

***CIVIC MONITORING PROGRAMME***  
*integrating the*  
**FOSENET Food Security monitoring**



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

**February 2004**

**For the executive summary please go to page 13**

**This report is the second 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 to [fsmt2@mweb.co.zw](mailto: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](mailto:fsmt2@mweb.co.zw).

This fifteenth round of NGO and community based monitoring nationally covers the month February 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 February 2004 report is drawn from **146 monitoring reports** from **60 districts** from all provinces of Zimbabwe, with an average of **2.4 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 security is gradually improving. Thirty-five districts (58%) report a worsening food situation, reduced from 79% in January, while a fifth (22%) report improving food supplies, a significant increase on the 11% in January, and due to early planted crops being harvested. Food insecurity appears to be highest in Manicaland and Matabeleland provinces.**



Thirteen districts (22%) reported an improvement in food availability, a marked improvement compared to 11% in January 2004. The increase in food supplies is reportedly due to increases in relief food distribution, improvement in GMB deliveries and some areas now starting to consume food from own production as the first crop matures. Despite these noted developments 58% of the districts still continue to report deteriorating food supply situation, a slight decrease compared to the 79% reported in January 2004 and 68% in November 2003.

**Table 1: Districts with sites with worsening food situations, February 2004**

Province	District
Manicaland	Mutare rural, Makoni, Buhera, Nyanga, Chimanimani, Mutare urban, Mutasa,
Mashonaland East	Seke, Mudzi, Goromonzi, Ruwa
Mashonaland Central	Mt Darwin, Shamva, Bindura urban
Mashonaland West	Karoyi, Zvimba, Norton, Makonde
Midlands	Shurugwi,
Masvingo	Bikita, Chivi, Mwenezi, Zaka
Matabeleland North	Bubi, Hwange rural, Nkayi, Tsholotsho, Binga
Matabeleland South	Beitbridge, Gwanda rural, Matobo, Umzingwane
Cities	Chitungwiza, Bulawayo, Harare

The pattern of vulnerability has remained much the same with the unemployed, the aged, former farm workers, orphans and people living with aids as most food insecure, community reports mentioning the AIDS and TB patients as most vulnerable continue to rise notably in the previous three rounds.

*'The demand for relief food has gone down due to reaping maize, ground nuts, pumpkins in the fields'*

Gokwe

**Households continue to be dependent on GMB, relief and commercial food, with about a tenth sourcing food from own production. Nearly all households (91%) had food stocks of a month or less.**

The recovery due to harvest yields is slow however and community reports note that 45% of households in districts do not have any food stocks and 46% only have food stocks to last them one month.

With February more than three months before full crop harvests most households thus continue to rely on food from GMB and commercial supplies. Households are thus vulnerable to costs of commercial food and prices of grain at GMB. Price factors are thus likely to have been a major determinant of food security in February.

Sentinel reports indicate that sites were primarily dependent on GMB and relief food in February with 30% and 24% of sites reporting GMB and Relief food as their food sources respectively and 18% and 13% reporting commercial sales and own production as their food sources respectively.

*Those who get the food share it with their relatives which means the food cannot complete the whole month.*

