



# **Food and Nutrition Security in the Context of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe**

## **MWENEZI DISTRICT Response Strategy**

# Mwenezi District

## Masvingo



### District Brief Introduction

**Mwenezi district** is one of the largest districts in Masvingo Province. The district comprises of 18 administrative wards (12 communal and 6 resettlements wards) and lies in agro-ecological regions 4 and 5.

According to NNS (2018) chronic malnutrition affects 25.8% of children under five years in Mwenezi.

### COVID 19 Disaster

The district suffered from the effects of the covid-19 pandemic which was declared in March 2020. Measures that were instituted by the government included reinforcement of lockdowns that restricted unnecessary movement of people. As a result, the food and nutrition security of communities was compromised including their means of livelihoods.

### Challenges Caused by the COVID 19

- *Limited access to markets for cash and food.*
- *Low remittances due to closure of borders.*
- *Hiking of prices of basic commodities.*
- *Learners out of school for long period affecting their schooling times and examinations.*
- *Increased child marriages and pregnancies because of loafing.*
- *High prevalence of domestic violence because of limited outdoor socio-economic activities.*
- *COVID-19 stigma and discrimination for returnees from quarantines and isolation centres.*
- *Shortage of public transport to access essential services.*
- *Downsized operations of other essential services.*
- *Loss of livestock due limited services e.g. inadequate dipping and vaccination programmes.*
- *Low rate of latrine construction at household level.*

## **Strategies employed to address challenges brought about by the COVID- 19**

- *Provision of food mitigation strategies by government, NGOs and retailers.*
- *Government- Drought relief programme, registration of small to medium enterprises affected by COVID-19 and Pfumvudza.*
- *NGOs- Implementation of nutrition sensitive food assistance programmes.*
- *Renovation of an isolation unit at Mwenezi District Hospital which is currently at 98% completion.*
- *Online learning for learners returning to school by end of third quarter.*
- *Continued health education on COVID-19 at all levels.*
- *Dissemination of IYCF messages at food distribution points every month.*
- *Awareness campaigns through WhatsApp groups for payment of dipping levy and supplies of scarcities to be supplied at animal health management centres.*
- *Nutrition screening and treatment of children with severe acute malnutrition in all wards.*
- *Rehabilitation and drilling of new boreholes.*
- *Installation of piped water schemes.*
- *Distribution of IEC material on COVID-19 at shops, clinics, households and community centres*

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