

**RAPID HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY ASSESSMENT**

**Chihwiti and Gambuli Informal Settlements**

**Makonde District, Mashonaland West**

**Zimbabwe**

September 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>, 2001

*Save the Children (UK) and Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe*



*Report Date: October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Chihwiti and Gambuli are informal settlements located approximately 70km south-west of Chinhoyi, in Mashonaland West. Both settlements were first established in the early 1990s, and now house approximately 3,500-4,000 and 5,500-6,000 residents respectively. The majority of the settlers in Chihwiti originate from commercial farms, while the majority in Gambuli originate from communal areas.

Chihwiti is currently estimated to be receiving up to 100 new settlers per week; most of these new arrivals are former farm workers, displaced as a result of the current land reform programme. Gambuli is no longer accepting new arrivals as it is considered to have reached its holding capacity.

Both settlements have similar livelihood patterns, though residents in Gambuli are generally somewhat better off than those in Chihwiti. Households depend primarily on agriculture. Own food crops provide most of the families' food needs, while piecework on farms within the settlements and on nearby commercial farms provide an important source of food and income, particularly for poorer families.

Cash incomes come mainly from the sale of agricultural products, namely cotton, maize and vegetables, and from piecework. A variety of casual labouring activities also supplement incomes.

Combined food and cash incomes are such that all groups in both settlements can be considered food secure, and will continue to be so until the next harvest. The extent of such food security, however, varies quite widely, and the poor in Chihwiti are only marginally food secure with very limited capacity to cope with any shocks. Emergency interventions relating to food are not considered necessary at this time, however the provision of agricultural input credit would be very worthwhile.

The provision of basic services on both settlements, i.e. education, healthcare, and water and sanitation, is very inadequate and there is a need for interventions in these sectors.

Sources of vulnerability in the settlements are (1) the risk of further population influxes, (2) the status of those commercial farms which provide significant employment in the area, (3) inflation, (4) the unofficial status of the settlements and (5) the risk of crop failure.

### ***The main recommendations made are:***

- Moves already underway by the Government towards officially recognising these settlements are to be encouraged. More broadly, the Government should also give greater consideration to the issue of land tenure for commercial farm workers during the ongoing land reform programme in the country.
- Ongoing monitoring of population changes and of the status of nearby commercial farms should be carried out
- Support should be given to the agricultural sector in the settlements through input credit schemes and through the extension of the services of Agritex and the Department of Veterinary Services

## **Introduction**

In July 2001, the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe carried out a baseline assessment of two informal settlements in Makonde district, Mashonaland West (FCTZ: 2001b). Chihwiti and Gambuli had been reported to have received significant numbers of former commercial farm workers, said to have been displaced as a result of retrenchment and farm closures linked to the current land reform programme.

The questionnaire-based baseline survey provided detailed information on the population, children in difficult circumstances, education, water and sanitation, shelter and health services. Although some useful information was gathered regarding food production and income, FCTZ subsequently requested Save the Children's assistance in carrying out a household economy assessment to provide a richer understanding of livelihood patterns in the settlements, and of the current food security situation.

The objectives of the assessment, therefore, were as follows:

- To describe the conditions that the residents of Chihwiti and Gambuli are likely to face over the period up to April 2002 as they may affect household food and livelihood security.
- To recommend appropriate interventions related to food and livelihood security in the settlements, particularly in the short term

Readers are advised that this assessment report should be read in conjunction with the FCTZ Baseline Study for a broader understanding of issues relating to these settlements.

The rest of this report provides background information on the settlements, and the methodology used in the assessment. The main findings for each settlement are then provided separately, followed by an analysis of the vulnerability of the population in the settlements to various shocks. Conclusions are then presented with a commentary on their relation to wider aspects of the problem of displaced farm workers, and recommendations for action are made.

## **Background<sup>1</sup>**

Gambuli and Chihwiti informal settlements are located approximately 65 and 75kms south-west of Chinhoyi respectively along the road to Kenzamba. Both settlements are on state land, buffering communal and commercial farming areas. Although these settlements have attracted increased attention in recent months as information has been sought on the fate of commercial farm workers displaced due to the "Fast Track" land reform programme, a large majority of the residents of both settlements are *not* recent arrivals. As was indicated in FCTZ's baseline survey, most of the population in Gambuli originate from communal areas, while a large majority of the households in Chihwiti are former farm workers retrenched over course of the 1990s.

---

<sup>1</sup> For more detailed information on the background to these areas, readers are referred to the complementary Baseline Study (FCTZ: 2001b).

As the settlements have unofficial legal status they are accurately termed “informal settlements”. However they are very different to the well-known informal settlements in peri-urban Harare; in fact they more closely resemble communal areas than the peri-urban settlements. The very clear difference from communal areas, however, is the extremely limited provision of services in the settlements, as is clearly indicated in the baseline survey. There are very few boreholes in the area, with most families relying on unprotected water sources; there is one primary school at Kanyaga to which children from these settlements walk over 6km each day; and there are no clinics in the settlements – the nearest are in Kenzamba and Lion’s Den, each over 20km away.

On the positive side, Chihwiti and Gambuli are relatively well served by a recently re-graded gravel road to Chinhoyi, which provides good access to markets. The quality of the land is reasonable, with the settlements falling under Natural Region III, and crop production is therefore quite reliable.

### **Seasonal Calendar**

As livelihoods in Chihwiti and Gambuli mainly revolve around agricultural production, seasonal factors play a large part in food security. Broadly speaking, households begin consuming green maize, groundnuts and roundnuts (bambara nuts) starting from March, with the main maize harvest being reaped in April. The poorest households begin exhausting their grain harvests around July, with the best off harvesting enough to carry them through to the next harvest. The cotton harvest during the winter months (June-August) provides income either through cotton sales or through employment opportunities in picking. Employment in the form of seasonal piecework is vital for poorer households to meet their remaining food needs during the year. An important factor in the economy of this area is that draught-power is not very common, and therefore there are good piecework employment opportunities available during the land preparation period, in addition to the more common weeding and harvesting periods. For the poor, the most difficult months are considered to be around January and February, prior to the harvest when employment opportunities are scarce.

