

Diversification of Adult Education Provision in Zambia

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Introduction

The paper discusses the nonformal education as a channel for the Diversification of educational provision in Zambia. The first part of the paper will generally deal with the conceptual issues regarding nonformal education and how it can complement the formal system in providing education opportunities to those left out of the formal system. Then, the paper will deal with current provisions of nonformal education in Zambia focusing on existing practices of nonformal education in the country. It also identifies some problems and limitations in the organization and delivery of nonformal education programmes within the context of education for all in Zambia. Lastly, the paper outlines ways of strengthening nonformal education in the provision of education in the country.

Non-formal Education and Development

In the 1960s belief that more investment in formal education would lead to development guided the educational planning process of newly independent countries. The classical view of education from an economic perspective argued that educational programmes geared to economic incentive under-pinned the greatest return to the individual as well as to the modernizing national development process. In search for national growth, developing countries invested substantial amounts of scarce resources in the expansion of formal education at all levels. Although these governments have invested heavily in education, they can neither meet the rising costs of the formal system nor the demand for education resulting from growing populations and increasing expectations of the potency of literacy.

In line with Coombs' (1968) analysis of world educational systems, many observers noted that formal education was failing to meet the needs of the poor majority in rural areas. Many viewed schooling as a main contributor to the rural-urban migration and the unequal distribution of income characteristic developing countries. Planners and theorists have recommended nonformal education as an alternative to existing educational programmes. Coombs defined nonformal education as:-

... any organized educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular sub-groups in the population, adults as well as children (p. 11).

Planners and theorists from international agencies including the Commonwealth identify nonformal education as a powerful instrument for development because it can meaningfully assist early school leavers. Nonformal education facilitates the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and attitudes for the rural poor, and can indeed utilise scarce educational resources more efficiently. The 1979 Commonwealth Conference on Nonformal Education was organized as part of the realisation of potency of nonformal education. He further notes:

... nonformal education is being viewed as more relevant to the needs of the population, especially for those in the rural areas working in the traditional sector, since it attempts to focus on teaching people to improve their basic level of subsistence and their standards of nutrition and general health (p.6)

Since nonformal education is diversified, planners hope that it will alleviate poverty and reduce the growing rural-urban socio-economic gap occasioned by earlier incomplete development efforts and ineffective education policies. Nonformal education as an alternative to investing into formal schooling has great importance to many developing countries, including Zambia, whose economies continue to decline.

Historical Background of Nonformal Education in Zambia

Nonformal education, not a new phenomenon in African societies, existed before the introduction of formal schooling by missionaries. Missionary education, though committed to promote formal schooling, placed emphasis on nonformal education centres for elementary industrial training which were all integral parts of evangelism. Existing community centres in Zambia (one in each province) had been set up to offer nonformal education activities in rural communities.

Community training centres established by the colonial government focused on mass literacy, leadership training vocational training in local skills, health education and traditional skills. The centres are currently manned by the Department of Community Development. The Department also offers basic functional literacy. Although the nonformal education is not directly targeted at young people, a number of youths participate in the programmes.

Agricultural extension, another aspect of nonformal education, was developed during the colonial period. It continues to be operated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Development and seeks to persuade farmers to increase and diversify production through the introduction of new farming practices. The Young Farmers' Clubs are co-ordinated by the Ministry.

There is no clear policy on nonformal education in Zambia today. Nonformal education activities cut across several ministries, non-governmental organisations and associations. The main organisations or ministries involved are: Education Community Development and Social Welfare, Agriculture, Defence, Sport, Youth and Child Development. Besides government departments, nonformal education activities are conducted by mining companies, parastatal organisations, church organisations and other non-governmental organisations and associations. Unfortunately, no national body co-ordinates nonformal education programmes conducted by different government departments and other nongovernmental organization, as is the case in some countries like Lesotho and Botswana.

Most nonformal education activities are conducted by extension workers whether in agricultural extension, community development, health education, or co-operatives. In most situations there is some use of distance teaching media (radio manuals, books and posters) during training as well as follow-up activities. It is recognised that learning needs of rural people are many and diverse, and cannot be met by one mode of education formal, informal or nonformal. Although extension workers train rural communities at training centres, in their villages, and at rural health centres, the small number of extension workers cannot cover all rural communities. Earlier studies on nonformal education indicated that in most developing countries, there were a very small number of extension workers. Thompson (1981) summarised the situation:

... The efficiency of even the more enlightened extension services depended upon a number of factors of which the number and quality of the field workers was the most crucial. In Kenya and Zambia extension staff came to number approximately one to every 1000 farm holdings, a proportion recommended as a minimum by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization but one which made it impossible for them to meet the majority of their clientele on a regular and individual basis. Yet even this figure compares favourably with the situation of most developing countries (p. 230 - 231).

