ADAPTING TO AN URBAN WORLD

URBAN FOOD SECURITY PILOT ASSESSMENT HARARE, ZIMBABWE

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Background

In 2008, the world reached a tipping point: for the first time in history more than half the world's population was classified as living in urban centres as opposed to rural areas. By 2030 the urban population is predicted to exceed five billion, with countries in Africa and Asia urbanizing faster than in other regions.[1] The rapid and mostly uncontrolled urbanization in developing countries is increasingly threatening the wellbeing and the development opportunities of city dwellers.

Millions of poor urban households are faced with structural problems and threats related to poverty, including lack of security of tenure, precarious living conditions often in overcrowded slums, poor or no access to basic services, unemployment, violence, public health risks and poor sanitation.[2] These underlying causes of food and nutrition insecurity are further exacerbated by the increased frequency and scale of disasters associated with climate change, and by the food, fuel and financial crisis.

Growing levels of urban vulnerability has led to increased demand for credible and useful urban assessments, analysis and information. In order to address this need WFP and the global Food Security cluster (gFSC) have launched a joint project aimed at adapting food security assessment tools and methodologies. Several partners, including UNHCR, Oxfam, Samaritan's Purse, World Vision International WVI, International Federation of the Red Cross IFRC, World Animal Protection and ALNAP have also joined the urban partnership. A series of urban assessments will be implemented under this initiative, and Zimbabwe was selected as first case study.

Harare was suggested as a suitable location for the first Adapting to an Urban World project pilot following input from partners of the steering committee created to guide the process of the project. When partner organisations reached out to their regions and countries and there was a particular interest from southern Africa as the region already had on-going urban work through the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (rVAC). Zimbabwe is one of the few African countries with a rich data and information base on urban food security. Although Harare has a substantial history of research on the urban dimensions of food security, changes in methodology over time and the use of tools that may not be adapted to urban settings make it difficult to track trends. This wealth of information further motivated the decision by the gFSC and WFP to select the country as one of the six pilot locations for this study.

Country Context

With a population of 13 million[3], some 33% of Zimbabwe's population reside in urban areas. At independence in 1980, the population of the capital city, Harare was under half a million but it grew rapidly during the 1980s primarily as a result of large-scale rural-urban migration. With over 2 million people, Harare has 47% of the urban population. Poverty levels are high in urban areas. Some 38.2% of the urban population are poor, with 5.6% regarded as very poor.[4] A growing urban population combined with high poverty levels, high unemployment and high pressure on social services are making poor urban households vulnerable to food insecurity. Urban food insecurity among the low-income population increased from 24% in 2006 to 33% in 2009, dropping to 13% in 2011 ZimVAC urban assessments).

[1] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2014). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision, Highlights

[2] United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2013). State of the World's cities 2012/2013.

[3] ZIMSTAT 2012. http://www.zimstat.co.zw/

[4] Zimbabwe 2012 Millennium Development Goals Progress Report. Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion & United Nations Development Programme

The levels of unemployment are high. Of the ten provinces in Zimbabwe, Harare has the highest proportion of economically active persons between 15 and 49 years, yet the proportion of gainfully employed is dwindling, as economic hardships increase. With the rapid shrinking of the formal sector – estimated at only around 10%, men have joined the informal sector, which was previously dominated by women and the youth, and are slowly but surely pushing out the women, thereby impacting negatively on the latter's source of livelihoods. No clear policies are being developed to harness the informal sector.

Overcrowding is common in urban areas with a single housing unit usually accommodating more than one household. This has created pressure on social services with urban authorities in Zimbabwe facing critical challenges in providing public services such as housing, water provision and sanitation, waste disposal, health services and energy for their residents. According to the *Safe Cities Research* (on-going), the increasing urbanisation is putting basic services at stake. Particularly, they identified water and sanitation as key issues in urban areas. Poor water and sanitation resulted in a serious cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe in 2008, mainly in urban areas with over 100,000 people contracting the disease and more than 4,000 deaths recorded. This shows how pressure on public services has implications on the nutritional status at household and individual levels.

Most of the food in Zimbabwe's urban markets is imported, rendering the urban population more susceptible to external food shocks and rising food prices.

Considering the existing vulnerabilities in urban areas and the growing urban population, accurate food security figures are essential to track the development and determine where the greatest needs are. However, challenges in how to best measure food security in urban areas remain.

Most urban assessments conducted in Zimbabwe have battled with one common element: defining the sampling frame or study areas.

The most comprehensive urban livelihoods assessments in Zimbabwe have been conducted by the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC), a multi-sectoral committee mandated by government on vulnerability issues. Drawing from the ZimVAC rural livelihoods assessments and the RVAC, the urban assessments have had a broad thematic approach encompassing urban livelihoods, food and nutrition, water and sanitation, service provision including education and health.

The first ZimVAC led urban assessment in 2003 used a random sampling with enumeration areas covering high income, medium income, low income as well as squatter camps. The following ZimVAC urban assessments (2006, 2009 and 2011) concentrated on the low-income areas defined by the type of area as high-density, peri-urban or small squatter settlement or small town. This implies that in the later assessments the results are only applicable to those geographical areas and cannot be extended to the entire town or city. The approach of only targeting poorer areas in assessments was also used in an assessment conducted by *The NGO Joint Initiative for Urban Zimbabwe* in 2011, which targeted urban poor in high-density areas.

Previous urban food security assessments and the work conducted by SADC[5] all pointed out that in an urban assessment the zoning is less about defining different livelihoods than about understanding the layout of the city in order to identify the most vulnerable areas to be included in the sampling frame. However, there is a need for more research to come up with criteria for inclusion of urban areas in assessments.

Another common theme coming out of previous assessments is the difficulty of applying traditional livelihood definition to urban dwellers.

