THE JESUIT CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

A Review of the Current Policy Environment Promoting Access to Early Childhood and Primary Education in Zambia

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Acronyms

7NDP	Seventh National Development Plan
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CP	Cooperating Partner
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction
CSEN	Children with Special Education Needs
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ECCDE	Early Childhood Care and Development Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ESB	Educational Statistical Bulletin
ESP	Education Sector Plan
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GPI	Gender Parity Index
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
JCTR	Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection
MOGE	Ministry of General Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NIF	National Implementation Framework
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PAF	Performance Assessment Framework
PER	Public Expenditure Review
PF	Patriotic Front
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
rSNDP	Revised Sixth National Development Plan
SNDP	Sixth National Development Plan
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNZA	University of Zambia
ZANEC	Zambia National Education Coalition
ZCSS	Zambia Community Schools Secretariat
ZGF	Zambia Governance Foundation

Executive Summary

Introduction

It is said that a successful implementation of any Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes greatly depends on the availability of a comprehensive ECE policy. Sadly, for Zambia, fifty-two years after independence, the country has no comprehensive ECE policy to guide the practice. It is not surprising therefore that a majority 76 percent of children at grade 1 level are without ECE experience, rendering them vulnerable and unprepared for the formalised education system demands. On the other hand, the minority 24 percent with ECE experience are doted along the rail-line between Lusaka and Copperbelt and in provincial centres, leaving most rural children unattended to. The immediate observable effect of having an educational system built on a weak ECE foundation is visibly seen through the very low completion rate currently at 30.8 percent (MoGE, 2015), ejecting out the 70 percent by the way-side by the time of completion at grade 12 stage. To a larger extent, the quality of education is compromised.

Whereas Zambia has numerous policies and pieces of legislature in support of education, little is known regarding the various policies and their contributions to the ECE and Primary subsector. At the same time, whereas stakeholders appear to concentrate resources on Primary Education sub-sector, it is not clear what policies and legislations are enabling or disabling the provision of quality education.

Given the reality highlighted above, this study was commissioned with the following specific objectives in mind:

i) To identify policies that support early childhood and primary education in education.
ii) To identify gaps that lie in the current policies in the enhancement of access to early childhood and primary education.
iii) Identify challenges faced in the provision of early child childhood and primary education.
iv) To identify interventions that will increase access to early childhood and primary education.
v) To map out relevant stakeholders in promoting access to early childhood and primary education.

Study Design

This study was qualitative in nature employing an unobtrusive method with a focus on document review. In this context, this meant riding on document reviews supplemented with key informants to inform the research process and findings. The adopted approach could be repeated and it is non-disruptive and non-reactive, easily accessible, inexpensive and a good source of longitudinal data. Key sources of data were the Ministry of General Education, Civil Society organisations and Cooperating Partners.

Key Findings

Numerous policies supporting ECE and Primary education exist such as: (i) the National Policy on Education (1996) entitled *Educating Our Future;* (ii) National Food and Nutrition Policy; (iii) National Health Policy (2012); (iv) National Child Health Policy (2008); (v) National Child Policy (2006); (vi) National Policy on Disability; and (vii) Child Labour Policy.

In terms of legal framework, the Education Act of 2011, provides for a) Early Childhood, Care, Development and Education; b) Basic School; c) School for Continuing Education; d) High School, and e) Tertiary.At ECE level, the Day Nurseries (repeal) Act 2010. Other pieces of legislations in support of children include: TheBirths and Death Registrations, Adoption Act of 1958 and the Probation of Offenders Act, among others. However, these legislations are implemented individually and hence leave gaps and inconsistencies in providing unified practices on children's rights (UNICEF, 2009).

There is lack of uniformity in the use of terminologies by stakeholders supporting the same children in Zambia. For instance, UNICEF, WHO and World Bank use Early Childhood Development (ECD) and the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development uses Early Childhood Care for Development (ECCD), Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) uses Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE), Ministry of General Education (MoGE) and Ministry of Health in Zambia use Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Early Childhood Development (ECD) respectively. But all of them recognize the importance of an integrated and holistic intervention in the early age of a child.

In addition, a weak coordination mechanism of service providers exists, perhaps pointing to the lack of uniformity in the conceptualisation and appreciation of the ECE subsector. Among the service providers are the following: (i) Ministry of General Education, (ii) Ministry of Community and Social Welfare, (iii) Ministry of Health, (iv) Ministry of Agriculture, (v) Ministry of Local Government, (vi) Ministry of Home affairs, (vii) Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Justice and (ix) Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs. In addition, the Private, Civil Society organisations and Cooperating Partners are actively engaged in the service delivery of the services at ECE and Primary education subsector as well.

Other findings include: (i) absence of a comprehensive ECE policy; (ii) non-compulsory ECE existing policies at preparatory stage for all children before they enter primary one, (iii) non-enforcement of the available ECE Policies and laws; and (iv) low consideration of equity in the distribution of resources.

Effective provision and delivery of ECE services are being hindered by lack of a comprehensive ECE policy, lack of adequate data on ECE, competent ECE personnel, adequate funding, adequate ECE structures, role conflict, appropriate enforcement mechanisms, and inadequate support supervision.

Key Recommendations

a) **ECCDE Sub-sector**

   i). Need for Uniformity and holistic approach when it comes to planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of using the ECCDE model and not the ECE.

   ii). MoGE should develop an inclusive coordination mechanism to allow different stakeholders to do their part in a coordinated manner without duplicating each other's work.

   iii). Expedite on the adoption of the draft ECCDE policy, which has been in draft form for the past 10 years now.

iv). Government needs to create an establishment for the position of ECCDE focal point personnel at district and zonal levels.

v). Ministry of General Education and Civil Society Organizations should lobby Ministry of Finance for increased budget allocation to adequately cover ECCDE related activities.

vi). MoGE should start and sustain discussions around minimum wage/salary of caregivers who work in different ECCDE programmes.

vii). MoGE still needs to put more effort in increasing community awareness on the importance of ECCDE for the development of the country.

viii). ECCDE begins right from home, parents and caregivers need to be sensitized about their role and the importance of feeding practices.

ix). District councils need to identify and pass bylaws that compel ALL parents to take children to ECCDE centers and schools at the right age.

x). NGO involved in ECCDE could provide funding for the training of ECCDE caregivers on ECCDE methodologies by targeting some district clusters.

b) Primary Education sub-sector

i). Expedite on the adoption of the new education policy to replace the outdated *Educating Our Future* which will address the emerging challenges facing society such as use of ICTs, gender, OVCs, global warming and inclusivity among others.

ii). Address the growing disparity gaps across the country in access and achievement between girls and boys, urban and rural locations, socio-economic classes, majority and minority ethnic/linguistic groups, and the "abled" and those with disabilities.

iii). Ensure that all constructed schools are user-friendly schools to children, to cater for diversity among learners and teachers among which are girls/women, disabled and OVCs.

iv). Increase budgetary allocation to the education sector in line with the SADC recommended 20% of the national budget.

v). Government should take ownership of Community Schools or where possible, ensure all teachers are on government pay-roll and teaching/learning resources are provided for.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This is a research report on a Review of the Current Policy and Legal Environment Promoting Access to Early Childhood and Primary Education in Zambia. In this study, we focus on the gaps that exist in the current policy and legal framework, as well as the identified challenges and suggested strategies to overcome the identified challenges for ECE and Primary subsector to thrive in Zambia. Emerging from the recent research study on Zambia citizens' access to Economic and Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) is a gloomy picture portraying more than 80 percent of children without access to Early Childhood Education. Ridding on the ESCR findings, this study then interrogates policies and related legal framework in the provision of education to the Zambian community.

This study adopts a purposeful visit to selected institutions with access to policies and legal documents related to the topic championing ECE and Primary education in Zambia. The study adopts an interpretive research approach. Our central endeavour into the context of the interpretive research paradigm was to understand the extent to which the various policies and legal provisions are facilitating and/or disabling children to access education in Zambia. The findings from this study could form a basis for formulating an advocacy strategy to lobby for improved access to quality education at foundational stage.

1.1   Context

Historically, Early Childhood Education (ECE) has not been a major responsibility of government in Zambia. This has been the case for both pre and post-independence governments. In colonial times, Sub 0 education was offered for one year and included learning to write letters of the alphabet, on the ground, for African children. This was the closest the system then came to offering ECE. Later, the colonial government came up with Day Nursery Act of 1957 to benefit local children. After independence, the government established nurseries and pre-schools through the Ministry of Local Government and Housing. These were mainly located in welfare halls. The level of participation though remained low and by the middle 1980s this provision had fizzled off.

For a long time, the provision of ECE was not the responsibility of the Ministry of Education although the Education Reforms of 1977, Focus on Learning of 1992 and Educating our Future of 1996 policy documents all have recognized the critical role that ECE plays as a foundation for all later learning. Since the provision of ECE has never been fully supported by government, the operations of pre-schools are dependent on fees that the learners pay. Therefore, the majority of the children that access ECE are from higher income households. This has also influenced the distribution and location of ECE centers as most of them are located in urban areas.

Given the limited opportunities to education, the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), a faith based organisation and a ministry of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), has over the years advocated improved access to essentials of life, such as nutritious food and education by citizens. This work has been informed and consolidated by other supportive activities including the monthly Basic Needs Basket (BNB) survey that the Centre conducts.

In the recent past, the JCTR in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) undertook a study that explored Zambian citizens' access to economic, social and cultural Rights (ESCR). The report highlight challenges by most citizens and households to access essentials such as safe water, nutritious food, health and education.

The JCTR plans to consolidate its advocacy on access to education considering the many benefits such as increased lifetime that come with citizens progressing and exceling higher in education. Considering the fact that strong foundation in education is cardinal and reflecting on the ESCR research findings that many citizens face challenges to access education, including primary and early education, the JCTR has planned to undertake a study to interrogate policies that support Early Childhood and Primary Education in Zambia. It is in this line that consultancy services are being sort to help conduct this study.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

Early Childhood Education has been in existence even before Zambia got her independence yet the sub-sector remains under developed. Generally, whereas Zambia has numerous policies and pieces of legislature in support of education, little is known regarding the various policies and their contributions to the ECCDE subsector. At the same time, whereas stakeholders appear to concentrate resources on Primary Education sub-sector, it is not clear what policies and legislations are enabling or disabling the provision of quality education.

1.3   Main Objective

To review current policies and related legal provisions promoting access to early childhood and primary education in Zambia.

