



ZRCS Volunteers and food commodity during the distribution in Siansundu (ward 9) Binga district, Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe.

7 September 2024

EAP No: EAP2022ZW01	Operation No: MDRZW020	EAP approved: 12/12/2022	EAP timeframe: 12/12/2022-31/12/2024
Trigger date: 24/08/2023	Early action lead time XXdays/weeks/months:	Operational timeframe: 16 Months	Period covered by this activation report: 08/09/2023 to 07/09/2024

Budget: 549,318 CHF

EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL SUMMARY



Beneficiary receiving seed pack assistance

Back in December 2022, the IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated CHF 549,318 for the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society to implement early actions to reduce and mitigate the impact of drought in Zimbabwe. The early actions to be conducted were pre-agreed with the National Society and are described in the Early Action Protocol [\[Link to the EAP summary\]](#).

The Drought Early Action Protocol (EAP) for the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society (ZRCs) is a tool to guide the timely and effective implementation of early actions based on forecast and observational data, which predict meteorological hazards with a high likelihood of humanitarian impact. Drought (Meteorological and Agricultural) is the most common and high-impact natural hazard occurring in Zimbabwe, both in terms of frequency of occurrence and the number of people affected, with droughts accounting for 7 out of the 10 top major natural hazards since recorded 1990. Due to

increasing climatic uncertainty, and reduced coping capacity, the risk of drought has spread to all areas of the country and is affecting a broader range of people, in both urban and rural areas. Furthermore, the impacts of this hazard are predicted to increase, with the World Bank Group Climate Change Knowledge Portal, predicting the annual likelihood of Zimbabwe encountering severe drought to increase by 21% in 2040 to 2059 and by 47% in 2080 to 2099 compared to the baseline period of 1986 to 2005 scenario. At a national scale, droughts often result in crop failure, loss of livestock and wildlife and power outages.

The country's worst drought occurred in 1991/2, directly affecting 5 million people and resulting in serious food insecurity and water shortages which had a ripple effect on the Southern African region compromising food security in countries which were reliant on Zimbabwe's food exports. Repeated drought exposure has entrenched vulnerabilities and reduced the coping capacities of small-scale farmers, leaving an increasing number of people who are affected by the impacts of drought. This EAP has been developed through extensive consultation with key informants, at community, district, and National level, and has been supported by technical guidance from the 510 Data initiative and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. The monitoring of the hazard and the implementation of the Early Actions will be led by the ZRCs, guided by relevant Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) departments, including the Agricultural Extension Department, Veterinary Department, and the Meteorological Services Department. This EAP has also been developed with close reference to the Government of Zimbabwe National Drought Plan and aligns the identified roles of the Zimbabwe Red Cross and other stakeholders. Technical and financial support for the development of this EAP has been provided by the Danish Red Cross and Finnish Red Cross Societies.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

