

Zambia consultation report

Forum for Food Security



in Southern Africa

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Food Security and Poverty Seminar For Zambian Civil Society

Tuesday 4th May 2004
Lusaka, Zambia

PROCEEDINGS

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Preface and acknowledgements

This report presents the proceedings a meeting held in Zambia in May 2004 to discuss the findings to date of the Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa and the implications for Zambia. Please send comments to foodsecurity@odi.org.uk

The aim of the Forum is to contribute to analytical and strategic thinking on longer term food security options following the 2001–3 Southern African crisis by providing a platform for improved linkages between food security analysis, policy making and implementation in the Southern Africa region. The Forum is a consortium of international and regional institutions committed to achieving food security for all in Southern Africa.

To find out more about the work of the Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa, the consortium, or to access full versions of the Forum's Country Issues Papers, Theme Papers, and other information products, visit:

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This report and the other information products produced by the Forum for Food Security are intended to stimulate informed debate about issues and options for food security policy in the countries of Southern Africa. They do not necessarily represent the views of all Forum consortium members and funders.

We particularly wish to acknowledge our grateful thanks for the contributions made to the organisation of the Zambia country meeting by Chileshe Chilangwa and colleagues, and prior to that the contributions to the Zambia country issues paper <http://www.odi.org.uk/Food-Security-Forum/docs/ZambiaCIPfinal.pdf> by Thomson Kalinda and colleagues.

The citation for this report is:

C. Chilangwa and E. Cromwell (eds) (2004) 'Food Security and Poverty Seminar for Zambian civil society. Proceedings of a seminar held in Lusaka, Zambia, May 2004' Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa, www.odi.org.uk/food-security-forum

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Acronyms

ACF	Agricultural Consultative Forum
CBO	Community based organisation
CIP	Country Issues Paper
CSO	Central Statistics Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FFSSA	Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa
FRA	Food Reserve Agency
FSP	Food Security Pack
IDE	International Development Enterprises
MACO	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OPVs	Open Pollinated seed Varieties
PAM	Programme against Malnutrition
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PUSH	Project Urban Self Help
SCC	Swedish Cooperative Centre
SHEMP	Smallholders Empowerment & Marketing Project
UN	United Nations
UNZA	University of Zambia
VAC	Vulnerability Assessment Committee
WFP	World Food Programme

1. Purpose of meeting

The Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa (FFSSA) has been facilitating debate on policy options for strengthening food security in the region since January 2003. It has involved 500 stakeholders in the region and internationally, including 60 from a range of sectors within Zambia. It has produced a variety of written outputs, including country issues papers, theme papers, a policy synthesis paper, and also facilitated international e-discussions.

In order to promote wide-ranging debate on food security policy options amongst all stakeholders, during 2004 the Forum is contributing to a series of consultations in each of the focus countries (Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe). These consultations all aim to provide a platform for discussing specific food security issues and policy implications in each country, and the Forum has provided as a resource the evidence and analysis so far collected about policy issues and options emerging across the region as a whole. A particular concern has been to encourage contributions from civil society organisations. The focus of the seminar organised by FFSSA and HODI in Lusaka in May 2004 was to encourage Zambians involved in the food relief and recovery process to air their views. The aid industry in Zambia is very much dominated by international donors, UN agencies and NGOs and it seemed likely that some home-grown views had not been adequately heard. So a major purpose was to get Zambian civil society's perspective, following its experience of the 2001-3 crisis and response.

These proceedings provide a brief background to the food security situation in Zambia in Chapter 2; summaries of the presentations made in Chapter 3 (these highlighted issues of food aid impact, social protection options, and lessons from other countries in Southern Africa) (full presentations are on the FFSSA website); summaries of the group discussions on the identified key issues of understanding livelihoods, targeting and data systems, and policy implementation in Chapter 4; and overall conclusions in Chapter 5. Conclusions focussed on the need to widen the food security debate to include issues of access to food as well as food availability; for better data as a basis for evidence-based decision-making; the need to strengthen the contribution of Zambian institutions to the policy process; and the need for locally-specific interventions, rather than once-size-fits-all national programmes.

2. Overview of food security situation in Zambia

It has become fashionable to talk about the 2001-03 seasons in Zambia as the food crisis that never was: predictions of people in need of assistance peaked at 2.7m in February 2002, the agreed assistance from WFP was set at 600,000MT of maize, and the FRA was actively sourcing a further 200,000MT. But during the second half of 2002, the food aid 'pipeline' was supplying just a third of the assistance agreed and yet the predicted famine did not occur in Zambia. By 2004 the accepted estimate of the number of people who had actually been in need of assistance between the 2001 and 2003 harvests had been revised down to 430,000. There is no doubt that the severity of the Zambian predicament in 2002 was exaggerated due to a number of influences. However, there is also no doubt that staple food prices rose sharply in Zambia as elsewhere in the region, and that some rural families as well as urban ones felt the pinch. This series of events masks some difficult issues for Zambia.

Everywhere in the world, measuring the extent and severity of food insecurity accurately is hampered by incomplete and out-of-date data, and there are long-running debates about the most appropriate indicators to use. However, even allowing for margins of error, Zambia does have a food security problem: over the last decade (and probably more, if the data were available), the relatively accurate national Demographic Health Surveys show that an increasing proportion of Zambia's children have been stunted (low height-for-age), indicative of long-term undernutrition, not just the occasional season of shortage (see Figure 1). At approaching 50% of all children under five years old by 2002, these figures are amongst the highest internationally. On the other side of the coin, at just 1,900 Kcal/day per person, dietary energy supply (see Table 1) is the lowest in the Southern Africa region and compares unfavourably with the FAO minimum recommended intake of 2,100 Kcals per day.

