Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee (ZimLAC)

2024

Rural Livelihoods Assessment

Matabeleland North Provincial Report

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Foreword

The 2024 Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee (ZimLAC) Rural Livelihoods Assessment (RLA) was undertaken against the background of the 2023/2024 El Niño induced drought. This RLA, the 24th since inception, was guided by the urgent need for the Government of Zimbabwe to determine the impact of the El Niño induced drought on households in the rural areas and provide evidence to inform decision making. The assessment will also ensure the timely development of holistic and robust response programmes.

Considering that this was a unique year, the ZimLAC engaged various data collection approaches to enhance ground-truthing of contextual issues affecting food and nutrition security in different geographic areas. In that regard, the household interviews and community Focus Group Discussions were complemented by interviews with selected Chiefs (together with the Headmen and other traditional leaders who fall under their jurisdiction) and district level Key Informant Interviews. This multi-pronged approach contributed towards collation of in-depth insights into pertinent rural households' livelihoods issues which include demographics, health, nutrition, WASH, social protection, food consumption patterns, income sources, income levels, expenditure patterns, coping strategies, shocks and food security.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Government of Zimbabwe and its Development Partners for the financial and technical support which enabled us to undertake the survey in a timely manner. We remain indebted to the food and nutrition security structures at both provincial and district levels for their support. We appreciate the rural communities of Zimbabwe, the local authorities as well as Traditional Leaders for cooperating and supporting this assessment. We submit this report to you for your use and reference in your invaluable work towards addressing priority issues keeping many of our rural households vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity.

George D. Kembo (Dr.)

DIRECTOR GENERAL/ ZIMLAC CHAIRPERSON

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Acknowledgements

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- Office of the President and Cabinet
- Food and Nutrition Council
- Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion
- Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development
- Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare
- Ministry of Health and Child Care
- Ministry of Local Government and Public Works
- Rural District Councils (RDCs)
- Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- ZIMSTATS
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- START NETWORK
- United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
- UNDP
- Catholic Relief Services
- Adventist Relief Agency (ADRA)
- World Vision
- Red Cross
- Bindura University of Science Education
- Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology
- Plan International
- CARITAS
- Lower Guruve Development Association
- Mwenezi Development Trust
- LID Agency
- Abundant Life For All (ALFA)
- Members of Parliament (Shamva, Murehwa South, Murehwa West and Murehwa North Constituencies)
- St Daniels Rehabilitation Centre
- JF Kapnek Trust Zimbabwe
- Takunda
- Family Aids Caring Trust (FACT)
- Valley of Hope
- Simukai
- AMALIMA Loko
- Midlands AIDS Service Organisation
- ZVANDIRI
- Aqua Culture Zimbabwe
- CARE International
- Nutrition Action Zimbabwe
- Mavambo Trust
- Mavambo Orphan Care
- Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services
- CIMMYT
- Zimbabwe Council of Churches
- Heather Chimoga Orphan Care
- Harare Rotary Club CBD
- Centre for Agro-Entrepreneurship & Sustainable Livelihoods Trust
- Africa Ahead

Acknowledgement of Financial Support

Acronyms

EA	Enumeration Area
FNC	Food and Nutrition Council
FNSP	Food and Nutrition Security Policy
HDDS	Household Dietary Diversity Score
NDS 1	National Development Strategy 1
RLA	Rural Livelihoods Assessment
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
ZimLAC	Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee

Introduction and Background

Introduction

- ZimLAC plays a significant role in operationalising Commitment Six, of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy (GoZ, 2012), in which the "Government of Zimbabwe is committed to ensuring a national integrated food and nutrition security information system that provides timely and reliable information on the food and nutrition security situation and the effectiveness of programmes and informs decision-making".
- The information system is critical in informing decision making as it provides evidence for timely response by Government.
- ZimLAC livelihood assessments' results continue to be an important tool for informing and guiding policies and programmes that respond to the prevailing food and nutrition security situation with 11 urban and 24 rural livelihoods updates having been produced to date.

Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee (ZimLAC)

ZimLAC is a consortium of Government, Development Partners, UN, NGOs, Technical Agencies and the Academia which was established in 2002 and is led and regulated by Government. It is chaired by FNC, a Department in the Office of the President and Cabinet whose mandate is to promote a multi-sectoral response to food insecurity and nutrition problems in a manner that ensures that every Zimbabwean is free from hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

ZimLAC supports Government, particularly FNC in:

- Convening and coordinating national food and nutrition security issues in Zimbabwe.
- Charting a practical way forward for fulfilling legal and existing policy commitments in food and nutrition security.
- Advising Government on the strategic direction in food and nutrition security.
- Undertaking a “watchdog role” and facilitating action to ensure sector commitments in food and nutrition are kept on track through a number of core functions such as:
    - Undertaking food and nutrition assessments, analysis and research;
    - Promoting multi-sectoral and innovative approaches for addressing food and nutrition insecurity, and;
    - Supporting and building national capacity for food and nutrition security including at sub-national levels.

Assessment Rationale

The assessment results will be used to guide the following:

- Evidence based planning and programming for targeted interventions.
- Development of interventions that address immediate to long term needs as well as building resilient livelihoods.
- Early warning for early action.
- Monitoring and reporting progress towards commitments within the guiding frameworks of existing national and international food and nutrition policies and strategies such as the National Development Strategy 1, the Food and Nutrition Security Policy, Sustainable Development Goals and the Zero Hunger strategy.

Purpose

The overall purpose of the assessment was to provide an annual update on livelihoods in Zimbabwe's rural areas to inform policy formulation and programming appropriate interventions.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the assessment were:

1. To estimate the rural population that is likely to be food insecure in the 2024/2025 consumption year, their geographic distribution and the severity of their food insecurity.
2. To assess the nutrition status of the rural population.
3. To describe the socio-economic profiles of rural households in terms of such characteristics as their demographics, access to basic services (education, health services, water, sanitation and hygiene services), assets, income sources, agriculture, incomes and expenditure patterns, food consumption patterns and consumption coping strategies.
4. To determine the coverage of humanitarian and developmental interventions.
5. To determine the effects of shocks experienced by communities on food and nutrition security.
6. To identify development priorities for communities.

Contextual Analysis - Background

- The 2023/2024 El Niño event caused widespread drought conditions across southern Africa, characterized by a late onset of rains, extended mid-season dry spells and extreme high temperatures. The El Nino phenomenon significantly and adversely impacted seasonal rainfall's spatial and temporal distribution.

- The extended dry conditions have had a widespread, severe impact on crops, as it occurred at a time when cereal crops were generally most susceptible to water deficits, resulting in widespread crop failure.

- Reduced precipitation exacerbates water scarcity, impacting agriculture, hydroelectric power generation, and water supply for communities (drinking and sanitation).

- Zimbabwe, like most Sub-Saharan countries was in the grip of the 2023/24 El Nino-induced drought which resulted in massive crop failure, depletion of water resources and pastures.

- According to the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development's 2024 2nd Round Crop, Livestock and Fisheries Assessment Report, both agricultural production and productivity for the 2023/ 2024 agricultural season were severely and negatively impacted by, arguably, the worst drought-induced El Nino in 40 years. Statistically, the season had the latest and driest start to a summer season in 40 years.

Contextual Analysis - Background

- The majority of rural households in Zimbabwe rely on rain-fed agriculture which is susceptible to climate change and variability. The dry conditions had an adverse effect on the commencement of planting nationwide, resulting in a substantial decrease in the area planted and crop yields. In addition, the dry conditions resulted in low livestock productivity and poor pastures which ultimately affects food security and livelihood options.

- The delayed onset of the rainfall season resulted in late planting as most farmers started planting in late December following some significant rainfall across the country which also resulted in a trail of destruction to infrastructure and livelihoods. More than 80% of the country received below normal rainfall average by end of February 2024. Prolonged dry weather conditions were again experienced in November and the first half of December 2023. The country further experienced the driest month of February 2024 on record.

- Crop failure was also exacerbated by the outbreak of fall armyworm (FAW) caterpillars with the highest infestation occurring in Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Midlands, and Matabeleland South provinces. Outbreaks of African Armyworm, quelea birds and armoured crickets were also reported. Control measures were put in place and minimized the damage.

- Livestock was impacted by the El Niño induced dry conditions, which resulted in considerable shortages in pasture and reduced water availability for livestock. In Zimbabwe, over 9,000 drought-related cattle deaths were reported and over 1.4 million cattle were reported as being at high risk of drought conditions and death due to lack of pasture and water.

- The Zimbabwean economy being agro-based has been largely affected notwithstanding mitigatory measures vigorously pursued by Government and partners.

Economic Stabilisation Measures

- Government, through the Ministry responsible for Finance put in place a number of measures which resulted in the following:
- Government delivered the 2024 Monetary Policy Statement which was expected to ensure lasting stability, certainty, and predictability in the exchange rate and inflation.
- The Reserve Bank introduced a structured currency which was expected to result in the dissipation of inflationary pressures in the short to medium term.
- Against this background, the Monetary Policy Statement primarily focused on immediate measures necessary to boost the demand for local currency in the multicurrency economy, fostering a stable and sustainable exchange rate, rebuilding market confidence and policy credibility and supporting a stable and sustainable economy as enshrined in Vision 2030 and (National Development Strategy 1) NDS1.
- The foreign currency receipts for January and February 2024 amounted to US$2.2 billion compared to US$1.8 billion received during the same period in 2023, representing a 23% increase.
- Month-on-month inflation also declined from a peak of 12.10% in June 2023 to -1.3% in August 2023. Driven by the exchange rate volatility, the month-on-month inflation rebounded to 4.7% in December 2023 and 5.4% in February 2024.
- However, the EL-Nino-induced drought, which turned out to be more severe than initially anticipated was expected to impact negatively on the domestic economy’s growth trajectory.

Government Mitigatory Measures

- In terms of Section 27(1) of the Civil Protection Act [*Chapter 10:06],* His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Cde Dr E.D Mnangagwa declared a nationwide State of Disaster due to the El Nino induced drought on the 3rd of April 2024. In order to facilitate a coordinated response to the climate-induced drought and allow for resource mobilization and response planning in the short and medium term, Government developed the robust *2024 EL NINO INDUCED DROUGHT DISASTER: DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE*. In the Appeal, Government focuses on search and rescue, mitigation and resilience building in the following critical areas:
    - Agriculture
    - Food and nutrition security
    - Protection
    - Health
    - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
    - Education
    - Environment and Natural Resources
    - Energy
    - Macro, Small and Medium Enterprises
- The impact of the current El Nino induced drought was expected to last until March 2025 for most communities hence it was critical that requisite resources be mobilized urgently to assure communities of sustenance. The Appeal seeks to raise a total of USD 3.9 Billion.

Contextual Analysis – Government Mitigatory Measures

Government remained committed to ensuring that every Zimbabwean is free from hunger and all forms of malnutrition and led the implementation of the following measures to ensure food security for all people:

- **Food Mitigation:** Government is targeting **7.7 million** people in both rural and urban areas who were projected to be food insecure. Of these, 6 million are in the rural areas. Government is embarking on a blitz three-month phased distribution plan prioritising the worst affected areas and the hard to reach. The blitz is targeting the most vulnerable groups who include the elderly, persons with disabilities, orphaned and child-headed households and chronically ill, among others. Each beneficiary will receive a three-month allocation of grain at once which has been pegged at **7.5kg per** person per month translating to **22.5kg per person** for three months and **138,171MT** countrywide. In urban areas, each beneficiary will be given cash equivalent to procure a **10kg bag** of mealie meal via mobile money transfers on a monthly basis.

- Government has also adopted the *Build-Back Better* Strategy to cushion communities and assist them to recover from the El Niño induced drought.

- **Presidential Borehole Drilling Scheme:** In order to alleviate the prevailing water scarcity challenges and climate change, Government is implementing the Presidential Borehole Drilling Scheme. The scheme aims to facilitate the provision of clean water to households and will help to avert the potential threats of waterborne diseases. The solar powered boreholes will also avail the much needed water for consumption and hygiene.

- **Strengthening of Multi-Sectoral Structures** in order to operationalise a cohesive response to the food and nutrition challenges.

Contextual Analysis – Government Mitigatory Measures

On the 12th of March 2024, Cabinet approved the following:

- The Food Security Outlook Report to March 2025 to facilitate winter cereals production planning.
- The consumption of 7,5kg per person per month be used immediately for social welfare and be adjusted after October to 8,5kg per person per month.
- The purchase of local grain at import parity price of USD390 per tonne to mop up excess local grain.
- Duty waiver on the importation of rice and potato seed.
- Importation of Genetically Modified stock feed, under strict supervised milling and distribution.
- Duty free importation of maize, rice and cooking oil by households with effect from July 2024.
- Re-activation of the Grain Mobilisation Committee to monitor private sector imports as well household imports.

Assessment Methodology

Methodology – Assessment Design

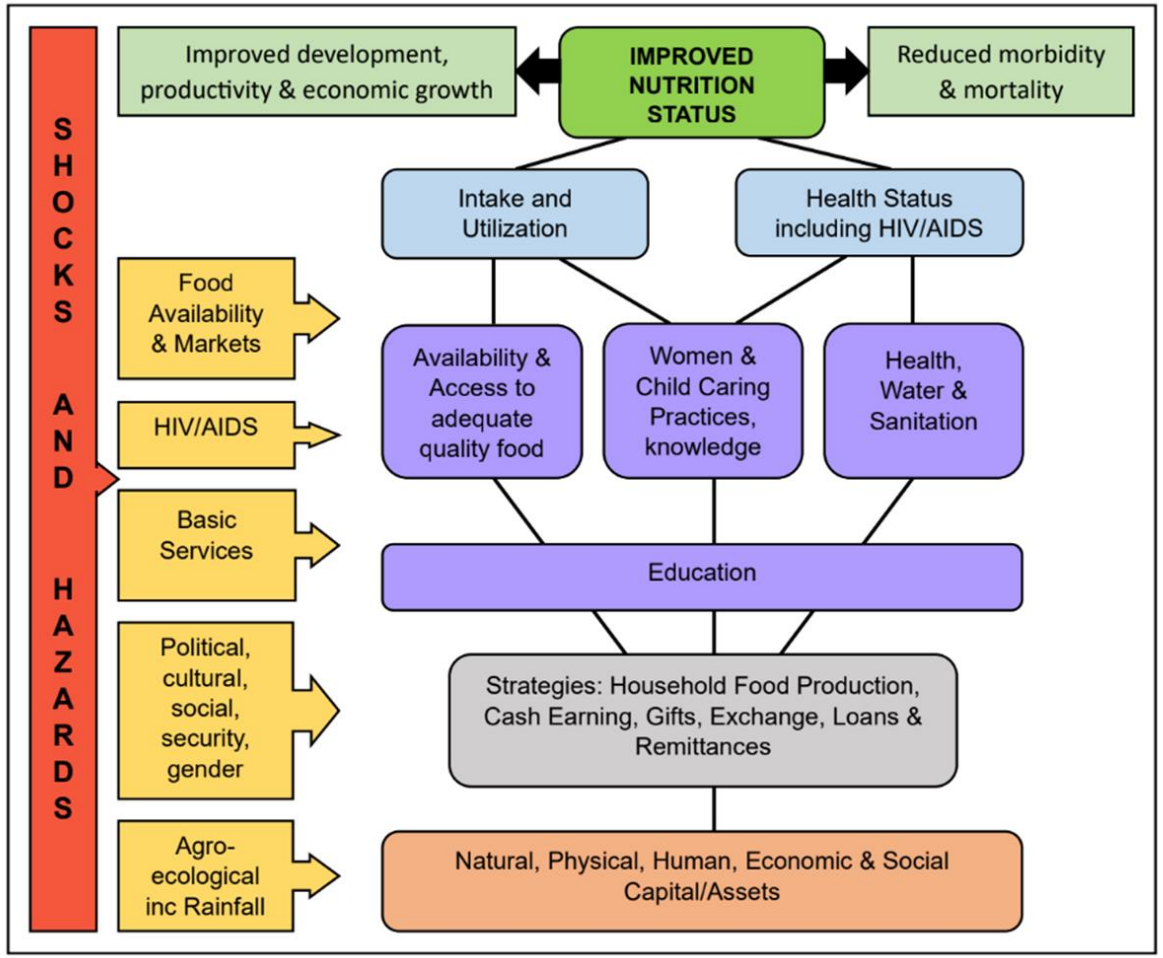


Figure 1: Food and Nutrition Conceptual Framework

- The assessment was a cross-sectional study whose design was guided and informed by the Food and Nutrition Security Conceptual Framework (Figure 1), which Zimbabwe adopted in the FNSP (GoZ, 2012), and the conceptual framework on food security dimensions propounded by Jones et al. (2013).
- The assessment was also guided and informed by the resilience framework (Figure 2) so as to influence the early recovery of households affected by various shocks.
- The assessment looked at food availability and access as pillars that have confounding effects on food security as defined in the FNSP (GoZ, 2012).
- Accordingly, the assessment measured the amount of energy available to a household from all its potential sources hence the **primary sampling unit** for the assessment was the household.

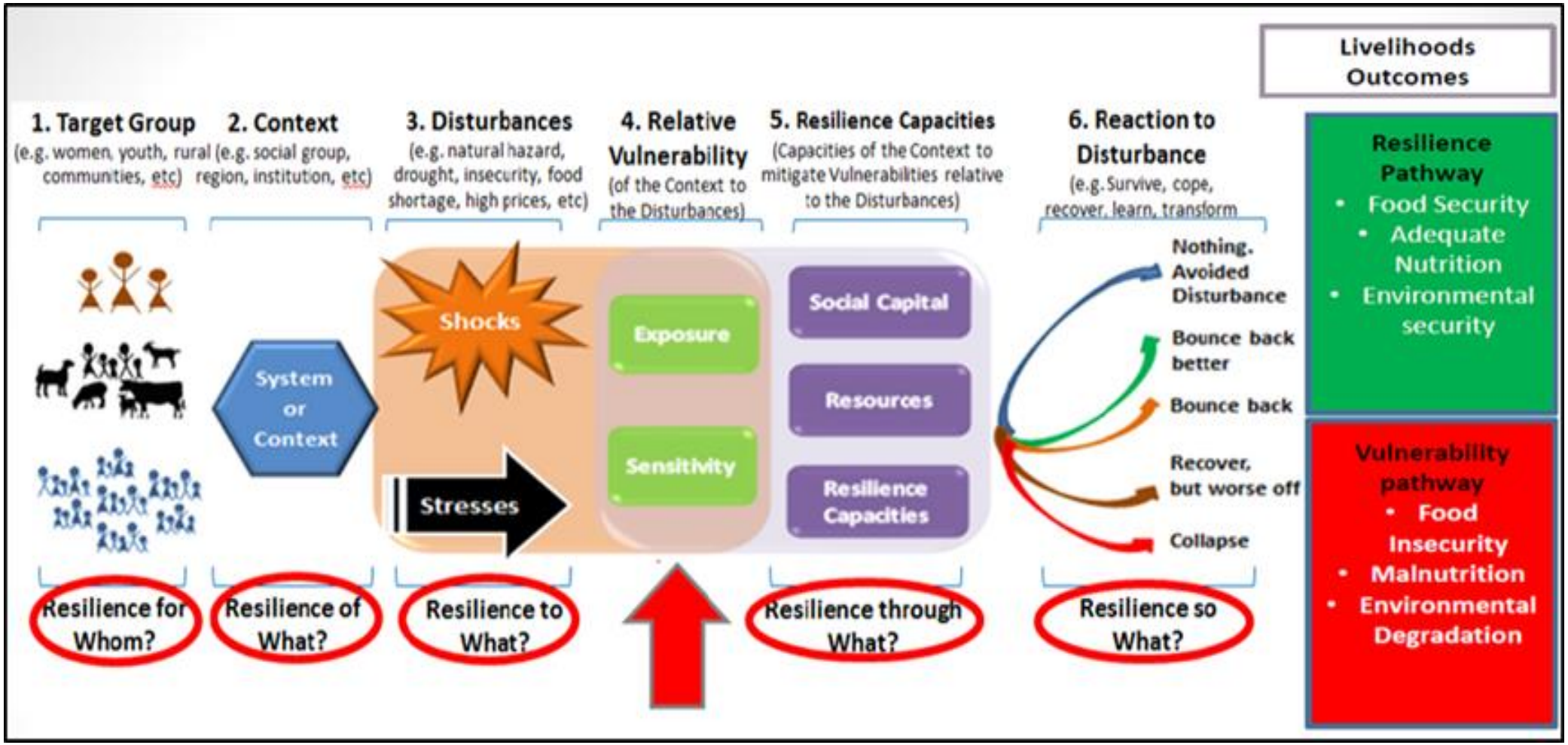


Figure 2: Zimbabwe Resilience Framework (UNDP Zimbabwe, 2015)

Methodology – Assessment Process

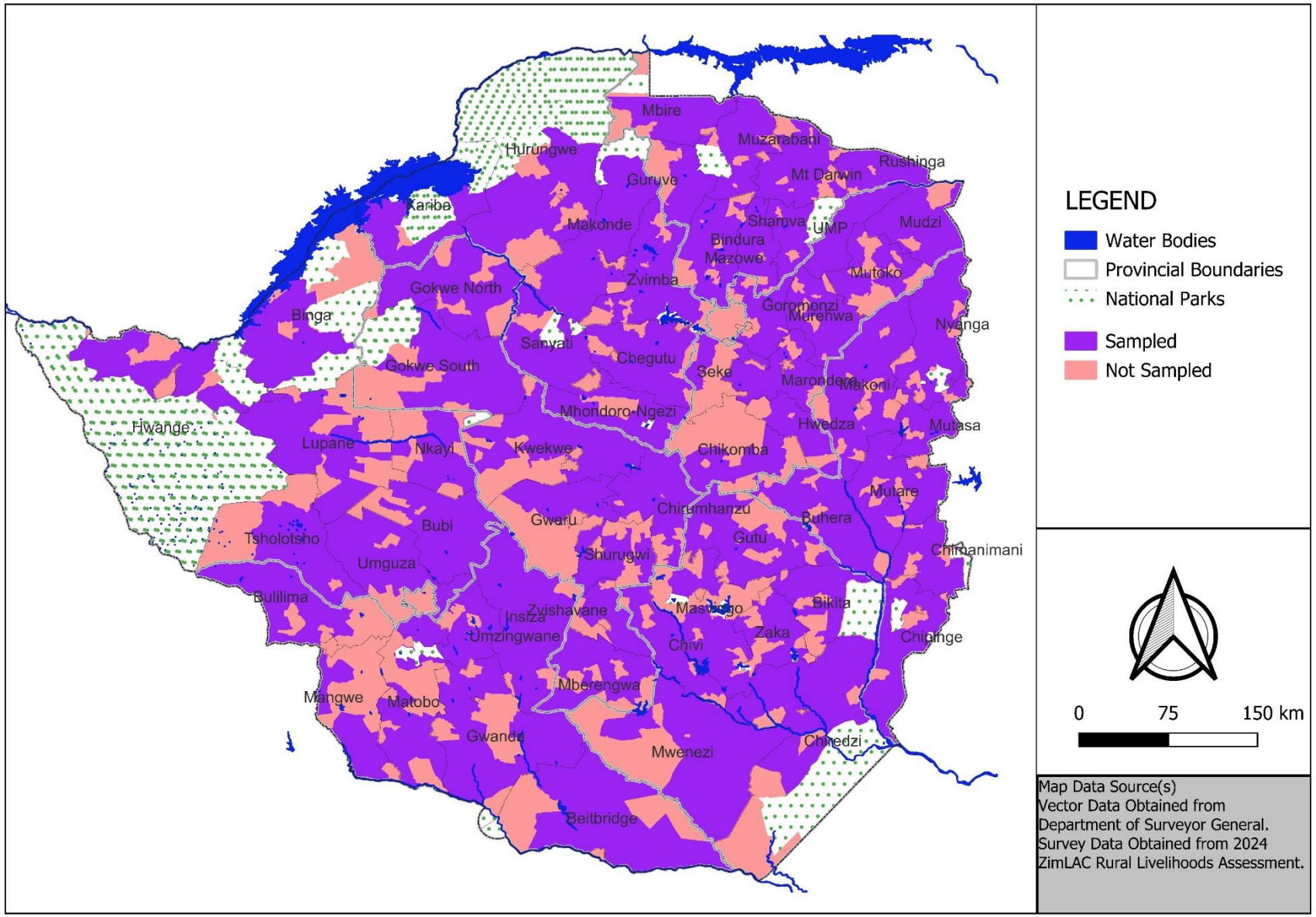
- ZimLAC, through multi-stakeholder consultations, developed an appropriate assessment design concept note and data collection tools informed by the assessment objectives.
- The primary data collection tools used in the assessment were the android–based structured household questionnaire, the community Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide, Irrigation Key Informant Interview and the Chiefs' FGD guide.
- ZimLAC national supervisors (including Provincial Agritex Extension Officers and Provincial Nutritionists) and enumerators were recruited from Government, United Nations, Technical partners and Non-Governmental Organisations. These underwent training in all aspects of the assessment. Training for enumerators was done at district level.
- The Ministry of Local Government coordinated the recruitment of district level enumerators and mobilisation of provincial supervision and district enumeration vehicles. Three enumerators were selected from each district for data collection and one anthropometrist was responsible for taking anthropometric measurements.
- Primary data collection took place from 4 to 20 May 2024. Data analysis and report writing ran from 27 May to 7 June 2024. Various secondary data sources and field observations were used to contextualise the analysis and reporting.

Methodology - Sampling and Sample Size

- Household food insecurity prevalence was used as the key indicator to determine the sample to ensure 95% confidence level of statistical representativeness at district, provincial and national level.
- The survey collected data from 210 randomly selected Enumerated Areas (EAs).
- A two staged cluster sampling was used and comprised of:
  - Sampling of 30 clusters per each of the 60 rural districts, denoted as EAs in this assessment, from the Zimbabwe Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) 2022 master sampling frame using the PPS methodology.
  - The second stage involved the systematic random sampling of 10 households per EA (village).
- At least 300 households were sampled per district. A total of 2 099 households were interviewed.
- 70 FGDs and 7 Chief's Focus Group Discussions were held across 7 districts.

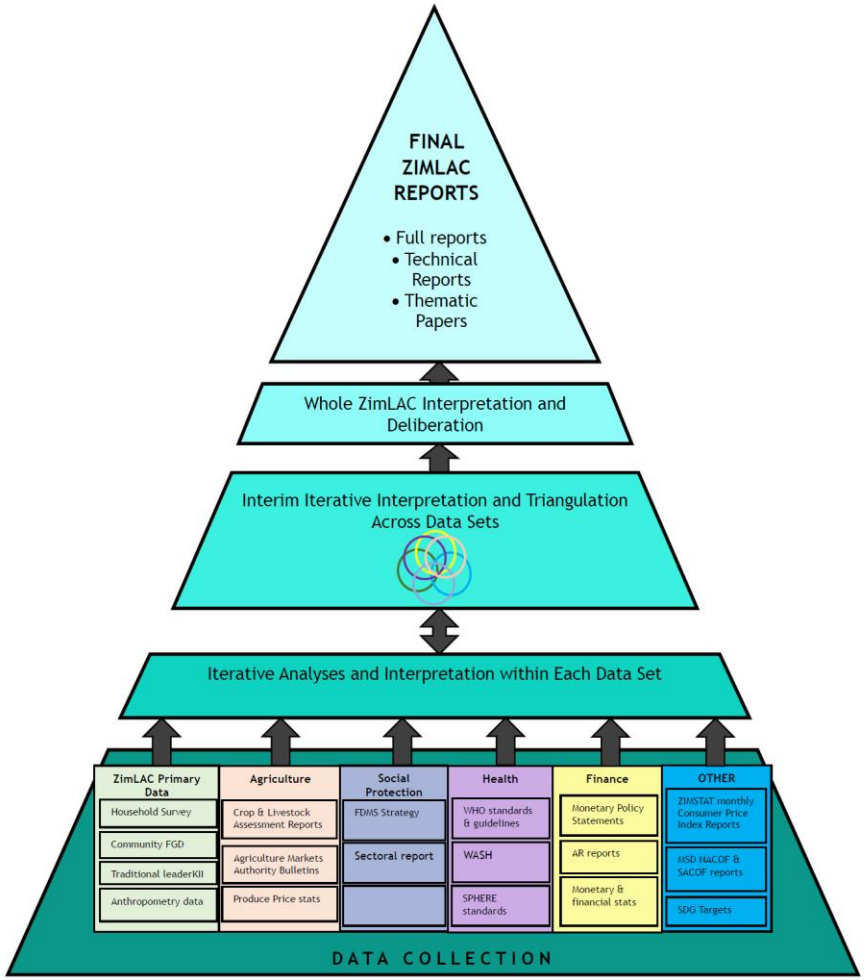
District	Number of Sampled Households
Binga	301
Bubi	300
Hwange	298
Lupane	300
Nkayi	300
Tsholotsho	300
Umguza	300
Matabeleland North	**2099**

Methodology – Sampled Wards



Data Preparation and Analysis

- Primary data was transcribed using CSEntry on android gadgets and using CSPro. It was consolidated and converted into SPSS, STATA and DBF datasets for:
  - Household structured interviews
  - Community Focus Group Discussions
  - Chief's Focus Group Discussions
- Data cleaning and analysis were done using SPSS, STATA, ENA, Microsoft Excel and GIS packages.
- Analyses of the different thematic areas covered by the assessment were informed and guided by relevant local and international frameworks, where they exist.
- Gender, as a cross cutting issue, was recognised throughout the analysis.



Technical Scope

The 2024 RLA collected and analysed information on the following thematic areas:

- Health
- WASH
- Nutrition
- Agriculture and other rural livelihoods activities
- Food security
- Shocks and stressors
- Social protection
- Youth
- Linkages amongst the key sectoral and thematic areas
- Cross-cutting issues such as gender

Demographic Description of the Sample

Household Characteristics

Household Members' Characteristics

District	Average Household Size	Males (%)	Females (%)
Binga	3.4	42.9	57.1
Bubi	3.2	47.8	52.2
Hwange	3.2	45.6	54.4
Lupane	4.6	45.9	54.1
Nkayi	4.4	46.7	53.3
Tsholotsho	4.4	44.4	55.6
Umguza	4.7	47.1	52.9
Mat North	**4**	**45.8**	**54.2**

- The average household size was 4.
- Females (54.2 %) constituted the majority of the household members.

Characteristics of Respondents

District	Respondent`s Average Age (years)	Respondent's Sex (%)	
		Male	Female
Binga	45.2	19.9	80.1
Bubi	45.7	40.3	59.7
Hwange	47.1	26.2	73.8
Lupane	52.2	30.3	69.7
Nkayi	50.2	32.0	68.0
Tsholotsho	61.9	21.0	79.0
Umguza	49.2	28.7	71.3
Mat North	**50.2**	**28.3**	**71.7**

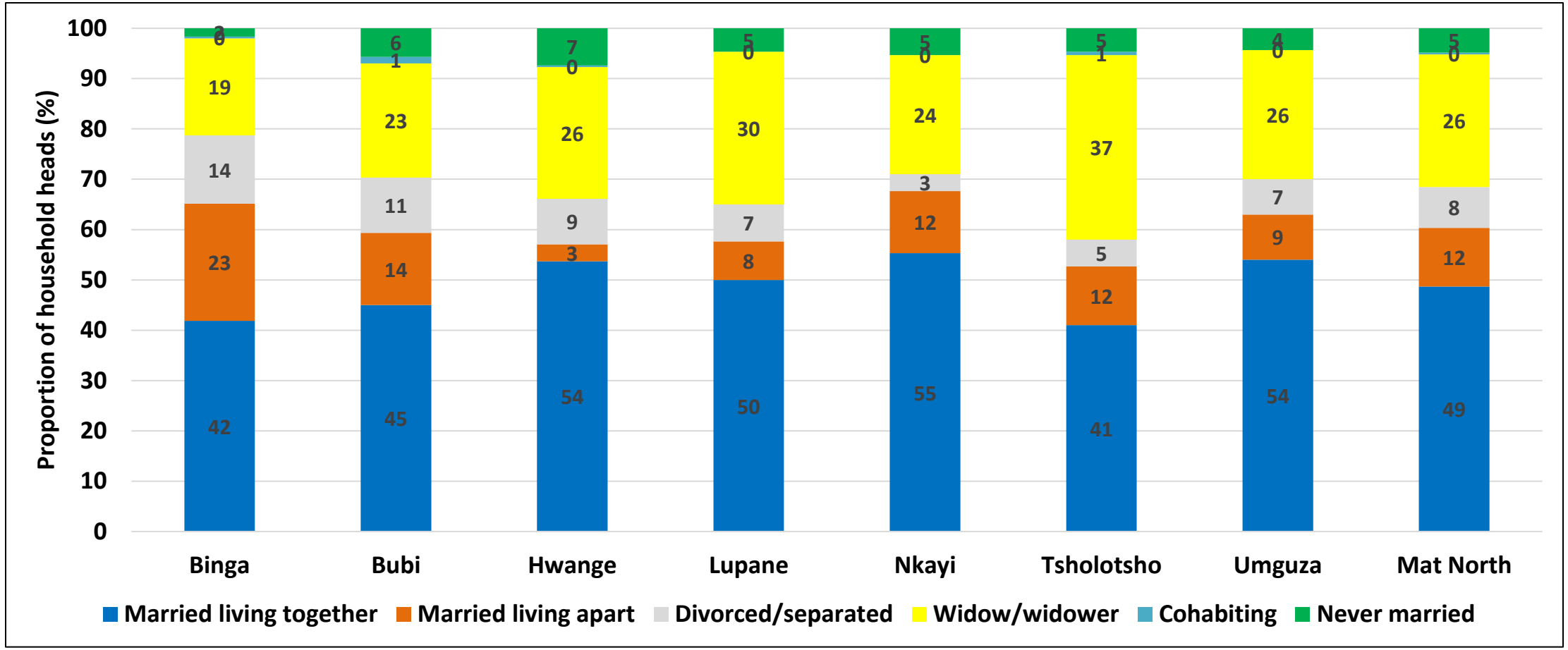
- The average age of the respondents was 50.2 years.
- About 71.7% of the respondents were females.

Characteristics of Household Head

District	Household Head Average Age (years)	Household Head Sex (%)		Household Head by Category (%)	
		Male	Female	Elderly Headed	Child Headed
Binga	47.2	41.5	58.5	17.6	1.3
Bubi	50.5	68.3	31.7	25.7	0
Hwange	52.8	57.4	42.6	26.8	0
Lupane	57.5	59	41	36	0.7
Nkayi	56.7	61.3	38.7	35.7	0
Tsholotsho	79.6	40	60	38.3	1
Umguza	56.8	62.3	37.7	30.3	0.3
Mat North	**57.3**	**55.7**	**44.3**	**30.1**	**0.5**

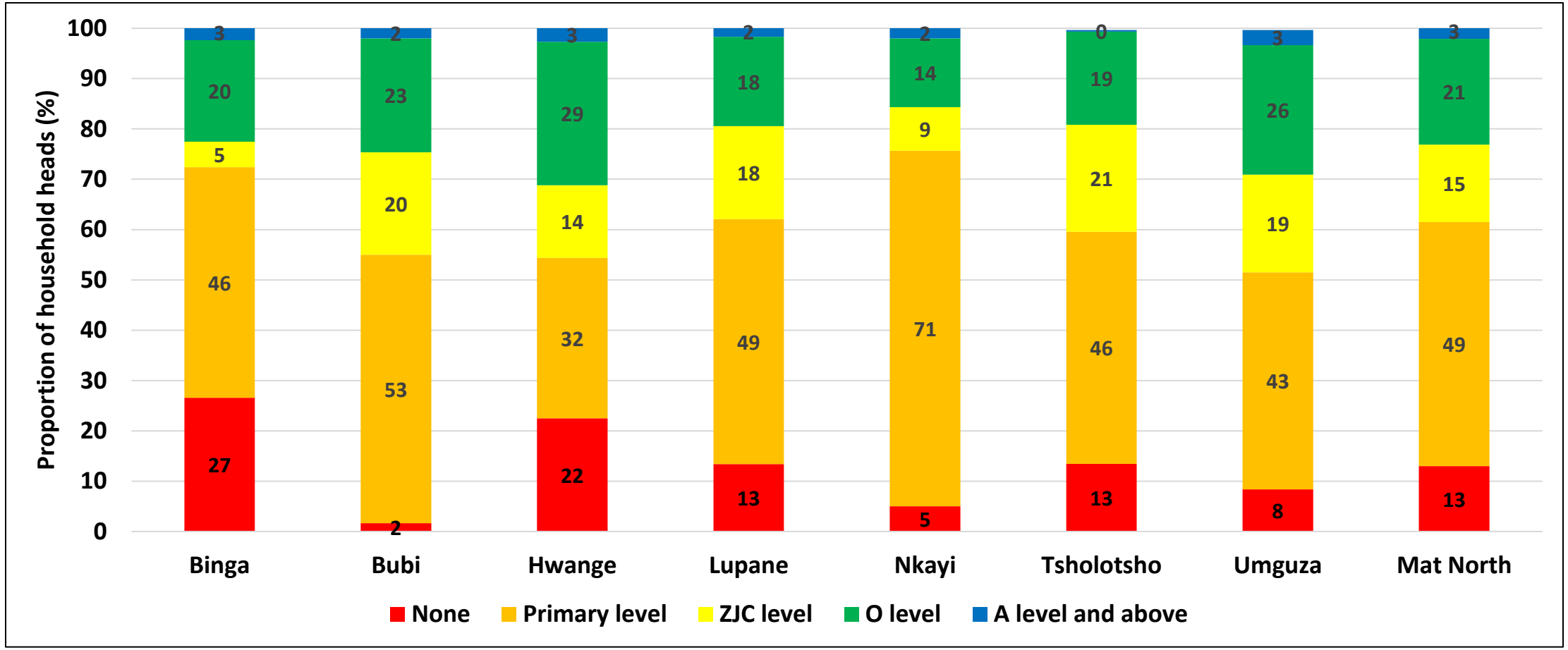
- The average age of household heads was 57.3 years.
- About 44.3% of the households were female headed, with the highest proportion in Tsholotsho (60%).
- At least 30.1%% of the households were elderly headed while 0.5% were child-headed.

Characteristics of Household Head: Marital Status



- About 49% of household heads were married and living together while 26% were widowed.

Characteristics of Household Head: Education Level Attained



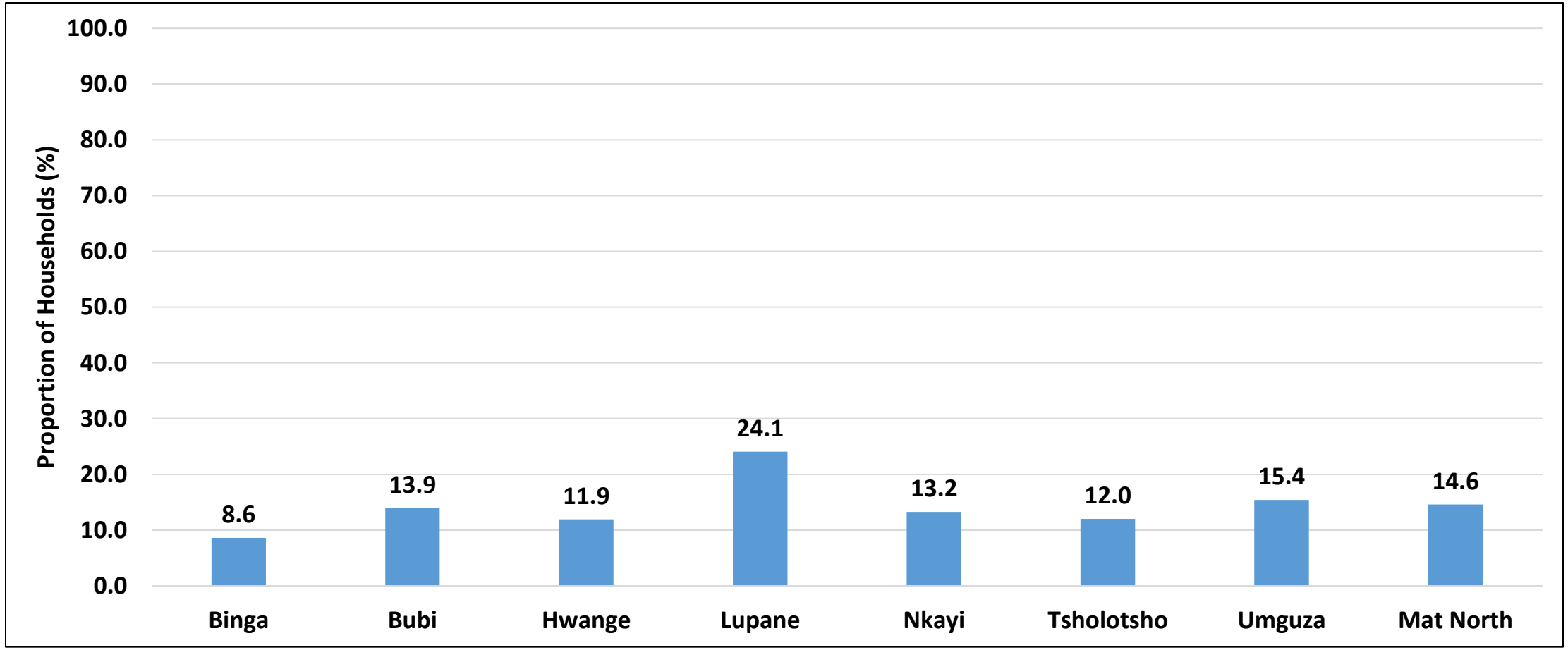
- About 87% of the household heads attained at least primary school education.

Characteristics of Household Head : Religion

	Roman Catholic (%)	Protestant (%)	Pentecostal (%)	Apostolic Sect (%)	Zion (%)	Other Christian (%)	Islam (%)	Traditional (%)	Other religion (%)	No religion (%)	Don't know (%)
Binga	4.3	10.0	31.9	19.6	11.3	0.0	0.0	9.6	1.0	12.3	0.0
Bubi	6.0	20.0	5.7	21.0	15.0	0.7	1.0	2.3	2.3	26.0	0.0
Hwange	21.1	3.7	27.2	19.5	19.1	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	6.4	1.7
Lupane	13.3	18.3	14.3	19.0	19.7	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.7	11.0	1.3
Nkayi	6.0	19.3	6.0	21.7	13.3	5.0	0.0	0.3	1.3	25.7	1.3
Tsholotsho	7.3	7.3	13.3	21.0	30.3	8.3	0.0	1.3	2.7	8.3	0.0
Umguza	5.3	10.0	19.7	27.3	14.0	4.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	17.7	0.7
Mat North	9.1	12.7	16.9	21.3	17.5	2.8	0.1	2.3	1.3	15.3	0.7

- The highest proportion of household heads were mainly from Apostolic Sect (21.3%) and Pentecostal (16.9%).
- About 15.3% of household heads had no religion.

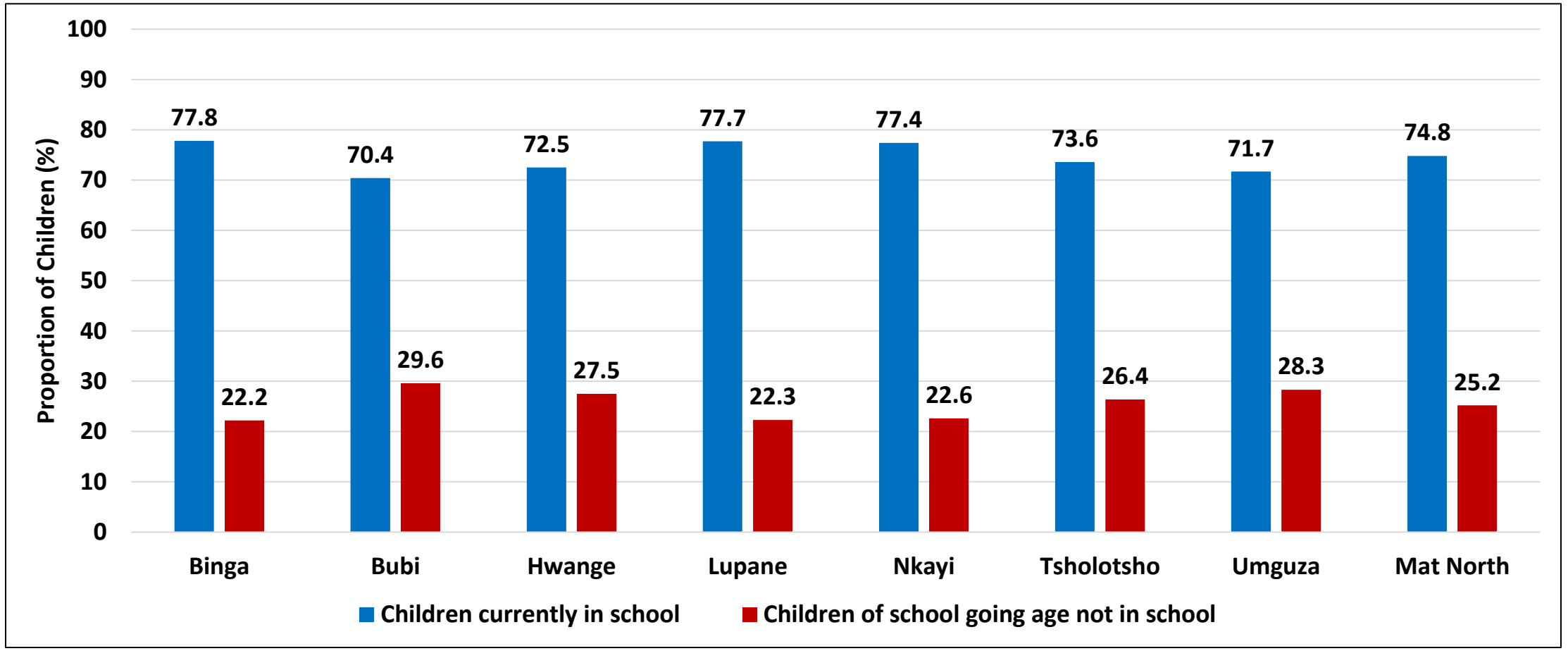
Orphaned Children



- About 14.6% of the households had at least one orphan.

Education

School Attendance



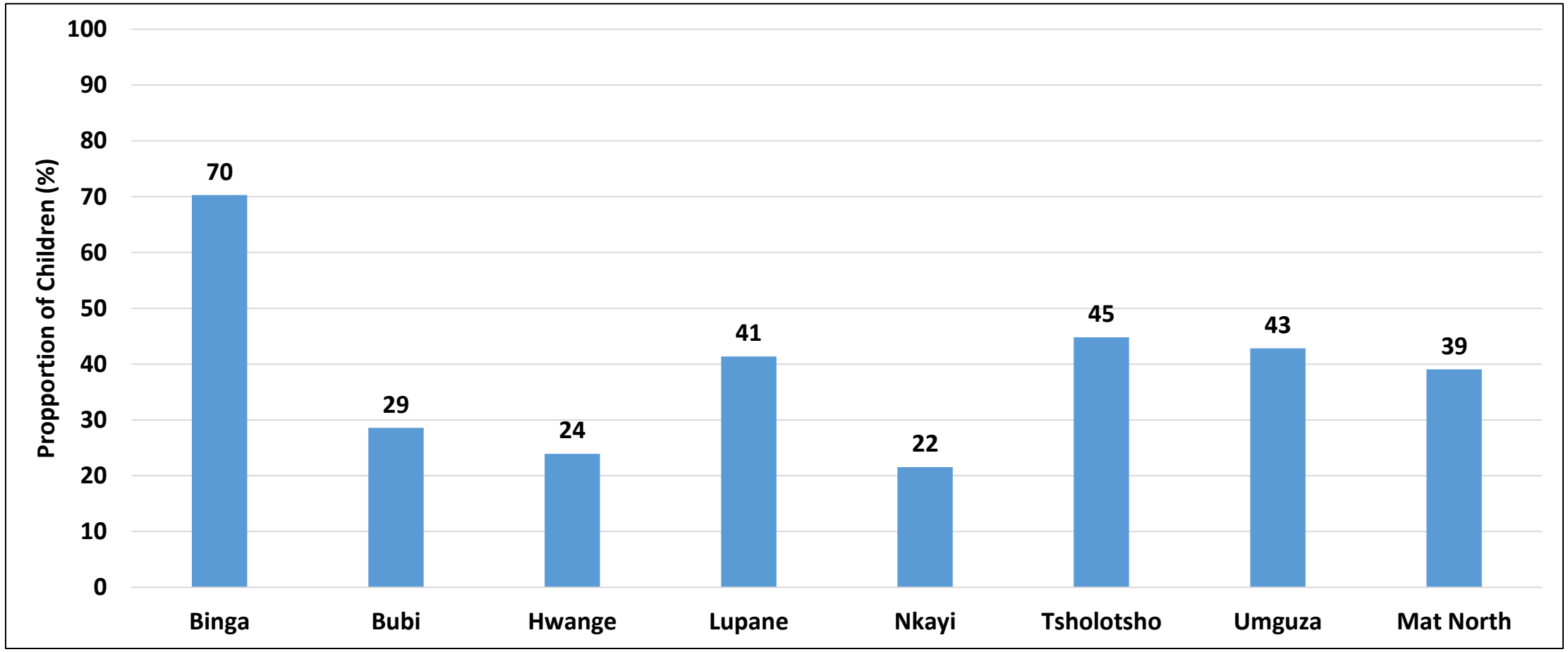
- At the time of the assessment, 25.2% of the school going age children were not attending school.

