

H

Cite this entry as

Mkandawire, S. B., Ilon L. (2019). Higher Education Systems and Institutions, Zambia. In: Teixeira P., Shin J. (eds) *Encyclopedia of International Higher Education Systems and Institutions*. Springer, Dordrecht

Higher Education Systems and Institutions, Zambia



Sitwe Benson Mkandawire¹ and Lynn Ilon²

¹School of Education, Department of Language and Social Sciences Education, University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia

²Bayoom Hub, Hamyool, South Korea

Higher Education System Development

The Republic of Zambia (Zambia), formerly known as Northern Rhodesia, is a landlocked country in Southern Africa, with a tropical climate. It consists of plateaus with some hills and mountains, dissected by rivers and valleys with an area of 752,614 km². The 2017 projected census indicated a population of 16,405,000 (Central Statistical Office Information 2018).

The economy of Zambia is centered on agriculture, mining, manufacturing, industry, commerce, trade, tourism, and transportation. Among the most important natural resources in Zambia include minerals such as uranium, cobalt, zinc, lead, coal, emeralds, gold, silver, and copper, which ranked Zambia on the fifth largest producer in the world (Masaiti and Mwale 2017, p. 468). Hydroelectric power, fertile land, wildlife, forests, abundant surface and ground water are other important natural resources of Zambia.

Zambia's general education system follows a five-tier hierarchy: early childhood education,

primary school, junior secondary, senior secondary, and tertiary or higher education (Mkandawire 2017).

Higher education refers to any structured and systematized learning that takes place in formal learning institutions that award certificates, diplomas, and degrees acquired after secondary or high school, to further one's education. Higher education includes universities, colleges, institutes, trades, seminaries, and specialized job training institutions.

The development of higher education in Zambia started in the early 1900s. Institutions like Barotse-Mongu trades that trained specialized skills such as construction, poultry, and clerk started in 1907. In 1915, Mabel Shaw formed a skills training institution for women and soon after established a Girls Boarding School in Mbereshi-Zambia (Hughes 2013). More trade institutions such as Mpandala, Lukasha, Hodgson, and Chalimbana were established in subsequent years. Soon after Zambia's independence, some of the trade institutions were closed while others continued with an introduction of more higher institutions like colleges and universities.

Before and during Zambia's independence in 1964, Zambia had no university and there were 138 graduates trained from universities outside the country (Chondoka 2007). This situation prompted the need for establishing a university, a goal it achieved a year later, (Masaiti and Mwale 2017). The University of Zambia reported that

“the University of Zambia (UNZA) is the oldest public university in the country that was established in 1965 by Act No. 66 of 1965” (University of Zambia 2017, p. ix). Twenty-two years later, Copperbelt University was established by Act of 1987, followed by Mulungushi University (2008). Kwame Nkrumah, Mukuba, and Chalimbana colleges were upgraded by government into universities between 2010 and 2014. Private universities and more colleges were also developing alongside public ones to complement each other. In 2018, Higher Education Authority of Zambia website (Higher Education Authority Zambia n.d.) indicated that there were six registered public universities and sixty registered private universities in Zambia mainly established between 2005 and 2018. Numbers of students and gender balances for universities whose data is available is presented in Table 1 below.

In the last few years, enrolment levels have grown across higher learning institutions in Zambia. For instance, from 310 students in 1966, numbers of students at UNZA increased to 4,266 students by 1973 (Manchishi and Hamweete 2017). By 2010, UNZA alone had about 16,200 students. In 2012 and 2013, there were 19,548 and 20,733 students, respectively. In 2014 and 2015, numbers increased by about 2,700 students and by 2016/2017, UNZA recorded a total of 24,676 students. This increase in student numbers is likely to reflect the trend across tertiary institutions in Zambia.

Higher Education Governance

The higher education system in Zambia is guided by legislative acts of parliament, national policy documents, and specific institutional strategic plans. For instance, there is the Higher Education Act of 2013, Technical Education, Vocation, and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) Amendment Act of 2005, University Act no. 11 of 1999 and Zambia Statutory Instrument no. 43 of 1993. Act no. 26 of 1992, the 1987 university Act, the 1979 new act and Act no. 66 of 1965. National policy documents such as the Seventh National Development Plan 2017–2021 (GRZ 2018),

Sixth National Development plan 2011–2015 (GRZ 2013), Educating Our Future (MoE 2011) are among the legal documents that guide higher education. Some institutions such as UNZA have specific strategic plans to guide them on what to do in a period of time. The Acts of Parliaments and National policy documents provide legal guidance and framework on higher education.

