



MUKUBA UNIVERSITY

**SKILLS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN PRIMARY AND
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Shemi, A.P; Lifuka, E; Luchembe, D; Sakala, J & Chisha, E

**REPORT FOR COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ON
SKILLS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY
SCHOOLS FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

October, 2020

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Skills and career development are processes that require an orchestration of efforts starting from early childhood to tertiary education. The Global Competitiveness Report of 2019 provides parameters used for understanding of the general workforce. Overall, Zambia ranks very low. This report has shown that this could be attributed to the low skills and career development at primary and secondary school level. At those levels there is a low funding, poor resource allocation and no or little career guidance and counselling if any.

2.0 RESEARCH METHODS

This study, mainly, utilised document analysis. Policy and legal documents were scrutinised for information on skills and career development in primary and secondary schools.

3.0 ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ZAMBIA

3.1 POLICY FRAMEWORK

Over the years, the Zambian education system has been guided by policies which were designed to support the achievement of its educational goals. The policy framework for education are based on the following documents:

- Educating our Future Policy of 1996
- The Science and Technology Policy of 1996.
- Investing in our people (1996)
- National Policy on Science and Technology (1996)
- The National Implementation Framework (2007)
- Vision 2030
- Education Curriculum Framework 2013
- Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) Education, 2017-2021

The Ministry of General Education and The Ministry of Higher Education (2017) collectively designed the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) to help re-establish education as the key catalyst for national development and help the country attain its development vision. This was to help deliver education which included a focus on skills and career development at primary, secondary and tertiary level. The two ministries noted, among other things that need for a relevant curriculum effective teacher, developing of foundational learning skills in learners and incentives to motivate the effective management of education delivery. The two ministries strategically combined the policies such as Educating our Future Policy (1996), Technical Education and Vocational and TEVET (Skills Development) Policy (1998) and the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (1996). This was done to provide a road map for attaining aspirations expounded in the presented in the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4. According to the The Ministry of General Education and The Ministry of Higher Education, the ESSP is a way of convening all stakeholders including primary, secondary and tertiary education institution to help the country meet both its national and international commitments.

One of the objectives of the National Policy on Science and Technology was to provide students at primary, secondary and technical colleges with scientific knowledge and skills which could help learners focus on practical skill for their career development. The STEM

skills involves problem solving, creativity, inquiry skills, math & science skills, engineering-design thinking, critical thinking and collaboration.

The revised curriculum of 2014 introduced a dual career pathway involving the academic and vocational paths which was aimed at promoting skills-based education and improving literacy instruction in learners. The two-tier curriculum was introduced for Grades 8 to 12 so that learners could choose to pursue academic or a vocational career pathway.

3.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The policy framework for education is based on the The Education Act of 2011. This law guides on how to best provide education at all levels in Zambia. The Act follows after the principles of liberalisation, decentralisation, equality, equity, partnership and accountability. The Ministry of Education followed this Act when highlighting skills and values in the curriculum covering primary, secondary and tertiary education.

**4.0 MEASURES PUT IN PLACE BY GOVERNMENT TO
ENHANCE SKILLS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL**

4.1 Measures put in place to enhance skills and career development in primary schools

To ensure that skills and career development are enhanced in primary schools, the Zambian curriculum was reformed so that learners may not face a lot of challenges but succeed in school and future life (MoGE, 2013). For example the education curriculum framework 2013 identified three key competences for learners at primary school level. These were:

- Literacy Skills in English and a Zambian Language or Sign Language
- Numeracy Skills
- Information and Communications Technology Skills
- Life Skills

The revised curriculum of 2014 introduced a dual career pathway (academic and vocational) aimed at promoting a skills-based education and improving literacy instruction in the early grades. The curriculum was designed to help young learners acquire knowledge, skills, positive values and attitudes for them to grow into resourceful and useful citizens. This helped learners engage in manipulation of objects and interact with nature during the learning process.

Additionally, the ministry has focused on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in helping to link education for learners to acquire skills to access, criticize, analyse and practically apply knowledge. This includes life skills such as psychosocial life skills and literacy skills to deal effectively with challenges of everyday life.

According to the National Policy on Science and Technology, basic orientation in Science and Technology coupled with training which focus on practical skills can contribute to national development (Ministry of Science, Technology and Vocational Training, 1996).

The Education Sector Strategic Plan (p.2) identified the following as the Key factors associated with learning achievement challenges:

- Limited space that results in large class sizes that are beyond the capacity of teachers to teach effectively;

- Low teacher skills and preparedness with less than 40 per cent of teachers routinely preparing lesson plans;
- Teacher absenteeism in the region of 20 per cent;
- Poor oversight of teaching and learning that reduces effective learning time; and
- The amount of grant the school received per child.

