who could not afford to compete actively with other members of the society. Urban gardens are generating “reasonable” income for the beneficiaries. “Reasonable” because Zimbabwe’s economy has rendered the local currency almost useless. However, during the time when the research was conducted, the beneficiaries were making more money than some formally employed people in the civil service.

Food shortages in the country, particularly meat products, which are not only in short supply, but beyond reach of many, has meant that many people have resorted to green vegetables as their major food. The demand is very high for the vegetables. Many people, especially vendors buy in bulk for reselling in the market at the city centre. At the time when the research was conducted, interviewed beneficiaries pointed out that on a good day they were making more than 100 billion Zimbabwean dollars, more than 50 United States dollars on the black market. It is important to note also that this money is tax free so beneficiaries have the advantage of doing business where they do not pay anything in return serve for the running of their projects. The former

councillor for Magwegwe North high density suburb who spearheaded the establishment of Magwegwe North allotment garden was more than pleased to announce that:

*“There is no doubt that we are now a vegetable factory in these gardens. Our vegetables are on demand after because they are affordable and people say they are tasty.” (Mahlangu, former ward 23 councillor, 17/07/08).*

This assertion by the councillor shows how important some of the gardens have turned out to be. Like most other informal sectors in Zimbabwe, urban garden farming has proved that it is more profitable than most formal jobs in the civil sector. One of the chairpersons of one of the gardens who requested anonymity noted that in many instances they had borrowed money to local teachers and council employees who make very little per month.

**Table 1. Income earned by beneficiaries according to crops grown.**

**Source: Researcher (2008).**

<b>Crops grown</b>	<b>Income earned on a regular basis</b>			
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally
Leaf vegetables	USD 5-20	USD 20-100	USD 100-200	No data
Tomatoes	No data	USD 50-150	USD 100-300	No data
Onions	USD 5-10	USD 5-30	USD 50-100	No data
Other (Maize, beans, Sweet potatoes etc)	No data	No data	No data	USD 200-500

The figures in table 1 above show income that is earned on a regular basis by the beneficiaries of urban gardens. It has been quoted in US dollars since the Zimbabwean dollar fluctuates on a daily basis and it would not give a clear picture. During the time of the research however, the beneficiaries sold their produce in local currency and the black market exchange rate was 1 US dollar equivalent to 5000 000 Zimbabwean dollars.

Leaf vegetables generate most of the income because they are produced and sold all year round. They are thus the cornerstone of these urban gardens. Tomatoes are



usually produced during summer but once they are in abundance they generate sizeable income. Other crops such as Maize are produced once a year in very few isolated gardens hence the income generated from them is represented as seasonal in the table.

It is important however to put this income generating scheme into perspective. Zimbabwe's inflation has rendered the income generated from the gardens less significant. When the garden projects started, the money was quite a lot and could be used do many things. Beneficiaries interviewed pointed out that they could afford to buy school uniforms, send children to school, pay their rents and generally afford most of the basics. However the ever-rising inflation also means that prices of basic commodities have gone up steeply even for those with access to foreign currency.

*“When we started on these gardens we were Kings because we could afford most of the basics. Now inflation is killing us because we have to change the money into foreign currency before we can buy anything reasonable. School uniforms for example are even beyond reach for those formerly employed people.” (Beneficiary, Mthombwesizwe garden, 20/07/08).*

Nevertheless, urban gardens have afforded beneficiaries an opportunity to make their own income. For some, this is the only way they can have money in their pockets. Galloping inflation however quickly erodes this income making it less significant each day. This is a problem facing every Zimbabwean at the moment and is not particular only to urban garden farmers.

### **6.5.2. Food security**

According to Mbiba (1993) UA contributes to the food security of many major cities both as an important component of the urban food system and as a means for vulnerable groups to minimise their food-insecurity problems. In terms of meeting household food needs, urban agriculture in Harare is estimated to provide families engaged in the activity with staple food for up to four months in a year (Ibid).

It is a fact that studies that have undertaken actual measurements of the impact of urban agriculture on food security generally support the hypothesis that urban agriculture does improve the food security of vulnerable households: Mwangi (1995)

compares farming and non farming households in low-income neighbourhoods in Nairobi and notes that, while mean consumption is well below estimated requirements in all cases, farming households are better off in terms of both energy and protein consumption, and that farmers participating in an organised urban agriculture support program are significantly better off in both categories.

In Bulawayo garden farming has created a sense of food self-reliance, which has gone a long way towards reducing the food insecurity of vulnerable groups. Fresh vegetables provide the beneficiaries with a much needed diversified diet. Meat shortages have resulted in an increase in the consumption of other products such as vegetables, beans and fish. However, the fact that the beneficiaries produce some of these products, fresh vegetables and beans, means that they cut the costs of purchasing them and use their meagre financial resources to purchase other food products.

