

**THE IMPACT OF HUMANITARIAN AID ON HOUSEHOLD  
RESILIENCE IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS: A CASE STUDY  
FROM KAJO-KEJI COUNTY, SOUTH SUDAN**

**Subtitle:** Evaluating Livelihood Strategies and Community Welfare under Humanitarian Interventions

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**ABSTRACT**

This research sought to assess how humanitarian assistance affects the resilience of families in Kajo-Keji County, Central Equatoria State, in South Sudan. Utilizing a comprehensive approach that combined surveys, interviews, group discussions, and the analysis of documents, the study gathered numerical and descriptive data from various households.

The initiative was driven by the urgent need to comprehend the influence of aid from different organizations and the government on life dimensions such as health, cleanliness, food sufficiency, and the availability of essential services. Results indicated that humanitarian efforts substantially boosted areas like agricultural output, health care, cleanliness, economic conditions, and the cooperation between the government and aid groups, leading to a community better equipped to face, adjust to, and recover from challenging situations. Thus, the research highlights the critical role of sustained and precise humanitarian support, particularly underlining the significance of improving access to small-scale financial services to invigorate local economies and bolster resilience.

The findings offer important perspectives for decision-makers, aid groups, and other parties engaged in aid provision, suggesting approaches that meet immediate necessities while also fortifying the fundamental elements of household resilience for lasting growth.

**Keywords:** Humanitarian Assistance, Family Resilience, Kajo-Keji County, Nutritional Security, Medical Services, Financial Empowerment, Policy Recommendations, Long-term Growth.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the complex world of global humanitarian efforts, the crucial role of aid in bolstering household resilience during crises is widely studied and practiced. This study focuses on Kajo-

Keji County in Central Equatoria State, South Sudan, to examine the subtle effects of humanitarian aid on community resilience, especially in the face of ongoing conflict and economic challenges.

It delves into the effectiveness of aid in building sustainable community resilience, providing insights into the broader implications for humanitarian policy and practice. Kajo-Keji County stands out for its agricultural base and history of conflict-related displacement, making it a key example for studying the resilience-enhancing potential of humanitarian aid. This region's experiences highlight the extreme difficulties faced by conflict-affected communities globally, where aid delivery meets the essential needs for survival, recovery, and sustained resilience.

Consequently, the research thoroughly assesses how different humanitarian aid forms have impacted household resilience in Kajo-Keji, contributing to the global conversation on effective aid strategies. The research seeks to dissect the intricate ways in which humanitarian aid supports household resilience in Kajo-Keji County. It posits that while immediate relief is crucial, the ultimate aim of aid should be to enable communities to withstand and recover from future crises independently. Hence, it closely investigates how humanitarian efforts intersect with community adaptive capacities, livelihood strategies, and long-term sustainability, addressing a significant gap in understanding aid's multifaceted impacts.

The study's goals include shedding light on the primary and secondary livelihood strategies in Kajo-Keji, exploring innovative methods to strengthen household resilience, and assessing the real-world effects of humanitarian interventions. By analyzing the various factors that influence household resilience, from livelihood diversification to access to essential services and social safety nets, the research aims to offer a comprehensive perspective on resilience as a complex concept.

This research's importance extends beyond academia, providing crucial insights for policymakers, humanitarian workers, and donors. It highlights the subtle benefits of humanitarian aid in enhancing household resilience and advocates for a strategic shift in how aid is delivered.

This entails moving towards more holistic, context-aware approaches that balance immediate relief to create strong, self-sufficient communities capable of dealing with post-conflict recovery and development. The findings indicate that well-planned humanitarian aid can significantly strengthen household resilience in Kajo-Keji County through emergency assistance, livelihood support, and capacity-building measures. However, the study also points to the need for more coherent aid strategies, stressing the integration of immediate relief with long-term development goals for sustainable resilience.

In conclusion, this inquiry into the effects of humanitarian aid on household resilience in Kajo-Keji County enriches the empirical literature and advances policy discussions on improving aid interventions for building resilience. It emphasizes the need for a nuanced, comprehensive approach to humanitarian assistance, one that combines prompt aid with strategies to bolster community resilience.

