

CIVIC MONITORING PROGRAMME
integrating the
FOSENET Food Security monitoring



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

May 2004

For the executive summary please go to page 13
This report is based on monitoring of food security and social welfare at community level by the Civic Monitoring Programme. Monthly monitoring is complemented by a more detailed focus in quarterly monitoring of specific areas of social welfare. The next quarterly report will be on economic and employment. Proposals for issues to monitor are welcomed and should be sent to fsmt2@mweb.co.zw

Background

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

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

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

This eighteenth round of NGO and community based monitoring nationally covers the month of **May 2004**.

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 May 2004 report is drawn from **150 monitoring reports** from **52 districts** from all provinces of Zimbabwe, with an average of **2.9 reports per district**.

Training has been carried out 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

After a steady improvement in food availability reported in the past few months, the share of sites reporting improved food availability is reported to have fallen in May 2004.

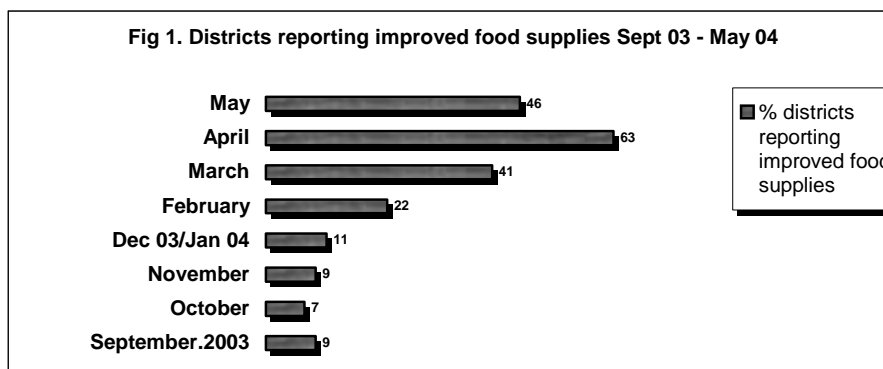
There has been improvement in people's lives due to relief and a little harvest people got, though it will not take them far.

Binga

After a steady increase in reported improvements in food supplies from January 2004, the share of sites reporting improved food supplies fell in May 2004 to 46% from 63% in April 2004. (See Table1 below).

Table1: % sites reporting improved food supplies September 03 to May 04

Month	% districts reporting improved food supplies	% districts reporting worsening food supplies
September 2003	9	74
October 2003	7	75
November 2003	9	68
December 03/January 2004	11	79
February 2004	22	58
March 2004	41	59
April 2004	63	29
May 2004	46	37



An increasing share of households are reported to be sourcing food from their own production, with an increase to 63% of sites reporting this in May compared to 44% in April 2004.

However a relatively constant two thirds of households report having stocks of a month or less comparing April and May 2004. The reported level of household food stocks in May 2004 is higher than that reported in May 2003.

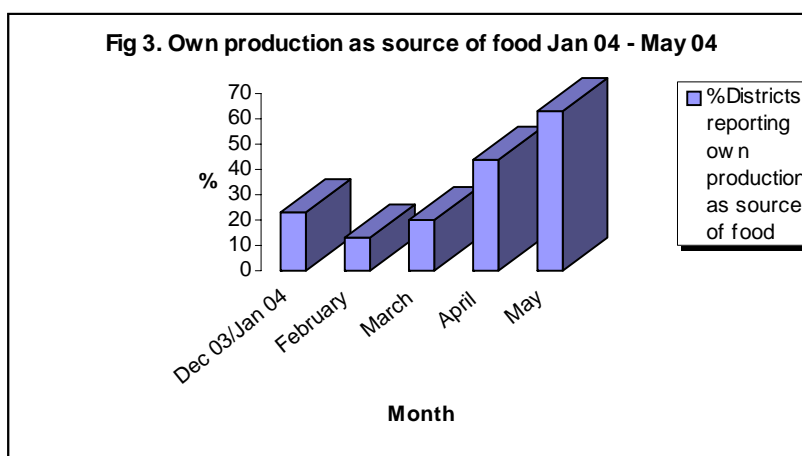
Some are now depending on their harvests but others are still buying buckets of maize from nearby township. Some did not have a good harvest due to poor rainfall.

