



CRS is supporting families to stay together and advance positive, healthy outcomes for their children. Photo by Dooshima Tsee/CRS.

overview

INCLUSIVE FAMILY STRENGTHENING

BACKGROUND

Children who grow up in safe, healthy, and nurturing families have better outcomes in life, including improved cognitive, emotional and social development, better health, and greater success in school. The Inclusive Family Strengthening (IFS) initiative is delivering a multilayered, integrated strategy to address key drivers of family separation in targeted communities of Copperbelt and Luapula provinces. In 2016, CRS conducted a study to understand the factors affecting children’s placement in Catholic affiliated residential care facilities in Zambia and found the top five reasons are:



Poverty: food insecurity



Death of a parent



Child with disability or chronic illness



Abuse, maltreatment, or neglect



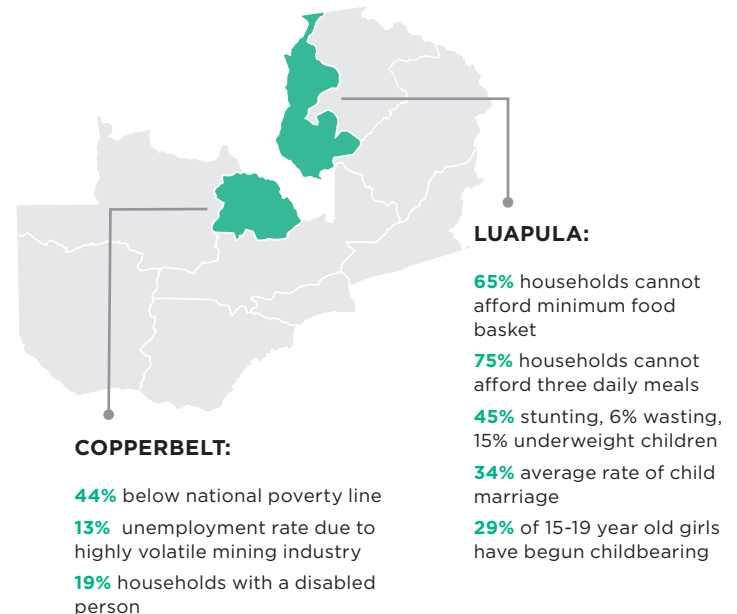
Household member with disability or chronic illness

IFS builds on relevant in-country experience in the areas of early child development, care for orphans and vulnerable children, youth development, and integrated nutrition. IFS advances CRS’ Children in Families Strategic Change Platform (SCP), a bold initiative to help vulnerable children thrive in caring families, create more resilient and supportive communities, and work with governments to establish policies and systems that strengthen families.

QUICK FACTS

Project location	Luapula province: Mansa and Chifunabuli districts Copperbelt province: Luanshya and Ndola districts
Timeframe	October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2023
Partners	Diocese of Ndola, Diocese of Mansa, Sisters of Mercy, Dominican Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi
Targets	14,400 families and 43,200 children

WHERE WE WORK





IFS is promoting household food security through seed support and training in organic farming and kitchen gardening. Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS.

IMPACT AREAS		KEY ACTIVITIES
Impact Area 1	Families are strengthened to stay together and effectively parent vulnerable children including children with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver parenting education curriculum for caregivers. • Provide educational support to vulnerable families. • Conduct sensitization campaigns to reduce stigma against persons living with disabilities.
Impact Area 2	Children and families have increased access to services and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote CRS' Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) methodology in low-income families and those at a risk of family separation. • Deliver microenterprise/business development support. • Link to national social protection scheme for families with children with disabilities.
Impact Area 3	Local partners are strengthened and coordinate with government and other stakeholders to help families and communities care for their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with government ministries to conduct disability assessments and referrals. • Map social services for referral pathways.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

IFS Zambia is partnering with the Catholic Dioceses of Ndola and Mansa to deliver SILC and microenterprise development support and advance household economic strengthening. The project also partners with three Catholic sister congregations: Sisters of Mercy, Dominican Sisters, and Franciscan Sisters of Assisi who oversee community mobilization, coordination, and sensitization; volunteer engagement and motivation; beneficiary identification and recruitment activities as well as manage referrals of beneficiaries.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE



Registered 1,739 families and 5,966 children as beneficiaries, which includes families living in poverty, families with adolescent mothers, and children living with disability.



Conducted orientation to partners on project goals and interventions, and a workshop on monitoring and evaluation.



Initiated positive discussions with government stakeholders for successful implementation of the project.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue with beneficiary recruitment and registration, with a target of adding 3,400 families by September 2021.
- Conduct initial community level assessment to identify priority sites, key stakeholders and supporting structures, and community needs.
- Facilitate trainings to enable community volunteers and partners to provide comprehensive support to beneficiaries on topics including disability-inclusive parenting education, microenterprise development, SILC and organic farming.
- Form parent groups in local communities to participate in positive parenting sessions, SILC and agriculture trainings.

