



COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION FUND

(CEF)

ZAMBIA

END OF PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

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Acronyms

CEF	Commonwealth Education Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DAPP	Development Aid from People to People
ECCDE	Early Childhood Care, Development and Education
EFA	Education for All
GWA	Global Week of Action
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
MoE	Ministry of Education
OYV	Operation Young Vote
PAF	Peoples Action Forum
VOY	Voice of the Youth Zambia
ZANEC	Zambia National Education Coalition
ZEDAO	Zambia Education And Development Advocacy Organization
ZCEA	Zambia Civic Education Association
ZCSS	Zambia Community Schools Secretariat

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report provides an end of project evaluation of the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) project in Zambia which covered the years 2003 to 2007. To evaluate the performance of CEF, Oxfam GB (Zambia Office) engaged a team of consultants to undertake an end of project evaluation. The terms of reference for the evaluation exercise were to:

- a) Carry out extensive literature review in relation to the CEF in Zambia;
- b) Conduct a field data collection exercise on CEF among partners and other relevant agencies;
- c) Assess the extent to which the CEF was able to achieve its objectives and how it was able to contribute to improved service delivery in the education sector taking into account the gender issues;
- d) Assess the functioning of the CEF Management Committee and how it has been able to support the implementation of the project;
- e) Assess the challenges and weaknesses of implementing the CEF as an advocacy project in Zambia;
- f) Make conclusions and recommendations; and ,
- g) Disseminate the findings of the exercise to key stakeholders .

This report provides a documentation of the findings during the evaluation. It provides basic information on how CEF was managed and the impact that various interventions had on the education sector in Zambia. The report also analyses the challenges faced in implementing CEF.

2.0 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation employed a two-pronged approach in compiling an understanding of CEF in Zambia. Firstly, literature on CEF was studied and analysed. This included documents from Oxfam, CEF and narrative and financial reports from partner beneficiaries. The literature from CEF also included audited financial reports.

The second approach involved interviews with individuals who were directly involved with CEF. These ranged from Oxfam staff, CEF staff, management committee members and representatives of partner CSOs.

An analysis of all the gathered data was conducted and provided the basis for this review.

The data collection process had its own challenges. The most prominent obstacle was the availability of selected individuals to respond to the interviews. There were a lot of scheduling problems (considering the busy calendars of most individuals) and appointments had to be rescheduled time and again, leading to time loss. Also as a result, it was not possible to interview 100% of the intended target.

Another challenge was in the literature review where documents were not easily accessible. Although CEF provided the consultants with dossiers on all the partner organizations, a lot of information was missing, incomplete or highly duplicated. It was not uncommon to find (for example) three copies of a draft workplan, each copy with slight modifications and no indication as to which copy served as the final version of the plan. This challenge also consumed much time in the verification process.

3.0 EDUCATION CONTEXT

3.1 Overview

Zambia is a signatory to international conventions that relate to the provision of education as a human right. Despite being a signatory to these international protocols, it has not domesticated provisions in the existing laws¹.

The 1966 Education Act governs the provision of education in Zambia. Noteworthy is that, despite numerous amendments, the Act does not adequately provide for the needs of the education system in Zambia and the achievement of the MDGs and the EFA Goals. The EFA goals aim at expanding and improving early childhood education and care, offering access to and completion of free and compulsory basic (primary) education of good quality, meeting education and training needs for all children, youth and adults as may be appropriate to their level and needs (adult literacy inclusive), reducing gender disparities and improving quality of education and training at all levels².

The “Educating Our Future” policy document of the Ministry of Education (MoE) provides the backbone for policy pronouncements. The Fifth National Development Plan and the National Implementation Framework (that runs from 2008 – 2010) provides the basis for programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

3.2 Trends in Education in Zambia

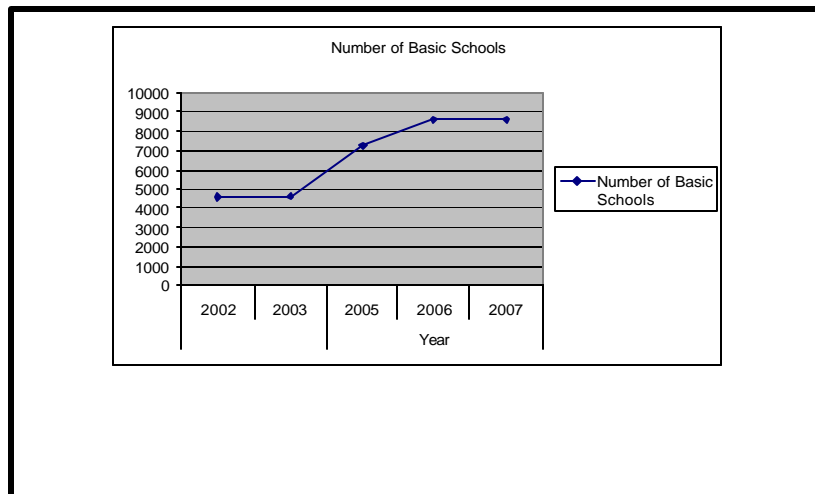
3.2.1 Infrastructural Development

There has been a steady increase in the numbers of schools offering basic education in Zambia. The table below indicates the increase in the numbers of schools between 2002 and 2007. It should be noted that in 2007, 32% of all basic schools were Community schools.