Activity	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Rains												
Lean/ Difficult Months												
Land Preparation												
Planting – Maize & Cotton												
Weeding Maize												
Weeding – Cotton												
Harvest – Maize												
Harvest – Cotton												
Peak Seasons for Piecework												
Sale of Vegetables												

## **Methodology**

For this assessment, a variant of Save the Children's "Household Economy Approach" (HEA) was used. This is a methodology for investigating the ways in which households get their income, their savings and asset-holdings, and their consumption of and expenditure on food and non-food items. In a normal HEA assessment, baseline information is gathered for each "Food Economy Zone"<sup>2</sup>, and then the impact of a shock on households' ability to meet their current and future food and non-food needs is determined.

As the present assessment was a rapid one and its purpose was to assess the need for emergency food security interventions within the next 6 months, this assessment focused simply on the current marketing year, from April 2001 to March 2002. Actual information was gathered on this year's harvest, employment opportunities so far this year, and current prices. Estimates of the availability of income-earning opportunities and expenditure patterns were made by the communities based on activities in previous years, viewed in the light of current circumstances.

Information was gathered through interviews with focus groups and key informants from both settlements. Community leaders and purposively sampled groups of households from different socio-economic or wealth groups were interviewed using semi-structured interviews and a variety of PRA tools. The number of groups interviewed (10) was smaller than would normally be used in HEA, but the information gathered during FCTZ's baseline assessment was important for cross-checking and verification of information provided. The judgement of the assessment team was also used in resolving some inconsistencies based on their knowledge of similar situations elsewhere in Zimbabwe at present.

Two teams comprising staff from Save the Children and FCTZ carried out this assessment between September 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The time available for interviews was further limited by the occurrence of a political rally in the area on one of the days, but otherwise there were no significant constraints in carrying out the assessment.

---

<sup>2</sup> A food economy zone is defined as "all the households in a geographical area where most households obtain their food and cash income by roughly the same combination of means" (Seaman et al., 2000: p38).

## 1. MAIN FINDINGS – CHIHWITI

### Background and Population

Unlike Gambuli, Chihwiti still has the capacity to accommodate new settlers, and the settlement has seen an increase in population in recent times. The first people came to Chihwiti in 1992, and were mainly retrenched mine workers and commercial farm workers. Numbers gradually increased in the first years of the settlement, and by the end of 1995 there were 476 households. An eviction order was served in December 1995 and the settlement was cleared. However people began returning again by early 1996. Another attempt was made to move people in 2000, but this was abandoned.

At present, community leaders in Chihwiti estimate that there are between 650-700 households in the settlement. FCTZ (2001b) found an average of 5.4 people per household, which would indicate a total population of 3,500 – 4,000. However, estimating the total population is difficult. There is a formal registration mechanism for new households, but while full households typically are registered, new individuals have also been arriving and staying with relatives who are existing settlers. Most of these individuals are not being registered. Extrapolating from estimates of new arrivals provided by four of the eight kraal heads in the settlement, it would seem that the population is currently increasing at a rate of 80-100 people per week.

As of July 2001, FCTZ estimated that 66% of the residents originated from commercial farms, 22% from communal areas, and the remaining 12% from mines, urban and other areas. New arrivals are mainly said to be commercial farm workers who have been retrenched as a result of the ongoing land reform programme. They typically arrive with some cash from retrenchment packages. They are able to avail of similar employment opportunities open to other settlers and either receive an allocation of land for cultivation themselves, or (in the case of individuals) help on the farms of relatives. Community leaders did not consider the new arrivals to constitute a separate wealth-group, as their livelihoods quickly become indistinguishable from the rest of the community. In addition, as existing settlers re-build their houses every few years, it is not possible to identify new settlers by their housing conditions.

### Wealth Ranking

Community leaders identified three broad wealth groups within Chihwiti, referred to as the poor (“*varombo*”), middle (“*varipakatinepakati*”) and better off (“*vafumi*”). The following table indicates the characteristics of each group:

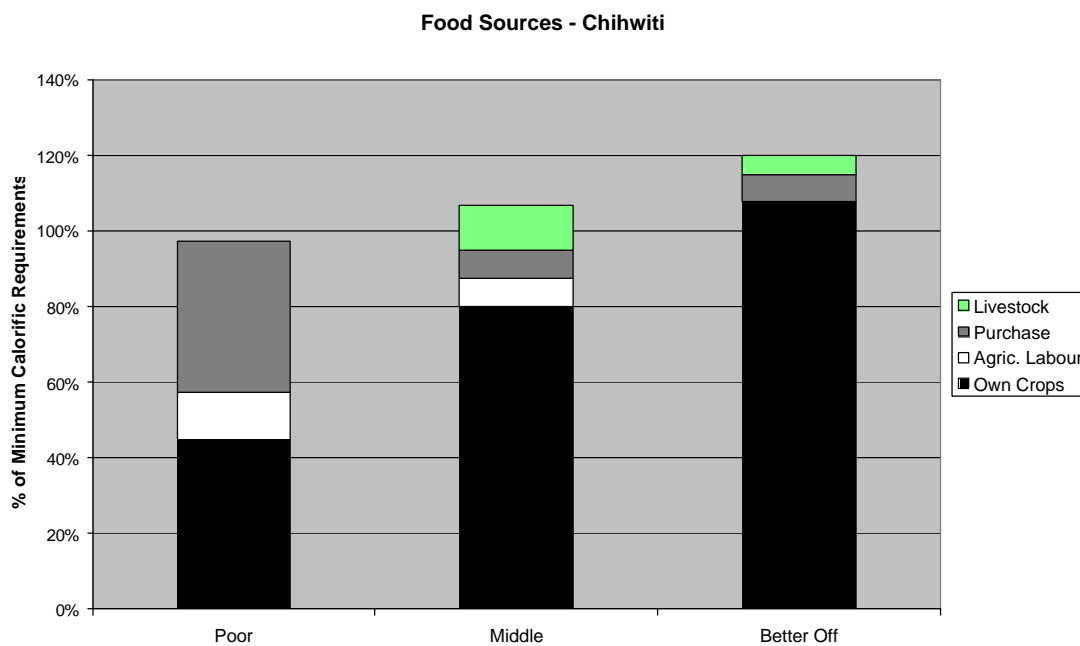
	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>Better Off</u>
<u>% of Total Population:</u>	70-80%	15-20%	5-10%
<u>Livestock Holdings:</u>			
Cattle	0	1-2	5-6
Goats	0	5-6	10
Donkeys	0	1-2	4
Chickens	<20	<10	<10
<u>Land Area Cultivated:</u>	3-4 acres	5-6 acres	Up to 10 acres