1.4   Specific Objectives

In order to achieve the overall objective above, the following specific objectives were used to guide the study:

- vi) To identify policies that support early childhood and primary education in education.
- vii) To identify gaps that lie in the current policies in the enhancement of access to early childhood and primary education.
- viii)   Identify challenges faced in the provision of early child childhood and primary education.
- ix) To identify interventions that will increase access to early childhood and primary education.
- x) To map out relevant stakeholders in promoting access to early childhood and primary education.

1.5   Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the following Research Questions were used to guide the research process:

i)   What policies exist that support early childhood and primary education in education?
ii) What gaps lie in the current policies in the enhancement of access to early childhood and primary education?
iii) What challenges are faced in the provision of early child childhood and primary education?

iv) What interventions could be deployed to increase access to early childhood and primary education?

v) Who is promoting access to early childhood and primary education and where are they situated

CHAPTER TWO

Conceptual Understanding Underpinning the Study

2.1 Introduction

This chapter documents the researchers' prior impressions that inform the study topic on Policy regarding Early Childhood Education and Primary Education in Zambia. We acknowledge the Policy cycle stages from Agenda setting, Policy formulation, Policy Implementation, Policy Evaluation and Termination. Since policy is meant to guide practice, the chapter then reflects on various Practices applied in the provision of ECE and Primary Education.

2.2 The Stages of the Policy Cycle

2.2.1 Agenda-Setting

Policy-making assumes the existence of a policy problem. Problem recognition itself requires that a social problem has been defined as such and that the necessity of state intervention has been expressed. The second step would be that the recognized problem is actually put on the agenda for serious consideration of public action (agenda-setting). The agenda is nothing more than "the list of subjects or problems to which governmental officials, and people outside the government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time" (Kingdon 1995: 3).

Consistently, over time, it has been acknowledged that problem recognition and agenda-setting are intrinsically apolitical processes in which political attention is attached to a subset of all possibly relevant policy problems. Actors within and outside government constantly seek to influence and collectively shape the agenda for instance by taking advantage of rising attention to a particular issue, dramatizing a problem, or advancing a particular problem definition. The involvement of particular actors (experts), the choice of institutional venues in which problems are debated and the strategic use of media coverage have been identified as tactical means to define issues (Kingdon 1995; Baumgartner and Jones 1993). While a number of actors are involved in these activities of agenda control or shaping, most of the variables and mechanisms affecting agenda-setting lie outside the direct control of any single actor.

2.2.2 Policy Formulation

During this stage of the policy cycle, expressed problems, proposals, and demands are transformed into government programs. Policy formulation and adoption includes the definition of objectives, what should be achieved with the policy and the consideration of different action alternatives. Some authors differentiate between formulation (of alternatives for action) and the final adoption (the formal decision to take on the policy). Because policies will not always be formalized into separate programs and a clear-cut separation between formulation and decision-making is very often impossible, we treat them as sub stages in a single stage of the policy cycle, (Olsen 1991 and Parsons 1995).

2.2.3 Implementation

The choice on a particular path of action and the adoption of a program does not guarantee that the action on the ground will strictly follow policy makers' aims and objectives. The stage of application or enforcement of a policy by the responsible institutions and organizations that are often, but not always part of the public sector, is referred to as implementation. Policy implementation is broadly defined as "what happens between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of the government to do something, or to stop doing something, and the ultimate impact in the world of action" (O'Toole 2000, 266). This stage is critical as political and administrative action at the frontline are hardly ever perfectly controllable by objectives, programs, laws, and the like (Hogwood and Gunn 1984). Therefore, policies and their intentions will very often be changed or even distorted; its execution delayed or even blocked altogether. An ideal process of policy implementation would include the following core elements:

(i)   Specification of program details (i.e., how and by which agencies/organizations should the program be executed? How should the law/program be interpreted?);
(ii)   Allocation of resources (i.e., how are budgets distributed? Which personnel will execute the program? Which units of an organization should be in charge for the execution?);
(iii)   Decisions (i.e., how will decisions of single cases be carried out?).

2.2.4 Evaluation and Termination

Policy-making is expected to contribute to problem solving or at least to the reduction of the problem burden. At evaluation stage of the policy cycle, intended outcomes of policies move into the centre of attention. The plausible normative rationale that, finally, policy-making should be appraised against intended objectives and impacts forms the starting point of policy evaluation. But, evaluation is not only associated with the final stage in the policy cycle that either ends with the termination of the policy or its redesign based on modified problem perception and agenda-setting. At the same time, evaluation research forms a separate sub-discipline in the policy sciences that focuses on the intended results and unintended consequences of policies. Evaluation studies are not restricted to a particular stage in the policy cycle; instead, the perspective is applied to the whole policy-making process and from different perspectives in terms of timing.

2.3 Conceptualising Early Childhood Education

There seem to be no consensus regarding childhood education conceptualisation. For instance, the World Organization for Early Childhood Education and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, view the early childhood period as starting from birth to eight years. Most organizations in a number of countries around the world, however, regard the early childhood period as starting from birth to about the age of seven or the period from birth to the commencement of primary school (UNESCO, 2010).

As can be expected, there has also been a wide range of terminologies used to describe early childhood issues. The following are the common terminologies that have been used to designate early childhood: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE); Early Childhood Care for Survival Growth and

Development (EC-SGD); Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD); Early Childhood Development (ECD); and Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE), (UNESCO, 2010). For the purpose of this report however, we shall adopt the term Early Childhood Care, Development and Education because the terminology seems to encompass all the relevant aspects of early childhood.

2.4 The Human Rights Based Model

This study ridges on a Human Rights model which places the child at the centre of interventions with nested rings starting with Micro, Meso, Exo and Macro systems. As championed by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model below.

Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

The human rights model positions a child as an important dimension of human culture, and it affirms that all human beings irrespective of their circumstances have certain rights which are inalienable. This model builds upon the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, according to which, 'all human beings are born free and equal in rights and dignity. As we engage in document review, the four rings are mirrored at family, institutional, community, national and international levels.

2.5 Modes of Providing ECCDE

By and large, ECCDE programmes can be categorized as follows: Home-based programmes and Centre-based programmes.

2.5.1   Home- based Programmes

Home-based programmes mainly will involve groups of parents and caregivers who have children falling in the same age category, come together to teach children. In these programmes, the learning programmes that children go through, are not developed by a single parent, rather programmes are as a result of collaborative sharing of ideas by all involved parents and caregivers in a particular community (Rao & Pearson, 2007; UNESCO, 2008). Home-based programmes work on the premise that as the first and most important teachers of children are mothers who happen to be in the best position to lay a solid educational foundation for their children. In order to enhance the quality of education provided in Home-based programmes, mothers are from time to time taught on how to engage their children in activities that can promote optimal learning and development (Rao & Pearson 2007).

2.5.2   Centre-Based Programmes

As the name suggests, these programmes are offered in designated centres where children are grouped in specific age groups and taught a well-designed curriculum to promote their psycho-motor, cognitive, language, and social development (UNESCO, 2010). Some researchers (e.g Rao & Pearson, 2007) have indicated that centre-based programmes tend to offer better quality early childhood education and care. Other scholars (e.g. Aboud, Hossain & O'Gara, 2008), found no difference in levels of performance between children who attended centre-based preschools and those who attended home-based preschools. Yet other researchers such as Matafwali & Munsaka, (2011) have indicated that getting the best outcome from an early childhood programme depends on using an integrative approach whereby teachers/caregivers and parents collaborate. Thus, it seems the success of any early childhood programme does not depend on whether it is home-based or centre-based, but rather on whether or not it is comprehensive. To this end, the Dakar Framework indicated that meaningless early childhood programmes should first focus on all aspects of children including health, nutrition, hygiene, cognitive development, and psycho-social development. Secondly, a good ECCDE programme should be offered in the child's mother language. Thirdly, ECCDE programme need to be pegged at the appropriate age level of the learners. It is also important that there is collaboration between parents and teachers. Finally, there is need to systematically use the indicators of early childhood development in evaluation of early childhood programmes (UNESCO, 2000).

2.5.3   Access and equity in ECCDE Programmes

Studies that have been conducted during the past half-decade in the developing world in Africa and parts of Asia have indicated that children benefited greatly from going through preschool. For instance, Engle et al. (2007) concluded that attending preschool enlightened children. Aboud (2006) in a study conducted in Bangladesh yielded similar findings, which were later confirmed by Rao & Pearson (2007) in a study conducted in Cambodia. More recently, in a study which was conducted in four countries in East Africa, Mwaura, Sylva and Malmberg (2008) found out that children from low socioeconomic status families who attended preschool education, tended to have better developmental outcomes than those who did not attend any preschool. Thus, it can be argued that the provision of early childhood education to all children,

regardless of whether they are poor or not, can become an important means by which equitable entry into primary school can be attained (UNESCO, 2006). For the developing world therefore, where 86% of the world's children live, providing meaningful early childhood programmes is critical (UNICEF, 2003).

2.5.4   Quality of ECCDE Programmes

There are mainly two dimensions in which the quality of early childhood programmes can be assessed. Firstly, quality can be assessed in terms of structural aspects. The structural dimensions involve, but are not limited to the following issues: teacher-child ratios, teacher experience, health and hygiene issues, safety, and physical infrastructure. Quality can also be assessed in terms of the processes of interaction that take place between children and personnel (UNESCO, 2010). UNESCO (2010) has further observed that in order for issues of quality in ECCDE to be fully understood and appropriately applied, there is need to consider the actual cultural contexts obtaining in each area. In other words, issues of quality may vary from culture to culture. Notwithstanding the ambiguities surrounding definitions of quality in ECCDE, there are certain aspects that have been agreed upon as constituting ECCDE quality across the globe. These include the physical infrastructure, psychological environment, curriculum, instructional and learning methods, relationships between teachers and children, programme management, and community involvement (Association for Childhood Education Intervention, 2006; Matafwali & Munsaka, 2011; Ou, 2005; Mantizicoupoulos, 2003). Among these universal indicators of quality, the interaction between teachers and children through the curriculum is the most critical. Matafwali and Munsaka (2011:11), observe, "the need for a good curriculum for early childhood programmes is obvious; the curriculum is the navigational device that guides the personnel in early childhood centres."

2.6 Summary

What is clear in this chapter is that ECE and Primary education services should be seen at various levels as described by Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. That, service delivered starts with the family, then community and national and international levels. To this effect, it would seem that Policy in itself if it's to be effective should be relevant to all the levels at family to national/international levels. With the understanding that policy formulation process carries with it political under-tones and moves in various stages, it becomes prudent for CSOs to engage government at various stages as well to ensure that proposed issues are not watered down at any given stage.

