

Chapter 2

Educational Crisis in Zambia

Introduction

The introductory chapter made some suggestions about the extent, the nature and the sources of educational problems in Zambia. In this chapter these suggestions are subjected to a more critical and analytical examination in the light of such research as there has been on Zambian education.

First, there is a review of research on the Zambian economy and the resourcing of education. This section outlines changes in Zambia's economic circumstance and policies during the last 20 years. The aim of this literature review is to offer some background information on the state of education in Zambia. The literature presented here is included to explain the wide economic context and, in particular, the severe reduction in government financial support for education and other social services.

Second, the author presents a review of the impact of these economic circumstances on the quality of inputs to education, centring on health and education, learning achievement, public discontent and teacher morale.

The chapter goes on to look at quality of educational outcomes, focusing on universal entitlement to education, primary schooling and secondary schooling. It then draws on studies conducted in Zambia to elicit some ways of improvement, such as the National Assessment Programme and the Literacy Programme, which have been undertaken to address the decline in educational quality. The final section focuses on secondary education in Zambia and a discussion of the integration programme that was implemented to include all students with special education needs in mainstream classrooms.

The Zambian economy and resourcing of education

The overall economy: changing policies

Over two decades (1980–2000), the sub-Saharan region of Africa (which includes Zambia) experienced a significant decline in investment in the

educational sector due to fiscal problems arising from economic recession, structural adjustment programmes and global economic restructuring. For many African countries, the inability to keep up with external debt payments has forced governments to cut down on the rapid rate of human resource development that occurred after independence in the 1960s. According to some surveys, particular problems facing the educational sector are: declining enrolment rates; erosion in the quality of education and level of student achievement; and some inefficiency in the management of educational systems (UNDP, 1989; World Bank, 1988; Hinchcliffe, 1987; Kelly, 1998; Klees, 2002).

Zambia's economy went into a free-fall in the mid-1970s when rising oil prices dented the world economy to such an extent that the bottom fell out of the market for copper, the country's dominant economic commodity. Authors like Kelly (1999a) and Hansungule (2002) claim that irresponsible borrowing, irresponsible lending, inappropriate policies and monstrous and massively inefficient state participation in the economy, quickly transformed the country from middle-level economic status to 'one of the poorest countries in the world'. It is these 'international trends' that need to be understood to see how under-resourcing may have come about and caused such an enormous decline in education provision. Most of Zambia's economic management problems over the last quarter of the century, in particular the resourcing of its education system, may be seen as following on from the difficulties it experienced in adjusting to this change in national circumstances.

In Zambia, problems were such that by 1982 the only answer seemed to lie in IMF-prescribed stabilisation and World Bank-directed structural adjustment. For the next eight or nine years, Zambia had an on-off relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions. Phases of IMF/World Bank-orchestrated market and liberalisation measures regressed to phases of tight government control, when the adjustment conditions were found to be economically too tough and politically too hazardous (Seshemani, 1997; Selvaggio and Henriot, 2001). Late in 1991, with transition to a new political and economic era, the Zambian government committed itself to 'an open-market economy in which private initiative would be encouraged and rewarded' (Government of the Republic of Zambia [GRZ], 1992, p. 1). In what amounted to virtually a total immersion approach, the government co-operated with the IMF and the Bank in implementing measures for economic reform rapidly and vigorously. The 'invisible hand' of the market replaced the visible hand of the government, which showed an

almost unseemly haste in disengaging from direct economic participation, divesting itself of state ownership and facilitating the establishment of conditions that would promote local and foreign participation in economic development. Private ownership rather than government ownership was encouraged. Klees (2002) argues that in most respects:

'The World Bank has become a knowledge Bank that spurs the knowledge revolution in developing countries and acts as a global catalyst 'for creating and applying the cutting-edge knowledge necessary for poverty reduction and economic development.'

Source: World Bank, 2001

The 'open-market' economic strategy advocated by the World Bank and implemented after 1991 in Zambia impacted on public expenditure. The Bank's and Zambian government's concern with reducing the budget deficit led to extensive curtailing of public expenditure, with the result that real public spending in 1993–96 was less than two-thirds of what it had been when adjustment began in 1981–84 (Kelly, 1999a). Ministerial or discretionary expenditure was even more severely affected, spending in the most recent years being only 40 per cent of what it had been when adjustment commenced. Remarkably, this curtailment in public spending made its biggest impact on the economic sector (figure 2.1). Production-related ministries, such as mines, lands, agriculture, tourism, commerce and industry, saw their aggregate annual spending cut from an average of US\$164 million in 1981–84 to a yearly average of US\$48 million in 1993–96. On the other hand, the general administrative sector (covering government administration, legislation, security etc.) increased its spending from an annual average of US\$217 million in the earlier period to an average of US\$241 million in the more recent period.

Spending on non-ministerial heads (debt service, pensions, subsidies, defence) grew at first from an annual average of US\$416 million in 1981–84 to US\$443 million in 1989–92, before falling back to US\$399 million in 1993–96.

The social sectors also suffered badly – not only in the uncertain period after 1982 when adjustment was on and off, but also since 1992 when adjustment has maintained its inscrutable, sphinx-like features. Real spending on the social sectors in the period 1989–1992 was 50 per cent less than it had been at the time when structural adjustment commenced some years earlier. The most severely affected areas were those relating directly to community services (housing, water and sanitation, social services and community development, youth, sport and child development etc.) where spending

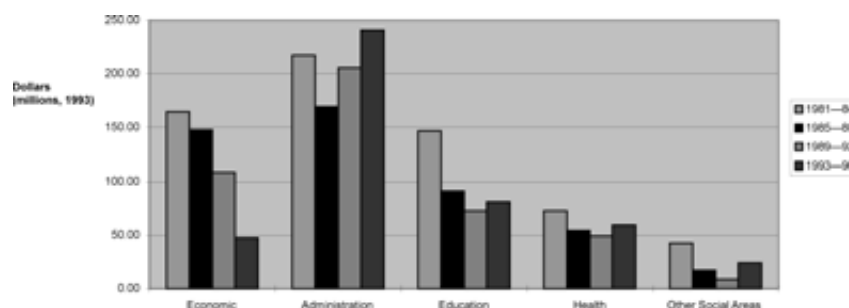


Figure 2.1: Public expenditure by sector (millions of 1993 US\$): 1981–1996

Source: Derived from GRZ: *Financial Reports*, annual issues, 1981–1996.

in the period 1989–92 was only one-fifth of what it had been at the beginning of the adjustment period.

