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## Desperate for a Drop: Bulawayo's Water Crisis Deepens, Threatening Health

Jacqueline Ndlovu



Water woes have reached a boiling point, with some suburbs enduring an agonizing three weeks without running water. This crisis isn't just an inconvenience; it's a health emergency, hitting women and children the hardest and exacerbating hygiene and sanitation challenges. The timing couldn't be more alarming, coinciding with outbreaks of cholera and polio. Bulawayo, already battling chronic water shortages, finds itself particularly vulnerable to these highly contagious diseases. The lack of water for basic sanitation and hygiene makes containing these outbreaks nearly impossible, raising the terrifying specter of a public health disaster.

"It's a living nightmare," says Amahle Ndlovu, a resident of Pumula South. "We

spend hours lined up at the only functional borehole as other boreholes have been left unserviced and unusable, only to receive a mere trickle of water. Keeping our families clean is impossible, especially for our young children who are most vulnerable to cholera and polio infections."

The lack of water forces residents to resort to unsafe alternatives, such as contaminated wells and vendors selling water of questionable quality. This increases the risk of waterborne diseases like cholera, which has already claimed lives in Zimbabwe in recent years. Bulawayo itself witnessed a devastating cholera outbreak in 2018, highlighting the city's vulnerability.

Adding to the grim picture, a polio case was detected in Harare, raising concerns about potential outbreaks due to low vaccination rates and inadequate sanitation. With limited water for hand washing and proper hygiene, the risk of transmission becomes ever greater.

Women are disproportionately burdened by the water crisis. They are often responsible for household chores, including water collection, cooking, and cleaning. This additional workload takes a toll on their health and time, limiting their ability to participate in other activities or earn an income.

Children are also highly vulnerable. Contaminated water can lead to diarrhoea, dehydration, and malnutrition, impacting their health and development. The lack of water for hygiene also increases the risk of skin infections and other illnesses.

"The government and local authorities need to act urgently," says Nqobile Sibanda, a community leader. "They must invest in long-term solutions to the water crisis, such as repairing infrastructure and exploring alternative water sources. But for now, immediate relief is needed. Kade kwakhulunywa ngendaba yeZambezi water khathesi lokhe sithenjiswa iGwayi-Shangani kodwa akukho okuphumayo. Providing safe water points and sanitation facilities, as well as raising awareness about hygiene practices, is crucial to prevent outbreaks and protect our most vulnerable citizens, ngoba bengehluleka ukwenza njalo sizakufa ngeCholera."

"The City of Bulawayo faces a major water crisis. Our dams are terribly low and none of the rivers into them are flowing. This morning I inspected the Umzingwane River upstream of the Umzingwane dam. The river is bone dry and there aren't even puddles. At this time of year one would expect at least puddles," said Senator David Coltart his Worship the mayor of Bulawayo on his X post on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2024.

The water crisis in Bulawayo is a complex issue with far-reaching consequences. It is not only a matter of access to a basic necessity, but also a public health threat with the potential to devastate families and communities. However, the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare is carrying out immunization of all children under the age of 10 years across Zimbabwe.

## **Zimbabweans Face Crushing Squeeze as inflation soars, USD dominates, and Women bear the brunt.**

**Jabulile Siwela**

Everyday life in Zimbabwe has become a desperate struggle as soaring inflation erodes incomes and savings, pushing millions deeper into hardship. Renowned economist Steve Hanke paints a grim picture, estimating the local currency has lost a staggering 95% of its value against the US dollar since December 2023, fuelling triple-digit inflation – one of the highest in the world. This bleak economic reality is forcing households to make agonizing choices for survival.



The sugar tax on all sugar sweetened beverages introduced by the Treasury in the 2024 National budget has seen most commodities being hiked. Mazoe Orange crush, a darling for many Zimbabweans has been hiked sharply from \$3.00 to \$5.10 with manufacturers lamenting the effects of sugar tax and rising production costs.

Majority of workers in Zimbabwe are remunerated in the local currency, yet most of the basic commodities are sold in foreign currency, with the United States dollar being the dominant currency. The central bank late last year conceded that over 80%

of transactions across board are now concluded in USD. This becomes a heavy burden for most citizens as they have to convert their local ZWL earnings to the USD. The parallel rate, which is largely used in the streets, is trading at 1USD: 16 000ZWL while the official bank rate is pegged at 1USD:12 000. Most consumers are forced to convert their hard-earned money using the parallel market rate owing to the hassle one has to go through to obtain USD using the official banking channels.

