



PORT-AU-PRINCE URBAN BASELINE

An Assessment of Food and Livelihood
Security in Port-au-Prince

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Executive Summary

The Port-au-Prince urban livelihoods baseline contains detailed, quantified information on the food, income and expenditure patterns of the urban poor. The assessment was conducted at a time of relative security and price stability from April to May 2009. Thus this baseline provides a picture of the urban poor as they were following the hurricanes, price rises and food riots of 2008. In conjunction with monitoring data, the baseline is a powerful tool that can be used for ongoing analysis of food and livelihood security in the slums of Port-au-Prince. It can also be used to assess the appropriateness of interventions aimed at alleviating urban poverty.

Undertaken by FEWS NET in collaboration with CNSA, this survey employed the Household Economy Approach (HEA). Since the focus of the survey was the urban poor, the assessment took place only in the city's shanty-towns, known as *bidonvilles*. Three teams of interviewers undertook 30 interviews with community key informants and 110 focus group interviews with representatives of households from the slums. During the focus groups a total of around 500 households were surveyed.

Even in the slums there are large disparities in wealth between households. The *bidonville* population was therefore divided into four wealth groups, which were defined by community representatives: very poor, poor, middle and better-off. 65% of those living in the slums fall into the very poor and poor groups. The very poor (30%) live on the edge of survival. They work in low-paying and unskilled jobs as street hawkers, daily laborers and petty traders. Not only do very poor households have the lowest paying jobs, they also have the highest dependency ratio (few income earners compared to dependents). Typically a very poor household contains seven people of whom two have jobs, compared to six people in poor households where two people also have jobs. The poor have similar sources of income to the very poor, but perform higher paying laboring jobs and engage in petty-trade/small business on a larger scale. Middle group households earn more still from skilled labor, petty trade/small business and salaried employment. For the better-off, business is the most common income source along with salaried employment. Remittances contribute to the income of all wealth groups and increase in quantity as wealth increases.

Households in all wealth groups purchase the majority of their food from the market. However, unlike the other three groups the very poor do *not* cover 100% of their minimum food needs. Their diet is basic, composed primarily of staple foods with little meat, milk and vegetables. The poor, middle and better-off can afford increasing dietary variety, but this is still low compared to those able to live in wealthier areas outside the slums.

Most of the cash of the lower three groups goes to securing their basic food needs. The very poor have little money left over for anything else, and what money is left over is spent on basic household items, water, fuel, health and education. The poor and middle have higher levels of income, but their purchasing power is still severely constrained. This report specifically highlights the price of education in Port-au-Prince, where the majority of schools are private. A range of costs such as fees, uniforms, pocket money, stationery and transport make education a very expensive commodity.

The urban poor are also vulnerable to a number of shocks - particularly the very poor whose existence is already fragile. The most important of these are political insecurity, natural disasters (e.g. hurricanes) and price rises. A range of coping strategies can be employed to combat these; however, given other detailed work on this by WFP-VAM, the information collected was not extensive. The monitoring tool discussed at the end of this report takes into account price changes, labor rate changes and households' coping strategies to provide a framework for ongoing analysis of food security in Port-au-Prince's *bidonvilles*.

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Acronyms:

CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment
CHF	Cooperative Housing and Finance
CNSA	Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning System Network (USAID)
IHSI	Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique
WFP	World Food Programme

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1. Introduction

FEWS NET is a USAID-funded famine early warning and food security monitoring project covering more than 20 countries in Africa, Central America/Caribbean and Central Asia. FEWS NET Haiti and its partners have made progress in applying a livelihoods approach to inform early warning, nutritional assessments and poverty reduction programs in rural areas. In 2005, all rural areas were divided into livelihood zones (see figure 1.1 below); baseline fieldwork was accomplished under the Household Economy Analysis (HEA) framework (see next section) and written livelihood profiles were completed. However, as can be seen from the map below, while Port-au-Prince was marked out as a discrete, urban zone, no similar livelihoods assessment was carried out. The aim of the present urban livelihoods baseline study was to fill this gap and provide detailed information on income, food sources and expenditure patterns of households in the poorer areas of the city.

This urban study comes at a highly pertinent moment. The Metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince is home to Haiti's largest and fastest-growing urban population, the majority of which lives in low-income neighborhoods with high rates of poverty and poor access to basic services. The global financial crisis and food price rises have had a serious impact on Haiti, which is heavily dependent on imports. There were food riots in the capital in April 2008, when protesters tried to break into the presidential palace. This had further repercussions within the city as rioters vandalized and looted businesses. Then, in August and September of the same year, a series of tropical storms and hurricanes hit Haiti, causing considerable devastation. In response to the food price situation, WFP-VAM with CSNA conducted a survey in Port-au-Prince in November 2008, which gave considerable information on peoples' responses to the crisis (WFP, 2008). But a basic account of how poor urban people operate their household economy – how they make ends meet – has been missing.

In this context the current assessment aimed to develop an up-to-date understanding of how the urban poor are living. The expected outputs were:

- to generate baseline livelihoods information that can be used to better understand vulnerability in urban areas and to inform early warning systems and future development programs.
- to develop a common analytical framework for monitoring food and livelihood security in urban populations.

Figure 1.1 Livelihood zone map of Haiti¹



¹ Household economy analysis was previously known as food economy analysis, and livelihood zones as food economy zones (Zones d'économie alimentaire on the map).

2. Methodology

2.1 The Analytical Framework

HEA aims to understand how people access the things they need to survive. It involves an analysis of the consumption by households of food and non-food items, and of how they obtain cash with which to buy the things they do not produce themselves. This information forms a baseline that can be used to evaluate at the household level the likely impact of a shock. Monitoring data about the shock can be used in conjunction with the baseline to produce an ongoing analysis of the current situation and intervention needs.

The analytical framework is applicable to widely different rural conditions as well as to the urban environment. Its application, however, can vary between different settings, and there is a particular difference in focus between rural and urban assessments. In the rural areas of developing countries, the population is overwhelmingly engaged in primary production, whether of food crops, cash crops or livestock, and thus land and its produce are a primary focus. There is, however, an increasing tendency for poorer people to purchase a large proportion of their food, as their land does not produce enough to satisfy their needs. Thus the first question is always how much of their essential food do they produce themselves, and how much do they purchase. This then leads to the second basic question: how do they acquire the money for purchases? There is usually a limited repertoire of occupations and rates of pay or profit, dominated by casual labor performed for other farmers who have considerably more land and other assets than they do.

Within the city, there are typically few people who are able to grow significant amounts of food or who receive substantial donations from rural kin, and so purchase is usually their sole source of food. On the other hand, the range of occupations and the differences in remuneration are far greater than in the countryside. While incomes tend to be heterogeneous in urban settings, patterns of expenditure are not. Poor families tend to spend similar proportions of money on similar things, and an enquiry into patterns of expenditure is often the most useful entry-point for understanding livelihoods in an urban setting.

The basis of reference is the household, as the household is the basic economic unit, sharing income and consumption. This holds true with female-headed households and even if a man has multiple 'partners' and children in different households. A particular feature of HEA analysis is to gather and compare information related to households at different levels of wealth, usually dividing the target population into four wealth groups: Very Poor; Poor; Middle; Better Off. In the village setting this encompasses all the households. But it should be emphasized that in the city, the target population was that living in the extensive shanty-town areas – called *bidonvilles* - and so the division of poverty and wealth is relative only to those people. There are great disparities of wealth around the city, especially between the inhabitants of the *bidonvilles* and the far higher-quality residential environments beyond these. Thus in terms of income and living conditions a 'Better Off' household resident in a *bidonville* is likely to be only at the level of a Poor, or at best Middle, household in the wealthier areas of the city if the same division of wealth were made there.

In the *bidonvilles* there are numbers of households where no member is earning a living and the household is entirely dependent for its survival on official or informal charity and/or remittances from relatives. These households were not part of the survey, since the focus of HEA is on economically active households, however poor. These might depend to some extent on charity or remittances, but as long as someone was obtaining some income from work, the household would fall into one of the wealth groups dealt with. At the other end of the scale, a good number of businesses and rented-out houses in the *bidonvilles* are owned by people who live in other parts of the city. These people were not included in the survey, but their employees or tenants were: the criterion was actual residence in the *bidonville*.

In sum, the assessment aimed to answer basic questions such as: Who are the *relatively* poor and not so poor within the *bidonvilles*? How do they access food, income and basic services? How do consumption patterns vary between different households: i.e. what are the income and expenditure differences between households at different wealth levels? What coping mechanisms do households adopt against shocks and what are the limits of these?

2.2 Steps of the assessment

The study contained the following steps:

- A review of secondary information sources.
- A review of information on population numbers and densities in the city sections to identify survey areas.
- A one-week training workshop for 14 field team members (interviewers).
- 30 interviews with groups of community key informants and 110 focus group interviews with household representatives from these communities.
- Entry of data onto a customized HEA baseline storage spreadsheet, and interim and final analyses of the field data.
- Compilation of a baseline picture and first consideration of a monitoring system.

Within the chosen survey area, two levels of interview were conducted. The first was of key informants from local community, to obtain an overview of local conditions: environment, employment, services and any special local features. The second level was of representatives of households, forming separate focus groups for each level of wealth, from whom an enumerated picture of the economy of a typical household for that wealth group was built up. More information on these procedures is given below.

2.3 Participants

The Port-au-Prince urban assessment was undertaken with the collaboration of the Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire (CNSA). FEWS NET was also given assistance by CHF and CONCERN, using their experience and contacts in the *bidonvilles* to help arrange the community level interviews.

2.4 Assessment Timeline

Initial preparation and a review of secondary documents took place in early April 2009. A training and preparation workshop was then held in Port-au-Prince from 13-17 April. This involved two international consultants, representatives from FEWS NET and CNSA, and 14 interviewers. The workshop involved: discussion of the HEA urban methodology; revision of HEA interview formats to make them specific to Port-au-Prince; and discussions on sampling areas within the city. The fieldwork itself took place from 23 April to 8 May. Final analysis was then completed from 9 to 12 May. The main results were presented on 13 May at the CNSA to an audience of around 30 people from FEWS NET, CNSA, the Haitian government and international NGOs.

2.5 Weights and Measures

In order to accurately calculate how much food households consume in food calorie terms it is important to have information on the weights and measures in which items are purchased. This is particularly true in an urban setting, where the majority of food comes from the market. Three market visits were conducted during the assessment to collect information on the weight and price of the measures in which food is sold. Fortunately, the most common measures (used for cereals, sugar, beans etc.) are the simplest; a '*petite marmite*' weighs 0.5kg and a '*grande marmite*' weighs 2.8kg. In contrast, the '*lots*' in which fruits, vegetables and potatoes are bought vary in weight. However, '*lots*' of the same item costing the same price tend to have consistent weights. In these cases the price could be used to calculate the amount of food purchased (in kg).

2.6 Street Food

In Port-au-Prince food prepared and bought in the street is an important source of calories for the urban poor. In a review of secondary documents and discussions with FEWSNET, the CNSA and partner organizations no existing information was found on the calorific values of street food. It was noted that *pâtés* (wheat-flour based pasties, usually filled with savoury items and deep-fried in oil) and *plats chauds* (consisting of rice with a sauce) were the most common types of street food and the most important in calorie and cash expenditure terms. Early in the assessment several food stalls in different areas were visited to weigh *pâtés* and *plats chauds* of different prices and estimate their calorie value. A simple price index was then devised to calculate the calories in *pâtés* and *plats* enumerated in the interviews as normally purchased.

