THE ROLE OF FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS IN EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN AID: THE CASE OF CELEBRATION CHURCH INTERNAL IN HARARE PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

The thrust of this study was on assessing the role of Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) in emergency humanitarian aid in the Harare province in Zimbabwe. Celebration Church International (CCI) in Harare province in Zimbabwe was picked as a case. The main objectives were to establish the institutional capacity of CCI as an FBO in providing humanitarian aid, to determine the range of humanitarian assistance in the CCI aid portfolio, to find out how much humanitarian aid CCI actually carried out and to investigate the amount of resources dedicated to humanitarian assistance at CCI. The research design was qualitative. The data was analysed and presented through narratives and quotations from participants used. The findings revealed that CCI provided humanitarian assistance which was timely in saving people's lives. Such assistance saved people in different crisis situations which include starvation, political victimisation and poor sanitation. However, the intervention strategies of CCI failed to restore sustainable livelihoods security of the recipients and in the process of making their aid perpetual, thereby creating dependency. The research recommends that intervention strategies should be inclined towards the restoration of livelihoods security of the recipients in order to curtail dependency on aid.

KEYWORDS: Faith-based organisations, emergency humanitarian aid, church, Harare, Zimbabwe

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1. INTRODUCTION

Olivier, Tsimpo, Gemignani, Shojo, Coulombe, Dimmock and Haakenstad (2015) posit that at a time when many nations struggle to meet health care targets of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 agenda for sustainable, the contribution of faith-based health-care is very crucial and cannot be understated. Faith-based organisations (FBOs) play a critical role in communities where they offer spiritual support, moral as well as material needs to the disadvantaged members of the community. This study seeks to examine and analyse the role of FBOs in humanitarian aid in the context of Zimbabwe. The study strives to establish the institutional capacity of Celebration Church International (CCI). The turn of millennium, particularly during the period beginning 2002 up to 2009, Zimbabwe's need for humanitarian intervention rose steeply as alluded to by Brewster (2011). The period was also characterised by the financial crisis which led to crosscutting dysfunction across many government departments. Brewster (2011) gives a multidimensional profile of the background in which Zimbabwe's humanitarian needs arose. He cited food shortages, water supply problems and public health delivery. The capabilities of government to meet the basic demand for public goods led to different forms of service deficiency. For example, the government could not afford to import food to meet the demand.

According to Harshpipe (2011) the church has evolved and led to the destruction of traditional social structures due to globalisation and commercialization. Menelik (2009) points out that the key to the Church’s sustained ability to carry out a range of humanitarian and other services is its solid income base. According to Brewster (2011), water supplies were heavily disrupted when city council and the Zimbabwe Nation Water Authority (ZINWA) was affected by the lack of foreign currency to import chemicals for the water pumping facilities. In general, the civil service was affected by a huge exodus of skilled manpower. In the end, the water supply and liquid waste management system was generally dysfunctional causing sewage pipes to burst in crowded urban settlements which ultimately contaminated water sources that led to the catastrophic cholera outbreak. Brewster (2011) alludes to the notion that in the health service delivery sector, the existing facilities could not contain the sheer amounts of people who needed medical attention. The sector had also been hit by an acute exodus of skilled personnel. There were also very few hospital supplies of medicines and other equipment in the hospitals.

According to Zhangazha (2010), as the numbers of Christians have gradually begun to increase drastically, resulting in a huge amount of revenue being generated for the purposes. After meeting the operating costs which include transport and communication, administrative furniture and equipment acquisition, staff salaries and service charges for water and power rates they are still left with significant amount of resources. Furthermore, Zhangazha (2010), posits that these resources are then often deployed in extra evangelical activities like humanitarian aid. From this financial perspective, being endowed with financial, infrastructural and human resources, the church has built capabilities to engage in humanitarian aid. Otto (2009) alludes to the idea that particularly during the 2008-2009 period, different institutional, economic, political and social forces and changes created and unprecedented level of humanitarian need.
Moyo (2009) postulates that having gone through economic turmoil emanating from a variety of factors, Zimbabwe’s economic problems have had a significant ripple effect in the capability for service provision on the part of the regular governmental institutions normally responsible for providing safety nets for people. According to Takure (2010), on the political front, many NGOs had a fallout with the government which with the autonomy gained over the government by providing what most states could not, this in-turn lead to animosity between the two entities. The following section will outline the problem statement for the study in question.

