

JCTR

Policy Brief

Promotion of Social Justice and Concern for the Poor

Second Quarter 2006

How Free is Free Education? The Cost of Education in Lusaka

by

Chris Petrauskis and Sheila Nkunika

**Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection
"Promoting Faith and Justice"**

Address: P.O. Box 37774, 10101 Lusaka, Zambia

Location: Luwisha House, (opposite UNZA main gate), Lusaka

Tel: 260-1-290410 Fax: 260-1-290759

E-mail: socialjctr@jesuits.org.zm

Web: www.jctr.org.zm

**Policy Brief 2nd Quarter 2006:
"How Free is Free Education? The Cost of Education in Lusaka"**

Section 1: Introduction

In the News...

To introduce a discussion on education in Zambia, particularly focusing on the cost of education to households, there is no better story than that of Goodson Lungu. As reported in The Education Post on 1st April 2006, "At the age of 18, Goodson Lungu is in Grade seven for the second year running, not because he failed but lack of sponsorship to proceed to secondary education...Rather than being idle at home, Goodson was advised to go back to grade seven, hoping that money would be found for him to continue in grade eight. 'It pains me, that is why I don't want to think about it. I feel sick...It gives me a headache. So I just spend most of the time studying,' says Goodson, who was found studying under a mango tree at home."

Goodson's story is simple and straightforward, very familiar in Zambia. A boy with a burning desire to learn, a society telling him 'no,' a boy refusing to give up. It is the simplicity of Goodson's story that makes it so powerful, that enflames emotion from deep within our hearts and begs us to ask difficult questions. How can we stand in the way of a child's desire to learn and develop into his full human self? How has this situation come to be? What can be done to ensure that our children never again hear the words, "you are not welcome here at school"?

At the same time, Goodson's story is a story of hope as much as a story of struggle. To some extent primary education is free in Zambia, free enough to allow even many of the poorest Zambian households to send their children through grade 7. According to the 2004 Education Statistical Bulletin produced by the Ministry of Education, the net attendance rate at primary level (grades 1-7) has increased from 71% in 2000 to 85% in 2004, meaning that 600,000 more children are now enrolled in our public, community and private primary schools. But many challenges remain in reaching the ambitious goal of Education For All (100% enrolment in primary education) by 2015.

Approximately 15% of Zambian children (about 293,000 boys and girls between ages 7 and 13) still miss out on even the most basic training in literacy and reasoning through primary education. Furthermore, accessibility of secondary education in Zambia remains very limited, with only about 254,000 school pupils enrolled in grades 8-9 in 2004, and 159,000 pupils in grades 10-12 (a net enrolment ratio in grades 10-12 of only 18.6%). What hope is there for the future if the majority of children remain unable to complete secondary education, let alone go for further skills and professional training in technical schools, colleges and universities!

This Policy Brief from the *Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection* (JCTR) serves to present the results of a recent study of Lusaka parents, teachers and headmasters about the cost, accessibility and quality of education in Zambia. This study resulted from many alarming stories from poor Lusaka households about the myth of Free Primary Education in Zambia, with so many hidden costs maintaining its unaffordable nature. And therefore, in many ways, this report serves as an independent evaluation of the implementation of free education in Zambia. Though the findings of this study focus mainly on primary schools in one city, Lusaka, the insights of parents provide a glimpse of the prevailing situation across the nation, across all types and levels of schools. We hope all policy makers hear the voice of concerned Zambian parents about the condition of our schools!

Education Essential to Development...

Education should be seen foremost as something essential to the human person, not only for the development of skills to make people "productive" or "employable," but to promote the fullness of human life. Created in the image of God, each and every person is born with unique talents, with something positive to contribute to the world. Education, whether in a formal or informal setting, can be understood as the facilitation of the discovery, the nurturing and the refining of these talents and of great human potential. Therefore, a quality formal education should encourage growth on all human levels, including the intellectual, emotional and moral.

As captured eloquently by the Catholic Bishops of Zambia in the 2004 Pastoral Letter *Empowerment Through Education*,: "Education in the full sense...is about helping students to find orientation, direction and meaning in their lives through a growing sense of respect for truth, responsiveness to beauty and a love of goodness. Without these any amount of facts or skills will give students information without knowledge and knowledge without wisdom. The education provided should address the whole person, the aesthetic, the creative, the critical, the emotional, the intellectual, the moral, the physical, the political, the social and the spiritual."