*“Our only worry when it comes to food at home is mealie meal and cooking oil. As for relish we do not have many problems because we have fresh green vegetables, tomatoes and onions. People in the community struggle to get some of these because they are now expensive.” (Beneficiary, Khulumsenza gardens, Nkulumane 5 high density suburb, 15/07/08).*



**Figure 9. Fresh green vegetables are in abundance in most gardens. Source: Researcher (2008).**

It must however be noted that urban gardening does not satisfy the demand for staple food crops such as cereals and tubers because these need to be grown on a large scale. Unfortunately these are the foods that local people generally refer to when the issue of

food security is raised. Some beneficiaries pointed out that whilst they appreciate having green vegetables, it is still not the same as having mealie-meal:

*“I can live on mealie-meal alone because that is the staple food that provides a lot of energy but can anyone really survive on vegetables alone?”(Beneficiary, Khulumsenza gardens, Nkulumane 5 high density suburb, 15/07/08)*

The above statement is important in that because it highlight the fact that though urban gardens are being lauded as ideal projects for improving food security, beneficiaries still believe that there is no substitute for staple foods such as cereals.

Mougeot (1994) brings on another interesting dimension arguing that urban agriculture often leads to food self-reliance not self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency could thus be a very difficult point to reach in the gardens than self-reliance. However the gardens do provide much needed fresh vegetables and helps the beneficiaries save some of their hard earned cash. Household food insecurity grows with the share that purchased food takes off the household budget; and the fewer the household’s alternatives in buying food are, the more serious its insecurity will be (Ibid).

Fresh vegetables have been most welcome by the HIV/AIDS beneficiaries. They provide the much needed nutrition which helps their bodies fight opportunistic diseases. FANTA-AED (2004) argues that HIV-infected adults and children have increased energy (10-30 percent) and protein needs (up to 15 percent) and need a sufficient amount of vitamins and minerals to compensate for losses and increasing inefficiency of the body. Most of the interviewed HIV infected beneficiaries pointed out that their diets are now diversified and healthy as recommended by health institutions they have visited. They now eat different fresh foods such as green vegetables, cabbage, beans, tomatoes, carrots, peas and occasionally maize. Most importantly they are feeding themselves and their fellow support group members

It must be stated however that the nutritional status of the beneficiaries could not be ascertained during this study as it requires a more scientific approach. However, from the crops grown and their availability, it can be inferred that the nutritional status of the beneficiaries is being influenced in a positive way. Some studies done on urban agriculture supports this argument: Maxwell, et al (1998) reports the linkages of urban

agriculture and malnutrition in Kampala. They found that urban agriculture is positively and significantly associated with higher nutritional status in children, particularly in terms of height-for-age, and that there is a significantly lower proportion of moderately to severely malnourished children in households where someone is farming. In Nairobi, Mwangi (1995) reported few differences in mean nutritional status where children from non farming households were somewhat more likely to be moderately malnourished.

### **6.5.3. Building community capital**

Urban gardens have also been hailed for building community capital. Community capital refers to the natural, human, social and built capital from which a community receives benefits (Bailkey, et al, 2007). While gardens are not so significant in the provision of natural capital (natural resources taken from nature) and built capital (roads, factories, houses and other infrastructure) human and social capital are very important positive effects. Human capital is a person's skills, abilities, health and education while social capital involves the connections in the community: the way in which people interact and relate to each other (ibid).

The human capital seems to have improved amongst the beneficiaries as shall be demonstrated in the following paragraphs. Some beneficiaries pointed out that they have learnt and developed new farming techniques which they are sharing with others in the community. Nutrition for those living with HIV/AIDS has also improved boosting their ability to fight opportunistic diseases.

Garden farming has also improved social relations and interactions amongst the beneficiaries. According to the chairpersons of most gardens visited, working together in the gardens has brought a sense of family hood amongst the beneficiaries which has benefitted many members.

*“In this garden we are like one big family. I know that when I am here I get the support that I need not only in day to day garden work, but also in other issues that might be affecting me.” (HIV positive beneficiary, Farming God`s way garden, 15/07/08).*

There is mutual dependency and security that has been created amongst the beneficiaries. Bailkey, et al, (2007) also observed that urban farming brings members together, generating collective action around the organisation, planning and implementation of a project and allowing the members to share in the success or failure of the project, thereby often creating bonding and bridging networks that did not exist before. While this assertion sounds too ideal it however demonstrates the importance of urban farming in building communities.

