

Policy Brief

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Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium
for Monitoring Educational Quality

Progress in Gender Equality in Education: Zambia

www.sacmeq.org

Introduction

This policy brief deals with progress in ‘gender equality’ in primary education for the nine provinces in Zambia by seeking answers to the following specific questions:

- What were the changes in the **proportion of girls’ enrolment** at the Grade 6 level for the nine provinces in Zambia between 2000 and 2007?
- What were the changes in the **size and the direction of the gender differences** in reading and mathematics scores for the nine provinces in Zambia between 2000 and 2007?
- What were the changes in **selected gender-related school environment information** between 2000 and 2007 that could be further investigated in order to improve gender equality in education for Zambia?

Answers to the above questions are expected to guide policy decisions regarding the gender-related interventions in education.

Zambia’s Participation in SACMEQ

The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) is a network of 15 ministries of education (Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland,

Tanzania (Mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe).

SACMEQ’s mission is to: (a) expand opportunities for educational planners to gain the technical skills required to monitor and evaluate the quality of their education systems; and (b) generate information that can be used by decision-makers to plan and improve the quality of education.

SACMEQ has undertaken three large-scale, cross-national studies of the quality of education: SACMEQ I (1995-1999, reading) with seven ministries; SACMEQ II (2000-2004, reading and mathematics) with 14 ministries; and SACMEQ III (2006-2010, reading, mathematics, and HIV and AIDS knowledge) with 15 ministries. Zambia participated in SACMEQ I in 1995 (2,558 Grade 6 pupils in 157 primary schools); SACMEQ II in 2000 (2,611 Grade 6 pupils in 173 primary schools); and SACMEQ III in 2007 (2,895 Grade 6 pupils in 140 primary schools)-

The Importance of Gender Equality in Education

The importance of gender equality in education within the process of international goal-setting has been emphasized in the Education for All (EFA) Goals (UNESCO, 2000) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (United Nations, 2006).

The gender equality issue in education has been a major concern in many countries, because of its link with health and nutrition, economic development, and civic responsibilities. For the purposes of this policy brief, the concept of ‘gender equality in education’ follows the UNESCO (2003) interpretation, which refers to the notion of boys and girls experiencing the same advantages or disadvantages in attending school, receiving teaching methods, curricula, and academic orientation, and producing equal learning achievements and subsequent life opportunities.

Gender Balance in Grade 6 Participation

Figure 1 shows the proportion of girls enrolled at Grade 6 level for each province and Zambia as a whole in both 2000 and 2007. Throughout all the SACMEQ studies, the use of a ‘scientific’ sampling method with an internationally required level of sampling accuracy ensured that the proportion of girls at the Grade 6 level in the sample reflected the entire Grade 6 target population.

Gender-Related Policy in Zambia

The Ministry of Education has taken a keen interest in providing equal access to education to all the people of Zambia. The provision of education to all children and adults must be seen in a holistic context, and should include issues of gender, education equality, as well as the quality of education. There have, however, been some factors that have impacted negatively on the education of some vulnerable groups, especially girls. The Republic of Zambia recognises the need to tackle the issues affecting the education of girls within a broader context, so as to provide quality education to all school-aged children. To this end the government, in collaboration with various partners, started the Programme for the Advancement of Girls Education (PAGE) in 1997.

Through this programme, specific actions have been developed to support successful strategies for increasing access, retention, and enhancing achievements, especially in mathematics and science for girls. In 1997, the Ministry of Education introduced the re-entry policy that allowed girls who fell pregnant to return to school after delivery. This was followed up with the 50-50 enrolment policy. The Strategic Plan embraced the equity programme, which specifically addressed gender issues within the ministry (Ministry of Education, 2003). The National Gender Policy supported these efforts (Gender in Development Division (GIDD), 2000).

