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**TEN YEARS AFTER JOMTIEN: ZAMBIA'S PROGRESS
TOWARDS EDUCATION FOR ALL.**

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BY

**PROFESSOR GEOFFREY LUNGWANGWA
DIRECTOR, RESEARCH and POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA**

E.mail DirectorPostgrad@Postgrad.unza.zm

Tel 260 1 250560 (H) and 260 1 290258

Cell 260 96 434730

BACKGROUND

Like many countries in the sub-Saharan region, Zambia entered the 1990's with a major crisis in its basic education. The indicators were:

Per pupil expenditure at primary school stood at \$17 compared to \$36 in 1985¹; per capita expenditure across the different levels of the educational system was highly disproportional being \$17 on a primary school pupil, \$117 on a secondary school student and \$2,566 on a university student²; 95% of the public expenditure on primary education was for personal emoluments and no public funding went to textbooks and other education materials;³ 250,000 primary school age children were not attending school and 32,000 children could not find places in Grade 1;⁴ rundown infrastructure, lack of desks, chairs and tables were the characteristics of many schools; teachers had reached the lowest motivation levels because of poor conditions of service; many children learnt while seated on the floor; the illiteracy level stood at 25% while female illiteracy rate was 33% and in the rural areas the illiteracy level was 60%;⁵ many marginalized children especially the disabled, girls and those living in remote rural areas had difficulties gaining access to school and if they did, they experienced high dropout rate.

The state of basic education at the beginning of the last decade can be summarized in two words namely *STAGNATION* and *DETERIORATION*. It had the following characteristics:

- diminishing education opportunities especially among disadvantaged children
- dilapidation in education infrastructure
- low quality of education
- loss of confidence in the value of education among parents and communities
- overcrowded classrooms in the urban schools and
- low political will towards education

It is against such a grim condition of basic education that Zambia's progress towards Education For All (EFA) should be assessed. The critical question is whether significant development has been made in reversing the negative trends in basic education in the last ten years? The World Conference on Education for All declaration provided hope for the revitalization of the basic education sector in the country.

¹ Mwikisa, C.N. and Lungwangwa, G. (1998) *Education Indicators, Costs, and Factors Associated with Primary School Effectiveness in Zambia, a Report for the Ministry of Education Table 3.8.1 p. 20* also see Kelly M.J. (1998) *Primary Education in a Heavily Indebted Poor Country: The Case of Zambia in the 1990s. A Report for OXFAM and UNICEF, Lusaka, p.viii.*

² Mwikisa and Lungwangwa (1998) *Ibid*

³ Kelly, M.J. (1991) *Education in a Declining Economy. The Case of Zambia 1975 – 1985 EDI Development Policy Case Series. Analytical Case Studies. No.8. Washington D.C. The World Bank.*

⁴ Kelly, M.J. ed. (1991) *National Conference on Education For All: Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward for Zambia, Volume 1. Conference Report. Also see Lungwangwa, G. (1991) Turning Off the Tap of Illiteracy: Policies and Strategies to Improve the Quality of Basic Education in Zambia in M. J. Kelly ed. (1991) National Conference on Education For All: Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward for Zambia, Volume 11. Conference Papers.*

⁵ Central Statistics Office (1991). *1990 Census of Population, Housing and Agriculture (Lusaka, CSO.)*

THE JOMTIEN EFA CONFERENCE

The EFA conference in Jomtien, set the stage for a world wide action to realize basic education for all individuals. Six Education For All goals and targets were set in the Jomtien declaration⁶ namely:

- *Expansion of early childhood care and developmental activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children;*
- *Universal access to, and completion of, primary (or whatever higher level of education is considered as basic) by the year 2000;*
- *Improvement of learning achievement such that an agreed percentage of a cohort (e.g. 80 per cent of 14 year olds) attains or surpasses a defined level of necessary learning achievement;*
- *Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate to say one half its 1990 level by the year 2000, with emphasis on female literacy, to significantly reduce the current disparity between male and female illiteracy rates;*
- *Expansion of provision of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults, with programme effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural change and impact on health, employment and productivity;*
- *Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sound and sustainable development, made available through all education channels including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication, and social action, with effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural change.*⁶

INTERPRETATION OF THE JOMTIEN VISION

Zambia participated in the World Conference on Education For All. The major concern after the conference was to understand what the Jomtien vision meant for the country and take steps to operationalize it into workable goals and strategies. More importantly, it was necessary to articulate the fundamental educational values from the vision and explain them to the political leaders whose commitment and support was extremely necessary for the success of the EFA vision.

