

Understanding Poverty, Promoting Wellbeing and Sustainable Development

A sample survey of 16 districts of Zimbabwe



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Chapter Five

Poverty Dynamics in Zimbabwe

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Main messages

- *Poverty in Zimbabwe has continued to increase from the 1990s.*
- *On a ten-step 'wellbeing ladder', 90 per cent of respondents thought they were currently on the bottom five rungs of the ladder, with 3 being the average step.*
- *Most respondents thought that their wellbeing had not improved since five years ago.*
- *However, most respondents thought that they would be at least two steps higher up the ladder in five years time.*
- *Strategies out of poverty hinge on having more money, and the means of getting more money through more and better jobs; increased agricultural production; and more and better education.*
- *A multi-stakeholder approach is required that commits the government, non-governmental organizations, international development partners and the private sector to working together to implement strategies that will address poverty in Zimbabwe.*

Introduction

Chapter Four indicated a high incidence and depth of poverty in the sampled households across Zimbabwe, as well as some of the key determinants of poverty in urban and rural areas. It is also important, however, to recognise that poverty is not a static condition, but a dynamic one. Households may fall – or fall deeper – into poverty as a result of one or an accumulation of shocks. Likewise, over time, they may also experience incremental improvements that allow them to move out of poverty. The MZF survey and qualitative components also wanted to get an understanding of the factors driving these movements into and out of poverty, as presented here. Section one of this Chapter traces changes in Zimbabwe's poverty levels using available datasets. Section two then looks at the experiences of households in our sample, asking households both where they currently stand in comparison with five years ago, and where they expect to stand in five years time. Sections three and four then look briefly at the nature of shocks facing poor households and strategies deployed by Zimbabwean households for escaping poverty, before section five investigates community perceptions of 'development'.

How has poverty changed over time in Zimbabwe?

Although an analysis of poverty dynamics is best based on panel data sets, a lack of panel data sets in Zimbabwe means we must instead look at other past survey data, while recognising they may not be as strictly comparable as a panel dataset would have been²³. Over the years Zimbabwe has conducted four nationally representative data surveys, with a fifth, the 2012 Poverty Income

Expenditure Survey (PICES), currently under way. Data from Income Consumption and Expenditure Surveys (ICES) carried out in 1990 and 1995 and from the Poverty Assessment Study Surveys (PASS) of 1995 and 2003 form the basis of current knowledge on poverty in Zimbabwe.

Data from the 1990 and 1995 ICES showed that real household consumption declined by 24 per cent between the two surveys (Alwang, *et al.*, 2002). The Poverty Assessment Study Surveys (PASS) also confirmed that income poverty continued to increase from 1995 to 2003, with the proportion of households living under the poverty line increasing from 42 per cent in 1995 to 63 per cent in 2003 (GoZ, 2006) (see Table 5.1).

Between 1995 and 2003 the cost of living or income required to meet minimum acceptable consumption increased. Survey results from the 2003 and 1995 PASS showed that in real terms the food poverty line increased, highlighting that the cost of maintaining minimum daily food requirements of 2,100 kilo-calories had increased. This was accompanied by an increase in the Total Consumption Poverty Line by 359 per cent, highlighting the inflation that also increased the cost of non-food items and services. The increase in the cost of living was higher in urban areas, and by 2003, it had become more expensive to live in urban areas. Among urban areas, Harare and Bulawayo experienced the highest increase in poverty lines during that period (GoZ, 2006).

During the same period real incomes, as measured by household expenditures and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, declined, pushing more and more households into poverty (GoZ, 2006). The depth of poverty also appears to have grown. The poverty depth

²³As mentioned in Chapter Three the only panel study being conducted in Zimbabwe is by Bill Kinsey of resettled households and is not nationally representative.

Table 5.1: Household poverty levels by land use area from the 1995 and 2003 Poverty Assessment Study Surveys

Land use Area	Total Consumption Poverty <i>The poor</i> (per cent)		Food Poverty <i>The very poor</i> (per cent)	
	1995	2003	1995	2003
Overall	42	63	20	48
Communal	53	66	24	51
Resettlement Area	52	58	25	46
Small Scale Commercial	32	58	15	43
Larger scale commercial	34	52	11	38
Urban Areas	31	53	10	29

Source: GoZ, 2006

in the MZF survey at nearly 53 per cent, is considerably higher than the 16 per cent reported during the PASS of 1995 and the 34 per cent reported in the 2003 PASS (GoZ, 2006). Although the data from the different surveys are not directly comparable, they all indicate deepening poverty, with more people not only becoming poorer but being entrenched in poverty as they fall further below the poverty line. It will take, therefore, more resources and much stronger assistance to reverse this process.

Poverty data throughout 2004 to 2010 is limited to the periodic ZIMVAC and Multiple Indicator Monitoring Survey (MIMS). However, there is a general consensus in the literature that poverty levels peaked in 2008 and have begun to tail off since 2009 (GoZ, 2011).