At the national level, there was an increase of only one percentage point, namely, girls enrolment was 49 percent in 2000 and by 2007 it was 50 percent., hence, there was no significant change in the gender balance at the Grade 6 level. At the provincial level, Copperbelt province, which had the highest proportion of girls in 2000, 54 percent, dropped to 52 percent in 2007. The proportion of girls in the Southern province increased from 42 percent in 2000 to 57 percent in 2007, becoming the province with the highest proportion of girls. The provinces of Luapula and Northern remained static at 43 percent for both 2000 and 2007 and were the only provinces where there was gender imbalance.

Gender Differences in Learning Achievements

While there was some progress in Zambia towards greater gender equality in enrolments between 2000 and 2007, policy-makers should be concerned about whether this enrolment trend was also accompanied by greater gender equality in terms of learning achievements.

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the gender and time differences in the learning achievements in reading and mathematics by province. The standardized scores with a pupil mean of 500 and standard deviation of 100 were established during SACMEQ II, based on the calibration of test items from the

METHODS FOR THE EVALUATION

The methodology for the assessment was based on the programme's logical framework and was predominantly qualitative in nature, given the time limit and the inadequate resource envelop. Data was collected from: WFP; UNICEF; Ministries of Education; Health; Community Development and Social Services; selected districts and community members.

Table 1: Summary of ABE objectives and the extent to which they were met

Objective 1: Increase enrolment and improve attendance

- Sampled schools showed increased enrolments after the introduction of the feeding program in both government and WFP target schools. Schools where feeding was discontinued registered a reduction in enrolments and an increase in dropouts.
- With respect to attendance, school registers showed high turnouts in all schools where feeding took place. This was not the same for Government schools where feeding had been suspended/stopped.

Objective 2: Improve capacity to concentrate and learn

- From discussions, it was learnt that the feeding programmes had raised the level of concentration among pupils.
- Teachers attested to the fact that feeding raised pupil's comprehension of complex subjects, as well as the pass rate.

Objective 3: Reduced gender disparity in enrolment, retention, and completion in primary

- The programme had contributed to the attainment of gender parity at lower grades in all schools visited.
- Statistics from sampled schools indicated improved retention and completion of education by learners.

POLICY ACTION POINTS

Using feeding programmes to reduce gender barriers

The ABE programme had positively impacted on gender enrolment imbalances by ensuring equal benefits for both female and male pupils. The programme had also facilitated the breakdown of gender barriers at the community level, through the participation of both male and female parents in the preparation and distribution of meals to pupils an activity which was traditionally reserved for women.

Raising enrolment, retention and learning capacities

Where the feeding programme had been implemented, there was evidence of increased enrolment and retention of pupils. Pupils in Siavonga district for example, reported that before the introduction of the programme, some of their classmates/peers dropped out of school due to shortage of food. Interviews with parents, teachers and discussions with pupils in sampled schools also indicated that the feeding program was relevant to the children in their area as it had led to high enrolment rates and improved pupil participation in class.

From discussions, it was learnt that the feeding programmes had raised the level of concentration among pupils. Furthermore, teachers attested to the fact that feeding raised pupil's comprehension of complex subjects and pass rate.



Building capacities for sustained school feeding

The evaluation demonstrated that sourcing food from local sources was cheaper and more effective than using imported food items. The WFP feeding programme was by far cheaper than the GRZ programme, essentially on account of the sources of food supplies. Using local suppliers of food was not only cheaper and more effective, but also strengthened local supply networks, which ensured sustainability of the programme and increased economic activities in the local community.

Policy and programme action points	Responsible institutions
Using feeding programs to reduce gender barriers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring systems should capture gender outcomes on enrolment and retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education district, provincial and national levels. Schools participating in the feeding programme.
Raising enrolment, retention and learning capacities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanisms for sustaining observed improvement in enrolment, retention and learning capacities should be implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools participating in the programme.
Capacity for sustained school-feeding programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximising the utilisation of local food sources for school-feeding programmes. Community awareness about the requirements and opportunities of the feeding programmes should continue to be raised towards eventual community contribution of some food stuffs to enhance sustainability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local sources of farm produce, especially small and medium scale farmers. Communities within catchment areas of participating schools.