One of the key findings from the 2011 assessment from the NGO initiative indeed was that the informal sector plays a big role in urban livelihoods but this is not reflected in traditional livelihood group classification. They noted also that outdated regulations undermine and stifle the potential of the informal sector. Cities such as Harare, Bulawayo and Gweru need a regulatory environment that

[5] Southern Africa Development Community (SADC): Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme

promotes the development of the informal economy. Also in "The State of Food Insecurity in Harare, Zimbabwe 2012" by *The African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN)* the importance of the informal sector activities and agriculture in urban areas are recognized. According to this report, the participation in the informal food economy was the major response to the crisis that peaked in 2008 and urban agriculture was a critical survival strategy with very few actually making income from home produce. Additionally, previous reports have found that urban agriculture is a significant livelihood option for the majority of the poor while agriculture is not expected to be a common livelihood option in urban area.

The review of previous assessments also indicated that standard expenditure analysis is missing some key elements and should be adapted in future assessment. For example, debt from utility bills (together with education and health) is a major challenge in urban centres.

The food security measures previously used in ZimVAC assessments have included caloric consumption, poverty information and dietary diversity. In the urban assessment conducted by ZimVAC, in high-density areas, peri-urban, small towns and townships, the questionnaire collected information on households' demography, water and sanitation, access to social services (education, accommodation, lighting and cooking energy), poverty, income levels and sources including remittances, expenditure patterns and levels, food sources and consumption patterns, food security, urban agriculture, household challenges and shocks. Based on this data the proportion of food insecurity was calculated.

The table below show prevalence of food insecurity based on these reports in 2006, 2009 and 2011.

Year of Urban assessment	**Sampling**	**Food insecurity measurement**	**% food in-secure**	**Provinces with highest prevalence**
2003	Random sampling taking suburb type into account	Households that failed to meet a minimum caloric requirement of 2,100 Kcal/person/day was determined as food insecure	64%	Bulawayo (71%), Matabeleland North (68%) and Midlands (65%).
2006	Random sampling in high density, peri-urban areas, small towns and townships	The report used three indicators to determine food insecurity (a) caloric intake; (b) the Food Poverty Line; and (c) a measure of dietary diversity. A food insecure household was one which failed to meet a minimum value on all three indicators (or on (a) and (b) or on (b) and (c)).	24 %	Bulawayo (35%) Manicaland (33%) and Mashonaland West (28%).

2009	Random sampling in high density, peri-urban areas, small towns and townships	Same methodology as in 2006.	33%	Manicaland (47%), Matabeleland North (45%) and Midlands (36%)
2011	Random sampling in high density, peri-urban areas, small towns and townships		13%	Mashonaland Central (23%), Bulawayo (16%) and Matabeleland North (16%)

The AFSUN study[6], captured information on household demographic characteristics, poverty data, income and expenditure patterns, household food insecurity experiences, dietary diversity information and household coping mechanisms, and showed much higher levels of food insecurity in the city. The study also highlighted the necessity to look into social networks to understand better how people are surviving in urban areas in absence of formal safety nets.

Building on previous assessments in urban areas and considering the lack of consensus of how to best measure the levels of food insecurity, there is a need for a better understanding of how food security can be determined and what urban specific characteristics and challenges have to be taken into account when assessing food security in urban areas.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are to contribute to the understanding of how to assess food security in urban areas and to test existing tools in order to inform and influence future urban food security assessments. In particular, the aim of this assessment is to provide input to the development of methods and tools for ZimVAC led national urban assessments in Zimbabwe.

For this purpose, the assessment draws upon previous studies and interventions outlined above but specifically aimed to increase the understanding of:

- Household food consumption patterns, including differences between individuals within the household and how to capture food consumed outside the household.
- Expenditure patterns and challenges in capturing all household expenses.
- The most common coping strategies when there is not enough food or income to buy food in the household.
- Available livelihood strategies, including the diversity of income sources within the households and the participation of different household members in these activities.
- Neighbourhood criteria or characteristics that contribute to or are associated with vulnerability to food insecurity.

[6] The African Food Security Urban Network (2012). The State of Food Insecurity in Harare, Zimbabwe 2012

Process and Partnership

The WFP-gFSC-partners assessment was originally planned to take place in the framework of the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) urban assessment initiative initially planned for the end of 2014. This was to include a survey to be carried out in Harare and Bulawayo including analysis of context, a mapping exercise, market analysis, quantitative household food security data collection and a nutrition element. Unfortunately, this larger ZimVAC assessment was re-scheduled to take place in early 2105.

A suggestion was thus made to the Food and Nutrition Council (FNC) to carry out an exploratory study to better understand how to measure certain elements of food insecurity based on what are known to be gaps and challenges in how food security is measured in urban areas. The study would then be designed so that the results could be used as a basis for development of tools in the national urban assessment under the lead of ZimVAC. The suggested approach was agreed on together with ZimVAC and all involved partners and a qualitative exploratory study was undertaken under the lead of ZimVAC in-country.

Process Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

The main strength of the process related to the study was the collaboration and the strong involvement of all partners, especially at the local level with open discussions among partners regarding all aspects of the assessment taking place before and during the assessment. The contextual knowledge and local experience from the partner organisations working in the field were valuable in strengthening the results of the study.

Another positive aspect was the time to be allocated to consult with partners involved and analyse the results after the fieldwork. Daily de-briefing and adjustment of tools took place during fieldwork days and after the field work a significant amount of time was allocated to discussion among the partners and analysis of results, which in the end strengthened the results of the assessment.

Challenges

Some communication challenges were met in the planning phase of the study arising from the multiple partners involved in the assessment. The complete commitment and buy-in from all involved partners came late in the day and this resulted in a timing issue. Little time was available for preparation to obtain all necessary security and police clearances. In turn, this resulted in difficulties doing all types of data collection that would be desirable, for example focus group interviews. In addition, all neighbourhoods were not accessible for the team due to a generally insecure situation and political tensions in some neighbourhoods.

Challenges related to the partnership included a lack of clear expectations of the final outcome, roles and responsibilities not being defined properly in the planning phase as well as an agreement of contribution of resources from the different partners.

A more comprehensive literature review of conducted, on-going and planned similar urban initiatives/programmes would have benefitted the outcome of the study. The secondary data review that took place, should have been completed before the planning of the primary data collection to make previously known gaps and challenges more precise.