¹ Zambia National Education Coalition, National Education Watch Report, Zambia. Zambia National Education Coalition with the Technical and Financial Support of African Network Campaign for Education For All. November 2007

² Directorate of Planning and Information, 2006 Educational Statistical Bulletin, Republic of Zambia, Ministry of Education, Lusaka

Figure 1: Trends in the provision of Basic School infrastructure



Source: 2007 Educational Statistical Bulletin

The 2007 statistics indicate that 84.6% of the schools are in the rural areas³ and that most of the community school infrastructure is built from temporal materials while only 31.9% and 14.0% of the Grant-aided and GRZ Schools are of temporal materials respectively. There is a further indication that a total of 1, 976 buildings in the GRZ schools which were incomplete⁴.

3.2.2 Access, Participation, Equity and Learning Achievements

(a) Access and Participation

In the Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE) Sub-sector the key achievements are that the number of children increased from 37,000 in 2002 to over 90,000 in 2005 and but this seems to have decreased in 2006 to 78, 286⁵.

The concerns in the ECCDE Sub-sector include the fragmented curriculum, the lack of coherent policy, standards monitoring and supervision. Also, ECCDE is confined to pre-schooling instead of offering a more comprehensive learning experience. The last concern is that ECCDE is mainly provided by the private sector and community schools mainly in the urban areas⁶.

Basic education has registered a remarkable response from the community. An analysis of enrolments in the middle basic level indicates that there was increase of 16.5%. The declaration of free basic education has indeed assisted in ensuring

³ Ministry of Education, Directorate of Planning and information, 2007 Educational Statistical Bulletin, Ministry of Education, Lusaka

⁴ Ministry of Education, Directorate of Planning and information, 2005 Educational Statistical Bulletin, Ministry of Education, Lusaka

⁵ Ministry of Education, Directorate of Planning and information, 2005 Educational Statistical Bulletin, Ministry of Education, Lusaka

⁶ National Education Implementation Framework, 2007

the country still remains on course in its pursuit of the MDGs and the EFA goals⁷. The drop-out rate at Basic primary school Grade 1- 9 declined by 6% in 2007 from 2006, with Eastern and Western Provinces recording a rise in the drop-out rate of 5 and 14% respectively⁸.

In the Literacy Education Sub-sector, key achievements in the last five years are that there are more females than males undertaking literacy classes and are keener to involve themselves in educational opportunities. There have also been initial developments of a literacy policy and broad discussions with all stakeholders with the Ministry of Education (MoE) under which the co-ordination of literacy education will be done. The concern in the Literacy Education Sub-Sector is that the national literacy rate of the age group 15-24 years old in 2003 was 70%, and that only 66% of females in the population of the age group 15-24 years were literate as compared to 76 percent of males. There is also an absence of a comprehensive national policy and a limited Government commitment in terms of more resources⁹.

In the High School Sub-sector, the upgrading of basic schools to high schools has increased the number from 271 in 2000 to 355 in 2005 and there was an increase in student enrolment, averaging 10 percent per year with a total enrolment in 2005 of over 182,000, up from 103,000 in 2000. The completion rates for Grade 12 have improved from 11.9 percent in 2000 to 17.7 percent in 2005 and the repetition rates and the number of drop outs have remained relatively constant. There has also been a significant drop in the cases of examination malpractices over the years. The concerns with the High School sub-sector are that it has remained stagnant from the 1970s to the end of the 1990s and that the transition rate from grade 9 to 10 has actually worsened from 42.1 percent in 2001 to 40.4 percent in 2005. Further-on, the Gender Parity Index in 2007 stood at 0.81, up marginally from 0.75 in the year 2000¹⁰.

(b) Equity and Learning Achievements

Basic school enrolment indicates a national gender parity of 50.3% in favour of girls by 2007. However, at the regional level, the Luapula and Western Provinces still have more boys enrolled in school than girls¹¹. This could partly be attributed to more and more pregnant girls going back to school after giving birth as a result of the re-entry policy although the number still below 50%. However, this initiative is being undermined by an increase of girls who are getting pregnant at Basic school level.

The National Assessment Survey of Learning Achievement in the fifth Grade indicated a decline in the overall mean performance in English reading between

⁷ Directorate of Planning and Information, 2006 Educational Statistical Bulletin, Republic of Zambia, Ministry of Education, Lusaka

⁸ Ministry of Education, Directorate of Planning and information, 2007 Educational Statistical Bulletin, Ministry of Education, Lusaka

⁹ National Education Implementation Framework, 2007

¹⁰ National Education Implementation Framework, 2007

¹¹ Ibid

1999 and 2001 and a record increase in 2003. As for numeracy, there was a decline observed in the 1999 and 2001 surveys while there was a recorded improvement in reading Zambian languages across all provinces.

3.2.3 Tertiary Education

(a) Training

There are fourteen (14) Teacher Training Colleges producing teachers for basic schools and two others for upper basic education (grades 8-9) in the Tertiary Education Sub-sector. The total number of students enrolled in teacher training colleges has increased between 2005 and 2007 with more and more females entering these institutions compared to 8,763 in 2004, representing a 46.2 percent rise in student enrolments.

(b) Provision of Teachers

An increase of 869 was evident in 2001, which was an additional 2%. More teachers were deployed in 2002 from 37, 793 in 2001 to 40, 488; an increase of 2, 695. There was a 9% increase in the period from 2003 to 2004 and 71, 612 in 2006. The pupil/teacher ratio stagnated between 2001 and 2002 at 46:1, but rose to 52:1 in 2003 and 55:1 in 2004. The pupil/teacher ratio rose to 57.2 in 2005 and has been stagnate at that level in 2006 and 2007.

This is worsened by the fact the teacher attrition doubled in 2005 compared to 2004 (from 2, 195 in 2004 to 4, and 965 in 2005). The 2006 Educational Statistics report that a total of 7,768 teachers left the teaching service. The most common reasons given for the attrition were those of illness, teachers being given non-teaching jobs, retirements and resignations.