SUMMARY OF EAP IMPLEMENTATION

Zimbabwe Red Cross Society

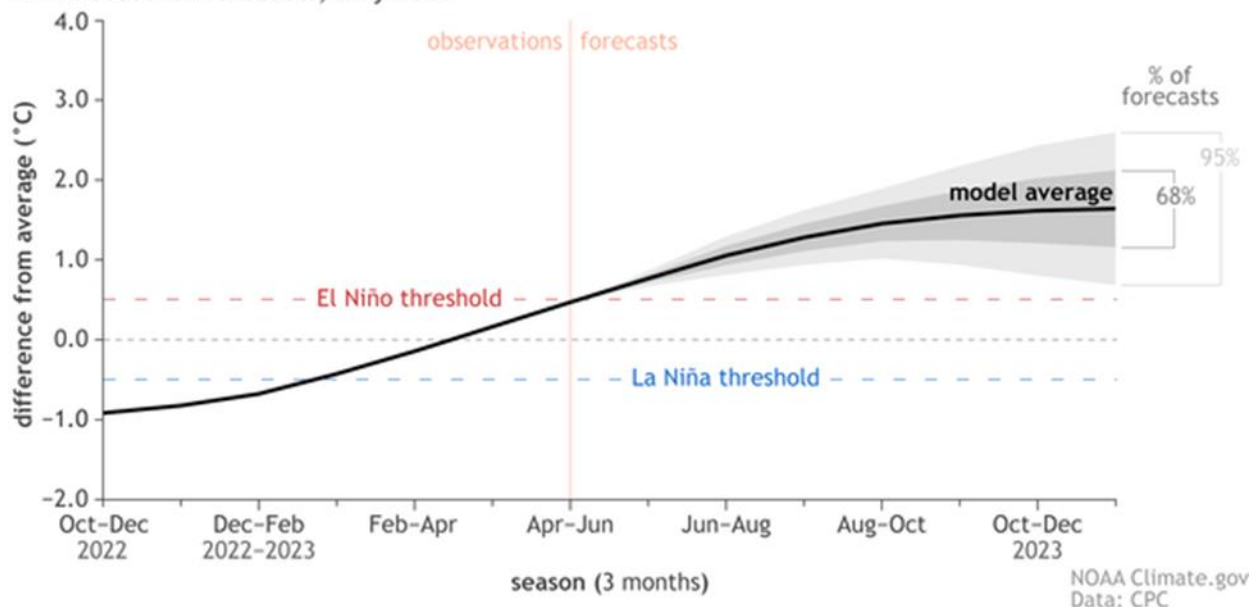
Based on the El Niño forecast the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society activated the first trigger for its Early Action Protocol in September 2023. The activation of the EAP for drought was based on a two-stage trigger, which allowed for long lead time that can address a series of expected drought impacts. The IBF Drought model utilized five meteorological indicators, which are monitored throughout the agriculture season, as forecast features for drought, with increasing certainty as the season progresses. Combining ENSO forecasts, CHIRPS Data and the Vegetation Condition Index, the forecast model runs on a monthly basis starting from September (7 months lead time to end of season). The model is informed by two separate trigger events which will activate sets of impact mitigating Early Actions. According to the trigger statement of the Early Action Protocol, the following will result in an activation of the protocol:

First Trigger: A forecast of an El Niño event, with an impact level corresponding to once-in-six-year event, will act as the first trigger for low investment Early Actions (Early warning disseminations, drought tolerant seed distributions and livestock dosing).

Second Trigger: A forecast of IPC 4 conditions in the FEWSNET Food Security Forecast Reports in Both Mach and June will trigger the second set of early actions that address drought induced food insecurity (livestock support, Multi- Purpose Cash Transfers and school supplemental feeding).

The ENSO forecasts indicated a very strong likelihood of an El Niño event in 2023 which was above 90% and a very strong correlation to future drought conditions in Zimbabwe.