2.7 Seasonality

Rural economy is ruled by nature's seasons, but in urban Port-au-Prince this is not the case, given that urban people are not primary producers from the land. Food prices are affected by the harvest times of the local production of staple foods and fruits and to some extent non-irrigated vegetables; but since Haiti is overwhelmingly a food importer, the price effects of local seasonality are very much diluted. However, a different seasonality does operate on urban households. In Port-au-Prince there are three important times of year. First, the school year starts in September, requiring for most households a major financial outlay in this month for fees, uniforms and other items (see education section). Remittances are sometimes sent to households at this time of year specifically to help pay for education. Second, Christmas and New Year (and to a lesser extent Easter) are times of greater than normal expenditure, for gifts and festive foods. Again, remittances are sometimes sent during these periods.

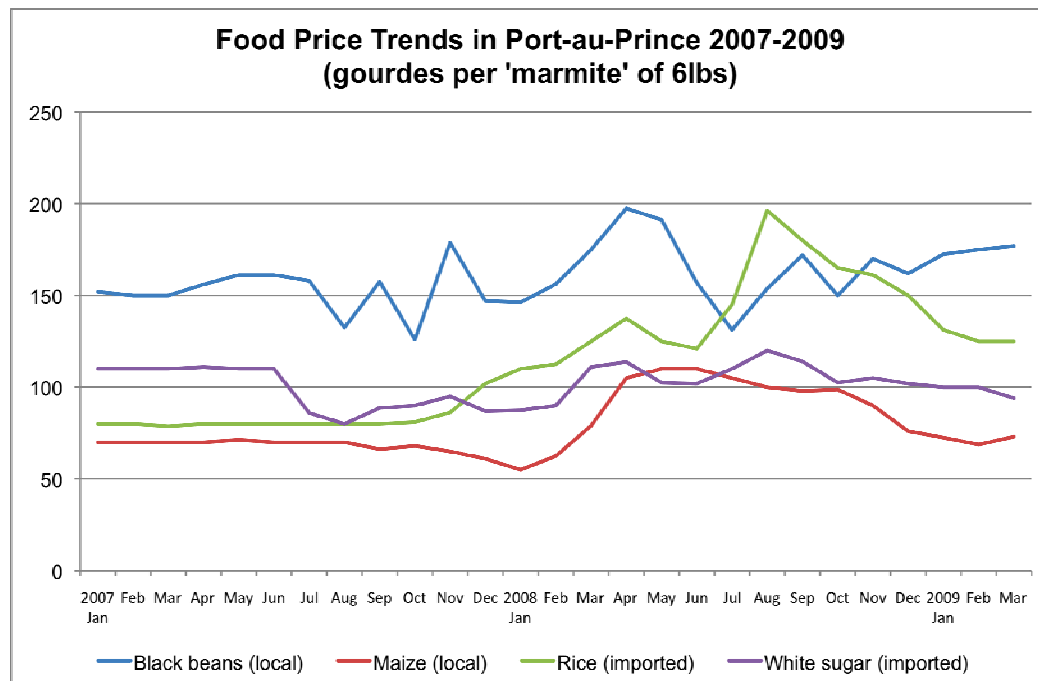
Third, there is the threat of hurricanes from around 1 June to 30 November. Hurricanes and flooding, more frequent during that period of the year, cause damage to infrastructure (houses, buildings, bridges), make transport difficult and can increase illness (and consequently expenditure on medicines).

2.8 Reference Month

Because of the very limited seasonality in an urban setting, most food, income and expenditure patterns are regular and information on them could be enumerated by month rather than by year. April 2009 was used as the reference month for two main reasons. First, following recent rises, prices seemed to be stabilizing in Port-au-Prince. Figure 2.1 shows that food prices, while changing dramatically from mid 2007 to late 2008 had possibly started to stabilize. Second, people think most readily of current prices and expenditure, and for a baseline aimed at a current picture there was, for the most part, no reason to ask people to try to recall accurately the changing prices from earlier months.

In regard to more periodic food, income and expenditure items, most notably expenditure on education, the information was enumerated on a yearly basis, using April 2008 to April 2009 as the reference year.

Figure 2.1



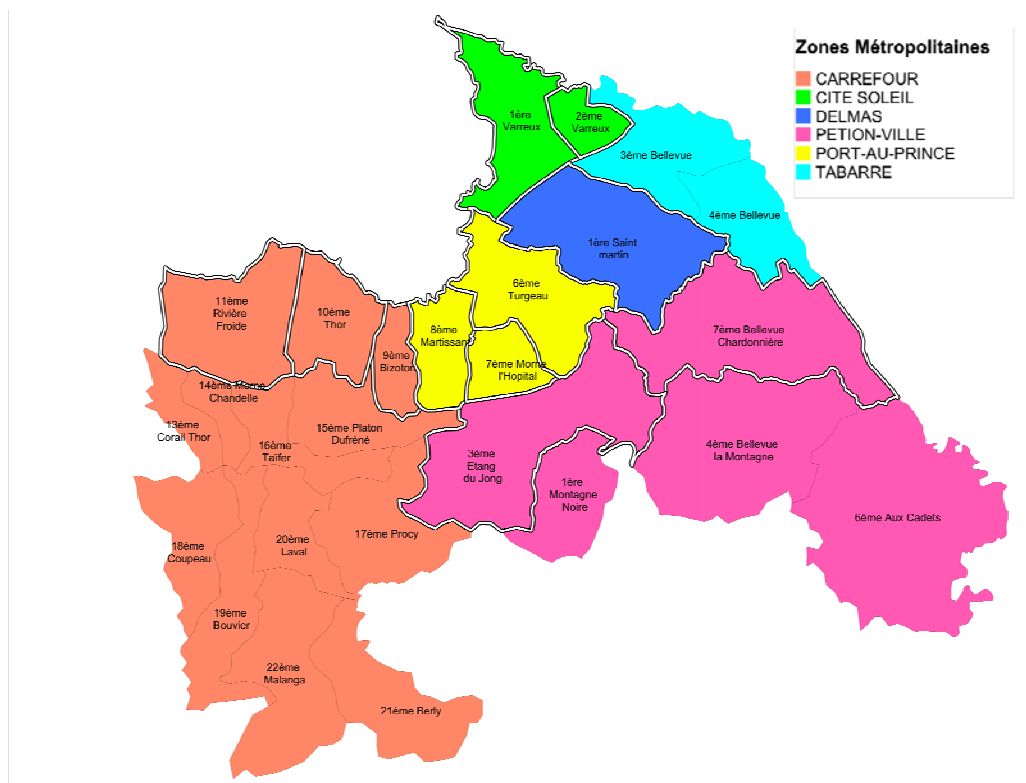
Source: FEWS NET & CNSA.

2.9 Sampling

HEA commonly defines geographical areas for survey and then employs a purposive rather than a random sampling technique within them. This process had to be adapted to the particular conditions – and the available information – in Port-au-Prince. The most recent census took place in 2003. It is these figures, from the Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique (IHSI), that were used in this assessment. The total population in the Sections Communales, classified by the IHSI as urban, is just under 2 million. Port-au-Prince spans 6 metropolitan zones (see figure 2.2). Each zone is divided into Sections Communales of which 13 are classified by the IHSI as urban. These urban Sections make up the geographical limit of the current assessment. Since the focus of the survey was on the urban poor it was decided to sample only the *bidonvilles* within the urban Sections. No wealthier areas of the city were surveyed. It should be noted also that peri-urban areas were not included in the sample.

No formal information was found which defined and enumerated different parts of the city in terms of wealth or occupational differences or living conditions. During the initial training workshop and in discussions with CNSA officials and partners it was established that differences between the *bidonvilles* were not marked or distinctive enough to warrant dividing the city into separate 'livelihood zones' (as is the case for geographically extensive HEA rural surveys, including that done in Haiti in 2005). Instead, one household economy baseline was to be produced for the city *bidonvilles* as a whole.

Figure 2.2 The Metropolitan areas of Port-au-Prince

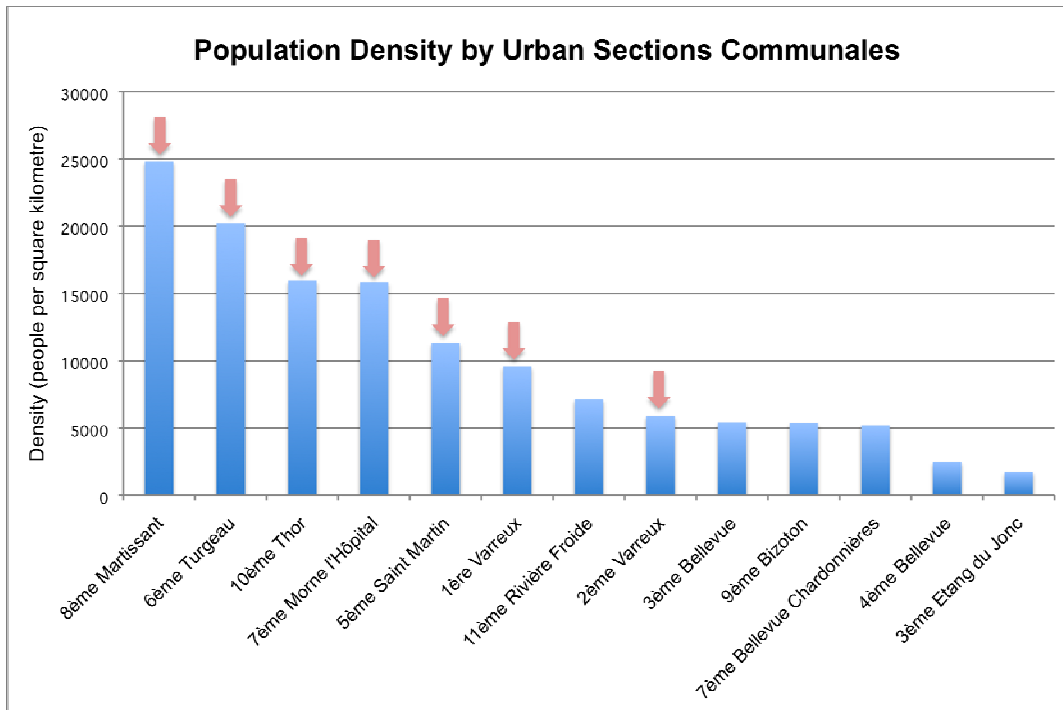


Map provided by CNSA

The next step involved selecting which Sections Communales to visit, given the timing and manpower of the survey. Although the Sections are large this is the smallest enumerated division available to use at this stage of the sampling. On the other hand, the IHSI does not have population data disaggregated by *bidonville* and the division for which there is population data (the Section d'Énumération), consists of units of a few hundred households only. Given the purposive (rather than random) nature of the sampling scheme it was not possible to use these divisions.