Process Recommendations

- As a first step in the planning phase, clear roles and responsibilities for all partners involved should be defined and an agreement on the expectations of the final output of the project

should be established. It is recommended also to agree on partners' contributions and resources in a timely manner;

- For an urban food security assessment to be as efficient as possible, a comprehensive literature review of previous assessments in the country/region should be conducted with the purpose to identify previous methods used, challenges encountered and lessons learned. The secondary data collection should include identification and analysis of food security related data and analysis of the context of the urban neighbourhoods/settlements where the assessment would take place. It is important to ensure that the project builds upon what already exist in the country, fills the gaps and avoid overlaps.
- As part of the planning phase scoping/pre-assessment missions from the global team should be planned to facilitate a smooth fieldwork process and to identify key players in the country, including government and NGO partners. Planning should be done with partners at field level (including bilaterally) to make sure all relevant stakeholders with expertise are aware of the project and can get involved in a timely manner. It is crucial to explore and highlight the added value of the project and therefore important to consult with relevant stakeholders and ensure that there is interest and a more importantly a need for an urban assessment.
- Planning with the government should start a few months in advance to make sure there is the support needed to conduct the field work; to ensure possible participation of government units in the field work; and ensure that logistical arrangements are taken care of such as security and police clearance in the targeted locations and city council representatives aware of the field work;
- It is also important to engage the regional level. Regional Bureaus of WFP and partners as well as regional government initiatives (i.e. SADC in Southern Africa) should be consulted and aware of the project in view of its possibly endorsement and utility for similar purposes in the Region;
- After the assessment phase, it is important to follow-up with country partners and government and learn how the results and tools were used and included in their urban programmes.

Methodology

The Primary Data Collection Approach

The data collection exercise comprised two different parts. One exploratory part using qualitative methods, to provide a detailed picture of factors related to food insecurity and another part to test an existing data collection tool and its suitability for urban areas.

The motivation for using this approach is that tools for measuring food insecurity already exist and are widely used in rural areas and sometimes also in urban areas, but their suitability for urban areas are often unknown. The addition of in-depth information related to the food security situation specifically for urban areas could improve the already existing tools without having to create something completely new. The combination of the in-depth food security information generated through the exploratory part including qualitative interviews and the testing of an existing tool allowed for the identification of discrepancies in information generated through the two methodologies. Areas where the existing tool has to be adjusted to correctly account for the specific characteristics of an urban setting could thereby be identified.

Preparation of Data Collection Instruments

In preparation for the data collection fieldwork, a one-day training with all participants of the data collection team was organised. The data collection team was composed of enumerators and field coordinators belonging to different organizations. This resulted in an effective collaborative exercise based on solid partnership between WFP, gFSC partners and National Government. Organizations

included: Oxfam, WVI, Zimbabwe Red Cross and IFRC among the NGOs, ZimStat, Food and Nutrition Council, Agritex, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MPSLSW) among government units with WFP and gFSC as coordinators. The main purpose of the training in addition to explaining the objectives of the study design was to go through the forms and the questionnaire and adjust to the local context.

The team was divided into three groups, one for each type of form/questionnaire: Household interview, key informant interview, Household food security questionnaire.

The groups were provided with drafts that had been prepared by WFP based on the objectives of the study and the groups went through the forms/questionnaires question by question, to improve the tools and make sure the questions were culturally acceptable and understandable. Suggested changes were presented to the whole team.

Sampling and Definition of Sampling Frame

The first stage of the sampling process was to decide the sampling frame, i.e. what the population of interest would be. The sampling frame for most urban food security assessment is a subgroup of the population, for example the urban poor or other characteristic making the population more vulnerable to food insecurity. It is often not seen as cost-effective to do a random sample of the whole population in a city, which would mean also including more affluent areas in the sampling frame. The purpose of most urban food security assessments is to assess the state of food insecurity in vulnerable or poor urban areas to get the facts that can serve as a basis for interventions to improve the situation or to avoid further deterioration in those areas.

Previous urban assessments in Zimbabwe have used the population density as the main determinant for inclusion of areas in the sampling frame. The motivation for using population density is the availability of data and that in the context of Zimbabwe higher density areas generally are poorer and households have poorer access to social services such as sufficient water. These factors also make these areas more food insecure.

To better understand the different areas of Harare and what criteria should be thought of for inclusion of an areas in the sampling frame, some of the main stakeholders were brought together in a one-day workshop with one of the aims to identify criteria for inclusion of areas in urban food security assessments. The participants of the workshop came from different government ministries, NGOs and the UN agencies. In the workshop, participants were asked to select five of the most vulnerable areas of Harare with different characteristics to be included in pilot assessment and to motivate the inclusion of these specific areas and what was making them more vulnerable to food insecurity among urban settlements in Harare. This resulted in stakeholders identifying some of the more vulnerable areas of Harare and the motivation for inclusion of these areas were mainly related to the topics: Urban planning and housing; Social services; poverty and social exclusion and density. Although these are important parameters, the challenge is that data might not always be available on a disaggregated level to systematically classify areas into different levels of vulnerability to food insecurity based on parameters such as poverty and access to social services. More details are listed in the Annex I.

For this study purposive sampling was deemed the most appropriate to achieve the objectives. Whilst the workshop participants had selected vulnerable areas the data collection finally took place in five high-density neighbourhoods of Harare in November 2014. As there was little time between the workshop and the data collection it was not possible to correctly sensitise the vulnerable neighbourhoods and so ZimVAC representatives deemed that in terms of security and the availability of neighbourhood leaders to facilitate the identification of key informant interviews, it was more appropriate and effective to carry out the assessment according to the more usual method of focusing on high density neighbourhoods. St Mary' in Chitungwiza, Dzivarasekwa, Rugare, Glen Norah and Mufakose were chosen for inclusion in the pilot.

For more information on the locations please refer to Annex III.

