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UNITED NATIONS
ZAMBIA



NEWS LETTER



**STOP STIGMA,
HELP TO END COVID-19**



Ms Lulu Hangala-Wood
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Foreword from the Resident Coordinator



I welcome you to the UN Zambia Newsletter covering the period January – March 2021. We appreciate your continued readership and interest to keep abreast of our interventions in support of Zambia's development priorities.

In this issue, we highlight continued UN Zambia response to the COVID-19 pandemic where UN agencies are Delivering as One to support Zambia overcome the health and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. This support has been made possible through the generous support and partnerships of our donors and other cooperating partners. One special highlight around the response is the MaskUpZambia Campaign on which we partnered with the Ministry of Health to encourage community members to consistently and correctly wear masks and fight COVID-19.

Other stories in this issue touch on UN Zambia support on women's empowerment, COVID-19 Cash Transfers, the fight against Gender Based Violence, our response to Climate Change and how we are supporting communities become more resilient. Apart from disability inclusion, we have also featured stories on digital financial services and maternal and newborn health.

Please do not hesitate to give us your feedback on any of the stories you will read or indeed about how we can better serve your reading needs going forward.

Thank you and happy reading.
Dr. Coumba Mar Gadio

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Ministry of Health and United Nations join forces on #MaskUpZambia campaign



With the second wave in full flow and widespread concern about lack of adherence to public health guidance, on 6 February 2021, the Minister of Health Honourable Dr Jonas Chanda MP launched the #MaskUpZambia initiative with the United Nations to promote regular and correct masking in public places.

Over the next few weeks, hundreds of Zambians, notably young people, used their social media channels to post photos of themselves wearing a mask and spreading the word with the hashtag. The campaign saw participation from sport personalities like Patson Daka and Enock Mwepu; musicians like Wezi, B.Flow, Esther Chungu; celebrities including Lulu Haangala-Wood and Simon Mwewa; as well as online influencers, diplomats, and hundreds of young people.

“A great campaign to get behind because COVID is still very present in

our communities,” said Zambian footballer star Patson Daka. “Let’s remember to always mask up whenever we move around as well as observing social distancing.”

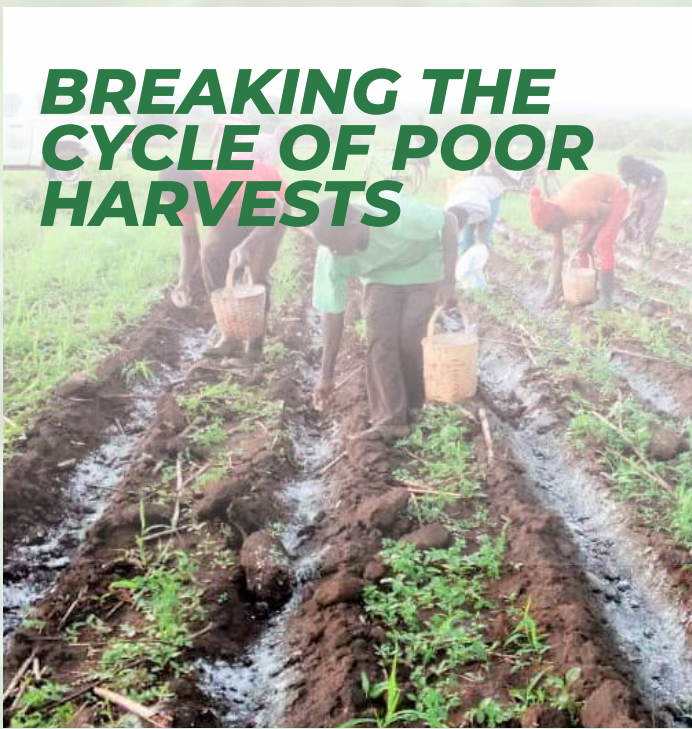
Many different organisations joined the campaign online including the Zambia Red Cross, World Vision, Save the Children, Lifeline/Childline, as well as youth associations, the media and private companies. Within a few days the campaign was officially trending on Twitter, made the ZNBC evening news and Facebook was particularly popular for posts.

