



**G06020 Rural Basket Surveys and Urban BNB project
Annual Report: December 2015**



Supported By



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1.0 Executive Summary

This annual report provides key highlights and our achievements under the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA) supported Rural Basket Surveys also known as the Rural Basic Needs Basket (RBNB) and Urban Basic Needs Basket (BNB) project. The report covers the period March to December 2015.

During the reporting period, PRFT launched two urban BNB projects in Masvingo and Bindura increasing its BNB coverage from five sites to seven. PRFT also launched the Rural BNB in Dora, Zimunya Mutare South Rural District. As a result of capacity building initiatives undertaken under this project, the residents in the project sites increased their engagement with local authorities as they demanded improved service delivery. The distribution of policy briefs, BNB reports and the media presence amplified PRFT's voice in policy debates, dialogues as well as empowering local communities to increase their participation in community decisions-making processes.

Under the reporting period, PRFT commissioned a study on Climate Change and Seasonality focusing on wards 5 and 35 in Zimunya where the Rural BNB is being implemented. The study sought to understand local awareness and perception of climate variability and trends related to climate change and associated impacts on natural resources in the study area. The study observed that the major factor which makes the communities vulnerable is the change in the pattern of rainfall although the annual total may not have significantly changed. Based on the results of this study we proposed adaptation options and actions which can be taken by different players to reduce the negative effects of climate change in the area. These include developing ward based resilience and vulnerability plans as part of the overall disaster risk reduction approach and share the plans and other vulnerability assessments to foster cross-scale learning between the public, government and civil society for the RDC. In addition promote natural resources management and watershed/catchment protection through institutional strengthening of ward based environmental sub-committees (ESCs) and the formulation, enforcement and monitoring of community participatory environmental by-laws. The first Rural BNB data collection was undertaken in September and the data complimented the findings from the research on seasonality and climate change. The results from the research and the RBNB surveys will go on

to inform policy makers and key stakeholders on necessary interventions in order to mitigate the negative effects of climate change on food security and rural livelihoods.

2.0 Technical Description of the project

2.1 Goal

The overall goal of the project is to generate regular and reliable statistical and qualitative information of the basic cost of living for ordinary residents. The evidence will allow PRFT to push for policies and programs that cushion vulnerable urban and rural households.

2.2 Specific objectives

- To continuously monitor and provide information on poverty and access to basic service delivery in rural and urban areas of Zimbabwe.
- To raise awareness on the rural livelihoods challenges among government departments, rural households and other development organisations so that informed interventions can be undertaken.
- To strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and residents associations so that they are able to actively engage policy makers and advocate for pro-poor development policies and to guarantee access to services to all layers of society.
- To strengthen existing dialogue mechanisms among residents, state and non-state actors at local level and to promote the creation of sustainable dialogue mechanisms where lacking.

3.0 Achievements to date

3.1 BNB surveys and Policy briefs publication

During the reporting period, monthly BNB reports were published and distributed electronically and physically. Key issues that emanated from the BNB surveys and public dialogues were captured in policy briefs that were also shared widely with key stakeholders. In April 2015, the BNB surveys revealed the vulnerability of children below the age of five in accessing adequate nutrition and healthcare. This lack of good nutrition has the potential to go on and affect the overall health of the children even when they become adolescents and subsequently adults. The

BNB surveys in Masvingo and Bindura revealed that this poor nutrition was closely linked to decreasing household incomes. The introduction of the mandatory child targeted Early Childhood Development (ECD) training has put a strain on households to enrol their children in school at the age of four (4) as they were required to fork out between \$66.00-\$70.00 per term in fees. The average monthly household income for 75% of households surveyed in July 2015 in Bindura and Masvingo stood at \$173 demonstrating the serious lack of disposal income among the households. From the survey, 15% of the respondents pointed out that some O- and A-level students as far back as 2013 have not received their results due to failure to clear outstanding school fees. Some students have failed to sit for any exams due to failure to raise the mandatory examination fees. Both the supply and demand side of the education system are in a quandary. In order to be viable and provide quality education, schools need financial resources yet households are failing to pay the school fees. As a result of these revelations, PRFT lobbied the Minister of Finance during the budget consultations to increase allocations to both Ministries of Health and Education in order to cater for the needs of children before and during school attendance.

The BNB dialogue meetings also revealed a new phenomenon of urban to rural migration in most parts of the urban centres as most residents failed to cope with the urban cost of living. Residents revealed that most of them who were subsisting from rentals of some rooms or whole houses, that stream of income was increasingly drying as the sitting tenants were failing to afford the rentals as a result of the shrinking economy.

