



**Caritas**  
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**INSIDE** ▶

**The Zambian Traditional  
Seed and Food Festival**

Page 8



# CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE	02
CHILD PARTICIPATION	03
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS	05
THE CHILOBE, CHILUBWA SAGA	07
THE ZAMBIAN TRADITIONAL SEED AND FOOD	08
WALK FOR EQUALITY	10
FOOD SECURITY, RESILIENCE, AND CLIMATE JUSTICE - CARITAS LIVINGSTONE	11
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AMONG RURAL COMMUNITIES CARITAS MONZE	13
WORLD DAY OF THE POOR	15

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## EDITOR'S NOTE



*Chibesa Ngulube Ngwira*  
EDITOR

**2**022 has been quite an eventful year for Caritas Zambia and its partners. 2021 was undoubtedly a challenging year, coming from the pandemic and recovering from its effects but also building on its lessons and opportunities has been significant for the milestones we have run this year.

As the year comes to close we hope that we can continue to put mission ahead of everything else and work towards continued relevance to the people we serve. 2022 was also a time to reconnect with the communities we serve in various aspect, as we together turned the crisis into opportunity.

Despite COVID-19's toll on various aspects of our work, the opportunities realised have helped with the momentum throughout 2022 and into the New Year to come. Capitalizing on these positive changes and turning them into opportunities for future growth. This year also brings a close to our current strategic plan and we look forward to transitioning into our new strategic plan which runs from 2023 to 2027, which we are hopeful will unveil a new platform to offer diversify and address the evolving needs of the communities we serve. We hope that you enjoy this final edition of our 2022 news bulletin and please feel free to give feedback even as you learn more about our work in this edition. 🌸



# CHILD PARTICIPATION

**C**hild participation is one pillar article of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) not being effectively addressed in many countries including Zambia. The idea of child participation is not a comfortable trajectory many societies like to take as children continue to be seen as objects for support rather than subjects with the capability to actively participate in various aspects of their social, economic and political environment.

Many people still believe that children should neither participate nor have express their views. Currently in Zambia, even the adult's population is still grappling with some sections of society not being able to express their view and effectively participate in the affairs of national interest. This influences their views on child participation, and causes them not to fully appreciate the importance of participation. Children in our social context have been rendered 'voiceless' by our norms and practices. A child is seen not heard' in many times and consequently children are made to endure harsh conditions or difficult circumstances in silence. A protesting child is disrespectful, discourteous, or simply badly behaved-even if the cause is just. Children voices need to be amplified.



Zambia has a population of approximately 17 million and more than half (53.4 percent) of the population are young people under the age of 18, of these 4.82 Million are Girls and 4.87 Million are Boys, (ZAMSTATS). It is also estimated that about 54.5% of the population



lives below the national poverty line, and that about 40.9 per cent of children suffer from at least three dispossessions or more and these include; lacking access to nutrition, education, health, water, sanitation, adequate housing leading to high levels of child abuse/exploitation and violence including; child marriages, with 29 per cent of women aged 20-24 married before the age of 18 in Zambia. With these statistics, Zambia is among the highest countries with high prevalence of child marriages in Africa and also ranks high with child labour which stands at 40%. Gender inequalities have also continued raising coupled with traditional beliefs and cultural practices that causes the increase of violence and exploitation among women and girls and silencing boys and men from speaking out on the injustices faced.

Further, Climate Change has been and might continue affecting everyone but not limited to children who have been and might be the worst affected if not much concerted efforts made to address this fastest growing scourge. It is estimated that one billion children globally are at 'extremely high risk' of the impacts of the climate crisis, – especially; boys and girls from poor families, people living with disabilities and women, (According to UNICEF's first child-focused climate risk index).

**“ It is estimated that one billion children globally are at 'extremely high risk' of the impacts of the climate crisis, – especially; boys and girls from poor families, people living with disabilities and women,**

Caritas Zambia in collaboration with key stakeholders such as the Communities (families), Traditional leaders, Religious leaders, Civil Society Organisations, Government likeminded departments , is responding to address these dispossessions through a project aimed at strengthening the Capacities of CSOs to support boys and girls to demand for improved services that promote and Support their Rights and Wellbeing. The project will among other things address the following;

**CHILDREN'S RIGHTS** - The project will focus on; strengthening the rights of children to Survival and development. The project will focus on promoting and strengthening platforms and opportunities that enhances the right of children to participation – and ensuring that children's views are respected. It will build the capacities of partners (diocesan partners etc.) in establishing systems and policies that takes into consideration the Best interest of the child determination in programming.

