

**ORGANISATIONAL VISION AND MISSION**

The vision of AAI Zimbabwe is : *“a zimbabwe without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life of dignity.”* And the mission of AAI Zimbabwe is: *“to work with people living in poverty to eradicate poverty and injustice.”*

**Our VALUES are:**

**MUTUAL RESPECT:** requiring us to recognise the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity.

**EQUITY AND JUSTICE:** requiring us to work to ensure equal opportunity to everyone, irrespective of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, HIV status, colour, class, ethnicity, disability, location and religion.

**HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY:** being accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and open in our judgements and communications with others.

**SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR:** powerless and excluded will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty.

**COURAGE OF CONVICTION:** requiring us to be creative and radical, bold and innovative – without fear of failure – in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty.

**INDEPENDENCE:** from any religious or party-political affiliation.

**HUMILITY:** in our presentation and behaviour, recognising that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty.

**People’s Action In Practice**

ActionAid’s  
Human Rights  
Based Approach **2.0**

[www.people-action.org](http://www.people-action.org)



**ACTIONAID ZIMBABWE**  
**NATIONAL OFFICE**  
16 York Avenue, Newlands, Harare, Zimbabwe  
Tel: +263-04 788 115, 776 127  
Mobile: +263-772 164 448  
Fax: +263-04-788 124

Email: [info.zimbabwe@actionaid.org](mailto:info.zimbabwe@actionaid.org)  
[www.actionaid.org/Zimbabwe](http://www.actionaid.org/Zimbabwe)

**REGIONAL OFFICE**  
281 Chimurenga Street, Rusape  
Tel: +263-25-3537, Fax: +263-04-788 124  
Mobile: +263-772 395 967  
Email: [peter.matimati@actionaid.org](mailto:peter.matimati@actionaid.org)

[www.facebook.com/actionaidzimbabwe](http://www.facebook.com/actionaidzimbabwe)  
[www.twitter.com/actionaidzimbabwe](http://www.twitter.com/actionaidzimbabwe)

**actionaid**  
zimbabwe

## Defining ActionAid's HRBA

### 1. A summary of our human rights based approach

Poverty is a violation of human rights and a terrible injustice. Poverty arises because of the marginalisation and discrimination associated with human rights violations. ActionAid has a distinctive human rights based approach<sup>1</sup> to development that centres on active agency: supporting people living in poverty to become conscious of their rights, organise and claim their rights and hold duty bearers to account. **Our HRBA flows from our values and our strategy, builds on international human rights law, but goes beyond a legal or technical approach to rights.** We support people to analyse and confront power imbalances and we take sides with people living in poverty. This sets our HRBA apart from the approach many other agencies take, using rights-based language but failing to challenge abuses of power at local, national or international level.

At all levels of society, the rich and powerful often deny the rights of excluded groups and individuals to keep control over productive resources and build individual wealth. It is often in the interests of the rich and powerful to dominate institutions, including state structures, and to use them for their economic, social or political gain. The on-going struggle for recognition of human rights has been a key counter-balance to this, opening doors for more fundamental social, economic and political change.

By using a HRBA, we support people living in poverty to understand that many of **their most fundamental needs are actually enshrined in specific human rights frameworks.** Indeed, the deprivation of needs often arises from the denial or violation of specific rights. The state normally has the ultimate responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil these rights. We should help people identify and target the specific duty bearer, or bearers, accountable for ensuring rights are realised. Some rights are subject to “progressive realisation”, where civil society actors have an important role in ensuring that states are indeed progressing in the right direction, dedicating increasing budgets to delivering on rights.

We place people living in poverty at the centre of our HRBA. We believe that women, men, youth and children living in poverty can only claim and protect their rights when they organise themselves and mobilise as a constituency, aware of their rights, and conscious of why their rights are being violated. They need the tools, knowledge and capacities to advance their case. But raising awareness and mobilisation are not enough on their own. We need a wider movement to challenge the structural causes of poverty – and this creates a vital role for supporters and solidarity action between citizens at all levels.

