ZIMBABWE LIVELIHOODS ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE (ZIMLAC)

2025
RURAL LIVELIHOODS ASSESSMENT REPORT

MASVINGO

Foreword

Under the leadership of FNC, the Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee (ZimLAC) remains committed to providing timely and reliable information on the food and nutrition security situation to inform the development of robust food and nutrition response programmes, policies and strategies. The 2025 Rural Livelihoods Assessment underpins the value of precision sustainable livelihoods planning to provide spatially resolved data to guide efficient targeting of interventions to those populations with the greatest need, to reduce social development disparities and accelerate progress. The results will enable quantification of inequalities and identification of successes and failures of programmes and policies at local level.

The 25th Rural Livelihoods Assessment Report provides updates on pertinent rural household livelihoods issues which include demographics, housing, education, health, nutrition, WASH, energy, social protection, food consumption patterns, food and income sources, income levels, expenditure patterns, debts, coping strategies, shocks and food security. The report will assist the country to evaluate its performance against set targets and aspirations; monitoring the continuing implementation of the National Development Strategic policies, Agriculture related policies, Social Assistance and Social Protection related policies, the Food Nutrition Security Policy, as well as the country's progress against regional and global commitments. The assessment is one of the documents that will be useful in providing baseline data critical for the development of the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS 2).

Our sincere gratitude goes 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. These resources also went a long way in facilitating the collection of data to enable the representation of key indicators at district level.

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

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

The technical and financial support received from the following is greatly appreciated:

- 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
- Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development
- Rural District Councils (RDCs)
- ZIMSTAT
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
- Plan International
- CESVI
- Friends for Matibi
- CARITAS
- International Medical Corps
- LID Agency
- Aqua Culture Zimbabwe
- Score Against Poverty
- Development Aid for People of Zimbabwe
- Mwenenzi Development Trust Centre
- Zimbabwe Council of Churches
- CARE/Takunda
- International Medical Corps
- Nutrition Action Zimbabwe

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 12 urban and 25 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 for improved 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.
- Providing baseline data for NDS 2

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 2025/2026 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, water, sanitation and hygiene), assets, 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 and stressors experienced by communities on food and nutrition security.
6. To identify development priorities for communities.

Contextual Analysis

- The 2024-25 production season generally experienced a delayed start. A normal to below normal rainfall pattern was experienced from October to November 2024, influenced by a weak La Niña. However, a transition into a stronger La Niña phase in the second half of the season resulted in more favourable rainfall, providing optimal conditions for planting and growth of crops.
- According to the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development's Crops, Livestock and Fisheries Assessment Report (CLAFA – 2), most Pfumvudza crops were planted during November 2024 (40%) and December 2024 (41%), with a smaller portion of crops planted later in January 2025 (19%).
- There was a 290% increase in food crop production compared to last season. The season also experienced an increased production of sorghum and pearl millet due to improved agroecological tailoring of crops. Maize production is estimated at 2,293,556 MT while Traditional Grains production is estimated to be 634,650 MT. Total cereal production is expected to be 2,928,206 MT. (CLAFA – 2).
- Yield levels from Pfumvudza/Intwasa in maize for the 2024/25 season were slightly higher than those from conventional farming.
- Tobacco production is expected to increase by 15%, Cotton by 52% and Sunflower by 303%. (CLAFA – 2).

Contextual Analysis

- According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff team that conducted the 2025 Article IV Consultation;
- Zimbabwe is experiencing a degree of macroeconomic stability despite lingering policy challenges. During the first half of 2025, better climate conditions and historically high gold prices have boosted agricultural and mining activity, strengthening the current account and contributing to the recovery, with growth projected at 6 percent in 2025.
- On April 5, 2024, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe introduced a new currency called Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG; code: ZWG). which is backed by a composite basket of foreign currency and precious metals (mainly gold) held by the RBZ. This structured currency was designed to foster simplicity, certainty and predictability in monetary and financial affairs. The RBZ aimed to consolidate the currency's stability, maintain low inflation and ensure a stable exchange rate.
- Following the introduction of the new Currency, Banks were required to convert existing Zimbabwe dollar balances into ZWG.
- The monetary policy formulation and implementation pursued by the Reserve Bank since 5 April 2024 created relative price, currency and financial stability in the economy. This stability is evidenced by:
    - ZWG month on month inflation which stabilised to 0.5% in February 2025 and -0.1% in March 2025.
    - Greater exchange rate stability, with foreign exchange parallel market premiums below 20%, resulting in price and currency stability.
    - Increased foreign currency inflows.
    - Increased availability of foreign currency and;
    - Sustained financial sector stability and soundness.

Government Mitigatory Measures

The following people-centered measures were implemented to ensure food and nutrition security for all:

- **Food Mitigation:** Government targeted 6 million people in rural areas with a package comprised of pulses, oils and cereal.
- **Presidential Borehole Drilling Scheme:** In order to alleviate water scarcity challenges and climate change, Government is implementing the Presidential Borehole Drilling Scheme. The scheme aims to increase access to safe drinking water.
- **Strengthening of Multi-Sectoral Structures** in order to operationalise a cohesive response to the food and nutrition challenges.
- **Easing of restrictions on maize grain trade (Statutory Instrument 56 of 2023)** thus increasing maize grain flows and improving availability.
- **Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme** – the Government of Zimbabwe through Statutory Instrument 47 of 2021 declared all roads to be a state of national disaster on 9 February 2021. The second Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme (ERRP II) was launched and the objectives of the programme are to improve the road network, which was extensively damaged during the rainy season and to harness the potential of the transport system in promoting economic growth.

Government Mitigatory Measures

- The Government of Zimbabwe and the RBZ implemented a range of policy measures:
    - **Monetary Policy Rate:** Set at 35% in September 2024 to curb inflationary pressures.
    - **Money Supply Control:** Established strict controls to prevent excess liquidity from undermining the new currency.
    - **Export Retention Thresholds:** Reduced from 75% to 70% in February 2025 to enhance foreign exchange liquidity in the formal market.
    - **IMF Agreement Delay:** Postponed an IMF staff-level agreement to allow reforms to consolidate before committing to new external programmes.
    - **Public Spending Control:** Maintained tight control over public spending and subsidies.
    - **ZWG Adoption:** Promoted broader use of ZWG across public services and transactions, with over 90% adoption reported by mid-2024. Mandated the use of point-of-sale (POS) systems by all businesses for transactions in both ZWG and USD, making this a pre-condition for business licensing.
    - **Interest Rates:** Upwardly reviewed minimum deposit interest rates, with ZWG savings deposits at 5%, time deposits at 7.5%, and USD savings deposits at 2.5%, time deposits at 4%.
    - **Targeted Finance Facility:** Introduced a facility extended to wholesalers and retailers.
    - **Reporting Currency:** Mandated the use of ZWG as the reporting currency for all entities with immediate effect.

Government Mitigatory Measures

- The 2024 mid-term budget review presented on July 25, 2024 focused on consolidating economic transformation and addressing challenges like the impact of the El Nino-induced drought on agricultural output. While economic growth was projected at 2% for 2024, down from the initial 3.5% projection, measures were being implemented to maintain economic stability and achieve fiscal consolidation.

- The Reserve Bank noted that most banks had stopped charging monthly bank maintenance or service charges for individual bank accounts with a conservative daily balance of USD 100 and below or its equivalent in ZWG for a period of up to 30 days. The exemption for monthly bank maintenance or service charges for accounts with a conservative daily balance of USD 100 or below was extended to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with effect from 1 September 2024.

- To further promote the use of electronic means of payment, the Reserve Bank with effect from 1 September 2024 exempted electronic transactions of less than USD 10 or the ZWG equivalent from bank charges. This measure was aimed at removing the cost of using electronic means of payments by according such transactions a near-cash characteristic, consistent with the Reserve Bank's drive towards digital cash.

- The Reserve Bank reiterated that the country was in a multicurrency environment and all domestic transactions must be settled in either ZWG or foreign currency, except in cases where there were explicit exemptions to sell in US dollars. In this context, all economic agents were expected to adhere to the multicurrency system in place.

- On September 27 2024, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe slashed the value of the ZWG by 43%, taking it from 13.56 ZWG to the US dollar at its launch to ZWG 24.4 to the dollar.

- The Reserve Bank made efforts to ensure that the Monetary Policy stance remained supportive of the envisaged growth of 6% in 2025.

Government Mitigatory Measures

- The Government, through a high-level task force on business malpractices launched this multi-agency initiative in 2024 to clamp down on unethical business practices and smuggling. The task force was led by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and involved collaboration between the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA), the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, the Consumer Protection Commission and other law-enforcement agencies.

- In addition to reducing smuggling, the operation aimed to regularise imports, ensuring that all importers paid the appropriate duties and taxes. This move was intended to protect consumers from harmful products such as hazardous foodstuffs and cosmetics, while also safeguarding businesses from unfair competition stemming from counterfeit or substandard goods. It further supported legitimate traders by addressing issues such as counterfeiting and intellectual property violations.

Assessment Methodology

Methodology – Assessment Design

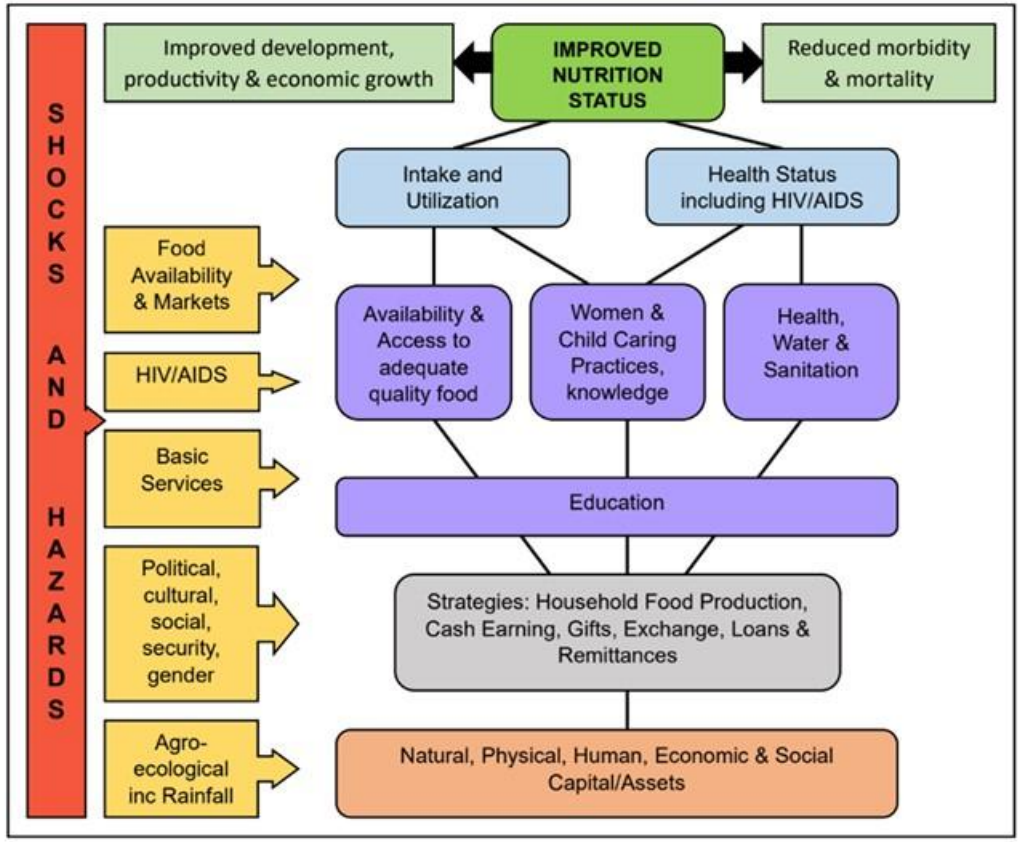


Figure 1: Food and Nutrition Conceptual Framework

- 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.
- The frameworks also place nutrition as an outcome of multi sectoral drivers at various levels and its role in driving the economic development.

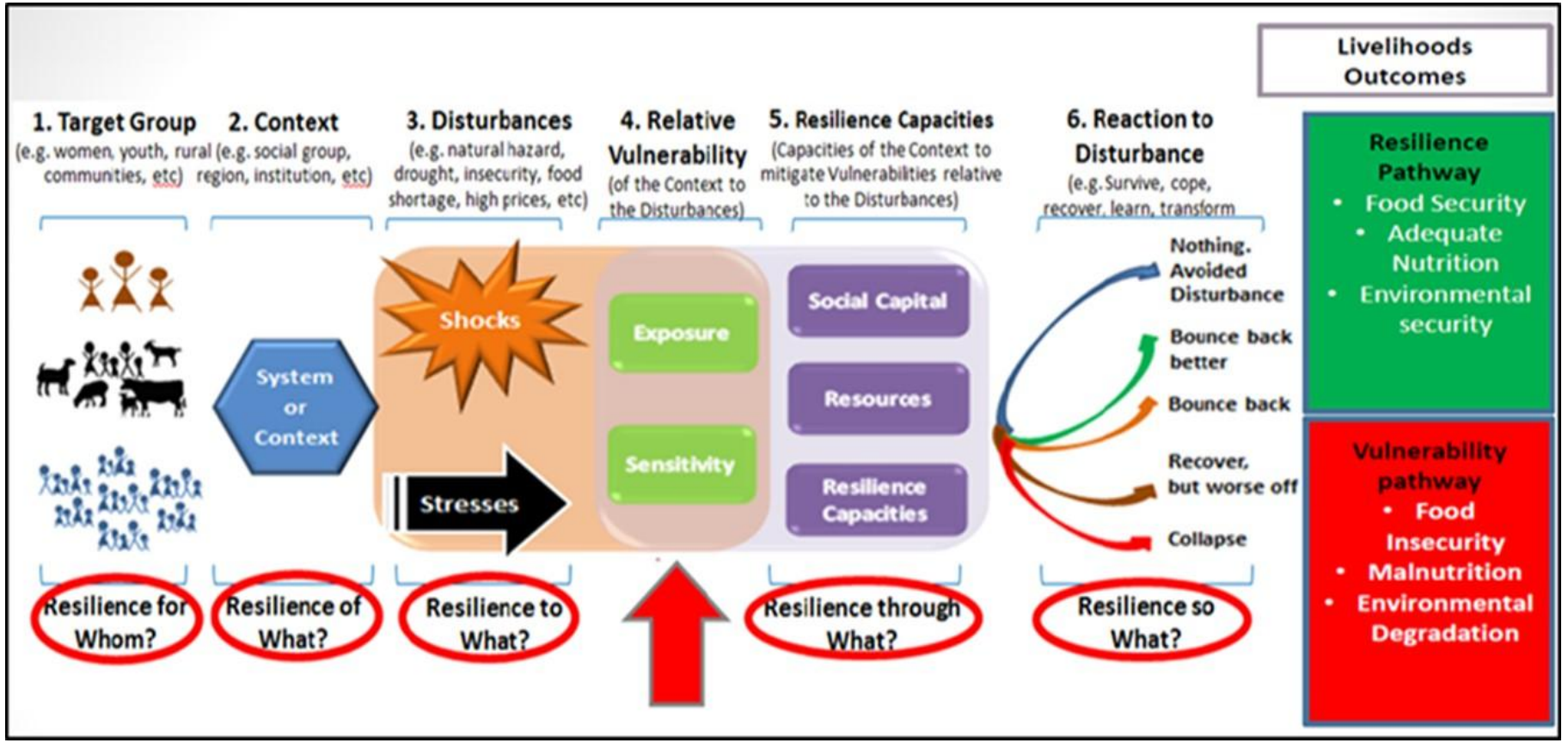
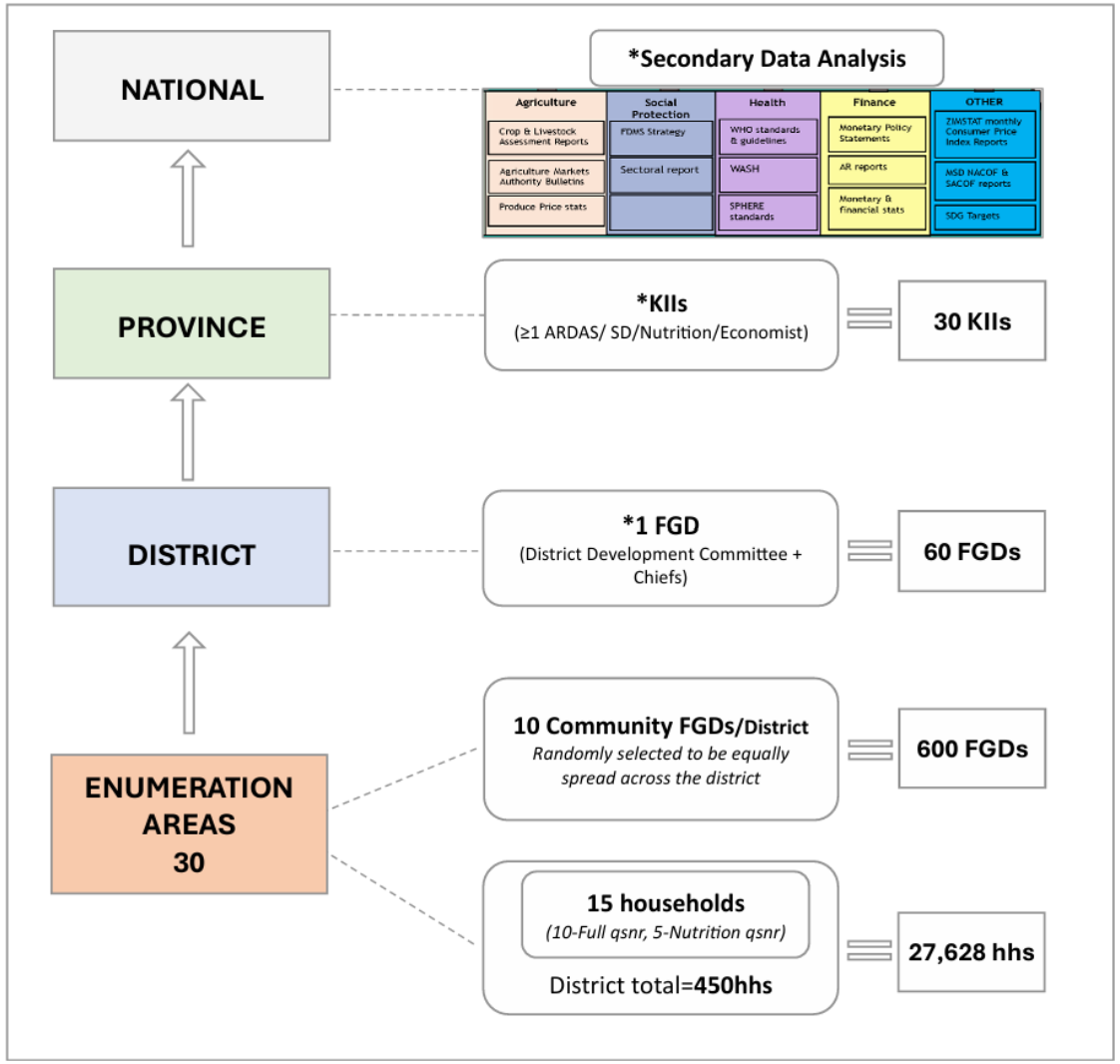


Figure 2: Zimbabwe Resilience Framework (UNDP Zimbabwe, 2015)

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 and the community Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide.
- ZimLAC national supervisors (including Academia, Provincial Agritex Extension Officers, Provincial Nutritionists and Provincial Coordinators) 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. Four enumerators (including 1 anthropometrist) were selected from each district for data collection.
- Primary data collection took place from 21 May to 11 June 2025. Various secondary data sources and field observations were used to contextualise the analysis and reporting.

Methodology – Assessment Process



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 Enumeration Areas (EAs).
- A two staged cluster sampling was used and comprised of:
  - Sampling of 30 clusters per each of the 7 rural districts, denoted as EAs in this assessment, from the Zimbabwe Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) 2022 master sampling frame using the Probability Proportional to Population Size (PPS) methodology.
  - The second stage involved the systematic random sampling of 10 households per EA (village).
- At least 300 households were sampled per district and a total of 2116 households were interviewed.
- 74 community FGDs were held across all the districts.

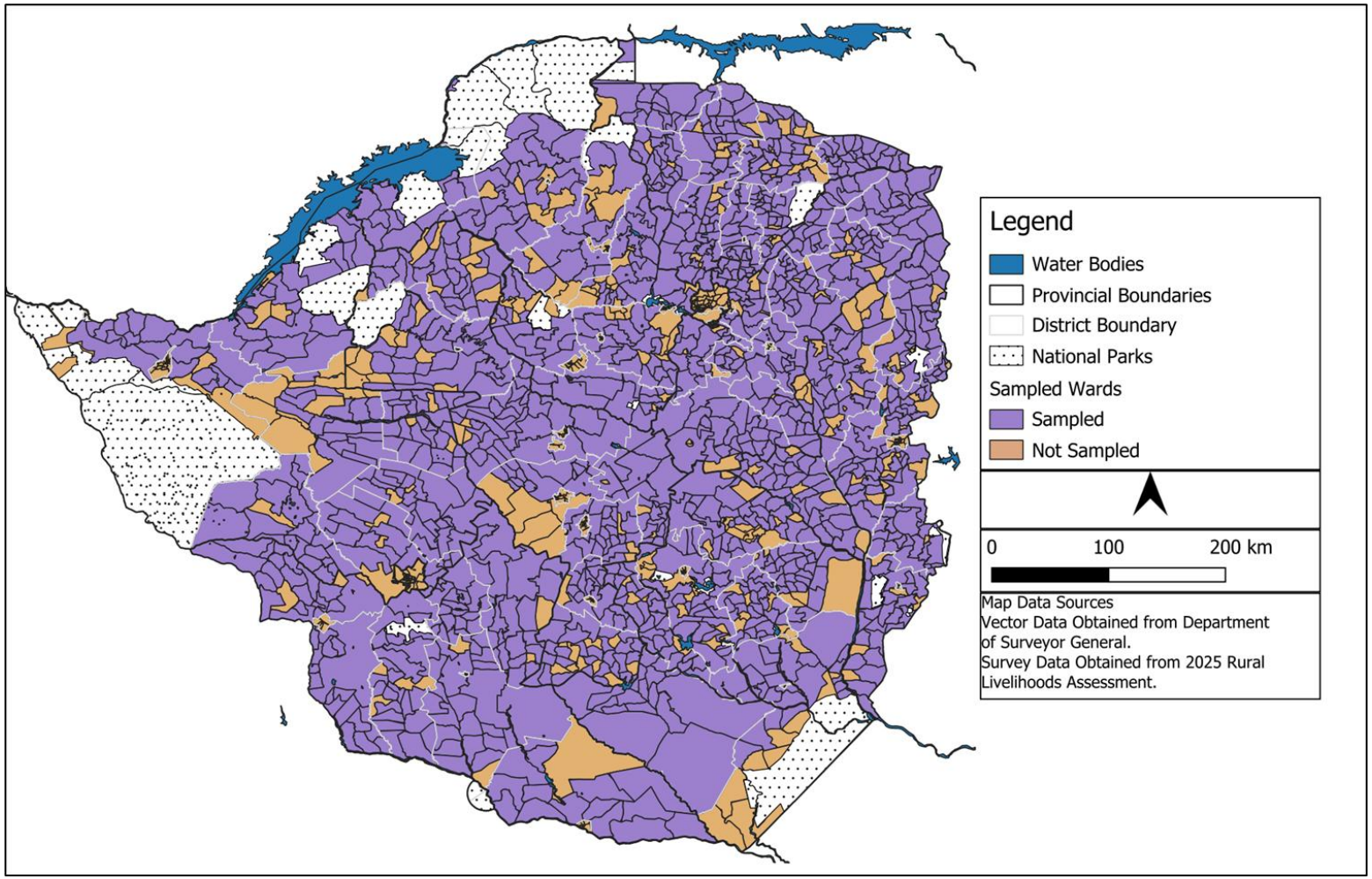
District	Households
Bikita	302
Chiredzi	301
Chivi	300
Gutu	300
Masvingo	304
Mwenezi	309
Zaka	300
Masvingo Province	2116

Methodology- Sampling and Sample Size for Nutrition Outcomes

- All members in the households were considered for anthropometric measurements, while adults were considered for non-communicable disease risk factors and individual diets targeted at women and children under 5 years.
- At least 450 households were sampled per district and a total of 3387 households were interviewed.
- Anthropometric measurements were taken from 2732 Children aged 6-59 months, 510 Children aged 5-9 years, 832 Adolescents 10-19 years, and 2703 Adults aged 20 years and above.

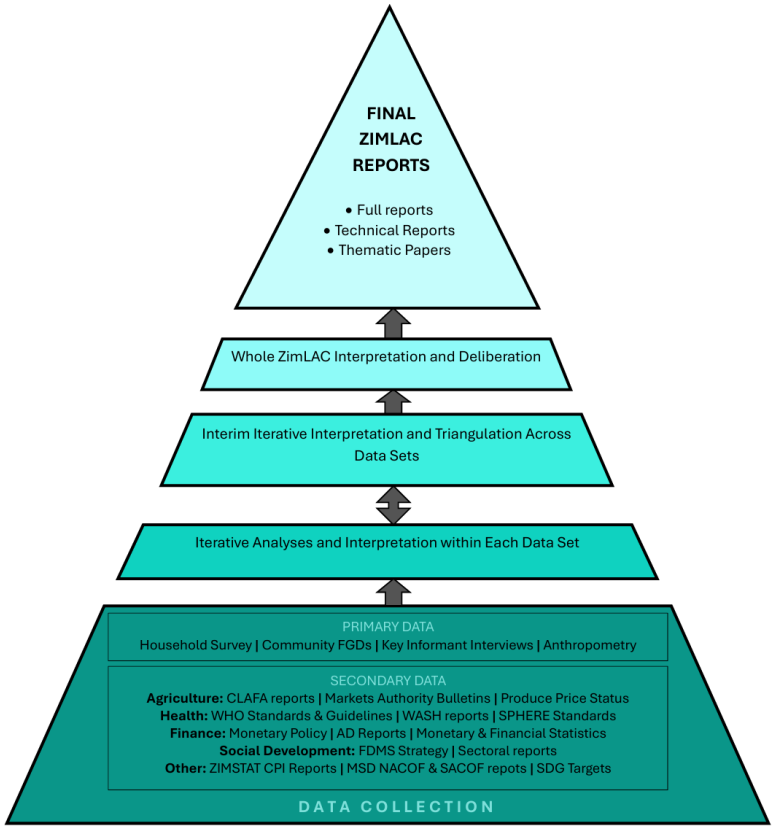
District	Total
Bikita	470
Chiredzi	510
Chivi	459
Gutu	478
Masvingo	493
Mwenezi	520
Zaka	457
Masvingo Province	3387

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
- 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 2025 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

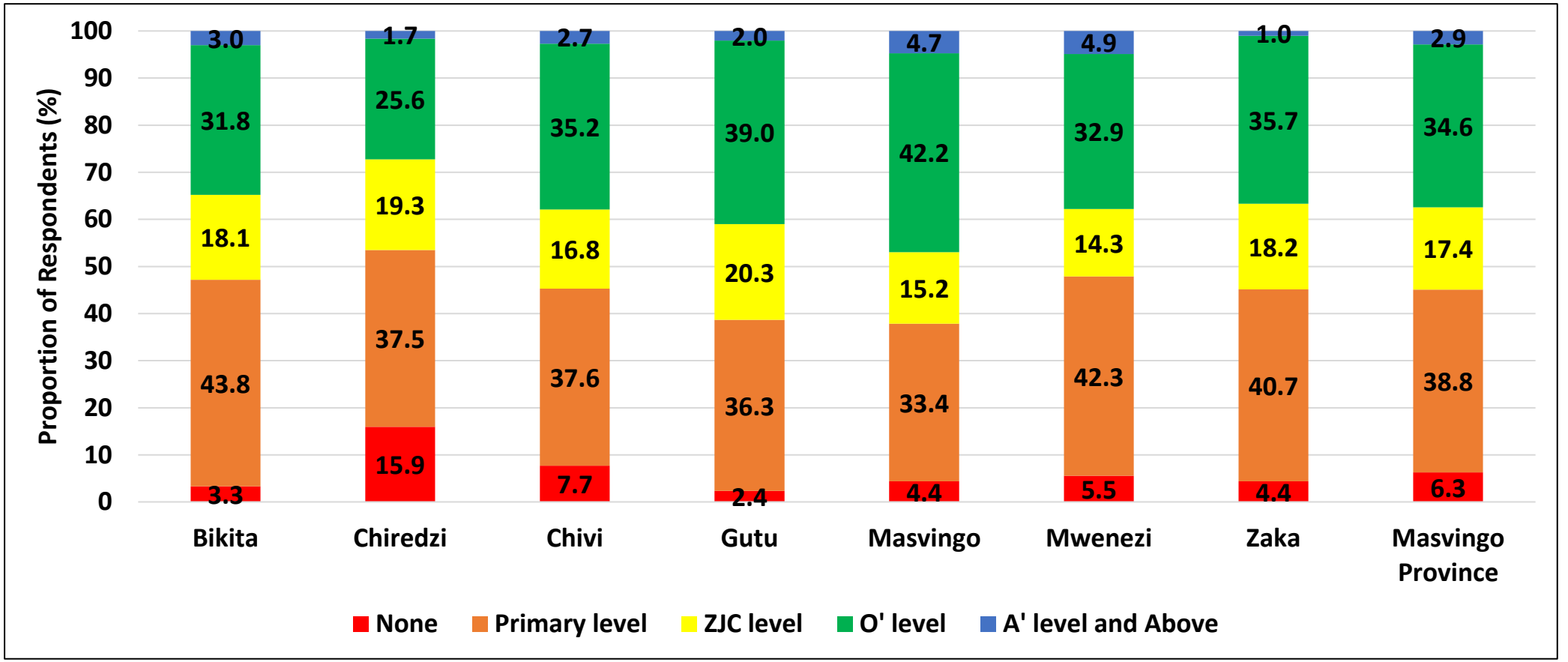
Household Characteristics

Characteristics of Respondents

Average Age of Respondent (Years)		Sex of Respondent	
		Male (%)	Female (%)
Bikita	45	22.5	77.5
Chiredzi	41	19.3	80.7
Chivi	51	25.3	74.7
Gutu	51	37.7	62.3
Masvingo	42	22.7	77.3
Mwenezi	41	35.6	64.4
Zaka	47	27.3	72.7
Masvingo Province	**45**	**27.2**	**72.8**

- Age is a characteristic used to understand and categorise populations. It is often analysed in conjunction with other socio economic factors to provide a complete picture of a population's characteristics.
- The average age of the respondents was 45 years.
- About 72.8% of the respondents were female.

Characteristics of Respondents: Education Level Attained



- About 93.7% of respondents had attained at least primary school education. This provides confidence that the respondents were knowledgeable on the subject matter.

Household Members' Characteristics

Average Household Size		Sex (%)		Household Members (%)						
		Male	Female	0 - 4 years	5 - 9 years	10 – 17 years	18 - 49 years	50 - 59 years	60 - 64 years	65+ years
Bikita	3	42.2	57.8	33.4	3.8	9.2	34.7	7.1	2.8	9.0
Chiredzi	5	47.1	52.9	19.9	12.4	17.3	39.6	4.5	1.5	4.7
Chivi	4	47.0	53.0	16.3	11.4	19.3	34.0	7.6	1.8	9.5
Gutu	4	46.1	53.9	20.6	8.5	17.5	34.8	7.5	2.0	9.2
Masvingo	4	46.8	53.2	26.3	8.5	12.2	38.4	6.4	1.6	6.6
Mwenezi	5	48.5	51.5	22.2	11.5	16.6	39.7	5.3	1.1	3.7
Zaka	4	43.5	56.5	22.5	12.6	19.7	30.1	5.3	2.1	7.8
Masvingo Province	**4**	**46.1**	**53.9**	**22.5**	**10.2**	**16.3**	**36.1**	**6.1**	**1.8**	**7.0**

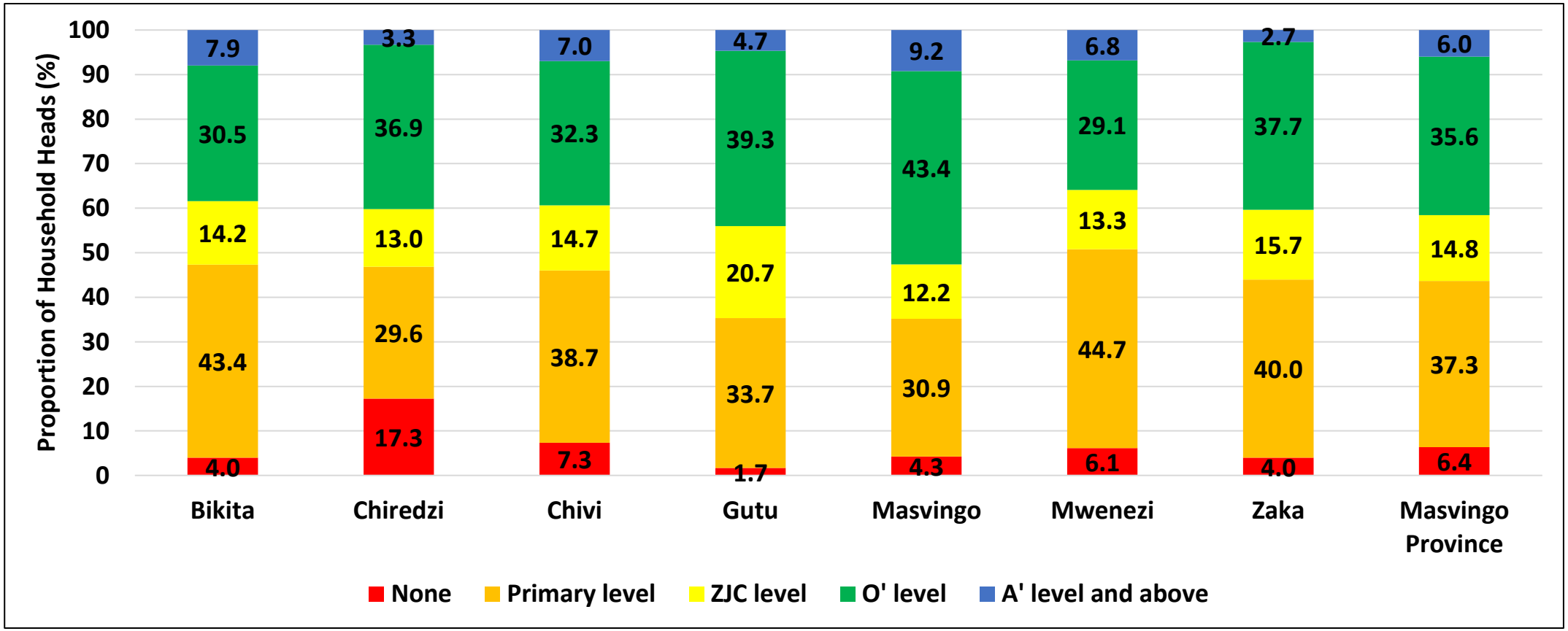
- The average household size was 4.
- Of the sampled population, 46.1% were male and 53.9% were female.

Characteristics of Household Head

District	Household Head Average Age (Years)	Sex (%)		Household Head by Category (%)	
		Male	Female	Elderly Headed 65 Years and Above	Child Headed
Bikita	51	52.6	47.4	31.5	0.7
Chiredzi	47	71.1	28.9	20.3	0.0
Chivi	56	62.3	37.7	38.0	0.3
Gutu	54	66.3	33.7	33.0	0.7
Masvingo	50	64.1	35.9	27.0	0.3
Mwenezi	46	68.9	31.1	16.5	0.3
Zaka	50	52.3	47.7	27.7	0.3
Masvingo Province	**50**	**62.6**	**37.4**	**27.6**	**0.4**

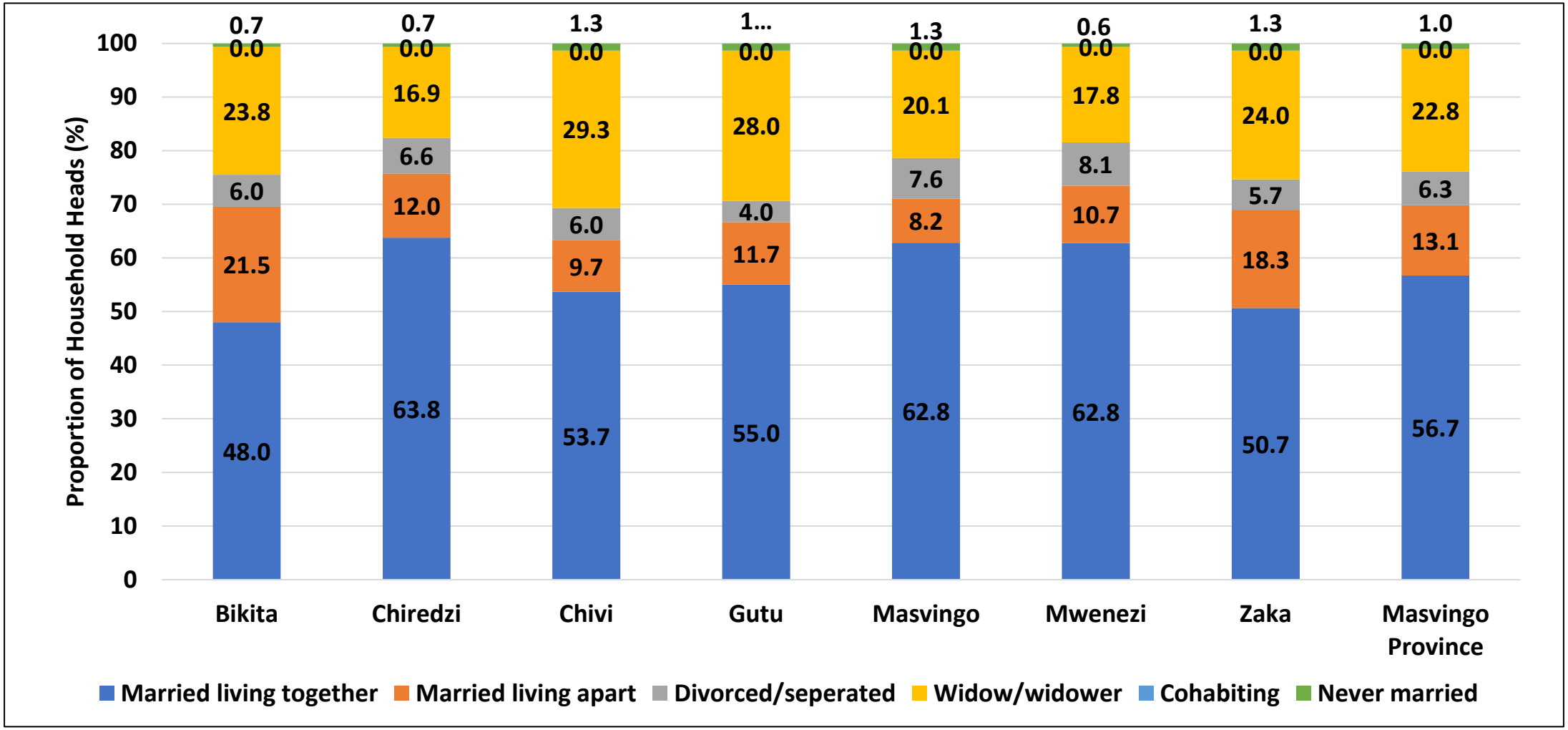
- The average age of household heads was 50 years, which is within the economic productive age group.
- Chivi (38%) and Gutu (33%) had the highest proportion of households which were headed by the elderly.

Characteristics of Household Head: Education Level Attained



- About 93.6% of the household heads had attained some form of education.
- Education level indicates individuals' knowledge, skills and competencies which are important in making day to day decisions.

Characteristics of Household Heads: Marital Status



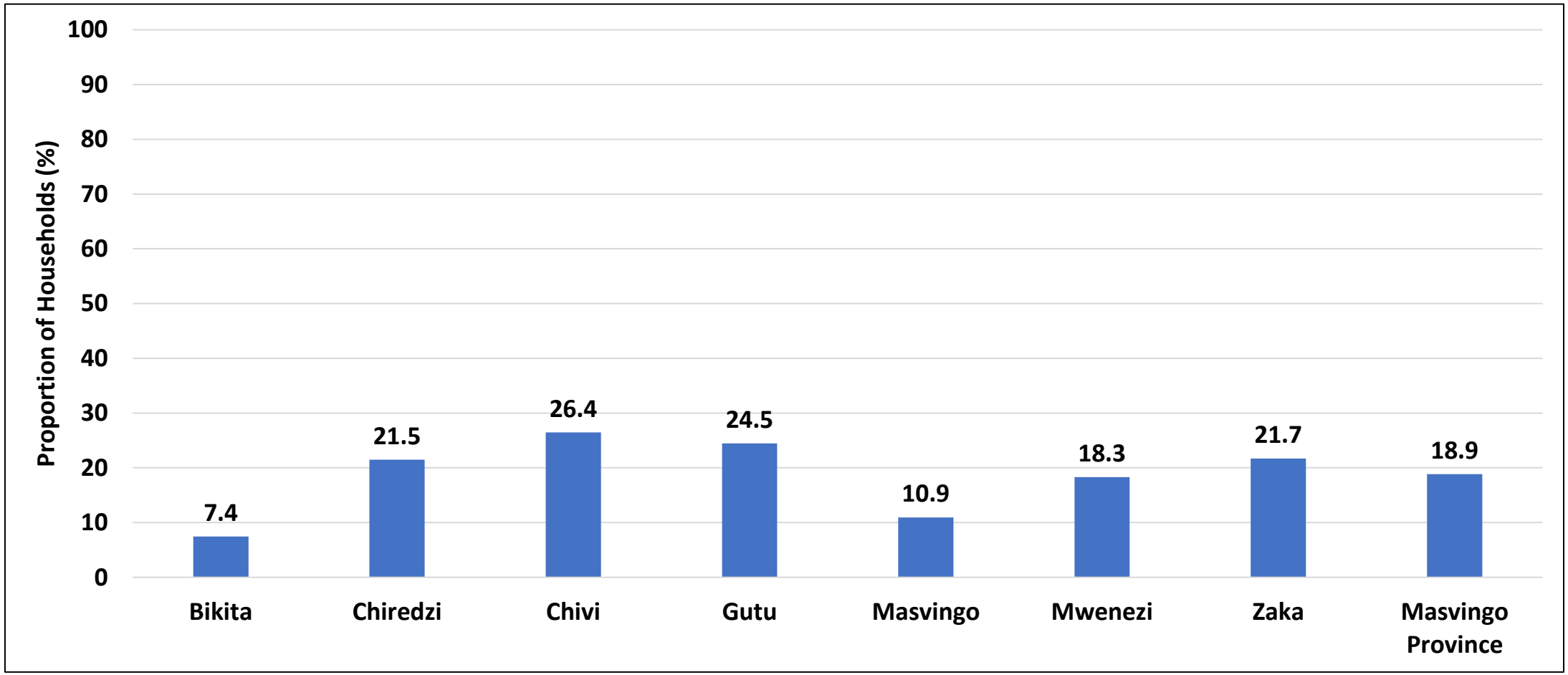
- The majority of household heads (56.7%) were married and living together.
- Chivi (29.3%) and Gutu (28%) had the highest proportion of household heads who were widowed.

Characteristics of Household Head: Religion

District	Roman Catholic (%)	Protestant (%)	Pentecostal (%)	Apostolic Sect (%)	Zion (%)	Other Christian (%)	Islam (%)	Traditional (%)	Other religion (%)	No religion (%)
Bikita	9.3	14.9	4.0	33.4	29.1	5.3	0.0	0	0	4.0
Chiredzi	4.3	3.3	16.9	33.9	20.6	4.3	0.0	2.0	1.0	13.6
Chivi	20.7	10.7	11.3	26.3	15.3	5.7	0.0	1.0	0.7	8.3
Gutu	20.0	10.3	9.7	32.0	10.3	11.0	1.0	3.3	0	2.3
Masvingo	9.9	8.6	11.5	32.9	12.5	8.2	0	0.0	5.6	10.9
Mwenezi	1.9	2.9	5.2	42.1	25.6	4.5	0	2.6	1.0	13.6
Zaka	9.7	6.7	13.0	34.7	25.7	4.7	0	2.0	1.0	2.7
Masvingo Province	**10.8**	**8.2**	**10.2**	**33.6**	**19.9**	**6.2**	**0.1**	**1.6**	**1.3**	**7.9**

- The majority of household heads were from the Apostolic Sect (33.6%) while 7.9% of the household heads had no religion.

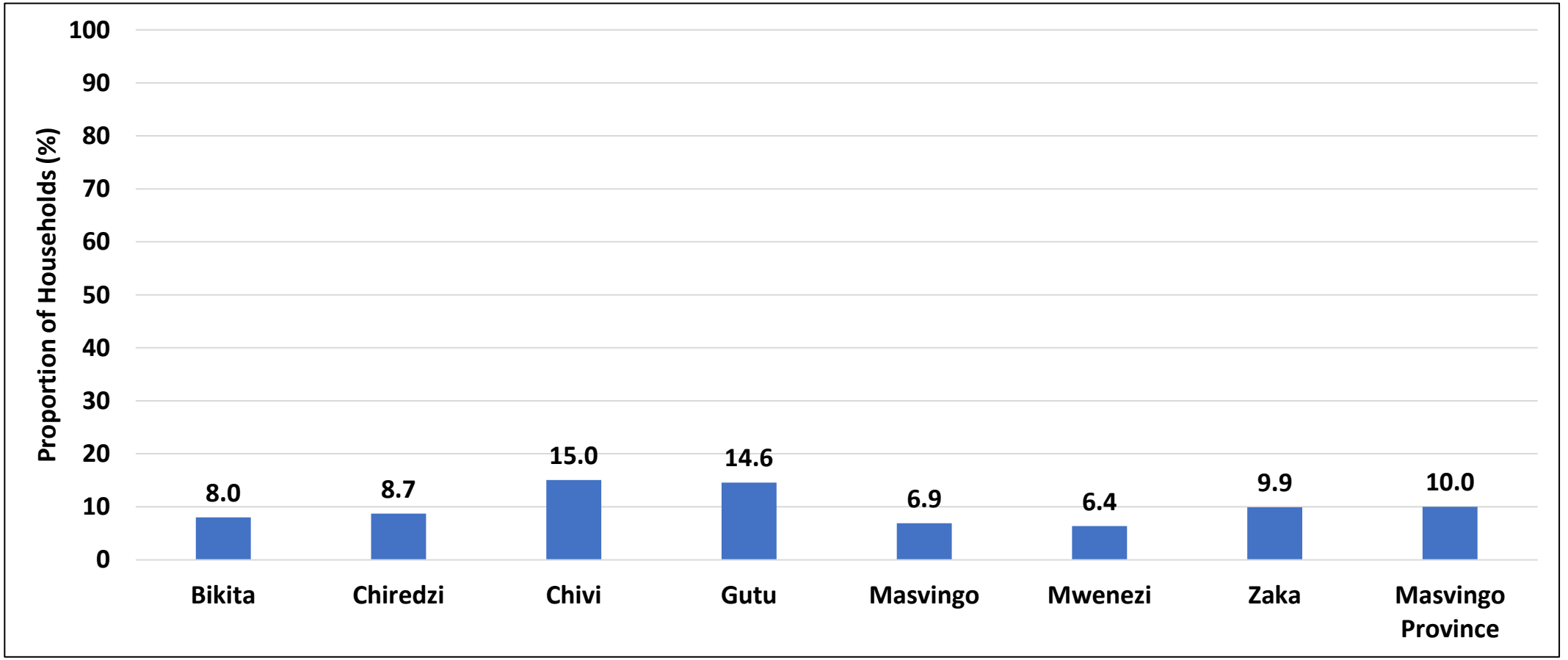
Orphaned Children



- Chivi (26.4%) and Gutu (24.5%) had the highest proportion of households with orphaned children.
- The presence of orphans increases the burden of responsibility on the households.

Chronic Conditions

Chronic Conditions



- The proportion of households with at least a member who had a chronic condition was 10%.

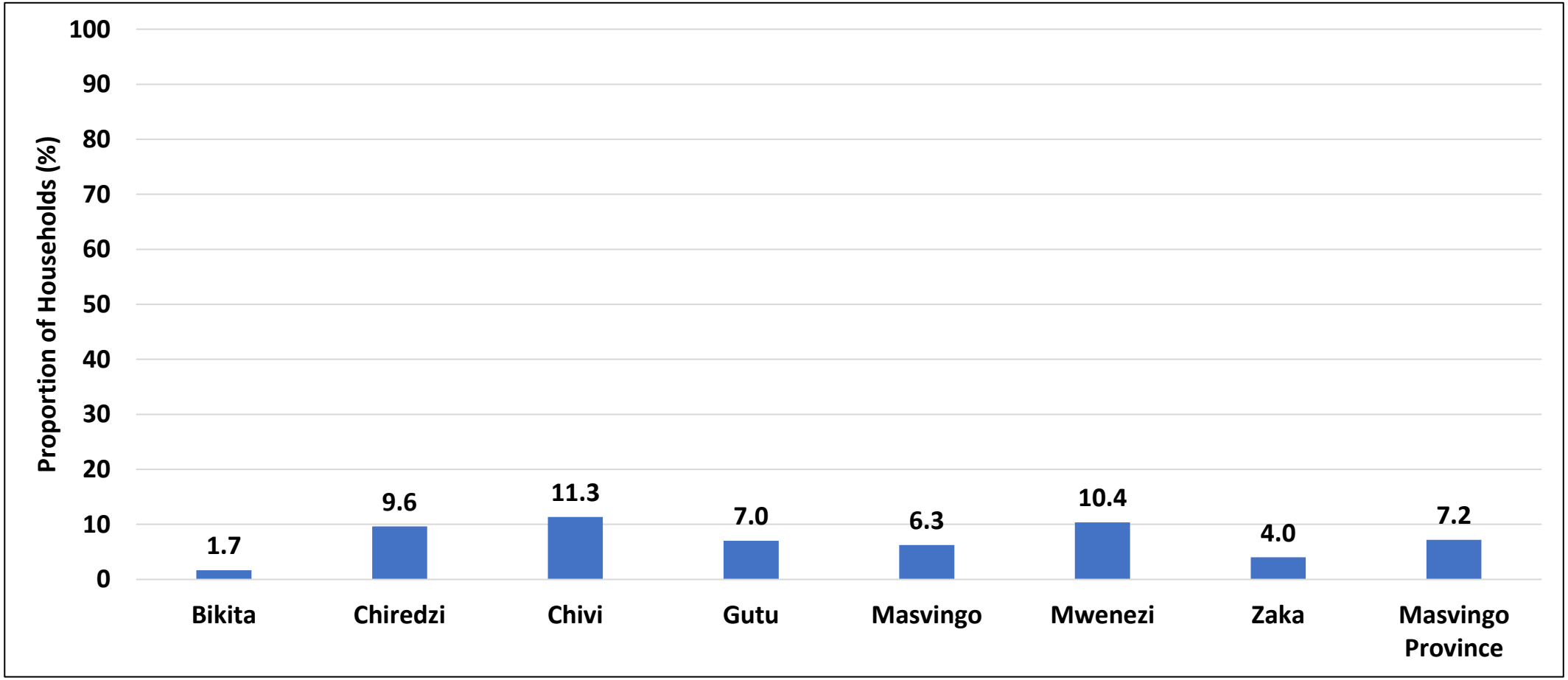
Chronic Conditions (10%)

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 (%)	Other (%)
Bikita	2.1	0.3	0.8	0.7	3.2	0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0	0.1	0.1	0.3
Chiredzi	2.5	0.2	1.0	1.9	2.7	0.2	0.1	0.3	0	0.2	0	0.1	0.7	0.3
Chivi	5.3	0.8	1.7	1.4	3.1	1.3	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.3	0	0.1	0.6	0.5
Gutu	5.1	0.2	4.2	1.2	3.0	1.9	0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.6
Masvingo	1.6	0.2	1.6	0.6	1.6	0.6	0.1	0	0.1	0.3	0	0	0.1	0.1
Mwenezi	2.5	0.5	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.1	0.1	0	0.1	0.2	0	0.1	0.1	0.2
Zaka	3.6	0.1	0.6	1.1	3.8	1.2	0.2	0	0	0.2	0	0.1	0.3	0
Masvingo Province	**3.3**	**0.3**	**1.6**	**1.2**	**2.6**	**0.8**	**0.1**	**0.1**	**0.1**	**0.2**	**0**	**0.1**	**0.4**	**0.3**

- The most reported chronic conditions were HIV/AIDS (3.3%) and hypertension/high blood pressure (2.6%)

Disability

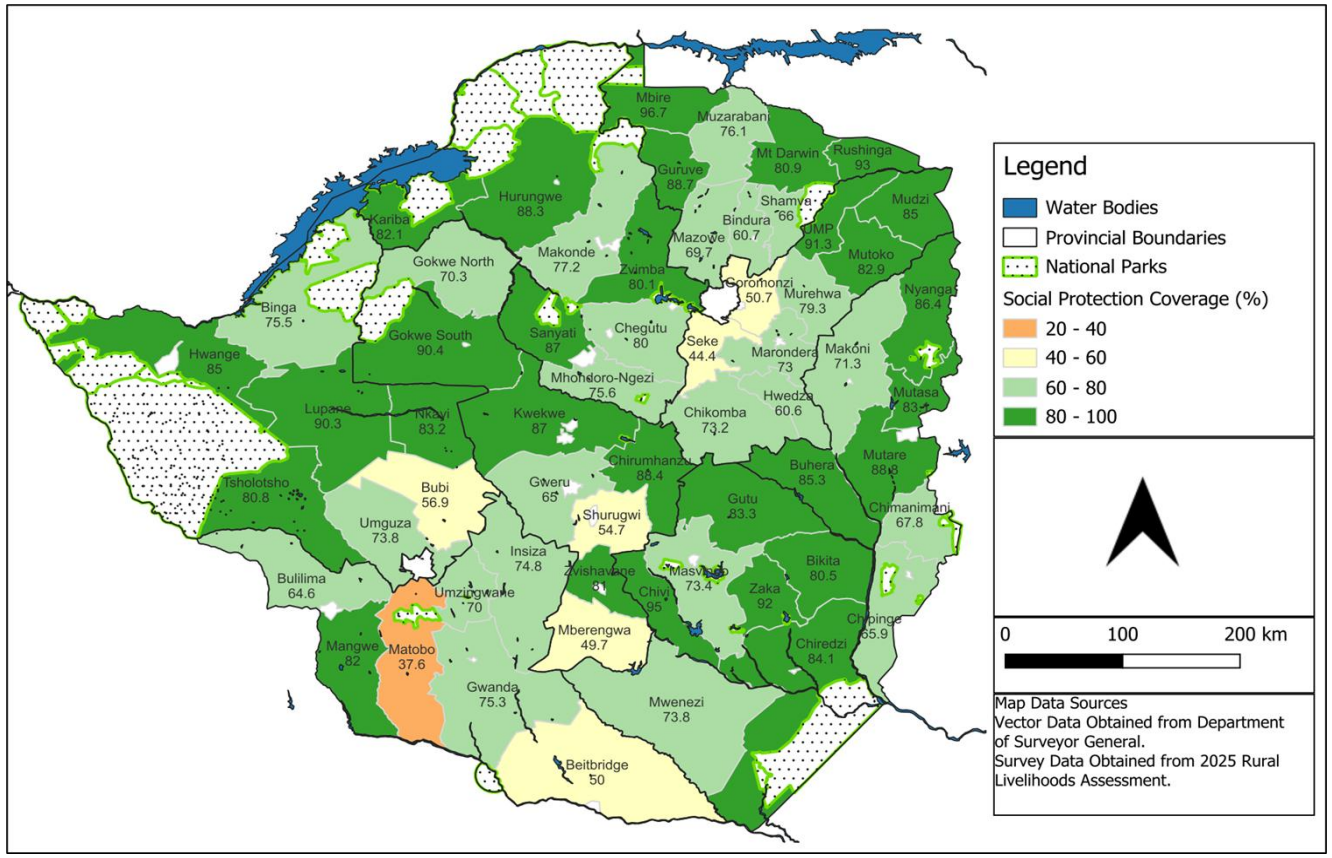
Disability Conditions



- The proportion of households with at least one person with any form of disability was 7.2%.
- Chivi (11.3%) had the highest proportion of households with at least one person with any form of disability.