Data Collection: Qualitative Household and Key-Informant Interviews

The team went to one location each day during 5 consecutive days starting on a Friday and ending on the Tuesday after. The team consisted of about 20 people from different organizations and different technical backgrounds (agriculture, social services, statistics, and the humanitarian and development sector).

The exploratory part was undertaken through household and key-informant interviews.

The interviews had a qualitative character with open-ended questions, which allowed the participants to explain their situation without limiting the answers through fixed questions and response alternatives in a questionnaire. This approach explained issues in-depth and increased the understanding of how households access food and what challenges they face to stay food secure in their day-to-day life. During these interviews, the interviewers were encouraged to ask follow-up questions to further explore topics related to the food security situation. Notes were taken on a form allowing the note taker to write whole sentences as the respondent said them.

The topics included in the interviews were centred around food consumption, expenditure patterns, livelihoods and coping strategies with some of the topics in the household interviews and the key-informant interview overlapping to allow for triangulation of information from the different sources.

In each neighbourhood, three to four key informant interviews were conducted with representatives of the community, including health workers, counsellors, social workers, Members of Parliament and community members to get more detailed information about livelihoods and differences between groups in the neighbourhood (e.g. characteristics of poorer/wealthier households). Topics included in the key-informant interview were characteristics of the neighbourhood, food sources, expenditures, income sources, livelihood calendar, shocks and coping, wealth ranking.

For the semi structured household interviews, six households with different main income sources were selected with the aim to capture the diversity between households, in contrast to the general perception that came out from the key-informant interviews.

Testing of Tools

The tool chosen for the testing was a household questionnaire that included the modules of the WFP Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators on Food Security (CARI). The approach addresses the multiple dimensions of food security with transparent indicators, which are consistent with internationally accepted food security concepts.

Modules included in household questionnaire:

- Household demographics
- Meal frequency inside and outside the house
- Food consumption
- Income sources
- Food and non-food expenditures
- Consumption coping strategies
- Asset depletion and livelihood coping strategies

These elements have also been included in previous ZimVAC assessments, motivating the inclusion and validation of these specific food security related areas. The modules in this questionnaire allow for the calculation of food security indicators such as the food consumption score, the coping strategies index and the share of expenditure that is spent on food.

Six households per neighbourhood (30 in total) were interviewed testing the existing household food security questionnaire.

In all interviews, the study was introduced to the households using the standard ZimVAC protocol.

For more information on the final tools used, please refer to Annex II.

Methodological Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

By using a qualitative approach a more nuanced understanding of the context and the factors associated with vulnerability and food insecurity could be gained. The qualitative method also allowed for a more participatory approach generating ownership from partners and stakeholders in the analysis phase. The simplicity of the design made it easier to explain to a non-technical audience what was done and how. Finally, the design of the study with less heavy data collection implied cost savings compared with a larger quantitative study.

Another strength of the study was the participation of partners from different sectors both from within and outside the government bringing a range of experience from previous urban assessments and expertise in the team. The breadth of experience strengthened the analysis of the results as well as the identification of challenges and suggestion of constructive ways to overcome these challenges. A key added value of this exploratory study is that it will be used as a basis to feed into the larger national urban assessment to be conducted by the Government of Zimbabwe and thus can be further validated.

Limitations

The fact that some of the following limitations are common to assessments in general is recognised but they are highlighted here below as being specific issues in the pilot assessment. The use of qualitative methods provides a deeper understanding of the topics that are being studied but is limited in its ability to provide statistically representative findings and to make general statements about the food security situation. The sampling was purposive and although the results are likely to be transferable to other similar areas, there may be significant differences in areas not included in the sample skewing the results to be valid for only those areas where data collection took place.

A methodological challenge met was that, although the team got an introduction to qualitative methods, not everyone had a deep understanding of the methodology. This led to some interviewers not taking complete notes and instead summarising what was said in only one word or a very short sentence. In the analysis of the findings the team interpreted the findings as a collaborative exercise. It was seen a strength that the team had previous experience in food security assessments and a contextual knowledge. However, this may also have resulted in preconceived ideas being brought into the analysis and the interpretation of the results.

During the process of the data collection, the team met challenges in order to find households willing to participate. The timing of the assessment and the little time available for preparation and sensitisation was one challenge encountered. The team recognised that for people to be willing to participate fully there is a need for proper sensitisation of the community, for example through media (newspapers, TV, radio). It was also a challenge to find respondents during the weekends and especially on the Sunday since most people go to church. In some cases there was reluctance by potential respondents to participate in the study even if they were home and in some other cases the household heads were unavailable during data collection, because they were engaged in economic activities. The team found that the participants had very limited time available for the interview and for this reason emphasised the importance of reducing the length of interviews to the extent possible.

For participating households it was sometimes noticed that the respondents were not open to provide all types of information, for example their income. The enumerators experienced a tendency among the participants to mention a lower than their actual income. In some cases, the level of expenditure mentioned was higher than the income, which is unlikely and pointing in the direction that the respondent provided inaccurate information.

The political and economic environment is putting stress on people, which can also influence the accuracy of the interviews. The enumerators encountered some expectations for food assistance, which

compromised the responses given in some cases. It was felt that households sometimes reduce the consumption (size, diversity) in expectation of aid.

Methodological Recommendations

- For future assessments it is recommended that the criteria for including areas into the sampling frame are well defined and agreed on through stakeholder discussions. This process should be described clearly and challenges in reaching all areas included in the sampling frame should be explained so that the results can be interpreted correctly.
- One possible suggestion would be to divide the city/town according to wealth of the area and to build upon this by using secondary sources and key informant interviews to gather information relating to two main indicators which are regularly used as a basis for urban stratification: housing and access to services (other criteria to define wealth could be also defined).
- Stakeholder sensitisation is recommended before data collection commences to make the households aware of the exercise and the purpose beforehand and thereby increase participation
- Data collection should happen at a time when it is most likely that the household head is available in the home and to the extent possible not disturb income activities. Data collection over the weekends could be considered. However, it should also be taken into consideration that in some contexts, such as the example of Zimbabwe, Sunday is a day when many families are going to church.
- Considering the little time available for households to participate in the interview it is important to make sure the questionnaire has an adequate length and is not too long;
- The presentation of assessment to respondents should ensure not to raise any expectations of assistance. The solution in Zimbabwe was to emphasise that the study was carried out under government lead, which decreased the expectations of any direct assistance from the UN or any of the NGOs involved.