Such an integral education should leave a person with the knowledge, the understanding, the skills and the conviction to participate fully and responsibly in all spheres of life: within relationships, within families, in churches and places of employment, across communities, from the economic to the political realm. The universal education of the youth is fundamental to the sustenance of the widely-peaceful Zambia of today, and the realisation of the deeply-democratic, highly-productive Zambia of tomorrow. To deny Zambian children their right to education is to bury undeveloped potential, to stifle rather than uplift human dignity, to bring-down the progress of the nation and to jeopardise the fight against HIV/AIDS and poverty.

Education System in Zambia...

The education policy in Zambia has gone through a number of phases over the years, and the policy governing school fees has mimicked the swing of a pendulum. In the early 1960s education was free in Zambia. In 1966, with the passing of the Education Act, fees were introduced in the form of both user fees and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) fees. These fees were moderate and considered affordable at all levels. In the mid-1990s, as Zambia entered a period of liberalisation, cost-sharing became the official educational policy. Parents began paying the major share of spending in the education sector, and enrolment levels declined mainly as a result of the prohibitive fees. It was because of pressure from the international community (primarily through the IMF) that Zambia gradually shifted the burden of payment for education from the government to Zambian households. During the late 1990s a number of community schools were born to absorb pupils unable to access government schools, especially the vulnerable.

Just recently the pendulum began to swing back again as the Zambian government introduced Free Primary Education for grades 1-7 beginning in the 2002 school year. This dramatic change in policy resulted from a combination of international and local pressure from organisations guided by a commitment to human rights, such as the United Nations, the *Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection* and Oxfam-Zambia. Article 26 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages."

In the year 2000 Zambia signed onto the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, which call for the realisation of universal primary education by the year 2015. Zambia also participated in the World Education Forum in 2000, agreeing to the realisation of universal primary education as part of the "Education for All" action plan. The guidelines concerning the administration of Free Primary Education in Zambia, as prepared by the Ministry of Education, prohibit any pupil from being turned away from a government primary school on account of not being able to pay fees or not having a school uniform.

However, concern remains that this "free education" exists only on paper and in reality remains unaffordable to poorer households. Recently there has been talk of extending the free education policy through secondary education, though the Ministry of Education has passed no official declaration. In his address to the opening of parliament in 2006, President Mwanawasa stated that the policy of free education up to grade 7 was "being revisited." And shortly thereafter the President announced the intention of government to provide free education in Zambia through grade 12 (information obtained from the State House Website: Education Homepage).

Background of "How Free is Free Education?" Study...

The JCTR has participated in two studies in recent years related to education in Zambia, the "Cost of Living of Primary School Teachers" and "Will the Poor Go to School" (commissioned in cooperation with Oxfam-Zambia). Both reports provided valuable contributions to exposing the plight of Zambian pupils, families and teachers in relation to education. Many of the report findings and recommendations are still valid today. "Cost of Living for Primary School Teachers" brought out how poor conditions of service, measured in comparison to the JCTR Food Basket, were hindering the ability of teachers to give dedicated teaching service to their pupils.

"Will the Poor Go to School" exposed how cost-sharing had negatively affected enrolment rates, and how parent contributions to schools in the late 1990s actually exceeded government contributions by approximately two times. Though these two valuable studies helped create some positive impact in the education sector, specifically with the end of cost-sharing at primary level and slightly improved conditions of service for teachers, the accessibility and quality of education are still impaired by cost-sharing at secondary levels and less than optimal teaching from poorly compensated teachers.

This latest study, "How Free is Free Education?" was conducted in the third term of the 2005 school year, between the months of August and October. At that time, according to the JCTR *Basic Needs Basket* for the month of October 2005, the cost of essential food and non-food items (excluding health fees, school costs, transportation, etc.) totalled K1,348,860 for an average size family of six (compared to the June 2006 *Basic Needs Basket* of K1,379,650).

In addition to publishing monthly statistics on the cost of living, the JCTR also uplifts the qualitative dimension of people's lives through regular interviews with families across the high-density compounds of Lusaka. This study resulted directly from these monthly interviews, after many families expressed concern that free primary education in Zambia has many hidden costs that maintain its inaccessibility, especially to the poor and unemployed.

