



*Delivering for
Women and
Young People*

2023 Annual Report



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Zero Maternal Deaths

Zero Gender Based Violence and Harmful Practices

Zero Unmet Need for Family Planning

Zero New HIV Infections

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UNFPA Zimbabwe 2023 Annual Report

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UNFPA Zimbabwe 2023 Annual Report

Delivering a world where
every pregnancy is wanted,
every childbirth is safe and
every young person's
potential is fulfilled.

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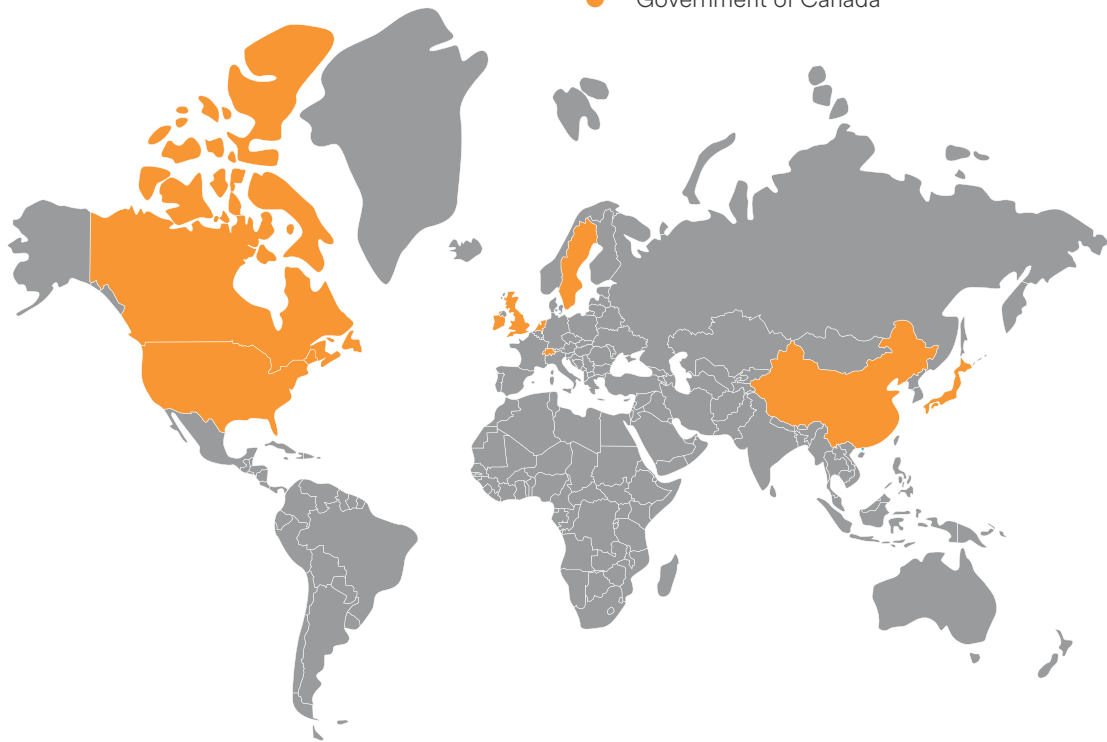
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Acknowledgement of Donor Support

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nation's Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) agency extends its deepest appreciation to all funding partners who enabled us to champion the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of women and young people in Zimbabwe. Their continued support and collective commitment is instrumental in delivering critical services, in building a brighter future where every woman and young person can access SRHR and live a life free from violence, particularly in the face of evolving challenges.

- The People's Republic of China
- European Union
- Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
- Global Fund
- Embassy of Ireland
- Kingdom of Netherlands
- Government of Sweden
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- Takeda Pharmaceuticals
- Government of Japan
- World Bank
- Government of Canada



Ambasáid na hÉireann
Embassy of Ireland



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Foreword

As we reflect on 2023 we mark a significant milestone - the second year of implementing the United Nations Population Fund 8th Country Programme of Cooperation with the Government of Zimbabwe (2022 - 2026). This program cycle guides our efforts to ensure that every woman, adolescent girl, young person and marginalised groups in Zimbabwe have access to Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) information and services and the power to make informed choices about their bodies and future.

Significant results and milestones were achieved in 2023. Highlights include supporting the Government of Zimbabwe to host high-level events - the 20th International Inter-Ministerial Conference (IIMC) on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) in Population and Development in Victoria Falls in October 2023. The Conference, which was officially opened by the President of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Dr. Emmerson Mnangagwa, adopted the Victoria Falls Declaration which seeks to advance the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) agenda. This Conference was a major milestone as it was one of the series of global consultations leading to the 30th anniversary of the ICPD that will be officially commemorated in New York in April 2024.

In December 2023, Zimbabwe hosted the 22nd International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa (ICASA). UNFPA showcased its work on HIV prevention, youth engagement and empowerment, promotion of SRH for key populations, strengthening condom programming, and supporting integrated delivery of HIV and SRH services.

As the country continues to progress towards ending the unmet need for family planning, UNFPA commends the Government of Zimbabwe's significant domestic investment in procuring contraceptives for a second consecutive year. This increasing commitment to domestic funding contributes to strengthening the national health system and complements UNFPA's and funding partners' contributions towards reducing the unmet need for family planning.



**A key achievement
was the Government
of Zimbabwe, Partners
in Population and
Development and
UNFPA hosting the 20th
International
Inter-Ministerial
Conference on South-South
and Triangular Cooperation
in Population and
Development.**



The continuation of the Health Resilience Fund (HRF) 2022 - 2025 has been instrumental in supporting critical health initiatives in health systems strengthening including for maternal health and family planning.

The development and launch of the National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence 2023 - 2030 by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, with support from partners including UNFPA, was a crucial step in addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the country. Continued support to survivors of GBV in 2023, saw 20% of court cases brought by survivors accessing One-stop Centres and shelters supported by UNFPA being completed in favour of the client (from 18% in 2022). This success reinforces the importance and effectiveness of integrated legal, health, and psychosocial support for survivors.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) remains at the core of our programming and a priority for the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). As technical lead on PSEA issues, UNFPA worked closely with the Office of the Resident Coordinator. UN Agencies as well as the PSEA Focal Points were sensitised on PSEA, case handling and reporting.

UNFPA made strides in advancing Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). Through advocacy and capacity-building, CSE is now an examinable learning area in Zimbabwe's primary schools under Social Science. Through CSE 500,000 learners were empowered to actively participate in Child Protection Committees, providing them with the knowledge and skills to protect their own well-being.

Ensuring innovation remains at the centre of what we do. The Country Office's innovation "**Not-In-My Village**" Pilot Project, a collaborative effort with the National Young People's Network to address adolescent pregnancies, won the UNFPA Global Innovation Award under the "**Dare to Dream**" category.

As the UN lead data agency, UNFPA in collaboration with the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), the Resident Coordinator's Office and the Office of the President and Cabinet engaged in key meetings to ensure the availability of data for reporting on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF) and, ultimately, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Zimbabwe. Furthermore, one of the Census Thematic reports on mortality was completed. In addition, working in partnership with other development partners, UNFPA also supported the ZIMSTAT-led Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey with focus on household listing, training, and the initiation of data collection.

As a critical humanitarian actor, UNFPA continued to support the Government in its humanitarian response, ensuring sustained availability of SRH information and services and enhanced referral pathways for GBV survivors. At least 262 food security and humanitarian sector actors on the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) were trained on GBV risk mitigation, PSEA, GBV referral pathways, and psychological first aid. Climate change is compounding the situation in Zimbabwe, and UNFPA is ensuring climate change-sensitive responses to its programming focus.

The results achieved would not have been possible without the steadfast commitment of the Government of Zimbabwe, the unwavering generosity of funding partners, the partnerships we had with United Nations sister agencies, and the sterling job done by implementing partners.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of our partners, whose support fuels our efforts to create a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

UNFPA's innovation

"Not-In-My Village"

Pilot Project, a collaborative

effort with the National

Young People's Network

to address adolescent

pregnancies, won the

UNFPA Global Innovation

Award under the

"Dare to Dream" category.

Despite all these achievements, a lot still remains to be done as we work together to ensure:

*Zero Maternal deaths
Zero Unmet need for family planning
Zero Gender based violence and harmful practices
Zero New HIV infections.*

Sincerely,

**Ms. Miranda Tabifor
UNFPA Representative**

Country Context

Zimbabwe population in 2023 was

15,406,641

 **48%** Male

 **52%** Female

Zimbabwe, a landlocked nation in Southern Africa, faces a complex set of development challenges that directly impact the SRHR of its population, particularly women, girls and young people.