This further erodes the income of most citizens who have to pay in USD for goods and services,

“Life has become extremely difficult for us, most of the goods are charged in USD yet we receive our salaries largely in local currency. Services are charged in USD, last week I was paying my daughter’s outstanding fees and we were told that payment should be done in USD only, this left me in shock because it was a sudden turn of events as they had said part of the payment can be done in local currency at a prevailing bank rate,” said Ms Londiwe Mafu, lamenting high cost of living.

What has shocked most Zimbabweans is that prices have sharply increased even in United States Dollar, most manufacturers claim that the introduction of raft tax measures and high operational costs have necessitated an increase. Prices of basic commodities are on an upward trend, with some retailers openly rejecting the local currency that has lost 95% value in 3 months in preference of the United States Dollar. Across retail shops in Bulawayo, the price of Pure Drop cooking oil has been sharply hiked to US\$4.20, a loaf of bread up from US\$1.00 to \$1.50, a 2kg Hullets brown sugar now trading at US\$3.50, while a kg of meat is now pegged at US\$6.30. Such has been a heavy burden for most women who have to fend for their families in this tough economic climate.

The informal sector has not been spared from this economic mayhem, women contribute a bulk number of individuals in the informal sector. The price hikes are negatively affecting their businesses as they are also forced to add a mark-up for profit realization. More woes were added as manufacturers were instructed to sell their produce to members with Value Added Tax (VAT) clearance.

The economic environment is not friendly to women in the informal sector as they have to cope with the unstable economic environment. With Zimbabwe’s unemployment rate sitting at an alarming 95%, many Zimbabwean women have been absorbed and found refuge in the informal sector and now they are forced to navigate through economic hardship,

“The economic environment has not been friendly for most of us post October 2018

when we started seeing radical changes in the economic landscape. People losing their jobs due to economic hardships, we started seeing people flocking to the informal sector. The new tax and regulations have pushed prices up, this is a heavy burden to many of us at a time we are expected to fend for our families,” said Mrs Zizhou, an informal trader in the city, concerned about the sharp price hike which has affected a sector that was previously spared from taxation.

## **The Dynamics of the Labor Force: Women, Unpaid Work and gender inequalities**

**Yollander Millin**

The labor force dynamics have undergone significant changes over the years and one aspect that warrants attention is the role of women and their engagement in unpaid work. Globally, women have long been the backbone of households, often balancing their responsibilities within and outside of the home. In this article, we want to probe into the dynamics of the labor force specifically, pertaining to women and the impact of unpaid work, and gender inequalities in the workspace on their professional and personal lives in the marginalized areas in Zimbabwe.

**To begin with, what is unpaid work?**

**Unpaid work** refers to the activities, duties and responsibilities undertaken by individuals that contribute to the functioning and well-being of households and communities but are not remunerated or recognized as employment. This includes household chores such as cleaning and cooking, caregiving, volunteering, and community engagement. Historically, such duties have been predominantly assigned to women. In Zimbabwean communities, this is particularly true as the writer witnessed this in Bulawayo, Cowdray park Suburb. Where the men were reluctantly sitting under a tree drinking intoxicating beverages while women were busy carrying budgets in search for water.



Upon engagement with the locals, it was discovered that the participation of women in unpaid work is based on implicit biases, societal stereotypes and cultural expectations that reinforce the notion that women are solely responsible for unpaid work. These biases perpetuate the subscription of gender roles that limit women's opportunities for career advancement. The men under the tree were very vocal in saying that their beliefs are that women cannot work. One Mr Mahlangu said that his wife did not work, she is just a housewife. He further went on to point out that the chores she does are her responsibility, and he as a man should not be seen doing such. This reinforces the bias that housework should only be subscribed to women.

These biases, coupled with the lack of recognition and value assigned to unpaid work, contribute to the gender wage gap and hinder efforts towards gender equality in the labor force. Many women even in the corporate sector find themselves being expected to clean the office and make tea for their counterparts. The shame in this is that even if they are equally qualified, they will still be expected to do the extra unpaid work, and earn less. Patriarchal norms and traditions that Zimbabweans are socialized in define women as less than men form the basis of unpaid work, putting women at a disadvantage.

In Zimbabwe, women constitute 52% of the population and they constitute between 80 to 90 % of the informal trade sector and yet they still do not have any protection of labor laws, social benefits, sick leave and other benefits. Given this, it is the writers argument that women should be recognized for the work they do and

awarded for it.