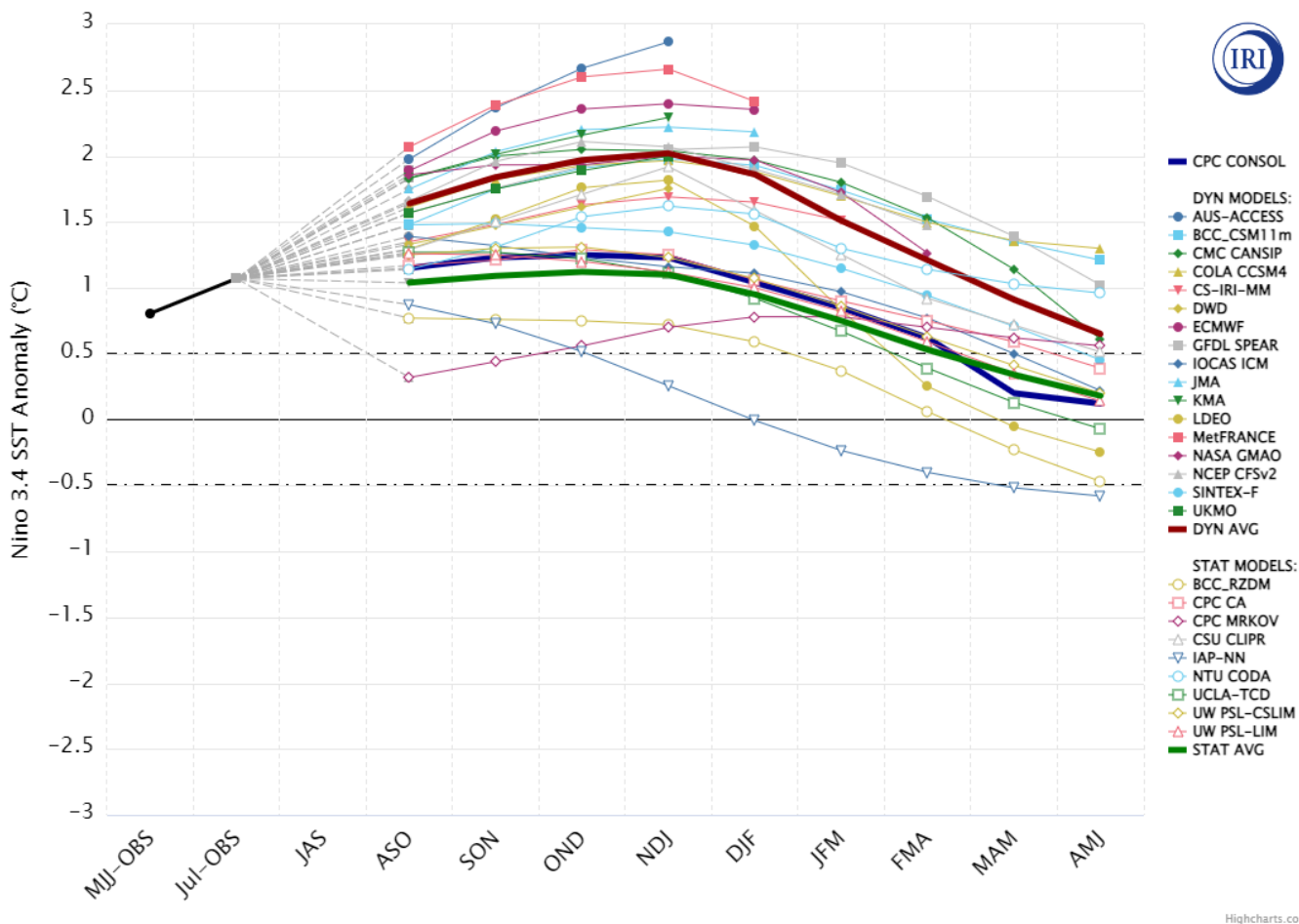
NMME seasonal forecasts, July 2023



There was a greater than 95% chance that El Niño would continue through the Zimbabwean summer. Sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the tropical Pacific are exceeding El Niño thresholds, with climate models indicated that it was likely to continue at least through to March 2024. The most recent IRI plume indicated El Niño will persist through the Zimbabwean summer 2023-24. Forecasters favored continued growth of El Niño through the fall, peaking this summer with moderate-to-strong intensity (81% chance of November-January Niño-3.4 $\geq 1.0^{\circ}\text{C}$). An event that becomes "historically strong" (seasonally averaged Niño-3.4 $\geq 2.0^{\circ}\text{C}$), rivalling the summers of 1997-98 or 2015-16, has an approximately 1 in 5 chances.

The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) was at neutral. Climate model forecasts suggested a positive IOD was likely to develop in September or October. A positive IOD typically decreases early summer rainfall for much of Southern Africa and can exacerbate the drying influence from El Niño.

Model Predictions of ENSO from Aug 2023



These conditions reached the trigger level 1 for the Binga Drought EAP activation.

Zimbabwe Red Cross Society reached the stage where the second trigger had to be activated. This followed:

1. The declaration of a state of disaster following the rainfall patterns that were observed during the 2023/24 rainfall season, which was significantly affected by the El Niño conditions that dominated the rainfall season.
2. The Crop, Livestock, and Fisheries report indicating a significant number of households having access to 1-3 month's storage supply.
3. Prolonged observed dry spells occurring in the last months. An El Niño induced drought occurred and the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe declared a state of disaster.

