

# ***A Qualitative Understanding of Poverty dynamics in Zambia & Poverty Monitoring in the Context of Covid-19***

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## INTRODUCTION

### A qualitative understanding of poverty dynamics in Zambia

- Part of a broader study of Zambia Poverty Dynamics focusing on the qualitative component. Other components include:
  - Analysis of two sets of survey data: , namely the Rural Agricultural Livelihoods Survey (RALS – 2012, 2015 and 2019) and the Living Conditions and Monitoring Survey (2010 and 2015).
  - Modelling forecasting of poverty up to 2060
- The mixed methods findings across all components are presented in a national report (Shepherd et al., 2021).

### Poverty monitoring in the context of COVID-19

- From existing research we know the risk of impoverishment and further destitution from social & economic disruptions of Covid-19 is high.
- Sought to complement ongoing surveys with qualitative research to highlight peoples' lived experiences of Covid-19.
- Builds on life history research (qualitative component) on poverty dynamics from 2019

## METHODS & PARTICIPANT PROFILES

### A qualitative understanding of poverty dynamics in Zambia

#### Focus Group Discussions

Activity	Men	Women	Total
KPFGD	50	47	97
FGD-Men	83	0	83
FGD-Women	0	107	107
	133	154	287

#### Life History Interviews

Activity	Men	women	Total
CP	27	36	63
TE	19	27	46
SE	18	19	37
Total	64	82	146

#### Key Informant Interviews

Activity	Men	Women	Total
KII	9	7	16

### Poverty monitoring in the context of COVID-19

- Building on life history research on poverty dynamics from 2019, returned Twice to households to discuss socio economic changes since March 2020

#### Household Interviews

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Kabwe (urban)	10	10	8
Chipata (rural)	12	12	12
Lusaka (urban)	6	6	6

#### Key Informant Interview

	District	Provincial	National
KII	3	3	5

## Findings – Poverty Dynamics – Participant reflections: Policy Periods

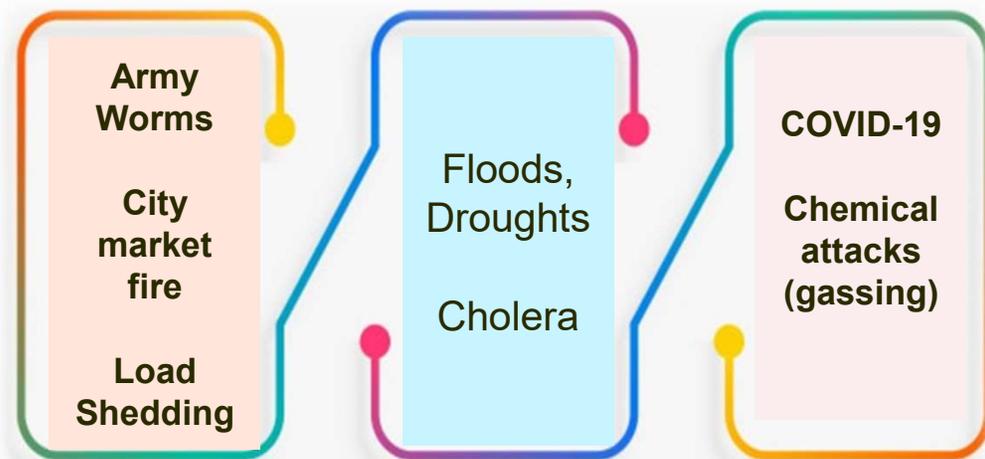
### 1964 - 2011

- **UNIP Government (1964-1990)**
  - Socialist/nationalist policies characterized by central planning & nationalization
  - State better placed than private sector to evenly redistribute wealth
  - Job creation & security achieved temporarily through nationalization
  - Prioritized provision of subsidized services & basic food commodities
  - Policies gradually undermined economy & increased poverty
- **MMD Government (1991-2011)**
  - Instituted radical policy reforms to support more liberalized economy
  - Enhanced social (health and education) services at minimal fees
  - Housing empowerment scheme implemented
  - Job retrenchments due to privatization contributed to poverty descent

### Recent Historical Trends (2011-2017)

- **Period 1, 2011 onwards:** Systemic stressors driving slower decline in income, savings and assets, increasing vulnerability now
- **Period 2, 2017 to 2020:** Recent period of sharp shocks to the incomes of the poor

