

EDUCATING CHILDREN OUT OF THE SYSTEM

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS MOVEMENT IN ZAMBIA

Client
UNICEF

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*Education, Education, Education
Love Education.
For us to succeed we need it.*

*Education, Education, Education
Educate us. Educate us. Educate us.
We love education.*

—Students, Cobet Community School

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	
Executive Summary	
List of Abbreviations	
Introduction to Project	1
Methodology	2
Background	5
Community Schools	9
The Actors	11
Policy & Decision Making	15
Financing	21
Staffing & Motivating	25
Other Dimensions	29
Conclusions	31
Recommendations	33
Bibliography	
Appendices	
Schedule of Meetings	
Summary of Community Schools Visited	
Institutional Assessment Matrix	
Stories: Two Children	
Interview Questions	
PRA Activities	

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Executive Summary

Zambia's education system is facing a crisis. With the stagnant economy, high poverty rates and staggering HIV/AIDS prevalence rates, the Government of Zambia is unable to provide free basic education to all Zambian children. Government schools aren't within walking distance of many rural areas, they charge mandatory enrollment fees, and they have uniform and shoe requirements for attendance. Unable to access or afford the government schools, Zambian families joined together to teach their own children with whatever resources they could gather. Community schools emerged from this grassroots initiative with one goal: to educate the children of poor, disenfranchised, vulnerable, and isolated communities. Despite the determination of communities, their schools are continually facing challenges that threaten their existence.

UNICEF has been involved in the community school movement in Zambia since the early 1990s, providing technical and material assistance, sponsoring teacher training, and supporting national community school organizations and advocacy programs. This report, prepared for UNICEF's Division of Policy, Evaluation and Planning, presents an institutional assessment of the community school movement in Zambia, highlighting the critical areas which could be strengthened to make community schools more effective in providing education to children out of the formal system.

The assessment focuses on the various "roles"—the actors, or the various stakeholders in the movement— and "rules"—the formal and informal constraints that shape the actors' behavior—specifically within the context of three functions. These functions are policy- and decision-making, financing, and staffing and motivating community schools.

Based on the assessment, the SIPA team presenting this report concluded that the community school movement lacks coordination and management infrastructure. Decisions regarding the schools are made by the local management committees, and national decision making structures are almost entirely removed from the local level. Though local decision-making creates policies that are more relevant to local needs, the lack of supervision and financial support from the national supervisory bodies results in inconsistent educational quality and a deficiency of teachers and supplies. Mobilization of further funds is limited by the general isolation of community schools and their lack of management, fundraising and advocacy capacity.

UNICEF has asked for recommendations based on the team's findings and conclusions. This report offers recommendations for potential funding, advocacy and technical assistance projects that could supplement UNICEF's current involvement in and support of the community school movement. A summary of these recommendations follows:

Advocate and help coordinate more technical and financial support for Focal Point Persons, the provincial-level community school advocates. They need more support in order to visit community schools, listen to community interests and needs, and act as a conduit for communications between schools, with the local movement and government actors, and with the national level donors, Community Schools Secretariat and Ministry of Education.

Explore innovative strategies for teacher certification and encourage the government to attract new teachers and support their teacher certification process. Zambia is facing a teacher shortage; helping attract new teachers and certifying the informal teachers will benefit both the formal and informal education systems.

Organize the Zambian Community Schools Secretariat, Focal Point Persons, community school representatives, and the Ministry of Education in a process to assess, set standards for, and monitor the quality of education in Zambian schools. Foment the creation of information management and tracking systems to monitor and evaluate school quality.

The report focuses on recommendations that are feasible, sustainable, and in the long-term best interest of Zambian children. With these interests in mind, the report concludes with a brief discussion of the implications of supporting the community school movement for Zambia, the children, and the Government of Zambia.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Autoimmune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
BESSIP	Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Program
CS	Community School
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DEO	District Education Officer
EFA	Education for All
ESIP	Education Sector Investment Programme
EU	European Union
FPP	Focal Point Person
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
GOZ	Government of Zambia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDA	International Development Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
MOA (MOU)	Memorandum of Agreement (Understanding)
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
PAGE	Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education
PCSC	Parent Community School Committee
PEO	Provincial Education Officer
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SPARK	Skills, Participation, Access, Relevant Knowledge (Curriculum)
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UNZA	University of Zambia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSO	Volunteer Services Overseas
VVOB	Flemish Office for International Cooperation and Technical Assistance
ZANUT	Zambia National Union of Teachers
ZCSS	Zambia Community School Secretariat
ZECAB	Zambian Education Capacity Building Programme
ZOCS	Zambian Open Community School

INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT

The main objective of this report is to provide UNICEF with information on policy and decision making, financing, and staffing and motivating as pertains to the community school movement in Zambia. This analysis is conducted within the framework of an institutional assessment—based on an understanding of the work of Douglass North on New Institutional Economics—which defines an ‘institution’ as the “rules of the game”; in other words, those constraints that shape incentives and hence human behaviors. Specifically, this report provides insight into the operation of community schools, defines the actors involved and the institutional principles that guide the community school movement, explores the relationship between the government of Zambia (GOZ) and the community school movement, and clarifies areas in which the community schools could be strengthened.

This project and report were undertaken as part of the Economics and Political Development Workshop at Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). This study was designed and carried out on behalf of UNICEF by a team of seven candidates of Masters of International Affairs at SIPA, with field support from a Masters candidate at the University of Zambia.

METHODOLOGY

Literature Review

The research team conducted a background literature review on Zambia's socioeconomic conditions, political situation, and education system, as well as on examples of successful community school movements in other countries. A preliminary institutional matrix was constructed based on the information gathered through the literature review, and was used as the basis for determining the focus of this study.

Institutional Assessment

The primary objective of our study was to identify how best to strengthen the existing community school sector in Zambia and to articulate its relationship with the government. Towards this objective we completed an institutional assessment matrix that lays out the relationship between the *roles*, *rules* and *issues* associated with the sector, at both the community level and the national level. Roles indicate the actors (individuals and organizations) involved, such as parents and the Ministry of Education. Rules can be formal (e.g. the law) and informal (e.g. social customs) and shape the actors' actions and decisions. The institutional assessment examined the following dimensions of the community school movement:

Policy and Decision Making

This dimension identifies who makes the decisions that affect the education sector or the community schools, and how such decisions are made, are identified. Consideration is also given to the effectiveness of these decision-making structures.

Financing

Sources and flows of finance play a key role in shaping possibilities and decision constraints. This dimension may look at issues ranging from who procures the funds and who determines how they are allocated, to the physical reliability of fund transfers.

Staffing and Motivation

Organizational structures, processes, resources, and management styles can affect how individual talents and skills are used to accomplish particular tasks. The availability of qualified staff and the existence of incentives towards motivating and retaining staff is crucial to any institution.

Communicating

Information exchange is critical to the running of any institution. This dimension examines what channels of communication exist among the different players, who they connect, and how effective they are.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This dimension focuses on the established system of monitoring and evaluation of the financial and input aspects of schools, teachers and administrators in the formal and informal sectors. It also assesses the accountability of these actors. At the community level, it may look at issues of trust between communities and the formal sector.

External Demand Making

External demand refers to external actors who are interested in community school education and who may be in a position to influence it. It may refer to the general public, the media, potential donors, as well as stakeholders in government schools.

Based on information gathered through the literature review, we decided to focus upon the *policy and decision making*, *financing*, and *staffing and motivating* dimensions of the institutional assessment. The institutional matrix was revisited and revised with the information gathered during the field visit. (See Appendix B for Institutional Matrix.) Our findings in these three areas are presented in this report.

Field Visit & Instruments

The team undertook a 2-week field visit during 5-18 March 2001, visiting community schools in Lusaka, Eastern and Southern Provinces. In Lusaka, the team also met with national level actors such as the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Zambia Community Schools Secretariat (ZCSS), and various donors. The team:

Visited 11 community schools in 3 provinces (including 7 urban and 4 rural; 2 missionary-run, 6 community-run, and 3 run by the national NGO, Zambia Open Community Schools);
Conducted group interviews incorporating Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) activities with over 70 parents;
Held group interviews and PRA activities with 32 teachers;
Involved over 100 children in activities to engage in casual interviews;
Interviewed 6 children in depth;
Conducted interviews with the MOE, ZCSS, 2 Provincial Education Officers (PEO), 2 Focal Point Persons (FPP), and 7 donor organizations including bilateral and multilateral donors and NGOs.
Interview questions and PRA techniques that could assist us in gathering information across the three dimensions of the institutional matrix were developed. The main questions posed were:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the community schools, and how can their weaknesses be strengthened?

