

Monitoring COVID-19 Impact on Households in Zimbabwe



Results from a High-Frequency Telephone Survey of Households

INTRODUCTION



The COVID-19 pandemic created an urgent need for timely information to help monitor and mitigate the socio-economic impact of the crisis. This information is essential to inform policy measures for protecting the welfare of Zimbabweans. Responding to this need, the Zimbabwe Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), together with the World Bank and UNICEF, designed a high-frequency telephone survey of households to measure the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe. The high frequency telephone survey is based on the Poverty, Income, Consumption and Expenditure Surveys (PICES) of 2017 and 2019. The surveys used a sample of 1 747 households in the first round, 1 639 households in round two, 1 235 households in round 3, and 1 319 households in round 4 from all ten provinces of Zimbabwe¹. The sample is representative of urban as well as rural areas. This survey is referred to as the Rapid PICES Monitoring Telephone Survey, and is jointly funded by the Zimbabwe Reconstruction Fund (ZIMREF) and UNICEF. ZIMSTAT is implementing the survey with technical support from the World Bank and UNICEF.

This brief report summarizes the results of the fourth round results of Rapid PICES, conducted from 1 May to 27 May 2021, and compares them to findings of the 3rd round conducted from 15 December 2020 to 10 March 2021. Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) was used for data collection. An overview of the findings of the key indicators for the fourth round is provided at the end of this note.

¹ Rapid PICES Survey Dates from Round 1 to Round 4:

First Round - 6 to 24 July 2020

Second Round- 24 August to 23 September 2020

Third Round - 15 December 2020 to 10 March 2021

Fourth Round - 1 to 27 May 2021

HIGHLIGHTS – ROUND 4



The proportion of people observing preventive health behaviour continued to fall. After remaining largely unchanged over the first two rounds, the share of people wearing a mask in public declined from 87 percent in round 1 to 80 percent in the third round and dropped sharply to 56 percent in the fourth round.



The proportion of households that were able to buy medication nationally rose from 75 percent in round 1 to 76 percent in round 3 and further to 80 percent in round 4. Nationally, the proportion of households that were able to access treatment rose from 79 percent in round 1 to 84 percent in round 3 and dropped slightly to 83 percent in round 4.



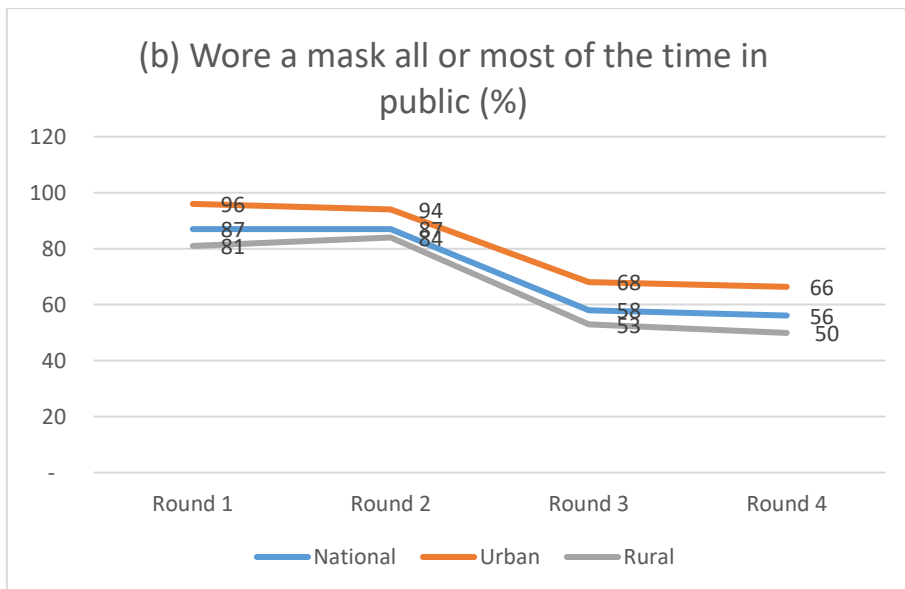
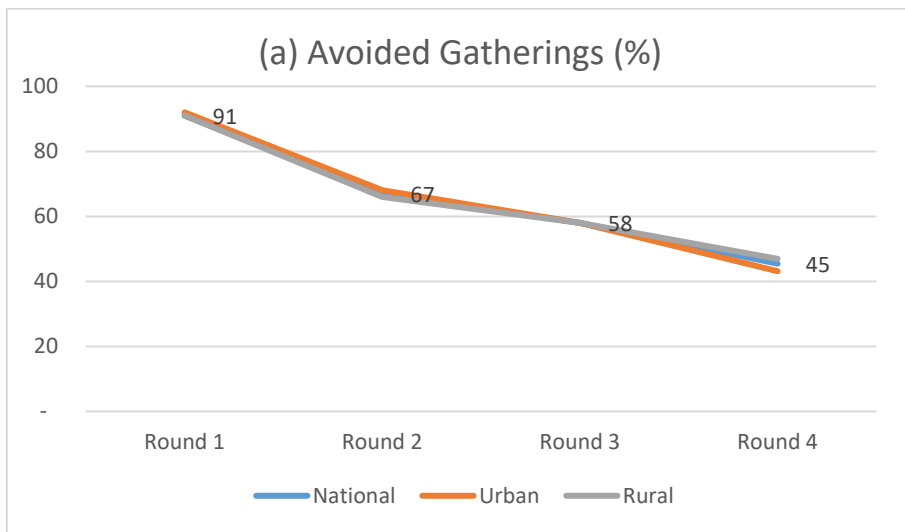
The proportion of households that were willing to be vaccinated shot to 77 percent in the fourth round compared to 63 percent in the third round. Households in rural areas were more willing to be vaccinated at 79 percent, compared to those in urban areas at 74 percent. About 15 percent of the households stated that they would not be vaccinated, whilst 8 percent were not sure. Seventy eight percent of the households had not been tested for COVID-19. About 6 percent had a Rapid Test for COVID-19, whilst 10 percent had a Swab COVID-19 test.