Social networks and organisations have developed as a result of beneficiaries working together in the gardens:

#### **6.5.3.1. Burial societies**

This is one of the most important social networks found in the gardens. It is a social support system for helping those who might have been bereaved. Beneficiaries pay a certain amount of money to the network every month which is used in case of death or emergency. The social network also takes time to provide non-material things such as advice, sympathy or moral support to those members who might need it. According to some of the interviewed beneficiaries, such burial societies are one of the most important things they value about urban garden projects. Some have already been helped:

*“When I lost my husband, my fellow garden project members did almost everything to prepare for his burial. My relatives were not willing to help citing financial difficulties. However, members of our garden project, who are now my family, did almost everything from cooking to buying of the coffin and all other burial arrangements. This burial society that we have is very helpful especially these days where life is so difficult for most of us.” (Widow with 5 children, Mthombowesizwe garden, 22/07/08).*

#### **6.5.3.2. Small-scale funds**

A small-scale fund, as they called it in some of the gardens, is a small social system where beneficiaries give each other certain amounts of money in a rotational basis. This is usually done when the harvest has been well and is not universal in all gardens. Beneficiaries who receive the money then go on to buy something they

require. Due to the continued hyper inflation, the value of the money given to an individual has been dwindling by day. Beneficiaries pointed out that with that money, one used to do a lot of things which included paying of school fees, buying clothes, small furniture at home and still save a little. Now the money cannot even buy enough basics such as a 20kg bag of mealie-meal. Nevertheless, they also noted that it is still better off than not having anything.

#### **6.5.3.3. Integration of HIV infected beneficiaries**

HIV/AIDS is a disease that is associated with stigmatisation and discrimination for those infected. Such social treatment has brought untold psychological damage to the victims of the disease as they continue to feel unwanted and unloved. However, urban garden farming has brought a sense of hope to the HIV infected beneficiaries. In those gardens where HIV infected beneficiaries work with other non-infected members, there has been positive social relations which have helped uplift the spirit of those infected.

*“Our HIV infected members seem at home when they are here. They always look happy and most of them talk about their status freely. This is because other members have treated them as equals and have supported them in their times of need. We are a family here and HIV/AIDS is no longer an issue rather than just another disease.”(Moyo, Chairperson, Farming God’s way garden, 18/07/09).*

Some of the interviewed HIV infected beneficiaries were really not worried about their status. They attributed this to their association with other non-infected beneficiaries who have supported them and treated them as complete human beings. To them life in the gardens is far much better than outside because here people understand what they are going through and they have grown to accept them. Mubvami and Munyati (2007) also noted that HIV/Aids patients (who are often socially isolated due to loss of self-esteem and social prejudice) can become reintegrated by working in garden allotments along with other community members who are not affected by HIV/Aids. This has been proven true in my study.

Gardens have also provided a platform for Anti-AIDS groups and other social groups who teach about HIV/AIDS. World Vision also provides this service to the beneficiaries. According to the municipality authorities, it is much easier for such

groups to get closer to those who are affected and infected. It is important to highlight at this point that most of the HIV infected beneficiaries come from some organised support groups. Other members also pointed out that they have benefitted a lot in working with HIV infected individuals because they now understand and appreciate the disease far much better than before. They claim that with the experience and knowledge they have acquired from their infected colleagues and anti-AIDS organisations, they are in a better position to deal with some of their own sick relatives.

#### **6.5.4. Political participation**

Political freedom for urban garden beneficiaries is not so much reflected outside their garden projects. However within the gardens the beneficiaries seemed quite involved in the running of the projects. They participate in the decision making on the day to day functioning of the gardens. According to the World Vision official interviewed, the garden projects are meant to be controlled by the beneficiaries themselves so that they feel they are responsible for their own welfare. Beneficiaries interviewed also pointed out that in they are their own bosses in the gardens and this has helped them create social networks which people at the top would not understand.

Outside the gardens, their political freedom has not been as much effective. However, some councillors noted that some beneficiaries have formed strong societies which have strengthened their status in their communities. They pointed out an example where women beneficiaries have intervened in some domestic violence's found in some households and managed to bring abusive husbands to face justice. Burial society groups have also managed to help push for the reduction of burial costs in the cities local cemeteries. They could only afford to make their views heard because of the power they generate as an organised social group emanating from urban gardens.

#### **6.5.5. Education**

This capability set relates to the kind of education the beneficiaries acquired as a result of their involvement in urban garden farming. Most of those interviewed already had some form of education. The majority finished primary school while a handful went as far as high school. However in the gardens the beneficiaries are exposed to technical education and skills. Through government technical departments

such as AGRITEX, the beneficiaries have benefited in farming techniques such as conservation farming. Some beneficiaries expressed gratitude and satisfaction with the knowledge they gained:

*“AGRITEX has helped us with the skills and knowledge on farming. Some of us have imparted some of these skills to our folk in the rural areas and they are benefitting.”*  
(Beneficiary, Farming God`s way garden, 20/07/08).

## **6.6. Achieved functioning`s**

These consist of the individual's activities and the state of well-being. They develop from the freedoms or capabilities one has. However, it must be noted that there is a very thin line between one`s capabilities and achieved functioning`s. In most cases capabilities also turn out to be achieved functioning`s (Robeyns, 2005). The distinction is between the realized and the effectively possible; that is, between achievements on the one hand, and freedoms or valuable options from which one can choose on the other (ibid). With the type of the available opportunities, people should be in a position to choose the kind of life that they want to live.

