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Educational System in Zambia

How it developed since independence on the 24th of October 1964

Ausgangspunkt ist die Situation der Republik Sambia zu Beginn der Unabhängigkeit. Die Zeit seither wird entsprechend der Verfassungsperioden in bislang „drei Republiken“ unterteilt: 1964 – 1973 (UNIP, Kaunda); 1973 – 1991 (Einparteienstaat UNIP, Kaunda); 1991 – 2001 (MMD, Chiluba); seit 2002 Mwanawasa. Jede dieser Perioden war für das Bildungswesen in unterschiedlicher Hinsicht bedeutsam.

Die Ausgangslage war denkbar schwierig und dennoch verfolgte man hochgesteckte Ziele: 1964 gab es nur wenige SambierInnen mit solider schulischer oder akademischer Bildung, trotzdem sollte das Land in kurzer Zeit zu demokratischer und wirtschaftlicher Blüte gebracht werden. Obwohl sich das sambische Schulwesen an das englische anlehnt, entschied sich die junge Republik dafür, nach zwölf Schuljahren (sieben in der Primary, fünf in der Secondary school) den ‚O-Level‘-Abschluss zu ermöglichen (Cambridge Standard) und damit auch die Zulassung zur Hochschule.

Der Ausbau der Primary Schools im ganzen Land (auch in den ländlichen Gebieten) und von gut erreichbaren Secondary Schools hatte deshalb in den ersten Jahren nach der Unabhängigkeit höchste Priorität und zeigte Erfolge: 1966 gelang die Integration des bis dahin nach Hautfarben oder ethnischer Herkunft segregierenden Schulwesens, die Vereinigung der Zuständigkeit für alle Bildungsfragen unter dem Dach eines Erziehungsministeriums und die Gründung der University of Zambia in Lusaka.

Obwohl die Weltbank den gleichrangigen Ausbau des Sekundarschulwesens (statt der Grundbildung für alle) skeptisch sah, erhoffte sich die Regierung einen Aufschwung davon, die eigenen Heranwachsenden für wirtschaftliche und technische Herausforderungen vorzubereiten.

Background

Zambia attained her political independence from Britain on 24th October 1964. Up to that point, 75 years later of colonial administration, provision of education in the country was mainly in the hands of missionaries. Had it not been for the missionaries, primary and secondary education could have

delayed much longer coming to Zambia than was the case. So Zambia owes a great deal from the early missionaries for its educational system. The missionaries laid the foundation on which Zambia continued to build. Discussing educational development in Zambia without mentioning the missionaries is incomplete. However, the role of missionaries in development of Zambia is not the scope of this paper; but it could well be a subject for another paper. For now the subject is “Educational System in Zambia: How it developed since Independence in 1964.”

Discussion of this subject will be confined to primary and secondary education from 1964 to 1976. 1976 marked the end of the Second National Development Plan (SNDP) in a series of four plans. [Emergency, Transitional, First and Second National Development Plans.]

At independence there were already two education systems running parallel on racial lines. There was the European education and African education. The former included Asians and Coloured. The European schools were well funded, provided with good learning facilities, and sufficiently staffed with qualified teachers. African schools, on the other hand were pathetically neglected in many respects. They were poorly funded, staffed with ill qualified teachers, under staffed and with poor learning facilities. The result was Africans education lagged behind in development. It was the responsibility of the new African government to integrate the two systems of education for effective delivery to Africans.

In 75 years of colonial administration, Northern Rhodesia, as Zambia was called before independence, it produced about “100 African university graduates, a bare 1500 Zambians with school certificate and only 6000 junior secondary education”¹ So much so that at independence Zambia faced a critical shortage of manpower for its development.

Setting the pace for expansion of educational facilities in Zambia Kenneth Kaunda² said: *“Expanding our Secondary School Education and paying greater attention to the requirements of university education, in order to produce qualified personnel... and help establish sound administrative cadres for upper and middle grades in government, commerce and industry, agriculture extension schemes and public works, for which good education is a must – has no substitute.”*

¹ J M Mwanakatwe: The growth of education in Zambia since independence OUP, 1974

² Former Zambian Republican President: Foreword to ‘Growth of Education in Zambia since Independence’ by J M Mwanakatwe. Revised Edition

Problems Stated

When the truly indigenous (African) Zambian government was installed in October 1964, it faced many problems, major among them were the following:

- Shortage of manpower
- Segregated education system favouring Europeans against Africans
- Zambians expectation to benefits from independence

Aims

The new government confronted with the problems of manpower devised developmental aims and objectives for addressing the above: -

- to train educated and skilled Zambian manpower
- to integrate the two education systems into one
- to aim at meeting Zambian aspirations for fruits of independence

The following were *objectives* for achieving the three broad aims stated above:

- To expand educational facilities at all levels
- To train skilled and educated Zambian personnel
- To achieve universal primary education
- To integrate two racially education systems into one
- To encourage girl/woman education
- To meet Zambian expectations following attainment of independence
- To improve on education over that of previous governments

Development

Following independence in 1964, Zambia quickly prepared strategies for intervention. This was meant to correct the wrongs by previous governments that caused manpower shortage. The new government decided to embark on the expansion of educational facilities in primary and secondary schools. The Government had realised that products from secondary education and above, were vital for development. The following strategies were formulated in due course:

Strategies for Intervention

- Emergency Development Plan: 1st January – 31st December 1964
- Transitional Development Plan: 1st January 1965 – 30th June 1966³
- First National Development Plan: 1st July 1966 – 30th June 1970
- Second National Development Plan: January 1972- December 1976.

An emergency development plan (EDP) was devised to supplement the existing colonial government Capital Development Plan (1961–1965) that was ending in 18 months' time.

Emergency Development Plan (January – December 1964)

The Emergency Development Plan (EDP) was quickly devised. Its broad aim was to provide more educational facilities to meet African education that had been neglected.

The structure of Primary and Secondary education is shown below. Full primary course used to last 8 years and secondary course another 5 years. After independence however, the primary course was reduced to 7 years. Later during the third Republic, a 9 years Basic education course was introduced.

The full secondary school is attained in 12 years. Thereafter is the tertiary education. Students are ready to pursue college, vocational training, university education and other professional studies. Primary school teachers' course is two years while secondary school teachers take as many as four years at the university. Others like medicine last as many as seven years. Diploma courses for secondary school teachers also take two years to complete.

The United National Independence Party (UNIP) Government implemented the final phase of the colonial government development plan. Out of K63, 266,000 (exchange rate 1 ZK to 1.4 US\$), K4, 800,000 was allocated to education. The Ministry of Education allocated K1, 960,980 to primary education.

An additional K20, 000,000 was allocated for capital expenditure for the 9 months March to December 1964. K2, 232,000 was for accelerating the expansion of secondary education and increasing facilities in primary schools.

³ 1966-76 Author headed Sec. Schools while the Plans were being implemented

Education Structure⁴

<Tertiary >

12	12	12	Secondary
11	11	11	
10	10	10	
09	09	09	
08	08	08	
07	07	07	Basic Ed.
06	06	06	
05	05	05	
04	04	04	Primary
03	03	03	
02	02	02	
01	01	01	

Primary Basic Secondary

1. Full Primary is 7 years, divided in 4 years lower and 3 years upper
2. Basic Education, is 9 years i.e. add 2 years above Gr. 7
3. Full Secondary is 12 years i.e. Junior is 2 years above Gr.7 and senior is 3 years above Junior.

Under the Emergency Development plan, expansion of rural primary education got K426, 000 while K200, 000 was for additional places to enrol children in urban schools [Copper-belt and Central Provinces of Zambia.] Political will and support helped to marshal members of the public to contribute their voluntary labour by participating in self-help schemes in rural stations. They built classrooms and teachers' houses while the government provided materials that were not locally available such as cement, galvanised iron sheets, steel windows and doors frames and school furniture. In this way 200 primary additional streams were made available in January 1965. The campaign was not as successful in urban centres because of different culture of workers. Instead of voluntary labour, parents contributed funds. By end of the year 144 more classrooms were provided.

⁴ The Structure is still in-force today: Note overlap at Basic education, last 2 yrs and Junior Sec School.

Transitional Development Plan:(1st January 1965 – 30th June 1966)

The Transitional Development plan (TDP) was designed to build on what was devised in the EDP. Any left over from EDP were incorporated into TDP. The following were the objectives for to provide more educational facilities so that: -

- One third of local primary schools out-put proceed to Form I /(Grade 8)
- Two thirds of all For II/(Grade 9) proceed to senior Secondary School
- Curriculum at senior secondary level was diversified (*having in mind provision for potential graduate student or higher professional courses*)
- Selection to University of Zambia be at ‘O’ level or equivalent
- Efficiency of secondary schools was improved through use of better equipment and more qualified teachers
- Twenty percent of primary students received education in other provinces to promote national unity.

First National Development Plan: (1st July 1966-31st December 1970)

The TDP easily spilled into the First National Development Plan (FNDP) 1st July 1966 – 31st December 1970. The enormity of the secondary education programme in the two plans was demonstrated in the building of new secondary schools in 1965. Eighteen dual (Co-education) secondary schools and three singles secondary schools were built mainly in rural areas. Six, Day Secondary Schools were built in urban centres on the Copper-belt and Lusaka. Dual secondary schools, when fully developed, were designed to ultimately cater for 840 Student in the ratio of 50:50 girls to boys. The set up was 6 junior and 4 senior secondary streams. In single secondary schools the plan was to cater for 420 of either sex. 3 junior and 2 senior streams.