“Our mask up Zambia campaign has seen many of our community heroes and celebrities alike come out on different social media platforms to support the movement. I thank you all for the part you continue to play in ending COVID-19 and urge you not to relent in your efforts,” said the Minister of Health at the end of the first week of the campaign.

The simple campaign was explained using attractive social media cards, and backed up with offline outreach, and included stickers, t-shirts and billboards.



BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POOR HARVESTS



Farmer Field Schools are helping Zambia's small-scale farmers and their communities become better equipped with knowledge and capacity to adapt and turn climate risks into climate resilience.

For years, Kennedy Chilepa struggled to eke out a living growing maize and cowpeas on his farm in Zambia's Mambwe District, where crop yields often take a big hit due to severe dry spells and floods, jeopardizing food security.

Chilepa and many small-scale farmers in the country's east had long relied on traditional farming methods to manage their crops. But such traditional know-how has become increasingly unreliable and are no longer sufficient to cope with a changing climate.

Unable to rely anymore on their outdated methods, Chilepa knows one way to save his farm in Ncheka Village is to sign up to the Farmer Field School in his village and learn how climate change impacts their farming and how to adapt to erratic weather.

"At first, it was a difficult decision for me because I didn't believe in anything called climate change. After participating in the Farmer Field School, I now know the benefits of converting to these new ways of farming are many and they are worth the time", the 44-years-old said.

EFFORTS TO HELP

To help remedy the situation, a project financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the world's largest dedicated climate fund, is helping small-scale farmers cope with worsening climate change impacts in Zambia. Led by the Zambian Ministry of Agriculture, the Farmer Field School initiative operates under the aegis of a project locally known as SCRALA. The partnership with the government was mobilised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through a coalition involving the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Under the GCF-funded SCRALA project, 76 Farmer Field Schools have since been established in eight districts - Mambwe, Nyimba, Mafinga, Chama, Luangwa, Rufunsa, Chongwe and Chirundu - with each school comprising between 30 to 35 participants. The project has so far trained 2,300 small-scale farmers to locally identified and prioritized adaptation practices and it's looking to expand the initiative to eight other districts namely, Kazungula, Siavonga, Gwembe, Namwala, Sesheke, Shangombo, Senanga and Mulobezi this year.

The Farmer Field Schools (FFS) are experimental learning centres designed to foster uptake of best practices. They also aim to train and build capacity of extension officers and provide information to small-scale farmers on agriculture resilience including information on diversification of crops and livelihoods.

The SCRALA project has deployed 15 United Nations Volunteers who are working with farming communities in 16 drought and flood-prone districts - promoting alternative livelihood practices and sustainable farming techniques to fend off climate change and improve food security.





WEATHER FORECAST

With 20 more automated weather stations added to the existing 68 stations under a previous UNDP-supported project, the Zambia Meteorological Department is taking important steps to give farmers accurate and easily digestible weather information, tailored to specific locations, which will allow farmers to plan better and optimise the planting season.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Department holds forums where they share forecasts and agro- meteorological tips on how farmers can prepare for the coming farming season. These improved agro-meteorological tips are giving small-scale farmers the support they need to strengthen resilience and better prepare for more frequent climate shocks.

GAME CHANGER

"I don't have to wait on rainfall to grow my crops these days. I now harvest two times more from the same field I used to prior to joining the Farmer Field School. My household has enough food to eat and sell," Kennedy Chilepa said.

Farmer Beauty Sakala, a 59-year-old single mother from Kakwiya Village almost lost interest in farming when she realised that more erratic weather was making agriculture an unreliable source of income. But these days, her garden is green and fertile, and she produces twice as much after joining the Farmer Field School. "I am now making a living for my family planting vegetables that grow quickly and require less water that can fetch me more money than maize," Beauty brags.

WOMEN TAKE THE LEAD

Women constitute more than half of Zambia's population of 18 million people and their leadership in agriculture is increasingly being recognized as key to adapting to climate change in the country. Women make up more than 70 percent of the agricultural labour force in Zambia and play a critical role in enhancing food security and nutrition, as they are the mainstay of agricultural production. They are playing a strong role in adapting new technology, spreading information, and urging action.