Demographics:

According to the 2022 Population and Housing Census, Zimbabwe has a population of 15,178,957 and a growth rate of 1.5% per year, therefore estimating a population of 15,406,641 in 2023. Of these 48% are estimated to be male while 52% are female giving a sex ratio of 92%. At least 61.4% of the population lives in the rural areas while 38.6% lives in the urban areas. Zimbabwe has a sizable young population, with 78% aged 39 years and below. There are an estimated 4.8 million young people aged 10 to 24 years which represents 31% of the total population. Of these, an estimated 3 million live in the rural areas and 3.6 million are adolescents aged 15 to 19 years. Given the high proportion of young people, Zimbabwe can reap the demographic dividend if it invests in young people's health and education.

The average life expectancy at birth, being the average number of years a person is expected to live, is 64.7 years with females (68 years) expected to live longer than males. The Crude Birth Rate is estimated at 28.9 births per 1,000 population while Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is estimated at 3.7, with the TFR higher in rural areas (4.4) than in urban areas (3.0). The disparity is partly due to rural women's unequal access to family planning compared to women in urban areas.

The national disability prevalence is estimated at 1.6% pointing to the criticality of programming that is inclusive of people with disabilities to ensure no one is left behind.

According to the 2023 fourth quarter Labour Force Survey, the unemployment rate among the general population was estimated at 20.4% while that among 15 to 24 years was estimated at 38.4%. The high unemployment rate among young people is a risk factor as they are likely to engage in unproductive activities including dealing in and using illicit drugs. There is a need to implement more economic empowerment programs for young people to keep them engaged.

Maternal mortality rate has been on a downward trend from 651 deaths per 100,000 live births (ZDHS, 2015) to 462 in 2019, and 362 in 2022 (Census 2022). Though there has been a notable decline, the maternal mortality rate falls below the Government of Zimbabwe's target of 314. Institutional maternal mortality rate was 114 per 100,000 live births in 2023 compared to 107 in 2022, noting a concerning increase. This also falls short of the target of 73 per 100,000 set by the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC). Although the proportion of births attended by skilled personnel is high at 86% (2019, MICS), maternal mortality remains high and poor quality of care is one of the contributing factors.

Maternal mortality rate is

362 deaths per
100,000 live births
(Census 2022)

Unmet need for family planning among married women has declined from 13.8% in 2012 to 11% in 2023. The Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) among married women is at 66.8% compared to a target of 73%. Zimbabwe therefore continues to be one of the countries with the highest modern CPR rate in Africa.

Prevalence of GBV remains high in the country. According to the Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS,2015), the percentage of women who have experienced physical violence declined from 18% in 2010 to 15% in 2015 and according to Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) in 2019, 5.5 % of women aged 15-49 often or sometimes experienced physical violence while about 39% of women aged 15 to 49 (ZDHS, 2015) had ever experienced physical violence in their lifetime which declined to 30.9% in 2019 (MICS). With the 2023/2024 Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) underway more current statistics are expected. As such, more effort is needed to end GBV.

Unmet need for family planning

among married women has

declined in 2023 to

11%

The HIV prevalence among the 15 to 49 years age group is 11% while incidence is 0.17. Among adolescents aged 15 to 19 years, HIV incidence among females is 7.3 times higher than that of males, showing a disparity in HIV incidence between males and females in this age group. Young women and girls are at risk of HIV infection as they are targeted by their peers as well as by older men who may be HIV positive. HIV prevention programs should therefore continue to target the young people, adolescent and young girls in particular.



Programme focus for 2023

Ending Maternal Deaths



UNFPA Zimbabwe's 2023 maternal health efforts concentrated on strengthening the health system's capacity to provide life-saving Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EmONC).

This approach included investment in vital equipment for operating theatres, hands-on skills training for healthcare providers, and the adoption of innovations to optimise and improve emergency obstetric care. UNFPA also prioritised addressing postpartum haemorrhage, a leading cause of maternal deaths, as well as enhancing safe and accessible Comprehensive Abortion Care (CAC). A focus on midwifery was evident in 2023. UNFPA established e-learning in midwifery schools, including procurement of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) equipment for setting up e-learning at the schools. UNFPA also supported the revision of CAC guidelines to ensure midwives are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills. These efforts translate directly into improved quality of care for mothers and newborns across the country.

Ending unmet need for Family Planning

In 2023, UNFPA concentrated on further expanding choice and access to family planning information and services, with a particular emphasis on empowering women to make informed reproductive health choices. Key strategies included broadening the contraceptive method mix through expanding use of Sayana Press, enhancing supply chain management and sustaining advocacy efforts for and supporting increased domestic investment in family planning. These interventions aimed to address the unmet need for family planning, with a particular emphasis on reaching young women. UNFPA recognises the importance of quality service alongside availability, focusing on healthcare worker sensitisation, and the production of accessible information materials to support informed decision-making. While challenges



remain, UNFPA Zimbabwe's unwavering focus on family planning in 2023 led to tangible advancements in women's reproductive health and autonomy across the country.

Ending GBV and Harmful Practices



UNFPA, in 2023, continued to implement a holistic, multi-pronged approach to ending GBV and Harmful Practices. Key focus areas included evidence-based advocacy to drive policy reform,

intensive community-level engagement for social norm change, and strengthening the capacity of service providers for survivor-centred support. In both development and humanitarian contexts, UNFPA championed the expansion of quality GBV services. Additionally, to ensure a coordinated response, UNFPA actively led and supported initiatives to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment within the Country Office and its implementing partners organisations.

Guided by a commitment to intersectionality and inclusivity, UNFPA work prioritised collaborative efforts to reach the most vulnerable and ensure that no one is left behind in the fight for a future free from GBV.

Ending HIV Infections

Efforts to reduce HIV infections in 2023 focused on targeted interventions for key populations and building a supportive environment that addresses structural barriers to care. Central to the approach was a strong emphasis on community engagement, leveraging peer educators and micro planners to reach men who have sex with men (MSM) communities. Innovative outreach strategies such as focusing on hotspot areas, social media and door-to-door campaigns were key to this outreach. The programme promoted expanded Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) access, provided stigma-free HIV treatment and care services, and actively engaged with religious leaders to foster inclusivity and acceptance. Our work highlighted the importance of adapting service delivery and reporting mechanisms to accurately capture the



impact of new technologies and self-driven approaches, such as self-testing kits. Advocacy for policy changes will be necessary to ensure these modalities are reflected in progress monitoring.

Ensure Adolescents and Youth reach their full potential



UNFPA prioritises empowering and safeguarding adolescents and youth. In 2023, interventions focused on accessing integrated SRH/HIV/GBV services; adolescent responsive systems strengthening and fostering knowledge, engagement, and protection. UNFPA supported programs to increase SRHR awareness, celebrated youth voices at global health conferences, and won the 2023 UNFPA Global

Innovation Fair award under the “**Dare to Dream**” category through its submission of the “**Not-In-My-Village**” campaign which seeks to address adolescent pregnancy. To amplify youth perspectives, UNFPA facilitated youth-led panels and dialogues on key issues. Crucially, UNFPA emphasised parental involvement, promoting supportive communication within families on SRHR. UNFPA’s multi-pronged approach translated into tangible progress.

We strengthened youth participation in governance; supported the development of an adolescent youth health implementation plan; bolstered youth-friendly healthcare; empowered young people in schools through CSE, expanded access to SRHR information, and mentored young entrepreneurs. While challenges remain, UNFPA Zimbabwe is committed to overcoming them, building on the lessons learned in 2023 to ensure adolescents and youth reach their full potential.

Population and Development

In 2023, UNFPA prioritised initiatives to strengthen the generation, analysis, and utilisation of population data to inform development strategies. A key pillar of this focus was supporting critical data collection efforts, including the Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) and the 2022 Census data analysis which consisted of a thematic analysis paper on mortality. UNFPA provided financial and technical assistance to enhance national statistical systems and ensure the successful dissemination of findings.

Advocacy played a crucial role in 2023. UNFPA’s efforts, including the launch of the State of the World Population Report and support for the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development (AADPD10) review, emphasised the importance of data-



driven policy making to address gender equality and ensure the realisation of the rights of women and girls. These initiatives highlighted the interconnectedness between population dynamics and sustainable development. While resource constraints remain a challenge, UNFPA Zimbabwe’s commitment to strengthening data-informed Population and Development initiatives is unwavering.

