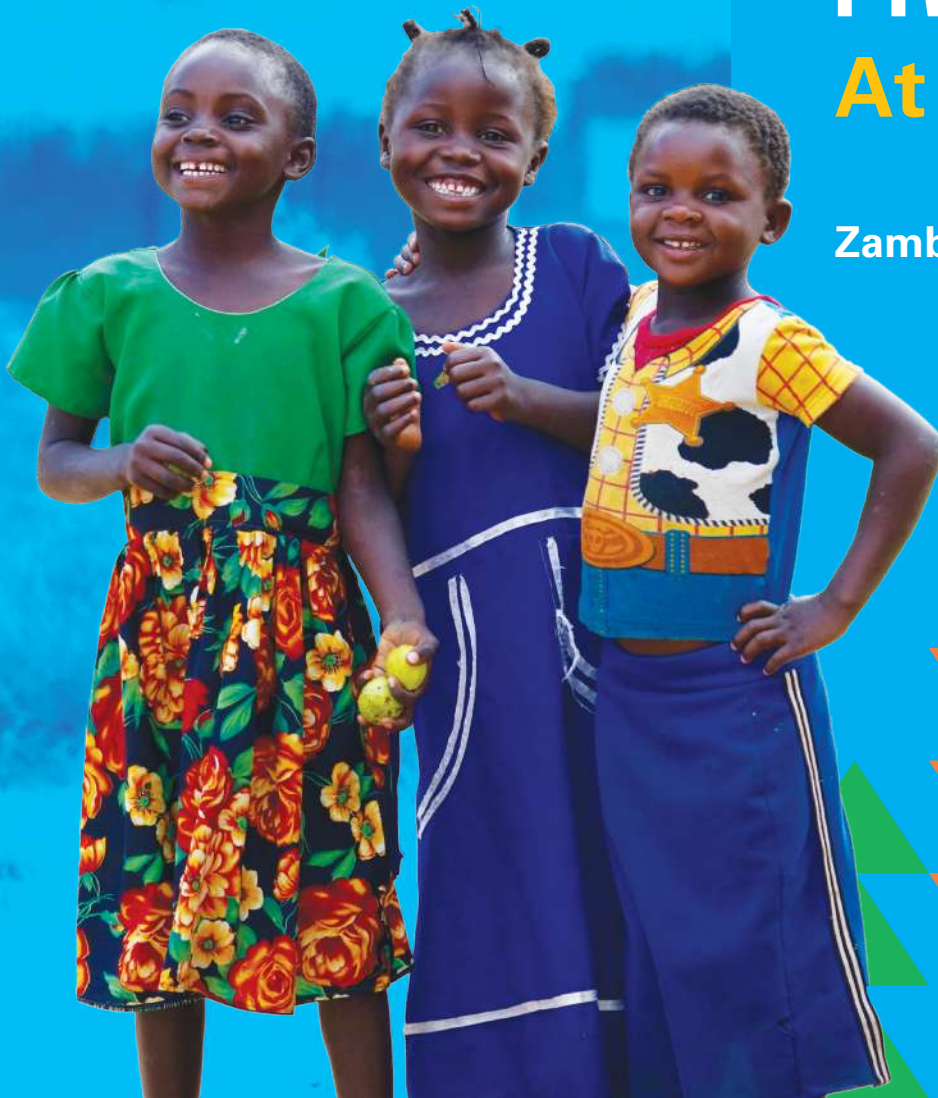




COUNTRY PROGRAMME

At a Glance

Zambia 2023–2027



About UNICEF Zambia

Since 1964, UNICEF's Office in the Republic of Zambia has been working with civil society organizations to help the Government fulfil its obligation to empower children to fully claim and enjoy their rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UNICEF's Country Programme 2023-2027 promotes the rights of every child and reaches the most disadvantaged children in Zambia. UNICEF works with the Government to improve social policies and systems, and on the ground to make sure that these systems reach all children, with a particular emphasis on the most vulnerable.

