



Sister uses ECD teaching technique to facilitate learning. Photo by Bertha Mpepo/CRS

overview

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY OF RELIGIOUS WOMEN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (SCORE ECDII)

BACKGROUND

The early years of childhood are critical in the formation of intellect, disposition, and social behavior. As trusted members of the community with a long history of deep commitment to relieving suffering and promoting human development, Catholic Sisters have a tremendously important role to play during early childhood, particularly for children affected and infected by HIV and AIDS.

85% of children aged 3-5 don't have access to preschool in Zambia¹.

Zambian congregations (both pontifical and diocesan) are deeply committed to and are already actively protecting and supporting child well-being by:



Working in education and with children with disabilities



Doing hospice care



Running hospitals, clinics, shelter homes, and residential facilities for vulnerable children



Supporting and caring for many affected and infected by HIV in their homes

QUICK FACTS

Funder	Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
Project location	Central, Lusaka, Luapula, Eastern & Copperbelt Provinces
# of children served	19,205+
Timeframe	October 2017 - September 2021
Partner	Zambia Association of Sisterhood

However, some Sisters and their congregations have not been able to fully develop the technical and organizational capacities they need to play a greater role in promoting Early Childhood Development (ECD).

Through **Strengthening Capacity of Religious Women in Early Childhood Development (SCORE ECD)**, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) works through National Associations of Sister congregations to support Catholic Sisters in Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia to expand the provision of early childhood development services for children ages 0-2.

In Zambia, CRS has adapted its capacity-strengthening model to work with Sister congregations and the Zambia Association of Sisterhood (ZAS) to identify ways to address their ECD needs in the short and long term.

¹ UNICEF Annual Report 2014: Zambia. (n.d.). Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Zambia_Annual_Report_2014.pdf

OBJECTIVES

SCORE ECD in Zambia works with



To ensure the following objectives:

1. Children under 2 attain age-appropriate developmental milestones
2. Sister organizations continue having sustained engagement in ECD sector at national and subnational levels
3. Stronger sister organizations assume greater ownership of ECD services

SCORE ECD improves Sisters' technical knowledge and skills in ECD, strengthening their ministry for children and families in their care. CRS focuses on building up the Sisters' ability to use current structures and models (support groups, home visits, health clinic sites, preschools, etc.) to expand their services and enhance responsive relationships, positive parenting, proper health and nutrition, sanitation and safe and stimulating environments for children.

ACHIEVEMENTS FROM SCORE ECD I

From 2015 to date:



36

Sisters became certified ECD MTs



550

Sisters received caregiver training



1500+

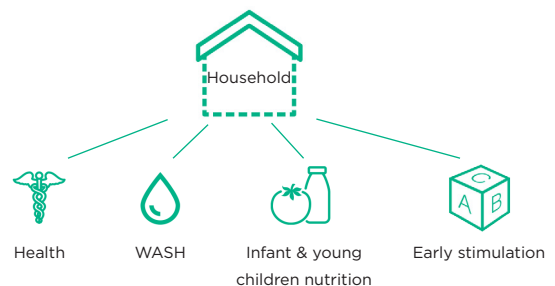
Sisters, Brothers, Priests & Caregivers mentored in CRS' ECD curriculum

INNOVATIONS FOR SCORE ECD II

CARE GROUP MODEL WITH SISTERS AS SUPERVISORS

Care groups are community-based groups of approximately 10 volunteers who meet on a regular basis with project staff for training and quality assurance on ECD knowledge and skills. They visit neighbor households to share their learnings and facilitate behavior change for improved ECD.

For SCORE ECD II, a community health volunteer, supervised by a Sister Master Trainer (MT), will **provide monthly training** to care groups on key ECD topics regarding:



Thanks to the project, government, teachers, and NGOs in their respective communities now recognize Sisters as ECD trainers. After the training, Sister's shared the impact of the training on the services they provide:

"We pay more attention to children with cognitive delay and plan different play activities, include them with peers, create safe environments for them to play, and encourage and guide them to explore together with their peers."

"We can talk to caregivers and mentor them on child development e.g. how to value children, respect them, talk to them, play with them."

"We modified our ECD classrooms so that they have different play and learning corners with various play materials we created from locally available materials."

"After the training I know that children can be disciplined in a non-violent way through guidance, teaching and through role modeling."