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND CHILD RIGHTS PROGRAMMING**- the project will build the capacities of key stakeholders including children in understanding climate change in the context of human rights based approach – for instance; - understanding how climate change is impacting on the rights and welfare of children – (effects and impact in terms of loss and damage on communities).

**CIVIC SPACE**- the project will focus on strengthening CSOs' participation in advocating for the promotion,



protection and fulfilment of children' rights through analyzing the application of laws that hinder and threatens advocacy around the implementation of children's rights in Zambia. It will also strengthen the capacities of CSOs to have coordinated mechanisms that support the joint advocacy in the monitoring of child rights in Zambia.

**DISABILITY INCLUSION** – the project will focus on strengthening the participation of children living with disabilities in decision making positions– creating platforms, empowering children living with disabilities to participation in decision making platforms and influence change aimed at solidification the implementation of children's rights in Zambia.

**GENDER INCLUSIVENESS /GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY** – the project will build the capacities of stakeholders in understanding gender in the context of child participation and addressing some of the harmful traditional norms and practices that perpetuates violence/abuse and exploitation among children and affect their development to reach their full potential.

**LEGAL FRAMEWORK AROUND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS** – the project focus analyzing and advocating for the enactment and implementation of laws and policies that promote and protect the rights of children and their wellbeing. Building the capacities of children and other stakeholders in understanding the available legal frameworks that support the implementation of children's rights as enshrined in the national laws, regional and international treaties signed and rectified – in Zambia. ✿

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS

Since the early 2000s, decentralization has been espoused as a major policy goal of successive Zambian governments. In both the Fifth (2006-2010) and Sixth National Development Plans (2011- 2015), deepening decentralization, especially through devolution, was a key policy goal.

Similarly, the country's previous - not current Seventh National Development Plan (2017-2021), emphasized the point that insufficient decentralization has been contributing to the country's large economic and social inequalities: "The contributing factors that have led to inequalities

**“ The contributing factors that have led to inequalities include the inability to effectively implement the Decentralization Policy to an extent that resources and decision-making have precluded people at lower levels from effectively participating in the planning and implementation processes.**







This project will respond to some challenges identified in the implementation process of decentralization such as; inadequate knowledge about the process among community members, lack of effective collaboration and Networking on issues pertaining to the implementation of the decentralization plan process, and poor collaborative engagements in sector issues such as social accountability; participatory planning, budgeting, and local decision-making; and service delivery, among CSO and other key players. The project will

include the inability to effectively implement the Decentralization Policy to an extent that resources and decision-making have precluded people at lower levels from effectively participating in the planning and implementation processes” Yet, despite this longstanding government rhetorical committing to decentralization, the country’s local authorities remain constrained in their capacity to deliver development, goods and services to the local communities that they serve. Furthermore, the local community members have limited information on devolved system of government and how it works and how they can participate.

Weak collaboration and networking among key stakeholders have not helped in the intensification of oversight provision in the implementation of the decentralization policy. The media has largely remained mute with little or no reporting about the process and challenges faced in the implementation of the policy itself.

achieve this through enhanced collaborations and networking among CSOs, government policy makers and community gate keepers.

This project will focus on bringing into existence, at least two Civil Society networks that will be drawn from organizations that do work around Decentralization and other sector issues such as community mobilization and participation, advocacy for transparency and accountability and public social service delivery. At the same time, the project will identify and bring together a network of community champions made of at least 360 individuals. These will carry out advocacy actions for the implementation of decentralization, mobilization of citizen participation in subnational planning, budgeting, and demand for improved service delivery by the local authorities in their communities. ❀

# THE CHILOBE, CHILUBWA SAGA

**A**cross the nation, Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) is commonly practiced in various parts of the nation and southern province is no exception. Southern province is heavily endowed with mineral resources and has potential to significantly contribute to the country’s mining sector if the mineral wealth the region is endowed with is properly harnessed. However, this potential has not been realized due to the inability of ASM operations to operate as business entities

This has led to ASM being in the back ground and their plights not seriously considered by the government due to informalization and association with illegal mineral supply chain, as with the case of Chilobe and Chilubwa areas of Mapatizya area of His Royal highness, Chief Simwatachela of Zimba district, where Tin, quartz, tantalite and Tungsten is mined illegally.