In 2015, the state established a Higher Education Authority (HEA), body under Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013, to provide quality assurance, registration of private institutions, and regulation of both public and private institutions. The HEA acts as an advisory unit to higher institutions and therefore, requires that every higher institution registers their programmes and curricula for accreditation (Hampwaye and Mweemba 2012).

Higher learning institutions in Zambia especially universities are autonomous as they have freedom of choice and action, select their own staff and students, determine their own curriculum, and can review courses anytime to meet societal needs. Higher learning institutions also market their own programmes to the international and local communities. This autonomy and self-accountability is more prominent in private institutions that fund themselves. The autonomy of public institutions is limited in some areas such as financing because they are funded and owned by the state.

Higher learning institutions in Zambia are managed by various administrative- and academic-related positions. Universities are normally headed by a chancellor who runs the institution with help from the Vice Chancellor, Registrar, deans, heads of departments, units, and academic staff. Colleges, trades, and institutes are usually headed by a principal, director, or manager.

Finance/Funding Systems

The funding of higher education system in Zambia is dependent on the nature of the institution. Public institutions are funded in percentages by government through Ministry of Higher

Higher Education Systems and Institutions, Zambia, Table 1 Student enrolment by gender and university institution

| Description | Type of institution | Male | Female | Total |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| University of Zambia | Public | 13,406 | 11,270 | 24,676 |
| Copperbelt University | Public | 8,010 | 3,650 | 11,660 |
| Kwame Nkrumah | Public | 4,710 | 4,173 | 8,883 |
| Mulungushi University | Public | 2,644 | 2,107 | 4,751 |
| Chalimbana University | Public | 1,442 | 3,279 | 4,721 |
| Mukuba University | Public | 1,023 | 1,320 | 2,343 |
| <i>Total</i> | Public | <i>31,235</i> | <i>25,799</i> | <i>57,034</i> |
| <i>Percent</i> | Public | <i>55%</i> | <i>45%</i> | |
| Lusaka Apex University | Private | 2,834 | 4299 | 7,133 |
| University of Lusaka | Private | 3,454 | 3,295 | 6,749 |
| DMI St. Eugene University – Chibombo | Private | 2,402 | 1,955 | 4,357 |
| Rusangu University | Private | 2,052 | 2,027 | 4,079 |
| Zambian Open University | Private | 1,595 | 1,925 | 3,520 |
| Cavendish University Zambia | Private | 1,579 | 1,270 | 2,849 |
| Chreso University | Private | 636 | 970 | 1,606 |
| LIUTEB | Private | 766 | 707 | 1,473 |
| Northrise University | Private | 434 | 291 | 725 |
| Zambia Catholic University | Private | 288 | 419 | 707 |
| City University of S&T | Private | 371 | 159 | 530 |
| DMI St. Eugene University – Chipata | Private | 250 | 180 | 430 |
| Africa Research University | Private | 183 | 98 | 281 |
| DMI St. Eugene University – Woodlands | Private | 102 | 109 | 211 |
| Trans-Africa University | Private | 132 | 60 | 192 |
| Evangelical University | Private | 28 | 28 | 56 |
| Southern Valley University | Private | 17 | 9 | 26 |
| African Christian University | Private | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| <i>Average</i> | Private | <i>952</i> | <i>989</i> | <i>1941</i> |
| <i>Percent</i> | Private | <i>49%</i> | <i>51%</i> | |

Source: Masaiti and Simuyaba (2018, p. 105) cited from 2016/2017 HOHE Annual Higher Education Census

Education supplemented by tuition and user fees and other institutional initiatives. Private institutions are funded by shareholders complemented by student's tuition fees, boarding, accommodation fees, and other institutional initiatives as outlined in the 1996 higher education financing policy. Masaiti and Mwale (2017) indicated that parastatal companies such as Zambia State Insurance Corporation and Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines also sponsor selected colleges with specialized courses. Faith-based institutions are sponsored by their religion.

Historically, higher education in Zambia has not been well funded and as a result, has experienced several challenges. Table 2, below, reflects

allocation to public universities based on education budgets between 2004 and 2011.

The Ministry of Higher Education budget of 2015 and 2016 allocated ZMK 1,183,502,640 and ZMK 939,723,144, respectively which translated to about \$107,591,149 and \$85,429,376, respectively which is not adequate to cover the costs of running the six public universities.