4.2 Measures put in place to enhance skills and career development in secondary schools

4.2.1 Revision of Secondary school curriculum

According to the National Policy on Science and Technology, basic orientation in Science and Technology coupled with training which focus on practical skills can contribute to national development (Ministry of Science, Technology and Vocational Training, 1996).

Secondary school curriculum was revised in 2013 and implemented in 2014 with the introduction of the following (ESSP, 2017):

- A two-tier curriculum system;
- Computer studies as a subject (Grades 8–12);
- Social studies at the junior secondary level (Grades 8–9);
- Design and technology as a subject (Grade 8–12);
- Redefinition of teaching content to clearly state knowledge, skills and values to be taught.

The change was made in order to create two career paths (Academic and Vocational). The academic pathway was created for learners who showed interest for academic subjects and careers which required those subjects. The Vocational Career Pathway was designed for learners with interests in technical and practical jobs.

4.2.2 Establishment of Guidance and Counselling Unit in secondary schools

To assist secondary school learners make informed decisions on their skills and career development, the Ministry established a Guidance and Counselling Unit in secondary schools. This unit could, among other things, guide learners on their career choices and development.

This shows the measures that have been put in place by government to enhance skills and career development in secondary schools but this was not the case at primary level.

4.3 CHALLENGES FACED IN PROVIDING SKILLS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL

4.3.1 CHALLENGES IN PROVIDING SKILLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

4.3.1.1 Guidance and Counselling Unit

Chambers, Kashefpakdel, Rehill and Percy (2018) survey of 20,000 primary school children from several countries including Zambia. It was found that sense of awareness for primary school children's career choices were influenced by the jobs of their parents and other members of the extended family except for Zambia and Uganda where the teacher was the main influencer. This shows that in case of Zambia there is need for Guidance and Counselling Unit to encourage learners move in the correct direction. This is because primary school pupils' career choices are in case of Zambia mostly influenced by teachers.

4.3.1.2 Learner performance

Archer, Osbourne, DeWitt, Dillon and Wong (2013) in the UK showed that primary school children's aspiration from age of 10 to 14 are consistent. They further found that if children have not developed STEM aspirations at age of 10 then it was unlikely that they could develop STEM aspirations when they are 14 years. Though this study was not done in Zambia, it indicates that learner's STEM skills development is greatest within a particular age range.

"When international assessments were applied on Zambian children in public schools only 5 per cent and 2 per cent of 15-year-old students met minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics respectively. With this trend in learning outcomes, Zambia will likely fall short of meeting the target 4.1 of SDG Goal 4" (UNICEF 2019, p.7). This could be due to various challenges that are encountered in the provision of skills such as STEM skills in primary schools. There is need to increase resource allocation to schools in order to enhance learner's skills and career development. This goes with a huge financial cost.

4.3.1.3 Huge cost for skills and career development

Skills development in primary schools is likely to be difficult due to the huge cost especially when practical skills are involved. The ESSP (2017) identified the following as the key factors associated with learning achievement challenges:

- Limited space that results in large class sizes that are beyond the capacity of teachers to teach effectively;
- Low teacher skills and preparedness with less than 40 per cent of teachers routinely preparing lesson plans;
- Teacher absenteeism in the region of 20 per cent;
- Poor oversight of teaching and learning that reduces effective learning time; and
- The amount of grant the school received per child.

