

CIVIC MONITORING PROGRAMME
integrating the
FOSENET Food Security monitoring



**Community Assessment of Food Security and
the Social Situation in Zimbabwe**

April 2004

For the executive summary please go to page 13

This report is based on monitoring of food security and social welfare at community level by the Civic Monitoring Programme. Monthly monitoring is complemented by a more detailed focus in quarterly monitoring of specific areas of social welfare. Proposals for issues to monitor are welcomed and should be sent to fsmt2@mweb.co.zw

Background

Civic organizations have through the monitoring Group of the National NGO Food Security Network (FOSENET) been monitoring food security in Zimbabwe since July 2002. The monitoring was implemented to provide a watchdog of the platform of **ethical principles** for relief and food security, viz:

- The right to life with dignity and the duty not to withhold life saving assistance;
- The obligation of states and other parties to agree to the provision of humanitarian and impartial assistance when the civilian population lacks essential supplies;
- Relief not to bring unintended advantage to parties nor to further partisan positions;
- The management and distribution of food and other relief with based purely on need and not on partisan grounds, and without adverse distinction of any kind;
- Respect for community values of solidarity, dignity, peace and community culture.

In 2004 this monitoring has been widened to cover other social and economic conditions, recognizing the wide range of conditions influencing social and economic wellbeing. The Civic Monitoring Programme is implemented through NGOs based within districts and community based monitors. Monthly reports from all areas of the country are compiled to provide a monthly situation assessment of food security and social welfare to enhance an ethical, effective and community focussed response to the current situation. Queries and feedback on these reports is welcomed and should be directed to the Civic Monitoring Programme at fsmt2@mweb.co.zw.

This seventeenth round of NGO and community based monitoring nationally covers the month of **April 2004** .

Coverage of the data

The monitoring information is collected from sentinel wards within districts. It is presented by district, using two or more site reports on any indicator.

The March 2004 report is drawn from **145 monitoring reports** from **52 districts** from all provinces of Zimbabwe, with an average of **2.8 reports per district**.

Training has been carried out to increase the reports per district to improve data quality and cross validation of reports across districts. Training will be continued into 2004 to improve both coverage and data quality.

The food situation

Food availability is reported to have improved substantially since March 2004, mainly due to harvests. The most food insecure districts are reported to be in Masvingo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South.



The proportion of districts reporting constant/ worsening food supply situation dropped to 29%, compared to 59% in March and 58% in February. The share of districts noting an improvement in food supply increased markedly to 63% in April, compared to 41% in March and 22% in February 2004.

There is a remarkable change giving to the harvest, self sustenance is now evident – because no more long queues for mealie meal in shops. People are a bit healthier but the harvest is not going to take them for long.

Hwedza

Improved food supplies are noted to be due to harvests, particularly from districts that received early and constant rains. Community reports however warn in eight districts (15%) that the harvest yields are not sufficient to sustain household food security, reported to be due to inadequate harvests, late rains and inability to afford seed.

Marked improvements in food supply due to harvests were reported from Midlands, parts of Manicaland, Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland East. The southern districts of Masvingo and Matabeleland report poor food security, with Matabeleland North and South having the most districts reporting worsening situations.

Table 1: Districts reporting no improvement in food situation, April 2004

Province	District
Manicaland	Nyanga
Mashonaland East	Seke, Marondera rural
Mashonaland Central	Shamva
Mashonaland West	Zvimba
Midlands	Gokwe,
Masvingo	Bikita , Chiredzi, Masvingo rural
Matabeleland North	Binga, Hwange, Nkayi
Matabeleland South	Matobo, Umzingwane, Beitbridge

There isn't much to write home about, as their harvest will just be a drop in the ocean. Though the rains fell there's still little hope for that bumper harvest.

