COMMUNICATING WITH COMMUNITIES

EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS ON QUALITY IN THE ZAMBIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Authors: Helena Paulsson and Madeleine Winqvist
Supervisor: Ellen Hillbom

Abstract

The aim of this study was to reach a better understanding on how quality education can be applied so that the needs, views and values of local actors are fulfilled at the same time as national principles and perspectives on education are considered. Three research questions guided our study: What patterns can be discerned among local stakeholders in three community schools in Lusaka, Zambia in their perceptions of quality education?; What are the perceptions on quality education among national education developers and decision-makers and how are these connected to the official policy stance on quality?; What patterns in perceptions on quality education can be discerned between the two levels, i.e. where do the perceptions meet and where do they part? Our data was gathered through a multiple case study of three community schools in Lusaka, a review of policy documents and interviews with representatives within the Ministry of Education. To reach our aim and analyze our data we constructed an analytical model based on our theoretical framework emphasizing a local perspective, teaching and learning processes and relevance. We conclude that these aspects were important for our aim but that communication and material aspects needed to be added to complete our model and reach our aim.

Key Words: quality education, perceptions, local perspective, community schools, Zambia

Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BSCF	Basic School Curriculum Framework
CDC	Curriculum Development Center
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DEBS	District Education Board Secretariat
DEO	District Education Offices
DLCS	David Livingstone OVC Community School
DPI	Department of Planning and Information
ECZ	Examinations Council of Zambia
EFA	Education For All
EQUIP2	Education Quality Improvement Program 2
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
GRZ	Government of the republic of Zambia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department
JCS	Jordan Community School
LOCS	Linda Open Community School
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoESP	Ministry of Education Stategic Plan
MSYCD	Ministry of Sports Youth and Child Development
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
OGCS	Operational Guidelines for Community Schools
PCSC	Parents Community School Committee
PEO	Provincial Education Offices
TPR	Teacher-Pupil Ratios
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program
ZDEFA	Zambia Declaration on Education for All
ZOCS	Zambian Open Community Schools

Table of contents

List of figures and tables

List of photographs

1 Introduction

The Republic of the Government of Zambia (GRZ) struggles to meet the demands on education by a fast growing young population while being strained by limited resources (IOB 2008:34,35). A dimension to this problem is the widespread HIV/AIDS epidemic which has induced a high number of orphans and vulnerable children (DeStefano 2006:1; MSYCD 2004:8). The response to the vast need for education among this vulnerable group of children has been the establishment of community schools, initiated by the community members themselves. The growing demand for education among the Zambian population has had repercussions on the delivery of quality education in the formal education system but particularly in the community schools (IOB 2008:65) and quality in education has therefore become a central focus in Zambian education policies. 'Quality education' is nevertheless a problematic concept due to its subjective meanings (Stephens 2003:4) and among policy makers, education practitioners and academics, there is a wide disagreement on what quality in education implies (Nagel & Kvernbekk 1997:101,104; Stephens 2007:4). A growing notion especially among academics is that 'quality education' should be contextually and locally determined (Smith & Ngoma-Maema 2003:347; Stephens 2003:4). However, while many authors discuss the importance of integrating a local perspective, there are surprisingly few studies and reports that have given voice to local actors. Further, in Zambia, education policies emphasize participation but there have been few examples where local stakeholders' views, in particular children's views, have been included in policy making. What therefore is needed is to fill this gap in the literature and in the policy debate on quality education in Zambia and "give voice" (Gomm et al 2000:3; Ragin 1994:83) to local stakeholders of education.

Our research topic as well as our choice of theories are guided by a rights-based perspective influenced by Sen's capability approach, which is based on the idea that people are entitled to "capabilities /.../ to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value" (Sen 1999:87). If people have real opportunities to influence decisions over their own schooling and education, the outcomes will in the end be more beneficial to them and to the wider society in which they exist (Sen 1999:18; Stephens 1991:232). Influenced by the Convention of the Rights of the Child (UN 1989) we also underscore the importance of listening to children's own opinions in matters that affect them.

To 'give voice' to local actors, we have conducted a case study on three community schools in Lusaka, Zambia (see Appendix I: Maps on Lusaka and Zambia), and performed semi-structured and group interviews with local stakeholders. Furthermore, we have interviewed representatives from various national educational institutions.