Kelly (1999a) claims that compared with other areas in the social sector, health fared best, with spending falling by about one-third in the eight-year period. Education, on the other hand, saw its real spending cut by more than 50 per cent during that time. The four-year period, 1995–1999, saw an overall 26 per cent increase in social-sector spending, with the most dramatic improvement in spending being on community services and similar areas. However, none of the social sectors has returned to anything like its position at the time when structural adjustment commenced. In particular, spending on education in 1996 amounted to no more than US\$80 million, compared with US\$153 million in 1983, the first year of adjustment measures.

Structural adjustment has had some short-term benefits. Stabilisation and adjustment measures necessitated a high level of financial discipline in order to bring the government's budget deficit under control and reduce inflation. This discipline transformed the budget from its deficit pattern, maintained each year since the early 1980s, into surplus in 1996 and 1997. Likewise, there was a dramatic reduction in inflation, from an annual average of 197 per cent in 1992 to 19 per cent in 1997. The introduction of a cash-based budget system in 1993, whereby government expenditures were incurred only if revenues were actually in hand, was a major factor in bringing about these improvements. Essentially these were the initial, short-term successes of a tightly-controlled fiscal management programme. With inflation rising again, to 31 per cent in 1998, it seemed that they might not have been maintained 'lending some support to the critique that structural

adjustment policies do not, in fact, constitute a long-term economic development programme' (Kelly 1999a).

Moreover, these initial successes were bought at a high social price. The Zambian government's submission to the 1995 World Summit for Social Development acknowledges that:

'Measures to curtail government expenditure to achieve a balanced budget have also impacted negatively on the provision of social services. This, coupled with the need to share costs in the social sector, has had telling effects by limiting the access of the poor to social services.'

Source: GRZ, 1995, p. 4.

The 1999 Budget Address expressed a similar view when it stated that despite the economic setbacks experienced in 1998, the government 'continued implementing structural and other reforms and serviced (its) external debt – albeit to the detriment of (its) priority spending in social sectors and on poverty alleviation' (GRZ, 1999, p. 14). In other words, the social impact of structural adjustment was, and continues to be, quite negative, particularly in terms of the losses sustained by the population's core poor of small-scale peasant farmers and the growing number of urban unemployed (Kelly, 1999a; Oxfam, 2001; Selvaggio and Henriot, 2000; Klees, 2002).

The goal to alleviate poverty through education appears to have turned into a 'dream' for World Bank and most developing countries. Klees (2002) claims that the retreat from the goal of poverty elimination became clearer when James Wolfensohn became World Bank president in 1995 and invented the 'Knowledge Bank' with the argument that 'we don't have much money to combat poverty, so don't come to us for our money, but for the quality of our advice' (World Bank, 1995). It seems the Bank retreated from its commitment to education. Few resources appear to be forthcoming and the continuation of structural adjustment programme (SAP) policies may yield further cuts in education budgets.

Education and structural adjustment

Focusing more sharply on the education sector, Zambia had at the time of writing the unenviable distinction of ranking among the lowest countries in the world in terms of the share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that it devotes to education and training; it is also one of the poorest countries in the world (Kelly, 1999a; Oxfam, 2001; Voluntary Service Overseas [VSO], 2002). In 1992, only 14 countries in the world devoted less of their GDP to education (World Bank, 1996).

Zambia's position was not always so bad. In 1982, before any form of structural adjustment began, the education sector accounted for 5.9 per cent of the country's GDP. By 1990, that proportion had plummeted to 2.3 per cent, falling further to 2.2 per cent in 1993, before rising slowly to 2.8 per cent in 1995 (see figure 2.2). Modest increases in educational expenditures after 1996, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of total government spending, have not improved the sector's position in relation to GDP.

Since the mid-1980s, this decline in public resources for education has been accompanied by an ever-increasing reliance on parental contributions, with a proliferation in the fees and funds that parents or users are expected to pay. Parents are called upon to provide financial support to every aspect of the education system.

At some schools, even teachers' salaries are being supplemented by parental contributions, while teachers themselves also supplement their incomes by charging fees for additional or special tuition, for instance, through what were officially sanctioned as 'Academic Production Units,' but were later abandoned in 2003 (MOE, 2002). At the primary level, school-related payments of various kinds by parents in government schools range from US\$5 a year in very remote and poor areas to over US\$50 in urban schools. Zambia's real GDP of US\$250 per capita (1996) provides the context for interpreting these figures.



Figure 2.2: Public spending on education as a percentage of total public expenditure (TPE) and GDP: 1972–1996

Source: Kelly, 1999a

It may be asked whether responsibility for this development rests clearly with the adjustment measures. Have they expressly mandated such consumer participation in meeting social service costs, or has this emerged as a surreptitious way of coping with reduced public expenditure in the sector? Although structural adjustment advocates are reluctant to admit it, there seems to be little doubt that cost sharing for social services is intrinsic to adjustment. In many respects, cost sharing is the social sector counterpart to the removal of maize, fertiliser and fuel subsidies in the agricultural and transport sectors. That user fees for social services are a constitutive part of a structural adjustment programme appears in Zambia's *Economic and Financial Policy Framework Paper* (the PFP) for 1992–1994, which was approved by the Board of the IMF in February 1992 before being released to the Zambian public.

In the education sector, the paper notes that, 'in order to strengthen the financial base for education, Zambia has introduced user fees for the beneficiaries of secondary and higher education and instituted cost-effective measures' (GRZ, 1992, p. 23). Influenced by the rate of return approach and the figures disseminated by Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985), the World Bank steadily advocated beneficiary payments at the secondary and tertiary levels, where private returns promise to be so high, but has been less vocal on user charges and fees at the primary level, with its large social rates of return. The logic of this is impeccable, but unfortunately it does not appear to have been so clearly understood by governments implementing adjustment strategies. User fees, cost sharing and privatisation have become such a haven for cash-strapped governments that they have allowed them to spill over into the provision of the basic social services of primary and secondary education, as well as primary health care.

According to Kelly (1999a), the subordination of education to structural adjustment priorities has meant the following:

- The fiscal imperative of achieving a balanced national budget has been so dominant that the financing needs of education (and other social sectors) have not been met;
- The liberal economic model of private provision has been applied almost indiscriminately to education (and other social sectors), to the disadvantage of the poor and marginalised;
- The counter-development policy of cost sharing for the basic human services of education and health care has come about in response to the demands of structural adjustment, again to the

disadvantage of the poor and marginalised (also Narayan et al, 2000; Oxfam 2001);

- The reduction in real terms of teachers' salaries, arising from restraints in the financing of the education sector and from the structural-adjustment-dictated imperative of constraining the growth of the public sector wage bill, has had two negative outcomes: (i) widespread demoralisation among teachers, with consequent lower levels of classroom performance; and (ii) extensive and costly loss of teachers and other education personnel (also VSO, 2002; Klees, 2002); and
- The low levels of national funding for education, arising from the implementation of adjustment policies, have brought in their wake extensive dependence on donors for educational provision and policy.