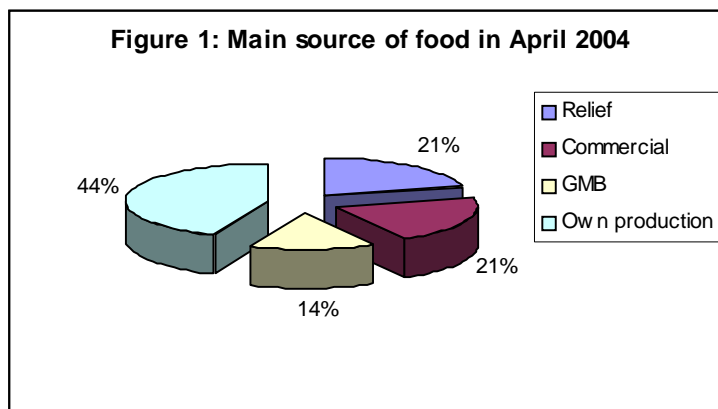
Binga

An increasing share of households are reported to now be sourcing food from own production , as a result of the current harvests. Despite this food stocks have not yet grown significantly, with 68% of households reported to have food stocks of a month or less.

People are eating their harvests.

Mberengwa

In April, 44% of sites reported that households sourced food from their own produce. This is an increase from 20% in March and 13% in February 2004. In many sites households are still reported to be relying on relief and commercial food (21% of sites) and on the GMB (14%). (see Fig 1. below)



The harvests have however not yet increased food stocks in households, with sentinel sites reporting that 40% of households do not have any food in stock and 28% reported to have food stocks for one month or less. This is lower than the levels reported around the same time, in March 2003, when 37% of households were reported to have food stocks of one month or less.

Vulnerable groups have remained much the same, viz; orphans, former farm workers AIDS and TB patients, elderly and unemployed people.

People are no longer starving or sleeping in queues for food.

Bulawayo

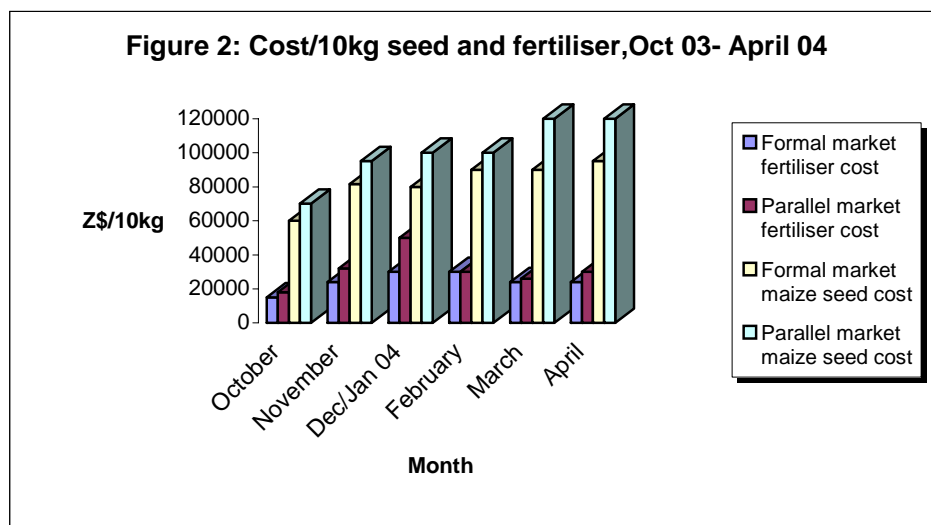
There is an improvement in food availability, but not all people have farmed owing to high cost of inputs. There is need for relief in the ward, if people could get assistance on seeds and inputs they don't afford, they could have a bumper harvest.

Goromonzi

Food Production

Fertilizer and Maize seed availability and prices are reported to have remained constant since March 2004. This is not a period of high demand for these products.

In April 48% of districts reported fertilizer available, the same level as in March 2004, while 37% of districts reported availability of maize seed, a small decline on the 43% reported in March 2004. The low demand for these inputs during this harvest period could explain this plateau in price and availability.



At least the situation is now looking better, with many people surviving on this year's crops. As a result the price of maize meal on the parallel market has reduced.