Reasons for Children not Being in School (25.2 %)

District	Financial challenges (%)	Child considered too young (%)	Pregnancy/marriage (%)	Completed O/A level (%)
Binga	12.7	2.7	2.3	0.5
Bubi	15.4	0.7	2.5	4.6
Hwange	6.5	0.7	0.7	14.1
Lupane	10.1	5.1	2.5	2.5
Nkayi	9.8	4.2	0.6	4.8
Tsholotsho	17.5	2.1	1.2	2.4
Umguza	16.9	2.4	0.3	2.4
Mat North	**13.1**	**2.9**	**1.4**	**3.7**

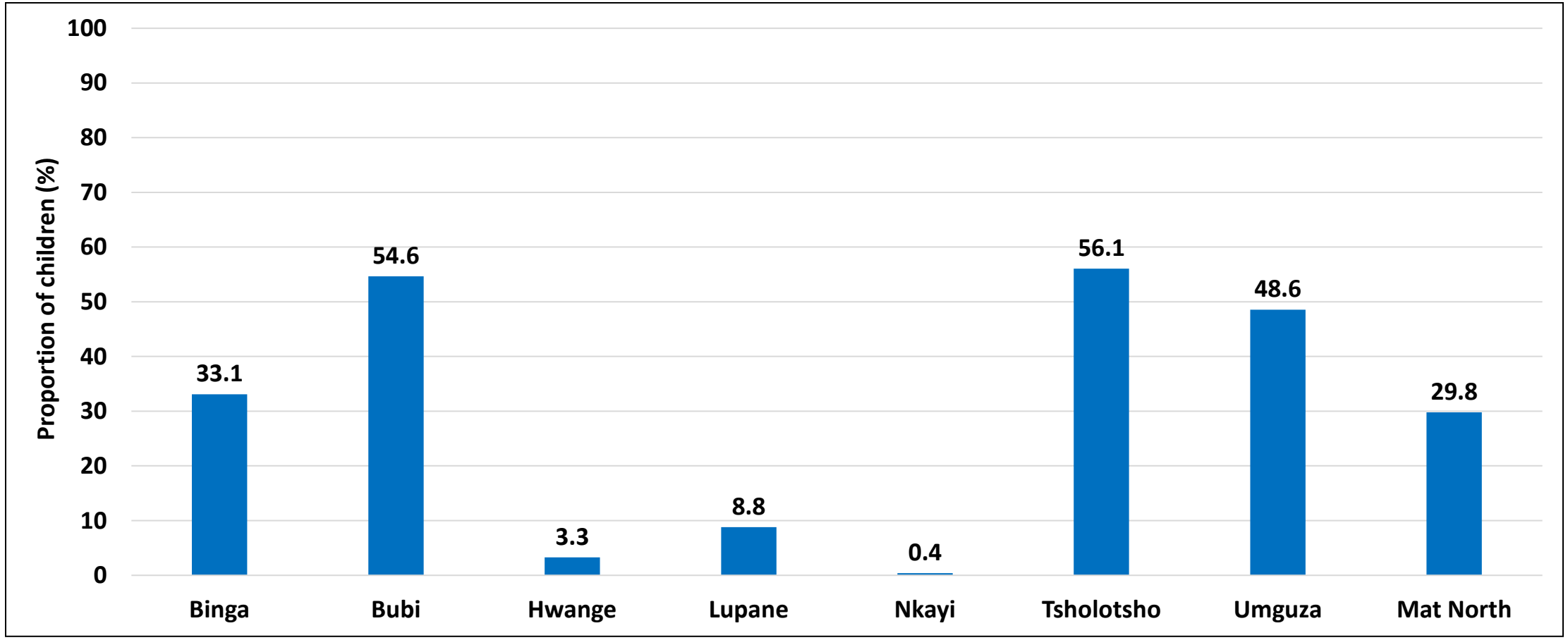
- Of the 25.2% children out of school, financial challenges (13.1%) were reported to be the main reason why children were not going to school.

Children Sent Away From School Due To Non-Fees Payment



- The proportion of children who were sent away from school during the first term of 2024 was 39%.

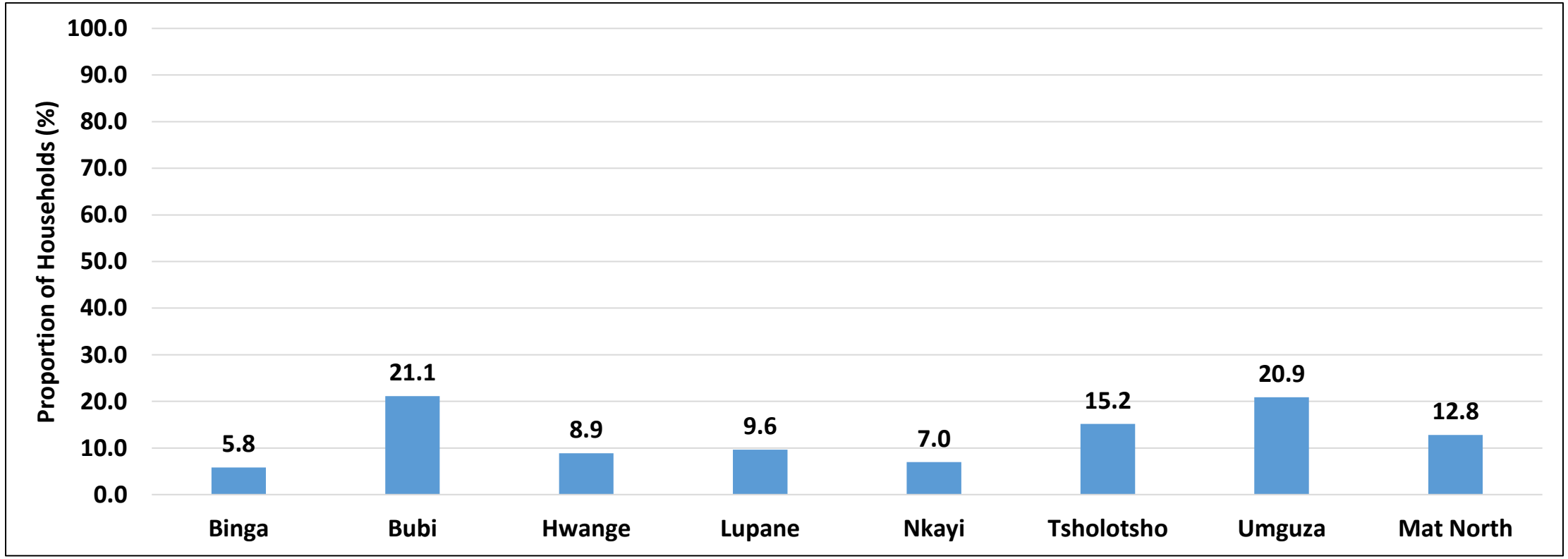
Children Receiving Hot Meals at School



- The proportion of children who received a hot meal at school was 29.8% .
- The highest proportion of children who received a hot meal was reported in Tsholotsho (56.1%).

Chronic Conditions

Chronic Conditions



- Provincially, 12.8% of households reported having a member with a chronic condition.
- Bubi (21.1%) had the highest proportion of reported chronic conditions while the least was Binga (5.8%).

Chronic Conditions (12.8%)

District	HIV infection, AIDS (%)	Heart disease (%)	Diabetes, high blood sugar (%)	Asthma (%)	Hypertension, High blood pressure (%)	Arthritis, chronic body pain (%)	Epilepsy, seizures, fits (%)	Stroke (%)	Cancer (%)	Tuberculosis (%)	Liver diseases (%)	Kidney diseases (%)	Ulcer, chronic stomach pain (%)	Cerebral palsy (%)	Mental illness (%)	Other (%)
Binga	2.1	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.4	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.9
Bubi	10.8	0.7	4.1	1.0	6.2	1.7	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.2
Hwange	3.2	0.0	2.4	0.5	3.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Lupane	3.2	0.2	2.2	1.2	2.5	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.7
Nkayi	2.5	0.0	0.7	0.4	2.0	0.9	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.1	0.5	0.3
Tsholotsho	5.7	0.1	1.3	0.5	3.8	2.5	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	1.0	1.0
Umguza	9.1	0.5	1.4	1.5	6.5	0.8	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.8	2.7
Mat North	**5.2**	**0.3**	**1.8**	**0.8**	**3.6**	**0.9**	**0.1**	**0.3**	**0.1**	**0.1**	**0.0**	**0.1**	**0.2**	**0.1**	**0.5**	**0.9**

- In Matabeleland North the most reported chronic conditions were HIV/AIDS (5.2%), hypertension (3.6%) and diabetes (1.8%).
- The highest proportion of household members had HIV/AIDS in Bubi (10.8%).

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Ladder for Drinking Water Services

Service Level	Definition
Safely Managed	Drinking water from an improved water source that is located on premises, available when needed and free from faecal and priority chemical contamination.
Basic Drinking Water	Basic drinking water services are defined as drinking water from an improved source, provided collection time is not more than 30 minutes for a roundtrip including queuing.
Limited Drinking Water Services	Limited water services are defined as drinking water from an improved source, where collection time exceeds 30 minutes for a roundtrip including queuing.
Unimproved Water Sources	Drinking water from an unprotected dug well or unprotected spring.
Surface Water Sources	Drinking water directly from a river, dam, lake, pond, stream, canal or irrigation channel.

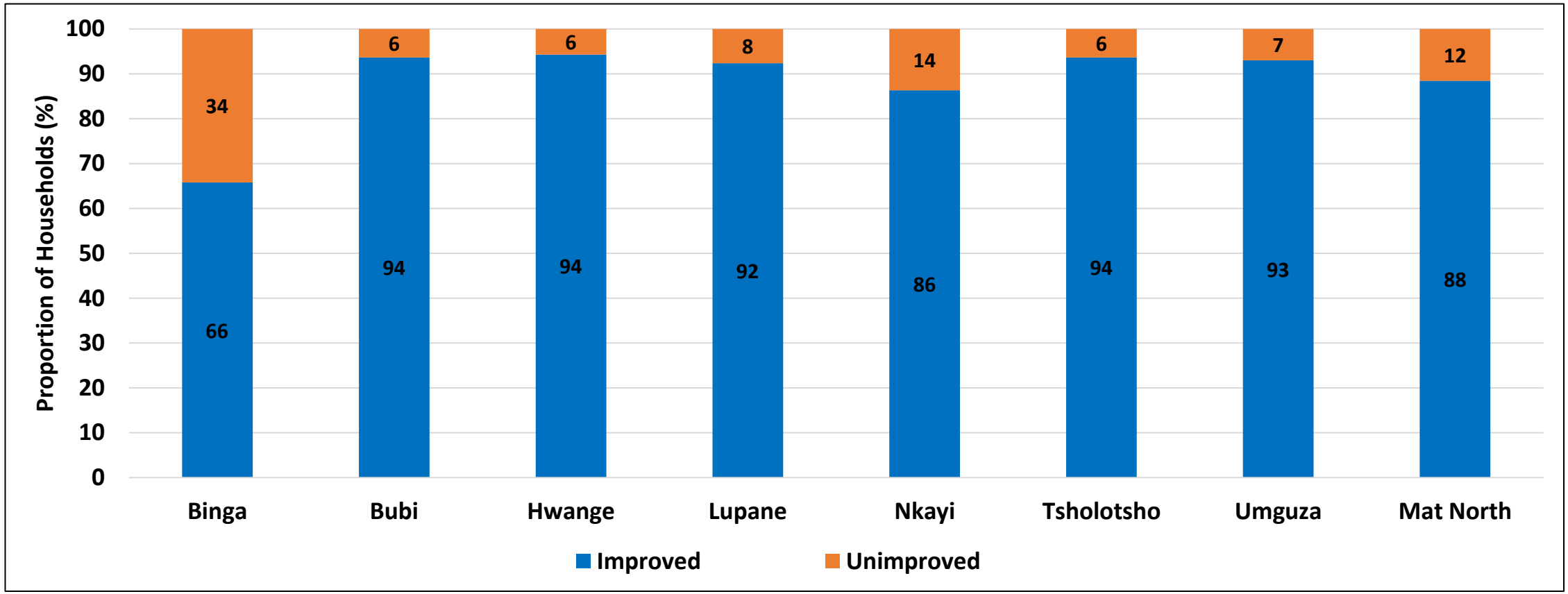
Note :
"Improved" drinking water sources are further defined by the quality of the water they produce, and are protected from faecal contamination by the nature of their construction or through an intervention to protect from outside contamination. Such sources include: piped water into dwelling, plot, or yard; public tap/standpipe; tube well/borehole; protected dug well; protected spring; or rainwater collection. This category now includes packaged and delivered water, considering that both can potentially deliver safe water.

Main Drinking Water Sources

District	Piped into dwelling (%)	Piped into yard or plot (%)	Piped into public tap or standpipe (%)	Piped into neighbour`s yard (%)	Borehole/ Tube well (%)	Protected well (%)	Unprotected well (%)	Protected spring (%)	Unprotected spring (%)	Surface water (%)
Binga	0.0	0.0	30.6	0.3	33.2	0.7	5.3	1.0	1.0	17.3
Bubi	1.7	2.3	28.0	15.0	45.3	0.3	1.7	0.0	0.3	4.3
Hwange	1.0	1.0	15.8	0.0	67.4	9.1	3.7	0.0	0.0	1.7
Lupane	2.7	1.3	18.7	1.0	47.7	19.3	5.3	1.7	0.0	2.3
Nkayi	0.3	0.3	6.0	1.3	46.0	29.3	3.3	1.0	0.0	10.3
Tsholotsho	1.0	2.3	3.3	1.3	83.0	1.7	2.3	0.0	0.0	4.0
Umguza	0.7	7.3	10.0	0.7	66.7	7.3	5.7	0.3	0.0	0.0
Mat North	**1.0**	**2.1**	**16.0**	**2.8**	**55.6**	**9.7**	**3.9**	**0.6**	**0.2**	**5.7**

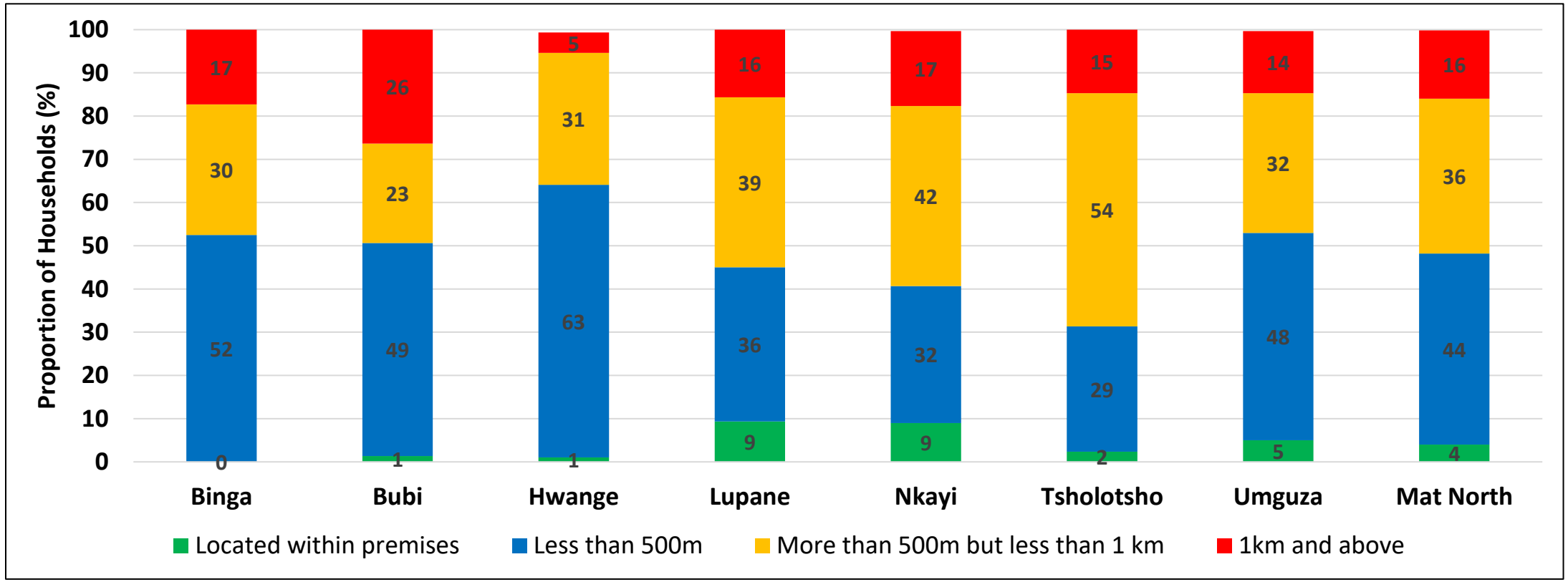
- The highest proportion of households (55.6%) accessed water from boreholes.
- Binga (17.3%) has the highest proportion of households that accessed surface water as a drinking water source.

Access to Improved Water Source



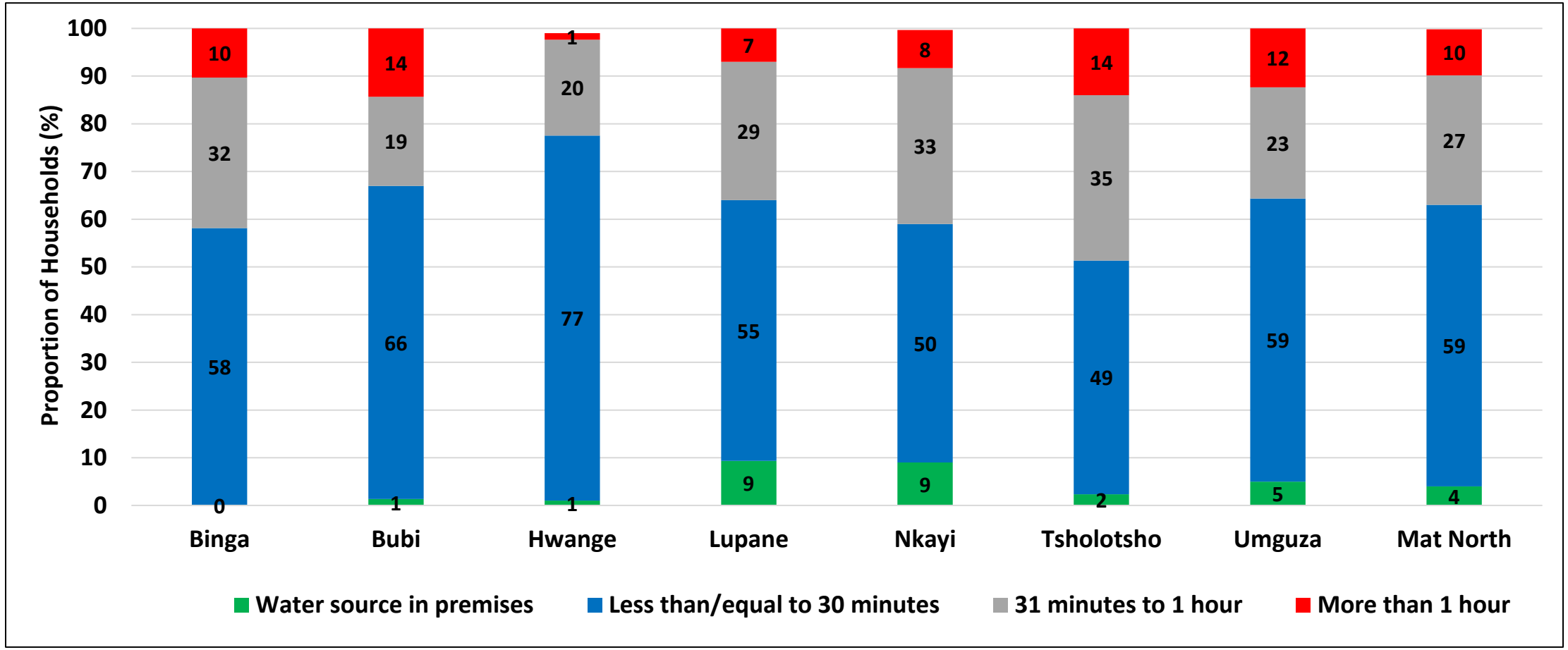
- There was a high proportion of households (88%) which accessed improved water sources.

Distance Travelled to and from Main Drinking Water Source



- Most households in Matabeleland North travelled less than 1km to the main drinking water source.
- The majority of households in Hwange (63%) travelled less than 500m to access drinking water.
- Bubi reported 26% of the households travelling more than 1km to the drinking water source.

Time Taken to and from Main Drinking Water Source



- About 63% of the households spent less that 30 minutes fetching water.
- Bubi had the highest proportion of households that took more than an hour fetching water.

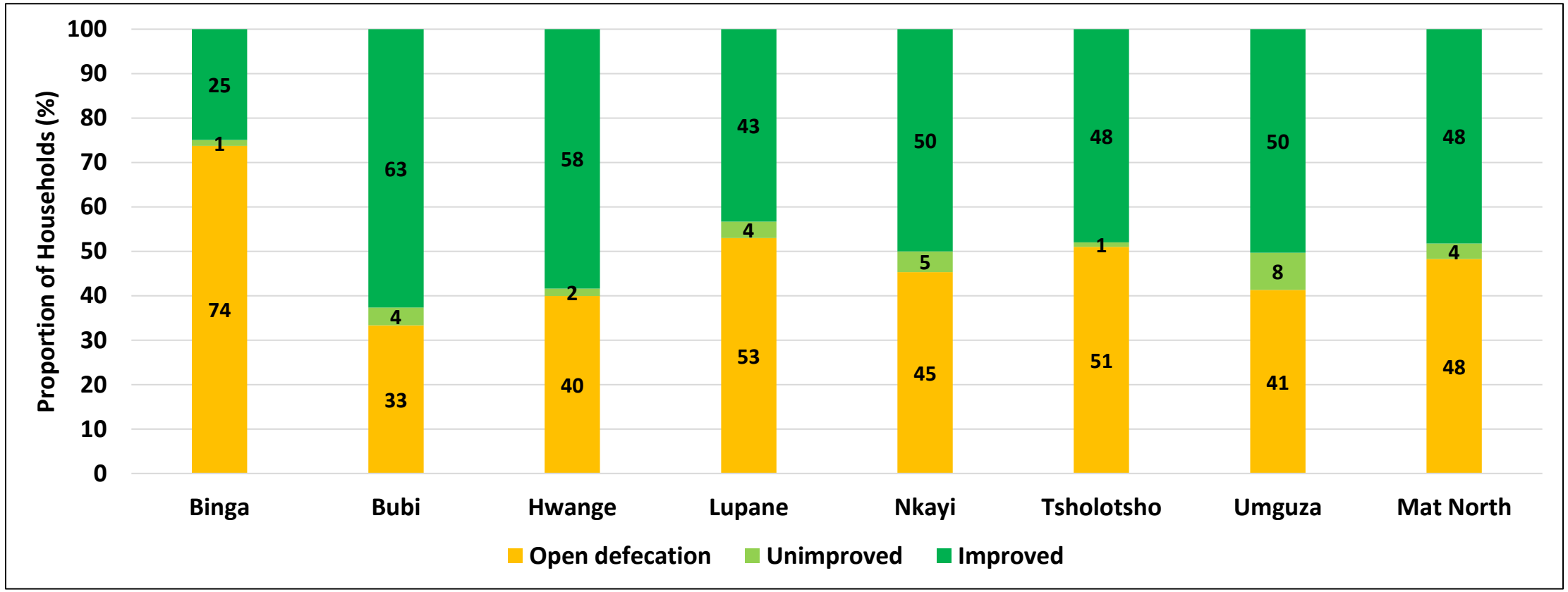
Sanitation

Ladder for Sanitation

Service level	Definition
Safely Managed	Use of improved facilities that are not shared with other households and where excreta are safely disposed of in situ or transported and treated offsite.
Basic Sanitation Facilities	Use of improved facilities which are not shared with other households.
Limited Sanitation Facilities	Use of improved facilities shared between two or more households.
Unimproved Sanitation Facilities	Facilities that do not ensure hygienic separation of human excreta from human contact. Unimproved facilities include pit latrines without a slab or platform, hanging latrines and bucket latrines.
Open Defecation	Disposal of human faeces in fields, forest, bushes, open bodies of water, beaches or other open spaces or with solid waste.

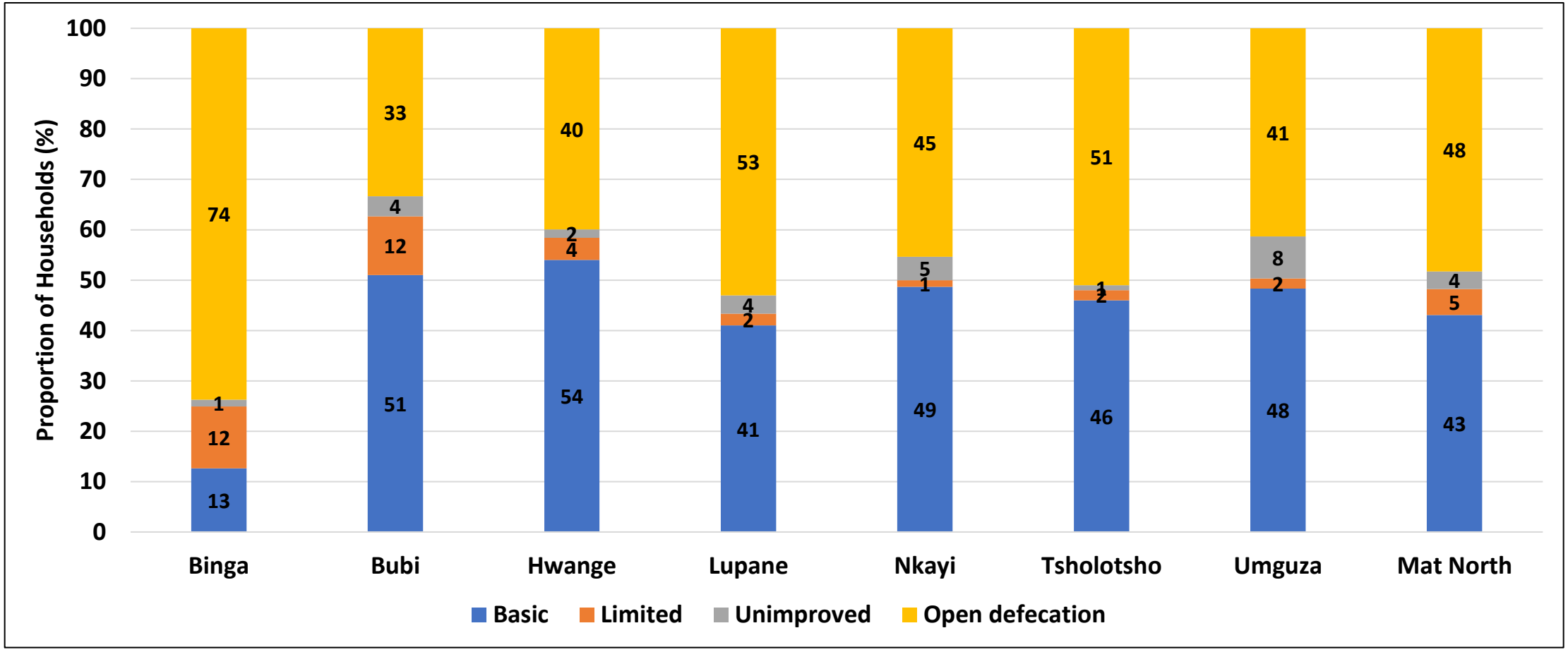
Note: Improved sanitation facilities: Facilities that ensure hygienic separation of human excreta from human contact. They include flush or pour flush toilet/latrine, Blair ventilated improved pit (BVIP), pit latrine with slab and upgradeable Blair latrine.

Access to Improved Sanitation



- In Matabeleland North, 48% of the households had access to improved sanitation.
- About 48% of the households practised open defecation. Binga (74%) had the highest proportion of households that practised open defecation.

Household Sanitation Services



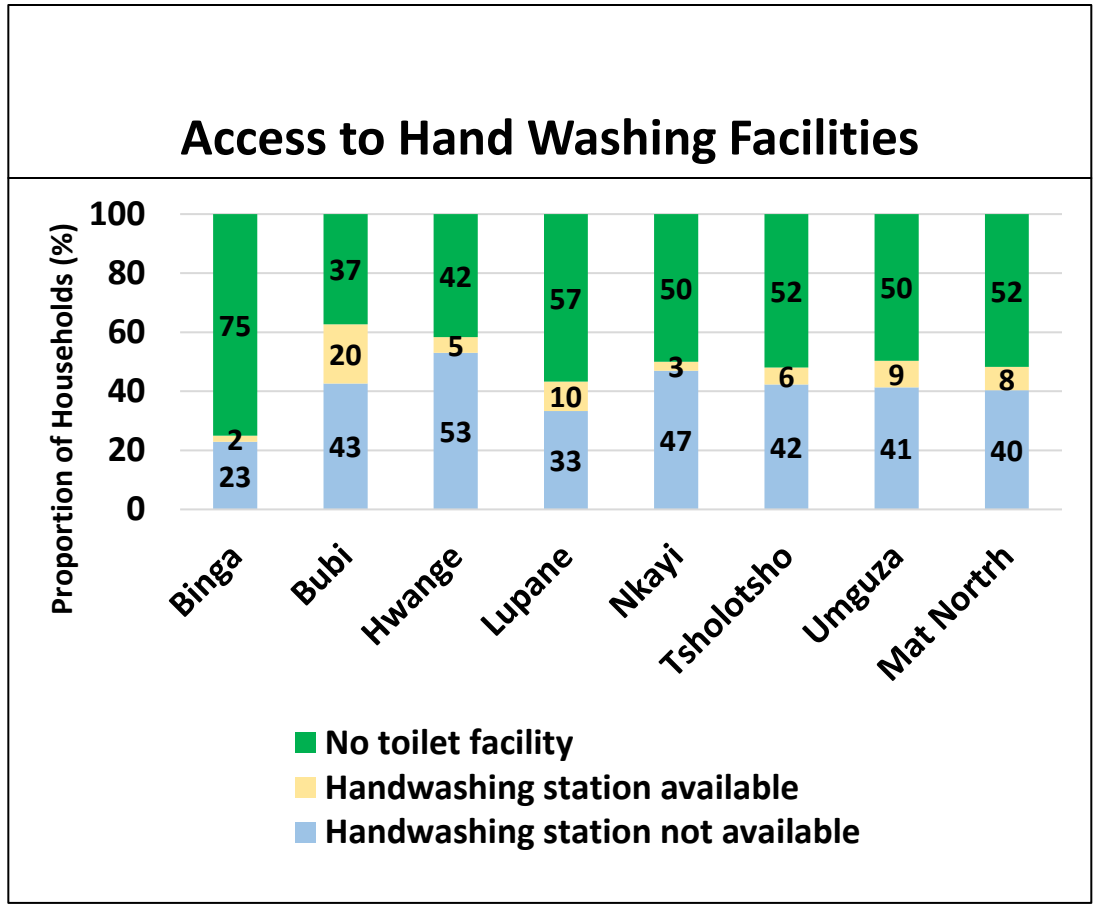
- At least 43% of households has access to basic sanitation services.
- Hwange (54%) had the highest proportion of households using improved facilities.

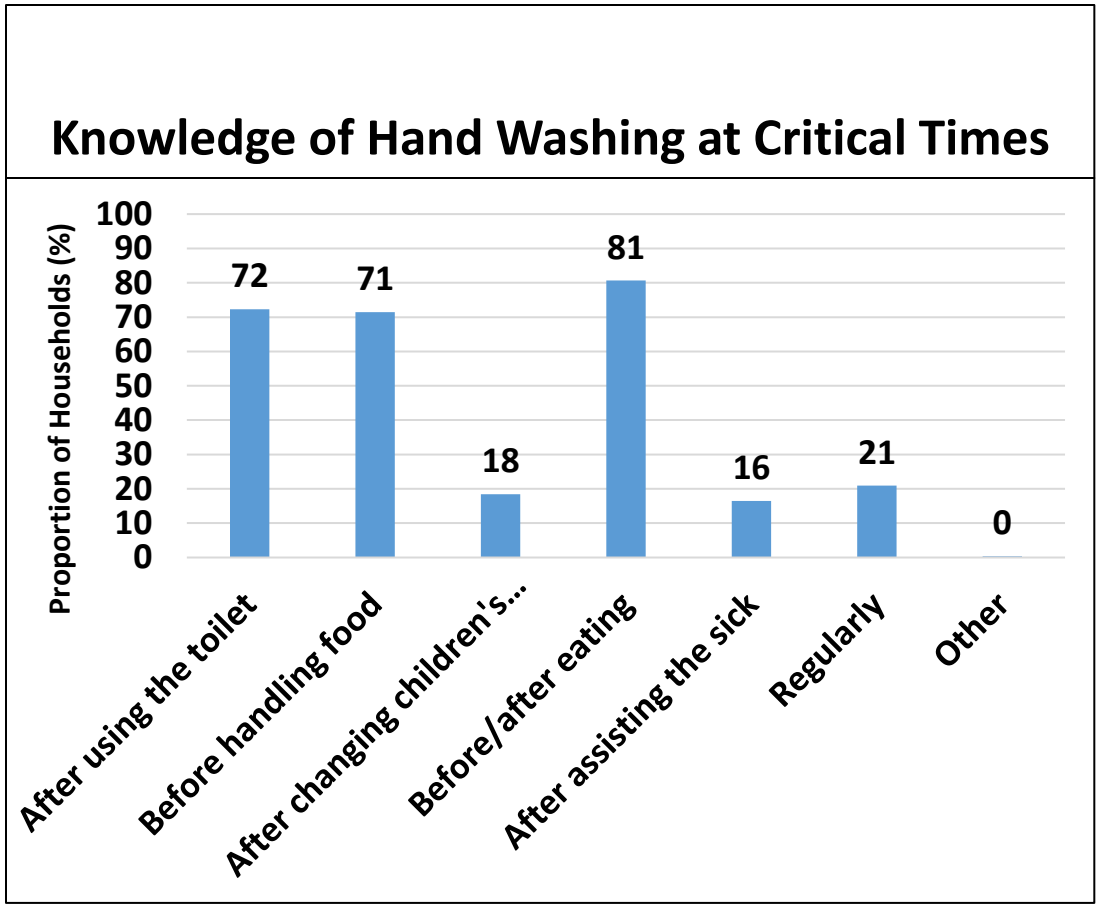
Ladder for Hygiene

Service level	Definition
Basic	Availability of a handwashing facility on premises with soap and water.
Limited	Availability of a handwashing facility on premises without soap and water. Access to Handwashing Services
No Facility	No hand washing facility on premises.

Note: handwashing facilities may be fixed or mobile and include a sink with tap water, buckets with taps, tippy taps, and jugs or basins designated for hand washing. Soap includes bar soap, liquid soap, powdered detergents and soapy water but does not include sand, soil, ash and other handwashing agents.

Access to Hand Washing Facilities and Hand Washing at Critical Times

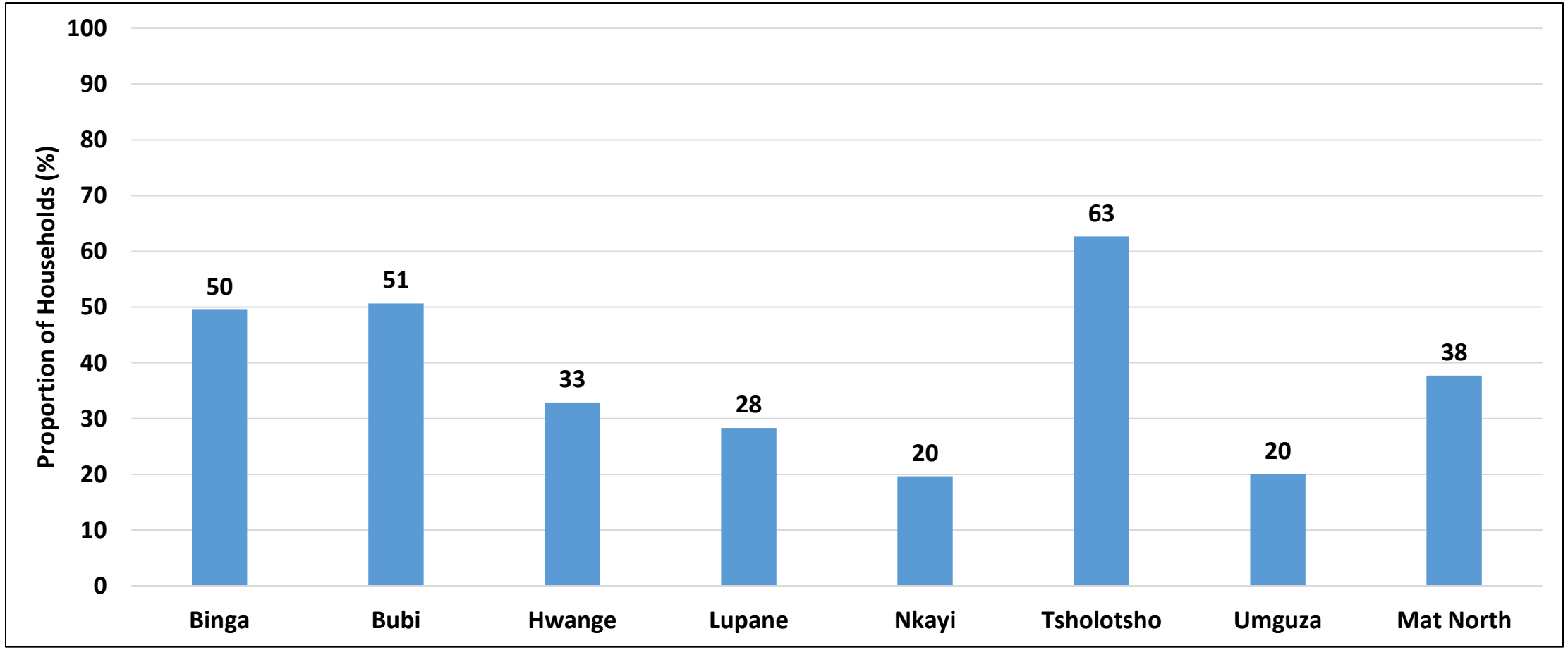




- Provincially 52%, of the households did not have a toilet facility. Binga (75%) had the highest proportion of households without a toilet facility.
- Most households reported that they washed their hands before and after eating (81%).

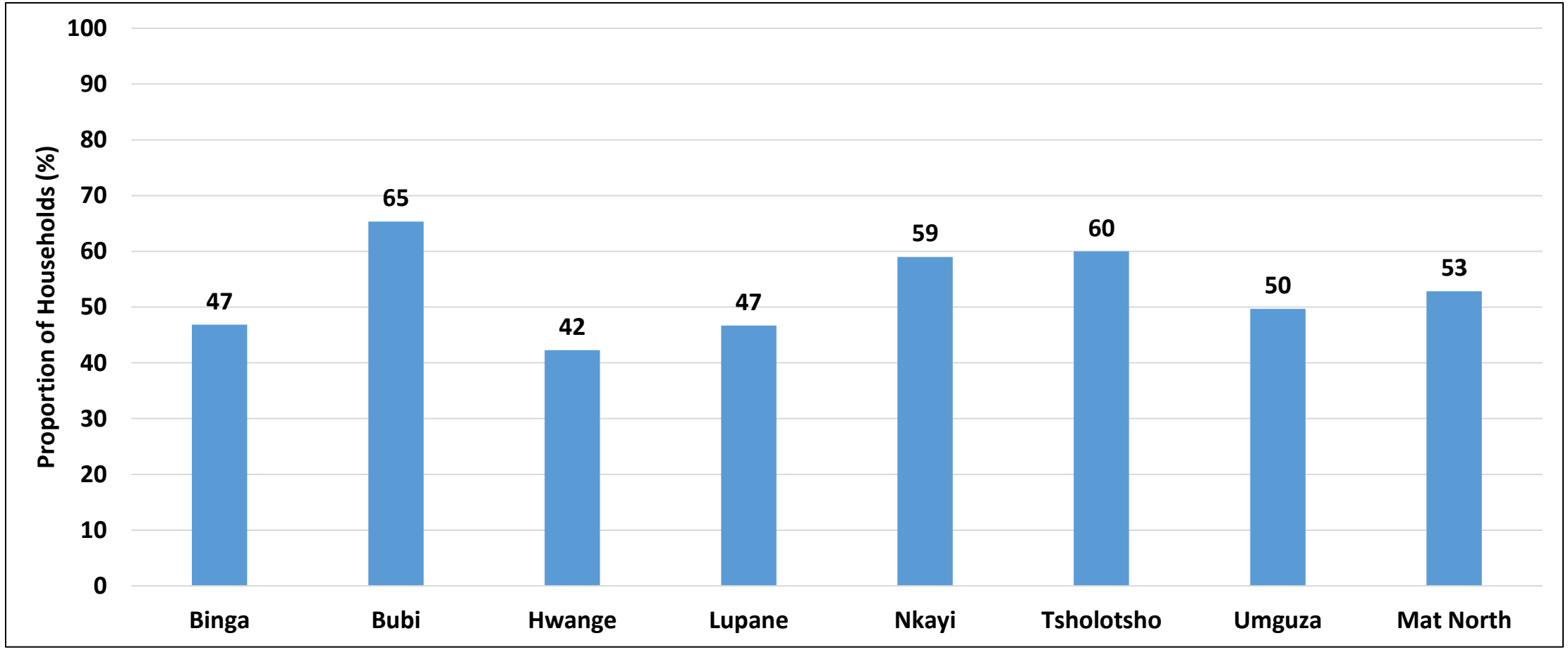
Access to Critical Infrastructure and Services

Households Accessing Police Services Within One Hour



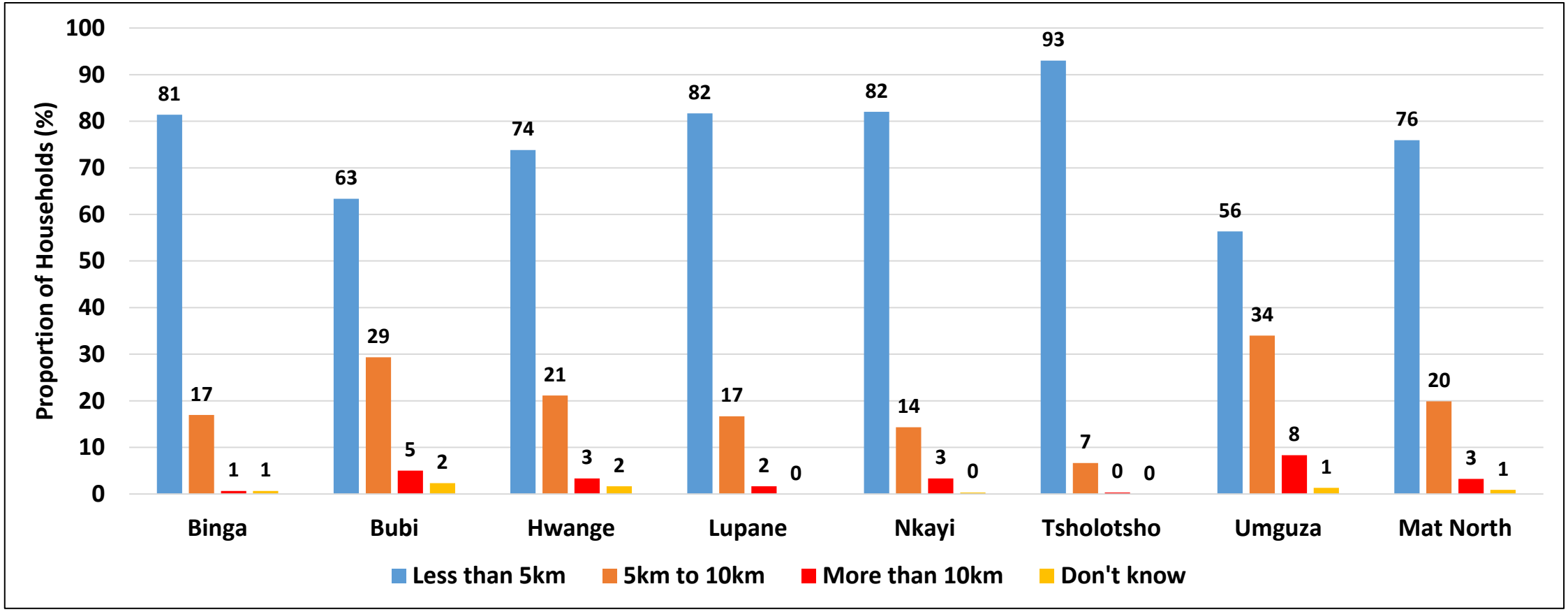
- In Matabeleland North, 38% of the households reported to have access to police services within one hour.

Households' Awareness of Victim -Friendly Services



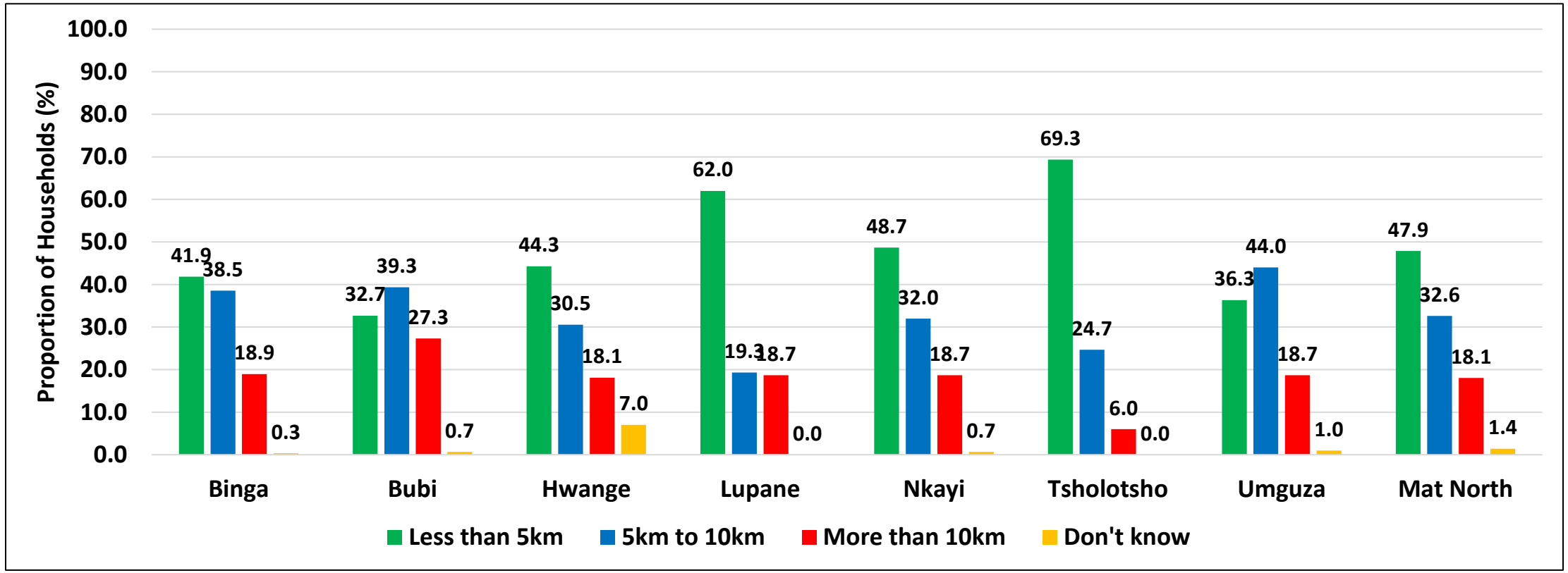
- On average 53% of households in Matabeleland North reported being aware to victim friendly services.

Distance to the Nearest Primary School



- Most of the households (76%) had their nearest primary school within a distance of less than 5km.
- About 3% reported having the nearest primary school more than 10km away.

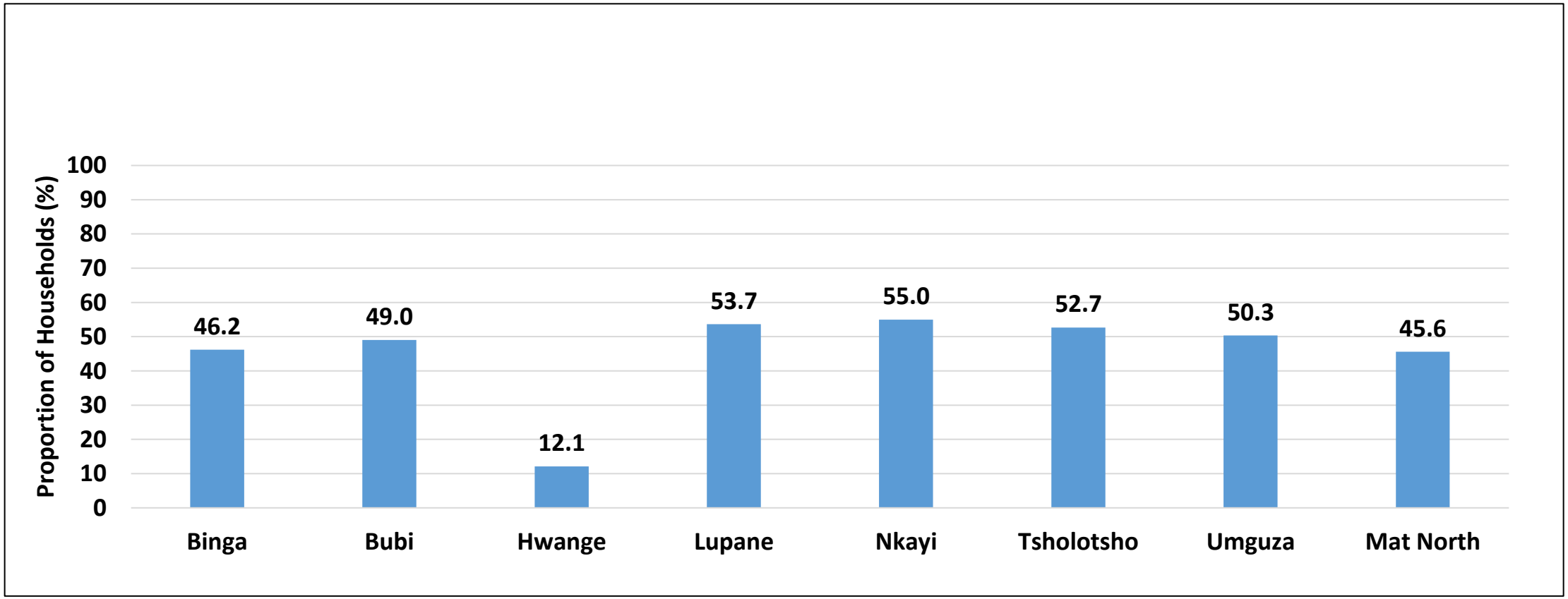
Distance to the Nearest Health Facility



- About 47.9% of the households had their nearest health facilities within a 5km radius.

