



The Impact of Improved and Predictable Funding to Vulnerable Schools

Social Protection

A CARE International in Zambia Learning Product

2009

CARE Zambia's work in Social Protection

Since 2004, CARE Zambia has been working through a Program Partnership Agreement (PPA) with the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) to implement a number of Social Protection projects, aimed at increasing the capacity of institutions and the most vulnerable in society to better manage risk associated with food insecurity, destitution and HIV and AIDS.

The PPA programme reflects CARE International's vision which *"seeks a world of hope, tolerance and social justice where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security"*.

An estimated 64% of Zambians are poor, mostly living in rural areas (Central Statistics Office 2007) on less than US\$ 1 per day. The PPA programme has focused on addressing this through a Social Protection agenda that supports both the achievement of Millennium Development Goals one, two and six, and the Government of Zambia's Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP).

In this context, CARE Zambia regards Social Protection as a holistic approach to protecting and promoting the livelihoods and welfare of vulnerable groups through coordinated policies and transfer mechanisms such as cash, physical resources, training and in-kind contributions. The vulnerable groups targeted include:

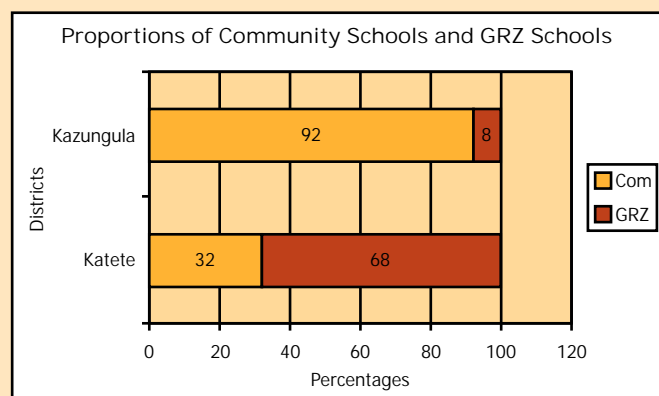
- Low capacity households including widows, the disabled, the old, and other marginalized, low-income households, and informal sector operators;
- Incapacitated households with no self-help potential, including mainly households affected by HIV/AIDS;
- Child-headed households and street children

As part of the PPA, a series of learning products have been developed as a means of sharing knowledge and promoting greater understanding with a wide spectrum of stakeholders including policy makers, Government, donors, and civil society.

Background to the project

Research findings from the 2004 Zambian Education Spending and Delivery Survey (ESDS) and the 1996 Ugandan Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) observed that little of the budget allocated to Ministries actually reached schools, especially those in more remote areas.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education's (MoE) Directorate of Planning and Information, CARE Zambia established the Supplementary Term Grants (TG) initiative in Kazungula and Katete Districts. The main aim of this initiative was to deliver adequate, regular and predictable supplementary Term Grants through a specially developed Operations Manual for the TG project, using MoE Sector Pool Fund expenditure guidelines. The project involved a total of 70 schools; 50 intervention schools and 20 control schools split equally across both districts. The targeted schools had been found to have the greatest need following a vulnerability assessment exercise and they included both community and GRZ schools enlisted for Government funding.



Capacity Building

The capacity of the school administration, School Committees at Zone and District levels was developed to handle specified tasks in the Project's Operational Manual. This therefore, boosted the school's capacity to manage the grants provided as well as effectively implement the planned project activities such as construction of school infrastructure, purchase of requisite teaching materials, management of school assets etc.

Standards

The Operational Manual specified the roles and provided examples of standard practices for staff from Care Zambia and the Ministry of Education officials in the project. With this guiding document in place, it was easier for all project partners (District Education Office, CARE staff, the school administration and Zonal Committees) to identify their roles and execute them as required. This therefore enhanced project efficiency and effectiveness.

Funding

Intervention Schools received funding at the rate of K20,000 per pupil in term 1 and K30,000 per pupil in terms 2 and 3. The funds were to be accessed during the

first week of every term. The project also targeted funds for the Zonal head teachers at the rate of K65,000 per school in term 1 and K100,000 in terms 2 and 3. District offices were funded at 17% of the total district budget to enable them monitor TG activities and meet other administrative requirements (1US\$ = ZMK3,700 January 2008).

Targeting of Grants

Through direct targeting of methods developed in conjunction with MoE, selected schools were provided an opportunity to receive supplemental grants to augment existing MoE funding. The development of school selection criteria also provided an opportunity to study 70 of the most vulnerable schools in Katete and Kazungula districts where the Term Grants project was implemented. The outcomes of this will contribute to building the evidence needed to support the Government of Zambia social protection initiatives as outlined in the Fifth National Development Plan.

Lessons Learned

- *Funding based on pupil enrolment* enabled schools to receive more grant money than under the Sector Pool Fund system where enrolment was not a

factor and the amount received was insufficient to have meaningful impact.

