

The statistical data on the enrolment of the OVCs by gender revealed that some schools' enrolment had decreased. The recorded decrease in the enrolment was attributed to some OVCs going back to some orphanage, and community schools which offered some incentives which were not provided for in government schools. The other reason given for the decrease in the enrolment of the OVCs was the transfer of the pupils away to other schools. The difference in the enrolment of OVCs by gender was minimal and in some instances there were more girls than boys.

The minimal parity in the enrolment of the OVCs by gender is in line with the government's commitment to upholding the right of every child of school going age to have access to basic education and eliminate gender disparity in Primary and Secondary Education preferably by 2005. The 50 to 50 enrolment guidelines at Grade 1 entrance compliments other policy measures the MOE has put in place to enhance gender equity and reduce gender bias in school enrolments (MOE, 2000). Research concurs with the findings of study with regard to OVCs access to and participation in primary education after the government of Uganda withdrew school fees. The number of the vulnerable and disadvantaged children who attended primary school was reported to have doubled (Watkins, 1999).

This study agrees with Sikwibele (2003) findings that enrolments had increased in the Southern and Northern Provinces of Zambia in the first two years of free education era.

The findings of the study also established that incentives played a major role on the OVCs' return to government basic schools. Some basic schools which offered meals and uniforms to the OVCs reported that they had quite a number of children who coming to school.

A feeding programme in Bangladesh agrees with the study findings. The Bangladesh government implemented a Food for Education Programme that provided 15 to 20 Kg of Wheat every month to poor families with school children regularly attending school. In 1996 more than 1.46 million families benefited from the food programme. The Government was reported to have significantly increased enrolment and attendance and reduced drop out rates at the Primary level (<http://www.dol.gov/ilab>).

The Zambian government in its quest to embrace equity in access to primary education and achieve the UPE by 2015, introduced the school feeding programme which was meant to compliment among others the re-entry policy, scrapped school fees and introduced optional use of school uniforms at the primary level, Grades 1 to 7. The feeding program in question was reported to have been supported by USAID and WFP (<http://www.zana.gov.zm> / viewnews.cgi)

5.5 FREE EDUCATION GRANTS

The study findings established that all the 6 basic schools received the free education grants from their respective District Education Boards. The grants were among others, for buying school requisites at the primary school level. Grades 1 to 7.

Further findings on the grants revealed that the amount of money a school received was determined by the total enrolment at the school. Hence, the total amount of grants received by each school was proportionate with the school's total enrolment. The condition under which schools received the funding was in line with the free education guidelines regarding the distribution of the grants to all government and recognized community schools based on unit cost and learner population (MoE 2003).

The study findings revealed that eighty respondents were grateful to the government for the free education grants which they said contributed to many vulnerable and disadvantaged children to come back to school. Many children who had dropped out of school because their parents had failed to meet the PTA user fees and other cost sharing measures were reported to have gone back to school. The study findings concur with the results of the research findings which had been carried out in Uganda. The Universal Primary Program undertaken by the Ugandan Government which withdrew school fees resulted in the number of children who attended school to double (Watkins, A, 1999).

The study established that ninety respondents called on the government to increase the amount of the free education grants so that all the dropouts who had left school could come back. The respondents observed that the funds schools received were too inadequate to meet the operational costs precipitated by increased demand for school places in the light of the free education provision. On the other hand, the government through the MoE increased its budgetary allocation to the level of education under review.

In the recurrent costs for the period 2003 to 2007, the Lower and Middle Basic Education levels, Grades 1 to 7 were allocated 52 percent compared to the Upper Basic and University levels among others which were allocated 12 percent and 8 percent respectively (MoE, 2003).

Zambia had prioritized its budgetary allocation with a bias to Middle Basic Education, Grades 1 to 7 in its quest to achieve Universal Primary Education, one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 through offering free education. This was taking into consideration that the country's budget for the education sector had been one of the lowest in the Southern Region (MoE, 2003).

5.6 INFRASTRUCTURE

The study revealed that there was little done in terms of infrastructure development in the light of the introduction of free education at the Lower and Middle Basic Education levels, Grades 1 to 7. Eighty respondents reported that schools in their communities had children of the school going age who could not access schooling due to inadequate classroom accommodation. They disclosed that the high demand for school places due to the introduction of free education had resulted in over enrolment in schools.