What is your vision for the future of community schools?

The use of PRA techniques offered the advantage of placing the participants at the center of the assessment process and allowed both the communities and the research team to analyze the information that the participants generated. The PRA techniques used were:

Priorities Assessment

Participants were asked to brainstorm various answers to a question, e.g. the advantages of community schools. They were then asked to come to a consensus on the 3 most important of the answers listed. The listing and ranking activities were used to facilitate discussion on why these factors were important to the participants.

Cause-Effect Diagram

Based on the Priorities Assessment activity, participants were then encouraged to discuss how some of the factors were interlinked.

Constraints

Although the team made its best efforts to visit different types of community schools in terms of location (urban and rural), physical development, and managing organization type, due to time constraints we were only able to visit 11 schools. Zambia is a large country with over 700 community schools; therefore, findings from these visits cannot be taken to represent all Zambian community schools. What is more, since the team only interviewed community members who had started and/or were actively involved in running the community school, there may be self-selection bias in the data. Further visits would be necessary to gain a more complete understanding of the different community schools.

Time limits in the field also meant that we were unable to meet with a few important stakeholders, notably the District Education Officers (DEOs), the Zambian National Union of Teachers (ZANUT) and the German aid agency, Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ). However, we were able to pose certain questions to GTZ through email contact.

The team also encountered difficulties in systematically collecting numerical demographic data in the communities. This was partially due to our decision not to use questionnaires in the communities, confusion with the ad hoc interpreters and the limited time in each community school. In many group interviews, particularly with the parents, the number of participants fluctuated over the course of the activities. We also were not able to collect data on the children's ages, as the majority of the children did not know how old they were.

BACKGROUND

Politics

A former colony of Great Britain, Zambia attained independence in 1964. Its political history can be divided into three periods. From independence until 1972, the United National Independence Party (UNIP) ruled and the African National Congress (ANC) was the opposition. From 1972 to 1991, the UNIP was the only legal party. Opposition parties were legalized in 1990 and a multi-party system has existed since. In the 1991 elections, Fredrick Chiluba the leader of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) defeated Kenneth Kaunda, who had been in power for almost 20 years. Again, in 1996, President Chiluba swept the November 1996 presidential elections with 69% of the vote.

Zambia is located in the middle of Southern Africa, amidst countries deep-rooted in conflict—Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Mozambique, and (to a lesser extent) Zimbabwe. Recently, Zambia has been playing an important role as a mediator in the conflicts in the Central African region. The Angola civil war, however, has continued to strain relations between the two countries. Huge flows of refugees and ex-combatants have not yet destabilized the country, but the strain on Zambia's resources causes concern. The flawed 1996 elections and continued problems of multi-party cooperation also represent serious concerns. This year Zambia faces a third multi-party election, which is scheduled for fall 2001.

Economy

Even in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa's economic performance, Zambia's economic decline has been extreme. Real GDP per capita is estimated to have declined more than 50% since 1970 (Anderson et al, 2000). The economy plunged into crisis in 1975 when the price of copper, Zambia's main export, fell dramatically. The situation improved however during the first years of the 1990s, as a result of several policy reorientations. In 1991, the new multi-party democratic government introduced a series of major economic reforms designed to transform the Zambian economy. A set of structural and institutional reforms was initiated, including reforms of agricultural marketing, a large privatisation programme and reforms to the public sector.

These policies were intended to stimulate growth. Zambia's economic performance in the 1990s has been disappointing, however. GDP growth declined in the 1990s, driven by substantial declines in the mining, quarrying and manufacturing sector (McCulloch et al, 2000). Performance on inflation over the decade has been slightly better than that on growth. The decade started with high inflation of almost 200% in 1993 but due to a tight monetary policy, inflation was reduced to 25% in 1998. It is expected to remain high at 27.5% in 2001 and 23.6% in 2002 (Economist Intelligence Unit 2001). More worrying has been Zambia's decline in certain social indicators. Its performances on school enrolment, number of malnourished children, infant and under-five mortality have declined since the early 1990s.

Although the economy recovered in 1999 with a GDP growth rate of 2.4% (IMF 1999), in micro terms Zambia's situation has continued to deteriorate. There has been a dramatic increase in poverty and inequality in urban and rural areas due to stabilization, job losses resulting from trade liberalization and the privatization program. A huge majority of Zambians are living in extreme poverty, defined by collapsing urban services, environmental degradation, poor and overcrowded housing conditions and insufficient basic food intake. Poverty in Zambia is multifaceted; rural poverty (very high at 83%, according to the IMF in 1999) is deeper and more prevalent among female-headed households and small-scale farmers. Urban poverty on the other hand is estimated at 56%.¹ Lack of access to employment, food, and assets have surfaced as significant challenges for the urban poor. Home industries have sprung up as a result; tailors, cobblers, vegetable sellers, petty traders and other micro-entrepreneurs sell almost anything to overcome the degradation of poverty.

Formal Education Sector

Education is a basic right of all children, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1959). It has since been encoded into international law with the Convention on the Rights of Children (1990). Zambia declared its commitment to providing basic education for all its children by participating in the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990) and becoming a signatory to the World Declaration on Education for All (1990).

Unfortunately, the education system in Zambia suffers from a lack of financial and human resources, like many other sectors in this country. Enormous debt, a weak economy, and losses from HIV/AIDS and other illnesses have affected Zambia enormously, particularly the inaccessible rural areas. The Government of Zambia is thus extremely limited in its ability to fulfill the education needs of Zambia's children. This section will examine the current state of Zambia's formal education system. It is important to understand the national situation in order to recognise the environment in which the community schools movement emerged.

School System

Zambia's formal sector schools are generally set up as outlined in Table 1. At the end of each level, students must pass national exams in order to continue to the next level. The first 9 years of education are regarded as 'Basic Education', and it is the goal of the Zambian government to make Basic Education available to all of its children. The language of instruction is in English, although most communities have a local dialect.

Educational Decentralization

In an effort to promote administrative autonomy and local decision-making, the MOE implemented a policy of decentralization. Local parent-school committees were created, and authorized to manage the school. However, as one of the consequences of decentralization, the resources supplied by the central government to the local level were reduced. Schools were thus forced to charge student fees to meet minimum costs.

Finances

Until very recently, government revenue and GDP per capita have been declining. Government allocation to education and training, as a share of total government expenditure, is among the lowest in Africa². Currently, the government spends about 11% of the total public budget on education, compared to between 20-25% in neighboring countries (See Table 2). Within the MOE's budget, university students receive a disproportionate amount compared to primary school students. On average, the government spends about \$22 per primary student while households contribute an additional \$17 per student, which may include the costs of school fees, uniforms, and supplies. Current public expenditures on education cover teacher and staff salaries, the largest part of recurring costs, and cannot cover the textbook, supplies, and school maintenance needs. Consequently, the quality of school buildings and the supply of educational materials have declined. Dropout and repetition rates have increased, enrolment has declined, and children are performing poorly on standardized tests.

Quality of Education

In primary schools the teaching/learning situation is characterized by lack of focus on children's learning outcomes and limited instructional time in the first four years—often due to the fact that school facilities are used by multiple 'shifts' each day to accommodate more children. Teaching in English may make learning difficult for young children who speak only a local language, and might alienate the school from the (non-English speaking) community. The curriculum, a national government standardized curriculum, does not reflect local needs and educational goals. Children who intend to continue on to secondary schools have different needs from those who will not continue beyond the primary level, which is the case for many children in the rural areas. There is a prevalence of traditional gender stereotypes in the textbooks.³ The classrooms and schools are in a poor state, and only a limited number of programs to support the education of the poor exist.

