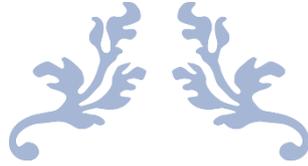




Methodist
Development and
Relief Agency



Methodist Development and Relief Agency

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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Abbreviations

AWC	All We Can
BftW	Bread for The World
BRiGS	Building Resilience in Gokwe South
BVIP	Blair Ventilated Improved Pit
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CA	Christian Aid
CHC	Community Health Club
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DDF	District Development Fund
EHT	Environmental Health Technician
ESLRM	Establishing Survivor Led Response Mechanism
FERGS	Flooding Emergency Response in Gokwe South
FPC	Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ISAL	Internal Savings and Lending
IGA	Income Generating Activities
LLCA	Locally Led Climate Change Adaptation
MCZ	Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
MeDRA	Methodist Development and Relief Agency
PHHE	Participatory Health and Hygiene Education
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
USD	United States Dollar
UW	UnitingWorld
VHW	Village Health Worker
VPM	Village Pump Minders
WPC	Water Point Committee

1. Introduction

MeDRA remains steadfast in supporting local communities across its diverse implementation areas, focusing on water, sustainable livelihoods, agriculture, environmental health, and emergency humanitarian response. The organization is dedicated to empowering and facilitating social justice, particularly among marginalized and vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, women, and children in both rural and urban communities. The board supported MeDRA tremendously with two board visits to areas of operation yielding recommendations key in ensuring quality and impact programming. In the year 2023, MeDRA undertook various initiatives aligned with its 2022 -2026 Strategic Plan and objectives, and this report provides an overview of the activities conducted during the period.

The following are the achievements for the reporting period:

- Improved supply of water to communities in Gokwe South, Chipinge, and Buhera. A total of 1 500 households were reached resulting in significant reduction in walking distance to fetch water and access to clean and safe water. There is anecdotal evidence from clinics of reduction in water borne diseases in the areas of operation.
- Communities in Gokwe South and Buhera successfully set up 25 Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and Internal Savings and Lending schemes (ISALs) to diversify sources of income and improve sustainable livelihoods benefitting 1,850 households.
- Increased interest and participation in disaster risk reduction in communities in Marondera MCZ District and Buhera in response to climate change. 1 District and 2 Ward committees with 40 (13F;27M) members have been established and spearheading the implementation of DRR plans in Buhera and 1 MCZ District DRR plan was developed for the church.
- Demand led sanitation approach yielded results with Mutupani village being declared open defecation free whilst two villages Mxochiwa and Mutindiziri are awaiting certification.
- 205 BVIP and 182 uBVIP were constructed across districts and across projects in Gokwe South, Chipinge and Buhera districts leading to reduction of open defecation and increase in sanitation coverage by 20% in the targeted areas.
- 52 Community Health Clubs were established, and these were pivotal in improving of health and hygiene practices in communities.
- MeDRA implemented activities that promoted a safe and inclusive MCZ church which led to improved knowledge on issues of human rights, voter education, peace building, gender equality and child protection. 1 000 people have been capacitated in and outside the church.
- Reduced the prevalence of gender-based violence through establishing survivor led response mechanisms and community dialogues on GBV in Hopley and Gokwe South as well as conducting research in 5 districts in partnership with Women's University in Africa to be used for writing future proposals. MeDRA was recognised and appreciated by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development as one of the leading partners in the province helping in fighting GBV.

During the reporting period, MeDRA implemented six projects funded by All We Can, Bread for the World, Christian Aid, Start Network, ACT Alliance, and UnitingWorld. These projects aimed to build, restore, and strengthen resilience in communities, respond to disasters, foster safe and inclusive churches, and promote social justice in Gokwe South, Chipinge, Bikita, Buhera, Harare South, and among MCZ congregants.

Operating Context

The organisation's operating context underwent several shifts over the 12 months period which include:

1. **Economic Challenges:** Zimbabwe has experienced significant economic challenges, including inflation, currency depreciation, and scarcity of foreign currency. These factors have impacted the overall economic stability and livelihoods of the communities supported by MeDRA.
2. **Humanitarian Crisis:** Zimbabwe has faced a humanitarian crisis characterized by food shortages, inadequate access to basic services, and challenges in the healthcare sector. This has further strained the livelihoods and well-being of the population. The Cholera pandemic which was declared a national disaster is a sure sign that there is a humanitarian crisis in the country.