Social Protection

Households which Received Any Form of Support



- The proportion of households that received any form of support in Matabeleland North was 45.6%; Nkayi (55%) being the highest while Hwange (12.1%) being the least.

Forms of Support from Government

District	Food (%)	Cash transfers (%)	Vouchers (%)	Crop inputs (%)	Livestock (cattle, goats, etc)	Other livestock support (Tick grease, acaricides, etc) (%)	WASH hardware (inputs) (%)	WASH software (trainings/ messaging) (%)	Education assistance (%)	Health Assistance (%)	Other (%)
Binga	25.2	0.7	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
Bubi	16.7	1.7	0.7	32.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0
Hwange	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
Lupane	21.3	0.3	0.0	32.3	0.3	1.7	1.0	1.7	3.3	4.0	0.0
Nkayi	14.3	0.0	0.0	46.7	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Tsholotsho	14.3	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
Umguza	12.0	0.0	0.3	33.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.3	1.0	1.0
Mat North	**15.4**	**0.4**	**0.1**	**24.7**	**0.1**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.3**	**1.4**	**0.8**	**0.2**

- Crop inputs (24.7%) and food (15.4%) were the main forms of Government assistance received in Matabeleland North.
- Nkayi (46.7%) had the highest proportion of households that received crop inputs.

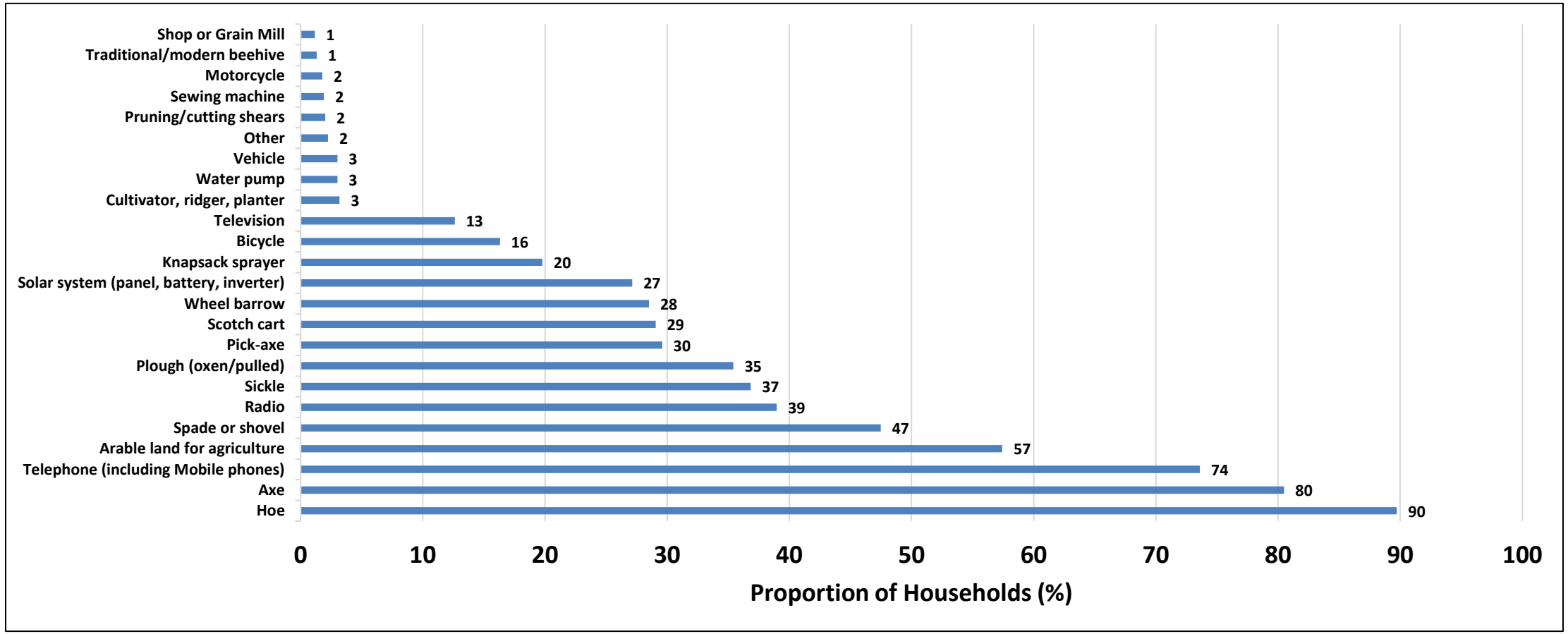
Forms of Support from UN/NGOs

District	Food (%)	Cash transfers (%)	Vouchers (%)	Crop inputs (%)	Livestock (cattle, goats,etc) (%)	Other livestock support (Tick grease, acaricides, etc) (%)	WASH hardware (inputs) (%)	WASH software (trainings/ messaging) (%)	Education assistance (%)	Health Assistance (%)	Other (%)
Binga	7.0	1.7	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
Bubi	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	1.0	0.0	2.0
Hwange	4.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.3
Lupane	3.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.3	1.3	2.7	10.7	2.0	1.7	5.0
Nkayi	5.0	0.3	0.0	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7
Tsholotsho	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.3	3.3	0.0
Umguza	3.0	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.0	1.7	1.0	1.0
Mat North	**3.2**	**0.4**	**0.0**	**1.0**	**0.2**	**0.3**	**0.7**	**2.1**	**0.9**	**0.9**	**1.3**

- UN/NGOs food support averaged at 3.2% in Matabeleland North.

Assets

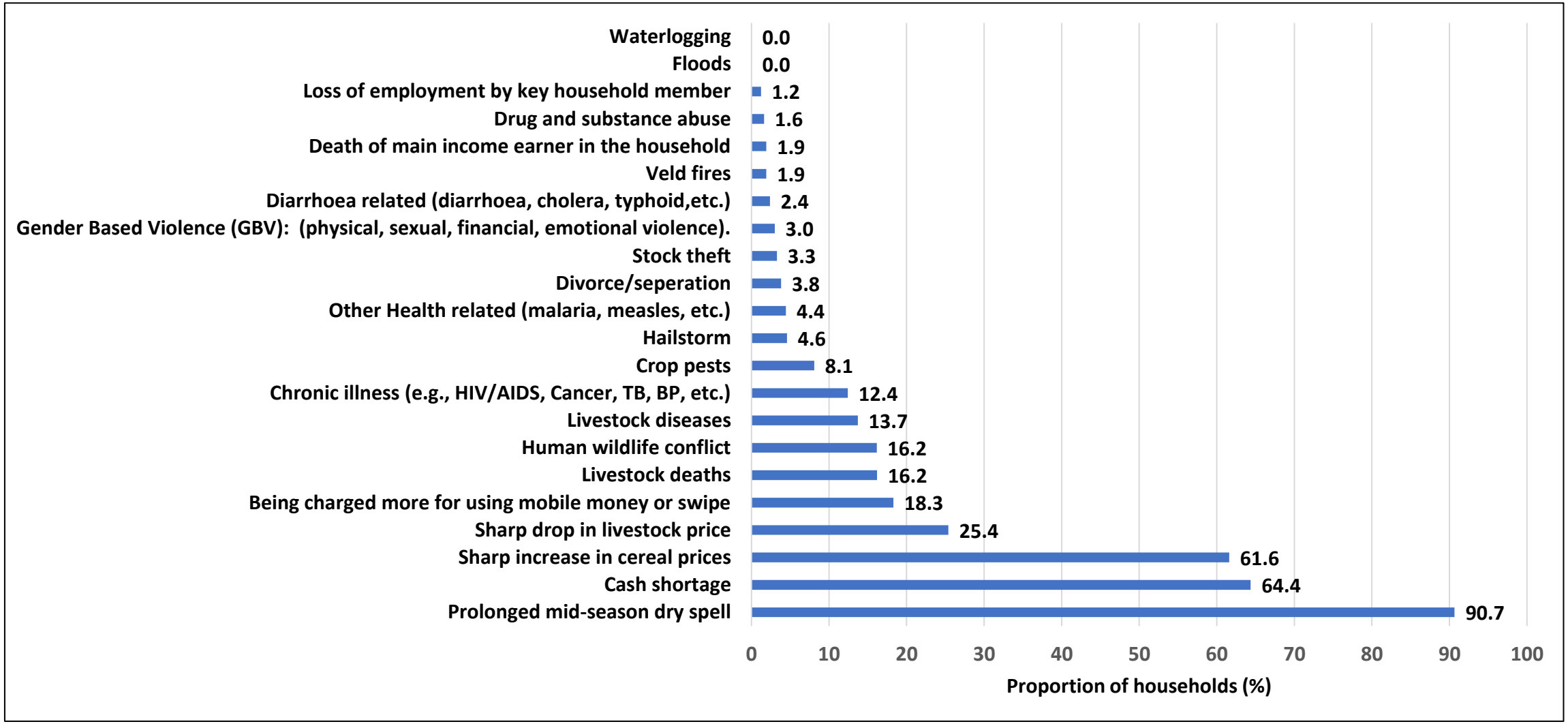
Household Assets



- In Matabeleland North, hoe (90%), axe (80%) and telephone (74%) were the most owned assets.

Shocks and Hazards

Proportion of Households Experiencing Shocks



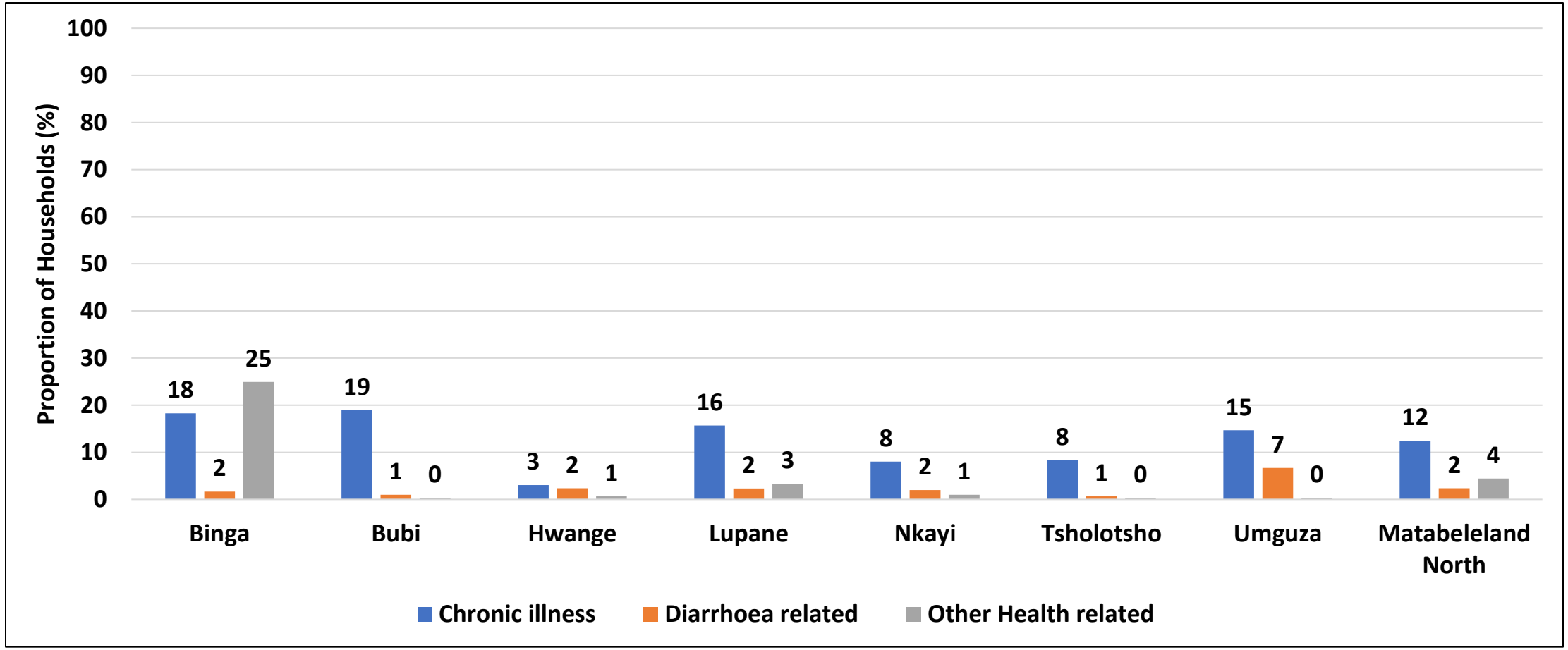
- Prolonged mid-season dry spells (90.7%), cash shortage (64.4%) and sharp increase in cereal prices (61.6%) were the most prevalent shocks experienced by households.

Proportion of Households Experiencing Shocks

District	Prolonged mid-season dry spell (%)	Cash shortage (%)	Cereal price changes-sharp increase (%)	Livestock price changes-sharp drop (%)	Being charged more for using mobile money or swipe (%)	Livestock deaths (%)	Livestock diseases (%)	Crop pests (%)	Other Health related (malaria, measles, etc.) (%)	Diarrheal related (diarrheal, cholera, typhoid, etc.) (%)
Binga	84.1	58.5	87.0	41.2	26.9	25.2	17.6	11.0	24.9	1.7
Bubi	89.7	97.0	58.3	22.7	43.7	16.0	16.0	1.0	0.3	1.0
Hwange	87.9	49.3	5.0	0.7	3.0	4.0	1.3	1.7	0.7	2.3
Lupane	97.3	24.7	33.7	11.0	10.3	22.3	19.0	3.0	3.3	2.3
Nkayi	91.7	72.7	93.7	59.7	2.0	13.0	18.7	17.0	1.0	2.0
Tsholotsho	93.7	53.0	68.0	24.3	27.7	18.3	5.7	0.7	0.3	0.7
Umguza	90.3	95.3	85.0	18.0	14.3	14.3	17.7	22.3	0.3	6.7
Mat North	**90.7**	**64.4**	**61.6**	**25.4**	**18.3**	**16.2**	**13.7**	**8.1**	**4.4**	**2.4**

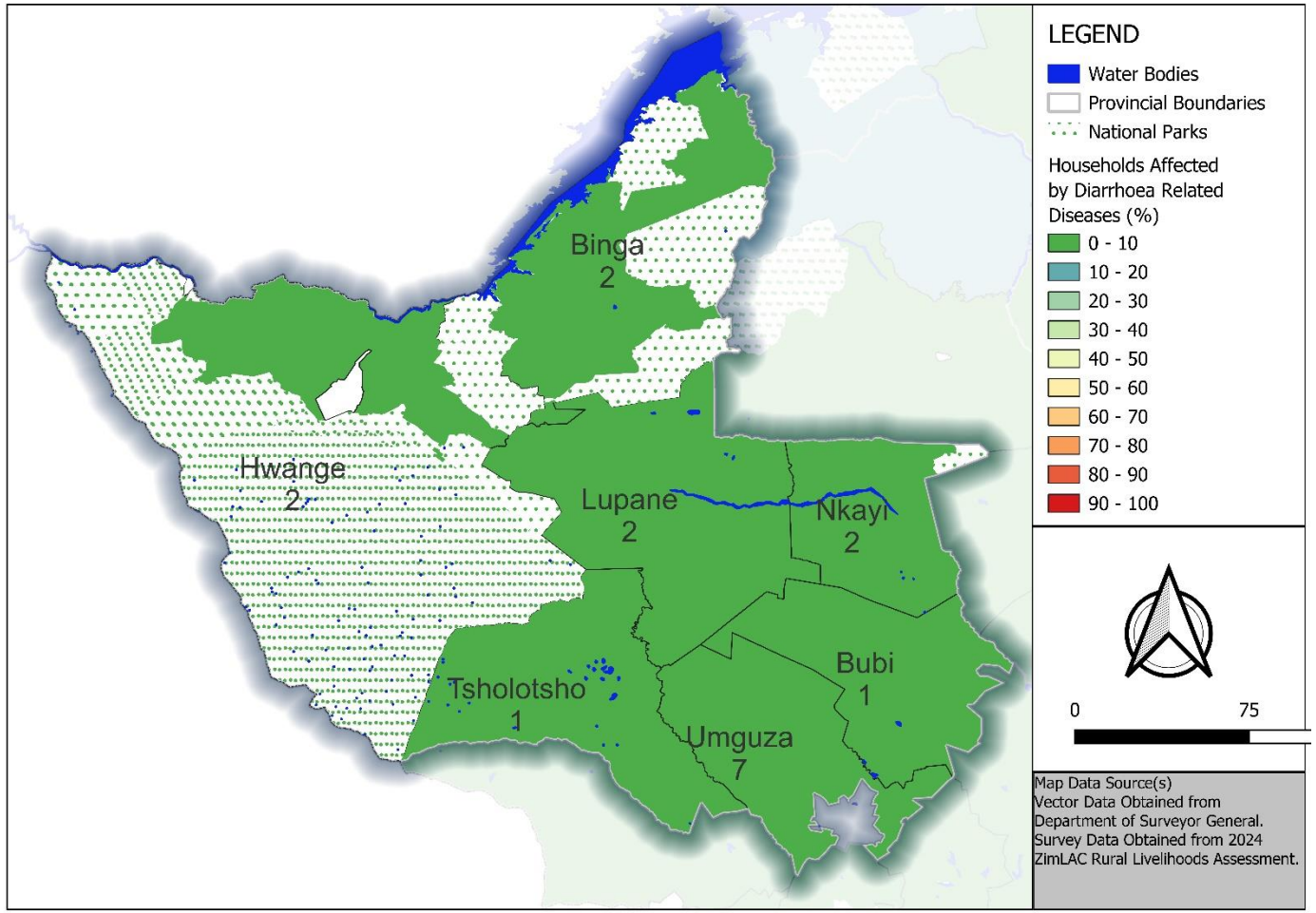
- Lupane (97.3%) had the highest proportion of households affected by prolonged mid-season dry spells.

Health Related Shocks



- Chronic illness was the most reported health shock (12%).

Households which Reported Diarrhoea Related Illnesses as a Shock



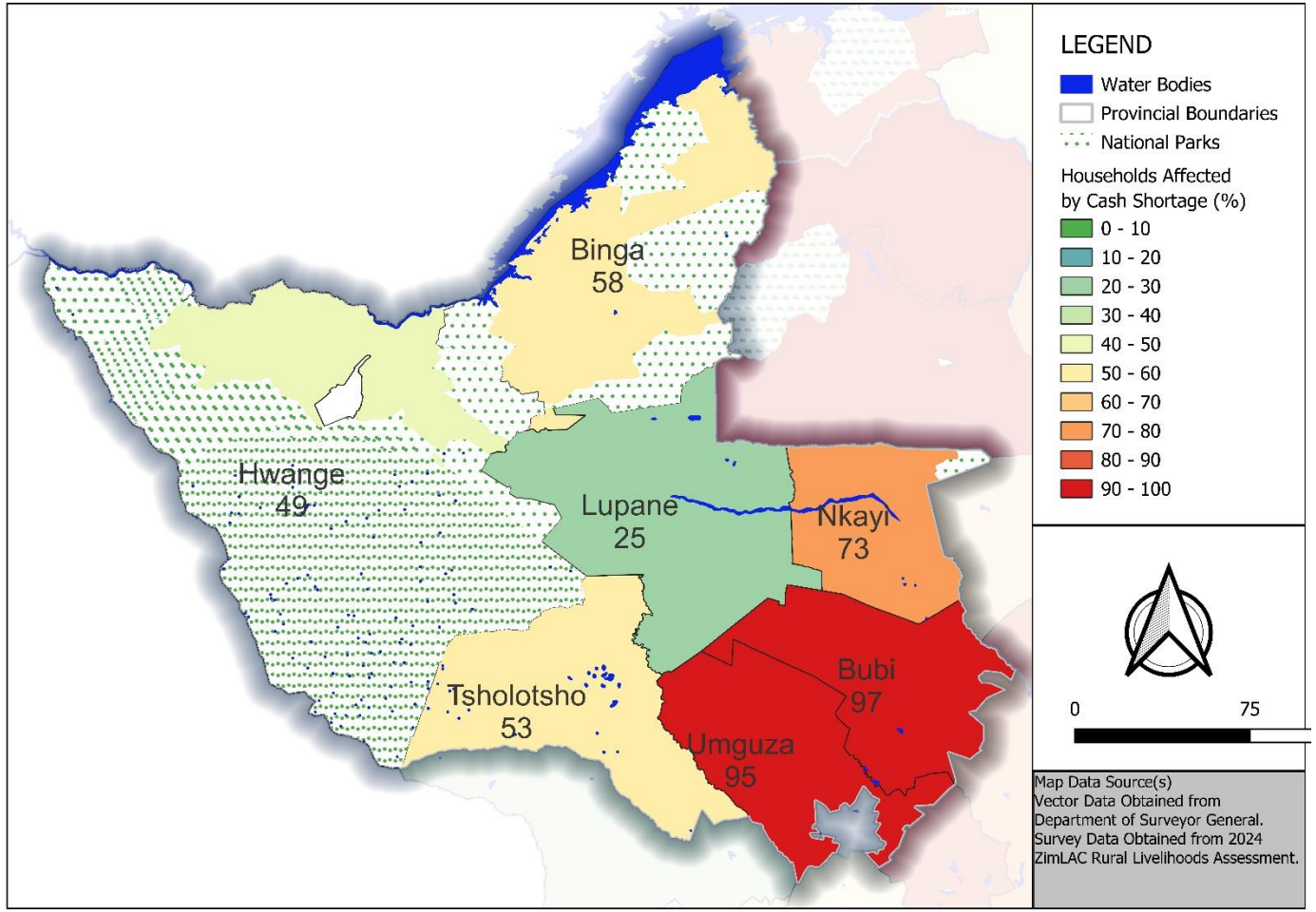
- The highest proportion of households which reported diarrhoea related illnesses as a shock were in Umguza (7%).

Economic and Social Shocks

District	Binga	Bubi	Hwange	Lupane	Nkayi	Tsholotsho	Umguza	Matabeleland North
Loss of employment by key household member	1.0	0.7	1.0	3.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	1.2
Drug and substance abuse	0.7	2.7	1.0	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.0	1.6
Death of main income earner in the household	1.3	2.7	0.7	3.3	0.3	3.3	1.7	1.9
Gender Based Violence (GBV	4.0	2.3	0.7	7.3	2.7	0.3	3.7	3.0
Divorce/seperation	4.0	10.7	2.3	5.0	0.7	0.0	4.0	3.8
Crop pests	11.0	1.0	1.7	3.0	17.0	0.7	22.3	8.1
Human wildlife conflict	13.6	25.0	40.3	9.7	2.0	7.7	15.0	16.2
Being charged more for using mobile money or swipe	26.9	43.7	3.0	10.3	2.0	27.7	14.3	18.3
Sharp Drops in Livestock Prices	41.2	22.7	0.7	11.0	59.7	24.3	18.0	25.4
Cereal price changes-sharp increase	87.0	58.3	5.0	33.7	93.7	68.0	85.0	61.5
Cash shortage	58.5	97.0	49.3	24.7	72.7	53.0	95.3	64.4

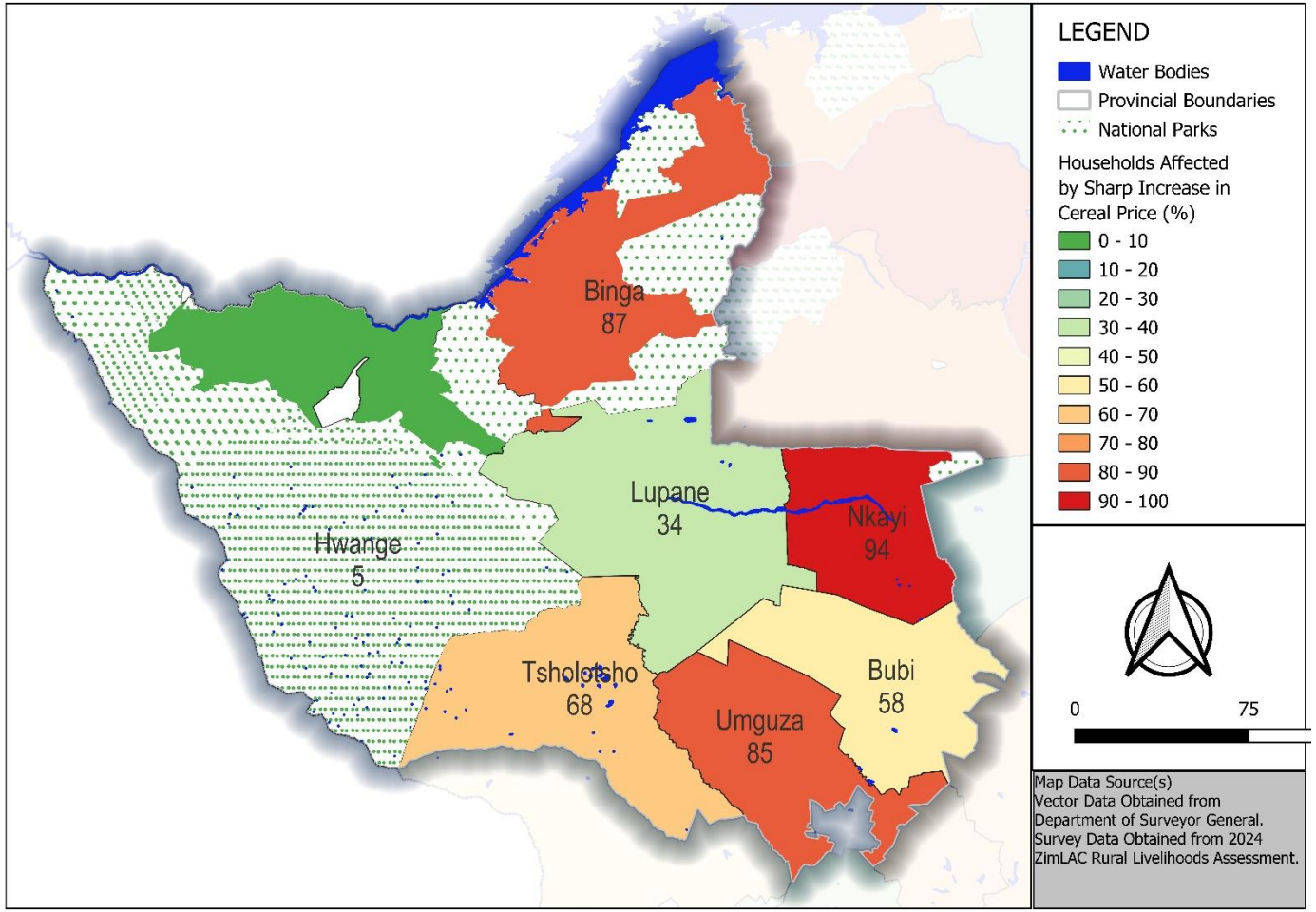
- Cash shortage (64.4%) was the most reported economic shock, followed by sharp increase of cereal prices (61.5%).

Households which Reported Cash Shortage as a Shock



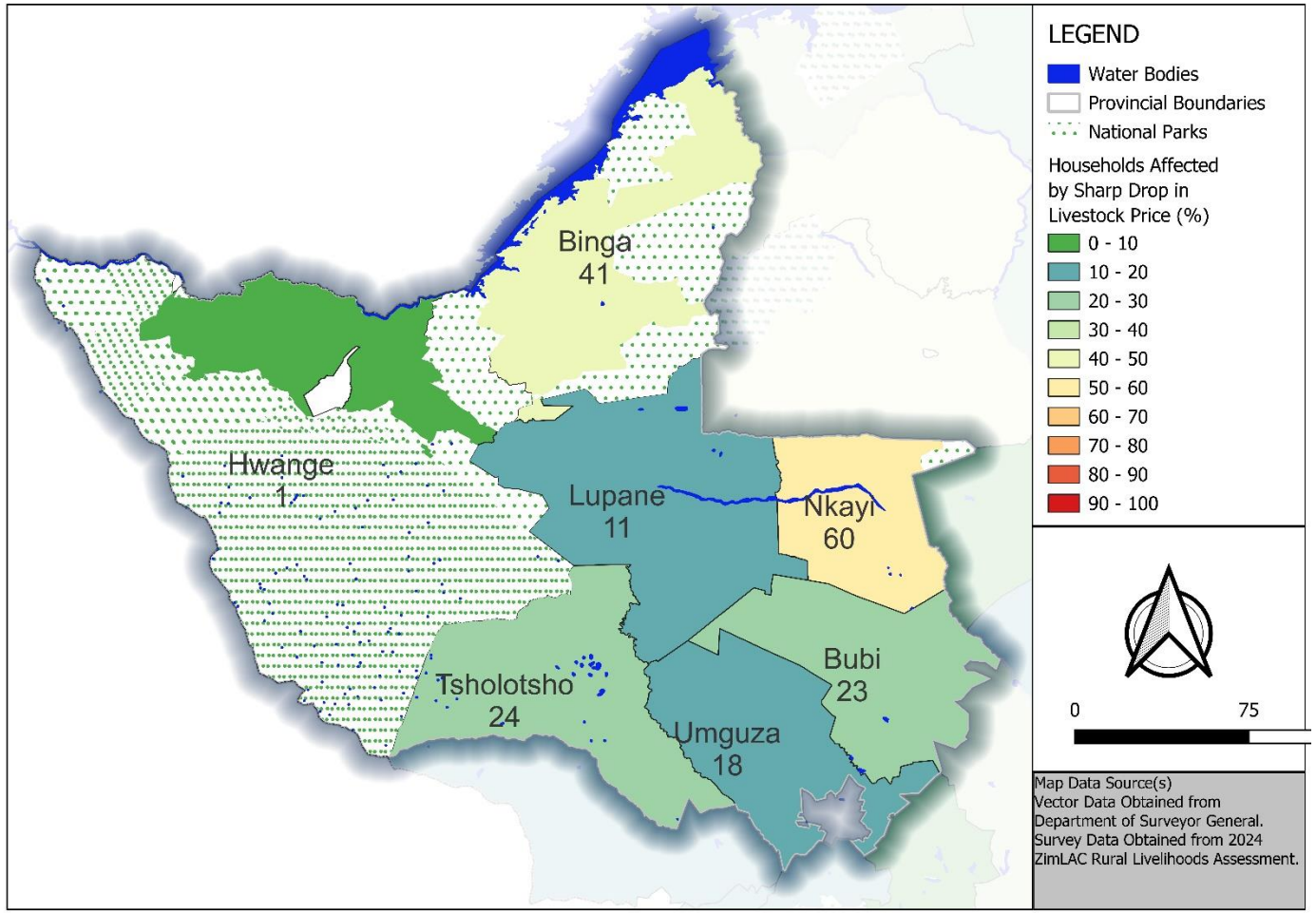
- Bubi (97%), Umguza (95%) and Nkayi (73%) had the highest proportion of households which reported cash shortage as a shock.

Households that Reported Sharp increase in Cereal Prices as a Shock



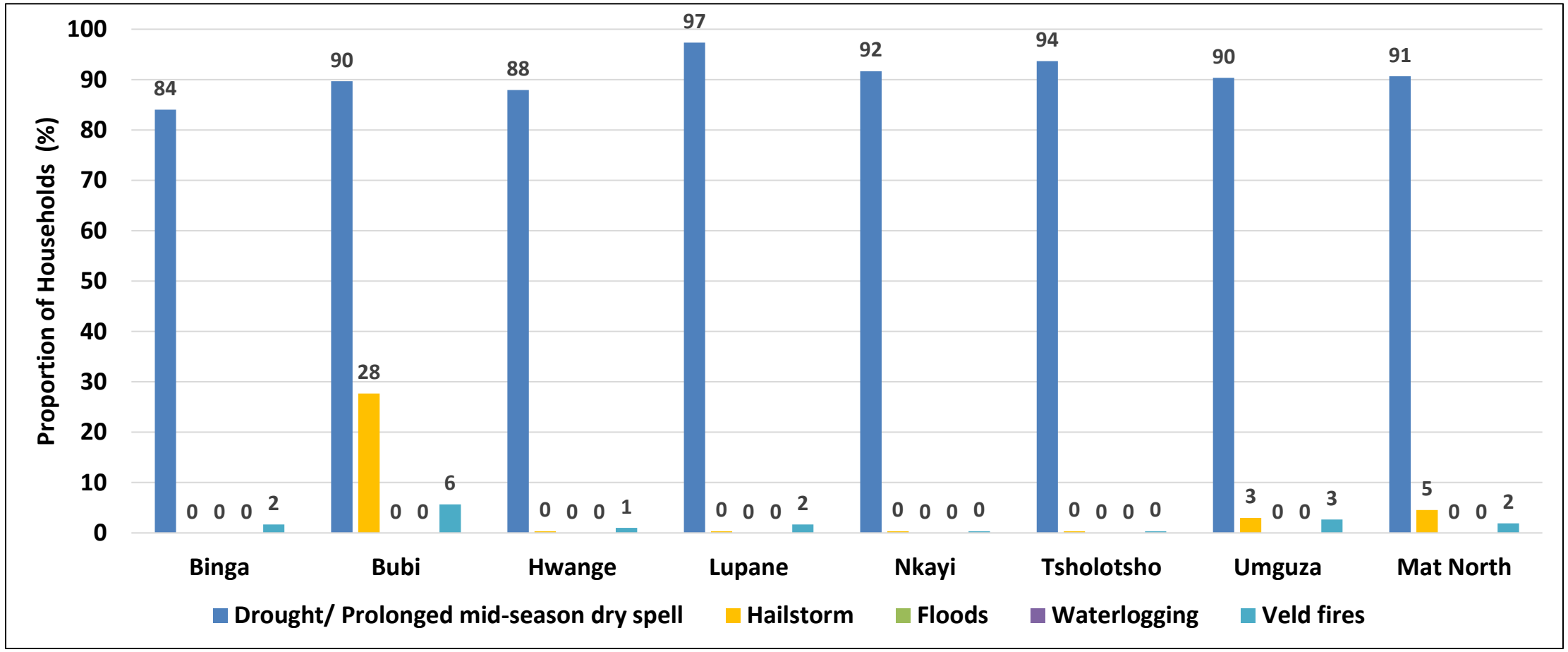
- Nkayi (94%), Binga (87%) and Umguza (85%) had the highest proportion of households which reported sharp increase in cereal prices as a shock.

Households which Reported Sharp Drop in Livestock Prices as a Shock



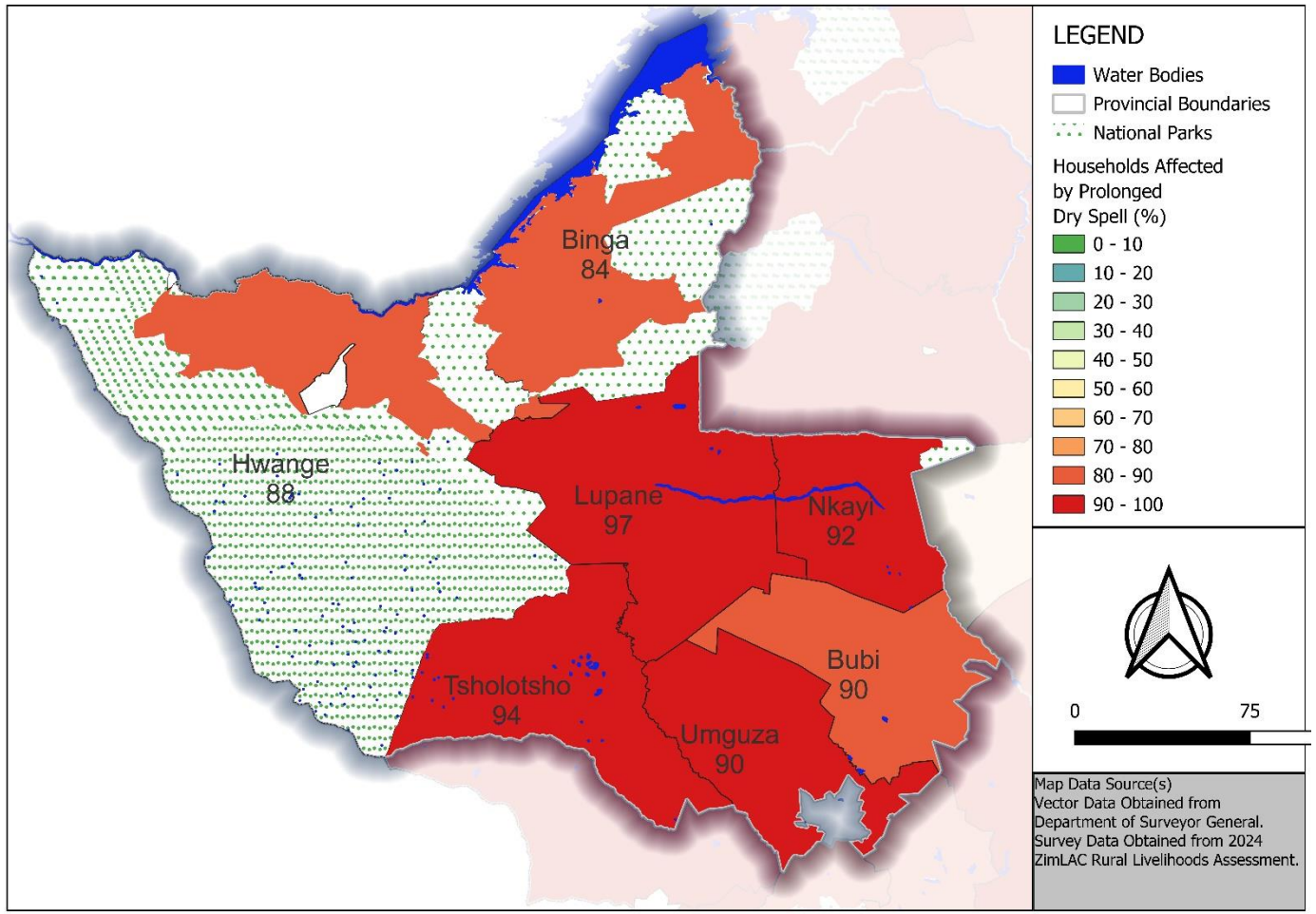
- The highest proportions of households which reported sharp drop in livestock prices as a shock were in Nkayi (60%) and Binga (41%).

Climate Related Shocks



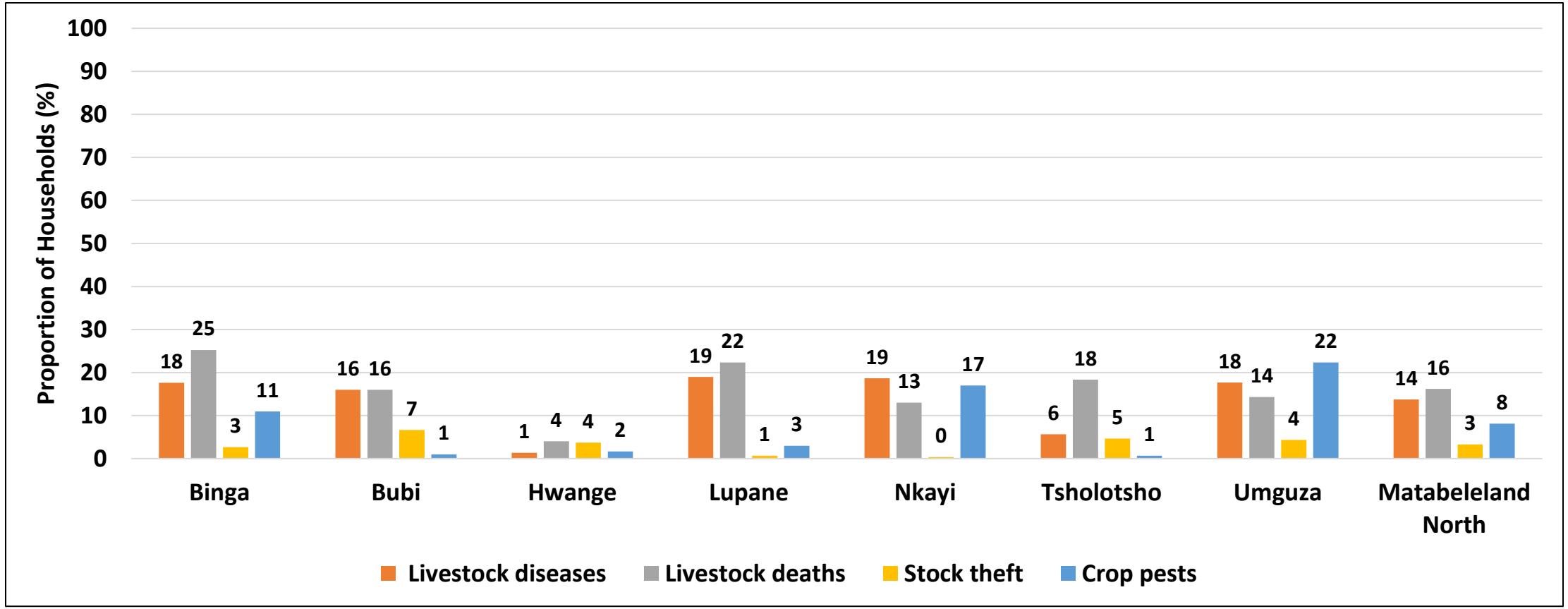
- Prolonged mid-season dry spells (91%) was the most related climate change shock.

Households which Reported Prolonged Mid-season Dry Spell as a Shock



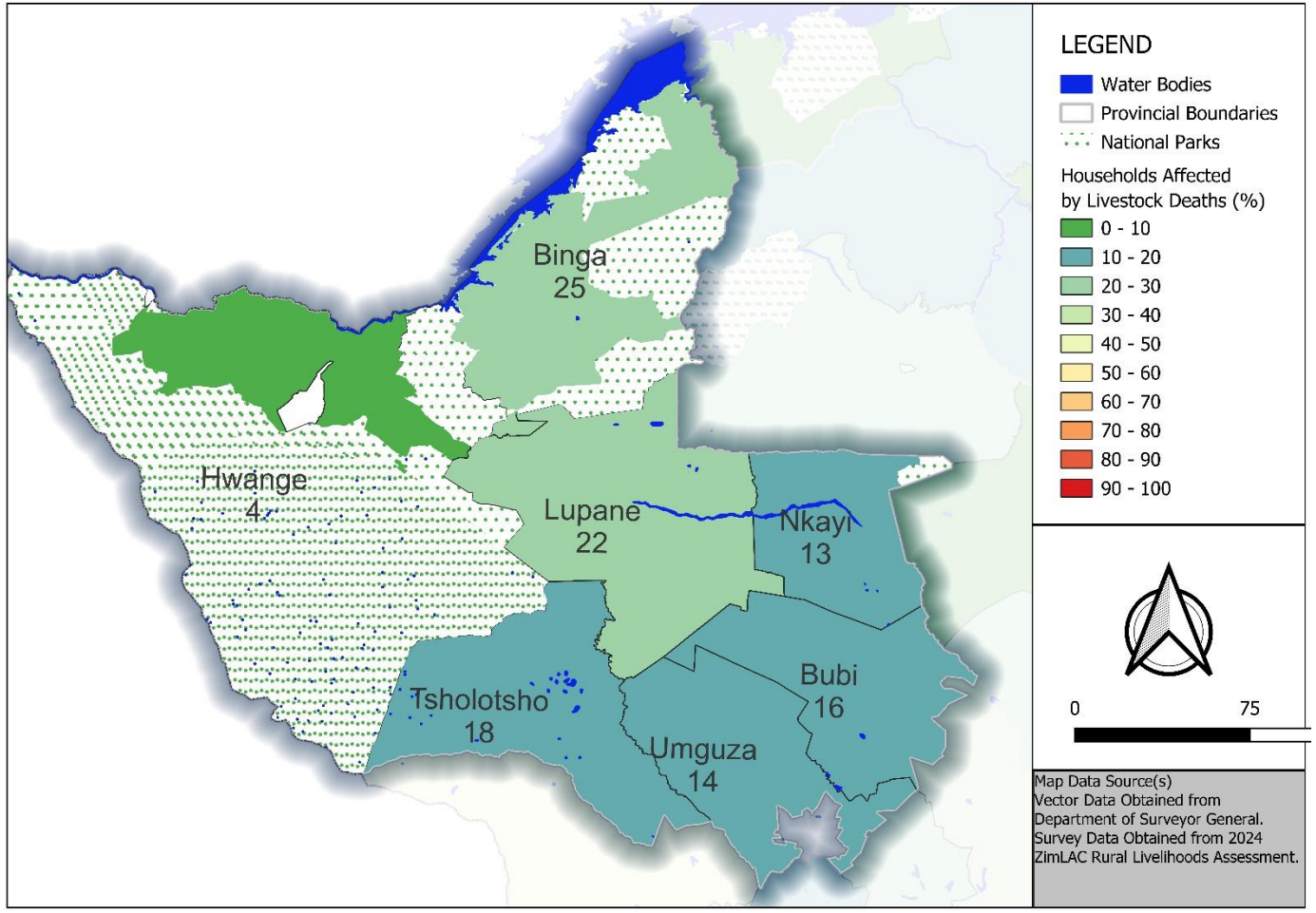
- Most districts reported prolonged dry spell as a shock.
- Lupane (97%), Tsholotsho (94%), Nkayi (92%) and Umguza (90%) had the highest proportion of households that reported prolonged mid-season dry spell as a shock.

Agriculture Related Shocks



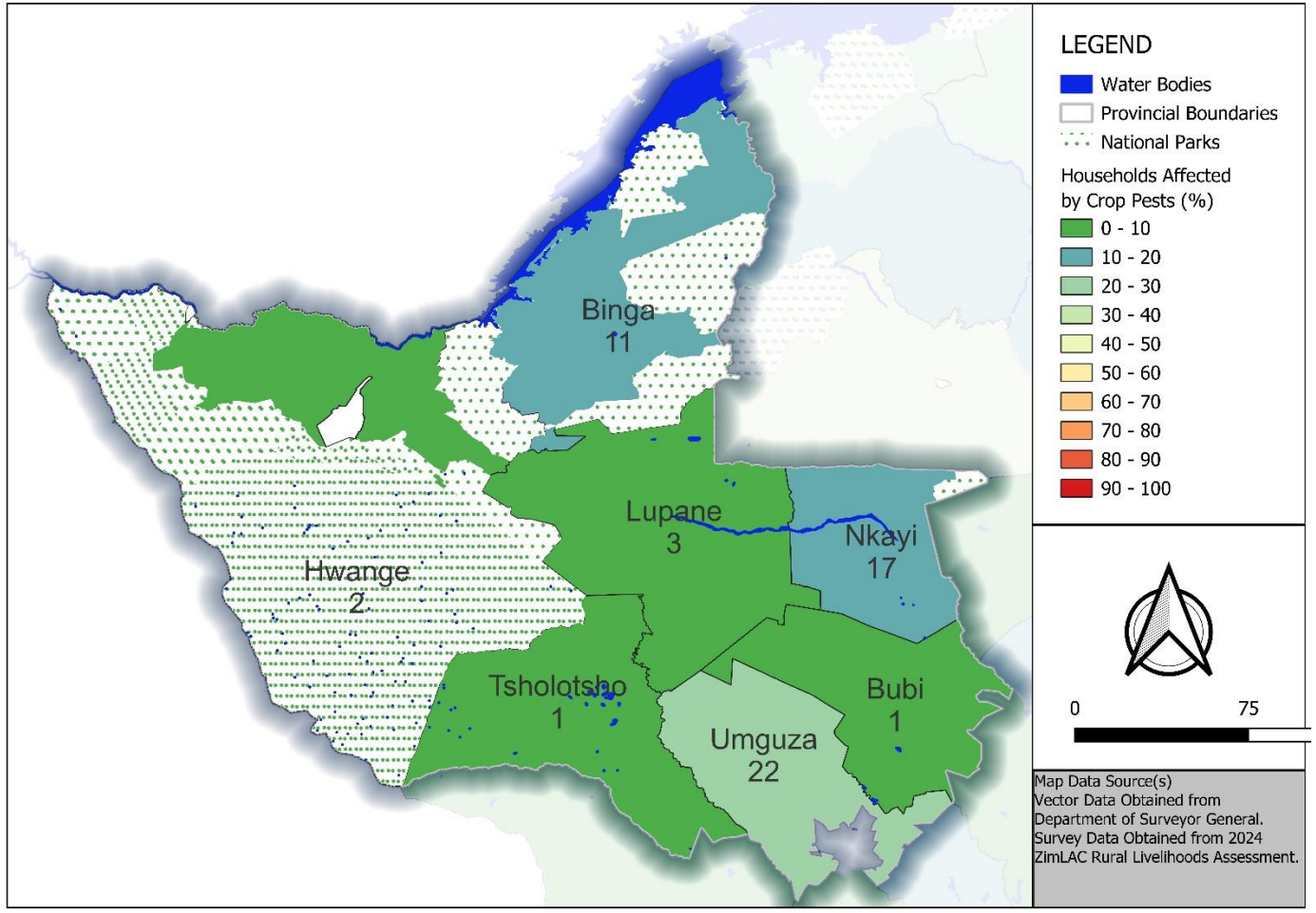
- Livestock deaths (16%) was the most reported agriculture related shock, with highest proportion in Binga (25%) and Lupane (22%).