Household perceptions of past, current and future poverty status

Surveyed households were asked where they thought they were on an imagined poverty/wellbeing scale. Using a 10-step ladder, where the bottom step (step 1) represents the worst possible life, and the top step (step 10) represents the best possible life, households were asked where on the ladder they thought they currently stood, where they stood five years ago, and where they expect to stand in five years time.

Ninety per cent of households placed themselves currently on the bottom five rungs of the wellbeing ladder, which displays household peaks for steps one and

Table 5.2: Perceptions of poverty status

Current position on step ladder	All (number)	All (per cent)
Step ladder 1 (worst condition)	803	23.8
Step ladder 2	568	16.9
Step ladder 3	518	15.4
Step ladder 4	449	13.3
Step ladder 5	709	21.0
Step ladder 6	161	4.8
Step ladder 7	83	2.5
Step ladder 8	40	1.2
Step ladder 9	10	0.3
Step ladder 10 (best condition)	30	0.9

five (Table 5.2). Notably, nearly one in four households highlight that they currently stand on the bottom rung of the poverty ladder. The rural and urban differences in poverty revealed by the survey are also reflected in this exercise, with a higher proportion of rural respondents placing themselves on the lower rungs than urban respondents (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). These findings also reveal that aspirations of mobility were much higher in

urban areas. Not only did a higher proportion of urban households place themselves currently on steps five to ten, a much higher proportion also indicated they envisioned household improvements over the next five years. While 15 per cent of urban households viewed themselves on the top rung of the ladder in five years time, only five per cent of rural households did.