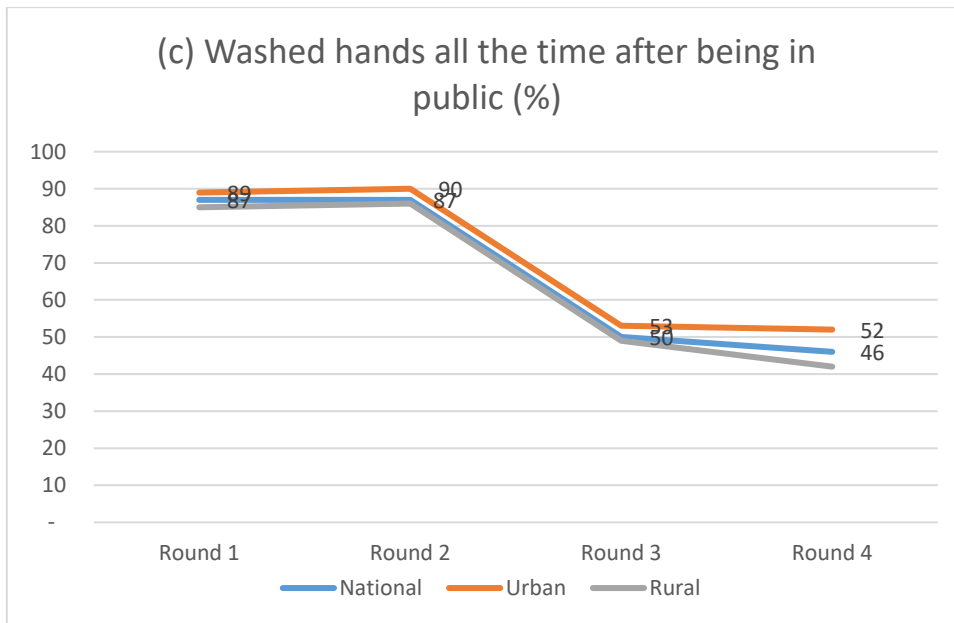
**KNOWLEDGE AND
BEHAVIOR IN
RESPONSE TO
COVID-19**



In order to stop the spread of COVID-19, people must adopt preventive health measures. During the fourth round survey (May 1– 27, 2021), the proportion of respondents who avoided gatherings at national level dropped to 45 percent in round 4 from 58 percent in round 3. The same pattern was observed in urban and rural areas between round 4 and round 3 (Figure 1a). The proportion of households wearing masks dropped from 87 percent in round 1 to 56 percent in Round 4. Wearing of masks in urban areas dropped from 96 percent in round 1 to 66 percent in round 4 compared to 81 percent and 50 percent in rural areas in the same rounds, respectively. The prevalence of hand washing in May 2021 was about half of what it was in July 2020 during the first lockdown phase. (Figure 1b). The proportion of households who washed hands after being in public dropped from 89 percent in round 1 to 52 percent in round 4 in urban areas compared to 85 percent and 42 for rural areas, respectively (Figure 1c).

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents who employed COVID-19 preventive measures





**ACCESS TO BASIC
FOOD
NECESSITIES**

The share of households that was able to buy basic food items except maize meal increased noticeably in round 4 survey as more people were able to buy food items. It was also indicated that the share of households that were able to buy maize meal declined as fewer people wanted to buy it. The proportion of households that was able to buy maize meal dropped from 56 percent in round 3 to 38 percent in round 4. Furthermore, the proportion of households that was able to buy cooking oil increased marginally from 54 percent in round 3 to 56 percent in round 4. It was noted that the proportion of households that needed to buy cooking oil remained high but declined from 76 percent in the first round to 70 percent in the fourth round. Additionally, the proportion of households that needed to buy chicken dropped from 67 percent in round 1 to 46 in round 4. The proportion of households that was able to buy chicken increased from 15 percent in round 1 to 26 percent in round 4. These results are, however affected by own production of chicken by some households (coloured bars Figure 2a). The drop in the proportion of households that attempted to buy maize meal could be attributed to a good rainy season as most households were able to consume from own produced agricultural products.