Teachers

Teachers in Zambia suffer from low morale—as reflected in the high level of absenteeism—and are underpaid in relation to other professions. Qualified teachers, especially university graduates, are lured away from the profession and the country by other jobs with attractive salaries or career structures. The teacher training institutions often do not provide the preparation that the teachers need in reality, such as how to teach large classes without books and equipment, how to handle multiple grade teaching, and how to deal with stressful environments. Teachers also lack professional and administrative support in the schools.⁴ There is some in-service training for teachers, organized through the University of Zambia School of Education, Department of In-service Education and Advisory Services.⁵

Health

Additional problems stemming from extreme poverty are malnourishment and general poor health in the student body. Illness and hunger affect students' readiness to learn, and also increases the students' vulnerability to other maladies, further decreasing the time they spend in school. AIDS, cholera and malaria strike teachers as well, depleting valuable human resources. Illness increases household poverty and increases vulnerable populations. High prevalence of HIV/AIDS is particularly grave, as it has led to increased numbers of vulnerable children—e.g. those who have lost their parents (AIDS orphans) or became sick themselves—and to vast numbers of out-of-school children. In 1996, there were more than 650,000 children in Zambia aged 7-16⁶ that were not in school. One 1999 study found that in urban areas 32% of orphans were not receiving formal schooling; in rural areas, the percentage of orphans not enrolled in school was a staggering 68%.⁷

Geographical Access

The formal education sector is hampered by the general difficulty of accessing rural areas. Inspectors, education officers, building officers and other support staff cannot reach the schools, and textbooks and supplies are left at central distribution points. Teachers abandon classes while they go pick up their pay, because no delivery system has been established, and they cannot access central training locations to receive in-service training.⁸

Community Schools—a Response

Community initiatives to provide children with a basic education emerged in response to the state of government-run primary education. In the face of the government's declining capacity to educate all of Zambia's children, the government of Zambia has begun to recognise the importance of community schools. The remainder of this report will examine this sector and the specific constraints hindering the sustainability of these schools. This report will show that many of the constraints facing the formal education system are not peculiar to government schools, but pertain also to community-based schools. The following sections will provide insight into the operation of community schools, as well as recommendations for the strengthening of the community school movement.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

History of Community Schools in Zambia

Community schools first emerged in the colonial period of 1890-1926. These were organized by European missionaries who aimed to Christianize the communities through education. By 1926, at least 1,925 schools had sprung up with a school population of 110,368. The Christian communities provided educational facilities for many years and operated these schools without much help from the government. However, in a drastic turn of events, the GOZ following Zambia's independence introduced a policy in which it was to be the sole provider of education. During this period, the missionary schools were completely absorbed by the MOE and the early community schools officially disappeared.

Education suffered rapid deterioration following the dramatic fall in copper prices in 1975 and the ensuing downturn of socio-economic conditions. With the rising unemployment and stagnant economy, accompanied by an increase in HIV/AIDS infection rate, many parents could not afford the school fees or uniforms and other costs of educating a child, such as books and supplies. Hence, community schools began to emerge to meet the rising need for low cost or free education.

The high prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS is a particularly large factor behind the continued expansion of community schools. Although AIDS orphans are customarily taken in by their relatives, many of these orphans cannot remain in government schools, as foster parents do not have the means to keep them there. Most of these orphans help with household chores, work in the market, or are left to survive on whatever resources they can lay their hands on. Moved by the plight of the growing number of school-age children out of school, community initiatives emerged to meet the needs of those children left out of the formal education system.

Community Schools Today

The community school movement in Zambia is growing and expanding at a rapid rate. In 1996, there were just about 100 schools registered; in 1999, the figure was up to 379. Today, there are over 700 community schools in Zambia. These schools can be run by local community-based organizations (CBOs), religious organizations, or NGOs; they differ greatly in their physical infrastructure and level of development. The community schools meet the basic learning needs of an identified vulnerable group in a local environment. Communities however, do not have the resources to support the schools in all ways needed. Some problems encountered by these schools include a lack of consensus on the overall definition of community schools, an unclear legal and future status of community schools, and a lack of a common vision for the future of community schools.

Students

Students who attend the community schools are generally among the most disadvantaged and most vulnerable of society. Many are AIDS orphans who have lost either one or both of their parents and live with relatives, who are themselves poor and cannot afford to send these children to government schools. Many are sick or malnourished, and often come to school without having had anything to eat. Nonetheless, the children often had high aspirations in life, such as becoming doctors and nurses, pilots and presidents.

Teachers

The teachers are mainly from the community, and are generally untrained and learn how to teach on the job. The large majority of them are unpaid; they teach in less than adequate conditions, with minimal resources, such as books, desks, and even buildings. Teachers in these schools however, are typically very highly motivated. They also demonstrate good sensitivity and connection to community education issues and concerns.

School Buildings and Facilities

The range of available school facilities among community schools was broad (see Table 3). While some schools had a solid foundation with walls and roofing, others merely had a cement floor and crumbling walls. Access to a clean water supply was restricted at most community schools, and only two community schools the team visited had running water. Toilet facilities were also minimal except in those schools with running water. Given the poverty and the poor state of health of the students, many parents and teachers expressed their wish that some food and minimal kind of medicine and first aid could be provided at the school. Only one school, Ndeke, had a daily food program.

Table 3: Condition of Physical Facilities at Community Schools

	Land ownership	Condition of school building	Roof	Desks & chairs	Water	Electricity	Phone
Chadiza	Yes. Share with church	Brick building; no windows	Yes. Grass roof	Brick benches	Yes. Borehole	No	No
Chibolya (ZOCS)	--	Building under construction. Classes held in courtyard	Under construction	Yes	--	No	No
Chipata (ZOCS)	--	Excellent. Newly built	Yes	Yes. Well-equipped	--	--	Yes
Cobet	No. Pay rent	Poor. Small, dark rooms; 2 classes held outside	Yes for building; no for outside classes	Some benches, but not enough	No	No	--
Kabele	Yes	Small adobe hut with no windows	Yes. Grass roof, vulnerable to heavy rain	Brick benches	No	No	No
Mchini	No. Borrowed from church	Poor. Classes held temporarily in roofless building	Yes, but grass roof caved in from rain	Some chairs	--	No	No
Natweshe	No. Pay rent	Very poor. Old building, with holes in walls	Partial. Not all parts covered	No	No	No	No
Ndeke	Yes	Good. Well-kept and well-equipped	Yes	Yes. Well-equipped	Yes. Running water	Yes	Yes
Ng'ombe (ZOCS)	Permission from Lusaka City Council	Under construction. Classes held in structure as it is being built	Under construction	Yes	--	--	--
Rehobeth Sheba	No. Using someone's land	Very poor. Only concrete floor and partial walls	No	No	No	No	No
Tionge (Italian missionary)	Yes	Excellent. Newly built	Yes	Yes. Well-equipped	Yes. Running water	Yes	Yes

Curriculum

There are two main curricula in use at community schools. The SPARK syllabus—'Skills, Participation, Access, and Relevant Knowledge'—was developed for community schools under the guidance of UNICEF, and includes minimum guidelines and a syllabus. It was designed for the education of students aged 9-16 years, to provide them with a complete primary education in only four years, as opposed to the seven years required for the national curriculum. SPARK is also unique in that it promotes the development of life-skills, such as problem solving, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship skills, and copying with stress.

The other curriculum is the national government curriculum, which focuses on seven subjects for seven years of education. Many teachers use a mixture of SPARK and national curriculum, while others teach simply according to their previous knowledge and education.

Locally relevant topics and subjects are taught as well. Community members and parents suggested that there be more vocational skills training such as carpentry, sewing, brick laying, gardening, and electric repair. They felt that such skills were important in giving their children the knowledge needed for gainful employment.

THE ACTORS

This section will give a brief overview of the ‘roles’, or actors, currently involved with the community schools in Zambia. In accordance with the framework of an institutional assessment, this descriptive synopsis of the actors at the local, provincial/district, and national levels is organized according to the following key dimensions:

Policy and decision making

Financial resource generation and allocation

Staffing and motivation

Policy and Decision Making

Certain actors play an integral part in the decision-making over policies and various aspects of the community school sector.

Local Level Actors

Parent Community School Committees (PCSCs)

The majority of schools have some form of PCSC that makes the decisions pertaining to community school management. These committees hire and fire teachers, decide on what children to admit, determine fees if there are any, and make any other decisions regarding the school.

Provincial Level Actors

Focal Point Persons (FPPs)

FPPs for each of Zambia’s nine provinces were appointed by the MOE (the first four in 1998 and the last five in 2000). Their principal role is to monitor and supervise community schools. These FPPs are usually accommodated in the Provincial Educational Officers’ (PEOs’) offices, and are funded for their operational costs by UNICEF. The role of the FPPs is to work closely with the PEOs and District Education Officers (DEOs) to reach community schools, particularly in remote areas. These FPPs act as the link between the Zambia Community Schools Secretariat (ZCSS) and the MOE, and the community schools.

