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ANNIVERSARY

# End year News Letter, 2025



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## Foreword

Welcome, dear reader, to the 2025 End-of-Year and 20th Anniversary Newsletter.

For the past two decades, Response Network—supported by our valued partners—has been working in Zambia's Southern Province, with a focus on the districts of Kalomo, Kazungula, Zimba, and Livingstone.

Over these 20 years, we have implemented life-changing programs on Self-Help that have transformed lives, revived dreams, and created second chances for the communities we serve. As you read through this newsletter, you will witness the transformative impact of our work across several key thematic areas, including:

- Community school construction
- Promoting self-reliance and resilience through climate-smart agriculture
- Empowering women through self-help group savings initiatives
- Responding to drought-related emergencies

Each milestone achieved by Response Network stands as a testament to our collective resolve, dedication, and unwavering commitment to advancing the rights and well-being of the communities we serve.

Thank you for embarking on this journey with us. Together, let us continue to equip communities with the knowledge and tools to become self-sustaining.

## Over 160,000 Beneficiaries as Response Network Marks 20 Years of Impact



The Government has commended Response Network for its impactful role in transforming communities across four districts of Southern Province.

Southern Province Minister, Honourable Credo Nanjuwa, expressed the Government's appreciation during Response Network's 20th Anniversary celebrations, held on 3rd October 2025 at the Zambia Air Force Banquet Hall in Livingstone.

Hon. Nanjuwa said that over the past two decades, Response Network has demonstrated that true development is not imported but cultivated from within communities. He noted that instead of handouts, the organization has promoted hands-on participation; instead of imposing external solutions, it has facilitated community-driven initiatives; and instead of fostering dependency, it has advanced local resource utilisation and human rights awareness as key pillars of sustainable development.

He explained that the celebrations were meant to honor the over 160,000 individuals who have participated in and benefited from Response Network's self-help initiatives. These include:

- Climate-smart agriculture practices that safeguard livelihoods against climate shocks
- Women's savings and lending groups that strengthen financial resilience and inclusion
- Vocational and life-skills training for women and youth, creating pathways out of poverty
- Girls' education and sponsorship programs, ensuring opportunities for future women leaders
- Governance and human rights awareness programs that promote accountable and inclusive local systems
- Community school construction projects, opening access to education for thousands of rural children

Hon. Nanjuwa emphasized that these initiatives are not isolated interventions but interconnected steps toward human dignity and self-reliance, representing both individual transformation and collective progress.

He further noted that despite the achievements being celebrated, Southern Province continues to face significant socio-economic challenges. With an annual population growth rate of 3.4 percent and a poverty headcount rate of 63.5 percent, the province requires sustained and innovative development efforts.

He added that agriculture, which employs over 73 percent of households, remains both the backbone and vulnerability of the province due to climate change effects such as prolonged dry spells, erratic rainfall, and crop failures. However, he said these challenges also present opportunities for innovation and resilience-building.



The Minister highlighted the province's youthful population as a valuable resource, stating that with the right skills, opportunities, and mindset, young people can drive transformation over the next twenty years and beyond. He described organizations like Response Network as indispensable in mobilizing communities, building resilience, and promoting innovation.

The 20th Anniversary celebrations, held under the theme "20 Years of Transformative Impact on Communities and Individuals through Self-Help Facilitation," were attended by government departmental heads, traditional leaders, stakeholders, and partners, all of whom gathered to celebrate Response Network's contribution to community development.

## Kubala Girls Careers Day Inspires Future Professionals



The initiative was well received by the students. Speaking on behalf of the attendees, Memory Manyando, Kubala Children's Council President, expressed her appreciation for the event, noting that it broadened their understanding of career opportunities.

"The Careers Day has enabled us to learn about different career paths, and we have also learned how to select a career, as it is one of the most important decisions one has to make in a lifetime," she said.

During the event, awards were presented to girls who performed exceptionally well in their academic and personal development. These included awards for Best Performing Grade 12 Student, Best Disciplined Student, and Best Timekeeper, among others.

Overall, the Careers Day empowered the girls with knowledge, motivation, and confidence, while recognizing excellence and encouraging them to pursue their dreams with determination.

