

## Chapter 9

# Education

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### **9.1 Introduction**

Poverty in the education sector manifests itself in several ways, including the following: low enrolments, low progression, and high dropout rates; poor performance; poor attendance because children are engaged in income-generating activities to supplement family income, tending to sick family members, and long distances to school; poor learning environments and lack of opportunities for appropriate skills training; malnourished learners who are unable to achieve their full learning potential; de-motivated and ill-qualified teachers, especially in rural areas; high illiteracy levels; ill health among teachers, pupils, and others in the education system; lack of motivation for parents to send their children to school; and wide gender gaps because of choices parents have to make on who goes to school.

### **9.2 Situation Analysis**

All citizens of a country have a right to education. Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that education is a human right, and that elementary education in particular should be free and compulsory. In Zambia, the education system is characterised by inadequate places at all levels due to a wide range of factors, such as cost and insufficient numbers of teachers and tuition materials, particularly in rural areas. In addition, there is inadequate provision of appropriate educational opportunities for the differently abled children. This is compounded by low levels of retention, with children beginning to drop out of school as early as Grade 2 due mostly to the high cost of education. Other reasons for dropping out are long distances to school, opportunity labour costs, early marriages, and pregnancies.

In line with the Education for All (EFA) commitments Zambia has made under this theme, activities for young children, 0-5 years old, were to be expanded, with emphasis on community-based interventions. Enrolments were to increase from 2 percent in 1990 to 25 percent in the year 2000. By 1998, only 8.4 percent of children going into Grade 1 had had access to Early Childhood Care, Education, and Development (ECCED). Rural areas had received little attention with only 2.7 percent of children having ECCED experience, compared with 23.6 percent in urban areas.

Although the Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme has been accorded priority, the programme caters for only Grades 1 to 7. This means that the average Zambian pupil is denied a comprehensive education that can form a firm foundation for the future. Enrolments at primary level, particularly from 1996, have increased marginally. In 1996, there were 1,547,389 pupils enrolled from Grade 1 to 7, and by 1998 this had increased to 1,557,257. The 1999 figures dropped slightly to 1,555,707. Consequently, universal basic education has not been achieved. Dropout rates have also increased, and by 1996 they ranged between 4.5 percent and 10.3 percent for Grades 1 and 6.

The poor quality of education as exemplified by the figures above has been worsened by inadequate number of teachers. The goal for teacher supply during the 1990-2000 decade was to provide 4,400 per year, but only 2,226 were produced. Statistics from the Ministry of Education show that the number of teachers has been decreasing. In 1996, there were 40,488 teachers in public schools, in 1998 there were 38,840, and by 1999 there were 37,117. This has been mainly due to a decision by the Ministry of Education to stop recruiting untrained

teachers. In addition, there is a high attrition rate of teachers due to HIV/AIDS, poor conditions of service, and lack of housing, particularly in rural areas and for single female teachers. The pupil/teacher ratio in recent years has worsened, starting with 37 in 1996, 45 in 1998, and 47 in 1999. Urban provinces have worse ratios than rural ones due to overcrowding. In rural areas, teachers have the additional problem of a single teacher teaching all the grades in some schools.

The secondary school level has not received adequate attention either in terms of expansion, rehabilitation, educational material support, and curriculum review. As a consequence, the quality of teaching and learning has been adversely affected. Currently, less than 50 percent of primary school leavers are absorbed by secondary schools. Similarly, progression from Grade 9 to 10 has fluctuated between 16.5 percent and 20.5 percent in the 1990s. Very few students graduating from secondary school find places in tertiary institutions due to a severely limited number of institutions. The University of Zambia, for example, has on average only about 4,500 students registered at any one time. Similarly, very few of the students who graduate from secondary school go into teacher training colleges. There are a total of 350 skills training institutions of various sizes registered with the Technical Education, Vocational, and Entrepreneurship Authority (TEVETA). Of these, the Trades Training Institutes, which total 23, are large while the rest are small, most of which have obsolete equipment, inadequate staffing, and inappropriate curriculum. Most of the institutions are urban-based, located mainly in Lusaka and Copperbelt Provinces. The rest are spread out across the other provinces, at an average of two per province. In comparison to the demand for skills training, the colleges are able to absorb only a small proportion of the growing demand. Currently, a total of 22,000 youths are engaged in some kind of skills training; this number is desperately small compared to over 600,000 young people who are not receiving any skills training.