Two of those who have stepped up in Mambwe

District are Bridget Nyirenda and Mary Mbale. With their histories of dismal harvests plus the knowledge they gained from the Farmer Field School, both women are on the frontline cascading this valuable knowledge to other women farmers in their villages - helping them identify available management options to mitigate climate related risks.

"I am very lucky to participate in the Farmer Field School. I will share the knowledge with as many women as possible so that they too can improve their harvests and make a better living," Bridget said.

"Without the knowledge to cope with this ever-changing weather, one can die of hunger. We really needed this knowledge to help us beat bad weather and grow more food," Mary said.

These farmers have proved the most open to trying new ideas to deal with climate-stress - even when they have been taunted for attending training sessions. The knowledge gained from the hands-on group learning and on-farm demonstrations enables farmers to make their own locally specific decisions about crop management practices.

"This has resulted in sustainable development benefits, as these vulnerable farmers and their families have seen increases in income and enhanced food security, leading to health and environmental co-benefit," said Turnbull Chama who coordinates the SCRALA Farmer Field School initiative under FAO.



EMBRACING FIELD BASED LEARNING

“The current farmer to extension worker ratio in Zambia stands at about 1000:1; and this is against an ideal and internationally recommended ratio of about 400:1. Therefore, in an effort to improve extension service delivery, the Government of the Republic of Zambia, has been promoting the formation of Farmer Field Schools, as this is an innovative approach that groups farmers together, in order to increase the coverage of extension service delivery,” Zyambo said.

Approximately 90 percent Zambia’s rural population depend on rainfed agriculture for a living, making them highly vulnerable to more extreme weather associated with climate change, agricultural experts say.

The goal of the SCRALA project is to improve farming yields, reduce poverty and bolster food security in a country where, during times of peak production, up to 60 percent of the country’s staple crop, maize, is grown by small-scale farmers, according to government figures.

Zambia continues to witness an increase in both the frequency and intensity of climate and weather shocks, resulting in more rural households being locked in the poverty cycle, particularly small-scale farmers. Experts say this trend will continue and likely get worse through the rest of this century.

Zambia’s agriculture sector has been identified as key to unlocking economic growth and it provides the main support for Zambia’s rural economy. About 48.9 percent of the Zambian population depends on agriculture, primarily through smallholder production for their livelihoods and employment, and the sector is estimated to contribute 4.8 percent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2017. Songowayo Zyambo, the Ministry of Agriculture Permanent Secretary, is confident such grounded, field-based learning will help farmers adapt to the country’s shifting climate.

In spite of this affirmative action, agriculture analysts say major facets of gender inequalities still exist, especially among rural women employed in

the agriculture sector, who constitute 76 percent of the agricultural labour force. These include women’s limited access to and control over productive resources, services and markets.

“As the largest service provider in the UN system supporting countries on climate change adaptation and mitigation, UNDP will continue to partner with the Government of Zambia, the private sector and other UN agencies on this defining issue of our time on a wide range of interventions, including strengthening resilience at grass-root level to help sharpen the ability of small-scale

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farmers, mainly women to make critical an informed decisions that render their farming profitable and climate smart,” says Lionel Laurens, the UNDP Resident Representative in Zambia.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POOR HARVESTS

In the face of increasingly unpredictable weather, adapting to climate change is an important step in helping small-scale farmers avoid future losses and adopt innovative and tailor-made methods to make their farming sustainable, efficient and economically profitable.

For many of Zambia’s long-struggling small-scale farmers like Chilepa, Beauty, Bridget and Mary, the Farmer Field School approach, a GCF-funded initiative supported by a UN coalition led by UNDP with FAO and WFP in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Zambia, offers hope that they might break the cycle of poor harvests, thereby transforming climate risks into climate resilience.





