



ActionAid Zimbabwe

May - June 2023 Newsletter

Humanitarian Response

ActionAid Zimbabwe

Building Resilient Communities

During Disasters





Joy Mabenge, ActionAid Zimbabwe Country Director

THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR'S WELCOME NOTE

Greetings! It is my pleasure to welcome you to the May- June 2023 edition of our newsletter. In this issue, we focus on our work around humanitarian response during emergencies, particularly climate-induced disasters. Over the past decade, Zimbabwe has been experiencing the effects of climate change, notably rainfall variability and extreme climate events namely floods, tropical storms, cyclones, and droughts. The resulting humanitarian crises from the climate-induced disasters have exposed the glaring gaps in legislation and Zimbabwe's preparedness and capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies in general.

Sadly, women are the most affected and are often not included in decision-making processes during emergencies. As ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) we pride ourselves in ensuring women-led responses to combat poverty and climate change-induced shocks and hazards. As we reflect on the effects of climate change-induced humanitarian crises, we continue to stand in solidarity with the women and girls who were affected by these disasters.

On the policy influencing front, AAZ is spearheading a campaign for the expeditious finalisation of the Disaster Risk Management Bill. The delays have caused concern among civil society organisations and communities that are affected by disasters such as floods and cyclones. I am happy to share that earlier this year, members of the Global Platform Zimbabwe submitted a petition to the Parliament of Zimbabwe calling for the prompt finalisation of the Bill.

AAZ joins the rest of the ActionAid International family in expressing our deep gratitude to all the women responders who have been so effective in recent, and historic, crises and emergencies. **#THANKYOU**

I invite you to read this issue of the newsletter and learn more about our solidarity work and interventions as we make our contributions through humanitarian responses to climate-induced disasters. Thank you for your interest and happy reading!

AAZ REBUILDING LIVES IN CHIPINGE DISTRICT

Mugondi Primary School immediately after Tropical Storm Freddy.



Tropical Storm Freddy hit Chipinge district in February 2023 and left a lot of people including women and children in crisis. Houses were destroyed and left uninhabitable. School structures were damaged, and some pupils were forced to stop attending lessons. It is in this desolate state that AAZ in partnership with its local partners Simukai Child Protection Programme and Jekesa Pfungwa Vulingqondo, embarked on a humanitarian response project in the district. The response was under the auspices of ActionAid International's (AAI) Start Fund Project that ran from 27 February to 13 April 2023. It focused on renovating and reconstructing damaged structures such as classroom blocks, teachers' houses, school office structures, and school toilet blocks in seven primary

schools (Chiriga, Mugondi, Ndiadzo, Mwanyisa, Manzvire, Chitepo, and Vheneka) of Chipinge district. At Chiriga Primary School, a teachers' house roof was renovated, at Ndiadzo Primary School a new F14 model seven roomed teachers house was built plus four-hole toilet block for this new house, a classroom block roof was renovated, and a 13-hole boys toilet block had its roof renovated. At Mwanyisa Primary School, a classroom block roof was renovated, and the school office roof was also renovated. At Manzvire primary two by four holes new toilet blocks were constructed for teachers while at Vheneka primary a five-hole girls toilet block roof was renovated. At Mugondi Primary School a classroom block roof was renovated plus a four-hole boys toilet block roof was also renovated.



Mugondi Primary School classroom block after renovations

Mugondi Primary School in Ward 15 faced a major crisis when their classroom block roof was blown away, leaving two classrooms open and 80 pupils exposed to bad weather elements. The school attempted to solve this problem by shifting the affected pupils to other classrooms, but this only resulted in overcrowding. The teachers were finding it increasingly difficult to properly execute their duties due to the cramped conditions. AAZ and its partners intervened to renovate the whole classroom block to ensure that the pupils would go back to their normal way of learning. A similar case was also responded to at Mwanyisa Primary school in ward 22. The roof was blown away and water started

pouring into one of the classrooms. One of the school offices was also flooded by water after the roof was also blown away by the heavy rains of Tropical Storm Freddy. Both the structures were renovated and restored through the project.

In addition to the destruction of classrooms, some of the teachers' houses and property were damaged. This led to disruptions in learning at the school. AAZ and partners renovated the affected teachers' houses and reconstructed Ndiadzo Primary School's house after it was weakened by the storm. The new structure is stronger and can withstand bad weather conditions.

DIGNITY KITS DISTRIBUTION

202
WOMEN



148
GIRLS



During the humanitarian response, AAZ and partners, donated, 350 dignity kits to 350 women at Mugondi, Ndiadzo and Chiriga Primary Schools. Of the 350 females reached, 148 were girls of 18 years and below while 202 women were between 19-50 years. The dignity kits constituted 20-litre buckets, bath towels, bathing soap, washing soap, body lotions, toothpaste, toothbrushes, sanitary pads (2 packets of 10 pads). In total the project reached a total of 1 210 people of which 616 were males and 594 were females who benefited from structures renovations and dignity kits distributions.

