



Between a rock and a hard place

Zimbabwe



Extreme poverty is a hard place to live in. This is where Gogo Sibongile, Ralph and his two uncles sleep.
Source of all photos: Idzai Murimba/ Tearfund

An opportunity to help vulnerable families trapped in poverty

January 2022 to December 2022

Overview

- Working across three districts, Gwanda, Matobo and Bindura to improve the quality of life, increase support for vulnerable families and equip churches to work together with their communities to achieve sustainable change.

Meet a ten-year-old hero

Ralph looks after his partially sighted Grandmother (Gogo) Sibongile, and his two disabled uncles. Cooking, cleaning, and walking over 8km to regularly fetch water are a few of the tasks Ralph undertakes to support his family. *"I can cook. I cook sadza [porridge made from maize] and relish"* he says. But Ralph is just ten years old. When he should be learning in school, or playing with friends his age, instead, Ralph is making sure the basic needs of his family are met. Ralph is a hero, but all of these responsibilities should not fall to him at such a young stage of his life. This has been forced upon him because there is no one else to look after him those he loves.

"Poverty has a child's face in Zimbabwe" UNICEF says. Of the 6.3 million boys and girls in the country, 4.8 million live in poverty¹. Over 4.5 million children live in rural areas with poor water and sanitation, lack of educational opportunities and high levels of food insecurity. Furthermore, one in three Zimbabweans is facing food shortages due to ongoing droughts and economic insecurity. **Children like Ralph are stuck between a rock and a hard place.** Staying home, he bears the burden of supporting his family alone. Going to school, he fears that his Grandmother will not be able to look after herself during the day (Ralph and Sibongile below).



¹ <https://www.unicef.org/zimbabwe/situation-children>

Sibongile's two sons suffer from mental health issues meaning that they cannot work and are also living with them, increasing the number of dependents who rely on Ralph for the household jobs. Without support, Ralph's chances to break free from poverty in the future are slim. With little educational background and skills, he will struggle to find work to earn a decent income and meet his basic needs such as food, shelter and medical care. Like many other young people, he may find himself turning to drugs to cope with the state of poverty, or find himself being abused or exploited in an attempt to find work to support his fragile family.

Ralph is extremely vulnerable. He desperately needs the support of his local community to help him care for his family's needs. Could you help his church and local community to rise up and be his hero?

How will this project make a difference?

In response to the vulnerability of Zimbabwe's children, Tearfund's partner, ZOE (Zimbabwe Orphans Through Extended Hands), is committed to working with local churches to care for orphans and vulnerable children like Ralph in their communities. Over 80 per cent of the children that ZOE works with orphaned due to HIV/AIDS. ZOE runs training that inspires and equips local churches to understand their mandate to be salt and light and care for the most vulnerable people in the local community. People like Gogo Sibongile.

When ZOE visited Sibongile's home, it was immediately clear the amount of responsibility that Ralph was taking. He made sure that Sibongile and her sons were wearing masks so that they could be protected against any risk of COVID-19 transmission whilst they chatted to the local coordinator. In 2020, ZOE worked with the local church, equipping them to rise up to support the needs of Sibongile's family. The church has been working to improve the state of Sibongile's home, creating a safer living environment for the whole family. ***"I am grateful for the church"*** shared Sibongile *"they provided labour, water and sand as we built this house [pictured below]. They occasionally bring me food such as relish, cooking oil and salt. I have appreciated the church in a big way. In 2020, they have shown me so much love. They have visited us and remembered us in an amazing way."* Without the support of the local church, Ralph alone would still be fulfilling all of the households duties with nowhere to turn when things were tough. But now, the church is bringing hope, being the hero that Ralph needs.



ZOE is committed to working with local churches and their communities to improve the lives of those vulnerable to poverty and injustice. With your help, 3,000 people like Ralph and Sibongile across three communities will be able to break free from their lives of poverty, caught between a rock and a hard place. A further 4,500 people will benefit indirectly. This year:



30 local churches will be envisioned through the Church and Community Mobilisation Process (CCMP). They will receive Bible studies, training and resources to engage them in how to work with their communities to bring hope and transformation to the lives of those living in poverty. Church and community mobilisation will mean that community members can identify families at risk of the impacts of poverty and support them, resulting in families that are more healthy, able to meet their needs and participate in community development initiatives.



15 facilitators will be trained on the CCMP process, giving them the skills to work with local churches and engage the local community in the development initiatives. These facilitators will be able to continue to train other churches when the project is finished to extend the number of people who experience an improved quality of life after the project.