The rural population in Zambia is very scattered, which makes the work of extension workers difficult. Distance teaching complements work being done by extension workers in agriculture, community development, health and co-operative development.

Arguments for Nonformal Education

Nonformal education should complement what formal education does. There is need to strengthen nonformal education in order in the provision of education in the country. Although there was a general expansion in the provision of education during the period after independence around the 1960s and 1970s, not all school age

going children are in school today. This situation has been worsened during the late 1980s and 1990s due to the worsening economic situation in the country because of the policy of Structural Adjustment Program.

Education is a basic human right for the advancement of all people in the world. This has been recognised throughout the world. Zambia has participated actively in the global revolutionary movement whose focus is on the right of every child to quality basic education and in providing different learning opportunities for categories of learner. This resulted in the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien in 1990. Zambia participated at this world conference and held a National Conference on Education for All in March, 1991 at which Zambia re-affirmed its commitment to Education for All children in Zambia. The National Conference set out goals to be the target for achievement by the year 2000. The following are some of the targets.

- (i) Universal access to, and completion of primary education by the year 2000;
- (ii) Reduction of adult illiteracy rate by half, with female illiteracy no higher than the male rate by the year 2000;
- (iii) Expansion of early childhood care and development activities, focusing on family, and community intervention.

At this National Conference it was recognised that one of the major problems of achieving basic education for all is the question of turning the tap of illiteracy by meeting the basic learning needs of mostly school age children, out of school youths, in addition to the learning needs of adults. Some of the strategies for achieving basic education for all included the following:

- (i) reasserting the political commitment to basic education as a human right;
- (ii) narrowing the gap between formal and nonformal education;
- (iii) creating partnerships for basic education development;
- (iv) meeting the basic learning needs and promoting the learning achievement of marginalised groups like girls, women and the poor. (p. 94).

The Provisions of Basic Education

In order to achieve the provision of basic education to the rapidly school age population and the out-of-school youths and adults, there is need to expand both formal and nonformal provision of education. Nonformal education derives its importance in Zambia from the limited capacity of the formal school system. Basic education for all envisages that minimum levels of learning should be laid down for every level of education or every educational experience and that all children have access to basic education of a measurable quality. This is related to universal achievements.

Universal achievement implies that all children that enter a program of basic education should be afforded an opportunity to achieve a minimum level of learning, which is defined for that level. A great deal of emphasis is being laid throughout the world to learning achievement, not just provision of facilities, enrolment and retention. A related concept is access and participation. Universal access presupposes that a school or nonformal education centre is available to all children within walking distance and that they are able to join in. Universal participation, on the other hand recognises that access alone does not ensure participation. Universal participation implies that not only are all children who start basic education continue till the end of that stage or learning experience but also that their participation is active and regular.

As already discussed, formal schooling has its limitations in offering basic education and learning opportunities to all children. Therefore, the paths to basic education are varied depending on the target groups and circumstances prevailing in each individual country (Lungwangwa, 1999). Some of the paths of achieving basic education include formal schools, community learning centres, distance learning programmes, and evening classes.

Limitations of formal schooling have been increasing over the years. Many children are growing up with out opportunities for leaning. Even among those who enter primary education, a significant proportional drop out before completing the primary school circle. Examples of this limitation can be seen in these figures. In 1991, 40,000 school age children were not in school compared to 1,494,817, which were in school. This number increased by 1996 to 650,000 not in school compared to 1,506,650 who were in school (Lungwangwa, 1999). This means that one third of the school age children in Zambia do not attend school.

There is a high illiteracy rates among the youths. Available data show that illiteracy rates among the youth. It is estimated that illiteracy rates amount the youth 14 - 20 years is higher than those for older persons between 21 - 30 years and 31 - 45 years (Lungwangwa, 1999). If the majority of the youth 14 - 20 years were in school, illiteracy rate would have been the lowest as it should be this group that should benefit of basic education offered in primary school. According to a recent study, the proportion of school age children in rural areas that do not attend school is 40% while it is 20% do not attend school in urban areas. (Lungwangwa, 1999).

