

Session 4

Challenges facing young people in Zimbabwe



‘Defend weak people and orphans. Protect the rights of the oppressed and the poor. Rescue weak and needy people. Help them escape the power of wicked people.’
(GW) Psalm 82:3-4

Health (and access to health services)

The NHS in the UK is funded by the government, from the taxes that people pay to them, and provides free and accessible healthcare to all, though some choose to pay privately for aspects of their healthcare. Many people have to pay towards things like prescriptions and dental care, but these are subsidised heavily by the government.

Zimbabwe once had a health sector that was the envy of many African countries. Well resourced and well staffed, the health of the nation was a top priority. However, financial pressures led to major cuts in funding and, although it is very slowly recovering, there is still a shortage of skilled professionals and healthcare staff, hospitals and healthcare centres, and a lack of equipment and medicines, laundries and canteens.



The health service in Zimbabwe is made of four separate parts: public sector (available to all, a bit like our NHS), private health (less than ten per cent of Zimbabweans have private health insurance), mission hospitals run by the church and non-governmental organisations (both fee paying). Even public sector healthcare is not free for everyone, only for those under five, over sixty, and women who are pregnant or breast feeding – and this varies from place to place. So many people in Zimbabwe struggle to afford or access healthcare.

HIV, tuberculosis and malaria are the most serious health threats and are responsible for many maternal and childhood deaths. Every year, one in every 11 children in Zimbabwe dies before their fifth birthday.

Much of the funding for Zimbabwe's health services is from grants and loans from other countries.

- Is it right that the best healthcare is reserved for those who can afford to pay for it? Does your faith influence your opinion about this in any way?
- Why do you think mission (church run) hospitals might charge for their services rather than providing them free of charge?

Research and activity

Use the NHS website to find out more about how the top three health threats in Zimbabwe (HIV, tuberculosis and malaria) are treated in the UK. Create an educational poster, infogram or short reel that could be used to inform people about one or more of these diseases.

Recipe

Find out what fruits grow in Zimbabwe and use them to create a healthy fresh fruit salad or a tasting platter.

Climate Change

Climate Change impacts communities throughout the world. In Zimbabwe, temperatures are rising and rainfall is decreasing. There are more droughts and also more floods. Sixty seven per cent



of people in Zimbabwe work in agriculture, which is severely affected by climate change, and this leads to food insecurity. Lack of water affects sanitation and the droughts and floods increase the spread of water-borne diseases such as cholera. Christian Aid believes that climate change is a social justice issue, as the communities that are being impacted first and worst are the countries that have contributed the least to cause the issues. Every child in Zimbabwe (43% of the population or 6.6 million children under 18) is exposed to at least one climate/environmental hazard and at risk of climate change impacts such as flooding, drought, heatwaves, cyclones, and air pollution, yet they are the least responsible.

Activity

Explore Christian Aid's Damage and Loss resource pack www.bit.ly/CA_loss_damage. Use the prayer activity and then use the guidelines to write a letter to your MP about the impact of climate change.

The Zimbabwean Government is working with UNICEF to tackle climate change within the country to reduce its impact on under 18s. Look at the targets on their report: <https://uni.cf/46h9eh4> How green is your school/learning environment? What about your church? Why not investigate what is already being done and whether maybe there is something else that could be tried? Who would you need to talk to? Even the smallest changes can make a difference. Look at these surprising facts www.bit.ly/Green-Age

Game

Give each player five beans. Label three areas of the room and ask players to choose where they will stand. One area is for planting rice, which needs plenty of water to grow and is flood resistant. Another is for planting cassava, which does not do well in watery conditions and will fail in flood conditions. And the third area is for growing maize, which is flood resistant. To choose rice or cassava costs each player two beans. To choose maize costs four beans. Participants pay these fees to the banker who then rolls a dice. 1-2 is a dry season, 3-4 is average rainfall, and 5-6 is flooding. Those people whose crops would survive the allocated weather receive four beans. Keep playing for a while and see what happens to the number of beans each player has. You could adapt it by giving half the group (representing female farmers) fewer beans than the other half (representing males). (Game based on an idea developed by Janot Mendler de Suarez and Pablo Suarez for the Red Cross.)



Gender Equality and Gender Based Violence

➤ **Content Warning** – this section explores issues of gender-based violence and domestic abuse. Support for those affected is available: www.bit.ly/Women-Aid and www.bit.ly/Dom-Abuse-Line

Gender-based violence is a global issue, which exists and impacts individuals in societies around the world, including in the UK where, on average, the police in England and Wales alone receive over 100 calls relating to domestic abuse every hour. (HMIC, 2015) In Zimbabwe one in three females report experiencing gender-based violence before the age of 18. (Zimbabwe National Baseline Survey of Life Experiences of Adolescents Report, 2011)

Ammara Brown is a musician from Zimbabwe. In 2022 she released a single called 'My Protector' www.bit.ly/A-Brown-protector as part of a national campaign in Zimbabwe called **#LoveShouldntHurt**. The campaign aims to "teach men and women in Zimbabwe knowledge, motivation and the urgency needed to eliminate violence in relationships and in the community".

Christian Aid's 'In Their Lifetime' programme works with partners and with faith leaders from the Zimbabwe Council for Churches to promote equal rights of men and women and to try and understand why the violence happens and what can be done to address it www.bit.ly/CA-gender.

Discuss

- Where do you see gender inequalities in society?
- The Christian Aid material talks about "positive masculinity". What do you think this means?
- Does your faith make any difference to the way you treat other people, especially those of a different gender or who are different to you in any way?



Prayer

Use this prayer from Compassion UK www.bit.ly/48wP5oX