

USING HEA IN EMERGENCY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

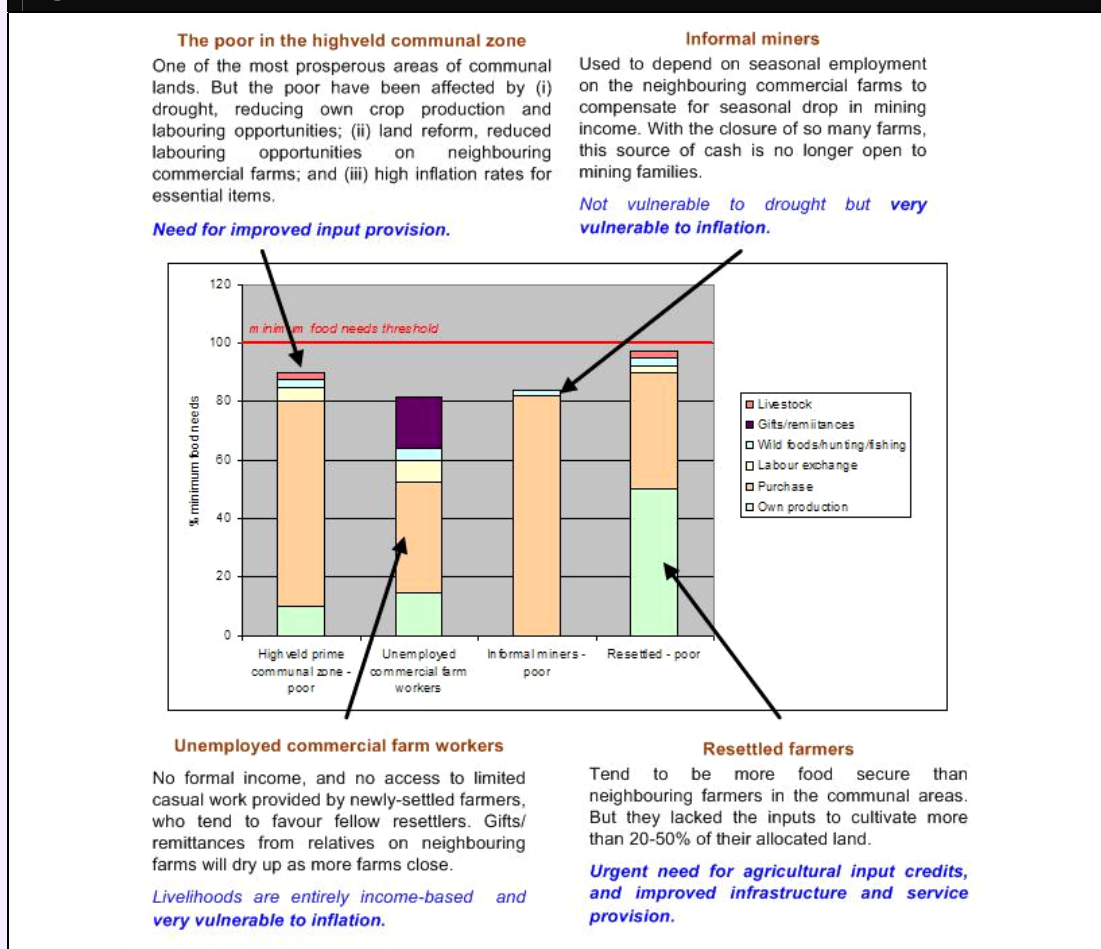
Source: Out-take from *A Guide to the Household Economy Approach*, FEG Consulting and SC-UK, for the RHVP, 2007

The following case study illustrates how HEA can provide (i) a quantitative, comparative picture of the immediate needs of communities with very different livelihoods; and (ii) a qualitative analysis of the fundamental problems facing each community and the risks to which they are vulnerable. It also shows the importance of being able to model the effects of more than one hazard.

Case study: Using HEA to assess the needs of different communities affected by macroeconomic change – Mashonaland, Zimbabwe

As part of a series of food security assessments across southern Africa following the 2001-02 drought, HEA assessments were carried out in the Mashonaland Provinces of Zimbabwe in July and August 2002. The assessments focused on communities that were vulnerable to changes in the wider macroeconomic and policy climate, such as the land reform programme and rising food prices, as well as to drought. One of the objectives was to assess households'

Figure 1: Patterns of food access for households in Mashonaland, Zimbabwe



ability to access food, non-food items and services at that time, and to predict how this might change over the subsequent eight months. The analysis showed how access to food over the four months prior to the assessment varied between the different communities, as shown in the figure above.

Source: Save the Children-UK, *Report on 4 Household Economy Assessments in Zimbabwe for the SADC-VAC and Zimbabwe VAC*, Save the Children-UK Zimbabwe. August 2002.

In this case, the very high rate of inflation meant that the most appropriate form of relief was food aid, rather than cash or vouchers. In other situations, HEA has - sometimes in conjunction with market assessments - been used to identify the appropriate balance of response between food and cash relief.

This was the case with an HEA assessment carried out in Pakistan in 2005¹, which was tasked with considering the impact of the October earthquake on livelihoods in parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The analysis highlighted the importance of markets both within and outside the area to the pre-earthquake rural economy, which was highly cash-based and strongly linked to urban centres through employment and remittances. In terms of the balance between food and cash relief, the assessment recommended that:

- As markets gradually began to function again, remaining food relief needs should be addressed by a **gradual substitution of cash for in-kind food aid**;
- Until families had rebuilt shelters in villages, or been provided with semi-permanent shelter in camps, **free relief was more appropriate than 'for-work' interventions**;
- **Cash-for-work activities** could be considered after shelter had been restored, although more employment was likely to be available by that time;
- If agencies went ahead with **food-for-work activities**, they should consider both the labour supply in the household plus the need for families to have cash to purchase non-food needs.

¹ Save the Children-UK, *Rapid Livelihoods Assessment Report – The Impact of the Earthquake on Livelihoods in Muzaffarabad & Bagh Districts, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Pakistan*, Save the Children- UK/Thardeep Rural Development Programme. November 2005.