

“The Responsible Teacher: how
Zambian teachers reach out to
the homes of their learners.

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eNSPIRED learning week, 18 April 2018

Introduce yourself

Use an adjective starting with the same letter as your name.

E.g. Motivated Mutinta

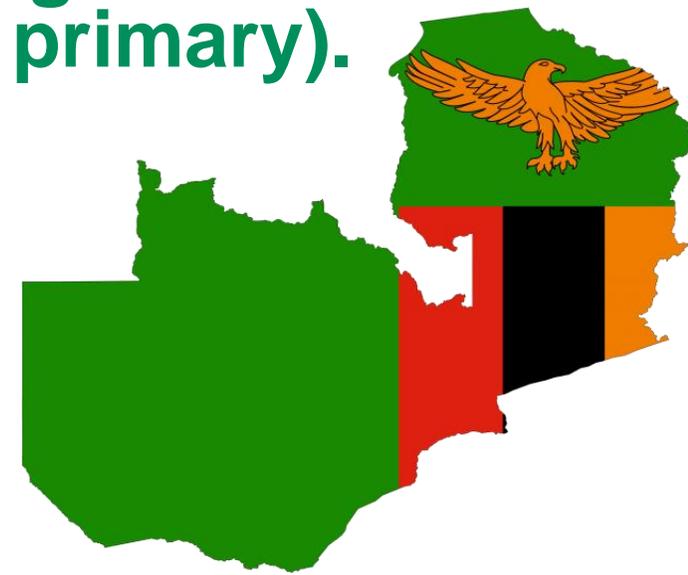
Facts and Figures Education in Zambia!

Zambian education is organized by the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) and the Ministry of Higher Education.

There are government schools, private schools and community schools. All should follow the same government guidelines.

However there is a shortage of schools resulting in less choice for parents and at times shorter teaching times (sometimes a mere 3 or 4 hours a day, even in primary).

Free (compulsory) education grade 1 to 8, but there are no fines for absenteeism and drop out rates are considerable.



Cost

ECE is meant to be free but schools struggle to finance it especially as it should have smaller groups, larger classrooms and it requires some equipment.

Sometimes grade 9 fees enable schools to organize ECE

In addition there are often hidden costs like parent teacher association contributions and uniform.

Facts and Figures Education in Zambia!

Time

**There are 3 terms, separated by over a month of holidays at Christmas, Easter and in “summer”.
ECE also has a mid-term break (unlike other levels) in week 7.**

ECE is almost always from morning to lunch (1/2 day, maximum 4 hours).

The new school year starts in January.



Facts and Figures ECE in Zambia!

Before 2011 Early childhood Education or ECE was mostly run by private institutions with a variety of approaches depending on the philosophy or the organizer as there were no clear guidelines yet.

Afterwards MoGE got increasingly involved and in 2015 a new directorate was dedicated especially to ECE.

Plenty of ECE-centres were established however, at present only a mere 1 out of 5 ECE learners are enrolled in Schools.

Early childhood education (ECE) being “new” a lot of searching for quality formulas and internal learning at different levels is ongoing. Both at ministry level as well as in pre- and in-service teacher training. For example there is increased attention to learning through play whereas before it was sometimes primary brought forward.

Levels and class sizes

There is mention of 3 classes: Nursery, middle class and reception.

However most schools organize but 2 (Nursery-reception) or 1, and often there is but 1 teacher for the 2 classes (so multi-grade classes).

According to ministry policy there should be no more than 25 learners per teacher this is not always feasible.

6	Pre-school	Reception
5		
4		Nursery
3		
2	Day Care	
1		
0		

Content of the learning

The syllabus covers:

- Language and literacy
- Environmental science
- Social studies
- Pre-mathematics
- Expressive arts
 - Motor Development (Gross and Fine motor skills)
 - Music Games and Dances
 - Art and Crafts, Drama

ECE is now taught in local language (one of the 7 most important ones). In grade 4 English is introduced.

By the end of ECE learners are expected to know some phonics.

Video

Questions related to the video



Why in your opinion is parental involvement important?

Importance of parental involvement

- **Better alignment between parents and school**
- **Improved support and learning outcomes**



What are the challenges you face related to parental involvement?

Challenges with parental involvement

Especially parents of vulnerable children have worries beyond school and struggle to make school a priority.

They are at times absent at meetings which makes it hard to sustain the dialogue, get their input and gain their confidence.

When some parents do not comply with earlier agreements sometimes the burden on the other parents increases causing more demotivation...



Overcoming challenges

- **Being transparent as much as possible**
- **Involve parents in a variety of ways:**
 - Invite them into the class to experience
 - Meetings with information
 - Home visits (to inform the teacher as well as the parents)
 - Informal chats during open days, pick up and drop off, in town, ...
 - Newsletters
 - Use any means available: text messages, calling, reminders, notes with children, involve siblings, ...
- **Have different expectations for different parents.**
- **Ask for reasons why they do not comply with expectations, to see if the expectations need to be adapted.**
- **Praise all received help and emphasise the importance of being partners in educationg the children.**



Think about one inspirational practice of yours (or of a colleague) which helped to bridge the gap between parents and school.

Are these examples part of the role and responsibility of the teacher as well as the school in the community?