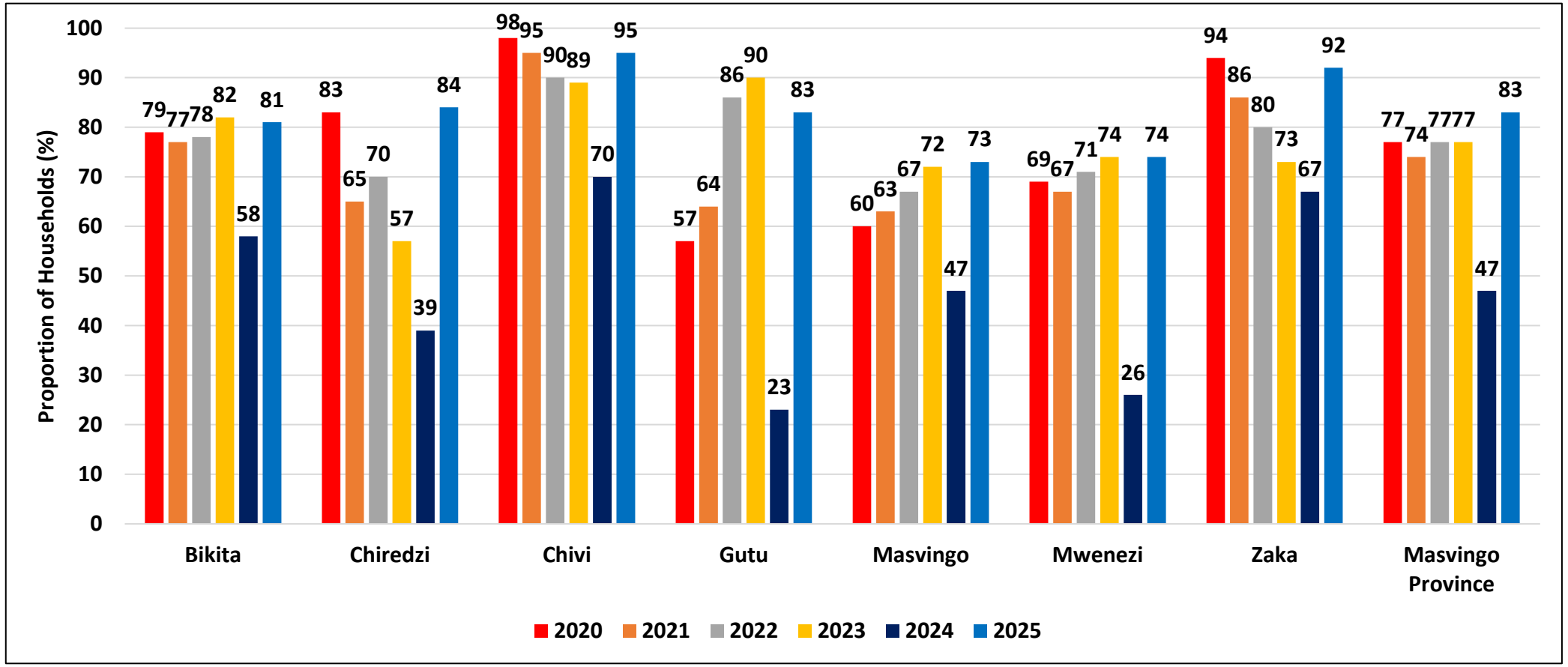
Social Protection

Households which Received Any Form of Support



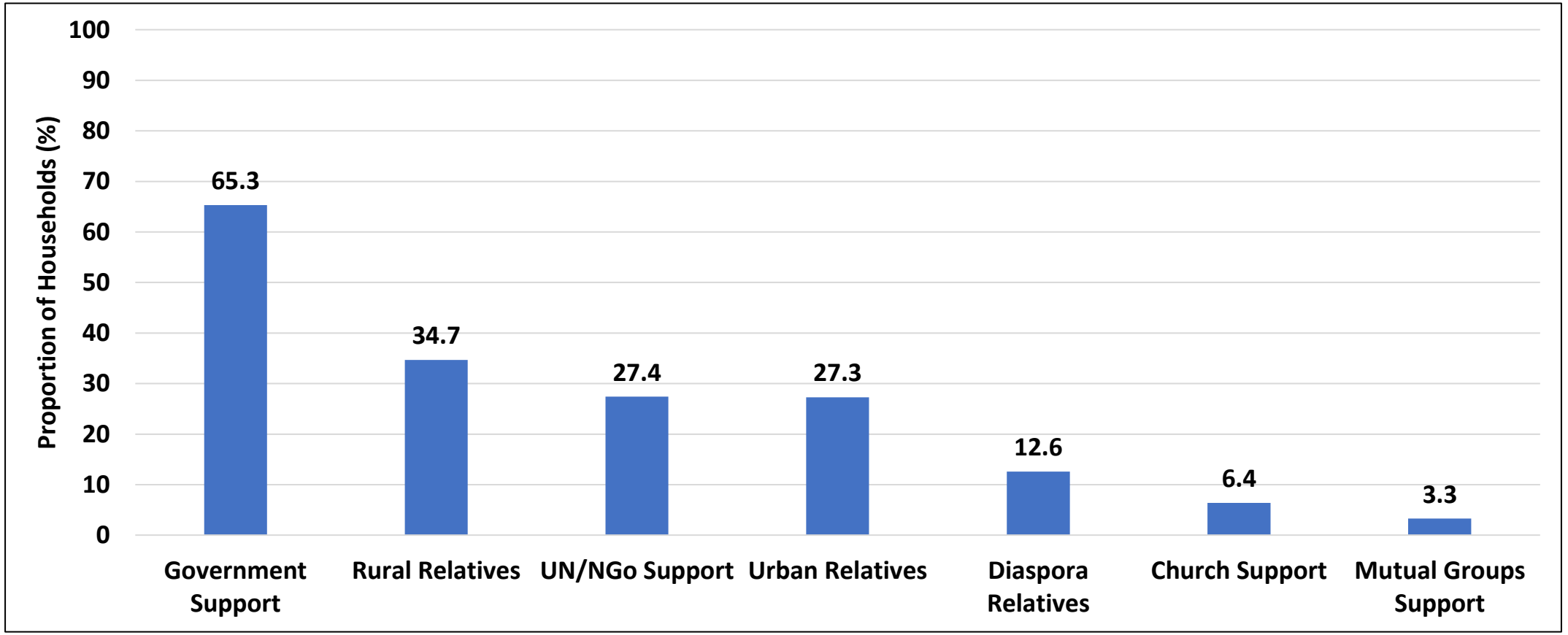
- Chivi (95%) had the highest proportion of households which received any form of support and Masvingo (73.4%) had the lowest.

Households Which Received any Form of Support



- Support increased from 47% in 2024 to 83% in 2025. This may be attributed to the need to respond to the El- Nino induced drought which was experienced in the 2024/2025 season.

Sources of Support



- The majority of households reported to have received assistance from Government (65.3%), rural relatives (34.7%) and UN/NGO Support (27.4%).
- Government is complimented for provision of crucial support towards building resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

Sources of Support

District	Government Support (%)		UN/NGO Support (%)		Church Support (%)		Urban Relatives (%)		Rural Relatives (%)		Diaspora Relatives (%)		Mutual Groups Support (%)	
	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
Bikita	46.0	61.3	0.7	12.6	0.3	1.3	18.2	20.9	2.3	17.2	3.6	4.0	0.0	0.3
Chiredzi	24.0	62.5	5.3	16.6	0.3	14.3	4.7	28.6	13.3	49.8	6.7	17.9	0.0	5.6
Chivi	53.0	83.3	31.7	70.0	0.7	9.0	12.7	44.3	15.3	48.0	2.7	19.0	0.3	1.7
Gutu	21.3	69.0	4.0	16.0	0.0	3.0	1.0	32.3	0.3	34.0	0.0	15.7	0.3	2.7
Masvingo	35.0	54.3	8.8	10.5	0.0	11.2	9.1	17.1	1.7	20.4	5.4	5.6	0.3	5.9
Mwenezi	15.7	49.8	15.7	17.2	1.3	3.6	1.0	13.3	1.0	22.0	3.3	11.7	0.7	3.9
Zaka	53.3	76.7	13.0	48.7	0.3	2.3	9.7	34.7	5.3	51.3	10.3	14.7	4.7	3.3
Masvingo Province	**35.4**	**65.3**	**11.3**	**27.4**	**0.4**	**6.4**	**8.1**	**27.3**	**5.6**	**34.7**	**4.6**	**12.6**	**0.9**	**3.3**

- In 2025, the proportion of households that received social assistance from the different sources increased compared to 2024.
- Government remained the major source of support which increased from 35.4% in 2024 to 65.3% in 2025.
- The support received from relatives (both rural and urban)reflects an enabling economic environment and social capital.

Sources of Support

District	Government Support (%)		UN/NGO Support (%)		Church Support (%)		Urban Relatives (%)		Rural Relatives (%)		Diaspora Relatives (%)		Mutual Groups Support (%)	
	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
Bikita	46	61	1	13	0	1	18	21	2	17	4	4	0	0
Chiredzi	24	63	5	17	0	14	5	29	13	50	7	18	0	6
Chivi	53	83	32	70	1	9	13	44	15	48	3	19	0	1
Gutu	21	69	4	16	0	3	1	32	0	34	0	16	0	3
Masvingo	35	54	9	11	0	11	9	17	2	20	5	6	0	6
Mwenezi	16	50	16	17	1	4	1	13	1	22	3	12	1	4
Zaka	53	77	13	49	0	2	10	35	5	51	10	15	5	3
Masvingo Province	**35**	**65**	**11**	**27**	**0**	**6**	**8**	**27**	**6**	**35**	**5**	**13**	**1**	**3**

- In 2025, the proportion of households that received social assistance from the different sources increased compared to 2024, except for support from mutual groups.
- Government remained the major source of support which increased from 35% in 2024 to 65% in 2025.
- The support received from relatives (both rural and urban)reflects an enabling economic environment and social capital.

Forms of Support From Government

District	Food (%)	Cash transfers (%)	Vouchers (%)	Crop inputs (%)	Livestock support - large stock (pass on) (%)	Livestock support - large stock (non-pass on) (%)	Small livestock support (%)	Livestock support: Teak grease (%)	Other livestock support (%)	WASH inputs (%)	Weather and climate (%)
Bikita	39.4	0.3	0.3	36.8	0	1.3	0	0	3.6	2.0	0
Chiredzi	40.9	1.7	0.3	24.9	0	0.7	1.3	1.0	8.0	20.6	2.0
Chivi	58.0	1.0	0.0	54.7	0.7	9.3	0.3	1.0	6.0	9.7	0.3
Gutu	56.3	0.7	0.3	51.0	1.3	3.7	1.7	4.3	1.7	1.7	0
Masvingo	47.0	0	0	13.2	1.3	0.3	0	0	0	0	0.3
Mwenezi	41.4	0.3	0	24.9	0.3	0.6	0	0	3.9	1.0	0.3
Zaka	60.0	0.3	0.3	68.3	0	0.7	0	0	4.3	0	0.3
Masvingo Province	**49.0**	**0.6**	**0.2**	**39.0**	**0.5**	**2.4**	**0.5**	**0.9**	**3.9**	**5.0**	**0.5**

- The majority of households received Government support in the form of food (49%).
- Government is committed to building resilience as evidenced by the proportion of households which received crop inputs (39%).

Forms of Support from UN/NGOs

District	Food (%)	Cash transfers (%)	Vouchers (%)	Crop inputs (%)	Livestock support - large stock (pass on)(%)	Livestock support - large stock (non-pass on)(%)	Small livestock support (goats, chicken, fish, etc) (%)	Livestock support: Teak grease (%)	Other livestock support (%)	WASH inputs (%)	Weather and climate (%)
Bikita	12.3	0	0	1.0	0	0	0.3	0	0.3	0.3	0
Chiredzi	9.3	1.3	0	5.0	0.3	0	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	0.7
Chivi	68.3	0.3	0	5.7	0.3	0	0.3	5.3	0.7	0.7	1.0
Gutu	12.3	0.3	0.3	9.7	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.7	2.0	0	0.3
Masvingo	8.6	0	0	1.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.3
Mwenezi	11.0	1.6	0	5.5	1.6	0.6	0	0.3	1.3	0.3	0.3
Zaka	47.0	0	0	8.0	0.3	0	0	1.0	0.3	0	0.7
Masvingo Province	**24.0**	**0.5**	**0.0**	**5.2**	**0.4**	**0.1**	**0.4**	**1.3**	**0.8**	**0.6**	**0.5**

- About 24% of households received support from UN/NGOs in the form of food assistance and 5.2% in the form of crop inputs.

Migration

Types of Migration

District	Migrated to Urban from Rural Areas (%)	Joined from Other Rural Areas (%)	Joined from Urban Areas (%)	Joined from Outside Zimbabwe (%)	Migrated to Stay Outside Zimbabwe (%)
Bikita	7.0	0.0	1.7	0	0
Chiredzi	14.0	8.3	4.7	2.3	10.3
Chivi	11.3	5.0	5.0	2.0	6.7
Gutu	28.7	5.3	9.0	2.7	8.3
Masvingo	17.1	12.8	9.5	3.6	7.2
Mwenezi	14.0	10.7	6.2	3.6	13.3
Zaka	24.0	4.3	7.0	2.3	8.0
Masvingo Province	**16.5**	**6.7**	**6.1**	**2.4**	**7.7**

- The main type of migration reported was migrating to urban from rural areas (16.5%) and migrating to live outside the country (7.7%).

Reasons for Migrating to Urban Areas (16.5%)

District	Better livelihood options (%)	Employment opportunities (%)	New job (%)	Newly acquired residential land (%)	Request by a relative (%)	Educational purposes (%)	Access to better standards of living (health, WASH, electricity) (%)	Marriage (%)	Business opportunity (%)	Illness (%)	Other (%)
Bikita	2.0	5.6	0.3	0	0	0.3	0	0	0	0	0
Chiredzi	2.0	9.3	0.3	0.7	1.3	1.0	0	0.3	0	0	0
Chivi	1.0	6.0	1.0	0	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.7	0	1.0	0.3
Gutu	4.7	18.7	3.0	0	1.0	3.0	0	2.3	0	1.0	0
Masvingo	1.3	11.5	0.7	0	2.0	1.6	0	0.3	0.3	0	0.3
Mwenezi	1.0	7.8	1.3	0	1.9	1.3	0.3	0	0	0.6	0.6
Zaka	1.3	13.7	3.7	0	1.3	2.3	0	1.3	0	1.7	1.0
Masvingo Province	**1.9**	**10.3**	**1.5**	**0.1**	**1.2**	**1.5**	**0.1**	**0.7**	**0**	**0.6**	**0.3**

- The main reason for rural to urban migration was reported to be employment opportunities (10.3%).

Reasons for Migrating Outside Zimbabwe (7.7%)

District	Employment (%)	Access to education (%)	Better standards of living (%)	Assist with caring of relative children (%)	Seek for medical treatment (%)	Marriage (%)	Other livelihood opportunities (%)	Other (%)
Bikita	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chiredzi	8.6	0	0.7	0	0.3	1.0	0.7	0
Chivi	5.7	0.3	0	0	0	0.7	2.0	0
Gutu	7.3	0.3	0	0	0	0	0.7	0
Masvingo	6.6	0.3	0.3	0	0	0.3	0	0.3
Mwenezi	12.6	0.3	1.0	0	0	0	0.6	0.3
Zaka	7.3	0	0.3	0	0	0.3	0.7	0
Masvingo Province	**6.9**	**0.2**	**0.3**	**0**	**0.1**	**0.3**	**0.7**	**0.1**

- Employment (6.9%) was highlighted as the major reason for migration outside Zimbabwe.

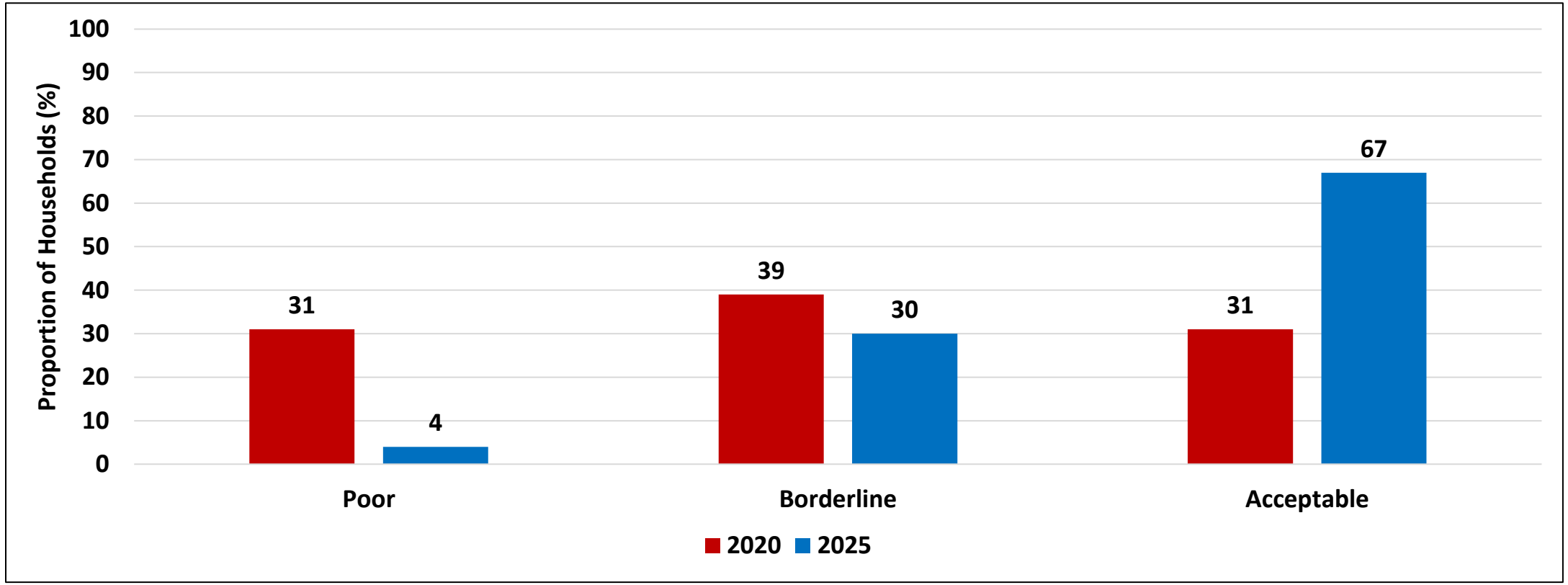
Household Consumption Patterns

Food Consumption Score (FCS)

Food Consumption Score

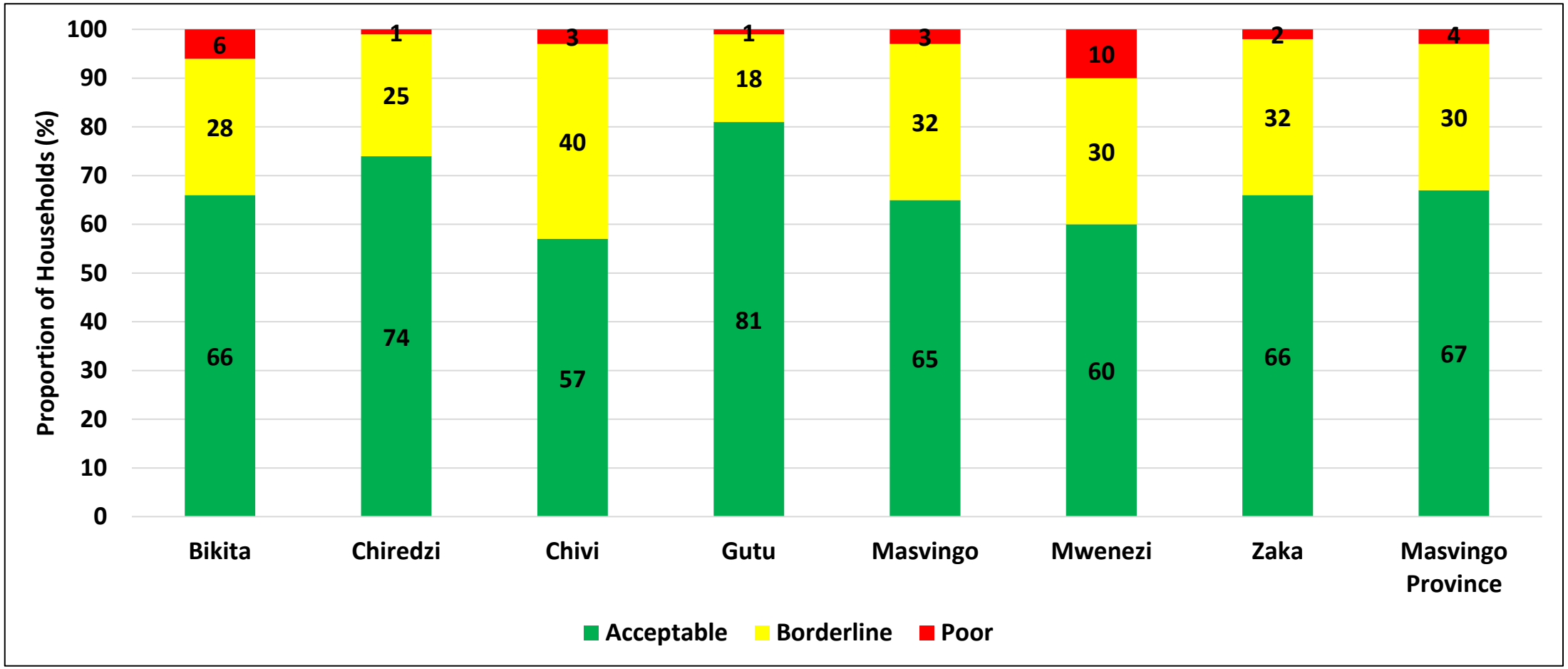
Food Consumption Score Groups	Score	Description
Poor	0-21	An expected consumption of staple 7 days, vegetables 5-6 days, sugar 3-4 days, oil/fat 1 day a week, while animal proteins are totally absent
Borderline	21.5-35	An expected consumption of staple 7 days, vegetables 6-7 days, sugar 3-4 days, oil/fat 3 days, meat/fish/egg/pulses 1-2 days a week, while dairy products are totally absent
Acceptable	>35	As defined for the borderline group with more number of days a week eating meat, fish, egg, oil, and complemented by other foods such as pulses, fruits, milk

Food Consumption Patterns Trend



- There was an increase in the proportion of households with acceptable food consumption from 2020 (31%) to 2025 (67%).
- The proportion of households which consumed poor diets decreased from 31% in 2020 to 4% in 2025.
- This reflects an improvement in the quality of diets being consumed by rural households as evidenced by the consumption of more diverse and nutritious food groups.

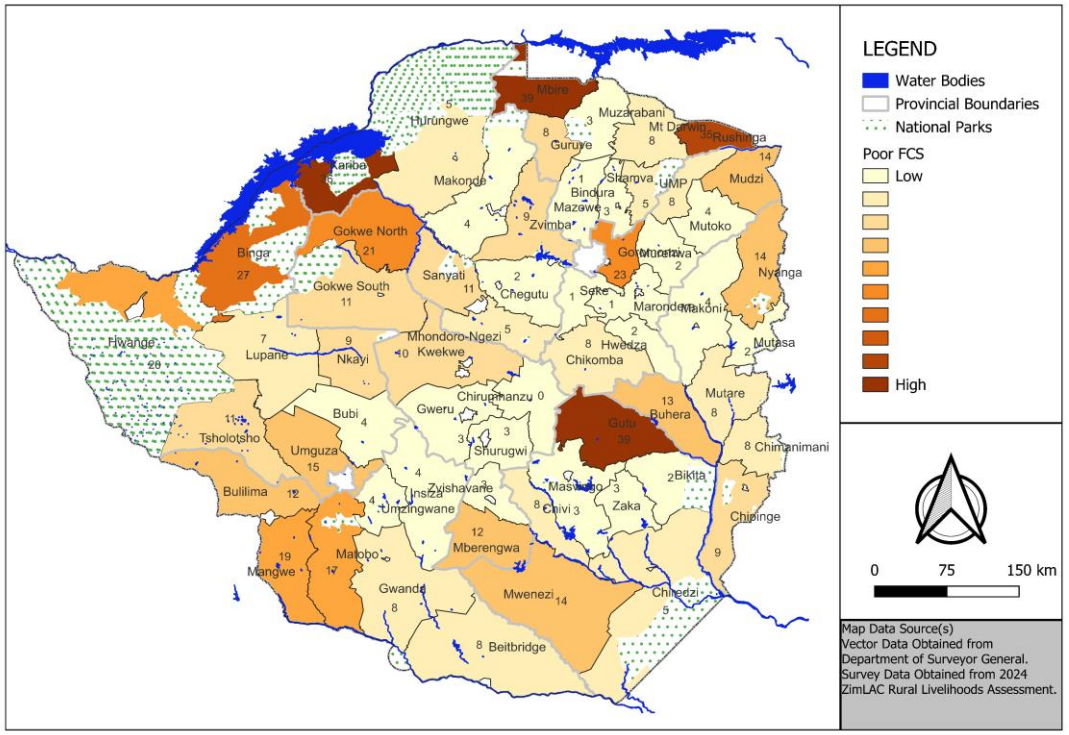
Food Consumption Patterns



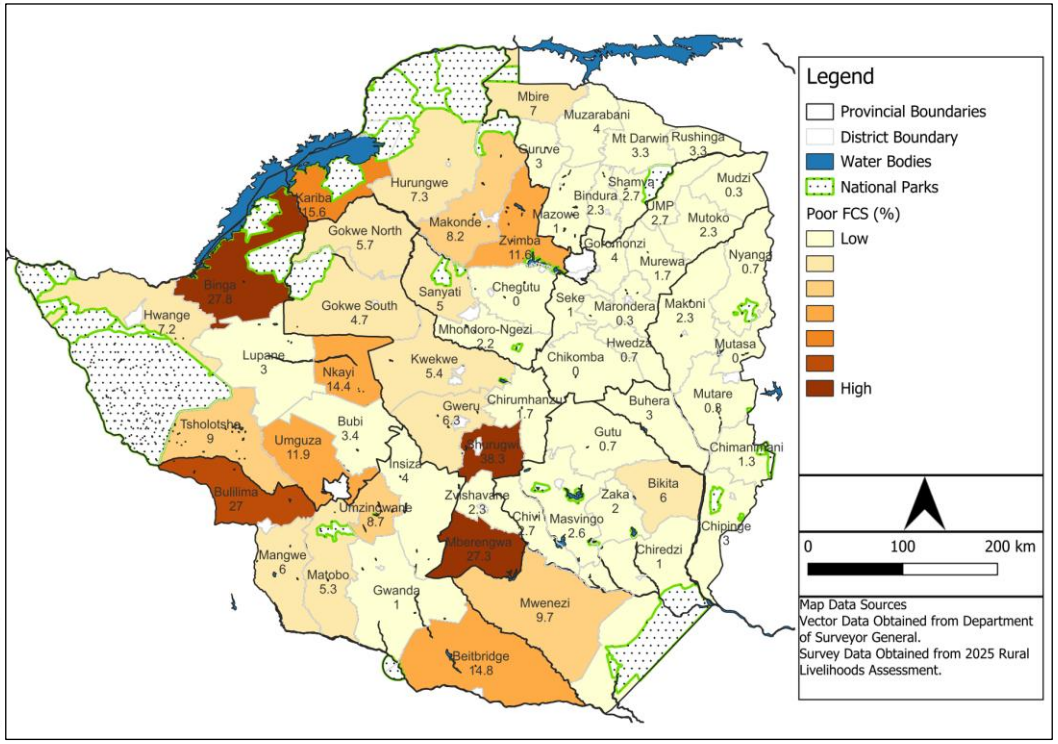
- About 4% of households had poor consumption patterns.
- Mwenezi (10%) had the highest proportion of households with poor consumption patterns.

Poor Food Consumption Patterns by District

2024



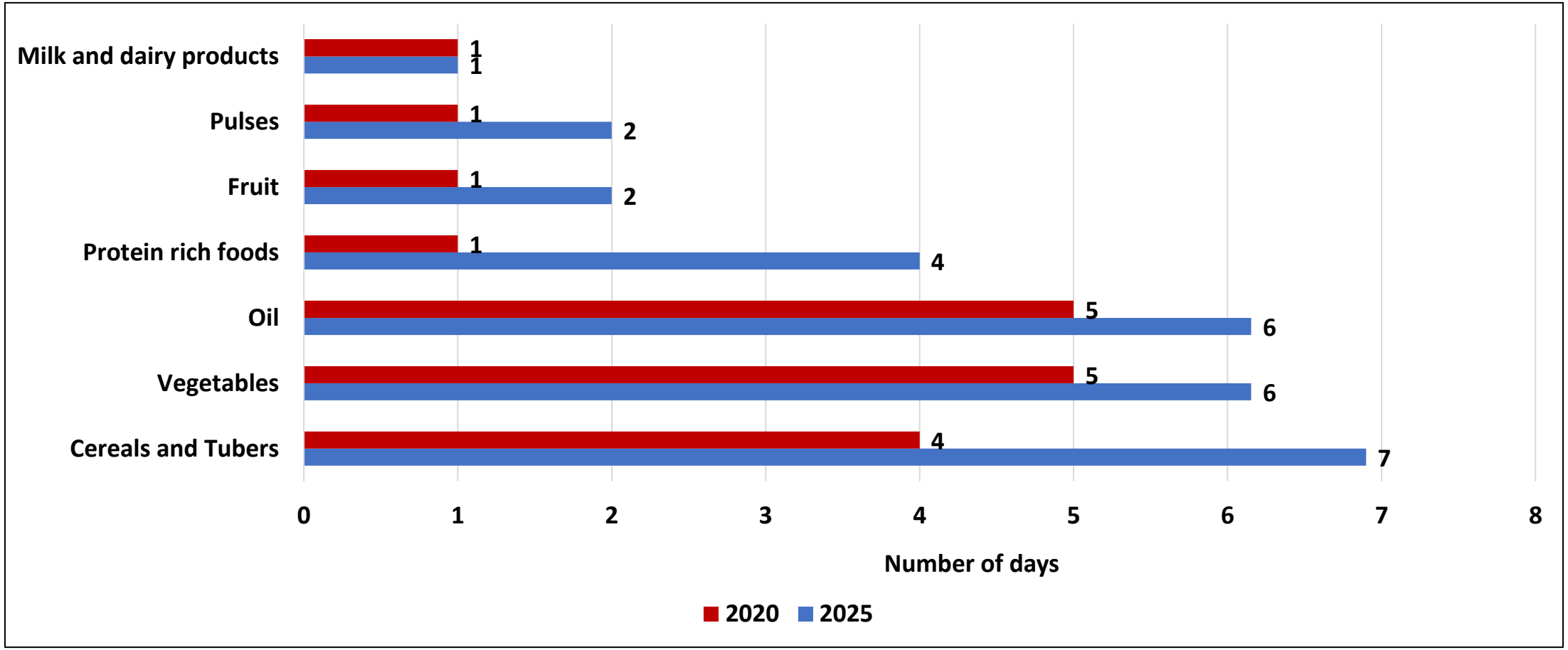
2025



- The proportion of households with poor food consumption decreased in most districts in 2025 when compared to 2024.
- Mwenezi (9.7%) had the highest proportion of households with poor food consumption patterns.

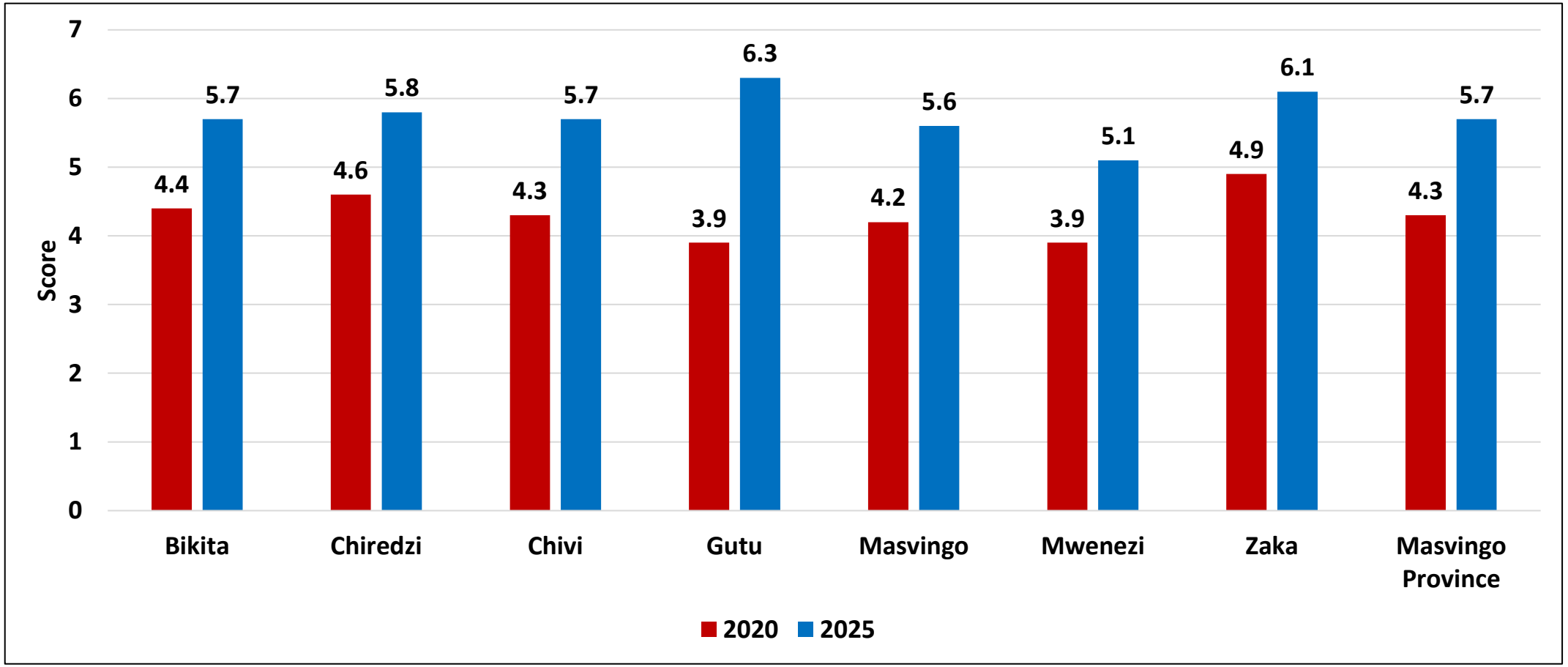
Household Dietary Diversity

Average Number of Days Households Consumed Food from the Various Food Groups



- Cereals, vegetables and oil have remained the most frequently consumed foods.
- Milk was the least consumed food item.

Average Household Dietary Diversity Score



- There was an improvement in the dietary diversity score from 4.3 in 2020 to 5.7 in 2025.

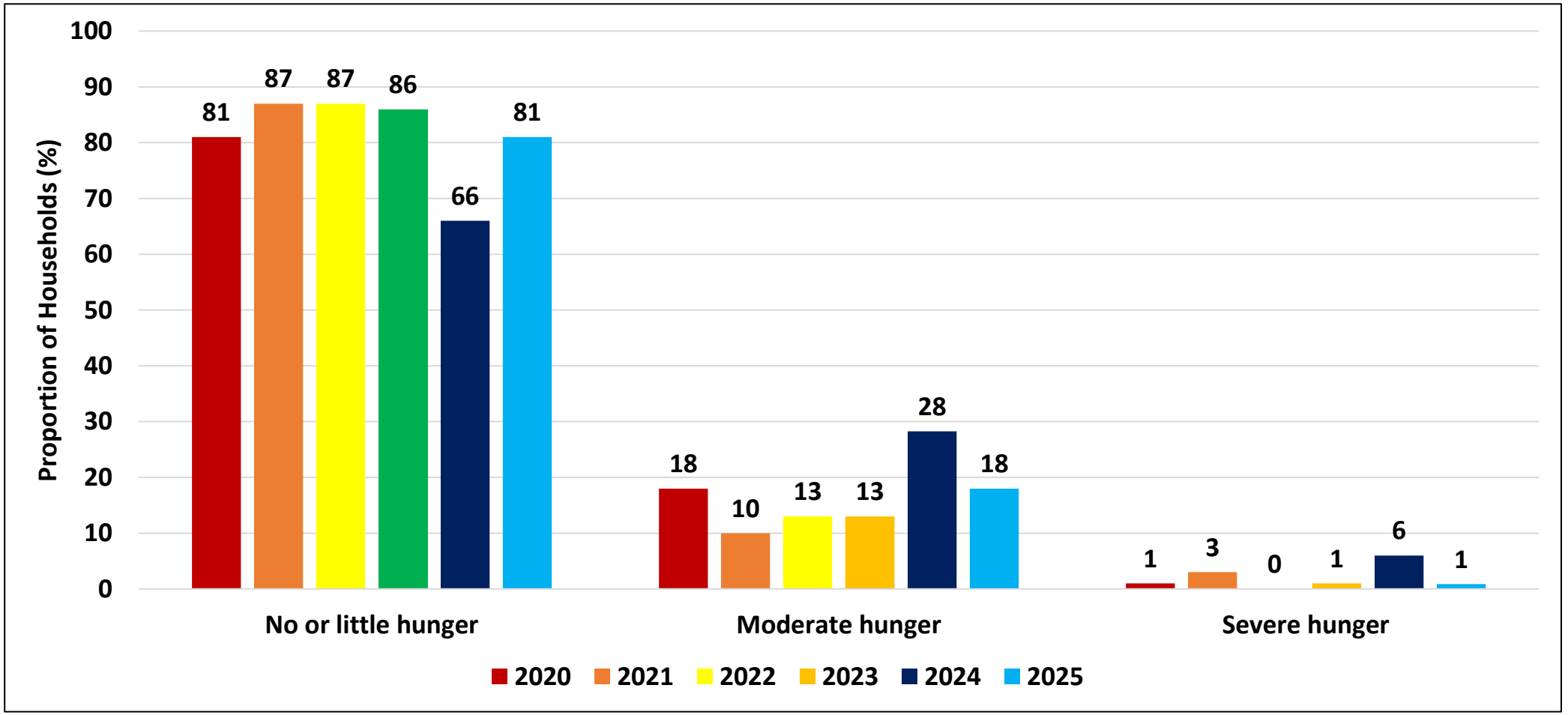
HDDS by Food Groups

District	Cereals (%)	Tubers (%)	Pulses (%)	Dairy products (%)	Meat (%)	Fish (%)	Eggs (%)	Vegetables (%)	Fruits (%)	Oil (%)	Sugar (%)	Condiments (%)
Bikita	97.3	75.0	68.5	57.5	42.0	19.5	43.2	88.0	72.2	92.5	88.6	96.5
Chiredzi	99.0	51.4	53.3	62.4	51.6	33.3	35.8	94.3	55.6	97.4	82.6	96.2
Chivi	98.3	51.5	54.1	67.1	51.6	33.3	36.1	92.2	57.9	95.7	91.4	91.5
Gutu	98.7	52.5	65.4	68.2	55.3	46.2	41.7	98.0	76.3	98.6	86.5	95.4
Masvingo	94.6	54.7	38.5	64.2	37.6	27.1	39.1	94.3	58.2	97.5	87.7	96.0
Mwenezi	98.3	44.3	60.2	67.0	62.0	33.3	47.6	93.9	59.4	95.7	82.2	94.5
Zaka	99.7	75.4	41.6	66.2	44.2	20.0	35.3	93.6	76.1	98.6	93.3	98.9
Masvingo Province	**98.0**	**60.2**	**55.2**	**65.2**	**49.6**	**30.1**	**39.9**	**93.5**	**66.4**	**96.6**	**87.7**	**95.6**

- Cereals (98%), oil (96.6%) and vegetables (93.5)% were the most consumed food groups.
- Meat consumption was highest in Mwenezi (62.%).

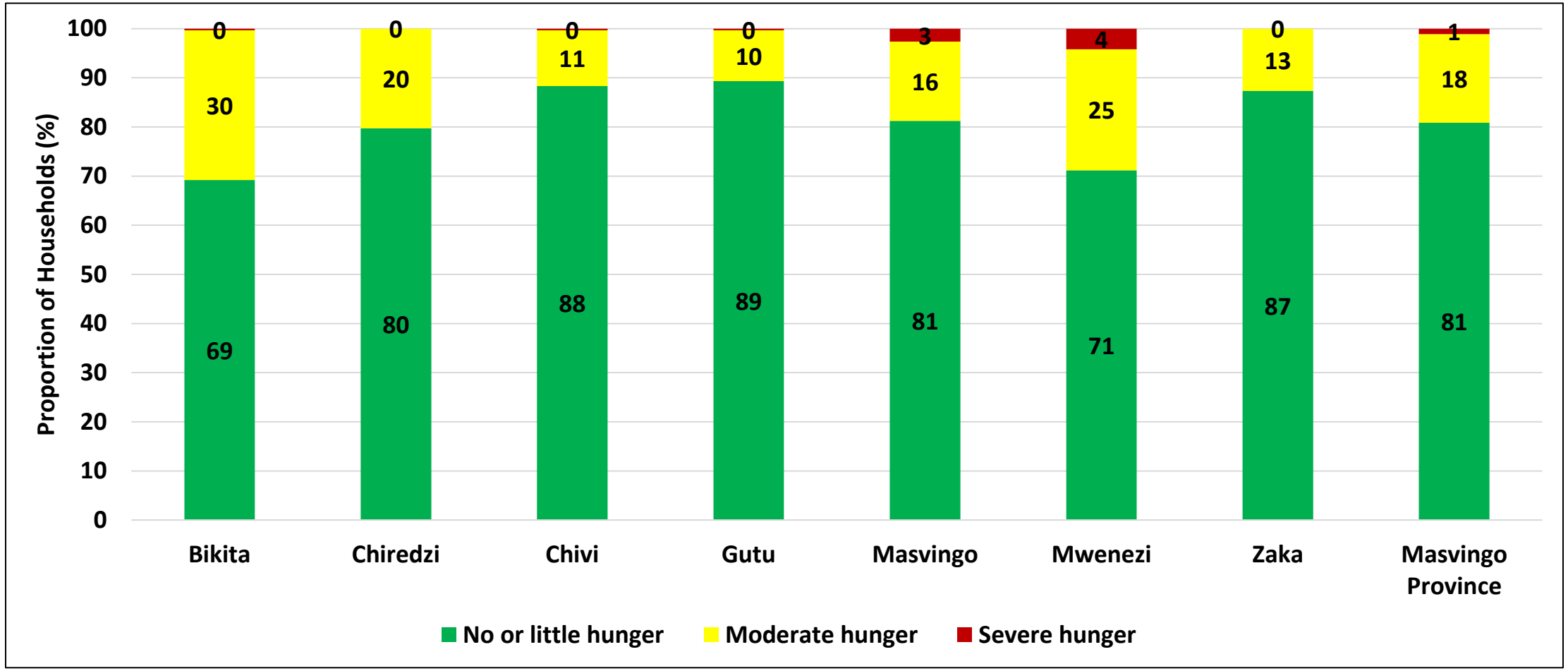
Household Coping

Household Hunger Scale



- The proportion of households which experienced no or little hunger increased from 66% in 2024 to 81% in 2025.

Household Hunger Scale



- Gutu (89%) had the highest proportion of households with no or little hunger whilst Mwenezi (4%) had the highest proportion of households with severe hunger.

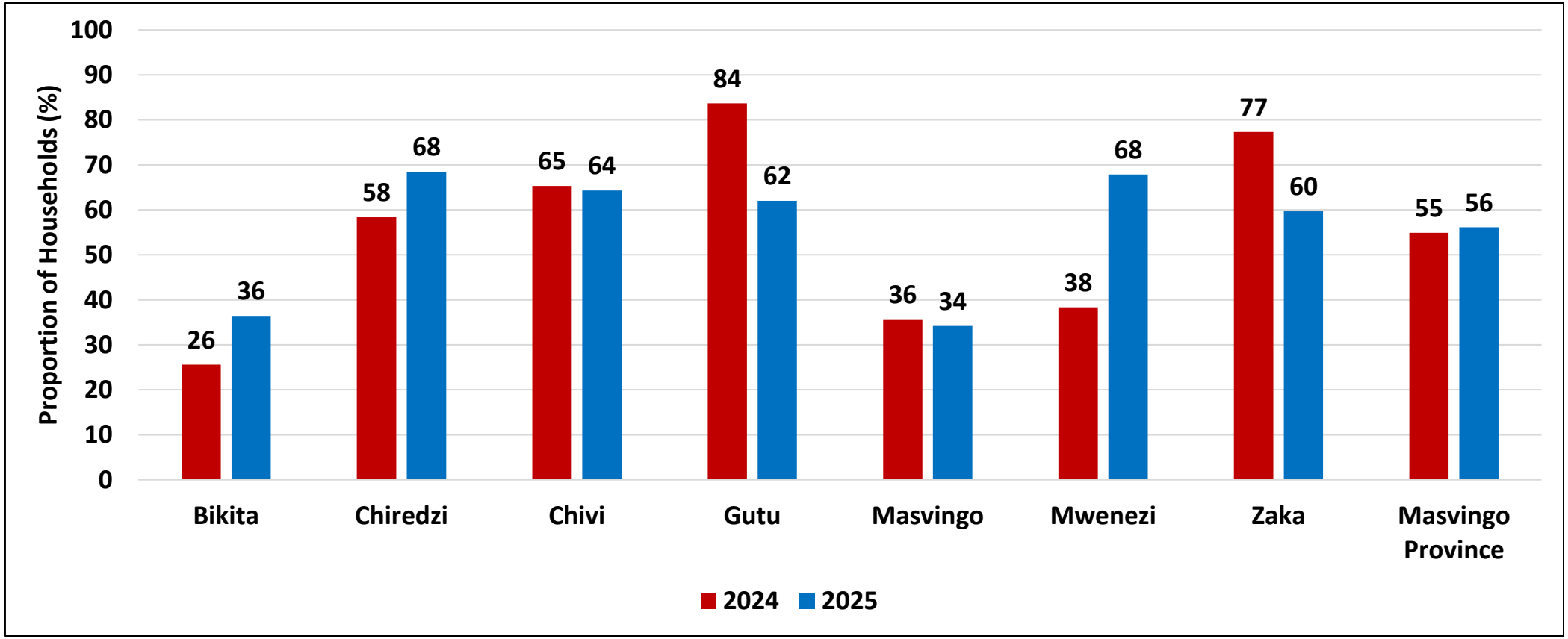
Livelihoods Based Coping Strategies

Livelihoods Coping Strategies

- Livelihood Coping Strategies are behaviors employed by households when faced with a crisis.
- The livelihood scoping strategies have been classified into three categories namely stress, crisis and emergency as indicated in the table.

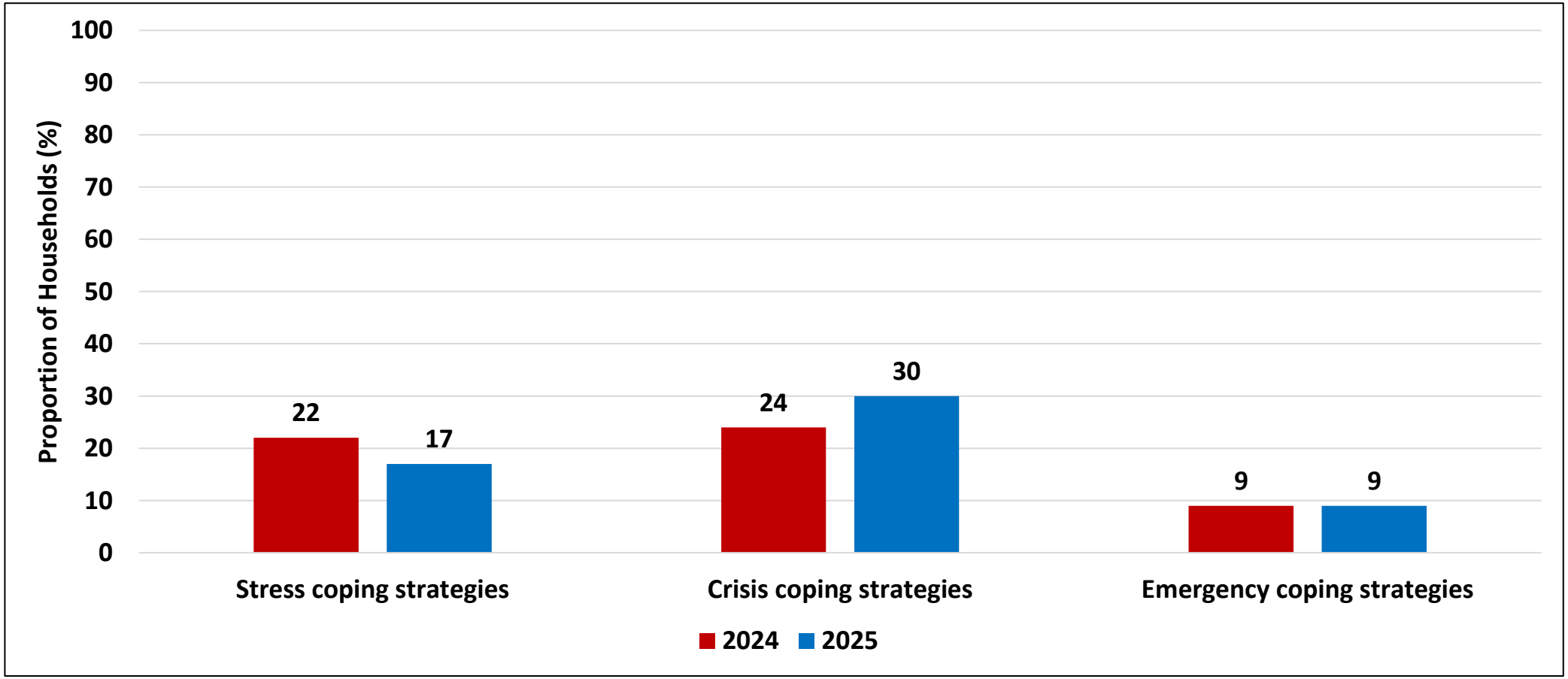
Category	Coping Strategy
Stress	• Sold household assets/goods (radio, furniture, television, jewellery etc.) • Sold more animals than usual • Spent savings • Borrowed money
Crisis	• Consumed seed stocks that were to be saved for the next season • Decreased expenditures on fertilizer, pesticide, fodder, animal feed, veterinary care, etc. • Harvest immature crops (e.g., green maize)
Emergency	• Mortgaged/sold the house where the household was permanently living or land • Begged (asked strangers for money/food) or scavenged • Sold last female (productive) animal

Households Engaging in any Form of Livelihood Coping Strategies



- The proportion of households engaging in any form of coping was 56% in 2025.
- Chiredzi and Mwenezi (68%) had the highest proportion of households engaging in any form of livelihood coping.

Households Maximum Livelihoods Coping Strategies



- The proportion of households engaging in emergency coping strategies was 9% in 2025.

Food Safety

Importance of Food Labelling

Importance of Food Labelling

- Provides essential nutritional information (e.g., energy, fat, sugar, salt) to help make healthier choices.
- Lists ingredients and allergens, protecting consumers with dietary restrictions or food allergies.
- Shows expiry and manufacturing dates, helping avoid consumption of unsafe or expired products.
- Displays origin and manufacturer details, supporting traceability and product accountability.
- Indicates certifications and standards compliance (e.g., fortification logo, organic, Halal), ensuring quality and regulatory adherence.

Why Consumers Should Read Food Labels

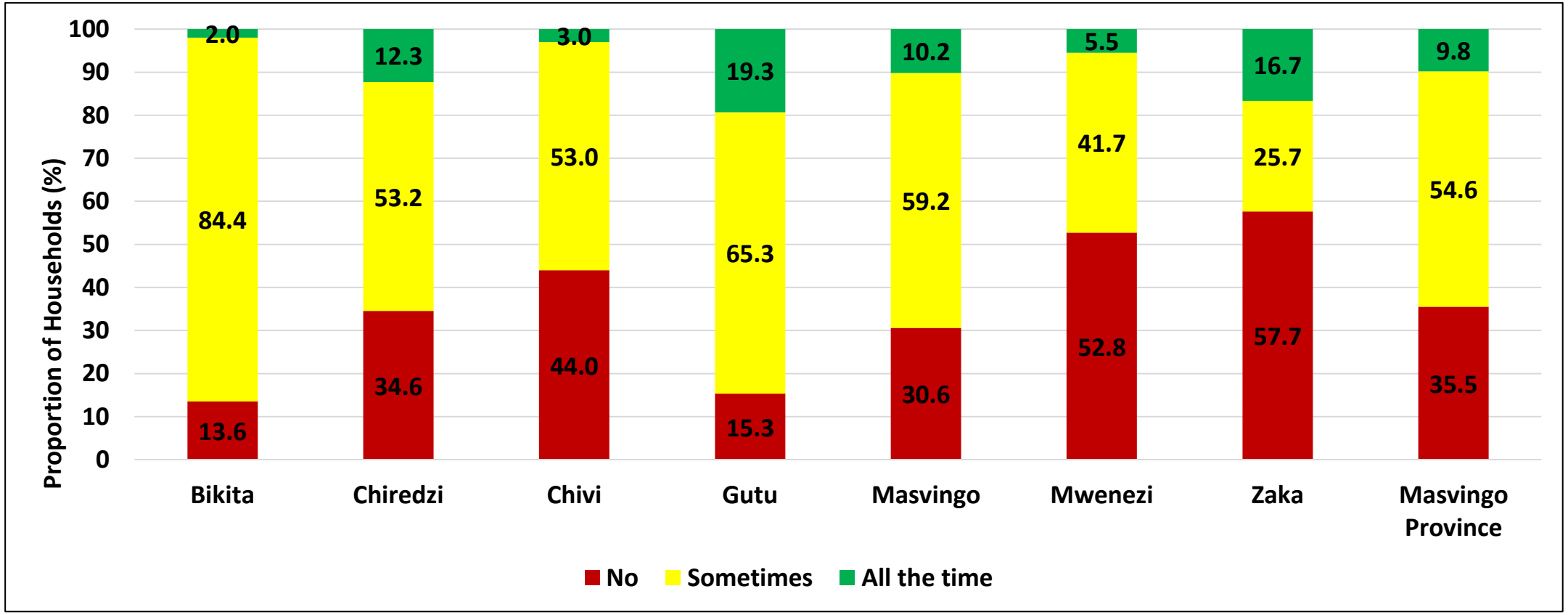
- Helps choose foods that align with health needs (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, child feeding).
- Avoids misleading claims (e.g., “sugar-free”, “natural”) by checking actual contents.
- Supports informed decisions on food value, cost-efficiency, and portion size.
- Protects against adverse reactions by identifying allergens (e.g., peanuts, gluten, sulphites).
- Empowers consumers to hold food producers accountable for food safety and nutrition quality.

Factors Considered by Households When Purchasing Food Items

District	Brand/Source (%)	Expiry /Best Before Date (%)	Nutritional Content (%)	Storage Instructions (%)	Other (%)	No Other Consideration (%)
Bikita	42.7	69.9	13.9	3.6	1.7	11.3
Chiredzi	10.6	74.1	8.6	2.0	2.0	25.6
Chivi	17.0	59.3	5.0	1.3	2.0	32.0
Gutu	58.0	74.3	16.0	9.0	2.3	8.7
Masvingo	56.9	83.2	19.1	3.3	1.6	6.3
Mwenezi	26.2	59.2	8.7	6.1	3.9	28.8
Zaka	30.7	48.7	1.7	1.3	9.3	23.7
Masvingo Province	**34.6**	**67.0**	**10.4**	**3.8**	**3.3**	**19.5**

- Holding price constant, about 67% of the households reported that they considered expiry dates, brand (34.6%) and nutritional content (10.4%) when purchasing food items.

Households Which Read Food Labels Before Purchasing Food Items



- Provincially, 35.5% of the households reported not reading food package labels when purchasing food items.

