



SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
Food Agriculture and Natural Resources

VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE



Vulnerability Assessments in Southern Africa: Concepts, findings, strengths, challenges and future developments.

Neil Marsland: SC(UK) / SADC VAC

Vulnerable to what?

- Household food security:

“access to adequate food at all times for an active and healthy life”

- Household livelihood security:

“A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living; a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation” (Chambers and Conway: 1992).

Most recent figures...

| Country | VAC Aug assessment: Maximum rural people in need Dec 02 – March 03 | VAC Dec Assessment Maximum rural people in need Dec 02 – March 03 | VAC Dec. Assessment Maximum percent in need** | VAC Dec. assessment MT cereal food aid*** Dec 02 – Mar 03 |
|---------------|---|--|---|---|
| Zimbabwe* | 6,700,000 | 7,180,000 | 52% | 345,000 |
| Malawi | 3,300,000 | 3,590,000 | 31% | 173,000 |
| Zambia*+ | 2,900,000 | 2,730,000 | 28% | 132,000 |
| Lesotho | 650,000 | 740,000 | 34% | 39,000 |
| Swaziland | 270,000 | 300,000 | 28% | 15,000 |
| Mozambique | 590,000 | 660,000 | 3% | 31,000 |
| Region | 14,400,000 | 15,200,000 | 26% | 735,000 |

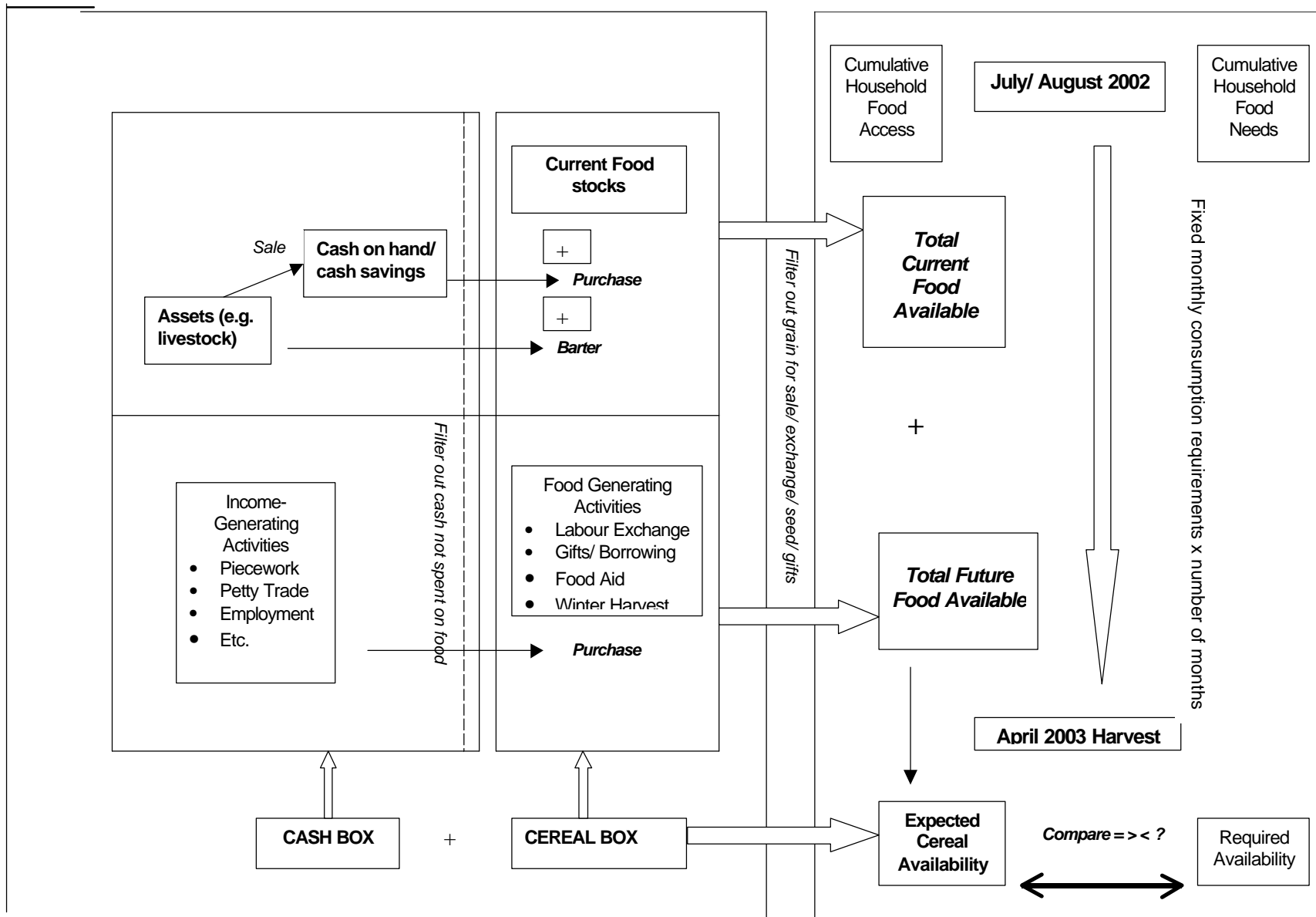
* Figures for Zimbabwe and Zambia include some urban needs