The concerns in the Tertiary Education are that the teacher training has expanded although the demand for teachers still exceeds supply and there is concern about the inferior quality of the newly trained teachers under ZATEC. There is also inadequate and poor staff accommodation and insufficient teaching/learning materials and information communication technology.

The high attrition rate of teachers in the education sector is also attributable to HIV and AIDS mortality. Lastly, the overall contact time between teachers and pupils is short when compared to the recommended of 850-1,000 hours per year¹².

3.2.4 Financing

In 2002 the allocation to education was high since an IMF condition was that Zambia had to channel more funds to the education sector for it to reach the HIPC completion point by 2004. The trend went down in 2004 and increased in 2005 although the budget proportion allocated to the MoE had actually reduced between 2002 and 2005 from 14% to 9%. There was an increase of 15% funding provision

¹² National Education Implementation Framework, 2007

to the education sector in 2006 and 16% of the total national budget was provided to the Education Sector in 2007.

A little over 50% of the budget is allocated to basic schools. The MoE headquarters received 23.5%. The third highest funded sector is High Schools receiving 11% of the budget. The lowest funded line is Distance Education Directorate at 0.2% followed by Human resources administration at 0.5%.

3.3 Key Challenges in the Education Sector

The Education for All targets of increased and equitable access to better quality for all children in Zambia continue to be a medium and long-term aspiration for Zambia. However, Zambia is experiencing high levels of illiteracy amongst its population, particularly amongst the female adults and children. The rural areas have higher levels of illiteracy than the urban areas.

The large number of out of school children, low enrolment, retention, progression and achievement rates, the lack of teachers in schools particularly in rural schools, limited school infrastructures and the impact of HIV and AIDS on teachers and pupils are but some of the major challenges of education provision in Zambia.

The Government of Zambia has responded to a number of these challenges in a number of ways but their efforts are met with a number of complexities. The main ones being limited financial resources, poor utilization and accountability of the meagre education resources that are available, a sheer lack of commitment, weak legal framework to support the implementation of the education policy pronouncements and poor coordination amongst sector ministries. The limited capacity of CSOs to engage effectively with government is another major factor contributing to the current poor status of education provision in Zambia.

3.4 Civil Society and the Education Sector in Zambia

The positioning of CEF in the education context in Zambia assumed that CEF's intervention could contribute to the attainment of the Education for All goals (EFA) in Zambia by 2015 by working in partnership with CSOs.

The EFA goals aim at expanding and improving early childhood education and care, offering access to and completion of free and compulsory basic (primary) education of good quality, meeting education and training needs for all children, youth and adults as may be appropriate to their level and needs (adult literacy inclusive), reducing gender disparities and improving quality of education and training at all levels¹³.

¹³ Directorate of Planning and Information, 2006 Educational Statistical Bulletin, Republic of Zambia, Ministry of Education, Lusaka

Noteworthy, however, is that there has been a steady growth in civil society engagement with Government on issues aimed at improving enrolment, participation, equity and quality of education in Zambia.

In this respect, the last five years have seen the emergence of CSOs which were developing skills and conducting advocacy campaigns in the education sector. Further-on, some CSOs over the last couple of years have developed the capacity to analyze and monitor Government allocation, disbursement and utilization of financial resources from the national to the provincial, district and sub-district levels.

The establishment of ZANEC during the CEF project period is a key factor in the growth of CSOs, in particular with respect to advocacy for improved education provision in Zambia. The coalition has grown from 6 to over 50 members. It has been able to develop the capacity of its members around resource mobilization, advocacy, partnerships and networking and has consistently co-ordinated its members around the Global Week of Action and in the commemoration of World Teachers and the International AIDS days as a means of bringing out issues that would contribute to Government action for improved education provision in Zambia.

In retrospect, education Civil Society Organisations, however, remain weak due to limited skills and capacity in partnership, advocacy, networking and in policy design. CSOs have also concentrated their efforts a lot in Lusaka and the Copperbelt at the expense of the more rural provinces.

4.0 CEF IN ZAMBIA

4.1 Purpose of CEF

The aim of CEF was to strengthen the capacity of civil society in 17 low-income Commonwealth countries whose governments had insufficient resources to provide adequate education for all. Under the chairmanship of Sir Edward George, Ex-Governor of the Bank of England, and managed by leading charities ActionAid, Oxfam and Save the Children, the fund would strengthen the capacity of low-income Commonwealth countries to ensure that the poorest and most marginalised children are able to enrol in and complete good quality primary education.

The Commonwealth Education Fund agreed to enter into a funding relationship with Oxfam GB in Zambia in September 2002. CEF support in Zambia was meant to build the necessary capacities of the national education coalition and the local communities to enable them contribute effectively to quality education provision for all in Zambia by:

- (a) Influencing national level education policy and practice and lobbying government to place education higher up on the national agenda.
- (b) Raising the profile of international goals at national level by raising public debate on Education.
- (c) Lobbying for increased investment in the education sector and greater transparency around education budgets at local and national level.
- (d) Focusing attention on excluded children, getting them back into school and addressing the main factors causing the exclusion.

4.2 CEF Zambia Project Goal and Objectives

CEF's project goal was to "contribute to the strengthening of networks of civil society organizations to engage with government, local communities and the international community to ensure quality basic education". The attendant objectives were:

- (a) To strengthen civil society participation in the design and implementation of local and national education plans through support to broad based national coalition- ZANEC;
- (b) To enable local communities monitor education spending both at national and local level;
- (c) Supporting innovative ways for civil society to ensure that all children (especially girls and the most vulnerable) are able to access quality

education within the framework of national education plans – in a way that links to advocacy; and,

(d) Establish the national civil society funding mechanism.