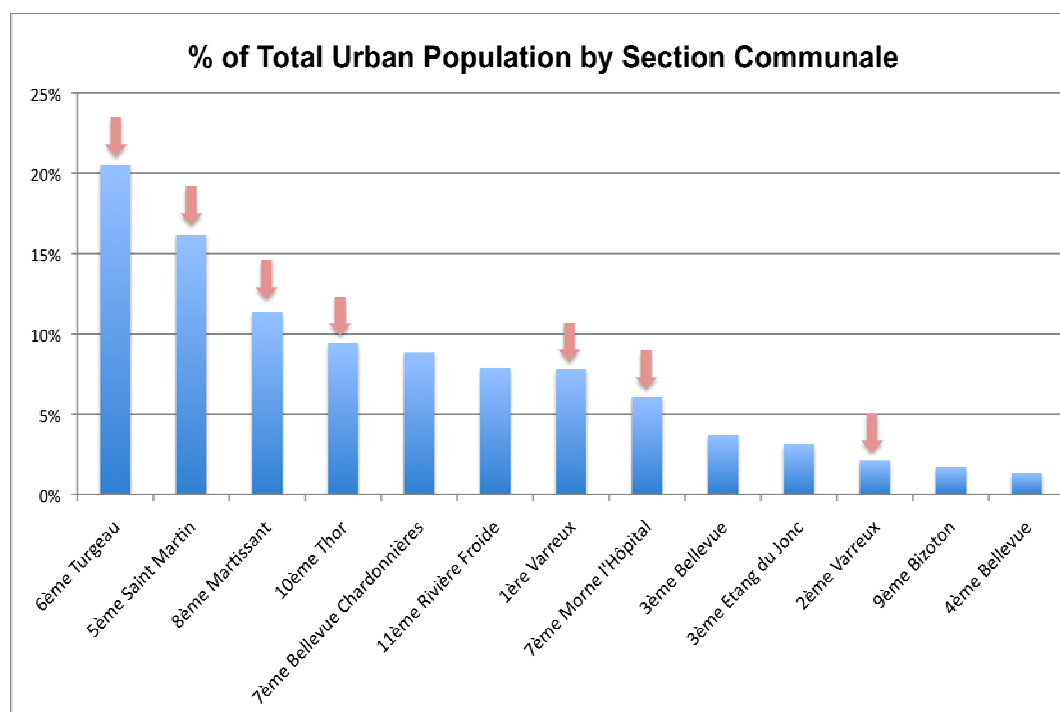
In selecting Sections to sample, both population density and the total share of the city population represented by a Section were taken into account. Population density is an essential proxy indicator of the relative wealth of a city area, and was accorded more weight than total population. Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show respectively the population density of each urban Section Communale and the percentage of the urban population in each Section. Arrows illustrate which Sections were sampled.

Figure 2.3 Population Density by Section Communale in the Metropolitan Area of Port-au-Prince (Arrows indicate sampled Sections)



Own calculations based on IHSI data.

Figure 2.4 Percentage of Total Urban Population by Section Communale in the Metropolitan Area of Port-au-Prince (Arrows indicate sampled Sections)



Own calculations based on IHSI data.

As can be seen seven of the densest and most populous sections were visited. Deuxième Varreux, although less dense and populous than other sections, was sampled because it makes up part of the Cité Soleil *bidonville*, the most notorious in the city. Once Sections had been selected, an attempt was made to spread the sample across them roughly in proportion to the estimated population (see table 2.1 below). It was decided to conduct a disproportionate number of interviews in Cité Soleil and Martissant for the following reasons. Cité Soleil has experienced much insecurity over recent years and there is a relative lack of information about it. Martissant is the most densely populated area of Port-au-Prince and the *bidonville* was experiencing heightened tension at the time of the assessment. That tension was related to civil insecurity, as gangs tried to regroup; this resulted in infighting and some civilian casualties. At the time of publication of this report, the situation in Martissant was fortunately calm again.

Table 2.1

Section Communale	% total population of sampled sections	% of sample
<i>Cité Soleil</i>	14%	24%
<i>Martissant</i>	15%	21%
<i>Morne L'Hôpital</i>	8%	3%
<i>St Martin</i>	22%	23%
<i>Thor</i>	13%	13%
<i>Turgeau</i>	28%	16%
Total	100%	100%

N.B. Cité Soleil in this table refers to the metropolitan zone (see map above), which is made up of two Sections Communales: Première and Deuxième Varreux. These

are not disaggregated here, because it was sometimes difficult for teams to know exactly which of the two Sections they were in.

The number of interviews per Section depended on both the cooperation of community representatives and sometimes unpredictable logistical and time constraints. Therefore the sampling in relation to population densities and totals could not always be completely followed. In Turgeau, in particular, the proportion of interviews conducted there was well below the proportion of the sampled population that lives there.

2.10 The interview process

Having decided upon target *bidonvilles*, the next stage was to hold meetings with partner organizations and their contacts both of whom were knowledgeable of and active in the *bidonville* within a particular Section. During these discussions a series of interviews of community level representatives was arranged for different parts of the *bidonville*.

Apart from establishing a set of overall information about the conditions in the area, the main aim of the **Community Representatives interviews** was to define the characteristics of the different wealth groups in the locality (sources of income, ownership of assets, access to services etc.) and the percentage of community households falling into each group. Participants in these interviews were selected by community leaders in conjunction with a FEWS NET representative and partner organizations. They were chosen on the basis of their knowledge of the area being surveyed.

The wealth groups were identified by the community representatives according to local definitions and perceptions of poverty. As mentioned above, the groups only include those people residing within *bidonvilles*. Thus, while the 'better-off' may seem wealthy in comparison to their poorer neighbours, they still live in poverty relative to other parts of Port-au-Prince, let alone by the standards of cities in developed countries. In relation to this it is worth noting that at the time of heightened insecurity and violence (around 2005-2007) many residents of the *bidonvilles* left for more peaceful areas and it is likely that the most wealthy of these never returned.

The wealth breakdown characteristics having been established, the community representatives were asked to find participants for subsequent **Focus Group interviews representing the different wealth groups**, i.e. these were people from households falling within each of the wealth groups. The community representatives were asked to ensure that half of the participants in the focus group interviews were women. This was generally successful. The objective of the focus group interviews was to collect a set of detailed, quantified information on the sources of food, sources of income and patterns of expenditure of a *typical* household within the wealth group, as described by the participants.

The table below summarizes the number of interviews conducted at community level during the assessment. Since the focus of the assessment was the urban poor, it was decided to concentrate on the lower three groups and conduct fewer focus group interviews with the better-off. Furthermore, because the better-off earn considerably more money than other groups and thus can spend their money in a more complex range of ways, and also tend to be less forthcoming about detail than poorer wealth groups, it was difficult in the time available to collect accurate information on their total expenditure. As a result, for some expenditure graphs below only three groups have been represented.

Table 2.2 Number of interviews conducted at community level

Community Representatives	Focus Groups				Total:
	Very Poor	Poor	Middle	Better-Off	
30	28	32	31	19	110

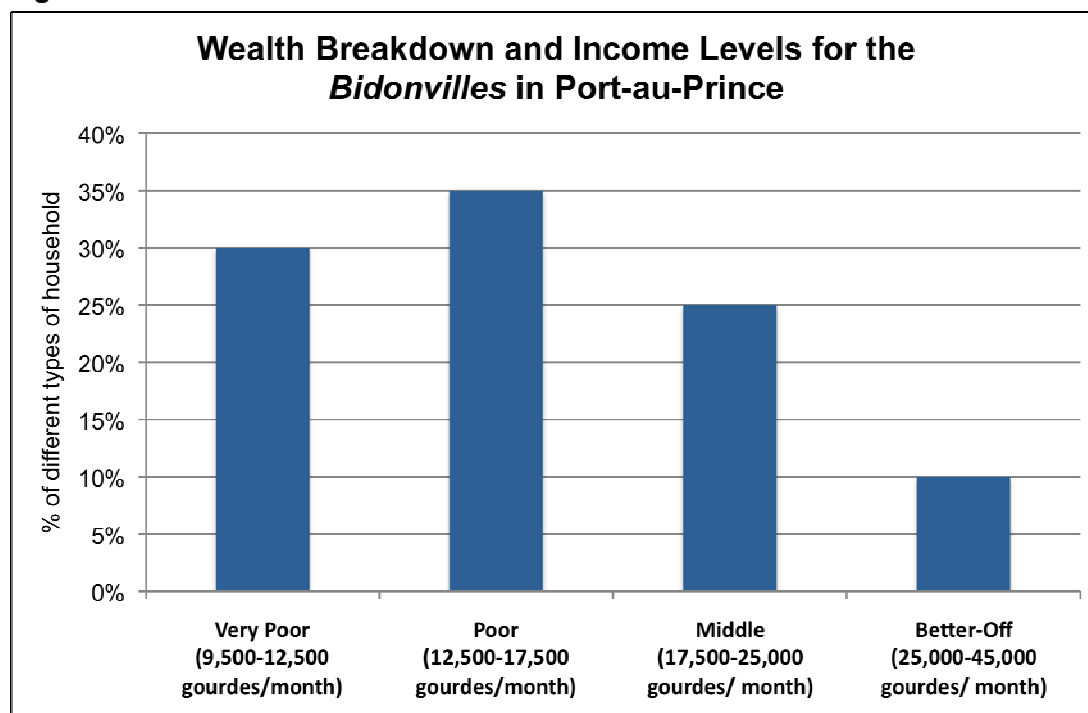
An average of 4-6 households was represented in focus group interviews for the very poor, poor and middle groups and an average of 2 households was represented in interviews for the better-off. Thus a total of approximately 500 households were sampled.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Wealth Breakdown

Figure 3.1 below shows the wealth breakdown for the *bidonvilles* in Port-au-Prince, along with income levels for each group. (40 Haitian gourdes = 1\$US)

Figure 3.1²



N.B. Each percentage represents the mid-point of a range. Wealth groups only include those households that are economically active and do not include those who are destitute.

Given that the *bidonvilles* are where most of the poorer people of the city live, it is unsurprising to find so much of the population making up the very poor and poor groups, even by the local definition. Table 3.1 below shows further important distinctions between wealth groups. Although typical household size is higher for the poor than the better-off, the average number of people working per household is not. In other words, poorer households have a higher dependency ratio (few income earners compared to dependents) than better-off households.

² Please note that figures shown on this graph, as with many of the graphs presented in this report, represent the mid-point of a range.

There is a significant difference between wealth groups in the quality and size of housing. It is most common for the middle and better-off to live in houses made with concrete, including the roof, and with considerably more space than their poorer neighbours. The houses of the very poor and poor are often walled with hardboard and generally roofed with corrugated iron. This makes these groups more vulnerable to the destruction caused by tropical storms and hurricanes.

It is also notable that the very poor, in contrast to the other three groups, do not own any productive assets. Thus while a middle household may be able to run a motorcycle taxi, and a poor household may possess a wheelbarrow which is important for earnings from portering, these options are less available to the very poor. In addition, the very poor group has little or no cash with which to hire assets – e.g. a wheelbarrow.

Table 3.1 Wealth Breakdown Information

N.B: Not every household in each wealth group owns the assets listed.

	<i>Household size</i>	<i>Number of people working</i>	<i>House rented or owned?</i>	<i>No. of rooms in the house</i>	<i>Vehicles owned</i>
<i>Very Poor</i>	7	2	<i>Rented</i>	1	<i>None</i>
<i>Poor</i>	6	2	<i>Rented</i>	2	<i>Barrow, Bicycle</i>
<i>Middle</i>	6	2	<i>Both</i>	3	<i>Motorcycle, Bicycle</i>
<i>Better-Off</i>	5	2	<i>Owned</i>	5	<i>Car, Lorry, Van, Motorcycle, Bicycle</i>

3.2 Income from work

There are six basic income sources for most households in the *bidonvilles* of Port-au-Prince: street hawking, casual labor, salaried employment, petty trade/small business, larger business and remittances. All wealth groups typically receive remittances (see section below). Street hawking is the preserve of the very poor and poor groups. In contrast, salaried employment and the greater job security it provides are mainly associated with the middle and better-off. Casual labor is common for all but the better-off, but the term covers very different levels of remuneration, reflecting mainly skilled versus unskilled work and sometimes the equipment provided by the worker. The middle group's skilled labor ensures them a much higher income than the other two groups; in turn, the poor perform better paid jobs than the very poor.

