CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

Globally, the Education for All (EFA) vision is derived from the United Nations Declaration of Human rights of 1948 article 26 which states that everyone has the right to education. Based on this premise the international community organized the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien-Thailand from 5th to 9th March 1990 where 155 governments of the world and 150 organizations agreed to provide free compulsory primary education. At the World Education Forum held in Dakar-Senegal, in April 2000, the aims of EFA were reaffirmed and upheld.

The spirit of Jomtien had an important impact both on Zambian education policy debates for public institutions and private education providers on the ground. It is against this background that Zambia joined the international community to achieve the EFA and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of Universal Access to Primary Education by 2015. Since 1990 the Zambian government has campaigned vigorously by setting for itself national milestones and assumptions on universal basic education such as: total elimination of wastage through dropouts by 2008, no girl child should be withdrawn from school for marriage or any unjustified reasons by 2005 (MOE May 2005). To achieve these policy milestones, the government came up with practical interventions such as abolition of school fees and school uniforms, re-entry policy which led to increased access to primary education.

The existence of an EFA movement inspired the development of community school projects and greatly facilitated the most favourable national-level policy response to the community schools. The community school movement began in 1995 as a reaction to the overwhelming numbers of orphans and vulnerable children in Zambia who were out of school. Originally the community school models were conceived to provide both simple, rapid expansion of education supply to the vulnerable children both in towns and villages and simultaneously,

through the work of Parent Community School Committees (PCSCs), ensure high enrolment and high retention rates in community schools. Community schools have since developed to be the major provider of basic education to vulnerable children especially in rural areas. Ministry of education statistics shows that there were 55 community schools in 1996. In 2005 this number increased to 162, while in 2006 the number reached 2457 (Chondoka 2006). The 2010 estimates indicated that there were approximately 3500 community schools all over the country catering for an estimated 500 000 children (http://www.zocs.org.zm/resources.php).

The above statistical information clearly shows that community schools were providing opportunities to many vulnerable children whose future was almost thrown into oblivion. Surprisingly, a lot had been written on the achievement of EFA goals of ensuring pupils accessed school but little had been written on keeping them there. Therefore, the challenges faced by community schools, deserve much study and concern to educators and other stakeholders. With high enrolment figures in community schools, it is important to draw our attention to the capacity of these schools to keep these children who faced many problems everywhere.

This study therefore sought to establish whether the retention rates of pupils had increased in proportion to the high enrolments before completing their primary education cycle in selected community schools of Lusaka

Statement of the problem

One of the MDGs set by the UN was to ensure Universal Access to Primary Education by 2015. This was to ensure all pupils stayed longer in schools and acquired basic skills needed for their survival in the 21st century. We were not sure whether community schools had the capacity to retain pupils they enrolled and if such pupils faced challenges both at school and at home which hindered their progress. Therefore, this study sought to establish the challenges of pupil retention in selected community schools in the light of Universal Access to Basic Education Policy in Lusaka district.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether increased enrolment of pupils in community schools had positively or negatively impacted pupil retention in selected community schools of Lusaka district.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:

(a) Establish whether there was a positive or negative correlation between high enrolment and pupil retention rates in community schools at primary level.

(b) Determine the factors contributing to either low or high retention rates in community schools of Lusaka.

(c) Establish the retention rates of pupils by gender in community schools.

(d) Establish whether or not there were measures put in place to improve the retention rates.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of this study the research questions were as follows:

(a) What was the relationship between high enrolment and pupil retention rates in community schools?

(b) What factors contributed to either low or high retention rates in Community Schools?

(c) How was the retention rate of pupils by gender in community schools?

(d) What measures, if any, were put in place to ensure pupils remained in schools?

Significance of the study

Keeping pupils in school is an under-researched area even though the problem is prevalent. With EFA and MDGs targeting access to education, the knowledge of dropouts and retention in community schools may help illuminate some of the complexities affecting pupil retention

and bring out new insights to policy makers and educational practitioners. Few studies account for the complexities of access and retention among the vulnerable children. In most studies, the emphasis has been on impressive statistical data of high enrolments, without addressing the issue of retention of pupils. The study could assist the researcher and other stakeholders to have a deeper understanding of the challenges pupils in community schools faced. The study may provide data to all stakeholders for improving and sustaining the community schools. The findings could also contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject of community schools, which all stakeholders especially education providers in the community schools, the University of Zambia and the Ministry of Education may find useful.

Limitation of the study

At school level, the researcher encountered great difficulty in collecting quantitative data due to lack of proper records of pupil enrolments over the years in some schools. Maintenance of records was quite poor in some instances. Therefore, the extraction of the quantitative data from the available records was often laborious. It required more extensive interviews from the head teachers and other members of staff to extract data. Additionally, the researcher was unable to receive all the questionnaires which were distributed to respondents due to apathy by some respondents. The researcher had limited funds to cover some schools that were in remote places and that limited the research to areas that were more accessible.

Organization of the rest of the dissertation

This dissertation is organized as follows; Chapter 1 gives an introduction to the research. It outlines the background to the study and highlights the objectives, raises the key research questions and addresses the significance of the study as well as the limitations of the study. Chapter 2 comprises the literature review. Chapter 3 gives a detailed description of the methodology used, specifically the data collection methods, the type of data collected and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research; the data collected, data analysis. Chapter 5 presents the discussion based on research findings. Chapter 6 gives the main conclusion drawn from the findings and the recommendations made. The chapter further gives the suggested areas of possible research in the field.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter, reviews literature on community schools in third world countries especially in Africa where these schools are an important part of the educational landscape in Sub-Saharan Africa. These schools were frequently held up as successful interventions in developing countries; as an alternative education system to achieve EFA and MDG set targets of providing Universal Basic Education (UBE) of good quality by 2015. Community schools were seen by many as a developmental strategy to respond to the failing public education system.

The literature highlights the major challenge that emerged of keeping pupils in schools due to very high levels of enrolments experienced in the previous decade brought about by EFA resolutions of Universal Primary Education. The literature provided what other scholars in other countries had found to be the reasons behind pupil dropout before completing their primary school education cycle.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the definition and concept of community schools and the rationale behind the development of such school models in Third world countries. It takes care of the historical background and the challenges the countries were faced with. The literature review also provides an in-depth review of the reasons why pupils failed to complete or dropped out of school. It further brings out and examines the gender perspective to pupil dropout. The chapter concludes by giving a synopsis of the issues raised in the chapter.

Defining Community School

A specific definition of community schools is difficult and not often attempted in research literature. However, its meaning is dealt with by considering the common key elements that

distinguish them from public schools and other forms of school systems. Some scholars have defined community schools based on the high level community participation as the identifying mark. DeStafano (2004) defined a community school as a village school which belonged to the local community and was organized, funded, run and supported by the community. It is something about which the community is exceedingly proud. It was also defined as a school established, run and largely supported by local communities, whether they were geographic communities (villages or urban townships), religious or non- profit educational trusts (Hoppers, 2006). The definitions complement each other but should be expanded and qualified. While local communities maybe involved in planning, teacher recruitment and income generating activities, stakeholders outside of the physical community often play significant roles in guiding management, governance and finance. For example, international religious organizations were able to fund and support community schools.

Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) on the other hand focused on the target population as part of the defining characteristics of CARE's community schools world –wide. Community schools provided educational opportunities for the underserved groups (rural poor, ethnic minorities, girls, etc) at a sustainable cost (CARE, 2001). Community schools in this case often provided education where families had no alternative (Hartwell & Pittman, 1999). In the Zambian context a community school is a community based learning institution that meets the basic / primary education needs of pupils, who, for a number of reasons, cannot enter government schools (Choondoka, 2006, ZOCS, 2008:3). Mumba (2000) defined the community school as a school which is established and run by the community which indicated the need for the school to cater for the less privileged children of whom the majority are girls and orphans, who for social and economic reasons have never been to school or have dropped out from school at an early age. In Mali, a 1994 law define community schools as private schools created and managed by communities or associations to permit the maximum number of children to attain a basic level of education. These schools have "public utility" and the regional inspectorate gives a certificate of opening (called recipiss'e) if they have at least twenty students, offer a formal education, and respect the

ministry definitions. They must use the official curriculum or one recognized by the education authorities (Ciss'e etal. 2000).

Other scholars identify community support to government provision of education as a key element for community schools. The World Education community schools in Mali are defined as a cost-sharing arrangement with government (Welmond, 2000 a). In this case, usually the community builds schools and hires teachers and the Ministry of Education (MOE) provides supervision. These schools belong to the community but are included in the national education system.

From the above definitions, it is quite clear that there are different community school models across the globe. In my research I considered community schools that had a community-based management or managed by an international non-profit making organization and had connection to the public education sector to be part of the study sample. These schools under study were either public schools, recognized as part of the formal education (private or community) or satellite schools that prepared students to transfer in the public system after completing their primary education cycle.

Rationale behind the creation of community schools in Developing countries

A large range exists of rationales for the creation of community schools in Third world countries, especially in Africa.

Increased access to education*: Miller-Grandvaux & Yoder (2002) noted that community schools increased access to education where the government did not have the resources to do so. This was the same rationale behind the Jomtien declaration and strategy to achieve UBE through local participation. Communities and Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were important elements in the Jomtien Declaration and Framework as necessary actors in the expansion of schooling. While it remained the responsibility of national governments to guarantee education to its citizens, the reality of most third world countries was such that the only hope for achieving UBE was for communities to contribute to the cost and management of schooling. Communities were massively contributing to increased access through

community schools. For example, local communities in Chad, facing a lack of government support, provided primary education during the country's civil war created, financed and managed schools completely independently to meet the education demand (Muskin, 1997). Rugh and Bossert (1998) studied some well known community school projects such as the BRAC schools of Bangladesh, the Harambe schools of Kenya, the Escuela Nueva in Colombia and the IMPACT project in East Asia. They discovered that community participation was especially useful for reaching disadvantaged groups especially in areas where demands existed but where circumstances were such that the governments had failed to provide an adequate supply of conventional schooling opportunities.

Therefore community schools and "alternative" approaches to primary schooling in resource – scarce countries were established under the assumption that government did not have the capacity to provide free primary education to all children as declared by Education for All (EFA) advocates.

Relevance to local needs: This was another assumption for the creation of community schools. Though community schools differed from country to country, they were usually based on the same principle; more relevant to the wants and needs of the community than government schools. World Bank, Africa Regional office (2000) noted that community schools were better integrated into the environment (mostly rural) and teaching practical subjects as well as theory. In six case studies conducted, it was discovered that most community school models attempted to make programmes more attractive to children by relating to daily life, drawing on local examples and skill resources using interactive and student centered methods and developing opportunities for parents to become more involved in the school (Rugh and Bossert, 1998). They were supported by the findings of other researchers who noted that community schools were inspired to implement innovative approaches to teaching and learning given the background and various characteristics of students. They were characterized by more student-centered learning and more locally relevant curricula (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder, 2002, Glassman, etal, 2007). The Skills, Participation, Access, Relevant and Knowledge (SPARK) curricula in Zambia was designed to meet the needs of over-aged out of school children between 9 and 16 years who had been

given the opportunity to start school and complete the 7 years primary education cycle in 4 years.

Therefore, community schools were thought to have an advantage over conventional schools in that they were more responsive to the local demand for education (decide structure, language, curricula, who the teachers were, etc, plus better learning outcomes).

Decentralization: The architects of the World Declaration on EFA and supporters of community schools argued that the creation of community schools was one way to implement educational decentralization. Since the Jomtien and Dakar conferences, governments and international agencies had advocated decentralization and community partnership as a mechanism for improving educational provision in developing countries. They believed that decentralization was the alternative approach to educational administration and management of entrusting management decisions downwards in the hierarchy, often to community levels and promoting the participation of stakeholders in the educational management (UNESCO Basic Education Division 2001). This view was supported by Gershberg and Winkler (2003) who explained that decentralization of real decision making power to schools was the means of increasing the voice of education's clients and could significantly increase parental participation in the school. The rationale for decentralization was that community participation in education was a strategy to improve educational access and quality (Uemura, 1999, Ramin, 2000). Research had shown that parental and community involvement in education had a positive effect on student outcomes in three ways; firstly, it added resources to education effort, secondly, it extended education coverage or increased local demand for quality and thirdly, it enhanced the implementation of education, its relevance and accountability of the education system (Dowd, 2001).

Therefore, the community school concept was a key for mobilizing communities and creating demand for education and facility improvement. At the same time decentralization was viewed by many as offering the promise of a new and more effective mode for organizing the delivery of education under certain conditions.

Cost effectiveness*:* Proponents of community schools argued that community schools were cost-effective with comparable or better instructional services for less money (Tietjen, 1999). In resource-scarce Third World countries, community initiatives and participation to provide education to their children was a workable solution to reach the underserved. Based on the premise that each community had the human and financial resources necessary to educate its children (Save the Children / USA, 2001), community participation could considerably reduce on the cost of education. Therefore, stakeholders want to use limited resources effectively and efficiently to solve problems and provide quality education for their children through high level community involvement in resource mobilization and management.

Governance and accountability: supporters of community participation in education argue that it is a good idea in itself, beyond achieving educational services and outcomes in that it contributes to the growth of civil society and democratic institutions which are integral parts of sustainable development (Rugh and Bossert, 1998). Therefore, we see community schools as community support models whose focus is on the community-school relationship. In this relationship, members of the community interact with school staff with the ultimate outcome of ensuring pupils learn and receive quality education. In the quest of providing education to their children community members are called upon to participate in issues of management, decision making, planning which of cause are issues of governance. A good example comes from West Africa where World Education have developed democratic local organizations called *Associations de parents d'eleves or APES* that are empowered to represent the interests of parents in the field of education (Welmond, 2000 b, Devine, 2001). Full management of schools by local people is a goal of Save the Children in Mali (Muskin, 1997). The 2000 Policy and Guidelines for community schools in Zambia states that PCSCs in the communities are responsible for staffing schools, by selecting teachers, monitoring teachers and head teachers as well disciplining / dismissing teachers. A research conducted by a UNICEF team in Zambia discovered that communities viewed their ability to hire and fire teachers as an important attribute of their autonomy and an opportunity to develop the schools in the manner they choose. Communities also valued their ability to dismiss teachers as a useful tool that forces teachers to be more accountable to the community they serve (Cashen

L, etal March, 2001). Therefore, community schools were established to foster the principles of democratic governance and accountability in local communities.

The history and development of community schools in Developing countries

Alternative Primary Education (APE) has become most popular in African and Asian countries where there are more out of school primary-aged children than anywhere else in the world (UNESCO, 2008). The problem of out of school had its roots from the colonial period due to total neglect of education for the colonized. A lot of people were left illiterate, with fragile education systems in colonized nations. Following independence from colonial rule for most African and Asian nations from the late 1950s continuing through the 1970s, educational policies were based on free primary education and expansion of secondary and university education for all in order to counter the effects of colonial education neglect and develop the much needed human resource.

However the global economic hardships of the late 1970s including the world oil crisis and a general drop in the prices of raw materials such as minerals had adverse effects on the economies of developing nations. This placed significant strains on the educational systems which were undergoing rapid expansion. Therefore, alternative ways were to be found and community-based schools gained popularity during this period, spurred in large part by macro-economic and social policies encouraged by international organizations like the IMF and World Bank to cut government spending on education and other services (Mwalimu, 2010).

General overview of global progress in education

The history and development of community schools as a developmental strategy and an alternative primary education pathway in developing countries can only be appreciated by reflecting on the general progress in education. The MDG number two (2) target is to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. It is against this target that we measure and evaluate the global

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progress. According to United Nations MDG Report (2010), the number of out of school primary–aged children had dropped from 106 million in 1999 to 69 million in 2008. Such mammoth progress can be attributed to many initiatives employed by developing countries and one such initiative which had yielded positive results is the establishment of community schools. By 2010 89% of primary school age children in developing countries were enrolled in school (UN MDG Report, 2010). However, the pace was slow to ensure that globally children would be able to complete a full course of schooling by 2015 (DFID July, 2010). It is estimated that 56 million children would be out of school by 2015 thereby failing to meet the set target. Around half the children out of school are in fragile and conflict-affected countries. Millions of children enter school late, drop out early and never complete a full circle of primary schooling. It is estimated that only 60% of children in Sub-Saharan Africa completed a full cycle of primary education (World Bank, 2008). This situational analysis presents challenges to Third world countries and the world at large to plan and double their effort towards the realization of MDG number two target.

