

Community Awareness Campaign on the  
importance of Girl-Child's Education in Chongwe  
District, Zambia

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# Outline

- Introduction
- Potential benefits of the project
- Research Project Aim
- Research Objectives
- Data Collection Techniques
- Main Findings
- Policy Implications

# Introduction

- The education system in Zambia is characterised by inequalities between females and males;
- The Ministry of Finance and National Planning states that: “At the basic educational level, for instance, in 1998 there were 810,873 boys enrolled compared to 747,151 girls with a concentration of girls between Grades 1 to 4. The gap widens from Grade 5 upwards, and gets even worse at secondary and tertiary levels” (Zambia, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2002:78).

# Introduction (Cont'd)

- The disparities between boys' education and that of girls' are worsened by high drop-out rates among girls at both primary and secondary schools. As the Government of the Republic of Zambia (2014:99) points out that: "In 2012, at primary level, 12,753 girls left school on account of having fallen pregnant...At secondary level in 2012, data indicates that 2,096 girls fell pregnant..."

# Introduction (Cont'd)

- According to the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health(2014) 17,600 female pupils fell pregnant in 2013 alone.

# Potential benefits of the project

- This was an exceptional project to be done. Many International Conferences are suggesting that educating girls is one of the ways of achieving gender equality in education thereby helping in achieving Education for All in primary and secondary schooling. In Zambia, with many economic and social problems, this is a particularly pertinent issue.

# Research Project Aim

The aim of the project was to conduct a community awareness campaign in Chongwe district, a rural area, in Zambia, in order to help parents and community members to have a positive attitude towards the education of girls.

# Objectives

- i) to help change negative perceptions of educating girls;
- ii) to encourage parents/guardians to educate their girl-children;
- iii) to recommend measures to the local politicians, community leaders, parents and other community members that may address negative attitudes and beliefs that hinder education of a girl- child in order to encourage the participation of girls in schools.



# Data collection techniques

- focus group discussions;
- Semi-structured interviews; &
- participant observation



# Main Findings

# Key issues

- Poor retention among girls
- High absenteeism among girls

# Factors that led to girls dropping out of school

- High poverty
- Cultural practices
- Early marriages
- Pregnancies (e.g. 'freedom' of sleeping in their own small shelters)

# Re-entry Policy

- 1997: Re-entry Policy introduced.

The guidelines of the Policy include:

- The steps that need to be taken after a pregnancy has been detected;
- The documents which should be given to the pregnant girl when she goes on leave and those that should be maintained by schools on pregnant girls;
- The length of time for re-entry after delivery;
- What can be done to improve the school environment and prevent pregnancies (Ministry of Education, 2004).

**Table 1: Number of pregnancies and re-admissions in basic schools in Zambia: 2002-2009**

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pregnancies	3,663	4,405	6,528	9,111	12,370	11,391	12,370	13,634
Re-admissions	1,322	1,836	2,626	3,899	4,470	3,870	4,692	5,517
% age-readmissions	36	42	40	43	36	34	38	40

Source: Ministry of Education (2010)

# Most girls not returning to school

- Stigma

“Most girls do not return to school after delivery because of stigma as they are now regarded as mothers” (Headteacher, Lwiimba Basic School)

- No care for baby
- Poverty



- “The Re-entry Policy is encouraging promiscuity among girls” (Mother A, Lwiimba Village)

# Policy Implications

- i) The Government of the Republic of Zambia together with its stakeholders should increase efforts to ensure that vulnerable communities especially in the rural areas are educated on the importance of girls' education;
- ii) Strengthening counselling services offered to girls who fall pregnant;
- iii) Strengthening advocacy to ensure that pregnant girls return to school after giving birth;

# Policy Implications (Cont'd)

- iv) The fight against early marriages should be intensified by the Government and all stakeholders.

Arigatou gozaimasu  
Thank you very much