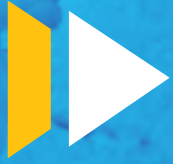
UNICEF works across the sectors of health, nutrition, social policy, child protection, early childhood development and education. We help supply clean water, sanitation and promote hygiene. We work with and for children and young people. UNICEF also provides humanitarian assistance when needed.

THE SITUATION



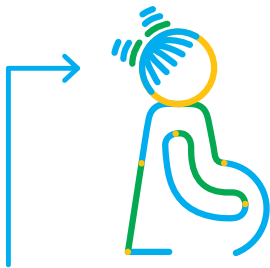
Zambia's 19.6 million (Census 2022) strong population is fast growing and young – almost half the country are people under the age of 15. The country is seeing increased social sector budgets, progressive policy and legislative reforms for children and women, and Zambia's Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP) has increased targets for the delivery of social services.

Zambia has one of the world's highest levels of income inequality and children are disproportionately affected. Three out of every five children live in households where the income is below the poverty line. This rises to four out of every five in rural areas. Many children face multiple, and often overlapping, deprivations: around 40.9 per cent of children, including 60 per cent in rural areas, suffer from at least three deprivations. These deprivations are often inter-generational and occur throughout the life course.



**THE
UNFINISHED
AGENDA**
for Zambia's
children





High rates of early marriage & teenage pregnancy

contribute to intergenerational cycles of poverty with teenage pregnancy as high as 29 per cent and with adolescents and young people aged 15-24 years representing 10 per cent of new HIV infections.



Worrying increase in newborn mortality and loss of some gains in maternal mortality

as prolonged response to emergencies has weakened an already overstretched health system. Mothers and children are bearing the brunt – a situation compounded by a high disease burden and poor access to basic services.



Longstanding learning crisis

resulting in round 65 per cent of Grade 2 learners unable to read a single word, and only 5 per cent and 2 per cent of the tested 15-year-olds meeting minimum levels of competency in English and Math.

Violence against children

including child sexual abuse, especially in remote rural areas. Out of the 20 per cent of girls and 10 per cent of boys who were sexually abused as children 0 per cent of girls and 7 per cent of boys had access to services.



Stubborn stunting rates

declined from 40 per cent to 34.6 per cent between 2013-2018, but the absolute number of children with stunting increased as stunting decline did not keep pace with population growth.



Maternal, newborn and infant mortality continue to be serious issues in Zambia.

Maternal mortality is high, despite a notable drop from 591 deaths per 100,000 live births to 278 between 2007 and 2018.

The country has seen improvements in mortality rates among children under five, which reduced from 75 per 1,000 live births in 2014 to 61.7 in 2018. But newborn mortality increased in the same period, from 24 per 1,000 live births in 2014 to 27 in 2018. This is a manifestation of suboptimal quality of care that is available, particularly during the intrapartum period.

84 per cent of deaths among women happen due to complications of pregnancy and birth occurring in health facilities.



In its HIV/AIDS response towards achieving the 95:95:95 global targets, Zambia achieved the following:

- ▶ 89 per cent of people living with HIV know their status.
- ▶ 98 per cent of those diagnosed with HIV are on treatment.
- ▶ 96 per cent of those on treatment are virally suppressed.

Of those children living with HIV who are under 15, only 58 per cent are receiving anti-retroviral treatment.

Only two-thirds of children born to mothers with HIV in Zambia receive an HIV test by the time they are two months of age.

Undiagnosed and without treatment, these children have less than 50 per cent chance of surviving past their second birthday.



Zambia also faces the triple malnutrition burden:

Undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency & overweight and obesity. Stunting remains persistent and although the number of children with stunting went down from 40 to 34.6 per cent between 2013 and 2018, the absolute number increased as the population expanded.



Being a child in Zambia is fraught with risks and vulnerabilities.