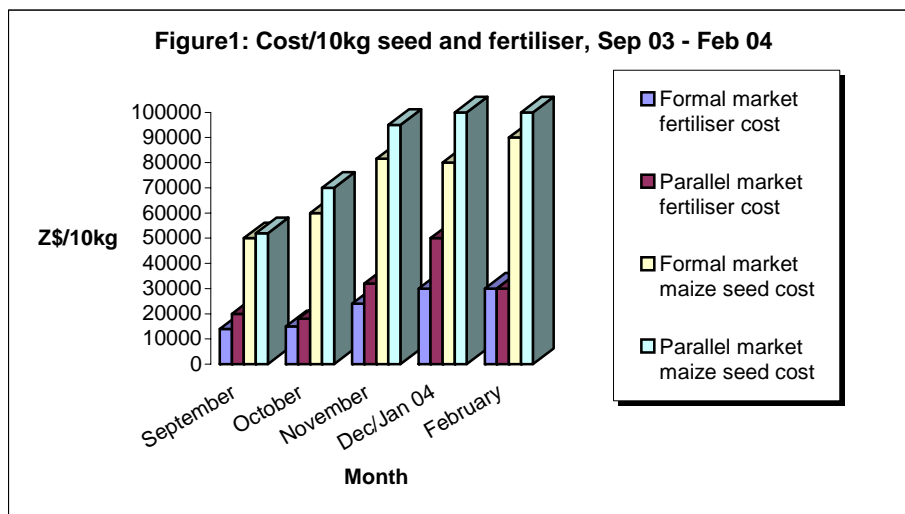
*Zaka*

### Production of Food

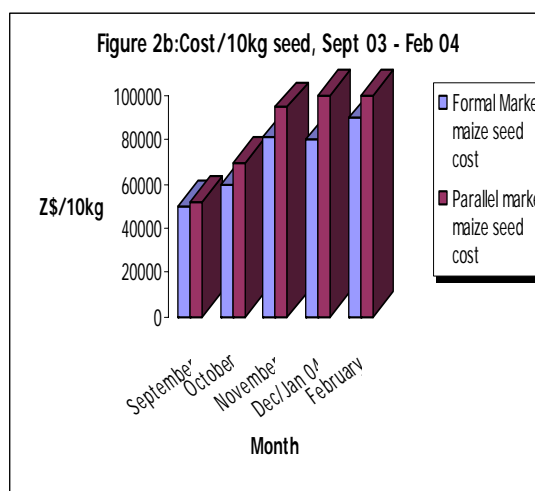
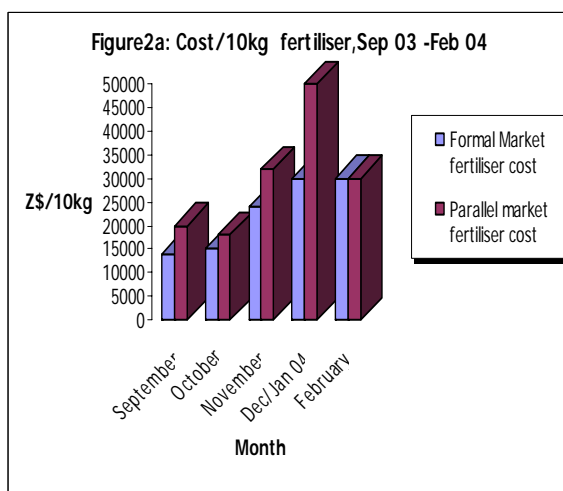
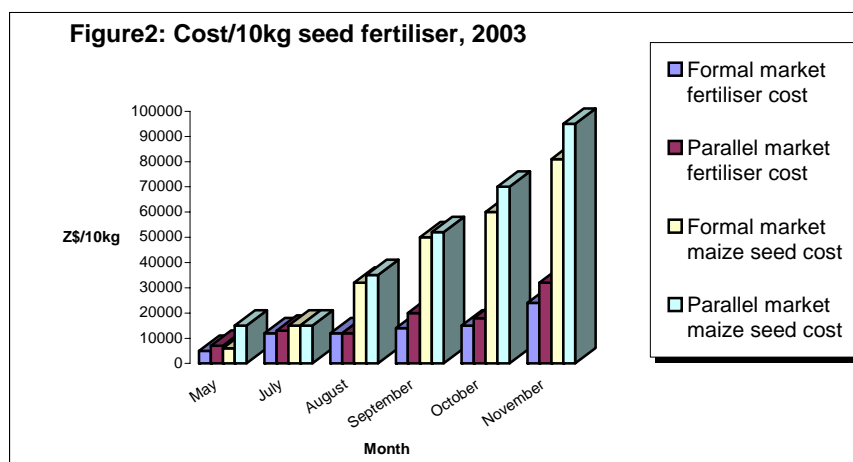
Rainfalls are reported to have been average in all provinces except Matabeleland South where communities perceive that they had below average rainfalls.

**Availability of fertilizer and seed appears to have remained relatively constant since January, with availability in about half of districts.** In February 42% of districts report availability of fertilizer, compared to 45 % of districts in January. Maize seed is reported to be available in 47% of districts compared to 54% in January. Prices of these inputs have remained constant over the period January to February.

Figure 1 and Table 2 show the steady increases in fertilizer and maize seed prices since September 2003, with plateauing prices in January and February, possibly as demand falls with the season coming to an end.