<i>Of which</i> Maize Cotton Other crops	2 – 2 ½ acres ½ - 1 acre ½ acre	2 ½ - 3 acres 2 acres ½ - 1 acre	4 acres 4 acres 2 acres
<u>Average harvest is exhausted by:</u>	July/ August (3-4 months)	March/ April (11-12 months)	Harvest carries over to next year
<u>Piecework:</u>	Do piecework for better off	Do piecework for better off; some hire draught power from better off	Employ poor and middle on farms; rent out draught power to some middle

Compared to many communal areas, Chihwiti’s wealth-ranking profile indicates low levels of livestock holdings. The explanation provided for this was that, because of the unofficial legal status of the settlement, residents are cautious about investing in livestock for fear of being evicted from the land again at some time in the future. This means that savings (for those in the middle and better off groups who can afford to save anything) are more likely to be in the form of cash rather than livestock. In the current inflationary environment, this could be problematic for those groups.

### Sources of Food

The chart below shows the percentages of minimum food requirements (based on 2,100 kcals per person per day) averaged out over the current year which are accessed through various sources.



In total, the middle and better off groups are expected to be able to access more than 100% of their minimum food needs this year. Some of the poor may have a minor

deficit, as they are predicted to be able to access between 85% and 110% of their minimum needs. The extent of the difference between the three groups in terms of diversity in the diet is less marked in Chihwiti than in other areas recently assessed<sup>3</sup>. Most of the difference in total calorific intake is accounted for by greater quantities of sweet potatoes, cooking oil and sugar in the diets of the middle and better off groups, while those groups also consume greater quantities of meat and fish.

### ***Own Crops***

There is quite a diverse range of food crops grown in Chihwiti. By far the most important in terms of food intake is maize. The middle and better off groups have reasonably good yields as they can afford to purchase certified seed, whereas the poor plant seed retained from the previous year's harvest. Production this year was reported to have been slightly below average, but no secondary data for these settlements is available from Agritex to verify that. The poor are the only group which does not sell any of its grain harvest. Their grain harvest tends to last only for 3-4 months, and they must therefore depend on income or labour exchange to access their remaining grain needs. The middle and the better off both sell significant amounts of grain.

In addition to maize, other important crops grown here are sorghum, sweet potatoes, groundnuts, roundnuts/ bambara nuts, pumpkin and various leafy vegetables.

### ***Agricultural Labour***

As is described in greater detail under sources of income, many people find casual employment either on nearby commercial farms or on local farms owned by the better off, doing piecework such as land clearing, weeding and harvesting or picking cotton. Payment for this labour can be given either in the form of food or in cash. If payment is made in food, depending on the task, it can take 4 – 6 man-days to earn 1 bucket (roughly 20kg) of maize grain. Generally, it is more common for people to be paid in food during the weeding period (which is after most poor households have exhausted their own stores of food), and in cash during the cotton picking period (which is soon after the maize harvest).

### ***Purchase***

For the middle and better off, purchased food only provides 5-10% of food needs. As is indicated under "Expenditure" below, a diverse basket of non-staple foods is purchased, including cooking oil, sugar, meat, kapenta (dried fish) and bread. For the poor, purchased food provides approximately 40% of food needs, and almost all of this is accounted for by maize grain. Only small amounts of cooking oil and sugar are also purchased, with meat and fish being rarely consumed.

### ***Livestock Products***

Animal products from own livestock account for a relatively small source of food for the middle and better off groups, and are insignificant for poor households. All groups occasionally consume a chicken, and the middle and better off slaughter a small number of goats on special occasions. Most of the calories from this source, however, come from milk obtained from cows during the rainy season. Milk is mainly given to children mixed into a porridge.

---

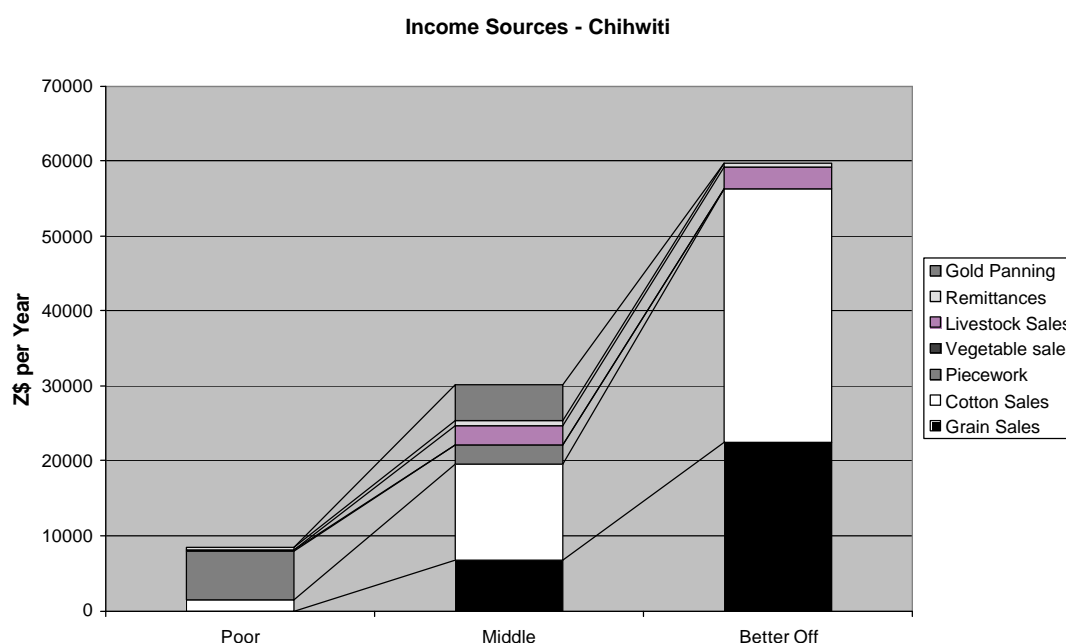
<sup>3</sup> Especially Mutorashanga, Binga and Nyaminyami (SC: 2001a, b, c) and Harare (FEWS Net: 2001)



## Sources of Income

Income levels vary widely between the three wealth groups in Chihwiti, and are mainly determined by the agricultural output of each group. The better off have the least diversified income base, being able to earn sufficient income predominantly from maize and cotton sales. The poor and middle engage in a wider range of activities.