 Community schools in Bangladesh

While several community schools arose in Africa as a response to government incapacity to provide free public education to all, similar institutions in Asia and Latin America grew for different purposes. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) was created to help resettle traumatized and economically devastated Indian refugees after the liberation war. Bangladesh is a developing country in Asia with a population of 158.7 million according to 2007 statistics. Its Gross Nation Income (GNI) per capital was $520 and ranked 148 out of 182 countries on Human Development Index (DFID July, 2010). The country was on track in achieving UPE. In 2010 enrolment was at 93% but completion rates were very low. Only 55% of children reached grade five (DFID July, 2010). Bangladesh attained its independence from Pakistan in 1971 and since then primary education has been a priority in Bangladesh politics.

A brief background about primary education in Bangladesh presents a lot of challenges for the country to achieve MDG and EFA goals by 2015. Until recent times, enrollment and government spending on education has remained very low. Little progress was seen in the

primary education sector throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Additionally there had been problems of inequity and access. The 1970s and 1980s saw marked gender parity in enrollment levels as well as attendance, completion, literacy rates and achievement levels. Marginalized and disadvantaged groups in general, particularly the rural and urban poor, had significantly less access to education than other groups. However, the second half of the 1990s especially, saw a rekindled dedication to the expansion of primary education partly due to renewed commitment made at the World Conference on Education For All (WCEFA). The government of Bangladesh took many initiatives in the years following WCEFA. For example in 1992, they established the Ministry for Primary and Mass education with its main objective of making primary education universal as well as elimination of gender and poverty gaps. To implement the policy of universal primary education, the government passed a compulsory primary education Act in 1993, making five-year primary education program free in all government schools. Other initiatives were the introduction of female stipend and the food for education. In 2000 the Primary Education Development programme (PEDP 11) was introduced which aimed to increase access, quality and efficiency across the board in the primary sector.

The education system in Bangladesh consists of four separate systems; government run schools, private schools, Madrassas (Islamic religious schools) and schools run by NGOS. Government schools support the vast majority of Bangladesh's students. There were about 37 000 government schools in Bangladesh attended by over 12 million students in 2010. However, these schools were mostly found in urban centers resulting in lack of access to the majority of children in the country side. There were also no such schools in the undeveloped periphery of the urban centers.

Community schools run by NGOs: There were about 400 NGOs in Bangladesh involved in providing basic education in 2010. The number of NGO schools had increased four times since the early 1990s and comprised 8.5% of the educational system.

The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) is one of the largest NGOs in the country working on primary education. BRAC schools make up 76% of all NGO primary

schools (Kabeer, etal, 2003). The BRAC non formal education programme which started in 1972 with 22 pilot schools has expanded greatly with about 40 000 BRAC schools attended by one million children (http:www.eenet.org.uk/newsletters/news4/p10.shtml Oct 2010). BRAC education began in rural areas where there were no alternative education options. In 1992, BRAC began making schools in urban slums after realizing that government schools were not accessible to slum children (http:// www. Brac.net/edf.htm Oct. 2010). Because of discrimination and unequal educational opportunities for girls, BRAC favours girls in their schools and pushes for female attendance. 70 % of children attending BRAC schools were female (Kalene, e tal 2005).

BRAC schools are usually one room mud or bamboo buildings with tin roofs constructed or rented by the community for a small fee. Class sizes are limited to 33 pupils. Curriculum in BRAC schools is interactive and meant to be interesting and fun for children. School schedules are flexible to make school an option for all children and the curriculum has been adjusted to meet the needs of children from rural and slum lifestyles. It takes five years for a child to complete the BRAC primary education and 90 % of pupils who complete the primary schooling through BRAC continue into secondary education (http://www.brac.net/edf.htm Oct 2010). However, some observers have noted that the BRAC model is a gap filler model that does not have a strong commitment to provide education as a human right or as an empowerment intervention. 97 % of the teachers in BRAC schools are married women residing in villages where such schools are built. They are lowly qualified with 9 years schooling and have attended 15 days teacher training. They also attend annual trainings and refresher courses.

The success story of Bangladesh in increasing access to primary education to the disadvantaged groups such as girls in rural areas and the urban poor is the story of BRAC community model schools. However, UNESCO (2008) statistics indicated that of the total percentage of pupils starting grade one (1) only 65.5% reach grade five (5). This simply means that about 34.5% drop out of school before reaching grade 5.

 The Escuela Nueva of Colombia

Colombia like many other developing countries faces the dual challenge of improving the quality of education while increasing access to primary school education and retention of pupils especially in rural areas. In spite of a constitutional clause made to provide UPE in the mid 1980s, the MDG number 2 has not yet been achieved. However, tremendous progress has already been made towards the MGD 2 target.

Alternative Primary Education has a long rich history in Colombia. The earliest attempts were pioneered in the early 1960s by UNESCO who introduced Unitary Schools (Escuelas Unitaries) based on the theories of multi-grade teaching and automatic promotion. The main characteristics of this type of community school model were; the presence of a single teacher (multi-grade), automatic promotion, learning that enabled children to advance at their own pace, educational materials that permitted the teacher to work with several groups at once and a teacher who guides students instead of lecturing (Psacharopoulos etal, 1993).

The Escuela Unitaries by mid 1960s had expanded in Colombia to 150 pilot schools in one province. But when an attempt was made to put the programme on scale at national level, several issues emerged such as; teacher training, the application of the automatic promotion and the relationship of the course contents to the rural environment in which the children lived. In response to these issues, Escuela Nueva was created in the mid 1970s as an official programme of the Ministry of Education to improve curricula, training and administrative aspects of Escuela Unitaries.

Escuela Nueva expanded rapidly after its inception in 1975 with very few schools. By 1978, more than 500 schools were in the programme, with another 1500 added by 1982. With partial financing from the World Bank, Escuela Nueva expanded again to several thousand rural schools and by 1989, 17 948 schools were serving 800 000 students operated at national level (ibid). The hallmark of Escuela Nueva were strong teacher- parent, community relationships, active learning curriculum, critical thinking, cooperation, self-instructional materials, individual learning, teacher training program, monthly teacher support groups, joint teacher and student management of school and frequent visits from supervisors (Rugh and Bossert, 1998).

Community Schools in Mali

Mali, formerly a colony of France and formerly known as French Sudan, gained its independence in 1961. The population estimates by 2008 was 12 324 029 with a population growth rate of 2.73%. In 2007 the United Nation development programme ranked Mali 175th out of 178 countries on the human development index (UNESCO UIS data, 2008). Education is free and compulsory for the 9 years basic education according to Article 18 of Mali's 1992 constitution of the Third Republic which declares that " every citizen has the right to instruction" and that public education is 'obligatory, free and secular" (Republique du Mali, 1992). However, the gross enrollment rate (GER) from the first cycle (the first 6 years) of primary education was increased from 26.5% in 1990 to 58% in 2003 and from 58% in 2003 to 69% in 2004. Private sector enrollment for primary education increased from 21.9% in 2000 to 34.8% in 2004. The completion rate percentage also increased from 28.5% in 2000 to 44.0% in 2004 (Cherry and Mundy, 2007). The population literacy rate by 2005 was 49.7% (UNESCO UIS data, 2008).

At the start of the 1990s, Mali's basic education system was failing under the weight of dictatorship. National public primary schools only accommodated 22% of the country's children. Fortunately enough, in 1991, the Moussa Traore military dictatorship regime (1968-1991) was overthrown by a popular revolt in which students and teachers played an important role and the advent of the Third republic promised a new era of opportunity. A democratic and a more prosperous future for the country depended on, among other things, the expansion and improvement of education. During the 1990s, the Malian government, with substantial external assistance, embarked on major education sector reforms aimed at principally redirecting resources towards the expansion of basic education. A separate ministry for basic education was created and significant external funding was made available to support investments in school construction, training of teachers, hiring and deployment of teachers.

However, throughout the 1990s, demand for schooling outweighed all government initiatives to provide basic education to all children. Therefore, an alternative system had to be sought.

An important contributor to improved access to basic education in the 1990s was the widespread multiplication of community schools created and managed by communities with support from NGOs. Community school construction has a long history in Mali. According to Recherche sur Education en Afrique de l' oust et centre's (ROCARE's 2001) the Malian community school effort originated in 1963 but official recognition of such schools had no precedent before the remarkable expansion of community-initiated education seen in the 1990s. In 1994 after successful advocacy by donors, international NGOs and Groupe Pivot Education de Base (a consortium of Malian NGOs), the Malian government afforded community schools legal recognition (as private schools) thereby giving them some access to public resource, technical support and monitoring from Ministry of Education officials (DeStefano, 2004). Community schools rapidly increased in number from 176 in 1995 to 2 344 in 2003 and represented 31.7% of primary schools in Mali by 1999 (Cherry and Mundy 2007). It was due to the International and local NGOs support that helped build the community schools that lasted from 1993 to 2003. External funding for community schools, typically delivered through NGOs, came from a wide range of donors namely; USAID, GTZ, French Municipalities and the World Bank and from international NGOs such as Save the Children USA, Save the Children UK, World Education, Africare, CARE and Plan International (Carneal, 2004). USAID alone funded 1 658 community schools in 2001, over 30% of the total number of primary schools in the country (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder, 2002). In 2009 there were 2 500 primary schools officially considered community schools by the government.

 The issue of accessibility of primary education can only be addressed fully if the Malian government employs intervention that would improve education quality and pupil retention which is quite low. However a case study conducted by EQUIP 2 in Sikasso in 2004 revealed that community schools were more effective than public schools in pupil completion of primary education cycle (DeStefano, 2004). It was estimated 56% of first graders reached sixth grade in public schools according to a synthetic cohort analysis of net repeaters from the

Ministry of Education data. For girls, that figure was estimated at 49%. Community schools in Sikasso reported an overall sixth grade completion rate of 67% and 57% for girls (Save the children's Annuaire Statistique des Ecoles communautaires, Rentree Escolaire 2002-2003).

Community schools in Zambia

Zambia, formerly called Northern Rhodesia was a colony of Britain before it attained its independence in 1964. At the time of independence, Zambia was a relatively rich country though its educational system was under developed due to colonial education policies that did not encourage advancement of education for the colonized. However, it was hit hard by the world economic crisis of the 1970s and its economy collapsed between 1975 and 1990. Today after two decades the country has failed to recover from the economic collapse of 1990. Zambia by 2010 was rated as one of the poorest countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. Around 68% of the estimated 13 million Zambians were classified as poor (living below the poverty line of USD $1 per day). Additionally, the HIV / AIDS had tremendously affected the population. Nearly one million Zambians were either HIV positive or had AIDS and over 750 000 Zambian children had been orphaned by HIV / AIDS which killed an estimated 100 000 people in 2004 (Policy and Operations Evaluation Department- MOE (2008). As a result, the government was forced to cut on the education budget to as low as 2% GDP, the spending which was lower than the 4% prevalent in most Southern African countries and consequently the education sector was severely affected. For example, the education sector became dilapidated. Enrollments in basic education remained static or decreased in spite of the population growth throughout the 1990s. By 1999, 37% of children in the school age were not enrolled. In the rural areas the percentage was as high as 60%. Literacy rate of the population deteriorated and in 2001, 75% of the children left primary school illiterate (World Bank 2001).

Despite the lost decades of the 1980 and 1990, Zambia is an example of a country that has struggled to revitalize the education sector after years of neglect. Completion rates improved from 67% in 2000 to 82% in 2005 and within six years, enrollment in primary education had

increased by 67% from 1.6 million in 2000 to 2.7 million in 2007 (Policy and Operation Evaluation Department – MOE (2008). The report noted that MOE had succeeded in significantly enhancing access to basic education after years of under investment by implementing development plans and abolishing school fees in 2002. It also noted that private and most especially community schools significantly contributed to this achievement.

One of the main characteristics of the Zambian education system is the central role played by community schools. Community schools are founded by communities to meet the basic needs of those children who are not found in formal education. The study conducted revealed that pupils in community schools generally belonged to the poorest and most vulnerable social strata. Less than one third of community school families lived in permanent structures, compared to 46% of public school families (DeStefano, 2006). In 2005, almost one in three children in community schools had lost his or her mother, father or both parents while in government schools this ratio was one to five (ibid). This clearly shows that these children lacked parental support. According to the study conducted in the Central Province, many orphans were unable to attend school regularly, while many were too hungry to concentrate in class when they managed to attend (Chondoka, 2006). In many instances these schools were run by parents, though increasingly they received assistance from the government, donors, churches and NGOs.

The concept of community schools is not entirely new to Zambia. The European missionaries had already established similar schools and called them village or bush schools (Chondoka 2006). The first community school in post colonial Zambia dates from 1992 when an American woman, Dr. Janice Stevens in collaboration with the Charity sisters, living and working in Kabwata – Lusaka founded the first school in Msisi compound. From a class of 50 girls, meeting in open field, more classes and other schools in other parts of Lusaka were started (http://www.zocs.org.zm/zocs_history.php. retrieved Friday 05/03/2010). The decision was made to join them together under one project which would oversee their operations and development. This new organization was called Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS) and became registered as an NGO in 1995. This marked the beginning of the community school movement in Zambia as a reaction to the overwhelming numbers of

orphans and vulnerable children who could not afford even the minimal government school fees. By 1996 approximately 55 community schools had been set up. Since then, their number has grown exponentially, making it very difficult to give reliable estimates on yearly basis. In 2010 there were approximately over 3 500 all around the country where these children had accessed school places, found both in rural and urban settings in areas without GRZ schools. A study conducted in 2006 showed that the main factor determining the location of rural community schools was the distance from the nearest government school (Chondoka, 2006). In urban areas these schools were set up in locations with large concentration of children who were unable to access education in public schools due to the cost or other factors (DeStefano, 2006). The community schools were intended to provide basic education up to grade seven (7) though initially they were meant to provide this education to over aged children in four (4) years using the SPARK curriculum. The community schools were aligned under an umbrella of the Zambia Community School Secretariat (ZCSS) a NGO established in 1997 as a mother body for all organizations involved in education provision in community schools. The organizations received funding from the Ministry of Education and donors such as UNICEF, USAID and others (http://www.racecourseschool.com/blog/ dated 28/11/2009).

Three types of community schools in Zambia

(a) Community schools that were launched and managed by the community and rely entirely on the support of the community. These schools tended to be severely under-resourced.

Paraffin community school, Luapula, photo by Vincent Snijders

(b) Community schools that were funded and sponsored by a church or NGO with intentions of eventually turning ownership and operations to a Parent Community School Committee (PCSC).

(c) Community schools launched and sponsored by individuals, which were run like private schools with little or no involvement from the community.

Due to their limited size, many of these schools employed multi-grade teaching especially in rural areas.

Factors affecting retention of pupils in community schools

For many years research has concentrated solely on the problem of access to education. This access-focused approach is inadequate if it does not take into account conditions governing the retention rate of students in the school system, that is the rate at which students are retained in the school until they graduate from the primary level. Michael (1998) noted that finding ways to minimize school wastage must play a central role in any serious effort to reach the goal for Education for All. The main discussion in this literature is around why

children fail to remain in school and the literature explores the subject of dropout after enrolment, the factor which competes with the goal of every child completing primary education.

