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# CASE STUDY

## Meeting EFA: Zambia Community Schools

### Introduction

As a result of the political and economic shifts that occurred during Zambia's transition away from a socialist economy in the early 1990s, many Zambians became concerned with the country's large number of uneducated children. Communities began forming their own schools, usually in the absence of a nearby public school and/or in response to the inability of families to meet the costs associated with government-provided schooling. Supported by local and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and, most importantly, embraced by the Zambian government, these local initiatives have grown into a national movement. The country's current education sector plan recognizes the critical role community schools play in contributing to realizing education for all (EFA), as evidenced by the following direct quote from the 2001 Ministry of Education "Policy and Guidelines for the Development of Community Schools in Zambia:"

*The Ministry recognizes that over the last four years two kinds of successful alternative approaches that address enrolment of orphans and vulnerable groups have already been established. Therefore new agreements and memoranda of understanding will be developed with community schools and interactive radio centres to provide specific access for out-of-school children. These agreements will increase Ministry support through grants and materials while still preserving strong community ownership.*

Since 1998, the government has officially recognized community schools and has been working in partnership with the Zambia Community Schools Secretariat (ZCSS), an umbrella NGO for community schools, to promote their development. As many as 500,000 students are estimated to attend community schools—approximately 20 percent of the total basic education enrollment in Zambia.

The impact of the HIV epidemic is one reason cited for the growth of community schools in Zambia. Almost 1 million people in Zambia are living with HIV/AIDS. The population of orphaned children grows as more and more adults succumb to the disease. More than 700,000 children have lost one or both parents, accounting for 15 percent of the population under 15 years old. Schools have to address the needs of these alarming numbers of orphaned children, and community schools have helped provide viable options in ways that public schools have not. According to a CARE Zambia study in 2005, approximately 500,000 orphans were enrolled in basic schools in 2004. Orphans account for 13 percent of the public school student body and almost a third of community school enrollment, according to the Zambia Ministry of Education 2004 "Free Basic Education Policy Implementation Assessment." The HIV/AIDS epidemic and the fiscal crisis confronting the country over the past 10 years represent two notable factors contributing to the accelerated growth of community schools in Zambia since the mid-1990s.



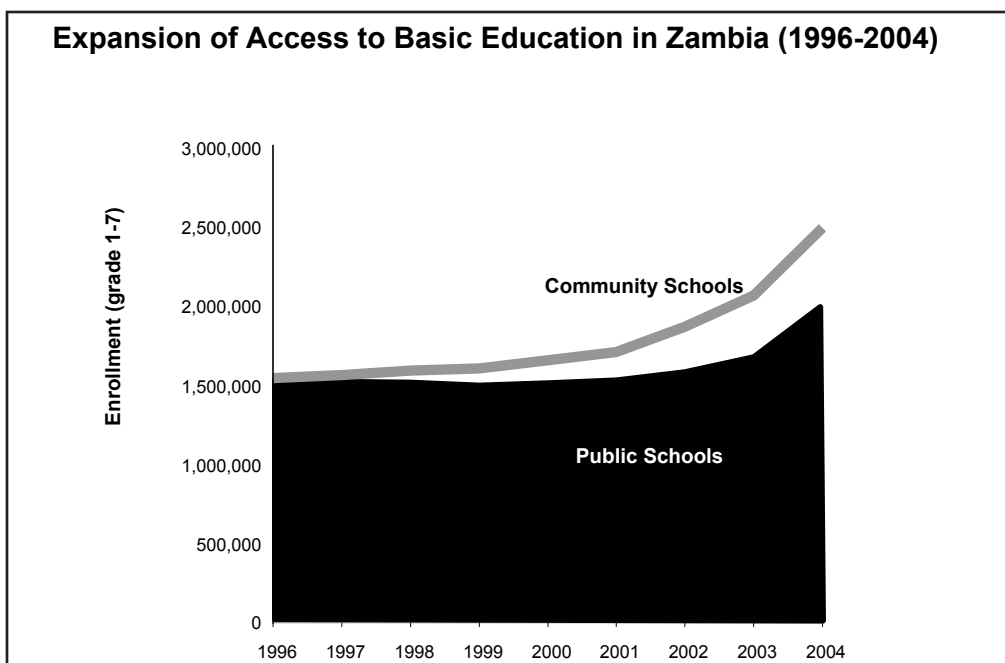


This case study examines community schools in Zambia in an attempt to assess the contribution they make to meeting the educational needs of students and, in particular, orphans and vulnerable children.

