

## **Glimpses of Life in Compounds in Lusaka- April 2008 to June 2008**

The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection conducted interviews with satellite homes in Matero, Chainda, Linda, Chipata, Kanyama, and Garden compounds with random interviews with different respondents in the same areas. The satellite homes supplement information reflected on the Urban Basic Needs basket while the random interviews give a greater depth of the daily life challenges in respective areas. Among the issues discussed in the interviews were socioeconomic issues, perceptions of poverty, and political activities. The research is largely qualitative in nature and conducted in an informal setting. The interviews were conducted in the first week of the each month, with interviewees asked to recall how the living situation was in the previous month. Some qualitative figures are also collected so as to examine the earnings and spending of each family.

The JCTR has been conducting these interviews since 2005 with approximately 7 homes that live in the high density, peri-urban areas of Lusaka. Some families are to be replaced as they have shifted to different compounds while others have expressed fatigue and therefore unwilling to continue participating in the research.

The following respondents were interviewed for the quarter

- Household of 8- a Mother and Father keeping 2 grown Children, a daughter in-law, and 3 grand children.
- Household of 7- A single mother keeping her 2 children and 4 dependants. In May the family increased to 7 when a nephew picking joined the family upon getting employed in Lusaka.
- Household of 8- A single woman keeping 7 others including her late brother's widow and her 5 children, and her late sister's child
- Household of 11- A father and mother keeping 9 children
- Household of 7- A recently remarried father with a new wife and 5 children. The respondent was not available for interviews
- Household of 4- the household head is a bus conductor on a mini bus. He was not available for the interview
- Respondent A- A clinical officer running a private clinic and drug store

Highlights on the different sectors

### **Health**

- Self prescription is used to treat suspected cases of malaria and any other ailment. Of the 7 households, 5 prescribed their own drugs except in cases where they deemed the sickness too serious. They avoided the health centres saying that they did not get any medicines but prescriptions despite paying user fees. One respondent expressed concern over the lack of privacy especially with cases of HIV/AIDS
- One household complained of the distance to the nearest health facility and the cost involved
- Cases of chicken pox and measles were on the increase especially in Garden compound, prompting the national wide immunisation programme by Government
- All the house holds complained of coughs and colds which are common at the start of the cold season

### **Housing, Water and Electricity**

- The residents complain of high rental charges. Long load shedding periods which increased the cost of energy and lighting.
- Water is easily accessible to all the areas, but one household complained that they could not buy enough safe water for use each day and hence supplemented it with unsafe water from shallow wells.
- Another respondent complained that the quality of water from a particular source was not good enough. It was either over chlorinated or muddy. Supply of water from Lusaka water was erratic with no clear time when the water would be supplied.
- The house holds complained that the houses they live in need to be improved but they did not have the resources to improve them.

## **Education**

- There were no disturbances in the school calendar. However, one respondent challenged Government to build a school and a clinic in the area as they are not easily accessible to the residents of that area.

## **Employment/ Income**

- Household of 8- Household head (Male), a freelance tile fitter but did not have any work during the period. The wife sells vegetables and dry food at the market. She only sold for 2 months as she was nursing a niece. She estimated to have earned ZMK 500,000.
- Household of 7 (B) - Household head (female), a Government school teacher with a take home pay of ZMK850, 000. She lets two flats for a total of ZMK400, 000 per month. She also sells school uniforms and dressed chickens but never raised anything as she did not have money to continue the business.
- Household of 8- Household head (female) runs a hardware/grocery store and lets 4 flats at a total of ZMK500, 000. The average income from the hardware/grocery stores was just under ZMK2, 000, 000.
- Household of 11- Household head (male) suffered a stroke and is not engaged in any income generating activities. The wife sells vegetables and dry foods at the market. She raised an average income of ZMK600, 000.
- Respondent A- A clinical officer running a private clinic and drug store. He estimates that he earns an average of ZMK960, 000.

## **Expenditure/Food Consumption**

Only two households were able to have three meals a day. The other households had 2 meals at most in a day, and have been unable to buy a 25kg bag of maize meal. They relied on small repackaged bags. Breakfast and lunch were often skipped or eaten alternately.

## **Social/Economic/Political**

- Random interviews showed that many youths are unemployed and therefore engage in antisocial activities such as excessive drinking and prostitution
- A respondent complained about the lack of sanitary facilities because of inadequate space for building pit latrines; lack of good roads within the compounds making emergency cases difficult to handle; and lack of functional drainage system causing a health risk in the rainy season