What follows below is the Methodology that was applied to generate data in order to understand the ECE and Primary education phenomenon at hand.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter discusses the Methodology and research design employed to conduct the study. The approach employed centred on a Document Review of selected policies and related legal documents on Early Childhood Education in Zambia. Evidence generated was further collaborated with views from key informants.

3.2 Research Design

In order to review the policy and related legal provisions facilitating access to education at ECE and Primary levels, we employed a Qualitative Approach within which an unobtrusive method with a focus on document review was adopted. According to Rathje (1979) and Babbie (1989), an unobtrusive approach studies the actual rather than reported behaviour. This approach could be repeated and it is non-disruptive and non-reactive, easily accessible, inexpensive and a good source of longitudinal data. This approach helped to elicit critical findings within a very limited time and financial resources available for this task.

In addition, unobtrusive research methods offer a strong critique of positivism, the concept that truths can be determined about the social world by scientific measurement. They instead belong to the epistemological theory of interpretivism which is that the social sciences are fundamentally different from natural sciences; therefore, requiring researchers to reject empiricism and grasp subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2004).

3.3 Research tools

In this study, we will deploy two main data generation tools and these are: Document Review and Interview Schedules.

3.4 Sources of Sampled Policy/ Legal/Research documents

The documents reviewed were purposively sampled from the four (4) key segments of the society actively involved in the provision of the education sector namely: Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ), Ministry of General Education (MoGE), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Cooperating Partners (CPs) as illustrated below.
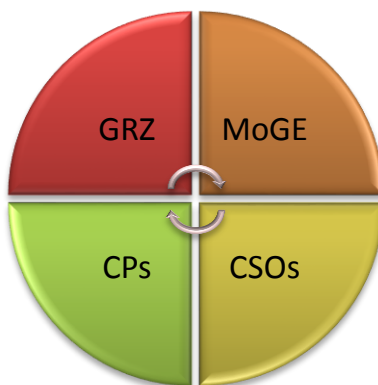
Figure 2: Sources of Sampled Policy/ Legal/Research

3.5 Research Procedure

In carrying out this study, we adopted an unobtrusive method with a focus on document review. The major source of data was the Education Statistical Bulletins from 2008 to 2015. Coupled with the educational policies and purposively sampled research reports on the subject matter centred on Zambia.

In addition, key informants in this study are defined as individuals who are considered as stakeholders to ECE and Primary Education sector in Zambia. These are broadly Government officials responsible for ECE (MoGE), Civil Society Organisations (CSO), Cooperating Partners (CPs) as well as Private organisations. Information from these informants provided insight on ECE and Primary education sub-sector successes and challenges, lessons learnt and promising practices.

The elicited information was cross checked by inside informants to avoid the usual emic/etic problems. This means that interpretation of physical traces or observations may be from the point of view of the stranger, or outsider (etic) and, therefore, may fail to grasp importance in-group meanings (emic).

3.6 Trustworthiness and Dependability

The unobtrusive approach applied is well suited for this particular study as it relied on archival data sources from the previous research studies and educational policy records which could be extrapolated into longitudinal data in a non-reactive and non-disruptive environment. This is consistent with the founder of the unobtrusive method, Webb et al. (1966) who argue that unobtrusive are presumed to avoid the problems caused by the researcher's presence. In addition, unobtrusive methods, because they do not disrupt others, are easily repeatable. This enabled re-checking of findings and allowed questions of Trustworthiness and Dependability to be re-examined by others. The use of multiple tools and sources of data is called "triangulation", which provides richer data interpretations (Lacey and Luff, 2001). To this extent, the findings of this study can be depended upon for decision making by policy makers and practitioners to effectively support the education of children in Zambia.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

Emerging from this study are the following findings thematically arranged in line with the objectives namely: (i) presence of Pupils with ECE Experience at Primary Level; (ii) Legal and policy framework; (iii) gaps in the current Policies; (iv) identified challenges; and (v) suggested intervention strategies. The findings are weaved around the performance of the ECE and Primary subsectors to inform policy gaps and proposed recommendations thereafter.

4.2 Existing Policies Supporting ECCDE and Primary Education

There are a number of policy frameworks in place that are currently being implemented in the country:

4.2.1   The National Policy of Education Policy (1996)

Chapter two of the 1996 National education policy entitled "Educating Our Future" document recognises the significance of ECE and Primary education and supports the holistic development of the child. However, the policy states that pre-school education should be funded and run by the private sector and CSOs. The role of the Ministry is cited as that of providing support to facilitate the provision of ECE, which includes the training of pre-school teachers, development of curriculum materials and the monitoring of standards (MoE, 1996).

4.2.2   The National Food and Nutrition Policy (2008)

The 2008 National Food and Nutrition Policy (NFNP) has set objectives to provide nutritional support to children. The policy aims at eliminating all forms of malnutrition in children. However, the policy is a general document which is inclusive of all ages; hence it has insufficient information on the specification of children's nutritional aspects (MoH, 2008).

4.2.3   National Health Policy (2012)

Two of the specific objectives focus on Malnutrition as well as Maternal, New-born and Child Health (MNCH). While the former deals with strengthen institutions dealing with food and nutrition issues, the latter looks at a comprehensive health services, including antenatal, delivery, postnatal and reproductive health services. Strengthen Maternal and Child Health programmes and access to essential vaccines is critical to the development of a health child. The policy recognises the need for strengthen community involvement in maternal and child health as well.

4.2.4   The National Child Health Policy (2008)

The 2008 National Child Health Policy (NCHP) aims at providing guidelines on addressing the child health situation in Zambia. The child health policy addresses issues of immunisation, childhood diseases and growth monitoring. It further, addresses nutritional needs of children and helps prevent and decrease

underweight, stunting, wasting and micronutrient deficiency which are crucial to the survival and development of the child.

4.2.5   The National Child Policy (2006)

The 2006 National Child Policy aims at addressing children's rights and is anchored on the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The focus areas include Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), children with disabilities, street children and those affected or infected by HIV and AIDS. The policy is aligned to the overall national development goals of other sector policies and programmes including the National Child Health Policy, the National Food and Nutrition Policy, and the Education Policy.

4.2.6   The National Policy on Disability (2012)

The National Policy on Disability addresses the needs of persons with disabilities in general but does not specifically address children with Special Educational Needs at early childhood level. The incidence of early childhood impairment in Zambia is unknown due to lack of research on the subject. The World Health Organisation (WHO) formula estimates of 10% of the child population from 0-6 years have been used to aid programme planning.

4.2.7   Child Labour Policy

The Child Labour Policy stems from Government's recognition that child labour is harmful to the development of the child and has long-term adverse consequences on the cultural, economic, social and political development of a nation. Key pieces of legislature that are supposed to protect children include the Employment of Children and Young Persons Act CAP 274 and the Employment Act CAP 268 of the Laws of Zambia.

4.2.8   Specific Policies at Primary Education level

4.2.8.1 Free Primary Education

Zambia has recorded a steady progress in improving access to education in line with its Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) commitments. For example, at basic school level, the country has seen an average increase in enrollment of 9% annually from 2002 resulting mainly from the country's declaration of free education at primary school level (ZANEC, 2010).

However, efforts at increasing enrollment alone, though important, have proved inadequate to guarantee the learners the necessary school achievements. According to the Zambia National Assessment Survey Report of 2006 on Learning Achievements at Middle Basic Level, performance in Zambian schools is below the desirable minimum levels of 40%.   Current achievement levels are on average at 34%, when the desired level is 70%. One factor identified for this state of affairs is inadequate instruction time. For a long time now, little attention had been paid by policy makers and implementers to maximize the teacher/pupil contact hours, especially in Primary schools (ZANEC, 2010).

Furthermore, the increase in enrolments at Primary school level has led to double and triple shifting in an effort to accommodate more pupils and reduce the teacher / pupil ratio. The resultant effect of this has been the reduced teacher-pupil contact time. Zambia, according to the Education Sector National Implementation Framework, records an average of 668 hours per year against the recommended 850-1000 hours, which is also the regional standard set by SADC. However, apart from the insufficient scheduled learning hours, teacher-pupil contact time is further reduced by teacher absenteeism resulting from various factors, (ZANEC, 2010).

4.2.8.2 Re-entry policy for girls

In 1997, the Zambian Government through the Ministry of Education, launched the Re-entry policy for girls who fall pregnant while at school of readmission of girls who leave school because of pregnancy (Forum for African Women Educationalists). This has been a positive decision to afford girls an opportunity to continue their second chances at continuing education to aid them to advance have opportunities in skilful development of themselves and the nation.

At basic school, of the 13,769 girls who were reported pregnant at basic education level, less than half 5,034 (37 percent) were readmitted in school 6 to 12 months after delivery. This indicates that 63 percent of basic school girls that fell pregnant did not return to continue their education after delivery within the stipulated period.

On the other hand, of the 1, 817 girls who were reported to have fallen pregnant enrolled in high school, more than half (56.9 percent) were readmitted. This is illustrated in Figure 6. It can be noted that the readmission rate is higher for high school girls than for basic school girls, (MoE, 2010)

4.2.9 Legal Framework in Support of ECE and Primary Education

Currently the legal framework guiding the structure of the education system in Zambia is the Education Act of 2011, which in Section 13, 2 (e) provides that, the fundamental school system shall be organised into the following units: a) Early Childhood, Care, Development and Education; b) Basic School; c) School for Continuing Education; d) High School, and e) Tertiary.

At ECE level, the Day Nurseries (repeal) Act 2010 establishes standards for all public and private institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care, education and protection of children, to ensure that they conform to standards in areas of health, safety, and the number of children in a group/class, among others.

There are a number of legislations which have been put in place to protect children including the Adoption Act, the Births and Death Registrations, the Day Nurseries (repeal) Act 2010, Adoption Act of 1958 and the Probation of Offenders Act, among others. However, these legislations are implemented individually and hence leave gaps and inconsistencies in providing unified practices on children's rights (UNICEF, 2009).

4.3 Gaps that lie in the current Policies

Emerging from the identified policies deemed to provide a supportive and an enabling environment for their survival, health growth and optimal development of a child are as follows:

(i) Dis-unity in the use of Terminologies

There are different terminologies used by different institutions addressing Early Childhood. For example, UNICEF, WHO and World Bank use Early Childhood Development (ECD) and the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development uses Early Childhood Care for Development (ECCD), Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) uses Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE), Ministry of General Education (MoGE) and Ministry of Health in Zambia use Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Early Childhood Development (ECD) respectively. But all of them recognize the importance of these integrated and holistic interventions in the early age of a child.