Most FPPs are inspectors of schools, and they provide technical and professional advice on how schools should be run. In theory, all community schools must contact their FPP if they want to fire or hire a teacher, although in practice, this is not always the case. They sensitize local chiefs and village leaders on the value of education, and train leaders on how to organize and manage a community school.

National Level Actors

Zambia Community School Secretariat (ZCSS)

In 1997, ZCSS was established by a group of NGOs involved in community schools, with the assistance of UNICEF, as an umbrella organization responsible for coordinating community schools in Zambia. Its main objectives are: to strengthen the capacity of community schools in Zambia through national and international networking and coordination; to establish (in cooperation with MOE) quality standards for community schools and monitor them; and, to coordinate the gathering, updating and dissemination of information on groups, NGOs and government bodies working in the provision of community based quality primary education.

The Board of Governors, which is comprised of 10 elected members, sets ZCSS policy. Four members have had considerable experience in the community school movement, and the other six come from NGOs outside the movement.

ZCSS’s administrative capacity in the first years after its inception was severely limited due to inadequate human capacity and lack of financial resources. Recent changes made in its mandate and new staffing with qualified individuals has given the secretariat greater credibility and capacity to carry out its activities. ZCSS has also been able to secure financial and technical support through a number of donor interventions. Donors and relevant actors now recognize ZCSS as a vital umbrella organization,

responsible for overseeing community schools, in cooperation with the MOE, donors, and community school management bodies.

Ministry of Education (MOE)

In 1998 the MOE signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with ZCSS, which clarifies the Ministry's position regarding community schools. The MOE accepts community schools as a complementary system to the existing government and private schools, and is concerned with maintaining standards and ensuring quality of learning, as well as increasing access to education for all children. The community school movement is congruous with its official policy of educational decentralization.

Revisions to the MOA are being considered at the time of writing. The Task Force on community schools—formed by the MOE in 2000 and comprised of NGOs and donors who run and support community schools—produced a report on MOE “Policy and Guidelines for the Development of Community Schools in Zambia” last year. If signed by the MOE, it will clarify Ministry policy towards community schools on issues such as curriculum, accreditation, teacher training, and other factors that would ensure quality education.

Financing

This dimension examines the financial and budgetary support that allows an institution to carry out particular tasks. The actors introduced in this section have a role in either providing resources, or determining how they are used.

Local Level Actors

Communities and Parent Community School Committees (PCSCs)

The PCSCs must mobilize community resources for the community school. It can collect fees or in-kind payments such as maize and groundnuts from parents and guardians, undertake fundraising activities, or muster community support. Community participation can manifest itself in various forms, such as in offering labor, materials, and skills to construct or maintain buildings.

Provincial and District Level Actors

Provincial Education Officers (PEOs) and District Education Officers (DEOs)

PEOs coordinate the provision of education in the province. They are responsible for distributing texts and overseeing exams in all schools, including both government and community schools. PEOs work through DEOs and FPPs. They can second to community schools government-trained and government-paid teachers, and channel teaching and learning materials to community schools. Funds from the Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Program (BESSIP; see following section on international NGOs/bilateral donors for more details) are also channeled through the PEOs and DEOs.

National Level Actors

Ministry of Education (MOE)

In the MOA the Ministry of Education committed itself to assist community schools with some funding—particularly regarding teacher salaries—and to provide textbooks and learning materials through ZCSS, FPPs, PEOs and DEOs. To date, however, this support has been limited. If a community school is adjacent to a government school, the government might second a public school teacher to teach at the community school, thus giving community school teachers an opportunity to learn from their colleague as they work side by side.

International NGOs/Bilateral Donors

Donors and international NGOs play a large role in supporting the community school movement in terms of both finances and resources. With the recent overhaul of ZCSS, the donor community is more willing to work with the umbrella organization, and they are providing financial and technical assistance to ZCSS. International NGOs, in the past, generally tended to have their own programs directly with the community schools. Now, there is greater consensus among them that they can best assist community schools by working through and with ZCSS, as it will allow greater coordination of efforts.

One major channel for MOE and donor funding to community schools is through the Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Program (BESSIP), a World Bank initiative established in 1999. BESSIP will be funded by the GOZ (US\$167 million), the World Bank (US\$40 million in IDA credits), and other donors (US\$133 million) over a period of 3.5 years.⁹ BESSIP operates within the Ministry of Education (MOE), and a portion of the funds is funneled to assist rural education programs and development of infrastructure. Community schools are categorized under the component of Equity and Gender within the project and a specified amount of funds are set aside to help support the community school movement through the MOE and ZCSS.

Zambian Open Community Schools (ZOCS)

Although by no means the only NGO in Zambia running community schools, ZOCS is by far the most well-known and respected among national level actors. ZOCS was incorporated in 1994/1995 as a national NGO. It has a reputation of integrity and is known for piloting new activities in the education sector. Its main objectives are to establish and run community schools, as well as to improve the quality of education in ZOCS schools through a number of different educational initiatives. ZOCS schools target older children who have not been accepted by government schools. About 61% of their students are girls and 40% are orphans. Several donors fund ZOCS, which also benefits from school links in the U.K. and from individual donors who sponsor classes in their schools.

ZOCS currently has 17 schools in its program. The organization provides salaries for its 107 teachers. It also takes on affiliate schools, and provides them with technical support.

Staffing and Motivating

Staffing community schools and the factors affecting teacher motivation are included in this dimension. Teachers are generally locally hired by PCSCs, but other actors play a part—or have the potential to play a part—in providing teachers with training and salaries.

Local Level Actors

Parent Community School Committees (PCSCs)

PCSCs are responsible for hiring and firing the teachers based on their own evaluation of teacher qualifications, and for determining and mobilizing the compensation that the community might be able to give to the teacher.

Provincial and District Level Actors

Focal Point Persons (FPPs)

FPPs are responsible for identifying needs and organizing training courses at the provincial and district level. In theory, they also monitor the quality of teachers at the community schools particularly through conferring with PCSCs on hiring and firing decisions, although FPPs' involvement in this matter has been limited to date.

National Level Actors

Ministry of Education (MOE)

The Ministry of Education provides training at teacher training colleges for teachers with a Grade 12 Certificate. Some funds from BESSIP are to be mobilized through DEOs and PEOs, to help community school teachers train and develop their teaching qualifications. Teachers who complete Grade 12 have the opportunity to go to teacher training colleges, receive formal training and be posted back to the community school.

Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS)

ZOCS has systematic training modules and resource centers designed to train its teachers, which have been funded with the help of UNICEF and the Dutch Embassy. Their teachers are trained to use the SPARK curriculum. ZOCS requires their teachers to have at least a Grade 12 Certificate of education. Those who were already working for ZOCS before this requirement and did not have a Grade 12 Certificate have received the training necessary to attain it.

The organization has recently started a new teacher-training program, a distance-learning program in collaboration with teacher training colleges in Zambia. This is to provide teachers with a college education and training for their national teacher certification.

ZOCS hires new teachers on a three-month trial basis, during which time they are trained for the SPARK manual and monitored for teaching quality by ZOCS education advisors.

Conclusion

The next section will discuss our research findings in more detail through these three dimensions: policy and decision making, financing, and staffing and motivating. Our findings indicate that given the right support in terms of resources and management, the community schools movement can be significant not only in meeting the educational demands of the most disadvantaged children, but in assisting the government in its commitment to providing basic education for all children in Zambia.

POLICY AND DECISION MAKING

The dimension of policy and decision making examines the question of *who* makes the decisions regarding *what* aspects of education in community schools. The team found that in practice the majority of decisions on quality of education standards and school management are made at the local level, in the community schools themselves. Three major findings emerged:

- The MOE views its future role in the community schools as a regulator that sets guidelines and ensures quality
- The communities are not willing to relinquish control of school management decision-making. This includes setting certain standards, hiring and firing teachers, deciding on the curriculum, and determining student enrollment eligibility.
- There were a range of views among donors on the role the government should play in formulating national policies on community schools

This section will highlight the different viewpoints on policy and decision-making of community schools by outlining issues related to quality of education standards that most frequently emerged during the team's interviews and workshops with stakeholders.

School Management

Government versus Community

The key stakeholders involved in supporting community schools and the actors at the community level themselves appear to be near a general consensus that the community should be responsible for management. Across the board, community school teachers and parents feel particularly strongly about the preservation of their independence from government in running the schools and would like to remain in charge of major decision-making issues such as the enrollment age of children, the hiring and firing of teachers and whether to charge fees and require uniforms.