A number of studies highlight the link between poverty and low retention of pupils in school. Hunt (2008) noted that household income was an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially incurs a range of costs both upfront and hidden costs. Upfront costs include school fees while hidden costs include uniforms, travel expenses to school, equipment and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school. Hunters & May (2003:5) call poverty 'a plausible explanation of school disruption "while UNICEF (2005) found that poverty was the most common primary and contributory reason for students to be out of school. Both statistical and empirical research suggest that children from better off households are more likely to remain in school whilst those who are poorer are more likely never to have attended or dropped out once they have enrolled. Chugh (2004:86), looking at the pattern of access and non access of education in slums in Bangalore, India, indicated that the income of the father was linked to the continuity or discontinuity of the child in school with the fathers of most dropouts not employed. When income levels are low, children are called to supplement the household income especially when children get older and the opportunity cost of their time increases. Therefore, they are forced to withdraw from school. Brown and Park (2002) saw poor and credit constrained children three times more likely than other children to drop out of school. Dachi and Garret (2003:36) asked a series of questions to parents and guardians about the financial circumstances surrounding children's school enrollment in Tanzania. Virtually all households responding said that the main barrier to sending children to school was financial and the ability to pay. As part of mitigation most countries have adopted fee free systems and community schools in principle have gone a mile ahead of ensuring that hidden costs are minimized. It has been cited that the issue of poverty is a major factor preventing extremely poor and vulnerable boys and girls from enrolling and staying in school in Third World countries. Furthermore it was also noted by the Irish Aid (2008:22) that economic barriers made even free education impossible for poor families.

Bereavement and orphan hood has been identified as another major challenge affecting retention of pupils in schools. Bereavement amongst family members and in particular parents often makes children more vulnerable to dropout, non enrolment, late enrolment and slow progress resulting in low retention of pupils in schools. Whilst being orphaned is often linked to an increased likelihood to childhood poverty, this is dependent on household context and who takes care of the orphaned children. Most children found in good orphanages in Zambia are well looked after and given good education. However, orphan hood often exacerbates financial constraints for poorer households and increase the demands for child labour and dropout (Bennell et al 2002). Chipfakacha's research on Uganda has shown that deaths from AIDS are associated with reduced schooling for children (Chipfakacha, 1999 cited in Hunter & May, 2003). With relation to dropout, research in Malawi suggested that 9.1% of children were found to drop out of school the year following the death of one parent but numbers rose to 17.1% for two parents (Harris & Schubert 2001 cited in Jukes, 2006). In Zimbabwe, orphan hood was found to decrease the likelihood of school completion. However, school completion was sustained, particularly for female orphans where orphanhood resulted in a female-headed household and greater access to external resources (Nyamukapa & Greyson, 2005). Guarcello, et al (2004) researching on Burundi claimed that orphans faced a higher risk of lost schooling and non attendance, with male orphans more likely to attend school than female orphans. Conversely, Bennell et al (2002) research on AIDS orphans in Botswana suggested that the rates of permanent dropout were not substantial because of support given by government and relatively little overt discrimination of orphans by teaching staff and students. However, research by UNICEF (2006 in Pridmore, 2007) highlighted the report from East Africa that girls orphaned by AIDS were increasingly being steered towards early marriages by their caregivers leading to dropout and low retention of pupils, while the World Bank (2002) noted that girls often dropped out of school to be care givers to siblings. This is a strong case for Zambia where most pupils in community schools are orphans with little external support.

One of the factors identified as being correlated with persistence in school had to do with household. The people who make up the household seem to have an influence over education access and retention, particularly in poorer communities. Research conducted in Morrocco

showed that girls and boys staying in school were correlated with father's presence in the home and for boys there was also a correlation with father's having finished primary (MEN, 1993). Conversely Grant and Hallman's (2006) research on education access in South Africa showed that children living with mothers were significantly less likely to have dropped out of school relative to those whose mothers were living elsewhere or whose mothers were dead. Additionally, Hunter and May (2003) described a particular notable relationship between family background and dropping out. They noted that youths from poor families, from single parents, children of the poorly educated parents and children with few role models in higher education were more likely to drop out from school. On the other hand household size can be a significant determinant of access and retention of pupils in school. Some contend that large household size (and in particular number of children) experience financial burden and greater work load. Children from such homes are less likely to attend school and often drop out (Boyle et al, 2002:4). However, some studies indicate that household with more children, jobs can be spread between them and siblings more likely to attend school (Colclough et al, 2000). This has got an important bearing on pupil retention in community schools in Zambia where most children are orphans and fostered in large families. While in many cases children are fostered in order to allow them greater educational opportunities, at times the focus is on foster children providing forms of child labour in household with less focus on education.

Studies conducted have shown that income shocks and child labour are factors that also affect retention of pupils in schools. Research studies indicate that vulnerable households can withdraw children from school as part of their coping strategy to deal with income shocks, often in order to work, save costs or to free some household members up to work. In the face of sudden income shock, poorer households with fewer physical assets may increase their labor supply, with women and children often called upon (World Bank 2000, cited in Hunter and May, 2003). While this coping strategy mitigated short term income shocks, the consequences of withdrawing children from school can lead to more permanent drop out. Conversely, the Hunter and May (2003:17) research in South Africa suggest that shocks to household do not seem to be a strong predictor to school disruption, with poor household attempting to defend the education of their children in the face of a range of shocks.

Child labour is one main copying strategy to mitigate poverty in Developing countries. Some studies have indicated that in many cases, girls have more duties than boys (Kane, 2004). Yet other studies indicate in particular contexts boys from poor urban household have particular pressures on them to work. For example, Hunter and May (2003) draw on research by Tanner, Krahn & Hartnagel (1995) which indicates a higher number of boys (than girls) leave school in South Africa because earning money and attaining adult status is more attractive to them. All in all, studies indicate that forms of child labour create pressure on a child's time. Children who combine work with school can have erratic school attendance, regular school absence (Croft, 2002, Brock & Cammish, 1997:34). This has a negative effect on retention of pupils in school because while still having educational access, low attendance in particular is seen as a precursor to dropping out. In Ghana child labour is seen as a prime reason for non-enrolment and low retention of pupils in schools (Fentiman, et al, 1999). A prime cause of absenteeism, repetition and most particularly dropout rates in Tanzania (Dachi & Garret, 2003). Research in Ethopia and Guinea showed that child labour was a significant reason for dropping out in both countries.

"In Ethopia, many children of both sexes, who enroll in September at the beginning of the year, leave by November because the demand on their labour during harvest time is great. In some cases, they re-enroll the following year in grade one but again, are unable to complete the year" (Colclough, et al, 2000:17).

The health of children is critical in determining pupil retention in school though there are few studies which directly tackle the issues connected with health and retention of pupils in school. Research indicates that school-aged children who suffer from protein-energy malnutrition, hunger or who lack certain micro nutrients in their diet do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well nourished children (Pridmore, 2007). Studies suggest that these children attend school less frequently, are more likely to repeat grades, drop out early and fail to learn adequately due to poor levels of attention, low motivation and poor cognitive function (Pollitt, 1990; Grantham-McGregor & Walker, 1998). The PROBE report (1999: 33) highlights the link between illness-related absence and drop out as "resuming studies after a prolonged absence can be difficult". With the absence of anti-retroviral drugs,

those who do not make it to school have reduced attendance and many dropped out as they become too ill. As children become sexually active, HIV/AIDS related infections increase, leading to missed schooling and drop outs.

The issue of children's health is closely connected to the health of relatives. Children whose parents or siblings fell ill might be expected to be caregivers for these sick relatives, at times causing them to miss or drop out of school. This is especially the case for girls (Case & Ardington, 2004). However, the frequency for drop-outs appears to be context specific with some areas affected more than others. For example quantitative research by Case & Ardington (2004) in South Africa indicated that children did not get pulled from schools to look after dying mothers. Bennell, et al (2002) in discussing HIV/AIDS, child care givers and drop out in Botswana, stated that their research had provided no information on the number of children affected in this way and teachers had only been able to identify a small number of students affected. Conversely, a research by Akunga, et al, (2000) in Kenya found that pupils living with people infected with HIV/AIDS had low concentration levels in school as they tried to cope with home and school lives.

Taking a more gender perspective, there is a range of research around pregnancy and re-entry into schools. Studies indicate that pregnancy is a significant cause of drop out for teenage girls from school (Cardoso & Verner, 2007; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hunter & May, 2003). The lack of social and economic opportunities for girls and domestic demands placed on them, along with gender inequities of the education system may lead to poor academic performance which may endorse early motherhood. In such a case girls' retention in school is negatively affected. Most African countries have introduced re-entry policy to assist pregnant girls to continue school after delivery. However, there are other factors which militate against re-entry. Some girls marry or move into their partner's homes following a pregnancy (Grant & Hallman, 2006) which might move them from their educational base. In Botswana, while girls are allowed to re-enter, it has been found that many girls do not return to school due to fear of ridicule, intimidation, social branding and harassment by the school community (Dunne & Leach, 2005: 21). Additionally, while policies may allow re-entry this information

may not be clearly conveyed throughout the system or communities may continue to adhere to their own cultural norms preventing these girls from attending school (Kane, 2004: 71).

It has been noted in most studies that gender practices at the household level affect the opportunities of girls and boys to access and complete education. Studies indicate the preference many households have for the education of boys over girls, with girls' education often deemed less important and dropouts consequently more likely (Admassie, 2003; Boyle et al,2002; Kobiane, 2002). For example, the gendered division of labour within households often sees girls taking on household duties and child care duties, which takes them out of school. Boyle et al (2002: 46) suggest that households in their studies tended to see boys' education bringing greater future economic benefits, which was not to be the case with girls (whose future was expected to lie in family care and marriage). Other research studies give examples of gendered household practices and convictions which appear to influence schooling retention. Colclough et al (2000) describes how some parents in Ethopia claimed that 12 years of schooling would mean their daughters would not perform house work and as a result may not be able to find husbands. Similarly, in Guinea parents mentioned that primary schooling was irrelevant to girls' roles. Both indicated a lack of motivation towards continued schooling for girls. An ILO / PEC (2004: 19) study highlights the propensity for girls to be excluded or withdrawn from school earlier than boys, in the belief that " as a girl she does not need to be educated or indeed should not be too educated in case it blights her marriage potential". In most cases parents view the education of girls as a poor investment because girls are married off and leave home, bringing the benefits of education to the husbands' family rather than her own.

However, the situation is not the same for all girls. There seem to be indications that perceptions around gender might be shifting in some contexts. In numerical terms, educational access for girls is increasing and in some instances even higher than boys. A research in Guinea (Colclough et al, 2000) indicates that parents were now aware of the broader benefits of girls' schooling such as being able to read and write, earning incomes to help themselves and taking better care of their own families. However, Boyle et al (2000) indicate that even contexts where the value of education is perceived to be in gendered terms

'equal' when households are faced with financial difficulties, it is still the girls who are more likely to be pulled from school.

Some studies suggest that the location of schools is another factor that determines access, retention and drop out of learners. In many instances educational non-access in general and drop-out rates are higher in rural rather than urban and peri-urban settings. (Birdsall et al, 2005) claim that in many countries the rural / urban educational gap is the most important factor explaining educational differentials. The possible reasons are households in rural areas tend to be poorer, schools more inaccessible, household members less educated and pressures on children to work to support the household greater. However, Mungisha (2006) informs us that this rural / urban picture is not always true. In his research he discovered that in urban slum areas there are high drop-out rates due to poor quality primary schooling, limited access to secondary schools, vulnerability to risky behaviors, e.g. sexual activity, alcohol, drugs, difficult home environments and increased child labour. In Mungisha's research (2006) it was observed that the schools that served the slum communities were mainly non formal and generally characterized by shortage of staff, crowded classrooms and lack of resources. Schools situated outside slum communities were in most cases unaffordable to the slum dwellers and secondary schooling was at times problematic. Therefore, pupils in community schools which were mostly found in slum areas were often too de-motivated to continue their education because of the limited opportunities to enter secondary schools situated in urban areas.

Factors within the schools such as schooling quality, processes, practices and schooling relations can influence access and retention of pupils in schools. Educational quality has been considered by many researchers as a major factor influencing access and retention of learners. Many educators have added their voices that as access to education increases with EFA and UPE, there is urgent need to shift the focus towards quality in order to ensure sustained access and persistence. With increased access, Boyle et al (2002) noted that quality has been compromised to some extent which has negatively impacted on pupil retention in schools. Some of the indicators showing poor quality in schools, especially community schools are lack or inadequate school facilities, for example, text books, desks, black boards, toilets

(Brock and Cammish, 1997, Molteno et al, 2000). Colclough et al (2000) noted that the availability of (separate) sanitary facilities is important for female retention particularly as girls get older and start menstruation. In their research in Ethopia, only 5 of the 11 schools visited had latrines and of these only one was separated for boys and girls. They noted that the lack of latrines led to female absence during menstruation and of subsequent poor performance or drop out of girls.

The quality of the teaching and learning experiences for children in schools is linked to learning outcomes and influences children's experiences of schooling, their motivation and the move towards dropping out of school. A research report from the University of Zambia (2003 cited by Smith, 2003) describes the reality of the classrooms of the Southern Province of Zambia, where teachers had not prepared lessons, had no schemes of work, did not mark pupils books consistently and did not determine satisfactory goals for teaching, classrooms lacked materials and text books and little worthwhile learning was observed. Smith suggested that the classroom practices and lack of resources had an impact on retention of students. Molteno et al, (2000: 2) observed that children with hard pressed life conditions dropped out due to the fact that they had learnt little. They also noted that vulnerable children got the worst school systems when they needed the best to make up to their disadvantaged position.

The other dimension of quality is how society perceived education in the context of its relevance to their needs. The educational quality is a factor that impact on decision making around schooling access and retention. Pryor & Ampiah (2003:200) in their research in a village in Ghana noted that many villages were disillusioned and considered education not worthwhile because the schooling in the village was not sufficiently of good quality to warrant investment of time, energy and economic resources. Therefore, pupils decided to leave school due to poor educational quality offered in some schools.

Summary

The EFA movement brought drastic changes in the education sector in all countries of the world especially developing countries. The literature revealed that countries adopted Alternative Primary Education systems to achieve EFA and MGDs goals on education by

2015. Most countries adopted community school system to increase the capacity of the education sector to enroll pupils who were under-served by the public education system. The literature revealed that millions of vulnerable children were not given the opportunity to go to school until the introduction of community schools in rural and over populated slum areas. The literature review has discovered that the focus seems to be on getting children into school rather than ensuring some sort of sustained access once they are present. The literature has also discovered that the same factors that influences being out of school are the same factors that influence dropout and those obstacles grow much stronger as the child ages and enters adolescence. It is in this revelation that we have discovered that the factors influencing access are different from those influencing retention and dropout. The literature review established that poverty in its various guises often influences schooling, retention and schooling demand. It is quite clear that community schools face many challenges which affect pupils' schooling experiences and learning outcomes. Additionally, the pupils found in community schools are vulnerable children who are hard pressed with daily life experiences and find it difficult to learn. Although community schools have been hailed as successful alternative to education by providing education to so many vulnerable children, we are yet to establish to what extent this type of schooling was able to retain pupils. The Zambian community school education landscape situation provides a big challenge in that most schools are owned by communities that face many economic challenges and it could be quite interesting to investigate how they sustain their schools and ensure pupils remain in school. Therefore the issue of retention of pupils in community schools is crucial in ensuring that the EFA and MDG targets are achieved by 2015.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This Chapter outlines the procedures used to collect the necessary information required to achieve the research objectives and methods used to analyze the collected data.

The Chapter begins with the description of the research design, a description of the population and gives the sample size as well as the sampling procedures. The Chapter then gives a description of data collection instruments, distribution of instruments, data collection methods and data analysis.

Research Design

The research employed mainly a qualitative survey and field study research approach as well as quantitative research approach especially in data analysis. There are a good number of reasons for the use of the two research methods. Firstly, qualitative research adopts a holistic perspective by providing a contextual understanding of the complex interrelationships between causes and effects that affect human behavior (Goetz & Le Compte, 1984), allowing the use of interviews and observations. Face to face and focus group discussions made it possible to identify the concerns and priorities of those the researcher was speaking to. The researcher had the opportunity to interact with participants in their social setting and it enabled the researcher to go into considerable amount of detail concerning participants' views and gain deep insights into their experiences through face to face interaction. This gave the researcher a stronger sense of confidence in making recommendations than he would have had from quantitative data alone.

Secondly, a study of access and retention is incomplete without quantitative analysis. Starting with enrolments and drop-out rates over the years and working through methodical comparison of the correlates of enrolment, a clear picture of the situation concerning retention of pupils in community schools emerged. The use of quantitative data allowed the gendered patterns to be compared systematically throughout the research and these patterns were

compared with those arising out of the interviews and focus groups. The quantitative method was effectively used in the presentation of data in frequencies, percentages, tables and graphs.

