

The political economy of poor learning outcomes in Zambia: Finding accountability solutions to collective action problems

FINAL REPORT – ZAP INTERNAL

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BESSIP	Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme
BETUZ	Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia
BTL	Breakthrough To Literacy
CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CS	Community School
CSO	Community Support Organisation
CVA	Citizen Voice and Action
DEB	District Education Board
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
DFID	Department for International Development
DSC	Directorate of Standards and Curriculum
DPI	Directorate of Planning and Information
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECZ	Examination Council of Zambia
EFA	Education for All
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessments
ELM	Education Leadership & Management
FACT	Fostering Accountability & Transparency
FAWEZA	Forum for Africa Women's Education – Zambia
G5NA	Grade Five National Assessment
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IOB	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs Policy and Operations Evaluation Department
LLPIT	Local Learner Performance Improvement Tracker
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MESVTEE	Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOESP	Ministry of Education Strategic Plan
MOGE	Ministry of General Education
MP	Member of Parliament
NBI	Notice Board Initiative
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NWP	North Western Province
OSF	Open Society Foundation
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PEO	Provincial Education Officer
PRP	Primary Reading Programme
PSMD	Public Service Management Division
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
PTU	Professional Teachers Union

RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SCP	School Community Partnerships
SDI	Service Delivery Indicators
STEP-Up Zambia	Strengthening Education Performance Up Zambia
TCZ	Teaching Council of Zambia
TESS	Directorate of Teacher Education and Specialised Services
TOC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas
ZANEC	Zambia National Education Coalition
ZAP	Zambia Accountability Programme
ZESSTA	Zambian Education Sector Support and Technical Assistant
ZMK	Zambian Kwacha
ZNUT	Zambia National Union of Teachers
ZOCS	Zambia Open Community School

Introduction

This study for the DFID-funded Zambia Accountability Programme (ZAP) uses political economy analysis (PEA) to understand challenges, on the demand and supply sides, to delivering quality education services in Zambia, expressed in terms of improved learning. It also suggests approaches on how ZAP can help support the Ministry of General Education (MOGE) and its clients, particularly the rural poor, to provide better quality, and accessible education services with mutual accountability. The work is being done in parallel with a PEA of the health sector.

Overview of the political economy in Zambia

Rationale: To understand why severe problems of service delivery and poor learning outcomes persist in the Zambian public education system it is important to examine the institutional, political and social context in which it is managed and funded. To do this, the research undertakes a PEA; this means examining “the distribution of power and [resources] between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time” (Wild and Harris, 2011). This PEA interrogates specific problems in how resources and services are managed and seeks to understand broad processes of power sharing. Contextually, the PEA research seeks to understand collective action problems in service delivery on the demand and supply sides.

This section provides an overview of some of the political economy factors shaping governance and public service provision in Zambia while section three provides a detailed account of the political and economic relations that may explain inequitable public education provision and poor learning outcomes. Annex 1 presents a literature review where these factors are considered in greater detail.

A recent country-level political economy study describes Zambia’s governance arrangements as characterised by personal relationships and patronage or what O’Neil et al. (2015:2) call “a competitive clientelist settlement”. O’Neil et al. (2015) show that political mobilisation in Zambia is weak and most political parties lack a clear structure and support base in rural areas. Further, O’Neil et al. (2015) argue that public engagement in politics is limited outside of elections, particularly because of low levels of education, high levels of poverty, and few civil society movements or organisations. They also observe that civil society organisations, where they do exist, are well networked and have significant involvement in governance and social issues processes. In general, however, O’Neil et al. (2015) show that the electorate engages with politicians through patronage relations rather than holding them to account on matters of public interest. Drawing parallels with other African countries, O’Neil et al. (2015) argue that politicians and parties in Zambia do not communicate clear policies or ideologies.

While the quality of public services is of political importance, particularly given the problems in basic services such as water, education, and healthcare, O’Neil et al. (2015) argue, however, that there is not a culture of public engagement in service provision and confrontation over service problems is rare. Our research builds on this observation and those of several previous PEAs and the recommendations made in the evaluation of ZAP (2015), with a particular focus on mapping the coordination and collective action problems in the education sector (explored further in the conceptual framework). The report uses these to identify areas where ZAP can have a substantial and sustainable impact in a short time at the service delivery level. The research aims to generate information that can meaningfully inform programming to improve social accountability in the delivery of education services that lead to improved learning outcomes.

Section 1. Accountability and the Zambian education system

Accountability can be defined as, “the obligation of power-holders to take responsibility for their actions” (UNDP 2013: 2), while social accountability, in turn, can be defined as the “broad range of actions and mechanisms beyond voting that citizens can use to hold the state to account, as well as actions on the part of government, civil society, media and other societal actors that promote or facilitate these efforts” (World Bank Social Accountability Source Book). Our PEA research adopts a broader understanding of accountability to include the moral obligation that service providers have to do right by themselves, their job requirements and citizens. Citizens too have obligations to uphold their civic responsibilities.

The literature on service delivery and accountability in education in Zambia is scant. Besides the work done by the Open Society Foundations (2013), most accounts deal generally with budget execution in the delivery of public services (Civil Society for Poverty Reduction 2010). A number of accountability interventions that have been implemented by NGOs are adding to this information but tend to focus mainly on citizen engagement and have not produced a strong evidence basis in terms of education.

Zambia’s education system has constantly been in flux. Several decades ago, the government was the sole provider of education, having taken over the mission schools and with the only private education being provided by a single international school. When private schools began to grow in the 1980s they were considered inferior to public schools. Public education, however, suffered a sharp decline in the 1980s, as the country’s economy collapsed and the government undertook cuts in social spending as a part of economic structural adjustment. These cuts led to a rapid erosion of the quality of public education as the school system virtually collapsed (Open Society Foundations 2013) and Zambia experienced a mass exodus of teachers to neighbouring countries.

The decline in social sectors fomented political discontent that led not only to a change of government in 1991, but also a switch to a multi-party political system. A quarter of a century later, after five general elections (including two by-elections) and a change of ruling parties, there is still little to show that political change has had a positive impact on political accountability and, in turn, public service delivery. Poor performance in the public education system has led to middle income citizens switching to private education, while the poor have either remained within the public education system or have established community schools – which account for almost a fifth of learners enrolled in primary education. These emerged in the late 1990s as a reaction to poor access to the public education system and entry barriers such as school fees, uniforms and other costs.

Despite Zambia’s recent success in expanding access to education, there are significant issues with learning outcomes. The country ranks at the bottom in terms of academic achievement as measured by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) assessment. In the latest round of SACMEQ assessments, conducted in 2007, for example, Zambia’s learners scored an average of 434 in Reading and 435 in Mathematics, well below the southern Africa regional mean of 500. National assessment results for Grade Five also show students consistently scoring below the minimum standard of 40 percent in English, mathematics, life skills and Zambian languages. Poor performance during the middle stage of primary education is of particular concern as it suggests learners are not grasping key foundational skills and will have challenges at higher levels.

On the demand side, efforts to improve education delivery by non-state actors in Zambia have focused on high level advocacy work designed to influence policy and allocating resources to enable marginalized citizens to stake a larger claim to public resources and services. Civil society

organisations have particularly focused on developing strategies to raise the share of education spending to over 20 percent of the national budget by engaging with government and other actors.

Tactics to influence policy have included lobbying in face to face meetings; developing policy briefs on specific topics to present to the government; and making representations to law makers. Lead NGOs, such as the Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC), and member organisations, such as the Zambia Open Community School (ZOCS), have made representations to government on various issues. Prominent successes have included securing legal recognition of community schools and the recent allocation of funds to pay a small allowance to their volunteer teachers. Other NGOs, such as Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), have helped develop child protection policies.

High level advocacy work assumes that the system can respond to the demands of NGOs. However, despite the achievements noted above, advocacy work has had very little impact on service delivery and the quality of education. As explored in section three, increases in education spending have not translated into improved performance due to distortions associated with the political priority given to expanding education access and political interference in teacher deployment and discipline.

NGO efforts to engage citizens to demand more from duty bearers have taken the forms of community sensitisation, mobilisation and training – with an emphasis on leveraging information and community participation. These programmes include the Notice Board Initiative (NBI) implemented by ZANEC; School Community Partnerships implemented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded “Read to Succeed” Project and World Vision’s Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) initiatives. These initiatives succeeded in stimulating community participation, particularly in the provision of public goods and services. However, their focus has been at the local level and there is a lack of evidence of improved accountability. In some cases programmes have avoided links to political actors due to perceived risks to their relationships with the government and funders.

In terms of accountability within the education system, the research investigates a number of examples of positive deviance that demonstrate improved accountability and learning outcomes despite broader challenges. These relate both to effective leadership and managerial accountability, as well as problem solving within the system. The presence of high and low performing schools in close proximity common in many education systems (Healey and DeStefano, 1997; DeStefano and Crouch 2006) seem to demonstrate that action (or inaction) at these levels can have a significant impact on learning outcomes, regardless of broader dysfunctions in the system (Healey and DeStefano 1997). Various interventions, such as implemented by the Strengthening Education Performance Up Zambia (STEP-Up Zambia) and Read to Succeed projects have worked within the system to this end – developing strategic planning processes, target setting and learning tracking tools, such as reading assessments and the Local Learner Performance Improvement Tracker (LLPIT).

In order to understand the factors that influence service delivery – and how improving accountability can have the greatest impact on learning – we must also understand the broader context. Incentive structures are key to why and how actors resolve collective-action challenges and why there may be inertia in this process – reducing school performance (Healey and DeStefano 1997; DeStefano and Crouch 2006; World Bank 2010). Incentives themselves are a produce of the interactions between formal and informal institutions at different levels of system and societies – with implications for policy design, implementation and outcomes (Ostrom 1990, Ostrom et al., 2002; Chipoma 2002; Booth, 2012; Tembo 2013; World Bank 2010). This understanding lies at the root of our PEA analysis of the challenges with, and solutions to, improving learning outcomes in the Zambian context.

Figure 8 in Annex 1 presents the structure of the Zambian education system in terms of hierarchy, function, responsibility and the relationships that ultimately influence education management. These elements constitute different decision-making spheres that impact each other and are all impacted by the broader political dynamics operating in Zambia.

Section 2. Conceptual framework and methodology

Conceptual framework

The Zambia Accountability Programme (ZAP) is concerned with the poor delivery of public goods and services in Zambia, and one of its aims is to improve poor learning outcomes in the Zambian education sector by addressing the lack of effective accountability. In its 2004 World Development Report, the World Bank (2003) lamented the poor delivery of services to marginalised groups. The World Bank (2003: 1) argued that governments and citizens could do better in improving services:

“By putting poor people at the center of service provision: by enabling them to monitor and discipline service providers, by amplifying their voice in policymaking, and by strengthening the incentives for providers to serve the poor”

However, the report’s linear assessment of what governance arrangements are needed to improve services for the poor has since been replaced by deeper insights into the constraints limiting governance and accountability. Offering an alternative view, Booth (2012: viii) argues instead that “governance challenges in Africa are not fundamentally about one set of people getting another set of people to behave better. They are fundamentally about both sets of people finding ways to act collectively in their own best interests.”

The idea that collective action problems are a major obstacle to sustainable development outcomes is now well accepted (Ostrom 1990, Chipoma 2002; Ostrom et al., 2002; Booth, 2012; Tembo 2013). Ostrom et al. (2002: xiii) attribute these problems to “a lack of motivation, and or/ missing or asymmetric information, [which] generates incentives that prevent individuals from satisfactorily resolving ...collective-action situation[s].” The central role of incentive structures is broadly supported by the literature, and lies at the core of the analysis of and search for solutions, in the form of designing and implementing social accountability projects (Tembo 2013: 1). Accordingly, divided interests and power relations both within and outside the education system undermine collective action preventing accountability solutions to improve learning outcomes (Kingdon et al., 2014). Collective action problems can also exist alongside coordination problems, which are more closely related to a failure to realise common interests due to inadequacy of informal mechanisms or organisational structures.

Thus conceptually, the methodology for this research is built around investigating coordination problems and collective action challenges in education delivery that impact upon learning outcomes. The focus of the investigation is on understanding the dynamics of two inter-locking domains:

- The supply side of the education system – including teachers, head teachers, bureaucrats at the district, provincial and national level, unions and politicians – with a particular focus on the operation of the oversight system and related political influence.
- The demand side of education – including students, parents, PTAs, District Education Boards, traditional leaders, politicians, NGOs and CSOs – with a particular focus on the accountability roles they play in different political contexts.

Our investigation aims to highlight where collective action problems exist both within and across these two domains, and identify entry points and approaches that the ZAP can use to begin to

improve accountability and learning outcomes. Theoretically, the PEA is focused on the agency of individuals and groups as service providers or clients. Accordingly, we draw on the fields of political science and psychology to account for human agency (Ostrom et al. 2002; Bandura 1989; Cialdini 2007). From political science, we explore principle agent relations which Ostrom et al. (2002:38) characterize as defining much of productive life since organisationally, individuals are arrayed in hierarchies of superior-subordinate positions. We are keen on understanding motivation issues and the influence of information asymmetries (or missing information) on accountability in principle agent relations.

From psychology, we draw on the ideas about influence offered by Robert Cialdini (2007). Cialdini's (2007 vii) six principles of persuasion: reciprocity, consistency, social proof, authority, liking and scarcity are helpful in understanding human decision making. Cialdini's (2007) primary argument is that people can be persuaded to act in a particular way essentially on account of known human traits. Along the lines of social capital arguments (Coleman 1990), the principle of reciprocity says that as humans we are likely to return acts of kindness. The principle of consistency states that people are motivated toward cognitive consistency. In other words, people are likely to stick to a commitment they have made. Social proof is essentially that often people look to others for cues concerning the correct behavior. In other words, people are likely to align with majority behavior. Authority speaks to a human disposition to show deference to people we trust, admire, respect or in positions of authority. The liking principle says that we are more likely to be persuaded by people we identify with. Finally, the principle of scarcity says that people are more likely to desire things when in limited supply.

Drawing on this knowledge, the World Bank (2015a) in the 2015 World Development report presents a framework that characterizes human decision making as influenced by thinking automatically, socially and with mental models. On thinking automatically, the World Bank (2015a: 25) argues that "much of our thinking is automatic, not deliberative. It is based on what effortlessly comes to mind". Regarding thinking socially, the Bank suggests that "humans are not autonomous thinkers or decision makers but deeply social animals. We have innate preferences for altruism, cooperation, and reciprocity, and we are strongly affected by the social norms and networks in our communities". Regarding thinking with mental models, the World Bank argues that "people have access to multiple and often conflicting mental models, and which one they invoke to make a choice depends on the context. Human decision making, therefore, is powerfully shaped by both contextual cues and the past experiences of individuals and societies". To this end, the investigation particularly examines human behaviours and decision-making behind pockets of successful performance within what appears to be a generally dysfunctional system since recent interventions by development projects and NGOs have demonstrated some success.

In making recommendations, the main focus of the proposed interventions is at the district and provincial level. The political economy analysis identifies a number of systemic issues that are rooted in the nature of political competition in Zambia. However, given the short timeframe of ZAP interventions and the deep-seated nature of these issues, it does not appear realistic to expect these programmes to be able to make a strong impact. The research and proposed interventions therefore focus on issues and levels within the system that are likely to be more amenable to change in this timeframe. In doing so the research examines the effectiveness and methodology of current interventions and positive deviant cases, but also draws on recent research that highlights the importance of the enabling environments and conditions for accountability (Grandvoinnet et al., 2015). Additionally, our research acknowledges the fact that the most successful interventions are strategic – using multiple strategies and building collaborations across government and citizens, as opposed to tactical – focusing on one approach and generally directed at enhancing citizen voice alone (Fox, 2014).

The overarching aim of our PEA research is to make recommendations that will allow for programmes to influence the incentive structure in the Zambian education system in favour of improved learner performance and that, to this end, are fitted to context and adaptive to evolving challenges and knowledge.

Research methodology

The research methodology for the PEA can be broken down into four steps:

1. Step 1 involved the identification of a ‘problem’ to be addressed in the PEA in order to narrow the scope of the research. This was conducted in collaboration with ZAP leading to agreement to focus on the issue of poor learning outcomes in the Zambian education system and how accountability interventions could improve this. An initial review of available literature and data on sector performance identified areas of progress in the Zambian education system, as well as persistent challenges. This led to the identification of two provinces (North Western and Southern) that had opposite trajectories in terms of performance in national assessment tests, as well as particularly high and low performing districts within them. In each province a number of NGOs and CSOs were found to be involved in innovative accountability programmes. These then formed the focus for the fieldwork process at the sub-national level.
2. Step 2 involved the mapping of key systemic features of the Zambian context (e.g. political, economic, geographic, demographic, historical and socio-cultural) most relevant to the education sector and specifically to the problem of poor learning outcomes and accountability. Analysis also included a mapping of the institutions and existing mechanisms and interventions for accountability to help determine what is possible in different contexts and to improve understanding of the incentives of different players.
3. Step 3 involved the identification of key stakeholders (e.g. central and local government education officials, union officials, teachers and head teachers, students, NGOs and community members involved in PTAs and DEBs) and analysis of their roles and influence regarding learning outcomes in the Zambian education system. A particular emphasis was placed on their role in, and perceptions of, the trajectories of education in their respective regions and districts so as to better understand the story of progress or decline, and the factors that enabled it. Data collection was conducted primarily through semi-structured interviews with these actors during a three week period of fieldwork. A complete list of the provinces, districts and types of actors interviewed can be found in Annex 2.
4. Step 4 involved the investigation of key factors affecting the challenge of accountability for learning outcomes in the Zambian education system and a range of practical strategies for addressing the problem, with an emphasis on viable entry points for ZAP.

Section 3. The political economy of learning outcomes in the Zambian education system

This section presents findings on a range of political dynamics at different levels of the Zambian education system and how they influence the quality of learning in schools. It focuses on those issues that might be resolved through short-term accountability interventions designed to draw on the experiences of the provinces, districts and institutions visited in the course of the PEA research.

Political priorities – education access, quality and resources

Education delivery in general is a politically charged issue in Zambia. The ruling Patriotic Front (PF) party developed a political manifesto for education as part of its campaign for election. However, the quality of education does not seem to be a policy priority for politicians or a strong focus of political competition. National surveys suggest education as a whole has consistently been a high priority for Zambian citizens (Afrobarometer, Online data analysis), but that this has mostly translated into a political focus on expanding access to education – particularly at the secondary level – through school construction and upgrading. While access to education is crucial, political interference in the manner of expansion has led to resources being wasted on under-utilised “white elephant” secondary schools and is stretching an already under-resourced system particularly thin.

Schools also face significant challenges around funding – with absolute levels of spending being well below target for primary education in particular (World Bank, 2015c). Central government grants frequently fall short of allocations (World Bank, 2015b) and there are often delays in fund disbursement. Schools are highly dependent on parental contributions for financing non-salary expenditure, particularly as government grant allocations do not meet national expenditure targets. There are voluntary PTA fees at the primary level and official fees at the secondary level – but payment rates are often low, particularly at the primary level where only just over a quarter of students pay (World Bank, 2015c).

The combination of under-funding and rising enrolment leads to high ratios of pupils per classroom and pupils per teacher and low levels of access to textbooks and other learning materials. The number of students enrolled at primary level (grades 1-9) rose by 7.2% over 2008-13, while the increase in secondary school enrolment was 19% (World Bank, 2015c). The rise was driven by national policy, but is also the result of lobbying by individual MPs and communities. School expansion projects dominate the use of the constituency development funds (CDF). While more children are now in school, they are not receiving the contact time, attention and resources necessary for strong learning outcomes, particularly where enrolment rates have risen rapidly (see World Bank, 2015c). These issues can be conceived of as a high level collective action problem – where rational application of funds and careful planning of expansion would lead to improved learning outcomes overall, but where MPs and political parties face short term incentives to focus on immediate expansion that undermine the quality of the system as a whole.

Managing the teacher workforce – patronage and political interference

Attempts to improve education quality face the significant challenge that the hiring, deployment and transfer of teachers is strongly affected by personal connections and political patronage. The former is driven by poor conditions of service in remote and rural areas, which persist despite the creation of dedicated rural, remote allowances. The latter arises from the perceived political influence of teachers in their communities, particularly around elections. Interviews frequently highlighted both teachers utilising personal or political connections to secure new posts and instances of political interference in teacher deployment and redeployment.

The effect of patronage networks and political transfers undermines efforts to improve the quality of education through three main mechanisms. First, it can contribute to inequity in teacher deployment by facilitating official or unofficial transfers from rural and remote areas to urban areas – blocking teacher places in rural schools in the case of all transfers. Second, it affects mechanisms for teacher oversight and discipline – undermining accountability relationships at the school and district level. This interference can involve the over-turning of pay-freezes that are imposed for disciplinary reasons, arranging for teachers who are subject to disciplinary proceedings to be transferred to other areas (rather than be dismissed) or preventing the imposition of transfers that are put in place for disciplinary reasons. Head teachers and district officials can be reluctant to discipline teachers if their orders will be countermanded, or if it will lead to pressure from political actors and the risk of being labelled as pro-opposition. This contributes to a sense of impunity amongst some teachers and a perception of injustice around the disciplinary process. Teacher absenteeism¹ is correspondingly high – 16 percent of primary school teachers were found to be absent for more than 50 percent of school days in a given month (World Bank, 2015b). Third, frequent turnover of staff at the school, district and province level has a disruptive effect on leadership and the consistency of policy implementation – undermining progress on learning outcomes.

Teacher quality, conditions and morale

Alongside the impact of high-level political dynamics there are a range of interlinked issues at the school and district level that undermine education quality and lead to challenges in resolving problems between these actors. Teacher absenteeism is high – as noted above – but the teaching workforce also faces significant challenges without receiving sufficient support. There is significant dissatisfaction as a result – with teacher attrition rates being consistently around 11 percent despite two major increases in teachers' salaries, and with less than 20% of this figure being due to retirement, illness or death (World Bank, 2015b).

Teacher salary levels were raised as an issue in interviews, but is contested as average teacher pay in Zambia is high relative to other sub-Saharan African countries (World Bank, 2015c). However, the

¹ The definition of teacher absenteeism used here is that of the World Bank SDI definition of “absence from school” to distinguish from the teacher attendance rate (attended days) using “administrative records”. The methodology is described as: *“To measure absence, in each school, ten teachers were randomly selected from the list of all teachers during the first visit to the school. The whereabouts of these ten teachers was then verified in a second unannounced visit. Absence from school is defined as the share (of a maximum of 10 teachers) who could not be found on the school premises during the unannounced visit.”* World Bank (2015b:10). It is important to note that this measure does not take into account whether or not the absence was approved, and also does not capture the challenge of teachers who may be present in school on the day, but are not in the classroom and teaching.

real value of teacher pay has been eroded by high inflation and elements of the salary – such as allowances for housing and transport – are often not accessible due to funding constraints. This failure to honour commitments can undermine mechanisms designed to improve teacher deployment and morale, such as rural and remote allowances. There is also dissatisfaction with existing systems for performance evaluation, target setting and rewards.

