

ACCESS, QUALITY, AND OPPORTUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF ZAMBIA OPEN
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (ZOCS)

By

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ABSTRACT

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Community schools and other approaches to Alternative Primary Education or APE have increased access to primary education for underserved populations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as a major goal of the Education for All (EFA) movement. In Zambia, a country where an estimated 20 percent of the basic education enrollment now attends community schools, such efforts are undoubtedly the most significant responses to the Zambian government's incapacity to provide a sufficient number of school places to primary-aged children. While community schools make meaningful contributions to the goals of EFA by increasing access for various populations, it remains unclear how Zambia's estimated 2,500 community schools are monitored and evaluated. Indeed, while advocates have praised community schools more generally for their focus on disadvantaged children, community control, and relevance to students' everyday lives, critics argue that these schools are "second-rate education for second-rate students" that perpetuate a system of inequality in which country governments play a minimal role in ensuring both access and quality for all students.

In this case study, I attempt to understand how various community schools in Zambia function, raising questions about why some families send their children to community schools and what lies ahead for community school students upon completion. In addition, I assess various successes and challenges faced by Zambia's largest community school organization, (Zambia Open Community Schools or ZOCS) analyzing perceptions, expectations and outcomes of schooling among students, teachers, and representatives of agencies who work directly or indirectly with ZOCS specifically and other community schools more generally. Considering

multiple actors and perspectives within schools, communities, and ZOCS as an organization, I apply my understanding of community schools within Zambia's larger social, political, and economic context to argue that despite national statistics illustrating the discouraging odds of progression through public secondary school and onto college or university, community school students in Zambia's urban and rural areas maintain a steadfast belief in the power of schooling to ultimately improve their living conditions by securing access to higher education and skilled employment. Utilizing interview and survey data collected over 14 months in the context of literature to date, I build a case for both praise and critique of community schools and the role of educational non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in a southern African context.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
APE	Alternative Primary Education
ASC	Annual School Census
BESSIP	Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Plan
CBU	Copperbelt University
DEB	District Education Board
ECZ	Examinations Council of Zambia
EFA	Education for All
ESIP	Education Sector Investment Plan
FBO	Faith Based Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Ratio
GNP	Gross National Product
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAS	National Assessment Survey
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PCSC	Parent Community School Committee
PEO	Provincial Education Office

PRP.....Primary Reading Programme

PTAParent Teacher Association

SSA.....Sub-Saharan Africa

USAID.....United States Agency for International Development

UNESCOUnited Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

WB.....World Bank

ZOCS.....Zambia Open Community Schools

ZCSSZambia Community Schools Secretariat

Chapter 1: Introduction, Study Rationale, and Research Questions



Figure 1. Map of Zambia and Africa. Source: <http://www.100milebethel.ca/missions.htm>. For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.

On May 26, 2009, the local ZNBC seven o'clock news reported a student protest at Kaunda Girls Secondary School in Zambia's Copperbelt Province. Students from the neighboring Kitwe Boys' Secondary School were also in protest and had allegedly torn down the

walls surrounding Kaunda Girls' yard. Both protests were in frustration over teacher absences: unpaid teachers had not shown up for school, leaving hundreds of eager-to-learn students, in uniform, abandoned. A Kaunda Girls' student, cheered on by her peers exclaimed, "It is not our problem! [That teacher' salaries are not paid]. We want to learn!"

This was one of several student protests I witnessed in Zambia while collecting data for this study in 2009. Despite Zambia's global reputation for pacifism and peace (the country has never witnessed a civil war, *coup d' état*, or other period of unrest), protests and unrest around social services such as education are not new. Just a few months prior to the May 26 incident, the University of Zambia (UNZA) was shut down when professors went on strike as a result of the University's refusal to increase faculty salaries. Students protested and rioted over two to three weeks while faculty engaged in closed door negotiations. UNZA eventually re-opened after more than one "go slow" month (during a "go slow", professors *may* show up to work, but usually spend most of their time in their offices , and more often than not, do not teach at all). I spoke with a few UNZA students who had plans for graduation that would most certainly be postponed as a result of the one month lapse in courses and examinations.

Both the Copperbelt and UNZA events were typical responses of students to public education. Worse still, the families of the students described above pay considerable fees for secondary and university schooling, often times at great sacrifice of other household responsibilities and commitments. In response to the ongoing criticism of public institutions (inefficiency, non-productivity, lack of incentives for improvement, etc.), increasing numbers of Zambians- in particular, those who have the resources- look to private and international schools to educate their children. However, the prospects for those who cannot "vote with their feet" to

take advantage of the burgeoning market for high quality schooling in Zambia are limited. Those who cannot access more prestigious government and/or private schools because of costs, distance, or other barriers remain excluded from what is today an overcrowded and competitive race for educational attainment and credentials. In 2008, a mere 36% of official school age students progressed to the upper secondary level beginning at grade 10 (UNESCO, 2008).

Similar to the experiences of other low-income countries around the world, the global push for and disproportionate investment in universal primary access in Zambia over the last two decades has facilitated the creation of a bottleneck in post-primary education. Secondary and university students fight so fiercely for their right to learn precisely because choices are limited and public institutions continue to monopolize the education system. While the examples above provide a glimpse into the state of public secondary and university education in Zambia and explain in part why fewer Zambian students will earn a secondary certificate, let alone a university diploma, a similar, more silent struggle for access takes place at the primary and basic level (grades eight and nine) where children have been promised free basic education since 2002. The rise of community-based schools as a response to such overwhelming demand has provided otherwise nonexistent opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Zambian children. However, at the end of primary school, whether government or community-based, Zambian children and their families increasingly raise questions and concerns about not only the value of primary schooling, but what lies ahead in a country that despite numerous political and economic developments continues to confront challenges of poverty, health crises, and a growing gap between rich and poor.

Study Rationale

Despite various steps taken to achieve universal primary education as a commitment to both Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a majority of low-income countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa have not met enrollment targets and standards of quality (UNESCO, 2008). This situation is exacerbated across Africa as citizens, NGOs, and international organizations increasingly look to private and decentralized school systems in which the state alone is no longer held accountable for providing primary education. While decentralization and privatization of schooling have improved access, such efforts have also complicated national governments' ability to monitor and evaluate educational practices and outcomes.

Although the Zambian government, along with local and international organizations has developed expansive programs to achieve universal primary education (UPE), resource and infrastructural constraints continue to challenge the country's educational system. Zambia's Free Basic Education Policy of 2002 opened doors of opportunity for millions of children. However, various populations, particularly those who are at most risk of poverty, malnutrition, and sickness, especially Zambia's orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) remain left behind (UNESCO, 2008; Petrauskis & Nkunika, 2006).

Community-based schools are one of the most significant responses to the Zambian government's incapacity to provide a sufficient number of school places to primary-aged children. While these schools make meaningful contributions to the goals of EFA by increasing access for various populations, it remains unclear in the literature how the country's estimated 2,500 community schools are monitored and evaluated. How school staff and students describe

their experiences as well as notions of success, failure, and opportunity are currently understudied ways of evaluating alternative and/or supplementary approaches to primary schooling. Moreover, whether Zambian community school graduates are able to access secondary schooling, employment, or other opportunities not easily defined or measured has yet to be examined in any analytical detail. Consequently, a deeper understanding of community schools' capacity to mitigate the negative impacts of poverty, social exclusion, and other consequences of disadvantage by providing access to basic education and skills has yet to be attained. Given the goals of community schools to cater to underserved populations based on a global commitment to Education for All (EFA), such an investigation is warranted.

Research Questions

This dissertation is a case study of students who have completed a community-based primary education in the Lusaka Province of Zambia. The questions below seek to develop an understanding of how various actors are thinking about the goals, objectives, and outcomes for students attending community schools in different Zambian settings. Placing ZOCS in the larger field of “non-formal” education, this study sheds light on successes, challenges, and room for inquiry concerning various non-public approaches to primary schooling that have been understudied in both a Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) context and other developing regions of the world more generally. It probes the following questions:

- 1.) How do community schools in Zambia function to provide primary education to various populations? What characteristics define Zambian community schools and the communities they serve?
- 2.) How do teachers and students define success with community schooling *vis á vis* their own perceptions and experiences?
- 3.) What factors continue to promote or limit success for Zambian students within broader school, community, and national contexts?

With the exception of literacy and numeracy assessments, these questions have not been explored in depth as a means to monitor and evaluate the impacts of community schooling on Zambian students. No published studies have focused on community school graduates to address issues of expansion, social stratification, and schooling in view of social, political, and economic contexts in low-income countries. This gap in the literature is noted by a majority of studies in the field (Mulenga, et. al, 2005; Chondoka, 2004; Chisamu, 2008) and consequently a more nuanced definition and evaluation of “quality” among community schools has yet to be developed. Moreover, the debate on whether community schools may reproduce existing social and economic inequalities is incomplete. While this study does not address the long-term effects of community schooling in Zambia, it attempts to fill the existing gap by drawing more attention to community school monitoring and evaluation efforts and addressing more directly the functions of community schools within Zambian political, economic, and social contexts. Such an approach draws much needed comparisons and contrasts between community-based and public schools not systematically addressed in the literature to date. Although the goal of the study is not to evaluate schools per se, it provides insights into avenues that communities, NGOs, faith-based organizations (FBOs), and government agencies may take to more efficiently and sufficiently support community school graduates.

Study Outline

Following a review of literature on Zambian education and the rise of community schools in Zambia and Africa more generally in Chapters Two and Three, Chapter Four outlines the study methodology. I explore Question One to provide a contextual framework on ZOCS’ organization and schools in Chapters Five and Six. Within these contexts, I address Questions

Two and Three in Chapter Eight, utilizing students as the major units of analysis throughout the remainder of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

This literature review is divided into four parts. Part I provides a brief history of educational policy in six distinct time periods with a focus on primary education to develop my understanding of the rise of community schools in Zambia. Part II discusses the Zambian education system's current organizational and financial structure and begins to build my argument that community schools have mushroomed in Zambia to exceed government and private schools in provinces such as Lusaka. This expansion of community schools also substantiates further research of their impacts on children and communities in urban and rural areas that, as I show in this study, may live under different conditions, but attend school with similar expectations. Part III provides summary statistics and highlights trends related to Zambian schools and issues of access and efficiency to show that community schools make significant contributions to expanding access, particularly for marginalized populations. I argue throughout the study that despite various differences, both community and government schools face similar challenges to providing educational opportunities beyond the primary level. The following Chapter Three continues my review of literature by delving deeper into community-based schooling as a theoretical concept, comparing and contrasting Zambian community schools to others within low-income countries in and outside of Africa.

Literature Review Part I: Historical Background to Zambian Education

In this chapter, I provide a brief background to the history of basic education in Zambia. I highlight relevant aspects of this history from six distinct time periods: the pre-colonial era, the colonial era, post-independence, the structural adjustment years, the Chiluba era, and Zambian

education in the context of Education for All (EFA) and the country's two most recent presidents, Levi Mwanawasa and Rupiah Banda.

Pre-Colonial Education

Notions of “community” (a geographical area or body of persons with common physical, cultural, social, political, economic, and/or environmental interests living within a larger group or society¹) are not new in educational research or practice. They can be traced back as far as the appearance of human life on earth, when children grew and learned how to participate in family and societal life through various cultural and social practices (Lahrr and Foley, 1998). Prior to colonial rule in several African territories, “community-based” education was central to the socialization of children into societies and the transmission of knowledge, values, and attitudes to future generations. Passed down by parents, elders, extended family, and community members through oral traditions, song and dance, and learning by doing, children acquired the knowledge and skills necessary for survival in largely agriculturally-based economies (Mwanakatwe, 1968). Education during this period emphasized cognitive and social development of individuals within families and communities, positive and peaceful uses of the environment, and socialization of children into different roles based on age, sex, and positioning within immediate and extended family structures². Retrospectively, education at this time was “formal” to the children who

¹ Author's definition.

² I make this distinction to emphasize the variety of skills and social roles assigned to both boys and girls in fishing, farming, and domestic chores. While girls were generally responsible for child-care and food preparation, it was not uncommon for boys to learn these skills and be expected to carry them out independently. Likewise, girls were incorporated into various aspects

participated in and benefitted from it, but did not exhibit the physical or social aspects of schools brought to Africans by colonial rule during the 19th and 20th centuries. In contrast to contemporary concerns for national development and economic growth on a global scale, education in the pre-colonial era prepared children for functional roles to serve the purposes of existing social structures within rural agriculturally-based communities.

Colonial Education

Throughout the colonial era, officials and missionaries generally educated small groups of Africans for subordinate employment positions in colonial industries and in conjunction with Christian evangelical efforts (O'Brian, 2006). Accounts from the colonial period in what was then Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe, respectively) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) refer to “village” or “tribal” schools, where British, French, Irish, and Polish missions ran basic schools for small groups of Africans. While missions would grow to become the most widespread providers of basic education in the pre-independence period, the ideology behind “village” and “tribal” schools was that Africans would become teachers, low-skilled workers, and leaders in the colonial political and economic structure. They would learn some basic skills, but remain “at home” in what were then predominantly rural areas (O'Brian, pp.

of agricultural practices (personal interviews with Charles Mwalimu, March 3, 2008 and Felistas Chibiliti, August 12, 2009).

216-221)³. A paper prepared by Mr. Mackenzie-Kennedy (Native Commissioner) for the General Missionary Conference of 1924 summed up the [colonial] government position:

What is meant by the Native Problem? Is not the *Muntu*'s most pressing need that of Education? To make the best use of his land, to dispose of his labour most profitably to all concerned and to utilize both land and labour so that he can fulfil himself to the limits of his capacity...For this education is needed and the Black man is actively demanding education. He is at heart an agriculturalist and pastoralist: his future is indissolubly bound up with the land...and to the land he will inevitably return (cited in O'Brian, p. 98).

O'Brian describes education during the colonial period as a platform of political and economic interests, expectations, and obligations of four major groups in Northern Rhodesia: Africans, missionaries, colonial officials, and white settlers/miners. He argues that education was,

A variable they could utilize and control to produce a result favorable to their particular position. What none of the groups understood was that education as an institutional practice possessed a logic or a regulatory discourse of its own, a constructed system of knowledge, that it was not easily manipulated and that it acted upon its providers or protagonists as much as they upon it. These colonial interactions played a central role in determining the shape of the national education discourse in pre and post-independence

³ The ideology behind "village" and "tribal" schools evolved as missionaries and colonial officials realized that increasing numbers of Africans were migrating to newly developing urban centers where they were employed as miners and low-level employees in other industries. This large-scale migration led to the creation of government and mission-run schools in towns that followed the "village" and "tribal" school era.

Zambia. The education process cannot be viewed in terms of a single linear or chronological entity, but rather as a series of disparate educational endeavors that nevertheless shared a set of common experiences, beliefs and language (O'Brian, p. 84).

Debates among colonial officials around educational policy concerned whether or not to expand an education system that was split into a “native” sector and a white settler sector (the white settler sector receiving more funding, more qualified teachers, and more advanced facilities), and exactly how much education Africans were worthy and/or capable of obtaining:

After the 1930's and with the advent of the war the British had to review how they regarded their colonies. The Government Officials had to deal, not with a rural population but with an educated one that believed in independence, the missionaries had also to learn to deal with an urban population and a population that had absorbed their message of the brotherhood of man and demanded equality of human status with the white people. The Africans had to learn in the mining towns the reliance on wages rather than crops and kinship and they had to learn to play the political game if they were to have a say in their own affairs (p. 205)...The Colonial Office continued to be afraid that Africa might develop what India had prior to independence, the well-educated but unemployed, who became radical politicians (p. 322).

By 1945, the colonial administration was forced to confront its underdevelopment of the education sector. The Creech Jones W.E.F. War Chair Report stated:

Everywhere, primary education was deficient in quality and reached too few children of school age. No rapid expansion of schooling was possible because of the inadequate

supply of trained teachers. The supply of teachers could not be quickly increased because the students entering the training centres were of poor intellectual caliber and much of their training period had to be used “puttying up the cracks” in their own inadequate general education (cited in O’Brian, *ibid*).

The Report also described colonial secondary schools as “a travesty of what is understood in this country as a secondary school”. O’Brian concludes that, “this would be an accurate description of the state of education in Northern Rhodesia except for the fact that there was really only one secondary school in the country at the time” (pp. 323-324). Although “village” and “tribal” schools were some of the first small institutions set up by missionaries, the education system would expand to create a diminutive group of colonial educated elites who would become leaders in nationalistic movements for independence (Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, Yoweri Museveni in Uganda, Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, Kenneth Kaunda and Simon Kapwepwe in Zambia, etc.). Most significant in the accounts provided above of colonial education was a shift from education for functional roles in African communities governed by Africans to education for functional roles that would serve the economic and political goals of colonial expansion. In essence, education during this period reproduced inequality among a majority of Africans and provided limited skilled opportunities to small groups. This cleavage would become more apparent with the spread of mass schooling post-independence and the resulting limited access to resources and opportunities for most Zambians.

Post -Independence Education: The Kaunda Years

Zambia gained independence on October 24, 1964. At this time, there were approximately 1200 Africans with secondary school certificates and 100 university graduates in

a total population of 3.5 million people (Manpower Report, 1966). The United National Independence Party (UNIP) won the first legislative elections with Kenneth Kaunda as prime minister and later the first president. Among other African leaders such as Julius Nyerere in Tanzania (*Ujamaa*) and Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana (*Consciencism*) who pursued socialist approaches to political, economic, and social policies, Kaunda's planning revolved around the state. His theory of "Zambian Humanism" was based on a combination of mid-twentieth-century thinking about state control and what he considered African values: self-reliance, equal opportunities, trust and loyalty to the community (Kaunda, 1967). At independence, Zambia's national development strategy promoted a welfare state with a centrally-planned economy, a common school movement and the nationalization of private enterprises (Lungwangwa, 1993, p.8).

In line with central planning principles, education was primarily the state's responsibility: Kaunda mandated that previously private-run institutions were to surrender their schools to the public sector as they allegedly fostered class divisions and exploitation. By 1979, these policies slashed the number of private schools to a mere 16 from over 1700 in 1963 (Lungwangwa, 1993). The Education Act of 1966 gave Kaunda's government the legal power over a unified school system, common curriculum, examinations, and teacher training programs [ibid].

According to UNIP's earliest educational policies, primary schooling was subsidized, secondary schools expanded, and bursaries provided at the university level for students progressing with distinction. These new developments represented a shift in both autonomy and thinking about the role of schooling in national development from the colonial era. For the first time, major investments at all levels would attempt to cultivate literacy and numeracy skills for

Zambians who previously did not have access to formal schooling and build a pool of highly educated Zambians who would lead public institutions for development in agriculture, health, business, and education. Between 1977 and 1985, foreign aid to education in Zambia was dominated by technical and monetary assistance to secondary and higher education with little to no international investment at the primary level (Kelly, 1991).

The Zambian government's educational monopoly would challenge the system when public resources began to dwindle. Beginning in the mid 1970's, a number of economic crises spawned the country's need for increasing amounts of international aid:

- Decreasing government revenue earning capacity resulting from a drastic fall in copper prices;
- A rise in Zambia's oil importation bill as a consequence of the 1979 world oil crisis;
- An overall increase in interest rates on foreign loans which exacerbated the country's external debt.

Government subsidies to social services were also constrained by the country's rapid population growth and high levels of urbanization. By 1986, Zambia's population had increased to 6.5 million from 3.5 million in 1964. By 2000, this figure mushroomed to approximately 10 million (O'Brian, p. 426). An ideal candidate for foreign assistance, Zambia entered into its first agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) in 1984.

The Structural Adjustment Period

Todaro and Smith (2003) characterize typical IMF stabilization or World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) as follows:

- Abolition or liberalization of foreign exchange and import controls;
- Devaluation of the official exchange rate;

- A stringent anti-inflation program controlling bank credit and government deficit through curbs on spending, control of wage increases, and dismantling of price controls;
- Greater hospitality to foreign investment and openness to international commerce.

During the 1980s, the Zambian government instituted major cuts in public education expenditures, dropping the per cent of Gross National Product (GNP) allocated in this sector from 6.5% in 1982 to 2.4% in 1989 (Kelly, 1991). Based on a policy jointly formulated by the Zambian government and the World Bank, *The Provision of Education for All* (1986), additional changes included the introduction of cost sharing mechanisms among primary school parents in areas such as school-building, textbook acquisition, and school feeding programs. As was the case in other countries such as Tanzania and Kenya pursuing similar educational policies under international influence, school enrollments at all levels decreased (Brock-Utne, 2001). The formation of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), community schools, and student loans were also characteristic of the structural adjustment period. Although initially, primary school fees were not a part of this scheme, they would later be mandated by Zambia's second president, Fredrick Chiluba. During its first structural adjustment phase, external debt in Zambia skyrocketed by more than 1000%. The country's debt to GNP ratio rose from 39.5% in 1972 to 82.7% in 1982 (Lungwangwa, 1993).

The Chiluba Years and BESSIP

By 1991 in response to both national and international pressure, Kaunda lifted the ban on political parties. That year, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) won 76% of votes and Frederick Chiluba became Zambia's second president (Kemp et. al, 2008, p. 33). In the next decade, Chiluba transformed Zambia's economy from centrally-planned to market-based, liberalizing several previously state-owned enterprises, most importantly the copper mining

industry. The Chiluba administration removed subsidies on several commodities including maize, groundnuts, and cassava. Although the effects of these measures were not immediately felt (GNI per capita eventually declined from USD 590 in 1975 to USD 300 in 2000), Chiluba's new economic policies would create several opportunities in Zambia's various sectors of development. In 1996, the government released *Educating our Future* as the country's first comprehensive, funded initiative addressing the entire formal education system and focusing on democratization, decentralization, and productivity. The document emphasized quality, curriculum relevance and diversification, efficient and cost-effective management, capacity building, cost sharing and revitalized partnership, flexibility, pluralism, and responsiveness. The following year, the Government of the Republic of Zambia (hereafter referred to as GRZ) adopted the *Education Sector Investment Plan* (ESIP). Based on ESIP, GRZ developed plans for two sub-sectors: the Ministry of Science, Technology and Vocational Training (which would develop the *Technical Education and Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) Development Plan* for skills and training) and the *Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Plan* (BESSIP) (Kemp, et. al, p. 36).

BESSIP planned to cover the period between 1999 and 2003. The major goals of the plan were to increase primary enrollments (grades 1-7) and improve academic achievement at the basic level, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Enrollment targets were set for 100% by 2005. In addition, by 2005, at least 65% of students in grade seven were to achieve satisfactory achievement levels in English and 50% in mathematics (Kemp et. al, p. 37). BESSIP planned to construct new schools (such that no child would need to walk more than five kilometers or approximately three miles), reduce school fees by providing grants to schools, and offer additional support for vulnerable populations (girls, orphans, rural children, etc.). In addition, the

policy intended to provide more textbooks to decrease the pupil to book ratio to 2:1 by 2005, revise the basic school curriculum, and teach initial literacy in mother tongues as opposed to English⁴. Finally, BESSIP included a plan to administer National Assessment Surveys (NAS) to monitor and evaluate student achievement at the basic level. Today, these surveys include a test of 20 randomly selected grade five students in 350-400 schools in English, mathematics, and Zambian languages. The NASs were administered in 1999, 2001, 2003, and 2006.

The goals of programs such as BESSIP were to jumpstart education for development in line with both research and technical advice by international partners such as the World Bank concerning the link between neoliberal policy, primary education, and economic growth (Jones, 2007). According to Chisala and Cornelissen (2005), only 19% of the funds planned for BESSIP were actually spent. The incremental restructuring process at the Ministry of Education (hereafter referred to as MoE) and slow pace of decentralization following the Kaunda years exacerbated the process of implementation at local levels. By the mid-1990's, Zambia's per capita foreign debt was among the highest in the world. At the end of the century, its external debt was approximately USD 6.5 billion: twice its GDP. In 2001, when the late former president Levy Mwanawasa won elections, Zambia first received debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative which represented 6% of the total approved budget. Under this initiative, allocations for debt servicing were intended to shift to social sectors such as education

⁴ The Primary Reading Programme or PRP was set up under the BESSIP umbrella to improve reading and writing skills at the primary level through the use of local languages. It stipulated that children in grade one be taught in local languages and translate their skills into English beginning in grade two. By grade three, students were to follow lessons in English as well as Zambian languages.

and health. In March 2005, when Zambia reached its HIPC completion point, its total foreign debt stood at approximately USD 7 billion. As a result of HIPC relief and the Multi-Lateral Debt Relief Initiative, Zambia's debt stock was reduced to USD .5 billion by the end of 2006, although concerns for adequate support to social sectors remains. Overall, since 2003 the economy has been growing by more than 5% per year. In 2006, Zambia's inflation rate dropped into single digits for the first time in the country's recent history (Kemp et. al, p. 34).

Mwanawasa and Banda, Free Basic Education, and the Fifth National Development Plan

During Mwanawasa's seven years in office from 2001 to his passing in 2008, education continued to be coordinated under the 1996 *Educating our Future* Policy, the *Education Sector Strategic Plan* for 2003-2007 and the *National Decentralisation Policy* of 2004. In 2006, GRZ released the *Fifth National Development Plan*, or *FNDP* covering 2006-2010. In contrast to the 1996 document emphasizing the expansion of access, the *FNDP* reiterates concerns for quality and efficiency. Moreover, the *FNDP* acknowledges the role of NGOs, FBOs, and other agencies in providing access to various populations through "alternative modes". However, more relevant to this study, the document does not detail coordination, resourcing, or policies intended for "alternative" service providers. Notable was the plan to increase overall government spending to the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) regional target of 5% of GDP, although 2008 data indicate that spending remained below 2% (UNESCO, 2008).

In line with the goals set forth by the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 and reiterated at the 2000 World Forum on Education for All in Dakar, former President Levy Mwanawasa announced the Free Basic Education (FBE) Policy for students in grades 1-7 in 2002, removing all fees associated with attendance and lifting the requirement of school

uniforms. Similar policies were announced in other SSA countries around the same time period (Kenya in 2003, Tanzania in 2001, Uganda in 1997, etc.) to essentially reinstitute plans enacted for free education in the immediate post-independence era. Although the efforts were well-intentioned, skepticism of the FBE policy was documented as early as 2003:

The introduction of the FBE policy was announced rather suddenly and it was hardly prepared. Within a short period of time, the MOE had to devise a grants scheme to compensate all schools... This policy favoured the smaller schools and many of these were rural schools. However, for many schools these grants were inadequate to purchase critical resources needed for effective teaching and learning. Moreover, grants were often not released on time (Duncan, Macmillan, and Simutanyi, 2003). For many schools, the grants were insufficient and several schools reacted by raising PTA fees at grades 8 and 9 (cited in Mwansa et. al, 2004, p. 45).

A number of studies (Boyle et.al, 2002; Petrauskis and Nkunika, 2006) have indicated ongoing problems of access (students still being charged “hidden” fees for uniforms, textbooks, and PTA fees) and quality (dilapidated infrastructures, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teaching and learning materials, teacher supply and quality issues, etc.), probing the notion that Zambian primary schools are as “free” as they should be. The rise of private and community-based schools in Zambia over the last 20 years further attests to the notion that government schools remain unable to entirely capture the widespread public demand for quality schooling at all levels. Since Rupiah Banda assumed the presidency following the death of President Levy Mwanawasa in 2007, no major changes have taken place in economic or educational planning as set forth in the *FNDP* and the *Education Sector National Implementation Framework* for 2008-

2010. However, the MoE has shown initiative in the areas of coordination and regulation of community schools as the largest non-governmental provider of primary schooling. Moreover, recent reports show tremendous accomplishments in teacher recruitment (30,000 new teachers between 2003 and 2008) and infrastructure development, particularly in rural areas (Phiri, 2010, p. 112).

A recently moderated discussion on aid to education in resource-scarce countries of the *Comparative Education Review* (Archer, et. al, 2010) included the MoE's Director of Planning and Information who explained Zambia's current situation in terms of aid to education:

Prior to 2004, the Ministry of Education was not given the authority to replace or recruit teachers due to the employment freeze enacted by the government as it strove to achieve the benchmarks set forth under the IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) program. Zambia enrolled in the HIPC program, despite the initiative's unfavorable conditionalities, in order to try and catch the carrot of debt forgiveness that was dangled in front of the impoverished countries. The irony of this incentive was that recipient countries were mandated to channel the alleged savings from debt forgiveness into social sectors such as education by both the multilateral and bilateral agencies. How can an impoverished country such as Zambia, which was failing to service the debt in the first place, be expected to declare savings from debt forgiveness and then channel it to the social sector? I thought it only logical to expect one to give only what one has... (p. 112).

Overall, Zambia's history of educational policy has witnessed major shifts in ideology much similar to its economic developments since independence. Beginning with education for functional roles of the pre-colonial and colonial eras and transitioning into education for

individual opportunity, skills development, and economic growth at national and global standards, contemporary policies aim to make schooling more transformative for the majority of Zambians who continue to live in poverty. Despite a strong sense of political commitment demonstrated in GRZ's various frameworks and national plans, the country's educational developments other than the expansion of primary access remain limited. In addition to the need for financial resources to develop infrastructure, improve quality, and hire more qualified teachers, current educational policies lack a clear and realistic vision of how the current system can shape and provide tangible benefits within current higher education and employment conditions. As I show in this study, the rise of community schools introduces a new realm of both discourse and policy uncommon to the Kaunda era of nationalization and new to the Mwanawasa/Banda era of free basic education.

Literature Review Part II: Organizational Structure and Finance of Zambian Education System

Organizational Structure

I briefly describe the organizational structure of the MoE as the central governing, planning, and financing organ of the education system (see diagram below). Now decentralized to provincial and district levels and supported by the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ), Provincial Education Offices (PEOs), and the Office of Teacher Education and Specialized Services, the Ministry's main tasks include:

- Formation of educational plans, policies, and guidelines at the national level;
- Recruitment and pay of government school teachers;
- Creation and promulgation of national curricula for primary, basic (lower secondary), and upper secondary schools (with support from ECZ);

- Disbursement of financial and technical assistance to schools (e.g., textbooks, teaching and learning materials, etc.) to provinces to be administered at the district level.⁵

Each of Zambia's nine provinces has a Provincial Education Officer (PEO) and a standards officer responsible for school inspections. Within each of the country's 72 districts, there are geographical areas in which zonal committees are responsible for localized communication and liaison between provincial and local levels. See district map, organizational structure of the MoE, and public school organization figures below.

⁵ At present, the MoE is attempting to decentralize textbook procurement to provinces and districts which will allow schools to participate in decision-making concerning textbook language and content. The process of condensing lower secondary or basic school grades eight and nine with primary schooling is also underway for many schools after which the term 'basic school' will encompass grades one through nine and 'secondary school' will include grades 10-12. I use the terms 'primary school' (grades one through seven) and 'basic school' (grade eight through nine) in the context of the sample schools for this study. All schools except one (Garden Open Community School) provided schooling through grade seven only.

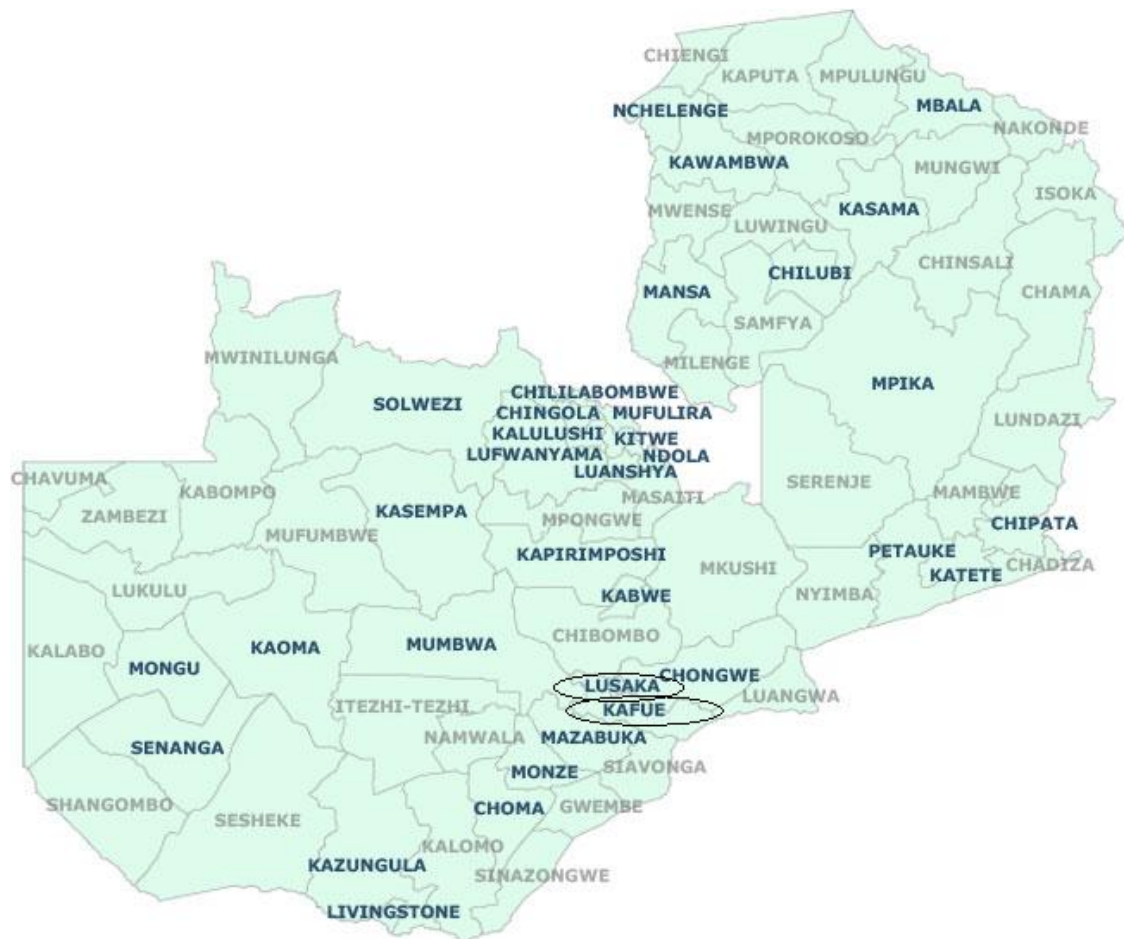


Figure 2. Districts of Zambia with Study Sites Highlighted. Source: <http://www.nmcc.org.zm/report-map.htm>.

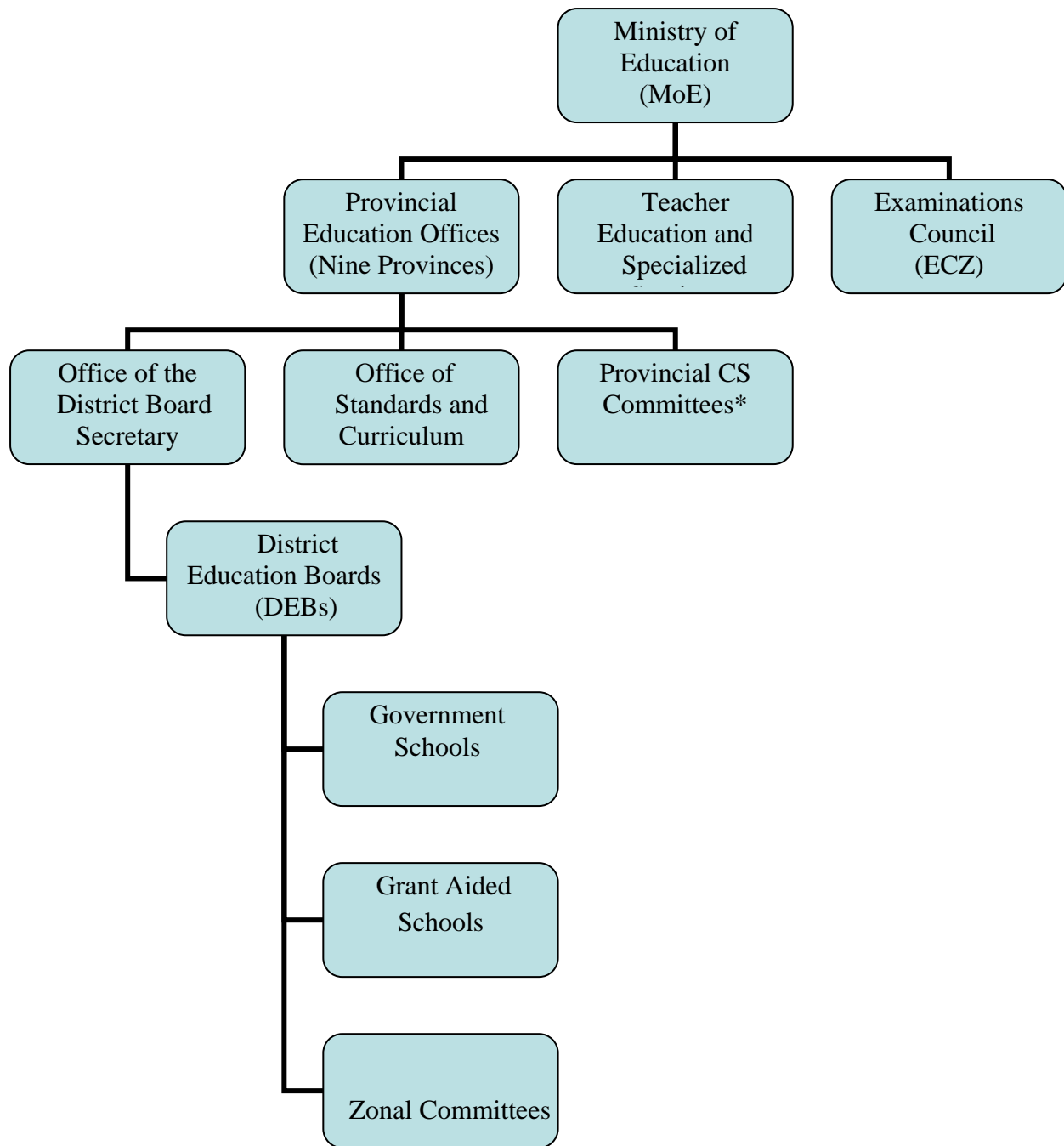


Figure 3. Zambian Education System: Organizational Structure. For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.

