

The logo features a red upward-pointing arrow on the left, a green downward-pointing arrow on the right, and a white circle in the center containing a black house icon with the letter 'R' inside. To the right of the arrows, the text 'HOUSEHOLD' is written in large, bold, black capital letters, and 'AFFORDABILITY INDEX' is written below it in bold, red capital letters.

HOUSEHOLD AFFORDABILITY INDEX

Johannesburg | Durban | cape town | SPRINGBOK | Pietermaritzburg

MARCH 2021

Release date: 31 March 2021

Supported by the Heinrich Böll Foundation Southern Africa and Foundation for Human Rights.

The logo features three vertical bars of varying shades of green.

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
SOUTHERN AFRICA

Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group [PMBEJD]

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About the Household Affordability Index

The Household Food Basket in the Household Affordability Index is a **new basket** and has been designed together with women living on low incomes in Johannesburg (Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa and Hillbrow), Cape Town (Gugulethu, Philippi, Khayelitsha, Delft, Dunoon), Durban (KwaMashu, Umlazi, Isipingo, Durban CBD, and Mtubatuba), and Springbok (in the Northern Cape), and Pietermaritzburg. It includes the foods and the volumes of these foods which women living in a family of seven members (an average low-income household size) tell us they typically try and secure each month. The basket was designed through a pilot project which ran from April 2020 to August 2020. ***It cannot however be considered the basket for every family living on a low income in each area and for all areas covered. It is however considered a reasonable proxy for a food basket which women identified as including the most important typical foods which most households try and buy each month, given affordability constraints.*** The Household Food Basket is not nutritionally complete.

Food prices are tracked directly by women data collectors off the shelves of **44 supermarkets and 30 butcheries** that target the low-income market and which women identified as those they shop at in the areas where they live. Food selection at the supermarket shelves mirrors how women themselves make decisions at the supermarket shelves given affordability constraints viz. that the foods are chosen on relative affordability and reasonable quality, and food brands are switched to seek out the cheapest prices and special deals. The selection of food brands is dynamic and subjective. Women are smart and savvy, and shop around for bargains: this specific methodology used provides an accurate cost of a monthly household food basket, as purchased by women living on low incomes.

There are 44 foods in the Household Food Basket. The date for data collection is between the 1st and 4th day of each month. Data is collected and released in the same month. Data is presented for each area, and it is also weighted and averaged for all 5 areas. *For more on methodology, see page 15-16.*

Important: data in the new Household Affordability Index starts from September 2020. Year-on-year comparisons are not yet available.

Please note: We will continue to publish the Pietermaritzburg Household Affordability Index on our website www.pmbeid.org.za. The Pietermaritzburg Household Affordability Index prioritises Pietermaritzburg-based data, which we have been running for several years. The index is useful as it is able to **provide annualised inflation figures**, is able to measure inflation over a longer period, it also serves as a good proxy for food price inflation in general. **The foods in the Pietermaritzburg household food basket are different to that of the new basket in the Household Affordability Index. *For this reason, it is not possible to compare data from the New Basket to the PMB Basket.***

About the Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group

The Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group is a Civil Society initiative founded in July 2018. This initiative focusses on issues of economic justice, the low-wage regime and on the increasing household affordability and food price crisis, with its attendant nutritional deficiencies, health and developmental consequences, and the lack of imaginative policy and systemic responses to deal with this crisis.

The Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group envisions and work towards a society of solidarity, based on a politics of love and universality, and an economy which provides justice, equity, and dignity for all.

1. MARCH 2021 Summary Data Reference Sheet

Summary of Household Affordability Data

National Minimum Wage in March 2021 (22 days)	
General workers at R21,69/hr	R3 817,44
General workers at 10% exemption at R19,52/hr	R3 435,52
Domestic workers at R19,09/hr	R3 359,84

Cost of Household Food Basket in March 2021	
Cost of <i>Joburg</i> Household Food Basket	R4 067,23
Cost of <i>Durban</i> Household Food Basket	R4 078,48
Cost of <i>Cape Town</i> Household Food Basket	R3 960,44
Cost of <i>Springbok</i> Household Food Basket	R4 238,41
Cost of <i>Maritzburg</i> Household Food Basket	R3 840,90
Average cost of Household Food Basket (all areas).	R4 039,56
Past 7 months change	R183,22 4,8%

Cost of foods prioritised & bought first in Household Food Basket over past 7 months (Sep 2020 - Mar 2021)		
Core foods	Sep_2020	Mar_2021
	cost	cost
Maize meal (30kg)	R 212,68	R 240,93
Rice (10kg)	R 135,99	R 138,51
Cake Flour (10kg)	R 92,45	R 94,56
White sugar (10kg)	R 151,80	R 158,19
Sugar beans (5kg)	R 116,77	R 158,76
Samp (5kg)	R 42,52	R 45,58
Cooking oil (5L)	R 104,43	R 109,82
Salt (1kg)	R 12,27	R 12,35
Potatoes (10kg)	R 67,20	R 59,39
Onions (10kg)	R 70,07	R 61,52
Frozen chicken pieces (10kg)	R 314,61	R 327,56
Curry powder (200g)	R 30,25	R 29,84
Stock cubes (24 cubes x2)	R 37,87	R 38,83
Soup (400g x2)	R 37,47	R 38,25
Tea (250g)	R 23,12	R 22,89
White bread (25 loaves)	R 321,69	R 333,59
Brown bread (25 loaves)	R 294,52	R 303,94
Subtotal of core foods	R2 065,71	R 2 174,53

Cost of Household Domestic and Personal Hygiene Products Basket in March 2021	R706,96
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Cost of feeding a family a basic nutritious diet per month	
Household size with 4 members	R2 837,47
Household size with 5 members	R3 583,35
Household size with 7 members	R4 954,18
In March 2021 , families with 7 members underspent on basic nutritious food by a minimum of 18% (-R914,62).	

Average cost of feeding a child a basic nutritious diet per month in March 2021	
Small child aged 3-9 years	R636,90
Small child aged 10-13 years	R691,39
Girl child aged 14-18 years	R733,94
Boy child aged 14-18 years	R829,73
Average for all children	R722,99
In March 2021 , the Child Support Grant is 25% below the food poverty line & 39% below the average cost to secure a basic nutritious diet for a child.	

Summary of Statistics South Africa's Economic and Social Data

All South Africans	
Population size	59,6 million
Unemployment rate	32,5%
Expanded unemployment rate	42,6%
Numbers of people unemployed	11,2 million
Numbers of people employed	15 million
Number of people one wage supports	3,97
NMW March 2021	R3 817,44
NMW dispersed through a family	R961,57

Black South Africans	
Population size	48,2 million
Unemployment rate	36,5%
Expanded unemployment rate	47,2%
Numbers of people unemployed	10,1 million
Numbers of people employed	11,2 million
Number of people one wage supports	4,29
NMW March 2021	R3 817,44
NMW dispersed through a family	R889,85

White South Africans	
Population size	4,7 million
Unemployment rate	8,8%
Expanded unemployment rate	11,3%
Numbers of people unemployed	224 000
Numbers of people employed	1,8 million
Number of people one wage supports	2,67
NMW March 2021	R3 817,44
NMW dispersed through a family	R1 429,75

The maximum value of the National Minimum Wage [NMW]: general workers	R21,69/hour
Level of NMW at 10% exemption	R19,52/hour
The value of the Child Support Grant [CSG]	R440,00
The value of the Old-age Grant [OAG]	R1 860,00
The number of children receiving a CSG	12,78 million
The number of pensioners receiving an OAG	3,67 million
The upper-bound poverty line [UBPL]	R1 268,00
The lower-bound poverty line [LBPL]	R840,00
The food poverty line [FPL]	R585,00

% of people living below the UBPL (30,4m)	55,5%
% of people living below the FPL (13,8m)	25,2%
% of Black South Africans living below the UBPL (±29,9m)	64,2%

Stunting levels in <i>boy children under 5 years</i>	30%
Stunting levels in <i>girl children under 5 years</i>	25%

Estimated overall HIV prevalence rate among population (7,8m)	13,0%
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Any errors in data entry or calculations are our own. See reference page 17 for Statistics South Africa data references. All efforts are made to source the latest available data.