Caritas Zambia, through the Justice and Peace members of Matadei Parish in Kalomo, of Southern province, has since 2019, worked with mining communities of Chilobe and Chilubwa areas, of Siankope, towards formalizing their activities through the acquisition of mining licenses. The two areas house over 300 illegal miners, who are mostly women across different age groups, ranging from the very young to the old, and men, mostly youths.

On first site, the conditions under which these mining activities were happening were disheartening, with many having no bargaining power due to the illegal conduct of these activities. One kilogram of tin was selling for K35 and would sometimes be exchanged for bag of mealie meal, due to the scarcity of food at the time. Further, children were seen working at the mine, to make ends meet for their families, with no safety gear. Some accidents were reported resulting in deaths, due to the unsafe mining conduct.

With Caritas Zambia building and strengthening their capacities regarding mining legislation, human rights and child labour laws, they were encouraged to form and formalize their cooperatives, then proceed to apply for a mining license, which they did.

Changes in their relations with buyers was noted, with them bargaining for a higher sale price for the minerals. They relatively bargained from K35, when we first visited their site to K120, currently, as they await licensing authorization from the ministry of mines and mineral development, once the licensing suspension is lifted.

Also, they have engaged their member of parliament to aid in this process, which is impressive, for they are showcasing strengthened capacities to engage their duty bearers, which is key in forwarding social justice.

Despite them still mining illegally, they have made more strides towards formalizing their activities through formalization of more cooperatives, which would too, apply for mining licenses, which will in the long-run add to the national cake. ❀





# THE ZAMBIAN TRADITIONAL SEED AND FOOD FESTIVAL



Food and nutrition plays a critical role in human development as well as environmental sustainability. Seed is the genesis of all food systems and is perceived differently depending on cultural, social, economic and religious beliefs. Seed is highly significant in determining our heritage and in the natural environment is considered to have a lot of cultural and religious attachments and rituals. Food is central to human health and national development. Zambia as a country is endowed with 72 tribes, each with its particular food types and consumption patterns.

“Smallholders are the country’s largest population of food producers. They are responsible for up to 90 percent of the food produced in Zambia, with women accounting for about 80 percent.”

Food is part of most cultural ceremonies and everyday life. Because of certain foods communities are connected to their history, culture and way of life. However, there has been an erosion of the consumption and appreciation of local seeds and foods due



to modernization which has brought into play western culinary cousin. This is more to do with cultural erosion. Production of Food in Zambia is highly influenced by both traditional and conventional systems. These systems are shaped by the structure of the agricultural policies, influence of direct foreign investments and global food trade and logistics. The majority of Zambians in the rural areas depend on their own foods while most of those in the urban areas are supplied by the rural areas and imported foods

The food and agricultural sector also generates livelihoods for local communities and provides opportunities for employment. The food production system has a plays a significant role in the way food reaches the table and how selective the consumers tend to be. According to the World Food Programme in Zambia, “smallholders are the country’s largest population of food producers. They are responsible for up to 90 percent of the food produced in Zambia, with women accounting for about 80 percent”. At the same time however, at least 50% of Zambians are chronically hungry. Stunting rates amongst children remain at an unacceptable 35% - and come with lifelong and intergenerational consequences (WFP Zambia, 2020). From a development perspective, recognising and supporting smallholders, particularly women, who produce diverse food for household and local market consumption, is an undeniable imperative. Food production and consumption impacts almost all other national development objectives. As the Stockholm Resilience Centre shows, unless there is a radical transition to a more sustainable food system, the world will largely fail on every other Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) commitment. The modern food system, that includes production and its inputs, transport, trade, processing, marketing, consumption and waste, is the biggest contributor to global ecological degradation, land-use change and unsustainable consumption that is driving climate change and poor health.