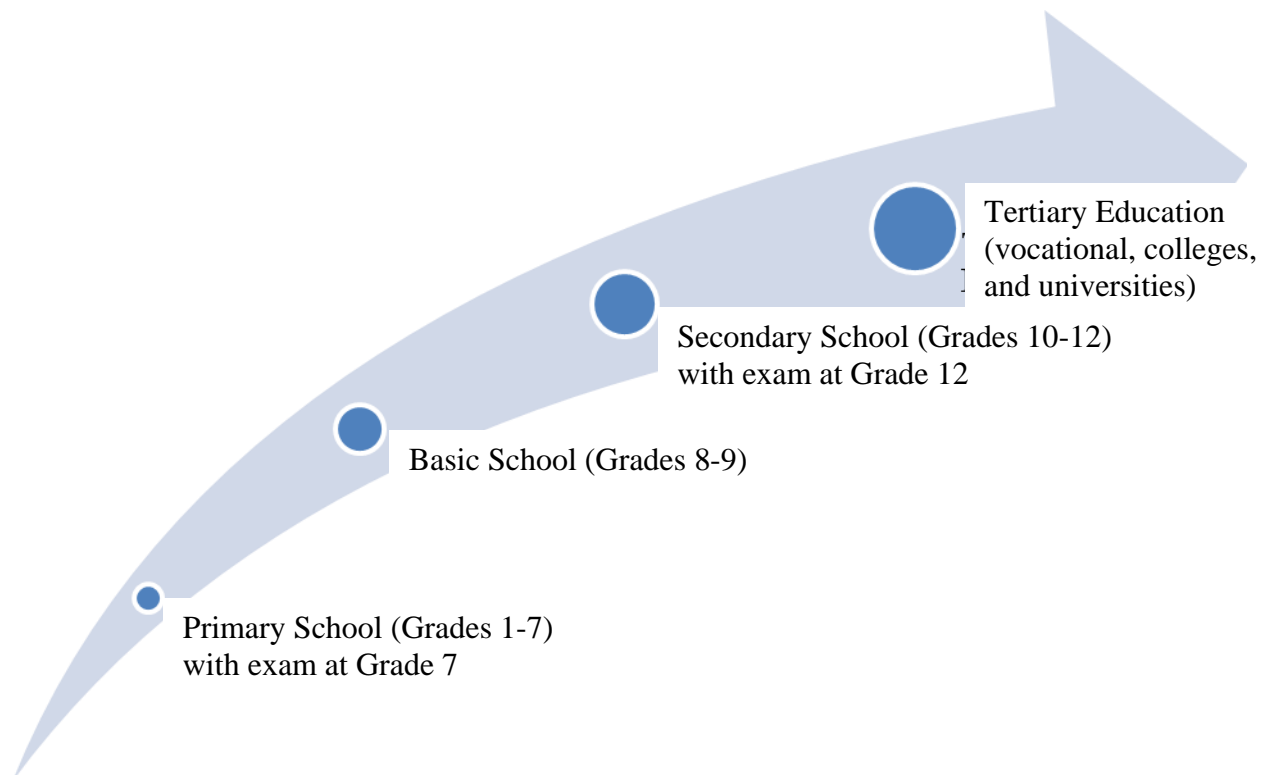


Figure 4. Zambian Public Education System: Grades and Examinations.

Figure three on the Zambian education system appears to map out a clear set of functions for each department. It depicts the MoE's complexity but does not explain the ongoing challenges of decentralization to provincial and district levels in both urban and rural areas. While the idea of decentralization would be beneficial in a country that is predominantly rural, studies have noted difficulties in assigning responsibilities, communicating across provinces and with the MoE, and maintaining a clear understanding of authority (Winkler, 2003). Most notable in the organizational chart above is the absence of any department or function related to community schools. Ideally, all legitimate community schools would be registered as grant-aided (receiving operational grants from the MoE), but this process has yet to be completed. As I argue in Chapter Five on the relationship between community schools and the MoE, Provincial Education Officers

(PEOs) have been limited in their knowledge of and capacity to support community schools without a clear sense of direction in budgeting or policy.

Finance

Zambia's education sector is funded primarily by GRZ revenue and with support from the following bilateral and multilateral agencies (MoE, 2008):

- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
- Netherlands
- Norway
- UK Department for International Development (DFID)
- Ireland Development Commission
- Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)
- Finland
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

In 2008, donor contributions accounted for 14.8% of education sector allocations, while GRZ contributed slightly more at 18.8% (ibid) and the remainder was financed by international loans. Zambian spending on education as a percentage of GNP (estimated around 1.5 to 2.2% in the last decade, UNESCO, 2008) is puzzlingly among the lowest of the SSA region that has a median of 4.4%. Although I did not assess these differences in any of my visits to the MoE, statistics have shown that educational expenditures as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) have also decreased from 2.2% in 2005 to 1.4% in 2008 (UNESCO, 2008). Despite these reductions over the last forty years, literacy, seventh to eighth grade progression rates, and secondary enrollment rates have increased- undoubtedly as a consequence of widespread public, grant-aided, private, and community school expansion. See table below.

Table 1
Zambian National Educational Indicators (1970-2009)

Indicator	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2009
Education Expenditures as % of GNP	6.0	4.2	2.3	2.2
Literacy Rate, Male (Age 15+)	61.0	75.1	81.9	86.8
Literacy Rate, Female (Age 15+)	43.2	52.6	64.8	74.8
Progression Rate (Grade 7-8)	21.2	22.2	33.1	51.9
Secondary School GER, Male	18.2	24.4	33.6	33.4
Secondary School GER, Female	9.8	13.2	21.1	27.3

Sources: Bajaj (2010); Kaluba (1986); Mundia (1995); MoE (2006, 2009); UNESCO (2008); World Bank (2004).

Despite declining expenditures on education as a percentage of GDP (a consequence of ideological shifts manifested in structural adjustment policies and neoliberal approaches to education over the last four decades), the basic indicators above show improvements. Ministry of Education expenditures were allotted to sub-sectors in 2007 as follows:

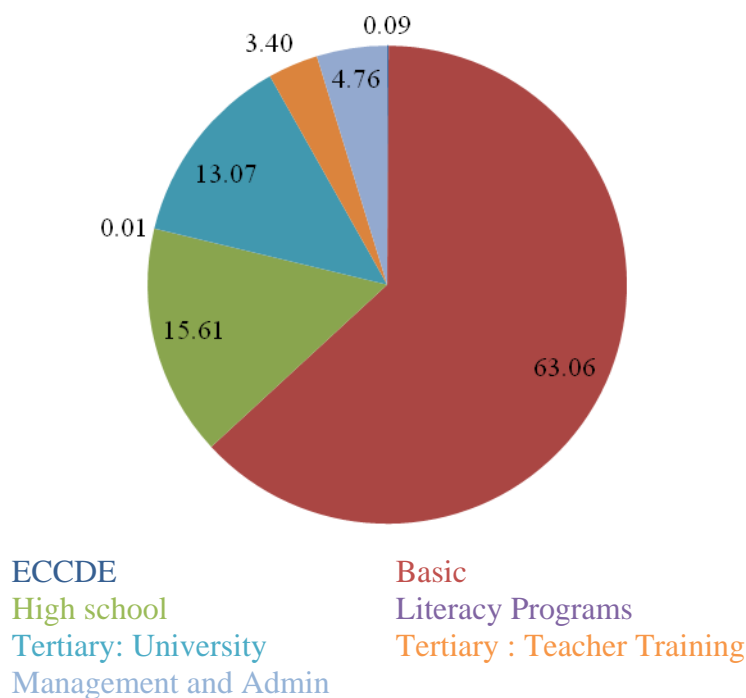


Figure 5. MoE Allocation by Sector, 2007. Source: MoE National Implementation Framework, 2007, p. 99. For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.

The majority of government spending has targeted the primary level, capturing government and grant-aided schools. Comparing expenditures per pupil as a percentage of GDP per capita with the most recent available data from 2005, Zambia's spending on primary education per pupil at 5.5% was lower than the SSA average of 12.8%. In the same year, secondary spending per pupil was around 7.8% (UNESCO, 2005). Although I was unable to secure more recent and reliable estimates for per pupil expenditures on Zambian tertiary students (168% in 2000) in a comparative SSA context, a UNESCO analysis (2009) confirmed that nine of 13 countries providing data spent anywhere from four to eleven times more per pupil on tertiary than secondary students (UNESCO, 2009). Although per pupil spending on tertiary students in Zambia remains the highest, the primary sector as a whole has a relatively larger

budget. Again, despite these micro-level statistics, resource constraints continue to challenge Zambia's public education system. As I show in this study, NGOs such as ZOCS mitigate some of these problems by applying for non-governmental grants and establishing schools for thousands of students who cannot or do not access the government system for various reasons.

Until recently laying out budget plans and provisions in the 2007 *Operational Guidelines for Community Schools*, the MoE did not provide major funding or support for most community schools that were not registered as grant-aided. By and large, community schools have been funded and supported by NGOs, FBOs, and other agencies. One of the largest community school supporters in Zambia, USAID recently published its *USAID/Zambia Assistance to Strengthen Ministry of Education Support to Community Schools* (2008), recognizing the expansion of community schools across the country and the need for policies and regulatory frameworks to guide collaboration between the MoE and community-based sector. Although provincial community school committees exist in various capacities, a national government agency focusing explicitly on community schools has not been formed since the collapse of the *Zambian Community Schools Secretariat (ZCSS)* in 2006.

Literature Review Part III: Schools, Access, and Efficiency

Supply and Schools

Four different types of schools constitute the Zambian education system: 1) public schools supported and operated by GRZ; 2) grant-aided schools run by faith-based agencies⁶; 3) private schools run by private agencies and individuals for commercial profit; and 4) community schools organized by individuals, NGOs, and FBOs. The country has witnessed an overall increase in schools of all types. As I show below, community schools augment these figures significantly at the national level and within the dissertation study's location of Lusaka Province⁷:

⁶ Many of today's grant-aided schools existed in the pre-independence era and were operated by various churches. In an effort to nationalize the education sector, former first president Dr. Kenneth Kaunda seized control of these schools and made them grant-aided government entities. This trend continued and today, several new schools, including community schools are registered as grant-aided. The community schools listed separately in the chart below receive limited to no financial assistance.

⁷ The MoE's estimation of the total number of community schools includes only those officially registered with the Ministry which may be less than the actual count.

Table 2

Percentage of Schools by Type and Province in Zambia (2008)

Province	Public (GRZ)	Grant- aided	Private/Church	Community	n=
Central	50	3	4	43	1,054
Copperbelt	43	4	18	38	1,016
Eastern	60	4	3	33	1,166
Luapula	58	3	3	36	675
Lusaka	31	3	19	47	749
Northwestern	67	7	2	25	700
Northern	64	4	2	31	1,412
Southern	56	5	6	34	1,208
Western	72	1	2	25	814
National	56	4	6	34	8,794

Source: MoE Statistical Bulletin, p. 17 (2008).

In Lusaka Province, there are actually *more* community schools than government schools:

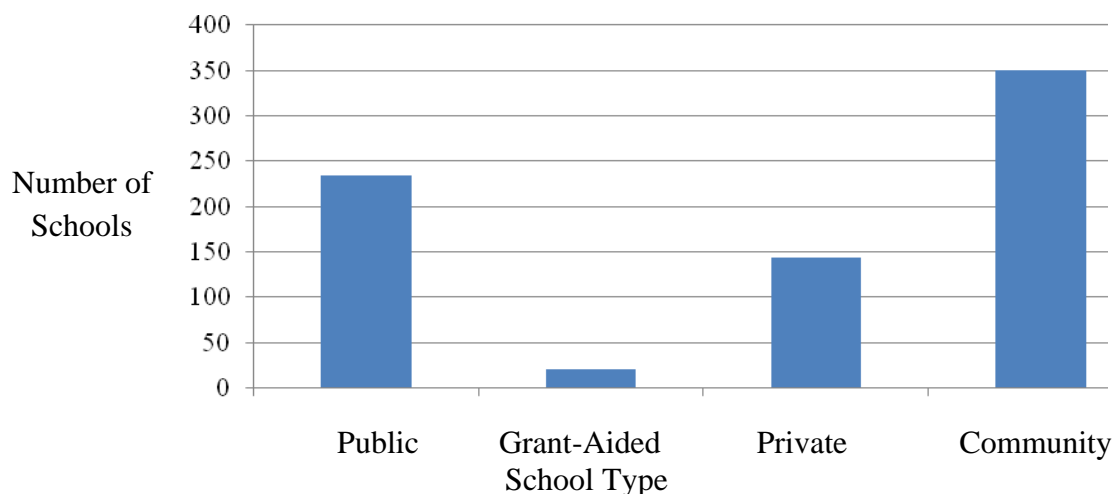


Figure 6. Schools by Type: Lusaka Province.

Between 2005 and 2008, the total number of primary schools in Zambia increased by 1,426 from 7,368 to 8,794. Community schools accounted for 1,064-- approximately 12%. More intriguing is that the number of community schools reported in the MoE's Statistical Bulletins (2005 and 2008) represent only those schools formally registered with the MoE and/or those schools participating in Zambia's Annual School Census (ASC), which implies that a proportion of schools may still be absent from national statistics.

In 2008, the MoE reported that Lusaka Province's eight zones included the following primary schools (445 urban and 212 rural):

Table 3
Primary Schools in Lusaka Province

School Type	Total
Public	202
Grant-aided	15
Community and IRI ⁸	350
Private Schools	90
Total Primary Schools	657

Source: MoE, 2008, p. 21.

⁸ Also classified as non-formal or alternative schooling, Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) is a teaching methodology in which a radio broadcast guides a teacher and students through the activities of a lesson. While listening to the radio, students participate by singing, reading, writing, answering questions and solving problems. "Learning at Taonga Market" is the name of the IRI program that was developed for Zambia. *Learning at Taonga Market* adheres to the Zambian primary school curriculum but infuses methodologies such as New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL) and Step into English (SITE) (MoE, 2005).

Compared to the total number of primary schools in Lusaka Province (657), the number of secondary schools is significantly smaller, regardless of type:

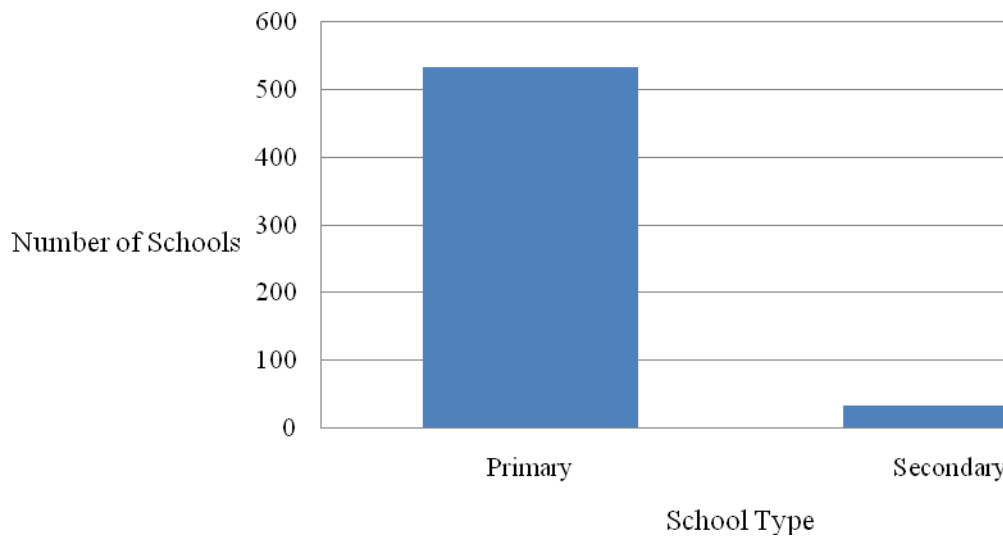


Figure 7. Primary and Secondary Schools: Lusaka Province, 2008. Source: MoE, 2008.

Access

I argue in this section that both government and other schools have made significant accomplishments by increasing access. Most community schools capture groups of children who otherwise may not be able to attend public school, although this study will show how some families may actually *choose* community schools over government schools for various reasons. Similar challenges characterize both government and community schools at the primary level and beyond. I provide brief nationwide statistics in this section to contextualize my discussion of community school trends across ZOCS schools and among government schools within districts in Chapter Six.

The MoE defines access as, “the ability and capacity of the system to provide opportunities for learners to access education” (MoE, 2008, p. 26). The following figure shows

statistical trends and comparisons of access between Lusaka Province as the study site and Zambia as a whole:

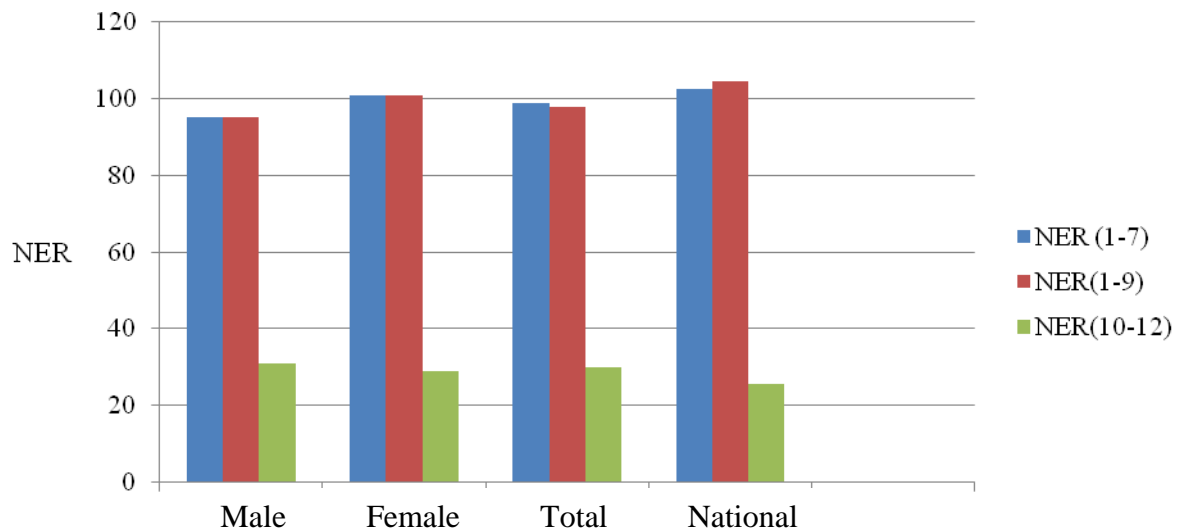


Figure 8. Lusaka Province Net Enrollment Ratios. Source: MoE, 2008.

Total enrollment in grades one through seven in Zambia increased by 3.1% from 2,822,759 in 2007 to 2,909,436 in 2008. Enrollments in grades eight and nine also increased substantially by 10.8% from 343,551 in 2007 to 380,782 in 2008 (MoE, 2008, p. 37). While the majority of primary aged children in Lusaka still attend GRZ public schools (219,851 out of 339,433 or 65%), community schools throughout the province are second to government schools, providing basic education to an estimated 26% of enrollment at the primary level in Lusaka and 15.8% of Zambia's total primary school population (ibid).

Efficiency

The MoE divides efficiency into five categories: progression, retention, repetition, dropout, and completion⁹. As I discuss in Chapter Eight, this study is most concerned with completion, progression, dropout, and repetition rates within community schools as they relate to district and national figures. The charts below show Lusaka Province and national comparisons to set the context for the dissertation study's smaller sample of 102 students in six community schools.

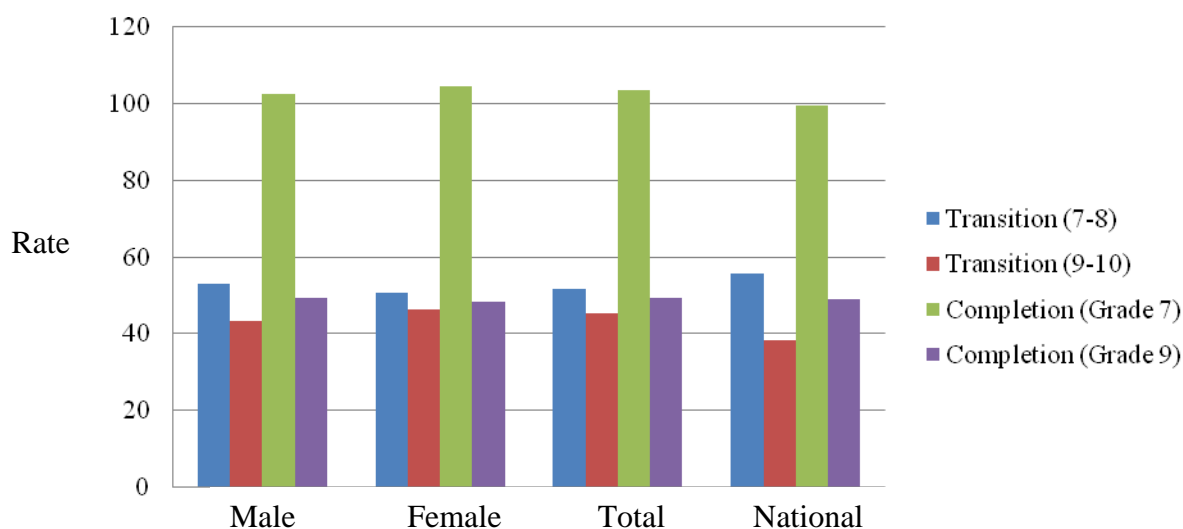


Figure 9. Transition and Completion Rates by Gender: Lusaka Province (All School Types¹⁰), 2008. Source: MoE, 2008.

⁹ The progression rate is the proportion of students who successfully completed a given grade in the previous school year and proceeded to the next grade in the current school year. The dropout rate is the proportion of pupils who leave the system without completing a given grade: high dropout rates imply high input/output ratios and lead to low internal efficiency. The repetition rate measures the occurrence of students from a cohort repeating a grade: higher repetition rates have negative effects on internal efficiency of educational systems. The completion rate is the percentage of students who complete a full cycle of schooling (MoE, 2008, pp. 47-52).

¹⁰ The MoE reports completion rates similar to Gross Enrollment Ratios (GERs) whereby the percentage may exceed 100 if the number of over-age or under-age children completing primary

Given inconsistencies in reporting by community schools that constitute a significant portion of the primary school population, this illustration is more useful and relevant to the current study in its grade comparisons. For example, completion rates for grade seven are more than double those for grade nine. Less than 50% of students in grade seven will progress to grade eight, and even fewer will advance to grade nine. I show in Chapter Eight how this trend is similar for my study sample of 102 ZOCS students in Lusaka Province. Lusaka's completion rates are on the higher end of the spectrum on the national scale following Southern, Central, and Copperbelt provinces respectively. Lusaka ranks six out of nine across provinces for progression from grade seven to eight (with the Copperbelt having the highest percentage), but ranks first in progression from grades nine to ten.

Progression rates to vocational training centers, colleges, and universities were not collected as part of the Annual School Census (ASC). However, data on enrollments at Zambia's two largest public universities (UNZA and Copperbelt University or CBU) show increases in enrollments as well. UNZA's total population increased from 7,558 in 2003 to 10,107 in 2007, while CBU's study body went from 2,534 to 4,155 in the same time period. Zambia's third public tertiary institution, Mulungushi University in Kabwe opened in 2007. Comparing UNZA and CBU figures with the number of students enrolled in grades 10-12 alone, less than 5% of secondary school students will proceed to the tertiary level. The nature of Zambia's education system as heavily exam-driven (inherited from the British colonial system)

school is in excess relative to the number of official school age children completing the same level.

reinforces and to some extent, sustains the current arrangement whereby only a small portion of students who pass examinations *and* pay corresponding school fees can enroll in upper grades. While government bursaries are sometimes provided for students at public universities, by and large the majority of tertiary students finance their schooling through personal and family contributions.

A comprehensive collection of statistics on the growing numbers of vocational training centers, private colleges, and universities has yet to be developed which would provide more accurate descriptions of educational outcomes for secondary school completers.

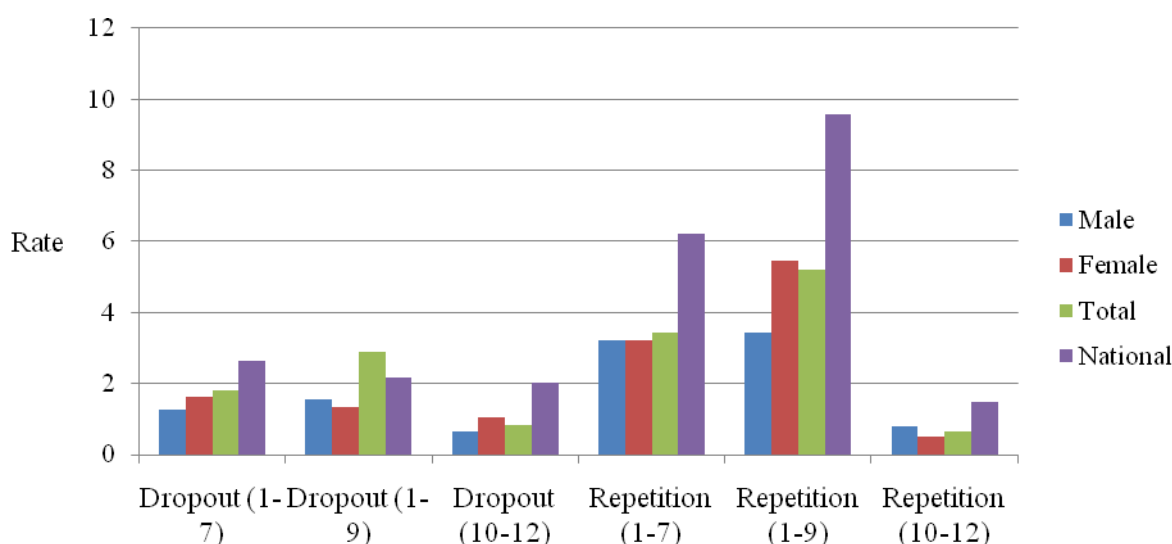


Figure 10. Dropout and Repetition Rates: Lusaka Province (All School Types), 2008.
Source: MoE, 2008.

Although there are slight differences between males and females in terms of dropout and repetition rates, Lusaka and Copperbelt Provinces have the lowest rates when compared to Zambia's seven other provinces. Again, these figures refer only to those schools that participated in the ASC. More nuanced is the discussion of dropout and repetition within ZOCS schools

sampled in Chapter Eight, which demonstrates significant differences between urban and rural schools within Lusaka Province.

As educational opportunities have expanded in line with national goals for political, economic, and social development, primary education has become more widely available through a number of sources within Zambia. Community schools continue to grow as the second largest providers of primary education nationally. This study asks what opportunities are available for community school students when they complete a full course of primary education: given the nature of Zambia's public education system as both heavily exam-driven and more expensive as students progress to higher levels, how might these conditions influence student perceptions and expectations of schooling? What policy or practice implications arise as a consequence?

Summary

In this first review of literature, I provided a brief background to Zambian primary education policy in six time periods. I continued by outlining Zambia's educational system with regards to finance, schools, and conventional indicators of access and efficiency arguing that community schools' contributions are evident in the total number of schools (which exceeds government schools in some areas) as well as the estimated percentage of the country's basic education enrollment that benefits from community school access. The following review of additional literature delves deeper into the concept of community schooling in low-income countries as a response to growing demand yet limited resources for primary education with a focus on Zambia.

Chapter 3: Literature Review (Cont'd): Alternative Primary Education and Community Schools

The Movement for Alternative Primary Education

Most community schools are frequently referred to in the literature as part of the broader field of Alternative Primary Education or APE that has expanded in developing countries to provide basic learning for the estimated 72 million children who remain out of school (UNESCO, 2010). Defined broadly by any set of educational models or programs existing outside formal school systems¹¹, APE has become a catalyst for the achievement of Education for All (EFA) goals related to access, literacy, and gender equity targets. As the general term implies, APE programs serve diverse populations with varying needs in Africa, Latin America, and Asia where there are more out-of-school children than any other regions of the world. APE is generally established under the premise that governments alone do not have the capacity to provide free primary education to all. Until recent large scale reviews of programs and policies conducted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2002), the

¹¹ APE programs include *community schools*, *alternative schools*, and *non-formal education* and may exhibit characteristics considered important to organizing NGOs or communities. Characteristics can include curricular additions (e.g., peace education, civic education, etc.), incorporation of different pedagogical practices, and a variety of school management models. Farrell and Mfum-Mensah suggest using the term alternative ‘as it seems the most generic’ and offer a preliminary methodology for classifying APE programs. The literature on alternative schools generally excludes private, for-profit models and many types of non-formal programs (ADEA, 2006 citing Farrell and Mfum-Mensah, 2002).

Association for the Development of Education in Africa or ADEA (Balwanz et. al, 2006), and the International Institute for Educational Planning or IIEP (Hoppers, 2005), scant literature existed on the various forms of APE, much less concrete definitions of the characteristics and goals of various models.

Community schools are defined by Hoppers (2005) as ‘schools established, run, and largely supported by local communities, whether they are geographic communities (villages or urban townships), religious groups or non-profit educational trusts (Hoppers, 2005, p. 63). This definition should be qualified and expanded, as various schools also depend on international religious groups and non-profit organisations for funding and support. While local communities may be involved in planning, teacher recruitment, and income generating activities, stakeholders outside of physical communities often play a significant role in guiding management, governance, and school finance. Furthermore, several schools identifying themselves as “community-based” increasingly work directly or indirectly with ministries of education to condense national curricula into shorter, more locally appropriate material for community schools.

As I discuss in future chapters, although Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS) were founded based on similar conditions of limited government capacity, what distinguishes ZOCS from other APE programs is its alignment with MoE standards and assessment requirements which makes these schools more of a *proxy* for government schools than an alternative. While other Zambian community schools and community schools in other African countries more generally represent more of an alternative to government schools in their goals, objectives, and practices, ZOCS schools strive to provide similar opportunities as government schools and must be analyzed as such. I argue in later data analysis chapters that despite the nature of ZOCS

schools as proxies or alternatives, their foundation as non-governmental has implications for teaching, learning and broader issues such as program funding and sustainability.

Although similar in some respects, Community schools around the world vary with respect to important factors such as:

- Links with and integration into the public system (e.g., school accreditation, curriculum, and testing);
- Costs (i.e., most schools exact minimal fees from students, while others accept payments in cash or kind);
- Teacher recruitment, retention, and quality (standards for and approaches to training, some involving ministries of education and others pooling resources and support from local and international organizations);
- Teacher salaries (who pays them and at what levels);
- Degrees of community engagement (e.g., building of schools, hiring and firing of teachers, school decision-making and management, and curriculum development and implementation);
- School goals (short and long-term);
- Student characteristics and expectations of schools;
- School quality (Hamaimbo, 2006).

As this study shows in a Zambian context, while community schools have come to provide a diverse set of learning opportunities for children in low-income countries, such differences undoubtedly have implications for quality, the process of monitoring and evaluation, and alignment with other regional and national development goals.

Current Issues Raised by the Spread of Community Schools

Theory

Current literature raises important concerns in the following thematic areas.

Community Schools and the Role of the State. Community schools and APE exist in large part as a result of the limited capacity of country governments to provide free primary schooling for all. I argue in this section that tensions between perceived roles of the state and the non-governmental programs creates a range of issues not easily resolved in decentralized education systems of low-

income countries. To contextualize this tension, I begin by defining government school systems and continue to discuss similarities and differences in institutional capacity among community schools and APE programs more broadly.

Generally, public school systems in Africa are characterized by (Hoppers, 2005, p. 34):

- Promulgation of a national, standard curriculum;
- Establishment of sanctioned institutions of learning;
- Linkage of selected forms of education within national systems of examination, qualification, and certification;
- Legitimization of certain socially acceptable values and ideals.

Community schools in Zambia may actually be more substitutes for government schools than alternatives, incorporating several of the characteristics above, most notably the promulgation of a national curriculum and linking of education to national systems of examination, qualification, and certification. However, such schools still maintain autonomy in other areas as described above. As Wood (in Glassman et. al 2007) argues, whether or not governments are absolved of their responsibilities by not providing free primary education for all is worthy of concern. The current literature does detail the diversity of relationships between various non-formal programs and the state, indicating that some governments have been deeply involved in supporting alternative and supplementary approaches and have even collaborated with civil society organizations to ensure that students are provided with similar curricula and the opportunity to advance to public secondary schools.

Most community school programs are decentralized to increase access, minimize bureaucratic control, increase efficiency, and increase accountability to communities. Teachers are hired and fired by community members, schools are built with local materials and labor, and parents may participate in curriculum planning. The locally controlled nature of such schools

improves student retention relative to public schools by maintaining a school calendar that takes into account harvesting seasons and other social and cultural practices that may prohibit attendance. Community schools are also often praised for policies to increase gender equity, as they enrol girls who are unable to attend school or are discouraged for practical, financial, religious, and/or cultural reasons (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder, 2002). Community school advocates (Glassman et. al, 2007) argue that the successes of these schools have the potential to impact national policies related to curriculum and pedagogy as successful progression to government secondary schools for some students encourages policymakers to seek more cost-efficient and effective approaches to public schooling. Contrastingly, teacher remuneration and retention (discussed in reference to Zambia below) has been cited as a serious challenge: as opposed to public and private school teachers who have undergone a minimal level of training, alternative school teachers are often not held to any national standards which may have implications for student achievement. Moreover, insufficient resources for teachers' pay can lead to teacher shortages as teachers become unmotivated without sustainable compensation.

In some countries, lack of government responsibility and support for alternative schools has become a serious issue, particularly between civil society organizations and ministries of education (Glassman et. al, 2007). Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder's (2002) review echoes these concerns by arguing that based on the financial and institutional limitations of communities, parents alone should not be expected to cover school costs for students (suggesting more community contributions than individualized fees). Given the financial capacities of NGOs in the areas of teacher salaries and teaching and learning materials, the authors argue here that local and national governments need to become more involved in the following (pp. 36-37):

- Paying or contributing to teacher salaries, teacher training, and professional development;
- Providing monitoring and support to community school teachers;
- Paying portions of school construction costs;
- Providing textbooks and teaching and learning materials.

A World Bank Study (2000) of community schools in eight countries claims further that ideological issues such as the lack of specific legislation regarding community schools, the lack of political engagement in community schools by government education actors, and the lack of contact between public and community school students not only threatens program functionality and growth, but has the potential to disengage communities from schooling children altogether without government support. In contrast to Glassman et. al (2007) who argue that different schools may benefit by not fully incorporating into the government system, Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder contend that, “Community schools need to be legally recognized and integrated into the national education system...the evolution of community schools outside the national educational system limits their present and future offerings whereas integrating the model into the official system permits them to respond more efficiently to educational problems” (p. 35). The authors also indicate that data on community school students are generally absent in national statistics with the exception of a few countries, raising questions about the scope and capacity of community school providers and the financial and structural limitations to their work in theory and practice. Limited data on enrolment, student characteristics, achievement, and educational outcomes creates challenges for policymakers, teachers, and researchers alike. The consensus of these studies is clearly that governments should play more integral roles in community schools, but how and with what resources is the new question.

Variation in Expectations for Community Schools

Limited theoretical approaches exist to assess the benefits of different primary schooling models in low-income countries. While ZOCS profiles claim that students outperform their public school counterparts, this dissertation study is the first to examine factors contributing to basic school progression, employment or other opportunities post-graduation for community school students in Lusaka, thereby assessing “...the social power associated with educational institutions to transform the status and prospects of [their] graduates’ (Hoppers, 2005, p. 42 cited in Bock, 1976, pp. 357-363). Although the requirement that ZOCS students sit for national examinations is evidence of the types of knowledge and credentials legitimated by public and community-based schools, this study reveals how such factors influence students’ perceptions of their own experiences. While some may assume that all community school students *want* to become incorporated into public systems, others may presume that students are willing to learn “locally-relevant” curricula as opposed to that which will provide them with the skills and opportunities linked to valued human and/or social capital¹². The latter conveys an idealized

¹² I define social capital as any social networks that can facilitate individual or collective action based on reciprocity, trust, and social norms (Portes, 1998). Community schools are often described as sites of social capital formation. Putnam (2002) argues that increased community participation not only builds a foundation of social networks between schools and surrounding communities, but also “bonds” these networks among civil society and more institutionalized forms of capital such as that found in governmental bodies, aid agencies, and other organizations. Contrastingly, bonding capital can isolate a group against perceived intrusions from outside actors or institutions. In excess, it can “accentuate inequalities since additions of social capital will be used to promote the interests only of the group concerned” (Edwards, 2000, p. 6).

community in which individuals are more concerned with basic survival within their immediate physical communities as opposed to participation in broader aspects of nationhood or citizenship.

I argue in this study that similar to some students and perhaps different from others attending community schools or participating in other alternative or supplementary programs in low-income countries, ZOCS students are interested in both short and long-term investments in education that derive both economic and social benefits within and outside of their immediate communities. In other words, ZOCS graduates have faith in schools to produce transformative effects that will lift them out of poverty, ensure access to social mobility, and secure a stable future for students and their families. Moreover, this study will show how, in addition to academic achievement evaluated in current research, teacher and student perspectives provide an alternative approach to assessing community schools and the populations they serve to aid our understanding of the complex web of relationships between local communities, organizations, and ministries of education.

The Capabilities of Community Schools to Meet Expectations

Community Schools and various approaches to APE are inspired to implement innovative approaches to teaching and learning given the resources, background, and various characteristics of students. When compared to government schools, such schools are generally characterized by more teacher/student and teacher/parent interaction, more “student-centered” learning, and more locally relevant curricula including but not limited to life skills, health, and vocational education (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder, 2002; Glassman et. al, 2007). However, with few policies guiding the administration of alternative schools, particularly in the areas of teacher recruitment, teachers’ rights and responsibilities, and remuneration, alternative schools have a range of

teachers with various qualifications. Although some organizations such as ZOCS have specific policies on teacher qualifications and training, several schools still lack such guidance. Limited teacher support and supervision remain a challenge in contexts where head teachers have minimal technical skills for monitoring and evaluation and NGO and donor agency assessments are sporadically conducted. Finally, the broader problems of poverty and illiteracy among teachers and students creates a harsh and challenging environment for teaching and learning (USAID, 2002): health and nutrition of teachers and students, family life, and responsibilities outside of the classroom can further complicate the process of schooling in both public and non-public school contexts.

