

MeDRA



**Methodist
Development and
Relief Agency**



2024 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
CA	Christian Aid
CHC	Community Health Club
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EHT	Environmental Health Technician
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ISAL	Internal Savings and Lending
IGA	Income Generating Activities
LLCA	Locally Led Climate Adaptation
MCZ	Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
MeDRA	Methodist Development and Relief Agency
RIDA	Rural Infrastructure Development 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

Executive Summary

In 2024, the Methodist Development and Relief Agency (MeDRA) demonstrated exceptional resilience and innovation amidst Zimbabwe's challenging socio-economic and climatic conditions. In response to cholera outbreaks in Dzivarasekwa and Glen View during the first half of the year, MeDRA implemented rapid and effective interventions, mitigating the spread and impact of the disease. Concurrently, during the El Niño-induced drought, the organization provided targeted cash and food distributions in Bulawayo and Buhera, with support from the World Mission Fund and the ACT Alliance Rapid Response Fund, ensuring essential resources reached the most affected communities.

In terms of infrastructure and education, MeDRA made significant progress on the new classroom block at Marota Primary School, achieving 90% completion and delivering 80 desks along with other essential furnishings funded by Australian AID. To finalize the project before the school's reopening in January 2025, an additional \$2,500 in funding was sourced from the church and \$330 from BancABC, with the dedication of the school set for 5 February.

On the advocacy front, MeDRA organized a high-impact press conference where faith leaders collectively called for enhanced climate action, reinforcing the organization's role as a staunch advocate for climate justice. Collaborative research efforts with the Start Network and Christian Aid Zimbabwe yielded evidence-based insights, which are instrumental in refining and improving programmatic approaches.

Internally, MeDRA focused on strengthening its operations by enhancing monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) practices. Capacity-building initiatives were undertaken to improve overall program performance and accountability, ensuring that the organization's interventions remain effective and responsive to the needs of the communities served. A Staff annual review workshop was held to reflect on the past, look at the present and forecast on the future of MeDRA's work with special focus on Resource Mobilisation.

Collectively, these accomplishments underscore MeDRA's unwavering commitment to its mission and its adaptive capacity in the face of adversity. Looking forward, the organization is poised to continue empowering communities and promoting social justice in Zimbabwe through innovation, collaboration, and impactful interventions.

1. Introduction

In 2024, Zimbabwe faced significant socio-economic and climatic challenges, including El Niño-induced droughts, economic instability, and public health crises. The severe drought led to a substantial decline in maize yield, exacerbating food insecurity and impacting livelihoods. Real GDP growth decelerated with the change in currency, influenced by adverse weather conditions, lower agriculture prices, and macroeconomic instability. Additionally, the nation grappled with cholera outbreaks in several regions, further straining public health resources.

Amidst this challenging operating context, the Methodist Development and Relief Agency (MeDRA) remained steadfast in its mission to empower communities and promote social justice across Zimbabwe. Throughout the year, MeDRA implemented a range of interventions aimed at mitigating the impacts of these crises and building resilience among vulnerable populations with support from our all-weather friends like All We Can, Diakonia, UnitingWorld, Bread for the World, Christian Aid, World Mission Fund, and ACT Alliance.

Emergency Response: In response to cholera outbreaks in Dzivarasekwa and Glen View, MeDRA swiftly mobilized resources in partnership with organizations such as UnitingWorld and Diakonia. These collaborations facilitated rapid response efforts, including the provision of clean water, personal protective equipment, and health education campaigns, effectively containing the spread of the disease and safeguarding public health.

Drought Response and Food Security: Addressing the severe drought conditions, MeDRA provided targeted cash and food distributions in Bulawayo MCZ district vulnerable circuits and Buhera Ward 16 villages. With generous support from the World Mission Fund and the ACT Alliance Rapid Response Fund, essential resources reached a total of 210 households (1061 persons - 625F, 436M) for the World Mission Fund and 418 households (1440 persons - 876F, 564M) for the ACT RRF which are the most affected communities, alleviating immediate hunger and contributing to longer-term food security.

Educational Infrastructure Development: Demonstrating a commitment to education, MeDRA, with funding from Australian Aid, made significant progress on the new classroom block at Marota Primary School, achieving 90% completion by the end of the year. In addition, the delivery of 80 learners' desks enhanced the learning environment of 80 learners at the school, reflecting MeDRA's dedication to improving educational opportunities in underserved areas. To finalize the project before the school's reopening in January 2025, an additional \$2,500 was sought from the MCZ administration, and all is now complete with the school's dedication taking place on the 5th of February. Additionally, support was sort from one of our banks, BancABC which donated \$330 to support the project.