A further challenge for improving learning outcomes is that teachers' subject knowledge is low overall and support to improve the teaching workforce is inadequate and poorly targeted (World Bank, 2015b). Only 27% of teachers received any training in the last year and these tended to be those who were better qualified, rather than those with less education (Ibid.) Interviews highlighted a lack of resources; concerns over the quality of pre-service training; and that revisions to the national curriculum had not been accompanied by support for teacher re-training. A new national Teaching Council is being created to assess and certify teachers, but there are concerns over how it will balance high standards with maintaining the teaching workforce and the cost that accreditation may impose on teachers.

The combination of high-level political dynamics; a lack of support and coherent policy making; and a poor quality teaching workforce pose major challenges to using accountability mechanisms at the school level to improve education outcomes. The capacity of teachers, schools and districts is limited and so, as a consequence, is their ability to meaningfully respond to citizen pressure.

The challenge of user accountability

User accountability within the Zambian education system is formally carried out through three mechanisms. At the school level parents report issues to the head teacher and issues are raised by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which has a broader oversight role. At the district level oversight is conducted by the District Education Board (DEB), although this mechanism will be replaced by oversight from district councils as part of the decentralisation process.

The operation of all of these mechanisms seems to suffer from severe difficulties at present. Problems in individual reporting of malpractice and in general parental mobilisation are now widely acknowledged in the literature (see Fox, 2014; Grandvoinnet et al., 2015; Westhorp et al., 2014; and Kingdon et al., 2014,). These instruments are most difficult to exercise where parents are less educated, have limited experience of the operation of schools, feel a power imbalance compared to teachers and have low expectations of the response their complaints will elicit from the disciplinary system. Interviews did highlight parent mobilisation on three issues – the most commonly noted were witchcraft allegations against teachers, followed by demands for school construction and there was a single example of parents complaining about teacher absenteeism – both directly to the district authorities and through community radio. These examples demonstrate that parental activism does occur, but that this level of assertiveness is relatively rare and is generally not focused on learning outcomes. Its effectiveness is also limited, as teachers are generally transferred in response to complaints, rather than made redundant.

The overall impression of PTAs from interviews was that these were largely ineffective in terms of the operation of the school and instead focus on raising school funds through PTA fees and on the oversight and implementation of school construction projects. Their effectiveness is limited by the fact that they are composed entirely of parents – who are constantly shifting as children arrive at and leave school – and had no representation from community leaders who could exercise stronger influence. Interviews noted that PTAs met only rarely and limited influence, but also highlighted some examples of activity – including PTA participation in monitoring, facilitating parental

complaints of teacher absenteeism and calling on the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS)² to resolve disputes at the school level.

District Education Boards include education officials and a range of high profile – such as local religious leaders, teachers unions and other leading citizens – and are involved in making recommendations and scrutinizing decisions on issues such as discipline and teacher deployment. However, their independence is limited by the fact that their members are nominated by the district education authorities and then appointed directly by the Minister of Education. Interviews highlighted that many Boards are currently in limbo as their term has expired or not been renewed. Boards should meet on a quarterly basis, but none of the actors interviewed stated that their DEB met this frequently. The performance of the Boards also seems to vary greatly. Some play an active role, while others lack knowledge of their role and powers meaning that the DEBS has almost complete control over the agenda and decisions. The shifting of DEB responsibilities to District Councils may improve accountability, but interviewees were skeptical as to whether councilors have the skills and incentives to engage on issues of education quality, as opposed to strengthening local control over teacher deployment.

The school and district level mechanisms for public accountability therefore seem weak overall. Most of the teachers and district officials interviewed were concerned with upwards accountability to their superiors, rather than downwards accountability to citizens, pupils and teachers.

The actions and circumstances of communities also has implications for learning outcomes and there are a number of collective action challenges both within communities and between communities and schools that are currently undermining progress. Interviewees highlighted four major challenges. Student absenteeism (often related to their engagement in paid work); high levels of teenage pregnancy and early marriage that take students away from school; parents not being involved in the education of their children, particularly in allowing children time to do homework and in providing oversight and assistance for it; and the relatively low levels of payment of PTA fees at the primary level. These reduce contact time between students and teachers, limit students' time for studying in the evenings and exacerbate the financing challenges facing schools – undermining learning outcomes overall. Relations between school and the community can also be strained in certain circumstances.

Local leaders – particularly traditional chiefs and sometimes district councilors – can play an important role in resolving disputes and enabling the community to overcome its internal collective action issues in order to improve learning outcomes. In some cases they have mediated and defused tensions between teachers and community members, while in others they have brokered community agreements and set up community monitoring systems to reduce student absenteeism and engaged in sensitisation on the value of education and reducing teenage pregnancies. They are also involved in mobilising communities to work on building and maintaining school infrastructure.

A number of accountability interventions in Zambia have drawn on the authority of local leaders in the recent past. Both World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) model and the School Community Partnerships (SCP) implemented by the Read to Succeed programme integrate community leaders and traditional chiefs into their structures and have used the authority that these figures possess to mobilise communities in a way that the current PTA structure has not been able to do.

² The District Education Board Secretary is the chair of the District Education Board and also the highest level education official at the district level, reporting upwards to the Provincial Education Officer (PEO)

Other initiatives have focused more on using information to raise awareness of the challenges facing schools and communities and using this as the starting point for problem solving – hosted at a new and neutral venue. This is the case with the Notice Board Initiative (NBI) implemented by ZANEC and parallels the way in which community score card model operate elsewhere. However, the success of such initiatives has varied considerably and their impact is generally confined to the local level due to the challenges of creating change at higher levels (see Wild et al., 2015).

The operation of existing accountability interventions does, however, demonstrate the potential for incremental improvements at the local level from a focus on problem solving, the creation of venues to discuss challenges and agree solutions, and the value of bringing in community leaders who have authority to mobilise the community. Linking these interventions to higher levels of administration and political authority is crucial, however, to achieve more widespread and sustained impact.

Positive deviance examples – What can we learn?

In the course of the research we came across several examples of provinces and districts which had achieved significant improvements in learning outcomes despite the systemic challenges outlined above. It was also striking that in almost all districts visited there were individual officials and teachers who demonstrated a strong enthusiasm for improving children's life chances and expressed frustration with the current barriers to change. These examples and individuals demonstrate that there are certainly potential allies within the system who are enthusiastic for reform and, at least in some cases, have found the political space to enact positive reforms. Learning from these examples can allow us to design more effective interventions, particularly in terms of reforms to the supply side of education and how to link public accountability with pro-reform actors within the system.

North Western Province

North Western Province is commonly held up as an example for other provinces, having significantly improved and sustained learning outcomes at both the primary and secondary level over 2007-2013, although it has since seen a decline in results. Prior to these improvements North Western had been considered a "Cinderella Province" due to its norm of poor performance (MOGE, 2015).

The impetus for improving education outcomes began in 2007, after the province had its worst set of results in national examinations across all levels of the education system (primary, secondary and college) (Ibid.). Media coverage of education outcomes was rare during this period, but North Western's failing attracted significant national media attention. The then Provincial Education Officer (PEO), with the assistance of the Provincial Minister for Education, was able to use this political moment to draw together a wide range of actors to address these issues. A stakeholder meeting was conducted to scrutinise the results, discuss challenges and establish consensus on a provincial plan to improve learning outcomes. This was noted as being exceptionally rare by interviewees, as it involved not only actors from within the education system at the provincial and district level, but also Members of Parliament, traditional chiefs, parents and representatives from teachers unions, civil society, the private sector and co-operating partners (Ibid.). This meeting essentially acted as a venue in which coordination and collective action problems could be identified and a strategic plan laid out for the PEO, who was noted as being a particularly strong leader, and education administration to enact, with the assistance of follow-up programming with specific projects that provided assistance.

The strategic plan emphasised six main elements: (i) leadership, management and supervision; (ii) teacher preparedness; (iii) assessment; (iv) supporting learners; (v) local policy development and implementation; and (vi) monitoring of teaching and learning (Ibid.). Interviews emphasised that these did not change the way that systems themselves functioned, but rather improved

implementation and the focus on key priorities. The priority given to regular and robust monitoring of schools, dovetailed with a much more intensive assessment regime, was highlighted in interviews as having been crucial to improving learning outcomes – both through improved discipline and an improved ability to target teacher support.

These efforts were supported by provincial review meetings between the PEO, DEBS, the District Education Board, PTAs, Head Teachers, councillors, traditional leaders and community based activists. They discussed the progress at the district level, highlighted the challenges that were being faced and provided a venue for problem solving and planning. This allowed regular and direct exchanges of information and allowed coordination and collective action challenges to be uncovered, discussed and resolved. The regularity of interaction also improved accountability between the different levels and so increased efforts at the school and district level. These meetings were viewed positively by interviewees, but have been discontinued due to funding challenges.

The decline in North Western assessment results since 2013 was blamed by several interviewees on the reduced frequency and standards of school monitoring, due to a combination of shrinking resources, a lack of focus resulting from changes in leadership, and complacency following consistently strong results. However, interviewees demonstrated a strikingly strong focus on finding solutions to these issues. Recent initiatives include team monitoring to reduce the resource burden; the creation of an active Whatsapp group for education administrators and teachers to share information; and setting up a series of one-to-one meetings between the Provincial Standards team and the head teachers of secondary schools to discuss assessment results and related issues – another forum for problem solving on coordination and collective action issues.

The experience of the North Western province over the last decade therefore provides a strong example of the potential of local political consensus, strong and focused leadership, and the creation of problem solving and information sharing mechanisms within the education system that also draw in important actors in the community.

Sinazongwe District, Southern Province

Sinazongwe District in the Southern Province was highlighted as a strong example by interviewees at the Provincial level, having shown improvements in national assessment results over the previous three years against a backdrop of poorer performance in the Southern Province as a whole. This was viewed as a particularly striking achievement given the rural nature of the district and the remoteness of some of the schools. Some elements overlap with the experience of North Western Province. Interviewees highlighted the importance of strong and effective leadership, in this case from the DEBS; the usage of information sharing within the district education team; and significant improvements in the volume and quality of monitoring and oversight, despite limited resources.

The most striking element of the case was a strong focus on enforcing discipline and reducing teacher absenteeism. This was achieved through strengthened monitoring and tighter enforcement of existing regulations – including ensuring DEBS sign-off on teacher absences from the district and the use of pay freezes, disciplinary transfers and a policy of making teachers work at the DEBS office to ensure teacher attendance. Interviewees emphasised that these actions are all within the remit and powers of the DEBS, but that in many cases they are not implemented. The DEBS emphasised establishing consensus and agreement on the implementation of a strong monitoring and discipline programme, and counter-balancing it with a heightened focus on support for teachers and schools. While schools were initially alarmed by the changes, these challenges were overcome through an emphasis on monitoring as a mechanism for improving communication, uncovering the root causes of persistent problems and facilitating joint-problem solving attempt, as opposed to being only

punitive. Meetings were held with head teachers and teacher unions to inform them of the changes and put them in a positive light – as rigorous, but fair – and helped to establish their buy-in and consensus. Attempts to improve discipline were also implemented together with a series of initiatives to improve conditions for teachers. This included ensuring that procedures for promotion and leave applications ran more smoothly and rapidly; securing funds for housing allowances; and supporting teachers who were transferred for disciplinary purposes.

Teacher motivation was also improved by congratulatory letters sent to the head teachers of high performing schools and the channeling of additional support and monitoring to lower performing schools. The DEBS also placed an emphasis on using zonal schools as hubs to provide peer support and worked with a range of partners to bring in additional resources, including NGOs, CSOs, mining corporations and the district council.

Mufulira District, Copperbelt Province

Mufulira District was visited primarily to investigate the Notice Board Initiative that had been implemented in ten schools. However, it was also notable for having a particularly active DEBS who is implementing a number of measures to improve performance. As in Sinazongwe, the DEBS was writing letters to congratulate high performing teachers and implementing a series of recognition awards to improve motivation. National assessment results for all schools are also shared within the district in order to encourage competition, apparently sparking a strong reaction amongst teachers and interest in how to improve results. The DEBS has also been involved in reforming monitoring mechanisms – developing an assessment mechanism for head teachers that is being adopted by Copperbelt Province and reforming use of information at the school level. Future plans include seeing how the notice board initiative can be linked to district level efforts and how the LPITT can be used to track learning.

Conclusion

Our PEA findings show that the education sector in Zambia faces a number of severe challenges for improving education outcomes, with high level political interference and patronage contributing to distortions in the teacher hiring and deployment process, problems of resource shortages, poor classroom conditions, a lack of teacher discipline and disruption associated with rapid turnover of teachers and administrative staff. These issues both contribute to, and are compounded by, the range of principal agent, coordination and collective action problems that exist between teachers and the education administration, as well as the collective action issues that exist both within communities and between communities and schools. Despite this, there are clear examples of districts and provinces that have succeeded in improving learning outcomes. These demonstrate that collective action issues have been overcome by a combination of convening authority, leadership, strengthened oversight of teaching and learning, information sharing, consensus building, the leveraging of traditional authorities and the creation of incentives and consequence to support performance. Building on these examples and models holds the best chance for an organisation such as ZAP to have a positive impact on learning outcomes – ideas for which are explored in the next section.

Section 4. Recommendations

Our PEA has highlighted challenges to improving learning outcomes within the Zambian education system that cut across both the demand and supply side, and interact across the school, district, provincial and national levels. Addressing the root causes of these challenges – particularly the politicisation of teacher deployment, transfers and discipline – in the three year time frame available for ZAP interventions may not seem realistic. Interventions must therefore be focused on problems on which there is a strong possibility that they can have an impact. This does not mean that these interventions cannot contribute to more significant change in the long run, but will do so by more incremental steps, rather than attempting to solve the root causes immediately. Most of our proposed interventions therefore focus on the district and provincial level, where there appears to be more scope for interventions to have a positive impact in the short to medium term. Other analyses of the political dynamics of Zambia also conclude that successful reform of the public sector will need to be incremental and are more likely to succeed if they are developed through consensus and partnership than through forceful demands (O’Neil et al., 2015).

From our findings, we can see a number of potential models, but also that there is no single intervention that will provide a “silver bullet” to improve accountability and learning outcomes, and that the current focus at the school and community level is necessarily limited in what it can achieve. This section therefore does not identify a single preferred programme for ZAP to implement, but argues instead that what is required is a series of linked interventions that address problems at different levels of the system and provide convening points to facilitate collaborations across these different levels. These should utilise the successful elements of existing interventions, but also go further – building on them and linking them up in order to maximise their impact.

To this end we have identified 5 interventions at different levels of the education system. Ideally all of these could be implemented simultaneously in an integrated fashion. If the cost of this was prohibitive then a selection of them could also be implemented with the emphasis being on those that were most closely aligned and where the combination of implementing partners and allies was most promising. The possibility of collaborating with other donors and implementing organisations to allow the simultaneous implementation and linking of all five interventions, or variants on them, should also be considered. To assist in this process this section outlines an initial theory of change, followed by a description of the proposed interventions that identifies which interventions would be most closely aligned and proposes some hypotheses regarding potential impacts. These sections also incorporate reflections on how the impact of these interventions might be tested and the types of organisations and skills necessary for implementation in practice.

Theory of change for education proposals

The background literature review, particularly on collective action and field research findings, highlighted a range of examples of problem solving at the district and provincial level. On the demand side, these have included World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) model, ZANEC's Notice Board Initiative and the School Community Partnership implemented by USAID's "Read to Succeed" programme. Analogous models have also been tried elsewhere, such as CARE's community score card programme (Wild et al. 2015). On the supply side, the cases of positive deviance (North Western Province, Sinazongwe and Mufulira districts) demonstrated that problem solving is feasible within the education systems even under very constrained circumstances. Our research highlighted education officials who were willing to exercise leadership and authority to resolve performance issues. These officials were able to solve coordination and collective action problems through a combination of convening power; consensus building; information use; application of awards & punitive measures; and developed management and assessment tools to operationalise their intentions.

Building on the lessons learned from the PEA and the theoretical proposition around collective action, a theory of change (TOC) emerges for our proposed interventions that involves four key hypotheses:

1. Resolving coordination and collective action problems, complemented with reformed support structures, will increase the likely chances of improving learning outcomes sustainably;
2. Strengthened oversight, monitoring and support for teaching and learning – combined with the solving of coordination and collective action issues – will significantly improve learning outcomes both in the short and long-term;
3. Community engagement (including traditional leaders) is necessary to sustain improvements in learning outcomes, but interventions must focus on linking supply and demand sides, rather than engaging on the demand side alone; and
4. Credible information (such as robust assessment information etc.) and its sharing are essential in empowering leadership action and enabling collective action in the education system.

Behind all of these hypotheses also lies a recognition of the importance of leadership, consensus building and ensuring that incentives align across the actors involved in them.

Consistent with these four hypotheses, the proposed interventions are premised on host country ownership of challenges and leadership in finding solutions. Achieving sustained learning improvements depends on the MOGE's convening authority to lead the design and implementation of education interventions. There is growing consensus that unless the implementation of development assistance is locally driven, it is unlikely to be effective in the long run (DeStefano and Crouch, 2006; Ostrom et al. 2002). A related imperative is scaling up interventions to reach more beneficiaries and achieve system-wide impact (McKinsey, 2010). The 2010 McKinsey Report provides one of the most compelling perspectives on system-wide change and lays out key ideas on how transformation happens in incremental fashion moving from "poor to fair, fair to good, good to great and great to excellent".

1. Community level problem solving platforms

As one element of attempts to bring together demand and supply side actors we would propose an intervention at the community level that brings together service users and providers to engage in problem solving. Represented in Figure 1 below, the approach involves creating the space for

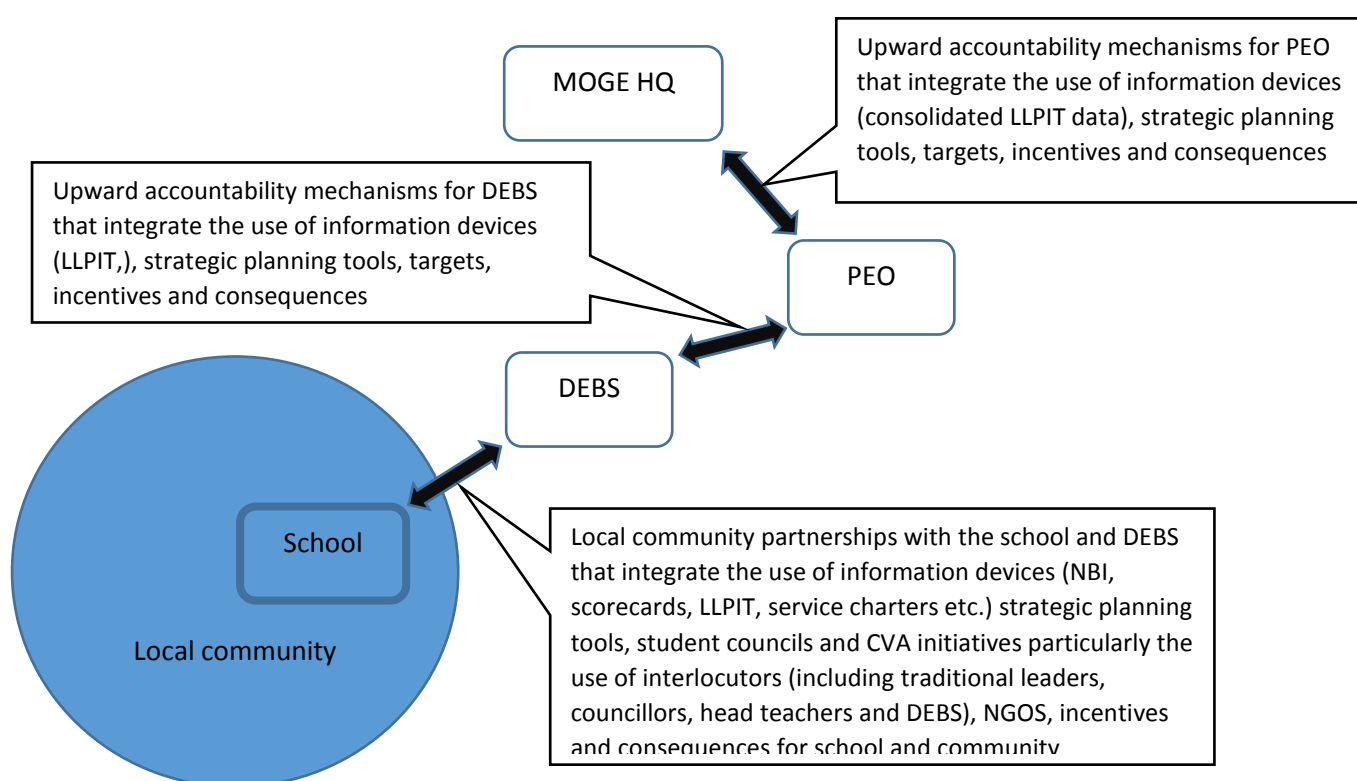
community engagement in schools looking beyond the current functions of the PTA. This proposal draws on the experience of school community partnerships that includes people with authority at the community level, such as traditional leaders, and representatives of local religious organisations, local NGOs or CSOs and, in some cases, political representatives such as local councillors. In World Vision’s work, these actors are described as interlocutors who mediate action within communities and between the service users and providers.

The intervention could begin by engaging with district level officials and community authorities to establish buy-in for the idea of local level problem solving, followed by an agreed selection of schools where the mechanism would be set up. At the school level, two bodies could be established:

- (i) an elected school council of students, who are able to articulate the concerns and needs of students to the head teacher and;
- (ii) a Community Education Committee – analogous to the School Community Partnership model – to bring together the head teacher with representatives of the PTA and School Council, along with community authorities such as traditional chiefs and representatives of local NGOs, religious organisations, the private sector etc.

These two bodies will form contact points and venues for information sharing and problem solving between communities and the school.

Figure 1: Community level problem solving platforms



Alongside these bodies, the intervention should also engage in an information gathering process analogous to that of the community score card process, LLPIT or NBI – using these information devices as the focus of a specially convened meeting incorporating a range of community stakeholders and representatives from the district level. This would allow discussion of these issues and problem solving that could then be followed up by the two newly formed school level bodies.

Broader impacts could potentially be achieved by taking the information gathered in the course of the intervention and publicising it through mechanisms such as community radio.