Women's rights are central to our HRBA. The eradication of poverty and injustice will simply not be possible without securing equality and rights for women. We understand that women living in poverty face double oppression because of their poverty and their gender. Causes of female poverty can be different to causes of poverty in general. For example, men may have property rights where women have none. As such, approaches to tackling poverty need to be gender specific. We believe that gender discrimination, which is all-pervasive, must be removed before we can achieve rights and end poverty

If we fail to specifically address women's human rights, our efforts to eradicate poverty for women, but also for men and the wider community, will be ineffective, at best – and harmful, at worst. Through our work we aim to confront the violation of women's rights and the inequality between men and women in access to services, resources and power.

In most cases, we need to change practices and not just policies. Securing rights on paper will never be enough – we also need to change the attitudes and behaviours of people that perpetuate rights violations. Anti-domestic violence laws, for example, exist around the world. But until women and men, girls and boys change their attitudes and behaviours to no longer tolerate or perpetuate violence, a life free of violence will not be possible.

In our HRBA, we think and act globally and locally. The roots of a human rights violation at the local level may lie elsewhere in a complicated and inter-connected global system. For example, people living in poverty in Kenya might be thrown off their land to make way for a biofuels crop grown by a European company as part of their efforts to promote a green economy. In building our programmes and campaigns we need to be aware of how the local links with the

national and global. And we need to reform institutions at every level, working collectively as a federation.

## 2. A checklist of minimum standards for HRBA programmes

Eight principles underlie our HRBA, and we have established minimum standards for their achievement. The checklist below will help you “assess” if a programme (whether local, national or international) is consistent with ActionAid's HRBA. While you may not meet all these standards at the start of a programme, it is non-negotiable that you must be able to show in your plans that you are working towards these in a credible way – and that your programme design is addressing these.

Principles	Minimum standards
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b>  <b>Putting the active agency of people living in poverty first – and building their awareness of rights</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People living in poverty and their organisations have been actively involved in the drawing up of all our local rights programmes. Our national and international programmes are based on analysis and learning done with people living in poverty.</li> <li>• Programme activities or strategies exist that enable people living in poverty to analyse and reflect on the conditions and causes of poverty and inequality, linking this with rights and the violation of rights.</li> <li>• We have supported the active, free and meaningful participation of people living in poverty so they are aware of their human rights and of key duty bearers and are able to hold them accountable.</li> <li>• We have addressed and understood vulnerabilities, strengthened people's resilience and helped respond to basic needs in ways that are sustainable, strengthen rights and generate alternatives.</li> <li>• People living in poverty have organised themselves and mobilised as rights activists. We have supported them to build their skills and leadership to articulate their agenda, and to take actions to claim and enjoy their rights.</li> <li>• Our fundraising and communications work represents people living in poverty as active agents, not victims.</li> <li>• In our campaigning and fundraising work, we are actively engaging people living in poverty, respecting them as rights holders and giving them a voice.</li> </ul>

<p><b>3</b> Advancing women's rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have ensured that women have the confidence to identify and challenge different forms of subordination and exploitation – whether sexual, cultural, political or economic.</li> <li>We have supported the capacity development of women living in poverty and their organisations.</li> <li>We have confronted unequal power relations between men and women, including within our own organisation.</li> <li>We have done gender analysis and gender budget analysis to concretise this commitment.</li> <li>We have connected women living in poverty and their organisations with others to build solidarity and strengthen the movement for change.</li> <li>Our fundraising and communications work is gender-aware and challenges stereotypes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b> Building partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have identified strategic partners who can help us achieve our goals.</li> <li>We are prioritising partnerships with organisations that are constituted by, genuinely represent or strongly connect with people living in poverty.</li> <li>We have built credible partnerships based on our principles, building trust and mutual understanding and developing clear agreements.</li> <li>We have identified partners with the capacity or the potential to implement high quality and high impact programmes.</li> <li>We have supported our partners' organisational and institutional capacity development.</li> <li>We are linking our partners (local-local and local-national, national-local, national-international etc), especially facilitating connections with social movements and engagement in international advocacy and campaigns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b> Being accountable and transparent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We can show evidence of our primary accountability being to people living in poverty.</li> <li>We are satisfying all relevant secondary accountabilities (as listed on <a href="#">page 40</a>).</li> <li>We can show the impact of all our work on children.</li> <li>We have fulfilled the requirements of our open information policy, by making information about our programmes and budgets available to all stakeholders in accessible formats.</li> <li>We are using our own accountability as a foundation for strengthening people's ability to hold their governments to account on their rights obligations.</li> </ul>

