

Zimbabwe

Some of the reasons why Plan works in Zimbabwe

- A quarter of the population is HIV positive, reducing life expectancy to just 33
- 80 percent of the population live on less than US\$2 per day
- Only 35 percent of children enrol in secondary school
- Half of the rural population do not have access to adequate sanitation facilities

Overview of the country

The Republic of Zimbabwe has been ruled by Robert Mugabe since the country's independence in 1980. Today, people are living under extremely difficult political, economic and social conditions; poverty and unemployment is soaring, political strife is commonplace, and there is an acute shortage of food and fuel. Although embracing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and prioritising these according to national needs, it is unlikely Zimbabwe will reach any of the goals set.

Eight MDGs were agreed at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000. They range from halving global poverty and hunger to protecting the environment, improving health and sanitation and tackling illiteracy and discrimination against women. Poverty reduction is a particularly challenge for Zimbabwe. 56 percent of the population live on less than US\$1 per day, and 1 million people to depend on food aid. Current government policies, including no right to assembly, have halted most mainstream sources of international aid, exacerbating the vulnerable situation of the poor. Access to education is also a staggering problem. School fees are rising and attendance has therefore fallen by 25 percent over the last five years.

Two of the projects described below relate Zimbabwe's HIV/AIDS epidemic. The country has one of the world's worst HIV/AIDS statistics; UNAIDS estimates that 1.7 million people are currently living with the disease and over 3,200 people die every week from AIDS related illnesses. 1.3 million children have lost one or both parents.

How you can help

Thanks to our supporters, Plan is working with communities in Zimbabwe on many projects. Field staff and communities in Zimbabwe have identified the following projects, from among those we are currently working on, as priorities for additional funding this financial year. With your help, these projects will be of huge benefit to communities we work with in Zimbabwe.

Training on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections for professional health workers in Chiredzi

Any primary healthcare system must have adequate supervision and support. This project focuses on providing that support through the recruitment and training of professional health workers in Chiredzi. Plan provides accurate information, educates the health workers and ensures they have the skills to effectively communicate the appropriate information. Alongside training, Plan produces materials such as posters, leaflets and t-shirts, and runs community events. These materials and activities play a key role in informing people of health risks and reduce their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

Information and education on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections in Mutasa

In Mutasa, Plan is focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention with a programme targeted at youth and adolescents; it is designed to heighten awareness of the problem and change behaviour patterns within this age group. The programme consists of awareness campaigns; the establishment of community support groups; and training of community health workers, providing testing, counselling and medication. The community health workers act as health promoters, by visiting families, passing on their knowledge and encouraging healthy practices, such as safe sex.

Immunisation campaigns in Bulawayo

Immunisation programmes are a way towards controlling or eradicating disease. Vaccines including measles, polio, and tetanus toxoid help children and their mothers avoid fatal diseases. Plan ensures that health centres have trained staff as well as the facilities and transport necessary for staff to reach all the community members. Plan will also raise awareness of the particular health issues that face children, such as the provision and maintenance of a clean water supply and proper toilets in schools.

Providing nursery equipment in Chipinge

Research shows that children can make the most of their formal schooling when they have already been exposed to a structured learning environment. Children do most of their growing – physically and mentally – in their early years, but in Zimbabwe, parents are often too busy simply working for their family's survival to be able to provide instruction during those early years. Our nursery projects give children from poor families a safe, stimulating place to start their learning before they attend a formal school, and they allow professionals to monitor the health of young children. Play and art materials help encourage social development, interaction skills, physical exercise, and to offer a degree of independence and freedom for children who otherwise wouldn't have anywhere suitable to play. We provide this, so children can realise their full potential no matter what their family's financial position.

Providing primary school text books in Harare

Going to a well-maintained school to learn from trained teachers makes all the difference to a child's ability to get the most from their education. But without basic equipment – such as text books – the experience will never be as rewarding or effective as it should be. Plan provides schools in Harare with such equipment, so that children have access to the materials they need to make the most of their education and realise their full potential regardless of their family's financial position.

Agricultural training for farmers in Mutare

Plan educates and trains staff to have appropriate skills to ensure that they communicate the right messages as effectively as possible. Training farmers in the most productive agricultural techniques and approaches is crucial to ensuring that parents can provide adequately for their children. This work tackles the roots of some of the income generation issues that families and communities face and starts to provide long-term solutions to these problems.

Providing seeds for farming in Kwekwe

Most rural communities depend on agriculture for their living, but existing seed systems in Zimbabwe are not meeting farmers' needs. Either they do not provide seed for the crops that farmers grow, or are too limited in scope. Plan's project in Kwekwe provides farmers with seeds, enabling them to grow their crop and raise some revenues for the community. Allowing rural communities to process grain themselves, near to their homes, reduces overall costs and the workloads of many families, particularly women. This enables farmers to provide their families with more food. Through greater incomes, families are more able to send their children to school or pay for healthcare.

These projects are integrated into our wider programme work, which address the needs of children living vulnerable lives in Zimbabwe. The support these programmes provide is thanks to the generosity of our supporters but with your help we can achieve even more. If you have any questions about our work, or your support, please contact us on 020 7482 9777, or visit www.plan-uk.org

Yes, I'd like to help a Plan project in Zimbabwe

Please complete and return this form to Plan, 5-6 Underhill Street, London NW1 7HS.

I would like to give £ _____ (please indicate amount) to help a project in:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chiredzi (ZWE0517) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mutasa (ZWE0521) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bulawayo (ZWE0515) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chipinge (ZWE0516) | <input type="checkbox"/> Harare (ZWE0518) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mutare (ZWE0520) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kwekwe (ZWE0519) | | |

Sometimes projects become fully-funded, and occasionally circumstance dictates that our priorities change and particular projects may have to be postponed or even abandoned. When this happens, funds may be transferred to other projects.

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