Mutare Rural.

In May 2004, 63% of sentinel wards reported that households are surviving on food from their own production a significant increase compared to 44% reported in April, 20% in March and 13% in February 2004. A few sites reported households relying on relief (8% of sites) and on the GMB (19%). (see Table 2 and Figure 1. below)

Table 2: Districts reporting households sourcing food from own production

Month	% districts reporting
December 03/January 2004	23
February 2004	13
March 2004	20
April 2004	44
May 2004	63

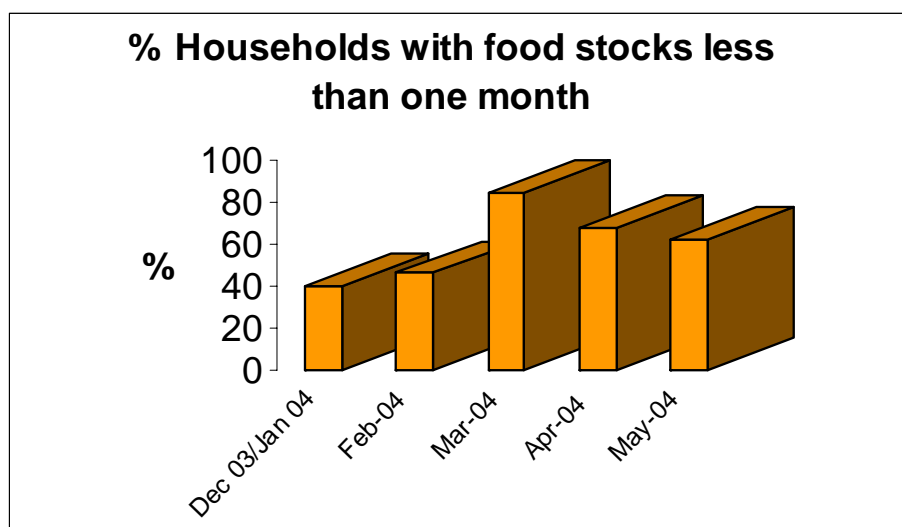


Despite increasing food sourcing from own production, reported household food stocks remain relatively low, with 34% of sites reporting that households have stocks of less than a month and 28% that households do not have any food stocks at all, a total of 62% of sites reporting household food stocks of less than one months supply. This is relatively constant compared to the 68% reported in April 2004, and an improvement on the 77% reported in May 2003.

Table 2: Share of households with stocks of less than one month

Month	% households
December 03/January 2004	40
February 2004	46
March 2004	84
April 2004	68
May 2004	62

Figure 4



Some areas did not even harvest anything during the last agricultural season due to either poor rains, lack of maize seeds and fertilizers and unstable environments which makes it difficult to go and plough the fields.

Makoni

Most of the harvests will only last until September

Hwedza

While reported food insecurity is thus lower than 2003, there are particular areas and social groups who appear to be more vulnerable.

Food availability is reported to be lower in Matabeleland South, Matabeleland North, Mashonaland East, Manicaland and Masvingo provinces.

A greater number of districts reporting no improvements in food supplies were noted in these provinces (See Table 3).

Those reported to be more vulnerable to food insecurity continue to be orphans, AIDS and TB patients, the unemployed, the elderly. In May sites also

reported concern that school children who were getting food from relief organizations may now be vulnerable after school feeding stops.