Current Nonformal Provision in Zambia

As already discussed earlier, there exist several paths to the delivery of basic education i.e. the primary school, community learning centres evening classes and distance learning programmes. Since a third of the total number of school age children do not attend regular, in some communities several efforts are being done to provide basic education to this group of learners. There has been an influx of communities schools in various parts of the country.

1. Community Schools in Zambia

Community schools serve as one of the paths to the provision of basic education in Zambiano cater for the many school age children who are not in regular school system. Community schools have been set up throughout Zambia in order to respond to the enormous demand for schools or learning opportunity.

A community school is a school, which established in and run by a community which indicated the need for a school to cater for the less privileged children. Many of these children are girls and many are orphans, who for social and economic reasons have never been to school or have dropped out school at an early age. In 1996, there were about twenty organisations involved in community schools in Zambia. Community school is currently being used as a term for initiatives in basic education outside the formal system. It can also be defined as community participation Durston (1996) identified three types of communities schools.

- (I) those wholly outside the government system with varying degrees of community participation;
- (ii) those which began as community initiatives but which now have assistance from the Ministry of Education, many of which have either been taken over by the Ministry or are planned to be incorporated into the Ministry of Education system;
- (iii) government schools with effective community participation.

The last category is considered as part of the formal with other two more towards the third. some of the characteristics of community schools are their diversity in the way they began, the degree and type of community involvement and degree of Ministry of agency involved. In urban areas, community schools can be seen as interventions by agencies whose constituencies are the poor, children of HIV/AIDS affected families, orphans and girls. They are normally run by volunteer teachers, usually chosen by the agency itself. In rural areas community schools are those began by a community, which has either found its own buildings or began to contract multipurpose building. The Ministry of Education provides teachers for such schools.

Government policy on education recognises the role of NGOs and states that local communities would participate in the development, maintenance and repair of basic schools and that the Ministry of Education would negotiate

with local authorities, church groups and other bodies for the resumption of some of the responsibility they had in the past for the management of schools. In 1997, there were 120 such schools with a total enrolment of 19,050 pupils. Providers of community schools include religious groups, international organisations and government. The enrolment figures in many schools is small between 100 and 160 as large schools often found in urban areas had large schools up to 600 pupils.

Some issues related to community schools, which may be considered as these schools develop, are:

- Difficulty of older children being taught alongside pupils
- The importance of peer support for enrolling or continuing in school for older pupils.
- How differences in aspirations of various stakeholders might be resolved.
- Hunger of children affecting both children attendance and learning in schools (This situation is the same in regular primary schools)
- Child Labour - how far can it be sanctioned at school?
- Community participation takes many forms: parents would like to be involved more than many of the teachers and implementing agencies would like.
- Volunteerism - how long can't be expected. (Durstun, 1996. p.8).

In a recent study conducted by Mwansa (1997), it was observed that the management of community schools is in schools where there were other developmental activity and community commitment was strong in those schools where supervisors have deliberately made an effort to involve the community in decision making process. Commitment is weakest in those communities where the community had little or no hand in the establishment of the school. He further observed that the main professional weaknesses of community schools are that the staff are primarily untrained teachers, the teachers are not paid, separate supply of learning materials and the poor quality of learning facilities.

Despite these concerns, the growth of community schools as an organized education enterprise in the 1990s is a response to the learning needs of the many school age children who are not in school whose number is increasing year by year. Community schools offer much promise in the provision of basic education to the many underprivileged and neglected and poverty stricken parents.

2. Evening Classes

Evening classes have a long history in Zambia. These were established before independence especially on the Copperbelt and other small towns such as Kabwe and Lusaka. They rapidly expanded after independence to provide education to those who had no chance to go to school. These were workers who wanted to improve their education so that they would fit into the work place. But evening class enrolment decreased in recent years, partly due to the fact that many have had a chance to get a junior secondary education, and partly due to the security situation in the country. It appears that there is still a large proportion of people enrolled in evening classes. The classes are offered under the auspices of the Department of Continuing Education in the Ministry of Education.

3. Open Secondary Schools

Open Secondary Schools cater for the School leavers who are not picked up in the regular secondary school. They are re run under the Department of Continuing Education and are conducted in the afternoons at basic schools. They are usually found in urban centres. In some cases uniforms is a requirement so that the children feel are being in the regular school.

4. Distance Education

The National Correspondence College based in Luanshya on the Copperbelt develops materials that are used in open secondary schools and evening classes. Materials from the National Correspondence College are also used by students who study on their own at home for Junior Secondary Certificate and General Certificate of Education. The students enrol directly with the National Correspondence College. They receive lecture material from the college and send their assignments regularly. They then write an External Examination similar to the one set for students in evening classes.