Analysis

To facilitate analysis the team was divided into three groups, one for each interview type: semi-structured household interview, key informant interview, household quantitative questionnaire. Each group was responsible for typing/entering the data into a template every day after the data collection was completed. For the two qualitative interview types, with households and key informants, the groups typed up the answers for each interview in a template where they could write freely and draw out some of the most important findings from each day. In the end of the day, the whole team discussed the main findings together as well as any challenges they had met during data collection.

After the finalisation of the data collection, analysis of the qualitative data was done by the groups by answering analytical questions divided into three thematic areas: 1.) Food consumption and food sources 2.) Income and expenditures and 3.) Difficulties and coping strategies. In addition, all groups were asked to note any crosscutting challenges or issues that they had faced during data collection. Example of analytical questions for the groups to answer based on the data collected were: *What is the significance of household members consuming food outside the household? Who is consuming food outside the house? What is consumed outside the house? Are different members of the household consuming different type of food outside the house?*

The data collected through the household questionnaire was entered and analysed in SPSS and the results, although not statistically representative were compared with what had come out from the qualitative interviews.

Main Assessment Findings

Household Composition

The size of the households interviewed in the structured questionnaire ranged between 2 and 9 individuals with the greatest number of household members between ages 18-59 years. In the qualitative interviews it came out that households with disabled individuals or orphans were seen as more vulnerable and with greater needs and it was suggested that these aspects should be included in any survey conducted in urban areas of Zimbabwe. The age grouping used was 0-5, 5-18, 18-59 and above 59 as this is the standard way of disaggregating age groups in Zimbabwe.

Discussion and Recommendations

In the preparation of the data collection tools it was agreed that a household should be defined as sharing a 'common cooking-pot'. However this definition could be problematic in some urban areas due to household members routinely eating outside, or several families sharing the living space without any other stronger connection. To avoid these potential issues and difficulties in identifying one household the definition of a household as 'sharing a common residence, income and expenditure has been suggested'[7].

- In the preparation for any assessment including households, agree on a common definition on how to define a household. The recommended definition by WFP to use in urban areas is: sharing a common residence, income and expenditure.
- It was also recommended from the team that in future urban assessments a question about disabled or chronically sick individuals should be included since those households are often seen as more vulnerable.

Food Consumption

Households across the sampled neighbourhoods indicated that they typically consume about two meals per day, typically brunch and supper. The reason mentioned to why few meals consumed is mainly limited access to adequate income at household level. Food items usually consumed for brunch (a combination of breakfast and lunch) are tea, bread, margarine and in some instances rice and soup. Some households reported having eggs as an addition to the brunch but this was not regular. For supper, sadza (thick maize meal porridge) and green leafy vegetables were the most prominent food items, although some had meat, kapenta (sardines) and fish. Although eating few meals per day and cheap and less preferred foods were mostly consumed, the frequency and diversity of food consumed was acceptable for almost all households according to the food consumption score which is an indicator of household food consumption based on a 7 day recall of food items consumed in the household.

There were no major differences in food consumed between members within the household. However, it was noted that children in some households have more meals than the adults. For instance, children in some households have porridge in the morning and consume more fruit, rice and potatoes than the adults. In a few cases, household members consumed maize porridge with peanut butter/margarine in the morning and this was typically for school going children.

It was also noted that most school children had a drink and corn snack (jiggies or maputi) as packed meal almost on daily basis as no other school lunch was served. Some households had members consuming meals outside the home and this was mainly observed for those who were working. Some of the formally employed household members reported that they either carried a packed meal or ate sadza with meat, mazondo (meat), chips or buns and a drink during the day away from the home.

[7] WFP (2008). Technical Guidance Sheet. Urban food security and nutrition assessments.

Differences in who consumes what inside the households was not noted to a larger extent, although there were some examples of the men consuming more mazondo whilst the women consumed lighter foods.

Discussion and Recommendations

As noted in many urban areas around the world, food consumption outside the house is a common practice especially among working household members and this was also found in Harare. In addition to the frequency of food consumed outside the house, it is also important to capture the amount and the nutrient value of food consumed outside the house to determine how this food is contributing to the overall household food consumption. For example, in an urban food security assessment in Malawi, household members were also asked about the type of food consumed outside the house. In addition, since children often have different eating patterns than the rest of the household, it was suggested that their food consumption and eating practices should be measured separately for children, although this can have implications in terms of cost for collecting this extra piece of data.

- In future urban food security assessments it is recommended to capture food consumed outside the household as this can contribute greatly to the diets of the household members and there is a need to know more about these food consumption patterns in urban areas. However, more research is needed to find out how this information can best be collected.
- One suggestion for future studies based on the different food consumption patterns in children compared with adults is to record food consumed by children separately. However the time and budget to collect this information has to be considered.

Food Sources

The majority of households indicated that they depend on cash purchase for most of their food requirements. The main source of cereals, tubers, sugar, milk, meat, eggs, cooking oil, salt, tea mentioned was the market. Apart from the formal local shops and some bigger supermarkets, small informal retail shops and informal vendors constitute the most common places where households get their food. The informal vendors are preferred for their convenience. These shops often sell very small quantities of food, which can be an important advantage for consumers with limited cash. These are mainly for groceries that are bought in small quantities and represent the day-to-day expenditures of households. Formal vending stalls exist, although they are not as popular partly due to their greater distance from residences.

The second most common source of food is own production. Some households even produce a surplus from own production, which is sold at the market to generate income. The food consumed coming from own production can come from rural as well as urban areas. Some households residing in urban areas have access to land and produce food in rural areas while other households have access to land that they use for agricultural activities within the urban area. About 50-60% of the households in the areas were estimated to practice urban agriculture. In the majority of cases it is the women that have the main responsibility for the cultivation. For those who practice urban agriculture there are mainly two types, agriculture that takes place in open spaces within the urban borders and agriculture that takes place in home gardens.

