



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Zambia Country Brief January 2025



Operational Context

In 2022, the World Bank reclassified Zambia as a low-income country after a decade in the lower middle-income category. The reclassification followed sustained poor economic performance exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. More than half of the country's 19.6 million people live below the poverty line. The country continues to grapple with a high debt burden, posing a significant threat to the Government's efforts to deliver social services, alleviate poverty, and achieve zero hunger.

In the last decade, Zambia has suffered from the impact of climate change, with frequent, prolonged dry spells (the most recent being the 2023/2024 El Niño-induced drought), extreme high temperatures, and floods that have undermined food security and threatened the livelihoods of many smallholder farming households. Smallholders are the country's largest population of food producers, responsible for up to 90 percent of the food produced in Zambia.

As part of the Zambia United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2023 – 2028, WFP provides technical assistance to the Government to strengthen national systems and programmes that aim to achieve zero hunger. This includes integrated nutrition programmes, smallholder farmer support, social protection programmes and disaster risk management, as well as providing food assistance to vulnerable individuals and populations, including refugees, and offering on-demand logistics support during emergencies.



Population: **19.6 million**

2023 Human Development Index: **153 out of 193 countries**

Income Level: **Low**

Stunting: **32 percent of children aged 6-59 months**

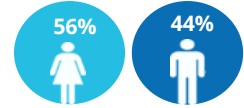
In Numbers

5,937.95 MT in-kind food assistance distributed

USD 659,509 in cash transferred to beneficiaries in January 2025

USD14.5 million six-month net funding requirements (February – July 2025) representing 48 percent of total needs.

261,880 people assisted in January 2025



Operational Updates

In January, WFP assisted 261,880 people, including 233,010 drought-affected individuals and refugees through crisis response (cash-based transfers and food distributions); 165 people through nutrition improvement interventions; and 28,705 individuals through smallholder farmer support and resilience interventions.

Crisis response/refugees

Food assistance for refugees: WFP continues to provide cash-based transfers to refugees and asylum seekers at the Mantapala refugee settlement. In January, WFP assisted a total of 9,055 refugees (4,590 female and 4,465 male).

Strengthened Livelihoods and Building Self-Reliance (SLABS) of Refugees and Host Communities in Mantapala:

On 30th January 2025, a Farm Financial Management Training was conducted to address the critical need for lead farmers in the refugee settlement and the host community to enhance their financial management skills. Many farmers face challenges in managing farm operations efficiently due to a limited understanding of budgeting, record-keeping, and planning, resulting in unoptimized resource use and financial losses. The training was organized to bridge this gap, equipping farmers with essential financial tools and skills to sustain and grow their farming enterprises. A total of 27 (16 males and 11 females) lead farmers were trained.

Crisis response/drought

WFP assisted 223,955 people across six provinces in Zambia through, in-kind food distributions (61,085 people), cash-based transfers (134,105 people), and voucher distributions (28,765 people). WFP responded to urgent food needs while also supporting local markets and retailers. The effort was part of WFP's commitment to mitigating the impact of drought and enhancing food security in affected regions in the country.

Nutrition Integration among the drought-affected communities:

WFP supported the government at both provincial and district levels through the Ministries of Education, Community Development and Social Services, Health, and Agriculture to conduct training sessions on nutrition and Social Behavioural Change. These sessions trained 35 extension officers (21 male and 14 female) and 130 (98 male and 32 female) Community-Wellness Action Committees (CWACs) and

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Photo: Eunice Yumba a grade 9 pupil at Mwaimene secondary school, receives food during her lunchbreak as part of the school's feeding programme. Photo: **WFP/Joseph Kaluba**

Country Strategic Plan (2023–2028)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirement (in USD)
109.7 m	79.3 m	14.5 m

Strategic Result 1: Access to food (SDG Target 2.1)

Strategic Outcome 01: Food-insecure people in Zambia (including refugees) affected by shocks are better able to meet their essential food security and nutrition needs in anticipation of, during and in the aftermath of crises.

Focus Area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide food and livelihood support to crisis-affected, food-insecure people, including refugees, to meet their basic food and nutrition needs, and support self-reliance in anticipation of, during and in the early aftermath of shocks including climate change induced impacts

Strategic Result 2: End malnutrition (SDG Target 2.2)

Strategic Outcome 02: Populations at risk of malnutrition in Zambia have improved access to and consumption of safe and diverse nutrient-dense food all year round.

Focus Area: Root causes

Activities:

- Promote adoption of optimal nutrition practices among populations at risk of malnutrition and strengthen partnership with food system actors to increase the availability of nutrient-dense foods.