Advocacy and Research Initiatives: On the advocacy front, MeDRA organized a high-impact press conference where faith leaders collectively called for enhanced climate action, reinforcing the organization's role as a staunch advocate for climate justice. The press conference attracted wider media coverage, bringing climate change issues to a wider audience, including those who may not regularly follow environmental news. This advocacy had a potential influence for stronger climate policies, such as climate change pricing, renewable energy targets, and protection of natural resources. Collaborative research efforts with the Start Network and Christian Aid Zimbabwe yielded evidence-based insights, instrumental in refining and improving programmatic approaches.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Enhancements: Internally, MeDRA focused on strengthening its operations by enhancing monitoring, evaluation, and learning practices. Capacity-building initiatives were undertaken to improve overall program performance and accountability, ensuring that interventions remained effective and responsive to community needs.

Strategic Partnerships and Governance: The successful induction of new board members ensured robust governance structures, guiding MeDRA's strategic direction. Vigorous fundraising efforts and strategic partnerships bolstered resource mobilization, enabling the organization to maintain resilience and agility in overcoming obstacles.

Collectively, these accomplishments underscore MeDRA's unwavering commitment to its mission and its adaptive capacity in the face of adversity. Reflecting on the year's achievements and challenges, MeDRA remains dedicated to empowering communities and promoting social justice in Zimbabwe through innovation, collaboration, and impactful interventions.



Methodist
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development



2. Strategic Pillars Updates

The following are updates per strategic pillar for the year:

2.1 Restoring the resilience of targeted communities

MeDRA has focused on enhancing food security, safe water access, improved sanitation, and disaster preparedness. Our multi-sectoral approach has integrated emergency response with long-term development strategies to build community resilience.

Strategic Objective	Target	Achievement of Outcome
1.1 Households consume adequate and nutritious foods	Improving Income Opportunities through ISALs and enterprise management as well as support in accessing markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISAL Groups: 19 active groups with 200 members (159F; 41M) in Ward 13, Gokwe South. Shift to ROSCAs: 5 out of 19 groups transitioned to ROSCAs due to drought-induced income declines, leading to a 65% reduction in loans and a 72% decrease in monthly savings by September.
	Improved household food consumption score and household dietary diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisted 1,440 individuals in Buhera Ward 16 with cash in July; shifted to food distributions in September and October, reaching 418 households (1,440 individuals) with essential food hampers. During the needs assessment, only 10% of participants were in the acceptable food consumption category. However, this improved significantly to 96% in the first Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) and 98% in the second PDM, showing that the aid provided essential nutrients and effectively addressed immediate hunger and malnutrition. The initial average Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) was very low at 2.4, highlighting limited food access and a lack of dietary diversity. Following interventions, the average HDDS improved significantly to 5 during the first Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) and continued to rise to 6.2 in the final PDM, indicating a positive impact on food access and diet diversity.

	<p>Increasing Livestock Production and Sales through improving knowledge in animal husbandry and health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended Support: Provided food hampers to an additional 210 households in Bulawayo MCZ District, benefiting 1,061 individuals, including 21 People with Disabilities, 127 children under five, 10 pregnant women, and 64 elderly. 53 farmers (33F; 20M) received refresher training in animal husbandry, leading to improved livestock management and productivity. To mitigate the effects of drought, targeted feed support was provided to 13 poultry groups (412 chickens), 1 piggery group (10 pigs), and 2 goat groups (19 goats), ensuring sustained animal health and growth. From sales of eggs, chickens, and goats, the 15 IGAs managed to have a cumulative sale value of \$ 9,405, enhancing household incomes and market participation. 70% of funds were reinvested into the IGA, especially for the purchase of feed, chicks, and vaccines. <table border="1" data-bbox="1055 699 1951 967"> <thead> <tr> <th>Product</th> <th>Units Sold</th> <th>Price per Unit (USD)</th> <th>Total Sales Value (USD)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Eggs (8 per \$1)</td> <td>1,000 eggs (125 sets of 8)</td> <td>\$1 per 8 eggs</td> <td>\$125</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chickens</td> <td>1,500 birds</td> <td>\$6 per bird</td> <td>\$9,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Goats</td> <td>8 goats</td> <td>\$35 per goat</td> <td>\$280</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Sales Revenue</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>\$9,405</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most sales for eggs and chicken were made within villages with direct buyers from local communities. Goats and chickens were also sold to local butcheries and restaurants, providing a stable market. 	Product	Units Sold	Price per Unit (USD)	Total Sales Value (USD)	Eggs (8 per \$1)	1,000 eggs (125 sets of 8)	\$1 per 8 eggs	\$125	Chickens	1,500 birds	\$6 per bird	\$9,000	Goats	8 goats	\$35 per goat	\$280	Total Sales Revenue			\$9,405
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<p>1.2 Increased population accessing safe water</p>	<p>Improving Accessibility to Potable Safe Water through capacitating Water Point Committees, rehabilitation of boreholes and borehole drilling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Water Point Committees in Buhera Ward 16 were strengthened to enhance community-led resource management. Strengthened structures ensured long-term water sustainability and maintenance. Rehabilitated 4 boreholes, providing clean water to 294 households and 354 school children who previously relied on dried-up shallow wells. Improved accessibility to Potable Water through the installation of an inline chlorinator and the procurement of 12 chlorine pills to treat water in 																				