In this study, achieved functioning`s shall be analysed in relation to the already discussed capabilities available to the beneficiaries. Most of these achievements are testimonies of different respondents on how garden farming has modified their lives. It is prudent to point out the achieved functionings for garden beneficiaries basically emanate from a set of capabilities which include income resources, food security, social relations and political participation. Analysis of the achieved functions shall be done under these capability sets.

### **6.6.1. Income related achievements**

Urban gardens produce a significant amount of vegetable products being sold and delivered to the market. The products are being hailed as the best in terms of quality and taste by other members of the community though this could not be ascertained as a fact since people have different tastes. Beneficiaries control the supply of most of the products and they determine the prices since the products are in demand. They now wield some economic power and control in terms of producing affordable food



products. This economic power has brought some self- respect and belief amongst the beneficiaries.

*“I feel like a very important person because I am involved in determining the everyday prices of my products. I am in control and have earned self-respect in the community.” (Female beneficiary, Magwegwe North garden, 10/07/08).*

The availability of financial resources realised through selling of urban garden produce has resulted in a variety of choices that beneficiaries now enjoy. It is important however to note that this income is being eroded by the country’s hyperinflationary environment. However beneficiaries pointed out that they are better off with the income they get than before. Some of the beneficiaries mentioned different choices that they now enjoy. They highlighted that with the money they get they can afford to get better medical treatment for their families once in a while. Zimbabwe’s public health system has virtually collapsed putting the health of millions of people into danger. The private sector is beyond the reach of many.

Beneficiaries also pointed out that the income they get increases their mobility. Public transport is expensive and many people would rather move around only when it is necessary. Some have resorted to walking so that they cut costs. Regular income they get makes it possible for them to use public transport on a regular basis. They now have a choice something they did not enjoy before.

*“Since I started selling my vegetables I have been able to move around a lot because of the money. I have been able to visit my relatives in the rural areas even though transport is now expensive and beyond reach of many ordinary Zimbabweans.” (Masuku, Chairman, Magwegwe North garden, 12/07/08).*

Mobility has thus become a choice available to some beneficiaries as a result of financial rewards realised from garden produce.

#### **6.6.2. Food security related achievements**

Beneficiaries expressed that they now have a better choice on the kind of food available to them than before. They can choose on different vegetables they want ranging from green vegetables, beans, legumes and sometimes maize products. These

food products are generally available and accessible to the beneficiaries. They also have benefitted from the nutritious nature of the products which has improved their health.

*“Women came into this garden thin but now they look well fed and healthy.” (Moyo, Chairman, Farming God’s way, 20/07/08).*

HIV infected beneficiaries have benefitted as well in that they now also have a wider choice of the much needed nutritious foods they require for their health. Most of those interviewed claimed that their lives have since changed for the better and they feel much healthier. Whether they are now healthier than HIV infected individuals who are not beneficiaries of urban gardens could not be ascertained from this study. Food availability and access seem to also have boosted the psychological health among the beneficiaries. Those interviewed reported less mental stress and generally looked happy upon observation.

However there are also those who did not see much significant change in food security. They argued that vegetables alone can never make them food-secure. In Zimbabwe mealie-meal is the most popular food stuff and there is a belief amongst people that food security can only be improved if there is a steady supply of this product. Some beneficiaries also pointed out that with the money they get from selling vegetables; they still have to buy mealie-meal which is often expensive as it is in short supply.

### **6.6.3. Social relations related achievements**

Urban garden projects have improved social relations of many beneficiaries in the gardens and in their communities at large. It can be argued that the gardens have empowered the beneficiaries to associate freely with other members of the society. They argued that because of their vulnerable status which made them poorer than other people in their communities, they often felt excluded and despised. Their self esteem was low and they lacked self respect. However since their involvement in the garden projects, they now feel part of their communities.

*“It is now much easier for me to discuss issues with my neighbours with a lot of confidence because they now respect me as someone who at least has something. I*

*can feed myself and my family now and that is the most important thing in our society.” (Beneficiary, Magwegwe North garden, 22/07/08).*

These sentiments reflect a society where those without are considered inferior to those with something. Food has become one of the basic measures of poverty and vulnerability. Those people who can provide for themselves have more respect than those who constantly beg. Thus urban gardens have given the beneficiaries much needed respect in their communities. In some occasions other members of the community which are not so poor have been asking for vegetables or other foodstuffs or borrowing money from some of the beneficiaries, a phenomenon which was not possible before.

*“Suddenly most of the beneficiaries have many friends in the community and they are being accommodated and listened to in many social gatherings. This is good for them because it improves their general well being and makes them feel important in their communities. Several beneficiaries in my ward have thanked me for these garden projects because they feel they are now in control of their lives.”(Mahlangu, former ward 23 councillor, 22/07/08).*

The responsibility of the urban garden projects falls solely on the beneficiaries. This responsibility has no doubt empowered them in the sense that they are now in control of a system that not only benefits them but Bulawayo community as well. The beneficiaries have moved from being helpless and vulnerable to being an essential group of people in Bulawayo. They now have a strong voice in the affairs and running of their communities as evidenced by a recent conflict between the municipality of Bulawayo and garden beneficiaries in Luveve high density suburb. The municipality has resorted to dialogue than forced removal after realising the political implications involved.