Thus, this study contributes valuable insights to the ongoing debate on humanitarian aid, offering evidence-based recommendations for more effective and enduring aid practices in

South Sudan and beyond. This in-depth analysis outlines how humanitarian aid intersects with household resilience in Kajo-Keji, offering a critical perspective for reevaluating and enhancing humanitarian strategies worldwide, thereby paving the way for a more resilient future for communities facing conflict and economic hardship.

In territories ravaged by conflicts and natural calamities, providing humanitarian aid is essential for sustaining affected families, aiming at bolstering resilience and promoting recovery.

The livelihood framework, which stresses the importance of understanding how families adapt and prosper despite challenges, is the foundation of this review. Research under this framework explores the effect of humanitarian aid on the various resources—human, social, physical, financial, and natural—that families depend on to enhance their resilience (Chambers and Conway, 1992). This approach highlights the complex nature of resilience and provides a means to evaluate the impact of humanitarian efforts.

Studies have shown that humanitarian aid is critical in stabilizing and improving primary and secondary means of livelihood in areas affected by conflicts and disasters. Initiatives focused on agriculture and generating income are crucial for rehabilitating livelihoods that conflicts have disrupted (UNDP, 2019; FAO, 2015).

Existing literature outlines several methods for enhancing household resilience, such as increasing adaptive capacity, improving access to essential services, and introducing social safety nets (Folke, 2006; Béné et al., 2012). Yet, there is a noticeable shortfall in research tailored to specific contexts, particularly in unique environmental and socio-political settings like South Sudan. A significant void in the current literature is the limited focus on the specific effectiveness of humanitarian aid across different settings, especially regarding its long-term effects on household resilience. The existing research on post-conflict recovery in South Sudan is sparse, providing minimal insight into the lasting impact of aid interventions and their ability to foster sustained resilience in affected families. This study seeks to fill these gaps by examining humanitarian aid's role in Kajo-Keji County, thus contributing to the scholarly discussion on promoting durable household resilience in conflict-affected areas. Furthermore, this research underscores the urgent need for adaptable humanitarian strategies that not only meet immediate needs but also enhance household adaptive capabilities and diversify livelihoods as sustainable resilience pathways. It highlights the importance of integrating humanitarian and development efforts to build long-lasting resilience in conflict-impacted communities, in line with suggestions for more comprehensive interventions in humanitarian practices (FAO, 2016; UNDP, 2019).

By focusing on South Sudan's Kajo-Keji County, this study significantly broadens our understanding of the long-term benefits of humanitarian actions in cultivating sustainable household resilience. Addressing the gaps identified, this research makes a vital contribution to the dialogue on designing and implementing humanitarian aid in comparable global contexts.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

This investigation delves into the effects of humanitarian aid on the resilience of households in Kajo-Keji County, Central Equatoria State, South Sudan, employing a detailed mixed-methods research framework to dissect the intricate dynamics of humanitarian efforts and their

repercussions on the local populace. The methodology segment of the study delineates the comprehensive research approach, encompassing the strategies for sampling and the procedures for gathering and analyzing data, and justifies the choice of Kajo-Keji County as the focal point for this inquiry.

Utilizing a mixed-methods research approach, this study aims to thoroughly explore the influence of humanitarian assistance on the resilience of households within Kajo-Keji County, Central Equatoria State, South Sudan. This approach marries both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide an exhaustive examination of the complex issue at hand. The quantitative portion of the study was designed as a cross-sectional survey, which was instrumental in collecting data from a representative segment of the population at one specific point in time. Such a design was pivotal in facilitating the exploration of relationships and enabling comparisons across various demographics within the study locale. Concurrently, the qualitative data of the study, through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, added layers of depth and context to the quantitative data, offering a nuanced understanding of the community's perspectives and experiences with respect to the effects of humanitarian aid on their resilience.

In selecting participants, the study employed a purposive sampling technique to identify households within Kajo-Keji County that have been directly affected by humanitarian aid initiatives. This targeted selection was crucial for ensuring that the data gathered was rich with insights and experiences directly relevant to the phenomenon under study. Additionally, key informants, including representatives from local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community leaders, and government officials, were identified through a snowball sampling technique, starting with initial contacts, and expanding to include others with essential insights on the delivery and impacts of humanitarian aid.