		Dzivarasekwa and 6 in Glenview. This initiative positively impacted approximately 6000 households, ensuring access to clean and safe drinking water to curb the Cholera pandemic and bringing positive hygienic health outcomes in the suburb.
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"> The Demand Led Sanitation approach has successfully led to the construction of BVIP and uBVIP latrines by 48 households in Gokwe South Ward 13. This initiative has significantly improved sanitation practices and contributed to a reduction in open defecation in the area. 238 members of the Community Health Clubs adopted good health practices like safe water handling, handwashing, and proper waste management. This has led to a noticeable reduction in diarrheal diseases, as reported by local clinics, village health workers, and environmental health technicians.
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"> A community dialogue on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) focused on how early warning systems are essential for disaster risk reduction. It emphasized integrating traditional knowledge with modern practices to improve community preparedness against hazards like drought and cyclones, particularly in Buhera and Gokwe. The harvesting of IKS can help preserve community knowledge and enhance disaster risk management. Issued a press statement with six media houses to raise awareness on disaster preparedness and climate adaptation. Conducted a technical meeting with 20 Faith Leaders highlighting the role of faith leaders in climate adaptation.

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
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<p>2.1 Reduction in violent conflict in communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-based conflict resolution systems established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained faith and local leaders in Community-Based Psychosocial Support, reaching approximately 2,400 people through group and individual counselling sessions. Notable interventions by local leadership, such as Sabhuku Mparangwa, have played a critical role in maintaining peace and fostering dialogue within communities, especially resolving an impasse in a poultry grouping, giving lasting solutions.
<p>2.2 Improved disability inclusion, gender equality and equity</p>	<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"> Conducted a Rapid Gender Analysis, which informed inclusive disaster preparedness strategies and highlighted gaps in current responses to gender-specific challenges. This analysis influenced the design and implementation of the RRF project, ensuring it was better tailored to meet diverse community needs. Additionally, a 'Gender On-The-Go' manual was developed to equip staff with the tools to address gender issues in emergency response and resilience efforts. Women's involvement in water point management and food distribution initiatives empowered them in community resource management. To enhance community safety, the organisation addressed 104 safeguarding issues, responding to feedback from various channels, which helped in identifying areas for improvement. Awareness of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was raised through the distribution of 250 flyers, 150 stickers, and 500 posters, promoting reporting and community engagement in these critical issues. Design of the Safety and Inclusion project that is being implemented in 7 MCZ Schools from July 2024 to June 2027. A Baseline survey and Environmental Impact Assessment were undertaken, and the report is under production.