Table 3: District sites reporting no improvements in food situation, May 2004

Province	District
Manicaland	Chipinge, Makoni, Nyanga
Mashonaland east	Mudzi, Seke, Marondera rural
Mashonaland Central	Mt Darwin
Mashonaland West	Kariba
Midlands	Zvishavane
Masvingo	Bikita, Chiredzi, Chivi, Mwenezi
Matebeleland North	Hwange, Nkayi, Tsholotsho
Matebeleland South	Bulilimamangwe, Gwanda, Matobo

Some people in the area are now wondering where to get maize meal since their produce will not last them to mid July.

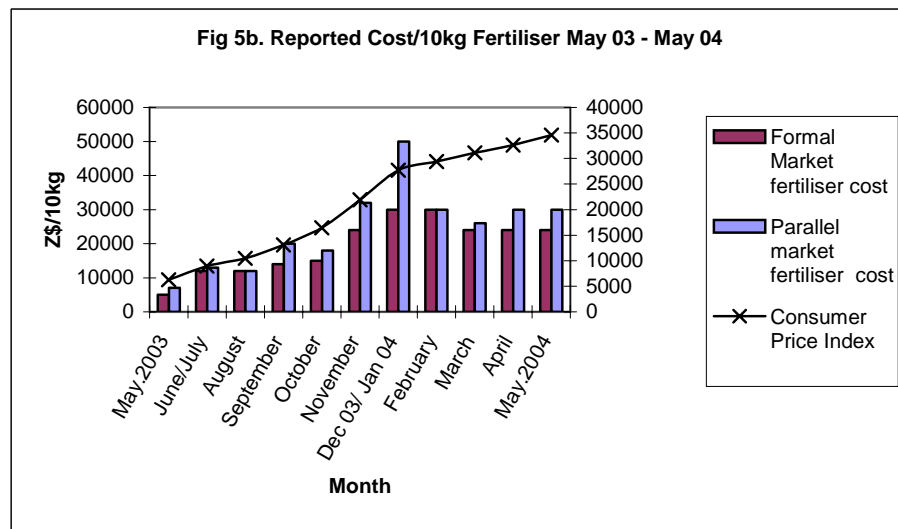
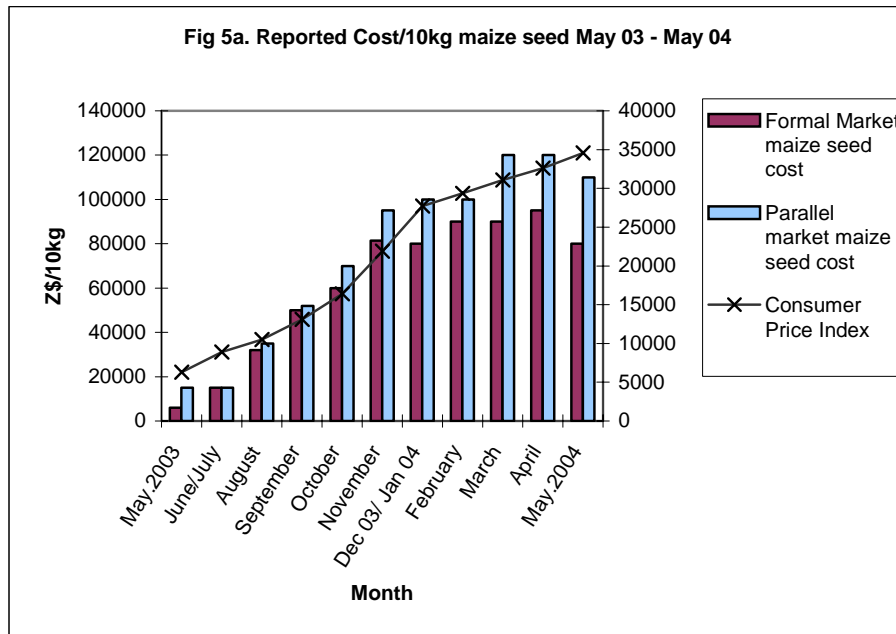
Murehwa

It has been noted in previous reports that seed and fertilizer availability and cost are a major constraint to production and thus food availability. Availability of these inputs was reported in about a third of sites. The reported costs of these inputs has remained stable since February 2004, compared to the increases in cost reported prior to this date, and have not followed increases in the Consumer Price Index. If these real cost reductions persist this will support food production, as long as availability improves. This will be monitored in future rounds.

