

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father and mother, rison Zikanika Gundamwala Phiri
and Bernadette Kapanda Tembo Phiri.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

- AIDS** - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- APU** - Afternoon Production Unit
- ASPnet** - Associated Schools Project Network
- CDC** - Curriculum Development Centre
- CSO** - Central Statistical Office
- DESD** -Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
- EE** - Environmental Education
- EPD** - Environment and Population Education and Information for Human
Development
- EPPCA** - Environmental Protection Pollution Control Act
- ESD** - Education for Sustainable Development
- HIV** - Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- IEEP** - International Environmental Education Programme
- LCC** - Lusaka City Council
- MDGs** - Millennium Development Goals
- MoE** - Ministry of Education
- SADC** - Southern Africa Development Community
- SADC REEP**- Southern Africa Development Community Regional Environmental
Education Programme
- SD** - Sustainable Development
- UN** - United Nations
- UNCED** - United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
- UNDESD** - United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development
- UNEP** - United Nations Environmental Programme

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNZA - University of Zambia

WCED - World Commission on Environment and Development

WSSD - World Summit Sustainable Development

ZAWA - Zambia Wildlife Authority

ABSTRACT

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a new approach to education that seeks to balance human economic well-being with cultural traditions and respect for the earth's natural resources. Five years into the United Nations decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), this approach to education is yet to be fully implemented at high school level in Zambia. Geography is one of the subjects offered in all Zambian high schools and this study, therefore, aimed to ascertain the relevance of ESD to Zambian high school geography.

The study sought to determine the aspects of geography that are compatible with ESD, to ascertain the attitude of high school geography pupils towards geography and determine ways in which the geography syllabus could be improved vis-à-vis the need for pupils to be empowered to thrive in their local environments.

The study's research design was a normative or descriptive survey. This research design had both quantitative and qualitative aspects. It captured the views and experiences of respondents from which quantitative and qualitative data was derived. The Statistical Package for Social Scientists and Microsoft Excel were used to process the field data. The study used the cluster, purposive and random sampling methods to select its respondents. It focused on high schools of Lusaka City in Lusaka Province of Zambia.

To gather primary information, questionnaires were prepared for pupils, geography heads of section and the geography curriculum development specialist respectively. Focus group discussions were also conducted to gather data from pupils that may not have been captured by the questionnaires that were issued.

The study established that geography as a subject was appropriate for ESD incorporation because of its unique ability to amalgamate aspects of the social sciences and natural sciences. It offered numerous linkages to ESD through its social, economic and biophysical facets. The study found that ESD could make a contribution to geography in the areas of field projects, personal hygiene and health, sex education, inter-generational transmission of knowledge, use of indigenous knowledge and localization of the geography syllabus. In relation to the dominance of foreign topics at the expense of local topics, the study established that the geography syllabus is still influenced by western inclinations and perspectives which have been part of the education system since the pre-independence colonial times and early post independence era. The study found that though pupils were interested in geography, as reflected by the general good performance of pupils in examinations, negative attitudes, nonetheless, existed towards geography because of its detachment from pupils' personal environments, excessive use of teacher-centred teaching methods and the bulky nature of the syllabus. It discovered that interest alone could not compensate for positive attitudes which are motivated by sustainable behaviour.

The study further established that the predominant teaching methods which were used at the time of the study in the year 2010, were the lecture as well as question and answer methods in which the bulk of questions were asked by the teachers and not the pupils. These teacher-centred methods were used at the expense of recommended pupil-centred methods such as field trips, debates and role-play. The study also established that the inclusion of more Zambian topics into the revised geography syllabus in the year 2000 did not suffice as a way of localizing the syllabus. This was so because the topics were not directly attached to the

pupils' local environment and daily experiences and they dealt with the content of geography in a superficial, detached and generalized manner.

In view of such findings, the following recommendations arose from the study: geography requires the use of more pupil-centred methods to inculcate positive values and attitudes. The role of field projects, the role-play teaching method and other pupil-centred teaching methods as tools for bringing pupils closer to their local environment and empowering them with relevant skills and knowledge has to be revisited to make it possible for such methods to play a greater role in the delivery of geography content. Field projects have to be more grounded directly into the local realities of pupils, knowledge oriented and skill oriented instead of being largely examination oriented. Examinations must incorporate creative ways of examining ESD related aspects which are relevant to pupils' local experiences and environments. The geography syllabus has to be made leaner for easy coverage. The syllabus' localization should include inter-generational learning as a key component. Aspects of personal hygiene, sex and moral education should be added to the syllabus so that pupils are empowered to face the daily emerging challenges of the world we live in, such as HIV and AIDS, Malaria, Cholera and Climate Change. Geography should offer an opportunity for pupils to deal comprehensively with major problems such as the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is devastating our local communities.

The following areas were found to have potential for future research:

- a) Need to ascertain how ESD could be incorporated into the Zambian high school curriculum through geography.
- b) Incorporation of ESD into pupils' learning experiences at high school, basic, primary and kindergarten levels.