Arising from this dis-unit in terminologies is a clear demonstration that stakeholders are not pulling in the same direction and therefore success is not guaranteed. For instance, whereas the Ministry of General Education's policy focused solely on ages 3 – 6, a significant number of players on the ground have combined the 0-2 in their service delivery. In such instances, it becomes a challenge to implement the ECE policy as espoused by MoGE, as other competing demands on the same children from other stakeholders such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Sport Youth and Child Development, Ministry of Local Government among others. To be more precise, The Ministry of Health (MOH) in Zambia has also come up with an ECD intervention with support from UNICEF and WHO under a project called MDGi that is currently running in 10 districts of Copperbelt and Lusaka provinces. The intervention aims at educating the masses on the importance of child feeding, stimulating and survival supports for children less than 3 years. What if the 0-3 were integrated together with the MoGE 3-6 given that implementers have combined both age ranges? It is clear that children would optimize the benefits derived from all stakeholders. As it is, stakeholders are pulling in opposite directions all together to the disadvantage of children but perhaps to the advantage of individual stakeholders operating within their comfort zones.

(ii) Not Compulsory and Available to All

UNESCO is continually voicing about the right to education. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (Article 26) states that 'everyone has the right to education'. Also the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 (Articles 28 and 29), has set that primary education should be made 'compulsory and available free to all', and that it should allow children to reach their fullest potential. The two major frameworks signed by the international community, the Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) were vocal in favour of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and expansion of Early Childhood Care and Education. Yet in Zambia, both the ECE and Primary education are not compulsory and this is a precursor to failure as seen through the more than 76% children without foundational and formative experience in ECE at grade 1 level, despite the 52 years of independence. Currently, there is no legal provision that compels state to make available quality education provisions for all children, failure to which stakeholders can seek legal redress in the courts of law.

(iii)   Weak Coordination Mechanism among stakeholders

While it is acknowledged that there many players dealing with children matters across various agencies such as Ministry of General Education, Ministry of Community and Social Welfare, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Home affairs, Ministry of Labour, Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, coordination mechanisms are still across Policies. This can be seen in the many policies which tend to overlap and duplicate efforts in the process.

(iv)   Non-enforcement of the available ECE Policies and laws

Non-enforcement of the available ECE laws, resulting in poor output in terms of ECE standards as can be attested by the two ECE centres below. The ECE policy in its design is expected to work and thrive based on the good will of different stakeholders. Therefore, no appropriate enforcement mechanism or sanctions have been identified to be applied in policy or its guidelines to stakeholders, individuals or institutions that flout the guidelines. This means that even if a good guideline is put in place, there is no mechanism to enforce use of such guidelines. What you find therefore is the guideline in the shelves while the stakeholders continue doing what they consider important.
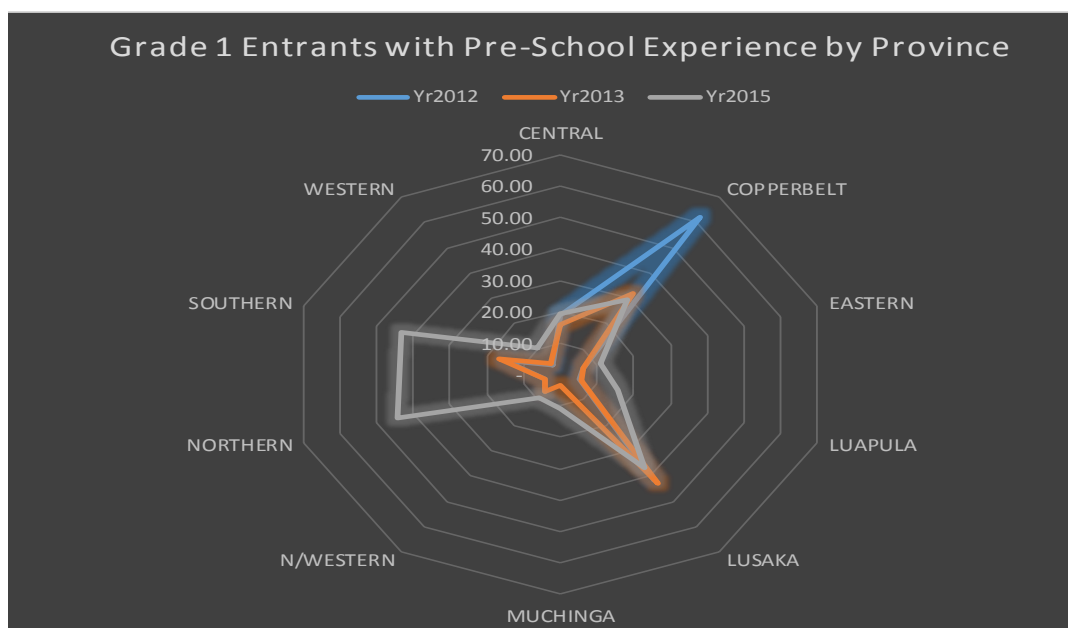
Comprised Standards

Source: MoGE 2016

Figure 3: An Example of compromised standard in ECE

(v)   Low consideration of Equity in the distribution of resources

The trend analysis of children with ECE experience at grade 1 for 2012, 2013 and 2015 years as documented by MoE 2012, MoE 2013 and MoGE 2015.

Source: MoE 2012, MoE 2013 and MoGE 2015.

Figure 4: Grade 1 Entrants with Pre-School Experience by Province

Presented in another form, the cumulative net contribution of Provinces for 2012, 2013 and 2015 as constructed from the MoE 2012, MoE 2013 and MoGE 2015 Education Statistical bulletin shows a huge 'Rural-Urban' gap with the latter having massive concentration of grade 1 pupils with ECE experience.
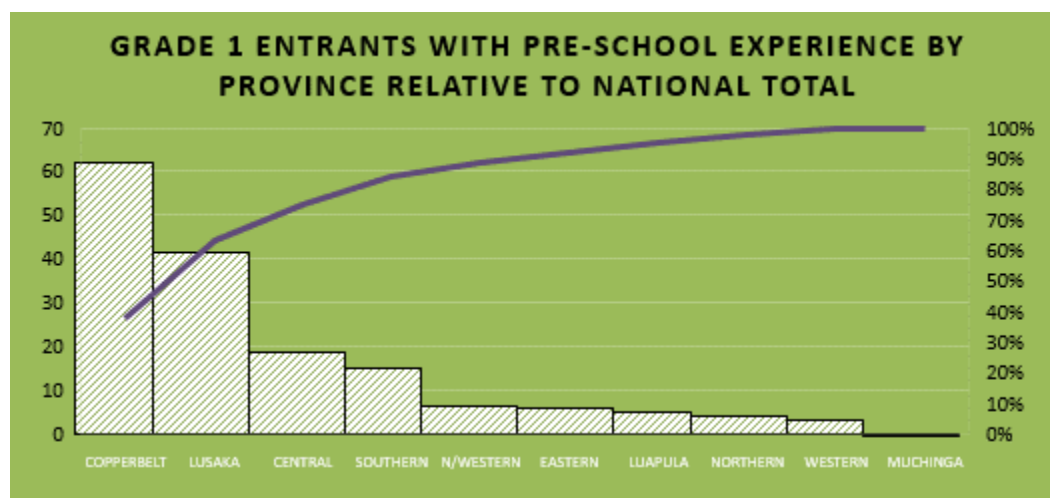
Source: MoE 2012, MoE 2013 and MoGE 2015.

Figure 5: Entrants with ECE experience by province relative to National

Figure above shows the relative contribution of each province to the National Total with Copperbelt, Lusaka having the highest contribution followed by Central and Southern Provinces. Muchinga, Western, Northern, Luapula, Eastern and North-western contributing below 10% threshold.

(vi)   No clear guidance on the inclusion of children with disabilities

Whereas the ECE policy makes consideration for ALL children, there is no special focus on children with special education needs that may not necessarily benefit from services that are provided for every child. A clear provision needs to be identified to cater for such children in order to make services to benefit ALL children.

(vii)   Lack of uniformity in curriculum

Nalwimba (2009), conducted a case study in Chongwe and Lusaka on Nurseries and Pre-schools' curriculum appropriateness in Zambia. 80 Nurseries and Pre-schools were studied and 250 participants were engaged in the study. The findings of this study revealed lack of uniformity in curriculum across Nurseries and Pre-schools consequently compromising the standards and quality of education offered. Even when MoGE has introduced a common curriculum this challenge could be attributed to narrow age (3 – 6) approach taken by MoGE when the players on the grassroots have embraced (0 – 2) ages as well in their Nurseries and Preschools. The inclusion of 0 – 2 ages range is within the Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE) being championed by Civil Society Organisations such as Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) out of conviction of the value of a holistic approach and not just the Early Childhood Education (ECE) alone.

4.3.1   Gender Parity Index at Primary Vs Secondary Schools

MoGE (2015), observes that Gender Parity Index (GPI) represents the ratio of female to male pupils. A GPI lower than one means that there are more males than females in school, while a GPI greater than one means that there are more females than male pupils in school. A GPI of 1 is desirable because it means that there are an equal number of males and females in school. The figure below shows a six (6) year comparative trend analysis for GPI for grades 1 to 7 and grades 8 to 12 with the former having a stable desirable GPI while the latter is averaging approximately 0.8 projecting a male dominated secondary education sub-sector.
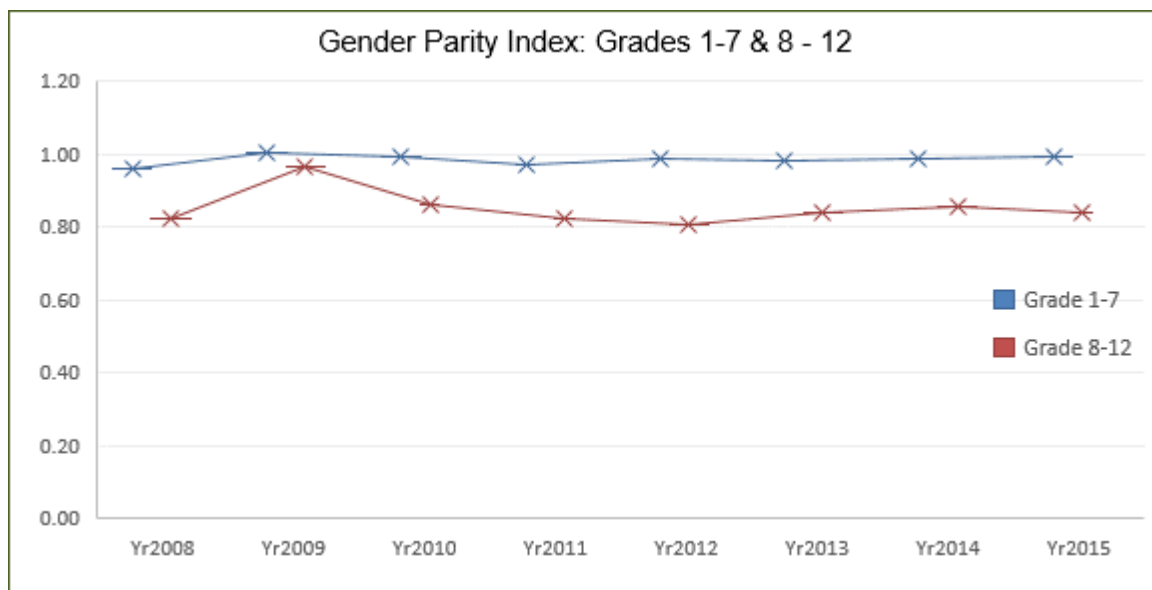
Source: MoGE 2015