3. Climate Change Impact: The country has been affected by climate change-related challenges such as droughts, floods, and erratic rainfall patterns. The current effects of El Nino were felt from mid-October to early December which led most areas having a false start of the rain season. This has largely affected agriculture sector with few hectarage having been ploughed and the already germinating seeds suffering from moisture distress due to the late rain season. These events have had detrimental effects on agriculture, food security, and water availability affecting mostly the rural community especially the poor and marginalized people.

These shifts in the external context have had profound implications for various aspects of life in Zimbabwe, including the economy, public health, governance, and social well-being of people in Buhera and Gokwe South.

2. Strategic Pillars Key Achievement for the 2023

The following are updates per strategic pillar for the year:

2.1 Restoring the resilience of targeted communities

MeDRA made significant progress in restoring the resilience of the targeted communities in Buhera, Chipinge, and Gokwe South during the year under review.

Strategic Objective	Target	Achievement of Outcome
1.1 Households consume adequate and nutritious foods	Improving income opportunities through ISALs and enterprise management to 750 households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant transformation is evident in the economic landscape of the community, with 600 households experiencing an upsurge in savings through Internal Savings and Lending (ISALs). The average monthly household savings now stand at \$10, reflecting a positive shift from the previous report's \$9. Generally, at the end of 6 months cycles each household had a cumulative income ranging from \$30 to \$50 which was used to buy small livestock, paying of school fees and farm inputs. To further enhance economic empowerment, a comprehensive business management training was conducted across nine villages, aimed at fortifying Income Generating Activities (IGAs) with 116 (81F;35M) people capacitated on running viable IGAs. Notably, the ISAL methodology has played a pivotal role in providing capital for diverse ventures, including 4 poultry initiatives, 2 goat enterprises, 1 piggery operation, and 4 gardening projects. This achievement underscores the MeDRA's positive impact on financial well-being and community empowerment thus building resilience.
	Increasing livestock production and sales through improving knowledge in animal husbandry and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90 (63F;27M) were capacitated in goat production and chicken production leading to improved management of the small livestock. To orient the community on the goat housing and good breed of goats, a goat fair was held in Mbizvo where farmers showcased their goats for market. This led to Mxochiwa group purchasing 2 boer goats for their IGA so as to improve their breed. Market (local butcheries and goat producers from Muzarabani) has been established for those involved in Goat production through market linkages in Gokwe South. 35 goats have been sold with a value of \$1 400.00 thus improving household income.
1.2 Increased population accessing safe water	Improving accessibility to potable safe water through rehabilitation of boreholes and installation of water reticulation systems (solar powered and gravity fed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the water coverage remains one of MeDRA's top priority with 8 boreholes rehabilitated in Buhera, Chipinge and Gokwe South whilst 2 wells were upgraded through installation of hand driers leading to 1 249 households having access to clean and safe water. 2 boreholes were solarised at Ngaone Toti Primary School and Mxochiwa village and a gravity fed reticulation system was installed at a spring at Ndiyadzo Primary School leading to improved accessibility and reduced walking distances especially for 1 200 school children.

	Improving capacitate of Water Point Committees (WPC) in governance, operations and maintenance of water points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Water Point Committees were capacitated on the operations and maintenance of their water points leading to reduced down time of water points and increased access to clean and safe water of communities. 5 committees have also started resource mobilisation to help in the maintenance of the water points portraying community ownership and sustainability. • Mxochiwa WPC managed to mobilise funds from the villagers for the initial solarisation of the borehole with 54 households contributing \$30 for the purchase of a pump, solar panels and tank. MeDRA supported with \$2 000 to this community initiative.
1.3 Reduction in population practicing open defecation	Improving Sanitation, Health and Hygiene through the Demand Led Approach to sanitation and PHHE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through Demand Led Sanitation approach a total of 309 households have managed to construct BVIP and uBVIP latrines on their own showing improved sanitation practices and reduction of open defecation. • 1 village (Mutupani) in Gokwe South was certified and declared Open Defecation Free Zone. • 621 community Health Clubs members are practicing good health and hygiene leading to reduction of diarrheal diseases in the communities.
1.4 Increased capacity of communities to prepare and respond to disasters.	Improving Disaster Risk Planning and Management by supporting development or review of Disaster Risk Management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community dialogues (4) on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) were conducted in Buhera and Gokwe South where Early Warning Systems were discussed as vital tools to Disaster Risk Reduction. The indigenous knowledge systems in this regard, are localised, collaborative, and transferrable, but as the local communities do so, they are being supported to be knowledgeable about climate change phenomena. • The dialogues have led to harvesting of IKS which will go a long way in preserving the knowledge communities have and help in DRM.
	Emergency response to Cholera pandemic in Buhera district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MeDRA responded to the Cholera pandemic in Buhera in partnership and managed to support in the reduction of human life loss due to cholera through management of Cholera affected populations through Infection Prevention and Control of new cholera cases in Buhera district. • Enhanced community health and hygiene practice, conditions and build the capacity of 12 000 vulnerable people to protect themselves from both contracting and transmitting cholera. • Improved access to safe drinking water through provision of water treatment chemicals to 250 households, 13 schools and 31 Rural Health Centres • Increased knowledge and community risk perception associated with cholera transmission and adoption of the preventive measures on Cholera and improved awareness among community members regarding pertinent protection issues and the availability of relevant services.