The respondents further disclosed that the inadequate classroom accommodation had led 4 pupils to occupy a desk which was designed for 2. Additionally, the statistical data on the construction or rehabilitation of the classrooms obtained in the study revealed that only two basic schools had constructed 1 x 3 classrooms blocks between 2001 and 2005.

This revelation was contrary to the commitment which the government obliged to with regards to infrastructure development which was intended to back up the introduction of free education at the primary level, Grades 1 to 7 (MoE, 2003).

The findings of this study agrees with The Issue Brief 05 – 01 MoE (2005) on the classroom space inadequacy which had been created by many more children enrolling and staying in school than before the introduction of free education. The nation's classrooms were reported to be severely overcrowded with an average of 88 pupils per class.

5.7 FACTORS LIMITING ACCESS AND EQUITY

The study established that inadequate infrastructure was one of the major impediments to access primary education, Grades 1 to 7 despite the introduction of free education in 2002. The respondents at the sampled government basic schools in Lusaka district revealed that it was not possible for schools to have accommodated all the pupils who had dropped out of school as well as the Grade 1 entrant applicants due to inadequate educational infrastructure such as desks, chairs and classrooms. The respondents further disclosed that the high demand for school places was compounded by parents who were transferring their children from Community and Private schools back to the government ones.

The teachers and parents in the sampled basic schools in Chongwe district also cited inadequate educational infrastructure to have been a major factor which impeded access and equity. They attributed long distances to few schools in the

district which they said had impacted negatively on access and equity despite the people in the communities being aware of the 'free education' policy in place.

Parents were reported to have preferred taking their children to community schools near their homes to sending them away to distant government basic schools. The school going age children whose parents work in the Chalimbana farming block where farm owners refused to give away part of their farmlands for the government to construct schools were reported to have been most affected by the long distances to either a government basic or community schools.

This finding was similar to MoE (1999) who revealed that the distances boys and girls had to walk to and from school affected their participation. Further research evidence indicates that access to Universal Primary Education (in Brazil) was undermined by inadequate school infrastructure among other impediments. The country failed to accommodate the demand for the primary education (<http://www.dol.gov.ilab>).

The study also established that although wearing of school uniforms was optional, only one government basic school had 1 to 1 ratio with regard to pupils who wore school uniforms and vice versa. Hence, the organizations such as FAWEZA, CHANGES 2 and YWCA were reported to be supporting OVCs by buying them Uniforms. The school managements and the PTA also were also reported to be supporting OVCs through fundraising for their school uniforms.

This study finding agrees with Sikwibele (2003) on the abolished school uniform which some stakeholders such as the school management, parents and pupils on the ground still saw as a requirement. Ten parents respondents said that school uniform was a 'latent' factor which negatively impacted on access and equity because some main stakeholders on the ground were still 'in favour' of the school uniform.

5.8 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed free Middle Basic Education awareness, access, equity, free education grants and infrastructure among other **Discussions of the Findings**.

In chapter six the researcher will draw **Conclusions**, suggest areas for further research and present **Recommendations** of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter draws a **Conclusion**, suggests areas for further research and presents **Recommendations** of the study.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

Research studies revealed that there had been a decline in the enrolment and increase in dropout rates at the primary level, Grades 1 to 7 due to the PTA levies and other cost sharing measures demanded by the school managements in collaboration with PTAs. Hence, the government abolished PTA user fees and other cost sharing measures through a Presidential 'decree' which introduced the 'free education' policy in February 2002. It was the foregoing that prompted the undertaking of this study to determine the effects of the 'free education' policy on access and equity at the primary level, Grades 1 to 7. The study was conducted in the six selected basic schools of Lusaka and Chongwe districts in Lusaka Province.

The findings of the study revealed that the introduction of free education had a positive effect on access and equity. The quantified data in the general and OVCs enrolment in the sampled basic schools revealed that there had been

an increase in the number of school going age children participating in schools. The statistical data obtained at the sampled basic schools indicated that some children of the school going age who had dropped out of the system had since gone back to school following the removal of the PTA user fees and other cost sharing measures.

The findings of the study also established that some children did not access formal education in government basic schools despite the introduction of free education due to some other factors.