Predictably, this has led to a dramatic deterioration in the provision of education and to extensive decline in school participation. According to Kelly (1999a) and others like Klees (2002) and Selvaggio and Henriot (2001), structural adjustment in the larger picture has:

- Made it difficult to ensure that every child and adult can exercise the human right to education;
- Made it impossible to guarantee that, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, 'education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages' (Article 26);
- Undermined education's potential to prepare a satisfactorily educated workforce that would sustain and develop a self-reliant economy;
- Enhanced gender discriminations in education (because in times of hardship boys and men are given preference);
- Reduced the potential for more equitable partnerships in education between developing and developed countries; and
- Aggravated poverty instead of helping to eradicate it.

There are many discussions of alternative 'economic structures' that authors believe may help improve people's lives and alleviate poverty (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2000; Marchand and Parpart, 1999; Schurguensky, 2001). The alternatives these authors propose are under the rubrics of par-

ticipatory economics, democratic development, popular, smaller, more exchange-based economics, feminist economics, bioregional economics, ecological economics and others.

Quality of inputs to education

The 'inputs' to education represent what should go into a school if it is to run effectively. These include strong parent and community support, effective support from the education system and adequate material support, such as teacher-development activities, textbooks and other materials and facilities like buildings, desks, chairs and so on. The quality of education may be judged in terms of the impact such 'inputs' have on students.

It seems clear that even before the World Bank and IMF came in with structural adjustment programmes, the inputs to education in were inadequate. In the early 1980s, some reports and studies revealed that most schools in developing countries were under-resourced. For example, Nyirenda (1981), a Zambian scholar, argues that educational development in developing nations is facing numerous problems. The situation that Nyirenda describes was despite the high level of government expenditure in Zambia at that time (World Bank, 1996), and more because of colonial heritage. He identified four critical problems:

1. Scarcity of resources, which include skilled people, money and learning materials. The rising school-age population or the 'student flood', increasing participation rates at every level, and rising human expectations and aspirations are all creating pressure for developing nations to increase expenditures for formal education much more rapidly than their GDP. These countries seemed to be spending higher proportions of their income on education than before, but spending has gone down. Shortages of qualified teachers and administrators also limit the growth and improvement of formal education systems.
2. Overcrowded classrooms, poor student–teacher ratios and a shortage of textbooks and other learning materials and equipment are all associated with *low quality of learning and teaching*.
3. Because of limited financial and other resources, there is a shortage of school places, which limits access to educational opportunity, particularly in the rural areas. Insufficient school places are a major problem facing educational development in developing countries.

4. The imbalance of school places between primary and secondary schools is a major cause for the vast numbers of school leavers and repeaters. There seem to be fewer school places at secondary level.

More than a decade later, Kelly (1998) argues that the inputs into education are inadequate and it appears that they may have deteriorated over this period. Ndawi (1997) also comments on the quality of education by observing that:

'With increasing numbers of consumers of the commodity (education) against a background of limited material resources, especially in poverty-stricken countries in Africa, the quality of the EFA (Education for All) to be offered is likely to be prejudiced. There will be too few textbooks, exercise books, classrooms, laboratories, pencils, chalk etc. Already critical shortages of resources are being experienced, especially in most rural secondary schools.'

Source: Ndawi, 1997, p. 124.

Kelly (1998) claims that primary education has suffered a great deal in Zambia due to fiscal problems arising from economic recession, structural adjustment programmes and global economic restructuring and the country's inability to keep up external debt payments. For instance, Zambia is classified as one of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) whose situation is described as one of 'helplessness, almost hopelessness'. The situation is extended to the entire social sector in Zambia. Kelly (1998, p. 1) argues that 'this perilous state is known by people, the government knows it, the aid community knows it, and something radical must be done to improve it'.

Kelly (1998) presents the situation as perilous. There appears to be wide differences between families, individuals and schools. For instance, some individuals and schools *do not* experience the extremes that Kelly is describing: there are 'good' schools and 'rich' Zambians. This suggests that schools need to be viewed on an individual basis as well as collectively. However, the author does agree with Kelly's thesis that there is a crisis in Zambia. In addition, the schools affected (government schools) are the ones most Zambian pupils (over 70 per cent) attend.

There follows a discussion of the specific kinds of input to schooling that have been negatively influenced by Zambia's economic problems and policies: health, poverty, teachers' salaries, teaching and learning materials, reliance on donors and school structures.

Health and education

The most important input to education is the learner, who needs to have a capacity for active learning. The health of children appears to affect the actual learning that pupils experience in classrooms, hence attention needs to be focused on the 'quality' of the child – helping the child to become an active agent in his or her own learning. Concern is with the child's active learning capacity (ALC), that is, the child's propensity and ability to interact with and make the best possible use of all the resources offered by any formal or informal learning environment. It is argued (e.g. Kelly, 1999b, Shaeffer, 1994, Oxfam, 2001) that a child's ALC is severely reduced by health-related factors, several of which are of major importance in Zambia.

The major problems affecting children in Zambia include malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, parasitic infections and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Children affected by malnutrition have difficulties in concentrating and paying attention; they are affected in terms of memory and in inclination to be active and explore. Those lacking micronutrients like iodine and iron have difficulty in maintaining attention, alertness, concentration and show less motivation to persist in intellectually challenging tasks. Almost half young children in Zambia are iron-deficient with low haemoglobin levels (Levine, 1992) and many are infected with roundworms, whipworm, hookworm, bilharzia and malaria. Such large infections are associated with impaired cognitive functioning; negative effects on ability to learn; possible effects on short-term memory and the ability to retrieve information from long-term memory; and the ability to make sharp visual discriminations, which is crucial in reading. Malaria also affects children at different times in their lives and impairs children's school participation and learning.

It is claimed elsewhere that good nutrition is important for children's health and impacts on learning in schools. Mukudi (2003) analysing some African countries including Zambia, argues that the linkage between education and nutrition is posited as one of synergism. Good nutrition plays a role in enhancing educational outcomes. Children with nutritional deficiency have difficulty in learning and nutrition-based supplementation has been proved to improve learning outcomes (Mukudi, 2003; Politt, 1995).