Figure1: Indicators of food security – Under-5's underweight

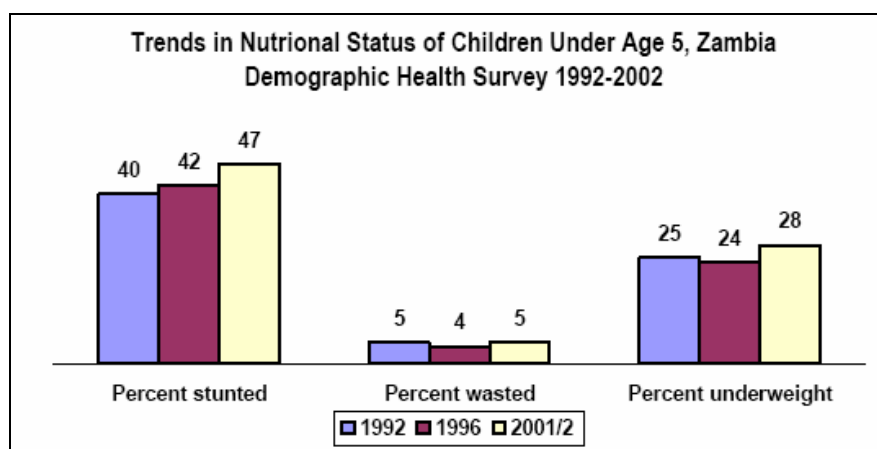


Table 1: Zambia dietary energy supply

1999–2001	Kcal/day per person
Lesotho	2,310
Malawi	2,170
Mozambique	1,950
Zambia	1,900
Zimbabwe	2,100

Source: State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2003.

Are Zambia's food security problems due to lack of food or to Zambians' inability to access plentiful food? In many regions of the world, and of course globally, food insecurity is more to do with lack of income to buy food than to do with absolute shortage of food. In Southern Africa, including in Zambia, the picture is slightly different, however, and absolute shortage of food does appear to be a factor (although not the only one, as we shall see later). Table 2 shows how the index of production of edible crops in Zambia does not compare favourably with other countries in the region, and has barely increased over the last decade. Of course, food availability also depends on imports (and food aid plays a role *in extremis*). Furthermore, if – as is currently the case in Zambia – the cotton and tobacco sectors are booming, does it matter that the food crop sector is still plagued by yields that are well below potential and by extreme inter-seasonal variability?

Table 2: Zambia food production index

	1980	1990	2000
Lesotho	89	100	99
Malawi	93	100	153
Mozambique	101	100	131
Zambia	73	100	101
Zimbabwe	83	100	105
Low-income av.	81	100	126

Source: World Development Indicators, 2002

Yes, it does. Domestic food production *does* matter in countries where importing food costs far more than growing it at home. Along with a number of other countries in Southern Africa, in Zambia imported food costs between 1.5 and two times as much as food produced locally (depending on whether imports are sourced regionally or internationally). Domestic food production matters even more in countries like Zambia where there are large numbers of poor people who struggle to buy food in the marketplace. Table 3 shows that sadly the only indicator where Zambia beats other countries in Southern Africa is poverty. For example, over 80% of the rural population is below the local poverty line - they don't have enough money to buy their minimum food needs. It is alarming to realise that, taking the world as a whole, most of the countries that are poorer than Zambia are at war.

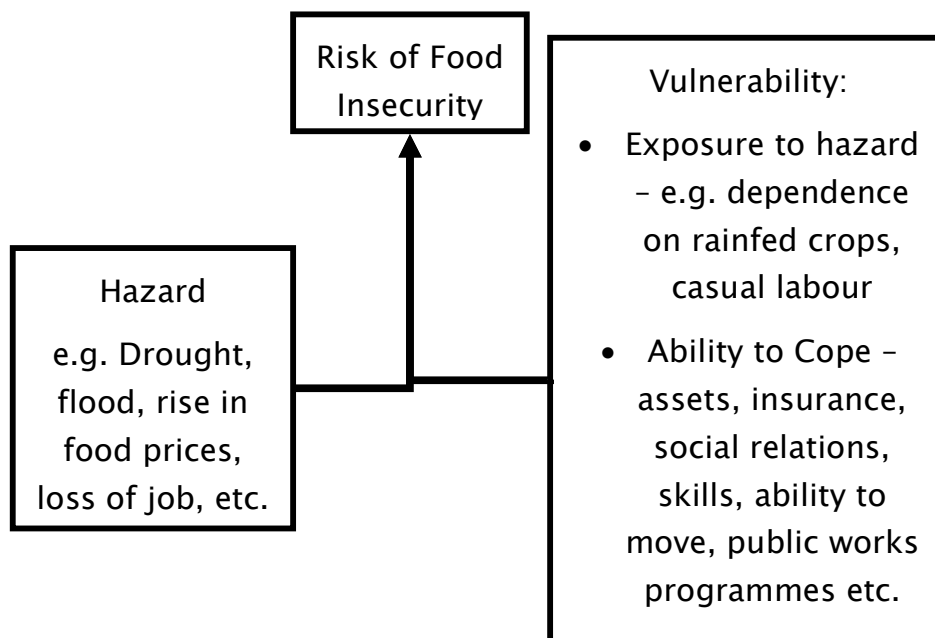
Table 3. Population below poverty line

1997–1998	Rural	Urban
Lesotho	54	29
Malawi	67	55
Mozambique	71	62
Zambia	83	56
Zimbabwe	48	8

Source: State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2003.

The fact that there was not widespread famine in Zambia in 2001-02, does not mean there is no food security problem. More accurately, it means the available data suggest those people who were additionally or more severely affected by food insecurity in 2001-02 than in other years, managed to meet their food needs through a variety of coping mechanisms that did not depend on international food aid. The situation in Zambia is perhaps more accurately described as a *sudden expansion of chronic food insecurity* than an acute food crisis.

Vulnerability may be seen as a combination of the degree to which a person or household is exposed to a hazard, and the extent to which they can cope with the effects of the hazard. The combination of vulnerability and hazard produces the risk of a particular outcome, such as food insecurity. These relations can be captured in a diagram, as seen in Figure A1.2.

Figure 2: Risk of food insecurity, hazards and vulnerability

Hazards may be natural, political, economic or social/human in nature; they may be unpredictable shocks or longer-term trends. Longer-term trends (for example,

weak economic growth and failures in democratic consolidation in the case of Zambia) can be as damaging for food security as sudden-onset natural disasters or conflict. Hazards that affect individuals, such as old age, illness or being orphaned, are additional threats to food security for affected individuals, over and above economy-wide hazards.