PRFT recommended that at the local level, the local authorities and government departments should develop child sensitive plans in collaboration with citizens. For example, PRFT urges local authorities in Bindura, and Masvingo to work effectively with the Bindura Residents Association (BRA) and Masvingo United Residents and Ratepayers Association (MURRA) in addressing barriers to access to children's basic needs such as education, health and quality nutrition. During its capacity building workshops, PRFT highlighted to the Residents Associations the key issues they should lobby for. For example Residents Associations (RAs) were encouraged to demand that in order to optimise utilisation of local resources, local authorities need to derive specific data from relevant ministries to support local planning of service delivery and children's needs.

During the reporting period, PRFT lobbied government and advocated for the creation of a supportive environment for the livelihood initiatives that are currently buoying most households in the country including informal trading. While noting the potential welfare benefits of supporting the domestic industry through import restrictions (e.g. the recent removal of second hand clothing from the Open General Import License (OGIL)), PRFT advocated for a whole package of policies which need to be implemented to rescue the economy from further deindustrialization. PRFT condemned the removal of second hand clothing from the OGIL on the argument that this removal alone may not be adequate enough to result in a turnaround for the textile industry¹. The industry should be further assisted in order to bring in new technologies that will ensure lower prices that will create demand.

3.2 Urban BNB Consultative meetings in Masvingo and Bindura in March 2015

Having no prior presence in Masvingo and Bindura, PRFT established relationships with the Residents Associations (RAs) in the two areas through signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with Masvingo United Residents and Ratepayers Association (MURRA) and the Bindura Residents Association (BRA). The RAs have strong existing links and networks in these urban areas already hence PRFT leveraged on these structures. PRFT prides itself in working and strengthening existing community structures as opposed to dismantling or starting completely new ones. After careful needs assessment, PRFT undertook some capacity building training.

3.2.1 Advocacy Training in Masvingo and Bindura

From the 16th to the 17th of September 2015, PRFT conducted advocacy training in Masvingo, in a bid to increase community engagement in lobbying for improved service delivery. This training was attended by 17 women and 14 men who represented Masvingo United Ratepayers and Residents Association (MURRA) and their membership, Women's Action Group (WAG), Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ) and Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ)., Community action committees were created to advocate for what the participants deemed as the major issues namely; improved electricity, water supply, education and maternal health.

¹ The ban on second-hand clothes was given by the Finance Minister in his Mid-Term Fiscal policy review on the 30th of July to be effective on the 1st of September 2015. However this was not effected.

Following the advocacy meeting, the committee responsible for maternal health being lead by Mrs. Takaedza has seen an improvement engagement with local authorities. As of December 2015, they had contacted the mayor, Mr. Fidze in order to lobby for access to maternal healthcare facilities at Runyararo clinic in Ward 6 of Masvingo urban. There are currently no maternal healthcare facilities at this clinic and pregnant women have to walk an average of five (5) kilometres to receive these services. There is a meeting scheduled with the maternal health committee, Mayor, District Nursing Officer (DNO) and the Provincial Medical Director (PMD) in February of 2017.

A similar training was conducted in Bindura on the 22nd of September 2015. The training was supposed to run from the 22nd to the 23rd of September 2015. However, after the first day of training when residents were exposed to the problem tree, some officials from the President's Office in Bindura ordered for the training to be stopped as they said PRFT was sensitizing residents and the training had the potential to incite residents to protest against government. The officials confiscated PRFT's training materials including the attendance register. The PRFT Board has resolved to engage the police commissioner in the area but is cautious in doing so. The lawyer on the PRFT Board of Trustees is advising on the best way forward..

3.4 In-house training on RBNB

PRFT realized that they also needed some capacity building in preparation for the launch of the Rural Basic Needs Basket (RBNB) Project. In order to meet this capacity gap, PRFT invited the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) from Zambia which has over 27 years experience with the BNB to train and share their experience.

PRFT staff received in-house training on the Rural BNB methodology from, JCTR's Programs Manager on Saturday the 11th of July 2015. The JCTR representative Faith Kalondawanga took PRFT staff through the methodology of the RBNB, whilst drawing from practical experiences of the Zambian experience. The training also gave JCTR and PRFT the opportunity to compare notes on the urban BNB as well as how to maintain effective advocacy in the various areas of operation. Through this training, PRFT came up with some changes to the urban BNB programming namely;

- PRFT has shifted from collecting household data for the urban BNB surveys from a monthly to a bi-monthly basis in order to minimize household fatigue. This move has allowed for increased household survey sample sizes from 10 to at least 30 in each urban location. A larger sample size enriches the quality of the results.
- PRFT has started creating and training BNB committees to improve advocacy at local level. BNB committees have since been created in Mutare and Masvingo. The committees are responsible for coordinating the implementation of the community action plans.
- PRFT will generate a standard urban basket in the 2016 cycle. This means PRFT will track two types of BNBs, one, that is local specific, and the other one that is standardized for all urban towns where the BNB surveys are undertaken. The standardized basket will allow PRFT to do trend analysis and bring out the associated poverty implications.