Harare

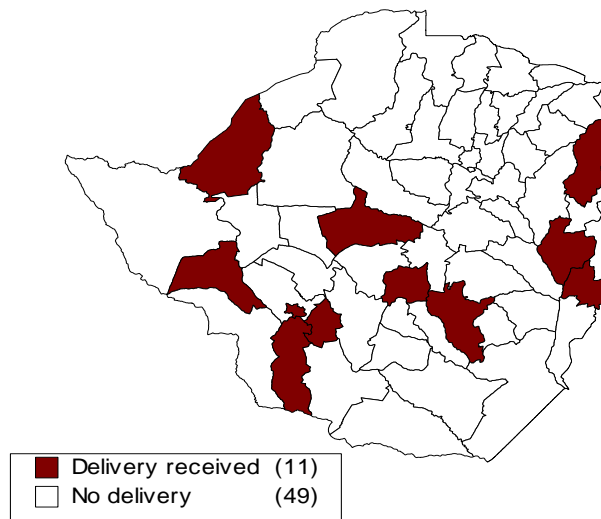
Table 2: Reported prices of maize seed and fertilizer, October 03 to March 04

Month	Fertiliser Cost Z\$/10kg		Maize seed Cost Z\$/10/kg	
	Formal market	Parallel Market	Formal market	Parallel Market
Price range October	7400 - 15000	9000 - 18000	30000 - 60000	35000 - 70000
Price range November	7800 - 24000	9000 - 32000	40000 - 81500	40000 - 95000
Price range January 04	10400 - 30000	14000 - 50000	20000 - 80000	35000 - 100000
Price range February 04	9000 - 30000	13000 - 30000	29000 - 90000	40000 - 100000
Price range March 04	12000 - 24000	14000 - 26000	38000 - 90000	45000 - 120000
Price range April 04	12000 - 24000	16000 - 30000	40000 - 95000	52000 - 120000

GMB deliveries

The decline in GMB deliveries reported in March continued in April, with a drop reported in the in coverage, frequency and volume of deliveries per sentinel ward. (see Figure 3 below)

Figure 3: Frequency of GMB Deliveries April 2004



Eleven districts (21%) reported any GMB deliveries, a marked decrease from the 33% in March 2004. An average 0.2 deliveries per ward was reported, with an average delivery volume of 1.5 tonnes per sentinel ward. This compares with 0.4 deliveries and 3.5 tonnes per ward reported in March 2004, and a 50% fall in April in both frequency and delivery volume. **This fall in GMB deliveries is reported to be compensated for by available food from harvests, with reports cautioning that this is a temporary situation.**

The G.M.B was always selling to them but now they don't come. In the past month it was critical because there was nothing delivered. Millers were suspended. Food shortages worsened as people went for up to 3 weeks with only one supply of 10kg bag.
Bulawayo

Community reports continued to note that GMB maize prices are unaffordable for the poor in the communities, particularly unemployed and elderly people, orphans and widows. Households are reported to have failed to raise money to buy GMB maize grain in Chimanimani, Mutare rural, Seke, Rushinga, Norton, Masvingo, Harare and Hwange districts.

Reported GMB prices did not change significantly in the month (see Table 3)

Table 3: Reported costs of GMB maize, Z\$/10kg

Province	Price range in Z\$/10kg		
	April 04	March 04	April 03
Manicaland	1220 - 5400	1600 - 2000	110 – 232
Mashonaland East	n.a	4400 - 7000	112 – 170
Mashonaland central	n.a	1700 - 6400	116
Mashonaland West	3200	1600 - 4400	110 – 112
Midlands	1600 - 2600	1600 - 4600	100 – 260
Masvingo	n.a	2600 - 4000	110 – 250
Matabeleland North	1440 - 5400	1200 - 5400	116
Matabeleland South	1300 - 2000	1300 - 2000	112 – 165
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	2200 - 2400	2200 - 2400	n.a

G.M.B should deliver its food equally to all retailers who are dealing with food so that consumers can be able to access food without much trouble.

Mutare rural

Commercial food

Commercial supplies of basic food stuffs were reported in April 2004 to be significantly higher than the same time last year, but prices are now reported to be too high for many households to afford .