Study Objectives...

The main objective of the cost of education study was to establish the *direct* (e.g. formal fees paid to schools) and *indirect* (e.g. hidden costs incurred by families) costs of accessing government primary education, secondary school education and community school education in Lusaka. Following the introduction of Free Primary Education in Zambia, the study particularly sought to provide answers to existing questions such as: "How free is free primary education?" "Is primary education more accessible today than before

implementation of free primary education?" and "Has the quality of primary education been affected by the free primary education policy?" A number of secondary schools were also included in the study, hoping to determine answers to questions such as: "What is the prevailing status of secondary education, at junior (grades 8-9) and senior (grades 10-12) levels, in terms of affordability, accessibility and quality?" and "What is the potential impact of an extension of the free education policy to secondary education?" Finally, the study paid some attention to the situation within community schools in Lusaka, to establish "How do community schools compare to government primary schools, in terms of both cost and accessibility?"

Section 2: Summary of Key Findings

Findings on Cost of Education in Lusaka...

- 1) Cost of Education** At both primary and secondary levels, the *indirect costs* of education in Lusaka, that include school uniforms, books and supplies, transportation, private tuition, packed lunches, etc. greatly exceed the *direct costs* that must be paid to schools in terms of user, PTA or project fees. This suggests that the indirect cost of accessing education is *more prohibitive* than the fees administered by schools, and that a policy of free education in itself *may not be sufficient* to allow all parents to afford and access education for their children.

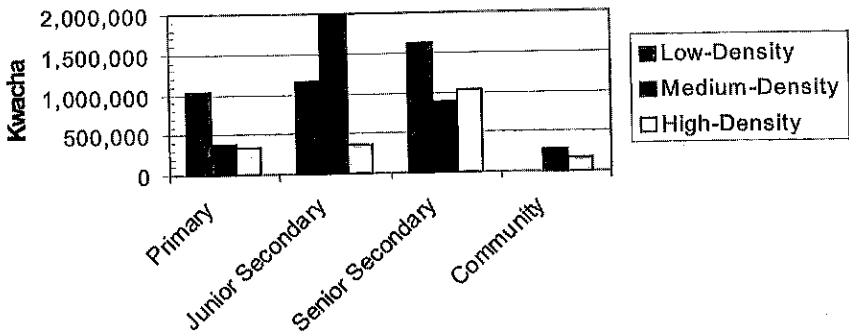
School:	Total Direct Cost*	Estimated Indirect Cost**	Totals
Matero East Basic (grades 1-7)	10,000-30,000	300,000-1,485,000	
Chawama Basic (grades 1-7)	15,000-20,000	46,000-900,000	
Woodlands B Basic (grades 1-7)	20,000	190,000-1,580,000	
Kamwala Basic (grades 1-7)	0	184,000-820,000	
Chibelo Basic (grades 1-7)	0	90,000-125,000	
GOVERNMENT PRIMARY AVERAGES:	K10,000 (5 schools)	K440,000 (21 parents)	K450,000
Matero East Basic (grades 8-9)	190,000	200,000 - 1,000,000	
Chawama Basic (grades 8-9)	410,000 - 470,000	84,000 - 194,000	
Chibelo Basic (grades 8-9)	350,000 - 380,000	165,000 - 355,000	
Matero Boys Secondary (grades 8-9)	220,000-250,000	420,000 - 2,400,000	
JUNIOR SECONDARY AVERAGES:	K310,000 (4 schools)	K670,000 (13 parents)	K980,000
Matero Boys Secondary (grades 10-12)	220,000 - 235,000	350,000 - 1,300,000	
Kabulonga Girls (grades 10-12)	260,000 - 300,000	2,680,000 - 3,370,000	
Arakan High (grades 10-12)	380,000 - 430,000	700,000 - 1,100,000	
SENIOR SECONDARY AVERAGES:	K300,000 (3 schools)	K1,270,000 (11 parents)	K1,570,000
Matero ZOCS (grades 1-7) / grades (8-9)	15,000 / 55,000	15,000 - 160,000	
Chawama ZOCS (grades 1-7) / grades (8-9)	25,000 / 240,000	60,000 - 367,000	
COMMUNITY SCHOOL AVERAGES:	K20,000 / K150,000 (2)	K170,000 (16 parents)	K190,000 / K320,000

Total Direct Cost refers to annual fees (i.e. user, PTA, etc.) that students are required to pay directly to the school. The variations are mainly due to some optional fees (i.e. sports, computer lab, etc.). Averages represent the mean direct cost of schools in a particular category.