3.5 Inaugural RBNB Consultative Workshop in Dora

The rural BNB was launched in Dora on the 13th of July 2015 with an inaugural consultative workshop at Matimba business centre. With 68% of Zimbabwe's population living in rural areas, the RBNB is an important step in our programming towards understanding rural poverty in the country.

PRFT employed a participatory methodology which allowed residents to come up with the list of essential food and non-food items required by an average family on a monthly and seasonal basis. The households that participated in the workshop were drawn from wards 5 and 35 of Dora under Chief Zimunya where the BNB surveys will be conducted. There were 51 people present; 31 males and 20 females who ranged between the ages of 20 to 68. According to the ZimStat Poverty Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey (PICES) for 2011/12, the rural household is made up of 4.7 people. Therefore PRFT's RBNB is representative of a family of 5.

With the assistance from the JCTR representative, the local agricultural extension departments and ZIMSTATS maps, PRFT mapped the RBNB household sentinel survey areas and the livelihoods activities in the areas. Through the platform, PRFT identified and trained two local enumerators who are assisting in data collection. This training included practical home demonstrations with households in the area. Two bicycles and two scales were purchased from

the CAFOD fund, another partner on the BNB project. The bicycles and scales are for use by the local enumerators for purposes of data collection.

3.6 RBNB Methodology Workshop in Harare

PRFT brought together key stakeholders to discuss and provide incisive input into the Rural BNB methodology. The methodology workshop was attended by stakeholders who included the Ministry of Agriculture (Extension services department), University of Zimbabwe's Rural and Urban Planning Department, United Nations World Food Programme, Food and Nutritional Council of Zimbabwe, Consumer Council of Zimbabwe and ZIMSTATS. The different gave their input towards improving the questionnaire for RBNB data collection.

- With the assistance of the Ministry of Agriculture &Mechanisation's two departments (agricultural extension and economics and marketing) and ZIMSTATS, PRFT refined and modified the data collection tools and sampling issues. This was in order to design the tools in such a way that they are in line with the Zimbabwe rural farming context and the other tools that government departments are using.
- The Food and Nutrition Council of Zimbabwe committed to collaborate with PRFT in the areas where the RBNB survey is being.. Through the project, Food and Nutritional council district committees have been engaged and more exchange visits will be made to strengthen the utilisation of the RBNB output in community planning.
- There was a recommendation from ZIMSTAT that PRFT should consider increasing the sample size in order to generate conclusive and representative results. PRFT hopes to increase the sample size in the next project cycle in order to address this important issue.

3.7 Rural Basic Needs Basket (RBNB) Data Collection

The first RBNB data collection was undertaken in the last week of September from 71 households in ward 5 and 35. The programs coordinator received great assistance from of the two councilors, Messrs Rommy Manjeya and Abu Masibango for Wards 5 and 35 respectively agricultural extension workers, Headman Reason Matiki, village heads ward development committees in Dora. This data collection also ran concurrently with the validation workshop for

the Climate Change and Seasonality Study which PRFT had undertaken in the area. PRFT managed to work favourably with the two councilors despite each belonging to a different political party Concillor Manjeya belongs to the ZANU PF party while Concillor Masibango belongs to MDC-T.

3.8 Research on impacts of Seasonality, Climate Change on rural livelihoods in Zimbabwe. Implications on strengthening community resilience and adaptation options: The case of Ward 5 and 35 of Zimunya in Mutare South District and First Rural BNB survey Publication

During the reporting period, PRFT commissioned a study on Seasonality and Climate Change focusing on the project area. This study intended to provide local specific information on the extent of seasonality and climate changes, climate change impacts on small scale farmers, livelihood systems and identify adaptation options and/or coping strategies being employed in Zimunya (Ward 35 and 5) under the Mutare South Rural District Council. The study sought to establish both the local awareness and perception of climate variability, trends related to climate change, effects of climate change and community adaptation mechanisms as a way to inform effective development of programmes to strengthen community climate change resilience and adaptations. The study used the Geographic Information System (GIS) to map households interviewed during the survey and analyse future climate scenarios. The results of the secondary data analysis were triangulated with primary data from Households surveys, FGDs and Key informant interviews (Agricultural extension workers, Councilors, Mutare Rural District Council, councillors, other local government departments , community based organisations and local NGOs) so as to come up with rich conclusions on seasonality and climate change in ward 35 and 5 of Zimunya. The research report was complemented with the results of the first Rural Basic Needs Basket survey which was carried out in September 2015.