1.3 Statement of the Problem
The study is an inquiry into the extent to which CCI was involved in humanitarian assistance in the Harare Region from 2008 to 2011. Although CCI is acknowledged as having carried out humanitarian intervention in Zimbabwe's crisis period as indicated, there is no clear articulation of the scale of the humanitarian intervention conducted. There is a need to examine the extent to which this intervention contributed towards the alleviation of human suffering. There is also a need to analyse the relevance of Fait-Based Organisation as well as the challenges they faced as they delivered humanitarian aid to targeted populace.

1.4 Research Questions
(i) How is CCI constituted as an FBO?
(ii) What is the range of humanitarian assistance in the CCI aid portfolio?
(iii) How much humanitarian aid have they actually undertaken?
(iv) How much resources are dedicated to humanitarian assistance at CCI?

1.5 Objectives of the study
a) Establish the institutional capacity of CCI as a faith-based NGO in providing humanitarian aid.

b) Determine the range of humanitarian assistance in the CCI aid portfolio.

c) Find out how much humanitarian aid CCI actually carried out.

d) Investigate the amount of resources dedicated to humanitarian assistance at CCI.

1.6 Significance of the Study
The significance or importance of the study relates to the theoretical or practical value that can be derived from the study. The beneficiaries who have got an interest in taking the research seriously such as government, CCI, NGOs, FBOs, students of Development Studies and academics.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
This section will review the literature on the role of FBOs in their endeavour to provide emergency humanitarian aid. According to Chawarika (2016) current research is of importance is it addresses critical issues. The section will contain literature from previous studies in the areas of humanitarian aid, NGOs and FBOs, in particular, this is from the macro perspective. Cliff (2007) argues that established religious organisations accrue huge sums of money and they should evolve and become autonomous funders of humanitarian intervention strategies.
2.2. The evolution of Faith-Based Organisations
Providing assistance to the poor and vulnerable is often a central tenet of faith-based organisations (Olivier et al., 2015). Faith-based organisations are unique participants in the global humanitarian community in that they are rooted in their local communities and yet have they impact the entire world (Ferris, 2005). Horne (2010) notes that from the very beginning, the history of aid and FBOs has been guided by the quest to provide humanity to meet the service and assistance gaps that governmental institutions could not provide. According to Darville (2006) FBOs are involved in both humanitarian and development intervention. Their role is to fill in the gap where moral and spiritual support is need most. According to Clarke and Hoffman (2006), the realm of FBOs is quite sophisticated and defies simplistic classification among different types. Clarke and Hoffman (2006) identifies a few categories which are faith-based based representative organisations or apex bodies, faith-based charitable or developmental organisations, faith-based social-political organisations, faith-based missionary organisations and faith-based radical, illegal, or terrorist organisations.

2.3 The concept of humanitarian aid
Furthermore, Valkin (2005) classifies aid into humanitarian and developmental. According to Sumba (2010), traditionally humanitarian aid is undertaken by local and international NGOs like ZimPro, Oxfarm, The World Bank, Christian Aid, Catholic Relief Services, Plan International and Doctors without borders (also known as Medicins San Frontiers (MSF)). Vakin (2005) notes that aid cannot be generalised since the motive behind it can differ. Some can provide aid with an intention of providing long term and permanent safety nets for one or more societies whilst others can provide aid in response to a crisis obtaining in the community (Valkin, 2005). Furthermore, Valkin (2005) states that the importance of humanitarian aid is strengthened by the fact that it stems from the recognition that humanitarian aid does not only play a critical role in alleviating poverty but is also a critical factor and determinant within the wider context of sustainable development.

2.4 The role of FBOs in humanitarian work
Darcy (2005) defines humanitarianism as a creed, a belief system that can be framed with equal conviction in secular or religious terms, but which is necessarily couched in language and morals. According to Clarke (2006), emergency humanitarian aid has been given to communities where the government would be committing atrocities against its own people. Furthermore, Clarke (2006) posits that FBOs have always been there in the community to provide services or aid to destitute members of the community. However, Clarke (2006) also argues that this aid was offered to complement government efforts in some cases and also offered to disadvantaged communities suffering through faults of the governments that rule them.