Households which Reported Livestock deaths as a Shock



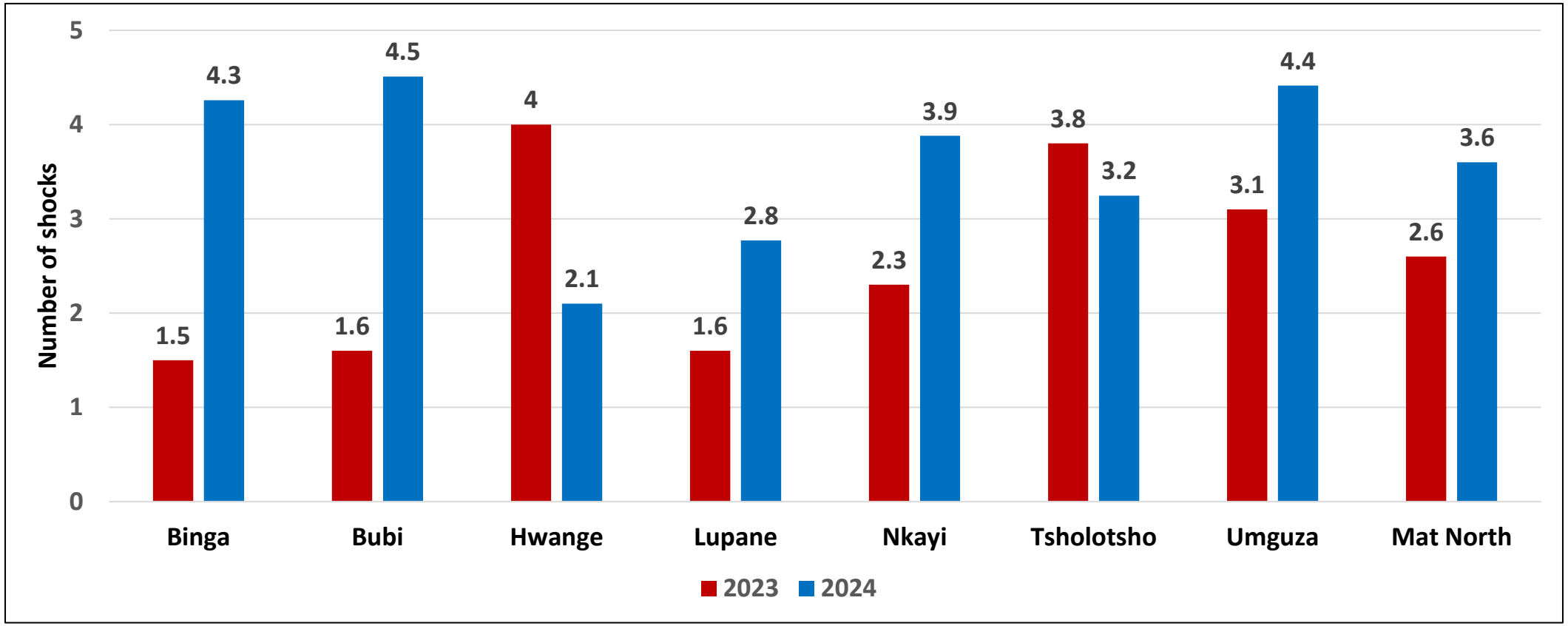
- The highest proportion of households which reported livestock deaths as a shock were in Binga (25%) and Lupane (22%).

Households which Reported Crop Pests as a Shock



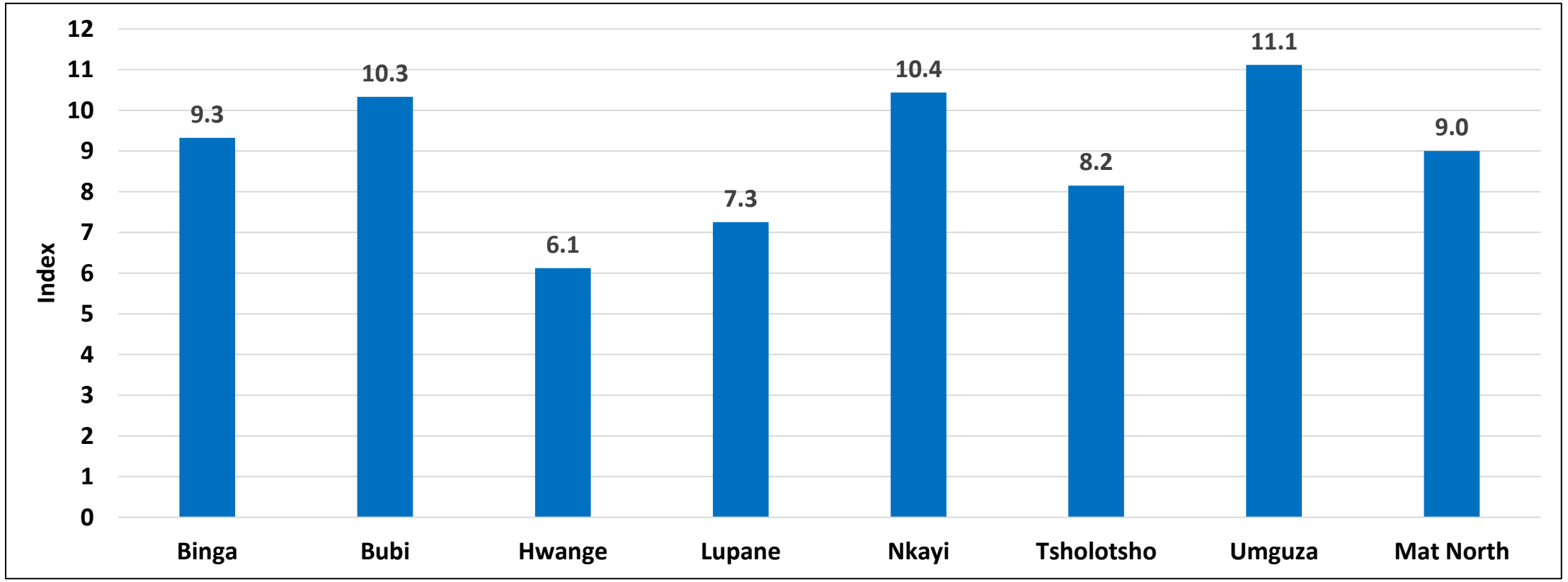
- The highest proportions of households which reported crop pests as a shock were in Umguza (22%) and Nkayi (17%).

Number of Shocks Experienced by Households



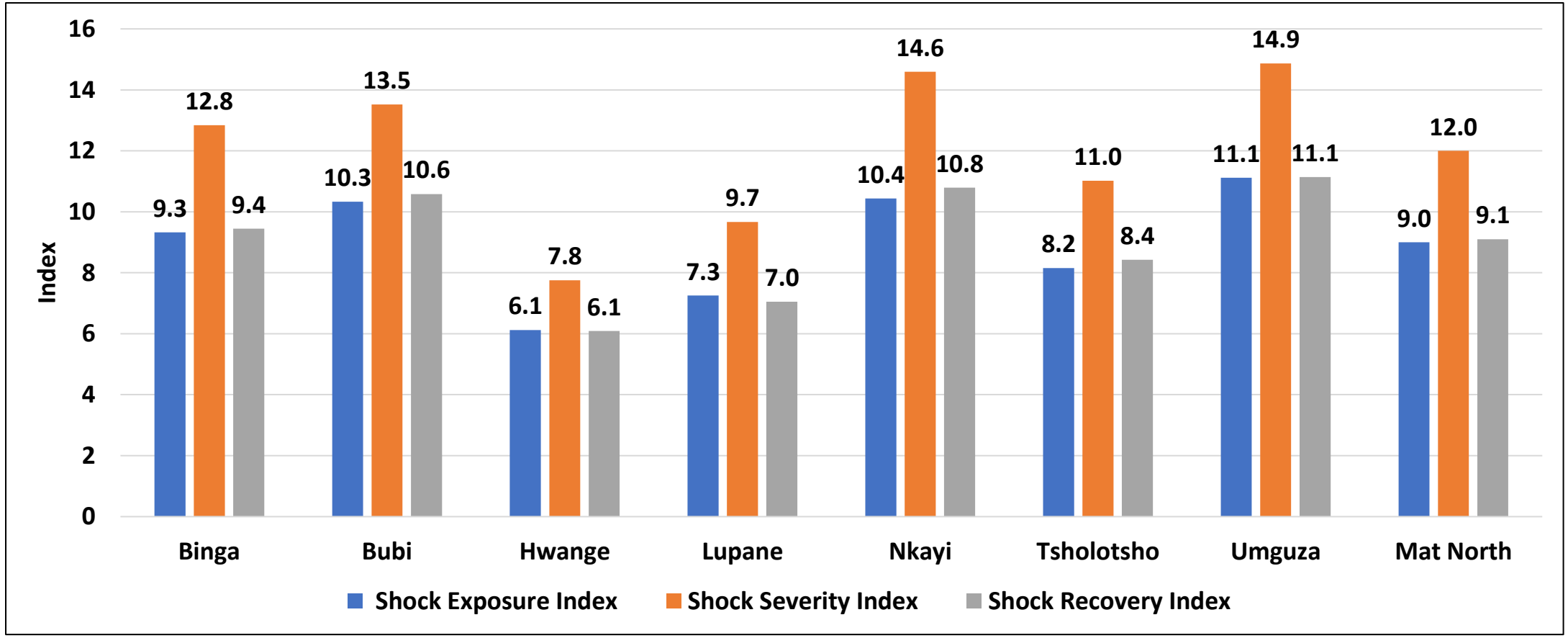
- The average number of shocks experienced by households was 3.6.
- This was an increase compared to the previous year.

Average Shock Exposure Index



- Shock exposure index was calculated by multiplying the number of shocks experienced with impact severity of the shock to the household.
- Umguza (11.1), Nkayi (10.4) and Bubi (10.3) had the highest shock exposure index in the province .

Comparison Between Shock Exposure and Ability to Cope Indices



- The average Shock Exposure Index was 9.0. Shock severity Index was 12.0. Average Shock Recovery Index was 9.1.

Agricultural Production

Average Household Stocks as at 1 April 2024

District	Maize (kgs)	Mealie-meal (kgs)	Sorghum (kgs)	Finger millets (kgs)	Pearl millets (kgs)
Binga	0.0	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bubi	2.3	10.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hwange	0.0	6.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lupane	0.0	14.4	0.0	0.0	0.5
Nkayi	0.8	8.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Tsholotsho	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Umguza	2.3	7.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Matabeleland North	**0.8**	**9.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.1**

- Households reported very low stocks.

Season Harvest

District	Maize		Sorghum		Finger Millet		Pearl Millet		Total Cereals	
	Expected (kgs)	Actual (kgs)	Expected (kgs)	Actual (kgs)	Expected (kgs)	Actual (kgs)	Expected (kgs)	Actual (kgs)	Expected (kgs)	Actual (kgs)
Binga	396	16	263	6	0	0	160	8	819	29
Bubi	624	7	124	3	0	0	13	0	762	10
Hwange	137	135	301	248	3	3	260	194	701	580
Lupane	434	2	149	3	1	0	136	2	720	7
Nkayi	502	14	123	8	1	0	44	1	670	23
Tsholotsho	130	5	102	2	31	0	226	9	490	16
Umguza	751	30	124	4	0	0	21	0	896	34
Mat North	425	30	169	39	5	0	123	30	723	99

- On average, households were expecting to harvest 425 kgs of maize and 169 kgs of sorghum.
- The actual household harvest was 30 kgs for maize and 39 kgs for sorghum.

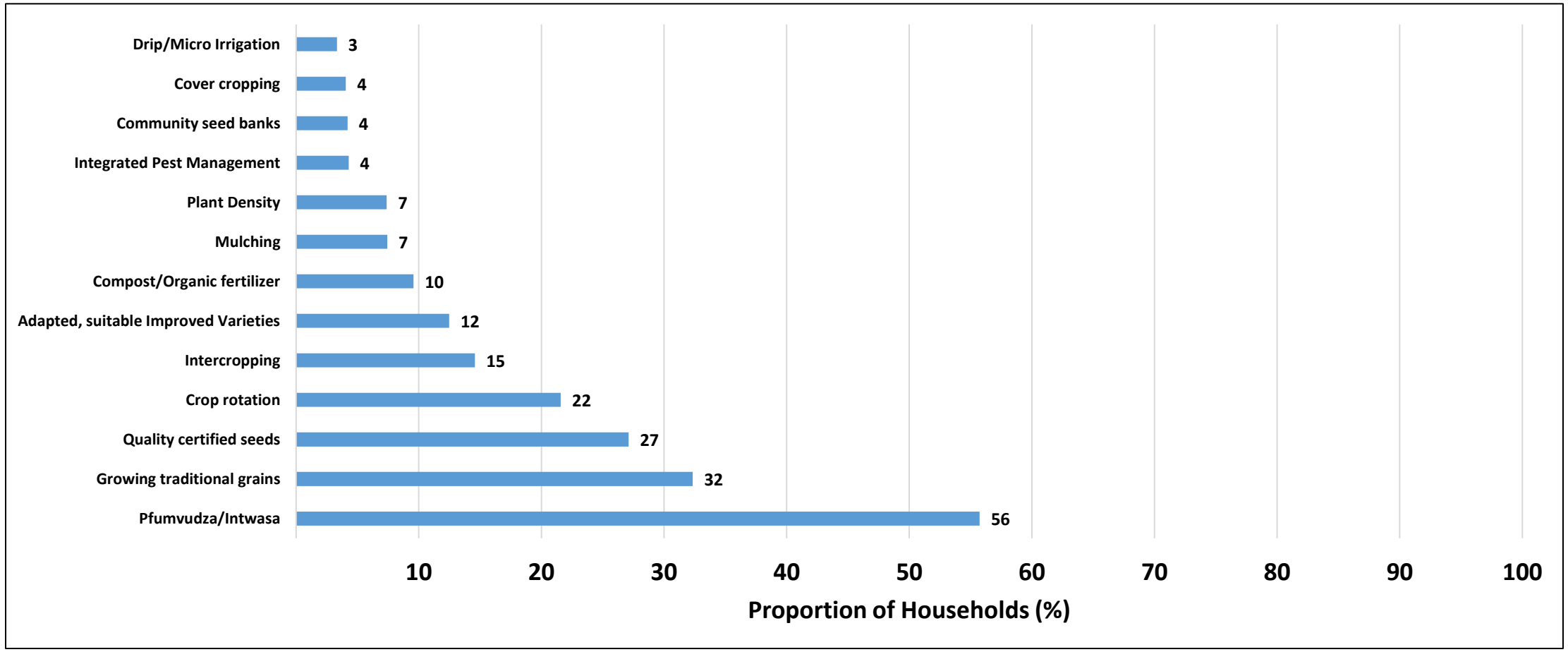
Maize from Casual Labour and Remittances

District	Maize from casual labour (kgs)	Maize from remittances (kgs)
Binga	3.9	0.8
Bubi	1.8	1.2
Hwange	0.8	0.0
Lupane	3.2	12.3
Nkayi	1.5	0.0
Tsholotsho	1.3	2.6
Umguza	3.3	0.0
Mat North	**2.0**	**0.6**

- On average, households received 2.0 kgs of cereals from casual labour and 0.6 kgs from remittances.

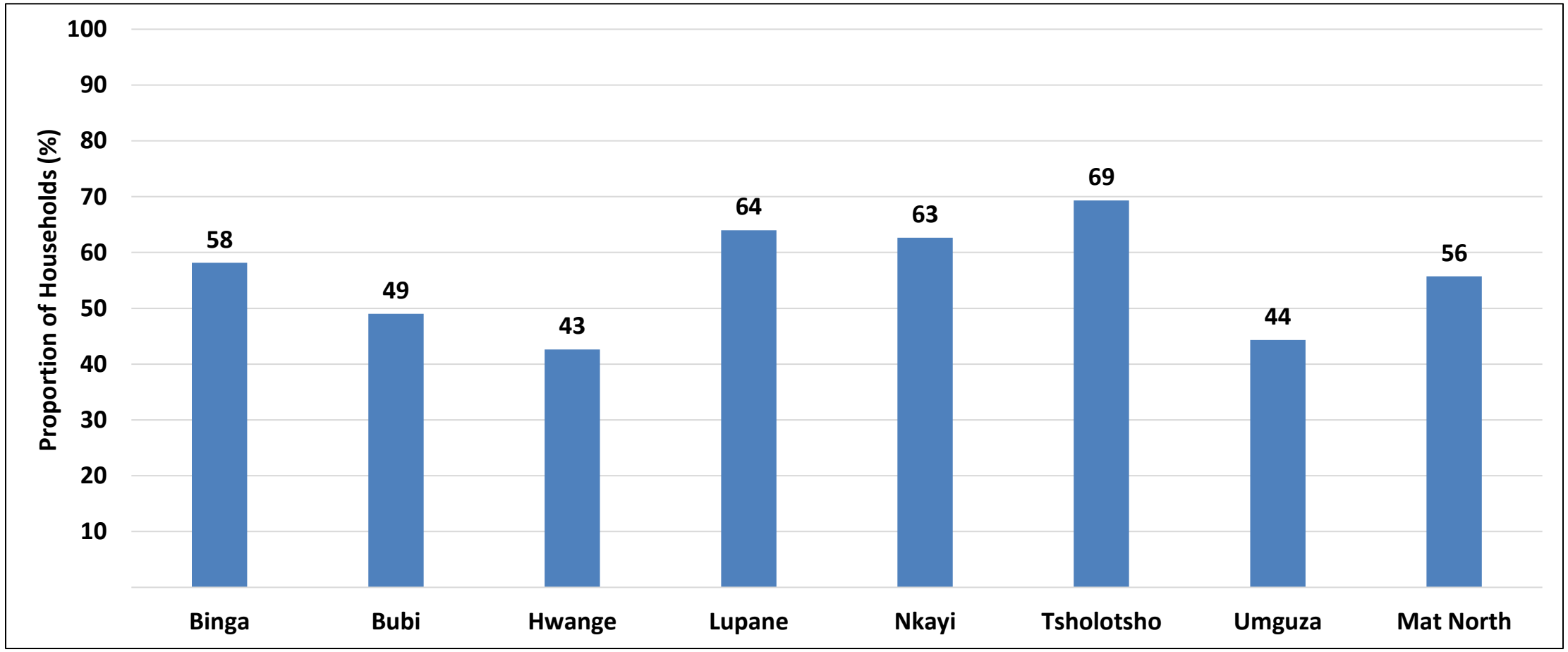
Agricultural Production Technologies

Climate Smart Technologies



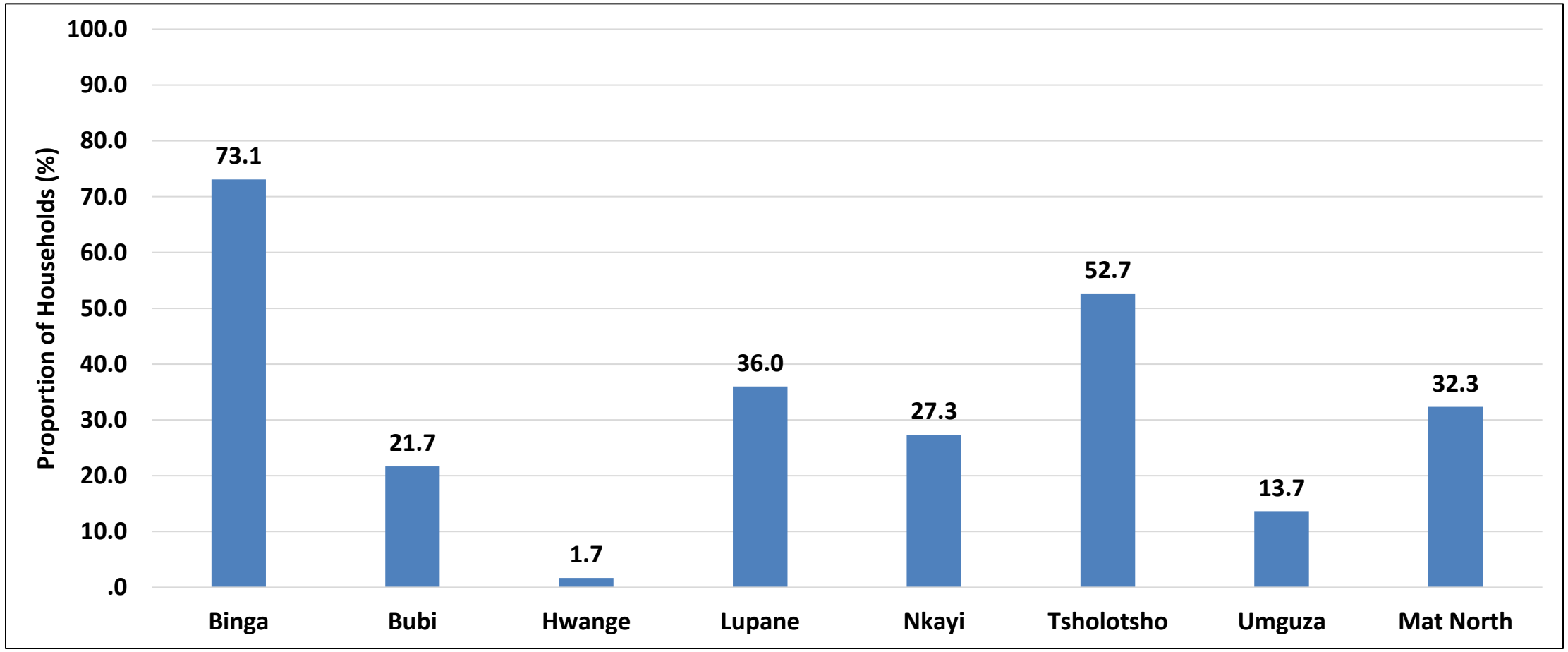
- The most adopted climate smart technologies were Pfumvudza/Intwasa (56%) and growing of traditional grains (32%).

Pfumvudza/Intwasa



- Tsholotsho (69%) and Lupane (64%) had the highest proportion of households that practised Pfumvudza/Intwasa.

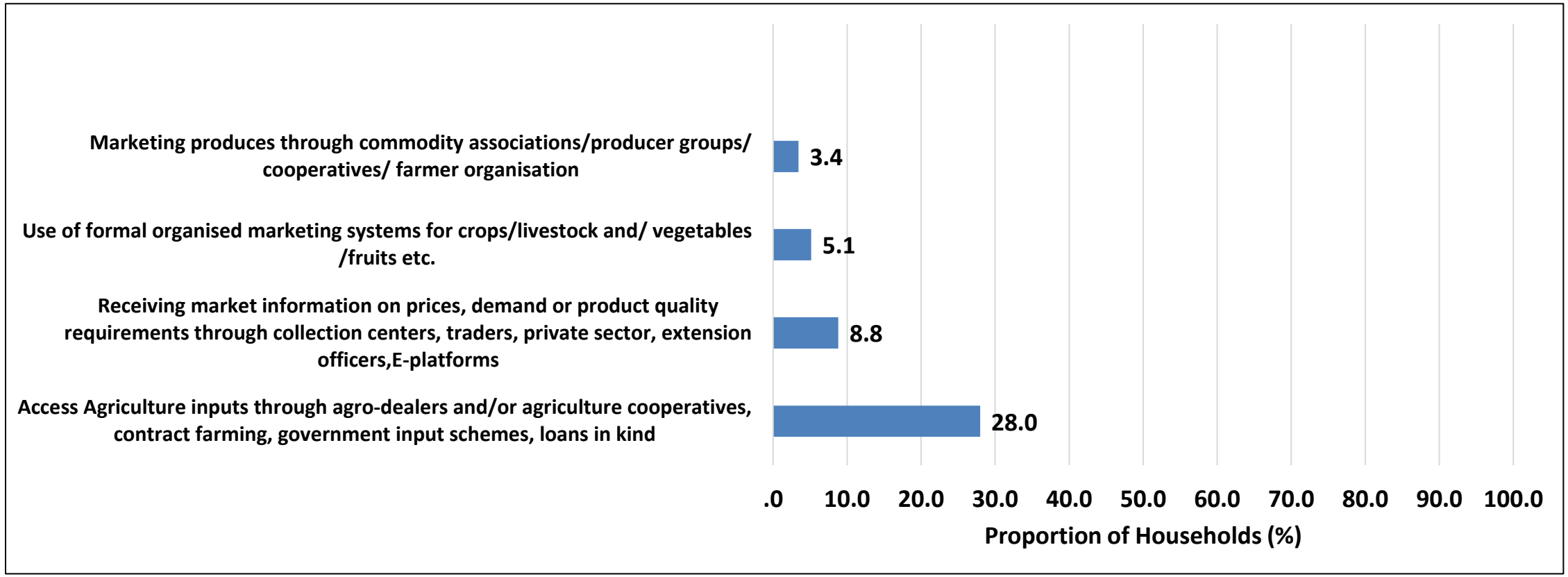
Households Growing Traditional Grains



- Binga (73.1%) and Tsholotsho (52.7%) had the highest proportions of households that grew traditional grains.

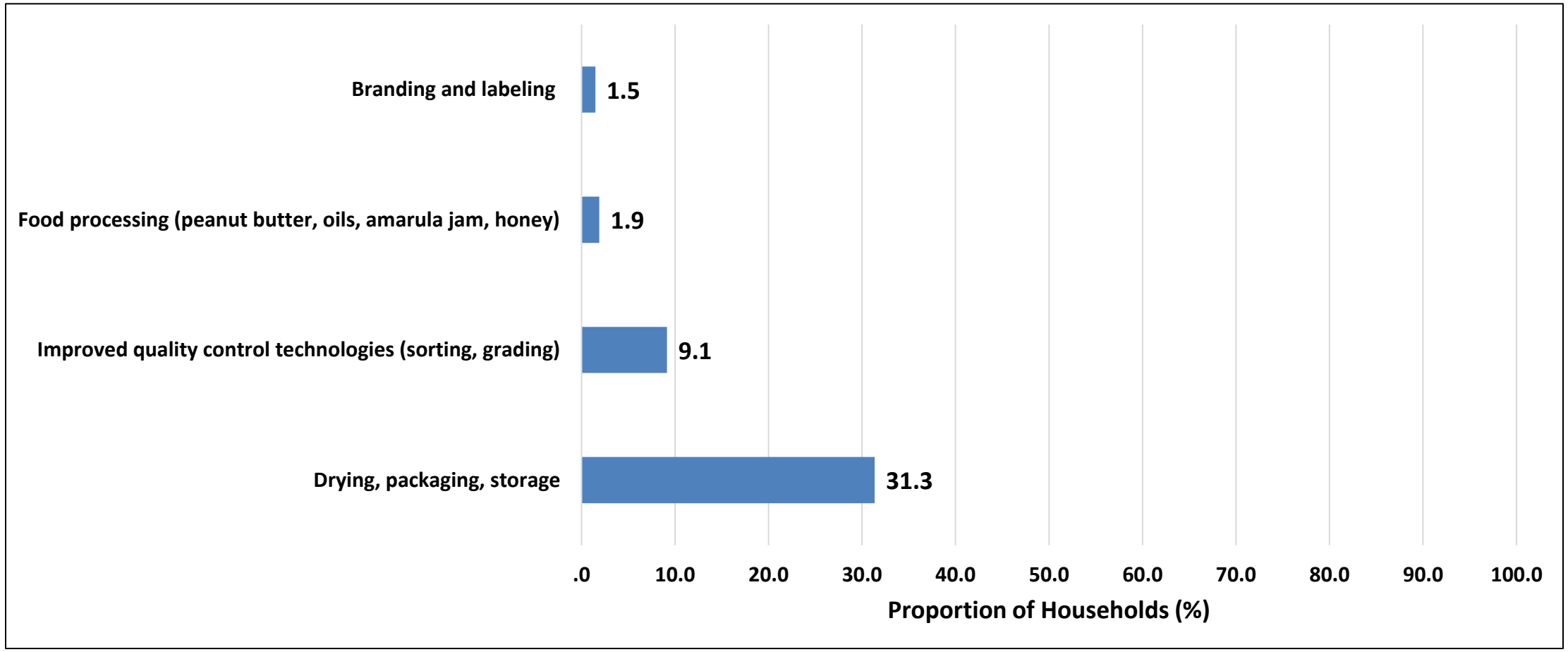
Value Chain Practices

Adoption of Improved Agricultural Marketing Practices



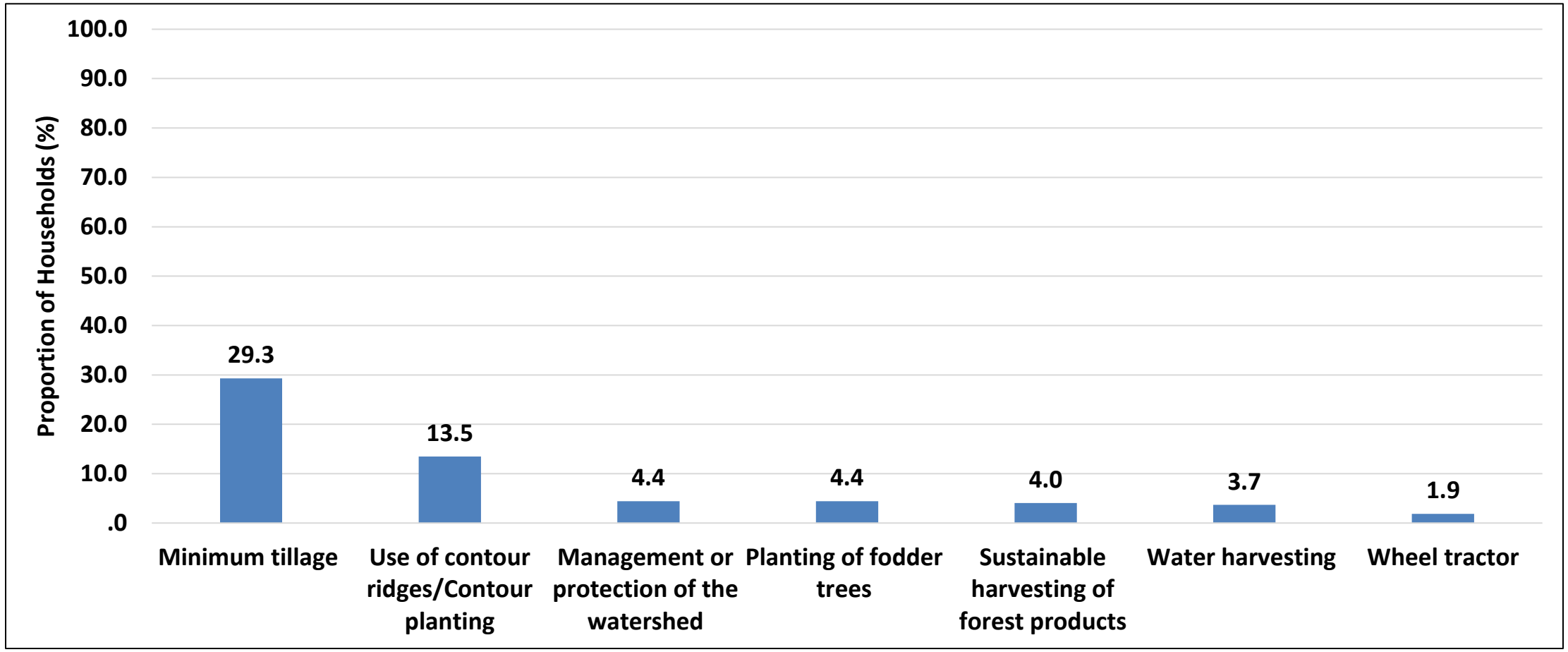
- About 28% of the households accessed agriculture inputs through agro-dealers and/or cooperative, contract farming, government input scheme and loans in kind.

Adoption of Value Addition



- Drying, packaging,and storage (31.3%) were the most practised value addition methods.

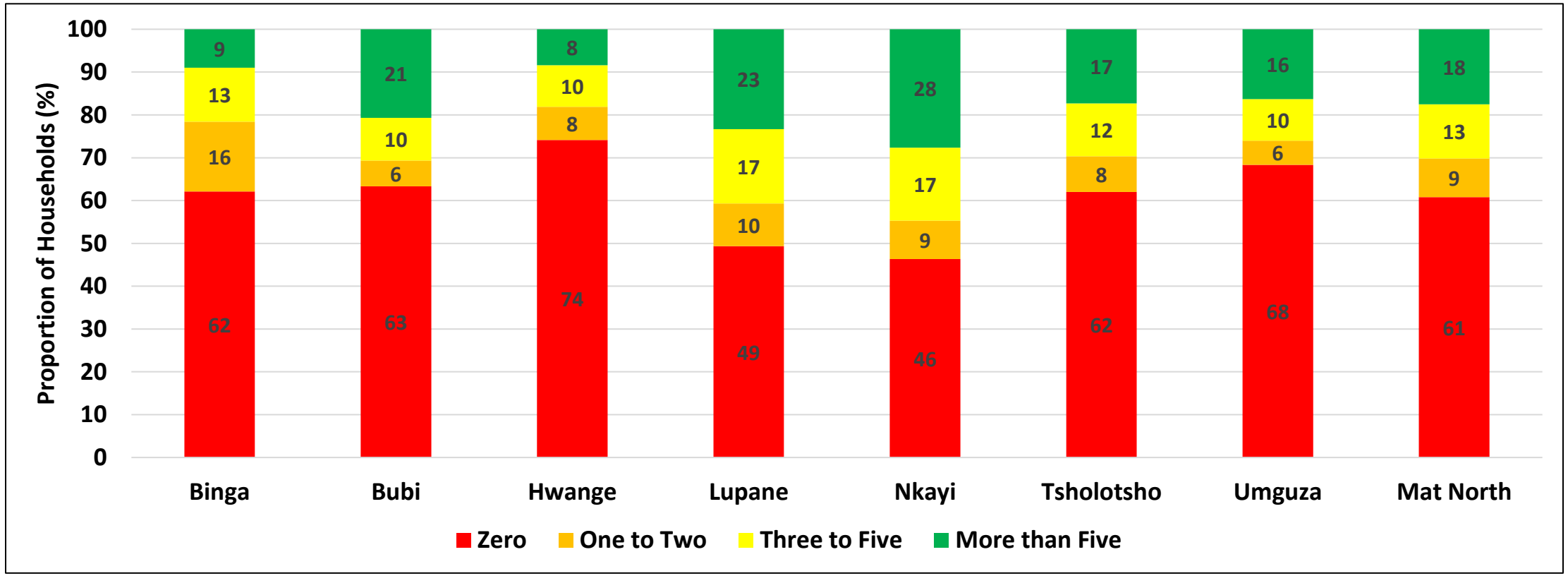
Adoption of Water and Soil Conservation Strategies



- Minimum tillage (29.3%) was the most practised water and soil conservation strategy.

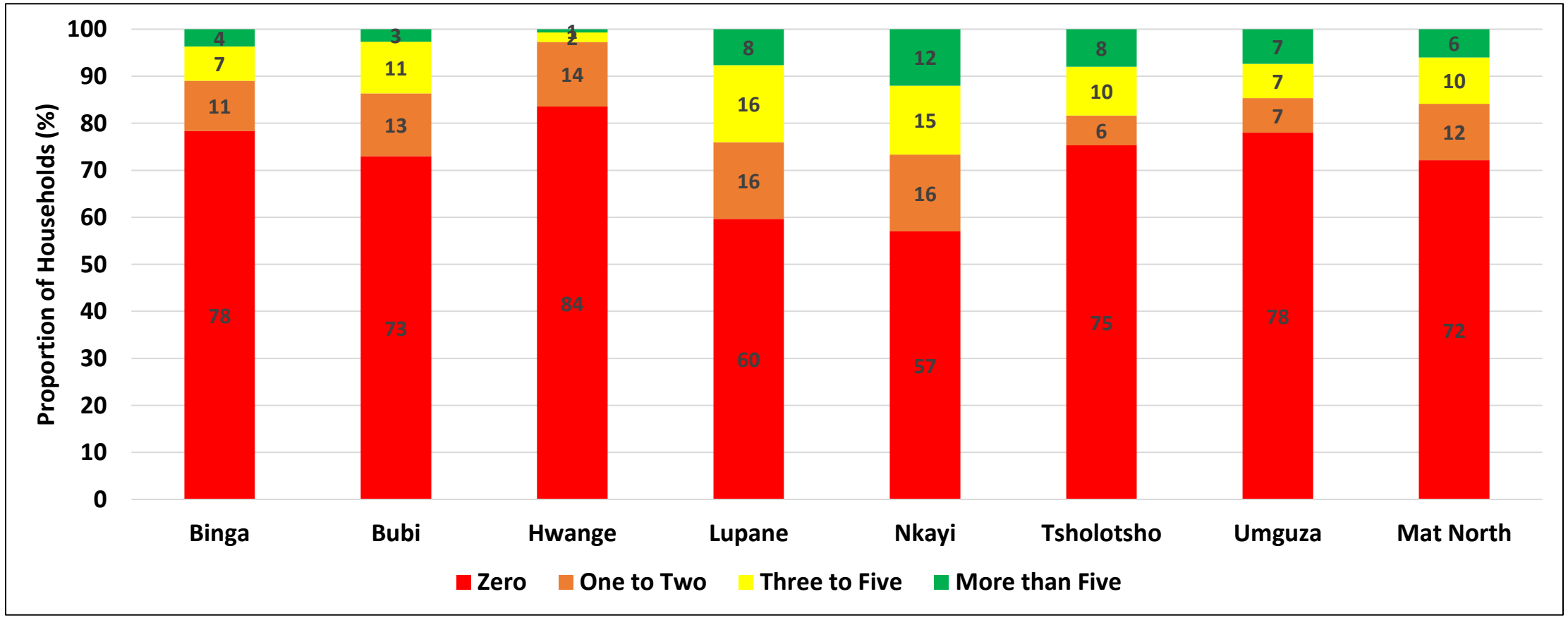
Livestock

Households which Owned Cattle



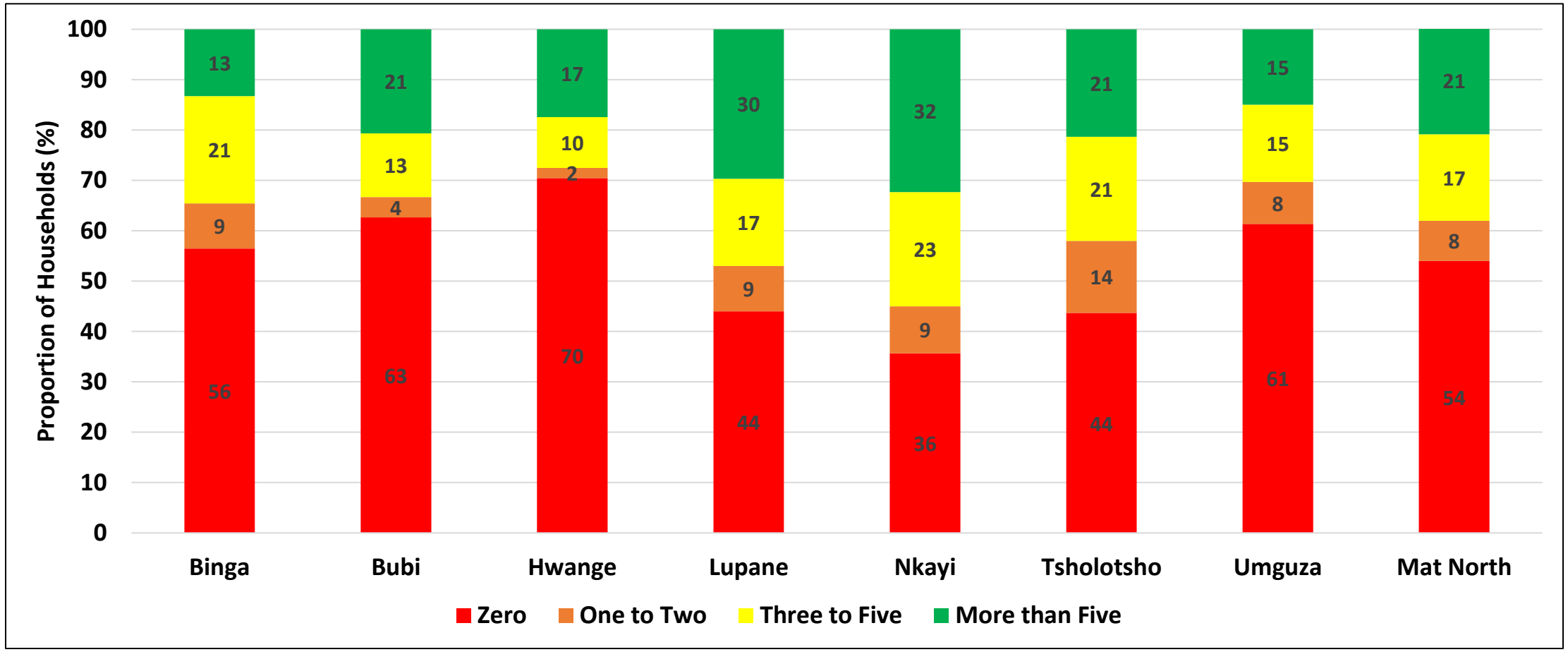
- The proportion of households that did not own cattle was 61% in Matabeleland North.
- Atleast 18% of the households owned more than five cattle, Lupane (23%) and Nkayi (28%) having the highest proportions.

Households which Owned Draught Animals



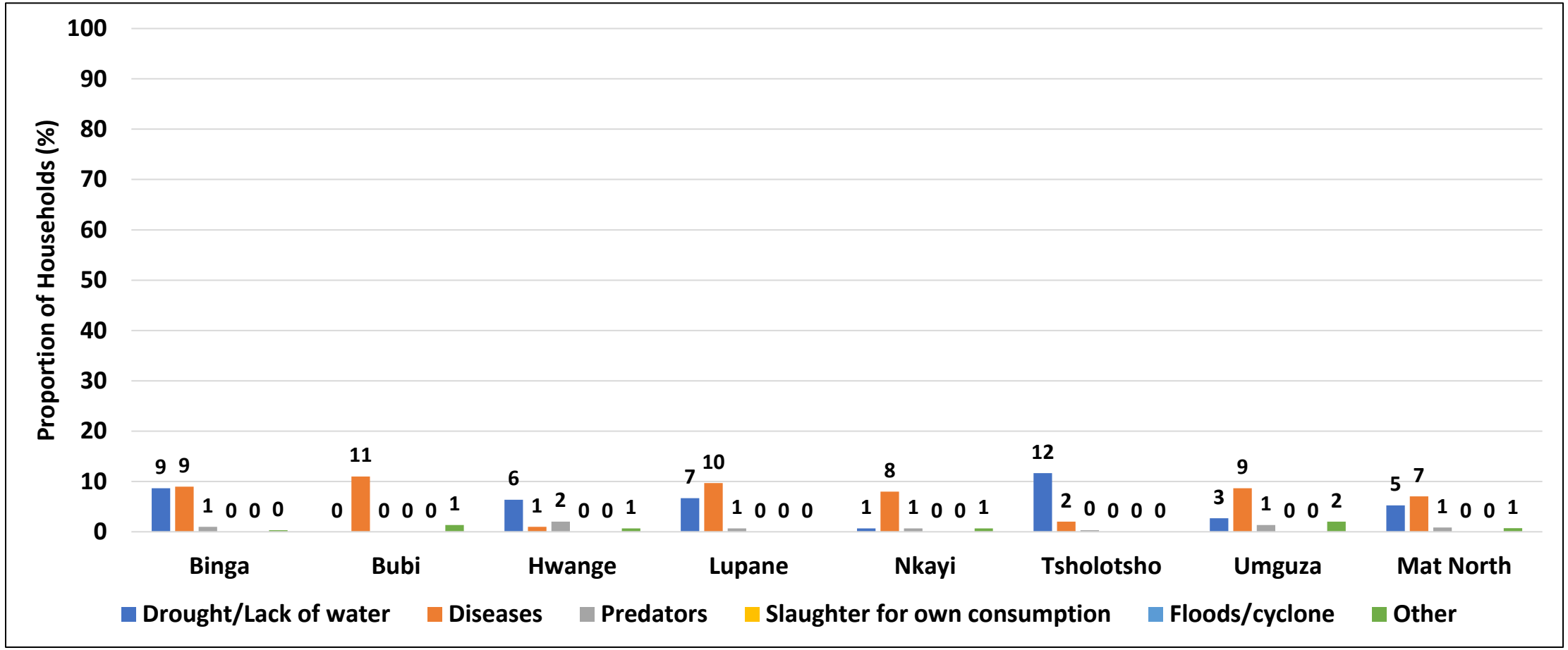
- Most households (72%) did not own draught animals. Hwange (84%) had the greatest proportion of households without draught animals.

Households which Owned Goats



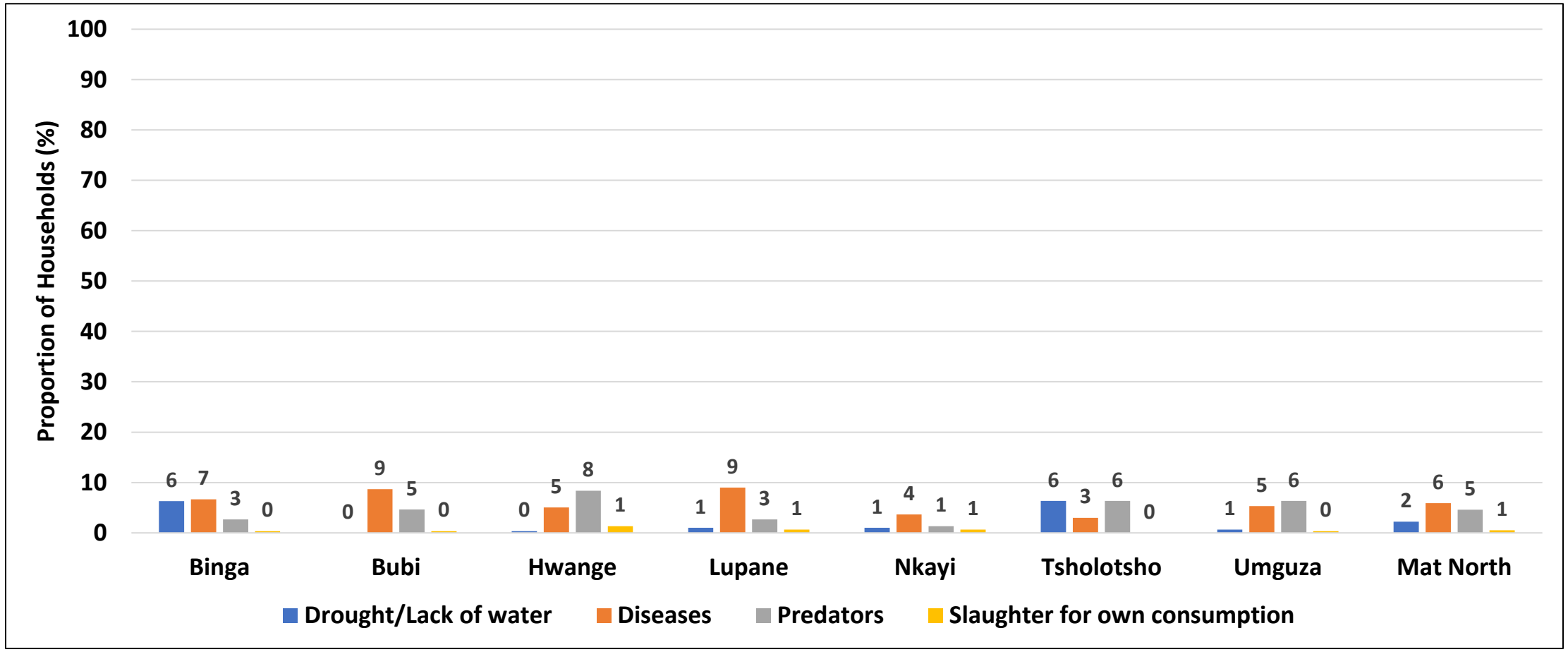
- About 54% of the households did not own goats while 21% owned at least five goats.