2.2 Promoting Social Justice

In the period under review, MeDRA continued to promote social justice in areas of operation as well as in the MCZ community.

Strategic Objective	Target	Achievement of Outcome
2.1 Reduction in violent conflict in communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community based conflict resolution systems established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The integration of conflict management remains a consistent practice across various project activities, including Community Health Clubs, Income-Generating Activity (IGA) groups, Water Point Committees, Ward Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Committees, and Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) initiatives.
2.2 Improved disability inclusion, gender equality and equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge on gender equality, equity and disability inclusion through awareness raising and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising and trainings have helped to improve knowledge of project participants and MCZ community on disability inclusion, safeguarding and gender. Improved awareness of Men, Women, Boys and Girls on issues of gender inequality and GBV through community dialogues in Hopley M13 F15 and Gokwe M10 F15 98 safeguarding issues were reported with 12 feedback messages received on toll free line and 33 over suggestion box, the remaining from COMPASS system. MeDRA responded to complaints and feedback and developed learning from the feedback. Distributed 500 Fliers, 350 stickers and 500 posters with GBV message to raise awareness and promote reporting. 44 sessions aired on Diamond FM and 27 on Star FM on promoting use of WhatsApp chatbot and toll free as media of communication with survivors of GBV in need of help.
2.3 Increased awareness of and participation in democratic processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of and participation in democratic processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 425 (250F;175M) MCZ members with increased knowledge on democratic processes through community dialogues conducted by 40 cadres trained by Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, ERC and MeDRA in the democratisation process. These helped promoting peace during the election period with the MCZ community in Bulawayo and Hwange districts.

Performance Measurement Status

Output	Target	Annual Achievement	% of Annual Achievement
Water Reticulation System established	3	3	100%
Households with improved knowledge on proper sanitation practices	720	750	104%
Households constructing toilets	400	309	77%
Income opportunities improved (ISALs and IGAs)	750	600	80%
Training and equipping Cluster Facilitators	3	3	100%
Youth and Women engaged in Civic Engagement and Democratic Processes	400	425	106%
DRM Plans produced	2	2	100%
People reached on Hygiene and Education Awareness	2000	1521	76%
Training in Climate Change as a DRM strategy	100	105	105%
Training in Business Management	90	116	128%
Training Faith Leaders in Climate adaptation	280	280	100%
Community dialogues on IKS	280	140	50%



3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The following were MEL activities that were undertaken during 2023:

- Two endline evaluations were completed for the UnitingWorld and Christian Aid funded projects, with the tasks being carried out by hired external consultants. Amongst the key recommendations was that, for future programming, there is need for MeDRA to add more activities that make communities more resilient. This includes “crisis modifier” interventions. The implementation period for a project such as the SCRiDAA project, should be more than two years. This is because these interventions take time to have an impact. Under the UW funded project, the key recommendations were as follows; introducing evidenced-based programming which are informed through research, in which specific programmatic activities and processes, which (based on a review of available research and ongoing research efforts) appear to be related to positive outcomes for programme participants. Also, there is a need to establish market linkages for output markets.
- The BRiGS project which is being funded by Bread for the World reached its mid-term during the month of May 2023 and as such an internal mid-term review was initiated and undertaken in Gokwe South, to establish if the project was showing any progress towards meeting its outcomes as indicated in the project design. In addition, the review, established if the project was being carried efficiently, effectively, transparently and sustainably in ward 13 and 16 of Gokwe South. Findings from this review, demonstrated that the project is progressing positively towards meeting its outcomes. The only major concern is the high turnover of ISAL group members, citing they are being affected severely by the prevailing harsh economic environment, which makes it difficult to raise their monthly subscriptions.
- Advanced excel skills were disseminated by Adept solutions. The Advanced excel training has assisted in data analysis which is being carried out fast and more accurately to produce quality reports.
- An additional Complaints and Feedback platform was introduced, that is making use of an email address where, program beneficiaries can email any of their concerns. However, with these additional platforms, MeDRA is still receiving very low feedback from program participants. The feedback received during the year was 104, with the majority sharing positive feedback, expressing their gratitude to MeDRA for the interventions in their communities.
- A Safeguarding risk assessment was carried out again with assistance from Christian Aid to establish if there are any forms of new risks that could potentially affect the implementation of MeDRA’s projects. MeDRA proved to be at moderate risk with regards to safeguarding, as long as all MeDRA staff continue to go through safeguarding training and are constantly refreshed on the subject, as well as sharing with partners on safeguarding.
- Routine project monitoring was done across projects to ensure quality programming.
- A needs assessment was done in Gokwe South Ward 24 and 40 and the findings will be useful for resource mobilisation and were used during the application of the USAID-BHA.
- Two Board and Management visits were held in Buhera district in March and Gokwe South district in December for familiarization of operating areas and understanding the dynamics of