For all wealth groups some kind of trade or business is common. This has been classified as *petty trade/small business* for the very poor, poor and middle, but as *business* for the better-off to indicate the somewhat larger scale of these activities – although they are nowhere near the scale of the enterprises of Port-au-Prince's bigger commercial operators. Figure 3.3 illustrates these differences. While the middle received only slightly more than the poor for petty trade/ small business, business as an income source is considerably more important and more lucrative for the better-off.

Figure 3.2

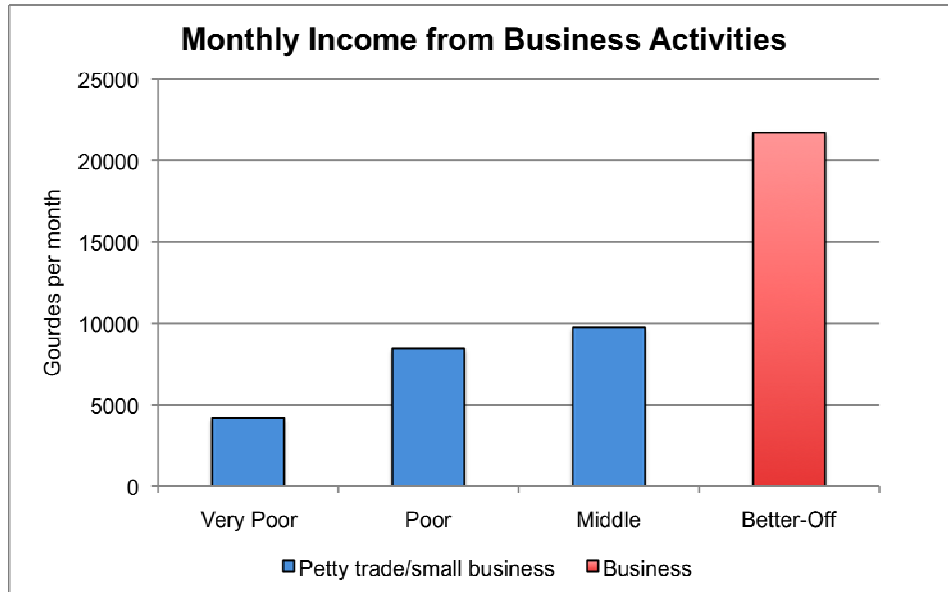
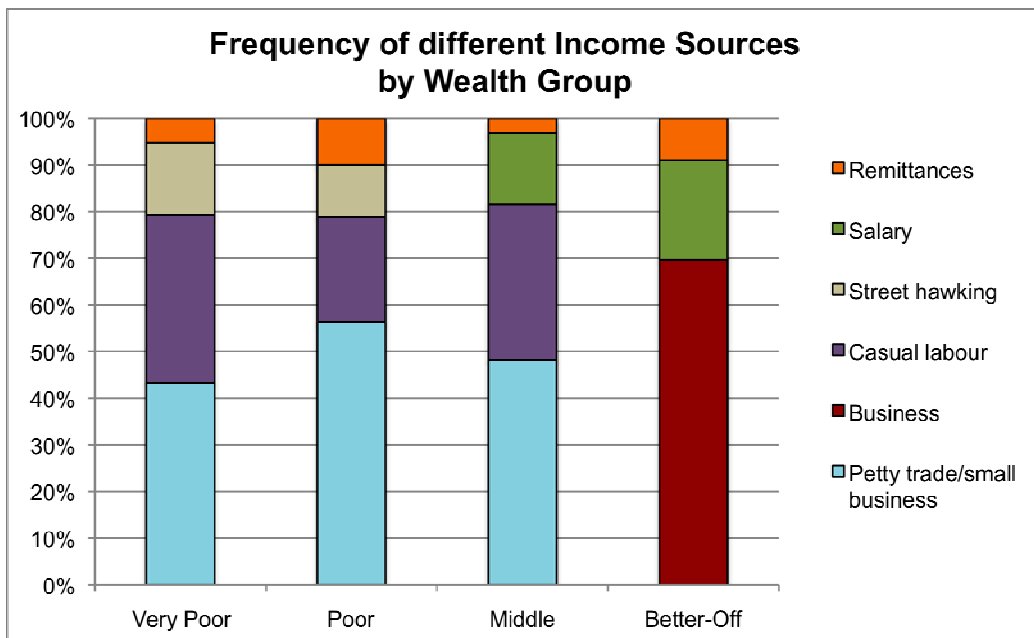


Figure 3.3 below gives an idea of the frequency of different income sources across each wealth group. This does not necessarily mean that individual households within a wealth group receive income from all the sources shown, but it does indicate, for example, that the poor group as a whole is more reliant on petty trade/small business than either the very poor or middle groups.

Figure 3.3



Street hawking, as would be expected, is more important for the very poor than the poor. The same is true of labor. Without the necessary skills to ensure a higher income from labor poor households concentrate more on petty trade/small business. Middle households, as mentioned above, can secure higher salaries for skilled labor,

which explains why it is more important for them. For middle households it is very likely that the importance of remittances has been underestimated (see section on remittances below)

Table 3.2 summarizes the different income sources by wealth group.

Table 3.2 Sources of Income by Wealth Group

Type of household	Income per month (gourdes)	Types of Employment
<i>Very Poor</i>	9,500-12,500	<p>Petty Trade: sale of food (e.g. mangoes, vegetables, pâtés), charcoal.</p> <p>Casual Labor: construction worker, factory worker, washing, porter.</p> <p>Street Hawking: sale of pistachio nuts, sweets, soap; car cleaning</p> <p>Remittances</p>
<i>Poor</i>	12,500-17,500	<p>Petty Trade/ Small Business: sale of food, toiletries, clothes, charcoal, hot chocolate; street food vendor; beauty care.</p> <p>Casual Labor: construction worker, motorcycle driver</p> <p>Street Hawking: sale of soap, food, telephone cards, pistachio nuts</p> <p>Remittances</p>
<i>Middle</i>	17,500-25,000	<p>Small Business/Petty Trade: small shop or stall (e.g. selling clothes, food, cosmetics), street food vendor, motorcycle taxi, artist</p> <p>Salary: teacher, technician.</p> <p>Skilled Casual Labor: foreman, mechanic, mason.</p> <p>Remittances</p>
<i>Better-Off</i>	25,000-45,000	<p>Business: shop/restaurant owner, wholesaler, transport business, usurer, headmaster, undertaker, proprietor of a house/vehicle.</p> <p>Salary: government employees, employees of Digicel mobile telephone company or others</p> <p>Remittances</p>

The three- to five-fold difference between the incomes of the very poor and the better off seems to be at about the level found for rural areas in the WFP-VAM CFSVA/CSNA rural survey of 2007, as deduced from their graphed information. But those are whole rural communities, whereas the communities in the present urban survey are together at the poorer (*bidonville*) end of the overall income range of the

whole city. No doubt it would not take an outstandingly rich household elsewhere in Port-au-Prince to earn twenty times the income of a very poor household in the *bidonville*.

If we take into account the cost of living, the bottom three groups are all distinctly poor by international standards and the 'better off' of the *bidonvilles* are hardly at even a mediocre level by international standards. But there are significant differences between them: for instance, the poor on average earn some \$US100 more per household per month than the very poor. Even so, the statement of average monthly earnings cannot represent the whole story. There is the question of security of income, and where savings are minimal, the possibility of switching expenditure, however marginally, to respond to specific misfortune, whether illness or storm damage or food price hikes. There are also differences in the sheer physical energy required for different jobs, and even in their pleasantness in terms of sanitation or other elements. These are nuances, which cannot be captured in a brief baseline survey; but the question of insecurity of income amongst poorer people requires further consideration, since it impinges *inter alia* on the monitoring of food security.

3.3. Loans and remittances

Significant loans are not common enough to be considered typical for any wealth group. However, some interviewees reported having taken loans, most frequently among the poor and very poor. People within these groups generally do not have assets that could be used as collateral in securing bank loans. Instead they are lent money by private creditors, at a much higher rate of interest.

Remittances, particularly from relatives working in the United States and Canada, are essential to Haiti's economy, forming the basis of food and other importation. Official figures cannot capture the full extent of remittances, given that it is hard to quantify those sent through informal channels. But it is clear that the Haitian population as a whole currently receives well over one billion US dollars in the course of a year. However, there are very few sources of formal information on which parts of the population – rural or urban, richer or poorer – receive what proportion of all these remittances. A substantial slice might be expected to go to rural households who form the majority of the country's population. According to the WFP-VAM CFSVA/CSNA rural survey of 2007 globally amongst the rural population some 16% of cash income comes from remittances, overwhelmingly from relatives living abroad. This is, however, somewhat concentrated on the highest-income quintile of the population. The FEWS NET rural livelihoods survey of 2005 found that the middle and better off households in different livelihood zones tended to receive around 5% of their annual cash income from remittances. But the poorer households were partly defined by the fact that they did *not* receive remittances.

For the *bidonvilles* in the present survey it was also difficult to quantify income from remittances. During focus group interviews many participants were reluctant to talk about how much they received in front of other members of the community, a problem apparently faced in other surveys, both urban and rural (see Fagen, 2006). Community representatives were more open on this subject. They reported that remittances were common in a majority of areas, increasing in frequency and value as wealth increased. The data do show a not insignificant contribution of income from remittances, but it is likely that the amount for the middle households at least is an underestimate. IHSI/Enquête sur les conditions de vie des ménages (ECVM) figures from 1999-2000 (quoted in Lamaute-Brisson, 2005) suggest that remittances as a proportion of income for very poor and poor households amongst the whole urban population were at some 9-11%.

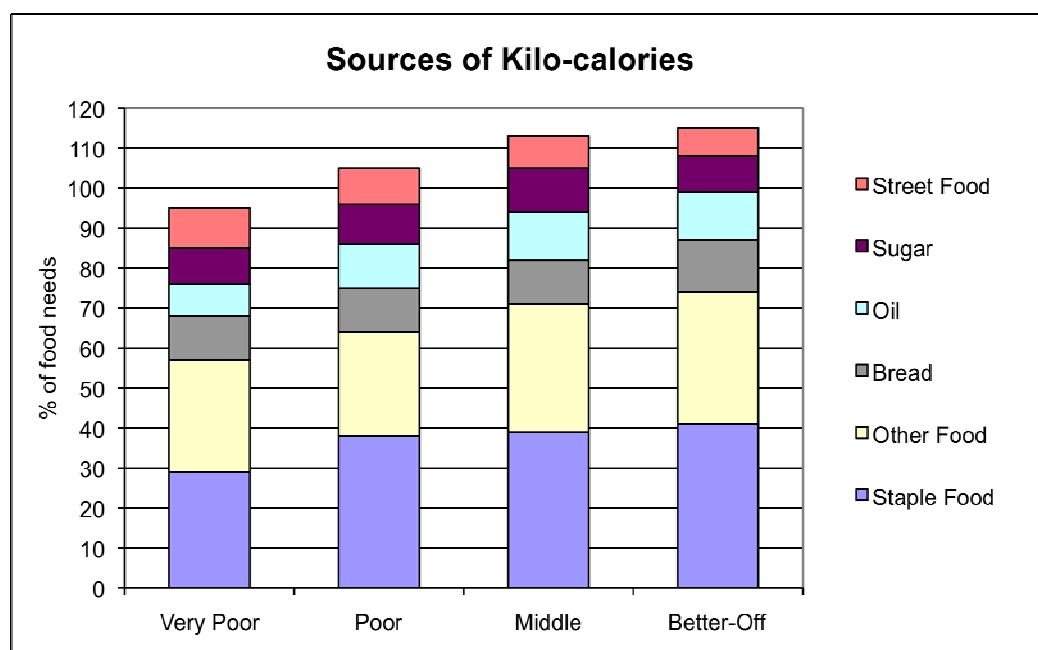
The WFP November 2008 survey of the effect of food price increases in Port-au-Prince *bidonvilles* found that some 10% of households claimed reduced remittance receipts due to the financial crisis in North America and elsewhere. On the other hand it is likely that a big proportion of the total value of remittances coming into the city is received by wealthier households beyond the *bidonvilles*.