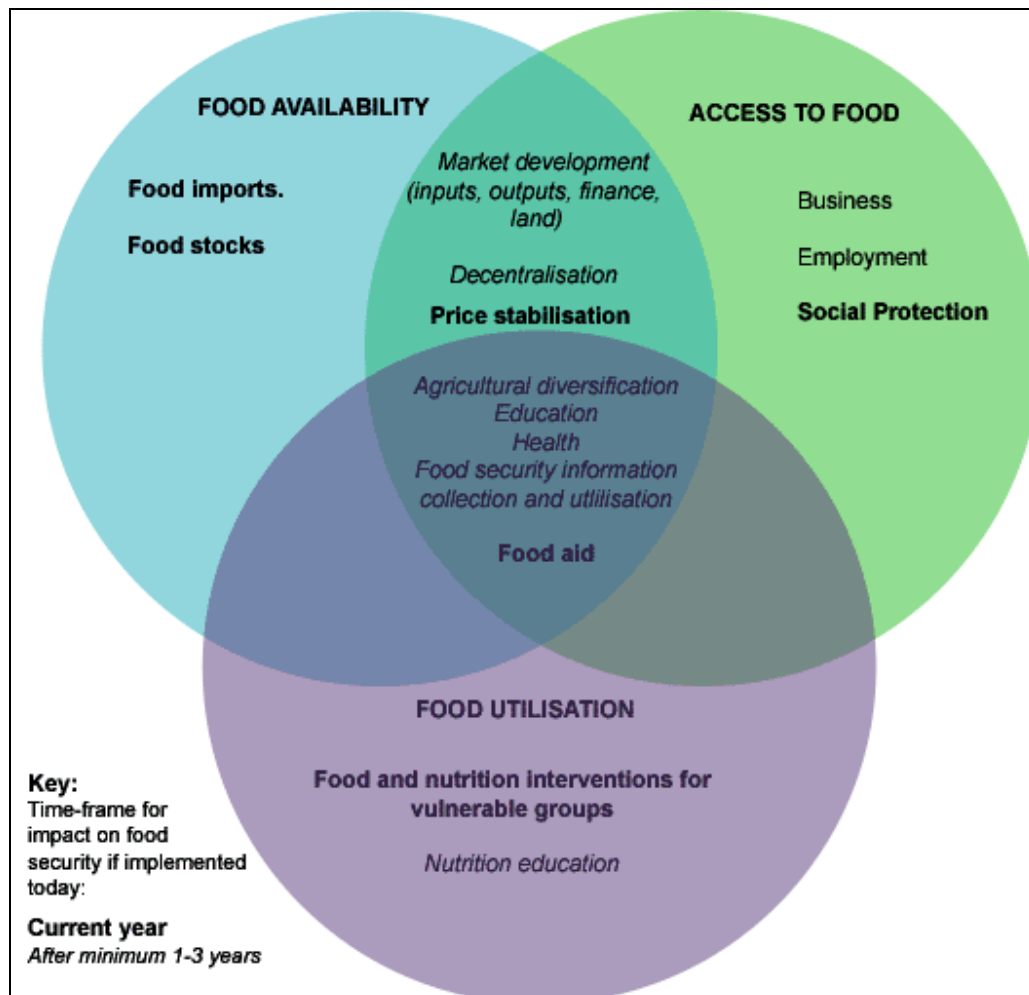
For the chronically poor, the land, labour and capital they have at their disposal may be so inadequate that they are vulnerable to food insecurity even in the absence of a significant hazard. These are the “vulnerable and non-viable” in Zambian terminology. For many other households, however, food insecurity can occur when they are unable to cope with a particular hazard or combination of hazards. It is this latter group that appeared to be expanding significantly during 2001-03, as a result of localised climatic events *in combination with* longer-term economic trends and the HIV/AIDS epidemic: in Southern Africa as a whole, by late 2002 doubling the number of people vulnerable to food insecurity to 16 million.

Inability to cope, or ‘vulnerability’, is conventionally related to physical assets. But households’ relationships with social and political institutions at state, market and community level (their degree of social inclusion or exclusion), are increasingly recognised as influential. This is particularly important for food security, because as we explained above the ability to generate income or to source food through community transfers is very important, not just the ability to grow it. This has important implications for Zambia: attention to increasing food production will not be sufficient without attention to making institutions more effective.

The negative influence of vulnerability on households’ livelihood decisions is increasingly recognised: persistent vulnerability can produce extreme risk adversity (seen, for example, in high levels of livelihood diversification amongst poor people) and sale of assets. These may allow households to cope over the short term, as they did in Zambia in 2001-03, but jeopardise investment by the household for the longer term. In relation to food security, livelihood strategies, in combination with livelihood outcomes themselves (i.e. in terms of poverty reduction and food security), can set up **virtuous or vicious circles** of asset accumulation and social integration, which have a critical impact on households’ ability to reduce, mitigate or cope with hazards threatening food security over the longer term.

Figure 3 shows the wide range of policy areas where action can be needed to address chronic food insecurity. Policy action is needed to meet longer term goals of food security through market development and food and nutrition education, as well as shorter term goals of food security through interventions such as imports and price stabilization. In Zambia, action is particularly vital to improve access to food for rural and urban poor men and women by supporting more sustainable livelihood strategies for all categories of vulnerable people: as we saw above, supporting food production alone is not enough.

Figure 3: Food security policy options



In conclusion, in Zambia's case, it would appear that policy action for strengthening food security is urgently needed in relation to:

- Food production – particularly to stem the decline in maize yields, but also
- Poverty reduction – to strengthen access to food for the majority of poor people who are net consumers of maize, and
- Data collection and utilisation – to enable more effective evidence-based decision-making in relation to food production and poverty alleviation.

In the next Chapter, we summarise the three presentations made at the seminar on different aspects of the food security conundrum that are particularly relevant to Zambia:

- Findings from the Forum for Food Security about experiences elsewhere in the Southern Africa region and internationally, particularly in relation to supporting longer-term market development, tackling human vulnerability, data needs, and policy implementation;
- How humanitarian food aid is being used in practice in Zambia, and its impact on markets and livelihoods;
- Experiences with food security packs, one of Zambia's major current safety net interventions.

