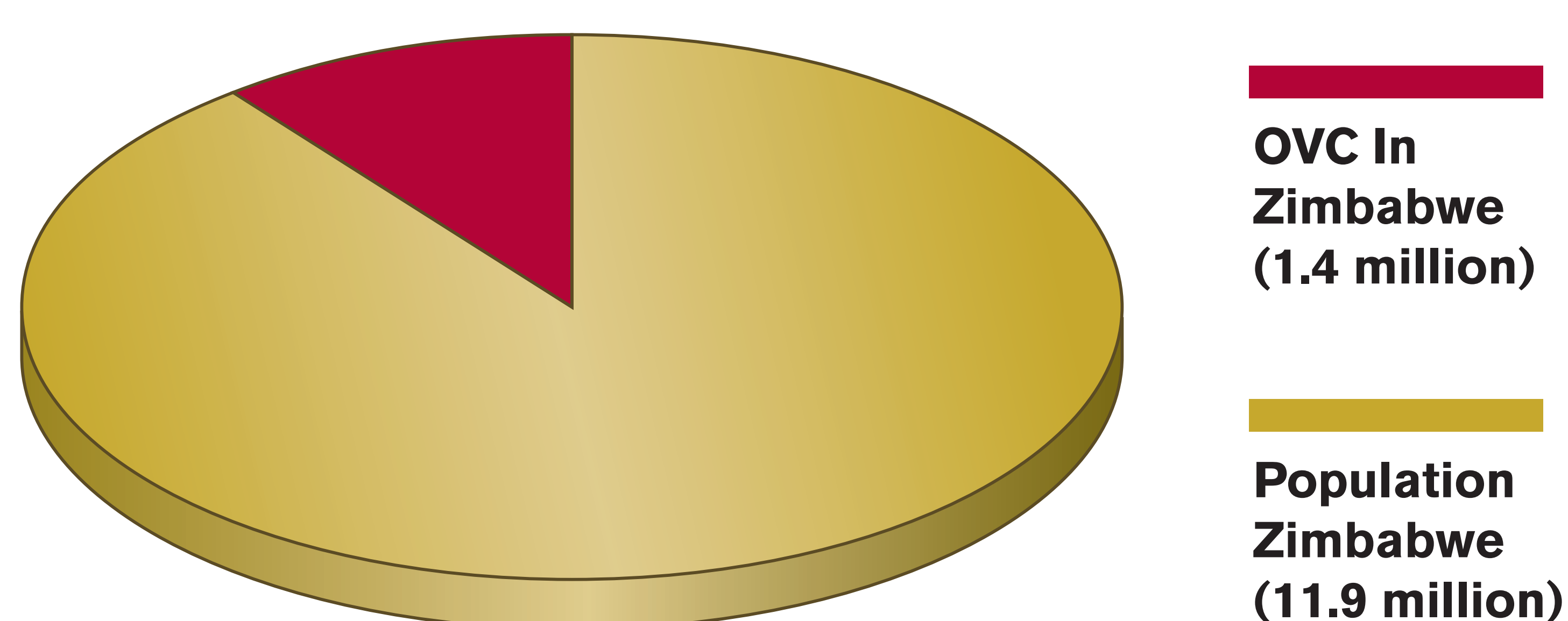


SUPPORTING LOCAL SOLUTIONS: HARNESSING PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT FOR ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN ZIMBABWE

Introduction

Zimbabwe has an estimated 1,400,000 orphans (UNICEF 2005), 80% of whom are orphaned by AIDS. The needs of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) are immense and a major challenge is getting resources directly to households and communities who are directly responsible for OVC.

OVC as Percentage of Population of Zimbabwe



Description

The Mercy Corps OVC Community Fund (OVCCF) efficiently transfers resources to households supporting OVC by offering small grants and fund management skills to untraditional grantees such as Child Protection Committees, School Development Committees, prayer groups and women's clubs. Communities use available funds for basic needs such as school uniforms, clinic fees, hygiene items or supplementary feeding. The Fund compliments government, UN and other NGO work, but is designed to more efficiently target and transfer resources directly to children.

PROGRAM STATISTICS:

- Grants awarded in past 12 months: **72**
- Average size of grant: **\$550 USD**
- Number of OVC supported: **5,000**
- OVC supported that are female: **60%**



Funding for the OVCCF is generated by a private sector partnership between Mercy Corps and two major Zimbabwe banks: Kingdom Bank through its microfinance subsidiary Micro King Savings and Credit Company and Stanbic Bank. Stanbic Bank and Micro King Finance provide a percentage of their loan interest to support the OVCCF in exchange for documentation of the support the OVCCF provides to children, which the banks use to promote their corporate responsibility to shareholders.

MERCY CORPS HIV/AIDS PROGRAMS AROUND THE GLOBE

Since 2004, our HIV/AIDS interventions have ranged from empowerment of people living with HIV/AIDS in Uzbekistan, to prevention with war-affected youth in Liberia, to increasing access to needed health services for indigenous populations in remote rural areas in Guatemala. In all of these interventions we seek to combat stigma and deliver hope; emphasizing grassroots collaborations and involving local partners around the world.

Lessons Learned

Community Funds are an effective and efficient way to respond to the OVC crisis because they:

- Are simple to plan, implement and monitor
- Leverage private financial and technical resources
- Empower and motivate community groups
- Improve psychosocial well-being of OVC because they feel valued by the community
- Can respond to the unique needs of individual OVC



Next Steps

Mercy Corps plans to broaden the support base of the OVCCF by increasing the number of private sector players contributing to the fund and by replicating this approach in other areas of the country to efficiently channel private support to an increased number of OVC.

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Mercy Corps works amid disasters, conflicts, chronic poverty and instability to unleash the potential of people who can win against nearly impossible odds. Since 1979, Mercy Corps has provided \$1 billion in assistance to people in 82 nations.