With respect to distance education, the opportunities that this can provide have not been fully realised. For example, the distance education programme at the University of Zambia caters for about 600 students only and the Department of Continuing Education of the Ministry of Education caters for less than 5,000 for the whole country. There are not many providers of distance education and where it is provided, it is only in a few restricted disciplines, mainly the social sciences. Distance education can be expanded through more utilisation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the education system, but this too has remained under-exploited. Two exceptions are the University of Zambia, which has recently embarked on a programme of expanding its distance education programme using the internet to connect the main campus with the provincial centres, and the interactive radio programmes of the Educational Broadcasting Services.

The literacy level for the population aged 15 years and above increased from 54.8 percent in 1990 to 67.9 percent in 1996. Female literacy increased from 46.7 percent in 1990 to 59.9 percent in 1996. Literacy in rural areas increased from 37.9 percent in 1990 to 50 percent in 1996 for the age group 15 years and above, while urban literacy increased from 68.5 percent in 1990 to 83.1 percent in 1996. Although there have been some improvements, the rural/urban and female/male gaps in literacy are still wide and the literacy levels generally are still low.

With respect to gender, the education system is characterised by disparities between men and women at all levels with regard to enrolment figures, progression rates, ratios among teachers/lecturers, and learning achievement. At the basic education level, for instance, in 1998 there were 810,873 boys enrolled, compared to 747,151 girls, with a concentration of girls between Grades 1 to 4. This gap widens from Grade 5 upwards, and gets even worse at secondary and tertiary levels.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic in Zambia has posed a serious problem in human development. Education is particularly adversely affected because teachers are said to be among the four most infected groups in Zambia. Teachers dying from the pandemic each year are estimated at about one thousand. In addition, due to HIV/AIDS, about 600,000 children have become orphans, and this contributes to the high dropout rate in schools.

### **9.3 Planned Interventions**

Under the PRSP, six programmes will be targeted to contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction. Three of these already exist.

#### **9.3.1 Existing Programmes**

##### **9.3.1.1 BESSIP Extension**

Basic education in Zambia is planned to cover Grades 1 to 9 although the Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) is currently catering only for Grades 1 to 7. Under the PRSP, all BESSIP activities will be extended to Grades 8 and 9 to ensure that graduates acquire more basic knowledge and have the opportunity to refine skills gained from practical subjects. It also means all primary schools will be turned into full basic schools. Learners leaving school after completing Grade 9 will have matured and will be better able to engage in gainful employment at the age of 15 years.

The management of BESSIP will fall under the restructured Planning Department of the Ministry of Education. The BESSIP components that will be extended are infrastructure development; educational materials; teacher development, deployment, and compensation; equity and gender; school health and nutrition; upper basic school curriculum development; capacity building and decentralisation; and HIV/AIDS. Distance learning strategies and other modes of delivery such as evening classes and ICT will be applied in order to increase access for out-of-school youths and adults. ECCED will be made part of basic education. Early childhood programmes provide a head start for schooling, making them part of basic education will make it easier for basic schools to host programmes in this sub-sector and, hence, increase access for many rural children. The Ministry of Education already contributes to this sub-sector by training teachers. Mainstreaming ECCED in basic education will also make it possible for the Ministry of Education to provide quality assurance.

