

GIVE WITH TRÓCAIRE

Teacher Note: Zimbabwe is the focus country for our resources this year. Emphasise that the experience of Thandekile in the case study is only one story from Zimbabwe, and does not represent everyone’s experience. Emphasise the support role of Trócaire here, and that we work with local partners, like Caritas Bulawayo, to support people to take control of their lives and circumstances.

Case Study Activities

Distribute Thandekile’s Story case study. After the students have read the case study, ask them to suggest the three words that come to their mind. Write these words on the board, or on sticky notes and place on the board or a sheet of paper. Alternatively, if the students have access to phones, tablets or computers, consider using a word cloud site, like [Mentimeter](#).



Thandekile and her children are living in a very complex situation. They are facing not just one issue, but many.

Ask the students: How does the daily experience of Thandekile and her family compare to your life? Guide the students to identify similarities and differences, and to suggest reasons why. For example, they may draw a comparison between the experience of going to school during the pandemic in Zimbabwe and Ireland. Encourage students to identify the similarities (face masks) and the differences (access to vaccines).

Supporting People and Families in Zimbabwe

Watch [Impact of Covid-19: Zimbabwe Crisis 2020](#), which looks at Trócaire’s work in Zimbabwe.



- Ask the students to list the particular impacts of Covid-19 on people in Zimbabwe.
- Are these impacts similar to or different from the impacts felt by people in Ireland during the pandemic?



Watch [Surviving through Covid-19 in Zimbabwe](#).

- In what way is Trócaire’s partner, Caritas Zimbabwe, supporting people in Zimbabwe through Covid-19?
- Ask the students their view on the method of support.
- What actions can we take in Ireland that would have a positive impact on the lives of the people in Zimbabwe who are struggling in the face of climate change and Covid-19?



Partnership is a key aspect of Trócaire’s work in Zimbabwe, and all over the world. Trócaire has been a partnership organisation since its foundation in 1973, and partnership is at the heart of how Trócaire works. Partnership is also central to achieving the SDGs. It is essential that everyone works together to achieve the SDGs, through creating partnerships and working in partnership towards the goals.





Thandekile (31) with her daughter, Nomatter (11), and son, Forward (8), inside their house in Zimbabwe. Photo credit: Cynthia R. Matonhodze

THANDEKILE'S STORY

Thandekile is a thirty-one-year-old widow who lives with her two children, Nomatter (11) and Forward (8), in the Matabeleland South Province of Zimbabwe.

Thandekile's husband, Donovan, worked in South Africa and sent money back to the family, which Thandekile added to through her own work buying and selling various goods from South Africa. The arrival of Covid-19 was catastrophic for the family. Donovan for a time lost his job because of the pandemic. He later contracted the virus and tragically died.

Climate Change

Circumstances were already difficult for Thandekile and her family. The effects of climate change, including three droughts and a severe cyclone in the past five years, mean that crops are failing, affecting the family's ability to feed themselves. Even before Covid-19, Thandekile and her family were facing hunger as droughts and heavy rainfall caused their plants and crops to fail. The family would often go nights without eating, as food was not always available in their community. The impact of Covid-19 has compounded these effects, and Thandekile and her family now rely on outside help for survival. Women, the primary producers of food, have also faced increased levels of gender-

based violence during the pandemic, with a 60 per cent increase in reports of gender-based violence incidents to service providers during the 2020 lockdown. Thandekile has seen how damaging this can be.

Covid-19

Covid-19 has had other impacts on the children quite aside from the tragedy of their father's death. Nomatter said, 'During the lockdown schools were closed. We stayed for a long period of time at home, helping by doing household chores. Now we are going to school but for just three days in a week instead of the usual five days. We are told to wash our hands all the time. We always wear masks in class and around the school. When we arrive at school, the teacher checks our temperature and sanitises our hands. I do not like masks; they are hot and sometimes the teacher cannot hear me when I talk with a mask on. I do not like Covid and I pray it goes away.'

Bothwell Maromo is a teacher at Nomatter's primary school and says that Covid-19 has had a huge psychological impact on the teachers and

children. 'We were all afraid we were going to die or to lose our relatives. Socially, we couldn't visit our relatives. The school closed for over six months and only opened for three months in 2020. This was a big challenge as the new curriculum had just been introduced in 2020 and the children did not get to cover much of it. It greatly affected the children. At home, they didn't have a chance to read books during those six months. Some students forgot how to read.'

However, the pandemic has perhaps had an influence on what Nomatter wants to do in the future. 'I wish to be a nurse so that I help the sick,' she said, smiling and brightening up immediately when she speaks of the future. She wishes to be a nurse at the local hospital. She understands that nurses help the community by helping the sick and she would like to do the same.

Hope for a Brighter Future

Determined to provide for her two children, Thandekile began buying and selling women's clothes in order to make money. 'My wish is to be able to provide for all their needs, so I hope that my business will grow. My hope is that my children will be able to continue in school and be successful in life.' Trócaire has been working in Zimbabwe since 1980 in areas such as humanitarian aid, food security, women's empowerment and human rights issues. In



Forward (8) wears a mask and gets his temperature checked before entering his school. Photo credit: Cynthia R. Matonhodze

Thandekile's community, Trócaire, with our partner Caritas Bulawayo, operates community gardens in which local people can plant vegetables, store seeds and learn about watershed management and planting methods. The garden is also used for Covid-19 awareness training.

Thandekile says, 'The greatest gift that people can give to one another in life is food and money, because we need it to survive. What gives me hope is that I am still alive despite all that we have been through as a family. Whatever the problems you have been through in life, it is important to dust yourself off and move on, have hope and work hard for the children even if it's very difficult. I thank the people of Ireland for all the help you give to us. Please do not tire.'

Nomatter (11) and her brother, Forward (8), walking to school, Zimbabwe. Photo credit: Cynthia R. Matonhodze