4.3 Project Activities

In order to attain the set goals and objectives, the project planned to undertake a number of activities and these were reviewed annually. Some of the activities implemented during the project period include; partner capacity assessment and skills training in various aspects that were identified in advocacy, policy analysis, school governance and budget work, education campaigns, organisational and administrative support to the national coalition secretariat, research and policy documentation and policy reviews. Networking and coalition building related activities such as thematic group meetings, participation in the annual sector review meetings, policy forums, media and public policy discussion advocacy and campaign activities were also undertaken.

The project implementation for CEF between September 2002 and end of June 2008 can be categorized into the following periods; the period between 2002 and mid-2005. During this period, the focus was on establishing ZANEC as a Coalition and CEF hoped that ZANEC would take up the funding mechanism and capacity building of CSOs in the education sector. During this time, activity support was also provided to FAWEZA through ZANEC.

However, there were concerns on the capacity of ZANEC to work as a funding mechanism introducing the second period is between 2005 to end 2006 when a system for grant provision and partner support (which also included ZANEC) was developed.

In 2007, the focus of activities was anchored around finalizing partner activities initiated in 2006 and contributing towards improving the implementation of the national education policy for increased access, equity and quality education; supporting civil society organisations to influence the revision of the 1966 Education Act; and, to monitor components of the 'Educating Our Future' policy as articulated in the Fifth National Development Plan, 2006-2010 (FNDP) and the Vision 2030¹⁴.

In the period January to June of 2008 of concern were activities related to end of project monitoring, evaluation and documentation; and, in country fund raising and establishing a funding mechanism that will sustain support to civil society activities that are aimed at contributing to the attainment of Education for All (EFA) goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Zambia¹⁵.

¹⁴ Commonwealth Education Fund. 2007 Work plan and Budget, February 19. 2007 version.

¹⁵ Commonwealth Education Fund. 2007 Work plan and Budget, February 19. 2007 version.

4.4 Financing CEF Zambia

The Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) provided £450,000 for work in Zambia. The terms of the CEF contract indicates that the funds were to be managed jointly by Save the Children Fund, Action Aid and Oxfam GB.

In Zambia, Oxfam GB was the lead agency, and was therefore responsible for the overall management of the CEF money, as neither Save the Children Fund nor Action Aid worked directly in Zambia at the time CEF was established. It should be noted that Action Aid become part of the Management Committee when it established a presence in Zambia in 2007.

4.6 CEF Governance Structure and Management

A Management Committee, composed of interested individuals and not organisations, was established to oversee the functioning of CEF. Apart from its Budgetary Responsibility mentioned on Page 3 of the Commonwealth Education Fund – Zambia, Terms of Reference for CEF Management Committee, no mention is made for financial responsibility. They approved who was to be funded and the quarterly reports for submission, which mainly focussed on income and expenditure, to CEF UK.

The organisational structure of CEF Zambia consisted of the Lead Agency, Oxfam, Country Programme representative, and the CEF Secretariat comprising the coordinator and the Oxfam donor accountant. The coordinator had a responsibility to monitor grant activity and ensure adequate levels of reporting and compliance as well as coordinate and provide written and financial reports to Oxfam and CEF on partner grants and activities. The job description did not specify how the Coordinator would work with the Finance and Administration Manager to whom the Donor Accountant reported, but was expected to produce the CEF reports.

The CEF Accountant was answerable to the Finance and Administration Manager in the Finance department of Oxfam. The job description of the donor accountant was Oxfam-related, but it did not specifically mention what the responsibilities were for the financial management of CEF. However, the capacity building of partner organisations in the area of financial training and financial reporting skills was included.

4.7 The Partners, Selection and Support to Partners

4.7.1 CEF Partners

In the project period, CEF supported a total of 15 partners. It supported the establishment of the ZANEC Secretariat in 2003, and up until 2007 CEF supported ZANEC administrative costs and some programme activities. In year 2004, other

donors joined in and agreed to pool their resources in supporting the ZANEC strategic plan.

Other partners that were supported by CEF were FAWEZA, PANUKA, CCF, Mulumbo Early Childhood and Care, OVC Media, Global Justice, Zambia Educational Development Advocacy Organisation (ZEDAO), Voice of the Youth Project Zambia (VOYPZ), Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA), Peoples Action Forum (PAF), Operation Young Vote (OYV) and Development AID from People to People (DAPP).

4.7.2 Selection of partners

The selection of partners was conducted in the following stages:

- (a) The first stage is where CEF advertises in the newspaper for Expressions Of Interest (EOI) for partnership. Applicants will be required to send in their expression of interest. Based on the strength of the EOI, prospective grantees will be short listed and contacted and asked to produce a proposal using the CEF application guide.
- (b) The second stage is the short listing by the Management Committee on the organisations that could be selected and these are requested to submit detailed proposals. The Commonwealth Education Fund management Committee Zambia, on a competitive basis, will evaluate this proposal. Additional information may be requested from applicants. Applicants may also be invited to make oral presentations/proposals during the management committee meeting.
- (c) The Management Committee further short lists the partners on the basis of the detailed proposals submitted. Appraisals are conducted to assess the risk and the needs of the partners in terms of support. A score sheet was used in the appraising the organisations who submitted the EOI.

An agreement is entered into between the partners and CEF (Oxfam – GB) in which it is specified how the funds will be used.

4.7.3 Support to Partners

In order to support the partners effectively, the CEF Zambia management committee developed funding guidelines to be used as a tool for the overall management of the fund.

The criteria for eligibility of organisations to access the funds from CEF were;

- (a) They had to be civil society, community based and faith-based organizations engaged in Education in Zambia but first preference was given to National education coalitions, Alliance and Networks.