3. Summary of Presentations

The full powerpoints for each presentation are available to view on the Events page on the Forum for Food Security website (www.odi.org.uk/food-security-forum).

3.1 Lessons for strengthening food security from the FFSSA

Presenter: **Elizabeth Cromwell**, on behalf of the Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa.

This presentation introduced the work of the Forum for Food Security and shared some of the Forum's major findings concerning the dimensions of food insecurity in Southern Africa and possible policy options for strengthening food security over the longer term.

Two areas were highlighted where fresh policies are needed to tackle the root causes of food insecurity: market development; and human vulnerability. Comments were also made about the functioning of policy processes, and data needs to support these processes.

3.1.1. Market development

The models of economic liberalisation underpinning many development strategies in the region over the last decade have significantly under-estimated what is being called the "low-level equilibrium trap": lack of market opportunities, resources to invest, reasonable returns on investment, and the limitations this imposes on private sector activity.

International evidence suggest that there are few if any success stories for agricultural transformation in last 100 years without some form of government coordination and risk-bearing investment for market development.

This does not necessarily imply direct intervention in markets (the parastatals of the 1970s and 1980s) but rather a more positive enabling environment for NGOs, CBOs, farmers organisations and private sector (inputs, outputs, finance, research and extension). The overall goal must be to promote stable and robust institutions to reduce investors' vulnerability.

Institutional innovation will be needed to achieve this. Decentralisation provides significant opportunities for this kind of institutional innovation, if implemented effectively. Interestingly, Zambia has a reputation in the region for leading the way on this kind of institutional innovation and development of alternative market models. The type of contractual arrangements common in the small-scale cotton

and tobacco sectors in Zambia are often cited as models worth consideration elsewhere in the region.

The need for new operational models to reduce investors' vulnerability to risk applies at regional as well as national level: regionally, there are huge potential benefits from cross-border trade in food. Zambia in particular has the potential to benefit from these kind of trading opportunities, if managed effectively.

The public sector has an important role to play in: setting grades and standards; contract law, property rights; removing unnecessary regulation; stable and consistent macro-economic policies; infrastructure for business (communications, roads). Over and above this, good governance is key if the effect of public action is to encourage not discourage private investment. The private sector has an important role to play in developing forms of cooperation, contracting, and interlocking markets.

3.1.2. Human vulnerability

Immediate action may be required to allow vulnerable people to cope with covariant risks arising from short-term shocks. But the experience of Southern Africa over 2001-03 indicates that this is not enough: action is also needed over a longer time frame to address vulnerability arising from long-term economic and social trends.

A major focus at present is on trying to identify appropriate policies for mitigating and ultimately reducing these longer-term covariant risks. These are likely to include adaptations to monetary and fiscal policy, as well as productive sector interventions such as promotion of drought-tolerant crops and low-input production methods.

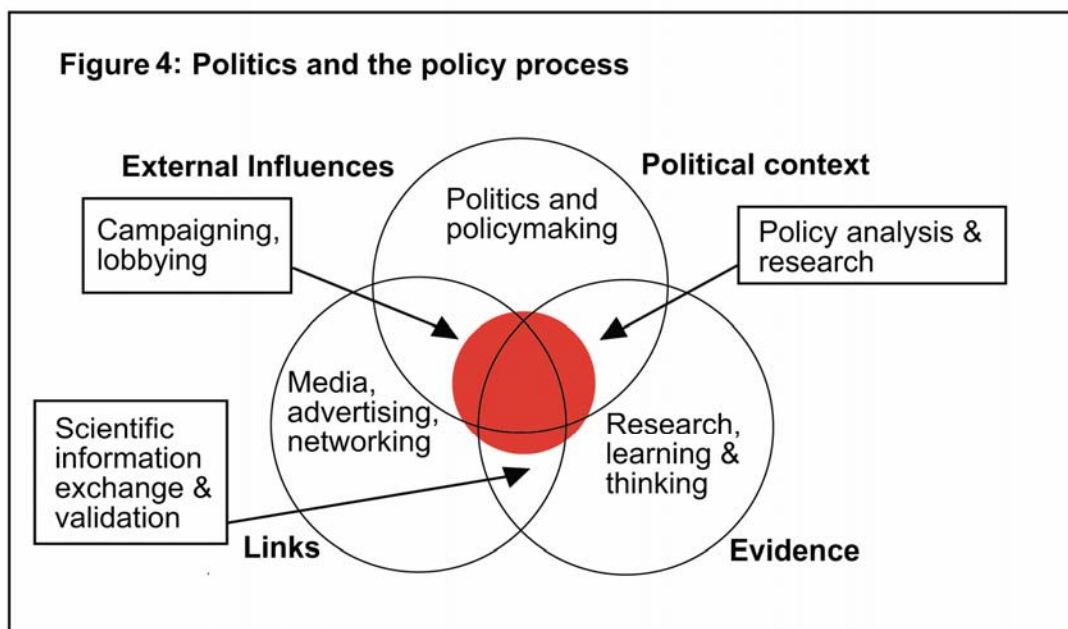
If a significant proportion of covariant risk can be addressed through fiscal, monetary and productive sector policies, this allows social welfare (which has a much smaller budget) to focus on supporting people vulnerable to idiosyncratic risks, such as those arising from old age or illness. A range of policy instruments are needed to address these different risks in different contexts. A major current concern is to identify social welfare instruments that can contribute to rather than impede economic growth, one example being cash for work approaches. However, there is a lack of tested models, and the issue of how best to support labour-constrained households (the "vulnerable and non-viable" to use the Zambian phrase) remains.

3.1.3. Policy process

Much of the analysis presented above is not new – how to do food security better in Southern Africa has been understood for years. But throughout Southern

Africa, policies that support food security have not been implemented as planned. Implementation is a significant constraint to strengthening food security. This is critical given that Zambia has a total government budget allocation equivalent to around US \$ 150 per person per year, which equates to a very significant proportion of the annual income of Zambians at or below the poverty line. It is essential that this money is used to best effect.

