

# Reli fürs Klima

## Climate Change Through the Eyes of a Zambian Child and Young Person – Careen Samatemba

Climate change is not a distant or abstract issue for children and young people in Zambia. It is a lived reality that affects access to food, water, education, and opportunity. While Zambia contributes less than 0.05% of global greenhouse gas emissions, it is among the countries most vulnerable to climate shocks such as prolonged droughts and floods. This imbalance exposes a deep injustice at the heart of the global climate crisis.

Countries in the Global North are responsible for over 70% of historical global emissions, yet it is countries like Zambia with minimal contribution to atmospheric pollution that experience the most severe consequences. This raises a critical question of fairness: why should those who have contributed the least suffer the most? Climate justice demands that those who have caused the greatest environmental damage take primary responsibility for addressing its impacts.

### How Climate Change Affected Me: A Personal Story

Climate change became deeply personal for me in 2024, when Zambia was hit by a severe drought that led to poor harvests across the country. At the time, I was in my final year of study at the University of Zambia. My father, whose livelihood depended on farming, was unable to pay my tuition fees because the harvest had failed.

Faced with the risk of not graduating, I had to find a way to support myself. I began selling pre-cooked beans to fellow students in order to raise money for my tuition fees. What should have been a time of academic focus turned into a daily struggle for survival. My story can be read using the link below:

[https://www.facebook.com/Kalembe.news/posts/pfbid02q5GiezFuFAvLU8Aasrb1k5WCyAzU4882sdgFN93VoJq5GJdX9sChPTv2x7nav2cHI?\\_cft\\_\\_\[0\]=AZa2sfmxmjxWhzGMvU2Ma9SQGVh4ArN0QQAAGe7Y0ahNil0H9iOHD9APL-81sCwm9botyKE\\_SRdu0iQjheWzkh\\_J9KsAYWKybdL3r60zdcervzAWbjuWYVEBomCG6nD9v87hkJxeWEjbTBmNPO4v1qDhQ97HZ25ZGrB2JVSKb5rmK7g&\\_tn=-UK-R](https://www.facebook.com/Kalembe.news/posts/pfbid02q5GiezFuFAvLU8Aasrb1k5WCyAzU4882sdgFN93VoJq5GJdX9sChPTv2x7nav2cHI?_cft__[0]=AZa2sfmxmjxWhzGMvU2Ma9SQGVh4ArN0QQAAGe7Y0ahNil0H9iOHD9APL-81sCwm9botyKE_SRdu0iQjheWzkh_J9KsAYWKybdL3r60zdcervzAWbjuWYVEBomCG6nD9v87hkJxeWEjbTBmNPO4v1qDhQ97HZ25ZGrB2JVSKb5rmK7g&_tn=-UK-R)

### Climate Change and Its Deep Impact on Children

For children in Zambia, climate change often begins with hunger. When rains fail and crops do not grow, households face food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty. Children are forced to walk longer distances to fetch water, miss school to support their families, or drop out entirely when education becomes unaffordable.

Climate change robs children of stability, safety, and opportunity. It increases vulnerability to child labour, early marriages, and poor health outcomes. These impacts are not temporary they shape a child's entire future. When children suffer, development stalls, inequality deepens, and cycles of poverty are reinforced.

### A Call for Climate Justice and Youth Action

Climate change does not discriminate based on race, nationality, or geography but its impacts are deeply unequal. Addressing this crisis requires collective



global action, with the Global North taking the lead in mitigation, climate finance, adaptation, and responses to loss and damage. This is not charity; it is accountability.

At the same time, young people across the Global South and Global North must raise their voices. The future at stake belongs to us. Silence is not an option. Young people must organise, advocate, and actively engage in decision-making spaces. Those with access to policy platforms must use them to amplify lived experiences and push for just, inclusive solutions.

Climate change is already reshaping lives in Zambia and beyond. The urgency to act is now and the responsibility to act boldly rests with all of us, especially those most responsible for the crisis.