JCTR

Policy Brief

Promotion of Social Justice and Concern for the Poor

First Quarter 2002

Current Development Challenges

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CURRENT DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Introduction

The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), in line with its vision for a *society where faith promotes justice for all in all spheres of life*, is this year adding a new quarterly publication, **Policy Brief**. This short analysis will be prepared through its Economic and Social Development Research Project.

The issues and topics to be highlighted will cover the overall questions of fostering integral and sustainable development and analyzing the reasons for lack of this development. Our approach to development will be guided by the emphasis given by Pope Paul VI, who said that *development is the movement of people from less human conditions to more human conditions* ("Progress of Peoples" 1967).

The above definition of development, as we can see, is far-reaching and very inclusive in terms of what elements need to be paid attention to in order to improve people's lives. As such, it is expected that our **Policy Brief** will touch on a number of issues: education, health, agriculture, manufacturing, cost of living, economic governance, etc.

Policy Brief will be a channel through which some policy alternatives will be put forward, especially those that emphasise the centrality of the human person in any economic activity. It is also hoped that **Policy Brief** will engender debates on development policies, priorities and politics across many sections of Zambian society.

For our first effort, we focus on a sketch of Zambia's current development situation.

Zambia's current development situation

Over the years, Zambia's development situation has not faired well in almost all dimensions. People's living conditions have continued to worsen, with the rural population the worst affected. Economic growth figures have not matched with reductions in poverty.

Zambia is currently ranked 143 out of 162 countries -- the same as in the previous year -- on the UNDP *Human Development Index* that measures average achievement in three basic dimensions: *a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living*. This means that Zambia has remained static on these measurements.

In a review of the year 2001, we present data gathered from various sources: the *Economic Report 2001* of the Ministry of Finance and National Planning of the Government of the Republic of Zambia, reports from various United Nations agencies (e.g., UNDP, the World Bank) as well as reports or studies undertaken by JCTR.

1. Social Situation

(a) Education

- Zambia's education system has been affected by two problems. The first problem has been the continued *deterioration in education standards* with such negative effects as engendering apathy on the part of parents in sending children to school. Parents take the position that children will *not* benefit much even if they went through the education process. The *intrinsic* and *instrumental* value of education has always come into question: is education worthwhile in itself or only for what results it can guarantee?

youth and well being

HEALTHY BODIES,
HEALTHY MINDS



Introduction

Young people are expected to be healthy. They are in the prime of life and the effects of unhealthy practices, such as smoking and poor eating and drinking habits, have not started to impact on their lives. Thus, youth is a time when young people should have the least fears about being sick. However, youth is also a time when young people are exposed to many harmful environments which impact seriously on their health.

The survey looked at health and well being of young people in a holistic manner and in the context of the Alma Ata Declaration which is still used by the World Health Organisation.

Definition of health:

A state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity

Health is a fundamental human right the attainment of which:

Requires the action of many other social and economic sectors in addition to the health sector.
Alma Ata Declaration, : 1978

In order to be healthy, young people need to live in a healthy environment. This includes not only good housing and sanitation and clean and safe water, but also the space and encouragement to grow mentally and socially. Therefore, they need a stimulating, enabling educational environment which provides them with relevant information and promotes critical thinking, a supportive environment which encourages them to participate 'according to their evolving capacities'¹, and a protective environment which ensures that they are safe from both physical and human threats. These are the responsibility of all sectors in society. The survey looked at the health and well being of young people from this perspective.

¹ Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 5

Finding One: Young people's health is jeopardised by the nature of the school environment

The human and physical resources required to provide a stimulating environment in school were in short supply.

