



Map of Zimbabwe

In 2022, Zimbabwe was classified as the 13th worst globally in terms of food insecurity ([Global Hunger Index, 2022](#)). World Food Program states that 42% of Zimbabwe's population lives in extreme poverty ([WFP, 2024](#)). The [2023 Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee's \(ZimVAC\) Urban and Rural Livelihood assessments](#) estimated that 2.7 million people in the rural areas are food insecure in the first quarter of 2024. The primary obstacles hindering Zimbabwe's agricultural transformation include climate change related drought, limited access to agricultural finance due to inefficient financial sector and an unstable local currency market, shortages of essential inputs (such as seeds, fertilizer, and fuel), and the persistent impact of pests and diseases ([IFAD, 2021](#)). Rapid hike in commodity prices in 2024 further threatens to worsen Zimbabwe's food security landscape ([FAO, 2024](#)). These factors continue to impede the country's progress in the agricultural sector.

Takunda¹..... We have overcome!

Overview

Cooperative Agreement: \$55 million
Funded by: United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
Timeline: 2020 – 2025
Program area: Buhera and Mutema Districts in Manicaland Province, and Chivi and Zaka Districts in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe.

Objective: Takunda aims to achieve sustainable, equitable, and resilient food, nutrition, and income security in Manicaland and Masvingo provinces of Zimbabwe.

Partners:



Takunda RFSA² works to improve the food and nutrition security in Zimbabwe through three purpose areas.
Purpose 1: Gender Equitable income among extremely poor and chronically vulnerable households, women, and youth increased.
Purpose 2: Nutritional Status among Children under 5, Adolescent Girls, and Women of Reproductive Age Improved.
Purpose 3: Resilience to shocks and stressors for extremely poor and chronically vulnerable households, especially women and youth, increased.

Altogether, Takunda has improved the lives of **77%** (out of 301,636) of its participants, **56% of women** (130,984), in its Life of Award (LOA) duration by FY³ 2023.

281%
 increase of Sorghum production from 0.17 to 0.65 MT/ha

111%
 increase of Groundnuts production from 0.27 to 0.57 MT/ha

154%
 increase in Female FFBS³ Facilitators from 68 to 173

124%
 increase of average household income from USD 34.5 to 77.5

213%
 more VSLA⁴ members from 7,600 to 23,791

178%
 more loans circulated among VSLA members from USD 97,336 to USD 270,321

30%
 increased participation in diversified non-farm income sources from 70% households reporting in FY22 to 100% in FY23

Impacts from FY22 to FY23⁵

Glimpse of Takunda in its fourth year (2020-2023)

Impact ¹	Activity	Completed against LOA target	Results ²
55,538	Food Distribution	138.8%	Reduction in malnutrition among children observed as a public medical officer reported that children with malnutrition across 4 wards in Chivi District decreased from 543 cases in FY22 to 63 cases in FY23.
59,797	Participants who used climate information to enhance resilience to climate change	304%	Making informed decisions on appropriate crop varieties to grow and livestock breeds to keep during extreme weather conditions, livestock disease outbreaks, minimizing losses due to action based on early warning.
22,189	Care Group Neighbor Women reached	74%	Children aged 6 to 23 months consuming a minimum dietary diversity increased from 28% in FY22 to 51% in FY23. Additionally, consumption of a minimum dietary diversity improved from 19% in FY22 to 56% in FY23 for Women of Reproductive Age (15 - 49 years).
17,523	Farmer Group Participants Reached	63.5%	Enhanced agricultural productivity, resulting from the adoption of advanced production methods and access to high-quality seeds, led to decreased reliance on food purchases. This surplus cash was then available for investing in other income-generating endeavors and meeting various household needs.
23,791	VSLA ³ Participants Reached	78.1%	Routine monitoring of 17 groups' and 122 individuals' IGAs ⁸ (139 IGAs in total) revealed that initial funding to support 132 out of 139 (94.9%) IGAs came from VSLAs. The average monthly income of monitored IGAs was USD 196. Participants used income from VSLA share-outs and IGA profits to invest in productive assets.
2,486	TVET ⁴ Students Trained	99.4%	Self-employed youth, who started their own IGA, earned between USD 80 to USD150 while those formally employed earned between USD 50 and USD100 each per month.
7,474	Life Skills Training	106.2%	Increased participation of young people in diversified informal IGAs. Monitoring visits and post training interviews indicate that at least 30% of the youth trained in life skills start either an individual or group income generating activity.
23,129	Participants Trained in DRR ⁵ , GCVCA ⁶ , PSP ⁷	116%	Increase in households participating in collective action to reduce the impact of hazards (climatic, inflation, cholera, Theileriosis).

¹ Life of award (2020-2023) impacts; ²Information from annual participant-based survey (PaBS), routine monitoring and field observation of Takunda team.

³VSLA: Village Savings and Loans Associations; ⁴TVET: technical and vocational education and training; ⁵DRR: Disaster Risk Reduction; ⁶GCVCA: Gendered Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis; ⁷PSP: Participatory Scenario Planning; ⁸IGA: income-generating activities

Stories from the field

Empowering Women: The Transformative Journey of a Care Group

On-farm activities play a crucial role in sustaining rural households in landlocked Zimbabwe. The recurrent occurrence of drought, the country’s primary natural disaster, significantly affects farmland and crop production. To address food and nutrition security challenges, the USAID Takunda program collaborates with women and children across three key areas. One of these areas focuses on enhancing the nutritional status of children under 5, adolescent girls, and women of reproductive age. Within this context, USAID Takunda implements Neighbor Women Groups.

A compelling example is the Tashinga Neighbor Women Group, comprising ten members, situated in Buhera District, specifically within Ward 12 Cluster 6 of Hazvinavarwi Village. Established in 2022, this group operates under the leadership of Eunice Chiyangwa.

Their activities include organizing monthly meetings for neighboring women, following the Care Group behavior change schedule and employing dialogue counseling techniques. In pursuit of enhanced livelihoods, these women **initiated their own VSLA**, resulting in profitable returns. With the generated income, they acquired essential resources such as a water pump, a solar panel, and a water pipe. The immediate availability of water facilitated their entry into tomato farming. During the 2022-2023 season, the Tashinga Neighbor Women's Group had their inaugural tomato selling season, resulting in **earnings of USD 1,000**.

“If it wasn’t for Takunda, we would remain poor. Takunda encouraged us to work with our bare hands as a group for the betterment of the village. We can now provide nutritious meals for our children, pay school fees, start businesses and buy clothes” - Eunice Chiyangwa (1st from right in the photo)

In the 2023/2024 farming season, the women once again cultivated tomatoes and **anticipate doubling their profits** compared to the previous year. Their VSLA savings have bolstered their resilience against Zimbabwe’s high inflation and other economic shocks. With these funds, they can adequately provide food for their families, cover school fees, and construct basic rural homes. Their long-term vision includes drilling a borehole to access more water for their 3-hectare garden, fencing the area to prevent livestock intrusion, and expanding their tomato production.



Photo: Tashinga Neighbor Women Group members proudly display the water pipe they acquired through their VSLA savings. This water pipe will facilitate irrigation for their tomato garden. ©CARE Zimbabwe/TAKUNDA RFSA/Emmanuel Mazangwa.



Takunda on Social Media:
<https://linktr.ee/takundarfsa>

Takunda studies