CUMULATIVE TOTAL

616
MALE



594
FEMALE

CASE STORY: TROPICAL STORM FREDDY: THE NEXT WAVE OF DESTRUCTION

For Teclar Chinondiwana (64) a schoolteacher based at Chitepo Primary School in Ward 29 Chipinge, Cyclone Idai, which destroyed her three-roomed house in 2019, leaving her without power and damaging her electrical appliances was the start of a series of unfortunate events. Before she could recover from the devastating effects of Idai, Tropical Storm Freddy came with another wave of destruction in 2023. Tropical Storm Freddy removed the roof, damaged the walls and windows, and destroyed the electric wiring of her house. The place she had called home at Chitepo Primary School was left in an uninhabitable state and in need of renovation.

After the storm, Teclar was forced to move out of the house fearing that the walls collapse on her. The alternative accommodation had no electricity and did not have enough space for her eight-year-old granddaughter who had to be relocated thereby disrupting her studies in the process.

"My granddaughter had to stop going to school because there was not enough space for both of us to live in the one-roomed house," said Teclar.

It wasn't only Teclar's granddaughter whose normal learning was affected by Tropical Storm Freddy, all her students went for days without learning because she had to go back to her hometown of Chiredzi to escape the mental stresses brought by the storm. Teclar's condition affected her ability to effectively discharge her work. This disruption of the teaching and learning affects the children's pass rate at the end of the year of in the national examinations. It is also in this light that AAZ is advocating for the expeditious finalisation of the Disaster Risk Management Bill which may address such issues. An assessment by AAZ and partners, working in with the local authorities agreed that Teclar's house was substandard and was not fit for renovations. A decision was taken to construct a new F14 model house for her. The new structure would ensure that no similar challenges caused by Cyclone Idai and Tropical Storm Freddy torment her in future. "I am very happy with the work that ActionAid Zimbabwe has done," she said.



Teclar's house immediately after Tropical Storm Freddy



Teclar's new house constructed by AAZ and partners at Chitepo Primary School.

“
**Expeditious
 enactment
 of new disaster risk
 management
 legislation
 crucial
 to Zimbabwe's
 disaster
 prevention and
 preparedness**”

**A conversation
 with AAZ
 Humanitarian
 and Policy Manager**



The threat of climate-induced humanitarian crises is now ever-present in Zimbabwe. Over the past 5 years, the country has been exposed to several hazards which have seen questions related to preparedness to deal with the hazards. The editorial team (ET) sat down with ActionAid Zimbabwe's Humanitarian Programme and Policy Manager, Isaac Mumpande (IM). Their discussion follows:

ET: What has been the hazard trend in the past 5 to 10 years in Zimbabwe?

IM: The hazards landscape in Zimbabwe has changed in the past decade. Initially, we expected droughts every 10 years. For example, in 1972 there was a serious drought then another one in 1982, and another one in 1992. However, after 1992, droughts started to become more frequent than before such that every 2-3 years there has been a drought. Cyclones were not common in the 1980s and 1990s, but the frequency increased after 2000. Between 2000 and 2022, Southern Africa experienced more than 30 cyclones which is a matter of great concern to Zimbabweans. Floods have also become common in both rural and urban areas. Even though previous years experienced more rainfall, there were fewer floods, yet in the past few years the annual rainfall quantities have decreased but the frequency of floods has increased.

Alongside increasing floods, is an increase in epidemics such as cholera, dysentery, typhoid, and diarrhea which have become more common than before due to deteriorating sanitation situation in urban areas. These epidemics disrupt the education activities in schools as authorities deploy containment measures such as closure of schools.

ET: Why has there been that pattern of disasters?

IM: There are two reasons why we have this pattern of disasters in Zimbabwe. Firstly, climate change has altered the pattern of hazards globally. As noted, droughts, cyclones and floods have become more frequent than before. Secondly, our economic performance in Zimbabwe has also contributed to the increasing vulnerability of people. Thus, there is an increase in hazards frequency and in vulnerability of Zimbabweans. In a

normal sense, not all hazards should turn into disasters. Unfortunately, most of these hazards have turned into disasters in Zimbabwe due to increasing poverty and vulnerability of communities in the past years. It should be noted that the disaster impact on the people is not determined by the magnitude of the hazard but by the level of vulnerability of people. A small hazard may result into a huge disaster in a vulnerable community whereas the same hazard may not be an issue to a resilient community.

ET: How has Zimbabwe been managing the disasters?