AIDS is a challenge to education and has had a devastating effect on education in Zambia. Since the first AIDS case was diagnosed in Zambia in 1984, the cumulative total of notified AIDS cases has increased alarmingly. The data available on HIV infection indicate that Zambia is among the countries more seriously affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Kelly, 2000;

Swainson and Bennell, 2002). Whereas several other diseases are currently more prevalent in the population, there are some important characteristics of HIV and its epidemiology that causes it to have a greater socio-economic impact. Given the current medical technology, HIV seems in Zambia almost inevitably lead to AIDS, a condition that is always fatal.

The most immediate and visible impact of HIV/AIDS has appeared already in many education systems of the world. Children infected at birth do not live to enrol in school. Some of the children that do enrol have to drop out of school in order to earn money for their families and to take care of ill relatives. Meanwhile, teachers fall ill and die, and because students and teachers are ill most of the time, the process of teaching and learning itself becomes more complicated and difficult and its quality deteriorates. The impact of HIV/AIDS is already quite clear and identifiable on the demand for education, on its supply and on the nature and quality of teaching and learning. There are claims that diarrhoeal sicknesses, due in large measure to inadequate water and sanitation, endemic malaria, respiratory sicknesses and the pervasive HIV/AIDS pandemic, have struck hard at a populace already weakened by cash poverty and inadequate food intake. The health situation has deteriorated to the extent that a 'quarter of the Zambian population is sick during any given time' (Seshemani, 1998, p. 5).

Public poverty

It is not only the economy of Zambia that is poor. Its people are poor, indeed very poor (Kelly, 1999a; Kelly, 2000; VSO, 2002). An estimated 70 per cent do not have income enough to provide them with an adequately nutritious daily intake of food. In addition, the cash economy has been severely curtailed with declining wage-sector employment, down from 546,000 in 1992 to 469,000 in 1996 (UNDP, 1997), and no cash economy exists at all across large segments of the rural provinces. There is human poverty manifested by a decline in life expectancy; an increase in infant and child mortality (the 1996 under-fives mortality rate of 197 per 1,000 live births, which had deteriorated by over 13 per cent in ten years, was one of the highest in the world); an increase in child malnutrition (in 1996, 46 per cent of under-fives were stunted through malnourishment); and high maternal mortality levels (649 per 100,000 births).

Given the deplorable statistics, many of which can be attributable to the higher price of foodstuffs and agricultural inputs, the introduction of user charges for health services, the laying off of low-paid government workers and other structural adjustment measures, very many Zambian families

are too poor to make any education-related payments. Yet these are the very families who stand most in need of education for their children if they are to disentangle themselves from the entrapment of poverty and deprivation. They themselves recognise this and state that they would still be prepared to sacrifice even their very limited resources for the education of their children if they could see that the quality of that education was worthwhile (World Bank, 1994b). However, so long as education remains peripheral to the adjustment programme, it will not receive the resources it needs to assure its quality and to make it worthwhile.

Teacher salaries

Because teachers' salaries account for as much as 95 per cent of spending on primary education, much of the reduction in the budget at this level was realised through a reduction in the real take-home pay of teachers. By 1996, teachers' salaries had fallen to about one-third of their pre-adjustment (1981) level. In 2002, teachers' salaries in Zambia ranged from a minimum of 29 pounds sterling (£) per month for teachers to £49 per month for head teachers (VSO, 2002). The situation in Zambia is very similar to that in Malawi where the VSO reports that:

'While a Malawian teacher earns 5,000 [Malawi kwacha, MK] a VSO teacher is paid MK14,000. The amount for the VSO teacher is determined to be the minimum required for basic living, not including travel or entertainment. Not surprisingly, poor remuneration has a detrimental effect on teachers' classroom performance, as they reported being tired and distracted during their time in school and in some cases took time out to attend to other business.'

Source: VSO, 2002, p. 26.

It is also not surprising that such low remuneration has led to widespread demoralisation and dissatisfaction among teachers in Zambia (Kelly, 1999a; VSO, 2002). Many of the better ones have reacted by seeking teaching positions outside the country, as have many of the best university lecturers. The restraints on the education budget during the period of adjustment have, in other words, led to an extensive and costly 'brain drain'. Apart from the financial implications, this is something that Zambia can ill afford, given the tremendous shortfall in educated personnel that it has experienced ever since it became independent.

Many teachers who have remained in the system strive to boost their meagre incomes by a variety of extra-curricular and para-curricular activities. Those who cannot find supplementary sources of income remain in

‘the slough of despond’. They teach, but experience little of the joy, challenges and satisfaction that committed teaching can bring. Perhaps the remarkable thing is that teachers do continue to teach, even when so lowly paid and without the resources needed for their task. In recognition of this, the Ministry of Education, in its policy statement, has paid tribute to teachers by saluting ‘the great number ... who work so valiantly, frequently under very difficult circumstances, to educate Zambia’s future’ (MOE, 1996, p. 107).

Teaching and learning materials

Under-resourcing seems to have impacted on learning achievement among pupils. As observed by Harber (1997, p. 62) it appears that:

‘There is little doubt that shortages of teaching resources, such as text books, chalk, chalk boards, exercise books, pens, pencils and so on, are a severe hindrance to the development of more active teaching methods and consequently impacts on pupils’ learning.’

The MOE (1996) states that ‘all learners should be facilitated in the attainment of the highest standards of learning through teaching of excellent quality’. Quality involves the provision of educational materials and is brought by maximising the efforts of all those responsible for the education of learners. In this case it appears that provision of teaching and learning materials are crucial to better learning and teaching.

Zambia has been trying to reverse the trend of falling standards in the education system, especially in trying to improve teaching and learning in schools in subjects like English. Interventions to date have included provision of resources like textbooks through donors, training head teachers in management, and in-service courses for teachers aimed at improving content and teaching strategies in areas such as English, Mathematics and Sciences (the AIEMS project – Action to Improve English, Mathematics and Science).

Reliance on donors for improved resources

Donor aid seems to be problematic in terms of its adding or reducing constraints facing the education sector. Although some of the countries studied (Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana) are highly dependent on donor aid for educational development, donors and recipients are fairly sceptical about the value of such aid. Donor aid is significant and yet does not seem to always satisfy national goals. It appears

that donor aid is concentrated in sub-sectors, and projects are of the donor agency's choice and preference rather than that of the government concerned. Countries like Zambia and Tanzania have never learnt to say 'No' to projects that do not meet their own priorities.

It is clear that donor agencies do not *run* education or health systems in Zambia and their contribution is quite minimal. However, it is also important to acknowledge the contributions that donors make to improve resources in education, because they have contributed to projects such as Action for the Improvement of English Mathematics and Science (AIEMS). It is also important to note that NGOs have been able to keep the pressure on, in part, by publicising quickly and disseminating widely the continued bad practices and harmful consequences of policies of the World Bank and IMF (Oxfam International 2001; Selvaggio and Henriot, 2000).