Women continue to bear the brunt of unpaid work, despite increasing labor force participation. Balancing responsibilities such as childcare, eldercare, cooking, cleaning, and managing household finances with paid employment can be overwhelming, leading to increased stress and reduced opportunities for professional growth.

The burden of unpaid work faced by women often leads to time poverty. Time poverty relates to subjective chronic experience of having too many things to do and not enough time to do them. As a result, women are then often viewed as less productive and are awarded lower chances for advancement. Further to this, the inequity in unpaid work ultimately results in physical and mental health issues, increased stress levels, and decreased overall well-being. Time poverty can restrict women's ability to participate in decision-making processes, further amplifying gender inequalities.

### **Addressing Gendered Unpaid Work:**

To address the dynamics of the labor force, it is crucial to challenge and reshape societal norms regarding unpaid work. The following steps can help alleviate the burden on women:

1. **Sharing the Responsibility:** Encouraging men and other family members to actively participate in unpaid work can help redistribute the burden and promote gender equality within households.
2. **Workplace Flexibility:** Implementing policies that promote flexible work arrangements and provide support for work-life balance can enable women to better manage their unpaid work alongside their professional ambitions.
3. **Recognizing Unpaid Work:** Governments and institutions should recognize and value unpaid work by developing policies that provide social protection, retirement benefits, and acknowledgment of the skills and contributions acquired through unpaid work.
4. **Education and Awareness:** Promoting gender equality through educational initiatives and creating awareness about the economic and social implications of unpaid work can challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

Women's involvement in unpaid work remains a significant barrier to achieving gender equality in the labor force. Addressing this issue requires a collective effort to

challenge ingrained gender norms and create an environment where unpaid work is equally shared and valued. Only by recognizing and addressing the dynamics of the labor force can we strive for a more inclusive and equitable society.

## Why Having an ID Matters: Unlocking Opportunities and Protecting Your Rights

Lorraine Phiri



Obtaining an identity document (ID) for many young adults, marks a crucial turning point. A new chapter filled with possibilities. But without a valid ID, these opportunities can remain locked away. From education and employment to healthcare and voting, an ID is essential for unlocking your full potential and safeguarding fundamental rights as a citizen. Yet, countless individuals lack this vital document due to various barriers, including missing documentation, unawareness of ID importance, long queues at the Civil Registry and even dislike for temporary "green passes" issued due to civil registry shortages of consumables needed for producing national identity documents.

Nobukhosi Dube recently secured her ID after attending a WILD's access to



documentation (ADT) community awareness outreach in Makokoba

“The process was slow but I am relieved that I finally got an ID. I received a green waiting pass and was told I can come and exchange for the plastic one once they have consumables. I am excited that I can now apply for scholarships, to study and even open a bank account,” she said.

Thabani Ndlovu shared similar sentiments. "Without an ID, I couldn't retake exams or even get considered for employment opportunities," he said. "Now I have hope for a better future."

Unfortunately for Clarisa Ncube who had come to exchange her temporary pass she discovered Pumula Housing Office civil registry center was still facing a shortage of consumables and issuing temporary green passes.

“I wanted to exchange my green waiting pass for a polythene ID card. Some financial institutions and scholarships refuse to acknowledge the temporary ID. "It's frustrating," she voiced, echoing the concerns of many who find these temporary passes limiting their access to certain opportunities.

When one does not possess civil registration documents, they face a lot of challenges. Education becomes impossible without proper enrolment documents, hindering your future prospects. Even basic rights like voting and property ownership are restricted. This lack of documentation creates a vicious cycle of disadvantage, limiting access to healthcare, financial services, and ultimately, a fulfilling life. Get your ID now, even if you receive a temporary green waiting pass. The temporary green pass is accepted as valid proof of identity in many situations but it's important to secure your permanent plastic card as soon as the Civil Registry has consumables. Visit any of the following Civil Registry Centres in Bulawayo to get an ID if you are 16 years old: Emsitheli at Drill Hall, Pumula, Entumbane and Nketa Housing Offices, and Tredgold Civil Registry Office.

## **Zimbabwe combats new Polio threat after decades of progress**

**Thabiso Sibanda**

Polio, short for poliomyelitis, is a highly infectious disease caused by the poliovirus, which can spread from person to person, damaging the central nervous system and motor neurons, resulting in flaccid paralysis.

