Community and household surveillance R8 Outcome report - Zimbabwe
United Nations World Food Programme
April 01, 2007

Note: The Community and Household Surveillance system is a regional initiative in operation that covers eight Southern Africa countries; namely, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Lesotho, and Swaziland. The hard copy of this thorough UN World Food Programme analysis has many colourful charts and graphs which the electronic version is unable to reproduce.

Table of contents

Executive Summary

Livelihood Security

Forty-four percent of the interviewed households are considered to be asset poor, owning four or less household assets. These asset-poor households, on average, did not own any cattle and had poor food consumption patterns. Households in the asset-medium category (49%) on average owned two cattle and asset-rich households owning 5 cattle. The proportion of households classified as asset poor has steadily increased from Round 5 to Round 8.

At least three quarters of the households have a primary source of income; the three main sources are agricultural casual labor, petty trade and vegetable sales. Household expenditure has continued to spiral, despite the low incomes that households are generating. Expenditure on food was reported to be the highest, followed by education, medical expenses and debt.

Trends in Food Security

The food insecurity situation has deteriorated between Round 7 and Round 8. More than three quarters of the interviewed households reported that they did not have any cereals stocks from their own production. Both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households showed a worsening situation in terms of their use of negative coping strategies. Coping Strategies Index scores (CSI) have significantly risen, indicating that there is continued need for support at the household level. Both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households resorted to more severe coping strategies to meet household food needs. However, the CSI for the beneficiary households is slightly lower compared to that for the non-beneficiary households. Initially the CSI for beneficiary and non-beneficiary households had improved from Round 6 to Round 7. In Round 6 and Round 7, both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households had less difficulty in coping with food shortages as indicated by the CSI.

However, beneficiary households fared better in terms of the consumption patterns and dietary diversity. The proportion of beneficiary households with low Food Consumption has remained less when compared to the proportion of non-beneficiary households with a low Food Consumption.

Vulnerability and Targeting

There has been a significant improvement in the targeting and selection of households from Round 7 to Round 8. This improvement is illustrated by the increase in the proportion of beneficiaries possessing three or more socio-economic targeting criteria from Round 7 to Round 8. The VGF programme appears to be the most effective at targeting, with more than three quarters of the beneficiaries possessing three or more socio-economic targeting criteria. The analysis confirmed the continued need to combine multiple targeting criteria to ensure that the most vulnerable households are identified. The best single predictor of household food insecurity was asset ownership.

Orphans and Vulnerable children

Most of the beneficiary households were hosting orphans, and were also female headed. By province, Mashonaland West had the highest proportion of households hosting orphans.

Introduction

The Community and Household Surveillance [CHS] system is a regional initiative in operation covering eight Southern Africa countries; namely, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Lesotho, and Swaziland. In 2006 Namibia and Angola also joined the outcome monitoring system. In operation since August 2003, the CHS, has to date been carried out bi-annually in the months of October and March regionally. However, for Zimbabwe the March 2004 (Round 4) was cancelled because of Parliamentary Elections which coincided with the survey.

The Post Distribution Monitoring system was eventually merged with the CHS to avoid duplication of information collection activities and also to ensure effective use of resources available for data collection, collation and analysis.

The objectives of the Community and Household Surveillance are to:

1 To monitor short to medium term outcomes of food assistance.
2 To monitor trends in livelihoods and food security.
3 To profile beneficiary and non-beneficiary populations and examine the nature of their vulnerability to hunger and poverty.
4 To enable a regional comparative analysis of food and livelihoods insecurity.
5 To collect information for corporate reporting requirements.

The CHS has value as a management tool and has proven to be useful for WFP by addressing the following questions:

• Are the intended outcomes being achieved?
• Is food aid reaching the intended beneficiaries? If so, are negative trends being reversed?
• What is the contribution of food aid to diet/nutrition, wellbeing and livelihoods?
• Is food aid helping to prevent the depletion of human and productive assets?

Purpose of the report

The CHS data provides information on the characteristics of vulnerable groups, and improves WFP's understanding of the variety of factors that cause a household to be vulnerable to hunger. The report focuses on changes in key indicators of livelihood and food security over time and provides information on the effect of food aid interventions by looking at differences between beneficiary and non-beneficiary households.

This report is based on the data collected in the timeframes indicated in the table below. The table also highlights the activities that were being implemented during those periods.

The table above illustrates the CHS calendar of events as well as the events that coincide with the period when the CHS was conducted.