2. MARCH 2021 Household Food Index: All areas

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2020/21			change in Rands		change in %	
		Sep_2020	Feb_2021	Mar_2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021
Maize meal	30kg	R 212,68	R 241,06	R 240,93	-R 0,14	R 28,25	0%	13%
Rice	10kg	R 135,99	R 140,75	R 138,51	-R 2,24	R 2,52	-2%	2%
Cake Flour	10kg	R 92,45	R 94,72	R 94,56	-R 0,16	R 2,10	0%	2%
White sugar	10kg	R 151,80	R 159,74	R 158,19	-R 1,55	R 6,40	-1%	4%
Sugar beans	5kg	R 116,77	R 157,69	R 158,76	R 1,08	R 42,00	1%	36%
Samp	5kg	R 42,52	R 45,56	R 45,58	R 0,03	R 3,06	0%	7%
Cooking oil	5L	R 104,43	R 108,53	R 109,82	R 1,29	R 5,39	1%	5%
Salt	1kg	R 12,27	R 12,81	R 12,35	-R 0,46	R 0,08	-4%	1%
Potatoes	10kg	R 67,20	R 64,44	R 59,39	-R 5,04	-R 7,80	-8%	-12%
Onions	10kg	R 70,07	R 69,17	R 61,52	-R 7,64	-R 8,55	-11%	-12%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R 314,61	R 318,58	R 327,56	R 8,98	R 12,95	3%	4%
Curry powder	200g	R 30,25	R 31,59	R 29,84	-R 1,75	-R 0,41	-6%	-1%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R 37,87	R 36,60	R 38,83	R 2,23	R 0,96	6%	3%
Soup	400g x2	R 37,47	R 38,70	R 38,25	-R 0,45	R 0,78	-1%	2%
Tea	250g	R 23,12	R 22,60	R 22,89	R 0,28	-R 0,24	1%	-1%
Full cream milk	6L	R 79,62	R 74,18	R 73,63	-R 0,55	-R 5,99	-1%	-8%
Maas	4L	R 46,81	R 47,10	R 48,03	R 0,93	R 1,22	2%	3%
Eggs	60 eggs	R 99,21	R 99,46	R 99,14	-R 0,32	-R 0,06	0%	0%
Chicken feet	2kg	R 73,32	R 63,29	R 65,12	R 1,82	-R 8,20	3%	-11%
Gizzards	2kg	R 59,07	R 67,59	R 68,86	R 1,27	R 9,79	2%	17%
Chicken livers	2kg	R 51,57	R 50,31	R 51,24	R 0,94	-R 0,33	2%	-1%
Beef liver	2kg	R 73,18	R 72,33	R 75,04	R 2,70	R 1,86	4%	3%
Beef	2kg	R 136,36	R 150,83	R 153,95	R 3,12	R 17,59	2%	13%
Wors	2kg	R 109,74	R 111,36	R 113,77	R 2,41	R 4,03	2%	4%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R 77,96	R 75,63	R 73,40	-R 2,23	-R 4,55	-3%	-6%
Fish	2kg	R 86,80	R 96,79	R 94,57	-R 2,22	R 7,77	-2%	9%
Tomatoes	6kg	R 80,48	R 85,61	R 103,41	R 17,79	R 22,93	21%	28%
Carrots	5kg	R 31,53	R 29,52	R 33,35	R 3,83	R 1,82	13%	6%
Butternut	10kg	R 67,93	R 62,09	R 57,31	-R 4,78	-R 10,62	-8%	-16%
Spinach	8 bunches	R 81,93	R 80,58	R 87,00	R 6,42	R 5,07	8%	6%
Cabbage	2 heads	R 32,53	R 26,89	R 30,32	R 3,43	-R 2,22	13%	-7%
Green pepper	2kg	R 48,49	R 43,51	R 43,62	R 0,11	-R 4,87	0%	-10%
Cremora	800g	R 34,36	R 34,46	R 35,33	R 0,88	R 0,98	3%	3%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R 111,71	R 114,46	R 114,48	R 0,02	R 2,77	0%	2%
Canned beans	410g x6	R 66,40	R 66,08	R 66,09	R 0,01	-R 0,31	0%	0%
Bananas	4kg	R 53,93	R 52,36	R 56,52	R 4,16	R 2,59	8%	5%
Apples	3kg	R 37,44	R 41,61	R 40,45	-R 1,16	R 3,01	-3%	8%
Oranges	7kg	R 82,71	R 102,93	R 104,07	R 1,15	R 21,36	1%	26%
Margarine	1kg	R 32,14	R 34,28	R 35,01	R 0,73	R 2,87	2%	9%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R 59,05	R 59,92	R 62,11	R 2,19	R 3,06	4%	5%
Polony	2.5kg	R 49,34	R 49,38	R 49,94	R 0,56	R 0,60	1%	1%
Apricot jam	900g	R 27,03	R 27,97	R 29,26	R 1,30	R 2,24	5%	8%
White bread	25 loaves	R 321,69	R 333,97	R 333,59	-R 0,39	R 11,90	0%	4%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R 294,52	R 304,13	R 303,94	-R 0,19	R 9,42	0%	3%
Total household food basket		R 3 856,34	R 4 001,17	R 4 039,56	R 38,39	R 183,22	1,0%	4,8%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **average household food basket increased** by **R38,39 (1%)** from R4 001,17 in February 2021 to R4 039,56 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The cost of the **average household food basket increased** by **R183,22 (4,8%)** from R3 856,34 in September 2020 to R4 039,56 in March 2021.

3. MARCH 2021 Household Food Index: All areas, by foods prioritised & bought first

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2020/21			change in Rands		change in %	
		Sep_2020	Feb_2021	Mar_2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021
Maize meal	30kg	R 212,68	R 241,06	R 240,93	-R 0,14	R 28,25	0%	13%
Rice	10kg	R 135,99	R 140,75	R 138,51	-R 2,24	R 2,52	-2%	2%
Cake Flour	10kg	R 92,45	R 94,72	R 94,56	-R 0,16	R 2,10	0%	2%
White sugar	10kg	R 151,80	R 159,74	R 158,19	-R 1,55	R 6,40	-1%	4%
Sugar beans	5kg	R 116,77	R 157,69	R 158,76	R 1,08	R 42,00	1%	36%
Samp	5kg	R 42,52	R 45,56	R 45,58	R 0,03	R 3,06	0%	7%
Cooking oil	5L	R 104,43	R 108,53	R 109,82	R 1,29	R 5,39	1%	5%
Salt	1kg	R 12,27	R 12,81	R 12,35	-R 0,46	R 0,08	-4%	1%
Potatoes	10kg	R 67,20	R 64,44	R 59,39	-R 5,04	-R 7,80	-8%	-12%
Onions	10kg	R 70,07	R 69,17	R 61,52	-R 7,64	-R 8,55	-11%	-12%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R 314,61	R 318,58	R 327,56	R 8,98	R 12,95	3%	4%
Curry powder	200g	R 30,25	R 31,59	R 29,84	-R 1,75	-R 0,41	-6%	-1%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R 37,87	R 36,60	R 38,83	R 2,23	R 0,96	6%	3%
Soup	400g x2	R 37,47	R 38,70	R 38,25	-R 0,45	R 0,78	-1%	2%
Tea	250g	R 23,12	R 22,60	R 22,89	R 0,28	-R 0,24	1%	-1%
White bread	25 loaves	R 321,69	R 333,97	R 333,59	-R 0,39	R 11,90	0%	4%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R 294,52	R 304,13	R 303,94	-R 0,19	R 9,42	0%	3%
Total household food basket		R 2 065,71	R 2 180,64	R 2 174,53	-R 6,11	R 108,82	-0,3%	5,3%

Month-on-month: The **average cost of the foods prioritised and bought first** in the household food basket **decreased** by **R6,11 (-0,3%)** from R2 180,64 in February 2021 to R2 174,53 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The **average cost of the foods prioritised and bought first** in the household food basket **increased** by **R108,82 (5,3%)** from R2 065,71 in September 2020 to R2 174,53 in March 2021.

The cost of the foods prioritised and bought first in the Household Food Basket is important. The core foods are bought first and these foods ensure that families do not go hungry whilst ensuring that meals can be cooked. When the prices of core foods increase, there is less money to secure other important mostly nutritionally-rich foods, which are essential for health and well-being and strong immune systems (viz. meat, eggs and dairy which are critical for protein, iron and calcium; vegetables and fruit which are critical for vitamins, minerals and fibre; and Maas, peanut butter and pilchards, good fats, protein and calcium essential for children. The data shows that the core foods contribute **54%** of the total cost of the Household Food Basket. At an average cost of **R2 174,53 in March 2021**, these foods are relatively very expensive in relation to the total money available in the household purse to secure food. These foods must be bought regardless of price escalations. The high cost of core staple foods result in a lot of proper nutritious food being removed off the family plates. The consequences of high costs on the core foods has a negative impact on overall household health and well-being.