Zambia’s farmers have already witnessed the effects of changing weather patterns and increased desertification. Unsustainable agricultural production mechanisms that are based on external inputs, chemicals and monocarp production of ‘empty calories’ is further driving the broad negative impacts of climate change in Zambia. Presently, food production systems and the environment are engaged in a mutually damaging relationship. In Zambia Agriculture and food processing systems are degrading

the environment through greenhouse gas production, pesticide use, and soil erosion and water depletion as well as energy intensive production methods.

The same systems that put our health at risk also have a devastating impact on environmental health. In a vicious circle, environmental degradation is also reducing the quality of basic nutrients. In addition, the current agricultural policies are not doing enough to priorities measures that would achieve productivity and reduce poverty especially among rural populations. Other natural and man induced calamities have compromised the food production system, unless these are tackled, the most vulnerable members of society will continue to face hunger, food and nutrition insecurity as well as poverty. This calls for a robust policy environment which supports a sustainable food system of production that will be reliable and usable for now and for the future. ✿







# WALK THE TALK FOR The Equality Walk EQUALITY

Zambia continues to experience high levels of inequalities. Caritas Zambia like many other civil society organisations work towards addressing the challenge of inequality not only in the community but the nation as a whole. Caritas works towards addressing inequalities among the general livelihoods of people, inequality around participation in the democracy and governance of the country, inequalities around natural resource governance, inequality around issues of child protection and child participation and also around economic and social accountability. In collaboration with other partners, Caritas Zambia takes part in one of the largest annual community campaigns dubbed “The Equality Walk”.

The Equality Walk is the Equality’s largest annual campaign community to fight against the inequalities in the country. 2022, the campaign celebrate its third year running. The main goal of the walk is to promote a general awareness amongst the citizenry as well as stimulate discussions on various aspects of inequality being faced by Zambians. In addition, the walk for equality is meant to create a purposeful platform for Communities, Government, Civil Society Organizations, and Companies to effectively deliberate on real life experiences of the impact of inequality in the country and see how best they can contribute to fighting the surge in Zambia and to radically reduce the gap between rich and poor.

Attended by scores of people from diverse walks of life, the equality walk Festival has been held every year since 2020, it is a grass roots festival that encourages people to come together and experience the positive aspects of our everyday lives and evaluate ways of addressing the challenge of inequality not only in the community, but as a nation. It is an all-round participatory festival where people interact, policy makers, faith leaders, CSO,



youth, children and share social change experiences and stories, providing a unique opportunity for cross-cultural engagement of how to fight against inequality in the country.

Our belief, however, is that if rising inequality is not well monitored and addressed, various sorts of political, economic, and social catastrophe will arise. Inequality can threaten the stability and security of a country especially that the cost of living is already very high due to the effects of debt crisis, climate change, effects of loss and damage, energy crisis, high unemployment levels, low wages, lack of proper quality public services coupled with increasing political and electoral tension, etc. Such an atmosphere serves only to accelerate inequality. In Zambia wealth and power, sometimes procured by the minority group through undemocratic means and helping themselves with public resources has distorted the economic outlook. This is also increasing the inequality gap that we see between the rich few and the very many poor people. ❁

# FOOD SECURITY, RESILIENCE, AND CLIMATE JUSTICE



The majority of small scale farmers depend on rain fed agriculture to sustain their livelihoods. Conventional agriculture is still largely promoted in these areas by the Government of the Republic of Zambia. The other big factor is deforestation. Agriculture and charcoal burning have been the main drivers of this. Commercial exploitation of trees for timber has also taken a toll on the depletion of trees. Timber merchants are over-exploiting timber without any due regard to environment. The rate of deforestation in Zambia based on remote sensing results is estimated between 276,000 and 300,000 hectares per annum or 0.62% of wooded land (forest).

This is negatively affecting the rainfall pattern as it has dire consequences on the climate. The climate change [variance] phenomenon has impacted more especially on the water resources. The effect of the Charcoal burning emissions is already affecting temperatures and precipitation.

Apart from affecting crops, rising temperatures and associated decrease in rainfall also reduces foliage for livestock. Households that depend on livestock for their livelihoods are challenged when their livestock die. They become vulnerable to climate change impacts as a result of reduced livestock that maybe alternative to crop production and income. Drought does not only destroy crops, but also causes siltation and sedimentation in rivers and streams thereby reducing their capacity to hold water. This reduces the availability of water for both humans and animals and affects biodiversity. For example, forests which previously regenerated quickly after deforestation or degradation (e.g., Miombo forest in Kazungula district) have been too slow to recover due to the heat and drought impacts of climate change.