In Zambia, the Jomtien Conference was understood as rooted in fundamental values about the basic human rights of every individual. These values included:

- (i) justice, equity and fairness to all individuals;
- (ii) obligation of the society to the educational needs of all its people;
- (iii) the right of all people everywhere to basic education as a fundamental human right;
- (iv) fair and equitable treatment of all learners – infants, children, youth and adults;
- (v) establishment of better learning environments;
- (vi) promotion of learning achievement as a significant measure of real education opportunities and
- (vii) education as a basis for better living of individuals and communities.

⁶ World Declaration on Education For All and Framework For action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, World Conference on Education for All 5-9 March 1990 Jomtien Thailand.

These were the deeply held values and principles embracing the global consensus on the vision of improving opportunities for basic education and raising the level of educational performance in all countries.

It was further understood that included in the broad vision of Jomtien were such considerations as:

- the importance of political will and commitment to the goal of education for all;
- attending to cost-effectiveness and improved efficiency in the educational system;
- promoting local empowerment and community action in educational provision;
- partnership in the development of education with all stakeholders;
- attention to girls' education and the education of disadvantaged groups;
- paying special attention to the training of teachers and improving their terms and conditions of service;
- making provision for child care and development, and
- allowing for private and voluntary funding sources for education.

Put simply, the Jomtien vision was understood to be better learning opportunities and outcomes in basic education programmes for all individuals in the country. Basic education programmes included early childhood education, primary education, non-formal education for out of school youth and adult literacy programmes. This was the Education For All package.

ZAMBIA'S EDUCATION FOR ALL GOALS

The goals set in 1990 that were to be realized by the year 2000 included the following:

- *increasing gross enrollment ratio of children in pre-schools from 2% in 1990 to 25% by the year 2000 with emphasis on the urban poor, children in rural areas and the disabled children;*
- *raising the proportion of trained pre-school care givers from 25% to 60% by 2000;*
- *creating 1.2 million additional primary school places by the year 2000 in order to enable all primary school age children estimated at 2.4 million by 2000 to be in school;*
- *raising the output from colleges of trained teachers to 4,400 annually or an annual addition of 2,700 teachers over the 1990 level;*
- *marginalised groups such as girls, street children, the disabled, the urban poor and children in remote rural areas to be enrolled, retained and helped to complete the equivalent of a 7 year primary cycle;*
- *reduction of adult illiteracy from 25% as reported in the 1990 Census to 12% by the year 2000;*
- *reduction of female illiteracy from 33% in 1990 to 12% by the year 2000;*
- *all illiterate 11-15 year old out of school children to be enrolled in learning opportunities programmes;*
- *marginalized groups such as disabled rural women and girls to have improved access to functional literacy;*
- *at least 80% of 14 year-olds beginning school at age 7, to achieve or surpass the competencies defined for grade 7 by the year 2000⁷.*

⁷ For detailed discussion of the EFA goals and strategies see Kelly, M.J. ed. (1992) National Conference on Education For All Vol. 1

Three major principles⁸ captured the underlining spirit of Jomtien's EFA objectives in Zambia. The first was quantity, which emphasized commitment to universal provision of opportunities for a defined minimum level of education. Although this principle was centrally concerned with opportunities for the school-age population, it also embraced provision for the adult population, which in the earlier years did not have access to such opportunities.

The second principle was equity, which emphasized the need to ensure that the distribution and utilization of opportunities in education would be fairly targeted in order to reach the disadvantaged groups in society. This called for specific measures and explicit strategies in favour of groups that had not been able to fully participate in the education process.

The third principle was achievement, which emphasized the need to focus on well-defined learning achievements as a major outcome of the education process. This principle was linked with relevance, effectiveness and efficiency which together help to define quality in the process of education.