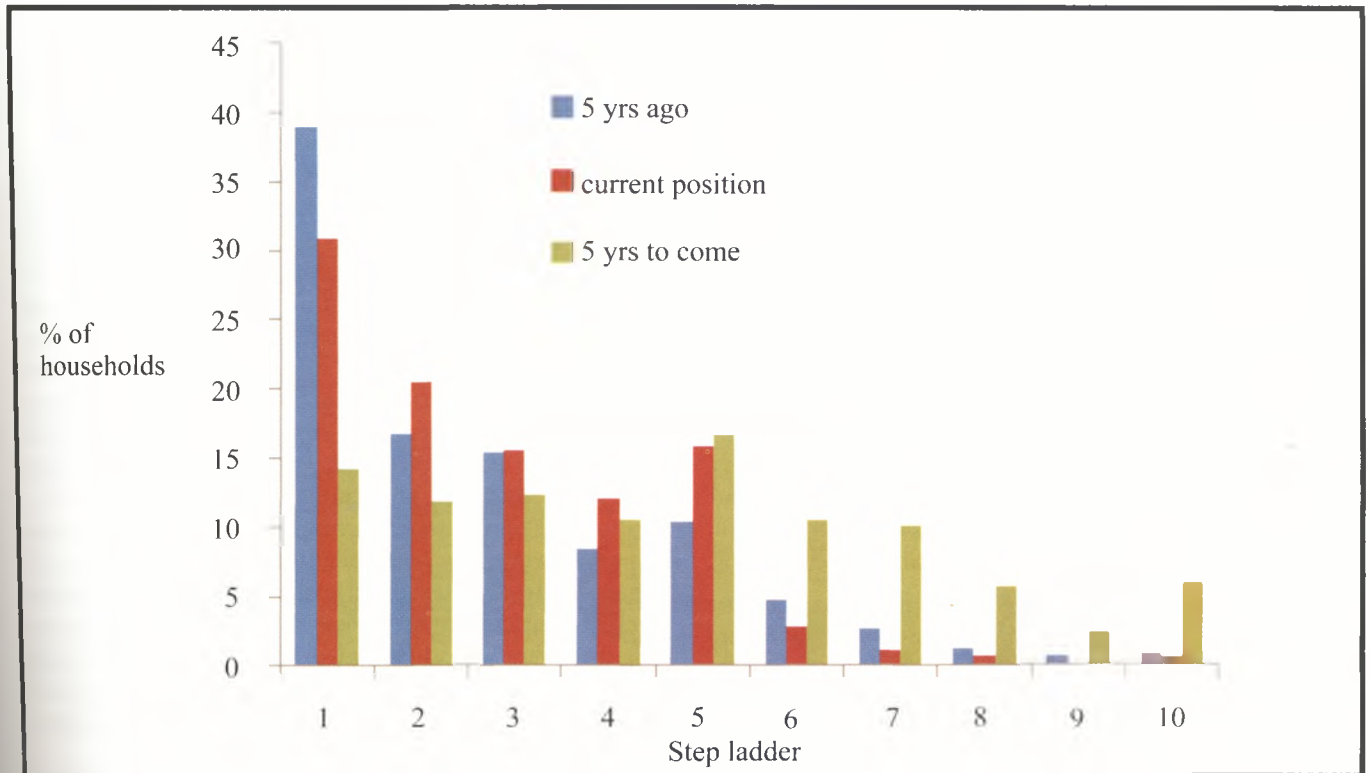


Figure 5.1: Rural perception of poverty status

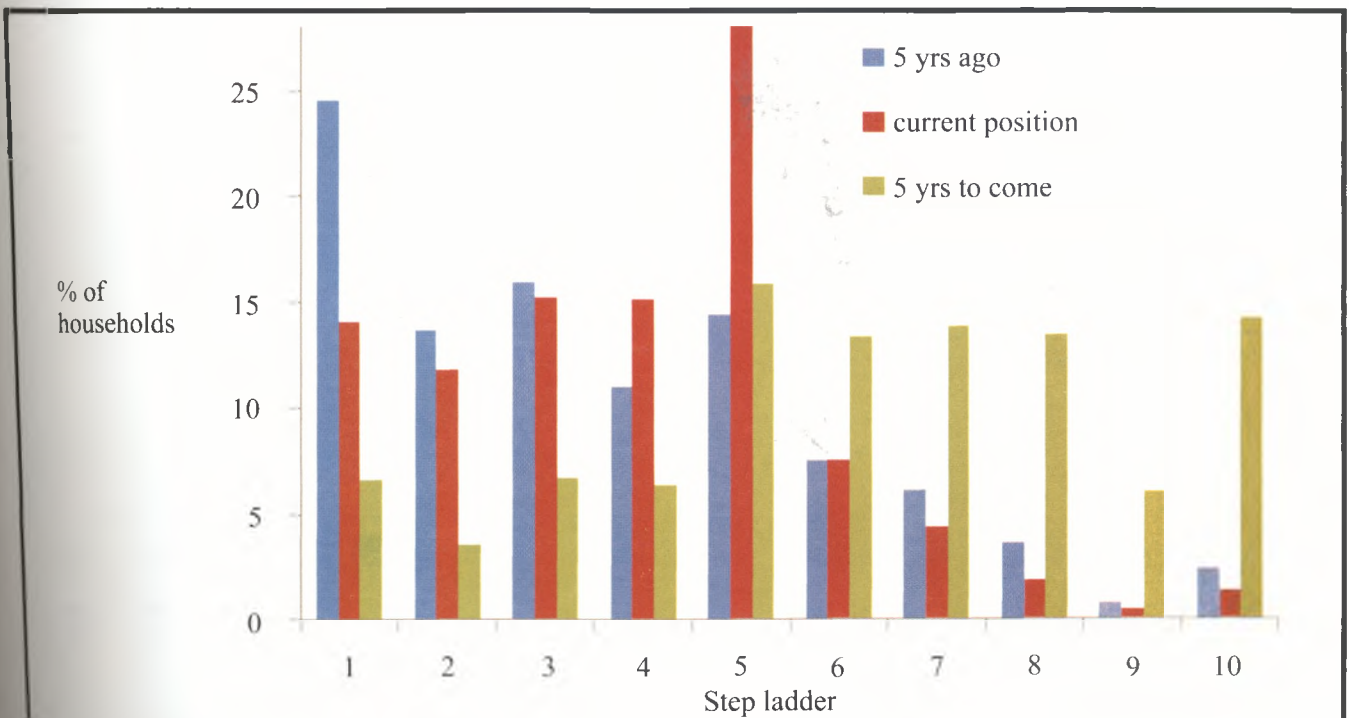


Figure 5.2: Urban perceptions of poverty status

Figure 5.3 shows the people's perceived current poverty status on the step ladder and actual household consumption poverty status from the survey data. As would be expected, more of the non-poor saw themselves on higher steps than the poor. Over a quarter of those from poor households thought they were currently on the lowest step, while one quarter of the non-poor perceived themselves on step 5. Figure 5.3 however, also shows that there is no clear correlation between perceived poverty status and actual household consumption/ expenditure poverty status. Just under one per cent of the poor thought they were on the highest step of the ladder, while 13 per cent of the non-poor thought that they were on the first step of the wellbeing ladder, that is, experiencing the worst possible life.

Looking at the average (arithmetic mean) of stated steps for households based on poverty categories and key background characteristics, Table 5.3 indicates that households in the sampled districts on average perceived themselves to be at the third step and believe that there had been no change in their welfare status over the past five years. While very poor households perceived that they were slightly better off than they were five years ago, for the majority, the general perception is that nothing had changed. These results suggest that the up-turn in the macro-economic environment registered since 2009 is yet to trickle down and benefit the poor.

Households were more optimistic about their future, expecting that they would, on average, move two steps higher in the next five years.

Urban residents were slightly more optimistic in this respect. This perception of a two-step upward mobility was consistent regardless of current welfare status (as measured by household consumption, employment status or experience of shocks over the past 12 months). For the

urban, non-poor category and those households with at least one member in permanent employment, the average wellbeing status expected in the next five years was over 6 steps on the ladder.

