Community and Household Surveillance System (CHS)

Food Security and Livelihood In-depth Trend Reports

Executive summaries: Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia

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ZIMBABWE CHS TREND REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of Community and Household Surveillance (CHS) data

CHS data is collected quarterly by WFP and C-SAFE through a joint data collection exercise. In Zimbabwe, 39 sentinel sites have been established in 34 districts spanning 9 Food economy Zones. Data on which this report is based was collected between the 15th and 31st of October 2003 and provides information on the livelihood and food security status of vulnerable households in the preceding three month period.

The purpose of the CHS is two-fold:

1. To compare the livelihood and food security status of beneficiary households with that of non-beneficiary households. This forms the basis of the CHS **Outcome Reports**.

2. To identify and describe trends or changes in the livelihood and food security status of targeted vulnerable groups in the WFP and C-SAFE areas of operation. This forms the basis of a more **In-Depth Report,** and represents the content of this document.

Key findings

- **Household Composition**

The survey included 854 households and a total study population of 5,351 persons. Among the households, 34.5% were female headed. The average age of female household heads was slightly above that of their male counterparts (53.5 years and 49.9 years respectively). The average age of the whole study population was 22.5 years.

- **Average household size**

Female-headed households on average had smaller sized households than their male counterparts (5.6 and 6.6 persons respectively). Household size has implications for labour availability especially for agriculture. Members of male-headed households were at least 2 times more involved in agriculture (30.4%) than was the case in female-headed ones (14.7%)

- **Vulnerable groups**

Categories of vulnerability have been defined and form the basis on which WFP and C-SAFE target households. These categories are:

- *Female headed households[1]*

- *Households with a chronically ill member*

- *Households with a disabled person*

- *Households hosting orphans*

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[1] The term "female headed households" implies absence of a husband or other man being the main decision maker, as generally in African tradition, the man is accorded this title, however 2% of households accorded the woman this title despite presence of a husband.

In addition to these more obvious characteristics of vulnerability, a number of derived variables were computed to explore other factors that indicate an increase in household vulnerability. These characteristics included in the analysis presented in this report are:

- *Households with high dependency ratio*
- *Households in the asset poor and asset very poor categories*
- *Households (both male and female headed) falling into two or more vulnerability categories*

Based on these characteristics, the number of vulnerable categories that households fell into was computed. The difference between male and female-headed households was highly significant in this regard (p-.000) with 89% of female-headed households falling into 2 or more vulnerable categories as compared to just 39% of those headed by males.

Overall, 60% of households receiving food aid fell into one or more of the vulnerability categories defined above.

- **Effective Dependency ratio**

Each household was assigned a dependency ratio classification based on its computed effective dependency ratio. Cut off points were determined and households classified as having high, medium and low dependency rates. More female than male-headed households have a high dependency ratio (44 % and 40% respectively).

- **Chronic illness**

Chronically ill individuals, for the purposes of the study, are those who have been ill for three months or longer prior to the study and are suffering from a recurring illness which results in loss of productive. This definition is used as a proxy for AIDS, and thus, includes mainly individuals with AIDS although a few with other long-term illnesses as cancer or asthma may be found. The majority of the study population (96%) was in good health. The findings showed that of those who were chronically ill, 1 in 10 was a household head and 52% of this chronically ill group fell within the productive age (15 – 64).

- **Asset wealth**

The asset wealth rank was assigned to households based on an average estimation of the total *present* monetary value of the assets they currently owned. Two thirds of households in the study population fell in the asset poor and asset very poor categories. There was no significant difference between male and female headed households in terms of their asset wealth.

- **Orphans**

Children (0 – 17 years of age) accounted for 54% of the study population and 31.4% of the studied children were single or double orphans. This means in effect that nearly one in three children is an orphan. Of the single orphans, the dead parent was nine times more likely to be the father than the mother. There was no significant difference between orphans and non orphans with regard to school attendance. School enrolment rates were over 75% for both orphans and non-orphans.