Small-scale farming is the major livelihood activity for the rural communities in Livingstone of Western province of Zambia. This is the catchment areas of Caritas Livingstone. The majority of small scale farmers practice mono culture and depend on rain fed agriculture to sustain their livelihoods. Conventional agriculture is still largely promoted in these areas by the Government of the Republic of Zambia. There is also widespread deforestation. Agriculture and charcoal burning have been the main drivers of this vice. Commercial exploitation of trees for timber has also taken a toll on the depletion of trees. Timber merchants are over-exploiting timber without any due regard to the environment. This, coupled with charcoal burning, is negatively affecting the rainfall pattern.

It is against this background that Caritas Livingstone initiated a project dubbed the “Mapoka” project – for Food Security, Resilience and Climate Justice, a Climate Change Adaptation Project intended to promote off-season farming and the application of agriculture interventions through crop diversification, building a more resilient farming community in view of negative effects of climate change. It promoted amongst participating families, vegetable production and field crops through sustainable organic agriculture with a view to promote household food security including environmental protection.

Through this project, Caritas Livingstone endeavoured to create an atmosphere where protection of natural resources is respected and adhered to. Households were trained in human rights, advocacy and lobbying skills. This helped them in reclaiming their rights and in holding government accountable on the enforcement of policies and regulations on sustainable Natural Resource Management, in addition to the practical benefits that they acquired from the sustainable organic farming trainings.



The project also advocated for the persons with disabilities (PWDs) women and youths to take up leadership positions in their communities as it is well understood that social and economic development can only be attained when there is equal participation of all in the development process. This is in line with Zambia's vision on gender as stated in the "Vision 2030" which is to achieve gender equity and equality in the socio-economic development process by 2030.

Building on the knowledge and experiences from the implementation of sustainable organic agriculture (SOA) projects, Caritas trained communities and farmers in the practice but also advocated for the adoption of SOA farming method as a way of supporting Climate Justice. This project will increase household income and food security of 180 small scale farming households in Sioma and Sesheke districts, of the western province of Zambia. It will focus on helping farmers become self-reliant through prudent management of their agricultural produce. Households will be trained, mentored, and encouraged to participate in Sustainable Organic Agriculture, Climate Justice, Chilli production as an alternative livelihood, and will diversify their income sources. Further, farmers will be supported to create sustainable water points to ensure all-season agricultural activities. The trainings will be done in the sites by caritas project officers working hand in hand with officers from ministry of agriculture, and the Forestry department. As in all other trainings the Lead farmers will be trained first in turn for them to train others (Unless where it is necessary to meet all the farmers at the same time)

Food Security, Resilience and Climate Justice Project is a Climate Change Adaptation Project intended to promote off-season farming and the application of agriculture interventions through crop diversification, building a more resilient farming community in view of negative effects of climate change, promoting amongst participating families, vegetable production and field crops through sustainable organic agriculture with a view to promote household food security including environmental



protection. Other project activities include, afforestation or tree planting, and social accountability activities in the face of climate and its far-reaching effects on the environment. The project encourages local farmers to engage in alternative livelihoods like rearing chickens, goats, pigs, bee keeping and aquaculture. It must be noted that agriculture production in the western province of Zambia, like other parts of the country, is primarily rain-fed and typically applies to the extensive staple-crop production with relatively low efficiency. Maize production is low due to fluctuating rainfall amounts and poor soils. The soil is relatively low in organic matter. High risk caused by uncertainty in rainfall amounts received per season, with relatively low expected yields lead farmers to receiving a reduction in their return on investment in terms of labor and time.

The Mapoka project targets households especially the vulnerable but viable household members. Considerations is also given to differently abled, elderly and other vulnerable persons within the participants' selection. Targeting 180 farmer, with a projected multiplier effect of improving the quality of life to the indirect beneficiaries estimated at 1, 080 family members. The targeted districts are Sesheke - Lusu East, and Research; Mwandi - Chisu; Sioma - Nangweshi, Malombe, and Kaanja communities, in western province of Zambia. Households are trained, mentored and encouraged to engage in sustainable organic agriculture, and income source diversification. Farmers are also trained in organic chili production and sensitized on the importance of Agro ecology and Agroforestry.

