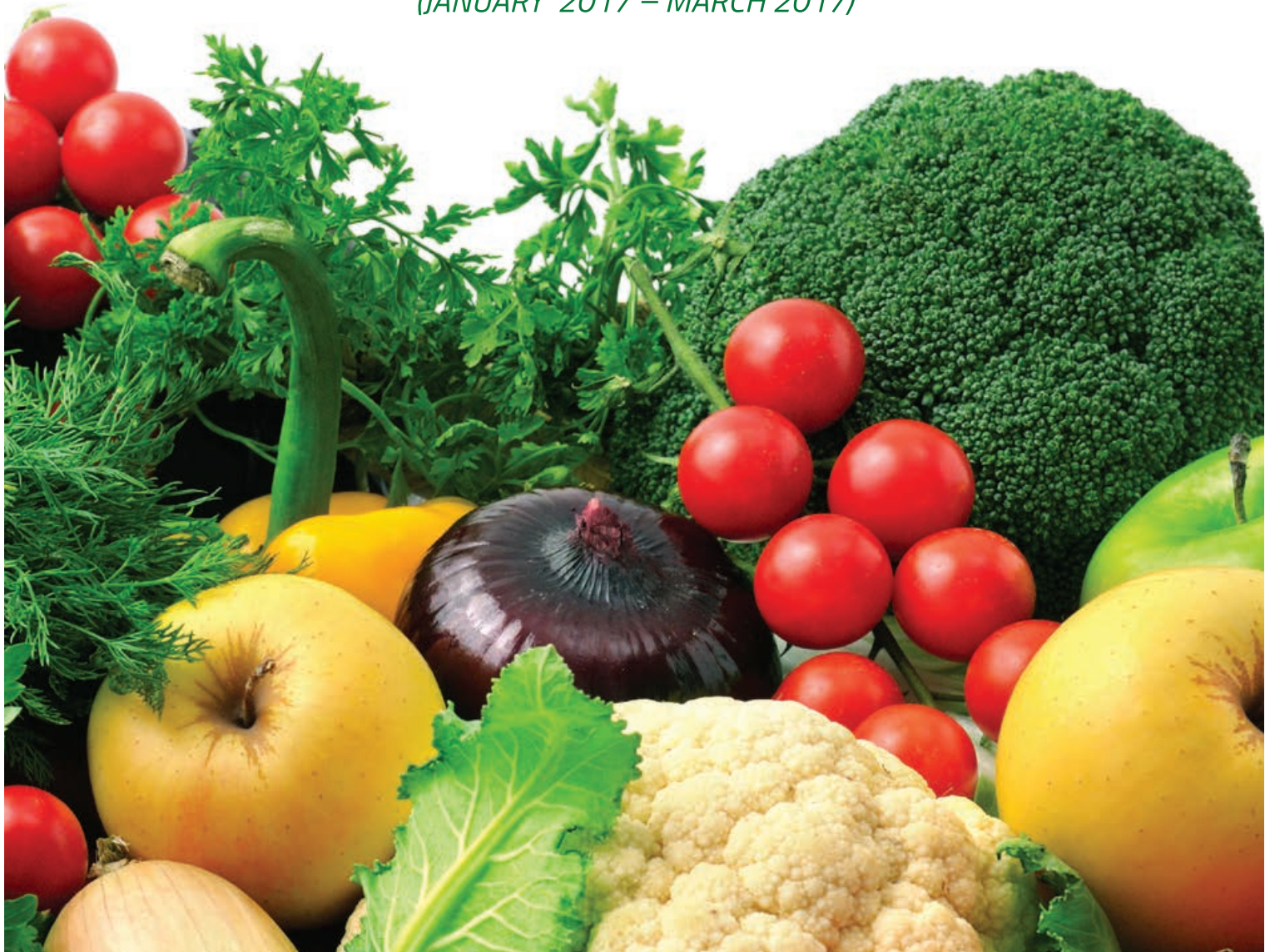


BASIC NEEDS BASKET POLICY REPORT:

(JANUARY 2017 – MARCH 2017)



THE HIGH COST OF BEING POOR

Vuyokazi Futshane



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South African households continue to fight a fierce battle to survive in a year marked by increasing inflation, stationary wages and the escalating scarcity of employment. In a recent report released by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), the latest employment report paints a grim for job security in South Africa. The March 2017 Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)¹ by Stats SA reports a 48 000 job loss suffered in the first quarter of the year, coupled with an unstable economy which has shrunk by a decrease of 0, 7% in GDP² in the same period. Considering these harsh statistics, it is clear that the attainment of a decent standard of living for average South Africans is becoming ever more elusive.

The cost of living is surpassing the typical income of lower income households, with female-headed households constituting the larger portion of those living in poverty and suffering the most from a volatile economy. Nearly 60% of South African women are living in poverty compared to men, and the majority of those women are black women who carry the heavy burden of domestic reproduction, unpaid labour and a labour market that is more favourable to their male counterparts. The March 2017 Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) also reported that black women are particularly affected by a

weak labour market. An estimated 43, 0% of black women who are employed, work in the low-skilled sector, compared to over half of white women employed in the skilled sector.

With the estimated income for a single black South African at R2900, spread across a household of 3.9 people³, the cost of living is proving to be unaffordable. Pressure continues to mount for lower income families and households are finding themselves with less and less purchasing power. Food prices have increased over the last year and those with the smallest pockets are hit the hardest by food inflation. It is in this context that the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII) in partnership with the Association of Community-based Advice Offices of South Africa (ACAOSA) launched its Basic Needs Basket (BNB) research project in South Africa in 2014. The Basic Needs Basket is a monthly survey of the cost of essential food and non- food items that comprise the items that a low income family in both rural and urban areas **across the nine provinces** of South Africa deem necessary. It is important to note that the BNB only monitors prices of the most common pack size purchased and not the actual quantities required for an average sized household per month.

PROVINCIAL BREAKDOWN OF THE COST OF LIVING: JAN-MAR 2017

When comparing year on year from January 2016 to January 2017, significant price inflation of 12% was experienced in the overall cost of a basket.

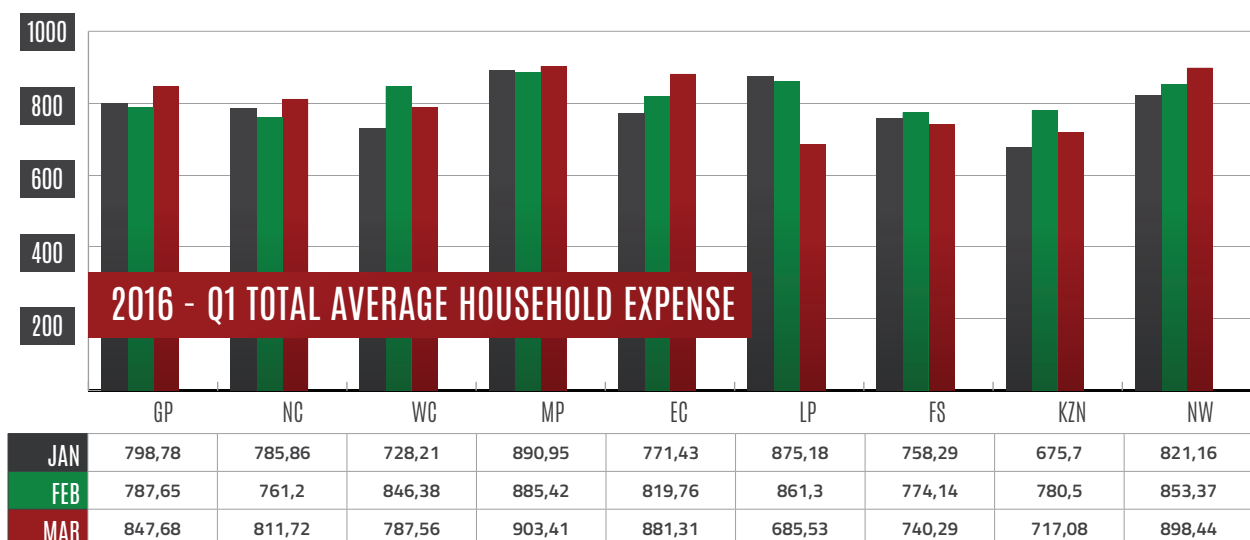


Figure 1: First Quarter Provincial Average Household Expense

¹ Quarterly employment statistics, www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0277/P0277March2017.pdf

² Gross domestic product, www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0441/P04411stQuarter2017.pdf

³ Frye, I. 2017. Towards a Decent Standard of Living. Policy Brief 4. Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute www.sprii.org.za/index.php/towards-decent-standard-living-policy-brief-number-4/

⁴ The BNB monitors prices across all the 9 provinces, but this report is a reflection of 7 provinces as a result of data validity concerns in the three (Limpopo, Free State & North West) which have been excluded from this report.