Key Results At A Glance

2.1

million women accessed modern contraceptives in 2023. This resulted in the prevention of approximately

760,000

unintended pregnancies,

190,000

unsafe abortions, and averted an estimated

2,200

maternal deaths.

UNFPA's investment contributed to

416,547

deliveries conducted nationally in 2023

Procurement of vital medical equipment such as anaesthetic machines, operating theatre tables and lights and caesarean section kits and vacuum extractors, 2,100 non-pneumatic anti-shock worth

\$2.565

million was initiated, including garments, LARCs insertion and removal equipment, and manual vacuum aspiration kits



Guided by the High-Level Compact of Commitment for Family Planning signed in 2020/1, the Government of Zimbabwe, for 2 consecutive years (2022 and 2023), has procured contraceptives worth

1,500,000

million annually using domestic funding.

This, matched with an additional

5,000,000

million from the UNFPA Global Supplies Partnership and the Health Resilience Fund, significantly boosted the availability of essential contraceptives, strengthening supply chains and ensuring that women and girls across the country have consistent access to the family planning methods they need.

15,341

GBV survivors accessed critical services in 2023. This includes shelters (833 survivors), mobile and static One-Stop Centers (6,574), and those who accessed health services (7,934). Of those who accessed healthservices in five targeted provinces,

7,134

were survivors of sexual violence.

UNFPA provided services to survivors of GBV through One-Stop Centres and Shelters.

20% of the **1,668**

survivors' court cases were completed in favour of the survivor. This will encourage other survivors to report their cases to the court while also accessing services offered by OSC and shelters.



The e-LMIS (Electronic Logistics Management Information System) was expanded to an additional 120 health facilities in 2023, bringing the cumulative total to

1,150

facilities nationwide. This partnership effort with the Global Fund and Chemonics optimises the tracking and distribution of contraceptives, minimising stock-outs and improving service delivery

UNFPA continues to advocate for the holistic adoption of Comprehensive Sexuality Education by the Government and is strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to roll out CSE in schools.

The CSE curriculum has been developed. Currently, CSE which is taught under Guidance and Counselling, is examinable under Social Science learning area in all

6,798

primary schools. In 2023, 10 provinces were supported to strengthen the capacities of learners to effectively participate in Child Protection Committees in which CSE is being delivered.

500,000

learners were recruited into Child Protection Committees and are acquiring knowledge, positive attitudes and skills to make informed SRH decisions.



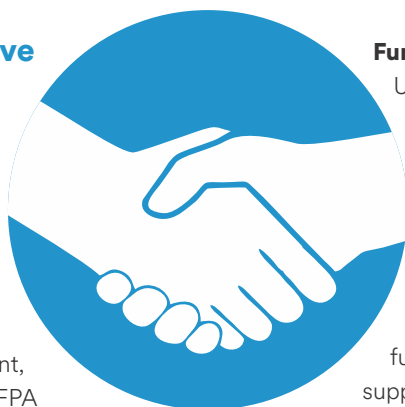
Strategic Partnerships, Advocacy, Communication, and Resource Mobilisation

Building Transformative Partnerships

Government Engagement

UNFPA maintained a close collaborative relationship with the Government of Zimbabwe, through its host Ministry, the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, and Investment Promotion. UNFPA also worked closely with the Ministry of Health and Child Care, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Skills, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Ministry of Higher Tertiary Education, and the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. This partnership with the Government of Zimbabwe was instrumental in policy development, for example the National Strategy to Prevent and Address GBV 2023 - 2030, and the implementation of programmes focused on SRHR and GBV prevention.

Government of Zimbabwe parastatals played a key role in the delivery of the UNFPA mandate in 2023. These include the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council leading efforts to end family planning unmet needs; the National AIDS Council leading on HIV prevention, CSE, and strengthening the national youth network; and the Zimbabwe Youth Council coordinating the positioning of youth issues in Zimbabwe. Data availability remains a key component of UNFPA's support to the Government of Zimbabwe with Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) leading efforts especially the post enumeration thematic data analysis for the 2022 Zimbabwe Household and Population Census.



Funding Partners

UNFPA Zimbabwe recognises the power of collaboration to achieve its ambitious goals. Throughout 2023, UNFPA strengthened existing partnerships and forged new alliances across various sectors. UNFPA extends its sincere gratitude to the dedicated funding partners, whose steadfast support makes its work possible including:

- Government of Canada
- Government of the People's Republic of China
- The European Union
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- Global Fund
- Embassy of Ireland
- Government of Japan
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands
- Swedish International Development Agency
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- United States Agency for International Development
- Takeda Pharmaceuticals
- World Bank



Civil Society Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations

UNFPA deepened engagement with civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations, empowering them to become key advocates for SRHR, and youth development. These partnerships amplified UNFPA reach and ensured community-driven approaches.

- World Vision
- Musasa Project
- Plan International
- Sexual Rights Centre
- Family AIDS Caring Trust
- Gays and Lesbians Zimbabwe
- Students and Youth Working on Reproductive Health Action Team

Advocacy and Visibility for Impact

UNFPA Zimbabwe strategically leveraged diverse platforms to advance its mission and create positive change. 2023 successes include:

Advocacy Events: Notable events, including program launches, key commemorations, and hosting high-profile conferences like the International Conference on AIDS and STIs (ICASA) and the 20th IIMC on Population and Development, amplified UNFPA's visibility and that of its funding partners.

Digital Media Presence: UNFPA's website, newsletter, and social media achieved over 300,000 exposures, highlighting the importance of digital platforms for beneficiary engagement, donor recognition and outreach.

Earned Media Coverage: UNFPA Zimbabwe garnered 60 media mentions across electronic and print/online outlets. Strategic media engagement ensured consistent coverage of critical population and development issues. UNFPA's sponsorship of the National Journalists Media Awards in the GBV and maternal health categories and engagements throughout the year through media briefings has been key in strengthening the capacity of the media to report on population and development issues.

Documentation: Throughout the year, compelling human-interest stories and videos to showcase the real-world impact of UNFPA work were captured. End-of-project documentation ensured donor recognition for various programs.

Resource Mobilisation

To sustain and scale UNFPA's impact, diverse funding opportunities were pursued. In 2023 UNFPA achieved success in:

Donor Partnerships: UNFPA secured renewed commitments from long-standing donors and expanded its donor base by forging new partnerships with governments, multilateral organisations, and foundations.

Domestic Resource Mobilisation: UNFPA advocated for increased government allocations for SRHR programs, demonstrating the health and economic benefits of investing in young people and women.

UN collaboration for greater impact

UNFPA Zimbabwe recognises the value of collaboration within the UN system. UNFPA works closely with its UN sister agencies as one UN, leveraging on the collective strengths to achieve shared goals. Key collaborations in 2023 included:

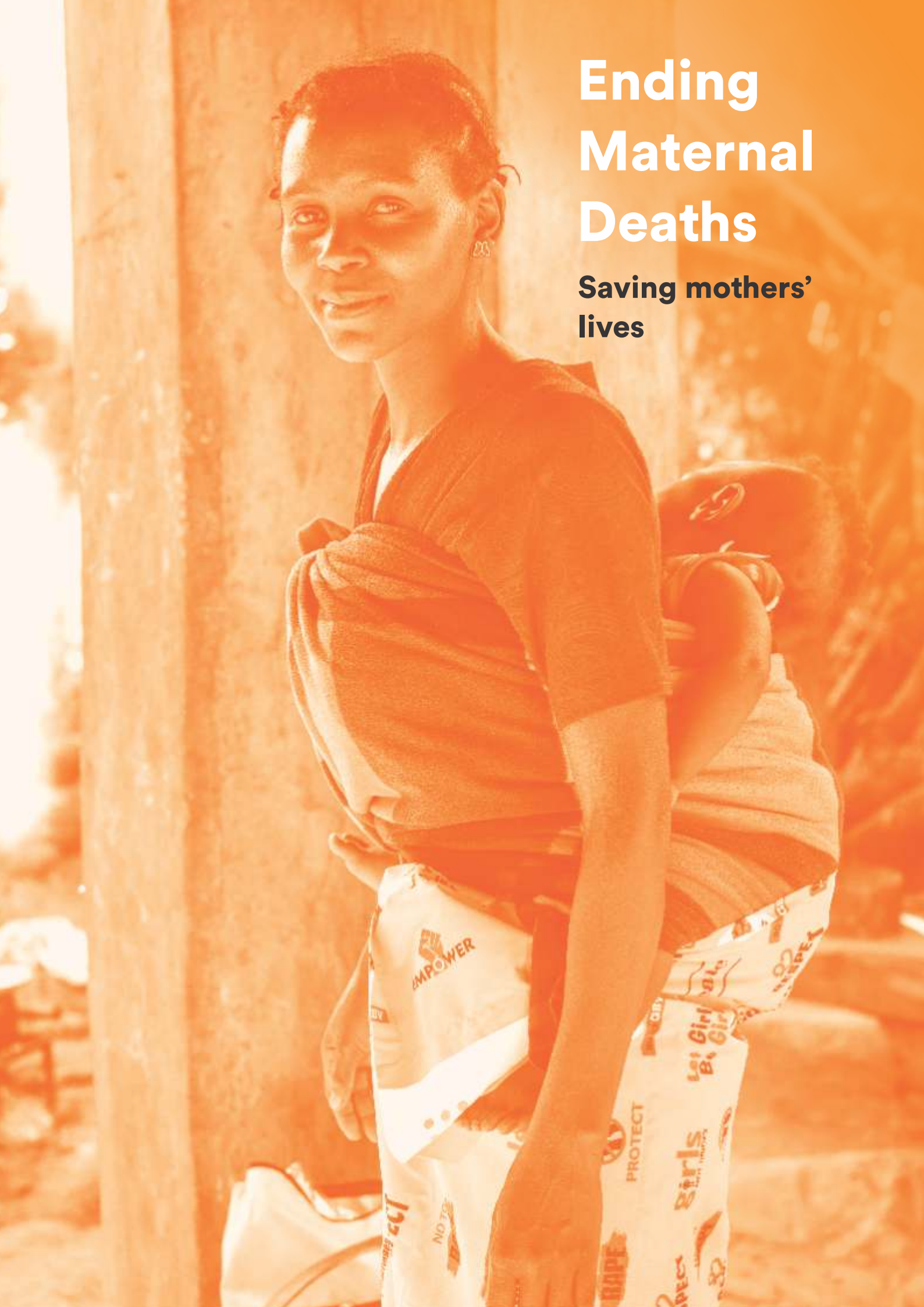
- The Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

Looking forward to 2024

UNFPA Zimbabwe enters 2024 committed to further strengthening partnerships for greater impact, relentless advocacy for policy change, innovative communication strategies for lasting behaviour change, and an unwavering pursuit of the resources needed to fulfil its mission.

Ending Maternal Deaths

**Saving mothers'
lives**



Interventions:

Interventions in 2023 made significant strides towards enhanced institutional capacity for the delivery of quality Integrated SRHR services.

UNFPA Zimbabwe remains committed to ending maternal deaths which is currently at 362 deaths per 100,000 live births (2022 Census). It adopted a holistic approach to saving mothers' lives, focusing on strengthening the provision of quality Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EmONC) including procurement of vital equipment, training of health personnel and harnessing innovation to enhance quality of care.

Achievements

Supporting readiness of health facilities to provide EmONC

Procurement of vital medical equipment was initiated, including 76 anaesthetic machines, 56 operating theatre tables and lights, caesarean section kits, vacuum extractors, 2,100 non-pneumatic anti-shock garments, LARCs insertion and removal equipment, and manual vacuum aspiration kits. Part of the procured equipment was received in the fourth quarter of 2023, and the rest is expected by April 2024. The equipment will be instrumental in enhancing facility readiness to provide quality EmONC and reduce maternal deaths.

As a result of UNFPA's technical support, at least 95% of health facilities now offer Basic Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (BEmONC) services. Additionally, 89.46% of primary healthcare facilities providing delivery services are now equipped to offer 5 signal functions of BEmONC. Signal functions are proven high impact and quality key interventions and activities that are implemented around the time of birth to prevent and address the major causes of morbidity or mortality of the mother and newborn.

As a result of UNFPA's

technical support, at least

95%

of health facilities now

offer (BEmONC)

services.

When these interventions are carried as per prescribed standards as recommended by the World Health Organisation, they lead to reductions in maternal and new deaths.

A substantial portion of district hospitals (81.7%) report offering Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (CEmONC) services, and 84.8% offer Caesarean sections.

Improving delivery outcomes

UNFPA's investment contributed to 416,547 deliveries conducted nationally in 2023, with 42,803 of the deliveries being caesarean sections, representing a caesarean section rate of 10%.

Human resources for health: mitigating brain drain

To mitigate the impact of high staff attrition rates and improve health worker skills in the provision of care, UNFPA-supported mentorship and on-the-job training for doctors, midwives, and nurses in emergency obstetric and neonatal care, obstetric anaesthesia, ultrasonography, newborn resuscitation, caesarean sections, labour monitoring; and comprehensive abortion care (UNFPA Supplies Partnership). These efforts will continue in 2024.

UNFPA's investment

contributed to

416,547

deliveries conducted

nationally in 2023

Innovation to save mother and baby

Recognising postpartum haemorrhage (bleeding) as a leading cause of maternal deaths, support was provided to initiate the implementation of the E-MOTIVE approach for haemorrhage management. Following UNFPA's procurement of the required commodities for E-MOTIVE as well as support in hosting an E-MOTIVE session at the 2023 Scientific Conference of Obstetricians and Paediatricians, the country is ready to pilot and roll out this transformative approach in 2024 with continued support from UNFPA.

Recognising midwifery's crucial role in saving the lives of women and newborn babies, UNFPA through core funds and through the Health Resilience Fund (HRF) invested in a midwifery E-Learning platform and helped address ICT gaps in 22 midwifery schools through procurement of laptops, desktops, television screens and projectors. This initiative enhances midwives' education, ultimately translating into improved maternal care

Challenges and outlook

Despite these achievements, UNFPA acknowledges persistent challenges that hinder progress. The Ministry of Health and Child Care continues to grapple with a high staff attrition rate, which impacts its ability to deliver quality essential services consistently. Challenges also include limitations in EmONC capacity, particularly manual placenta removal and blood availability. UNFPA remains committed to addressing these challenges through continued equipment provision, targeted training and mentorship, advocacy for increased resource allocation towards maternal health systems, and strategies to mitigate the impact of staff attrition and organisational transitions.

Focus for 2024 and beyond

Building on the achievements of 2023, UNFPA focus will be centred on:

Strengthening Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR)

A robust MPDSR system is essential to understanding the root causes of preventable maternal deaths and guiding targeted interventions. UNFPA will continue to support the development of a national MPDSR framework, revamping of the electronic MPDSR system; enhancing hotspot mapping, regular analysis of maternal and perinatal death data, and the implementation of timely and effective response action to prevent future deaths.

Improving Quality of Care: UNFPA remains committed to upgrading skills and equipping health facilities to provide the highest quality maternity and newborn care. As such, 2024 efforts will include continued procurement of vital equipment, support for ongoing skills-building initiatives, and strengthening quality assurance mechanisms.

Roll-Out of Key Innovations: Innovation is key to accelerating progress. In 2024, UNFPA will prioritise the widespread adoption of the E-MOTIVE approach for haemorrhage management, expanded use of the e-partograph to optimise labour monitoring, and scaled-up access to the Moodle E-Learning platform for midwifery education.



Ending Unmet Need for Family Planning

Pregnancy by choice, not by chance





Family Planning

USD 5
million from the UNFPA
Global Supplies
Partnership and the HRF,
significantly boosted the
availability of essential
contraceptives.

Interventions

As part of its commitment to empowering women and girls to make informed choices about their reproductive health, UNFPA Zimbabwe expanded access to family planning services and information through several key interventions in 2023. This included the introduction of a new family planning method (Sayana Press) and procurement of contraceptives. These interventions directly address the unmet need for family planning, empowering women of all ages to make informed decisions and take control of their reproductive health and futures.

Achievements

Persistent efforts to reduce the unmet need for family planning yielded impressive results in 2023. UNFPA's approach addressed key bottlenecks and empowered women to make informed choices about their reproductive health.

Increasing domestic investment

UNFPA's effective advocacy resulted in the Government of Zimbabwe's historic investment of USD 1.5 million for contraceptive procurement in 2023, demonstrating increasing domestic ownership of family planning programs. This, matched with an additional USD 5 million from the UNFPA Global Supplies Partnership and the HRF, significantly boosted the availability of essential contraceptives, strengthening supply chains and ensuring access to contraceptives for women and girls across the country.