- **Primary economic activity**

Almost all households had at least one main source of income. Forty five percent of households had an additional second source. Income was mainly derived from vegetable sales (20% of households). Remittances and petty trade were a primary source of income for more female than male headed households (16.3% vs. 11.4% respectively). Male-headed households were more reliant on casual labour (both agricultural and non agricultural) than female-headed households.

- **Cereal stocks**

At the time of the survey, only 15% of households had any food stocks and a mere 4% expected to still have any stocks three months after the survey.

- **Food consumption and sources**

Maize, vegetables and oil/fats were widely consumed (50% or more households) in the study population. Food aid and own garden contributed to the previous day's meal in over 50% of the households. A third or less of households consumed sugar, meat, legumes, other cereals or fruit.

- **Coping strategies**

The most commonly relied on coping strategies (used 5 – 7 times a week by at least 60% of households) were; limiting portion seizes at meal times, reducing the number of meals and harvesting immature crops.

To access the full report, go to: http://www.c-safe.org/downloads/CHSZimbabwe.pdf

ZAMBIA CHS TREND REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of C-SAFE / WFP CHS impact reports

The Community and Household Surveillance (CHS) is a joint WFP and C-SAFE monitoring tool designed to capture data on quarterly basis in areas of food aid intervention. In Zambia, a total of 30 sentinel sites (Food Distribution Points) have been selected in six districts, with five sites per district. The selected sites are spread across four food economy zones[2]. This report is based on data collected in October 2003 and March 2004 and looks at changes in the livelihoods of the targeted food aid beneficiaries. This forms the basis of determining the impact of food aid on the targeted beneficiaries. The two data sets are compared against each other for the purpose of identifying the changes in the livelihood status and possible trends. Where it is not specifically mentioned or indicated the data collected in March is used as a reference point, e.g. Household size.

The purpose of the CHS is two-fold:

1. To compare the livelihood and food security status of beneficiary households with that of non-beneficiary households. This forms the basis of the CHS **Outcome Reports**.

2. To identify and describe trends or changes in the livelihood and food security status of targeted vulnerable groups in the WFP and C-SAFE areas of operation. This forms the basis of a more **In-Depth Trend Report,** and represents the content of this document

Key findings

The primary findings reported in this document are based on the CHS data collected in March 2004 and will be referred to as Round 2 data (abbreviated to R2). The R2 data will be compared to the CHS data collected in October 2003 (referred to in this study as Round 1 data and abbreviated to R1), with the aim of identifying trends. The survey included 893 households and a total study population of 5,909 persons.

- **Average household size**

The average size of households sampled in R2 was 6.6 and 6.3 in R1. In both Rounds, it was clear that female headed households were smaller in size, having on average one less person than male headed households.

- **Vulnerable groups**

Categories of vulnerability have been defined and form the basis on which WFP and C-SAFE target households. These categories are described below:

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[2] The Food economy Zones covered within the CHS round one and two were one livestock fishing and trading, secondly crops trading and wages, thirdly crops, wages, timber curbs and cross boarder trade and fourthly crops, fishing, livestock and game meat

- **Female headed households**

Among the households, 23.4% were female headed and 76.6% were male headed. he average age of female household heads was slightly above that of their male counterparts (19 years and 4 month and 19 years and 1 month respectively).

- **Households with a chronically ill member**

In R2, 23.1% of households had their livelihood system affected by the presence of at least one chronically ill member and this an increase from R1 where 15.8% of studied households were reported to have at least one chronically ill member. In this study, the indicator "ill for three or more months" is referred to as "chronic illness" and is used as a proxy for AIDS infection.

- **Households with a disabled person**

The proportion of households with a mentally or physically disabled member was up by 3% in R2 to 11.2% from 9.1% in R1. The distribution of disabled persons was similar across male and female headed households.