4. MARCH 2021 Household Food Index: Zero-rated vs. VAT

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2020/21			change in Rands		change in %	
		Sep_2020	Feb_2021	Mar_2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021
Zero-rated foods								
Maize meal	30kg	R 212,68	R 241,06	R 240,93	-R 0,14	R 28,25	0%	13%
Rice	10kg	R 135,99	R 140,75	R 138,51	-R 2,24	R 2,52	-2%	2%
Samp	5kg	R 42,52	R 45,56	R 45,58	R 0,03	R 3,06	0%	7%
Sugar beans	5kg	R 116,77	R 157,69	R 158,76	R 1,08	R 42,00	1%	36%
Cooking oil	5L	R 104,43	R 108,53	R 109,82	R 1,29	R 5,39	1%	5%
Full cream milk	6L	R 79,62	R 74,18	R 73,63	-R 0,55	-R 5,99	-1%	-8%
Maas	4L	R 46,81	R 47,10	R 48,03	R 0,93	R 1,22	2%	3%
Eggs	60 eggs	R 99,21	R 99,46	R 99,14	-R 0,32	-R 0,06	0%	0%
Potatoes	10kg	R 67,20	R 64,44	R 59,39	-R 5,04	-R 7,80	-8%	-12%
Onions	10kg	R 70,07	R 69,17	R 61,52	-R 7,64	-R 8,55	-11%	-12%
Tomatoes	6kg	R 80,48	R 85,61	R 103,41	R 17,79	R 22,93	21%	28%
Carrots	5kg	R 31,53	R 29,52	R 33,35	R 3,83	R 1,82	13%	6%
Butternut	10kg	R 67,93	R 62,09	R 57,31	-R 4,78	-R 10,62	-8%	-16%
Spinach	8 bunches	R 81,93	R 80,58	R 87,00	R 6,42	R 5,07	8%	6%
Cabbage	2 heads	R 32,53	R 26,89	R 30,32	R 3,43	-R 2,22	13%	-7%
Green Pepper	2kg	R 48,49	R 43,51	R 43,62	R 0,11	-R 4,87	0%	-10%
Tinned pilchards	6 tins	R 111,71	R 114,46	R 114,48	R 0,02	R 2,77	0%	2%
Bananas	4kg	R 53,93	R 52,36	R 56,52	R 4,16	R 2,59	8%	5%
Apples	3kg	R 37,44	R 41,61	R 40,45	-R 1,16	R 3,01	-3%	8%
Oranges	7kg	R 82,71	R 102,93	R 104,07	R 1,15	R 21,36	1%	26%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R 294,52	R 304,13	R 303,94	-R 0,19	R 9,42	0%	3%
Cake flour	10kg	R 92,45	R 94,72	R 94,56	-R 0,16	R 2,10	0%	2%
Subtotal of zero-rated foods		R 1 990,96	R 2 086,35	R 2 104,36	R 18,01	R 113,40	1%	6%
Foods subject to VAT								
White sugar	10kg	R 151,80	R 159,74	R 158,19	-R 1,55	R 6,40	-1%	4%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R 314,61	R 318,58	R 327,56	R 8,98	R 12,95	3%	4%
Chicken feet	2kg	R 73,32	R 63,29	R 65,12	R 1,82	-R 8,20	3%	-11%
Gizzards	2kg	R 59,07	R 67,59	R 68,86	R 1,27	R 9,79	2%	17%
Chicken livers	2kg	R 51,57	R 50,31	R 51,24	R 0,94	-R 0,33	2%	-1%
Beef liver	2kg	R 73,18	R 72,33	R 75,04	R 2,70	R 1,85	4%	3%
Beef	2kg	R 136,36	R 150,83	R 153,95	R 3,12	R 17,59	2%	13%
Wors	2kg	R 109,74	R 111,36	R 113,77	R 2,41	R 4,03	2%	4%
Inyama yangapakhathi	2kg	R 77,96	R 75,63	R 73,40	-R 2,23	-R 4,55	-3%	-6%
Fish	2kg	R 86,80	R 96,79	R 94,57	-R 2,22	R 7,77	-2%	9%
Salt	1kg	R 12,27	R 12,81	R 12,35	-R 0,46	R 0,08	-4%	1%
Stock	48 cubes	R 37,87	R 36,60	R 38,83	R 2,23	R 0,96	6%	3%
Soup	800g	R 37,47	R 38,70	R 38,25	-R 0,45	R 0,78	-1%	2%
Curry powder	400g	R 30,25	R 31,59	R 29,84	-R 1,75	-R 0,41	-6%	-1%
Tea	200g	R 23,12	R 22,60	R 22,89	R 0,28	-R 0,24	1%	-1%
Cremera	1kg	R 34,36	R 34,46	R 35,33	R 0,88	R 0,98	3%	3%
Canned beans	6 cans	R 66,40	R 66,08	R 66,09	R 0,01	-R 0,31	0%	0%
Margarine	1kg	R 32,14	R 34,28	R 35,01	R 0,73	R 2,87	2%	9%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R 59,05	R 59,92	R 62,11	R 2,19	R 3,06	4%	5%
Polony	2.5kg	R 49,34	R 49,38	R 49,94	R 0,56	R 0,60	1%	1%
Apricot jam	900g	R 27,03	R 27,97	R 29,26	R 1,30	R 2,24	5%	8%
White bread	25 loaves	R 321,69	R 333,97	R 333,59	-R 0,39	R 11,90	0%	4%
Subtotal of VATable foods		R 1 865,38	R 1 914,82	R 1 935,20	R 20,38	R 69,81	1,1%	3,7%
Vatable foods (excl. VAT)		R 1 622,07	R 1 665,06	R 1 682,78	R 17,72	R 60,71	1,1%	3,7%
VAT total		R243,31	R249,76	R252,42	R2,66	R9,11	1,1%	3,7%
Total household food basket		R3 856,34	R4 001,17	R4 039,56	R38,39	R183,21	1,0%	4,8%

Month-on-month: The **zero-rated foods** in the household food basket **increased** by **R18,01 (1%)** from R2 086,35 in February 2021 to R2 104,36 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The **zero-rated foods** in the household food basket **increased** by **R113,40 (6%)** from R1 990,96 in September 2020 to R2 104,36 in March 2021.

Month-on-month: The **foods subject to VAT** in the household food basket **increased** by **R20,38 (1,1%)** from R1 914,82 in February 2021 to R1 935,20 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The **foods subject to VAT** in the household food basket **increased** by **R69,81 (3,7%)** from R1 865,38 in September 2020 to R1 935,20 in March 2021.

22/44 foods in the total household food basket are subject to VAT. Foods subject to VAT make up **48%** of the total cost of the household food basket. VAT on the total household food basket came to **R252,42 in March 2021**. This means **6,2%** of the household food basket is made up of VAT. *A tax of R252,42 is not an insignificant amount of money if we consider that 30kg of maize meal in March 2021 cost R240,93.*

5. MARCH 2021 Household Domestic & Personal Hygiene Index: All areas

Products tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2020/21			change in Rands		change in %	
		Sep_2020	Feb_2021	Mar_2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021
Green bar soap	500g x8	R 60,21	R 63,16	R 65,05	R 1,90	R 4,84	3%	8%
Washing powder	3kg	R 62,38	R 63,57	R 63,81	R 0,24	R 1,44	0%	2%
Dishwashing liquid	750ml	R 26,64	R 27,08	R 28,28	R 1,21	R 1,65	4%	6%
Handy Andy	750ml	R 22,29	R 22,47	R 24,23	R 1,77	R 1,95	8%	9%
Jik	1,5L	R 42,44	R 38,18	R 39,26	R 1,08	-R 3,19	3%	-8%
Toilet paper	24 rolls	R 83,72	R 88,56	R 91,36	R 2,80	R 7,64	3%	9%
Bath soap	500g x4	R 54,82	R 56,09	R 55,35	-R 0,74	R 0,53	-1%	1%
Toothpaste	100ml x3	R 41,79	R 43,18	R 44,16	R 0,98	R 2,37	2%	6%
Vaseline	500g	R 33,79	R 35,75	R 34,11	-R 1,65	R 0,32	-5%	1%
Cream	big bottle x2	R 37,71	R 36,57	R 38,72	R 2,15	R 1,01	6%	3%
Roll-on deodorant	x4	R 62,44	R 62,71	R 62,76	R 0,05	R 0,32	0%	1%
Spray-on deodorant	big spray x3	R 72,35	R 73,37	R 73,91	R 0,55	R 1,56	1%	2%
Sanitary pads	2 big packs	R 56,07	R 58,65	R 60,38	R 1,73	R 4,31	3%	8%
Shoe Polish	100ml	R 25,67	R 24,85	R 25,58	R 0,73	-R 0,09	3%	0%
Total household domestic and hygiene products		R 682,30	R 694,17	R 706,96	R 12,79	R 24,66	1,8%	3,6%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **household domestic and personal hygiene products basket** *increased* by **R12,79 (1,8%)** from R694,17 in February 2021 to R706,96 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The cost of the **household domestic and personal hygiene products basket** *increased* by **R24,66 (3,6%)** from R682,30 in September 2020 to R706,96 in March 2021.

Domestic and personal hygiene products are critical expenses for safe hygiene and overall health and well being. The money needed to secure domestic and personal hygiene products are sourced from within the food budget. These products compete viciously in the food budget.

6. MARCH 2021 Basic Nutritional Food Index: families

By number of family members	Index 2020/21			change in Rands		change in %	
	Sep_2020	Feb_2021	Mar_2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021
Four (4)	R2 730,66	R2 788,48	R2 837,47	R 48,99	R 106,81	1,8%	3,9%
Five (5)	R3 450,98	R3 522,22	R3 583,35	R 61,13	R 132,37	1,7%	3,8%
Seven (7)	R4 774,55	R4 868,71	R4 954,18	R 85,47	R 179,63	1,8%	3,8%

Month-on-month: The cost of a **basic nutritional food basket for a family of 7 members increased** by **R85,47 (1,8%)** from R4 868,71 in February 2021 to R4 954,18 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The cost of a **basic nutritional food basket for a family of 7 members increased** by **R179,63 (3,8%)** from R4 774,55 in September 2020 to R4 954,18 in March 2021.

In **March 2021** the difference in cost between the foods which families living on low incomes try and buy each month (the household food basket) and the foods which families would like to buy and should buy to meet basic nutrition (a basic nutritional food basket) was **R4 039,56 vs. R4 954,18** (-R914,62).

It means that in **March 2021**, families with seven members underspent on basic nutritional food by a **minimum of 18%** (R914,62).

7. MARCH 2021 Basic Nutritional Food Index: children

By age of child	Index 2020/21			change in Rands		change in %	
	Sep_2020	Feb_2021	Mar_2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021
Small child aged 3-9 years	R615,77	R624,71	R636,90	R 12,19	R 21,13	2,0%	3,4%
Small child aged 10-13 years	R668,04	R679,23	R691,39	R 12,16	R 23,35	1,8%	3,5%
Girl child aged 14-18 years	R707,81	R721,77	R733,94	R 12,17	R 26,13	1,7%	3,7%
Boy child aged 14-18 years	R791,33	R817,28	R829,73	R 12,45	R 38,40	1,5%	4,9%
Average for all children	R695,74	R710,75	R722,99	R 12,24	R 27,25	1,7%	3,9%

Month-on-month: The **average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet increased** by **R12,24 (1,7%)** from R710,75 in February 2021 to R722,99 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The **average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet increased** by **R27,25 (3,9%)** from R695,74 in September 2020 to R722,99 in March 2021.

As children grow older, their nutritional requirements increase. It means that the cost of feeding a child increases in price as a child grows older and is also different for teenage girls and boys. The Child Support Grant is a fixed amount: it does not account for age.

The Child Support Grant is **R440**.

The food poverty line calculated by Statistics South Africa is **R585** per capita per month (latest April 2020).

In **March 2021** the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet per month cost **R722,99**.