3. Performance Measurement Status

Annual Output	Annual Target	Annual Achievement	% of Annual Achievement	Comments
Food Distributions	2500	2501	100%	Distributed food hampers in Ward 16 Buhera (1440) and 4 circuits in MCZ Bulawayo district (1061).
Water Reticulation System established – solarized borehole	2	0	0%	2 water reticulation systems are in the pipeline, with procurement in progress set to be completed by March 2025
Households constructing toilets (BVIP and uBVIP) with their resources	150	48	31%	Most people are prioritising the purchase of food over building materials due to the drought experienced in the country and economic hardships.
Marota Classroom block construction	1	1	100%	The classroom has been completed with additional support from the church
People reached on Hygiene and Education Awareness	2000	2000	100%	The target was reached through community health workers in Glen View and in Gokwe South Ward 13 through community health clubs.
Water Point Committee Training Refresher	6	4	67%	Managed to train 4 Water Point Committees in Ward 16, Buhera, the remaining 2 will be trained after the solarisation of water points
DRM Plans produced	1	1	100%	Produced Ward DRM plan for Ward 13 Gokwe South.
PHHE Competitions conducted	2	2	100%	Reached target with Mbizvo and Naison Villages Community Health Clubs holding their competitions
Installation of Inline Chlorinator	2	1	50%	One inline chlorinator was installed at the Dzivarasekwa MCZ church borehole. The target was not reached due to insufficient funds
Chlorine tablets distributed	8	12	150%	150% was reached as the remaining funds for the 2 nd Inline Chlorinator were redirected to the purchase of tablets
Establishment of nutritional gardens	2	2	100%	Target Reached through the establishment of 2 gardens in Ward 8 Buhera and Ward 13 Gokwe South
Stakeholder consultation workshops	2	2	100%	Stakeholder consultation for the BRiGSC follow-on project in Gokwe South and Safety and Inclusion project were conducted.
Call to action statement on climate adaptation	1	1	100%	Interfaith call to action statement was developed and published through a press conference
Refresher training in animal husbandry	60	65	108%	Training was done with FPC to equip groups practising poultry and goat production.

4. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

1. Design and Development of M&E Frameworks:

- Created M&E frameworks for several projects, including the Bread for the World Follow-on Project and Christian Aid initiatives. Updated databases with data from monitoring visits and gender analyses to meet project targets.

2. Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM):

- Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) was conducted in August for the first cycle of cash transfer distribution, revealing improvements in food security, indicated by increased Food Consumption Scores (FCS) and Household Dietary Diversity Scores (HDDS). Notably, 96% of households prioritized using cash for food purchases.
- Subsequent PDMs for the second and third food distribution cycles in November also indicated positive outcomes. The percentage of households with acceptable food consumption levels improved from 96% in the first cycle to 98% in the later assessments. The program effectively addressed immediate hunger and malnutrition by providing essential nutrients, while cash transfers allowed households to allocate funds for other necessities like school fees and medication. Additionally, the food aid was specifically tailored to meet the nutritional needs of vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant women, and the elderly.

3. Learning Research Initiatives:

- Conducted *Start Network Alert747 Learning Research* in Harare (Kuwadzana, Chitungwiza) and Manicaland (Buhera) to gather lessons from previous cholera response projects.

Key Lessons gathered:

- There are structural factors that cause Cholera outbreaks thus, there is a need to emphasize WASH, especially water supply, to prevent future outbreaks.
- Budgeting for WASH should focus on reaching wider populations, not just resourcing affected families.
- Early staff deployment in affected areas prevents disease spread.
- The establishment of Cholera Treatment Units in hospitals and Cholera Treatment Centres in communities helps contain the disease.
- Village Health Workers need rigorous training on Cholera response and resources like Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials and Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) kits.
- Door-to-door awareness campaigns in communities are impactful.
- Centralizing supplies from the Government and partners through district stores for efficient distribution.
- Collaboration with community leaders, religious volunteers, and religious leaders is essential.
- Social and cultural factors had a multiplier effect on the spread of the Cholera outbreak.
- The apostolic faith membership has increased significantly, reducing mainstream church coverage, which might have a strong bearing on access to health care services.

4. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):

- Initiated EIAs at the start of every project to evaluate potential biophysical, social, and economic impacts, particularly the Safety and Inclusion project and the ACT RRF. This has made it possible to build Environmental Impact Plans for the projects.

5. Capacity Building and Documentation:

- Conducted staff training for all MeDRA employees on writing impactful success stories, facilitated by a consultant. Now, the staff contributes to the stories that are updated on MeDRA’s social media platforms and in donor reports
- Documentation of success stories for the *Bread for the World (BftW)* project, complemented with high-quality photographs and a project showcase video.
- Engaged the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation to develop a story and documentary of the work done in building the resilience of disaster-affected communities in Buhera. Link to the news story is attached below: <https://www.zbcnews.co.zw/five-years-after-cyclone-idai-stories-of-resilience-and-recovery/>

6. Digitalization of Data Collection:

- Transitioned to mobile data collection systems for real-time data access, enabling swift decision-making, trend analysis, and pattern identification using the KOBO Collect platform.