It is also important to note that the development of social clubs such as burial societies and small scale funds is a result of choices now available to the beneficiaries. It also shows that they are now in control of their own destiny. The World Vision commented on this issue arguing that one of the major visions of the gardens was to create independent individuals who would be prepared to take the

responsibility of their own development in their communities. The gardens are thus expected to restore lost hope and help build communities again.

HIV infected beneficiaries have also achieved a lot as a result of the garden projects. Their association with other non-infected beneficiaries has boosted their self esteem and respect. Some of those interviewed noted that they now feel wanted and loved because other garden beneficiaries now understand their plight and rarely discriminate them. This has given them hope and belief and has improved their well being.

*“As an HIV infected person it was not easy at first. However in this garden I feel at home and part of a big family no because no one discriminates us and people are willing to learn more about the disease. This has helped me open up and talk freely about it and this has given me belief and hope to live positively.” (HIV/AIDS victim, Farming God`s way garden, 14/07/08)*

Mubvami and Munyati (2007) supports the above statement arguing that HIV/Aids patients can become reintegrated by working in garden allotments along with other community members who are not affected by HIV/Aids.

However this positive community development has also created animosity amongst other people. Not everyone is happy with this development. Some beneficiaries noted that their improved status in the community has not gone down well with other members of the community who once looked down on them. The gardens have empowered and protected the beneficiaries against shocks and stresses of the economic collapse.

*“It is not everyone who is happy with these gardens; some of us have enemies now because we no longer ask anything from them.” (60 year old beneficiary, Luveve garden, 09/07/08).*

The political significance of the gardens also further strains some of the relationships in the community in the sense that the local authorities seem to be diverting most of the time and attention to the beneficiaries because of the publicity associated with them.

#### **6.6.4. Political participation related achievements**

There are many different definitions of political participation that include activities ranging from voting in elections or joining a union, to discussing politics with friends or engaging in community self-help initiatives (Klein, 2005). In many developing countries political participation has generally been an exclusive privilege of the better off with the majority being used when politicians want to be elected. The most vulnerable groups continue to have their lives decided by others mainly because they are poor and thus powerless to make themselves heard. However, beneficiaries seem to have some form of influence albeit limited, in some of the decisions that affect them in their local communities.

The study finds that along with ward councillors, the beneficiaries identify several other actors with whom they interact to solve problems, namely, government service providers, NGOs and in some cases local Members of Parliament.

##### **6.6.4.1. Ward Councillors and the beneficiaries**

Focus group discussions revealed that beneficiaries maintained a close relationship with Ward Councillors. The groups also pointed out that before getting involved in urban gardens; many beneficiaries hardly had access to the Ward Councillors. They saw them as aloof and un-approachable. Gardens have created a common ground for both Councillors who seek political millage and beneficiaries who seek extensive social networks for survival. Discussions revealed that councillors now meet with the beneficiaries more times than they met with other community members. Some of the councillors interviewed argued that they felt some form of responsibility towards garden projects hence this close relationship. It is no doubt that this scenario has in a way empowered beneficiaries in the sense that they have the opportunity to air their grievances directly and more frequently than before.

##### **6.6.4.2. Other forms of political participation**

Beneficiaries do have other avenues of expressing their views and grievances besides the Ward Councillors. These include local NGOs, Bulawayo municipality and in some cases local Members of Parliament. Beneficiaries are in constant contact with World Vision which usually acts on their immediate problems. Discussions revealed that a lot of trust and hope is placed on World Vision as it gives the beneficiaries a

platform to air their views without victimisation. However, the gardens have opened other opportunities such as having meetings with local Members of Parliament. This is a privilege because in most cases once voted into power MPs disappear from their electorate only to appear in the next elections. Discussions also revealed that beneficiaries in some gardens have once appealed successfully to their MPs for donations. World Bank (2002) in Banks (2008) argues that using personal contacts with politicians or officials for grievance resolution is more successful than using formal channels, particularly in service delivery. It must be noted again that this political empowerment that beneficiaries seem to be enjoying now is also due to the associations and organisations that they have developed. They now have more bargaining power because they speak in one voice. Verba et al (2005) supports this argument by observing that citizens who choose to join organisations have more opportunities to meet people, develop more extensive systems of social relationships and thus become more engaged in civic life.

## **6.7. Conclusion**

This chapter attempted to give a balanced discussion on the effectiveness of urban gardens as a capability building tool primarily for the beneficiaries and also for the larger Bulawayo community.