The transmission route of polio is from person to person mainly through contact with contaminated faecal matter and is prevented by immunisation. While anyone can contract polio, individuals who are not fully vaccinated against the disease are most vulnerable. Children who have not completed the recommended vaccination schedule are particularly vulnerable as their immune system is still developing. Adults who have not been vaccinated or have not received all recommended doses are also susceptible, especially if they travel to areas with higher polio risk.



### Historical Context

Polio was first recorded in Zimbabwe in the early 20th century during the colonial period. At that time, vaccines existed but were largely inaccessible to the majority of the population due to colonial policies. Following independence, Zimbabwe prioritized healthcare and vaccination campaigns. Polio cases significantly declined in the 1980s and early 1990s owing to the gains of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) and the GOBI-FFF program (Growth, Oral Rehydration Therapy, Breastfeeding, Immunization, and Family Planning) increased vaccination coverage and reduced childhood mortality, including from polio.

## **Current Situation**

While Zimbabwe eradicated wild poliovirus (WPV) in 1986 and achieved polio-free status in 2005, a new challenge has emerged. In October 2023, the country detected seventeen circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) in environmental samples collected from Harare. This sparked swift action, with the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC) declaring a public health emergency in October 2023. The samples were from four polio environmental surveillance sites in Harare. The events that followed saw a declaration of the polio outbreak as a public health emergency by the Minister of Health and Child Care within the same month of its discovery.

## **Responding to the cVDPV2 Outbreak**

In response to the recent polio threat, Zimbabwe has intensified vaccination campaigns, targeted high-risk populations, and strengthened surveillance systems. The government, in collaboration with international partners and organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, has made strides towards containing the outbreak and preventing further transmission of the virus. To contain the outbreak, Zimbabwe launched a two-part vaccination campaign using novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2). During a press conference held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2024, the Deputy Minister of Health and Child Care, Hon Sleiman Timios Kwidini highlighted that health centers and workers nationwide had received 4.2 million vaccines, earmarked for distribution. The initial vaccination phase took place from February 20 to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2024, whilst the second phase is expected to be rolled out between March 19 to 29, 2024.

## **The Ongoing Risk:**

Despite ongoing efforts, the risk of poliovirus spreading within Zimbabwe and neighboring countries remains high. As such there is need for the Government, Civil Society actors, private sector and the society at large to maximise efforts to address vaccine hesitancy amongst communities. Misinformation and conspiracy theories surrounding vaccines can contribute to low vaccination rates in some communities – especially the religious sects, leaving children vulnerable to the polio infection. Continued vigilance and support for the vaccination campaign are crucial to prevent further outbreaks.

## **Preventive Measures**

To safeguard the gains made in polio eradication and prevent future outbreaks,

Zimbabwe should focus on the following preventive measures:

1. **Strengthening Routine Immunization:** The health sector should ensure that all children receive the required doses of polio vaccine through routine immunization services, as it is essential for maintaining immunity levels in the population.
2. **Community Engagement:** Health workers, the media and society should continue to sensitize and build trust with communities through education, awareness campaigns, and engagement with local leaders as it is crucial for addressing vaccine hesitancy and ensuring high vaccination coverage.
3. **Improve Water and Sanitation Hygiene Services:** The Government and Local Authorities should maintain proper sanitation facilities and practices to prevent the spread of the virus through contaminated water and human waste. Access to clean and safe drinking water should be prioritized as the citizen's health and human rights.
4. **Surveillance and Response:** surveillance systems should be enhanced to detect and respond to potential polio cases quickly as this is critical for preventing outbreaks and maintaining polio-free status.

## **Ministry of Health and Child Care Weekly Disease Surveillance Report for the week ending 11 February**

### **Common Diarrhoea Cases**

About 7 648 common diarrhoea cases and 5 (five) deaths were reported on the week ending 11 February 2024. The deaths were reported from Sally Mugabe Central Hospital (3) in Harare Province, Chivi District (1) in Masvingo Province and Tsholotsho District (1) in Matabeleland North Province. Of the reported cases, 2 960 (38.7%) were from under the age 5. The provinces that reported the highest number of cases were Mashonaland Central Province (1233) and Mashonaland East Province (1146). The cumulative figures for common diarrhoea are 42 857 cases and 16 deaths.

### **Malaria**

1 027 malaria cases and one death were on the week ending 11 February 2024. The death was reported from Mount Darwin District (1) in Mashonaland Central Province. Of the reported cases, 121 (11.8%) were under five years of age. The provinces that reported the highest number of cases were Mashonaland Central (515) and Manicaland (270). The cumulative figures for malaria cases are 5 365 and 6

deaths.