Background research and interviews highlighted that these types of interventions have been effective at solving certain challenges at the community and school level. They can reduce problems of student absenteeism, raise awareness of re-enrolment policies for pregnant students and provide improvements in resourcing for schools – for example by communities providing labour or materials to construct additional classrooms or facilities. They can also improve working relationships between the community and teachers – improving service conditions and so potentially reducing teacher absenteeism, although there is no evidence for this at present. These are positive impacts in and of themselves, but are limited as neither the community or school authorities have significant power over a range of other variables affecting learning outcomes and the operation of the system. For this reason we propose that this mechanism is linked to the district, provincial and MOGE headquarters level to facilitate long term accountability reforms. Sustainability is an important issue, because of tendencies for the mechanisms to become inactive once the implementing NGO withdraws unless they are fostered by officials at the district or provincial level.

The role that ZAP might play in this process would be analogous to the way that CARE implements its community score card programme (see Wild et al., 2014). ZAP would sub-contract the actual implementation of the programme to existing CSOs or NGOs that have a history of working in the intervention areas and so have existing good relationships and networks in the community and local government. This assists in ensuring that the implementing organisation has the necessary credibility with all local actors, as well as the leverage from previous work, to allow them to persuade local actors both to participate in the programme initially and then to follow up on the actions agreed to. Successful examples have also tended to be implemented by organisations that had politically adept staff and where they were given the flexibility to adapt their approaches to emerging opportunities and challenges across the lifetime of the intervention (Wild et al., 2014). These characteristics and approaches should be borne in mind by ZAP when selecting implementation areas and implementing partners, as well as when managing the actual contract and evaluating progress.

2. Problem solving platforms linking the Province, District and Community level

The second proposed intervention focuses particularly on the supply side and draws on the examples of positive deviation analysed in the course of the research. These demonstrate how problems of learning can be identified and collective action issues between different levels overcome. The repeated occurrence of positive deviance also demonstrated the possibility of replication.

Re-establishment of fora such as district and provincial review meetings is essential to allow for improved information sharing and problem solving. However, it would rely on positive engagement from the PEO or DEBS in question to ensure that they were focused on ensuring improvements in learning outcomes and ensuring actions were followed up on through local policies, strategic planning tools and incentives systems. Careful selection of promising districts and provinces would therefore be key to the establishment of the intervention, as would an implementing partner with good relationships at these levels or the capacity to establish them in a relatively short time frame.

This intervention could also be implemented in combination with the community level problem solving mechanisms as outlined above. Their representatives could attend the district level meeting, either alongside the PTA or using common representatives. A combination of information gathered and progress achieved at the school level by these bodies would be an important focus of the group discussions. This would have a dual reinforcing effect of increasing the flow of information between

the different levels of the education system and actors at the school level. Knowing that their actions with the community would come under scrutiny by provincial and district level authorities on a regular basis should increase the likelihood that they would follow through on agreed actions.

The precise form that these bodies would depend on the pace of decentralisation. Under the current system, the District Education Board would need to participate and so improving the skills and knowledge of these bodies would be a priority. Once the implementation of decentralisation has advanced, these fora would need to be linked instead to district councils – with representatives of the education committees at the district level being incorporated as well. There may then be opportunities to leverage the authority of these actors and raise the political salience of local education issues.

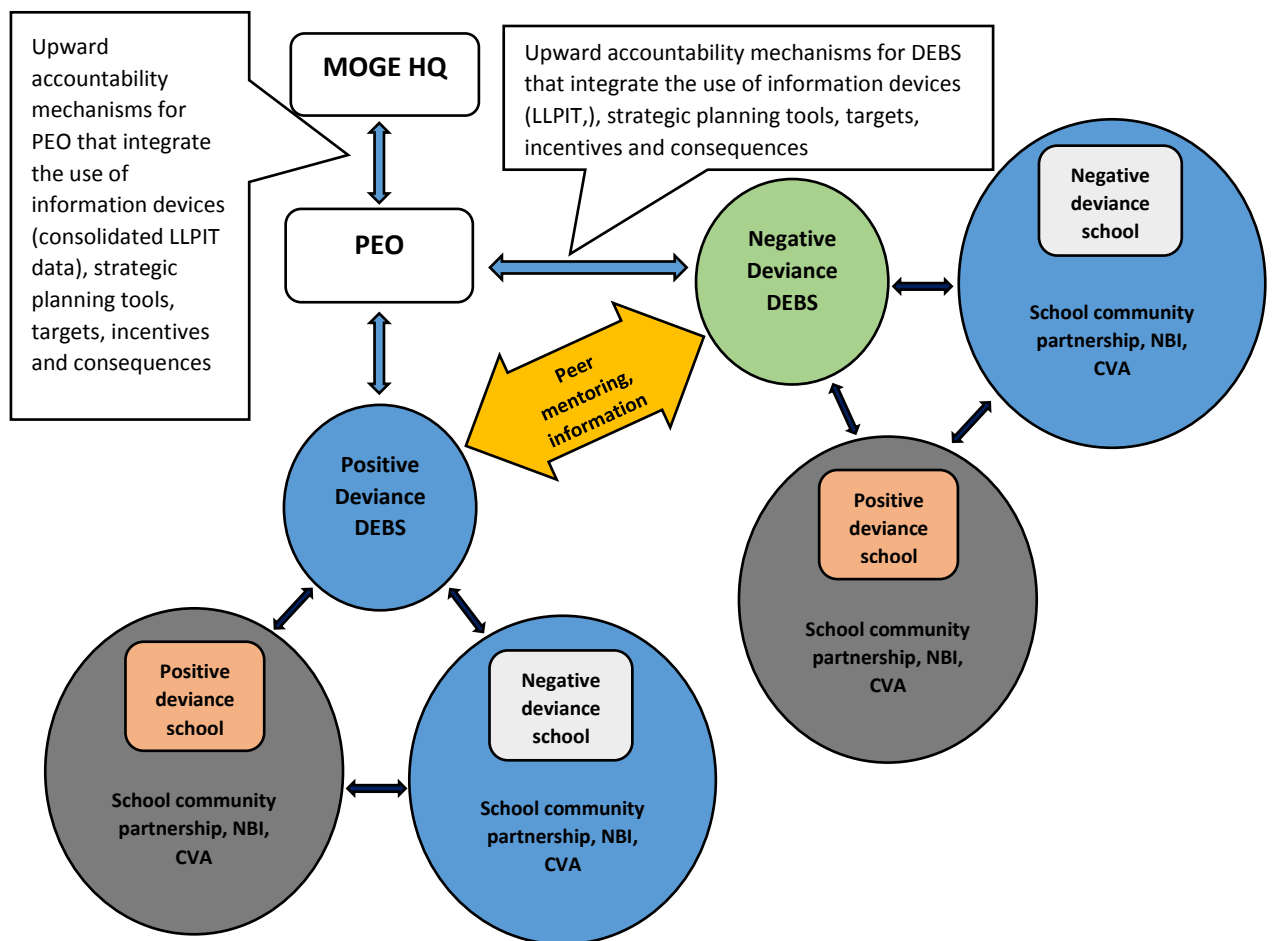
The experience of the districts and provinces visited in the course of the field research in the course of this investigation suggests that there is considerable scope for actions at this level to improve learning outcomes. However, these will be heavily dependent on linking with motivated officials at the district and provincial level who are willing to engage substantively with the process and use their convening power. The need to link with these officials also creates risks for the intervention, in that the transfer of the key official or those around him/her could undermine the effectiveness of the intervention considerably. Developing close contacts with other sources of authority – whether district councillors, traditional chiefs or provincial education ministers – could help to improve security in these cases, but the implementing partners would need to be proactive and effective in building alliances, particularly given the uncertainties of progress around decentralisation.

Based on the needs and risks outlined above, the role of ZAP in implementing the intervention would be mainly to act as a facilitator in establishing these fora, with a more limited role than that outlined for the community level problem solving platforms. Site selection could be initially based on: (i) the presence of supportive officials at the district level that were identified in the course of this research; and (ii) the implementation areas for the community level problem solving platforms. Implementation would initially focus on these districts and could then be scaled up to encompass all districts in provinces where there was strong engagement from provincial level officials. Implementation could be conducted either by the organisation responsible for implementing the community level interventions or by a combination of them and an organisation focusing more at the provincial level. The latter role could be potentially be played by ZAP itself, using the links created through this research as a springboard, in the absence of partners with stronger links.

3. Leverage high performing PEOs, DEBS and Head Teachers – publicise, network and mentor

The existence of a range of improving and high performing schools, districts and provinces within the Zambian education system – despite facing similar challenges in terms of context, systems and resources – demonstrates the potential for small teams and individual leaders to make a substantial impact on learning outcomes and issues such as teacher absenteeism. This is not to say that systemic reforms are unnecessary or undesirable, but that actors can find space and support to make a difference at lower levels despite the challenges. Figure 2 demonstrates how these positive examples could be used as agents of change through mentoring arrangements and information sharing.

Figure 2: Positive deviants as interlocutors for social accountability transformation



The research process highlighted across a range of individuals whose strategies appeared to be generating improvements without having significant additional access to resources or going beyond their mandated roles. An intervention aimed at providing a more positive form of accountability – raising the profile of high performing head teachers, DEBS and PEOs, and sharing the strategies and approaches that contributed to their success – could have a strong impact in both bolstering intrinsic motivation and morale amongst these actors and inspiring others to attempt their strategies. Improving their profile might encourage superiors to leave these actors in their posts for longer periods and so allow them more time to embed their working practices before being moved on.

The Zambian education system does already incorporate some elements of this process. For example, North Western province has been held up as an example for others to emulate and interviews highlighted fact-finding missions that have been conducted to high performing or improving districts. However, these efforts could be further supported and a more tailored approach adopted. This could include the creation of a peer review process for district performance that would bring together different DEBS to scrutinise performance and share problems and solutions, or the creation of a mentoring programme in which DEBS from high performing districts would work with a DEBS from a lower performing district to discuss issues and ways of approaching them.

Two important limitations should be borne in mind here. Firstly, the success of this intervention would be heavily reliant on individual officials and head teachers, and so setbacks are almost certain to occur when these individuals are moved within the system – potentially out of the intervention areas. This would need to be taken into account – either accepting that there will be a degree of attrition or attempting to compensate for it by having the programme follow officials or securing

agreement that the officials in question would not be moved during the duration of the programme. Secondly, officials have a wide range of duties they need to attend to and so there would need to be strong buy-in from higher level officials to ensure that the time and space needed for mentoring and review was secured.

These interventions would therefore necessitate working closely with officials inside the education system, as well as careful initial work to establish clear evidence of where remarkable improvements were occurring in order to select the head teachers and officials whose work should be highlighted and to design mentoring programmes or mechanisms. ZAP might therefore undertake a three-pronged approach. Firstly, providing resources to evidence and document in detail where, how and why high performers have achieved success. Secondly, working with national-level NGOs, media outlets and the MOGE to highlight strongly evidenced positive cases. Thirdly, working directly with the MOGE in selected provinces to pilot mentoring and peer review programmes.

The intervention would have to be targeted on the basis of where high-performing officials were, but in theory could still be evaluated by using matching methods to compare the improvement in results in schools and districts receiving mentoring against statistically similar ones that were not in the programme. Implementation could also potentially be linked with the proposed mechanisms for community or district level platforms, and there might also be potential synergies with the following intervention focusing on encouraging intrinsic motivation at the school level.

4. Build on intrinsic teacher motivation and leverage sharing of results

The importance of strong intrinsic motivation amongst teachers and head teachers should not be underestimated as a driver of improved system performance and learning outcomes. Analysis based on World Bank survey data found that head teachers and teachers with higher pro-social motivation were associated with lower rates of teacher transfer and absenteeism, and that there was a positive association between learning outcomes and the presence of teachers who were motivated by a desire for respect from students and the community (World Bank, 2014a). Interventions aimed at raising intrinsic motivation could therefore have a positive impact and are likely to be received positively by education authorities given the resource constraints that are being faced at all levels.

Existing mechanisms and approaches highlighted in the course of the research provide some examples of interventions that could be pursued to this end. The process of high performing schools receiving congratulatory letters from the District Education Board Secretary, and in one case this also being extended to high performing teachers, could be applied more broadly or made more high profile by linking with local media outlets, holding public ceremonies or other non-financial reward mechanisms. The selection of teachers would either need to be independent or conducted within the education system with careful scrutiny to ensure that it was perceived as fair, rather than an opportunity for patronage. The fairness aspect would also need to be addressed through mechanisms such as looking at recognising not only high achievement, but also improvements to ensure it did not become demotivating for those facing more difficult school circumstances.

The publication of complete national examination results and rankings for districts and schools was also highlighted as a motivating factor. This practice appears to be quite widespread at the district level. DEBS are generally aware of their district rankings and similarly for head teachers. However, its profile could be lifted by linking with the media or through the publication of the complete lists to allow comparisons across districts and schools.

These forms of intervention would have an impact both through raising the intrinsic motivation of teachers. They would aim to provide clear recognition of the achievement of results and encourage a

sense of competition and pride in performance, by raising the profile of education in the public eye at the level of the community and above, depending on the extent of the media strategy. The precise design of these strategies would require in-depth consultation with the MOGE, as well as head teachers, teachers and officials at the district and provincial level. The consultation would aim to capture existing experiences of what has been effective in Zambia and to design interventions that build on this knowledge. Broader uses for these interventions should also be considered. For example, MPs or district councillors could be invited to preside over award ceremonies – potentially increasing political focus on learning outcomes and introducing these representatives directly to challenges and progress in their constituencies, as well as creating an association between them and learning outcomes amongst the voting public.

The evidence base on non-monetary, “recognition” incentives is surprisingly limited. A randomised controlled trial (RCT) conducted on teacher performance pay in India found some evidence that the recognition aspects of incentive payments may be as important as the actual level of payment (Muralidharan and Sundararaman 2011). However, a review of existing evidence conducted by Banerjee et al. (2013) noted that the effectiveness of “recognition incentives” was still an open question. Both of these forms of intervention could be implemented independently of each other and of the other four interventions we propose. Given the sparse nature of the evidence base on these forms of interventions there could be value in setting up an RCT to test both treatments (separately and combined) against a single control group. Randomisation could be conducted at the school or zone level within a single province, with key outcomes to monitor including the level of teachers’ intrinsic motivation, attendance and overall student outcomes. This would allow analysis of the impact of the interventions that could guide scale-up, as well as contributing to the broader evidence base.

It should be noted, however, that the interventions are more likely to be effective if they are implemented alongside efforts to improve collective action and link across different levels of the education system. These can help guard against one of the potential disadvantages of celebrating strong performance in an environment with systemic challenges – that a combination of highly publicised poor performance and a lack of assistance can potentially be demotivating.

The role of ZAP here would be three-fold. Firstly, ZAP would be involved in identifying implementing organisations that have links and credibility within the education system in the implementation areas, and that have a strong reputation that will insulate them from claims of rigging and allows them access to local media. Secondly, ZAP would work with the selected organisation and district/provincial education officials to agree the form implementation would take and protocols for any randomised assessments of effectiveness. Thirdly, ZAP would look at options for improving the sustainability of the intervention through leveraging private sector sponsorship and resources. Interviews highlighted a number of examples of private firms, particularly in the mining industry, providing resources for school equipment or construction. The channelling of some of this funding into an award system covering a particular district or set of districts could potentially have mutual benefits in terms of raising the profile of the sponsor and allowing financial sustainability.

5. Tailored media and information strategy to raise the profile of education

Interventions aimed at improving accountability on particular issues at the national level are particularly challenging to develop successfully, especially when programmes are short-term and attempting to deal with deep rooted and systemic issues. Despite this there are areas where ZAP interventions could positively affect the national debate and test strategies for later expansion.

Interventions at the national level would need to be approached carefully, however, as there is a danger that a media campaign focused on learning outcomes alone could generate a hostile reaction or cosmetic reforms that do not tackle deeper issues. Interviewees expressed concerns that, while NGOs and CSOs operating at the district and community level tend to operate pragmatically and engage positively with government, at a national level there is a much stronger record of antagonism that has not had success in the education sector, which would need to be avoided.

Two main approaches could be considered. The first would be to build up a positive media approach, drawing on successful examples of problem-solving and leadership generated through the other interventions outlined above. These would allow the existence of challenges within the education system to be publicised widely, but with a strong emphasis on how problems can be solved. This could potentially generate incentives for high level actors to be associated with these forms of initiatives and so improve the chances that they will be sustained and expanded. The second would be the adoption of a tailored lobbying approach for individual MPs. This might synthesise information about the performance of schools in their constituencies in terms of national assessment performance; teacher transfers and absenteeism; financial flows allocated and received; student attendance rates etc. Information gathered in the course of interventions at the community level – whether in the form of learning assessments or challenges experienced by service users or service providers. These briefings could be beneficial for the MP in terms of giving them clear information on important local issues that they are not receiving from other sources and would create a mechanism to engage them on these issues. There are no guarantees, however, that these interventions would radically change the patronage and short-term incentive facing MPs and national actors in the short run, but might begin to ensure a better informed national debate and more effective lobbying by MPs in terms of the needs and demands of their constituents.

The implementation of these interventions would require careful targeting of media outlets and politicians to ensure an effective use both of resources and of the information in a manner that was positive, rather than antagonistic. In terms of the provision of tailored information to MPs, ZAP would need to find an organisation that had strong data skills to gather and synthesise the information and to link it to organisations that could act as interlocutors through links with the media, MPs or other elected officials. It would be best implemented initially on a small scale and focused on MPs with a known interest in education – perhaps targeting the constituencies of MPs on the Education, Science and Technology Committee of the National Assembly. This would give some indications as to whether the information would be of value to MPs and if they have incentives to engage in practice. These interventions could also be launched independently of the other four outlined, but would need close linkages to access information on the successful cases and individuals that are to be publicised.

This intervention would also be the hardest to evaluate in terms of effectiveness, as its focus is long term and it would theoretically operate through a number of quite diffuse channels. Monitoring could focus on the frequency with which targeted MPs address education issues in Parliament and the content of what is said; trends in education outcomes in the constituencies of targeted MPs; or on surveys of citizens in target constituencies to measure changes in the electoral significance of education. Expecting major shifts in these indicators in the short term does seem unlikely based on this research, but monitoring could also be conducted in a relatively low cost manner over long periods utilising information that is largely publically available.

The potential impact of recent developments – The Teaching Council of Zambia and Decentralisation Process

Two recent developments should be noted in terms of the potential impact they may have on our proposed interventions – the creation of the Teaching Council of Zambia and the ongoing process of decentralisation. Uncertainties as to how these developments would unfold in practice meant that the research was not able to produce detailed evidence on them and our strong recommendation is that the final intervention designs are flexible enough to allow them to adapt to the challenges and opportunities that these developments may create. However, we are able to provide some brief reflections on what these might mean for the interventions – in addition to the notes included in the proposed intervention section above.

The Teaching Council of Zambia (TCZ) has been established with the explicit aim of improving performance and accountability among teachers. The Teaching Profession Act (No.5 – 2013) mandates the TCZ to conduct teacher registration and undertake the accreditation of teacher education colleges. All teachers – both new and current – from the public and private sectors are required to be registered, a process that will require the paying of particular fees and demonstration of particular teaching competencies and knowledge. In theory the teacher registration process should act as a quality control mechanisms – ensuring that all teachers fulfil basic requirements and removing those teachers that do not. This could potentially address some of the issues around low teacher skills and concerns with teacher training standards noted in earlier sections. However, the need to balance quality control with ensuring sufficient staff for an expanding education system may lead to a watering-down of standards that will limit the impact of the TCZ. Concerns were also expressed in the course of the research that the registration process might be financially burdensome for teachers and that assessment without the provision of services to improve standards may be counter-productive. In terms of our interventions, the TCZ should be viewed as a potential ally in improving learning outcomes and overall accountability. The registration mechanisms could be used to identify high performing teachers that could act as mentors and examples to others (Proposed Intervention 3). Equally, information on the performance of teachers in the registration process could be packaged for MPs (Proposed Intervention 5) or utilised as an element of information sharing (Proposed Intervention 1). The ability of the TCZ to strike off teachers for severe malpractice could also help to improve overall teacher discipline, but it is likely that political protection will continue in practice and so the overall impact in this area will be muted.

The broader process of decentralisation in Zambia could have significant impacts for the interventions proposed above in terms of both entry-points and barriers. However, interviews conducted for the research found considerable confusion and uncertainty at all levels of the education system as to what decentralisation would look like and the implications that this might have for the operation of the system. Positive assessments of the likely impact emphasised that shifting the power to manage teaching and learning to local authorities (district councils) would reduce interference in issues of deployment and discipline from the central level, leading to improvements in teacher distribution and management that would have a positive impact on learning outcomes. Equally, the delivery of school grants directly to primary schools could have a positive impact on school-based management. In contrast, more negative assessments expressed concern that the shift could further politicise teacher deployment and management issues by giving additional powers to elected actors (district councillors) with links to party patronage machines – reducing the ability of DEBS and PEOs to insulate their workforce from disruption. Concerns were also expressed as to whether local authorities have the skills and capacity to supervise, pay staff and

deliver social services. The delivery of school grants directly may also have a muted impact, given that the current reliance on unofficial fees collected at the school level and the fact that the shortfalls and delays in grants originate at least partly at the central level. Experiences elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa also highlight the challenges that emerge when decentralisation is implemented without clarity on the roles and responsibilities of different actors and levels of government (see O’Neil and Cammack, 2014 on the Malawian experience).

Despite this confusion, decentralisation could represent a significant opportunity for our proposed interventions. The passing of power to elected district councillors may raise their profile on education issues, making them more willing to engage with the proposed collective action mechanisms (Proposed Interventions 1 and 2) and interested in engaging with approaches that will reflect positively on them (Proposed Intervention 3). There may also be opportunities to take advantage of electoral cycles to secure backing for change at strategic moments (see Tanzanian experience in Wild et al. 2014) and so implementing partners should be in position to adapt their strategies across time in order to do so. However, it may also undermine the power of the DEBS and district level officials, creating challenges for implementation of certain elements (such as Proposed Intervention 2). The strongest approach in the face of this uncertainty is to give the implementing partners considerable leeway in developing and adapting their strategies. They should be free to engage with district councillors where they are potential allies interested in improved learning outcomes, but also to engage with DEBS and district education officials – and link across both – where this approach seems a more promising route for reforms. Careful judgement will have to be exercised by the implementing partners, however, particularly if there are power struggles between district officials and elected district councillors resulting from a lack of clarity as to devolved responsibilities and authority. Conversely, there is also the possibility, given the confusion around the decentralisation process, that interventions aimed at improving collective action and coordination will be particularly useful in ensuring that the actors involved are aware of what others are doing, and so are able to take actions to ensure all areas of responsibility are covered (particularly Proposed Interventions 1 and 2).

The uncertainties around how these two major developments will play out mean it is challenging to make concrete recommendations beyond these broad outlines of potential opportunities and concerns. However, the strongest response to them from a programmatic perspective is to design in flexibility and ensure that implementers are well-connected and adaptable enough to cope with these uncertainties and the strong possibility of variations in impact across different districts.