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- (b) Only project proposals with a total budget of US\$10,000 and above per annum were considered.
 - (c) Project must fall within the CEF time frame (2004- March 2007).
 - (d) Applications should incorporate gender/HIV-AIDS focus and the needs of women and children.

Participation in project meetings such as project annual reviews, planning meetings, individual partner annual review meetings (who usually extended invitations to other CEF partners working in the same focus area), skills training workshops facilitated by both local and international facilitators created more opportunities for learning and sharing of experiences. Partners were able to share certain expertise and mentor each other. Good examples are partners like Operation Young Vote who shared their expertise in budget work, PAF in school governance and adult literacy, PANUKA in community mobilization and adult literacy working with rural women, Mulumbo in the management and care of early childhood centres, OVC media in media sensitization and ZADAO in supporting and mentoring community school parent's teacher committees.

The partners were provided with reporting guidelines which covered both the narrative and financial reporting formats.

According to the MANGO partner assessment tool, three quarters of the partners assessed as high risk at the start of partnership with CEF have now moved to medium and low risk and are able to attract funding from other donor sources e.g. PANUKA and OVC Media. This is not only beneficial to the individual organizations but to the coalition- based on the principle that ZANEC, as strong coalition should be founded on a strong membership. For these CEF partners, the quality of participation, presentation and articulation of issues during ZANEC thematic meetings or any other policy discussion has improved greatly.

5.0 IMPACT OF CEF IN ZAMBIA

This section discusses the extent to which CEF Zambia achieved its set objectives and how it was able to contribute to improved service delivery in the education sector. The section further looks at Project financing and management, and lastly the functioning of the CEF Management Committee and how it has been able to support the implementation of the project. The set objectives are used as the discussion framework in the former case.

5.1 Impact of CEF Zambia vis-à-vis Set Objectives

Objective 1.0

Strengthening civil society participation in the design and implementation of national and local education plans especially through support to broad based national alliances and coalitions.

One of the most visible efforts of the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) in Zambia under the above objective was the support (financial and technical) rendered to a coalition of CSOs. The Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) became a focal point for efforts and input from CSOs into the education sector.

Though ZANEC began with teething problems, by the end of the CEF project cycle it had established itself as a key player in education, gaining the recognition of government (through the Ministry of Education), co-operating partners and broader civil society. The coalition mission is to campaign and advocate for the attainment of education for all goals through promoting CSO interaction with government, cooperating partners and other strategic stakeholders in the sector. CEF assisted ZANEC to establish itself as an umbrella institution for CSOs. The secretariat of ZANEC has developed to possess the necessary governance and management structure for effective programme implementation.

Civil society's capacity to advocate on educational issues was greatly enhanced. Some notable interventions by CEF partners included participation in developing the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP). The input from CSOs influenced the Ministry of Education to include teacher deployment, school infrastructure and quality of education in the FNDP. The government made a commitment to employ about 7,000 teachers and build more schools as reflected in the 2007 national budget.

As a result of lobbying efforts by CSOs, government took a more active and supportive role in the management of community schools. Community school guidelines were reviewed and a policy framework for community schools was developed.

ZANEC members also engaged government on issues of early childhood care and development. This led to the drafting of an ECCED policy which is currently in its final stages.

The coalition was involved with government in coming up with a roadmap that would see the 2002 draft education bill enacted by the end of 2007.

Objective 2.0

Enabling local communities to monitor spending on education at both national and local levels (budget analysis/tracking).

CEF strengthened CSO skills and knowledge in budget tracking and analysis at district and school level by providing funds to the organisations to facilitate the training workshops earmarked for teachers, District Education Boards, Parents Teachers Associations and CSO staff. The skills imparted at the workshops included:

- (a) Budget tracking skills and knowledge.
- (b) Development of Budget tracking template.
- (c) Lobby and advocacy skills and knowledge.
- (d) Budgeting and recording of financial procedures.

Some CSOs and local communities conducted practical budget tracking exercises in some schools. Other activities undertaken on the ground were:

- (a) Identification and registration of trackers and schools.
- (b) Preparation of budget tracking materials.
- (c) Training workshops on budget tracking.
- (d) Development of budget tracking manual.
- (e) District stakeholder consultative forum on budget tracking.
- (f) Conducted budget tracking review.
- (g) Sensitisation of PTAs, teachers, CSOs, communities and Government officials on budget allocations

This intervention resulted in CSOs and local communities being able to conduct budget tracking effectively and to write reports. Schools were also able to establish proper documentation of financial procedures in appropriate financial accounting books.

There was also a reduction in misapplication and misappropriation of school funds.

The enhanced knowledge on allocation, utilization and budgeting of school funds led to teachers sharing financial management responsibilities with parents and involving school children in the financial planning process.

Overall, there was increased community participation in school governance at school level. There was also evidence of women participation in school governance. Parents, teachers, school children and the local communities got a better understanding of their roles in setting school priorities.

The main difficulty cited under this objective was the lack of information on budget allocations from the Ministry of Education.

Objective 3.0

Supporting innovative ways for civil society to ensure that all children (especially girls and the most vulnerable) are able to access quality education within the framework of national education plans – in a way that links to advocacy.

CEF gave grants to partners for advocacy activities through radio and television. Once a year, support was given to CSOs to highlight pertinent issues during the Education Action Week. Stakeholder consultative forums were also supported once in each quarter.

This support helped to popularize and publicise the EFA goals at the local level. It also strengthened the CSO networks at district level and consolidated interaction with the local DEBs offices.

The major achievements under this objective are not clear. Apart from mention from one CSO on the Copperbelt that government increased funding from the sector pool for 17 community schools, there is no direct reference of success in achieving the objective.