Academic Profession, Students, Administrative staff

The majority of staff and students employed in higher learning institutions in the country are

Higher Education Systems and Institutions, Zambia, Table 2 Funding for public universities from 2004 to 2011

| Year | Education budget US\$ (000) | Universities allocation US\$ (000) | (%) universities allocation | Growth over previous year (%) |
|------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2004 | \$225,500 | \$9,922 | 4.4 | |
| 2005 | \$180,000 | \$10,800 | 6.0 | 9 |
| 2006 | \$202,000 | \$12,120 | 6.0 | 12 |
| 2007 | \$419,000 | \$50,280 | 12.0 | 315 |
| 2008 | \$460,000 | \$55,660 | 12.1 | 11 |
| 2009 | \$617,000 | \$63,551 | 10.3 | 14 |
| 2010 | \$900,000 | \$86,400 | 9.6 | 36 |
| 2011 | \$1,080,000 | \$96,120 | 8.9 | 11 |

Source: Ministry of Education, AWPBs 2004–2011

Zambians. The staff and students constitute about 95% of the population. The remaining 5% are expatriate staff and international students from neighboring African countries and the globe.

Most tertiary students in Zambia are enrolled in undergraduate programmes. For example, by December 2018, there were about 18,969 students enrolled in the School of Education, Law, Institute of Distance Education, and Humanities and Social Sciences at UNZA. About 6,500 were enrolled in natural sciences, health sciences and medicine related fields. Furthermore, about 2,688 students were pursuing postgraduate-related studies such as masters and doctorate. Health Sciences, Medicine and Law usually have smaller numbers of students (Hampwaye and Mweemba 2012). Gender disparity in student population is not significant in the last 5–10 years. Males and females are roughly the same percentage with a slight increase in females in some institutions.

Other Main Issues

In most institutions, courses are evaluated and updated every after five years. New programmes and courses are developed whenever there is a need in the society as part of curriculum innovation, and this is subject to availability of teaching space and staff.

The introduction of Higher Education Authority and Zambia Qualification Authority bodies was designed to enhance quality assurances across institutions. Currently, some higher

learning institutions have internal and external quality assurance systems normally created by institutions themselves. For instance, colleges that are affiliated to University of Zambia, Copperbelt University, and other universities are monitored every year in terms of staff qualification, syllabus coverage, quality of marking, learning environment, moderation of examination question papers, and students marked scripts among others. Other universities on the other hand, have their own internal mechanisms in place. For instance, the University of Zambia have employees to deal with quality assurance issues who check for student lecturer ratio, number of courses a professor can teach in a year and other quality measures indicators.

References

- Central Statistical Office Information, Research and Dissemination Division. 2018. *Zambia in figures, 2018*. Lusaka. <http://www.zamstats.gov.zm/phocadownload/Dissemination/Zambia%20in%20Figure%202018.pdf>
- Chondoka, Y.A. 2007. Remembering pioneers in University education: An exploratory study of the Zambian University graduates before political independence, 1964. In *Zambia forty years after independence 1964–2004*, ed. Y.A. Chondoka, B.J. Phiri, and C.M. Chabatama. Lusaka: History Department, University of Zambia.
- Hampwaye, G., and L. Mweemba. 2012. *A profile of higher education in Southern Africa: Chapter 15, Zambia*, volume 2: Country profiles, 105–113. Wits: Southern African Regional Universities Association. <http://docplayer.net/64006151-Compiled-by-godfrey-hampwaye-and-liberty-mweemba.html>.

- Higher Education Act (the), No. 4 of 2013. National Assembly of Zambia. 13 Feb 2013.
- Higher Education Authority Zambia. n.d. Higher Education Authority. <http://www.hea.org.zm/index.php>
- Hughes, R.C. 2013. The legacy of Mabel Shaw. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 37 (2): 105–108.
- Manchishi, P.C., and W. Hamweete. 2017. Education in the first Republic: Rationale and focus. In *Education in Zambia at 50 years of independence and beyond*, ed. G. Masaiti. Lusaka: Unzapress.
- Masaiti, G., and N. Mwale. 2017. University of Zambia: Contextualizing and contribution to flagship status in Zambia. In *Flagship universities in Africa*, ed. D. Teferra, 467–505. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Masaiti, G., and E. Simuyaba. 2018. University education in Zambia in the face of Austerity: History, trends and financing. In *Education in Zambia at 50 years of independence and beyond*, ed. G. Masaiti. Lusaka: Unzapress.
- Ministry of Education (MoE). 2011. *Recurrent budget estimates*. Lusaka: Government Printers.
- Mkandawire, S.B. 2017. Familiar language based instruction versus unfamiliar language for the teaching of reading and writing skills: A focus on Zambian languages and English at two primary schools in Lusaka. *Zambian Journal of Language Studies* 1 (1): 53–82. ISSN: 2415-668X.
- University of Zambia (the). 2017. *The UNZA graduation directory from 1966 to 2016*. Lusaka: Unzapress.