More urban households were able to buy maize meal, cooking oil and chicken compared to rural areas. Rural populations mostly use own produce compared to urban populations (Figure 2b and Figure 2c).

Figure 2: Access to basic food necessities (Percentage of households willing to buy basic items and that was able to buy them)



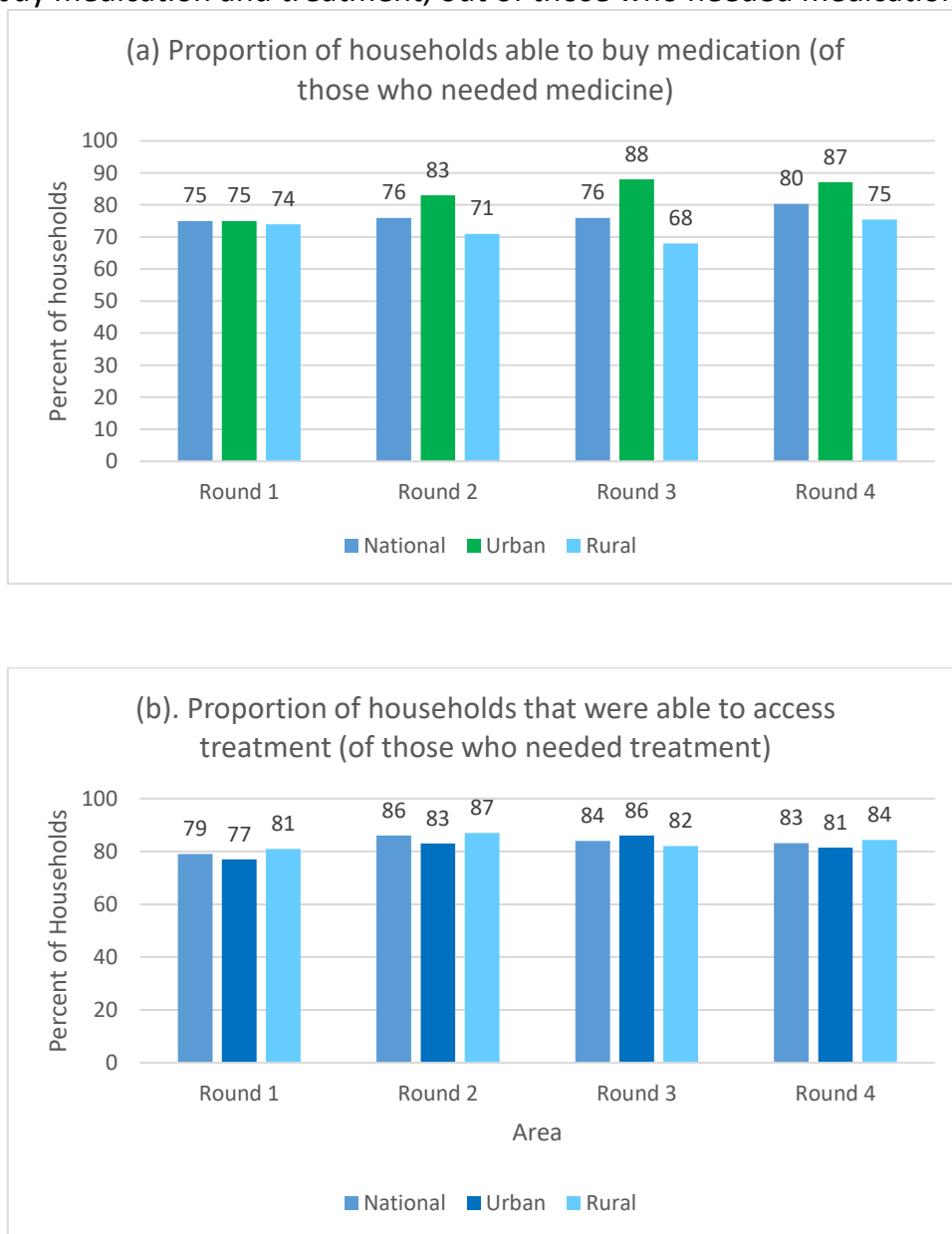
ACCESS TO
HEALTH SERVICES



About 23 percent of the households needed to buy medicines in round four. The proportion of households that were able to buy medication nationally rose from 75 percent in round 1 to 76 percent in round 3 and further to 80 percent in round 4 (Figure 3a). The proportion of households that were able to buy medication in urban areas rose from 75 percent in round 1 to 88 percent in round 3 and declined slightly to 87 percent in round 4. In rural areas, the proportion of households that were able to buy medication dropped from 74 percent in round 1 to 68 percent in round 3 and increased to 75 percent in round 4. Lack of money was the primary reason for not being able to access