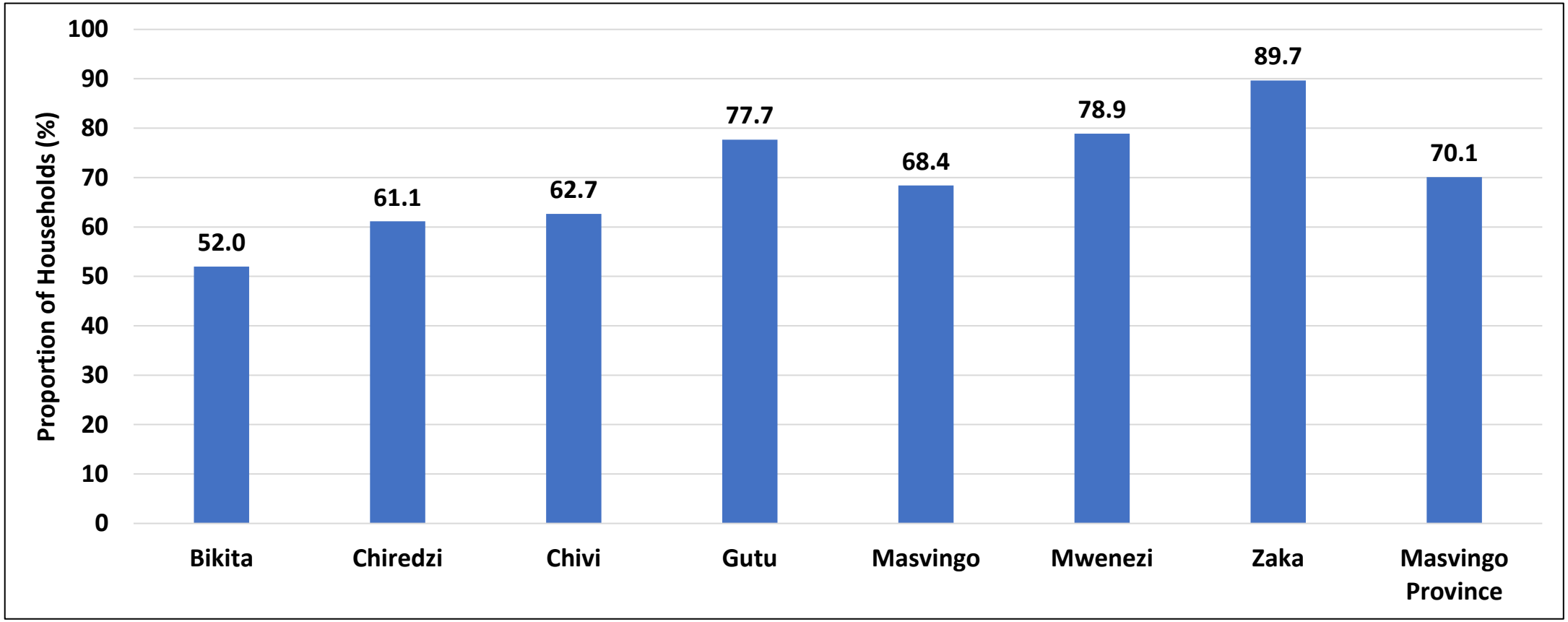
Importance of Observing Pre-Harvest Intervals (PHIs) on Pesticides

- The Pre-Harvest Interval (PHI) is the minimum number of days that must pass between the last pesticide application and the harvesting of fruits or vegetables. This allows pesticide residues to degrade to safe levels before the crop is consumed.

Importance of Observing PHI

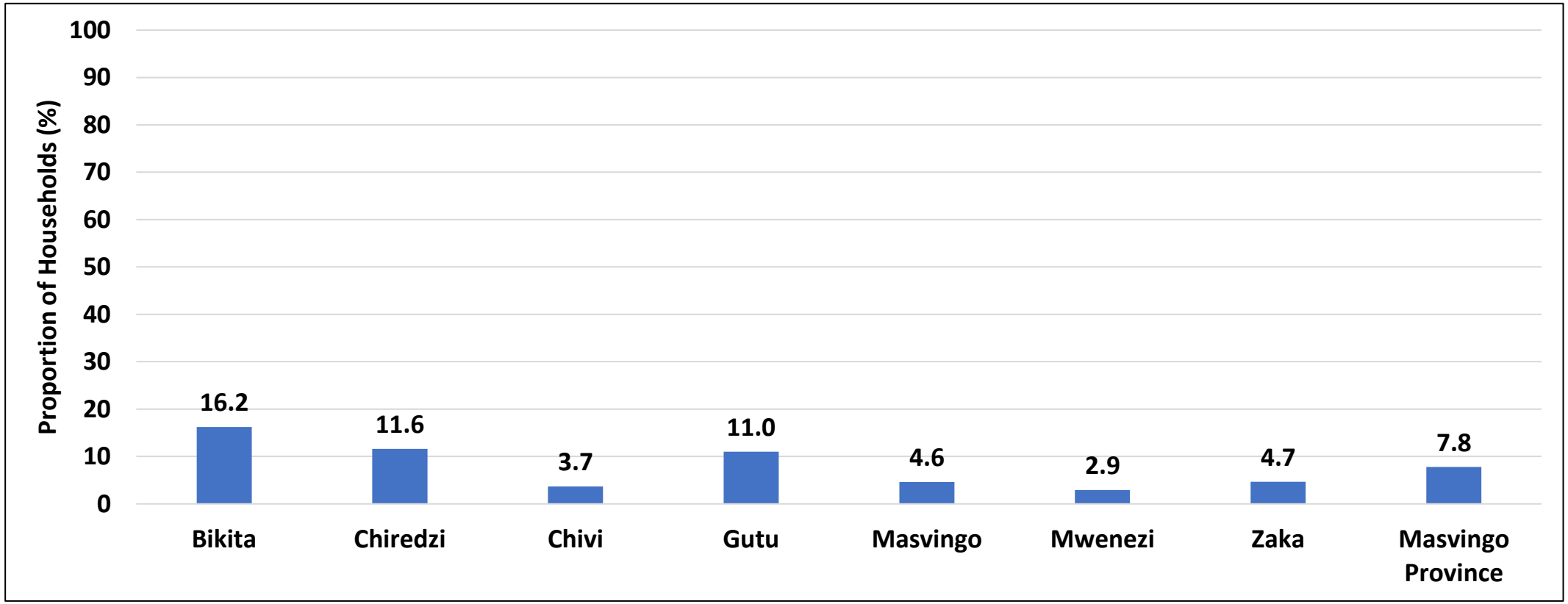
- Protects consumer health by preventing exposure to harmful pesticide residues that can cause acute poisoning, cancer or reproductive issues.
- Reduces residue levels to within acceptable safety limits set by regulatory authorities (e.g., WHO, FAO, Codex).
- Supports food safety and quality, ensuring that fruits and vegetables meet national standards and retain consumer trust.
- Preserves export markets by complying with international residue limits (Maximum Residue Limits – MRLs).
- Promotes responsible farming by reinforcing good agricultural practice.

Knowledge on Fruits and Vegetables Sprayed with Pesticides



- About 70.1% of the households reported that they had knowledge about the pre-harvest interval to be observed after spraying fruits and vegetables with pesticides.

Consumption of Vegetables or Fruits that were Sprayed with Pesticides



- About 7.8% of the households reported consuming vegetables or fruits before the recommended pre-harvest interval after pesticide application.

Importance of Observing Withdrawal Periods on Antibiotics in Livestock

- The withdrawal period is the minimum time that must pass between the last antibiotic treatment of an animal and the slaughter or harvesting of animal products (milk, eggs, meat) to ensure no harmful drug residues remain.

Importance of Observing Withdrawal Periods

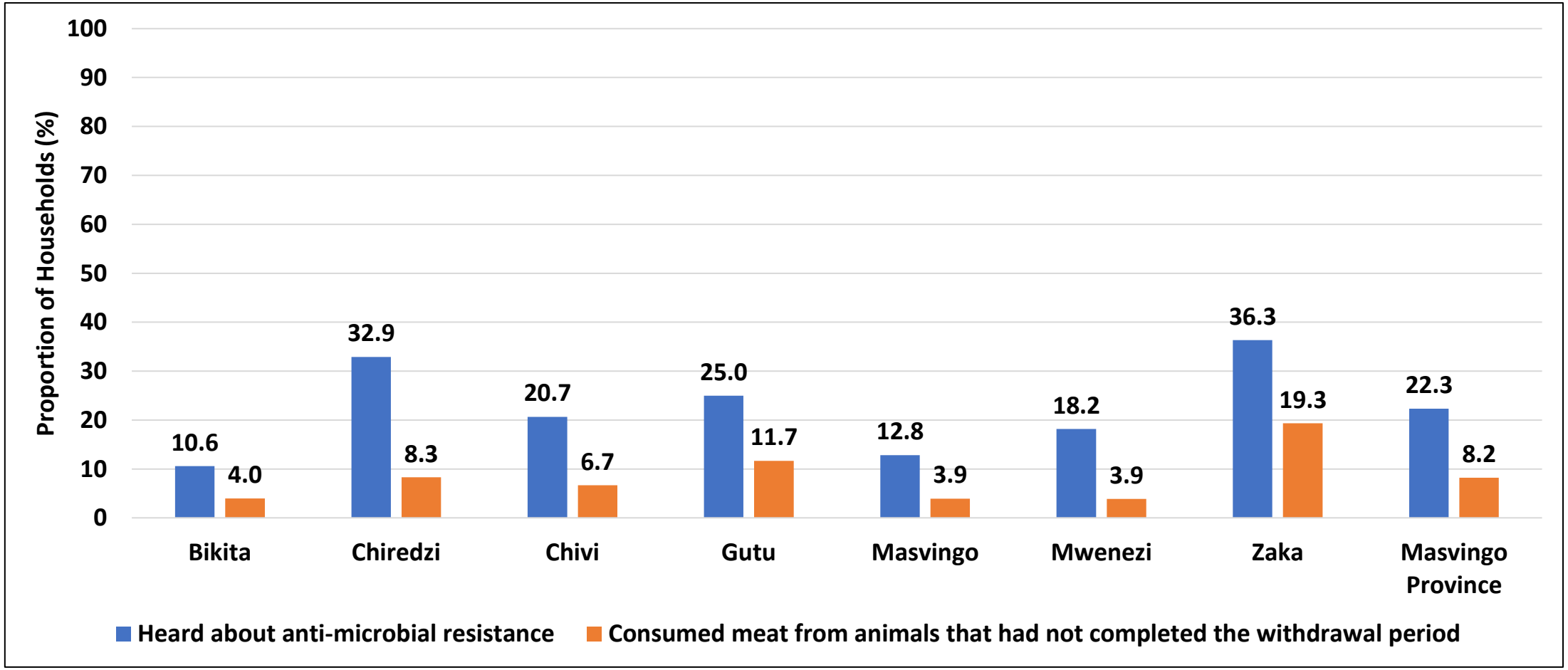
- Protects human health by preventing consumption of animal products with antibiotic residues that can cause allergic reactions or toxicity.
- Prevents antibiotic resistance, a major global threat where bacteria become resistant to treatment due to overexposure to antibiotics.
- Ensures compliance with food safety standards, helping farmers to meet national and international regulations (e.g., Codex, WHO).
- Preserves market access by ensuring products are safe for trade.
- Maintains consumer trust in animal-derived foods such as meat, milk and eggs.

Use of Antibiotics to Treat Livestock

District	Use antibiotics to treat livestock (%)				Read instructions regarding withdrawal periods (%)			
	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Bikita	0	5.9	8.8	0	0	4.4	11.8	0
Chiredzi	0	2.8	1.4	0	0	4.2	0	0
Chivi	3.6	0	0	3.6	0	0	0	0
Gutu	0	0	0	0	0	0	9.1	18.2
Masvingo	2.2	0	0	0	2.2	0	2.2	0
Mwenezi	0	6.9	3.4	3.4	1.7	3.4	3.4	8.6
Zaka	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.8
Masvingo Province	**0.7**	**3.3**	**3.0**	**1.0**	**0.7**	**2.6**	**3.9**	**2.6**

- About 0.7% of the households indicated that they rarely read instructions on the withdrawal period when treating animals with anti-biotics.

Knowledge of Antimicrobial Resistance



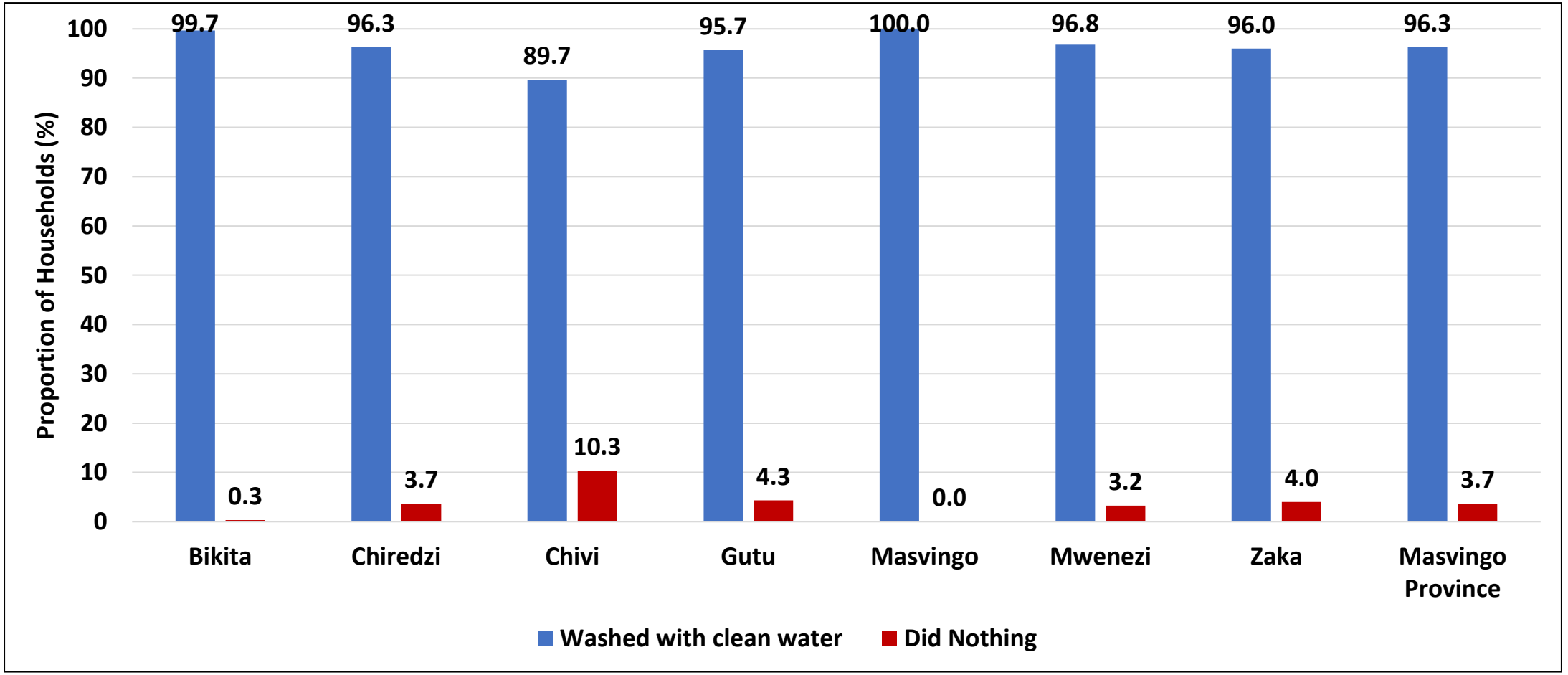
- About, 22.3% of the households had heard about antimicrobial resistance.
- At least 8.2% reported having consumed meat from livestock that had not completed the withdrawal period.

WHO Five Keys to Safer Food

Ensuring food safety is key to preventing food borne illnesses which are contracted through consumption of unsafe foods:

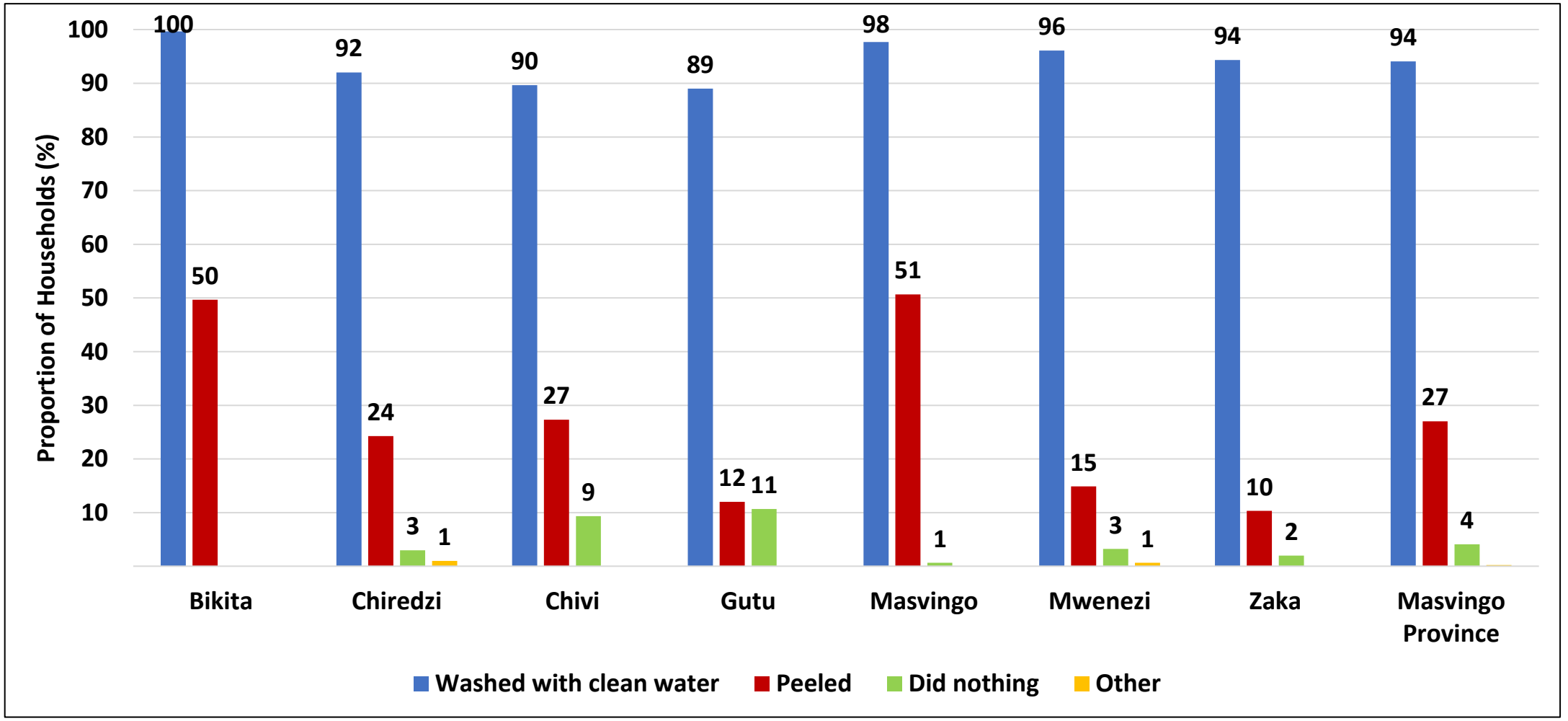
Five Keys	Key Steps
Keep clean	• **Wash hands before handling food** and often during food preparation • **Wash hands after going to the toilet** • Wash and sanitise all surfaces and equipment used for food preparation • Protect kitchen areas and food from insects, pests and other animals
Use safe water and raw materials	• **Use safe water** *households improved water source*) **or treat it to make it safe** *households treat water)* • Select fresh and wholesome foods • Choose foods processed for safety, such as pasteurised milk • Wash fruits and vegetables, especially if eaten raw • Do not use food beyond its expiry date
Separate raw and cooked	• Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other foods • Use separate equipment and utensils such as knives and cutting boards for handling raw foods • Store food in containers to avoid contact between raw and prepared foods
Cook thoroughly	• Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, eggs and fish • Bring foods like soups and stews to boiling to make sure that they have reached 70°C • Reheat cooked food thoroughly
Keep food at safe temperatures	• Do not leave cooked food at room temperature for more than 2 hours • Refrigerate promptly all cooked and perishable food (preferably below 5°C) • Keep cooked food piping hot (more than 60°C) prior to serving • Do not store food too long even in the refrigerator • Do not thaw frozen food at room temperature

Safe Ways of Handling Meat and Fish



- Most of the households (96.3%) washed meat and fish with clean water before cooking.
- Only 3.7% of the households did nothing.

Safe Ways of Handling Fruits and Vegetables



- Most of the households (94%) reported washing fruits and vegetables with clean water before eating.

Safety of Food During Storage, Cooking and Serving

District	Used clean and fresh utensils (%)	Kept food at correct temperatures (%)	Kept food closed or covered (%)	Separated raw and cooked food (%)	Cooked food completely (%)	Other (%)
Bikita	80.8	30.8	60.9	45.4	39.4	0
Chiredzi	82.7	22.6	73.1	37.9	24.6	1.3
Chivi	85.3	28.3	46.7	18.0	7.7	1.7
Gutu	70.7	37.0	51.7	61.0	53.0	.3
Masvingo	92.1	42.4	52.6	26.3	19.4	.3
Mwenezi	51.8	26.2	92.6	17.8	5.8	1.9
Zaka	64.7	6.0	70.7	18.3	12.3	0.3
Masvingo Province	**75.4**	**27.6**	**64.1**	**32.0**	**23.1**	**85.1**

- At least 75.4% of households used clean and fresh utensils and 64.1% kept food covered during storage, cooking and serving.

Most Common Food Items Purchased from Vendors

District	Cereal (Rice, Pasta, Mealie Meal, Traditional Grains) (%)	Biscuits, sweets and snacks (%)	Drinks (%)	Fruits and vegetables (%)	Meat and Meat Products (%)	Dairy Products (%)	Other (%)
Bikita	29.5	14.6	11.3	39.7	11.9	.0	2.3
Chiredzi	19.3	16.3	9.0	71.8	32.9	8.6	3.3
Chivi	33.3	9.3	8.7	45.7	9.7	4.7	11.3
Gutu	51.7	11.0	17.7	33.7	23.0	10.0	5.3
Masvingo	53.0	44.4	40.5	36.8	34.5	32.2	13.2
Mwenezi	2.9	7.8	12.6	69.3	10.0	1.9	1.6
Zaka	7.3	4.0	5.0	54.7	2.7	0.7	4.3
Masvingo Province	**28.1**	**15.4**	**15.0**	**50.3**	**17.8**	**8.3**	**5.9**

- The majority of the households (50.3%) reported that they purchased fruits and vegetables from vendors.
- About 17.8% of the households reported that they bought meat and meat products from vendors. This predisposes them to food borne illnesses.

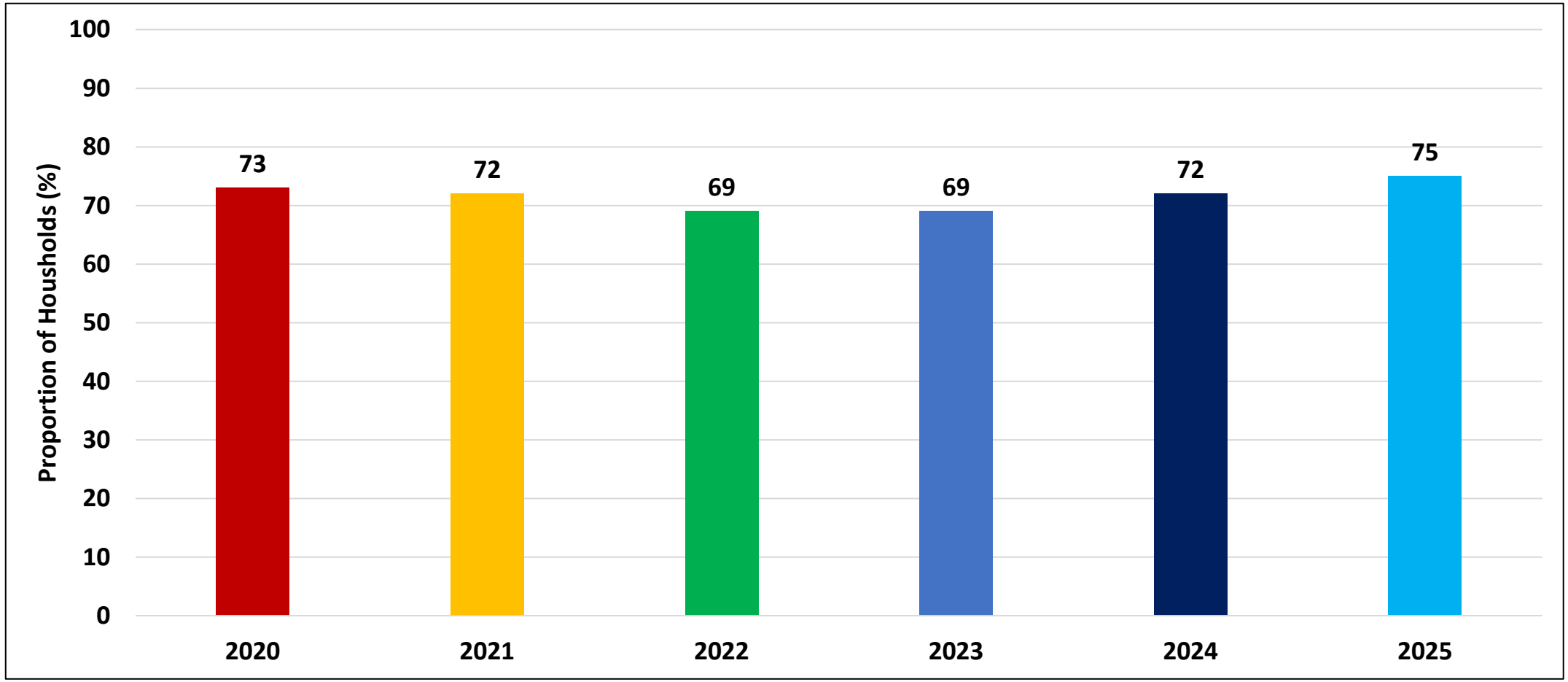
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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.

Access to Improved Water Source by Year



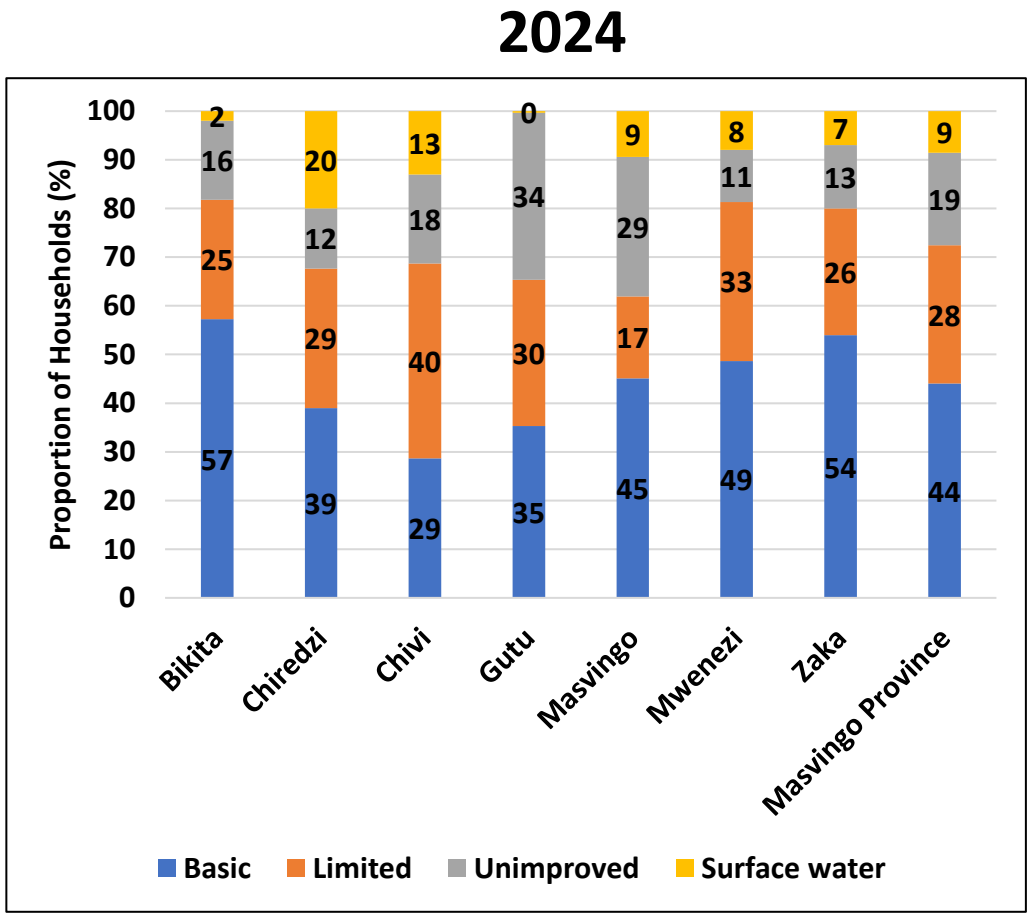
- Access to improved water sources slightly increased from 73% in 2020 to 75% in 2025.
- This is a reflection of the country's progress towards achieving SDG 6 which is fundamental for human health, economic development and environmental sustainability.

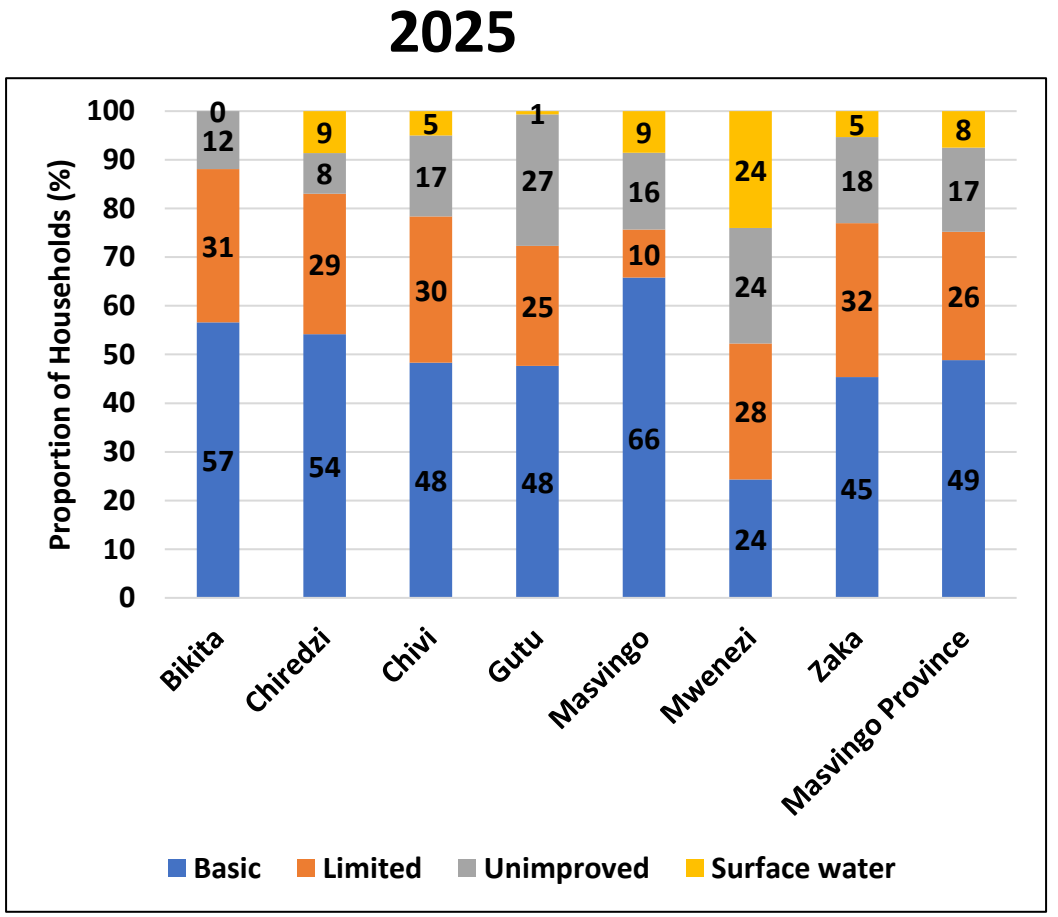
Main Source of Drinking Water

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 (%)	Sand abstraction (%)	Other (%)
Bikita	0.7	1.7	7.6	3.3	57.9	16.6	10.6	0.3	1.3	0.0	0	0
Chiredzi	4.0	3.0	22.6	1.0	40.2	11.3	8.0	0.7	0.3	8.6	0	0
Chivi	1.3	3.0	8.7	3.7	50.0	10.7	14.3	1.0	1.0	5.0	1.0	0.3
Gutu	1.0	0.3	1.3	1.0	26.0	42.3	25.3	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.3
Masvingo	0.3	3.9	11.8	1.3	38.2	19.4	13.8	0.7	1.3	8.6	0.7	0
Mwenezi	3.9	4.2	4.2	1.0	30.5	8.1	17.9	0.3	0.6	24.0	4.2	1.0
Zaka	4.3	6.0	6.7	10.0	36.7	11.7	16.0	1.7	1.7	5.3	0	0
Masvingo Province	2.2	3.2	9.0	3.0	39.9	17.1	15.1	0.7	1.0	7.5	0.9	0.2

- The majority of households were drinking water from boreholes or tube wells (39.9%).
- About 7.5% of the households were drinking surface water.

Main Drinking Water Services

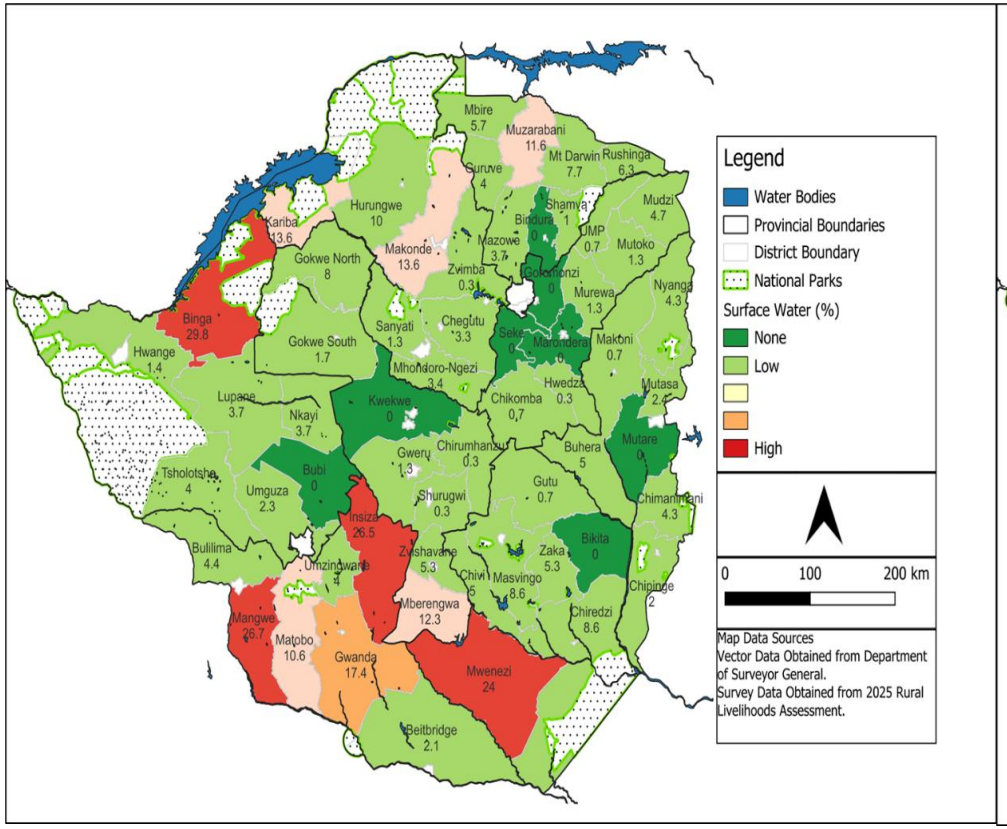




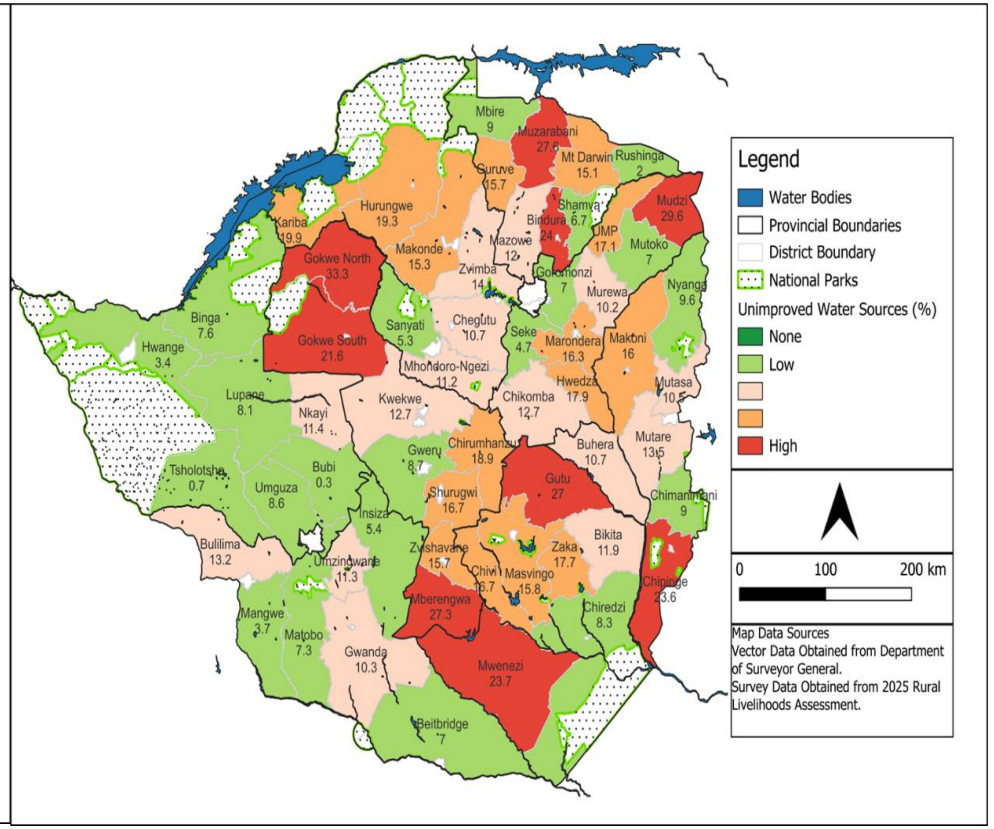
- There was an increase in the proportion of households accessing basic water services from 44% in 2024 to 49% in 2025.
- Masvingo (66%) and Bikita (57%) had the highest proportion of households that had access to basic water services.

Water Services

Households Drinking Surface Water

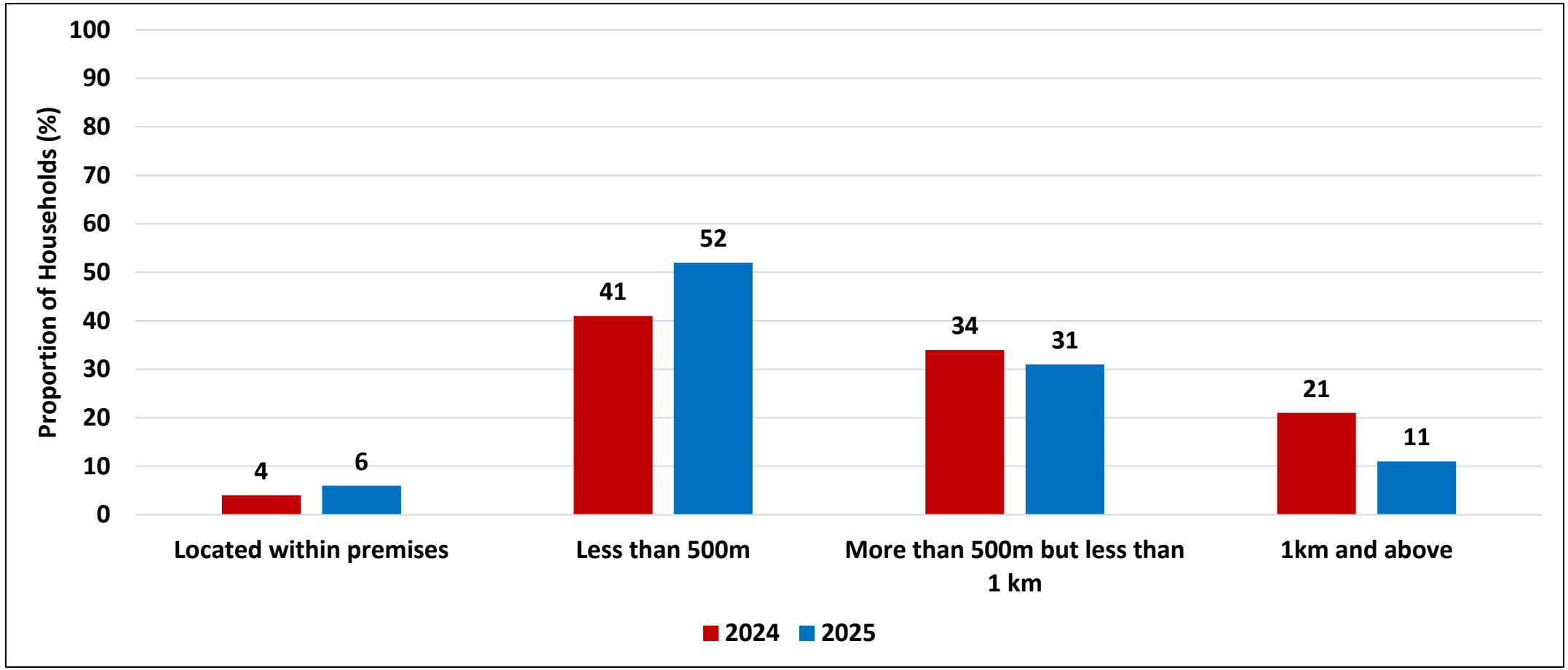


Households Using Unimproved Water



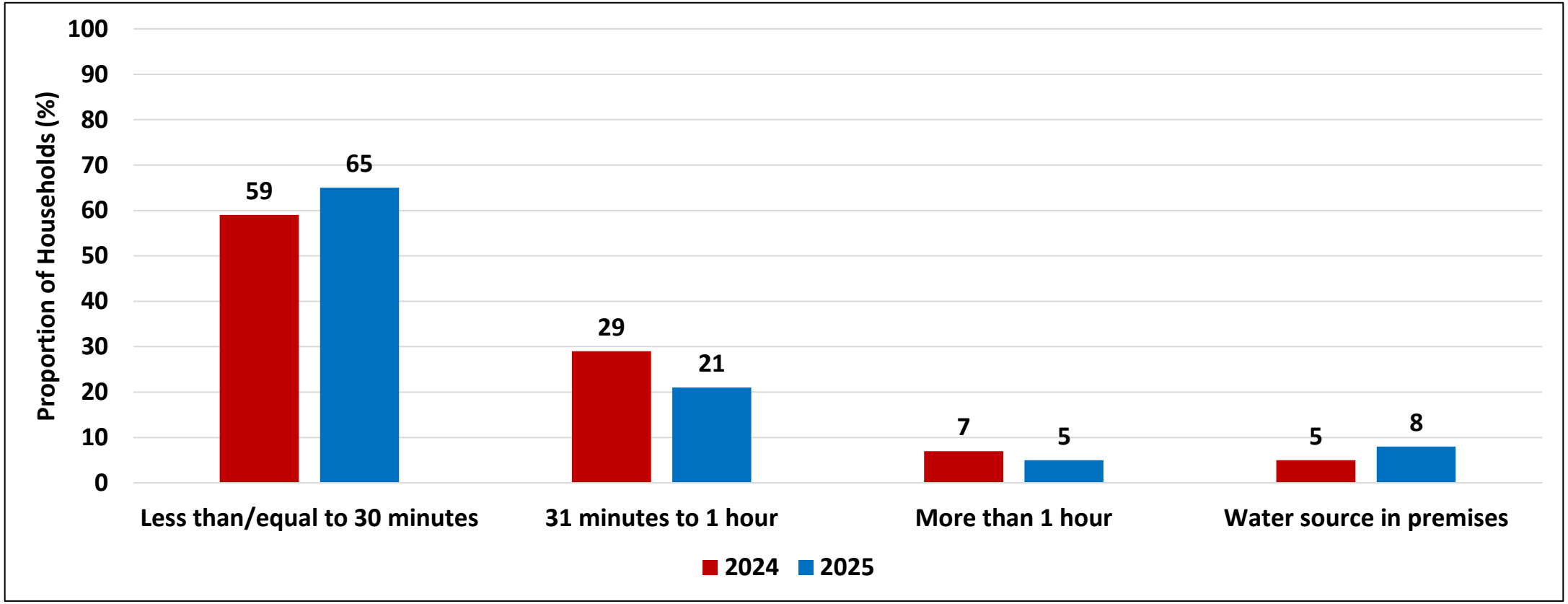
- Mwenezi (24%) had the highest proportion of households which were drinking surface water.
- Gutu (27%) had the highest proportion of households using unimproved water services.

Distance Travelled to Main Water Source



- About 52% of the households accessed water less than 500m from their homes in 2025, an increase from 41% in 2024.
- The proportion of households travelling 1km and above to their main water source decreased from 21% in 2024 to 11% in 2025.

Time Taken to and from Main Drinking Water Source



- The proportion of households spending thirty minutes or less for a round trip to collect water from their main drinking water source increased from 59% in 2024 to 65% in 2025.
- About 5% of the households spent more than one hour for a round trip to collect water from the main drinking water source.

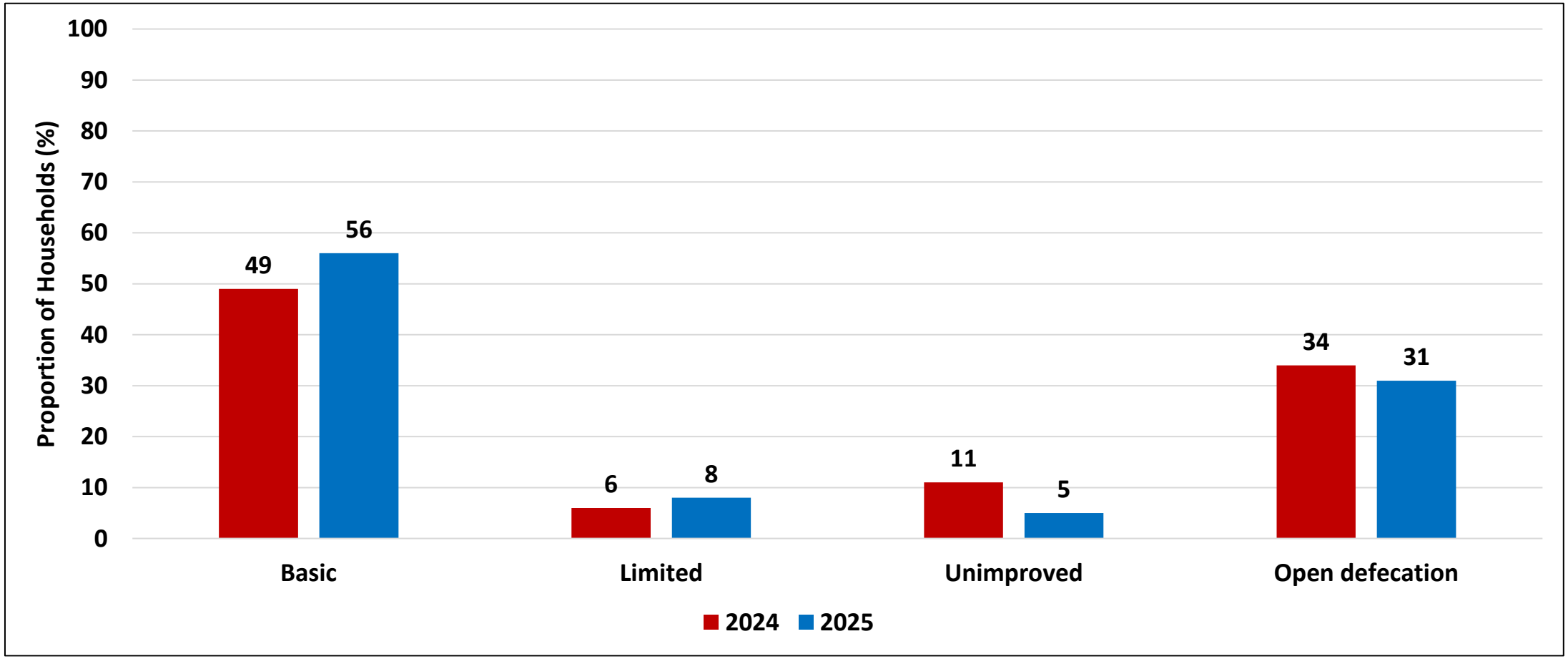
Sanitation

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.

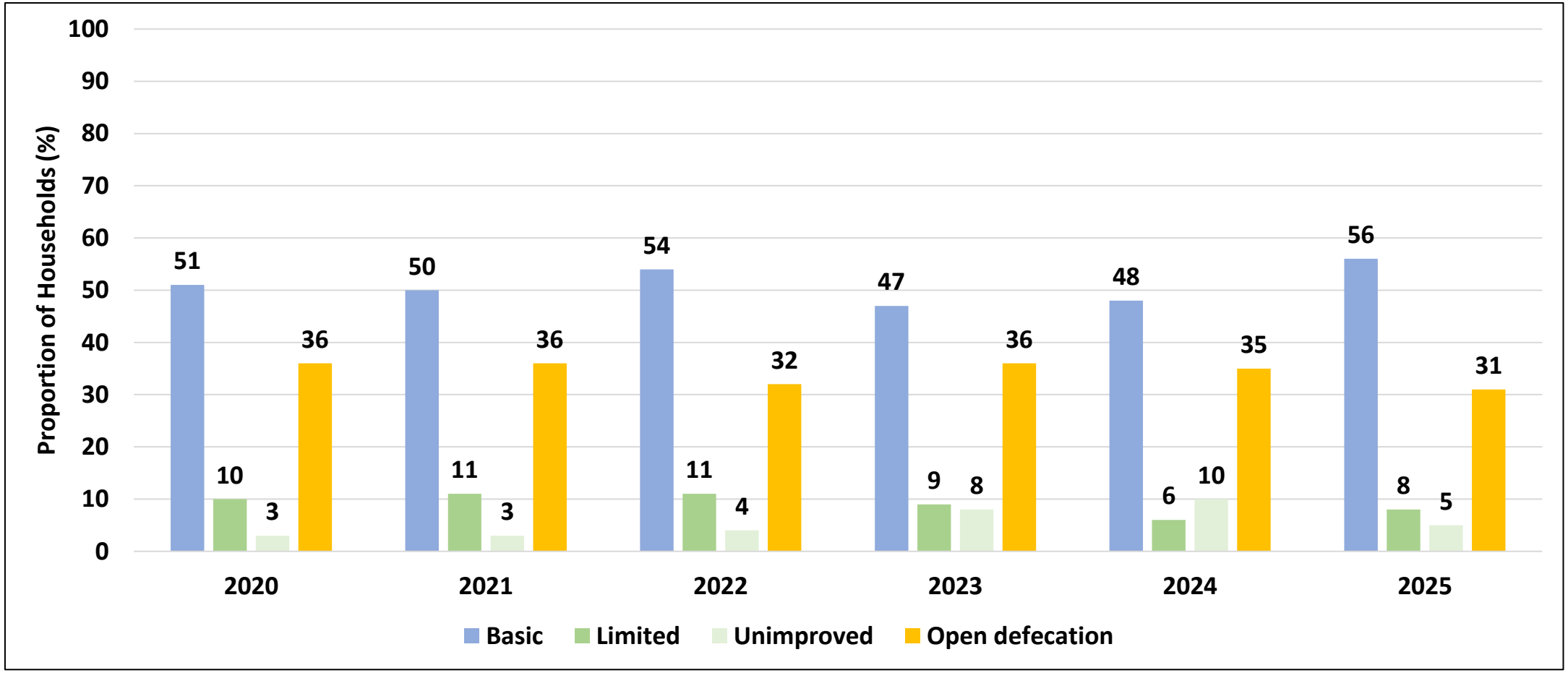
Note: Improved sanitation facilities: Facilities that ensure hygienic separation of human excreta from human contact. They include flush or pour flush toilet/latrine, Blair ventilated improved pit (BVIP), pit latrine with slab and upgradeable Blair latrine.

Household Sanitation Services



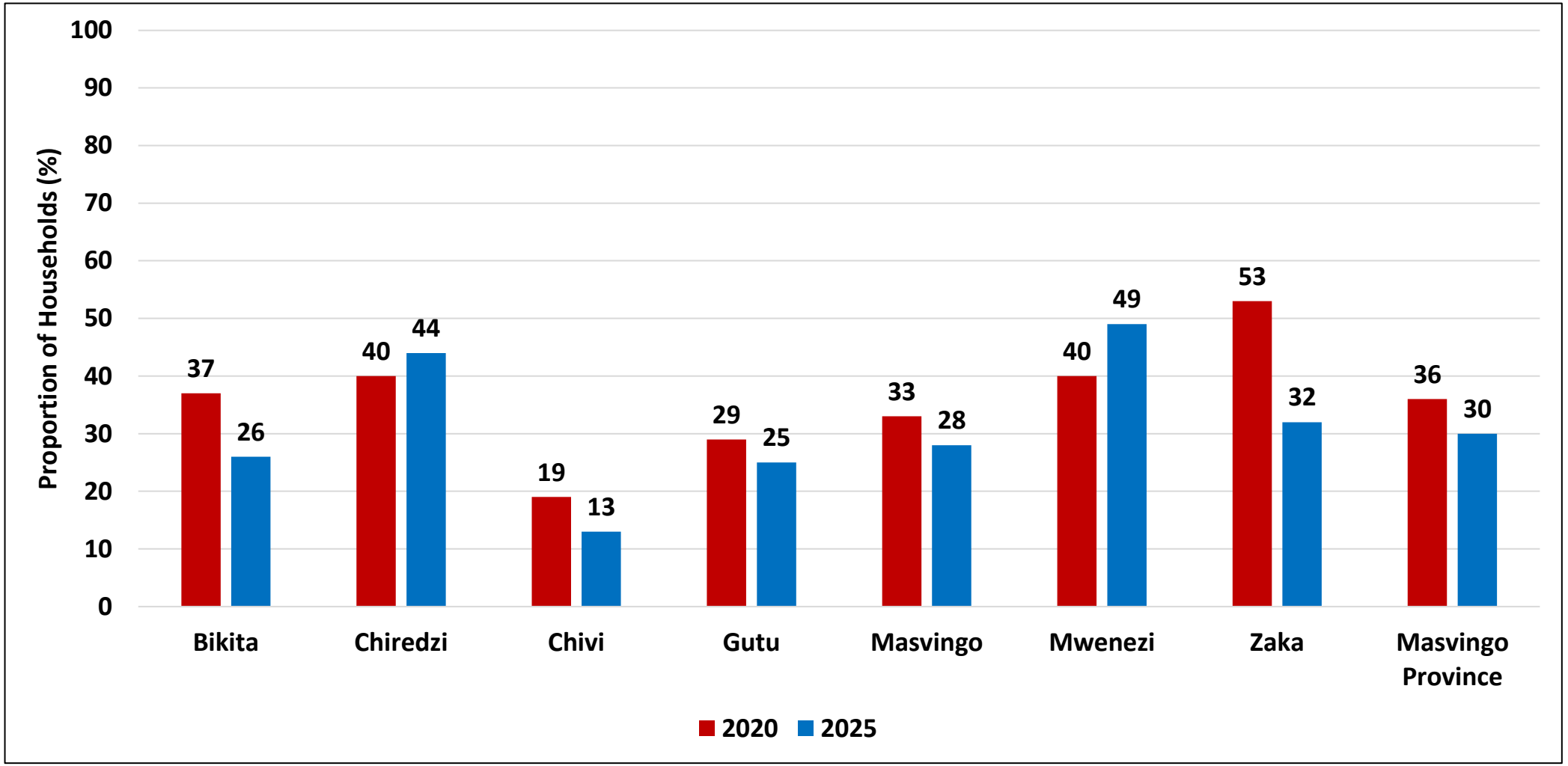
- There was an increase in the proportion of households with basic sanitation services from 49% in 2024 to 56% in 2025.
- There was a decline in the proportion of households practicing open defecation from 34% in 2024 to 31% in 2025.

