

Country strategic plan summary for 2004-2014

This document describes how Plan Zambia and its partners will mobilise the different resources to improve the welfare and prospects of vulnerable children. It provides the strategic framework for consistent and continued action from 2004-2014.

About Zambia

Zambia is a landlocked country covering an area of around 750,000 sq km (290,000 sq miles) with a population of around 11 million people of which half are under 15 years of age. Over 6.1 million people live in rural areas. The poverty level is ranked amongst the highest in Africa. It is estimated that about 80% of rural Zambians are poor and 60% extremely poor. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has devastated the country, with around 16% of the 15–49 years olds infected and with everyone affected in some way. Many children's rights are not met, and their needs remain high. Zambia's major source of livelihood is minerals (copper), agriculture and tourism. Although Zambia is a low-income country, it is recognized for its economic and political potential.

Plan Zambia programme focus

Since 1996, Plan has been working with children, their parents and rural communities in improving their lives and future prospects and breaking the cycle of poverty in the four districts of Chadiza, Chibombo, Mazabuka and Mansa. Its focus is on programmes that achieve sustainable improvements in basic health, water and sanitation; food security and income generation; children's and community empowerment; and learning. Child rights, gender and HIV/AIDS are crucial cross-cutting issues that are integrated in all programmes.



A picture that is better than words

Plan Zambia programme approach

Plan Zambia takes a child rights approach to its programme work which is implemented through the child centered community development approach. This focuses on children as active agents of change in their communities and ensures that children actively participate in all project stages, from design to impact evaluation. Its entry point into communities is through children who act as ambassadors of their communities. In this way, parents are also involved and mobilised.

To more effectively exploit opportunities, develop appropriate responses and mobilise resources, Plan works in partnership with other organisations. It is active in lobbying and advocacy on protection issues to decision makers and the media to promote good policies and practices to improve the well being of children. Plan works with government and non-governmental organisations to improve the lives of millions of children in Zambia.

The country strategic plan was formulated within the context of Zambia's poverty reduction strategy paper and the United Nation's millennium development goals. It involved research surveys and extensive consultation within Plan, with children, communities, community-based organisations, donors, the Government of Zambia, and other non-governmental organisations.

Issues affecting children in Zambia

In our strategic plan, the following key issues were identified:

- Children are in danger of death, malnutrition and illness due to high levels of preventable diseases, particularly malaria, diarrhea and dysentery, respiratory infections, and HIV/AIDS.
- High levels of poverty and food insecurity, particularly amongst rural farming households, cause high levels of malnutrition and weaken resistance to disease.
- Children's participation in their own and their community's sustainable development is low, and they and their families are not yet sufficiently empowered to control and manage this.
- Many children still do not complete their basic education, which is of inadequate quality.

Plan's strategy to address key children's issues

To improve the quality of health among children and mothers, we will focus on:

- Increasing access to an integrated basic health care service that communities are actively involved in.
- Reducing disease levels by increasing people's awareness on basic health care, malaria, water and sanitation and nutrition.
- Strengthening HIV/AIDS interventions on prevention, treatment, care and support while working together with community members.
- Increasing access to sufficient potable water and adequate sanitation and providing hygiene education.
- Building capacity of the community in management skills, and promoting the utilisation of volunteers to maximise sustainability and cost.



Promoting maternal and child health

To improve the participation of children, their families and communities in the development process, we will focus on:

- Adapting, introducing and institutionalising the child centered community development approach.
- Building capacity of community groups to manage their development projects while integrating child participation and gender equity.
- Promoting community self-reliance to take up their core role in development.
- Birth registration and child protection projects that unites children to identify and discuss issues which affect their lives and ensuring that their voices are heard by decision-makers.
- Using sponsorship communications to educate sponsors on development issues affecting children.



Children as active participants of their own development



Promoting universal education for all children

To improve the quality of education among children, we will focus on:

- Increasing child enrolment by enhancing awareness on benefits of education and addressing inhibiting factors.
- Promoting the participation of children, parents in the management of their schools.
- Supporting communities and local government with increased access to early childhood care and development and primary education of good quality.
- Investigating possibilities for effective sexual health education in primary schools, and the introduction of an active learning teaching methodology.



Good harvests guarantee food security and child nutrition

To improve household food security and income among families, we will focus on:

- Developing and improving sustainable agricultural activities to avoid food shortages.
- Improving nutrition through awareness raising and training, crop diversification and improved farming techniques.
- Promoting rural enterprise such as small-scale savings and credit, which enhances household income.
- Building capacity and opportunities of community based organisations and farmer interest groups to access local markets for their produce.