### Access

Data on community schools are maintained by ZCSS and through the annual school census conducted by the Ministry of Education. However, the failure of all community schools to return their annual school statistic returns has hampered the compilation of data on community schools by the Ministry. For this reason, the Ministry and ZCSS report drastically different numbers of community schools. According to the Ministry’s 2004 data, 1,338 community schools enrolled just over 230,000 students. The ZCSS reports 3,009 schools with a total enrollment of approximately 500,000.

Based on the ZCSS data, community schools increased enrollment in basic education in Zambia by 25 percent in 2004. The graph below—based on official figures for public schools and estimates of community school enrollment taken from Kanyika, Sakala, Mwale, Musuku, Mweemba, and Nakazwe-Musakanya’s 2005 *Learning Achievement at the Middle and Basic Level, Zambia’s National Assessment Survey Report – 2003* as well as data collected by CARE Zambia—shows the growing contribution of community schools to basic education access in Zambia over the last 10 years.



In 2002, the Zambian government declared basic education free. All schools were directed to stop charging any form of fees for pupils in grades one through seven, and uniforms were no longer compulsory. Furthermore, the government directed that no pupil should be denied enrollment or excluded from school because of an inability to pay

any levy. As shown in the preceding graph, enrollment in basic education did increase by 30 percent from 2002 to 2004. During the same time period, community schools expanded along with access to public schools. By design, community schools most often serve the poorest, most vulnerable children in Zambia.

Most experts assumed that the implementation of free basic education (FBE) would draw students from community schools into public schools. However, according to the Zambia Ministry of Education 2004 “Free Basic Education Policy Implementation Assessment,” more pupils have moved from government to community schools since FBE, implying that community schools in Zambia are addressing other constraints that are equally or more important to families than the direct costs of schooling.

It should be noted that FBE policies actually increased the cost of education in some cases because public schools often charge user fees despite the FBE policies. User fees are often higher than the previously negotiated fees. In these cases, student movement to community schools may be attributed to cost because user fees in community schools are almost always less than public school fees.

National estimates indicate that in 2000, over 570,000 children age seven to 13 years old, or roughly 30 percent of the school-age population, were not in regular school. By 2003, the number of out-of-school children decreased to 480,000, or 23.4 percent. Including community school enrollments, the number of out-of-school children is only 340,000, or 16.6 percent of the school age population, all according to the Ministry of Education 2004 “Free Basic Education Policy Implementation Assessment.” As stated earlier, the most recent estimates indicate that 30 percent of community school enrollments are children who have lost at least one parent.

The 2005 CARE Zambia report profiles seven community schools and one public school. For the six community schools that have disaggregated data, 100 percent of the children enrolled were categorized as orphaned or vulnerable and 56 percent as children who have lost one or both parents. Vulnerable children were defined as children who are inadequately cared for as a result of their parents’ socioeconomic status.

Community schools in Zambia also consistently serve more over-age students than public schools. Based on official statistics in *Learning Achievement at the Middle and Basic Level, Zambia’s National Assessment Survey Report – 2003*, as opposed to the higher ZCSS figures, more than half of community school students are over age 14, while only 28 percent of public school students are over age 14.

Community school students’ households are poorer than public school students’. Less than one-third of community school families live in permanent structures, compared to 46 percent of public school families. Students attending rural community schools are 13 percent more likely than rural public school students to report never having breakfast before school. Urban community school students are almost 1.5 more likely than urban public school students to report never eating breakfast at all, according to Kanikya, et al.



Community school families have less education on average than the families of students enrolled in public schools. Half of the fathers or male guardians of community school students have primary education or less, compared to 32 percent of public school students' male guardians. More than twice as many public school male guardians have a certificate or degree. Female guardians of community school students are twice as likely as female guardians of public school students to have no education. Consequently, community schools students are more likely to speak only a local language at home, according to Kanikya, et al.

