

CIVIC MONITORING PROGRAMME
integrating the
FOSENET Food Security monitoring



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

December 2003/ January 2004

For the executive summary please go to page 11

This report is the first of a broader monitoring of food security and social welfare at community level by the Civic Monitoring Programme. Monthly monitoring will be complemented by quarterly monitoring of specific areas of social welfare. The first quarterly report will be on health and education. Proposals for health and education issues to monitor are welcomed and should be sent by March 15 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 fourteenth round of NGO and community based monitoring nationally covers the months December 2003 to January 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 December 2003 / January 2004 report is drawn from **141 monitoring reports** from **53 districts** from all provinces of Zimbabwe, with an average of **2.7 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

More than three quarters of the districts report a worsening food situation, an increase of 10% in the districts compared to November 2003 .



'Yes – those who went to the farms come back to source food aid in the villages. People are no longer affording the high cost of basic needs. The poor are becoming poorer. Stealing has become rampant'.

Zaka

Only 6 districts (11%) reported any improvement in food supplies, this was a slight increase from the 9% reported in November 2003. The increase in food supplies is reportedly attributable to relief supplies and in one district (Insiza) is due to some food coming from irrigation schemes. Over three quarters 79% of the districts report a worsening food situation compared to 68% in November 2003 and 75% in October 2003.

Table 1: Districts with sites with worsening food situations, January 2004

Province	District
Manicaland	Chipinga, Mutare rural, Makoni, Rusape
Mashonaland East	Hwedza, Mudzi, Murehwa, UMP, Marondera rural, Marondera urban, Mutoko
Mashonaland Central	Bindura, Mazoe, Guruve, Centenary, Mvurwi, Rushinga
Mashonaland West	Chegutu rural, Chegutu urban, Kadoma urban, Kariba urban, Kariba rural, Karoi, Makonde, Hurungwe, Mhondoro, Zvimba
Midlands	Gokwe, Kwekwe rural, Zvishavane, Mberengwa, Kwekwe urban, Gweru rural
Masvingo	Bikita, Chiredzi, Masvingo, Chivi, Zaka
Matabeleland North*	Binga
Matabeleland South	Gwanda
Cities	Harare, Chitungwiza, Bulawayo

* one district reported

The pattern of vulnerability to food insecurity has remained constant: People living with aids, displaced farm workers, orphans and the unemployed are commonly reported as the most vulnerable groups. More areas are reporting that people with AIDS and TB are vulnerable to food insecurity. In this round greater report has been made of AIDS mortality in communities than in previous rounds.

'People in the area are dying due to illness and other causes leaving orphans to old aged people who cannot afford to pay their school fees and fend for them. I can foresee in the next two months the situation worsening.'

Mutoko

Production of food in the current growing season is an important input to future food security. This is a major period for agricultural activity. Access to key inputs such as seed, fertilizer, water and land are vital for improved production. There is anecdotal evidence of unreliable rains in areas of Matabeleland and Manicaland.

'Due to shortage of rainfall, not much has been in the fields on crop production.'

Binga

'Most of the crops grown this season have already wilted.'

Buhera

Fertilizer availability has improved, with more than 45% of districts reporting fertilizer available on the local market compared to a third in November 2003. Seed availability has also improved, with half (54%) of districts noting seed to be available on local markets, compared to a quarter (28%) in November 2003.

Some increase in availability is reported to be due to a decrease in demand as the planting is over in most districts.

Improved supplies are however counteracted by increased costs. Prices of fertilizer have increased by 27% since November 2003, although median seed prices have remained relatively constant in the same period. This may reflect falling demand for seed after planting but continued demand for fertilizer.

Figure 1 and Table 3 show the steady increases in fertilizer and maize seed prices since August 2003.

