

Japan Funds Six Grassroots Projects to Improve Human Security for Vulnerable People

The Government of Japan has decided to fund six projects to improve the human security of vulnerable groups in Zimbabwe through NGOs.

The six grassroots projects are in the fields of landmine clearance, education, and health. They will be carried out in different parts of the country, including Rushinga, Mudzi, Hwedza, Bikita and Lupane districts. The agreements for the projects were signed on 19th March 2024 between H.E. Mr Shinichi Yamanaka, Ambassador of Japan to Zimbabwe, and the heads of the six implementing NGOs.

The Project for Mine Clearance in Mashonaland Central Province and Mashonaland East Province will be implemented by The HALO Trust, with funding of US\$ 507,019. Japan has been supporting HALO to clear landmines in Zimbabwe since 2013. The new project will continue Japan's support of five demining teams removing landmines in Rushinga and Mudzi districts for a year. The Government of Zimbabwe and HALO are aiming for Zimbabwe to become a landmine-free country by 2025, and the achievement of this goal will make a huge difference to the lives of people in the border areas. People will be able to have access to land for farming and raising livestock as well as water, and children will be able to walk to school without fear of landmines.

The Project for Construction of School Buildings in Vamba Primary School in Hwedza District will be carried out by SOS Children's Village, with US\$ 72,000 provided. SOS Children's Village has been working with the Government of Zimbabwe to provide education for vulnerable children. At present, the educational environment of Vamba Primary School is inadequate, as there are insufficient classrooms and toilets. The funds will support the construction of two additional classroom blocks and a new toilet block. This will greatly benefit the school children and teachers, allowing them to have lessons in a suitable environment, and will allow more children to join the school.

Two projects will involve the provision of second-hand ambulances from Japan, the procurement being carried out by a Japanese NGO called The Society for Promotion of Japanese Diplomacy. Firstly, the Project for Provision of Two Second-Hand Ambulances for Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Examination throughout Zimbabwe will be implemented by WizEar Trust with US\$ 39,363 provided in funding. WizEar Trust will conduct regular ear treatment clinics in eight provinces for local people who cannot afford to go to a clinic, as well as conducting outreach activities to raise awareness of ENT issues. Secondly, the Project for Provision of Two Second-Hand Ambulances for Emergency Medical Services at Silveira Mission Hospital in Bikita District will be implemented by SolidarMed, with US\$ 39,198 in funding. There have been no functional ambulances at the hospital for the past four years due to financial difficulties. The vehicles will play a crucial role in providing emergency medical services for approximately 400 people each year, including expectant mothers.

The Project for Provision of Medical Equipment for Ophthalmic Examination and Treatment will be conducted by SightSavers, with US\$ 72,910 provided in funding. The organisation has expanded its activities in Zimbabwe since 2013 by providing people with eye examination and treatment, working with the Ministry of Health and Child Care. The funding will allow the purchase of medical equipment for eye examinations and surgeries at St Lukes Hospital in Lupane District. This medical equipment will be purchased from a Japanese company, OUI Inc., allowing easier and more accurate ophthalmic diagnosis and treatment. The equipment will help to overcome eye diseases and blindness among vulnerable people.

Finally, the Project for Construction of School Buildings in Gobakhulu Primary School, also in Lupane District, will be carried out by Hand in Hand Zimbabwe with US\$ 71,999 USD provided in funding. The funding will allow construction of two new classroom blocks of two classrooms each and a teachers' house. Currently in this area, approximately a hundred children do not have access to education due to the school's limited capacity. In addition, there are insufficient teachers at the school as the school has inadequate housing and is located in a remote area. The additional classroom blocks and teachers' house will ensure children in the community can receive a proper education.

At the signing ceremony, Ambassador Yamanaka expressed the significance of the grant and his hope that the six projects would make a positive impact in the respective communities. He further emphasised the importance of the commitment of each organisation to fully and thoroughly implement their projects for the benefit of the communities, as this would open up more possibilities and hopes for the future generations of Zimbabwe.

The Grant Assistance for Grassroots and Human Security Projects is a scheme which provides support to improve basic human needs, such as education, health, food and nutrition security, and water, sanitation and hygiene. It was launched in Zimbabwe in 1989, and 156 projects have been implemented so far, with funding totalling over US\$ 16 million.

(Photos below)



Group photo



Ambassador's remarks



The HALO Trust signing



SOS Children's Villages signing



Hand in Hand Zimbabwe signing



SightSavers signing



WizEar Trust signing



SolidarMed signing