### Key shocks (2017-2020)



Inflation, high cost of living, unemployment →

# Comparative Characteristics

## Sustainable Escapers



- Stable childhood
- Gradual, steady improvements
- Hard work
- Diversification of income
- Spousal co-operation
- Respectful relations
- Alcohol abuse & GBV more unusual
- Educate children

## Transitory Escapers



- Sharper drop in well-being
- Fluctuating well-being
- Diversification
- Over reliance on farming
- First marriages often fail
- Some accumulation of assets
- More shocks
- Second marriage more stable

## Chronically Poor



- Poor, rural, mobile childhood
- Early marriage, divorce common
- Women-headed households
- Alcohol abuse & GBV feature
- Only primary education
- Single-stranded livelihoods
- Minimal assets
- Child labour
- Food in small quantities
- Old age & illness challenging
- Intergenerational poverty

## Findings – Poverty Dynamics

### Drivers of Poverty Descent

- **Personal:** high dependency ratio, intergenerational poverty, early marriage, alcohol abuse, infidelity, crime, limited social networks
- **Educational challenges:** school drop outs, educational costs
- **Poor Health:** Illness, disability, death
- **Failure to access SCT**
- **GBV:** Divorce, sexual & GBV
- **Labour market:** Limited employment, exploitative daily wage, sexual harassment
- **Vending & low returns**
- **Environmental depletion:** Depleted fishing stock, livestock disease, poor soils, climate change, deforestation, load shedding, water & sanitation

### Drivers of Poverty Escape

- **Personal:** Good health, spousal co-operation, maternal kin support, access to education, & smaller households
- **Entrepreneurial:** Access to capital and diversification
- **Economic:** Formal employment, assets, & women's rights
- **Social welfare:** Social Cash Transfer

## Findings – Poverty Dynamics – Urban Vs Rural Escape

### Urban

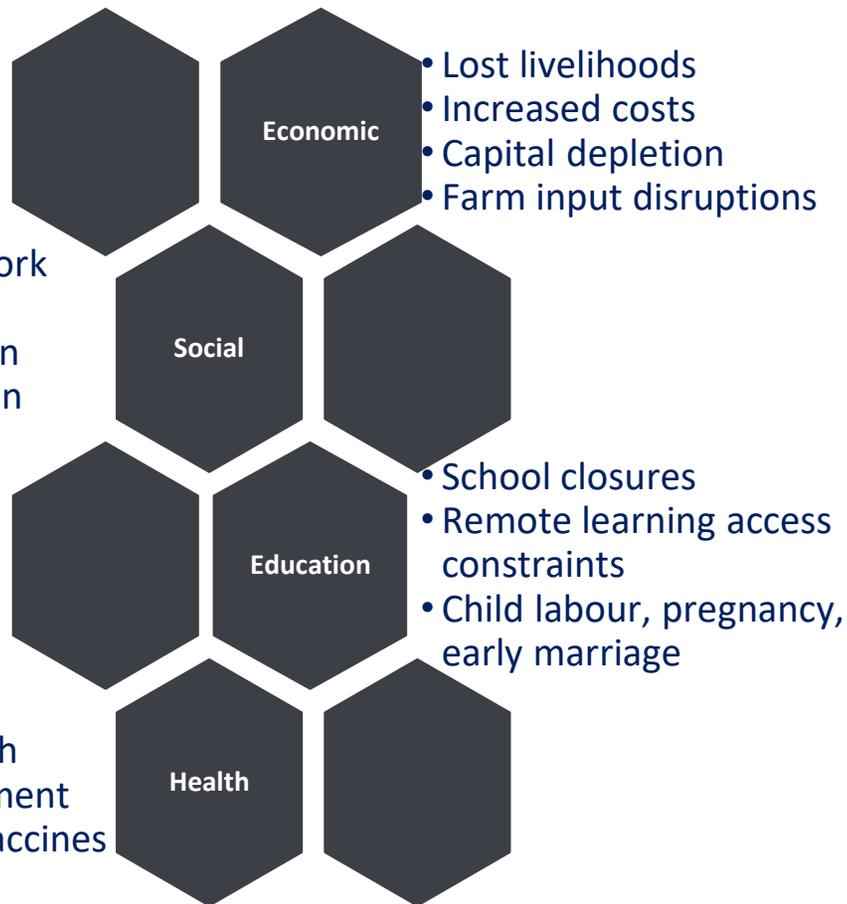
- Entrepreneurship more evident
- Multiple incomes: business, supplemented by salaried employment, artisan activities, taxi driving, petty trade & wage labour.
- Involved in trading & renting out houses or shops.
- Business activities mainly: grocery shops, food & hardware trade.
- Urban women play a substantial role in supporting household poverty escapes.