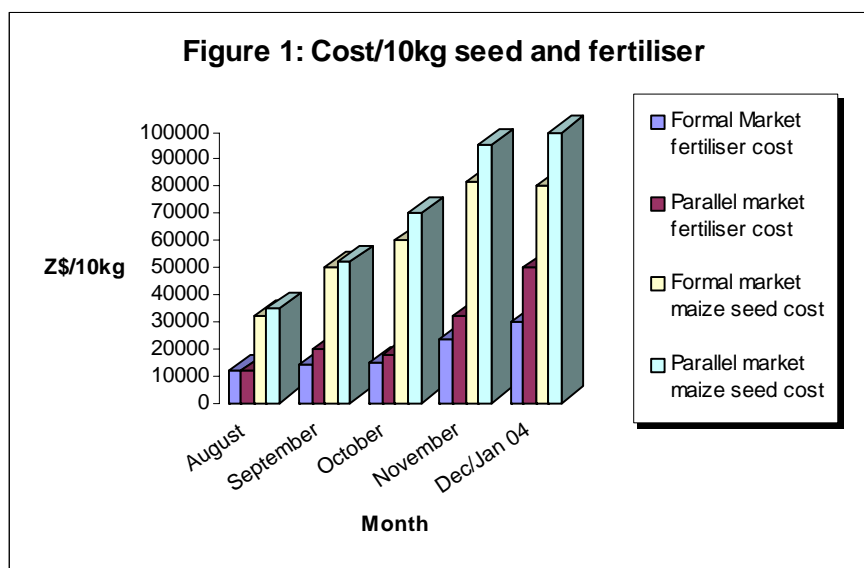


Table 3: Reported prices of maize seed and fertilizer, August 03 to January 04

Month	Fertiliser Cost Z\$/10kg		Maize seed Cost Z\$/10/kg	
	Formal market	Parallel Market	Formal market	Parallel Market
Price range August	2400-12000	6000- 12000	9000 - 32000	12000- 35000
Price range September	4600 -14000	5000- 20000	20000- 50000	20000- 52000
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

Maize is being sold at higher prices of which very few people are able to buy.

Gweru

Community reports indicate that 50% of households in districts do not have any food stocks and less than 40% have stocks to last them just one month.

Chikomba is facing food shortages, had it not been for the NGO, people could have starved to death. The MP is helpless. He has not been seen.

Chikomba

Given low food stores and the fact that harvests are not yet due for several months, households are still relatively dependent on foods available from the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and from the commercial market.

Commercial supplies of food have improved markedly in January 2004 compared to January 2003. Cost rather than supply is now a more important limiting factor in food access. (see Table 8 below)

Table 8 : Reported market availability of foods, January 03 and January 04

% of districts reporting food present	Maize meal		Oil	
	Jan 04	Jan 03	Jan 04	Jan 03
Manicaland	83	0	83	66
Mashonaland East	80	n.a	90	n.a
Mashonaland Central	57	n.a	57	n.a
Mashonaland West	73	n.a	83	n.a
Masvingo	60	38	80	75
Midlands	n.a	50	n.a	25
Matabeleland North	n.a	0	n.a	0
Matabeleland South	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a

Maize meal is found primarily in informal markets with prices in January 2004 approximately ten times higher than a year ago (January 2003).

(See Table 9)

Table 9: Upper prices of maize meal in parallel markets, Jan 03 -Jan 04

Province	Upper prices of Maize meal in parallel Markets Z\$/10kg			
	Jan 2004	Nov 2003	Oct 2003	Jan 2003
Manicaland	20000	15000	15000	2000
Mashonaland East	25000	12000	15250	2250
Mashonaland central	20000	20000	17000	2000
Mashonaland West	22500	16000	14000	2500
Midlands	17500	12500	16000	3000
Masvingo	15000	10000	12000	2500
Matebeleland North	n.a	10000	8000	3000
Matebeleland South	n.a	15000	14000	n.a
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	25000	15000	15000	3000

n.a = not available

The average price of maize meal has risen by over 44 % since November 2003, with 10kg maize meal being sold for up to Z\$16000 and Z\$25000 on the formal and parallel market respectively.

Half of the districts reported 50% or more of households unable to afford current maize meal prices.

Sixteen districts (30%) reported that 50 –70% of households can not afford maize meal prices, while a further eleven districts (21%) reported that more than 75% of the households in the district can not afford commercial maize meal prices.

People have foregone most basic needs and just doing with little or nothing at all. Basic foods are expensive these days and some families are now having one meal a day so as to try and manage the current situation.

Harare

Those who cannot afford these prices are reported to be seeking work on farms where they are paid in food or to be resorting to gold panning.

People are working in the farms where they are paid with mealie-meal and potatoes.

Goromonzi

Districts reporting people working for food are: Rusape, Chikomba, Goromonzi, Mudzi, UMP, Hwedza, Bindura Rural, Centenary, Mazowe, Chegutu, Gokwe, Masvingo rural.