These acted as a trigger for the second level of Early Actions namely Cash Voucher Assistance and supplementary feeding for school children for 3 months.

Achievements for Trigger One:

1. **2,000 households** received a **5 kg pearl millet seed** packet and a **2.5 kg cowpea seed packet** each during the last week of October 2023. This was more than a month before the expected rains thus ensuring that all seed was in place before the first effective rains. It also ensured that the households would have sufficient time to prepare their fields adequately. Although the rains delayed, households managed to successfully plant the seed resulting in good crop establishment early in the season. Dry spells later affected the crop resulting in most of the crop being a write-off.

2. Livestock deworming was also conducted in the same area. The activity was done in two phases based on recommendations from the Department of Veterinary Services. A total of **5,148 heads of cattle** were dewormed out of a **targeted 6,120**. The initial target was 5,000 heads of cattle but given the differences in dosage amounts, more cattle were covered at the same cost. Visual observations showed an improvement in the state of the cattle when the second round of deworming was done in April. The two rounds of deworming were done with chemicals with different active ingredients to deal effectively with the various internal parasites. Early warning messages were shared throughout the rainfall season with volunteers also tasked with the responsibility of sharing the messages within their communities.

Achievements for Trigger Two:

The Zimbabwe Red Cross Society planned to implement the second trigger activities following the activation of its Early Action Protocol for drought from September 2024, but the activities were delayed. On the 26 August 2024, the Government of Zimbabwe through the Department of Social Services issued a directive to all humanitarian partners to adapt direct in-kind food distributions within their areas of operations to ensure that rural households had access to basic food particularly cereals. As a result, ZRCS had to change the intervention modality from Cash and Voucher Assistance to in-kind or food distributions as directed by Government of Zimbabwe.

1. In-kind / Food distributions September 2024 to November 2024 Targeting 785 Households (3,410 individuals) in ward 9 and 10.

Beneficiary selection for the recipients was done in a participatory and inclusive approach with full community and government stakeholder involvement. Targeting was done using a village ranking form at village level according to the community's own determined criteria but guided by Department of Social Development and ZRCS vulnerability criteria. Beneficiary selection was supported by Department of Social Development and the District Development Coordinator's offices. In addition, beneficiary households were identified in line with the budget allocation. Engagement of a supplier or services provider is ongoing, and the first food delivery and distribution is targeted for the last week of September 2024. The next food distribution will be conducted in October 2024 and the last distribution in November 2024. Beneficiary list verification was conducted in both targeted wards (ward 9 and 10) in preparation for food distribution to ensure that any irregularities was captured and corrected before distributions were conducted. Beneficiaries' verifications and community engagement is expected to continue until all 3 distribution cycles are completed.

2. School supplementary feeding of 10,176 learners to reduce absentees between September 2024 to early December 2024.

The target for this action was 11 primary schools in the 5 targeted wards as recommended by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. 6 schools also have Early Childhood Development satellite centres that will be supported through the main learning institutions, and this gives a total of 20 centres. Corn Soya Blend (CSB), supplementary pots and cleaning utensils have been procured and distributed to the respective schools during the school holidays (in August 2024) to ensure that upon opening date for the third term, schools are ready to start food preparation and feeding activities.

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

IFRC Harare CCD provided technical and financial resources in the implementation of the EAP.

- The cluster office has been responsible for managing the protocol from drafting a funding agreement for readiness and early actions to disbursing the funds for these activities.
- The cluster supported the development of the notification of activation and subsequent operational updates to inform any changes on the EAP.

The cluster technical team were on standby to support the NS in analysing data for activation and overall technical support supervision including:

- Provision of technical support to ZRCS in the identification of possible Early Action activities in Binga and Scoping Study report.
- Review of the draft EAP before submission to the review process.
- Operational support - review of financial files, cash requests, etc.
- Technical support during activation of the EAP - supporting tender adjudications processes, facilitating partner coordination (with WFP), and activity scheduling.