As shown in Figure 2 below from the November 2003 Fosenet Monitoring Report prices of seed and fertilizer are extremely demand responsive and rose sharply when demand increased for the November planting season, while remaining at low levels in May-August. It is however evident from the January/February data that the plateau settles at a much higher price level at the end of each season, with the February 2004 prices approximately ten times the prices in May 2003. The parallel market is reported to continue to have higher prices than the formal commercial market.



**Table 2: Reported prices of maize seed and fertilizer, Sep 03 to February 04**

Month	Fertiliser Cost Z\$/10kg		Maize seed Cost Z\$/10/kg	
	Formal market	Parallel Market	Formal market	Parallel Market
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
Price range February 04	9000 -30000	13000-30000	29000- 90000	40000-100000

*People are starving (no food) and the cost of living is very high.*

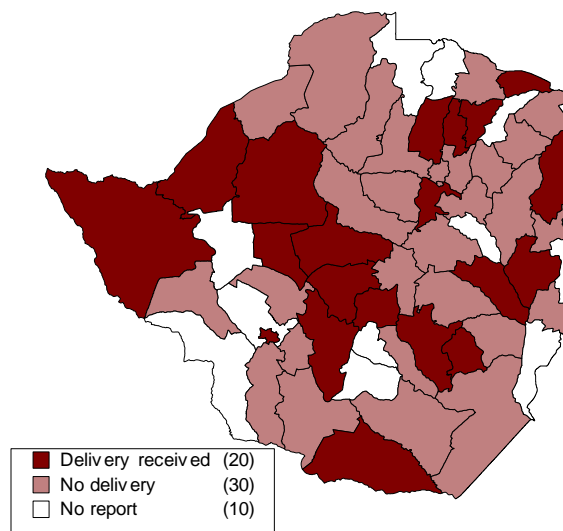
*Marondera Rural.*

It was too early to obtain crop estimates from sites. It was reported that 36% of sites had been visited by an AREX officer in the past month. With agricultural activity at a reasonably intense level this is a period of peak activity.

### **GMB food deliveries**

**GMB deliveries were reported to have been improving since January 2004 in terms of quantities being delivered and the frequency of deliveries to sentinel wards.** (see figure 2)

**Figure 2: Frequency of GMB Deliveries January 2004**



Twenty districts (33%) reported GMB deliveries, with an average 0.4 deliveries per sentinel ward. A delivery volume of 7.05 tonnes on average per site ward was reported an increase on the 5.5 tonnes reported in January 2004 and 1.2 tonnes reported in November 2003. The level is approximately that reported in March 2003 of 7,34 tonnes per delivery.

**Communities continue to note problems in GMB food distribution, including rising prices, influential people accessing GMB food ahead of others and political bias.**

Reported GMB maize grain prices show an increase between January and February 2004 have been reportedly rising across provinces since January 2004. Prices of up to Z\$7000/10kg are reported (see Table 5 below) **The prices of GMB Maize in February 2004 are about 15 times higher than those reported in February/ March 2003**, a higher rate of increase compared to the commercial markets in the same period. This perhaps reflects a 'catch-up' in price setting given the price controls

operating in 2003. **GMB maize is however still considerably cheaper than that available in commercial markets.**

**Table 5 : Reported costs of GMB maize, Z\$/10kg**

Province	Price range in Z\$/10kg		
	February 04	January 04	Feb/March 03
Manicaland	1600 – 5200	1600 – 5000	116-250
Mashonaland East	1800 - 7000	1592 - 6000	110-174
Mashonaland central	3000 - 5000	1500 -4900	116-150
Mashonaland West	n.a	1600 – 5333	112-260
Midlands	1600 – 5000	1400 - 4200	112-160
Masvingo	2400 - 4000	2000 – 4200	116-250
Matebeleland North	1200 – 5400	1500	100-116
Matebeleland South	1700 - 5000	1600	116-120
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	n.a	4400	250-300

Despite this cost is still cited to be a barrier for some households, particularly the poorest in the community, indicating the long term issues that poverty now poses for food security. The other barrier to access that was cited in reports was political influence or obstacles in accessing food. Political party involvement in GMB food distribution was reported from 13% of districts, namely Nyanga, Mudzi, Chiredzi ,Chivi, Masvingo rural, Mwenezi, Gwanda rural and Bulawayo.