In May, 25% of districts reported fertilizer available, a substantial decline from the 48% reported in April 2004. A third (31%) of districts reported availability of maize seed an insignificant change from the 37 % noted in April 2004. The prices of fertilizer and maize seed are reported to have fallen or remained stable after February 2004, while the CPI has increased, indicating real price reductions in this period. (See Table 4 and fig Figures 5a and 5b below).

Table 4: Reported prices of maize seed and fertilizer, May 03 to May 04

Month	Fertiliser Cost Z\$/10kg		Maize seed Cost Z\$/10/kg	
	Formal market	Parallel Market	Formal market	Parallel Market
May 03	520 - 5000	7000	6000	15000
June/July 03	2000 - 12000	3000 - 13000	4000 - 15000	3250 - 15000
August 03	2400 - 12000	6000 - 12000	9000 - 32000	12000 - 35000
September 03	4600 - 14000	5000 - 20000	20000 - 50000	20000 - 52000
October 03	4000 - 15000	9000 - 18000	30000 - 60000	35000 - 70000
Price range November	7800 -24000	9000 - 32000	40000 -81500	40000 -95000
Price range January 04	10400 -30000	14000-50000	20000- 80000	35000-100000
Price range February 04	9000 -30000	13000-30000	29000- 90000	40000-100000
Price range March 04	12000- 24000	14000-26000	38000-90000	45000-120000
Price range April 04	12000 - 24000	16000 - 30000	40000 – 95000	52000 - 120000
Price range May 04	12000 - 24000	14000 - 30000	36000 – 80000	65000 – 110000

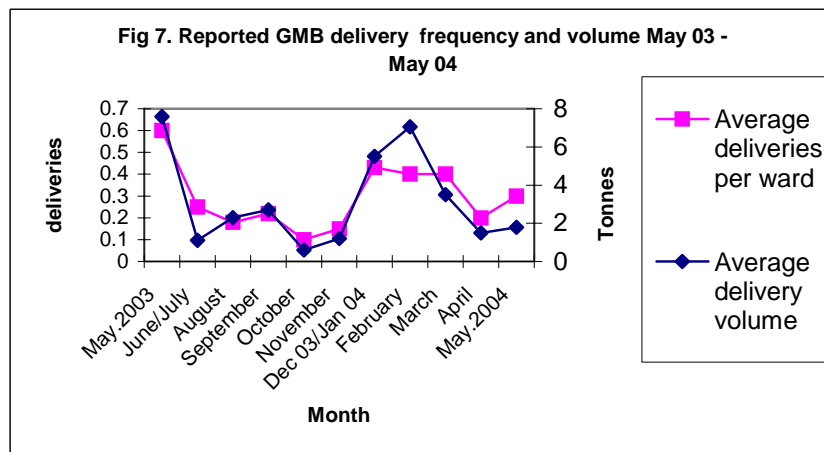
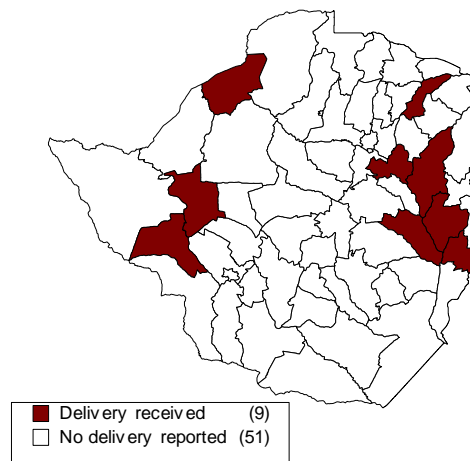


GMB deliveries

Reported deliveries from the GMB continued to remain low in terms of frequency, quantities delivered and areas covered by the distribution. GMB deliveries are reported to have increased between November 2003 and February 2004 and fallen thereafter, with increased GMB deliveries noted during periods of reduced food availability from household production.

