

Zimbabwe

Amid a decade of economic decline in Zimbabwe due to ongoing drought and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, International Medical Corps has delivered quality health and nutrition services to vulnerable populations in food-insecure rural areas, contributed to improved nutrition and helped reduce the spread of waterborne diseases by improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices.

International Medical Corps began working in Zimbabwe during the 2008–09 cholera epidemic, implementing a comprehensive package of health, water and sanitation interventions for affected populations. In 2013, in response to food and nutrition insecurity in the country's southern region, we expanded our health and nutrition activities as part of a US Agency for International Development Food Assistance Program, serving more than 66,000 community households. Today, as COVID-19 threatens to further exacerbate food insecurity, we continue to provide nutrition and WASH support to underserved communities, with a focus on vulnerable mothers and children.

Largely due to deteriorating public water and sanitation facilities and a decaying healthcare system, a large-scale cholera epidemic crippled Zimbabwe in August 2008, killing more than 4,200 people and infecting more than 97,000.

International Medical Corps responded to the cholera outbreak by providing much-needed medical supplies to local partners, and by working with the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) to conduct health sector assessments. We also launched long-term interventions, including promotion of WASH services, and provided training programs for community-based health workers in cholera prevention and case management.

An El Niño-induced drought in late 2016 and early 2017 significantly affected livelihoods in Zimbabwe, where food insecurity remains a pervasive problem. Even now, poor water and sanitation facilities in urban and rural areas continue to exacerbate the risk of diseases such as cholera and typhoid. In response, International Medical Corps implemented emergency nutrition and WASH programs, funded by the US Agency for International Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, targeting beneficiaries in the Insiza, Bubi and Beitbridge districts of Matabeleland South and Matabeleland North provinces.

International Medical Corps has so far supported health workers across 78 health facilities in 14 districts, including nine district hospitals. To reduce chronic malnutrition, our work focuses on vulnerable populations, including pregnant and lactating women and children under two years of age. We have strengthened the capacity of local health clinics to establish nutrition surveillance systems and community-based growth monitoring, for the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition; implemented risk-informed WASH activities; rehabilitated water boreholes; rehabilitated WASH facilities at 17 COVID-19 isolation units; and promoted proper hygiene practices. To further strengthen local capacity and foster self-reliance, we consistently train MoHCC staff, as well as village health workers.



WHERE WE CURRENTLY WORK

MATABELELAND NORTH PROVINCE

- A BINGA**
- B BUBI**
- C HWANGE**
- D NKAYI**
- E LUPANE**
- F TSHOLOTSHO**
- G UMGUZA**

MATABELELAND SOUTH PROVINCE

- H BEITBRIDGE**
- I BULILIMA**
- J GWANDA**
- K INSIZA**
- L MATOBO**
- M UMZINGWANE**
- N MANGWE**

BULAWAYO PROVINCE



OUR IMPACT

We have reached



84,777 PREGNANT AND LACTATING WOMEN

and



114,916 CHILDREN
as of June 2020.

TRAINING HEALTHCARE WORKERS

International Medical Corps provides intensive training to district-level health staff and village health workers on the management of acute malnutrition, prevention of chronic malnutrition, nutrition surveillance, promotion of hygiene and risk-informed WASH. To create a more comprehensive emergency response network, International Medical Corps also trains village health workers on good maternal, infant and young-child feeding (IYCF) practices, and hygiene promotion.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

International Medical Corps works through 2,615 community-level volunteers to promote complementary feeding practices, good maternal nutrition and optimal hygiene. To date, we have reached almost 44,225 people with messages on promoting optimal nutrition.



MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

In 2019, International Medical Corps constructed three “Waiting Mothers Shelters” at Sivalo, Sebhumane and Zenka clinics in Matabeleland North province to promote institutional deliveries. We trained 32 health staff and 175 village health workers on IYCF practices to improve their capacity to deliver quality maternal and child health services. International Medical Corps also contributed to reducing maternal and newborn mortality rates and improving IYCF practices in Nkayi district, one of the poorest districts in Zimbabwe.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Since 2017, International Medical Corps has supported four districts in Matabeleland North and South, in southern Zimbabwe, to address the challenge of poor hygiene practices and a lack of environmental health education. In some villages in Matabeleland South, a single borehole serviced more than 250 people; in others, less than one-third of the community had access to a functional latrine before we intervened. Thanks to our efforts, 71 boreholes have been rehabilitated and more than 20,000 community members have gained access to clean, safe water since 2018.

Since January 2011, International Medical Corps has strengthened hygiene promotion capacity in five districts of Mashonaland Central Province. Additional WASH activities since 2014 have focused on hygiene promotion across seven districts in Matabeleland North and South, including Bulilima, Beitbridge, Bubi, Gwanda, Insiza, Mangwe and Tsholotsho. Our Community Health Clubs promote community hygiene as well as hygiene improvements at the household level, such as the construction of pot racks, handwashing facilities and self-supply latrines. The program encourages the participation of men and adolescents through innovative strategies, such as the use of sports. To date, 22,211 community members have been trained on participatory health and hygiene promotion.

CARE GROUP TRAINING

From 2013-2020, International Medical Corps has promoted Care Groups and Community Health Clubs through the USAID-funded Amalima program in Tsholotsho, Bulilima, Mangwe and Gwanda districts. Through the “Care Group” approach, International Medical Corps trains community health workers and lead mothers to support families in adopting recommended IYCF and other care practices, which are particularly critical during a child’s 1,000 first days of life to prevent chronic malnutrition. In 2020, we further introduced the Care Group approach in Lupane, Hwange, Binga and Nkayi, four new districts in the drought-stricken Matabeleland North province. Care Groups impart nutrition knowledge, practices and skills, and promote the consumption of nutritious, locally available foods for improved maternal and child health. To date, we have reached more than 102,000 people through Care Group training sessions.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Since July 2020, International Medical Corps has been implementing a UNICEF-funded COVID-19 project focused on strengthening WASH capacity across health facilities in Bulawayo Metro, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South provinces. The project has rehabilitated WASH facilities in COVID-19 isolation units within 17 health facilities, distributed WASH-related non-food items to communities and trained 476 healthcare workers on infection prevention and best practices. Since the COVID-19 outbreak began, International Medical Corps has prioritized mainstreaming COVID-19 activities within all of our projects in Zimbabwe, with the goal of reaching 170,000 community members with key COVID-19 prevention messages.

COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

International Medical Corps’ Zimbabwe team is committed to strengthening partnerships with donors, community-based organizations, United Nations agencies, and international and national NGOs. We maintain and strengthen our presence in national and sub-national coordination structures convened by the Zimbabwean government and other sector lead agencies, including the Nutrition Cluster, Food and Nutrition Security Committees, Nutrition and WASH Clusters, Drought Relief Committee platforms and the WASH Emergency Strategic Advisory Group, for which International Medical Corps serves as the provincial focal agency. International Medical Corps also liaises with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security on security issues, as part of staff safety and security matters.



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A pre-eminent first responder since 1984, International Medical Corps delivers emergency medical and related services to those affected by conflict, disaster and disease, no matter where they are, no matter what the conditions. We also train people in their communities, providing them with the skills they need to recover, chart their own path to self-reliance and become effective first responders themselves.

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