Figure 6: Gender Parity Index: Grades 1-7 & 8-12

Whereas the GPI is stable at lower primary school level, the gap widens with increasing grade level as showed in the figure 3 above. The GPI is stable from grades 1-4, thereafter it starts dropping slightly, and it drastically drops after grade 7 at secondary school level.
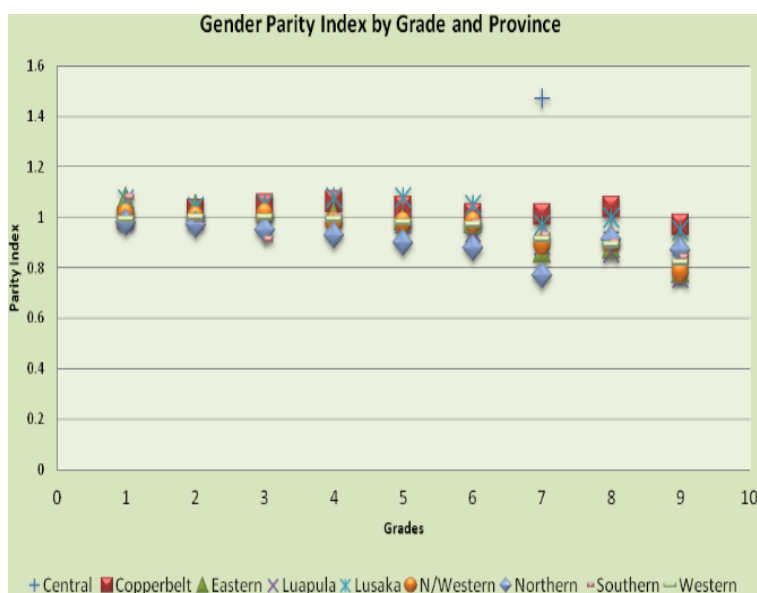
GPI for grades 1 – 8	*GPI for grades 9 – 12*
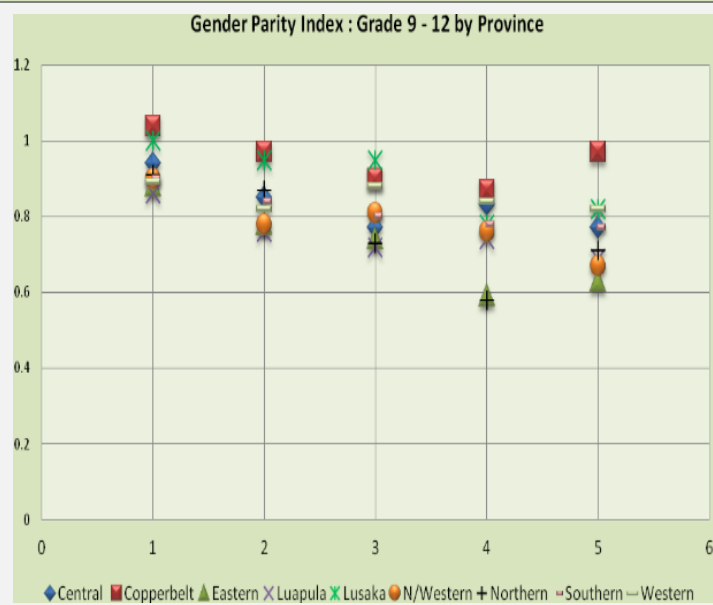
(MoE, 2012)

Figure 7: Gender Parity Index by grade and province

Predominantly, urban provinces (Lusaka, Copperbelt and Central) had a higher GPI at all levels. From the GPI figures above, it can be deduced that more interventions from grade 8 to 12 are required to empower girls from dropping out of the school system.

4.3.2   Children with Special Educational Needs at Primary Education level

Children with Special Education Needs are present within the education sector and below is a trend analysis on CSEN from 2008 to 2015.
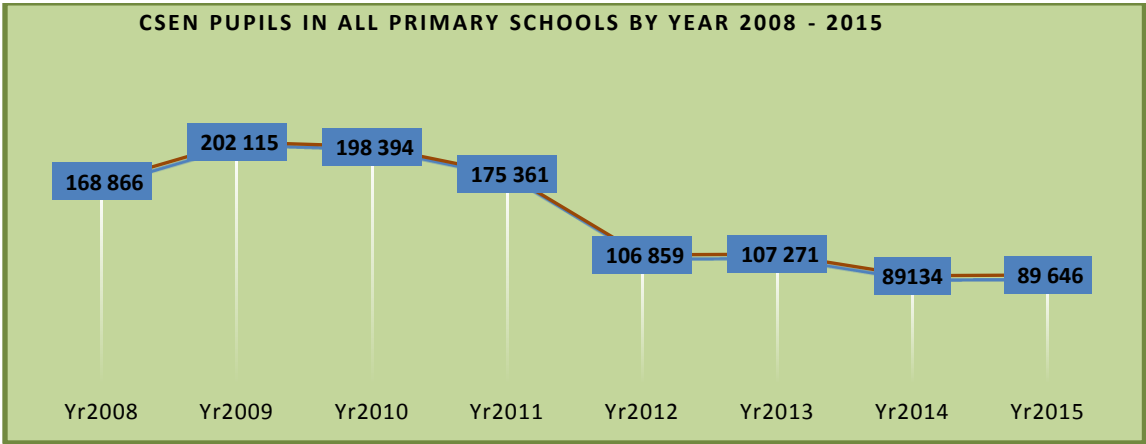
Source: MoGE 2015

Figure 8: Children with Special Educational Needs at Primary Education level

MoE, (2009:34) observes that at national level, there are 202,115 (2009) CSEN pupils at the basic level, and 2,445 CSEN students in Zambia's secondary schools. Interestingly, in 2009, Northern Province had 34,653 CSEN pupils in grades 1-9, while Lusaka had only 11,521. There are 6 impairment categories captured by the Annual School survey namely: hearing, intellectual, other, physical, specific learning difficulties and visual. Among these, 78,729 of students in grades 1-12 are categorized as having a "specific learning difficulty," while only 13,838 are categorized as having a "physical" impairment. In addition, the Cooperating Partners also support MoE efforts to consolidate gains in access by supporting equity promotion and reaching out to the excluded and vulnerable children, (MoE, 2009). For disaggregated statistics, see the figure 9 below.

CSEN for grades 1 – 9	CSEN for grades 10 – 12

CSEN Pupils in Grades 1-9, 2012

	Hearing	Intellectual	Others	Physical	Learning	Visual
Female	7446	8610	3202	3650	24207	4761
Male	8249	9344	3425	4217	24478	5323

CSEN Pupils in Grades 10-12, 2012

	Hearing	Intellectual	Others	Physical	Learning	Visual
Grades 10-12 Female	20	16	24	47	66	42
Grades 10-12 Male	23	15	15	43	33	17
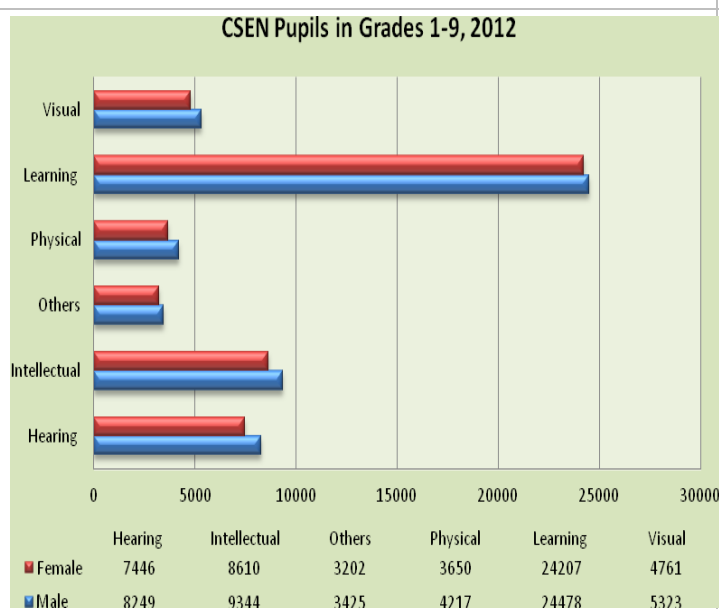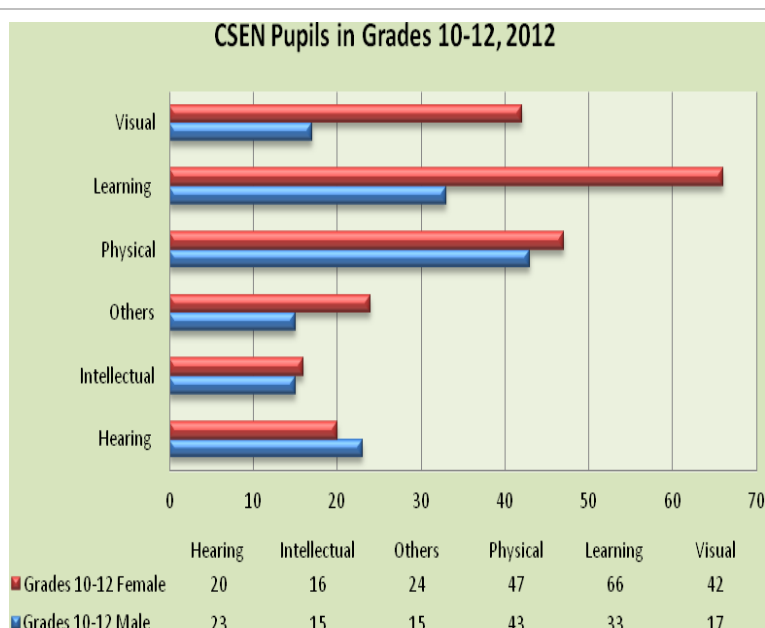
Source: MoE 2009
Figure 9: Categories of Children with Special Educational Needs

Figure 9 above shows that, whereas there is huge number of children with SEN present from grades 1 – 9, the numbers drastically reduce between grades 10 and 12.

