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VOICES FOR JUST CLIMATE ACTION

ZAMBIA

Factsheet

Be one with nature

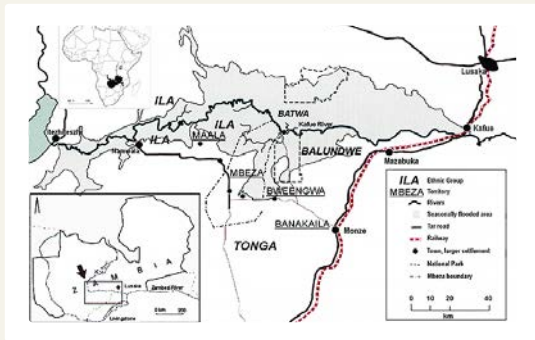
VCA CONTEXT, IMPLEMENTATION AND GOALS

WWF-VCA interventions are carried out in **Lusaka, Kafue, Chirundu, Siavonga, Chikankata, Mazabuka, Itezhi tezhi** district of Lower Kafue Basin. These districts are located in the central part of the southern plateau, and the Southern region of Zambia respectively.



THE KAFUE LOWER BASIN

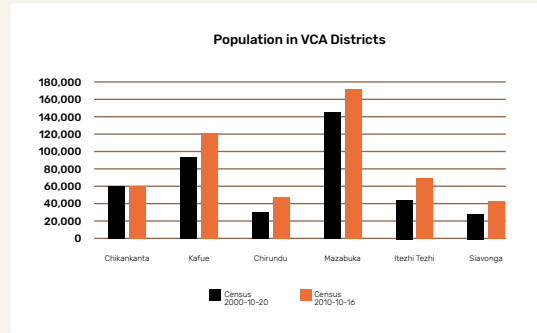
The Kafue Flats are located on the lower section of the Kafue River comprise a low-lying floodplain system. It is six thousand five hundred square kilometers (6,500km²), with a shallow gradient of an area of twenty meters (20m), which results in diverse habitats. It hosts a Ramsar site and two National Parks: Blue Lagoon and Lochinvar, and a large Game Management Area.



POPULATION

The population can be divided into different common demographic groups: urban and rural. Zambia is one of the most urbanized countries in Africa with 44.8 percent of the population living in urban areas. The population density is 24 people per square kilometer. (Zambia Population Accessed on: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/zambia-population/>.) Each category of the population is further differentiated along wealth, able or disabled, gender and age. The rural areas also have district groups of pastoralists, farmers and businesses which are further divided into commercial and subsistence.

Almost 1,000,000 people reside in the Kafue Flats area with many relying on the wetlands for their livelihood.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

The Kafue River is paramount to Zambia's economy from sustaining irrigation. The river provides up to 44% of Lusaka's water supply, accounting for over half of Zambia's total hydropower production through Kafue Gorge. The main socio-economic activities and sources of livelihood are fishery and agriculture. The Kafue floodplain is one of the eleven (11) major fisheries of Zambia, providing a livelihood and basic protein source for approximately one million inhabitants (WWF, 2016). Since colonial times, the Kafue Flats have been the focus of agricultural development plans that make maximum use of the fertile floodplains. The area supports both subsistence and commercial farms. Majority of the land is located in the eastern part of the Kafue Flats, and most of it is dedicated to sugar cane plantations. This is an area of approximately 20,000ha. It hosts the highest density of cattle in Zambia which grazed on the floodplain when the floods recede (250,000 according to Shanungu et al. (2015)). Additionally, crops such as maize, tobacco and cotton are grown in the area (Kalinda & Chisanga, 2014)

CLIMATE CRISIS

By 2050, Zambia is expected to experience increases in temperature of up to 2.2°C, with the greatest increases in the southern parts of the country, such as the Lower Kafue and Lusaka areas. Over the last four decades, the Kafue basin has experienced

an increased mean annual temperature of 1.3 °C. The rainfall in the area has decreased by 1.9 mm/month. Rainfall seasons have become less predictable and shorter, with rainfall occurring in fewer but more intense events. From 2000 to 2007, the intensity and frequency of droughts and floods and the number of people affected has also changed, with a net trend towards more floods and, over a longer time-period, droughts. Moreover, the area affected by floods and droughts appears to have expanded.