Community dialogues will be held with church and community leaders on topics such as child abuse and child labour. This will ensure they are aware of the issues that impact children, how to support those at-risk and reduce harmful cultural practices.



Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) issues will be addressed through awareness events in each of the three communities. Gender Champions will be identified who will lead in the education about gender issues and promote safeguarding, and the reduction of harmful cultural practices to reduce the incidence of SGBV.



Three campaigns will be run to improve young peoples access to economic resources and other social services. Youth support groups will be established giving them the opportunity to form healthy relationships with one another and learn about topics such as sexual health.



Six nutritional gardens will be set up to improve the nutritional and calorific intake of 150 people suffering from a lack of food. Members of the community will be encouraged to take part in nutritional gardens, livestock rearing and skills training, increasing their confidence in working with one another to meet their needs and households will be provided with seeds.



Self Help Groups will be established. These will allow members to save money and share loans with members ensuring financial freedom and supporting them to break free from poverty. In the SHGs, members can also share knowledge about their livelihoods to encourage and advise one another.



Awareness events on health and hygiene will take place in the communities. In 2021, communities will continually be made aware of COVID-19 and prevention measures such as handwashing. The promotion of hygiene practices and water storage practices will mean that the overall health of the communities improves.

No longer alone

The support of the local church has meant that Ralph and Sibongile no longer feel alone in their poverty, but have support to meet their needs and give them hope. This project is encouraging the church to prioritise the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) and empowering them to work with the community on initiatives that increase the opportunities and reduce the vulnerabilities of OVC. This may be activities such as

providing school supplies, meeting healthcare needs and improving shelter. All of which make children like Ralph less susceptible to being trapped in poverty in the future.

To ensure the sustainability of this project, activities will be completed using a participatory approach which includes the active involvement of community members from project design to completion. This allows the community to feel ownership of the project and make decisions based on their specific needs. The church will take a lead role in the project by mobilising the community to actively participate in the project activities and utilise its local resources to find solutions to problems that the community is facing.

How can you help the church to be the hero?

By himself, Ralph can't break free from his life of poverty, caught between a rock and a hard place. But with your support, the church can work with the community to bring hope to those like Ralph. Your gift can enable the local church to be the hero, inspiring change as it works with its local community to help the most vulnerable. We're aiming to raise **£75,581*** and are inviting you to help.

ACTIVITY OR ITEM	COST (£)
Supporting livelihoods	10,569
Family strengthening and Self Help Groups	5,396
Church and Community Mobilisation Process	5,426
Monitoring and Evaluation	3,608
Personnel	31,013
Transport, Communications and Administration	8,988
UK support costs**	10,581
Total costs	75,581

* using an exchange rate of £1 to 1.22 USD

** 7% of your gift will go to our wider international work, ensuring your money is well spent. 7% will go to help cover running costs in the UK which includes fundraising enabling us to raise further vital resources. Any Gift Aid received from your donation will go to Tearfund's general work to help where the need is greatest.

Please pray

- *"My prayer is for Ralph to get help with school supplies. He has no uniform satchel and stationary"* says Gogo Sibongile. Pray that the local church and community can support Ralph with the equipment he needs for school and that Sibongile will have support when he leaves each day to study.
- Pray for wisdom for ZOE as they carry out the CCMP training and that church leaders are receptive and engaged.
- Pray for Zimbabwe as it deals with the impact of COVID-19, which seems like a cruel blow. There have been 35,222 cases as of the 16th of February. In a country which has the second-largest informal employment sector in the world², the social and economic implications of a generalised lockdown are daunting. Poverty is on the rise here due to climate change-induced crop failure, a crippled economy, high unemployment and soaring inflation. Recurrent droughts (the worst in 40 years) and the impact of two cyclones have resulted in food, fuel and water shortages across Zimbabwe. The COVID-19 pandemic is set to exacerbate the situation for the most vulnerable.³

² IMF Paper - *Shadow Economies Around the World: What Did We Learn Over the Last 20 Years?* L. Medina, F. Schneider. 1/ 24/18

³ According to UNICEF, a staggering one in four children under five are stunted. According to the Spotlight Initiative, Zimbabwe's national gender-based violence hotline has seen a 75 per cent increase in calls since the COVID-19 lockdown began in March.

A note on coronavirus

COVID-19 is still having a huge impact and has affected our partners' work across the world. We are hoping to implement this project as planned but would ask for your patience and understanding if future restrictions affect some of the activities.



Can the church rise up here on behalf of the most vulnerable...?

The Lord replies, "I have seen violence done to the helpless,
and I have heard the groans of the poor.
Now I will rise up to rescue them,
as they have longed for me to do."

Psalm 12:5 NLT

Thank you