As the current assessment was interested in the period up to the next maize harvest in April 2002, the 12 months from May 2001 were covered. Therefore actual income is recorded for grain, cotton and vegetable sales, while income levels for piecework, livestock sales, remittances and gold-panning combine actual income earned to date with predicted income for the rest of the period based on previous experience, as estimated by interviewees.



### *Grain Sales*

Households in the middle and better off wealth groups sell a portion of their maize harvest to earn cash for their other needs. Sales are made both to local private buyers (who claim to use the grain as payment for labourers they employ either on farms or in small-scale mining enterprises) and to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB).

### *Cotton Sales*

Cotton production is a very important source of income for the middle and better off groups, but is also significant for the poor. The latter cultivate a small area of cotton, and this year harvested on average just over one 200kg bale, while the better off harvested and sold an average of 7-8 bales. The middle and better off are also able to afford more fertilizer and chemicals, and therefore get better yields in addition to planting a larger area. Cotton is sold mainly to Cottco in Chinhoyi.

### ***Piecework***

Piecework (i.e. undertaking agricultural labour, with payment based on completion of a specific task such as weeding one line of maize, or clearing one acre of land) is by far the most important source of income for the poor, and therefore for the majority of the population. Piecework is available both locally, on the farms of the better off, and on nearby commercial farms. For local farms, the work is mainly in cotton picking, land clearing, and weeding of maize and cotton. Peaks occur during the weeding and cotton picking seasons, but employment is nonetheless available at most times of the year. One farm in Alaska (close to Chinhoyi) seems to provide most of the employment on the commercial farming side. Lorries come to Chihwiti to take casual workers to the farm every morning during the peak seasons, and employment is said to be readily available – anyone who wants to work is said to be able to get some employment.

### ***Vegetable Sales***

The poor group make some income from the sale of vegetables such as rape and tomatoes, however the quantities sold do not account for large amounts – less than 5% of the small total income for this group. Vegetable sales were not mentioned as significant for the middle or better off households.

### ***Livestock Sales***

As stocks of cattle and goats are quite limited in Chihwiti, livestock sales are not as significant a source of income as might be expected for a rural community such as this. The poor and middle make small amounts of money from the occasional sale of chickens, while the better off earn approximately 5% of their total income through the sale of a small number of goats and some chickens.

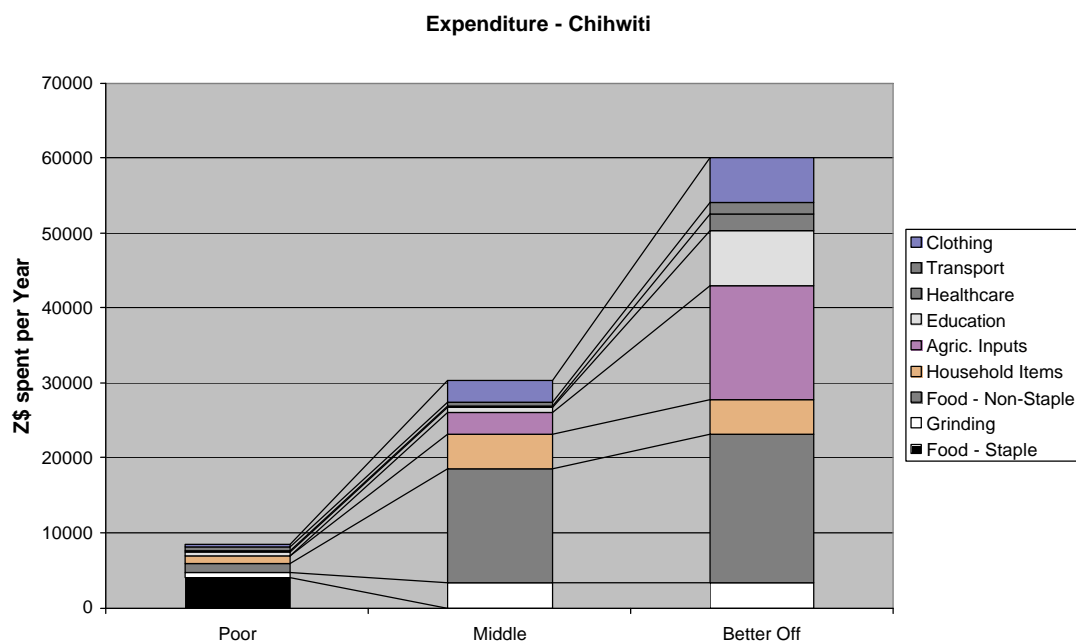
### ***Remittances***

A similar picture to other recently-assessed areas emerged in Chihwiti regarding remittances. Previously this would have been considered quite an important source of income for most families, in this case because most families still had relatives working elsewhere on commercial farms. However, due to the combination of widespread general economic hardship and particular problems in the commercial farming sector, amounts remitted are now small and infrequent and would amount only to several hundred dollars per year.

### ***Gold Panning***

Only the middle group reported engaging in gold panning in the many rivers in this mineral-rich area. Details on the activity were limited, but for the middle group it could account for 10-15% of total income.

## Expenditure



Some differences in expenditure patterns between the three wealth groups were quite evident from this assessment. Only the poor group purchase maize (the “Food – Staple” category in the graph above), as the other groups produce enough to meet their own needs. The poor spend just under 50% of their total income on maize grain, and when the costs of grinding and expenditure on non-staple foods (which include items such as cooking oil, sugar and salt) are added, all food-related expenditure uses up approximately 70% of this group’s total income. The rest of their income is spent on household items (such as soap and lotion), education, healthcare, transport and clothing. The amounts spent on each of these categories is very small. For education, poor households can typically only afford to send one child to the nearest primary school at Kanyaga. This is consistent with the finding in the FCTZ baseline survey that many children do not attend school because of a lack of funds (although the distance to the school is also a significant factor).