- **Teacher- student ratio.** The average teacher- student ratio was 1:88 in secondary schools. In four of 13 secondary schools the ratio was higher than 1:100. It is thus very difficult for a teacher, however skilled and motivated, to educate and stimulate the students effectively.
- **Untrained teachers:** In order to make up the shortfall in teachers, schools are employing high school leavers on a part time basis. Many of these part time teachers may be very enthusiastic and committed but they have not been trained to provide the right educational environment.
- **Hours of idleness:** As a result of these high ratios, the average number of classes taught on the day of the survey was less than two in eight of 14 secondary schools and less than three in 10 of 14 schools. Students are left to their own devices for the major part of the school day.
- **Lack of books and other equipment:** At the very least, if there were books, students could seek stimulation in them, but books were a scarce commodity. This was also true for any teaching aids on the walls, laboratories and even desks.
- **Medium of instruction:** The rapid expansion in secondary education, without ensuring an equivalent rapid expansion in language competence, means that even if students are lucky enough to have a teacher in the classroom, the majority of students do not have the language required to understand and participate. As a part of the survey, students in secondary school were given a reading test from a primary school text for Standard 2. Only 23% of the students were able to read the passage and answer the questions without difficulty and there is no guarantee that even they can cope with the level of English required to study Physics or History.



As a result of the above, the vast majority of students are condemned to a life of boredom and frustration, while they await confirmation of their failure in the National Form Four Examinations, as witnessed by the results for 2010. This must have a very negative effect on their healthy development.

Finding Two: Young peoples' health is affected by dangerous physical and social environments

The dangers are obvious but little action has been taken to address them.

- **Hazardous working conditions:** In the survey this was seen particularly in two areas:
- **Quarries in Iringa.** There have been many accidents, some even fatal, but working in the quarries remains one of the most popular livelihoods because it pays well.
- **Motorbike taxis.** Nearly all motorbike taxis are driven by young people with little or no instruction or monitoring, leading to an epidemic of motorbike related accidents.



Education in Reverse: Is PEDP II Undoing the Progress of PEDP I?

Recent analyses of the implementation progress of the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) II have revealed disturbing trends. This brief covers a few of these trends that carry the most implications for the education sector and how to fix them.

All of us want our children to succeed in school. Schools are expected to be places where our children can go to learn, acquire skills and knowledge, and be able to become creative, smart, and self-sufficient so that they may take care of themselves and their own future families.

The Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) is perhaps the single most important plan for determining the quality of our schools and the future of our nation's education. It encompasses such critical aspects as enrolment expansion, teacher recruitment, school infrastructure development (e.g., classrooms, teacher housing, latrines), and school inspections. In the plan, many of these facets are outlined in terms of annual goals and the budget required to meet said goals. For example, it dictates that 17,864 latrines need to be built nationwide in 2008, and Tsh 12.505 billion is needed to do so. Thus PEDP creates an entire development plan and budget for primary education.

PEDP has been designed and carried out in two five-year phases. PEDP I ran from 2002-2006; PEDP II, 2007-2011, is currently in its fourth year. The latest implementation reports concern the second year of PEDP II, 2007/08, and HakiElimu has just published a review of these government reports.

Despite the successes that are discussed in the review, there are some very serious trends that need to be specifically highlighted, namely in the areas of classroom construction, teacher housing, and teacher recruitment. Though both phases of PEDP deal with similar matters, there are many signs indicating that PEDP II merely exists on paper, offering no real development to the education sector.

Tighter Classrooms

Unlike its predecessor, PEDP II has utterly failed to provide a noteworthy amount of new classrooms. While PEDP I saw the construction of 4,000-10,000 new

classrooms per year, meeting 76.2% of its overall five-year goal, only 1,263 classrooms, or 11.7%, were built in 2008 when PEDP II called for 10,753 to be constructed. That's like if professional planners determine that your neighborhood or village needs 100 water spigots, but only 12 are built—it's simply not enough to meet the needs of the people. Chart 1 demonstrates the difference between the PEDP target versus what was actually achieved over PEDP I and PEDP II. As can be seen, PEDP targets are rarely met, but they are far more grossly unmet in PEDP II thus far. The period of PEDP I had results that demonstrate an attempt to achieve the targets, while now, during PEDP II, actual classroom construction is almost nothing compared to the planned targets.