398 GBV Survivors undergo economic empowerment training

The 'Get Ahead for Women in Enterprise' training is the ILO tool for capacity building in enterprise skills



The International Labour Organization (ILO) has intensified economic empowerment trainings among GBV survivors and those at risk in 15 districts across the country with 398 GBV survivors having successfully completed the 'Get Ahead for Women in Enterprise' training so far from October 2020 to March 2021 under the United Nations (UN) Joint Programme (JP) on Gender Based Violence (GBV) Phase Two (II) Project.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia and five United Nations Agencies with support from Sweden and Ireland are currently implementing the GRZ-United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Based Violence (GRZ-UNJP-GBV) Phase II. The participating UN Agencies are: The ILO, International Organization

for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The joint programme, which runs from 2019 to 2022 is a multi-partner programme designed to reduce the prevalence of GBV in Zambia. The programme builds on and consolidates the gains made in the GRZ-UN Joint Programme Phase I implemented from 2012 to 2017.

The ILO is responsible for the component on economic empowerment that is ensuring that GBV survivors, those at risk and communities are empowered to break the cycle of abuse.

The five-day 'Get Ahead for

Women in Enterprise' trainings saw 361 females, representing 91 percent of the trainees and 37 males, at seven percent, successfully complete the training.

The expected impact change is that the participants will be champions and promoters of rights for women and men; thereby, building capacity in gender equality, and entrepreneurship skills. It is also expected that the trained individuals will be empowered economically with start-up capital kits to improve and start new businesses.

Meanwhile, 20 participants have separated with their spouses at 5 percent of trainees, with 74 single females and males, representing 19 percent of trainees and 41 were widows, representing 10 percent of the trained males and females.



The trainings have provided an opportunity for the ILO to strengthen its collaboration with the Zambian Government through the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) at national, provincial and district levels as they work towards the reduction of the prevalence of GBV in Zambia.

When it comes to the district level, the ILO and the Department of Community Development have enhanced their working relationship with the Zambia

Police, district hospitals, Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), Judiciary and the Department of Social Welfare as they work together in identifying GBV survivors and those at risk.

It is hoped that with this collaboration, the districts are now able to work on time and demand for support to be provided for them to carry out the trainings to identified GBV survivors.

Seeds of Hope: Hydroponic tech in Zambia boosts school meals

To mark the sixth annual Africa Day of School Feeding, the World Food Programme highlights a greenhouse initiative that allows food to be grown all year round

David is learning to grow avocado, green peppers, chillies, rapeseed leaves and potatoes using hydroponics techniques. “My dream is to become a hydroponics expert,” he says. The 13-year-old lives in Kitwe, Zambia — a country of 18 million people whose food security is threatened by extreme weather caused by climate change. Hydroponics is a soilless cultivation technique that enables plant growth all year round. It uses up to 90% less water and 75% less space than traditional agriculture while growing crops 100% faster.

Each month the World Food Programme (WFP) supports thousands of people, including smallholder farmers whose hopes of growing crops are crushed by long spells of dry weather. Smallholder farmers produce 90% of Zambia’s food. Techniques such as hydroponics provide a lifeline to individuals and communities, enabling governments to nourish the next generation. This is a familiar story across



the continent, and it explains why the African Union is keen to promote sustainable ‘home-grown’ school feeding on Africa Day of School Feeding.

WFP has supported the Government of Zambia to set up 23 greenhouses in schools across the country to pilot hydroponics. Each greenhouse shields around 2,000 plants which produce an estimated 1,300 kg of vegetables per month. Trainings have been provided to more than 400

teachers, parents and students at the schools.

Schools are also piloting ‘grainy bag’ cultivation — growing crops in plastic or fabric bags with tiny holes for better drainage and oxygen. The soil in the bag is mixed with charcoal dust, an organic fertilizer that conserves soil pH levels and retains water to create a natural environment where crops can flourish.



Now schoolchildren like David are bringing their newly acquired knowledge home with the aim of growing fresh and nutritious produce for their families and utilising the technologies for their future livelihoods.

Hydroponics equipment is expensive. “We used plastic buckets, recycled bottles, a plastic sheet and a chicken cage to set up the hydroponics site,” says David. “We couldn’t find any hydroponic fertilizer, so we used soil fertilizer in the water. For the bags, we used

old maize- meal bags and charcoal dust as fertilizer.

“We had our first harvest of sweet potatoes a few weeks ago. They took three to four months to grow in the bags. Usually, they would take four to five months.”