### Rural

- Fewer, could be hard to identify
- Multiple incomes: farming and/or fishing with livestock rearing & business enterprises that revolve around trading.
- Livestock and poultry more common in non-fishing communities, including cattle, goats, pigs & chickens.
- Rental assets – property, farm equipment, boats.
- Mostly members of farming cooperatives to access subsidised fertiliser.

# RESULTS-PMI

## Areas of concern for the poorest and potential impoverishment



## Groups at risk of impoverishment due to Covid-19



### Unprotected workers

Informal and formal workers report loss of employment and unpaid wages due to lack of labour protections.



### Children and youth

Children's learning has been disrupted by lock downs and holiday, idleness being linked to increased protection risks (e.g. pregnancy).



### Older people

Movement restrictions have limited contact with relatives and among church communities and support networks.



### Women

Limited resources and livelihood options

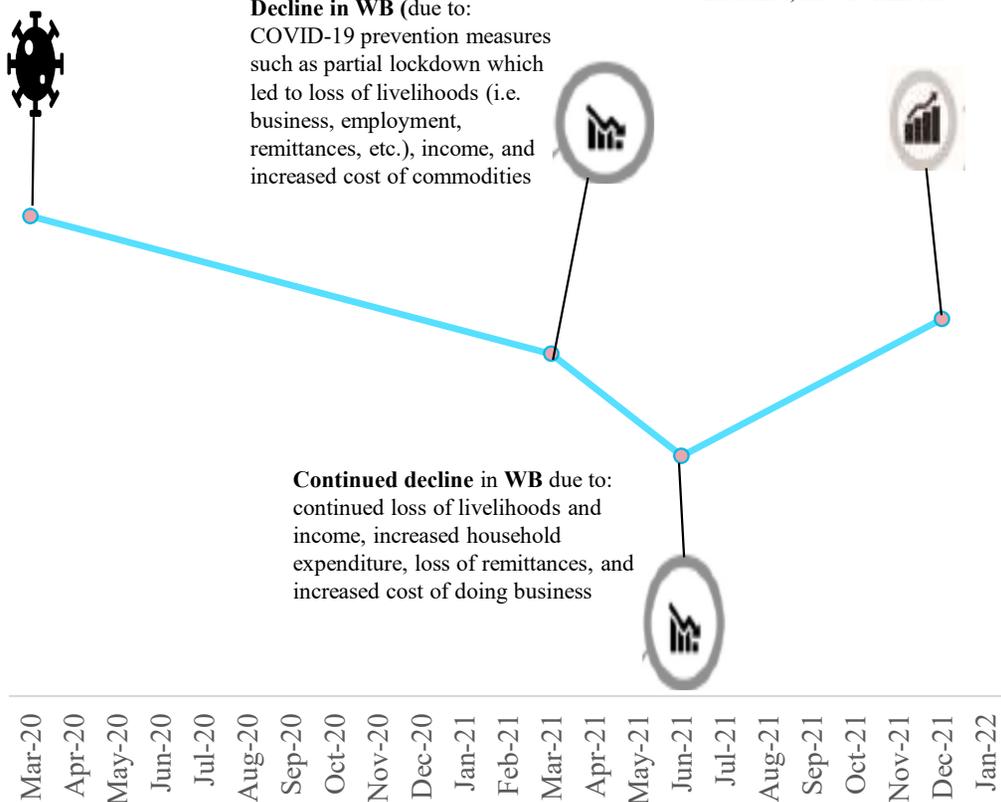
# RESULTS-PMI

First cases of COVID-19 recorded and the country goes into partial lockdown

**Decline in WB** (due to: COVID-19 prevention measures such as partial lockdown which led to loss of livelihoods (i.e. business, employment, remittances, etc.), income, and increased cost of commodities