It appears that donors are available to give some *short-term* relief to educational problems in Zambia. It has been reported, for example, that rapid population growth and unfavourable economic conditions have contributed significantly to the serious decline in the provision of educational services in Zambia. This decline has led to a number of donor-funded initiatives in recent years in an attempt to strengthen various aspects of the education sector. Some donor intervention programmes have targeted improvement in schools and the education system as a whole.

Although donor support seems significant, it appears minimal and inclined to support *projects* that are short term rather than long-term *programmes*. What seems interesting is that over the last decade it appears that education is still declining after such interventions. Why is this so? Perhaps focus on what happens in classrooms may bring to light other ways of improving schooling.

School structures

A study of classroom conditions in most urban areas in African countries shows that nearly half have inadequate teaching and learning facilities. For example, Hallak (1990) reports that classrooms designed for 40 pupils accommodate up to 70 pupils. The maintenance of school buildings is often the first to suffer in the context of budgetary cuts. A decade later, a report by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2003) revealed that the infrastructure in Zambia had deteriorated over the previous 20 years due to economic decline, lack of resources and institutional inefficiencies. In addition, stagnation of school enrolment is due to a

number of long-standing problems, including not enough schools and long distances between homes and schools.

Many schools in Zambia, especially primary schools, lack many attributes taken for granted in more prosperous settings. Existing buildings often have no water or sanitation facilities, nor do they have enough desks or chairs for students and teachers. Schools, especially those in rural areas, may lack electricity and even when they are connected, power supplies are often erratic and unpredictable.

The next section focuses on the quality of educational outcomes that have emerged from such difficult circumstances.

Quality of educational outcomes

The appropriate starting point here is a discussion of the universal entitlement to basic education. That leads on to a consideration first, of the extent of school participation in Zambia, differentiating between primary and secondary education, and then of the quality of learning outcomes.

Universal entitlement to basic education

At the World Conference on Education for All, held in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, the international community set for itself the challenge of providing basic education for all and reducing illiteracy. The World Declaration on Education for All that ensued from the conference, stressed the importance of access to educational opportunities: 'every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs' (Article 1). However, equally it stressed the importance of learning outcomes: 'whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development – for an individual or for society – depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of those opportunities. That is, whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills and values' (Article 4).

Almost exactly one year later, in March 1991, Zambia held its own National Conference on Education for All. Article 4 of the Zambia Declaration on Education for All, which was issued by the National Conference, states that: 'the focus of Education for All is not on the numbers enrolled in schools or participating in educational programmes. Rather it is on measurable learning achievements and outcomes.' By that historic declaration, Zambia recognised that the health of its education programmes could no longer be measured merely by enumerating the inputs and resources that

are used by the system. While recognising the importance of input factors, such as numbers enrolled, school building and rehabilitation, the provision of books and learning materials, the training and deployment of teachers, and school inspections, the 1991 Declaration also pointed to the need to focus on what might be called the *essence of school education, good teaching and good learning*, and the manifestation of these in measurable learning achievements and outcomes.

One consequence of this approach was the emphasis that the educational policy adopted by the Government of Zambia in 1992 placed on learning achievement: 'the principal purpose of schooling is student learning and hence unremitting attention must be given to making *student learning* the first priority in all schools' (MOE, 1992a, p. 3). The emphasis of the policy document is on schools as institutions where students are supposed to learn and teachers are supposed to teach.

It is generally accepted that quality basic education will yield the highest social and economic returns and have a positive impact on education, economic development and quality of life (Psacharopoulos, 1985; Fuller, 1991). It is argued that (e.g. Kelly, 1999b; Fuller, 1991; Ndawi 1997) quality universal basic education should, apart from teaching traditional reading, writing and mathematics, help build a strong foundation in reasoning skills, logical thinking and effective communication, as well as strengthen the social values of the community.

In recent years, primary education in Zambia, particularly for girls, has been given precedence over other long-term educational goals (MOE 1992a, 1996, 2002). In addition, primary schooling is the only formal education that the majority of children in Africa can receive (only 30–35 per cent proceed to secondary schools). It is also argued that primary education is of such potential importance because it can reach all the people throughout the country – in rural areas, very remote places, girls, those with disabilities and the underprivileged (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995; Scott, 1994). However, if it is to realise its potential, attention needs to be focused on the quality of education delivered. The fact that an individual is in school does not guarantee that he or she is learning. Many constraints already discussed above may influence the education process in Zambia and some can exert profound influence on the dissemination of the teaching and learning process.

Cost sharing and participation in school

Zambia's experience is that cost sharing on the part of the community has contributed to a severe decline in school participation. The signs are numerous: steadily declining completion rates, with few reaching grade 7 at primary level and fewer reaching grade 12 at secondary level; stagnating enrolments in a population that is growing at the annual rate of 3.2 per cent; one-third of the eligible 7–13 year-old population – some 600,000 children – not attending school at all; and 10–15 per cent of final-year primary students not sitting for the crucial secondary selection examination because of inability to raise the prescribed examination fee of about US\$10 (Lungwangwa et al, 1998)

The dropout rate at primary level is about 4.5 per cent. As a percentage this is not excessively high, but in terms of numbers it means that about 70,000 pupils leave school prematurely each year, compared with fewer than 20,000 (or less than 1.5 per cent of the enrolment) in 1983. This is a large increase in a period of just 15 years. Reports from the schools attribute more than half the dropout to economic causes: either parents cannot afford the cash payments required in school or they need the labour and domestic inputs of school-going children to supplement the household budget.

On the one hand, the educational participation rate, the premature leaving rate and other measures of the proportion participating in schooling are clear indicators of the inadequacy of education provision. On the other, even as things are, schools and classes are over-crowded both in terms of accommodation and the number of teachers available. It may be argued that there is no point in encouraging more people to attend school unless the buildings, books and teachers are also going to be provided.

Most efforts toward improvement have properly been focused on primary education, in accordance with Zambia's policy priority for basic education. The remainder of this section focuses on evidence relating to the most significant educational outcome for primary education, the quality of pupils' learning achievement.

Learning achievement

In the well-known words of the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All, 'whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development depends ultimately on whether people *actually learn* as a result of those opportunities.' It is argued (MOE, 1992a) the focus

of education must be on *actual learning* acquisition and outcome, rather than exclusively upon enrolment, continued participation in organised programmes and completion of certification requirements. School is a place where students are expected to learn. The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) study (Nkamba and Kanyika, 1998) of reading achievement in Zambia set out to investigate how pupils perform in reading English and local languages. The study was conducted in late 1995 by SACMEQ, which prepared and applied reading tests for grade-6 pupils.