The most important crop grown in the open spaces was maize. In addition, in the open spaces that are set aside for development or conservation such as wetlands, households also reported to be cultivating beans, which at times were sold to their neighbours and passers-by. Other crops mentioned to be grown in the open space cultivation were tomatoes, sweet potatoes and other vegetables. There is high demand and competition for land for cultivation in all areas and access is not always sustained. Some respondents indicated that the plots they used for urban agricultural activities had been converted to residential plots by the responsible authority. This development was mentioned to have negative effects on household food security as well as income transfers. In cases where households still have access to urban plots for agricultural activities they indicated that the plots provided significant quantities of cereal to cover household needs for as much as six months.

A number of households reported that they had backyard gardens where they grow leafy vegetables, tomatoes and onion for household consumption. In some cases also cereals, such as maize were produced for own consumption. The practice of own production is widespread amongst homeowners with mainly vegetables produced.

Reportedly, only ten to fifteen percent of households residing in areas where data collection took place engage in poultry raising activities. Most of the poultry are sold as broilers, to raise income via the market.

The least common source of food was remittances. Remittances constituted an important income source for some households, and these remittances enabled food purchases via the market. Others got their food through borrowing and barter exchange.

Discussion and Recommendations

In most urban areas globally, the main way of acquiring food is through cash purchase, and so also in Harare. Thus, the households' access to food will be determined by what is available in the market and what the food prices are in relation to the income and assets available in the households. However, what distinguish urban areas of Zimbabwe from many other countries is the significant amount of agriculture that is carried out in urban areas and the importance of own production as a source of food. As much as 60% of households grow their own food in Harare which can be compared with 23% in Maputo, 3% in Lusaka and 9% in Johannesburg[8]. It is mainly the women that are cultivating and this is an activity that has benefits both for the economic and the nutritional status of the household. However, agriculture is not considered an urban activity in Zimbabwe and as the case in many urban areas around the globe therefore not taken into account in urban planning and considered an illegal activity, but for many households a necessity to obtain sufficient food.

- With food purchased at the market being the most important way of acquiring food in urban households, it is recommended for future studies to further investigate how the households can access food from the market and how the food prices influence household food access.
- Future urban food security assessments in settings where urban agriculture is a significant contributor to the food security situation, will need to generate information regarding this topic to quantify the importance of food from own production and the challenges related to urban agriculture. Recommended topics to cover are:
    - To ensure that data collection instruments incorporate questions that distinguish between own production that is produced on "home" gardens; and own production that is produced on bigger plots away from the residence; i.e. community or local government land in "open spaces".
    - Questions that captures own production that is originating in rural or peri-urban areas.
    - Questions that capture food source information and own production information from a gender perspective; including responsibilities within the household for obtaining or producing food.
    - Capture challenges in practicing urban agriculture both from the household perspective and from a policy perspective. At the household level, this information could be obtained through asking households what their main constraints are related to agricultural production. The policy perspective is recommended to be included to get a clearer picture of the regulations around urban agriculture and what opportunities there are for urban households to sustain their own production of food.

[8] AFSUN (2010). Pathways to insecurity: Urban food supply and access in Southern African cities, Crush J., & Frayne, B. eds., in Urban Food Security Series No.3., African Food Security and Urban Network (AFSUN).

Income Generating Activities

The most common sources of income are small businesses (tuck shops), trading food and clothes, petty trade and formal employment (mainly civil service) and agriculture. Common income sources for older people are pensions (mainly in the neighbourhoods Dzivarasekwa and Glen Norah) and remittances from their grown-up children. Across all study sites, the level of formal employment was reported as low with most of the households getting their income from engaging in petty trade where they sell household items and consumables for a small profit margin.

Cross border trade was noted as one of the main sources of income with traders in this respect dealing in household durable items and clothing which they mainly sell on favourable credit terms to surrounding communities and beyond. This activity was common among both sexes, but by no means an option for the poorest households who do not have the possibility to raise the required capital.

Other sources of income reported include leasing properties to tenants who would pay rent monthly. The amount of rent per room was reported to be between US$30 and US$80 depending on the location and size of the room. This source of income is an option those who have houses, but few other income sources which is more common in the older population. Owning a house can thereby serve as a buffer against food insecurity for those who own property. In one of the study areas, Rugare, pension was reported as one of the main sources of income for the retired National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) workers who get an average of US$ 17 per month.

Both adult men and women were reported to be active participants in economic activities. While it is more common that women take part in activities such as small business and petty trade it is more common for men to have a formal employment.

Impact on Food Security

With the majority of households relying on the market as their main source of food, the stability of the food security situation is highly correlated with the household economy and their income sources. One challenge seen in this regard is the instability of many of the income sources. The formal employment and pensions has regular income while small business and petty trade has a more irregular income (fluctuates between highs and lows due to demand). Petty trade, chicken business, vending and cross border trade were significantly higher during public holidays such as Easter and Christmas times when demand will be high. On the other hand, households engaging in these activities had difficulties in January and February, a period when demand is lower because of people recovering from the Christmas and new-year over-expenditures. However, for those who are in formal employment, the most common challenge was that of delayed salaries that may take even months to come, as some indicated that the salaries where not being received on the traditional pay days or consistently. Also, most of the salaries/wages are low due to the persistent economic hardships in the country.

The households in various income activities also experienced structural challenges in sustaining their business to make a profit. For the most common income source, petty trade, the biggest challenge mentioned is that they had no proper vending stalls. Most of the respondents involved in vending activities indicated that there had been an influx of vendors resulting in lower profits than before rendering these activities less viable.

The home industries face the challenges of inadequate infrastructure and space to work on which would significantly affect their potential. The cross border traders face the twin challenges of having to meet the high import duties as well as the challenge of depressed markets for their commodities owing to the current liquidity crisis. These traders are facing the risk of accumulating debts that threaten the viability of their businesses. Other challenges mentioned were no record keeping, no separation of food meant for the business and that for home consumption and inadequate capital for the business to replenish stocks.