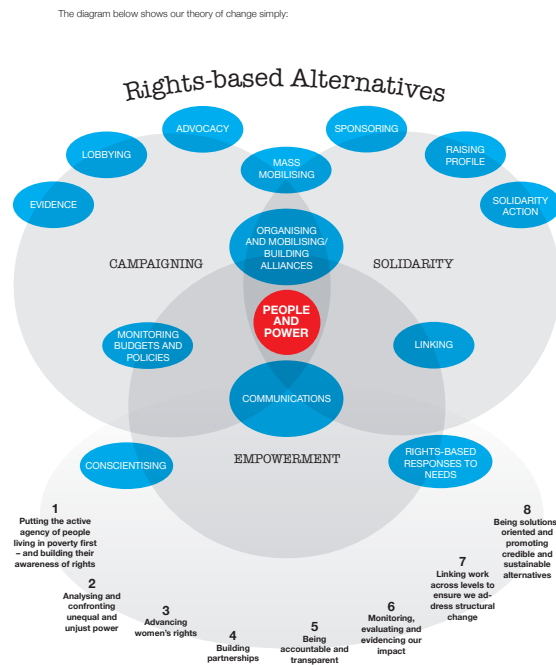
<p><b>6</b> Monitoring, evaluating and evidencing our impact, and promoting learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are tracking relevant indicators and have credible baseline data so we can measure change, showing the outcomes and impact of our work – whether we are working in a local rights programme, in a multi-country campaign or in fundraising.</li> <li>We are cost- and carbon-conscious in all our work, being careful how we use both ActionAid's resources and natural resources.</li> <li>We are monitoring and reflecting on change processes in a participatory way on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>Our future plans are informed by what we are learning and by evidence of what is effective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7</b> Linking work across levels to ensure we address structural change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are working towards lasting gains at the local level and beyond by tackling structural causes of poverty and rights violations (for example, changes in law, policy, procedure or budget allocation in favour of people living in poverty).</li> <li>We are connecting local rights violations to national and international factors and to recognised human rights legal frameworks.</li> <li>We are connecting local struggles with national and international movements, and connecting local issues to national civil society change processes.</li> <li>We are connecting work on different objectives/key change promises and connecting grassroots programme, campaigning and fundraising work.</li> <li>We are facilitating communication and information flows between local, national and international levels.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8</b> Being solutions-oriented and promoting credible and sustainable alternatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are putting forward credible alternatives to challenge dominant models and paradigms that undermine people's rights.</li> <li>The alternatives we propose and support are sustainable, being cost- and carbon-conscious.</li> <li>We have developed these alternatives with people living in poverty, our partners and allies.</li> <li>We encourage innovation and experimentation and are not afraid of failure – but are quick to learn.</li> <li>We are connecting our work on alternatives in different areas.</li> <li>We have created some space for dreaming and visioning the future.</li> </ul>

(POSTER ON MINIMUM STANDARDS)

#### 4. Our theory of change

Our analysis of poverty and exclusion drives our theory of change, which is, succinctly:

“We believe that an end to poverty and injustice can be achieved through purposeful individual and collective action, led by the active agency of people living in poverty and supported by solidarity, credible rights-based alternatives and campaigns that address the structural causes and consequences of poverty.”



People living in poverty – and their relationships to power – are at the centre of our concern. For our theory of change to work, we need to be rooted in our principles and values and we need to be inspired and supported by credible rights-based alternatives. Only by working on empowerment, campaigning and solidarity together will we secure change.

**Empowerment** is at the heart of our approach to change. In ActionAid's thinking, human rights can only be realised if people living in poverty have active agency. Empowerment includes giving people living in poverty the power to:

- build critical awareness of their situation (conscientisation)
- organise and mobilise for individual and collective action, with us supporting and strengthening organisations and movements
- monitor public policies and budgets
- develop communication skills and platforms
- respond to vulnerability and needs through rights-based approaches to service delivery.
- Read more about empowerment in chapter three

**Campaigning** creates and harnesses people's power around a simple and powerful demand, to achieve a measurable political or social change to the structural causes of poverty. It has many elements including:

- building a research/evidence base
- advocacy
- lobbying
- mass mobilisation
- mass communications to engage key people and motivate others to act.