2.5 Funding and management of FBOs
President George W. Bush lobbied the United States of America to commit $15 billion in humanitarian aid over five years to address the international AIDS epidemic in select countries throughout sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, and South-East Asia. Scot (2005) suggests that FBOs should try to raise their own money without involving the state or political parties as this would compromise the political neutrality of such organisations. Scot (2005) raised a concern over the developments in the United States of America as the then president George W. Bush pushed for a bill that includes FBOs in the federal fiscus.
According to Cooper (2015), this would imply that FBOs would be legally entitled to a budget allocation so as to expand their operations to beyond national borders, especially to third world countries. Furthermore, Scot (2005) argues that if tax payer’s money is being channelled to international charity, it, therefore, becomes logic for citizens through their governments, to determine the manner in which the intervention strategies would be undertaken. Funding of organisations specialising in humanitarian work has always been used by critics as a convenient way of attacking such organisations and accuses them of lack of neutrality. Glennie (2008) questioned the neutrality of International FBOs, arguing that their behaviour is a replica of their sending country.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section of the study will explore the research procedures that will be followed to collect and analyse data. This section presents the research design that involves the population of the study, sample and sampling procedures and research instruments adopted for the current study. The methodology for this study was triangulation research design. According to Bloor & Wood (2006: 116) “triangulation” consists of a combination of different methods within the same study design. In this particular case, the purpose of such a combination is additive in nature such that different methods were used to address different sub-topics in the endeavour to establish the role of FBOs in humanitarian aid.

3.1 Population, Sample and Sampling of the Study

The population of the study included the recipients of the emergency humanitarian aid. There were beneficiaries who were in a position to assess the basing on their experience in the interaction with the services that were provided to them by the organisation. The study population for this research also included the leadership of CCI which was made up of leaders in the medical field and members of the church. The researcher adopted the convenience sampling approach for purposes of the present study.

3.3 Research Instruments

The research instruments that were used in this study were a questionnaire and interviews. These were ideal in the sense that the researcher would be able to probe using semi-structured questions where respondents would give their views on the role of FBOs.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section will focus on the presentation and interpretation of data collected through different research instruments used during field work. The data is presented through narratives and discussed thematically. The data generated a plethora of themes related to the role of CCI, an FBO in emergency humanitarian aid. This was in an endeavour to address sustainable development and at the same time alleviate suffering among the beneficiaries and benefit the communities that they live in. The data centred on the capacity of the organisation to undertake humanitarian assistance, the range of its humanitarian assistance portfolio and the amount of aid the organisation channels to the humanitarian cause.
4.1 The capacity of CCI as an institution to offer humanitarian assistance.

The gathered data indicates that CCI strives to provide humanitarian assistance in a professional way. As such, the organisation has recruited qualified personnel from its members and also created a welfare department which specialises in identifying areas of need as well as strategies to address them. In an interview with one of the welfare department employees at CCI, it emerged that the department is legally recognised as a welfare organisation. The CCI constituted a formal FBO and was registered in terms of Zimbabwean Law. It is mandated to deal with emergency humanitarian issues but they are mostly exclusive to their church members. The respondent, however, pointed out that during the 2008-2010 period they were forced to extend their humanitarian work to a non-member of the congregation. Response;

“Our church was highly active during the time of cholera in Zimbabwe. Our intervention strategies were initially exclusive to our members, but later extended to the rest of the affected in Harare.”

4.2 The range of assistance offered by CCI

The data show that CCI was engaged in humanitarian assistance which includes health, sanitation and food provision. In various interviews, CCI welfare department employees indicated that the FBO was more into health related issues which include cholera that broke in 2009 in the suburbs of Harare. I was a human crisis were families were losing members in large numbers. The CCI initially started by attending to their church members who resided in the affected areas. They provided transport and detergents to the affected households. Due to the overwhelming demand, they ended up assisting non-members. A major challenge was the sourcing of food due to the unavailability of food on the market due to the closure of industries. Foreign currency was crucial for procuring food outside the current was also very difficult to obtain as it had to done through bureaucratic channels.