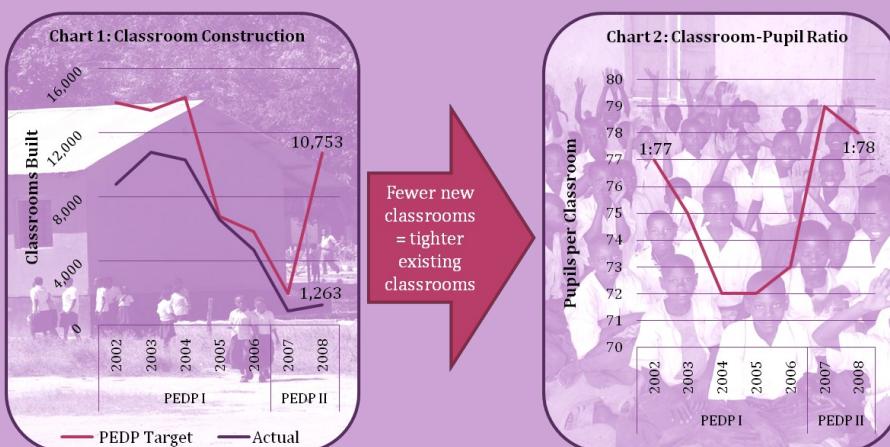
Just like if there are not enough spigots in your village then more people will be forced to fetch water from the same one, classroom construction of course relates to the number of students stuffed into a single classroom. As enrolment increases and fewer classrooms are built, the existing classrooms become more and more crowded. Chart 2 shows how PEDP I succeeded in lowering the classroom-pupil ratio while the shallow implementation of PEDP II has allowed the classroom-pupil ratio to skyrocket.

Because classroom construction has apparently been forgotten, classrooms are more overcrowded than they were even when PEDP began, as can be seen by comparing the 2008 classroom-pupil ratio with that of 2002 above.

When You Don't Care for Teachers, Fewer People will Want to be One

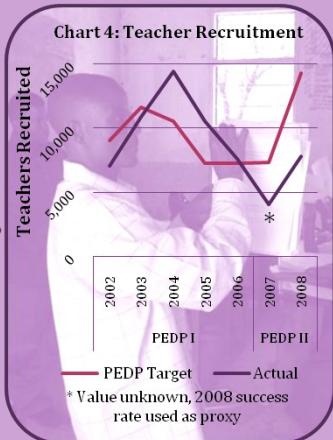
Similarly, construction of teacher houses has become non-existent. While such construction actually surpassed the targets during PEDP I, it is almost as if construction of teacher housing has halted in PEDP II. In 2008, while the government had written a plan to build 21,936 teacher houses, it only built 277, or 1% of what was called for by PEDP II. That's like buying medicine that advertises that there are 100 tabs in the box, but when you open it, there's only 1!

Teacher housing is a major problem in our education sector. Not only are current teachers leaving the profession to seek work elsewhere due to the poor living conditions that they are subjected to, but new graduates are becoming more and more reluctant to enter the teaching field because they know they will not be well cared for. Obviously, the

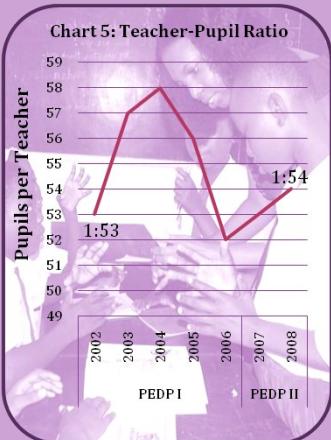




Poor living conditions = demotivation to become a teacher



Fewer new teachers = more students for existing teachers to educate



government failure to construct teacher houses exacerbates this problem. This is reflected in the low teacher recruitment that is currently being experienced by PEDP II, as in Chart 4. Again, while teacher recruitment actually exceeded PEDP I targets, only half of the target was met in 2008.