Educational Outcomes

The most intriguing praise for community schools in the contemporary literature refers to higher student achievement on primary leaving examinations (Balwanz, et. al, 2006; ZOCS, 2007) in some low-income countries. Some community schools have demonstrated that students outperform government school students as a result of the use of local languages of instruction, more dedicated teachers, and teaching and learning methods not utilized in public schools (Glassman et al, 2007). Research in Mali and Uganda (Glassman and Millogo in Glassman et. al, 2007) upholds the benefits of collaboration between alternative schools and ministries of education, where alternative schools administer national examinations and students are admitted into public junior and high schools on the basis of their performance. The few published program assessments (USAID, 2004; Glassman, et. al, 2007) show that poor student performance and high dropout and repetition rates still prevail in several alternative and supplemental schools. External conditions may also play a role in opportunities accessible to completers. For example,

the number of public secondary school places available facilitates a competitive process of selection that may be exacerbated in environments with hostile attitudes surrounding the low social status of community schools. The issue of secondary school expansion is also addressed by ADEA as the international community and SSA governments are reminded of “...the empirical data testifying to the added value of post- primary education, both in terms of its economic and social incidence” (ADEA, 2008, p. 37 citing Amelwonou and Brossard, 2005; Hanushek and Wobmann, 2007; UNESCO/BREDA 2007). Securing bursaries upon admittance to middle basic and secondary is an additional challenge. Moreover, low enrolment at secondary and tertiary levels and high unemployment rates may be more related to poor labor markets, civil conditions, and other issues rather than students’ academic performance or educational qualifications. These concerns (related more to Zambia’s political economy) have the potential to disengage parents from alternative approaches and diminish confidence in the value of schooling all together.

Sustainability of Community Schools

The most pressing substantive concerns for community schools and the field APE in general are whether or not (and for how long) various schools will last given the involvement of and dependence on various organizations for their survival as well as what practical benefits students and their families derive from such programs. ZOCS competes against other NGOs for grants to pay teacher salaries, sponsor secondary school students, and accomplish other goals. While not all schools share such challenges, closer scrutiny of the foundations of these institutions and their sustainability in the event that support is no longer available is necessary.

Since 1990, funding for education in low-income countries has been overwhelmingly dedicated to the primary sector (Jones, 2007). Although some research delves deeper into the

value of secondary and higher education and more balanced growth models for education in low-income countries (Lewin and Caillods, 2001), the EFA targets are set at least until 2015 (UNESCO, 2010). It is uncertain how support for primary education from various donor agencies will evolve in the future. Leaders within ADEA make a compelling case similar to that of African policymakers in the immediate post-independence era for expanding post-primary education and training in SSA, arguing that “...the accessibility of secondary education creates stronger motivation for learners to be successful at the primary level, and that without such continuation the investments already made in primary education may go to waste” (ADEA, 2008, p. 37).

The current literature has identified *immediate* structural and financial challenges to community schools and APE (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder, 2002; UNESCO 2008) but remains limited in responding systematically to more long-term concerns. Moreover, lists of policy and budgeting prescriptions have been produced by donor agencies, but limited cost analyses have been conducted about how many different types of resources are necessary to improve the conditions surrounding community schools. This process is further complicated by the fact that when community schools are funded through external sources, governments need to plan their support with these sources in mind and configure an equitable distribution of spending for both public and community-based schools.

Some research has attempted to assess the impacts of community schools and APE on students, families, and communities (Chondoka, 2006; Casely-Hayford and Ghartey, 2007; Chisamu, 2008) but few longitudinal studies have considered students upon graduation from such schools as this study sets out to accomplish. This study will raise questions about how an organization such as ZOCS actually has the capacity to respond to community school graduates

both within primary classrooms and post national examinations. In regards to secondary schooling, no community schools in Zambia cater to students beyond grade nine which raises additional concerns about the capacity of ZOCS as well as the involvement of the MoE.

Methodological Concerns and the Need for More Research

Most literature to date is limited to assessments of physical and financial inputs. While such evaluations are useful to donor and technical assistance agencies, they lack the benefits of objectivity and experimental design. Ironically, a majority of the research on community schools and APE utilizes a top-down methodology to evaluate ostensibly bottom-up programs. Jimenez and Sawada's (1999) study of El Salvador's EDUCO schools is one of few efforts to relate community-based schooling to student outcomes utilizing statistical comparisons. Achievement on standardised tests and attendance were compared for EDUCO and public school students, controlling for student characteristics, school and classroom inputs, and endogeneity. The authors found that "enhanced community and parental involvement in EDUCO schools improved students' language skills and diminished student absences which may have long-term effects on achievement" (p. 415). This dissertation study employs a similar approach to quantify factors associated with student performance and progression while taking into account some of the more contextual factors that may influence various outcomes.

While community schools increase access and facilitate an 'Opportunity to Learn' (Schuh- Moore et al, 2007) researchers and practitioners alike remain unclear as to the long-term goals of alternative or supplementary schools as well as their relevance and value in the face of macro-structural challenges such as high unemployment rates, urban/rural opportunities, and local political, cultural, and social conditions. Whether various educational models- proxies or

alternatives- are reproducing existing inequality among low-income country youth remains largely unanswered. Given what may be considered a disorganized system of community schools in Zambia, governments have a significant role to play in encouraging research on various approaches as the current literature is dominated by large-scale institutions implementing their own programs. Databases of statistics such as the number of schools, the names of local and international organizations involved and student performance on national examinations are essential for research in the field to develop. Despite significant accomplishments and contributions made to the literature on successes of and challenges to alternative and supplementary programs. Researchers also remain unclear about how to study community schools *vis à vis* existing frameworks and methods utilized for primary schooling-related inquiries in low-income countries. Equally challenging is the need for scholarship to acknowledge the diversity of program attributes, goals, and capacities in varying contexts that may inform new theoretical and methodological developments.

Overall, several claims have been made in support and critique of community schools and the field of APE. The relevant claims addressed in this study are 1) how to conceptualize community schools in Zambia's political, economic, and social context; 2) how actors within community school organizations such as ZOCS perceive institutional strengths and weaknesses via their dependency on external sources of support and relationships with the MoE; and 3) how teachers and students define and achieve success with schooling and perceive future opportunities.

Summary

This review of literature was divided into two chapters and four parts. In Part I, I provided a brief history of Zambian education from pre-colonial times to present day circumstances under

Zambia's *Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP)* and the Education for All (EFA) movement. Part II detailed the system's current organizational and financial structures, while Part III provided information on Zambian schools, access, and efficiency with emphasis on Lusaka Province. As the fourth part of the literature review, Chapter Three discussed the concept and applications of community schools and Alternative Primary Education (APE) in African countries, highlighting successes and challenges to theory, policy and practice. As a whole, the literature review chapter sets the context for my case study of Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS) as a program that has expanded in response to overwhelming demand for primary education, but limited resources and capacity of the MoE.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Research Design

This mixed methods study was conducted in two parts. The first (Phase I) provided information from a background survey conducted between June and August 2008. The second (Phase II) delved deeper into research questions for the larger dissertation study. The chart below outlines the dissertation's research questions and corresponding data collection approaches.

Table 4

Research Questions and Data Collection Methods

Research Questions	Data Collection Methods
1.) How do community schools in Zambia function to provide primary education to various populations? What characteristics define Zambian community schools and the communities they serve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Semi-structured interviews • Phase I teacher and PCSC questionnaire
2.) How do teachers and students define success with community schooling <i>vis á</i> <i>vis</i> their own perceptions and experiences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Semi-structured interviews
3.) What factors continue to promote or limit success for Zambian students within broader school, community, and national contexts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Semi-structured interviews

In addition to the research questions above, I was initially interested in measuring grade seven knowledge and skills with a short assessment in Phase II. In contrast to national examinations that do not utilize proficiency scales and are solely intended to determine acceptance and placement into subsequent grades of schooling, the goal of this study's assessment was to capture individual ability in specific content areas required at the grade seven level.¹³ All Phase II students (who at the time of data collection, had already completed one year of grade seven or level four in ZOCS schools) participated in these assessments.

¹³ Contrastingly, the National Assessments Surveys (NASs), administered every three years to random samples of students around the country include proficiency scales. The National Assessment program measures learning achievement at the Middle Basic Education level in relation to educational inputs and processes and how these are changing over time in an effort to

A thirty-four question, three-section assessment was developed with support of the staff at the National Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) to determine competencies in mathematics, English, and critical thinking. Fifty percent of assessment items (17) were selected based on their discrimination index value ($> .2$) from a pilot examination administered to 247, 359 Zambian grade seven students in 2005¹⁴. The remaining 50% (17) of the assessment items were selected based on required content knowledge specified in the Grade Seven National Curriculum. These assessments were administered in English (as are the National Examinations that ZOCS students are required to complete) and were intended to gauge some of the basic skills associated with a primary education according to national standards.

Assessments were administered in classrooms with the permission and assistance of community school teachers and head teachers. Each student was given approximately one hour to complete the assessment. A team of six Zambian grade seven teachers (three from public schools and three from ZOCS) further evaluated the assessment to determine below average, average, and above average levels of performance for each participating student.

After returning to the U.S. and reviewing all of the data collected in 2009, my advisor and I decided that analyzing the assessment we crafted, grade seven national examination scores for students sampled, and interview data would be best done after the dissertation. As a major

evaluate national and international educational goals. Surveys were administered in 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2006 (Sakala and Chilala, 2007).

¹⁴ The discrimination index is a measure of an item's ability to discriminate between those who score high or low on a given assessment. The discrimination index can be interpreted as an indicator of the extent to which overall knowledge of the content area or mastery of the skills is related to the response on an item (Haladyna, Downing, and Rodriguez, 2002). For the purposes of this study, those items with a discrimination index of greater than .2 were selected based on how well they differentiated between high and low ability subgroups from the 2005 pilot.

goal of the study is more to assess successes and challenges to organizational stability and individual successes and challenges to academic achievement in a comparative context, we concluded that the assessment analysis would be more valuable after the initial study of success and failure within the ZOCS context.

Target Population

The study's target population includes all ZOCS students. I chose ZOCS because it is the largest NGO in Zambia offering community-based schooling in both urban and rural areas. While volunteering with ZOCS and meeting with various governmental and non-governmental education officers during a pre-dissertation period from June to August 2008, I also learned that since the 1990s, ZOCS had earned a reputation across the country as the most outstanding provider of non-formal education outside of private schools run mostly by Catholic missions. One of few programs in Zambia especially and southern Africa more generally to teach a condensed national curriculum, require students to sit for grade seven national examinations, and maintain academic achievement records by school and district, ZOCS students and schools provide a rich context in which to assess performance and outcomes. Moreover, ZOCS' organization and size (19 official schools and 118 affiliate schools) make it an intriguing case to study. The total number of ZOCS students in its 19 official schools in 2008 was 8,545. Fifteen of these official schools are located in Lusaka Province, while the remaining four are situated in Central, Eastern, and Southern Provinces. Beginning with my initial efforts to establish contact with ZOCS' staff in 2007, I began building a trusting relationship with ZOCS' coordinator and officers and was afforded the opportunity to volunteer in ZOCS offices and classrooms, sit in on key meetings among ZOCS staff, donors, and MoE officials, and eventually carry out this study in 2009 on the only educational NGO in Zambia with such scope and capacity.

Study Sample and Research Sites

Phase II is comprised of 102 students living in Lusaka Province (urban and rural areas) ages 13-20 who sat for grade seven national examinations in 2008. This group includes students who had been enrolled in grade seven during 2008 and were successfully enrolled in grade eight, repeating grade seven, or not enrolled in grade eight for some other reason in 2009. Data analysis in Chapter Seven refers primarily to students participating in Phase I (pre-dissertation period) while Chapter Eight covers the bulk of data collected in Phase II. Additional interviews with school personnel, donor agency representatives, and MoE officials conducted between 2008 and 2009 are included to contextualize student responses.

Urban schools sampled are located in the high and medium density compounds as shown below: Mancilla Community School (Chibolya compound, southwest) Mary Aikenhead (Kabwata compound, south), Matero (Matero compound, northwest), and Garden (Garden compound, also northwest). See map of Lusaka urban below:

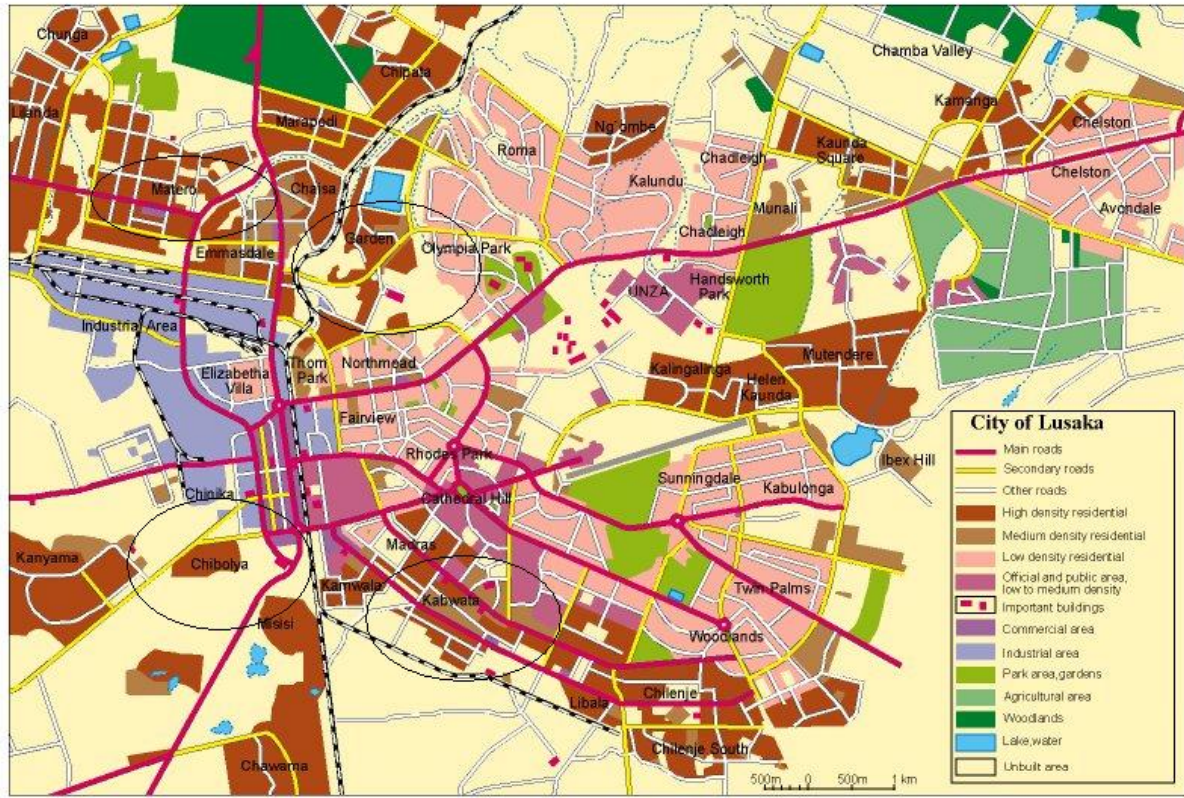


Figure 11. Sectional Map of Lusaka Urban with four urban compounds highlighted (Chibolya (Mancilla OCS), Garden (Garden OCS), Kabwata (Mary Aikenhead OCS), and Matero (Matero OCS)). Source: <http://www.rzhr.org/Pictures/Lusaka%20City%20Map.jpg>. For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.

Rural schools are more than 45 miles southwest of Lusaka urban (not pictured above) in Kafue district, off of Kafue Road and through dirt paths leading to Lusaka's southeastern foothills. See map of Lusaka Province below with rural Makangwe and Chilambila Open Community Schools highlighted:



Figure 12. Map of Lusaka Provinces Highlighting Rural Schools Sampled. Source: <http://www.zambia-mining.com/country.html>.

Sampling Rationale, Characteristics, and Techniques: Students and Schools

For Phase I, I selected 104 ZOCS students from Lusaka Province utilizing a systematic sampling method; every other student was selected from a list of all grade seven students present from the following six schools: Garden Open Community School, Makangwe Open Community School, Mancilla Open Community School, Mary Aikenhead Open Community School, Matero Open Community School, and Chilambila Open Community School (all located in Lusaka's

urban compounds and peri-urban or rural villages)¹⁵. These schools would also participate in Phase II with some students included in both Phase I and II. I describe this process in detail below.

ZOCS has 19 official schools-- fifteen in Lusaka Province. The one year timeline for this study led to the conclusion that working with schools in Lusaka Province would provide an efficient yet in-depth experience with six different schools. Moreover, utilizing schools within the same province allowed for cross-comparisons of trends specific to Lusaka and relevant to the province's economic and social conditions. Finally, the population of Lusaka Province shares the common language of Chinyanja, mitigating the process of translation to and from different languages that would pose additional challenges in Zambia's eight other provinces.

Four urban schools and two rural schools in my sample represent a higher percentage of rural schools than actually exists in the ZOCS population (ZOCS has a total of four rural schools and fifteen urban schools. Rural schools represent less than 30%). Given what we know about the relative performance of rural children, especially poor girls in rural Zambia (MoE, 2006), the two rural ZOCS schools in Lusaka Province were selected to permit a more qualitative investigation of this trend in ZOCS settings. See chart below for study recruitment details:

¹⁵ Urban community schools are generally located in Lusaka's high density "compounds". Rural community schools (both sampled for this study) are more than 30 miles outside of Lusaka's urban center, generally nested in Lusaka's southeastern foothills.

Table 5
ZOCS Schools: Phase I and Phase II Recruitment

School Name	School Location	Phase I (June-Aug 2008)	Phase II (Jan-Dec 2009)	Both Phase I and Phase II	Additional Recruits to Phase II*	School Population (2008)
Garden	Urban	13	16	7	9	465
Makangwe	Rural	15	25	5	20	278
Mary Aikenhead ¹⁶	Urban	27	11	20	0	563
Mancilla	Urban	20	21	15	6	531
Matero	Urban	15	13	9	4	233
Chilambila	Rural	14	16	7	9	305
Totals	6	104	102	63	48	

For Phase I, alternating students were selected from the total number present yielding a 100% response rate. ZOCS schools were recruited based on location (ability to add geographic diversity within Lusaka Province), availability, and willingness to participate. Every school I invited to the study was recruited under the condition that students were compensated for their time with school supplies such as notebooks, pens, and colored markers. I offered school staff

various teaching materials, including chalk, red pens, and notepads in exchange for their participation in semi-structured interviews. Both ZOCS organizational staff and school personnel welcomed my presence as a volunteer and observer of their classrooms and expressed interest in the potential for rich comparisons my research could provide between community and government schools within districts that had yet to be undertaken.

Each ZOCS school varies significantly with respect to teacher qualifications and training, school resources, and financial support. Sixty-three students from Phase I participated in Phase II of data collection which took place from February to December 2009 (approximately 61% response rate). To re-establish communication with these students for Phase II upon my return to Zambia in 2009, I visited each school and spoke with teachers, head teachers, and members of PCSCs to receive updates about each student insofar as how they could be contacted to participate in Phase II. Given school personnel's familiarity with me from the pre-dissertation period and the interest they expressed in the study as a means of evaluating students and assessing ZOCS' work, each person I communicated with assisted me by contacting students on my behalf and coordinating times and locations for interviews. The 41 students who participated in Phase I but not in Phase II were unavailable because they had moved residences since 2008 or could not be located by school staff for some other reason. School staff at the rural Makangwe Open Community School could not locate the one girl in my sample that was married in 2008 and was presumed to have moved to her husband's village.

Given time and transportation restrictions, an additional 48 students were purposively selected to participate in the study utilizing a snowball method whereby teachers and students would alert others in the community that I was conducting a study of level four graduates. Upon completion of data collection, nine students were removed from the final count as they turned out

to be in grade nine instead of grade eight. This was a result of miscommunication between teachers and me at Mary Aikenhead Open Community School about the types of students I wished to recruit. The Phase II sample that captures the majority of data for Chapters Seven and Eight includes 102 students and attempts to include similar proportions of different categories (with the exception of rural students as described above). Given the overrepresentation of girls from the all-girls Mary Aikenhead Open Community School in Phase I (27 girls), I sought out more of a balance in gender with my snowball method search for Phase II. Beyond this factor, I did not express any other preferences for new participants other than including more rural students to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges that rural schools face in ZOCS' academic context. See table below on sample and population comparisons.

Table 6
Phase II Sample and Comparison of Population Characteristics

Category	Study Sample	ZOCS Population
Orphans	39% (40/102)	38% (3239/8545)
Boys	44% (45/102)	47%(4003/8545)
Girls	56%(57/102)	53%(4542/8545)
Rural Students	40% (41/102)	15%(1266/8545)
Urban Students	60%(61/102)	85%(7279/8545)
Totals	102	8545

Population Source: ZOCS Annual Report, 2008.

Demographic information on students from Phases I and II are shown below:

Table 7
Sample Demographic Indicators: Phases I and II

Indicator	Phase I (n=104)	Phase II (n=102)
Age (Range)	13-20	13-20
Age (Median)	16	16
Male	34	45
Female	70	57
Single Orphans	--	28
Double Orphans	--	21
Urban	75	61
Rural	29	41

Note: Single and double orphan status was not inquired in Phase I.

Data Collected from School Personnel, ZOCS Staff, and Institutional Representatives

School Personnel

I engaged in a series of formal and informal conversations with 24 head teachers, teachers, and Parent Community School Committee (PCSC) members in Phases I and II as follows:

Table 8
ZOCS School Personnel Participants

School	Location	Head Teachers	Teachers	PCSC Members	Totals
Chilambila	Rural	1	2	0	3
Garden	Urban	1	2	1	4
Makangwe	Rural	1	3	1	5
Mancilla	Urban	1	4	0	5
Mary Aikenhead	Urban	1	2	1	4
Matero	Urban	2	1	0	3
Totals	Four Urban, Two Rural	7	14	3	24

ZOCS Staff and Institutional Representatives

Informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with agency representatives raised issues related to teacher recruitment and retention, management, governance, and finance. These discussions, also all in English, provided a variety of perspectives on the successes and challenges of community schools, the relationship between NGOs and the state, and the future of community schools in relation to current educational, political, and economic conditions. Discussions with agency representatives took place at agency offices and in public places such as cafes and restaurants. In addition, I engaged in casual conversations and semi-structured interviews with nine representatives from the following agencies:

Table 9

ZOCS Staff, Agency Representatives, and Ministry Officials: Sample Characteristics

Organization/Ministry	Position Titles
Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Coordinator • Chief Fundraiser • Education Officer • Community Development Officer
United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Program Specialist
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Specialist
Ministry of Education District Education Board (DEB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEB Secretary (Lusaka District) • District Community School Committee Chairperson
Examinations Council of Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director
Ministry of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former Secretary to the Treasury

Two preliminary focus groups with three ZOCS grade seven graduates based in Lusaka were conducted in February 2009 to assess and redevelop relevant, language appropriate interview questions for Phase II. Semi-structured interviews with students explored demographic indicators such as socioeconomic status, family composition and background, and information on students' current status (e.g., whether they passed or failed on national examinations), plans for the future (secondary school, employment, etc.), and the implications of this status for their individual and family lives. Questions encouraged students to discuss issues such as family history, immediate and extended family support, educational attainment (including perceptions of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in a number of areas), and how and why students spend their time carrying out certain activities. All urban student interviews (61) were conducted in English, while all rural student interviews (41) were conducted with the guidance of a Nyanja translator.

Interviews were voice recorded with the written or oral consent of participants. Individual interviews took place in schools, churches, community centers, homes, and outdoors. These conversations lasted anywhere from thirty minutes to one hour. In accordance with the requirements of Michigan State University's Institutional Review Board, in cases where parental/guardian permission could not be provided, the oral or written consent of students was accepted. Each participant is assigned a pseudonym in the analysis of data throughout the dissertation for the purposes of confidentiality.

Challenges

Although unexpected going into the field, I underestimated the fact that ZOCS students sampled were mostly young teenagers and would not necessarily be inclined to respond in depth to every question I asked in semi-structured interviews. The most evident challenge in the presentation of data for this dissertation is the reality that most students did not provide lengthy responses to several interview questions. The interviews I paraphrase in the study represent the richest accounts I uncovered during analysis. Whether such limited feedback among all 102 students is a result of the way I asked the questions, the fact that I may have been perceived as an authority figure in schools and therefore not easily relatable among teenagers, or some other combination of factors, the absence of multiple in-depth interviews is explained by the lack of detail I was able to gather despite developing what I felt to be amicable and comfortable relationships with students.

While most students were frank about their feelings concerning academic performance, inadequacy about not being enrolled, and/or desperate need for school fees, other discussions such as what students did with their time outside of school revealed many unexpected patterns, especially given the fact that such questions were initially planned to be open-ended rather than

include a set of options for students to select. This area was one in which I expected more in-depth explanations of why students spent their time carrying out specific activities as opposed to providing me with a one or two-word response. As a result, such variables are not easy to interpret throughout the study in either a qualitative or quantitative fashion, especially in view of some responses being prompted as opposed to volunteered. Despite these limitations, the sample size of 102 is large and diverse enough across schools to raise some intriguing questions about patterns prevalent across rural and urban settings and among other groups based on gender, orphan status, parental employment, etc.

Informal conversations and interviews with school personnel provided information on various conditions of teaching and learning within urban and rural schools. These discussions also allowed teachers to address issues otherwise challenging to negotiate among ZOCS staff or managers including topics such as teacher salaries, housing, and training programs. Interviews with school personnel were all conducted in private in English on school grounds in head teacher offices or outside during student free time with the oral or written consent of teachers.

Document Analysis

Interviews with students and teachers, ZOCS staff, donor agency representatives, and MoE officials, coupled with analyses of policy and school level documents supplemented primary data with background information on schools and education in Zambia's current political, economic, and social context. I had access to the following documents to supplement interview data and provide an appropriate school, district, and national context for the study:

- National policy documents including operational guidelines, budgets, and national examinations and other studies commissioned by MoE on community schools accessible to the public;

- ZOCS background documents (e.g., mission statements, annual reports, strategic plans, etc.);
- School level records (e.g., school profiles, attendance records, dropout and repetition rates, and average test scores;
- Student level records: test scores (where available).

After revisiting my research questions in light of the data I was able to collect, the most useful documents for analysis which I draw on heavily in the dissertation are ZOCS' Annual Report (2008), the Ministry of Education's Statistical Bulletin (2008) and the Ministry of Education's *Operational Guidelines for Community Schools* (2008).

Data Analysis

I address the dissertation's three main research questions utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data to explain *what* defines ZOCS schools and students; *how* students perceive their experiences, performance, and future prospects; and *why* students experience different outcomes based on individual responses and the contextual backdrop created through a synthesis of demographic information and document analysis of social, political, and economic conditions in Lusaka. Qualitative data were organized through an "open coding" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) process in which I identified and tentatively named conceptual categories based on recurring themes.

Quantitative data contribute to an analysis of Research Questions Two and Three. This includes information from interviews that was merged into quantitative data for future manipulation in SPSS (socioeconomic status variables, orphan status, pass/fail performance on examinations, etc.). At the onset of data analysis, I planned to conduct logistic regression analyses of factors associated with grade eight progression among ZOCS students. Given the volume of qualitative data collected and the mixed nature of my sample (some systematically selected, others purposive) among other statistical concerns found during my cross-tabulation of

variables, the committee and I decided that the qualitative data collected provided a rich foundation to explain outcomes rather than quantifying them alone.

Analysis for this study adheres to the following process:

- a.) Identify and code various dependent and independent variables by quantitizing student interview data (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998, p. 126);
- b.) Enter raw quantitative data into SPSS, name and categorize variables;
- c.) Identify recurring explanatory themes from interviews utilizing a series of cross-tabulations and chi-square tests to determine relationships between different variables of interest;
- d.) Combine analysis of quantitative and qualitative factors to describe and qualify trends within the study sample.

Chapter 5: ZOCS' Fragility as an Organization

Overview

In this chapter, I highlight some of the major issues influencing ZOCS' fragility as an organization financially and structurally. I begin by providing some background to community schools in Africa then detail defining characteristics of Zambian community schools and ZOCS in particular. I continue to analyze issues such as ZOCS' relationship with the MOE, finance, and the difficulty of recruiting, paying, and training teachers. I conclude with a brief comparative analysis of ZOCS and government schools to highlight the political context in which ZOCS continues to thrive.

This case study of ZOCS is situated within a history of ongoing educational developments in Zambia and other SSA countries more generally. Following independence from colonial rule for most African nations from the late 1950s through the 1970s, educational policies in countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe emphasized free primary and the expansion of secondary and university education for all to provide access for previously underserved populations. Global economic hardships of the late 1970s including the world oil crisis and a drop in the price of mined minerals placed significant strain on educational systems. Community-based schools first gained popularity during this period, spurred in large part by macro-economic and social policies encouraged by international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the WB to cut government spending on education and other services. An increasing openness to market-based economies welcomed a number of actors to African education including various development banks, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, and several international organizations (Kelly, 1991). With the financial and technical

support of such sources, non-profit organizations established their own primary schools and operated with limited to no support from African ministries. Given ongoing obstacles to achieving universal primary education (UPE) under declarations such as Education for All (EFA), community-based primary approaches are now acknowledged as some of the most viable alternatives and/or supplements to government schools (UNESCO, 2008).

In general, African nations have increased access with efforts such as the Complementary Basic Education Program in Tanzania (COBET), a national endeavour geared towards vulnerable children who cannot afford direct school fees or who live too far from a government school); Mobile Schools in Kenya; Tent Schools in Algeria and Sudan (serving nomadic communities, also popular in countries such as Iran and Mongolia); Shepherd Schools in Botswana; School for Life (SFL) in Ghana; Market Schools in Nigeria (linking schooling to employment opportunities); and United Nations Children's Fund's community schools in Egypt. The USAID, working through NGOs such as Save the Children, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), and World Education has supported more than 5,000 community-managed schools in Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, Mali, south Sudan, Uganda, and Zambia (Glassman et al., 2007, p xviii). The nature and characteristics of different programs continues to stimulate debate on how education ministries can incorporate such efforts into national policies for some purposes yet maintain autonomy for others. As I show in this study, the Government of Zambia has been prompted to more fully acknowledge and support various community schools, particularly in the context of deep donor involvement through various civil society organizations over the last decade.

ZOCS mission and background

ZOCS describes its mission as follows:

The Organization provides free basic education to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), most dispossessed children, particularly girls. The twin pillars on which ZOCS builds its approaches are those of enhanced educational opportunities for children (through Human Rights approach to programming, which entitles every child the right to education), and increased community capacity to provide such opportunities. ZOCS is unwavering in keeping these two aspects at the fore; more and better education for more children and community dedication to the provision of such education. The advent of poverty and HIV/AIDS on children required a quick response to cover Lusaka, Kafue and Kabwe districts, with a focus on OVC aged between 8-18 years... [ZOCS] vision is simply to see that *every* OVC, especially girl child, at least completes compulsory basic education and proceeds to higher level grades (ZOCS, 2008).

Given the limited support and funding ZOCS has, the mission is an ambitious program to serve a population numbering thousands in Lusaka and beyond. The sample of 102 ZOCS students in Phase II of this study alone shows that not all ZOCS students are orphans, but may be nonetheless categorized as “vulnerable” to a certain degree in various ways. Thus, a defining characteristic of ZOCS schools not mentioned or emphasized as much in the mission statement lies in these schools’ roles as inclusive institutions that serve sometimes as cost-efficient proxies for government schools rather than as a means of last resort.

Financial and technical support is primarily provided to ZOCS schools by international organizations such as the World Food Program (WFP), World Vision (providing educational materials, second-hand clothing, and sports equipment), the Education Development Center or EDC (collaborating with the MoE to provide interactive radio instruction or IRI), Project Concern International (PCI, specializing in food supplements), and numerous FBOs. In line with

ZOCS' mission to provide a "holistic" learning experience for students, schools also offer a variety of during- and after-school activities. The most popular activities cited by students in my sample were sports such as football and netball (with inter-zone tournaments between and among community-based and government schools), anti-AIDS clubs, scripture unions, and school choirs. Given Zambia's colonial history, and the predominance of Christianity among black Zambians, it was not uncommon for students I studied to frequently refer to their faith in God and God's power to transcend many of the difficulties students faced in their daily lives. Attending church or meeting with church groups was often described as an activity mostly engaged in by urban students when they weren't completing household chores or working for pay.

Each ZOCS school has a Parent Community School Committee (PCSC) comprising parents and other community members. Depending on the school, some PCSCs are actively involved in hiring and firing of teachers and school governance. Others collaborate with teachers and students on income-generating activities for schools, some of which contribute to teacher salaries, teaching and learning materials, and school maintenance. ZOCS staff visit schools and meet with PCSCs at least twice a month. PCSCs are also trained by ZOCS and supporting agencies in entrepreneurship skills, children's psychosocial care, and community development projects. Some PCSCs have access to microfinance for small businesses from various donors through ZOCS. Ideally, schools supported by ZOCS will eventually be self-sufficient, generating their own income to pay teachers, provide facilities and materials, and maintain school infrastructures. At the time of this study, however, none of ZOCS schools were operating completely independently of support from donors and other sources although income-generating activities were emphasized to some extent.

Teachers, PCSCs, and students collaborate to create income for their schools. Some examples of these projects in the schools sampled are the selling of vegetables from school gardens, tailoring services, and small kiosks offering cooking oil, mealie-meal, and other foodstuffs at competitive prices to local markets. ZOCS formally requires that all schools engage in at least three income-generating activities, although the schools sampled generally focused more on only one. In addition to income-generating activities for schools, ZOCS offers microfinance schemes to female household heads discussed further in the chapters on ZOCS schools and households.

ZOCS and the Role of the State

Beginning with just 55 in 1996, Zambia now has approximately 2,500 community schools. In 2006 there were more than 500,000 students enrolled in community schools-- an estimated 20% of the country's basic education enrollment (USAID, 2004). Zambian community schools employ more than 7,000 teachers, with variable qualifications (Hamaimbo, 2006). In an effort to regulate community schools more closely (teacher recruitment and retention, curricula, examinations, etc.), the MoE established a Zambian Community Schools Secretariat (ZCSS) in 1997. The ZCSS worked closely with the MoE to develop *Policy Guidelines for the Establishment of Community Schools*, positioning ZCSS as the umbrella organization through which community schools would access grants, teaching and learning materials, and training opportunities for volunteer and government-paid teachers (USAID, 2008, p. 11).

ZCSS collapsed in 2006 as a result of mismanagement of funds and increased donor interest in working directly with civil society organizations rather than through the MoE¹⁷. As ZCSS was previously formed in response to the rapid growth of community schools and the need for policy support from the MoE in the 1990s, its collapse left a void in communication between NGOs and the MoE that characterizes the current situation. The data I provide in this study will show that ZOCS has built a reputation for advocating on behalf of other community schools and interacting more closely with the MoE than other organizations can or want to. However, ZOCS remains a non-governmental entity supported by various sources of support it would otherwise not receive if it were part of the national system.

In 2007, the MoE published its *Operational Guidelines for Community Schools* providing a “predictable support network for children in community schools intended to be in operation by the end of 2007” (MoE, 2007). The document states that: “The MoE will endeavour an equitable allocation of resources to community schools through the relevant budget lines in the MoE budget (p. 20)”. This statement suggests that in part at least, GRZ takes responsibility for primary education in community schools. As the document was published in 2007, the literature to date has not revealed if and how community schools are indeed receiving financial and/or technical assistance as pledged by the Ministry. Nor have the implications of this support for school quality been made clear. Moreover, although progress has been made in terms of teacher training, the MoE has yet to enact any of its plans for school grants or support articulated in its *2007 Operational Guidelines for Community Schools*.

¹⁷ Interview with Dr. Yizenge Chondoka. Friday, August 1, 2008.

The *Guidelines for Community Schools* document is a twenty-page booklet providing background to an education bill that was to be presented to Parliament for enactment in 2007. The *Guidelines* articulate plans to legally categorize community schools as an independent schooling category in addition to the three existing categories of private, government, and grant-aided. The document is divided into sections addressing stakeholder roles and responsibilities, teacher training, and teacher deployment. The document maps out the following major plans that were “intended to be in operation by the end of 2007” (p. v):

- Conduct School Mapping Exercises (SME) to register, grade, and change community school statuses by enrolling schools that are at least three kilometers in distance from other schools;
- Accredit community schools in “stages” that meet basic standards:
 - Stage One: schools have volunteer teachers with a minimum grade nine certificate taking in-kind contributions, flexible curricula, basic sanitary and water facilities;
 - Stage Two: schools meet requirements of stage one, teachers have a minimum grade 12 certificate, classrooms must have sitting surfaces and basic teaching and learning materials;
 - Stage Three: schools meet requirements of stages one and two and demonstrate sustainable funding sources with teachers engaged in continuous professional development.
- Facilitate smooth transitions of government school teachers to community schools: relevant to conditions in rural schools, the guidelines state that “the same set of incentives enjoyed by government officers serving especially in rural areas will be offered to qualified community school teachers serving in similar circumstances” (p. 14).
- Provide grants to newly registered community schools through District Education Boards (DEBs) utilizing a more “equitable allocation” system (as opposed to the current 30% to community schools and 70% to government schools).

In an interview with a Joe Mwansa, a previous employee of ZCSS, I learned that with a small staff, the former ZCSS “didn’t have the capacity to support or manage community

schools... ZOCS [now wants] to take over what ZCSS was doing. Far schools [outside of Lusaka] were actually left to ravages of faith to survive [without ZCSS]” (personal interview, August 12, 2008).

Mr. Mwansa shared with me the fact that Lusaka Province is lucky, as “there is not one organization supporting schools in Northwestern Province”. He went on to describe that even the formulation of the *Guidelines* was not a MoE endeavor. Rather, it was created under pressure from large-scale donor agencies such as USAID (similar to the *Handbook for Training of Community School Teachers* released in 2007 by the MoE in collaboration with USAID and American Institutes for Research or AIR) to coordinate and strengthen its assistance to community schools (USAID, 2008) through the MoE rather than directly to schools and civil society organizations.