Causes of Deaths for Cattle



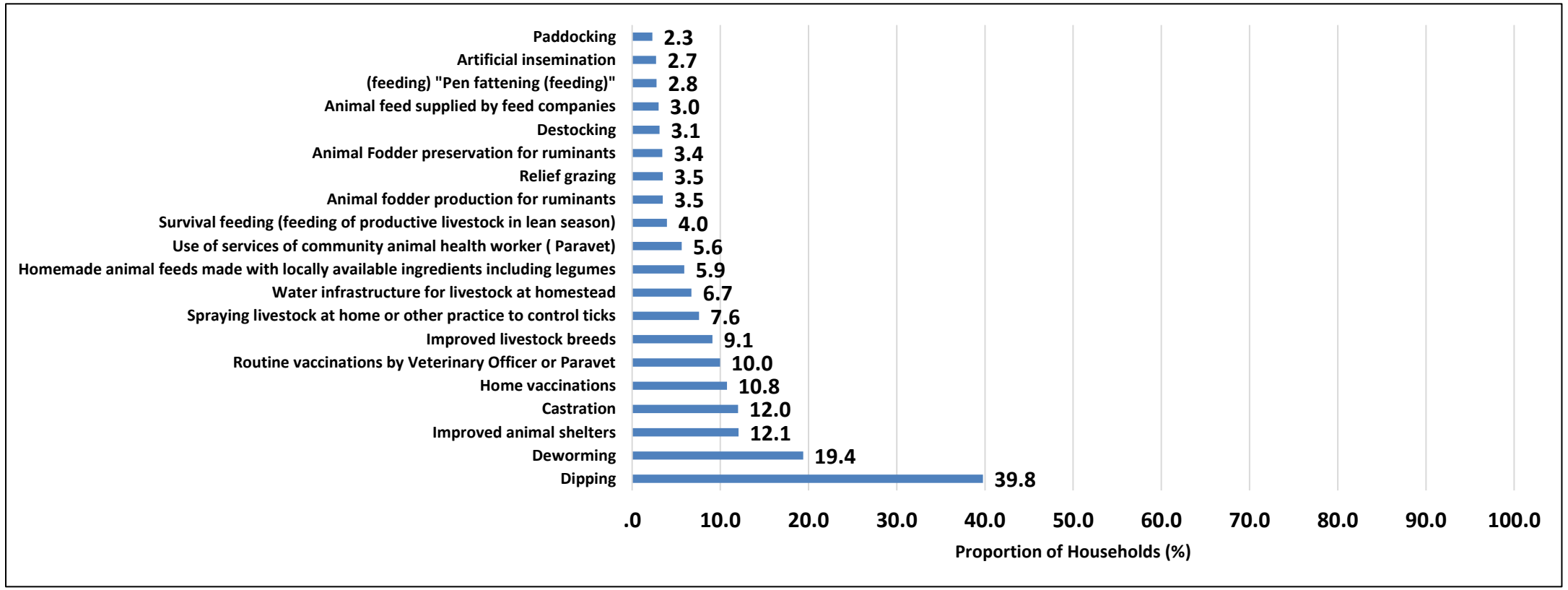
- Diseases (7%) and drought (5%) were the most reported causes of cattle deaths.

Causes of Deaths for Goats



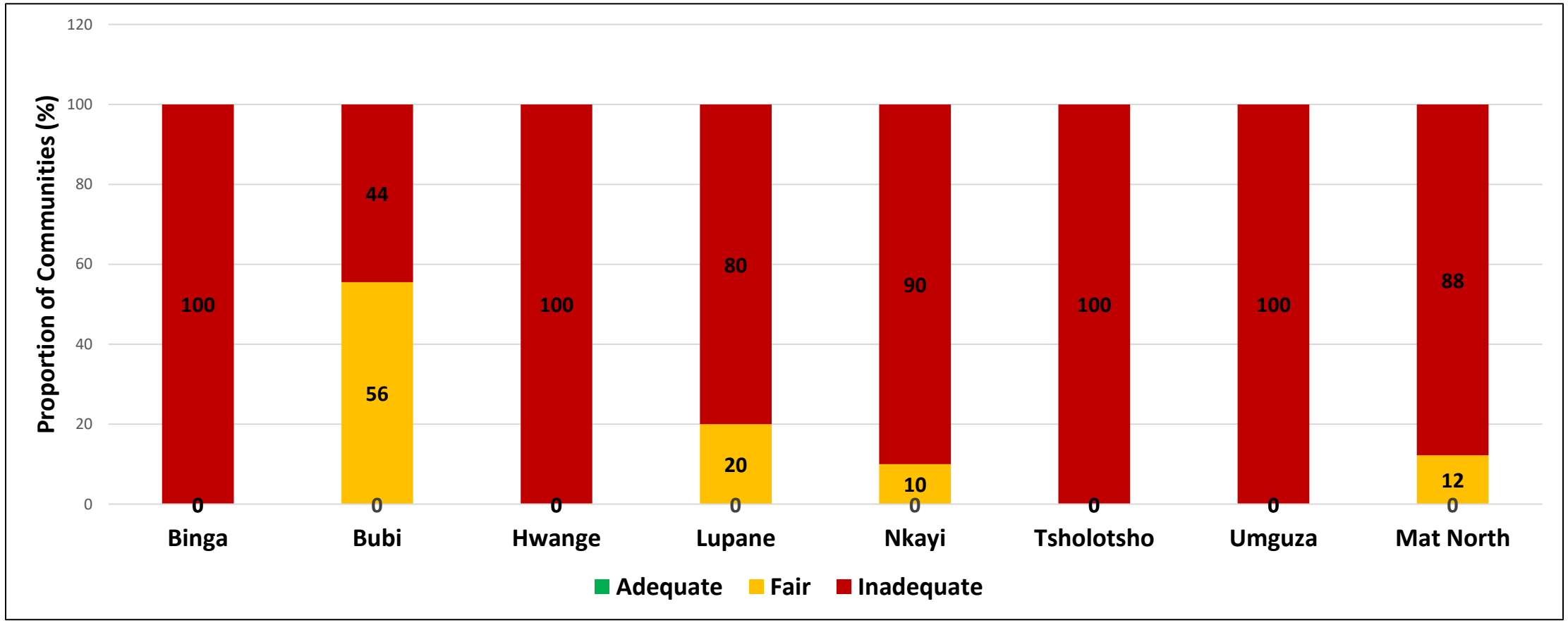
- Diseases (6%) and predators (5%) were the most reported causes of deaths for cattle.

Improved Livestock Practices



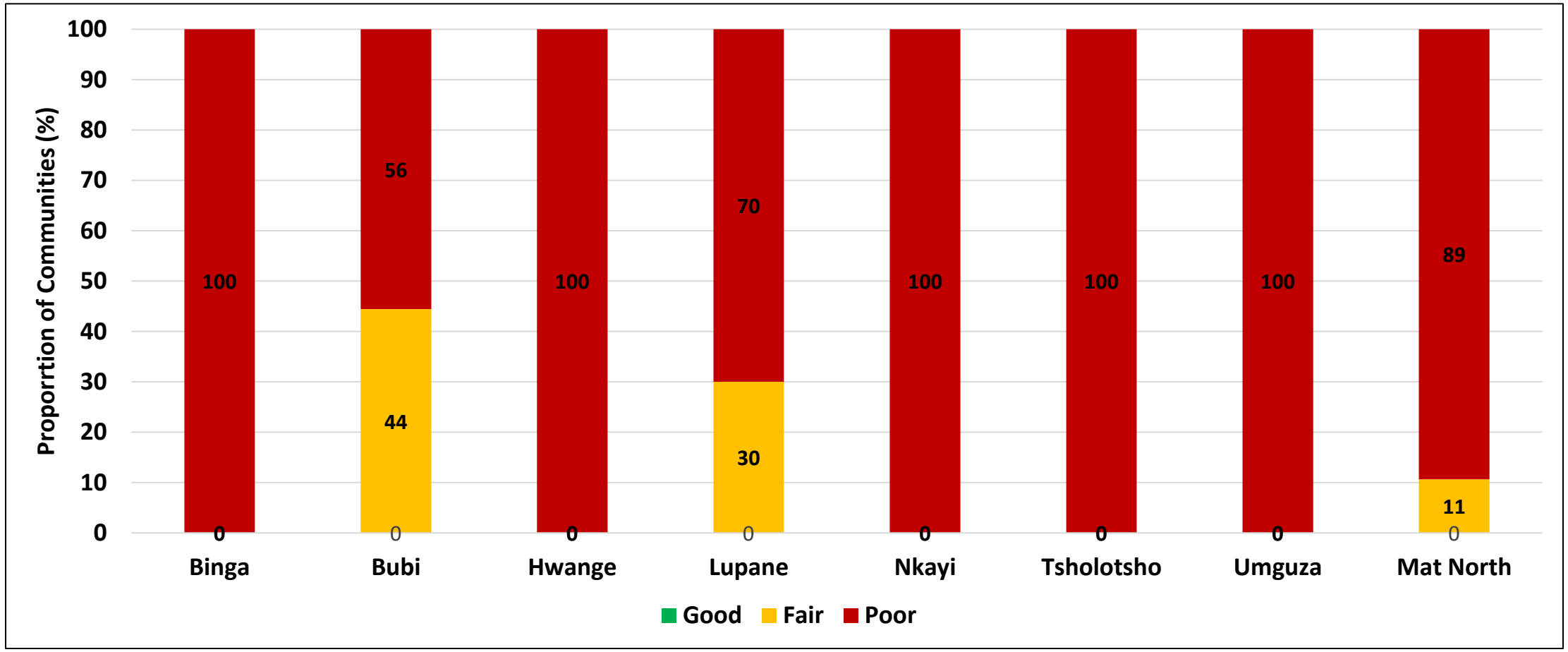
- The most practised livestock improvement strategies were dipping (39.8%) and deworming (19.4%).
- Artificial insemination (2.7%) and paddocking (2.3%) were the least practiced methods.

Availability of Pastures



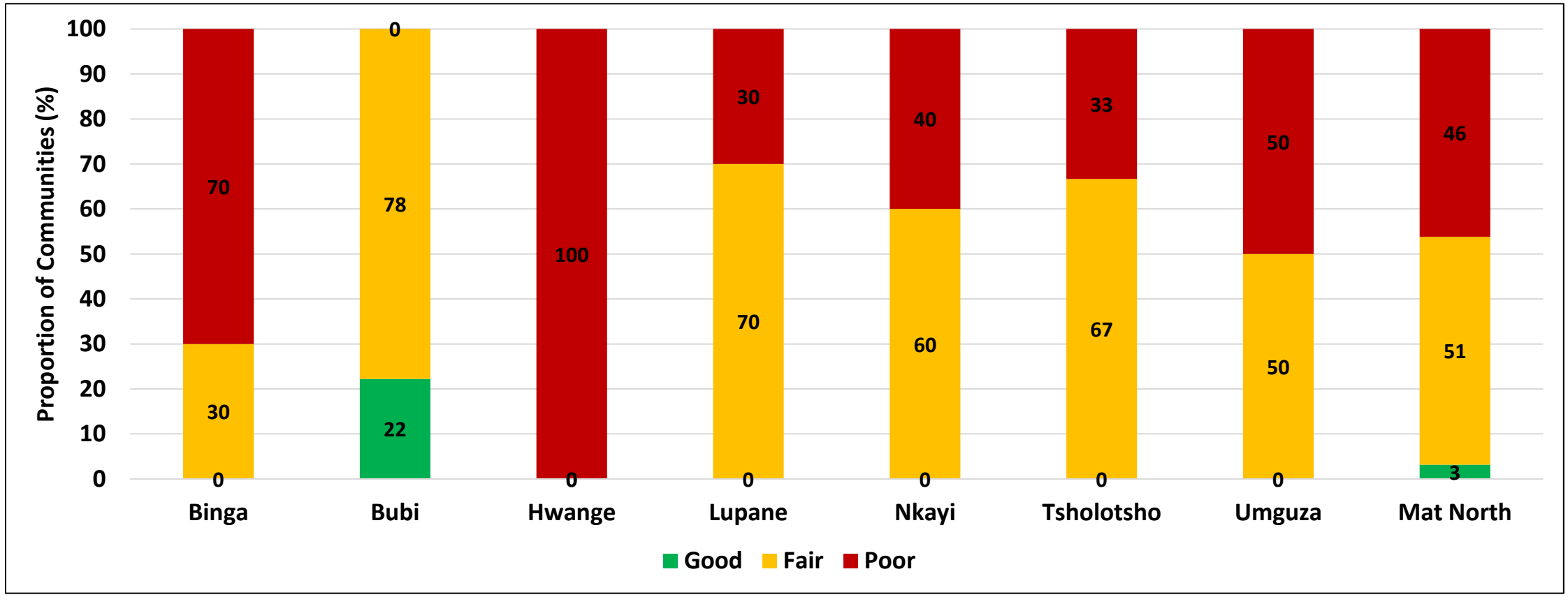
- The availability of pastures was reported to be inadequate (88%) by the majority of communities.
- Communities in Hwange, Binga, Umguza and Tsholotsho all reported that there were inadequate pastures.

Quality of pastures



- Generally, the quality of pastures was reported to be poor (89%).

Livestock Condition

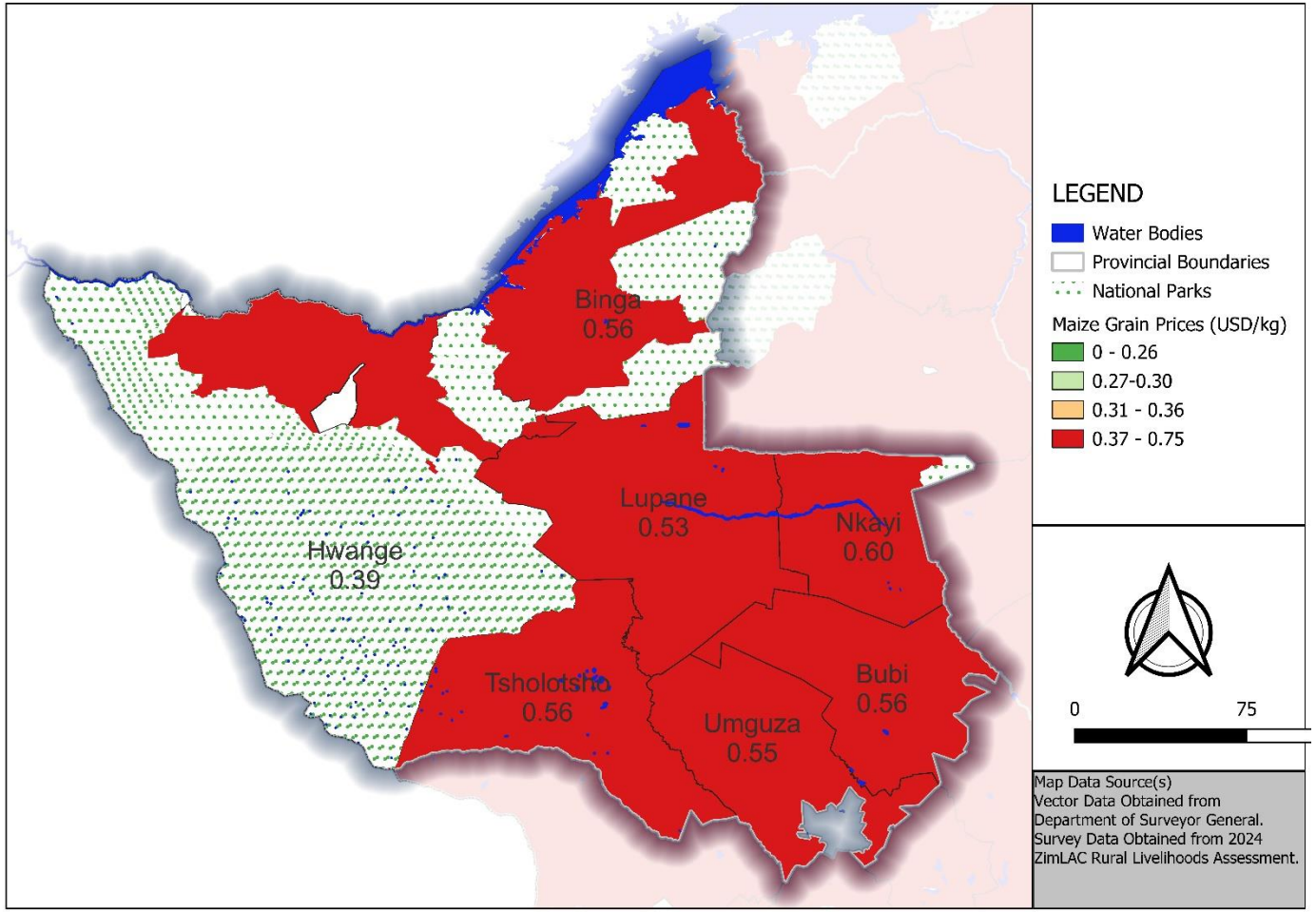


- The condition of livestock was reported as 46% poor.

Agricultural Produce Markets

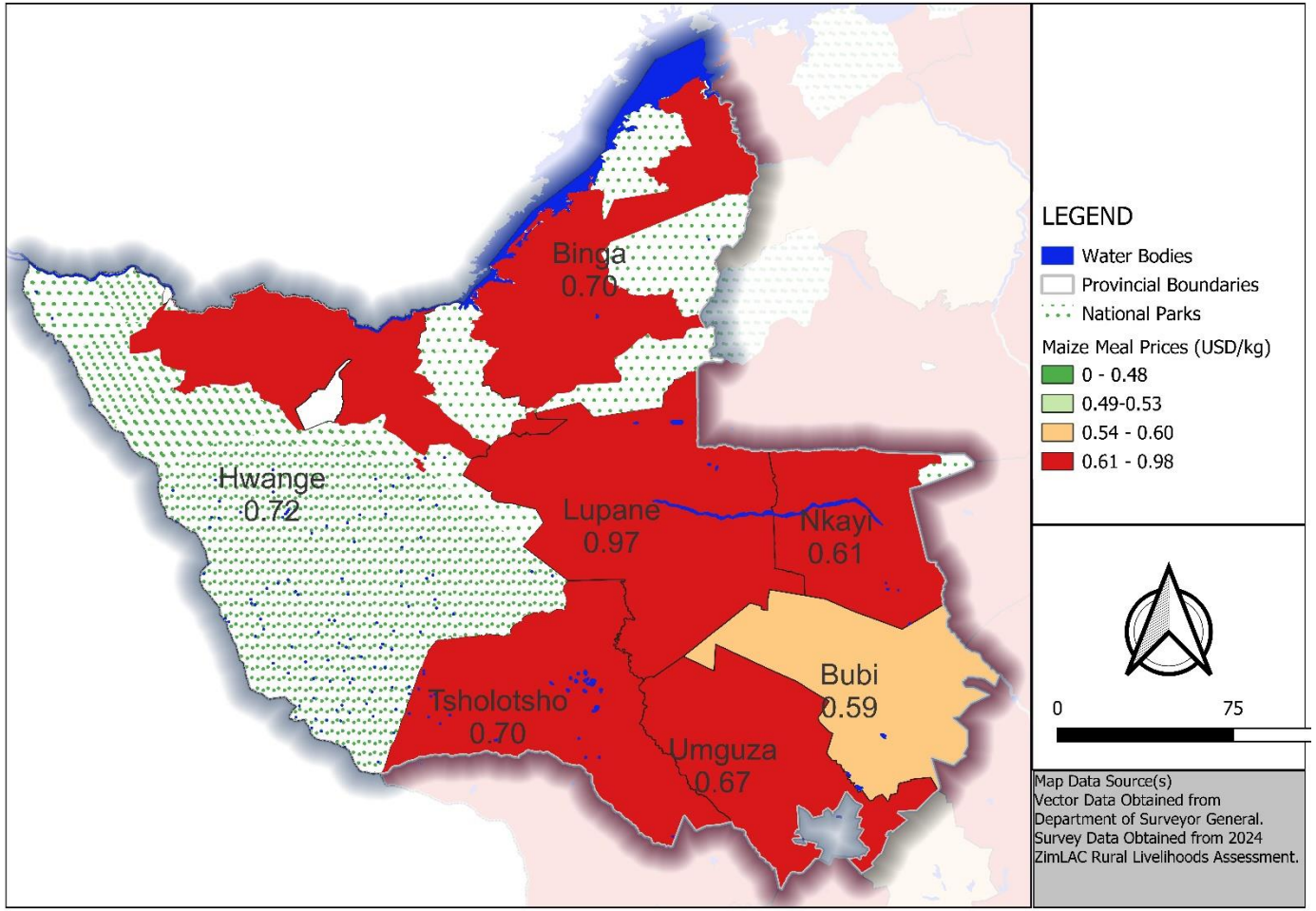
Maize Grain Prices

- Maize grain prices ranged from USD$ 0.39 to USD$ 0.60 per kilogram.
- High prices were reported in Nkayi (USD$ 0.60) and lowest prices in Hwange (USD$ 0.39).

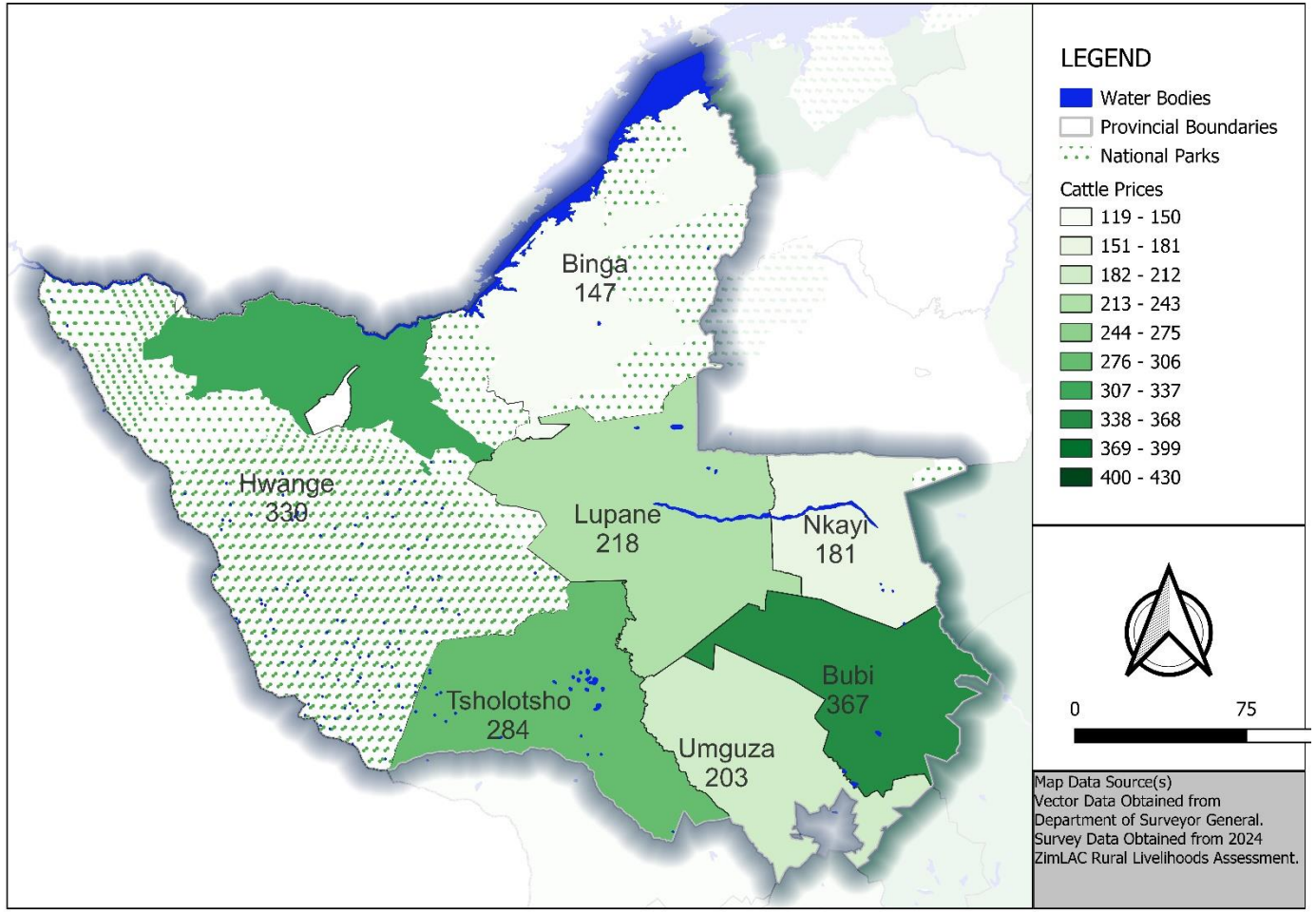


Maize Meal Prices

- The prices for maize meal ranged from USD$ 0.59 to USD$ 0.97 per kilogram.
- The highest price were reported in Lupane (USD$ 0.97) and the lowest prices in Bubi (USD$ 0.59).

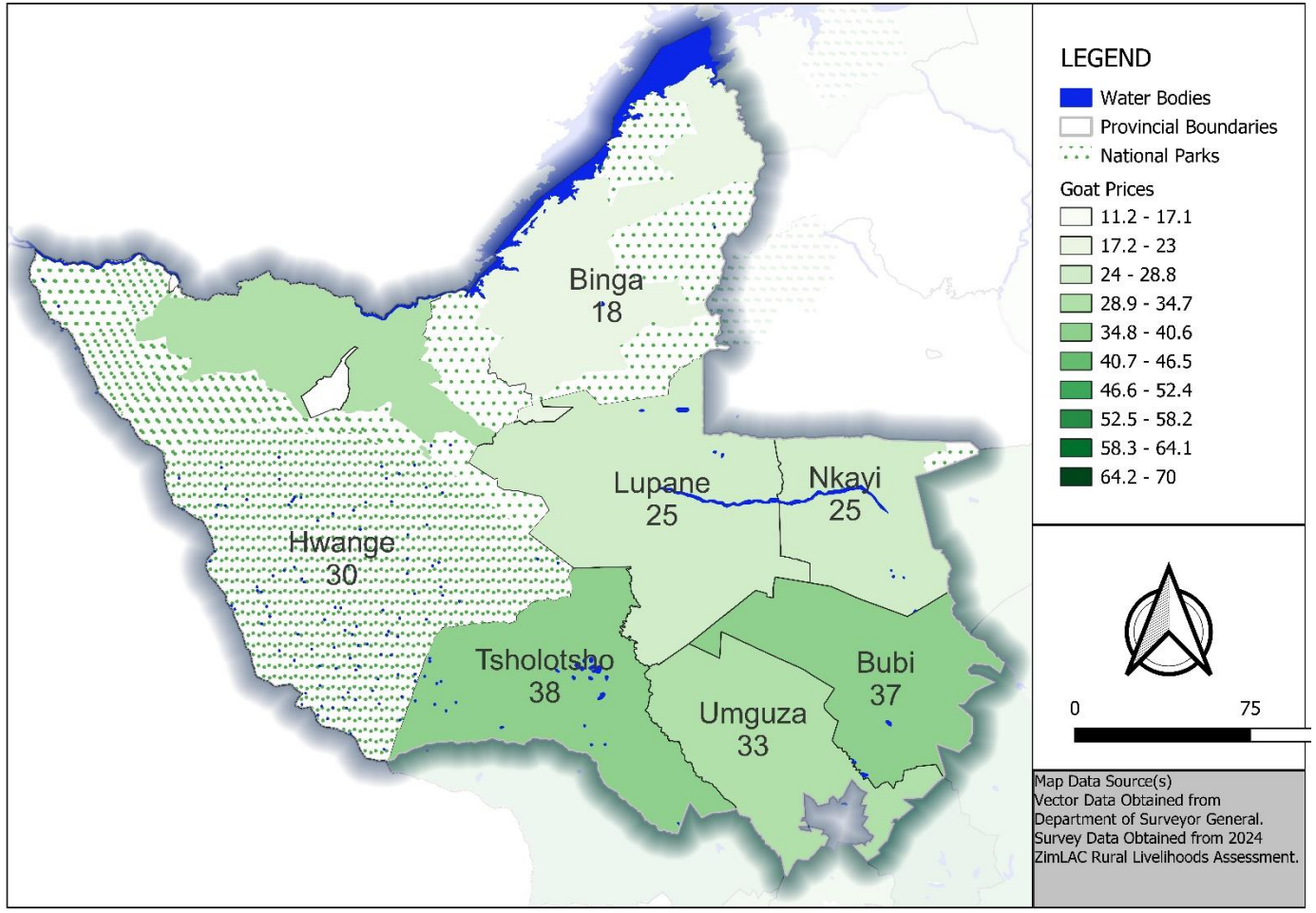


Cattle Prices



- Cattle prices ranged from USD$ 147 to USD$ 367.
- Bubi (USD$ 367) had the highest prices while Nkayi (USD$ 147) had the lowest prices.

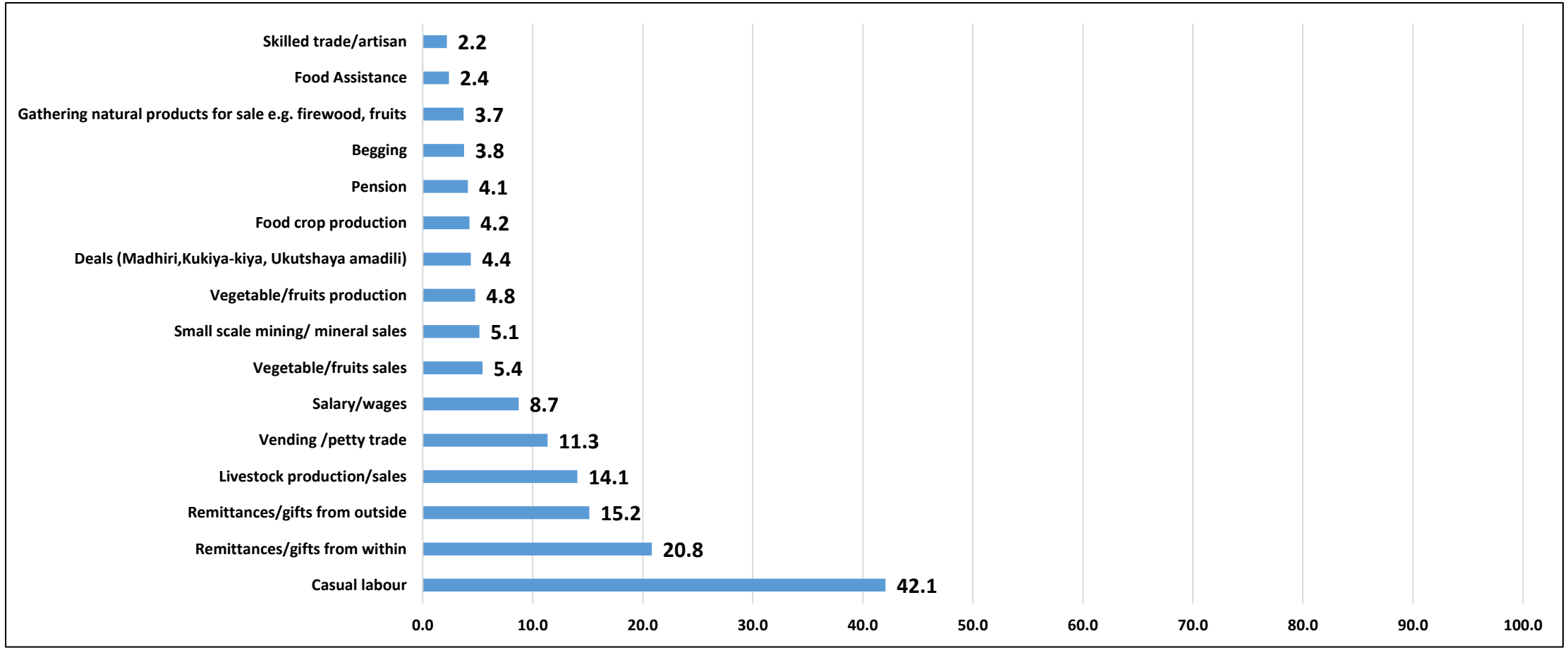
Goat Prices



- Goat prices ranged from USD$ 18 to USD$ 38.
- Binga has the lowest prices while Tsholotsho had the highest prices.

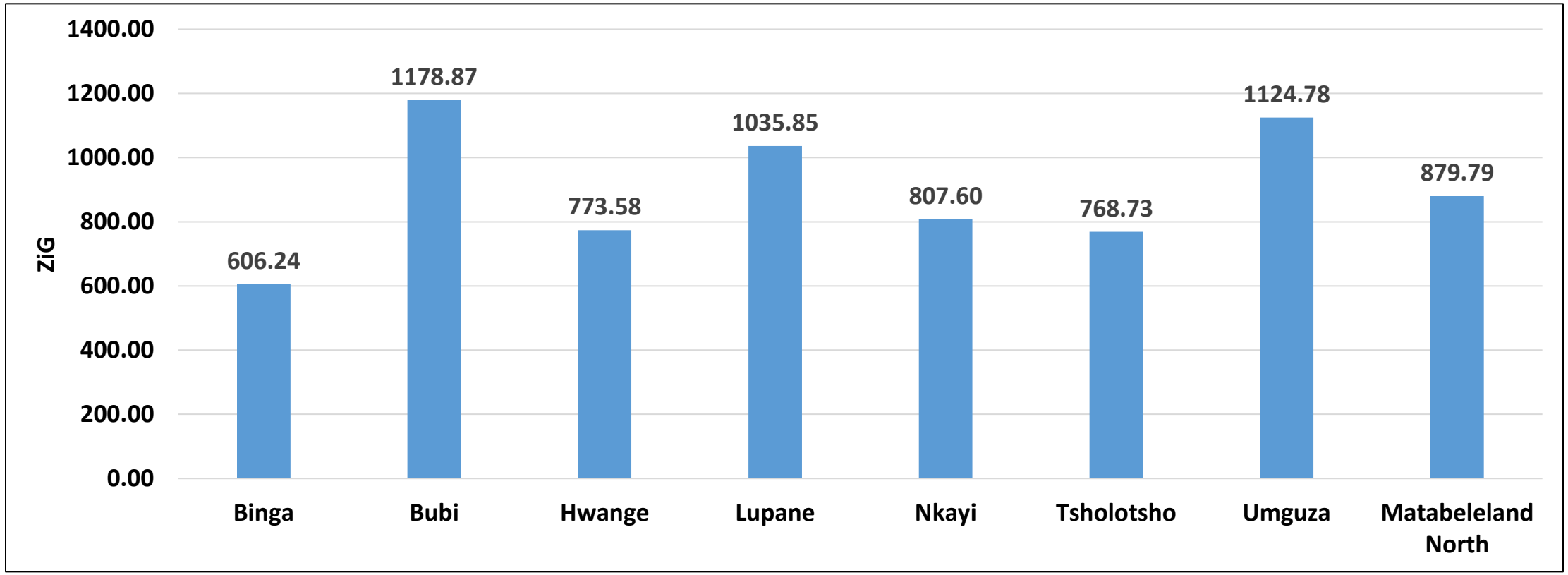
Incomes and Expenditure

Income Sources



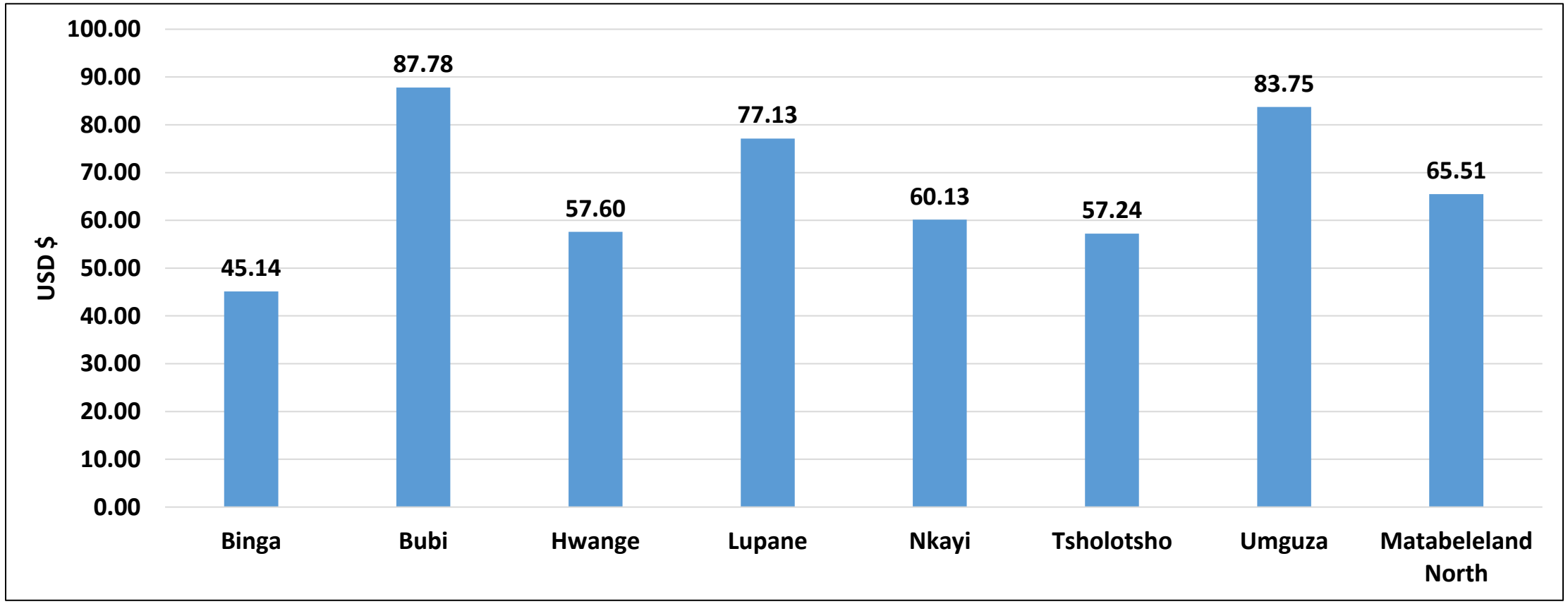
- Most households relied on casual labour (42.1%) and remittances from within Zimbabwe (20.8%) as a source of income.

Average Household Monthly Income (ZiG) For April 2024



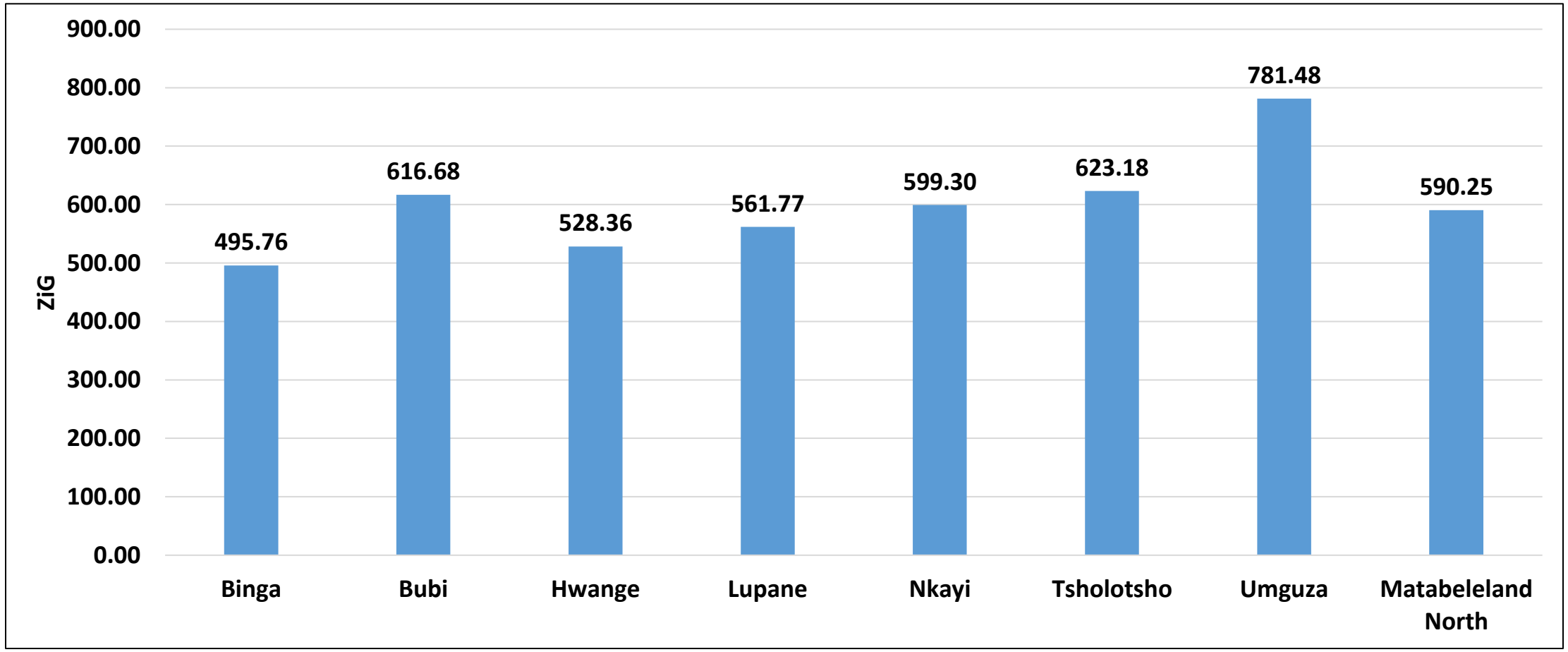
- In Matabeleland North, the average monthly income was ZiG 879.79, with Bubi having the highest average (ZiG 1178.87) and Binga having the lowest (ZiG 606.24).
- **NB: The USD monthly income and expenditure was calculated using the official exchange rate of Tuesday 30 April 2024**

Average Household Monthly Income (USD) For April 2024



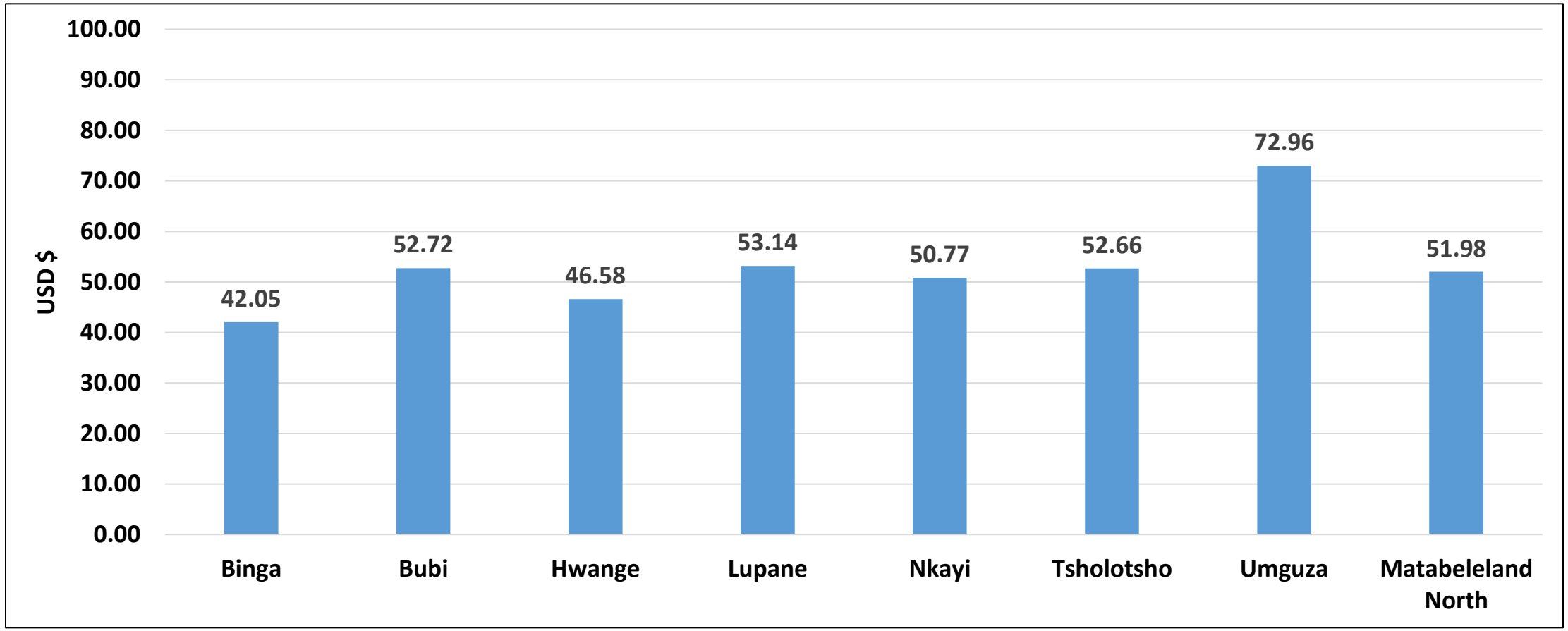
- The household monthly income averaged USD$ 65.51.
- Bubi had the highest income (USD$ 87.78) while Binga had lowest (USD$ 45.14).

Average Household Monthly Expenditure (ZiG) For April 2024



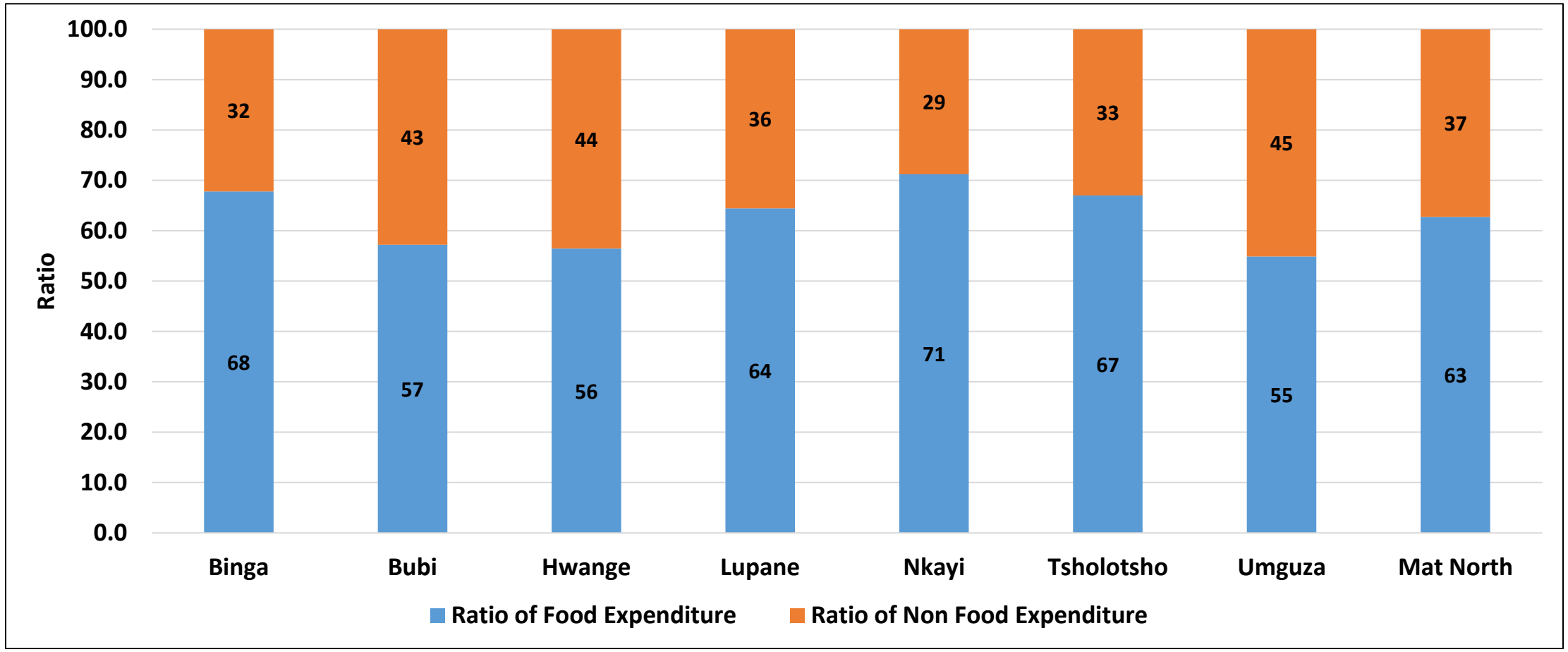
- The average expenditure was ZiG 590.25.
- Umguza had the highest expenditure (ZiG 781.48).

Average Household Monthly Expenditure (USD) For April 2024



- The average expenditure was USD$ 51.98.
- Binga had the lowest expenditure of USD$ 42.05.

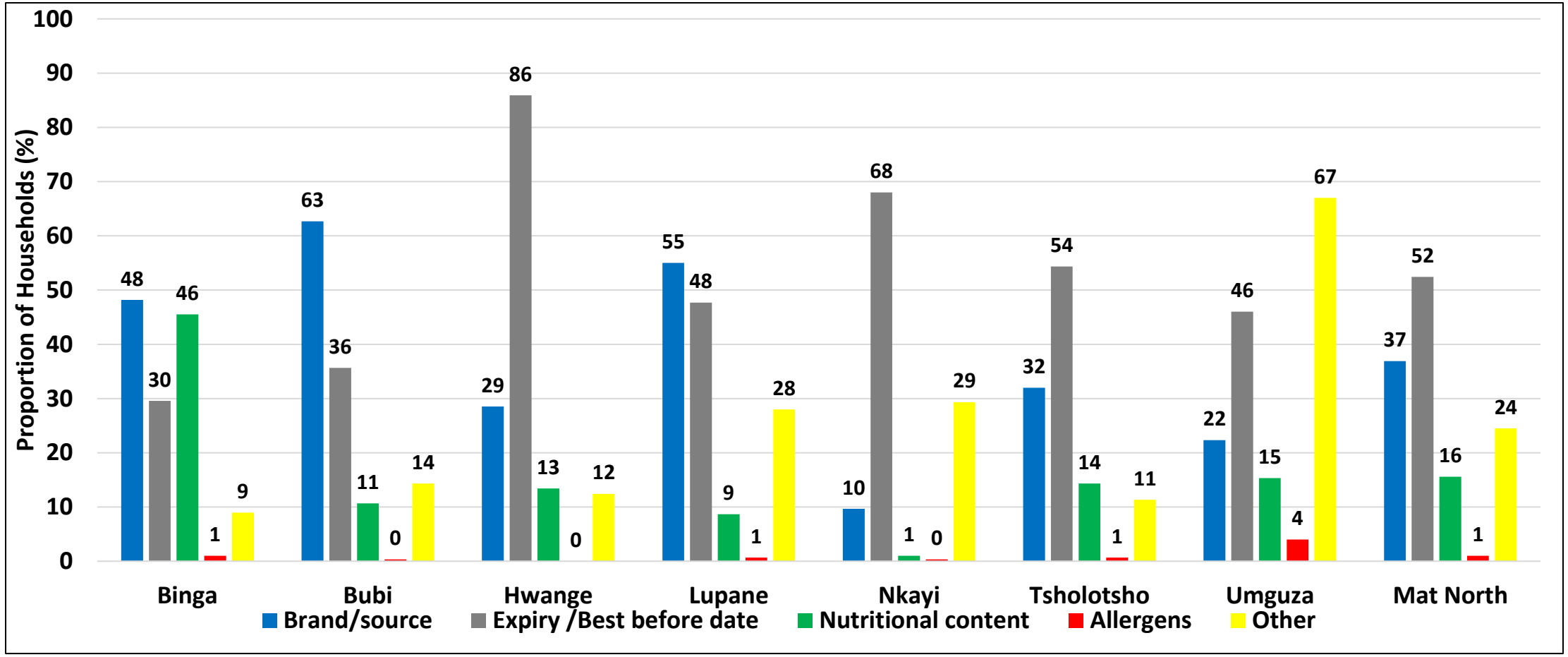
Food and Non-food Expenditure Ratio



- The proportion of food expenditure (63%) was higher relative to non food expenditure (37%).