IM: Zimbabwe has been struggling to manage the increasing number of disasters. This has been largely due to several factors; the protracted economic poor performance, the debt crisis, and the poor legal framework anchoring disaster management in the country. The protracted poor economic performance for the past two decades has seen increased

poverty levels in the country among the population. Furthermore, the government has been continuously constrained to come up with preventative and mitigatory measures against these disasters.

The debt crisis has also weakened the government's ability to provide key social services that provide a social protection to the people at the same time strengthening their resilience against economic shocks and stresses. The disaster legal and policy framework in the country is outdated to match the emerging new millennium disasters. Unfortunately, the pace of changing our laws and policies regarding disaster management has been extremely slow.

ET: What is your assessment of the legal framework governing disaster preparedness and response in Zimbabwe?

IM: The disaster legal and policy framework in Zimbabwe requires a major overhaul. As a country, we seem not to be responsive enough and agile to the increasing frequency of disasters affecting the country. Our legal and policy framework is guided by the Civil Protection Act (CPA) of 1989 which has numerous loopholes. For example, the CPA is not in sync with the global disaster management frameworks such as the more recent Sendai Framework of Disaster Risk Reduction; it does not clarify the role of the Local Authorities (LA) in disaster management operations or structure.

Yet LAs are well positioned in areas where disasters happen. The role of community leadership such as councilors and Traditional leaders in disaster management is silent in the CPA. Yet these leaders reside in areas where disasters happen. It promotes centralisation of disaster response and the management of resources meant for disaster management. The CPA also does not clarify how Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) funds should be raised by the government. It has limited citizen

participation at the lowest level, yet local citizens are the first responders to disasters affecting them.

It is silent on the participation of women, youths, and people with disabilities in disaster management and decision-making structures. These marginalised groups are usually the most affected by disasters, yet they are excluded from disaster risk management decision-making structures. It does not articulate the responsibilities of various stakeholders in disaster management such as the private sector and the academia in disaster management to ensure partnership and complementarity in all disaster risk management processes.

Other countries have been very agile to the changing disaster landscape. For example, many countries have revised or overhauled their disaster risk management legislation and policies such as South Africa which revised twice its Disaster Management Act No. 57 of 2002 and 2005; India came up with a new Disaster Management Act of 2005. Indonesia also put in place a new Disaster Management Law No. 24 of 2007. Equally, Philippines came up with a new Disaster Risk Reduction Act of 2010 while Sri Lanka, Gambia, Egypt, and Zambia have also revised their disaster risk reduction laws. However, it has taken Zimbabwe at least 20 years so far to overhaul and finalise its disaster risk reduction laws. The Disaster Risk Management Bill, which was first drafted in 2003, remains in the pipeline as it has not yet been finalised to date.

ET: What should be done for Zimbabwe to improve its disaster management capacity?

IM: Our legal and policy framework must promote a paradigm shift from disaster response or relief to promoting a culture of preparedness, prevention, mitigation, and resilience building. Our financial returns from preparedness and resilience building

could offset public expenditure on disaster response and recovery. It has been noted that each USD1 spent on resilience and preparedness, saves USD100 for humanitarian response. This means that it is cheaper to manage disasters through preparedness and resilience building than through humanitarian response. Action Aid Zimbabwe has been urging the Zimbabwean government to ensure that the new DRR law must incorporate a wide range of issues to enable sweeping changes in the disaster management sector. AAZ's expectations in the new law are that the DRM Bill must provide specific mandates and responsibilities to different actors on disaster management in both public and private sectors, academia, local government, community members, development partners (NGOs), the Media, etc. It should promote full devolution of powers, competences, responsibilities, and resources to subnational levels. It should establish clear DRR funding mechanisms.

The new Bill must promote women and youth involvement in the disaster risk management decision-making structures from national to local levels. Resource mobilisation needs to be much clearer on ex-ante rather than on ex-post activities in the new law. There should be Private Public Partnership (PPP) financing for DRM Fund. It must promote documentation of national risks (database) and the development of early warning systems which must also promote the indigenous knowledge system in disaster management. Lastly, it must promote DRM information System through research, appropriate education, and training.

If our DRM Bill is not finalised much earlier, then our 2030 Vision of an Upper Middle-Income nation might not be realised because our weaknesses in managing disasters are being exacerbated by lack of a coherent legal framework in addition to the continuously deteriorating economic situation.