*Maize is now available at the GMB. People are finding it difficult to pay 22500 for 50kg and find their own transport for carrying their maize.*

*Buhera*

*Disabled people are not getting maize from the G.M.B*

*Marondera Rural*

### **Commercial food sources**

*Since the introduction of sorghum meal life has changed as the non working class have resorted to buying the commodity as it is affordable*

*Bulawayo*

*Due to economic hardships people are improvising, such as buying mealie-meal measured in different cup sizes to suffice for single meals only*

*Chitungwisa*

**Commercial availability of basic foodstuffs (maize meal, oil, sugar and bread) is higher in February 2004 than it was at the same period in 2003, significantly so in some provinces. Price is the major reported barrier to food access from commercial markets. .(see Table 3 below)**

The parallel market remains the major source of maize meal with reported price increases of more than 30% in the past month. (see Table 4 below).

**Table 3 : Reported market availability of foods, February 03 and February 04**

% of districts reporting food present	Maize meal		Oil	
	February 04	February 03	February 04	February 03
Manicaland	50	50	88	25
Mashonaland East	75	n.a	75	n.a
Mashonaland Central	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Mashonaland West	80	13	80	13
Masvingo	40	33	75	33
Midlands	42	n.a	42	n.a
Matabeleland North	66	40	83	60
Matabeleland South	60	60	80	60

**Table 4: Upper prices of maize meal in parallel markets, Oct 03 - Feb 04**

Province	Upper prices of Maize meal in commercial and parallel markets Z\$/10kg		
	Feb 2004	Jan 2004	Feb/March 2003
Manicaland	27000	20000	2500
Mashonaland East	20000	25000	4000
Mashonaland central	25000	20000	4000
Mashonaland West	20000	22500	3000
Midlands	20000	17500	8000
Masvingo	18000	15000	6000
Matebeleland North	20000	n.a	4000
Matebeleland South	20000	n.a	n.a
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	20000	25000	5000

n.a = not available

Maize meal prices continue to rise both on the parallel and formal markets with 10kg maize meal now being sold for up to \$20 000 on the formal market and Z\$25 000 on the parallel market.

**In half of the districts, monitoring reports assessed that 50% or more of households in the district could not afford prevailing maize meal prices.**

In a quarter of districts this figure rose to more than 75% of households in the district can not afford maize meal prices.

**Households unable to afford food are reported to carry out farm work for food, rural gold panning and urban vending and to rely heavily on relief.**

Households facing difficulties with the cost of maize meal are reported to be working for food on nearby farms or working for other people in the same communities who have stocks of food to pay them. Districts reporting people working for food (outside the

food for work programme) are: Nyanga, Rusape, Goromonzi, Bindura, Mazoe, Chegutu, Kadoma, Norton, Gweru, Shurugwi, Chiredzi and Mwenezi. Some are reported to be resorting to gold panning to raise money for food and in urban areas vending has been noted to be on the increase. Where relief food is available people are depending on food packs from relief organizations. Households are also reported to be reducing the number of meals per day as a way to stretch available stocks.

## Humanitarian Relief

**The government cash for work programme was reported present in thirty two districts (53% of districts).** Reports from 30% of districts indicated dissatisfaction with the selection of beneficiaries. Districts reporting political bias in this process included: Mutare rural, Mutasa, Nyanga, Rusape, Chikomba, Ruwa, Seke, Bindura rural, Bindura urban, Chinhoyi, Kariba, Karoyi, Gokwe, Gweru urban, Kwekwe urban and rural, Chiredzi, Chivi, Zaka, Hwange rural, Harare. The cash for work programme was reported to have stopped in a number of districts due to lack of resources.

*The problem is that people are saying they cannot work for \$5 000 in 15 days. They are saying that the money is too little, they need more if they are to work for 15 days.*

*Umzingwane*

**Relief activities were reported present in forty four districts (73% of districts) including urban areas, a relatively constant level compared to January 2004. Reports indicate the relief programmes are generally now focused on the most vulnerable groups, including school children, the elderly, pregnant women, orphans and people with TB and AIDS.** Targeting of relief to households rather than specific vulnerable groups was reported in 23% of districts.