### Influenza Cases

7 093 suspected influenza cases and no deaths week ending 11 February 2024. The provinces that reported the highest number of suspected influenza cases were Mashonaland East (2 024) and Mashonaland Central (1 994). The cumulative figures for influenza are 32 446 and 3 deaths.

### Cholera Analysis

As of 21 February 2024, the Ministry of Health and Child Care reports that Zimbabwe had 25 500 suspected Cholera cases, 2 695 confirmed cases, 24 797 recoveries, 71 confirmed deaths and 473 suspected deaths. As of 20 February 2024, 2 099 497 people had received the Oral Cholera Vaccine.

Province	Cumulative Suspected Cases (New)	Cumulative RDT+ for Screening (New)	Cumulative Culture Confirmed (New)	Cumulative Recovered Cases (New)	Cases (In-Care)	Cumulative Culture Deaths (New)	Cumulative Suspected Deaths (New)
Bulawayo	31(0)	18(0)	7(2)	28(0)	2	0(0)	1(0)
Chitungwiza	1 928 (14)	311(1)	54(0)	1 887(9)	8	9(0)	24(0)
Harare	8 474(13)	8(0)	863(0)	8 397(13)	8	4(0)	65(0)
Manicaland	6 059(2)	40(0)	1163(0)	5 892(12)	12	35(0)	120(0)
Mash Cent	2 478(42)	282(0)	107(0)	2 334(35)	59	2(0)	83(1)
Mash East	1 010(8)	560(0)	148(0)	987(5)	14	2(0)	7(0)
Mash West	1 283(23)	825(23)	108(0)	1 206(26)	31	3(0)	43(2)
Masvingo	2 852(17)	105(0)	39(0)	2 738(22)	22	11(0)	81(0)
Mat North	275(0)	81(0)	30(0)	269(1)	0	0(0)	6(0)
Mat South	457(1)	85(0)	155(0)	447(0)	2	5(0)	3(0)
Midlands	653(0)	90(0)	23(0)	612(0)	1	0(0)	40(0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 500(120)</b>	<b>2 405(24)</b>	<b>2 695(0)</b>	<b>24 797(123)</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>71(0)</b>	<b>473(3)</b>

## 9 Things to remove from your CV in 2024

- 1. Career Objective:** Avoid starting your CV with a generic career objective that focuses on what you seek rather than highlighting your value to the role. You can include an objective if you are doing a career pivot or if you are a fresh graduate.
- 2. Personal Information:** Omit details like ID number, dependents, health info, date of birth, marital status, and religion. Adding this information on a CV may pose a concern for discrimination during the recruitment process.
- 3. Photo:** Unless appearance is crucial for the job like the hospitality industry, exclude photos to prevent bias and keep the focus on your skills and experience. Some countries may require photos so you need to also do your research.



**4. Additional Documents:** Do not combine certificates, ID copies, etc., with your CV. Keep your CV as a stand alone file. Combining the documents may disadvantage you especially in this era of using ATS bots during initial screening.

**5. Graphics:** This may make your CV clumsy or too beautiful but lacking proper value based content. Also some ATS systems may struggle with graphics, so skip logos, charts, and tables that could hinder initial scanning.

**6. Unimportant information:** Remove cover pages, titles like "Curriculum Vitae of...", and anything that does not contribute to a concise, impactful CV. Remember a Recruiter has 6-8 seconds to skim through your CV in order to make a decision so you need to make it short and straight to the point.

**7. Long Paragraphs:** Break information into bullet points for readability. Keep introductory summaries and responsibilities brief. Also, don't make the bullets too long.

**8. Life Story:** Your CV is not a Wikipedia page or biography. Focus on a clear structure and a succinct Unique Value Proposition, resembling a website's landing page.

**9. Work Email Address:** Using your current employer's email is unprofessional. Opt

for a personal email to maintain a polished image.

Source: Jobify

## Opportunities

Are you ready to embark on an exciting journey towards new opportunities and personal growth? Listed below are interesting opportunities you could apply for. Do not hesitate - Seize the opportunities and apply today!

### Click Opportunity to Apply

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3. [Master of Leadership and Governance](#)
4. [4th cohort Africa CDC and Kofi Annan Global Health Leadership Programme](#)
5. [World Bank Junior Professional Associates Program](#)
6. [Government of Ireland Fully Funded Scholarships 2024 for Bachelors, Masters, and PhD!](#)
7. [Internet Society Early Career Fellowship](#)
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