The data collection methodology was multi-pronged to ensure a thorough examination of the impact of humanitarian aid:

- Structured questionnaires of 150 were distributed to households across the county to quantify the aid received, the alterations in livelihood strategies, and the perceptions of resilience post-aid intervention.
- Semi-structured interviews with key informants from humanitarian organizations, local government, and community leadership provided in-depth insights into the operational aspects, challenges, and achievements of humanitarian efforts in the region.
- 14 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to enable the collection of communal experiences and views on humanitarian aid and its effect on household resilience, allowing for the emergence of shared narratives.
- An analysis of relevant documents, including reports, policy briefs, and prior studies, offered additional context to situate the study's findings within the broader spectrum of humanitarian efforts in South Sudan and specifically in Kajo-Keji County.

In analyzing the data, the study utilized statistical software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)) to process the quantitative data from the questionnaires, identifying patterns, trends, and relationships concerning the impact of humanitarian aid on resilience indicators. Descriptive statistics provided foundational insights, while inferential statistics delved into the

relationships between variables. The qualitative data from interviews, FGDs, and document analysis underwent thematic analysis to highlight recurring themes and patterns in the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders concerning humanitarian aid. This comprehensive analysis, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, facilitated a multifaceted understanding of how humanitarian aid impacts household resilience, capturing the scope and depth of its influence.

The choice of Kajo-Keji County as the focus for this investigation is anchored in its distinctive status as an area emerging from conflict, which has received considerable humanitarian support in recent times. This backdrop of strife, displacement, and subsequent aid efforts provides a fertile ground for exploring the complex effects of assistance on the resilience of households within the county. Kajo-Keji's varied socio-economic and ecological environment further enriches this examination, presenting a broad spectrum of challenges and possibilities for resilience building in areas similarly marred by conflict (UNDP, 2019).

The findings from the study shed light on the complex role of humanitarian aid in bolstering household resilience in Kajo-Keji County, marking notable advancements in livelihood approaches, resilience enhancement, and community welfare.

The inquiry highlights the central role of agriculture in the livelihood strategies of Kajo-Keji County's residents, with a significant portion of the populace engaged in farming and horticulture. This dependence highlights the vital importance of agriculture for food security and the sustainability of livelihoods. The research underscores how humanitarian aid, through the provision of farming inputs, educational programs, and support, has strengthened these primary livelihood strategies. This aid has enabled a transition to more sustainable practices and the incorporation of secondary livelihood activities like livestock rearing and earning wages.

Key observations include:

- The dominance of agriculture as a primary livelihood strategy underscores the community's reliance on land and natural resources, emphasizing the necessity for aid efforts that focus on enhancing agricultural resilience.
- The move towards diversifying income sources, facilitated by humanitarian aid, reflects a strategic approach to building resilience by minimizing vulnerabilities to agricultural setbacks.

The contribution of humanitarian aid to enhancing household resilience is evident across various dimensions. Aid initiatives have significantly boosted access to food, healthcare, and education, directly fortifying households against crises. Additionally, support for peace-building measures has been crucial in establishing a stable environment for sustainable livelihood pursuits.

Key observations include:

- The aid's effects extend beyond economic assistance, affecting crucial elements of human well-being and social stability, which are fundamental for resilience.

- Despite positive outcomes, concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of aid efforts underscore the importance of fostering self-reliance and diminishing dependency on external support.

The overall perception within the community strongly supports the beneficial impact of humanitarian aid on welfare, with marked improvements in health services, educational access, and infrastructure development. These enhancements are vital for building a resilient community prepared to face future challenge

Key observations include:

- The bolstering of community welfare acts as proof of the efficacy of humanitarian aid not only in immediate crisis response but also in promoting lasting resilience.
- The wide range of welfare improvements highlights the need for comprehensive aid strategies that cater to the diverse needs of a community to foster all-encompassing resilience.

In summary, the study conclusively reveals that humanitarian aid has significantly influenced the livelihood strategies, household resilience, and community welfare in Kajo-Keji County. These insights advocate for the continuation and concentration of humanitarian support, especially in agricultural development and capacity enhancement, to maintain and build upon the achievements in resilience and welfare. Nevertheless, the focus on sustainability and self-sufficiency necessitates integrated development strategies that ensure the longevity of these improvements and a smooth transition from reliance on aid to autonomy.