Choosing a career is one of the most important decisions an individual can make, with far-reaching implications for their future. In Livingstone District, Response Network supports a number of girls through its Sponsorship Programme. These girls are known as the "Kubala Girls," a term that translates to "the reading girls."

As part of this programme, Response Network organized a Careers Day at its Livingstone office, which was attended by over 100 Kubala Girls currently in high school. The event brought together professionals from a wide range of fields, including law, engineering, firefighting, health services, accounting, and agricultural science.

The professionals took turns inspiring the girls by sharing insights into their respective career paths. Their presentations focused on the process of choosing a career and highlighted key factors to consider, such as personal interests, abilities, education requirements, and long-term goals.



### Sponsorship Program



600 Girls currently on sponsorship in Primary and High School



More than 2500 Girls have graduated under skills and Tertiary education

## **Educated to Rise: Empowering Girls for a Brighter Future**



Education is widely recognized as the key to success. However, many children still struggle to access education due to challenges such as poverty and lack of financial resources. These difficulties are often caused by complex life circumstances.

It is common to find children who have been orphaned after losing one or both parents and are left vulnerable. Others are raised by single parents who may have little or no source of income and struggle to make ends meet due to divorce, illness, or death.

Such life situations pose a serious threat to the present and future of these children. Dreams can be shattered, and opportunities for a brighter future may be lost.

In response to these challenges, Response Network, in partnership with AKIND, has over the years supported more than 2,500 girls through its Sponsorship Programme. This initiative has enabled girls from highly vulnerable backgrounds to access education and pursue their dreams.



This year, as in many years past, the programme has recorded yet another success with girls graduating from college. The programme proudly added new graduates from Livingstone College of Education, a prestigious institution that has trained teachers who continue to shape the education sector and contribute to national development in Zambia. Four girls successfully graduated from this institution with Teacher's Diplomas.

Furthermore, the programme also celebrated graduates from Livingstone College of Nursing and Midwifery. This institution has played a significant role in strengthening Zambia's health sector by producing skilled health professionals who serve communities across the country.

These achievements stand as a powerful testimony to the impact of the Sponsorship Programme—transforming lives, restoring hope, and building a stronger future for Zambia.



**Over 20 years ,2500 Girls have graduated under skills and Tertiary education**

## From Play to Prosperity: Shooting Stars Sports Club's Road to Self-Reliance

The Shooting Stars Sports Club is a community-based club with 15 members based in Mabombo Village, under Chief Chikanta in Kalomo District, Southern Province of Zambia. Initially established to participate in local village league sports, the club faced persistent financial challenges that limited its ability to cover basic administrative costs and sustain its activities.

Recognizing these challenges, the club joined the Rural Sports for Development Program, implemented by Response Network in partnership with NIF. The program uses sport as a strategic entry point for community development, leadership building, and economic empowerment.

Through targeted mentorship and capacity-building support, the Shooting Stars Sports Club strengthened its technical sports skills, successfully affiliated with the Football Association of Zambia (FAZ), and secured a land agreement for its sporting facilities—an important milestone for the club's development.

A key outcome of the program has been the club's transition toward financial sustainability through income-generating activities. As a result of self-help and livelihood training provided under the program, the club has established a small-scale livestock initiative. To date, the club owns 11 goats and 50 chickens, with clear plans to expand these assets to generate income for administrative and operational costs.

The club leadership has expressed profound appreciation for the program's holistic approach, noting that the integration of sports development with livelihood support has placed the club on a path toward self-reliance. The Shooting Stars Sports Club now serves as an example of how community sports initiatives, when supported with appropriate development interventions, can evolve into sustainable local institutions.

This initiative demonstrates the impact of strategic partnerships and donor support in strengthening grassroots sports organizations while contributing to broader community development.



## **Saving Together, Thriving Together: How the Malanga Saving Group Builds Resilience**



Rural livelihoods in Zambia largely depend on environmental conditions, with income-generating activities such as livestock rearing and crop farming relying heavily on rainfall. However, the increasing effects of climate change—particularly droughts and floods—have put these livelihoods under serious threat. As a result, communities are being forced to find alternative ways to sustain their lives, either by working individually or by forming community-based groups.

