

Village Volunteers in Action

Strengthening ICA Service Ventures, Zambia

ICA has been working in Zambia since the late 1970s and has a rich history of community development work. Different organisations have taken the lead on this work at different times with ICA Service Ventures (ICASV) being the latest. Following on from ICA Zambia and from OPAD, ICASV was established in early 2025 to improve livelihoods in a sustainable manner by ensuring that the poor have a voice, have access to and control of their resources and are enabled to actively participate in their own development. In line with this mission, ICASV implements food security programmes using sustainable agriculture methods and climate smart agriculture; promotes small business through the self-help group approach; encourages small scale livestock keeping in the form of goats and chickens; constructs solar powered boreholes for drinking water and for livestock and builds livestock housing structures to facilitate the collection of manure for fertiliser. At the heart of ICASV’s approach is the application and use of the Technology of Participation methods developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs worldwide.

In late 2025 the ICA:UK Board approved ICASV’s proposal to Village Volunteers to address two key issues, identified by them as key constraints on their organisational development. These were:

1. An overriding need within ICASV to develop a long term plan, with details of its aspirations and vision, that will enable the organisation to respond effectively to the needs of the communities (e.g. climate change, hunger, disease and human rights among the poor and the marginalized) and develop the sustainability of the organisation.
2. ICASV’s dependency on a national power grid which is unable to meet the needs of a growing population, resulting in regular power outages (power often being available only for 3 hours/day), and ICASV’s reluctance to find solutions which would contribute to the climate crisis (e.g. petrol or gas generators).

The solutions were to hold a participatory strategic planning event, bringing together all the staff and some other stakeholders to develop a long term plan and to install a new electrical system in the ICASV office powered by solar panels.

A five-year strategic plan was conducted by ICASV staff involving 15 people over a period of five days from 15th to 20th December in Lusaka town at New Life Conference Centre.



Benjamin Muntali and Salizi Nyirongo facilitating; Different parts of the strategic planning process were facilitated by staff members



Small group work to involve everyone and generate ideas is a key component of the strategic planning process. Here are (l-r) Yolantha, Benjamin, Michael, Emmanuel and Favor, Ishmael, Glory

Facilitated by ICASV staff, the Technology of Participation Participatory Strategic Planning process was used, and led to the development of five key strategies: Facilitating sustainable, innovative and climate smart development; Enabling and catalysing meaningful and beneficial youth engagement; Promoting and increasing ICASV Information and Communication Technology usage; Facilitating local communities to implement best health practices; Enabling a viable, stable and economically independent organisation

Implementation plans were created for each strategy and staff teams assigned to monitor progress using Whatsapp and quarterly meetings.

“This has inspired me to want to take action.” Moses Lungu
“We learned a lot about the organisation during the planning.” Ishmael Muyumba
“This helped us work together as a team.” Lister Mulenga



Samuel in front of the newly installed equipment- now able to work uninterrupted

The solar panels on the office roof- able to generate power even when there is little sunlight

The solar system installed consists of three solar panels, a lithium battery, an inventor and 2 electricity controllers. In addition, the technicians from the solar firm did electrical wiring of the entire three room building installing sockets and bulbs. The system can now provide consistent energy to power laptops, fans, printers and a fridge. While the equipment comes with a 2-year warranty, staff were also given

training on maintenance and repairs. Theft and vandalism are a threat, so burglar bars across the windows and doors have been strengthened and a security person is present at all times.



The solar system was installed by local electricians, who also trained ICASV staff members on repairs and maintenance

After completion of the projects, Voice Vingo, ICASV Director remarked:



This has been a great moment for ICASV.

ICASV doesn't have to panic no more or go through stress any more due to a fully functioning well installed solar system.

The direction of the organisation is clear due to the strategic plan. The year 2026 is carefully and intentionally planned with a detailed 90-day implementation plan. What remains now is to ensure that this plan is fully implemented.

The Village Volunteers sponsorship scheme is a project of ICA:UK, registered charity no. 1090745

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