This thorough exploration of the study's findings emphasizes the pivotal role of humanitarian aid in fostering resilience in areas affected by conflict, while also calling attention to the need for strategies that guarantee the sustainability and enduring impact of such interventions.

The research conducted in Kajo-Keji County, situated in the Central Equatoria State of South Sudan, provides significant insights into the effects of humanitarian aid on the resilience of households in areas plagued by conflict. Through a detailed examination of how humanitarian efforts contribute to improving livelihood strategies, the resilience of households, and the overall well-being of communities, this study enriches the ongoing conversation about the effectiveness of humanitarian aid. It offers a nuanced interpretation of the research findings within the broader scope of existing literature, shedding light on the influence of humanitarian aid on household resilience and exploring the avenues through which aid delivery can be made more effective in regions affected by conflict.

The research uncovers a pronounced dependence on agriculture as a fundamental livelihood strategy among the inhabitants of Kajo-Keji County. This characteristic is prevalent in many areas impacted by conflict and underscores the pivotal role of agriculture in securing food and sustaining livelihoods in rural environments. The encouragement of livelihood diversification through humanitarian assistance reflects the strategies experts advocate, emphasizing the importance of varied income sources for bolstering household resilience against various shocks.

Moreover, the study illustrates that humanitarian aid has been instrumental in transitioning towards more sustainable agricultural practices and diversifying livelihoods, thereby enhancing long-term resilience. This aligns with scholarly suggestions that aid programs focusing on improving agricultural productivity and diversification can substantially diminish vulnerability to both environmental and economic disturbances.

Regarding the enhancement of household resilience through aid, the study identifies a crucial role of humanitarian assistance in expanding access to vital services such as food, healthcare, and education and in supporting efforts towards peacebuilding. The broad impact of aid is fundamental for establishing a comprehensive framework for resilience that extends beyond mere economic support, embracing human well-being and social unity. This approach is essential for effectively countering the impacts of shocks by addressing various dimensions of resilience, including social, economic, and infrastructural facets.

The study also touches upon the sustainability of aid interventions, highlighting a notable gap in the literature regarding the transition from immediate relief to sustainable development strategies. It underscores the necessity for humanitarian aid to be conceived with a dual aim: catering to immediate needs while establishing the foundations for sustainable development.

In the realm of community welfare and the influence of aid, the community's positive perceptions regarding the impact of humanitarian aid on health services, education, and infrastructure underline the indispensable role of aid in enhancing community welfare. This finding supports the view that effective delivery of humanitarian aid can significantly contribute to the improvement and resilience of communities in crisis situations.

The study concludes with a strong emphasis on the multidimensional impact of humanitarian aid, which includes economic support, social welfare, and peacebuilding. This underlines the complexity of building resilience in conflict-affected areas. The research makes a valuable contribution to the debate on integrating humanitarian and development approaches, advocating for interventions that are responsive, resilient, and oriented towards development.

In essence, this research on Kajo-Keji County offers profound insights into the effective delivery of humanitarian aid in conflict-affected areas. It advocates for interventions that support sustainable livelihood strategies, enhance multi-dimensional household resilience, and promote community welfare. The findings and recommendations of this study are critical for optimizing aid delivery in similar conflict-affected regions, emphasizing the need for comprehensive, sustainable, and integrated approaches to humanitarian assistance.

## 2.1 Whether humanitarian aid provided material and logistics to people who need help.

**Table 1: Whether humanitarian aid provided material and logistics to people who need help.**

	Humanitarian Aid	SD	SA	NS	D	A	GT
1.	Providing material and logistic assistance to people who need help in Kajo-Keji.	1%	0%	20%	67%	11%	100%
2.	All the vulnerable people received support from humanitarian organizations in Kajo-Keji County	0%	0%	24%	12%	64%	100%

3.	Humanitarian aid saved lives of the people of Kajo-Keji county	1%	1%	7%	1%	91%	100%
4.	Humanitarian aid restored hope and dignity for the people of Kajo-Keji County	1%	5%	1%	1%	91%	100%
5.	Humanitarian aid alleviates the suffering of the people of Kajo-Keji County	1%	1%	17%	7%	74%	100%
6.	Humanitarian aid enabled growth and development in Kajo-Keji County	0%	3%	1%	1%	95%	100%
7.	Humanitarian aid improves food security in Kajo-Keji County	0%	1%	4%	3%	92%	100%
8.	The people of Kajo-Keji rely on humanitarian aid support	84%	1%	1%	9%	6%	100%