Description of the Population

The target population was taken from Lusaka district. It consisted of all head teachers, teachers, pupils found in community schools, parents in the community, Ministry of Education officials at DEBS, PEO and MOE headquarters and NGOs involved in the community school education system. Lusaka district was purposely chosen out of the many districts because that was where the researcher lived and the district provided a wider presentation of different types of community schools operating in Zambia both rural, peri-urban and urban schools. The study covered two types of community schools found in rural areas of Lusaka which were largely under-resourced, schools found in urban-slum areas which were either run by communities, churches or NGOs. These two sites were chosen because they presented contrasting social, cultural and economic situations and thus to a certain degree representative of the country as a whole.

Sample size

An important consideration in sample design is the choice of the sample size. According to Anderson et al (2002) the best choice usually involves a trade-off between cost and precision. It is further noted that large samples provide greater precision but are more costly. Thus more often than not, the budget for a study will dictate how large the sample can be. With this view in mind, the sample consisted of 6 community schools. 6 head teachers were purposively picked from the 6 community schools. 40 teachers were included in the sample at least 8 from each school. 100 pupils were picked to be part of the sample with each school providing 20 respondents. The sample also included 20 parents from the community most of whom were part of the school management committee and 10 people from NGOs and MOE officials.

Sampling Procedures

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the one-to-one interviews and answering questionnaires. This was in the case of picking of head teachers, NGO members of staff

running community schools and MOE officials. Purposive sampling is a method in which researchers carefully select the cases to be included in the sample based on an assessment of their typicality (Cohen, et al, 2001). In this way a sample is built up that meets the specific needs of the researcher. Cohen et al (2001) however acknowledge that while purposive sampling may satisfy the researcher's needs, it does not represent the wider population. The head teachers of community schools, respondents from NGOs involved in community school education, MOE respondents attached to community schools were selected on the basis that they were found in those institutions. Pupils in community schools, teachers and parents were randomly selected, though to some extent the researcher considered pupils in middle grades from Grade 6-7 to participate in answering the questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion for the obvious reason of better understanding of issues. There was also a deliberate move of including parents who were part of the management committee of the schools because they understood community school challenges better than their counterparts due to their constant interaction with administrators, teachers and pupils.

Data Collection Instruments

Collection of data was done by preparing and administering questionnaires and interview guides. The respondents included MOE officials, NGO members of staff, Head teachers, teachers, parents and pupils. All were required to answer specific questionnaires. There were three types of questionnaires. The first questionnaires were administered on head teachers (school coordinators). The second questionnaire was administered on teachers. The third questionnaire was meant for the pupils. Semi-structured interview guides were also administered on MOE and NGO officials, head teachers, teachers, parents and pupils. Confidentiality was strictly observed by the researcher.

Distribution of the research instruments

Table 3.1 shows how the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the respondents

Table 3.1 Distribution of Questionnaires

Respondents	Number distributed	Number distributed by gender		Total distributed	Total received
		Female	Male		
Pupils in (10) schools	100	50	50	100	100
Head teachers	6	3	3	6	5
Teachers	40	20	20	40	27
Parents	20	-	-	-	-
MOE, NGO staff	10	-	-	-	-

Data Collection Methods and Techniques

The chief and primary source of data collection used in this study was one to one interview, Focus Group Discussion, questionnaire, study of documents and field notes were used as secondary source of data collection.

The interview was adopted for this study because it is the most convenient means of understanding human values and exploring views and experiences. Another advantage of

using the interview is its adaptability and the opportunity it offers to obtain rich and in-depth information in order to appreciate a situation from other points of view and experience (Cohen et al, 2001).

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was preferred to interview pupils using semi-structured guide. Sarantakos (2005:182) explains that group discussions offer information about…processes, spontaneous feelings, reasons and causes through the views of respondents. Thus the factors affecting vulnerable children to dropout or remain in school were explained in the discussion. The semi-structured guide stood out as the most appropriate means of investigating the challenges faced by community schools in pupil retention which is the focus of the study. It was considered most useful in study because it allowed the researcher to ask pre-established key questions and at the same time probe more deeply in response to interviewees' contributions (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989). The researcher was also engaged in informal and unstructured interviews as and when appropriate especially in situations in which it was likely to help him understand certain complexities affecting pupil persistence in school that were more nuanced and required tact to unravel. It is worth noting, however that the interview as a method is prone to some limitations; such as being open to misinterpretation due to cultural differences between interviewer and interviewees. It is also susceptible to ethical dilemmas and dependent on respondents' openness, honesty and circumstances at the particular time. The researcher, therefore, had to rely on interpersonal skills, vigilance and proficiency in conducting interviews. The researcher also used other methods to collect data in order to compliment the limitations encountered in the interviews.

The study of documents such as class registers, enrolment school charts, helped to collaborate evidence gathered from other sources. The review of documents is an obstructive and non-reactive method that was used to elicit information about pupils' enrolment and retention. The advantages of documentary data gathering are that it can be conducted without disturbing the setting, information can be validated, it is exact and can have broad coverage (Marshall, C & Rossman, B.G., 2006). However, its weakness lies in the difficulty in retrieving data, biased selectivity, biased reporting (reflecting the author's own bias) and the occasional problems

encountered in accessing documents. In this vein, the researcher examined documents with the research questions in mind in order to extract information relevant to the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

Analysis of the collected data was based on the objectives of the research study. All answered questionnaire items were organized, quantified, categorized in themes and subjected to statistical analysis. These were then summarized into frequencies and percentages with the help of SPSS package. This was then presented using frequency tables and graphical presentations. The researcher transcribed all interview responses from different groups or individual respondents. The data were summarized using narrative reports. The findings are presented and discussed in Chapter four (4) and five (5) respectively. The data were strictly presented and interpreted in relation to research objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents findings of the study. The qualitative data were summarized using narrative reports while quantitative data were presented in frequencies, percentages, tables and graphs. The findings were presented strictly in relation to the research objectives.

Background demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presents the background characteristics of the school coordinators, teachers and pupils in the study. The information for school coordinators and teachers includes sex, age, marital status, academic and professional qualifications as well as years of teaching experience. The researcher has explained why this information was relevant for this study in chapter five. For the pupils, the focus was on gender, age, grade and family status. The section also presents a brief description of the other respondents namely parents, ZCSS and MOE officials.

School Coordinators

The total number of school coordinators sampled was six (6) from the peri-urban community schools of Lusaka District. However, five (5) school coordinators participated giving a completion rate of 83.3 %. The following are some of the characteristics of school coordinators that were seen to be useful to the study.

(a) Gender

The frequency table on the next page shows the distribution of school coordinators by gender

Table 4.1 Distribution of school coordinators by gender

Sex	Frequency
Male	3
Female	2
Total	5
Missing	1

(b) Age

The table below shows the distribution of school coordinators according to sex and age group.

Table 4.2 Distribution of school coordinators by sex and age group

Sex of respondents	Age of respondents		Total
	31 – 35	41 & above	
Male	2	1	3
Female	1	1	2
Total	3	2	5

(c) Marital Status

The table on the next page shows the distribution of school coordinators according to sex and marital status.

Table 4.3 Distribution of school coordinators by sex & marital status

Sex of respondents	Marital status		Total
	Married	**Divorced**	
Male	3	0	3
Female	1	1	2
Total	4	1	5

(d) Highest academic and professional qualification

The research findings revealed that the five (5) school coordinators had completed Grade 12. Their highest professional qualification according to gender is shown in the table below.

Table 4.4 Distribution of school coordinators by gender & professional qualification

Sex of respondents	Highest professional qualification		Total
	Primary teachers certificate	**Diploma in Education**	
Male	2	1	3
Female	2	0	2
Total	4	1	5

when school coordinators were further probed during interviews two of the respondents , one male and one female revealed that they had no formal training in teaching, thus no qualification. The two revealed that they didn't want their subordinates to know about their lack of qualification.

(e)Teaching experience

The pie chart on the next page shows the years of experience of school coordinators.

Figure 4.1 Years of teaching experience
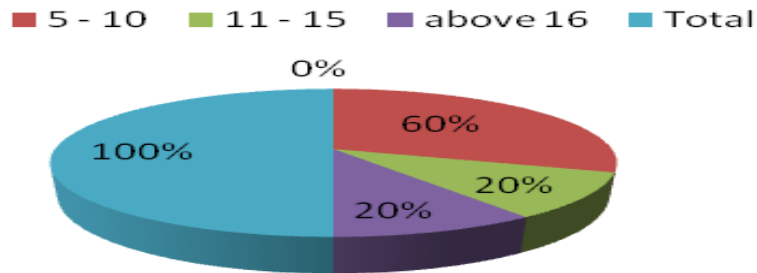
Teachers

The total number of teachers sampled was forty (40). A total of 27 teachers participated giving a completion rate of 67.5%.

(a) Gender

The bar chart below shows the distribution of teachers by gender.

Figure 4.2 Distribution of teachers by gender
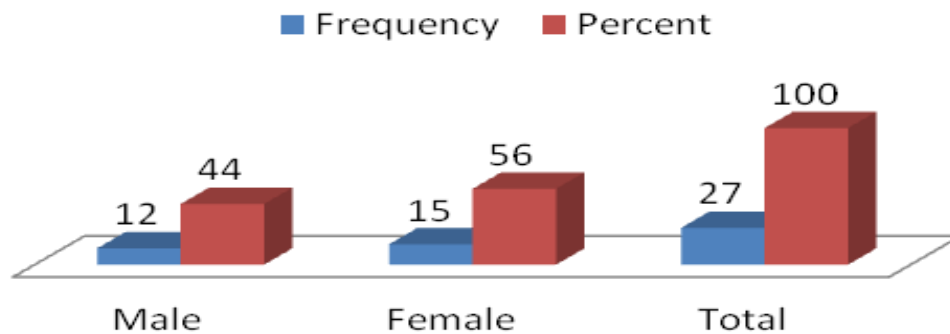
From the graph 12 respondents were male representing 44.4% and 15 were female representing 55.6% of the respondents.

(b) Age

Table 4.5 on the next page shows the distribution of teachers according to sex and age group.

Table 4.5 distribution of teachers by sex & age group

Sex of respondents	Age of respondents					Total
	Below 25	26 - 30	31 - 35	36 - 40	41 & above	
Male	5	5	1	0	1	12
Female	2	6	3	3	1	15
Total	7	11	4	3	2	27

(c) Marital status

The table below shows the distribution of teachers according to sex and marital status

Table 4.6 Distribution of teachers by sex & marital status

Sex of respondents	Marital Status				Total
	Married	Single	Widowed	Divorced	
Male	4	8	0	0	12
Female	6	5	2	2	15
Total	10	13	2	2	27

(d) Highest Academic and Professional qualification

The research findings discovered that of the 27 respondents 5 had primary teachers certificates representing 18.5% and only 1 had a diploma in education representing 3.7 %, 10 teachers representing 37% of the respondents had other qualifications mostly short courses related to teaching and other courses not related to teaching. 11 of the respondents had no formal training in teaching or any other courses representing 40.7% of the respondents. Therefore, 16 respondents had some kind of training representing 59.3% while 11 had no training of any kind.

The bar chart on the next page shows the distribution of teachers according to their qualification.

Figure 4.3 Distribution of teachers by professional qualification
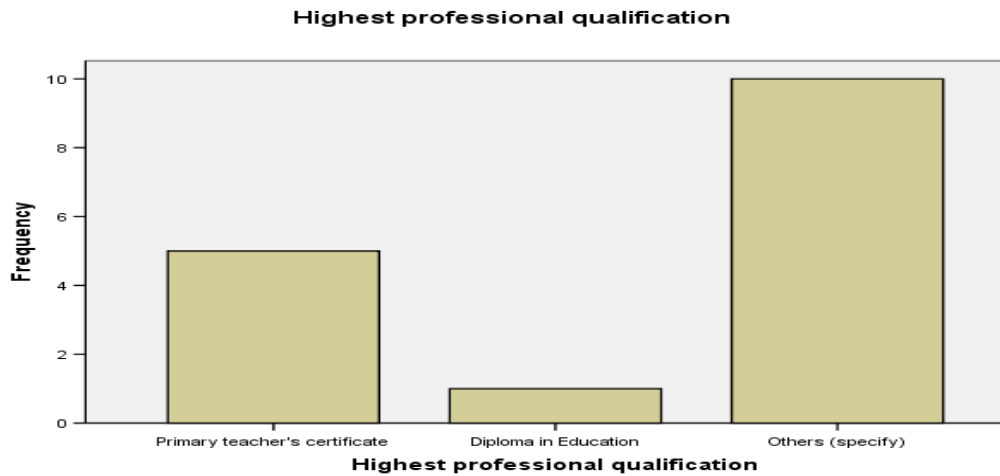
(e) Teaching experience

The bar chart below shows the years of teaching experience of respondents

Figure 4.4 Distribution of teachers by their teaching experience
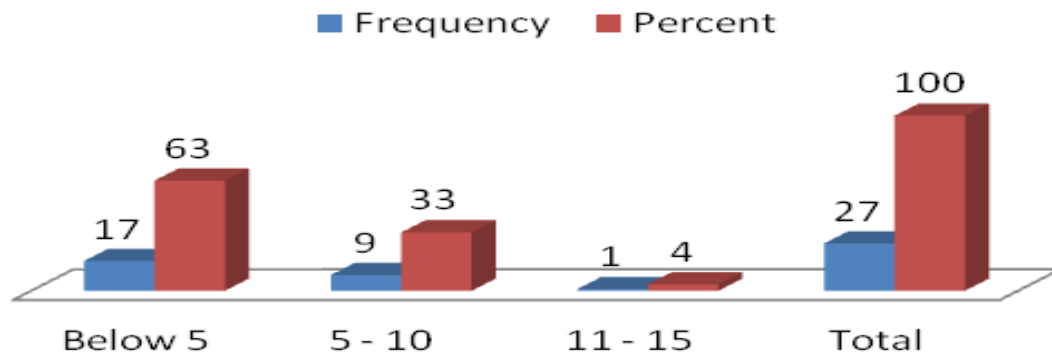
From the study it was revealed that 17 of the 27 teachers had only worked for less than five (5) years representing 63% of the respondents, while nine (9) had the work experience of between 5 – 10 years representing 33.3% of the respondents. Only one (1) had the work experience of between 11 – 15 years

Pupils

The total of pupils sampled was 100 and all of them participated in answering the questionaires which resulted in 100% completion rate.

(a) Gender

Of the 100 pupils interviewed using a questionaire, 43% were boys and 57% were girls. The bar chart below shows gender distribution of respondents

Figure 4.5 Distribution of pupils by gender
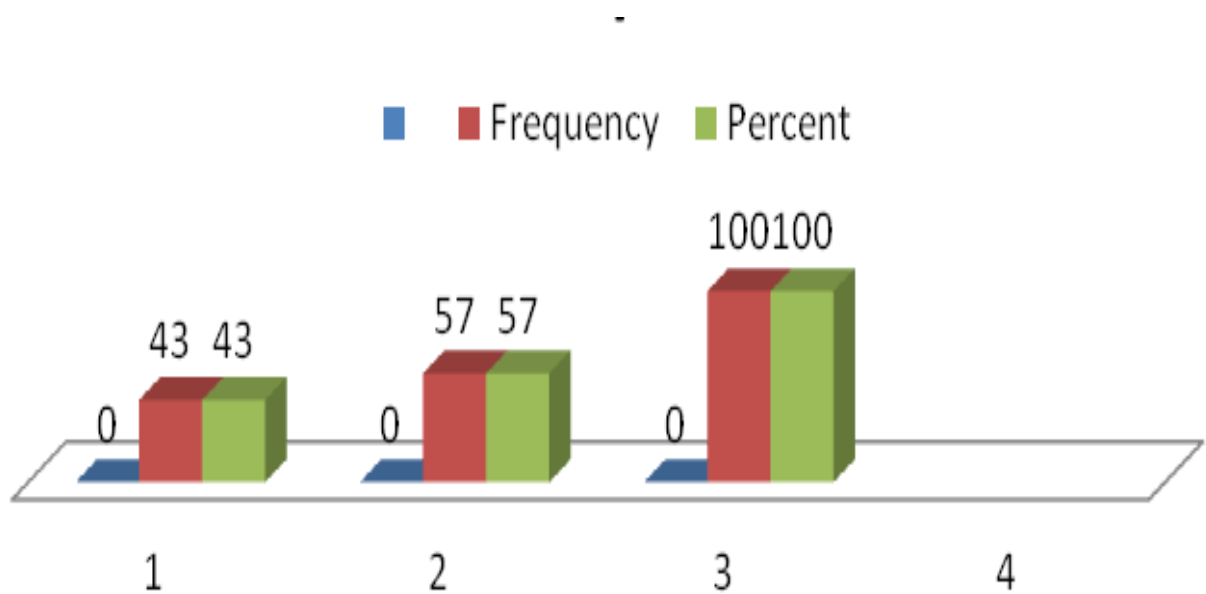
(b) Age

The table on the next page shows the age of pupils who participated in the study and their grades.