Within the Primary education subsector, approximately 20% of the primary school population is served by about 3000 community schools which hardly get any support from MoE and which cater for most of the OVCs, living in the most remote regions and/or less developed areas. However, there are isolated cases where CSOs have partnered with Cooperating Partners to provide quality services both at ECE as well as primary level. One such case is the Disability Education Access Rights (DEAR) project, as documented below.

4.3.3   DEAR Project on Access to Education among CWD

Disability Education Access Rights (DEAR) is a project established by a consortium of three organizations: the Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD), Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS) and Zambia Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities (ZAPCD). The thrust of the project was on supporting the realisation of the rights of children with disabilities in accessing quality education, particularly in community schools. The project had a specific focus on early childhood care and development education (ECCDE) for children with disability in the communities in which they lived. At the time of evaluation in 2012, the project had been implemented in four districts of the province namely: Mongu, Kaoma, Lukulu and Senanga. For this study, Mongu and Kaoma districts were purposively sampled due to their rich experiences on the project, (Simui and Mtonga, 2012). From the study, it was observed that a good number of parents had brought their children to the community schools near their homes or villages. For instance, at Bethlehem Community School which has been adopted as

the centre of excellence, there were 23 children with disabilities. The school has 15 children with physical disabilities, one totally deaf child, and one problem in hearing and two of them are intellectually disabled. The 23 children with disabilities represent 23% of the total population of pupils at the said school.

An early learning centre with slant floors

Toilets with slant floors for easy accessibility

A primitive hand washing system after using a toilet

Part of the play grounds

Children happily playing at school

Figure 10: Bethlehem Community School Centre of Excellence

The Centre of Excellency houses approximately 80 children, including 14 CWD. Met Mandandi aged 9 (cleft palate) and Yvonne aged 8 (with intellectual disability). They have a good playground but no story books. Compound includes fully accessible toilets, a primitive handwashing system, an early learning centre. This school has 4 satellites (for more distant communities) and it is desired to develop more.

(Simui and Mtonga 2012).

Most head teachers revealed that children with disabilities had been there even before the DEAR project. However, the said pupils were very few and they never enjoyed school. After the DEAR project had started putting up good infrastructure and working with parents, there was an increase in the number of children at that particular school.

The Namilangi head teacher in Kaoma said, "We are overwhelmed by the number of children with disabilities that have come to our school. We do not know how to handle the school. My school alone has 49 children with disabilities out of the 220 total numbers of children at my school." Overall, the response from parents was overwhelming in bringing children with disabilities to community school (Simui and Mtonga 2012).

4.3.4 Shift in Education Structure

Most fundamentally. there has been apolicy shift from the 7-5-4 structure, denoting seven years of primary education; five years secondary and four years of university to first degree level, to a 9-3-4 structure, (MoE, 1996:10). In keeping with the Patriotic Front (PF) Manifesto for 2011 to 2016, on the education sector which says, inter alia, "In order to raise the educational standards, the PF shall phase out basic education and reintroduce a conventional early educational, primary, secondary and tertiary education system," (PF Manifesto, 2011.8), the Government has embarked on the implementation of this pronouncement, reverting to the old system. Given the state of affairs, it was not clear; (i) adequacy of the policy and legal framework guiding the shift; (ii) the implications of the change on infrastructure and materials acquisition in the affected schools. In a quest to better understand the situation on the ground, purposively selected institutions from Lusaka, Mumbwa, Kaoma, Lukulu and Zambezi were visited and 553 stakeholders engaged, (Kalila etal. 2013).

Key findings on the advantage of the old system included (i) many children accessed education from Grades 1 to 9. (ii)There was enough time to acquire knowledge and skills in the nine years of basic education where facilities were available.

However, the down-side of basic/high school structure included: (i) too much dependency on Grades 8 and 9 in terms of fees to support the running of primary schools because the Government funding was irregular. (ii) Some teachers at Grades 8 and 9 were usually not adequately qualified to teach at that level and this compromised quality. Even supervision was a big challenge. For example, since there was no position of Head of Department in the basic school, senior teachers, who were primary trained, were assigned to supervise teachers in subjects in which they were not qualified. This posed both professional and administrative challenges. Further, (iii) Most basic schools had no facilities such as science

laboratories and workshops so the teaching of science, industrial arts, home economics and other practical subjects suffered over the years. (iv)There was reduced learning time because of the double or triple shift system, (Kalila etal. 2013).

On the other hand, the new system (primary/secondary school structure), has its own advantages as observed by stakeholders in Kalila et al (2013) that (i) Once fully implemented, the structure would create more room for Grades 1 to 7 because Grades 8 and 9 spaces would be left by those moving to secondary school; (ii) Five years of secondary school would provide more time to both learners and teachers to adequately cover the syllabus. (iii) The primary-secondary system would promote specialisation and consequently efficiency as teachers would only teach the subjects for which they were trained. (iv) It would be easier to manage one education structure of either primary or secondary, instead of a double structure covering Grades 1 to 7 and 8 to 9 in one school.

The disadvantages of the primary/secondary structure as highlighted by stakeholders included: (i) Selection for admission into secondary school at Grade 7 level would increase the number of young drop outs in the system. (ii)   The dependence on the existing few secondary schools would increase distances to secondary schools which would disadvantage young learners and particularly girls in high schools. (iii) The inclusion of Grades 8 and 9 in former high schools would create pressure on Grades 10, 11 and 12 classrooms because of increased demand against reduced streams in order to create space for the two Grades. (iv) The construction of boarding schools would disadvantage rural populations because most boarding places would be taken up by the elite from urban areas that have the capacity to pay boarding and other user fees. (v) Even the weekly boarding facility, which is the most preferred for rural secondary schools, did not guarantee the security of girl children, who are vulnerable to pregnancies. (vi)The construction of new secondary schools would exert much pressure on the meagre national resources, (Kalila etal. 2013).

4.3.5   Analysis of the Quality of Primary Education

In view of the improved access to Primary Education, there has been reduction in contact hours at Primary level in schools as a coping mechanism owing to limited resources, (ZANEC 2010). The figure below shows four running agencies namely: Community, Grant aided, GRZ and Private with varying contact hours.
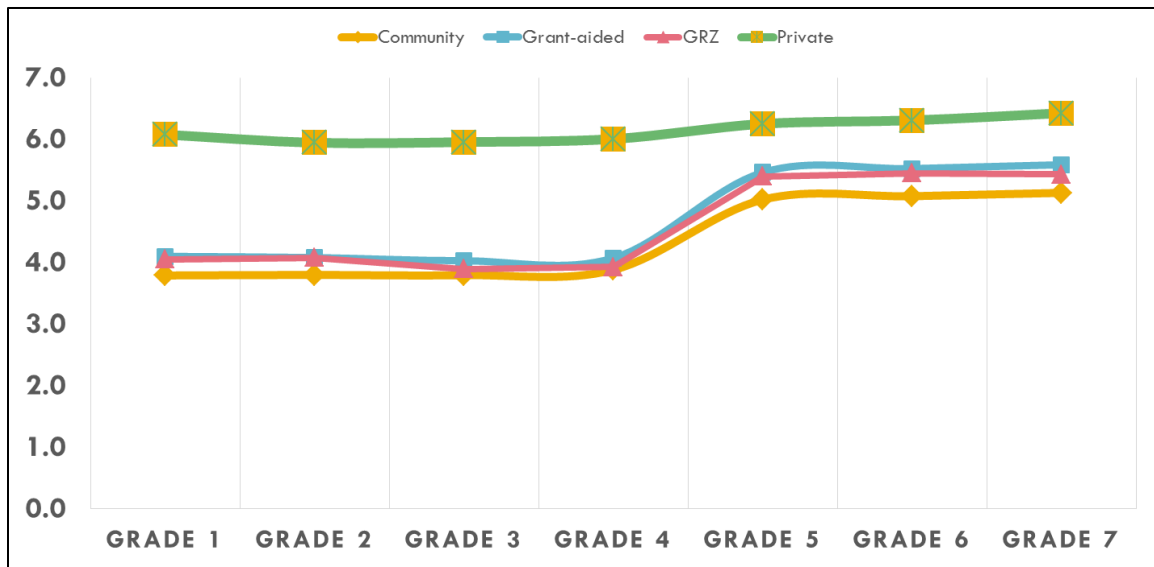
Source: ZANEC 2010

Figure 11: Scheduled Learning Hours by grade and Running Agency

From figure 11, the Private schools were reported to have the most contact hours compared with the other agencies. Government on the other hand was closely tied with Community and grant Aided schools at a time when it's expected to lead by a good example.

Reduced contact learning time could be contributing to poor academic results among learners as demonstrated by the 2014 National Assessment Survey which shows an overall decline in learner mean performance from the 2012 National Assessment Survey. The scores in all the assessment areas were below 40%, with the score for numeracy being the highest at 35.5% followed by Reading in Zambian Languages at 35.2%, Life Skills 34.6% and Reading in English at 32.1% (ECZ, 2014).