Districts reporting of relief programmes included: (see also fig 3)

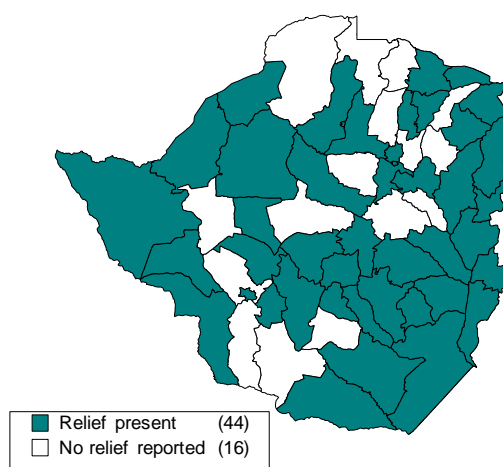
<b>Manicaland:</b>	Mutare urban, Mutare rural, Mutasa, Makoni, Chimanimani, Buhera, Nyanga, Rusape
<b>Mashonaland East:</b>	Chikomba, Marondera rural, Mutoko, Mudzi, Seke, Marondera urban, Ruwa
<b>Mashonaland Central:</b>	Bindura rural, Mt Darwin, Rushinga, Shamva
<b>Mashonaland West:</b>	Chegutu, Kadoma, Zvimba
<b>Midlands:</b>	Chirumhanzu, Gweru rural, Gweru urban, Gokwe, Shurugwi
<b>Masvingo:</b>	Bikita, Masvingo urban and rural, Mwenezi, Chivi, Chiredzi, Zaka
<b>Matebeleland North:</b>	Bubi, Binga, Hwange rural and urban, Nkayi, Tsholotsho
<b>Matebeleland South:</b>	Beitbridge, Insiza, Gwanda, Matobo, Umzingwane
<b>Cities:</b>	Chitungwiza, Harare, Bulawayo

*The vetting system is so tight that some people those with working children or young are denied food.*

*Chikomba*



**Figure 3: Districts reporting relief activities**



Various issues were noted in the distribution of relief. Relief was reported to be a major food source for households who could not afford commercial or GMB foods and whose sticks or own production was low. However problems were reported of relief supplies being inadequate or cut, communities not being able to predict or plan for relief supplies, people with influence preferentially accessing supplies in seven districts, and political bias or obstruction in distribution (See Table 6 below). **A larger number of districts than in previous rounds reported relief food being 'siphoned' to relatives** (See Table 6 below) and in Mashonaland West two districts reports HIV testing of pregnant women linked to relief food.

**Table 6: Reported problems in accessing relief food in districts, February 2004**

District	Issues reported
Nyanga, Mutare rural, Mutasa	Resettled farmers not included , political interference and corruption. Supplies reduced.
Chikomba, Goromonzi, Mudzi, Mutoko,Seke	Parents with working children not included. Too many people in need. Food going to top party officials. No scheme.
Mazoe, Shamva, Rushinga	The people in charge of distribution favour their relatives. Relief food not allowed in the area by party activists.
Chinhoyi, Zvimba	People must be tested for HIV first before being given food.
Gweru urban, Kwekwe rural, Gokwe	Supplies no longer coming. Kraal heads and those distributing favor their relatives first.
Bikita, Chivi,Masvingo urban,Zaka,Mwenezi	Chiefs and politicians often access the food first ahead of the desperate people. Supplies have been reduced. Supplies coming after two months.
Hwange rural, Binga	Ruling party officials want to use their power on the young people employed to distribute the food. Those not registered the first time still do not get food.
Umzingwane, Beitbridge	Fuel shortages, Political interference, and corruption in the distributing committees.

*They are selling mangoes, tomatoes, vegetables, cucumber etc to survive. Those who are HIV/AIDS are getting free medication and food..*

*Mudzi.*

*Since the introduction of feeding programmes living conditions have gone up and food related illnesses have decreased especially in schools.*

*Umzingwane*

**There was some movement by people from urban and resettlement areas to rural areas where relief food is being distributed** (in nine districts) and a few reports (4 districts) of migration into urban areas for food. Feeding points were reported to have changed in a quarter of districts (25%) either due to withdrawal of points, to take account of transport routes or because feeding was shifted to schools.