Almost equal numbers of boys and girls are enrolled. The recently introduced free education policy now also covers secondary schooling.

However, there is a long-standing learning crisis in Zambia as children in school are not learning. Children under the age of 7 have limited access to early stimulation and early learning opportunities – the bedrock for future learning.

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Child marriage of girls stands at 29 per cent (DHS 2018).



Zambia has made significant progress in universal access to primary education and with gender parity.

Almost equal numbers of boys and girls are enrolled. The recently introduced free education policy now also covers secondary schooling.

However, there is a long-standing learning crisis in Zambia as children in school are not learning. Children under the age of 7 have limited access to early stimulation and early learning opportunities – the bedrock for future learning. Only one in three Grade 1 entrants have received any early childhood learning.

And the transition to, and completion of, secondary education is wanting: the net enrolment rate at secondary level in 2018 remained at 20.2 per cent, and only one-third of children completed secondary school.



Poor access to water, sanitation and hygiene undermines the overall health and wellbeing of children and women,

including causing diarrhoea, a leading cause of death among children aged 0-5 years, as well as stunting. In Zambia, a third of the population lacks access to basic drinking water services.

The situation is more apparent in rural areas, where 72 per cent of the population don't have access to basic sanitation services and only around one in six people have access to basic hygiene services.

Additional dimensions like disparities along urban and rural lines, gender and disability – combined with the impacts of public health emergencies and recurrent climate-related shocks, including droughts and floods – have further compounded existing challenges and increased deprivations, particularly for the most vulnerable.



**UNICEF'S
WORK**
in Zambia





UNICEF's mission in Zambia is to give children a better start in life and to support them throughout their life course so that they can develop to their fullest potential. Our work, as part of the United Nations system, is to support the Government of the Republic of Zambia's national development goals as enshrined in the 8th National Development Plan, and in doing so, contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

This entails:

1

Working in the sectors of Health, HIV, Nutrition, Education, Child Protection, WASH and Social Policy.

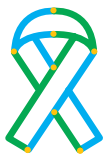
2

Creating synergies and inter-linkages between sectors to realise the rights of children through a life-cycle approach.

3

Using data and advocacy to shine a light on children's unmet needs.

Health & HIV



UNICEF will work with the Government to improve the capacity of Zambia's health-care system and its resilience to shocks and crises, so that the quality of care it provides is not interrupted or compromised.

The goal is to ensure that women receive the right care during and after pregnancy, including preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV and paediatric HIV treatment, and that there is a health care system which safeguards essential new-born care and child health to both prevent and manage childhood illness. This will be done by bringing services closer to people through a community health system that is responsive and capacitated to respond. This entails ensuring key medical supplies are available, including life-saving oxygen therapy; training the healthcare workforce; establishing a Health Management Information system that informs actions like health outreach services.

Another key area of work will be to strengthen the primary healthcare system to effectively manage and deliver life-saving vaccines in both development and humanitarian situations. This will involve stimulating demand amongst people while ensuring supply of quality immunization services at both community and health facility level.

UNICEF will also support revitalizing and optimizing the use of cold-chain systems (including with climate-adaptive equipment), and building capacities to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks.

Given that a quarter of Zambia's population are adolescents and recognising the specific needs and vulnerabilities of this age group, UNICEF will work with the Government to expand both skills and programmes that cater to adolescent health. This includes adolescent pregnancies, HIV, substance abuse and mental health, and access to adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services.





Nutrition

UNICEF's priorities in nutrition aim to address all forms of malnutrition (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency, overweight and obesity) through a life cycle approach.



This will be done by ensuring adequate coverage and optimal utilisation of quality services across the life course – from pregnancy through early childhood, mid-childhood, and adolescence life-stages; and by ensuring the services are gender-responsive and equity-focused.