Some households have taken advantage of the rains to increase supplies of vegetables.

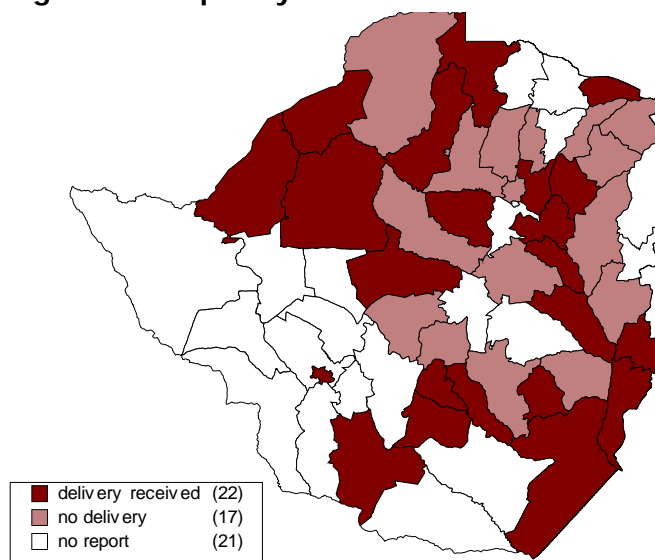
'People seem to be having enough now as things/basic commodities are available. Things have eased a bit since they now eat garden pumpkins and wild relish'

Hurungwe

GMB deliveries were reported to have improved in January 2004 in terms of both frequency and volume of delivery. (See Figure 2)

Twenty two districts (42%) reported GMB deliveries, with an average of 0.43 deliveries per sentinel ward compared to the 0.15 deliveries per ward reported in November. A volume of 5.5 tonnes on average per ward was reported, quite a substantial increase from the 1.2 tonnes reported in November 2003.

Figure 2: Frequency of GMB Deliveries January 2004



The major reported problems relating to the GMB thus concern issues of access, with continued complaints of problems and bias in access, including political bias:

Each time you go to GMB you will be told that maize is not available so you have to use politicians or government employees.

Gokwe

People are forced to buy party cards and attend party meetings for one to access food from GMB.

Chiredzi

Funds collected to buy maize from the GMB have not been refunded up to now. People are still crying for their money.

Bulawayo

Seeking a letter from the ward councilor (for food) is a process, which is affecting those who are not members of Zanu pf, and the process also is time consuming.

Shurugwi

Political party interference with GMB maize grain sales were widely reported to be resurfacing, with Mashonaland East accounting for the highest cases. The districts that noted such interference in GMB distribution were: Chikomba, Marondera rural and urban, Mudzi, Hwedza, Bindura rural, Guruve, Mazowe, Chegutu urban, Norton, Zvimba, Bikita, Chiredzi and Chivi.

GMB Grain prices are also reported to have risen markedly in the period, with reported increases of 66- 120% across all provinces. Prices of up to \$6000/10kg were reported. (See Table 7). **Food shortages and rising input costs and food prices have led to persistent dependency on food aid, despite improved availability of market supplies .**

People in town still need food relief because the GMB is not assisting and food coming from rural areas is very expensive.

Kwekwe

Table 7 : Reported costs of GMB maize, Z\$/10kg

Province	Price range in Z\$/10kg		
	January 2004	November 03	October 03
Manicaland	1600 – 5000	2600 – 3000	210 - 2600
Mashonaland East	1592 - 6000	3000	1700 - 3000
Mashonaland central	1500 -4900	2600	2200 - 3000
Mashonaland West	1600 – 5333	300 - 2200	300 - 2600
Midlands	1400 - 4200	1600 – 2400	320 - 3000
Masvingo	2000 – 4200	1900	800 - 3000
Matabeleland North	1500	160 - 2000	138
Matabeleland South	1600	140 - 1200	1200
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	4400	1900 – 2600	216 - 2600

Humanitarian Relief

Relief was reported to be present in thirty four districts (64% of districts). Urban areas now report relief activities, although to a lesser extent and only covering school children, the elderly, and TB and AIDS patients.