Zambia adopted the linear approach to EFA, which assumed that a combination of quantitative, equitable and qualitative development of the existing basic education system would help in achieving education for all. There was no attention given to possible threats to the achievement of the EFA goals. In particular, no consideration was given to the type of socio-economic environment, which was conducive to the achievement of the EFA goals. The approach was a narrow focus on systemic or education specific factors, which were taken as important in achieving EFA.

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION FOR ALL SINCE 1990

(a) THE CONTEXT

In 1991 Zambia experienced a major political change comparable only to that of political independence in 1964. This was the transition from a one party state to a multi-party system of political governance. The political change was accompanied by major changes in

⁸ The principles are taken from *Three Years after Jomtien EFA in the Eastern and Southern African region* by C. Wright and R Govinda. A report of a seminar on Education For All Organized in Kampala, Uganda, 21- 23 September 1993.

economic, social and political policies. Liberalisation and privatisation of the economy became the guiding national policy framework for the new government after 1991. In the social sectors, the new policy framework has involved elimination of state subsidies and free social services and a greater demand for cost sharing. Liberalisation and privatisation also created an environment in which individuals and other agencies could participate as equal partners in various sectors including education.

The political and economic policy shift in the country brought new international relationships. Economically, the country strictly adhered to the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) dictates of the World Bank and the IMF. Measures like budget balancing, meeting debt servicing schedules, and adherence to financial discipline through cash budgets became the center of macro-economic policies. Some of these economic measures affected the government's ability to mobilize financial resources for investments in social sectors like education. In some cases the conditions of the Structural Adjustment Program resulted in deep cuts in the education budgets.

The country's economy has not been stable over the ten years since 1991. The local currency the Kwacha has depreciated considerably against other currencies. In 1991 the exchange rate of the Kwacha to one United States dollar was 1:90. In July 2001, the exchange rate between the two currencies stands at 1:3,500. The liberalisation and privatisation of the economy has been accompanied by retrenchments of the workforce and employment prospects have not risen.

Some of the social impact of the economic policy environment created after 1991 were: increases in unemployment levels, sharp decline in real incomes for the rural dwellers because of drastic reductions in their productivity, sharp rises in poverty levels because lack of prospects for income generation, inability of households to meet rising cost of health, education and other services, increase in de-motivation levels among public service workers because of poor conditions of service. These and other factors have affected the country's progress towards Education For All.

(b) *SOME ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE EFA DECADE*

There are some achievements, which the country made in the area of Education For All. These achievements can, however, be described as tangential to the goals of EFA and they include policy formulation, attention to the education of girls and other marginalized children, broadening participation in education provision, professional improvement of the teachers and partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Co-operating Partners and development of the capacity for research and analysis.

(i) *POLICY FORMULATION*

Major education policy developments have taken place since 1991. Immediately after the change of government, a new education policy entitled *Focus on Learning approved by Cabinet* in 1992. Focus on Learning was initiated by the Education For ALL Task force, which spearheaded development towards EFA. The goal of the new education policy was improving access, equity, efficiency and quality of education through: rehabilitation of school

infrastructures, construction of new schools, training of education managers, and procurement and supply of education materials to schools⁹.

A major outcome of *Focus on Learning* policy was the Zambia Education Rehabilitation Project (ZERP), which started in 1993 and ended in 1998. ZERP was established to assist the Ministry of Education to rehabilitate old schools, to revitalize the quality of education, to increase access and to improve the management of human, financial and material resources in primary schools. Under ZERP, twenty primary schools were constructed in the peri-urban areas of Lusaka, Kitwe and Ndola, more than 4,000 education managers were trained in education management, the Examination Council was supplied with Computers and training of personnel in their use to facilitate processing of examinations, gender issues were incorporated in the school curriculum and significant efforts were made in procuring and distribution of education materials to schools.

Another policy development was the publication of the national education policy entitled *Educating Our future* in May 1996¹⁰. *Educating Our Future* created a path for educational development, which is in line with the country's political, economic and social direction. The benchmarks of the new education policy are decentralisation, partnership, equity, efficiency, quality, democratisation and effectiveness.

Educating Our Future has set new frameworks for developing the national educational system. Basic education has been defined to mean the first nine years of school. Every child is expected to have access to nine years basic education by the year 2015. In the interim, 2005 was set as the year for achieving universal primary education. Quantitative expansion in the basic education system is to be accompanied by increases in the number of teachers from the teachers training colleges.