Donors also expressed the view that the government should not be involved in the direct management of the schools. Most of them highlighted the importance of “community ownership” as a cornerstone for strengthening communities’ ability to sustain the schools. However, 90 percent of donors interviewed by the team thought that the government has a responsibility to provide other means of assistance such as the setting of minimum standards, development of curriculum, inspection of schools, and the provision of salaries and training for teachers. ZCSS would be primarily responsible for monitoring school quality. A senior MOE official noted that the government would like to encourage continued independence of community schools while focusing upon its role as a provider of funding for teachers and responsibility for ensuring that quality education is provided by community schools. As he stated: “Community schools should never become absorbed into government schools. Rather, government schools should become more like the community schools.” This is in keeping with the general government policy of decentralizing education.

What reasons did community school teachers and parents give against giving control of their schools over to the government? Almost 90 percent of respondents said that the government would require higher school fees and make children wear uniforms and shoes thereby pricing such schools beyond the reach of poor families. In the absence of government support for poor families, the government school requirement that all students wear shoes and proper uniforms to class every day imposes a huge, often insurmountable expenditure for parents and guardians in poor communities. According to parents and teachers, the imposition of such a policy would undermine the mission of the community school—to serve orphans and other needy children.

Also, community members generally did not have faith in the government’s ability to manage their schools effectively. They felt that the government did not understand their problems, because as one parent stated, the government “is too far away from our reality. Government can’t even build a water hole. It’s no help for us at all.” Parents interviewed in both the Eastern Province and in Lusaka said that elected officials “only come around before elections.”

Lack of contact between communities and their local government officials cause community school teachers and parents to feel detached from the government and resent state involvement. The majority of teachers and parents believed that the communities could better address local issues. Over half of the schools visited reported that DEOs, the government officials responsible for overseeing schools, rarely visit community schools and are unaware of their problems. In two of the three provinces visited, FPPs mentioned the DEOs neglect community schools, focusing solely on the government schools. One reason may be that traditionally DEOs have only been required to oversee government schools and still lack clear guidelines or standards for community school oversight. Finally, many DEOs may still be in the process of adjusting to their new roles and responsibilities.

Involvement at the Community Level

The official role of the PCSC in the community schools is to encourage the communities at large to support education, according to the 2000 MOE Policy and Guidelines. Although community schools are premised on community participation, some communities do not commonly act together and have not expressed much interest in schooling. In some schools, the teachers and parents actively involved in the schools lamented the lack of interest among other parts of their community. Some regions of Zambia have much fewer community schools because those communities are less likely to initiate the creation of such schools. Part of this may be due to cultural values; it may also be due to the high opportunity cost of volunteering their time. For those living at the margin, the time spent on managing community schools could directly impact the amount of food they can put on the table. In general, the better-organized schools also tended to be the ones with the better capacity to encourage community participation. Currently, the MOE's policy is to work with less active communities that do not receive external assistance in order to help them identify both needs and strategies to meet those needs.

Views on the importance of community participation can differ. The NGO ZOCS considers community participation to be the cornerstone of its success and sustainability. In fact, recently ZOCS pulled out of three schools that lacked community participation and support. Conversely, Tionge missionary school does not require parents to participate in school activities. The headmistress is "satisfied if parents bring the children to school everyday" because parents have to care for orphans or they must work. The particular situation at each school calls for different policies.

In interviews, some teachers described the lack of community participation in the community schools as an information problem. They believe that parents would become more involved if they realized the need for greater involvement. The teachers at Tionge community school blame the Zambian media for the lack of community mobilization on the behalf of community schools. The teachers suggested that the media should work to shape public opinion around community issues and raise awareness to a higher level.

Quality of Education Standards

Teachers

Hiring and Firing Teachers

In all the community schools visited by the team, teachers were hired and fired by the community. The 2000 Policy and Guidelines for Community Schools states that PCSCs in the communities are responsible for "staffing schools" by selecting teachers and "disciplining/dismissing teachers". The Guidelines designate the government to a regulatory role, with ZCSS responsible for formulating a standardized policy on teacher hiring. If this revision to the 1996 MOA is signed, the PEO, DEO and FPPs will be responsible for assisting the PCSCs in appointing new teachers and making staff management decisions. By helping PCSCs make qualified decisions, the PEO, DEO and FPP will be able to ensure the quality of instruction.

One drawback of the Policy and Guidelines is the vagueness of the stated role of PEOs, DEOs and FPPs to "facilitate PCSC in the appointment of teachers." No specifics are provided as to the type of facilitation or the role of such facilitation. Depending on the interpretation, the guidelines could potentially take away some of the autonomy in teacher selection that communities now enjoy. For now, communities appear to make their own decisions without consulting either their FPP or DEO. This may be that these guidelines have yet to be officially accepted by the MOE and thus have not been broadly disseminated. The provision should be made more specific in order to avoid future misunderstandings.

The communities viewed their ability to hire and fire teachers as an important attribute of their autonomy. While they do support the government provision of certified teachers, they want the power to select their own teachers. They see the ability to hire teachers as an opportunity to develop the schools in the manner they choose. Communities also value their ability to dismiss teachers as a useful tool that forces teachers to be more accountable to the community they serve.

Teacher Qualifications

Currently, teachers who graduate from government accredited teaching programs become certified and are appointed to a teaching position. The MOE envisions appointing certified teachers to community schools in the future. At this time, the GOZ can second certified teachers from government schools to the community schools, although the team only met one (at Ndeke). The PCSCs do not have a part in this decision. MOE has also lowered the entrance requirements to teacher training colleges, so that current community school teachers with a Grade 12 Certificate may obtain certification and return to their community school while being paid a salary by the government.

All MOE officials interviewed at the national and provincial levels stated that in the future they hope all community schools will have certified teachers. The standard of teacher certification is one way of ensuring that instruction in community schools is equivalent to instruction at government schools.

To date, however, the research team found that the government has not been able to regulate qualifications of community school teachers. Moreover, the evidence collected by this study shows that there is no systematic academic standard for teacher qualification in the community schools. The education level and hours of training of community school teachers varied across schools. The ZOCS and missionary school teachers in Lusaka have received more training than any of the other teachers the team interviewed, primarily because ZOCS and missionary schools have more resources than the other community schools and can afford more teacher training and the higher salaries of trained teachers. A school with little resources is restricted to those teachers that it can afford, and in some cases this means only volunteers who may have little or no training.

In sum, communities recognized that community school teachers generally had lower academic qualifications than government school teachers. They had completed less formal schooling and had participated in fewer workshops. The parents, teachers and students interviewed expressed hope for community school teachers in the future who possess good academic, as well as personal, qualifications.

Curriculum

There are two predominant curricula in use in Zambia, the official government school curriculum and the SPARK curriculum for community schools. The MOE's policy is to develop standards of quality for community schools.¹¹ In collaboration with ZCSS, the MOE is currently designing assessment tools for all levels using the SPARK curriculum. The Inspector of Schools in the Eastern Province explained that the MOE wants communities to use the SPARK curriculum in order to "ensure that all community school students receive a similar quality of instruction as government school pupils."

Donors had different opinions towards creating a standard curriculum for community schools. Two of the donors thought that SPARK should serve as the model curriculum for all community schools. Four donor representatives maintained that SPARK should be modified and then standardized, but three others believe the community should decide on their own curriculum. ZOCS requires that its schools use SPARK. However, the research team found that ZCSS and more than half of the donors had a different view on the applicability of SPARK for all community schools. They maintained that SPARK was no longer appropriate for all community schools.

At the local level, the research team found that the government has not been able to control which type of curriculum community schools use. The evidence collected in 11 community schools shows that teachers use different combinations of the four-year SPARK curriculum and the seven-year government basic education curriculum. In most schools, a lack of materials and resources dictated which curriculum was used and how materials were taught. One of community-run rural schools in the Eastern Province did not have any school materials and did not use either curriculum. In this case, the teacher uses the one school copy of a textbook to teach from the blackboard. The children often just repeat what the teacher

says rather than reading it from the board. Few can afford notebooks in which to write the lessons, and learning is made more difficult.

According to headmasters and teachers from community schools, one reason that some schools use both government and SPARK curricula is that they find each limiting in its own way. The content of the SPARK curriculum is very rigid, and since it was designed for use with 9 to 16 year olds it does not work for other ages. In most schools the team visited the students' ages ranged from 6 to 18 years of age, contrasting sharply with ZCSS's policy that community schools should not teach SPARK to children under the age of 9.