The stratified random sampling methodology was used to select CHS sites. The sites were located in districts were WFP is implementing its programmes, namely, Home Based Care (HBC) and Orphans and Vulnerable Children Programme (OVC), Mobile and Vulnerable Populations (MVP), School Feeding Programme (SFP) and the Vulnerable Group Feeding programme (VGF).

A list of villages under the FDPs was obtained by the Sub-offices and with the assistance of the CO; the Sub-offices selected the particular villages for the surveillance. A site is defined as a village in a specified ward. A reserve village per sentinel site was selected as a fall back, in the event that the village of interest could not be surveyed due to either ongoing community activities or the village having households fewer than those required for the survey.

Twenty household questionnaires were planned to be administered at each site; ten questionnaires were administered to both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households. In the event that a sampled household was not available, it was recorded as a non-response (where the respondent is missed on more than 3 occasions) and enumerators were encouraged to move to the next household in the sample. Neither substitution nor re-sampling was undertaken for absent households. Where a village had less than ten beneficiaries, enumerators were advised to sample another village and then merge the sub villages to have a new sampling frame.

Data Collection

Quantitative data was obtained through the administration of a structured household questionnaire installed on Personal Data Assistants. Some 804 households were visited during the surveillance. The household questionnaire investigated household demographics, migration, income and production, borrowing, agricultural production, access to food aid, household food stocks and sources, food consumption, coping strategies, water and sanitation, assets and livestock ownership.

Following enumerator training, data collection at household level was carried out from 1st of April to the 20th of April, 2007. WFP and Cooperating Partner enumerators administered the questionnaires, under the supervision of WFP team leaders. Following the completion of data collection, data was downloaded from the PDAs and exported, cleaned, and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 13.0 (SPSS).

1. Household Demographics

The socio-demographic characteristics of households provide a proxy indication for potential food insecurity as they determine the livelihood status of the households. The March 2007 findings confirm that WFP food aid was distributed to the most vulnerable beneficiaries, who include female-headed households, elderly-headed households, and households with a disabled member, households with chronically-ill members and those households hosting orphaned children. The highest proportion of these demographic characteristics was found among the beneficiary households as indicated in the bar graph.

The bar graph in figure 1 illustrates that there are no significant differences in the proportion of orphan-hosting households among the beneficiaries (41%) and the non-beneficiaries (47%). Food aid beneficiary selection emphasizes “no means self support” as the entry point for a household to be selected into any programme. The second point also makes reference to the household’s socio-demographic status.

In table 1, all WFP programmes had a considerable percentage of households with socio-demographic characteristics. This is indicative of the fact that WFP is targeting the right households. Each programme component had high percentage of households with a particular socio-demographic criterion.

Table 2 illustrates the household demographics for the interviewed households under each province. The proportions of households with various demographic characteristics vary from one province to another.

household. Midlands Province recorded more female headed households (42%) and Mashonaland West Province had a notable percentage of households hosting orphans (72%). Understandings of geographic distribution of the above socio-demographic status assist in programme design, implementation and selection of beneficiaries.

The Vulnerability Indicator is derived from the demographic indicator, livestock ownership and the dependency ratio. It is divided into three categories,

Low Vulnerability = households with a combination of 0-2 vulnerability characteristics i.e. a household might have a high dependency ratio with a chronically ill member.

Medium Vulnerability = households with a combination of 2-3 vulnerability characteristics i.e. a household might have no livestock, have a high dependency ration hosting orphans with disabled members.

High Vulnerability = households with a combination of 4 or more vulnerability characteristics.

(56%) are under the OVC programme. The second largest proportion is under the HBC programme with 45%. Figure 3 shows that the majority of the households (57%) with a high vulnerability indicator had a poor consumption pattern. As the level of vulnerability improved so did the consumption patterns of the households.

2. Asset and Livestock Ownership

Asset ownership is used as a proxy indicator of household well-being. Categorization of the households based on asset holding (i.e. productive and non-productive assets) was done as follows: asset poor category (0-4 assets), asset medium category (5-9 assets) and asset rich category (10 or more assets).

Forty-four percent of interviewed households are considered to be asset poor, 49% asset medium and 7% asset rich. The distribution of wealth groups between the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries is illustrated below

Figure 4 shows a steady increase in the proportion of beneficiary households that are asset poor, from Round 5 to Round 8, with the highest being in Round 8 – 42%. This is indicative of the improvement in the targeting and selection of beneficiaries over the year as WFP strives to reach the needy individuals.

The proportion of non-beneficiaries households that are asset poor has also increased over the rounds, which highlights that the need for food assistance still exists, even when WFP's emphasis is on targeting and the resource constraints which are being encountered. No significant variation was noted between beneficiary households and non-beneficiary households in terms of asset ownership.

