

Girl-Child Education Campaigns and Enrolment/Retention in Zambian Basic Schools: Impact Analysis

Chishimba Nkosha, Musonda Luchembe and Peggy Nsama Chakufyali
University of Zambia, Zambia

Abstract

This study investigated the impact of the Girl-Child Education Campaigns between 1998 and 2006 on enrolment and retention in selected basic schools in Zambia. The campaigns were part of the strategies that government used to redress the existing gender disparities in basic schools where girls were numerically under represented. A multi-pronged research design that encompasses primary and secondary research methodologies was used. Data were collected through questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions with different respondents. Data from questionnaires were summarised using frequencies, percentages and graphic presentations.

The study showed that there was a noticeable positive impact of the girl child education campaigns on enrolment and retention rates in selected basic schools. However, it should also be noted that campaigns may not have been the only factor that impacted positively on the enrolment and retention of the girl-children in school. For instance, the deliberate policy by government to build more schools could be one of the factors, which contributed to the high enrolments and retention of the girl-child in basic schools.

Apart from the Government, other stakeholders like Non-governmental organisations played an important role in the campaigns using a variety of methods. Therefore, the success of the campaigns can be attributed to the combined efforts of many organisations, which complimented those of government. Considering the positive achievements of these campaigns, the government and other stakeholders are urged to come up with measures which will sustain what has been achieved. It should also be noted that campaigns of this nature can yield more positive results if the cultural beliefs that hinder the girl-children from advancing in their education are addressed.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right, as enshrined in numerous international human rights instruments, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1976 International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. These instruments specify that gender inequalities in education should be eliminated, wherever they exist. The Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) obliges States to “*take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education, and in particular to ensure on the basis of equality of men and women*” (CEDAW, 1979).

The girl-child education campaign in Zambia started about 1996, soon after the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. A situational analysis of Zambia’s total population in 1996 was estimated at 9.5 million, of which about 51 percent were females. Despite the predominance of females, gender imbalances which did not favour women existed in Zambia’s socio-economic, cultural and political spheres. These imbalances prevented women from effectively contributing to and benefiting from the development process.

However, to ensure sustainable development and attainment of equality and equity between men and women, the Zambian Government recognized the need for full participation of women in the development process at all levels. Therefore, it became necessary for the Government to redress the existing gender imbalances and provide equal opportunities for women and men to participate and contribute to their fullest ability and equitably benefit from national development.

The Government’s vision and mission as it relates to gender is captured in the mission statement of the National Policy on Education document, **Educating Our Future** (1996, p.1) which states:

“..... to guide the provision of education for all Zambians so that they are able to pursue knowledge and skills, manifest excellence in performance and moral uprightness, defend democratic ideals, and accept and value other persons on the basis of their personal worth and dignity irrespective of gender, religion, ethnic origin, or any other discriminatory characteristic.”

In relation to the girl-child education awareness, different strategies were used by the Government and Non-governmental organisations to redress the existing gender disparities. For example, strategies such as the 50-50 Enrolment policy whereby schools were by law compelled to enroll equal numbers of girls and boys at Grades 1, 8 and 10, and the creation of co-education public schools and colleges were implemented. Other strategies included the conversion of Boys-only public secondary schools into Co-education High schools; the introduction of the Re-entry Policy in 1997 and the extensive classroom construction component of the Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP, 1998-2002) to improve access to basic education for Grades 1-7 to all eligible Zambian children.

Apart from that, in March 2000, the Government of Zambia decided to formulate the National Gender Policy which had a holistic approach in ensuring a full participation and equitable benefit of both sexes from the development process.

Unique among the World Conventions that have taken place so far, is the World Education Forum that was held in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000, where different stakeholders such as the Teachers, Academic Policy Makers, NGOs, Prime Ministers and Heads of International Organisations from 164 countries convened. This meeting saw the adoption of the Education for All (EFA)'s Framework for Action. The Dakar Framework for Action and the Millennium Declaration both established time bound gender equality goals to which all member States are committed.

Among the six goals that were established, two had a bias towards gender:

Goal 2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Goal 5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full equal access to achievement in basic education of good quality.

“Education for all” means what it says. Apart from the commitment by the international community, in Dakar Framework for Action, to have all eligible children attending fee-free primary schooling by 2015, adult illiteracy was to be halved, early childhood education and programmes for out-of-school youth were to be increased, and the quality of education was to be greatly improved. The phrase “All Children” implied, of course, boys and girls. However, greater emphasis was put on elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary schooling, as indicated in Goal Number 5. A careful analysis of this emphasis shows that gender equality is given major prominence in the Dakar Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 Nations and signed by 147 Heads of States during the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000. The MDGs relevant to this field are the two goals highlighted above.

In recognition of the importance of addressing gender inequalities in national development, the Zambian Government included “*gender equity and equality*” in the vision of the Fifth National Development Plan (2006). There has been an integration of efforts from different stakeholders to address gender disparities in Zambia amongst other challenges yet to be tackled.

In the past decade, the Ministry of Education in Zambia has initiated policy measures to facilitate enrolment, participation and retention of children in basic education (Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development, 2006). As indicated earlier, one of the most important measures taken so far has been what is commonly referred to as the re-entry or re-admission policy. This policy came into being in September, 1997. It allows a school girl who becomes pregnant to come back to school after she has given birth. This is aimed at enhancing retention of the girl child in basic education.

Other measures include an increase in the provision of textbooks and the declaration that government would offer free education from grade 1 to 7 and that with or without uniforms, children would be allowed to attend school. In addition, children would be provided with free exercise books and pencils. A further positive trend affecting girl child education in Zambia today is the increase in gender sensitivity, more recognition of the need to dismantle the “apartheid of gender”, and growing realization of the many social and economic benefits that accrue from the education of girls and women (Kelly, 1994, p.18).