The Child Support Grant of R440 is set below the food poverty line of R585, and further below the average cost of R722,99 to secure a basic nutritious diet for a child in February 2021.

In **March 2021**, the Child Support Grant is **25% below** the food poverty line and **39% below** the average cost to secure a basic nutritious diet for a child.

About the Basic Nutritional Food Index

Households living on low incomes change their purchasing patterns in response to changes in affordability conditions. On low incomes, women buy the core staple foods first so that their families do not go hungry and for basic meals to be prepared. Where the money remaining is short, women have no choice but to drop foods from their trolleys or reduce the volumes of nutritionally rich foods in their trolleys. This has negative consequences for health, well-being, and nutrition.

As financial and economic circumstances worsen, so too does household health and nutrition. The gap between what women are able to buy and what they need to buy for proper nutrition widens. The Basic Nutritional Food Basket is an attempt to track the cost of foods required for balanced nutrition, viz. the foods and the cost of these foods for families to ensure their health and nutrition and for children to grow and develop properly. The basket was designed in consultation with a Registered Dietician Philippa Barnard.

The Basic Nutritional Food Basket is an index on which we can start talking realistically about the cost of nutritious food, and the inadequacies of low wages and social grants. Importantly it ensures that current food expenditure (severely limited by affordability constraints) are not conflated with the food expenditure required to secure proper nutrition.

8. MARCH 2021 National Minimum Wage Scenarios

Number of working days in March 2021 = 22 days

Affordability, in its simplest form, is relative to income levels and the cost of goods and services (expenses). Workers work to support their families. Workers, reasonably expect to cover the costs of goods and services needed for dignity and household functionality off their wages. In most Black South African households, only one family member works. This one wage must support, a reductive average of **4,29 persons in March 2021**.

The Minister of Employment and Labour gazetted a **4,5%** annual increase on the National Minimum Wage for General Workers, which took effect on the 1st of March 2021. For a *General Worker*, the 4,5% increment works out to be 93 cents an hour, R7,44 for an 8-hour day, and if the full working-day month is worked (22 days in March), a R163,68 monthly increase. **The NMW increased by 93 cents from R20,76 per hour to R21,69 per hour.**

The *NMW for Farm and Forestry Workers* has been equalised with General Workers and is now R21,69 per hour. The *NMW for Domestic Workers* has still not been equalised with General Workers and is R19,09 per hour.

The tables over the page provide income scenarios for households with workers remunerated at the National Minimum Wage level for different categories of workers, as well as for different number of days and hours worked. Households do not prioritise paying for food first out of the wage. Instead households paid low incomes are forced to secure non-negotiable expenses like transport and electricity before food. Other important expenses like debt servicing, scholar transport, education and burial insurances, including household domestic and personal hygiene products also compete viciously in the purse.

A reasonable indicator of whether the NMW is improving the lives of workers is whether workers earning the NMW are able to secure the basic household expenses needed to live at a basic level of dignity and household functionality.

In the scenarios we pull out just 3 core worker expenses: transport to get to work and back; prepaid electricity and the cost of a basic basket of nutritional food for a family of 4 persons. We take the NMW in its various scenarios and subtract the cost of transport and electricity. We then look at the money remaining to buy food.

The last row in the tables highlights the minimum surplus/shortfall on food costs. If the NMW value is set at a reasonable level than we should see a surplus on the food costs, because households have a myriad of other expenses which also need to be secured. If however we see a shortfall on just the food costs, then we must conclude that the level at which the NMW has been set is inadequate because this scenario means that a worker cannot secure even the basic cost of food let alone the other essential goods and services families require.

A note on the data in the scenarios: The NMW and social grant data is national data. The food data is based on the average cost of the PMBEJD Basic Nutritional Food Basket for a family of 4 persons for Joburg, Durban, Cape Town, Springbok and Pietermaritzburg. We use Pietermaritzburg-based costs as a proxy for the transport and electricity figures.

The data in the tables are relevant as at March 2021.

Both scenario tables below calculate transport to work on 2 taxi fare, return (R15x4). The electricity charge is based on Msunduzi Municipality's prepaid tariffs (R1,85 per kWh). The first table provides scenarios for the NMW for General Workers at R21,69 an hour and the second table provides scenarios for the NMW for Domestic Workers at R19,09 per hour. Each scenario provides for the maximum NMW for the maximum number of working days and hours; for a 15 day working month and full 8-hours; and for a 15 day working month for 5 hours.

General Workers: at NMW **R21,69 an hour**

Income	Wage scenario 1	Wage scenario 2	Wage scenario 3
Number of days worked	22	15	15
Number of hours worked	8	8	5
Remuneration rate	R21,69	R21,69	R21,69
Wage income	R3 817,44	R2 602,80	R1 626,75

	Wage scenario 1	Wage scenario 2	Wage scenario 3
Wage income	R3 817,44	R2 602,80	R1 626,75
Household expenses	% of wage	% of wage	% of wage
Transport to work (2 taxi, return)	R1 320,00 34,6%	R900,00 34,6%	R900,00 55,3%
Prepaid electricity (350kWh)	R647,50 17,0%	R647,50 24,9%	R647,50 39,8%
Total for transport + electricity	R1 967,50 51,5%	R1 547,50 59,5%	R1 547,50 95,1%
Money remaining to secure all other expenses	R1 849,94	R1 055,30	R79,25
Subtract: food (4 persons)	R2 837,47	R2 837,47	R2 837,47
Minimum surplus/shortfall on food costs	-R987,53 -34,8%	-R1 782,17 -62,8%	-R2 758,22 -97,2%

Domestic workers: at NMW **R19,09 an hour**

Income	Wage scenario 1	Wage scenario 2	Wage scenario 3
Number of days worked	22	15	15
Number of hours worked	8	8	5
Remuneration rate	R19,09	R19,09	R19,09
Wage income	R3 359,84	R2 290,80	R1 431,75

	Wage scenario 1	Wage scenario 2	Wage scenario 3
Wage income	R3 359,84	R2 290,80	R1 431,75
Household expenses	% of wage	% of wage	% of wage
Transport to work (2 taxi, return)	R1 320,00 39,3%	R900,00 39,3%	R900,00 62,9%
Prepaid electricity (350kWh)	R647,50 19,3%	R647,50 28,3%	R647,50 45,2%
Total for transport + electricity	R1 967,50 58,6%	R1 547,50 67,6%	R1 547,50 108,1%
Money remaining to secure all other expenses	R1 392,34	R743,30	-R115,75
Subtract: food (4 persons)	R2 837,47	R2 837,47	R2 837,47
Minimum surplus/shortfall on food costs	-R1 445,13 -50,9%	-R2 094,17 -73,8%	-R2 953,22 -104,1%

All the scenarios above show that workers paid at the level of the NMW cannot meet even the 3 core household expenses on the NMW. This provides a stark indication of the deficiencies in low baseline wages. The NMW set at such a low level does not allow workers and their families the possibility to secure even their most basic expenses. Instead it appears from the data above that the NMW has worked to lock workers and their families into even deeper levels of poverty. Workers will have to cut back further on food and go into deeper levels of debt to cover wage shortfalls.

The National Minimum Wage is a poverty wage - it hurts workers & slows down economic growth. The maximum wage of **R3 817,44 in March 2021** when disbursed in a Black South African family of **4,29 persons is R889,85**. This is below the **upper-bound poverty line of R1 268** per capita per month. Set at such a low level, the NMW works to institutionalise the low-baseline wage regime and lock millions of workers into poverty. Small annual increments off such a low base, and which do not reflect inflation levels as experienced by workers (including not projecting inflation forward for workers in the entire 2021 term), means that workers on the NMW are getting poorer and poorer each year.