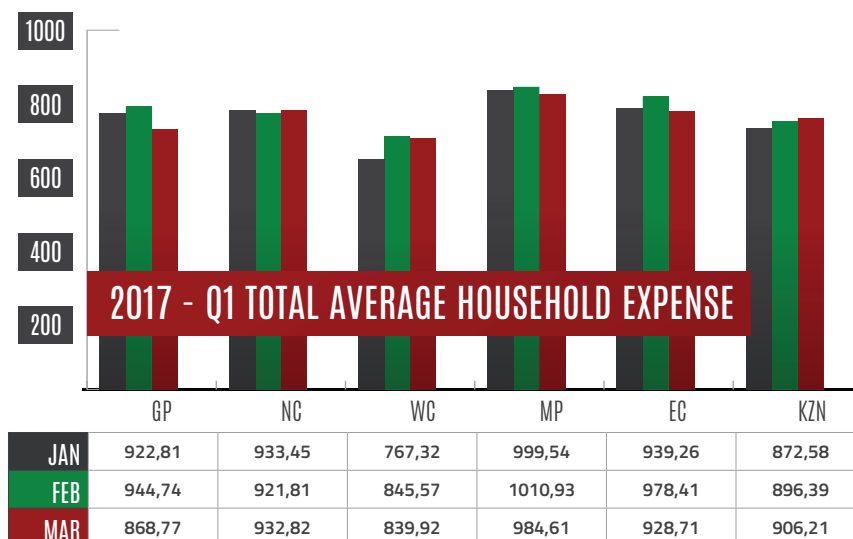


Figure 2: First Quarter Provincial Average Household Expense 2017

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measurement of retail price changes related to the cost of living. It is surveyed monthly (by Stats SA) assessing the prices of goods and services purchased by average households and is one of the factors that determine inflation.

KEY FINDINGS FROM STATS SA ON THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI) IN THE FIRST QUARTER INCLUDE:

Annual (measured from January 2016 to January 2017) consumer price inflation of 6, 6% in January 2017.

Food and non-alcoholic beverages increased from 1,8 percentage points in December to 1,9 percentage points in January.

The consumer price index increased by 0, 6% month-on-month in January 2017.

Measured annually the CPI increased by 11, 4%.⁵

The Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action also reported an annual increase of 16.5 % in their Food Price Barometer measured from January 2016 with a basket of food costing R 1 797.04 to an increase to R2 092.95 in January 2017⁶.

In the context of these figures, the cost of basic nutrition is disproportionate to the average income of many lower income households, many of whom are either in the low-skill sector, informal sector or rely on the social grant system to increase household purchasing capacity. The poor are unable to keep up with rising inflation and the threat of food insecurity is an everyday dilemma.

The number of social grant recipients in South Africa as at March 2017, was 17 million. Over 12 million of those were children under 18 years old and over 3 million of those were old age grant recipients⁷.

The Eastern Cape, one of the poorest provinces in the country has the highest number of old age grant recipients and the second highest number of child social grant recipients. Many across the country rely on the social grant as a means to access their basic needs. The current value of the child social grant is R380, when broken down the grant amounts to R12.66 per day, well below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day (R24.68). The current value of the old age grant is at R 1600 (and R1625 for recipients over 75 years), when broken down amounts to R53.33 per day, barely over the Stats SA upper bound poverty line of R1 077 per month. Social grants are then diluted across households and with such limited sources of income, a basic needs basket of food and non-food items is unattainable, and sacrifices to personal hygiene are often made to accommodate the demanding needs of hunger.

FIGURE 3: 2016 NATIONAL AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD EXPENSE

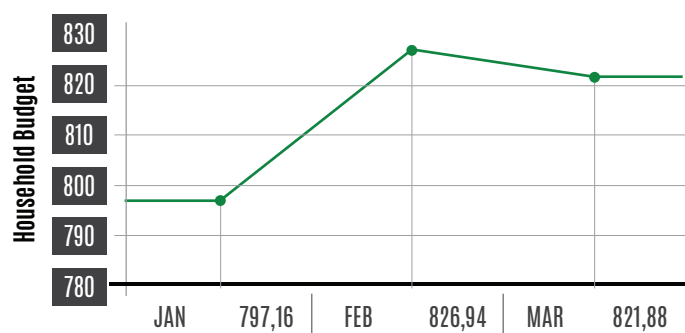
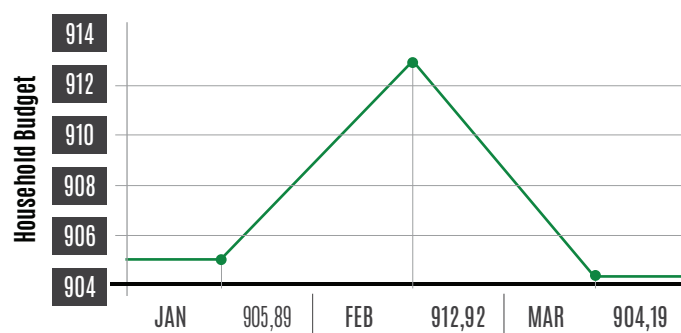


FIGURE 4: 2017 NATIONAL AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD EXPENSE



⁵ Consumer Price Index 2017. www.statssa.gov.za/publications/PO141/PO141January2017.pdf

⁶ PACSA Monthly Food Price Barometer: JANUARY 2017

www.pacsa.org.za/images/food_barometer/2017/January_2017_PACSA_monthly_food_price_barometer.pdf

⁷ Statistical Report no.3 of 2017 – 31 March 2017. www.sassa.gov.za/index.php/knowledge-centre/statistical-reports

QUARTER ONE BREAKDOWN

JANUARY: NO RELIEF IN SIGHT FOR THE HUNGRY

Out of the 27 food items tracked in the Basic Needs Basket, 23 food items increased in price, with the '5 big food' items (Maize meal, rice, flour/bread, sugar and cooking oil) identified by the Pietermaritzburg Association for Community Social Action (PACSA) as the food items deemed necessary for a families basic energy and critical ingredients in providing meals for a family all increasing.

OUT OF THE 10 NON-FOOD BASIC NEEDS ITEMS TRACKED, 7 NON-FOOD ITEMS INCREASED OVER THE QUARTER.

**KWA ZULU NATAL HAD THE
HIGHEST PRICE INCREASE FOR
THE MONTH**

↑23%
R676 - R873

KWA ZULU NATAL basic needs basket increased from **R675,71** in Jan '16 to **R872,58** in Jan '17 increasing by **R197**.

**MPUMALANGA RECORDED
THE HIGHEST COST FOR A
BASIC NEEDS BASKET**

↑13%
R890 - R999

MPUMALANGA basic needs basket increased from **R890** in Jan '16 to **R999** in Jan '17 increasing by **R109**.