Some of the findings from the study are;

- 1 That climate change has occurred and it is evidenced by increases in temperature in the area, late rains, changes in rainfall patterns, decline in the quantity of water resources and other forest resources.
2. There are limited livelihoods opportunities in the area (both off farm and farm livelihoods sources) as communities continue to rely on climate sensitive agricultural and non agricultural activities for survival such as selling firewood, molding bricks and chicken rearing. The results of the rural Basic Needs Basket show that climate change has resulted in high levels of food

instability because households were already buying the staple food – mealie-meal in the last quarter of the year (September). This is contrary to what used to happen when local communities were sustained by their harvest throughout the year. The RBNB surveys show high level of income insecurity and this indicates unsustainable food consumption patterns.

3. The findings also showed that climate change effects in the local area are mostly affecting the poor, women, elderly and children. The food consumption analysis from the RBNB surveys revealed high levels of calcium deficits in the 71 households in the last quarter of the year. The average calcium consumed per day per person was 428.40 (mg) in ward 5 and 305.49 mg in ward 35. The figures fall below 510 (mg) which is recommended by the World Health Organisation. The daily calcium deficits were -16% and -40% for wards 5 and 35 respectively. This shows that the households are failing to meet the required calcium requirements. Calcium which is mostly found in fresh vegetables is very vital especially in children's development of teeth and bones and thus should be consumed in adequate amounts. Vegetable gardening in the area has been constrained due to inadequate water and households can no longer grow vegetables for a prolonged period.

PRFT was informed by both the study on Seasonality and Climate Change and the RBNB surveys and came up with the following recommendations:

1. Development of ward based resilience and vulnerability plans as part of the overall disaster risk reduction approach and share the plans and other vulnerability assessments to foster cross-scale learning between the public, government and civil society for the RDC.
2. Promotion of natural resources management and watershed/catchment protection through institutional strengthening of ward based environmental sub-committees (ESCs) and the formulation, enforcement and monitoring of community participatory environmental by-laws.
3. Increasing training and awareness raising on the climate smart agricultural activities such as conservation farming to farmers and households
4. Rolling out of agro-forestry and conservation agriculture initiatives with the farmers at household level to mitigate the effects of deforestation
5. It is recommended that the Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate should strengthen participatory community monitoring on climate change, i.e to promotes the collection, dissemination and use of local risk climate information (including scientific data and local knowledge about trends and changes) which will be used in Community

Based Adaptation initiatives as local farmers' decision making tool on such important times for planting, weeding and harvesting.

6. Identification of Community Based Climate change adaptation activities that reduce community vulnerabilities. These can include value addition to agricultural and NTFPs, sustainable wetland utilization based on EMA guidelines, intensive horticultural production activities to take advantages of proximity to Mutare town
7. Enhance institutional, financial and human capacity of the Mutare RDC to address the climate change impacts especially hazards and to implement climate change smart budgets that are responsive to climate change
8. The development of local programmes to strengthen horticultural activities value chains through market linkages.

This report will be on the PRFT website by end of January, 2016. www.prftzim.org

3.9 Validation Workshops on Climate change report and RBNB findings in Dora

The Poverty Reduction Trust organized a validation workshop to get local stakeholders' feedback and comments on the findings from the research on climate change and the RBNB survey. The platform enabled PRFT to interact with the people who participated in the research work and these included ordinary households, councilors, ward development committees, agricultural extension departments and local community based organizations. The workshop gave an opportunity for participants to have an in-depth discussion on the findings and to recommend some action points to enrich the reports which will be used for engagement with key stakeholders. The research and the validation increased the knowledge that the community had on climate change and its associated impacts. The dialogue motivated the participants to change their behavior especially with regards to environmental management and do more in climate change advocacy work. The agricultural extension officers felt that they had benefited from the research findings as they were useful in rolling out government's activities towards climate change communication, mitigation and adaptation strategies. One of the strategies to adapt to the effects of climate change is to reignite the interest of the households to grow drought resistant crops which were proved to be viable in the area. The discussion reviewed the need to do more investigative research in this area to find what can practically work in terms of strengthening the growing of drought resistant crops. Other specific programme interventions would be to assist in market access and infrastructure development (such as technology for harvesting).