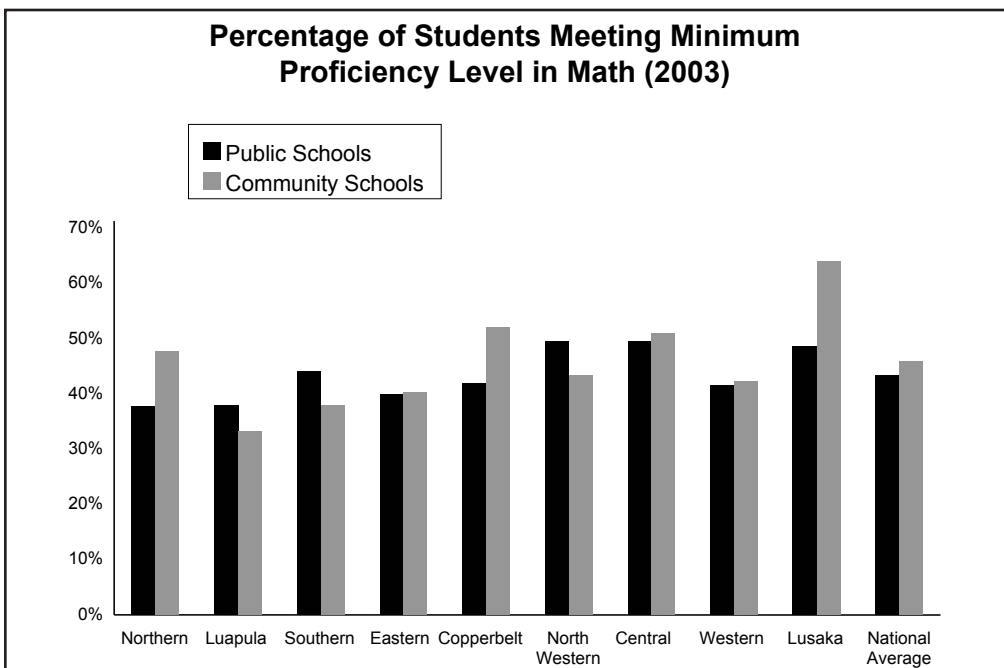
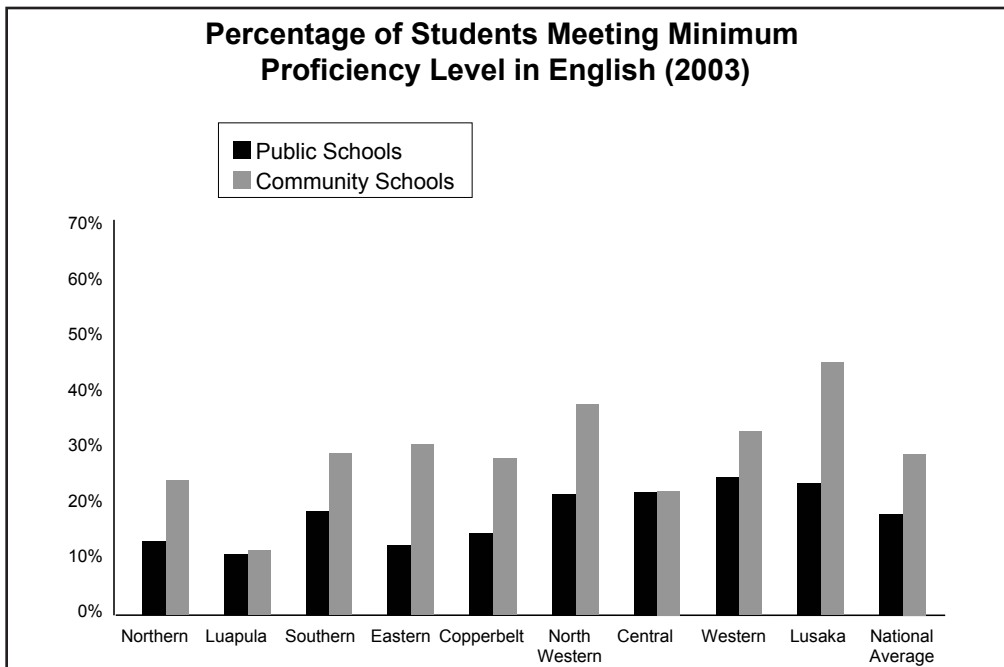
Community schools have grown in response to the need to provide schools to disadvantaged families and children in Zambia and clearly offer an important complement to public schools. More than twice as many public school students in rural areas report having to walk more than one hour to get to school, according to Kanikya, et al.

## Learning

In 2003, the Examinations Council of Zambia undertook a comprehensive sample-based assessment of student learning in primary school. Grade five students in public schools were scientifically sampled from urban and rural areas in all nine provinces. Two hundred fifty public schools were included in the sample, for a total of 5,000 students. Additionally, for the first time, the 2003 assessment also included a sample of 100 community schools drawn from each of the nine provinces. The Examinations Council selected community schools that were "relatively stable and enduring schools with fairly sizable enrolments," according to Kanyika, et al. on page nine of *Learning Achievement at the Middle and Basic Level, Zambia's National Assessment Survey Report – 2003*, for tests in English, math, and Zambian language.

