An Analysis of the Urban Food Environment and Lived Experiences of Urban Youth in Harare & Bulawayo

Presented by
Dr Percy Toriro
Municipal Development Partnership
ptoriro@yahoo.co.uk
MDP is grateful to the 2 partners that made it possible for us to do this work.....
Further Aprreciation....

- Government of Zimbabwe
- Harare City Council and Bulawayo City Council
- Tertiary Institutions (UZ, NUST, Hillside, Byo Polytech)
- NGOs
- GIS Support
- Parents and Youths that participated
- Business people that allowed us to intrude
- Food lab participants/Researchers
- Many others we have not mentioned

- Without your participation and support this would not have been possible
In the year 2008

• The World Reached the **Tipping Point**
• More People lived in Cities than in Rural Areas
State of World Urbanization Today

- North America: 82%
- Latin America +C: 80%
- Europe: 73%
- Asia: 48%
- Africa: 40%
Summary of African Urbanization

• North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya) most urbanized at around 70%
• Southern Africa (Led by South Africa, Botswana, and Angola all 60%) so we average 50%
• East Africa (Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya) all 20% and less
Zimbabwe Urbanization Trends...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1975</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>2025</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,202,000</td>
<td>3,619,000</td>
<td>10,875,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual growth Rate 1990-1995 1.5% Rural 5.0% urban
Unfortunately......

• The majority of the urban poor across Southern Africa suffer chronic food insecurity
Presentation Outline

• Research Methodology
• Background and Context
• Part A Overview of the urban food systems
• Part B of the study (Youth lived experience)
• People’s main sources of food and what influences choices
• Policies Gaps
• Proposed policy/action areas
• Areas for future research
Research Methodology

- The research comprised two parts
  - Part A comprised city-wide characterization of food systems in Harare and Bulawayo. For this part the main method used was a desk survey that examined laws that affect food, plans and policies as well as reports published by institutions that work in the area of urban food. The desk survey was complemented by interviews with key informants mainly in councils and government, as well as some in NGOs, academic institutions, and community groups. Food systems infrastructure in both cities was mapped. The data that was being collected was shared in food lab meetings where stakeholders validated it.
  - Part B was the youth lived experience in sample 2 sample areas in each city. 5 tools were used namely; interview guides for youths and their parents, focus group discussions, transect walks, photographic recording of food infrastructure as well as GIS mapping.
Part A

• Characterization of the Urban Food System of Harare and Bulawayo

• The next few slides summarize this component with emphasis on Harare
Background and Context

There is rapid urbanization in Zimbabwe as in much of the global South

There are high levels of poverty (ZimVAC, 2019)

There is a disproportionately high expenditure on food almost 60%

There are many designated players in the area of food, but there is little visibility and impact on communities

Like in much of SADC, there is chronic food insecurity amongst the urban poor (AFSUN, 2012, 2019)
Demographic, Socio-economic, Geographic

Both cities have a youthful population with almost 60% below 25 years (Zimstats, 2019)

There’s a high prevalence of child-headed households

Most households enjoy poor diets with a low dietary diversity (ZimVAC, 2019)

Harare enjoys good rains, a moderate climate conducive to good food productivity but not prioritized

Bulawayo suffers periodic droughts and severe water shortages limiting food productivity unless underground water is used BUT better organized production
Poor dietary diversity - dominance of starches and veggies

![Bar graph showing the number of days incorporating different food groups: Maize (6 days), Vegetables (5 days), Fruits (2 days), Meat (1.8 days), Dairy Products (1.3 days), Pulses (0.9 days), Eggs (0.5 days).]
Overview of the urban food systems

• Although some food is produced within the city boundaries (approx. 30% in Harare), most food (70%) comes from outside the city region.

• There is a general widespread provision of food infrastructure, but there is little consideration of nutrition and health.

• A deeper analysis shows that although there are shops, there are pockets of food deserts in the cities.

• Informal markets are abundant, popular and widespread, but very fragile.

• Fast food outlets are popular and increasing in numbers (Innscor establishing 92 this year), but tend to be established along major traffic routes and busy nodes.

• A growing phenomenon in both Harare and Bulawayo is the increase in households receiving food and cash remittances from the diaspora (up to 30% of respondents).
Governance and Policy Framework

• The Zimbabwe constitution recognizes the right to food

• There are many laws that govern food (Food Safety and Standards Act, Public Health Act, Urban Councils Act, Regional Town and Country Planning Act, etc)

• These laws work well to safeguard public health and curb the spread of diseases

• They are all however mostly old laws that no longer serve today’s needs (Shop Licenses Act, 1976; Public Health Act 1940s; Regional Town and Country Planning Act, 1945)

• The informal and small-scale food sector is particularly affected by these laws which were enacted when the economy was largely formal

• There are several institutions that govern food (FNC, Min of Health, Councils)

• Food institutions are mainly government and not community-based

• Planners (Harare) do not believe they have a role in urban food!