Only nine districts (17%) reported GMB deliveries, less than the 21% reported in April and 33% in March 2004. An average of 0.3 deliveries per ward was reported with an average delivery quantity of 1.8 tonnes per site. The GMB delivery frequency and quantities delivered have been declining since March 2004 after increases in both number of deliveries and volume delivered between November 2003 and February 2004. (See Figures 6 and 7 below). It would appear that GMB deliveries have increased during periods of reduced household food availability.

Figure 6: Frequency of GMB Deliveries May 2004



In the few districts that received GMB deliveries of maize grain, problems were reported of prices being unaffordable (Mutare rural, prices of \$4 400/10kg for maize grain) and of barriers in access due to political affiliation (Tsholotsho). **Reported GMB maize prices have remained constant and are significantly lower than commercial prices. It is not clear how far this subsidy on GMB prices is particularly available to the areas or social groups more vulnerable to food insecurity reported above (see Table 5 below).**

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

Province	Price range in Z\$/10kg		
	May 04	April 04	MAY 2003
Manicaland	1500 – 4400	1220 - 5400	106 – 380
Mashonaland East	1500	n.a	114 – 450
Mashonaland central	n.a	n.a	116 – 150
Mashonaland West	3200	3200	120 - 1000
Midlands	1700	1600 - 2600	120 – 136
Masvingo	n.a	n.a	112 – 350
Matabeleland North	1600	1440 - 5400	108 – 120
Matabeleland South	n.a	1300 - 2000	100 – 136
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	2400	2200 - 2400	250 – 1400

Commercial food

Commercial supplies of food remained high in May 2004, and significantly higher than May 2003. The reported barrier to household access is not availability but cost, particularly in urban areas where grain from own production is reported to be less available. (See Table 6).

Table 6: Reported market availability of foods, May 03 and May 04

% of districts reporting food present	Maize meal		Oil	
	May 04	May 03	May 04	May 03
Manicaland	63	0	63	14
Mashonaland East	80	0	80	0
Mashonaland Central	100	17	100	17
Mashonaland West	100	14	67	14
Masvingo	75	13	88	38
Midlands	100	10	100	10
Matabeleland North	84	25	100	75
Matabeleland South	100	0	75	0

The price of maize meal in commercial markets was reported to have increased in May 2004 to upper price levels of between \$18 000- \$21 000 /10kg. Food prices in May 2004 are 350% higher than they were in May 2003 (see Table 7)

Table 7: Upper prices of maize meal in parallel markets May 03 and May 04

Province	Upper prices of maize meal in commercial and parallel markets Z\$/10kg		
	May 2004	April 2004	May 2003
Manicaland	18000	18000	4000
Mashonaland East	18000	20000	3000
Mashonaland Central	20000	20000	2400
Mashonaland West	18000	14800	2500
Midlands	18000	20000	2500
Masvingo	20000	20000	4500
Matabeleland North	n.a	15000	6000
Matabeleland South	18000	20000	1000
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	21800	15000	4000

n.a =not available

Humanitarian Relief

Relief organizations have indicated that they are no longer going to supply people with food as from May. Some people with small harvests are going to be affected in the near future.

Buhera

The government cash for work programme was reported to be operational in 21% of districts and non governmental and UN relief programmes to be operational in 61% of districts, a constant level compared to April 2004.