5.2 Financing, Reporting and Accounts Management

5.2.1 The Funding Guidelines

Some respondents stated that although CEF grant support guidelines have been formulated, the character and typology of networks of civil society organisations that meet the support criteria are not adequately defined. The eligibility criterion states that ‘first preference will be given to national education coalitions, alliances and networks’.

Intended beneficiaries (direct and indirect) are not well knowledgeable on CEF intervention, or its grant support mechanism. This is mostly in its relation to the major beneficiary, which is ZANEC. While, there exists grant/funding guidelines, most of the ZANEC membership is not aware of their existence.

ZANEC did not support their members in working with CEF and this work was done by CEF for those who were short listed but not for those who did not go through the first round.

5.2.2 CEF Funding

The main funder of CEF Zambia is CEF UK, which is funded by DFID. Funding is secured as per the agreement entered into between Action Aid, Oxfam and CEF UK.

The Finance and Administration Manager is responsible for the management of the working capital for Oxfam, being the lead agency for CEF. The coordinator is

therefore dependent on him/her, by default, for the overall management of CEF Funds.

Monthly top-ups are prepared based on submissions from the partner organisations (in 2006, there were thirteen (13) partners whereas in 2007, it was only one), with overheads and other activities that may be planned by the programme coordinator. This is brought together by the Accountant and Administration Department, signed off by the Country Programme Manager.

The role of the CEF coordinator was that of requesting from CEF, ensuring that there was no over expenditure and that the partners used the funds for the intended purpose.

However, the CEF funding procedures are followed. This involves using a CEF electronic form called Remittance Request that is prepared by the Finance Department and signed off by the Oxfam Finance and Administration Manager and country programme manager. The form is sent to the Regional Office in South Africa, who later submits it to the UK office. So far there has only been one remittance.

Preparation of the funding request is done in British pounds, whereas the transfers from CEF UK are done in United States Dollars as Oxfam Zambia maintains an account in United States Dollars.

The disbursements to partners were given out in Kwacha. This led to exchange rate differences.

An agreement was reached with CEF not to establish a separate bank account. This has severely weakened the effectiveness of performing bank reconciliation, as funds are mixed with Oxfam funds. Reconciliation of funds due to CEF is therefore based on the top-ups received from CEF UK and matched against the expenditures recorded under a separate cost code in the accounting system.

Grants/funds have been given via a cheque. The partner organisations acknowledge receipt of the funds by signing on the voucher and giving CEF a letter of acknowledgement of the funds.

5.2.3 Reporting

There are standardized formats used by CEF. 2222 Reports are produced monthly as well as quarterly. The internal reports are for the Oxfam GB budget holders and the external reports are for Oxfam UK incorporating financial and narrative information.

The CEF Coordinator prepares the narrative and the Accountant prepares the financial which is provided to the CEF Coordinator and the Finance Manager for consideration.

Who reviews them for correctness and consistencies against budgets/plans? The Finance Manager reviews the finances but the CEF Management Committee which

is supposed to have a look at both the narrative and financial reports did not have the time.

5.2.4 Accounts Management

(a) Accounting and Administration

CEF conforms to the Oxfam GB accounting procedures, which are available electronically from the intranet as well as in hardcopy. These are detailed and include all the financial and accounting requirements.

An accounting package called Peoplesoft was introduced in mid 2003 that produced Trial Balance, Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet, and Cash Book, in the Euro, United States Dollars and Pounds Sterling currencies. These reports incorporate the expenses of CEF. The previous system SIPS did not incorporate the CEF expenses, and this affected the reconciliation of 2002 and 2004 finances. However, these balances have now been reconciled as at July 2004.

CEF funds are placed in the United States Dollar pool account but a separate code is used to distinguish CEF expenses in the accounting system i.e. Zam711. This is in line with the proposal for the International Management of Commonwealth Educational Fund (CEF) by Action Aid Draft 4.

According to the proposal mentioned in the preceding paragraph, Oxfam is supposed to be charging CEF an administrative charge and costs of the Managing Agent.

(b) Audits

CEF funds were audited as part of the Oxfam GB Audit. As examination of the 2003 external Audit Report by Grant Thornton revealed that there is no separate statement on the CEF Funds as per requirement in the proposal.

The 2004 Financial Audit Report was not reviewed and the 2008 Financial Audit is currently ongoing.

The Audit Financial Reports for 2005 to 2007 indicate the separate expenditure reports for CEF.

In the Internal Audit Report No. 0303 of December 2006, it was reported that Oxfam Zambia's current (2006/07) budget for that year was £1,396,113 (including programme and management costs) with CEF accounting for £328,000 of this.

