

Following the Crisis: Poverty and Food Security in Harare, Zimbabwe

Household food security in African cities has received increasing academic and policy attention in the past decade as the continent rapidly urbanizes. The African Food Security Urban Network has played a leading role in producing empirical research on the extent of household food insecurity and on its causal factors, but to date it has produced little longitudinal data. This paper addresses this gap by presenting the results of household food security surveys conducted in low-income neighbourhoods in Harare, Zimbabwe in 2008 and 2012. The analytical focus is on the changes that took place from the “crisis” situation in 2008, when the formal sector economy virtually ceased to function, to the situation in 2012 after new economic policies and a political detente had led to economic stabilization. The results show an overall improvement in food security but with important qualifications, such as the continued importance of non-monetized and informal food sources, continued problems with access to basic services and infrastructure, and the accrual of food security gains mostly among wealthier households.