The larger proportion of asset poor households was under the MVP programmes followed by the HBC/OVC programme, as illustrated in figure 5. However, there is need to pay attention to the 6% of households that are asset rich under the VGF and 4% under MVP.

A positive correlation exists between cattle ownership, asset wealth and food consumption patterns. The asset-poor households, on average, did not own any cattle and had a poor food consumption pattern. Households in the asset medium category on average owned 2 cattle and the asset rich households, 5 cattle. A small difference was noted between the cattle ownership of beneficiary and non-beneficiary households. Beneficiary households owned an average of one cow and the non-beneficiary households' two cattle. In measuring household vulnerability the correlation that exists between the three variables is of paramount importance.

3. Household Income and external support

Households derive income from a variety of sources. The trend analysis from March 2006 (Round 6) shows that communities have continuously relied on seasonal sources of income such as casual labor (29%), petty trading (9%) and vegetable sales (6%) to meet their needs. This is illustrated by figure 6 below.

Major sources of livelihoods have remained the same for Rounds 6 to Round 8. However, it is interesting to note that there has been an increase in the proportion of households engaging in casual labor from 19% in the previous round to 39% in the current round. There has also been a steady drop in petty trading activities and the sale of vegetables.

In Round 8, four percent of the households relied on remittances; this was particularly the case for districts situated along the border i.e. in Chiredzi and Hwange Districts, as well as districts which had more emigrant workers in South Africa –Tsholotsho, Zaka and Masvingo Districts. Four percent reported that they rely on livestock sales as the major source of income. The proportion of households engaging in livestock sales was more common in districts situated in the western (Hwange, Lupane and Binga Districts) and southern (Chiredzi District) parts of the country which are favorable for cattle production/ranching.

3.1 Household Expenditure Patterns

Figure 7 below shows the expenditure share for food and non-food items between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. It is important to highlight that there is a notable difference (14%) in the expenditure for food between the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

Non-beneficiaries spend 37% of their income on food and beneficiaries 24%, as shown in figure 7. This is a manifestation of the safety-net provided by WFP's food assistance; hence resulting in income transfers i.e. in the current round beneficiaries dedicated 18% of their income towards education. The non-beneficiaries dedicated less (10%) due to the cost of food which they will still have to address. Households indicated that they spent their income on other activities which included purchasing of agricultural inputs, entertainment and travel expenses.

Analysis of expenditure by programme activity illustrates that beneficiaries participating in the HBC programme spent more (40%) of their income per month on food in comparison to other beneficiaries under other programmes. The beneficiaries under the MVP programme also indicated that they spend 39% of their household income on a monthly basis on food.

Given the above analysis it is evident that total expenditure is not always a proxy of wealth status, but it also depends upon the needs that that particular household will be requiring. Hence, it explains why under programme activity expenditure was higher for the Home Based Care programme.

4. Food Security Situation

4.1 Household cereal stocks and sources

Cereal availability at the time of the surveillance was a challenge in Zimbabwe. Eighty-eight percent of interviewed households reported that they did not have any cereal stock from own crop production from any agricultural season. Twenty-nine percent of the households harvested cereals which lasted for less than four months while 22% had no harvest at all.

The table 3 illustrates the sources of cereal for all households. 86% of the beneficiary households indicated that they relied on food aid as the main source of cereals, with 7% purchasing their cereals and 3% engaging in casual labor activities.

46% of the non-beneficiary households reported that they heavily relied on purchases as the source of cereal; with 20% on casual labor and 16% own harvest.

The situation was worst in the Matabeleland provinces and urban provinces (Harare and Bulawayo) where all households had no cereal stocks. Only Manicaland province (Mutare Sub-office) had some households which had cereals which could last for four or more months. These limited cereal stocks from previous harvests necessitate timely intervention to improve household food security in light of the unpredictable food availability on the market and the increases in cereal prices. The above is shown in figure 8 above per sub-office.

Households interviewed cited food aid (46%), purchases (22%) and casual labor (12%) as the three key cereal sources. Food aid was the main source of cereals among beneficiary households in all the provinces. However, it was noted that food aid did not provide adequate cereals for the households, such that some of the households had to complement food assistance by engaging in casual labor and making purchases as shown in figure 9. Among the non-beneficiaries purchases (46%), casual labor (20%) and own production (16%) were the main sources of cereals.

4.2 Coping Strategies

The CSI is a tool used to measure the frequency and severity of household coping strategies for dealing with shortfalls in food supply. Information on the frequency and severity of coping strategies is combined into a single CSI score. The higher the CSI, the more food insecure the household.