A major outcome of *Educating Our Future* has been the current policy development directed at adopting a sector approach to the development of basic education through *the Basic Education Sub Sector Investment Program* (BESSIP). BESSIP aims at increasing access, decentralising the educational system, building capacity in the educational system, raising equity, developing better partnership and improving quality and coordination in basic education. The objectives of BESSIP are:

- (a) To expand access at grade 1 – 7 level and reverse the decline in enrolments in order to increase enrolment of eligible children by the year 2005. For the BESSIP period (1999 – 2002) the target number of places to be created are 275,000.
- (b) To continue to improve access to and quality of Upper Basic (grades 8 – 9) to achieve 100% enrolment by 2015.
- (c) To provide a wide range of learning opportunities in order to broaden access to education.
- (d) To enhance the quality and relevance of Basic Education by improving pre-service and In-service teachers' education and reviewing curriculum to empower children with literacy, numeracy, life skills and attributes that will enable them to participate fully in personal, community and national development as well as effectively manage the challenges of life.

⁹ See Ministry of Education (1992) *Focus on Learning* (Lusaka, Ministry of Education)

¹⁰ Ministry of Education (1996) *Educating Our Future: National Policy on Education* (Lusaka: Ministry Of Education)

- (e) To improve the supply of education materials, and in particular to attain a pupil/textbook ratio of 2:1 by the year 2005.
- (f) To provide training opportunities for effective teaching and management of the new enrolment targets.
- (g) To provide sufficient infrastructure and school furniture to accommodate enrolment targets.
- (h) To eliminate imbalances by achieving parity in gender and urban/ rural enrolments and by ensuring enrolment of the poor and children with special needs.
- (i) To improve the nutrition and health status of Basic Education pupils.
- (j) To provide an enabling institutional framework for efficient and effective management of education at all levels.
- (k) To create accountable and transparent systems for financial management and procurements.
- (l) To create comprehensive and responsive management information systems for informed decision - making¹¹.

The objectives of BESSIP are expected to be achieved through such priority components as overall management; infrastructure; teacher development, deployment and compensation; education materials/procurement; equity and gender and school health and nutrition¹².

(i) *BROADENED PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION PROVISION*

The legacy of educational provision adopted after independence and which was followed up to the 1980s was government control. However, the policy of liberalisation, which was strictly followed after 1991, opened avenues for other agencies to participate in educational provision. Since 1991 there has been broadened participation in educational provision. Those providing primary education include the government, communities, individuals, religious organisations and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

There has been an observable growth in the number of private schools from 20 in 1990 to 63 in 1996 and 92 by 1999¹³. A new development in primary education has been the emergence of community schools in mid 1990s, which are run on voluntary basis by the communities and NGOs. The number of these schools has risen from 55 in 1996 to 416 in 2000¹⁴. The new book policy has liberalised the education materials market in such a way that several private publishing companies are now competing for the supply of books and education materials to schools. The educational system has over the past ten years become diverse giving alternative paths of access to educational opportunities. The government is no longer the only actor.

¹¹ Ministry of Education (1998) Zambia Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) Logframe, PIP, and Programme Costs (Lusaka: Ministry of Education) p.2

¹² Ministry of Education (1999) BESSIP Semi Annual Review Report

¹³ Lungwangwa, G. (1993) Private Entrepreneurs in Zambia's Primary Education. A Research Report Prepared for the Ministry of Education (Study Fund, Lusaka) Also see Ministry of Education (2000) Trends in Primary Education 1996 – 1999(Ministry of Education Planning Unit, Lusaka)

¹⁴ Ministry of Education (1999) Education For All Assessment (Ministry of Education, Lusaka). See Zambia Community Schools Secretariat (ZCSS) (2,000) Community Schools in Zambia Provincial Statistics 1999 and 2,000.

(ii) TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Major efforts have been made since 1990 in initiatives directed at the professional development of teachers in the country. Among the noticeable developments was the establishment of the Teacher Education Department (TED) whose mandate is to spearhead the development of teachers. Some of the activities carried out by TED since its formation were accelerating the development of teachers nation wide through in-service and pre-service training programmes and redeployment of teachers, elimination of ghosts and decentralisation of the teachers' payroll.