Students' test results are evaluated against the established national norm for minimum and desirable levels of proficiency. In both English and math, the minimum level of proficiency for the fifth grade in 2003 is defined as a score of 40 percent correct. The desirable level of proficiency for fifth grade English is 71 percent and 60 percent in math. The following graphs show the percentage of students meeting minimum levels of proficiency in 2003 in each province for both community and public schools, taken from *Learning Achievement at the Middle and Basic Level, Zambia's National Assessment Survey Report – 2003*.

In 2003, 29 percent of community school students met minimum proficiency in English, compared to 18 percent of public school students. Additionally, community school students outperformed public school students in English in every province, as shown in the following graph. In particular, the percentage meeting the minimum proficiency level in English far surpassed the percentage of public school students meeting that level in the Northern, Southern, Eastern, Copperbelt, North Western, and Lusaka provinces. ZCSS reports the portion of students meeting minimum proficiency in English at 35 percent for public schools and 40 percent for community schools.



In math, 46 percent of community school students met minimum proficiency, compared to 43 percent of public school students. Community school students outperformed public school students in the Northern, Copperbelt, Central, and Lusaka provinces while Public school students did better than community school students in the Luapula, Southern, and North Western provinces. For 2004, the CARE Zambia report finds



that 36 percent of public school and 45 percent of community school students met minimum proficiency in math.

It is important to note that community schools vary greatly, ranging from the most basic attempt by a community to meet the education needs of its children to schools that include support from an on-the-ground, nongovernmental or faith-based organization. It would be misleading to generalize that these different kinds of community schools are all equally able to effectively educate poor and vulnerable children.

### Costs and Cost-Effectiveness

Data on costs for community schools were extremely difficult to find. Given the variation among community schools, especially between those that operate independently and those that are supported by a project of some kind, generalizing based on existing data would be misleading.

The CARE project in Kopano has provided some data on the costs associated with a community school. These figures are a good estimate of the costs of a supported school in which the teachers receive training and small incentive payments, teachers and students are provided materials, and other organizations invest in school and community capacity building. CARE reports providing just over \$20,000 of recurrent support to a school that has 525 students and seven teachers. The components included in that total are shown in the following table.

**Recurrent Costs of a Community School in the CARE Kopano Project**

Recurrent Cost Components	Cost	Portion of Total
Teaching and learning materials	\$3,477	17%
Teacher honoraria	\$2,864	14%
Teacher training	\$5,600	28%
Capacity building	\$8,000	39%
Sports and recreation	\$352	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,293</b>	<b>100%</b>

CARE provides basic resources to the 10 community schools it supports in the Central, Lusaka, and Southern Provinces:

- Texts for teachers and students, usually one book per teacher and one for every two students to share in the four subject areas of English, math, science, and social studies;
- Training for teachers and Parent Community School Committee (PCSC) members;
- Stipends of roughly U.S. \$34 per month for teachers; and
- Some equipment for sports and recreation.

Teacher training and PCSC capacity building represent the largest portions of a community school budget. Based on these estimates, community schools supported by CARE’s Kopano project have annual unit costs of roughly \$39 per student enrolled.

The government of Zambia had recurrent expenditure for basic education of approximately \$147 million in 2004. Students enrolled in basic education in public and grant-aided schools in that year numbered 2.2 million, for a recurrent annual per pupil cost of \$67. The following table compares the cost-effectiveness of community schools and public schools in terms of unit costs, costs to produce a seventh grade completer, and costs to produce a desired level of learning.

**Estimated Per-Pupil Unit Costs in Community and Public Schools**

<b>Cost Component</b>	<b>Community Schools</b>	<b>Public Schools</b>
<b>Recurrent costs per student</b>	<b>\$39</b>	<b>\$67</b>
<b>Completion rate</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>Cost per completer</b>	<b>\$376</b>	<b>\$655</b>
<b>Portion of students achieving minimum standards</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Cost per student meeting minimum standards</b>	<b>\$885</b>	<b>\$1,845</b>

In the CARE Zambia sample of cases, community schools were more cost-effective than public schools despite enrolling poorer, more disadvantaged students. This stems primarily from their much lower per-student costs and their better learning outcomes. A higher percentage of community school students meet minimum standards in both English and math. Using these statistics, the ZCSS successfully lobbied the Ministry of Education to mandate 30 percent of funds in one district to community schools.