In my visits to urban schools sampled, teachers and head teachers had copies of the *Guidelines* but did not express any optimism about the document’s plans. Rural teachers could not locate the document and had not read it, although they were certain they had a copy. Rather than discuss the rights and responsibilities of schools described in the document, teachers and head teachers appeared more concerned with their immediate relationships with ZOCS staff and the main office. This apparent disinterest in the *Guidelines* perhaps would have been different if the ZCSS was still in operation with the capability to be the liaison between the MoE and individual schools.¹⁸

¹⁸ The existing gap between well-intentioned policies and school level responses has been documented widely in both U.S. and comparative research (Portes, 1998; Green, 1994;

Similar to my findings at Lusaka's District Education Board (DEB) office, Mwansa's unpublished 2006 study in Zambia's Northern Province found that community schools were also receiving little if any support from the local DEB. He went on to compare his experiences with ZOCS schools, offering a different perspective on a national level:

Most community schools are fully aware that Ministry is supposed to support them. At policy and planning levels, community schools are included, but [the] support simply isn't there. On paper, ZOCS is responsible for less than .7% of Zambia's community schools and receives good support. Some schools they run are better than private schools. ZOCS has a huge budget for supporting teacher training. ZOCS schools are far much better than most government [schools], especially when it comes to staffing. ZOCS wants to run a small number of secluded schools. Once, there was an advert for schools to submit school returns. ZOCS didn't respond. The task was to count [the] number of schools, disclose information such as number of desks, teaching staff, etc. Most ZOCS schools didn't respond, probably on purpose. It is because they are apathetic about working with the Ministry of Education...all the time firing attacks at Ministry... they've even written letters to State House (personal interview, *ibid*).

My conversation with Mr. Mwansa echoed other opinions about ZOCS within Lusaka: although not systematically addressed, informal discussions with government primary and secondary teachers reinforced the notion that ZOCS has a reputation of actually competing with

Petrauskis and Nkunica, 2006) and is applicable in the case of community schools with similar goals for academic achievement at national standards.

local government schools and in some cases, receiving more funding and support per school from external sources. Mr. Mwansa's comments above suggest that the support ZOCS receives not only outweighs that offered to government schools, but is substantial enough to conceal from the Ministry for reasons that remain unclear. When I asked ZOCS' program coordinator about this issue, although she did not address finances directly, she explained how she needed to protect ZOCS and prevent the MoE from "taking over" ZOCS schools, perhaps for fear of a loss of employment among ZOCS staff or the dissolution of the organization entirely.

In short, and as described in both the section on Zambian educational finance and above with ZOCS, the MoE is also constrained by the global economic crisis *in addition to* its current conditions as a low-income government extracting little to no income from taxes in a country where informal employment is predominant. Although the MoE has demonstrated political will to play a more of a role in the financing and support of community schools, where or how the MoE will find the resources to do this remains a puzzle. Tensions continue between NGOs such as ZOCS and the MoE as the MoE *explicitly* pledges support to such schools but does not always follow through. Since the MoE's budget is already constrained, its ability to deliver on its promises is limited and highly unlikely to change in the near future.

Linked to the national level of coordination between the state and NGOs such as ZOCS is the issue of communication and coordination between ZOCS and each of its 19 official schools. It was not uncommon during my time in Lusaka to witness frustration among teachers and head teachers with "those people" at the ZOCS office about everything from teacher salaries to school supplies and bursaries for grade eight. Some teachers worried that money donated to ZOCS students for eighth grade bursaries was instead taken by ZOCS staff or used for office purposes. Auntie Agatha (one teacher from Matero) as well as others I worked with expressed their desire

that “donations for bursaries should be taken directly to the school [where the student will attend] rather than through the ZOCS office”. I did not learn of any funds mismanagement from my conversations with ZOCS staff. But at the national level, stealing and corruption was the reason cited by a former MoE consultant for the dissolution of ZCSS. However, for its larger funding sources, ZOCS keeps regular financial records, has hired an internal auditor, and creates annual reports and work plans with detailed budgets required by donor and technical assistance agencies.

As ZOCS continues to provide meaningful opportunities to children who may otherwise not attend school, its limitations as an NGO (the head office kept only ten people in 2008) are apparent. Finite political power, limited funding, and insufficient support from the state prohibits the organization from operating completely on its own, much less in districts around the country. Interviews with both ZOCS staff and Lusaka’s DEB Officer (Mrs. Mulenga) reveal the complexity of this relationship as ZOCS leaders report ongoing struggles to maintain autonomy over teacher recruitment and retention while advocating for teachers to be placed on public payroll. Mrs. Mulenga responds to these concerns by drawing attention to the shortage of funds currently dispersed to government schools, let alone grant-aided schools. She notes that there are community schools in Zambia that are simply not registered with the MoE and therefore, cannot qualify for financial or technical support. In addition, concerns have been raised about the legality and standards of teacher recruitment in certain community schools. The state requires that the middle basic or lower secondary grades of eight and nine must be taught by teachers with grade eight or nine certificates but this is not the case in some community schools that provide schooling through grade nine. Moreover, district officials are concerned that anyone can

round up ten children or more and feign a community school when in practice, the grants the schools receive are used for personal benefit.

Mrs. Mulenga is frustrated with the public/grant aided/ community school debate, stating that she “never enjoys working with community schools because it is always a hassle” (personal interview, Wednesday, August 6, 2009). In sum, there are concerns on both sides: some organizations such as ZOCS may want specific kinds of support, but must also meet certain national, provincial, and district level requirements. Moreover, challenges remain within the Ministry in implementing the decentralization of the education system and linkages between local administration and the non-governmental education sector. I show in this study that the organizational challenges ZOCS faces trickle down to the classroom level, where teachers and students are expected to produce exemplary (if not comparable) results to government schools with more limited resources and support.

The Precarious Finances of ZOCS and its Dependence on Grants

Growing up in the middle class suburbs of Montgomery County in the state of Maryland, I never worried about where money came from for school. I remember those few weeks leading up to the first days of elementary school where “school shopping” meant new clothes, colorful *Mead* notebooks and fun stickers to paste onto my “homework folder”. The American system of public education, paid for by property taxes worked well in my community where residents voted to increase their taxes for a new library or local swimming pool. Although some of my friends in lower-income areas of the neighboring Prince Georges County or Washington, D.C. had a worse off experience—their schools labeled frequently in metropolitan newspapers as “failing”—none of us worried about an inability to attend public school because we had to pay a

fee. Moreover, we were never turned away from schools because we could not afford the costs of attending. Taxes, no matter how high or low-funded our education.

The situation in Zambia and SSA more generally is drastically different. Still a predominantly rural country, informal employment in Zambia constitutes more than 68% of the economy (MoE, 2006). Keeping track of the finances of all its citizens and generating significant revenue for social services such as education on a country-wide scale from taxes is virtually impossible in a context where more than half of the population lives at the national poverty line (World Bank, 2011). For example, the closest system Zambia has to the United States' requirement of a Social Security card is its creation of the National Registration Card (NRC) which is required for formal employment, driver's licenses, and passport applications. My conversations with one of Zambia's former secretaries to the treasury revealed that a majority of residents, particularly in rural areas, do not own an NRC. This fact makes it extremely difficult to comprehensively track those gainfully employed or owning property for taxation purposes. Without a sustainable tax collection system in place, the Zambian government continues to provide public schooling with funds from a small portion of income and property tax from Zambia's middle and upper class residents, supplemented by support from various international agencies.

External grants are therefore the principal source of funding for ZOCS teachers although some are paid by the Zambian government and some are offered cash or in-kind community contributions. Through its competition for grants from international donor agencies and FBOs, ZOCS has secured grants to start new schools, offer small salaries to teachers, and provide teaching and learning materials when possible. Most contracts ZOCS signs with donors and other sources of support last anywhere from one to three years. Its record of accomplishment since

1992 makes the organization a strong candidate for donor interest: at its headquarters in Rhodespark, Lusaka, ZOCS frequently welcomes visitors, volunteers, and potential donors from countries such as Australia, Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The popularity of ZOCS ensures local respect and international attention, as illustrated in articles published by USAID (2004) among others (Friends of Zambia Project, 2009).

At the time of Phase II data collection in 2009, ZOCS had a budget of approximately 27 billion kwacha (USD one million) over five years (close to USD 200,000/year) in grants and support from the following aid agencies and organizations:

- Community without Borders
- The ELMA Philanthropies
- World Food Program (providing soya for porridge)
- Irish Aid
- Book Aid International
- New Zealand Aid
- Solar Aid
- Christian Aid
- Danish Embassy

ZOCS also seeks government grants but in an ambivalent way. Mr. Chanda explained that ZOCS plans to eventually register all of its schools with the MoE as “grant-aided” in order to receive government grants on a continuous basis. Mr. Chanda noted that in order for schools to receive government grants, they are required to be on a list at the Ministry of Finance.

Surprisingly the only requirements that ZOCS schools must meet to become “grant-aided” are to develop a formal constitution and show proof of steady physical conditions and regular student attendance.

Mr. Chanda commented that: “Our community schools are not established on the list ... they are not established maybe because they can be taken over by government” (personal interview, *ibid*). I probed Mr. Chanda’s concern for being “taken over by government”, asking him why ZOCS schools would not want to (or why the organization hasn’t completed the process for all of its schools to) be registered formally with the MoE and put on the Ministry of Finance’s “list”. Reflecting on the relationship between ZOCS and the MoE, he explained that,

It is the desire of ZOCS that these schools one day become government schools. Since ZOCS started, the relationship [with the MoE] wasn’t too well. People were thinking that they were supposed to be competing. [MoE] are supposed to send government teachers in community schools. Then they are supposed to supply the learning and teaching materials. They are supposed to give grants. This has not been fulfilled so much. They are supposed to at least assist community schools but the Ministry of Education is not doing so much. I think the relationship between ZOCS and the Ministry keeps on improving. It is not like it was some two, three, four years ago. I think there is a bit of working together now (personal interview, *ibid*).

My observations of collaboration between ZOCS and the MoE as well as my conversations with district level MoE officials revealed similar sentiments about this complicated, yet improving relationship. I believe from my experience in Zambia that the MoE genuinely wanted to do more for community school students but was constrained by its budget. I was also surprised by how much the MoE promised to community schools in its recent policies and guidelines that it was clearly unable to deliver, given the current state of public education in which so little has changed—for example, the physical appearance of schools (including the University of Zambia) or the national curriculum.

Since 2005, the MoE has categorized Lusaka District (where the urban community schools I sampled are located) as one of the country's 72 districts with the lowest access to basic education (grades eight and nine) based on net intake ratios. Moreover, reduced to the school level, most of these figures do not even incorporate community schools that were not registered as grant-aided in 2008. Only one of ZOCS' 19 schools (founded by Catholic missionaries) is grant-aided. Located in Kabwe (the capital of Zambia's Central Province), this school was not sampled for my study.

The Difficulty of Recruiting and Paying Teachers

ZOCS recruits teachers based on community recommendations and solicitations in local newspapers such as *The Post* and *The Times of Zambia*. With authorization from the ZOCS Board of Directors, staff, and members of a schools' PCSC, new teachers are hired and oriented with the support of school supervisors and teachers. Teachers' levels of education and qualifications differ across schools and locations. Mr. Chanda reported that the schooling of such teachers varies from grade seven to grade nine while warning that training or qualifications do not necessarily make better teachers in ZOCS schools. He commented that rural teachers tend to have less years of schooling than urban teachers. Nevertheless, what mattered most to him most to become a great teacher was someone who was interested in children and passionate about teaching.

The Zambia Teacher Education Course or ZATEC is a training program for basic education teachers that replaced the Zambia Education Basic Course (ZBEC) in 1998. Over two years, teachers who are not considered qualified by national standards engage in study and practice in schools with bi-weekly meetings in April, August, and December and a two-week boarding program in which teachers gain experience in real classrooms. This training course is the same

course offered to government school teachers. But according to Mr. Chanda, less than 20% of ZOCS teachers are ZATEC trained. To participate in ZATEC, teachers pay an enrollment fee of two million kwacha (USD 400 in 2009) and an examination fee of 100,000 kwacha (USD 20) to complete the course¹⁹. After graduation, the MoE places these teachers on government payroll (making them eligible for salaries of at least one million kwacha or USD 200 per month in 2009). In contrast, when funding is available from donors and other sources, ZOCS teachers without formal ZATEC training are paid approximately 500,000 kwacha per month (USD 100 in 2009).

Since 2008, my conversations with ZOCS staff have focused on the precarious situation of ZOCS teacher recruitment and training, relationships with the MoE, and the flight of ZOCS teachers to government schools (to “greener pastures”). Although the MoE has collaborated with ZOCS to offer ZATEC training to paying teachers and agreed to subsequently place trained teachers on government payroll, no decisions were made about providing incentives for ZOCS teachers to remain in ZOCS schools. The ZATEC certificate thus provides teachers with a means of applying for jobs and receiving higher pay. ZOCS also provides in-service training programs for teachers. While such programs take place anywhere from two to three times a year, they do not result in any formal qualifications or credentials recognized by the MoE.

ZOCS’ 2008 Annual Report expands on this issue:

A major challenge the organization is facing is the movement of qualified MOE-ZATEC ZOCS teachers to government payroll, which has had a negative impact on the quality of

¹⁹ 1 USD = 5,000 ZMK (2009).

education offered in community schools. However, efforts are still being made to have these teachers seconded back to community schools though the pace at which government is tackling this matter is extremely slow. So far just one teacher is being seconded back to his original community school in Chifwema [compound], following the schools' involvement of the local MP who is also a Minister...The Ministry's Operational Guidelines state that teachers will be retained in community schools and yet this is not being implemented. ZOCS continues to lobby the Government on this issue...ZOCS faced the continued increase in the number of requests from communities to have more teachers' supplemented given the high poverty levels being experienced in Zambia. This was caused by the lack of capacity by most communities to raise funds to supplement teachers' allowances and also the continued refusal by most donors to support this activity (ZOCS, 2008, p.9).

Compared to the salaries of non ZATEC- trained ZOCS teachers, government school teachers are undoubtedly better off financially. The one million kwacha (USD 200) benchmark for primary public school teachers is a minimum that can increase with qualifications, credentials, and years of experience up to three million (USD 600) for teachers in primary grades. In discussions with Mr. Chanda and other ZOCS staff, I learned that the loss of recently ZATEC trained ZOCS teachers to government schools was one of the most significant challenges to ZOCS in schools where teacher shortages were already a concern. The coordinator expressed frustration that collaboration of the MoE with ZOCS to provide ZATEC training to ZOCS teachers was at the time yielding more losses to ZOCS schools than benefits, as teachers continued to search for "greener pastures" in higher paying government schools. Mr. Chanda described the situation as follows:

But what I can say as an opinion is that it's not so much sustainable for us to keep on those schools because one, it's becoming so difficult for us to pay the teachers and if we can't pay teachers allowances, I mean most of them would want to go to government schools...so if those teachers were paid by the government, I think it would be more sustainable than the organization doing it. And then we would end up having a lot of untrained teachers in the community schools than trained teachers. We should have taken a process where we are weaning off some schools (personal interview, *ibid*).

Between 2008 and 2009, funding and technical assistance agencies such as Irish Aid and the ELMA Philanthropies Foundation were sponsoring ZOCS teachers' salaries equivalent to USD 200 per month (ZMK 700,000 in 2008 and ZMK 1 million in 2009²⁰). In the absence of these subsidies, through income generating and other local sources, ZOCS has managed to provide salaries averaging 400,000 kwacha a month-- significantly less than that offered by sponsors. The incentives for teachers to obtain the ZATEC certificate and teach in government schools paying at least one million kwacha (USD 200 in 2009) and as much as 2.5 million (USD 500 in 2009) per month are clear.

Considering government school teacher salaries in isolation, Mingat (2001) and Pôle de Dakar (2009) used a variety of studies in EFA's high-performing countries to suggest that the average primary teacher salary should not exceed 3.5% of a country's GDP per capita. For the purposes and goals of EFA, Lambert (2004) argues that,

²⁰ 1 USD=3,500 ZMK in 2008. 1USD=5,000 ZMK in 2009.

On the one hand, when salaries are too high, most of the already scarce resources of the education sector are dedicated to their payment to the detriment of either wider coverage of the education system or better provision of complementary inputs (such as textbooks for example). On the other hand, if teachers' compensation becomes too low, it can be feared that teachers' commitment to their job will be affected and that the quality of schooling will suffer the consequences of this loss of motivation (p. 2).

Applying the WB and UNESCO estimates, Zambian teachers on average actually earn *less* than the recommended target of 3.5% at 3.1% of GDP per capita. On the lower end of the SSA average of 4.3, Zambian teachers earn similarly to others in Anglophone countries and generally much less than teachers in Francophone countries (Minghat, Ledoux, and Rakotomalala, 2008).

I could not locate any published studies on salaries of community school teachers in Zambia that would have provided a more accurate depiction across different organizations. However, having lived in Zambia for fourteen months and buying food and other necessities in various locations (including compound markets and more expensive shopping centers in town), my experience proved that a minimum of 400,000 kwacha places severe constraints on Zambian households in a city such as Lusaka that is becoming increasingly expensive in terms of housing, food, and other basics. For example, the cost of fuel (required for minibuses that are the primary mode of transport in Lusaka urban) was approximately two times the average cost of fuel in the United States in 2009-- around USD 8 per gallon). Aunty Madeline from Matero Open Community School also told me (personal interview, June 1, 2009) that 400,000 kwacha (USD 80 per month) was, "Not even enough to make a budget...the salaries are so meager or too small of which a bag of mealie-meal, soap, rentals, and school going children cannot be supported. We fail to sustain our homes in everything".

ZOCS' Vulnerability

Concerns for ZOCS' ability to continue providing access for underserved students as well as its capacity to offer competitive pay and job security for teachers and ZOCS personnel were recurring themes in my discussions with both office staff and teachers. One ZOCS' officer offered that, "getting schools to stand alone" was a major goal, although she seemed dedicated to her job at ZOCS headquarters where most people felt overworked and underpaid considering the amount of responsibility designated for a staff of ten to oversee 19 schools.

ZOCS' vulnerability was illustrated on a hot afternoon in June of 2009, when I sat with two teachers (whom I refer to as Aunty Agatha and Aunty Madeline) at Matero Open Community School while they shared their thoughts on ZOCS. Aunty Madeline told me the story of Matero:

Back in 1996, we [Aunty Agatha and Aunty Madeline] collaborated because many children were losing their parents and dropping out of school. I decided to start a school in my home...my kitchen became *full*! Then I approached the priest at St. Mary's Parish who said he would allow us to use the catechist classrooms to teach. This was around 1997. That priest asked me to go and register with ZOCS to receive help. ZOCS provided pencils and books for the children. But you see, now ZCSC is no more. ZOCS can easily be no more as well. We've been thinking that missionaries should take over the schools (personal interview, June 1, 2009).

According to Mr. Chanda, ZOCS was originally started by Catholic nuns. The rise of HIV and AIDS coupled with deteriorating economic conditions leading up to the millennium precipitated the growth of the OVC population and necessitated the creation of more community schools. While Aunty Madeline's suggestion to turn community schools such as Matero over to

missionaries may be seen as a substitute for ZOCS as the historical alternative to government schools, the number of places at such schools is very small compared to Zambia's current orphan population which currently exceeds 1.3 million (MoE, 2007). Aunty Madeline did not mean to say Zambians or Black Zambians (such as those who run ZOCS) are incapable of organizing or governing ZOCS schools as well as missionaries. Rather, I interpreted her suggestion as based on the reputation in Zambia of church-run schools for financial stability, academic rigor, and discipline unparalleled by many government schools. Missionary-founded secondary schools continue to produce the highest examination scores across provinces (ECZ, 2009) and accept students of various ethnicities and religions (for example, my mother, an Indian Muslim, attended St. Monica's Catholic Secondary School in Eastern Province).

A few months after my conversation with Aunty Madeline, in November I received a urgent text message from the head teacher at Garden Open Community School (Ms. Banda) to come visit her. When I arrived, she took a letter out of her desk which had been hand delivered to her by a staff member from the ZOCS head office. The letter was printed on ZOCS letterhead, addressed to the staff at Garden, and signed by the ZOCS' program coordinator. In it was an apology from ZOCS for the sad news that the organization would no longer be able to subsidize teachers' salaries. Teachers were encouraged to put more effort into income generating activities, work more closely with communities, or find other organizations willing to help. The letter explained how an expected grant from one of the usual donors supporting teacher salaries had been cut and funding would no longer be available, at least in the coming year. Ms. Banda looked at me in desperation, asking,

What are we expected to do now? Even the money for salaries that those people were giving us before was not enough! A 400,000 kwacha-that is barely enough for anything.

We also have our own children...we also have to pay rentals and buy food and pay fees for our own children. Lusaka is expensive! You see? What will happen when all of us decide to just go and teach for government? What will happen to these children? They will have no one (personal communication, November, 2009).

Feeling awkward and helpless about my own limited power to improve the situation of these teachers of whom I had become so fond since 2008, I had nothing to offer but empathy. Reflecting on global events such as the ongoing economic crisis in 2008 and 2009, I realized how major cuts in spending not only by governments, but also by donor and technical assistance agencies have profound effects on the work of smaller scale community development organizations in Africa such as ZOCS. Some manifestations of the global economic crisis that I directly observed in schools included the loss of teacher salaries once provided by a specific donor agency that was no longer able to supply its usual grants; a decrease in the number and amount of donations (physical and monetary) that schools received directly from donors and various organizations; the absence of grants promised to various community schools (not just ZOCS) by the MoE since 2007 in its *Operational Guidelines for Community Schools*; and less frequent monitoring and evaluation visits to schools by donor and technical assistance agency representatives.

ZOCS staff remains uncertain about how long schools will suffer while the global economy recovers. As I complete the write-up for this study in 2010, several ZOCS teachers are leaning towards the prospects of completing ZATEC training and working in government schools, as the intrinsic rewards to volunteer teaching of OVC do not compensate sufficiently for the lack of tangible support teachers need to sustain their families.

While income generating activities were one part of school management and governance, they were clearly not sustaining enough for the schools to be completely released from ZOCS as Ms. Banda's letter suggested. Although the MoE was in the process of instituting measures to fund, monitor, and evaluate community schools such as those in ZOCS, ZOCS teachers had nowhere near universal access to government payroll or job security. Despite MoE collaboration with ZOCS on teacher training and the transfer of ZATEC trained teachers to government payroll, incentives such as salary increments, teachers' housing, and other benefits had yet to be realized as part of the ZOCS teacher package. With all this in mind, I became deeply aware of the risks ZOCS ran as an organization funded and sustained primarily by local and international NGOs as opposed to the MoE.

Nevertheless, with 19 official schools and 118 affiliate schools (participating in ZOCS training programs, sharing materials, etc.), ZOCS was frequently referred to in my discussions with NGO staff and Ministry officials as the closest agency to the Ministry's former Zambia Community Schools Secretariat (ZCSS) in terms of advocacy and support for underserved youth. It is notable that ZOCS is the only community-based schooling program to provide grades eight and nine (in two of its schools) in the country. When I asked Mr. Chanda how ZOCS had accumulated 19 schools and how it went about starting schools, he replied,

I think the community schools are starting on two levels: there are situations whereby you will do an assessment and then think these people around need a school... and there are situations where the community itself comes up with the idea that they want to build a community school and then maybe they would want assistance, so that's when they come to ZOCS. But most of the schools are started by the people in the community. Then ZOCS came in. They would come like, we want to be an affiliate to you. I think there are

guidelines for those schools. For the 19 official schools, it was the initiative of ZOCS [personal interview, *ibid*].

ZOCS has impressive support from various organizations, especially when compared to other community schools throughout Zambia. But considering the limited and unsustainable nature of ZOCS' funding, it is difficult for ZOCS to respond to demand among families to attend. Mr. Chanda shared with me that ZOCS schools do not turn students away and the majority of students can be categorized as "vulnerable" in some way:

Other than orphans, a vulnerable child is a child that is coming from a home where maybe in this house there is a father...in this house there is a mother but maybe the father is not doing anything... it's a poverty stricken home and whatever...just where the parents are failing to provide for the children at least the basic necessities so we call those children vulnerable. When we talk about the community schools in the rural areas... most of them...in these situations they would cater for everyone because of the distance...so orphan, even someone who is not an orphan. But in urban areas, it emanated usually from the background of HIV and AIDS, people not having jobs....these are the children in urban community schools (personal interview, *ibid*).

Mr. Chanda's description of "vulnerable" explains the diversity in household composition and background I found within my Phase II study sample of 102 ZOCS students across six schools (see Chapter Six). To an extent, the term "vulnerable" categorizes all children in Zambia's population of people living at the national poverty line (more than 60% in 2004 according to World Bank 2011 estimates). While some may be considered more vulnerable than others in terms of orphan status and other factors, each student participating in this study

benefitted in ways otherwise unlikely in the absence of a community school. I describe relationships among different student characteristics, academic achievement, and transition to grade eight in more depth in Chapter Eight.

ZOCS and Government Schools

For the purposes of this study, comparisons to government schools are needed a) to demonstrate why students may attend ZOCS as opposed to government schools and b) to illustrate how, despite potentially different experiences in community and government primary schools, both groups of students face similar obstacles to transitioning to basic (grades eight and nine) and upper secondary (grades 10 and 12) as a consequence of examination performance and/or the ability to pay school fees.

A number of characteristics differentiate ZOCS from government schools in terms of policy and practice. For example, ZOCS schools are organized according to levels rather than grades to ease students through the program quickly: level one covers the equivalent of grades one and two, level two covers grades three and four, level three grades five and six, and level four covers grade seven. In addition, curricula at each level are designed to address the same content students learn in government schools, but are condensed to fit two years of government schooling into one. Each level lasts one year: at the end of four years, level four students sit for grade seven examinations and graduate based on their performance at national standards. See chart below for additional comparisons between ZOCS and government schools. I exclude private schools as these institutions are funded, organized, and often use different (mostly British) examination and accreditation standards.

ZOCS	Government Schools	Similarities
Classes organized according to levels one through four	Classes organized according to grades one through seven	Shift teaching for each grade: morning shift from 7 or 8am to 12pm and afternoon shift from 1pm to 4 or 5pm
Primary program of four years	Primary program of seven years	Same curriculum, but condensed in ZOCS schools
No mandatory fees	Some fees charged at school level despite FBE Policy	
“No uniforms” policy	Implicit uniform policy remains enforced at school level	Similar language of instruction policies (mother-tongue in earlier grades and progression to English in later grades)
Provision of school lunches	No lunches served at school	Same grade seven examinations for level four and grade seven students
ZOCS teacher training required (not ZATEC)	ZATEC training and secondary school certificate required	
Teacher remuneration by GRZ (if ZATEC trained) and donors	Teacher remuneration by GRZ	
No teachers’ housing provided	Teachers’ housing provided in some cases	
Average primary class size=40	Average primary class size=60 (Kapambwe, 2010)	
Schools governed by school staff, PCSCs, and ZOCS	Schools governed by District Education Boards (DEBs) and Provincial Education Offices (PEOs)	

Figure 13. ZOCS and Government (GRZ) Schools: Similarities and Differences.

Conclusions and Summary

Acknowledging that ZOCS and most other community school programs in low-income countries exist as a *consequence* of the state’s limited capacity to provide basic education for all, how can the two systems be reconciled? One of the most pointed aspects of the debate on community schools and the field of APE more generally is whether such schools should be mainstreamed into government schools and how the state can more adequately support existing

schools in what have emerged as parallel education systems within countries. Viewing ZOCS as an organization whose support and status is vulnerable to changing global forces in Zambia's post-colonial context, the scope of civil society organizations such as ZOCS to address educational access beyond the primary level is limited. As I show in this study, the current state of rural ZOCS schools in particular demonstrates how civil society educational projects often reflect parallel challenges to government schools in similar settings. Likewise, if most ZOCS students do manage to complete all levels of schooling and obtain secondary school certificates, they would still face challenges equivalent to government school students upon completion of secondary school: steep competition for higher education and limited skilled employment opportunities in the formal sector.

Findings from this case study of an NGO struggling to adequately support thousands of students illuminate various challenges in regard to relationships between civil society and the state. ZOCS' work may be seen as underlining the response of the state to provide primary education as a "human right" in a "borderless world" (Ohmae, 1995). In the absence of national standards for teaching, learning and enforcement of various standards, NGOs such as ZOCS may use their autonomy to craft primary education *delivery* with a condensed national curriculum and a shortened primary cycle (four levels as opposed to seven years). However, as observed in rural schools, the lack of official standards for language of instruction and teacher qualifications among other factors has negative implications for students in the less regulated schools where students may not pass examinations simply because they cannot read English. Given what Guehenno (1995) describes as the erosion of the state and the consequent formation of communal identities replacing former relationships to the nation-state (in this case, attending a community school as opposed to a government school), the issues of consistency, accountability,

and equal learning opportunities are important to address, particularly in light of ZOCS' goals to serve marginalized populations.

Acknowledging the mushrooming of both NGOs and funding for such non-state actors in developing countries over the last twenty years, Arnove and Christina (1998) advance an argument in favor of the state as a foundation and civil society organizations as *complementary*:

The issues facing marginalized and systematically discriminated-against populations in most societies require a strategic response at the macro or societal level: changes in laws and in the workings of major institutions...many NGOs often have small staffs--frequently only one or two paid individuals—as well as very limited and precarious sources of funding... most are fragile institutions. Such uneven resources threaten the durability of NGOs. It can be substantiated generally that NGOs are able to perform with greater ease and flexibility than the state in responding to local needs. However, they also have very limited resources and are frequently unable to carry small projects to scale. Furthermore, increased competition for resources on the open market (1) forces organizations to divert attention and time from programming to fund raising; and (2) may force out of existence smaller organizations or agencies whose political bases are not in line with those of dominant funders (p. 46).

This argument applies to NGOs such as ZOCS among others, especially in light of the variation in donor funding. I showed in this chapter how ZOCS' fragility and vulnerability is related to various aspects of organizational stability, teacher recruitment, training, and remuneration, and potentially student achievement as schools continue to lose teachers who are ZATEC trained or teachers who cannot settle for volunteering their time as opposed to seeking paid employment. More generally, in the event that support for primary and/or “non-formal” education is no longer

popular among donors and technical assistance agencies, countless NGOs such as ZOCS will be either a) hindered from making progress on their current work plans or b) forced to change their scope of work entirely to a theme more attractive to potential funders. Given what we know about an already constrained educational budget in Zambia, there may be other methods of support and avenues for collaboration among the MoE and NGOs such as ZOCS that acknowledge both the reality that the MoE is unlikely to deliver grants to all registered community schools in the near future and the ideal that the MoE does have an interest in more adequately and efficiently supporting community schools and APE more generally as its major partner on the EFA fast-track.

Chapter 6: **Success and Failure in ZOCS Schools and How Schools Cope with Various Challenges**

Overview

Beyond the organizational context of ZOCS and its relationships with donors and the MoE exists a separate space of schools serving diverse urban and rural populations within Lusaka Province. In contrast to government schools that remain accountable to district and provincial education boards, ZOCS schools are uniquely defined outside the formal system adhering to policies of finance and governance established by the organization rather than the MoE. Most ZOCS teachers and staff rarely interact with government officials without ZOCS staff as liaisons. Central to an understanding of these complex identities and relationships and in line with the case study approach is an analysis of each school as its own entity functioning within opportunities and constraints posed by a range of student, family, and community factors. These factors contribute to notions of “success” and “failure” as described by students and teachers throughout the study. Moreover, as I argue throughout the dissertation, success and failure must be discussed in Zambia’s broader political, economic, and social post-colonial context to understand differences between what education *means* to ZOCS students compared to what education can and will *do* for students who move forward.

This chapter delves into perceptions of teaching and learning conditions in ZOCS schools and the broader milieu of community and societal factors influencing both schooling experiences and notions of success and failure. I introduce Chapter six by profiling the six ZOCS schools sampled with information from the ZOCS 2008 Annual Report. Dividing the chapter into two urban and rural parts, I describe in detail the settings and contexts for ZOCS schools sampled with a focus on three (Mancilla, Garden, and Makangwe) as examples highlighting some of the major challenges related to the locations of different school sites. For each location, I also

analyze aggregate school performance, making comparisons to government and grant-aided schools within districts with data from both the Annual Report and the MoE's 2008 Statistical Bulletin. Each segment concludes with a discussion of how school staff and PCSCs define success and achievement within the contexts of their own schools and communities. I argue in support of current literature that while both urban and rural schools share similar definitions of success and educational goals for students, rural schools are not as well equipped to face various challenges given contextual issues such as language, teacher qualifications, and training that are not as pervasive in urban areas. Moreover, I maintain that while ZOCS teachers reinforce the belief that students have in schools by encouraging attendance and promoting achievement on national examinations, the potential of ZOCS schooling alone to alter students' realities is uncertain.

Table 10
ZOCS Sample Schools: Population Characteristics (2008)

School	Location	District	Boys	Girls	Total Students	Total Orphans	Orphans as % of Students
Garden	Urban	Lusaka	241	224	465	306	66%
Mancilla	Urban	Lusaka	281	250	531	300	56%
Mary Aikenhead	Urban	Lusaka	0	563	563	352	63%
Matero	Urban	Lusaka	125	108	233	128	55%
Chilambila	Rural	Kafue	185	120	305	77	25%
Makangwe	Rural	Kafue	159	119	278	106	38%

Table 11
Student Sample Characteristics by School (Phase II, n=102)

School	Boys	Girls	Total	Orphans (%) of Total
Garden	10	6	16	44
Mary Aikenhead	0	11	11	64
Mancilla	12	9	21	62
Matero	5	8	13	31
Chilambila	10	6	16	6
Makangwe	7	18	25	32
Totals	44	58	102	

Part I: Urban ZOCS School Characteristics and Contexts

Urban ZOCS Schools: Contemporary Realities

In relation to rural communities in which families depend on subsistence farming and fishing for sustenance and access land based on kinship and clan ties, urban households rely more on income generation for food and shelter. An urban Mancilla Community School teacher remarked that urban schools face different challenges than rural ones, often more severe as they are situated in “crime prone areas coupled with massive unemployment”. Community schools in Lusaka’s high density compounds fit the description-- I was asked to park my rental car on the grass near some of the urban schools to insure its safety when I visited for interviews. Driving with me through the streets of Lusaka, my father, a native Zambian from the rural, northeastern Luapula Province, who had not been back to the country in over ten years was disappointed at the amount of languishing or “loafing” on city streets, particularly among young and adult men. On a weekday, countless men were lined up along roads sitting under trees, others drinking local beer. He gasped at the “amount of labor” being wasted and expressed his frustration at the conditions of unemployment in the city. Moreover, he lamented that the urban culture of loafing, drug use, alcoholism, crime, and restlessness among some was quite different from the Lusaka he remembered of the 1970s through the 1990s.

Despite difficult living conditions for many families sending their children to ZOCS, I found urban students to be just as lively as I was in elementary and middle school. Full of energy and excitement about their youth and future, urban students were much more extroverted and confident than rural ones. They boasted to me about how much English they had learned, how well they performed in football and netball tournaments, and how many songs they had written or performed in their church choirs. In January 2009, when I made my first visits back to the

schools since 2008, all students remembered who I was (probably because of my “colored”, i.e., mixed ethnicity appearance coupled with my American accent). In just one year, I noticed so much physical and emotional growth, as many students were moving through the years of adolescence. Both boys and girls were maturing, some engaging in flirtatious exchanges with each other on football fields, others segregating based on sex into different camps of the school grounds. Unforgettable are the countless boys and girls who appear as though they have lived many years beyond their age, those whose lives are shown in their faces-- some looking like forty year olds trapped inside of teenage bodies. Below are the stories of two urban schools-- Mancilla and Garden-- that exemplify some of the most common characteristics among urban ZOCS schools. Utilizing data from informal conversations and formal interviews with teachers and members of PCSCs, I build a background for understanding perceptions of schooling, notions of success and failure, and educational outcomes in Zambia’s social, political, and economic context.

Mancilla Open Community School: “There is something going on here”

First opening in 1996 and serving the three compounds of Kanyama, John Laing and Chibolya, Mancilla Open Community School was rebuilt at a new site (now located in the southern part of Chibolya compound next to the Chibolya Police Post and closer to Lusaka’s major City Market) with support from ZOCS and a number of donor agencies including Project Concern International (PCI) and Children International (CI). Although the scattered trash and local fermented beer cartons make the dirt path leading up to the school look unsightly, the surrounding compounds are full of meaningful activity: small kiosks selling onions, tomatoes, cooking oil, cabbages, and “talk time” (pay-as-you-go credit from the popular Saudi Arabian owned companies of Zain (formally Celtel) and MTN or the Zambian owned company, CellZ).

As early as seven in the morning, women and men line the streets selling *salaula* (used or second-hand) clothes for sale, spare tires, small puppies, and virtually anything else one could imagine. Mancilla has a borehole providing fresh water to the school. Although the school is set up for electricity, it was not in operation while I was there between 2008 and 2009. Mancilla is one of two ZOCS schools offering level one to grade nine. It is also an examination center for grade seven to which students from various schools (public and community-based) are randomly assigned during examination weeks.

As one of ZOCS' larger urban schools, Mancilla had 531 students and 12 teachers in 2008. In 2007, it was among the lowest performing ZOCS schools with a pass rate to grade eight of less than 2% (43 students sat for examinations and one passed). I observed two to three students sharing one textbook and classrooms of at least 40 students in levels one and two. Accustomed to frequent visitors from what teachers referred to as "the white people" (i.e., donors, Christian missions, NGOs, etc.), Mancilla staff were open and welcoming to me, perhaps because I was a) a woman with Zambian ancestry (albeit strange to them because my mother is Indian and my father is African which is a highly uncommon mixture in Lusaka) and b) a researcher who could potentially share their experiences with the rest of the world to improve their school's financial conditions.

Mr. Kantolo is Mancilla's head teacher and school supervisor with whom I spent most of my time at Mancilla. In contrast to the other smaller urban schools, Mancilla is the only school I visited where teachers and supervisors such as Mr. Kantolo said that student motivation is a problem. He explained that it may have something to do with compound life, exposure to drugs, crime, and images of movie stars, musicians, and others who may not have completed a full course of school but are still financially successful. Mr. Kantolo talked about the need for

teachers to encourage parents and students about the importance of school and the issue of parental involvement not only in children's schooling, but also in what students were doing *outside* of schools that potentially lowered their motivation. Our conversations were identical to the debates I participated in over years of graduate school in relation to "urban" American youth. Mr. Kantolo also alluded to absenteeism and dropouts that were uncharacteristic of the other schools sampled, lamenting that, "some students show up today, then you won't see them for another two or three weeks".

Teachers at Mancilla, as at all other schools sampled, explained to me how their salary was often not disbursed on time and usually not enough to sustain their families in the city. With an average salary of 362,000 kwacha (USD 72) per month, Mancilla teachers teach in shifts from 8am-12pm and 1pm-4pm and often teach extra lessons without extra pay to help improve students' chances of passing the grade seven national examinations.

