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To my Children and all vulnerable children of the world. Remember that while illiteracy is one of the strongest predictors of poverty, education is a powerful equalizer, opening doors to all to lift themselves out of poverty. It empowers people and strengthens families and nations.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, Edward Kalumba, do hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work and it has not previously been submitted for the degree at the University of Zambia or any other university.

Name……

Signature……Date……

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of Edward Kalumba is approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration and Management by the University of Zambia

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Signature……...Date……...

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dear wife, Mable, and our lovely children, Chisala Kalumba, Chewe Kalumba and Nkole Kalumba. This work is also dedicated to my late father and mother, Edward Ponde and Harriet Chansa.

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ABSTRACT

One of the global aspirations set by the governments of the world under the auspices of the United Nations was to ensure that Universal Access to Primary Education was achieved by governments as set by Education For All and Millenium Development Goals target by 2015. This goal gave developing countries where the problem of limited access to education was prevalent a new orientation and challenge to ensure solutions were sought despite the difficult circumstances they were faced with.

Zambia, by 1990 had joined the rest of the world to pursue and achieve the world vision of Universal Primary Education for all children by 2015. One major initiative that was devised was the creation of community schools to reach out to the under-served, vulnerable children who were mostly found out of school. The Community school movement which began in Zambia by 1995 became the major provider of basic education to vulnerable children. Since the inception of community schools, a lot of interest has been generated among researchers to undertake some studies about the new concept of educational provision for the under-privileged. A series of studies have been undertaken on many issues relating to community schools in Zambia, yet few researchers have explored the issue of retention of pupils in these schools. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether increased enrolment of pupils in community schools had positive or negative impact on pupil retention and dropout in selected community schools of Lusaka district.

The study used the qualitative and quantitative research designs. It targeted school coordinators (head teachers), teachers, pupils, parents, MOE officials and NGOs involved in the operation of community schools. A representative sample was selected using purposive and random sampling procedures. Questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussions, record analysis and observations were some of the tools that were used to collect data. Quantitative data were analyzed into descriptive statistics with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software while qualitative data were transcribed and summarized using narrative reports.

The study discovered that community schools had experienced overwhelming response from out of school children which led to increased enrolment. The overwhelming response was the result of campaigns urging out of school children to go back to school and to a large extent the free primary education policy implementation by the Zambian government. However the study revealed that there was no monitoring mechanism that was put in place to ensure pupils were retained. The study also revealed that most of the pupils in community schools were vulnerable and were faced with many challenges such as lack of financial support, pregnancies and early marriages in case of girls and poverty related problems. The challenges were so overwhelming that equally a good number of these children were forced to drop out of school. The measures that were put in place could not create much impact to turn around the effects of poverty and other challenges pupils were faced with. The researcher concluded that pupil drop out in community schools was prevalent and was quite a serious problem that required serious intervention to reverse the trend of low pupil persistence in schools or else the millennium goal of 2015 would not be achieved. Therefore, the researcher recommended that head teachers and teachers should be trained in record management and information communication technology (ICT), feeding programme to be extended to all community schools and government should take full responsibility in the running of community schools.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APE	Alternative Primary Education
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
EFA	Education for All
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MOE	The Ministry of Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PCSC	Parent Community School Committee
PEO	Provincial Education Office
SPARK	Skills, Participation, Access, Relevant Knowledge
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WCEFA	World Conference on Education For All
ZCSS	Zambia Community School Secretariat
ZOCS	Zambia Open Community School