Discussion and Recommendations

The rather similar different economic activities found in urban areas require clear categories and definitions for how to differentiate between the income activity options in quantitative surveys with fixed response alternatives. For example, clear descriptions of what should be classified as self-employed and what the differences between petty trade and small business are needed. In the analysis phase, this information is important to be able to define who is more food insecure. In urban areas in particular there may be a large variation in vulnerability to food insecurity depending on the size of the business for business owners. When grouping the income activities, parameters such as formal/informal and legal/illegal should be taking into consideration.

- In future quantitative assessment, include clear, well-defined categories for different income-activities, avoid broad definitions as re-grouping can be done during analysis
- In future assessments, capture the stability of income by asking the household when the income is lower from the different income activities and how it is fluctuating.
- It is recommended to capture who in the household that is participating in the different activities male/female, children/adults. This will allow for an analysis of the gender dimensions related to income activities.
- In household interviews, ask separately about incoming remittances since that is not always considered an income source by the household.

Expenditures and Assets

Food expenditure was noted as a major component of household expenditures and varied from about $50 on average to about $250[9] per household per month. Equally on the high side was the expenditure on rent, electricity and water which varied depending on whether the responding households was a landlord or a tenant. Many households end up being in arrears due to expensive bills, with a significant portion of the households having their water and electricity disconnected by the utility company (ZESA) and city authorities after they fail to settle their bills. The utility company recently adopted a more flexible approach allowing households to pre-pay their bills thereby making it easier for consumers to pay their electricity bills and avoid being disconnected from the system. Despite this, many households still struggle to pay their bills, and resort to using cheaper sources of fuel such as firewood for their daily needs. Expenditure on education is also another significant component although parents have negotiated for staggered payment systems that would ease the pressure on the pocket as the schools opens.

In the households sampled for the structured household questionnaire the share spent on food from the total budget was generally low. Almost all households spent less than 50% on food. However, the impressions by the key informants was that food expenditures in general were higher when asked to rank and estimate the largest expenditure of the households in their community.

Households interviewed own a large range of assets including bed, wardrobe, TV, radio, freezer, sofas and stoves. Some households mentioned ownership of productive assets such as sewing machines, knitting machines and peanut butter machines.

The main differences mentioned between poorer and wealthier households were the quality of the housing, the wealthier was mentioned to have more rooms, better housing material and fences around their houses. It was also mentioned that they have cars and well-furnished houses.

Discussion and Recommendations

In the initial analysis the share spent on food was generally low, which would according to Engels law be a sign of household wealth. However, other expenses are generally high in urban areas and especially expenses such as rent, water, electricity and transport and with a significant part of food

[9] All currencies are given in US Dollars

coming from own production, there is a possibility that the value of food coming from own production has been underestimated. This can underestimate the economic vulnerability of households as measured by the food expenditure share.

- In future quantitative assessments, in order to capture all expenses related to food, it is recommended to ask specifically about the monetary value of food consumed that is coming from own production and the value of food consumed coming from own business. This is to ensure that all costs related to food are included and when the share of expenditure coming from food is calculated.
- In quantitative assessments where poverty data is not collected, asset indices such as the wealth index could be considered as a way to differentiate poorer from wealthier households in urban settings.

Shocks and Difficulties

Challenges in obtaining food were acknowledged by most households and this was mainly said to be due to unemployment and irregular and inconsistent income. Mid-month, beginning of school terms and bill payment periods were noted as the periods where these shocks affected households most. There is therefore a competing interest between food and other expenses such as rentals, utility bill payments, and health as well as transport costs.

In obtaining food, and apart from the challenges highlighted above, the key informants reported the occasional absence of food to purchase on the market.

Discussion and Recommendations

In most rural areas seasonality is an important component of food insecurity with periods over the year when it is known to be more difficult for households to maintain a proper diet, for example the lean season. Results from the Harare study indicate that in this setting the food security situation is less dependent on the climatic seasons and more related to specific events over the year when the general cost of living are higher.

Based on this it is recommended that:

- When assessing food security in urban areas, also capture when shocks and difficulties are most frequent, not only which month, since it can be also be a difficulty that is reoccurring every month.

Coping Strategies

Most of the households reached during the assessments mentioned that they had already altered eating patterns to have only two main meals per day, which seems to have become the standard, although it was seen as more ideal for households to have three meals per day. However, as mentioned previously in the report under the food consumption section, there are no indications of food insecurity based on the frequency and the nutrient value in what households consume. Households mentioned that would they face food shortages, the most common way of coping would be cutting the number of meals and complementing the diet by gathering wild fruits. Others mentioned that they would reduce the meal portion sizes.

For coping that is not directly related to food consumption, borrowing from friends and relatives was mentioned by the households and the key informants mentioned that some households would turn to unethical and illegal livelihood alternatives as prostitution, robbery/theft while others migrate to neighbouring countries to engage in different economic activities. Another strategy mentioned was to send children to rural areas to reduce the cost of school fees and transport.

Both adult men and women were reported to be active participants in economic activities and decision-making concerning how to use the food and what coping strategies to employ.

Discussion and Recommendations

Coping as mentioned by the households is mostly centred around reducing the amount of food consumed although in some cases other strategies were mentioned as a way to obtain food or income to buy food. While the food consumption strategies can change back immediately when the situation is getting better, other coping strategies such as selling off assets are putting households in a worse situation that in some cases will be irreversible and compromise future abilities to cope with shocks.

- It is recommended for future assessments that both food consumption strategies and livelihood coping strategies are included. Food consumption strategies give an indication of the difficulties faced by the households in that specific moment, while other coping strategies may have implications over a longer time, for example, the decision to turn to illegal activities.
- The coping strategies asked for has to be appropriate for, such as household members turning to illegal activities. A good way to find out more about different coping strategies and what is appropriate to talk about in the households are focus group discussions.
- It is recommended to include a range of different coping strategies with different severity to be able to differentiate the more serious situations from less serious situations. The severity of the coping strategies could also be found out through focus group discussions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Despite its limitations the urban assessment in Zimbabwe has allowed the formulation of the following conclusions that could improve upcoming urban food security assessments.