Strategic Result 3: Smallholder productivity and incomes (SDG Target 2.3)

Strategic Outcome 03: Food-insecure and risk-prone smallholder farming populations, especially women, youth, and people with disabilities in targeted rural and urban areas, are enabled to withstand climate change and other shocks and benefit from more resilient food systems through increased incomes that contribute to improved nutrition and food diversity and increased economic and livelihood opportunities by 2030.

Focus Area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Promote knowledge and adoption of climate services, regenerative agriculture practices and innovative technologies among smallholders and nutritious food value chain actors to build resilience with regard to climate change and other shocks while simultaneously reducing environmental degradation.
- Provide targeted smallholders and value chain actors with an integrated package of innovative and transformative skills, tools and systems to enable the adoption of diversified and decent livelihoods

Strategic Result 4: Capacity Building (SDG Target 17.9)

Strategic Outcome 04: National institutions in Zambia have strengthened capacity to design policies and programmes that promote the enhancement of national food systems and deliver national emergency preparedness, anticipatory and response programmes, nutrition-sensitive, shock-responsive social protection, supply chain systems and sustainable food security programmes by 2030.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide technical assistance, including through South-South and triangular cooperation, to national institutions to strengthen national capacity and systems for emergency preparedness, anticipatory action and early response, social protection, food and nutrition security and sustainable food systems.

Strategic Result 5: Global Partnership (SDG Target 17.16)

Strategic Outcome 05: Humanitarian and development actors in Zambia have improved access to on-demand services and benefit from innovative, effective, and cost-efficient supply chain capacity by 2030.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide timely and appropriate on-demand services for supply chain, innovation, and health logistics services to relevant actors

Community-Based Volunteers (CBVs) from Western Province. The individuals who underwent this training are now educating their communities on optimal nutrition practices and Infant and Young Child Feeding, with a special emphasis on bean utilization. The training sessions are ongoing in the remaining districts.

Nutrition improvement support

Gender and Nutrition: In preparation for 2025, significant progress has been made in integrating Gender and Protection Integration (GPI) across all Strategic Outcomes (SOs). During the Annual Activity Planning (AAP) process, all SOs were aligned with GPI priorities, ensuring targeted actions for effective implementation. Meanwhile, the Gender Equality Certification Programme (GCEP) is nearing completion, with two remaining benchmarks to be finalized. Additionally, GPI has completed preparations for the Country Office's Integrated Cross-Cutting Context Analysis and Risk Assessment (I-CARA), with field missions scheduled for February 2025. This assessment will enhance country office programming by incorporating gender analysis and protection risk assessment.

Nutrition Messaging in Schools: WFP supported the Ministry of Education to build capacity in Nutrition messaging for the Emergency School Feeding programme for 200 School Health Nutrition (SHN) coordinators from 10 districts. By 30 January, the first implementation reached 14,383 learners (6,520 boys, 7,863 girls) across 56 schools in 4 districts. The key nutrition messages are being disseminated across various platforms including school assemblies, school classes and SHN clubs.

Smallholder Farmer Support

Input distribution under drought recovery programme: In January, WFP continued input distribution, reaching 54,926 beneficiaries (92 percent) of the targeted 60,700 across 17 districts. Inputs distributed include cereals (maize, sorghum), tubers (cassava, sweet potatoes), legumes (groundnuts, cowpeas, beans), and assorted vegetables (tomatoes, onions, rape, and amaranthus).

Research, assessments and monitoring

mVAM Remote Market Monitoring: Food price monitoring conducted in January showed a decrease in the cost of a basic food basket for an average household of five, which provides the recommended 2,100 kilocalories per day. The cost of a standard food basket for an average household of five decreased from ZMW 1,802 (USD 65) in December 2024 to ZMW 1,698 (USD 60.9) in January 2025.

Market Functionality Index (MFI): The national MFI average score was 6.0, with separate dimensional ratings of: assortment 6.9, availability 9.0, price 4.8, and resilience 9.4.

Analysis of the four dimensions of remote MFI (availability, assortment, price, and resilience) shows that despite the impact of the drought, markets have managed to maintain a variety of goods. Markets have robust supply chains and maintain the ability of goods to continue to flow into the market. Most essential items are in stock, but there are occasional shortages or delays in replenishing stocks. There was a significant improvement in the price stability score when compared to the previous round of MFI (from a 1.9 score in December to a 4.8 score in January).

Donors: African Development Bank, African Risk Capacity, Danish Refugee Council, France, German Federal Foreign Office, Ireland, Japan, KfW Development Bank, Republic of Korea, Sweden, United Kingdom, United Nations Central Emergency Fund, United Nations Children's Fund, United States of America