Strengthening Supply Chains

To ensure contraceptives reach those who need them, the Electronic Logistics Management Information System (e-LMIS) was expanded to an additional 120 health facilities in 2023, bringing the cumulative total to 1,150 facilities nationwide. This partnership effort with the Global Fund and Chemonics optimises the tracking and distribution of contraceptives, minimising stock-outs and improving service delivery.

Enhancing Method Mix and Care

The introduction of Sayana Press in rural provinces broadened the method mix and offered women effective protection against unintended pregnancy for up to three months. These efforts to broaden contraceptive choice and improve service quality led to the sensitisation of 1,286 additional health workers across all provinces on the use and self-care model for Sayana Press. Production and dissemination of informational videos in English, Shona, and Ndebele further support increased accessibility and informed decision-making.

Young women's access to family planning

Data indicates a significant emphasis on reaching younger women, with 35% of the 2,792,917 contraceptive dispensaries serving women younger than 24. This focus on young women is essential, as it empowers them to delay childbearing until they are prepared, invest in their education and careers, and contribute more fully to national development.

Impact

The combined impact of these interventions is tangible: 2.1 million women accessed modern contraceptives in 2023. This resulted in the prevention of approximately 760,000 unintended pregnancies, 190,000 unsafe abortions, and averted an estimated 2,200 maternal deaths. These numbers translate into lives transformed and greater autonomy for women and girls in Zimbabwe.

2.1 million
women accessed modern
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760,000
unintended pregnancies
were prevented.

2,200
estimated maternal
deaths were averted.

Challenges and outlook

While significant progress has been made towards ensuring access to family planning, challenges persist. Stock-outs of contraceptives, while less frequent compared to other essential medicines, remain a concern in some facilities. Addressing these inconsistencies will be critical to maintaining uninterrupted access to contraceptive choices.

Additionally, although Sayana Press offers the potential for increased self-administration and greater contraceptive choice, a majority are still administered by healthcare workers. Shifting towards the self-care model will require continued sensitisation, training, and community-level awareness campaigns.

The high attrition rate within the Ministry of Health and Child Care poses an ongoing challenge to service delivery and consistent access to family planning. Sustained investment in human resources for health and innovative service delivery models will be essential to mitigate disruptions.

UNFPA Zimbabwe will address these challenges through a multifaceted approach to strengthen supply chain management, leveraging e-LMIS data to improve forecasting and procurement, and enhance the self-care model for Sayana Press administration. This will include targeted healthcare provider training, the development of clear client education materials in local languages, and community mobilisation to address social and cultural barriers and promote informed decision-making about self-administration.

Focus for 2024 and beyond

Leveraging the valuable lessons learned and addressing the remaining hurdles identified in 2023, UNFPA Zimbabwe will continue accelerating progress towards zero unmet need for family planning in 2024 and beyond with a focus on the following:

SMART Advocacy for Increased Domestic Funding

Recognizing the success of recent advocacy efforts, UNFPA will strategically intensify its efforts for increased and sustained domestic

investment in family planning. Data-driven, targeted advocacy with policymakers and stakeholders will emphasise the economic and social benefits of investing in voluntary family planning as a key pillar of national development.

Quality Service Delivery and Rights-Based Approach

Beyond ensuring access, UNFPA is committed to enhancing the quality of family planning services. In 2024, training healthcare providers to adopt a human rights-based approach, focusing on non-discrimination, informed consent, and respectful care will be prioritised. This will empower women and girls to make informed choices about their bodies and futures within a supportive and enabling environment.



Ending Gender Based Violence and Harmful Practices

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IVision



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Interventions

UNFPA recognises the devastating impact of GBV and Harmful Practices on individuals, families, and communities. Interventions in 2023 focused on a multi-faceted approach to combat these pervasive issues. UNFPA actively engaged in evidence-based advocacy, driving policy reforms to promote gender equality and eradicate GBV. UNFPA's work contributed to the development and finalisation of key policy instruments, such as the Zimbabwe National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence 2023-2030.

Community-driven initiatives to prevent GBV and transform harmful social norms were intensified. These included engaging with community and traditional leaders, men and boys, and women and girls as change agents through tailored community dialogues, awareness campaigns, and peer-to-peer education to promote gender equality and dismantle the social structures that perpetuate violence. UNFPA worked diligently to ensure access to essential GBV services for survivors. The Fund supported the establishment of One-Stop Centers to provide integrated medical, psychosocial, and legal assistance. These efforts encompassed both development and humanitarian settings, recognising the increased vulnerability of women and girls during crises. Capacity building of health workers, law enforcement, and community-based

organisations was an additional priority to enhance service quality and survivor-centred care.

Achievements

Significant strides in combating GBV and harmful practices were attained in 2023. UNFPA's accomplishments spanned policy development, community engagement, capacity building, and essential service provision:

National strategy on GBV

UNFPA played a key role in finalising, validating, and launching the Zimbabwe National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence 2023-2030. This guiding document, led by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, maps out priority areas for a coordinated national response. UNFPA's GBV interventions align seamlessly with the strategy's six key objectives.

Intersectional approach to disability inclusion

In partnership with the Department of Disability Affairs, UNFPA commissioned the development of a practical guide on intersectionality in Zimbabwe. This guide will empower duty bearers to uphold human rights and embrace the "leave no one behind" principle of the 2030 Agenda, recognising the unique vulnerabilities of women and girls with disabilities.

Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEA)

UNFPA's commitment to upholding zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment is unwavering. It proactively engaged in leadership, awareness-raising, and capacity building within the UN system focused on safeguarding the most vulnerable and upholding PSEA principles.

Zimbabwe UN Agencies have gone through several transitions with the movement of staff, including for PSEA coordination. This led to a gap in the continuity of PSEA activities. UNFPA volunteered to take up the PSEA coordination role to fill the gap. UNFPA conducted a 3-day PSEA awareness raising and training for the UN Country Team as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, UN PSEA Focal points, and UN inter-agency staff, including for UNFPA with support of UNFPA HQ Learning Budget. A total of 150 staff were reached. UNCT recommitted to supporting the PSEA agenda, and the UN staff association committed to zero tolerance PSEA. Following the PSEA training, the PSEA network worked on the country action plan for PSEA.

16 Days of Activism

UNFPA's collaboration and participation in this global campaign galvanised action and investment in GBV prevention. Its collaboration with key stakeholders successfully amplified awareness-raising and calls for action within communities.

Capacity building for Humanitarian Actors

UNFPA partnered with USAID BHA to train 262 food security and humanitarian sector actors on IASC GBV risk mitigation, PSEA, GBV referral pathways, and psychological first aid. This practical training enhanced their ability to reduce GBV risk in humanitarian settings.

Community-Level Impact

UNFPA focused work on grassroots mobilisation, GBV surveillance, and GBV risk mitigation, particularly through safe spaces and Sista2sista clubs, raised awareness of GBV and facilitated essential referrals for survivors.

Despite funding challenges, a total of

15,341

GBV survivors accessed critical services in 2023.

7,934

are those who accessed health services

6,574

accessed mobile and static One-Stop Centres and

833

accessed shelters

Expanded Reach

Despite funding challenges, a total of 15,341 GBV survivors accessed critical services in 2023. This includes shelters (833 survivors), mobile and static One-Stop Centers (6,574), and those who accessed health services (7,934). Of those who accessed health services in five targeted provinces, 7,134 were survivors of sexual violence. Of the 7,134 sexual violence survivors who accessed health services, 1,944 (27%) sought care within the crucial 72-hour period for optimal health outcomes. This was an improvement from 26% who reported within 72 hours in 2022.

Strengthening GBV Case Management

With funding from Takeda, a Japanese Pharmaceutical company, a baseline assessment for a system-wide strengthening of GBV case management in Zimbabwe was initiated. Inter-ministerial and government buy-in is secured, ensuring the project's integration and sustainability.

Challenges and outlook

Despite the progress achieved, UNFPA Zimbabwe recognises the persistent obstacles in achieving zero GBV and harmful practices. These challenges include limited resources, particularly in the last quarter of 2023, which hampered the timely implementation of key activities such as the development of GBV IMS 2. Additionally, unresolved disagreement between the relevant Ministries regarding One-Stop Centre management highlights the need for a clearer and integrated GBV service delivery model. UNFPA's continued facilitation of inter-ministerial dialogue will be essential to ensure a survivor-centred, coordinated response.