3.4 Food calorie consumption

In the Port-au-Prince *bidonvilles* the market is virtually the sole source of food for the households in all four wealth groups. Gifts of food from better-off to poorer households are uncommon. Livestock is kept in very small numbers by a few households. Both livestock rearing and crop cultivation can be considered highly untypical of the *bidonville* populations of the city proper.³

The graph below shows the percentage of total food needs in terms of calories purchased by each wealth group as well as the types of food purchased. Given the large quantities in which they are consumed, bread, oil and sugar must count as staple foods for all wealth groups. They have been separated out here to illustrate their significance. As might be expected, total food access increases with wealth. More strikingly, while the poor, middle and better-off groups can purchase over 100% of their minimum food requirements, the very poor can afford only 95% of their food needs. The food security of the very poor is tenuous; this leaves them vulnerable to future shocks, particularly further price increases.

Figure 3.4



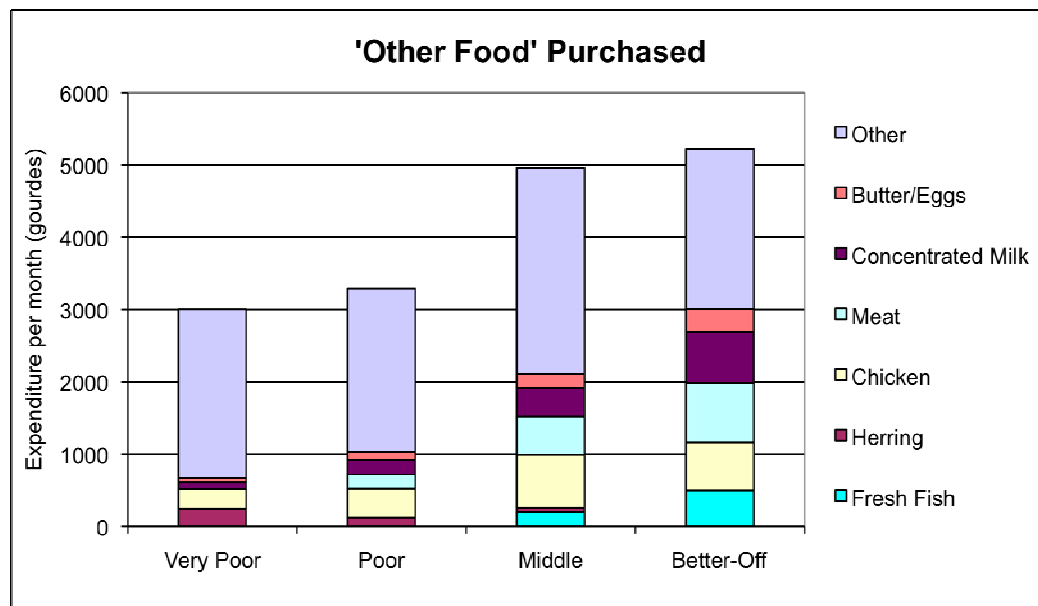
N.B. Calculation of percentage satisfaction of need is based on the minimum average requirement of 2,100 kcals per person per day as accepted by CNSA and WFP.

³ This is of course in contrast to rural Haiti. FEWS NET's 2005 profiles showed significant consumption of own crops and significant livestock production amongst wealthier households. Nevertheless even in rural areas the bulk of food is purchased, taking the village populations as a whole.

3.5 Dietary quality: 'Other Food' and the cost of calories

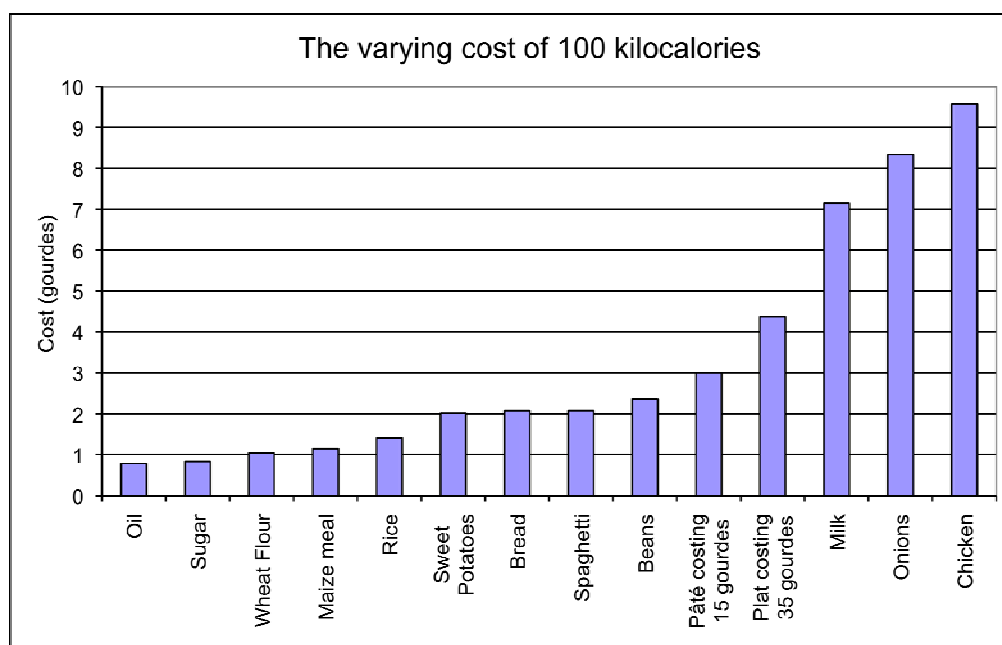
Dietary quality also clearly increases with increasing wealth. Figure 3.6 breaks down the 'other food' category from the table above to illustrate this. The middle and better-off can afford to buy more expensive foods, such as butter, milk and meat, and consume these in much greater quantities than the very poor and poor. Interestingly, it is the very poor who spend the most on dried herring, because it is relatively inexpensive animal protein and adds flavour to meals. The better-off do not typically purchase any dried herring and instead are able to afford better quality animal proteins, such as fresh fish and meat. Notice also the difference between the very poor and poor. Although modest consumers of animal products by comparison with their wealthier neighbours, the poor can afford significantly more butter, milk and chicken than the very poor, as well as being able to eat a small amount of meat.

Figure 3.5



What is perhaps most striking about food consumption patterns is the high percentage of calories coming from oil and sugar, including amongst the poor and even the very poor – an unusual phenomenon among the poor urban populations of most developing countries. Figure 3.7 below shows the cost of calories from different foods, and it immediately becomes clear why so much oil and sugar is consumed: in terms of cash for calories, these are the cheapest sources of calories available. This reflects import prices in what is fundamentally an imports-based economy; for instance, a similar consumption of oil and sugar was found in Djibouti City, on the Red Sea coast of Africa, another imports-based economy.

Figure 3.6



Calories from wheat flour are also inexpensive and it is not surprising, therefore, that the very poor eat more of it than the better-off (see table 3.3). Spaghetti and beans, on the other hand, are the two most expensive staples and are eaten in greater quantities by the middle and better-off. Animal proteins, like chicken and milk, are among the most expensive foods in calorie terms. Onions are also expensive in this regard, but they might be considered almost as a universal condiment, used in most cooked dishes but in limited quantities.

Table 3.3 Food needs (% Kcals) obtained from a selection of foods.

	Oil	Sugar	Wheat Flour	Rice	Bread	Spaghetti	Beans	Milk
<i>Very Poor</i>	8%	9%	7%	14%	11%	6%	9%	0%
<i>Poor</i>	11%	10%	5%	22%	11%	7%	11%	1%
<i>Middle</i>	12%	11%	5%	23%	11%	9%	13%	1%
<i>Better-Off</i>	12%	9%	4%	23%	13%	10%	13%	3%

On the other hand, it is remarkable that the poor and very poor get fully 11% of their calories from bread, which nearly rivals spaghetti or other pastas as the most expensive source of calories from cereals. Even more remarkable is the fact that poor and very poor households get 9-11% of their calories from cooked street foods, which in calorie-cost terms are some 3-4 times more expensive than uncooked rice, maize or wheat flour. Limited inquiry suggested possible explanations for this. One is simply that it is the 'culture' of city people to eat street food frequently. More practically, it is certain that members of many (if not most) households spend their working days away from home, making it easier (or necessary) to eat street food at least for lunch. But there is a third possible factor. Meals bought in the street may also represent better value than is immediately apparent. Cooking a rice dish at home requires fuel and an accompaniment such as beans or sauce to make the dish palatable. These expenditures are included in the price of a plate of rice and sauce bought in the street.

Now if we add the fact that the way poorer households live means that very often not all members of the family are present even for an evening meal, the cost in time as well as fuel of preparing a hot meal at home may sometimes be seen as

uneconomical. Unfortunately there was not time to properly corroborate these explanations in the field.