medical treatment as reported by 84 percent of the households who needed treatment. Nationally, the proportion of households that were able to access treatment rose from 79 percent in round 1 to 84 percent in round 3 and dropped slightly to 83 percent in round 4 (Figure 3b). The proportion of households that were able to access treatment in rural areas in round 4 was 84 percent compared to 82 percent in round 3. The proportion of households that were able to access treatment in urban areas was 81 percent and 86 percent in round 4 and round 3, respectively. May 2021 was situated between two COVID waves and very few cases were recorded. Return to work after lockdown implied an increase in income, such that people could afford healthcare by the time round 4 data was collected.

Figure 3: Access to medication and treatment (Percentage of households that were able to buy medication and treatment, out of those who needed medication)



**COVID-19
VACCINATION**



The Rapid PICES Telephone survey also sought to understand the respondents' feelings about the corona virus by asking, "How do you feel about the possibility that you or someone in your immediate family might become seriously ill from COVID-19 (coronavirus disease)?" About 68 percent of the households were very worried about the possibility of having Corona virus illness in the family and the proportions were the same for both rural and urban areas.

In early 2021, the Zimbabwe Government started a campaign to vaccinate citizens from COVID-19. The programme started off with the vaccination of frontline workers such as nurses, doctors, uniformed forces, teachers and people suffering from chronic illnesses and the elderly. The proportion of households that were willing to be vaccinated shot to 77 percent in the fourth round, compared to 63 percent in the third round. Households in rural areas were more willing to be vaccinated (79 percent) compared to 74 percent for those in urban areas. Round four results show that about 15 percent of the households did not want to be vaccinated, whilst 8 percent were not sure. The majority of the households (78 percent) in round 4 had not been tested for COVID-19 while 6 percent had a Rapid Test for COVID-19 and 10 percent had a Swab COVID-19 test.

**ACCESS TO
SCHOOLS AND
LEARNING**



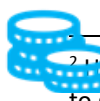
The schools were supposed to have started second term in May 2021, according to the 2021 schools calendar but was negatively affected by the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, which subsequently led to level 4 lockdown. Round 4 results indicated that nationally, 40 percent of the children paid school fees during the first term. About 31 percent of the households paid school fees compared to 56 percent in urban areas.

Since children were still homebound due to the lockdown, 74 percent of the households in round 4 reported that their children communicated with their teachers. This is compared to 78 percent in urban areas and 72 percent in rural areas.

During that period, 42 percent of the national households reported that their children were engaged in remote education learning activities. Thirty five percent of the households in rural areas reported that their children were engaged in remote education learning activities compared to 54 percent for households in urban areas.

About 23 percent of the households in round 4 stated that their children completed assignments from teachers. Another 8 percent completed assignments from parents whilst 7 percent of the households reported that their children had a session with their lesson teachers.