The inadequate infrastructure was a common challenge cited by all the respondents in both Lusaka and Chongwe districts. The respondents cited the upgrading of the primary schools, Grades 1 to 7 to basic schools, Grades 1 to 9 to have been one of factors which contributed to inadequate educational infrastructure such as classrooms, desks and chairs. They observed that little was done in terms of infrastructure development at all basic schools in the study. To this effect, the study established that the Upper Basic, Grades 8 to 9 in the 6 schools shared the educational infrastructure which was originally meant to accommodate primary school pupils, Grades 1 to 7. Hence, the more reason why some OVCs had failed to come back to government basic schools despite the provision of free education.

Since the study focused on the effects of the 'free education' policy on access and equity in one province, there was need to conduct further research in five provinces so that a sample representation of the national population could be obtained.

There was also need to conduct research on how communities could enhance access and equity in the light of the provision of free education at the primary level, Grades 1 to 7.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations were based on the findings and conclusions of the study. The following recommendations had been made to the Government of the Republic of Zambia, the Ministry of Education, the Policy Makers, the Researchers and Stakeholders in the education provision and delivery:

- The Government should increase its budgetary allocation to the MoE. Consequently, the MoE should allocate more funding to primary level, Grades 1 to 7 than to the other higher levels of the education system to enhance access and equity in the light of the free education provision.
- The Ministry of Education should extend the feeding programme currently taking place in selected government basic schools in two Provinces and some community schools in Lusaka province to the remaining seven Provinces. The study established that OVCs preferred Orphanages and Community Schools which offered food to some government basic schools which did not offer food.
- Parents should be sensitized that they still had a role to play in the education of their children despite the 'free education' policy in place.

- The government through the Ministry of Education should uphold the quarterly cycle disbursement of free education grants to schools in order to enhance continuity of school programmes.
- The NGOs among others, should spread their activities to all basic schools especially in rural areas and impoverished communities of peri-urban areas.
- The line Ministries, churches and corporate world should support financially and materially the cause for free education.
- The wearing of the school uniforms should be abolished. The mandate which gave PTAs to decide whether or not their schools should have school uniforms should be withdrawn.
- The Government through the Ministry of Education should allocate more money to basic schools which would address among other things infrastructural expansion.
- Schools and communities should work together in order to produce food supplements in Production Units which would enhance School Health and Nutrition programmes.

- The line Ministries such as Agriculture and Cooperatives and Health should work together with Ministry of Education in school feeding programmes.
- Parents should participate in school projects in order to supplement the Government efforts in light of free education.
- Head Teachers and Teachers should strive to give boys and girls alike equitable treatment.
- The Government through the Ministry of Education should widely reintroduce boarding schools in rural areas which would address the long distance factor.
- The Government through the Ministry of Education should construct schools close to homes of school going children.

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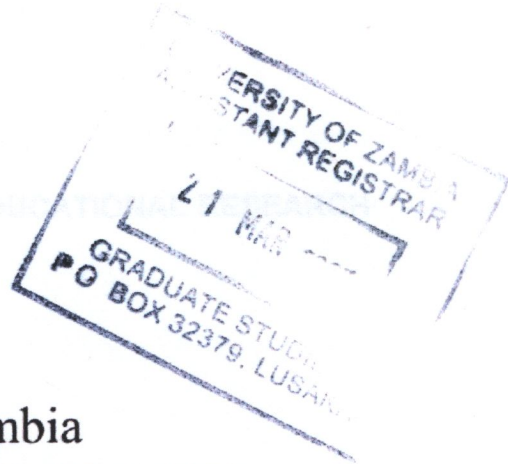
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The University of Zambia

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Telephone: 290258/291777
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E-mail: imsimukoko@yahoo.com

P O Box 32379
Lusaka, Zambia
Your Ref:
Our Ref:

21st March, 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE : LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO DO FIELD WORK; SAMWAMI
ELIZABETH NYAMBE (COMPUTER NUMBER 526001535)**

This serves to inform you that the above named student is a bonafide student of the University of Zambia doing Master of Education in Education Administration Programme. Her research proposal entitled *"Effects of Free Education Policy on Access and Equity in Lusaka and Chongwe Districts"* was approved for data collection.

