PROMOTING EQUITY IN EDUCATION

How Zambian Civil Society is promoting equitable access to education
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PROMOTING EQUITY IN EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA is a joint advocacy booklet developed in partnership with various civil society organisations. The booklet provides a highlight of what is currently occurring in the education sector with particular focus on equity issues. It further showcases some of the good practice interventions on how civil society is contributing to achieving equity in education.

The booklet provides an understanding of existing gaps with key recommendations for government. In doing so it creates a ‘call to action’ for government and legislators in driving forward equity in education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Restless Development thanks Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA), Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) and Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS) for the great partnership in putting together this booklet. Finally Irish Aid for their continued support in enhancing quality education in Zambia and for funding the publication of this booklet.
DISABILITY

The Situation:

According to Zambia’s Central Statistics Office, Zambia’s total population stands at approximately 13 million and out of this, 15% - 17% accounts for persons with disabilities. Having a disability is mostly associated with and perceived to be a shame to society, leading to persons with disabilities being mistreated, abused, victimized, tortured, neglected and marginalized throughout their growth. Sometimes, persons with disabilities are seen to be of no use to the community and as a burden. With such perceptions and myths, children with disabilities are hidden in homes and prevented from being part of people who bring development in the nation. They are often denied the true life that every person deserves and their rights are violated in so many ways, such as limited or no access to education, health services, social services, shelter, good sanitation, water and food. As a result, the majority of the persons with disabilities have been affected by high poverty levels, which leave them with no option but to beg on the streets for survival.

Some of the barriers to accessing high quality education for children with disabilities are:

• Schools offering special education in the country as compared to the persons with disabilities population.

• Special schools have insufficient teaching and learning materials and not appropriate learning infrastructures (classrooms, toilets, and recreational facilities).

• Few trained teachers in special education.

• Sparse location of these special schools making it even difficult for children with disabilities to have access to education, especially in rural areas.

• Lack of awareness, of the importance of educating children with disabilities, among teachers, parents’ community school committees (PCSC) and guardians of the children. The education system of Zambia could be the best solution and a way out to first-class standard of living for persons with disabilities.

Lyson Phiri, who is now able to attend school regularly (Kalongwezi Community school, Chadiza district, Eastern Province), is one of the many beneficiaries of inclusive education advocacy efforts.
The Intervention:

Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS) vision is “Every orphan and vulnerable child in Zambia (especially the girl child and children living with a disability) receive quality education, which enables him or her to build a sustainable livelihood”. Since 1992, has been supporting community schools which offer education to the most vulnerable children (Including children with disabilities) in Zambia.

In order to effectively implement its vision, the organization employs a trio approach – through advocacy, capacity building, and service support to community schools.

Through collaborations with CSOs and other partners, ZOCs has facilitated for an increase in the number of children with disabilities attending school and performing well.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Government, CSOs and local communities should prioritise the provision of services and facilities that are user friendly to children with disabilities through an increased budgetary allocation in the sector

- More teachers for special education should be trained

- MESVTEE to take a lead role in the production of disability friendly education materials

- Research on influence of culture on disability in Zambia to be conducted to inform mainstreaming
HIV and AIDS

The Situation:
HIV and AIDS is a major cause of morbidity and mortality among teachers in Zambia. This has a significant impact on the pupils that they teach. Since teachers constitute the largest proportion of civil servants and enjoy the widest geographical coverage, equipping them with Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and life skills knowledge is not only empowering for them, but has great potential for reaching out to huge segments of the youth population.

The Intervention:
Restless Development has built the capacity of over 4,200 student teachers in 13 Zambia’s National Colleges of Education over the past 5 years, to deliver SRH and life skills education to pupils in the schools that they will be deployed to upon graduation.

Impact
The findings of the evaluation demonstrated that Teacher AIDS Action Programme (TAAP) has made a considerable contribution to the training of graduate teachers, who, once deployed to schools, are able to deliver current, relevant and effective support for pupils in areas of SRHR and critical life skills knowledge:

• 78% of teachers interviewed in this study indicated that they had received lessons in SRH.

• 86% of the teachers that received training in SRH, indicated that they offer lessons in SRH in their schools and that the training that they received was sufficient for them to offer lessons to pupils in SRH.

The evaluation has also shown that SRH and Life Skills teaching at college level has contributed to shaping health promotion behaviour among graduate teachers.

• 89% of the teachers stated that the lessons they had received from Restless Development had been useful for their daily lives.

• 81% of the teachers trained by Restless Development had undergone VCT.

• 76% of the teachers had one sexual partner.

• 63% of the teachers indicated that they used condoms as a preventive measure against STIs, HIV and AIDS as well as a contraceptive method.

• SRH lessons were cited by many pupils in the Focus Group Discussions as a main catalyst for their changes in behaviour with regard to early sex, pregnancies and marriages.