In addition, the teachers said it does not cater towards the different goals of community school pupils. Although not many students continue on to secondary schools, some teachers feel that children preparing for the national 7th grade exam, which is based on the government curriculum, would benefit more from the use of both curricula as opposed to just using SPARK. The government basic education curriculum is designed to prepare students for the 7th grade examination, whereas SPARK places greater emphasis on the development of life-skills.

Other Issues

Grade Repetition

Government school students are not encouraged to repeat a grade because repetition is a burden financially to the government and usually carries a serious stigma for the child to bear. In contrast, the community schools visited allowed students to repeat grades according to their needs, and in fact, this was in the communities' opinion a huge advantage of community schools in comparison to government schools. The headmistress of Natweshe Community School in Lusaka Province felt that allowing children to repeat grades results in better educated children. Teachers from Cobet Community School said that allowing students to repeat grades was an advantage for community schools because "teachers can allocate more time to slow learners." This is important because many community school students have never had the opportunity to attend any school prior to the community school and require more help than others.

Fees and Uniforms

In all community schools visited, community members stated that PCSCs should set admission fees and determine whether they will have uniform and shoe requirements. The communities believe that local decision making will keep schooling affordable to all disadvantaged children in the community since the PCSCs are more aware of the families' financial situation. Communities feel that the opportunity to make such a decision also gives them a sense of proprietorship over the school even if the government plays a role in providing teachers for the community school. As one teacher stated, "controlling the fees gives the most vulnerable children an opportunity to go to school."

Enrollment Age

The ability to set the enrollment age of children was cited as an issue that should be decided by individual communities by 90 percent of all headmasters, teachers and parents interviewed. Government schools have a rigid policy of accepting only children between 7 and 16 years of age. Community schools on the other hand enroll almost all children who show up for school (with the exception of ZOCS schools which do not enroll children under 9, and the Ndeke School that only allows children over 9 to start the SPARK program). At many schools, there were children as young as 5 or 6 years old and as old as 18 years old in the same classroom. Communities were opposed to what they considered the exclusionary system of government admittance and focused upon the benefits of giving more children an opportunity to go to school. For this reason, communities feel strongly that enrollment age is an issue to be decided at the local level.

One positive effect of the absence of age limits for students cited by communities is that they can enroll more girls. A majority of teachers and parents stated that many families, faced with limited resources, send boys to school before girls. The result is that many girls become ineligible for a government school education because they have passed the entrance age. The inclusive age policies of community schools reduce gender inequality by giving access to schools for girls of all ages.

However, conservative social attitudes are still prevalent in Zambian society and several teachers in Lusaka Province and in Eastern Province stated that they have a difficult time recruiting girls since parents do not understand the purpose of community schools or the value of education for women.

FINANCING

Questions of financing are central to the development of the community school movement in Zambia. Under this dimension, the team examined such aspects as what resources were required to run the community schools, what were things that communities needed most, what sources of funds and materials were available, and how they were channeled to the community schools.

Locating sources of funding for hiring teachers, and to provide an adequate learning environment is a major concern of the community schools. Although the government has been a more visible actor in recent years, its role with the financing these schools is still in its infancy. Donors and multilateral organizations have been playing a larger role, but visions for the future financing of community schools are still varied. This section will discuss funding for community schools, and the major needs of community schools.

Funding for Community School

From the National Levels

Through BESSIP, there has been a much more formalized recognition and support for community schools. BESSIP funds for community schools are currently disbursed through the MOE, specifically via the DEOs, although MOE reports that they are considering going through ZCSS in the future. One donor speculated that although the BESSIP grant money is allocated for the community schools and is to be distributed via the DEO, many times it never actually reaches the community schools. The donor's view was that because there are so many needs among government schools, the funds might be shifted towards them instead.

Community schools we spoke with were generally not aware about the availability of BESSIP funds. One rural school in the Eastern Province (Kabele) had received approximately US\$226 through BESSIP. They used the funds to build a new school building and get limited supplies. As a result of this funding, the school had no concerns about their physical learning environment, unlike the other two schools in the Eastern Province and three rural schools in Lusaka we visited. Because of the impact that BESSIP funds can have, donors also expressed a need for community schools to have a stronger voice for advocacy in BESSIP forums.

The second major way that community schools receive funds is to have it channeled directly to the school from donors. Two donors interviewed prefer this method, and perceive it to be faster and less bureaucratic than channeling through BESSIP. With their revived confidence in ZCSS, the same donors also expressed their willingness to work with ZCSS while maintaining direct support to the community schools.

Donors can also provide assistance to ZCSS. In practice, this aid often takes the form of technical assistance. This is a growing trend because donors perceive ZCSS as being more transparent and capable than in the past.

More active donor support for community schools can have unintended consequences. A number of major stakeholders—donor and NGO representatives—were concerned that an increased flow of funds to community schools could create an incentive for some parties to start NGOs for personal gain. To avoid this, it was suggested that standards for NGOs and CBOs be established, and a system of monitoring the community schools be developed.

From the Private Sector

There is minimal private sector involvement in the community schools at this point. Some community schools target specific companies for fundraising activities, such as the local Rotary Club that has supported community schools in the past. The ZCSS gives the schools an approval/recommendation letter with which to approach the businesses. ZCSS suggests that a public awareness campaign is needed to raise interest in supporting the schools. They also speculated that the poor economy in Zambia limits the help that local businesses can provide, making international companies better targets (i.e.,

Rothman's cigarettes company, Barclay's Bank, Coca-Cola, and Zambian Breweries, all of which are making a profit in Zambia). Zambia's wealthy and middle classes generally do not have much interest, as most send their children to private schools.

From the Communities

A few community schools charge fees for attendance, but they are not a major source of income. Most schools charge a very low fee that is paid once a semester and others allow children to come free of charge. The lowest fee reported by the schools visited was 1,000 kwacha (US\$0.30, exchange rate of April 2001) per year; the highest was 10,000 (US\$2.85) kwacha per year.

In the instances that financial payment cannot be paid by the parents or guardians, other forms of in-kind contributions were accepted. These contributions varied from giving produce, to providing skills and labor for school building construction, to volunteering time to help coach soccer teams. At the Ndeke Community School, parents and community members also provided vocational skills training to the children in an effort to teach them trades such as woodworking, metalworking, and cooking. Commercial products produced at Ndeke by the children are sold for fundraising to support maintenance of the school.

School Needs

Infrastructure

The infrastructure needs of different schools the team visited varied considerably. Whereas the ZOCS schools had well-constructed school buildings, other community schools varied in building facilities. The extremely poor conditions at some schools impair the learning environment and are among the highest concerns of parents and teachers in that community. For example, the Mchini Community School in the Eastern Province uses a school building with a collapsed roof. This is a major concern at this school especially during rainy season, because the children have to be sent home whenever it rains. Some classrooms at schools in Lusaka had nothing more than rocks for children to sit on and children shared mats. All the community schools were resourceful and made the best of what was available. For example, the Chibolya Community School, a ZOCS school, uses a temporary space in an enclosed lot while their permanent school structure is being built.

Land use and rent is also an important financing consideration for community schools. The land used for the Mchini Community School is being borrowed from a church nearby; the community school in Chadiza shares ownership of its one-room structure with a church that uses it for religious services as well. In most cases, schools have to pay rent for usage of the land, but some used the land without permission and remained fearful of being ejected, such as Rehobeth Sheba. Schools can also be barred from access to additional sources because some donors condition their grants to community schools on land ownership.

School Teaching Materials and Supplies

The community schools we visited are most affected by the lack of teaching materials and supplies. This need is common among all the schools and all teachers raised this concern to varying degrees. The DEO is entrusted with distributing teaching materials and supplies to all community and government schools. However, more than half of the community schools voiced frustration they were not receiving any of these supplies. Given the limited resources, the DEOs may be placing priority on government schools instead.

A few schools, notably Ndeke and Tionge, have been more successful at obtaining textbooks and workbooks for their students. The teachers at these schools also have supplemental teaching aids (posters on walls—some created by the teachers themselves—rulers, colored paper, etc.). Both these schools obtained such supplies through the direct support of international donors—Irish Aid and UNICEF for Ndeke, and the Sisters of Charity mission for Tionge. Some of the ZOCS schools were also well-equipped, but the majority of the schools visited did not have adequate teaching supplies.