- *Allocation of separate funds for the District and Zonal Education Offices* resulted in schools receiving 100% of the funds designated for them; something which was not the case under the Sector Pool Fund system. According to the ESDS Survey findings in 2004, no more than one third of total discretionary funding eventually reached schools.
- *Community participation in the planning and implementation of school activities* enhanced school and community partnerships in the provision of quality education. It also created another layer of accountability at school level.
- *Funding schools on the basis of agreed activity plans* greatly increases the chance that the money will be used for the intended purpose.
- *Funds for the District and Zonal Education office were used for frequent monitoring visits* to ensure that intervention schools operated within their agreed activity plans and budgets. This was in contrast to the Sector Pool Fund system where some schools could not be



Adult Pupils with their Teacher (standing) in a rehabilitated classroom in Kazungula

monitored or assessed for more than a year often due to lack of resources.

- *Release of funds by CARE Zambia directly to districts* enabled schools to access their money within the first week of the term.
- *Disbursement of funds by cheque* and the requirement that three people (including a community representative) from each school to cash the cheque enhanced accountability in the disbursement of funds.
- *Community participation in the cashing of cheques, purchase of goods and implementation of project activities* enhanced partnership between the school and the community. These partnerships were important for the continuation of good practices introduced by the Term Grant project.
- *Use of reconciliation forms forced schools to develop a culture of balancing budgets against actual expenditure* hence developing the capacity for schools to handle public funds.
- *By requiring intervention schools to provide accurate information about progress made in reducing vulnerability* through the use of school performance forms it was possible to plan better for the following term. This was in contrast to the Sector Pool Fund system, where there was no specific way of measuring reduced vulnerability at the level of a school and, thus, planning interventions for the following term.

Utilisation of Grant Funds

Schools used Sector Pool Funding guidelines to allocate funds; 50% for Infrastructure, 35% for Free Basic Education (FBE), 10% for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) and 5% for School Health and Nutrition (SHN).

Activities under infrastructure included construction of classroom blocks, teachers' houses, improved ventilation in pit latrines (VIPs), and purchase and rehabilitation of desks. Schools bought text books, exercise books, pencils, rubbers, pens, chalkboards and chalk under FBE. Different commodities such as uniforms, shoes, clothes, blankets

and sometimes food stuffs were purchased using the OVC allocation. Under SHN, schools bought buckets for drawing water, basins and soap for washing hands along with livestock, fertilizer and seed to improve the nutritional status of pupils.

Although the utilization of funds followed the MoE Sector Pool funding guidelines, beneficiary schools were given the liberty to vary expenditure in consultation with the District Education Office and CARE Staff based on community identified needs. This flexibility in the use of funds therefore provided an opportunity to respond to more urgent community problems as opposed to sector wide intervention which would constrain limited funds.



Some Teaching Aids bought using Term Grants

Lessons learned

- *With funds for infrastructure, schools either completed or started new classroom blocks and teachers houses.* Other schools rehabilitated some classrooms and bought new desks, thereby improving the teaching and learning environment.
- *Pupil enrolment in intervention schools increased* because the improved teaching and learning environment attracted pupils from nearby schools. The number of OVCs in school also increased due the support services schools were able to establish using the TG funds. Nearby schools funded through the Sector Pool Fund system began to lose pupils as they became less attractive.

Recipient schools did however, face challenges of too many pupils coming from outside the normal school catchment areas thereby creating undesirable higher pupil/ teacher ratios.
- *Most schools involved in the TG intervention never ran out of teaching and learning materials* such as chalk, chalkboards, exercise books, pencils and rubbers, for use by both teachers and pupils. The availability of

Delivery and Accounting of Funds

Schools planned for activities and made budgets, which were approved by Zonal Committees. The Zonal Committee submitted the plans and budgets to District offices, which in turn submitted these to CARE Zambia who released funds directly to the District Education Board Secretaries in Katete and Kazungula districts. The District Education Offices prepared cheques which were collected and cashed by schools in the first week.



Block of Classrooms under construction at Mancheula School in Katete

teaching and learning materials motivated the teachers to teach and pupils to learn, leading to improved pupil and teacher attendance.

- *Some intervention schools constructed new VIP toilets, bought buckets for drawing water, basins and soap for washing hands and other buckets for fetching drinking water. All these measures contributed to improved sanitation.*
- *Intervention schools opened stock books and files where all the records concerning project*

activities were accurately recorded and safely kept. This was in contrast to schools funded through the Sector Pool Fund system which did not usually have up to date records about schools development projects.

- *Intervention schools were monitored more often than before* as a result of the term grants project. The supplemental funding enabled District Officials to visit intervention schools more often than before and the quality of monitoring improved.

End Note: Long term and more sustainable social protection interventions find rationale in those approaches which build the poor's capacities to better respond to their own vulnerabilities. In an array of such approaches, education support to the educationally marginalised is critical as it provides them with requisite life skills to effectively respond to poverty. Through the Term Grants project CARE International in Zambia sought to demonstrate that provision of education to educationally marginalised children including orphans and other vulnerable children can better be achieved through targeted assistance to vulnerable schools. Through increased and predictable funding, the Term Grants project did not only improve the learning environments in the recipient schools but more importantly increased child enrolment and improved quality of education due to constant availability of teaching materials and motivated teaching staff. The project therefore demonstrated that support to vulnerable schools can contribute to strengthening a community's resistance to vulnerability. Success at this stage on the vulnerability scale helps build a barrier to stop children from falling back into more vulnerable situations. The Term Grants project, as articulated in this learning product, demonstrates an effective response to chronic poverty that should be a part of a holistic approach to social protection.