



# Tackling Chronic Poverty and Acute Food Insecurity through Social Protection

ONE THIRD OF ZIMBABWEANS ARE LIVING UNDER EXTREME POVERTY.

CASH TRANSFERS ARE A VERY IMPORTANT WAY TO PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE IN ZIMBABWE.

## The situation

Chronic vulnerability and poverty have been on the rise in Zimbabwe in recent years. Extreme poverty increased from 23 per cent to 38 per cent in 2019. Chronic poverty and vulnerabilities are exacerbated by various covariate shocks. For instance, due to a poor agricultural season, Zimbabwe is enduring increases in food and nutrition insecurity. Suboptimal and erratic rainfall has led to a reduction in food production, which is then mirrored by increases in prevalence of malnutrition. The Rural Livelihoods Assessment Report (2022) predicts that more than three million people will be food insecure during the lean season of October and December 2022, rising to close to four million in the January to March 2023 lean period.

The Social Protection System is an important mechanism for dealing with these increased chronic and acute vulnerabilities, as well as in addressing child

protection issues that are exacerbated by poverty and multiple deprivations. Ideally, the social protection system of a country should be the mechanism for supporting the vulnerable populations, generally, and in response to shocks. However, the current social protection system and its underlying programmes are not suitably designed to respond rapidly to any impending shocks in Zimbabwe, nor is its reach adequate in meeting the current caseload of vulnerable populations in the country, with over half of the extreme poor households not reached by any social-assistance support.

As such, there is increased attention in supporting the strengthening of the social protection system in Zimbabwe and enhancing its responsiveness to shocks; all with the aim of reducing reliance on humanitarian support and enabling the system to deal with chronically vulnerable caseloads.



## UNICEF Response

UNICEF has established the 'Child Sensitive Support to Strengthening Social Protection Systems in Zimbabwe' programme. The aim of this programme is to provide medium-to-long term assistance to supporting the different components of the social protection system. Included in this programme is the Emergency Social Cash Transfer Programme. This is a 'shock-responsive' social protection instrument that aims to bridge the humanitarian and development divide and support the strengthening of the social protection system and its reach across the country.

### In response to the chronic and acute vulnerabilities in the urban areas that were exacerbated by COVID-19, UNICEF:

- Continues its Emergency Social Cash Transfer programme, launched in August 2020, to enable the immediate channeling of humanitarian resources to the social protection sector, whilst supporting the extension of Government's social protection reach by handing the programme over to the Government.
- Continue to engage on systems strengthening initiatives to ensure that social protection programmes are expanded with adequate and timely support to all those who are in need of it.

## Target beneficiaries

Over 110,000 people and 25,000 vulnerable households

An additional 17,500 households in 9 rural districts, focusing on the poorest

## ANNUAL BUDGET \$13,497,666

Reaching new targeted districts and supporting them with 12 x monthly payments

Cash Support to Households **\$11,438,700**

Operational and Director support costs (18%) **\$2,058,966**

### CONTACTS

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