In the light of the combined efforts of various stakeholders in ensuring that girls are given the same opportunities as boys in as far as enrolment and retention in school are concerned, it was hoped that this study would bring to the fore the effects of such efforts. It was also anticipated that policy makers might benefit from the findings of the study especially that it would amount to evaluating Government’s efforts in promoting gender equity in education.

Statement of the Problem

It has been reported that there are significant gender differences in enrolments at upper basic level of education (i.e. Grades 8 and 9). According to the Ministry of Education report of 1996, the census shows that 39.2% of the eligible boys were enrolled in these grades in 1990 and 29.4% of the girls. In rural areas, 20.9% of the eligible population was enrolled, compared with 52.8% in urban areas. The lowest enrolment ratio at this level was that for girls, only 16.7% of these being recorded as participating in upper basic education (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Further, the report revealed that girls were more severely affected than boys. For example, the 1988 – 1994 completion rate for girls was 71.4% compared with 86.9% for boys. Overall, only 79% of those who entered Grade 1 in 1988 reached Grade 7 in 1994.

Prioritizing the enrolment and retention of girls in school is a critical step in promoting equal opportunities in Zambia. It has been proven that increased education for girls has a dramatic impact on their subsequent achievements and on the status of their families – socially, economically and health-wise (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 1996, p. 11). For these reasons, the girl child education awareness has been given high consideration for the past fourteen (14) years in Zambia.

In light of the above, this study sought to assess the impact of the girl-child education campaigns during the period 1998 – 2006 on the enrolment and retention of girls in selected basic schools in Zambia.

Objectives of the Study and Research Questions

The objectives of this study were to:

- a. assess the impact of the girl-child education campaigns on the enrolment of girls

- in selected basic schools in Zambia;
- b. establish the extent to which the girl-child education campaigns had improved the retention of girls in basic schools in Zambia;
- c. identify basic schools that experienced the effect of the girl-child education campaigns;
- d. determine basic school children's knowledge of the girl-child education campaigns;
- e. determine teachers' knowledge of the girl-child education campaigns; and
- f. establish the methods used in the girls' education awareness campaigns.

The research questions were as follows:

- a. What has been the impact of the girl-child education campaigns on the enrolment in selected basic schools in Zambia?
- b. How have the girl-child education campaigns affected the retention rate of girls in selected basic schools?
- c. Which basic schools experienced the effect of the girl-child education campaigns?
- d. What is the basic school's children knowledge about the girl-child education campaigns in Zambia?
- e. What do basic school's teachers know about the girl-child education campaigns in Zambia?
- f. What methods were used in girls' education awareness campaigns?

Literature Review

Globally, girls represent the majority of children out of school and face some of the biggest challenges in getting an education. In 2006, 75 million children of primary school age were not enrolled in school; in 2007, 101 million were not attending school. Most out-of-school primary school-age children (88 per cent) live in Africa and Asia (UNICEF, 2009). According to Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE, 1996) comparative data for Latin America, Asia and the Middle East indicate that both the gross primary and the secondary enrolment ratios were significantly lower in sub-Saharan African region than in developing regions. It explains further that as many as 36 million girls in sub-Saharan Africa are missing from school, and those who gain access to education are often poorly served. While the same number of boys and girls enrol in first grade, by fourth grade, 50% of the female students have dropped out. In other words, enrolment decreases, the higher one ascends the educational hierarchy.

The centrality of women's contribution to national development cannot be underestimated. Several studies have shown that an investment in girls' education is an investment in the family, community and nation (Adetunde & Akensina, 2008; Government of the Republic of Zambia, 1996, p.13). It improves overall quality of life.

Their education is particularly associated with significant reductions in infant mortality and morbidity, improvement in family nutrition and health, lowering of fertility rates, improved chances of children's education, and increased opportunities for income earning in both wage and non-wage sectors (Kelly, 1999). The Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) for 1992 also revealed that the social benefits associated with secondary education of girls included lower fertility rates, later age of first marriage, greatly reduced infant and child mortality, reduced incidence of child malnutrition (Gaisie, Cross & Nsemukila, 1993).

However, for a long time now, it has been noted that the education sector has not been able to give equal access to girls nor has it been able to retain many of them in school for many years. Some factors responsible for imbalances in female access to education are: wage discrimination, quality of education offered to girls, type of school, religion and ethnicity (Mwansa, 1995, p.3). Studies in West Africa indicated that parents, unless wealthy, preferred to educate their sons on the assumption that education "pays off" in life time wages more handsomely for males than for females (Ram, 1982). The Forum for African Women Educationalists in Zambia has observed that the girl-child is discriminated against from the earliest stages of life, through childhood into adulthood. In terms of education, they include unequal access, poor performance, early drop-out, and low enrolment in higher education (FAWE, 1996, p.15).

In Zambia, it has been observed that there was a steady attrition of girls relative to boys over the twelve years of primary and secondary school, such that by Grade 12 female students accounted for only about 35% of the enrolment (Kelly, 1999, p.253). There is a traditional belief in the intrinsic value for the education of the boy-child (Kelly, 1994; Serpell, 1993). The degree to which this belief is widespread and persistent has not been investigated but it is known that there are different expectations on the part of teachers about girls' performance compared to that of boys (Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe & Chilangwa, 1995).

At the World Declaration on Education for All in 1990, Zambia joined the international community to make a commitment to achieve universal primary education, to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education and to attain gender equality at all levels by 2000. To guide all state parties, the United Nations developed strategic objectives to ensure quality education for all girls; to build political and resource commitments for girls' education, end the gender gap in attendance and completion, eliminate gender bias within national education systems and to support girls' education in areas affected by or recovering from armed conflict, natural disasters or external shock.