Household Sanitation Services



- There was an increase in the proportion of households with basic sanitation services from 51% in 2020 to 56% in 2025.
- There was a decline in the proportion of households practicing open defecation from 36% in 2020 to 31% in 2025.

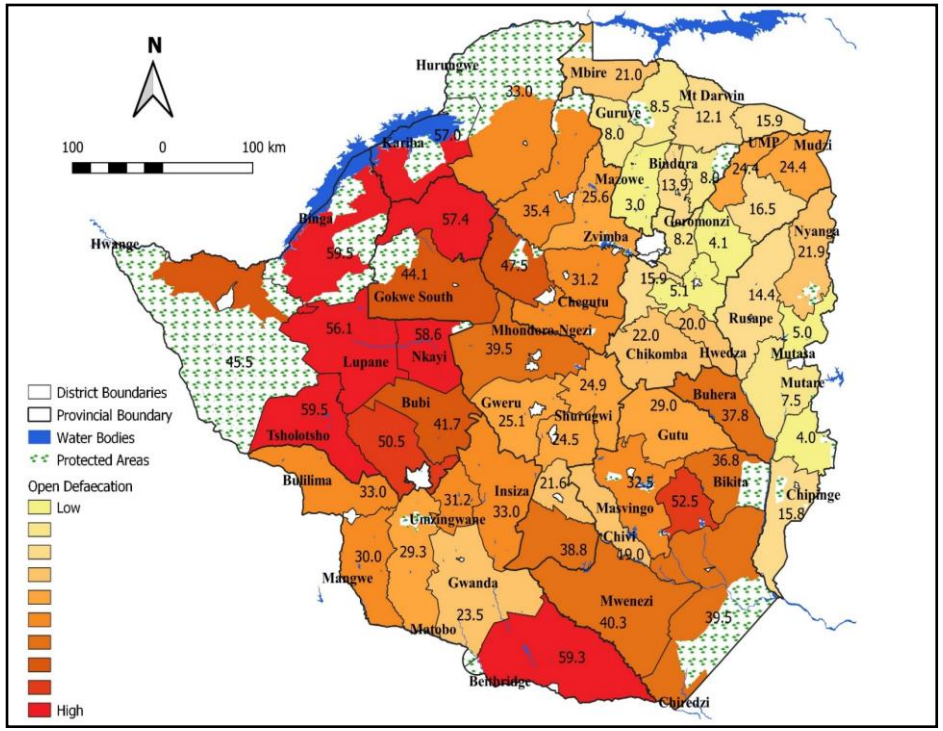
Open Defecation by Year



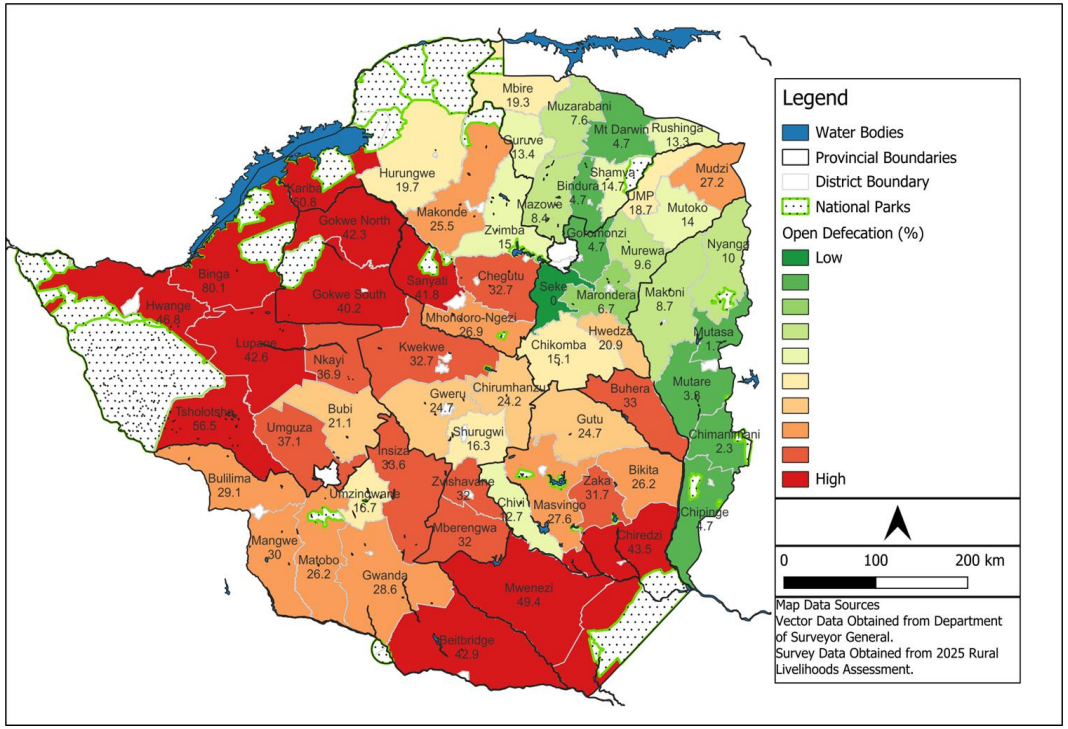
- Open defecation has decreased from 36% in 2020 to 30% in 2025.

Open Defecation By District

2020



2025



- Mwenezi (49.4%) had the highest proportion of households which practised open defaecation.

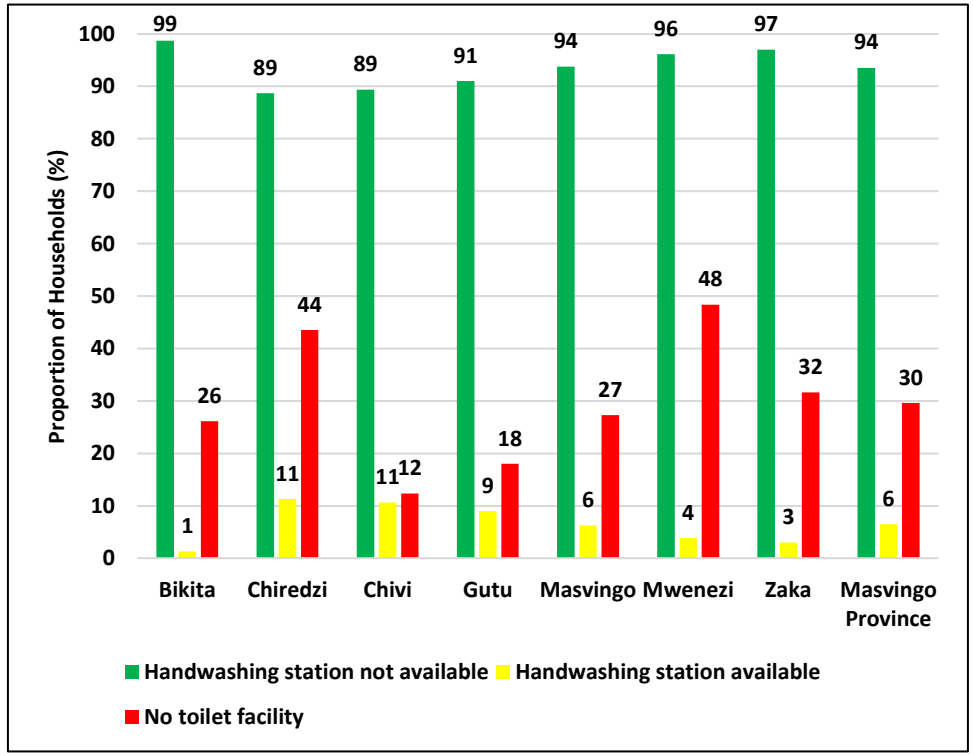
Ladder for Hygiene

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.
No Facility	No hand washing facility on premises.

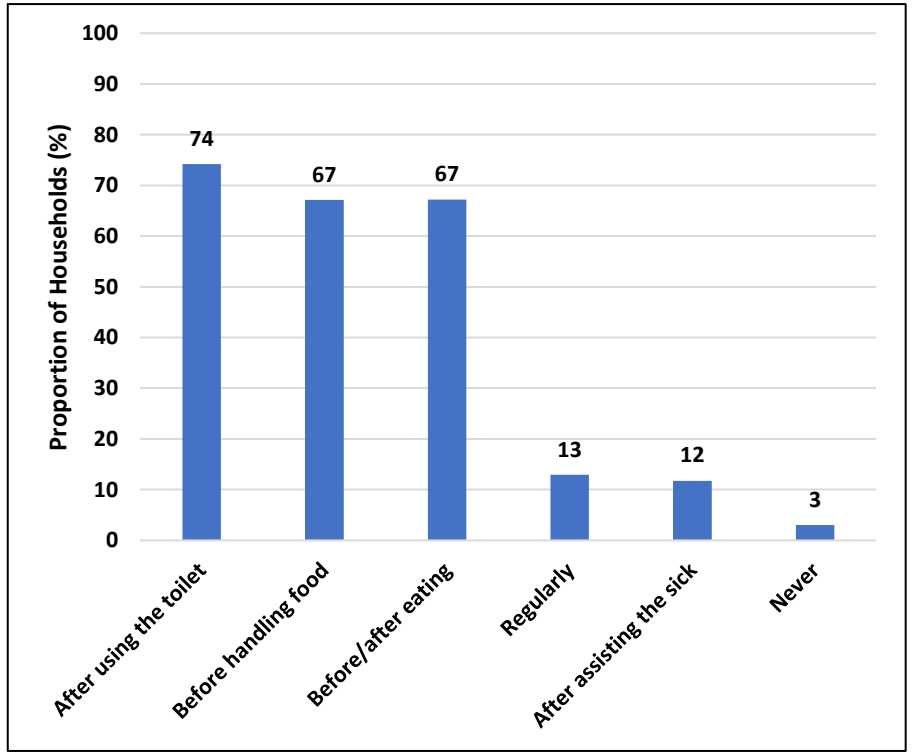
Note: handwashing facilities may be fixed or mobile and include a sink with tap water, buckets with taps, tippy taps, and jugs or basins designated for hand washing. Soap includes bar soap, liquid soap, powdered detergents and soapy water but does not include sand, soil, ash and other handwashing agents.

Handwashing

Handwashing facilities



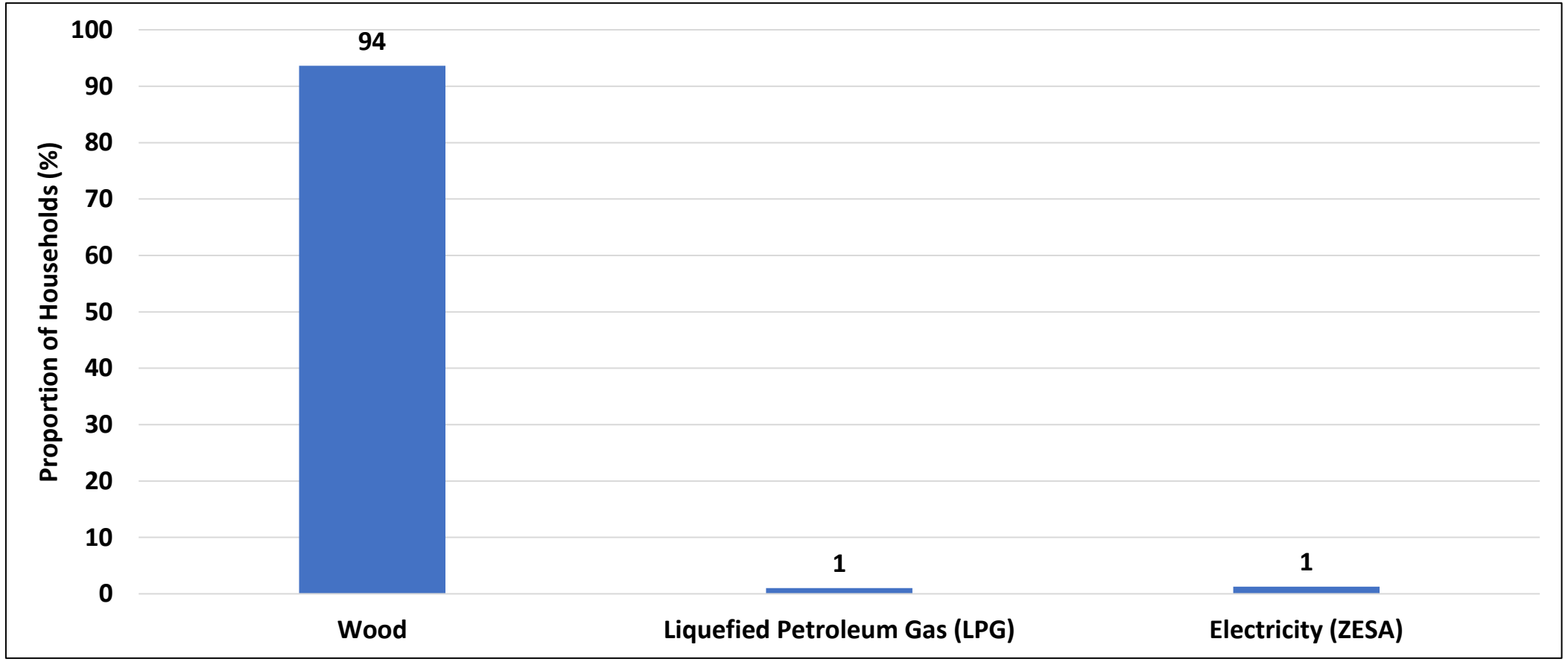
Handwashing at Critical Times



- The proportion of households without handwashing facilities was 94%.
- The majority of households reported that they washed their hands after using the toilet (74%) whilst 3% reported that they never washed their hands.

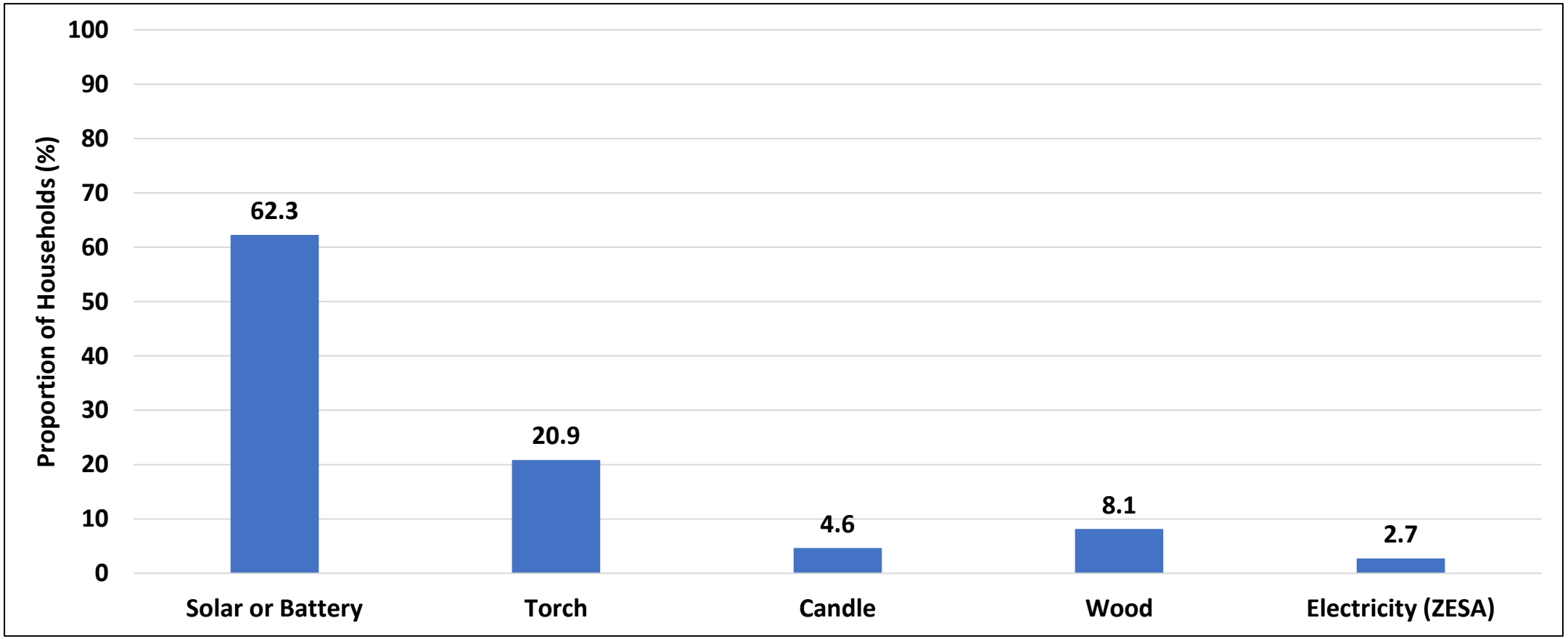
Energy

Type of Energy Used for Cooking



- Wood (94%) was the most reported type of energy used for cooking.
- The unsustainable use of firewood may lead to high levels of deforestation.

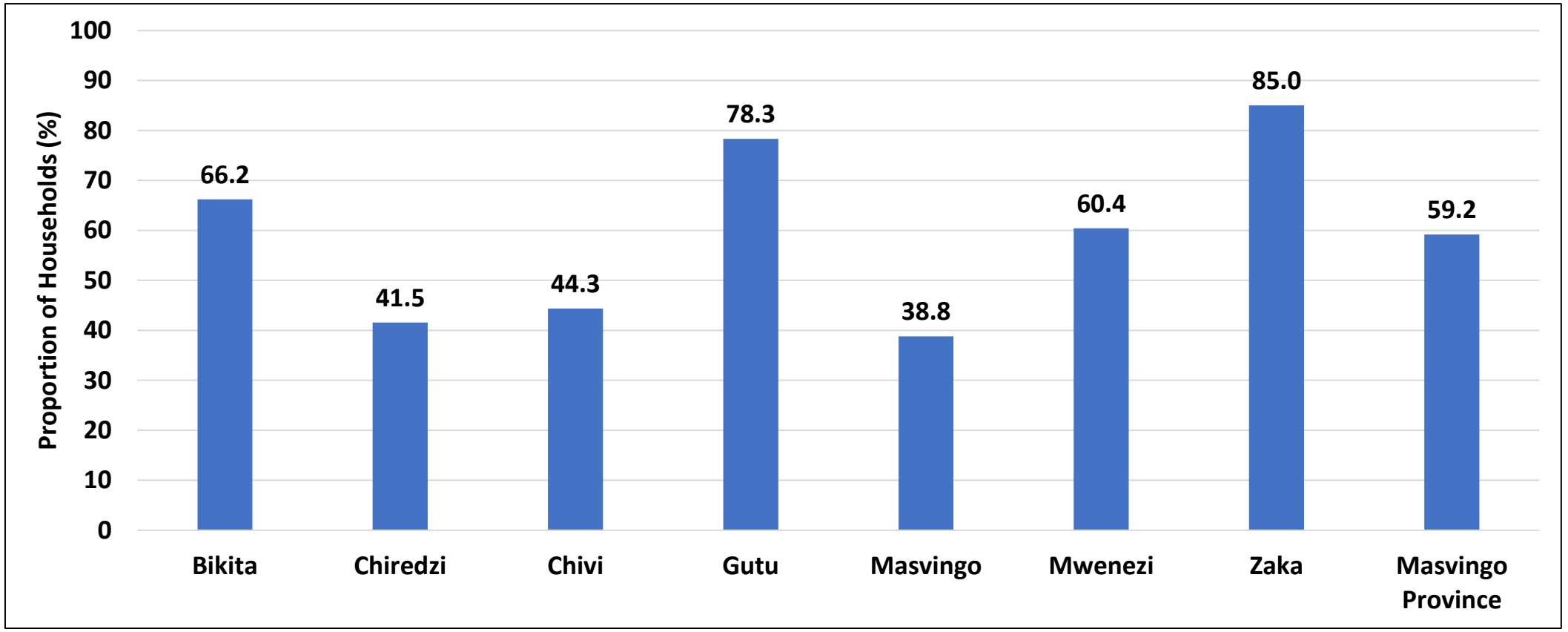
Type of Energy Used for Lighting



- Solar or battery (62.3%) was the most reported type of energy used for lighting.

Climate Change

Household Knowledge on Climate Change



- The proportion of households which reported having knowledge on climate change was 59.2%.
- Zaka (85.0%) had the highest proportion of households with knowledge on climate change, while Masvingo District (38.8%) had the lowest.

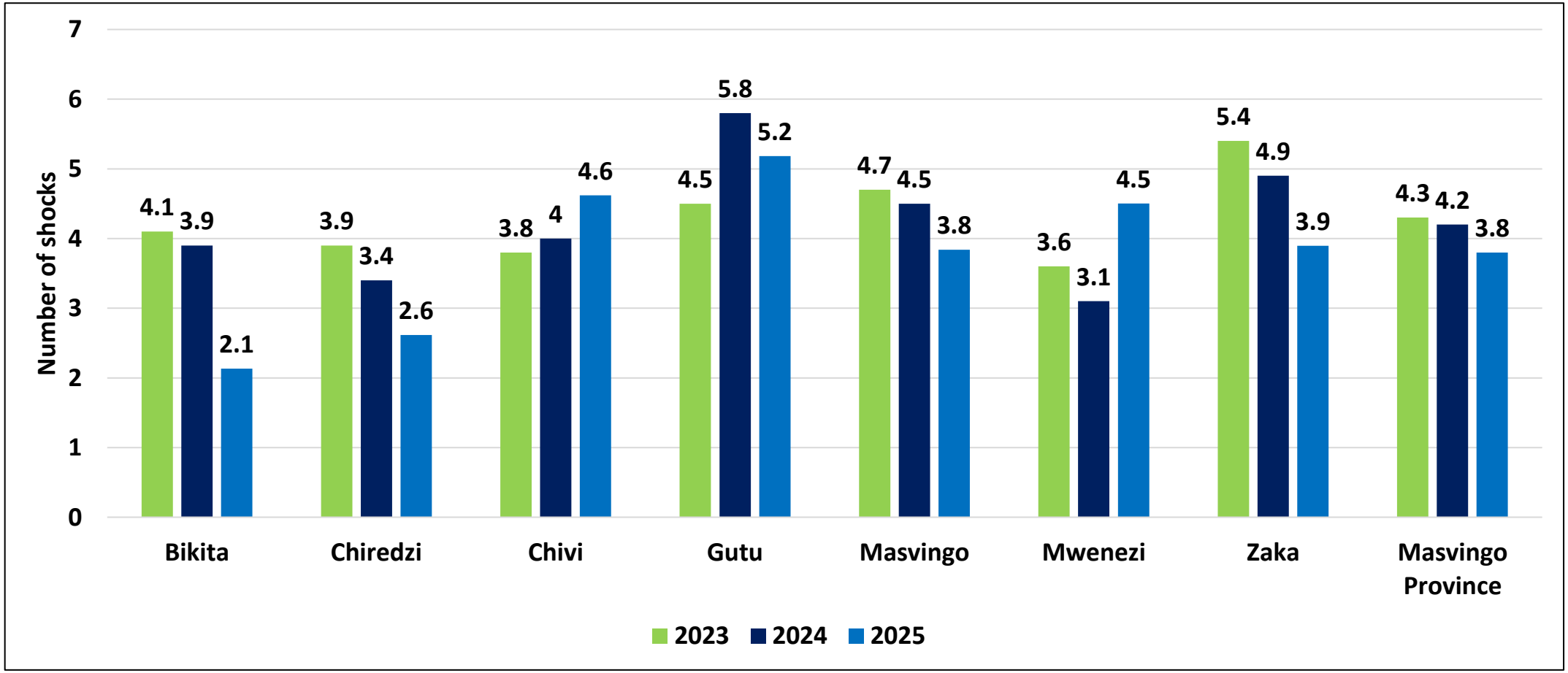
Perceived Effects of Climate Change on Households

District	Not enough food (%)	Increased droughts (%)	More health risks (%)	Extreme temperatures (%)	Severe storms (%)	Loss of species (%)	Poverty and displacement (%)
Bikita	30.8	31.5	0	3.6	0.3	0	0
Chiredzi	17.3	9.3	2.0	11.3	0.3	0.7	0.7
Chivi	30.7	8.7	0.3	3.0	1.0	0	0.7
Gutu	31.0	26.7	2.3	12.0	1.3	2.7	2.3
Masvingo	16.4	17.1	2.6	2.0	0.3	0.3	0
Mwenezi	51.8	4.2	0	3.9	0.3	0	0
Zaka	43.7	22.0	0.7	7.3	9.7	1.0	0.7
Masvingo Province	**31.7**	**17.0**	**1.1**	**6.1**	**1.9**	**0.7**	**0.6**

- Not enough food (31.7%) and increased droughts (17.0%) were the most reported perceived effects of climate change.

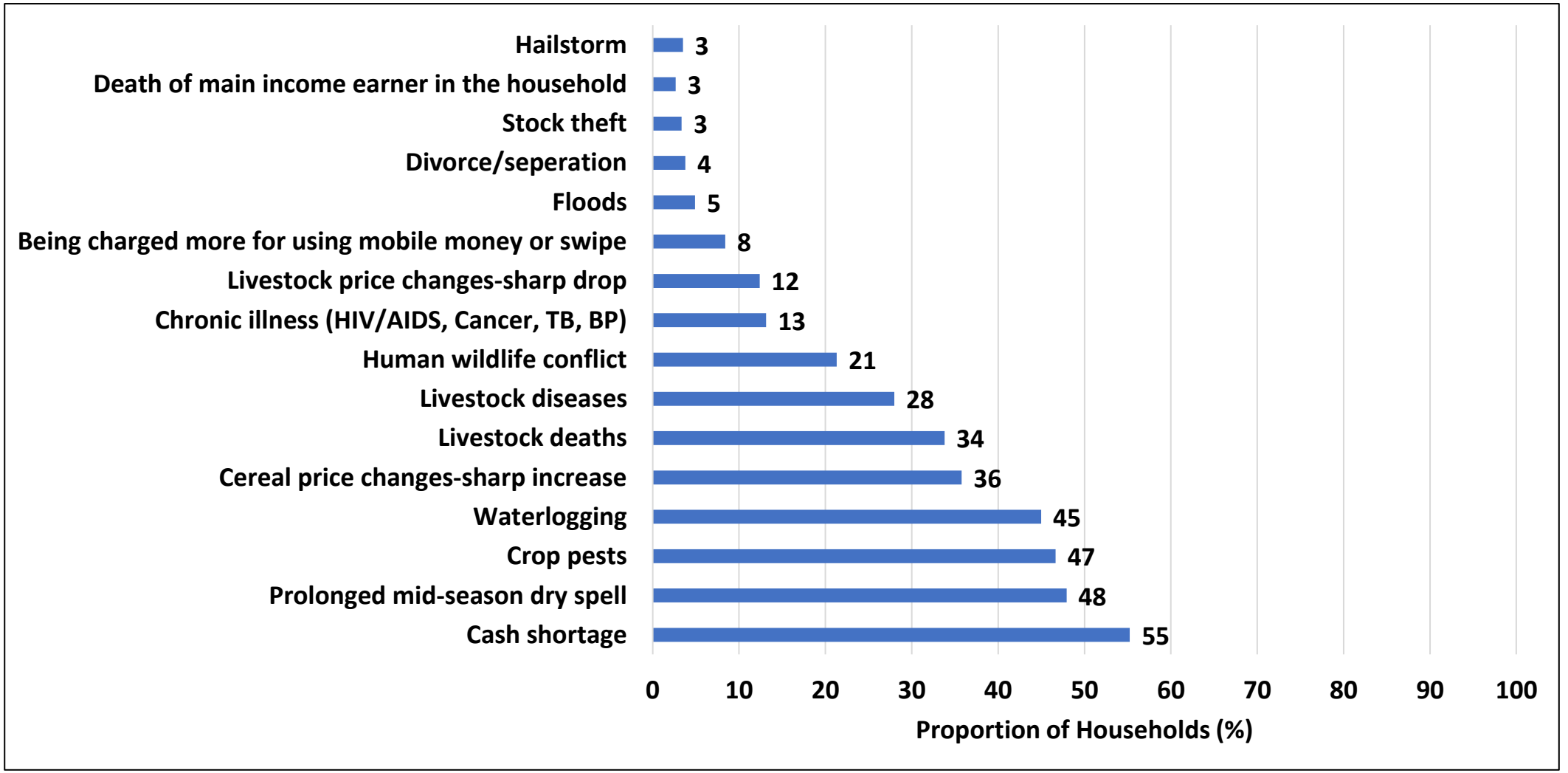
Shocks and Stressors

Number of Shocks and Stressors Experienced by Households



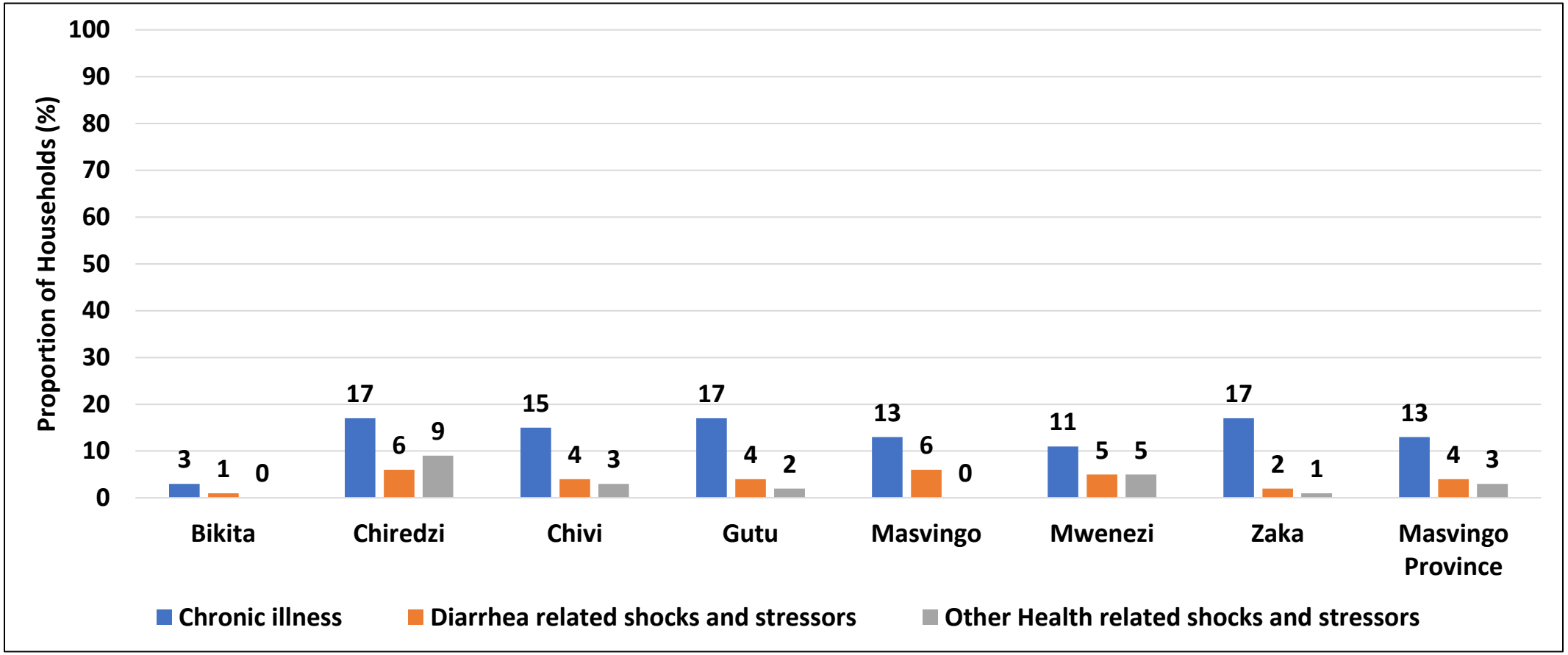
- The average number of shocks and stressors experienced by households decreased from 4.3 in 2023 to 3.8 in 2025.

Households that Experienced Shocks and Stressors



- Cash shortage (55%) and prolonged mid-season dry spells (48%) were the most prevalent shocks experienced by the households.

Health Related Shocks and Stressors



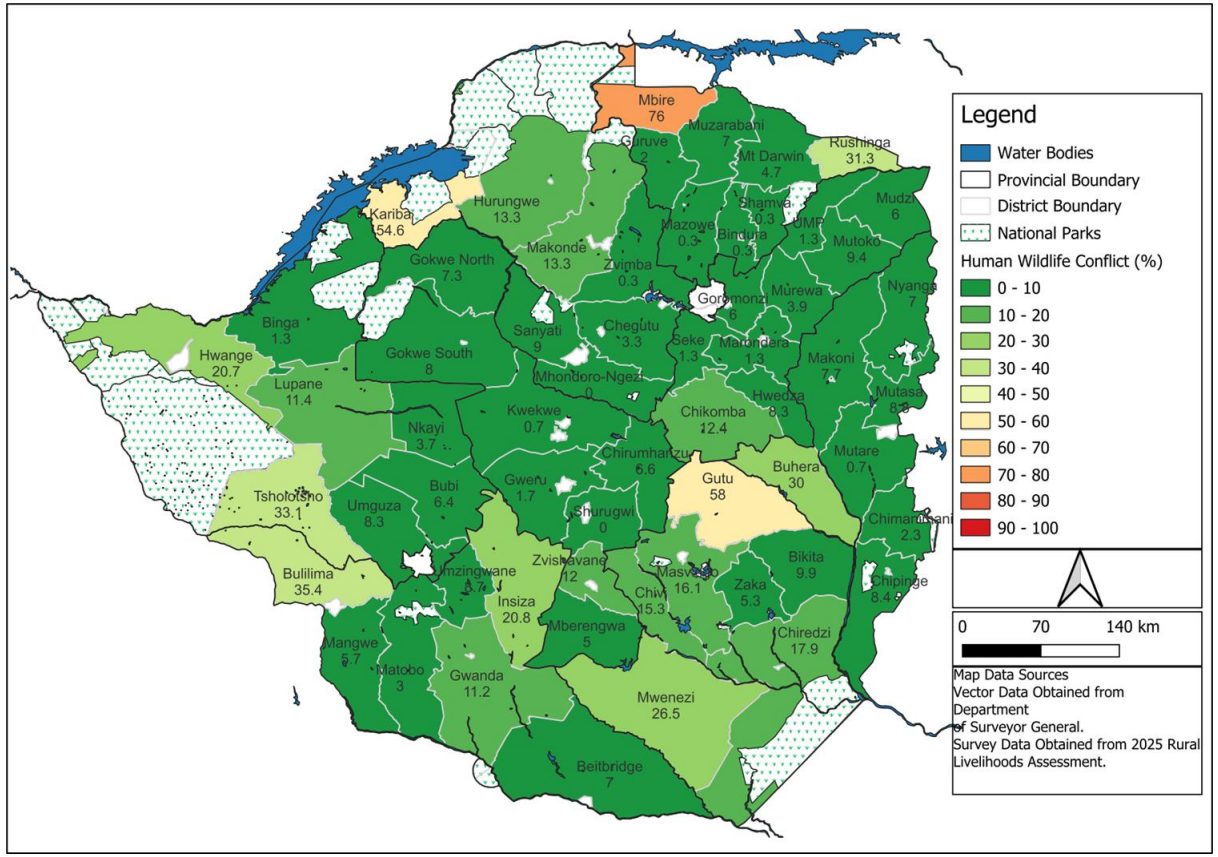
- Chronic illness was the most reported health shock and stressor (13%).
- Chiredzi, Gutu and Zaka had the highest proportion of households which reported chronic illness as a shock and stressor (17%).

Economic and Social Shocks and Stressors

Shock and Stressor Type	Bikita (%)	Chiredzi (%)	Chivi (%)	Gutu (%)	Masvingo (%)	Mwenezi (%)	Zaka (%)	Masvingo Province (%)
Cash shortage	30.5	35.5	54.0	67.3	77.0	52.4	70.0	**55.2**
Being charged more for using mobile money or swipe	2.0	12.3	8.7	22.7	7.2	5.5	0.7	**8.4**
Cereal price changes-sharp increase	18.9	16.9	45.7	44.0	23.0	63.8	37.7	**35.8**
Livestock price changes-sharp drop	2.0	1.3	3.3	25.7	2.3	47.6	3.7	**12.4**
Gender Based Violence	4.3	4.3	9.7	3.7	1.3	2.9	5.3	**4.5**
Divorce / separation	2.6	6.6	4.0	5.3	2.3	2.3	3.3	**3.8**
Death of main income earner in the household	1.3	1.3	1.7	3.3	4.3	2.3	4.3	**2.6**
Loss of employment by key household member	0.7	2.0	2.7	2.0	4.3	2.6	3.0	**2.5**
Drug and substance abuse	0	0.7	1.3	2.3	0.3	1.0	3.0	**1.2**
Human wildlife conflict	9.9	17.9	15.3	58.0	16.1	26.5	5.3	**21.3**

- Cash shortage was the most reported economic shock and stressor (55.2%).
- Masvingo (77%) had the highest proportion of households that reported cash shortage.

Human Wildlife Conflict



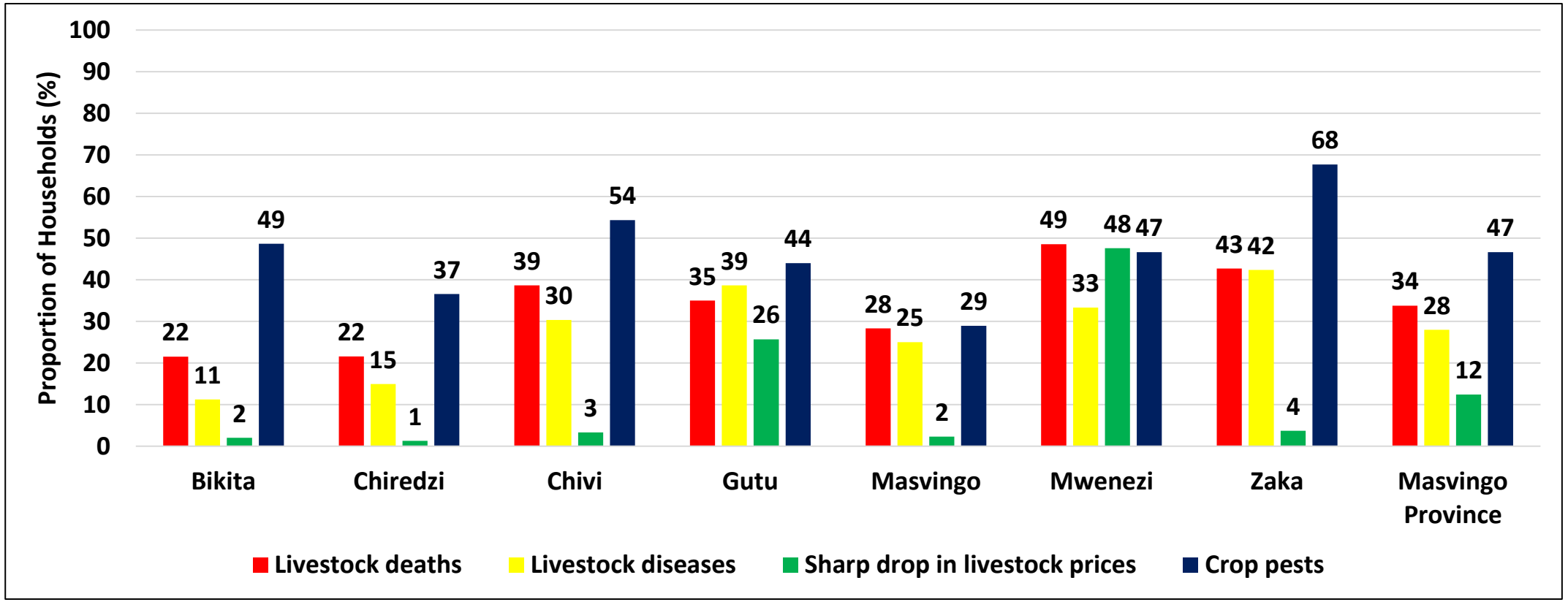
- Gutu (58%) had the highest proportion of households reporting human wildlife conflict as a shock and stressor.

Climate Related Shocks and Stressors

Shock and Stressor Type	Bikita (%)	Chiredzi (%)	Chivi (%)	Gutu (%)	Masvingo (%)	Mwenezi (%)	Zaka (%)	Masvingo Province (%)
Prolonged mid-season dry spell	49.0	39.2	67.3	83.0	49.3	34.6	13.3	47.9
Hailstorm	0	1.0	5.0	14.0	2.3	1.6	0.7	3.5
Floods	0.7	3.0	2.7	3.3	17.4	6.8	0.3	4.9
Waterlogging	3.3	7.3	92.7	35.3	73.0	42.4	61.0	45.0
Veld fires	**0.7**	**0.7**	**0.3**	**4.3**	**2.3**	**0.3**	**0.0**	**1.2**

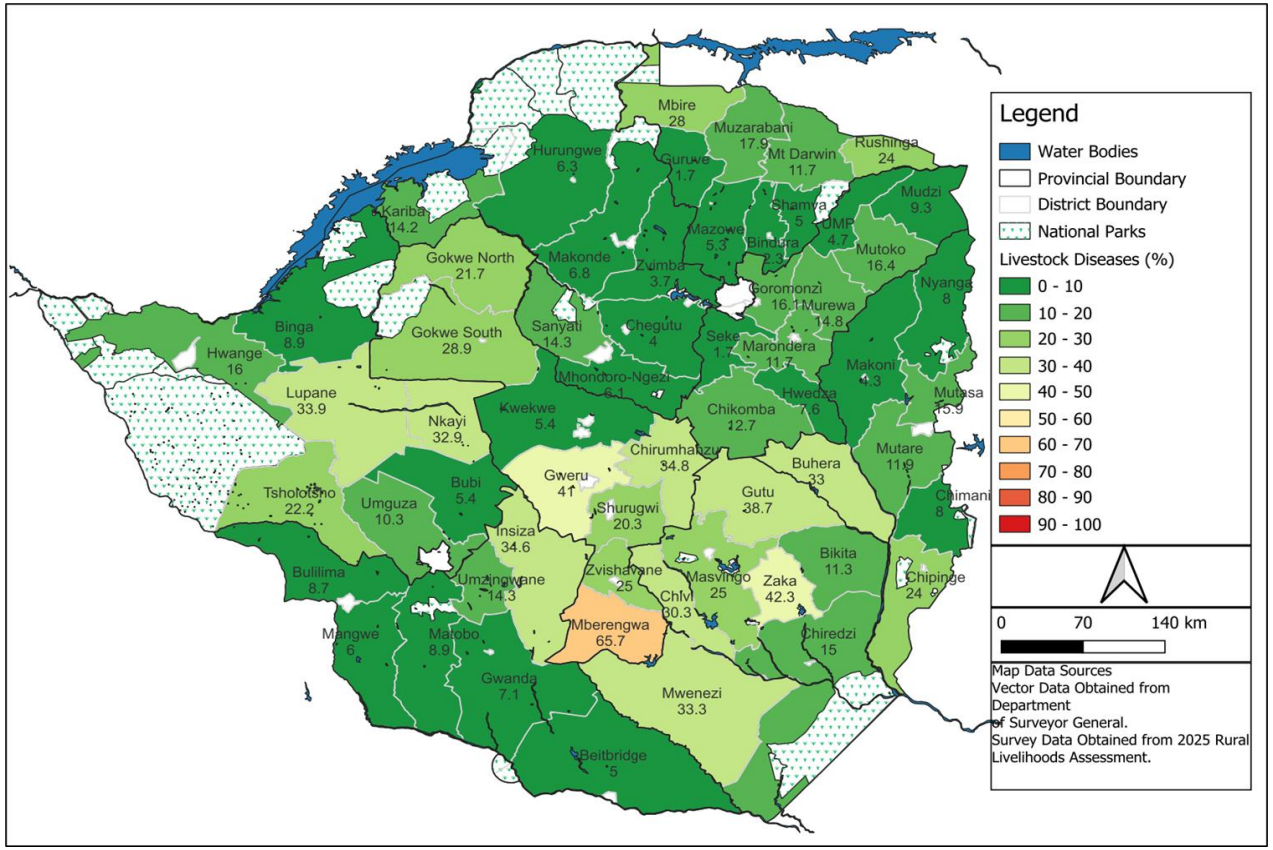
- Prolonged mid-season dry spell (47.9%) was the most reported climate related shock and stressor.
- Gutu (83.0%) had the highest proportion of households which reported prolonged mid-season dry spells as a shock.

Agriculture Related Shocks and Stressors



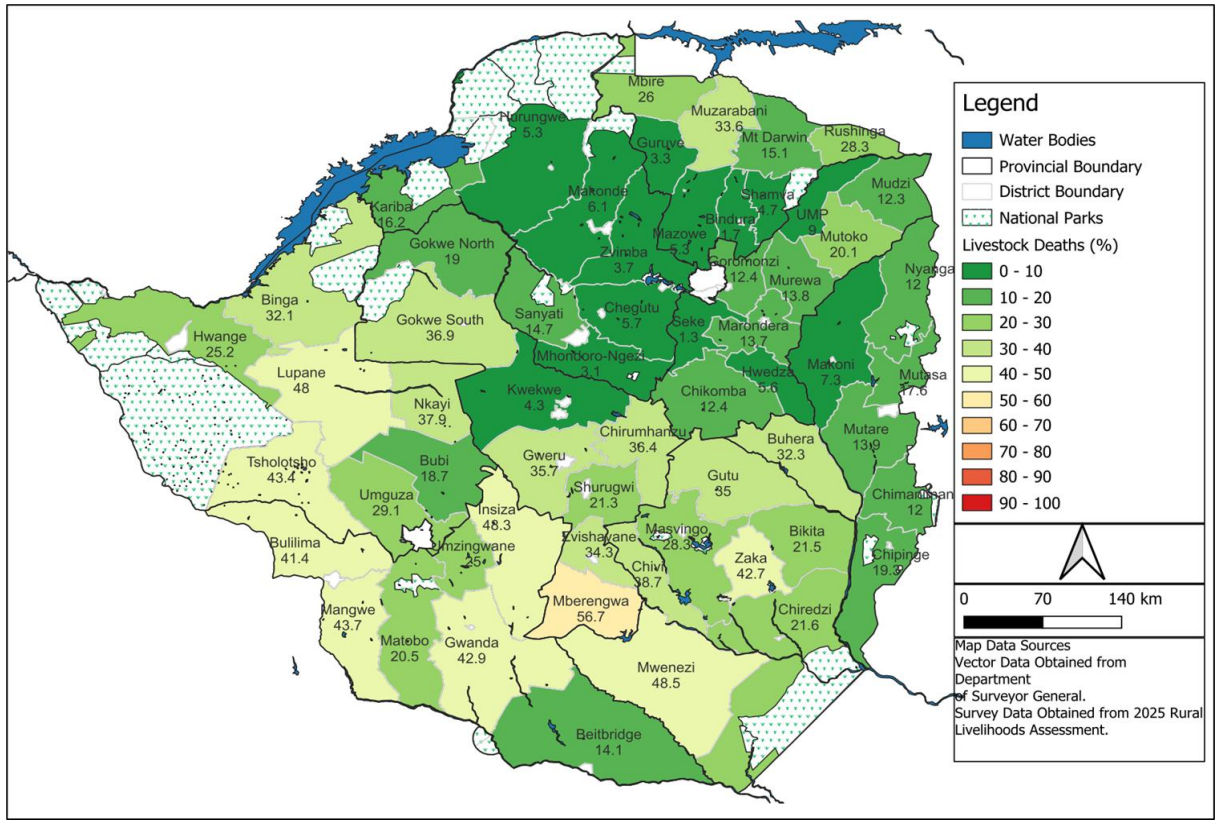
- Crop pests (47%) were the most reported agriculture related shock, whilst sharp drop in livestock prices was the least reported (12%).
- Zaka (68%) and Chivi (54%) had the highest proportion of households which reported crop pests as a shock.

Livestock Diseases



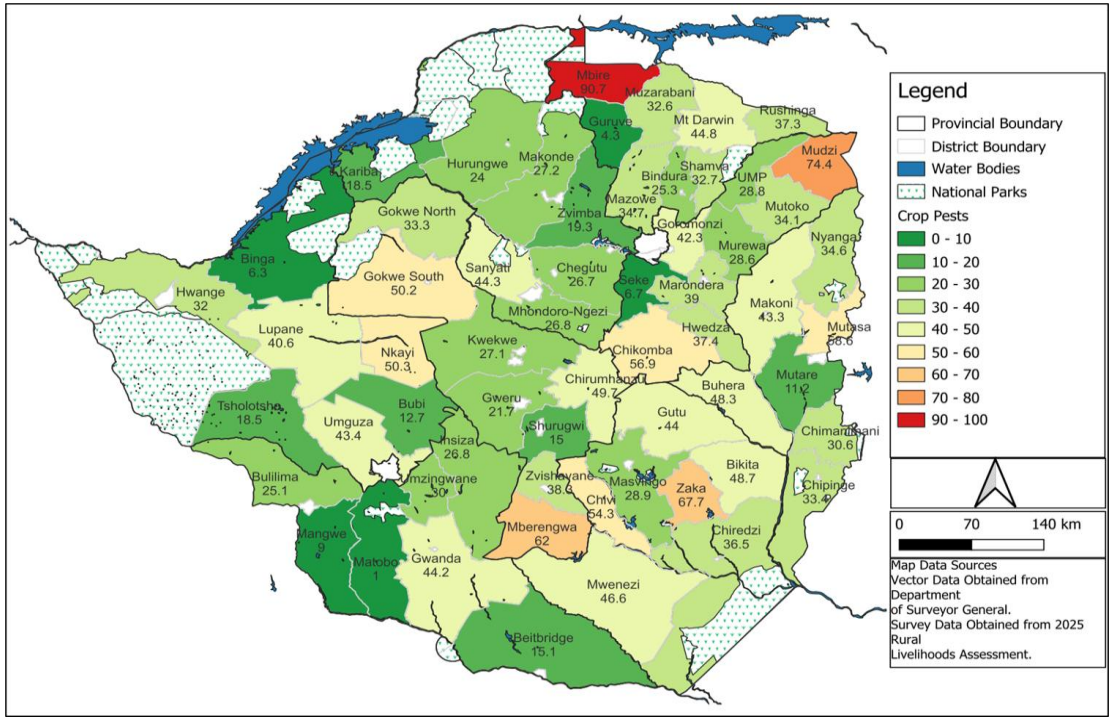
- Zaka (42.3%) had the highest proportion of households reporting livestock diseases as a shock and stressor.

Livestock Deaths



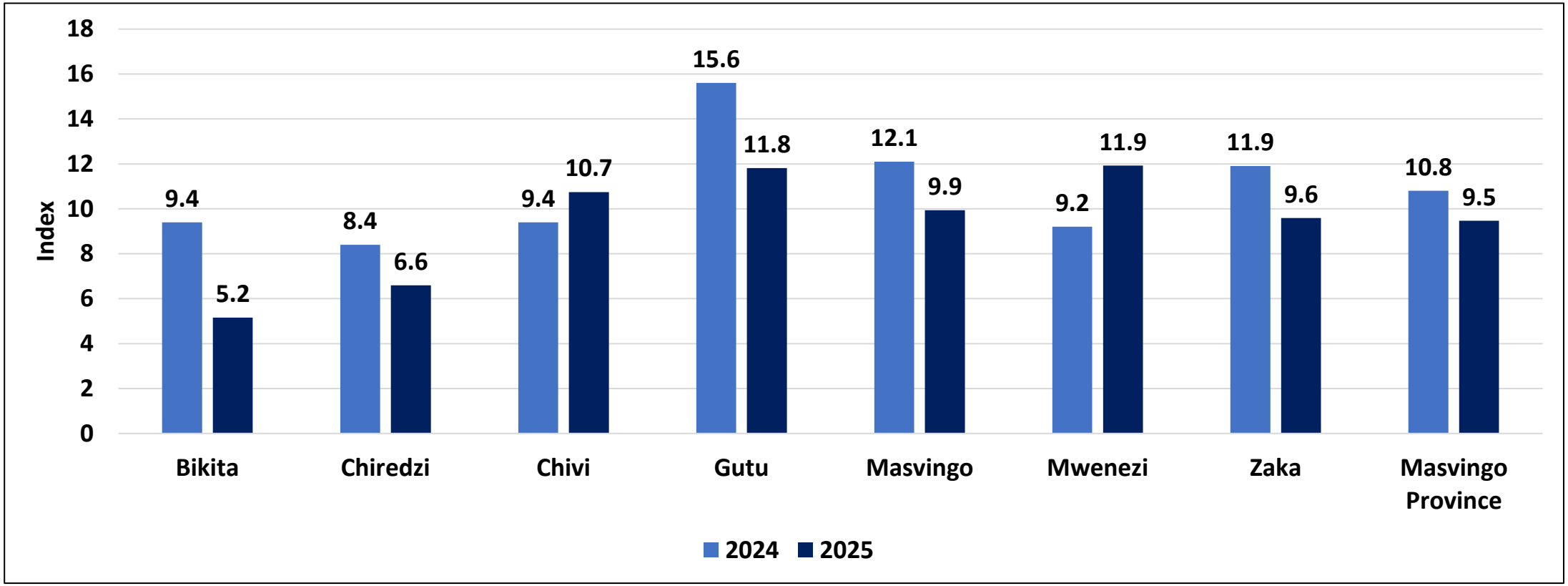
- Mwenezi (48.5%) had the highest proportion of households reporting livestock deaths as a shock and stressor.

Crop Pests



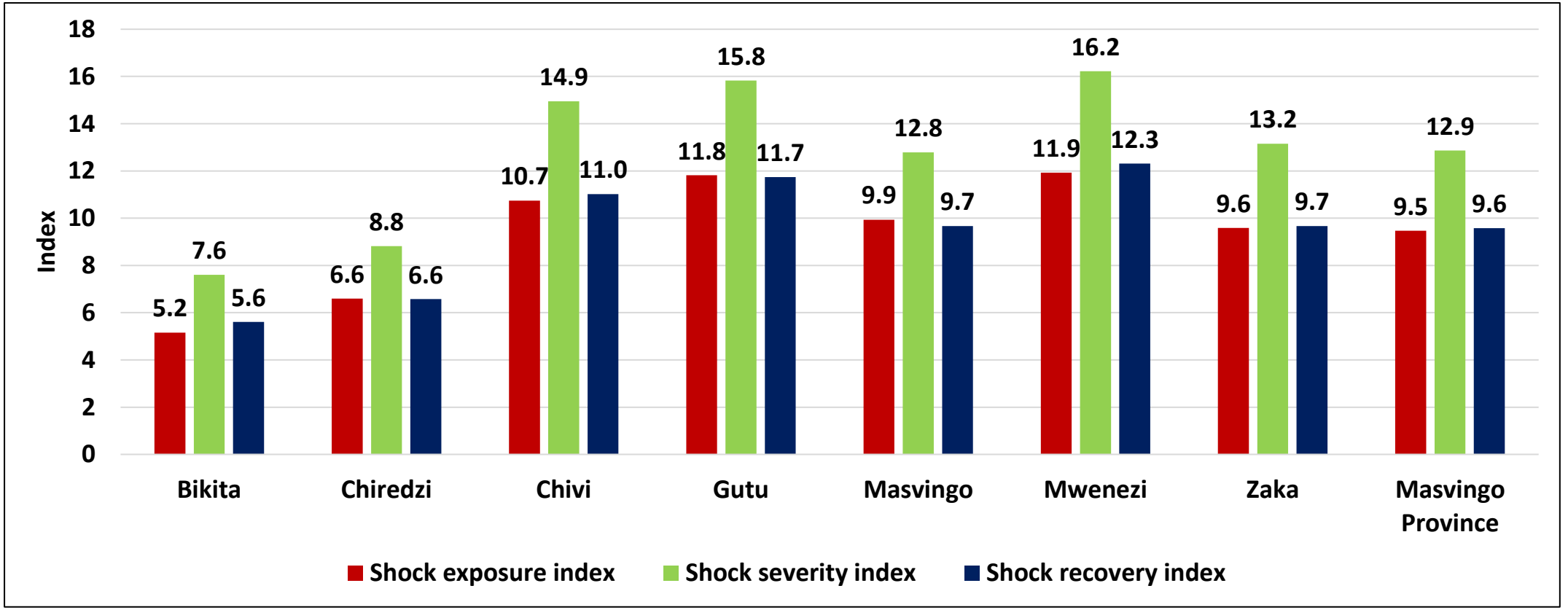
- Zaka (67.7%) had the highest proportion of households reporting crop pests as a shock.