## **Critical Features of Community Schools**

Community schools are difficult to describe in general terms because they are managed locally and vary widely in character, organization, and operation, whereas public schools are managed centrally and are, therefore, more uniform. This case study attempts to highlight the characteristics that distinguish community schools from typical public schools, including management and governance, teachers, and curriculum.

### ***Management and Governance***

Community schools in Zambia can be classified into three categories. Those launched by a community on its own tend to be under-resourced and rely almost entirely on the initiative and will of the members of the local community. The ownership and management of the school are in the hands of the PCSC representatives. Other schools are started and supported by an NGO or a faith-based organization with the intention of eventually turning over ownership and operations to a PCSC. However, this does not always happen, in particular with schools sponsored by faith-based organizations. In many cases, the organization remains primarily in charge of the school through an appointed board of its own representatives and offers more resources to the school.



with little or no community involvement and no PCSC. The nature of these schools depends entirely on the resources and will of the sponsoring individual. In rural areas, a community school is usually started where no public schools are located within walking distance. In urban areas, a community school is started where there is a large concentration of children who are not able to access a public school due to cost and other factors. In all situations, the demand of out-of-school children drives the creation of schools.

A school is formally recognized and registered by the ZCSS or Ministry of Education if it enrolls children who:

- Have never been to school but are older than the age of entry to basic education;
- Have no other education alternative in the community;
- Are orphans or otherwise vulnerable children; and
- Are disadvantaged with regards to access to the school system or cannot pay fees.

However, most schools are started without the prior knowledge of the Ministry and ZCSS. Communities, local organizations, or individuals simply decide to start a school to meet an identified need.

The ZCSS lists specific criteria for community schools to pass through three stages of accreditation: developmental, intermediate, and full. Criteria related to infrastructure, enrollment, teachers, curriculum, and materials are specified for each stage. NGO-sponsored or -supported schools can receive the following kinds of assistance towards meeting those criteria:

- Training for teachers and PCSC members;
- Scholarships for teachers to attend teacher training colleges and obtain teaching certificates;
- Investments in school infrastructure, including the provision of school furniture;
- Provision of teaching and learning materials, including textbooks; and
- Development of sanitation and water facilities

Community schools are owned and managed by their PCSCs unless an NGO, faith-based organization, or individual retains the ownership and management rights. The PCSC registers the school with the government, formulates a school constitution, recruits teachers, draws up development plans, and obtains funding. PCSC membership varies from community to community, but usually includes seven to 10 members (e.g., parents, teachers, school supervisor, a prominent individual from the community, local police officer, health worker, public school teacher). The role of the PCSC is to provide the school oversight in all matters—administration, management, supervision—and specifically has responsibility for:

- Mobilizing resources for the school, including supplies obtained through ZCSS;
- Finding school premises and setting up the infrastructure;



- Recruiting and selecting teachers and securing resources to pay their allowances;
- Appointing a school supervisor;
- Monitoring and supervising teachers and disciplining or dismissing them as necessary;
- Enrolling pupils and ensuring appropriate targeting of orphans and vulnerable children;
- Sensitizing parents and the community to the importance of girls' education; and
- Monitoring curriculum to ensure conformity with the national curriculum.

The PCSCs officially meet every month. There is also an annual meeting with the public to reflect on the school's progress, report on finances, and make plans for the coming year. Community schools hold annual meetings to reflect on lessons learned throughout the year, report on finances, and make plans for the coming year. This meeting provides an open forum for individuals to voice their opinions and state their priorities for the local leaning environment. This process also engages a variety of stakeholders in developing a vision for their community school.

Community schools' teachers and supervisors are accountable to the PCSC. In addition, the District Education Standards Office is supposed to visit community schools to observe classrooms, review lesson plans, and manage other tasks. However, this oversight function is carried out inconsistently. Often, the lack of dependable support from Ministry offices compels PCSC members to supervise teacher quality themselves.

The Ministry of Education and/or the ZCSS evaluate whether a school is meeting accreditation standards and whether the community approves of the teaching and learning taking place in the school. The ZCSS consistently lobbies the Ministry of Education to relax standards for opening and registering community schools. As a result, community schools start out following minimum standards while public schools follow conventional standards.