7. Needs Assessments and Baseline Studies:

- Performed needs assessments for the *Emergency Cholera Response* funded by Diakonia to evaluate outbreak severity and guide future preparedness.
- Performed a rapid needs assessment for the ACT Alliance RRF-funded project responding to El-Nino induced drought, to assess the effects of the drought on household food consumption and welfare before the project commences.
- Carried out a baseline study for the UnitingWorld Safety and Inclusion Project to investigate the current situation of safety, inclusion, and climate resilience in schools and surrounding communities and develop recommendations based on the findings of the research as the basis for further development of the project.

8. Cholera Response Monitoring and Research:

- PDM after WASH kit and cholera drug distribution in Glenview revealed effective resource utilization.
- Ongoing cholera response learning research with Christian Aid Zimbabwe, funded by Start Network, focusing on Harare, Manicaland, and Masvingo.
- Engaged a public health expert consultant to lead the cholera research.

9. Evaluations and Gender Analysis:

- Completed end-of-project evaluation for the *BRIGSC* project, highlighting strong performance under OECD criteria but noting resilience challenges due to drought.
- Conducted Rapid Gender Analysis to understand gender dynamics in emergencies.

5. Communication and visibility

Social Media Platforms:

Platform	Followers/Impressions	Growth	Key Strategies Implemented
Facebook	120 → 780 followers	 +650 followers	Regular posting (3x/week), active engagement, strategic highlights
Facebook Post Reach	200 → 1,000 engagements	 5x increase	Content sharing, tagging, and outreach to church groups
LinkedIn	1,500 impressions	Expanded reach	Networking, project participant stories, multimedia content

Platform	Followers/Impressions	Growth	Key Strategies Implemented
X (Twitter)	Active engagement	Broadened visibility	Regular updates, advocacy on global issues

- Shared impactful messages during special international humanitarian and development days, amplifying MeDRA's voice on key global issues.
- **Church-Based Visibility:** Utilized MCZ structures and events such as the MCU Convention and Youth Conference to promote MeDRA's work within the church community, enhancing grassroots visibility.

2. Enhanced Media Engagement:

- **Press Engagement:** A comprehensive Call to Action statement was disseminated via a press conference on October 4, 2024, focusing on agricultural adaptation and the role of faith actors in climate resilience advocacy. This event attracted widespread media coverage, including The Herald, Sunday Mail, Newsday, ZBC, Daily News, ZTN Prime TV, ZiFM, and The Standard. MeDRA featured a Community Resilience story on ZBC News and Good Morning Zimbabwe.
 - [Newsday Article](#)
 - [Daily News Article](#)
 - [Sunday Mail on Twitter](#)
 - [YouTube Video](#)
- **Published Features:** MeDRA featured in four success stories within the MCZ newsletter, enhancing organizational visibility within faith-based communities.

4. Website and Digital Infrastructure:

- The MEL Assistant undertook refresher courses in web design to maintain and enhance the website's functionality, hence added a Gallery and Publications section on the website to showcase projects and provide regular updates. medrazim.org.zw
- **Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC):** Leveraged SBCC strategies through Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials, particularly within the Diakonia Cholera Emergency Project, focusing on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in emergencies.

5. Resource Mobilisation

The Methodist Development and Relief Agency (MeDRA) has actively pursued various funding opportunities during the year, soliciting funding worth \$ 601,136.00 through successful proposals. Strong partnerships established with Diakonia, World Mission Fund, and UnitingWorld. Vigorously pursued resource mobilization in response to the President's declaration of a state of disaster due to the El Niño-induced drought and initiated a drought appeal in the church.

Corporate engagement initiatives initiated with BancABC, Fossil Contractors and First Capital bank as part of their corporate social responsibility and managed to secure funds to support the construction of Marota Primary School

Capacity Strengthening: To strengthen its resource mobilization efforts, MeDRA has invested in capacity strengthening with support from Bread for the World and Diakonia, focusing on writing humanitarian proposals and strategic partnership development as well as various online resource mobilization courses and webinars to further enhance their knowledge and skills.

Networking and Collaboration

MeDRA consistently participated in forums such as the Food Security Cluster, National Cash Working Group, ACT Alliance, Gender Faith Working Group, National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), National WASH Cluster, and various online networking events. These

engagements served as platforms for continual learning and the exchange of best practices within the programming field. Additionally, MeDRA made strides to join the Head of Agencies and was admitted to the Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) network, which is committed to promoting sustainable ecological land use practices and strengthening the capacities of its member organizations. Through these concerted efforts, MeDRA continues to strengthen its capacity to mobilize resources effectively, ensuring the successful implementation of its programs and initiatives.