COVID-19 Cash Transfers - Giving Hope in the Pandemic



Sishemu Matongo with her grandchild soon after receiving ECT cash and RUTF for her grandchild

Beyond the devastating loss of life and health the COVID-19 pandemic has caused around the world, the socio-economic impact is also bringing increased hardship to vulnerable families. Marginalised groups such as women, the elderly and persons with disabilities face an increased risk of job losses, reduced income and ultimately poorer health.

To provide a short-term emergency support during the period, in July 2020, the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services launched the COVID-19 Emergency Cash Transfers (ECT) for around 200,000 households, supported by the United Nations (UNICEF, ILO, UNDP, WFP) with funding from the European Union and the governments of Germany (through KfW), Ireland, Sweden and the UK.

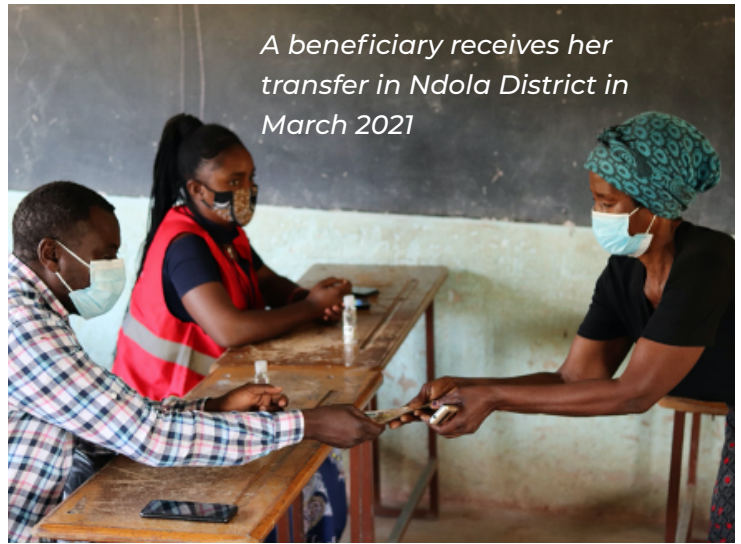
“My life has completely changed in a snap of a second!” says 77-year-old widow Georgina Mutize, a beneficiary in Kazungula District. Despite her age, she is the breadwinner of her family and takes care of her grandchildren’s secondary school expenses.



The Emergency Cash Transfer intervention is scheduled to run over a period of six months with a transfer value of 400 Zambian kwacha (\$18) monthly paid in one, two or three instalments. The emergency cash transfers are intended to boost household income to buy necessities such as diverse nutritious foods, fund income-generation activities and help families afford as soap and face masks to better follow COVID-19 health advice.

To Ms. Shishemu Matongo in Western Province, the ECT programme came at the right time. She takes care of her daughter who is disabled both mentally and physically. In addition, Ms. Shishemu is looking after her 3-year grandchild who is malnourished.

“I was so excited when I got the payment this morning and the first thing I planned to



A beneficiary receives her transfer in Ndola District in March 2021

do was travel to town and get some various dried food stuff to improve the household diet especially for my grandchildren, purchase chickens to rear and a few basic items like soap to wash the children’s clothes,” she said.

“I am very grateful. As an old woman there is only as much that I can do, yet this help will go a long way. The lump-sum payment makes it much easier to budget and invest.”

In addition to the cash support, the emergency response links beneficiary households to other services under the overall COVID-19 response such as prevention/hygiene promotion, nutrition, protection from Sexual Exploitation and Gender Based Violence and disability inclusion.

So far, the programme has supported 85 per cent of the targeted case load across the country and is scheduled to finalise the disbursements by mid-2021. To support smooth programme implementation, provincial, districts and community welfare assistance committee structures have been oriented on the programme. The programme has also provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to frontline workers.

The programme is financially supported by the European Union, the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW, the Republic of Ireland, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and UK aid from the British people.



CWACs during a sensitization meeting in Ndola

“

I am very grateful. As an old woman there is only as much that I can do, yet this help will go a long way. The lump-sum payment makes it much easier to budget and invest.

- Ms. Shishemu Matongo - CBT Beneficiary



5,000

Persons with disabilities registered within two months on the Disability Management Information System



The International Labour Organization (ILO) through the United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection is providing technical support to the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD) to register people with disabilities. All 10 provinces have been equipped with computers to enable digital registration. In two months, 5,000 people have managed to register on DMIS from a baseline of about 10,000 records the system had in the past years.