Why are people poor? Covariant and idiosyncratic shocks

There are two types of drivers of poverty in Zimbabwe, namely covariant or structural drivers which affect all households in a community, and idiosyncratic or individual drivers which target specific individuals, households or social groups. The widespread nature of covariant drivers in Zimbabwe means they often require long-term national policy-programming responses at scale. Covariant drivers such as agricultural or economic crises and jobless growth, breakdown in claims and entitlement, and inadequate markets, are often seen as being more lethal, because their generalised nature often implies that individuals and communities cannot help each other in meaningful ways to climb out of poverty (PRP, 2012). On the other hand idiosyncratic drivers, including access to assets, shocks and stresses such as illness and crop failures, hurt individual entities but there is scope for localised interventions through specific programme responses. While a household may be able to withstand one or several small crises, however, the accumulation of multiple shocks over time slowly depletes their resilience to future shocks as well as their current wellbeing. Focus groups revealed two major covariant and one major idiosyncratic shocks that influenced poverty dynamics, which are discussed briefly below, before being more thoroughly explored in Chapter Six.

Shocks related to agriculture

In rural areas the predominant explanation for why poverty persists was attributed to low agricultural productivity.

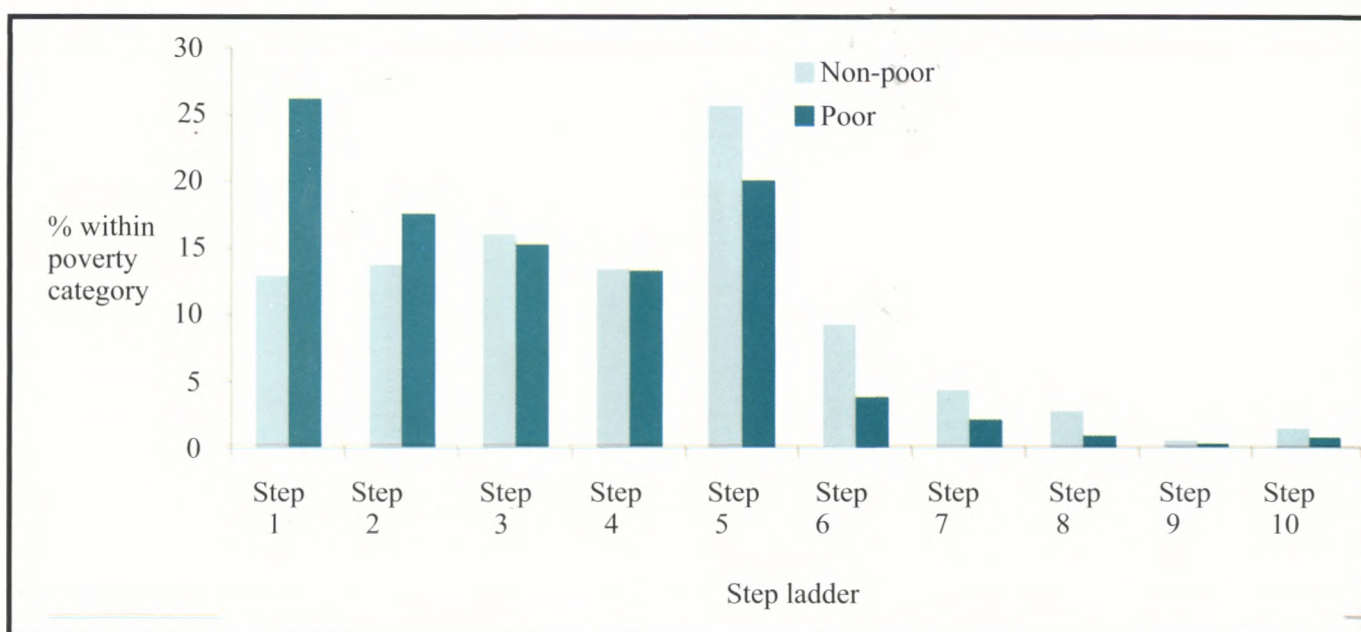


Figure 5.3: Perceived poverty status and household consumption poverty status

Widespread crop failure was noted in many of the sample districts during the survey and focus groups. Focus groups proposed a number of reasons why they could not produce enough, including erratic rainfall, continuous droughts, lack of farming inputs and problems with marketing. In Chiredzi, one participant lamented *'we have experienced persistent droughts leading to poor or no harvests at all. By persistent I mean we experience it every year'*. As well as crop failures, droughts mean there is not enough drinking water for livestock or household members. In Hwange, for example, locals complained that access to drinking water was constrained by drought and the fact that the majority of boreholes in the communal areas were not working.