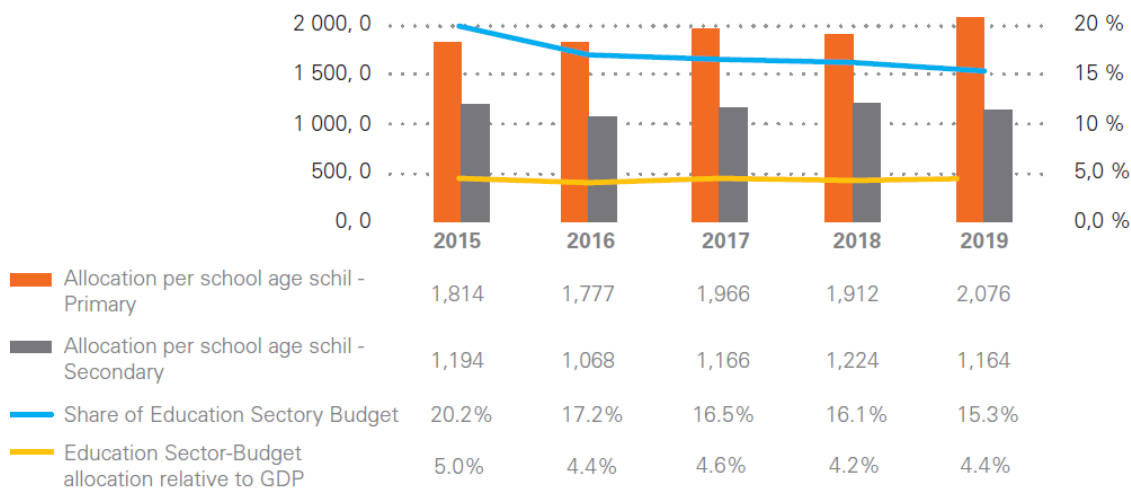


Figure 1. Evolution of Education Budget from 2015-2019 (Source; UNICEF - Appropriation Act and budget speeches, 2015-2019)

4.3.1.4 Lack of infrastructure

This shows that funds could be a challenge in learners' skill and career development in primary schools. Infrastructure and equipment is another challenges in regards to skills and career development in primary schools. For example, Table 1 shows classrooms,

laboratories and libraries in primary schools by type and province. This shows the limited infrastructure in primary schools.

Table 1. Classrooms, laboratories and libraries in primary schools by type and province (Source, Educational statistical bulletin - Ministry of Education)

	Classrooms			Laboratories			Libraries		
	Perm	Temp	Incomplete	Perm	Temp	Incomplete	Perm	Temp	Incomplete
National	39 941	4 251	4 222	473	33	76	743	75	27
<i>Provinces</i>									
CENTRAL	4 544	611	664	30	3	4	22	4	1
COPPERBELT	7 202	471	360	173	3	0	115	5	0
EASTERN	4 363	494	633	9	1	0	42	31	4
LUAPULA	3 191	279	254	24	4	5	44	3	2
LUSAKA	5 705	187	235	70	8	20	73	0	7
MUCHINGA	2 791	518	508	12	8	5	8	4	7
NORTH WESTERN	2 661	370	296	32	2	14	195	1	0
NORTHERN	3 311	692	532	57	1	17	17	21	3
SOUTHERN	6 069	556	694	31	2	0	32	2	2
WESTERN	104	73	46	35	1	11	195	4	1

The tables reveals an absence of libraries in many primary schools in all the provinces. It indicates that pupils could not carry out their own independent study which is essential in skills and career development. Students might not be able to, for example, develop, reading and study skills. There are other specialised rooms that are required for skills developments

4.3.1.4 Legal framework lagging policy provisions

Comparing policy provision and legal framework shows that legal framework has significantly lagged behind policy provision. Policy and legal provisions in the Zambian education system are not aligned to each other. This observation was also noted in ESSP (2017). Currently, the Education Act of 2011 is still been used to guide education provision. Legal provisions which take into account skills and career development in schools must be designed. Such an Act will guide the financing of skills and career development and the allocation of resources to schools.

4.3.2 CHALLENGES IN PROVIDING SKILLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

4.3.2.1 Guidance and Counselling units

According to ESSP (2017) Guidance and Counselling Units in secondary schools do not provide desired services to due due to shortage of Guidance and Counselling teachers as most of the units are manned by part-time staff. Additionally, the staff in these Units are not properly qualified so they may not properly guide learners.

4.3.2.2 Huge cost for skills and career development

Skills development in secondary schools is likely to be difficult due to the huge cost as stated under primary education. The same key factors identified in ESSP (2017) in connection to learning achievement challenges apply in case of secondary schools. These are:

- Limited space that results in large class sizes that are beyond the capacity of teachers to teach effectively;
- Low teacher skills and preparedness with less than 40 per cent of teachers routinely preparing lesson plans;
- Teacher absenteeism in the region of 20 per cent;
- Poor oversight of teaching and learning that reduces effective learning time; and
- The amount of grant the school received per child.

As indicated in Figure 1, education requires financing and skills and career development might require a huge budget. For example some of the skills such as computer skills require the purchasing of computers for use by students.

4.3.2.3 Lack of infrastructure

Infrastructure and equipment are a challenge in regards to skills and career development in secondary schools. There is limited infrastructure in secondary schools. Table 2 shows classrooms, laboratories and libraries in secondary schools by type and province.