Any assistance rendered to the student regarding her research and subsequent data collection will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

I. M Simukoko (Mrs.)
ACTING ASSISTANT REGISTRAR-GRADUATE STUDIES

Cc: Director -DRGS

APPENDIX 2

LETTER OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Libala Basic School

P.O. Box 320340

LUSAKA

19th September 2007

The District Education Board Secretary

Chongwe District Education Board

CHONGWE

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR A MASTERS DEGREE IN
EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia in the School of Education. The Second Part of the Degree Programme entails undertaking an Educational Research to determine the effects of the “free education” policy on access and equity in selected Basic Schools of Lusaka Urban and Chongwe Districts.

Kindly, find attached a copy of an introductory letter from the Directorate of the Graduate Studies, the University of Zambia, pertaining to the subject matter above.

I would be grateful if your good Office permits me to undertake the Research in your District.

Yours faithfully

Samwami Elizabeth Nyambe

COMPUTER NO. 526001535

APPENDIX 3

LETTER OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Libala Basic School

P.O. Box 320340

LUSAKA

28th September 2007

The District Education Board Secretary

Lusaka District Education Board

P.O. Box 50297

LUSAKA

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR A MASTERS DEGREE IN
EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia in the School of Education. The Second Part of the Degree Programme entails undertaking an Educational Research to determine the effects of the “free education” policy on access and equity in selected Basic Schools of Lusaka Urban and Chongwe Districts.

Kindly, find attached a copy of an introductory letter from the Directorate of the Graduate Studies, the University of Zambia, pertaining to the subject matter above.

I would be grateful if your good Office permits me to undertake the Research in your District.

Yours faithfully

Samwami Elizabeth Nyambe

COMPUTER NO. 526001535

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL OFFICIALS

INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondents,

I am a Postgraduate Student at the University of Zambia in the School of Education and in the Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies carrying out an educational research on the effects of the “Free Education” Policy on access and equity in your School.

You have been selected a participant on this important undertaking because of the cardinal role you play in education provision and delivery. Your participation will be treated with the strictest confidentiality possible. Hence, feel free to answer all the questions as honestly as possible. Do not write down your name on the questionnaire.

I wish to thank you most sincerely for accepting to participate in this important educational undertaking.

Yours Sincerely,

RESEARCH STUDENT

INSTRUCTIONS: The Questionnaire requires you to either tick (√) in a ☐ adjacent to your option of choice or supply a short answer by filling in the blank spaces.....

SECTION A - Demographic Information

- 1. School :.....
- 2. District :.....
- 3. Geographical Location:.....
- 4. Title of Respondents :.....

Gender of respondents

- (a) Male ☐
- (b) Female ☐

SECTION B: Access and Equity in Free Education Implementation

- 1. Does this School receive free education funds from Government for Grades 1 to 7 pupils?
 - (a) Yes, it does ☐
 - (b) No, It doesn't ☐
 - (c) I don't know ☐

2. If the answer to **question 1 is Yes**, how often does your school receive funds from Government?

(i)
.....

3. What else apart from free education funds, does the School receive from Government?

(i).....
(ii).....

4. What is the School’s position with regards to the wearing of School Uniforms between Grades 1 and 7?

(i).....

5. Do you think that the ‘free education’ policy is addressing ‘equity’ for the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) in your School?

(a) Yes ☐

(b) No ☐

6. Suggest ways in which the implementation of the ‘free education’ policy could enhance equity for OVCs in your Community.

(i).....
(ii).....
(iii).....

7. How has the ‘free education’ policy affected enrolment of pupils in your School?

- (a) Enrolment has increased ☐
- (b) Enrolment has not changed ☐
- (c) Enrolment has reduced ☐

8. If your response to **question 7 is (a)**, what has been the relationship between your School infrastructure and increased enrolment?

- (i).....
- (ii).....

9. If your response to question 7 is (b), what could be reasons for no change?

- (i).....
- (ii).....

10. What is the reduction in enrolment in your School, if response in *question 7* is (c)?

- (i).....
- (ii).....

11. If there has been an increase in enrolment, how has this affected teaching in your School?

- (i).....
- (ii).....

12. How has been the dropout rate in your School since the introduction of the “free education” policy?

(i).....

(ii).....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

APPENDIX 5

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DISTRICT
EDUCATION BOARD OFFICIALS**

SECTION A - Demographic Information

- 1. District :.....
- 2. Geographical Location:.....
- 3. Province :.....
- 4. Date of Interview :.....
- 5. Title of Respondent :.....
- 6. Gender of Respondents: Male ☐ Female ☐

**SECTION B: District Education Board Allocation of Free education and
Sector Pool Funds to Basic Schools**

- 1. Give a brief background of the “free education” policy.
.....
.....
.....