It has been revealed from the analysis that urban gardens have become an essential survival strategy for the beneficiaries. Using the capability framework approach outlined in figure 3, urban gardens are being analysed as a “good” which provides various capability sets that are made available to those directly involved with urban garden farming. The beneficiaries use the capability sets to meet their day to day life challenges and also to realise and choose the kind of life they would want to lead therein referred to as “achieved functions”. Testimonies from beneficiaries have highlighted the importance of the gardens as a survival strategy and as a means of building communities. The beneficiaries expressed gratitude towards the garden projects which have seen them have access to some income and improve food access and availability.

The chapter also explores the influence of the gardens on HIV-AIDS victims. The gardens seem to have given some hope to some of the victims as they are slowly

being re-integrated into the society through association and working with other people. The nutritional value of the garden products has been one of the most important outcomes for Aids victims as they revealed.

However the discussions also highlight some actual and potential difficulties experienced by the beneficiaries. Hyperinflationary environment being experienced in the country affects these gardens projects in terms of the costs of inputs and general loss of the value of Zimbabwean dollar. What the beneficiaries could afford today is very much likely going to be halved the following day.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

### **7.0. Introduction**

This chapter consists of two main parts. The first consists of the conclusions drawn from the use of capability theory and qualitative research methodology. This part discusses the relevance of these two aspects to the study and how they influenced the findings and overall analysis. The second part summarises and discusses the main research findings. This is done through the discussion of the core objectives of the study.

### **7.1 Theory and Methodology**

Analysing data involved the use of theory in order to gain insight into the empirical situation. Capabilities approach was used as the theoretical framework to address the research questions. The core claim of the capability approach is that assessment of the well-being or quality of life of a person and judgement about equality or level of development should not primarily focus on resources but on the effective opportunities that people have to lead the lives they have reason to value (Robeyns, 2006). This was also the core of this study; to understand how urban gardens are improving people's well-being through presenting different capabilities. This theory thus suited my study well. However it must be mention that there were some challenges in its application in this study. The theory does not mention which set of capabilities are to be studied as there are so many. It is thus left to the discretion of the researcher to select those capability sets they deem important. Nussbaum (2003a) notes that the endless list of capabilities makes it difficult to determine which is more valuable than the other. The list of capabilities analysed and discussed in this study are by no means the only ones presentment by urban gardens. However they are the most visible and pertinent.

The theory also states that with the capability sets people are able to choose the kind of life they wish to live and thus improve their well-being. The garden beneficiaries did exploit the capability sets presented to them but it is not very clear if they chose the kind of life they wanted to live or the resources available forced them to choose such living standards. For example, the financial rewards from the gardens are usually



not enough to buy most of the basics. The beneficiaries pointed out that they wished it was significant enough to cope with rising inflation. Do these beneficiaries have a choice on the things they wish to do with this money to improve their well-being or they are governed by the amount they make from the gardens? The theory falls short in this regard.

However, I still find the theory quite useful in this study. It is unique in that it attempts not to quantify but to get a deeper understanding on people's well-being. Robeyns (2007) also notes that researchers should not take the capability approach for being more than what it is; an evaluative approach that draws attention to people's beings and doings. It thus shows that development is much more complex than narrowing it to numbers and percentages. Understanding what people value the most can help bring the right kind of development.

To fully explore the capability theory, I adopted a qualitative methodology approach. Gathering data on people's choices, feelings, attitudes and other personal attributes is best done through qualitative techniques. Due to the fact that there is no single perfect method or tool of assessing well-beings or livelihoods (Weinberg, 2002) various methods: direct observation, interviews, and focus group discussions, have been employed. Interviewing helps create strong relationships and trust making it possible for the researcher to go deeper and acquire very sensitive information. My encounter with HIV/AIDS victims who are some of the beneficiaries showed me that it is not easy to get sensitive information from people without getting close to them and earning their trust. The qualitative techniques I used were very critical in getting me closer to the beneficiaries. I was able to get data that could be analysed through Capability approach frame work.

### **7.3. Findings and discussions**

#### **7.3.1 Exploring the development of urban gardens**

The first objective of the study was to understand the development of urban gardens in the city of Bulawayo. Gardens were established as a response to the country's economic collapse and Operation Murambatsvina which affected urban people's livelihoods. They are an intervention scheme with the main stakeholders being World Vision and Bulawayo Municipality.

The main idea behind the development of the gardens was to provide a source of livelihood for the vulnerable group of people such as widows, HIV/AIDS victims, orphans and the elderly. However because of the devastating effect of HIV/AIDS and economic meltdown, the number of people falling under `vulnerable` category means that the gardens cannot accommodate everyone. Beneficiaries have to be selected. While the authorities were at pains to point out the transparency of the selection process, it is clear that the issue of social capital also plays a very critical role. Some of the beneficiaries hardly fell under the `vulnerable` category as explained by the authorities. They were beneficiaries because of some other unspecified reasons. To some of the beneficiaries it is a question of “Who you know” not what you are that can get you into one of the gardens. Similar sentiments were expressed by some members of the community who are very bitter with the whole selection process. The issue of corruption can never be ruled out as well since most institutions and individuals have succumbed to it mainly because of poverty.