In pursuit of the promotion of girls' access to education in relation to their male counterparts, the Ministry of Education (MoE) formulated and put in place a number of policies and programmes. The 1990s studies on the situation of education in Zambia revealed that due to the unequal socio-cultural gender construct, the scale of disadvantages was tipped against girls and women. According to Mumba (2002), among the major problems identified in the research studies were that:

- In primary school, the enrolment, retention and completion rates of girls were lower than that of boys; and
- Many parents prefer to spend the little money they have on the education of boys rather than of girls.

Differences in enrolments can be noted between rural and urban areas. In the 1990 census, the gross enrolment rate in rural areas was 69.3% while in urban areas it was 100.8%. At the provincial level, gross enrolment rates varied from as high as 100.2% in the Copperbelt Province to as low as 53.6% in the Eastern Province. Net enrolment ratios followed the same pattern, ranging from as high as 72.3% in the Copperbelt Province to as low as 36.1% in the Eastern Province (meaning that only 36.1% of the 7-13 year-olds in the Eastern Province were actually in school) (Kelly, 1994).

Kelly (1996) reported that in 1996, the number of children out of school aged 7-13 years old in Zambia were more than one-quarter of a million and more than half of them were girls. The rates at which girls drop out of school at any point at the primary level in Zambia is higher than for boys. Kelly (1994) reports that in 1991/92, the overall primary school attrition rate for Zambia was 5.2% - 6.9% for girls and 3.5% for boys as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Primary school attrition in Zambia, 1991 - 1992

	Girls		Boys		Both sexes	
	Rate of Attrition %	Number Leaving School	Rate of Attrition %	Number Leaving School	Rate of Attrition %	Number Leaving School
Whole Country						
After Grade 1	4.9	5,155	2.6	2,816	3.8	7,971
After Grade 2	4.7	4,794	2.8	2,931	3.7	7,725
After Grade 3	5.6	5,408	2.7	2,767	4.1	8,175
After Grade 4	9.1	8,153	6.2	6,081	7.6	14,234
After Grade 5	8.2	6,561	4.3	3,756	7.2	10,317
After Grade 6	10.8	7,851	2.8	2,309	6.5	10,160
After Grade 1-6	6.9	37,922	3.5	20,660	5.2	58,582
Line-of-Rail Provinces						
After Grade 1-6	3.0	8,530	1.4	3,867	1.5	12,397
Province away from Line-of-Rail						
After Grade 1-6	11.0	29,392	5.5	16,793	8.1	46,185

Source: Ministry of Education Data, 1996.

The total number of pupils who left school prematurely from 1991 to 1992, as shown in Table 1 was 58,582, of whom 37,922 were girls and 20,660 were boys.

Campaigns Aimed at Promoting Girl-Education in Zambia

To improve access and retention of the girl child in basic schools, the Government used a number of strategies. One of them was a girls' education initiative locally known as 'The Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education (PAGE). The Programme was a Ministry of Education initiative supported by UNICEF, CIDA and NORAD. This programme was piloted in Lusaka and Eastern Provinces until 1998 when it was scaled up to all the nine provinces of Zambia. By 2002, 1,571 Basic schools had been reached by this programme. The programme seeks to deliver quality primary education to all children, especially girls, and to reduce gender disparities in primary education enrollment, retention, completion and achievement.

Among PAGE's immediate objectives were the following:

- a. Promote and create public awareness of the importance of girls' education and empowerment at national level, within the framework of the Education for All programme and Convention on the rights of the child.
- b. Support the Ministry of Education to monitor and analyse data on girls' education.
- c. Implement specific interventions that directly impact on access, retention and achievement of girls in selected schools.

To achieve the objectives, several interventions to improve access and retention of the girl child were introduced. One such intervention was that researches were conducted in order to provide information and insight needed to identify and formulate policies and actions in support of girls' education. Another intervention was advocacy and sensitisation. This intervention was aimed at creating policies which promote an enabling environment for the education of children, especially girls. It also focusses on strategies and activities to sensitise the community i.e. parents, teachers, administrators, and pupils to change negative attitudes towards girls' education.

Initially, PAGE was being implemented in Lusaka and Chipata districts. Later the Ministry of Education decided to expand the programme by adopting ten schools in each province. According to Muyakwa (2002), this decision was arrived at after an evaluation revealed positive impacts of what PAGE had achieved in the pilot schools in terms of enhancing the girl-child education. Since then PAGE has continued to expand to other parts of the country though at a slow a pace due to financial constraints.

Similar initiatives to improve access and retention of the girl child in basic schools have been tried elsewhere. For example, the Strategies for Advancing Girls's Education (SAGE) project was funded by the office of Women in Development at USAID to cover five countries namely Guinea and Mali in 1999, and the Ghana, El Salvador, and Democratic of Congo (DRC) programmes launched in 2001. The objectives of the

SAGE project were focused around mutually reinforcing strategies to form and develop partnerships across sectors that can advance girls' education, and to expand the knowledge base, skills and tools that provide guidance for the SAGE programmes, in particular, but also for other girls' and basic education programmes and activities.

Another strategy that was aimed at promoting girl-child education in Zambia was the 50-50 Enrolment policy. Historically, the colonial government adopted policies that tended to favour males to the exclusion of women. Muyakwa (2002) describes how discriminatory the colonial education system was as follows:

‘The initial integration strategies were to enable women learn how to be better mothers and wives, and therefore tended to concentrate on the home economics and social etiquette training. In many, especially rural households, the limited educational resources are made available for boys' education. The rationale being that the girls will eventually be married off and the husbands will look after them’ (p.45).

