



## Problem

The El Niño climate phenomenon, marked by increased surface temperatures, has contributed to drought conditions in Zambia, amplifying the incidence and severity of cholera outbreaks. In Lusaka, the negative health impacts of cholera are further amplified by inaccurate risk perceptions, misinformation, and barriers to accessing health services. After a significant surge in cholera cases in early 2024, the Zambia Ministry of Health looked to understand why most deaths were occurring in communities lacking formal healthcare settings.

## Solution

The Collective Service, a partnership between IFRC, UNICEF, and WHO, conducted Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) activities to inform cholera response efforts. Identifying Lusaka as a high-burden region, the Collective Service trained partners to conduct Rapid Qualitative Assessments (RQAs), including interviews with people from communities affected by cholera, to understand the social, cultural, and behavioral factors influencing transmission.

The Collective Service synthesized findings from each round of RQA and uploaded them to a centralized community feedback mechanism (CFM), visualized via a data dashboard. This dashboard, also including other forms of community feedback collected by trained response partners, was then shared with the MoH, partners, and response pillars to inform activities at community, district, and provincial levels.

## Impact

The work of the Collective Service facilitated a flexible and dynamic cholera response. For instance, when a lack of transportation was identified as a key barrier to timely and effective health-seeking behaviors, the Ministry of Health and UNICEF jointly funded and allocated seven ambulances to transport patients. And when mixed messaging around cholera prevention was found to cause confusion, an infographic on 3Cs for cholera (Clean water, Clean hands, Early care) was developed in multiple languages, and its core messaging was shared through 15 national FM radio stations with an estimated listenership of 10 million nationally.

RCCE partners were able to reach more than 2 million community members in Lusaka and its surrounding provinces, resulting in an increased uptake of oral rehydration solution, 100% uptake of oral cholera vaccines, and a decline in community deaths.

### 3Cs to stop Cholera



**Clean and safe water**



**Clean hands**



**Early care**