**Solidarity** involves people and organisations sympathetic to the struggles of people living in poverty supporting and sustaining a movement for change, with people living in poverty taking the lead. Solidarity takes several forms for ActionAid:

- sponsoring children and donating money

- linking different struggles
- taking action through demonstrations or letter writing
- using communications to raise the visibility of an issue
- building broader alliances.

**Alternatives** play a crucial role for us. They add vision and a sense of optimism and direction to our work. Rather than only fighting against poverty we work towards lasting solutions – exploring, documenting, sharing and activating alternatives. We work with people living in poverty and our partners and allies, finding and popularising new ways of doing things, challenging dominant paradigms, promoting innovation, piloting, innovating and being solutions-oriented. Even more than that, our commitment to work on alternatives is also a commitment to find the space to dream, to build visions of another world, to escape from present boxes and labels, to think laterally and to imagine a different future which can inspire action today.

Ending poverty and injustice is a complex process. Sometimes change takes decades – as the movements to end apartheid, advance gender equality, stop wars and demand accountable leaders show. At other times change can seem to happen overnight. Change does not follow a straight path. It is, however, happening every day because of the passion, vision and commitment of people working together in solidarity across borders, social groups and experiences.

**People make change happen!**

### **Monitoring and testing our theory of change.**

In our People's Action strategy we commit to elaborating and testing our theory of change. Through our People's Action Monitoring Framework (PAMF) we monitor our theory of change, including the progress we are making in our three programme areas (empowerment, solidarity and campaigning) and towards our eight HRBA principles. This is the first core element of the PAMF. The second core element is monitoring impact through the critical pathways – which represent our theory of change – and associated indicators for each key change promise (see part two of this resource). This monitoring will help us learn more about our theory of change and how change happens.

Our monitoring and evaluation system will let us analyse whether our theory of change is leading us towards the desired impact. Its insights, coupled with our culture of being self-critical, will help to ensure that we are continually testing and evolving our theory of change

Human rights are classified in three main categories:

- Civil and political rights ensures all citizens participation in the civil and political life of the state without discrimination.
- Economic, social and cultural rights focus on what the state should do to promote people's rights. They are concerned with equality of condition and treatment.
- Collective rights focus on the rights of groups of people rather than on individual.

Rights. They include minority rights, the right to development, environmental rights and the rights to sovereignty and self-determination.

### **Human Rights have three key principles:**

- **Universal:** That is, they apply to all human beings
- **Indivisible:** A human being can only be treated with justice, equality and dignity if all his or her civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. All rights are inter-related and there is inter-dependency between them.
- **Inalienable:** They cannot be taken away and people cannot be forced to give them up.

### **Holding Duty bearers to account**

The focus of ActionAid's HRBA is to support the protection and fulfilment of the human rights of people living in poverty – as the best way to eradicate poverty and injustice. Our main strategy is to empower people living in poverty (who are rights holders just as much as any people) to claim their rights and to hold the institutions (duty bearers) meant to uphold these rights accountable. Everyone is a rights holder as human rights are universal and the state is usually the primary duty bearer. In a HRBA, development is recognised as an obligation and a duty. And duty bearers

can therefore be held accountable for their actions and for their inaction to advance human rights. Accountability requires that the government, as the legal and principle duty bearer:

- accepts responsibility for the impact it has on people's lives
- cooperates by providing information, undertaking transparent processes and hearing people's views
- responds adequately to those views

### HRBA is Political

ActionAid's HRBA is political. It is political with a small "p", not party-political. Driven by our values and our mission, we go to the heart of complex political issues to do with the exercise of power. We mobilise more power on the side of people living in poverty by building solidarity with friendly movements, organisations and supporters at all levels of society. We work with social movements. We work to hold duty bearers to account and we advocate and campaign with others to change laws, policies, programmes and practices of duty bearers. Although we are clearly not neutral, we are impartial, particularly in the context of our humanitarian work and in responding to conflicts. As we work for change we also need to consider ways of dealing with and mediating conflict. Conflict is inherent in the social change process. We cannot avoid it if we want to challenge power.