Another strategy which was aimed at promoting the girl-child education in Zambia was the re-entry or re-admission policy. This policy required school girls who fell pregnant to return to school after they had delivered their babies. In Zambia, this policy became operational in September 1997. But the most important question to be asked is: To what extent are girls taking advantage of this policy and returning to school after giving birth?

During the period 2002 – 2008, the percentage of pregnant girls re-entering school after giving birth had slightly increased at the basic education level from 36 percent to 38 percent, while the percentage at the high school level fell from 79.2% to 65.1% (Namuunda & Mumbuna, 2010). In addition, the regulation demanding the sending away of both boy and girl from school to nurse the expected baby may have also played a positive role in increasing retention of the girl-child by avoiding pregnancy.

Mwansa (2008), in her exploration of the use of focused group discussion and semi-structured interview techniques during her studies in London, collected data on the experiences of adolescent mothers in the implementation of the Re-entry policy at high school level in Lusaka. Among other things the following emerged:

“ The Ministry of Education (MoE) reports on the policy have focused on the goals, implementation strategies and on-going development outreach of the policy. It tends to highlight the effectiveness of various interventions. During the early years of the Re-entry policy there was little to be learned about the achievements and failure of this policy in MoE annual statistical bulletins because of lack of consultations that characterised the implementation stage of the policy. However, these statistical reports and joint annual review meeting memoirs seem to suggest that the Re-entry policy in Zambia was achieving the expected goals. They highlighted the indisputable fact that a significant number of school girl mothers, especially in rural areas, had returned to school” (p. 32-33).

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of pregnancies among school-going girls. According to Namuunda and Mumbuna (2010), between 2002 and 2008, there had been an increase in the number of school girls who fell pregnant; from 3,663 to 12,370 at Basic school level and from 765 to 1,566 in 2008 at High school level. They also noted differences in the trends in re-entry rates between basic and high schools, rural and urban areas and among provinces. For example, over the years, there were more girls at high school who returned to school after giving birth compared to girls from basic schools. Although the implementation of the re-entry policy has shown some positive impact, there are still challenges that are experienced and subsequently affect the extent to which girls are taking advantage of this policy.

It has been noted that the enrolment and progression rates of boys and girls in school differ a lot. According to Katongo (2004), girls enrol in grade 1 in numbers almost equal to that of boys. The gap between sexes starts to widen from grade 5 to grade 7, with the girls accounting for only 46 percent. This is because the drop up rate for girls is higher than for boys. Several factors that inhibit the full participation of girls in education have been identified. The campaign, as earlier mentioned, was aimed at promoting the enrolment and retention of the girl-child.

Apart from this strategy, measures such as turning Boys-only schools into Co-education High schools, construction of more basic schools and so on were implemented. However, assessment of the effect of these strategies on the girl-child education has not yet been done.

The progress that has been made in Zambian basic schools regarding access and retention of the girl-child following country-wide campaigns has not been established. Zambia witnessed many groups including Government and some Churches getting involved in these campaigns to advance the cause for the girl-child and women education since the mid-90s. It was, therefore, important to carry out a research to establish the extent to which this policy had yielded the much anticipated and needed results.

Methodology

The objectives of this study clearly point towards a multi-pronged research design that encompasses secondary and primary research methodologies. A descriptive study was used to carry out the research. Unlike other research designs, a descriptive study allows for a wider coverage of cases in the collection of data. As argued by Charles (1988, p.8), “descriptive research describes conditions, situations and events of the present”.

This study consisted of a threefold approach from the onset of the study up to the end term review. It was, thus, a hybrid of *qualitative and quantitative* methodologies preceded by some desk research. To ensure evidence-based insights upon which the impact of the girl child education awareness campaign was established, the information needed to be detailed, diverse and credible. Collecting such comprehensive information called for an exhaustive and methodical irrefragable process. The research was carried

out in conformity with professional ethics, international standards and practices.

The target areas of this study were Northern and Eastern provinces of Zambia, which are among the most hit places with high dropout rates and Copperbelt province, which is not one of the most hit provinces. The Copperbelt province acted as a control group. The main reason for this was to compare the result of the most hit provinces and the less hit provinces by establishing the real situation on the ground (MoE Database Ed Assist). In addition, from each province, three districts were randomly selected.

The Ministry of Education Directorates, Provincial and District Education Officials were part of the target population. Others were serving Head teachers, teachers and pupils in selected basic schools of the target provinces, some parents in selected communities as well as selected Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the country.

Seven out of 15 Head teachers that participated in the study had served in their present capacity for a period ranging from one to five years while five of them had served for a period of less than one year. Two Head teachers had served for a period between six and ten years while only one Head teacher had served for more than 20 years. The study further probed the length of stay of individual teachers at their present school. It was discovered that the majority of the teachers, that is 22 (48.8%) out of the 45 teachers that participated in the study had served at the present school for a period between one and five years. Thirteen teachers representing 28.8% had served for a period between 11 and 15 years while seven (15.5%) of them had served for a period between six and ten years. On the other hand, three teachers had served between 16 and 20 years while three representing 6.6% had served at their present school for over 20 years.

The sample consisted of three officials from the Directorate of Planning and Information of the Ministry of Education Headquarters, two officers at the provincial and district education offices, and three parents from each of the selected provinces. Others were five Head teachers from each province, three teachers from each of the selected schools, five pupils from each of the selected schools and five officers from three different NGOs.

Ministry of Education officials, basic schools teachers and NGOs were chosen using purposive or judgmental sampling procedures. Purposive or judgmental sampling is based on the judgment of a researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. The strategy in purposive sampling is to select elements that are judged typical of the population under investigation. Head teachers of the selected basic schools were automatic respondents, whereas parents were selected randomly. Random selection as stipulated by Charles (1998, p.8) ensures that “each and every individual in the population has an equal chance of being included”. He adds that random selection helps ensure accurate samples.