The aim was intended to provide for:

- Two third of the pupils completing two year junior course to go on to three year senior secondary course.
- Larger secondary schools provided variety of curriculum to suit individual abilities
- Secondary schools had correspondingly large staff that promoted a happier social life (among expatriate teachers in rural areas) whose isolation sometimes affected their teaching performance.

Most of the dual (Co-ed) secondary schools in the rural areas, it was anticipated that once fully enrolled Forms 1 to 5 their population was 1000

(teachers, pupils, ancillary staff and their families). It was envisaged the school and farming area in the neighbourhood would be interdependent. Schools providing markets for farmers' produce that is, maize, vegetables, fruit, milk, fish, meat and social life stimulation

There was also provision for extending few selected existing secondary schools to facilitate additional Form III (Grade 10) as per new policy requirement that two thirds of all secondary schools entrants should complete the full course.

Single boarding schools were built at Mbereshi for girls, Mwense for boys and Kenneth Kaunda for boys.

The eighteen secondary schools built in the rural Provinces were:

Northwestern:	Mwinilunga and Zambezi*
Western:	Kalabo, Kaoma, Senanga and Sesheke
Southern:	Kalomo and Namwala
Eastern:	Lundazi, Petauke and Chadiza
Northern:	Luwingu* ⁵ , Mbala and Mporokoso
Luapula:	Nchelenge and Samfya
Central:	Mkushi* and Mumbwa

Two mission/church schools at Kasempa and Rusangu in the Northwestern and Southern Provinces respectively were expanded at the cost of which government paid 75%.

By any standards the FNDP was an ambitious plan, among others it set out to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase per capita out put in monetary terms from 120 to 200 from 1964 to 1970 respectively
- Increase opportunity for employment during the plan from 300,000 – 400,000 jobs by 1970
- Diversify the economy of Zambia by increasing productivity in non-industrial sector especially Agriculture
- Increase opportunities for education and training at various levels so as to minimise the nation dependence on foreign countries for skilled manpower.

⁵ * Author opened Luwingu 1966; transferred to Mkushi 1970; to Zambezi 1971 and to Kamwala 1973.

It must be noted that objectives were not achieved in total. Out of K360 million nearly K80million was for expansion of primary and secondary education, training teachers, technical education, bursaries, university of Zambia and project e.g. education broadcasting, library all designed to improve the efficiency of educational institutions.

Changes

Significant changes took place in 1966 when the Government decided that all children entering grade I should progress to Grade VII automatically without having to sit for selection examination at Grade 4 for both European and African children in (fee paying and non fee-paying)⁶ schools. This was the beginning of abolition of the two systems of education. Education was then under one Ministry of Education.

Changes towards universal primary educations by increasing school facilities were received with mixed feelings as parents faced serious sociological problems in urban areas.

- From 1970 onwards all 7 years old children entered grade I.
- In urban centres all children would complete full primary course
- In rural areas however about 75% of grade 4 could proceed to grade 5
- About a third of all grade 7 primary school leavers went to grade 8 (Form I)⁷

Need to provide more space led to introduction of double sessions in limited spaces. Under this system one room could accommodate two shifts under one teacher in a day. For a class of 40 pupils, it meant a teacher handled 80 pupils. The session had its flaws it placed strains on teachers who were compelled to prepare two sets of work for pupils. Double session system was unavoidable. Abolishing it would have required additional 5,000 classrooms and 5,000 teachers. Funds could not permit.

Zambian graduate teachers, was the largest scarce resource in both government and mission secondary schools and teacher training institutions

Second National Development Plan: (*January 1972 – December 1976*)

The Second National Development plan (SNDP) 1st January 1972 to 31st December 1976 devised to provide sufficient new lower school streams in

⁶ Fee paying meant in former European schools Non fee paying were Africans schools

⁷ Grades: 1 to 7 but 8-12 are called Forms 1,2,3,4 &5

keeping with the growing population did not achieve its planned objectives. Financial resources needs outstripped the requirements. However reasonable expansion of primary schools was maintained to enable a higher number complete the full 7 years education. The de-acceleration of the expansion adversely affected secondary school. De-acceleration continued to the end of the plan in 1976. It became clear that the objective of FNDP for one third of total primary schools out-put entering Form I, could not be achieved. Indeed it was not achieved. By 1970 other targets of secondary education expansion were equally not achieved.