### HRBA requires Coherence

A HRBA should frame all our work, whether we are engaging at a local, sub-national, national, regional or international level and whether we are directly working with people living in poverty or raising funds to support this work. In designing a rights programme, one of our key concerns is to ensure coherence between our work at all levels.

- **Connect local work:** We should design and develop all local rights programmes with clear links to district and national level work. Avoid isolated local work!
- **Connect national work:** Our national campaigning and policy work should maximise connections with local rights programmes (based on a two-way relationship) and seek to make international connections. Bring local partners together to inform your national analysis and draw on other members and the inter-national secretariat to bring in new perspectives and harmonise efforts. Avoid isolated national work!
- **Connect international work:** Our local and national experiences should inform and connect with our international

engagements, harnessing and elevating the voices of those living in poverty.

### 9. Eight principles that guide all our HRBA work

Eight core HRBA principles are the foundation of our practice. They guide how we plan and implement interventions and distinguish the ActionAid HRBA approach.

1. We put people living in poverty first and enable their active agency as rights activists.
2. We analyse and confront unequal power.
3. We advance women's rights.
4. We work in partnership.
5. We are accountable and transparent.
6. We rigorously monitor and evaluate to evidence our impact and we critically reflect and learn to improve our work.
7. We ensure links across levels – local, national, regional and international – to ensure we are addressing structural causes of poverty.
8. We are innovative, solutions-oriented and promote credible alternatives.

### Excerpt from ActionAid's partnership policy

A partnership is a relationship of equality between partners based on mutual respect, complementarity and accountability where the shared values, purpose, goals and objectives are clear and which recognises autonomy of the partners.

Based on the above definition, we recognise:

- A partnership as both a dynamic process and a relationship, which may or may not involve the transfer of money.
- It is often longer-term (one year or more) allowing time to develop and deepen the relationship for shared goals, objectives, programmes and projects.
- It involves the transfer or exchange not just of funds but also of solidarity, staff, ideas, learning and extended relationships etc.
- A partnership is grounded in a documented agreement that spells out contractual obligations, irrespective of

whether ActionAid provides funding or not.

### Guiding partnership principles

- **Complementarity**

Partnerships must identify mutual benefits for the partner organisations and ActionAid. Mutual benefits should strengthen the impact of our work to eradicate poverty and injustice.

- **Adherence to principles of mutual respect, equity, justice and accountability.**

All parties should recognise that a partnership between two organisations comes with its differences in resources, information and power.

- **Nurturing nascent organisations of rights holders.**

Partnerships should aim to support them to develop into autonomous and sustainable organisations that have their own identity and are not replicas of ActionAid.

- **Fostering a HRBA.**

ActionAid fosters a HRBA in its strategy to fight and end poverty and injustice.

- **Promote independence.**

While some partners will initially be heavily dependent on ActionAid (financially and technically), it is recommended that we develop partners' capacity and sustainability to reduce their dependency on ActionAid.

### Below are a few key learnings about how we build effective partnerships:

- **By selecting the right partners through a thorough mutual appraisal.** Our partners need to be committed to working for the advancement of human rights. They need to have the necessary knowledge and capacity, and their systems and policies need to support HRBA programmes and fundraising work. We have to share values and principles and build trust
- **By developing clear partnership agreements, reflected in a memorandum of understanding (MoU), during the strategic planning process.** Through the extended initial appraisal process a partner should be able to assess and understand ActionAid and its systems, and vice versa. This appraisal should inform the MoU developed during the strategy process.