The specific programmes established for teachers have included the Zambia Teacher Education Reform Programme (ZATERP), In- Service Education For Teachers (INSET) through school based and Resource Centre-based Training System (SPRINT), establishment of the teachers' diploma through Distance Learning; development of teacher deployment norms and compensation criteria; introduction of competence-based testing at Grade 4 level, sensitisation of teachers on HIV/AIDS, formalisation of the Zambia Reading Programme directed at initial literacy in the mother tongue and the professional enhancement of college lecturers through advanced training at degree level like the B. Ed. Programmes at Mongu Teacher Training College and the University of Zambia.

(iii) CURRICULUM REFORM

Significant efforts have been made in the last ten years to reform the school curriculum. The Curriculum Development Center has come up with Curriculum Framework aimed at establishing a core curriculum and combined with a localised component. The localised component is directed at adapting what is taught in school to local environment thereby making education more relevant, flexible and adapted to the lives of the learners. Life skills and HIV/AIDS issues have been integrated in the school curriculum from Grade 1. The local Zambian languages have been re-introduced as medium of instruction from Grade 1 to 4 in order to facilitate acquisition of initial literacy. The school curriculum places high priority to the development of literacy, numeracy and life skills. The curriculum could in fact be defined as outcome based because its underlining objective is "to improve teaching and learning outcomes through a school curriculum with flexible methodologies and increase emphasis on core skills"¹⁵ Teachers are expected to carryout school-based continuous assessment.

(iv) ENHANCED DONOR INVOLVEMENT

Experiences in basic education show that Donor agencies have continued to play a major role in funding education. Given that 98% of the public allocations to primary education is for personnel emoluments¹⁶, the resources needed for capital expenditure such as infrastructure construction and rehabilitation of buildings have mainly come from donor agencies. In the past this funding has been in form of education projects. However, with establishment of BESSIP, some of the money from donors is channeled directly to the pool. To illustrate the role played by donors in funding basic education, out of \$63, 716,146 budgeted for BESSIP

¹⁵ Ministry of Education (2000) BESSIP Annual Work Plan and Budget January – December 2001 p.83.

¹⁶ Ministry of Education (1999) Education For All Assessment p.44.

in 2001 only \$1,520,000 will come from the Government. The bulk of funding for BESSIP is largely through Donor support.¹⁷

(v) *EDUCATION OF GIRLS AND OTHER MARGINALISED CHILDREN*

The past ten years have seen concerted efforts to address the education opportunities of girls and other marginalised children. In the middle of the decade, the Programme for the Advancement of Girls Education within the Ministry of Education and the Forum for Women Educationists Zambia chapter (FAWEZA) were launched. Major sensitization campaigns have taken place through the activities of PAGE and FAWEZA. The community sensitization campaigns on the education of girls have yielded positive results. If current statistics are anything to go by, the gender gap in enrolments at primary level has narrowed down since 1990¹⁸.

Although the numbers may not be too high, indications are that Community schools have provided an alternative path of education opportunity to disadvantaged children. The numbers of children in community schools have risen from 6,599 in 1996 to 45,646¹⁹. Most of these children are from poor households, which cannot afford PTA levies, school fees and the cost of school uniforms.

(vi) *RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS*

Research and analytical capacity of educational problems significantly improved in the country in the EFA decade. Both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms have been rigorously applied in analysis of educational problems. Several valuable research work and analytical papers relevant to policy, planning, teaching and management of education have been produced in the country. Various dimensions of the EFA goals namely, girls' education, disadvantaged children's education opportunities, general access to education, financing education, learning achievement and so on have been researched. Valuable data have been accumulated for policy development, planning and management of the educational system.²⁰

SOME CONSTRAINTS TO PROGRESS IN EDUCATION FOR ALL

Critical analysis indicate that progress towards EFA in Zambia is slow and to enlarge static. Indications from available data are that participation in basic education opportunities is declining or very low in most cases.

¹⁷ Ministry of Education BESSIP Annual Work Plan and Budget January – December 2001.