↑14%
R798 - R922

GAUTENG basic needs basket increased from **R798** in Jan '16, to **R922** in Jan '17 increasing by **R133**.

↑21%
R735 - R933

NORTHERN CAPE basic needs basket increased from **R735** in Jan '16 to **R933,34** in Jan '17 increasing by **R198**.











↑4%
R728 - R767

WESTERN CAPE basic needs basket increased from **R728,21** in Jan '16 to **R767,32** in Jan '17 increasing by **R5**.

↑17%
R771 - R939

EASTERN CAPE basic needs basket increased from **R771,43** in Jan '16 to **R939,26** in Jan '17 increasing by **R167**.

JANUARY

		GP	NC	WC	MP	EC	KZN	National	
		FOOD ITEMS							
Brown Bread		700g	10,89	11,28	9,70	9,99	9,53	9,12	10,08
Poultry Products		2kg	56,99	54,68	48,48	61,95	54,95	51,84	54,81
White Bread		700g	13,21	12,35	9,88	11,00	10,55	9,24	11,04
Maize Meal		1kg	48,66	50,00	30,74	52,85	51,62	34,60	44,74
Beef & Veal		1kg	34,09	50,20	41,99	63,95	63,95	62,89	52,84
Cabbage Fresh		1 head	11,99	14,50	9,99	16,95	9,95	9,97	12,23
Fresh Full Cream Milk		1 litre	13,99	15,45	9,97	17,95	14,95	20,99	15,55
Potatoes		1kg	11,49	12,95	11,14	23,95	11,95	19,99	15,25
Maas		2 litre	23,99	25,95	19,99	29,95	24,95	20,49	24,22
Cooking Oil		2 litre	41,32	41,25	34,97	40,95	39,95	30,98	38,24

Rice 	2kg	27,49	22,00	20,39	24,20	23,28	36,96	25,72
White Sugar 	2.5kg	35,49	34,75	32,98	32,48	34,95	43,74	35,73
Large Eggs 	6 Eggs	13,49	10,45	10,49	12,45	9,95	13,74	11,76
Canned Pilchards 	400g	16,49	16,50	16,39	16,20	17,95	12,62	16,02
Onions 	1 kg	12,74	13,73	12,69	16,58	15,45	16,30	14,58
Tagless Teabags 	100g	36,49	24,68	29,97	31,95	38,95	28,99	31,84
Apples 	1.5kg	14,99	21,45	12,97	23,95	19,95	19,99	18,88
Baked Beans 	410g	9,98	9,08	8,01	10,28	8,45	9,62	9,24
Mayonnaise 	750g	22,99	22,18	22,07	25,45	25,95	20,99	23,27
Margarine 	500g	28,99	23,58	20,24	28,95	19,95	19,24	23,49
Bread Flour 	10kg	104,50	97,00	88,76	106,90	111,30	85,31	98,96
Instant Yeast 	200g	4,21	3,48	5,89	5,95	3,45	7,49	5,08
*Sugar Beans 	500g	19,99	23,00	15,62	27,47	16,95	29,49	22,09
*Mealie-Samp 	2.5kg	15,99	29,60	13,13	29,95	14,45	28,49	21,94
Coffee 	250g	32,99	42,70	31,99	41,62	35,60	29,66	35,76
Juice 	2 Litre	29,99	23,43	25,24	21,45	25,62	23,66	24,90
COST		693,43	706,22	593,68	785,32	714,45	696,04	698,26

*Mealie Samp and Sugar Beans are measured in varying quantities and the recorded figures represent the average cost of these varying quantities.



NON-FOOD ITEMS								
Washing Powder 	2kg	41,16	51,58	34,74	49,45	46,2	33,74	42,81
Toothpaste 	100g	10,94	9,95	9,04	9,95	11,62	8,62	10,02
Toilet Paper 	9 Rolls	45,99	45,9	30,99	39,45	41,62	31,49	39,24
Body Cream Gel / Vaseline 	100g	40,99	25,95	13,97	18,95	25,95	19,99	24,3
Body Soap 	200g	9,99	12,25	11,22	12,62	12,62	8,99	11,28
Deodorant 	50ml	19,99	18,45	16,49	18,95	18,95	13,99	17,8
Sanitary Towels & Tampons 	10's	19,49	22,25	13,82	22,95	23,95	13,24	19,28
Matches 	1 Pack	7,99	4,95	6,64	5,95	5,95	7	6,41
Paraffin 	1 Litre	14,4	17	21,74	18	18	19,49	18,11
Candles 	1 Pack	18,44	18,95	14,99	17,95	19,95	19,99	18,38
HOUSEHOLD BUDGET		229,38	227,23	173,64	214,22	224,81	176,54	207,63
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE		922,81	933,45	767,32	999,54	939,26	872,58	905,89

Figure 5:
January Average Cost of
Essential Food and
Non-Food Items

QUARTER ONE BREAKDOWN

FEBRUARY: AN UPHILL BATTLE FOR BASIC SURVIVAL

THE PRICE A BASIC NEED BASKET WAS RECORDED THE HIGHEST IN FEBRUARY ACROSS ALL PROVINCES.

NORTHERN CAPE HAD THE
HIGHEST PRICE INCREASE FOR
THE MONTH

↑17%

R761 - R922

NORTHERN CAPE basic needs basket increased from **R761,20** in Feb '16 to **R 921,81** in Feb '17 increasing by **R160**.

MPUMALANGA RECORDED
THE HIGHEST COST FOR A
BASIC NEEDS BASKET

↑12%

R885 - R1011

MPUMALANGA basic needs basket increased from **R885,45** in Feb '16 to **R1010,93** in Feb '17 increasing by **R126**.

↑16%

R788 - R945

GAUTENG basic needs basket increased from **R787,75** in Feb '16, to **R944,74** in Feb '17 increasing by **R157**.

↑13%

R781 - R896

KWA ZULU NATAL basic needs basket increased from **R780,50** in Feb '16 to **R896,39** in Feb '17 increasing by **R116**.

↓1%

R846 - R845











WESTERN CAPE basic needs basket increased from **R846,38** in Feb '16 to **R845,57** in Feb '17 decreasing by **R1**.





↑16%

R820 - R978

EASTERN CAPE basic needs basket increased from **R819,76** in Feb '16 to **R978,41** in Feb '17 increasing by **R159**.

FEBRUARY

		GP	NC	WC	MP	EC	KZN	National	
		FOOD ITEMS							
Brown Bread		700g	11,49	11,28	9,54	10,58	9,78	9,18	10,31
Poultry Products		2kg	49,79	54,74	53,99	58,07	59,95	46,37	53,07
White Bread		700g	12,79	12,27	10,16	11,22	10,4	9,81	11,11
Maize Meal		1kg	49,66	46,74	44,66	48,1	51,93	39,62	46,21
Beef & Veal		1kg	53,62	50,25	74,99	58,12	69,95	56,99	55,26
Cabbage Fresh		1 head	14,99	14,75	11,99	17,47	10,95	8,5	13,11
Fresh Full Cream Milk		1 litre	14,79	15,5	11,64	22,97	14,95	21,49	17,31
Potatoes		1kg	12,99	14	10,99	22,97	11,95	18,5	15,23
Maas		2 litre	24,99	23	23,24	27,47	25,95	30,49	25,86
Cooking Oil		2 litre	35,99	40,83	32,72	40,59	41,95	38,24	38,87