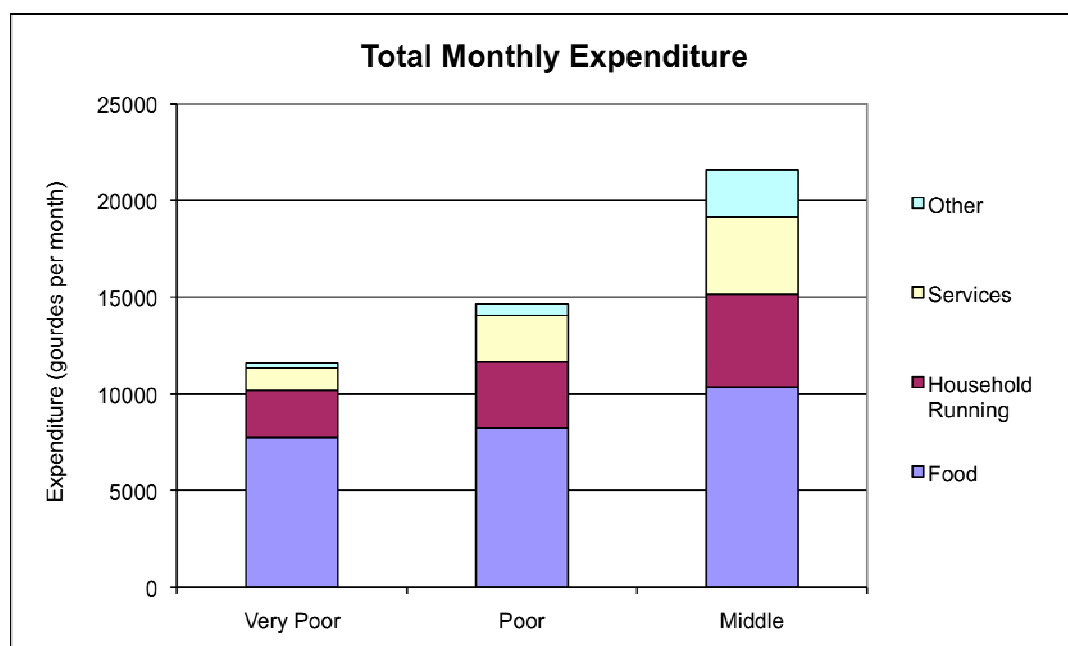
3.6 Expenditure: the overall cost of living

As would be expected, absolute expenditure on almost all items increases as wealth increases (see figure 3.8). In the graph below the cost of running the household includes spending on rent, fuel, water, clothes and household items such as soap, washing powder and matches. The services category includes money spent on education, health and transport, while 'other' accounts for money spent on communications (e.g. phone cards), festivals (mostly Christmas), celebrations (e.g. birthdays, first communion and graduation) and 'luxury' items such as alcohol.

The very poor spend the very minimum required for survival. Food makes up the majority of this and, as discussed above, this is still not enough to ensure access to 100% of their minimum food needs. The remaining money spent on the running of the household and services is barely adequate. Almost nothing is spent on festivals or on luxuries such as even small amounts of tobacco and alcohol.

For the very poor to survive at this level requires around 1.35 US\$ per person per day. The poor's expenditure is at a slightly more acceptable level: enough to cover minimum food needs and with more money available for household running and services. This costs around 2 US\$ per person per day. In many developing countries such expenditures would be enough to secure a household a far higher standard of living. In Port-au-Prince, however, one might say that it is expensive to be poor.

Figure 3.7



N.B. The better-off are not represented in some of the expenditure graphs due to the limited amount of information collected on this group's expenditure (see methodology section above).

3.7 Expenditure Patterns

Figure 3.9 provides a more detailed look at expenditure patterns across the lower three wealth groups. Food expenditure is by far the biggest single item for all three groups, an immediate sign of their poverty, given also that as we have seen, these are far from luxurious diets. As wealth increases it is items such as education,

transport, clothes, ceremonies and celebrations that are not only allocated greater real expenditure, but also make up a greater *proportion* of expenditure. The proportion of expenditure on health remains fairly consistent across these groups, although it is the type of expenditure that is perhaps most prone to change, since expenditure is not typically on regular items such as vitamin supplements or health check-ups, but rather on incidents of acute illness. Nevertheless, in terms of 'typical' expenditure it is worth remembering that the middle group, while significantly wealthier than the very poor, are members of the poorer communities of the city – the *bidonvilles* - and are not wealthy enough to avoid hard choices in expenditure between health and other basic items.

Figure 3.8

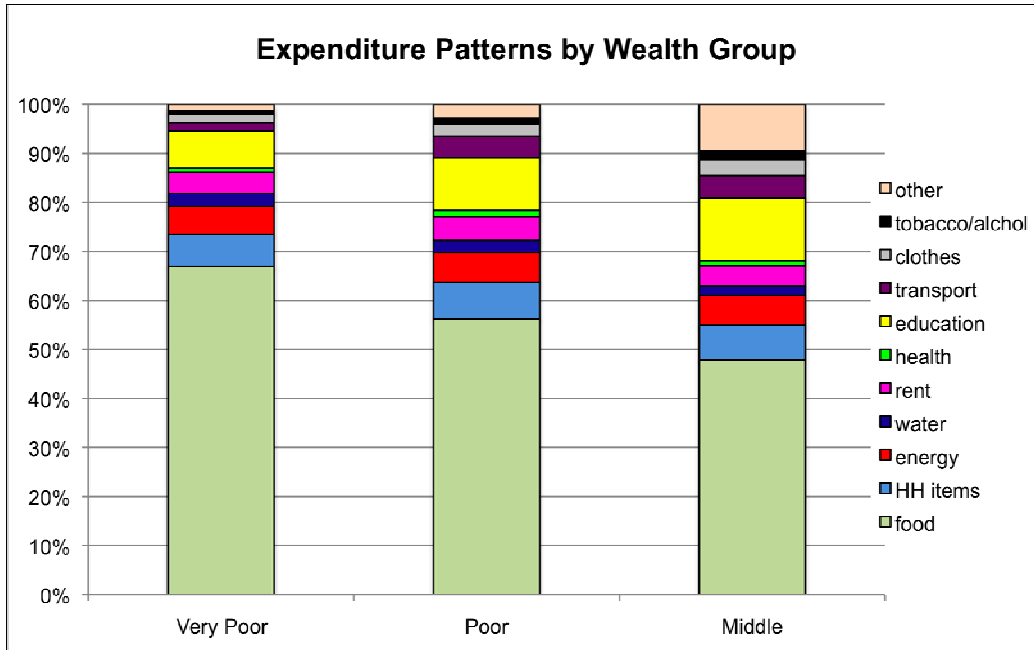
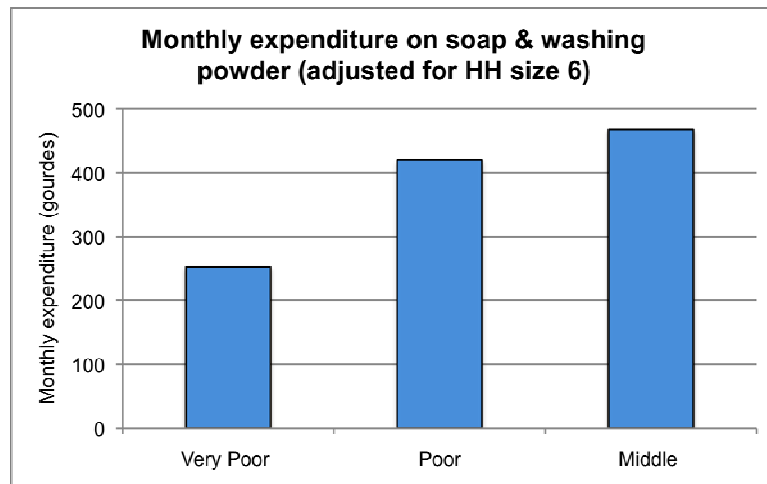


Figure 3.9 (left) helps to illustrate the difference in standard of living between the poorer groups. Even for an essential household item such as soap the very poor spend 40% less than the poor.



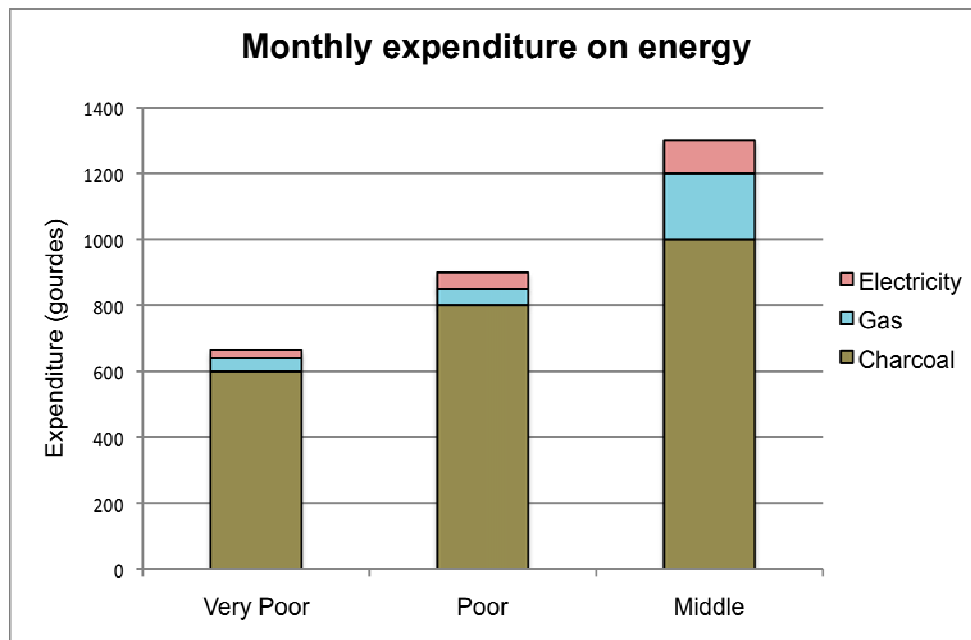
3.8 Energy expenditure

Charcoal is by far the most important form of energy on which the lower three wealth groups spend money, making up 5% of the total expenditure for each. It is cheaper

than gas for cooking. Electricity is used far more for lighting and other functions than for cooking,

In the *bidonvilles* of Port-au-Prince most electricity is supplied 'informally' by '*prise clandestine*'; that is to say some individuals siphon electricity from the main line and sell it on to their neighbours. Even the top two wealth groups buy electricity in this way, for a price of 50-100 gourdes a month; in a very few areas the better-off had electricity meters. It should also be noted that in some areas the very poor and poor did not have an electricity supply. On the whole, however, spending on electricity was common enough among these groups for a small monthly expenditure to be considered typical. But candles are also used to provide light.

Figure 3.10

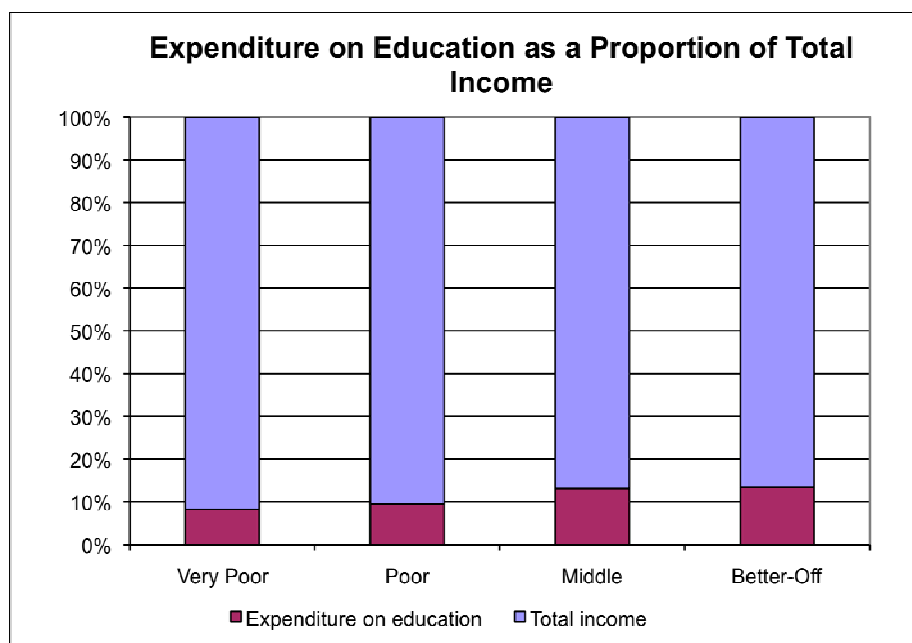


3.9 Expenditure on education

Only 10-15% of schools in Port-au-Prince are publicly funded; the remaining 85-90% is privately run – a huge proportion even by developing country standards. After food, education is the largest single source of expenditure for all wealth groups. Furthermore, as wealth increases, so does the absolute amount spent on education as well as the *proportion* of a household's income that can be spent on education. Figure 3.12 below shows this for all four wealth groups.