*There is no more food - pre-school children no longer get the porridge.*

*Mount Darwin*

**The greater reporting of movement of people to areas of relief food distribution than of relief food leakages into commercial markets indicates that the system for relief distribution has remained relatively free from leakages, although biases in access continue to be reported.**

## **Social conditions**

Movement in and out of districts is not only for food related reasons. People are also moving for a range of social and economic reasons.

**Inward or outward population migration was reported in 50% of the districts, an increase on the figure reported in January 2004 (36% of districts) and similar to the figure reported in November 2003 (47% of districts).**

**People are reported to be moving due to the cost of living, for incomes, due to land tenure changes or for political security.**

People are reported to be leaving urban areas for rural areas due to the high cost of living, loss of employment or for gold panning. Former farm workers are seeking pieces of land to build homes in communal areas. Manicaland and Mashonaland Central having several reports of people leaving areas due to political harassment. Some peri-urban informal settlements around the larger urban areas were reported to be growing due to job loss on large scale farms. In ten districts there were reports of people who were forming informal settlements in districts due to migration other areas. This was more commonly reported around urban areas and was linked primarily to economic poverty but also to movement of farmworkers and people who left their areas due to violence.

*Generally people are living in abject poverty as they cannot afford the basics.*

*Nyanga.*

## Survival strategies

A range of survival strategies are reported to deal with the rising cost of living and difficult conditions.

### **Households reported that they used a range of approaches to deal with economic difficulties, most individual household actions rather than community actions**

- ♦ Not buying medicines when ill (Manicaland)
- ♦ Sale of personal goods to raise funds for survival (Manicaland)
- ♦ fishing in dams, selling river sand, bricks and other goods (Mashonaland East)
- ♦ sale of vegetables and fruit (Mashonaland East)
- ♦ commercial sex work (Manicaland, Mashonaland East)
- ♦ working as housemaids (Mashonaland Central)

*Surprisingly some who are tested and found HIV negative become angry because they want to get free food and medication. Teenagers are practising prostitution so as to survive.*

*Mudzi*

**Sixteen districts(26%) reported that households were selling assets, similar to the 28% reported in January.** Asset sales were reported to include household furniture, livestock and clothing . Some urban wards indicated that the assets were being sold to offset debts acquired in 2003 at the peak of the food crisis.

Coping strategies continue to be individual and household based. Reports of people working on other peoples fields and farms for food continue to be received from across all provinces. Vending of vegetables is on the increase in urban areas (because of high unemployment) as residents strive to raise money for food . In rural and some urban areas gold panning is on the increase as those who have lost employment due to company closures turn to gold panning for survival.

*People are becoming poorer because they are selling animals to get money to buy food which is beyond the reach of many.*

*Binga.*

## Social services

Social services play an important role in reducing household spending on social welfare and thus mitigating poverty.

Health services are particularly important given the poor diets, poor living and environmental conditions and high levels of HIV/AIDS reported by monitors.

*The living conditions are getting worse and a disease outbreak might be there. People are now dumping garbage all over the ward,*

*Bulawayo*

**Health service provision was reported to be reasonable in relation to infrastructures and nurse staffing. However safe water and drug supplies were less available,** with only 42% of districts reporting that antibiotics were available at the clinic and 47% indicating that chloroquin was available for malaria. A

quarter (27%) of the clinics were reported to not have a safe water source. Service quality factors thus relate to safe water and drug availability.

*People have stopped visiting private doctors because they are now expensive.*

*Kwekwe urban*

**Cost is also reported to be a barrier to health care.** Clinic fees were reported to range from Z\$700 – Z\$15000 and when drugs are not available in the public sector community members are reported to be unable to afford difficulties prescribed drugs due to high prices.

*Living conditions are not stable because landlords are increasing the rent which leads to the decrease in the number of rooms*

*Harare*

Education is a second service regarded as critical for helping households confront poverty. Child education has been termed a 'social vaccine' for HIV as higher education levels are associated with reduced HIV infection.

