



ZPP COVID 19 COMMUNITY TRACKER

11- 22 May 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) works with community structures and community-based partners in five districts of Zimbabwe namely Binga, Chiredzi,, Matobo, Mutasa and Mutoko, . A brief survey was administered to gauge the lived experiences on key issues during the Covid 19 lockdown; as part of the community peace building initiatives and in line with ZPP's aim to allow community voices to be heard. Key findings are discussed below.

COVID AWARENESS & INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION

All survey respondents indicated they had received COVID 19 related information during the weeks 11 to 22 May 2020. Information on the outbreak was broadcasted on television, social media and the radio. WhatsApp platforms were reported to be the major vehicle for information distribution. The COVID 19 information received was on mitigation and hygiene measures to stop the spread of the virus; however, respondents expressed a lack of understanding on the daily figures published by the Ministry of Health and Child Care in the sitrep updates. Some communities, particularly Binga Ward 9 cited challenges with radio stations infomercials being broadcasted primarily in English, Ndebele and Shona, excluding Tonga. The same complaints were recorded in Chilonga in Chiredzi district and Mwenezi district. Poor telecommunications and radio infrastructure remains a problem in peripheral boarder areas such as Binga Ward 9 and this has excluded these communities from accessing information.

LOCKDOWN ENFORCEMENT

Visible police patrols were reported in the communities of Binga Ward 9 and 22 and Umguza Ward 5. In these districts, police have been patrolling and discouraging unnecessary movement. In some areas such as Umzingwane Ward 7 and Gwanda Ward 13, residents reported that they were able to fully move in their community on condition that they were wearing face masks. In Bikita Ward 11 and Mutasa Ward 11 some people were reportedly arrested by the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) for defying the lockdown regulations by not wearing masks Alarmingly, in Mutoko Ward 11, citizens were denied free movement to access shops to purchase food.

In Bikita district in Ward 1 it was reported that community meetings were held with no social distancing taking place.

Food insecurity remains high in many districts and communities.Mealie-meal was reportedly available predominantly on the parallel market; however at exorbitant prices of between ZWL 200 -250 for 10kgs or USD5-6, as in the case of Siansundu in Binga District. In the majority of surveyed districts, respondents stated that there is inadequate food in their households to last them a week, with the exception of

Mwenezi Ward 15 which had received aid distribution. Government subsidized mealie-meal was said to be available in Umzingwane district Ward 7 at the government recommended price of ZWL 70 per 10 kg, but the supply was inadequate compared to the demand as evidenced by the long queues at retail outlets. In Beitbridge West Ward 3 and Chiredzi Ward 6 there was food aid distribution by CARITAS and WFP respectively which was reported to be carried out in a fair manner.

HEALTHCARE

Community clinics are increasingly offering limited services to the public. Respondents in the survey reported numerous cases of community members being turned away unless in severe emergency cases as clinic staff were said to be attending only to COVID19 cases. There were numerous reports in Mutoko and Mudzi Districts of increases in malaria cases and communities reported lack of access to healthcare. Hospitals such as St Anne Clinic at Kezi growth point are providing expanded health care in comparison to government health centres. The lack of access to medication particularly for chronic medicines has led to citizens resorting to traditional or herbal medicines; some of which may have no effect and others; with negative effects due to lack of scientific medical research. The lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for health personnel remains problematic in all surveyed districts. This has negative implications on the health care delivery system of the said communities.

ACCESS TO WATER

Country wide the right to access to water is less than optimal during this critical period. Rural communities face challenges of not easily accessing water points. Urban communities are increasingly without water with Bulawayo City Council gazetted a 144 hrs water shedding schedule. This has increased the inaccessibility of the precious mineral as residents can only access water once a week. In rural areas, communities are still dependant on spring water and community boreholes. Accessing water for the recommended regular hygiene protocol suggested by health care experts during the COVID-19 outbreak is adding strain to households which have limited access to water and inadequate water storage facilities.



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Respondents reported concerns on the indefinite timeline of the lockdown. There were high levels of fear and anxiety about the future, particularly regarding the opening of schools. Parents expressed fear that with classes of up to 50 children each, social distancing would be impossible to achieve. Moreover, it is unlikely that government, which is already struggling to pay the current teaching staff, would

recruit more teachers so that the size of classes would be reduced. Other anxieties were related to restarting and engaging in economic activities after the lockdown is lifted.

A total; of 21 wards were surveyed. A disaggregated table is below:

District	Wards	Women	Men	Ages	Total Participants
Beitbridge West	3	0	1	42	1
Bikita	1	1	0	51	1
Binga	9	1	1	28, 55	2
Buhera	31	0	1	41	1
Bulawayo North	7	1	0	55	1
Chipinge	7	1	0	50	1
Chiredzi	6, 7	1	3	35, 54, 49, 46	4
Gokwe	3	0	1	42	1
Gwanda	13	0	2	50, 45	2
Kadoma (Rimuka)	2	0	2	48, 45	2
Mangwe	7	1	0	46	1
Matobo	9	0	1	63	1
Mutasa	31	1	1	25, 41	2
Mutoko	11	2	2	46, 45, 47, 30	4
Mwenezi	15	0	1	49	1
Mzilikazi	1	1	0	43	1
Umguza(Nyamandlovu	5	0	1	56	1
Umzingwane	7	1	0	55	1
Zvishavane	5	0	1	43	1

Grand Total	21	11	18		29
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RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Government and local authorities are obligated to provide all citizens with clean and potable water as stipulated in Section 77 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe.
2. Government and local authorities should ensure that food aid is distributed in a non-partisan and fair manner.
3. State Security forces should desist from using excessive force on unarmed civilians while enforcing the lockdown.

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