We all need to be more aware of the context in which policy is designed and implemented, and of the activities that are needed to ensure evidence contributes to effective policy implementation. The Research and Policy in Development team at the Overseas Development Institute have developed a framework (see Figure 4) which highlights a number of important influences on the policy process.



Source: ODI Research & Policy in Development Programme

By considering the context, evidence and links that influence the policy process in Zambia, we are better able to understand how some of these implementation constraints arise, and how they might be addressed.

External influences refer to socio-economic and cultural influences, donor policies etc.

The **political context** refers to political and economic structures and processes, culture, institutional pressures (democracy, governance, media freedom, academic freedom). It is a key driver of the policy process. Important components include how policymakers think; how policies are made (bureaucracies, incentives, street level, participatory approaches); and decisive

moments in the policy process (policy processes, votes, policy windows and crises).

Evidence is a key factor. Does it provide a solution to policy makers' problems? It is essential to use appropriate research approaches and methodology. Is the evidence presented relevant, credible, operationally useful? How much does it challenge received wisdom? Is the message clear and packaged suitably for policy makers? Strenuous advocacy efforts are often needed. Communication is key.

Links between policy and research communities are the other vital influence on the policy process. Are there effective networks (communities of like-minded people; policy networks; advocacy coalitions)? Are there competing discourses? Effective feedback processes are often prominent in successful cases.

Using this framework provides some clear pointers to strategies that can be used to increase evidence-based decision-making in general and for strengthening food security policies in particular:

Policy analysis and research:

- Look out for policy windows – prepare for known events. What meetings and other key events are coming up in Zambia relevant to food security policy-making in the near future? Participate in policy fora e.g. PRSP;
- Prepare operational guidelines rather than research summaries.

Scientific information exchange and validation:

- Put research results into economic language (ie provide practical solutions);
- Provide clear options, familiar narratives;
- Get involved in campaigning and lobbying;
- Get to know the networks and/or build new ones. For example, in Zambia, work with the many existing NGO and CBO networks to progress agreement on food security priorities;
- Present to parliamentary committees;
- Involve key actors in pilot projects, exposure visits (which Ministers to target?);
- Use different communication tools: video, radio, print media, electronic

Policy for the majority, not for speculation:

- Needs suitable evidence, good links and understanding of political context, i.e. government, donors, other stakeholders (farmers, private sector, etc);
- Identify facts not myths, for example that the 2001-03 food crisis was as much to do with vulnerability and markets as it was with drought;
- Use tools such as stakeholder analysis, force field analysis, consultation in order to understand priorities better.

3.1.4. Data

Solid empirical evidence needs to be made the basis for effective interventions. The lack of this has characterised response to the 2001-03 crisis across the Southern Africa region. For example, in Zimbabwe a massive supplementary feeding programme has been implemented across the country but there are no indicators against which to measure impact, only data on quantity of food provided. More generally, the “New Variant Famine” hypothesis has been hugely influential, but there is little reliable data with which to measure the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on different geographical areas and socio-economic groups. Key requirements include:

- Indicators – urgent agreement of appropriate indicators for measuring vulnerability (e.g. more nuanced indicators of vulnerability in national early warning systems; greater use of VAC data in food security planning);
- Identifying policy targets in addition to generalised goals and objectives;
- Establishing coordinated systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of different programmes.

3.2. Food security in Southern Zambia: a case study¹

Presenters: **Christopher Mufwambi** and **Guy Scott** of Mano Consultancy Services.

The presentation describes a report based upon a short field visit to a number of localities in the Zambezi Valley. The areas concerned are characterized by low rainfall and high summer temperatures and are unsuitable for the summer

¹ For the full paper on which the presentation was based, see Scott, G and C. Mufwambi (2004) *Tinker, tailor, fisherman, farmer? Local level impacts of food aid in rural Zambia and their implications for long-term food security*. Available through the Publications page of the Forum for Food Security website

production of maize. The construction of Lake Kariba has impacted on the economy and ecology of the valley, not necessarily negatively on balance: the flooding of the lake reduced the area available for recessional winter agriculture, for example, but it created significant fishing and tourism industries.

The field visit was prompted by reports that food aid was continuing in the valley areas (in April 2004) despite the “crisis” having been over for two years. Indeed the investigation found food aid, mostly maize but including beans and sorghum, being distributed to several thousand families in Sinazongwe district. This was being done on the basis of “food for assets” – the aid being given as a reward or incentive for recipients to adopt Conservation Farming techniques. One problem with the programme is that it is denying food to the truly vulnerable (since they cannot adopt new, or any, farming techniques). In actual practice the conservation farming techniques are being applied to maize, for which inputs are also provided. Unsubsidised maize is not sustainable as a crop in the area, whether under conservation farming or otherwise, and the “food for assets” programme as presently crafted is merely ensuring that it will be needed forever! There seems to be a confusion in some minds between acute rainfall deficit in a normally well-watered area (drought) and normal low rainfall in certain low-lying areas where maize cannot be sustainably grown.

People who live in the valley generally do not depend upon rainfed arable agriculture for their food. Rather, food is usually brought into the area and paid for with cash generated by a wide variety of activities, in addition to paid employment. These activities include trading, fishing, cotton growing, livestock rearing as well as illegal activities such as poaching.

An appropriate long-term initiative to support food security would perhaps place more emphasis on low-rainfall tolerant crops (sorghum etc.) rather than maize. However, most opportunities are for supporting food security indirectly by improving incomes. These include further promotion of cotton growing, livestock improvement and the general promotion of non-agricultural commerce.

Tentative overarching guidelines for future intervention include: any prolonged relief food distribution should be targeted at the truly needy as social protection; “emergency” food aid should be given in true emergencies, which do not include low rainfall in valley areas; attention should be paid to socio-medical implications of some activities e.g. HIV transmission in migrant workers, fish traders and sex workers.

Tentative recommendations concerning the right institutions to carry out local interventions include: identification of the needy should involve institutions long embedded in the community such as hospitals or churches; attention should be given to the formation of community trusts; the Government should be more proactive at the topmost levels in developing policy and ensuring it is implemented.

3.3. Social protection options for strengthening food security: the example of the targeted food security pack

Presenter: **Ronald Msoni** of Programme Against Malnutrition.