Expenditure on education can be divided into five categories; fees, books and stationery, uniforms, pocket money and transport. Fees are generally paid once a year when school begins in September. Fees for both primary and secondary public schools range from around 200 to 500 gourdes per year per pupil. Fees for private schools vary considerably depending on the school, but are often several times higher than those for national schools.

Figure 3.11

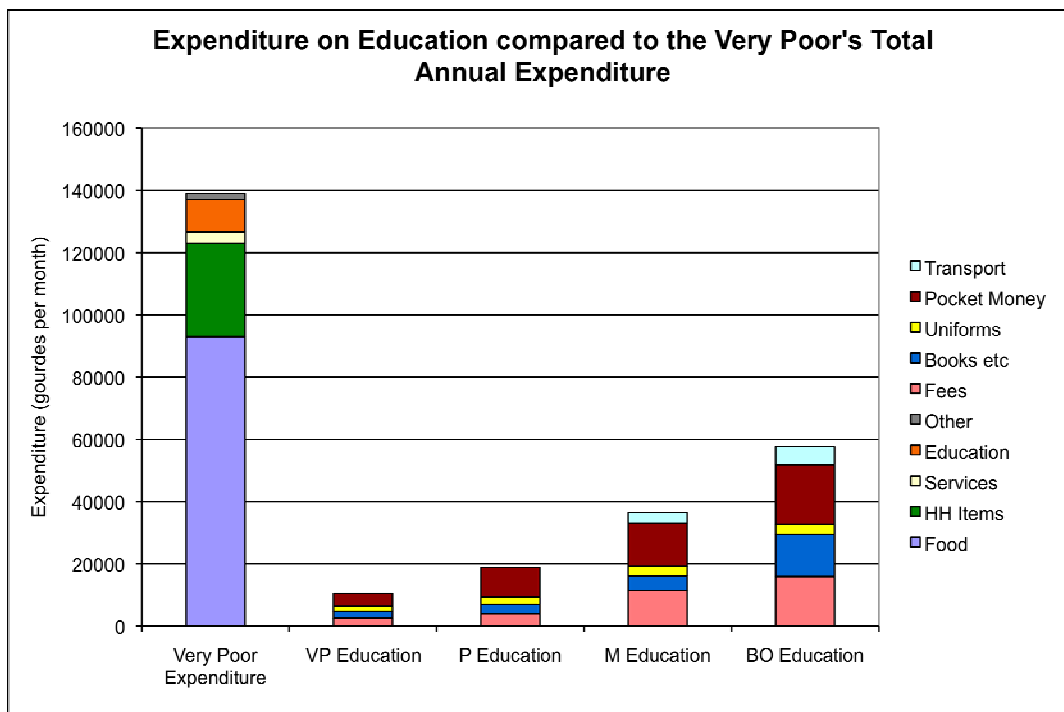


Pocket money is given to children throughout the year to buy lunch and snacks from vendors just outside schools; for all wealth groups this money makes up the largest portion of expenditure on education (see figure 3.13 below). Not surprisingly, the middle and better-off can afford to spend much more on fees and books for their children. Indeed, only the middle and better-off commonly spend money on transport to school; this may reflect the ability of the wealthier groups to send their children to preferred schools located outside the immediate area, especially at the secondary level.

Figure 3.13 below compares expenditure on education across wealth groups with the total annual expenditure of the very poor. However, it should be emphasized that insofar as sending a child to school is an optional expenditure, the *proportion* of income spent by the very poor households is impressive. These are people living at the very margins of acceptable survival, and the very poor households typically cannot even fulfil their basic food need, being at some 95% of minimum requirement. But the point is that they cannot fulfil this *if they choose to educate their children*. And they do – because they see this sacrifice as the best hope, perhaps the only hope, for the future. This is also why relatives send remittances specifically earmarked for school costs.

We can offer a sad enumeration of the disadvantage faced by the very poor. If they were to reduce their expenditure on food in order to spend the same on education as the poor, they would only be able to consume 84% of their food needs. If they were to do the same in order to spend the same on education as the better-off they would only be able to consume 36% of their food needs. On the other hand, by doing the opposite and reducing their expenditure on education the very poor could access 100% of their minimum food needs. The 'right' to basic education is a very varied commodity in the *bidonville*.

Figure 3.12



3.10 Other Services

Rubbish collection: In the *bidonvilles* of Port-au-Prince most rubbish is thrown into the street or canals. There is no public collection; accumulated rubbish is one of the most obviously noticeable things for a visitor. Rubbish is then gradually burned and informally recycled.

Water: Consumption of water in Port-au-Prince increases as wealth increases – an element of difference in standard of living and even health status. Unlike in most rural areas, water in urban settings is mostly bought. In Port-au-Prince water may come from public standpipes, or it may be bought from those with piped water or from those with a water tank or water tanker. In some cases better-off households purchase a whole tanker and then sell the unneeded water to poorer neighbours for a profit. Only a minority of households has piped water. The quality of water consumed also increases as wealth increases, since the middle and better-off can more often afford to buy treated water.

3.11 Hazards and Coping Strategies

The present survey concentrated on providing baseline livelihood information rather than a specific analysis of response to shocks, a topic recently covered extensively in relation to price rises by WFP-VAM (2007). The limited information that was collected in this survey is presented below.

Hazards

The urban poor are vulnerable to a number of hazards. The most commonly reported in community interviews were:

Natural disasters: These include floods, tropical storms and hurricanes, the most recent example being those of August-September 2008. The effects of such natural

disasters are exacerbated by the poor infrastructure and poor quality of housing within the slums.

Price rises: The poor of Port-au-Prince are highly vulnerable to price increases, particularly because of the almost exclusive dependence on the market in an urban setting. Price increases in items such as food, water, fuel, education, transport and rent can have a significant impact on households' food security. The global financial crisis and concurrent rise in international food prices have been keenly felt in Haiti, which is heavily dependent on imports.

Political insecurity/ conflict: This has been common in Haiti's recent past and is clearly a possible future shock. The political strife surrounding and following the departure of Aristide in 2004 was cited by many community representatives as detrimental to households in their zones. Lower scale conflict still continues within some *bidonvilles*.

Coping Strategies

In order to respond to hazards the urban poor may employ a range of strategies.

Households may **change their patterns of expenditure**, for example by reducing the money spent on celebrations, festivals and 'luxury' items such as tobacco and alcohol in order to increase expenditure on food. In addition, expenditure on expensive foods, such as meat and milk, may be reduced in order to spend more on cheaper staple foods. Households may also **reduce overall expenditure** by cutting out non-essential items.

These strategies are **not** available to the **very poor**. As almost all their purchases are essential the very poor have no room to squeeze their income further.

Increasing the number of days worked: This strategy is clearly dependent on the availability of labor opportunities. Furthermore, some households already work a maximum number of days per month.

Increases reliance on foreign remittances: The full effects of the global financial crisis on remittances in Haiti remain to be seen.

Pawning: Households may pawn their assets.

Loans: Households may take out loans, but for poorer groups interest rates are extremely high.

Temporary reduction of food consumption (not possible for the very poor): this coping strategy is normally considered unacceptable and not included in HEA reports. However, in many interviews in Port-au-Prince this was cited as a short term strategy to get through periods of difficulty. The recent WFP report, conducted during the 2008 hurricanes, made the same finding.

Importantly, this is **not** a strategy that the very poor can safely employ, since they already do not have access to 100% of their minimum food needs. It is possible though that the other groups, with access to over 100% of minimum food, may slightly reduce their consumption for a few difficult weeks, in order to avoid other strategies, such as pawning their goods or taking a loan.

3.12 Monitoring

One of the reasons for conducting the urban assessment of livelihoods in Port-au-Prince was to provide a basis for improving monitoring systems within the city. When baseline information is combined with monitoring data it is possible to continue to analyse the food and livelihoods security of the urban poor periodically. A monitoring tool has been designed to facilitate this.

In order to develop the monitoring tool it was necessary to define a set of minimum expenditure 'baskets' to serve as thresholds; these are discussed in more detail below. First, however, it had to be decided whether to use the expenditure information for the very poor or poor wealth group as the basis for these baskets. Ultimately, information on the 'poor' has been used. This is because the 'very poor' were deemed already to live below an acceptable level, not even, for example, having access to their minimum food needs.

The next step was to divide the baseline expenditure information for the 'poor' into four categories or 'baskets': survival food; survival non-food; livelihoods protection; other. In defining these expenditure baskets we have essentially defined two thresholds. The survival threshold includes the survival food and survival non-food baskets and is the threshold of minimum acceptable calorie intake and minimum means of cooking and maintaining hygiene. The livelihoods protection threshold combines the two survival baskets as well as the livelihoods protection basket and is the line below which existing livelihoods assets and strategies cannot be maintained. Both thresholds are measured in cash terms.

Expenditure Baskets

Survival Food: The amount of money needed to purchase 100% of kilocalories from basic staple foods over a given period.

Survival Non-Food: The amount of money required to cover the cost of preparing and consuming food plus any cash expenditure on water for human consumption and rent. The survival non-food basket includes basic items such as salt, soap, charcoal for cooking, etc.

Livelihoods Protection: The amount of money that must be spent on items that are essential in terms of i) maintaining access to basic services (e.g. routine medical and schooling expenses) or ii) the maintenance of livelihoods in the medium to longer term (e.g. cost of transport to work, etc.) or iii) the maintenance of a minimum acceptable standard of living (e.g. purchase of basic clothing, coffee, toothpaste, a small amount of non-staple foods, etc.).

Other: The amount of money left over for expenditure on other non-essential or discretionary items, such as celebrations, festivals, more than the minimum quantity of meat and vegetables, alcohol, cigarettes, etc.

Defining the contents of these 'baskets' is not a routine process, and depends upon local conditions. So the following should be seen as preliminary rather than final, offered in the first instance for discussion with FEWS NET and the CNSA.

In terms of basic food consumption, there is an internationally accepted minimum energy requirement that can be used to define the contents of the survival food basket: an average of 2100 kilocalories per person per day. The cost of these

calories can be calculated in two ways. It is possible either to use the price of the cheapest staple food or to combine the prices of a range of staple foods. In Port-au-Prince the poor commonly consume several staples including maize meal, rice, oil and sugar; we have therefore decided to take all staples into account in calculating the price of 100% of kilocalories in the proportions found for their normal baseline living. This is shown in table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4 Suggested contents of the survival food basket

Survival Food Basket			
HH Size: 6 members			
Item	Quantity	% Kcals	Cost per month
Rice	48 petites marmites	22%	1,200
Maize	19 petites marmites	9%	380
Bread	88.9 sachets of 0.18kg	11%	889
Spaghetti	22.9 packets of 0.35kg	7%	572
Wheat flour	10 petites marmites	5%	180
Beans	24 petites marmites	11%	960
Oil	1.2 gallons	11%	314
Sugar	20 petites marmites	10%	400
Total		85%	4,894
Cost 100% Kcals = $100/85 \times 4,894 = 5,758$ gourdes per month			

We have defined the survival non-food basket in accordance with previous HEA assessments elsewhere. It contains 100% of the poor's expenditure on salt, matches, soap, washing powder, water and charcoal, which are all necessary for basic survival. Rent has also been included in this basket on the basis that poor households in Port-au-Prince typically pay it and that in an urban setting it is necessary for survival. Table 3.5 below shows the contents of the survival non-food basket.