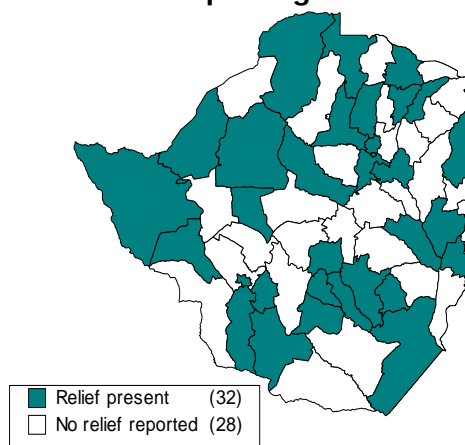
The Government cash for work programme was reported present in eleven districts (21% of districts) compared to 48% in March and 29% in April 2004. The cash for work programme was reported to have been affected by funding constraints in Seke, Masvingo rural, Zaka, and Lupane, where people are reported to have worked without receiving payment. Bias in the selection of beneficiaries for the programme was reported from Buhera, Makoni, Zaka, Lupane, Chiredzi, Bulawayo and Harare.

Non government and UN Relief programmes were reported present in 62% of districts, equal to that reported in April 2004. The current activities are reported to be covering highly vulnerable groups, including AIDS patients, orphans and school children. No site reported any household food distribution in May 2004 (See Figure 8).

The rain didn't rain quite well in this area so the people's yield is not satisfactory. People need food in this area. people are getting worse on living standards. More humanitarian organisations should be asked to come into the area

UMP

Figure 8: Districts reporting relief activities



Fewer problems were reported in relief food distribution in May 2004 (19% districts reporting problems) compared to April 2004 (31% of districts reporting problems). (see Table 8): Problems reported included withdrawal of programmes where people have harvested very little or nothing at all, bias in beneficiary selection, interference with the distribution of food.

Table 8: Reported problems in accessing relief, May 2004

AREA	TYPE OF AGENCY	REPORTED PROBLEM
Buhera	Ind NGO	Beneficiary selection was biased
Makoni	UN	Programme stopped when people are real need because of poor harvests
Marondera Urban	Ind NGO	Organisation forced to distribute on political lines
Bindura	Ind NGO	Undeserving cases benefiting at the expense of the needy
Zvimba	Ind NGO	Pregnant women have to be tested for HIV before receiving food.
Mazowe	UN	Organisation notified people that it is withdrawing
Chiredzi	Ind NGO	Food being distributed at political gatherings.
Masvingo Urban	Ind NGO	Deserving children left from the scheme
Gwanda	UN	Organisation has suspended general food distribution and serving very few people
Harare	Ind NGO	Influential people holding on to supplies

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

Social Conditions

The living conditions have improved because of the harvest so food accessibility has improved.

Marondera.

The level of population movement reported in April remained generally the same in May, with population migration reported in 25% of districts, almost the same level of 27% reported in April 2004. People are reportedly moving for political campaigns for the 2005 elections (Mutare rural, Makoni, Lupane) for gold panning(Shurugwi, UMP, Mt Darwin, Bindura) to seek more fertile land (Binga) and to come into peri-urban resettlement areas (Bulawayo, Harare).

Social Services

Drug availability at clinics is reported to have remained relatively constant in the past month with 58-63% of sites reporting indicator drugs (antibiotics and chloroquin) to be available. **Community reports in both urban and rural areas indicate that medical fees and drug cost are the major constraint in health care. These costs are reported to arise both at facilities and when facilities do not have the drugs and people have to secure them privately.**

People now depend on natural herbalists and clinics as doctors' fees are expensive.

Bulawayo.

Clinic fee levels are reported to vary widely from Z\$120 to Z\$35 000, with the highest reported level at \$35 000 in Mashonaland East. (See Table 9)

Table 9: Reported clinic fees, and provision of staff and safe water at clinics by province

Province	Clinic fee range	% sites reporting	
		Clinic with nurse	Clinic with safe water
Manicaland	120 – 27500	100	62
Mashonaland East	1000 – 35000	60	60
Mashonaland Central	500 - 12000	100	67
Mashonaland West	n.a	67	33
Midlands	120 - 12000	58	42
Masvingo	500 – 10000	100	50
Matebeleland North	160 – 5000	67	50
Matebeleland south	500 – 20000	75	50
Bulawayo ,Harare	1500 - 20000	100	100
Total	120 - 35000	80	57

n.a = not available

Few are accessing treatment at hospitals due to admission and administrative fees, secondly, non-availability of some drugs.