9. MARCH 2021 Household Food Basket: Per area, compared.

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Joburg	Durban	Cape Town	Springbok	Maritzburg	Average
Maize meal	30kg	R 232,22	R 229,97	R 253,22	R238,97	R 259,77	R240,93
Rice	10kg	R 148,57	R 132,74	R 143,08	R148,98	R 110,99	R138,51
Cake Flour	10kg	R 97,57	R 92,16	R 95,99	R98,66	R 87,19	R94,56
White sugar	10kg	R 160,99	R 147,32	R 165,74	R187,66	R 141,79	R158,19
Sugar beans	5kg	R 160,27	R 156,85	R 158,36	R183,23	R 145,39	R158,76
Samp	5kg	R 45,28	R 45,91	R 47,65	R54,96	R 36,19	R45,58
Cooking oil	5L	R 113,41	R 106,57	R 108,30	R101,64	R 117,59	R109,82
Salt	1kg	R 14,66	R 12,99	R 6,57	R16,99	R 16,39	R12,35
Potatoes	10kg	R 57,21	R 61,90	R 59,33	R63,31	R 55,99	R59,39
Onions	10kg	R 56,94	R 59,73	R 65,03	R84,73	R 53,69	R61,52
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R 329,24	R 337,44	R 303,12	R356,22	R 332,89	R327,56
Curry powder	200g	R 31,91	R 29,99	R 27,88	R27,66	R 29,79	R29,84
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R 39,77	R 36,81	R 39,98	R41,98	R 36,78	R38,83
Soup	400g x2	R 44,08	R 35,81	R 41,53	R33,98	R 26,78	R38,25
Tea	250g	R 24,16	R 23,66	R 21,78	R20,99	R 21,79	R22,89
Full cream milk	6L	R 73,57	R 75,41	R 68,98	R69,32	R 83,99	R73,63
Maas	4L	R 49,24	R 46,41	R 49,99	R49,99	R 43,59	R48,03
Eggs	60 eggs	R 98,81	R 98,16	R 99,81	R106,65	R 95,99	R99,14
Chicken feet	2kg	R 82,19	R 82,19	R 26,48	R57,98	R 75,89	R65,12
Gizzards	2kg	R 62,48	R 77,21	R 61,46	R69,98	R 79,44	R68,86
Chicken livers	2kg	R 57,49	R 58,81	R 39,60	R47,98	R 50,44	R51,24
Beef liver	2kg	R 77,02	R 73,69	R 72,73	R68,98	R 81,44	R75,04
Beef	2kg	R 153,42	R 151,69	R 148,55	R147,98	R 171,94	R153,95
Wors	2kg	R 113,06	R 115,93	R 96,55	R119,98	R 138,44	R113,77
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R 77,24	R 69,67	R 70,76	R79,98	R 73,94	R73,40
Fish	2kg	R 67,22	R 99,13	R 99,63	R137,94	R 110,89	R94,57
Tomatoes	6kg	R 99,87	R 111,19	R 102,03	R109,94	R 88,98	R103,41
Carrots	5kg	R 39,59	R 36,16	R 22,17	R56,84	R 22,49	R33,35
Butternut	10kg	R 62,54	R 56,86	R 46,34	R103,30	R 47,69	R57,31
Spinach	8 bunches	R 91,05	R 94,60	R 79,93	R87,92	R 37,25	R87,00
Cabbage	2 heads	R 28,35	R 31,81	R 31,99	R31,31	R 26,78	R30,32
Green pepper	2kg	R 43,62	R 44,78	R 40,98	R57,31	R 38,38	R43,62
Cremora	800g	R 37,57	R 33,99	R 35,32	R29,66	R 36,59	R35,33
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R 116,85	R 118,44	R 113,02	R109,94	R 105,54	R114,48
Canned beans	410g x6	R 68,45	R 65,45	R 62,49	R69,94	R 68,34	R66,09
Bananas	4kg	R 56,33	R 59,63	R 53,96	R74,63	R 44,76	R56,52
Apples	3kg	R 42,89	R 40,40	R 42,73	R29,99	R 35,99	R40,45
Orange	7kg	R 76,97	R 136,44	R 118,95	R50,13	R 51,00	R104,07
Margarine	1kg	R 38,82	R 34,41	R 33,15	R29,99	R 34,77	R35,01
Peanut butter	400g x2	R 64,65	R 62,98	R 59,97	R54,65	R 63,58	R62,11
Polony	2.5kg	R 53,57	R 48,12	R 41,35	R49,65	R 63,19	R49,94
Apricot jam	900g	R 29,49	R 29,74	R 29,32	R26,99	R 28,79	R29,26
White bread	25 loaves	R 345,13	R 325,40	R 344,60	R333,08	R 299,40	R333,59
Brown bread	25 loaves	R 303,52	R 289,98	R 330,02	R316,42	R 268,40	R303,94
Total household food basket		R 4 067,23	R 4 078,48	R 3 960,44	R 4 238,41	R 3 840,90	R 4 039,56

The difference in cost of the total household food basket in Joburg, Durban and Cape Town is consistent at around \pm R150. Springbok and Pietermaritzburg tend to be outliers in the data (Springbok being highest, and Pietermaritzburg being lowest). **The average cost of the total household food basket in March 2021 is R4 039,56.**

10. MARCH 2021 Household Food Index: Johannesburg

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2020/21			change in Rands		change in %	
		Sep_2020	Feb_2021	Mar_2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021
Maize meal	30kg	R 205,46	R 238,47	R 232,22	-R 6,25	R 26,76	-3%	13%
Rice	10kg	R 138,32	R 146,71	R 148,57	R 1,86	R 10,25	1%	7%
Cake Flour	10kg	R 94,82	R 97,57	R 97,57	R 0,00	R 2,75	0%	3%
White sugar	10kg	R 151,41	R 158,82	R 160,99	R 2,16	R 9,58	1%	6%
Sugar beans	5kg	R 118,08	R 165,48	R 160,27	-R 5,20	R 42,19	-3%	36%
Samp	5kg	R 41,14	R 42,12	R 45,28	R 3,17	R 4,14	8%	10%
Cooking oil	5L	R 105,07	R 107,91	R 113,41	R 5,50	R 8,33	5%	8%
Salt	1kg	R 13,99	R 14,41	R 14,66	R 0,25	R 0,67	2%	5%
Potatoes	10kg	R 60,58	R 65,21	R 57,21	-R 8,00	-R 3,37	-12%	-6%
Onions	10kg	R 60,44	R 67,93	R 56,94	-R 11,00	-R 3,50	-16%	-6%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R 317,74	R 318,49	R 329,24	R 10,75	R 11,50	3%	4%
Curry powder	200g	R 31,32	R 32,32	R 31,91	-R 0,42	R 0,59	-1%	2%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R 40,60	R 38,27	R 39,77	R 1,50	-R 0,83	4%	-2%
Soup	400g x2	R 42,29	R 43,15	R 44,08	R 0,94	R 1,79	2%	4%
Tea	250g	R 23,82	R 23,24	R 24,16	R 0,92	R 0,33	4%	1%
Full cream milk	6L	R 72,10	R 73,25	R 73,57	R 0,31	R 1,47	0%	2%
Maas	4L	R 48,99	R 48,07	R 49,24	R 1,17	R 0,25	2%	1%
Eggs	60 eggs	R 98,22	R 97,65	R 98,81	R 1,17	R 0,60	1%	1%
Chicken feet	2kg	R 89,57	R 83,73	R 82,19	-R 1,54	-R 7,38	-2%	-8%
Gizzards	2kg	R 57,49	R 63,49	R 62,48	-R 1,01	R 5,00	-2%	9%
Chicken livers	2kg	R 52,49	R 59,70	R 57,49	-R 2,21	R 5,00	-4%	10%
Beef liver	2kg	R 78,61	R 75,65	R 77,02	R 1,37	-R 1,59	2%	-2%
Beef	2kg	R 142,15	R 155,73	R 153,42	-R 2,31	R 11,28	-1%	8%
Wors	2kg	R 109,99	R 111,99	R 113,06	R 1,08	R 3,07	1%	3%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R 83,99	R 71,13	R 77,24	R 6,11	-R 6,75	9%	-8%
Fish	2kg	R 67,98	R 72,84	R 67,22	-R 5,62	-R 0,76	-8%	-1%
Tomatoes	6kg	R 67,09	R 80,60	R 99,87	R 19,27	R 32,78	24%	49%
Carrots	5kg	R 30,06	R 35,44	R 39,59	R 4,15	R 9,52	12%	32%
Butternut	10kg	R 57,84	R 62,91	R 62,54	-R 0,36	R 4,70	-1%	8%
Spinach	8 bunches	R 86,47	R 85,75	R 91,05	R 5,30	R 4,58	6%	5%
Cabbage	2 heads	R 29,43	R 27,53	R 28,35	R 0,82	-R 1,09	3%	-4%
Green pepper	2kg	R 48,48	R 42,98	R 43,62	R 0,63	-R 4,86	1%	-10%
Cremora	800g	R 34,91	R 34,74	R 37,57	R 2,83	R 2,67	8%	8%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R 112,42	R 115,94	R 116,85	R 0,90	R 4,43	1%	4%
Canned beans	410g x6	R 68,37	R 66,99	R 68,45	R 1,46	R 0,08	2%	0%
Bananas	4kg	R 55,72	R 53,30	R 56,33	R 3,03	R 0,61	6%	1%
Apples	3kg	R 42,48	R 43,53	R 42,89	-R 0,64	R 0,42	-1%	1%
Oranges	7kg	R 70,29	R 79,77	R 76,97	-R 2,80	R 6,68	-4%	10%
Margarine	1kg	R 33,32	R 38,82	R 38,82	R 0,00	R 5,50	0%	17%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R 58,65	R 61,65	R 64,65	R 3,00	R 6,00	5%	10%
Polony	2.5kg	R 50,84	R 50,78	R 53,57	R 2,79	R 2,74	5%	5%
Apricot jam	900g	R 26,78	R 28,41	R 29,49	R 1,08	R 2,71	4%	10%
White bread	25 loaves	R 348,38	R 341,94	R 345,13	R 3,19	-R 3,25	1%	-1%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R 318,71	R 310,00	R 303,52	-R 6,48	-R 15,19	-2%	-5%
Total household food basket		R 3 886,87	R 4 034,38	R 4 067,23	R 32,85	R 180,36	0,8%	4,6%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **Joburg household food basket increased** by **R32,85 (0,8%)** from R4 034,38 in February 2021 to R4 067,23 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The cost of the **Joburg household food basket increased** by **R180,36 (4,6%)** from R3 886,87 in September 2020 to R4 067,23 in March 2021.