Average Shock Exposure Index



- Shock exposure index was calculated by multiplying the number of shocks experienced with the impact severity of the shock on the household.
- Shock exposure index decreased as compared to 2024.
- Mwenezi (11.9) and Gutu (11.8) had the highest average shock exposure index.

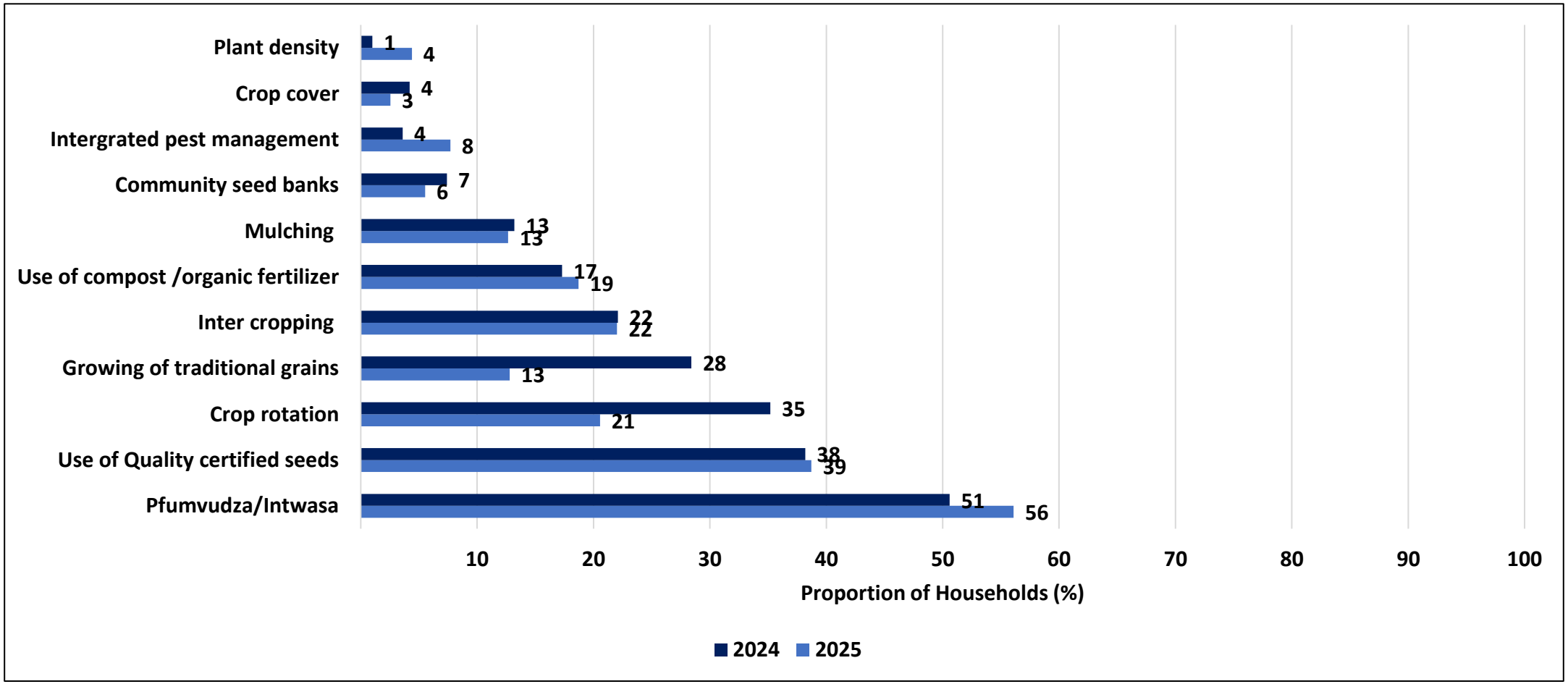
Comparison Between Shock Exposure and Ability to Cope Indices



- The average Shock Exposure Index was 9.5.
- Shock severity Index was 12.9.
- Average Shock Recovery Index was 9.6. This was slightly higher than shock exposure index (9.5).

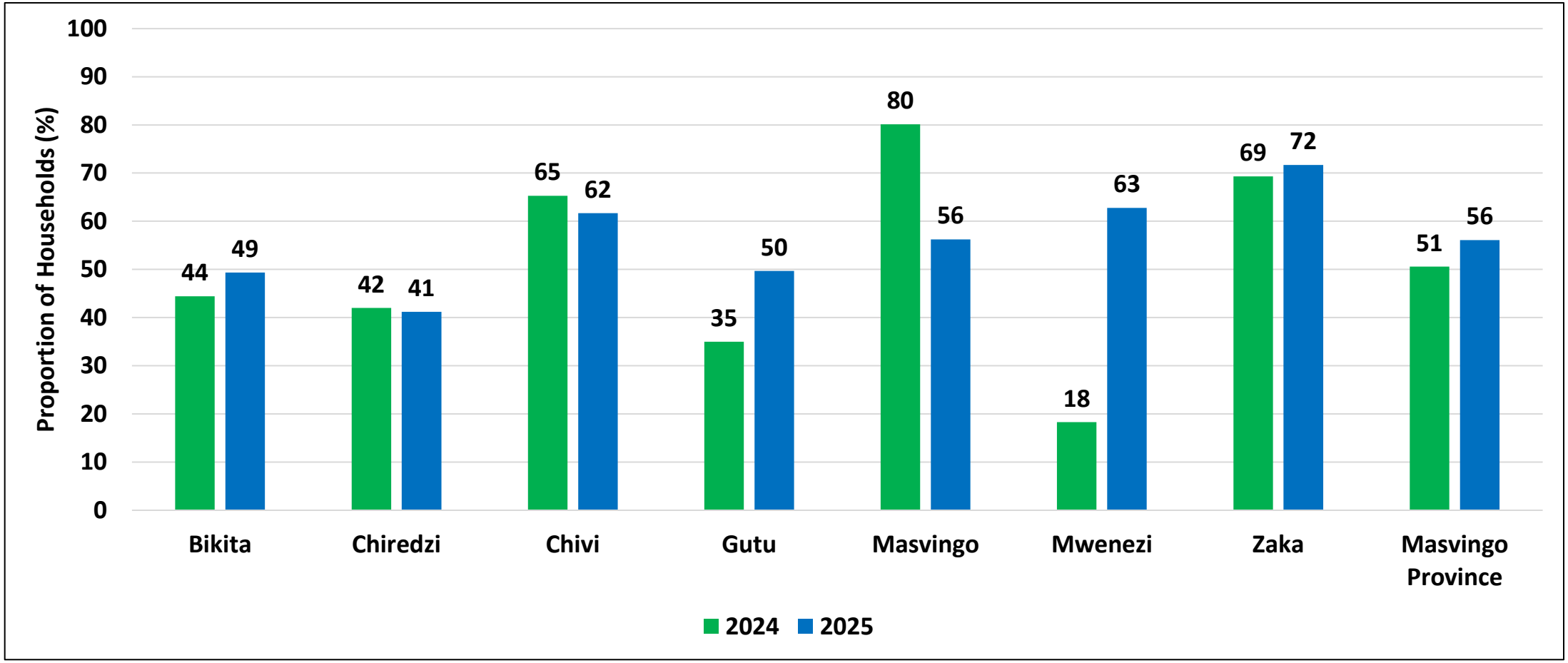
Agricultural Production Technologies

Climate Smart Technologies



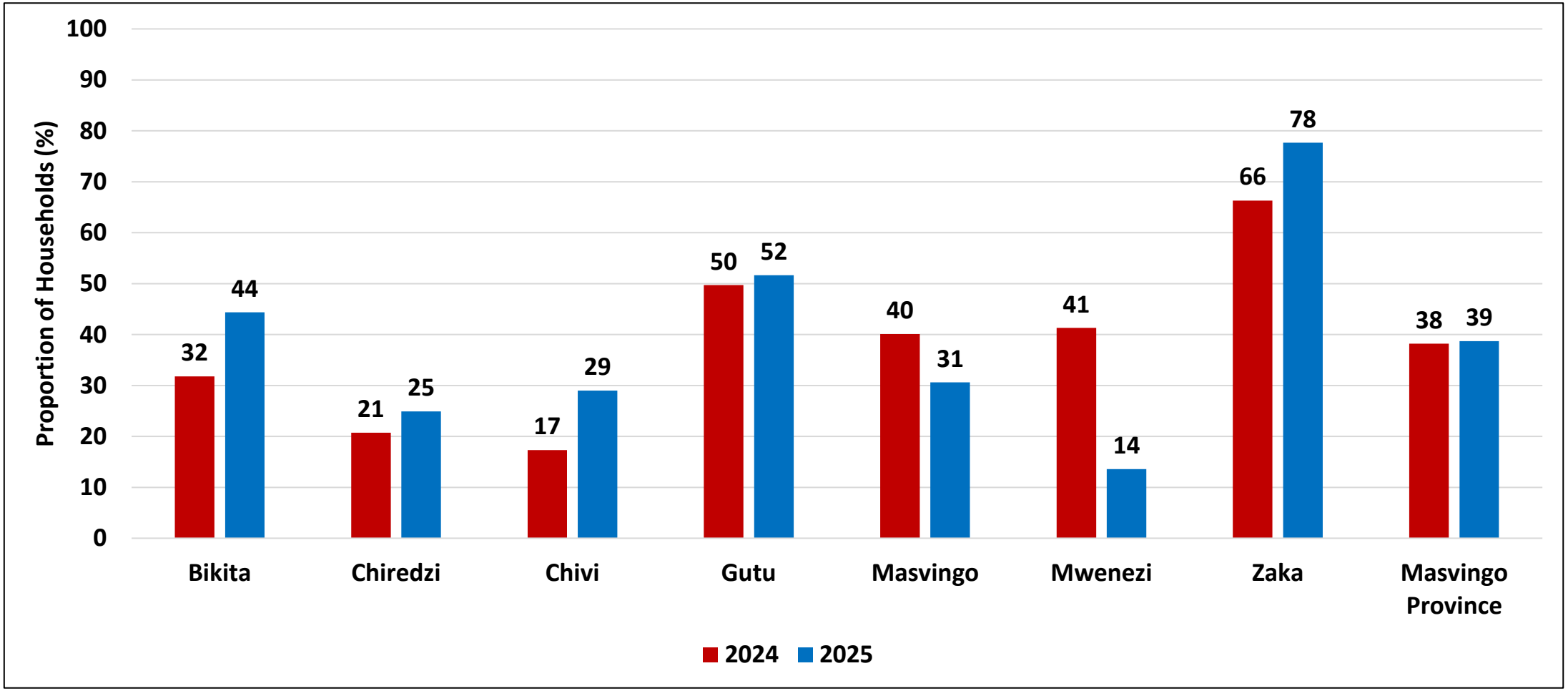
- About 56% of households practised Pfumvudza/Intwasa in 2025, an increase from 51% reported in 2024.

Pfumvudza/ Intwasa



- There was a slight increase in the proportion of households which practised Pfumvudza/Intwasa from 51% (2024) to 56% (2025).

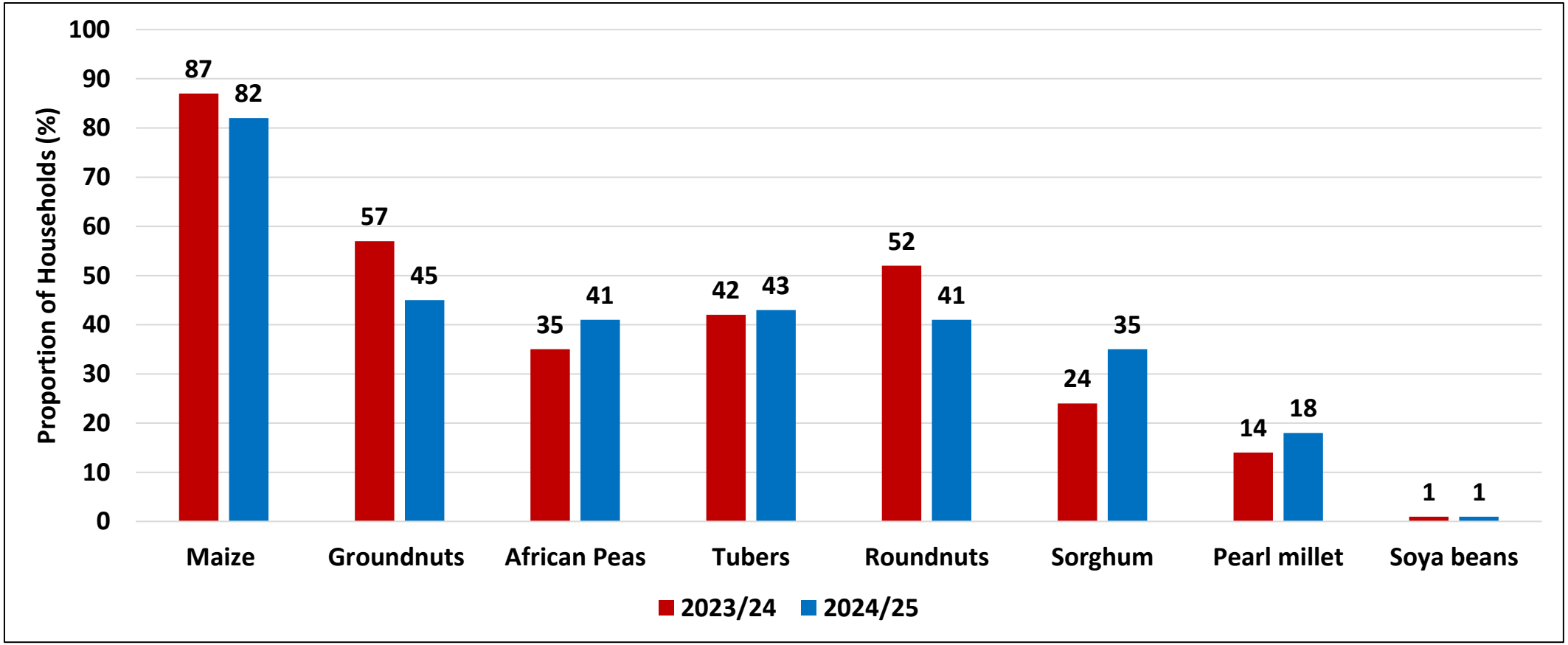
Use of Quality Certified Seed



- Certified seeds are crucial in crop production as they ensure better yields and increased resistance to diseases and pests.
- Zaka (78%) had the highest proportion of households which used quality certified seeds.

Crop Production

Households which Grew Crops



- The proportion of households that grew maize was 82%.

Proportion of Households that Grew Crops

District	Maize (%)	Sorghum (%)	Finger Millet (%)	Pearl Millet (%)	Tubers (%)	African peas (%)	Groundnuts (%)	Roundnuts (%)	Sugar beans (%)	Soya beans (%)	Tobacco (%)	Cotton (%)
Bikita	85	28	8	10	20	11	28	25	2	0	0	0
Chiredzi	55	51	5	24	17	29	22	23	4	2	0	9
Chivi	94	47	12	6	53	69	60	55	7	1	0	1
Gutu	97	22	21	17	49	43	68	49	10	0	0	0
Masvingo	90	25	9	7	62	35	38	38	9	1	0	1
Mwenezi	54	50	3	59	19	39	29	36	5	0	0	4
Zaka	99	20	29	2	81	59	68	63	4	0	0	3
Masvingo Province	**82**	**35**	**12**	**18**	**43**	**41**	**45**	**41**	**6**	**1**	**0**	**3**

- Zaka (99%) and Gutu (97%) had the highest proportion of households which grew maize.
- Chivi had the highest proportion of households which grew African peas (69%).

Cereals from Casual Labour and Remittances

	Cereals from Casual Labour (kgs)		Cereals from Remittances (kgs)	
	2024	2025	2024	2025
Bikita	26.0	30.9	4.1	11.5
Chiredzi	17.3	73.2	0	44.0
Chivi	14.0	28.8	3.2	21.7
Gutu	13.4	50.7	0	24.2
Masvingo	21.6	16.2	0.8	3.4
Mwenezi	13.7	47.7	0	8.3
Zaka	16.2	26.2	2.1	32.1
Masvingo Province	**16.4**	**39.1**	**0.9**	**20.7**

- Generally, there was an increase in the amount of cereals accessed by households from casual labour and remittances compared to the previous consumption year.
- On average, households reported to have accessed 39.1 kgs of maize from casual labour and 20.7 kgs from remittances in the previous consumption year.

Cereal Stocks as at 1 April 2025

	Maize (kgs)		Sorghum (kgs)		Finger Millet (kgs)		Pearl Millet (kgs)	
	2024	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**
Bikita	24.9	22.3	0	2.5	0	0.7	0	0
Chiredzi	3.7	56.6	1.6	53.5	0	1.0	0	2.4
Chivi	6.5	33.5	0.6	2.9	0	0.3	0	0
Gutu	0	192.5	0	14.5	0	9.0	0	0
Masvingo	34.5	102.5	0	7.1	0	2.3	0	0
Mwenezi	2.1	13.1	0	10.9	0	0.1	0	2.0
Zaka	23.8	2.4	0	2.3	0	0.9	0	0
Masvingo Province	**11.5**	**60.2**	**0**	**13.4**	**0**	**2.0**	**0**	**11.1**

- On average, households had 60.2kgs of maize in stock on the 1st of April 2025, an increase from 11.5kgs reported in 2024.
- Gutu (192.5kgs) had the highest maize stocks.

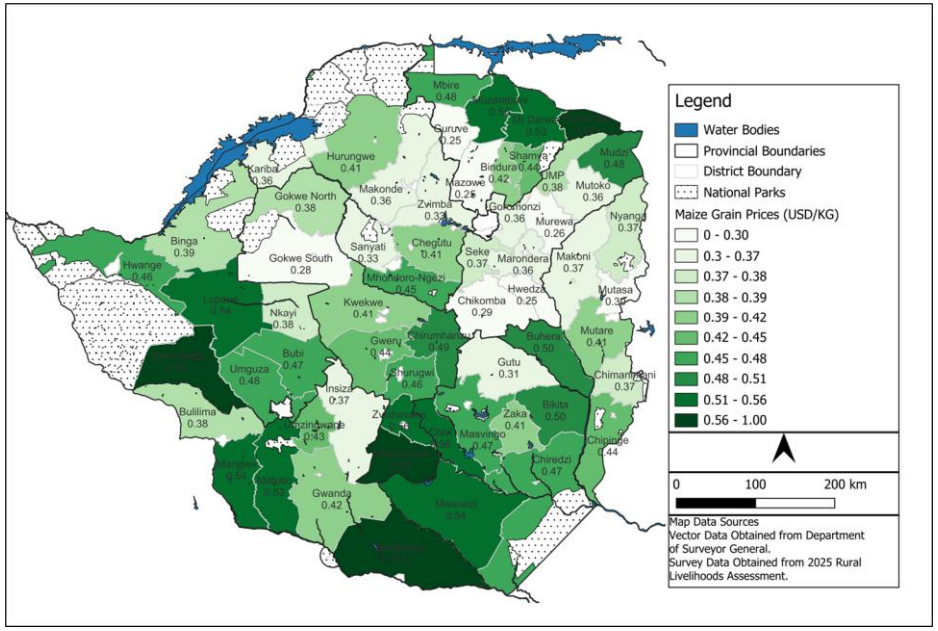
Season Harvest

	Maize (kgs)		Sorghum (kgs)		Finger Millet (kgs)		Pearl Millet (kgs)		Total (kgs)	
	2024	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**
Bikita	27.8	192.9	4.1	42.1	2.5	5.2	0.3	12.4	34.7	252.6
Chiredzi	87.9	132.6	140.9	212.5	27.1	8.0	1.9	70.7	257.8	423.8
Chivi	26.4	129.2	15.0	29.9	1.6	3.3	0.9	1.7	43.9	164.1
Gutu	36.0	450.3	10.0	38.1	23.5	38.3	1.7	38.9	71.2	565.6
Masvingo	155.7	324.8	12.2	35.0	5.0	5.7	2.7	8.3	175.6	373.8
Mwenezi	14.3	70.3	15.1	122.2	55.7	1.5	1.6	258.0	86.7	452
Zaka	80.2	307.3	2.1	19.2	0.1	17.4	4.7	1.5	87.1	345.4
Masvingo Province	61	**229.1**	28	**71.5**	16.4	**11.3**	2.0	**56.6**	107.5	368.5

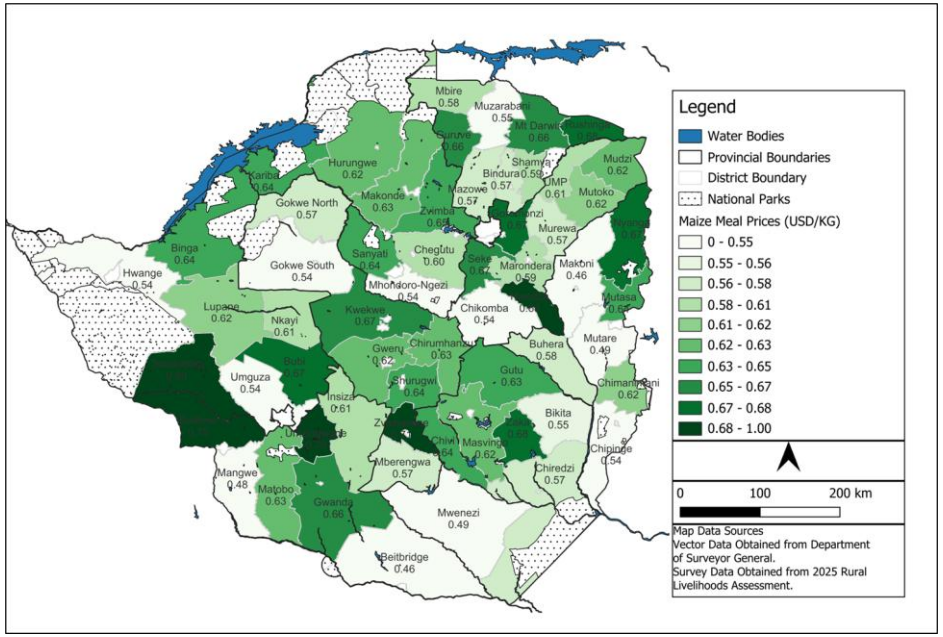
- There was an increase in the amount of cereals harvested by households across all provinces. This may be attributed to a favourable rainfall season.
- On average, households harvested 229.1kgs of maize and 71.5kgs of sorghum.
- Gutu (450.3kgs) had the highest average harvest for maize.

Maize Grain and Maize Meal Prices

Maize Grain



Maize Meal



- Maize grain prices were high in Chivi (USD 0.56) and Mwenezi (USD 0.54).
- Maize meal prices were high in Zaka (USD0.68).

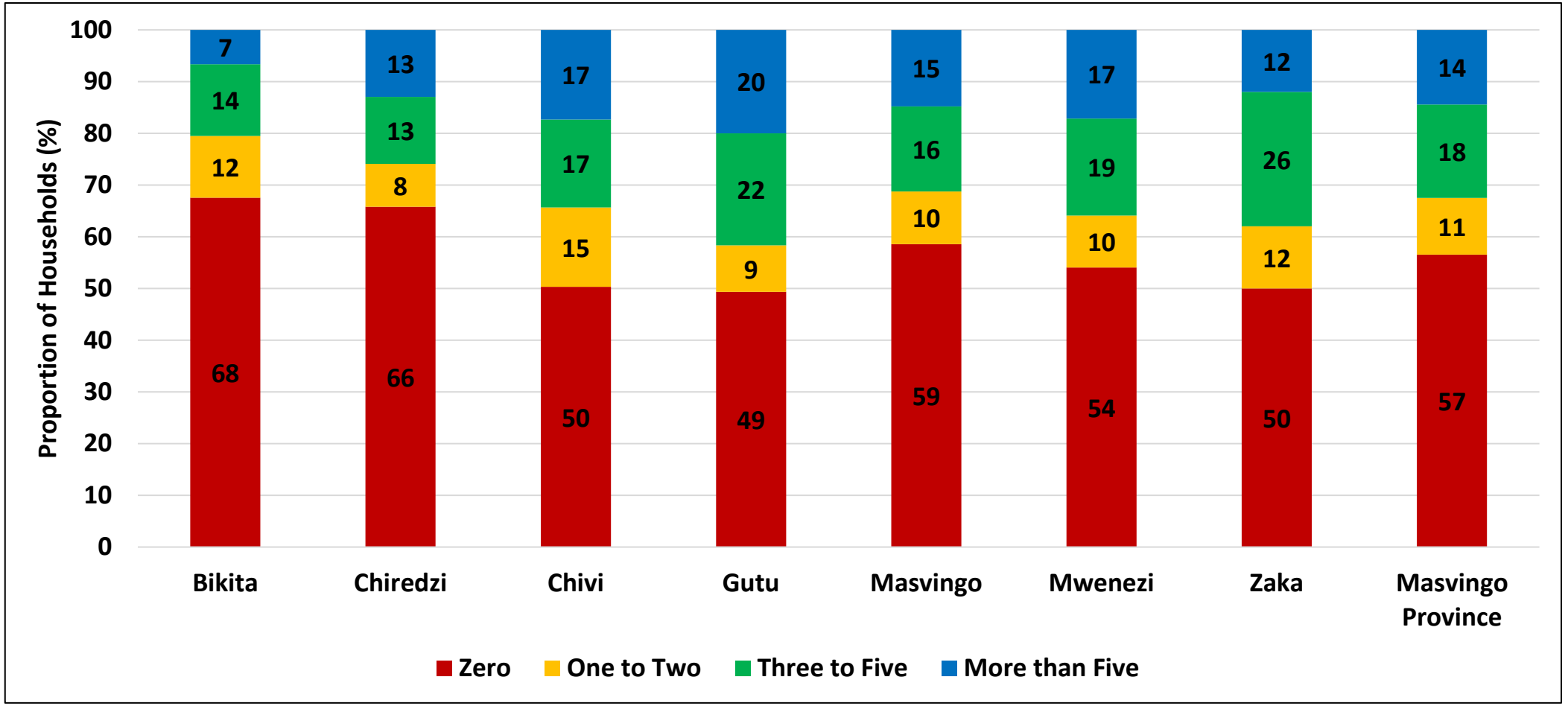
Livestock Production

Households which Owned Livestock

Province	Cattle (%)	Donkey (%)	Sheep (%)	Goats (%)	Pigs (%)	Poultry (%)	Rabbits (%)
Bikita	32.5	1.7	1.0	31.1	1.3	59.3	1.0
Chiredzi	34.2	8.6	6.3	35.9	1.7	57.8	2.7
Chivi	49.7	14.7	2.3	49.7	0.0	72.0	2.0
Gutu	50.7	3.0	2.3	53.3	1.0	77.3	1.7
Masvingo	41.4	3.6	2.0	36.8	3.0	54.6	1.3
Mwenezi	46.0	22.0	4.9	48.5	0.6	61.8	0.6
Zaka	50.0	6.7	6.7	55.7	8.0	85.0	2.0
Masvingo Province	**43.5**	**8.6**	**3.6**	**44.4**	**2.2**	**66.8**	**1.6**

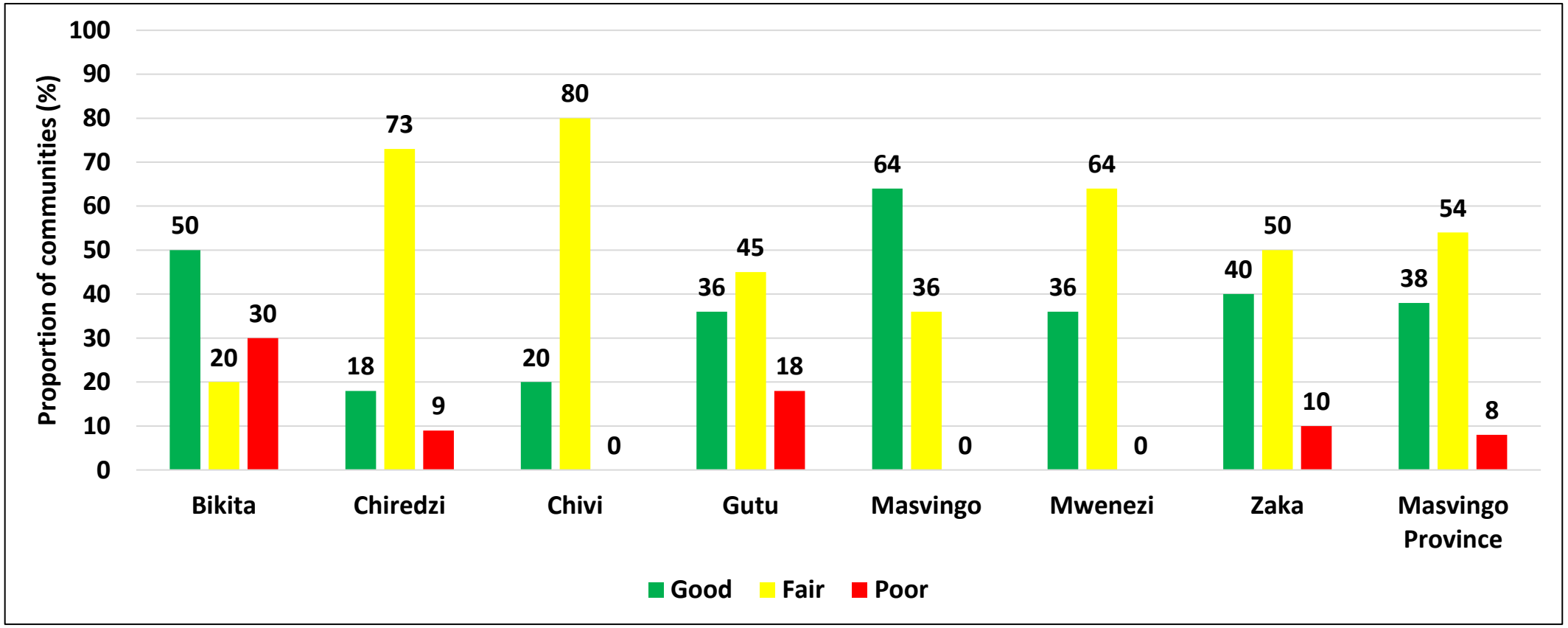
- At least 44.4% of households owned goats and 43.5% owned cattle.

Cattle Ownership



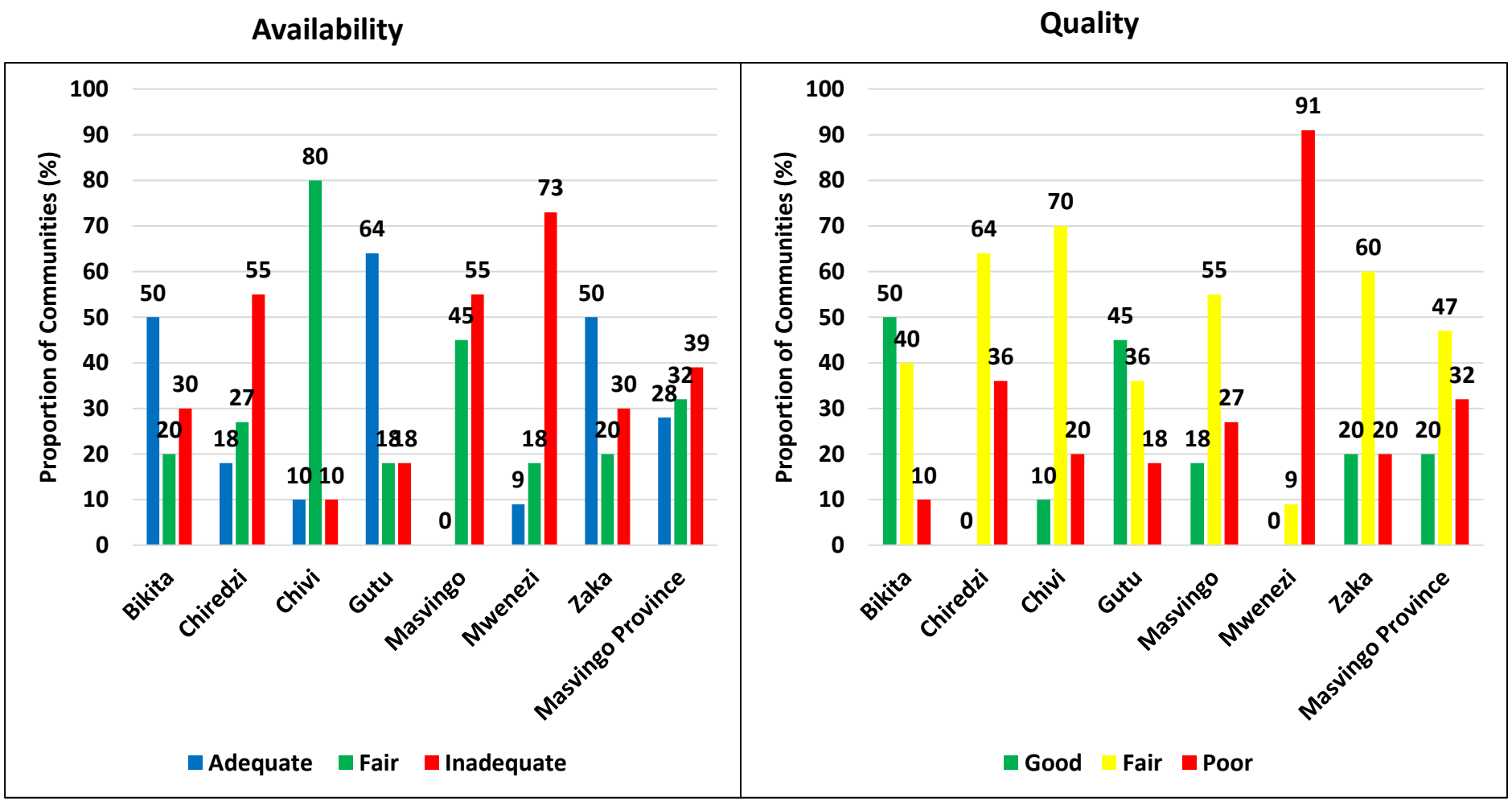
- About 57% of the households did not own any cattle.
- Only 14% of the households owned cattle in excess of 5 animals.

Livestock Condition



- About 8% of the communities indicated that their livestock were in a poor condition.

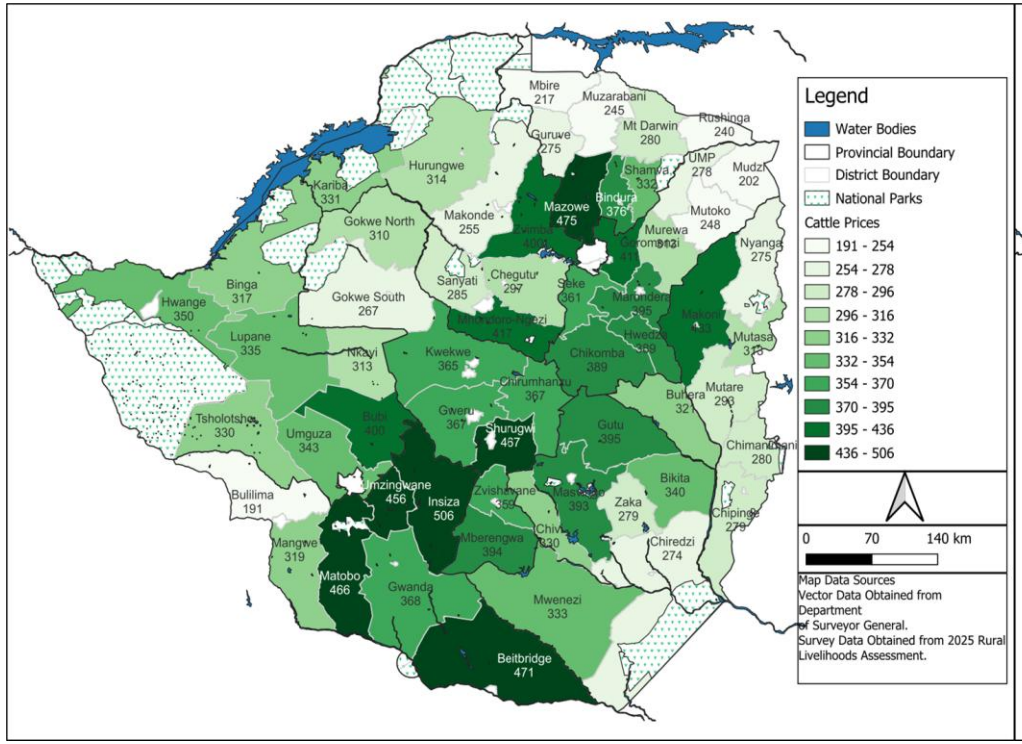
Pasture Availability and Quantity



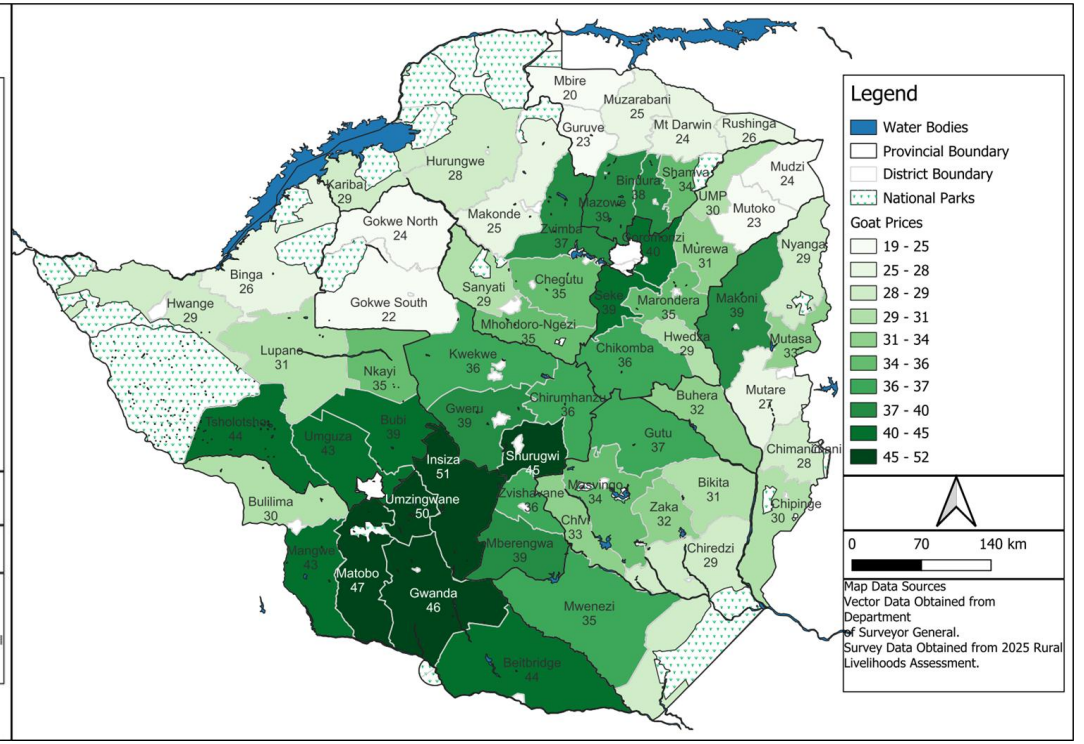
- Most communities indicated that pasture availability (39%) was inadequate and pasture quality (47%) was fair at the time of the assessment

Livestock Prices

Cattle Prices



Goat Prices



- The highest cattle prices were reported in Gutu (USD395) and the lowest were reported in Chiredzi (USD274).
- The highest goat prices were reported in Gutu (USD37) and the lowest were reported in Chiredzi (USD29).

Access to Information and Critical Services

Access to Agricultural Extension

District	Training-cropping advice (%)	Training - Livestock services (%)	Training-Weather and climate advice (%)	Extension Visit (%)	Other training (%)
Bikita	55.1	45.8	42.1	49.5	0.5
Chiredzi	34.9	20.9	18.1	34.9	0.9
Chivi	61.1	23.8	15.1	42.6	1.5
Gutu	55.0	51.6	53.9	29.8	4.7
Masvingo	66.5	34.4	3.3	6.1	0
Mwenezi	75.0	43.8	57.9	32.5	0.4
Zaka	52.9	32.6	6.5	9.1	5.4
Masvingo Province	57.4	36.1	28.1	29.0	2.1

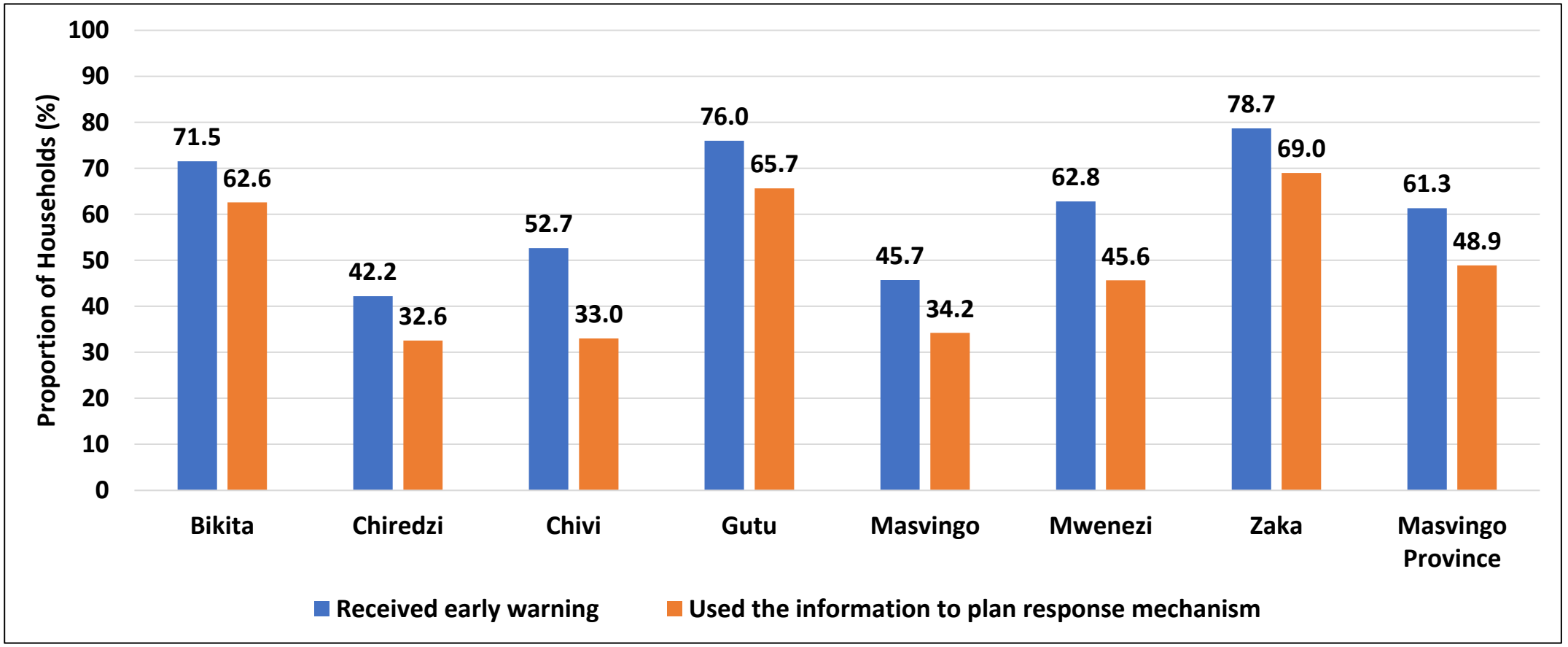
- About 57.4% of the households received cropping advice during the 2024/2025 agricultural season.

Community Access to Information on Infectious and Contagious Diseases

District	Rabies (%)	Anthrax (%)	Cholera (%)	Typhoid (%)	Dysentery (%)	Salmonella (%)	Listeria (%)	Other (%)
Bikita	90.0	10.0	10.0	0	0	0	0	0
Chiredzi	81.8	36.4	36.4	18.2	18.2	0	0	9.1
Chivi	80.0	60.0	100.0	100.0	90.0	40.0	30.0	0.0
Gutu	72.7	63.6	72.7	36.4	0	0	0	27.3
Masvingo	90.9	81.8	100.0	63.6	81.8	0	0	0
Mwenezi	54.5	18.2	72.7	27.3	27.3	0	0	54.5
Zaka	60.0	60.0	90.0	50.0	30.0	0	0	10.0
Masvingo Province	**75.7**	**47.3**	**68.9**	**41.9**	**35.1**	**5.4**	**4.1**	**14.9**

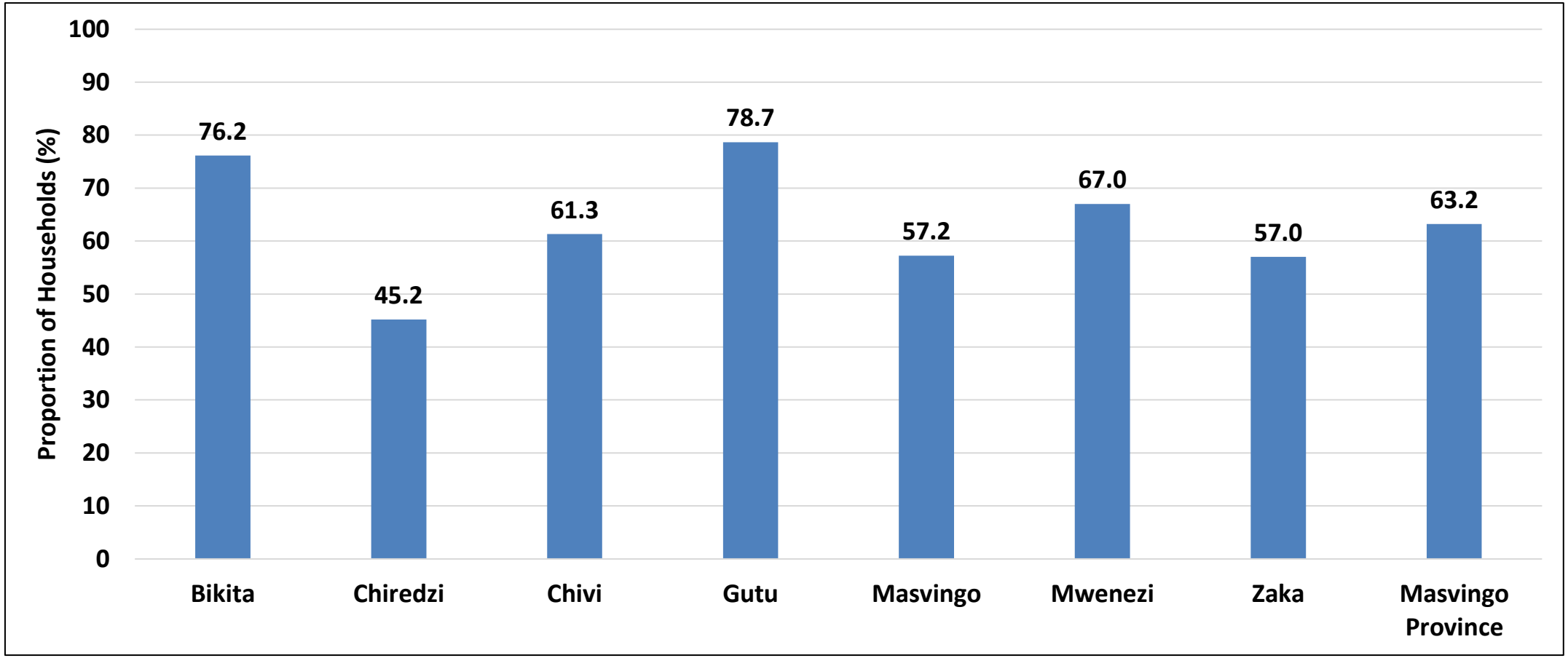
- About 75.7% of the communities had accessed information on rabies.
- Information on listeria (4.1%) was the least accessed by communities.

Access to and Use of Early Warning Information



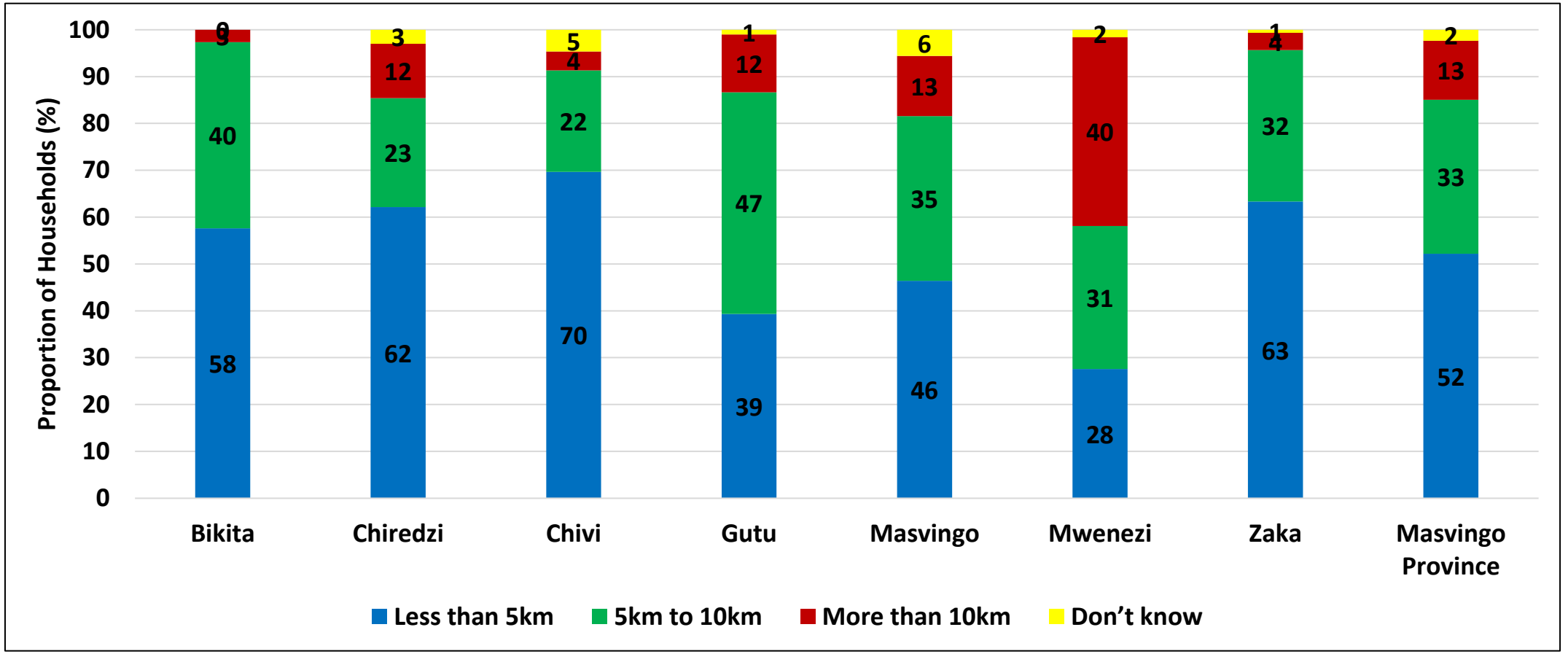
- About 61.3% of the households reported to have received early warning information.
- Only 48.9% of these had used the information to plan response mechanisms.

Households that Received Information on Health and Nutrition



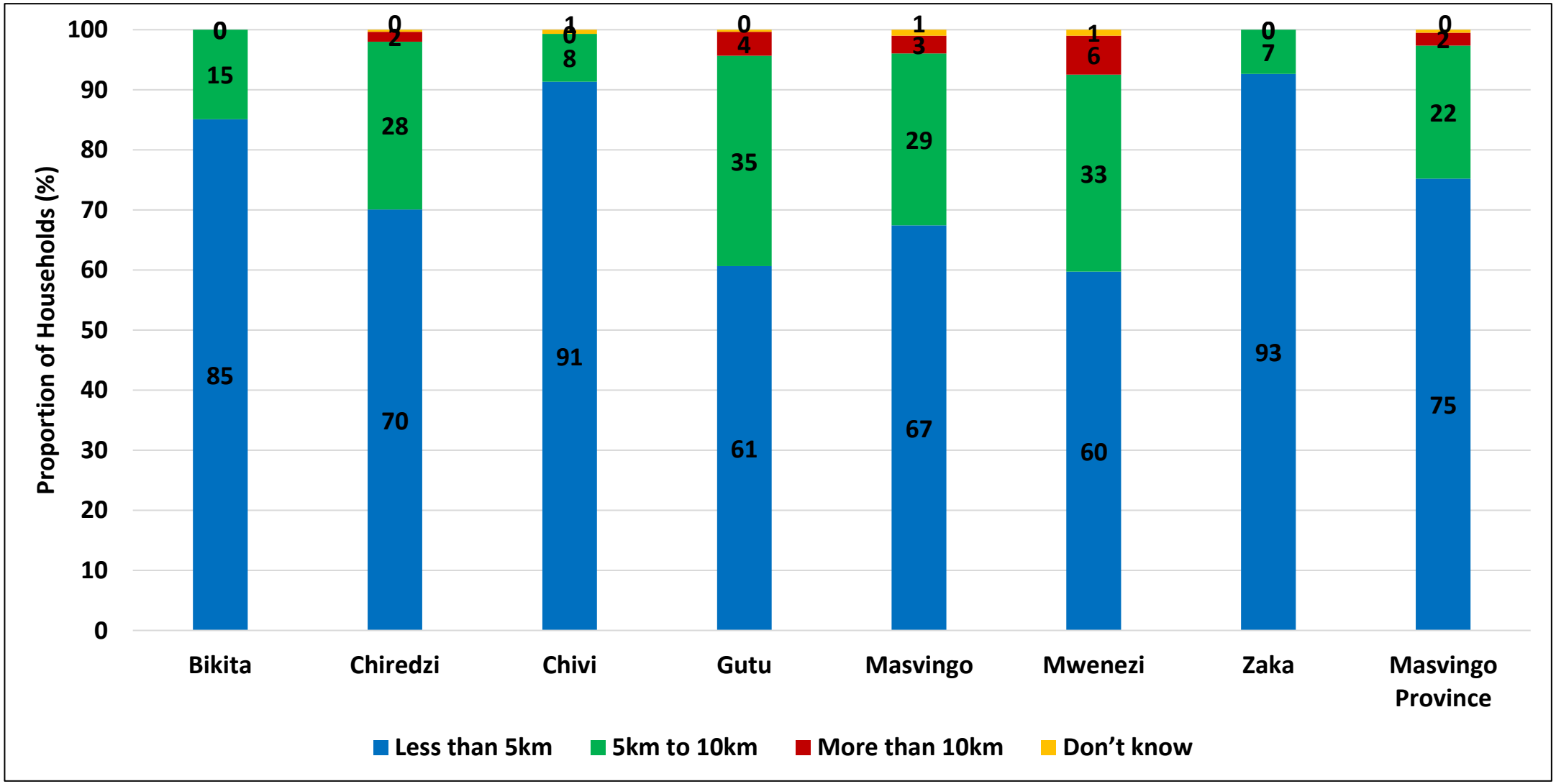
- Access to nutrition and health information empowers communities and influences consumer behavioural changes.
- About 63.2% of the households reported to have received information about health and nutrition.

