

# A guide to Zambia



- **Population:** 15m (UK = 64m)
- **Land size:** 752,618 sq km (about three times the size of the UK)
- **Currency:** Zambian Kwacha
- **Languages:** English, Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga and many others
- **Main religion:** Christian (95%)
- **Agricultural products include:** maize, sorghum, rice, peanuts
- **Industries include:** copper mining and processing, emerald mining
- **Life expectancy:** 52.5 years
- **GDP ppp** (value of goods and services, divided by population): US\$3,900 per year (UK = US\$41,200)
- **HIV and AIDS:** More than 1 in 10 people live with HIV and AIDS

Source: CIA World Factbook, 2015

## Geography

Zambia is renowned for its abundant wildlife. It is also very rich in minerals and is the world's fourth largest copper producer.

Most of Zambia is a wide plateau, with a few mountains in the north and the centre. On the Zambezi River, the Victoria Falls or Mosi-oa-Tunya ('Smoke that thunders' in the local Sotho language) is the largest curtain of falling water in the world.

## History

Zambia was originally the home of the Khoisan peoples. They were displaced in the thirteenth century by Bantu people from other parts of Africa. In the eighteenth century, Zambia was colonised by Europeans and was mostly governed by an administration appointed from London with the advice of the British South Africa Company.

## Politics

In 1964 Zambia made a peaceful transition to independence and has had a long period of political stability. Its government consists of the President and a national assembly. Elections are held every five years and a President can serve two terms. Edgar Lungu has been President since 2015.

## Urbanisation

Zambia is one of the most highly urbanised countries in sub-Saharan Africa. More than 40 per cent of the population live close together in a few cities near main roads and rail lines. In contrast, rural areas are very sparsely populated.

## Economy

The country's economy is based on copper and enjoyed rapid economic growth between 2004 and 2014. This growth slowed down in the following two years due to falling copper prices around the world.

Around 70 per cent of Zambia's people depend on agriculture to make a living. Often farmers cannot afford seeds, tools or fertiliser. They also have to cope with changing rainfall patterns due to climate change, poor roads for taking crops to market and lack of training in effective farming methods.

## Poverty and malnutrition

Many families have inadequate income and no reliable source of food. More than 54 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line and almost 6 million people live in extreme poverty.

There are high levels of malnutrition – more than half of the children under five have stunted growth.

## CAFOD projects in Zambia

CAFOD works in partnership, supporting local organisations that know the area and its needs. CAFOD projects are designed to be long-lasting, giving people skills, resources and opportunities to cope with disasters and provide for themselves, rather than being dependent on aid. CAFOD has been supporting partners in Zambia since the mid-1980s.

## The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary

The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary are a CAFOD partner in Mbala in Northern Zambia, close to Tanzania. Temperatures here range from 15°C in the cold season to 29°C in the hot season. Farmers in Mbala mainly grow maize and beans.

The Sisters run an organisation called Households in Distress (HID) which seeks to reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS on families in the area, for example by coordinating home-based care. HID also runs education programmes and helps people to develop livelihoods so that they can support themselves and their families. It helps children and young people who are orphaned or have special needs, and supports vulnerable adults.

## Florence's story – developing livelihoods

Florence Nachinsambwe lives in Mbala. She joined a local group supported by HID because she was struggling to provide for herself and her two children after her husband was killed in a mining accident.

At first, Florence and the group learned farming techniques such as how to make a fertiliser that would increase their crop yield. Later, they were offered training in fish farming.

## Growing a business

Florence made two fish ponds and stocked them with small starter fish, called *tilapia*, from our partner. She received training in caring for the ponds and the fish.

When the fish had grown and she sold them, Florence reinvested the money, cleaned the pond and bought new starter fish and fish feed.

Now Florence's business supports her parents, as well as her own family, so they can buy the things they need and her children can go to school.

## Community transformation

Florence shared her new skills and knowledge with her neighbours and they set up fish ponds too.

*"I wanted to help my neighbours as they had helped me in the past... I thought if they were empowered, they could benefit too."*

Florence's neighbours use the profits to send their children to school, to improve their homes, for example by installing solar panels, and to buy radios to keep in contact with the world.

Life in Florence's village is transforming... one fish at a time!

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*I was interested in fish farming because it's a business that I knew would help me make a living."*

*Florence, Zambia*

Watch our animation about Florence's fish pond at [cafod.org.uk/secondary](http://cafod.org.uk/secondary)