Masvingo.

Medication is fast becoming difficult to get due to unavailability of drugs and exorbitant costs of drugs at private pharmacies hence more people are dying at home.

Bindura.

Primary school fees per term were reported to range from Z\$325 to Z\$95 000 with highest fees reported in Manicaland and the lowest in Midlands. School levies were reported to range from Z\$425 to \$100 000. (see Table 8)

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

Province	Fees range	Levies range
Manicaland	2000 – 95000	1000 – 90000
Mashonaland East	6000 – 80000	5000 – 30000
Mashonaland Central	8000 – 60000	2000 – 45000
Mashonaland West	8000 - 10000	5000 – 10000
Midlands	325 – 50000	15000 – 75000
Masvingo	400 – 25000	1000 – 20000
Matebeleland North	500 – 5000	500 – 15000
Matebeleland South	6000 – 50000	2000 – 10000
Bulawayo, Harare	1000 – 81000	425 - 100000

Parents cannot afford fees especially secondary school. Some child-headed families have no fees and some organizations who used to assist them like Zvinoda Kushinga have stopped.
Makoni.

Communities reported in 56% of districts that high school fees and levies have resulted in some children of school going age failing to go to school because parents or guardians have failed to raise money for these costs. This was specifically reported to affect children of unemployed parents and orphans. The CMP quarterly monitoring report in March 2004 reported community views that inadequate information is reaching deserving beneficiaries on the operations of BEAM and the AIDS levy fund and that greater effort needs to be made to inform and reach these groups.

Fees are too high mostly for the unemployed people.

Mazowe

Community and social responses

The profile of social and economic conditions in May 2004 indicates increasing commercialization of basic social and economic needs, as people are having to spend an increasing amount to secure these needs. Household spending is reported where there are shortfalls in public sector provision of social services (eg to access drugs) or where there have been production shortfalls (eg food).

Community responses have ranged from

- ⇒ **strategies to boost incomes** (eg: market gardening (Goromonzi, Hwedza, Gwanda) trading (Bulawayo, Norton, Bulilimamangwe) income generating projects (Harare) buying and selling fish, moulding bricks for sale (Zvimba); working in other people's farms to get food as payment (Makoni, Bindura, Mazowe, Gokwe);
- ⇒ **strategies to use savings:** Household asset sales were reported from 19 districts(37% of districts) a slight increase from the 15 districts(29%) reported in April. The asset sold includes livestock, furniture, clothes and utensils.
- ⇒ **strategies to cut spending and consumption** (eg: reducing number of meals (Zvimba, Mutare rural); withdrawing children from school; using less expensive health providers (clinics; herbalists)
- ⇒ **strategies to pool or reduce costs** (eg: purchasing food as a group then sharing the commodities (UMP) forming village food committees (Nyanga)

Meetings are reported to be taking place between communities and their elected representatives around some of these issues in a third of districts, particularly food and school fees. Community reports noted meetings between communities and their members of parliament or councilors in 20 districts (34% of districts) in May 2004, lower than the 46% reported in April. The meetings reportedly covered relief food, school fee hikes and the 2005 elections.

Locals are now no longer keen to meet the councilors because there is no change of food supplies.

Marondera

As reported in previous rounds of CMP monitoring, strategies that pool or reduce costs or that build community support of disadvantaged members are reported to be hampered by poverty. Households are reported to have meager resources to sustain themselves and very few have anything to spare to assist vulnerable groups in the community. **It would appear that efforts to support production activities in communities, boost incomes and strengthen public services are more sustainable intervention strategies.** Future quarterly monitoring will thus report in more detail on employment, production and incomes.