**EMPLOYMENT
AND INCOME**

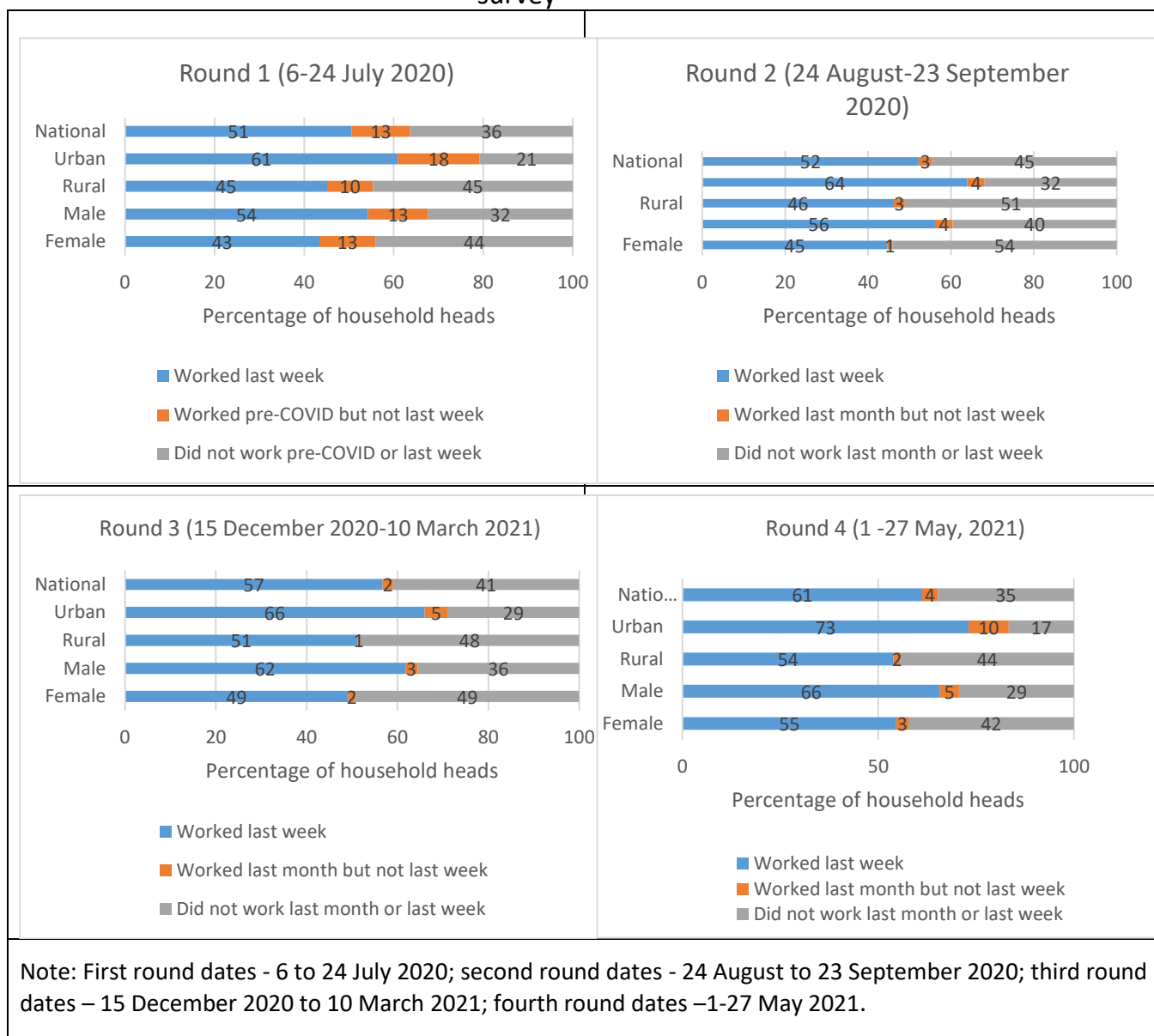


The share of respondents with a job rose to 61 percent in round 4, being an increase from both the second and the third round survey (52 and 57 percent), respectively, see Figure 4).² In urban areas, the employment rate increased

² Having a job is defined as doing any work for pay, operating any kind of business, farming, or engaging in other activity to generate income, even if only for one hour in the last week.

marginally from 64 percent in round 2 to 66 percent in round 3 and 73 percent in round 4, while in rural areas it increased from 46 percent in round 2 to 51 percent in round 3 and 54 percent in round 4. The employment rate of male workers continued to rise from 56 percent in round 2 to 66 percent in round 4, while that for female workers rose from 45 to 55 percent in the same period, respectively (Figure 4).

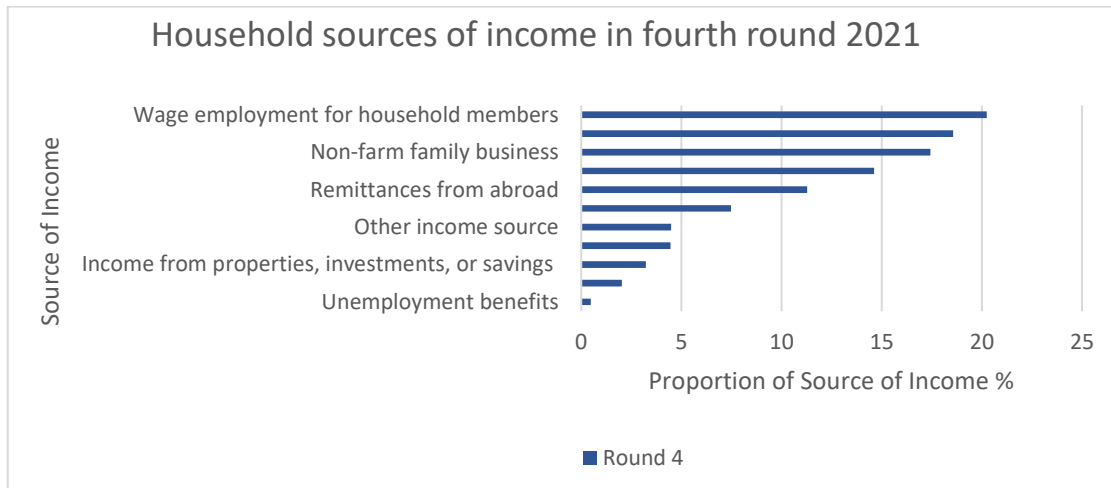
Figure 4: Employment status between the first three survey rounds, and fourth round survey



The main source of income for households was wage employment, which remained unchanged at 20 percent for round three and four. Assistance from family within the country increased marginally from 17 percent in round 3 to 19 percent in round 4. This was followed by non-farm family business, which increased from 14 percent in round 3 to 17 percent in round 4. Other major

sources of income to the households in round 4 were assistance from Government 15 percent, remittances from abroad 11 percent and assistance from NGOs or charitable organizations 7 percent. The proportion of households reporting assistance from Government or NGOs and charitable organizations, showed a decrease in the fourth round, compared to the third round survey. Remittances from abroad increased marginally from 9 percent in the third round to 11 percent in the fourth round (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Household sources of income in fourth round survey