UNICEF will work to prevent all forms of malnutrition by improving children's and women's access to nutritious, safe, affordable and sustainable diets, while promoting optimal feeding, hygiene and care behaviours and practices for children and women. This includes:

- ▶ Promoting breastfeeding, diversified complementary food and feeding practices;
- ▶ Strengthening community-level structures that promote nurturing care;
- ▶ Integrating nutrition within the primary health care delivery framework;
- ▶ Providing child nutrition services as part of the Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness package;
- ▶ Strengthening the supply chain and procurement of essential nutrition supplies;
- ▶ Supporting the Ministry of Health and the National Food and Nutrition Commission in evidence generation, advocacy and policy development as well as contributing to develop strategies for the prevention and control of micronutrient deficiency.



Where prevention falls short, UNICEF prioritizes the early detection, treatment and care of malnourished children to help them survive, recover, and go on to live healthy and productive lives. This entails strengthening facility- and community-based approaches to the integrated management of acute malnutrition, which requires active case finding, referral, follow up and counselling, and outpatient and in-patient therapeutic programmes to treat children.

UNICEF will also support pre-positioning nutrition supplies and building capacities on emergency preparedness and response.



Climate-Resilient WASH

UNICEF will work to increase access to clean water and basic toilets and promote good hygiene practices for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, as this helps keep them alive and healthy.



This will entail helping the Government to boost access to safe water and toilets in health centres, schools and homes, and enable communities to design, build, operate and maintain WASH services in ways that are sustainable and inclusive.

Equally important will be generating awareness to encourage people to adopt behaviours and practices with regards to hygiene and sanitation.

UNICEF is committed to making its WASH programmes sustainable and adaptive to climate change.

Efforts will be invested in strengthening communities' and institutions' capacities to prepare for and respond to climate-related shocks, including WASH-related diseases in emergencies.

The analysis of WASH-related climate data will help inform actions on institutionalising climate resilience into existing interventions and the development of child-sensitive climate change policies, mobilising climate financing and conducting risk assessments.





Quality Learning & Skills Development

UNICEF will focus on improving the quality and inclusiveness of education – starting from the early years through early childhood development and education, through to primary and secondary education, so that children and adolescents have the knowledge and skills they need to thrive.



In the early years, UNICEF will work with the Government to support both caregivers and young children to foster early childhood development. This entails a multi-sectoral approach that includes health care and nutrition, protection from harm, opportunities for early learning, and responsive caregiving – all of which are needed to nourish developing brains and fuel growing bodies.

To address the longstanding issue of learning quality, UNICEF will help the Government to strengthen the quality of teaching by training and mentoring teachers, with a focus on learner-centred and activity-based pedagogies that cater to needs of children, including those with special needs. This will go hand in hand with supporting school environments that are safe, and sector reform initiatives and policies that are informed by evidence and best practice.

UNICEF will also focus on enhancing capacities to deliver quality and inclusive secondary education and skills development programmes for adolescents, particularly girls. This will include providing alternative learning options including through digital solutions, and flexible learning pathways, for children out of school, at-risk and disadvantaged learners.



Child Protection

UNICEF will support the Government to strengthen its child protection system to both prevent, as well as be able to respond, to violence against children.

This will include enhancing the Government's welfare structures at community and district level to address violence, stigma and exclusion and facilitate access to quality services, with special emphasis on psychosocial support, family-based care, child-friendly justice and access to birth registration.

UNICEF will provide support to foster a culture of zero tolerance on violence, including GBV, through empowering girls and boys to be change agents and through engaging with traditional leaders, elders and parents.

UNICEF will support the Government to roll-out newly adopted legislation on child protection. Emphasis will be on advocacy for securing adequate resources in priority areas:

- ▶ To make sure that children can safely report cases of violence and that they have access to services if they experienced abuse or exploitation.
- ▶ To make sure that accessible and free birth registration services are provided.





Social Protection



UNICEF will continue strengthening Government's capacities to deliver child-sensitive social protection effectively and equitably in development and humanitarian settings.

