

Sustainability of donor-funded projects in developing remote minority Tonga communities of Zimbabwe

Mark Makomborero Matsa, Beauty Dzawanda, Oshneck Mupepi and John Hove

Abstract

Underdevelopment and poverty are causes for concern, towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the Global South. In most developing countries donor-funded projects through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) accompany governments' quest to achieve development through poverty reduction initiatives. However, the sustainability of these donor-funded projects in developing minority communities remains questionable. As such, this research evaluates the sustainability of donor-funded projects in developing remote-minority Tonga communities of Zimbabwe in pursuit of the SDGs. The research adopted a descriptive survey design triangulating quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Ten percent (805) of the total households (8053) in four wards of Binga District (Siabuwa Ward 23, Pashu Ward 19, Kabuba Ward 17, and Kani Ward 24) were selected to participate in this study. Findings indicated that there are various projects (food aid, water and sanitation, monetary aid, and climate change resilience) undertaken by NGOs in Binga District. There was a slight change in household socio-economic development since the operation of NGOs in the district and challenges were witnessed after donor-assistance withdrawal. This resulted in the stagnancy or collapse of some projects which affected the development of the Tonga minority community. There is an inadequate understanding of the livelihoods of the poor in Binga District due to a lack of adequate needs assessments, hence the need for participatory grassroots development approaches. Lack of development in Binga District, despite the various donor-funded projects operating in the area, is an indicator that the projects are insufficient and ineffective to deal with underdevelopment in this district. The paper recommends a shift in approaches used by both NGOs and the government to ensure sustainability in donor-funded projects to develop minority communities and help the government in its efforts to attain Vision 2030 and the SDGs.

Keywords: Project sustainability, Development, Sustainable Development Goals, Tonga minority communities, Donor-funded projects, NGOs