Districts reporting relief activities were (See Figure 3 below):

Manicaland: Buhera, Chimanimani, Makoni, Mutare rural, Rusape
Mashonaland East: Chikomba, Goromonzi, Marondera urban, Marondera rural, Mudzi, UMP, Wedza
Mashonaland Central: Bindura, Centenary, Mazowe, Mvurwi
Mashonaland West: Chegutu urban, Chinhoyi, Hurungwe, Kariba rural, Kariba urban, Karoi, Mhondoro, zvimba
Midlands: Gokwe, Gweru rural, Gweru urban, Kwekwe urban, Mberengwa, Zvishavane , Shurugwi.
Masvingo: Bikita, Chiredzi, Chivi, Masvingo, Zaka
Matabeleland North: Binga
Matabeleland South: Gwanda, Insiza

The relief map in Figure 3 indicates gaps in relief provision in some of the more food insecure areas in Matabeleland. Where relief is provided there were some reported problems linked to the distribution process. (see Table 10 below).

Barriers to relief include deserving beneficiaries left off lists due to marginalisation or reported political bias, transport and access problems for ill and vulnerable groups, lack of clear information on relief programmes, and shortages in overall supplies.

Figure 3: Districts reporting relief activities

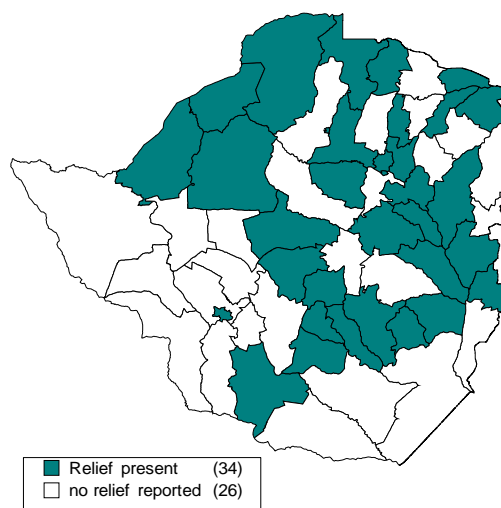


Table 10: Reported problems in accessing relief food in districts, January 2004

District	Issues reported
Makoni, Mutare rural	Villagers tend to disadvantage the intended beneficiaries by not registering them. There sometimes transport problems to ferry the food from the distribution points.
Chikomba, Goromonzi, Marondera urban, Marondera rural, Ruwa, Hwedza	The registration process is unfair, programme was stopped and people are suffering. TB and AIDS patients find it difficult to get to the distribution points which are far away. Suspected opposition supporters being left out of the beneficiary list. Queues being controlled by national service youths and war vets.
Bindura, Guruve	Suspected opposition supporters as a way of punishment.
Kariba urban, Karoyi, Hurungwe	Insufficient supplies, opposition supporters excluded from the list.
Gokwe, Zvishavane	Shortage of relief food. Supplies have been reduced
Zaka, Bikita, Masvingo, Chivi	Corruption and nepotism occurring in the process, suspected opposition supporters left out of list by village committees. Politically powerful people accessing the food first.
Binga	Some NGOs stopped bringing in food
Harare	TB patients programme not well publicized.

There were no supplies, and the organizations were threatened in the eastern area by the youth.

Hurungwe

Community monitors noted in January that people were coming from resettlement areas to access relief food in their former communal areas, reported in Chikomba, Goromonzi, Marondera rural, Murehwa, Mazowe, Makonde, and Zaka.

The government cash for work programme has remained relatively constant in its coverage of about half of districts (49%), but also in the persistence in reported problems of exclusion of selected community members, particularly opposition supporters. The districts where political interference with the programme were reported are: Mutare rural, Rusape, Chikomba, Marondera urban, Marondera rural, Hwedza, Chegutu, Chinhoyi, Makonde, Bikita, Chivi and Zaka. The programme is also reported to have stopped in some districts due to lack of money to pay those working.

Mobility

Households are moving to a limited extent, either to secure food or resources or away from lost homes and jobs on farms, inadequate resources or high costs of living.

Migration in and out of districts is reported to be taking place in 36% of the districts. This level of reported migration is lower than that reported in October 2003 (53% districts) and November 2003 (47% districts).

The monitors report that many people in rural areas were in December / January occupied with planting for food, limiting movement.

The major reasons given for the movement of people are of former farmworkers moving into rural and urban areas to seek refuge, or find areas to settle. There is some report of people leaving rural areas due to political harassment. Some urban to rural movement is reported into resettlement areas, but there is also a report in Manicaland of people leaving newly settled forest areas. Urban to rural movement for gold panning continues to be reported across Mashonaland and Manicaland.