For the middle and better off groups, absolute expenditure on grinding, non-staple foods and household items is very similar. However, the better off use the balance of their much larger income mainly on agricultural inputs, education and clothing. For the better off, these agricultural inputs include certified maize and cotton seed, chemicals and equipment for cotton cultivation and cash for hiring labour. The middle also purchase certified seed, but in smaller amounts. Expenditure on education increases significantly for the better off households, as they typically can afford to send a child to secondary school.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS – GAMBULI

### Background and Population

The settlement was established by a Chief Manhenga of Manhenga Clan in the early 1990s with an initial 300 households settling in the area. Most of the settlers are said to have come from areas such as Hurungwe, Masvingo, Makonde and Gokwe areas. It was also recorded that other people came from the commercial farms and mining areas. Gambuli farm is comprised of 3 farms that belonged to a commercial farmer, and which was later acquired by the State. Later the state leased the farm to a Mr Machipias up until 1999 when he moved out. The local leaders noted that from 1992 up to the year 2000, the settlers suffered quite a number of evictions by the state as they were regarded as illegal occupiers. A number of settlers moved into the area taking advantage of the launch of the fast-track land resettlement programme, which commenced in July 2000. Part of this group were said to be former farm workers.

At the time of this assessment (September 2001) a total of 1,006 households were residing on the farm. From the study that was carried out by FCTZ (July 2001) 14.4% of the settlers are estimated to have originated from the commercial farms, while 77.4% originate from communal areas. The residents are now offering resistance to any other further incoming settlers arguing that the area has reached its capacity. New arrivals are said to find it easier to go to Chihwiti, which is about 10 kilometres away, since there are more ex-farm workers already resident there, and there is more land available. At the present moment, Gambuli settlement is divided into 10 villages each being led by a local leader and the village structures are their vehicles of development.

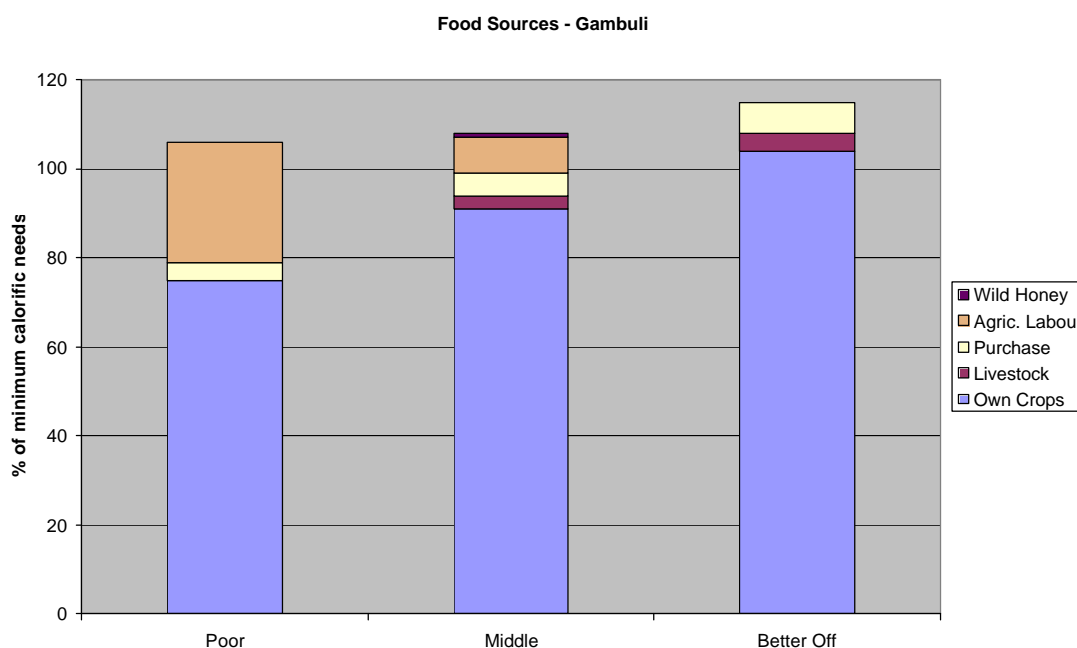
### Wealth Ranking

	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>Better-off</u>
<u>Proportion of Population</u>	45%	40%	15%
<u>Livestock Holdings</u>			
Cattle	0	1-2	>5
Donkeys	0	2	4
Goats/ Sheep	2	4-5	>10
Chickens/ poultry	4-5	5-20	>20
<u>Land under cultivation</u>	3-4 acres	5 acres	6-12 acres
<u>Average Harvest is Exhausted by</u>	August/ September (5 months) “Masunda chando”(Through winter)	December/ January (9-10 months) “Ruswa runyoro” (To the time of new grass)	12months+. They have surplus for sale and can also feed their livestock.
<u>Piecework</u>	Go for piecework twice a week	Only go when they have a problem.	They provide others with piecework

<u>Education for children</u>	Their children go as far as primary education. They do not have uniforms and food to take to school. Have problems in paying of school fees.	Their children generally complete primary school, but few attend secondary school consistently because of problems with school fees.	They can manage to send their children to school up to any level.
-------------------------------	--	--	---

### **Sources of Food**

Sources of food for Gambuli were found to be similar to those in Chihwiti. However, the shares from each source differ, with those in Gambuli realizing quite a lot of their food requirements from own crop production. The chart below represents the percentages of food requirements the different wealth groups get from every source:



As indicated in the chart above, all the three wealth groups access more than 100% of their minimum food requirements, and are therefore expected to be food secure at least until the next harvest.

### ***Own Food Crops***

All the wealth groups have access to a variety of crops with maize, sweet potatoes, groundnuts and pumpkins contributing quite significantly to their minimum food requirements. The better-off group is managing to get more than 100% of food requirements from own crop production. It was also noted that the better-off group managed to produce enough maize grain to last their families for the whole year with a surplus either for sale or for payment of agricultural labour. The poor and the middle groups get nearly 80% and 96% of their minimum food requirements from own crops respectively.

Despite the fact of tenure insecurity, the present agricultural practices indicate that, given the opportunity, the area has potential for very good yields. The yields that were reflected during the assessment for the different wealth groups reveal that they are getting reasonable amounts in the face of tenure uncertainties. The poor group, without any draught power and only cultivating between one and two acres of maize (out of a total area under cultivation of up to 4 acres) are able to harvest enough to last them through winter (May to August), referred to as “masunda chando”. The middle group’s harvest lasts for 9-10 months which takes them through to the period of “new grass” or “ruswa runyoro” (December and January).