Teacher Training and Salaries

The MOE, within the framework of the MOA, has agreed to provide training, accreditation and salaries to community school teachers that are certified by the government. The team observed, however, that active government involvement has to date been limited. With the exception of Ndeke (which has a government school teacher seconded by the MOE), none of the community schools visited had teachers on the government payroll, although the headmistress of Natweshe was a certified teacher. Most of the teachers the team spoke to work for small, annual or monthly stipends or in-kind payments, provided for by the local communities. The amount of payment does not vary greatly among the schools. Payments are generally too small for the teachers to fully subsist on. The ZOCS schools fully fund the salaries, or “allowances”, of their teachers. This stipend is roughly equivalent to that of government schoolteachers, approximately \$40 per month.

In terms of teacher training, government support was limited as well. The PEO in the Eastern Province did hold a training for 50 teachers before our arrival. However, all of the schools we spoke with cited a lack of support from government for teacher training. ZOCS provides and funds training for its own teachers and a few other schools support the participation of their teachers in distance learning programs. (More on staffing and training will be discussed in the next section).

STAFFING AND MOTIVATING

The staffing and motivating of teachers has been an overall concern, particularly as they are the basis of ensuring quality in the community schools. Three major themes emerged in this area:

There are often high teacher turnover rates because of low teacher morale, stemming from a lack of monetary compensation, professional support and external and psychological stress factors.

Teachers in community schools exemplify high levels of devotion and dedication to their schools and communities. However, their difficult work situation can diminish this motivation, even for the most devoted teachers.

According to the 2000 Policy and Guidelines for Community Schools, the MOE has the responsibility to support the community schools by providing training, accreditation, and salaries for teachers. However, active government involvement in the community school movement has been limited. This section will describe three important staffing issues—teacher salaries, training, and certification—and how they relate to the motivating of community school teachers.

Teacher Salaries

If the new MOA (based on the 2000 Policy and Guidelines) is signed, the MOE will be responsible for providing accreditation and salaries to trained community school teachers. As discussed in the financing section, most of the teachers the team spoke to work for small stipends or in-kind payments provided for by the local communities and by some donors. Rather than being motivated by monetary considerations, the teachers' own dedication to the children has been the primary incentive for remaining at their quasi-voluntary teaching positions. While the dedication levels of the teachers to their communities are high, the little or no pay they receive has been a deterrent, lowering motivation levels among some teachers and creating high teacher turnover rates. Teachers at three of the schools visited reported hunger as an impediment to their teaching abilities, and one teacher at Mchini Community School noted that even soap was a luxury. Teachers are often forced to look elsewhere for alternatives with better monetary compensation.

This is in contrast to the ZOCS schools, the Ndeke Community School, and the Tionge Community School, where teacher motivation is enhanced by a fully funded salary or allowance, roughly equivalent to the salary of a government school teacher. At these schools, the donor-funded teacher salaries has motivated teachers to stay at their positions and also to show higher levels of interest in the improving the quality of their teaching and their classrooms.

A further difficulty leading to lower motivation levels has been a stigma attached to community school teachers working without a salary. According to some teachers interviewed, government school teachers perceive community school teachers differently. For example, the government school teacher who was seconded by the MOE to teach at Ndeke Community School in the Southern Province stated that her government school colleagues ridiculed her for deciding to teach at a community school. This stems from the commonly held belief that community schools are not “as serious” as government schools. Conversely, although none of the community school teachers the team interviewed were averse to being certified and paid by the government, many did not want to teach in government schools because they had a negative view of them.

In general, the teachers believed that by providing salaries that could improve community school teachers' living conditions, the government, and donors could contribute to raising teacher motivation and morale. At the same time, there is a certain fear among people in the school management that having teachers on the government payroll will take away the power to hire and fire teachers from the community schools.

Teacher Training

Unlike government schools that use an academic criterion for selecting teachers, most community schools must look at other measures. Qualitative standards substitute for more rigorous training-based criteria because of real constraints in attracting trained people. A primary measure by which community school headmasters, teachers and parents assess teachers is by their dedication to teaching underprivileged children, particularly orphans and girls, and to helping the community. The teachers and parents in every school visited cited these as the strengths these teachers brought to community schools. Thus, the schools' financial constraints play a large role in decision making, and standards are adjusted to fit these realities.

As the number of community schools rapidly grows, maintaining quality education is a concern. For varying reasons, the training of teachers at over half the schools visited has not been adequate. Over 90 percent of the teachers interviewed do not have any type of formal teaching training. Most often, their teaching is a reflection of what they recollect from their own limited schooling. While over half of the parents and teachers believe that the teaching standards at their schools are higher than that of government schools, they also expressed the desire to have more training, similar to that provided for government teachers.

The teachers' abilities are further taxed by the wide variance in student ability levels and preparation and the multi-grade classes. In some cases the older children experience social problems stemming from their shame of being in class with younger children. To address these problems, teachers in schools with more resources mentioned that psycho-social training for teachers would assist them in working with these children.

The parents and teachers interviewed felt that greater government assistance was desirable. The MOE, through PEOs and DEOs, could facilitate increased training opportunities by arranging long distance courses on SPARK and by providing access to District Resource Centers. Such opportunities, however, are not yet available in a consistent manner. In response, some donors have been sponsoring teacher-training seminars explicitly for community school teachers. Only a small number of the schools visited have benefited from these trainings, since others are located too far away to attend formal training seminars. Easily accessible teacher training is an incentive that will allow for greater personal satisfaction and accomplishment. This, in turn, will contribute to increasing the level of motivation community school teachers need in order to stay in their communities.

Certification

The Ministry of Education is willing to put teachers that have certification on its payroll. However, this official teacher certification accepted by the government and for community schools is expensive to earn and is only provided by teacher training colleges. While the government promises to pay certified teachers, it does not provide the monetary assistance community school teachers need in order to receive this essential and valued certification. Among the schools visited, only Ndeke has been able to send their teachers to become certified, as they have funding from Irish Aid to do so. The lack of financial support for other community school teachers lowers motivation and creates a dilemma for teachers, whose options are already limited because of their low economic standing.

As an alternative, ZCSS is attempting to begin a dual community school/government school teacher certification program. Meanwhile, ZOCS has recently started a new distance-learning teacher-training program with Kitwe Teachers College, to provide teachers with a college education and training for their national teacher certification. 47 of the ZOCS teachers are currently enrolled in the Kitwe program and are working towards their certification.

While these and other donor-assisted initiatives are aiding specific teachers, other community schools visited do not benefit from similar support. Reasons for this may include the geographic remoteness of the particular school, the low level of school development, and lack of contact between the school and the FPP, DEO, and ZCSS.

Many teachers the team spoke with view certification as a form of security for the future. Without certificates, they face job insecurity. They also felt that to ensure equal opportunity, government school and community school certification standards should be the same. Without the needed certification, even the most dedicated community school teachers will be faced with the dilemma of searching for a more viable option. One important strategy for addressing high teacher turnover rates, low teacher morale and lack of motivation is putting the attainment of certification within the reach of community school teachers.

OTHER DIMENSIONS

In this report, focus was placed on the dimensions of *policy and decision making*, *financing*, and *staffing and motivating*, as these were deemed to be the most pressing areas for analysis. However, the other three dimensions—*communicating*, *monitoring and evaluating*, and *external demand making*—are an integral part of the movement as a whole. Here, we briefly touch upon each of these dimensions.

Communicating

Communication is critical in order to strengthen the links among different players and the functions in the community school movement. Effective and systematic communication between community schools and all other actors was found to be generally lacking. Because of the vast geographical spread of community schools and their often inaccessible locations, it is extremely difficult to ensure that regular site visits by FPPs, DEOs, and PEOs takes place. They cannot fulfill this mandate unless they are given focused support for their outreach activities. To address this issue, channels of communication would need to be given an explicit structure within the movement, with necessary resources including staff, finances, and means of transport.

Monitoring & Evaluating

The progress and quality of the community schools need to be monitored and evaluated. Although many communities have provided substantial support for schools, comprehensive evaluation has not yet been undertaken. There is no systematic monitoring policy in place for the community schools. However, ZCSS and MOE are currently designing assessment tools for all levels of SPARK. Some schools use the National Grade 7 Exam as an evaluation tool for community school performance, since successful completion of schooling should prepare the children to take the exam with their government school counterparts, and continue on to secondary school.