** Rural population in need over total national population

*** Excludes stock replenishment

+ National population figures updated since VAC August assessment (decreased about 10%)

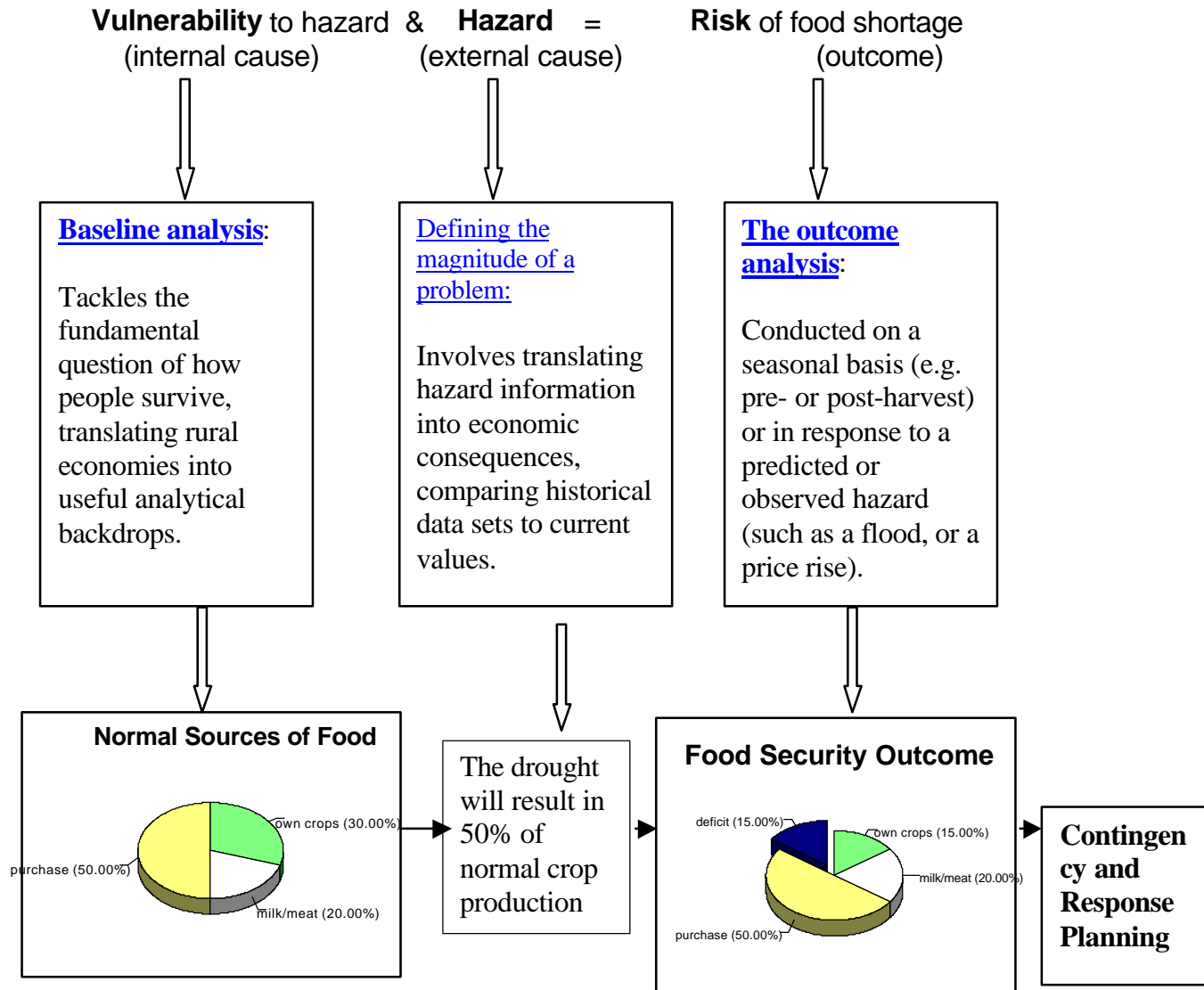
Method 1: Zim., Zam., Mal., Les



Method 2: Swazi, Moz., Les., (partly), Zim(partly), Mal.(partly)..