Rice 	2kg	23,99	22,16	20,74	23,97	25,62	33,74	25,04
White Sugar 	2.5kg	38,49	34,83	33,59	33,98	34,95	43,49	34,47
Large Eggs 	6 Eggs	13,74	10,5	11,14	12,45	11,95	13,37	12,19
Canned Pilchards 	400g	17,99	16,99	16,84	16,29	17,95	14,37	16,74
Onions 	1 kg	12,49	13,5	8,99	14	16	17,49	13,74
Tagless Teabags 	100g	36,49	24,74	34,24	37,47	39,95	32,99	34,31
Apples 	1.5kg	18,99	21,5	12,49	24,97	24,95	20,39	20,04
Baked Beans 	410g	9,95	9,16	7,92	7,87	8,2	9,24	8,72
Mayonnaise 	750g	22,94	22,24	22,07	25,68	25,95	21,74	23,44
Margarine 	500g	24,99	23,66	21,88	29,13	20,95	19,53	23,36
Bread Flour 	10kg	105,99	97,13	95,28	94,95	101,98	94,3	87,58
Instant Yeast 	200g	4,29	3,54	5,39	4,56	3,45	5,74	4,49
*Sugar Beans 	500g	19,99	23	13,99	38,97	16,95	23,49	22,73
*Mealie-Samp 	2.5kg	21,99	26	10,64	27,62	11,95	22,49	20,11
Coffee 	250g	32,99	42,75	31,16	41,96	40,97	25,99	34,79
Juice 	2 Litre	34,99	20,66	27,99	30,41	29,45	30,99	29,08
COST		715,4	695,72	658,27	781,84	738,98	708,54	697,17

*Mealie Samp and Sugar Beans are measured in varying quantities and the recorded figures represent the average cost of these varying quantities.

NON-FOOD ITEMS								
Washing Powder 	2kg	49,99	51,16	35,12	44,6	52,28	34,99	44,69
Toothpaste 	100g	10,89	10	8,59	12,11	10,95	9,73	10,38
Toilet Paper 	9 Rolls	58,99	47,66	32,99	47,14	48,28	26,99	43,67
Body Cream Gel / Vaseline 	100g	19,99	26	16,49	33,47	25,95	27,49	24,9
Body Soap 	200g	10,49	11,49	11,21	12,62	12,97	10,16	11,49
Deodorant 	50ml	18,99	18,5	16,49	17,47	18,95	14,49	17,48
Sanitary Towels & Tampons 	10's	27,99	19,83	18,14	21,09	22,95	15,62	20,94
Matches 	1 Pack	7,99	5	6,64	6,97	5,95	1,9	5,74
Paraffin 	1 Litre	14,58	17,5	21,49	18,17	16,2	17,99	16,3
Candles 	1 Pack	12,99	18,95	20,14	15,45	24,95	28,49	20,16
HOUSEHOLD BUDGET		232,89	226,09	187,3	229,09	239,43	187,85	215,75
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE		944,74	921,81	845,57	1010,93	978,41	896,39	912,92

Figure 6:
February Average Cost of
Essential Food and
Non-Food Items

QUARTER ONE BREAKDOWN

MARCH: SLIGHT RELIEF ON STRAINED POCKETS

THE PRICE A BASIC NEED BASKET WAS RECORDED THE LOWEST IN MARCH ACROSS ALL PROVINCES.

KWA ZULU NATAL HAD THE
HIGHEST PRICE INCREASE FOR
THE MONTH

↑20%

R717 - R906

KWA ZULU NATAL basic needs basket
increased from **R717,08** in Mar '16
to **R906,21** in Mar '17 increasing by **R189**.

MPUMALANGA RECORDED
THE HIGHEST COST FOR A
BASIC NEEDS BASKET

↑8%

R903 - R985

MPUMALANGA basic needs basket increased
from **R903,41** in Mar '16 to **R984,60**
in Mar '17 increasing by **R81**.

↑2%

R848 - R869

GAUTENG basic needs basket
increased from **R847,68** in
Mar '16, to **R868,77** in
Mar '17 increasing by **R21**.

↑12%

R812 - R924

NORTHERN CAPE basic needs
basket increased from **R811,72**
in Mar '16 to **R923,82** in
Mar '17 increasing by **R112**.

↑6%

R788 - R840











WESTERN CAPE basic needs
basket increased from **R787,56**
in Mar '16 to **R839,92** in
Mar '17 increasing by **R52**.


↑5%

R881 - R929

EASTERN CAPE basic needs
basket increased from **R881,31**
in Mar '16 to **R928,71** in
Mar '17 increasing by **R47**.

MARCH

		GP	NC	WC	MP	EC	KZN	National	
		FOOD ITEMS							
Brown Bread		700g	10,49	11,45	9,54	10,73	11,23	10,12	10,59
Poultry Products		2kg	58,49	54,74	56,49	58,7	51,64	49,47	54,21
White Bread		700g	11,24	12,27	10,04	11	10,92	11,66	11,19
Maize Meal		1kg	43,49	47,16	41,64	49,7	45,97	37,96	44,32
Beef & Veal		1kg	20,38	46,25	79,99	65,95	60,97	59,87	55,57
Cabbage Fresh		1 head	11,5	14,5	10,99	15,95	10,97	11,95	12,64
Fresh Full Cream Milk		1 litre	13,49	16	10,04	16,95	13,97	19,97	14,86
Potatoes		1kg	13,99	15,99	11,29	19,95	13,97	18,49	15,61
Maas		2 litre	26,99	26,5	21,99	29,95	22,97	19,49	24,65
Cooking Oil		2 litre	37,99	38,66	34,99	39,95	37,47	30,59	36,61

Rice 	2kg	22,49	20,16	20,64	24,95	25,8	27,49	23,59
White Sugar 	2.5kg	34,99	34,99	34,72	36,62	34,47	42,49	36,38
Large Eggs 	6 Eggs	13,89	10,5	11,29	11,62	9,97	16,32	12,26
Canned Pilchards 	400g	17,49	15,91	13,79	15,7	16,98	15,12	15,83
Onions 	1 kg	9,99	11	8,99	8,95	11,97	17,49	11,4
Tagless Teabags 	100g	29,99	24,74	29,99	39,95	35,47	24,47	30,77
Apples 	1.5kg	19,99	21,5	16,97	23,95	18,97	18,99	20,06
Baked Beans 	410g	9,47	9,33	8,14	8,46	10,39	10,49	9,38
Mayonnaise 	750g	22,99	22,49	20,49	26,45	24,97	27,24	24,11
Margarine 	500g	18,99	23,66	22,79	25,95	18,1	12,49	20,33
Bread Flour 	10kg	102,99	100,46	87,54	94,95	96,95	108,97	98,64
Instant Yeast 	200g	3,74	3,57	5,89	5,95	3,12	8,74	5,17
*Sugar Beans 	500g	18,99	24	15,29	24,99	18,47	36,49	23,04
*Mealie-Samp 	2.5kg	19,49	36,5	8,29	29,95	10,97	28,99	22,36
Coffee 	250g	29,74	35,45	31,54	31,95	34,97	33,32	32,83
Juice 	2 Litre	32,49	21,66	25,49	36,95	31,47	22,66	28,45
COST		655,77	699,44	648,85	766,17	683,12	721,33	694,84

*Mealie Samp and Sugar Beans are measured in varying quantities and the recorded figures represent the average cost of these varying quantities.