ZAPD working with the ILO and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) will be rolling out the mobile registration to five provinces

in 2021. Disability registration and certification plays a significant role in qualifying for eligibility to most social protection programmes. For instance, persons who have been registered on DMIS and have a severe to profound disability are entitled to double the transfer value entitled to a household under the social cash transfer. Furthermore, linkages to other social security entitlement provided under different laws such as tax exemptions will be done more efficiently through the verification of the Disability certificates presented through DMIS.

Speaking at DMIS capacity building training in December of 2020, the Director General Ms Julien Mwape, expressed her gratitude towards the support rendered to the

Institution. “With DMIS and Mobile registration we will be able to reach persons with disabilities in rural areas and ensure that the statistics obtained will inform planning and budgeting,” she said.

The ILO is leading the work on strengthening systems that promote disability inclusion. For instance, through DMIS about 500 persons with disabilities were listed and validated in Lusaka and included on COVID-19 Emergency Cash Transfer (ECT) for the Lusaka district. The system has been instrumental in mapping beneficiaries for ECT.

With 5,000 persons registered in two months, it's envisioned that more people will be registered and linked to various social protection services. Through the financial support of the UN Joint Programme, the ILO will continue to support the mobile registration of persons with disabilities to ensure that more persons are registered and receive the certification required for many social protection programs. This intervention has been made possible through financial support from the Republic of Ireland, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and UK aid from the British people.





Making Women Stronger

Responding to the climate crisis in Zambia, the Government has joined a UN coalition led by UNDP, FAO and WFP in a GCF-funded project to help women turn goat rearing into economic fortune



“I can’t give up. I need an income because I have many children and it’s my responsibility to provide for them,”

Sylvia Chiinda, a mother of seven lives on the edge of desperation. Being a widow, she is left with no savings or possessions. With her maize and groundnut farm production dwindling, Sylvia was forced to find an alternative income to keep her family afloat. She started running a makeshift grocery shop in her village of



Kanakanatapa in Zambia’s Chongwe District. But the income – just 300 Zambian Kwacha (US\$15) in a good month – is barely enough to meet the basic needs for her and her seven children.

LESS ACCESS TO LOANS



As part of wider government efforts, a UN coalition mobilized by UNDP, involving the FAO and WFP with funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) – together with national institutions like the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources Management Authority (WARMA) and the Zambia Meteorological Department – is helping climate-stressed small-scale farmers like Sylvia to tap into a booming – and drought-resistant source of income – goat rearing.

“Banks in the city won’t lend us money because we have no land title to put up as collateral”

In Zambia, many rural families cannot obtain loans from mainstream banks to cope with the impacts of weather extremes. They are viewed as high risk, compounding the challenges they face.

For women in farming communities, the first hurdle to setting up a business is access to affordable credit. The absence of a commercial bank in their villages adds to their woes.

The GCF-funded ‘Strengthening Climate Resilience of Agricultural Livelihoods in Agro-Ecological Regions I and II in Zambia (SCRALA) project supports resilient agricultural livelihoods in the face of climate change and promotes diversification practices to improve food security and income generation. The project is making important strides to empower women such as Sylvia as rural entrepreneurs and agents of change. The project was made possible with initial funding of US\$32 million from GCF – the



world's largest dedicated climate fund – along with US\$103 million from the Zambian Ministry of Agriculture, US\$369,000 from WARMA and US\$1.4 million from UNDP.

HELP TO ADAPT



Single women like Sylvia Chiinda are among the most vulnerable in Zambia's patriarchal traditional communities, where age- old customs dictate a woman's life. This vulnerability is compounded by the ravages of climate change.

Sylvia is among more than 8,000 beneficiaries – mostly women – who were trained in goat rearing and animal husbandry practices through the far-reaching and innovative project. Women were provided with tools and training to prevent diseases, build sheds and breeding management. To kick off the intervention, each beneficiary received five goats. most vulnerable in Zambia's patriarchal traditional communities, where age- old customs dictate a woman's life. This vulnerability is compounded by the ravages of climate change.