Table 4.7 Age of pupils and grade

Years	Grade		Total
	6	7	
-	0	1	1
11	3	0	3
12	2	8	10
13	12	16	28
14	8	23	31
15	3	13	16
16	1	4	5
17	0	5	5
20	0	1	1
Total	**29**	**71**	**100**

Of the 100 pupils interviewed, 29 were in Grade six (6) and 71 were in Grade seven (7). The research findings also revealed that 12 pupils in Grade 6 were 14 years and above and therefore could be deemed to be overaged. In Grade 7, 23 pupils were 15 years and above and could also be considered overaged especially the 6 pupils who were 17 years and above.

(c) Family Status

The family status which was considered was whether the pupils had parents or not. The research findings is shown in table 4.8. The distribution of respondents was according to sex and parental status

Table 4.8 Distibution of pupils by sex & parental status

Sex	Parents				Total
	Both living	**Both dead**	**Mother living**	**Father living**	
Male	29	6	8	0	43
Female	32	3	17	5	57
Total	**61**	**9**	**25**	**5**	**100**

The research findings revealed that 61 pupils had both parents living, 9 were double orphans and 30 were single orphans. However, it was later discovered that at the time the study was conducted most of the pupils who were mostly double and single orphans were sent away due to non payment of school fees. This explains the high number of pupils with both parents who participated in the study. During the FGD with pupils at school C, one pupil had this to say;

> *I have just reported today after my uncle from Kitwe gave me some money most of our friends have been chased because they have not paid school contribution of K20 000 (about $4)*

Another pupil from school B had this to say;

> *Teachers are very strict this term, they want us to pay money especially that we are coming to the end of the year. Alot of our friends have arrears and I dont know if they will manage*

(d)Economic status

The study wanted to establish the economic status of pupils found in community schools in order to determine their vulnerability.

When 27 teachers were asked to state the economic status of their pupils, most of the respondents indicated that their pupils were poor. The results are summarised in the bar chart below.

Figure 4.6 Distribution of pupils according to economic status
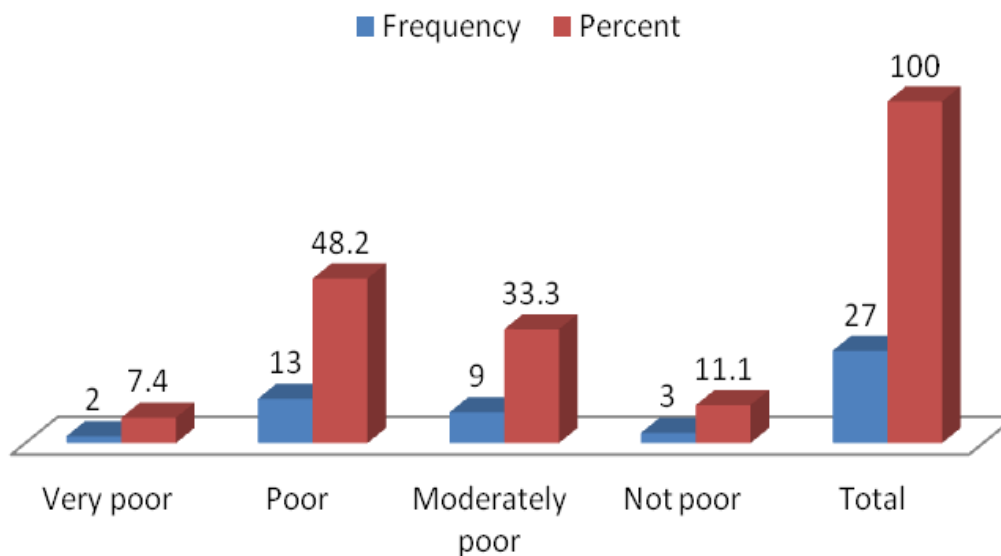
The five school head teachers also indicated that their pupils were coming from poor families. Parents during interviews also confirmed that most of them were unemployed and too poor to provide the basic needs of their children.

Parents

The total number of parents sampled was 20 who participated in the study. A total of five (5) FGD were conducted where both male and female parents participated. The discussions were conducted using English and Nyanja.

MOE and NGO officials

The total number of officials sampled was ten (10), however only five   (5) participated in one to one interviews. Of the five, two were Education Standards officers from the DEBS

office, one Senior Education Standards officer from PEO's office and two officers from ZOCS.

Increased enrolment Versus Retention rate

One of the objectives of the study was to find out whether there was positive or negative correlation between increased enrolment and retention rate in community schools at primary school level. This was to determine whether pupils remained in school until they completed their primary school education in view of the increased enrolment and access to primary education. In order to establish the facts, pupils, teachers, head teachers, parents, MOE and NGO officials were asked to give their views.

(a) Increased enrolment

When one hundred (100) pupils were asked to state whether there had been more pupils joining their shools, 90% of the pupils agreed and only 10% disagreed. Table 4.9 below shows the research findings.

Table 4.9 Pupils' responses to the question *Have you seen more pupils joining your school for the past three years up to 2011?*

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	90	90
No	10	10
Total	100	100

When twenty seven (27) teachers were asked to state whether they had experienced an increase in enrolment, twenty six (26) teachers representing 96.3% said 'Yes' while only 1 teacher representing 3.7% of the respondents said 'No'

When the school coordinators were asked the same question, all the five (5) agreed. MOE and ZOCS officials as well as parents during interviews agreed that they had seen an increase in enrolment in community schools.

The researcher conducted a head count in Grade 7 classes for each school to find out how many pupils had joined as new entrants for the past three years, the findings revealed that alot of pupils joined the schools at Grade 6 and 7. Table 4.10 below gives this information.

Table 4.10 Pupils who joined the school between grade 5 & 7

School	Total number of Grade 7 pupils	Number of pupils present	Number of pupils who joined
A	122	68	28
B	90	52	25
C	75	42	18
D	80	48	29
E	78	41	21

From the information given above, it was evident that there was an increase in enrolment.

Pupil Retention

Twenty seven (27) teachers were asked to state whether they had problems of pupil drop-out in their schools, twenty four (24) teachers representing 88.9%, indicated that they experienced the problem of pupil drop-out.

Figure 4.7 Teachers' responses to the question 'Do you have the problem of pupil dropout in your school?
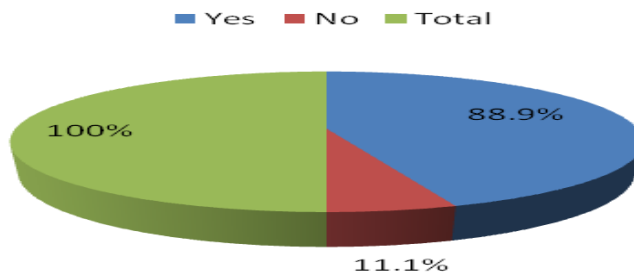
When further asked to state whether they had experienced an increase in the number of pupils dropping out of school, 14 teachers representing 51.9% said 'Yes'while 14 teachers representing 48.1% said 'No'. The findings are summarised in the table below

Table 4.11 Responses to the problem of pupil drop out

		Have you also experienced an increase in the number of pupils dropping out of school?				Total
		Yes	%	No	%	
Do you have the problem	**Yes**	14	59.9	10	37	24
of pupil drop out in your school?	**No**	o	0	3	11.1	3
Total		14	59.9	13	48.1	27

To get the views of pupils on the problem of pupil drop-out in community schools, respondents were asked four key questions. They were first asked if they knew some of the pupils who stopped school at their school in 2011when the study was conducted and their responses are summarised in table 4.12

Table 4.12 Responses by pupils on whether they knew of their friends who dropped out of school in 2011

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	85	85
No	14	14
Missing	1	1
Total	100	100

From the table, most of the pupils (85%) said that they knew of some pupils who had stopped school and only 14% said 'No'. One (1) respondent had no response to the question. The pupils were further asked to state whether they knew of some of their classmates who had stopped school in that year, 82 pupils representing 82% said 'Yes' and only 18 pupils representing 18% said 'No'. When they were requested to state whether they were still learning with all their classmates who were with them in Grade 1 in 2005 when they started school, eighty-four (84) representing 84 % of the pupils indicated that most of their Grade 1 classmates were no longer with them while sixteen (16) representing 16% of the respondents indicated that they were still learning with their Grade 1 classmates. Pupils were further asked to confirm if they were aware of some of their classmates who were with them in Grade 1 but had stopped, eighty-five (85) respondents said 'Yes' and only fifteen (15) said 'No'. The summary of the findings is shown in table 4.13.

Table 4.13 Responses by pupils on whether they knew of their classmates since grade 1 who dropped out of school

		Are you aware of some of your classmates who were with you in Gd.1 but have stopped?		Total
		Yes	No	
Are you still learning with	**Yes**	16	0	16
your classmates who were with	**No**	69	15	84
you in Gd. 1?				
Total		85	85	100

The researcher could not access registers for 2005 Grade 1 intake, the cohort in Grade 7 understudy due to non-availability of registers in all the five community schools. Therefore, the researcher conducted a simple census exercise to determine how many pupils in Grade 7 who were present when the exercise was conducted belonged to the original 2005 Grade 1 intake. The research findings are summarised in table 4.14.

Table 4.14 Distribution of Grade 7 pupils belonging to original 2005 grade 1 cohort

School	Total Number of 2011Gd .7 pupils	Number of Gd. 7 pupil present	Number of Original 2005 Gd. 1 intake
A	122	68	23
B	90	52	17
C	75	42	22
D	80	48	15
E	78	41	12

The results indicated that the number of original 2005 Grade 1 intake had greatly reduced though there had been a marked increase in enrolment of new pupils especially at Grade 6 and 7. Most of the pupils indicated that they were repeaters or had stopped school while others came on transfer.

The pattern of having few pupils belonging to the original 2005 Grade one (1) intake was also noticed in the composition of FGD teams. Table 4.15 summarises the findings.

Table 4.15 Distribution of FGD participants belonging to 2005 grade 1 cohort

School	Number of FGD participants	Number of 2005 Gd. 1 pupils
A	8	1
B	6	2
C	7	1
D	6	0
E	6	2

When pupils were asked if they had any idea where their former classmates had gone, one pupil had this to say;

> *most of our friends stopped school when their parents died, others went on transfer while others joined government school. We usually see some of our friends on the streets selling, stealing and drinking,they are now bad boys.*

The five school coordinators were also asked whether they experienced the problem of pupils stopping school. They all agreed to the fact that pupils stopped school. They, however, stated that the drop out rate was low and learners'completion rate was very high. One school coordinator had this to say;

> *we experience this problem with overaged pupils and pregnant girls, also when parents or guardians of our pupils die.*

When they were further asked to state whether schools had increased the pupil retention rate; three school coordinators indicated that schools had not increased the pupil retention rate. The findings are summarised in figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8 Responses by school coordinators on whether schools had increased the pupil retention rate
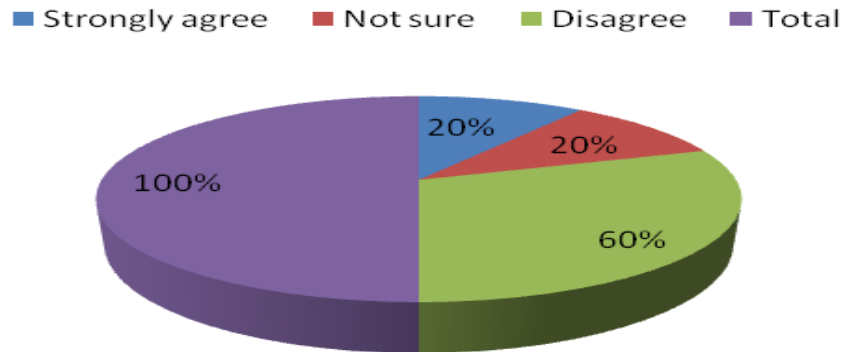
When parents were asked during interviews whether they had seen some of their children stopping school, almost all the parents interviewed agreed and lamented that some pupils unfortunately stopped school. One parent had this to say;

> *this is the biggest problem we are facing, some of our children especially overaged girls and boys simply stop school despite our encouragement.*

Officials from ZOCS acknowledged the fact that some pupils dropped out of school but had no official statistics. Officials from MOE also indicated that pupils dropped out just like in government schools but were not aware of how many dropped out of school. One official from the DEBS office had this to say;

> *the problem of pupil drop-out in community schools is not well known because we are not fed with annual reports and records are not properly kept.*

The researcher agreed with the statement because all the five (5) schools had no registers for 2005 Grade 1 intake.

Objective two (2) of this study was to determine the factors contributing to either low or high pupil retention rate in community schools. Therefore, this section focuses on the findings based on this objective.

Social and Economic factors

The study findings identified poverty to be the highest causal factor for low pupil retention in community schools. When teachers were asked to mention the causes of pupils dropping out of school, Twenty-four (24) out of twenty-seven (27) teachers representing 89% identified poverty, lack of financial support to be the main reason for pupils dropping out of school. Second in rating was pregnancies and early marriages identified17 teachers representing 63% of the respondents. 12 teachers representing 44% of the respondents mentioned peer pressure and need to earn money to be the causes while 10 teachers representing 37% of the respondents identified too much household chores and overage to be among the social factors contributing to low pupil retention in schools. 8 teachers representing 30% of the respondents identified bad role models by those who stopped school to be a causal factor.

The findings of the teachers were similar to the responses given by the head teachers. All the headteachers identified poverty, lack of encouragement from parents, pregnancies, death of parents to be some of the causes contributing to low pupil retention in community schools.

Parents also identified poverty to be the main cause of pupils'dropping out of school. One parent had this to say;

> *It is really painful to see our own children failing to go to school because we are unable to provide them with money. Most of us are not working or just do piece work and get very liitle at the end. Government should do something to help us.*

The high levels of poverty in these communities is quite evident in the way people live in these shanty compounds.

Feeding programme

The five Head teachers were asked whether they provided food to their pupils to mitigate the impact of poverty. Four (4) of the Head teachers indicated that they had feeding programmes for their pupils. Only one Head teacher denied having feeding programme for her pupils. Teachers during FGD from two (2) schools, confirmed that their schools provided food, while

teachers from the other two (2) schools explained that they had the food programme in the first term but had discontinued due to lack of sponsorship from NGOs like Children International, World Vision. Teachers from the other school confirmed that they had no feeding programme.

When the hundred (100) pupils were asked over the feeding programme, 49 pupils representing 49% confirmed that they were provided with food while 51 pupils representing 51% denied receiving food. During FGD interviews, some pupils revealed that they were fed on soya porridge, nshima with beans or vegetables. When they were asked on the impact of the feeding program on pupils' attendance, one pupil had this comment;

> *we are given soya porridge, sometimes nshima with beans or vegetables. Most of our friends come to school in order to eat. Sometimes big boys who are not pupils also come to feed. We all look forward for a meal because most of us eat very little at home.*

Provision of school requisites

The pupils were asked if they were provided with necessary school requirements, 81 pupils representing 81% acknowledged receiving school requisites while 19 pupils representing19% denied having received any school requisites from the school. During FGD interviews, they acknowleged receiving school requisites such as exercise books, pencils, school bags and sometimes orphans received school shoes. Pupils further revealed that they received the items once in a year. Head teachers and teachers confirmed that their pupils received the items mentioned.