- **Households with orphans**

In R2, orphans made up 22% of the number of children in the study and were living in 38.8% of the households. This was a two percent increase over the 36.2% of R1 households that housed orphans.

- **Other indicators of vulnerability**

In addition to these more obvious characteristics of vulnerability, a number of derived variables were computed to explore other factors that indicate an increase in household vulnerability. These characteristics which are included in the analysis presented in this report are:

- **Households with high dependency ratio**

High dependency ratio households were 24.3% in R2. Of these households, 53.9% were receiving food aid. A higher proportion of female-headed household had high dependency ratios, 36.4% of households compared with 20.6% of male headed ones.

- **Households in the asset poor and asset very poor categories**

Just over three quarters (75.3%) of all households fell into asset poor or very poor in R1. In comparison with R2 there was a five percent reduction in these categories. There was a slight increase in the proportion of asset medium and asset rich households.

Female-headed household dominated the asset very poor category. 54.1% were situated in this category as compared to 27.3% of male-headed households. This represented a slight increase from 47.7% of female-headed households and 24.1% of male headed households in this category in R1.

Although sale of assets was relatively low in either Round, there was a slight increase in the proportion of households reporting a sale from 10.4% in R1 and R13.5% in R2.

- **Households falling into two or more vulnerability categories**

In R2, 10% of all households did not fall into any of the WFP / C-SAFE vulnerability categories while 34% possessed at least one vulnerability factor; and 56% possessed two or more. Among the households falling in the least vulnerable categories, 40.9% were food beneficiaries.

- **Primary economic activity**

For both rounds, farming was the primary economic activity for nearly half of all households. From October to March there was a marked increase in the number of households who engaged in casual agricultural labor (11.4% in R 2 compared with 3.5% in R1). Disaggregation by gender of the household heads showed that between 60% and 70 % of their households members were involved in farming.

- **Cereal stocks**

Availability of household cereal stocks is an indicator of food security/insecurity in communities. From all households, 92% in R2 had no cereal stock in March 2004, compared with 76% in October 2003.

- **Number of meals per day**

In R2, adults consumed 2.0 meals per day on average as compared to an average of 1.89 in R1. In both R1 and R2, more than 50% of households were able to eat two meals per day.

Children in this study were reported to consume an average of 2.2 meals each day both at R1 and at R2.

- **Coping Strategies**

The Coping Strategies Index is a derived variable that measures the frequency and severity of a household's short term consumption strategies used in a particular context to mitigate against shortfalls in food supply. This index was developed by CARE and WFP and serves as an early warning signal of food shortages. The higher the value of the coping strategy index, the more vulnerable the household is deemed to be. In this study, the average CSI for R2 was 70.0. Asset very poor and households with a disabled member exceeded the mean by 17 – 18 points. The CSI value showed a significant reduction from the R1 value of 109.9.

The coping strategies most frequently employed by households in this study were limiting portion sizes at meal times, reducing number of meals eaten per day, doing casual labour in exchange for food and relying on less preferred food.

To access the full report, go to: http://www.c-safe.org/downloads/CHSZambia.pdf

MALAWI CHS TREND REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of Community and Household Surveillance (CHS) data

CHS data is collected quarterly by WFP and C-SAFE through a joint data collection exercise. In Malawi, the food distribution happened in 9 districts spanning 36 Food Distribution Points. Data on which this report is based was collected between the 23rd of February and 8th March 2004 and provides information on the livelihood and food security status of vulnerable households in the preceding three month period. The data is compared against that collected in the previous rounds for the purpose of identifying changes in the livelihood status and possible trends.

The purpose of the CHS is two-fold:

1. To compare the livelihood and food security status of beneficiary households with that of non-beneficiary households. This forms the basis of the CHS **Outcome Reports**.

2. To identify and describe trends or changes in the livelihood and food security status of targeted vulnerable groups in the WFP and C-SAFE areas of operation. This forms the basis of a more **In-Depth Report,** and represents the content of this document.