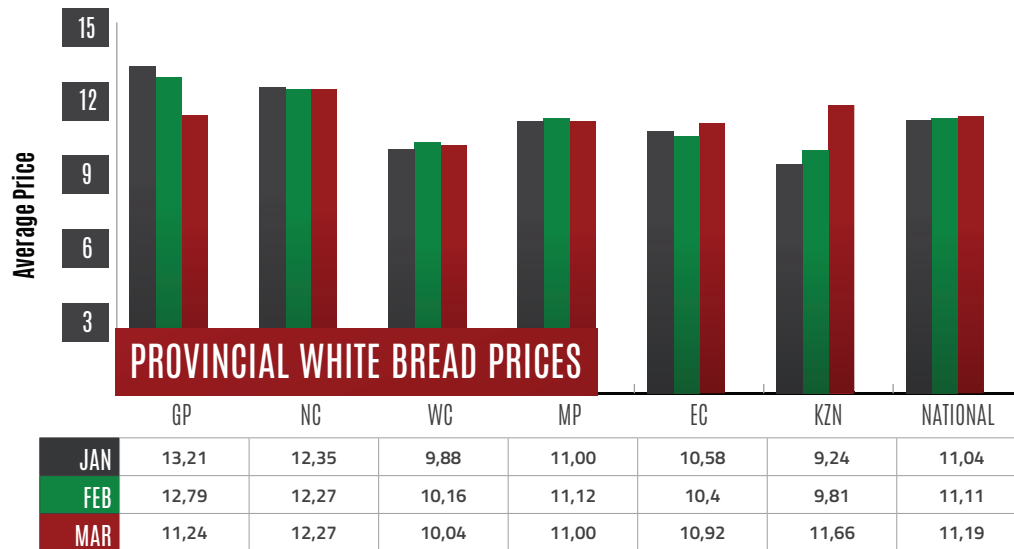
NON-FOOD ITEMS								
Washing Powder 	2kg	43,99	46,74	41,66	43,28	45,81	32,74	42,37
Toothpaste 	100g	10,74	10	8,79	10,62	12,05	11,99	10,7
Toilet Paper 	9 Rolls	36,99	46,99	34,99	39,95	47,63	32,16	39,78
Body Cream Gel / Vaseline 	100g	38,49	26	13,97	18,95	37,97	18,99	25,73
Body Soap 	200g	8,99	10,66	11,97	13,28	14,47	10,99	11,73
Deodorant 	50ml	19,99	18,5	16,49	18,95	19,97	14,95	18,14
Sanitary Towels & Tampons 	10's	16,49	25,49	19,83	13,82	23,45	22,73	20,3
Matches 	1 Pack	6,64	5	6,64	5,95	5,72	3,85	5,43
Paraffin 	1 Litre	13,55	17	21,74	15,95	17,05	16,49	16,96
Candles 	1 Pack	16,89	18	14,99	17,95	21,47	19,99	18,21
HOUSEHOLD BUDGET		213,26	224,38	191,07	218,43	245,59	184,88	209,35
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE		868,77	923,82	839,92	984,6	928,71	906,21	904,19

Figure 7:
March Average Cost of
Essential Food and
Non-Food Items

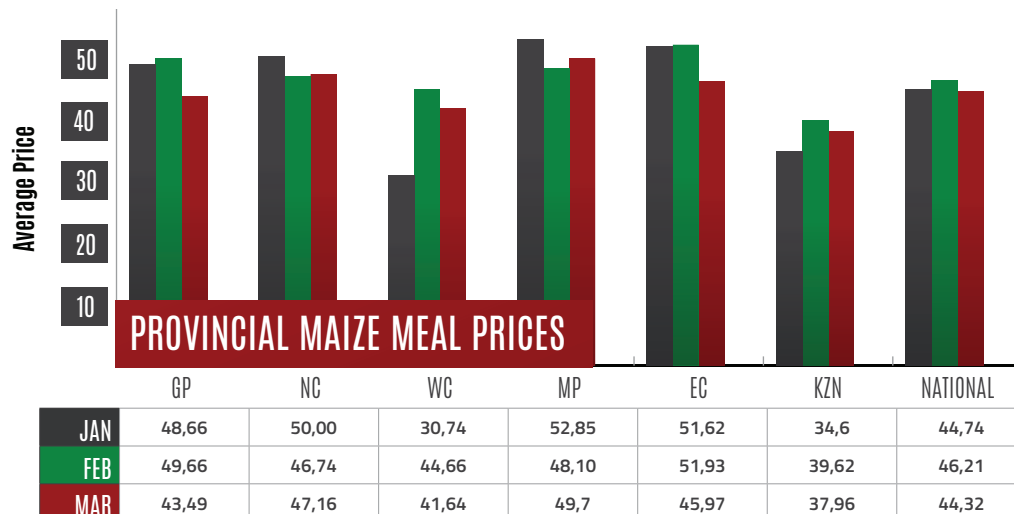
A TREND ANALYSIS OF ESSENTIAL FOOD AND NON-FOOD BASKET ITEMS

1.1 FOOD ITEMS

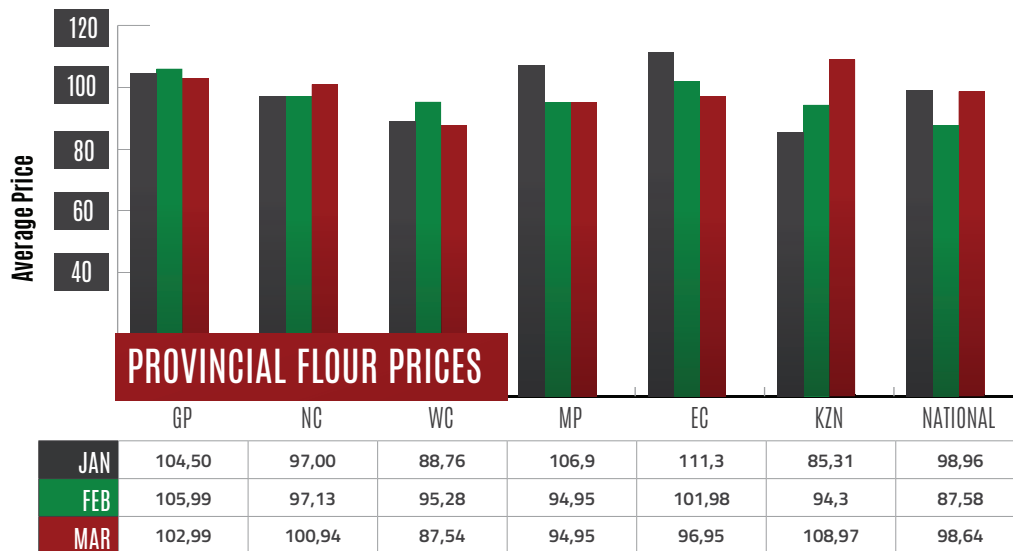
The ripple effects of the El Nino draught that swept through Southern Africa last year has aggravated the costs of staple food items such as bread, maize meal, which act as core energy consumption sources for many lower income households. Food inflation has further worsened the threat of food insecurity and against this backdrop the question then begs how will South Africa's poorest fill empty stomachs with the bread of sorrow?



Nutrition is often sacrificed for sustenance in many lower income households, and their diets usually comprise of carbohydrates, and even that is steadily becoming unaffordable.