Kelly and Kanyika (1999) reported the following:

'The principal findings of the National Assessment are that the levels of learning achievement in grade 5 were very low. They were low in English and Mathematics in all parts of the country, for both sexes, and for those from all socio-economic strata in society. Although somewhat higher than in English, levels of learning achievement in Zambian languages were also low, at least in those provinces where these languages were tested. Performance levels were lower in rural than in urban schools. They were lower for girls than for boys. They were lowest of all for girls in rural schools.'

Source: Kelly and Kanyika, 1999, p. 50.

The test was designed to provide a valid measure of basic literacy skills for grade-6 pupils, the minimum and desirable performance standards being based on the professional expertise of Zambian reading specialists. Only little more than a quarter of grade-6 pupils attained the standard designated in advance as the minimum performance level. Only 2.4 per cent attained the standard designated as the desirable performance level. Three-quarters of the grade-6 pupils did not reach the minimum expected level, while 97.6 per cent of them did not reach the desirable level. Put more harshly, three-quarters of grade-6 pupils were found to be virtually illiterate. The analysis from the Eastern Province quotes parents as complaining that 'pupils in grade 7 (age 12/13) are not able to read and write' (Kelly et al, 1998).

Nkamba and Kanyika's study (1998) may be considered to give a poor picture, since examinations do not always give a comprehensive demonstration of actual learning achievement. Specially designed mastery tests are required for this. However, the findings do pose a challenge for all involved in primary education, particularly for those teaching in schools and for the inspectorate. The picture is very poor. Nkamba and Kanyika (1998) claim that:

'Right across all provinces in Zambia, children are not learning much in schools. It is worse for the girls. But since girls have to make their way in a system that has historically been biased in favour of boys, and in a society that is oriented to male values and practices, solid learning achievement is probably of greater importance for girls. Girls do not perform as well as boys in examinations. The percentage of girls who obtain full Grade 9 and 12 certificate is lower than the percentage of boys; the percentage of girls who fail entirely is higher than that of boys.'

The fact that the reading achievement of girls is poorer than that of boys is all the more serious because girls usually command better verbal skills than boys, and in the school certificate examination usually outperform boys in literature and English. The situation appears serious if the Zambian government is to educate more girls and improve the lives of women (MOE, 2002; Kelly, 1998). Girls' low reading achievement in relation to that of boys may lie at the root of their poorer performance in the grade-8-selection examination. During the 1990s there were redoubled efforts to get more girls in school and keep them there. What may also be needed are greater efforts to ensure substantial meaningful learning acquisition on the part of students while they are in school.

In *Focus on Learning*, a MOE policy paper (1992b, p. 15), it was noted that performance in secondary schools would obviously improve with better graduates from primary schools; as this improvement works its way up to higher levels, the entire education and training system benefits. On the other hand, when quality is poor at the lower levels, considerable resources must be spent at each grade and level to remedy the deficiencies carried forward from the lower level.

Educational research in Zambia

In this section the author reviews some recent studies of the quality of classroom teaching and learning in Zambia and related suggestions for improvement.

National Assessment Project

The results of the National Assessment Project (1999) regarding levels of learning achievement in grade 5 are reported above. However, the project also collected a great deal of other evidence potentially relevant to the factors influencing these levels of learning achievement. The National Assessment Project brought out factors pertaining to home and school

environment among head teachers, teachers and pupils. A central purpose of the National Assessment was to establish base-line information on learning achievement and its correlates.

That base line has now been established, not perfectly but adequately, that learning achievement among pupils in grade 5 is very low. Kelly and Kanyika (1999) suggest that the daunting challenge that faces the National Ministry of Education and Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) is two fold:

1. To remedy the situation as it exists for pupils currently in school, so that their levels of learning achievement gradually improve; and
2. To take whatever steps are needed to prevent the problem of unsatisfactory learning from developing among new entrants to the school system.

Taking appropriate action along both dimensions will ensure that subsequent assessments will show real and substantial improvements in the learning achievement of pupils in the lower and middle basic grades. The conclusions of the National Assessment Project are based on a survey using achievement tests, together with questionnaires completed by head teachers and teachers.

Kelly and Kanyika's findings may be useful and helpful to understand factors affecting teaching and learning in Zambian classrooms today. They document their findings and bring out characteristics of head teachers, teachers and pupils. Kelly and Kanyika show that there are several factors that contribute to low levels of achievement.

The evidence from the National Assessment Project is that most school heads sampled in the study are persons of long classroom experience, considerable 'headship' experience and reasonable stability in the school they are heading. Their teaching responsibilities are also satisfactorily large, covering on average about two-thirds of the actual teaching week. They appear to be well-qualified individuals who have received considerable in-service training, with the majority having also received some management training.

Although concerned about teacher shortcomings, such as late arrivals and absenteeism, almost all school heads have instituted programmes aimed at the professional development of teachers. Head teachers are aware that in many respects their schools fall far short of the ideal. They have a strong professional interest in seeing that this is remedied, particularly by improvements in the furnishing and infrastructure that will enable them to

provide conditions more conducive to learning. They also want to see their schools equipped with the learning materials and resources necessary for good teaching and satisfactory for pupil learning.

Kelly and Kanyika (1999) claim that few of the teachers teaching in grade 5 have been well educated and trained. Though relatively young, they are experienced, highly professional and dynamic teachers who are concerned about their professional development and gladly seize opportunities for self-improvement. They draw strength and professional support more from one another than from outsiders. They make use of various teaching strategies and methodologies. They are conscientious about monitoring pupil performance through various activities within class, homework and through extensive testing. They work under somewhat difficult conditions, in classrooms that are not adequately furnished or equipped. In particular, they must teach with some books generally available, but never enough for pupils, even on a shared basis. Teachers find the management of their schools supportive of their work, but are demotivated by the level of their salaries and the inadequacy and poor quality of teacher accommodation.

It is important to recognise that the pictures painted by head teachers and teachers are based on what they say about themselves. While these pictures are indeed encouraging, they need to be understood for what they are. If head teachers and teachers are really positive in their attitudes, it is surprising that learning achievements are so poor. Kelly and Kanyika's study does not seem to provide convincing evidence of what really underlies poor levels of achievement.

Overall, the National Assessment brings out the enormous potential for enhancing pupil learning that exists in those teaching grade 5 as also, no doubt, in the majority of teachers in primary schools. What needs to be done is to establish conditions that will enable all teachers to actualise their potential, so that they in turn can assist pupils to bring out their latent possibilities. Kelly and Kanyika (1999, p. 8) suggest that

'The discouragement of finding that the levels of pupil learning achievement are so low should be counterbalanced by acknowledging the latent potential of Zambia's teachers, recognising that they are like a coiled spring, ready to erupt into a ferment of activity on behalf of pupil learning, if given the necessary support, supplies, encouragement and motivation.'