##### **9.3.1.2 Integrated Functional Literacy Programme**

This programme will revamp the national literacy programme whose performance has deteriorated. Access to functional literacy for all marginalized groups will be increased. The quality of the programmes will be improved too, and the capacity of providers will be enhanced. Lastly, communities will be sensitised to demand access to literacy programmes. Opportunities will be created for literacy graduates to continue education through distance learning, night school, and other modes of provision.

##### **9.3.1.3 Skills Training**

TEVETA has developed a comprehensive skills training programme to improve the skills of the human resources produced for both the formal and non-formal sectors, using a demand-driven TEVET system that is sustainable and promotes equity. The TEVET Development Programme has identified seven priority areas, namely, organisation and management of TEVETA; training systems; trade testing and examinations; entrepreneurship development and informal sector training; human resource development; management information systems; infrastructure and equipment; TEVET financing system; and a number of cross-cutting issues. Since there are a variety of skills providers, TEVET needs a structure to facilitate effective planning and coordination of interventions. This will call for the strengthening of TEVET management at policy formulation and evaluation level, regular and support services level, and TEVET providers' level.

TEVET also addresses other activities including curriculum review and retraining of curriculum developers and providers of skills training to meet changing demands, such as entrepreneurship training to prepare trainees for both wage and self-employment. It also deals with developing the capacity of teaching staff, planners, managers, and other support staff; the development of an effective TEVET management information system; rehabilitation of facilities and providing new equipment for institutions; and the incorporation of cross-cutting-issues such as HIV/AIDS, environmental protection, occupational health, gender, poverty reduction, child labour, and disabilities. Under the TEVET policy, apprenticeship will be re-introduced to improve the quality of crafts training. Distance vocational training will also be introduced to increase access to skills training in trades, technical, and commercial fields.

TEVET financing will be based on cost sharing. A TEVET fund will be established with contributions from government, industry, and donors. In addition to the existing TEVET Development Programme, there will be an extension which will include a bursary scheme, re-equipping of more training centres, increasing the participation of women, introducing short courses in business skills, sensitising people about the value of skills training, establishing a data base, and disseminating information on available programmes and credit facilities.

### 9.3.2 New Programmes

#### **9.3.2.1 Equity Programme**

Some equity activities, particularly the Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education (PAGE) and bursary scheme at basic school level, have been taking place for several years but in an uncoordinated manner. This programme will address issues inhibiting access to all levels and programmes in the sector. Activities under this new programme will include a study to review bursary schemes currently in place; expansion of the bursary schemes to all levels – based on the findings of the above study, including continuing education and skills training; and abolition of school uniforms at basic level. Other measures are the abolition of all fees at basic level; sensitisation of communities about the importance of educating girls, women, orphans, the differently abled, and the vulnerable; distribution of resources to all districts based on unit cost and learner population; development of guidelines for cost sharing for levels other than basic education; provision of appropriate physical facilities and learning materials for vulnerable groups; provision of counselling for students; and strengthening and enforcement of laws, regulations, penalties, and sanctions governing safety and security of learners. There will also be more funding for schools with children with special needs, and provision of bursaries to such children. The equity programme includes support to community schools. In addition, guidelines will be prepared on the maintenance of standards in the community schools, and community assistance to community schools will be promoted.

#### **9.3.2.2 High School Improvement Programme**

In line with the education policy document of 1996, Grades 10 to 12 will be referred to as high school. This programme is planned to improve quality and increase access to high school education. The curriculum will be reviewed to make it more relevant and responsive, and will, *inter alia*, include advanced skills training to enable graduates acquire higher-level skills. Other components will include infrastructure development; materials production, procurement, and distribution; teacher development, deployment, and compensation; equity and gender; school health, nutrition, water and sanitation; capacity building and decentralisation; and HIV/AIDS education. Distance education and other modes of provision such as night school will also be provided for.