A year later, Sylvia now has had a total of 30 goats, including additional goats she bought using proceeds from the sale of goat manure. To multiply the impacts of the project and build a steady income stream, Sylvia sold 10 of her goats and five goat offspring were passed on to help other women. This tiered, multiplier-effect approach capitalizes on initial handouts while promoting solidarity, equity and sustainability within communities.

STABLE INCOMES

This life changing moment did not just stop with Sylvia's family. Mpeza Phiri, 49, a single mother of six living in the Luamba Agriculture Camp in eastern Zambia, says because of this initiative, her family now has a steady and stable income for the first time in their lives. As a result, the family now owns 10 goats and counting. Now when crisis hits, farmers like Mpeza and Sylvia have greater savings and equity. And equity means resilience.

"The SCRALA project provides small-scale farmers with goats to give them an alternative source of income in case their crops fail," says Parick Muchimba, the acting project manager.

SURGING DEMAND

Goat farming in Zambia is set to grow in importance with huge demand from Saudi Arabia, which now wants to import as many as 1 million Zambian goats a year.

Zambia only has approximately 4 million goats being reared largely by small-scale operators – not nearly enough to meet the new demand, according to a senior livestock officer.

Back in the capital, Lusaka, goats sell for between \$25 and \$30 depending on the size and breed.



Many of the women are looking to expand their herds to take advantage of a potential surge in demand for Zambian goats.

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE



Sylvia, Mpeza, Charity, Anna and thousands of other women beneficiaries were without a doubt among the most vulnerable members of their communities. Through the project, they are now well on their way to financial independence. As it accelerates its activities, the GCF- funded project will indirectly support approximately 3 million small-scale farmers in Zambia in building climate- resilient lives.

“Climate change is one of the major factors and challenges contributing to low productivity of farmers, especially at small scale level. As government, we are therefore pleased that our partnership with UNDP and GCF, under the SCRALA project, is supporting farmers, especially women, with opportunities and sustainable lifelong solutions to help boost productivity and adaptation to climate change effects,” says the Ministry of Agriculture

Permanent Secretary, Songowayo Zyambo.

Seblewongel Negussie, the Green Climate Fund’s Gender and Social Specialist, said this project shows the importance of gender mainstreaming in project design and implementation. “It does this by strengthening the climate- resilient value chains for smallholder farming, which opens up new and relevant economic opportunities - as well as social benefits - for Zambian women. This aligns with GCF’s emphasis on inclusive climate action so that all our US\$7.3 billion of projects committed so far to developing countries promote gender equality and women’s empowerment,” says Negussie.

“With the extra income from goat rearing, more than 8,000 beneficiaries, half of whom are women, will be able to pay for school expenses, improve their diets and afford medical costs for their families - giving them power over their lives and the means to lift themselves out of extreme poverty,” says Lionel Laurens, the UNDP Resident Representative in Zambia.

It’s an important step in realizing Zambia’s Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement and accelerating progress to end hunger and poverty by 2030 as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals.





Airtel Zambia & UN Capital Development Fund partner to strengthen digital finance services across the country

Airtel Networks Zambia Plc and the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) have announced a partnership named the 'Last Mile Distribution' project designed to bring digital financial services closer to Zambians living in remote areas across the country through Airtel Money.

The Last Mile Distribution project will be implemented in 6 Provinces including the Copperbelt, North Western, Luapula, Western, Northern and Southern and aims to provide connectivity of Airtel Money to every site. To aid the project's success, Airtel Money will improve on the number of products and services for customers in these sites especially targeting those who previously were unable to connect.

Airtel Money will also provide their agents with innovative access to electronic float (E-Float)

with the aim of improving their transactions and enhancing limits which will help them serve their customers with ease.

Speaking on the new project, Airtel Money Director, James Chona said he is confident the partnership will improve digital finance and inclusivity within the two provinces.