11. MARCH 2021 Household Food Index: Durban

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2020/21			change in Rands		change in %	
		Sep_2020	Feb_2021	Mar_2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021
Maize meal	30kg	R 189,22	R 213,47	R 229,97	R 16,50	R 40,75	8%	22%
Rice	10kg	R 137,99	R 134,82	R 132,74	-R 2,08	-R 5,25	-2%	-4%
Cake Flour	10kg	R 91,24	R 91,41	R 92,16	R 0,75	R 0,92	1%	1%
White sugar	10kg	R 143,16	R 150,24	R 147,32	-R 2,92	R 4,17	-2%	3%
Sugar beans	5kg	R 103,08	R 154,32	R 156,85	R 2,53	R 53,77	2%	52%
Samp	5kg	R 43,91	R 47,87	R 45,91	-R 1,96	R 2,00	-4%	5%
Cooking oil	5L	R 100,66	R 109,07	R 106,57	-R 2,50	R 5,92	-2%	6%
Salt	1kg	R 12,74	R 13,91	R 12,99	-R 0,92	R 0,25	-7%	2%
Potatoes	10kg	R 64,70	R 70,38	R 61,90	-R 8,48	-R 2,80	-12%	-4%
Onions	10kg	R 74,45	R 68,31	R 59,73	-R 8,57	-R 14,71	-13%	-20%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R 315,46	R 319,39	R 337,44	R 18,05	R 21,98	6%	7%
Curry powder	200g	R 29,82	R 31,74	R 29,99	-R 1,75	R 0,17	-6%	1%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R 34,65	R 36,98	R 36,81	-R 0,17	R 2,17	0%	6%
Soup	400g x2	R 36,65	R 39,31	R 35,81	-R 3,50	-R 0,83	-9%	-2%
Tea	250g	R 22,49	R 23,07	R 23,66	R 0,58	R 1,17	3%	5%
Full cream milk	6L	R 85,47	R 76,57	R 75,41	-R 1,16	-R 10,06	-2%	-12%
Maas	4L	R 43,57	R 44,49	R 46,41	R 1,92	R 2,83	4%	7%
Eggs	60 eggs	R 98,48	R 101,78	R 98,16	-R 3,61	-R 0,32	-4%	0%
Chicken feet	2kg	R 75,36	R 82,62	R 82,19	-R 0,43	R 6,83	-1%	9%
Gizzards	2kg	R 62,94	R 76,19	R 77,21	R 1,02	R 14,27	1%	23%
Chicken livers	2kg	R 55,36	R 53,19	R 58,81	R 5,63	R 3,45	11%	6%
Beef liver	2kg	R 69,19	R 71,94	R 73,69	R 1,75	R 4,50	2%	6%
Beef	2kg	R 127,94	R 152,44	R 151,69	-R 0,75	R 23,75	0%	19%
Wors	2kg	R 114,69	R 123,19	R 115,93	-R 7,26	R 1,24	-6%	1%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R 75,10	R 78,69	R 69,67	-R 9,02	-R 5,43	-11%	-7%
Fish	2kg	R 98,46	R 103,41	R 99,13	-R 4,29	R 0,67	-4%	1%
Tomatoes	6kg	R 83,23	R 95,15	R 111,19	R 16,04	R 27,97	17%	34%
Carrots	5kg	R 34,82	R 31,81	R 36,16	R 4,35	R 1,34	14%	4%
Butternut	10kg	R 64,85	R 69,08	R 56,86	-R 12,22	-R 8,00	-18%	-12%
Spinach	8 bunches	R 78,11	R 79,29	R 94,60	R 15,31	R 16,49	19%	21%
Cabbage	2 heads	R 26,65	R 29,15	R 31,81	R 2,67	R 5,17	9%	19%
Green pepper	2kg	R 46,69	R 47,24	R 44,78	-R 2,46	-R 1,91	-5%	-4%
Cremora	800g	R 33,99	R 35,81	R 33,99	-R 1,82	R 0,00	-5%	0%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R 115,94	R 121,44	R 118,44	-R 3,00	R 2,50	-2%	2%
Canned beans	410g x6	R 62,83	R 67,45	R 65,45	-R 2,00	R 2,62	-3%	4%
Bananas	4kg	R 54,29	R 54,29	R 59,63	R 5,33	R 5,33	10%	10%
Apples	3kg	R 39,48	R 42,15	R 40,40	-R 1,75	R 0,92	-4%	2%
Oranges	7kg	R 94,63	R 125,35	R 136,44	R 11,08	R 41,81	9%	44%
Margarine	1kg	R 31,49	R 32,82	R 34,41	R 1,58	R 2,92	5%	9%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R 58,48	R 60,81	R 62,98	R 2,17	R 4,50	4%	8%
Polony	2.5kg	R 50,89	R 50,55	R 48,12	-R 2,43	-R 2,78	-5%	-5%
Apricot jam	900g	R 27,74	R 27,49	R 29,74	R 2,25	R 2,00	8%	7%
White bread	25 loaves	R 308,73	R 321,67	R 325,40	R 3,73	R 16,67	1%	5%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R 281,02	R 291,48	R 289,98	-R 1,50	R 8,96	-1%	3%
Total household food basket		R 3 800,59	R 4 051,78	R 4 078,48	R 26,70	R 277,89	0,7%	7,3%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **Durban household food basket increased** by **R26,70 (0,7%)** from R4 051,78 in February 2021 to R4 078,48 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The cost of the **Durban household food basket increased** by **R277,89 (7,3%)** from R3 800,59 in September 2020 to R4 078,48 in March 2021.

12. MARCH 2021 Household Food Index: Cape Town

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2020/21			change in Rands		change in %	
		Sep_2020	Feb_2021	Mar_2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021
Maize meal	30kg	R 244,97	R 265,97	R 253,22	-R 12,75	R 8,25	-5%	3%
Rice	10kg	R 143,66	R 144,16	R 143,08	-R 1,08	-R 0,58	-1%	0%
Cake Flour	10kg	R 92,88	R 97,66	R 95,99	-R 1,67	R 3,12	-2%	3%
White sugar	10kg	R 160,21	R 167,82	R 165,74	-R 2,08	R 5,53	-1%	3%
Sugar beans	5kg	R 124,56	R 151,28	R 158,36	R 7,08	R 33,80	5%	27%
Samp	5kg	R 43,99	R 47,89	R 47,65	-R 0,24	R 3,66	0%	8%
Cooking oil	5L	R 106,12	R 109,15	R 108,30	-R 0,85	R 2,18	-1%	2%
Salt	1kg	R 6,42	R 7,92	R 6,57	-R 1,36	R 0,14	-17%	2%
Potatoes	10kg	R 73,10	R 59,33	R 59,33	R 0,00	-R 13,77	0%	-19%
Onions	10kg	R 75,22	R 66,04	R 65,03	-R 1,02	-R 10,19	-2%	-14%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R 306,65	R 311,24	R 303,12	-R 8,11	-R 3,53	-3%	-1%
Curry powder	200g	R 29,82	R 31,24	R 27,88	-R 3,36	-R 1,94	-11%	-7%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R 38,87	R 34,98	R 39,98	R 5,00	R 1,11	14%	3%
Soup	400g x2	R 40,48	R 39,70	R 41,53	R 1,83	R 1,05	5%	3%
Tea	250g	R 24,05	R 22,07	R 21,78	-R 0,29	-R 2,26	-1%	-9%
Full cream milk	6L	R 83,97	R 69,34	R 68,98	-R 0,37	-R 15,00	-1%	-18%
Maas	4L	R 49,36	R 50,07	R 49,99	-R 0,08	R 0,63	0%	1%
Eggs	60 eggs	R 103,41	R 93,53	R 99,81	R 6,28	-R 3,60	7%	-3%
Chicken feet	2kg	R 34,99	R 24,98	R 26,48	R 1,50	-R 8,51	6%	-24%
Gizzards	2kg	R 52,65	R 56,31	R 61,46	R 5,15	R 8,81	9%	17%
Chicken livers	2kg	R 42,31	R 40,98	R 39,60	-R 1,39	-R 2,72	-3%	-6%
Beef liver	2kg	R 68,38	R 67,48	R 72,73	R 5,25	R 4,35	8%	6%
Beef	2kg	R 129,98	R 137,22	R 148,55	R 11,33	R 18,57	8%	14%
Wors	2kg	R 98,98	R 85,98	R 96,55	R 10,57	-R 2,43	12%	-2%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R 65,98	R 76,78	R 70,76	-R 6,02	R 4,78	-8%	7%
Fish	2kg	R 71,49	R 89,18	R 99,63	R 10,45	R 28,15	12%	39%
Tomatoes	6kg	R 102,80	R 87,29	R 102,03	R 14,74	-R 0,76	17%	-1%
Carrots	5kg	R 34,32	R 23,48	R 22,17	-R 1,31	-R 12,15	-6%	-35%
Butternut	10kg	R 78,90	R 59,78	R 46,34	-R 13,44	-R 32,55	-22%	-41%
Spinach	8 bunches	R 81,93	R 74,11	R 79,93	R 5,82	-R 2,00	8%	-2%
Cabbage	2 heads	R 43,76	R 24,99	R 31,99	R 7,00	-R 11,78	28%	-27%
Green pepper	2kg	R 55,98	R 41,25	R 40,98	-R 0,27	-R 15,00	-1%	-27%
Cremora	800g	R 34,43	R 33,49	R 35,32	R 1,83	R 0,89	5%	3%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R 115,81	R 111,34	R 113,02	R 1,68	-R 2,79	2%	-2%
Canned beans	410g x6	R 67,61	R 62,16	R 62,49	R 0,33	-R 5,12	1%	-8%
Bananas	4kg	R 55,96	R 48,32	R 53,96	R 5,64	-R 2,00	12%	-4%
Apples	3kg	R 32,87	R 41,82	R 42,73	R 0,92	R 9,86	2%	30%
Oranges	7kg	R 76,95	R 104,95	R 118,95	R 14,00	R 41,99	13%	55%
Margarine	1kg	R 32,65	R 32,41	R 33,15	R 0,75	R 0,50	2%	2%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R 60,20	R 57,76	R 59,97	R 2,21	-R 0,23	4%	0%
Polony	2.5kg	R 41,49	R 41,72	R 41,35	-R 0,36	-R 0,14	-1%	0%
Apricot jam	900g	R 26,21	R 27,66	R 29,32	R 1,67	R 3,11	6%	12%
White bread	25 loaves	R 335,86	R 350,85	R 344,60	-R 6,25	R 8,74	-2%	3%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R 312,25	R 321,69	R 330,02	R 8,33	R 17,77	3%	6%
Total household food basket		R 3 902,48	R 3 893,37	R 3 960,44	R 67,07	R 57,96	1,7%	1,5%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **Cape Town household food basket** *increased* by **R67,07 (1,7%)** from R3 893,37 in February 2021 to R3 960,44 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The cost of the **Cape Town household food basket** *increased* by **R57,96 (1,5%)** from R3 902,48 in September 2020 to R3 960,44 in March 2021.