In order to have wide coverage of views, data were collected through questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions with the different respondents. Researchers completed the interview schedules by directly obtaining information from the Ministry of Education Officials, NGOs’ officials and conducting discussions with parents, while Head teachers and teachers completed their respective questionnaires themselves.

Interview schedules were used with pupils.

Non-structured questions were manually analysed through categorisation and coding of themes. Descriptive statistics were used in data analysis, i.e. numerical data were summarised using frequency distributions, percentages or graphic presentations in form of figures.

Findings

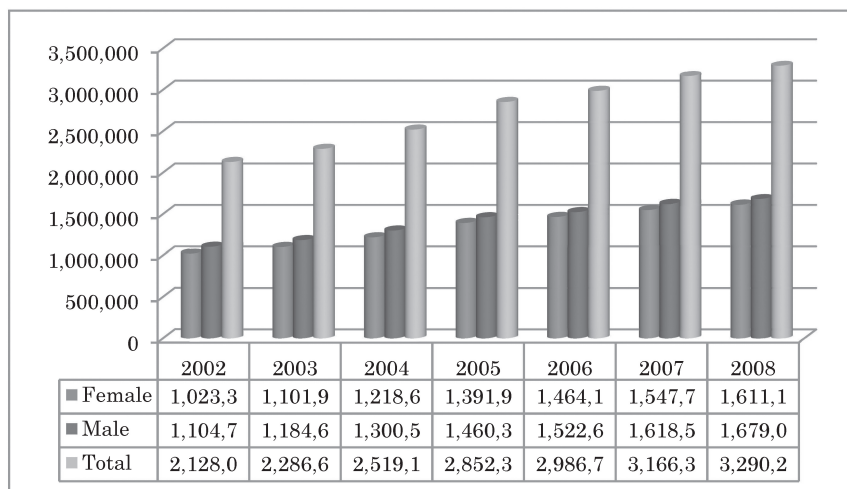
This section presents and discusses the findings of the study on the impact of the Girl-Child Education Campaigns between 1998 and 2006 on enrolment and retention in selected Basic Schools in Zambia. A total of 176 respondents was drawn, of which 15 (8.5%) were Head Teachers, 45 (25.6%) were Teachers and 27 (15.3%) were Ministry of Education officials (i.e. 3 from the Ministry of Education headquarters, 6 from the Provincial Education office and 18 from the District Education Board Secretary’s office). Others were 5 (2.8%) NGO officers, 9 (5.1%) parents and 75 (42.6%) pupils. The presentation and discussion of the findings in this regard centre on the objectives which guided this study.

Impact of the Girl-Child Education Campaigns on Enrolments

The other focus of the study was to assess the impact of the girl child education campaigns on the enrolment of girls in selected basic schools in Zambia. Figure 1 below gives us a picture of the enrolment trends between 2002 and 2008.

The information in Figure 1 above shows that the enrolment figures for girls

Figure 1: Enrolment in Basic Schools by Gender and Year in Zambia



Source: 2006/8 Educational Statistical Bulletin

gradually increased from 1, 023, 320 in 2002 to 1, 464, 130 in 2006 representing an increase of 440, 810 (43%). This means that whereas the difference in enrolment figures between boys and girls in 2002 was 81,390 in 2006, this was reduced to 58, 510. The difference in enrolment figures between girls and boys improved by 28% in 2006. A closer examination of the enrolment pattern reflected in Figure 1 reveals that the more the campaigns lasted, the more girls were enrolled and the narrower the gap between the enrolment of girls and boys. Responses from the Ministry of Education officials, Head teachers and teachers confirmed that there had been a steady increase in the enrolment figures of girls in the selected basic schools between 2002 and 2006. They attributed this increase to the girl child education awareness campaigns.

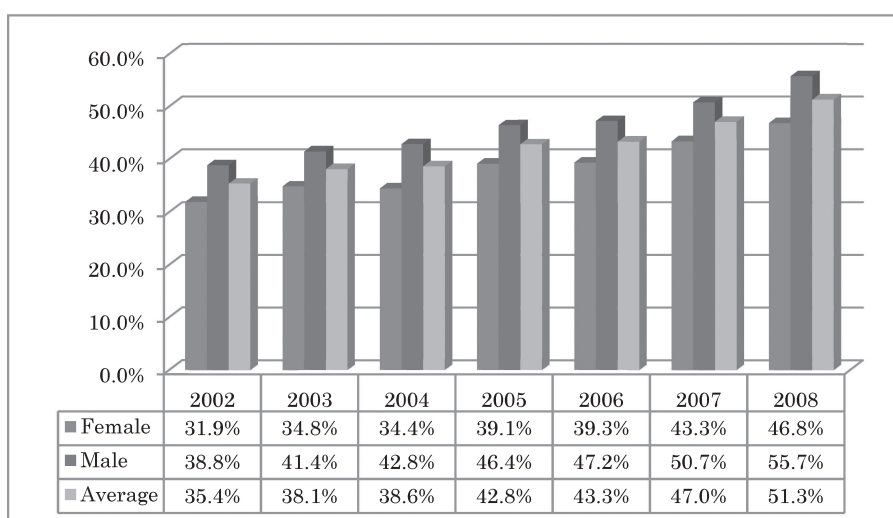
Impact of the Girl-Child Education Campaigns on Retention

Finally, the study also sought to establish whether or not the girl-child education campaigns had improved the retention of girls in basic schools in Zambia.