UNCDF Country Lead Isaac Holly said: ***"To successfully promote digital economies that leave no one behind, UNCDF depends on partnerships. We know we cannot do this work alone. Partnerships are important to us. We partnered with Airtel in the past, and working together again shows how meaningful our collaboration has been. This new collaboration with Airtel is one that improves digital and financial inclusion for Zambians living in remote or hard-to- reach areas."***



The 'Last Mile Distribution' project will be integral to increase financial inclusion and improve rural digital financial literacy. In addition, agents can now receive e -float necessary to run their Airtel Money shops and reduces their dormancy rates thereby increasing their profitability and boosts their community's economy.

The Airtel Money and UNCDF partnership is integral to building a cashless economy in rural areas and further supports the Government of Zambia's effort to curb COVID-19. It further improves the circulation of money in the country with a focus of building a more robust digital financial service industry.

SUPPORTING CONTINUITY OF SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS AFFECTED BY GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AMID COVID19 PANDEMIC

During pandemics, women and girls remain among the most severely affected population group – with a heightened need for health and protection services.

One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence from studies undertaken globally highlights a strong correlation between COVID-19 and a spike in gender-based violence (GBV) cases affecting women and girls. Stress, limited mobility and livelihood disruptions increases women and girl's vulnerability to violence and exploitation.

As part of the GRZ/UN Joint Programme on Gender-Based Violence, supported by Governments of Sweden and Ireland, UNFPA is supporting key actions aimed at integrating the needs of women and girls affected by GBV in national



emergency responses. In March 2021, this support included the procurement and distribution of COVID-19 personal protective equipment and hygiene products for use in GBV One-Stop Centres in Lusaka.

In statements and messages delivered at the official handover of personal protective equipment and hygiene products at the University Teaching Hospital GBV One Stop Centre, Minister of Gender, Hon. Elizabeth Phiri MP; Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Dr Kennedy Malama; Head of Development at the Embassy of Ireland in Zambia, Mr.

Pronch Murray; as well as UNFPA Representative, Ms. Gift Malunga acknowledged sustained partnerships with the Government of Zambia, towards integration of gender-based violence response in existing health services, including ensuring continuity of GBV services amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The GRZ/UN Joint Programme on GBV aims to contribute to a reduction of GBV prevalence in the target districts by focusing on (1) strengthening access and utilization of GBV responsive services and (2) empowering GBV survivors, persons at risk and communities to break the cycle of abuse by challenging the culture of abuse and silence.



Advancing maternal and newborn health outcomes in Zambia through health systems strengthening

As part of ongoing partnerships with the Government of Zambia towards addressing maternal and neonatal mortality, UNFPA Zambia, with financial support from the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), facilitated the procurement and handover of various Emergency, Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) equipment to support the Ministry of Health in its efforts to advance maternal and newborn health outcomes in Western and Central Provinces.

While the Government of Zambia has made notable progress towards achieving universal health coverage, key challenges inequitable access to EmONC services persist, as evidenced by current data highlighting over 70% of reported maternal deaths occurring in health facilities, which can be attributed to factors including constraints in fully functional EmONC facilities and capacities among health personnel. Receiving the equipment on behalf of the Ministry

of Health, Permanent Secretary Dr Kennedy Malama acknowledged the sustained collaboration with UNFPA and FCDO towards improving overall maternal and newborn health outcomes in Zambia.

“The Ministry of Health continues to prioritize the strengthening of health systems, including human resource for health, health care financing, infrastructure, equipment and transport as well as the availability of essential medicines and other medical supplies. The EmONC equipment received with support from FCDO and UNFPA is, therefore, a smart investment, which will make a significant contribution towards ending maternal mortality, neonatal mortality, and ensure the overall wellbeing of mothers, children and adolescents countrywide.”
- Dr Malama said.

The equipment handed over included 773 normal delivery sets, 72 caesarean section sets, 425 cervical sets, 88 oxygen concentrators, ultrasound scanners, and various theatre equipment. In addition, the

donation included modern equipment that will raise the capacity of Western and Central Provinces to have at least four Basic EmONC facilities and one Comprehensive EmONC facility.

As part of the broader support by the UN in Zambia, UNFPA continues to advocate for increased support from both international and local partners as well as private sector investment in EmONC services, which are a critical component in a comprehensive and sustainable approach to universal health coverage, towards achieving national aspirations as espoused in the National Health Strategic Plan 2017-2021, the 7th National Development Plan and Zambia’s Vision 2030.



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