2. What do you think were the reasons for the introduction of **free education** by the Government?

.....

.....

.....

3. What role do you play in the “free education” policy implementation in your District?

.....

.....

.....

4. What are the sources for the sector pool and free education funds you allocate to basic schools in your District?

.....

.....

.....

5. How many times are funds in **question 4** made available to Basic Schools annually?

.....

.....

.....

6. Are funds adequate in terms of meeting parents' demand for school places due to free education?

(a) Yes ☐

(d) No ☐

7. Do you think that the introduction of free education is addressing the drop out problems of the OVCs in terms of access?

(e) Yes ☐

(f) No ☐

8. How often does the District Education Board release free education funds to buy among others, pens, rulers, rubbers, pens and exercise books?

.....
.....

9. Do you think that funds are adequate enough to address the equity aspect in terms of the distribution of free education items to all pupils from Grade 1 to 7?

(a) Yes ☐

(b) No ☐

10. What is the District Education Board doing in order to enroll all pupils of school going age in basic schools?

.....
.....
.....

11. How effective is the “free education” policy implementation with regards to enrolment in your District?

.....

.....

.....

12. How effective is the “free education” policy implementation with regards to fair distribution of free education resources?

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

APPENDIX 6

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

SECTION A - Demographic Information

1. Name of School :
2. Geographical Location:.....
3. District :
4. Date of Interview :
5. Gender of Respondents: Male ☐ Female ☐
6. Title of Respondent :

SECTION B: Access and Equity in Free Education Implementation

1. Is your Community aware of the existence of the “free education” policy?

(g) Yes ☐

(h) No ☐

2. At what occasion does the PTA meet parents to sensitize them on the “free education” policy?

.....

.....

3. How many times are the **meetings** named in **question 2** held per year?
-
4. In your opinion what is the perception of parents in your Community as regards to free education?
-
-
5. What role do you play in the implementation of the “free education” policy in your Community?
-
-
6. Do you think that free education is addressing the drop out factor of pupils whose parents could not pay user fees and other school requirements before the introduction of free education?
- (a) Yes ☐
- (b) No ☐
7. How effective is free education implementation in your Community with regards to access?
-
-

8. What is the relationship between enrolment and school infrastructure with regards to access in free education implementation?

.....

.....

9. Do you have access to information on free education sector pool funds that the school is entitled to?

(a) Yes ☐

(b) No ☐

10. What is your source of information to your response to **question 9**?

.....

.....

11. Does the School receive free education funds to buy among others, rulers, pencils, pens, exercise books and rubbers?

(a) Yes it does ☐

(b) No, it doesn't ☐

12. When was the last disbursement of the funds received?

.....

13. Do you think that the wearing of School Uniform, which is no longer compulsory, enhances access for the OVCs in your Community?

(a) Yes ☐

(b) No ☐

14. In your opinion, is your committee instrumental in the “free education” implementation in your Community?

.....

15. What is your comment on the distribution of the learning and teaching materials with regard to equity in your School?

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR

APPENDIX 7

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL OFFICIALS

SECTION A - Demographic Information

1. Name of School :
2. Geographical Location:.....
3. District :
4. Date of Interview :
5. Title of Respondents :
6. Gender of Respondent :

SECTION B: Access and Equity in Free Education Implementation

1. What factors do you think led to the introduction and implementation of the
"free education" policy in lower and middle basic school in 2002?
2. Do you think that your School is addressing the factors alluded to in
question1?

3. **Mention the School undertakings that are addressing the access aspect of the “free education” policy in your School?**
-
-
4. **What role do you play in making sure that the access aspect of free education is succeeding in your School?**
-
-
-
5. **What role do you play in making sure that the equity aspect of free education is succeeding in your School?**
-
-
-
6. **What role do you play in making sure that the “free education” policy is addressing access in your Community?**
-
-
-

7. Do you think that most children of school going age in your Community have access to Grades 1 up to 7?

(a) Yes ☐

(b) No ☐

8. If the response to **question 7 is No**, please give reasons

.....

.....

.....

9. Do you think that free education funds and materials given to your School are enhancing access by the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs)?