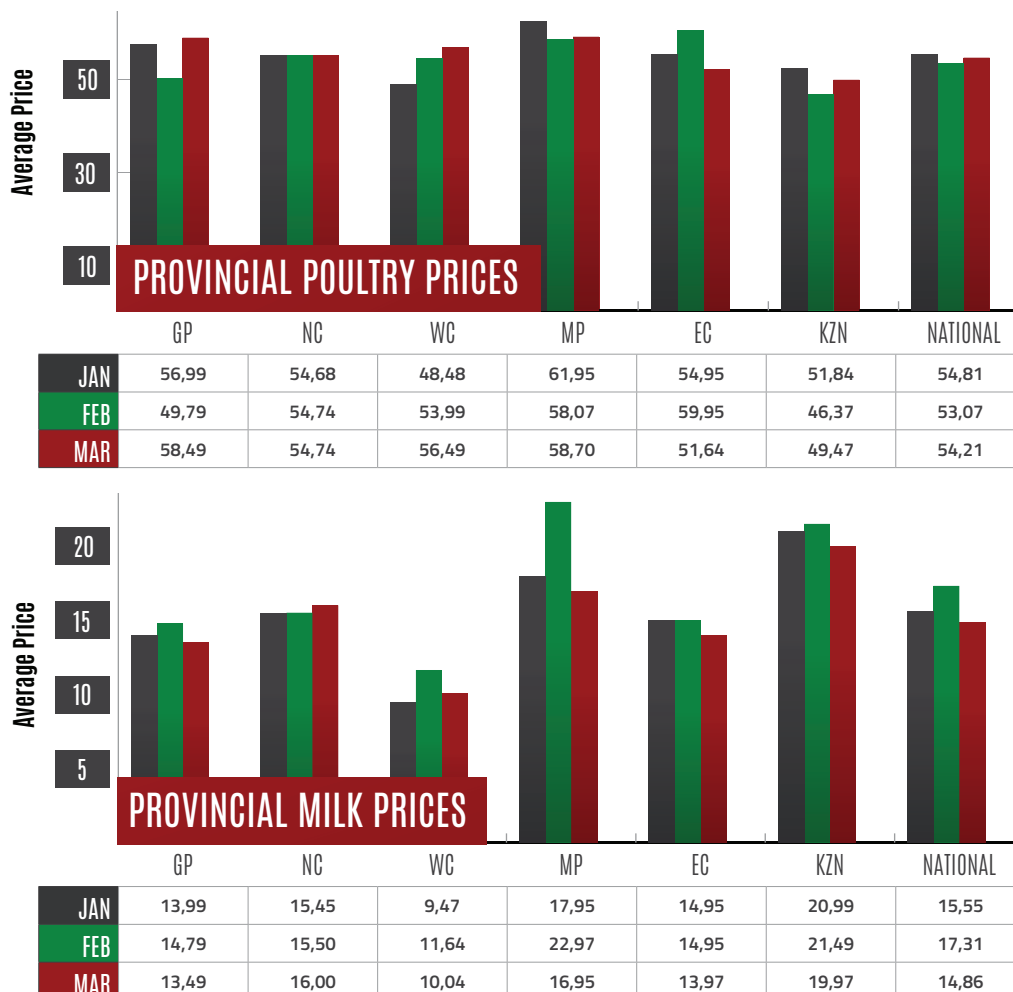
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The progressive realisation of socioeconomic rights and the enjoyment of a dignified life are largely vested on food security. Overall human development is also intrinsically linked to having sufficient food, findings from The Right to Food in South Africa published by SPII state, “To improve child nutrition, there must be adequate household food security”.⁸

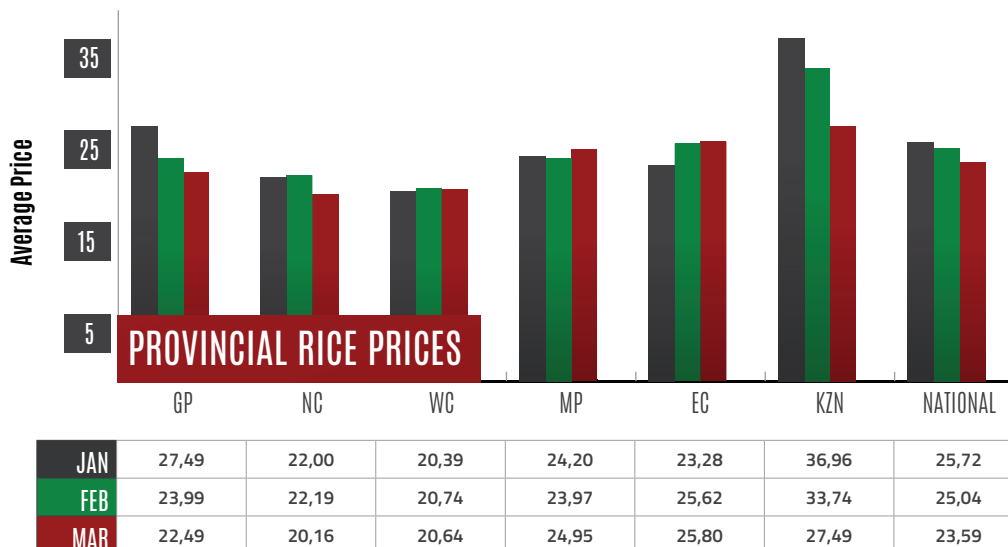
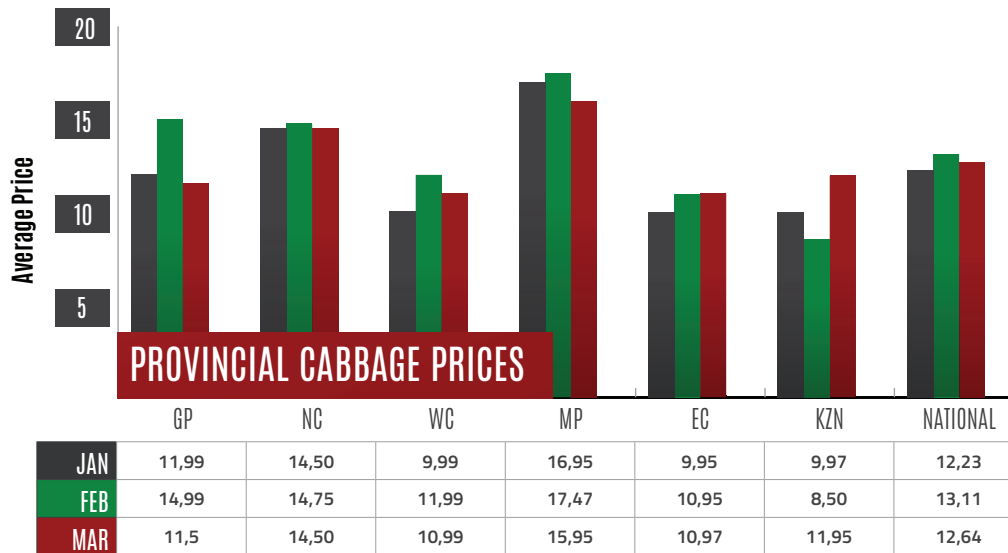
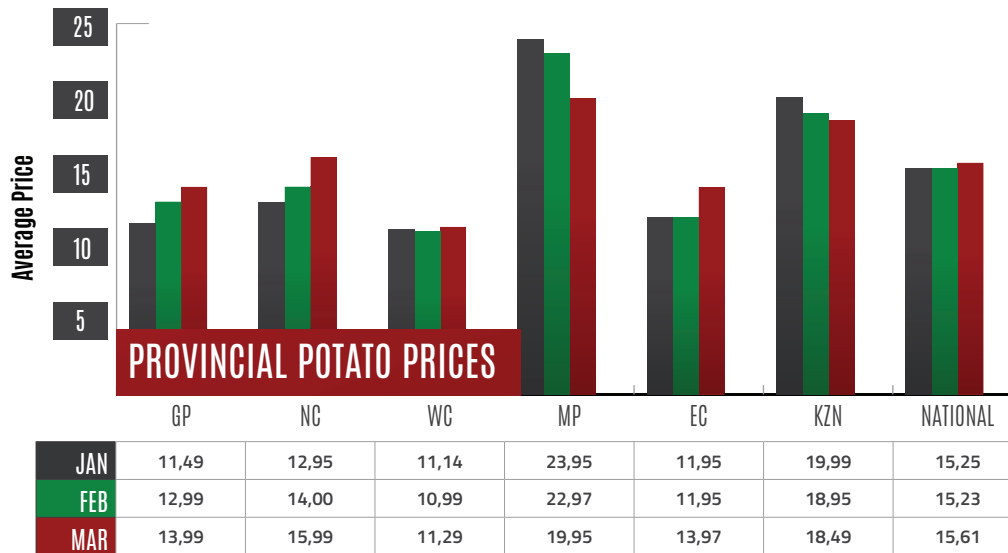
At the mercy of hunger, South Africa’s lower income households

simply cannot afford to satisfy balanced dietary requirements and the devastating effect of a “sustenance” based diet can lead to stunted growth in children, malnutrition and long term cognitive defects. The increasing food prices have meant that a balanced diet is a luxury the poor cannot afford. Items on the basic needs basket such as chicken which rose from an average of R46, 67 in March 2016 to an average of R54, 21 in March 2017 are sources of protein that many lower income households find themselves having to go without.