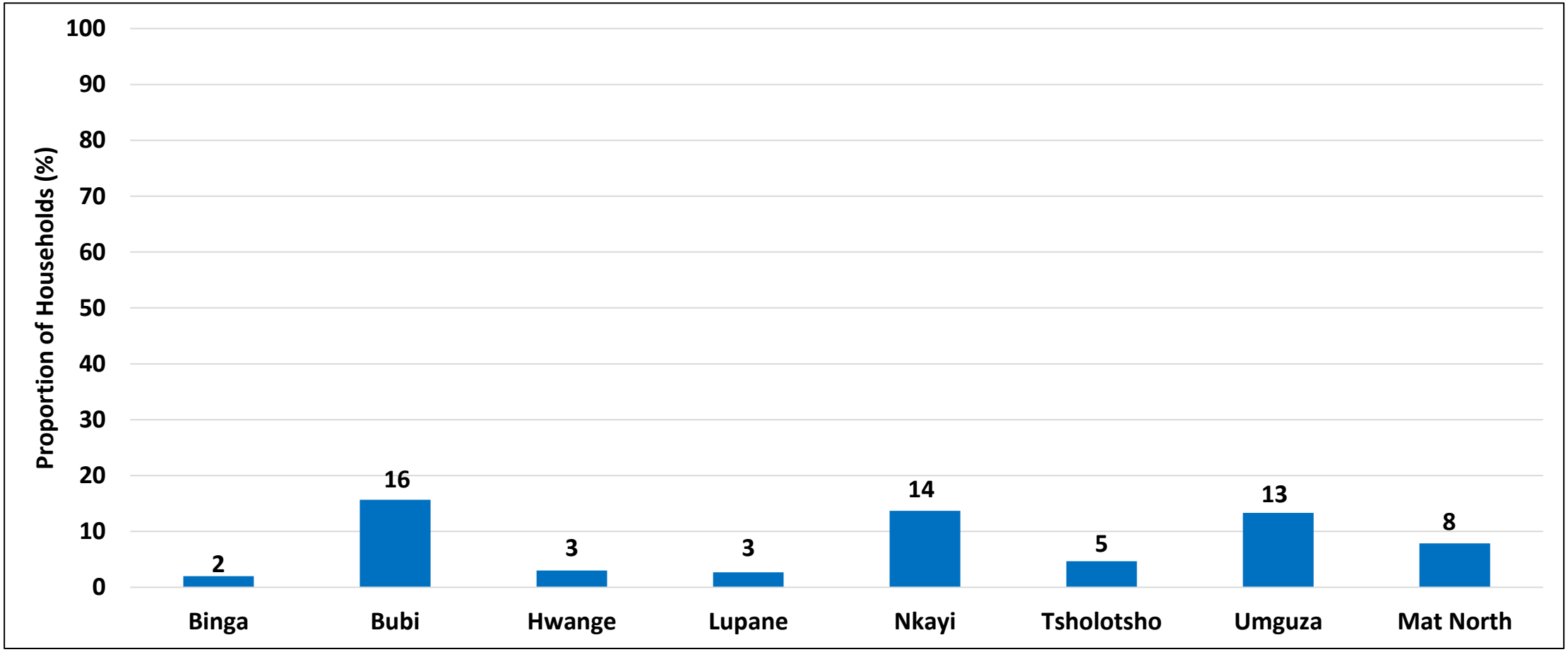
Food Safety

Household Considerations when Purchasing Food



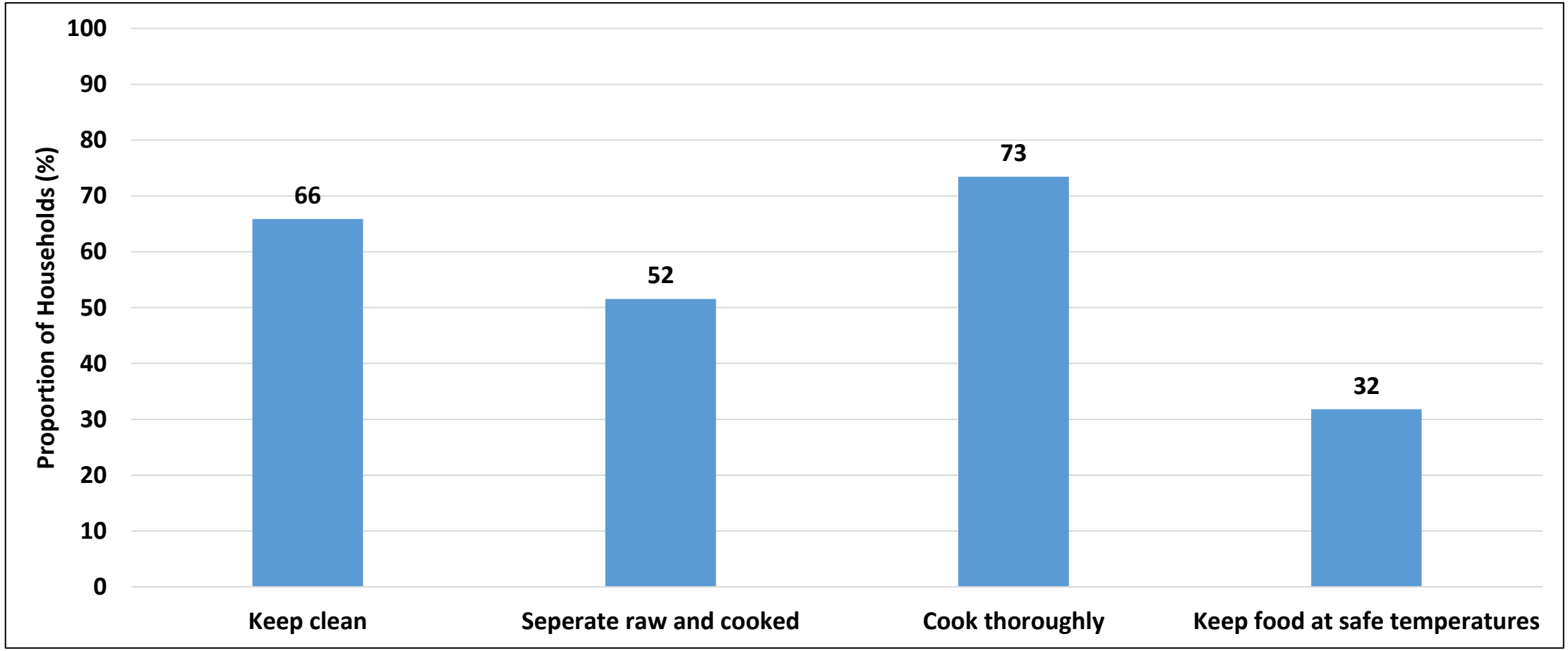
- Holding price constant, when buying food, households considered the expiry date (52%), brand (37%), nutritional content (16%) and 1% allergens.

Households that Purchased Expired Food



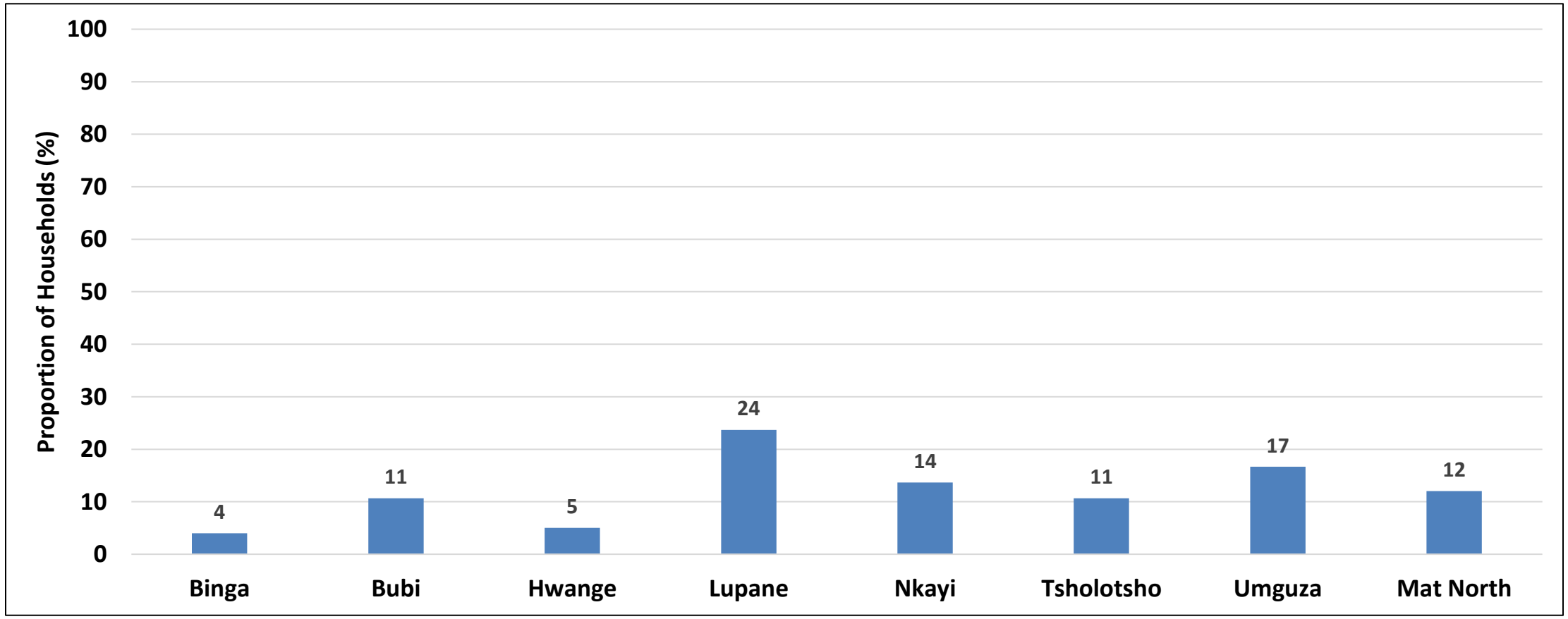
- Most households (92%) reported to have not purchased expired food in Matabeleland North.
- Bubi has the largest proportion (16%) of households that purchased expired food.

Safe Preparation of Food



- Most households reported cooking food thoroughly (73%) as a method to prepare safe food, while keeping food at safe temperatures (32%) is the least used method of preparing food.

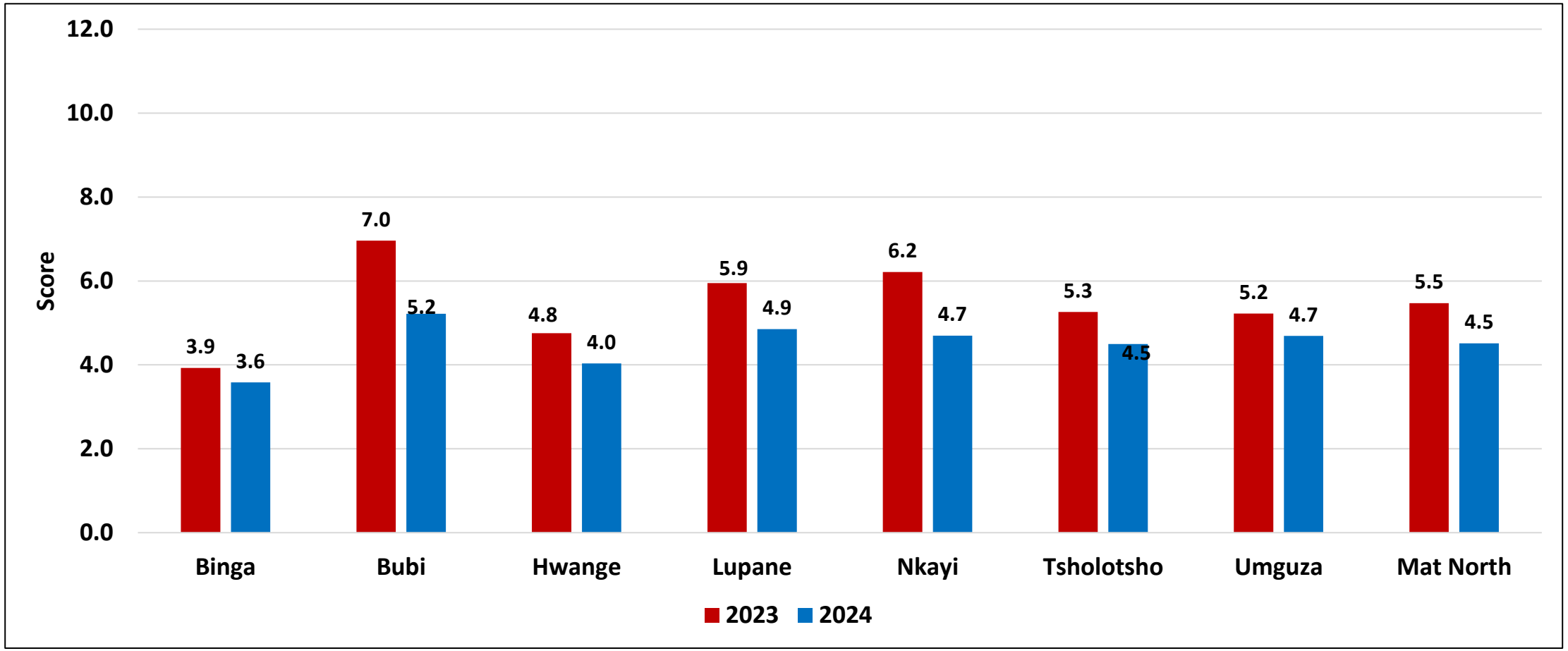
Households that Received Information on Food Safety Issues



- About 12% of the households received information on food safety.

Food Consumption Patterns

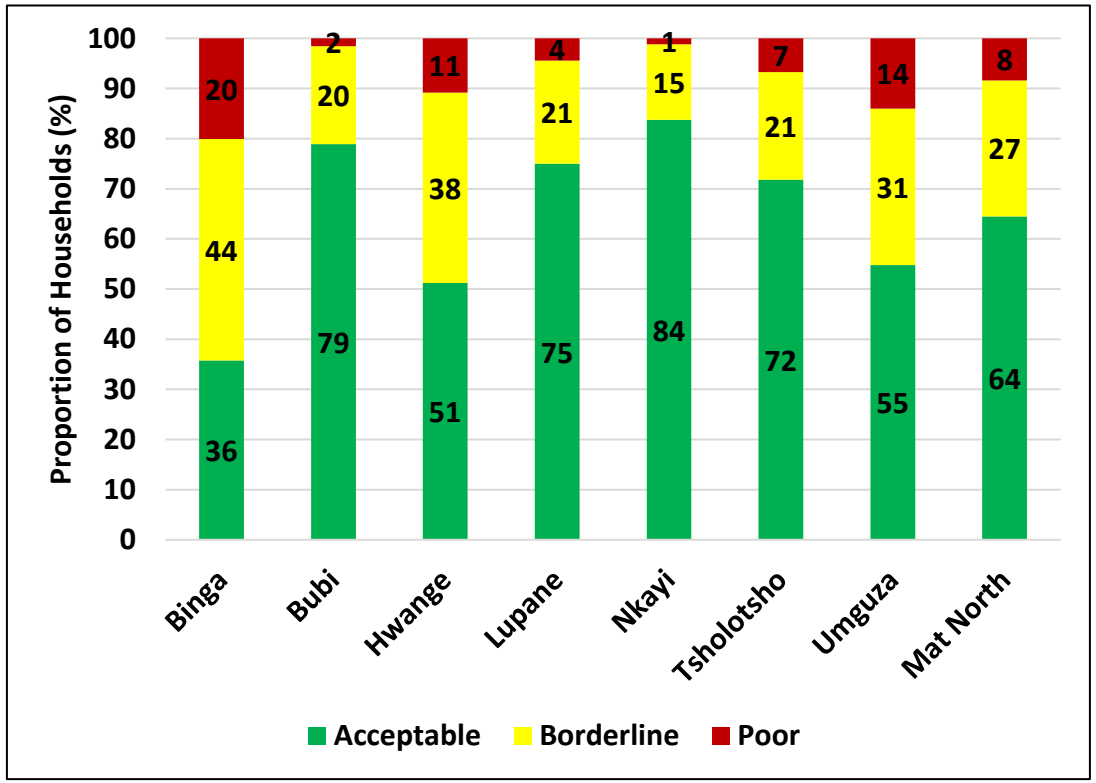
Average Household Dietary Diversity Score



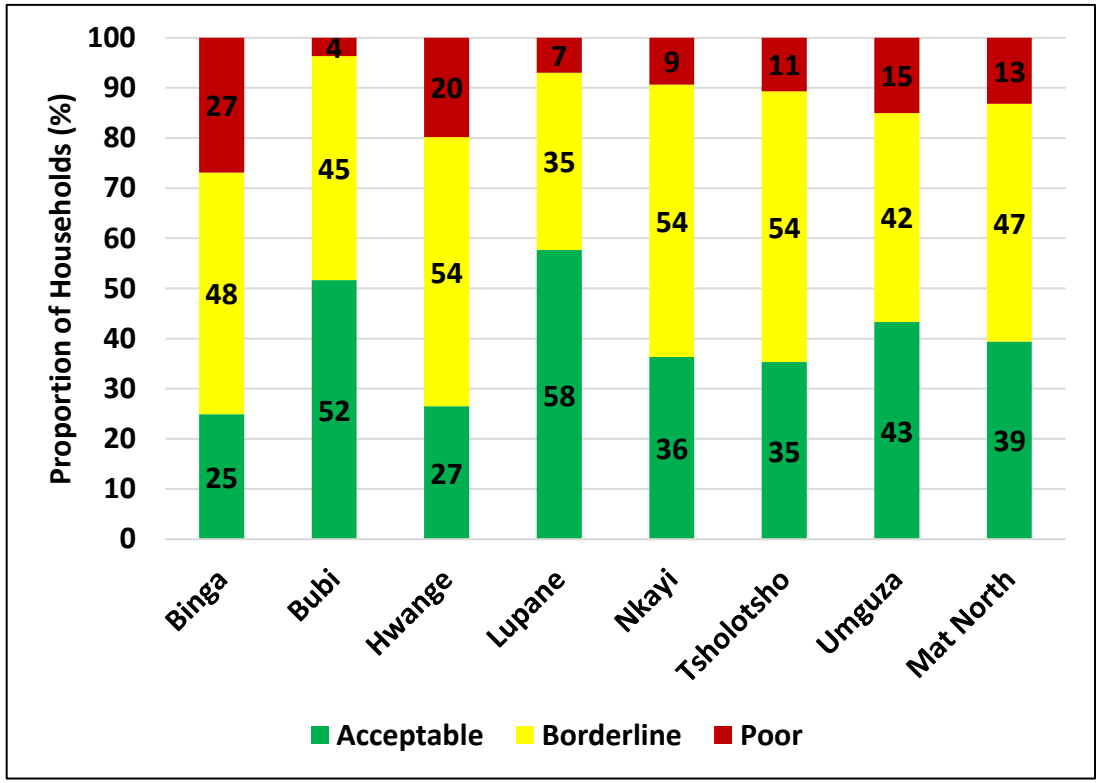
- The average household dietary diversity for Matabeleland North was 4.5
- Compared to 2023 the household dietary diversity dropped from 5.5 to 4.5 in 2024.
- The HDDS indicator provides an indication of the household's ability to access food based on the previous 24 hours.

Food Consumption Patterns

2023

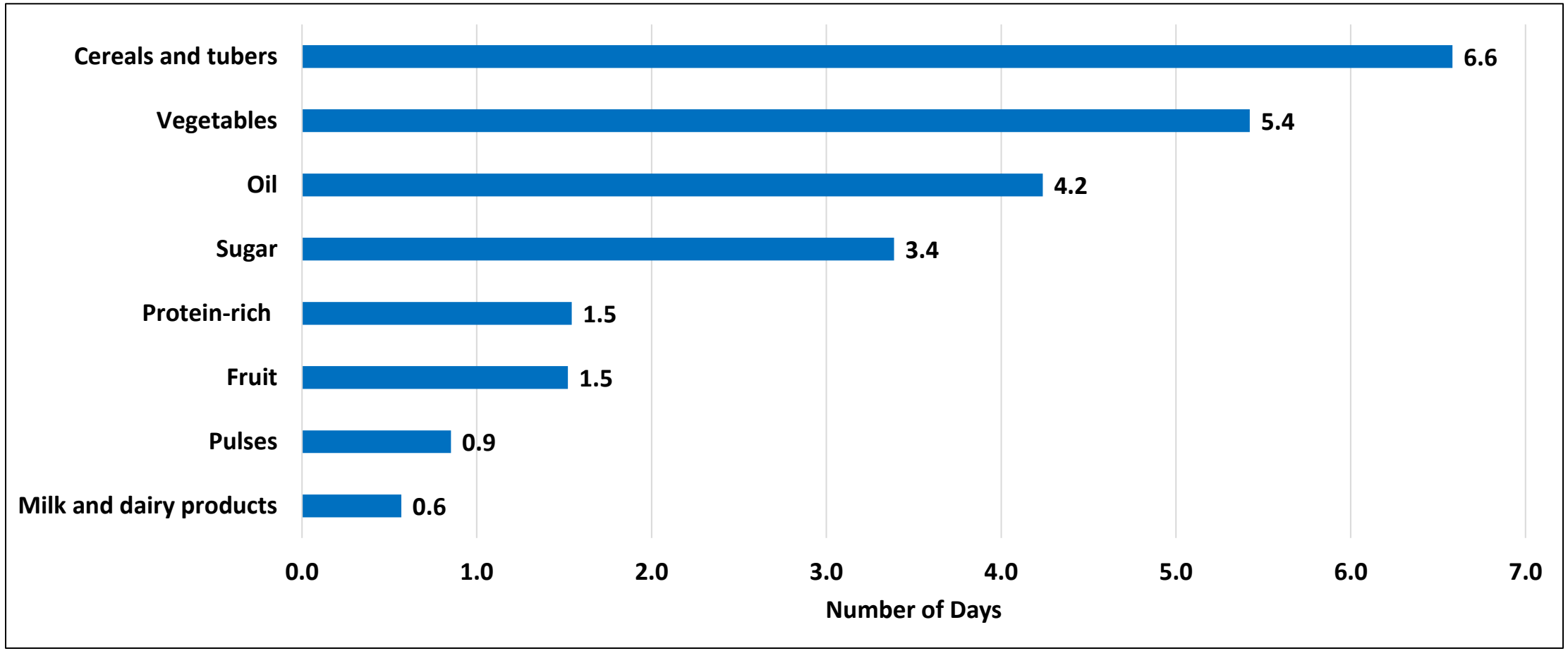


2024



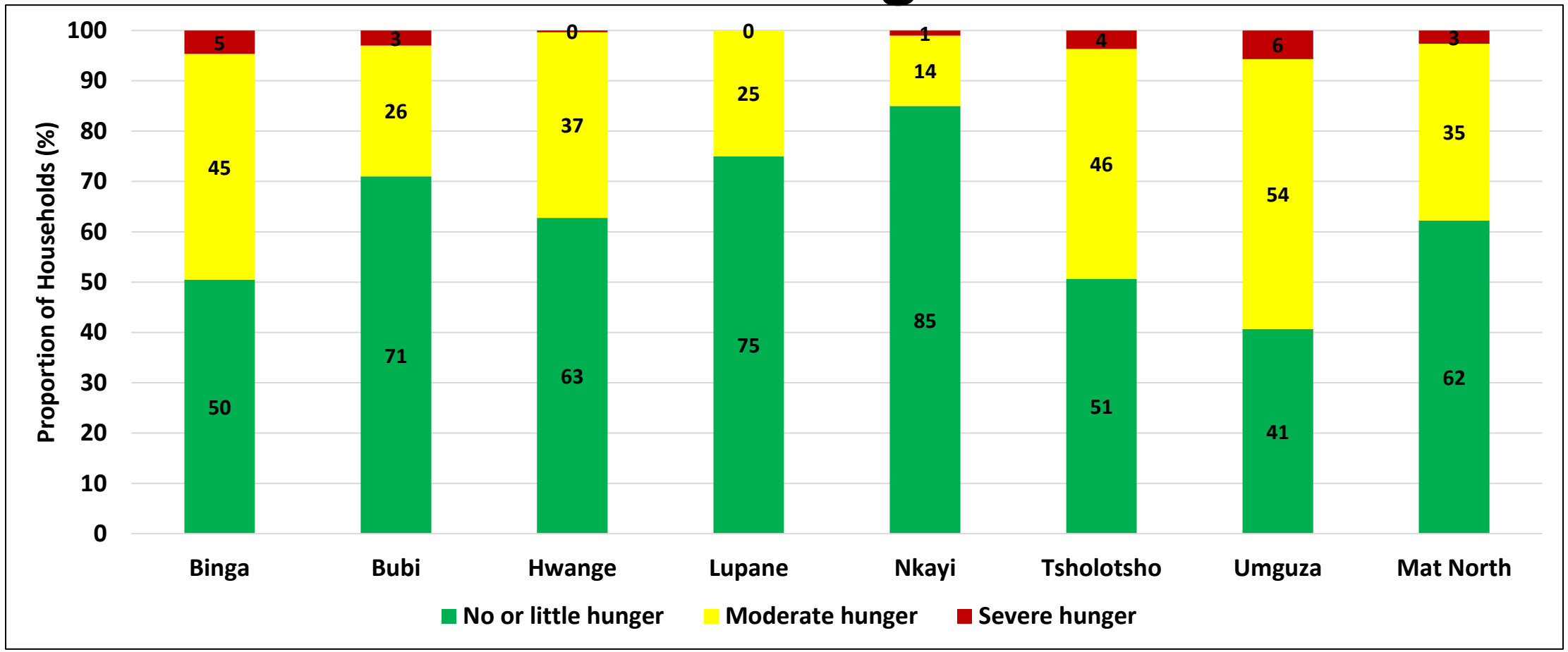
- Lupane (58%) and Bubi (52%) had the highest proportion of households consuming acceptable diets.
- Compared to 2023 the proportion of households within the acceptable category in Matabeleland North dropped from 64% in 2023 to 39% in 2024.

Average Number of Days Foods were Consumed



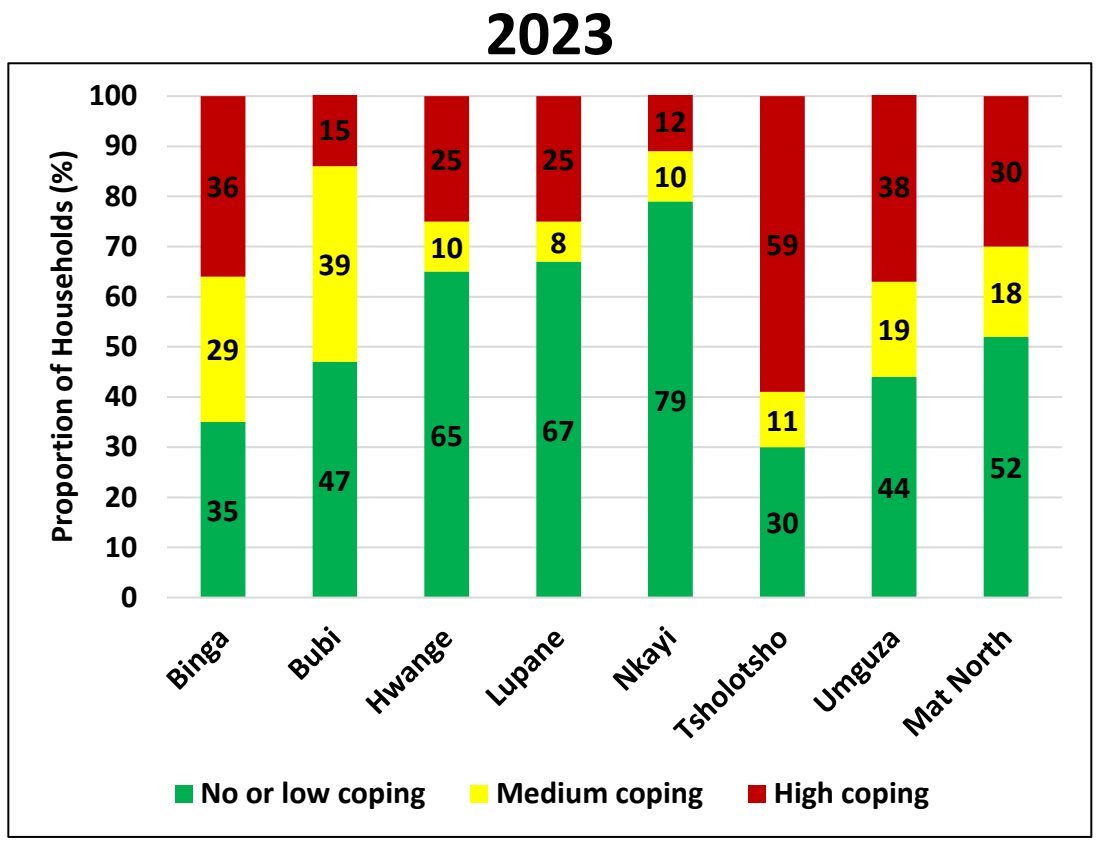
- Cereals (6.6 days), vegetables (5.4 days) and oil (4.2 days) were the mostly consumed foods in the 7 days preceding the survey.

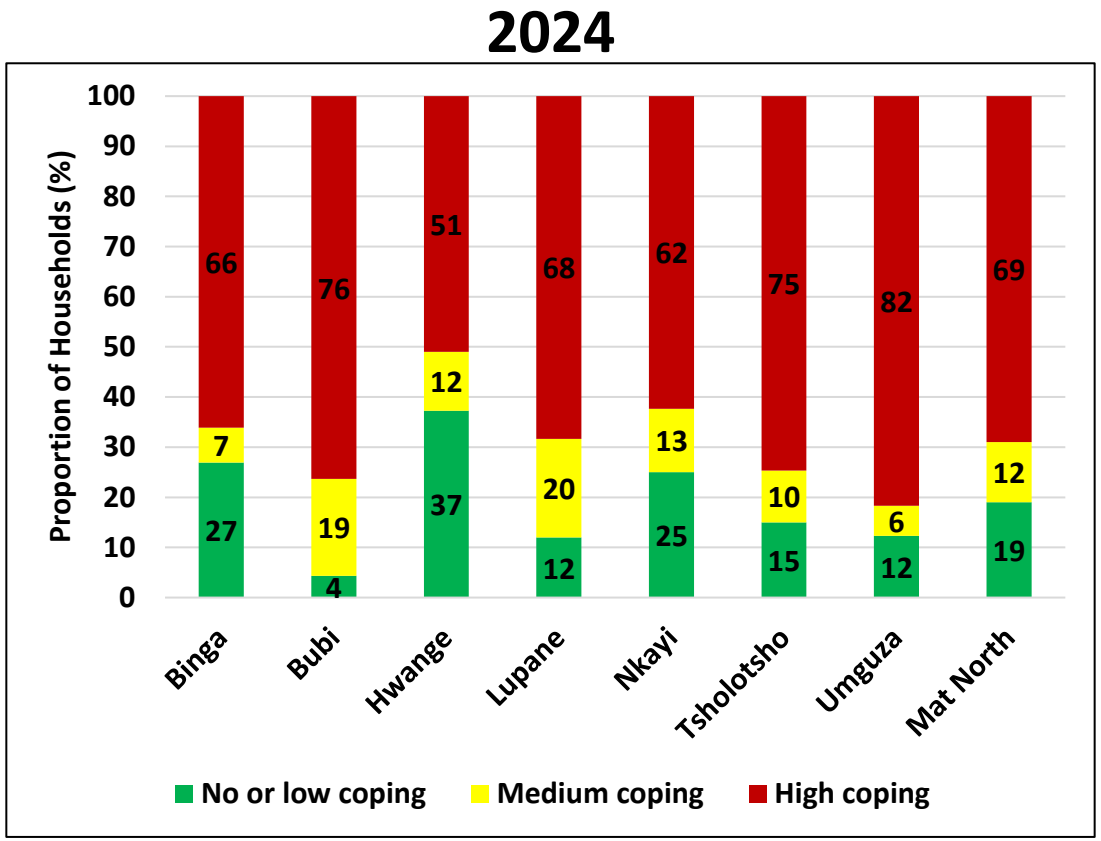
Household Hunger Score



- Sixty two percent of households were within the acceptable category whilst 3% were within the severe hunger category.

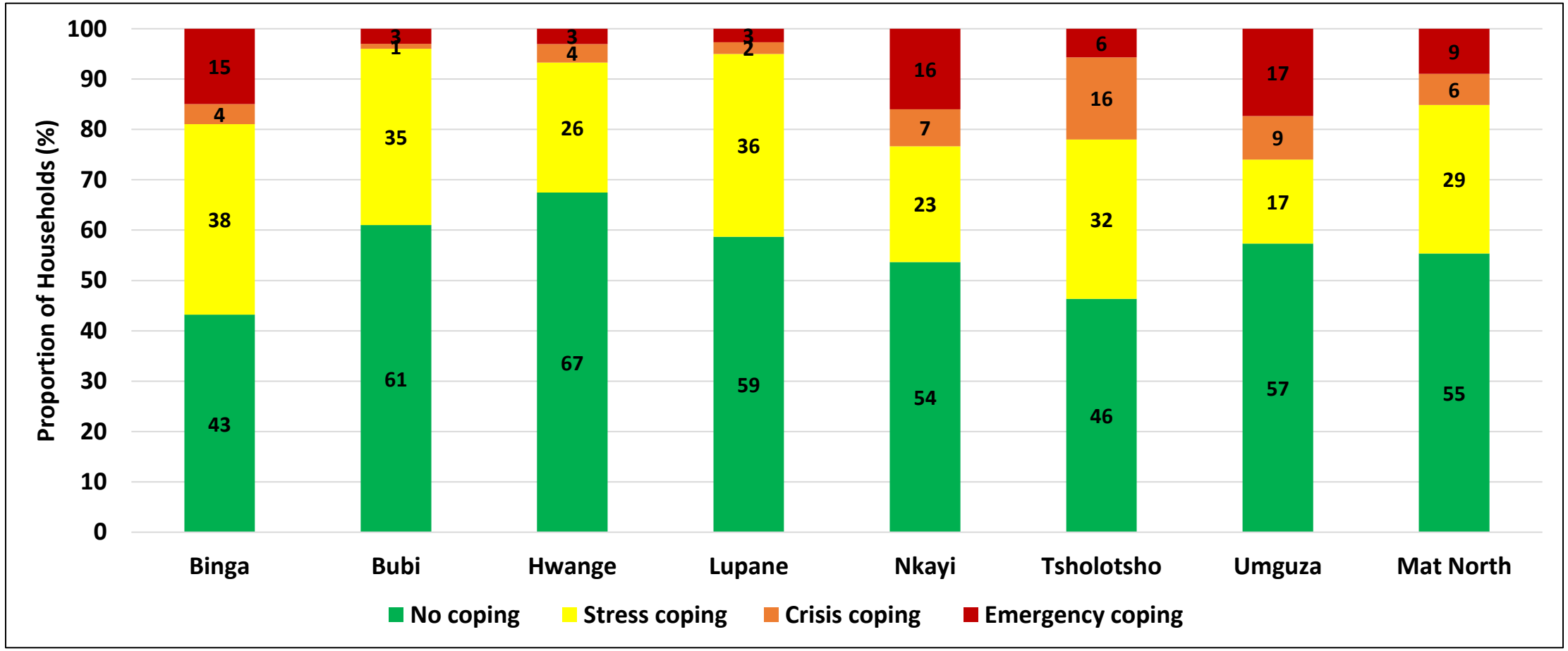
Reduced Coping Strategy Index





- About 69% of households in Matabeleland North were employing high consumption coping.
- Compared to 2023 the proportion of households within the acceptable category in Matabeleland North dropped from 52% to 19% in 2024.

Livelihood Coping Strategy Index



- The Livelihood Coping Strategy Index measures strategies a household employs when it cannot meet basic needs due to inadequate income in times of stress; the Index indicates coping capacity.
- Tsholotsho (17%), Nkayi (16%) and Binga (15%) had the highest proportion of households employing emergency coping.

Child Nutrition

Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices

Infant and Young Child Feeding

- Infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices directly affect the health, development and nutritional status of children less than two years of age and ultimately, impact child survival. Improving IYCF practices in children 0–23 months of age is therefore critical to improved nutrition, health and development.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends breastfeeding practices that consist of early initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth, exclusive breastfeeding for six months, and continued breastfeeding with complementary feeding for at least two years.
- Exclusive breastfeeding is a low cost, life-saving child survival intervention
- WHO recommends that children aged 6–23 months be fed a variety of foods to ensure that nutrient needs are met. Food group diversity is associated with improved linear growth in young children. A diet lacking in diversity can increase the risk of micronutrient deficiencies, which may have a damaging effect on children's physical and cognitive development.
- Poor-quality diets are one of the greatest obstacles to children's survival, growth, development and learning. During the first two years of life, diets lacking in essential vitamins and minerals can irreversibly harm a child's rapidly growing body and brain and increase the risk of stunting, wasting and micronutrient deficiencies. Meanwhile, foods high in sugar, fat or salt can set children on the path to unhealthy food preferences, overweight and diet-related diseases.

Notes

EGG AND/OR FLESH FOOD CONSUMPTION 6–23 MONTHS (EFF)

- WHO guiding principles for feeding breastfed and non-breastfed children state that “meat, poultry, fish or eggs should be eaten daily, or as often as possible”
- There is evidence that children who consume eggs and flesh foods have higher intakes of various nutrients important for optimal linear growth. Consuming eggs is associated with increased intakes of energy, protein, essential fatty acids, vitamin B12, vitamin D, phosphorus and selenium, and with higher recumbent length
- Introduction of meat as an early complementary food for breastfed infants was associated with improved protein and zinc intake. There is also evidence of low prevalence of egg and flesh food intake across many countries.
- Indicator definition: percentage of children 6–23 months of age who consumed egg and/or flesh food during the previous day.

ZERO VEGETABLE OR FRUIT CONSUMPTION 6–23 MONTHS (ZVF)

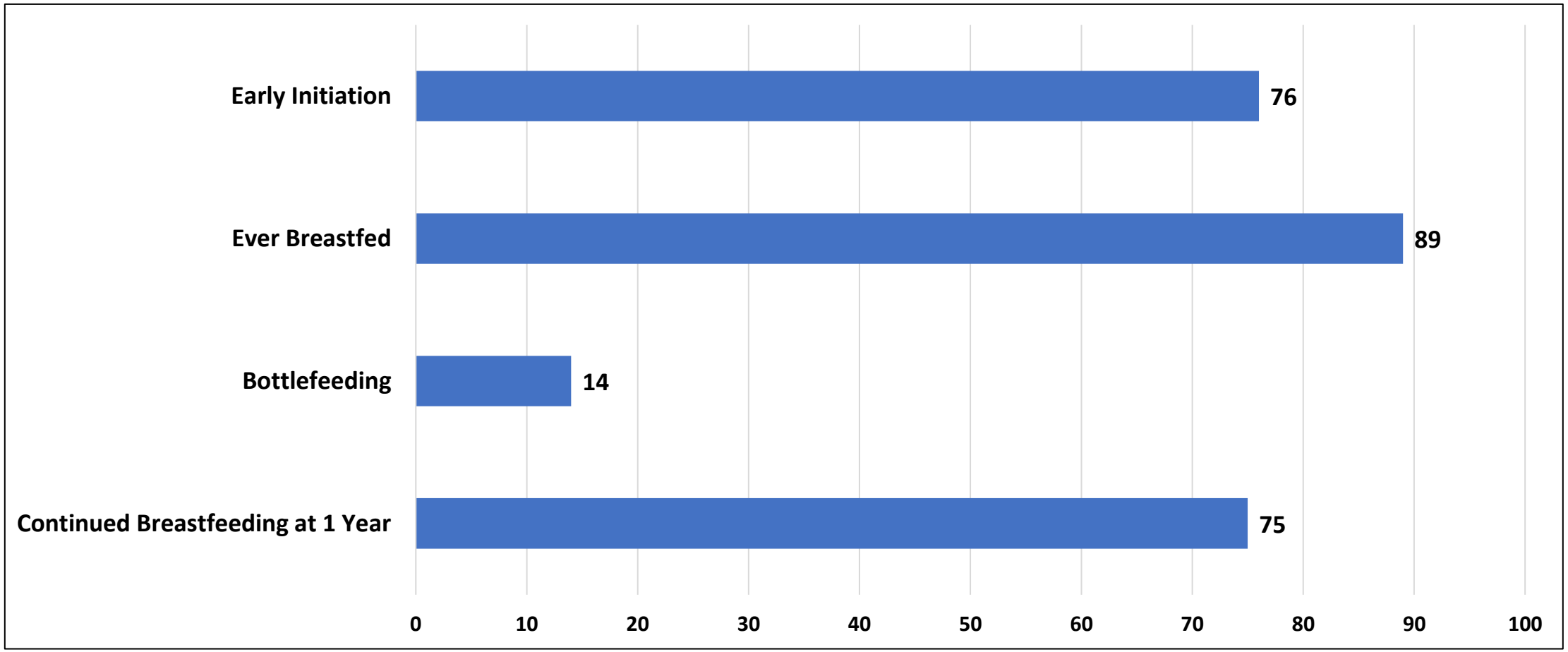
- WHO indicates that low vegetable and fruit consumption is associated with increased risk of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs).
- Non-consumption of vegetables or fruits on the previous day represents an unhealthy practice.
- Indicator definition: percentage of children 6–23 months of age who did not consume any vegetables or fruits during the previous day.

Notes

UNHEALTHY FOOD CONSUMPTION 6–23 MONTHS (UFC)

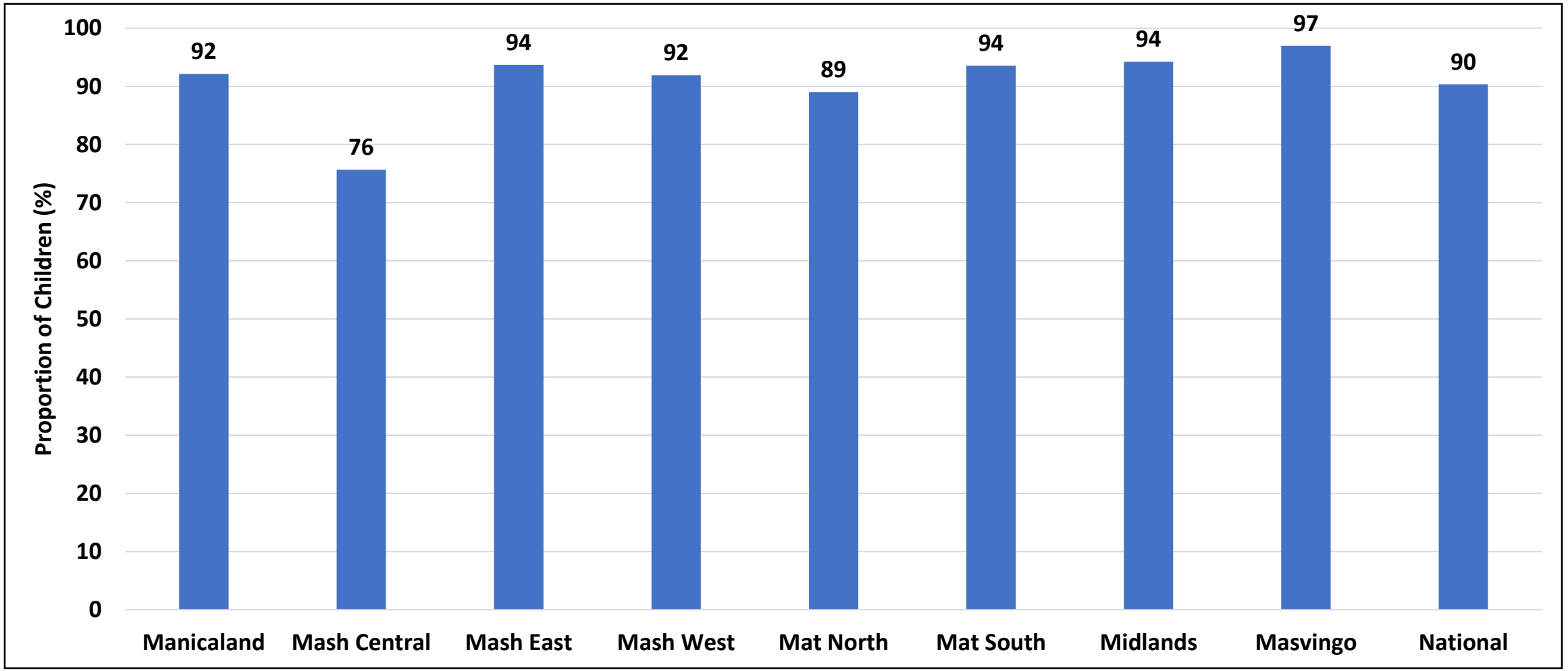
- In many low- and middle-income countries, diet patterns are shifting towards higher intakes of added sugars, unhealthy fats, salt and refined carbohydrates.
- A variety of guidance documents indicate the need to avoid or limit these types of foods when feeding IYC.
- Recent national guidance for feeding IYC advises avoidance of foods such as candies, chocolate, chips, French fries, cakes and cookies: Consumption of such foods may displace more nutritious foods and limit the intake of essential vitamins and minerals.
- Recently, unhealthy snack food and beverage consumption has been associated with a higher risk of nutrient inadequacy, and lower length-for-age among one-year-olds *(43)*.
- Food preferences that begin early in life track into later childhood and adolescence. Such practices, if continued throughout adolescence and adulthood, can increase the risk of becoming overweight or obese, and of related chronic diseases later in life.
- Indicator definition: percentage of children 6–23 months of age who consumed selected sentinel unhealthy foods during the previous day.
- *"sentinel unhealthy foods" are foods or categories of foods (e.g. "sweets"* or *"candies") that are likely to be consumed by IYC and are high in sugar, salt and/or unhealthy fats.*

Breastfeeding Practices



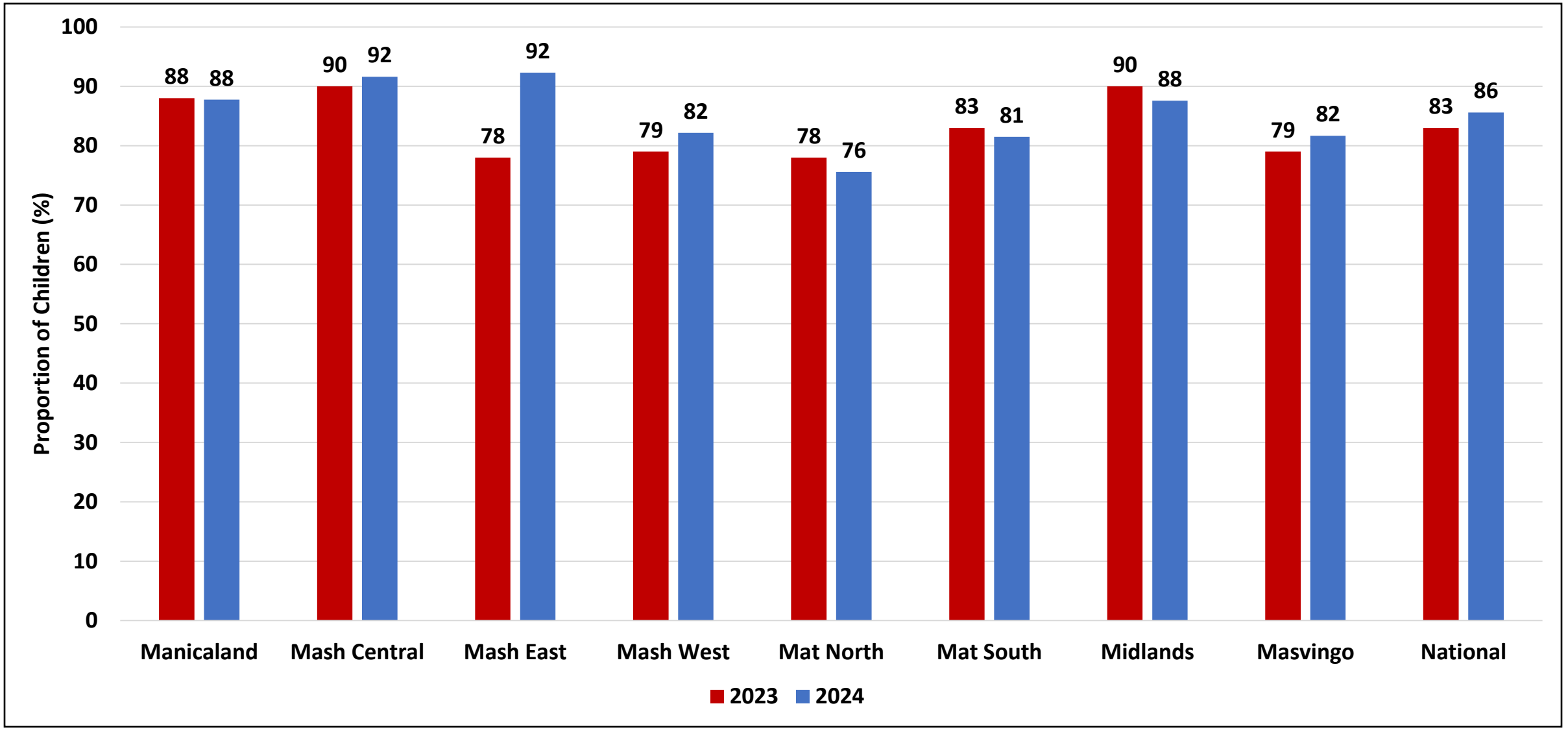
- The proportion of children who continued to be breastfed beyond one year was 75%
- At least 89% of the children were ever breastfed.