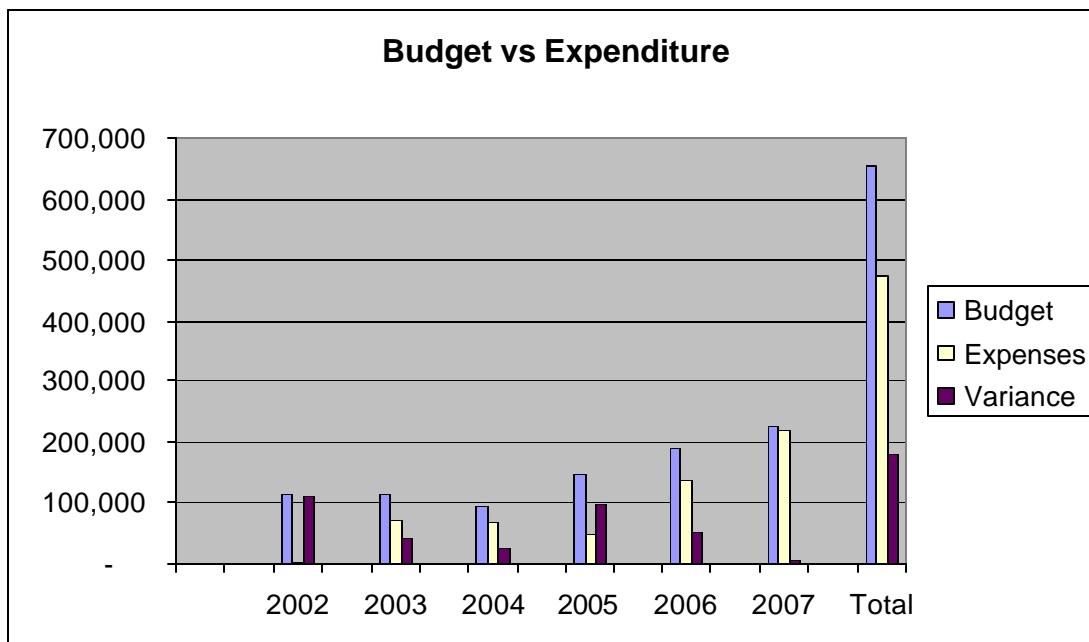
(c) Examination of Financial costs vis-à-vis the Programme

The Internal Audit Report No 303 reports that initial contract between Oxfam GB and the Zambia Commonwealth Education Fund was for £450,000 and has recently been extended to expire at 30 June 2008. Due to under expenditure

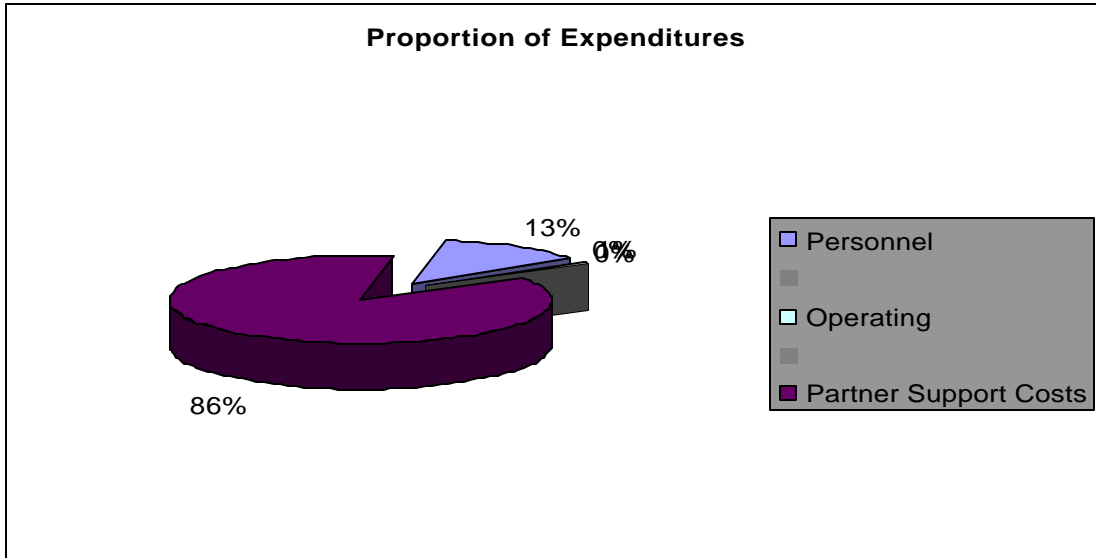
across all projects additional funds will be available which the Zambia programme will apply for.

The programme has consistently reported under expenditure against budget since it started. Initially funding was to be channelled through one main partner - ZANEC - which is a national coalition of NGO organisations. However due to ongoing problems with ZANEC's ability to implement, Oxfam funded a total of 12 partners directly in 2006. This helped to improve progress against the plan and expenditure came almost in line with the budget in 2007.

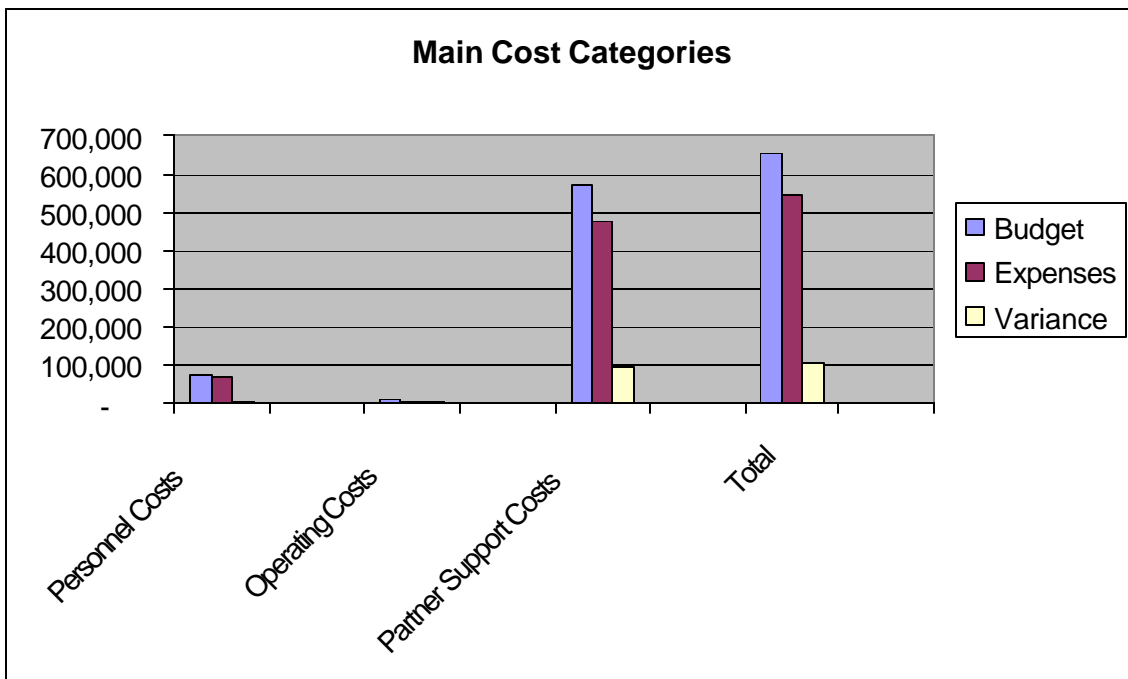
CEF does not carry over funds that are not utilised in one year to another year. In general there has been constant under expenditure throughout the period. This is reflected in the diagram below; (figures have been obtained from the Audited Financial Reports of Oxfam)