One group of Mancilla teachers takes small loans of 500,000 kwacha (USD 100) to raise income by buying wholesale foodstuffs and re-selling them in individual packaging for a small profit. The goals of this effort are to raise money for the ZATEC course which will ideally increase teacher salaries at the end of the two-year training program (assuming ZOCS has the funding). Between 2006 and 2008, Mancilla lost six teachers to government schools offering higher pay and benefits. The school now has eleven teachers (eight men and three women), four of whom are ZATEC trained and actually on government payroll through ZOCS' most recent collaboration with the MoE. Mancilla's PCSC works with students and teachers to manage a chicken coup and sell chickens for income to contribute to teachers' salaries (when donor funding is not available) and electricity bills for the building. The school is currently working to expand the chicken coup as an additional source of income.

Mr. Mulenga is a grade seven teacher who was brought to level four at Mancilla from a government school to “improve” student performance on national examinations. He described his unique experience in public and community schools as surprising to him and his public school colleagues: he explained that many teachers in government schools do not take community schools seriously: they “look down” on community schools as second rate and do not necessarily consider them to be “real”. He went on to describe how, “after coming here, I can tell them that no-- there is something going on here.” Despite Mancilla’s record as one of the worst performing schools on the grade seven examinations in 2007, Mr. Mulenga did not doubt that Mancilla in particular or community schools in general were capable of providing positive learning experiences and eventually, successful outcomes for Lusaka’s youth. From 2007 to 2008, whatever measures of improvement teachers or Mr. Mulenga took at Mancilla yielded positive results as the pass rate overwhelmingly increased from 2% to 67%.

I attempted to follow up with Mr. Mulenga through my research assistant (Mr. Chanda) after returning to the United States. I expressed to Mr. Chanda how tremendous Mr. Mulenga’s contribution must have been to Mancilla and asked if Mr. Chanda had any ideas as to what or how things changed when Mr. Mulenga was transferred. Mr. Chanda echoed my arguments above, stating that, “The idea of sending government teachers into schools is basically to raise the standards in terms of output in community schools”. He confirmed that, “It could be true that his [Mr. Mulenga’s] contribution was enormous following the fact that the results from Mancilla [are] quite bad of late. The sad part of it all is that this man was withdrawn from the school and has since passed away” (electronic communication, August 6, 2010).

Mr. Mulenga’s death was news to me in Mr. Chanda’s letter. Just eight months prior to our communication, I sat with Mr. Mulenga who, as most other Zambians infected or affected by

various illnesses, appeared healthy and energetic at school. Mr. Mulenga's death was not the only loss ZOCS suffered, as other teachers and ZOCS personnel have passed since my departure in December 2009. Such frequent death not only ravages households and family life, but has profound effects on the "quality" of education, as Mr. Chanda alludes to above and numerous studies have noted (Bennell, 2000). Mancilla's school level results have since declined.

Although much educational research has established that academic achievement appears related to a range of factors including gender, family background, and socioeconomic status (Coleman et al. 1966, Hanushek, 1995), how teachers and schools more generally play a role has been challenging to identify and measure in both national and international contexts (Heyneman-Loxley, 1982; Fuller, 1987). In Mancilla's case and that of ZOCS schools in general, I inferred that schools played multiple roles in students' lives not always reinforced at home: for some, school was a safe haven from urban environments of drugs and crime and for others (including Garden students as described below), a place where students felt safe and nurtured with teachers who became more like parents in ways students may have been missing at home. These arrangements imply that for some ZOCS students, schooling is experienced as something separate from home life, although the tangible effects it produces may remain tied to home, community, and/or societal contexts in the long-run.

Garden Open Community School: "These are all of my children"

A small community school was founded in Garden compound by the Silesian Sisters Mission with eight teachers in 1993. The neighboring St. Peter's Catholic Church was operating a similar school within the same community during this period. With growing numbers of enrollments at both schools, the two merged into one building in 2000 under the name Garden

Open Community School. Managed by a supervisor and assistant supervisor, Garden had approximately 465 students in 2008, also offering schooling through grade nine. The size of the school and significant number of students facilitated the development of two classes at each level (one through four).

With a better reputation for performance on the grade seven examinations in 2007 (54%), Garden Open Community School provides an example of a situation in which students and teachers seemed to interact much more personally than students and teachers at Mancilla. Garden's head teacher, Ms. Banda, offered her thoughts on the relationship between teachers and students at her school as more of a "family" in which students clearly considered their teachers as parents, guardians, and mentors. She described how,

...the only meal some of these children will receive will be here with us. When they go back home, sometimes they will find nobody, sometimes they will find that their father is drinking, or their mother is too busy working to spend time with them...some of them don't even have parents. So you see, we are like parents to these children. These are all of my children (personal interview, September 11, 2009).

Perhaps the nature of Garden as a school run predominantly by women who are also mothers (nine of ten of the staff members) may explain the different perspective Garden staff has towards its students. In contrast to what I learned at Mancilla where more than half of the staff are men, it was not uncommon at Garden for a teacher to visit a student's home to investigate why a student was late or absent to school. Ms. Banda and her teachers also seemed to have deeper knowledge of the individual, personal circumstances of each student than the staff at Mancilla. They could share intimate details with me about each of their students, whereas Mancilla teachers didn't seem to know as much, maybe as a consequence of the high levels of absenteeism mentioned by

Mr. Kantolo. In regards to the gender of teachers, Zambia's National Assessment Survey (NAS) of 400 schools in 2006 found that "the learning achievement of pupils taught by female teachers surpassed that of pupils taught by male teachers and more especially in schools headed by females. In numeracy, male teachers had a *negative* effect on the performance of girls but a positive effect on boys" (emphasis added, MoE, 2006, p. xv.). Despite higher rates of absenteeism and dropout rates, a greater proportion of Mancilla students (67%) actually passed national examinations in 2008 when compared to Garden (12%). As mentioned above and according to unpublished ZOCS data, results declined in 2009 at Mancilla following Mr. Mulenga's departure to less than 50% of students passing. The qualitative differences that I observed between schools relate more to the nature of interaction between teachers and students, as Garden students appeared more emotionally close to teachers and frequently relied on them as mothers as Ms. Banda described. While such relationships may have indeed been formed among teachers and students at Mancilla, this pattern was relatively more observable at Garden.

Ten Garden teachers are paid by ZOCS (having twelfth grade certificates), while two have completed the ZATEC training and are on government payroll. The school also operates with the support of four mothers who volunteer in classrooms and as members of the PCSC. Although I did not observe these mothers providing in-depth academic instruction, I took note of their roles as enforcers of classroom rules, caretakers for children who needed extra support or attention, and aids to teachers in other capacities. Given the larger space at Garden compared to some of the rural ZOCS schools and a clear student interest (from the Phase I survey) in learning more science and technology, I worked with a visiting colleague from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) based in Washington, D.C. to secure a science laboratory apparatus for science instruction at Garden. Until we purchased the apparatus and delivered it to the school

in August of 2009, teachers were conducting science experiments on chalkboards, requiring students to imagine tools and reactions rather than demonstrating them with tangible materials. Based on Ms. Banda's experience with previous donations to the school, she asked that we also organize a training in the use of the science apparatus with teachers from a neighboring government high school, Kabulonga Boys. Providing transportation and a 100,000 kwacha (USD 20) incentive for three teachers from Kabulonga Boys, we managed to help Garden begin its first use of a science classroom that was built for them over a year before we arrived.²¹

As discussed by Lusaka's District Community Schools Chairperson, urban schools are uniquely situated to receive various kinds of support such as that offered by my colleague from Washington. It is evident that despite legitimate concerns for salaries and teaching support, urban ZOCS teachers care deeply about their students, developing relationships beyond the classroom. The chart below adds academic achievement to the milieu, providing aggregate school statistics on urban students who sat for grade seven examinations in 2008 and showing district comparisons from the MoE 2008 Statistical Bulletin. Although trends across different types of community schools (non-ZOCS community schools in particular) would have enhanced the analysis of data, I was unable to locate such information from the Ministry or other community school organizations. The most useful alternatives- MoE National Assessment Surveys (NASs) - are conducted whereby comparisons can be drawn across but not within school types.

²¹ 1USD=5,000 ZMK in 2009.

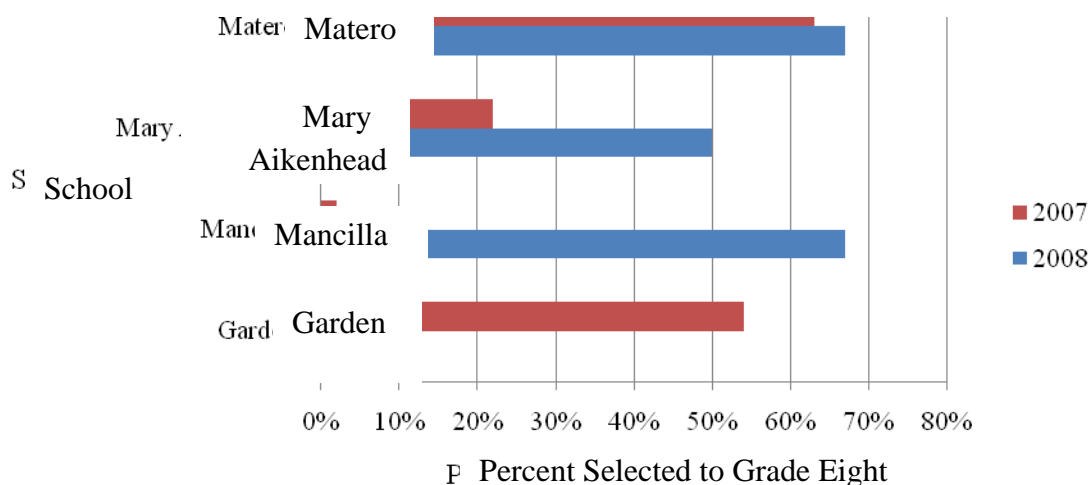


Figure 14. Urban Grade Seven Examination Results by School, 2007-2008.

The average pass rate for Lusaka District in 2008 was 49%. The figure above indicates that in 2008, Garden was below while Mary Aikenhead, Matero, and Mancilla were above the district average. For the years of 2007 and 2008 alone, Mancilla and Garden experienced the most drastic changes in performance with Mancilla’s performance increasing by over 50% and Garden’s decreasing by over 40%.

Defining Achievement and Success in Urban Schools

Between June and August of 2008 in Phase I, I spoke with 12 urban teachers about school successes, challenges, and comparisons with government schools. When I asked urban teachers to describe positive or successful attributes of their schools and students, most teachers pointed to the minimal fees imposed on families to attend, student performance on national examinations, and programs unique to ZOCS for both students and parents. Ms. Banda from Garden offered that,

The passing percentage is higher than some [government] schools. The daily attendance is higher than in government schools where they are sent away for

failing to pay school fees. We also have the health sensitization, the workshops for PCSC and teachers (personal interview, September 11, 2009).

Nine of 12 teachers cited examination performance or merely the fact that ZOCS students sit for national examinations as a positive attribute of their schools (indeed, there are many community schools in Zambia and other African countries where sitting for national examinations is not a requirement or an option). Despite Mr. Mulenga's comment that government school teachers "look down" on community schools, the urban teachers I spoke with took a great deal of pride in their teaching and students with several urban teachers reiterating that, "the passing rates are high". Although most of the speculation about how well ZOCS students (within and across schools) performed on examinations in comparison to government schools seemed to be based more on teachers' perceptions than any published reports I could locate, I found that some ZOCS students in urban schools did pass comparably to Lusaka District's average of 49% as discussed in relation to the figure above. As both primary education and progression to later grades is at the center of ZOCS' mission, urban ZOCS schools put examination performance and passing rates at the forefront of their teaching agenda. Upon arrival to any ZOCS school, school statistics are taped on the walls in the front office or teachers' quarters: the number of students attending by gender, the number of students who sat for national examinations in the previous year, and the number who passed. This display not only showcases student achievement for donors and other visitors such as myself, but also appears to provide motivation to students who want to be on the list of successful completers. As in government schools, the grade seven examinations are the only method to recognize student performance which creates an environment of pressure for children (arguably not the best measure of student aptitude and currently under review by the MoE as the only means of determining progression to

grade eight) but also a sense of motivation for students to study and perform well. Although I did not assess trends in performance of different schools over several years which may have revealed patterns in relation to changing student characteristics or the difficulty of different national examinations in each year (e.g., if significant differences in performance could be observed within one school each year, this could suggest the likelihood that the test was changing more than the students taking the test) such an analysis may offer some additional explanations of variation undetectable with this study's approach.

Additionally, ZOCS teachers share a sense of pride about the services they provide to disadvantaged children within their communities, often for limited pay. A Matero teacher commented that, "[our school] is doing fine because we have taken OVC as [the] center of everything in terms of quality education, care, and support". Further praise for ZOCS' policies of inclusion, a Mancilla teacher commented that "Our school is one of the community school[s] which most deals with orphans...because it caters [to] pupils above 15 to be put in grade one or level one while in other schools they only enroll pupils of seven years". Teachers' references to OVC, inclusive policies, and holistic education indicate that school staff and ZOCS are aligned in their visions of schools and goals for students in those respects. As ZOCS determines teacher salaries, curricula, and other policies, teachers interact more with ZOCS staff than district or provincial education officials, further supporting the argument that ZOCS schools operate more of a parallel system to government schools, sharing some similarities but governed more by the guidelines of ZOCS as an NGO. Most importantly, the majority of teachers interviewed in Phase I cited students' academic achievement (that at a minimum, it was comparable to government schools) as a source of success and pride. While three out of four urban schools sampled did indeed pass at comparable rates to Lusaka District as a whole, urban teachers were forthright

about what they needed to improve the conditions of their schools, their teaching practice, and consequently, student achievement as I elaborate below.

Urban School Challenges

When I asked urban teachers to describe the challenges they faced at their schools, most responses pointed to physical inputs rather than issues of content, pedagogy, or student achievement directly. This pattern could be expected among all schools but Garden where less than 25% of candidates passed grade seven examinations. With the exception of language of instruction issues as a serious obstacle to boosting student comprehension and performance, all urban teachers discussed issues of infrastructure: the need for toilets or more classrooms, science or sports equipment, etc. Although a Garden teacher suggested that Garden students were performing with an “average result”, Garden was actually among the lowest when compared to other urban schools sampled *and* within Lusaka District as a whole. When I asked a Garden teacher about what happens to most of the level four (grade seven) students at her school, she was incorrect in her response that, “most pass but the money [for grade eight school fees] is a problem.” The numbers show that passing or student performance may be more of an issue than she knew or admitted. As alluded to in the description of Chibolya Compound where Mancilla is located, all four Mancilla teachers interviewed responded that many students, either those who do not pass examinations or those who pass but cannot afford grade eight fees end up dropping out of school all together. While the Garden teacher’s response represents a more idealistic view of student performance, Mancilla teachers drew attention to some of the realistic limitations to ZOCS schools. A challenge for urban schools in particular seemed to be various home factors referenced by Mr. Kantolo: how to reinforce student learning at home among parents or guardians or whether and how to alter perceptions of schooling among urban households to

encourage repetition and progression among failing students. These conversations were seldom a part of what appeared to be distinct fields of home and school life as suggested in the stories of both Mancilla and Garden.

Across the six urban schools sampled, classroom observations and discussions with teachers implied that students and teachers believed in schooling as a means to obtain immediate benefits (both basic learning as well as care and support that some students may not have received at home) and maintained a symbolic (Fuller, 1991) faith in schooling's long-term educational advantages (i.e., transitioning to higher grades and fulfilling career aspirations). In addition to the non-academic benefits students received by attending urban schools, "success" seemed to be defined by how adequately each school prepared students for the next level or grade and how well students performed in comparison to their government school peers. Government schools were frequently used as a benchmark for performance in my conversations with school staff which shows that a) teachers are aware of differences in perceptions of the two school types and b) ZOCS teachers most likely view their roles as educators with the same emphasis on examination performance as teachers in government schools. In the following chapter, I refer back to what appears to be the separation of home and school life and the implicit deference for the school as both the "formal" educator of children and the authority on learning that supports contemporary literature in Zambia and low-income countries around the world.

All urban teachers alluded to salaries and the need for "upgrading", "motivation", or "more allowances", (i.e., more money) on some level. Given what I have described above as a situation of scarce, often infrequent access to resources by ZOCS, teacher salaries continue to be a problem that mutually reinforces ZOCS teachers' decisions to earn the ZATEC certificate and leave ZOCS schools for government schools. This practice is exacerbated in the absence of MoE

policies to retain ZATEC trained teachers in ZOCS schools for similar pay as in government schools and arguably contributes to the reproduction of poor student performance, particularly in rural areas. Although it appears that increasing pay may encourage motivation among ZOCS teachers or at least retain them within ZOCS schools, it remains unclear what implications any of the challenges described (with the exception of language) would have for student achievement or performance, especially considering the fact that teacher absenteeism was not an issue among any of the schools sampled as in schools of other low-income countries (Bennell, 2004; Chaudhury, et. al, 2005; Alcazar et. al, 2006).

Part II: Rural Schools

Settings and Contexts

While Lusaka Province's rural schools are relatively closer to an urban town center (a minimum of 45 miles) than those of other provinces, rural communities near ZOCS schools are similar to those throughout Zambia: having limited to no electricity or running water, depending largely on subsistence agriculture for food, and living in homes built from grass or mud. Rural life in Zambia is financially cheaper but more physically intensive which creates different responsibilities and challenges for children in particular. Compared to 47% of urban students, 68% (27 of 40 valid cases) of rural students described their parents' or guardians' occupation as informal. Similar to urban students, 23% of rural parents or guardians are formally employed, while unemployment among rural households is much lower at 10% (compared to 30% of urban households). This may be attributable to the wider availability of work on large scale farms more accessible to rural populations. Similarly intriguing and related to contemporary social and economic conditions in Zambia is the fact that 64% of rural parents or guardians have completed some secondary school, attesting to the notion that while secondary schooling may have been

more widely available for previous generations (Bajaj, 2010), tertiary education and skilled employment has not expanded to provide opportunities to a majority of the provincial population- urban or rural- at the same pace.

In comparison to urban settings where students are exposed to more fast-paced lifestyles and are generally confined to the laws and enforcement of Zambian police, life in rural communities is governed by a hierarchy of authority and responsibilities based on chieftancies, kinship, and clan ties. Although household responsibilities are often shared between the sexes, I most frequently observed boys and men collecting firewood or charcoal and assisting with livestock, while girls and women were generally responsible for fetching water, going to markets, cooking, and cleaning. Agricultural work is also shared among the sexes in rural Lusaka, with both men and women participating in planting and harvesting of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, and other produce. As a result of the labor-intensive nature of rural living, it is common for primary school students to also work for pay in cash or kind. Of the 41 rural participants in the study, 21 students (51%) were employed. Five of these were both working and enrolled in grade eight while the remaining 16 were repeating grade seven because they did not pass examinations in 2008.

Despite rural communities' relatively long distance from Lusaka urban where the majority of bars and stores selling alcohol are located, alcoholism of fathers was frequently cited among students as a challenge to obtaining money for both living expenses and school fees (both at primary schools and in grade eight). One 14 year-old rural girl related the following experience:

My mother burns charcoal. My father makes pots as a blacksmith. After selling his pots, my father just goes and buys beer. I do some piecework at Zulu Gardens...I am paid a 5,000 (\$1) for planting some beds...sometimes I can help with fees (personal interview, July 30, 2009).

For rural students in particular, attending a ZOCS school is a result of necessity rather than choice as there are no government schools in these areas. In the Phase I survey, 58% of participants citing distance to the nearest government school as a reason for attending ZOCS came from rural areas. Both Makangwe and Chilambila are more than 15 miles from a government school. In rural communities where families do not own cars and the male head of the household may own a bicycle, children would otherwise be forced to walk this distance to attend school.

Rural community schools in Zambia are one of several examples of schools in low-income communities serving populations outside the government school catchment area (Tent Schools in Algeria and Sudan for nomadic communities, Shepherd Schools in Botswana, etc.). As opposed to urban households that may choose ZOCS as a lower cost alternative to a government school, rural students sampled conferred that ZOCS schools are the only schools in their communities. This implies that even if rural parents had sufficient financial resources to send their child to a government school, the time and opportunity costs associated with transportation would be significant. While rural ZOCS schools clearly provide an opportunity to learn for children that otherwise would not exist, unique consequences remain of the geographic isolation of these schools from others. These consequences are echoed throughout the literature (GRZ, 2006) especially in the areas of teacher recruitment and retention, teaching and learning, and student

performance detailed below following a description of rural ZOCS schools with emphasis on the experiences of Makangwe.

Makangwe Open Community School: “Can you imagine?”

Makangwe Open Community School provides an example of a situation in which ZOCS and its partners strive to provide assistance to families and schools simultaneously, again attesting to the notion that families perceive immediate and long-term benefits of sending their children to a ZOCS school. For example, in 2008, 103 parents of Makangwe students began receiving “take home rations” of soya meal (used to cook Zambia’s staple, *nshima*) from the World Food Program’s collaboration with World Vision.²² Commonly referred to as a school with many “vulnerable” children, Makangwe is also one of few ZOCS schools registered with the MoE as a “grant-aided” school through the local Catholic mission. The school received a grant from the MoE in 2007 for 700,000 kwacha (USD 179 in 2007²³). Perhaps being positioned closer to Lusaka urban and having strong ties to the local catholic church has benefitted Makangwe more than Chilambila which is positioned an additional 20 km (15 miles) further into Lusaka’s foothills on a dirt path seldom traveled by ZOCS staff, let alone donor agency representatives. Students at Makangwe have received support from Barclay’s Bank, USAID, and the Ministry of Health for school grants, school maintenance materials, and student checkups, medications, and vaccinations.

²² I did not investigate whether parents of students who did not attend Makangwe received the same rations.

²³ 1USD=3,900 ZMK in 2007.

Working for 415,000 kwacha (\$85) per month, Makangwe had six teachers for 278 students in 2008. Four women and two men, only two of these teachers were ZATEC trained and on government payroll. Five had completed grade twelve while one went only as far as grade ten. For the four untrained teachers, Makangwe made progress in 2008 in terms of generating income for teacher salaries with the help of a hammer mill grinding maize into mealie-meal (cornmeal) and a community garden growing onions, cabbage, and lettuce. At the time of Phase II data collection in 2009, the hammer mill's transmission was in need of repair. Makangwe's head teacher explained that it would take as much as 17 million kwacha (USD 3400) to repair it. The year of 2009 was also a difficult period for Makangwe in which the school lost its two ZATEC trained teachers: one transferred to a government school while the other accepted a head teacher posting at a private school. More devastating, Makangwe's female head teacher and her newborn baby passed away in January 2010 during birth. Today, this leaves Makangwe with three teachers and 278 students.

Makangwe offers Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI, or *Learning at Taonga Market*) in levels one through four for thirty minutes a day. I was able to observe this process one day at Makangwe where level two students sat eagerly awaiting for the IRI program to begin on a battery-operated radio that had been donated to the school by one of ZOCS' partners. As the male teacher spoke on the radio through his lesson on different types and processes of plants, the Makangwe teacher took notes as he thought of ways to further explain the lesson and answer questions at the end of the program. Started as a pilot project in 2000 with 22 IRI centers, the program is currently used by community schools around the country with 857 centers reaching 70,000 students through 2,000 radios sponsored by a variety of international agencies (USAID, 2010).

Despite tremendous support in infrastructure development, income generating activities, and various other services at Makangwe, students and teachers remain disillusioned by their schools' performance on grade seven examinations. In 2007, 44 Makangwe students sat for grade seven examinations and 17 (29%) passed. While this figure increased to 48% of all rural students in 2008 and 44% within the study sample (still below the Kafue District average of 59%) rural ZOCS schools continue to face similar challenges in graduating grade seven students. I observed rural teachers dedicating extra time and effort (in addition to teaching two shifts of classes per day) to prepare students for exams before and after regular school hours. A Makangwe PCSC member related how she "...really admire(s) these teachers because they sacrifice so much...right now they are doing grade seven extra lessons and they are not even paid, can you imagine?"

Defining Achievement and Success in Rural Schools

Six of eight rural school teachers interviewed mentioned examination performance as an accomplishment despite the fact that passing rates in both 2007 and 2008 were less than 50% (perhaps because this is comparable to Lusaka District's performance of 49% although a more plausible explanation based on general perceptions of student performance nationally may be that this figure is standard from grade seven to grade eight). It is unclear whether teachers may have interpreted my question as relating to *all* ZOCS schools or just their schools in particular which may have provided an additional justification. As at Garden, rural teachers also referred to students' ability to "feel free" and perceive teachers as "friends" as a positive attribute to their schools (one Makangwe student echoed this preference for community school teachers, sharing that a friend attended a government school where students received beatings). While the implications of these feelings cannot be easily connected to student performance or progression

to grade eight, they are nonetheless significant in the ways that students and teachers perceive and experience rural schools. Beyond fostering a sense of comfort and nurture, I inferred that the relationships students had with ZOCS teachers in both urban and rural schools (the ones described in this chapter in particular where I spent most time observing) further encouraged students academically and boosted their confidence in such a way that even if a student did not pass examinations the first time, it was worth her/his time to repeat level four and re-take examinations the following year. As such, ZOCS teachers may help to perpetuate the faith students have in schooling despite the reality that statistically, most students will not progress beyond grade nine.

Chilambila was the only school sampled where teachers highlighted school-based income generating activities as a success to their school. Chilambila's head teacher, Mr. Kondwe, took me on a tour of the school's garden where students had planted cabbage, lettuce, and carrots. At the time of my second visit in 2009, the school had just managed to put up a small fence around the garden to prevent local rabbits from coming in and eating the produce. Mr. Kondwe explained that students were given an opportunity to practice their planting skills and learn about different food groups and nutrients provided with hands-on experience in ways that they were otherwise limited in science subjects such as chemistry (where experiments were drawn out on the blackboard rather than enacted by students as at Garden Community School). Although several rural students are exposed to farming and herding at a young age in their own households, learning more about such activities in a school environment provides additional enrichment, especially when the dimension of planting for profit (encompassing critical thinking and mathematics skills) is added. Chilambila provides an intriguing example of a school where I

also observed students learning scientific terminology for hands-on farming projects that enhanced their knowledge of planting and harvesting learned at home.

Rural School Challenges

Upon arrival at a rural ZOCS school, stark physical differences from urban schools are observed. Chilambila and Makangwe are significantly smaller than the urban schools sampled- having no more than three or four classrooms for an average of 230 students (urban schools sampled have at least five classrooms serving an average of 512 students). The upkeep of rural facilities is not as notable as that in urban schools and the availability of chalk, pens and pencils, and notebooks for children is scarcer than in urban schools. While the goal of this study is not to assess school effects on student achievement to determine the relative importance of school versus family or other factors (Heyneman-Loxley, 1982; Fuller, 1987), conversations with rural teachers and head teachers revealed a few patterns in relation to urban schools sampled that aid an understanding of the contextual school factors influencing the comparatively lower performance and levels of grade eight progression among rural students. These include teacher recruitment and retention, language of instruction, and the process of teaching and learning.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

The two head teachers at Makangwe and Chilambila mentioned difficulty they had getting to ZOCS sponsored trainings and meetings at the head office in Lusaka urban. They also referred to the comparative challenges they faced coming from urban areas to teach in rural schools. In contrast to government teachers who transfer to rural government schools and are provided with houses by the MoE, rural ZOCS teachers must either commute by minibus and

foot daily or build their own houses without additional incentives²⁴. In the case of Makangwe, one teacher expressed frustration that rural students who needed help from as many ZATEC trained teachers as possible were suffering as teachers frequently left to teach in urban government schools (“greener pastures”) with higher pay, more security, and lodging. As mentioned above, Makangwe lost two of its six teachers to government schools offering higher pay and job security unavailable through ZOCS. Again, while this study does not explicitly examine the relationship between issues such as class size or teacher to student ratios and academic achievement, Chilambila and Makangwe teachers were clear about the limitations they faced as a result of inadequate teacher support. In 2008, Makangwe had six teachers for 278 students with only one teacher serving the highest number of students (55) in level two (grades three and four). Although class sizes in ZOCS rural schools shrink as students progress to level four (as in government schools), Makangwe’s level four teacher was concerned that the children in her class (36) were “too many” for her to manage on her own given the amount of individualized attention and academic support each student needed that was not reinforced at home. While other SSA primary classrooms may have higher numbers of students (O’Sullivan, 2006), it is important to note that in this context, level four is the most crucial phase of ZOCS schooling in which students are preparing for national examinations. Makangwe’s examination results, standing at less than the Kafue average of 59% at 48% suggest that there is still room for improvement.

Language of Instruction

²⁴ I did not discuss this issue in depth, although such information would have revealed deeper insights as to what encourages urban ZOCS teachers to migrate to rural areas.

As at Chilambila, English is rarely spoken among students outside of Makangwe (one student related, “When we see the teachers, we just start speaking English”). Despite Zambian educational policies encouraging English in early grades through the Primary Reading Program (PRP), both Makangwe and Chilambila students remain underexposed to English outside of school. Chondoka and Subulwa’s 2004 study of twelve Zambian community schools showed that teachers in these schools- both urban and rural- were unaware of or untrained in the PRP and as a result it was not implemented. Although urban students also reported the use of a mother-tongue as the primary language of their household, it was evident that urban ZOCS students had a better command of spoken and written English than their rural peers. Moreover, urban students’ relatively frequent exposure to English outside of school and home (e.g., at shopping centers, in local restaurants, at gas stations, etc.) may explain their comparative knowledge of the language in informal settings (which may in fact, boost examination performance). All interviews with urban students were conducted with ease in English, at times per the request of students who wanted to practice their English with me. Contrastingly, none of the interviews conducted at Chilambila or Makangwe were in English (I employed a Nyanja translator to help me, as my Nyanja speaking skills at the time were still limited). Compared to the majority of urban students with ancestry in linguistic regions of Zambia’s northern and eastern provinces (50 Nyanja (eastern) households, nine Bemba (northern) households, and two Tonga (southern) households), Chilambila students in particular represent a much more diverse set of language and ethnic groups. See table below.

Table 12
Language and Ethnic Groups of Rural Students (n=41)

Language/Ethnic Group	Chilambila	Makangwe	Total
Chilala (Southern Province)	0	1	1
Nyanja (Eastern Province and Lusaka)	4	15	19
Shona (Southern Province and Zimbabwe)	1	0	1
Soli (Southern Province)	2	0	2
Tonga (Southern Province)	9	9	18
Total	16	25	41

In my own observations of various primary classes in rural schools, teachers frequently deferred to Nyanja to explain new concepts. Given Nyanja as the default native language for commerce and other activities in addition to English in Lusaka's town centers, students coming from households speaking other languages will generally also learn Nyanja as a means of survival and communication across different ethnic groups which appeared beneficial. Within Lusaka urban, Nyanja is more commonly spoken than any other Zambian language followed by Bemba which also shares similarities with Nyanja.

Although I do not focus explicitly on the link between language of instruction and academic achievement, much research has drawn attention to an overwhelmingly negative correlation between language of instruction in secondary languages (as opposed to mother-tongues) and student performance in African contexts (Putz, 1995; Desai, 2006; Brock-Utne, 2007). Beyond language of instruction, I argue that urban students' mere *exposure* to more of the English language in their day-to-day lives reinforces achievement gaps between urban and rural students as English continues to be perceived among Zambians (and institutionalized by GRZ in the education sector) as a social asset or what Bourdieu dubbed as "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1983; Backman, 2010). Utilizing rural student interviews in Chapter Eight, I show how some students felt they did not pass simply because they were unable to read the examinations which were administered in English.

Teaching and Learning

The isolation of rural ZOCS schools also prevents teachers from collaborating and discussing their practice in ways I observed across different urban settings. Outside of formal training opportunities, rural teachers seldom see others from different schools- government or community-based. Mostly situated in the communities where they teach, rural teachers rely on each other for feedback on lesson planning, pedagogical approaches, and student-teacher interactions. The occasional visits from ZOCS staff (twice or three times a month) provide limited exposure to new knowledge and professional development activities that urban teachers may experience as a result of proximity to other community-based and government schools.

Makangwe's head teacher explained that while community schools have fewer teachers, ZOCS students in general pass more on exams because of "teacher commitment". Makangwe was the only school I visited where teachers gave extra lessons in preparation for the grade seven

examinations free of charge. While one urban and one rural school had issues with level four students becoming pregnant, Makangwe was the only school where girls who did not pass the grade seven examinations were getting married at the request of their families. Although rural teachers, head teachers, and ZOCS staff make appeals to some families to allow their daughters to repeat level four, most families decide against sending their daughters back to school. In some cases, marriage was decided for a girl who did not pass the grade seven examinations, suggesting that her family gave schooling a try, but decided it was a waste of time or money to re-enroll her as a repeater. I was unable to locate the one Makangwe student from my Phase I sample who was married when I returned in 2008 for an interview. After her wedding, she moved away from the community and no one knew how to contact her or her family.

In sum, relative to urban schools, rural schools sampled faced more challenges with examination failure as opposed to the costs of schooling at grade eight for urban students. However, this trend should be interpreted with caution as the percentage of urban passing students is overrepresented in the sample which I discuss in more depth in the following chapters.

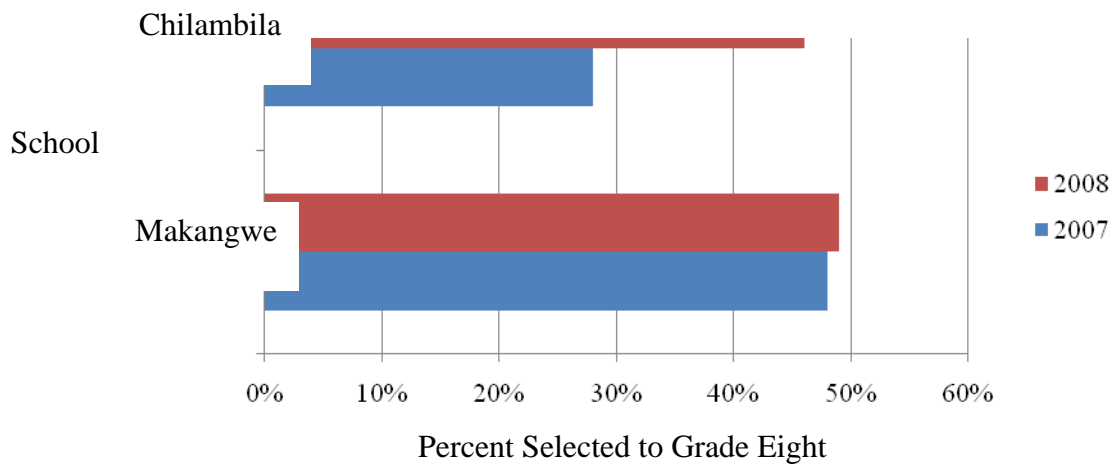


Figure 15. Rural Grade Seven Examination Results by School, 2007-2008.

Kafue District's average was actually higher than that of Lusaka District (49%) at 59%. Both Chilambila and Makangwe were below the Kafue District rate at the time of data collection in 2008 at 28% and 48% respectively. Although time did not permit, what accounts for this variance would have been intriguing to study by comparing and contrasting the conditions of rural government and ZOCS schools. In total, 39% of rural students sampled passed grade seven examinations in 2008 compared to a similar percentage of rural passing students within the larger ZOCS population (34%). Among all ZOCS' 19 schools, 51% (663 of 1309 total students) passed grade seven examinations in a similar 10 percentage point range of Lusaka and Kafue Districts.

As is the case among ZOCS families, rural teachers continue to be both optimistic and dedicated to improving performance in their schools despite various challenges. While urban teachers were more vocal and passionate about their frustrations with salaries and the higher costs of urban life, rural teachers were concerned with the existing conditions of student learning which were evident in Makangwe and Chilambila's examination results. Nonetheless, and true to a Zambian cultural norm of expressing gratitude or hope in the most desperate of situations, rural

teachers most frequently commented that they “were grateful” or “moving forward” or “managing” notwithstanding limitations to their qualifications, resources, or surroundings.

Moreover, despite numerous informal conversations I had with school personnel in which several complaints were launched against the ZOCS office (e.g., accusations of money embezzlement, low and undependable salaries, insufficient professional development and resources, etc.), most teachers felt obligated to endure the sacrifice to remain in their schools. While I empathized with teachers such as Ms. Banda who expressed such deep affection for children and a sense of guilt for considering leaving, it appears that by and large, ZOCS teachers remain in their schools because job prospects are limited elsewhere, particularly for those who have not been ZATEC trained. As with household decisions about schooling I discuss in the following chapter, the lines between choice and necessity are blurred among families, teachers, and students alike.

Summary

Chapter Six highlighted various school factors with an emphasis on three school sites (Mancilla, Garden, and Makangwe). In Chapter Six, I also discussed how school personnel and PCSCs defined “success” for students, drawing parallels to the government school system. In contrast to other community schools and APE programs in Zambia and SSA more generally, ZOCS’ mission is to integrate its students into the larger, “formal” education system. This reinforces the symbolic implications for schooling and encourages families that community schools are worthwhile. The organization attempts to achieve this definition of success by implementing curricula and administering national examinations that will place ZOCS students on equal footing with their government school counterparts. ZOCS schools may indeed serve as

proxies for government schools for vulnerable children who are afforded an opportunity to attend for limited costs before possibly transitioning into the government system in grade eight. Based on findings from this chapter, I argue that while both urban and rural teachers have similar goals and expectations for their students, among other factors, rural teachers face severe challenges because their communities are geographically isolated, most parents and guardians do not speak English at home, and students spend more time on daily survival activities than their urban counterparts.

The next chapter highlights student characteristics within urban and rural schools sampled, assessing how ZOCS students view their performance and educational outcomes *vis á vis* their own socioeconomic conditions and day-to-day activities. In addition, it continues to build on my argument that despite different conditions in urban and rural communities, motivated students continue to believe in schools as one of few paths to economic and social mobility.

Chapter 7: Student Characteristics, Family Background, and Why Some Families Choose ZOCS

Overview

With an understanding of the accomplishments and constraints ZOCS faces as an NGO as well as the settings and characteristics of urban and rural schools sampled for this study, the following two chapters continue to address the first and second research questions:

- 1.) How do community schools in Zambia function to provide primary education to various populations? What characteristics define Zambian community schools and the communities they serve?
- 2.) How do teachers and students define success with community schooling *vis á vis* their own perceptions and experiences?