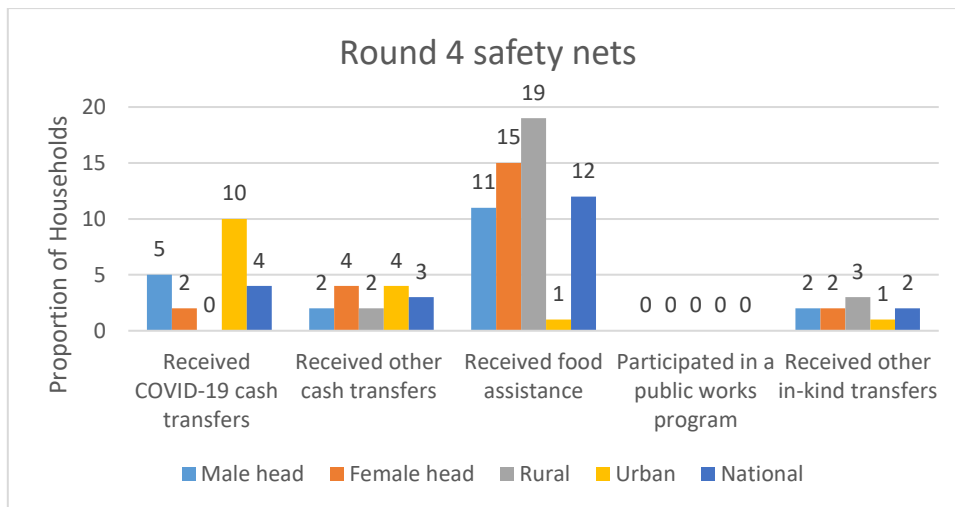
**ASSISTANCE
FROM THE
GOVERNMENT**



The proportion of households receiving COVID-19 cash transfers declined from 4 percent in round 3 to 1 percent in round 4. Rural areas received less Covid cash transfers compared to round 3 (Figure 7).

During the fourth round and third round 12 percent of the households received food assistance in the form of grain distribution. In both rounds, 19 percent of the food assistance was provided to households in rural areas compared to 1.2 percent in urban areas.

Figure 7: Coverage of safety net programs (proportion of households receiving assistance).



**UPCOMING
ACTIVITIES**



The fourth round telephone survey was completed in June 2021, and the fifth round data collection was implemented in mid June 2021 as well. The fourth round questionnaire was adapted to understand concerns regarding vaccinations and agricultural practices under the Pfumvudza/Intwasa programme. Data collection for the fifth round and sixth round have been completed. The questionnaire for round seven is ready to be used. Stakeholders are welcome to suggest themes to be investigated in future rounds.

Annex

Annex 1. The Pfumvudza/Intwasa Agricultural Programme 2020 to 2021

The Pfumvudza/Intwasa Programme was adopted by the Government to mitigate the problems of low productivity, low profitability and food insecurity situation in the country. Consequently, Zimbabwe had become a perennial net importer of cereal grains such as maize and wheat.

Low agricultural productivity is caused by poor agronomic practices, poor soils, the impact of climate change (such as poor rains, dry spells, too much rainfall) and failure to take agriculture as a business by both farmers and the extension system. Thus, the Pfumvudza /Intwasa concept based on conservation agriculture principles such as reducing soil erosion, moisture loss was adopted. Pfumvudza/Intwasa targets smallholder farmers who are vulnerable to climate change and low yields.

The Pfumvudza/Intwasa programme ensures food, nutrition and livelihood security at household level by increasing productivity and higher yields from small areas. The programme required each farmer to have three plots: two plots with cereal crops such as maize and/or traditional grains, whilst for the third plot, farmers in the high potential areas were provided with soya bean seeds while those in the low potential areas were provided with sunflower seeds that the farmer would sell to earn income.

Under the Pfumvudza/Intwasa Programme, the Government provides through the Presidential Inputs Programme inputs to 1.8 million smallholder farmers. Between July and August 2020, the farmers were expected to have been trained by extension workers, completed digging holes on their plots, collected mulch, and prepared for the season by end of September 2020. Those who were not trained or had not dug holes were not eligible to receive the Pfumvudza/Intwasa package of inputs. The Pfumvudza/Intwasa programme intends to address household food security whilst at the same time commercialising the smallholder farming sector of Zimbabwe.

Expected Outputs for Pfumvudza/Intwasa

- A total of 1.8 million farming households were targeted.
- Each household was expected to plant 3 plots, maize and soya beans or sugar beans in high potential areas, sorghum or pearl millet and sunflowers or cow peas in low potential areas.