**Table 2: Whether the primary and secondary livelihood of Kajo-Keji people depended on sales as a means of their livelihood.**

	Primary & Secondary Means of Livelihood in Kajo-Keji County	SD	SA	NS	D	A	GT
1.	The main livelihood means of Kajo-Keji County is agriculture	1%	1%	37%	21%	39%	100%
2.	My livelihood depends on crop growing	0%	0%	19%	29%	52%	100%
3.	My livelihood means depends on Horticulture	0%	0%	5%	1%	94%	100%
4.	My community depends on animal husbandry as a means of livelihood	0%	0%	65%	5%	31%	100%
5.	Kajo-Keji County household depends on forest-based sales as a means of livelihood	0%	9%	1%	1%	89%	100%
6.	Poultry is the main source of livelihood in Kajo-Keji County	0%	0%	78%	9%	13%	100%
7.	Most of the people of Kajo-Keji practice business as means of daily livelihood	0%	1%	59%	1%	40%	100%
8.	The livelihood of the people of Kajo-Keji are wage earners	0%	14%	0%	1%	85%	100%
9.	The livelihood of the people of Kajo-Keji supported by the government of South Sudan	5%	0%	11%	5%	79%	100%
10.	The livelihood of the people of Kajo-Keji is supported by humanitarian agencies	0%	10%	2%	3%	85%	100%

**Table 3: Respondents on household resilience and the study respondents generally see resilience as the capacity of outcome-based food security.**

	APPROACHES TO HOUSEHOLD RESIDENCE	SD	SA	NS	D	A	GT
1.	The community of Kajo-Keji County can create a new system of household resilience	0%	1%	2%	95%	3%	100%
2.	The community of Kajo-Keji has an environmental and socioeconomic system for improving household residence	0%	3%	5%	83%	8%	100%
3.	The community has a clear approach to the integration of capacities for making household resilience	0%	1%	7%	82%	10%	100%



4.	The community can deal with shocks and making resilience as an intermediate outcome for social-economic	0%	1 %	3 %	90%	7%	100%
5.	There is always sustainable livelihood for the well-being of the people of Kajo-Keji County	0%	0 %	3 %	87%	11%	100%
6.	There is always a mechanism to address food security as means of household resilience	0%	0 %	9 %	80%	11%	100%
7.	Household resilience enabled food security recovery	0%	0 %	9 %	84%	7%	100%
8.	Household resilience enable access to services such as school, health, water, sanitation, and markets	0%	3 %	3 %	88%	7%	100%
9.	Access to basic service contribute to reduction of illness risk in Kajo-Keji County	0%	3 %	1 %	93%	3%	100%
10.	The community of Kajo-Keji has social safety nets for household resilience	1%	1 %	9 %	79%	11%	100%

## 2.2 Whether Health Services have improved in Kajo-Keji County

**Table 4: Whether Health Services have improved in Kajo-Keji County**

	IMPACT OF HUMANITARIAN AID	SD	S A	N S	D	A	GT
1.	There is improvement of education services in Kajo-Keji County	1%	94 %	1 %	3%	0%	100 %
2.	There is enough food produced by the community of Kajo-Keji County	0%	95 %	3 %	1%	1%	100 %
3.	The people of Kajo-Keji drunk clean water	0%	72 %	5 %	22%	1%	100 %
4.	Health services has improved in Kajo-Keji County	1%	99 %	0 %	1%	0%	100 %
5.	The population of Kajo-Keji has sustainable security	9%	89 %	0 %	0%	2%	100 %
6.	Sanitation service has improved in Kajo-Keji County	1%	66 %	1 %	32%	0%	100 %
7.	Social-economic system has improved in Kajo-Keji County	0%	72 %	20 %	7%	1%	100 %
8.	There is access to wage earning to improve livelihood	0%	76 %	9 %	15%	1%	100 %
9.	The community of Kajo-Keji practices income-generating activities	5%	89 %	2 %	3%	0%	100 %
10.	The government of South Sudan collaborate with humanitarian agencies	4%	21 %	56 %	18%	1%	100 %

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