



# USAID | ZIMBABWE

## COUNTRY PROFILE



G. PIROZZI/ICRS

*Over 173,000 Zimbabwean orphans and vulnerable children have received education assistance, psychosocial support, income generating support, and food security assistance from USAID.*

### OVERVIEW

Zimbabwe's interrelated political, economic, and social crises have wracked the country since 1998—and taken a terrible toll on the country's people in the process. Consecutive years of economic decline have resulted in chronic shortages of food, fuel, electricity, and other critical imports. Zimbabwe's once robust social services are decaying, exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS epidemic and a considerable exodus of skilled personnel.

The U.S. Government seeks to support the people of Zimbabwe in this deteriorating political and economic environment by strengthening the prospects for stability through fortified civil society and democratic institutions, implementing a robust response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and mounting a flexible humanitarian response that will save lives.



### PROGRAMS

#### GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

Zimbabwean civil society remains a vibrant force, with increasing levels of political consciousness and debate. But the Mugabe regime has responded with intense repression—tightening restrictions on the independent media and journalists, impeding the work of nongovernmental organizations, and restricting freedom of public expression and association. USAID's program is designed to help civil society organizations express their views on legislative matters, and to support Parliament's ability to be more receptive to their positions. Activities include advocating to Parliament and local authorities, building an effective committee system within Parliament, and supporting local authorities in being more open to citizen input. In addition, USAID is training elected mayors and councilors in modern management practices, good governance, and effective participation with civil society—in effect, grassroots efforts to stimulate and secure long-lasting democracy.

#### INVESTING IN PEOPLE: HEALTH

Zimbabwe has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the world, estimated at 15.6 percent. Life expectancy has dropped from 61 years in 1990 to 34 years today, partly due to AIDS-related deaths, as well as the country's general decline in health standards. USAID's program to mitigate Zimbabwe's HIV/AIDS crisis includes providing

#### ZIMBABWE SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1980  
Population: 9 million (2008)  
GDP per person: unavailable

Source: U.S. Department of State

#### USAID IN ZIMBABWE

[www.usaid.gov/zw](http://www.usaid.gov/zw)



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## COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

training, technical assistance, and commodities to reduce the transmission of HIV/AIDS; improving maternal health and nutrition; and slowing the decline of the health system. USAID's collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention supports the Ministry of Health's national anti-retroviral therapy program, which provides health facilities with training, logistical systems, and anti-retroviral medicines. Behavior change programs, like those to prevent mother-to-child transmission, are boosted by a strong testing and counseling network. USAID programs are intentionally designed to have "spill-over" effects that strengthen systems within the public health sector. USAID has invested over \$175 million in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe since 2000.

### **HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

Destructive policies and the deterioration of the rule of law continue to cripple the economy, including the agricultural sector, putting Zimbabwe on the brink of the worst humanitarian crisis in southern Africa. Up to half of its people are threatened with acute hunger. Food access and availability remain difficult for Zimbabweans as basic food and non-food necessities become increasingly scarce. The government's suspension of aid operations from June to August 2008 severely limited the provision of food, social and medical services, and material support to hundreds of thousands of Zimbabwe's poor. The economic and humanitarian crises, coupled with political violence, have led to increased migration, both within Zimbabwe as well as into neighboring countries. In 2008, USAID provided nearly \$176 million in food assistance and more than \$7 million for programs related to agriculture and food security, shelter, livelihoods, relief commodities, humanitarian coordination and information management, water, sanitation, and hygiene.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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