The recent floods caused by the Tropical storm Ana affected districts within the Kafue Flats. In addition, a dry spell from 1st to 15th December 2021 left nearly two-thirds of Zambia with little or no rainfall. Both average annual temperature and rainfall are projected to increase by 3.6 Degrees Celsius and 3 percent respectively by 2100.

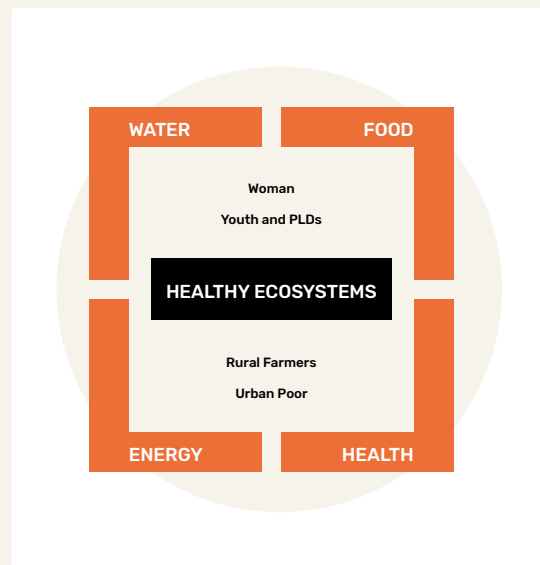
The predominant coping strategies adopted by the communities include, reducing meal quantities, numbers, and composition (shifting to a vegetable-only diet and relying on less preferred wild foods).

It is evident that the core of the Kafue flats is changing and will not cope with the double forces on rapid population and climate change. We cannot wish away Kafue Flats climate-related risks we face nationally. If not managed proactively, climate change will be too costly to bear. As Climate change affects everyone, we need all on board to prevent and manage climate-related future deficits of water, power, and food that will result from poor or weak action. Our strong collective actions today can reverse the impact of climate change on the wetland and can help us build a secure and sustainable future for ourselves and our children.

SCOPE OF THE VCA PROGRAM

The VCA is focusing on building a Zambia where civil society is heard and respected as it influences and co-creates locally relevant, inclusive and fundable climate

solutions that deliver real benefits to people and nature as part of a local and global response to the climate crisis. The civil society organizations coordinating VCA with WWF, are Hivos, Slum Dweller International (SDI), Alina Mana wa Africa (AMWA) and South South North (SSN). The partners have collectively rolled out the programme in ten (10) districts in Zambia i.e. Luangwa, Rufunsa, Chongwe, Lusaka, Kafue, Chirundu, Siavonga, Chikankata, Mazabuka, Itezhi tezhi and thematically focuses on the water-food-energy-health nexus.



Each coordinating partner works through local civil society organizations.



THE KAFUE FLATS IN 2026: WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE THROUGH THE VCA PROGRAMME

With reference to the Programme Proposal Objective, WWF Zambia through the VCA envisions an expanded civic space where civil society voices are present and heard on climate action success and actively leading in shaping, and accounting for a portfolio of locally relevant, inclusive and fundable climate solutions that deliver tangible benefits to most people and nature in the Kafue flats.

Specifically, by 2026 we anticipate the following:

- An expanded civic space is achieved in Zambia where civil society voices are present and heard on climate action.
- Diverse civil society is collaborating on a shared agenda & co-creating scaled, locally led solutions that have enhanced the resilience of the community against climate change impacts.
- Amplified citizens' voices by enhanced participation and civic engagement in climate action.
- Government policies, practices and budgets are responsive to citizen needs at local and national level.