Of the total expenditure from 2002 to 2007, 86% has been Partner Support Costs, the Lead Agency costs represent 10% and the personnel costs 1%.



The budget variance has mostly affected the Partner Support Costs mainly due to the weak funding guidelines and procedures, whereas the personnel costs has shown very small variance despite the resignation of the CEF Coordinator in mid 2007.



It should be noted that ZANEC provides reports to CEF in kwacha despite the fact that the base/default currency of CEF is British Pounds. CEF Zambia than uses as

administrative exchange rate to convert the kwacha balances to British pounds. It is not clear how CEF deals with these exchange rate differences.

In addition, the financial year of CEF runs from January to December while that of Oxfam runs from May to April. The challenge lies in how to harmonise the accounting procedures especially for auditing purposes.

Overall, the assessment of the financial resources inputs vis-à-vis implementation of activities is relatively low, as evidenced. The activity-expenditure level is at about twenty-four (24) percent of the programme disbursements.

5.4 Functioning of the CEF Management Committee

Although, the Country Management Committee of CEF Zambia had the central role in decision making of CEF's undertakings, most respondents observed that the Committee was often constrained in its mandate as the Lead Agency (Oxfam GB Zambia) had an overburdening influence on decision-making. This is, in particular, pronounced where the decisions are of a structural or human resource nature and hence have financial implications. Therefore, the Lead Agency's legal and fund accountability inherently provided that it had a subtle monopoly of representation in decision making.

A position paper on *CEF Zambia Institutional Issues and Challenges* shows that the Management Committee was in a precarious position, as its centrality in decision making was determined by the extent to which such decisions impinge on Oxfam GB-Zambia's internal institutional structures.

However, interviews with some Respondents show that despite the Management Committee's constrained centrality in decision making, the Committee also ailed in its responsibilities. This is in particular with respect to:

- (a) Participation and commitment to the CEF programme. There was an evident moderate to low participation as reflected in the low frequency of Management Committee meetings. It seems Management Committee members were often too occupied with their individual organisational responsibilities;
- (b) The Committee seldom provided timely feedback on decisions to the Country Secretariat. The Country Secretariat at times had to request/demand that feedback be provided as the Management Committee rarely gave feedback to emails sent by the Coordinator; and,
- (c) Some Management Committee members were still grappling with clearly defining their roles and responsibilities.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CEF Zambia could be said to have had its successes and pitfalls. In general, however, its positioning in the education Civil Society sphere could have been timely as evidenced by activities that mostly increased Civic Society Participation in school governance issues like budget tracking. All partners felt that the CEF intervention had a positive impact although the financial resources could have had more impact if the number of partners was reduced or the budget increased.

Its project end necessitates that there was need to have a clear exit strategy and timeframe which should have been well communicated to all stakeholders. Most CSOs felt abandoned in midstream when informed that the funding would end abruptly. To which end the following lessons need attention.

- (a) Composition of Management Committee (bringing in interested individuals) did not guarantee effectiveness and legitimacy.
- (b) Irregular meetings by the Management committee did not give it effective oversight of the project.
- (c) The role of the lead agency (Oxfam) should have been minimised to let the committee have ownership and delegate to the secretariat. The competing staff time was also a hindrance in setting CEF as a priority in Oxfam. Terms of Reference for the Management Committee absolves them of financial management of CEF except for Budget responsibility. Financial Responsibility belongs to Oxfam, and by default, the Oxfam Finance and Administration Manager.
- (d) Placement of the Donor Accountant under Finance Administration Manager caused unclear reporting lines
- (e) Placement of CEF funds in Oxfam bank account, reduced the transparency of bank reconciliation and made it difficult to follow up funds requested for. The added complexity of receiving in one currency and reporting in another was a hinderance.
- (f) Under utilisation of the budget could be attributable to the late release of funds. For example, in 2006, ZANEC was given funds in September but was required to complete all the planned activities by December 2006.

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APPENDIX 1 List of Persons Interviewed

Dr. John Chileshe (JICA Consultant)
Ms Chileshe Chilangwa- Collins (HODI)
Ms. Mirriam Chonya Chiyama (ZANEC)
Ms. Jennifer Chiwela (PAF)
Ms. Gina Chiwela (PAF)
Ms. Miyanda Kwambwa (DCI)
Mr. Happy Malanda (ZEDAO)
Mr. Mwenda Mumbuna (CEF)
Mr. Angel Musenge (Voice of the Youth)
Mr. Clever Musonda (Oxfam/ CEF Accountant)
Mr. Muweme Muweme (JCTR)
Dr. Elizabeth Nkumbula
Dr Kasanda Sichalwe (EFA, MoE)
Mr. Rinos Simbulo (MULUMBO)