The development of this EAP was supported by the FBA for droughts project, implemented since October 2019, with financial and technical support from the Finnish and Danish Red Cross Societies. Some achievements in this reporting period, include the climate smart resilience and preparedness for effective response project (supported through an FRC-DRC consortium) which activated the crisis modifier for anticipatory action to support scale up of the early actions.

- In 2023, the consortium supported distribution of seeds to **2,000 households** and dipping and dosing of cattle, with the additional funding doubling the number of beneficiaries.
- In 2024, the consortium contributed funding for an additional 2 months (Oct 2024-Nov2024) of food distributions. The NS is currently trying to secure funds to be able to continue the support throughout the lean season (end of March 2025).

Overview of non-Red Cross Red Crescent actors in country

The Veterinary Services Department (VSD) provided technical support on animal health livestock interventions. These include cattle deworming and dipping. The timing of deworming activities and the types of chemicals to be used were informed by DVS Veterinary personnel and the Acaricides suitable for Binga district. The local VSD personnel were responsible for administering of the deworming chemicals including advise on dosages. The Meteorological Services Department (MSD) provided weather updates and messages to be shared with communities to improve their levels of preparedness to the El-Nino induced drought. ZRCS coordinated with other partners such as Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) and these participated during the Early Action Protocol lessons learnt activities in Binga District. ZRCS has been an active member of the several coordination platforms including Anticipatory Action and Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) clusters. In addition, ZRCS has been an active member of the Civil Protection Unit at National, Provincial and district level in responding to the drought.

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

There was timeous procurement and distribution of drought tolerant seeds for farmers in the targeted wards. Seeds were distributed before the onset of 2023-2024 agricultural season to promote early planting. In addition, farmers were trained of Climate Smart Agricultural (CSA) practices before receiving seeds. The Department of Veterinary Services was engaged for animal health activities such as dosing and dipping. Agritex provided technical expertise on CSA and the most appropriate seeds for the district. Monitoring and support were provided by ZRCS and IFRC PMER department. This was key for continuous improvement and ensuring that standards are met for food distributions, schools feeding and other interventions.

Date National Society requested the early action funds: 19 September 2023

Date National Society received the early action funds: 21 September 2023

Human Resources:

The project has 3 personnel, including Project Coordinator, PMER Officer and two district officers.

Logistics and supply chain:

Procurement of drought tolerant seeds was conducted before the onset of the 2023-2024 rainfall season. Food distributions were conducted as planned after the supplier was identified and contracted. Schools' feeding activities were supported after the delivery of Corn Soya Blend (CSB) to the targeted schools. Materials to support school feeding such as pots and other items were delivered to the schools.

Information Technology:

Inclusion of EAP triggers and their integration supports real-time monitoring and assessment of risks, allowing for timely interventions. Communication of Early Warning Messages, and development of robust early warning messages improved dissemination of information through radio messaging. Use of Kobo for data collection was key to support real time data.

Communications and Information:

Information dissemination on the local radio station in Binga District and information dissemination through ZRCS volunteers on Early Warning Messages was key to early warning messages and early action. Approximately a total of 120,000 individuals were reached with Early Warning Messages through several platforms such as ZRCS volunteers, Government Extension officers, and texts messages and dissemination during community social gatherings.

Security:

There was no security threats encountered during the implementation of the project in Binga district.

PLANNING, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING (PMER):

PMER were responsible for monitoring Early Protocol (EAP) project activities such as Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDMs) to assess the impact of food distributions and school feeding activity, and establishment of beneficiary feedback mechanisms. Regular field visits were conducted to assess the situation, identify needs, and monitor activity implementation. Needs assessments were conducted in schools to identify needs before delivering CSB. Monitoring activities aimed at ensuring accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency in delivering humanitarian assistance to those in need.

