



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

## **UMP DISTRICT Response Strategy**

# UMP

## (UZUMBA, MARAMBA, PFUNGWE)

### Mashonaland East



### Brief background

The district covers an area of about 2660 square kilometres which consists entirely of communal areas. It has three communal areas, Uzumba in the south, Maramba in the central part and Pfungwe in the north. The district is further subdivided into 17 administrative wards. The administrative centre for the district, Mutawatawa Growth Point is centrally located 76km north of Murewa Centre. UMP district basically covers land lying between Mazowe River and its major tributary, Nyadire. Mazowe River defines the district boundary with Rushinga district on the north and Shamva district on the west. To the east, the district is bound by the Nyadire River which forms its eastern boundary with Mudzi and Mutoko districts. The district is also bound on the south by a small stream, Muhume which defines its boundary with Murewa district. The district has a population of 112 000.

### Major Economic Activities

The majority of households are engaged in field crop production, horticulture, livestock production and gold panning along Mazoe river during the dry season. Major crops grown are maize, sorghum, millets and groundnuts. Popular horticultural crops include tomatoes, onions, butternuts and beans. Livestock reared include cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and poultry.

Successive droughts as a result of climate change have resulted in a decrease in overall yield of most field crops. Average maize yield was 0.3 t per hectare and 0.4t per hectare for sorghum. This has resulted in an acute grain deficit. The devastating drought during 2019/20 season has left many households insecure both in terms of food availability and nutritionally. This has been worsened by COVID-19 induced lockdown which disrupted socio-economic activities in the district. Most households now rely on food assistance from NGOs and the Department of Social welfare.

### Recommendations

**Education** - The proportion of children out of school because child is considered too young (39.8%) and schools are expensive (32.3%) remains high in the province. There is need to decentralise the ECD schools to within walking distances for easy access and enhancing the BEAM programs which promote universal access to education in the province.

**Social Protection** - There is need for more disbursements of safety nets to cover more vulnerable households. There is also need to reduce distance to the nearest police post to combat crime.

**Crop Input Support** - The government is supplying agricultural inputs through the Pfumvudza program for small scale farmers and command agriculture, there is need to look at ways to sustain that programme so that farmers are self-sufficient.

**Livestock production**- Tick borne diseases were responsible for many livestock deaths. There is need to improve cattle dipping in the district.

**Household and Individual Dietary Diversity (Child and Women's)** - There is need to increase both household and individual dietary diversity.

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**- the district continues to lag behind in terms of WASH activities, there is need to increase access to clean drinking water as well as reduce open defecation.

**Child Nutrition** - There is need to improve child nutrition in the district with a focus on reducing stunting and wasting as well as raising the rates of exclusive breastfeeding.

**Chronic Illnesses** - Drugs for chronic illnesses have gone beyond the reach of many and need to be subsidised by government

**COVID-19 IPC** - Training of health staff in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), assist in provision of PPEs, sanitizers, brooms, buckets and so on.

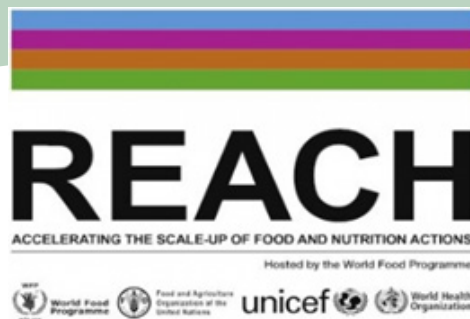
**Food Insecurity** - Successive droughts have resulted in most households being food insecure, therefore there is need to adopt technologies which will enhance production.

### **COVID-19- Response Strategies.**

- *Primary health care medication as well as key treatment for the COVID-19 needs to be subsidised.*
- *Building capacity of local health institutions so that they can respond to emergency situations.*
- *Ensure availability of drugs at local clinics.*
- *Strengthen WHO guidelines on controlling spread of COVID-19.*
- *Improve monitoring and enforcement on adherence to regulations.*
- *Capacitate local health institutions to deal with COVID-19*
- *Establish a quarantine centre in the district*
- *Increase testing for COVID-19 in order to screen and get the true picture of infections in the district.*
- *Increase awareness for the disease.*
- *Support more farmers timeously with both basal and top dressing fertilizer.*
- *Increasing the overall Pfumvudza package*
- *Improve water infrastructure at plunge dip tanks.*
- *Improve provision of acaricides to reduce incidence of tick-borne disease.*
- *Establish livestock breeding centres in the wards*
- *Capacitate local veterinary to provide essential service to livestock farmers.*
- *Increase livestock interventions especially on production.*
- *Increase funding for small to medium enterprises.*
- *Promote employment creation through use of locally available resources.*
- *Council to support small businesses through charging affordable rates which promote businesses.*
- *Establish nutrition and backyard gardens*
- *Create awareness through training and holding cooking demonstrations.*
- *Increase support in the form of easy access to health extension services to expecting and lactating mothers.*
- *Local clinics were being encouraged to have nutrition gardens for fresh produce supply to feed expecting mothers.*
- *Set by-laws which ensure sustainable use of forest products.*
- *Mutawatawa service centre to get water from Saparanyambuya dam.*
- *In the long run to get water from Mazowe river.*

- There is need to build a dam at the confluence of Nyadire river and Mazowe river.
- Government should expedite *national* policy on sanitation. This will empower local councils to set by-laws which will improve sanitation in the district.
- DDF, NGOs and private players to drill more boreholes in all wards
- Capacitating village health workers with PPE and knowledge about the COVID-19 to disseminate with caregivers and village focal points.
- Promote farmers to diversity crops they grow which will lead to consumption of diversified diets.

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