¹⁸ Ministry of Education (1999) Education For All Assessment

¹⁹ ZCSS (2,000) *op cit* p.7

²⁰ see Kelly, M.J. (1994) Below the Poverty Line in Education: A Situation Analysis of Girl-Child education in Zambia (Lusaka, UNICEF) Kelly, M.J. (1998) Primary Education in a Heavily Indebted Poor Country: The Case of Zambia in the 1990s (Lusaka, OXFARM and UNICEF). Mwikisa, C. and Lungwangwa, G. (1998) Education Indicators, Costs and Factors Associated with Primary School Effectiveness. Research Report for the Ministry of Education (Lusaka MOE). Lungwangwa, G. (1997) The Impact of Cost-Sharing in Education.: A Study in Financing and Delivery of Education in Zambia (Nairobi: IDRC/ESAURP) Lungwangwa G. *et al* (1999) Basic Education for Some: Factors Affecting Primary School Attendance in Zambia (Lusaka: Study Fund) Kaonde-Ngandu S. *et al* (1999) Partnership for Strategic Resource Planning for Girls' Education in Africa. Gender and Primary Schooling in Zambia (Brighton:FAWE, IDS) Kelly, M.J. and Kanyika, J. (2000) Learning Achievement at the Middle Basic Level (Lusaka: MoE)

(i) EARLY CHILDHOOD AND CARE

According to the EFA assessment report, there has only been a small increase in the proportion of children entering Grade 1 with pre-school experience. By the end of the decade, only 8.4% of the Grade 1 children had pre-school experience an increase from the 2% at the beginning of the 1990s. Pre-school experience is much higher among children in urban areas namely 23.6% of the Grade 1 entrants than among children in rural areas where only 2.7% of them have such experience. The gender parity in pre-school education is 1.2% in favour of girls.²¹ Pre-school experience is mainly for children from well to do homes which can afford the fees charged. Most of the children from poor families in the urban and rural areas do not have opportunities for pre-school education.

(ii) ACCESS TO PRIMARY EDUCATION

Trends in school enrolments and attendance at primary education level show stagnation and decline. At Grade 1 level, both the Gross and Net Admission rates have declined since mid 1990s. The Gross Admission Rate declined from 106% in 1996 to 75% in 1999. On the other hand, the Net Admission Rate declined from 44% in 1996 to 33% in 1999. The decline in Admission Rates indicates that children who qualify to enter school are not doing so. In other words, parents are not eager to enroll their children in school.

In terms of coverage and participation, the Gross and Net Enrollment Ratios have been on the downward trend since 1996. The Gross Enrollment Ratio declined from 98% in 1996 to 90% in 1999. The Net Enrollment Ratio declined from 81% in 1996 to 76% in 1999. In rural areas the proportion of children enrolled in school is 68%. The decline in enrollment ratio show that fewer children of the eligible primary school age are enrolling in primary education. In terms of school attendance, the Net Attendance Rate declined from 69% in 1995 to 66% in 1999.²² This means that at the end of the EFA decade, about one third of the primary school age children were not attending school.

The reality of primary education in Zambia therefore is that enrollments and school attendance are declining. Visits to schools do show that classrooms are in many cases empty. The scenario that has emerged in primary education level is that many children who should be attending school are not in school. In 1999 out of the population of 7-13 year old children of 1,729,086, only 1,312,013 were enrolled in school. This means that 417,073 children of primary school age were not in school²³. The number of children not attending school at the end of the 1990s was almost twice that at the beginning of the decade.

There are several reasons, which have been attributed to this negative development in primary education. Children are not enrolling and attending school because parents cannot afford the cost of education reflected in PTA levies, uniforms, education materials, and examination fees. Lack of school enrollment and attendance is attributed to the increasing household poverty. The report on poverty released in 1998 indicated that 6 million Zambians were living in extreme poverty. They had insufficient access to food, education, health care, adequate

²¹ Ministry of Education (1999) Education for All Assessment p.12.

²² see Ministry of Education (2000) Trends in Primary Education 1996 – 1999.

²³ *Ibid.* The estimated number of children not attending school in 1996 was 650,000

shelter, adequate income, clean surroundings, sanitation, safe drinking water and power.²⁴ Unemployment, retrenchments, liquidation of parastatal companies, withdrawal of state subsidies to agriculture is some of the factors that have exacerbated the high levels of poverty in the country.