Summary

The May 2004 report is drawn from **150 monitoring reports** from **52 districts** from all provinces of Zimbabwe, with an average of **2.9 reports per district**.

An increasing share of households are reported to be sourcing food from their own production, with an increase to 63% of sites reporting this in May compared to 44% in April 2004. Despite this the share of sites reporting improved food availability is reported to have fallen in May 2004, reversing an upward trend since February 2004.

A relatively constant two thirds of households report having stocks of a month or less. The reported level of household food stocks in May 2004 is higher than that reported in May 2003.

While reported food insecurity is lower than 2003, there are particular areas and social groups who appear to be more vulnerable. Food availability is reported to be lower in Matabeleland South, Matabeleland North, Mashonaland East, Manicaland and Masvingo provinces. Those reported to be more vulnerable to food insecurity continue to be orphans, AIDS and TB patients, the unemployed, the elderly.

Previous monitoring reports have noted that seed and fertilizer availability and cost are a major constraint to food production. Availability of these inputs was reported in about a third of sites. The reported costs of these inputs has remained stable since February 2004, compared to the increases in cost reported prior to this date, and have not followed increases in the Consumer Price Index. It will be important to track whether these real reductions in seed and fertilizer costs persist into periods of high demand later in 2004 and this will be monitored in future rounds.

Reported deliveries from the GMB continued to remain low in terms of frequency, quantities delivered and areas covered by the distribution. GMB deliveries are reported to have increased between November 2003 and February 2004 and fallen thereafter, with increased GMB deliveries noted during periods of reduced food availability from household production.

Reported GMB maize prices have remained constant and are significantly lower than commercial prices. It is not clear how far this subsidy on GMB prices is particularly available to the areas or social groups more vulnerable to food insecurity reported above (see Table 5 below).

Commercial food was reported to be widely available in May 2004, significantly more so than in May 2003. The reported barrier to household access is not availability but cost,

particularly in urban areas where grain from own production is reported to be less available. The price of maize meal in commercial markets was reported to have increased in May 2004 to upper price levels of between \$18 000- \$21 000 /10kg. Food prices in May 2004 are 350% higher than they were in May 2003.

The government cash for work programme was reported to be operational in 21% of districts and non governmental and UN relief programmes to be operational in 61% of districts, a constant level compared to April 2004.

Community reports in both urban and rural areas indicate that medical fees and drug cost are a major constraint in health care. Clinic fee levels are reported to vary widely from Z\$120 to Z\$35 000, with the highest reported level at \$35 000 in Mashonaland East.

Primary school fees per term were reported to range from Z\$325 to Z\$95 000 with highest fees reported in Manicaland and the lowest in Midlands. School levies were reported to range from Z\$425 to \$100 000. Communities reported in 56% of districts that high school fees and levies have resulted in some children of school going age failing to go to school, particularly children of unemployed parents and orphans.

The profile of social and economic conditions in May 2004 indicates increasing commercialization of basic social and economic needs, as people are having to spend an increasing amount to secure these needs. Household spending is reported where there are shortfalls in public sector provision of social services (eg to access drugs) or where there have been production shortfalls (eg food).

Community responses have ranged from

- ⇒ strategies to boost incomes (eg: market gardening; trading; income generating projects; buying and selling fish, moulding bricks for sale; working in other people's farms to get food as payment
- ⇒ strategies to use savings: with household asset sales in a third of districts,
- ⇒ strategies to cut spending and consumption (eg: reducing number of meals; withdrawing children from school; using less expensive health providers (clinics; herbalists)
- ⇒ strategies to pool or reduce costs (eg: purchasing food as a group then sharing the commodities; forming village food committees

As reported in previous rounds of CMP monitoring, households report having too few resources to provide sustained support of vulnerable groups within communities. It would appear that efforts to support production activities in communities, boost incomes and strengthen public services are more sustainable intervention strategies. Future quarterly monitoring will thus report in more detail on employment, production and incomes at community level.