

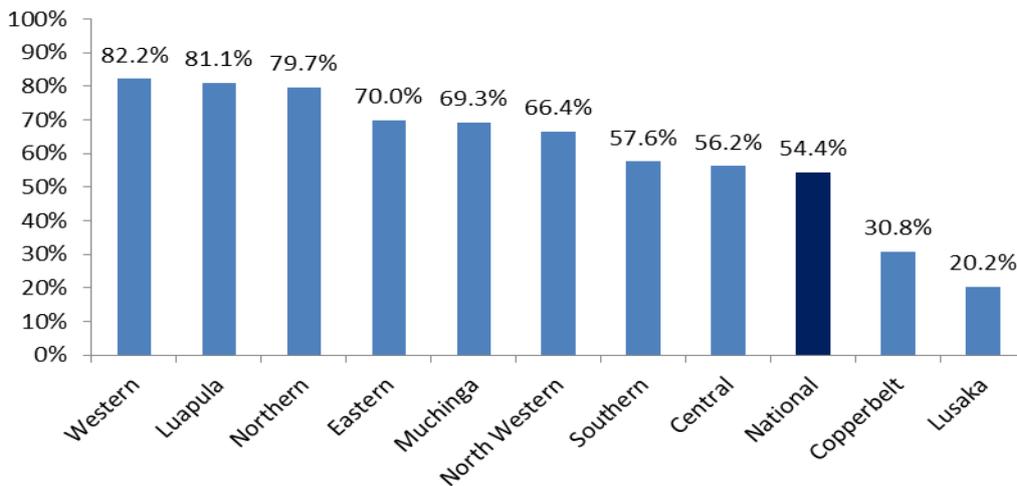
Connectedness: the Ministry of Education in Zambia creates an enabling environment in the struggle against child poverty by Esvah Chizambe

The challenges related to poverty are huge in Zambia. Budgets are limited, but the Ministry of Education makes the difference by taking up a facilitating role in the struggle against child poverty. They connect actors, from schools and teacher training colleges to NGO's. They create an enabling environment which makes collaboration possible and where each stakeholder can take up its responsibilities. Esvah Chizambe talks about the role of the Ministry and wants to exchange ideas.

POVERTY IN ZAMBIA

According to the 2015 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey (LCMS), around 54.4% of the population in Zambia could be considered poor, subdivided into extremely poor (40.8%) and moderately poor (13.6%). In absolute numbers, this means that 8.5 million people are living in poverty, with 6.4 million of those living in extreme poverty with insufficient resources to meet their daily minimum food requirements. Figure 1.1 below shows the regional distribution of poverty. Lusaka and Copperbelt Provinces perform above the national average, whereas the other eight provinces are below the national average.

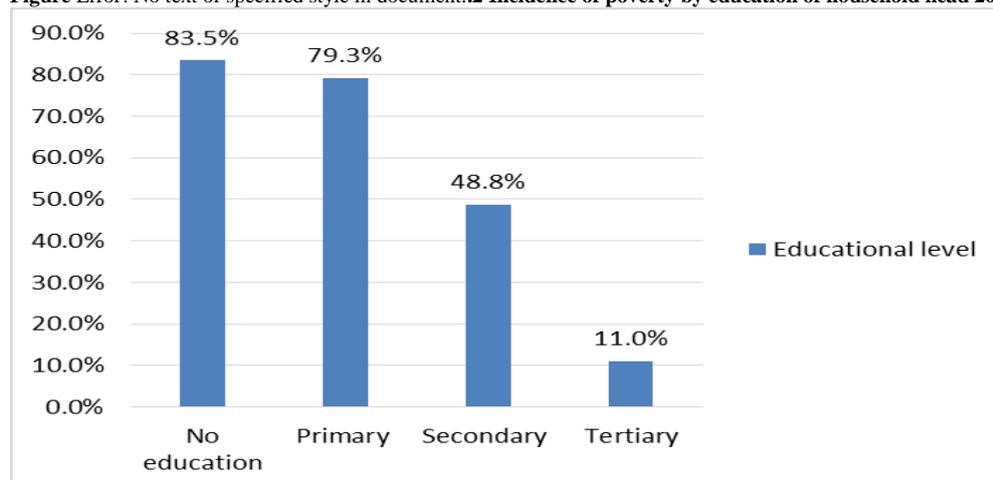
Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..1 Poverty Rates by Province (%)



Source: LCMS 2015.

It seems clear that the impact of poverty is greatest in rural areas. As can be seen, poverty has a strong impact on all aspects of education, including access, quality and attainment. In addition, education has a strong impact on levels of poverty. Figure 1.2 below shows how education has an impact on poverty alleviation with 83.5 percent of the population with household heads who have not attained any formal education living in poverty, 79.3 percent of those that attained primary education were living in poverty, 48.8 percent of those who attained secondary education and only 11 percent of those with household heads with tertiary education living in poverty.

Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..2 Incidence of poverty by education of household head 2010 (%)



Source: 2015 LCMS.

In addition to the high levels of poverty, wealth in Zambia is not distributed equitably. The Gini coefficient measures how family income is distributed: how much the richest 20 percent of the population get compared to the poorest? A low score is good, a high score not so good. The United States is ranked 40th in the world in terms of income inequality with a score of 45 while Zambia is ranked 5th with a score of 57.1 (2015 World Bank data).

TOPIC 1: Curriculum and teaching aids, the role of government and cooperating partners

- The Ministry of General Education finalised the review of the curriculum for all levels of the education system from ECE to teacher training. The review was supported by Cooperating Partners.
- There is a good deal of international evidence that textbook availability and use helps student learning. This is also the case in Zambia. The most recent PETS found that textbook ownership is positively correlated with student learning.
- According to the MoGE policy on school textbooks, the development of textbooks is the responsibility of publishers. Publishers are expected to develop books at their own risk, in response to a perceived market need for schools, and sell them through the normal marketing mechanisms. The role of the MoGE in this process is that of evaluating and approving the books that are produced by the publishers using criteria that are developed by the Ministry in order to ensure educational standards are met.
- However, where the private publishers fail to provide, or where special need arises, MoGE through the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) initiates and develops course textbooks and teachers' guides/manuals. As for the course syllabi and supplementary materials, it is the responsibility of the Ministry to initiate, develop, publish and distribute. Since the CDC has no publishing facilities as of now, the institution is expected to go into partnership with publishers or printers

TOPIC 2: Partnerships and collaboration in terms of vulnerable children

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and other stakeholders make a significant contribution to provision of education in the Zambian education system. Some FBOs such as churches provide education to many learners at different levels country wide especially ECE and that for LSEN. **Some of these institutions are grant-aided and receive grants from Government for approved projects and running costs**, while others are purely run without Government support. **Government also pays the salaries of teachers and approved personnel at some of these institutions.** *There are also organisations that do not run schools but only provide financial and material support to education institutions.* These institutions are also key in providing advocacy in the education sector.

Challenges

- Budgetary constraints
- Coordination of partners

TOPIC 3: School Meals

Zambian context

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) recently compiled finds Zambia is the third hungriest country in the world.

Following the severe drought of 2002-2013, the World Food Programme (WFP) implemented recovery interventions, which included mainly school feeding. A total of *10,000* school children in the most drought-affected districts were fed per annum. Later, this was expanded, and school meals were provided to *890,000* learners in the targeted *2,300* schools in 22 districts in 2015.

Challenges

- The principal obstacle to provision of school meals for all children is the cost.

Meeting the Needs

- Encouraging schools to grow fruit trees in school orchard/gardens
- Community members to ensure that learners ate before coming to school or carry food to school

TOPIC 4: Language policy dealing with multilingualism, policy and link to adult literacy

The policy on education recognises:

- The use of familiar Zambian languages as the official languages of instruction in the Pre-Schools and early Grades (Grades 1-4). All the teaching and learning in all the learning areas at the Lower Primary level will be in familiar Zambian Languages. This is because there is evidence that children learn more easily and successfully through languages that they know and understand well.

- English will be offered as a subject, beginning at Grade 2. After the children have acquired sufficient literacy skills in the Zambian languages, it will be easier for them to transfer these skills quickly and with ease to Literacy in English at Grade 2.

Youth and adult literacy education and continuing education

According to the UNESCO Education Policy Review (Zambia) of 2016, the recent literacy data from Demographic and Health Survey 2013-2014 suggest that there were more than 2.2 million Zambian youth and adults aged 15-49 years with minimal literacy skills (16 percent of females and 13 percent of males never went to school at all). The Review noted that in 2015 the adult literacy rate in Zambia was 63.4 percent (those aged fifteen years and above). Illiteracy remains an important challenge to be addressed by the Government.

To promote equity in the provision of Youth and Adult Literacy Education, the Ministry has:

- Focused on establishing adult literacy classes in the existing government schools in rural, remote and urban areas.
- There is provision of both basic and functional literacy by providing skills training courses such as tailoring and bricklaying to encourage both men and women to enrol in literacy classes.
- Establishment of adult literacy classes in correctional facilities or prisons for inmates to cater for the marginalised groups in society among others.

Challenges

The YALE programme is challenged by:

- Limited resources. Currently, YALE is allocated about 3 percent of the Ministry budget and the actual releases are much less than the allocation;
- Another major challenge is coordination between MoGE and MCDSS. While MoGE controls the funds, MCDSS owns some of the facilities.
- Limited number of qualified trainers;
- Inadequate infrastructure and learning materials;
- Limited record keeping; and
- Absence of evaluations