This focus on teacher motivation is echoed by other studies conducted in Zambia and Sub-Saharan Africa (VSO 2002, Oxfam 2001).

In terms of learning achievement of students, Zambia appears to be a nation at risk. The critical state of learning achievement that the National Assessment has documented is not confined to grade 5. The Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) and SACMEQ (Nkamba and Kanyika, 1996) investigations indicate that low levels of learning achievement are equally characteristic of grades 4 and 6. The overall conclusion seems inevitable: levels of learning achievement are low right across the country, in all grades and in all curriculum areas. Very little learning of the type expected by society is occurring in Zambia's schools.

Collectively, the National Assessment, SACMEQ and MLA studies reveal what virtually amounts to a national emergency in the learning situation in schools. An emergency situation requires an emergency response, in this case a strenuous national campaign for the improvement of learning in the lower and middle basic classes and perhaps at all levels of education. The campaign should focus on action at two levels – preventive and remedial – and should seek to mobilise the human, material and financial resources needed to effect an improvement in the learning situation in schools.

Kelly and Kanyika (1999) suggest that schools need to be 'flooded' with the necessary textbooks and learning resources. Through school-based and regional centre in-service activities, teachers need to be helped to integrate these materials into their teaching. These resources should be supplemented by a steady supply of back-up materials that will help teachers in their actual classroom teaching.

The authors seem to be addressing the national Ministry of Education and the education boards. What appears realistic in the short term is perhaps to invest more into what teachers and pupils can do to improve the teaching and learning processes. However, the 'flooding' of resources that is called for may be implemented more realistically in the long term. Other interventions that Kelly and Kanyika (1999) claim are needed include all spheres in the education system, that is inputs, processes and enabling conditions:

- *Key inputs* for bringing about pupil learning are teachers and materials, especially writing materials and textbooks.
- *Key processes* are teaching methods, the proper use of books, regular pupil testing and feedback, and frequent and regular homework that is quickly marked and returned to pupils.

- *Key enabling conditions* are a school ethos (to a large extent personified in the school head) that is unambiguously oriented to pupil learning, and adequate time for that learning to take place.

Taking the preventive and remedial actions advocated for the improvement of classroom learning necessitates the large-scale mobilisation of resources. The National Assessment, SACMEQ and MLA studies all point to the pedagogical degeneration of schools, which have been denied the resources needed to ensure worthwhile pupil learning. The low levels of learning achievement of the majority of pupils is the high price that Zambia is paying today for under-investment over a number of years in the instructional dimensions of education. Remedying this intellectual decay will entail very great cost. However, this cost must be met if education is to play its proper role in the development of the country's people and economy.

The preventive and remedial measures outlined above may result in more investment in teachers, teaching materials and books. Kelly and Kanyika (1999) also argue that school and system-based dimensions relate to learning achievement:

- The longer it takes a pupil to travel to school, the lower the mean achievement scores;
- Those who have repeated a grade have lower achievement scores than those who have not repeated;
- The availability and use of books in the classroom raise levels of learning achievement, with best results being obtained when the pupils share books, preferably with two pupils to a book;
- Higher levels of learning achievement are attained when students are given homework regularly and frequently, but not too often;
- Better learning occurs when pupils are seated comfortably, on a chair or at a desk, but the benefits are lost if pupils are crowded around a desk;
- Better learning occurs when pupils have sufficient writing space at a stable facility, such as a desk or table, designed for this purpose;
- Levels of learning achievement of students who have manual work or sports at school every day tend to be somewhat lower than those of students who have work or sports less frequently; and

- The learning achievement of pupils taught by female teachers surpasses that of pupils taught by male teachers.

Kelly and Kanyika have produced clear statistical evidence showing these relationships between system-based dimensions and learning achievement levels.

Literacy programme

After some debate on which language to use in instruction of lower grades 1 to 3, the *Zambian Policy on Education* (1996) states that a local language will be used for the first two grades. The language policy in Zambia (MOE, 2002) has been modified to allow for initial literacy to be taught through local languages. The argument for this change in language policy is the attribution of low levels of achievement to the long-standing policy of using English as a medium of instruction from grade 1, that is, from age six or seven.

A literary programme was identified as one way to improve literacy levels in primary schools. The pilot study commenced in 1996 and there have been some encouraging findings:

'Zambian children who learn through the local language acquire literacy skills at an earlier age; the approach is transforming classrooms into lively learning environments where confident, happy children interact freely with their teachers and can work independently and co-operatively; teachers are abandoning their traditional chalk-and-talk approach in favour of child-centred group work and the use of the local language is binding school and community more closely together.'

Source: Kelly, 1998, p. 11.

The findings seem convincing, although minimal evidence only was gathered from the sampled schools. The schools and teachers were trained and evaluated by the researchers and they also received support from them¹. The support offered also seems to take for granted the activities that enable pupils to learn, which perhaps may be lacking in other schools where this child-centred approach has not yet been implemented. It is also assumed that most teaching and learning activities under this programme take place in the classroom.

Apart from the literacy programme, another programme that has been introduced in Zambia is the 'integration programme', discussed below.

Integration programme in secondary schools

Some policies that have been implemented in Zambia may seem to have contributed to further decline in the provision of quality teaching and learning. Most countries have adopted a policy of inclusion for children with special educational needs. Zambia has also adopted such a policy, known as the 'integration programme'.

Children with special educational needs include those with physical disabilities, and children with a hearing, visual and/or cognitive impairment. Special education has become a proxy for wider concerns about education and social policy. It is certainly at the centre of debates about inclusion and exclusion, about identity and diversity, about professional roles and responsibilities and about the extent to which similar standards and targets can be set for *all* children. In most countries since the 1980s, there has been a movement towards integration of 'special education' into the mainstream (Florian and Rouse, 2001).

'Integration' involves preparing pupils for a placement in ordinary mainstream schools, where the pupils must be able to adapt to the school. 'Inclusive education' is based on a value system that recognises and 'celebrates diversity arising from gender, nationality, race, language of origin, social background, level of education achievement or disability' (Mittler, 2000, p. 10). This implies that all pupils have the right to attend their neighbourhood school, which is important for social reasons. Inclusion means that all teachers are responsible for the education of all children and the curriculum must be adapted to cope with this diversity.

