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# VOICES FOR JUST CLIMATE ACTION

## ZAMBIA

In 2023 and 2024, Zambia experienced its driest agricultural season in more than forty years, affecting 9.8 million people and causing economic losses of 941 million US dollars. In and around Zambia's capital, Lusaka, extreme droughts and flooding hit the urban poor hardest, destroying their crops, income, and homes. The resulting food insecurity and infrastructural losses likewise harms their health and livelihoods.

Hivos has been working in Zambia for over 10 years. Through the VCA program, Hivos has supported **12 local organizations** addressing the water, food, energy, health, and gender impacts of climate change. Implemented in **10 districts** along the lower Kafue basin that are most vulnerable to climate change impacts, their projects have gradually built up collective resilience.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ Contributed to the passing of the 2024 Green Economy and Climate Change Bill. The bill provides resources for environmental safeguarding, ensuring that economic activity takes vulnerable communities, ecosystems and climate into account and promotes green economic initiatives to create new jobs.
- ✓ Supported six partners in scaling up regenerative agriculture in four districts as a climate adaptation strategy.
- ✓ Supported youth participation in capacity building programs on climate change, such as Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, which equipped them with knowledge, skills, and tools to address climate change. We further supported youth meetings, such as the Local Conference of youth and regional Conference of youth, ensuring youth participation in UN climate talks. The conference attracted more than 400 participants. Through our partners, we also created an [advocacy toolkit](#) to guide community strategies for climate advocacy.
- ✓ Trained 23 journalists in data and investigative journalism, fact-checking, and effective use of visuals.
- ✓ Launched a [report with guidelines](#) to improve the government's Constituency Development Funds for local climate action in Zambia and ensure compatibility with local climate related issues. The report also recommends how best to support and fund local climate action.

## REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE - A KEY CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

Communities in Chongwe, Rufunsa, and Luangwa – mostly women – were trained in a variety of climate-resilient agricultural techniques. For example, creating seed banks with local resilient varieties, improving water and fertilizer use, and supporting value chain development to enhance access to markets and prepare for unforeseen climate risks. In addition, they were taught to train other community members to sustainably continue these practices.

They also learned about recycling farm waste, agroecology, agroforestry, mixed farming, multicropping, water conservation, natural pest and disease management, and indigenous seed use. These practices have been proven to reduce risk while supporting long-term productivity and resilience of food systems. The program also actively pushed the Zambian government to create a stand-alone policy document on agroecology.

## VCA AND ADVOCACY

We seek to create systemic change by mobilizing individuals and groups to elicit public interest and influence decision-makers, ultimately leading to policy and practice reforms and improvements at community, regional and national level.

At the regional level, VCA supported capacity building programs for youth and sponsored their participation at regional conferences such as the Regional Conference of Youth (RCOY). Together with our local partner Keepers Zambia foundation, Hivos developed a toolkit to give local communities a step-by-step guide on advocating for climate policies. It was used to train 2000 people.

## AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Besides working with communities directly, VCA also informed the greater public about climate change through the media, including radio and television programs. This increased their understanding of climate change as a human rights issue as well as an environmental one. The Zambia National broadcasting cooperation sponsored a thirteen-week program called Climate Check that reached over six million people weekly. In addition, 23 journalists received training in data journalism, investigative journalism, fact-checking, and effective use of visuals. The training raised the visibility of climate change work done by alliance partners within the program, and we were able to simplify complex climate change information for our target audiences.

Charcoal is a primary source of energy for many households in Zambia. In 2023 alone, 303,000 hectares of natural forest were lost to charcoal production. VCA countered deforestation with large-scale educational campaigns, reforestation efforts, and by promoting local solutions such as solar powered and traditional cook stoves. The program also pushed the government to promote alternative energy sources more sustainably. At the end of 2022, 109 households in Rufunsa district stopped using charcoal and in Luangwa district 80.17 hectares of land for indigenous trees were protected.

## CHANGE LABS

Hivos organized climate justice change labs through VCA in Chongwe, Rufunsa and Luangwa. The labs included local community members in prototyping local solutions to climate challenges. They also integrated advocacy into local governance structures such as the Ward Development Committees (WDCs). WDCs put forward community needs to local governments, getting them to be more responsive to climate change, and serve as an advocacy platform. Therefore, the change labs empowered local leadership to prioritize climate action in project selection at the community level. Our partners Keepers Foundation Zambia and Civil Society for Poverty Reduction have carried on the climate justice labs.

## BUILDING ON THIS PROGRESS

To sustain and expand its impact, VCA Zambia would like to continue supporting this work beyond 2025. We are seeking flexible funding to support the change labs. This would ensure continued inclusion of marginalized citizens in local governance, support the promotion of agroecology policy and scalability, and support clean energy initiatives and sustainable alternative livelihood programs.

Voices for Just Climate Action is a program collaboratively implemented by Hivos, WWF-NL, Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA), Fundación Avina, Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and SouthSouthNorth (SSN). The program brings together global and local voices by connecting a diverse range of civil society organizations representing women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, the urban poor, digital activists and more. It is implemented in Bolivia, Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Paraguay, Tunisia and Zambia.

## About Hivos

Hivos has three strategic focus areas: **Climate Justice**; **Gender Equality Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI)**; and **Civic Rights in a Digital Age (CRDA)**. This expertise is complemented by that of our large network of civil society partners.

We are keen to **collaborate**, **co-create** and **scale up** impactful programs with our implementation and development partners. Please contact our Climate Justice Business Development Manager, **Gigi Wing-Davies**, at [gwingdavies@hivos.org](mailto:gwingdavies@hivos.org) or +263 7787 68435.