Distance to the Nearest Health Facility/ Clinic



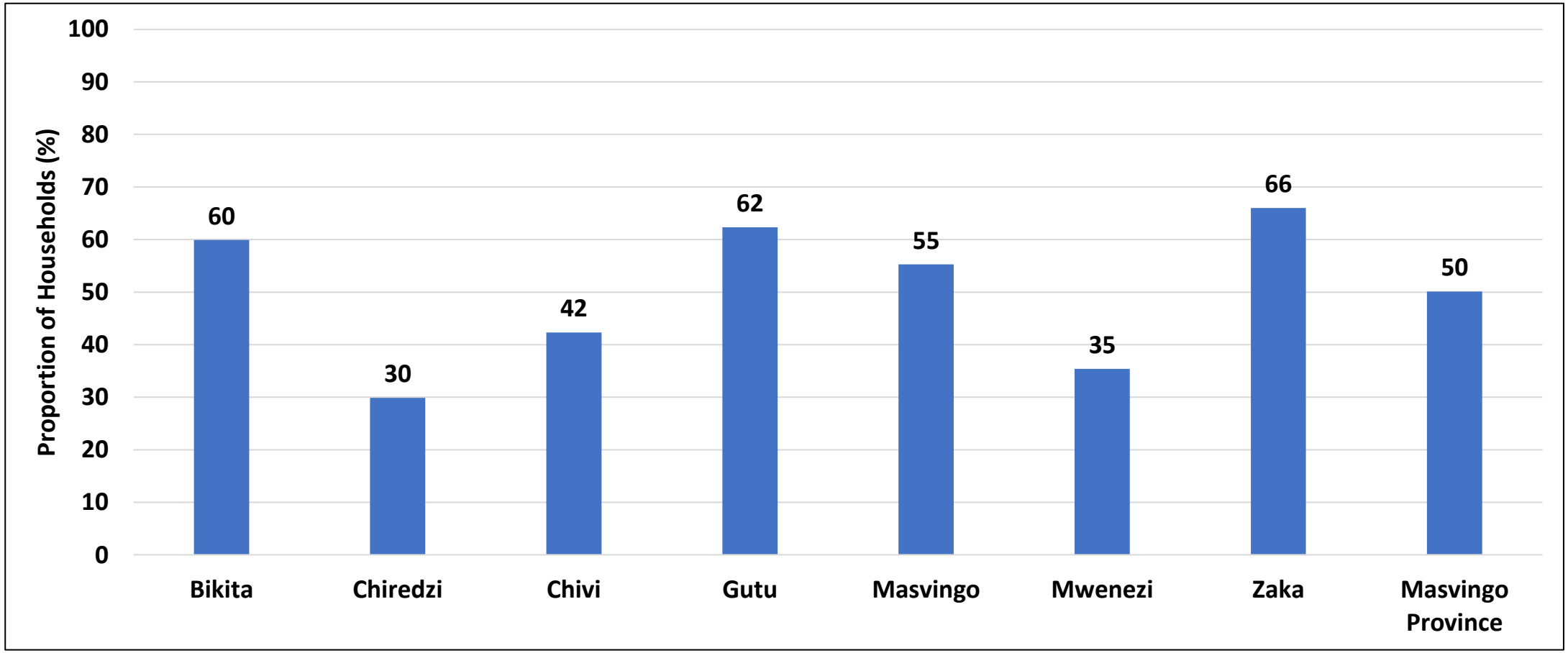
- The majority of the households (52%) had their nearest health facility within a 5 km radius, which is the recommended distance for health facilities.
- However, about 13% of households were travelling more than 10km to access a health facility.

Distance to the Nearest Primary School



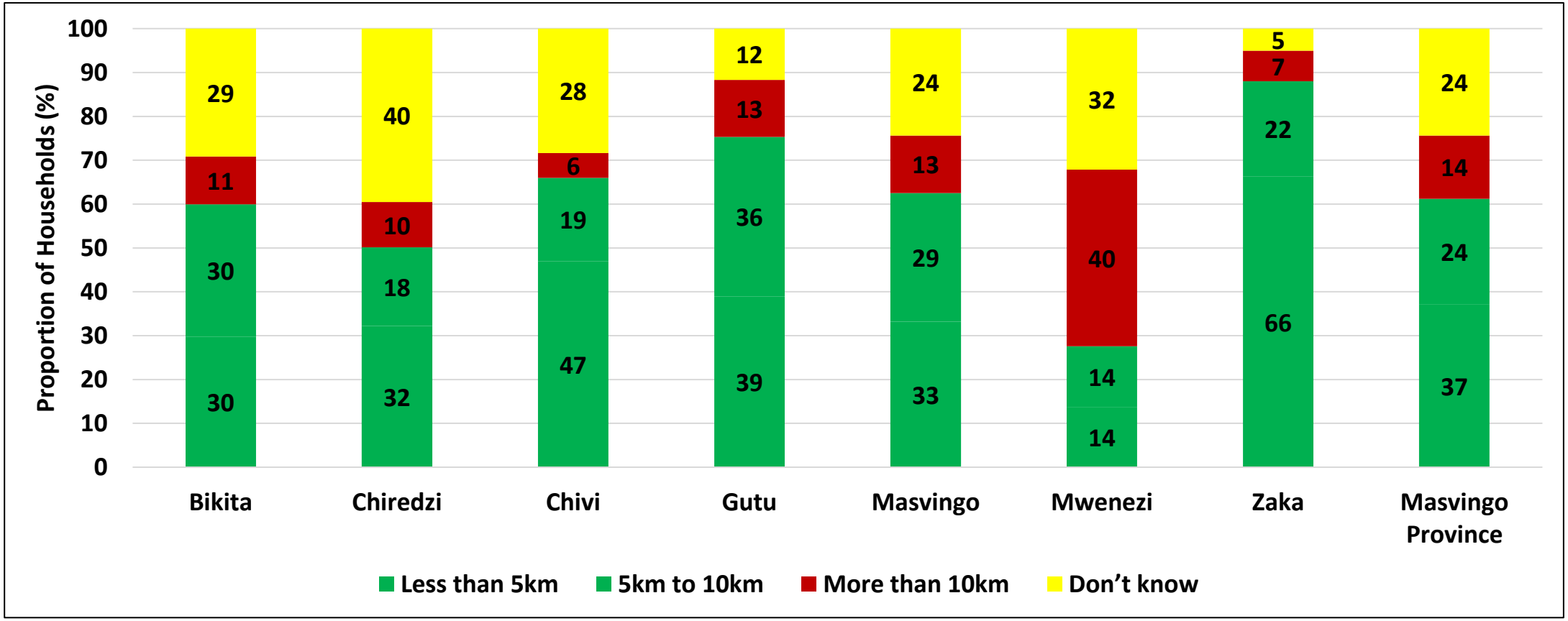
- About 75% of the households had a primary school that was within a 5km radius.

Access to Information on Services for Victims of Physical and Sexual Abuse



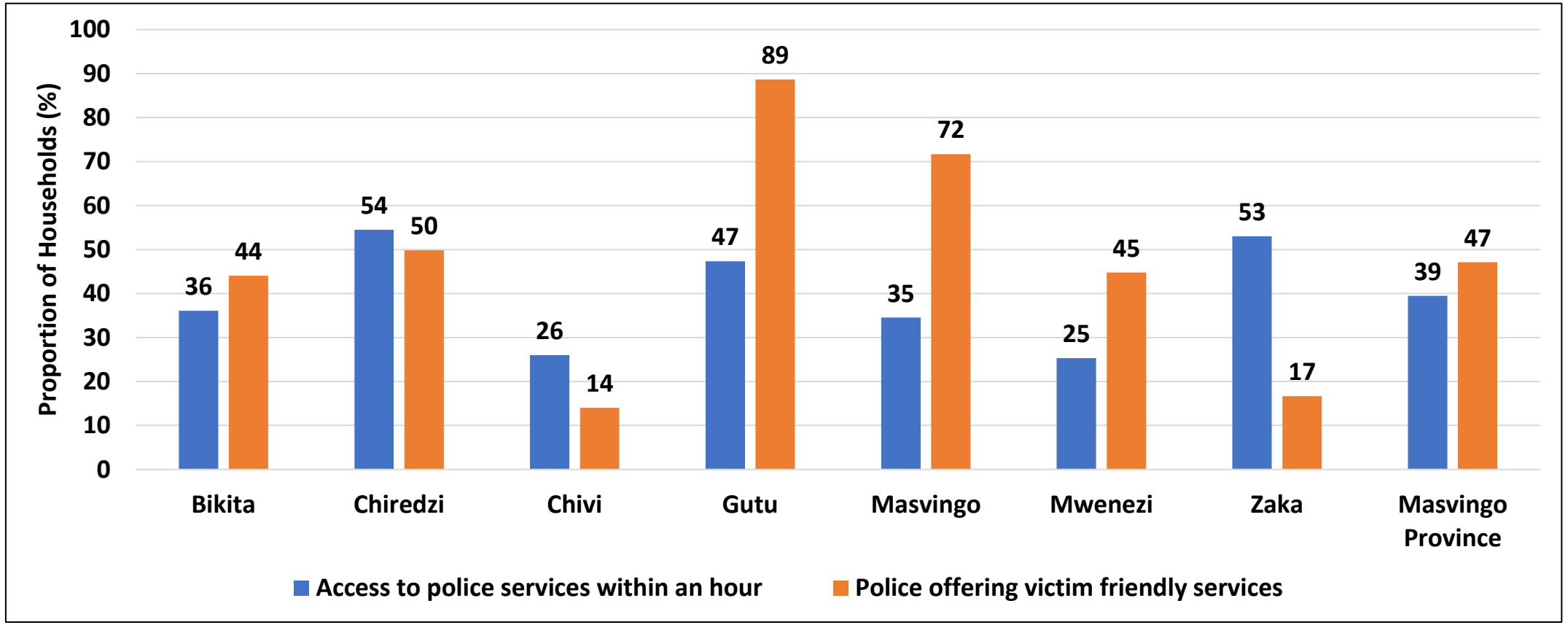
- About 50% of the households had access to information on services available for victims of physical and sexual abuse.

Distance to Facilities Providing Services for Physical and Sexual Abuse



- About 37% of the households could access a facility providing services for physical and sexual violence within a 5km radius.

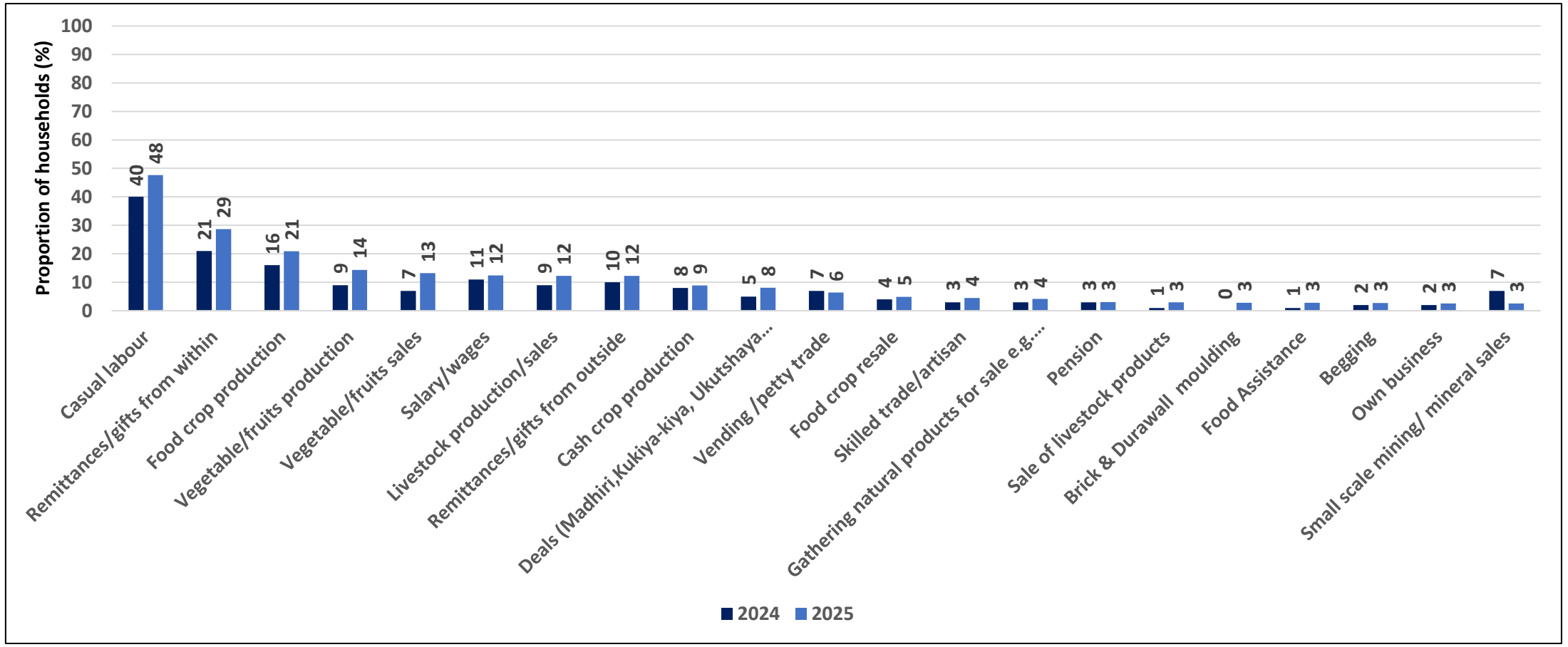
Access to Police Services



- At least 39% of the households were accessing police services within one hour and 47% reported that the police services were offering victim friendly services.

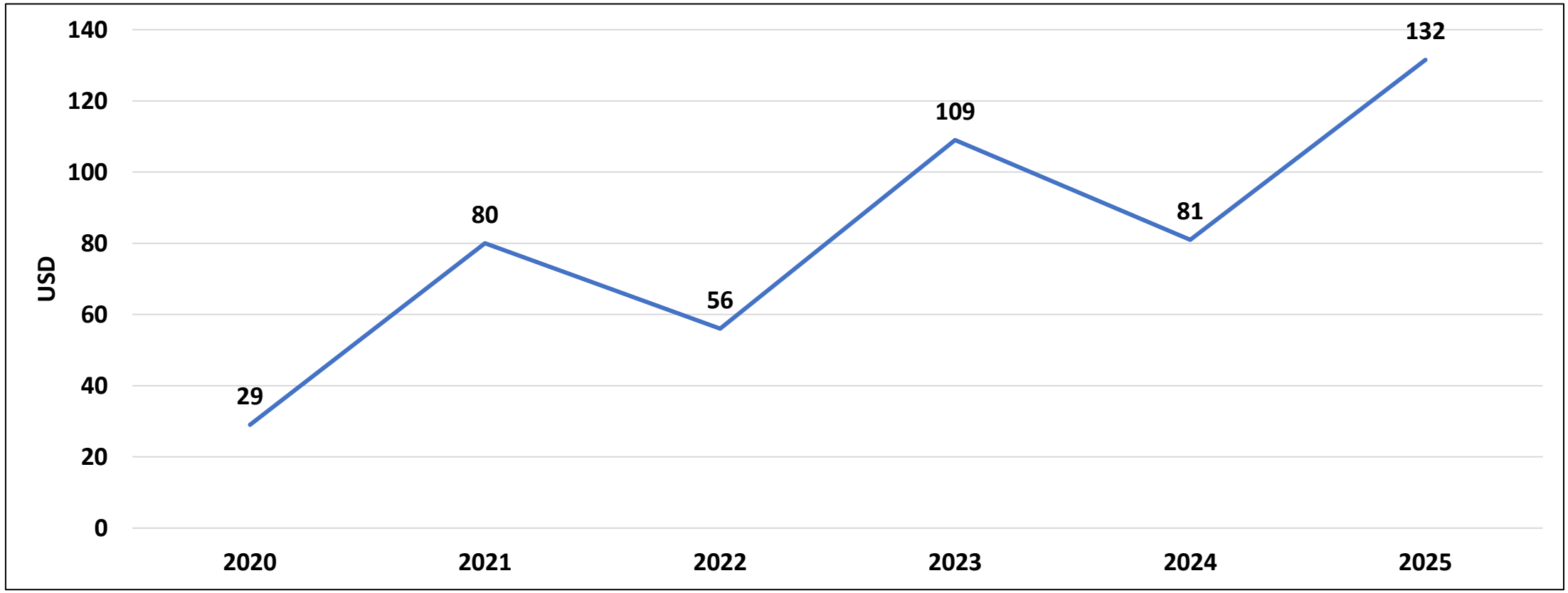
Income and Expenditure

Most Important Income Sources



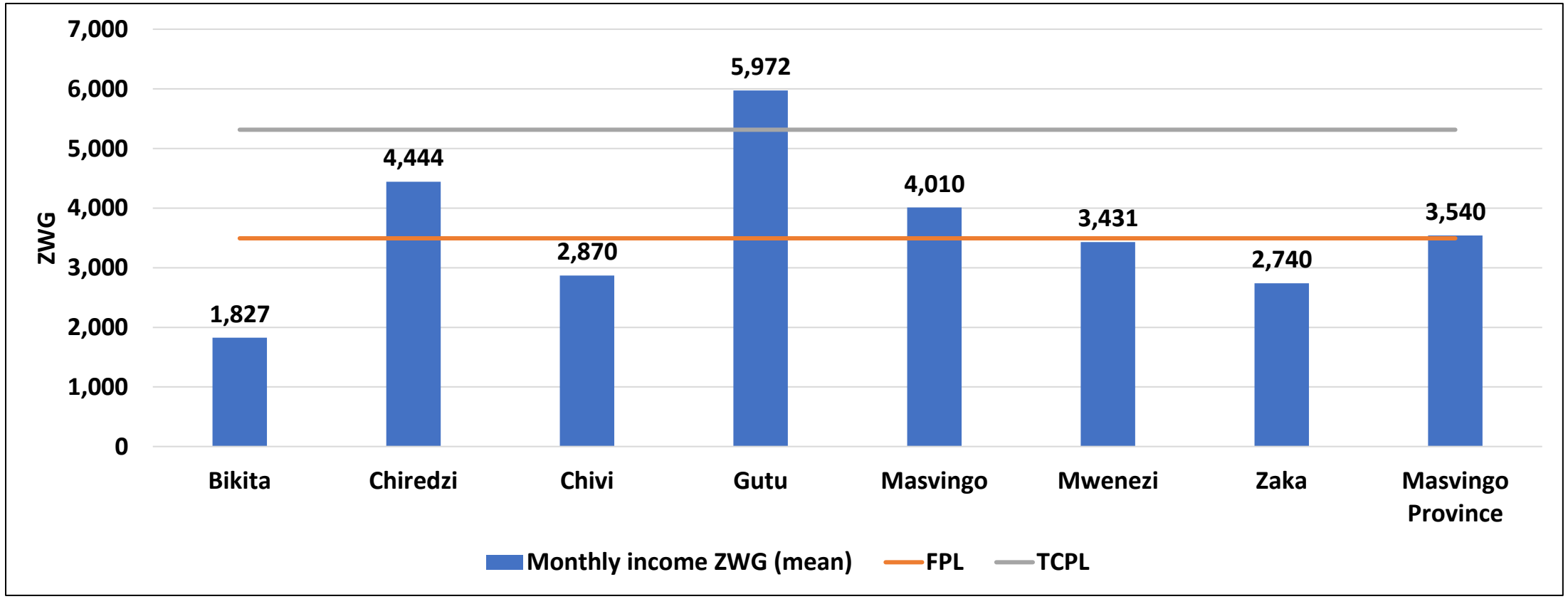
- Income is a proxy for economic status, living standards and wellbeing.
- Most households relied on casual labour (48%), remittances from within Zimbabwe (29%) and food crop production (21%) in 2025.

Income Trends (USD): 2020-2025



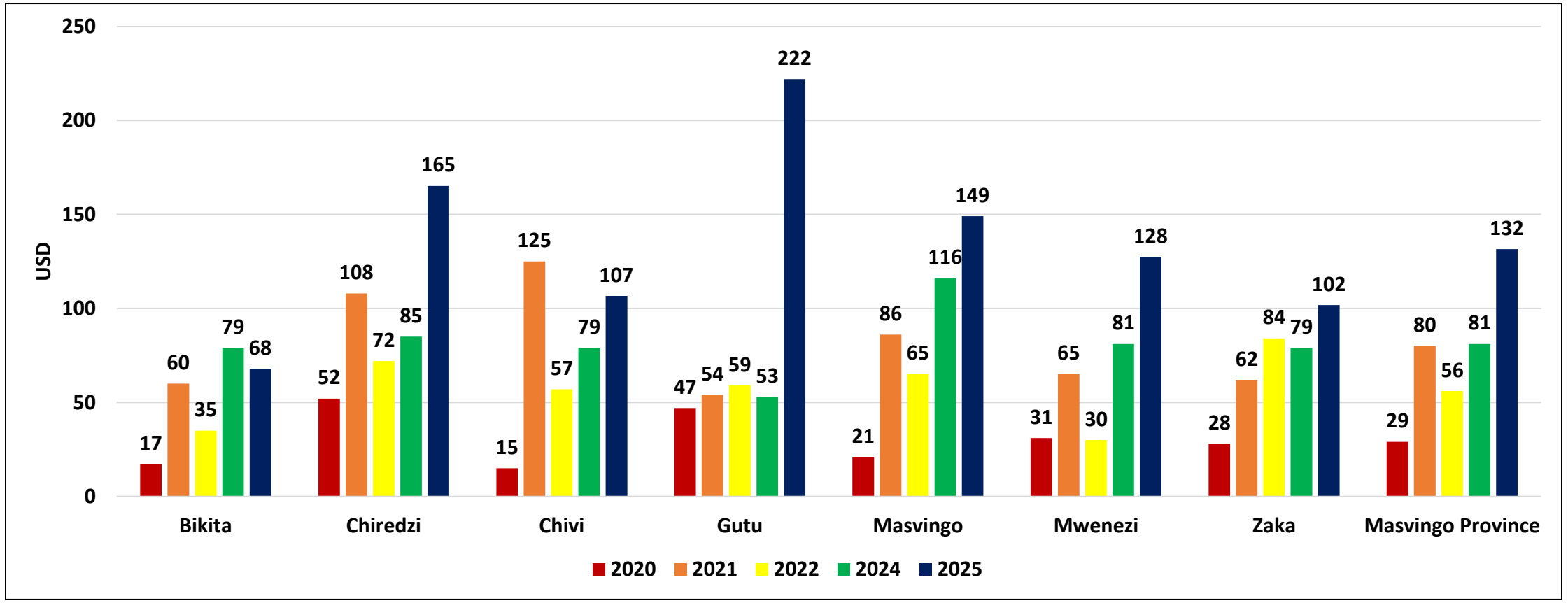
- Compared to base year 2020, rural incomes have been increasing.
- There was a 355% increase in households' purchasing power as evidenced by incomes increasing from USD 29 in 2020 to USD 132 in 2025.
- This is expected to contribute to a higher material quality of life and standard of living for households.

Average Household Monthly Income (ZWG) For April 2025



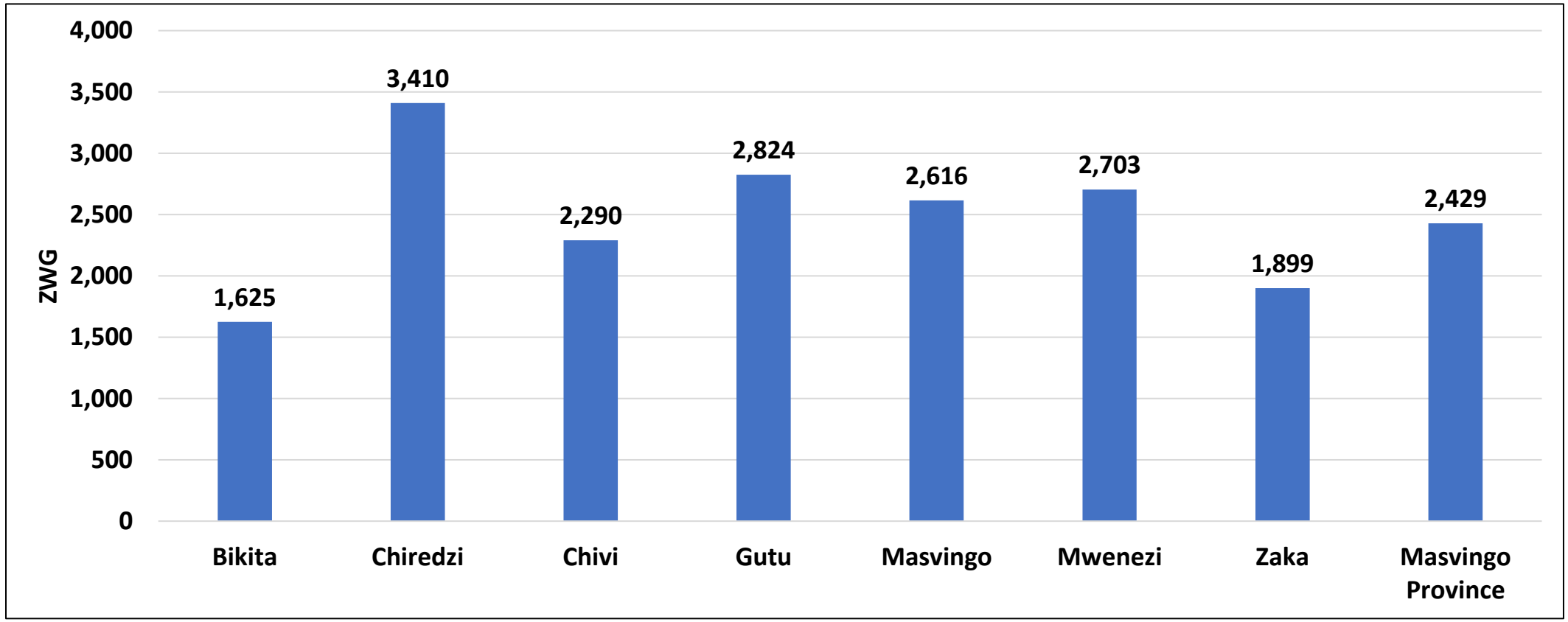
- Average monthly income for the Month of April 2025 was ZWG 3,540. This was slightly above the Food Poverty Line.
- Gutu (ZWG 5,972) had the highest income.

Average Household Monthly Income (USD) for April 2025



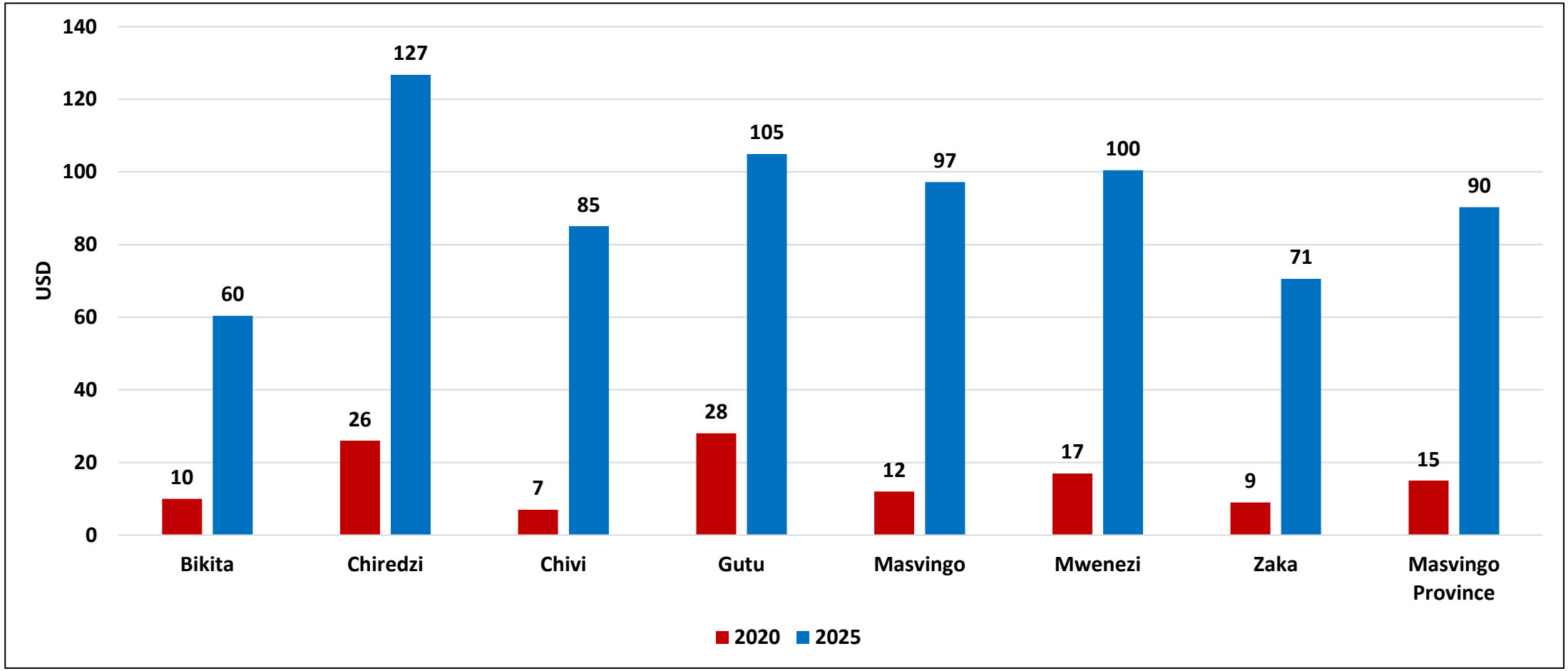
- The average household monthly income increased from USD 81 in April 2024 to USD 132 in April 2025.
- Gutu had the highest average household monthly income (USD 222) for April 2025.

Average Household Monthly Expenditure (ZWG) for April 2025



- The average household monthly expenditure was ZWG 2,429 in April 2025.
- Chiredzi (ZWG 3,410) had the highest monthly expenditure.

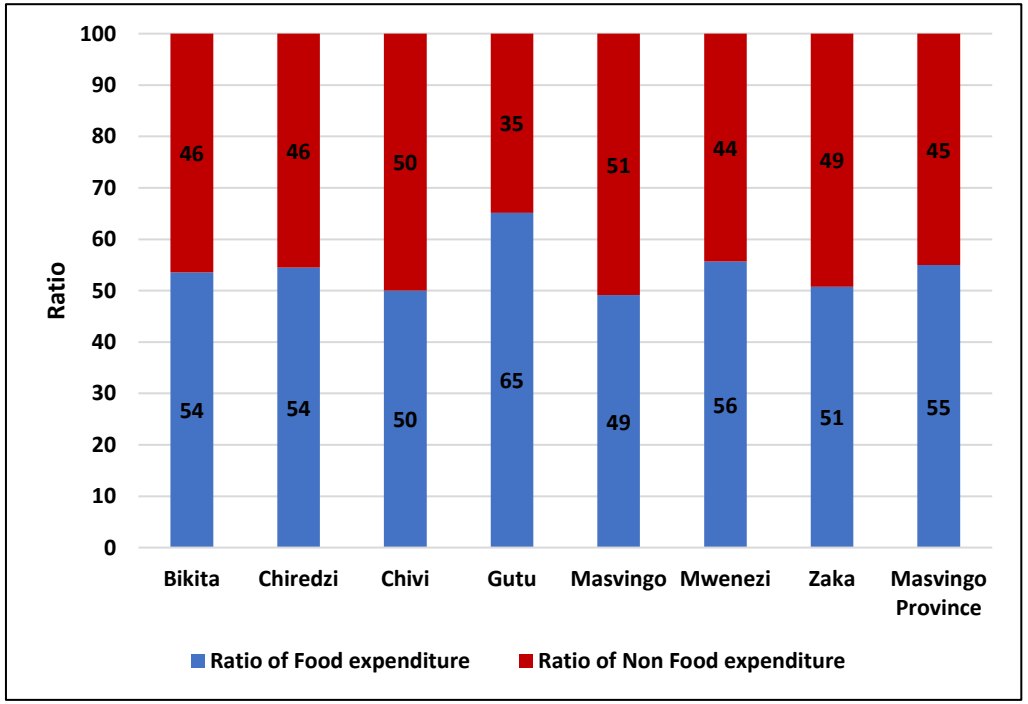
Average Household Monthly Expenditure (USD) for April 2025



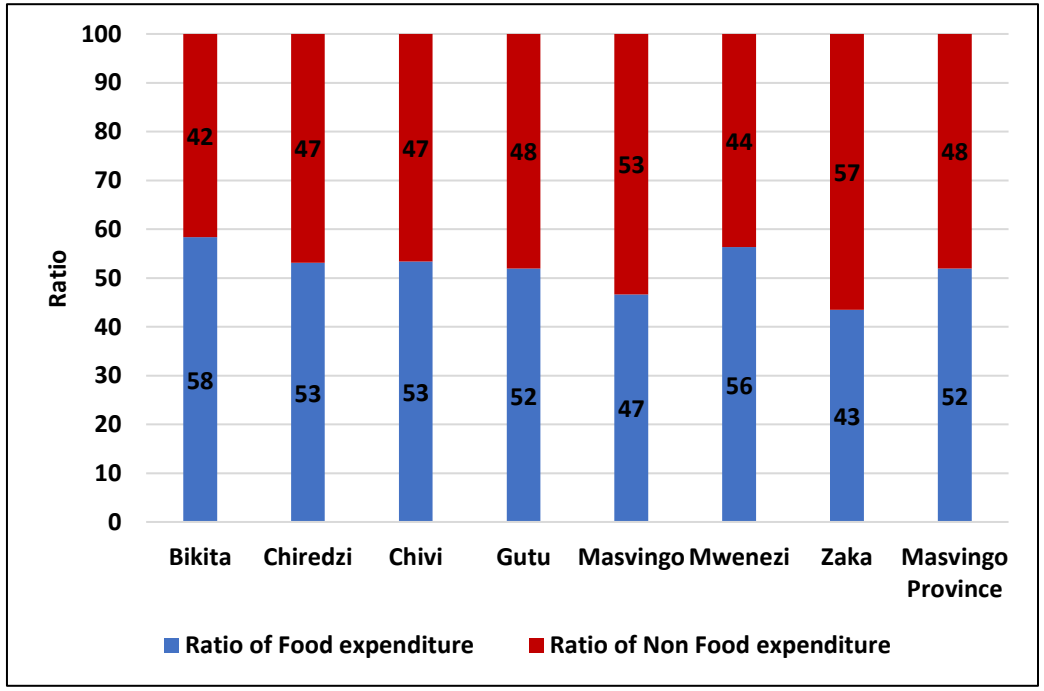
- The average household monthly expenditure for the month of April 2025 was USD90, an increase from USD 15 in 2020.
- Bikita (USD 60) reported the lowest expenditure.

Food and Non-Food Expenditure Ratio

2024



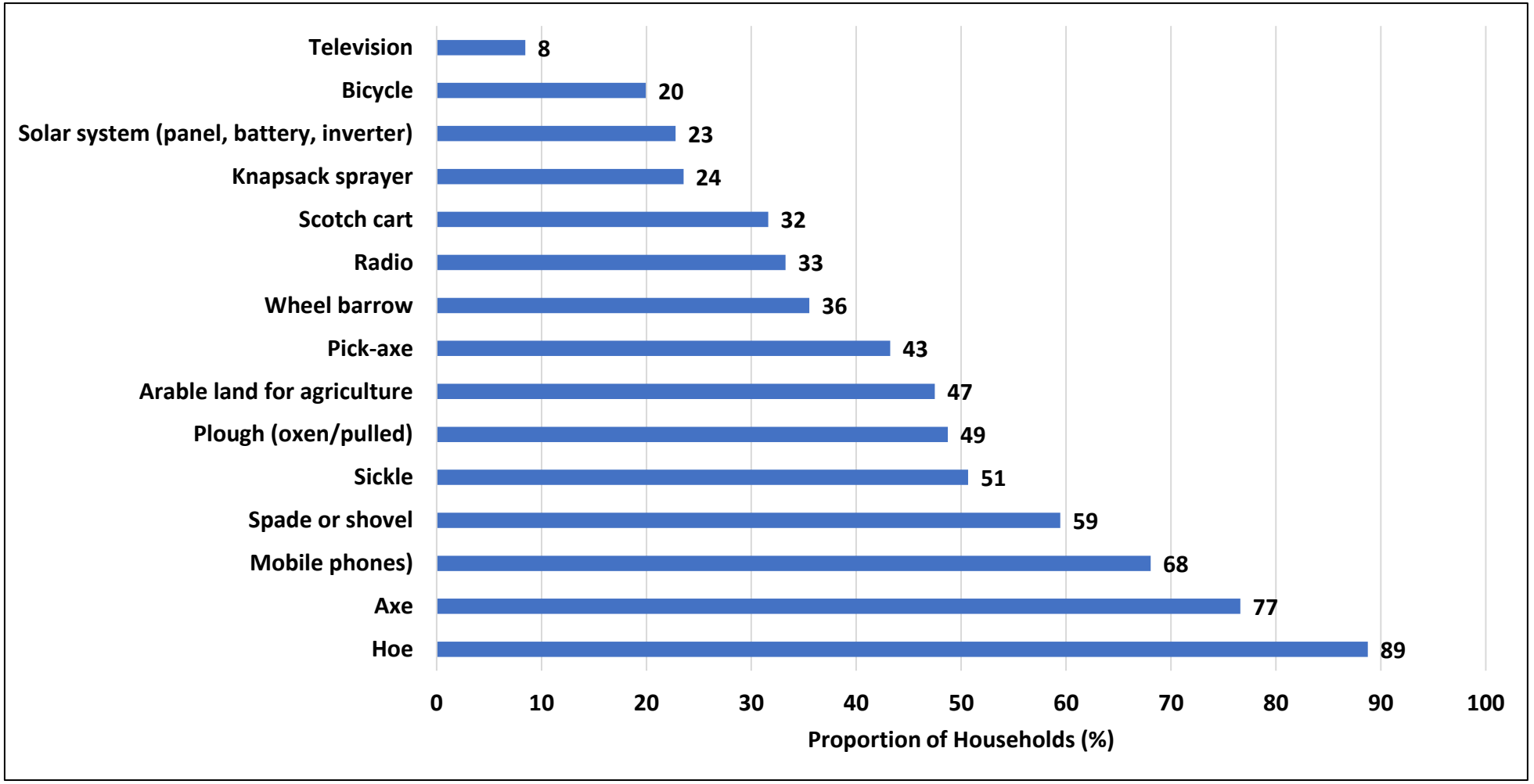
2025



- The food expenditure ratio was 52.

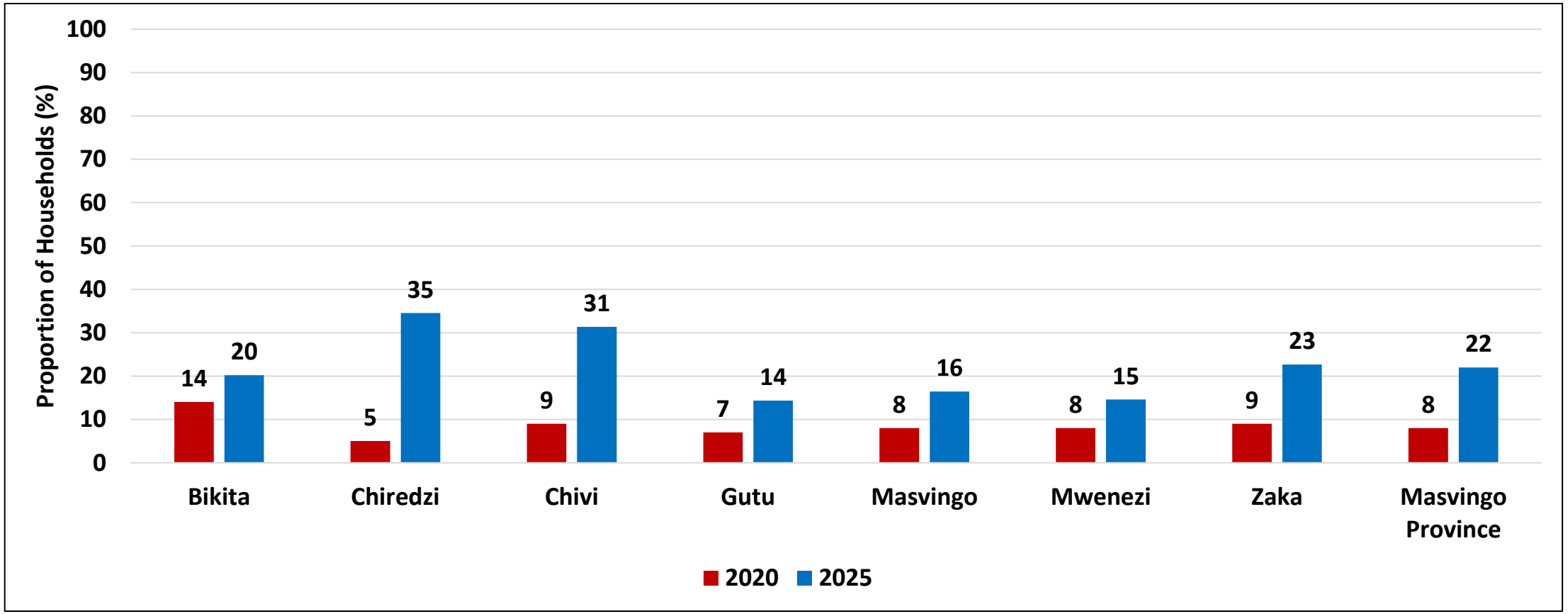
Assets, Loans and Remittances

Assets



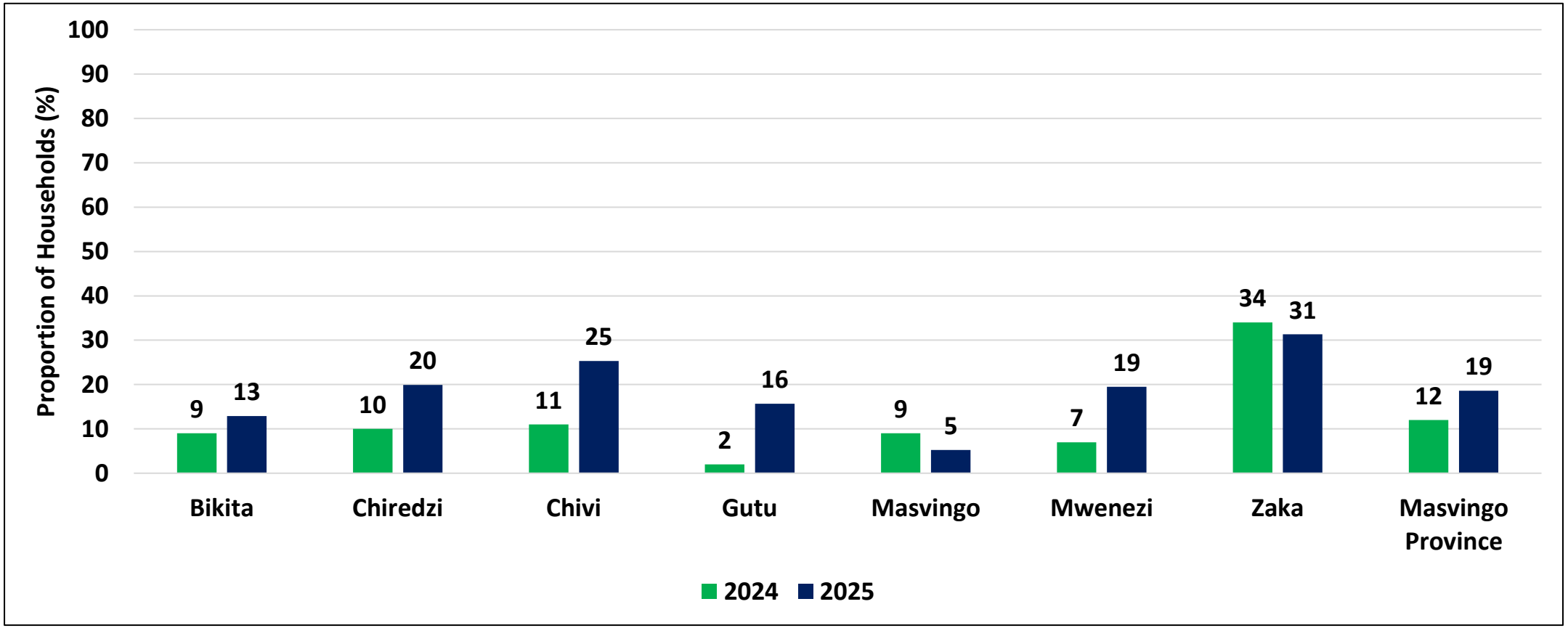
- The most commonly owned assets by households were hoes (89%), axes (77%) and mobile phones (68%).

Households Participating in ISALS/Mukando/Ukuqogelela



- There was an increase in the proportion of households participating in ISALS/Mukando/Ukuqogelela from 8% in 2020 to 22% in 2025.

Households that Accessed Loans



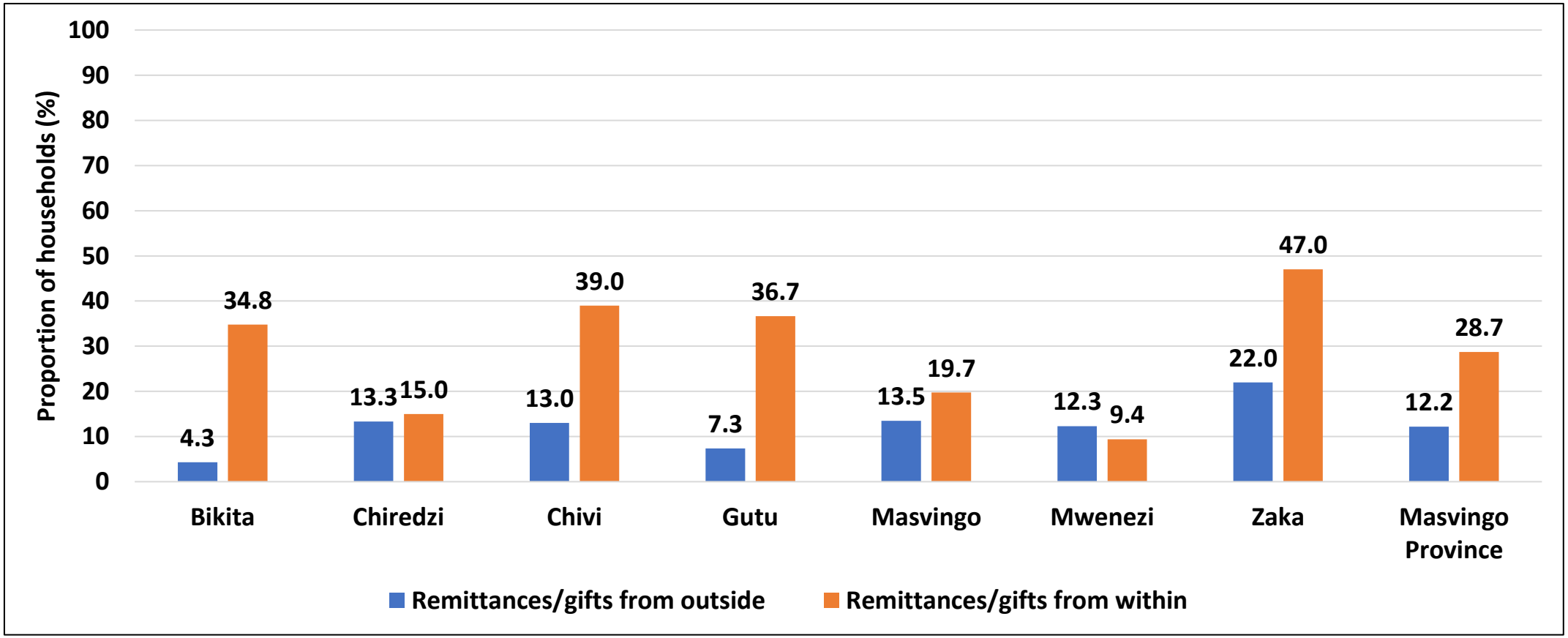
- The proportion of households that accessed loans was 19% in 2025, an increase from 12% in 2024.
- Zaka (31%) had the highest proportion of households that accessed the loans in 2025.

Sources of Loans

District	Friend/relative (%)	Money lender (%)	Banks (%)	Micro finance institutions (%)	Other Financial Services (%)	ISAL/Mukando/Ukuqogelela (%)	Farmer's organization (%)	Local trader/ shopkeeper (%)	Other (%)
Bikita	0.3	0.0	0.0	0	0	12.6	0	0	0
Chiredzi	4.3	1.7	3.3	2.0	0.3	11.3	1.0	1.0	0
Chivi	7.3	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.3	15.7	0.3	0.7	0
Gutu	7.7	0	1.0	0	0	10.0	0.3	0	0
Masvingo	1.0	1.3	0.0	0.3	0	2.0	0.7	0	0
Mwenezi	6.1	1.0	0.6	0.3	0	11.0	0	0	0.3
Zaka	10.3	0	0	0	0.3	22.0	0	0.3	0
Masvingo Province	**5.3**	**0.7**	**0.8**	**0.5**	**0.1**	**12.1**	**0.3**	**0.3**	**0.0**

- The main source of loans for the households was ISAL/Mukando/Ukuqogelela (12.1%).

Households which Received Remittances/Gifts



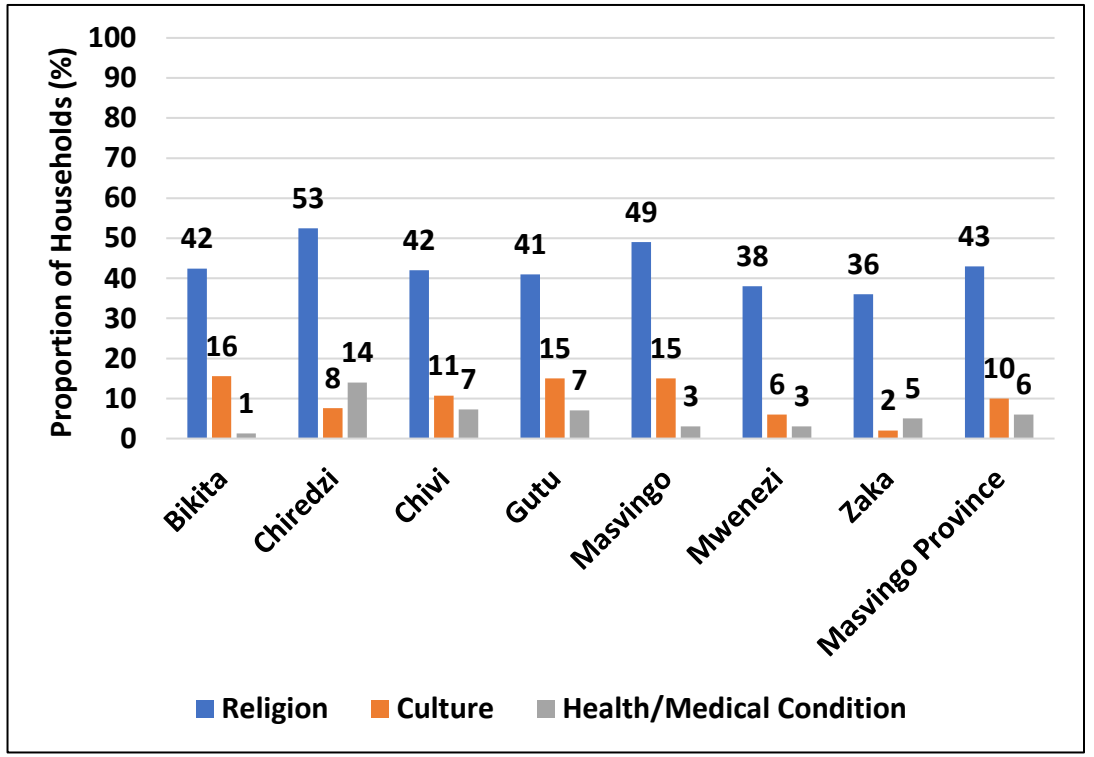
- Remittances/gifts received were mainly from within the country (28.7%).
- Zaka (47%) had the highest proportion of households that received remittances/gifts from within the country
- Zaka (22%) had the highest proportion of households that received remittances from outside the country.

Taboos

Household Food Taboos

District	Certain meat and meat products not consumed (%)	Certain fruits not consumed (%)	Traditional cereals not consumed (%)	Certain insects not consumed (%)	No taboos or restrictions (%)
Bikita	40.7	1.3	0.7	9.9	49.7
Chiredzi	56.1	2.7	2.7	8.0	42.2
Chivi	48.7	5.0	1.0	7.7	50.3
Gutu	52.7	4.7	2.3	0.7	46.7
Masvingo	60.5	0.0	0.3	0.7	38.8
Mwenezi	45.3	0.3	0.3	3.6	54.7
Zaka	39.3	0.0	1.0	6.7	60.7
Masvingo Province	49.1	2.0	1.2	5.3	49.0

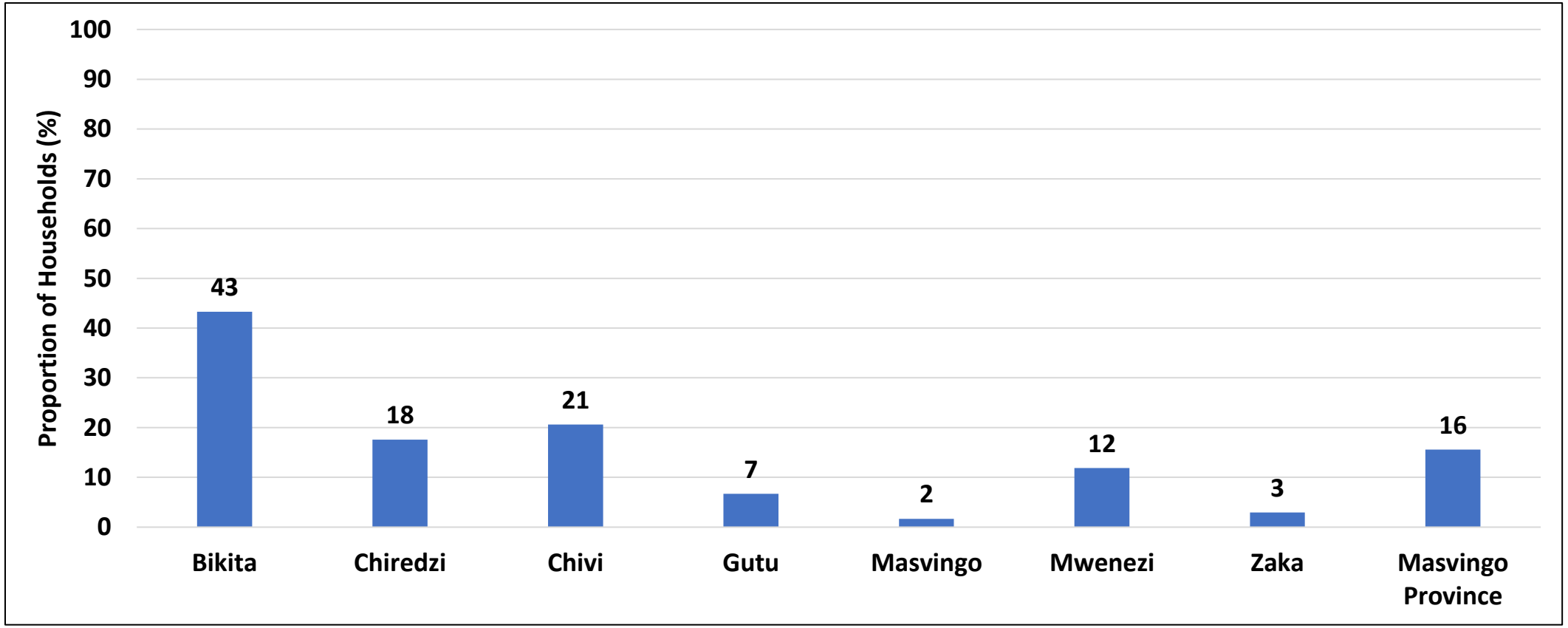
Reasons for Taboos



- In the Province, 49.1% of the households had taboos on consumption of certain meat and meat products which may have a negative effect on individual dietary diversity options ultimately affecting the quality of diets.
- Religion (43%) was the most reported reason for dietary related taboos.