Estimated Indirect Cost refers to annual costs (i.e. transportation, uniforms, etc.) that parents estimated incurring to send a child to school. For each school, the range of parent estimates is shown. For each school category, the average represents the mean of parent estimates of indirect costs.

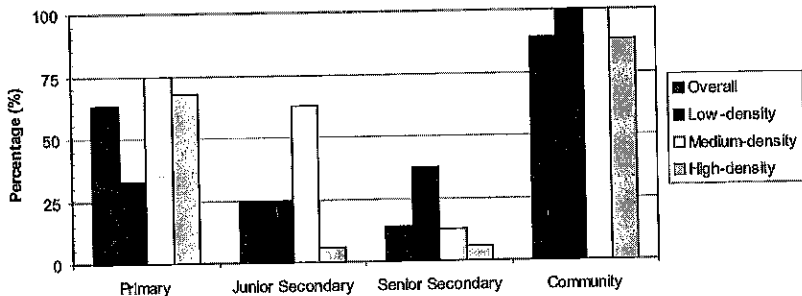
- 2) **Cost of Free Primary Education** The policy of Free Primary Education has led to the removal of nearly all fees for grades 1-7 in Zambia, though some schools continue to administer modest (K10,000 - K30,000/year) PTA or Project Fees (contrary to guidelines from the Ministry of Education). Though *direct costs* are now affordable to most, the *indirect costs* (especially uniforms) may continue to prohibit poorer households from accessing primary education. An average estimated indirect cost of K440,000 for one child to access one year of primary education in Lusaka (compared to an average monthly income of K506,000 for households in urban low-cost areas) is quite high (7% of annual income per primary level pupil). The most frequently mentioned indirect costs include school uniforms/shoes and books/supplies.
- 3) **Cost of Secondary Education** The annual direct cost of both junior and senior secondary school in Lusaka averages to approximately K300,000. The estimated indirect cost of accessing secondary education greatly exceeds the total direct cost, with parents on average *indirectly* paying 2-times (K670,000/year) and 4-times (K1,270,000/year) more for junior and senior levels respectively. Compared to average incomes of Lusaka residents, especially those residing in low-cost areas, the cost of secondary education is very high. The most frequently mentioned indirect costs include transportation and lunch at junior secondary level, and transportation, lunch and private tuitions at senior secondary level
- 4) **Cost of Community School Education** Though annual direct costs of primary education at community schools are on average higher (K20,000/year) than those at government primary schools, the much lower indirect costs (K170,000) make community school education the most affordable overall in Lusaka. This is mainly a result of the no-uniform policy. At the same time, the user fees charged by community schools may still prevent some extremely poor and vulnerable households from accessing education for all school-aged children.
- 5) **Cost of School by Respondent Location** At all school levels, parents from lower density areas indicated investing more in their children's education than those from high-density areas. This suggests that households facing resource constraints may be failing to adequately meet all the needs of their school-going children. There appears to be a situation emerging in the government schools where pupils with money are provided with a greater chance of succeeding, particularly through an ability to afford private tuition and food during the school day. For example, at senior secondary level, the estimated indirect costs were notably high for high-density households because of large amounts of money spent on transportation, as opposed to on food or private lessons. This may be the result of the location of senior secondary schools primarily in low-density areas of Lusaka.

Figure A) Estimated Annual Indirect Costs (2005) of Lusaka Schools by Household Location