Priorities include ensuring that the social protection system is shock-responsive, well-coordinated and disability-inclusive. Link cash transfer programme beneficiaries with other child focused services, like health and education, through a strengthened Cash-Plus system, thereby leveraging the social protection programme to reduce overall inequality of the poor and vulnerable.

UNICEF will support and advocate for increased investments in children. This will be done by enhancing capacities of central and local government to sustainably mobilize, plan, equitably allocate, utilize and monitor resources, and support reforms around budget transparency, fiscal

decentralization, and social accountability initiatives to enable community-based monitoring. The capacities to generate and use quality and equity-focused data will be strengthened, so that this is then used to highlight equity concerns, understand multidimensional and monetary child poverty, and inform programmes and policies that seek to address this.





**CROSS
CUTTING**
priorities



Early Childhood Development

Investments in ECD are a key entry point to providing holistic and integrated services to young children, in health, nutrition, nurturing care, water and sanitation, early learning and protection.



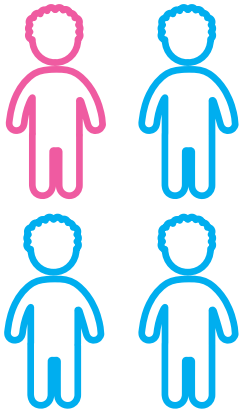
UNICEF will continue to support integrated ECD service delivery as a cross-cutting priority area, by integrating multi-sectoral delivery of a core set of health, nutrition, sanitation interventions to young children, and through accelerating early learning interventions through community-based ECD centres and direct outreach to families in their homes.



At the policy level, UNICEF is supporting the development of a national ECD Multi-Sectoral Policy and Strategic Framework which will help articulate the country's vision and strategies; and provide clarity in defining the roles and responsibilities of the various sectors, actors and coordination mechanisms.



Adolescent Programming



Adolescents account for over a quarter of Zambia's population,

and adolescence provides a second window of opportunity to influence developmental trajectories, make up for poor childhood experiences and facilitate productive transition into adulthood.

The unique issues associated with adolescence and the needs of adolescents have been poorly addressed or, in some cases, ignored, leading to multiple deprivations for adolescents. UNICEF will support the Government to deliver policies and programmes that are sensitive and responsive to adolescent needs.

THIS WILL ENTAIL A TWO-FOLD APPROACH:

1. Address the needs of adolescents in specific sectors, e.g. adolescent health and nutrition, education and skills development both in terms of programmes and policies that reinforce each other.

2. Build the capacities of adolescents to participate in decisions that affect them, and create platforms to allow for meaningful adolescent engagement.

Disability-Transformative Programming

Disability inclusion is critical if UNICEF is to deliver on its equity mandate. Evidence has shown that children, adolescents and women with disabilities in Zambia face numerous barriers as well as discrimination and stigmatisation.

UNICEF Zambia will work with the Government and other partners to support inclusive and transformative programmes.



First,

By designing and implementing programmes to ensure social and environmental barriers to accessing services are factored in and effectively addressed. This includes internal monitoring measures to ensure that persons with disabilities are fully included in (and able to access/benefit from) all interventions.

Second,

By amplifying transformative effects by:

- ▶ Strengthening inclusive development at community level.
- ▶ Supporting increased access to assistive technologies for children and adolescents with disabilities.
- ▶ Employing social and behaviour change strategies to address stigma and discrimination.

Gender-Transformative Programming

Despite the policy and legal framework in place, high levels of gender inequality in the social, economic and political spheres persist.

UNICEF Zambia will ensure that all programmes it supports are gender transformative in ways that support removing structural barriers, changing harmful gender norms and empowering girls and women.

This includes work to improve the quality of maternal health care and nutrition, HIV testing, counselling and care, while addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights, particularly when it comes to adolescent girls.