Asked whether the girl child education awareness campaigns had improved the retention rate of girls in the selected basic schools, 14 out of 15 Head teachers responded in the affirmative. However, one Head teacher did not attribute the improved retention rate to the campaigns. The responses from the teachers also showed that most of the schools had increased retention due to the campaigns. Of the 45 teachers, 43 (96%) acknowledged an increase in retention rate while two (4%) did not give any alternative explanation to this phenomenon.

The completion rate in grades 1 to 9, as reflected in Figure 2 below, also confirms

Figure 2: Completion Rate in Grade 1-9 by Gender and Year in Zambia



Source: 2006/8 Educational Statistical Bulletin

that the retention rate among girls in selected basic schools had increased.

Whereas the retention rate was 31.9% in 2002, it increased to 39.3% in 2006 representing an improvement of 7.4% in the retention rate. While significant retention rates among girls were recorded between 2002 and 2003 as well as 2004 to 2005, the retention rate recorded in the latter case was the highest of them all.

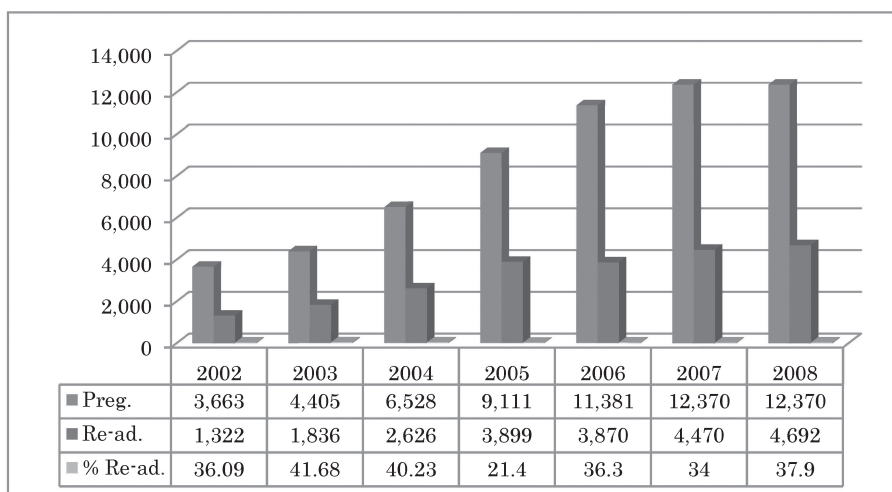
While the improvement in the enrolment and retention rates among girls in basic schools can be attributed to the girl child education campaigns, some of the factors such as the Zambian government’s re-entry policy appear to have played a more significant supportive role than others. As indicated earlier in this report, this is a policy that allows school-going girls to return to school after giving birth. The information given in Figure 3 below will suffice to prove this point.

Of the 3, 663 girls who got pregnant in 2002, 1,322 were re-admitted, representing 36.09%. The highest percentage of re-admissions (re-entry) that is 41.68%, was recorded in 2003. The Head teachers and teachers spoken to in this study appreciated the positive effects of the campaigns and the re-entry policy on the enrolment and retention of girls in basic schools. A teacher at one basic school in Eastern Province gave an example of five girls that their school received on *re-entry* policy in 2011 and 2012.

One teacher stated, ‘Many pupils have come back into schools’ mainstream’, while another teacher confirmed the effectiveness of the campaigns though monitoring of the campaign had been rather poor. Other teachers, however, believed that many girls had deliberately taken advantage of the new policy when they remarked, ‘It (policy) has brought more problems because a lot of girls think they will be retained later’.

Similar sentiments were recorded in the Copperbelt Province. For example, “A lot

Figure 3: Pregnancies and Re-admissions in Zambia’s Basic Schools by Year



Source: 2006/8 Educational Statistical Bulletin

of people are now aware because girls are participating in education”, and “The mode of dressing for girls changed”. A good number of teachers described what was happening at their schools as follows: “Most girls who were on streets have gone back to school and are doing very fine”. In addition, some claimed that there had been a reduction in pregnancy levels. Others reported, “Our school has become a girls’ only school due to campaigns”; “Most girls are free to air their views”. Many administrators said, ‘Most girls have come back after giving birth’, while others stated that more girls had been sent to Grade 10.

To address the problem of school-going girls getting pregnant, the re-entry policy put in place the following measures:

- a. Each school should had a trained female Counsellor for girls and a male Counsellor for boys. Each school had counselling on sexual and gender relations and reproductive health education included on the timetable to reduce incidences of teen pregnancies.
- b. Schools had to sensitise pupils on the consequences of pregnancy for both girls and boys, i.e. both would be sent on maternity/paternity leave and that the school Guidance and Counselling Department would contact legal bodies for information on legal action and maintenance for the girl and the child.
- c. Existing Student Alliance for Female Education (SAFE) Clubs and Child Rights Clubs were strengthened and new ones established in all the schools (Ministry of Education, FAWEZA & UNICEF, 2004, p. 12).

From the aforesaid, it can be concluded that the girl child education awareness campaigns between 2002 and 2006 on enrolment and retention in selected basic schools produced positive results. From the information available in Figures 1, 2 and 3 presented in this report, it can be inferred that this positive trend continued even beyond 2006.

Basic Schools that Experienced the Effects of the Girl-Child Education

The study revealed that all the basic schools in all the Provinces/Districts visited were targeted for the campaigns of Girl-Child education. The responses from all the Ministry of Education Officials interviewed confirmed that there were no specific schools that were targeted for this exercise, as all the schools were reached in this regard. However, the respondents from the Lusaka Provincial Education Office explained that the campaigns were more focused on certain areas where cases of early pregnancies and early marriages were more prevalent such as Chongwe, Luangwa and Lusaka Districts.