Conclusion

The barriers to improving learning outcomes in Zambia are considerable. They cut across both the demand and supply side, and interact across the school, district, provincial and national levels. The interventions outlined above do not attempt to directly address the deep rooted causes of these challenges, but instead draw on existing practice and approaches to target specific problems at different levels of the system through a combination of venues for collective action, raising intrinsic motivation and the sharing of information and positive examples.

The findings of the report make it clear that there is no single intervention that will provide a “silver bullet” to improve accountability and learning outcomes, and that the current focus at the school and community level is necessarily limited in what it can achieve. Ideally, therefore, these proposed interventions would all be implemented by ZAP in an integrated fashion, but if the cost of this is prohibitive then some forms of intervention could be grouped as outlined above.

It should be noted that within the framework of ZAP all interventions will face some common challenges in terms of the relatively short proposed duration of the programmes and the difficulty of sustaining and institutionalising changes in behaviour and approaches amongst all stakeholders. The proposals have attempted to integrate strategies to reduce these challenges, but the broader issues should be considered when commissioning interventions. In particular, organisations should be chosen that have existing links and strong relationships with system or community actors; and provinces, districts and schools selected where there is stronger potential for linking with motivated actors in the community and education system.

Annex 1 – Background Literature Review

Recent reform experience of Zambia's education sector

Zambia's education sector is constantly changing. However, it is exactly two decades ago since the government developed the current education policy in 1996. Along the way, the government has made several major policy decisions including the declaration of free primary education in 2002, the legal recognition of community schools in 2011, introduction of early childhood education (ECE) in 2014, and reversion to the primary and secondary school structure in 2011. The latter policy decision is the result of criticism of the performance of the basic education system that was introduced in 1983. At that time, the government sought to expand access to basic education to enable more Zambian children undergo skills training that would lead to employment after nine years of education (grades 1-9). Even as the government planned to gradually upgrade primary schools into basic schools, the investments required outstripped the resource envelope.

The government did get support from the World Bank and donor community through the Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) that was implemented between 1999 and 2002. The BESSIP had a specific focus on improving access and learning with its main objectives being to: (i) increase enrolment at grades 1-7 and reverse the decline in enrolment by providing access to education for all eligible children; and (ii) improve learning achievements, especially in literacy and mathematics.

Towards the end of the BESSIP in 2002, it became evident that enrolments were declining in primary school because of the high cost of public education. This realization led the government to introduce free primary education in 2002. This entailed the abolishment of user fees and flexibility with uniform requirements.

It is worth noting, however, that as crucial as they the policy shifts were, they were only made as political pronouncements rather than were products of carefully crafted policy development processes. Accordingly, there was a mismatch in terms of the policy rhetoric and actual investments. The grade 8 and 9 sector of basic schools lacked adequate infrastructure to deliver a skills based education and the teachers that taught these two grades were not adequately qualified. In short, the government was unable to make the investments necessary to support the implementation of basic education.

The government would follow BESSIP up with two strategic plans (Ministry of Education Strategic Plan MOESP 2003-2007; MOESP 2007-2010). Subsequently, the government would expand investments in education through the Fifth and Sixth National Development Plans. The main thrust of the investment plans since BESSIP has been to expand infrastructural investments. Since 2010, the government has implemented an infrastructural operational plan that has emphasized the construction of classrooms in the primary sub-sector and whole super schools for the secondary school sector. The government's specific focus on secondary education is the result of years of underinvestment because of the commitment to basic education. The government has also followed through its 2011 commitment to upgrade community schools into regular public schools.

The government is implementing the reversion to the primary and secondary school structure concurrently with a revised national curriculum. Beginning in 2014, the government implemented a revised curriculum that is particularly focused on strategies, such as use of local/familiar language, to improve learning outcomes in primary schools. For secondary education, the curriculum is structured around a dual track approach separated along academic and vocational pathways. Supporting these two policy initiatives is costly. The reversion to the primary and secondary structure has huge cost implications for financing primary education and upgrading of secondary schools. The underfunded primary sector had always been subsidised by the user fees collected for grades 8 and 9. These funds will no longer be available as primary schools stand on their own.

In terms of supporting new subjects, such as Information Communications Technology (ICT) in the revised curriculum, the schools are not equipped to deliver these areas of learning effectively. Integrated subjects such as social and development studies that combine once stand along learning areas including civics, history and religious education also entail that teachers that taught these subjects will be underutilised. The government has embarked on training teachers that can specifically support the new curriculum. Fieldwork for this research found that the separation of primary and secondary schools is not happening quickly in practice. Basic schools still operate and some are evolving into "combined schools" that cover early childhood, primary and junior secondary education.

Challenges in education service delivery

The disconnect between expenditure and student outcomes is an enduring feature of education service delivery in Zambia. Three key issues account for this challenge. The first issue relates to the high cost of supporting teachers' salaries, the largest input, whose financial commitment is nearly 70 percent of the budget going towards the MOGE (see Figure 4). The second is structural, manifested by limited classroom space. Despite the progress made in constructing new schools and classrooms, the current carrying capacity of the education system is insufficient to absorb all eligible children. With a net enrolment that exceeds 97 percent, Zambia still has challenges with classroom space. The ongoing drive by the government to build more schools means that a significant portion of the budget will go towards investing in infrastructure, whose impacts on student outcomes will be long term at best.

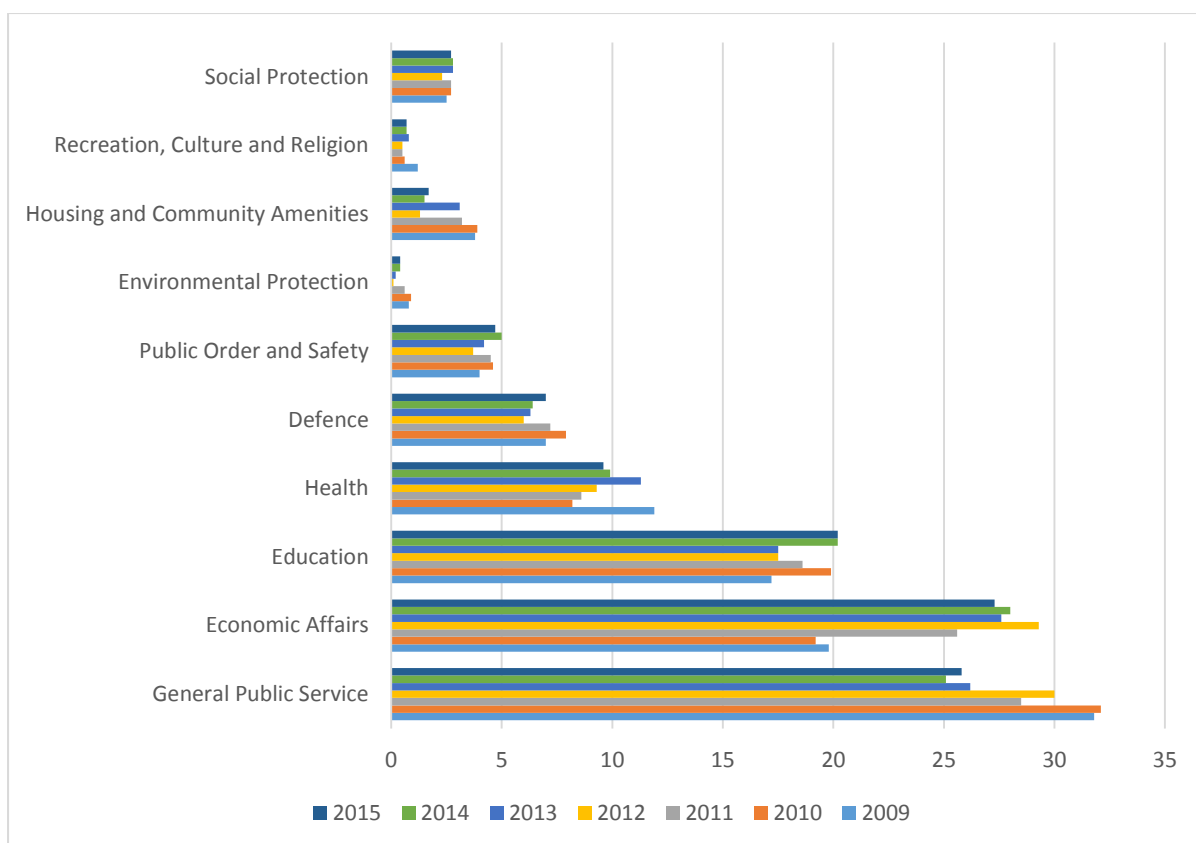
The third key issue bearing on the weak link between student outcomes and service delivery is that education programming suffers globally from an 'input-output bias' which lends itself well to large scale resource mobilisation efforts. The Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) goals have rallied nations to focus on specific areas of socioeconomic improvement and poverty eradication, an approach that has been heavily input focused. Whether the quest is to reduce pupil teacher ratios, which in Zambia are on average 1 to 60 but easily escalate to 1 to over 100 in rural areas, or buy school requisites such as desks, chalk, textbooks, and work books, the operational modality has emphasised an input and output interest.

The focus on inputs and outputs has crowded out concerns with soft issues particularly learning, governance and education leadership and management (ELM). A well-known constraint to the service delivery and performance of schools is the lack of skilled leaders and education managers. The majority of officials running learning institutions have risen through the ranks without the professional training to manage schools. Only about 2,000 head and senior teachers have since 2008 participated in the ELM training. Furthermore critical activities that focus directly on learning such as assessment have not received much needed attention. Outcomes results have also not been favoured in budget allocation decisions, because they are harder to achieve and measure over short time frames.

Increasing budget allocation to education

Over the past six years successive national budgets have allocated a higher proportion of spending to the education sector. As Figure 3 shows, the education sector's budget allocation is the third highest at slightly over 20 percent after general public service and economic affairs. Two factors account for the growing education budget. The first has been an ongoing effort, which begun in 2008, to build more schools particularly for the secondary school subsector. This spending was motivated both by a need to revive secondary education, given the lack of investment that followed a large World Bank supported initiative in the 1980s, and the desire to create an economic stimulus to create jobs.

Figure 3: GRZ budget allocation to key sectors (2009-2015)



Source: GRZ budget speeches (2009-2015)

The second factor explaining the growing education budget is a more than 100 percent 2012 increment in salaries and allowances (calculated as a percentage of base pay) for teachers and civil servants. The salary adjustments gave teachers in rural areas a 20 percent hardship allowance whereas those in remote settings are awarded 25 percent. Teachers without institutional housing are entitled to 20 percent housing allowance while all have a 10 percent transport allowance. Teachers taking more than one class also have a double class allowance whereas those teaching at a grade level higher than they are qualified to teach get 20 percent (applies mostly to teachers in basic schools). In all, the salary adjustments had improved teachers' morale because of the increased disposable income which they are spending on durable goods such as cars. However, as the union representatives pointed out, inflation has undercut the financial gains.

Broken down according to programme areas (Figure 4), close to 70 percent of the education budget is allocated for salaries. A modest 3.7 percent is allocated for school grants (to cover Free Primary School costs) and only 1.6 percent for materials. Construction takes 20 of the budget to support building of secondary schools and establishing new universities. Thus, in reality, the amount available for teaching and learning resources and running schools is insignificant. Across subsectors (Figure 5), primary education takes up nearly 60 percent of the education budget followed by secondary education at 22 percent. Universities and other institutions of higher learning are allocated nearly 13 percent of the budget. The newest subsector, ECE, is the least funded at 5 percent despite the political pronouncements to expand learning opportunities.

Figure 4: GRZ education spending allocation by category (2015)

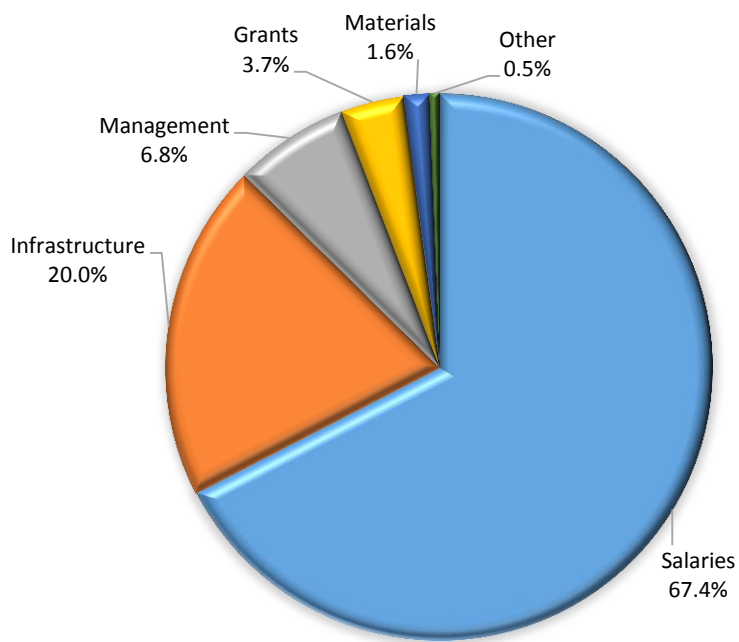
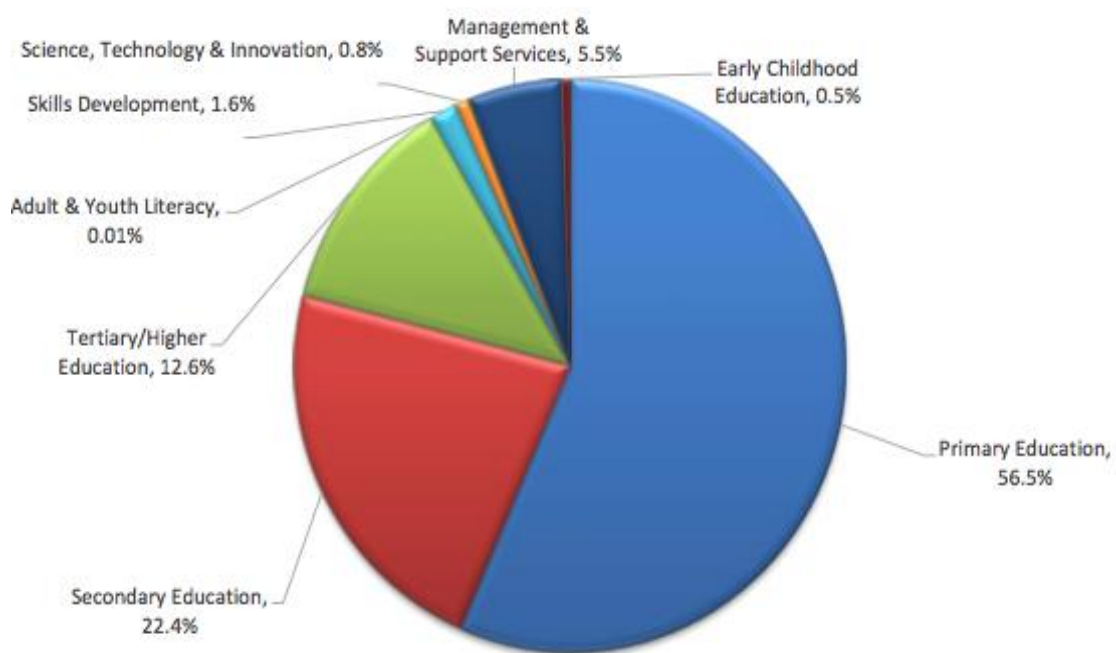


Figure 5: GRZ education allocation by sub-sector (2015)



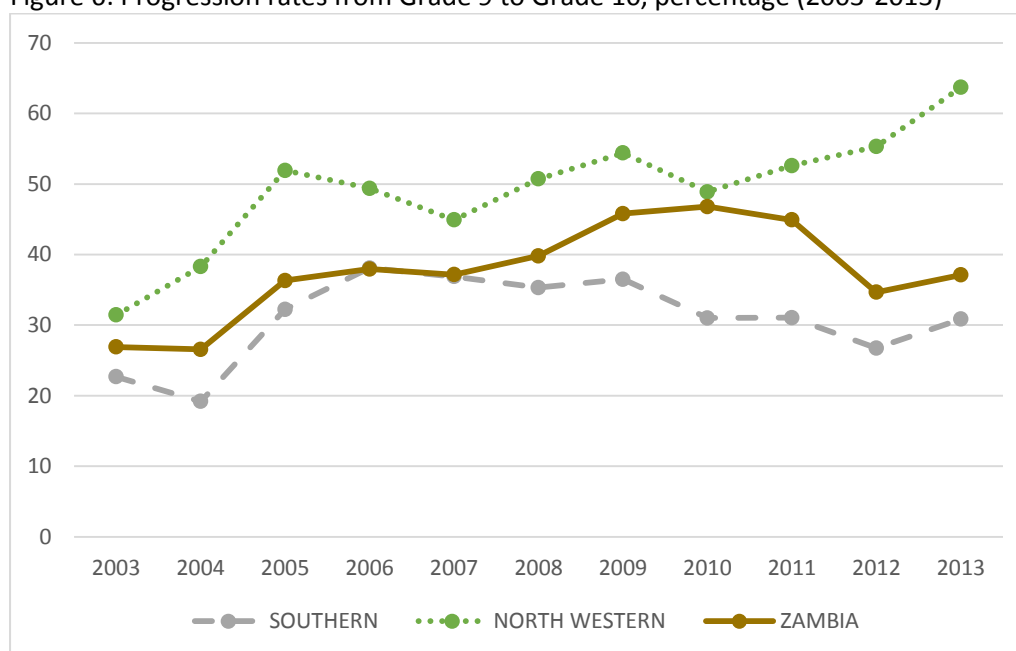
Low Learning achievement outcomes

Despite Zambia's success in expanding access to basic education, the country has routinely ranked at the bottom in terms of academic achievement as measured by standardised national and regional testing. As the 2012 Grade Five National Assessment (G5NA) indicates, pupils consistently scored

below 40 percent, the minimum performance standard established by the MOGE. Mean scores in 2012 recorded include 35.3 percent in reading in English; 39.4 percent in mathematics; 40.2 percent in life skills; and 39.4 percent in Zambian languages. This pattern of results has persisted over the past decade. National Assessment results for Grade Five are of particular concern because poor performance during the middle stage of primary education indicates that learners are not grasping key foundational skills in the early grades. For example, Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRA) have shown that over 80 percent of children in second grade are unable to read.

Regionally, the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) shows that Zambian learners are performing at levels far lower than their regional counterparts. In 2007, for example, Zambia's learners scored an average of 434 in reading and 435 in mathematics on the SACMEQ exam, well below the international mean of 500. Low learning achievement is, indeed, unequivocal at all levels. The national average in progression rates for Grade 9-10 (Figure 4) has remained below 50 percent over the past decade. In terms of actual performance, student outcomes are very low. For example, approximately a third of about 300,000 pupils who sat the grade nine English Composition examination in 2012 got a mark of zero. To progress this far in the learning process and perform this poorly shows that the educational system is failing to track performance outcomes and support students.

Figure 6: Progression rates from Grade 9 to Grade 10, percentage (2003-2013)



Source: Compiled from 2013 Examination Council of Zambia grade 10 progression statistics

Progression for provinces such as Southern Province is also constrained by lack of space. As the PEA research found, fewer places mean that students who perform even better than those in regions with more places such as Western and North-western provinces drop out of the school system.

Management of teaching and learning

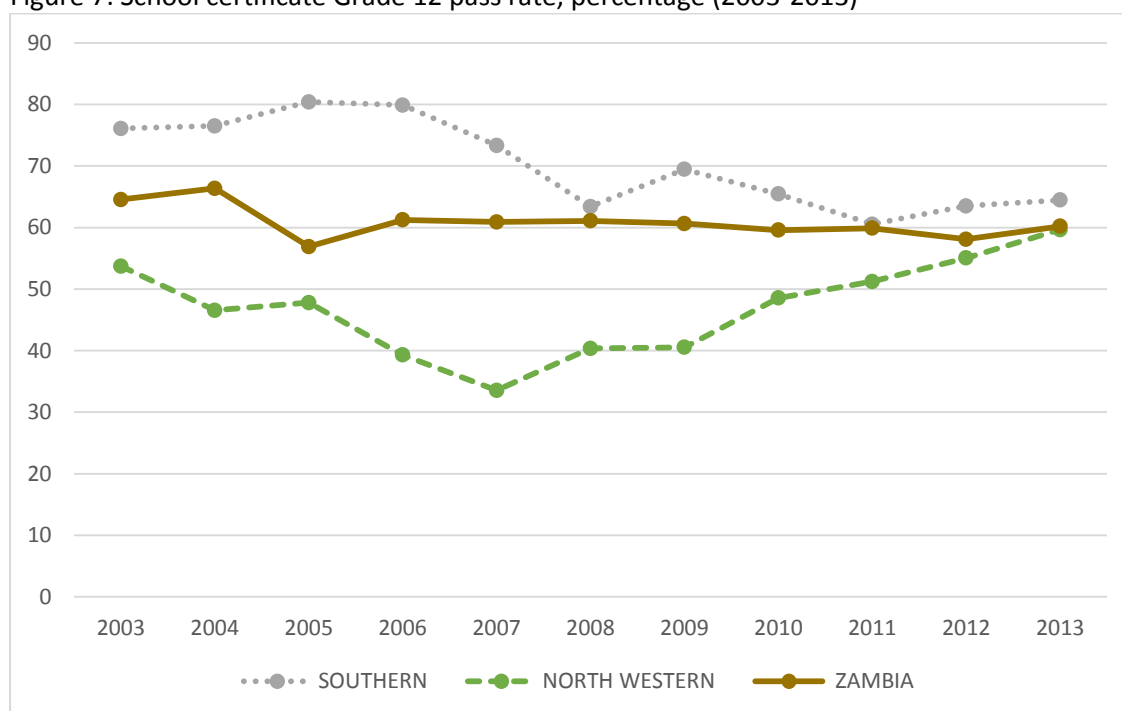
Logically, as teachers are the most significantly funded input, it behoves school management teams to ensure that teaching staff carryout their work diligently. The past eight years has seen concerted action by the MOGE's management teams in the provinces to improve learning outcomes. Much of the focus of this work has been on improving supervision and management of education. Figure 6

highlights the significance of this work in NWP. The PEA research was designed to understand the factors that have been influential in NWP's transformation.

Because the supply of teachers is a problem, the government set a target of hiring 5,000 teachers annually to reduce the often high pupil teacher ratios particularly in rural areas. The government has also taken steps, including improving conditions of service and requiring teachers to serve a minimum two years before requesting to be moved, to reduce teacher attrition which tends to be high in rural areas. With the substantial pay adjustments made in 2012, the bigger challenge now relates to living conditions in hardship areas. Poor living conditions in remote areas mean that even the pay adjustment is insufficient to keep teachers motivated. Female teachers are most affected by poor housing conditions because of personal security considerations. For this reason, the distribution of teachers in Zambia is such that in urban schools, females account for more than 85 percent of the teaching staff while the opposite is true for rural schools.