School fees

When pupils were asked if they contributed or paid anything towards their education, the findings showed that 95% of the respondents confirmed paying school contribution fees while 5% denied paying any school fees. The findings are summarised in figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9 Pupils' responses to whether they contributed or paid towards their education
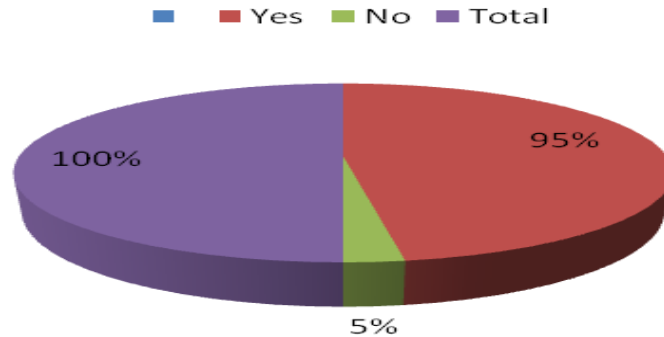
When they were further asked to state how much, one pupil at school A had this to say:

> *We pay K60 000 (about $12) per month that is K180 000 (about $36) per term and that is too much. Our friends who have been chased I do not think they will find money to pay. Many of them have large amounts in arrears.*

Another pupil at school B said:

> *We are made to pay K20 000 (about $ 4) every month. They tell us that the money we contribute is used to pay our teachers but it is very difficult to pay this money because our parents fail to pay.*

All the five head teachers confirmed that pupils pay some money, except some few cases of double orphans with no support from guardians. However, they were quick to defend the contribution fees paid by the community. One head teacher had this to say:

> *We are forced to charge them a token fee because it is the only way we can manage our schools. We receive no funding from the government. We heavily depend on contributions from parents to pay our teachers.*

Teachers also confirmed that pupils are asked to pay some money towards their education. One teacher had this to say:

> *This is the only money we depend on for our upkeep. We are not paid salaries in fact we get very little about K200 000 (about $20) per month and most pupils fail to pay.*

The issue of orphans being exempted from paying school fees was not consistent with the situation on the ground because it was discovered that most of the pupils who were chased were pupils from all categories including orphans.

School environment

The pupils were asked to state whether they had enough teachers; 64 pupils representing 64% of the respondents indicated that they had enough teachers, while 18 pupils representing 18% disagreed. 16 pupils representing16% of the respondents were not sure. When teachers were asked whether they were enough to handle all the pupils; the teachers indicated that they were not enough and that they were being overworked. School headteachers also confirmed that they lacked teachers and the few teachers were being overworked. Further investigations showed that teacher-pupil ratio was very high in four schools that had proper records of pupil enrolment as shown in the table below

Table 4.16 Teacher – pupil ratio in schools under study

School	Total pupil enrolment	Number of classes	Number of teachers	Teacher-pupil ratio
A	1220	12	18	1 : 68
B	686	6	6	1 : 114
C	745	5	8	1 : 93
D	427	3	9	1 : 47

In addition to the above numbers, the same teachers handle Grade 8 and 9 classes.

When pupils were asked whether classrooms were enough, spacious, clean and well organised; 63% indicated that the rooms were well organised, spacious and clean, 27% disagreed while 10% of the respondents were not sure. However, when the number of classrooms were considered aganist the total number of pupils enrolled, it was discovered that the number of pupils outstripped the number of classroom space.

The researcher wanted to establish whether pupils had enough textbooks and used textbooks in their schools. The results indicated that there were few textbooks and pupils seldom used them. The results are summarised in the figure below.

Figure 4.10 Pupils' response on the use of textbooks in classrooms
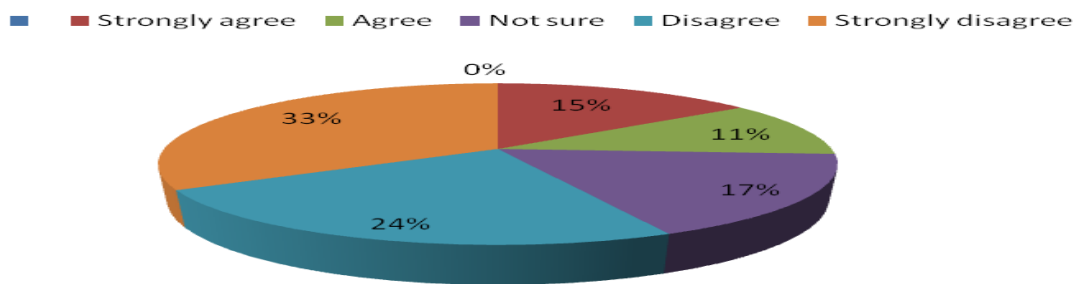
When pupils were asked if they had enough clean toilets that they used at school, most of them indicated that toilets were not enough and were in a bad state. The results are shown in the figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11 Responses on the availability of toilets in schools
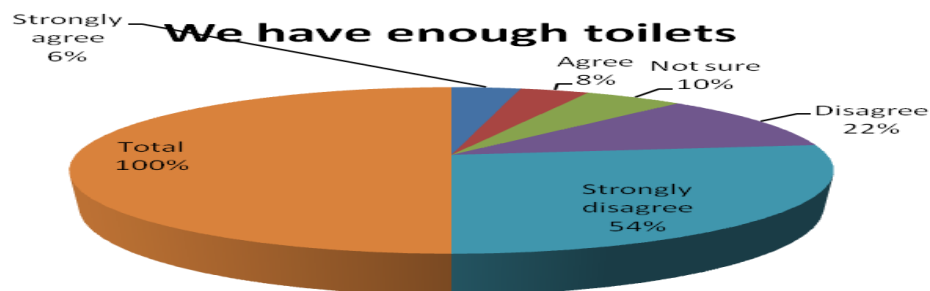
The head teachers were asked on the number of toilets facilities in their schools. The results are shown in the table below

Table 4.17 Number of toilets in each school

School	Number of Male teachers' toilets		Number of Female teachers' toilets		Number of Boys' toilets		Number of Girls' toilets	
	Water borne	Pit - latrine	Water borne	Pit- latrine	Water borne	Pit- latrine	Water borne	Pit - latrine
A	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1
B	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	2
C	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	2
D	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
E	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1

The data above clearly showed that toilet facilities in community schools were not enough and below the expected standards.

Gender versus pupils' survival rates

Objective number three (3) of the study was aimed at establishing the retention rates of pupils by gender in community schools in Lusaka district.

When head teachers were asked to identify which group of pupils mostly dropped out of school, all of them identified girls to be the most affected. When they were further asked to give reasons, most of them gave reasons of pregnancies, early marriages, lack of financial support and girls were forced to look after the siblings especially after the death of parents.

A similar response was given by teachers. Two (2) teachers representing 8% out of twenty-seven (27) mentioned boys to be most affected by the problem while twenty-four (24) teachers representing 88% mentioned that girls dropped out of school more than boys.

Figure 4.12 Teachers' response indicating which gender often drop out of school
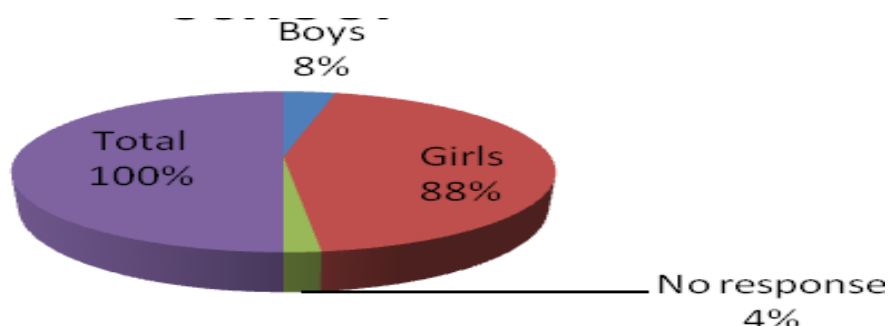
When pupils were asked during FGD interviews to state which group of pupils mostly dropped out of school. Most of the pupils felt that more girls stopped school than boys. One pupil from school D had this to say;

> *We see our friends, I mean girls, stop coming to school. Most of them complain of mistreatment at home, lack of support and some just become pregnant because they want money from boys. Esther and Lungowe have stopped coming to school because they have become pregnant . some boys also stop school and join street life.*

The researcher could not extract valuable information from class registers because they were poorly marked and in most cases not marked.

Measures taken to improve retention rates

The last objective of the study was to find out whether or not there were measures put in place to improve the retention rates of pupils in community schools.

When 27 teachers were asked to state the measures the school had taken to reduce pupil drop out, only 19 teachers responded to the question representing 70% of the respondents. Out of the 19 teachers, 8 of them representing 42 % indicated that pupils were encouraged to involve themselves in extra-curricula activities most especially sports. It was, however, discovered that the community schools understudy had no proper sports facilities like playfields or equipment. Despite this limitation pupils during FGD confirmed that they were involved in some sporting activities using the limited space available. One pupil from school C had this to say;

> *We usually use this small space for games. Boys sometimes use the football ground for the local club in the compound. What we want is to compete with pupils in government schools as well because we have very good teams.*

A pupil from school B had this to say;

> *When we have sports competitions in the second term alot of pupils come to school, sometimes even those who temporarily stopped coming we usually see them coming to play for the school team. We really enjoy sports.*

Headteachers at the five community schools also confirmed that sports was one major activity that attracted pupils to come to school. When asked whether Physical Education was taught in their schools; the headteachers and teachers were not so sure. Pupils, however, explained that only few instances especially in the second term, is when teachers took them out, for activities like running.

The other measure that was identified by respondents was sensitization of the community. Out of 19 teachers, 6 teachers representing 31% of the respondents indicated that they sensitized the community about the importance of school. Closely related to sensitization, 5 teachers representing 26% indicated that they usually visited parents and guardians of pupils and discussed with them about their children. Sometimes pupils were counselled while at school. The other measure that was taken as a remedy to improve pupils' retention rate was the provision of food. Only 3 teachers representing 16% indicated that they provided food to pupils while 2 teachers representing 11% indicated that pupils who had stopped school were encouraged to comeback and continue school especially those who fell pregnant. They also indicated that they provided financial support by helping pupils to register under some NGOs that provide financial assistance to vulnerable children. When pupils were interviewed during FGD, they confirmed that some of them were registered with some organizations that paid their school fees and were provided with school materials like uniforms, books, shoes and clothes. Only 1 teacher representing 5% of the respondents interviewed mentioned counselling on issues of sex and HIV /AIDS as a measure to reduce drop out rates. She indicated that pupils were usually advised from engaging in premarital sex and encouraged to abstain .

When the 27 teachers were asked to state the roles played by stakeholders such as the parents, sponsors, ZCSS and government in solving the problem of pupil drop out; only 14 teachers representing 52% of the respondents gave their views.

Most of the respondents identified parental roles of encouraging children to attend classes and financial support through school donation of fees as their major contribution. When parents were interviewed they also indicated that they helped in the running of school through paying school fees and ensuring that pupils went to school. One parent had this to say;

> *When the school authority called us to discuss on how we could improve pupils' attendance especially in cold and rainy seasons when pupils sometimes refused to go to school, we agreed as parents to get involved and ensure our children were forced to go to school.*

Teachers and Head teachers indicated that Community Schools that had sponsors were assisted through provision of student requisites, paying school fees to some vulnerable pupils and sponsoring training workshops for teachers to develop their teaching skills.

Teachers and Head teachers who were interviewed indicated that the Zambia Community School Secretariat (ZCSS) played no role in assisiting community schools in increasing pupils'retention rates while the government provided minimal support. Teachers and Head teachers indicated that government gave minimal support in terms of providing school materials like books, desks and sometimes grants which they described as pathetic and unrealistic.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter discusses and interprets the findings of the study in relation to the objectives of the study.

Background demograhic characteristics of respondents

This section explains why background demographic characteristics of respondents were relevant to the study

School coordinators

The study findings showed a fair distribution of school coordinators by gender which stood at 50% male and 33.3% female (as indicated in table 4.1, page 38) . We can deduce that there was almost equal balance of gender equity of school administrators providing leadership in community schools. The data also showed that the researcher dealt with young administrators (as indicated in table 4.2, page 38) who probably were not employed at the initial stage by government or probably could not accept working in rural areas or leaving their husbands or wives. The young administrators were in their early stages of working, therefore were full of energy and enthusiasm but lacked the necessary experience to handle effectively complex problems and situations found in community schools. Additionally their professional qualifications were not so impressive (as indicated in table 4.4, page 39) and questionable in some cases providing them with challenges to administer their schools effectively and professionally with confidence. Most of the administrators were married (as indicated in table 4.3, page 39), meaning the researcher worked with respondents who had families and probably understood the many challenges vulnerable children faced and the need for these children to be educated.

Teachers

The distribution of teachers by gender was almost equal (as indicated in fig. 4.2, page 40) and we can deduce that they provided a balanced presentation to boys and girls, providing them

with opportunities to learn that they could all make it regardless of their gender. More than half of the teachers were below the age of thirty (30) with less than five (5) years teaching experience (as shown in table 4.5 page 41 & fig.4.4 page 42 respectively). We can deduce that these young people were coming straight from school and were unemployed. They found teaching in community schools to be a stepping stone while waiting for better opportunities or to raise some money for their education. Additionally, most of them had no formal training in teaching posing a challenge to handle pedagogical challenges effectively. We can also deduce that the quality of teaching and learning could be affected and compromised due to lack of teaching qualifications and experience. The presence of a large number of single young teachers (as indicated in table 4.6, page 41) in these schools could pose a big challenge to administrators because they were dealing with teachers whose stability in life was questionable and may tend to be less concerned with pupils' welfare and challenges.

Pupils

The distribution of pupils by gender posed some challenges and created some questions that needed further research. The fact that there were more girls (57%) than boys (43%) (see fig. 4.5, page 43) gave us an idea that girls might have been discriminated against in such communities. We can also deduce that more girls are consigned to schools that are deemed to be not very good compared to government schools' standards. It was also discovered that more than 25% of the pupils were overaged (as indicated in table 4.7, page 44), a strong indicator for pupils' poor performance, negative attitude towards school and eventual elimination from the school system. It was also established from the findings that about 90% of the pupils came from poor families (as indicated in fig.4.6, page 46) and more than 25% of the pupils were either single or double orphans (as shown in table 4.8, page 45). It was more likely that the number of orphaned pupils could have been more than what was revealed because most of them were sent away due to non payment of school fees. We can deduce that the economic poor status of the pupils is a strong indicator for low retention of pupils in community schools where the free education policy was not practiced because pupils were made to contribute money towards their education.

Increased enrolment versus retention of pupils

One of the objectives of the study was to find out whether there was positive or negative correlation between increased enrolment and retention of pupils in community schools. From the research findings, it was well established by all school coordinators, teachers, pupils, parents and other stakeholders that there was an increase in enrolment. Enrolment data from schools also showed an increase in enrolment. It was discovered that community schools experienced an initial increase of pupil enrolment at Grade 1 and subsequent increase especially at Grades 5, 6 and 7 due to repeat and re-entry cases. Such an increase is an indication that there were a lot of young people who were out of school and may not ever have a chance of completing their basic primary school education. It was also established from the findings that while some pupils were being enrolled others were forced out of school. Respondents in the study confirmed that they experienced the problem of pupils dropping out of school (as indicated figure 4.7, page 49). The problem of pupil dropout in community schools was not seriously considered due to poor monitoring mechanisms existing in community schools. Registers, in most cases were not marked or had incomplete data or poorly marked. It was discovered that teachers did not exactly know how many pupils attended school and how many absented themselves from school or had even stopped. The findings of the study also revealed that school administrators were quite aware of the numerical increase of pupils in their schools due to repeat cases, transfers or re-entry cases but had only a rough idea of pupils dropping out of school. It seemed the increase in the population of pupils overshadowed the reduction due to drop out cases. The study revealed that a good number of pupils dropped out of school before reaching Grade 7. This fact was proved when a simple census was conducted to ascertain how many pupils belonged to the original Grade 1 cohorts that were enrolled in 2005 and were in Grade 7 in 2011 (as indicated in table 4.10, page 48). It was shocking to find out that less than half of the pupils who were present belonged to that group despite the increase in the total number of pupils. Pupils confidently attested to this fact that most of their friends had stopped school (as indicated in table 4.11, page 49, Table 4.12, page 50), while teachers and school coordinators only confirmed that they experience the problem of pupils dropping out of school without knowing

exactly how many had stopped school. This failure to take stock of pupils is the major challenge facing community schools that needed to be addressed because the nation will never know the wastage in our education system. The findings clearly demonstrated that despite the increase there was equally a good number of pupils who stopped school due to various reasons. We can, therefore, deduce that community schools experienced increased enrolment at the same time pupil dropout, though the number of new entrants outnumbered those dropping out. Therefore, we can conclude that there was negative correlation between increased enrolment and pupil retention (as indicated in figure 4.8, page 54) because we expect the increased input to translate into increased output at every stage. The failure to account for such a significant loss of pupils brings to question the retention capacity of these schools to ensure all pupils attain basic primary school education.