Both urban and rural area respondents complained of high prices causing poverty. In Mutoko, the community complained that prices of goods in local shops were too high, as were services such as the cost of grinding cereals. These problems are exacerbated by the low market prices that the community receive for their agricultural products like cotton, maize and tobacco. Hurungwe, for example, is well known for cotton farming but the farmers lamented that the returns on cotton further condemns the community into poverty. Poor and delayed payment by grain companies was cited by the community as a major drawback leading to more poverty. Other buyers (grain dealers) offered them very low prices, leaving farmers with no money to buy inputs for the next season. When yields were good or adequate, farmers experienced setbacks with marketing preventing them from benefiting. For example in Chimanimani, farmers had no access to markets for their products, especially fruits which are easily perishable.

Farmers resorted to selling their bananas to locals for *'peanuts'*.

In some areas, such as Chimanimani, infertile soils caused low agricultural production. Districts such as Mbire, Kariba, Chiredzi, and Hwange, which are close to protected areas, have large wildlife populations which bring a number of challenges to agricultural production. Wildlife such as elephants, baboons and antelope, perennially destroyed crops, while predators such as lions and leopards killed livestock. In Chiredzi, outbreaks of diseases such as Foot and Mouth, bovine tuberculosis and Newcastle can wipe out both large and small livestock.

Economic crisis

The importance of employment to poverty outcomes was emphasised in the previous chapter. In Highfields, a high density suburb of Harare, and Epworth, a peri-urban area, people identified high unemployment as the most important cause of poverty. Focus groups highlighted that the industries which closed down as a result of the economic crisis had not started operating to full capacity yet.

Urban residents complained that they were unable to accumulate the capital necessary for generating their own employment given the high costs of living and limited incomes. Although most households were relying on the informal sector for their employment, they face many challenges in this sector. For example, the Epworth Local Board requires levies amounting to USD 4 per

Table 5.3: Perceptions of wellbeing by household poverty

	Average wellbeing step for the household		
	Five years ago	Current	Next five years
All	3.1	3.3	5.3
Poverty status			
Non-poor	3.8	4.4	6.6
Poor	3.0	3.0	4.9
Very-poor	2.7	2.6	4.3
Location			
Rural	2.8	2.8	4.6
Urban	3.6	3.9	6.2
Agro-ecological Regions 1 and 2	3.3	3.4	5.7
Agro-ecological Region 3	3.3	3.6	5.4
Agro-ecological Region 4	2.8	3.1	5.0
Agro-ecological Region 5	2.9	3.0	4.6
Employment			
Household has permanent employees	3.4	4.1	6.4
Household has temporary employees	3.2	3.5	5.7
Household has business enterprise	3.6	3.6	5.8

month for vending which most people could not afford because profits were marginal. Employment was not just an issue for the urban and peri-urban sectors. Focus group participants in Mutoko, Chimanimani, Gwanda and Chiredzi complained of lack of employment opportunities, particularly amongst the youth.

Ill health

Ill health and high mortality rates due to AIDS were cited as a cause of poverty in most areas, especially when the family breadwinner was affected (see the example in Box 5.1). In Hurungwe, the issue of HIV and AIDS was cited by the community as a leading cause of household poverty. Surviving children were left to head families without farming implements or equipment. Such child-headed families were tied to poverty (*mburi inosiwa munzara, inongorima vo zvenzara-nzara. Hapana chaino budisa*, meaning the family that is left in hunger/poverty will also reap hunger/poverty – they cannot better their lives). In Chiredzi, participants pointed out that HIV and AIDS

incapacitates, causing people to become too ill to work in the fields. When the breadwinners die the orphans have to be looked after by elderly grandparents or fend for themselves, thereby creating a cycle of poverty.

The regression analysis of the survey data found that having larger households and accommodating orphans in the household correlated with higher consumption expenditure poverty.

Strategies out of poverty

Understanding the nature of poverty is academic, and does not concern the poor who are actually experiencing it. Chambers (2006) points out that as professionals we are asking the wrong question about ‘what is poverty?’ Poor, marginalised and vulnerable people are more concerned with questions such as ‘What can be done to reduce our bad experiences of life and living?’ and ‘What will enable us to achieve more of the good things in life to which one aspires?’ In line with this, the MZF questionnaire



Photograph: S. Chiutsi

survey inquired about the factors that may help move households up the welfare status ladder (Table 5.4 and Figure 5.4). Furthermore, the focus group question guide asked community groups for suggestions on strategies that could lift them out of poverty.

The results in Table 5.4 (which looks at perceived pathways by location) and Figure 5.4 (which looks at poverty categories) indicate that increased incomes and spiritual blessings were the most frequently cited reasons for a household's success in moving forward. At least 25

per cent of households in both rural and urban areas cited these as the most important reasons for any possible future movement up the welfare ladder. In urban areas, where employment is central to survival and wellbeing, getting a better job or job security was the second most cited reason for possible welfare movements. Table 5.4 and Figure 5.4 also highlight the important influences of social networks and voluntary associations on mobility, such as becoming a member of a local organisation; receiving remittances; support from spouses, family, community or religious organisation; and friendship.