**Partial economic recovery** due to: Appreciation of local currency, reduced cost of doing business, social cohesion, free education, public health insurance, new livelihoods

**Continued decline in WB** due to: continued loss of livelihoods and income, increased household expenditure, loss of remittances, and increased cost of doing business



WB Category	Round 1 Mar-2021	Round 2 Jun-2021	Round 2 Dec- 2021	Description
WB-1	3	11	4	In acute distress. <b>Basic needs are <u>not</u> being met.</b> Having lasting impacts on children and adult vulnerability.
WB-2	10	8	9	In distress. <b>Basic needs are <u>not</u> being met.</b> Facing severe impacts on children and vulnerable adults.
WB-3	7	3	6	Have indicators of distress. <b>Applying short term coping strategies</b> being employed or in small scale business
WB-4	7	5	6	Have limited indicators of distress. <b>Basic needs are still being met.</b>
WB-5	1	1	1	<b>Resilient.</b> All basic needs are being met. No sign of livelihood distress. <sup>9</sup>

# Coping strategies – March and August 2021

## March 2021

### Food rationing and cheaper sources:

Reducing quality, quantity, frequency of meals.

### Diversification of livelihoods:

Increase acreage, non-farmers adopting gardening for food security

### Borrowing and drawing from savings:

For subsistence and school fees

### Adherence to Covid19 guidelines:

Avoidance of income loss and medical bills, more customers

### Government support:

Covid19 emergency cash transfers, pensions, subsidised fertiliser

## September 2021

### Drawing on savings and borrowing:

Limiting expenditure to essential commodities

Government remittances.

Informal trade.

### Farming and gardening:

Some urban participants report taking up farming and gardening

### Casual day labour:

Food rationing.

Informal support networks

Identifying of cheaper sources of commodities: such as buying vegetables directly from farmers.

Prayer..

## January 2022

**Government support:** i.e SCT, health insurance, FISP, free education

**Continued diversification of livelihoods**

**Social cohesion.** Informal networks being reestablished

**Savings and borrowing:** Partial economic recovery allowing for saving

**Limiting expenditure** to essential commodities

**Adhering to COVIDI-19 guidelines:**  
Prayer..

## Government Support Measures

- Public Health Insurance:** The government provides contribution-based universal health insurance exempts the vulnerable from paying. Provision of free health services to the poor helps lessen the economic burden that comes with Covid-19.
- **Income:** The government provides financial support to the vulnerable and non-viable people in society through the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) Scheme. Respondents report receiving the SCT, and those who don't are optimistic about receiving it in future.
  - **Nutritional Security:** The government provides food security through FISP and Food Security Packs.
  - **Emergency Support:** The government through DMMU provides relief to the poor in times of emergencies. DMMU further sensitizes communities on emergency preparedness which enhances resilience in times of shocks. Flash floods, and armyworms occurred after the household interviews had been completed, illustrating how ongoing emergencies are in Zambia.
  - **Free education:** The government is currently providing free education in all public day schools from nursery to secondary school. The government further provides bursaries for tertiary education in some public institutions of higher learning

## Future challenges for poor- and near-poor households

- Livelihoods have not returned to PRE-COVID-19 levels for many. Will these disruptions continue until the vaccination programme is fully operational?
- Disruptions to education may lead some children to drop-out due to lost motivation, pregnancy or child marriage. How to prevent a 'lost generation'?
- Reliance on social networks for support was widely recognised, though social distancing measures disrupted normal activities. Will these return to pre-Covid strength?
- Social assistance has been inadequate in supporting vulnerable households to cope. Will there be a reimaging of social protection in Zambia?

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A qualitative understanding of poverty dynamics in Zambia

- **Employment:** more formal options & support to informal
- **Education:** Alleviate costs, provide bursaries & vocational training
- **Gender:** Continue social movement
- **Social Welfare:** Equitable access to SCT
- **Agriculture: Diversification, climate smart**
- **Land:** Provide security for rural land
- **Environment:** Future of rural livelihoods dependant on natural resource protection

### Poverty monitoring in the context of COVID-19

- **Put measures in place to address inflation**
- **Recalibration and better targeting of cash transfers**
- **Invest in making food systems more resilient**
- **Intervene immediately to prevent irreparable damage from school closures**