The second objective of the study was to determine the factors contributing to either low or high pupil retention rate in community schools. Therefore, this section discusses and interprets the findings based on the objective.

From the the research findings, social, economic factors and the school environment were identified as factors contributing to either low or high retention of pupils in community schools.

Social and economic factors

The results of the study identified poverty as the main determinant of low pupil persistence in community schools. 89% of the teachers interviewed identified poverty to be the causal factor while all the school head teachers, parents and pupils interviewed had a similar response. The research findings revealed that there was general lack of basic needs among the people in these communities where these schools are located. The general lifestyle and observable indicators testify to this fact. The communities were characterised by small poorly spaced slum-like houses surrounded by unkempt dirty environment with heaps of garbage and litter in many places, poor drainage system coupled with poor sanitation systems with blocked sewarage lines. Pools of dirty stinking water, the favourable home of mosquitoes were found everywhere in rain season, erratic piped water supply forcing people to dig pit-latrines very

close to their houses due to limited space for construction. Most of the people were unemployed or were in the informal sector struggling to survival on small make shift businesses like street vending. The majority of the people spent their time drinking in makeshift bars which are found everywhere in the compounds with loud music played daily. From the evidence accrued from respondents especially parents, it can be deduced that the pupils were coming from poverty-stricken homes and lacked the basic necessities of life that could promote a healthy, motivating learning home environment. In an environment where children lacked a lot of things and support from parents, chances of such pupils dropping out of school was very high. This view is supported by other researchers like Hunter & May (2005) who concluded that poverty was a plausible explanation of school disruption while UNICEF (2005) research studies found that poverty was the most common primary and contributory reason for students to be out of school. Parents testified that they were unable to support their children with school requirements because they were poor, forcing some children to dropout of school. This study also confirmed that poverty was the major causal factor for low pupil persistence in community schools in peri urban areas of Lusaka.

The other determinant to low pupil persistence in community schools that was identified in the research study and closely connected to poverty was the issue of school fees. 95 % of the pupils interviewed confirmed that they were made to pay school fees (as indicated in figure 4.9, page 57).The average monthly school fees that was mentioned was K20 000 (about $4) except in the case of one school were pupils reported that they paid K60 000 (about $12) per month. Head teachers and teachers also confirmed that pupils paid some money towards the administration of the school and teachers salaries. Alot has been written about community schools as alternative schools providing free education for the vulnerable pupils with minimal hidden costs. The revealation from the research findings, however, provided a contrasted view of the situation in community schools understudy. The vulnerable, poor parents were made to contribute a mandatory fee in order to have their children in school. In addition it was observed that almost all children had uniforms though school head teachers maintained that it was not part of school policy. This meant that parents were indirectly forced to buy uniforms for their children as part of the hidden costs. The financial pressure loaded on them was quite

huge for some parents who could not afford to pay the money, therefore many pupils were forced to absent themselves or completely drop out of school. The fact that was witnessed during the research study when it was discovered that most of the pupils had stayed away due to non payment of school fees. This in agreement with research findings by Hunt (2008) who noted that household income was an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially incurs a range of costs both upfront and hidden costs. It can be deduced from the findings that community schools were as expensive as government schools and did not give any comparative advantage to vulnerable pupils in these schools who were forced to drop out of school.

The respondents identified teenage pregnancies and early marriages as a factor to low pupil persistence in schools. 63 % of the teachers interviewed mentioned teenage pregnancies and early marriages as a factor, while Head teachers, pupils and parents gave similar responses. The research findings revealed that young girls were forced to engage in sex due to poverty and girls were seen as a source of income. It was observed that the communities where the schools were located, social problems like prostitution, crime were common, corrupting the morals of young girls who quickly join the older generation. The result of such lifestyle were pregnancies, HIV / AIDS infections, early marriages, absentism and pupil drop out from school. We can deduce from the findings that sex education was not so much emphasised in these schools to mitigate the problem of teenage pregnancies. In addition, the lack of records to show how many pupils left school due to pregnancies was an indication that the issue was poorly handled and could even be a very serious problem in these schools.

Peer pressure and the need to earn money was mentioned by respondents as a factor contributing to pupils' dropping out of school. It was observed that pupils lived in communities where most of their peers are out of school and on the streets earning some income. Some school going children admired such friends. The research findings revealed that some pupils were forced to go on the streets to sell goods in order to supplement family income, leading to absentism and dropping out of school.

The research study also revealed that about 39 % of the respondents were either single or double orphans, though the number could even be higher than that. Head teachers, teachers and parents indicated that most of these childrens lacked support. Only very few were on bursary scheme from their sponsors. It can be deduced that most of these pupils were unable to pay school fees and they were likely to absent themselves from school or drop out due to lack of parental support.

School environment

The study looked at the school environment as a determinant to low or high pupil persistence in school.

The research findings indicated that there was a high pupil- classroom ratio. Overcrowding was common in most schools. However, the responses from pupils indicated that it was not a factor because there were no adverse comments on the issue. This could probably mean that the pupils were so conditioned to this lifestyle and saw no difference or problems with overcrowding.

It was also noted in the research findings that there were a high pupil – teacher ratio, suggesting an acute shortage of teachers. Most of these teachers were untrained. The scenario presented by the findings was sufficient to conclude that the education quality in these schools had been compromised. The result could be having learners who find very little benefit to be in school. However, the responses from the pupils indicated that they were very happy with their teachers and praised them for their hard work and good teaching. Teachers and head teachers acknowledged that they were over worked and boasted of producing very good results more than government schools. We can, therefore, deduce that teacher shortage and under qualification was not a factor to low pupil persistence in community schools.

The research findings also revealed that there was a critical shortage of toilets in community schools. Pupils indicated that the toilets were not enough, dirty and sometimes shared between boys and girls. This was confirmed by teachers and Head teachers. The issue of toilets could demotivate pupils especially older girls who desired some privacy. Eventually they would

develop a negative attitude towards school and may decide to drop out of school. This was in agreement with the research findings in Ethopia by Colclough, etal (2000) who noted that lack of latrines led to female absence during menstruation and of subsequent performance or drop out of girls.

It was also discovered that the pupil – textbook ratio was very low because of non-availability of books in these schools. 57% of the pupils confirmed that they had few textbooks which they seldomly used while 26 % of the pupils felt that they had enough textbooks which they usually used (as indicated in fig. 4.10, page 59). However, teachers and school administrators confirmed that they had very few textbooks. This shortage of teaching and learning materials would constrain efforts to improve teaching and learning bearing in mind that most teachers were untrained and inexperienced. It can be deduced that lack of textbooks contributed to poor quality of education in community schools, consequently to low retention of pupils.

Feeding programme

The other research findings presenting a different dimension to pupil retention was the feeding programmes in some community schools. The findings indicated that some pupils were provided with food while at school to mitigate the impact of poverty. The responses from pupils and parents suggested that the initiative had greatly helped and boosted the morale of pupils. They confirmed that the programme had helped in pupil attendance and retention. This is in agreement with the observation made by the then Minister of education, Dora Siliya, who explained that the School Health Nutrition (SHN) had led to greater learning outcome, through improved pupil retention and attendance (Times of Zambia, 2 July 2009). We can, therefore, deduce that the feeding programme had an impact on pupil attendance and retention in schools due to the fact that respondents confirmed that they had seen a steady increase of pupils' attendance.

Provision of school requisites

The provision of school requisites to pupils such as exercise books , pens, pencils, sometimes school bags and shoes was seen as a positive initiative to improve pupil retention. 81 % of the

pupils acknowledged receiving school requisites and it was confirmed by all Headteachers and teachers interviewed. The initiative is seen as a mitigation against poverty and vulnerable children are provided with basic school requirements. This also had a positive impact on pupil attendance and retention.

The third objective of the research study was to establish the retention rate of pupils by gender in community schools. The focus of this section is to discuss the findings and establish whether gender was a factor in determining pupil persistence in school. The findings revealed that 88 % of the teachers had indicated that more girls dropped out of school than boys. Only 8 % of the teachers indicated that boys dropout of school more than girls (as shown in fig. 4.12, page 61). All the five Head teachers indicated that more girls dropout of school than boys. The same response was given by pupils. The respondents' responses provided a concrete evidence to conclude that girls were often disadvantaged and forced out of school. This is mainly due to the negative perception and practices society has built around girl-child education. Some of the reasons which were advanced to explain early exit of girls from school were pregnancies, early marriages, lack of financial support for girls, too much household chores, taking care of siblings in case of child- aided homes. Pupils had simply indicated that girls were grossly mistreated at home. This was in agreement with the findings of other researchers who noted the preference many households had for the education of boys over girls, with girls' education deemed less important which consequently resulted in low girls persistence in school (Admassie 2000, Boyle etal 2002). Other research findings by ILO / PEC (2004) highlighted the propensity of girls to be excluded or withdrawn from school earlier than boys in the belief that as a girl she did not need to be educated or indeed should not be too educated in case it blighted her marriage potential. It can, therefore, be deduced from the evidence of the study that more girls dropped out of school than boys. This would mean that girls had low survival rate than boys in community schools in peri-urban areas of Lusaka.

Measures taken to improve retention of pupils

The fourth and last objective of the study was to find out whether there were measures put in

place to improve the retention rates of pupils. This section, therefore, discussses the findings of the research based on this objective.

Extra curricula activities

When teachers were asked to state the measures they had taken to improve the retention rate of pupils, 42 % of the teachers interviewed identified pupils' involvement in extra-curricula activities especially sports as a measure they had taken to reduce pupil dropout rate. This was also confirmed by Head teachers and pupils. They all agreed to the assertion that sports was a critical component in attracting pupils and ensuring they remained in school. The researcher, however, discovered that sporting activities were hampered by non-availabilty of sports equipment and facilities as well as lack of planning for extra-curricula activities on school time tables. It can be deduced that pupils were not given enough opportunities to engage in sports or extra curricula activities thus creating less impact on pupils' persistence in school. The impact was only experienced in the second term when pupils participated in sports competition with other schools. It simply meant that pupils were likely to go back to the streets after such competitions because of lack of continuity.

Sensitization of communities

Sensitization of the community on the importance of school was ranked second as a corrective measure to improve on pupils' persistence in school. 31 % of the teachers interviewed identified it as a factor. In addition 26 % of the teachers indicated that they usually visited parents or guardians of pupils who perpetually absconded from school. Such visitations are important to link the community to the school and foster strong bonds between the school and the community. However, the fact that only 26 % of the respondents identified it as a measure, gives us the idea that it was not a popular practice done by schools. It also meant that such visits were not common and few teachers were involved. We can conclude that not much was achieved due to the fact that sensitization programmes were uncoordinated and emphasised by schools. There were no monitoring programmes put in place to check on the progress and effectiveness of the programme by community schools.

Feeding programme

The feeding programme was also cited by teachers, administrators and pupils as a remedy to improve pupils' persistence in school. 16 % of the teachers interviewed indicated that they provided food to pupils. In poverty stricken communities where these schools are located this is a very effective way to deal with the problem. However, the programme only involved very few schools which benefited from the feeding programme. It was also observed that there was need to improve on diet and hygiene to make the feeding programme more effective and beneficial to pupils.

Re-entry policy

The re-entry policy was also mentioned as a corrective measure to improve pupils' survival rates in schools. 11 % of the teachers interviewed indicated that pupils who stopped school especially those who fell pregnant were encouraged to comeback to school. This policy by government was very effective policy to capture out of school children but it seems it has not been popularised and understood by many people in society. The fact that only 11 % of the teachers interviewed mentioned it gives us alot of ground to conclude that it is not a popular method in these schools. This is in agreement with Kane (2004) who noted that while policies may allow re-entry this information may not be clearly conveyed throughout the system or communities may continue to adhere to their cultural norms preventing these girls from attending school

Sponsorship

Sponsorship of vulnerable pupils was identified by head teachers, teachers and pupils as a measure to improve pupils' persistence in school. From the findings this measure is helping some vulnerable pupils to continue schooling. However, it was observed that there were very few NGOs involved and had no capacity to sponsor most of these pupils who are vulnerable. Therefore very few pupils who were helped by teachers access funds from NGOs. There was no proper mechanism put in place to deal with issues of sponsorship of vulnerable children

and it was likely issues of favouritism, nepotism and bribery could be used to determine who gets the sponsorship.

Sex and HIV / AIDS counselling

Some respondents mentioned counselling on issues of sex and HIV / AIDS as a way of reducing on pupils dropping out of school. 5 % of the teachers interviewed, identified counselling as a factor. From the research findings it was observed that schools had no qualified counsellors or counselling rooms. What teachers termed as counselling could be mere advice given to some pupils or during lessons. Pupils lacked professional advice on these important issues and lacked real kowledge about issues of sex and HIV AIDS. Teachers provided them with the common information they come across even in their communities which they usually take as mere stories of the older generation. We can, therefore, deduce that the counselling teachers conducted had little impact on pupils sexual behaviour because it lacked the professional touch of the counsellor.

Roles played by stakeholders

The roles played by various stakeholders were also seen as measures to the problem of pupil dropout in community schools. The research findings revealed that parents involvement and contribution towards school and the education of their children was very crucial in ensuring children remained in school. Head teachers and teachers indicated that parents were the main partners and contributed massively through encouraging pupils to attend school and through financial contributions. It was however discovered that not all parents were reliable partners in the quest to provide and improve the education of their children. Most parents were unsupportive, uncaring and demotivative to their children. In the case of orphaned children the situation was worse. These children lacked parental support and most of them were not sponsored by NGOs and, therefore, they were left at the mercy of their relatives, most of them were poverty stricken with a lot of responsibilities and limited financial capacities. Teachers confirmed the inability of parents to pay the school contributions. In an effort to ensure parents honoured their obligation towards the education of their children, teachers were forced to send the children away. Such actions led to abscondment and pupil dropout. It can

concluded from the findings that the inability of most of the parents to support their children financially and morally had contributed to low pupils' persistence in schools.

The role the government undertook in the education of its citizen was very important in ensuring children were given equal access to quality education. The low profile taken by government in community initiated education centres is a source of concern. The research findings revealed that government assistance to these under-resourced schools was very minimal. Due to lack of support from government, school authorities were left with no option but to rely heavily on poverty stricken communities for support. The research findings also revealed that ZCSS, the institution mandated to run community schools, played no role in supporting the efforts of communities. The researcher concluded that instead of goverment and ZCSS being solutions to the problem of pupils drop out, they were a source of the problem due to lack of support.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter gives the conclusion of the study. It highlights the findings of the study, the conclusions drawn from it and the recommendations. Suggestions are also made for areas of further research.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, it can be concluded that community schools had increased pupil enrolment due to population increase in underserved communities. Most of the children of school going age were unable to access school in government schools and find community schools as the alternative. The increase had also been the result of the re-entry policy where out of school children had been encouraged to go back to school.

The study also concluded that some children dropped out of school at different grade levels of the primary school education cycle. These children in most cases went out unnoticed and no statistical information was available in schools to indicate the number of drop-outs each year but from the research findings it was quite evident that there was an increase in the number of pupils dropping out of the school system in community schools. The study also revealed that there was very poor monitoring system in community schools. Head teachers, teachers seemed not know much about how many pupils attended school on daily basis, how many absconded and how many eventually dropped out of school. This has been partly due to large numbers of pupils in their schools but they lacked the managerial capacity to handle and account for them. A lot of inadequacies were observed in the administrative skills and experience of Head teachers and teachers.