MeDRA operations in the field. Also, to provide technical insights into the implementation of projects in the field and strengthen best practices.

4. Communication and visibility

- MeDRA significantly enhanced its visibility during the reviewed year, featuring in four success stories within the MCZ newsletter. An external advert addressing Anti-Drug and substance abuse, and illicit trafficking reached an estimated 2 million readers through the NewDay Press. Participation in the Matthew Rusike Day and two exhibitions during the Christian Aid week and at Diakonia offices further increased MeDRA's presence, fostering new partnerships and learning opportunities from like-minded organizations dealing with climate change resilience.
- Four social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Youtube as well as the website were consistently updated, with Facebook experiencing substantial growth despite technical challenges hindering post boosting. Branding initiatives extended to all materials used in exhibitions, enhancing MeDRA's distinct presence.
- A Communication and Story Writing workshop empowered MeDRA's programming staff to proficiently document stories and improve image quality in reports, emphasizing strategies to enhance visibility, branding, and social media followers.
- MeDRA maintained visibility through radio sessions on Diamond FM (44 spot adverts) and Star FM (27 spot adverts) combating Gender-Based Violence and 29 spot adverts addressing Cholera concerns on Radio Zimbabwe reaching more than 4 million listenership.
- Toll-free line uptake and feedback moderately increased after awareness campaigns in three districts during Code 1 Monitoring, with reported cases shared with relevant stakeholders in the referral pathway.
- Efforts are underway to address new requirements for MeDRA's Econet biller code, and a total of 500 bulk messages disseminated important information on Cholera, Safeguarding, and El Nino awareness.
- Voter education messages promoting peaceful and active citizen participation in elections were shared on social media platforms.
- A complaints flow chart has been implemented to streamline the resolution process for any complaint received.

5. Resource Mobilisation

5.1 Responding to Calls

Efforts to fundraise for different projects through responding to calls was done in the period under review. The table below indicates proposals submitted and status on response.

Grant	Period of application	Status
Australian Embassy DAP (\$25 000)	August	Successful
Start Fund – Cholera Response Buhera (\$100 000)	October	Successful
Start Fund – FERGS (\$90 000)	February	Successful
ACT Alliance – Cholera Response RRF	October	Resubmitted
Humanitarian Response - UNHCR	June	Submitted
ACT Alliance – Climate Change Adaptation (\$25 000)	November	Successful
Japanese Grant	Rolling basis	Pending
USAID – BHA	January 2024	Pending
Borehole Drilling and solarisation – Beast philanthropy	June	Unsuccessful

Aligned with the Resource Mobilisation Strategy, various initiatives have been undertaken to enhance the organization's resources:

- A two-day Resources Mobilisation workshop was conducted for all 10 MeDRA staff, covering donor mapping, stakeholder analysis, aligning mobilization efforts with the strategic plan, proposal development, and grant monitoring. Recommendations were provided, emphasizing proactive involvement from all staff and the Board. Advocacy for the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's contribution to MeDRA was encouraged, and permission to conduct fundraising activities during the Social Justice week within the church was proposed. The proposal of having a MeDRA day or week in the MCZ calendar could not sail through in 2024 as the calendar was already done. To push to 2025 and get church leadership buy in.
- Collaborated with Childline for a joint proposal submission in response to the USAID/BHA call.
- Established a database of potential grant writers, initiating email communications to profile consultants.
- Participated in the Diakonia Consultative meeting, mapping partners for humanitarian response, particularly addressing issues related to the El Nino phenomenon.
- Engaged in the Anticipatory Contingency Planning workshop with the Department of Civil Protection, enhancing knowledge and understanding of Government of Zimbabwe priorities.
- In progress: Developing an ACT Alliance Appeal for anticipatory action in response to the potential humanitarian situation arising from the El Nino phenomenon.
- Developed a Cholera response concept to support ongoing initiatives in Dzivarasekwa and UnitingWorld availed \$5000.