### ***Piecework/Agricultural Labour***

After exhaustion of their harvests in August, the poor manage to find piecework that enables them to earn grain and income to feed their households until the next harvest. Since the settlers are still opening up new lands for cultivation, a lot of agricultural-related piecework is earning both the poor and the middle groups enough grain to meet their minimum food requirements. The seasonal calendar indicates the types of piecework and the periods such activities are undertaken.

### ***Purchase***

The contribution of purchase to the total minimum food requirements for all the groups is relatively low when compared to the other sources of food. Cooking oil and sugar are the only significant foods they purchase with quantities increasing from the poor to the better-off groups. Food crops such as sweet potatoes and pumpkins substitute for bread and other foods that people normally buy for breakfast and lunch.

### ***Livestock products***

Livestock contribute to the food requirements of the middle and better off groups only. This contribution is also relatively low since some settlers are still building their stocks, while others have left livestock in the communal areas from which they originated. The rate of slaughtering is very similar to that of Chihwiti where only small livestock such as chickens and goats are slaughtered on special occasions.

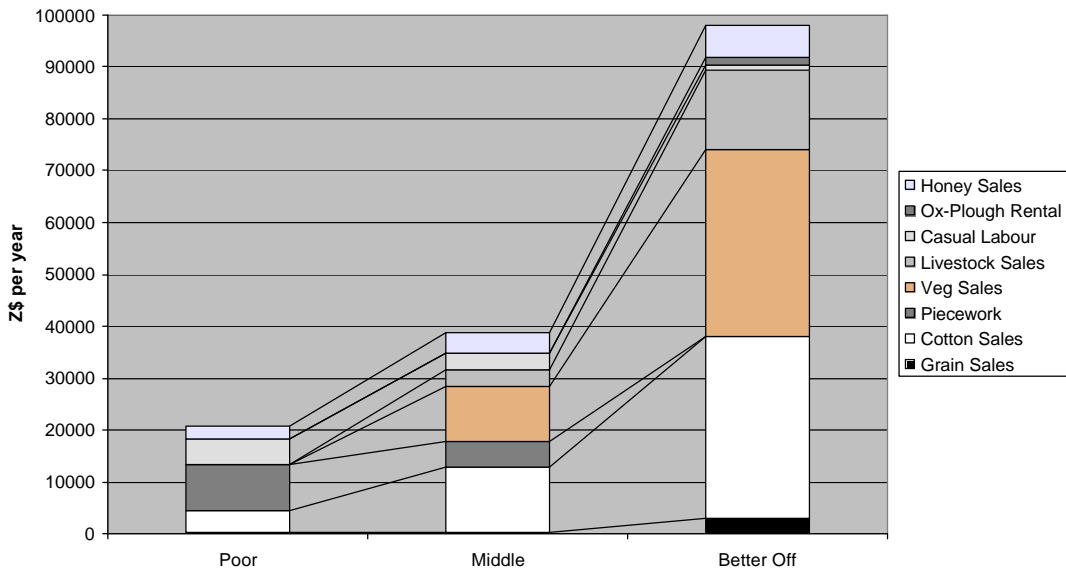
### ***Wild Honey***

The collection of wild honey takes place in two periods, from November to January and from March to July. Honey is both consumed and sold, and the quantities consumed provide a small contribution (1-2%) to total food needs.

## **Sources of Income**

The chart below indicates the contribution in annual monetary terms, of each source of income to the households of different wealth groups.

**Income Sources - Gambuli**



Comparing Chihwiti and Gambuli, it can be seen that each of Gambuli’s wealth groups is somewhat better off than their counterparts in Chihwiti. (Gambuli’s “poor” earn more than Chihwiti’s poor group, but less than their middle, etc.) There are some differences in income sources between the two settlements. For example, gold panning and remittances were significant in Chihwiti, while wild honey sales were a significant source of income in Gambuli. Cotton sales were also seen to be important as a source of income for the two settlements.

***Grain Sales***

Only the better-off group can afford to sell surplus grain but the contribution is relatively low (below Z\$3,000 per season) when compared to other sources such as cotton and livestock sales. The better-off group indicated that they stock surplus grain to pay for agricultural labour rather than for sale. The poor and middle groups do not earn any income from grain sales as they do not harvest any surplus.

***Cotton sales***

All the three groups have significant income from cotton sales. The poor manage to harvest and sell some cotton although they indicated that they could not afford to buy chemicals for their cotton, hence their low yields. They can manage to harvest up to a bale (200kg). Due to absence of inputs, the grade of the cotton which they harvest is the lowest, earning Z\$4,000 per bale this year. The better off group is earning a relatively fair income from their cotton sales despite the small acreage that they cultivate. Their cotton enters the highest paying grade (earning at least Z\$7,000 per bale). There is good potential for cotton production in this area, only that many are not able to afford the inputs necessary to maximise yields.

***Piecework/Agricultural Labour***

Piecework or agricultural labour is a significant source of both food and cash income for the poor and some households in the middle group. However the latter tend to have limited time to go for piecework since they spend most of the time in their own

fields. The poor quickly opt for piecework due to limited harvests they produce themselves, which lasts not more than 4 months. The poor group indicated that during the months soon after harvesting, they would rather work for cash than for food since they would be eating their own crops. Then later when they finish their harvest, they start working for food. Cotton-picking and non-agricultural piecework such as grass cutting and building activities are normally paid in cash.

### ***Vegetable Sales***

The better off and the middle groups indicated that they were earning quite a significant amount from vegetable sales. They sell tomatoes and green leafy vegetables within the area and also to the traders from nearby Chinhoyi town. However, they raised the issue that their gardens suffer from the problem of water shortage since most of the boreholes in the area have been vandalized.

### ***Casual Labour***

This category comprises a diverse range of activities, which individually may not employ large numbers of people, but which when combined provide just below 25% and 10% of total income for the poor and middle groups respectively. Among the activities included here are brick-making, construction of huts, cutting of grass and collecting/ selling firewood and water.

### ***Ox-Plough Rental***

Some families within the better off group rent out the use of their ox-ploughs to those in the middle group who cannot afford their own draught power.