Administration and Finance

EAP has received support from both IFRC and ZRCS on administration support such as procurement of fuel and other logistical support. Furthermore, finance have been availed for project implementation.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

There were several challenges encountered during implementation of EAP in Binga district and these included shortages of water in the targeted wards, thereby affecting cattle dipping activities resulting in the postponement or delay in the dipping activities. The infrastructure and facilities used for handling and dipping cattle with pour-on treatments were in poor condition, making it challenging to complete dipping activities on schedule. Additionally, cattle prices have significantly decreased due to food insecurity, with farmers selling at rates as low as USD 0.50 per kilogram (live weight). Pastures continued to degrade, with most in poor condition due to the drought, negatively impacting animal health. Although the EAP project had distributed drought tolerant seeds on time for the 2023 – 2024

agricultural season, the season was characterized by very low rainfall and long dry spells resulting in poor germination and growth.

Several key lessons were learned from implementing EAP interventions:


- The importance of effective early warning systems in local languages was clearly recognized, as they play a critical role in preparing for climate-related events such as droughts.
- Timely and accurate dissemination of weather patterns and related information is essential for community preparedness.
- It was observed that community members continue to rely on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) for predicting weather patterns, underscoring the value of integrating traditional knowledge with modern early warning systems.
- Regular dipping and dosing significantly improved livestock health and productivity, with no reported disease outbreaks or animal fatalities during the intervention.
- A majority (64.3%) of community members expressed a preference for drought-resistant crops, such as millet and sorghum, due to their resilience to drought conditions. This underscores the need to promote these types of crops in similar regions and establishment of seed banks for availability and accessibility of seeds.
- The value of community-based preparedness strategies was effective in early action and early response to drought in Binga. These include using climate-smart agriculture (CSA) techniques, enhancing coordination and collaboration and leveraging local knowledge and resources to cope with adverse conditions.
- Utilizing a variety of communication channels such as radio, mobile phones, local leaders, and community meetings ensured that early warning messages reached a broad audience effectively. The preference for text messages, radio, and community leaders as future channels was noted.
- Different groups within the community, especially children and people with disabilities, were affected differently by drought. Tailored coping mechanisms, such as reducing food intake and prioritizing resources for the most vulnerable, were essential.
- In drought situations, selling livestock yields minimal prices hence disadvantaging those who rely on livestock. The EAP project leveraged on existing projects (layering of projects) to enhance efficiency and productivity. The Climate Smart Resilience project enhanced resource mobilization and effective communication.


EAP was set up correctly with assumptions and triggers and activities under the two phases clearly defined. These were informed by FEWSNET, Meteorological Services Department (MSD) data and other parameters. However, there was need to include triggers that were not informed by Government declaration such as state of disaster before activation.

Under Early Action Protocol (EAP) project activities conducted include Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDMs) to assess the impact of food distributions and school feeding activity. A total of **6,910 individuals from 1,628 households** and **pupils from 11 schools** benefited from the EAP project responding to the El Nino induced drought. Beneficiary feedback mechanisms were also established to collect and respond to concerns and suggestions. Regular field visits were conducted to assess the situation, identify needs, and monitor activity implementation. Needs assessments were conducted in schools to identify needs before delivering Corn Soya Blend (CSB). Monitoring activities aimed at ensuring accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency in delivering humanitarian assistance to those in need. A total of **5,916 children** are receiving daily feeding rations of CSB from 11 primary schools.