Table 2. Classrooms, laboratories and libraries in secondary schools by type and province (Source, Educational statistical bulletin - Ministry of Education)

	Classrooms			Laboratories			Libraries		
	Perm	Temp	Incomplete	Perm	Temp	Incomplete	Perm	Temp	Incomplete
National	10 113	6	555	1 036	33	98	746	26	31
<i>Provinces</i>									
CENTRAL	1 113	1	0	105	6	14	107	6	14
COPPERBELT	2 260	0	0	198	6	10	60	2	3
EASTERN	794	1	0	120	6	4	107	5	4
LUAPULA	577	1	0	58	1	20	27	3	2
LUSAKA	1 452	3	2	173	1	16	73	5	0
MUCHINGA	428	0	550	51	4	7	96	1	0
NORTH WESTERN	790	0	3	51	4	7	16	1	2
NORTHERN	662	0	0	17	3	2	127	3	3
SOUTHERN	1 375	0	0	198	1	17	58	0	0
WESTERN	662	0	0	65	1	1	75	0	3

Skills development require enough laboratories, libraries and equipment that allow students to perform practical activities in groups or individually.

4.3.2.3 Guidance and Counselling units

According to ESSP (2017) Guidance and Counselling Unit in secondary schools do not provide desired services due to due to shortage of Guidance and Counselling teachers as most of the units are manned by part-time staff. Additionally, the staff in these Units are not properly qualified and those that are qualified are heavily given the roles.

4.3.2.4 Legal framework lagging policy provisions

On legal framework and policy provisions the same issues discussed under primary education still apply. For example, the Education Act of 2011 applies to secondary school. Policy and legal provisions in the Zambian secondary education system are not aligned. Even at this level there is need for legal provisions which could take into account skills and career development of learners, for example, guiding the financing of skills and career development and the allocation of resources to secondary schools.

Fund allocation to the Zambia education sector as a percentage of the total national budget has been declining in the past five years. It is also occurring at a time when secondary schools are expected to implement the two-tier curriculum from Grades 8 to 12.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The policy framework for Zambia education system are based on documents such as Educating our Future Policy of 1996 and Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), 2017-2021. The education policies and Education Act apply to both primary and secondary schools. The legal framework on the other hand is based on the Education Act (2011). Educational documents such as ESSP has explained on the skill and career provision in the Zambian educational sector. The Zambian government has put measures in place to enhance skills and career development in both primary and secondary schools. Unfortunately, the legal framework was found to be lagging behind the policy provisions. Therefore, policy and legal provisions in the Zambian education system are not aligned. Additionally, the Education Act does not specifically guide skills and career development for learners in primary and secondary schools. Therefore, while the policy provisions appear adequate, it is difficult to say the same for legal framework in the Zambian educational system. Funding to the educational sector has been dwindling making some policy framework to be inadequate and ineffective for student skills and career development. Therefore, the unaligned legal framework and policy provision coupled with insufficient funds to education sector makes skills and career development in primary and secondary learners difficult to attain.

6.0 WAY FORWARD

This section presents the recommendations with regard to skills and career development in primary and secondary school.

1. Guidance and counselling units to be introduced at primary school level
2. Revision of Education Act of 2011 so that it could be aligned to policy provisions. The Act must also contain components that could guide on issues such as financing of skills and career development in primary and secondary schools.
3. Increasing funding to primary and secondary schools.

REFERENCES

- Archer, L., Osbourne, J., DeWitt, J., Dillon, J. & Wong, B. (2013). *ASPIRES: Young People's science and career aspirations, age 10-14*. London: King's College
- Chambers, N, Kashefpakdel, E, Rehill, J & Percy, C. (2018). *Drawing the future: exploring the career aspirations of primary school children from around the world*, Education and Employers, London, Accessed from <https://www.educationandemployers.org/drawing-the-future-report-published>
- Ministry of Science, Technology and Vocational Training. (1996). *National Policy on Science and Technology*. Lusaka, Zambia.
- Ministry of Education (2013). *Zambia education curriculum framework 2013*. Lusaka: The Curriculum Development Centre
- Ministry of Science, Technology and Vocational Training (2009), *Science, Technology and Innovation Policy*. Lusaka, Zambia.
- Ministry of General Education & The Ministry of Higher Education. (2017). *Education and Skills Sector Plan 2017-2021*
- Ministry of General Education. (2013). *Education Curriculum Framework 2013*. Curriculum Development Centre
- UNICEF. (2019). *Zambia Education Budget Brief*, UNICEF
- The Science and Technology ACT, No. 26 of 1997. National Assembly of Zambia. 11th November, 1997
- Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Act, No. 11 of 2005. National Assembly of Zambia. 17th May, 2005