Chapter Seven contains three parts. Part I profiles the 102 students sampled for Phase II of the study who were either repeating grade seven or enrolled in grade eight in 2009, providing information on age, gender, responsibilities at home, activities outside of school, and characteristics of the study's sub-sample of orphans. Part II describes more general living conditions in urban and rural settings, assessing relationships between parental education and employment. Part III draws on teacher and Parent Community School Committee (PCSC) member interviews to analyze advantages unique to ZOCS such as uniforms, school lunches, and microfinance opportunities as both an influence on family decisions to attend and an illustration of the transformative ideal reflected in ZOCS' mission.

Part I: Student Characteristics and Activities Outside of School

I begin Part I by describing various student characteristics such as age, gender, location, and how ZOCS students sampled spend time outside of school. These descriptions provide background for an understanding of different perceptions of schooling, responsibilities that

students manage in addition to attending school, and how these variables may interact to produce different outcomes. I conclude Part I by addressing the subset of orphans within the sample and comparing trends across non-orphan and orphan groups regarding enrollment and examination performance to build a case for *why* teachers, parents/guardians, and students may continue to look to schools as the most promising path to new opportunities.

Student Age

Of 102 students sampled, the following ages were reported in 2009 (the year in which all students would have ideally been enrolled in grade eight). While the MoE states that the “eligible population” for grade eight students ranges from ages 14 to 15 (MoE, 2010), most ZOCS student sampled were 16 years old in 2009. Backtracking to grade seven where the eligible primary age is 7 to 13, most ZOCS students would be considered at least one year too old to be enrolled in government primary schools. See chart below:

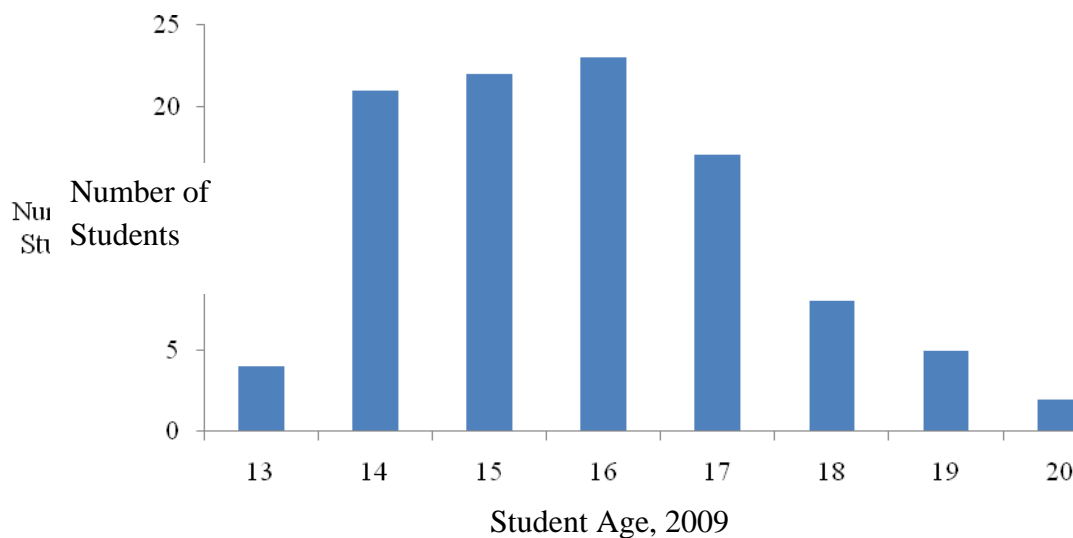


Figure 16. Age of Students in Years (n=102).

With both a median and mode age of 16, the model ZOCS student who continues to upper secondary school will be age 20 by the time she/he graduates with a secondary diploma. More than half of the sample is aged 16 or older, implying that in the earlier primary stages, ZOCS schools also accept students who are older than the “eligible” age required in government schools. I did not inquire among students as to their perceptions of age in community schools. However, one can infer that the age of students sampled for this study in comparison to those of acceptable age in government schools suggests that ZOCS also provides a welcoming and inclusive environment for older students. There is a statistically significant relationship between student age and location. Although I did not investigate potential explanations, with the exception of two 20 year-old rural students, older than “eligible” age ZOCS students live in urban areas. Because ZOCS does not collect age information for all its students, a comparative analysis of student age within my sample and the ZOCS population was not possible. See table below:

Table 13
Student Age by Location (n=102)

Student Age	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
13-14	15	39
15-16	46	42
17-20	39	20
Total	100%	100%
n =	61	41

$\chi^2 (2, n=102) = 9.076, p = .011$.

Student Gender and Location

Similar proportions of males and females were selected to the study sample of 102 students. Although ZOCS prioritizes girls for selection to its programs, close to half of its students are also boys. At the national level in 2008 in government schools, similar proportions of boys and girls were enrolled in grades one through seven while more boys continued to grades 10-12. In both grade groups there are slight differences across provinces. See Figure 17 for the study sample and ZOCS population and Tables 14 and 15 for national statistics below:

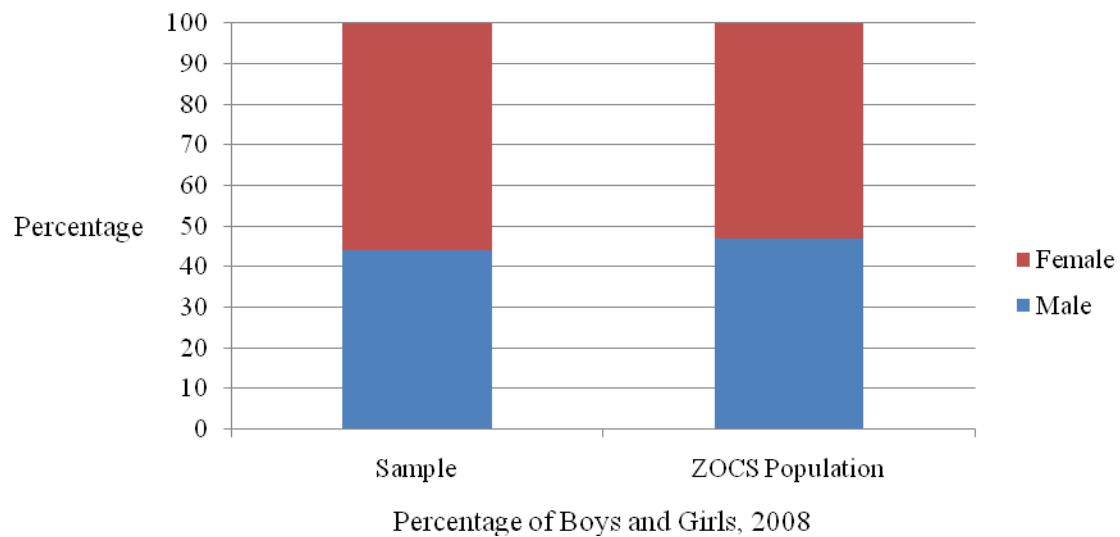


Figure 17. Students by Gender in ZOCS Sample and Population. Population source: ZOCS Annual Report, 2008.

Table 14
National Gross Enrollment Ratios (Grades 1-7, Ages 7-13) by Gender and Province, 2008

Province	Male	Female
Central	151	145
Copperbelt	139	141
Eastern	113	110
Luapula	133	127
Lusaka	118	123
Northwestern	136	133
Northern	142	130
Southern	137	133
Western	130	125
National	133	129

Source: MoE Statistical Bulletin 2008, p.29.

Table 15

National Gross Enrollment Ratios (Grades 10-12, Ages 16-18) by Province and Gender, 2008

Province	Male	Female
Central	31	25
Copperbelt	50	44
Eastern	21	13
Luapula	26	18
Lusaka	36	35
Northwestern	39	29
Northern	20	14
Southern	33	25
Western	24	18
National	32	26

Source: MoE 2008 Educational Statistical Bulletin, p. 31.

Student Responsibilities at Home

Beyond conventional indicators generally used in comparisons of academic achievement such as age, location, and gender above, I engaged in a series of conversations with Phase II students to understand what was required of them outside of school and how they spent their time when they were not completing household tasks. I also expected that these conversations

would unveil more information about potential factors associated with academic achievement and grade eight enrollment.

The nature of responses I initially encountered to “What are your responsibilities at home” led me to prompt various answers for more depth. Keeping in mind how this may have biased responses (including some responsibilities and perhaps leaving out others), I found no statistically significant relationships between household responsibilities and gender-- similar percentages of boys and girls reported both cooking and cleaning although slightly more boys reported fetching water and firewood and only girls mentioned childcare.

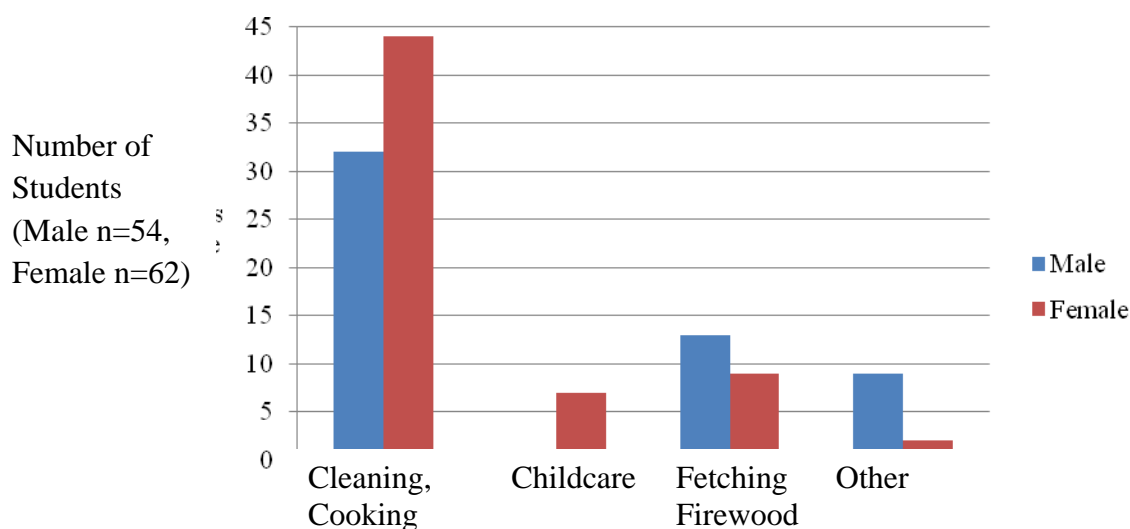


Figure 18. What Are Your Responsibilities at Home?

As expected, more rural students reported collecting water and firewood as household responsibilities. Cleaning, cooking, and collecting water are common across both urban and rural households while collecting firewood is widespread in rural areas. More rural students also reported activities in the “other” category which included tending cattle, digging up sweet potatoes, and shelling maize belonging to family plots. With the exception of this task, both urban and rural students are similar in their responsibilities at home.

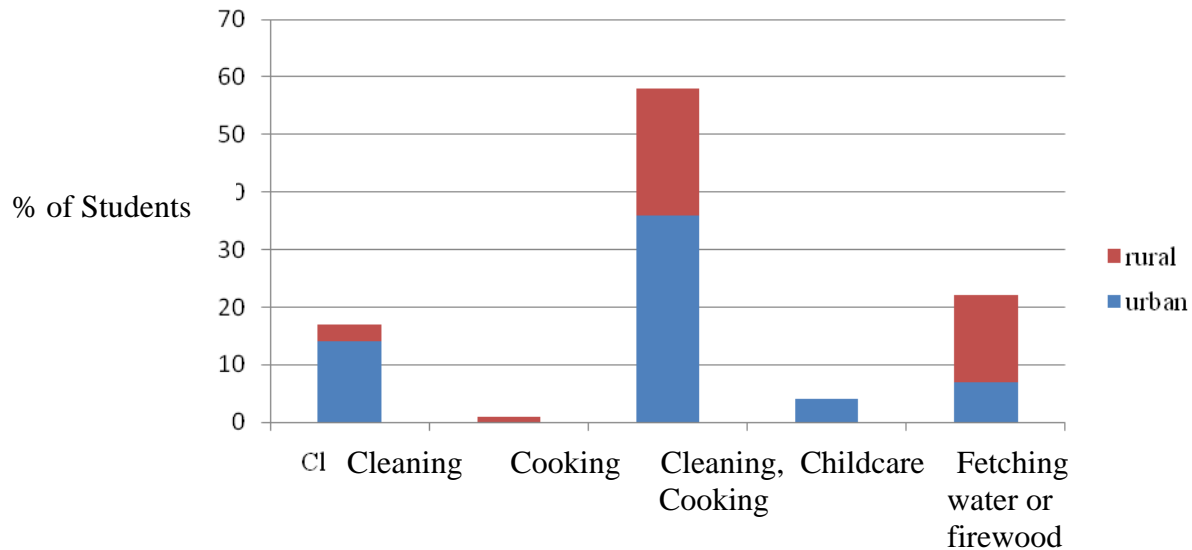


Figure 19. Responsibilities at Home by Location.

Keeping in mind that most students in this study are around the age of 16, this is a culturally appropriate time by when adolescents are not only knowledgeable in how to cook and clean, but can manage household duties with little to no supervision from parents or guardians.

The pattern is similar in the area of childcare. I expected a higher percentage of children reporting childcare as a household responsibility. This could perhaps be explained by the fact that a) none of the students live in child-headed households which implies that a parent or guardian assumes major responsibility for childcare; or b) childcare for siblings is not considered a “chore” or “responsibility” as I would have interpreted it. For example, a Zambian mother would not necessarily tell her daughter to look after younger siblings in the same way that she would tell her to wash dishes or sweep the house. From my experience, such responsibilities are implied and understood among Zambian children from a young age in a different way than other daily tasks such as cooking or cleaning may be.

Student Activities Outside of School

Probing alternative means to understand daily life in urban and rural areas, I asked the 102 Phase II students how they spent time outside of school. While there appear to be significant relationships between activities outside of school and both gender and location, it is important to remember that the inclusion of more urban failing students (described in more detail in Chapter Eight) may have yielded different comparisons for urban versus rural. I was not surprised to find that more rural students spend time working for pay, especially given the amount of time most fieldwork requires (e.g., digging up sweet potatoes, shelling maize, molding bricks, etc. as opposed to selling items in markets on particular days among many urban students). This finding as well as that discussed above in relation to responsibilities at home should be interpreted with caution as responses were sometimes prompted (with the exception of “sitting at home”) rather than volunteered in interviews where I sought more detail from participants. In other words, the fact that certain other activities were not volunteered does not imply that students did not engage in them (or others). With the exception of working for pay which I also asked separately in a different segment of the interview, it is possible that students partake in a range of other activities not referenced in the interview and therefore, not shown below.

Again, urban passing students are overrepresented in the study (98% as opposed to 52% in the population). Because the number of urban failing students in my sample is so low (two students who are both repeating), I cannot make conclusive arguments as to activities outside of school for urban students who are not repeating—a group that does not exist within the sample of 61 urban students but does exist within the population of 2,985 urban ZOCS students. Given the fact that urban students are underrepresented in the sample and that failing students are more

likely to work for pay, this may explain in part why there are more rural working students in the study sample.

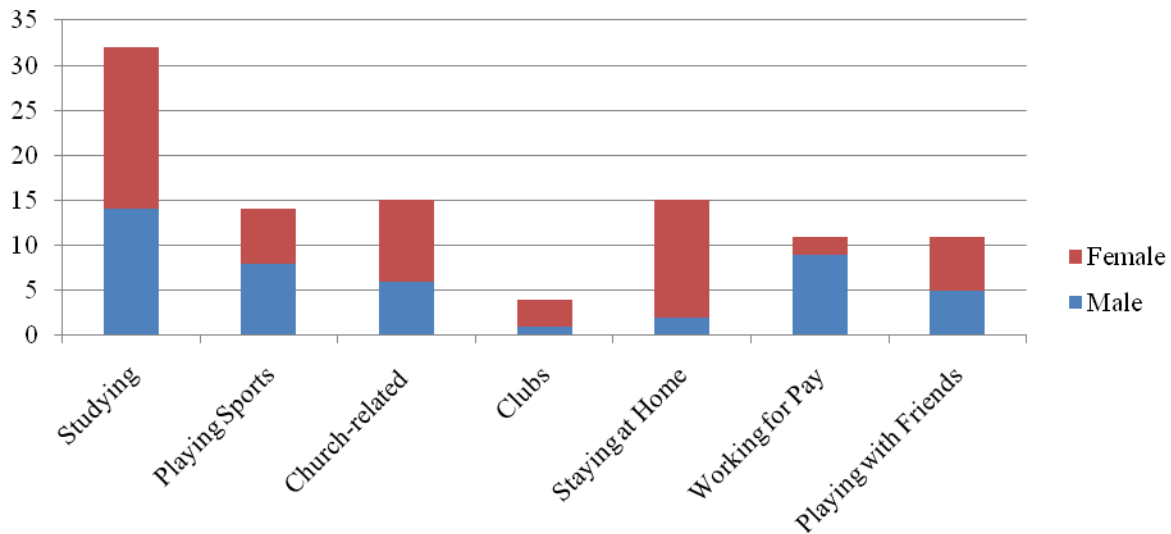


Figure 20. Male and Female Responses: “How Did You Pass Your Time Outside of School Last Week?” $\chi^2 (6, n=102) = 13.777, p=.032$.

The most gendered variation between groups is staying at home (13 girls compared to two boys) and working for pay (nine boys compared to two girls). No rural students reported participating in extracurricular clubs while urban students spoke of school gospel choirs, the Anti-AIDS club, and the young Child’s Rights Club. Urban students more frequently mentioned sports, attending church, and “just sitting” at home. One explanation behind rural students not participating in sports or church activities may be because these students are working either for food or pay to sustain their family’s livelihoods over extended periods of time each day. With regards to church activities, my understanding is that 1) there are not as many churches in rural areas as in urban areas and/or 2) families may also practice other forms of worship or spirituality not related to Christianity.

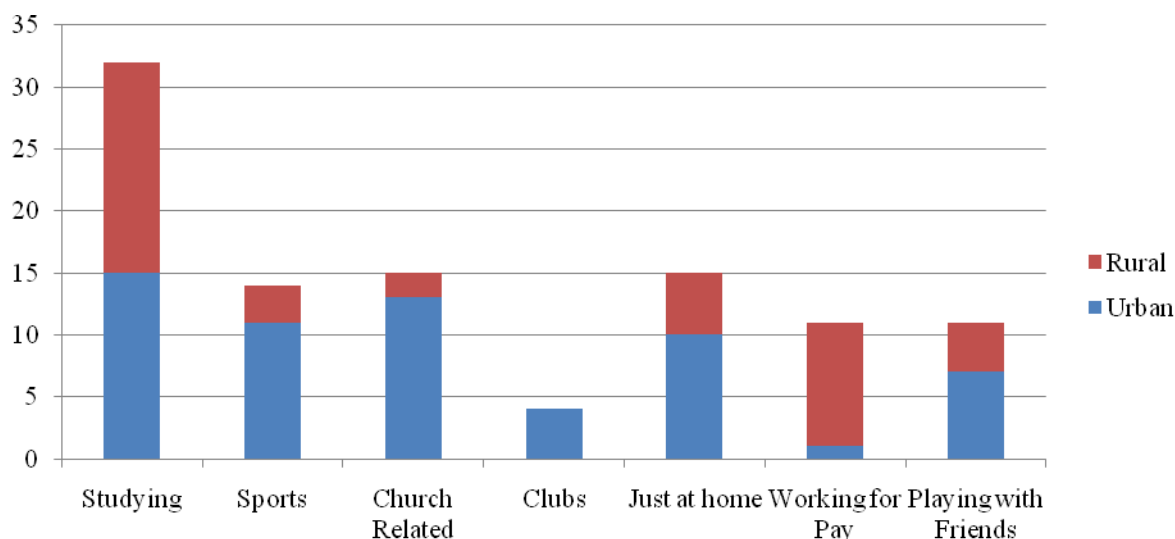


Figure 21. Urban and Rural Responses: “How Did You Pass Your Time Outside of School Last Week?” ($\chi^2 (6, n=102) = 23.597, p = .001$).

Orphan Characteristics

Since ZOCS strives to cater to orphans as underprivileged or “vulnerable” populations, special analysis of this group is necessary. In addition to the characteristics of students previously examined, orphan status is another opportunity to learn more about how different groups of students experience schooling, perform on national examinations, and transition to grade eight. Of the 102 students sampled for the study, 49 participants (48%) represent the orphan category with 28 characterized as “single orphans” (one parent deceased) and 21 as “double orphans” (both parents deceased). Moreover, of all orphans sampled, 43% live in households with extended family members such as grandmothers, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Seventy-three percent of orphans sampled are between the ages of 15 and 17. More orphans live in urban rather than rural areas (51% of all urban students as opposed to 22% of all rural students). This prevalence of orphans in urban areas is significant within the sample and has been found among other studies of orphan hood and childcare patterns in Zambia and other high HIV and AIDS prevalence countries such as Central African Republic, Malawi, and Uganda

(Monasch and Boerma, 2004). See charts below on the number of orphans sampled in relation to ZOCS' population.

Table 16

Percent of ZOCS Orphans by Location in Sample and Population

Orphans	Urban	Rural
ZOCS Population	41% (n=7279)	21% (n=1266)
Study Sample	51% (n=61)	22% (n=41)

While the rural sample does not have a drastically different proportion of orphans than the rural ZOCS population, I was surprised to find that urban orphans are overrepresented in the sample. Given the snowball method of Phase II, it is possible that teachers and students recommended other urban, “vulnerable” orphans for participation in the study knowing that they would be offered compensation in school materials for their participation. A similar pattern is observed among orphans in urban schools-- most notably Garden and Matero below.

Table 17
Percent of Orphans by School

School	School Population	Study Sample
Chilambila	25% (n=305)	26% (n=16)
Garden	66% (n=465)	44 % (n=25)
Makangwe	35% (n=278)	32 % (n=25)
Mancilla	56% (n=531)	62 % (n=21)
Mary Aikenhead	63% (n=563)	64 % (n=11)
Matero	55% (n=233)	31 % (n=13)

More than 50% of the total urban sample (n=61) has lost at least one parent with the largest number of orphans attending Mancilla. Girls represent a slightly higher 58% of all orphans in the sample than boys.

Table 18
Orphan Status by Gender (n=102)

Orphan Status	Male	Female	Totals
Non-Orphans	62	60	61
Orphans	38	40	39
Total	100%	100%	100%
n =	45	57	102

$\chi^2 (1, n=102) = .070, p = .792$.

There is a significant relationship between orphan status and the presence of extended family in the household, $\chi^2 (1, n=102) = 10.058, p = .002$). Joseph and Alick are two examples of such orphans. I share their stories briefly here and elaborate on the larger sub-sample of orphans in relation to examination performance in Chapter Eight.

Joseph, 16 and Alick, 14, both attended Mancilla- a community school located in one of Lusaka's more precarious compounds with higher rates of crime, prostitution, and drug abuse. Both boys have lost their mothers and fathers. Joseph lives with a cousin while Alick stays with his grandmother and four siblings. Both Joseph's cousin and Alick's grandmother went as far as grade 12 in school, but sell vegetables and mealie-meal in local markets to pay for the boys' school fees. Despite the bulk of literature suggesting that orphans are less likely to excel in school (Foster and Williamson, 2000; Human Rights Watch, 2005) and that Joseph and Alick would not pass grade seven examinations, they did and were enrolled in grade eight at the time of Phase II.

Despite stories such as these and although non-orphans live in households with higher percentages of formal parental or guardian employment (23% as opposed to 13% among all orphans), there is no significant relationship between orphan status and guardian education *or* employment in the larger study sample. Otherwise stated, a guardian completing higher levels of education or being employed in a specific form of work is not necessarily associated with a child's orphan status. See tables below:

Table 19
Orphan Status by Parent/Guardian Education (Valid n=93)

Orphan Status	None-Primary	Secondary	College or University	Totals	n =
Non-Orphans (%)	31	67	2	100%	62
Orphans (%)	50	50	0	100%	40

$\chi^2 (3, n=93) = .672, p=.880$.

Table 20
Orphan Status and Parent/Guardian Employment (n=102)

Orphan Status	Missing	None	Informal	Formal	Totals
Orphans	63	47	60	74	61
Non-Orphans	37	53	40	26	39
Totals	100 (n=19)	100 (n=17)	100 (n= 47)	100 (n=19)	100 (n=102)

$\chi^2 (3, n=102) = 2.74, p=.433$

Parents/guardians, whether of orphans or non-orphans had similar forms of formal employment: pastors, domestic workers, shop employees, etc. Several orphans are also working to pay their own school fees. At age 18, Apton -- also a student of Mancilla-- lost both of his parents and now lives with his aunt. Apton's aunt has never attended school but sells produce in Lusaka's City Market while Apton works at a barbershop in the compound. As is the case in most compounds, one can find virtually anything they need for a lower price than in town-- foodstuffs, hair salons, electronics, and more. As such, youth and adult compound residents often perform

odd, more unsteady jobs (sweeping in salons, fetching water for shopkeepers, etc.). Apton makes 15,000 kwacha (USD 3)²⁵ per day when he works at the barbershop which he saves to pay his own school fees in grade eight. Again, although I assumed that orphans and students living in households with less educated guardians would not perform as well as other students, Joseph, Alick, and Apton's stories coupled with their aspirations for the future to be an accountant, mechanic, and doctor respectively demonstrate both a deep faith in schooling and a serious commitment to education despite various challenges they face at home and in their communities where youth are frequently tempted to dropout in search of fast money or the life of "loafing".

Part II: Living Conditions in Urban and Rural Areas

Urban Conditions

The 61 urban students sampled for this study live in rented, often crowded small houses of Lusaka's low-income, high density "compounds" while rural students reside in villages within Lusaka's Kafue District. Similar to South Africa's urban townships, Lusaka's compounds are nestled on the peripheries of Lusaka urban, usually within walking distance to more affluent neighborhoods where compound residents generally travel by foot or minibus daily to work. With its roots in the colonial system of housing and employment based on race,

...the term *compound* referred to the racially-segregated housing institution tied to employment. In postcolonial Zambia, the semantic field of the term has come to encompass all low-income areas...many residents of compounds refer to the former white residential areas as *mayadi* ('the yards'), a term that today connotes any high-

²⁵ 1 USD=5,000 ZMK in 2009.

income residential area and is no longer associated with race; that is to say the segment of
Zambian society that today lives in *mayadi* has the status and influence held by the
whites (*wazungu*) during the colonial period (Hansen, 1997 cited in Hansen, 2005).

Not all Lusaka compounds are the same. In fact, some compounds house residents with lower
income than others and have varying reputations. The study sample includes what I learned are
some of the most precarious compounds with the highest rates of unemployment, crime,
prostitution, and gangs in Lusaka (Matero Compound where Matero is located and Chibolya
where Mancilla is located). The remaining two urban schools (Garden in Garden Compound and
Mary Aikenhead in Kabwata Compound) are in slightly better off, less congested areas. I lived in
a locale called Long Acres-- a neighborhood within close distance to several national embassies
and donor agency offices. Not too far from my apartment was Kalingalinga compound, where
domestic workers, janitors, and craftsmen often employed in businesses and homes of Long
Acres resided. This pattern is prevalent across Lusaka urban, where the dearth of land and large
population in close proximity to urban centers creates urban sprawl with polar opposite standards
of living and amenities.

During my 14 months in Zambia, I had the opportunity to visit several urban homes of
different variety. Spending time in more affluent Asian, English, Greek, Italian, and black
Zambian homes in gated lots and communities with ample space and amenities such as
microwaves, refrigerators, and cable television, I learned quickly that differences between rich
and poor are not only apparent-- they are pervasive. Everything from the use of English to the
name of a child's school marks social status in Lusaka urban. All but one student sampled for
this study utilized a Zambian language at home with most students living in households where no
one speaks English. Class and hierarchy are deeply embedded in Zambia's urban social fabric

and especially evident in Zambian languages. Among my friends and family, I never became accustomed to hearing the Bemba pronoun “*iwe*” (as opposed to *imwe*, which connotes more respect) meaning “hey you”, used by restaurant patrons when speaking to waiters or domestic workers as the same pronoun adults used to speak to children. This reference could be used by people in cars shouting at men selling odd goods in the streets, by employers to employees, and in a plethora of other circumstances where ones’ wealth or social status implied that he or she was not only justified, but almost expected to treat people of less wealth differently. While the use of pronouns may seem a trivial marker of social stratification, Zambian languages such as Bemba are built based on a foundational hierarchy uncommon in English whereby pronouns and other parts of speech can symbolize deference and authority that translates symbolically to differences in age, family or clan position, and occupational status. The repercussions for misuse of such pronouns can be severe and at an extreme, a means of insulting others or even provoking conflict. While the demographic information I provide below and throughout Chapter Seven more generally confirms the lower socioeconomic status of ZOCS families, my experience of languages and conduct in various Zambian social settings revealed that even without speaking to parents and guardians of students in my sample directly, I could easily infer that students attending ZOCS schools a) do not live in *mayadi*; b) have parents who are most likely frequently referred to as *iwe*; and c) meet various challenges to support their households adequately in ways uncommon to more affluent families in urban and rural areas as I elaborate below.

Rural Conditions

Lusaka’s Kafue District, where 41 rural students were sampled for this study begins approximately 45 miles from Lusaka urban. Heading southwest from Lusaka’s busy Cairo Road, my drive to Makangwe was one hour while the trip to Chilambila could last as long as two and a

half hours. Traveling southeast past Makangwe (located about ten miles west of Munda Wanga National Zoo and La Farge Cement Factory that are situated near the border of Kafue and Lusaka Districts) to arrive at Chilambila, one views the typical imagery of rural Zambia: dirt paths rather than paved roads, homes made of grass and mud, and expanses of land and foothills. I collected all data in rural areas during the dry season (between May and October) as travel to Kafue during the rains was nearly impossible. More peaceful than Lusaka's congested two-lane roads, roundabouts, and population of more than two million (growing exponentially since 2000), Kafue District was home to about 176, 000 Zambians in 2007 (GRZ, 2000; Dunn, 2007).

Rural life in Zambia is similar to that within other SSA countries-- with subsistence agriculture, limited access to electricity, and the social characteristics of communities adhering to traditional laws and hierarchical chieftancies. Despite different urban and rural locations, household composition is similar and access to various amenities remains limited for students sampled as I explain below. For example, most compound populations draw their water from a communal, paid tap while rural residents draw water from rivers and wells. Both populations do not have access to water within their homes through a filtration system as do wealthier Zambians.

Urban/Rural Comparisons

Of the 102 students sampled for Phase II, 50 (49%) live in homes with no more than two rooms (as small as 10 ft. by 14 ft.). In the case of urban students, this supports the notion that families make serious sacrifices to live in Lusaka urban, perhaps with the hope of finding better employment opportunities than in other provinces. However, from my informal conversations with urban and rural residents, smaller homes are cheaper and easier to build and traditionally, children are expected to leave their homes (boys to build their own houses and girls to marry into

the homes of others) at a younger age (generally during teenage years).²⁶ Although household size, house construction, and access to various amenities as described here do not capture a full range of perceptions within households, such demographic information linked to students' qualitative descriptions of their home life provides a contextual backdrop for the purposes of understanding family decisions about schooling.

I utilized the number of rooms in each student's home, the number of people living in each household, the material construction of each student's home, and access to amenities such as electricity, running water, and ownership of a cellular phone by at least one member of a student's household as indicators of socioeconomic status for ZOCS families. Within the sample of 102 students, there is a significant relationship between the number of rooms in a student's home and whether that student passed or failed national examinations. In other words, the highest percentage of students who failed examinations lives in smaller, less expensive homes.

Approximately 56% of rural students compared to 54% of urban students live in homes with five to eight people. The rural sample contains the highest percentage of households having nine or more members (22% compared to 8% in the urban sample). See table below:

²⁶ A number of studies have assessed the effects of family size on child mortality, family access to and use of resources, and health conditions (Farah and Preston, 1982; Mahadevan, 1985; Manun'ebo et al. 1994; Burstrom, Diederichsen and Smedmen, 1999; Bawah, 2001). As theorists have developed new ways to describe standards of living including inequality, unemployment (Todaro, 1978), and more difficult to measure indicators such as happiness, utility, and choice (Sen, 1985; 1987; 1992), the field has expanded to include more qualitative and quantitative analyses in low-income countries.

Table 21
Total People Living in Household by Location (n=102)

Household Size	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
2-4	30	15
5-7	54	42
8-10	15	32
11-14	2	12
Totals	101%	101%
n =	61	41

An additional descriptor of living standards is house type. Most students live in brick homes (cheaper to purchase and build and most common in Lusaka's compounds), followed by those living in urban cement homes and grass/mud structures found in rural areas. Consistent with Zambia's national statistics (MoE, 2008), the highest percentage of failing students live in rural areas.

Table 22
House Construction by Location

House Type	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Grass	0	44
Brick	44	51
Cement	56	5
n=	100% (n= 61)	100% (n=41)

$\chi^2 (2, n=102) = 45.003, p=.000$

Although 47% of all students live in homes where at least one member of the household owns a cellular phone, less than 28% have access to electricity and less than 10% to running water. None of the students sampled reported ownership of a car in their household as the majority of Lusaka residents travel by foot or minibus.

Table 23
Access to Amenities in Household by Location (n =102)

Amenity	Urban		Rural	
	%	n	%	n
Electricity	43	(61)	5	(41)
Running Water	16	(61)	0	(41)
Cellular Phone	69	(61)	15	(41)

Note: Cellular phone ownership by at least one member of household. “N” refers to total study sample while “n” refers to total sub-sample. Electricity: $\chi^2 (1, n=102) = 17.540, p=.000$; Running Water $\chi^2 (1, n=102) = 7.452, p=.006$; Cellular Phone: $\chi^2 (1, n=102) = 28.931, p=.000$.

As with household size and other variables, a more accurate representation of urban students who failed national examinations may or may not have decreased the percentage of urban students who had access to various amenities. It is important to note that obtaining a cellular phone and purchasing pay-as-you-go “talk time” is relatively cheaper than living in a home with running water or electricity. A cell phone may be purchased from street vendors for 50,000

kwacha (USD 10 in 2009²⁷) and talk time is sold in increments as small as 2,000 kwacha (25 cents). During my time in Zambia, I observed widespread cellular phone usage although more commonly in urban than rural areas. Keeping in mind that a student's location is the strongest predictor of her/his examination performance, positive associations such as those between cell phone ownership (most common in urban areas) and both examination performance and grade eight enrollment (for performance, $r = .281$, $n=102$, $p=.004$. For grade eight enrollment, $r=.367$, $n=102$, $p=.000$) should be interpreted with caution as access to such amenities are generally a function of a student's location.

Part II: Parental Education and Employment

I first provide background information about parental education and employment as the conventional indicators used to measure and describe socioeconomic status and consequently, access to different types of schooling in low and high-income countries. Second, I show that despite higher levels of secondary school completion in both urban and rural areas of Lusaka, a majority of ZOCS parents and guardians remain employed in the informal sector which a) has implications for household income and decisions about schooling and b) suggests that considering the current economic and political landscape in Zambia, both ZOCS students and public school students will probably enter the informal market for employment similarly to their parents and guardians. Third, I discuss how various community factors may influence decisions about schooling, arguing that the lack of security guaranteed by informal employment places additional constraints on household decision-making, particularly in rural areas.

²⁷ 1USD=5,000 ZMK in 2009.

Informally employed parents and guardians of students sampled earn income as market sellers of produce (fruits, vegetables, dried fish, and mealie-meal), artisans, *salaula* (second hand goods) sellers, and “piece workers” (running odd errands for shop keepers and small business owners). Formal employment included mini-bus and taxi drivers, domestic servants, factory workers, a bank teller, and one government employee. Formally employed and unemployed guardians each represent a smaller 20% of valid cases.

Moving beyond standards of living and access to amenities within different households sampled, I asked Phase II students how far their parents or guardians had gone in school.

Table 24
Household Head Education by Location (n=102)

Highest Level Achieved	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
None or Primary	41	29
Secondary	46	66
College or University	2	0
Missing	11	5
Total	100%	100%
n =	61	41

Given the relatively higher levels of secondary school completion in the sample (the highest percentages of parents attaining at least some secondary school as shown above) and typically positive associations between education and individual income around the world

(Gregorio and Lee, 2002; Jamison et. al, 2006), I expected that more educated parents would be engaged in some sort of formal employment, although this was not the case in my sample. See table below:

Table 25

Household Head Employment Type (Valid n=85)

Location	None (%)	Informal (%)	Formal (%)
None	29	10	0
Primary	41	24	24
Secondary	29	67	71
College/University	0	0	6
Total	99% (n=17)	101% (n= 42)	101% (n=17)

More recent research in Zambia (Hansen, 2005; Bajaj, 2010) has explicated this phenomenon by demonstrating the shrinkage of the formal employment sector driven by neo-liberal policies instituting major cuts to the civil service and former state-owned companies (particularly jobs within the mining industry) in the Kaunda era. As a result, those formally qualified for such jobs faced new challenges in today's employment market. Although the number of secondary schools in Zambia has expanded and secondary school Gross Enrollment Ratios (GERs) have increased since 1970 (see table below), the link between education and employment remains weak in my sample.

Table 26
National Secondary School Gross Enrollment Ratios, 1970-2009

Gross Enrollment Ratio	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2009
Male	18.2%	24.4%	33.6%	33.4%
Female	9.8%	13.2%	21.1%	27.3%

Source: UNESCO, 2008.

In Bajaj's (2010) study of inter-generational views on secondary schooling and employment on the Copperbelt, similar sentiments were offered by a male participant who attended secondary school during the Kaunda era:

First of all, people then [had] passion for learning. A good education assured one of a very bright future as compared to today where education is expensive and unfruitful in some cases. The other point is that even before completing grade twelve, companies used to go around schools recruiting workers. So all this encouraged pupils to work hard (cited in Bajaj, 2010, p. 184).

The quote above supports Bajaj's claim that the change in presidential administrations and a shift from a centrally planned economy to one adopting more neoliberal policies has altered perceptions of both the value of schooling as well as its utility and opportunity costs given the current reality that formal employment is more difficult to access than it was during the 1960s and 70s.

Part III: Why Some Families Choose ZOCS

Given what we now know about how ZOCS operates and the communities and families sampled including standards of living, access to amenities, household composition, and family background, what factors encourage students to attend ZOCS schools? Although I did not interview all parents of ZOCS students directly, a number of conversations with students and PCSC members highlighted benefits not available in government schools such as costs, ZOCS' "no uniforms" policy, school lunches, and microfinance opportunities as attractive characteristics, particularly among urban families that influence a choice between community-based and government schools.