Of course, teacher recruitment then has implications on the teacher-pupil ratio: the less teachers recruited, the more students each single teacher is responsible to teach. This has consequences on the quality of education our children receive because the more students a teacher is responsible for, the less individual attention he or she may give to each student.

The national target for the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:40, that is, 40 students for each teacher. Chart 5 shows that while effort was put forth in curbing the teacher-pupil ratio during PEDP I, PEDP II has now allowed it to grow back to a level even higher than when PEDP was initiated. Currently there are 54 students for every teacher while in 2002 there were 53 students per teacher.

Failing Exams

With all of this—fewer new classrooms, more crowded classrooms, fewer new teachers, a higher teacher-pupil ratio—one would expect the quality of education to plummet and our students to begin to fail. That is exactly what is happening. Chart 6 tracks the success rates of the Primary School Leaving Examination. Again, as there were clear improvements in PEDP I, matters are

worsening in PEDP II as a smaller proportion of students are passing their Standard VII exam. In 2008, only 52.7% passed whereas at the end of PEDP I, 70.5% passed. If the education system is likened to agriculture, it would be as if only *half* of our crops grew to fruition in 2008...nationwide! How could our country survive?

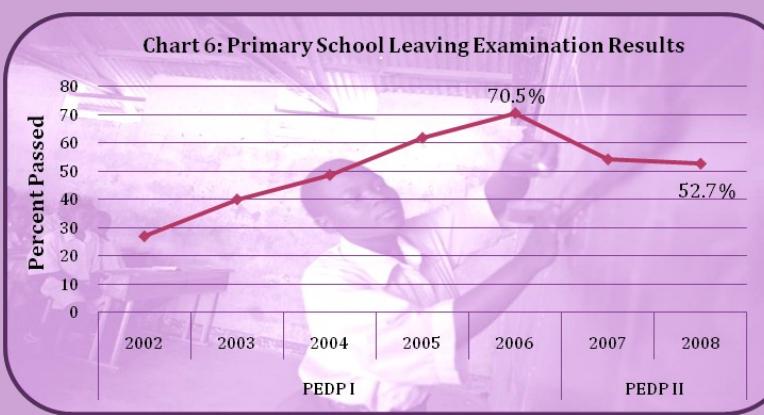
Where is PEDP II?

All of these charts say the same thing: From 2002-2006, during PEDP I, targets were more closely met if not surpassed. Starting in 2007 and with the onset of PEDP II, targets begin to be grossly missed. Every chart shows improvements from 2002-2006 then drastic failures starting in 2007. All of this correlates into the recent troubles students are having with Standard VII examinations. Though inputs such as numbers of classrooms and numbers of teachers do not solely determine the quality of education our children receive, such inputs clearly play a vital part.

In relation to the 2008 PEDP II construction targets, only 12% of classrooms, 1% of teacher houses, and 5% of latrines were built. Failure rates of 88-99% do not raise questions as to why PEDP II is crashing; rather, they make one ask if PEDP II even exists other than just on paper. If PEDP II didn't exist, would the state of education be much different than it is today?

It is not too late to fix this. The first step is to realize these trends and to decide to do something about it. Most of these problems begin with the central government budget—despite the budget written in PEDP II, year after year, far too little funds are committed by the government to follow through with its own plan.

Talk to your local government representative today! Demand that they fund PEDP II! Demand that they prove to you that PEDP II is more than just words on paper!



All figures have been taken from or derived from *PEDP I, PEDP II, Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST), and PEDP II Annual Performance Report FY 2007/08*, all published by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.