Table 2: Districts reporting migration in January 2004

Province	District	Reason
Manicaland	Chipinge, Mutare urban	In for gold panning. Some movement of people from low to high density areas
Mashonaland East	Chikomba, Marondera urban, Hwedza, Mutoko, Murehwa, Marondera rural, Goromonzi	Former farm workers seeking refuge in villages. Into the area for gold panning. Out of the area as opposition party supporters reported to flee harassment. Inward migration to work for food.
Mashonaland Central	Bindura, Mazowe, Mvurwi	Former farm/mine workers moving into urban areas. Opposition supporters reported to be chased away from rural areas. Inward movement for gold panning
Mashonaland West	Chegutu rural, Kariba urban	Former farm workers settling in rural areas. Fishing camp ex- workers coming to settle in the urban area.
Midlands	Gokwe	Outward movement reported for gold panning
Matabeleland North	Binga	People who had settled on forest land coming back to the villages
Cities	Bulawayo, Harare, Chitungwiza	Inward movement from rural areas because of political violence. Outward movement reported to new resettlement areas, and to avoid high rentals in urban areas.

Social Services

In an environment of reduced household wellbeing, state service play a critical role in buffering household incomes and welfare, particularly health and education services. A more thorough review of these services will be carried out in the quarterly monitoring in March/April 2004.

Forty districts (75%) reported the presence of a nurse at their local clinics. However this means that a quarter of clinics (25%) had not even the basic staffing of a nurse. Only 47% of the districts indicated that antibiotics were available, while 50% noted that Chloroquin was available. A reported 16% of clinics did not have safe water supplies.

Adequate staffing is reported to be a barrier to quality of primary level health services in a quarter of districts, and drug availability is a reported barrier in half of clinics.

'If people are referred to bigger hospitals they are failing to cope with bus fares and at the hospital they can't afford x-ray costs and other hospital costs. people are getting desperate by the day.'

Gokwe

Clinic fees were not commonly reported, and in the 13 districts (25%) where they were reported ranged from \$118 to \$15 000. Communities do report serious difficulties buying drugs due to high prices.

School fees were reported to average \$11 000 per term, while levies were reported to average \$12 000 per term, a combined total for households of \$23 000 per term. The range for fees was \$105 to \$45 000 and for levies \$500 to \$50 000.

Economic hardships, parents failure to pay fees and a high rate of orphaned children due to AIDS were the most commonly noted reasons given for children dropping out of school in January 2004.

'People are getting poorer and poorer as a result of food shortages. The standards of living are going down'

Wedza

Community welfare

Lifestyle is changing for the worse because of financial problems that are causing hunger in most families. No family can afford 3 meals a day. living conditions are getting down because of economic hardships/high inflation. hunger and corruption, food shortages, destitution. people can't afford basic commodities. Others are not sending children to school even to the clinics because of high prices. The lives and living conditions of people are being affected by shortages of money to pay clinic fees and shortage of adequate food.

Marondera Urban

The quote from Marondera urban highlights the growing squeeze on households to meet basic needs. This has now extended beyond food, and as

noted below includes rising costs of health, education and other basic services.

People's living standards have deteriorated and they cannot afford three meals. a general review depicts that the standard of living has nosedived and homes have been torn apart due to poverty, disease etc

Mudzi

Over a quarter of districts (28%) reported asset sales for food, including livestock, furniture and clothes. Households are reported to be cutting down on number of meals per day so as to stretch the meager food stocks they have.

Coping strategies are primarily individual and household based. People are reported to be working for food on nearby farms or for other local people who might have stocks of maize. There are limited reports of social activities: Some districts reported that community groups had been formed to lobby local authorities to secure GMB grain and to approach relief organizations for assistance. There were almost no reports of community inputs to help the local destitute and orphans, beyond a few churches giving donations in urban areas. **As household resources have become stretched, so community and social inputs for vulnerable groups have fallen.**

This is compounded by the lack of contact between people and their elected representatives. In only 8 districts (15%) did people report having seen their elected representative (councilor or MP) in the past month.

'People are suffering because they cannot afford the current life style. The changes noticed are that people have changed their lifestyle some from average rich to generally poor. people are generally struggling. People are failing to meet their day to day needs due to costs which are high.'