It can thus be concluded that TAAP has the potential for scaling up effective skills-based HIV education and support.
for youth, promoting healthy norms and behaviours at a broad community level through youth-adult partnerships.

• While expanding coverage and output, the TAAP has been cost-effective, and the programme can be easily sustained in the way it has been implemented, through the use of Volunteer Peer Educators working in the National Colleges of Education.

• Study findings show there are a huge number of TAAP graduates who are implementing SRH and Life Skills activities at minimal or no cost at all in their schools, making the programme sustainable in the long run.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

• Organisations working on SRH and HIV should look at ways of partnering to advocate for the institutionalisation of SRH and life skills training at college level

• There is need to push for the development of a clear curricula for both SRH and life skills, which must be implemented at both college and school levels

• There should be a clear plan for monitoring Life Skills in schools to track the National Implementation Framework (NIF III) indicators

• Implementation of the revised MESTVEE HIV Policy for learners needs to be tracked in the Annual Workplan and Budget (AWPB)
The Situation:
The ratio of boys to girls at secondary level was at 0.82 in 2011 which is below the one for 2007 and 2008 respectively; (Zambia Human Development Report 2011) as a result mainstreaming gender into the education sector has remained a challenge in Zambia.

The Zambian Education Act of 2011 Part IV, Section 18 (1) States that “Subject to the constitution and any written law, a learner who is a child shall not contract any form of marriage” and (2) States, A person shall not – (a) marry or marry off a learner who is a child; or (b) prevent or stop a learner who is a child from attending school for the purpose of marrying or marrying off the learner who is a child.

Part IV, Section 25 (2) States a learner who falls pregnant or impregnates a female learner while pursuing a course of study at an educational institution shall be re-admitted to the institutional institution after delivery of the baby.

Despite this active legal framework and policy document there remains a poor quality of education being delivered to learners and addressing gendered power relations within institutions.

The Intervention:
FAWEZA is currently engaged in advocacy to strengthen government and its stakeholder’s commitment to raise awareness on the implementation of the Re-entry and child protection policies and anti-gender based violence and education acts.

- From 2005, FAWEZA has been implementing a multi-level scholarship scheme that is interlinked from basic to high school to tertiary level, at a female/male ratio of 70:30 percent.

- Holds Science, Mathematics and Technology (SMT) for girls to address the low participation of females in the SMT related careers

- Engages communities in promoting gender equality in schools and surrounding communities to monitor attendance of children and follow up on those at risk of dropping out of school.

- Holds sexual reproductive health training for adolescent girls to prevent
early pregnancy, HIV Infection and to build their self-confidence
• Trains teachers in guidance and

Impact
• FAWEZA recognizes that the cost of education is still a limiting factor to education for children from marginalized families, particularly girls

• A total of 28,170 scholarships at all three levels were awarded in the period 2005-2011. The aim of the FAWEZA Scholarship Programme is so that Gender disparities in retention, performance, transition and completion rates at basic and high school levels are reduced.

• The Scholarship package at Basic and High school include school fees, uniform, Study Groups, Student Alliance for Equity (SAfE) Club, comfort kits (a comfort kit consists of a set of reusable sanitary towels, a set of underpants, a tooth brush, tooth paste, Vaseline, soap and a comb, the Comfort Kits have greatly contributed to the girls’ regular attending of school during the menstrual cycles) and where necessary safe accommodation for girls.

• At tertiary level, the scholarship caters for tuition fees, stipend allowance, accommodation fees and project fees for students in their final year.

My name is Mwenya Kalela with support from FAWEZA I managed to graduate and obtain a bachelor’s degree of law from the university of Zambia Great East Road campus in 2011. I am writing to thank FAWEZA for the help they rendered to me because now I can boast to have been empowered with education, which has helped me to be employed by Legal Aid Board in the department of Ministry of Justice. At the same time I am studying with Zambia Institute of Advanced Legal Education. So that I could obtain my practicing license. 

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The Situation
The Zambian Global School Student Health Survey of 2004 found that; one in three (31%) girls reported having been physically forced to have sex.

- Zambia Demographic Health Survey of 2007 reported that 15% of women were aged 14 or younger when they were first sexually assaulted, and 20% were in the age group 15-19 years.

- Prosecution of cases related to child abuse in schools have been historically low indicating that school authorities, parents, and legal structures were not working together to protect children.

- Human Development Report 2010 ‘63% of Zambians suffer poverty in multiple dimensions, similar to the share living below $1.25 per day’ and an estimated 1.3 million orphans and an average life expectancy of just 49 years,

- Education has been identified as a priority investment area by the government of Zambia.