The learning needs of other students are also being met by private correspondence colleges, some of which are able to make better provision for students than the National Correspondence College can offer.

5. Schools for Continuing Education

The schools for continuing education offer a wide range of skills training courses such as and metal work. Commercial subjects are also offered in various schools. There are schools for continuing education in each of the nine provinces.

ENROLLMENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CONTINUING PROGRAMMES

Program	Enrolment
1. Distance Education (Junior	32,795 (1991) Secondary) GCE 'O' Level 21,202 (1991)
2. Open Secondary Schools (Total	16,520 (1991) Enrolment)
3. Evening Classes (Total	10,356 (1991) Enrolment)
4. Schools for Continuing Education	1,174 (1990) (Total Enrolment) Table 1.0

Most of the programmes offered by the Department of Continuing Education are formal equivalency courses designed to give second chance educational opportunities to those whose schooling ended early, and, where appropriate, to allow them re-enter the main stream of formal education provision.

6. Educational Broadcasting

Educational Broadcasting Services were established in the early 1960s to enrich and supplement classwork. They used to cater for primary, open secondary schools, directly enrolled students in distance education programmes and teachers. The activities were reviewed around 1994 and programmes were discontinued after an evaluation for their impact was done. Recently, however, the Ministry of Education is implementing a pilot project funded by NORAD in the use of educational broadcasting for out of school children in learning centres.

7. Literacy Programmes

The major organization that offers literacy activities is the Ministry of Community Development. Although these programmes are targeted to adult learners, a small proportion of young learners benefit from literacy activities. Apart from the Department of Community Development other organisations such as different church groups, Catholic, the Bahai, Jehovah Witnesses, NGOs and associations offer literacy program both for the youths and adults.

In the review that was conducted in 1990, it was concluded that there has been lack of effective strategies to sustain acquired literacy skills in the country. This was evidenced by the lack of post-literacy materials and activities. There is also lack of effective linkage between literacy and continuing education efforts. Those who complete attendance at adult literacy centres are not deliberately channelled into continuing education programmes of the school system and those that exist outside the school system. The different groups that offer

literacy programmes in the country work in isolation from one another. In some cases they use different literacy materials in their work.

8. Agricultural Extension

Agricultural Extension is another area where nonformal provision takes place. The work is done by Agricultural Extension workers who are stationed in rural communities to provide the agricultural messages to the rural communities. These messages are delivered face to face through residential courses at Farm Training Centre available in each district in the country. Agricultural messages are also aired through radio and television by the National Agricultural Information Services. Seed companies also air programmes that are aimed at informing the public the goodness of their seeds.

9. Skills training

Skills training for youths are conducted by the Ministry of Youth and Sport. Others include the Ministry of Education in their Schools for Continuing Education, the Ministry of Community Development at their Community Development Centre one in each of the nine provinces. Non-governmental organisations are also involved in offering skills to youth people such as the children's village, Women For Change, Women in Agriculture, Zambia Alliance of Women, the Young Women Christian Association to name but a few.

10. Health Education

The Ministry of Health has a Health Education Unit which produces Health Education Materials i.e. booklets, pamphlets and posters that are used at health Centres to disseminate health education messages about diseases and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Some health messages are disseminated through radio and television and drama.

In recent times several non-governmental organisations have become involved in health education related to AIDS such as Kara Counselling, Society for Family Health, Fan-lily Health Trust, Children in Distress, Society for Women and Aids. These are playing a major role in disseminating messages about Aids. They serve as Counselling Cities for testing for Aids and for counselling those that are already infected. These organisations play a major role in the communities where they operate. Church groups have become increasingly involved.

Concluding Remarks

The categories of nonformal education provision which have discussed in this paper are not exhaustive but are intended to provide a broad overview of the provision of nonformal education in the country. The problems that face nonformal education were discussed in detail at the national Conference on Education for All in March, 1991. These were: poor co-ordination, underfunding, inadequate curriculum development, lack of suitable teaching materials, and lack of training among nonformal education. Other problems relate to the poor state of information about the organisations that offer nonformal programmes, about the programmes themselves, their clientele being reached and the funding involved (MOE, 1992).

One way to strengthen nonformal education would be to set up a National Council for

Nonformal Education that would co-ordinate the work of all organisations involved in nonformal education so as to avoid duplication and to ensure that nonformal education program complements formal education.

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