

OXFAM IN ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe, Oxfam's focuses on sustainable livelihoods, health, and ensuring poor people have enough food

IN NUMBERS*

550,000
total people helped

THE SITUATION

Zimbabwe is gradually emerging from a severe political and humanitarian crisis characterised by a decade-old economic collapse. The crisis reached its peak in 2008 when unprecedented hyperinflation, poor agricultural production, and massive degradation of basic social services resulted in about 7 million people needing emergency food assistance. The violence that followed the first round of elections in March 2008 led to internal displacements and from August that year the country experienced a debilitating cholera epidemic that resulted in the deaths of more than 4,000 people.

In February 2009, the main political parties in Zimbabwe signed an agreement to form an inclusive Government of National Unity. The political environment has since improved and there has been an opening up of operating space for civil society, enabling access to vulnerable

communities.

In 2009, the use of multiple currencies was introduced and inflation levels started to drop. Significant improvement was observed in the availability of food and other basic consumables. In 2010, the modest economic growth and stabilisation continued.

The agricultural sector, which is the backbone of Zimbabwe's economy, has shown remarkable improvement, but industrial productivity remains poor. Most industries are operating below production capacity because of power shortages and the lack of essential imported inputs. Civil servants are underpaid and the quality of services in the health and education sectors remains low. Water and sanitation facilities are dilapidated and there is an acute shortage of chemicals to treat major water supply points.



While there have been improvements and relative stability in the country, the fragility of the situation at a political level remains evident, particularly as the country is undergoing the constitution-making process and moves closer to anticipated elections.



Aggie Ncube, S'patsiwe Ncube and Regina Maphosa pick spinach at an Oxfam-supported vegetable garden

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

We're working to increase agriculture production and productivity, link farmers to produce markets, set up information centres within communities for information about market prices, and build producer groups' and partner organisations' capacity to influence decisions and policies that affect them.

We also work to diversify livelihoods and farming systems and improve disaster risk reduction and natural resource management, to combat climate change.

In urban areas, we are mobilising vulnerable households to support the establishment of small- to medium-sized enterprises, as well as promoting urban agriculture.

Right: Peninah Nare waters her maize using an irrigation well installed by Oxfam partner the Dabane Trust.

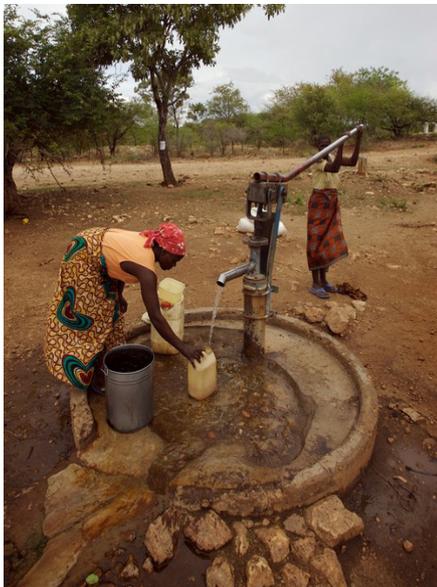


Photo: Nicole Johnston

RIGHTS IN CRISIS

We're working to reduce -risk urban, peri-urban and rural populations' vulnerability to water-, sanitation- and hygiene-related disease transmission, by increasing access to water and sanitation infrastructure and public health promotion activities, and enhancing the capacities of key water and sanitation institutions.

We're also working to reduce the risk of future food crises in Zimbabwe by building the capacity to respond and reducing people's vulnerability.



ESSENTIAL SERVICES

We're working to ensure vulnerable people can access affordable and quality essential services: HIV prevention, quality care and treatment services; affordable quality health services; and quality basic education.

To achieve this we're mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in economic justice and humanitarian programmes; running a

livelihoods programme for people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS in the Chirumanzu district; supporting the Fair Play for Africa campaign; working with partners to lobby the National AIDS Council on improved access to quality HIV services; and undertaking research on the links between HIV and AIDS and water-related diseases.

GENDER JUSTICE

We work to raise awareness around violence among women and men in rural areas, and to strengthen reporting systems. We work with a men's organisation, Padare, on preventing gender-based violence and upholding women's rights, targeting men and boys and influential community leaders to address attitudes and beliefs. We're also developing projects for women's economic

empowerment to support women's livelihoods.

Women's leadership and participation is mainstreamed throughout all the country programmes. We also support the workplace HIV and gender programme, as well as Oxfam staff and partners, to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation of the communities they work with.

Left: A woman collects water from an Oxfam rehabilitated borehole in Kotwa

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

We work to:

- Identify and articulate policy issues, and support programme and partner teams in analysing them, as well as highlighting priorities
- Identify research and policy needs, and commission and conduct research that will serve as an evidence base for influencing policy makers
- Network and engage in constructive dialogue with key stakeholders – including policy makers, donors and the private sector – who are central to our programmes, to influence policy; in particular, the development, adoption and implementation of new and existing policies
- Work closely with the media as a tool for advocacy, lobbying and campaigning
- Contribute to other Oxfam advocacy campaigns based on experience in Zimbabwe

JOINT INITIATIVE PROGRAMME

We're working to address the vulnerable communities' short and medium-term needs through "integrated programming": Oxfam and local partners have agreed to work together in a unique collaboration, utilising their strengths and networks to provide much-needed assistance in a variety of sectors, including livelihoods support, food security, HIV and AIDS work, and social and child protection.

We're working to help vulnerable populations get increased and integrated access to priority needs and services; to support the recovery and revitalisation of

the local market economy through support to market catalysts such as traders, entrepreneurs, and opportunities for vocational skills; to strengthen community mechanisms and national actors to collaboratively and transparently manage resources to address priority needs; to advocate and share lessons learned on urban poverty and development in this dynamic and unique context.

Below: Oxfam seeks to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS and provide support to those affected by the virus. Here, a group communicates about HIV and AIDS through traditional song and dance

