

Financing basic services

Improving education in Zambia

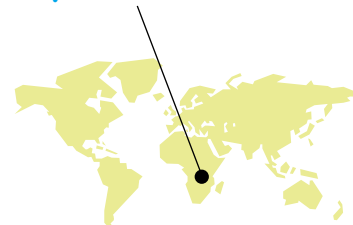
Basic services must be improved, but should also be (locally) financed

Capacity Development Illustrated



16-year old Juliet Mwamba is a Grade 7 pupil at Milenge Middle Primary school. She should have been in Grade 10 or 11, but in 2000 she suffered a severe bout of cerebral malaria that left her legs paralysed. She was forced

Joliet Mwamba, Zambia



to drop out of school because her parents could not afford to pay for her special needs. Juliet had already resigned herself to the fate of the many illiterates in her community.

Because of the prevalence of many traditional, gender-based stereotypes, such as 'a girl's place is in the kitchen, a girl's education is not relevant because she will get married one day', Juliet's parents did not find anything wrong with keeping her at home.

Decentralised planning of education

Zambia's long-term development plan, Vision 2030, deals with a number of development priorities, such as health, teacher training, and access to education. The educational system follows a centralised and hierarchical structure, which does not take contextual factors into account. Consequently, decentralised planning has become a major focus in recent years.

As part of the education decentralisation process, the Provincial Education Management Committee was established to strengthen the capacity of District Education Boards. It carried out pilot projects in the Northern and Western Provinces of Zambia. The Northern Province Education Management team has responsibility for twelve District Education Management Committees, which support all 803 primary school boards in their districts. The committees are tasked with enhancing opportunities for school-going children in these districts through improved planning and the implementation of educational programmes.

In 2004, SNV and the Ministry of Education entered into a Memorandum of Understanding through which SNV agreed to support the

What did SNV do?

- Train members of the Provincial Education Management Committee (PEMC), who subsequently passed on their knowledge and skills;
- Develop clear objectives for the participatory planning programme;
- Support the PEMC to undertake a mini assessment of the implementation of participatory approaches on the ground;
- Facilitate the provincial education forum where the findings were presented.

This amounted to 482 direct advisory days in 2006.

implementation of the Accelerated Decentralised Programme in the Northern and Western Provinces. A key goal of the programme was to promote a people-centred education delivery process.

Participatory Planning

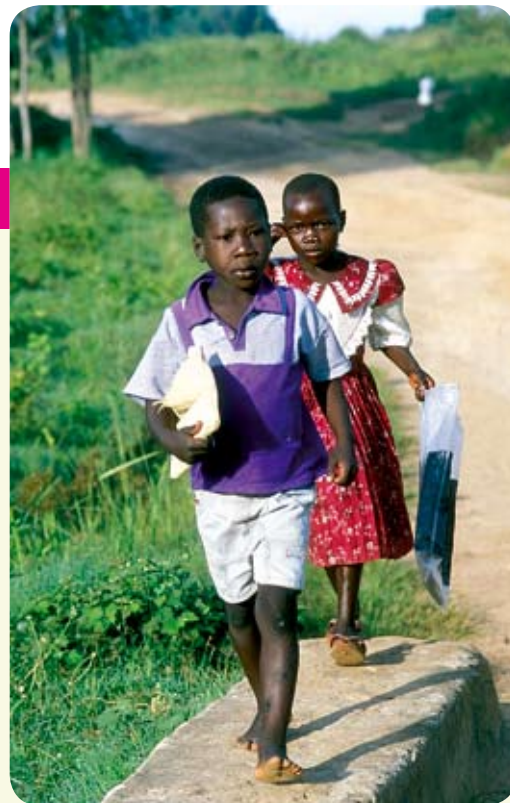
SNV's initial involvement in the Accelerated Decentralised Programme entailed institutional building: supporting the Provincial Education Management Committee as a local capacity builder, and strengthening its capacity to undertake participatory planning processes at various levels (districts, zones and schools) of the education system.

With the support from SNV, nine out of the twelve districts have embraced the concept and practice

of participatory planning. The essence of participatory planning is to incorporate a bottom-up, client-focused approach in education service delivery, optimising quality and quantity. It also envisages active community participation in the development and implementation of school development plans, thus enhancing the spirit of community ownership and commitment to the implementation and fulfilment of the development plans.

In September 2004, Irish Aid granted Northern Province 1.4 billion kwacha (about \$ 350,000) to implement the programme, while the Western Province received 1.8 billion kwacha (about \$ 450,000), which was set to run till 2006. The Embassy of the Netherlands also part-funded the programme. SNV introduced a number of follow-up assignments for the period 2003-2007 particularly aimed at enhancing the quality of education in the provinces.

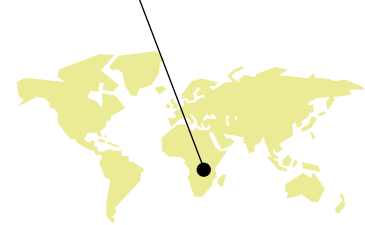
In 2006, SNV provided support to the Provincial Education Management Committees to undertake a mini assessment of the implementation of participatory approaches. The findings were presented at the provincial education forum, which brought together the District Education Boards from all twelve districts to review their progress towards achieving key educational indicators, including enrolment, retention, progression and quality of education provided (especially for girls). The mini assessment



revealed capacity gaps at the districts' level, including the lack of monitoring and evaluation systems to measure their progress towards meeting national targets with respect to access, efficiency and quality of education.

The forum also revealed inadequate participation by communities in the planning and implementation of education at the school level. The forum triggered the formulation of a comprehensive, locally-owned (bottom-up) strategy for attaining educational targets in the province. SNV supported the Provincial Education Officer and her team in the development of the needed strategy and designing a self-assessment tool that was applied in the planning and budget for 2007.

Joliet Mwamba, Zambia



A new start for Juliet...

Since 2004, the school has strengthened the role of the Inclusive Schooling Programme in which community members take part. The participatory planning process helped in identifying some of the impediments to enrolment and progress, which brought out issues of poverty, pregnancies and early marriages. Through this process the community joined hands with the school to design an outreach programme aimed at encouraging girls' education.

A situation analysis carried out in 2004 as part of the participatory planning process identified Juliet as one of the pupils with special educational needs. Through the Parents' and Teachers' Association, her needs were fully defined, following which she received a wheelchair from the local Catholic Church and other special arrangements to enhance her mobility. In 2004, Juliet re-enrolled in Grade 4 and she is set to finish her primary school study in 2007.

Key Achievements

- 803 primary schools in the province benefited from the participatory planning process;
- More than 5,000 children, including pupils with special needs, now have access to education;
- Impediments to school attendance were progressively solved;
- There is an increased focus on combating drop-out rates for girls;
- Enhanced gender equality has improved employment chances for women;
- Public-Private Partnerships are emerging as an alternative financing mechanism;
- Education quality has improved.