The Analytical Framework & Associated Information Requirements

HOW IT ALL FITS TOGETHER



Strengths and challenges

Method 1: Strengths

- Conceptually robust food access model
- Addresses key livelihoods issues (assets, activities, outcomes)
- Generates quantifiable food security outcomes (“cereal gap”)
- Good for looking at past and present components / measures of household food security

Strengths and challenges

Method 1: Challenges

- Difficulty in predicting the future - important especially for livelihoods of the poor (heavy reliance on rainy season off-farm activities)
- Seasonality elements are left out / under-represented in the analysis - assumes a “linear” food access profile through time - concept of “counting back” - has implications for temporal targeting
- Food aid focus
- Operational difficulties....

Strengths and challenges

Method 2: Strengths

- Modelling on the basis of the past, not prediction - less room for error (see last slide).
- Holistic measure of livelihood vulnerability
- Quantified outcomes in terms of food aid and other interventions

Strengths and challenges

Method 2: Challenges

- Not transparent
- Relies heavily on skill of analyst
- Various assumptions used in modelling (e.g. expandability of coping strategies).
- No household level data
- Difficult to tease out gender and age dynamics

How accurate are the figures?

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How accurate are the figures?

1. Macro picture....

- EMOP only 56% funded as of Jan 31st.(now up to over 70%)
- Domestic cereal gap at macro level: 1,600,500 MT (six countries) as at Jan 20th, of which Zim = 897,000 MT.

2. Large need for food aid estimated by the VACs: 735,000 MT.

Yet....

3. Available data indicates that acute malnutrition rates low in general (wasting in under-5's below 10%)

What does this mean?

- Estimates of food aid need are inflated??
- Micro level malnutrition figures are not representative of country wide situations??
- Households are maintaining nutrition by depleting assets??

Other issues....

- Is food aid the only answer?
- What about “non-food sectors”?
- What about HIV/AIDS?
- What about Angola?
- What about urban assessments?

HIV/AIDS

- 1 National data-sets from Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe suggest several relationships between HIV/AIDS related variables and depth of acute food insecurity:
2. HIV/AIDS related indicators are correlated with:
 - Poverty
 - Availability of food
 - Access to food
 - Coping strategies
 - Food security outcomes
3. Qualified and tentative conclusion:
“All other things being equal, HIV/AIDS affected households are being hit harder by food crisis than non-affected households”

HIV/AIDS

4. A “new variant famine” (NVF)?? - too early to say
5. A chronic emergency which will persist, undermining food security and livelihoods IRRESPECTIVE of food and other shocks??
6. Implications for response??
7. The need for monitoring - tracking households through time, will they bounce back or spiral into destitution - (the NVF thesis)??

Urban assessments

- Plans in Zimbabwe, Lesotho to be undertaken later this year
- No plans for other countries
- Some money available
- Need for development of methodology

Angola

- ?
- WFP-VAM undertaking vulnerability assessments, methodology not clear.
- Need to re-vamp the Angola VAC
- Angola will be high on the priority list in the medium term in terms of assessments

The future of VAC assessments and of the VACs themselves: Short term - the April - May assessments

Objectives

- 1.** To assess how people have coped over the last 12 months.
- 2.** To estimate access to food and other basic needs from April 2003 - March 2004, in conjunction with National and FAO crop estimates.
- 3.** To ensure a comparable understanding of livelihoods and vulnerability across countries
- 4.** To enhance understanding of the multi-sectoral nature of livelihood security.

The future of VAC assessments and of the VACs themselves: Longer term..

SADC project proposal to build capacity in livelihoods based vulnerability assessment: 4-5 years, target start date: mid 2003.....

Project structure

Goal:

- To reduce the vulnerability of households to shocks and stresses.

Purpose:

- To ensure that Livelihood Based Vulnerability Assessments influence and inform policies that improve household food security and reduce poverty.

Outputs:

- Sustainable capacity to provide effective leadership in livelihoods based vulnerability assessment at regional SADC level established and maintained.
- National capacity to undertake reliable, cost effective livelihoods based assessment of vulnerability achieved.
- Livelihoods based vulnerability assessment and monitoring implemented at national and micro levels in SADC Member States

Key Stakeholders