Table 4 : Reported market availability of foods, April 03 and April 04

% of districts reporting food present	Maize meal		Oil	
	April 04	April 03	April 04	April 03
Manicaland	80	0	60	14
Mashonaland East	71	0	86	0
Mashonaland Central	100	17	50	17
Mashonaland West	100	14	100	14
Masvingo	50	13	100	38
Midlands	50	10	100	10
Matabeleland North	50	25	100	75
Matabeleland South	100	0	100	0

The price of maize meal appears to have fallen between March and April 2004 as stocks from the current harvests flow onto the market. Average maize meal prices in formal markets are reported to be Z\$12000 per 10 kg.

Maize meal prices in the informal markets are reported to be Z\$18000 per 10kg on average. While maize prices are not identified as a problem in rural areas, for urban families primarily dependent on commercial sources many identify cost as a barrier to food security (see table 4)

People are no longer interested in sending their kids to school because of the unaffordable fees, they prefer not to pay fees and use the money for food.

Mazowe.

Reported prices of maize meal are variable across districts, with price changes reported to respond to harvest supplies. **Even the cities report a decrease of about 25% on the parallel market maize meal price, possibly due to rural food sales in informal markets.** It is not yet clear what impact the recently announced increases in official maize producer prices (around Z\$700 000 per tonne) will have on commercial maize meal prices but this will be monitored in future rounds.

Table 5: Upper prices of maize meal in parallel markets April 03 and April 04

Province	Upper prices of Maize meal in commercial and parallel markets Z\$/10kg		
	April 2004	March 2004	April 2003
Manicaland	18000	20000	3000
Mashonaland East	20000	21000	3500
Mashonaland central	20000	20000	4000
Mashonaland West	14800	20000	2500
Midlands	20000	18000	4000
Masvingo	20000	12000	3000
Matebeleland North	15000	15000	4000
Matebeleland South	20000	25000	n.a
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	15000	21000	5000

n.a = not available

Humanitarian Relief

I would like NGOs to come and help people in my ward with relief food and in also paying the children's school fees since the prices are so expensive and most people cannot afford to pay and also buy school uniforms.

Masvingo Urban

Reported relief activities have fallen markedly, both in terms of government cash for work and non government and UN relief activities. Reported government cash for work activities have fallen from 48% in March 2004 to 29% in April 2004, while reported UN and NGO relief activities have fallen from 91% of districts in March 2004 to 62% in April 2004.

The Government cash for work programme is reported to be operational in 29% of districts, compared to 48% in March and 53% in February 2004. It is reported from sites that this programme has suffered funding constraints, with people reported in Chimanimani, Nyanga, Goromonzi, Hwedza, Mt Darwin, Gokwe, Masvingo rural, Gwanda, Bulawayo districts to be working for up to three months before receiving the cash benefit. Favoritism and bias in the recruitment of beneficiaries is reported to have taken place in Mutare urban, Seke, Kwekwe rural, Chivi, Gwanda, Umzingwane, Harare and Chitungwiza.

The residents are facing some difficulties because of high rates of fees in schools and low cotton price. I suggest that if donors had cash we request them to assist some people with maize seeds and fertilizers in order that farmers can improve because some people still need help and others need food now.

Gokwe

Non government and UN relief programmes were reported to be present in 32 districts (62% of districts) a decrease from the 91% reported in March 2004. The existing programmes are reported to be covering extreme cases of vulnerability, particularly AIDS patients , orphans and school children. General food distribution to households was reported in only seven districts (13% of districts). Communities have reported that relief organizations withdrew from wards in April, reduced or completely stopping delivery of supplies.

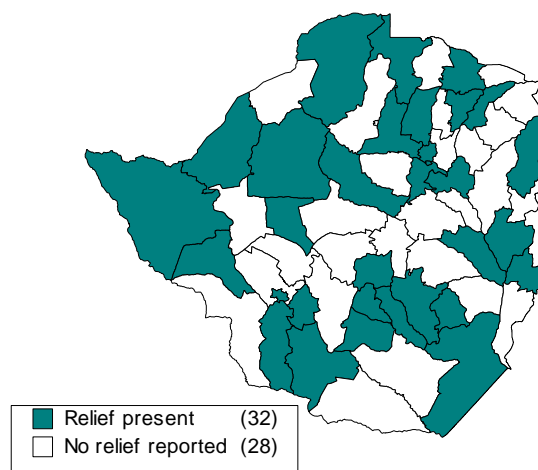
Not everyone is getting aid from food relief agencies. Some of the old aged who are getting public assistance from social welfare were left out yet they are given as little as \$2,500 per month. W.A.A.C did not pay last year's fees for orphans.