4.3 The impact of assistance as seen by the church and the beneficiaries

CCI spoke proudly about the impact that its assistance has made in saving and transforming the lives of its recipients. In an interview, their programs manager said that the church channelled over US$100 000 towards humanitarian aid between 2009 and 2010. She said;

“Our impact in their lives has been tremendous. We saved many from the death bed of illness, starvation and political threats to human security. Most of our beneficiaries are now our church members. We are praying with them here because as a church we should take care of their spiritual life.”

She further highlighted that they distributed food handouts in the form of mealie-meal, beans, cooking oil, salt, sugar and many other kinds of food to the needy. The data showed that the community leadership was engaged in determining those who deserved to be recipients of the aid, depending on the severity of their situations. The organisation’s health intervention, especially during the 2008-2009 cholera epidemic was also crucial in saving lives. One of the recipients of such said;

“I had two children who almost died because of cholera in December 2008. But I want to thank God that through this church which intervened, my children were saved and now we are members of this church as a family. We also received spiritual salvation from this church.”
4.4 The relevance of CCI aid and its subtle effects

It has been observed that from the responses that have been given that emergency humanitarian aid is necessary and crucial as well in urban communities that have been marginalised by donors. FBOs come in handy to assist in the provision of humanitarian aid. From the data given it was established that most of the respondents were of the opinion that emergency humanitarian aid was necessary. The majority of the respondents concurred with the role of responsibilities of FBOs. They are part of the development conduits in the community that act as safety nets when there is a crisis in any given community. FBOs have been seen as offering a unique service that gives spiritual, moral as well as financial support to the affected individuals and communities. Glennie (2008) posits that issues of food, sanitation and human security constitute integral parts of human rights and it does not make sense to create long-term disaster prevention strategies when people are facing an imminent threat to their lives. The best thing to do is to intervene and save lives and then later create long-term disaster prevention measures. In this regard the CCI activities become laudable. In this regard CCI performed a role that a religious structure is expected of, thereby expressing its functional necessity to the maintenance of social order and stability in society. However, it is disappointing to note that some of the recipients of food and shelter offered by CCI since 2008 are still relying on such aid for survival. Most of them are now converts and full members of the church, but still on the list of the church’s aid recipients. The church becomes divided into two categories of the wealthy who donate to the poor in that same church and the poor themselves. Instability is fostered and consequently, a skewed power relation within the church is also created.

4.5 The significance of CCI’s financial independence

The data showed that the CCCI is not funded by any organisation or government in Zimbabwe or abroad. This exonerates the organisation from the accusations of being remotely controlled by a hidden hand so as to effect interests of the funders. As noted by Scot (2005), financial independence is of fundamental significance to FBOs if they are to confine their activities to saying and developed humanity and not be used as political proxies by wealthy nations. It has been established that CCI was an organisation whose mandate ranged from the provision of health services, moral, spiritual support. It has been highlighted that CCI as an FBO played a crucial role in addressing the plight of Zimbabwean citizens who created faced with a crisis. Most of the community members who were assisted through the programme did appreciate the services offered.

4.6 The Inability of CCI to use its Institutional Capacity to Create Sustainable Livelihoods

The data revealed that CCI as a humanitarian institution has qualified personnel to execute its mandate of providing social, political and economic relief to the needy in society. In this regards, CCI becomes different from many other FBOs as demonstrated by the reviewed literature.

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The literature highlighted that many FBOs are institutionally deficient and resultantly, their intervention strategies are a disincentive to the recipients as they affect long-term sustainability problems. From the research findings, it was established that CCI as an FBO had proper structures in place that ensured service delivery. They had employed a full-time welfare officer who coordinated the activities of the organisation with the assistance of the board. CCI was illuminated was composed of religious clerics who had the relevant qualifications and doctorates in administration responsible for running the organisation professionally which is uncommon in FBOs.

5. CONCLUSION
The aim of the research was to focus on the role of FBOs in the provision of emergency humanitarian aid and evaluate the effectiveness of such aid. It emerged that CCI played a significant role that CCI in arresting the effects of various crisis situations in Harare. Such situations include starvation, lack of sanitation and political violence. It emerged that CCI provided timely interventions which saved human lives which were facing an imminent threat of death. It also emerged that CCI is quite different from other FBOs in terms of funding. The church does not receive any funding from the government or any organisation. It attracts elite membership which contributes significantly towards the coffers of the welfare department. This gives the organisation independence in decision making. The organisation is also well staffed by professionally qualified people who undertake humanitarian work. However, the findings revealed that CCI is failing to substantially restore livelihoods security of the recipients of its aid. The organisation seems to be only intending to provide aid and then convert the recipients to be members of their church. The consequent result is a situation of structural and individual instability which can cause dependency between recipients of aid and the church. This ends up making their aid less effective.