When assessing food security in urban areas specific attention has to be paid to a number of urban specific characteristics and challenges in order to collect accurate data. The main areas that will need attention are:

1.) How the sampling frame is being defined so that the most vulnerable areas are being included in the assessment

2.) How to account for all household food consumption with more people consuming food outside the home

3.) Households' access to food from the market, with food purchased with cash being the main food source

4.) How to accurately capture all household expenditures and assets in order to use this measure as a proxy for economic vulnerability

5.) How to make sure that the shocks and coping strategies are appropriate to urban areas, especially the livelihood related coping strategies which may differ significantly from rural areas, and

6.) How to make sure that when asking for income activities it will be possible to make categorisations that can distinguish the households that are more vulnerable to food insecurity from those that are less vulnerable depending on their source of income.

In previous urban assessments in Zimbabwe the sampling frame had been defined by the type of urban area, based on density, peri-urban and the size of the urban centre. This was used due to availability of data and the correlation between density and poverty in the case of Zimbabwe. For future assessments it is recommended that the criteria for including areas into the sampling frame are well defined and agreed on through stakeholder discussions. This process should be described clearly and challenges in reaching all areas included in the sampling frame should be explained so that the results can be interpreted correctly.

Although it was found that most meals are consumed within the house, food consumption outside the house is a common practice especially among working household members. For food consumption measures to be accurate, it is important to know what is consumed outside the house

and how often, so that this can be accounted for in the food consumption measure. In future urban food security assessments it is recommended to capture food consumed outside the household as this can contribute greatly to the diets of the household members and there is a need to know more about these food consumption patterns in urban areas. However, more research is needed to find how this information can best be collected.

With food bought at the market being the most common way for households to access food in urban areas, there is a need to include a market component in future studies to get a clearer picture of households' possible constraints to access food. However, in the case of Harare, there are also some characteristics that are significantly different and more often associated with rural areas, such as the large number of households practicing agriculture. This will serve as an important source of food for urban households and should therefore be taken into consideration in future assessments.

The share of expenditure a household spend on food and asset ownership are two measures often used as proxies for economic vulnerability. For these measures to correctly identify more economically vulnerable households all expenses and assets has to be included. It was found that according to the expenditures collected in this study, the share of expenditures households spent on food was very low. However, it was also found that there were difficulties in accounting for the value of all food items consumed, which may have led to a lower value for the expenditures on food. For example food coming from own production and food coming from the own business was not always accounted for. For future assessments it is recommended to ask specifically for the value of food that is consumed within the households that were not purchased with cash.

It was found that the difficulties households experienced in obtaining enough food were not necessarily related to a specific season, but more often the time of the year or the month when school fees or bills had to be paid. When assessing food security in urban areas, also capture when shocks and difficulties are most frequent, not only which month, since it can be also be a difficulty that is reoccurring every month. It was found that the most common coping strategies were to alter the food consumption by reducing the number of meals consumed, although the food consumption based on the food consumption score was seen as acceptable. For future assessments it is recommended to include a range of different coping strategies with different severity to be able to differentiate the more serious situations from less serious situations.

The different economic activities found in urban areas require clear categories and definitions for how to differentiate between the different income activities. For example, clear descriptions of what should be classified as self-employed and what the differences between petty trade and small business are needed. It is also recommended to capture who in the household is participating in the different activities male/female, children/adults. This will allow for an analysis of the gender dimensions related to income activities.

Although this study did not produce any statistical figures, the indication of the current food security situation in Harare is not alarming considering the high number of households with an acceptable food consumption based on the food consumption score. However, considering the outcome from the interviews regarding the difficulties faced by urban households of Harare and the instability of income sources, there are indications that there are groups with high risk of becoming food insecure would there be any negative changes in the political/social/economic environment. Therefore, when assessing the food security situation in urban areas of Zimbabwe it is important to not only base the food security situation on the food that is available in the area or the food currently consumed by the households, but also take into account economic vulnerability and future coping capacity in case of shocks.

The tool that was tested which included the modules of the WFP Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators on Food Security (CARI) addresses the multiple dimensions of food security with transparent indicators. The main indicators tested and to be used in the CARI were: food consumption score, share of expenditure on food and severity of livelihood coping strategies. For the CARI to correctly estimate the food security situation the indicators that goes into the CARI has to be adjusted to urban areas as discussed above.

In addition to the topics covered in the pilot assessment it will also be important to include some information about markets, nutrition and water and sanitation. These topics came out from the workshop as well as being recommended by the SADC framework for assessing food security in urban areas.

The four themes specifically recommended by SADC are 1.) Food access, availability and markets; 2.) Livelihood zoning and risk mapping; 3.) Socio-economic data; and 4.) Health and nutrition. Two additional themes to be included in Zimbabwe specifically are migration and access to social services such as health care, education, transport and refuse collection.

For markets it was specifically mentioned the importance of measuring the availability of food items and the prices. For nutrition it was mentioned that this is especially important for vulnerable groups such as children under five, pregnant and lactating women and TB & HIV/ AIDS patients.

In the coming urban assessments included in the WFP/gFSC project Adapting to an Urban World, it will be important to also include some of the themes that were not included in the Harare study. When conducting an urban food security assessment it is especially important to include some of questions on poverty levels of an area where the poor are located in the city, whether there are differences between poor areas, if access to services varies by subgroup, whether specific programs are reaching the poorest, and how to design effective poverty reduction programs and policies. Answering these questions is critical, particularly for large, sprawling cities with highly diverse populations and growing problems of urban poverty and food insecurity. To get a good understanding of urban food security it is necessary to investigate all dimensions of food insecurity including physical availability of food, economic and physical access to food, food utilisation and the stability of these dimensions over time.