PAM describes itself as a local, indigenous NGO. It was founded in 1992 to serve as a secretariat to the Government-led response to the 1991/92 drought emergency. In the intervening period since then it has forged links with 100 rural based NGOs and CBOs. This is the most extensive network in Zambia dealing with food security. PAM's emphasis has shifted from emergency disaster mitigation to longer-term recovery and developmental programmes.

It should be noted that although PAM is registered as an NGO it has close links to Government. Three Ministries are represented at Permanent Secretary level on its board of seven members². The bulk of PAM's financing is as an executing agency for Government programmes.

PAM defines "subsistence farmers" as those farming less than one hectare and distinguished between those that are "vulnerable but viable" and those that are "vulnerable and not viable". PAM's target is the first – those that are viable. These include female and child headed households, unemployed youth, the disabled, and those caring for many disadvantaged people.

The Food Security Pack promotes crop diversification and Conservation Farming. It also promotes entrepreneurship in the marketplace and the development at community level of seed and grain banks. It explicitly recognizes that there are many areas in Zambia where it is appropriate to promote alternative livelihood options through training, the provision of alternative inputs etc.

The composition of the food security pack itself is generally a mixture of cereal, legume and root planting materials. This includes fertilizer in the case that maize seed is provided (in suitable areas).

The claimed positive impacts of the FSP include: attainment of 2-3 meals per day for recipients; asset accumulation; and improved community mobilization and organisation.

Challenges still facing the FSP include: erratic Government funding; the difficulty in disposing of surpluses in some years; and the uncertainty and confusion of the national food security policy framework in which the FSP is operating. A particular concern is that there should be equity vis-à-vis the "vulnerable but non

² These are the Office of the Vice President, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services. The Ministry of Health, which was heavily involved in PAM's creation, is no longer involved.

viable". This requires a standard of social welfare that does not match the FSP's benefit to the "viable".

There needs to be a (new) Food and Nutrition Security Policy that embraces a number of critical issues including: financing; infrastructure development; marketing policy; definitive institutional structures; and scientific research and development.

3.4. Discussion of presentations

3.4.1. Open pollinated versus hybrid seed

Growing of open pollinated seed varieties (OPVs) is much more cost-effective for the most vulnerable in that it is cheaper and locally sustainable (seed can be retained rather than brought in each year). Unfortunately there are no suitable maize OPVs in Zambia. This is possibly due to the self-interest of plant breeders and seed companies. Yes, hybrid varieties yield more but have to be replaced every year and need expensive fertiliser which many small scale farmers cannot afford. And in Zambia, only 30% of small holder farmers have access to improved hybrid seed, hardly a recipe for improved food security. Action? Ministry of Agriculture, progressive seed companies, research institutions...

3.4.2. Marketing

There is need for better coordination between all players (NGOs, Government, private traders) in the development of markets. Private sector is sitting on the fence and waiting to see what government will do. Private sector is afraid to take risks (e.g. with input supply) because of unstable and uncertain government policy. Donors such as World Bank have a role to play to influence government policy. However, public announcements by Government to please donors are not always honoured in practice and do not form a basis for private sector decision making. After burning its fingers following investment in agricultural trade, the private sector has frequently decided to pull out until Government policy becomes clear cut. This brings instability and shrinkage to the sector. For example Omnia Small Scale had established over 200 fertiliser distribution centres but these have dwindled to less than 60 as they have been undermined by the intermittent appearance on the market of government fertiliser on credit. Currently, the uncertainties inherent in the annual tendering process for fertiliser distribution in Zambia are preventing private sector participation, and investment.

There should be stronger emphasis on market development. In Zambia we are moving towards partnerships between private and public sector in the development of the country's liberalisation, referred to as managed transition, in several sectors.

The problem with agricultural policy in Zambia is that implementation is slow to non-existent. There is need to come up with strategies that support effective implementation of policy. Political expediency/interference seems to influence whether appropriate policies will be developed and/or implemented expeditiously

3.4.3. User fees

There are other issues which need to be looked at when considering food security, vulnerability and social protection. The user fees charged for education and health are good examples of factors that may impinge on household food security. In fact, when cash is short, schools and clinics often accept maize or other crops as payment for fees – making the substitution effect very clear. Government is committed to free universal primary education but has been unable to fund it without some form of user fees coming in. Health charges have done much to alienate people from their health providers; but they are depended upon by rural clinic staff because budgetary provisions from the central administration do not materialise.

3.4.4. The emphasis on maize

Isn't maize entirely the wrong crop for food security because it needs so much money to purchase of inputs such as fertiliser, which most vulnerable people cannot afford? Further, roots and tubers have much higher yields without inputs. In Malawi the issue is not the seed but fertiliser which is \$200 a bag.

Wealth creation with the people we are supposed to be supporting is not priority in Zambia. The focus is still largely maize growing.

In Southern province there are good examples of how NGOs, donors and government are working collaboratively to improve cash income for purposes of improving food security for vulnerable people. There are also some lessons that can be drawn from people in this province where it is assumed there is drought. The people have been able to survive without maize. They have survived mostly on other livelihood products such as goats, sheep, cattle etc. And cash income is important because it equals food security. The conclusion is that people should be discouraged from growing maize where it cannot be relied upon to grow. Unfortunately, there is still resistance to diversifying from the maize in many parts of the country especially where other crops could do better. Worse still, current practice by government and other donors still encourages people to grow maize as a way to address food security. It can actually be very difficult to persuade people to take inputs other than those for maize, even if you are giving them away for free.

Yes but, in areas where maize is still profitable, people should not be advised to stop growing maize; however, they should still be encouraged to diversify. There is also need to recognise that maize production has been declining and that this

has affected national food security. It is worth noting that high cost of imported maize is a drain on the country's resources; if a country does not have adequate strategic stocks, huge sums of money will continue to be spent importing grain and will take money away from other equally important sectors such as education, health etc.

By way of conclusion: it has increasingly become evident that it is important to understand the livelihoods of the different areas of the country in order to come up with appropriate responses to food security situations in the various areas. It seems the use of livelihood zoning in other countries is useful.