13. MARCH 2021 Household Food Index: Springbok

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2020/21			change in Rands		change in %	
		Sep_2020	Feb_2021	Mar_2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021
Maize meal	30kg	R 217,97	R 239,97	R 238,97	-R 1,00	R 21,00	0%	10%
Rice	10kg	R 138,65	R 173,98	R 148,98	-R 25,00	R 10,33	-14%	7%
Cake Flour	10kg	R 97,32	R 99,66	R 98,66	-R 1,00	R 1,33	-1%	1%
White sugar	10kg	R 169,99	R 189,32	R 187,66	-R 1,67	R 17,67	-1%	10%
Sugar beans	5kg	R 146,57	R 189,90	R 183,23	-R 6,67	R 36,67	-4%	25%
Samp	5kg	R 48,97	R 58,30	R 54,96	-R 3,33	R 5,99	-6%	12%
Cooking oil	5L	R 111,65	R 104,98	R 101,64	-R 3,33	-R 10,00	-3%	-9%
Salt	1kg	R 15,49	R 16,99	R 16,99	R 0,00	R 1,50	0%	10%
Potatoes	10kg	R 74,27	R 64,27	R 63,31	-R 0,95	-R 10,96	-1%	-15%
Onions	10kg	R 98,39	R 103,31	R 84,73	-R 18,57	-R 13,66	-18%	-14%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R 325,18	R 327,42	R 356,22	R 28,80	R 31,04	9%	10%
Curry powder	200g	R 29,66	R 30,99	R 27,66	-R 3,33	-R 2,00	-11%	-7%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R 43,31	R 36,65	R 41,98	R 5,33	-R 1,33	15%	-3%
Soup	400g x2	R 31,31	R 33,98	R 33,98	R 0,00	R 2,67	0%	9%
Tea	250g	R 17,99	R 20,32	R 20,99	R 0,67	R 3,00	3%	17%
Full cream milk	6L	R 73,97	R 70,99	R 69,32	-R 1,67	-R 4,65	-2%	-6%
Maas	4L	R 49,99	R 49,99	R 49,99	R 0,00	R 0,00	0%	0%
Eggs	60 eggs	R 107,31	R 125,31	R 106,65	-R 18,67	-R 0,67	-15%	-1%
Chicken feet	2kg	R 79,98	R 65,98	R 57,98	-R 8,00	-R 22,00	-12%	-28%
Gizzards	2kg	R 60,00	R 63,98	R 69,98	R 6,00	R 9,98	9%	17%
Chicken livers	2kg	R 63,94	R 48,98	R 47,98	-R 1,00	-R 15,96	-2%	-25%
Beef liver	2kg	R 71,98	R 78,98	R 68,98	-R 10,00	-R 3,00	-13%	-4%
Beef	2kg	R 140,94	R 149,98	R 147,98	-R 2,00	R 7,04	-1%	5%
Wors	2kg	R 98,94	R 119,98	R 119,98	R 0,00	R 21,04	0%	21%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R 107,90	R 89,98	R 79,98	-R 10,00	-R 27,92	-11%	-26%
Fish	2kg	R 118,94	R 139,98	R 137,94	-R 2,04	R 19,00	-1%	16%
Tomatoes	6kg	R 99,94	R 101,94	R 109,94	R 8,00	R 10,00	8%	10%
Carrots	5kg	R 36,47	R 33,96	R 56,84	R 22,88	R 20,37	67%	56%
Butternut	10kg	R 96,06	R 78,85	R 103,30	R 24,45	R 7,24	31%	8%
Spinach	8 bunches	R 103,92	R 87,92	R 87,92	R 0,00	-R 16,00	0%	-15%
Cabbage	2 heads	R 38,65	R 26,65	R 31,31	R 4,67	-R 7,33	18%	-19%
Green pepper	2kg	R 53,31	R 47,97	R 57,31	R 9,34	R 4,00	19%	8%
Cremora	800g	R 33,32	R 32,66	R 29,66	-R 3,00	-R 3,67	-9%	-11%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R 99,94	R 109,94	R 109,94	R 0,00	R 10,00	0%	10%
Canned beans	410g x6	R 67,94	R 68,94	R 69,94	R 1,00	R 2,00	1%	3%
Bananas	4kg	R 65,29	R 69,29	R 74,63	R 5,33	R 9,33	8%	14%
Apples	3kg	R 34,65	R 34,32	R 29,99	-R 4,33	-R 4,66	-13%	-13%
Oranges	7kg	R 109,60	R 109,60	R 50,13	-R 59,47	-R 59,47	-54%	-54%
Margarine	1kg	R 21,66	R 28,32	R 29,99	R 1,67	R 8,33	6%	38%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R 51,98	R 55,98	R 54,65	-R 1,33	R 2,67	-2%	5%
Polony	2.5kg	R 50,65	R 45,99	R 49,65	R 3,66	-R 1,00	8%	-2%
Apricot jam	900g	R 24,99	R 29,99	R 26,99	-R 3,00	R 2,00	-10%	8%
White bread*	25 loaves	R 274,75	R 341,42	R 333,08	-R 8,33	R 58,33	-2%	21%
Brown bread*	25 loaves	R 258,08	R 320,58	R 316,42	-R 4,17	R 58,33	-1%	23%
Total household food basket		R 4 061,82	R 4 318,48	R 4 238,41	-R 80,07	R 176,59	-1,9%	4,3%

Month-on-month: The cost of the **Springbok household food basket decreased** by **R80,07 (-1,9%)** from R4 318,48 in February 2021 to R4 238,41 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The cost of the **Springbok household food basket increased** by **R176,59 (4,3%)** from R4 061,82 in September 2020 to R4 238,41 in March 2021.

14. MARCH 2021 Household Food Index: Pietermaritzburg

Foods tracked	Quantity tracked	Index 2020/21			change in Rands		change in %	
		Sep_2020	Feb_2021	Mar_2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021	Feb 2021 vs. Mar 2021	Sep 2020 vs. Mar 2021
Maize meal	30kg	R 224,97	R 254,37	R 259,77	R 5,40	R 34,80	2%	15%
Rice	10kg	R 110,19	R 112,59	R 110,99	-R 1,60	R 0,80	-1%	1%
Cake Flour	10kg	R 85,99	R 85,79	R 87,19	R 1,40	R 1,20	2%	1%
White sugar	10kg	R 147,39	R 147,59	R 141,79	-R 5,80	-R 5,60	-4%	-4%
Sugar beans	5kg	R 115,19	R 145,99	R 145,39	-R 0,60	R 30,20	0%	26%
Samp	5kg	R 34,74	R 35,99	R 36,19	R 0,20	R 1,45	1%	4%
Cooking oil	5L	R 104,59	R 109,39	R 117,59	R 8,20	R 13,00	7%	12%
Salt	1kg	R 15,59	R 15,59	R 16,39	R 0,80	R 0,80	5%	5%
Potatoes	10kg	R 72,87	R 60,84	R 55,99	-R 4,85	-R 16,89	-8%	-23%
Onions	10kg	R 57,44	R 58,91	R 53,69	-R 5,21	-R 3,75	-9%	-7%
Frozen chicken portions	10kg	R 313,30	R 327,39	R 332,89	R 5,50	R 19,59	2%	6%
Curry powder	200g	R 29,59	R 30,39	R 29,79	-R 0,60	R 0,20	-2%	1%
Stock cubes	24 cubes x2	R 33,98	R 35,58	R 36,78	R 1,20	R 2,80	3%	8%
Soup	400g x2	R 26,78	R 27,98	R 26,78	-R 1,20	R 0,00	-4%	0%
Tea	250g	R 24,39	R 22,59	R 21,79	-R 0,80	-R 2,60	-4%	-11%
Full cream milk	6L	R 80,97	R 83,99	R 83,99	R 0,00	R 3,02	0%	4%
Maas	4L	R 43,39	R 42,19	R 43,59	R 1,40	R 0,20	3%	0%
Eggs	60 eggs	R 92,59	R 96,99	R 95,99	-R 1,00	R 3,40	-1%	4%
Chicken feet	2kg	R 73,94	R 69,39	R 75,89	R 6,50	R 1,96	9%	3%
Gizzards	2kg	R 63,89	R 76,44	R 79,44	R 3,00	R 15,55	4%	24%
Chicken livers	2kg	R 50,59	R 47,44	R 50,44	R 3,00	-R 0,15	6%	0%
Beef liver	2kg	R 76,94	R 72,89	R 81,44	R 8,55	R 4,50	12%	6%
Beef	2kg	R 148,89	R 165,44	R 171,94	R 6,50	R 23,05	4%	15%
Wors	2kg	R 120,89	R 132,94	R 138,44	R 5,50	R 17,55	4%	15%
Inyama yangaphakathi	2kg	R 78,39	R 72,39	R 73,94	R 1,55	-R 4,46	2%	-6%
Fish	2kg	R 113,99	R 113,39	R 110,89	-R 2,50	-R 3,10	-2%	-3%
Tomatoes	6kg	R 58,74	R 57,13	R 88,98	R 31,85	R 30,24	56%	51%
Carrots	5kg	R 20,19	R 21,74	R 22,49	R 0,75	R 2,30	3%	11%
Butternut	10kg	R 65,12	R 38,27	R 47,69	R 9,42	-R 17,43	25%	-27%
Spinach	8 bunches	R 57,28	R 37,25	R 37,25	R 0,00	-R 20,03	0%	-35%
Cabbage	2 heads	R 29,58	R 24,78	R 26,78	R 2,00	-R 2,80	8%	-9%
Green pepper	2kg	R 37,58	R 38,78	R 38,38	-R 0,40	R 0,80	-1%	2%
Cremora	800g	R 34,39	R 34,19	R 36,59	R 2,40	R 2,20	7%	6%
Tinned pilchards	400g x6	R 99,54	R 104,34	R 105,54	R 1,20	R 6,00	1%	6%
Canned beans	410g x6	R 67,14	R 68,34	R 68,34	R 0,00	R 1,20	0%	2%
Bananas	4kg	R 40,69	R 44,76	R 44,76	R 0,00	R 4,07	0%	10%
Apples	3kg	R 30,38	R 39,99	R 35,99	-R 4,00	R 5,61	-10%	18%
Oranges	7kg	R 62,62	R 51,00	R 51,00	R 0,00	-R 11,62	0%	-19%
Margarine	1kg	R 36,19	R 34,97	R 34,77	-R 0,20	-R 1,42	-1%	-4%
Peanut butter	400g x2	R 63,58	R 61,18	R 63,58	R 2,40	R 0,00	4%	0%
Polony	2.5kg	R 54,99	R 62,79	R 63,19	R 0,40	R 8,20	1%	15%
Apricot jam	900g	R 28,59	R 27,59	R 28,79	R 1,20	R 0,20	4%	1%
White bread	25 loaves	R 291,40	R 299,40	R 299,40	R 0,00	R 8,00	0%	3%
Brown bread	25 loaves	R 258,85	R 268,40	R 268,40	R 0,00	R 9,55	0%	4%
Total household food basket		R 3 678,32	R 3 759,35	R 3 840,90	R 81,55	R 162,58	2,2%	4,4%