Women constitute most of the beneficiaries as stated in the previous chapters. However, as the economic meltdown bites even more, more and more men have been to the World Vision and Municipality offices seeking opportunities in the gardens. Poverty is forcing the society to abandon some of its established norms. Men have always found urban farming a women`s department while they look for work in industries. However most industries have or are closing in Zimbabwe and men have to find other sources of livelihood hence their increased interest in urban farming.

### **7.3.2. Capability sets**

Urban gardens are a very important commodity for the beneficiaries due to the different capability sets they present. In this study, income generation, social relations, political participation and food security are the capabilities discussed. It is important to note however that this is a subjective choice I made because these could be the most important capabilities one can have in Zimbabwe at the moment.

Income generation is one of the most important capability sets presented by the gardens. Beneficiaries produce and sell the vegetables for their own income. The income realised is used mainly to purchase basic foodstuffs such as mealie-meal, cooking oil, meat and beans. It could have been significant if the inflation was stable.

Most commodities are beyond the reach of ordinary people. When this study began, beneficiaries could afford to use their income for other things such as rent and school fees. Such uses however became a luxury as inflation was eroding the value of the money each day. Choices relating to income generation are thus governed by food availability and access; once these are satisfied then the money can be used for something else.

Food security has also been discussed as another critical capability set available to the beneficiaries. Gardens provide cheap nutritious food especially to the HIV/AIDS beneficiaries. Food availability and access have generally improved for the beneficiaries in the sense that vegetables are readily available while other essential foodstuffs can be purchased with the money realised from the selling some of the produce. However it is important to point out that garden beneficiaries cannot be said to be food secure. Food security exists when people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs (World Food Summit, 1996). The prevailing harsh economic conditions continue to push prices of basic food stuffs to unassailable levels. Some beneficiaries are finding it difficult to purchase all the food requirements they need hence they cannot be said to be food secure.

Social relations developed in the gardens have gone a long way in cushioning the beneficiaries against shocks and stresses of life. Organisations formed in the gardens are helping them financially, politically and socially. As was mentioned in chapter six, the small scale revolving fund has become very important as it enables someone to do many different things besides just purchasing food stuffs. However focus group discussions revealed that not all members are happy with the selection of beneficiaries. Some beneficiaries fell short of accusing Ward Councillors and World Vision of corruption and nepotism. Indeed there are some beneficiaries who hardly fall under the “vulnerability” bracket but efforts to understand their existence in the gardens was not appreciated by the beneficiaries themselves and the Councillors.

Gardens are also being hailed for integrating HIV/AIDS victims within their communities. While this is a commendable social development, the attitude of Zimbabwean people towards HIV/AIDS victims is still poor. People living with HIV are often perceived as having done something wrong, and discrimination is frequently

directed at both them and their families. Many people are afraid to get tested for HIV for fear of being socially alienated, losing their partner or losing their job (GHC, 2005). HIV/AIDS beneficiaries still find life difficult outside their gardens. Total integration thus requires an improvement in the attitudes of the majority of people towards HIV/AIDS as a disease.

The issue of politics cannot be separated from the urban gardens because their inception is heavily linked to the country's political environment. This issue can however be discussed from a micro scale; activities within the gardens and from a macro scale; general political environment in Zimbabwe though the two are interlinked.

Zimbabwe's volatile political situation has resulted in violent conflicts between opposition parties. Competition is fierce between the parties and anything that increases popularity of the politicians is vital. Urban gardens, though not so big in scale, are now very important politically because of their potential success. As has been mentioned in the previous chapters, it is not clear where the idea of the garden projects came from. The municipality, Ward Councillors and World vision all claim it. In some gardens, beneficiaries reported having meetings with their Members of parliament and receiving donations from them. This is an important point to highlight because usually once elected MPs become unreachable to most ordinary people.

Getting access to the beneficiaries is a political problem. There are many obstacles one has to negotiate. Beneficiaries have become politically important in their communities. It can be argued that the situation could be different if the political and economic situation was stable. The political empowerment enjoyed by the beneficiaries could probably have been a dream. Nevertheless, the beneficiaries are using this political empowerment to make themselves heard. Some beneficiaries pointed out that they probably have more access to the Councillors than anyone else in their communities.

Finally it would be prudent to point out contextual issues that shaped this study. This study should be understood within time and political context. 2008 has been a volatile and dangerous year in Zimbabwean politics. This was a year of violent elections which culminated in the death of many innocent people. The study was thus done

during the peak of this violence. People were afraid to talk and those who could were very conscious not to make politically sensitive statements. Data gathered is most likely have been affected and influenced by this. Some of the information presented could also have become irrelevant by the time this work was finished. Understanding this work within a time context is thus very important.