Yet it is a fact that in the whole period of development, 1966 – 1968 was the most successful. [See enrolment 1966 – 1970 Below]

Evaluation

The UNIP government must be commended for initiating rapid expansion of school facilities and integrating the racially segregated school system into one that was relevant to Zambia. In so doing the new government surpassed the previous colonial governments in provision of education to Africans.

Zambians were pleased to have their children going to school in numbers near their villages. They appreciated their fight for independence. They were enjoying the fruits.

The Government's objectives by all standards were achieved. More primary and secondary school places were made available to many. In short time secondary schools were constructed at all provincial headquarters and district administrative centres in the country. In 1966 at the start of FNDP 473,432 were enrolled by the end of the plan 694,670 pupils were enrolled in all primary schools. Increase of 32% in 4 years or 8% per year. In Secondary schools over the same period enrolment, rose from 23,799 to 52,472 an increase of 120% in four years or 30% per year. Enrolment of girls in schools also increased.

Secondary schools communities and surrounding farming communities complemented each other. Markets became available for farmers' produce while school communities got their varied food provision within easy reach.

Enrolment during the period 1966 to 1970					
	1966	1968	1968	1970	1970
FORMS	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Planned</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Planned</i>	<i>Actual</i>
Form I	8,250	14,000	12,395	17,150	14,686
Form III	2,049	5,460	6,896	9,310	8,360
Form V	847	1,870	2,145	4,990	5,303
Total all Forms I, II, III, IV, V	16,843	36,360	42,388	54,580	50,785

The two parallel running Ministry of Europeans Education and Ministry of African Education merged into one Ministry of Education. Although it was not done easily, the government was able to go over the teething problems. Early in 1966, pupils from two systems were able to proceed to higher grades together having sat for the same selection examinations.

Staffing in schools was enhanced. Potential administrators were identified and trained on the job. Workshops, seminars and short courses were organised from time to time to supplement and sharpen their administrative skills. The University of Zambia for training qualified teachers for higher education needs was just opened in 1966. It was early for it to produce much needed personnel

In this manner, the author and many others were put in position when they had no experience. The author was pitched into heading secondary schools without experience. His Provincial Education Officer, late Nyambe Mutten-dango from Kasama reprimanding expatriate teachers for insubordination at Luwingu said, “Mr Simposya is allowed to make as many mistakes as Headmaster, so that he can learn from them.” He went on to add “After all it is because your colonial government did not prepare us for the work.” That encounter empowered the author so much that for the next ten years he confidently and successfully headed 3 dual secondary schools in rural

Zambia, before coming to an urban school in Lusaka, Prince Philip⁸ (Kamwala) Secondary school for Asians, Coloured and Africans.

At Luwingu, the secondary school he opened, the author recalls problems of poor and inadequate water supply, electricity and recreational facilities. The experience was not unique to Luwingu only but was common in all schools. Schools were not adequately provided with teaching aids and material. In many instances teachers improvised. However the communities managed to live happily. Schools in the province related in sports, debates and other recreational activities e.g. ball room dancing. It was exciting and challenging heading the Dual/Co-education schools.

With all government's good vision the expansion programme had to stall. Funding for projected plans were not forthcoming. Financiers (World Bank) did not appreciate Zambia's idea of accelerated expansion of secondary education and not primary. Provision of manpower in shortest possible time was the rationale of expansion. However, the programme stalled for lack of funds. Result was corresponding fall in school enrolment. By 1970 it had become clear that the hope of providing education for all 7 years old had faded away. Even the object of providing 80% of grade 4 proceeding to grade 5 could not be achieved.

The reality of the dream had shown that the expansion had been very ambitious indeed. Set objectives were not met. Out-put of teachers for primary schools fell short of demand. As for secondary schools the training was just beginning. So much depended on expatriate teachers.

The good dream, seemingly begun to fail. In due course the infrastructure lacked maintenance and eventually the quality of education deteriorated. Scarce qualified teachers started persisted. Lack of employment, lack of good recreational facilities, compelled teachers in schools to drift to town. On the other hand urban schools became overstaffed with female teachers. Marriages of convenience became prevalent to enable one stay in town or prevent her being posted to a rural school as well as to draw teachers from rural schools to urban centres.

The objective that secondary school graduates would stay in the rural area was never realised. During school holidays and on completion of their courses, students headed for bright lights to town. To their disappointment of job seekers, ended joining many unemployed in town. Others ended in

⁸School named after Prince Philip husband to Queen Elizabeth of England.

worse troubles than living in rural areas, like being involved in serious criminal activities.

Conclusion

The government efforts are continuing. It is the author's view that rural urban drift will continue for both school students and teaching staff, as long as infrastructure roads, electricity, road network, provision of sufficient clean water and good housing as well as good working condition are not attended to. Otherwise the objective of government would remain unattainable. It is the author's hope that it will not be the case.

The struggle for better education facilities continues unabated.