In Malanga Community, located in Kazungula District of Southern Province, the Malanga Self Help Group was formed as a response to these challenges. The group consists of 15 members who came together to promote savings and self-reliance. Initially, the group faced several challenges, including limited financial literacy, poor record keeping, and the absence of income-generating activities.

Through the Response Networks Community Education Program, the group received capacity-building support in financial literacy, record keeping, and group management. This support significantly strengthened the group's operations and confidence.

Most importantly, the group has now successfully engaged in income-generating activities (IGAs), which have greatly improved its financial base. Beyond saving and lending money among members, the group has invested in poultry production and currently has 210 broiler chickens in their second production cycle.

The Malanga Saving Group has had a positive impact at the household level. Members are now able to borrow funds to start or expand individual businesses, enabling them to meet essential family needs such as food, education, and healthcare. Overall, the group has become a strong example of how community savings groups can build resilience and promote self-reliance in the face of climate change.



## A New Dawn for Learners at Siameja Community School



Access to decent learning infrastructure and the long distances to the nearest schools remain major challenges for children in Zambia's rural communities. Quite often, the reality for these children is learning in grass-thatched classrooms without desks, where they sit on stones or bare wood during lessons. For many years, this was the situation at Siameja Community School, located in Zimba District of Southern Province, which serves 149 learners. Lessons were conducted in a grass-thatched classroom, and learners had no proper furniture. This learning environment negatively affected learners' concentration and contributed to poor academic performance.

Through the Rural Child Access to Education (R-CATE) Programme, implemented by Response Network in partnership with Norwegian Church Aid, the situation at Siameja Community School has significantly improved.

The school now boasts a standard 1 x 3 classroom block, with adequate desks for all learners. In addition, a teacher's house, which is nearing completion, has been constructed to support staff retention. As a result, learners now have access to a safe and conducive learning environment comparable to that of children in urban areas.



Furthermore, the school has been provided with a 10,000-litre water point, which not only serves the school but also supplies clean water to surrounding villages.

The Head Teacher, Mr. Mbewe, expressed his gratitude to Response Network and its partners for transforming the school:

"I am extremely excited and humbled by the work done by Response Network and its partners here at Siameja Community School. We now have a standard learning space for our children and a decent teacher's house. It is my hope that through this support, pupils—who are the future leaders—will be shaped for a better tomorrow," he said.

Under the R-CATE Programme, two additional community schools—Muyunda Community School in Kazungula District and Namamba Community School—are also nearing completion.



### THROUGH 20 YEARS

- **90 Community Schools Constructed on Self help**
- **More than 1000 Desks distributed in School.**
- **50 Teacher houses Constructed**

## Hope Takes Centre Stage as the LIFT-Zambia Southern Hub Is Launched



The sound of drums echoed through Leon's Guest House in Choma on 4 September 2025, setting the tone for a day filled with hope, colour, and a shared commitment to change. Songs, traditional dance, and drama welcomed guests as the Southern Hub of the LIFT-Zambia Programme was officially launched — a moment that marked the beginning of new possibilities for communities across Southern Province.

At the heart of the gathering was a clear message: lasting change happens when people, partners, and purpose come together. Speaking to partners and community representatives, Jonathan Lea-Howarth, Country Director for NCA and DCA, explained how LIFT-Zambia was shaped by the lived realities of communities themselves.

"LIFT-Zambia is an integrated programme informed by baseline findings," he said. "It brings together interventions that tackle inequality, food security and economic development, climate and environmental stewardship, climate-resilient WASH, and gender-based violence — because these challenges are deeply connected in people's lives."

The Guest of Honour, Mr Bestone Mbozi, Assistant Provincial Secretary for Southern Province, welcomed the programme with optimism, describing it as both timely and necessary for the province.

"This programme comes at the right time," he said. "It will help lift the people of Southern Province out of poverty and strengthen their ability to face the future."



# Seasonal Greetings

We would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a rewarding New Year.  
Our deepest appreciation goes to you—our stakeholders and partners—for your  
unwavering support, trust, and belief in who we are and the work we do.

Enjoy the festive season.

From the Board, Management, and Staff



The End  
Thank you