For the poor households, the opportunity cost of sending the child to school is much higher. When costs and benefits are weighed, it is more beneficial to engage the child in immediate family economic survival activities like selling and looking after cattle than sending him or her to school²⁵.

What further contributes to low participation rates in education among children from poor households is the perceived poor quality of education in the schools resulting from dilapidated buildings, lack of teachers especially in rural areas, lack of education materials and poor performance on the terminal Grade seven examination. Many parents have lost confidence and value in primary education because it neither leads to permanent literacy, further education or a job²⁶. Long distances to school in rural areas, rising numbers of illiterate parents, local traditions and ceremonies contribute to poor school attendance.

Another contributing factor to the low participation rates in primary schools is the rise in the number of orphans. In 1998 the number of orphans in the primary school age population was estimated to be 451,100. Out of these, 20% had lost both parents.²⁷ The loss of a parent or both parents under the current economic condition in Zambia has negative impact on the education of the child. Many children will either never enter the classroom or they drop out of school because of the loss of parents.

(iii) *LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT*

Available research evidence indicates that the learning achievement of the Zambian primary school children is very low. The National Assessment of learning achievement conducted in 1999 observed that "in terms of the learning achievement of school pupils, Zambia appears to be a nation at risk....levels of learning achievement are low right across the country, in all grades and in all curriculum areas. Very little learning of the type expected by society is occurring in Zambia's schools."²⁸ The report concludes that only one pupil in four reach what teachers would consider minimum achievement level and only one in twenty-five what they would consider as the desirable achievement level in English, Mathematics and local Languages.

²⁴ The Post 8th July 1998. The World Bank report of 1994 stated that 76% of the people were extremely poor, 8% were moderately poor and only 16% were above the poverty level (World Bank (1994) Poverty Assessment in Zambia)

²⁵ see Lungwangwa, G. and Macwani, M. (1996) Street Children in Zambia a Situation Analysis (Lusaka, UNICEF)

²⁶ for detailed discussion of factors affecting schools attendance see Lungwangwa, G. *et al* (1999) Basic Education for Some...

²⁷ Central Statistics Office (1999) Living Conditions in Zambia 1998 p.13.

²⁸ Kelly, M. J. and Kanyika, J. (2000) Learning Achievement at the Middle Basic Level p. 6

CONCLUSION

From the discussion made in this paper, the following conclusions represent the EFA situation in Zambia ten years after Jomtien:

- No growth in primary school enrollments has taken place. There has been a decline in both the Gross and Net enrollment Ratios.
- School attendance in primary schools has declined. Many classrooms in most schools are empty.
- The quality of teaching and learning in most schools is very low.
- Many parents have lost confidence and value in primary education.
- Schools have lost their magnetic force of attracting children to themselves and engaging them in enjoyable useful learning experiences.
- Many parents who cannot afford the cost of education find community schools attractive options for their children to acquire some form of basic education.

In both quantitative and qualitative terms, EFA in Zambia is at a stand still. The efforts made so far have contributed in tightening the bolts and nuts in the education machine but the engine is not yet in motion. Accountable for lack of progress towards EFA is the lack of fit between the humanitarian and democratic goal of basic education as a human right and the narrow economic policy approach which economically disempowers the great majority of people and places them under abject poverty. Zambia's experience therefore calls for new thinking and innovative approaches, which will make basic education a human right and revitalize the teaching and learning environment. This demands for an approach that focuses both on macro (national) and micro (local) level reform measures. Many macro level basic education reforms are taking place in Zambia. What is required in a more intensified approach are micro level reform and strategies. This should involve:

- This should involve strengthening local level institutions, teacher training colleges and schools alike to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Some of areas to consider are improving school management and classroom teaching, creating strong links between the teacher training colleges and schools and between the colleges and universities.
- Creating a system of local level network among education institutions, communities and community based organisations in order to effectively sensitize parents and leaders about the value of basic education to all children.
- Establishing local level data bank emanating from monitoring and evaluation of access, equity, participation and learning outcomes in schools. This means building the research and analytical capacities of staff in teacher training colleges.

The objective in micro level capacity strengthening strategies should be to ensure that all children are in school and stay in them until completion of the defined terminal grade, that schools are effectively managed and are developing the expected learning outcomes and that the teaching and learning environment is such that schools retain their magnetic force as centers for effective learning and development of children.