The study also revealed that the campaign started as a pilot in some specific places. For example, in Kitwe town of the Copperbelt Province, the pilot started in 1998 at Valley View, Ndeke and Justine Kabwe Basic Schools. This finding was verified by the response

from the Ministry of Education Headquarters Official, who revealed that the campaign commenced as a pilot in six provinces of Zambia such as the Eastern, Copperbelt, among others. The campaign aimed at positioning the girls in Education by addressing cultural beliefs that hindered the girl-children from advancing in their education. In view of the aforesaid, it is clear that most of the basic schools in Zambia experienced the effects of these campaigns.

Basic School Children's Knowledge of Girl-Child Education Campaigns

Focus group discussions were held with pupils in all the schools visited to establish their awareness of the campaign for the girls' education. The study revealed that in spite of some pupils being aware of the campaigns in their schools, others initially appeared not to know that their schools were among those that had been targeted for the campaigns for girls' education. However, a further probe indicated that most of them did not link the measures that were being implemented to the 'Girl Child Education Awareness Campaigns'. One of the measures was encouraging the pregnant girls to go back to school after giving birth. Some pupils explained that they were being encouraged to be morally sound by their Head teachers during school assembly or by their teachers during lesson times. In some cases, some pupils were trained and encouraged to have discussion with their fellow pupils on the issues of girl's education as Peer Educators.

Some of the children gave the following responses: "Our Head teacher encourages us to work hard", "Our teacher in class encourages us to abstain from sex", "Our teacher encourages us during lessons to listen attentively and also see the value of school", "Our head teacher encourages us to be good girls", among others. All in all, it was evident that most of the pupils were aware of the measures aimed at promoting girls' education in their schools.

Teachers' Knowledge of the Girl-Child Education Campaigns

Although this objective initially targeted teachers in the selected basic schools of this study, an attempt was made to gauge the knowledge of other prominent respondents in this regard. The study revealed that all the respondents, that is, basic school teachers, Ministry of Education officials and Non-Governmental Organisations were aware of the Girl-Child Education Campaigns. Further, their responses indicated the roles they played in the various capacities.

The Head teachers' responses revealed that some of them played more than one role. Out of the 15 responses, seven (47%) played the role of sensitizing and/or encouraging girls on the importance of education. Four Head teachers indicated that they played the role of sensitizing the communities while three of them indicated that they implemented the campaigns in their schools. However, only one Head teacher indicated that he had been facilitating at workshops for promoting the importance of girls' education.

While the teachers' responses revealed that most of them, that is 22 out of 45, (49%) played the role of sensitizing the Girl Child in the school, 11 (24%) were involved in sensitising the community. Eight teachers were counselling and guiding the girls while 4 (9 %) did not play any role. Respondents from the Ministry of Education headquarters confirmed the various roles that teachers played in the girl child education awareness.

Owing to their involvement in promoting the girl child education, Non-Governmental Organisation officials also exhibited knowledge of these campaigns. They played various roles such as creating awareness of the importance of promoting girls' education among Parliamentarians. They (NGOs) also recruited many female teachers in order to strengthen advocacy. Parents, too, exhibited sufficient knowledge of the campaigns.

Methods used in the Girl-Child Education Campaigns

Many interest groups used various campaign methods to create awareness of the importance of educating the girl child. For example, The Ministry of Education officials and teachers used the following methods:

- a. Parent-Teachers' Association meetings
- b. Psycho-socio counselling talks
- c. Radio advertisements
- d. In-house workshops
- e. Drama and poetry
- f. School clubs
- g. Integration of girls into former boys-only schools
- h. Forming classes exclusively for girls under the programme called Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education (PAGE)
- i. Pupil-parent orientations

The NGOs mainly used the following methods to create awareness of the importance of educating the girl-child:

- a. Brochures and fliers
- b. Television role plays and drama (in places where television service is available)
- c. Radio advertisements
- d. Community sensitisation through sketches
- e. Sensitisation meetings with the local leadership
- f. Organisation of role model talks

Various categories of the respondents such as the Ministry of Education officials, Head teachers, teachers, pupils, parents, NGOs officials and community leaders confirmed that these methods used in the campaigns were very effective in creating awareness of the

importance of educating the girl child.

Discussion and Implication of Findings

Overall, the campaign to a larger extent can be described as having achieved its objective of increasing access and retention of the girl-child in school. Not only did it create awareness about the importance of education among the girl-children, but it also encouraged parents and the community in general on the need to send and support the girl-children at school. The success of the campaign can be confirmed by both the statistics emanating from the study including information from the participants themselves. However, success of this nature can only be sustained if the cultural beliefs that hinder the girl-children from advancing in their education are addressed. These include negative self-image reinforced in school, distorted teacher's opinion of the ability of the girl-child, role expectation of the girl-child in the community and so on. It was, however, apparent in this study that none of such beliefs was given prominence nor were steps being taken to improve the situation highlighted.

It should also be borne in mind that the campaign may not have been the only factor that led to this positive development. There might have been other factors that contributed to more girls having access to educational facilities as well as staying there for a longer period of time. For example, the building of more basic schools in many areas could have contributed to the increase in enrolment and retention of the girl-children as it became relatively easier for them to get to school.

It can also be stated that not all areas in Zambia benefitted from the campaigns. For instance, some areas in Zambia still have challenges of inadequate learning facilities whose schools in some cases are located far from human settlements. In this regard, some girl-children still do not have the opportunity to attend school.

The achievement of these campaigns should be replicated in areas that were not reached. Furthermore, the Government should be encouraged to adopt and sustain the 'good' measures, as best practices, in order to increase enrolment and retention of the girl-child.