An Alternative to School Fees

Demonstrating an interest and commitment to equity in primary education, the late former president Levy Mwanawasa announced a Free Basic Education Policy in 2002 requiring public primary schools to abolish all school related fees. Subsequent research (Petrauskis and Nkunika, 2006), as well as the first phase of this study confirmed that government schools were not only still charging fees at the local level, but were turning away students unable to pay. Moreover, for public schools that may have lifted tuition costs, "indirect fees" outweighed the direct costs of tuition:

At both primary and secondary levels, the *indirect costs* of education in Lusaka, that include school uniforms, books and supplies, transportation, private tuitions, packed lunches, etc. greatly exceed the *direct costs* that must be paid to schools in terms of user, PTA or project fees. This suggests that the indirect cost of accessing education is *more prohibitive* than the fees administered by schools, and that a policy of free education in itself *may not be*

sufficient to allow all parents to afford and access education for their children (Petrauskis and Nkunika, 2006, p. 4)

The authors calculated an estimated indirect cost average of 440,000 kwacha (USD 122 in 2006) per year or 147,000 kwacha (USD 29) per term of primary education in Lusaka compared to an average monthly income of 506,000 kwacha (\$101) for households in urban low-income areas. This was mostly for expenditures on school uniforms, shoes, and supplies. In 2006, this was an estimated 7% of annual income per student. Such figures make clear the appeal of community schools to parents and guardians seizing opportunities to send their children to school (especially ZOCS schools that require students to sit for the same grade seven national examinations as those in government schools) at limited to no cost.

In the Phase I background survey of 104 grade seven ZOCS students conducted between June and August of 2008, 56% of students referenced costs when asked, “Why did your parents decide to send you to a community school?” ZOCS schools do not charge mandatory fees, although a token of 2,000 to 15,000 kwacha (40 cents to USD 3) in 2008 compared to 147,000 (or USD 29) in government schools was requested for each of three terms. If students were unable to pay this fee, they were not penalized or turned away. An urban sixteen year old girl offered that, “We get the same education only that we do not pay which is good”. While comparing community schools to government schools, an urban ZOCS teacher also commented that, “The daily attendance is higher [in ZOCS schools] than in government schools where they are sent away for failing to pay school fees”.

The corollaries of economic disadvantage were observed most in rural areas where access to food and secure forms of employment were most challenging as a result of distance to the nearest city center. While all families face multiple overlapping financial obstacles, urban

students in particular were motivated to take initiative and seek creative ways to earn income to aid in both household expenses and their own school fees in grade eight in distinct ways not observed among rural students.

This discussion of costs in government and ZOCS schools suggests that while parent or guardian wages may be substantial enough to cover government primary school *direct fees* ranging from 10,000 (USD 2) to 30,000 (USD 6) kwacha per term, knowledge of the indirect fees of public schooling may be one of the factors influencing decisions to send children to ZOCS. In addition to those ZOCS students who are now enrolled in grade eight and required to pay various fees, 40 of 102 Phase II students interviewed reported having siblings who were attending government schools for grades eight through twelve with various household members or relatives paying school fees. This suggests that at a minimum, many ZOCS parents and guardians plan and make informed decisions about which schools to send their children. Moreover, such decisions may be more a consequence of foregone income than direct or indirect school fees. Given a situation of relatively scarce resources in comparison to households sending children to private schools, some families (especially in urban areas where distance is not a barrier) may select ZOCS for the primary grades and government schools (as the provider of the majority of lower and upper secondary schools) for upper grades. Some interviews echoed various studies in the field (Hannum and Buchmann, 2001; UNESCO, 2005) showing how family decisions about which children to send to school are often related to issues of resources, gender, and culture.

Memory, a thirteen year old female student from Makangwe shared that her elder (only) sister who was supposed to be in grade nine was not attending because their mother and father could not afford her school fees. However, at the time, Memory's parents were

paying fees for Memory's two brothers, one in upper secondary and the other in a bible college.

Bertha's story presents a slightly different situation:

At age sixteen, Bertha of the urban Garden Community School is the only student in the entire study sample with a guardian (her aunt) who has been to college. Bertha's aunt makes, buys, and sells blankets for a living. Together, Bertha, her aunt, and her cousin live in a cement, two room house with electricity. Bertha's mother and father reside in an Eastern Province village where Bertha originates. Bertha's four sisters and brother have remained in the village. All four sisters attend government schools in the village (cheaper than government schools in Lusaka). Bertha passed the grade seven examinations and is now in grade eight at a neighboring government school.

Without interviewing Bertha's aunt, it remained unclear how Bertha was selected from among her sisters to live in Lusaka. However, somehow, her parents were able to afford fees for her sisters to attend government schools in a rural Eastern Province village. Contrastingly, Memory's sister was sacrificing her grade nine year for her brothers' completion of upper secondary and college. Although there is some ambiguity about the ability of different ZOCS families to pay for community schooling, more than half of the students sampled (62 of 102) did not allude to their parents/guardians sending different siblings to various types of schools as a result of scarce resources and instead referred to ZOCS as the only choice.

Other Advantages of ZOCS

I learned through interviews with Teachers and Parent Community School Committee (PCSC) members that beyond limited to no costs of entry, ZOCS schools attract families through various amenities offered to students *and* parents. These include a "no uniforms" policy, school

lunches, and a range of income generating activities encouraging parents to a) start small businesses to supplement household income and b) become more involved in the day-to-day functions of the school within their own communities.

Uniforms. Community school students are most easily identified by their dress. In contrast to the conventional mental images created by throngs of government school students walking to schools in their color coordinated blue, green, and red uniforms, ZOCS students' attire paints the stereotypical image of poverty, e.g., torn shirts, mismatched or no shoes, the same outfit worn daily, etc. Central to ZOCS mission is its "no uniforms" policy whereby uniforms are mandated for government school students (albeit implicitly based on the Free Basic Education Policy). An urban PCSC member stated plainly that students attend ZOCS schools for two reasons: "No uniforms, no fees". At both the rural and urban schools sampled, children did not risk the chance of ridicule by their peers or teachers for wearing dirty or worn clothes, mismatch shoes, or no socks. One girl proudly offered, "Community school students wear regular clothes and slippers and eat porridge every day (unlike students in government schools who are not offered meals). Less than 4% of 104 Phase I survey respondents actually expressed a desire for uniforms in community schools, perhaps to not feel so isolated or different from their fee-paying peers in government schools. As explained above in the section on costs, ZOCS appeals to parents by alleviating concerns for uniforms as part of the indirect fees associated with schooling. A visit to any government school in Lusaka confirms how uniforms are a part of school culture, despite the Free Basic Education Policy. ZOCS "no uniforms" practice makes plain clothes the rule rather than the exception.

School Lunches. Food was also a major theme in my discussions with ZOCS staff, teachers, and PCSC members in both urban and rural schools and appears to be one of the most attractive

features influencing family decisions to attend. Unlike government schools, many ZOCS schools are supported by the World Food Program (WFP) and other sponsors to feed children soya porridge once a day. On one of my first tours to Kalingalinga Open Community School (not sampled for this study), a ZOCS staff member shared with me the belief that students would be more alert and perform better if they worked on full stomachs. She also relayed that, “this is the only meal that some students will eat the whole day. Sometimes we have found that the students come to school hungry, saying that they have not had anything”.

Meal time at ZOCS is one of the livelier periods of the day. A lucky student gets to ring a bell and children begin assembling themselves in a line for their portion of porridge, usually prepared by some of the female PCSC members. Plopping themselves down on the grass, children eagerly eat their porridge, some sipping straight from the bowl, others attempting to scoop it into their mouths with their blunt pencils. Food was referenced by 20% of students as something they liked about their school in the Phase I survey. This supports the notion that children in developing countries respond favorably to meals in school and may increase their attention span and performance as a result of working on a full stomach (Mitchell, 2003; United Nations, 2007; World Food Program, 2010). In contrast to Fuller’s (1991) argument that schooling is symbolic alone, ZOCS students and families perceive real, immediate benefits (such as food) to attending that are uncharacteristic of government schools.

Microfinance. Alongside formal income generating activities that are guided by ZOCS staff, ZOCS offers microfinance schemes to female household heads with viable business plans. A select number of widows receive individual loans starting at 150,000 kwacha or USD 30, ranging up to one million kwacha or USD 300 depending on a business’ profitability. These women also

participate in a one-week entrepreneurship training at the ZOCS office, again with support from ZOCS and other partners.²⁸

The United Kingdom's Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO) microfinance program also provides loans to groups within school communities (not necessarily PCSC members). Each parent in a group has her/his own business, but the group repays the loan as a whole (if one person defaults, the entire group cannot access more capital). Up to 40% of profits are returned to ZOCS offices and/or schools, while the remaining 60% belongs to parent groups. Examples of loans for women and community groups include funding for tailoring start-ups, small gardens, and local kiosks selling onions, tomatoes, and cabbage. Again, while guardians were not interviewed about how they spent money earned from microfinance ventures, it is expected by ZOCS that a portion will help students with materials or small donations for teacher salaries. I remain unclear as to whether ZOCS monitors how individual profits are spent. The purposes of the microfinance program as I understand it through conversations with ZOCS staff and PCSC members are not only to improve the business skills of women in the community, but also to generate income to more adequately support both school and household expenses. Consistent with ZOCS' mission to integrate schooling into the broader goals of community development, the hope is that parents will also become more involved in supporting their children on their schooling trajectory, feeling comfortable engaging with teachers and other parents and articulating desires and concerns for their children's education. Microfinance schemes are a clear departure from the government school model, offering parents an opportunity to *earn* income

²⁸ 1 USD=5,000 ZMK in 2009.

rather than spend it on various school related fees. Parents and guardians may actually choose ZOCS schools based on their knowledge of these programs, although I was unable to research this possibility in depth. Again, these benefits are real and offer opportunities to households that could be unavailable in the absence of ZOCS.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided an overview of student characteristics such as age, gender, activities outside of school, and the study's sub-sample of orphans. I also discussed the role of factors such as urban/rural location and family background. While most parents or guardians have completed at least some secondary school, many continue to be employed in informal sectors which explains a) why they may prefer to incur fewer costs and send their children to ZOCS schools and b) raises questions about the employment opportunities ZOCS students would have even in the event that they did complete some secondary school as their parents/guardians did.

Overall, this chapter shows that while ZOCS students may come from a variety of households and backgrounds, ZOCS offers various benefits to attract both students and parents/guardians. In Chapter Eight, I show that such perceptions become relevant when students reflect on their previous expectations of schooling and the outcomes they face after receiving their examination results.

Chapter 8: Achievement, Progression, and Perceptions of Success and Failure among ZOCS Students

Overview

Since 1992, ZOCS has made tremendous accomplishments by building a reputation for itself that now gives some urban students a choice to attend community schools instead of government schools. From my observations of teachers and classrooms, I have learned that deeply caring, underpaid teachers—often viewed as parents and mentors—work tirelessly to ensure that their students meet national standards and compete with their government school counterparts for places in basic schools at grade eight. Within these school contexts and the harsher realities of both urban compound and rural village life in Zambia, students are expected to obtain the best results they can with the few resources they have at their disposal.

This fourth and final chapter of analysis focuses on students, addressing the third major research question:

- What factors continue to promote or limit success for Zambian students within broader school, community, and national contexts?

As I have argued, notions of “success” are embedded within homes, schools, communities, and Zambia’s broader political, economic, and social post-colonial conditions that define what it means to be “educated”, how to measure and legitimate certain types of education, and how to reward and/or sanction students based on their performance. Chapter Eight is divided into four parts: In Part I, I describe career goals and aspirations of students sampled, raising questions about students’ expectations in light of what we know about basic and secondary school progression nationally. In addition, I analyze how students describe their success and failure on examinations in relation to their own abilities, motivation, and perceptions of schools. In Part II,

I assess student achievement and grade eight progression within the study sample by 1) evaluating performance in light of various demographic indicators in urban and rural areas; 2) dividing students into four categories based on performance and outcomes; and 3) discussing the subset of orphans. Finally, Part III analyzes both benefits and challenges to securing financial support for grade eight among ZOCS students.

Part I: Big Dreams, Small Chances

Based on ZOCS' emphasis on examination performance and grade eight progression as indicators of school success, how do ZOCS' populations fit into this scheme? In the Phase I survey of 104 grade seven students, 80 (77%) shared their plans to reach secondary school or higher. Twenty-five of these explicitly mentioned college or university. When I revisited Zambia in 2009 and asked, "How far do you think you will go in school?", or "What grade will you reach"?, and after students had received their examination results and some were enrolled in grade eight, little had changed: the most common response was, "I want to go all the way", which generally translated to completing secondary school or higher.

In view of such expectations, what are the characteristics of "successful" students? How are "unsuccessful" students coping, spending their time, or utilizing skills acquired in community schools in their everyday lives? Despite a climate in which ZOCS obstructs as well as facilitates various outcomes of schooling, what remains strong among all ZOCS students is a deep faith in schooling and the desire to fulfil their own expectations of financial security and social mobility. In 2009 when asked, "What do you want to do when you finish school?" former grade seven students provided responses ranging from "the president of Zambia" to "a pilot". See table below:

Table 27
“What do you want to do when you finish school?”

Profession	Urban (n=41)	Rural (n=61)	Total
Teacher	4	16	21
Accountant	16	1	17
Doctor	8	5	13
Nurse	4	7	11
Journalist	12	1	13
Soldier/Police	3	3	6
Football Player	1	0	1
Minibus/Taxicab/Truck Driver	3	2	5
Lawyer	3	0	3
Pilot	0	1	1
President	2	0	2
Scientist	1	0	1
Priest	1	0	1
Mechanic	1	0	1
Singer/Musician	0	2	2
Don't know	2	0	3
Something In An Office	0	1	1
Total	61	41	102

While rural students were more likely to name professions that they saw on a regular basis (teachers) or seemed to have learned about in school (doctors, nurses), urban students, whom one might assume would be more aware of the potential challenges to securing certain types of

employment, chose some of Zambia's most prestigious careers (to be the President of Zambia, for example). Journalism is also a popular career, reflecting passion that many Zambians have for watching and debating topics of the local seven o'clock news. Some of the news reporters are just as popular in Lusaka's contemporary urban culture as are singers or actresses. The two most common Newspapers (*The Post* and *The Times of Zambia*) are also commonly discussed in schools.

It is important to note that while the respondents to these questions were former grade seven students, their ages ranged from 13-20 with most students between the ages of 14 and 17, meaning that some are mature enough to understand the political, social, and economic conditions around them. While one 16 year-old male expressed his interest in accounting because he wanted to "make money fast and buy a Range Rover", another 16 year-old female lamented that she did not know what she wanted to do because "jobs here are hard to find". A 14 year-old rural student may not have ever actually seen an "office", but perhaps learnt about it in school or through a friend (her response was simply, "something in an office"). Finally, there were students who may have named one of the professions above, but concluded that they just wanted to be "rich" or "important".

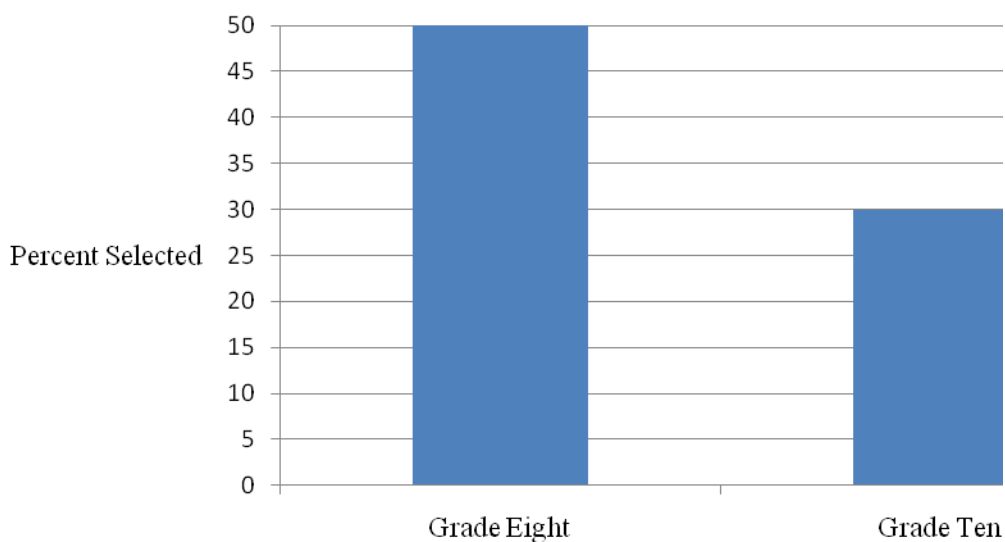
To apply the aspirations of students in my sample to the realities of ZOCS, the figures below show that 50% of students taking the grade seven examinations are selected to grade eight—a proportion that plummets to about 30% from grade nine to grade ten within the ten ZOCS schools that offer basic schooling (grades eight and nine):

Table 28

ZOCS Grade Seven and Grade Nine Examination Performance (2008)

Grade at Examination	Total Number of Candidates	Total Number of Students Selected
Seven	1309	663
Nine	494	148

Source: ZOCS Annual Report, 2008

*Figure 22. Percentage of ZOCS Population Selected to Grades Eight and Ten, 2008.*

Source: ZOCS Annual Report, 2008.

ZOCS figures were similar to those of the country as a whole in 2008 (56% for grades seven to eight and 38% from grades nine to ten according to the MoE 2008 Statistical Bulletin). Although the majority of parents or guardians of ZOCS students or Zambian families in general may not look into these statistics, the obstacles to moving through each level of the system successfully are serious. Nonetheless, fewer than 50 ZOCS students have gone beyond secondary school since its inception in 1992 (personal communication with ZOCS staff, October 5, 2009). Despite

these facts and perhaps for other reasons such as the desire for basic skills in English reading and writing, arithmetic, and other benefits such as those described in Chapter Seven, families continue to send their children to ZOCS schools. Every student sampled in 2009 expressed interest in going beyond lower basic (grades eight and nine) and graduating from high school.

Individual Failure vs. School Success

When I asked ZOCS students how they felt about their success on examinations, they most commonly praised their teachers (e.g., “without them we would be nothing”, “our teachers care about us”, “they teach us so well”, etc.). At Mary Aikenhead, girls commended their teachers for showing them “how to grow into a woman”, or “how girls should take care of themselves”. Language was another positive outcome of schooling reported among students, although reproductive theorists may argue that this represents an additional locus of control over disadvantaged groups by those in positions of power and authority. One student argued that to be educated required English, saying that, “I did not know how to speak English but now I can and I know the importance of school”. Another commented that she liked her teachers because “they encourage us to speak [a] language from [another] country”.

Given what one teacher described as a sort of stigma some students experience because they attend community schools rather than government schools (“...because the tag that they come from community schools and it being known that community schools are for orphans... this might psychologically disturb them somehow”), receiving passing examination results is a means for celebration. As interviews were held at the urban schools graduating students once attended and my time with them was in some cases, the first time seeing them since they received their results, I observed how much more confident and relaxed many “passing” students seemed and how much more comfortable they felt about their own ability to persevere despite challenging

conditions at home with little to no time to assess the mental and emotional turmoil they experienced on a daily basis. These sentiments were generally not observed in rural schools where most students were less likely to pass and had faced so many other challenges.

In contrast to urban students who most frequently praised their schools for positive examination results, conversations with the majority of rural students sampled who failed examinations exposed a pattern described by Carnoy (1974) and noted in Backman's (2009) more recent study of language policy and practice in Lesotho-- namely that "failing" students attribute their failure to themselves (personal ability, motivation, etc.) rather than their teachers, schools, or other factors. Utilizing Bourdieu's forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986), Backman engaged in a series of conversations with students, parents, and teachers about language policies and student experiences in government and private schools. He found that,

When students from lower class backgrounds do not succeed in school, instead of blaming the schooling system, or the structure of society, they blame themselves for not being smart enough and not possessing what it takes to succeed. Instead of seeing the inherent inequalities of society, they see themselves as lacking in cultural capital, and thus help to perpetuate and legitimate the system (Backman, 2009, p. 146).

Viewing language as a form of symbolic cultural capital among Basotho in a post-colonial context, Backman found that while the acquisition of English skills in schools was one of the most important factors in student success (examination performance and progression to secondary schools and universities), what appeared more crucial were the ways in which certain forms of capital were constructed, embodied, and reinforced at home, arguing that,

...the home and educational backgrounds of students and their families has a much greater impact on students' ability to be instructed in English than what the schools and teachers do themselves (p. 260).

Among other factors, several students cited language issues as a source of their failure. Brenda was one of many rural students who stated that they failed examinations because they “didn’t know how to read”, which translated to not knowing how to read and write in English. In some cases, students reported ability to read and write in their mother tongue more than English, but these skills were never required or tested in school at higher grades. Similar to the students in Backman’s study, English as a form of capital was more evident among urban students than rural ones. Neither group reported using English at home as a means of reinforcing its legitimization at school and in other areas of Zambian society.

When asked “*Unamvera bwanji?*” or ‘how did you feel?’ [about failing the examination], 23 out of 25 rural ZOCS students who failed used the word *kwipa* [bad] to discuss how guilty or ashamed they felt about not passing, how embarrassed they were about seeing their friends progress to the next grade, or how they wished they had studied more or been more “serious”. Contrastingly, when 67 urban students who passed were asked, “How do you feel?” more than half alluded to the quality and support of their teachers and schools more generally. Again, including more failing urban students in the sample could have revealed different perspectives on individual ability, the conditions of home life, or the role of schools in supporting different students. Speaking with only urban repeating students, my sample does not capture those urban students who may have failed and decided not to repeat because they no longer had the same faith in schools as their repeating peers. Whether or not they attribute their failure to individual ability alone is uncertain.

In contrast, the geographic isolation of rural schools may prevent rural students from observing real differences between their schools and urban schools--community-based, government, or private. Building on both Carnoy (1974) and Backman (2009) in a low-income country context, I would argue that in addition to limited access to valued cultural capital such as English, the isolation of schools also perpetuates a system in which rural students, unaware of alternatives to their own schools, continue to believe that their failure can only be the result of their own shortcomings rather than the harsh conditions in which they are forced to learn.

While failing rural students in this study did express patterns of self-blame, it is also evident that they remain confident enough in themselves to repeat grade seven rather than drop out and give up on schooling entirely (as may some urban students who were not sampled for the study but did fail examinations). The decision to repeat echoes Fuller's (1991) arguments by demonstrating that despite the reality that most students will not go beyond grade nine, schools are still seen as the only way out of poverty for Zambia's poor.

Part II: Factors Related to Student Success and Failure

A key predictor of whether a student passes examinations and progresses to grade eight is whether she/he lives in an urban or rural area (for performance, $\chi^2(1, n=102)=45.5, p=.000$; for grade eight enrollment, $\chi^2(1, n=102)=48.793, p=.000$). While a much higher percentage of urban students sampled (98%) passed examinations than within ZOCS' total population of students who sat in 2008 (52% or 681 of 1,309 students), this may represent sampling bias as much or more than the true situation.

Table 29

Examination Performance by Sample and Population

	<u>Urban</u>		<u>Rural</u>	
	Sample	Population	Sample	Population
Passed	98	52	39	34
Fail	2	48	61	66
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
<hr/>				
	n= 61	N =1220	n= 41	N= 89

Note: The total number of ZOCS' urban students who sat for examinations in 2008 was 1,309 (1,220 urban and 89 rural).

A representative sample of ZOCS' population in regard to urban failures would include 29 students corresponding to the population figure of 48% of the total urban sample rather than one student or 2% as the table above indicates. Unfortunately, the method of sampling does not explain the underrepresentation of urban failures which presumably would have turned out different if a probability sampling approach had been executed as planned. The lack of urban students sampled who failed examinations makes inferences difficult about a) urban conditions in schools that were not sampled for the study and b) variables such as repetition, student employment, and activities outside of school since a more representative sample could have produced different tables from what one sees here. While passing urban students are overrepresented in the sample, rural sampled students performed similarly to rural students within the population. I continue by explaining how other factors are related to examination performance in this sample.

Living Conditions and Examination Performance

Within the sample of 102 students, there is a significant relationship between the number of rooms in a student's home and whether that student passed or failed national examinations. In other words, the highest percentage of students who failed examinations lives in smaller, less expensive homes. See table below:

Table 30

Examination Performance by Household Composition (n=102)

Examination Performance	1-2 Rooms (%)	3-4 Rooms (%)	5-8 Rooms (%)
Passed	67	94	100
Failed	33	6	0
Totals	100% (n=76)	100% (n=18)	100% (n=8)

$\chi^2 (7, n=102) = 17.874, p=.000$.

A more accurate representation of urban failing students in the sample would have increased the percentage of failing students living in brick and/or cement homes (more likely to be found in urban areas) and weakened the relationship between location and socioeconomic status.

However, consistent with MoE literature, we would still expect to see the highest percentage of failures among students living in grass homes which are characteristics of rural areas.

Table 31

Examination Performance by Household Construction (n=102)

House Materials	Grass	Brick	Cement
Passed	33	77	92
Failed	67	23	8
Totals	100% (n=18)	100% (n=48)	100% (n=36)

$\chi^2 (2, n=102) = 17.874, p=.000$.

Gender and Examination Performance

Although a slightly higher percentage of failure on national examinations is found within the female group (30% among girls in relation to 20% among boys), I found no statistically significant relationship between examination performance and gender.

Table 32

2008 Grade Seven National Examination Results by Gender

Examination Results	Male	Female
Pass (%)	80% (n=36)	70% (n=40)
Fail (%)	20% (n=9)	30% (n=17)
n =	100% (n=45)	100% (n=57)

$\chi^2 (1, n=102) = 1.278, p = .258$.

In the area of achievement, this study echoes the findings of others within Zambia and internationally placing rural girls at the highest risk of low academic achievement and educational attainment (MoE, 2006, UNESCO, 2010). A mere seven of 23 rural girls sampled

passed grade seven examinations in 2008. In an environment of pressure to perform well to move forward or avoid getting married or pregnant, rural students face multiple obstacles to schooling including language issues at home and school (as discussed in Chapter Seven), a possible lack of learning reinforcement at home (as rural parents and guardians spend significant amounts of time away from home during daylight hours for work) and household chores or employment also requiring time outside of school not discussed as a time-consuming challenge among urban students.

Parent/Guardian Education Levels and Examination Performance

In contrast to much of the literature on children who attend community schools in Africa (Glassman, et. al, 2008), 59% of valid ZOCS parents or guardians sampled finished some secondary school. Thirty-four percent reached grades 11 or 12. Although the relationship between parental/guardian education and examination performance is not significant within this study ($\chi^2 (3, n=102) = 4.752, p = .191$), a sample that was more representative and therefore included more urban failing students would be likely to show a stronger and potentially significant relationship. Given the bias of the sample, the table below considers rural students in isolation and shows that most failing students actually live in homes where at least one parent has completed some secondary school:

Table 33

Rural Examination Performance by Household Head's Highest Level of Education Completed

Highest Level of Education Completed	Pass (%)	Fail (%)
None	0	0
Primary	20	38
Secondary	80	62
College/University	0	0
Totals	100% (n=15)	100% (n=24)

Student Employment and Examination Performance

The relationship between being employed and school success is strong: 12% of the enrolled are employed while 49% of the not enrolled are employed. Forty-eight percent of the employed students failed examinations, while 82 % of the unemployed passed. Student employment is significantly associated with both location and grade eight enrollment and level four repetition. Again, because urban passing students are overrepresented in the sample, it is likely that a higher percentage of urban students who failed examinations would result in even higher percentages of employment.

Examples of Student Success and Student Failure under Varying Conditions

To illustrate how student success is related to varying conditions, short vignettes are presented below on selected students from five key groups in urban and rural contexts: 1) students who passed examinations and are enrolled in grade eight; 2) students who passed examinations but are not enrolled in grade eight *and* not repeating grade seven or level four (which some teachers and students refer to as “just sitting”); 3) students who passed

examinations but are repeating level four because they cannot afford the costs of grade eight enrollment; and 4) students who failed examinations and are repeating level four.

Table 34

Examination Performance and Outcomes by Selected Indicators (n=102)

Indicator	Passed and Enrolled	Passed and “Sitting”	Passed and Repeating	Failed and Repeating	Failed and “Sitting”	Total* %
Urban (%)	92	7	0	2	0	101% (n = 61)
Rural (%)	24	10	5	59	2	100% (n = 41)
Male (%)	62	13	4	20	0	99%
Female (%)	67	4	0	28	2	101%
Orphans (%)	78	8	0	13	3	102%
Non-orphans (%)	56	8	3	32	0	99%
Guardian education (none-primary %)	65	11	0	24	0	100%
Guardian education (secondary or higher %)	63	5	4	27	2	101%
Employed (%)	28	16	8	44	4	100%
Unemployed (%)	77	5	0	18	0	100%

Note: Totals greater or less than 100 due to rounding effects.

Passed and Enrolled Students in Urban Areas

Given the fact that 92% of urban students sampled passed examinations and are enrolled in grade eight, I describe the “passed and enrolled” group in an urban context first by sharing James and Susan’s stories.

James, an urban story. James is a sixteen year-old boy who has lost both of his parents. Labeled as a “double orphan” in ZOCS terms, James lives with his three older brothers and grandmother in a rented one-room house in the urban Matero Compound. One of Lusaka’s highest density areas, Matero also has some of the city’s top crime rates. Despite the fact that Matero Open Community School is built on a plot of land owned by a catholic church with the church building nearby, when visiting the school for interviews, I was urged by friends and family not to travel to Matero past dark as I would almost certainly run into *kafwafwa* [trouble, nonsense].

Successfully passing his grade seven examinations and now enrolled in grade eight, James is employed, attends school regularly, and pays his own school fees at Chengwere Basic School. When I asked him if anyone else helped him, he told me that,

It's only me... ah! [Expressing both laughter and frustration]... because I do not have a sponsor, so I go to the town to buy the tomatoes, bring tomatoes to sell them with my *mbuya* [grandmother]...then after finishing school, I read these books here... [Shows me some of the material he uses to study English and mathematics]...me, I like school (personal interview, June 1, 2009).

Sensing my interest, James goes further to describe the arrangement he has with his grandmother. I learned that James wakes up around 4:30 or 5:00 am and goes into town to buy tomatoes in bulk from a local market. He comes back to Matero by minibus with the tomatoes

and gives them to his grandmother to sell while he is at school. Since James attends the morning shift at basic school which ends around noon, he comes back to help his grandmother with selling and sometimes makes an additional trip to town to purchase more. On average, James makes the trip to town about three times a week. The money he makes with his grandmother is used to pay his school fees at Chengwere. When this is not enough, James appeals to his older brothers (none of whom went beyond secondary school) who are able to help out sometimes with the money they also make from odd jobs in town.

In his spare time, James helps his grandmother around the house with “washing plates” and other cleaning tasks. He also sings in a local music group and attends church with his grandmother on Sundays. When I asked James how he felt about all the work he does to stay in school and on top of his studies, he expressed his wishes for a “sponsor” (someone to pay his grade eight fees), but said he was managing the best he could under the circumstances. James is one among 56 (61 total) urban students sampled who passed grade seven examinations and was in grade eight at the time of Phase II data collection in 2009.

Susan, another urban story. In a tear jerking conversation in which I cut voice recording short, I learned that Susan, a fourteen year old Mary Aikenhead student who recently lost both of her parents, lives with her aunt. Susan’s three brothers and two sisters have since gone to live with different members of her family in the village, leaving Susan alone with her aunt. Susan described her examination success and enrollment in grade eight at Mary Aikenhead (one of two ZOCS schools offering grade eight) as a positive distraction and escape from her sadness about losing her parents and being separated from her brothers and sisters:

It's just me [sobbing]. They have taken them [her siblings, three brothers and two sisters] to the village. Me, I like school because here I have many friends...they can teach us dressing...self-control...respect...Me, I will finish school and go for tourism...or journalism (personal interview, July 29, 2009).

Mary Aikenhead's connections with local catholic churches ensure that girls' attending grade eight at Mary Aikenhead are sponsored for their studies and not required to pay fees. Similar to government schools, Mary Aikenhead only accepts students who pass a certain "cut off point" on their grade seven examinations. Susan is one of eight orphans sampled (out of 11 total girls) for whom Mary Aikenhead has provided both a place of learning and a community of girls raised under similar conditions in the neighboring Kabwata compound. In Susan's view, passing examinations and attending Mary Aikenhead translates not only to academic excellence and progression but possibly a way to earn money and one day reunite with her brothers and sisters whose absence she was forced to experience immediately following her parents' death. All of the Mary Aikenhead girls sampled (11 total) passed examinations and were enrolled in grade eight. While I did not investigate reasons for the success of these students in particular, I did observe that Mary Aikenhead's all-girl environment coupled with academic rigor and strict discipline characteristic of most private, church-run schools cultivated a sense of focus and determination among students. This may be one of the reasons Aunty Madeline of Matero suggested handing over ZOCS schools to missionaries.

James and Susan's stories do not articulate a typical vision of academic "success" dependent on economic background, orphan status, or parent/guardian education. Among rural schools, four of the 11 Makangwe students who passed examinations and were enrolled were also orphans who had lost at least one parent. These stories suggest how students may utilize

their home life and family background as motivation to transform their challenges into success. James wakes up at dawn because of his belief in the potential of schooling. Given the fact that none of his elder brothers finished school, we can infer that James does not have “successful” role models who have proved the value of schooling to him- yet, James is invested in his education as a means to achieve his dreams of being an accountant.

Susan’s traumatic past could easily have been her rationale for disengaging from school all together. Contrarily, school was an escape and perhaps even a therapeutic space where Susan could meet friends (some who could undoubtedly empathize with her situation) and focus on learning as a way to improve her living conditions and build a more promising future. Susan was successful not just because she passed examinations and was in grade eight but also because of the ways in which she used the school as a means to support her in both her mourning process and the loneliness she felt in the separation from her siblings. Without Mary Aikenhead, it is uncertain whether Susan would have wanted to continue school at all, let alone persevere and progress to grade eight. From both James and Susan’s stories, one could argue that orphans outperformed non-orphans within groups perhaps because they see schooling as the only way out of their living conditions and are consequently more motivated and focused. While 85% of all orphans sampled passed examinations (34 of 40), 70% of non-orphans passed (42 of 60). The higher percentage of passing orphans contrasts to conclusions about poorer educational performance found among orphans in South Africa where a majority of such studies have been conducted (Ardington and Leibbrant, 2010). Again, although these trends should be taken with caution considering the purposive nature of my Phase II sample, how orphans are performing well at all in primary schools based on the literature that argues the opposite is significant.

Passed and Enrolled Students in Rural Areas

While none of the five students from Chilambila that passed examinations were enrolled in grade eight, all 11 out of 25 students from Makangwe who passed were enrolled in a government basic school. Two of these students were sponsored by individual donors in grade eight, while the remainders were supported by one or more parents or extended family members. Although a higher percentage of Makangwe students passed (44% representing six girls and five boys) than at Chilambila (31% representing five boys), I did not observe relevant differences between students or teachers at these two schools other than the longer distance of Chilambila from urban activity. The differences in enrollment of passing students appear to be more related to securing school fees than any other factor. Within schools, there are no significant relationships between parental/guardian education or employment and examination performance, suggesting that student success may have been related to some other combination of individual, home, or school factors. While the number of rural students who passed and were enrolled represent special cases among most rural students who did not pass (I detail their stories below), the fact that some students did pass suggests that rural ZOCS schools have potential to improve achievement on a larger scale.

Passed and “Sitting” Students in Urban Areas

Seven percent of urban and 10% of rural students passed examinations but were “sitting” (i.e., not enrolled in grade eight and/or not repeating level four) because they could not afford school fees. Economic disadvantages are passed down from parents who cannot afford school fees which in turn, prevents their children from attending school and decreases the chances that students will complete a full course of education and enter any form of formal employment in the long-run. A more longitudinal study would allow this hypothesis to be tested in light of Carnoy’s

arguments that schools reproduce existing social hierarchies. However, some conclusions can be drawn about the current situation most “passed and sitting” students face within the sample.

Jacob, an urban story. Similar to James and Susan, Jacob from Matero passed his examinations. Unlike James and Susan, Jacob is unable to attend because he does not have the kwacha for school fees required at the local basic school. At 17, Jacob lost his father and was caring for his mother who was in hospital at the time of our interview. Living in a small brick compound house, Jacob is fourth in a line of six sisters and three brothers. When I asked Jacob what he was doing with his time since he wasn’t enrolled in grade eight, he shared,

Me, I am not doing anything...I’m just home helping my mom...because I don't have school fees...This piecework [sighs. Referring to fetching water for shopkeepers in the local market]...it helps at home... but it is not enough for school (May 21, 2009).

Although Jacob was unsure what he wanted to do when he finally finished school, he was certain that he wanted to be back in grade eight. Jacob is one of four urban students who passed national examinations but are not enrolled because they cannot afford school fees. His story is similar to others of students who still cannot afford fees despite earning money from “piecework”.

Oscar, another urban story. Uncharacteristic of the “passed but not enrolled” group was the story of Oscar, who lost both of his parents and was living with his uncle in Garden Compound. Unlike his peers in neighboring compounds such as James, Oscar explained that he could not find a job because he did not have an NRC (National Registration Card) and could not get an NRC because that process would incur additional costs. Oscar’s response did not make sense to me because I was aware that Oscar knew people (friends and other community members) who

worked informally without NRCs. Oscar could not remember what his uncle's occupation was, which may have influenced a) his own perceptions about seeking employment in the compound and/or b) my interpretation of his response.

James and Oscar's stories signify conventional descriptions about why many African youth are not in school. Despite what they reported to be a desire for schooling, James' income was insufficient and Oscar was not working to make the same investment as Jacob was with his grandmother's tomato business. The nature of delay between grade seven and grade eight for financial reasons still typifies inequities that would not exist if James' mother and Oscar's uncle had sufficient funds to enroll them in grade eight immediately following grade seven.

