Issue
Climate change is the most high stakes issue of our times. The 2013 IPCC report identified Africa as the continent most at risk from the impacts of climate change, while it has done the least to contribute to the problem. Zambia is prone to floods and droughts, which are expected to increase in severity and frequency due to climate change. Deforestation, land degradation and indoor air pollution cause environmental damage to Zambia, while increasing emissions that contribute to climate change. In Zambia, as in most countries in the world, young people are seldom provided with opportunities to not just learn about, but take action on climate change. UNICEF’s work in Zambia includes responding to the impacts and threats of climate change by equipping young people with the knowledge and advocacy skills to support them to be leaders in their communities, nation and even on the global stage on climate change.

Action
An offshoot of the UNICEF global Climate Ambassador Program created out of the first Children’s Climate Forum (CCF) held in Copenhagen in 2009, Unite4Climate Zambia is one of the signature Child-led advocacy programs at UNICEF. Unite4Climate Zambia trains 200 children per year to be climate ambassadors, supporting them to use media, debates, peer education and advocacy efforts to engage with their communities and leaders on the issue of climate change. Unite4Climate Zambia climate ambassadors work in all of the country’s ten provinces.

Unite4Climate Zambia climate ambassadors have worked on a range of creative and innovative projects and initiatives that spread awareness on climate change and create climate solutions. From creating a plan to build a floating school in Mongu, where flooding impacts school attendance every year, to hosting radio programs—for children, by children—that address climate change and youth voice, to leading classes on climate change for their peers, UNICEF’s Unite4Climate Zambia project’s 1000+ climate ambassadors have put their training into action.

Results
Unite4Climate Zambia has made significant inroads to make the nation, as well as the global community more equitable, especially regarding climate change. By instilling, a, ’pay it forward’, concept in its Climate Ambassadors, the program ensures that the youth empowerment training reaches more than those who are trained. Through partnerships with a range of national and international partners, the Climate Ambassadors meet with high level leaders to discuss policy and practical solutions to environmental degradation and climate change, informed by a youth perspective, as well as community needs. As United4Climate Zambia facilitator, Solomon Nkonde said, “I have always been an environmentalist and now that I will be doing this work, I feel that I will effectively contribute to making the world a greener place.” Unite4Climate Zambia prepares the next generation of climate leaders.

For more information:
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