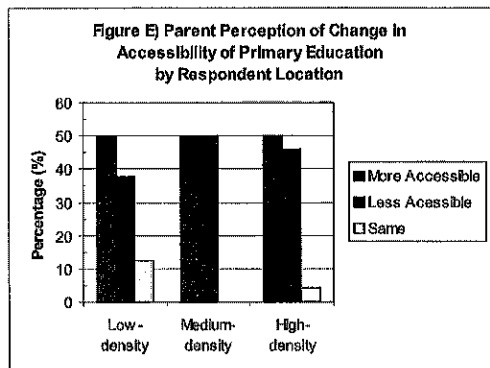
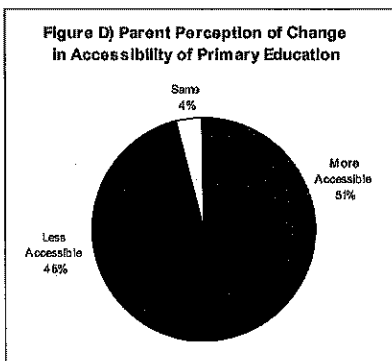
- 6) **School Affordability** Parents perceived community school education as most affordable (89% of parents indicating very affordable or affordable), followed by government primary education (63%), government junior secondary education (25%) and senior secondary education (only 14% of parents indicating very affordable or affordable). These perceptions correspond directly with the estimated total costs of the different categories of education, with community school education estimated to cost the least and government senior secondary education estimated to cost the most. Government primary education was perceived least affordable by respondents from low-density areas (as compared to respondents from medium and high-density areas), whereas community school education, junior secondary education and senior secondary education was perceived least affordable by respondents from high-density areas (as compared to respondents from low and medium-density areas).

Figure B) Percentage of Parents Perceiving School Categories as Affordable or Very Affordable (by Respondent Location)



Findings on Accessibility of Education in Lusaka...

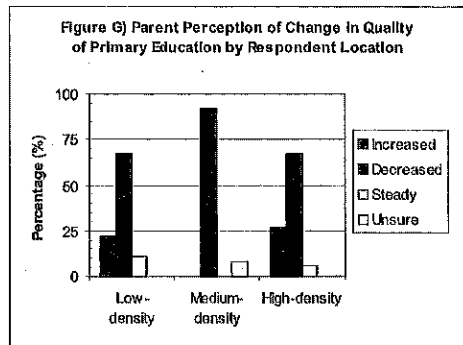
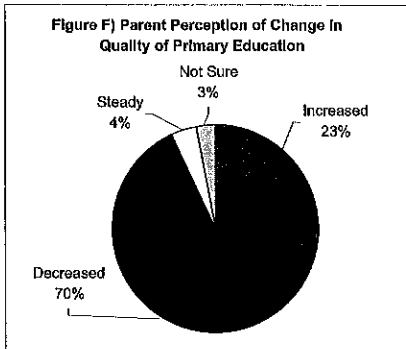
- 7) **Accessibility of Education** Medium-density households were the most likely to indicate at least one child out of school (40% of households), followed by households from low-density areas (36%) and households from high-density areas (32%). At the same time, high-density households indicated the highest number of children out of school (those high-density households indicating at least one child out of school indicated an average of 2.21 children missing school, compared to 1.75 children in low-density areas and 1.33 in medium-density areas), with some parents indicating as many as 5 school-age children out of school. The majority (74%) of parents attributed the absence of their children from education in Lusaka to *lack of school fees*. Teachers at most schools indicated that attendance levels of pupils have increased, citing reasons such as improved relations with parents, greater awareness of the importance of education and school feeding programmes (only indicated at a community school).
- 8) **Accessibility of Free Primary Education** Approximately half of parents perceived an increase in the accessibility of primary education since the introduction of the Free Primary Education policy, with the other half either perceiving no change or an actual decrease in accessibility. Those who perceived an increase in accessibility explained that it is now easier to enrol a child in primary education, whereas the other parents explained that it is now more difficult for their children to access uninterrupted classes and complete lessons. This demonstrates how the standard definition of accessibility is founded on an assumption that schools function and teachers teach. Teachers indicated that drop-out rates have increased in many basic schools in Lusaka, due to increases in pregnancies, unemployment, orphanhood due to HIV/AIDS, strikes, etc.



- 9) **Accessibility of Secondary Education** There is a strong correlation between the number of children accessing secondary education (grades 8-12) and the location of parent respondents within Lusaka. 100% of low-density households had 1 or more children in secondary education, compared to 80% in medium-density areas and 65% in high-density areas. Low-density households averaged over 2 children per household in secondary education, compared to 1.6 and 1.23 children per household from medium and high-density areas respectively. The location of secondary schools primarily within low-density areas of Lusaka may be disadvantaging typically poorer households from medium and especially high-density areas.
- 10) **Accessibility of Education and Gender** Parents indicated higher numbers of boys (18%) than girls (11%) out of school and also more girl-children (40%) than boy-children (30%) attending primary education. At the same time, parents indicated fewer girls (15%) than boys (17%) accessing senior secondary education, suggesting that the progression rate is much lower for girl-children than boy-children. According to teachers, the campaigns in support of the girl-child and the policy to accept pregnant girls back in school are helping to promote gender equity, though girls still face challenges including home responsibilities and danger of winding up in prostitution.