Of the ten provinces in Zambia, Southern Province has traditionally been the highest performer while North-western Province has been at the opposite end. NWP's improved performance is the result of close attention by provincial, district and school management teams to teaching and learning.

Figure 7: School certificate Grade 12 pass rate, percentage (2003-2013)



Source: Compiled from 2013 grade 12 Examination Council of Zambia examination statistics

For the higher grades (9 and 12), the NWP increased its management of the mock examination whose results have been used consistently to carry out remediation. Crucially, however, a change in attitudes has been pivotal in NWP's transformation. The management team has also relied on specific measures particularly related to assessment, to chart its improvement journey. Beginning with developing provincial learner performance improvement strategies (2008-2011 and 2011-2015), the NWP identified six areas for performance improvement:

- Leadership, management and supervision;
- Teacher preparedness;
- Assessment;
- Supporting learners;

- Policy development and implementation; and
- Monitoring of teaching and learning.

All of the NWP's districts and schools have developed learner performance improvement strategies in line with the vision of the provincial management team but tailored to respond to their specific circumstances. Key among the measures implemented related to assessment are the mock examinations and homework. Steadfast attention to homework policies and tracking related teacher performance measures such curriculum coverage and attendance. Some schools, in agreement with local communities, have held back children from progressing to the next grade if they have not achieved required competencies. Aiding such children to catch up is a strong focus on remedial instruction particularly during term breaks. With these measures, NWP like the other nine provinces, are showing that strengthening the linkage between student outcomes and service delivery is feasible with conscientious attention to teaching and learning. Certainly, additional resources would be most effective when the fundamentals of education management are solid.

Education quality, gender and equity

A crucial constraint to sustaining gender parity and achieving equality in Zambia is the inadequacy of the educational experience that children are exposed to. Various assessment efforts including the Primary Reading Programme's (PRP) 'break through to literacy' (BTL), early grade reading assessments (EGRA), the Grade Five National Assessment and successive public examinations conducted over the past decade show that children are drifting through the school system with very low mastery of desired learning competencies. Reading assessments for early grades show consistently that over 80 percent of children are unable to read and write at the end of their first year of learning.

As class sizes have grown exponentially and the attention to monitoring teaching and learning has weakened, children move on to second grade with minimal remediation. Critical to any corrective action in the early stages of learning is an ardent commitment to and use of formative assessment (Chipoma 2014). Zambia has focused more on summative assessments. Most teachers not only neglect formative assessment but are also are unable to do it well because they lack skills. Teacher professional development activities have neglected the development of assessment skills to the detriment of effective teaching and learning. In the absence of corrective action, most children, especially girls in rural areas, eventually lose interest in learning and start to drop out by the fifth grade. A poor educational experience is unable to protect children from the vagaries of social norms that assign roles and responsibilities that disadvantage both boys and girls. The boys are expected to quickly cede their childhood and become 'men' while girls are exploited sexually and economically. In rural areas, boys are faced with pressures to take on wives and become bread winners while girls are pushed into marriage for financial gain.

Over the past decade, Zambia has experienced a challenge in pregnancies among school girls. The MOGE's data shows on average over 15,000 reported pregnancies annually during the past five years. More than 80 percent of these pregnancies occur in rural areas where students are subjected to unsafe learning environments. Fieldwork for this research found, girls that have to temporarily relocate to makeshift boarding houses, because of long distances to school, fall prey to sexual predators in part because of poverty and a lack of personal security. In some communities, copycat behaviour leads to an escalation in pregnancies. If not that some of these girls will die from child birth complications (Zambia has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in Africa that is closely linked to a school-age group), indeed even unsafe abortions, they are at great risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases particularly HIV. Their children's survival is also at great risk and most grow up to continue the cycle of poverty. In one of the schools visited during the field work, three

girls were attending school while pregnant. The guidance and counselling teacher at the school indicated that the girls and boys were sexually active and often were misinformed about the risk of pregnancy and vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections.

The government's drive to construct schools with safe boarding facilities may help to manage the vulnerabilities that girls face. Crucially, however, reproductive health is needed to better inform girls about contraception and the risks associated with unsafe sex. There is early optimism that the promotion of school councils is putting the responsibility into pupils to address such issues in a much broader way than is achieved by self-selecting Anti-AIDS clubs.

Participation and the opportunity cost of schooling

Because education is seen as bringing returns in the long term, the temptation to opt out is high particularly for children coming from poor households. Fieldwork for this research highlighted that student absenteeism can be high in rural areas due to families pulling their children out of school to help with economic activities. The opportunity cost of staying in school is also exacerbated when children experience little joy in learning. Failing to read, write one's name, and undertake simple arithmetic harms self-esteem as well as reinforces negative messages about schooling. A huge challenge in this regard is the loss of learning time. Under the old curriculum, children in grades 1-4 were only expected to be in school 540 hours annually (compared to 8,230 that they spend at home each year). As much as 50 percent of the allotted learning is then routinely wasted through late starts to school terms, sporting activities, school closures during examinations, teacher and student absenteeism and so on. The children that stay in the school system are permanently disadvantaged, progressing without essential competencies such as the ability to read.

Currently, the norm is just to pass children over to the next grade teacher without an initial or aptitude assessment. Poor learning outcomes negate the valiant efforts that Zambia has carried out to increase participation. A good educational experience creates positive incentives for children and families to choose education over other competing influences. Access is also a barrier to gender quality and equality, as well as communities and the negative social norms.

Public versus community and private education delivery

Since the late 1990s, communities, working with civil society organisations and co-operating partners, have helped to create over 550,000 new places in the primary school sub-sector through the establishment of community schools (see Table 1). These emerged as a reaction to poor access to the public education system and entry barriers such as school fees, uniforms and other costs. While the number is variable as schools open and close, Zambia has over 2,600 community initiated and run schools that account for almost 20 percent of total enrolment in basic schools. Community schools (CS) outnumber private schools by a very wide margin. The relief that community schools have provided, however, is limited as these schools have worse infrastructure and learning conditions. Even the dogged and selfless commitment of volunteer community school teachers cannot be sustained and so attrition is high. Despite the challenges, community schools do relatively well.

Table 1: Numbers of primary schools by running agency (2006-2014)

	Year								
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total	7639	8013	8195	7639	8493	8362	8359	8801	8754
GRZ/GA	4709	4918	4790	4709	4903	5016	5219	5420	5474
Private/Church	354	387	411	354	739	709	498	485	616
Community/Unknown	2576	2708	2994	2576	2851	2637	2642	2896	2664

Source: MOGE Educational Statistical Tables 2014

Compared to public and community schools, private schools are far fewer in numbers. The reliability of the MOGE's data is questionable, however, because whereas it is understandable that numbers for community and private schools might change, the numbers for public schools should be growing steadily rather than oscillating.

Table 2: Numbers of secondary schools by running agency (2006-2014)

	Year								
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total	544	583	599	544	646	631	663	683	794
GRZ/GA	447	459	464	447	498	487	501	522	616
Private/Church/Community	97	124	135	97	148	144	162	161	178

Source: MOGE Educational Statistical Tables 2014

Improving education service delivery arrangements

The literature on service delivery and accountability in education in Zambia is scant. As popular as the notion of accountability is as development lexicon, the literature is scanty on its particular application to service delivery in Zambia. Besides the work done by the Open Society Foundations (2013), most accounts deal generally with budget execution in the delivery of public services (Civil Society for Poverty Reduction 2010). A number of accountability interventions that have been implemented by NGOs are adding to this information but tend to focus mainly on citizen engagement and have not produced a strong evidence basis in terms of education.

As earlier noted, Zambia's education system has constantly been in flux. Several decades ago, the government was the sole provider of education, having taken over the mission schools and with the only private education being provided by a single international school. When private schools began to grow in the 1980s they were considered inferior to public schools. Public education, however, suffered a sharp decline in the 1980s, as the country's economy collapsed and the government undertook cuts in social spending as a part of economic structural adjustment. These cuts led to a rapid erosion of the quality of public education as the school system virtually collapsed (Open Society Foundations 2013) and Zambia experienced a mass exodus of teachers to neighbouring countries.

The decline in social sectors fomented political discontent that led not only to a change of government in 1991, but also a switch to a multi-party political system. A quarter of a century later, after five general elections (including two by-elections) and a change of ruling parties, there is still little to show that political change has had a positive impact on political accountability and, in turn, public service delivery. Poor performance in the public education system has led to middle income

citizens switching to private education, while the poor have either remained within the public education system or have established community schools.

On the demand side, efforts to improve education delivery by non-state actors in Zambia have focused on high level advocacy work designed to influence policy and allocating resources to enable marginalized citizens to stake a larger claim to public resources and services. Civil society organisations have particularly focused on developing strategies to raise the share of education spending to over 20 percent of the national budget by engaging with government and other actors.

Tactics to influence policy have included lobbying in face to face meetings; developing policy briefs on specific topics to present to the government; and making representations to law makers. Lead NGOs, such as the Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC), and member organisations, such as the Zambia Open Community School (ZOCS), have made representations to government on various issues. Prominent successes have included securing legal recognition of community schools and the recent allocation of funds to pay a small allowance to their volunteer teachers. Other NGOs, such as Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), have helped develop child protection policies.

High level advocacy work assumes that the system can respond to the demands of NGOs. However, despite the achievements noted above, advocacy work has had very little impact on service delivery and the quality of education. As shown earlier, increases in education budget allocations have not translated into improved performance due to distortions associated with the political priority given to expanding education access.

The efforts by NGOs to engage citizens to demand more from duty bearers have taken the forms of community sensitisation, mobilisation and training – with an emphasis on leveraging information and community participation. These programmes, examined further below, include the Notice Board Initiative (NBI) implemented by ZANEC; School Community Partnerships implemented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded “Read to Succeed” Project and World Vision’s Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) initiatives. These initiatives have had success in stimulating community participation, particularly in the provision of public goods and services. However, there is a lack of evidence that they have improved accountability and their focus has been very localised – in some cases avoiding links to political actors due to concerns that this will damage their relationship with the government and funders.

In terms of options for improving performance on the supply side, the PEA research investigated cases of positive deviance that demonstrated improved accountability and learning outcomes despite broader challenges. These relate both to effective leadership and managerial accountability, as well as problem solving within the system. The presence of high and low performing schools in close proximity common in many education systems (Healey and DeStefano, 1997; DeStefano and Crouch 2006) seem to demonstrate that action (or inaction) at these levels can have a significant impact on learning outcomes, regardless of broader dysfunctions in the system (Healey and DeStefano 1997). Various interventions, such as implemented by the Strengthening Education Performance Up Zambia (STEP-Up Zambia) and Read to Succeed projects have worked within the system to this end – developing strategic planning processes, target setting and learning tracking tools, such as reading assessments and the Local Learner Performance Improvement Tracker (LLPIT).

The case of NWP’s transformation shows that frontline service staff are critical to changing expectations related to governance, service delivery improvements and influencing learning outcomes. NWP’s transformation came after the province experienced its worst educational results in 2007. The provincial management team took on the leadership role and defined a clear path for change through the learner performance improvement strategic plan. Articulating desired local

policy initiatives, the strategic plan reflects ownership of challenges and problem solving. In many ways, the NWP experience fits with the McKinsey (2010) report's suggestion that sometimes a crisis can lead to transformation if those affected make good on it. Substantively, the NWP shows that reform can be carefully guided with clear expectations and targets. Districts that have improved performance such as Sinazongwe have implemented measures that mirror the NWP experience.

Education governance arrangements and service delivery

Showing that poor people are principally harmed by poor public service delivery, the World Bank's 2004 Report described reforms needed to achieve improvements in service delivery. Specifically, the report asserted that improving service outcomes for poor people required strengthening three relationships in the chain—between client and provider, between citizen and policymaker, and between policymaker and provider (World Bank 2004). Pointing to difficulties in realizing accountability relations between citizens and policy makers, the report was most optimistic about transformation happening more quickly through altering the relationship between client and provider. Making choice a defining feature of this relationship, the report offered suggestions for engaging poor people in influencing service delivery. Overall, the Report described conditions and incentives that would give rise to appropriate service delivery arrangements that engage poor people in different socio-political and economic contexts (World Bank 2004).

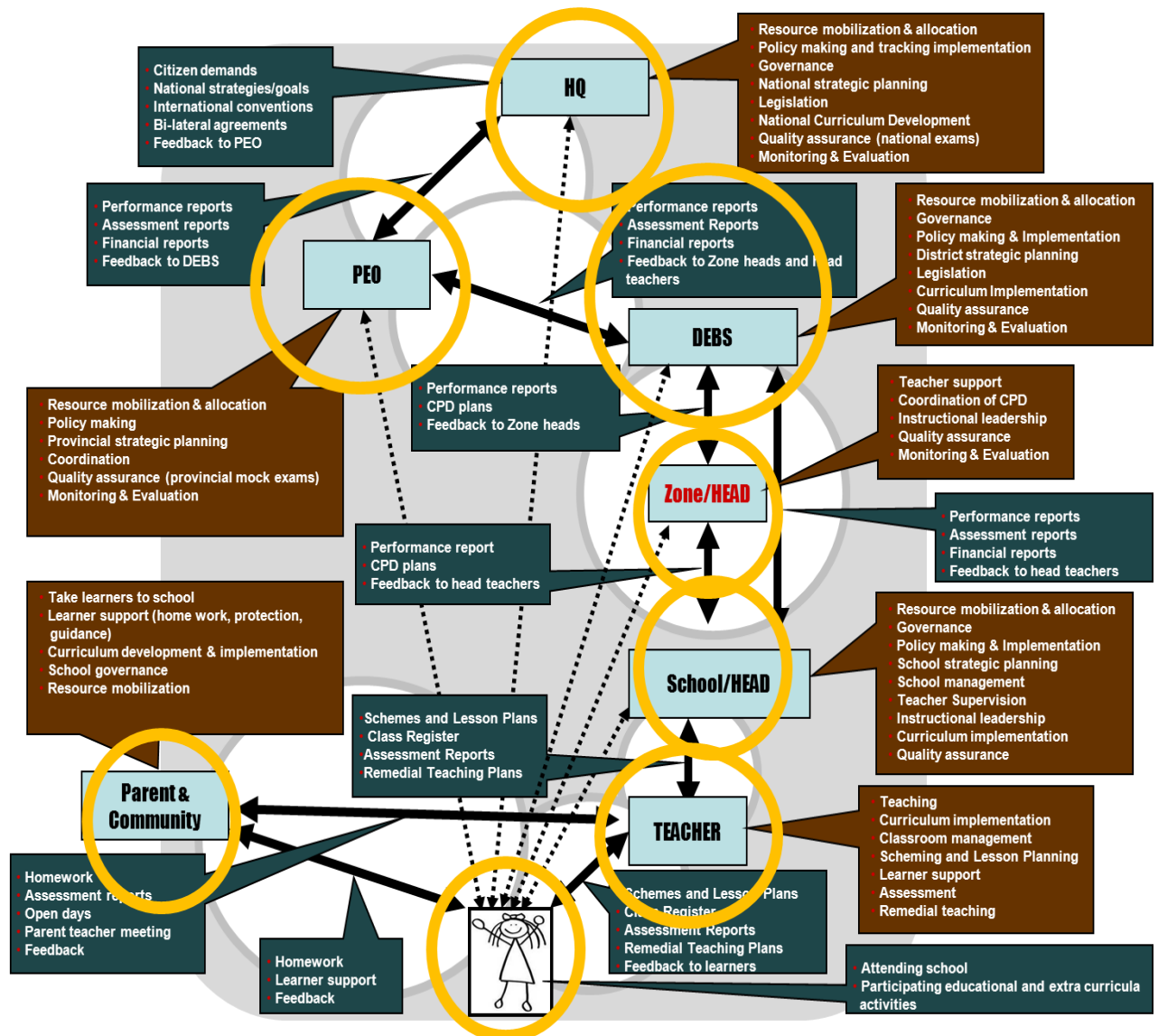
In order to understand the factors that influence service delivery – and how improving accountability can have the greatest impact on learning – we must also understand the broader context. Incentive structures are key to why and how actors resolve collective-action challenges and why there may be inertia in this process – reducing school performance (Healey and DeStefano 1997; DeStefano and Crouch 2006; World Bank 2010). Incentives themselves are a produce of the interactions between formal and informal institutions at different levels of system and societies – with implications for policy design, implementation and outcomes (Ostrom 1990, Ostrom et al., 2002; Chipoma 2002; Booth, 2012; Tembo 2013; World Bank 2010). This understanding lies at the root of our PEA analysis of the challenges with, and solutions to, improving learning outcomes in the Zambian context.

Figure 5 presents the structure of the Zambian education system in terms of hierarchy, function, responsibility and relationships that ultimately influence education management. Figure 5 also conveys the system's reporting and feedback structure and, in a governance sense, delineates the spheres of decision-making by hierarchy, function, and connection to the learner. These elements constitute different decision-making spheres that impact each other and are all impacted by the broader political dynamics operating in Zambia. In fact, ideally, all education governance and service delivery objectives must emanate from the child.

The brown boxes in Figure 5 outline the functions while the green reflect the mechanisms for tracking learning performance and accountability. In terms of relationships, Figure 5 shows that the child has the most direct contact with the teacher and the family/community they are coming from. The child is only indirectly linked to the higher levels. The teacher in turn has direct contact with the head teacher and the family/communities where children are coming from. The head teacher has direct contact with teacher and the DEBS. The zonal head's function is centered on supporting continuous professional development (CPD). The DEBS has direct contact with all head teachers and the Provincial Education Officer (PEO). The PEO reports to the Permanent Secretary and is in direct contact with all DEBS. While Figure 5 conveys the ideal, in practice, the higher levels in particular want to have a direct relationships with teachers and learners, a reason that is used to justify holding on to resources at the highest levels. For this reason, implementing units that have a direct relationship tend to lack operational funds.

In terms of reporting, interviews highlighted that the MOGE has challenges with technical directorates working as a unit. Each directorate has its own reporting channel making collaboration a challenge. While the PEO reports to the PS the Provincial Education Standards Officer reports to the Director Standards and Curriculum. The Directorates of Planning and Information and Teacher Education and Specialised Services too, have their own reporting channels. There, however, is optimism that as decentralisation becomes well established, the resources and decision-making will be closer to the service delivery levels. For ZAP, Figure 8 shows entry points for working with the demand and supply sides to improve education governance and accountability.

Figure 8: Structure of Zambia's Education System



Source: Author (Cornelius Chipoma)

Annex 2 – Political economy analysis – methodology and results

Conceptual framework

The Zambia Accountability Programme (ZAP) is concerned with the poor delivery of public goods and services in Zambia, and one of its aims is to improve poor learning outcomes in the Zambian education sector by addressing the lack of effective accountability. In its 2004 World Development Report, the World Bank (2003) lamented the poor delivery of services to marginalised groups. The World Bank (2003: 1) argued that governments and citizens could do better in improving services:

“By putting poor people at the center of service provision: by enabling them to monitor and discipline service providers, by amplifying their voice in policymaking, and by strengthening the incentives for providers to serve the poor”

However, the report’s linear assessment of what governance arrangements are needed to improve services for the poor has since been replaced by deeper insights into the constraints limiting governance and accountability. Offering an alternative view, Booth (2012: viii) argues instead that “governance challenges in Africa are not fundamentally about one set of people getting another set of people to behave better. They are fundamentally about both sets of people finding ways to act collectively in their own best interests.”

The idea that collective action problems are a major obstacle to sustainable development outcomes is now well accepted (Ostrom 1990, Chipoma 2002; Ostrom et al., 2002; Booth, 2012; Tembo 2013). Ostrom et al. (2002: xiii) attribute these problems to “a lack of motivation, and or/ missing or asymmetric information, [which] generates incentives that prevent individuals from satisfactorily resolving ...collective-action situation[s].” The central role of incentive structures is broadly supported by the literature, and lies at the core of the analysis of and search for solutions, in the form of designing and implementing social accountability projects (Tembo 2013: 1). Accordingly, divided interests and power relations both within and outside the education system undermine collective action preventing accountability solutions to improve learning outcomes (Kingdon et al., 2014). Collective action problems can also exist alongside coordination problems, which are more closely related to a failure to realise common interests due to inadequacy of informal mechanisms or organisational structures.

Thus conceptually, the methodology for this research is built around investigating collective action challenges in education delivery that impact upon learning outcomes. The focus of the investigation is on understanding the dynamics of two inter-locking domains:

- The supply side of the education system – including teachers, head teachers, bureaucrats at the district, provincial and national level, unions and politicians – with a particular focus on the operation of the oversight system and related political influence.
- The demand side of education – including students, parents, PTAs, District Education Boards, traditional leaders, politicians, NGOs and CSOs – with a particular focus on the accountability roles they play in different political contexts.

Our investigation aims to highlight where collective action problems exist both within and across these two domains, and identify entry points and approaches that the ZAP can use to begin to improve accountability and learning outcomes. Theoretically, the PEA is focused on the agency of individuals and groups as service providers or clients. Accordingly, we draw on the fields of political science and psychology to account for human agency (Ostrom et al. 2002; Bandura 1989; Cialdini

2007). From political science, we explore principle agent relations which Ostrom et al. (2002:38) characterize as defining much of productive life since organisationally, individuals are arrayed in hierarchies of superior-subordinate positions. We are keen on understanding motivation issues and the influence of information asymmetries (or missing information) on accountability in principle agent relations.

From psychology, we draw on the ideas about influence offered by Robert Cialdini (2007). Cialdini's (2007 vii) six principles of persuasion: reciprocity, consistency, social proof, authority, liking and scarcity are helpful in understanding human decision making. Cialdini's (2007) primary argument is that people can be persuaded to act in a particular way essentially on account of known human traits. Along the lines of social capital arguments (Coleman 1990), the principle of reciprocity says that as humans we are likely to return acts of kindness. The principle of consistency states that people are motivated toward cognitive consistency. In other words, people are likely to stick to a commitment they have made. Social proof is essentially that often people look to others for cues concerning the correct behaviour. In other words, people are likely to align with majority behaviour. Authority speaks to a human disposition to show deference to people we trust, admire, respect or in positions of authority. The liking principle says that we are more likely to be persuaded by people we identify with. Finally, the principle of scarcity says that people are more likely to desire things when in limited supply.

Drawing on this knowledge, the World Bank (2015a) in the 2015 World Development report presents a framework that characterizes human decision making as influenced by thinking automatically, socially and with mental models. On thinking automatically, the World Bank (2015a: 25) argues that "much of our thinking is automatic, not deliberative. It is based on what effortlessly comes to mind". Regarding thinking socially, the Bank suggests that "humans are not autonomous thinkers or decision makers but deeply social animals. We have innate preferences for altruism, cooperation, and reciprocity, and we are strongly affected by the social norms and networks in our communities". Regarding thinking with mental models, the World Bank argues that "people have access to multiple and often conflicting mental models, and which one they invoke to make a choice depends on the context. Human decision making, therefore, is powerfully shaped by both contextual cues and the past experiences of individuals and societies". To this end, the investigation particularly examines human behaviours and decision-making behind pockets of successful performance within what appears to be a generally dysfunctional system since recent interventions by development projects and NGOs have demonstrated some success.