There has been deterioration in the food security situation in the country when compared to October 2006 (Round 7). Figure 10 illustrates the increase in the CSI score for the beneficiary and non-beneficiary households. There has been a sharp increase in the mean CSI from 23 to 31 for the beneficiary households and 30 to 40 for the non-beneficiary households.

Figure 12, further illustrates the relationship that exists between the CSI and asset wealth. The CSI for the asset rich populations is lower than the CSI for the asset poor households. This means that the level of coping and the strategies that asset rich households engage in less severe compared to the asset poor households

The CSI for households with poor food consumption was 67- higher than the CSI for households with a borderline consumption (35) and adequate consumption 26. This means that for the interviewed households whose diet was better and more diverse they engaged in less severe coping mechanisms, than households who had a poor consumption pattern.

4.3 Agricultural Production

Zimbabwe's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture. The majority of rural households depends on this sector for their livelihoods and therefore must be able to grow or purchase sufficient food, in terms of quantity, quality and variety in order to sustain household needs. There are two distinct cropping seasons - winter and summer. The summer crop is rain fed, whilst winter is mainly irrigated, making it capital and labor intensive.

During Round 8 more than 96% of the sampled households in Zimbabwe had access to arable land. The three main crops grown were maize (68%), sorghum (13%) and millet (13%). Thus, subsistence farming remains the most important reason for agriculture in Zimbabwe.

In Matabeleland and Harare province, maize grain remains the most popular crop that was planted by households. Sorghum production was reported to have been highest in Mashonaland East and Manicaland Provinces as highlighted in figure 13.

Households that had not planted over the 2006/7 season cited a number of reasons for this. All (100%) the households sampled in Kariba District which did not plant anything cited that among other reasons they had experienced an illness in the household. This reason was also reported by 67% of the households in Chiredzi District.

In Harare, Bulawayo and Umzingwane districts, proportions of households that did not plant anything in the 2006/7 season did not have access to land. Of the beneficiaries who did not plant anything, 75% had no access to land, six percent did not have fertilizer, while another six percent lacked labor (a situation likely to be emanating from the fact that food aid selection criteria includes the targeting of the elderly, chronically ill and disabled members). Reasons for not planting identified by non beneficiaries included failure to access land, illness in the household (17%) and four percent due to lack of draught power.

Fifty nine percent of the interviewed households indicated that cattle was the main source of draught power, five percent reported that they used donkeys and 35% had no source of draught power. Thirty two percent of the non-beneficiaries and 39% of beneficiaries do not have access to draught power. Figure 14 illustrates the sources of draught power according to the asset wealth categories. Whilst the use of cattle as draught power has remained common for all asset wealth groups; there is a steady decrease in the proportion of households with no draught power from the asset poor category to the asset rich.

The shortage in draught power has been as a result of the continual decline in the number of cattle. Cattle deaths have been largely as a result of the frequent droughts the country experienced and the outbreak in diseases such as, foot and mouth, red water and anthrax. District where households reported that they did not have draught power include Binga (82%) and Hurungwe (71%) Districts. Tractors were a rarity in all the provinces. The fact that most households planted small acreages during the 2006/7 season is partly attributable to the above.

5. Food Consumption and Utilization

A Food Consumption Score (FCS) is calculated for each household based on the reported consumption over the seven days prior to the survey. Each food type is allocated a score based on its contribution to the nutritional value of the diet - the higher the score, the greater the nutritional value. An adequate diet is equal to the consumption of cereals, pulses and vegetables on a daily basis and oil at least 4 times per week. The cut off points for the index that were used in this analysis were:
Poor consumption (FCS less than 21)
Borderline consumption (FCS 21.5 -34.5)
Good consumption (FCS more than 35).

In this report the FCS has been used with a number of indicators to provide a combination of vulnerabilities for the analysis.

The proportion of asset poor households that have a poor consumption pattern increased from 33% in Round 7 to 60% in Round 8. The Food Consumption Score (FCS) provides a clear indication of dietary diversity and is an appropriate proxy indicator for vulnerability as it is expected to be lowest in food insecure households.

The bar graph illustrates that the asset poor households have the poorest diets, which fall below the threshold for adequacy. The asset medium and the asset rich households had a relatively better diet compared to the asset poor households. Food assistance therefore enables the asset poor households to meet their dietary requirements.

20% of the interviewed households had a chronically ill member in the household. As the number of chronically ill members increased in non-beneficiary households, the dietary intake of the households deteriorated further and households also engaged in more negative coping mechanisms. However, for the beneficiary households even when the number of chronically ill members increased in a household, their diet remained adequate. This is because they were receiving WFP food assistance.