- ▶ UNICEF will support more equitable WASH services, taking into account the specific needs of women and girls and the barriers they face, particularly when it comes to safe access to water and to menstrual hygiene management.
- ▶ UNICEF will also foster the participation and leadership of women and girls in decision-making processes through skills development and empowerment, as well as through poverty reduction measures that provide income stability through a gender-responsive social protection system.



Climate Change Adaptation



Zambia is a country prone to climatic shocks. It has experienced extreme weather conditions caused by climate change in recent years, such as drought, floods and rising temperature. UNICEF will focus climate change efforts in both its programmes and operations.

UNICEF will develop sustainability plans for supply chains, procurement, transport, energy, water and waste for its operations and warehousing.

In programmes, UNICEF will build on and possibly expand its work on:

- ▶ The solarisation of schools, possibly also expanding this to ECD centres and health facilities.
- ▶ Support climate-resilient WASH services to mitigate risks and better prepare for climate-related shocks.
- ▶ Continue working with partners to support the Government on strengthening shock-responsive social protection and increasing households' resilience and adaptation capacities through social protection measures.
- ▶ Explore climate financing to secure adequate funding for climate initiatives.

UNICEF will also continue to engage youth and young people as change agents in climate action, building on existing support to climate ambassadors in schools and communities and using this initiative to increase attention on climate change as well as catalyse behaviour change to mitigate its adverse impacts.



Social and Behaviour Change

Social and Behaviour Change aimed at transforming behaviours and social/gender norms at individual, family, community, institutional and policy levels is key to accelerating results for children.

UNICEF Zambia positions Social and Behaviour Change as a key change strategy to:

- 1.** Accelerate change in individual and family practices.
- 2.** Transform entrenched gender and social norms.
- 3.** Increase demand for and uptake of quality and inclusive services, informed by improved behavioural evidence, community feedback and through participatory SBC interventions.

Implementation approaches will include generation of behavioural evidence to inform and monitor progress; use of behavioural sciences and tools; multi-media production and dissemination, including content tailored for marginalised groups; dialogue-based interpersonal communication; partnership with key influencers; integration of

community feedback systems including social accountability; enhancing social and behaviour change capacity and government-led coordination in Risk Communication and Community Engagement; and fostering centres of excellence among academic institutions to convene Social and Behaviour Change learning and exchange.





RESULTS & funding



2023–2027 Results & Funding

Robust, innovative and multi-stakeholder partnerships with public and private sectors, International Financial Institutions and others, coupled with increased investment in child-sensitive social sectors, are what is needed to drive progress for the children of Zambia. Over the next five years, UNICEF’s goal is to mobilize \$189 million to operationalise its 2023-2027 country programme, in support of the Government’s 8th National Development Plan and to accelerate improved outcomes for Zambia’s children.





HEALTH & HIV

- ▶ Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health
- ▶ Expanded Programme on Immunization in Primary Health Care
- ▶ Adolescent's Health & HIV
- ▶ Emergencies & Emerging Public Health

\$55,764,000



NUTRITION

- ▶ Stunting & Micro-nutrients Deficiency
- ▶ Wasting including in Emergencies
- ▶ Governance, Policy, Evidence & Financing

\$27,882,000



WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE

- ▶ Systems Strengthening
- ▶ Access to Services
- ▶ WASH in emergencies
- ▶ Climate Change

\$27,307,000



EDUCATION

- ▶ Early Learning & Development
- ▶ Quality Learning & Systems Strengthening
- ▶ Adolescent Learning & Skills Development

\$29,307,000



CHILD PROTECTION

- ▶ Prevention
- ▶ Response
- ▶ Legislative Policy & Systems and Budget

\$12,620,000



SOCIAL PROTECTION

- ▶ Public Financial Management
- ▶ Social Protection
- ▶ Data & Evidence

\$16,601,000



PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS

- ▶ Programme and Operational Support
- ▶ Monitoring & Quality Assurance

\$19,380,000



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