#### **9.3.2.3 Tertiary Education Programme**

A tertiary level programme that will increase access, improve quality of education, and review curricula to make graduates more relevant and responsive to the changing labour market will be introduced. Programmes will be diversified using various modes of teaching. This is because tertiary level programmes should lead to acquisition and generation of

knowledge that will contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction. In order to attract funding, tertiary institutions will do the following:

- Apply appropriate management principles to administration and financial management.
- Analyse the cost-effectiveness of the workforce, especially academic staff.
- Conduct thorough human resource reviews to determine actual labour needs and, therefore, ascertain the job opportunities for graduates.
- Expand distance education programmes to increase access.

### 9.3.3 Cross-Cutting Interventions

#### 9.3.3.1 *HIV/AIDS*

The Ministry of Education has developed a comprehensive HIV/AIDS programme under BESSIP. A similar programme will be developed to cater for the whole sector to include learners, instructors, managers, and policy makers. Activities under this programme will include the development and implementation of a sector-wide strategic plan, mounting an advocacy and sensitisation campaign, and developing materials and human resources for the programme.

#### 9.3.3.2 *Education Administration*

The provision of education is currently fragmented among several providers. To counter the problem of poor coordination in the sector, several steps will be undertaken. Firstly, a National Education Sector Authority (NESA) will be established to coordinate the activities of all education providers and be the supreme body in the sector. Membership will come from all stakeholders. As part of the first phase towards its formation, a feasibility study will be undertaken and a steering committee of key stakeholders will be set up. In order to be effective, NESA will be given legal status and will fall under the Ministry of Education. Secondly, efforts will be directed towards the strengthening of partnerships among providers of education and increased service supply. In this regard, the government will provide the private sector with tax and other incentives to enhance this cause. Thirdly, an education sector-wide strategic plan will be developed that will, among other things, help in effective coordination.

## 9.4 *PRSP Strategies in Education*

The following strategies will be applied to implement the above new and old programmes and activities during the PRSP implementation period:

- Increased funding for the educational sector.
- Provision of quality and innovative training for teachers.
- Provision of competent and well-motivated teachers.
- Improvements in the conditions of service for teachers, in particular provision of a living wage, and housing – especially in rural areas, and for single female teachers.
- Provision of free and compulsory basic education for all.
- Passing of legislation to compel parents/guardians to send children to school.
- Development of a relevant, flexible, and innovative curriculum that will accommodate evolving development priorities, such as technology advancement, HIV/AIDS prevention, life skills, gender, environment, use of local languages for initial literacy, and topics relevant to local communities.
- Development of a national policy on the education of orphans.
- Ensuring special learning opportunities for out-of-school children and illiterate adults.
- Eliminating sources of educational disadvantage to enhance equity and equality of access, participation, and benefit for all, in accordance with individual abilities.
- Creating a conducive and enabling environment in all institutions to enhance standards of teaching and learning.

- Promoting and integrating the use of ICT at all levels and in all modes of the educational system.
- Development of an ECCED system, recognising its critical role in the development of mental, physical, and emotional capacities of children, thereby compensating for disadvantages.
- Improvements in the progression rates to high school – particularly for the poor and the girl child, and provision of quality and relevant high school education, which prepares students for further education or employment through skills and entrepreneurship training.
- Building a responsive and effective planning and management system that can provide accurate data, and development of appropriate policies and strategies.
- Enhancing the capacity of tertiary institutions in generating and disseminating new knowledge.
- Increasing access of the poor and vulnerable to all educational institutions.
- Recognising the new image and role of the school as a centre for the dissemination of messages about HIV/AIDS, the environment, and civic issues, not only to its own students but also to the wider community.

All the programmes identified above are important for economic growth and poverty reduction; hence, they will all be implemented. The following is the order of implementation; all the six programmes should, however, be allocated some resources, in proportion to their priority:

- BESSIP Extension
- Integrated Functional Literacy
- Skills Training
- Equity
- High School Improvement
- Tertiary Education.