(a) Yes ☐

(b) No ☐

10. Comment on the relationship between access and infrastructure with regards to free education implementation in your School.

.....

.....

.....

11. Comment on the role being played by the parents and the community in your area with regards to their involvement in the school’s income generating ventures?

.....

.....

.....

12. Do you think that school – community partnership through various fund raising ventures is supplementing government effort in implementing the “free education” policy?

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX 8

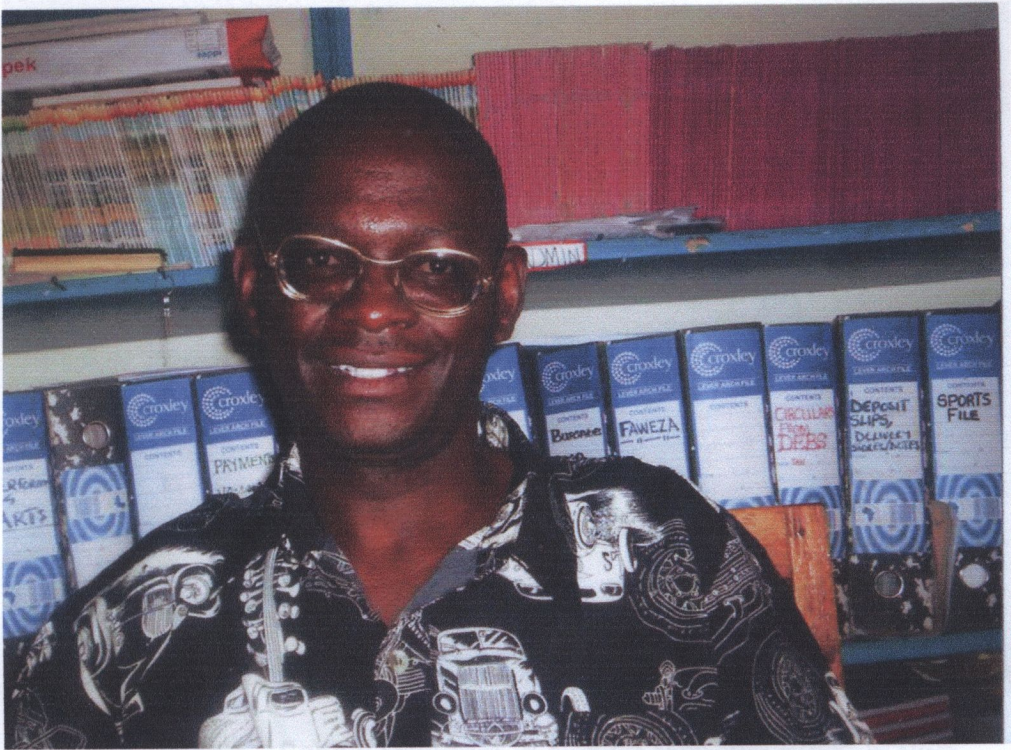
THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOME RESPONDENTS IN THE STUDY



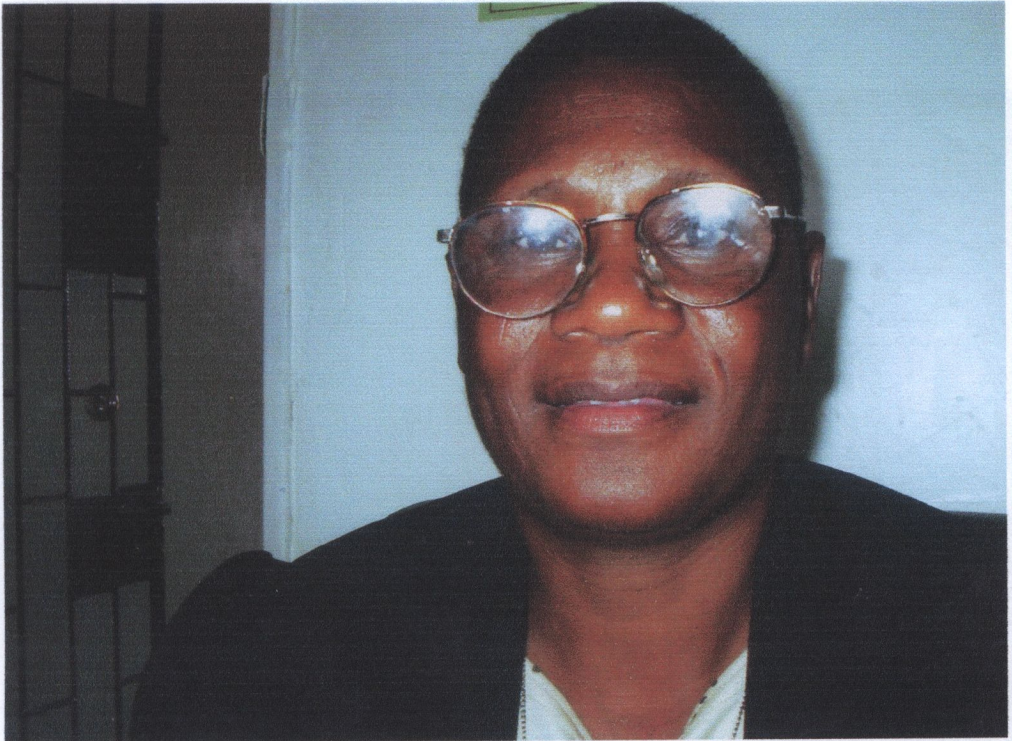
**Mrs. N. H. Mwaanga Acting District Education Board Secretary
Chongwe Education Board**