- Each plot measured 0.016ha, and one plot was targeted to produce a minimum 1 metric tonne. Farmers are supposed to deliver 1 metric tonne to GMB.
- The rest of the produce will be enough for consumption and for storage for the next 12 months.

Input Package and Requirements For Pfumvudza/Intwasa Plot

- 2kgs Seed
- 12kg lime
- 16kg Compound D
- 16kg Ammonium Nitrate
- Insecticide for pests

Requirements

- Mulching, Fencing, Reliable water, manure/compost

Pfumvudza/Intwasa Specifications and Inputs

- Each plot consists of 1/16 ha (39m*16m)
- 1456 holes per plot
- 52 rows with 28 holes per row
- Each planting station/ hole will have 2 plants
- Spacing 60cm * 75cm
- Each Agritex Extension Worker (AEW) to train, track and monitor 350 Pfumvudza/Intwasa households.
- Each farmer to establish two Pfumvudza/Intwasa plots for cereal (maize or small grains); one for food self-sufficiency, one for strategic grain reserve)
- Third plot for soya beans or sunflower

Source: Department of Agritex, 2020

Annex 2: Appendix Tables Round 4

Description of indicator	National	Rural	Urban	Male	Female
Behaviour					
Avoided groups of 10 or more people	45	47	43	47	44
Wore mask most or all the time in public	56	50	66	57	55
Washed hand most or all the time after being in public	46	42	52	46	45
Access to basic food necessities					
Able to buy maize meal (of those who needed to buy)	38	24	59	38	37
Able to buy cooking oil (of those who needed to buy)	56	49	67	58	53
Able to buy chicken (of those who needed to buy)	26	12	49	28	24
Access to health					
Able to buy medicine (of those who needed to buy medicine)	80	76	87	79	83
Able to access medical treatment (of those who needed medical treatment)	83	84	82	82	85
Access to utilities					
Able to access sufficient drinking water	96	98	93	96	97
Able to buy electricity	48	24	82	47	49
Able to access internet services	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Access to education (of those with a school-age child)					
Children engaged in remote education or learning activities	42	35	54	43	41
Paid school fees	40	31	56	43	35
Household supplementing teachers salary	9	7	14	10	9
Communicated with their teachers	74	72	78	75	72
Completed assignments from teachers	23	20	27	23	22
Listened to educational radio programs	2	2	2	3	1
Watched educational TV programs	1	0	2	2	0
Used mobile learning applications	4	0	9	4	4
Completed assignment from parents	8	7	10	9	7
Had Session/Meeting With Lesson Teacher	7	8	6	7	8
Other	0	0	1	0	0
Employment					
Currently working (worked last week)	61	54	73	66	55
Did not work last month	96	98	90	95	97
Operated an own non-farm business (of those who worked)	20	7	36	18	24
Operated an Hhold or family non-farm business (of those who worked)	6	2	12	4	10
Worked on household farm (of those who worked)	38	65	5	36	42
Worked for a wage (of those who worked)	35	26	47	42	24
Wage employment (of those who worked for a wage)					
Able to work as usual	97	98	96	96	98

Received full wage	90	88	91	91	84
Received partial wage	8	9	8	7	11
Received no wage	2	3	2	1	5
More weekly hours of work since last month	8	9	7	7	9
Same weekly hours of work since last month	80	77	83	81	81
Fewer weekly hours of work since last month	12	14	10	12	10
Non-farm business (of those operating a non-farm business)					
Household business open	83	81	85	81	88
Household business temporarily closed	13	17	11	13	11
Household business permanently closed	4	2	4	5	2
Revenue from business sales higher (compared to last month)	13	11	14	16	9
Revenue from business sales the same (compared to last month)	48	37	50	43	53
Revenue from business sales lower (compared to last month)	35	51	32	35	36
No revenue from business sales (compared to last month)	2	0	3	4	0
Did not have a business last month (compared to last month)	2	0	2	2	2
Agriculture					
Household ever been involved in agriculture	62	89	18	61	63
Household operated on a farm to grow crops since COVID-19 outbreak	97	99	86	97	97
Household Planning to grow crops before COVID-19	99	99	98	99	99
Participated in the Pfumvudza/intwasa programme	51	55	19	52	49
Carried out Preparatory activities for Pfumvudza/Intwasa such as digging holes and mulching	98	97	100	98	97
Received extension services support (of those who participated in pfumvudza/intwasa)	84	84	71	86	81
Received training in a demonstration Plot	75	75	78	80	69
Yields higher because of Pfumvudza/Intwasa	80	80	81	82	76
Planted crops with first effective rains	89	89	91	90	89
Practiced crop rotation or intercropping	40	39	53	40	40
Household will participate in the Pfumvudza/Intwasa again	98	98	100	99	96
Planted 2 maize seeds in a hole	47	46	60	50	43
Planted 3 maize seeds in a hole	44	45	20	40	50
Applied the Pfumvudza farming practices in non-Pfumvudza plots	49	48	71	51	46
Household been raising any livestock since the beginning of 2020	79	80	72	83	74
Coronavirus Outbreak Affected Your Livestock Activities	6	6	23	9	2
Sales of livestock Increased since outbreak date.	39	46	0	39	0
Sales of livestock declined since outbreak date.	31	37	0	31	0
Sales of livestock not changed since outbreak date.	30	17	100	30	0
Income source (of households in the last 12 months from source)					
Non-farm family business	17	5	37	16	19
Wage employment for household members	20	11	35	25	13
Unemployment benefits	1	0	1	0	1
Remittances from abroad	11	8	17	8	17
Assistance from family within the country	19	19	18	13	27
Assistance from other non-family individuals	2	1	3	2	3