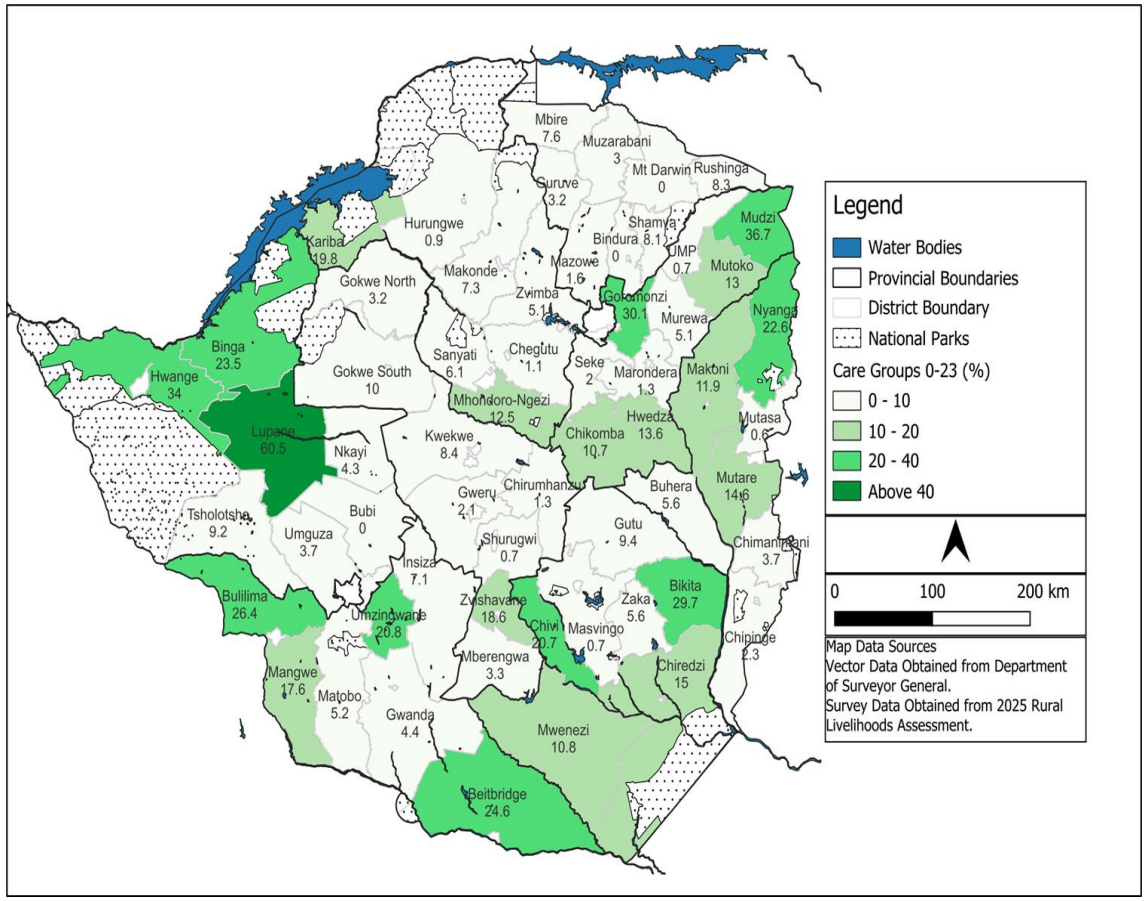
Care Groups

Membership of a Care Group or IYCF Support Groups (0-23 months)



- The Care-group approach is a community-based strategy for promoting health and nutrition behavior change.
- At least 16% of the primary care givers for children 0-23 months were either enrolled in a care group or were part of an Infant and Young Child Feeding support group.

Membership of a Care Group or IYCF Support Groups (0-23 Months) by District



- Bikita (29.7%) reported high proportions of caregivers being members of a care group or IYCF support group.

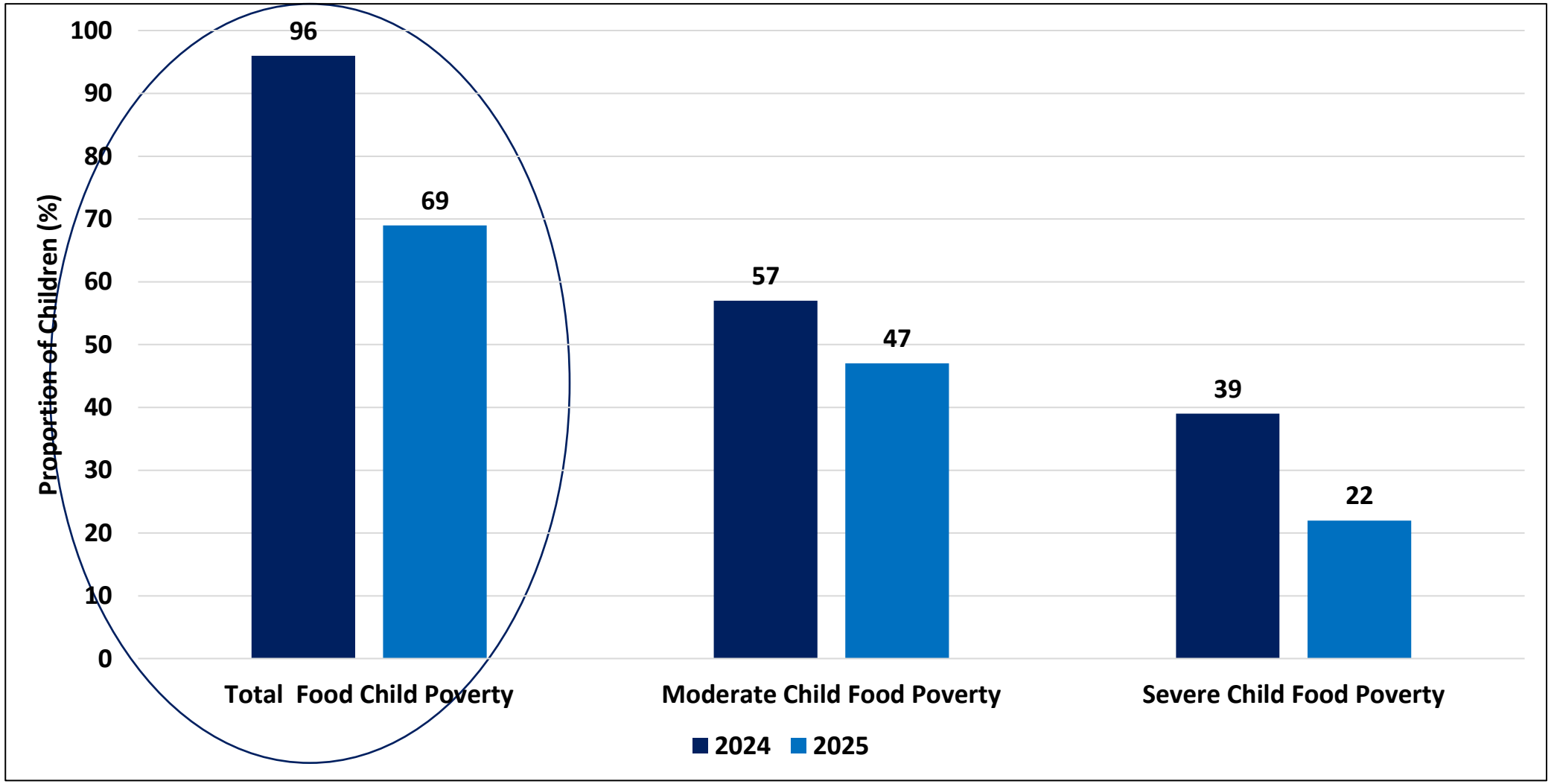
Child Food Poverty

- **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.

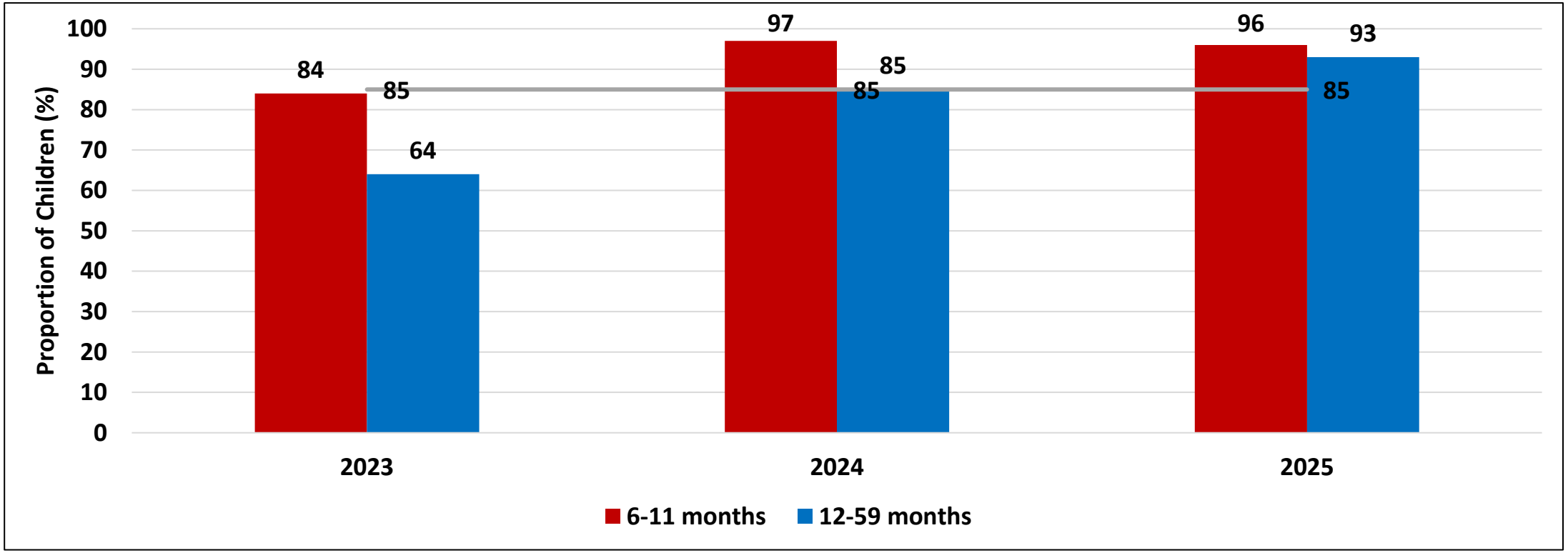
Child Food Poverty



- Total Food Child Poverty was 69% for the province
- Attention needs to be given to the 22% of children who were in severe child food poverty.

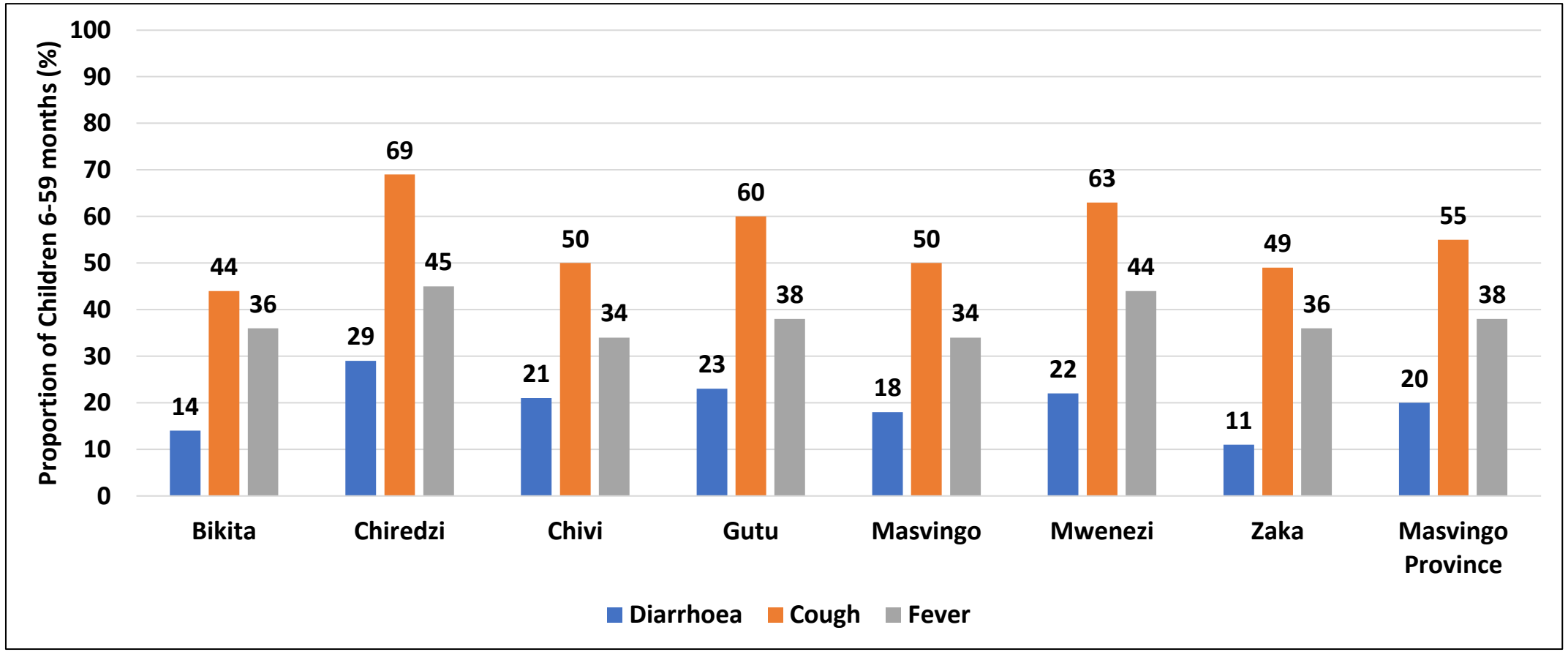
Child Health

Vitamin A Supplementation for Children 6-59 Months



- Vitamin A is essential for the functioning of the immune system and the healthy growth and development of children. Provision of vitamin A supplements every six months is an inexpensive, quick and effective way to improve vitamin A status and reduce child morbidity and mortality in the long term.
- In the Province, 96% of children 6-11 months and 93% of children 12-59 months received the required one dose of Vitamin A.

Child Illness 6-59 Months



- Child illness is a potential catalyst to child undernutrition.
- Cough (55%) was the most reported illness.

Infant and Young Child Feeding

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.

SWEET BEVERAGE CONSUMPTION 6–23 MONTHS (SwB)

- WHO guiding principles for complementary feeding advise against giving sweet drinks, such as soft drinks, as they contribute no nutrients other than energy and may displace more nutritious foods.
- Higher intakes of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) have been associated with an increased obesity risk among children of all ages. Early introduction of SSBs (before 12 months of age) is associated with obesity at six years of age. SSB consumption during the complementary feeding period is associated with an increased risk of obesity in childhood.

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 Organisation (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.
    - Early initiation of breastfeeding, within one hour of birth, protects the newborn from acquiring infection; reduces newborn mortality and facilitates emotional bonding of the mother and the baby and has a positive impact on duration of exclusive breastfeeding.
    - 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

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.
- 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.
- 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.

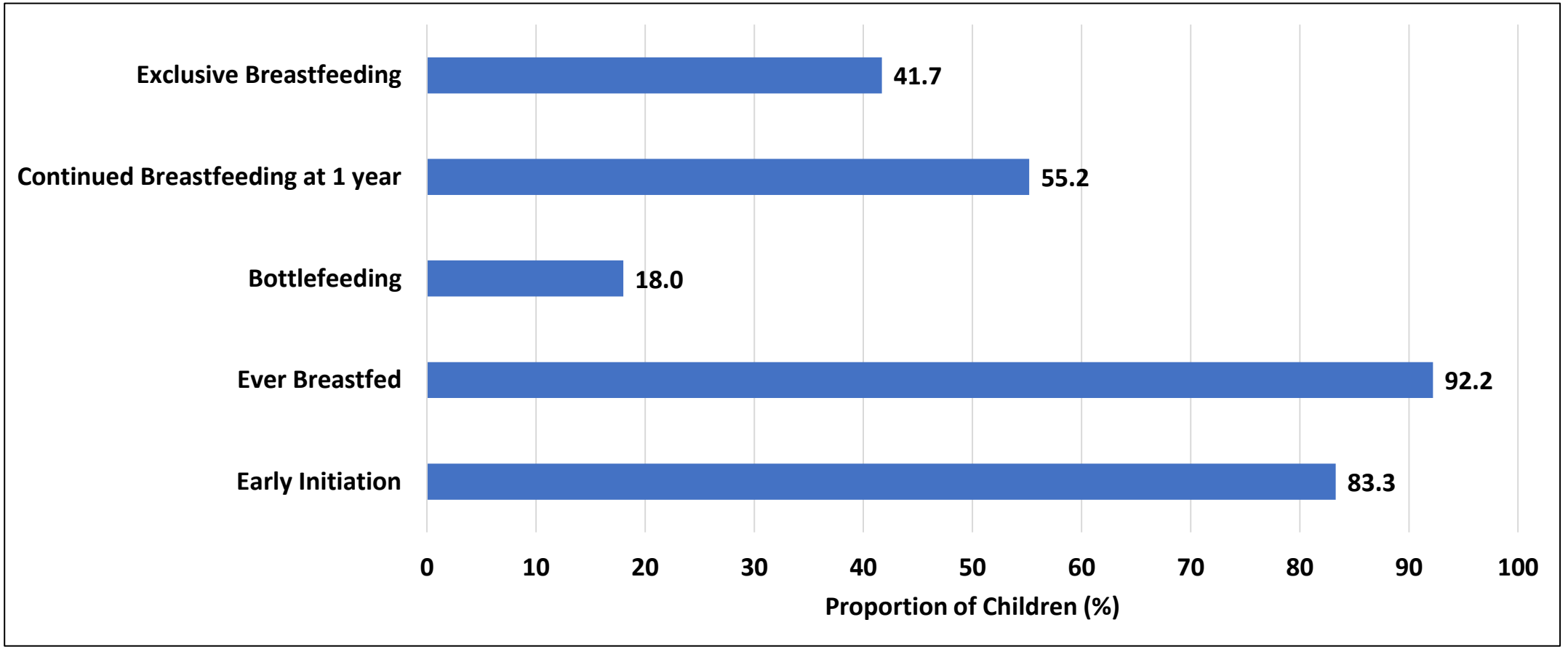
Notes

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

- WHO indicates that low vegetable and fruit consumption is associated with increased risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
- Consumption of zero vegetables or fruits on the previous day represents an unhealthy practice.

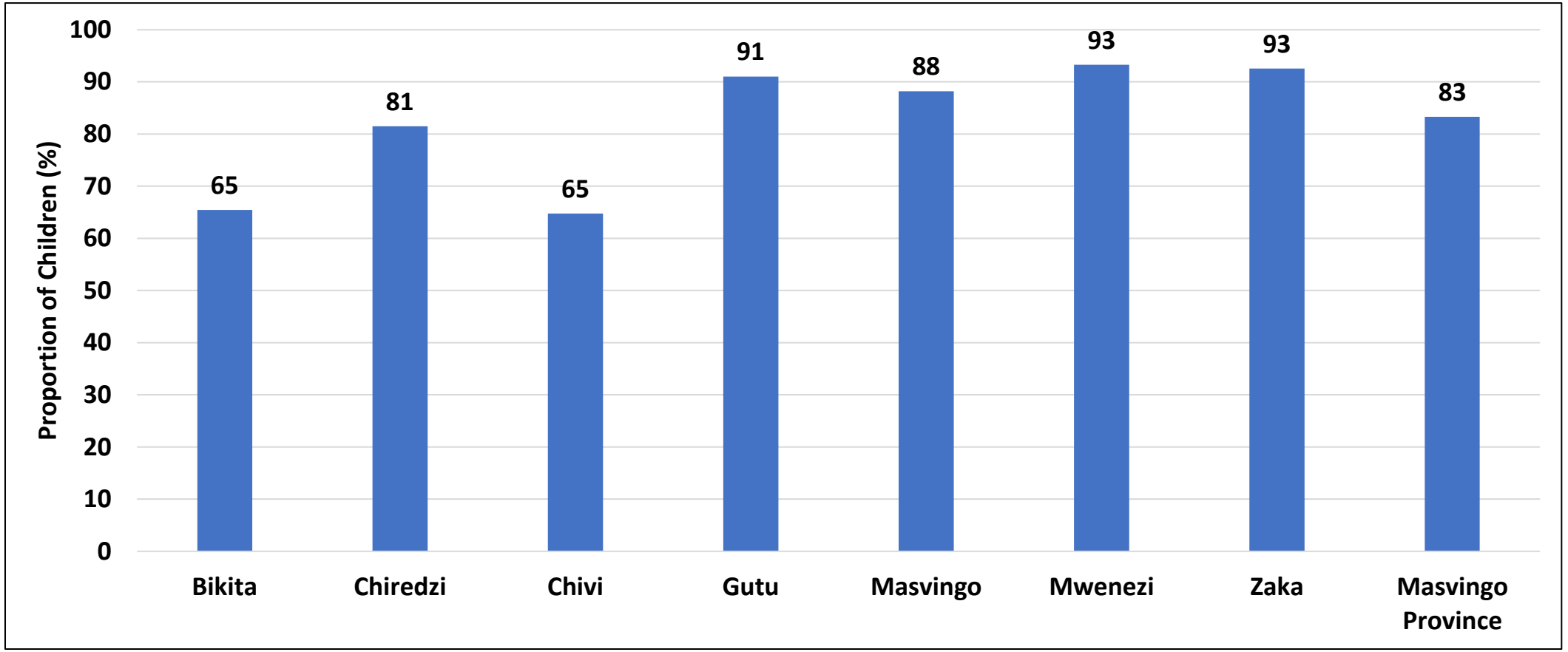
Indicator definition: percentage of children 6–23 months of age who did not consume any vegetables or fruits during the previous day.

Breastfeeding Practices



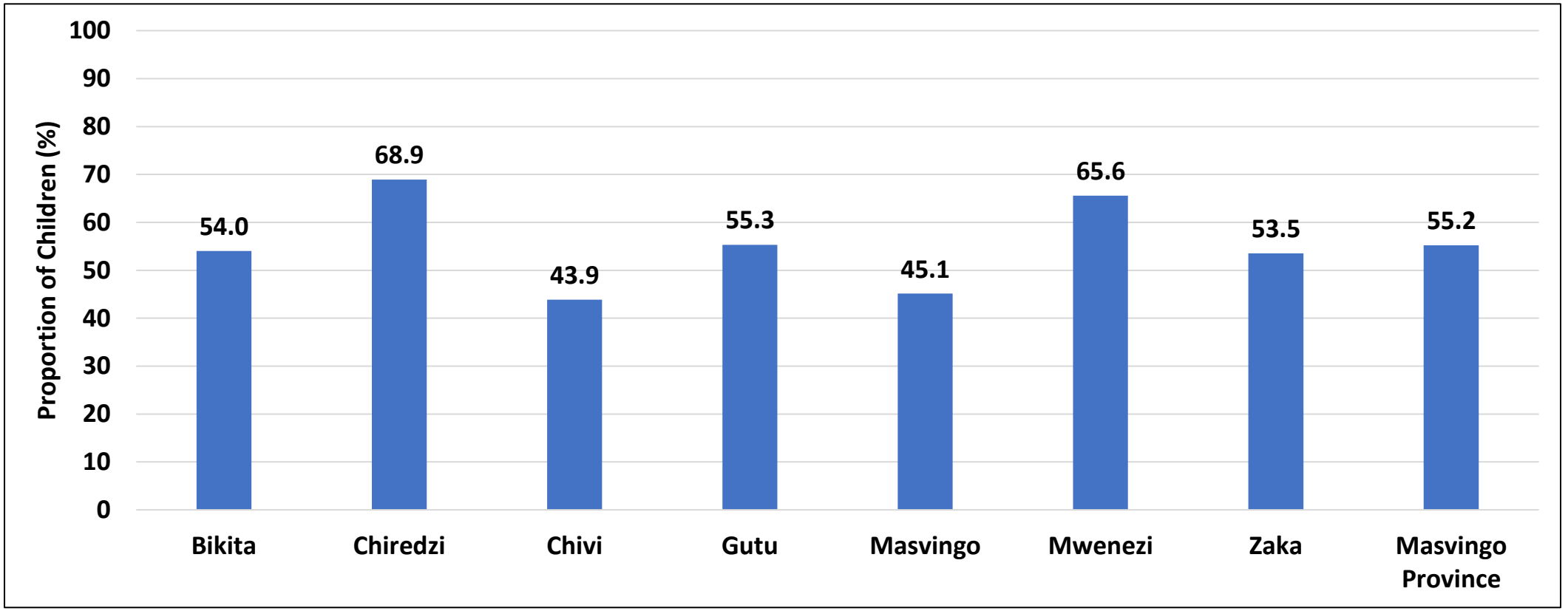
- Exclusive breastfeeding is a low cost, life-saving child survival intervention. The exclusive breastfeeding rate was reported to be 41.7%.
- The proportion of children who continued to be breastfed beyond one year was 55.2%
- At least 92.2% of the children were ever breastfed.

Early Initiation of Breastfeeding



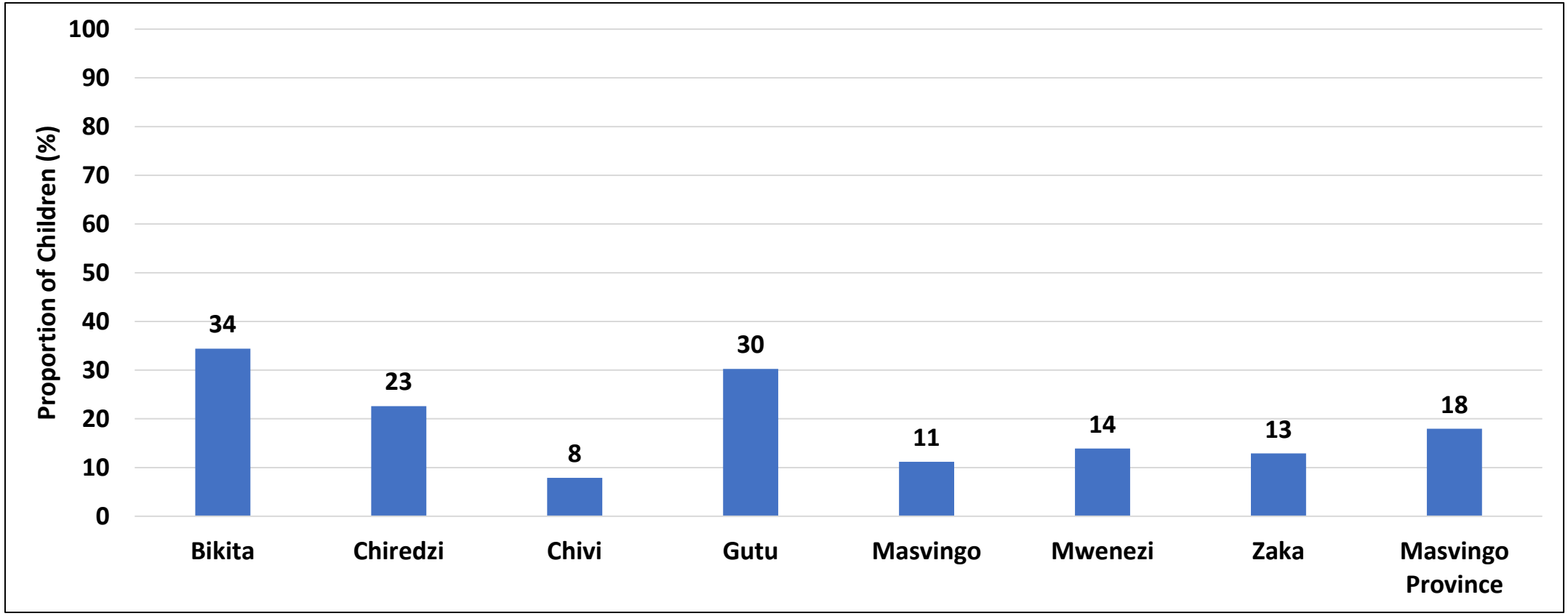
- About 83% of children were put on the breast within an hour of birth.

Continued Breastfeeding Beyond 1 year



- Breastfeeding provides one third of energy needs between 12 and 24 months.
- The proportion of children who continued to be breastfed beyond one year was 55.2%.

Bottle Feeding

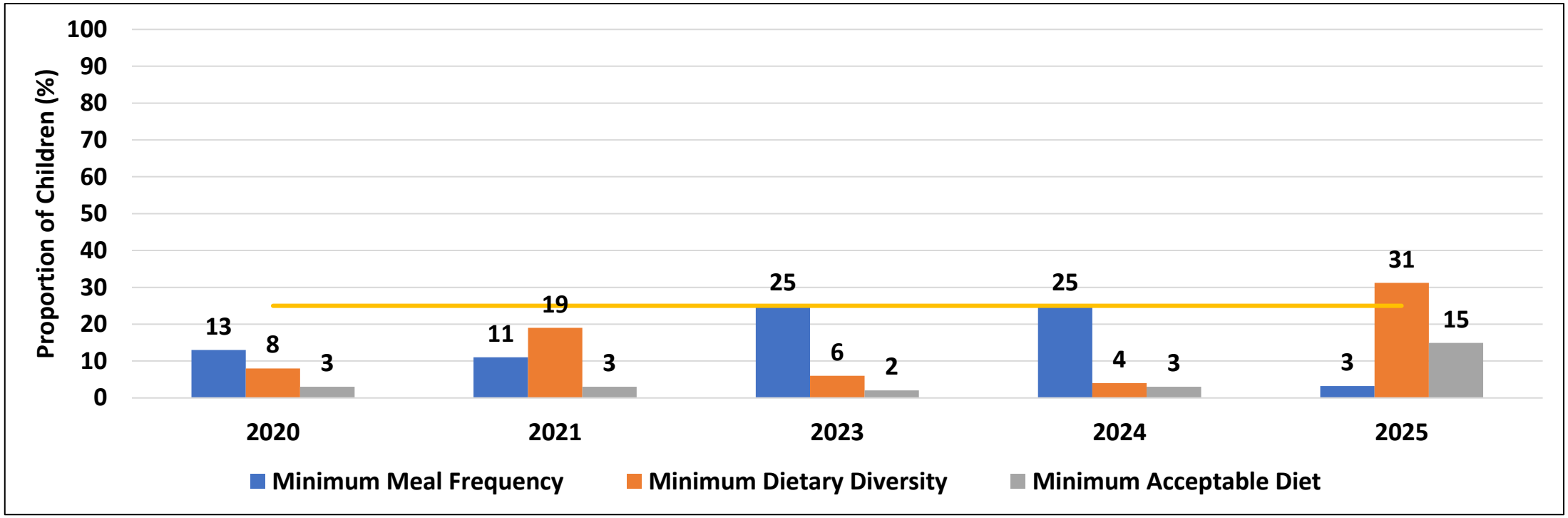


- Bottle feeding interferes with breastfeeding and predisposes infants to diarrhoeal diseases, especially in an environment with compromised WASH services.
- Bikita (34%) and Gutu (30%) reported the highest rates of bottle feeding.

Complementary Feeding

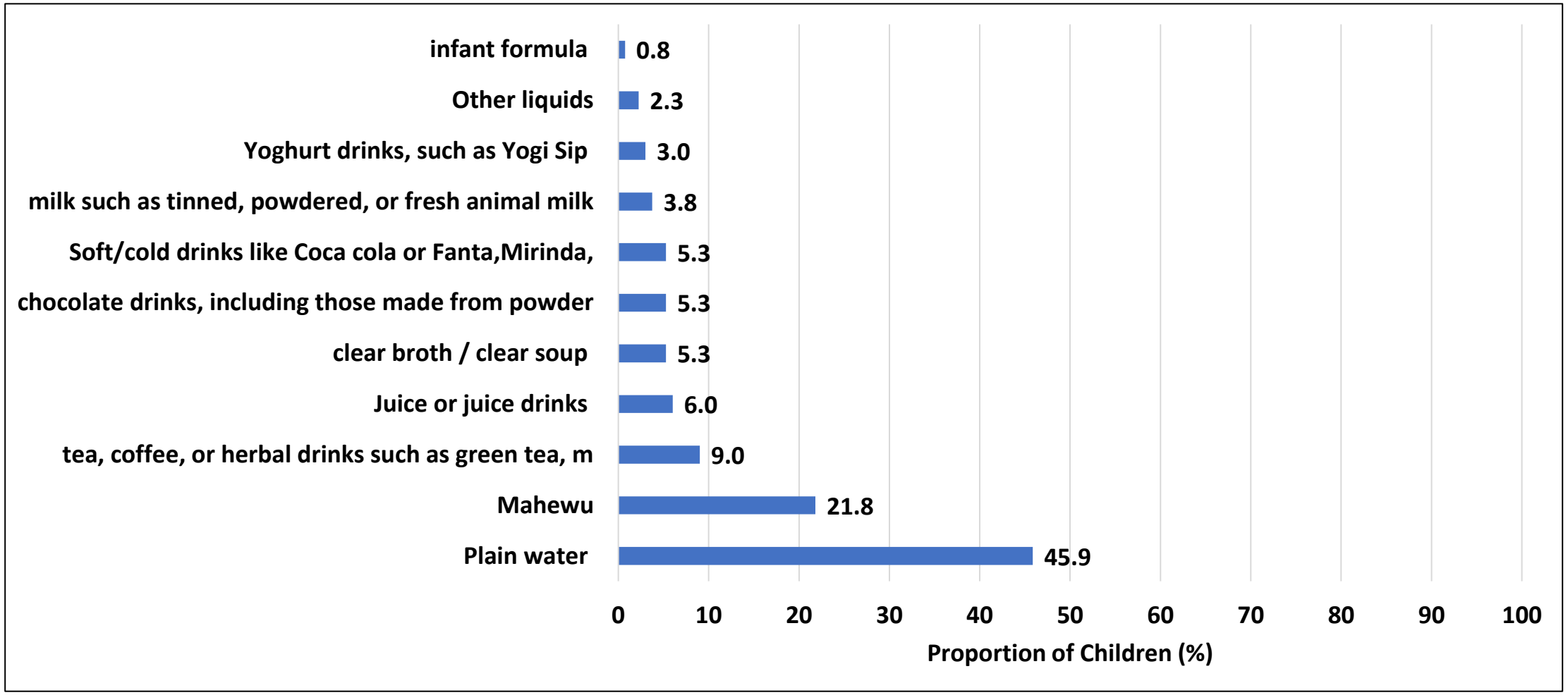
- Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD) is a proxy indicator for adequate micronutrient density. Both breastfed and non-breastfed infants are expected to consume at least five of the seven food groups that are recommended by the World Health Organisation.
- Minimum Meal Frequency (MMF) is a proxy for a child's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



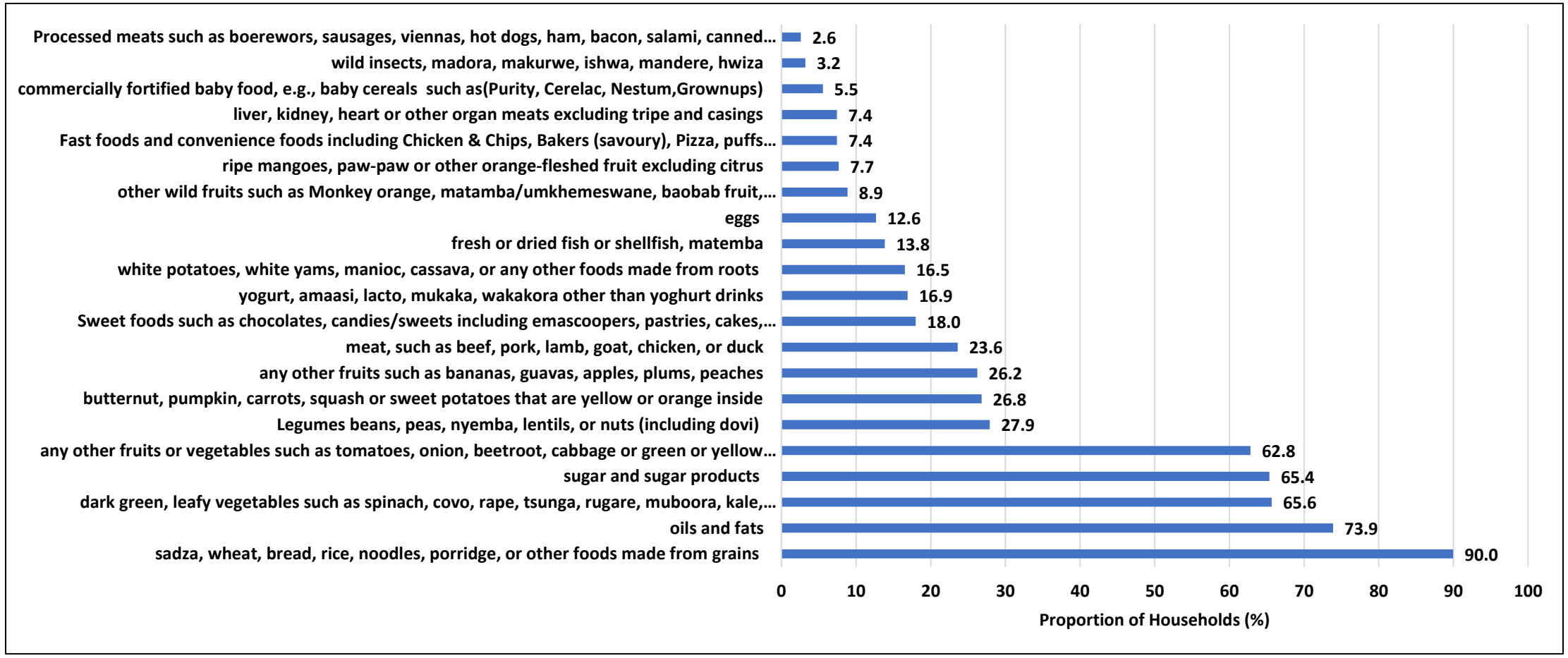
- Children aged 6–23 months should be fed meals at an appropriate frequency and in a sufficient variety to ensure, respectively, that energy and nutrient needs are met.
- The proportion of children fed a Minimum Acceptable Diet had improved from 3% in 2020 to 15% in 2025 which falls short of the Multisectoral Food and Nutrition Security Strategy target of 25%.

Liquids Given to Children (6-23)months



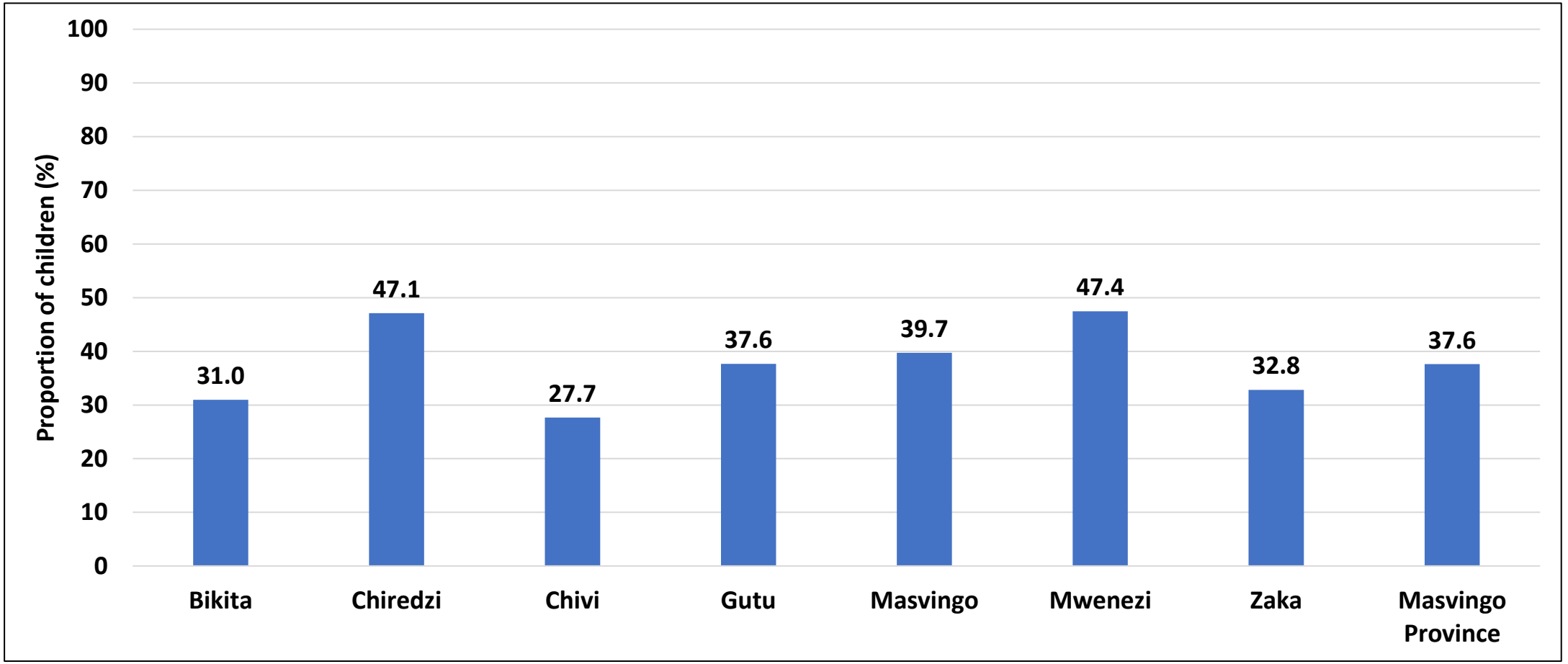
- Plain water (53%) and mahewu (21.8%) were the most common liquids given to children.

Solid Foods Given to Children (6-23)months



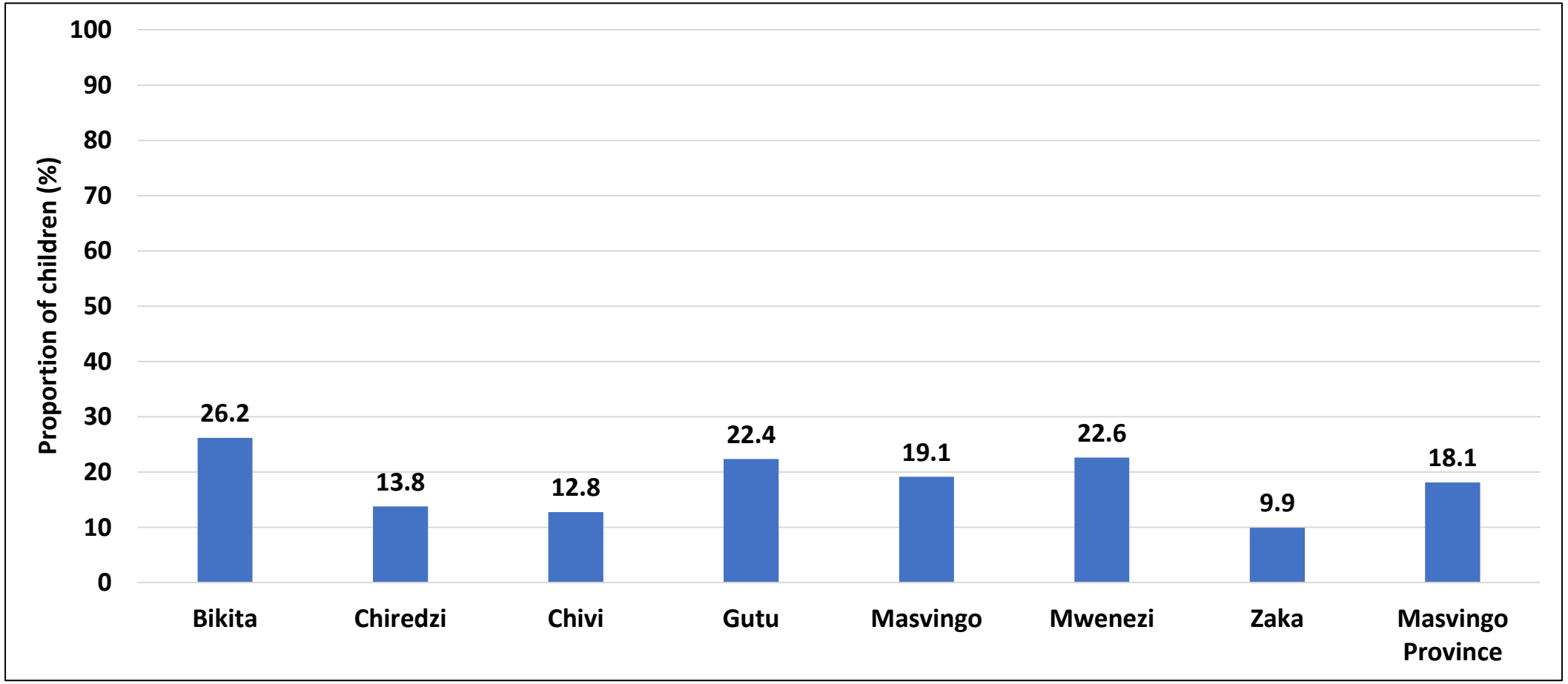
- Grains (90%) and Oils (73.9%) were the most common foods given to children

Egg and/Flesh Meat Consumption 6-23 Months



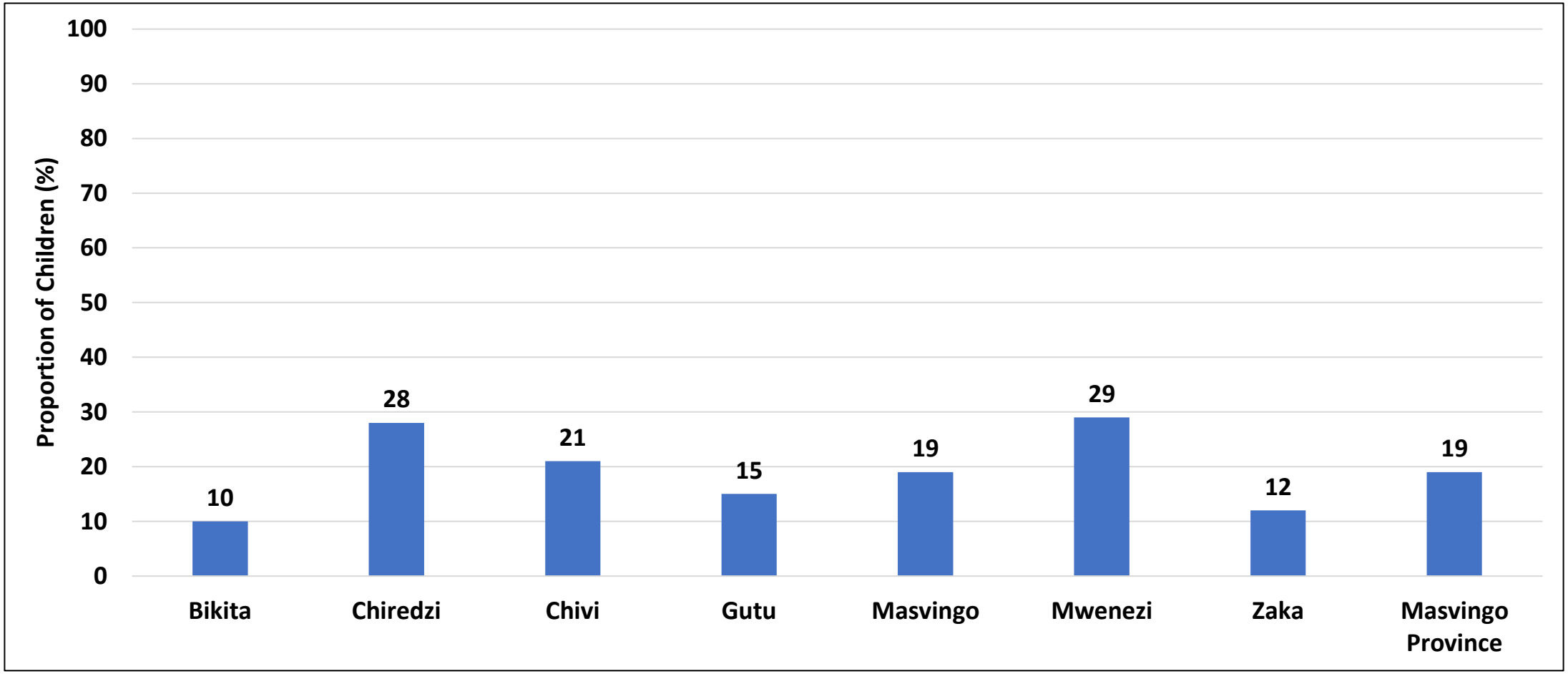
- About 37.6% of children 6 – 23 months consumed egg / flesh meat.

Non-Vegetable food Consumption 6-23 Months



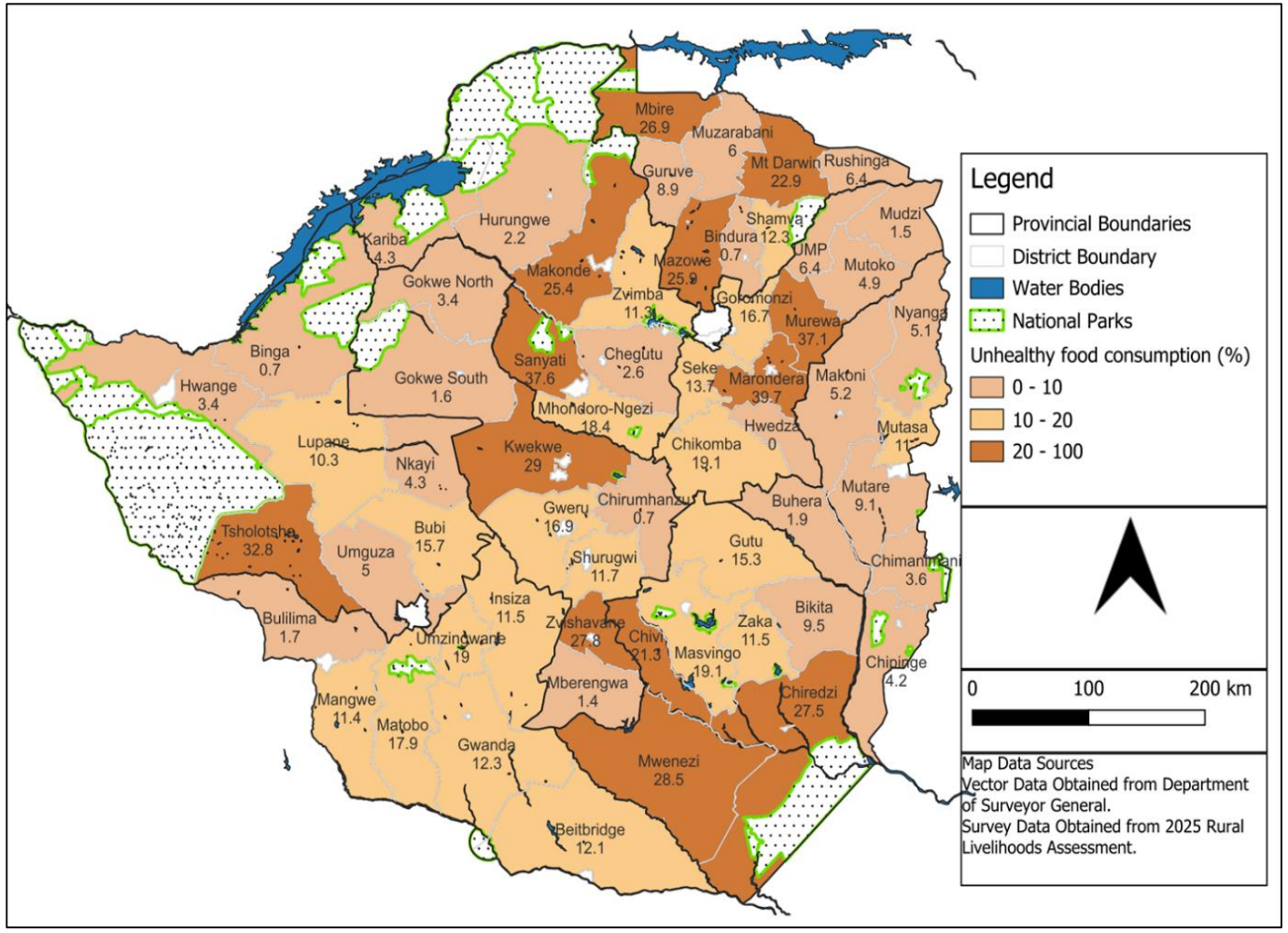
- About 18.1% of children 6 – 23 months were neither consuming vegetables nor fruits.

Unhealthy Food Consumption (6-23) Months



- About 19% of children 6-23 months were consuming unhealthy foods.

Unhealthy Food Consumption 6–23 Months Map



- Low unhealthy food consumption was in Bikita (9.5%).

Nutrition Status

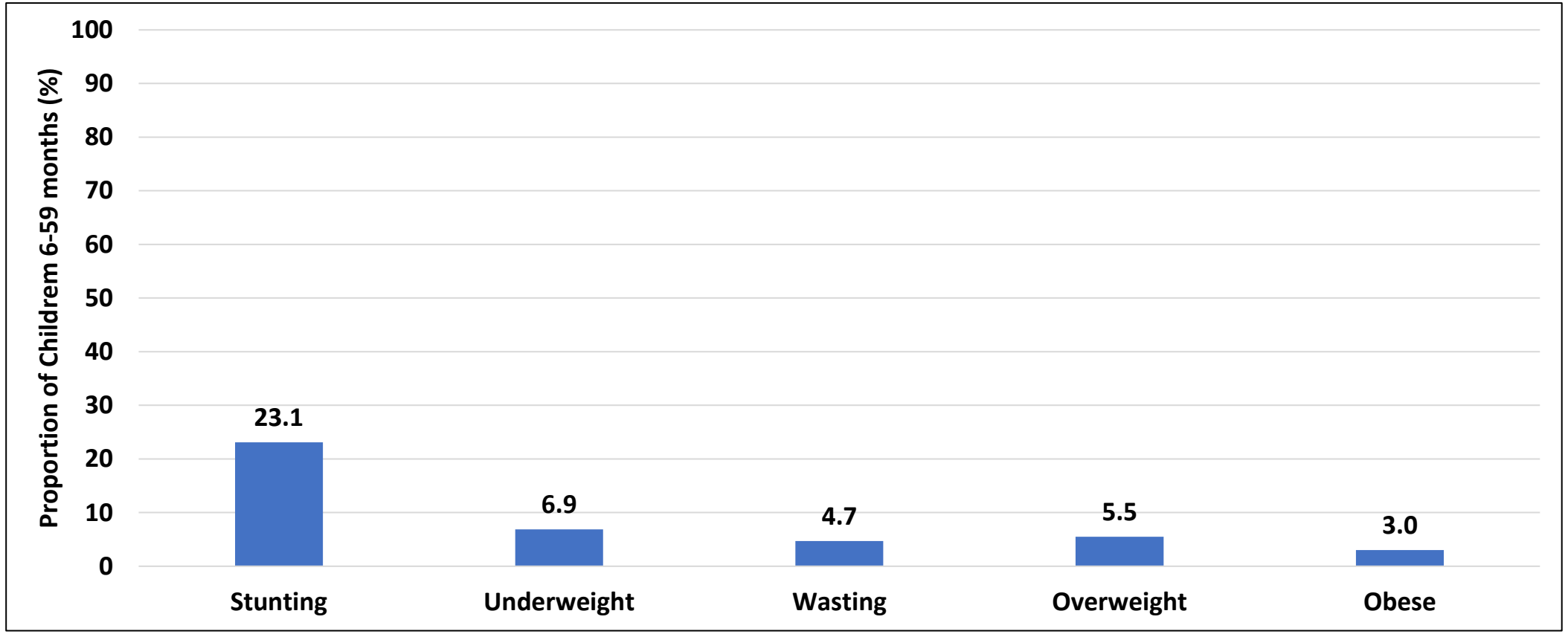
Child Nutrition Status

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).