Date of the impact of the hazard/disaster: 29 August 2023


PLANNED OPERATIONS


 Livelihoods	CHF budget: 324,290	CHF actual: 125,005	
	People targeted: 16,088	People reached: 19,974	
	Female: 1,302	Female > 18: 7,732	Girls < 18: 3,254
	Male: 1,200	Male > 18: 6,325	Boys < 18: 2,663
	Percentage of activities implemented before the impact of the hazard	Estimate the % of early actions done for this sector %	
Indicator:	Number of people reached with livelihoods interventions in advance of a hazard		
Early actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of beneficiary registers for seed distributions. • Distribution of seeds to targeted households. • Post distribution monitoring assessments. • Distribution of dosing chemicals to Veterinary department and support to dosing activities. • Distribution of CSB to schools. • Post distribution and regular monitoring of the school supplemental feeding. • Beneficiary engagement and sensitization by volunteer structures. • Monthly distribution cycles using CVA modality once the trigger thresholds have been reached. • Post-distribution monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of the early actions. 		
Narrative description of achievements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,000 households received a 5 kg pearl millet seed packet and a 2.5 kg cowpea seed packet each during the last week of October 2023. This was more than a month before the expected rains thus ensuring that all seed was in place before the first effective rains. It also ensured that the households would have sufficient time to prepare their fields adequately. • In kind food distributions started in September 2024 to November 2024, targeting 1,628 households and 6,910 individuals. • Primary School supplementary feeding of 11 schools with 5,916 learners to reduce absenteeism, school dropouts between September 2024 to early December 2024. • Although the rains delayed, households managed to successfully plant the seed resulting in good crop establishment early in the season. Dry spells later affected the crop resulting in most of the crop being a write-off. • A livestock deworming was also conducted in the same area. The activity was done in two phases based on recommendations from the Department of Veterinary Services. 5,148 heads of cattle were dewormed out of a targeted 6,120. The initial target was 5,000 heads of cattle but given the differences in dosage amounts, more cattle could be covered at the same cost. Visual observations showed an improvement in the state of the cattle when the second round of deworming was done in April. The two rounds of deworming were done with chemicals with different active ingredients to deal effectively with the various internal parasites. 			

	CHF budget: 1,678	CHF actual: 1,678	
	People targeted: 15,000	People reached: 15,000	
	Female: 7,500	Female > 18: 46,800	Girls < 18: 19,200

Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and Recovery	Male: 7,500	Male >18: 38,400	Boys < 18: 15,600
	Percentage of activities implemented before the impact of the hazard	Number of people reached with risk reduction and/or climate adaptation interventions in advance of a hazard	
Indicator:	Number of people reached with risk reduction and/or climate adaptation interventions in advance of a hazard.		
Early actions:	Alert dissemination and drought preparedness information disseminated to target areas through bulk SMS and community level messaging through lead farmer and agricultural extension service structures.		
Narrative description of achievements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early warning messages were shared throughout the rainfall season with volunteers also tasked with the responsibility of sharing the messages within their communities. Approximately a total of 120,000 individuals were reached with Early Warning Messages through several platforms such as ZRCS volunteers, Government Extension officers, and texts messages and dissemination during community social gatherings. 			

Enabling approaches

 Coordination and Partnerships		Female: 7,500	1,678 CHF
		Male: 7,500	AP Code: 118, 119, 127, 128
Early actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with external partners. Continued representation and coordination within the community of practice and technical working groups. Movement Cooperation. Continued engagement with Movement actors to guide and review the implementation of the EAP as required. 		
Narrative description of achievements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NS has been attending the National Anticipatory Action Technical working group where the stakeholders have been exchanging ideas sharing learnings. There are several humanitarian actors in Zimbabwe that are actively engaged in addressing various crises, primarily driven by climate change, economic instability, and health emergencies. Their efforts encompass a wide range of services aimed at supporting vulnerable populations, particularly women, children, and migrants. These include UNICEF, WFP, IOM MSF, UNDP and other organizations. 			

 National Society Strengthening		Female:	35,686 CHF
		Male:	AP Code: 124,125,126
Early actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District Field Officer at 100% of USD2,086 per month. 2. PMER Officer at 50% of USD2050 per month. 3. Disaster Preparedness Officer 65%. 4. Bank Charges. 5. NS Admin Cost (7% of budget). 6. Vehicle Lease. 		
Narrative description of achievements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff supported the activation of the first and second trigger early action activities in Binga district and the first trigger activities were successfully implemented. 			

FINANCIAL REPORT

The financial report will be shared with the final end of project report.

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Reference



Click here for:

- [EAP2022ZW01 Activation Zimbabwe Drought.pdf](#)
- [2022-IFRC-EAP Summary Zimbabwe Droughts Final NL.pdf](#)
- [MDRZW020 EAP Update .pdf](#)