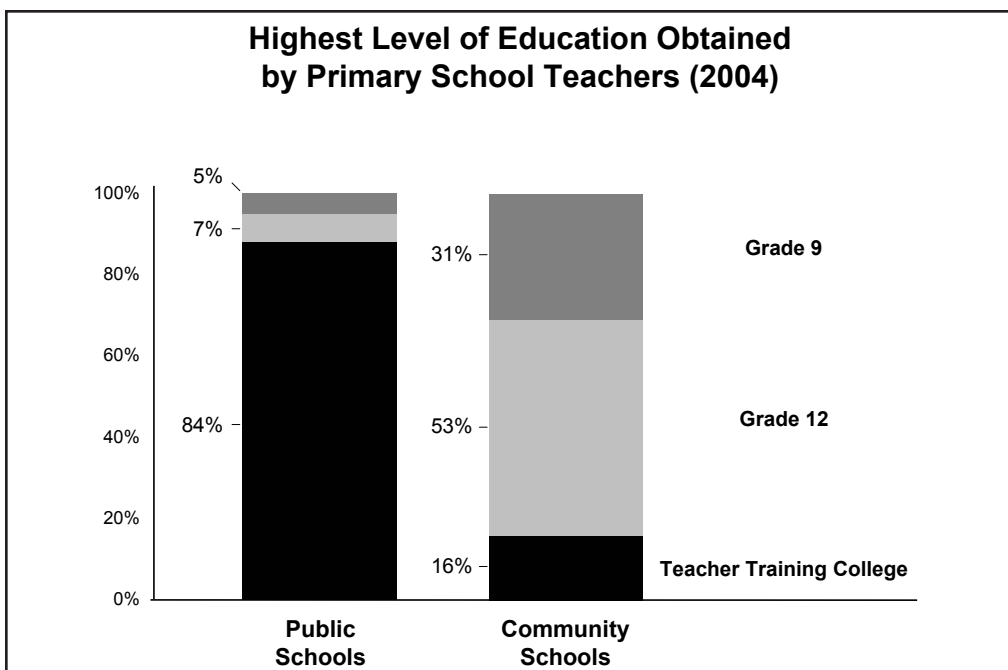
Communities evaluate their schools based on seventh grade end-of-cycle examination pass rates. Increased pressure on community schools to adopt the official government curriculum stems from communities' desire to have students pass this exam, on which admission to upper basic education depends.

The ZCSS annually collects information on new and established community schools, as does the Ministry of Education as part of its annual school census. The ZCSS and Ministry are collaborating to make their data collection efforts more compatible. The ZCSS is working to make sure all community schools are included on district and national education management information system (EMIS) databases. At present, almost 50 percent of community schools are not included in the EMIS. Community schools must register with the ZCSS and Ministry and complete the annual school census form in order to be eligible for government funding.



### Teachers

Teachers in community schools have less formal education and less experience teaching specific curricula than their public school counterparts. Public school teachers are officially required to have a primary teacher certification, which requires a two-year course at a teacher training college. Teachers who have a primary certificate are eligible to upgrade to a diploma or Bachelor of Arts degree. Teachers in community schools are supposed to have completed senior secondary school through grade 12. The chart below shows the actual levels of education of the teaching corps in public and community schools according to 2004 Ministry of Education official statistics.



While the vast majority of public primary school teachers have attended teacher training college, only 16 percent of community school teachers have. In fact, almost a third of community school teachers have only a lower secondary education. Most of these teachers are in rural areas. In urban areas, most teachers are better educated, but have a higher turnover rate.

Community school teachers are recruited locally by a school’s PSCS. Teachers in community-initiated schools are recruited on a volunteer basis, with promises for occasional in-kind compensation. Teachers receive an allowance in schools supported by NGOs or faith-based organizations. For example, under the government’s BESSIP program, which ended in 2004, community schools were able to use up to 20 percent of their grant money to pay teachers allowances. The amount of allowances varies from \$11 to \$22 per month in rural areas and from \$33 to \$50 per month in urban centers. Public school teacher salaries range from \$170 to \$341 per month, depending on qualifications and years of service.

Training for community school teachers is assured primarily through donor-funded and/or NGO-supported projects. For example, CARE is coordinating with other NGOs, donor agencies, and the District Education Board Secretariats to avoid duplication and ensure an appropriate sequence of training for community school teachers. For example, in many schools supported by NGOs, new community school teachers are trained in the 12 basic skill areas of the primary school curriculum. They are then trained in classroom management, use of locally developed teaching and learning materials, and curriculum planning. Individual schools are supported in taking the initiative to identify the training needs of their teachers. For example, the Simatobolo Community School in rural Livingstone District placed an emphasis on improved teacher qualification as a key strategy for improvement of teaching and learning reading. The school is working with an NGO to have its two teachers, both of whom dropped out in grade 12, obtain primary certificates through the long-distance teacher training program at the Livingstone Teacher Training College, according to CARE Zambia.