**Community reports noted that school dropouts are attributable to economic difficulties, with parents or guardians failing to raise money for school fees and levies, given the increases imposed at the beginning of the year.**

School fees were reported to range from Z\$ 300 - Z\$70 000 per term, and levies from Z\$425 – Z\$50 000. Generally levies were higher than fees. The other significant cost reported for households was the cost of uniforms.

**The groups reported to be most affected by fallout from education were members of child headed households (due to AIDS deaths) and extremely poor households.**

*Alot of children are not in school due to failure by parents to get the school fees. These were raised from \$800 to \$10 000.*

*Mount Darwin*

## **Community actions**

In January 2004 only 15% of districts reported meeting their MP or councilor in the past month. **In February 2004 58% of districts reported that communities met their Member of Parliament or councilor during the month, a significant increase compared to January 2004.** The meetings covered various issues, including health, food and social welfare and next years elections.

Community social action was not widely reported. In the case of orphan care, for example, only 16% of communities reported taking direct social action to support orphans (food, education, caring) and most said that it was left to families or to the District AIDS Committee. Communities report that they have little resources for these activities. **Communities seem to lack access to information. On agricultural prices for example only half of districts said they could adequately access information, with 30% of these getting information from formal media, especially print media, 23% from word of mouth and 15% from traders directly.**

## Summary

The February 2004 report is drawn from **146 monitoring reports** from **60 districts** from all provinces of Zimbabwe, with an average of **2.4 reports per district**.

Food security is gradually improving, primarily due to early production yields and available wild foods. Food security is however still low with 91% of households having food stocks of a month or less. Thirty-five districts (58%) report a worsening food situation, reduced from 79% in January, while a fifth (22%) report improving food supplies, a significant increase on the 11% in January, and due to early planted crops being harvested. Food insecurity appears to be highest in Manicaland and Matabeleland provinces.

Households continue to be dependent on GMB, relief and commercial food, with about a tenth sourcing food from own production.

Availability of fertilizer and seed appears to have remained relatively constant since January, with availability in about half of districts.

GMB deliveries were reported to have been improving since January 2004 in terms of quantities being delivered and the frequency of deliveries to sentinel wards. Communities continue to note problems in GMB food distribution, including rising prices, influential people accessing GMB food ahead of others and political bias.

Commercial availability of basic foodstuffs (maize meal, oil, sugar and bread) is higher in February 2004 than it was at the same period in 2003, significantly so in some provinces. Price is the major reported barrier to food access from commercial markets, with monitoring reports in half the districts noting that 50% or more of households in the district could not afford prevailing maize meal prices.

Households unable to afford food are reported to carry out farm work for food, rural gold panning and urban vending and to rely heavily on relief.

The government cash for work programme was reported present in thirty two districts (53% of districts).

NGO Relief activities were reported present in forty four districts (73% of districts) including urban areas, a relatively constant level compared to January 2004. Reports indicate the relief programmes are generally now focused on the most vulnerable groups, including school children, the elderly, pregnant women, orphans and people with TB and AIDS.

There was some movement by people from urban and resettlement areas to rural areas where relief food is being distributed. The greater reporting of movement of people to areas of relief food distribution than of relief food leakages into commercial markets indicates that the system for relief distribution has remained relatively free from leakages, although biases in access continue to be reported.

Inward or outward population migration was reported in 50% of the districts, an increase on the figure reported in January 2004 (36% of districts) and similar to the figure reported in November 2003 (47% of districts). People are reported to be moving

due to the cost of living, for incomes, due to land tenure changes or for political security.

Households reported that they used a range of approaches to deal with economic difficulties, most individual household actions rather than community actions

- ♦ Not buying medicines when ill (Manicaland)
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- ♦ commercial sex work (Manicaland, Mashonaland East)
- ♦ working as housemaids (Mashonaland Central)

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Health service provision was reported to be reasonable in relation to infrastructures and nurse staffing. However safe water and drug supplies were less available. Cost is also reported to be a barrier to health care, with clinic fees reported to range from Z\$700 – Z\$15 000.

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In February 2004 58% of districts reported that communities met their Member of Parliament or councilor during the month, a significant increase compared to January 2004.

Communities seem, however, to lack access to information. On agricultural prices for example only half of districts said they could adequately access information, with 30% of these getting information from formal media, especially print media, 23% from word of mouth and 15% from traders directly.