In making recommendations, the main focus of the proposed interventions is at the district and provincial level. The political economy analysis identifies a number of systemic issues that are rooted in the nature of political competition in Zambia. However, given the short timeframe of ZAP interventions and the deep-seated nature of these issues, it does not appear realistic to expect these programmes to be able to make a strong impact. The research and proposed interventions therefore focus on issues and levels within the system that are likely to be more amenable to change in this timeframe. In doing so the research examines the effectiveness and methodology of current interventions and positive deviant cases, but also draws on recent research that highlights the importance of the enabling environments and conditions for accountability (Grandvoinnet et al., 2015). Additionally, our research acknowledges the fact that the most successful interventions are strategic – using multiple strategies and building collaborations across government and citizens, as opposed to tactical – focusing on one approach and generally directed at enhancing citizen voice alone (Fox, 2014).

The overarching aim of our PEA research is to make recommendations that will allow for programmes to influence the incentive structure in the Zambian education system in favour of

improved learner performance and that, to this end, are fitted to context and adaptive to evolving challenges and knowledge.

This investigation is being undertaken in parallel with another that focuses on the health sector. The consultants on the two reports will coordinate to ensure compatible conceptual approaches and to identify shared and contrasting findings across the two sectors.

Research methodology

The research methodology of the investigation can be broken down into four steps:

1. Step 1 involved the identification of a ‘problem’ to be addressed in the analysis in order to narrow the scope of the research. This was conducted in collaboration with ZAP leading to agreement to focus on the issue of poor learning outcomes in the Zambian education system and how accountability interventions could improve this. An initial review of available literature and data on sector performance identified areas of progress in the Zambian education system, as well as persistent challenges. This led to the identification of two provinces (North Western and Southern) that had opposite trajectories in terms of performance in national assessment tests, as well as particularly high and low performing districts within them. In each province a number of NGOs and CSOs were found to be involved in innovative accountability programmes. These then formed the focus for the fieldwork process at the sub-national level.
2. Step 2 involved the mapping of key systemic features of the Zambian context (e.g. political, economic, geographic, demographic, historical and socio-cultural) most relevant to the education sector and specifically to the problem of poor learning outcomes and accountability. Analysis also included a mapping of the institutions and existing mechanisms and interventions for accountability to help determine what is possible in different contexts and to improve understanding of the incentives of different players.
3. Step 3 involved the identification of key stakeholders (e.g. central and local government education officials, union officials, teachers and head teachers, students, NGOs and community members involved in PTAs and DEBs) and analysis of their roles and influence regarding learning outcomes in the Zambian education system. A particular emphasis was placed on their role in, and perceptions of, the trajectories of education in their respective regions and districts so as to better understand the story of progress or decline, and the factors that enabled it. Data collection was conducted primarily through semi-structured interviews with these actors during a three week period of fieldwork. A complete list of the provinces, districts and types of actors interviewed can be found at the end of this annex.
4. Step 4 involved the investigation of key factors affecting the challenge of accountability for learning outcomes in the Zambian education system and identifying a range of practical strategies for addressing the problem, with an emphasis on viable entry points for ZAP.

Key informant interviews and research areas

In the course of the research 52 interviews and focus groups were conducted with 63 individuals from 34 departments, administrations, schools and organisations. A full list of these by position and organisation is provided at the end of this annex.

The individuals and organisations interviewed were identified by:

- A stakeholder analysis, which identified key actors in the provision of education that could either influence, or were affected by, learning outcomes. These included: officials in the Ministry of General Education; international donors; education officials at the provincial and district level; teachers and head teachers; teachers unions; NGOs; CSOs; and community members involved in Parent Teacher Associations and District Education Boards.
- Expert identification and interview information on NGOs and CSOs that are involved in innovative accountability programmes focusing on public service provision. These included: ZANEC (Notice Board Initiative); USAID's "Read to Succeed" project (School Community Partnerships); and World Vision (Citizen Voice and Action).

The field research focused particularly on three provinces and five districts within them.

- North Western Province – Kasempa and Solwezi
- Southern Province – Choma and Sinazongwe
- Copperbelt Province – Mufulira

North Western Province and Southern Province were identified in the review of recent literature and data as having opposite trajectories in terms of performance in national assessment tests over the last decade. North Western in particular has been highlighted as a success story to be emulated, while Southern has historically been one of the top performers, but has experienced stagnant progress in recent years. Examining the differences and similarities in processes and dynamics in these different provinces can help us understand the functioning of the education system as a whole and identify entry points for improving accountability and learning outcomes. The choice of districts was driven by practicalities in the case of Solwezi and Choma, as they are the two districts covering the capital city of their respective provinces. The choice of the other two districts was due to interviews at the provincial level identifying them as showing results that were surprising and atypical for the province. Kasempa performed particularly poorly on recent national assessments in North Western Province, while Sinazongwea had demonstrated significant and sustained improvements in contrast to most of Southern Province. These, again, allowed exploration of the different processes and dynamics at play in the system. While it should be noted that these provinces and districts are not necessarily comparable on socioeconomic or geographic indicators, they were selected because the trajectory of their performance had surprised experts and interviewees – making it less likely their results are a result of underlying characteristics alone.

Mufulira District in Copperbelt Province was selected due to Notice Board Initiative having been implemented in a series of schools within the district. Interviews were conducted with district officials and a head teacher at one of the schools covered by the programme in order to investigate its impact and explore the broader dynamics at work in the district.

Interviews were conducted over a three week period in February – March 2016. They followed a semi-structured methodology with interviewers having a set of topic areas to pursue information on, which were updated and adjusted in the course of the research as new information was acquired.

Throughout the work, researchers sought to triangulate findings to ensure robust analysis. This was the case across provinces and districts in the case of high level political dynamics and their implications, and within districts for exploring specific examples and cases of positive deviance.

The fieldwork placed emphasis on validation of the findings and fostering ownership, particularly at the provincial and district level. This was achieved through holding a series of introduction and exit meetings in each district and province, which also provided useful information in terms of the way officials explained and responded to the issues discussed in their area. In certain areas the researchers were also accompanied by staff from the provincial and district education offices to enable learning, validate findings and also to facilitate immediate actionable decisions. Potentially sensitive topics were not pursued by researchers in these interviews, except in cases where they were raised by the interviewees themselves.

Background review – Social accountability and the politics of education

Social accountability – the state of the evidence

The last two decades have seen an increasing use of programmes and interventions designed to promote accountability in developing countries. Gaventa and McGee (2013) argue that these approaches have their roots in the third wave of democratisation that took place in 1980s and early 1990s. Despite a shift to democratic government in a whole range of countries, there were still significant failures of public policy and equitable provision of public goods and services. These were seen as ‘accountability failures’ within newly democratic systems, whereby elections and other traditional accountability mechanisms were not sufficient to hold government to account. In order to address these issues, these formal mechanisms needed to be either circumvented or augmented by new mechanisms for citizen-led accountability.

The 2004 World Development Report, *Making Services work for Poor People* (World Bank, 2003), as noted elsewhere in this report, also played a major role in framing the focus of accountability interventions through its analysis of both supply- and demand-side blockages in service provision. It concluded that blockages occurring on the ‘long route’ of accountability (between citizens and politicians, and politicians and service providers) were too deeply entrenched to be removed in most contexts. Instead the focus of interventions should be on improving the ‘short route’ of accountability between service users and service providers.

Over the last decade a wide range of accountability programmes and interventions have been implemented across the globe, resulting in a mushrooming of evidence on the effectiveness of these interventions and the contexts and strategies that appear to have been most effective. A series of recent reviews and syntheses of evidence have drawn similar high level conclusions that should shape the analysis of accountability problems and the design of interventions to address them.

Grandvoinnet et al. (2015) and Fox (2014) both conducted wide overviews of existing evidence on accountability, coming to overlapping and mutually reinforcing conclusions. Two of the major implications of these analyses is the need for programmes to be adapted to the context that they are operating in and a need to focus not only on citizens and the actions they can take, but also to engage with the state, understand its limitations and build links with pro-reform or pro-accountability officials within it.

Grandvoinnet et al. (2015) focused particularly on the contextual factors that enable accountability programmes to be successful, as well as how their approaches need to be tailored to context. Their analysis identifies four main weaknesses in existing social accountability interventions: (i) a tendency for support to be centred on the technical application of standardised tools – rather than adapting their form and application to context; (ii) a focus on information and transparency as being sufficient for social accountability; (iii) a conflation of social accountability with “participation” – as the latter requires only engagement from citizens, rather than their having a substantive or decision making role; and (iv) a tendency to focus only on citizen action, without giving equivalent attention to the need for state action.

Developing accountability in a context therefore requires an interplay of citizen and state action, with many interventions having historically only focused on the first of these. Citizen action can involve making demands, protesting or claiming better public goods or services as is done in many interventions. State action, in contrast, tends to be neglected in both analyses and programmes. It can be positive – responding to demands made by citizens – or negative in terms of backlash or repression of groups and individuals that are demanding accountability. Understanding the nature of

the context is particularly important here as different governments and actors have different incentives and capacity to respond. In some cases responses can take an institutional or organisational response – based on cultures, norms and procedures, while in others individual officials may have greater power and discretion. Knowing who has the power and how it can be exercised is crucially important to understand who in the state can take action and what will make them do so.

The authors identify three “levers” that can support and shape the interplay of citizen and state action – information, interface and civic mobilisation. Information can flow in both directions between citizens and the state, and is often necessary to spur engagement between the two. However, in many cases the necessary information either does not exist and so must be collected, or needs to be transformed, presented or interpreted in a way that actors can engage with. Intermediaries and external organisations may therefore be key in these processes. Interface between citizens and the state is crucial to ensuring accountability, with a need for neutral arenas where interlocution can take place. The concept of civic mobilisation then comes into play – as neither information nor the existence of citizen-state interfaces will necessarily result in state or citizen action. External groups may be necessary here to trigger and facilitate citizen voice and action, while similarly officials within the state must be mobilised to engage with citizen and work for reforms within their organisations. Civic mobilisation can therefore be understood as the creation of coalitions of actors that share goals – whether pro-accountability or pro-learning outcomes – both within and across communities and the state.

Putting these findings and framing into practice in an operational sense requires careful attention to four additional factors, which again are mirrored in the findings of Fox (2014) and others. The first involves the tactics of building alliances – which can be helped or hindered by the fact that neither citizens nor the state are exclusive or homogenous categories. The fact that there are pro- and anti-reform officials in most administrations does create the potential to build alliance with those who are pro-reform. However, the lack of a homogenous citizenry means that collective action problems and conflict may arise within communities – undermining their capacity to organise and demand accountability. Locating allies in the state and creating consensus amongst communities are therefore key issues that programmes need to address. The remaining deal with the design and expectations that are reasonable for accountability programmes. The authors argue that the process of generating accountability is iterative – with information flows acting as both a driver and outcome of citizen-state interface, in turn spurring further action from citizens and states via civic mobilisation. Small initial results can therefore build to larger reforms and impacts in the long run. Programme monitoring therefore needs to focus on realistic, incremental changes in a manner that allows the testing of theories of change and identification of successful pathways to reform. The report cautions that while there can be positive feedback loops, these processes are not risk-free. Programmes may generate more adversarial relationships and a lack of trust between service users and service providers in some circumstances – resulting in worse service outcomes and less citizen accountability. Finally, programme design and strategies must be tailored to context – taking into account the degree of openness in the political system and identifying potential spaces for citizen-state engagement. It is not possible to achieve everything everywhere at once and strategies that are effective in one space may have negative results in others – intelligent application of examples and adapting programmes in the light of learning is therefore key.

Fox (2014) conducts a similar review on a smaller scale – focusing more on the characteristics of successful social accountability interventions than on the broader contextual enabling conditions. Many of his findings align with those of Grandvoinnet et al. (2015), but add useful operation depth. Fox concurs on the shortcomings that exist in current accountability programming, but frames these in terms of two types of intervention – tactical and strategic.

Fox's review of evidence suggests that tactical interventions tend to involve a single intervention that is usually localised at the community level and bounded in terms of its scope and results. These interventions are often information led – without serious engagement with the fact information is rarely sufficient to spur change in most cases – and have very mixed results – very rarely leading to strong, positive outcomes beyond the immediate area they operate in. In contrast, strategic interventions have demonstrated promising results by engaging with actors and problems at multiple levels of the state as part of a broader campaign. They bolster enabling environments for collective action, scale up citizen engagement beyond the very local level and build alliances with government to improve state capacity to respond to demands. However, Fox notes that relatively few citizen or voice-led initiatives are well co-ordinated with attempts to reform the public sector and encourage responsiveness.

The essence of Fox's critique and recommendations for accountability programmes is the need to build synergies across civil society and government – akin to need for both citizen action and state action in the formulation of Grandvoinnet et al. (2015). Fox summarises this argument as: "Voice needs teeth to have bite – but teeth may not bite without voice" (Fox, 2014:36). Citizen voice alone will not have an impact unless it is directed at a state – or actors within it – that have both the incentives and capacity (or teeth) to address issues, discipline offending or under-performing actors and reward those who are high performing. Equally, actors within the state that may wish to take action to improve public services or implement reforms may not be able to do so without information from citizens or without the pressure they can put on other anti-reform actors. Interventions aiming to achieve significant and durable change must therefore find shared interests between these actors and bring them together.

Fox also outlines a series of factors and strategies – drawn from his overview of recent evidence – to outline how these forms of programmes can be built and maintained. Some of these – such as the importance of context and the potential for reinforcing positive and negative cycles of accountability – are shared, but in some areas he goes further. One important aspect here is the use of voice and information in programmes. Information, while usually not sufficient in itself, can be highly effective provided that it is used strategically. There must be a clear idea of the actor that the information is targeted at, what they are expected to do in response to the information and what types of information will provoke or enable the desired response. Understanding the perspective of the user of information is therefore very important. Fox also emphasises the importance of interlocutors in this process – organisations and individuals who can go beyond the aggregation of voice and information to represent users and present this information at other levels. These interlocutors also have a role in overcoming what Fox dubs the "fear factor" – the fact that citizens may not engage in voice if they fear the reprisals that may happen as a consequence. Interlocutors can act as a shield to preserve their anonymity and there is also a role here for alliances with pro-accountability state officials at higher levels who can provide political cover and protect citizens and service providers who speak out.

This last point leads to Fox's repeated emphasis on linking interventions at the local, regional and national level – both in terms of civil society and alliances with actors within the state. He argues that this vertical integration is often missing from accountability interventions and that it is vital, particularly when issues of corruption and patronage that lead to failures in public service provision are enabled by informal coalitions of anti-accountability actors at different levels of the state and society. Pro-accountability or reform coalitions can then use "sandwich strategies" – with pressure to reform coming from citizens below and allied officials above. However, it is important to also focus on state capacity and reforms to ensure that reformists within the state have the ability to

deliver their societal counterparts in terms of providing tangible support and political space necessary to prevent reprisals, as well as being able to act on information channelled to them.

More granular work on what some of these approaches look like at the programme level in different contexts can be drawn from Wild et al. (2014). The authors took a case study approach to examine the different pathways that CARE's community score card programme had utilised to have an impact on public service outcomes in four countries – Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania. The research drew five main conclusions. Firstly, the interventions that were most successful where they were framed in terms of building collective action and collective interests – rather than focusing only on citizen voice and empowerment. Working closely with district level officials produced strong results, particularly in contexts with a strong and reform-minded centre (Rwanda and Ethiopia). In contexts that lacked this, impacts were largely restricted to the community level – focusing on resources or co-production with strong involvement from credible local leadership such as traditional leaders (Malawi) or councillors (Tanzania).

Secondly, local leaders need to be brought into the accountability process early and convinced of its benefits. This was achieved through positive framing of the intervention as having the potential to assist leaders in their aims – whether from an innate desire to improve the system or career incentives to produce results. This is particularly the case for district or provincial level officials, whose permission is often needed to establish interventions and provide the “teeth” or state action when they respond to citizen concerns and information. However, chiefs and faith leaders are also important actors in terms of mobilising the community.

Thirdly, multi-stakeholder partnerships are key to successful interventions and need to involve more than just facilitating meetings between different actors. Facilitation meetings are a key element of the score card process and provide a venue for identifying and solving coordination or collective action problems. However, strong mediation is key and the existence of links and relationships between government officials and implementing organisations greatly helps to establish trust, a willingness to engage in the process and for follow up on agreed changes. This aligns closely with what Grandvoinnet et al. (2015) describe as civic mobilisation. However, it should be noted that Wild et al. (2014) found that in contexts without a strong, reform-minded centre the focus tends to be on problems at the local level. Problems at higher levels tend to be too diffuse and the actors involved in the score card process lack influence over them.

Fourthly, collective action problems for individual groups (e.g. communities or service providers) need to be solved before collective action issues between communities and service providers can be solved. This requires involvement of local authorities on both the demand side (e.g. traditional chiefs, local councillors, faith leaders etc.) and supply side (e.g. district level officials).

Finally, expectations of these types of programmes should be limited – particularly when there is not a reform minded centre. The sustainability of the accountability mechanisms beyond the lifetime of the programme was very limited, unless it was institutionalised by the state, local politician or district official. Impacts also tended to focus on tangible aspects at the very local level – such as access to services, provision of resources (particularly community construction) or improved relationships between service users and service providers. Little evidence was found of changes in power relations between the different actors as a result of the programmes.

The authors also highlight the importance of allowing interventions to adapt to the circumstances around them and be flexible given the need to build alliances with communities and the government. Successful examples tended to be implemented by organisations that had politically

adept staff and had a history of working in the intervention area – meaning that they had existing relationships and networks in the community and local government.

This background provides us with important information when considering the approaches to improving accountability and learning outcomes in Zambia. However, there is also a literature on the political economy of education and specifically the effectiveness of accountability programmes for improving learning outcomes. This is explored in the following section.

A brief review of politics and accountability relationships in education

Understanding the ways in which the political incentives and dynamics impact specifically on the education sector is a particularly important for identifying entry points and blockages to improving learning outcomes. These also provide assistance in terms of diagnosing the causes of some of the challenges that we observe within the Zambian education system.

A rigorous review conducted by Kingdon et al. (2014) examined the state of evidence on the role of political economy issues on the education in developing countries – highlighting important implications for accountability in the sector. They note that the level of parental participation and voice in school management is extremely low across the developing world, partly as a result of parents nationally being dispersed as a group and lacking the knowledge and skills to effectively monitor and evaluate teacher performance. In contrast, teachers – and particularly teacher unions – benefit from sheer numbers, their spread throughout most countries, a high level of mobilisation capacity (in terms of social networks and financial resources) and their potential to cause disruption. The authors note that teachers unions tend to focus on salary levels and job security – protecting poorly performing teachers – rather than aspects that are related to learning outcomes such as classroom conditions or teacher training. However, they also note a more positive focus in some contexts – enabling broader reforms and acting as a powerful ally in doing so.

The authors also note that the literature provides strong evidence for clientelism, patronage and corruption being rife in education systems across the developing world. These factors create incentives to expand the education system, rather than a focus on learning outcomes. The expansion of systems allows resources (such as schools and teaching posts) to be allocated in such a way as to reward political allies and groups of supporters in an inefficient manner. Clientelism drives expansion of teacher numbers, but also leads to widespread political interference in deployment and transfers that undermines the effectiveness and equity of education systems – leading to poor learning outcomes. The authors also find evidence that teacher influence extends into the legislative process – both through union lobbying and the presence of significant numbers of former teachers in legislatures in many countries.

The evidence examined by the authors also suggest that two commonly advocated measures for improving learning outcomes – decentralisation and increased spending on education – have had very mixed impacts, but that there are certain institutional mechanisms that are associated with stronger learning outcomes. The authors also, however, note how common instances of implementation failure are in the literature – partly attributing this is technical and capacity issues, but also noting the presence of vested interests or countervailing political incentives.

The conclusions the authors draw from the literature is that in many cases there are potential agents of change – including civil society, NGOs, the media, trade unions and religious groups, as well as reform-minded politicians, bureaucrats and other elite actors – that can be brought together where there is political will or incentives. However, they emphasise the need for reforms to be pitched at multiple levels of the education system and to link reformers at the lower levels of the system to

those at higher levels. Local level action cannot achieve widespread or improvements without moving in the same direction as actors and initiatives at higher levels. They also conclude that success of these types of movements will be dependent on whether there is multi-party electoral competition, the political knowledge of the electorate, the extent to which the elite dominates the political arena and the extent of centralisation of governance – all factors that are important to bear in mind in the case of Zambia.

Similar conclusions have been drawn by other studies. Nicolai et al. (2014) drew on broader literature and a series of case studies conducted for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Development Progress project to conclude that four major political dynamics negatively affected education quality. These were (i) political prioritisation – that generally focus on access i.e. fee abolition or school construction; (ii) a tendency to focus on highly visible policies and tasks i.e. school facilities, text books and ICT; (iii) issues of information access and asymmetries i.e. users not being able to effectively monitor the provision of education and ineffective monitoring by education systems; and (iv) demand dynamics i.e. the contrast of strong teacher mobilisation with weak parent mobilisation and the ability of some users to opt out of the system by shifting students to private schools. They note a range of potential entry points, such as attempts to improve the knowledge of parents and political salience of education quality through mass media focus on learning outcomes and involving parents in the testing of students, as well as reforms within the education system to improve monitoring and linking teacher incentives to student outcomes.

The evidence syntheses on the overall political economy of education therefore appears to be quite bleak for accountability programmes, given the strength of teacher influence and the challenges facing the mobilisation of parents and communities on issues of learning outcomes. However, research examining the evidence specifically on the impact of accountability programmes appears to offer a more optimistic prognosis and potential strategies.

Westthorp et al. (2014) conducted a realist review of evidence on the relationship between enhancing community accountability, empowerment and education outcomes – focusing on low and middle income countries. They identify a total of eleven different routes through which community empowerment and accountability initiative can operate, and that a range of intervention types have had a proven impact on learning outcomes. These included a range of accountability interventions, as well as decentralisation, school-based management and community schools. The evidence suggested that the success of these interventions was at least partly associated with increases in face-to-face teachers and student contact with teachers – whether through volunteer teachers, employing additional teachers or increasing the attendance of the existing teaching workforce.

Many of the author's findings on the enabling environment and programme strategies necessary for improving learning outcomes align with those found in the more general accountability literature – particularly in terms of adapting interventions to context, adopting a collaborative approach with the state and linking with pro-reform actors within the state.