5.1 Limitations of the Study
The researcher encountered limitations on access to information. This was mainly because of the standoff that has been prevailing between the state and the civic organisations. However, the researcher assured the respondents of anonymity so that they were able to respond without fear of favour. The recipients of aid from CCI were not comfortable with answering questions as they suspected that the findings might demotivate the church in providing more aid to them. This ended up prolonging the data collection process. Moreover, this research is confined to the activities of the CCI and therefore the findings can be of limited applicability when applied in other contexts.

5.2 Recommendations
Humanitarian work needs to evolve from being perpetual so that it aims at restoration of livelihoods security of the recipient population. This avoids paralysing the potential within the recipients for them to be autonomously self-sustaining. As a result, this research has the following recommendations. First, there is need of the CCI to work closely with the state authorities to avoid suspicion from the political arena. It is on record that some politicians would want to highjack such programs for the benefit of their political parties. At times they would put barriers on who has access or not. Second, their area of operation should be spread in other suburbs and chapters have to be set which will oversee the running of emergency humanitarian assistance programmes. The coordination should be from the centre. There is further need for collaborative efforts that are interdenominational and should include the Pentecostal churches, Muslims, apostolic sects and other synergies.
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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How is Celebration Church International (CCI) constituted as a Faith Based Organization (FBO)?

   Is Celebration Church international constituted as a formal Faith Based Organisation?  
   Yes/ No?  
   If so please provide details........................................................................................................

   What kinds of structures has CCI put in place to facilitate humanitarian work?

   Does CCI collaborate with other organisations in the execution of humanitarian aid?  
   Yes/ No?  
   If so please provide details........................................................................................................

   Do you find this collaboration helpful?  
   Yes/ No?  
   If so please provide details........................................................................................................

2. What is the range of humanitarian assistance in the CCI aid portfolio?

   What categories of humanitarian work does CCI get involved in?  
   What Criteria did CCI use to select the types of humanitarian assistance in their aid portfolio?  
   How are the recipients of the emergency humanitarian assistance selected?  
   Comment of the selection criteria of the emergency humanitarian assistance selected?  
       a. Transparent  
       b. Discriminatory  
       Give reasons for the above........................................................................................................

3. How much humanitarian aid have they actually undertaken?

   During the crisis of 2008 to 2010, did Celebration Church get involved in any humanitarian work?  

   What indicators of the humanitarian activities have CCI carried out over the years?  

   In which areas was the humanitarian assistance concentrated?  
   In what ways were the emergency humanitarian work beneficial?  

       Who benefitted from the emergency development programs?  
       How do you rate the emergency humanitarian work?  
       a. Relevant  
       b. Irrelevant  
       c. Not sure  
       Give reasons for the above responses........................................................................................

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4. How much resources are dedicated to humanitarian assistance at CCI?
   Is there any infrastructure that is specifically dedicated to humanitarian work at the CCI?
   Does CCI have a dedicated budget for humanitarian work?
   Are there any figures available to show how much money has been spent in humanitarian assistance?
   Do you think CCI has the institutional capacity to provide humanitarian aid?
   Suggest areas that need strengthening or improvement in the institutional capacity to deliver.
   What have been the challenges faced in the process of delivering emergency humanitarian work?

   If so please provide details........................................................................................................
   What do you suggest should be done to improve emergency humanitarian work?
   Give reasons

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CCI EMPLOYEES

1. Is CCI legally registered as a humanitarian organisation in Zimbabwe?

2. What structures are there in your organisation to ensure that aid is given effectively?

3. How qualified is CCI personnel in humanitarian work?

4. What is the range of humanitarian assistance offered by your organisation?

5. How much aid has your organisation provided to beneficiaries between 2008 and 2011?

6. How much in terms of financial resources has your organisation channelled out between 200-2011?

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