Caritas Livingstone endeavours to create an atmosphere where protection of natural resources is respected and adhered to, also advocating for PWDs, women and youths to take up leadership positions in their communities as it is well understood that social and economic development can only be attained when there is equal participation of all in the development process. ❁

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AMONG RURAL COMMUNITIES

*Caritas Monze*

**S**outhern Zambia (which is most of the Diocese of Monze) has, since 1991 experienced unpredictable weather changes that have included droughts, flash floods, a shift in the rainfall pattern and at times extremely high temperatures up to 48 degrees Celsius. These variations in the weather / climate, coupled with intensified deforestation activities (for charcoal burning) and environmental insensitive cultivation methods by the people in southern Zambia have negatively impacted their livelihood and the ecosystem in general. The climate change effects are of global nature and as such interventions to address these should be both by way of preparedness and response.

In response to these challenges and in an effort to mitigate them, Caritas Monze launched the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) project with focus on two broad areas of enhancing community resilience against negative effects of droughts in the selected target communities of Sinazongwe, Siavonga, and Chirundu Districts. Some of the noted effects were increased human wild life conflict, shift in the rain season, reduced rain season duration, decline in water table resulting in most of the boreholes drying out, receding of water in the main rivers, reduction in number of perennial rivers and increased livestock diseases as a result of increased infestation of external parasites and vectors (ticks and tsetse flies) and poor nutrition.

The EPR project is also perceived as an intervention that should offer sustainable alternative livelihoods as opposed to charcoal burning, wild fruit collection and flat stones collection which is the pre-occupation of men when there's no rainfall. These activities are in themselves catalytic to poor family life and environmental degradation resulting into perpetuation of poverty among the targeted communities

The interventions include Training target communities in sustainable agriculture methods, livestock disease control measures and promoting establishment of functional livestock schemes, promotion of community grain storage facilities and marketing strategies for crops and livestock.

Caritas Monze, through the project also supported target communities with boreholes that have minimum required standards for resilience in terms of depth, provision of treadle pumps which can easily be used by both genders for all year round irrigation among the targets located by the main water bodies, developing strategic alliances with other partners, traditional leaders and government for coordinated efforts to emergency preparedness and response and formation of community task forces to come up with and be able to implement disaster response contingency plans.

The majority of the population in Southern Zambia lives in rural and often marginalised areas with few income alternatives and largely dependent on agricultural (crop and livestock production) for their livelihood. The smallholder farmers who



are mainly into seasonal cropping as they are dependent on rain, are characterised by high dependency on external inputs (especially chemical fertilizers and hybrid seed varieties), high vulnerability and low capacity to produce surplus crops for sale and consumption. This is worsened by the government's failure to protecting and fulfilling the rights of smallholder farmers to agro produce market, adequate food and nutrition by not coming up with agricultural policy that is pro-poor and effect its implementation at community level. This situation has continued to leave rural communities in severe poverty and marginalisation. The change in climate has also contributed greatly to the reduction in water table making it difficult for target communities to grow crops all year round using artificial irrigation.

Distances to water sources have been increased, subjecting target communities to walk long distances to access water for domestic use and to water their animals. The Water table for facilities (boreholes) that were supported by the Diocese among the targets in the last project have gone very low due to reduction in rainfall over the past 6 to 10 years. Most of these boreholes were drilled according to the Zambian standards of an average of 50 meters deep.

The emergency preparedness and response targets four Parishes of the Diocese in Sinazongwe District (Maamba Parish) and Siavonga District also covering part of the current Chirundu District (Siavonga, Lusitu and Chirundu Parishes) covering an area of 8,731 sq. km and a total estimated population of 185,400 people - for details see Annex 1. These are areas along the Zambezi valley and are prone to droughts and marginalization (due to their remoteness) when it comes to Government social



and economic services. This makes the communities in these areas even more vulnerable than in most parts of Southern Zambia. However, some of the targeted community members' proximity to the Zambezi River and general temperatures offers them an opportunity for all year round crop production given the means; this proximity has also posed as a hazard due to human wild life conflict as well as flooding in case of heavy rains when the river overflows.