6. HIV and AIDS

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has had a devastating impact on household food insecurity. To measure the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in households a proxy indictor for chronic illness has been established. Proxy indicators are key in measuring the effects of HIV and AIDS. Among the households surveyed, eight percent of both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households had at least one household member who died three months prior to the survey. The survey is also indicative of the fact that the majority of the deaths (79%) were as a result of a chronic illness.

The proxy indicator for chronic illness (indicator for HIV and AIDS prevalence) shows a decline among both beneficiaries and non beneficiaries as shown in figure 18. In both cases, beneficiary households had higher proportion of chronically ill persons compared to non-beneficiaries. This is also because the programmes being implemented by WFP target specifically the chronically ill.

The illustration above shows the proxy indicator for chronic illness per programme from Round 7 to Round 8. Under the HBC programme there is downward trend from Round 7 to Round 8 from 67% to 58%. Under the OVC programme the prevalence is less than that for the HBC decreasing from 29% to 21% in the current Round. This means that the food assistance is having positive impact on the beneficiaries and it is also an indication that there is need to discharge clients form the programme and bring on board new deserving clients.

7. Water and Sanitation

Access to adequate water supply is a fundamental need and human right. Access to water supply also has considerable health and economic benefits to households and individuals. Lack of access to adequate water contributes to illnesses and deaths, especially in children. Lack of sanitation is also a major public health problem that causes disease, sickness and death.

Sixty-five percent of both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households had access to improved water sources. Some 35% of beneficiary and non-beneficiary households had unimproved water sources. An improved water sources refers to piped water, public tap, borehole with pump, protected dug well and purchased/tanker. Unimproved water sources refer to rain water, unprotected well, pond, dam, river, and stream.

In the analysis, Poor Housing referred to households whose housing structures had a mud or sand floor and a thatch roof. Medium Housing referred to households with a plastic roof and floor. Good housing referred to households with concrete roofs and floor, galvanized iron or tin and wood structures.

Sixty–eight percent of beneficiaries had poor housing facilities given that they are located in the rural areas. Sixty-one percent of the non-beneficiaries had poor housing structures. However of those with good housing structures, more were non-beneficiaries (22%).

8. Transfer preferences

Food aid beneficiaries were given the opportunity to indicate whether they preferred cash, food or both. From the interviewed beneficiary households 75% preferred food, 1% cash and 24% both food and cash.

Seventy-eight percent of households under Mashonaland Sub-office indicated that they preferred food because it satisfied household food shortages. Eighteen percent of households in Masvingo sub-office reported that the food prices were too high hence found it better to be given food than cash. 14% under Mutare Sub-office also highlighted that the food prices were unpredictable.

Twenty four percent of beneficiaries reported that they would rather get assistance in form of both food and cash as it can purchase food and other household needs. Analysis indicates that these beneficiaries are getting food assistance under the OVC and MVP programme. Since the majority (75%) of the households interviewed preferred food aid it may be sound to continue supporting the most vulnerable households with food assistance.

9. WFP Programming Implications

• Whilst WFP is targeting some of the vulnerable populations in its programmes, there appears to be a large proportion of households who also deserve who have not been reached, hence the targeting criteria should be revised to ensure that those households who may benefit from food assistance are targeted. This also means that there might be need to upscale food assistance programmes in order to accommodate the vulnerable populations.

• Given the above, there is need to revise the targeting and selection criteria for programmes such as the Vulnerable Group Feeding, which will result in evidence based criteria which selects the most vulnerable households for food assistance.

CHS VIII Questionnaire

District_____________________________ |__| Site _____________________________ |__|__|
Beneficiary HH as per CP record: 1 = Yes 2 = No
Programme Activity as per FDP records1: |__| Household number |__|__|

Guidance for introducing yourself and the purpose of the interview:

• My name is _____ and I work for _________ (NGO name/WFP).

• Your household has been selected by chance from all households in the area for this interview. The purpose of this interview is to obtain information on the effects of the WFP food aid program. It helps us understand whether we are implementing our program properly and whether our intended objectives are met.

• The survey is voluntary and the information that you give will be confidential. The information will be used to prepare reports, but neither your, nor any other names, will be mentioned in any reports. There will be no way to identify that you gave this information.

• Could you please spare some time (around 40 minutes) for the interview?

NB to enumerator: DO NOT suggest in any way that household entitlements could depend on the outcome of the interview, as this will prejudice the answers.