While urban gardens seem to provide essential capability sets the economic situation in the country makes it difficult for beneficiaries to improve their choices. A lot has to change in the political arena for the economic situation to improve and hence for the garden projects to become more successful in improving people`s lives.

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## **Appendices**

### **A. Interview guide for Ward councillors and Municipality authorities**

1. What is the history of allotment gardens in Bulawayo?
2. How many are they?
3. What is the difference with other types of gardens such as home gardens and community gardens?
4. Why are people continually turning to urban agriculture as a livelihood strategy?
5. Who are the people involved in allotment gardens?
6. What is the criterion used to select these people?
7. Do the selected farmers own the land they work on?
8. Do you consider gender issues in your criterion?
9. How has the reception and perception of allotment gardens by the selected farmers/people?
10. What capability assets have the allotment gardens presented to the selected farmers?
11. Do you think these assets have helped the farmers achieve the kind of life that you might consider as good?
12. There is so much stigmatisation on HIV/AIDS victims in our society. Do you think these gardens are helping dispel this and how?
13. What challenges do you face as a local authority in managing these gardens?

### **B. Interview guide for World Vision official**

1. Do you think allotment gardens are an effective strategy for creating livelihoods for the vulnerable groups in Bulawayo?
2. Are gardens providing any capability sets?
3. If so, which are those and how important do you think they are in people's lives?
4. What challenges have you faced?
5. Do you think gender issues are seriously considered in the allotment of gardens?  
How?
6. There is so much stigmatisation on HIV/AIDS victims in our society. Do you think these gardens are helping dispel this and how?
- 6 What kind of support do you offer those engaged in allotment gardens?



7. How is your relationship with the local authorities in your work with urban farmers?

### **C. Interview guide for other respondents**

#### ***General information***

1. Name
2. Sex
3. Age
4. Marital status
5. Occupation

#### ***Why urban agriculture?***

1. What were you doing before garden farming?
2. Do you have another source of livelihood besides urban farming?
3. What made you take up farming?
4. What is your perception of allotment gardens as a strategy for survival?

#### ***Economic and food opportunities***

1. What do you produce from the gardens and how much (quantities)?
2. Where do you get the inputs from?
3. Do you sell any of the produce and where? Is the produce enough to provide for your household in terms of food and income?
4. How is food secured in your household?
5. If you get income from the produce, what do you use it for?
6. Do you think it is adequate to provide for basics such as education, health and food?
7. How do you see your future food security situation?

#### ***Political freedom/opportunities***

1. What do you understand by political participation?
2. Do you participate in any decisions on the use of the gardens?
3. How does participation/lack of it make you feel about allotment gardens?
4. Do you think you are getting enough support from the authorities?
5. What else do you think should be done to ensure that you are empowered in your day to day work in the gardens?
6. Does the current prevailing political situation affect your work in the gardens?

### ***Social opportunities***

1. Do you feel/think one need to be socially connected to become a beneficiary in one of the gardens?
2. Has the involvement in allotment gardens improved your access to social activities such as health, education, and housing?
3. Can you explain in what way if yes or otherwise?
4. Do you feel urban gardens are helping you earn some respect in the society and how?
5. Do you think allotment gardens present equal opportunities for both man and women?
6. If woman, do you think opportunities derived from urban farming help you compete on an equal footing with male counterparts? How?
7. Do you think urban gardens around Bulawayo are contributing in rebuilding Bulawayo community and how?

### ***D. Interview guide for HIV/AIDS infected beneficiaries***

1. What do you think of these gardens in terms of food production and financial returns?
2. What are the basic needs that you feel you need in your status?
3. Are you able to meet these needs since you got involved in the gardens?
4. What is your relationship with other beneficiaries in the gardens?
5. Are you free to talk about your status and how does it feel?
6. Do you think the gardens are helping dispel stigmatisation from other beneficiaries?
7. Do you see your lives having changed after joining garden projects and how?
8. Do you see any change in the society's attitude towards you now that your beneficiaries in these gardens?
9. Do you think you have freedom to participate in the local politics of your communities?
10. If you do have this freedom, are you exercising it and how?

### ***E. Interview guide for Focus group discussion***

1. What do you think are the major reasons for urban agriculture in Bulawayo?
2. Are you happy with the criterion used for selecting people who have to farm in allotment gardens?

3. Do you feel the gardens have helped you earn some respect in the society? How?
4. What is your opinion on the relatively small number of men involved in garden farming?
5. Do you think gardens are reshaping the role of women in urban areas?
6. Is this a good or bad thing?
7. Have allotment gardens changed your lives in any way? How?
8. Were you better off before?
9. There is so much stigmatisation on HIV/AIDS victims in our society. Do you think these gardens are helping dispel this and how?
10. Prevailing political conditions makes it dangerous for one to express themselves politically whether nationally or politically. Since some of these gardens seem to be very important to some politicians, do you have the freedom to contribute freely in your communities?
11. What else do you think should be done to improve your well-being in the allotment gardens?