

DECLARATION

I, Maxwell Mulenga, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work which has not been submitted for a degree at this or any other University.

Signature

Date

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother Uriah Mulenga who was so dear to me; she did everything in her power to see me continue with my education (M.H.S.R.I.P), also to my father Mr. Peter Mulenga Mpangayonse who treaded in dangerous places just to find support for my education. Lastly, to my wife Mary, my sons, Peter and Maxwell and my daughters, Mary and Mapalo (Blessings) for their patience and encouragement during the course of my study.

APPROVAL

This dissertation by Maxwell Mulenga is a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education (Sociology of Education) of the University of Zambia.

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Acronyms

BESSIP	: Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme
CRC	: Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSA	: Community School Alliance
CSO	: Central Statistics Office
DEBS	: District Education Board Secretary
EDC	: Education Development Centre
EFA	: Education for All
FGD	: Focused Group Discussion
HIV/AIDS	: Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
MDG	: Millennium Development Goals
MOE	: Ministry of Education
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation
PCSC	: Parents Community School Committee
PRAT	: Participatory, Rural Appraisal Teams
PTA	: Parents and Teachers Association
SDDF	: Shepherd Staff Development Foundation
SEN	: Special Education Needs
SMC	: School Management Committee
SPARK	: Skills, Participation, Access Relevant and Knowledge
UNICEF	: United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
USA	: United States of America
USAID	: United States of America International Development
WCEFA	: World Conference on Education for All
ZCEA	: Zambia Civic Education Association
ZCSS	: Zambia Secretariat for Community Schools
ZOCS	: Zambia Open Community Schools

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of stakeholders towards community schools. It assessed the impact of community schools on communities in Kasempa District and examined the attitudes of various stakeholders towards community schools in the District.

The study mainly used the qualitative design which is interactive in order to come up a detailed, accurate and factual account of the perceptions and attitudes of stakeholders. The study thus used instruments and techniques such as focused group discussions, one to one interviews and both structured and non-structured questionnaires so as to capture in-depth information. The data collected was pre-coded and arranged according to themes that emerged in the course of the study to meet the objectives of the study. All focused group discussions and interviews were tape recorded for the purpose of verbatim transcription during data analysis.

Findings of the study were described under three themes namely: Views for establishment of community schools, Impact of community schools, and Attitudes of stakeholders towards community schools. The study revealed that community schools in Kasempa were *established* to create school places and reduce distances between home and government schools; the schools were liked because they made it possible for most children in the Kasempa communities to have access to education, but community schools were also disliked because of poor infrastructure; the expectations of stakeholders were that community schools would help the children to complete their education, get white collar jobs or become self reliant; and that unless the government comes in, the sustainability of community schools was in serious doubt due to the local communities' lack of capacity to maintain the school buildings and pay teachers.

With regard to impact of community schools on the local communities, it was found that enrolment and attendance had increased; a good number of children were able to read and write; community school going children's behaviour had generally improved; and there were playing fields, wells and adult literacy (shibukeeni) classes being conducted in the community schools.

The findings further revealed that the attitudes of stakeholders towards community schools were initially positive although eventually attitudes began to become negative due to lack of adequate external support and government encouragement; most stakeholders suffered from an inferiority complex arising from the many challenges associated with community schools.

The community members running the schools were very poor, they could not provide everything needed for quality education. Although community schools had been sighted as a positive alternative to increasing access, the task of operating the schools was found to be too burdensome for the community members; the Member of Parliament (MP) and the local political leaders (Ward Councillors) paid very insignificant attention to problems in community schools. The DEBS office did very little in terms of inspecting community schools. Despite all the challenges, community schools in Kasempa had a total enrolment of 4,986 pupils at the time of the study which accounted for 27% of all the primary school pupils in the district. In terms of pupil performance, the transition of grade 7 pupils to grade 8 was in the range of 85% and 100%.

It was therefore recommended that the Ministry of Education should expedite the implementation of the Operational Guidelines for Community Schools which are now almost over due in order to make community schools become more effective and relevant to the Zambian education system. For the community schools in Kasempa to offer quality education, the NGOs should get involved. This calls for the MP, the Councilors and the DEBS to lobby the NGOs to come to Kasempa and run the schools in some communities.