### ***Honey Sales***

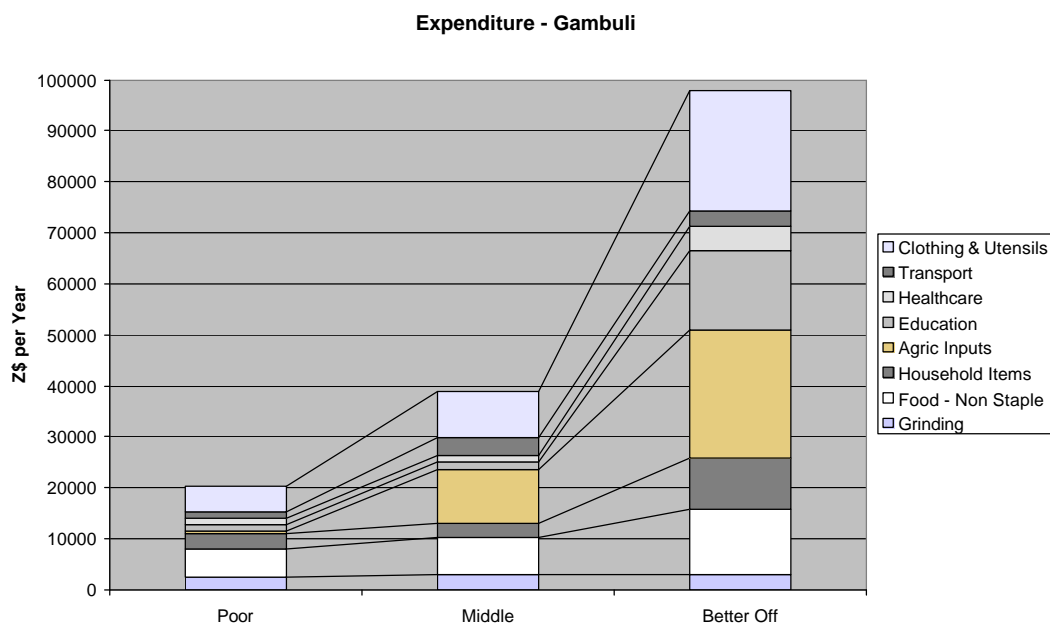
Wild honey provides income for many households across the three wealth groups. The honey is sold to a trader who comes to the area. Income from honey sales ranged from Z\$4,000 to Z\$6,000 per household per year with the amount depending on the ability to grade the honey into correct grades before selling.

### ***Livestock Sales***

Although the settlers of Gambuli are still building their livestock holdings, they also sell small livestock like chicken and goats, and sometimes sell cattle in order to cover expenses such as school fees. Livestock sales are only significant in the middle and better-off groups.



## Expenditure



The patterns of expenditure shown above for the three wealth groups shown above show clearly how, as more income is earned, expenditure on the most basic needs changes little, but expenditure on productive inputs and non-essential goods increases markedly. A similar amount is spent by all groups on the grinding of maize, as total amounts of the staple food consumed by households changes little as income rises. Spending on maize or maize meal is typically zero in Gambuli, as most families either are self-sufficient or access additional maize through labour exchange.

Spending on non-staple foods changes almost in proportion to changes in income. For the poor, such spending covers small amounts of items like cooking oil, sugar, tea, meat, fish and bread or wheat flour. This contrasts with Chihwiti, where the poor's limited income does not even allow them to purchase any of some of these items. As income rises in Gambuli the quantities of such items purchased tends to increase, and additional "luxury" items such as rice are added. A similar pattern exists for spending on clothing and utensils and on household items (such as soap, lotion, and paraffin).

Expenditure on transport and healthcare differs little between the three groups. Most of the spending on health in fact relates to transport to the nearest clinics, over 20km away, rather than on drugs or consultation fees. The siting of a clinic closer to these settlements, therefore, would not only improve healthcare provision but would also save money and time for the settlers.

There are very significant differences between the groups in relation to spending on education and agricultural inputs, however. The big jump in spending on education between the middle and better off occurs because typically only the better off send their children to secondary school, where costs are much greater (fees, uniforms, and transport or boarding expenses, as the nearest secondary school is at Kenzamba, approximately 20km away).

As income rises, there is also greater investment in agricultural inputs. Whereas the poor are limited to purchasing basic hand tools, the middle purchase certified seed and some fertilisers/ chemicals, while the rich purchase draught power and hire labour in addition to purchasing improved inputs for cotton and food production.

### **3. COPING MECHANISMS**

This issue of coping mechanisms was not covered in great depth during this assessment. However, from an analysis of the household economies in the settlements, it is possible to suggest that the following strategies could be undertaken in times of stress:

#### ***Reducing expenditure***

Although expenditure levels are not very high, all groups except the poor in Chihwiti could probably cut back in some areas of spending temporarily without incurring lasting harm to their welfare or productivity. For example, clothing and utensils could be purchased less often, maize grain could be pounded rather than ground (though this would have greatly increase the burden of labour on women and children), and cutbacks could be made in the purchase of relatively expensive foodstuffs such as cooking oil and sugar. The poor in Gambuli, for example, could purchase up to 6 months' worth of maize by making such cutbacks. While none of these cutbacks are desirable, they would be feasible if necessary.

#### ***Increased livestock sales***

This option is possible for the middle and better off groups. However, as livestock numbers are limited in the two settlements this strategy would not yield large quantities of income.

#### ***Increased casual employment***

This would not appear to be a widespread option, particularly in Gambuli where piecework opportunities are already limited. It may be an option for the poor in Chihwiti, but given the types of shock that the community is vulnerable to (particularly population influxes, closure of commercial farms and crop failure), employment opportunities are in fact more likely to decrease in difficult times.

### **4. VULNERABILITY**

Five main sources of vulnerability exist for families in these settlements. The first two apply to the short term (within the next six months), the third and fourth are ongoing threats, and the last applies to medium-term livelihood security.

#### ***1. Population influx***

Chihwiti continues to receive sizeable numbers of new settlers every week. At some point the carrying capacity of the land will be exhausted, and the ability of existing settlers to support individual newcomers (usually relatives) will also be exhausted. The experience in Gambuli would suggest that newcomers will simply be refused permission to settle if that capacity is reached. However it is difficult to control the

entry of individuals when they join existing households, therefore there is still some threat to livelihoods from an increased population.