Month-on-month: The cost of the Pietermaritzburg household food basket *increased* by **R81,55 (2,2%)** from R3 759,35 in February 2021 to R3 840,90 in March 2021.

Over the past seven (7) months: The cost of the Pietermaritzburg household food basket *increased* by **R162,58 (4,4%)** from R3 678,32 in September 2020 to R3 840,90 in March 2021.

15. Food Price Methodology

In 2019 we began a process of thinking through how to expand the scope of the Pietermaritzburg-based Household Affordability Index. The reason to expand the scope of the Pietermaritzburg data was to seek greater empirical evidence of the national picture of household affordability constraints and how families, living on low incomes, were responding to a deepening financial and economic crisis, given rising expenditure costs, job losses, stagnant employment, a deepening food crisis, deepening poverty and entrenched inequality.

The Pietermaritzburg Household Affordability Index is a realistic and accurate tool to measure inflation on basic expenditure items for households living on low incomes, whilst able to provide a picture of how families living on low incomes are responding to a deepening household affordability crisis. The data that we release monthly is important and provides a reflection of what is playing out in Pietermaritzburg but it is also able to provide a reasonable reflection of what might be playing out nationally. Expanding the scope of our data beyond Pietermaritzburg is an attempt to better track and analyse the national picture of household affordability.

In April 2020, PMBEJD started a process of expanding the scope of food price data collection and having conversations with women in four new areas: Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, and Springbok. Women living in low income households within these areas were approached to work with us, talk with us, think with us, and track food prices and other expenditures in the areas in which they lived. The areas include Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa and Hillbrow; Gugulethu, Philippi, Khayelitsha, Delft, Dunoon; KwaMashu, Umlazi, Isipingo, Durban CBD, and Mtubatuba; and Springbok, and includes Pietermaritzburg.

Between April and August 2020 we ran a pilot, based on the Pietermaritzburg methodology, to (1) test which foods constitute the core foods and the volumes of these foods in the trollies of low income households in the new areas; (2) identify, test and verify supermarkets and butcheries which target the low-income market and where women living on low incomes do their shopping; and (3) collect food prices from the supermarkets and butcheries every two weeks (for 5 months), whilst improving the practice of selection of foods for greater accuracy of data (this included buying and cooking selected cheaper food brands to check quality), as well as to continually track and reflect how women themselves make decisions at the supermarket shelves.

The pilot was successful.

The outcomes of which were that the core foods identified by women as constituting those in the area-based household food baskets were very closely reflective of the foods and volumes of foods in the Pietermaritzburg Household Food Basket. Women agreed that the Pietermaritzburg Household Food Basket was a good proxy for the baskets in new areas, but that a few modifications should be made to improve its accuracy of area-based food purchasing dynamics to better reflect the core foods in the basket. In this regard several new foods were added to the new Food Basket, and some foods originally in the Pietermaritzburg Household Food Basket were increased/decreased in volume or dropped from the trolley.

The new Food Basket retains the core of the Pietermaritzburg Household Food Basket with the following modifications: **New foods** added are 6L Low fat milk, 2kg chicken livers, 2kg beef livers, 2kg fish (seasonal), 2kg green pepper and 7kg oranges. **Increased volumes** are 3kg apples (up from 1,5kg), 4 bars of 500g green bar bath soap (up from 2 bars of 500g), and 1,5L of *jik* (up from 750ml). **Reduced volumes** are 30kg maize meal (down from 35kg), 2kg chicken feet (down from 5kg), 1kg margarine (down from 2 x 1kg), and 1 x 900g apricot jam (down from 2 x 900g). **Removed item** is *jeyes fluid*. **The new Food Basket includes 44 foods & the Domestic & Hygiene Products Basket includes 14 products.**

The new basket reflects the most important foods in the trollies of families living on low incomes in the new areas. Because we have universalised the new basket (the basket is the same for all 5 areas: Joburg, Durban, Cape Town, Springbok and Pietermaritzburg), it is important to note that whilst the new basket reflects the core foods in the trollies across the five areas; there will be nuances within households and areas. For example, there will be differences in the volumes of starches (viz. maize meal and rice); types of meats (viz. chicken feet, fish, offal, and red meats); and purchasing of types of fruits and vegetables (seasonality). This is expected. The new basket therefore is a proxy of the foods, the volumes of foods and the cost of foods which form a household basket in each area and averaged for all areas. ***It cannot however be considered the basket for every family living on a low income in each area and***

for all areas covered. It is however considered a reasonable proxy for a food basket which women identified as including the most important typical foods which most households try and buy each month.

The supermarkets and butcheries selected by women are those which most households, in the areas in which they live, do their shopping in, and which offer the cheapest/or most affordable prices. These are all supermarkets which target the low-income market. In total, prices are tracked in 44 supermarkets and 30 butcheries.

The methodology used to collect food prices is unique and has some significant implications: (1) food price inflation is tempered by switching to cheaper brands if monthly prices increase beyond what women consider affordable or reasonable; and (2) [linked to 1] the cost of the household food basket month-to-month is relatively stable, and therefore provides an accurate measure of inflation, whilst also better able to show spikes (because women absorb price shocks by switching to cheaper brands – if there is a spike, then there really is a spike because the shock was not absorbed by switching as most brands of that food would have increased); and (3) the household food basket is accurately able to capture the real costs of food and other basic expenditures for households living on low incomes.

Implications of expanding the scope of the Household Affordability Index

Expanding the scope of the food price work provides a better lens into the national picture of food price inflation, the cost of a food basket, household affordability, low wages, and low social grants. Conversing with women in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Springbok further provides a deeper level of understanding on inflation on different foods, the vagaries of local contexts, the different ways women respond to food price and other expenditure fluctuations and how women cope on low incomes; and what different local situations look like and what women think about what is happening, and what should be done about it. Through dialogue and confirming stories and insights with all women data collectors we are also able to provide a joint narrative of what is happening (what the situation is like), whilst pulling out the nuances. The Household Affordability Index is better able to reflect the national picture of the deepening household affordability crisis.

Whilst we intend to continue broadening the scope of the Household Affordability Index, to include more areas in South Africa as well as including more expense and income data; and therefore improving data capacity to better reflect a wider national picture, whilst continually improving the accuracy of data collected and analysis, we are confident that the data and analysis which we now release to the public from September 2020 is sound, grounded, verifiable and accurate in capturing the real cost of foods as purchased by women living on low incomes, and the decisions taken by women at the supermarket shelves in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Springbok and Pietermaritzburg.

Summary of the new Household Food Basket

The Household Food Basket has been designed together with women living on low incomes in Johannesburg (Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa and Hillbrow), Cape Town (Gugulethu, Philippi, Khayelitsha, Delft, Dunoon), Durban (KwaMashu, Umlazi, Isipingo, Durban CBD, and Mtubatuba), and Springbok (in the Northern Cape), and Pietermaritzburg. It includes the foods and the volumes of these foods which women living in a family of seven members (an average low-income household size) tell us they typically try and secure each month. **The Household Food Basket is not nutritionally complete. It is a basket of food which women try and secure each month for their families given affordability constraints.**

Food prices are tracked directly by women data collectors off the shelves of 44 supermarkets and 30 butcheries that target the low-income market and which women identified as those they shop at. Food selection at the supermarket shelves mirrors how women themselves make decisions at the supermarket shelves given affordability constraints viz. that the foods are chosen on relative affordability and reasonable quality, and food brands are switched to seek out the cheapest prices and special deals. The selection of food brands is dynamic and subjective. Women are smart and savvy, and shop around for bargains: this specific methodology used provides an accurate cost of a monthly household food basket, as purchased by women living on low incomes.

There are 44 foods in the Household Food Basket. The date for data collection is between the 1st and 4th day of each month. Data is collected and released in the same month. Data is presented for each area, and it is also weighted and averaged for all 5 areas. Weighting is as follows: 27% for Joburg, Durban & Cape Town; 12% Pietermaritzburg, and 7% Springbok.

16. References

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