In Zambia, there is a lot that needs to be done in order to achieve accessibility and quality of education for exceptional children. It is important to identify the barriers to learning in order to identify where the transformation of the system needs to occur. Kelly documents that:

'These barriers lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity, leading to learning breakdown or preventing learners from accessing educational provision. The challenge is to minimise, remove and prevent barriers to learning and development and thereby assist the education system to become more responsive to the diverse needs of the learner population.'

Source: Kelly, 1999a, p. 24.

Social economic disadvantages have had a negative effect on education and all aspects of social development in the majority of the population. The effects of sustained poverty, which becomes a self-perpetuating cycle, such

as under-nourishment, lack of or overcrowded housing and unemployment, all have a deleterious impact on learners, including those with disabilities who are excluded from the system. Other social, economic and political conditions have had harmful effects on the physical and emotional well-being of children such as dysfunctional families, sexual and physical abuse, and chronic illness, including HIV/AIDS. These barriers are most severe among the marginalised in society, such as those with disabilities or special educational needs. This barrier is compounded by lack of teachers, lack of teaching and learning materials and large classroom numbers, which inhibit teachers from providing individual attention.

Language and communication may also be a barrier to learning when the medium of instruction is not the first language of the learners. Sign language is not provided for deaf learners in 'integrated' classrooms and there is a lack of alternative and augmentative communication strategies for non-speaking learners. Kelly (1999a) tabulates some barriers for students with special educational needs and their teachers. These include inaccessible and unsafe built environments, which are barriers when not adapted to the needs of learners with physical and/or sensory disabilities; lack of parental recognition and involvement in the support for education provision to learners; and lack of human resource development, including education and training of teachers and other relevant role players.

There are other disabilities among Zambian children including physical, neurological, psycho-neurological and sensory impairments; moderate to mild learning difficulties in reading, written language and maths; and speech, language and communication difficulties. It appears that only those with sensory hearing and visual impairments have been integrated. The lack of protective legislation and/or a policy to support the development of an inclusive education and training system, and perhaps implementing the integration programme without much preparation, seem to have further disadvantaged pupils.

To some extent the Ministry of Education has realised that something needs to be done to support education, even for special needs children. In *Educating our Future* (1996, p. 69) the MOE policy states:

'To the greatest extent possible, the Ministry will integrate pupils with special educational needs into the mainstream institutions and will provide them with necessary facilities. However, where need is established, the Ministry will participate in the provision of new special schools for the severely impaired.'

More needs to be done to help students with special needs. The development of an integrated and community-based support system aimed at building the capacity of all aspects of the system to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population needs more consideration. Information advocacy and mobilisation is important. This may facilitate a shift in thinking about 'special needs and support' in Zambia towards an understanding of and support for the development of a better inclusive education and training system. It is important the children with disabilities are brought to school and that parents do not feel uncomfortable to bring them.

The provision of appropriate and adequate funding support, which focuses on addressing particular educational needs, with the most vulnerable learners and institutions being a priority in the short, medium and long term is very important. However, can Zambia afford such a programme? There could be better ways of implementing the integration programme. For instance, having teachers who know sign language and Braille in schools where pupils are integrated would assist pupils and perhaps they would learn better. There should also be accessible and safe built environments to cater for the needs of learners with physical and/or sensory disabilities.

Secondary schooling in Zambia

In most previous attempts to improve the quality of education in Zambia, the emphasis has been on inputs, that is, pupils, materials, resources, teaching staff, the values of a school, goals and infrastructure. Kelly (1998) and Lungwangwa (1992) have identified rapid enrolment growth and economic decline as factors that have badly damaged the quality of schooling, whilst Heneveld (1994) argues that factors of support from outside and the deteriorating climate within schools have contributed to the decline in the quality of teaching and learning. Secondary schools have been neglected as a focus for research and for planned improvement. This book may help in bringing out some suggestions for improvements in classroom teaching and learning of secondary English in Zambia.

As mentioned before, there are three types of secondary (and high) schools in Zambia: government, grant-aided and private. In 2002, the total number of schools was 256, of which 208 were government, 33 grant-aided and 15 were private. Most such schools still structured with grades 8–12 (age 12–18), while a few – the high schools – have grades 10–12 (age 15–18).

The challenges facing secondary schooling in Zambia are reported to include funding from the government being unreliable, irregular and

inadequate and most schools relying on community support through fees and other fund-raising methods (MOE, 2002). As a result, resources to maintain the quality of high-school education are extremely limited. Infrastructure and equipment in many schools are in a poor state, and supplies of educational materials such as textbooks are insufficient and out of date. The situation is worse in schools located in rural areas.

The focus of this book is secondary schools. Various problems make teaching and learning difficult for teachers and pupils both in primary and secondary schools. However, secondary schooling cannot wait until the problems of basic education have been resolved before it receives critical attention.

Just as what is happening at classroom level has to be understood, and could perhaps be improved, without waiting for improvement in the overall economy, so what is happening at secondary level has to be understood, and could perhaps be improved without waiting for the impact of improvements at the basic level. It is crucial to understand precisely how inadequate resourcing is preventing good quality teaching and learning in schools. There is need for those concerned with secondary schooling to seek ways in which their current problems might at least partially be resolved, especially in establishing strategies of teaching. It is also important to focus on the opinions of those at the centre of teaching and learning in classrooms – the teachers and students themselves.

Educational crisis: conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the impact of under-resourcing that Zambia's education sector is facing. The country's poor economy and policies such as the structural adjustment programme have impacted on the quality of inputs and outcomes of education, on the health of students, student achievement, teacher morale and the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.

The Zambian economy has been in dire straits for 20 years and the government has felt obliged to accept World Bank and IMF directions for structural adjustment, with negative consequences for public health and welfare and the funding of education. Resource inputs to education have been greatly reduced, directly with reduced salaries for teachers and reduced expenditure on buildings and educational materials, and indirectly through parents' poverty and children's poor health. Educational outcomes have also deteriorated significantly.

This book does not dissent from two widely held and documented views. First, most problems with Zambian education are due to grossly inadequate resourcing and second, the national educational priority should be with basic education. However, the quality of secondary education also remains important. There is therefore a need to explore at secondary level, as Kelly and Kanyika (1999) have done at the basic level, the nature of the suspected link between poor resourcing and poor outcomes. Given Zambia's continuing economic problems, it is also crucial to consider what kinds of improvements might be made without, or with very little, increased resourcing.

The remainder of this book will explore these issues, especially as they relate to the teaching and learning of English at secondary-school level. To consider such classroom teaching and learning in an informed way, a wide range of literature is reviewed in the next chapter to establish a tentative best understanding of what good classroom practice in the teaching and learning of English in Zambia would be if there were no severe financial constraints.

Note

1. Interview with research leader, July 2001, Lusaka, Zambia.