The project networks with relevant NSAs and government departments especially the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU). Targeting these stakeholders by way of enhancing their buying into the project so that they become part of the implementation team and continue providing needed services to target communities after the project period. Traditional leaders have influence on the people's culture in their areas. Unless these

are part of the project efforts which may require change in some of the cultural norms of the people and formation of task forces, there is bound to be resistance among people towards change that is intended by the project.

Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) project embarks on enhancing community resilience among the target areas against negative effects of droughts in the selected target communities of Sinazongwe, Siavonga, and Chirundu Districts. Some of the noted effects were increased human wild life conflict, shift in the rain season, reduced rain season duration, decline in water table resulting in most of the boreholes drying out, receding of water in the main rivers, reduction in number of perennial rivers and increased livestock diseases as a result of increased infestation of external parasites and vectors (ticks and tsetse flies) and poor nutrition. ❀

# WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

For your sakes  
Christ became poor  
(cf. 2 Cor 8:9)

**A**s the Church celebrates the World Day of the Poor each year, Caritas Zambia as the Dicastery for Evangelization, under the auspices of the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops, we join the rest of the church around the world in reaching out to poor and to raise awareness on the levels of poverty and the extent to which it has ravished our people. The Day was established by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter "Misericordia et Miser", to celebrate the end of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. Since 2017 it has been celebrated every year on the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Its aim is to encourage the Church to "go out" into the streets to encounter poverty in its different forms. For us as Caritas this is what we do in our daily work as we strive towards justice and equality for all. Specifically on this day, as Pope Francis reminds us in his message this year, that from the very early times of the Church, attention to the needs of the poor was a feature of the Christian community, as shown by St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. In that letter, the Apostle asks the local Christian community to take up a special collection for the community in Jerusalem, which is suffering great hardship due to a food shortage, as "a sign of love, the love shown by Jesus himself".

We therefore would like to remind all of us, especially in the spirit of togetherness as a Christian nation, to take it upon ourselves to give attention to the needs of the poor. As Pope Francis put it "so that throughout the world Christian communities can become an ever greater sign of Christ's charity for the least and those most in need," he wrote in Misericordia et misera. As a country we have pledged to live no one behind, and true to this we must commit to ensure that the poor and most vulnerable do not remain behind. We therefore implore;

## THE GOVERNMENT

Policy formulation and decision making is a starting point for government to take a course of action that makes a real life



Let us add a human face to the many policies we are making and enforcing, to ensure that they yield results and improve the living standards of our people. Failure to which, in the face of these challenges, policy making will need to change – both in its function and its formulation. In the long run, poverty and inequities affect us all. In one way all the other we must all pay to reduce the burden of poverty on our society- healthcare, unemployment, lack of decent housing and sanitation, among other things.

## THE CITIZENS

Let us remember that we can attract investment from our foreign partners, but Zambia can never develop without the involvement of its citizens. It will take us, to make the sacrifices that others will not make for us, as such a sacrifice must be profitable to them, externalize profits to their countries of origin. Let us be patriotic. Let us reflect on this day, and pray that God awakens our conscience to share the little we have with those who have nothing, so that no one will go without. Pope Francis calls us to a sense of community and of communion as a style of life. Let us do our part towards achieving economic growth by carry out initiatives that support social responsibility. Let us support local businesses, and local job creation. Development is a product of collective effort of all. If citizens engage in economic activities, the profit raised is re-injected into the economy thereby accelerating development. The involvement of citizens in economic activities also empowers them to help others, thereby uplifting the living standards of many and reducing poverty.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

Let us take back our projects to the community. Service to the poor must be our goal. Let us continue to advocate and lobby the government for policy change at the national level and directly providing effective services to the poor at the grassroots level. We need to push for economic reforms, call for accountability and transparency, promote human rights protection and combat social exclusion and inequalities, advocating for the rights of the poor, lobbying policymakers for pro-poor reforms and directly providing our services to the poor and marginalized. ❀

change for all, including the poor. We need to address the high levels of poverty and inequality that have persisted in our country, driving the poor further into poverty. The benefits of growth should not be limited to a small segment of the population. Let us develop a strong political commitment to increasing employment, promote labor-intensive economic activities there by generating more low-skilled jobs that trickle down growth to the ordinary people.







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