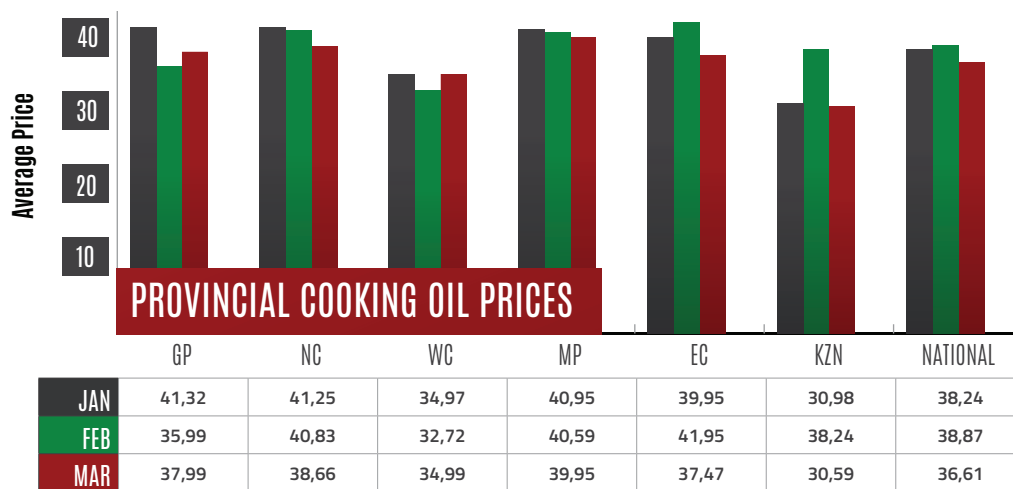
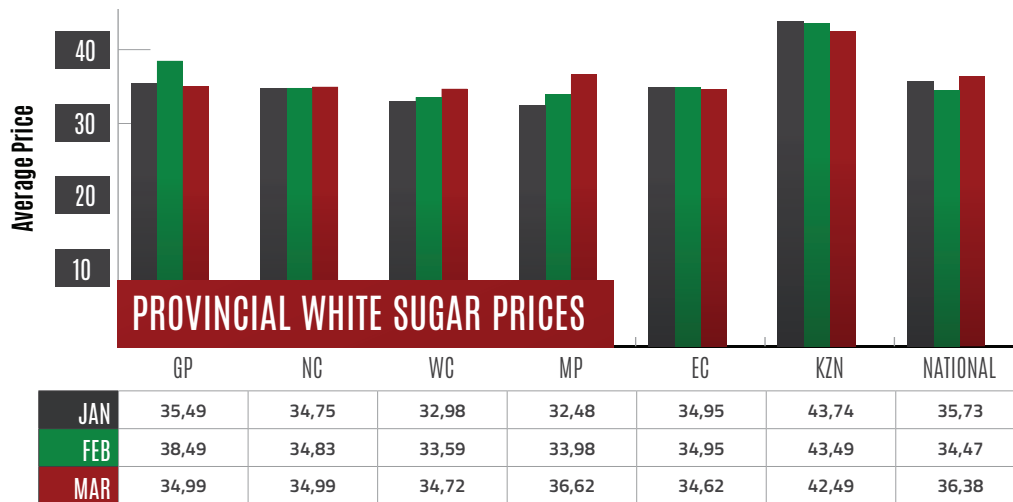


⁸ McLaren, D, Moyo, B and Jeffery, J ‘The right to food in South Africa: An analysis of the content, policy effort, resource allocation and enjoyment of the constitutional right to food’ (2015) Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute, Working Paper 11.

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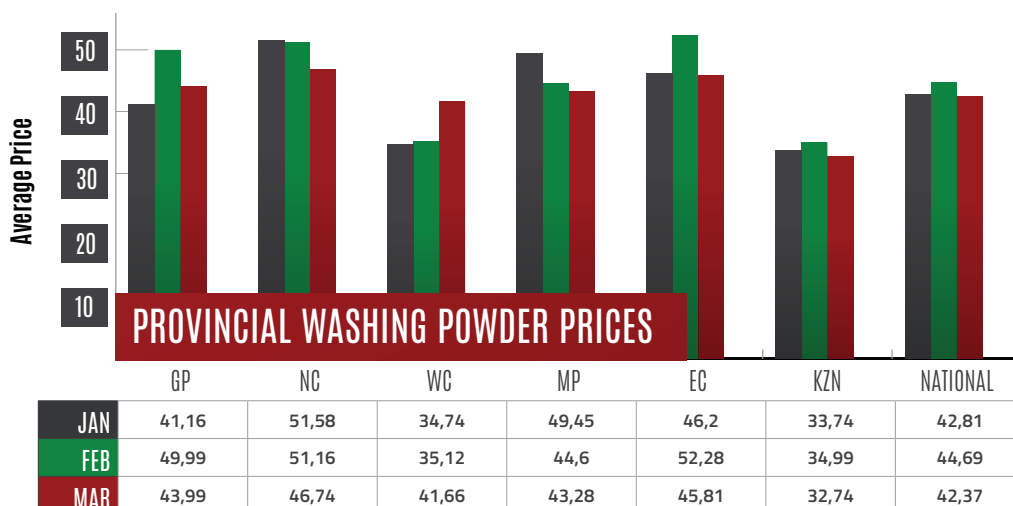
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1.2 NON- FOOD ITEMS