However, in grade 7 national examinations, there appear to be a few underperforming provinces namely Muchinga and Northern Provinces as can be seen in the figure below. On average, the female pupils appear to have performed better than their counterparts across provinces. Perhaps, this could be attributed to the strong gender advocacy being championed by the various stakeholders and the mitigatory measures put in place to enhance their learning process.
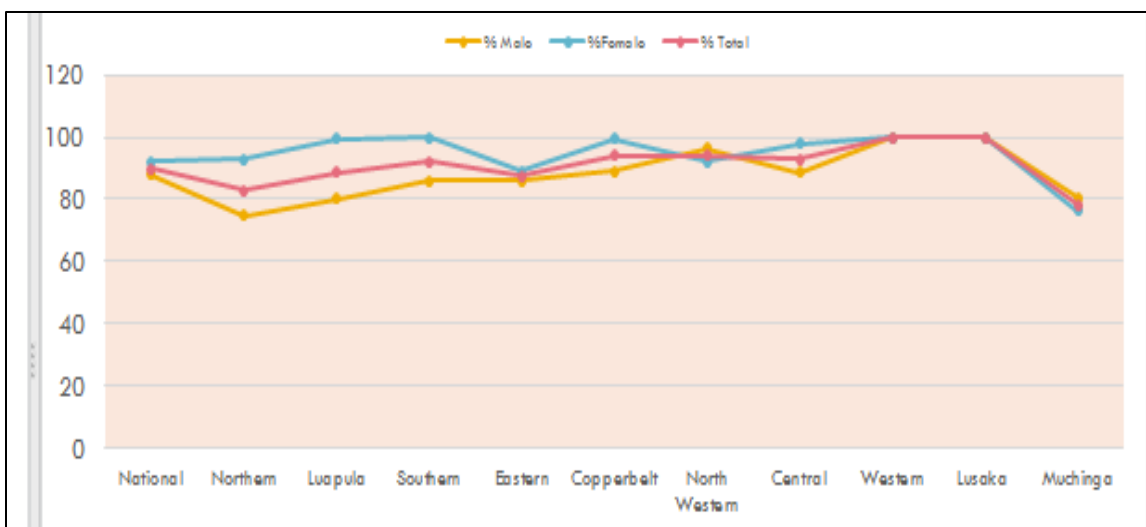
Source: MoGE, 2015

Figure 12: Pass Rate in Grade 7 by Sex and Province, 2015

The academic performance of pupils appears to worsen as they climb the ladder further at junior secondary and senior secondary levels. For instance, figure 13shows Lusaka, Central and Southern Provinces underperforming during the 2015 nation-wide grade 9 examination while Luapula and Western Provinces outperformed the rest.
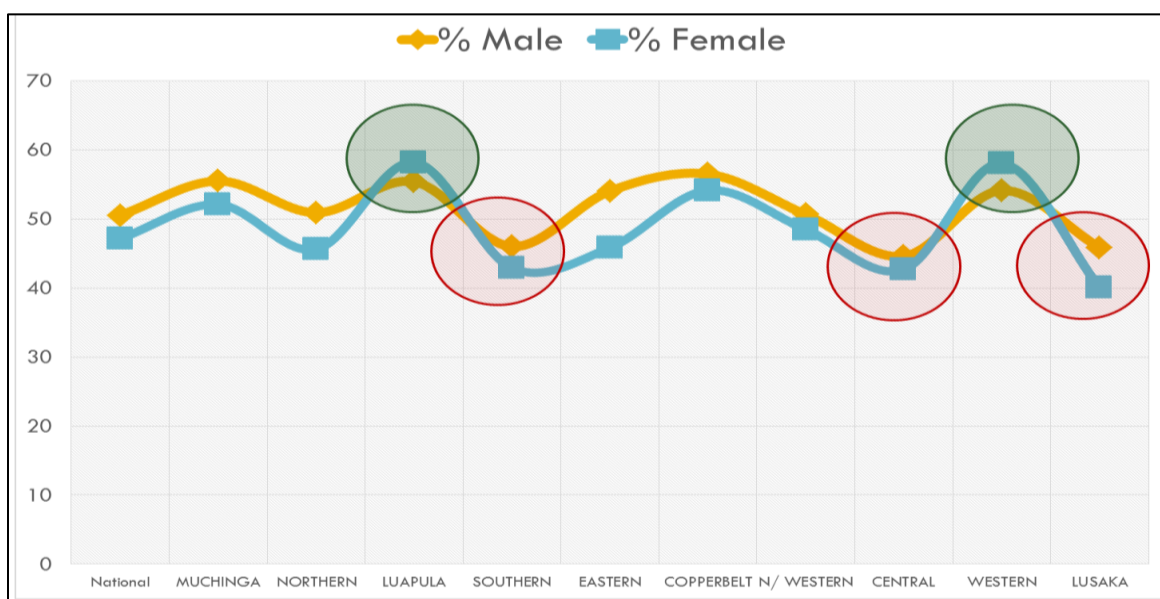
Source: MoGE, 2015

Figure 13: Pass Rate in Grade 9 by Sex and Province, 2015

At grade 12 level, Copperbelt and Luapula provinces were the least performers compared to Southern and Eastern provinces as can be seen in figure below.
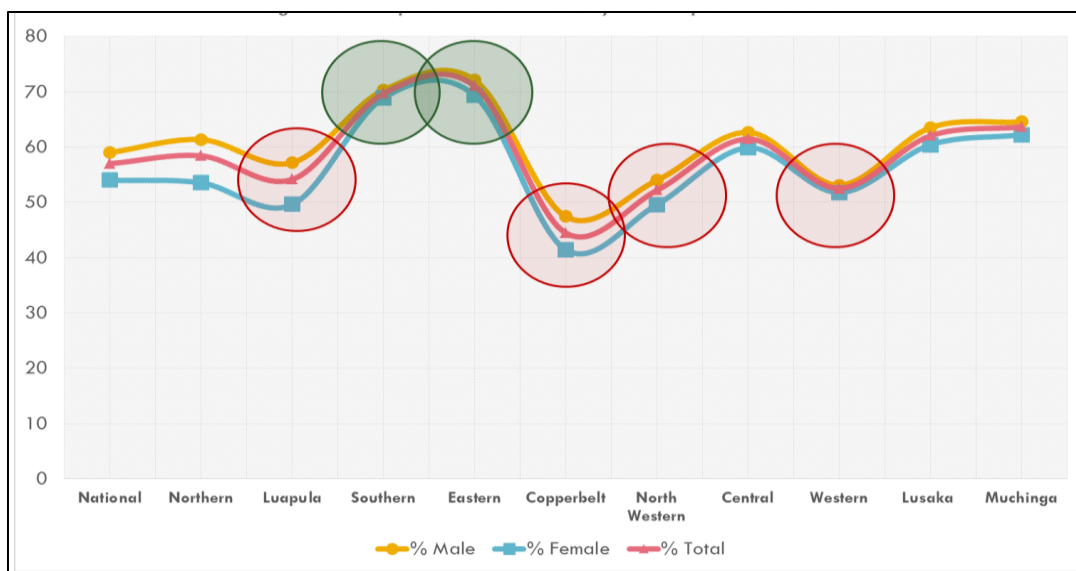
Source: MoGE, 2015

Figure 14: Pass Rate in Grade 12 by Sex and Province, 2015

The Poor academic performance among most pupils could be attributed to very low level of readiness with quality ECE experience at grade 1, since the majority 76% of the pupils are ill equipped to face the demands of the formal education system.

4.4 Challenges of ECE and Primary Education provision

The main challenges in ECE provision are:

(i)   **Insufficient financial and human resources.**

The budget for ECE is still very small. During the National Implementation Framework III (NIF III), the Ministry hardly had financial means to implement its policy ambition for ECE. Since 2015, ECE falls under the financial responsibility of the newly established Directorate of ECE at the MoGE. With an allocation of ZMW 46.5 million in the 2015 budget, it is by far the smallest among the eight education programmes, from which ZMW 42.3 million was allocated for infrastructure development. However, this component has experienced delay. Out of the total allocation, about ZMW 4.1 million for recurrent costs had been released by November 2015. For the implementation of the ECE programme, the MoGE relies heavily on its partners such as UNICEF.

(ii)   **Attitude towards ECE**

Challenges to do with negative attitudes were reported by a number of key informants, who observed that as represented by DH03 (pseudonym), one of the key informants:

> Although most people you find are generally positive about supporting ECE related activities, because it is the most important stage in a child's development, on ground, the same persons are the ones who shelve ECE activities aside for other more 'important' things, DH03.

This point to lack of supportive attitude to practical implementation of ECE activities and policies. Some officials would only be attracted to implement ECE activities if there is a provision for allowances.

(iii)   Low and poor quality of ECE services in most centers across the country;

(iv)   Lack of adequately qualified professionals specialised in Early learning skills and competences;

(v)   Limited number of local training institutions that offer training in the field of Early Childhood;

4.5 Strategies for Improving Educational Provisions at ECE and Primary levels

(i)   Given the existing weak coordination mechanisms, it would be in order to create a multi-sectorial groups such as **health**, **nutrition**, **sanitation**, **education**, and **children's rights** that include indicators related to young children and families.

(ii)   Kalila et.al. (2013), observes that for the Primary/Secondary education system to work properly, there was need for massive investment in infrastructure and timely and increased release of grants to schools. In addition, there is need to introduce weekly boarding school facilities in newly constructed secondary schools in rural areas as opposed to conventional boarding schools which do not serve the local rural community.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Eleven (11) years since the transfer of ECE Portfolio from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to the Ministry of General Education, there has been a marginal growth in numbers of children with Early Childhood Education experience at grade 1 level, from 14.17% to the current 24.4%. The rise could be attributed to the pioneering role played by the private sector as well as Government's resolve to provide leadership within the sub-sector.

Although there has been a marginal rise in the terms of Access to ECE, a lot more is still required to improve the quality of ECE services in the country. As a matter of principle, Policy is meant to guide practice. However, given the vacuum within which ECE players are working, this has resulted in compromised standards, with services favouring the urban at the exclusion of the rural dwellers.

At Primary education level, there has been improved access to schooling, albeit at the expense of quality education. Despite the rise in numbers, there are still pockets of children hard to reach namely those with special education needs, rural-remote and Orphans and vulnerable in general. Quality education at ECE and Primary levels ranks high as an area of concern among stakeholders. The community schools have played a key role in improving access but this has not been accompanied by Government support to improve on the quality. Moreover, despite the declaration of free education, the indirect costs of providing education to a child are still too high especially for the rural poor who are already unable to meet their daily needs.

The time to reverse the widening gap is now, to push the ECE and Primary education agenda much more in rural areas and improve on Quality service delivery and Equity agenda among the marginalised. If the status quo continues as it is now, our children will keep missing the golden window of opportunity in their critical stage of development and will fail to compete favourably with other children from privileged communities to the detriment of the cherished national Vision 2030.

5.2 Recommendations

Emerging from the findings of this study are the following recommendations segmented as follows: ECCDE and Primary sub-sector for the sake of clarity.

