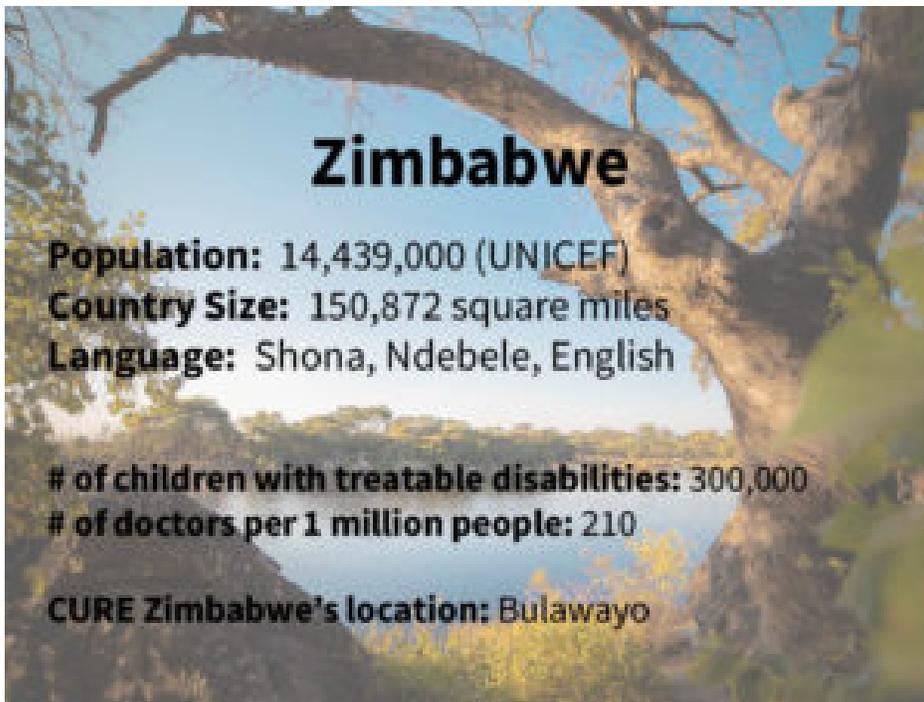


# The need for children’s medical care in Zimbabwe

Jun 14, 2021 · By Joel Witwer · [Reflections](#)



Zimbabwe is one of the pillar nations of southern Africa. Zimbabwe is named after the imposing fortress Great Zimbabwe, which is the largest ancient structure south of the Sahara Desert. The country has also been called “the breadbasket of Africa,” exporting its crops and minerals all over Africa and the world.



This was up until the early 2000s when Zimbabwe’s economy collapsed. By 2008, the country was at the peak of what is known as a “hyperinflation” event, when the price of basic goods skyrocketed. At one point, the Zimbabwe Reserve Bank was issuing notes as large as 100 trillion Zimbabwe Dollars, and a loaf of bread alone could cost up to 550 million dollars if the stores even stocked it, or 10 billion dollars on the black market. Since then, Zimbabwe has experienced multiple hyperinflation events.

As you might expect, an economic collapse doesn’t just affect businesses and cities. It wreaks havoc on every level of society, especially those which are already vulnerable, such as the estimated 300,000 Zimbabwean children living with treatable disabilities.

A person’s salary might be consistent, but with the cost of everyday items skyrocketing, it’s even harder to make ends meet. CURE Zimbabwe Executive Director Jonathan Simpson explains that hyperinflation drastically reduces the population’s financial security.

So what begins to happen is that families begin to sell movable assets ... In Zimbabwe, that has happened month after month, year after year. A family can sell a TV this month. They can sell a cow that month. After five or six months, they end up selling a bed.” And on and on it goes. The point is that it gets to the stage where a family cannot dispose of any other assets and have nothing left in the bank.

Jonathan points out that in situations like these, everyday expenses like education and even food become luxuries. And when things like feeding your family become a luxury, elective surgeries are not even considered. The harsh truth of the situation is you can live with a disability, but you can't live without food.

Even for children from families who have the means to pay for medical treatment, their situation is still not straightforward. CURE Zimbabwe's Doctor in Charge, Dr. Collen Msasanure, explains that there are limited surgical resources in Zimbabwe, and few are directed specifically for children. Dr. Collen explains that with limited resources, priority is often given to adult victims of orthopedic trauma. “Most trauma victims are breadwinners...You would want to sort out the breadwinner so that they can go back home and look after their families.” The elective nature of orthopedic surgery takes a backseat to more emergency cases, and this is where the resources are allocated. Thus, conditions like clubfoot are often never treated.

As an unfortunate result, many children with treatable disabilities will never get the surgery they need, like [Sean](#), who had his leg broken when he was hit by a car. For months, Sean's family searched for help for him, and after failing to be a priority in Zimbabwe, Sean traveled to neighboring South Africa in search of the surgery there. While he did find a place capable of giving him his surgery, it was far too expensive to be a realistic solution for him and his family.



Sean after surgery at CURE Zimbabwe

Thankfully in 2021, CURE Children's Hospital of Zimbabwe opened its doors, and Sean was admitted as the second patient for the hospital. After Sean's surgery was complete, CURE's estimate of Zimbabwean children living with treatable disabilities was down to 369,998. Even with two checked off, this seems to be an insurmountable number. And frankly, it is if we were to try it alone. Here at CURE, we depend on you to partner with us to do what Jesus has called us to do in Luke 9:2 “proclaim the kingdom of God and heal the sick.” Your monthly Hero contribution won't single-handedly bring the ticker down to zero, but if we all partner together, we can transform the lives of children in Zimbabwe — one kid at a time.

To connect with a child at CURE Zimbabwe today, [click here](#).

To support life-changing surgery for a child and become a CURE Hero, [click here](#).