Table 3.5 Suggested contents of the survival non-food basket

Survival Non-food Basket		
Item	Quantity per month	Cost per month
Salt	1 grande marmite @ 45 gourdes	45
Matches	1 box @ 12 gourdes	12
Soap		140
Washing Powder		280
Water	72 sceaux @ 5 gourdes	360
Charcoal	32 marmite @ 25 gourdes	800
Rent		708
Total		2,345

Perhaps the most difficult basket to define is the livelihoods protection basket. We have again used previous HEA assessments elsewhere for guidance as well as including items specific to the Haiti urban context. Most non-staple food purchases have **not** been included. The exceptions are milk, vegetables and street-bought rice dishes and *pâtés* (pasties). Given its importance, particularly for children, 100% of the poor's expenditure on milk has been included. In contrast only 25% of the poor's expenditure on onions and tomatoes and 50% of their expenditure on street

food have been included in the basket. The rationale for this is that the poor can reduce their expenditure on these items as coping strategies. 25% of expenditure on onions and tomatoes remains to allow for some purchase of these items, which increase palatability. Indeed onions may be regarded as a universal condiment and tomatoes are an important constituent of sauces, which are eaten with staple foods. 50% of expenditure on street food remains to allow for the fact that it may be a necessary purchase for some poor households, especially when one member works away from home and needs to buy lunch.

The livelihoods protection basket also includes 100% of the poor's baseline expenditure on health, education, transport for work, other household items (primarily candles), coffee, spices, gas and electricity. 50 gourdes of expenditure on toiletries has been included to allow for the purchase of toothpaste, but to exclude 'luxury' items such as perfume. 50% of expenditure on communications (mainly phone cards) has been included, since remittances are sometimes organized by telephone. Finally, only 25% of expenditure on clothes has been included, since this can be reduced as a coping strategy. The table (3.6) below displays the contents of the livelihoods protection basket. All other expenditure falls into the 'other' non-essential category.

Table 3.6 Suggested contents of the livelihoods protection basket

LIVELIHOODS PROTECTION BASKET			
Item	Quantity	% Kcals	Cost per month
Vegetables- Onions	1.5kg	0%	60
Vegetables - Tomatoes	0.75kg	0%	23
Milk	12 sachets of 0.17kg	1%	204
Street Meal	10 street meals @ 35 gourdes	2%	350
Street Pâté	16.5 pâtés @ 15 gourdes	2%	248
Coffee	20 sachets of coffee @ 10 gourdes		200
Spices	40 units of spices @ 5 gourdes		200
Gas			50
Electricity			50
Toothpaste	2 'pâtes dentifrice'		50
Other HH items (candles)			40
Clothes			92
Health			184
Education (Fees, Uniforms, Stationery...)			775
Education: Pocket Money			800
Communications			83
Transport for Work			575
Total		5%	3,984

Once these baskets have been defined the cost of the survival food, survival non-food and livelihoods protection baskets should be monitored, by collecting regular price information on the items that make up the baskets. In essence, this means that we are monitoring the monthly cost of living for a typical poor household of six; one cause for concern may be if this cost increases significantly. However, any price increases need to be considered alongside household income, so this should be monitored too. The most common income sources for the poor are casual labor and small business/ petty trade; given the difficulty of monitoring income it is suggested that *either* the daily labor rate *or* the daily profit from petty trade be monitored.

Using the two bits of information above (cost of living per month and daily income) it is possible to create a monitoring index – the number of days' work per month required to purchase the three expenditure baskets listed above. This can be calculated by dividing the cost of living for a given month by daily income (see below)

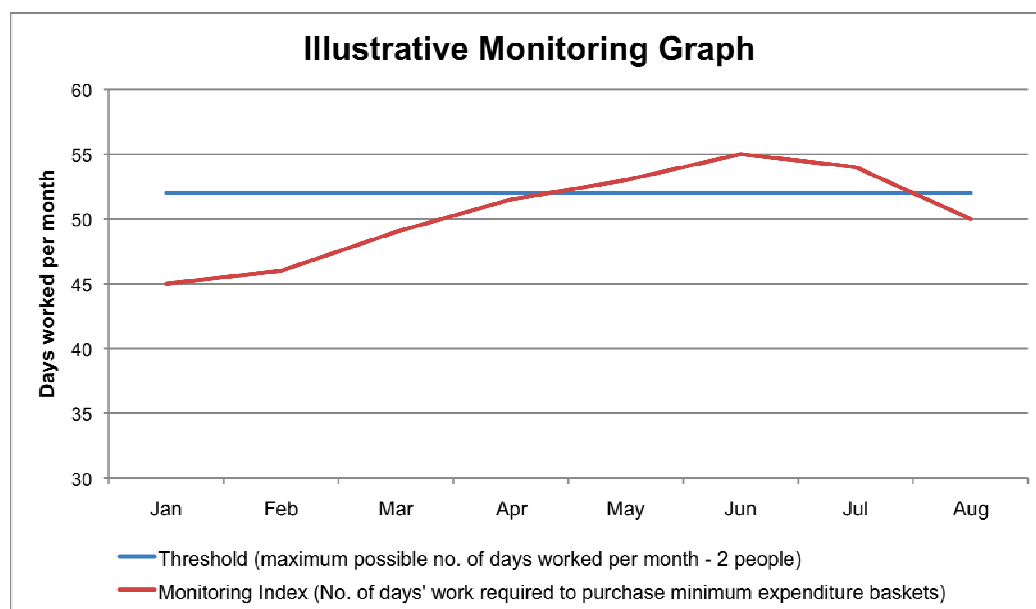
Urban Livelihoods Monitoring Index (number of days' work required to purchase survival food, survival non-food and livelihoods protection baskets) =

$$\text{Cost of Livelihoods Protection Basket} \div \text{Daily Labor Rate}$$

Having calculated the number of days' work required to buy these baskets, it is clearly important to set a threshold, beyond which poor households are unable to afford these baskets (i.e. their basic living costs). This threshold should be the maximum number of days it is possible for poor households to work in one month. Like the composition of the minimum expenditure baskets, setting a threshold is, to some extent, subjective and needs to be finalized in discussions with FEWS NET and the CNSA.

Finally, it should be noted that this monitoring tool takes into account coping strategies, such as those listed in section 3.11 above. In including 100% of calories from staple foods in the survival food basket and only a minimum of non-staple foods in the livelihoods protection basket, the assumption is made that poor households will change their foods consumption patterns to respond to hazards. Furthermore, income from remittances can be included by subtracting it from the cost of the minimum expenditure baskets, before calculating the index. Finally, in setting the threshold it is possible to include the maximum number of days a poor household can work per month, thus taking into account the fact that, when faced with difficulties, households try and increase the number of days they work. Figure 3.14 below shows how the monitoring tool would work, once it has been running for several months. When the index crosses the threshold, there is a need for further information and possibly an intervention. The data displayed on the graph are illustrative only and are not based on information collected during the assessment.

Figure 3.13



4. Conclusion

This survey has established baseline information on the livelihoods of the urban poor in Port-au-Prince and has suggested a monitoring framework, which can contribute to ongoing analysis of food and livelihood security in the city. It set out to answer basic questions on the nature of urban poverty, particularly about how households access food, income and basic services and how income and expenditure patterns differ between households at different wealth levels. The following draws the main findings together, emphasizes the most important points and identifies areas for further work.

The results of this assessment show that the majority of the population in the *bidonvilles* is poor even by the standards of the *bidonvilles* themselves, with 65% of the population falling into the lower two groups of the four-way division (very poor, poor, middle, better-off). Following the riots, storms and price rises of 2008, the very poor (30%) are just able to survive, but arguably at an unacceptable level. They live on around 1.35 US dollars per person per day. This may not seem particularly low by comparison with other developing countries in absolute terms, but the cost of living in Port-au-Prince is comparatively high, reflecting an imports-based economy. In the city it is expensive to be poor.

An analysis of food, income and expenditure patterns has revealed significant distinctions within overall poverty. The poorest households are distinguished by a high dependency ratio (few income earners compared to dependents), a lack of access to productive assets, and poorly paid jobs. As wealth increases, the level of pay increases and the nature of work changes, so that the middle and better-off tend to perform more skilled, secure and well-paid jobs, while also engaging in more lucrative business activities. The assessment showed that remittances were important for all wealth groups, but it remains difficult accurately to quantify these on a household as well as on a national level.

Due to their low incomes households in the two lowest groups have to spend the majority of their cash on food, just to meet their minimum food needs. Indeed the very poor cannot even do this; they only consume 95% of the minimum required in calorie terms. The poorer groups purchase mainly basic staple foods. Animal proteins are bought only in small quantities; indeed the very poor cannot afford beef or goat meat at all and spend the little they have on cheaper animal proteins, such as dried herring and frozen chicken pieces. In contrast, the 'better-off' (who are nevertheless not wealthy enough to move away from the *bidonvilles*) can spend four-and-a half-times more than the very poor on animal products, including fresh fish, as well as using more beans and vegetables. In this context, it is an interesting finding that the very poor and poor purchase large amounts of food prepared in street, which is relatively expensive in terms of the cost of calories. Several reasons have been suggested for this, including the need for workers to eat away from home, and cooking-fuel costs. However, more work is needed to understand why the poor spend money in this way.

Households in the two poorest groups spend most of the rest of their money on the basic items required for survival – primarily charcoal, water, soap and rent. Even for such basic items, significant differences in living standards between the poor and very poor are evident. For instance, adjusting for a similar household size, the very poor spend 40% less on soap than the poor – an indication of differences in the quality of life, if not indeed health.

In absolute terms poor households can also afford to spend more than the very poor on water, charcoal for cooking and rent, which ensures them a larger and slightly better quality house. All in all the very poor households' level of expenditure was

judged to be unacceptably low, and that of the poor has been used instead as a minimum basis for setting thresholds for monitoring.

Of the little money left over for the poorest groups after essential household expenditure, most is spent on education. While the same is true for the middle group, these households have considerably more cash to spend on small 'luxuries' such as celebrations, tobacco and alcohol. Very poor households typically spend almost nothing on such items. Indeed, the very poor's expenditure on education is particularly impressive. If they did not pay for education, they could easily afford 100% of their minimum food needs. However, they cannot fulfil their minimum requirements *if* they choose to educate their children – and typically they do.

Of the different expenditures on education (fees, uniforms, stationery, transport, pocket money), it is pocket money to be spent by students on lunch and snacks that is largest for all wealth groups. This may mean that a school-feeding programme could considerably ease the pressure on the poorest groups. However, we may note that during an HEA assessment of Djibouti Ville in East Africa, pocket money was found to be of a similar importance, and not having pocket money could lead to a child standing out as different and even dropping out of school. A further understanding of the role fulfilled by pocket money in Port-au-Prince is needed.

Finally, this assessment has also highlighted the vulnerability of the poorest groups to a range of shocks, including political insecurity, natural disasters and food price rises. The proposed monitoring tool has been designed to provide continuing information on the poor's ability to purchase their minimum food and non-food needs as well as to access services such as health and education. It is hoped that, once finalized following discussions with FEWS NET and CNSA, the tool will be used to improve the quality of food and livelihood security information for Port-au-Prince.

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