Harare

Economic deterioration is a major issue, and while some report was made of fear, violence and harassment, the most common report was of the significant deterioration in people's living standards.

'People have increased information about the economic situation in Zimbabwe. They are discussing issues openly without fear'

Mazowe

Summary

Monitoring information for December 2003/January 2004 is drawn from **141 reports** from sentinel wards in **53 districts** from all provinces of Zimbabwe.

More than three quarters of the districts report a worsening food situation, an increase of 10% in the districts compared to November 2003 .

Fertilizer availability has improved, with more than 45% of districts reporting fertilizer available on the local market compared to a third in November 2003. Seed availability

has also improved, with half (54%) of districts noting seed to be available on local markets, compared to a quarter (28%) in November 2003.

Improved supplies are however counteracted by increased costs. Prices of fertilizer have increased by 27% since November 2003, although median seed prices have remained relatively constant in the same period. This may reflect falling demand for seed after planting but continued demand for fertilizer.

Community reports indicate that 50% of households in districts do not have any food stocks and less than 40% have stocks to last them just one month

Commercial supplies of food have improved markedly in January 2004 compared to January 2003. Cost rather than supply is now a more important limiting factor in food access.

Maize meal is found primarily in informal markets with prices in January 2004 approximately ten times higher than a year ago (January 2003). The average price of maize meal has risen by over 44 % since November 2003, with 10kg maize meal being sold for up to Z\$16000 and Z\$25000 on the formal and parallel market respectively.

Half of the districts reported 50% or more of households unable to afford current maize meal prices. Those who cannot afford these prices are reported to be seeking work on farms where they are paid in food or to be resorting to gold panning.

GMB deliveries were reported to have improved in January 2004 in terms of both frequency and volume of delivery. GMB Grain prices are also reported to have risen markedly in the period, with reported increases of 66- 120% across all provinces. Food shortages and rising input costs and food prices have led to persistent dependency on food aid, despite improved availability of market supplies. The major reported problems relating to the GMB thus concern issues of access, with continued complaints of problems and bias in access, including political bias.

Relief was reported to be present in thirty four districts (64% of districts). Urban areas now report relief activities, although to a lesser extent and only covering school children, the elderly, and TB and AIDS patients. Barriers to relief include deserving beneficiaries left off lists due to marginalisation or reported political bias, transport and access problems for ill and vulnerable groups, lack of clear information on relief programmes, and shortages in overall supplies.

Migration in and out of districts is reported to be taking place in 36% of the districts. This level of reported migration is lower than that reported in October 2003 (53% districts) and November 2003 (47% districts). The major reasons given for the movement of people are of former farmworkers moving into rural and urban areas to seek refuge, or find areas to settle. There is some report of people leaving rural areas due to political harassment. Some urban to rural movement is reported into resettlement areas, but there is also report in Manicaland of people leaving newly settled forest areas. Urban to rural movement for gold panning continues to be reported across Mashonaland and Manicaland.

Monitor reports indicate the growing squeeze on households to meet basic needs. This has now extended beyond food, and includes rising costs of health, education and other basic services.

Clinic fees were not commonly reported, and in the 13 districts (25%) where they were reported ranged from \$118 to \$15 000. Communities do report serious difficulties buying drugs however due to high prices. Inadequate staffing of clinics is reported to be a barrier to care in a quarter of districts, and drug availability in half of districts.

School fees were reported to average \$11 000 per term, while levies were reported to average \$12 000 per term, with a combined total for households of \$23 000 per term. The range for fees was \$105 to \$45 000 and for levies \$500 to \$50 000. Economic hardships, parents failure to pay fees and a high rate of orphaned children due to AIDS were the most commonly noted reasons given for children dropping out of school in January 2004.

Economic deterioration is thus a major issue and a concern for households. While food insecurity has contributed significantly to household poverty, the significant deterioration in people's living standards covers wider issues of access to and costs of basic goods and services.

Coping strategies were reported to be primarily individual and household based. As household resources have become stretched, so community and social inputs for vulnerable groups have fallen. This is compounded by the lack of contact between people and their elected representatives. In only 8 districts (15%) did people report having seen their elected representative (councilor or MP) in the past month.

The Civic Monitoring Project welcomes feedback on these reports.

Follow up queries and feedback to
CMP, Box CY2720, Causeway, Harare
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