Findings on Quality of Education in Lusaka...

- 11) **Quality of Education** Parents overwhelmingly (70%) perceived that the quality of primary education has decreased since the introduction of free primary education, though it cannot be concluded from this report whether or not the free primary education policy itself is the cause of this perceived decrease in quality. Most parents linked the decreased quality of education to the poor remuneration of government teachers, which has led to teacher strikes, poor performance in the classroom and a tendency of teachers to focus attention on private lessons administered to pupils at a cost. Other explanations of decreased quality mentioned under-funding, crowded classes, illiterate pupils and lack of educational materials. Teachers and headmasters in most schools verified that class sizes have been increasing, but at the same time indicated (contradictory to the perception of parents) that pupil performance has been improving in most schools, alongside the provision of teaching aids.



- 12) Conditions of Service for Teachers** The take-home pay of nearly all Lusaka teachers is significantly lower than the cost of basic needs as measured through the JCTR *Basic Needs Basket* for Lusaka (essential food and non-food items cost K1,348,860 in October 2005). Teacher salaries in 2005 ranged between K150,000-K350,000 at community schools, K500,000-K1,000,000 at government schools and K600,000-K1,200,000 at the one grant-aided secondary school included in the study. This poor remuneration of teachers negatively affects the quality of education in Zambia, with teachers often splitting their focus between classroom lessons and other income generating activities (such as private lessons at a cost). This suggests that the wage freeze put in place in order for Zambia to reach the HIPC Completion Point has had a negative bearing on the quality of education within Zambian schools.

Section 3: Policy Recommendations

Recommendations...

- 1) Since the indirect costs of education are more burdensome to families than direct costs, the Ministry of Education should *greatly expand its bursary programme* to ensure that all poor or vulnerable households have access to sufficient resources to provide transportation, uniforms, lunches, etc. for their school-going children. In order to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary education by 2015, incentives such as school bursaries must be targeted towards the remaining 15% of children (approximately 293,000), especially the girl-children, who continue to miss out on primary education. This recommendation depends upon greater capacity building of school administrators and Social Welfare officers countrywide to identify the most vulnerable children.

- 2) The Ministry of Education should revisit the enforcement of guidelines for schools on the administration of free primary education in Zambia, to re-emphasise that no child should be sent away from primary education on account of not being able to pay any fee (whether Project or PTA) or not having a school uniform.
- 3) The Ministry of Education should establish a system to regulate the fees independently administered by schools across the country, including PTA and Project Fees. Though PTAs utilise a participatory process in determining school fees, it is likely that poorer (and often less educated) parents have a limited voice in these meetings. Oversight is needed to ensure that school fees are set at levels reasonable to households within respective communities across the country. Furthermore, schools (especially in the urban areas) must be empowered to request and receive appropriately sized grants from the Ministry of Education to fund recurring operations and undertake rehabilitative projects. To progressively promote enrolment and retention of poorer pupils, the Ministry of Education might consider allocating proportionately higher grants to those schools catering for poorer communities or large numbers of orphans & vulnerable children.
- 4) The Ministry of Education should continue with, scale-up and raise awareness about the many good initiatives and policies that are having a positive impact on the accessibility of education, including school health and nutrition programmes, the bursary scheme, the campaign in support of the girl-child and the policy of allowing pregnant pupils to return to school. These initiatives must not be limited only to primary education but integrated into all levels of education.
- 5) The Ministry of Education and Government of the Republic of Zambia should make every effort to improve the conditions of service of teachers in Zambia, to further improve both the accessibility and quality of education in Zambia. Increasing the remuneration of all teachers to at least meet basic needs is a quick-win initiative with tremendous potential to minimise teacher unrest, increase focus of teachers on classroom lessons as opposed to other income generating activities (especially private tuition), improve performance of pupils, etc.
- 6) The Ministry of Education should build more schools, especially secondary schools, in all parts of Zambia. Particular attention must be paid to the equitable distribution of these schools, so that they become accessible to households of all income levels. In urban areas like Lusaka, schools (especially secondary) must be built in the high-density compounds to reduce on expensive transportation costs for these typically poorer pupils, or government must introduce a creative means to make transportation free to school-going children (i.e. school bus routes, pupil bus passes, etc.)