Box 5.1: HIV and AIDS pandemic creating widows, widowers and orphans in Gwanda

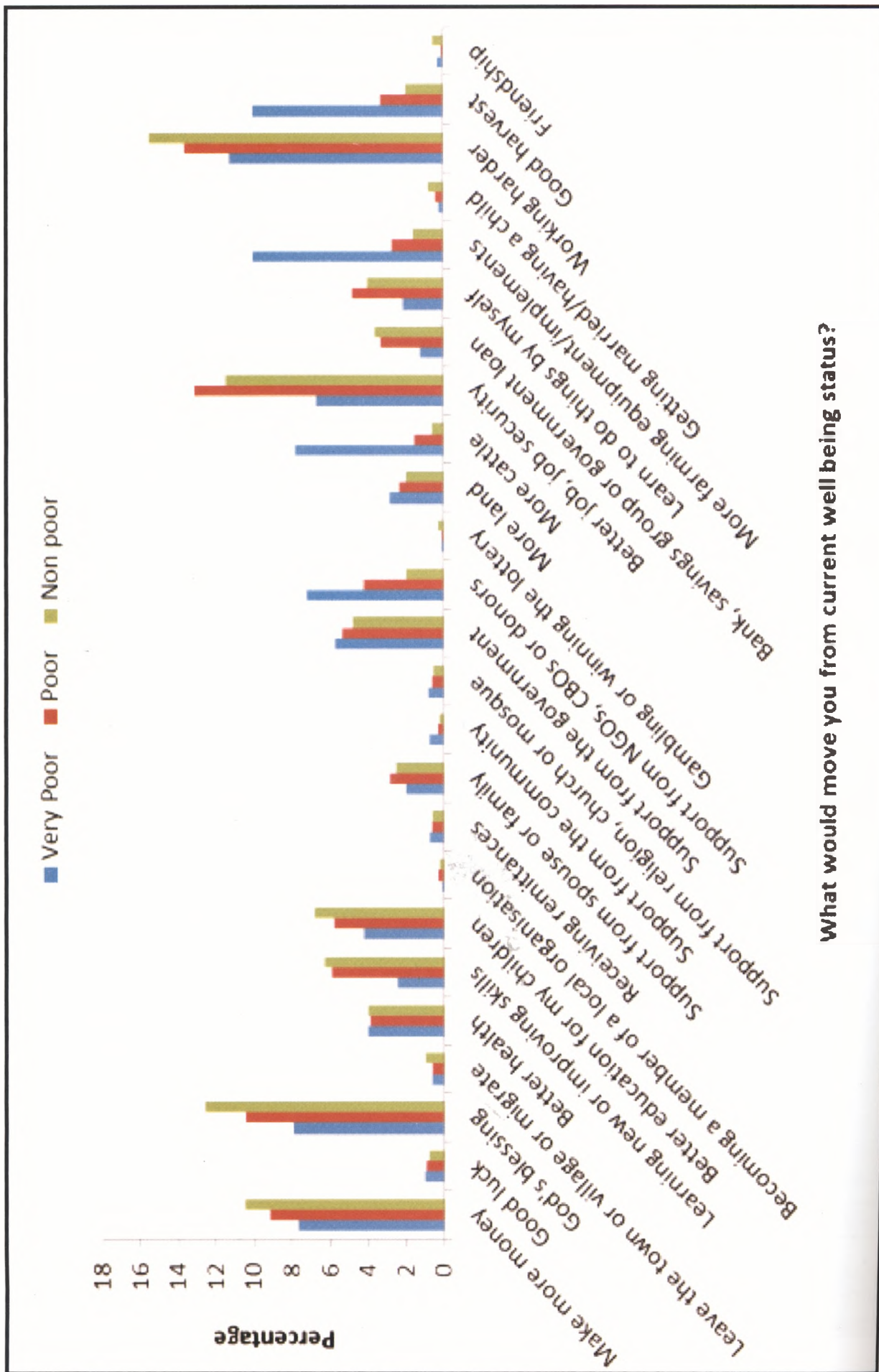
During a focus group discussion in Mtshazo area, Gwanda, HIV and AIDS were identified as major contributors of death in the community, which had killed breadwinners in most families, leaving widows, widowers and orphans suffering. Expanded households were created when a relative (for example brother) passed away and another sibling had to take care of the children on their behalf. Such responsibility tended to overwhelm the breadwinner of such families and poverty manifested in the form of inadequate food, failure to pay school fees for the children, etc.