Nyanga

People in the area managed to harvest from their fields but the harvest is little so that relief food is still needed.

Chivi

Figure 3: Districts reporting relief activities



Problems reported in food relief distribution were reported in 16 districts.(see Table 6): The reported problems include bias in beneficiary selection, interference with relief, sale of or unfair access to relief food and insufficient supplies.

People working for A2 farmers are hungry because they are not earning enough hence they cannot afford to buy food.

Mazowe

Table 6: Reported problems in accessing relief, April 2004

AREA	TYPE OF AGENCY	REPORTED PROBLEM
Nyanga	Ind NGO	Inadequate supplies being delivered
Seke	Ind NGO	Bias reported in food distribution
Guruve	UN	Food going to elderly and disabled people but not to orphans.
Mazowe	Ind NGO	A2 farm workers not included but very food insecure
Hurungwe	Ind NGO	No supplies delivered to patients
Shurugwi	Ind NGO	Non deserving beneficiaries reported to be getting relief
Chiredzi	UN	Relief food reported to be stolen
Zvimba	Ind NGO	Reported that beneficiaries must be tested for HIV
Chivi	Ind NGO	Non deserving beneficiaries receiving relief
Gokwe	UN	Insufficient supplies delivered
Zaka	UN	Relief food being sold
Zvishavane	Ind NGO	Inadequate supplies delivered
Masvingo rural	Ind NGO	Kraal heads reported to be leaving out deserving beneficiaries from lists (political bias reported)
Bulawayo	Ind NGO	Relief food distribution stopped
Gwanda	Ind NGO	Relief food distribution was impeded and suffering transport delays
Harare	Ind NGO	Relief food reported not to be reaching intended beneficiaries

Key: Ind NGO =Reported relief from independent NGO UN =Reported relief from WFP implementing partner

Social Conditions

There has been a fall in population movements, with population migration reported in 27% of the districts in April 2004 compared to the 33% reported in March 2004. Movement is reported to be taking place for several reasons: People are reported to have moved onto newly acquired farms from urban areas (Makonde, Matobo, Bulawayo) former farm workers are reported to have been chased from farm homes by new occupiers (Hurungwe, Mazowe, Mutasa); people are reported to have moved into districts for gold panning (Kwekwe rural, UMP), to have moved to growth points for commercial sex work (Goromonzi, Hwedza), and in the cities some people are reported to be moving from low to high density areas due to increased rentals.

Social Services

As harvest supplies have taken the immediate pressure off food access for many, the major concern voiced in this round was on quality and cost of health care. This was particularly reported in terms of drug access and costs of care. Availability of antibiotics was reported in 58% of districts (62% in March) and of chloroquin in 69% of districts (74% reported in March 2004).

Reports highlighted that when public clinics are not able to provide drugs then households cannot afford to buy them from private pharmacies.

People are dying because of shortage of medicine and doctors. The living conditions are better in terms of food availability but medical treatment is at its lowest.

Gwanda

Malaria cases have been on the increase and clinics and hospitals have no medicines. People have to fork out more money to buy from chemists.

Gokwe

Fee levels for clinics are reported to vary widely, with an upper limit of Z\$45 000. Clinic fees were reported to range from \$120 to \$45 000 – ie difference of 375 times between highest and lowest reported levels. Reported nursing staff availability is best in the cities and in Manicaland, and lowest in Mashonaland Central and Matabeleland (See Table 7). **Only half of the clinics are reported to have safe water in sites in Mashonaland West, Midlands and Masvingo.**

Table 7: Wards with clinics with nurse and safe water by province

Province	Clinic fee range	% sites reporting	
		Clinic with nurse	Clinic with safe water
Manicaland	750 - 1500	100	100
Mashonaland East	1000 -26000	88	100
Mashonaland Central	2000 -5000	67	67
Mashonaland West	120 - 7000	83	50
Midlands	120 - 6500	86	57
Masvingo	200 - 6750	100	57
Matabeleland North	n.a	50	75
Matabeleland south	5000 -12000	75	100
Bulawayo ,Harare	500 - 45000	100	100
Total	500 - 45000	90	77

Reported fee levels for secondary schools ranged from \$200 to \$200 000, a 100 times difference between highest and lowest levels, with hest reported fees reported in Mashonaland Central. Levies generally were reported to start at higher ranges, around 2000-4000 with upper ranges of about 30 000-50 000 (See Table 8).