- 7) The Ministry of Education should make every effort to discourage the privatisation of quality education within the public education system, to ensure that children of all socio-economic backgrounds have an equitable chance of succeeding within the classroom and progressing through all school levels. Existing practices, such as the need for full-day pupils to carry a lunch and teacher administration of private lessons at a cost, may be disadvantaging pupils from poorer households. Targeted school feeding programmes could improve the concentration-levels and performance of poorer pupils. Investment in teacher recruitment and remuneration could improve pupil-teacher ratios and discourage the widespread practice of private tuition.
- 8) In considering the expansion of free education to junior and senior secondary levels, the Ministry of Education must carefully plan for increases in pupil enrolment and decreases in collected fees, by improving capacity of secondary schools (e.g. building more schools, hiring more teachers, etc.) and allocating sufficient resources to meet funding gaps that would emerge at each school. If these two conditions cannot be met, it may be more prudent for the Ministry of Education to prioritise the scaling-up of school bursaries at secondary levels, for a targeted bursary programme may have a greater impact than a free education policy in increasing school accessibility to the neediest families struggling to afford the indirect costs of education. No child passing the grade 7 exam should be turned away from grade 8 due to lack of finances.
- 9) Community schools must re-commit themselves to a mission of providing accessible education to the most marginalised children in Zambia, by re-visiting the practice of charging user fees to pupils, by expanding provision of school health and nutrition programmes and by advocating for larger donor resources to adequately administer free education.
- 10) The IMF should encourage rather than prevent governments in developing countries to maintain an appropriately-sized, well-funded public sector, so that governments such as Zambia are given the freedom and resources to employ and adequately remunerate the required number of teachers and health workers to serve the public. The conditionality that Zambia maintain a wage bill less than 8% of GDP may be negatively impacting the delivery of social services in Zambia, due to understaffing in clinics, schools, etc.
- 11) Donors should continue the strong cooperation with the sector funding of the Ministry of Education, and should make these donations more regular, long-term and available for use by the Ministry to meet its huge cost of recurrent departmental charges that include teacher emoluments, while also continuing to fund infrastructure development.

- 12) The Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Central Statistical Office should carry out a countrywide study that looks into the main factors inhibiting accessibility of school (at all levels), in order to map-out where cost, where lack of infrastructure, where parent attitudes and where other factors are acting as the primary impediment of school accessibility and to develop area-specific (i.e. district) strategies to improve the level and equity of school accessibility.
- 13) All members of society, including teachers, politicians, pupils, parents, etc., must join together in fighting poverty, gender discrimination and violence, HIV/AIDS and other social ills that inhibit the realisation of universal education of young people and sustainable human development.

Conclusion...

In concluding, it must be pointed out that the implementation of the recommendations would come at a significant cost, especially to the Ministry of Education. At the same time, the existing global attention to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, including the realisation of universal primary education, provides a window of opportunity for the Ministry of Education to set ambitious goals and take innovative approaches to improve education in Zambia. Where political will exists, money can be found, either through increased donor inflows or improved government prioritisation of expenditure. The Final Draft of the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP), though it is still undergoing stakeholder consultation, has a strong focus on improvement of the education system, with the Ministry of Education allocated significant increases of resources between 2006 and 2010. As long as the Ministry of Finance and National Planning follows the priorities of the FNDP in formation of the next four National Budgets, resources will become available to implement many of the key recommendations of this report. Though the provision of equitable, quality education may be costly in the short-term, the benefits of a widely educated and well trained population will certainly be felt at all levels in society in the long-term.

*July 2006
Lusaka, Zambia*

To access the full research report "How Free is Free Education? The Cost of Education in Lusaka," please visit the JCTR offices or website www.jctr.org.zm.