Key findings

- **Average Household Size**

The average size of household sampled in R2 was 5.6 and 5.4 in R1. In both rounds, it was clear that female headed households were smaller in size than male headed households.

- **Vulnerable groups**

Categories of vulnerability have been defined and form the basis on which WFP and C-SAFE target households. These categories are:

- *Female headed households*

- *Households with a chronically ill member*

- *Households with a disabled person*

- *Households with orphans*

In addition to these more obvious characteristics of vulnerability, a number of derived variables were computed to explore other factors that indicate an increase in household vulnerability. These characteristics which are included in the analysis presented in this report are:

- *Households with high dependency ratio*

- *Households in the asset poor and asset very poor categories*

- *Households (both male and female headed) falling into two or more vulnerability categories*

- **Effective Dependency ratio**

Each household was assigned a dependency ratio classification based on its computed effective dependency ratio. Cut off points were determined and households classified as having high, medium and low dependency rates. More female than male-headed households have a high dependency ratio (19% and 7.5%% respectively).

- **Female headed Households**

Among the households, 34.4% of the sampled households were female headed in R2 as compared with 30.9% in R1.

- **Household with Chronically ill Member**

In R2, 10.5% of households had their livelihood system affected by the presence of at least one chronically ill member and this was less than 18% of households in R1.The findings showed that of those who were chronically ill, 1 in 10 was a household head and 45% of this chronically ill group fell within the productive age (18 – 59).

- **Household with a disabled person**

The proportion of households with a mentally or physically disabled member was up by 3% in R2 to 11.2% from 9.1% in R1. The distribution of disabled persons was similar across male and female-headed households.

- **Household with Orphans**

In R2, orphans made up 39.4% of the number of children in the study and were living in 45.3% of households. This was an increase from 36.2% orphans in R1.

- **Asset wealth**

The asset wealth rank was assigned to households based on an average estimation of the total *present* monetary value of the assets they currently owned. Two thirds of households in the study population fell in the asset poor and asset very poor categories. There was no significant difference between male and female-headed households in terms of their asset wealth.

- **Primary economic activity**

For both rounds casual agriculture labor was the primary economic activity for nearly half of all households. From October to March there was a two-fold increase in the number of households who engaged in casual agriculture labor (47% in R2 compared with 12% in R1)

- **Cereal stocks**

Availability of household cereal stocks is an indicator of food security/insecurity in communities.94% of households in both rounds had no cereal stock during the time of the survey

- **Food consumption and sources**

Sugar and oil/fats were consumed by more households in R2 (29.3% and 21.3% respectively) as compared to R1 where it was less (11.4% and 9.8% of HH). Food gathered from wild

animals and casual labor contributed to the previous day's meal with an increase from R1 to R2 on the reliance of the source of food.

- **Number of Meals per day**

In R2, the adults consumed 1.77 meals a day on average as compared to an average of 2.04 in R1. In both R1 and R2, more than 50% of households were able to eat two meals per day.

Children in this study were reported to consume an average of two meals each day in both R1 and R2.

- **Coping strategies**

Coping strategies index is a derived variable that measures the frequency and severity of a household short-term consumption strategies used in a particular context to mitigate against shortfalls in food supply. This index was developed by CARE and WFP and serves as an early warning signal of food shortages. The higher the value of the coping strategy index, the more vulnerable the household is deemed to be. In this study, the average CSI for R 2 was 37.3. Asset very poor households had the highest CSI (40.6 and standard deviation 24.9)

The most commonly relied on coping strategies employed by households were: engaging in casual labour on frequent basis (39.12% as compared to 25.2% in R1), reducing the consumption of adults to allow children to eat (17% as compared to 10.5%) limiting portion sizes at meal times, reducing the number of meals and harvesting immature crops.

To access the full report, go to: http://www.c-safe.org/downloads/CHSMalawi.pdf