Some parents cannot afford fees while others are totally disinterested.

Bindura

Some parents cannot afford both school fees and uniforms

Hurungwe

Table 8: School Fee level per term by province April 2004

Province	Fees range	Levies range
Manicaland	250 – 95000	2000 – 32000
Mashonaland East	325 – 55000	4000 – 75000
Mashonaland Central	5000 – 200000	2000 – 50000
Mashonaland West	12000– 30000	5000 – 50000
Midlands	200 – 34000	4000 – 35000
Masvingo	3000 – 80000	1000 – 72000
Matebeleland North	5000 – 12000	5000 – 10000
Matebeleland South	200 – 30000	2000 – 60000
Bulawayo, Harare	300 – 80000	400 – 30000

Communities reported in 71% of districts that increases in schools fees and levies have led to some children of school going age defaulting on school attendance. In most districts this was reported to affect a small number of children and particularly orphans. Sites in 37 districts (71% of districts) reported children defaulting on school attendance because parents and guardians failed to pay fees or levies. This was attributed to the harsh economic environment and to households not fully knowing or understanding how to access the BEAM programme. It was also reported in six districts that the AIDS Levy fund (WAAC and DAAC) was no longer supporting these payments. **In those areas where the AIDS Levy fund (DAAC) was supporting school fees, school access was reported to be better.**

No children are out of school because of the DAAC programme which is paying for orphans and the poor.

Shurugwi

Some parents failed to get school fees because they have raised from \$10 000 to \$50 000 per term.

Bikita

Community and social responses

Various strategies were reported to be employed by communities in April 2004 to meet their social and food needs, including;

- Working for other people and get food as payment (Manicaland, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, Midlands and Masvingo)
- Borrowing money from friends, relatives and moneylenders (Bulawayo, Harare, and Masvingo)
- Households contributing towards the purchase of a bag of maize or maize meal and sharing this (Manicaland, Mashonaland East, Cities)
- Households selling goods and livestock (Manicaland, Matebeleland North, Cities, Masvingo, Matebeleland South)
- Households carrying out fishing, moulding bricks for sale (Zvimba)

There was a significant fall in reporting of household asset sales, probably signaling the relief on household budgets of the harvest yields.

Economically they have improved due to the harvest.

Mutoko

Household asset sales were reported from fifteen districts (19% of districts) a significant fall from the 53% of districts where households were reported to be selling assets in March 2004. This decrease is probably attributable to harvest stocks alleviating food shortages in rural districts.

The strategy of borrowing however is reported to be indebting urban households, with assets reported to be used as collateral. In urban districts reports were made of households surrendering their goods such as televisions and radios to moneylenders as collateral security for loans taken to buy food and other needs.

These individual household actions have been primarily affected by the reduced stress on households due to harvest yields. For those households with good harvests this could be a sustained relief. For those with poor harvests the reported increase in prices could mean that when harvest food stocks run out they will again face significant economic pressures and increased poverty. The monitoring reports indicate the importance of food, public health services and education costs as areas where households prioritise expenditure, and thus where poverty reducing social expenditures may be needed.

Community strategies for supporting the poorest are reported to be disabled by household poverty. The sites report that most communities are struggling to survive and hence cannot afford to raise resources to assist the underprivileged amongst them. Care of the terminally ill is reportedly left to close relatives within households and families. Very few sites report locally organized home based care or other social schemes, although the church is reported to be an organizer of community support. **As household economic pressures have lifted marginally there is some report of increased community support, in community support for food and in Zunde raMambo schemes.**

There is a big change in people helping each other with food and also medicines in times of need.