### ***2. Reduction in employment on commercial farms***

Two commercial farms in the vicinity of Chihwiti and Gambuli provide a vital source of income for large numbers of residents of those settlements, predominantly from the poorer sections of the communities. Production on those farms does not appear to have been affected to date by the ongoing land reform process. However, should those farms be designated, occupied or resettled, employment opportunities for casual workers will be one of the first affected areas (as was shown in FCTZ 2001a).

### ***3. Inflation***

Prices of foodstuffs, non-food items and agricultural inputs continue to rise rapidly in this area, as in the rest of the country. As is indicated above, most families have some capacity to reduce expenditure or, conversely, to cope with some level of inflation with existing income. The poor in Chihwiti – who are the most cash-poor – rely more on payment-in-kind in the form of maize for piecework, and therefore are partially insulated from the effects of price rises. Hence, on its own, inflation is unlikely to cause too much hardship, but would exacerbate the effects of other shocks.

### ***4. The unofficial status of the settlements***

Efforts have been made by the authorities to close these settlements and evict residents on a number of occasions over the last 10 years. Given the importance of the output of their land, the impact of such eviction on all residents' livelihoods would be extremely serious. Around the time of this assessment, however, the government did indicate that moves would be made to make the status of the settlements official.

### ***5. Crop failure***

Agriculture is hugely important to Chihwiti and Gambuli both as a source of food and of income. Crop failure, for example due to drought or excessive rain, therefore, could potentially be extremely damaging to these communities.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

The assessment findings suggest that food security is not currently a high priority area for intervention in either Chihwiti or Gambuli. In the short-term, all wealth groups are predicted to be able to meet their minimum food needs, mainly as a result of reasonably good food and cash crop harvests earlier in the year, and the availability of employment opportunities in the form of piecework within the settlements and on nearby commercial farms. Some households in Chihwiti may fall slightly short of their food needs, but there does not appear to be a justification for food aid.

Although there appears to be capacity in Chihwiti (though not Gambuli) to absorb more settlers, it will be important to continue to monitor population changes in the settlements. Very soon, further new arrivals will be too late to cultivate this year and they could place a heavy burden on support from relatives and others already in the settlements. New arrivals may be able to find employment on farms in the area, but already in Gambuli the amount of piecework available is becoming limited. The status

of the commercial farms where people from these settlements currently get occasional employment must also be monitored. The closure of these farms would have an extremely detrimental impact on the livelihoods of the poor in Chihwiti and Gambuli.

Both settlements appear to have very good potential for further agricultural development, however, and the situation of households in the poor wealth group in particular could be enhanced through medium- and longer-term support. The land appears to be quite productive, and all households have access to at least 3 acres. Input credit schemes, for example, would probably be viable and very beneficial in these settlements. However until the status of these communities is formalized, there will probably be a reluctance for private companies to extend existing schemes to these areas.

Although food may not be a significant problem at present, it is stressed that the level of provision of basic services such as water and sanitation, healthcare and education in the settlements is extremely poor, and there are great needs in these sectors. Improvements in the health status in particular of these communities could have very positive knock-on effects for food security in terms of improved productivity.

### **Wider Applicability of Conclusions and a Note on Targeting**

It should be stressed that although the situation in these settlements does not appear to warrant emergency food aid or relief interventions at this time, this should not be considered necessarily to have wider applicability in relation to displaced farm workers. The circumstances and nature of displacement will vary from area to area, and will clearly have different implications for livelihoods. The ability of workers to move with their assets or savings, the timing of their displacement, the existence of relatives elsewhere with whom they can stay, the availability of land and employment opportunities in the area to which they have moved, and their access to agricultural inputs will all have a bearing on their capacity to re-start their lives.

If anything, the situation described here may turn out to have a greater resemblance to the situation of new settlers on acquired or occupied commercial farms rather than that of displaced farm workers.

One practical point regarding interventions that should also be highlighted is that it would be extremely difficult, and arguably unwarranted, to attempt only to target the recently displaced in a context such as this. The difficulty would arise partly because new arrivals are often absorbed into existing families, and also because they do not seem to be particularly worse off than existing residents. This point may have a wider applicability regarding former farm workers, as it increasingly appears that they are being absorbed into existing settlements, rather than creating new settlements as was originally feared would occur.

## **Recommendations**<sup>4</sup>

- Positive steps recently taken by the Government towards the formalisation of the status of Chihwiti and Gambuli should be encouraged
- More broadly, the Government needs to give greater consideration to the issue of land tenure for commercial farm workers within a broader programme of land reform and rural development in Zimbabwe
- Ongoing monitoring should be carried out of population changes in the settlements and of the status of the commercial farms which provide seasonal employment to large numbers of residents.
- Agritex and the Department of Veterinary Services should extend their services to these settlements to provide the necessary support for agricultural development.
- FCTZ should engage with private companies currently operating agricultural input credit schemes in other areas to examine means of extending those schemes to Chihwiti and Gambuli, or should establish such a scheme itself.

---

<sup>4</sup> For recommendations relating to health, water and sanitation and education, please see the Baseline Study.

## **6. ASSESSMENT TEAMS**

<b><u>Chihwiti</u></b>	<b><u>Gambuli</u></b>
Michael O'Donnell (SC) Moffat Mutale (SC) Jack Kutadzaushe (FCTZ) Godfrey Tanyanyiwa (FCTZ)	Mary Khozombah (SC) Crispen Rukasha (FCTZ) Martha Bvunzawabaya (FCTZ) Alfred Dongo (FCTZ)

## **7. REFERENCES**

FCTZ, 2001a: *The Impact of Land Reform on the Livelihoods of Commercial Farm Workers*, Harare: FCTZ

FCTZ, 2001b (forthcoming): *Baseline Study for Chihwiti and Gambuli Informal Settlements in Mashonaland West Province*, Harare: FCTZ

FEWS Net, 2001: *Harare Urban Vulnerability Assessment*, Harare: FEWS Net

Save the Children UK, 2001a: *Household Economy Assessment: Mutorashanga Informal Mining Communities, Mashonaland West*, Harare: SC UK

Save the Children UK, 2001b: *Household Economy Assessment: Binga District, Matabeleland North*, Harare: SC UK

Save the Children UK, 2001c: *Household Economy Assessment & Training: Kariba District, Mashonaland West*, Harare: SC UK