Conclusion

In this study it has been established that most of the basic schools experienced the girl child education awareness campaigns. It has also been noted that nearly all the respondents (Ministry of Education officials, head teachers, teachers, parents, pupils and NGOs) had adequate knowledge of the girl child education campaigns and their effect on the enrolment and retention rates of girls in basic schools.

It has been observed that stakeholders used a variety of methods in promoting the girl-child's education. It should be noted, however, that some of these interest groups used the same methods. For instance, teachers, Ministry of Education officials and NGOs

officials used radio, workshops, drama, and meeting with parents. These and many other methods proved to be very effective.

As far as the findings of this study are concerned, there was a noticeable positive impact of the girl-child education campaigns on the enrolment and retention rates of the girl child in selected basic schools in Zambia. As stated earlier, the Zambian Government's introduction of the re-entry policy appear to have enhanced the retention of girls in Basic Schools.

Recommendations

The recommendations which are based on this study are as follows:

- a. There is need to keep an up – to – date pupil information systems (records) at the Ministry of Education Headquarters, Provincial and District Education offices as well as in schools.
- b. Considering the positive achievements of the girl child education awareness campaigns, the Government and other stakeholders should put measures in place to sustain them (campaigns).
- c. Since some respondents expressed misgivings over the re-admissions (re-entry policy), the Government and other stakeholders should carry out sensitisation campaigns to highlight the benefits of this policy.
- d. It is recommended that in future a similar study should be conducted on a large scale.

Owing to limited resources and time constraints, this study was conducted in selected basic schools in Zambia. Therefore, it (study) might not give us a broader picture of the impact of the girl-child education awareness. Consequently, generalisation of the findings might also be inappropriate. In studies of this nature, findings might be interpreted in different ways. For example, while the researchers' focus was on the impact of the girl-child education awareness campaigns on the enrolment and retention, other people might argue that other factors could affect both access and retention of the girl child in basic schools.

Although the study sought to establish enrolment and retention trends among female pupils in basic schools from 1998 to 2006, statistical information from 1998 to 2001 was not available at the time of this study. Therefore, this information gap might not give a full picture of the developments that took place during the whole period the researchers wanted to cover in the study.

References

- Adetunde, I.A. & Akensina, A.P. (2008). 'Factors affecting the standard of female education: A case study of senior secondary schools in the Kassena-Nankana district'. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(4): 338-342, 2008.
- Charles, C.M. (1998). *Introduction to educational research*. New York: Longman Inc.
- Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, art. 10, opened for signature December 18, 1979, Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/text/econvention.htm> (Accessed on 28th January 2013).
- Forum for African Women Educationalists. (1996). *Beyond Beijing: A summary of the global and Africa region platforms for action with a focus on education*. Fourth World Conference on Education.
- Gaisie, K., Cross, A.R. & Nsemukila, G. (1993). *Zambia demographic and health survey 1992*. Lusaka: University of Zambia and Central Statistical Office; Columbia, Maryland: Macro International Inc.
- Government of the Republic of Zambia. (1996). *Zambia's children in 1995: Key results of a survey to monitor progress towards goals for children*. Lusaka: Government Printers.
- Katongo, C. (2002). 'Education, child and youth'. *Journal of African Social Research* 49/52: 42 – 60, December 2002/June 2003. Special issue: Part two.
- Kelly, G.P. (1984). Women's access in the Third World. In Acker, S. (Ed.), *World Yearbook of Education 1984 Women and Education*. London: Kogan Page Limited.
- Kelly, M.J. (1994). *Below the poverty line in education: A situation analysis of Girl-child education in Zambia*. Lusaka: UNICEF.
- Kelly, M.J. (1996). *The origins and development of education in Zambia*. Nairobi: East African Education Publishers.
- Kelly, M.J. (1999). *The origins and development of education in Zambia: From Pre-colonial times to 1996*. Lusaka: Image Publishers.
- Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe, I. & Chilangwa, B. (1995). *Learning from inside the classroom*. Lusaka: UNICEF & Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education (1996). *Educating our future: National policy on education*. Lusaka: Zambia Publishing House.
- Ministry of Education, FAWEZA & UNICEF (2004). *Guidelines for the Re-entry policy*. Lusaka: Zambia.
- Ministry of Finance (2006). *Fifth national development plan 2006 – 2010*. Lusaka.
- Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development (2006). *National child policy*. Lusaka: Golden Touch Graphical Printers Limited.
- Mumba, E.C. (2002). *Education for all: Increasing access to education for girls in Zambia*. (Unpublished Paper). Presented at the 2nd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, 29th July – 2nd August 2002, Durban, South Africa.
- Muyukwa, S. I. (2002). 'Gender issues in Zambia'. *Journal of African Social Research*, 43/44: 44 – 60, 2002. Special issue: Part one.

- Mwansa, A.C. (2008). 'An exploration of the use of focused group discussion and semi-structured interview technique in collecting data on experiences of adolescent school girl mothers in the implementation of the re-entry policy at high school level in Lusaka province in Zambia'. London: Institute of education. Pop news issue 18th April to June, 2008. In Kasonde-Ng'andu, S. (2011). *The evaluation of the Re-entry policy in Zambia*. Lusaka: UNICEF.
- Mwansa, D. (1995). *Listening to the Girl-child: Voices for change and redress in primary education in Zambia*. Lusaka.
- Namuunda, M. & Mumbuna, M. (2010). *Review of the Re-entry policy*. Lusaka: Ministry of Education.
- Ram, R. (1982). 'Sex differences in the labour market outcomes of education'. In Kelly, G.P. & Elliot, M. (Eds.), *Women Education in the Third World Comparative Perspectives*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Serpell, R. (1993). *The significance of schooling: Life journeys in African society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.