It can also be concluded that there were more factors contributing to low pupil retention than factors boosting retention of pupils in community schools. Poverty was seen as the main factor contributing to low retention of pupils. This had been worsened by the cost of

education through payment of monthly school contribution fees, a cost which was beyond the income of so many vulnerable families. The study had revealed that there was no comparative advantage for vulnerable pupils in community schools that they enjoyed over those in government schools, especially with the free education policy implementation in government schools, the cost for education is almost the same as pupils in both schools incurred hidden costs of education such as school uniforms, books, school fees not approved by government but indirectly approved and encouraged by school authorities. It was also revealed that the feeding programme in some schools had proved to be an effective initiative to boost pupil persistence in schools but with so many orphans and other vulnerable children in community schools lacking basic needs, the initiative had not created so much impact in increasing pupils' persistence and children had continued to drop out of schools due to lack of meaningful and adequate support to address their needs.

The study has also shown that more girls dropped out of school than boys due to gender based problems that mostly affected girls. The study revealed that girls dropped out of schools due to unwanted pregnancies, forced marriages, taking care of siblings in case of child aided homes which their male counterparts never experienced. As a way to supplement family income, some girls were forced to engage in sex. It was also discovered that there was a propensity of some families to support boys financially and morally leaving out girls, thus forcing some girls to drop out of school. The study concluded that there were still gender impediments, targeting the girl-child, forcing her to drop out of school.

The study also concluded that the measures that had been put in place were not so effective to mitigate the impact of poverty and create a greater impact on pupils' persistence. Only the feeding programme and sponsorship had scored some successes but the programmes were on a small scale affecting few schools and pupils.

The study finally concluded that in as much as community schools had seen unprecendented increase of pupils it equally experienced an increase in pupils' dropout rates, mostly caused by increased poverty, lack of managerial skills, experience and effective monitoring system to handle increased population of pupils and ensure they are kept in school.

Recommendations

Based on the reserach findings the following are some of the recommendations that need to be considered

1. There is an urgent need to train school administrators in education management in order to meet the demands of increased population of pupils in community schools and enhance leadership skills.

2. There is need to build capacity of administrators and teachers in ICT and record management in order for them to meet the challenges of the 21st century and improve on record keeping so that vital information of their clients can be stored and kept for future use.

3. Teachers in community schools need professional training and upgrading in order to improve their qualification so that they can improve on education quality in community schools which is so much compromised because of the presence of so many untrained personnel in these schools.

4. There is urgent need to improve infrastucture and sanitation in these schools to accommodate the increased population of pupils

5. Government should take up the challenge of employing community school teachers to remove the burden of poor vulnerable families looking after the teachers for the services they provide to their children.

6. Government should restructure the organization of community schools so that it takes full responsibility. Community schools should be delinked from ZCSS which has failed but government should forge partnership with the community.

7. The feeding and sponsorship programmes should be extended to all community schools and government should be the main implementors and sponsors of the programmes. NGOs should only supplement the efforts of government.

8. Counselling centres / offices should be created in community schools managed by trained counsellors to provide much needed services in issues of sex education, child abuse, child labour, childrens' rights and many other topics that affect vulnerable children.

9. Increase government grants to community schools and establish accounts sections to ensure accountability and proper use of funds.

10. Introduction of female stipend for girl – child education

Areas for further research

1. Quality assurance in community schools

2. Teacher motivation vs. Poor conditions in community schools

3. Learning from inside the classroom in community schools

4. Orphanhood and its impact on pupil's classroom performance

5. Community schools versus children's rights to education

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Appendix 1: QUESTIONAIRE FOR PUPILS

TITLE: THE CHALLENGES OF PUPIL RETENTION IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN THE LIGHT OF UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION POLICY: A STUDY OF SELECTED SCHOOLS OF LUSAKA PROVINCE

Dear pupil,

I'm a post graduate student at the University of Zambia, carrying out a research on the challenges of pupil retention in community schools. The information shall be used for purely academic purposes and shall be treated with the strictest confidentiality. You are kindly asked to give honest answers to all questions.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Complete the statements by either writing short answers or ticking (√) on the answer of your choice in the box provided.

Part 1 - Demographic data

01. Name of school…………………………… Grade:……., Age:…… Sex: M [   ] F [   ]

02. Parents: Both living [   ], Both dead [   ], Mother living [   ], Father living [   ]

Part II - Indicators for pupil retention

03. How many meals do you usually take every day?

(a) One meal per day [   ]

(b) Two meals per day [   ]

(c) Three meals per day [   ]

04. Does your school provide you with food before going back home?

(a) Yes [   ]

(b) No [   ]

05. Have you seen more pupils joining or coming to your school in recent years?

(a) Yes [   ]

(b) No [   ]

06. Did you receive new pupils joining your class this year?

(a) Yes [   ]

(b) No [   ]

07. Do you know of some pupils who stopped school this year?

(a) Yes [   ]

(b) No [   ]

08. Did you know some of your classmates who have stopped coming to school this year?

(a) Yes [   ]

(b) No [   ]

09. Are you still learning with all your classmates who were with you when you started school in grade 1?

(a) Yes [   ]

(b) No [   ]

10. Are you aware of some of your classmates who were with you when you started school at this same school but have stopped?

(a) Yes [   ]

(b) No [   ]

11. Are you provided with all the school requirements by your school?

(a) Yes

(b) No

12. Do you contribute or pay anything towards your education?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Part III: School environment and quality of education indicators

Indicate whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Not sure (3), Disagree (4) and Strongly Disagree (5) with the statement below

	1	2	3	4	5
a. I like being in this school and would not like to go a government school					
b. We have enough teachers					
c. Our teachers teach us every day					
d. Our classrooms are well organized, clean and spacious					
e. We have enough desks					
f. We have enough textbooks that we use when learning in all subjects					

g. Our teachers use teaching aids like charts, pictures, diagrams etc when teaching us.					
h. We have enough clean toilets that we use at our school					

Appendix 2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What things do you like most about your school?

2. What are some of the problems you face at school, that affect your learning and school life?

3. What problems do you face at home that have forced some of your friends to drop out of school?

4. Are there specific reasons why boys and girls drop out of school?

5. Which group of pupils between boys and girls drop out more often than the other when we consider the number of drop-outs between boys and girls?

6. What do you suggest the government should do to improve your school so that many pupils will remain in school?

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONAIRE FOR SCHOOL COORDINATORS

TITLE: THE CHALLENGES OF PUPIL RETENTION IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN THE LIGHT OF UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION POLICY: A STUDY OF SELECTED SCHOOLS OF LUSAKA PROVINCE

Dear Respondent,

I'm a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia School of Education, carrying out a study in which your assistance is very vital. My study is based on the title above. Kindly respond to the items in the instrument by placing a **tick (√) or a brief explanation.** Your responses will be handled with outmost confidentiality and will only be used for the above named study. Thank you for your cooperation and taking time within your busy schedule to support this study.

Name of School………………………………… Year of establishment……………
Sponsors………………………………………….

Part 1: Demographic Information

1. Gender: M [ ]   F [ ]

2. Age: Below 25 [ ]   26 – 30 [ ]   31 -35 [ ]   36 – 40 [ ]   41 and above [ ]

3. Marital status: Married [ ] Single [ ]   Widowed [ ]   Divorced [ ]

4. Highest academic qualification: Grade 7 [ ]   Grade 9 [ ]   Grade 12 [ ]

5. Highest professional qualifications: Primary Teachers certificate [ ]   Diploma in Education [ ] Bachelor's Degree [ ]   Others (specify)
   …………………………………………………………..

6. Years of teaching experience: below 5 [ ]5 – 10 [ ]   11 -15 [ ]   above 16 [ ]

Part II: Indicators of pupil retention

1. Have you experienced increased demand for school places at your school in recent years? Yes [   ] No [   ]

2. If the answer in question (1) is Yes, have you increased pupil enrolment at your school?

   Yes [   ] No [   ]

3. What could be the reasons for high demand for school places?-------------------------------------
   ----

   ----

4. If the answer in question (2) is Yes, how has the increased enrolment affected your operation in terms of resources and school management?
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………

5. Do you have cases of some pupils stopping school at your school?

   Yes [   ] No [   ]

6. How do you rate the following?

	High	Not sure	Low
(a) Learners' drop out rates			
(b) Learners' daily class attendance throughout the year			
(c) Learners' interest in learning			
(d) Completion rates			

7. If the answer in question 5 is Yes, which group of pupils has recorded a high rate of dropout?
Boys [   ], Girls [   ]

8. What could be the reasons for pupil dropout?
……
……
……
……
………………………………………………..

Part III. School environment and education quality indicators

1. What is the total population of pupils in your school by gender?

Girls………………… Boys…………………………

2. How many classrooms do you have? ....

3. How many pupils are in each class? Grade 1….. , Grade 2……., Grade 3………., Grade
4……, Grade 5……, Grade 6………., Grade 7………….

4. How many toilets do you have for the following groups?

Members of staff: water borne toilets for (a) Men………… (b) Women………..

Pit- latrines for (a) Men………….. (b) Women……………

Pupils: water borne toilets for (a) Girls…………… (b) Boys…………….

Pit- latrines for (a) Girls…………….. (b) Boys………………….

5. Water supply facilities: Piped water; Yes [   ] No [   ] Wells; Yes [   ], No [   ]

6. How many teachers in the school are;

(a) Male……………………. Female…………………..

(b) Trained………………… Untrained……………………

7. Indicate the number of teachers against each qualification

(a) Primary certificate…………………………………..

(b) Diploma in Education………………………………..

(c) Bachelors' Degree…………………………………..

(d) Others specify…………………………………………………………..

8. Are you visited by inspectors every year from

(a) Ministry of Education; Yes [   ] No [   ]

(b) Sponsors; Yes [   ] No [   ]

(c) Community; Yes [   ] No [   ]

(d) ZCSS; Yes [   ] No [   ]

9. Where does the school get funds for the running costs?

Government [   ], Parents [   ], Sponsors [   ], Donors [   ], Any others specify

………………………………………………………………………………………………

10. Do you get sufficient funds Yes [   ] No [   ]

11. If No, how do you take care of the shortfall?

....

....

....

12. What support do you receive from the

(a) Community

…………………………………………………………………………...

....

(b) Government

………

………………………………………………………………………………

(c) ZCSS

………

………………………………………………………………………………..

(d) Sponsors

………

………………………………………………………………………………….

13. To what extent does the PCSC carry out their roles as managers of the school?

(a) To a large extent [   ] (b) A considerable extent [   ] (c) To some extent [   ]

(e) To very limited extent [   ] (e) Not at all [   ]

14. Please indicate whether you (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Not sure (4) Disagree, (5) Strongly disagree with the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5
(a) Teaching-Learning materials are adequate					
(b) Instructional time is enough					
(c) School has adequate physical facilities					
(d) School has increased pupil survival rate					
(e) Community has positive attitude to community school					

APPENDIX 4 INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL COORDINATORS

1. What factors have led to increased demand for school places both in community and government schools?

2. Despite free education policy in Zambia at basic school level, why do you still have vulnerable children in your school instead of them attending government schools?

3. Have you experienced a positive or negative impact of increased enrolment on pupil survival rate and completion rate?

4. With high demand for education and increased enrolment in your school, do you experience problems of pupils dropping out of school?

5. What could be the reasons behind pupils dropping out of school?

6. Do you see some gender challenges contributing to pupils dropping out of school? And if so which gender is most affected?

7. Can you specify some gender factors contributing to pupils dropping out of school?

8. What are some of the measures various stakeholders have taken to ensure pupils remain and complete school?

9. What suggestions can you provide to stakeholders to curb the problem of pupils dropping out of school?

APPENDIX 5: QUESTIONAIRE FOR TEACHERS

TITLE: THE CHALLENGES OF PUPIL RETENTION IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN THE LIGHT OF UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION POLICY: A STUDY OF SELECTED SCHOOLS OF LUSAKA DISTRICT

I'm a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia, School of Education, carrying out a study in which your assistance is very vital. My study is based on the title above. Kindly respond to the items in the instrument by placing **a tick (√) or giving a brief explanation**. Your responses will be handled with outmost confidentiality and will only be used for the above named study. Thank you for your cooperation and taking time within your busy schedule to support this study.

Name of School ………………………………. Year of establishment…………………..

Sponsors …………………………………………………………….

Part 1: Demographic Information

1. Gender: M [ ]   F [ ]

2. Age: Below 25 [ ]   26 – 30 [ ]   31 -35 [ ]   36 – 40 [ ]   41 and above [ ]

3. Marital status: Married [ ]   Single [ ]   Widowed [ ]   Divorced [ ]

4. Highest academic qualification: Grade 7 [ ]   Grade 9 [ ]   Grade 12 [ ]

5. Highest professional qualifications: Primary Teachers certificate [ ]   Diploma in Education [ ] Bachelor's Degree [ ]   Others (specify)
…………………………………………………………..

6. Years of teaching experience: below 5 [ ]   5 – 10 [ ]   11 -15 [ ]   above 16 [ ]

Part II: Indicators for pupil retention

1. What is the economic status of most of the pupils that you teach in your class?

Very poor [   ], Poor [   ], Moderately poor [   ], Not poor [   ]

2. Are most of your pupils orphans or vulnerable? Yes [   ], No [   ]

3. Have you experienced an increase in enrolment in your school during the past few years and in 2011? Yes [   ], No [   ]

4. If the answer to question 3 is 'Yes', how has the increase affected pupils attitudes towards school in terms of attendance, interest and performance? Positively [   ], Negatively [   ], No change [   ].

5. Do you have the problem of pupil drop out in your school? Yes [   ], No [   ].

6. Have you also experienced an increase in the number of pupils dropping out of school? Yes [   ], No [   ].

7. If the answer to question 5 is 'Yes' what could be the causes?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………..

8. Do you see some gender reasons for pupils stopping school? Yes [   ], No [   ].

9. If the answer to question 7 is 'Yes' which group of pupils is mostly affected? Boys [   ], Girls [   ].

10. Specify the main reasons why the particular group you have mentioned above drop out of school?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………

11. What measures have you taken as a school to reduce on pupil dropouts?

………

………

………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

12. What role do the following stake holders perform in solving the problem of pupil dropout?

a. Parent / community

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

b. Sponsors

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………….......

c. Zambia Community School Secretariat

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

d. Government

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX 6: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR TEACHERS (FGD)

1. How is the economic status of the community where you draw most of your learners?

2. Do you think the economic status of your pupils have affected your pupils and if so how?

3. What causes pupils dropping out of school especially at your school?

4. Do you think the state of your school and the conditions you operate under are suitable for increasing pupils' survival or retention rate?

5. What measures can be put in place to ensure pupils stay in school?

APPENDIX 7: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. What prompted you to start this school?

2. Who is the main sponsor of your school and what kind of support do you receive?

3. How often do you visit the school to check on school and pupils' progress?

4. What are your views on pupils' enrolment, attendance, continuation, completion and pass rates?

5. Do parents contribute money in form of school fees or material support towards the running of the school?

6. Do you experience the problem of pupils dropping out of school? And if so what could be the reasons?

7. Which group of pupils between boys and girls dropout of school more often than the other?

8. What could be the special reasons behind one group of pupils dropping out of school more often than the other?

9. What measures have you taken as parents to help the school in increasing pupils' survival rates?

APPENDIX 8: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MOE / ZOCS / ZCSS

1. What have been the main reasons for the establishment of community schools?

2. Do you receive annual returns on staff and pupils from community schools?

3. If 'Yes' what is your comment on pupils' enrolment, attendance , retention and completion rates?

4. How often do your visit these community schools for the purpose of quality assurance and what incentives do you offer the teachers?

5. Do you think the problem of pupil dropout exists in community schools?

6. What could be the reasons for pupils dropping out of school?

7. What measures have you taken to ensure pupils remain in school?

8. What do you think the government should do to improve on pupil retention in schools?