In addition to the training supported by NGOs or donor projects, public schools also serve as zonal and district resource centers for community schools. Often twinning relationships are set up between community schools and nearby public schools. School-based resource centers act as training sites for teacher professional development workshops. The public school teachers may also serve as mentors for the community school teachers. A close collaboration between community and public school teachers has caused similarities in instructional approaches and sharing of teaching resources. The Ministry of Education also, when possible, will send government teachers to community schools while continuing to pay their salaries.

### *Curriculum*

Community schools are flexible in their enrollment and structure. No age limits are imposed on prospective students, and schools initially tended to enroll older students. In fact, preference was often given to older learners who either had not had a chance to enroll in school previously or who had dropped out. Often, in rural areas, schools employ multi-grade teaching.

Many community schools previously used the curriculum developed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) focused on skills, participation, and access to relevant information (SPARK). SPARK is an alternative curriculum for accelerated learning, designed for students who enter school at an older age. It compresses the seven grades of formal basic education into four years.

The SPARK curriculum focuses on helping the illiterate or semi-literate child acquire practical skills so he/she may become a productive citizen in the local community. The curriculum was not designed to be examinable and, thus, those passing out of the SPARK program were not expected to continue schooling. After completing the four-year curriculum, students are expected to proceed to a skills class focused on practical training (e.g., woodworking, metalworking, tailoring). However, very few community



schools offer these skills courses, and those that do have difficulty retaining students because most learners want to continue an academic education in a secondary school.

Two things have contributed to a movement away from the SPARK alternative curriculum and towards the official Zambia Basic Education Curriculum among community schools. First, community schools are now enrolling students who are closer to the target ages for formal basic education—seven to 14 years old—and SPARK was not designed for younger learners. Second, the SPARK does not fully cover the official curriculum and, therefore, does not adequately prepare students for the national examination at the end of the basic education cycle. Community schools increasingly prefer the official curriculum and are converting to a full seven-year cycle in order to compete with public schools in exam scores. SPARK is being used only for older students who are not expected continue past primary schools.

The Zambia Basic Education Curriculum includes:

- Literacy and language (i.e., Zambian languages, English);
- Mathematics;
- Science;
- Social studies (i.e., history, geography, religious studies);
- Technology studies (i.e., industrial arts, woodwork, home economics); and
- Expressive arts (i.e., physical education, music, art).

Another contribution to community school teaching and learning has been the curriculum and direct instruction delivered through interactive radio. Interactive radio instruction was initially started for vulnerable out-of-school children in very remote areas or in places where there were no education services. Centers are set up in communities where the radio broadcasts can be received, and a local mentor is recruited and trained to follow a manual that supports the broadcast lessons. The radio instruction targets literacy and numeracy in local languages and English, following the official curriculum in those subjects.

The interactive radio program has been incorporated into many community schools, where teachers report finding the radio-based instruction very useful. ZCSS has also capitalized on the spread of interactive radio centers by converting some centers to full-fledged community schools, with PCSCs willing to put up permanent structures for them.

## Policy and Institutional Context

Education in Zambia, like in many Sub-Saharan African countries, was for a long time firmly controlled by the government. For the first decades of independence, a centralized, state-dominated approach to all aspects of the country's development carried over into the education sector. Communities participated little in running schools. In the 1990s, two factors combined to spur the development of community-based

approaches to education. The transformation of Zambia to a more democratic, market-oriented government and economy increased the scope for communities and nongovernmental actors to participate in all aspects of society. At the same time, the impact of the country's economic decline and the HIV/AIDS epidemic meant many communities had to fend for themselves. Increasing numbers of families were marginalized, as evidenced by the 1990 census, which revealed that 44 percent of children ages seven to 18 years old were out of school. Many of those children were orphaned or otherwise vulnerable. Communities themselves or with the aid of civil society organizations opened schools in an attempt to accommodate this large group of neglected children.

Burgeoning community and nongovernmental initiative led to the rapid growth of community-based schooling. The government of Zambia responded by recognizing community schools as a viable alternative or complementary system for providing educational opportunities to disadvantaged children. Community schools were officially recognized by the Ministry of Education in its 1996 "Educating Our Future, National Policy on Education." That policy states:

*The Ministry will assist communities and voluntary organizations that wish to develop their own schools by providing them with technical assistance and guidance, supporting their efforts to mobilize funds and resources, supplying the new schools with educational materials, and providing them with an agreed number of state-funded teachers.*

In that same year, a group of NGOs formed the ZCSS to serve as an umbrella organization coordinating the opening and operation of the growing number of community schools.