Children Ever Breastfed



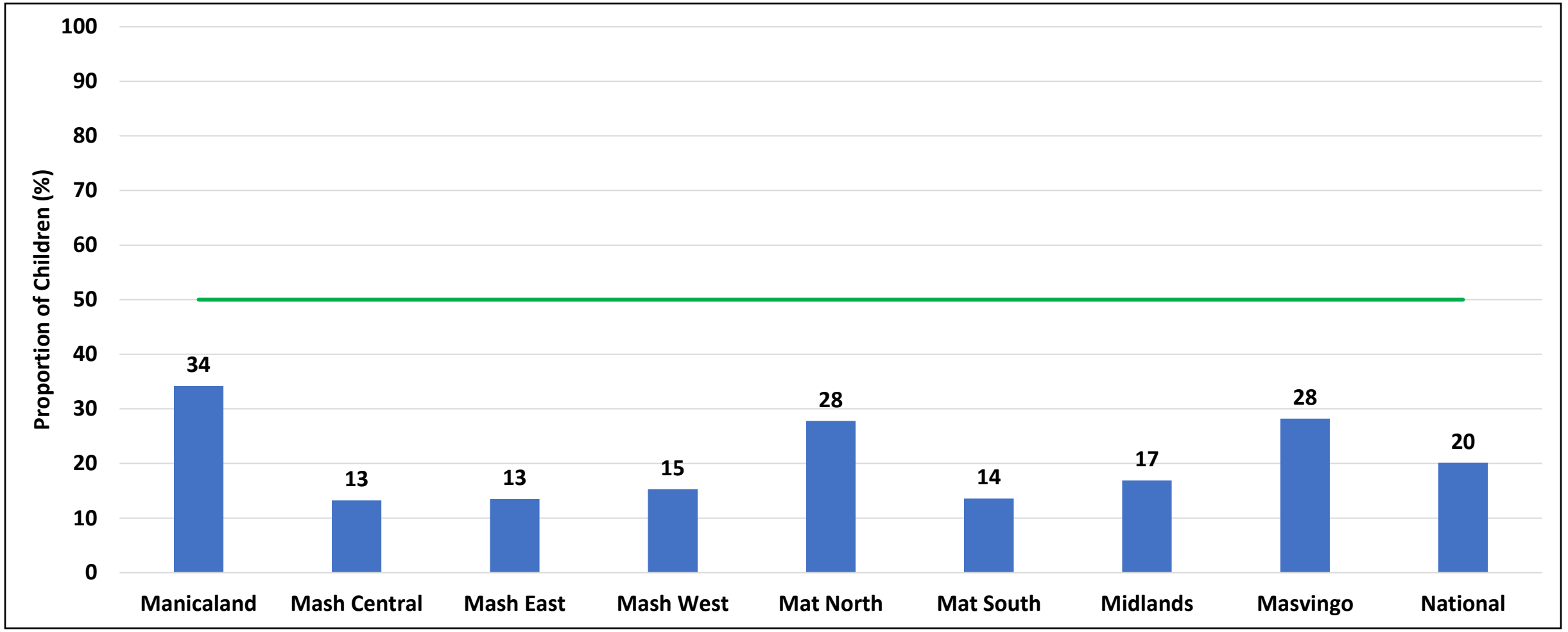
- Matabeleland North province reported (89%) of children were ever breastfed, this was below the national average of 90%.
- The recommendation is to have children exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months and continue breastfeeding for at least 2 years.

Early Initiation of Breastfeeding



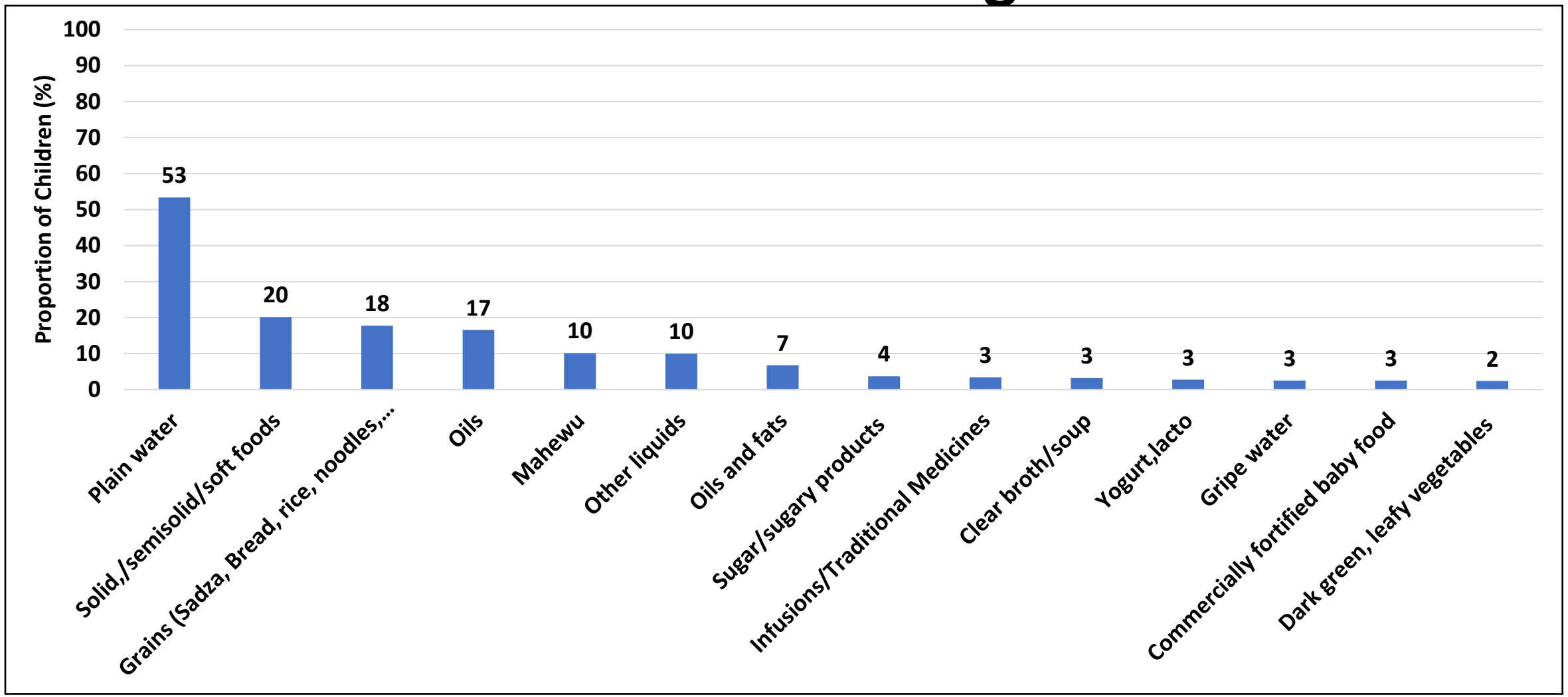
- The proportion of children who were initiated early for breastfeeding in Matabeleland North was 76%.
- This was below the national average of 86%.

Exclusive Breastfeeding



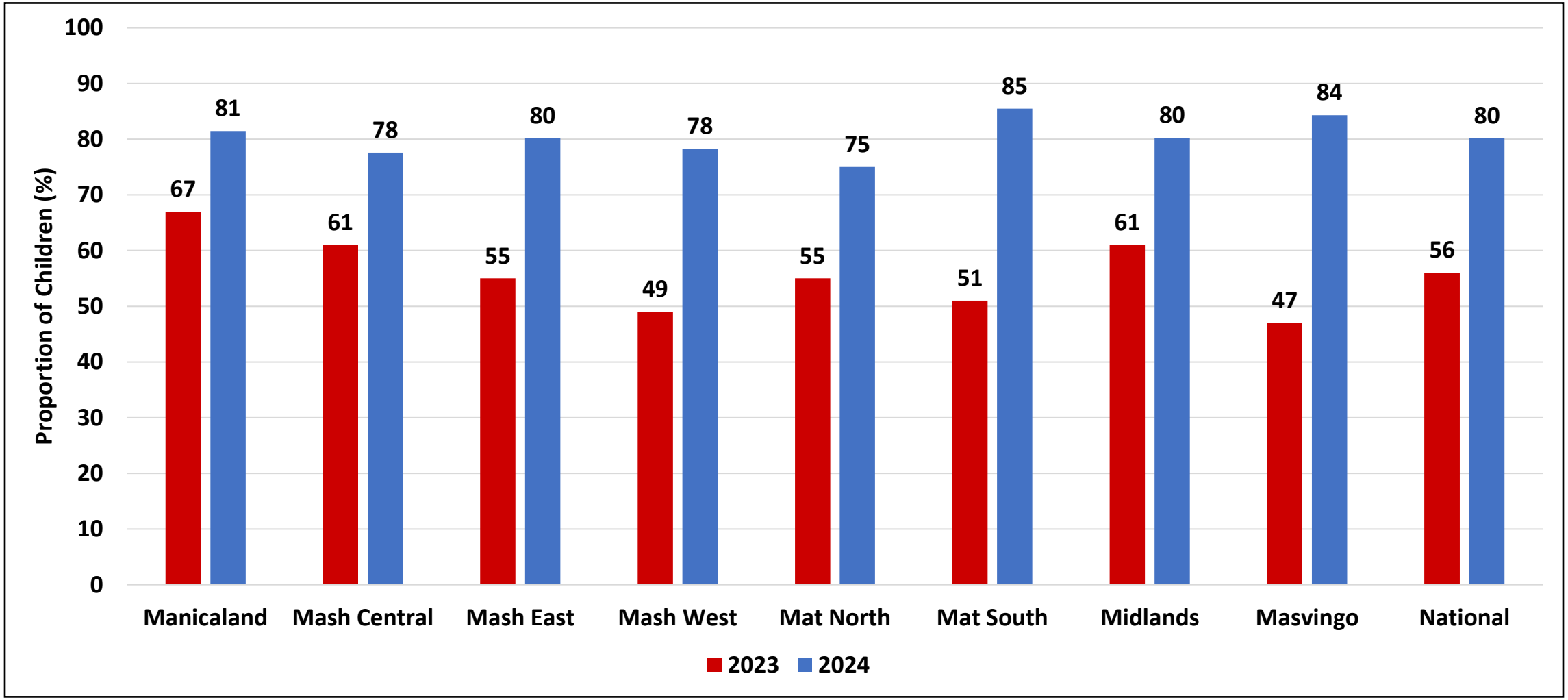
- Exclusive breastfeeding is a low cost, life-saving child survival intervention
- The proportion of children who were exclusively breastfed in Matabeleland North was 28%.

Foods Given to Children Less than 6 Months in Addition to Breastfeeding



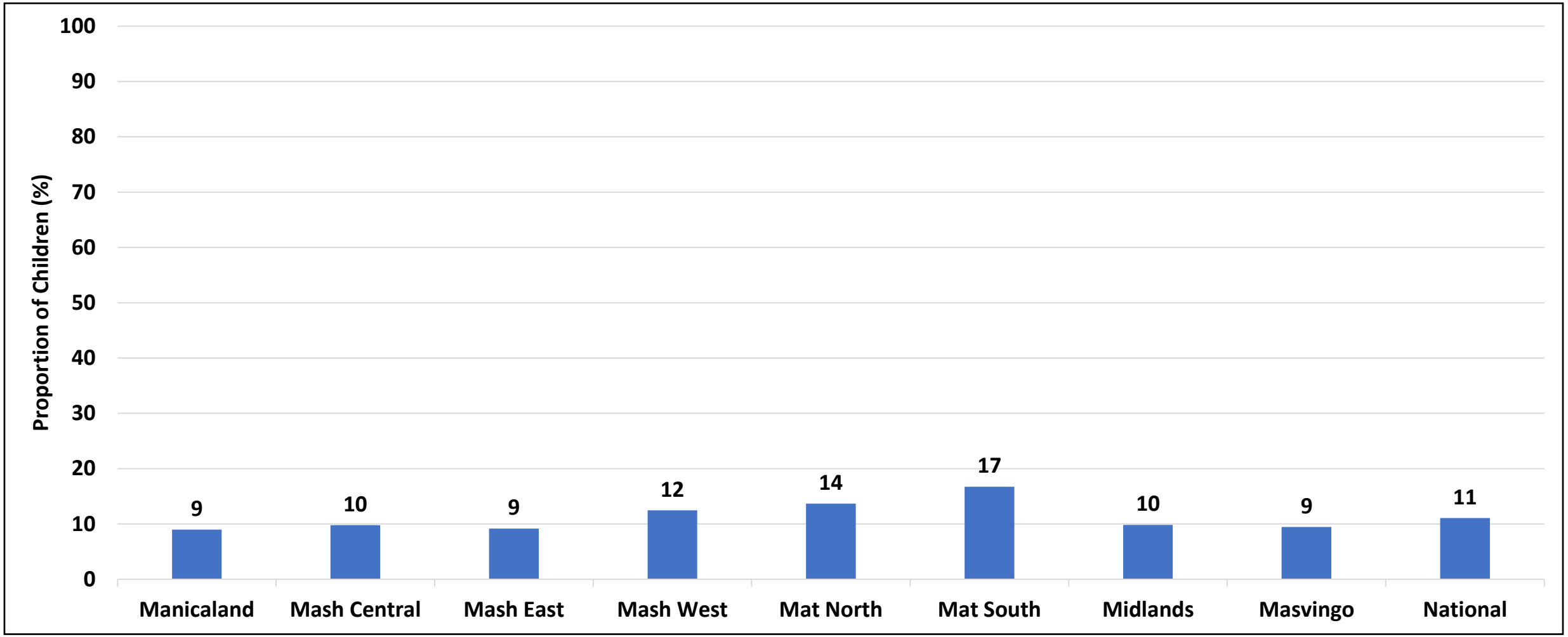
- Plain water (53%), soft foods (20%), grains (18%) and oils (17%) were the most common foods given to children less than 6 months

Continued Breastfeeding Beyond 1 year



- Breastfeeding provides one third of energy needs between 12 and 24 months.
- Children who were continued on breastfeeding beyond one year increased from 55% in 2023 to 75% in 2024 in Matabeleland North but this was below the national average of 80%.

Bottle Feeding



- Bottle feeding interferes with breastfeeding and predisposes infants to diarrheal diseases, especially in an environment with compromised WASH services.
- Matabeleland North reported 14%, above the national average of 11%.

Complementary Feeding

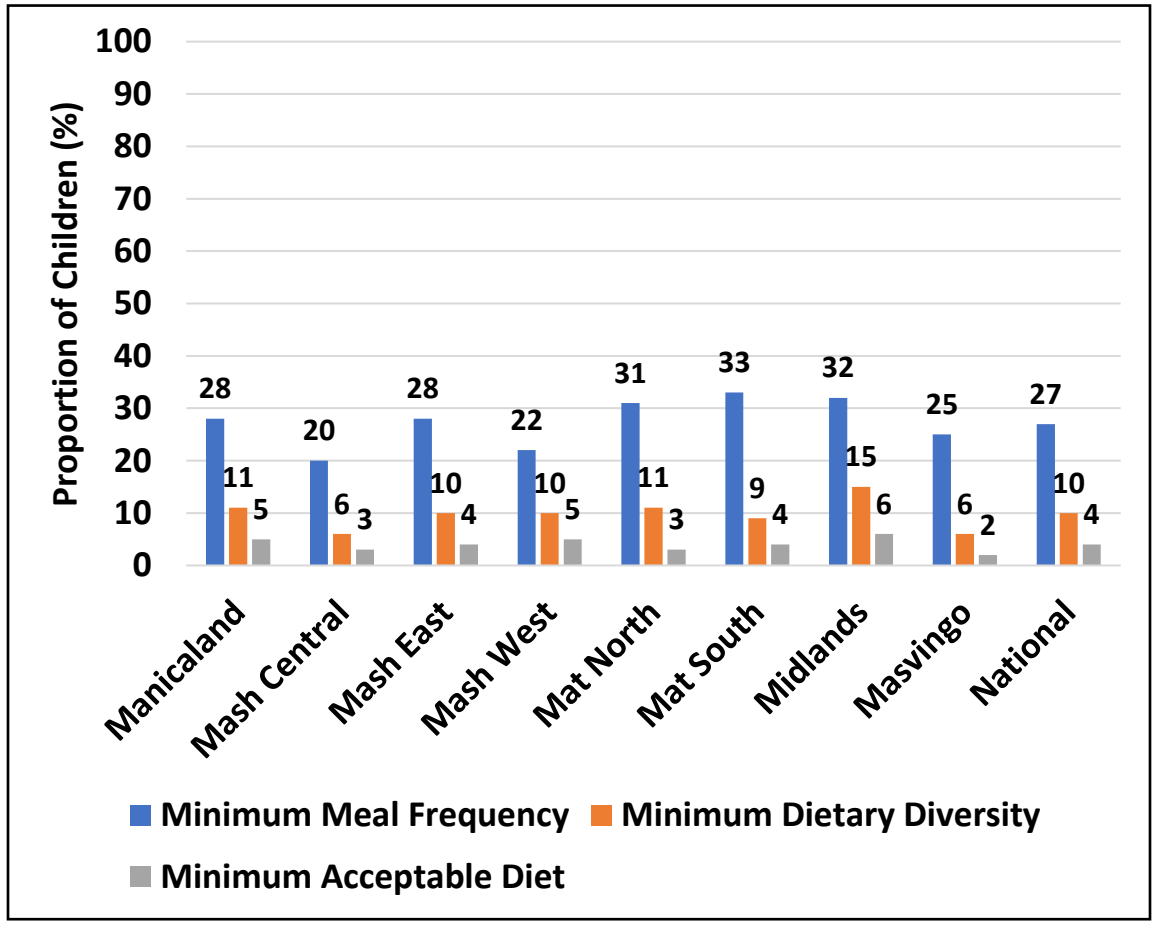
- Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD) is a proxy indicator for adequate micronutrient density. Both breastfed and non-breastfed infants are expected to consume at least five of the seven food groups that are recommended by the World Health Organisation.

- Minimum Meal Frequency (MMF) is a proxy for a child's energy requirements and is the proportion of breastfed and non-breastfed children 6 to 23 months of age who receive solid, semi-solid, or soft-foods or milk feeds the minimum number of times or more.

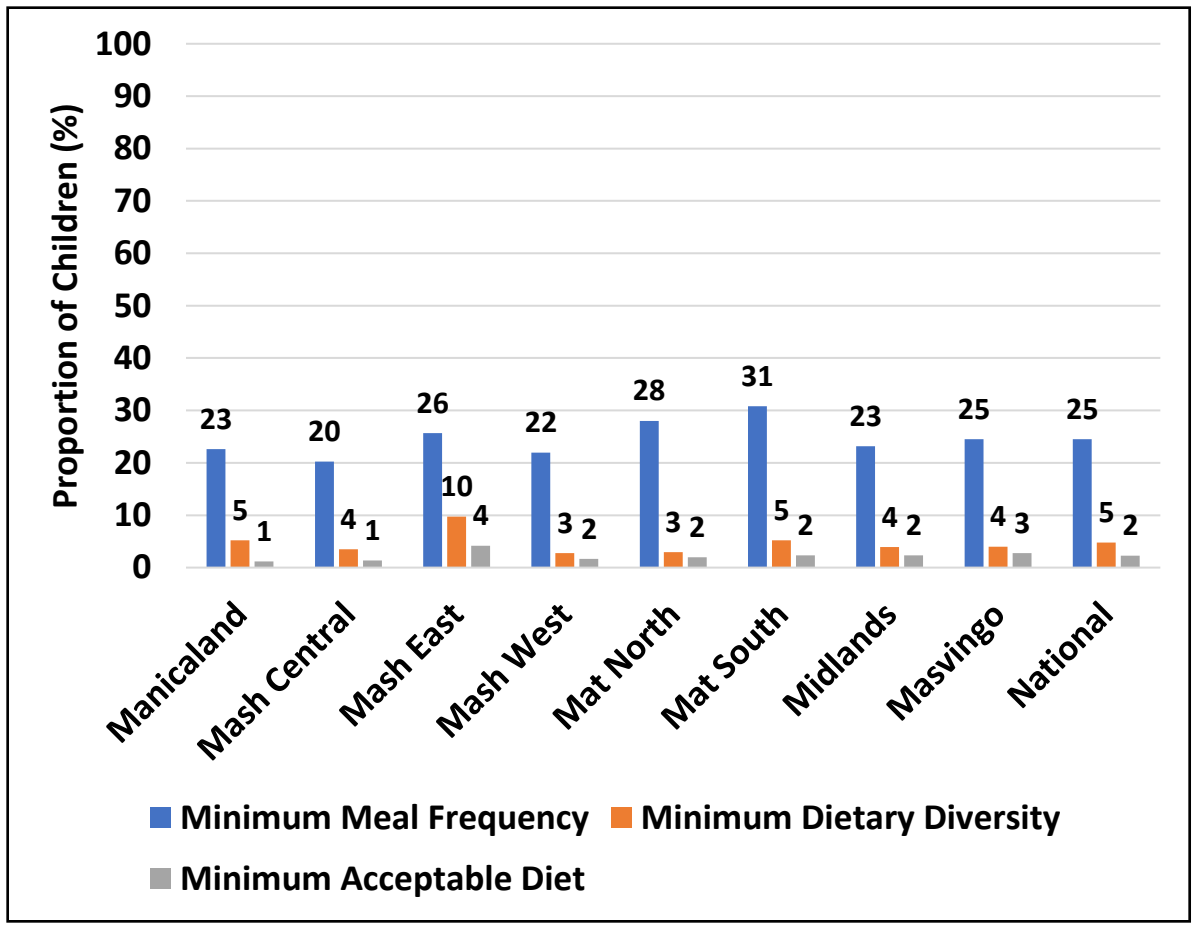
- Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) is a composite indicator of minimum meal frequency and dietary diversity. It represents minimum standards of IYCF practices.

Infant and Young Child Feeding Diet Quality

2023



2024



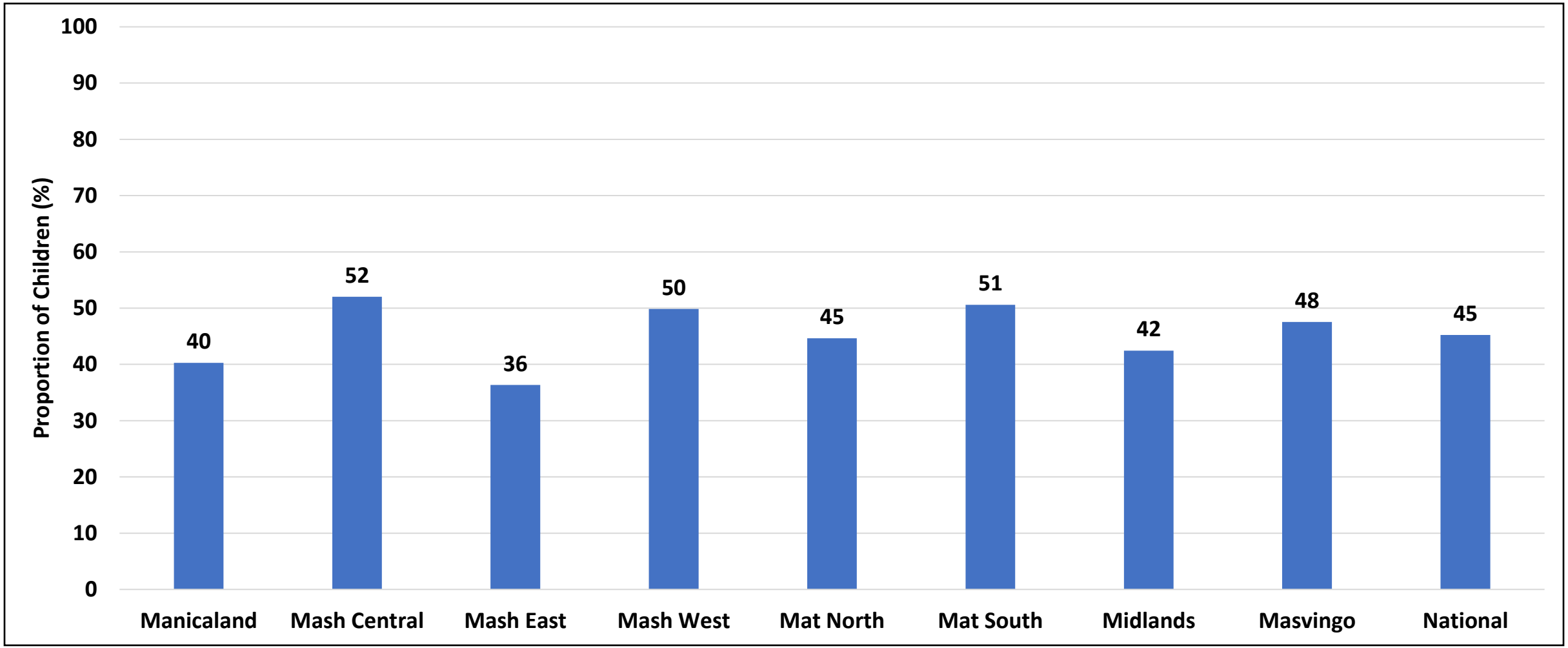
- In Matabeleland North, only 2% of children aged 6-23 months received the Minimum Acceptable Diet, a decrease from 3% recorded in 2023.
- A Minimum Acceptable Diet indicator reflects the proportion of children who receive adequate diverse age-appropriate foods. Adequate nutrition is essential for growth and development of children aged 6-23 months.

Foods Consumed by Children 6-23 Months

	Breastmilk (%)	Grains, roots, tubers and plantains (%)	Pulses (beans, peas, lentils), nuts and seeds (%)	Dairy products (milk, infant formula, yogurt, cheese) (%)	Flesh foods (meat, fish, poultry, organ meats) (%)	Egg (%)	Vitamin-A rich fruits and vegetables (%)	Other Fruits and vegetables (%)
Manicaland	43.5	94.8	5.2	11.0	11.3	4.3	49.6	27.5
Mash Central	46.1	90.6	3.8	9.2	11.3	6.2	38.0	22.6
Mash East	44.4	91.2	8.1	20.1	14.8	9.5	47.0	39.6
Mash West	41.4	88.2	3.3	9.3	11.2	2.5	40.5	18.9
Mat North	41.7	92.5	6.8	16.6	6.8	1.3	44.0	23.1
Mat South	44.2	94.2	9.9	19.5	18.9	2.6	34.0	26.7
Midlands	37.8	92.7	1.0	18.5	9.6	1.8	40.4	26.3
Masvingo	47.9	90.8	6.7	16.9	12.3	2.5	37.4	26.4
National	43.3	91.8	5.6	15.2	12.1	4.0	41.5	26.8

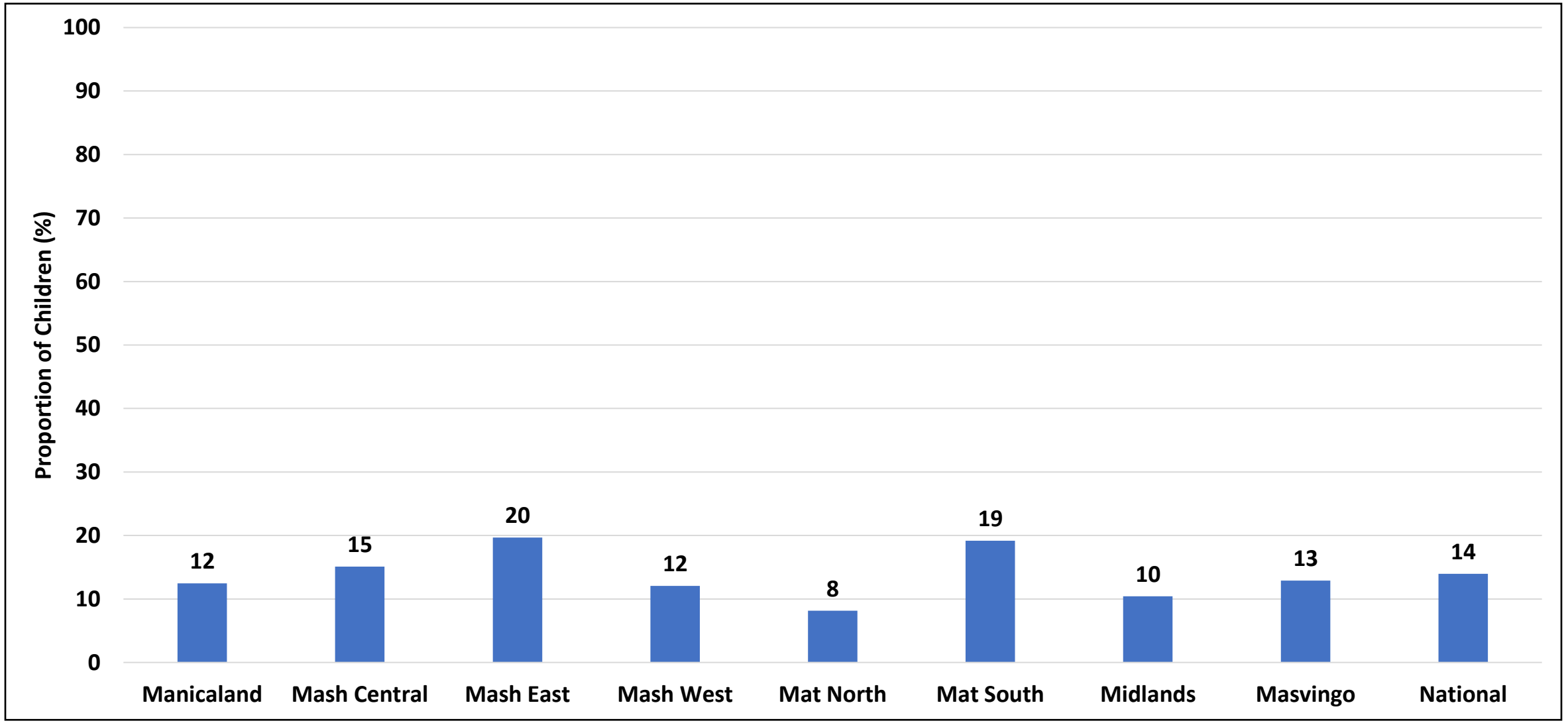
- The majority of the children 6-23 months in Matabeleland North consumed grains, roots and tubers (92.5%), vitamin A rich fruits and vegetables (44.0%) and breastmilk (41.7%).

Non-Vegetable or Fruit Consumption 6–23 Months (ZVF)



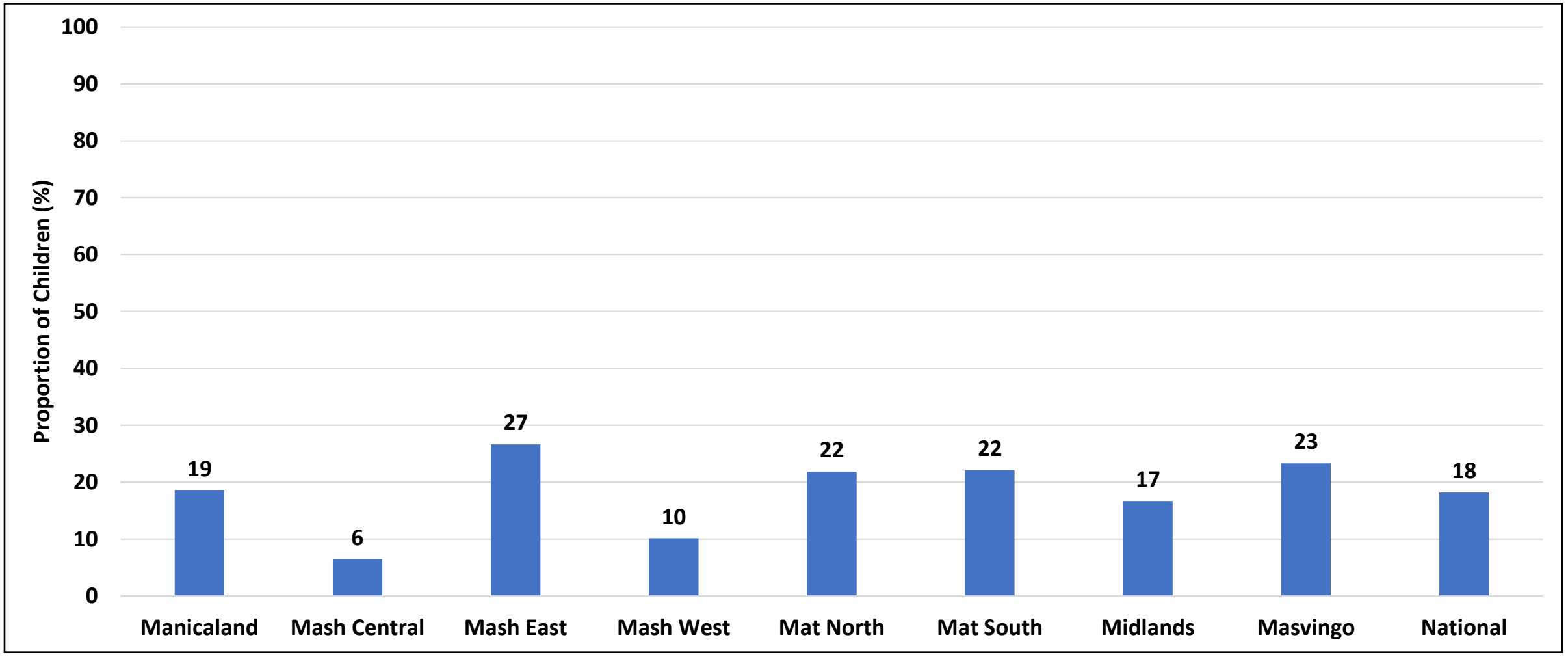
- In Matabeleland North, 45% of children 6-23 months were neither consuming vegetables nor fruits.
- Fruits and vegetables contain important vitamins, minerals and plant chemicals. A diet high in fruit and vegetables can help protect you against cancer, diabetes and heart disease.

Egg and/Flesh Meat Consumption 6–23 Months (EFF)



- Fourteen percent of children 6-23 months were consuming egg and/ flesh meat with Matabeleland North reporting (8%).

Unhealthy Food Consumption 6–23 Month (UFC)



- An estimated 18% of children 6-23 months were consuming unhealthy foods, with Matabeleland North recording 10%, which was below the national average.

Child Health

Vitamin A Supplementation for Children 6-59 Months

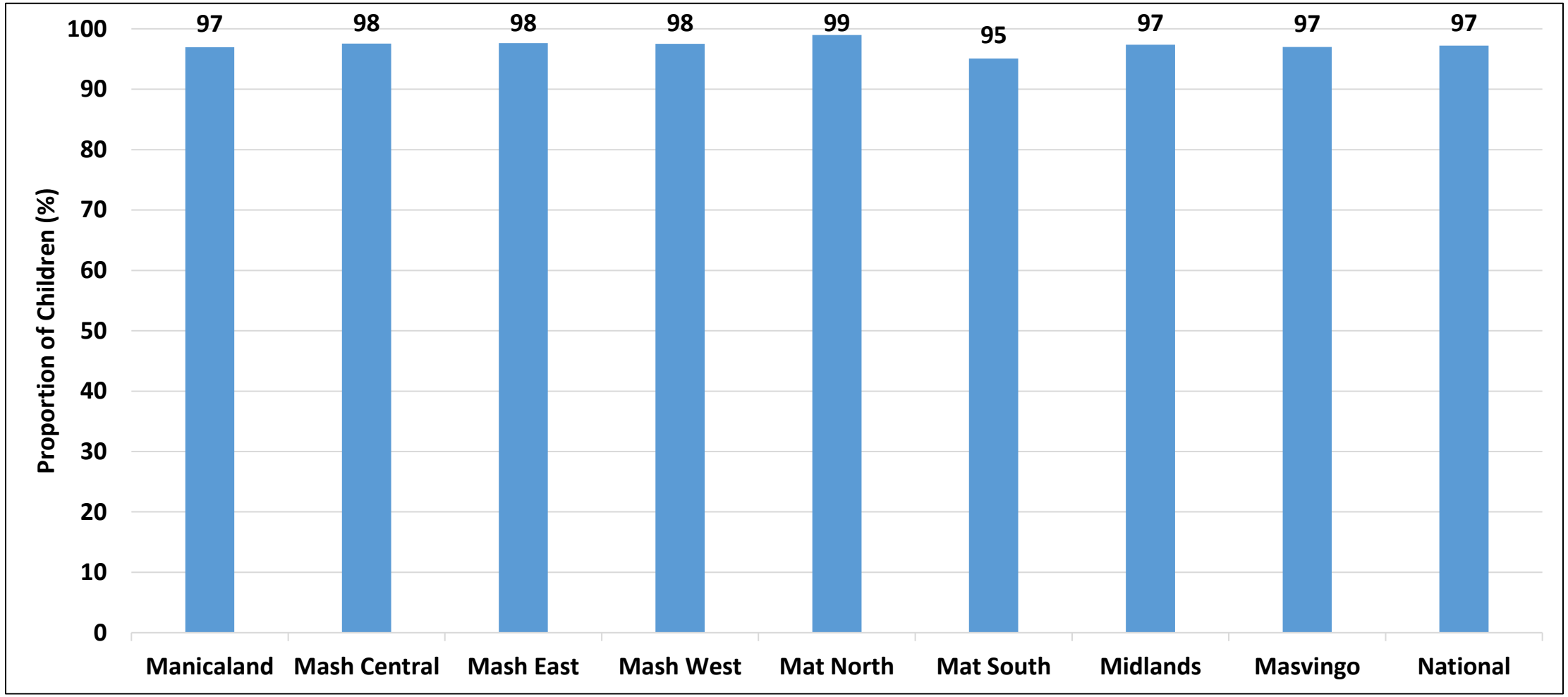
- The World Health Organization recommends Vitamin A Supplementation (VAS) once every six months for children in the age group of 6 59 months.

- VAS is proven to reduce all cause mortality, incidence of diarrhea and measles in children.

The Zimbabwe VAS Schedule

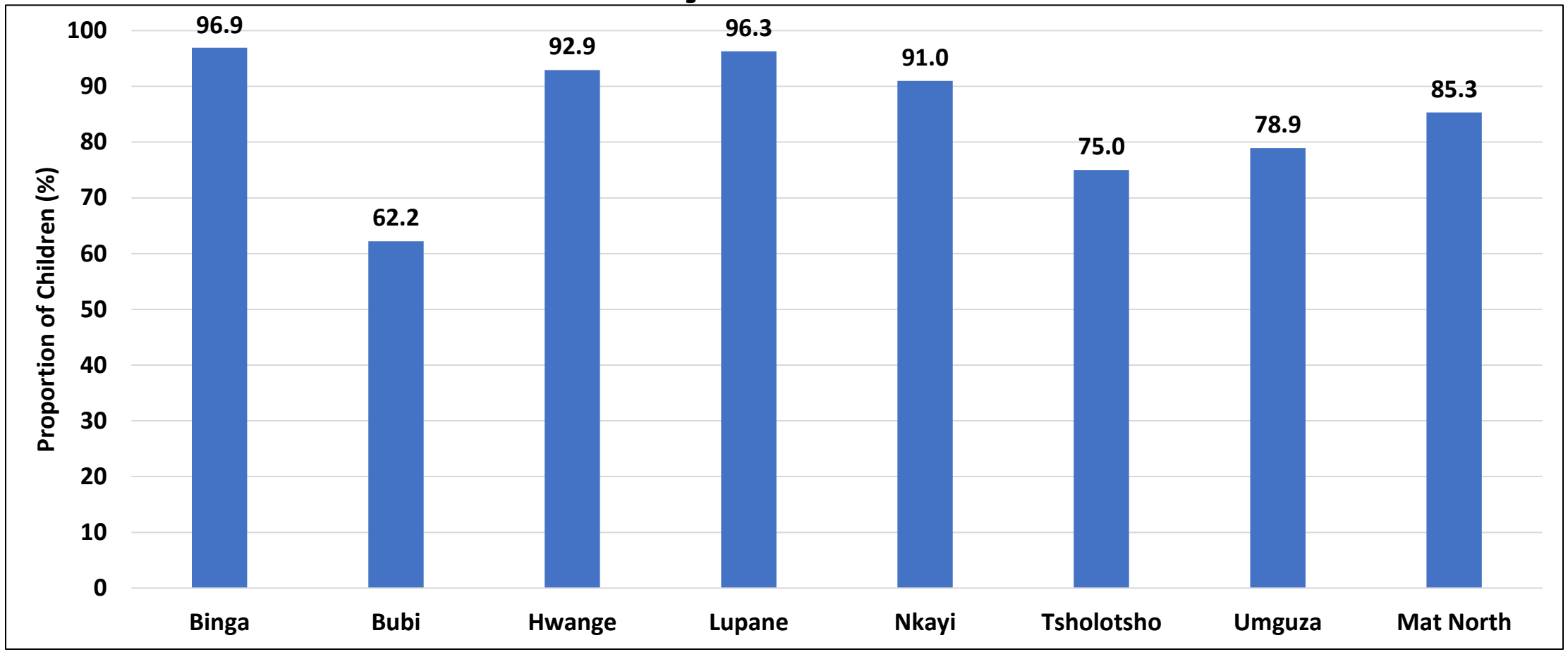
Age Group	Vitamin A Dosage	Timing for Administration
Below 6 months	**Do not give**	**N/A**
6-11 months	**100 000 IU**	**Once at age 6 months**
12-59 months	**200 000 IU**	**Once every 12 months from age 6 months, until child reaches 5 years**

Vitamin A Supplementation Children 6-11 Months by Province



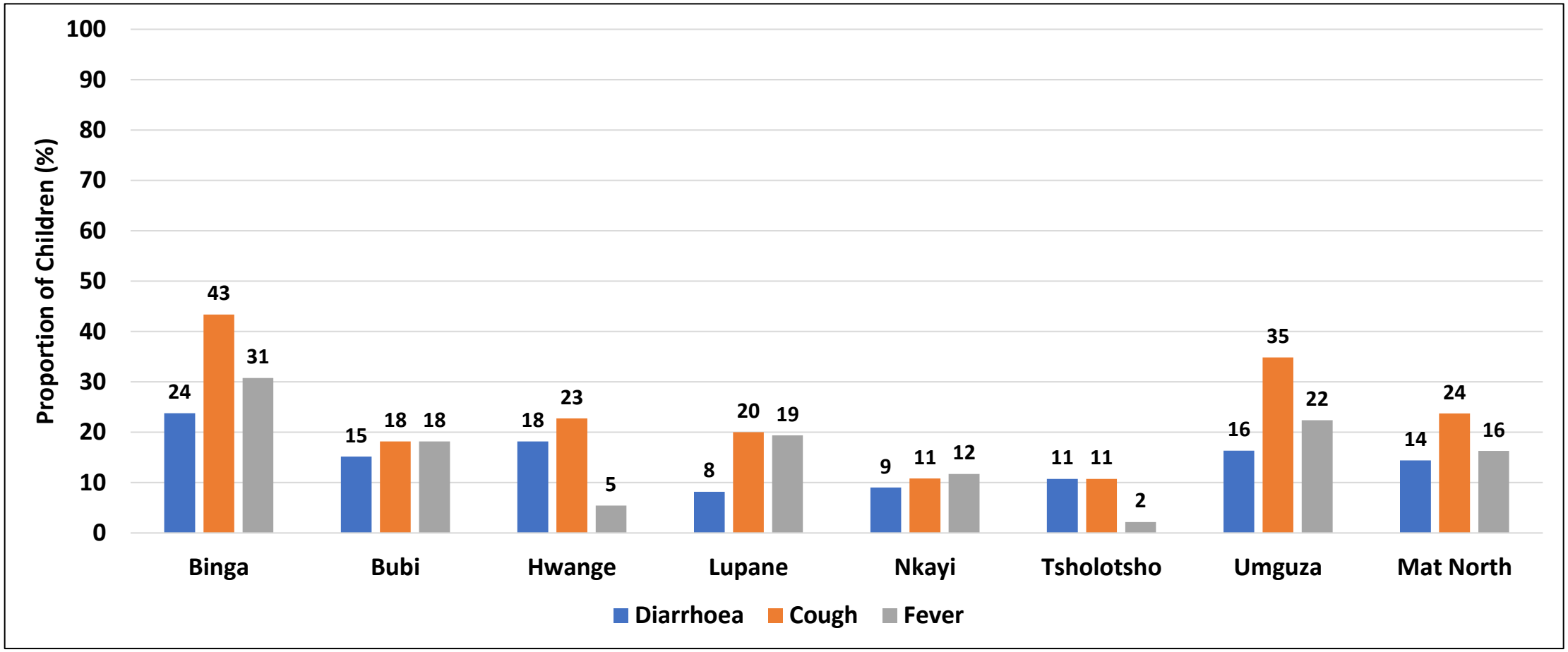
- Matabeleland North recorded a vitamin A coverage of 99% for children 6-11 months.

Vitamin A Supplementation Children 12-59 Months by District



- Bubi (62.2%), Tsholotsho (75.0%) and Umguza (78.9%) reported the lowest coverage for vitamin A supplementation for children 12-59 months.
- The provincial average was 85.3% which was below the national target of 90%.

Child Illness (0-59 Months) by Province



- Cough (24 %) was the most reported illness experienced by children in Matabeleland North in two weeks preceding the survey.

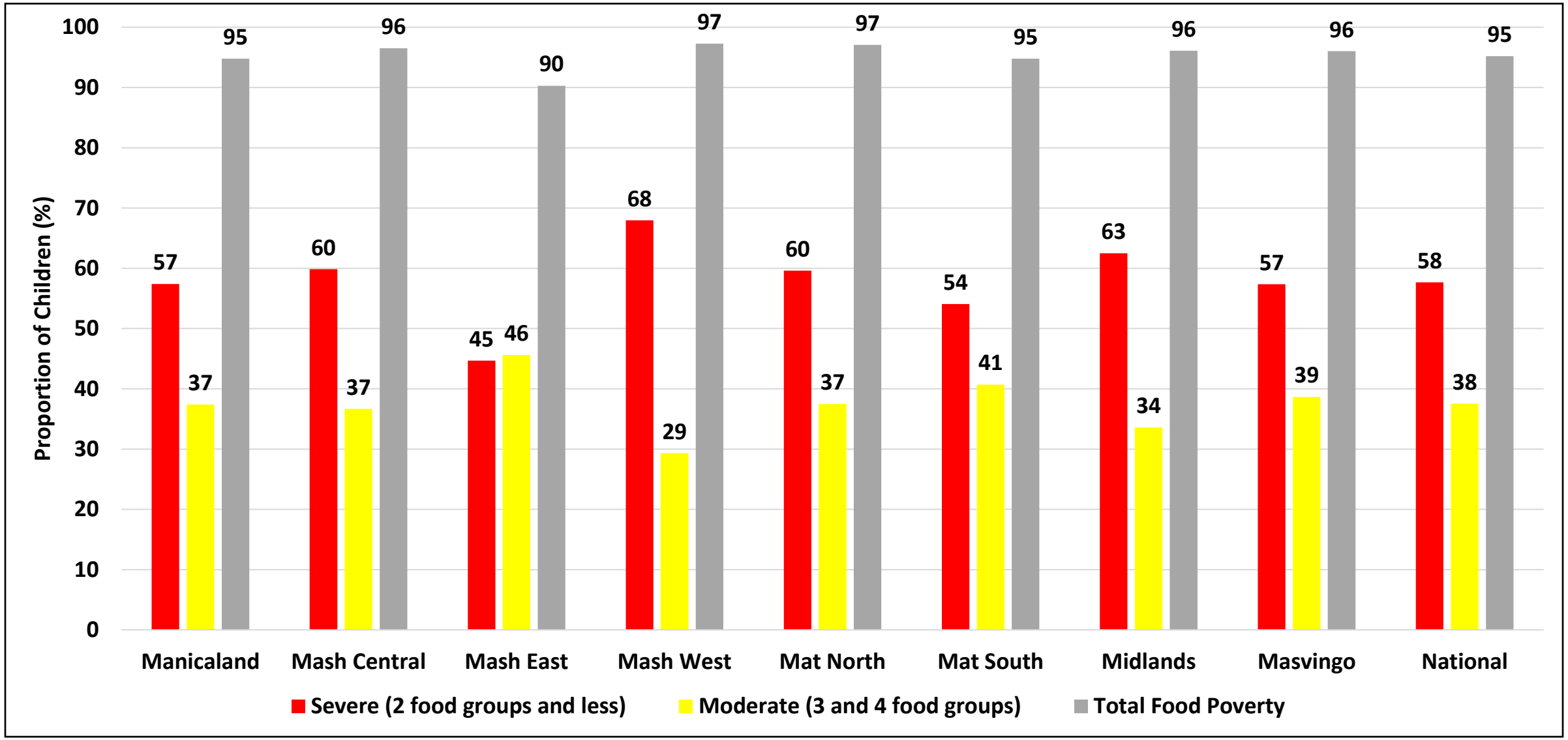
Child Food Poverty

- **Children living in food poverty** is defined as the proportion of children under five years of age consuming foods and beverages from four or fewer of the eight defined food groups.

