

LIVELIHOODS AND COPING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS: A CASE OF BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to investigate experiences and survival strategies of civil servants, who live in urban areas, using Bulawayo as a case study. The experiences and survival challenges were measured against the following indicators (1) the socio-economic challenges faced by civil servants in urban areas and (2) survival and coping strategies of civil servants in urban areas in light of these socio-economic challenges. Since the study was centred on livelihood strategies, the study opted for qualitative research on account of its efficacy in providing feelings of participants from their spoken words and observable phenomena. A total of 20 urban civil servants participants was purposively selected from different government departments; education, police, health and prisons. Findings revealed that civil servants are facing socio-economic challenges such as poor salaries, poor living conditions, poor working conditions and demotivation. Civil servants have adopted some survival and coping strategies as a buffer to these challenges and these include doing extra work, migrating and house leasing, borrowing money to boost their income, farming, illegal gold mining activities and social group networks. The study recommends, among other things, an increase in salaries of civil servants and an improvement of working conditions.

KEYWORDS: Civil Servants, Coping strategies, Livelihood Strategies and Urban Areas