The year under review provided valuable insights for strengthening its approach towards zero GBV. Demonstrating the impact of interventions is vital for building trust and securing continued investment from funding partners. Emphasising results and outcomes will attract and sustain much-needed resources. Additionally, GBV prevention and response require holistic strategies. Synergising efforts across humanitarian clusters maximises impact, ensuring that GBV concerns are effectively mainstreamed across all interventions. Finally, regular updates and refresher training will maintain a strong focus on the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment within UNFPA work and throughout its partnerships. Upholding PSEA principles is non-negotiable. By addressing these challenges and applying lessons learned, UNFPA Zimbabwe remains steadfast in its commitment to building a future free from GBV and harmful practices.

Focus for 2024 and beyond

Building on the momentum of 2023, UNFPA Zimbabwe remains fully committed to combating GBV and harmful practices. UNFPA focus in 2024 will be guided by the following priorities:

Strategic Alignment: UNFPA will continue investing in GBV response in close alignment with the Government's priorities, as outlined in the recently launched National GBV Strategy. This collaborative approach will maximise its impact and ensure sustainability.

Targeted Resource Mobilisation: Efforts will focus on securing funding for critical interventions that lacked support in 2023, including the much-needed development and implementation of the GBV IMS 2. This modernised Information Management System will be crucial for robust data collection and evidence-based decision-making in the GBV sector.



Ending New HIV Infections

**Break the stigma,
stop the spread**

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WISE GUYS & BABES
— KNOW THEIR —
HIV STATUS





Enabling HIV Infections

Interventions

UNFPA Zimbabwe, in strategic collaboration with GALZ and the SRC, implemented a multifaceted Global Fund supported MSM program. This initiative focused on reaching and retaining men who have sex with men (MSM) within the continuum of HIV care while advocating for an enabling environment.

Drop-in Centres provided safe spaces for enhanced psycho-social support and increased knowledge of SRHR. Community dialogues, safety and security training, and human rights literacy workshops empowered MSM communities, and 'Proud to Serve' campaigns fostered inclusivity among service providers. New interventions that were introduced in 2023 under the MSM program include ball games, SRHR service provision outside working hours under Moonlight Testing, and blue couch talks that were key for information sharing and awareness raising on SRHR. The sensitisation of religious leaders in Masvingo, Bulawayo, and Gweru reached 142 influential figures.

This proactive engagement encouraged openness, understanding, and prompted 10 religious leaders to become active in Parents, Friends, and Allies of MSM/LGBTI communities groups (PFLAG). Engaging faith leaders is critical to reduce stigma and barriers to care for MSM. PFLAG sensitisations reached a total of 356 parents, friends and allies of MSM/LGBTI communities.

The participation of sex workers and MSM micro planners in the 22nd ICASA Conference in Harare empowered them to advocate for rights-based approaches to HIV prevention and SRHR for key populations. Additionally, community mobilisation efforts for sex workers in six districts gained momentum through a partnership with the National AIDS Council. Micro planners received tablet gadgets with voice and data capabilities, enabling paperless outreach and virtual service promotion. This innovative approach enhances efficiency and expands access to stigma-free HIV/SRHR services for key populations.

Achievements

Steadfast efforts to reduce HIV infections among key populations yielded significant results in 2023. UNFPA's strategic interventions and community-driven approaches achieved the following:

Expanded Reach: UNFPA surpassed its 2023 target by 28%, reaching a total of 11,229 MSM with at least two HIV prevention messages. The tireless work of Micro Planners using innovative methods, including social media, door-to-door campaigns, hotspot outreach, and high-volume events, were instrumental in achieving this milestone.

Strengthening PrEP Uptake: UNFPA successfully initiated 1,478 MSM on PrEP, achieving 90% of its target. Outreaches to new sites, informative 'blue couch' sessions about HIV prevention, and a streamlined approach from testing to PrEP initiation were key contributors to this positive outcome.

Supporting Sex Workers: The fund's partnership with Micro-planning peer educators achieved significant gains in supporting sex workers. In 2023, UNFPA recorded 48,934 sex worker contacts, resulting in 19,912 clinic visits where sex workers received commodities, prevention services, HIV testing and counselling, and broader SRHR support.

HIV Treatment and Care: In collaboration with partners, UNFPA provided vital HIV treatment and care services to 3,596 MSM across five districts. These services, aligned with Zimbabwe's national guidelines, included ART initiation, adherence support, side effect management, differentiated care models, retention monitoring, and treatment success evaluation.



Challenges and outlook

Despite these notable achievements, challenges remain in reaching UNFPA's full potential in the fight against HIV among key populations. A primary concern was within the area of HIV testing, where it achieved only 40% of its target, with 2,460 MSM tested against a planned target of 6,134. This is primarily due to a strong preference among MSM for HIV self-test kits. While these kits empower individuals and increase access to testing, they are currently not included in official reporting metrics for HIV testing.

Addressing this discrepancy will be a focus for 2024 and beyond. It's essential to refine the current reporting mechanisms to better reflect the realities of service provision and accurately capture the impact of self-testing in HIV prevention efforts among key populations. UNFPA will advocate for policy changes that recognise the importance of self-testing as a valid form of HIV testing, thus enabling us to more comprehensively measure progress toward the Fund's goals.

Focus for 2024 and beyond

Building on the lessons learned in 2023, UNFPA Zimbabwe remains deeply committed to achieving zero HIV infections, particularly among key populations. Moving into 2024, focus will centre on:

Providing Leadership within the Global Fund MSM/HIV Program

The organisation will continue to offer technical guidance and support, ensuring the successful and sustainable implementation of all Global Fund MSM/HIV program components.

Integrating HIV Across UNFPA Pillars

Recognising the interconnectedness of HIV prevention and SRHR, UNFPA will prioritise the strategic integration of HIV across UNFPA's core program areas. This includes focused efforts in adolescent and youth health initiatives and in GBV prevention and response. A holistic approach maximises UNFPA's impact and strengthens overall health outcomes.



Adolescents and Youth

Empowering the next
generation





The "Not-In-My Village" campaign, which was piloted in 2023, is mobilising traditional leaders and community influencers to implement actions to address adolescent pregnancies.

Interventions

UNFPA Zimbabwe prioritises empowering and safeguarding adolescents and youth. In 2023, interventions focused on a range of initiatives. Marking the 10th anniversary of the Safeguarding Young People (SYP) Programme, UNFPA supported activities to increase knowledge on comprehensive SRHR and foster engagement among youth, parents, and decision-makers. To ensure youth voices were heard at the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA), UNFPA empowered young people through capacity-building workshops, networking opportunities, and youth participation within official delegations. UNFPA, together with UNESCO and UNICEF, supported a national assessment on adolescent pregnancies in Zimbabwe, which revealed glaring statistics and emphasised the need to find more innovative ways to address adolescent pregnancies in Zimbabwe.

One of UNFPA's innovative programs to address these alarming rates, the **"Not-In-My Village"** campaign, which was piloted in 2023, is mobilising traditional leaders and community influencers to implement actions addressing this critical issue. Working with Young People's Networks on SRHR/HIV/AIDS, traditional leaders, other opinion leaders, and community members will develop action plans and monitoring tools tailored to their specific communities, complementing existing CSE and access to service interventions. Lessons learned will inform future scale-up and efforts to safeguard young girls' potential.

UNFPA also supported the participation of 40 young people from all sectors and all the 10 provinces of Zimbabwe to participate at the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA). These young people are part of the national and sub-national structures of the National Young People’s Network on SRHR/HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, UNFPA facilitated a youth-led panel discussion to mark International Youth Day, highlighting young people’s perspectives on SRHR and providing a platform to influence decision-making. Additionally, the International Day of the Girl Child National Dialogue amplified girls’ voices on challenges and solutions to reach their full potential, emphasising their right to education, health, and protection from violence. Finally, recognising the crucial role of parents and guardians, their engagement in positive dialogue with young people about sexual and reproductive health topics was promoted. Programmes and resources addressed knowledge gaps and fostered supportive, non-judgmental communication within families.



Achievements

UNFPA’s commitment to empowering young people yielded significant results in 2023. UNFPA composite initiatives improved their health and well-being, strengthened participation, and built a more supportive environment for adolescents and youth:

Youth Engagement in Governance

In partnership with government ministries and parastatals, youth participation in decision-making was fostered. The establishment of Youth Desks in all government ministries has created a vital access point for young people. Over 1.3 million youths have benefitted from these Youth Desks, gaining access to opportunities and services across various government departments. UNFPA supported workshops and assisted in developing Terms of Reference to streamline and strengthen these Youth Desks, ensuring consistent and effective service delivery.

