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POVERTY WATCH:

Introduction to the Basic Needs Basket

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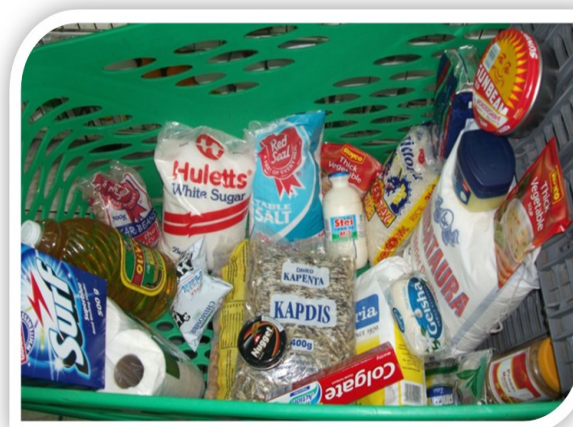
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Introduction

The PRFT seeks to continuously tell the poverty story in Zimbabwe through a participatory and broad-based consultative process.

In line with its mandate for undertaking research in order to inform the socio-economic development in the country, the PRFT will periodically fill this information gap through research on topical poverty related issues and dialogue with the Government, other civil society groups and organisations together with communities.

In this regard the PRFT contributes towards increased monitoring of poverty indicators and thus lobby for a more holistic approach to poverty alleviation and the development of pro-poor policies.



This issue therefore highlights the PRFT focus on poverty and development issues with the BNB as a baseline for a full home grown publication that will consistently bring out topical poverty related issues vis-à-vis the current socio-economic situation.

What is the Basic Needs Basket

In this issue the PRFT gives an overview of the Basic Needs Basket (BNB) which is an accurate monthly survey that shows the minimum cost of living for an average family of five. It outlines the minimum cost of essential food and non-food items (excluding education, transport, healthcare and clothing) needed for an average

sized family to live a decent and healthy lifestyle. The BNB is a tool that reflects the socio-economic situation at household level that can be useful to various stakeholders including government bodies in planning and policy making.

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To the individual the BNB is;

A GUIDE to household budgeting – understanding what is needed for healthy living and prioritizing spending on what is really happening.

A Driver of positive values such as hard work, self sufficiency, integrity and prudence.

An ALARM to awaken people to how they are enslaved by high living costs and to empower people with a sense of their basic human rights

A MOTIVATION to work

hard to meet family needs by exploring activities like gardening, poultry farming, candle making, soap making and other income generating activities

INFORMATION for considering how best to manage the size of your family, whether to live in urban or rural areas, and which family members should work.

An ENCOURAGEMENT to pay any employees (e.g maids, guards, gardeners) a wage that

will support them and their families.

A TOOL to help understand how political issues like the Constitution, agricultural policy and the minimum wage affect how we meet basic needs.

A LEVER for asking for fairer wages from your employer, and for lobbying your MP for economic changes like affordable taxes and levies

An INSPIRATION to fight poverty, for yourself, your family, your relatives and your fellow citizens, and to strive for justice and dignity for all. people.

"A MIRROR to reflect internally on how justly the church is treating its employees"

To the Church Leader it is;

The SUBJECT of sermons, home groups, meetings, and discussions linking faith to the present realities of life within Zimbabwe

A TOOL with which to uplift the moral obligation of all leaders to pay particular attention to the plight of the poor, in order to move people from less to more human conditions

A VEHICLE with which to communicate the key values of the Church's Social Teaching – espe-

cially that all human beings have an innate dignity that must be respected.

A MIRROR to reflect internally on how justly the church is treating its employees

A CHALLENGE to work towards self-sustainability, and to understand the difficulties faced by people on tithing.

A GUIDE to help church members to spend their money wisely and prudently, by encouraging them to budget and

increase self-reliance (e.g. home gardening, poultry farming and other income-generating activities)

A CHALLENGE to counter-productive attitudes concerning family planning, borrowing, hard-work, agriculture, HIV/AIDS, education and gender

An ENTRY POINT for dialogue with groups such as youth, women, widows, NGOs and other churches on how to work together for progress

An INSPIRATION to be rigorous in advocating and lobbying for the elimination of the widespread moral evil of poverty in Zimbabwe

For Community groups it is;

EVIDENCE when negotiating with local and national government for more affordable and accessible services, including basic needs such as shelter, water, energy and food.

