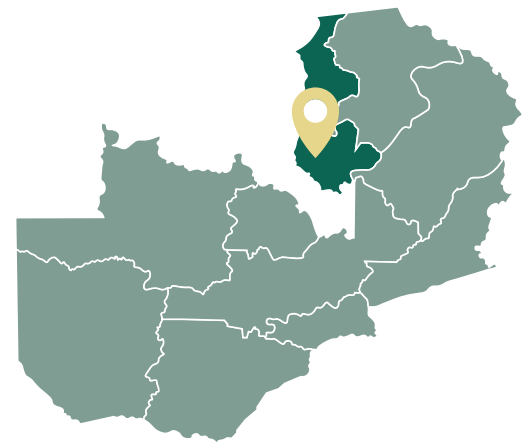


# Zambia and Luapula Province Are on the Cusp of a Promising Future

Zambia has the potential to achieve a prosperous and competitive economy in the coming decades, but rapid population growth hinders its goal of becoming an upper middle-income country by 2030.<sup>1</sup>

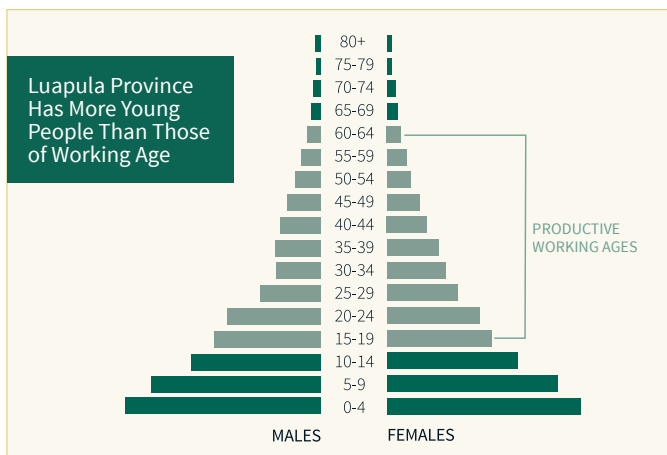
## Rapid Population Growth Challenges Zambia's Ability to Provide for Its People

- Half of Zambia's 17 million people live in **poverty**.<sup>2</sup>
- The **unemployment** rate is 12.6%; the youth unemployment rate is 17.4%.<sup>3</sup>
- One in five married women (ages 15 to 49) have an **unmet need** for family planning—they want to space or limit childbearing but are not using a family planning method.<sup>4</sup>
- On average, Zambian women have five children.<sup>5</sup> At this rate, the population will increase to 24 million by 2030 and **more than double** to 41 million by 2050.<sup>6</sup>
- For every 100,000 live births, there are 252 **maternal deaths**.<sup>7</sup>
- To meet the basic needs of the population in 2030, the government will need to:<sup>8</sup>
  - Train and absorb 25,000 **doctors** and **nurses** and 115,000 **teachers**.
  - Educate more than 4.5 million primary and secondary school **students**.
  - Invest 37 billion Kwacha in **health** and **education**.



### Luapula Province...

- Seventh most populated province in Zambia—1.2 million people.<sup>9</sup>
- Second highest rate of poverty—81 out of every 100 people live in poverty.<sup>10</sup>
- Contributes 2.8% to Zambia's total GDP.<sup>11</sup>
- Highest unemployment rate at 24.2%.<sup>12</sup>
- Third lowest rate of family planning use—40% of married women use a modern method of contraception, and one in five have an unmet need for family planning.<sup>13</sup>
- Fifth highest adolescent pregnancy rate in Zambia—one in four female adolescents (ages 15 to 19) have had a live birth.<sup>14</sup>
- Women's median age at first marriage (ages 25 to 49) is 18.3.<sup>15</sup>
- Second highest prevalence of disability among adults (ages 18 and older)—13.7%.<sup>16</sup>
- Twenty-six percent of employed youth work in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing industry.<sup>17</sup>



## With Investments in Family Planning and Reproductive Health, Luapula Province Can Help Zambia Achieve Upper Middle-Income Status

### HEALTH

Women in Luapula Province have an average of 6.4 children, while their mean ideal number of children is 5.2.<sup>18</sup> By expanding access to family planning and reproductive health services, women and couples will be better able to choose the timing and spacing of their pregnancies, meet desired family sizes, and improve child survival. These changes will help slow the country's rapid population growth and free up resources to address health issues like malnutrition, HIV, and malaria. Luapula Province is home to 9% of Zambia's malnourished children under age 5, and its mortality rate for children under age 5 is 98 per 1,000 live births.<sup>19</sup> The prevalence of anemia among women of reproductive age is 33.7%.<sup>20</sup> The province's HIV prevalence rate is 11%.<sup>21</sup> The province's incidence of malaria is 701.7 per 1,000 people.<sup>22</sup>

## EDUCATION

In 2017, Luapula Province had over 323,000 students enrolled in primary and secondary school; 7,000 students received bursaries from the Ministry of General Education.<sup>23</sup> Only 23% of adolescent girls in the province completed secondary school, compared to the national average of 30%.<sup>24</sup> Almost half of the girls who experienced pregnancy in primary and secondary school that year did not return to school after giving birth.<sup>25</sup> Teenage mothers are more likely to experience adverse pregnancy outcomes and less likely to pursue educational opportunities than young women who delay childbearing. Eliminating barriers to family planning for youth will enable them to avoid pregnancy and stay in school.

## ECONOMY

When girls are able to stay in school longer, they can attain higher-skilled jobs that allow them to better contribute to the economy and help increase the working-age population (ages 15 to 65). The working-age population supports Zambia's dependent population—those under age 15 and above age 65. Fifty-one percent of Luapula Province's population is dependent.<sup>26</sup> Supportive policies like expanded access to family planning and reproductive health services help increase Zambia's working-age population relative to its dependent population. Such changes can create a more competitive workforce, decrease youth unemployment and poverty, and address rapid population growth.

### Recommended Actions for Sustainable Population Growth and Economic Success

To achieve sustainable population growth and meet national development goals, Luapula Province must:

- Use demographic data to inform development policies and programs, and invest in multisectoral approaches that integrate population issues, including age-structure dynamics.
- Increase prioritization and funding for and access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health services, with a focus on reducing unmet need and expanding access and services for young people.
- Improve educational outcomes by reducing adolescent pregnancy and ensuring that young mothers are able to stay in school.
- Invest in economic growth by creating youth employment and skills-building opportunities.

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