• Bulawayo has an UA Policy, Strategy (Stakeholder Forum) and are working closely with the informal sector
Part B

The Youth Lived Experience
The Study
Cities: Harare and Bulawayo
Study Sites in Harare: Budiriro and Shawasha Hills
Study Sites in Bulawayo: Entumbane and Fourwinds
Sources of Food

• There are differences in where food is accessed by different income groups in Harare and Bulawayo
  • The rich are more flexible in where they get food whereas the poor mostly get food from the local shops, local market, or local food vendors
  • The rich buy in bulk and store in pantries and refrigerators whereas the poor buy when they want to cook and only in small quantities
  • Up to 90 percent of the respondents in low-income areas buy some of their food from informal traders who do not have authority to do business from their areas of operation
  • Although informal sector food is NOT cheap, it is AFFORDABLE
  • Although meat is strictly regulated, after hours it is sold on some streets
  • Almost 30% of households receive food and cash remittances

• Harare and Bulawayo locally produce up to 30% of some of the food consumed
  • (Harare produces slightly more at 30% with Bulawayo producing approximately 20%)
  • Both cities import the bulk of their food from outside their boundaries (+/_ 70%)
Food Remittances....
Images of some food spaces in Budiriro
Off-plot production is more orderly in Byo community gardens
Food flows into Harare from across the country as well as from South Africa.
What’s influencing food choices?

• Availability of food at the markets
• Convenience (for low-income households, food choices are also influenced by what is easily accessible at different times of day)
• Affordability (majority amongst the low-income)
• Parents’, in particular, Mother’s influence (>90%)
• Ease of preparation (noodles in tertiary institutions)
• What you know (awareness of food type)
• What is ‘fashionable and tasty’ (fast foods)
• Although almost everyone mentioned health considerations, few in the low-income areas are influenced by health and nutrition in practice
What is working and what is not working in the food environment?

• What is working
  • Almost every household that owns a house are growing food (veggies) in a backyard garden
  • There is food in most areas, although not everyone can afford
  • There is government (council in Byo) support for food production
  • There are many organizations working in the area of food (FNC, FAO, MDP, World Vision, Care, Solidarites, etc)

• What is not working
  • Community-led initiatives are not active in Harare
  • There is sometimes disharmony between policy and practice (eg UA)
  • There is little collaboration between city authorities and informal food suppliers
    • Most laws are violated by informal traders because there is a tendency to over-regulate
    • The informal sector constitutes an insecure food supply source due to periodic raids
    • This denies the residents of some traditional foods that are supplied by the sector
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges that the youths are facing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little or no room to decide what to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - most parents cannot give the youths money to eat adequate good food or to choose what to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited availability of healthy options at places they hang out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most healthy food restaurants and nutritious foods are very expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor presentation of some healthy food options leave youths who may want to try it with difficult choices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Existing Food Policies and Gaps

- The constitution gives right to food, Section 15
- The State must—
  - (i) encourage people to grow and store adequate food;
  - (ii) secure the establishment of adequate food reserves; and
  - (iii) encourage and promote adequate and proper nutrition through mass education and other appropriate means.
- Not much of (iii) is happening

- Laws are good at safeguarding public health, but they are control-focused, rather than facilitate and encourage innovation in food provisioning (see Public Health Act, Shop Licenses Act, Food Safety and Standards Act, Regional Town and Country Planning Act, Urban Councils Act, etc)
- There are generally no city policies that seek to address food (Bulawayo is an exception on promoting Urban Agriculture and engagement)
- There is little or no people role in current food set ups
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Any differences between gender and/or vulnerable groups?</th>
<th>Mothers (females) tend to be more involved in food choices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is little to no gender or special interest focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proposed solutions or ideas from the youths from research and from labs (differences and similarities)

Lab Youths

- **Raise awareness of youths to healthy and nutritious food**
  - ‘Introduce traditional and healthy food festivals’
  - ‘Dial a Shasha’

- **Improve packaging and presentation of good healthy food**

- **Teach youths how to prepare traditional foods.**
  - ‘Much as we may want some healthy or traditional foods, we don’t know how to prepare them. Even some parents cannot prepare them as well’
Lacking....

Attractively packaged healthy food is rare on the market
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Policy/Action areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness raising on healthy, nutritious foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving packaging and presentation of healthy food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal reform to support small-scale and informal food traders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising planners' awareness on their role in promoting food access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a healthy relationship between parents and children on food and nutritious issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Areas for further research...

1. Comprehensive assessment of sources and quantities of urban food. Accurate primary data is important to develop resilience

2. Youths in tertiary institutions. What we found was a sneak-peak, this is our future and more work must be done to get a full picture.

3. Role of the informal sector in urban food supply must be further investigated to inform relevant legal reform.

4. Food deserts in urban areas. We found that despite the perception of plenty food, there are areas of lack. This must be pursued, understood and addressed.

5. Food waste. How much food is wasted after harvesting, at the markets etc?