5.2.1   Early Childhood Education Sub-sector

    i). There is need for uniformity and holistic approach when it comes to planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of using the ECCDE model and not the ECE which appear to perpetuate dis-unit in service delivery. This will make it possible for the country to pull in the same direction as opposed to the current situation.

    ii). In order to have uniformity in the way early childhood education is provided, MoGE needs to ensure that a policy on early childhood education is enacted. Currently, the policy is still in draft form and is yet to be presented to parliament.

iii). MoGE should, in consultation with other stakeholders design a more inclusive coordination mechanism to allow different stakeholders to do their part in a coordinated manner without duplicating each other's work. The coordination will also allow different stakeholders to be recognized and respected in their own areas as they provide services that will promote holistic child development. The coordination must be at the ministry and also at the district levels to bring on board all line ministries and departments with a stronger enforcement mechanism.

iv). Government needs to create an establishment for the position of ECCDE focal point personnel at district and zonal levels. This will ensure identification, and recruitment of ECCDE specialists to coordinate ECCDE activities at the district and zonal levels.

v). Ministry of General Education and Civil Society Organizations should lobby Ministry of Finance for increased budget allocation to adequately cover ECCDE related activities. As of now, most of the funds allocated under ECCDE and primary education is taken up by primary education leaving ECCDE uncatered for appropriately.

vi). MoGE should start and sustain discussions around minimum basic payment or remuneration of caregivers who work in different ECCDE programmes should be encouraged to begin. Because most service providers are private looking for profit, most caregivers are paid very little thus making the profession fail to attract the best staff to it.

vii). MoGE still needs to put more effort in increasing community awareness on the importance of ECCDE for the development of the country, more resources allocated to it, a clear structure put in place for its implementation and a strong enforcement, monitoring and evaluation mechanism put in place. If things continue as it is now, our children will keep missing the golden window of opportunity in their critical stage of development and will fail to compete favorably with other children from privileged communities in the world.

viii). ECCDE being right from home, parents and caregivers need sensitization on their role and the importance of feeding practices. Dietary diversification practice can play a big role in improving the health, nutrition status of mostly under five year children and the school going children. Malnutrition affects so many of our children, three out of ten children under five years of age have stunted growth (DHS, 2013)

ix). District councils are urged to identify and pass bylaws that compel ALL parents to take children to ECCDE centers or schools at the right age. The laws should also be used to discourage child abuse and promote community responsibility towards children.

x). While there are many ECCDE centers that are being established in different parts of the country, the bulk of the care givers in centers do not have caregivers who have been trained in any child development methodologies. In the absence of trained caregivers at the centers, children are either being handled using primary school methodologies or are just being kept at the centers without any form of stimulation.

xi). NGO interested in ECCDE could provide funding for the training of ECCDE caregivers on ECCDE methodologies by targeting some district clusters. There is no doubt that increasing the numbers of skilled caregivers is a reliable and significant measure towards improving the quality of ECCDE.

5.2.2 Primary Education sub-sector

At Primary school level, the following are the recommendations:

i). The need to have a responsive educational policy to replace the outdated *Educating Our Future* which will address the emerging challenges facing society such as use of ICTs, gender, OVCs, global warming and inclusivity among others.

ii). The need to directly address the barriers and needs of the hard-to-reach groups, since the closer Zambia moves towards UPE, the greater difficulty of reaching the last of the unreached. This will require construction of learner friendly with relevant support services attached near children's homes, 5km distance at most as by the government policy.

iii). There is need to address disparities within the country in access and achievement between girls and boys, urban and rural locations, socio-economic classes, majority and minority ethnic/linguistic groups, and the "abled" and those with disabilities.

iv). In general, the development of schools which are more child-friendly – not only academically effective but also healthy and protective, genuinely inclusive, responsive to issues of gender, disability and encouraging of student, parent, and community participation.

v). In view of the dwindling budget share amidst increased demand for financial support, there is need to increase resources in line with the SADC recommended 20% of the national budget. This will contribute to improved services in a quest for quality education provision.

vi). Given that Community schools are home to nearly a third of learners at Primary school who in most cases are vulnerable, Government should therefore take ownership of Community Schools or where possible, ensure all teachers are on government pay-roll and teaching/learning resources are provided for.

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Appendices

6.1 Time Frame

The consultants conducted the assignment in 22 working days as follows:

Activities [Dec, 2016]	WK 1	WK 2	WK 3	WK 4
[1] Consultations with JCTR	▓			
[2] Plan the implementation framework of the proposed methodology	▓			
[3] Review data generation tools in collaboration with JCTR	▓			
[4] Seek permission letters to carry out the research.	▓			
[5] Desk appraisal	▓	▓		
[6] Field work: Sampled Institutions		▓		
[7] Data validation, entry, analysis and interpretation		▓	▓	
[8] Drafting and submission of draft report, Article, Advocacy Strategy to the JCTR for comments		▓	▓	
[9] Incorporation of feedbacks forwarded by the JCTR.			▓	
[10] Validation Workshop			▓	
[11] Submission of final report, Article, Advocacy Strategy to the JCTR				▓▓

6.2 Work Plan

Activities	Due Date
[1] Draft concept paper send to JCTR for comments	2nd Dec, 2016
[2] Presentation to stakeholders on the concept paper	5th Dec, 2016
[3] Submit Final Concept Paper	6th Dec, 2016
[4] Desk Appraisal	7th Dec, 2016
[4] Field work	15th Dec, 2016
[5] Analysis and Interpretation	20th Dec, 2016
[6] Report, Article, Advocacy Strategy Drafting	23rd Dec, 2016
[7] Submit draft report, Article, Advocacy Strategy to the JCTR	26th Dec, 2016
[8] Final report, Article, Advocacy Strategy submitted to the JCTR	30th Dec, 2016

6.3 Advocacy Action Plan Matrix

Issues	Goal	Objective	Strategy	Target	Activity	Ally/ Partner	Outcomes	Indicators of success
Inadequate funding to MoGE	Improve funding to MoGE	To increase allocation to MoGE from below 1% to 20% of the national budget by 2018	Lobbying	Minister of General Education	• Meeting with the minister and other key officials • Produce a policy brief	• Other CSOs • Trade Unions • MPs • Traditional Leaders • Cooperating partners	Funding to MoGE programs is increased	Percentage increase in the budget allocation to MoGE programs
Lack of holistic approach in the ECE	Transform ECE to ECCDE	To advocate for a holistic ECCDE by 2018	Lobbying	Minister of General Education	Meeting with the minister and other key officials	• Other CSOs • Trade Unions • MPs • Traditional Leaders • Cooperating partners	Improved quality of services to children in ECCDE centers	Percentage of learners with access to comprehensive ECCDE services
Absence of dated education policy	Approve education policy	To approve education policy by the end of 2017,	Lobbying	Minister of General Education	Meeting with the minister and other key officials	• Other CSOs • Trade Unions • MPs • Traditional Leaders • Co-operating partners	Improved practices guided by education policy	Policy approved and implemented

Issues	Goal	Objective	Strategy	Target	Activity	Ally/ Partner	Outcomes	Indicators of success
Weak coordination mechanism	Strengthen coordination mechanism	To strengthen coordination mechanism among stakeholders	Lobbying	Minister of General Education	Meeting with the minister and other key officials	- Other CSOs - Trade Unions - MPs - Traditional Leaders - Cooperating partners	Improved coordinate service delivery among stakeholders to the education sector	Percentage of stakeholders working together in the education sector in a coordinated manner
Absence of ECE focal point personnel at district and zonal levels	Presence of ECE focal point personnel at district & zonal levels	To increase the presence of focal point personnel at lower levels	Lobbying	Minister of General Education	Meeting with the minister and other key officials	- Other CSOs - Trade Unions - MPs - Traditional Leaders - Cooperating partners	Improved service delivery at lower levels	Percentage of districts and Zones with ECE focal point personnel
Poor condition of service for caregivers	Improve condition of service for caregivers	To improve condition of service for caregivers	Lobbying	Minister of General Education	Meeting with the minister & other key official	- Other CSOs - Trade Unions - MPs - Traditional Leaders - Cooperating partners	Improved service delivery by caregivers	Conditions of service improvement

Issues	Goal	Objective	Strategy	Target	Activity	Ally/ Partner	Outcomes	Indicators of success
Low community awareness on ECE	Increase community awareness on ECE	To increase community awareness on ECE	Education	• Chiefs • Village headmen • Parents • Councilors • MPs • ward chairpersons	• Disseminate messages via radio/TV • Social media • Meetings with chiefs and village headmen	• Other CSOs • Trade Unions • MPs • Traditional Leaders • Cooperating partners	Improved community involvement in the implementation of ECE	Number of communities sensitized on the value of ECE
Low parental involvement	Increase parental involvement in ECE	To increase parental involvement in ECE activities	Education	• Chiefs • Village headmen • Parents • Councilors • MPs • Ward chairpersons	• Disseminate via radios, TV, social media • Meeting with chiefs and village headmen, parents	• Other CSOs • Trade Unions • MPs • Traditional Leaders • Cooperating partners	Improved community involvement in the implementation of ECE	Number of parents involved in ECE disaggregated by sex and district
Limited ECE tenets compliance by stakeholder	Improve compliance to ECE guidelines	To improve compliance among ECE implementers	Audit checks	ECE implementers	• Spot checks • Audit reports	• Other CSOs • Trade Unions • MPs • Traditional Leaders • Cooperating partners	Improved service delivery by service providers	Percentage of implementers compliant to the ECE tenets

Issues	Goal	Objective	Strategy	Target	Activity	Ally/ Partner	Outcomes	Indicators of success
Absence of trained caregivers	Train caregivers	To increase the number of trained caregivers	-Training -advocacy	Minister of General Education	Meeting with the minister and other key officials	• Other CSOs • Trade Unions • MPs • Traditional Leaders • Cooperating partners	Improved service delivery by caregivers	Percentage of trained caregivers in ECE centers disaggregated by province
Exclusive policies & practices	Advocate for inclusive policies and practices	To advocate for inclusive policies and practices in the education sector	Advocacy	Minister of General Education	Meeting with the minister and other key officials	• Other CSOs • Trade Unions • MPs • Traditional Leaders • Cooperating partners	Increased access to ECE and Primary education by the marginalized persons	Percentage of marginalized persons participating in the ECE and primary education by sex and province
Limited GRZ support to community schools.	Improve support to community schools	To increase GRZ support to community schools	Advocacy	Minister of General Education	Meeting with the minister and other key officials	• Other CSOs • Trade Unions • MPs • Traditional Leaders • Cooperating partners	Improved quality of education in community schools	Percentage of community schools supported by GRZ

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection

JCTR

Promoting Faith and Justice

Vision:

"A just Zambian society guided by faith, where everyone enjoys fullness of life".

Mission Statement:

"From a faith inspired perspective the JCTR promotes justice for all in Zambia, especially for the poor, through research, education, advocacy and consultations".

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2017

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