

Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fund **SPECIAL APPEAL**



November 2025

Leaving home for school with nothing to eat, without a lunchbox, and hoping that when you get home your elderly grandmother will have made some plan for you to have some food. You get home at the end of the school day after walking a few kilometres each way. Grandmother is standing outside, worried because you are late, and both happy and sad to see you because she has nothing to give you. You go into the kitchen and everything is pretty much where you left it in the morning, you ask her for something to eat and her reply is “mntanami inkosi iyazi” (God knows), holding back her tears.

Friends, I am Phaniel from the ZVSF Bulawayo team and this is my story as a little boy aged five to six years' old and I would not wish it upon any child. Sadly, this is still the plight of many children in the Lupane area of Zimbabwe who have been left with grandparents who have no capacity to give them food. And this is why we need your support now as much as ever. Thank you for reading this, for your prayers and for your financial generosity.

Why is food poverty still an issue in Zimbabwe?

According to a [2024 UNICEF report](#), up to a quarter of children in Zimbabwe are in 'kinship care' (being looked after by relatives or friends of the family who are not their direct parents). With approximately seven million children in Zimbabwe, that equates to **1.75 million children being cared for, often by elderly grandmothers**. There are multiple reasons for this, including:

- Death of parents due to HIV/AIDS, illness or accidents caused by poor Health & Safety practices and the appalling state of the road network
- Economic migration either within Zimbabwe or overseas due to the economic crisis and lack of local employment opportunities
- Abandonment by parents due to mental health challenges or substance addiction

The main impact of kinship care is that many children are living in homes with no income, which rely on subsistence farming for survival. However, this comes with its own set of challenges – no working age adults to farm the land, no money for agricultural inputs such as tools or seed, inability to adapt farming practices to climate change – to name just a few.

On our most recent trip to Lupane, we asked a teacher whether our relief feeding intervention is still required. Her reply speaks volumes:

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"We have a lot of children who come to school without having had anything to eat and will fall asleep in class. We have taken to making them porridge at 10am to give them something and, even then, they will put some of it into bottles and containers to take home for their siblings."

The journey from Bulawayo to Lupane used to take just over an hour. With the terrible state of the roads and high volume of large lorries transporting coal, the journey now takes five hours of very careful and exhausting driving to deliver five tonnes of mealie meal (half of our total monthly distribution, benefitting under 4,000 children) to eight schools in the area. These act as distribution points for children to collect from, with school staff on hand to identify the neediest families.

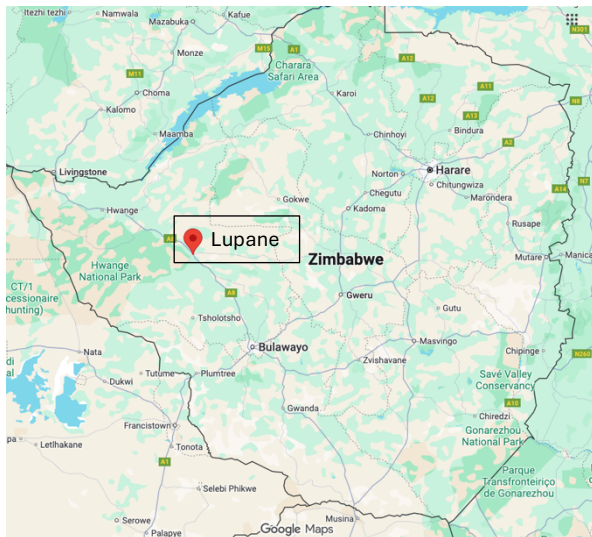
As a charity, we are having to make difficult decisions about our funding; however, we feel that continuing (and increasing if possible) this monthly delivery to the children of Lupane should be one of our highest priorities. To sum this up in Phaniel's words:

"If we were ever forced to discontinue this life line of support to the children, it would break our hearts."

We are so grateful for the financial support you provide for the work of ZVSF and hope you can continue to partner with us to serve those who need it most.

With heartfelt thanks,

Phaniel, the Bulawayo team and ZVSF trustees



And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." (Luke 3:11)

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