The authors find that, in terms of engaging with the state, successful interventions deliberately build constructive partnerships and generate shared goals with teachers and teachers' representative bodies. This process was easier when actors – including implementing organisations – can leverage existing links and social capital, particularly where officials are worried about the potential impacts of the programme. This parallels the findings of Wild et al. (2014), as does the findings that impacts were stronger where they could engage with a reasonably supportive political context. The authors also find that it is important to build on teachers' intrinsic motivation and avoid the creation of perverse incentives. Programmes that worked with head teachers and teachers who are receptive to community engagement were generally more successful.

The capacity of the state to respond is also raised by the authors. Interventions will often face challenges where there is an undersupply or oversupply of teachers, and contexts where more power is concentrated at the local level, through decentralisation, community schools or school-based management, saw greater success arising from interventions as actors had the capacity, as well as the will, to respond. Brokering engagement between communities and service providers must also emphasise a constructive approach that encourages further collaboration and aims to avoid confrontation that can undermine progress and build mistrust.

In terms of community mobilisation, the evidence reviewed suggested both challenges and opportunities. Local communities are more effective when they are literate, and interventions that involve a literacy promotion element or that build parental confidence and capacity often have more success. Understanding the context and tailoring approaches to it is also vitally important here. Programmes must take into account social norms, as well as the capacity and motivations of parents. In parallel with Fox (2014), they conclude that information gathering and dissemination can be effective, but needs to be carefully tailored to the change process they intend to trigger and the information needs of communities. The role of interlocutors is also important here, with successful interventions engaging local leaders and working with them to develop community consensus on shared issues, challenges and proposed solutions. The review is less encouraging regarding parent teacher associations and other existing accountability mechanisms – although they do note positive examples where their membership is openly and democratically composed, and where they have sufficient resources and where no members have significantly more informal power than others.

Overall, Westthorp et al. (2014) reach encouraging conclusions in that there is sufficient evidence that accountability approaches can help to improve learning outcomes. However, this partly based on local level improvements in school facilities resulting from them can improve student and teacher attendance. They also caution that while external facilitation can assist in shaping local power dynamics, these forms of impacts are not necessarily sustainable beyond the life of the programme.

Their conclusions in terms of programme design are also in line with those of Grandvoinnet et al. (2015), Fox (2014) and Wild et al. (2015). They emphasise that planned approaches must have a clear theory of change that is adapted to local structures, barriers and opportunities. However, programmes must retain the flexibility to develop approaches iteratively – gathering feedback and data in the process of implementation that can then be used to adapt interventions. To this end, monitoring and evaluation should constantly test the theory of change, examine the pathways the intervention is operating through and measure both the overall impact of the intervention and how it varies across the intervention area.

This background review therefore gives us an important range of issues to bear in mind as we analyse the political economy of the education sector in Zambia and consider the types of intervention design that might be most effective in improving learning outcomes.

Results of the political economy analysis of the education sector in Zambia

This section presents findings on a range of political dynamics at different levels of the Zambian education system and how they influence the quality of learning in schools. It elaborates further on the issues that were covered in brief in section 3 of the main report and draws in evidence from a broader range of sources.

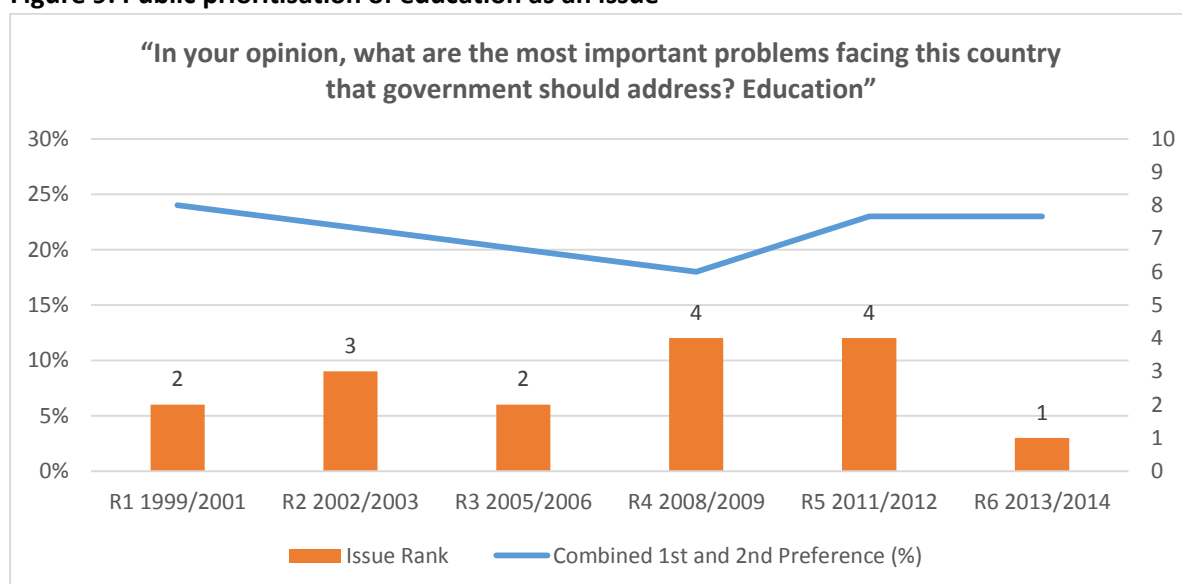
Overview of the political economy of Zambia

The political settlement in Zambia has been described as “a competitive clientelist settlement, in which access to resources is based on personal relationships and patronage” (O’Neil et al., 2015). It is characterised as having weak political mobilisation and an electorate that engages with politicians largely through patronage relations, rather than holding them to account on matters of public interest (Ibid.). The few civil society organisations that do exist are well networked and significantly involved in governance and social issues. While the quality of public services is of political importance, there is not a culture of public engagement in service provision and confrontation over service problems is rare (Ibid.). Similar challenges are diagnosed in the analysis of Yezi (2013) in terms of the lack of popular participation in political life; citizen perceptions of disempowerment and social exclusion; and the channelling of development to political party strongholds and urban areas.

Political priorities – education access, quality and resources

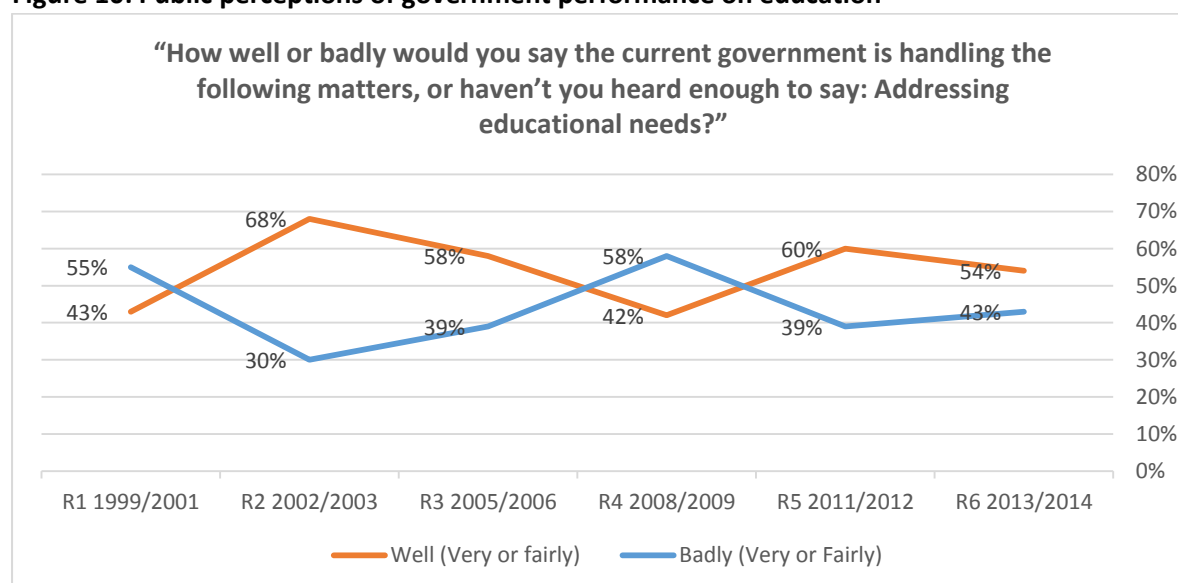
Education delivery in general is a politically charged issue in Zambia. The ruling Patriotic Front (PF) party developed a political manifesto for education as part of its campaign for election. However, at the highest level the quality of education does not seem to be a policy priority for politicians or a strong focus of political competition, although national surveys suggest education is a priority for Zambian citizens and that levels of satisfaction have varied markedly, as can be seen in figures 9 and 10 (Afrobarometer, Online data analysis). These figures, however, do not disaggregate as to whether people are concerned with access to education or the quality of education received.

Figure 9: Public prioritisation of education as an issue



Source: Afrobarometer – Online data analysis [Data retrieved March 25th, 2016]

Figure 10: Public perceptions of government performance on education



Source: Afrobarometer – Online data analysis [Data retrieved March 25th, 2016]

In practice, public prioritisation of education has translated into a political focus on the expansion of access to education. Particular priority has been given to the construction of new secondary schools and the upgrading of schools to include secondary levels. The Third National Implementation Framework (2012-2015) identified increasing access by expanding school supply and upgrading schools as one of its key priorities. Moreover, interviews also highlighted the role of individual MPs in pressing the administration to improve access to secondary education and the role that Constituency Development Funds have played in financing expansion in classroom space under the direction of MPs and District Councils.

This expansion of access has been a significant success. The number of basic schools rose from 8,195 to 8,801 over 2008-2013, meaning an additional 236,000 students are now enrolled across grades 1-9 – an increase of 7.2% (World Bank, 2015c). This is mirrored at the secondary level, with an additional 84 secondary schools – as well as expansion of existing institutions – leading to 119,000 more secondary students in 2013 compared to 2008 – an increase of 19% (Ibid.) However, while there are significant access issues in Zambia, there are concerns over how efficiently and effectively the expansion is being conducted. Interviews noted examples of “white elephant” secondary schools being constructed and not having sufficient pupils enrolled to fill their capacity and the fact that these newly constructed schools received priority in terms of new teaching posts over existing schools – suggesting wastage and poor use of existing resources. There is also a broader issues that the rate of school expansion is not being matched by increased resource levels – leading to strain on the provision of education.

Schools face significant challenges around funding – with absolute levels of spending being well below target for primary education in particular (World Bank, 2015c). Central government grants frequently fall short of budget allocations and almost 30% of primary schools do not receive any school grants at all (World Bank, 2015b). Delays in funding are also common – both the initial disbursement to the Ministry of Education and then subsequent transfers to the school level. These delays are disruptive both for the administration of the education system – as a lack of resources can undermine monitoring and supervision – and for improvements in school infrastructure and

resources. Schools are highly dependent on parental contributions for financing non-salary expenditure. These are received voluntary PTA fees at the primary level and official fees at the secondary level. This creates financial problems, particularly for primary schools, where around half of schools charge fees at an average of 32 ZMK per year, but only just over a quarter of students pay (World Bank, 2015c).

The overall financing challenge is marked, as is the low level of central government contribution. Zambian national targets for annual education spending per student are 46 ZMK at the primary level and 144 ZMK at the secondary level, while actual spending stands at 35 ZMK and 250 ZMK. While there is a clear financing gap at the primary level, it should be noted that school grants from central government are inadequate at both levels – covering only 22 ZMK (64%) of actual expenditure at the primary level and 25 ZMK (10%) at the secondary level (Ibid.). Education financing is therefore lagging behind Zambia's aspirations – even assuming full delivery of funds on time – and also appears more strongly focused on secondary education in terms of government grant funding per pupil, a potential source of inequity as secondary education is only accessible to those who can afford school fees.

The combination of under-funding and rising enrolment therefore leads to high ratios of pupils per classroom and pupils per teacher; and low levels of access to textbooks and other learning materials. While more children are now in school, they are not receiving the contact time, attention and resources necessary for strong learning outcomes, particularly where enrolment rates have risen rapidly (see World Bank, 2015c). District and provincial level officials interviewed also highlighted a lack of resources for school monitoring – adding further to issues of discipline and teacher support.

These issues of political prioritisation and funding levels can be conceived of as a high level collective action problem. Raising funding and applying them rationally with careful planning of expansion would lead to improved learning outcomes overall. However, in practice MPs and political parties face short term incentives to focus on immediate expansion that undermines the quality of the education system as a whole.

Managing the teacher workforce – patronage and political interference

Attempts to improve education quality must take into account strong evidence that the hiring, deployment and transfer of teachers is strongly affected by personal connections and political patronage. . The former is driven by poor conditions of service in remote and rural areas, which persist despite the creation of dedicated rural, remote allowances. The latter arises from the perceived political influence of teachers in their communities, particularly around elections.

The conditions of service that teachers face is a major issue, as examined in the following section, but the challenges are particularly acute in remote and rural regions. Surveys conducted by the World Bank (2015b) found that around half of teachers want to transfer away from their current location, with this being particularly widespread in rural schools. Attempts have been made to address these issues with rural and remote allowances to boost teacher pay, which are reported to have raised morale in areas where they have been successfully implemented. However, there are challenges with payments – as noted in following sections. Interviews highlighted the lack of infrastructure and learning materials in remote and rural areas as an issue, as well as a lack of accommodation for teachers and insecurity for female teachers in particular. Several interviews highlighted relatively common instances of teachers complaining they were being targeted by witchcraft and so requesting transfer to other areas. There was a perception that teachers use rural areas where there are teacher shortages as a route into the profession and then those with connections arrange to be rapidly transferred out. Urban posts were seen as more attractive and

less likely to suffer from teacher absenteeism, although high pupil-teacher ratios in these settings were also noted as a challenge. Teachers are therefore keen to move away from rural areas and to join schools in urban areas, with postings in Lusaka having historically been a particular, and they utilise personal or political connections in order to do so. There is also an added complexity that teachers may be officially be employed in one school and receive their pay through that district, but in fact are working in a different school or, in some cases, different districts or regions. This has sometimes been used to allow additional teachers to be allocated to over-crowded urban schools, but it can also be a major source of disruption and inequity as teachers secure posts in rural areas and then are unofficially re-deployed to other, more attractive posts.

Political interference in teacher deployment and redeployment is rooted in the perceived or actual political influence that teachers can exert on communities and the implications this has for electoral competition. Teachers are the largest cadre within the civil service and play a role in both voter education and the administration of elections. They also have influence in the areas they serve beyond that of other front-line civil servants due to their status and constant contact with the community. All of these factors combine to make them politically important and so creates incentives to manipulate teacher deployment. Reports of political interference in teacher deployment and redeployment were commonly referenced in interviews.

While teachers and other civil servants are supposed to refrain from involvement in party politics, in practice a small percentage of teachers are acknowledged to be politically active, with a number having been subsequently elected as MPs or appointed as District Commissioners. Interviews also highlighted that teachers can be perceived as being political even if they are not. In some cases this is as a result of having names associated with tribal groups that are linked to particular political parties. In other cases this is due to teachers acting as community representatives or otherwise being involved in community affairs in a way that is perceived as party political – particularly if it brings them into conflict with other authorities. Interviews highlighted a perception among teachers and education officials that being associated with, or affiliated to, opposition parties increased the likelihood of punitive transfer or dismissal.

The effect of patronage networks and political transfers undermines efforts to improve the quality of education through three main mechanisms:

First, it can contribute to inequity in teacher deployment by facilitating official or unofficial transfers from rural and remote areas to urban areas – blocking teacher places in rural schools in the case of all transfers. While it is true that urban areas do have unmet education needs, they also generally have larger schools and staff numbers, whereas rural areas suffer from teacher shortages and high turnover of staff as a result.

Second, it affects mechanisms for teacher oversight and discipline – undermining accountability relationships at the school and district level. This interference can involve the over-turning of pay-freezes that are imposed for disciplinary reasons, arranging for teachers who are subject to disciplinary proceedings to be transferred to other areas (rather than be dismissed) or preventing the imposition of transfers that are put in place for disciplinary reasons. Head teachers and district officials can be reluctant to discipline teachers if they are put under pressure by political actors or receive countermanding orders from higher levels of the education system that weaken or reverse their actions. Officials may be particularly reluctant to take action against teachers aligned with the governing party if they believe it will result in them being labelled as pro-opposition – leading to their own transfer or other disciplinary actions. This contributes to a sense of impunity amongst some teachers and a perception of injustice around the disciplinary process. Teacher absenteeism is

correspondingly high – 16 percent of primary school teachers were found to be absent for more than 50 percent of school days in a given month (World Bank, 2015b)³.

Third, frequent turnover of staff at the school, district and province level has a disruptive effect on leadership and the consistency of policy implementation – undermining progress on learning outcomes. At the school level there can be challenges caused by high turnover of teachers and transfers that occur at short notice, both in terms of school administration and the maintenance of relationships between teachers and the community. Analysis from the World Bank (2015b) found that fifteen percent of grade 5 teachers and 12 percent of grade 9 teachers had transferred to different schools in 2013 – a significant proportion of the teaching workforce. There have also been issues with short term posting and rapid turnover within the administration at the district and provincial level and the disruption this causes to leadership at these levels has been cited as having undermined progress.

Teacher quality, conditions and morale

Alongside the impact of high-level political dynamics there are a range of interlinked issues at the school and district level that undermine education quality and lead to challenges in resolving problems between these actors. Teacher absenteeism is high – as noted above – but the teaching workforce also faces significant challenges without receiving sufficient support. There is significant dissatisfaction as a result – with teacher attrition rates being consistently around 11 percent despite two major increases in teachers’ salaries, and with less than 20% of this figure being due to retirement, illness or death (World Bank, 2015b).

Teacher salary levels were raised as an issue in interviews, but the severity of the issue is contested. Average teacher pay in Zambia is high relative to other sub-Saharan African countries at 6.7 and 7.1 times GDP per capita for primary and secondary teachers respectively (World Bank, 2015c). However, the real value of teacher pay has been eroded by high inflation and elements of the salary – such as allowances for housing and transport – are often not accessible due to funding constraints. This failure to honour commitments can undermine mechanisms designed to improve teacher deployment and morale, such as rural and remote allowances. Delays in teacher pay can also be a demotivating factor, but broader analysis suggests that these have a negligible effect overall. Analysis in World Bank (2015b) finds that delays average 0.2 months of salary outstanding per year at the primary level and 0.3 at the secondary level (World Bank, 2015b) – far below the level of delays and non-payment of school grants.

There is also dissatisfaction with existing systems for performance evaluation, target setting and rewards. The annual performance appraisal system has been characterised as unwieldy and suffers from disconnections between different levels within the education system, as well as a lack of linkages between staff accountability and stated operational plans, budgets and targets. The absence of a link between performance in the appraisal process and financial rewards for teachers also undermines its potential to act as an incentive. A new “notch system” is intended to be

³ The definition of teacher absenteeism used here is that of the World Bank SDI definition of “absence from school” to distinguish from the teacher attendance rate (attended days) using “administrative records”. The methodology is described as: “To measure absence, in each school, ten teachers were randomly selected from the list of all teachers during the first visit to the school. The whereabouts of these ten teachers was then verified in a second unannounced visit. Absence from school is defined as the share (of a maximum of 10 teachers) who could not be found on the school premises during the unannounced visit.” World Bank (2015b:10). It is important to note that this measure does not take into account whether or not the absence was approved, and also does not capture the challenge of teachers who may be present in school on the day, but are not in the classroom and teaching.

introduced, but there are concerns that it will have similar limitations as the current system. Other interviewees were more optimistic, however, with a recognition that the general political environment is more open to discussing challenges over performance. Dissatisfaction in terms of career prospects and rewards should also be understood in the context of the politicisation of teacher discipline and deployment. These all contribute to perceptions that the system is unfair and that effort will not be rewarded – undermining morale and encouraging risk averse behaviour that stifles innovation.

A further challenge for improving learning outcomes is that teachers' subject knowledge is low overall and support to improve the teaching workforce is inadequate and poorly targeted. Half of grade 5 teachers score below 90% in grade 5 subject material, with grade 9 teachers scoring below 70% in grade 9 subject materials (World Bank, 2015b). Despite these statistics only 27% of teachers reported receiving any training in the last year and these tended to be those who were better qualified, rather than those with less education (Ibid.) Teachers in urban areas are more likely to be trained than those in rural areas, with an emphasis on distance learning at both the primary and secondary level, although in-school or in-district training is more prevalent at the primary level (Ibid.). Interviews highlighted a perception of challenges in three areas. Firstly, there was a perception that training largely occurs in schools and that there is a lack of official resources to support teachers' further training. Teachers had previously been able to sponsor themselves for courses, but this was no longer the case and while there are fast track courses for under-qualified teachers, these are hard to access in practice. Secondly, there are concerns over the current quality of pre-service training – chiefly that these courses are too short and rush material due to the focus on expanding school access and the teaching work force and that the rapid expansion of teacher training colleges has not been properly regulated. Consequently, large numbers of new teachers have inadequate training. Thirdly, interviewees complained revisions to the national curriculum had not been accompanied by support for teacher re-training – resulting in problems in delivering the new curriculum and so poorer assessment results. A new national Teaching Council is being created to assess and certify teachers. However, unless it is accompanied by improvements in both pre and in service training it will either have to disqualify large numbers of teachers or accept a low overall standard of teacher quality. There are also concerns over the cost of accreditation that teachers will face under the new system.

The combination of high-level political dynamics; a lack of support and coherent policy making; and a poor quality teaching workforce pose major challenges to using accountability mechanisms at the school level to improve education outcomes. The capacity of teachers, schools and districts is limited and so, as a consequence, is their ability to meaningfully respond to citizen pressure.

The challenge of user accountability

User accountability within the Zambian education system is formally carried out through three mechanisms. At the school level parents report issues to the head teacher and issues are raised by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which has a broader oversight role. At the district level oversight is conducted by the District Education Board (DEB), although this mechanism will be replaced by oversight from district councils as part of the decentralisation process.

The operation of all of these mechanisms seems to suffer from severe difficulties at present. Problems in individual reporting of malpractice and in general parental mobilisation are now widely acknowledged in the literature (see Fox, 2014; Grandvoinnet et al. 2015; Westhorp et al., 2014; and Kingdon et al., 2014,). These instruments are most difficult to exercise where parents are less educated, have limited experience of the operation of schools, feel a power imbalance compared to teachers and have low expectations of the response their complaints will elicit from the disciplinary

system. Interviews did highlight parent mobilisation on three issues – the most commonly noted were witchcraft allegations against teachers, followed by demands for school construction and there was a single example of parents complaining about teacher absenteeism – both directly to the district authorities and through community radio. These examples demonstrate that parental activism does occur, but that this level of assertiveness is relatively rare and is generally not focused on learning outcomes. Its effectiveness is also limited, as teachers are generally transferred in response to complaints, rather than made redundant.