Youth Voice in Parliament

The active Youth Caucus, established with UNFPA support, continues to champion youth perspectives and interests in Parliament. The Fund’s 2023 engagement with the 25-member Parliamentary Youth Caucus resulted in a Youth Caucus Strategy (2023 - 2028) focusing on education, employment, governance, health, and community engagement. This plan serves as a roadmap to address critical issues affecting youth in Zimbabwe.

Participation in Regional Forums

The participation of young people at ICASA enabled them to successfully coordinate and chair a number of main and side events that amplified their voice in terms of articulating their health and well-being interests. Thus covering all sectors, including young people living with HIV/AIDS, with disabilities, key populations and those in tertiary institutions.

Over **1.3** million youths have benefitted from the establishment of Youth Desks in all government ministries.

500,000
learners in 10 provinces
participated effectively
in child protection
committees in an effort
to create safer environments
within schools.

National ASRH Coordination

UNFPA plays an essential role in national coordination and strategic information management on Adolescent and Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH). UNFPA's advocacy contributed to the development of a draft National Adolescent and Youth Health Implementation Plan (2024 - 2030), providing strategic guidance on sector needs and programming for youth well-being. This plan, once finalised in 2024, will serve as a blueprint for improved service delivery and resource allocation for adolescent and youth health programs across the country.

Health Service Capacity Building

586 pre-service and in-service health personnel were trained in adolescent and youth-friendly service delivery practices, ensuring that young people receive respectful, non-judgmental care. This investment in healthcare worker training strengthens the capacity of the Zimbabwean health system to respond to the specific needs of young people.

Reaching Learners and Strengthening Protection

UNFPA support reached 50,000 learners in 5 provinces through interactive SRHR sessions. Additionally, in an effort to create safer environments within schools, The fund empowered 500,000 learners in 10 provinces to participate effectively in child protection committees. These committees play a critical role in identifying and addressing potential threats to the safety and well-being of learners.

Expanding Access to Information

Radio and social media campaigns on key topics like Life Skills, Sexuality, and HIV/AIDS reached a wide audience of young people. The printed resources on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), menstrual health management, climate change, and mental health reached approximately 140,000 learners. On social media alone, CSE programs reached an additional 485,821 youth. These varied communication strategies ensure young people have access to critical information on sexual and reproductive health, regardless of location or background.



Supporting Young Entrepreneurs

At least 53 young people (39 female, 14 male) were directly mentored and supported in managing their enterprises and savings groups. Business plan submissions led to 30 start-up kits, further bolstering youth-led economic opportunities. This initiative empowers youth to become economically self-sufficient and contribute to the overall development of the country.

Primary and Secondary CSE

UNFPA collaborated with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to develop CSE modules for students, ensuring age-appropriate information reaches both primary and secondary learners. These modules are essential for equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

Global Recognition

UNFPA Zimbabwe's innovative "Not-In-My Village" Pilot Project, a collaborative effort with the National Young People's Network to address adolescent pregnancies, was recognised with the UNFPA Global Innovation Award under the "Dare to Dream" category.

Challenges and outlook

Despite the progress made in 2023, we acknowledge that obstacles remain in effectively reaching and empowering adolescents and youth. The 2023 harmonised elections disrupted program implementation, particularly during the second and third quarters. Changes in Parliamentary representation necessitate rebuilding relationships and strategies for engaging youth parliamentarians. SAYWHAT faced challenges in maintaining a consistent supply of condoms in tertiary institutions, with limited financial resources hindering the procurement of youth-preferred condom varieties. College clinics continue to be challenged by understaffing due to brain drain and low salaries, leading to very high nurse-to-student client ratios and compromised quality of care. Additionally, inadequate equipment and spaces within clinics necessitate frequent off-site referrals.

2023 provided valuable insights for improving UNFPA's work with adolescents and youth. Involving young people directly in program planning and management ensures that initiatives are truly relevant and aligned with their needs. Tackling drug and substance abuse requires a collaborative effort across various sectors, such as health, education, law enforcement, and community organisations. Bringing youth-friendly services on campus directly increases access for a population that might otherwise face barriers to seeking vital care. Including a dedicated youth-friendly health services indicator within Results-Based Financing frameworks provides motivation and resources to sustain and expand youth-friendly health services.

Moving forward, UNFPA Zimbabwe remains committed to overcoming these challenges. The organisation will adapt its engagement strategies with parliamentarians, champion innovative solutions for condom access, and advocate for increased investment in staffing and resources for youth-friendly college clinics. By directly addressing these obstacles and applying the lessons learned, UNFPA can ensure that adolescents and youth are able to reach their full potential.

Focus for 2024 and beyond

Building on the lessons and achievements of 2023, UNFPA Zimbabwe remains deeply committed to empowering adolescents and youth. Focus in 2024 will centre around:

Strengthening the capacity of youth networks: UNFPA will continue to invest in the capacity strengthening of national youth networks to enable them to provide leadership and mobilisation of young people from all constituents to participate in programmes and policies that support the development of their health and well-being including in SRHR/HIV/GBV.

Mainstreaming Emerging Issues: UNFPA will strategically integrate critical emerging issues, such as climate change, disability, menstrual health management (MHM), and innovations across all interventions targeting adolescents and youth. This holistic approach ensures a future-focused response to the interconnected challenges they face.

Expanding UNFPA Footprint: The Fund will prioritise resource mobilisation to increase its reach in adolescent and youth programming and support the development of supportive national policies. This expanded footprint is essential for scaling up effective interventions and fostering sustainable change.

Addressing Adolescent Pregnancy: Two critical initiatives will underpin UNFPA's approach: finalising and implementing a multi-sectoral framework for addressing adolescent pregnancy and piloting the "Not-In-My-Village" Campaign. These strategies, developed in collaboration with youth networks and relevant stakeholders, will address the root causes of adolescent pregnancy and empower communities to create a more supportive environment for young girls.

Population and Development



Interventions

The year under review was significant for Population and Development initiatives in Zimbabwe, including supporting the Government of Zimbabwe to host a high level Ministerial Conference, with UNFPA playing a central role in facilitating high-level events and driving vital discussions.

In collaboration with government and development partners, UNFPA also launched the 2023 State of the World Population Report as part of World Population Day commemorations. Entitled "8 Billion Lives, Infinite Possibilities: The Case for Rights and Choices" the report urged action to protect the fundamental rights of women and girls. Key findings highlighted that 44% of partnered women and girls in 68 reporting countries, including Zimbabwe, lack bodily autonomy regarding contraception and healthcare, with an additional 257 million worldwide facing unmet contraceptive needs. The report underscored the importance of advancing gender equality as central to addressing population and development challenges.

Initial efforts were made to renew the Data for Development Group, which plays a critical role in ensuring the availability of data for programming and ensuring data for Zimbabwe's SDGs reporting purposes. In collaboration with the Resident Coordinator's Office and the Office of the President and Cabinet, the Terms of Reference of the newly named Data for Development and Innovation Group were drafted for finalisation and endorsement in the first quarter of 2024.

In collaboration with other UN sister agencies, UNFPA played a critical role in supporting the planning of the Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Building week for all Government of Zimbabwe line ministries.