3.4.5. Targeting and the issue of the viable versus the non-viable

Why support vulnerable people who are not viable with interventions like food security packs if they are unlikely to graduate to become emergent farmers. What other forms of targeting make sense in the context of poverty/vulnerability?

Targeting should be systematic and be based on sound principles as in the example of agricultural recovery programmes. For this type of programme for instance, there is need to carefully identify and select people who have the ability to bring about recovery from investment. There is to help people create wealth; therefore there is need to target people who can develop and generate income.

Political influence tends to affect the targeting of interventions like relief food strongly. Firstly, whole provinces may receive food aid when it is not needed because of "tribal balancing" with provinces that are receiving it because they need it. Secondly, the individuals who actually end up with their finger on the relief may be those, such as supporters of the local MP, who have the political influence.

There is need to discuss the issue of relief versus development and how this can be structured so as not to distort medium-long term attainment of food security.

As opposed to targeting individuals, World Vision targets households where vulnerable people live; the assumption is that they belong to households where there are people who can ensure viability of farming activities.

Dependency syndrome. Those who are doing well are not indigenous farmers. What is the problem? What needs to be done to change the mindset among local people?

There is need to look critically at whether food aid is needed in all areas at all times in the country, and whether the current practice in relation to food aid encourages dependency.

3.4.6. Data and coordination

The issue of data collection, management and use is a critical problem and impedes appropriate action that is evidence-based. People base decisions on what course of action to take based on their own interpretation of events. This makes it difficult for accurate planning on behalf of people who have specific demands. Apart from the issue of accuracy there is also the issue of how credible these data sources are.

Food security has to be looked at from a multisectoral perspective and recognising that no one sector can ensure food security. Coordination is critical.

Data collection managers are appointed by politicians therefore interference for political ends can result – although CSO methods are generally fairly good. However there are notable areas of weakness as witnessed by the poor counting of animals. Certain circs others do surveys e.g. NGOs etc even if CSO can't manage – need mixture of tools and contributions.

Data collection and analysis is affected by a range of constraints including: finance e.g. crop estimates March up to now not done due to finance not there; logistics e.g. can't reach Western Province to collect data; conflict on what data to collect resulting from lack of consultation and coordination by stakeholders in data collection; poor response rates due to misunderstanding e.g. Livingstone resident believe enumerators are Satanists.

Estimates for crops which are rare can be over-estimated because of sampling procedures. Information on sweet potatoes was inaccurate in 2003. We need to get data collection much better if we are to know whether there is a famine or not, whether HIV/AIDS is an important factor in food security or not.

When relief is stopped (i.e. when the “tap” is closed), what effect does this have on food security? Who decides when the tap is to be closed and under what circumstances?

3.4.7. Urban areas

There is very poor conceptual and statistical modelling of the situation in urban areas. Food is generally available on a permanent basis and cheaper than it is in rural areas when it has to be brought in. Any future seminar along the lines of this one should be sure to include a presentation on urban hunger.

4. Group Discussions

The purpose of this session was to identify the most important

- Practice; and
- Policy.

Points that participants had heard during the presentations and subsequent discussion, and to spend some time discussing:

- Constraints;
- Opportunities;
- Practical steps for influencing government (identifying institutions, agencies, specific actions) in support of better food security policy.

Three priorities emerged:

- Understanding livelihoods in Zambia;
- Better targeting, and data collection and systems;
- Better policy implementation, sustainability and coordination.

The full list of learning points and action points identified under each category are detailed in Boxes 1– 3.

Box 1: Key area: understanding livelihoodsLearning points

- Food security cocktail consists of effective access to food as well as food availability; health and education are also important influences on food security
- Livelihood security is a very important determinant of effective access to food.
- There is a poor understanding of “indigenous” livelihood strategies in Zambia, for example the relative importance of agricultural and non-agricultural components of livelihoods.
- Need to develop strategies for supporting long term access to food for all social groups
- Need improved understanding of cross sector nature of chronic food insecurity

Constraints

- Inadequate baseline information on livelihoods in Zambia
- Limited understanding of urban livelihoods
- Inappropriate approaches of many project interventions to date
- Preconceived ideas about communities
- Lack of community ownership of interventions

Opportunities

- Upcoming profiling of Zambia into livelihood zones will be consultative
- Livelihood approach is holistic and can create wealth as well as increasing food security
- Past experience can be used to build our understanding of livelihoods approach

Steps for influencing government policy

- Profile Zambia into different livelihood zones
- Use findings as basis for designing suitable interventions
- Involve local institutions (church and community/traditional leaders)
- Ensure community ownership of process
- Promote non-farm activities as well as crop and livestock production.

Box 2: Key area: targeting, data collection and systems

Learning points:

- Important to recognise importance of data quality and of timely/efficient systems for data collection and analysis
- The lack of food consumption data in Zambia (i.e. diet, calorific intake, seasonality, etc) is a major constraint to more effective food security planning
- Similarly, the lack of reliable and coordinated data on relief food
- Whether or not to target interventions is a key question. Some interventions (e.g. support for agricultural production) are clearly not appropriate for all groups and should be targeted. But in the absence of good data it can be difficult to target effectively.
- There is an urgent need to identify the truly vulnerable, who should legitimately benefit from relief, and develop suitable policies towards addressing their needs
- CSO is or should be central to data collection and analysis in Zambia. At present there is extreme lack of coordination among stakeholders in food security data collection and analysis.

Constraints

- Financial resources
- Poor road infrastructure (access restricted for data collection teams)
- Conflict on what data to collect
- Lack of consultation and coordination by the stakeholders in the data collection process (PAM, WFP, FAO, MOH, MOE etc)
- Most data has not been analysed
- Response rate by respondents is poor
- Misinterpretation of data
- Lack of data collection framework; what data do we need at what time

Opportunities

- Stakeholders should work with National Food and Nutrition Commission on indicators of food security
- Use existing data more fully and more accurately

Steps for influencing government policy

- Agree on who collects what data and when
- Timely release of funds
- Develop coordinated data collection framework
- Clarify roles of govt, donors and NGOs
- Improve data interpretation
- Disseminate timely data to feed into policy on food security
- Targeting dependent on what data is available

Box 3: Key area: implementation of policy/coordination

By way of background, it is relevant to point out that a Coordination Committee exists, although participation is very poor. There is also a Task Force on destitutes, and an international NGO/Donor Food Security Forum which addresses food, HIV/AIDS. DDCCs exist but they are not very functional. An agricultural consultative forum exists but it is not very functional.