Income from properties, investments, or savings	3	0	8	2	5
Pension	5	2	8	4	5
Assistance from the government	15	22	3	13	17
Assistance from NGOs/charitable organizations	8	8	6	7	8
Other income source	5	6	3	5	4
Decrease or increase of Income source					
Non-farm household business					
Increased	11	10	12	13	9
Stayed same	42	27	46	34	52
Reduced	38	42	37	41	34
Not received	9	22	5	11	5
Wage employment of household members					
Increased	37	28	42	38	36
Stayed same	47	58	41	46	51
Reduced	10	9	10	11	7
Not received	6	5	7	6	6
Unemployment benefits					
Increased	26	0	55	100	0
Stayed same	74	100	45	0	100
Reduced	0	0	0	0	0
Not received	0	0	0	0	0
Remittances from abroad					
Increased	15	13	17	11	18
Stayed same	44	34	51	45	43
Reduced	27	28	25	29	25
Not received	14	25	7	15	13
Assistance from family within the country					
Increased	17	20	12	21	14
Stayed same	41	32	55	27	50
Reduced	26	28	22	30	23
Not received	17	20	11	23	13
Assistance from other non-family individuals					
Increased	17	22	10	23	8
Stayed same	41	24	60	31	57
Reduced	33	37	30	30	35
Not received	7	18	0	16	0
Income from properties, investments or savings					
Increased	15	54	29	36	27
Stayed same	46	46	69	64	70
Reduced	2	0	2	0	3
Not received	0	0	0	0	0
Pension					
Increased	44	25	53	40	48
Stayed same	54	68	47	56	52
Reduced	2	7	0	5	0
Not received	0	0	0	0	0

Assistance from government					
Increased	4	3	17	3	5
Stayed same	51	49	67	57	44
Reduced	8	9	0	7	10
Not received	38	39	17	34	42
Assistance from NGO					
Increased	6	7	3	4	9
Stayed same	36	41	25	38	32
Reduced	3	2	4	3	2
Not received	56	50	68	54	58
Other					
Increased	11	12	4	15	3
Stayed same	36	39	25	38	33
Reduced	37	33	51	37	37
Not received	17	15	20	10	27
Concerns					
Coronavirus poses substantial threat to household finances					
Very worried about possibility of having Corona virus in family	68	68	68	68	68
Somewhat worried about possibility of having Corona virus in family	22	20	25	21	23
Not too worried about possibility of having Corona virus in family	8	9	6	8	7
Not worried at all about possibility of having Corona virus in family	2	3	2	3	2
Covid 19 Testing					
Would agree to be vaccinated if vaccine for Covid 19 is free	77	79	74	81	71
Would not agree to be vaccinated if vaccine for Covid 19 is free.	15	15	15	12	19
Not sure to be vaccinated if vaccine for Covid 19 is available free	8	6	11	7	10
Covid 19 Test					
Yes Rapid Tested for Covid 19	6	4	8	6	6
Yes, Swab Tested for Covid 19	10	5	19	11	10
Yes, Rapid And Swab Tested for Covid 19	4	1	8	4	3
Yes, But Do Not Know Which Test It Was for Covid 19	2	2	2	3	1
No not tested for Covid 19	78	88	64	77	80
Shocks since the previous survey (for round 4 households)					
Job Loss since March 2020	3	2	5	4	2
Non-farm business closure	3	1	6	3	3
Theft/looting of cash and other property	1	1	2	1	2
Disruption of farming, livestock, fishing activities	5	7	1	5	5
Increase in price of farming/business inputs	18	25	8	20	17
Fall in the price of farming/business output	5	8	1	6	5
Lack of availability of farming/business inputs	5	8	1	6	4
Reduction of farming/business output	5	7	0	5	4
Increase in price of major food items consumed	55	59	48	52	59
Illness, injury, or death of an income-earning member of hhold	5	6	3	5	4
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Natural disasters	1	1	0	1	1
Safety nets (of households)					
Received COVID-19 cash transfers	1	1	3	2	1

Received other cash transfers	1	1	2	1	1
Received food assistance (grain distribution)	12	19	1	10	15
Participated in a public works program	1	1	0	1	0
Received other in-kind transfers	0	0	0	0	0

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