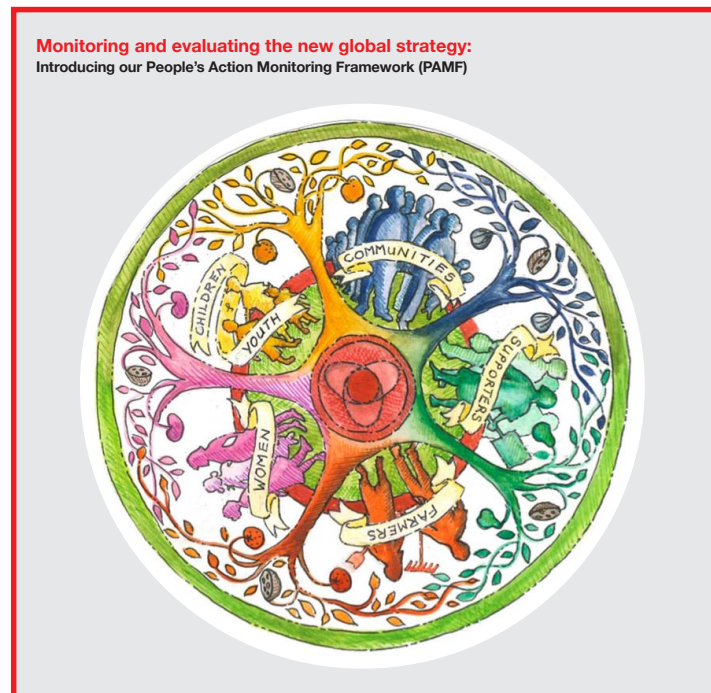
- **By modelling and monitoring our values and principles in our relationship with partners.** Throughout the partnership (at least once a year), you should monitor how well the MoU and partnership principles are being respected and how the partnership can be improved.
- **By supporting the capacity development of our partners.** In many cases we have long-term relationships with partners, and we need to ensure we are supporting their capacity development across the spectrum
- **By linking our partners together.** This helps address power imbalances. We have local partners in different geographical areas and national partners who are working on policy and campaign issues. We need to ensure we link them – that there are forums for them to come together and that we facilitate communication between them and with wider movements for change
- **By regularly reviewing our partnerships.** At least once a year, as part of the participatory review and reflection process, partners should give ActionAid feedback on its work and the relationship, and vice versa.

In our new strategy we make a strong commitment to deepen and better evidence the impact of our work on the lives of people living in poverty, holding ourselves collectively accountable for delivering on our key change promises, and strengthening our monitoring and evaluation system. The new global strategy specifies four clear, inter-connected elements that we must monitor at all levels, through all programmes, and across all countries:

1. **Our HRBA/theory of change** (at the heart of the diagram). The loops depict empowerment, solidarity and campaigning, which show our theory of change when woven together and delivered in line with our programming principles.
2. **Our impact.** This is achieved through our five objectives (the five trees in the diagram), each with two change promises (depicted as fruit) and our work on alternatives (seeds for the future). Each change promise has an agreed meta indicator to allow us to collectively monitor progress (through aggregated data) towards it across the whole federation.
3. **The people living in poverty, supporters and allies we work with** (represented by the groups under the trees). We will monitor how many people (men, women, girls, boys and youth) have participated in efforts to achieve change and how many our work has impacted (building on element two).



4. **Our organisational priorities and values** (represented by the ground the people in the diagram stand on). What we need to change and deliver organisationally (increasing our supporter base, raising more money, strengthening members and building staff capacity and women's leadership, for example) to be able to deliver the promised change.



# actionaid

## zimbabwe

**ACTIONAID ZIMBABWE**

**NATIONAL OFFICE**

16 York Avenue, Newlands, Harare, Zimbabwe  
Tel: +263-04 7881/5, 776 127  
Mobile: +263-772 164 448  
Fax: +263-04-788 124

Email: [info.zimbabwe@actionaid.org](mailto:info.zimbabwe@actionaid.org)  
[www.actionaid.org/Zimbabwe](http://www.actionaid.org/Zimbabwe)

**REGIONAL OFFICE**

281 Chimurenga Street, Rusape  
Tel: +263-25-3537. Fax: +263-04-788 124  
Mobile: +263-772 395 967  
Email: [peter.matimati@actionaid.org](mailto:peter.matimati@actionaid.org)

[www.facebook.com/actionaidzimbabwe](http://www.facebook.com/actionaidzimbabwe)  
[www.twitter.com/actionaidzimbabwe](http://www.twitter.com/actionaidzimbabwe)