6. Challenges and Responses

Over the past year, several challenges have impacted our operations, along with the corresponding mitigation strategies implemented:

Challenges	Response/mitigation
Dwindling financial resources	Increase fundraising efforts
Banning of cash transfers	Changed to food distribution
Exchange losses affecting the project design	Reduce project activities and indirect costs
Changes to the operation plan for a partner	Mobilise resources to cater for the gap created especially in community projects and administration costs
Delayed implementation of the Marota project	An extension for the project has been granted with the church spearheading the process to meet the deadline
Delayed disbursements of funds from	Developed an accelerated work plan
Failure to build resilience in communities due to drought and economic hardships	Follow on project to build resilience
The staff has limited capacity in graphic design, digital marketing, and project digital documentation	To further strengthen MeDRA's communication and visibility efforts, staff are undertaking free online courses on graphic design, digital marketing and project digital documentation.

These challenges reflect broader economic conditions in Zimbabwe, including high inflation rates, currency instability, and fiscal deficits. For instance, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe maintained its policy rate at 35% in February 2024 monetary statement to address inflationary pressures.

Additionally, the country has faced significant droughts, such as the El Niño-induced drought in 2024, which have impacted agricultural output and economic stability.

7. Success Story

Timothy Chirenje's Journey to a Healthier, Resilient Life



Timothy with latrine constructed through rotating contributions

In the serene village of Mxochiwa, nestled in Zimbabwe's Gokwe South District, lives Timothy Chirenje, a 56-year-old peasant farmer whose life has been transformed through the interventions of MeDRA's Building Resilience Project. Timothy, a husband, father of three, and grandfather of two, has always worked hard to provide for his family. Yet, for many years, his efforts were hindered by challenges that seemed insurmountable.

Before joining MeDRA's Community Health Clubs, Timothy and his family faced significant health risks due to open defecation. With no proper sanitation facilities, they were exposed to diseases that threatened their well-being. However, everything changed when Timothy became an active member of the Chenesai health club. Inspired by the training sessions, he embraced the principles of good hygiene and community-driven development. With collective contributions from group members, where they took turns to contribute to one to build a latrine and a commitment to improving his homestead, Timothy constructed a latrine, ensuring his family's dignity and safety.

Reflecting on the change, Timothy shared, "Having a latrine has brought us peace of mind. We no longer worry about the shame or health risks of open defecation. It feels good to live in a clean and safe environment." With the support of the village leadership and the Sanitation Action Group, a bylaw has been set for the village to make sure everyone has a latrine. The village is now at 90% sanitation coverage and is targeting to be declared Open Defecation Free.



Timothy in his field practising what was

The project also introduced Timothy to sustainable farming techniques that have revolutionized his approach to agriculture. Through hands-on training, he learned how to grow crops like sweet potatoes using natural methods to improve yield and control pests. By incorporating ash potash into his farming practices, Timothy has enhanced soil fertility and no longer needs to spend scarce resources on expensive fertilizers. "MeDRA has taught me farming methods that are not only affordable but also effective. I can grow enough to feed my

family and even have surplus to sell," he said with a smile. Today, Timothy's homestead is a model of progress and resilience. His fields are thriving, and his family enjoys better health and improved living conditions. The Building Resilience Project has equipped him with the knowledge and tools to overcome challenges, ensuring that he and his family are better prepared for future uncertainties.

"Life before MeDRA was difficult, but now we live decently and happily. My family and I are grateful for the new skills and opportunities that have come our way," Timothy added.

Timothy's story is a powerful example of how community-driven initiatives can create lasting change. By fostering better health, hygiene, and sustainable farming, MeDRA has empowered families like Timothy's to lead healthier, more resilient lives.



Timothy using his "chigubhu gear" washing hands after latrine use

8. Picture Gallery



Faith Leaders Climate Adaptation advocacy training



Community Health Hygiene Education Facilitators



Technical faith actors workshop on climate adaptation advocacy



Cash transfer in Buhera



Stakeholder Consultation process for the BRIGSC follow-on project



Madzivanyika Community Garden Group after watering their garden



Rev Nunu handing over wheels of hope to a student at Kwenda



Food stacked for Distribution at Bika FDP