- Camfed’s 2008 Baseline Study found that 27% of stakeholders believed that the girl was to blame if she got pregnant by a teacher, and 21% believed that ‘If a male teacher makes sexual comments or advances to a female student, it is usually because she invites it’.

The Intervention:
With funding from Irish Aid, Camfed Zambia launched the ZERO tolerance to Child Abuse Campaign in 2008, which was endorsed by the Ministry of Education Science Vocational Training and Early Education. Camfed is also implementing the Safe Spaces initiative at Chongwe Basic School in Chongwe district, in conjunction with the Tisunge Ana Atu Akazi Coalition (TAAAC) members which include FAWEZA, YWCA, PPAZ, and Boys’ Network and the Help Desk Clubs in 78 schools providing space for children to discuss issues affecting their lives.

Outreach and Results:
At delivery level, over 400,000 people have been reached through community radio programmes, meetings, 671 schools engaged (High schools, Basic schools and Community schools) and trained over 3,500 of Camfed’s stakeholders in child protection, psychosocial support and paralegal education. The partner schools have child protection policies in place and have developed strategies to combat child abuse.

- 16,686 children have benefited from direct bursary support for school-going costs, to mitigate the risk of exclusion from education. 190,333 girls and boys benefited from Safety Net Fund to mitigate dropout rates.

- Community outreach to raise awareness on the negative effects of child abuse and strategies for preventing
and responding to child abuse cases in schools and surrounding communities.

- Camfed distributed copies of its Child Protection Guidelines to all 671 Partner schools, District Committees and Partners.

- Camfed Zambia has engaged the MESVTEE who has pledged their support and commitment to curbing Child abuse.

- Established help desk in 120 partner schools to give a platform to pupils at which they can participate in their own protection.

- Trained teacher mentors in sexual reproductive health and peer mentors in psycho social support.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Community outreach to be enhanced to raise awareness on child abuse for prevention strategies

- Monitoring and reporting of child abuse cases should be achieved in the MESTVEE’s own reporting system and structure

- A strategy aimed at engaging adolescent girls should be introduced as they are the most marginalised

- Stakeholders at various levels should be engaged to bring in diverse context specific strategies to address child abuse
(Budget tracking):

ZANEC

The Situation:

Zambia has recorded steady progress in improving access to basic education in line with its Education for All (EFA) commitments over the past 10 years. For example, enrolments at basic school level increased from 2.9 million children in 2004 to 3.6 million children in 2009 (MoFNP, SNDP 2010) due to the country’s declaration of free education at primary school level.

- Efforts at increasing enrolment alone, albeit important, have proved inadequate to guarantee learner achievements.

- According to the Zambia National Assessment Survey Report of 2008 learning achievements in Zambian basic schools are still below the minimum levels of 40%.

- Current learning achievement levels are on average at 34%, while the desired level is 70%.

- Having a proven track record in education advocacy, Zambian National Education Coalition (ZANEC) in collaboration with its membership undertakes advocacy activities aimed at addressing the above challenges.

- Little money is released to the districts compared to initial budget allocations.

- Funds are released in small batches and late in the year and implementers have to use their discretion to implement one activity at the expense of others.

- District and Provincial Education Officers, indicate that their major challenge is when their annual budgets are reduced by the time they are submitted to Ministry of Finance for budget allocations.

The Intervention:

- ZANEC’s major activities is to collect evidence to effectively engage around the financing of the education sector in order to contribute towards the increase in allocations,

- Conducts budget analyses of the education sector, dissecting allocations to the different subsectors of education and the implications of the allocations.

- Tracked expenditures in the equity subsector which deals with gender, infrastructure, special education needs, HIV awareness, vulnerability, disabled children and community schools.
Results:

• ZANEC used findings from the budget tracking exercise to engaged MESVTEE technocrats and other relevant ministries and legislators (MPs) around the budget with the view to see increased and more effective allocations in the next year.

• In 2011, ZANEC presented their budget analysis to the Committee on Education. More recently in 2012, a separate meeting with MPs equipped them with information to adequately debate the ECCDE sub-sector before budget approval.

• Disparity between allocations and disbursements, with budget tracking revealing that funding have been inadequate, with government contribution concentrating mainly on non-service delivery activities.

• Positive trends in the 2013 budget, it is noted that the ECCDE and Community Schools sectors have received significant allocations.

Recommendations:

• There should be concerted efforts by civil society to step up advocacy in the education sector.

• CSOs to have a more informed involvement in the policy formulation and financial planning.

• Disbursement of funds should be made early in the financial year and should correspond to the allocation in the national budget.

• Domestic Accountability projects should be strengthened in the schools to enable budget tracking on equity issues and for enhance participation in the financial planning cycles.

• Increase education sector budget allocations to the SADC recommended 20% instead of the average of 17.5% allocated in the past four years.