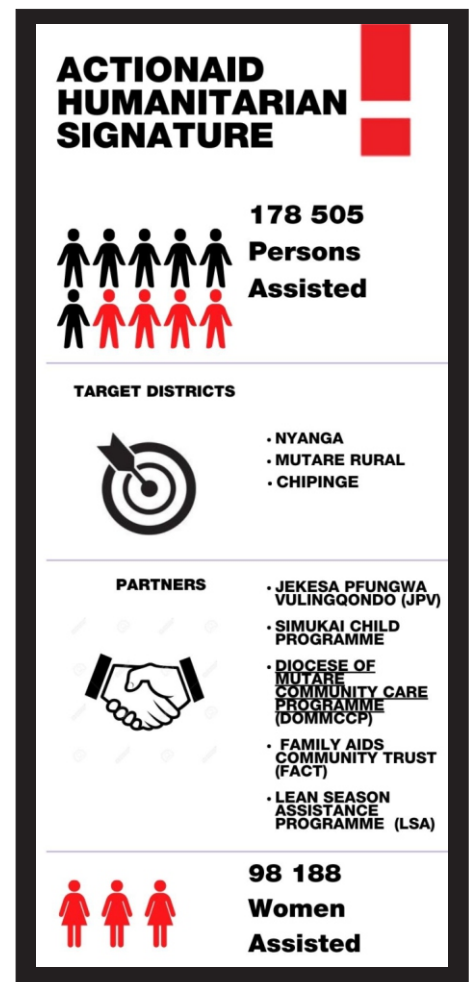
ActionAid's Humanitarian Signature

AAI humanitarian signature is grounded in a feminist and human rights-based approach that advocates for women's rights in emergencies. It aims to ensure that women are meaningfully represented in decision-making processes. The devastating impact of disasters, crises and conflicts on women is undeniable. In these situations, women's human rights are significantly violated, and they are often excluded from decision making and denied access to resources. Despite this, women and women's organisations are still significantly underrepresented in humanitarian responses. To address this, AA focuses on cultivating women's leadership in emergencies. This is a major part of our human rights-based approach, which seeks to empower women

and enable them to play an active role in humanitarian responses.

An example of a recent disaster that AA responded to is Tropical Cyclone Freddy which hit Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Over 1.5 million people were affected in these countries. AA is working with its teams and partners in each country to support communities whose lives have been changed forever by this cyclone.

In addition, ActionAid works to shift power to local organisations and movements. It aims at strengthening their capacity to advocate for women's rights in emergencies and to ensure that women are meaningfully represented in decision-making processes during emergencies.



Nyanga Cyclone Ana response: From despair to dignity: How AAZ and FACT Zimbabwe are rebuilding lives after Cyclone Ana.



Letween's hut soon after Tropical Cyclone Anna.



A new house constructed by AAZ and FACT

Letween's only house was damaged by Cyclone Ana in 2022, leaving her and her family of six daughters exposed and vulnerable to harsh weather conditions and physical harm. As if that was not enough, their food supplies were spoiled by water. Letween felt hopeless and unable to provide for her family. The family had to depend on her mother-in-law for food and shelter.

AAZ working in partnership with Family Aids Caring Trust (FACT) Zimbabwe came to the rescue by constructing three-roomed houses to six households that were affected by Cyclone Ana. This type of house (see below) is strong enough to withstand future storms. The intervention helped to restore Letween's dignity and self-esteem, and gave her children a safe and decent place to live in. They no longer must worry about their safety and food storage.

“ActionAid has provided the most needed help for my family. I did not have anywhere else to take them. When the Tropical Storm Ana occurred and destroyed my house, I did not know what else to do. The poverty that I am experiencing was worsened by the storm. But AAZ and FACT Zimbabwe came to our rescue. They provided the building materials and paid the builder who constructed the house. We could not have afforded this as a family. Now my family has a safe place to stay. My little children are now safe and protected from bad weather and other

forms of abuse that can come because of a lack of decent shelter. I also now feel safe as a woman and my dignity was restored. I also now have a safe place to store our food without fear of thieves or storms because the house was well-built.” said Letween.

UPDATES SECTION

ActionAid Zimbabwe joined the rest of the world to celebrate World Environment Day

On June 5 AAZ joined the rest of the world in commemorating World Environment Day bringing attention to issues of plastic pollution and exploring alternatives to reduce plastic use to aid the fight against climate change. AAZ urged the government of Zimbabwe to tighten the legislation to reduce plastic use and complete a ban on single-use plastic bags, invest more in the service delivery of refuse collection to ensure improved plastic management and limit its environmental impact and push the corporate and industrial sectors to adopt and implement the UNEP circularity approach.



ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) is celebrating 20 years of rooted community programming, strategic partnerships and taking sides with people living in poverty, exclusion and the vulnerable groups, women, youth, and children included. Since its establishment in 2003, the organisation remains grounded in communities from which it derives its mandate, with a geographic footprint embedded in Local Rights Programmes (LRPs). We are celebrating together with communities, social movements, partners by sharing positives in the sector and solidarity actions. Stay tuned!



COVER PICTURE: Madya Mwanza standing on one of her huts destroyed by Mbire Floods. The frequency of climate change induced hazards in Zimbabwe requires urgent attention by the authorities.

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