The overall impression of PTAs from interviews was that these were largely ineffective in terms of the operation of the school and instead focus on raising school funds through PTA fees and on the oversight and implementation of school construction projects. Their effectiveness is limited by the fact that they are composed entirely of parents – who are constantly shifting as children arrive at and leave school – and had no representation from community leaders who could exercise stronger influence. Interviews noted that PTAs met only rarely and limited influence, but also highlighted some examples of activity – including PTA participation in monitoring, facilitating parental complaints of teacher absenteeism and calling on the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS)⁴ to resolve disputes at the school level.

District Education Boards include education officials and a range of high profile – such as local religious leaders, teachers unions and other leading citizens – and are involved in making recommendations and scrutinizing decisions on issues such as discipline and teacher deployment. However, their independence is limited by the fact that their members are nominated by the district education authorities and then appointed directly by the Minister of Education. Interviews highlighted that many Boards are currently in limbo as their term has expired or not been renewed. Boards should meet on a quarterly basis, but none of the actors interviewed stated that their DEB met this. The performance of the Boards also seems to vary greatly. Some play an active role, while others lack knowledge of their role and powers meaning that the DEBS has almost complete control over the agenda and decisions. The shifting of DEB responsibilities to District Councils may improve accountability, but interviewees were skeptical as to whether councilors have the skills and incentives to engage on issues of education quality, as opposed to strengthening local control over teacher deployment.

The school and district level mechanisms for public accountability therefore seem weak overall. Most of the teachers and district officials interviewed were concerned with upwards accountability to their superiors, rather than downwards accountability to citizens, pupils and teachers.

The actions and circumstances of communities also has implications for learning outcomes and there are a number of collective action challenges both within communities and between communities and schools that are currently undermining progress. Interviewees highlighted four major challenges. Student absenteeism (often related to their engagement in paid work); high levels of teenage pregnancy and early marriage that take students away from school; parents not being involved in the education of their children, particularly in allowing children time to do homework and in providing oversight and assistance for it; and the relatively low levels of payment of PTA fees at the primary level. These reduce contact time between students and teachers, limit students' time for studying in the evenings and exacerbate the financing challenges facing schools – undermining learning outcomes overall. Relations between school and the community can also be strained in certain circumstances.

⁴ The District Education Board Secretary is the chair of the District Education Board and also the highest level education official at the district level, reporting upwards to the Provincial Education Officer (PEO)

Local leaders – particularly traditional chiefs and sometimes district councilors – can play an important role in resolving disputes and enabling the community to overcome its internal collective action issues in order to improve learning outcomes. In some cases they have mediated and defused tensions between teachers and community members, while in others they have brokered community agreements and set up community monitoring systems to reduce student absenteeism and engaged in sensitisation on the value of education and reducing teenage pregnancies. They are also involved in mobilising communities to work on building and maintaining school infrastructure.

A number of accountability interventions in Zambia have drawn on the authority of local leaders in the recent past. Both World Vision’s Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) model and the School Community Partnerships implemented by the Read to Succeed programme integrate community leaders and traditional chiefs into their structures and have used the authority that these figures possess to mobilise communities in a way that the current PTA structure has not been able to do. Similar conclusions were also reached by NORAD (2007), which found that traditional leaders in Southern Province generally have strong connections with elected representatives and tend to act as intermediaries between communities and local authorities. They find that the mobilising power is often used by the government, for example in implementing construction projects, and can benefit NGO programmes. However, they also question the extent to which this form of community participation genuinely constitutes communities being empowered or making decisions affecting their lives, or will lead to them exercising their rights as citizens in the long run.

Other initiatives have focused more on using information to raise awareness of the challenges facing schools and communities and using this as the starting point for problem solving – hosted at a new and neutral venue. This is the case with the Notice Board Initiative (NBI) implemented by ZANEC and parallels the way in which community score card model operate elsewhere. However, the success of such initiatives has varied considerably and their impact is generally confined to the local level due to the challenges of creating change at higher levels (see Wild et al., 2015).

The operation of existing accountability interventions does, however, demonstrate the potential for incremental improvements at the local level from a focus on problem solving, the creation of venues to discuss challenges and agree solutions, and the value of bringing in community leaders who have authority to mobilise the community. Linking these interventions to higher levels of administration and political authority is crucial, however, to achieve more widespread and sustained impact.

Positive deviance examples – What can we learn?

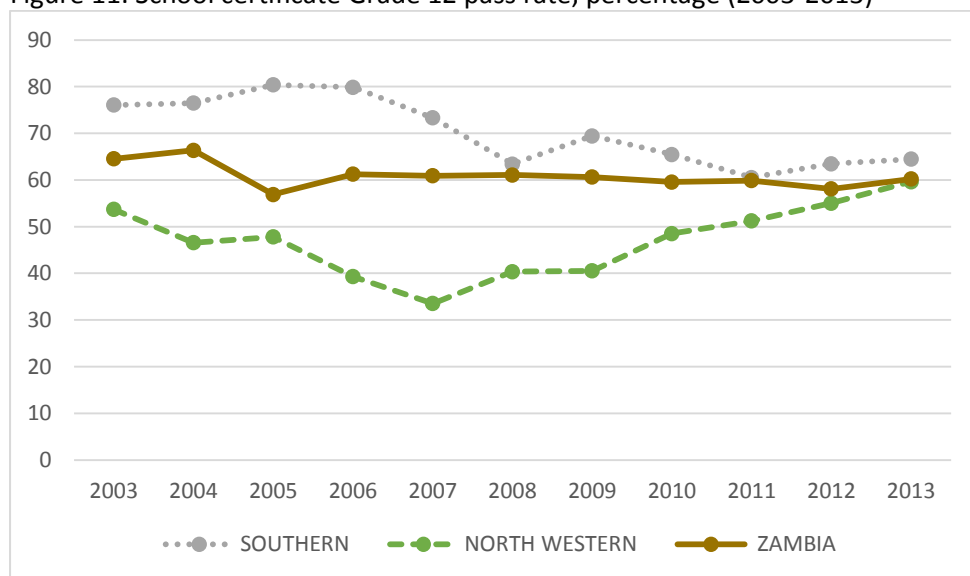
In the course of the research we came across several examples of provinces and districts which had achieved significant improvements in learning outcomes despite the systemic challenges outlined above. It was also striking that in almost all districts visited there were individual officials and teachers who demonstrated a strong enthusiasm for improving children’s life chances and expressed frustration with the current barriers to change. These examples and individuals demonstrate that there are certainly potential allies within the system who are enthusiastic for reform and, at least in some cases, have found the political space to enact positive reforms. Learning from these examples can allow us to design more effective interventions, particularly in terms of reforms to the supply side of education and how to link public accountability with pro-reform actors within the system.

North Western Province

North Western Province has been seen for several years as an example for other districts, having significantly improved and sustained learning outcomes over the period from 2007 to 2013, when it began to experience a decline. MESVTEE (2015) notes that it had been considered a “Cinderella

Province” due to its norm of poor performance, but that it has since reversed this image through a concerted strategy to improve learning outcomes.

Figure 11: School certificate Grade 12 pass rate, percentage (2003-2013)



Source: Compiled from 2013 grade 12 Examination Council of Zambia examination statistics

As can be seen in Figure 11 above, the North Western Province has achieved an impressive improvements in Grade 12 national examination performance and also showed the highest average improvement (39 percent) across all examination areas at Grade 5 – demonstrating improvements across both primary and secondary levels (MESVTEE, 2015).

The impetus for improving education outcomes began in 2007, after the province had its worst set of results in national examinations across all levels of the education system (primary, secondary and college) (Ibid.). This poor performance attracted significant national media attention, despite the fact that a focus on education and learning in the media had been rare up to that point. The then Provincial Education Officer, with the assistance of the Provincial Minister for Education, was able to use this political moment to draw together a wide range of actors and hold a stakeholder meeting to scrutinise the results, discuss challenges and establish consensus for a clear plan for reforming education in the province. This was noted as being exceptionally rare by interviewees, as it involved not only actors from within the education system at the provincial and district level, but also Members of Parliament, traditional chiefs, parents and representatives from teachers unions, civil society, the private sector and co-operating partners (Ibid.). This problem solving forum only met once in its extended form, but a series of smaller meetings were held at the provincial level to follow up. Importantly, the stakeholder meeting established a clear plan and set of priorities for action that the Provincial Education Officer (PEO) was able to carry out consistently. The leadership, skills and vision of the PEO at this time was commented on frequently in interviews, as was the suggestion that her retirement, along with the transfer of her immediate subordinates, had contributed to the province’s subsequent decline in performance.

The strategic plan emphasised six main elements: (i) leadership, management and supervision; (ii) teacher preparedness; (iii) assessment; (iv) supporting learners; (v) policy development and

implementation; and; and (vi) monitoring of teaching and learning (Ibid.). Interviews emphasised that these did not change the way that systems themselves functioned, but rather improved implementation and the focus on key priorities. One area that was emphasised repeatedly in interviews was the conducting of regular and robust monitoring visits to schools by both the provincial and district standards officers – enabling them to both increase oversight and knowledge of actions at the school level, but also to provide support to teachers as necessary. These were dovetailed with much more intensive assessment regimes and the setting of performance targets at the school level that allowed tracking of progress and highlighted where there were issues with learning levels (Ibid.). These included the use of mock examinations, whose results were used to target remedial instruction – particularly during term breaks. Interviewees reflecting on the potential cause of the current decline in assessment results in the province highlighted in the reduction of the frequency and standards of monitoring – emphasising that these were caused by a reduction in the resources available, a lack of focus resulting from changes in leadership and complacency following consistently strong results.

Interviewees highlighted the creation of a new institution at the district level during North Western's period of improvement. These were quarterly meetings between the PEO, DEBS, the District Education Board, PTAs, Head Teachers, councillors, traditional leaders and community based activists that discussed the district's progress in detail, highlighted the challenges that were being faced and allowed for problem solving planning. These acted as not only as a regular opportunity for the exchange of information, but also as a space in which collective action challenges could be highlighted and analysed, and solutions found. The regularity of interaction also allowed for follow up on agreed plans and so improved the level of focus at the school and district level. Though regular meetings and follow up have since been discontinued due to funding challenges, they are viewed positively by actors within North Western. They demonstrate the potential for the creation of venues for collective action that bring in external actors and allow interaction across different levels.

The example of the North Western province is also striking in that interviewees demonstrated a strong focus on solving the challenge of falling examination results, despite the constraints they emphasised in terms of reduced resources and turnover in leadership. In response to declining results and reduced resources for monitoring, emphasis has been placed on team monitoring. This allows data for a range of departments to be collected from a single visit and improves data sharing between teams within the province. These efforts have also included innovative use of technology – such as setting up a Whatsapp group for education standards officers and head teachers, including the PEO. This allows the sharing of information, challenges and initiatives in what appear to be active, open and frank exchanges, with the PEO encouraging DEBS to join the discussion, and so form a low-cost convening point for problem sharing and solving.

Interviews also highlighted that the Provincial Standards team were holding a series of one-to-one meetings with the head teachers of secondary schools within the province to discuss the recent results and related issues. The research team was able to sit in on several of these and found them to be a useful opportunity to share challenges and ideas across the different levels of the provincial education system. They also an opportunity for oversight, support and clarification of policies and processes that was mutually beneficial for the head teachers and provincial standards team. While these may not allow the level of problem solving that existed with the local fora, they do demonstrate a low cost model that could be utilised elsewhere.

The experience of the North Western province over the last decade therefore provides a strong example of the potential of local political consensus, strong and focused leadership, and the creation of problem solving and information sharing mechanisms within the education system that also draw in important actors in the community.

Sinazongwe District, Southern Province

Sinazongwe District in the Southern Province was highlighted as a strong example by interviewees at the Provincial level, having shown improvements in national assessment results over the previous three years against a backdrop of poorer performance in the Southern Province as a whole. This was viewed as a particularly striking achievement given the rural nature of the district and the remoteness of some of the schools.

As with North Western Province, interviewees highlighted the importance of strong and effective leadership – in this case from the DEBS – and there also appeared to be a strong teamwork mentality within the district education administration – with a number of younger and enthusiastic officials having been appointed in the last two years who have been able to work together effectively. Interviewees highlighted both the usage of information sharing within the district education team and the fact that focused leadership and teamwork had enabled them to significantly improve the volume and quality of monitoring and oversight, despite having only very limited resources as only a single vehicle was available for the district, despite having three Standards Officers and 145 schools to cover⁵.

The most striking element of the case was a strong focus on enforcing discipline and reducing teacher absenteeism through strengthened monitoring from the district, and tighter enforcement of existing regulations. This was achieved through a combination of ensuring DEBS sign-off on teacher absences from the district and the use of pay freezes, disciplinary transfers and a policy of making teachers work at the DEBS office to ensure teacher attendance. Interviewees have emphasised that these types of actions are all within the remit and powers of the DEBS, but that in many cases they are not implemented. In the case of Sinazongwe District, the DEBS had put effort into establishing consensus and agreement on the implementation of a strong monitoring and discipline programme, and counter-balancing it with a heightened focus on support for teachers and schools. Interviews highlighted the fact that schools were initially alarmed by the changes, but that these challenges were negotiated through an emphasis on improved monitoring as a mechanism for improving communication, uncovering the root causes of persistent problems and facilitating joint-problem solving attempt, as opposed to being only punitive. A series of meetings were also held with head teachers and teachers unions to inform them of the changes, set them in a positive light and ensure their buy-in. Setting expectations that disciplinary procedures would be implemented rigorously but fairly, and alongside support appear to have helped to achieve some degree of consensus and created the space to allow more effective implementation of discipline.

Attempts to improve discipline were also implemented together with a series of initiatives to improve conditions for teachers. The DEBS took an active role in ensuring that basic elements of administration and management of teachers ran more smoothly and rapidly – including cases for promotion and leave applications. Funds were also found to ensure that teachers received housing allowances to compensate for the poor quality of teacher housing in the district. Morale has also been maintained by supporting teachers who had been moved for disciplinary reasons – explaining the reasons for their move and trying to locate them in schools where they could be mentored and improve. There also appears to have been an enhanced focus on openness and problem solving, as well as raising morale. The DEBS wrote to all the head teachers of schools performing well in the national assessment tests and channelled additional support and monitoring to schools that were not performing so well. They have also placed a greater emphasis on using zonal schools as hubs to

⁵ These include one full boarding secondary school, two combined secondary schools, 64 primary schools, 28 community schools and 50 Early Childhood Education schools.

provide peer support and the sharing of ideas between different schools and teachers, although most support and training still occurs at the school level.

The DEBS also highlighted working with a range of partners to bring in additional resources in terms of materials, construction, pupil support and training for teachers, students and PTAs. These included NGOs and CSOs (such as World Vision, Save the Children, School Club Zambia and some churches); mining corporations engaged in corporate social responsibility endeavours and also the District Council, which has channelled funds to classroom construction from the CDF. They are also exploring options for public private partnerships with the mining companies, although these are still at an early stage.

Mufulira District, Copperbelt Province

Mufulira District was visited by the research team in order to investigate the impact of the noticeboard programme that had been implemented in ten schools. However, it is also notable for having a particularly active DEBS, who is implementing a range of interesting measures to encourage improved performance. Utilising a similar method as in Sinazongwe, the DEBS was writing letters to congratulate high performing teachers and implementing a series of recognition awards in order to improve motivation. This approach is mirrored by a mechanism to share the national assessment results of all schools within the district in order to encourage competition, apparently sparking a strong reaction amongst teachers and interest in how to improve results. Alongside these devices the DEBS had also developed a revised and detailed assessment mechanism for head teachers in the district, a mechanism that is now being adopted at the provincial level, and attempted to improve the monitoring framework and use of information at the school level. He also expressed enthusiasm for the noticeboard programme and interest in how to link it up to district level efforts to improve outcomes.

The case of Mufulira highlights again the importance of leadership at the district level, and also how information can be usefully re-packaged to improve teacher and school motivation, and the potential for the current system to adopt new ideas and mechanisms, despite the significant challenges outlined in this section.

Conclusion

The political economy of the education sector in Zambia poses a number of severe challenges for improving education outcomes, with high level political dynamics contributing to problems of resource shortages, poor classroom conditions, a lack of teacher discipline and disruption associated with rapid turnover of teachers and administrative staff. These issues both contribute to, and are compounded by, the range of principal agent, coordination and collective action problems that exist between teachers and the education administration, as well as the collective action issues that exist both within communities and between communities and schools. Despite this, there are clear examples of districts and provinces that have succeeded in improving learning outcomes. These demonstrate that collective action issues have been overcome by a combination of convening power, consensus building, the leveraging of traditional authorities and the creation of positive incentives to perform. Building on these examples and models holds the best chance for an organisation such as ZAP to have a positive impact on the Zambian education system.

Interview list

In the course of the research 52 interviews and focus groups were conducted with 63 individuals from 34 departments, regions, districts, schools and organisations. These are listed below by name, position and organisation.

Name	Position	Organisation
Grace	Programme Manager	Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED)
Mr. Frank Malama	District Education Board Secretary	Choma District, Southern Province
Mrs. Lillian Hangoma	District Education Standards Officer	Choma District, Southern Province
Mr. Rodgers Kapiololo	District Education Standards Officer	Kasempa District, North Western Province
Mr. Jonathan Hinji ESO	Education Standards Officer – Special Education	Kasempa District, North Western Province
Ms. Monica Katanga Mudambo	Education Standards Officer – Guidance and Counselling	Kasempa District, North Western Province
Mr. Fightwell Mutambo	District Education Board Secretary	Mufulira District, Copperbelt Province
Mr. Henry Mwale	District Education Standards Officer	Mufulira District, Copperbelt Province
Mr. Aiden Kambunga	District Education Board Secretary	Sinazongwe District, Southern Province
Mr. Best Mungoni	District Education Standards Officer	Sinazongwe District, Southern Province
Mr. Evans Kamwana	District Education Board Secretary	Solwezi District, North Western Province
Tania Zebroff	Education Advisor	Department for International Development (DFID)
Robert Hughes	Team Leader – Social and Human Development	Department for International Development (DFID)
Kaputo Chenga-Bwalya	Governance Adviser	Department for International Development (DFID)
Mrs. Cecilia Sakala	Director	Directorate of Standards and Curriculum (DSC) – MOGE
Mr. Dominic Nyambe	Principal Education Standards Officer	Directorate of Standards and Curriculum (DSC) – MOGE
Mr. Neroh Mwanapabu	Principal Education Officer – Education Boards	Directorate of Planning and Information (DPI) - MOGE
Mrs. Ngonya Hichelema Miyoba	Principal Education Officer – Education Boards	Directorate of Planning and Information (DPI) - MOGE
Mr. Stephan Zimba	Principal Planner – Policy and Research	Directorate of Planning and Information (DPI) - MOGE
Mr. Patrick Lufunda	Senior Planning Officer	Directorate of Planning and Information (DPI) - MOGE
Mr. Clive Bacon	Chief of Party	Fostering Accountability & Transparency (FACT) Program – Zambia
FAWEZA Team		Forum for Africa Women’s Education – Zambia (FAWEZA)
Mr. Njobvu	Deputy Head Teacher	Maamba Mine Combined School, Sinazongwe District, Southern Province
Ms. Maggie Nambeya	Head Teacher	Mufulira Primary School, Mufulira District, Copperbelt Province

Mr. Dickson Mtonga	Head Teacher	Mukinge Girls Secondary School, Kasempa District, North Western Province
Mr. Mwisa Nkwanga	Head of Mathematics Department	Mukinge Girls Secondary School, Kasempa District, North Western Province
Tukiya Malobeka	Prefect - Academic	Mukinge Girls Secondary School, Kasempa District, North Western Province
Bridget Bwalya	Student Council Representative - Academic	Mukinge Girls Secondary School, Kasempa District, North Western Province
	Head Teacher	Rodwell Mwepu Primary School, Solwezi District, North Western Province
Ms. Cristine Kadimba	Deputy Head Teacher	Rodwell Mwepu Primary School, Solwezi District, North Western Province
	Guidance Councillor	Rodwell Mwepu Primary School, Solwezi District, North Western Province
Mrs. Phannely Kayumba Nyundo	Vice Chair	District Education Board, Kasempa District, North Western Province
Mr. Habakuku Mwale	Chief Human Resources Officer	Directorate of Human Resources, MOGE
Mrs. Esther Chisuta	Training Officer	Directorate of Human Resources, MOGE
Ms. Florida Hampondela	Senior Education Standards Officer – Mathematics (Acting Provincial Education Officer)	North Western Province
Ms. Minevah Mubita	Senior Education Standards Officer – ODL	North Western Province
Mr. Christopher Kabanda	Head Teacher	Mapachi Combined School, Zambezi District, North Western Province
Mr. Milton Kambanji	Senior Education Standards Officer – ODL	North Western Province
Ms. Jauna Banda Mututa	Acting Head Teacher	Ntambo Day Secondary School
Mr. Boniface Kanema	Senior Education Standards Officer – Special Education	North Western Province
Ms. Zinnia Lindinda	Senior Education Standards Officer – Practical Subjects	North Western Province
Ms. Nosiku Mwiya	Senior Education Standards Officer – Languages	North Western Province
Mr. Joseph Mchichi	Senior Education Standards Officer – Business	North Western Province

	Studies	
Bernard Kampolombo	Provincial Statistics Officer	North Western Province
Mr. Reeves Kamwandi	Head Teacher	Kashinakji Day Secondary School
Mrs. Florence Chikalekale	Provincial Education Officer	Southern Province
Mr. Munkinyi	Provincial Education Standards Officer	Southern Province
Mr. Lubasi Sakwiba	Director – Human Resources Information and Planning	Public Service Management Division (PSMD)
Dr. Justin Lupele	Chief of Party	STEP-Up Zambia
Edwin Milambo		STEP-Up Zambia
Brenda Mwanza		STEP-Up Zambia
Mr. James Musolokoto	Provincial Organising Secretary	Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT)
Mr. Clifford Saluseke	Deputy Director	Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia (BETUZ)
Mr. Martin Bwembya		Professional Teachers Union (PTU)
Linda Johansson	Education Officer	UNICEF
Ms. Alice Mafuleka	Programme Manager – Governance	Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO)
Mr. Moses Ngulube	Southern Africa Social Accountability Lead	World Vision Zambia
Ms. Matridah Mukombo	Child Health	World Vision – Choma District, Southern Province
Ms. Grace Manyonga	Executive Director	Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC)
Mr. Joe Kanyika	Technical Assistance Manager and Deputy Team Leader	Education Sector Budget Support Programme in Zambia (ZESSTA) – British Council
Mr. Misheck Mutamba	Monitoring and Evaluation Manager	Zambia Open Community School (ZOCS)
Ms. Cleopatra Muma	Programme Administrative Manager	Zambia Open Community School (ZOCS)
Mr. Kamutumwa	Director	Directorate of Teacher Education and Specialised Services (TESS)

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