

Critical Challenges to the Livelihood Options of the Aged in Rural Zimbabwe: Evidence from Mubaira

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ABSTRACT This study used an explorative approach in its quest to understand challenges related to the livelihood strategies of the elderly in Zimbabwe. In-depth interviews and life histories were utilized as data collection instruments. In addition to this inductive and qualitative research approach, the study used the sustainable livelihoods framework to examine the different facets of vulnerabilities and obstacles to the livelihood options of the elderly in Mubaira in their attempts to stave off poverty in old age in the absence of social security systems and a declining Zimbabwean economy. Through the livelihoods approach's vulnerability framework the study also analyses the various factors affecting the attainment of sustainable livelihood outcomes. The study revealed that threats to livelihoods in Zimbabwe ranged from social, health, economic to political factors. The study concluded that the vulnerability context that emerged from the economic collapse rendered the aged caretakers for the young who had lost their jobs as well as those who had become burdens after contracting HIV/AIDS.