A TOOL with which to advocate for reduced costs to community members where they are too high (i.e., local levies and taxes)

An ENTRY POINT into evaluating the needs of your own community and

determining the best strategies for initiating your own local solutions

A CHALLENGE to organize the people in your community to proactively improve their own conditions before seeking assistance (e.g. by setting up gardens, rearing chickens or other income-generating activities)

INFORMATION to educate community members on how to form household budgets, how economic issues

affect them at the household level, and how to help judge economic policies of aspiring political leaders

A CHALLENGE to counter-productive attitudes concerning family planning, borrowing, hard work, agriculture, HIV/AIDS, education and gender

An INSPIRATION to work hard to fight against poverty and its causes in your community, and for basic human rights for all Zimbabweans.

For employers it is;

A CRY to pay just wages to all employees, to end dehumanizing casualization, and to remember the human dignity of your employees

A neutral, factual REPRESENTATION of the difficult situation faced by your employees at home

A CHALLENGE to promote the common good of all employees by narrowing the gap in income between the lowest and highest paid workers by narrowing the gap in income between the lowest and highest paid workers in your enterprise or institution

An ENCOURAGEMENT to make every effort to pay wages that will allow your employees and their families to live in a healthy and dignified way especially for informal (e.g., domestic) workers who are vulnerable to exploitation

A REMINDER for the importance of business ethics in a free market economy

A FOCAL POINT for discussing working conditions with employees, unions and government

INFORMATION to encourage entrepreneurship and to help you understand how the market economy works in different parts of the country

ferent parts of the country

An INSPIRATION to use your position as an Employer to take a hand in fighting poverty and its causes in Zimbabwe, for example by lobbying your MP for a tax regime that will allow you to pay your employees justly.

For Trade Unions it is;

A TOOL with which to advocate for improved conditions of service, conditions of work and conditions of life

A SOUND BASIS for arguing that the minimum wage needs to be tied to a poverty datum line, and the PAYE Tax Exemption Threshold should be decided in consideration of the BNB

A GUIDE to fulfilling your responsibility to educate workers on how best to use the

money they earn to meet the basic family needs

An INDICATOR with which to point out how aid conditionalities have prevented government from fully supporting workers' interests in the past

A RALLYING POINT around which to organize trade unions into a unified, powerful force in support of the workers.

An illustration with which to educate foreign investors who

may not be familiar with Zimbabwe on the basic costs of living faced by employees

A REMINDER to advocate for workplace policies that take into account issues of HIV/AIDS, nutrition and provision of ARVs

An INSPIRATION to fight hard for the rights of Zimbabwean workers, to fight poverty and its causes in Zimbabwe, and to strive to achieve fair working conditions for all workers

**"A RALLYING POINT
around which to
organize trade unions
into a unified, powerful
force in support of the
worker"**



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A Zimbabwe Free from Poverty

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About PRFT

The Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRF Trust) is a non-profit-making civil society network of multi-layered, multi-disciplinary, multi-audience process geared towards influencing the formulation of pro-poor policies. This is targeted at deepening and widening the debates on policy, strategy and practice and the decision-making processes that impact on poverty in the country.

Vision

*PRFT vision is the attainment of a socially and economically stable and equitable society that addresses the needs of its members in a sustainable manner leading to a **Zimbabwe Free From Poverty** in which every human being lives a dignified, secure and decent life and there is sustainable human development.*

Mission

Our mission is to conduct poverty related research, advocate for and facilitate national dialogue on sustainable poverty reduction and human development issues.

Goal

Our goal is to influence the formulation of pro-poor policies through carrying out research on poverty related issues, engaging with policy makers, promoting broad-based consultative dialogue and processes, as well as advocating for sustainable human development in Zimbabwe.

Next issue

The next issue will give highlights of community consultations and topical policy issues from the Basic Needs Basket survey.

Watch this Space!

WEBSITE COMING SOON