The discussion reviewed the following opportunities and advocacy issues in light of the need to secure improved rural livelihoods.

1. There is need for irrigation infrastructure to be put place so that communities can engage in agricultural activities.
2. Necessary infrastructure should be put place to facilitate water harvesting.
3. The communities felt that there is need for more training and skills transfer programmes for the youth to improve income security. There is need to make use of the land that the Mutare Rural District council has provided for income generating project for the youth in ward 35
4. There is need for more sensitization workshops for the local leadership such as heard men and the chief so that they can spearhead local climate change adaptation strategies
5. Need for more accessible quality agricultural extension services through further capacity building of the extension workers.
6. More training and sensitization in drought resistant crops including soil testing to inform the same.

PRFT is planning to carry out more advocacy in the next project cycle informed by these findings.

3.10 Production of awareness raising materials

PRFT produced BNB brochures (both English and Shona), newsletters and t-shirts to disseminate information on poverty-related issues. Three hundred (300) t-shirts and 500 brochures in Shona as well 200 English brochures were disseminated in Dora Bindura and Masvingo as well at the RBNB launch in Harare. This served to raise the program awareness.

3.11 Media engagement

The continuous interaction of PRFT with media houses has strengthened and increased PRFT's information coverage. PRFT's policy briefs and comments on poverty continued to be covered in print and online newspapers.

PRFT has also been on a drive to improve its media presence through Facebook. We have seen a steady increase in followers on our Twitter and Facebook profile from 51 followers in June to 86 in December and Facebook followers from 71 in June to 207 by December 2015.

PRFT has developed a YouTube link

(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTLrF6h89RSMiHnrKemAZCQ>) which currently has 19 videos capturing voices of the communities on issues of service delivery and other socio-economic challenges they are facing.

4.0 Other Activities

4.1 Participation in the Parliamentary Portfolio Committees

During the reporting period PRFT participated in the consultative meetings for the Finance and Economic development parliamentary committee as well as in the Parliamentary Portfolio committee on Food security. PRFT participated in the 2016 National Budget consultations facilitated by the parliamentary portfolio committee on Finance and Economic development. PRFT has shared its publications with these Portfolio Committees. As a way forward, PRFT proposes to formalize its relationship with the 8th Parliament by way of going into an MOU. This however requires resources given that any engagement with Members of Parliament requires paying for their daily allowances and other related costs.

5.0 Lessons learnt and plans for the next phase

- The expansion of the BNB project to Masvingo and Bindura has addressed an information gap experienced by the two towns. Through implementing this project, PRFT has learnt that information on poverty is rarely available to residents in small towns as most development initiatives tend to target bigger cities. PRFT will thus continue to collect data on the BNB during the next phase. The introduction of the RBNB and the commissioning of the in-depth studies in the rural areas has opened avenues for policy engagement and more advocacy work on securing rural livelihoods. In the next cycle, the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust aims to do more BNB-related researches that will inform development and review of local policies with the view to improve access to food, income and other social basic services

required in the rural areas. The reports from the researches on climate change and BNB survey will be used to engage local policy makers and local leadership. PRFT would want to facilitate translation of the findings into practical implementation of the actions points by linking the communities to donors and other organisations implement some of the recommendations.

- While residents and bodies that represent them are well aware of socio-economic deprivations that affect them, PRFT has learnt that there is still limited capacity on how they can engage policy makers and their local authorities. The next step will thus see capacity building as a pillar stone for raising the residence's voice on issues that have to do with their wellbeing. Community leaders need to be equipped with lobbying and advocacy skills so that they are able to effectively engage their local leadership.
- Another key lesson generated by the project is the importance of continued dialogue between residents and policy makers in order to maintain a shared understanding of issues that affect citizens. In the next circle, PRFT will continue to organize stakeholder dialogues among residence and policy makers both in the rural and urban areas
- It is important to have increased monitoring and evaluation the projects in order to increase relevance by being responsive to the needs of the community
- The Urban BNB has the tendency to unearth issues in a community that will likely require further interrogation. For example, in Bindura and Masvingo, it emerged that there was a rise in urban-rural migration as a result of the high living costs in these towns. In order to come up with the best recommendations, further indepth research on the numbers, gender distribution and the impact on family dynamics of migration among other issues would need to be investigated.
- The Rural BNB is a seasonality tool. So far the data collected does not cover all the seasons hence it is limited in its impact. It is therefore against this fact that PRFT proposes to extent this project further and would require further funding for the same.