Achievements

UNFPA made significant strides in strengthening data utilisation for Population and Development initiatives in 2023. Efforts focused on building capacity and generating key data sets:

Supporting Critical Surveys

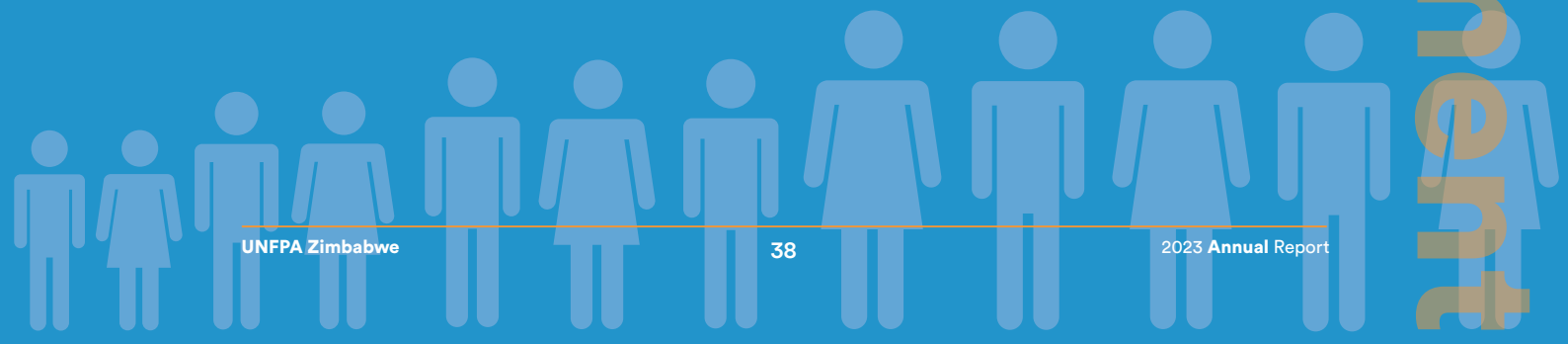
In partnership with Global Fund, USAID, and the HRF programme, UNFPA Zimbabwe supported the ZIMSTAT-led Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey. UNFPA's 2023 involvement focused on household listing, enumerator training, and the initiation of data collection.

2022 Census Data - Enhanced Data Analysis and Dissemination

UNFPA prioritised strengthening the national statistical system's capacity to produce, analyse, and use disaggregated data for evidence-based policymaking. This included direct financial and technical support for ZIMSTAT, enabling the printing of the 2022 census report as well as facilitating secondary data thematic analysis to produce reports that provide stakeholders across sectors with valuable insights for targeted program development. Furthermore, one of the Census Thematic reports on mortality was completed.

Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development (AADPD) 10-Year Review

UNFPA collaborated with the Government of Zimbabwe, utilising a multi-sectoral approach led by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and Trade Investment, to produce a national progress report on the AADPD@10 which contributed to the Continental Report that came out of the Lusaka Conference in November 2023. This comprehensive review highlighted achievements, gaps, lessons learned, and best practices since 2014. Additionally, it identified challenges and recommended actions to ensure continued progress on the government's ambitious population and development commitments.



Partners in Population and Development (PPD) 2023 Conference

With the technical support of the UNFPA Country Office and in collaboration with PPD, the Government of Zimbabwe served as host to the crucial 20th International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Population and Development in October 2023 in Victoria Falls. This gathering of government ministers, development partners, and academics provided a platform to review the gains and gaps in the progress of commitment implementation, and future strategies and priority actions to be taken to finish the unfinished ICPD Agenda

Challenges and outlook

Despite the progress achieved, financial constraints continue to be a significant challenge in fully realising UNFPA's Population and Development goals in Zimbabwe. Limited funding restricts the effective sharing of census findings and the ability to conduct in-depth secondary analyses. This limits the ability of decision-makers to fully utilise this vital data for evidence-based planning. UNFPA is exploring extended partnerships, especially with academia for more cost-effective and efficient ways of better availing data in all its forms.

Focus for 2024 and beyond

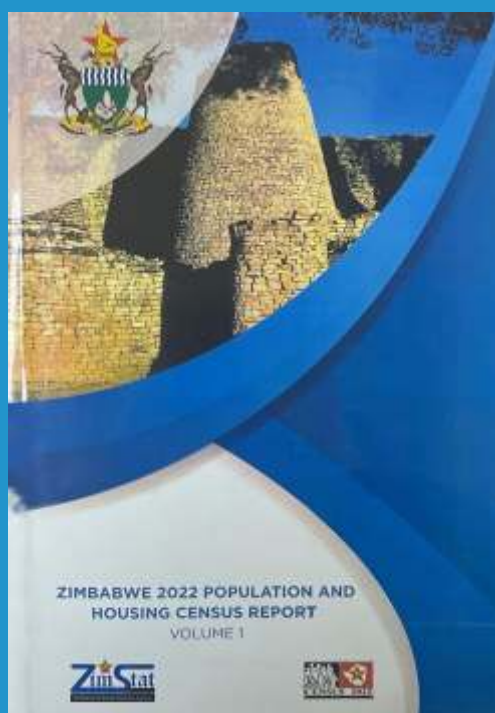
Advocacy and resource mobilisation will be crucial in 2024 to increase investment in Population and Development initiatives. By demonstrating the clear link between accurate data, sound policymaking, and sustainable development outcomes, UNFPA aims to secure the necessary funding to maximise its impact in this critical area. UNFPA Zimbabwe remains steadfast in its commitment to Population and Development initiatives. Its 2024 priorities therefore include:

National Population Policy Revision:

Collaborating with the Government of Zimbabwe on revising the National Population Policy. This is crucial to ensure that the policy aligns with current population dynamics, addresses emerging issues, and provides a framework for effective interventions.

ZDHS Completion: Supporting ZIMSTAT to finalise the Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey remains a vital focus. This includes completing data collection, analysis, and report writing, providing essential insights for policymakers and development partners.

Vital Statistics Support: UNFPA will assist with the production of vital statistics reports. This reliable data strengthens decision-making and resource allocation, particularly in the health sector.



Stories from the Field

Raising our hands together: Toward an AIDS-free future

Opinion editorial by
**Lydia Zigomo, UNFPA East and Southern Africa
Regional Director**

The young girls and boys raised their arms and stomped their feet during the opening of the 2023 22nd International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (ICASA), their energy and hope blending with reflection and determination.

As a Zimbabwean who witnessed the scourge brought about by AIDS on families, communities, and countries, I am humbled by the strides we have made but conscious of the hurdles we must overcome.

In our pursuit to transform Africa's fight against HIV, there is indeed cause for celebration. Significant drops in new infections among children and young people bear witness to the success of targeted interventions. However, the theme of ICASA rings true – AIDS is not over. Last year, 210,000 adolescent girls and young women worldwide acquired HIV, 63 percent from sub-Saharan Africa. Our progress, though inspiring, is delicate, and the road ahead demands a stronger effort that can withstand the tension and stresses wielded against it.

Statistics reflect a stark picture of human lives, and UNFPA champions a proactive approach, aiming to address the root cause of new infections. Zeroing in on the sexual and reproductive health needs and rights of all women and young people is the key. This encompasses dismantling gender inequality, eliminating gender-based violence, and eradicating discrimination – barriers that shroud access to vital services.

Africa, a continent of resilience, bears a disproportionate burden of the HIV epidemic. Of the 39 million people living with HIV globally, more than half call Africa home, with 60 percent of deaths etched into the African narrative.

Inequalities loom large as an impediment to reducing new HIV infections. Discrimination and the lack of bodily autonomy, especially among women and girls, create formidable barriers. I am reminded of the story of Haillie of Namibia, who was raped at the age of five by a family member. This is a common occurrence in our region, with devastating effects—challenges to mental and physical health, including through exposure to sexually transmitted infections like HIV. Haillie was tested for HIV through a UNFPA-supported mobile clinic. In her vulnerability, she shares a profound truth – when you test, you free your mind, protecting not only yourself but those around you.

We are in dire need of targeted interventions. Haillie and thousands of women are the resilient pillars in the face of adversity, and they also bear the brunt of new infections, necessitating targeted strategies.

The Sustainable Development Goals, including those tethered to HIV and AIDS, are adrift. The largest AIDS conference on the continent, ICASA, is now our arena for transformative change.

As ICASA unfolds, we find solace in many success stories. Zimbabwe is on that path – having already achieved the 95–95–95 targets, along with Botswana, Eswatini, and others. This illuminates a path to follow on our united journey towards 2025 prevention targets and the goal of ending AIDS by 2030.

However, gaps persist, and AIDS responses risk leaving too many behind. Accelerating and scaling up the HIV response is not a mere option; it is an imperative. Beyond health concerns, societal barriers demand our attention. A comprehensive strategy must encompass dismantling restrictive laws, policies, and cultural practices that breed stigma and discrimination.

Communities must take the lead, with grassroots initiatives providing a fast track for HIV responses. Empowering individuals to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights is paramount. Renewing political commitment and ensuring sufficient, sustainable funding are our guiding stars.

As we progress through ICASA, the world watches, hoping that Africa can spearhead transformative change. It is a call to action, a symphony of hope resonating for a healthier, AIDS-free future.

In the delicate contrast between statistics and sentiment, let us script a narrative where we can all raise our hands together and stomp our feet in celebration with the young people – heralding our triumph in banishing the shadow of AIDS.



Partnerships





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