JCTR BASIC NEEDS BASKET: LUSAKA

June 2006

(A) COST OF BASIC FOOD ITEMS FOR A FAMILY OF SIX IN LUSAKA

Commodity	Kwacha	Quantity	Total
Mealie meal (breakfast)	35,100	3 x 25 Kg bags	105,300
Beans	6,300	2 Kgs	12,600
Kapenta (Siavonga)	33,300	2 Kgs	66,600
Dry Fish	39,800	1 Kg	39,800
Meat (mixed cut)	12,300	4 Kgs	49,200
Eggs	4,900	2 Units	9,800
Vegetables (greens)	1,900	7.5 Kgs	14,250
Tomato	2,600	4 Kgs	10,400
Onion	2,800	4 Kgs	11,200
Milk (fresh)	7,500	1 x 2 litres	7,500
Cooking oil	12,700	2 x 2 litres	25,400
Bread	2,400	1 loaf/day	72,000
Sugar	4,500	8 Kgs	36,000
Salt	1,800	1 Kg	1,800
Tea (leaves)	8,600	1 x 500 g	8,600
Sub-total			K470,450

(B) COST OF ESSENTIAL NON-FOOD ITEMS

Charcoal	43,000	2 x 90 Kg bags	86,000
Soap (Lifebuoy)	1,100	10 tablets	11,000
Wash soap (Boon)	2,500	4 x 400 g	10,000
Jelly (e.g., Vaseline)	5,200	1 x 500 ml	5,200
Electricity (medium density)	113,000		113,000
Water (medium density)	34,000		34,000
Housing (medium density)	650,000		650,000
Sub-total			K909,200

Total for Basic Needs Basket

K1,379,650

Totals from previous months	Jun 05	July 05	Aug 05	Sept 05	Oct 05	Nov 05	Dec 05	Jan 06	Feb 06	Mar 06	Apr 06	May 06
Amount	1,349,650	1,361,770	1,358,990	1,353,790	1,348,860	1,345,850	1,368,700	1,415,650	1,413,150	1,408,650	1,408,700	1,421,850

(C) SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS

Item	Kwacha	Item	Kwacha
Education (PTA/user fee per year)		Health (clinic / hospital fee)	
Upper Basic (grades 8-9)	K220,000-K350,000	Monthly Scheme (per person)	K1,500
Secondary (grades 10-12)	K220,000-K380,000	No Scheme Emergency Fee	K8,000
Transport (bus fare round trip):		Fuel (cost at the pump)	
Chilenje-Town	K3,800	Petrol (per litre)	K5,690
Chelston-Town	K4,400	Diesel (per litre)	K4,680
Matero-Town	K3,600	Paraffin (per litre)	K3,653

"Kudyetsa banja nicobvuta muno mu town, ndaba kalli konse kafuna ndalama, koma ndalama yemene nifora ning'ono." – Woman in Mandevu

(D) SOME COMPARATIVE FIGURES OF WAGES -- "TAKE HOME PAY"

	Teacher	Nurse	Guard with Security Firm	Secretary in Civil Service	Police Officer (Constable-Chief Inspector)	Piecworker on a Farm
Pay Slip	K672,000 to K1,193,000	K748,000 to K2,105,000	K120,000 to K715,000	K653,000 to K1,190,000	-	K3,000 to K15,000 per day

This survey was conducted on 29th to 30th June 2006 by the Social Conditions Research Project of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection. Average prices were calculated on the basis of prices gathered from retail outlets at Northmead, Town Centre (Shoprite), City Market, Chawama, Chelinda, Kaobwata, Matero and schools, clinics/hospitals around Lusaka. The June Basic Needs Basket is approximately US\$393 based upon an average middle exchange rate of 3,510 Kwacha per US\$ at the end of June.

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, P.O. Box 37774, 10101 Lusaka, Zambia
 Tel: 260-1-290-410 Fax: 260-1-290-759 E-mail: socialctr@jesuits.org.zm Internet: www.jctr.org.zm
 Location: Lawisha House, Plot 5880 Great East Road (opposite UNZA main gate), Lusaka

The quarterly JCTR Policy Brief is designed to inform decision-makers and the general Zambian public about key issues that require urgent and effective responses to meet the needs of integral, sustainable and socially just development. We welcome comments on our positions.

2006

How Free is Free Education? The Cost of Education on Lusaka

Petrauskis, Chris

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection

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