- **Severe child food poverty** refers to the proportion of children under 5 consuming foods and beverages from zero, one or two out of eight defined food groups during the previous day.

- **Moderate child food poverty** refers to the proportion of children under five 5 consuming foods and beverages from three or four out of eight defined food groups during the previous day.

Child Food Poverty



- In Matabeleland North 60% of children aged 6 to 23 months had severe food poverty.

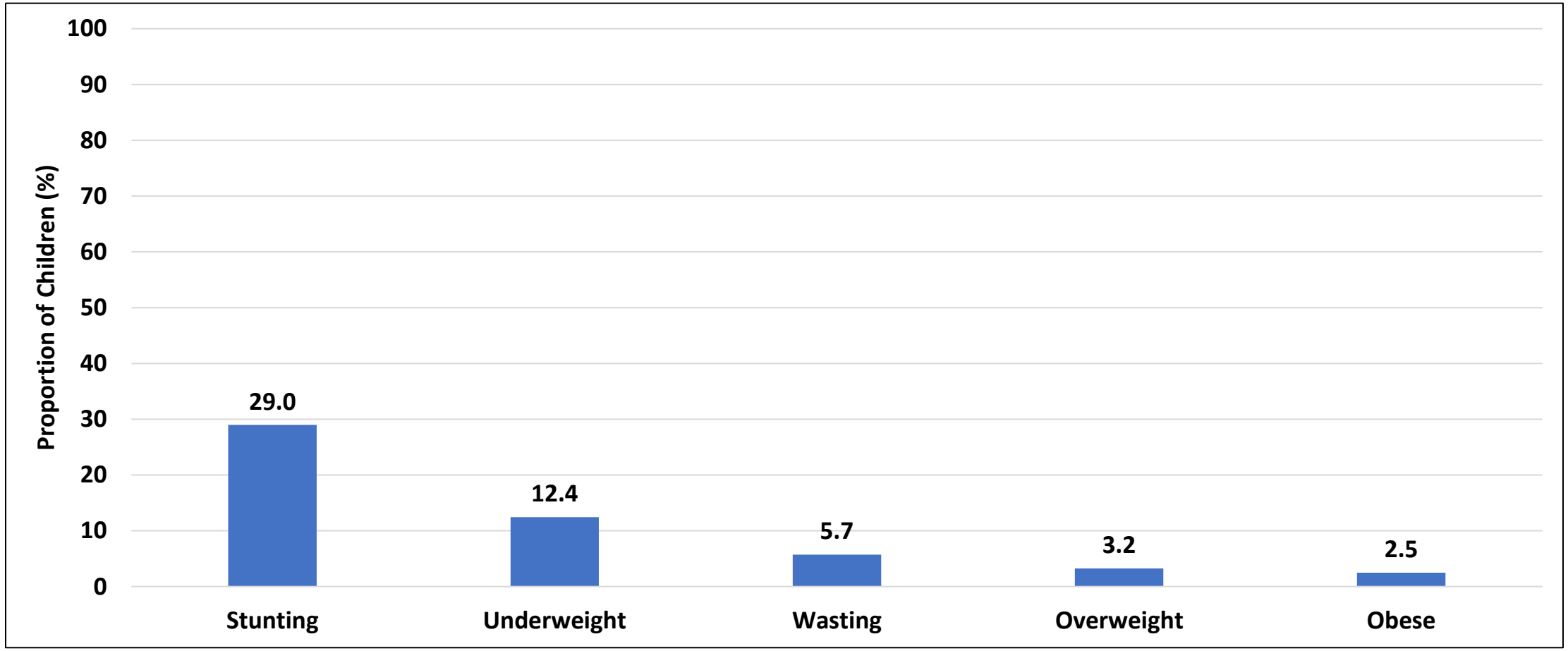
Nutrition Status

Child Nutrition Status

Child Stunting 	The share of children under the age of five who are short for their age (having a low height-for-age), reflecting chronic undernutrition.
Child Wasting 	The share of children under the age of five who are too thin for their height (low-weight-for-height), reflecting acute undernutrition.
Child Underweight 	The share of the children under the age of the five who are too thin for their age (low weight-for-age).
Overweight /Obesity 	The share of children under the age of five who are too heavy for their height (high weight-for-height).

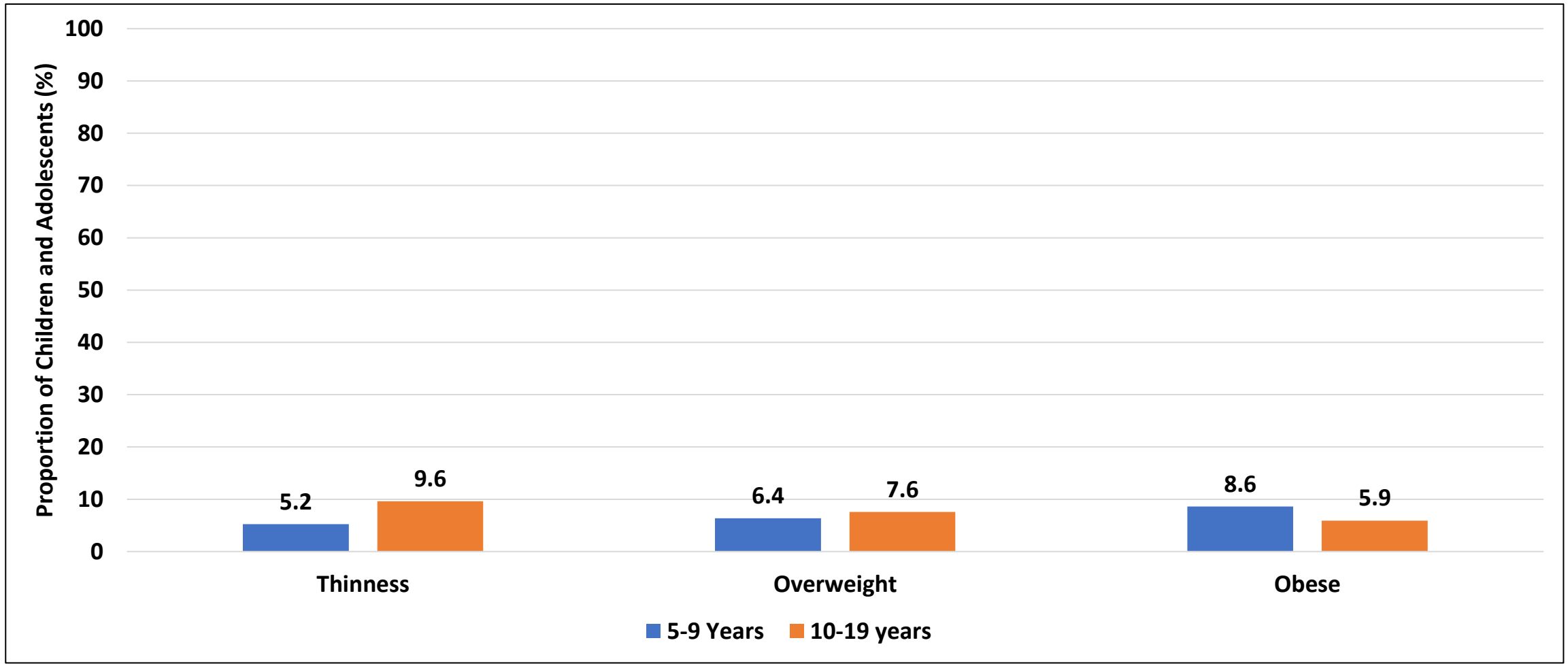
Indicator	Indicator definition (WHO standards, 2006)	National prevalence (%)	Prevalence cut-off values for public health significance
Stunting	Height/Length for age <–2 SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median	**29**	<2.5%: Very Low 2.5-<10%: Low 10-<20%: Medium 20-<30%: High ≥30%: Very High (DeOniset al., 2019)
Global Acute Malnutrition	Weight for height <-2SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median and/oedema	**5.7**	<5% Acceptable 5–9.9%: Poor 10–14.9%: Serious >15%: Critical
Severe Acute Malnutrition	Weight for height <–3 SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median	**2.1**	0% = acceptable >0%: Unacceptable
Underweight	Weight for age <-2SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median and/oedema	**12.4**	
Overweight	Weight for height >+2 SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median	**3.2**	<2.5%: very low 2.5 to <5%: low 5 to <10%: medium 10 to <15%: high ≥15%: very high
obesity	Weight for height >+3 SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median	**2.5**	

Nutrition Status of Children 6- 59 Months



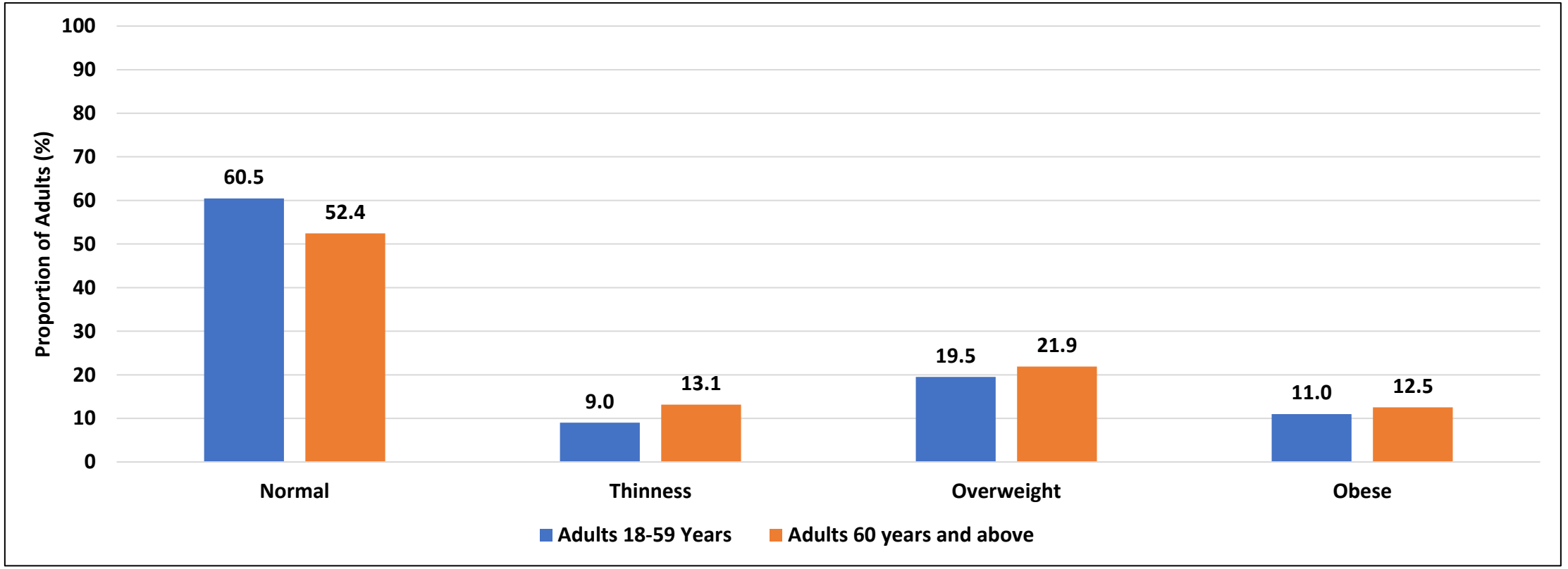
- Stunting (29%) and global acute malnutrition (wasting) (5.7%) were high according to the World Health Organization classification.

Nutrition Status of Children and Adolescents



- Amongst the age group 5-9 years, 13.5% of the children were stunted, 5.2% were thin, 6.4% were overweight and 8.6% were obese.
- Amongst the age group 10-19 years, 9.6% were thin and 5.9% were obese.

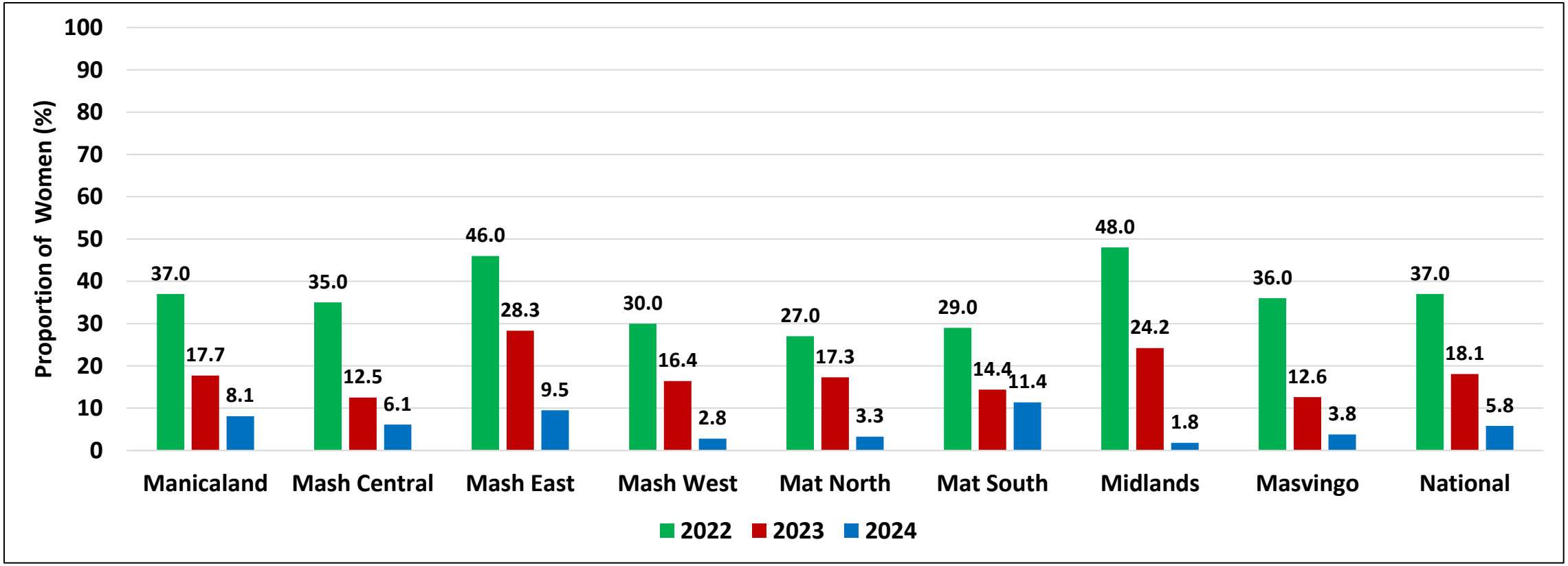
Nutrition Status of Adults 18 Years and Above



- Body mass index was used to classify adults aged 18 years and above. Having excess fat deposits in the body leads to to serious health consequences such as cardiovascular disease (mainly heart disease and stroke), type 2 diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders like osteoarthritis, and some cancers (endometrial, breast and colon).
- Amongst the 18-59 years age group, 19.5% were overweight whilst 11.0% were overweight.

Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women of Child Bearing Age

Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women of Child Bearing Age by Year



- The proportion of women of child bearing age in Matabeleland North consuming 5 or more food groups dropped from 27.0% recorded in 2022 to 3.3 in 2024.

Actual Food Groups Consumed by WCBA

	Foods made from grains (%)	Orange fleshed Vegetables or root (%)	White roots and tubers s (%)	Dark green leafy vegetables (%)	Fruits that are dark yellow or orange inside (%)	Other fruits like bananas, apples, citrus fruits (%)	Other vegetables like onion, tomato (%)	Meat made from animal organs (%)	Other types of meat or poultry, (%)	Eggs (%)	Fish or seafood, (%)	Beans or peas, (%)	Nuts or seeds, (%)	Milk or milk products, (%)	Oils/fat/butter (%)	Condiments and seasonings, (%)	Other beverages and foods (%)
Manicaland	98.3	22.0	4.1	62.9	2.8	15.9	28.4	3.1	8.9	5.2	5.0	5.4	1.8	5.5	35.8	16.1	8.3
Mash Central	99.1	19.4	3.3	58.2	3.1	7.8	32.2	3.3	8.5	5.9	8.5	4.1	2.6	4.6	39.4	17.0	5.4
Mash East	95.2	16.3	7.7	57.8	1.0	7.8	46.1	3.9	15.2	7.1	3.8	3.5	2.7	10.1	57.9	27.3	24.4
Mash West	98.8	12.9	1.7	46.4	1.0	2.4	29.4	0.9	5.0	3.8	13.9	3.3	0.3	6.6	39.5	7.5	8.2
Mat North	99.1	9.6	2.4	61.2	0.3	1.5	17.0	4.0	8.9	3.1	2.2	5.0	0.9	6.4	33.0	29.0	21.5
Mat South	97.3	18.1	9.4	50.4	4.0	12.7	32.5	7.9	27.5	5.9	6.4	11.7	2.5	13.2	34.5	13.1	21.4
Midlands	98.0	13.5	4.6	49.1	2.3	4.9	32.3	3.2	11.4	1.5	2.4	4.4	1.4	4.9	29.0	10.3	11.0
Masvingo	96.7	10.5	3.2	50.1	1.0	9.0	30.4	3.8	15.6	1.8	3.7	4.2	3.7	9.2	45.6	9.7	16.0
National	97.7	15.1	4.7	54.3	1.9	7.6	31.4	3.8	12.9	4.2	5.5	5.2	2.0	7.7	39.5	16.3	15.0

- Women of Child Bearing Age (WBCA) because of their physiological demands of pregnancy and lactation require a more nutrient-dense diet. Requirements for most nutrients are higher for this group than for adult men.
- The results show that generally WCBA were mostly consuming foods made from grain (97%), dark green vegetables (54.3%) and Oils(39.5%).
- Insufficient nutrient intake before and during pregnancy and lactation can affect both women and their infants.

Physical Activity and Non Communicable Diseases

Type of Physical Activity by Children 5-9 Years

	Walking (%)	Dancing (%)	Swimming (%)	Jogging (%)	Aerobic exercise (%)	Bicycle Riding (%)	Gardening (%)	Sporting Activities (%)	None (%)
Manicaland	55.2	12.6	0.8	17.8	0.5	0.7	23.8	17.1	27.5
Mash Central	63.2	21.2	0.6	23.1	1.3	0.4	17	20.8	22.6
Mash East	79.5	21	0.8	27.7	1	0.7	18.5	13.6	14.3
Mash West	65.5	5.8	0.1	31.7	0.2	1.2	21.2	22.7	18.2
Mat North	78.4	11.3	0.4	19.8	0.1	1.3	28	28.4	11.9
Mat South	74.8	20.1	2.8	34.3	0.1	1.9	29.1	21.2	18.9
Midlands	85	20	0.4	33.6	0.5	0.3	31.8	12.4	9.3
Masvingo	82	14.7	0.9	32.2	2.3	3.5	32.1	24.6	8.1
National	73.3	15.9	0.8	27.8	0.7	1.2	25.1	19.9	16.1

- Establishing healthy habits in childhood is crucial for long-term well-being. The main physical activity engaged in by children 5-9 years in Matabeleland North was walking (78.4%) , gardening (28%) and sporting activities (28.4%) .
- Almost 11.9% of children aged 5-9years in rural households reported not to be engaging in any physical activity.
- Children who do not engage in regular exercise are more prone to obesity, cardiovascular problems and weakened bones and muscles.

Type of Physical Activity by Adolescents (10-19 Years)

	Walking (%)	Dancing (%)	Swimming (%)	Jogging (%)	Aerobic (%)	Bicycle Riding %)	Gardening (%)	Sporting Activities (%)	None (%)
Manicaland	59.4	8.5	1.1	17.5	0.6	1.1	44.7	23.2	17.7
Mash Central	65.6	18.7	0.8	21.6	0.5	2.1	35.1	27.7	13.2
Mash East	78.9	19	0.8	24.9	0.8	2.7	34.4	21.9	11.6
Mash West	67	5.8	0.4	27.4	0.4	2.9	37.2	29.7	14.9
Mat North	78.1	12.3	0.7	22.5	0.2	4.8	42.9	28.8	8.1
Mat South	74.6	16.3	2.1	28.9	0.5	7.5	47.3	25.9	14.5
Midlands	85.7	18.7	0.5	31.8	0.3	1.5	41.1	19.2	8.3
Masvingo	81.4	9.9	1.2	30.5	1.6	5.8	56.3	35.8	3.1
National	74.3	13.9	0.9	25.8	0.6	3.5	42.2	27.7	11.3

- Investing in adolescent health and physical wellbeing has been shown to yield a health benefit into adulthood.
- Adolescents aged 10-19 years in Matabeleland North engaged in walking (78.1%), gardening (42.9%) and sporting activities (28.8%) .
- About 8.1% of adolescents did not participate in any physical activity.
- The adolescence period is generally considered a healthy period but many Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) that manifest later in life are a result of modifiable risk behaviors established during this time, such as smoking, unhealthy diet patterns and low levels of physical activity.

Type of Physical Activity by Adults 18-59 Years

	Walking (%)	Dancing (%)	Swimming (%)	Jogging (%)	Aerobic Exercise (%)	Bicycle Riding (%)	Gardening (%)	Sporting Activities (%)	None (%)
Manicaland	59.4	8.5	1.1	17.5	0.6	1.1	44.7	34.6	17.7
Mash Central	65.6	18.7	0.8	21.6	0.5	2.1	35.1	38.1	13.2
Mash East	78.9	19	0.8	24.9	0.8	2.7	34.4	31.4	11.6
Mash West	67	5.8	0.4	27.4	0.4	2.9	37.2	41.8	14.9
Mat North	78.1	12.3	0.7	22.5	0.2	4.8	42.9	50.1	8.1
Mat South	74.6	16.3	2.1	28.9	0.5	7.5	47.3	39	14.5
Midlands	85.7	18.7	0.5	31.8	0.3	1.5	41.1	23.7	8.3
Masvingo	81.4	9.9	1.2	30.5	1.6	5.8	56.3	51.3	3.1
National	74.3	13.9	0.9	25.8	0.6	3.5	42.2	39.7	11.3

- The main physical activity engaged in by adults aged 18-59 years in Matabeleland North was walking (74.6%), Gardening (42.9%) and sporting activities (50.1%).

Type of Physical Activity by Elderly (60+ Years)

	Walking (%)	Dancing (%)	Swimming (%)	Jogging Running (%)	Aerobic Exercise (%)	Bicycle Riding (%)	Gardening (%)	Sporting Activities (%)	None (%)
Manicaland	49.6	1.8	0.1	2.1	0.4	0.2	45	10.2	30.8
Mash Central	60.6	7.3	0	1.9	0	0.9	37	9.4	25.1
Mash East	72.1	5.7	0	3.4	0.7	1.5	41.9	7	18.9
Mash West	64.5	0.9	0	0.8	0	2.2	28.7	8.9	25.3
Mat North	72.6	3.9	0.1	2.7	0	3.1	48	16.7	19.8
Mat South	72.8	5.5	1	4.9	0.1	3.8	47.1	14.3	19.8
Midlands	79	8.9	0	3.8	0.1	0.5	38.5	0.6	14.3
Masvingo	75.8	4.1	0	2.5	0.4	2.3	57.2	13.4	13.2
National	69.6	5	0.2	2.9	0.2	1.8	43.3	9.8	20.2

- The main physical activity engaged in by household members aged 60 years and above was walking (72.6%).
- 19.8% of household members 60 years and above reported that they were not engaging in any physical activity.

Type of Physical Activity by WBCA 15-49 years

	Walking (%)	Dancing (%)	Swimming (%)	Jogging (%)	Aerobic exercises (%)	Bicycle Riding (%)	Gardening (%)	Sporting activities (%)	None (%)
Manicaland	59.4	4.7	0.4	7.1	0.2	0.5	55.5	20	16.9
Mash Central	68.6	13.8	0.2	7.8	0.4	0.6	51.8	13	12.4
Mash East	74.7	13	0.2	9.5	0.5	0.5	47.7	11.7	13.2
Mash West	67.3	2.4	0.4	10.1	0	1.1	48.6	16.3	13
Mat North	76.5	11.8	0.3	6.5	0.1	0.7	51.9	20	14.2
Mat South	74.1	12.9	1.8	13.6	0.4	3.9	63.7	17.8	14
Midlands	84.2	15.6	0.3	16.7	0.4	0.5	50.8	1.7	8.9
Masvingo	83.4	9	0.5	13.3	1	3	71.9	20.3	3.2
National	73.6	10.5	0.5	10.6	0.4	1.3	55	14.6	11.9

- The main physical activity engaged in by Women of Child Bearing Age in Matabeleland North was walking (76.5%).

Chronic Conditions by Age

	5-9 years (%)	10-19 years (%)	15-49 WCBA (%)	18-59 years (%)	60 years and above (%)
Arthritis, chronic body pain	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.4	4.8
Asthma	0.1	0.3	0.7	0.8	1.9
Cancer	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.7
Cerebral palsy	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
Diabetes, high blood sugar	0.0	0.1	0.9	1.1	8.4
Epilepsy, seizures, fits	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3
Heart disease	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.3	1.6
HIV infection AIDS	0.1	0.5	3.8	4.3	4.2
Hypertension, High blood pressure	0.0	0.0	1.6	1.9	16.4
Kidney diseases	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Liver diseases	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Mental illness	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.6
Not willing to disclose	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.4
Stroke	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.2
Tuberculosis	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.4
Ulcer, chronic stomach pain	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.9

- Hypertension (16.4%) and diabetes (8.4%) were the mostly reported chronic conditions amongst the 60 years and above age group.

Food Security

Food Security Analytical Framework

- Food security exists when all people at all times, have **physical, social and economic** access to food which is safe and consumed in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their dietary needs and food preferences and it is supported by an environment of adequate sanitation, health services and care allowing for a healthy and active life (Food and Nutrition Security Policy, 2012).
- The four dimensions of food security are:
    - **Availability** of food
    - **Access to food**
    - The safe and healthy **utilisation** of food
    - The **stability** of food availability, access and utilisation

Food Security Analytical Framework

- Household cereal security was determined by measuring a household's potential access to enough cereal to give each member 2100 kilocalories per day in the consumption period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- Each of the surveyed households' potential to acquire minimum expenditure food basket was computed by estimating the household's likely disposable income (both cash and non cash) in the 2024/25 consumption year from the following possible income sources;
    - Cereal stocks from the previous season;
    - Own food crop production from the 2023/24 agricultural season;
    - Potential income from own cash crop production;
    - Potential income from livestock ;
    - Potential income from casual labour and remittances; and
    - Income from other sources such as gifts, pensions, gardening, formal and informal employment.

Food Security Analytical Framework

- The total energy that could be acquired by the household from the cheapest energy source using its potential disposable income was then computed and compared to the household's minimum energy requirement.
- When the potential energy that a household could acquire was greater than its minimum energy requirements, the household was deemed to be food secure. When the converse was true, the household was defined as food insecure.
- The severity of household food insecurity was computed by the margin with which its potential energy access was below its minimum energy requirements.

Food Security Status at Peak Hunger

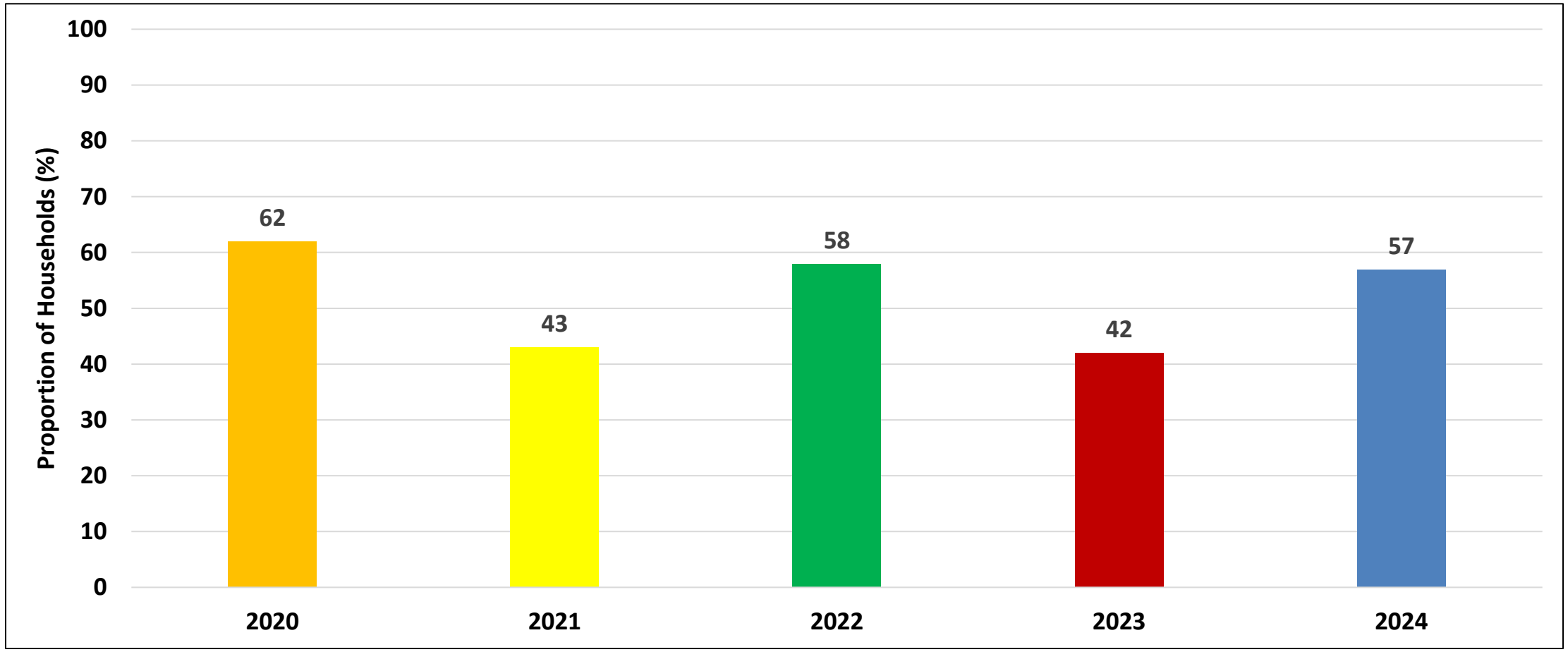
- During the peak hunger period (January to March 2025) it was estimated that approximately **57%** of Matabeleland North rural households will be cereal insecure.
- The 57% of rural households translated into approximately **427,389** individuals requiring a total of **15,813 MT** of cereal (Maize Grain) from the National Strategic Grain Reserves.

Cereal Insecurity by Pillars

District	Food insecurity from cereals stocks (%)	Food insecurity from cereals stocks plus food crops (%)	Food insecurity from cereals stocks plus food crops plus cash crops (%)	Food insecurity from cereals stocks plus food crops plus cash crops plus remittances (%)	Food insecurity from cereals stocks plus food crops plus cash crops plus livestock plus casual labour and remittances (%)	Food insecurity from cereals stocks plus food crops plus cash crops plus livestock plus casual labour and remittances plus income (%)
Binga	85	85	85	84	82	63
Bubi	72	72	72	72	57	38
Hwange	73	65	65	65	61	45
Lupane	90	90	90	90	75	48
Nkayi	89	89	89	89	74	60
Tsholotsho	94	94	94	94	83	62
Umguza	90	90	90	90	81	68
Mat North	**85**	**83**	**83**	**83**	**73**	**57**

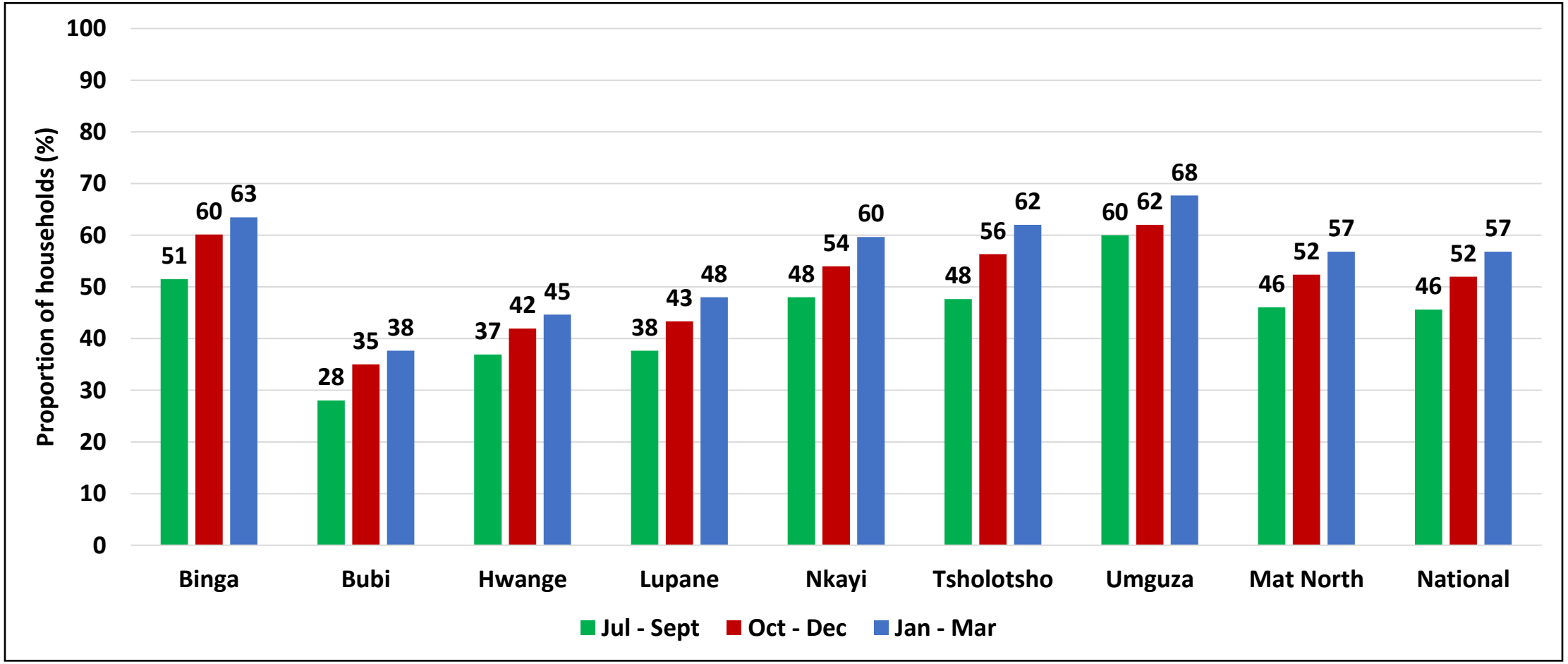
- Considering all sources of potential income, the cereal insecurity prevalence is projected to be 57% during the peak hunger in the 2024/25 consumption year.

Cereal Insecurity Trends: 2020-2024



- Generally, the household cereal insecurity has deteriorated across all districts due to poor rains.

Cereal Insecurity Progression by Quarter



- About 46% of the rural households were projected to be facing food access challenges in the July to September quarter.

Cereal Insecure Population by Quarter

District	Food Insecure Population		
	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar
Binga	82,383	96,202	101,517
Bubi	20,744	25,929	27,905
Hwange	25,602	29,093	30,955
Lupane	40,396	46,473	51,478
Nkayi	53,986	60,734	67,108
Tsholotsho	55,189	65,224	71,785
Umguza	67,959	70,224	76,643
Mat North	**346,258**	**393,879**	**427,389**

- Binga (101,517) and Umguza (76,643) were projected to have the highest populations of cereal insecure people during the peak hunger period.

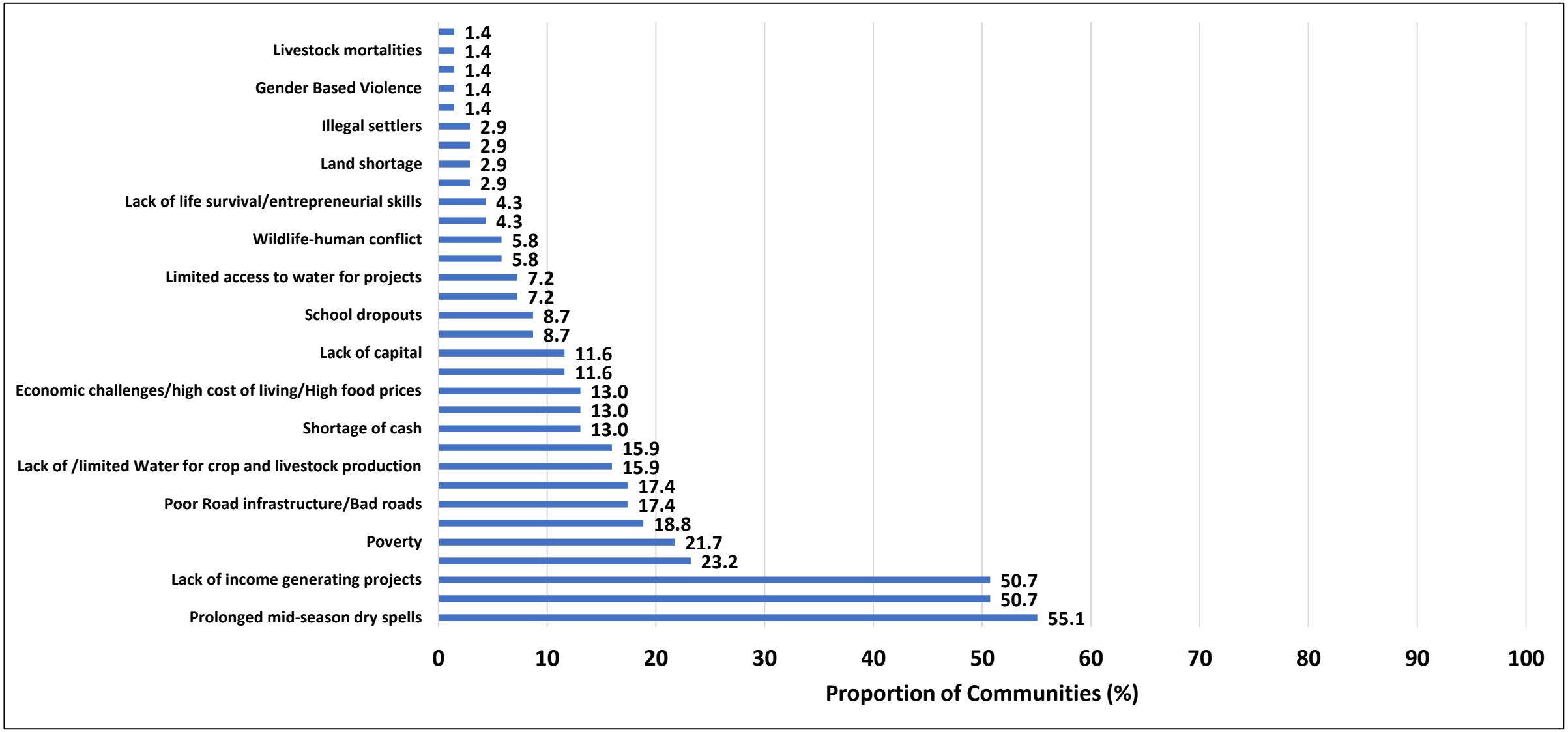
Cereal Requirements (MT) by Province by Quarter

District	Cereal Requirements		
	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar
Binga	3,048	3,559	3,756
Bubi	768	959	1,032
Hwange	947	1,076	1,145
Lupane	1,495	1,719	1,905
Nkayi	1,997	2,247	2,483
Tsholotsho	2,042	2,413	2,656
Umguza	2,514	2,598	2,836
Mat North	**12,812**	**14,574**	**15,813**

- Binga (3,756MT) and Umguza (2,836MT) were projected to have the highest cereal requirements during the peak hunger period.

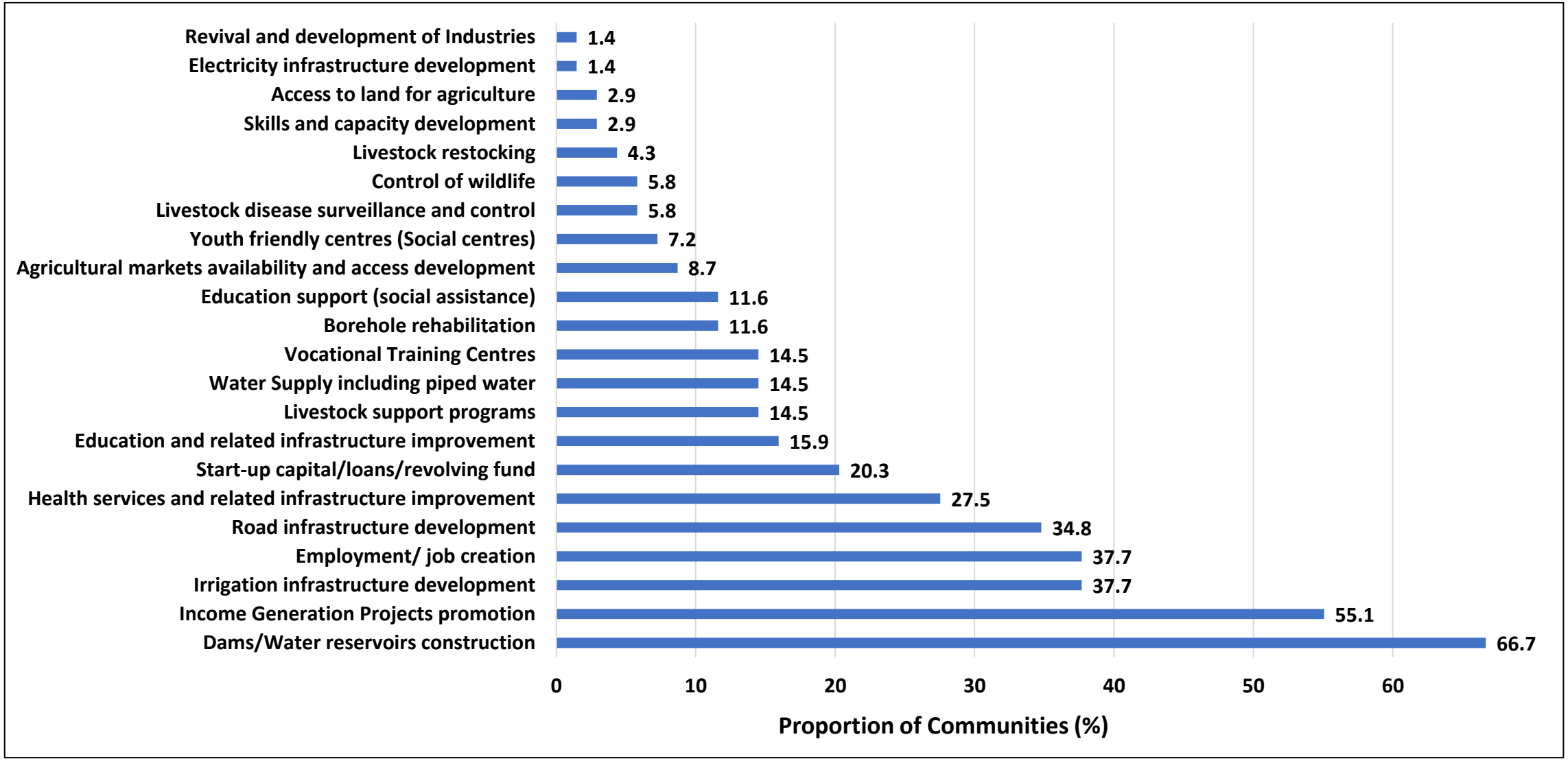
Development Challenges and Priorities

Community Development Challenges



- In Matabeleland North, prolonged mid-season dry spell (55.1%), were ranked high by the communities; unemployment (50.7%) and lack of income generating projects (50.7%).

Community Development Priorities



- In Matabeleland North, most communities prioritised dam construction (66.7%), income generation projects promotion (55.1%), irrigation infrastructure development (37.7%) and employment/job creation (37.7%).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations

WASH

- Access to improved sanitation for the province was 48%, Binga (74%), Lupane (53%) and Tsholotsho (51%) had the highest proportion of households practising open defecation. Government and development partners need to scale up interventions that increase the availability of latrines and their use since this poses a huge health risk.
- The proportion of households using unimproved water sources was 16%. Bubi (26%), Binga and Nkayi (17%) had the highest proportion of households using unimproved water sources. Government and development partners should prioritise the establishment and rehabilitation of water sources that are safe for cooking and drinking for communities using unimproved water sources.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Social Assistance

- Government-led social assistance reduced from 62% (2023) to 40% (2024) due to better harvests in 2023. However due to a poor harvest in 2024, there is a great need to increase support for vulnerable communities.
- The Government is commended for the continued support to vulnerable communities. UN/NGOs also provided complementary social assistance (9%).
- During the peak hunger period January-March 2025 the food insecure population is projected to be 57%. Therefore it is recommended that the Government through the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and its partners rollout emergency humanitarian assistance for the vulnerable households. It is further recommended that resilience building programmes be implemented to ensure that affected households build resilience to future climate shocks.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Shocks and Hazards

- The shocks that mostly affected Matabeleland North were prolonged mid-season dry spell (90.7%), cash shortage (64.4%), sharp increases in cereal prices (61.16%) and sharp drop in livestock prices (25.4%). Therefore a combination of measures should be implemented:

I. Prolonged dry spells – It is recommended that households practise crop diversification by having a fair proportion of traditional grains in their produce.

II. Cash shortage – The Government through the ministry responsible for finance is recommended to encourage the use of mobile money in rural areas. However there is a gap to filled in terms of network connectivity in rural areas.

III. Sharp drop in livestock prices – The results reported that 46% of the livestock were in a poor condition and livestock like cattle and goats had died due to diseases 7% and 6% respectively. Therefore it is recommended to upscale life saving interventions like supplementary feeding to be implemented especially in Hwange and Binga. This should be complemented by resilience building interventions which promote fodder production and disease control.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Agriculture Production

- The results showed that the average harvest for maize was 3.9kgs per household and the average harvest for sorghum 15.1kgs per household.
- Adoption of climate-smart technologies was mostly prominent in the use of quality-certified seeds and Pfumvudza/Intwasa (55.7%), alongside the growing of traditional grains (32.3%). While these are efficient interventions, the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, Climate and Rural Development should spearhead the establishment of a multi-stakeholder strategy aimed at scaling-up climate.

Child Nutrition

- While a high proportion of children (89%) were ever breastfed, only 20.1% of infants under six months of age were exclusively breastfed, falling short of the World Health Assembly's target of 50% by 2025. Efforts to address childhood undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overnutrition need to be integrated to achieve global nutrition targets.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Child Nutrition

- Matabeleland North recorded a Global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate of 5.7% amongst children 6-59 months which was above the 5% cut off WHO threshold. The Government through the Ministry responsible for health should intensify its community mobilization network capacities for early identification of severe and moderate acute malnutrition cases to treatment facilities, community sensitization on acute malnutrition, preposition nutrition commodities in vulnerable areas and support capacity strengthening to support the management of severe and moderate acute malnutrition in each country. Furthermore preventive strategies which include infant and young child feeding, hygiene and sanitation promotion should be scaled up.
- Early initiation of breastfeeding is one of the high impact child survival strategies. About 76% of the children were breastfed within the 1st hour of birth. Innovative Baby Friendly Hospital Initiatives such as localised on job mentorship, should be expanded to cover all institutions offering delivery services to improve optimal breastfeeding practices. In addition, strengthening of community care groups, community synergy initiatives and attendance of ante-natal care sessions initiatives is recommended to ensure continuum of care during the window of opportunity (first 1000 days). This should be augmented by task-sharing with other relevant Ministries such as those responsible for gender and women affairs, agriculture, bringing in the multisectoral approach to realise optimal IYCF practices at community level.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Child Nutrition

- The Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) remained low at 2.3%, below the national target of 25%. Only 4.8% of children were consuming diversified diets. Additionally, children consuming unhealthy foods (18%) and those not consuming fruits and vegetables (45%) further impact negatively on children is diet quality outcomes. To improve this indicator, there is need for collaborative efforts by the Ministries responsible for Agriculture, Health, Social Welfare, Education, Women Affairs and ICT, as well as the Private Sector, that ensure that food security is ensured at household level and innovative ways of disseminating nutrition messaging to caregivers at every contact point.

Development Challenges and Priorities

- About 55.1% of the communities reported that prolonged mid-season dry spells was the major challenge affecting the community. Therefore there is a need that the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to increase their coverage in assisting the communities in Matabeleland North.
- Most communities prioritised construction of dam/reservoirs (66.7%), income generating projects (55.1%), irrigation infrastructure development (37.7%) and job creation (37.7%). There is need for Government to increase investment in the development of water resources and creation of employment.

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