Passed and "Sitting" Students in Rural Areas

The five boys in the furthest rural school from Lusaka urban (Chilambila) who passed grade seven examinations are unable to attend because of school fees. Each of these boys has a parent who engages in farming, molding bricks or burning wood into charcoal for sale to generate income. See chart on parent/guardian occupations for the entire rural sample (40 of 41 valid responses) below:

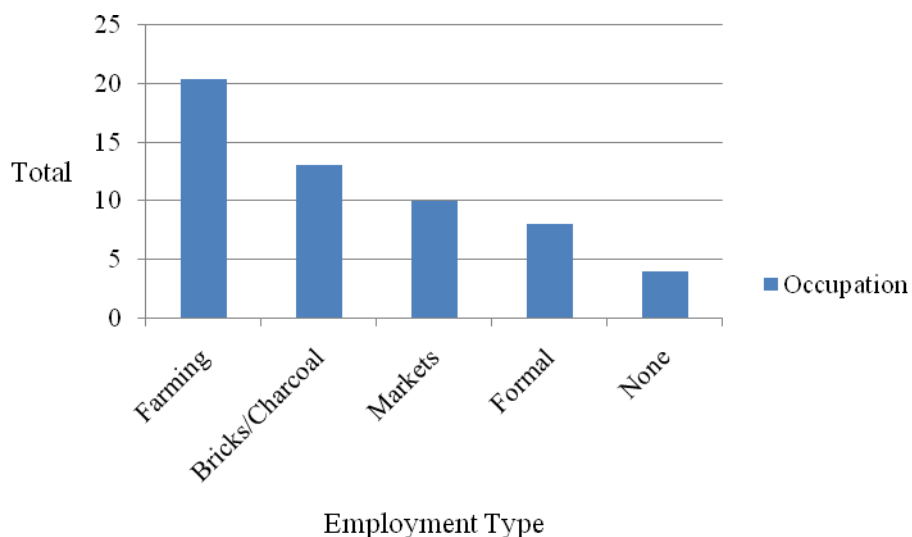


Figure 23. Rural Parent/Guardian Employment. Note: One student did not know his parent/guardian employment type and was entered as “missing” in analysis.

The nature of informal employment in rural ZOCS settings implies that income is unsteady and in the case of farming, may sometimes be provided in kind (food) rather than cash. When one of the five boys at Chilambila who passed examinations was asked whether he thought he would enroll in grade eight the following year, his response was (translated to English from Nyanja):

I felt so bad [about not being able to afford fees]. Maybe if the field [where he and his father work] does well, I will get more money. I have an older brother [who lives] in town. He did not finish school. My father goes to town to ask [him] for money but [he] cannot expect him to always give because he also has children of his own. Sometimes my father gets money [from him] and sometimes he does not. I am thinking of going to my older brother to ask (personal interview, July 30, 2009).

Passed and Repeating Students in Rural Areas

Of the 16 rural students who did pass, 11 are enrolled in grade eight while three are actually *repeating* grade seven, two whose stories I share below. This trend was not observed among any of the urban students who passed examinations but were not enrolled in grade eight. While repetition in Zambia is not frequently described as a national problem with rates less than 10% in 2008, the limited number of secondary school places and the associated fees partially explain why some students continue to repeat grade seven. This trend is common in several SSA countries that have yet to expand the secondary school sector (Lewin, 2008).

Andrew, a rural story. Andrew, a sixteen year old Chilambila student lives with his mother, father, and grandmother in a grass house in the village. Andrew's family is originally from Southern Province and speaks only Tonga. Andrew's parents are subsistence farmers who work for cash and food on various commercial farms. Andrew also makes bricks to earn income. He is paid 30,000 kwacha (USD 6) for every 200 bricks he molds together. He spends about three hours a day molding bricks, but wants to finish school so that he can be a teacher. Andrew told me he felt "*kwipa*" (bad) about being in grade seven again while his friends had moved on to basic school, despite the fact that he passed examinations.

Robert, another rural story. Robert is a 19 year-old Chilambila student whose father owns a considerable plot of land on which he harvests maize for consumption and sale. Robert lives with both of his parents who he reports have both gone as far as grade twelve in secondary school. Robert has four sisters and two brothers: three of his sisters are not in school, while one finished grade twelve. Robert has one brother who is in grade eleven and another brother who is supposed to be in grade nine but is not attending because Robert's parents cannot afford fees. Robert has taken the grade seven national examinations twice (once in 2007 and again in 2008) and passed

each time. Robert explained that his parents did not want him to lose what he learned in school, so while they continued to search for funds for grade eight, they advised him to repeat grade seven until they could afford basic school. To earn money, Robert shells maize for his parents and makes charcoal when he can find an employer. Robert plans to be a doctor when he finishes school.

Whether these students' circumstances are a result of family decisions about schooling, individual motivation, or the ability to find employment, rural students such as Andrew and Robert are repeating content that they have clearly mastered while their peers are continuing on to grade eight. Again, while my study only extracts information on educational outcomes at a particular point in time, the case of rural repeaters within the study sample points to larger well-documented consequences of economic disadvantage for educational attainment between urban and rural areas (MoE, 2006).

Failed and Repeating Students in Urban Areas

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, urban failing students are underrepresented in the study sample. Not knowing whether a student passed examinations before recruiting them to the study, this issue may have been avoided with a completely randomized sample or with more information about a students' pass/fail status before recruiting them utilizing the purposive approach. Consequently, this chapter does not include references to students who may have failed and are *not* repeating which may characterize other urban students within the ZOCS population but does not characterize any student in my sample. Including such students would have provided deeper insights into patterns of employment in addition to how former students are now spending their time and how they may be utilizing skills learnt in ZOCS schools in their everyday lives.

Failed and Repeating Students in Rural Areas

While only two percent of urban students had failed examinations and were repeating level four, 59% of rural students fall into this category. I discuss the rural group in depth here as it represents the most typical outcome for rural students. I begin by sharing Brenda's experience as a common case.

Brenda, a rural story. Brenda is a fourteen year-old ZOCS student attending the rural Makangwe Open Community School. Recently losing both of her parents to the HIV and AIDS epidemic, Brenda stays with an aunt who sells *vitumbuwa* (flour based fritters) for a living. Brenda's aunt has an eighth grade education, speaks Tonga and Nyanja only, and lives alone with Brenda in a small one room house made of mud and bricks. Makangwe's PCSC identified Brenda as "vulnerable" and appealed to ZOCS to provide additional support in food, clothing, and other goods to Brenda and her aunt. ZOCS staff contacted the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (that also has committees in Lusaka's various districts) and managed to secure two goats for Brenda and her aunt to breed and sell for income generation.

Brenda did not pass the grade seven national examinations in 2008. When I asked her to explain how she felt about her performance, Brenda described sentiments of guilt and shame as she saw friends she was with once in the same class now enrolled in grade eight, while she was left behind in grade seven. She then went on to describe what my translator and I discovered could be an unethical system of enrollment at the neighboring basic school (Chipapa Basic) where most Makangwe graduates enroll. Chipapa Head Teachers appear to allow two streams of students into their schools: a morning stream that passed the grade seven examinations legitimately and pays 150,000 kwacha (USD 30) per year to enroll and an afternoon stream that

did not pass the examinations and are charged 250,000 kwacha (USD 50). Brenda explained that neither she nor her aunt could afford the 250,000 kwacha.²⁹ As a result, she was going to repeat grade seven until she legally passed. Brenda (as well as subsequent interviews with other rural participants) confirmed that there were some students at Chipapa Basic paying the additional fees and currently enrolled in grade eight despite failing the national examinations in 2008.

Cholwe, another rural story. Cholwe is a 14 year-old girl who attended Chilambila in 2008. She is one of two students in this study belonging to the Soli ethnic group originating from what is now Zambia's Central Province and speaking Soli at home. Cholwe has six siblings, one who also attends Chilambila, while the others remain at home. Cholwe's father has a small maize field that the family uses for both income and food while her mother stays home and looks after her siblings. Cholwe is not sure if either her mother or father completing any schooling. Similar to Brenda, Cholwe did not pass examinations and "felt really bad" that she was not able to enroll in grade eight. Despite how disappointed she felt in herself, Cholwe was confident that "next time", she would not fail. She also offered that her parents supported and encouraged her, confident that she would pass in 2009 and fulfill her dreams of becoming a nurse.

Brenda and Cholwe's stories are common among rural ZOCS students who face multiple challenges to academic performance and grade eight progression. Of the 41 rural students sampled, more than half (25 students) did not pass. Unlike the issue of school fees in urban areas, the concern for academic achievement in rural locations draws the most convincing parallels to arguments by authors such as Carnoy (1974) that, a) "parents and eventually pupils themselves

²⁹ 1USD=5,000 ZMK in 2009.

regard schooling as a key to higher income and status, a step toward success in a competitive, success-oriented economy”, b) “For those who are poor, this last function is held to be particularly crucial, for social mobility may mean the difference between lifelong poverty and access to the consumption society” (p. 2), and c) “...the schools function to reinforce the social relations in production, and that no school reform can be separated from the effect it will have on the hierarchical relations in the society” (p. 343). However, as I elaborate below, the fact that *none* of the students sampled decided to give up on schooling by dropping out after failing examinations attests to the notion that the reproductive framework does not adequately explain students’ perceptions or expectations of schooling, as their self-confidence and belief in it as potentially providing life-changing opportunities persists. A similar conclusion may be drawn from Brenda’s story which shows that some urban basic schools are accepting students who *failed* national examinations, while students such as Andrew and Robert remain left behind.

With regards to school fees, Robert’s family provides an example of a situation in which Robert cannot attend school because neither he nor his parents earn enough to pay for all children in the household. Moreover, it is important to note the possibility that passing students (both urban and rural) may not be enrolled in grade eight not just because costs in isolation are high, but because families forego significant portions of income for other necessities. In some cases, as confessed by a girl attending Chilambila, parents or guardians (men in particular) use kwacha that could be allocated to school fees to buy beer instead. Without speaking directly to parents or guardians of students sampled, it remains unclear how prevalent such issues are and to what extent they truly prevent students from enrolling in grade eight.

If these cases were typical, rural students who failed examinations were not spending their time engaged in new activities. First, all but three passing but “just sitting” or informally

employed students were repeating grade seven which meant that most students' daily schedules were more or less the same as they were in 2008. Second, the types of employment that rural students were engaged in did not appear to require skills that a) they were not already taught at home by their parents or guardians such as molding bricks or working on commercial farms and b) were related to school subjects beyond mathematics. Longer term observations of these activities (as well as inclusion of more urban failing students) would have permitted a more conclusive argument about the use of school-learned skills outside of schools, but what I found instead was a focus among ZOCS schools on academic achievement at national standards rather than schooling for vocational skill-building as in other African APE programs. As discussed in Chapter Six, Chilambila was the only school where I found evidence that students were building on biological knowledge of planting and harvesting that they may not have received at home. The situation of repetition at the primary level was not what I expected coming into the study: I assumed that given the limited number of school places available in Lusaka and potential differences in student aspirations following participation in a ZOCS program, many students would utilize new skills--cognitive or vocational in various settings for paid employment. Clearly, the continued faith in schools, evidenced by students who were willing to continue repeating grade seven until they could find a way back into the system remained dominant.

Orphans' Examination Performance

From both James' and Susan's stories, one could argue that orphans outperformed non-orphans within groups perhaps because they see schooling as the only way out of their living conditions and are consequently more motivated and focused. While 85% of all orphans sampled passed examinations (34 of 40), 68% of non-orphans passed (42 of 62). These results contrast with the poorer educational performance found among orphans in South Africa where a majority

of such studies have been conducted (Ardington and Leibbrandt, 2010). Again, although these trends should be taken with caution considering the purposive nature of my Phase II sample that may over-represent orphans, the percent performing well in primary schools is not what one would expect from the literature.

Table 35
Orphan Status and 2008 Grade Seven National Examination Results (n=102)

Examination Results	Non-Orphans (%)	Orphans (%)
Pass	68	85
Fail	32	15
Totals	100% (n=62)	100% (n=62)
$\chi^2 (1, n=102) = 3.813, p = .051.$		

While 85% of all orphans (34 of 40) passed national examinations, only 68% of non-orphans passed (42 of 62). At a significance level of $p=.051$, this trend attests to the notion that orphans may perform just as well academically as their non-orphan counterparts at ZOCS. When I controlled for location and gender in the analysis, the data show that all female orphans living in urban areas passed examinations, while no female orphans in rural areas passed. Again, this may be due to the fact that students who failed are greatly underrepresented in urban areas. See table below:

Table 36

Examination Performance by Location, Orphan Status, and Gender (n=102)

	<u>Urban</u>				<u>Rural</u>			
	Boys, Non- Orphans	Boys, Orphans	Girls, Non- Orphans	Girls, Orphans	Boys, Non- Orphans	Boys, Orphans	Girls, Non- Orphans	Girls, Orphans
Pass	100	91	100	100	50	67	30	0
Fail	0	9	0	0	50	33	70	100
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n =	16	11	14	20	12	6	20	3

The cell counts for female orphans are not large enough to make inferences about the significance or strength of associations with examination performance (there were three rural orphans total). At the onset of analysis, I speculated that disparities between female orphans in urban and rural areas in terms of performance (none passing in rural areas and all passing in urban areas) could be attributed to the group of passing orphans attending Mary Aikenhead-- the rigorous, all-girls school I described in Chapter Six in which all eleven girls sampled passed examinations and were enrolled in grade eight. However, after revisiting the data, only seven of the 20 female orphans in urban areas attended Mary Aikenhead. Although I did not select Mary

Aikenhead students based on orphan status, the 64% of orphans in the Mary Aikenhead sample (seven out of eleven) is similar to the 63% of orphans existing in the Mary Aikenhead school population (352 out of 563 according to ZOCS 2008 Annual Report). Moreover, deleting this school from the dataset and re-running analysis, there is still no significant relationship between orphan status, gender, and/or examination performance. This suggests that while Mary Aikenhead may play a role in producing higher rates of success within the sample, gender and orphan status may otherwise be negligible indicators of performance in the larger ZOCS' population. A larger study sample yielding the same differences between urban and rural female orphans might indicate that there is something about being a girl orphan in an urban ZOCS school that affects performance differently than for the same group in a rural area.

Inocent, a rural story. Inocent (age 15) is a rural Makangwe student who did not pass the grade eight examinations. Prior to his mother's passing, Inocent's family stayed closer to Lusaka urban. At the time of our conversation, he had moved to Kafue District and was spending most of his time herding cattle owned by his aunt and uncle. He told me the story of his family and how he arrived at Makangwe:

My mother passed some time ago. Then my father was married again. I was not getting along with this new woman, so I went to move with my Uncle [in Makangwe]... I can go to my uncle's wife if I have a problem. So now, me, I have thirteen brothers and sisters...eight are in government schools and two are in community schools...there is this demand for uniforms so my father had to decide which ones to send. Me, I chose a community school to ease problems for my father (August 12, 2009).

Inocent's choice to attend a rural community school required a life change-- a move to Kafue District and a new life with his uncle. When I asked Inocent what he wanted to do when he got older, he told me he wanted to be a minibus driver because he wanted to "be having money everyday".

Iledy, an urban story. At age 17, Iledy attended Matero Open Community School. With her parents also separated, Iledy lives with her grandmother who has never been to school and four younger siblings in a two-room compound house. Iledy gave birth at age 15 to a baby boy who also lives in the same house. Although Iledy passed the grade seven examinations, she had been sitting at home for a year since she received her results. When I asked why, she explained (in what resembled more of a confession than a declarative statement):

I am just sitting...money, I don't have money. There is no one to help, madam. I just want you to help me...I have one children, madam. I made a mistake. The baby is now two years...the baby's father is in Ndola [on the Copperbelt].... My grandmother also looks after this baby. I was in school when I fell pregnant (personal interview, June 1, 2009).

The phrase "fall pregnant" is frequently used among many Zambians to describe girls who become pregnant while in school. In my interviews with the four young mothers who participated in this study, their reference to pregnancy and childbirth as "falling" or "making a mistake" was echoed in several ministerial conferences I attended in which the issue of "girl child pregnancy" was spreading across the provinces. Frequently discussed as a plague or serious disease, there seemed to be an underlying assumption that girls "fell" pregnant on their own, as a result of their personal carelessness or negligence, while young fathers, often in the same class or school (and in few cases, male teachers or head teachers) were not as severely reprimanded or

shamed. Until 1997, the re-admission of new mothers back into schools was not regularly practiced or enforced. In some cases, girls were turned away completely (FAWEZA, 2001). Giving birth to her child at the age of 15, Iledy wants to be back in school and eventually become a nurse. Similar to the Mancilla boys, I expected Iledy not to have performed as well as she did on examinations with her responsibilities as a new mother, but her experience is similar to the other three young, urban mothers I interviewed who passed despite multiple responsibilities and challenges at home.

Both Inocent and Iledy's stories are not the norm among most families that do not divorce, but the faith that students have in schooling and consequently, their expectations for the future are typical across urban and rural settings. In sum, ZOCS students come from a diverse set of families and circumstances-- some orphaned, some living with urban family while their parents remain in villages, and others living with both parents. ZOCS students sampled experience varying degrees of poverty and reside in low-income differentiated compounds and rural villages.

Observations and analysis of orphans in the study sample did not show disadvantage related to parents or guardians in ways I expected going into the study. For example, none of the households sampled were child-headed and at least one adult was present in each household that took some responsibility for students' care and well-being. I did not find any records from ZOCS that would provide more information on the number of child-headed households in the population. Moreover, although I was unable to locate recent nationwide studies on child-headed households, a randomized USAID (2002) study of 1,014 homes in four districts with the highest HIV and AIDS prevalence rates (Livingstone in Southern Province, Kitwe in Copperbelt Province, Lusaka, and Mongu in Northern Province) revealed that less than 5% of households

were child-headed. In regards to the current study, when asked, “Who would you go to if you had a problem or needed to attend a clinic?” every student sampled had at least one member of their household or community with whom they felt comfortable approaching in times of need.

Part III: Financial Obstacles to Student Success

Although I did not collect data on student performance in grade eight, I did discuss the issue of school fees with sampled passing students in more depth to investigate how they were managing fees ranging from 120,000 kwacha (USD 24) in rural areas to 250,000 (USD 50) per term (in three terms per year) in rural and urban areas plus the costs of uniforms, shoes, and other fees. As shown in Chapter Seven, not all children attending ZOCS schools are orphans and not all students come from families living in extreme poverty. Moreover, the 56 urban and 11 rural students who are currently enrolled in grade eight manage to pay school fees and other costs by pooling a variety of funds from different sources. See chart below on grade eight school fees:

Table 37

Who Pays Your Grade Eight School Fees or Other Costs of Attending School?

Location	Parents or Guardians	Extended Family	ZOCS and Sponsors	Student	Totals	n =
Urban	45	23	27	5	100%	61
Rural	64	19	18	0	100%	41

This data brings out several points about the nature of schooling and support for ZOCS students. First, parents and guardians, employed by a range of formal and informal activities make up the bulk of providers for school related fees at the basic level in grade eight, which may support claims made in prior chapters concerning parental ability to pay for primary schooling and the appeal of ZOCS as a choice for cost-saving urban parents. It is important to note that the 11 rural students who are now enrolled in grade eight are all from Makangwe Open Community School which is a) relatively closer to Lusaka urban than Chilambila and b) also supported by a local church discussed in more detail below.

Second, extended family plays an integral role in providing both financial and moral support for students as in James' case. Forty to forty-five percent of students sampled live with a parent or at least one member of their extended family, most often as a household head who is a grandmother, aunt, or uncle. The presence of extended family within households has always been a cultural aspect of most African families, but has only recently been referenced in relation to the mushrooming of orphan populations over the last two decades. Several students shared that they lived in a compound with relatives, but their parents were living in a village--often in a different

province. In addition to underlining the fact that ZOCS students come from families living in Lusaka for various reasons and under different circumstances, this suggests that resources for schooling may not just come from within a students' household, but perhaps across different homes where family members and other sources of support pool funds together for children of the family or clan. Within my own family and among several friends, money for school fees has been pooled and shared by relatives in the United States, Europe, and within Zambia. Although not on this scale for students in community schools, the arrangement that continues within various Zambian communities further suggests that extended families in Zambia, whether in the case of caring for orphans or paying school fees, create a complex web of networks or social capital as Backman (2009) describes in Lesotho. Beyond Backman's argument that valued social capital at home explains student success more than what happens at school alone, I argue that the nature of social capital found among extended families and other sources of support in ZOCS populations specifically and African communities more generally cautions researchers not to oversimplify household characteristics or family background in isolation with regards to student achievement or "success".

This study shows that the conventional measures of association with achievement utilized in high-income countries such as household characteristics and family background take on different meanings in low-income contexts that are not easily definable or measureable. Such differences are even more accentuated in community school contexts where schools have multiple sources of income and students have access to various types of support within and outside of schools. By providing more qualitative analyses of certain types of social capital in different settings, some current research captures nuances missing in larger scale quantitative

studies and raise questions about the validity of generalizations linking household characteristics, family background, and achievement that do not take into account the extended family.³⁰

Third, sponsorship by donors is an additional avenue for paying grade eight school fees among former ZOCS students. Students appear to be sponsored in grade eight by ZOCS or other partners more frequently in urban areas than rural ones. This was new knowledge to me, as I assumed that ZOCS students would largely be left to raise funds on their own for basic school. The five rural Chilambila students who passed examinations but were not enrolled did not have sponsors, whereas the two Makangwe students whose families could not afford basic school fees were assisted by ZOCS and/or the neighboring church. An important pattern to note here concerns the history of each school and relationships with catholic churches and missions as described by Mr. Chanda: Chilambila (the school with the highest rate of examination failure and the only school with the most students passing exams but being unable to enroll) does not have historical ties with any neighboring churches that could provide financial assistance to students and schools in a similar fashion to Makangwe. Largely dependent on whether or not funds became available from donors as well as which students qualify as “very vulnerable”, this system of administering sponsorship is another aspect of ZOCS’ vulnerability as discussed in Chapter Six. As I observed at Chilambila, some students can wait more than a year and still do not get a sponsor.

³⁰ Some recent research has begun to analyze social capital and schooling in Africa through different lenses including community participation in Ghanaian rural schools (Pryor, 2005) and the effects of patron-clientage relationships in Nigeria on educational attainment (Morgan, et. al, 2010).

Fourth, students such as James who are working for pay in urban areas are managing to utilize their kwacha for school fees, whereas students working in rural areas either a) are contributing their wages in cash or kind to their family's well-being, or b) are not earning enough to afford the full costs of basic school.

Summary

I began Chapter Eight with a discussion of student goals and aspirations for the future, drawing attention to larger Zambian educational and societal challenges that must be addressed for community school students to be adequately and equitably mainstreamed into government basic schools. Concluding part I, I explained how, consistent with recent studies such as Backman's (2009) work in Lesotho, failing students, particularly in rural areas internalized blame for examination failure, while mostly passing urban students attributed their success to teachers and schools. Part II provided an overview of student performance and grade eight progression within the study sample of 102 ZOCS students in six schools (four urban, two rural) in Lusaka Province relating achievement with various demographic indicators including orphan status. My findings concurred with conventional literature on topics such as comparative economic disadvantage in rural versus urban areas, rural girls as the most at-risk group for not passing grade seven examinations, and the role of various school and home factors in accentuating differences between student performance and progression in ZOCS schools. Contrastingly, my results departed from prevailing literature with regards to the percentage of orphans passing examinations when compared to non-orphans. I highlighted more and less typical cases of student "success" and "failure" among five groups utilizing interview data and analyzed how students defined their success or failure. Finally, in Part III, I assessed various

financial obstacles to student success, demonstrating the role that extended family and other community sources can play in addition to parents and guardians in supporting ZOCS students.

Chapter 9: Discussion and Conclusions

Since 1945, colonial officials, post-independence policymakers, and contemporary scholars have written on ways to improve primary education in Zambia. To date, no one suggestion or solution has perfected the system and much work lies ahead for the benefits of universal primary education policies or other investments to be realized. The GRZ's tax base continues to be insufficient for higher national investments in primary education. No new secondary schools have been built in Zambia since the immediate post-independence era. When my parents came to visit me in Lusaka, they remarked that the University of Zambia had not changed at all since their attendance in the 1970s. Three major universities cannot accommodate all the students who should be developing as Zambia's next generation of scholars, professionals, artists, and entrepreneurs. What has proved relatively successful over the last two decades is the spread of norms, values, and ideas about how to provide basic educational opportunities to thousands of children who remain out of public primary schools. But success in this regard is elusive. Zambia's post-colonial context continues to shape education and social stratification. And while Zambia's wealthy and elite continue to send their children to private schools at home and abroad, the majority of Zambians are offered either government or community schooling with decreasing chances of success at each level. A system of high-stakes examinations coupled with expensive, limited secondary school places perpetuates a growing population of out-of-school youth likely to end up unemployed or employed informally at minimal wages.

This chapter is divided into four parts in which I revisit the main findings of the study's initial research questions and conclude by addressing its implications for other community schools in practice and the larger field of "non-formal" education and APE more broadly.

Part I: How do community schools in Zambia function to provide primary education to various populations? What characteristics define Zambian community schools and the communities they serve?

ZOCS started garnering support of local churches and bilateral and multilateral development agencies as early as 1992. With the advent of globalization and by word of mouth, the internet, and cross-country exchange programs, people learned and shared information about ZOCS. Through these networks and linkages with various Christian churches, the organization became Zambia's largest community school provider, bringing in thousands of children who would otherwise be out of school and perhaps lured into circles of child prostitution, drugs, and crime-- particularly in urban areas. Although not all ZOCS students experience extreme poverty and reside in low-income compounds and rural or peri-urban villages, as I described in Chapter Six on ZOCS schools, a visit to any of the schools sampled further substantiates the notion that most students attend ZOCS schools out of necessity rather than choice.

Improving its standards and reputation over time, I found that ZOCS was not considered second-rate to government schools among the Zambians working in education that I interviewed. Especially in urban areas, it serves as a proxy for government schooling for families who make difficult decisions about which children to enroll in different types of schools and a low to no-cost option for extended family members and caretakers of orphans. In rural villages of Lusaka Province, ZOCS has become a household name, providing learning opportunities for children who would otherwise be forced to walk more than 15 miles to a government school or simply not attend at all. The parents and guardians of ZOCS students in both urban and rural areas are mostly men and women who, despite having attended at least some primary or secondary school, face various challenges to maintain steady formal employment, earn enough income to sustain household needs, and provide adequate support to students outside of school.

What differentiates ZOCS from other community schools and APE programs I have studied is its commitment to national goals for learning and achievement. Recognizing that examinations are still required for students who wish to be mainstreamed into the government school system by grade eight, ZOCS mandates that its students sit for national examinations. This focus on an academic end-goal, coupled with ZOCS' emphasis on community control and accountability, as well as tremendous efforts and dedication put forth by many teachers are what make the ZOCS model work. Within both urban and rural schools, examination results are posted on walls and shared with visitors. Parent/Community School Committees (PCSCs) are aware of or involved in various aspects of school planning and decision-making. An emphasis on activities outside of schooling for income-generation also helps to build a sense of community that may not be as prevalent in government schools. In short, ZOCS provides an appealing path to learning for students wanting to join Zambia's educated elite, despite data proving the odds against them.

Although Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder (2002) have argued that "there may be instances where community schools will and should, remain outside the formal government system" (p. 145) my position is that, with the exception of APE programs in countries experiencing severe conflict and instability, not providing students with the *choice* to move forward academically by teaching to nationally acceptable standards as ZOCS does is in essence, a disservice. Community members in my study were not most interested in how to teach children "locally-relevant" subjects that did not have any bearing on their academic work. Rather, the concern among parents, teachers, and students in urban and rural areas alike was learning knowledge and skills for examinations, progressing to grade eight, and "going all the way".

One MoE official told me that ZOCS are some of the most elite community schools in Zambia- in urban areas, I agree. However, within urban areas, there are also differences between and among schools that have different sources of support and unique relationships with particular churches, donors, and agencies. This phenomenon is not as prevalent in the rural schools sampled. I learned that students in rural schools face some of the same obstacles as their government school counterparts across the country. Rural ZOCS schools provide telling examples of how geographic isolation and the lack of government monitoring and evaluation can hinder school progress, especially as students from more diverse language and ethnic groups are forced to learn and write examinations in a language they never hear outside of school. Despite institutional and/or organizational challenges, what matters most for ZOCS students is that the national examination is their one chance to excel, their one chance to secure a school place so that they have choices to do something more than “loaf” in urban areas, work in a field for food or infrequent wages in rural areas, or (for rural girls) get married at a young age to someone who can pay a satisfactory bride price.

In response to Fuller’s (1991) argument that governments are the primary “sellers” of mass schooling in low-income countries, I argue that Zambian children become acutely aware of the alternatives to schooling in their communities with little to no exposure to their governments in capital cities. Although I do not have data to substantiate this speculation, several students I spoke with told me they believed in schooling and wanted to be educated simply so they could be “like me”. As most of them knew nothing about me beyond why I was in their schools, they observed my freedom, learned of my choice to conduct this study, and knew that I had undergone several years of schooling to get here. For many Zambian children, education seems to be freedom to be anything but poor.

Despite notable accomplishments among urban and rural schools sampled and the opportunities ZOCS offers for thousands of Zambian children who would otherwise not be in school, ZOCS' fragility and vulnerability as an organization cannot be ignored. Before I left Zambia in 2009, urban teachers were receiving letters informing them that ZOCS would no longer be able to pay their salaries, encouraging them to put more effort into other activities to supplement or even replace previous income. More generally, the global economic crisis continues to play a role in bilateral, multilateral, and philanthropic assistance to NGOs such as ZOCS with long-term effects that have yet to be realized. While there are some benefits to ZOCS' autonomy as an NGO in nature, the disadvantages to ZOCS schools existing outside the government system become clearer in regards not only to teacher salaries, but issues such as teacher training, language of instruction, and resources including school infrastructure and teaching and learning materials that are donated by various individuals and agencies rather than provided by the MoE. Such threats to long-term sustainability may have implications not only for school operation but for student achievement as well.

Part II: How do teachers and students define success with community schooling *vis á vis* their own perceptions and experiences?

After speaking with hundreds of children and collecting data for this study over 14 months, I learned that based on the limited number of secondary school places in Zambia, the system of high-stakes examinations for entry into different levels is not likely to change, at least in the near future. Consequently, although references to other school incentives such as meals and microfinance are made, study participants by and large continue to define the success of students and schools in terms of national examinations as described above--how many students were selected, how many are now enrolled in government schools, etc. A considerable amount of debate in both U.S. K-12 and international comparative education has examined the implications

of such heavy emphasis on examinations to measure student achievement (Henyeman, 1987; Greaney, 1995), yet Zambia's limited capacity to expand its education system continues to perpetuate its reliance on examinations inherited from the British colonial era. Exacerbating the issue of examinations is how rural students are placed at considerably more disadvantage because the language in which examinations are administered is not their mother-tongue (nor does it appear to consistently be the language of instruction in classrooms).

Despite this reality, interviews from my study showed how students did in fact believe that their community schools could set them on equal footing with students from other schools: if they did well in school, passed examinations, and moved forward, they could be an accountant, or a doctor, or the next president of Zambia. Based on my comparative analysis of both district and national data, while most students sampled (particularly in urban areas, although failures were underrepresented) did pass and are, at the point of completion, similar to students from other schools, the chances that they will complete a full three years of secondary school are limited. However, given what we also know nationally about the low number of places and high costs of secondary schools, these odds are less related to attending a specific type of primary school than they are to performing well in grade nine *and* managing to pay school fees. From my review of the literature, the number of Zambian students who do not attend secondary schools because they do not have school fees has not been studied in detail, leaving the story incomplete.

Part III: What factors continue to promote or limit success for Zambian students within broader school, community, and national contexts?

Without observation over a longer period of time, I am unable to draw conclusions about how many rural students go all the way to upper secondary and graduate with a high school diploma. However, there does appear to be some malpractice among rural government basic

schools that are accepting students who did not pass examinations under the condition that they pay higher school fees. Rural disadvantage and performance is not specific to ZOCS or community schools in general-- it is a national problem that applies in a majority of African countries. But with the support of its partners, ZOCS could create incentives for teachers to teach in rural schools in similar ways to the urban Mancilla Open Community School that was able to bring in a government school teacher to improve examination scores. On a smaller scale, programs involving parents, perhaps in learning English or basic mathematics might provide the supplemental support rural students are missing at home. These approaches do not require a restructuring of the entire education system (such as removing examinations as the requirement for progression or changing national languages of instruction) but could be carried out on a micro basis with potentially immediate effects on the teaching and learning process.

Concerned more with teacher and student responses to community schooling, this study showed how a small NGO such as ZOCS has made significant impacts on the lives of children who believe deeply in schooling and would rather be in school than doing anything else. The data presented here showed that several of the conventional indicators utilized in comparative research to explain student achievement such as gender, family background, and orphan status in a Zambian context played no role in educational outcomes within my sample. Because of the nature of my Phase II sample as more purposive, some of these findings (including the lack of correlation between socioeconomic status and achievement, the surprising number of parents with secondary education, the link between parental education and employment, and the number of urban failing students in community schools) should be interpreted with caution and would benefit from further investigation. However, the overwhelming differences between urban and rural areas draw much needed attention not only to the importance of living conditions outside of

schooling that may influence student experiences and abilities (orphan status, student employment, parental education and support for students, student motivation in urban areas, etc.) but also to the potential effects of schools themselves on student learning under different conditions (school location and exposure to harmful influences in urban areas such as crime and drug use, ZATEC trained versus untrained teachers, teachers with limited English ability in rural areas, etc.). Despite harsh realities in urban compounds and rural villages, the number of students who did pass and are enrolled suggests that ZOCS students are capable of succeeding with more support both at home and in school.

Part IV: So What?

ZOCS has expanded to serve more students than any other NGO in Zambia. This study shows that “non-formal” approaches to primary schooling are not only viable, but are capable of serving as proxies where government school capacity is limited. Although various challenges to ZOCS schools are similar to those of other community schools in low-income countries, the ZOCS model shows how, with the support and resources of NGOs, donor agencies, and others, programs existing outside the government system can succeed. While other aspects of non-academic enrichment characterize ZOCS schools, these community schools teach others that with limited resources and dedicated teachers, an opportunity to excel at national standards can be provided for children who have, for various reasons been excluded from the public system. Moreover, this study shows that community school students can compete with government and private school students for places in basic (lower secondary) schools--their performance being comparable within districts. As community schools in other countries continue to expand, similar comparative analyses will not only bring much needed attention to the strengths and challenges

of different schools, but possibly suggest various avenues for improvement in curriculum, instruction, and other aspects of programming.

Growth and change has occurred in the lives of many ZOCS students who are learning to read, write, and communicate in English as the national language. Organizations such as ZOCS continue to redefine notions of family background, socioeconomic status, and social capital in a comparative context by demonstrating how resources *beyond* ones immediate household play a role in securing access to educational opportunities for Zambian youth (e.g., through sponsorship, ties to local churches, etc.).

Despite striking evidence that most ZOCS students simply will not progress past grade nine, stories such as that of James (who sells tomatoes with his grandmother to pay school fees) show that Zambian adolescents are taking initiative to ensure that being poor does not prevent them from learning. While such stories attest to how ZOCS makes remarkable accomplishments with limited and infrequent resources, it remains evident organizationally as well as within schools that are unable to consistently remunerate teachers that ZOCS is not self-sustaining and more work lies ahead if ZOCS' work is to continue.

ZOCS offers a foundation for basic learning that some government schools do not. Its story of accomplishments to date make it worthy not only of greater MoE support and involvement, but also of being documented and shared with scholars, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to understand a relatively new field of APE with tremendous potential for learning and growth not only in Zambia but across the developing world.

APPENDIX

Interview Schedule

Questions 15, 16, 17, and 20 include choices that will not be presented at the onset of the question. These options will be offered if and when participants do not provide sufficient detail in their initial responses.

1.) Age:

2.) Gender:

3.) Who do you live with (mark all that apply)?

- a. Mother**
- b. Father**
- c. Aunt**
- d. Uncle**
- e. Grandmother**
- f. Grandfather**
- g. Sister**
- h. Brother**
- i. Cousin**
- j. Friend**
- k. Foster Parent**
- l. Employer**
- m. Alone (do not live with anyone)**
- n. Other. Please explain:**

4.) Are either of your parents deceased (note mother and/or father)?

5.) What is the highest level of education obtained by your parent (s) or guardian(s)?

6.) Who pays for your school fees or other costs of attending school?

7.) Who can you contact in case of an emergency? Why this person? When and why have you gone to this person for help?

8.) How many siblings do you have? Are you the eldest, youngest, etc.? Do they live with you? Are you responsible for your siblings? Which ones?

9.) Which materials are your home built with?

- a. Mud/dung
 - b. Brick
 - c. Concrete/cement
 - d. Metal sheets (specify roof and/or frame)
- 10.) Does your home have any of the following?
- a. Electricity (lights, a gas stove, etc.)
 - b. Running Water (from a tap)
 - c. A wired phone
 - d. Cell phones (please specify how many and to whom they belong)
 - e. A car
 - f. A flushing toilet
- 11.) How many rooms does your home have?
- 12.) Did you pass the grade seven national examinations?
- 13.) Have you been selected to a secondary school?
- 14.) If yes, will you be able to attend? Please explain.
- 15.) If no, what are your short and long term plans? (paid employment, unpaid employment, domestic work, etc.)? How did you become involved in this/these activities? Did you choose these activities on your own, or with the help/encouragement/command of someone else?
- 16.) How did you pass your days last week (school, work, domestic chores, farming, childcare, etc.)? Which activities did you spend the most and least time on?
- a. Relaxing with friends
 - b. Going to school

- c. Earning money
- d. Doing schoolwork (outside of school)
- e. Playing sports
- f. Caring for children
- g. Attending church or mosque
- h. Extracurricular activities (clubs, music groups, etc.)?

17.) Why do you carry out the activities mentioned in question (17)?

- a. Someone forces me
- b. I have nothing better to do
- c. I make money
- d. I help my family
- e. Other:

18.) Do you earn money? If so, from what activities? Who do you work for/with? How did you obtain your current job?

19.) What are your family responsibilities?

20.) When and how often do you utilize the following knowledge and skills in your daily life (always, very often, sometimes, rarely, never)?

- a. Reading (in mother-tongue)
- b. Writing (in mother-tongue)
- c. Speaking (in mother-tongue)
- d. Reading (in English)
- e. Writing (in English)
- f. Speaking English

- g. Calculating numbers**
- h. Health knowledge (HIV and AIDS, malaria, TB, reproductive health, hygiene, etc.)**
- i. Caring for sick or elderly people**
- j. Teaching in a community school**
- k. Volunteering**
- l. Other.**

21.) Could any aspect of your community schooling experience have been improved? If so, please explain.

22.) What are your personal, academic, and/or professional goals for the future? Which of these goals are most important to you?

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