Guruve

People are working very hard to develop their area even if things are hard.

Binga

The Chief launched the Zunde raMambo scheme and food committees have formed in each village.

Nyanga

However the majority of districts report that households are primarily using strategies to secure their own survival needs. Some sites noted the need for longer term social 'rehabilitation' activities.

'People need to be empowered. People need to be rehabilitated with projects'

Tsholotsho

Meetings are reported to be taking place between communities and their elected representatives in about half the districts. Sentinel sites reported meetings between the communities and members of parliament our councilors in 24 districts (46% of districts) in April, lower than the 71% reported in March 2004. The meetings were reported to cover school fee hikes, concerns over health services and public health, peace building, access to food deliveries and elections.

As noted earlier and in previous rounds of monitoring, reports indicate information gaps in how to access public assistance (eg BEAM, AIDS Levy Fund) particularly in the most vulnerable. Information on these and other social and economic issues is reported in April 2004 to come from the media (33% of districts), from traders and business people (29% of districts) and from meetings and friends (25% of districts). While media, commercial operators and local meetings are reported to be important vehicles for social information, 42% of districts did not report any source of information or reported that they relied on hearsay.

Summary

The April 2004 report is drawn from 145 monitoring reports from 52 districts from all provinces of Zimbabwe, with an average of 2.8 reports per district .

Food availability is reported to have improved substantially since March 2004. The most food insecure districts are reported to be in Masvingo, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South.

Improved food supplies are noted to be due to harvests, particularly from districts that received early and constant rains. Community reports warn in 15% of districts that harvest yields are not sufficient to sustain household food security.

An increasing share of households are reported to now be sourcing food from own production. Despite this, food stocks have not yet grown significantly, with 68% of households reported to have food stocks of a month or less.

The decline in GMB deliveries reported in March continued in April, with a drop in the in coverage, frequency and volume of deliveries per sentinel ward. Reported GMB prices did not change significantly in the month. The fall in GMB deliveries is reported to be compensated for by available food from harvests, with reports cautioning that this is a temporary situation.

Commercial supplies of basic food stuffs were reported to be significantly higher than the same time last year, but prices are now reported to be too high for many households to afford.

The price of maize meal appears to have fallen between March and April 2004. Even the cities report a decrease of about 25% on the parallel market maize meal price, possibly due to rural food sales in informal markets.

Relief activities, both government cash for work and non government and UN relief activities, are reported in less districts. falling from 48% districts in March 2004 to 29% in April 2004 for the cash for work programme, and from 91% districts in March to 62% in April for the UN and NGO relief activities.

As harvest supplies have taken the immediate pressure off food access for many, the major concern voiced in this round was on quality and cost of health care. This was particularly reported in terms of drug access and costs of care. Availability of antibiotics was reported in 58% of districts (62% in March) and of chloroquin in 69% of districts (74% reported in March 2004).

Fee levels for clinics are reported to vary widely, with an upper limit of \$45 000. Only half of the clinics are reported to have safe water in sites in Mashonaland West, Midlands and Masvingo. Reported fee levels for secondary schools ranged from \$200 to \$200 000, a 100 times difference between highest and lowest levels, with hest reported fees reported in Mashonaland Central.

Communities reported in 71% of districts that increases in schools fees and levies have led to some children of school going age defaulting on school attendance. In most districts this was reported to affect a small number of children and particularly orphans. In those areas where the AIDS Levy fund (DAAC) was supporting school fees, school access was reported to be better.

Various strategies were reported to be employed by communities in April 2004 to meet their social and food needs, primarily household strategies to seek informal work or trading or to borrow money. There was a significant fall in reporting of household asset sales, probably signaling the relief on household budgets of the harvest yields. The strategy of borrowing however is reported to be indebting urban households, with assets reported to be used as collateral.

While community strategies for supporting the poorest are generally reported to be disabled by household poverty, as household economic pressures have lifted marginally there is some report of increased community support for food and in Zunde raMambo schemes. Some sites noted the need now for longer term social 'rehabilitation' activities to be started , while economic pressures are a bit less.