**Mrs. Jere - The District Accountant
Lusaka District Education Board**



Mr. D. Zulu - School Manager at Chinyuny Basic School



Mrs. N. Sunkutu - School Manager at Kabwata Basic School

Mr. J. Longwani - School Manager at Chilimbana Basic School



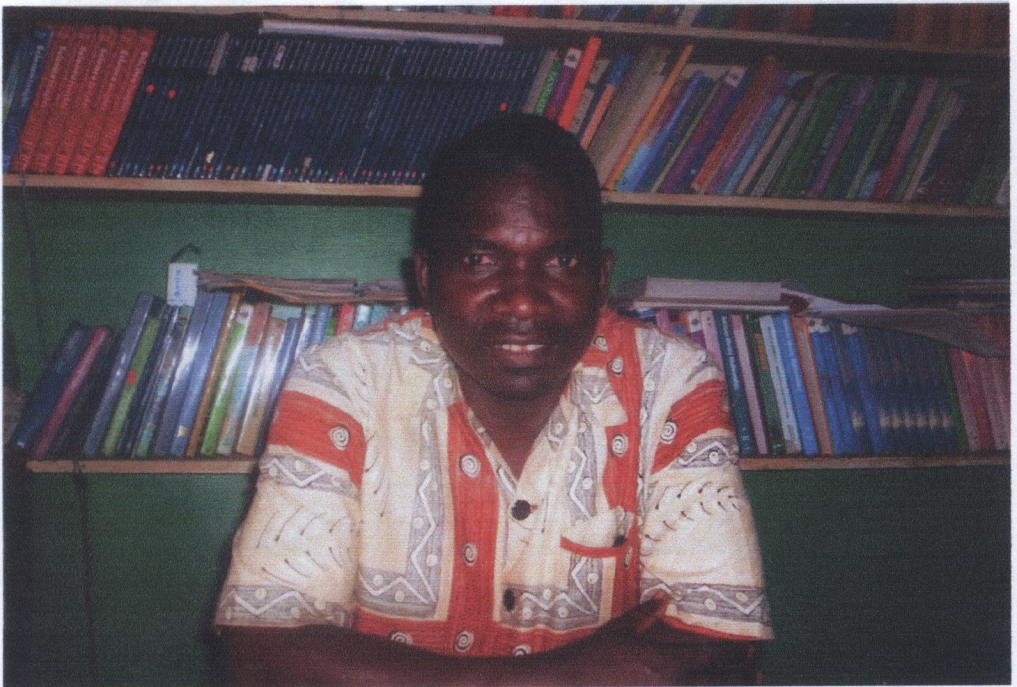
Mr. K. Mutete - School Manager at Nelson Mandela Basic School



Mr. J. Longwani - School Manager at Chilimbana Basic School



Mr. S. Simwatachela - School Manager at Lilayi Basic School



Mr. A. Siambo – Assistant School Manager at Chongwe Basic School



Pupils at Chinyunyu Basic School



Chinyunyu Basic School PTA Executive Committee Members