5.2 Networking

MeDRA consistently participated in forums such as the Food Security Cluster, National Cash Working Group, ACT Alliance, Gender, Faith Working Group NANGO, National WASH Cluster, Community of Practices ACT Alliance, and diverse online networking events. These engagements served as platforms for continual learning and the exchange of best practices within the programming field.

6. Challenges and responses

The following are challenges and responses experienced during the Quarter:

Challenges	Response/mitigation
The Safety and Inclusion project has a budget of only USD 55 969.	Reduced activities to be implemented in the project as plans for next project design are underway
Exchange losses affecting the Safety and Inclusion project	Reduce project activities and indirect costs
Communication Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer resigned	An advertisement was flighted with application received and shortlisted, now awaiting interviews
Cholera Outbreak	Resource mobilisation for response
Very acute rise of prices, there by affecting MeDRA's beneficiaries practising farming as a business and toilet construction	Staff capacity building in selection Planning and Management of income generating Activities - Capacitating On business development services and enterprise development
High turnover amongst project participants in ISAL groups due to economic woes	Established IGAs and encouraged group members to start IGAs

8. Plans for 2024

Activity	Time Frame
Implementation of the BRIGCS project into 3 rd year	Jan- Oct
Implementation of Integrated WASH and Sustainable livelihoods project	Jan – Dec
Implementation of the Safety and Inclusion Project	Jan - Jun
Implementation of ACT LLCA project	Jan - Mar

Implementation of ACT Faith leaders and actors' engagement in climate adaptation advocacy in Africa	Jan - Dec
Implementation of Improving the Education Environment at Marota Primary School	Jan - July
Participate in Connexional staff calendar events	On-going
Fundraise for the organisation	On-going
Annual Review meeting	July
Strategic Plan review	July
MeDRA 20 years celebrations	August

10. Success stories



Rebecca with the chicks she is rearing.

Rebecca Chiyaka, a 61-year-old resident of Masanzu village, has experienced a remarkable transformation in her life through her involvement in poultry farming and entrepreneurial ventures. Partnered with her 84-year-old husband, Clever Chiyaka, and accompanied by their granddaughter, Rebecca embarked on this journey of change.

In April 2023, Rebecca participated in a training program on Indigenous chicken production and ethnovet practices facilitated by MeDRA, Agritex Department, Veterinary Department, and Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre. Armed with newfound knowledge, she began her poultry venture with just two indigenous hens and a rooster. Applying

the skills acquired from the training, she established a brooder to efficiently

multiply her flock.

By July of the same year, Rebecca's flock had expanded to 50, with 40 chickens sold at \$5 each. The revenue generated from the sale of eggs and chickens not only added nutritional value to her family's diet but also contributed to food security within the household. With savings amassed from poultry farming, she raised \$200 and diversified into opening a tuck shop.

Empowered by enterprise management training from the Ministry of Women Affairs Gender and Community Development, Agritex Department, and MeDRA, Rebecca successfully established a tuck shop at her homestead. The shop, offering groceries and chicken cuts from her poultry production, became a local hub, selling products at \$6 each to nearby schools and the community. This initiative yielded a monthly profit of \$155, providing a vital source of disposable income for her household.

Through strategic financial planning, Rebecca and her husband now purchase food and have even invested in a peanut butter making machine. This additional venture has become a source of extra income, as they grind groundnuts from community members and sell the product. Rebecca's success extends beyond her personal gains, as she holds the position of treasurer in her poultry project group, offering guidance to members on planning and decisionmaking.

Inspired by Rebecca's achievements, neighbours like Mrs. Murambadoro have also embraced similar projects. Rebecca attributes her hygienic lifestyle to lessons learned from Participatory Health Hygiene Education toolkits, integrated with WASH and sustainable livelihoods. Grateful for the knowledge and wisdom acquired from MeDRA and government stakeholders, Rebecca stands as a testament to the positive impact of community-driven initiatives and collaboration and women claiming ownership to assets.



Rebecca in her tuckshop

Picture Gallery



Faina fetching water from Solarised Tap in Mxochiwa



Ideal Homestead, a well-furnished kitchen from proceeds of ISAL



Kubatana IGA members showing their indigenous chicken.



Land preparation using knowledge from agroecology training in Shamhu village.



Board members discussing with Shamhu village beneficiaries.



Dialogue on GBV