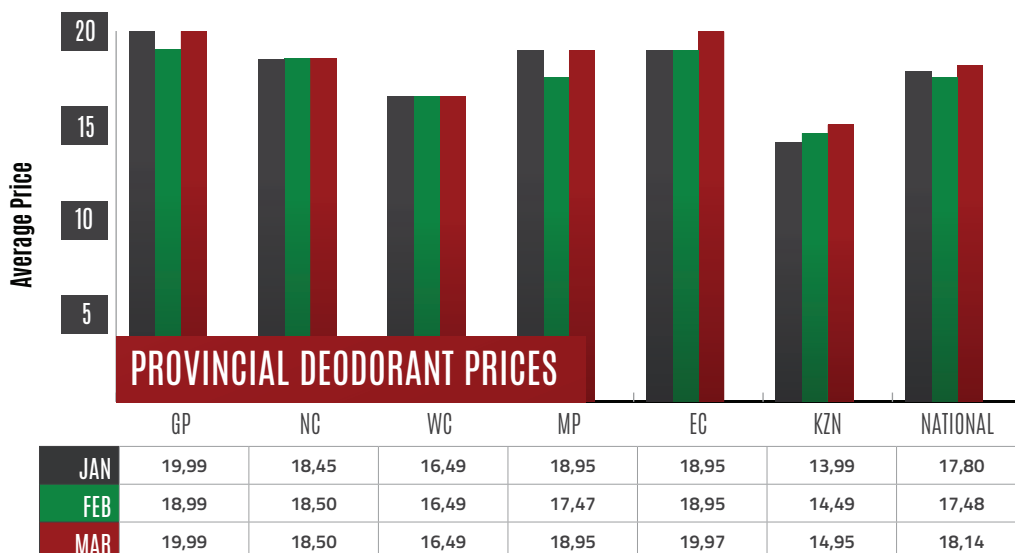
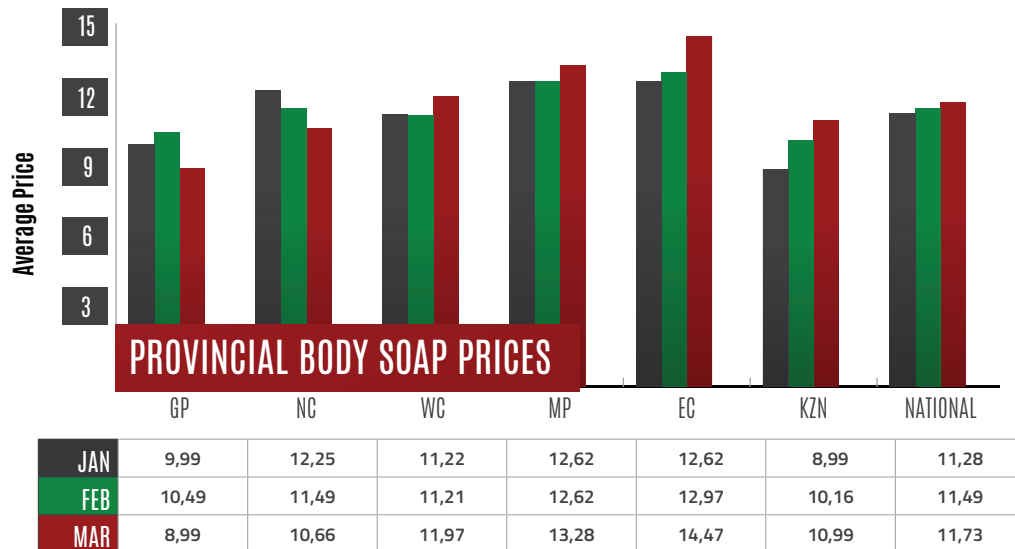
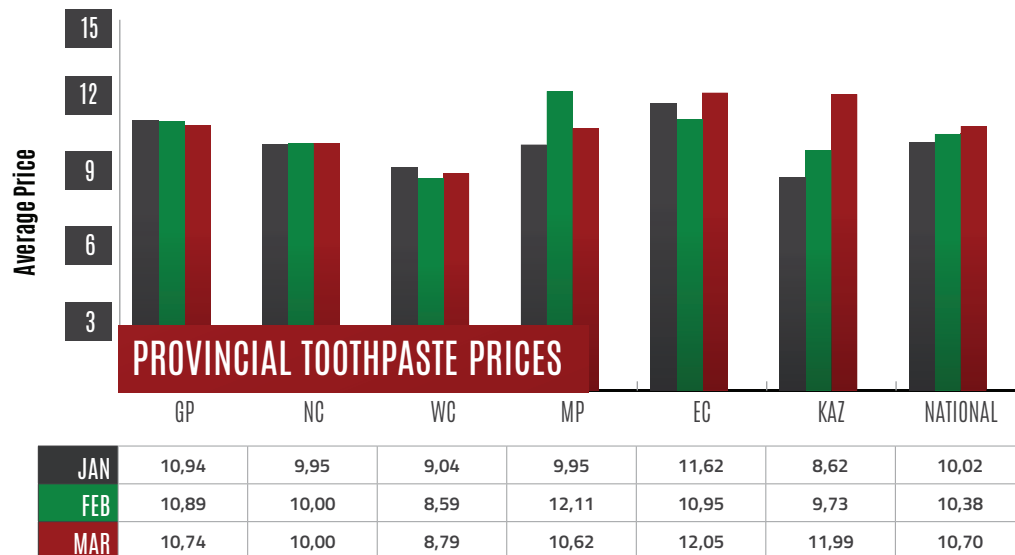
Sources of inequality in the country are still deeply racially entrenched, in a report released by Deloitte⁹, South African CEOs, the majority of whom are white are earning an average of R69 000 per day. The wage gap in South Africa continues to be hugely disproportionate, and the average annual pay of R 35 000 for a black low-skilled worker remains insufficient to access a basket of basic needs comprised of food and

non-food items. The poor working class have to make tough choices and often that requires them to forgo non-food items and basic items required for hygiene and sanitation. Pay disparities, an escalating cost of living and harsh economic times have resulted in a compromised standard of living.

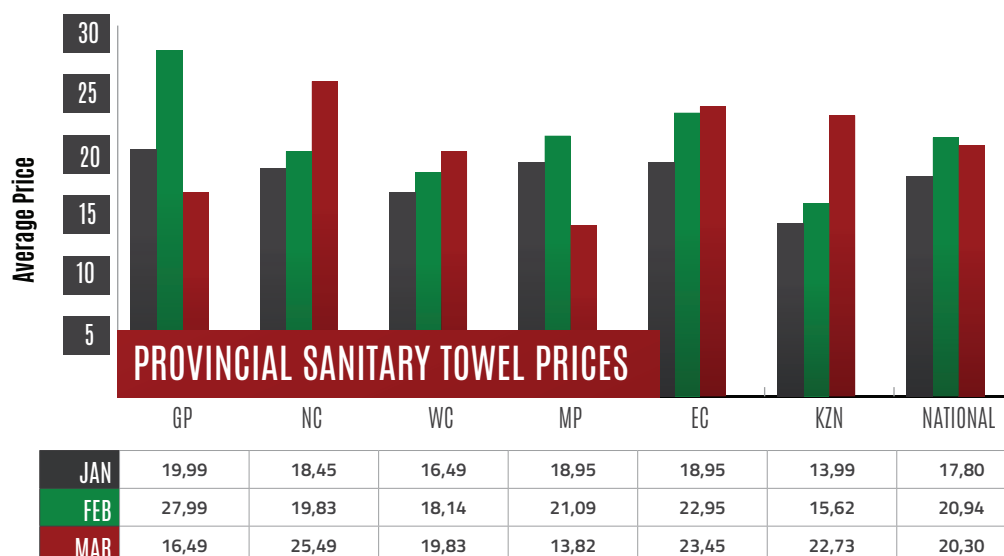


⁹ 69 000 a day CEOs. www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2017-06-28-r69000-a-day-ceos/

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Particularly concerning in the inability to afford non-food items, is the need for sanitary towels and the effects they have on the dignity of young girls, who have been reported to miss school during their monthly cycle as a result of being unable to afford sanitary towels. This concern has spurred on advocacy efforts to urge the government to supply free sanitary towels at schools¹⁰. Subsequently the Kwa Zulu Natal Department of Education announced in January of this year, it's commitment to provide free sanitary towels to nearly 3000 schools in the province.

CONCLUSION

In Steve Biko's *I Write What I Like* in an extract from a paper presented in 1971 he says "in South Africa now it is very expensive to be poor", he also further states "it is the poor people who use untarred roads, have to walk long distances, and therefore experience the wear and tear on commodities like shoes..."¹¹ And decades later this statement still rings true.

The struggle from perpetual impoverishment continues and this narrative has become overwhelmingly dominant in the lives of many South Africans, the majority of whom are black. A fundamental shift is required, with urgency and immediacy, one that is rooted in the

attainment of a decent standard of living for all. A decent standard of living is one that requires a holistic approach to improving the lives of the poor, beyond basic survival and an overall elevation of the quality and standard of living for people that will uplift their inherent human dignity and reduce inequality. Poverty and hunger are one of the greatest injustices of a post-conflict society, a concerted effort from the state, civil society, business and all of society is critical in closing the poverty and inequality gaps that have only continued to widen. Legitimate dialogues need to lay the foundation of inclusive socioeconomic policies that will be designed to work for all who live in a society.



Church of Sweden

SPII would like to thank its partners on the project, The Association of Community-based Advice Offices of South Africa (ACAOSA) and Church of Sweden (CoS) for providing assistance and support in the cause to end poverty and inequality. Together we can make a change.

¹⁰ School girl sanitary towels by numbers, www.enca.com/south-africa/infographic-school-girl-sanitary-towels-by-numbers

¹¹ Biko, S. 2004. *I Write What I Like*. Picador Africa. South Africa.