Table 5.4: Perceptions of wellbeing: Factors that would be most important to help to move up the wellbeing ladder. Per cent, ranked and by location

Factors	Rural			Urban		
	First	Second	Third	First	Second	Third
Making more money	13.2	3.7	6.1	13.6	6.5	8.5
God's blessing	12.7	3.8	4.5	20.0	7.9	8.2
Better education for my children	3.7	3.9	4.1	5.5	9.2	5.2
Support from the government	5.4	5.8	4.5	4.6	7.0	6.2
Support from non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations or donors	6.8	8.7	6.4	2.2	3.3	4.6
More land	2.3	3.6	2.5	1.7	2.6	2.4
More cattle	7.0	10.9	6.5	0.1	0.7	0.7
Better job, job security	6.7	6.7	4.8	15.0	16.3	9.3
More farming equipment/ implements	9.6	11.8	10.5	0.6	1.5	1.9
Working harder	8.3	10.7	15.2	10.3	13.9	19.3
Good harvest	6.6	8.9	17.7	0.7	1.0	2.3
Other factors*	17.9	21.4	17.3	25.8	30.1	31.6
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Notes: *Other factors listed include: good luck; migrate from the town or village; better health; learning new or improving skills; becoming a member of a local organization; receiving remittances; support from spouse; family; community, or religious organizations; government loan; getting married/having a child; and friendship.

Figure 5.4: Perceptions of wellbeing by poverty category: Factors that would be most important to help to move up the wellbeing ladder.



Focus group discussions elicited information on strategies out of poverty. Most of the strategies they discussed relate to macro-level solutions rather than address micro-level changes or strategies. This is likely due to the depth and extent of poverty across Zimbabwe, which leaves households with little resources with which to pursue alternative livelihood strategies for household improvements. The three strategies and interventions highlighted by focus groups are employment, education and livelihoods. Employment creation will result in more income. Better education will lead to better job opportunities and more income. Access to education can be improved through free education up to 'O' level, and through expanding and up-scaling support provided by the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) programme. A number of livelihood options were put forward including:

- Grants to start community based projects (for example, the mining Community Share Ownership Schemes, and loans for vending, see Box 5.2).
- Support to community food security schemes, such as Zunde raMambo (see Box 5.3).
- Nutrition gardens for subsistence and income generation (see example in Box 5.4).

- Government subsidies on basic commodities. This will curb against inflation.
- Irrigation schemes to grow food crops.
- More extension workers to assist with agricultural production.

Providing support for agriculture

Strategies that can effectively alleviate poverty by enhancing agricultural production focused on the call for efficient, affordable and accessible input supply systems. Many households had no draught power. For example, Hurungwe has good soils and receives good rainfall but farmers had no capacity to engage in maximum crop production. The community was of the view that government and Rural District Councils should provide tillage services at affordable rates. In Chimamimani, the focus was on provision of farming implements to farmers either on a loan basis or at subsidized prices, and provision of appropriate maize seed to the area and in time, which would increase crop production and intensify market gardening. Focus groups also highlighted that growing small grain crops such as sorghum, which does well in low rainfall areas, should be promoted in drier areas.

Box 5.2: Support for informal vendors

In Epworth, focus group participants agreed that for poverty reduction to take place, the Local Board should reduce the amount of money paid by vendors as levies. The government should provide loans for projects. It seems the loans currently being given to people by the Government just benefit a few.

In Highfields, respondents argued that the municipality should not be so harsh on vendors by demanding levies that are beyond the reach of many, especially where one goes home with a profit of USD 2 per day.

Box 5.3: Assistance by government, non-government and aid organizations.

Gwanda focus group discussion: *'non-governmental and aid organizations always come in to help the poor and supply food during extreme drought years with poor harvest. However, these have in some instances been abused since some households never plough and wait solely for the aid. This has created some form of laziness in the community and as a result, food for labour has been introduced'*.

Box 5.4: Gardening in Gwanda

Gardening has been seen as one of the strategies that can be used to reduce poverty in the area of Mtshazo, Gwanda. The gardens are used to supplement the household food basket and extra produce sold for income for other uses. Marketable produce brought to Gwanda town for sale included green pepper, butternuts, onions, tomatoes, green beans and cucumbers.

In Mazowe, recipients of land from the land reform programme said that it was beneficial and should be extended to benefit more communal farmers and farm workers. Resettled farmers should be supported with inputs and tillage to enable them to become commercially productive.

Migration and greener pastures

In order to cope with frequent droughts and poverty, many of the economically active people in Districts such as Chiredzi that border neighbouring countries, work as migrant labourers in South Africa, Mozambique or Botswana. Most of them do not have travel documents and they cross the borders illegally using undesignated points. While there, they send groceries and money to build better houses and buy livestock, mostly cattle. In some cases, the husband is the one who goes first while the wife remains behind and follows once the husband settles down (See Box 5.5).

Perceptions of development

Community perceptions of poverty and the strategies that households deploy to escape poverty, is followed by a discussion of community perceptions of the inverse, namely, of their definitions of 'development'. The Brandt (1980) Report takes development to mean 'improvements in living conditions for which economic growth and industrialisation are essential. But if there is no attention to the quality of growth and to social change, one cannot speak about development....development involves a

profound transformation of the entire economic and social structure.'