External Demand Making

External demand refers to external actors who are interested in community school education and who may be in a position to influence it. This can include the general public, politicians, media, and government school teachers. Currently, the community school movement is not a widely discussed phenomenon in Zambia. Public interest is low, members of the media generally know very little about it, and expanding community schools is far from politicians' agendas. As mentioned before, there is also minimal private sector involvement in the community schools. A public awareness campaign may be needed to raise interest in supporting the schools.

According to the students, teachers and parents interviewed at the community schools, their relationship—if any exists—with the closest government schools is not necessarily a congenial one. There is a tendency to view each other with a degree of suspicion. Community schools are seen as being less legitimate and less prestigious, in part due to the poverty of the students—easily discernable in the bare feet of the students and the absence of uniforms—and the lack of materials at the community schools. People question what motivates community school teachers to work for little or nothing. On the other hand, some community school teachers view government teachers as unmotivated and unconcerned with the welfare of vulnerable children. Active dialogue with government school stakeholders, including teachers, may be necessary to garner greater cooperation between the two education sectors.

CONCLUSIONS

This section summarizes critical themes that emerged through our research on community schools. It presents conclusions on structures and relationships that could strengthen the community school movement. Specific recommendations to UNICEF, based on these conclusions, will follow in the ensuing section.

1. The SPARK curriculum is not meeting all the needs of community schools.

SPARK was originally envisioned as a condensed curriculum to be used by all community schools. As it has been implemented, however, it is clearly not flexible enough to meet the varied needs of the schools. Some schools teach children who are older than 16 years or younger than 9 years old, but SPARK is designed specifically for the 9-16 year age group. While SPARK is an effective tool in giving older students a basic education in only a few years, it is perhaps insufficient for students who aspire to secondary school or higher education. These limitations impede the applicability of the SPARK curriculum.

While some schools supplement SPARK with the government curriculum, others have already begun to adapt SPARK for their own uses. One example is the Ndeke school, which has developed a transition course for children under the age of 9 and a new initiative to incorporate a fifth level to the SPARK curriculum. Adaptations such as this make the use of this life skills curriculum more conducive to the needs of individual schools.

2. There is no systematic measure for assessing community school teacher qualifications.

MOE and community schools use different criteria for selecting teachers. Community schools are restricted financially from attracting well-trained teachers, and thus are limited in their ability to demand specific qualifications of applicants. In place of these criteria community schools use qualitative parameters such as level of commitment to the community. However, their capacity to assess a teacher based on his or her ability to teach is also important. If teachers are selected based solely on subjective criteria, the danger of a two-tiered system may emerge, in which one proves academically inferior to the other.

3. Many community school teachers are not getting certified

Encouraging teachers to get certified is a way for MOE to support teachers with specific preparation and training. Although MOE has committed to putting all certified community school teachers on its payroll, many teachers are unable to pursue certification training due to financial constraints. If the number of certified teachers does eventually increase in the future, the financial burden of their salaries may be eased away from the community level. Increased job security and the provision of salaries provided by the MOE may also lead to a decrease in the high turnover rates currently found among community school teachers.

4. Community participation is central to the sustainability of community schools

Community members have an important role to play into the development of their schools and their involvement can provide many positive effects. Many schools in dire need of the most basic of resources have been strengthened by community members coming together to provide skills and labor. This interaction has provided a stronger sense of ownership for parents, and seemed to have boosted morale among teachers.

5. Community schools have different funding needs, varied according to local resources and capacity.

It is clear that not all community schools have access to the same levels of funding, and that this imbalance among schools is causing them to emerge in different ways. Many of the poorer schools are struggling with day-to-day survival while other better-funded schools are expanding and improving quality standards. The wide variation in community schools makes it difficult for stakeholders to create and apply standardized policies for the schools, particularly in funding the sector.

6. Community schools are unaware of resources that are available to them.

Initiatives such as BESSIP have been put forward to assist community schools. However, many schools have not benefited from these initiatives due to lack of awareness about them. Many community schools

also do not know what mechanisms are available through the FPP to supply teacher training and supplies. Since many of these resources and funds have already been allocated and are ready for disbursement, they could provide immediate assistance to local communities in need.

7. Independent community-run schools do not have the capacity to adequately sustain their needs.

While each community the team visited was able to identify needs for their schools, they rarely possessed the technical and professional skills required to adequately mobilize resources sufficient to meet needs. Strategies for mobilizing resources seem to be based on particular objectives. Mechanisms to raise funds for school buildings, for example, were usually different from those for teachers' salaries. Many community schools, particularly the rural schools, are successful at mobilizing community resources such as labor and skills, saving sparse resources for inputs the community cannot provide itself. On the other hand, community fundraising for recurrent costs such as teacher's salaries or in-kind payments is more problematic than for infrastructure. Continually donating salaries and food is less appealing to community members and many potential donors than constructing buildings or other items that have immediately visible benefits.

When communities need to provide teacher salaries, they commonly raise much of the necessary revenue through school fees. However, raising fees in community schools is problematic, since unaffordable government school fees drove children to the community schools in the first place. Other community schools have addressed this issue by developing alternative income generating activities such as selling student-made crafts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

UNICEF has played an important role in supporting the community schools movement; sponsoring technical assistance and teacher training programs, providing basic educational supplies to schools, advocating for government/MOE resource support, and strengthening the roles of ZCSS and the FPPs.

UNICEF's human and financial resources, strong relationships with the GOZ, international donors, and educational stakeholders, and history of involvement in the educational sector, lend it the capacity to continue making a positive impact on the educational system in Zambia. Our research team offers the following recommendations for action in some areas where UNICEF could provide additional support to the community school system.

1. Provide Further Support to the FPPs

FPPs have the most contact with community schools on a direct level. They can act as a voice for the community schools, representing their needs, concerns, and achievements to the MOE, ZCSS, and donors. We recommend providing and facilitating more technical and financial support for FPPs.

Continue to provide training for FPPs, particularly in providing technical assistance to community schools, collecting data, and representing community schools' views.
Strengthen FPP capacity by providing all FPPs with access to vehicles and support staff.

2. Facilitate Teacher Certification

Skilled teachers can make a greater difference in a child's education than books, supplies, or even roofs. Zambia's severe shortage of qualified teachers threatens both the formal and informal education systems. Drastic measures are needed to attract, train, and pay skilled teachers for both community schools and government schools. Particular attention should be given to the CS teachers, whose low or nonexistent salaries prevent them from obtaining certification training.

Continue working with the MOE and ZCSS to encourage the adoption of more flexible teacher training and certification programs. Advocate for training in both the government and SPARK curricula, to enable teachers to work in either sector after receiving their certification.

3. Track Quality of Education in Zambian Community Schools

The absence of reliable information and stored data on community schools complicate efforts to monitor and evaluate their quality. It is difficult to gather this data, particularly from remote communities where standards of education vary greatly. Improved oversight would supply the data necessary to better support the community school movement, and the individual schools. Comparing this with data on government schools will help the GOZ and donors make policy and funding decisions.

Create a model for assessing educational achievements at community schools, in cooperation with the MOE, ZCSS, and FPPs from each province.
Strengthen the ZCSS information management and tracking systems. ZCSS can input baseline data when community schools register with them, and DEOs, FPPs, and PEOs can submit periodic reports on the community schools within their regions. Train ZCSS staff to manage this system, and FPPs, DEOs, and PEOs to collect and report relevant data.
Encourage MOE and ZCSS to conduct a nationwide assessment of education in community schools and government schools. The assessment should look at the effects on varying quality standards on student achievement as well as the overall provision of education in the two sectors.

Conclusion: The Implications of these Recommendations

We have put forth some recommendations where we think UNICEF's resources and knowledge can be best used to address current realities in the community school sector. This will significantly contribute towards improving the quality of community education, and the

organizational effectiveness of the community school movement in Zambia. The recommendations are designed with realistic goals in mind.

At the same time, any assistance from UNICEF and other donors increases the risk of donor dependence. In the long run, the danger of donor dependence is that it shifts the responsibility of financing these schools to outside actors. Donor support, particularly from non-national donors, can be unpredictable. If long-term sustainability of community-based education is the goal, then communities and governments need to work together towards creating a system they can support without reliance on external actors. In this way, targeted assistance to the community school movement should be undertaken as part of a broader plan to strengthen primary education in Zambia across sectors.

ENDNOTES
