In 2013, Zimbabwe's National HIV and AIDS Care and Treatment Programme estimated that the nation had 170,000 children under age 15 living with HIV/AIDS. Even more disconcerting, only 44 percent of these children are on antiretroviral treatment, compared with 72 percent of adults. The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is committed to reaching orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and seeks to link those who have HIV/AIDS to care and treatment programs and to prevent infection among those who do not have HIV. The Department of State's Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy (S/GAC) provides funding to USAID and other U.S. government implementing agencies to implement PEPFAR in partner countries.

PEPFAR's 2014 report "Strategies for Identifying and Linking HIV-Infected Infants, Children, and Adolescents to HIV Care and Treatment" made clear to PEPFAR OVC Specialist Alpha Chapendama that the OVC program needed innovation and aggressiveness in identifying and linking children to HIV care. Chapendama, a USAID-employed Zimbabwean, assessed the level of OVC access data in high-HIV areas and knew current efforts would not meet her country's need to find and test OVCs. The data, she said, showed "we were not having a lot of children tested. So, we sat down and said, 'what can we do differently?'"

"Through PEPFAR and our partnerships with the many good people and institutions working on health care in Zimbabwe, we can help the country save the lives of its most vulnerable."
- Ambassador Wharton

The USAID OVC program and pediatric treatment program in Zimbabwe then worked with partners to review district-level data on HIV testing among children. Program officials examined the