In 1998, the first memorandum of agreement between the Ministry of Education and ZCSS was signed, conferring official recognition on the ZCSS as the sole umbrella body for community schools. The memorandum formalized the arrangements through which a community or nongovernmental initiative would be complemented by government endorsement, support, and resources. Communities, NGOs, and faith-based organizations became free to start schools. When those schools can meet pre-determined criteria, they are eligible for state accreditation and direct support. Specifically, as indicated in the recently updated memorandum of agreement, the Ministry commits to ensuring the overall development of community schools on an equitable basis, including:

- Sending teachers appointed by the national Teacher Service Commission to community schools and paying their salaries;
- Providing for the continued support and in-service training of teachers in community schools;
- Providing grants to community schools that meet the Ministry of Education and ZCSS accreditation criteria;
- Including community schools in all standards monitoring;



- Providing infrastructure improvements, furniture, and materials to community schools; and
- Giving financial, logistical, and other support to the ZCSS.

Policymakers in Zambia have recognized that community and NGO efforts offer the best possible means to ensure schooling for disadvantaged groups, in particular orphaned and vulnerable children. They also recognize that government effort and resources could best be deployed to complement community initiative, as exemplified by this statement from the 1996 Ministry of Education “Educating Our Future, National Policy on Education:”

*Communities that wish to establish schools, that would operate as community schools outside the government or District Education Board system, will be strongly encouraged to do so. The ministry will contribute to the running costs of such schools through the provision of teachers and teaching supplies, or through a system of capitation grants.*

Up until 2005, each community school was given approximately \$634, 20 percent of which was used to pay teachers’ allowances. For the 2005 school year, the Ministry of Education directed districts to allocate their Sector Pooled Fund on the following basis: 70 percent to government basic schools and 30 percent to community schools. However, teachers’ allowances may not be paid from these funds. Only schools that have functioning PCSCs and that have been in operation for two years are eligible for these grants. In 2001, the Ministry of Education formally recognized the district and zonal community school committees as parallel to regional government offices. Representatives from these committees, now sit in Ministry offices and report to regional officers. Additionally, ZCSS has established provincial program officers who liaise between community school committees and government officials.

In addition to grants-in-aid, the government, in consultation with ZCSS, reserves a number of places in teacher training colleges every year for qualifying community school teachers. Community school teachers are given priority for admission by the training colleges. When they have completed their two-year college course, community school teachers agree to return to their communities and the Ministry of Education agrees to officially recognize them and put them on the government payroll.

## Conclusion

The Zambia community schools provide a case in which government, through the Ministry of Education’s Sector Wide Program (SWAP), recognizes the importance of community schools in meeting the challenge of HIV/AIDS, orphans, and the disadvantaged. The Ministry of Education has established policies for a partnership between government and community schools, which includes a key role for a national level nongovernmental association, the ZCSS. This association provides legitimacy for the community schools based on a set of criteria and a review process for registration and support. Further, government policy has provided for the use of public funds, channeled to registered community schools as a sector investment strategy. The result of these policies is that the community schools have demonstrated exceptional capacity for

reaching orphans and the poor and for providing an education environment where they are actually outperforming public school students.

The case seems to suggest that the organization of schools by communities, drawing on largely volunteer teachers who are provided a manageable and relevant curriculum under the supervision and support provided by NGOs and a national association, can perform exceptionally well. By providing up to 20 percent of Zambia’s underserved children and youth with quality basic education, the community school movement is making a significant contribution towards EFA goals.

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**EQUIP2: Educational Policy, Systems Development, and Management** is one of three USAID-funded Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreements under the umbrella heading Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP). As a Leader with Associates mechanism, EQUIP2 accommodates buy-in awards from USAID bureaus and missions to support the goal of building education quality at the national, sub-national, and cross-community levels.

**FHI 360** is the lead organization for the global EQUIP2 partnership of education and development organizations, universities, and research institutions. The partnership includes fifteen major organizations and an expanding network of regional and national associates throughout the world: Aga Khan Foundation, American Institutes for Research, CARE, Center for Collaboration and the Future of Schooling, East-West Center, Education Development Center, International Rescue Committee, Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, Michigan State University, Mississippi Consortium for International Development, ORC Macro, Research Triangle Institute, University of Minnesota, University of Pittsburgh Institute of International Studies in Education, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

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