Learning points

- Reversing food insecurity should be a primary focus of policy. At present there is inconsistency, particularly concerning ratification and implementation of food security and nutrition policy.
- As part of this, better addressing of food security issues is needed in PRSP planning and implementation (food security should be mainstreamed in PRSP).
- Better coordination of stakeholders (donors, govt, NGOs) is needed. At present there is poor coordination between NGOs and donors, and poor information flow amongst and between themselves. There is particularly poor coordination between development and food relief partners at implementation level. Govt should coordinate activities of NGOs
- Nutritional planning and implementation is an important component of food security policy
- There should be greater recognition in formal policy of traditional resource distribution and the way different communities traditionally cope with food insecurity
- Strategies for dealing with annual food insecurity during the hungry season (Feb-March) urgently need to be developed.
- Policy should be developed to provide support for rural development capitalisation and commercialisation
- Needs of small farmers should be better addressed and how proposed policies in support of small farmers are implemented should be made clearer to all concerned.
- Specific vital components of small farm policy include yield-enhancing technology promotion via improved availability of appropriate inputs through private sector marketing. This requires attention to marketing and provision of a national seed security reserve.
- The sustainability of proposed interventions e.g. credit should be carefully assessed.

Constraints

- No food security and agricultural policy
- Lack of information on activities taking place
- Lack of food and seed reserves
- Inability by govt to coordinate NGOs and other stakeholders around food security issues

Opportunities/practical steps

- There is need for existence of NGO lobby groups on agricultural issues
- There is need to sort out balance of foreign and big NGOs in Zambia
- Excellent background work done in terms of research, draft papers, there is opportunity to develop code of conduct/guidelines to regulate all stakeholders
- Need to pass legislation to support guidelines

Government needs to think carefully how to use tax well for policy implementation. There are few examples in the Southern Africa where countries have good mechanism for using tax well.

In plenary discussion of the priorities areas for action, the following points were made:

- The proposal to profile Zambia into Livelihood Zones is innovative because it would help to identify what economic activities are driving the economy of the particular areas.
- The political appointment of Director of CSO runs the risk of leading to political interference such as manipulation of data, or expedient interpretation of data.
- Statistics are not 100% reliable. There is need to consider further improvements in the accuracy of data so that there is good information for planning. For example, the costs to Zambia of inaccurate information were highlighted in 2003 when the maize harvest was significantly under-estimated leading to exaggerated fears of food shortage. The lesson learnt is that there is need to harmonise information so that for instance there is no dispute about whether there is famine or not.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Food security policy objectives

The food security debate in Zambia needs to be broadened beyond questions of seasonal maize availability. In particular, it should address longer term food security issues, notably improving effective access to available food supplies. This requires integration of food security concerns into the PRSP and any other poverty alleviation frameworks.

Food security interventions need to take into account the specific conditions in each area. Zambia is extremely diverse in ecological terms and there is no overall model of best practice that can replace local knowledge. This is even more true when the Southern Africa region as a whole is considered: the differences between Zambia and any of its neighbours are enormous in political, economic and historical terms.

5.2 Implementation and institutional co-ordination

There is a critical difference between having policy and implementing it in an effective way. All the participatory processes that are undertaken in order to get “ownership” result in nothing if politicians refuse ownership or neglect the resulting policy. A lot of policy in Zambia is made simply to be put on paper to impress donors by meeting their conditionalities. “Political will” must refer to the real thing.

At present in Zambia, the food security sector is dominated by foreign institutions. This is largely for funding reasons, and because Zambian institutions are disparate and disunited. We need to consciously strengthen Zambian influence in the sector by being better informed and organised.

Local level institutions are not very effective in food security processes in Zambia because of political interference/patronage in distribution of food. We should pay more attention to the background and the “incentive structure” of the institutions that are involved. There are long-established missions and mission hospitals, for example, that have huge institutional memory and knowledge of the community. There is also a need to address the vacuum in sub-District governance that arose when the Native Authorities were abolished in the 1960s.

5.3 Information and data needs

There is an urgent need to improve the extent to which all development partners’ interventions in Zambia are based upon solid evidence, about the extent of food

shortage, the extent of vulnerability, the working of the rural economy and households' coping strategies. This is essential in order to distinguish the need for emergency response or interventions more targeted at longer-term poverty alleviation and economic development.

Zambia's agricultural information system must be adapted from the current version, which was originally designed to address the colonial government's needs. For example, the current system tells us plenty about the maize crop but very little about the cassava crop, and yet this latter is a vital contributor to food security in many areas. By the same token, we know much more about Irish potato, which in Zambia is a luxury vegetable, than about the sweet potato crop.

There is need for accurate, practical and useful information that gives a total picture of different areas of the country, i.e. the politics, the traditional/local leadership, community dynamics, community development etc. We do not have accurate figures for many important things, including rural HIV prevalence, food production, or even population.

Annex 1: Agenda

08:30 – 09:00	Hours Registration
09:00 – 09:15	Welcoming Remarks Chileshe Chilangwa-Collins
09:15 – 09:45	Lessons for strengthening long-term food security in Southern Africa from Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa (FFSSA) Elizabeth Cromwell, Overseas Development Institute
09:45 – 10:15	Discussion
10:15 – 10:35	TEA BREAK
10:35 – 11:00	Social Protection Options for Strengthening Food Security Dr. Drina Nyirenda, Director Programme Against Malnutrition (PAM)
11:00 – 11:20	Southern Zambia and implications for policy and practice Guy Scott, Mano Consultancy
	Discussion and Recommendations on implementation of policy and practice procedures
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH Groups Work and Discussion
15:30 – 15:50	TEA BREAK
15:50 – 16:15	Conclusions
16:15 – 16:30	Closing Remarks, Guy Scott



Annex 2: List of participants to the food security and poverty seminar for Zambian civil society

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