

Zimbabwe

Since we began working in Zimbabwe, during the 2008–2009 cholera epidemic, International Medical Corps has delivered quality health and nutrition services in food-insecure rural areas while improving nutrition and helping to reduce the spread of waterborne diseases through water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices among underserved populations.

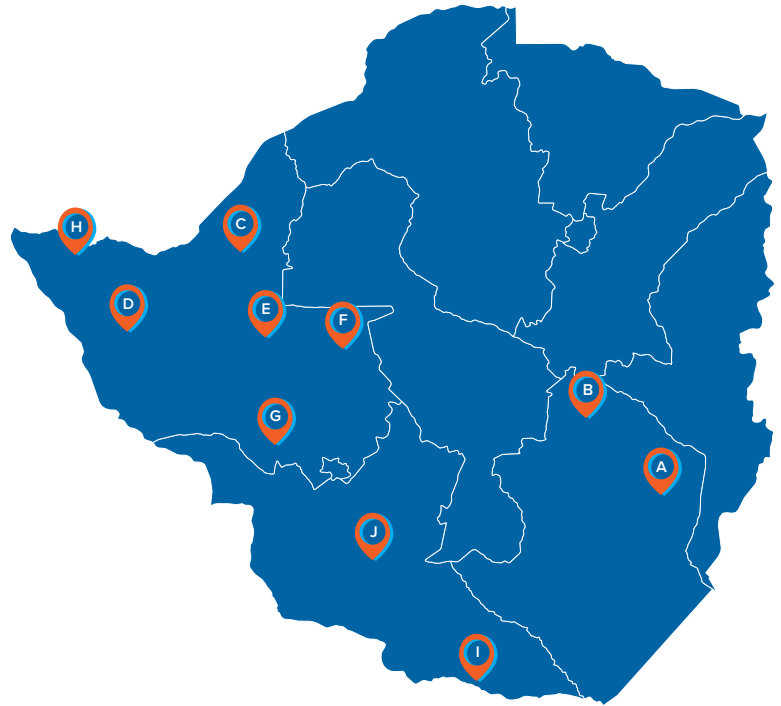
In 2013, we increased our development-oriented programming as part of a consortium in which International Medical Corps led the health, nutrition and WASH components. Today, our teams continue to improve maternal and child health, nutrition and WASH in communities and health facilities while strengthening local healthcare systems, training local healthcare workers, preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) and improving overall self-reliance through community engagement.

Zimbabwe's health delivery system continues to face challenges caused by the 2000 economic downturn when health personnel left the country in droves to seek work in more stable economies.

In 2019, Zimbabwe's neonatal mortality rate rose to 32 per 1,000 live births, far exceeding the World Health Organization (WHO) target of 12 per 1,000 live births. Zimbabwe's maternal mortality ratio also remains high, at 357 per 100,000 live births, exceeding the WHO target of 70 per 100,000 live births.

Zimbabwe faces severe challenges with access to WASH, with an estimated 40% of rural households lacking access to essential water services. The same percentage of rural communities lack access to improved sanitation, while 29% of the rural population practice open defecation and approximately 93% lack access to handwashing facilities. As a result of these challenges, Zimbabwe's health systems struggle to combat diseases such as cholera, typhoid and dysentery.

Climate change exacerbates these challenges. Models and projections show that climate change decreases access to water, negatively affects nutrition and increases the incidence of multiple diseases. In addition, climate-related emergencies—including cyclones, drought and floods—also present significant challenges to the people and infrastructure of Zimbabwe. Extreme weather events—spanning from Cyclone Leon-Eline in 2000 to Cyclone Freddy in 2023—have caused considerable damage. If climate change continues at its current pace, its effects will likely delay any increase in Zimbabwe's life expectancy of approximately 62 years.



WHERE WE CURRENTLY WORK

MASVINGO

- A BIKITA
- B GUTU

MATABELELAND NORTH

- C BINGA
- D HWANGE
- E LUPANE
- F NKAYI
- G TSHOLOTSHO
- H VICTORIA FALLS

MATABELELAND SOUTH

- I BEITBEIDGE
- J GWANDA



OUR IMPACT



We have reached more than

114,000 PREGNANT AND LACTATING WOMEN

and more than



153,000 CHILDREN

through supplementary-feeding programs.



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Since 2017, International Medical Corps has supported all 16 districts and the Bulawayo Metropolitan province by improving access to WASH facilities and providing training sessions on WASH behaviors and practices, including water conservation. Our teams have rehabilitated more than 140 waterpoints, and solarized more than 20 community waterpoints (boreholes and springs). Our work to improve the supply of clean water has created access for more than 80,000 community members since 2017. Between 2020 and 2023, we conducted WASH rehabilitations in nearly 40 healthcare facilities, using the WHO's Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool (WASH FIT) to improve the quality of care and IPC practices.

International Medical Corps is the provincial focal point for WASH in Matabeleland South, where—in collaboration with the MoHCC—we helped develop the official WASH in healthcare facilities guidelines for Zimbabwe. Our work has improved access to water in nearly 50 healthcare facilities in Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South.



MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

To reduce maternal and newborn mortality rates in Binga and Nkayi districts of Matabeleland North, International Medical Corps constructed eight, and rehabilitated 10, waiting mother homes. At Nkayi and Binga hospitals, we established two nutrition gardens that provide vegetables for pregnant mothers. We also trained more than 40 health staff and nearly 300 village health workers on infant and young-child feeding (IYCF) practices.

Since 2013, International Medical Corps has promoted care groups through the USAID Food for Peace program in Binga, Bulilima, Gwanda, Hwange, Lupane, Mangwe, Nkayi and Tsholotsho districts. Our staff trains community health workers to adopt IYCF and other care practices to promote nutrition for pregnant and lactating women and children during the critical period between conception and a child's second birthday. We are developing and integrating climate change content into our health and nutrition messaging for community health workers.





TRAINING HEALTHCARE WORKERS

International Medical Corps provides intensive training to district-level health staff and village health workers on active screening for acute malnutrition, WASH and preventing chronic malnutrition. We also train village health workers on health services; hygiene promotion; maternal nutrition; IYCF; and obstetric and newborn care (BEmonc). To reduce health-facility-acquired infections, our staff has trained nearly 600 frontline healthcare workers on infection prevention and control (IPC), and distributed personal protective equipment, clothing, cleaning and disinfection kits to healthcare facilities. Today, we are also adding climate-related health risks to the healthcare worker training program.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

International Medical Corps works with community health clubs (CHCs) to promote health and hygiene education and WASH practices. We have trained approximately 100 environmental health technicians on health and hygiene; they have trained more than 1,400 community-based facilitators, who in turn have reached more than 29,000 CHC members. Our promotion of integrated internal savings and lending among CHCs to finance latrine construction has led to the construction of more than 2,600 latrines. We have also worked with more than 10,000 community-level volunteers to promote complementary feeding practices, maternal nutrition and optimal hygiene practices. To date, we have reached more than 300,000 people with messages on optimal nutrition.



www.InternationalMedicalCorps.org

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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