Development was perceived with reference to thriving businesses and industries in all areas of the MZF study, implying that these are important for peoples' livelihoods, by providing employment and also by making available certain goods and services. The issue of good road networks, good infrastructure and availability of clinics and hospitals were key to people's livelihoods, in peri-urban and rural areas. Clinics and hospitals are important due to the rates of ill health in these areas as compared to urban areas.

Rural people added access to clean water, uninterrupted access to mobile phones, television and radio transmission networks as being features of development. Limited infrastructure and services worsens the position of poor people, because no matter how much they try, their efforts are constrained by lack of supportive infrastructure. As a result, their poverty can partly be explained by the residual approach which views poverty as a consequence of being left out of processes of development, a process which Muzvidziwa (2005) calls social exclusion. The assumption here is that development brings economic growth, which sooner or later raises everybody's income. This is termed the trickle-down effect: that the benefits of growth trickle down even to the poorest groups in society in the form of increased opportunities to earn (more) income (Bernstein, 2002). Remoteness is therefore a key factor in explaining concentrations of poverty in specific areas as it limits access to markets, increases the price of

Box 5.5: Migration as a way to cope with poverty

Moletsane, a young man of 22 years, married with three children, from Chiredzi, was on his way to South Africa when he was interviewed. He said he was going to cross into South Africa illegally as he had no proper travel documents. His major reason for going down south was poverty within his household. He said he had planted crops that included maize which did not do well, as a result there was hunger at his homestead. Once he crossed the border, he was going to claim asylum. He would start by doing piece jobs on farms near the border. This would help him raise money to travel to Pretoria where he could find a better job. When the asylum is granted he would look for a job and this would enable him to start sending money and groceries to his family. Once he had settled down, his wife would then join him.

Tsotsowani, a young woman in her twenties who is now based in Polokwane, South Africa, together with her husband, was visiting her home in Chiredzi. She said that she got married at the age of 17 after coming from the initiation ceremony (a Shangaani cultural tradition). She had to drop out of school when she got married. Her husband went to South Africa in 2008 and got a job as a gardener. She joined her husband in 2009 and got a job as a housemaid, leaving her young child with the maternal grandmother in Chiredzi. Tsotsowani and her husband sent about South African Rand 1,000 every month and some groceries which were shared between the couples respective families. They had been able to buy eight head of cattle and built a brick and asbestos house at the husband's homestead. Tsotsowani said she had to go and work in South Africa mainly because:

'Life is hard in Zimbabwe for people who did not go far with school like me. It is easier to go and work in South Africa rather than here. We are fortunate as women because our husbands have allowed us to follow them to South Africa to work and we are making significant contributions to our families here'

inputs and creates obstacles to accessing economic and social services. In providing its citizens with infrastructure (roads, transportation), water, education, health care and employment opportunities, the government provides the tools that individuals use to generate their livelihoods and wellbeing.

Community groups in all areas of the study rated development in Zimbabwe as low when using these diverse measures of development. The measures of development used by people in all areas correspond to official measures which relate development to access to basic services such as water and health, employment and communication.

Conclusion

Official poverty measures in Zimbabwe are now based on the human development paradigm which takes into consideration the multidimensional nature of poverty. Nevertheless, official measures of poverty often leave out various indicators that are of cultural and social significance such as type of food and clothes, cattle, education, lack of opportunities, remoteness and isolation. Common practices in Zimbabwe such as barter and reciprocity, together with social networks and social capital are difficult to measure, but are nevertheless crucial to survival and wellbeing. By integrating qualitative with quantitative approaches, the MZF study explored how people themselves regard their poverty and wellbeing and how poverty feels and looks to the people who are experiencing it. The results reveal the complex nature of poverty, which consists of interrelated factors that reinforce each other to produce cycles of poverty. This information is important for the development of localized solutions aimed at the plight of the poor.

The study also found that local people know and understand why they are poor (which corresponds well to academic studies) and what needs to be done to reduce their poverty and increase their wellbeing. What the people identified is that 'more money' would solve most of their poverty-related problems, and the means of getting more money is through more and better jobs; increased agricultural production for better food and income; and more and better education. For the rural poor, support to agriculture such as inputs, irrigation and functioning markets, and also off-farm livelihood strategies are important to enhance their well being. In urban areas, the important issue is employment creation through progressive pro-poor policies for inclusive economic growth.

The answers to reducing poverty and increasing wellbeing are clear and practical, easily achievable and affordable, and furthermore, they are well-known and well documented. What has been lacking is commitment, at all levels, to implement strategies that will address poverty in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe's Medium Term Plan, which recognizes the need for a poverty reduction strategy and pro-poor economic growth (GoZ, 2011), is a good starting point. A multi-stakeholder approach is required that commits the government, non-governmental organizations, international development partners and the private sector to working together for one goal and agreed priorities.

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