Child Nutrition Status

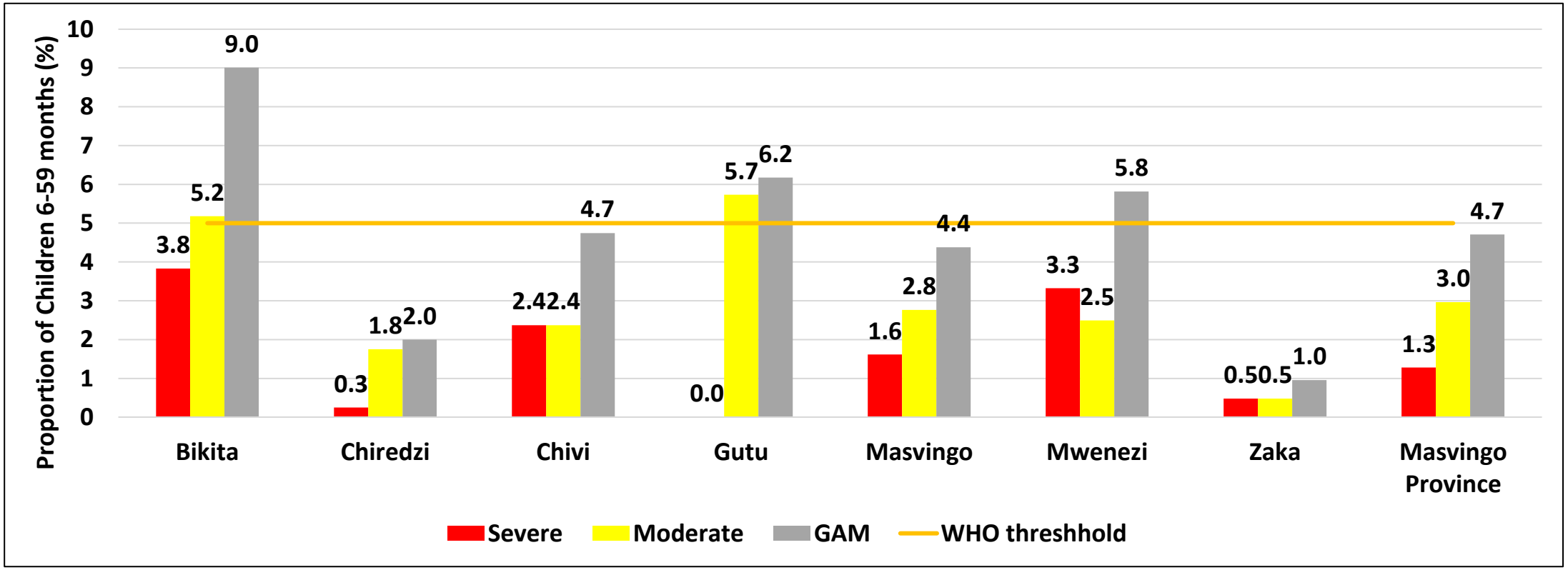
Indicator	Indicator definition (WHO standards, 2006)	National Target (%)	Prevalence cut-off values for public health significance
Stunting	Height/Length for age <–2 SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median	17.3	<2.5%: Very Low 2.5-<10%: Low 10-<20%: Medium 20-<30%: High ≥30%: Very High (DeOniset al., 2019)
Global Acute Malnutrition	Weight for height <-2SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median and/oedema	5	<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	2.5	0% = acceptable >0%: Unacceptable
Underweight	Weight for age <-2SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median and/oedema	10	
Overweight	Weight for height >+2 SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median	<3	<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		

Nutrition Status of Children 6-59 Months



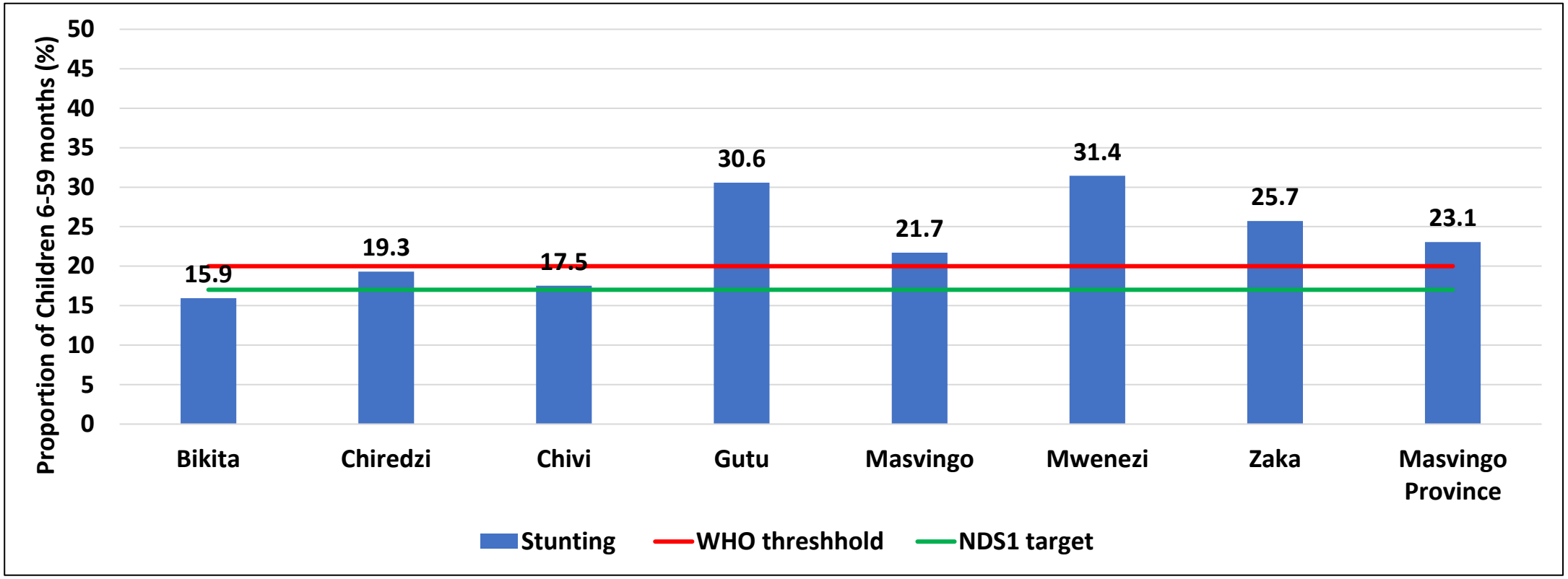
- Provincially, prevalence of GAM (wasting) was 4.7% which is acceptable and is below the WHO threshold of 5%.
- Stunting prevalence remains high (23.1%) according to the World Health Organization classification. It is also off the NDS1 target of 17%.

Prevalence of Wasting for Children Aged 6-59 Months



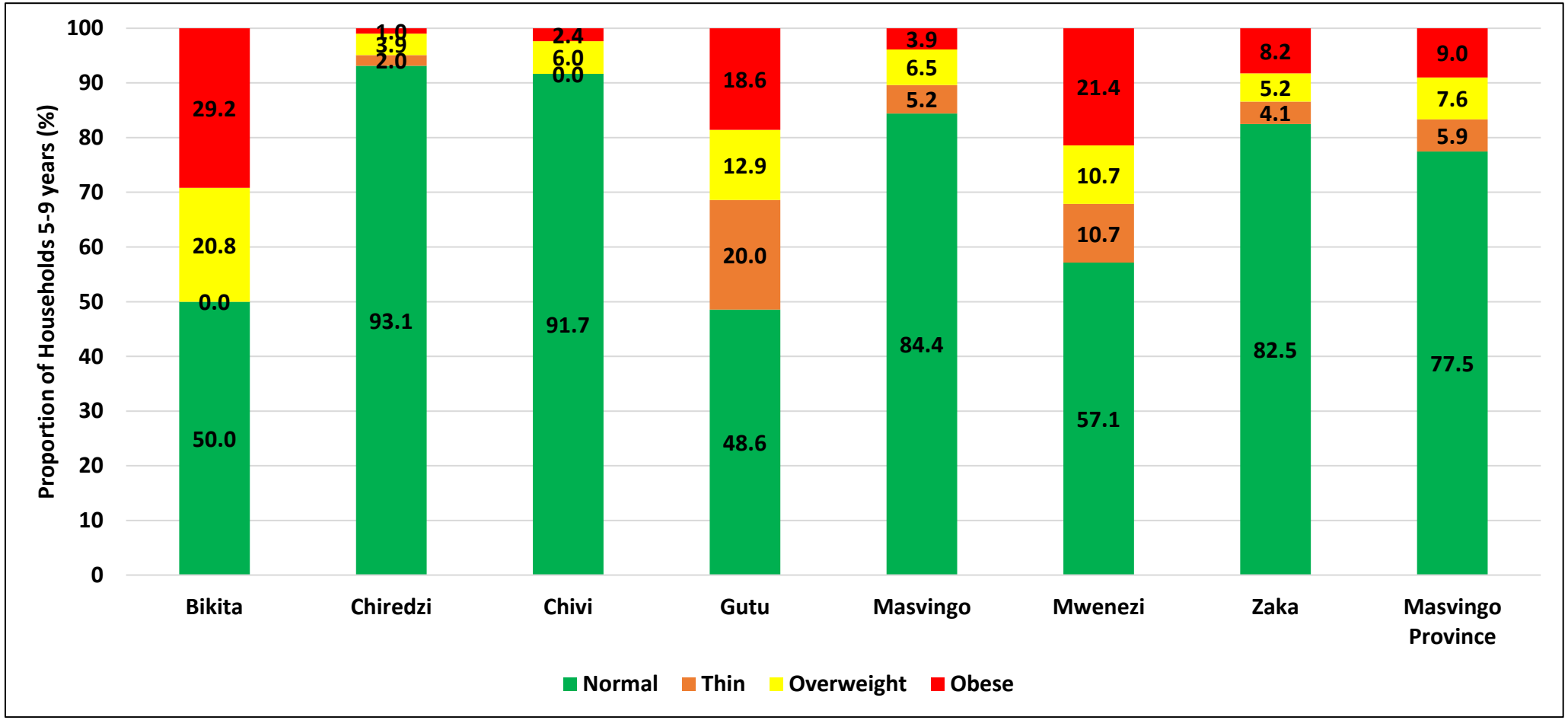
- The prevalence for Global Acute Malnutrition (wasting) GAM was 4.7%, with Bikita (9.0%) and Gutu (6.2%) reporting the highest.
- The Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) prevalence was (1.3%).

Prevalence of Stunting for Children 6-59 Months by District



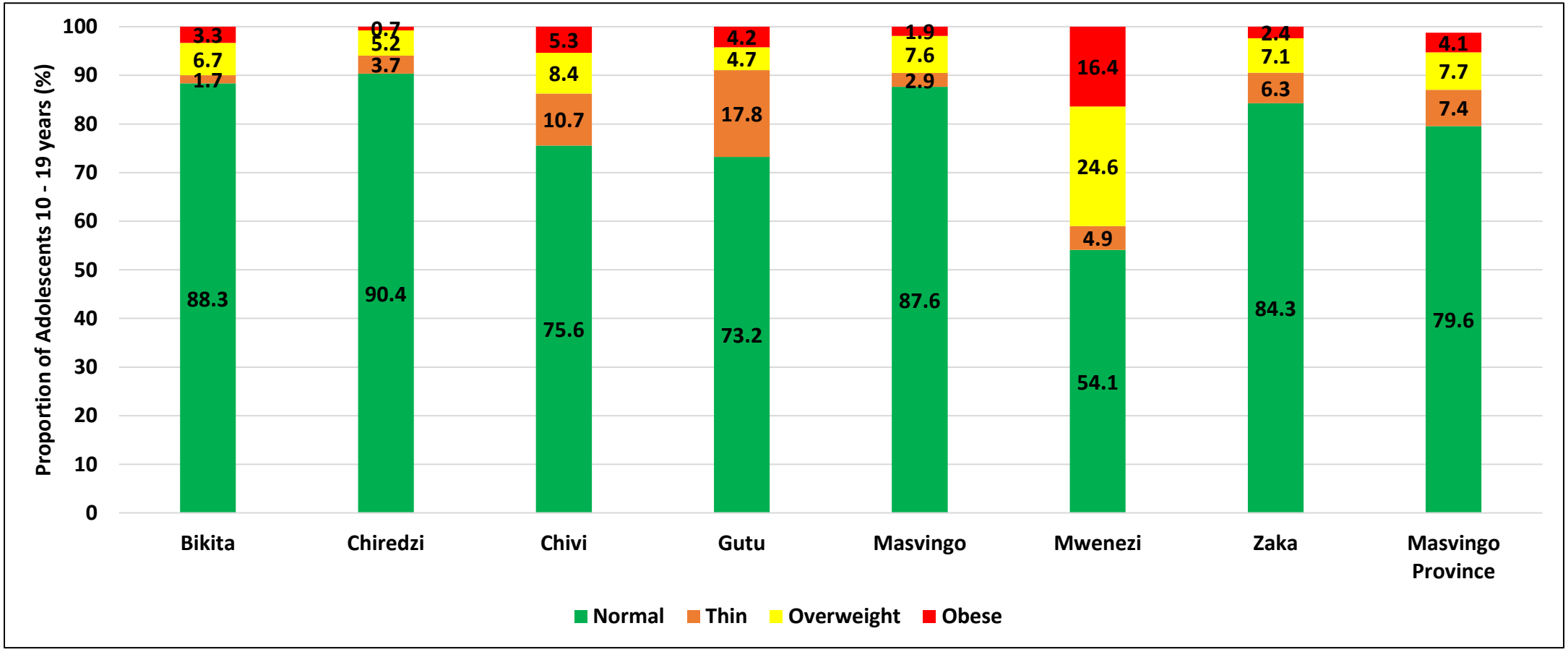
- The target of NDS1 is to reduce the national prevalence of under-five to 17% by 2025.
- The provincial proportion of children 6-59 months who were stunted was 23.1%, which is higher than the NDS1 target of less than 17%.
- Stunting levels were highest in Mwenezi (31.4%) followed by Gutu with (30.6%).

Nutrition Status of Children 5-9 Years (BMI-for-Age)



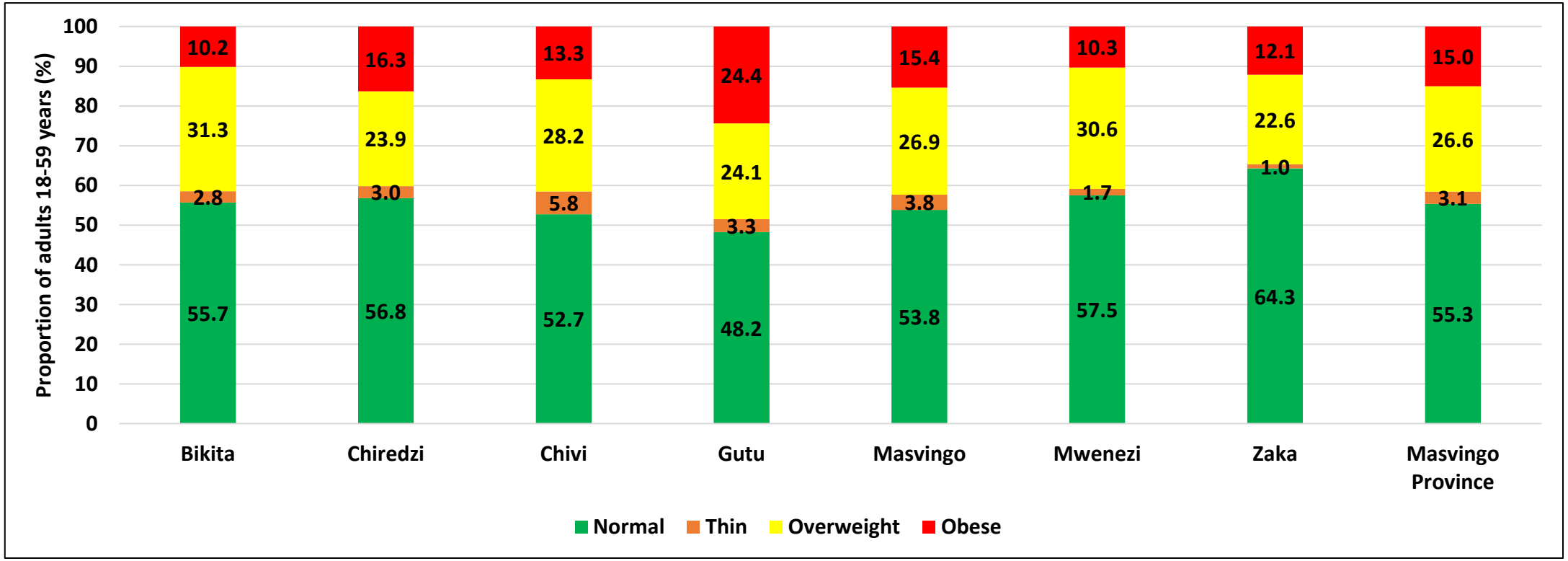
- At least 9% of the children aged 5 to 9 years were obese and 7.6% were overweight whilst 77.5% were normal.

Nutrition Status of Adolescents 10-19 Years



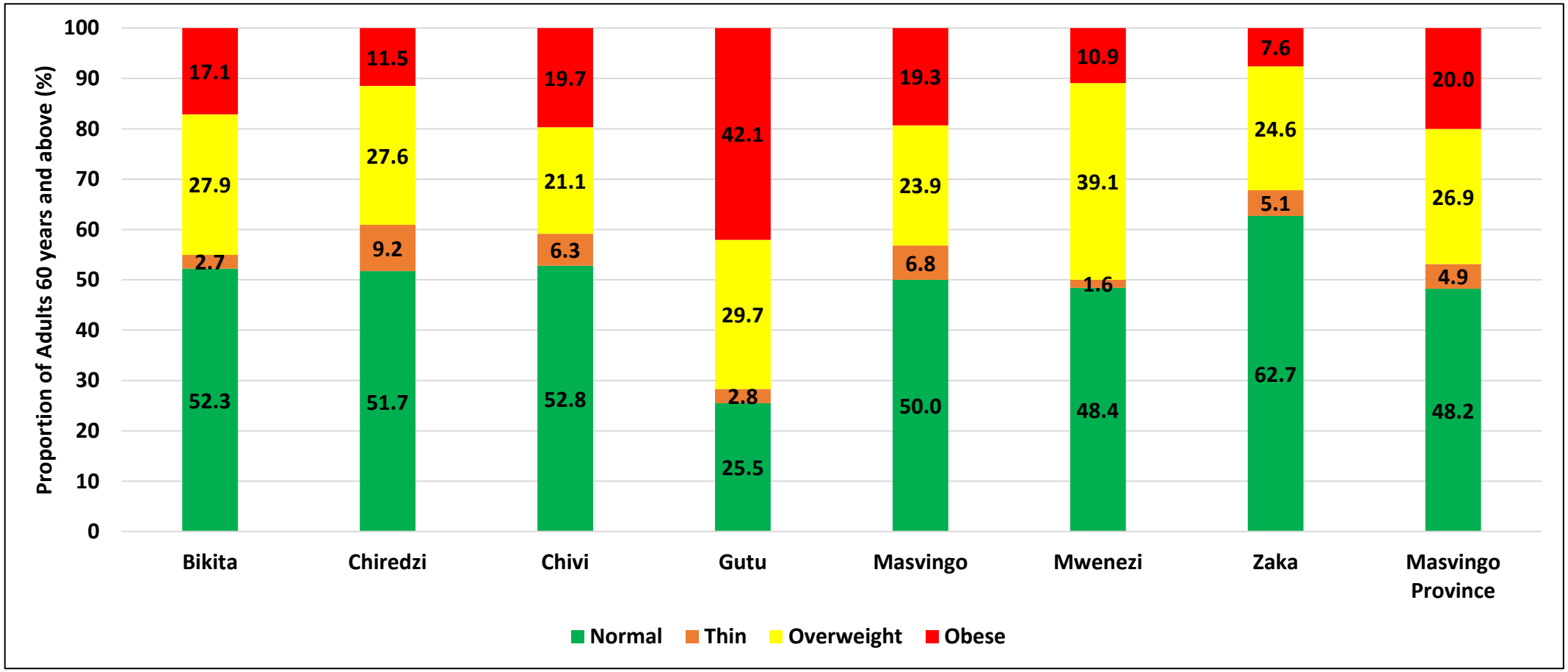
- At least 4.1% of the adolescents were obese.

Nutrition Status for Adults 18-59 Years (BMI)



- 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).
- About 26.6% of the adults aged 18-59 years were overweight.

Nutrition Status for Adults 60 Years and above (BMI)



- About 26.9% of adults above 60 were overweight and 20% were obese.

Food Security

Food Security Dimensions

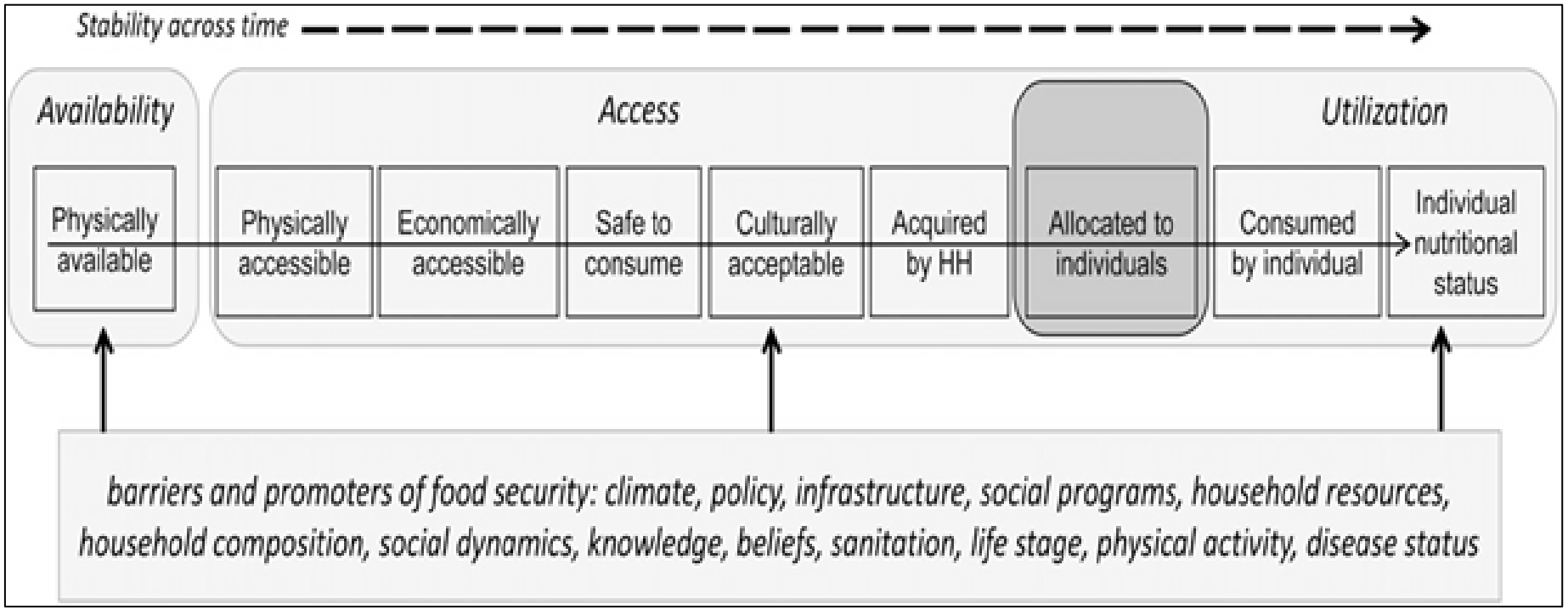


Figure 3: Dimensions of Food Security (Jones et al., 2013)

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 as given in Figure 3 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 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- 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 2025/26 consumption year from the following possible income sources;
    - Cereal stocks from the previous season;
    - Own food crop production from the 2024/25 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.

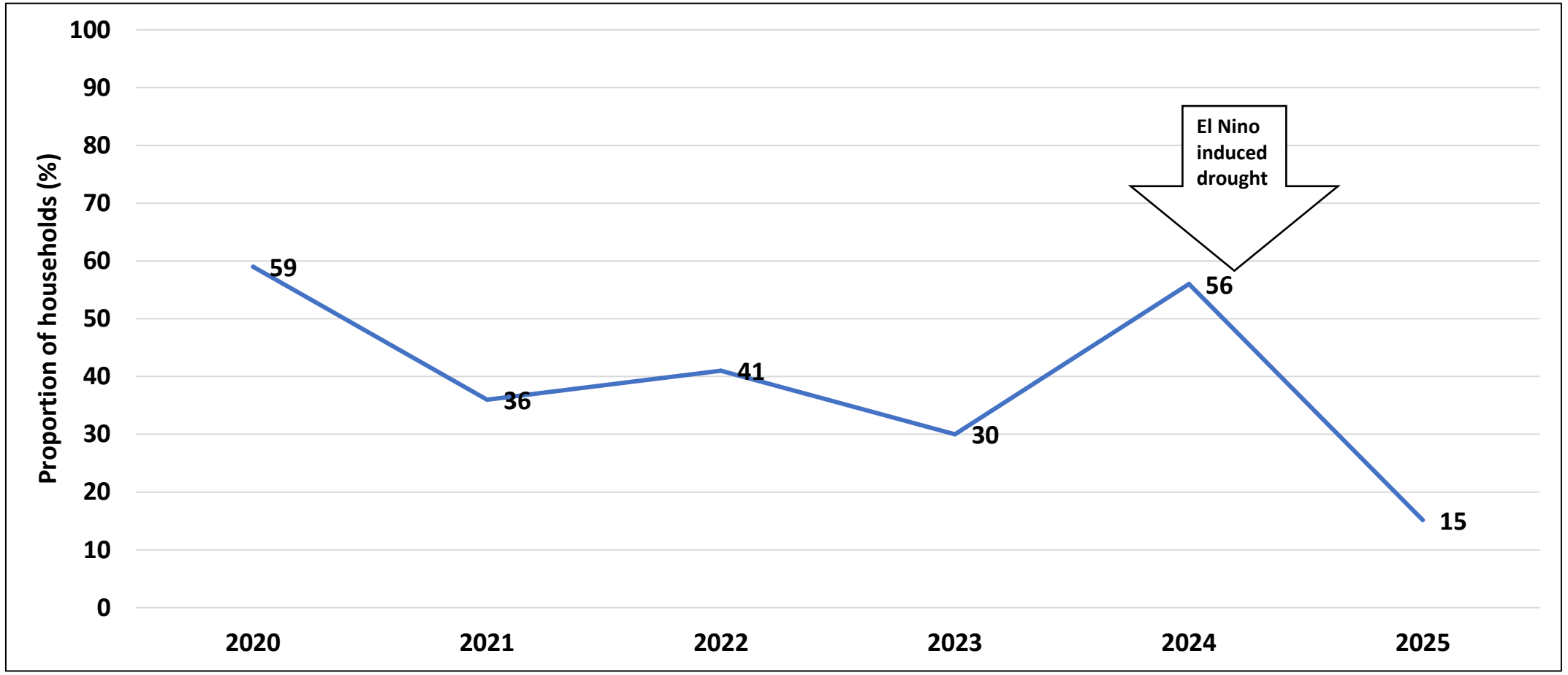
Food Security Analytical Framework

- 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 Period

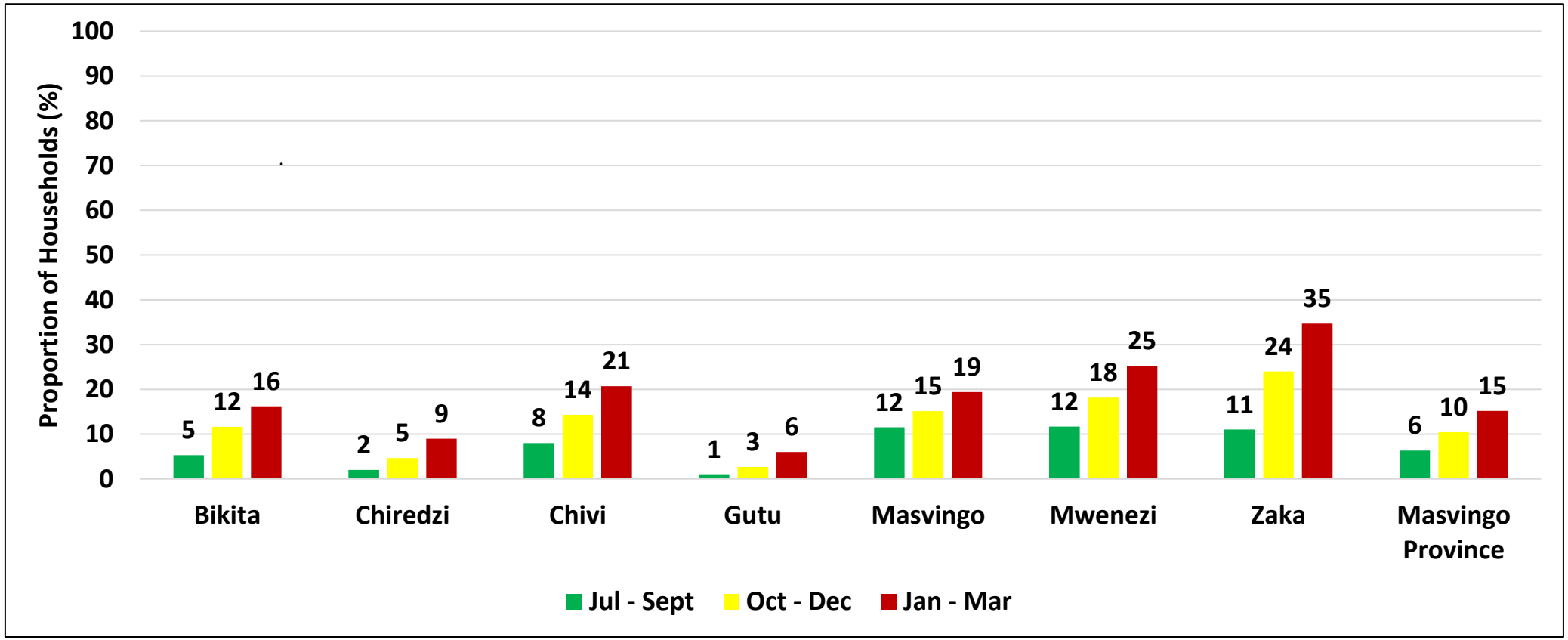
- During the peak hunger period (January to March 2026) it was estimated that approximately **15%** of households will be cereal insecure.
- The 15% of rural households translated into approximately **272,154** individuals requiring a total of **10,070 MT** of cereal (maize grain) from the National Strategic Grain Reserves.

Cereal Insecurity Trends 2020 - 2025



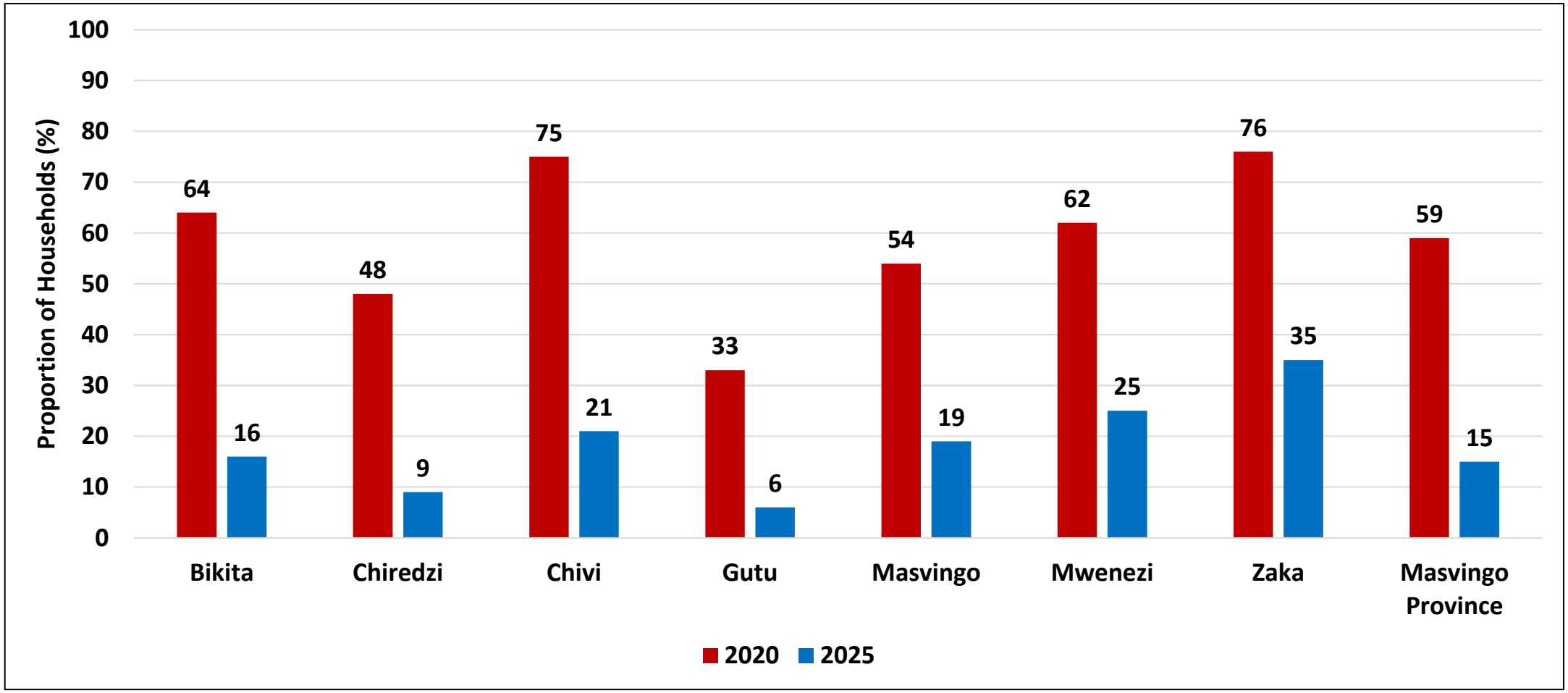
- There was a 74.6% drop in cereal insecurity from 59% in 2020 to 15% in 2025.
- Government is complimented for implementing shock responsive interventions.

Cereal Insecurity Progression by Quarter



- About 6% of households were projected to be facing cereal access challenges in the July to September 2025 quarter.
- Zaka (35%) and Mwenezi (25%) had the highest proportion of households at peak.

Cereal Insecurity (Peak Hunger Period)



- The proportion of food insecure households during the peak hunger period is projected to be low compared to 2020.

Cereal Insecure Populations by Quarter

	Jul – Sept 2025	Oct – Dec 2025	Jan – Mar 2026
Bikita	9,369	20,494	28,692
Chiredzi	6,050	14,116	27,225
Chivi	13,838	24,794	35,749
Gutu	2,082	5,551	12,490
Masvingo	27,413	36,029	46,211
Mwenezi	24,388	37,936	52,840
Zaka	21,878	47,733	68,948
Masvingo Province	**105,017**	**186,654**	**272,154**

Cereal Requirements by Quarter

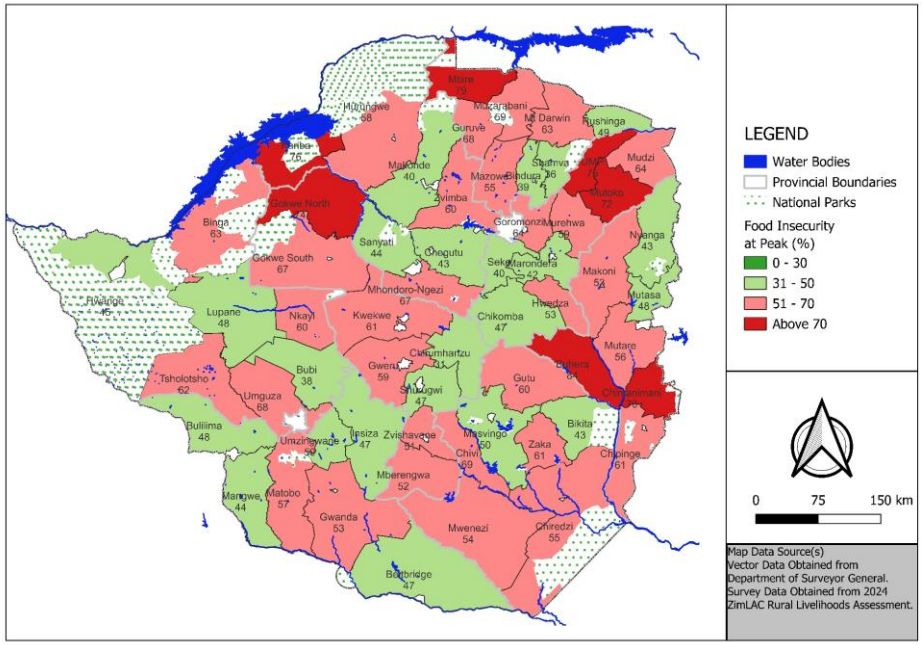
	Jul – Sept 2025 MT	Oct – Dec 2025 MT	Jan – Mar 2026 MT	July 2025 to March 2026 Total MT
Bikita	347	758	1,062	2,167
Chiredzi	224	522	1,007	1,753
Chivi	512	917	1,323	2,752
Gutu	77	205	462	745
Masvingo	1,014	1,333	1,710	4,057
Mwenezi	902	1,404	1,955	4,261
Zaka	809	1,766	2,551	5,127
Masvingo Province	**3,886**	**6,906**	**10,070**	**20,862**

Cereal Insecure Proportions By Quarter

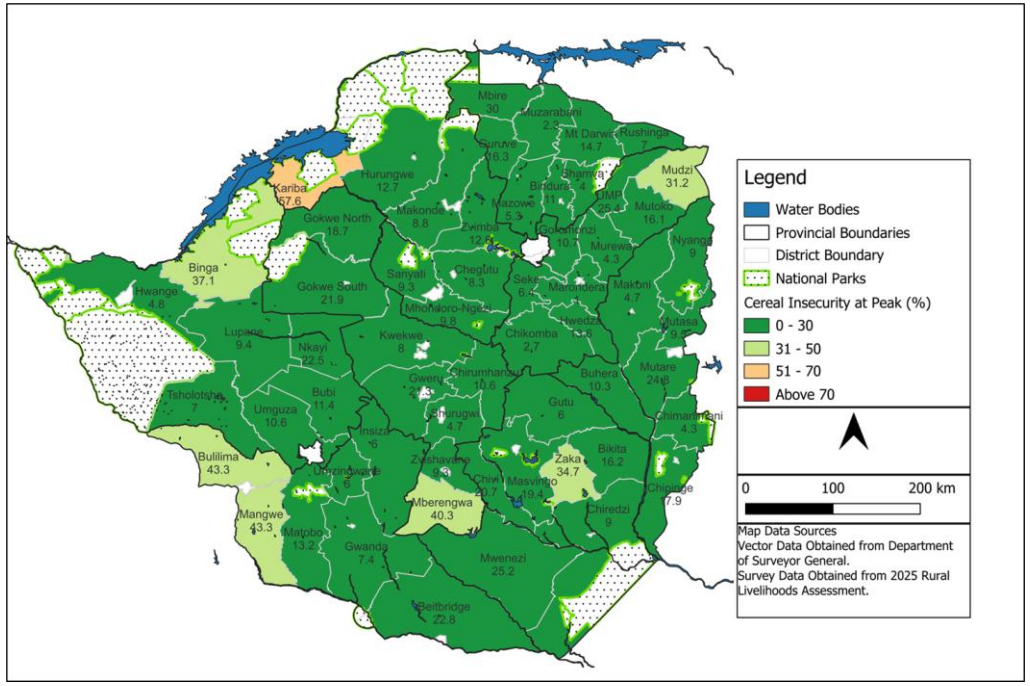
	Jul – Sept 2025 (%)	Oct – Dec 2025 (%)	Jan – Mar 2026 (%)
Bikita	5	12	16
Chiredzi	2	5	9
Chivi	8	14	21
Gutu	1	3	6
Masvingo	12	15	19
Mwenezi	12	18	25
Zaka	11	24	35
Masvingo Province	6	10	15

Food Security Status: Peak Hunger Period January to March

2024

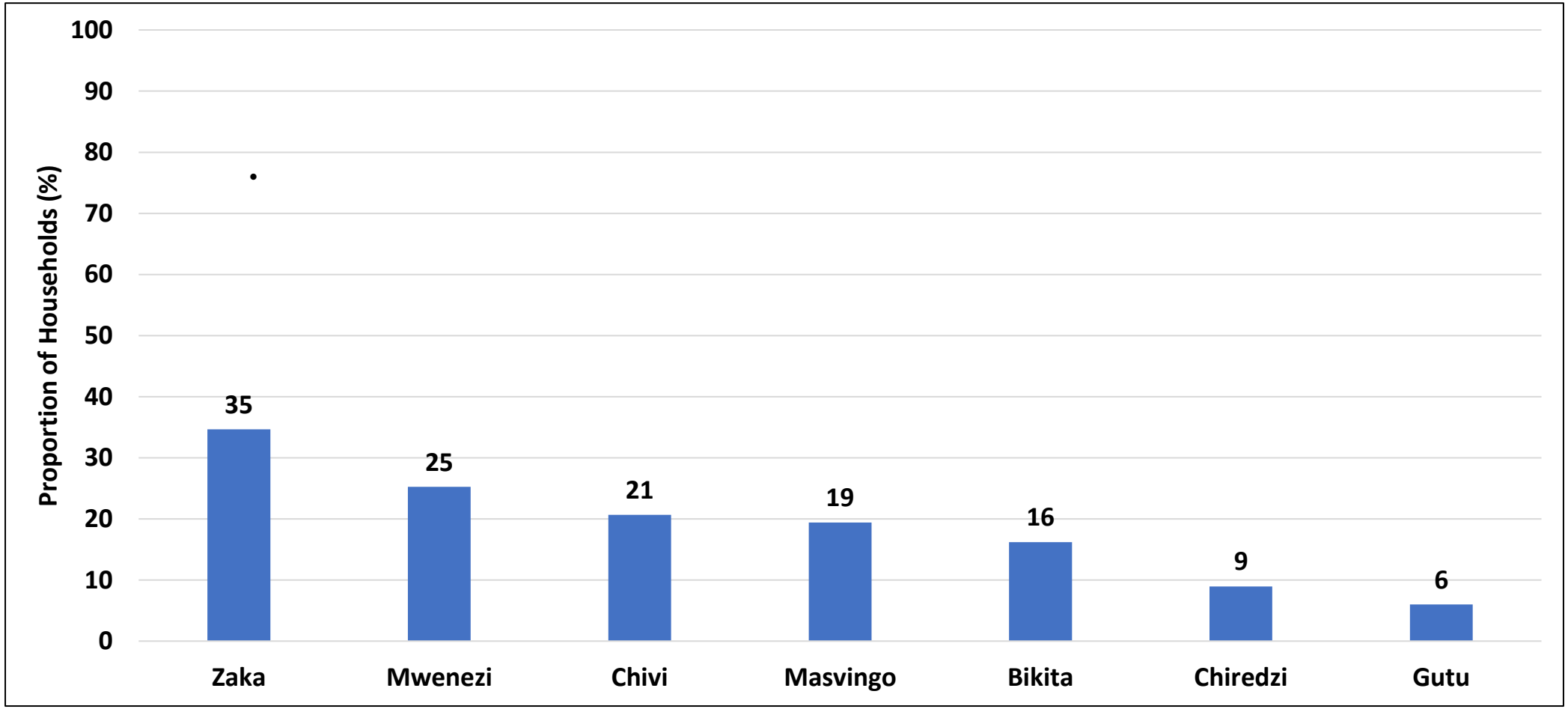


2025



- Zaka (34.7%) and Mwenezi (25.2%) have the highest proportions of people that would be food insecure during the peak hunger period.

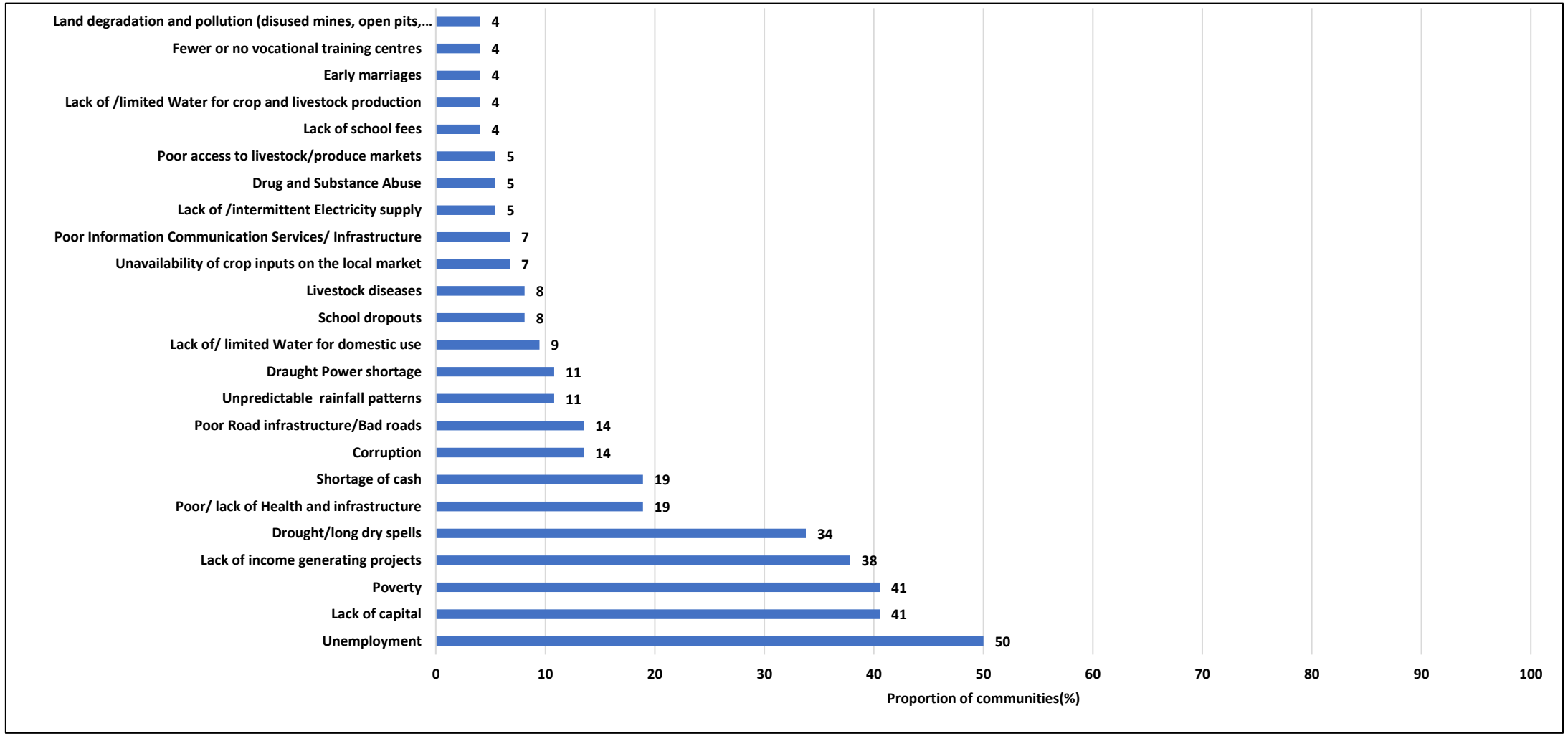
Cereal Insecurity (Jan- March 2026)



- At the peak of the hunger season, Zaka (35%) will have the most food insecure households followed by Mwenezi (25%) and Chivi (21%).

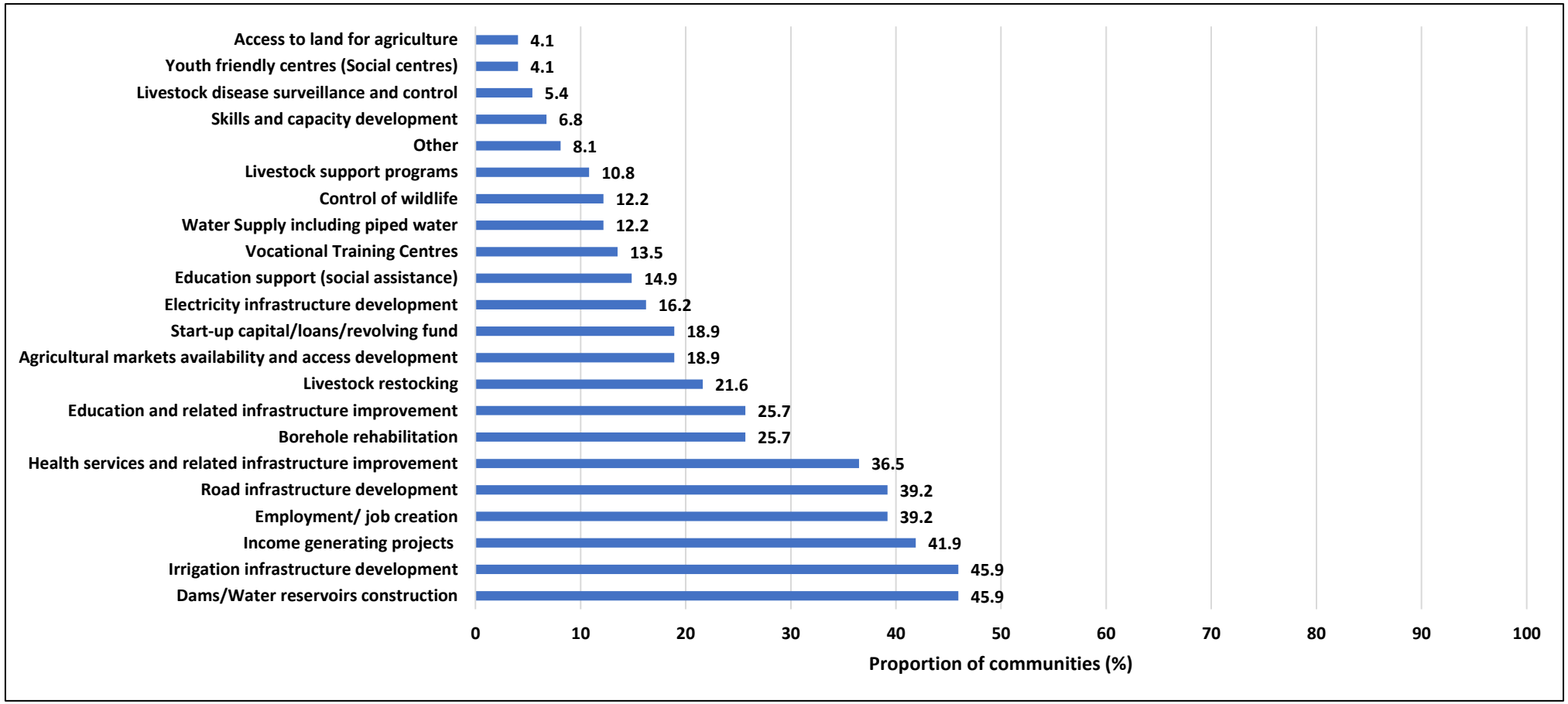
Community Development Challenges and Priorities

Community Development Challenges



- Unemployment (50%), lack of capital (41%) and poverty (41%) were the most reported community development challenges.

Community Development Priorities



- Dams/ water reservoirs construction (45.9%), irrigation infrastructure development (45.9%) and income generating projects (41.9%) were the most reported development priorities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations

Social Protection

- Support from Government increased from 35% in 2024 to 65% in 2025 due to low harvests caused by the El-Nino induced drought. The Ministry responsible for Finance is encouraged to continue with Sovereign Insurance to strengthen disaster risk management systems and access rapid and predictable financing to protect the food and nutrition security and livelihoods of vulnerable populations.

Livelihoods Coping

- The proportion of households engaging in stress (17%) and crisis (30%) livelihoods coping categories was higher compared to the base year. The Government and its partners are recommended to accelerate the implementation of policies and strategies focusing on livelihoods diversification and resilience building to ensure sustainable livelihoods and economic growth in rural areas. Areas of focus emerging from the assessment include large-scale irrigation development, value addition, market linkages strengthening, financing and capacity building for communities.

Food Safety

- The proportion of households which reported lack of knowledge on the pre-harvest interval of fruits and vegetables sprayed with pesticides was 29.9% while 7.8% reported that they were consuming vegetables or fruits before the recommended pre-harvest interval. There is need for the Ministries responsible for Health and Agriculture to increase awareness on the importance of observing pre-harvest intervals. This will help to protect households' health by preventing exposure to harmful pesticides residues that can cause acute poisoning, cancer or reproductive problems.

- About 35.5% of the households reported that they were not reading food package labels when purchasing food items. Improving food safety is an essential element of improving food security. There is need for the Ministry responsible for Health to scale-up consumer education and awareness on food safety issues to enable households to make healthy food choices.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- Access to improved sanitation for the province was 75% and 31% of the households practiced open defecation. About 31% of the households were practising open defecation. Government and development partners need to scale-up interventions and adopt innovative approaches to end open defecation. The SADC Hygiene Strategy (2021-2025) identifies opportunities and evidence for innovative approaches to end open defecation.

- In the province, the proportion of households using unimproved water sources was 17%. Government and development partners should prioritize the establishment and rehabilitation of water sources that are safe for cooking and drinking for communities. The Government should scale up village level solarized boreholes to ensure communities can access piped safe drinking water.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Shocks and Stressors

- In addressing climate-related shocks and stressors which include prolonged dry spells (47.9%), the Ministry responsible for Agriculture should continue to accelerate implementation of the Rural Development 8.0 Strategy which focuses on drought-proofing, resilience building programmes and drought relief programmes effective at mitigating the impact of drought on households' livelihoods.
- Gutu (58%) had the highest proportion of households reporting human wildlife conflict as a shock. There is need for the Ministry responsible for Environment to continue implementing strategies to mitigate and manage human wildlife conflict in the short and long term.

Agriculture Production and Technologies

- About 56% of households reported that they practiced Pfumvudza/Intwasa. There is need to scale up production of labour-saving machinery for climate smart agriculture and make them affordable, as well as have an integrated approach to implementing Pfumvudza/Intwasa to improve uptake.
- About 94% of the households reported using firewood as the main source of energy for cooking. There is need to maintain the country's biodiversity and wildlife in a good state. The Ministry responsible for Environment needs to ensure that programmes and strategies on re-afforestation ensure the sustainable use of timber and non-timber forest products.

Household Income

- Rural households' incomes have been on an increase since 2020. Government is commended for implementing robust economic stabilisation measures which have contributed to this improvement. However, the major income sources (casual labour (48%) and food crop production (21%) are susceptible to climate related shocks. Therefore, there is need to up-scale rural development programmes which promote livelihoods diversification and enhance resilience.
- About 39% of the households received crop inputs from Government. Government is commended for providing this support to households and is urged to continue equipping farmers with inputs, skills and knowledge so as to increase productivity and resilience while decreasing dependency on food assistance .

Conclusion and Recommendations

Infant and Young Child Feeding

- Vitamin A supplementation to children 6 to 59 months was above the NDS1 target of 90%. The Ministry responsible for Health should continue with the strategies applied, that is task sharing with community health workers, integrating with campaign blitz and child health and nutrition support groups/ care groups. However there is need to strengthen routine surveillance and documentation of Vitamin A supplementation efforts at community level.
- The quality of diet practice which is measured by proportion of children consuming a minimum acceptable diet (MAD) was 14.9% in 2025. This however remains below the WHO target of 25% . There is compelling evidence that supports the provision of nutritional counseling to caregivers through local multi-sector support group platforms , one-on-one and feeding demonstrations as potential interventions to improve complementary feeding practices and ultimately the nutritional status of children in developing countries . The Ministry of Health and Child Care should scale up caregiver access to care groups that are linked with other multi-sector interventions.

Food Security

- At peak (January to March 2026), 15% of the rural households (approximately 272,154 individuals) will be cereal insecure. The quarterly requirements will be 3,886MT for the July to September 2025 period, 6,906MT for the October to December 2025 period and 10,070MT for the January to March 2025 period. The Ministry responsible for Social Welfare is urged to consider programmes that address the cereal gap in the affected districts.

Community Development Challenges and Priorities

- Unemployment (50%) was ranked highest among community development challenges followed by lack of capital and poverty (41%). The aspirations for rural development spelt out in the NDS1 will require the Government to fully utilize the water bodies across the province and develop community led irrigation business units and to finance and fully implement local level business units incorporating the different community projects and skills training.

Supported by

ZIMBABWE