In response to the research problem outlined above, the aim of this study is to reach a better understanding on how quality education can be applied so that the needs, views and values of local actors are fulfilled at the same time as national principles and perspectives on education are considered. An analytical model is used as a tool to reach our aim and by doing this we can also explore its usefulness for this purpose and detect possible shortcomings. The model includes essential aspects of quality derived from our theoretical framework built on the works of two Classroom Culturalists, David Stephens and Wim Hoppers. The main components in the theoretical framework are the local perspective, relevance and teaching and learning processes. We will explore the perceptions on quality education among actors on two levels of the Zambian education system; the *local community school level* and the *national education policy level*. The three research questions outlined below guide our study and help us reach our aim as they influence our theoretical framework and are the main pillars in our analytical model.

1. What patterns can be discerned among local stakeholders in three community schools in Lusaka in their perceptions of quality education?

2. What are the perceptions on quality education among national education developers and decision makers and how are these connected to the official policy stance on quality?

3. What patterns in perceptions on quality education can be discerned between the two levels, i.e. where do the perceptions meet and where do they part?

We recognize that local school stakeholders can not be seen as one homogeneous group. Hence, we do not intend to develop a universal truth from our findings that can be applied in every situation as this diverges from our epistemological as well as theoretical perspective. We do, however, believe that for Zambia with a considerable part of the population living under similar conditions and receiving their education through community schools, the study can hopefully produce findings that can be relevant for the education system in Zambia and contribute with useful knowledge when exploring the same issue in similar settings.

The structure of this study is; 1) Introduction: a brief introduction to the study, our aim and research questions. 2) Background: a presentation of the global, national and local context of the research area. 3) Previous research on the concept of quality education. 4) Theory: theories on quality education used in our analytical model are presented. 5) Method: presentation of methods and discussion on our methodological position. 6) Analysis: an analysis of our findings on three analytical levels; the local school level, the national policy level and a crosscutting level, following the structure of our analytical model. 7) Concluding remarks.

2 Background

2.1 Socio-economic environment

Zambia is recognized as one of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (IOB 2008:31). 68% of the Zambian population is below the national poverty line, while the percentage of population living under the extreme poverty line is 53%. The same information on Lusaka is 48% respectively 29% (CSO 2005:113). The population is numbered to 11 million, and people younger than 25 years constitute 67% of the total population (CSO 2005:11). The HIV/AIDS epidemic is a crucial factor contributing to the young population and the increasing amount of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs). A great number of these children reside in high-density areas, so called compounds, which are characterized by high rates of poverty and unemployment (Tranberg Hansen 2005:6,7,11). It is in these types of areas that we find the community schools covered in our case study.

In the aftermath of independence in 1964, Zambia was a rich country with large resources in copper. However, the global economic crisis in the 1970's struck Zambia hard, as international prices on copper declined and the country suffered an economic meltdown. The impact on the education sector was severe, as budget cuts made the sector underfunded (IOB 2008:31). The devastated economy forced Zambia into debts and donor dependency. In 2001, the GRZ received debt relief from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and budget funding could once again be directed to the education sector (GRZ 2005:2). However, despite aid support the economy is currently declining (CSO 2005:2) and the effects from the years of low funding are still felt in the education system.

2.2 Structure of the education system

The national education system consists of pre-school, basic education (grade 1-9), high school education (grade 10-12), university education, college and other training programs and vocational training programs (DPI 2008:12) (see Appendix II). Basic education is separated into three levels; lower basic (grade 1-4), middle basic (grade 5-7) and upper basic (grade 8-9) (IOB 2008:52). The Ministry of Education (MoE) is the main provider of education through government schools, but the education system also contains three additional forms of schools; grant-aided, private and community schools. The national education activities are coordinated and monitored by nine Provincial Education Offices (PEO) and 72 District Education Offices (DEO). Each district has a District Education Board Secretariat (DEBS), set up by the MoE to strengthen the decentralization of education (IOB 2008:50). The DEBS also intermediate between the government and the Zonal Committees and the schools.

2.2.1 Community schools

Community schools initially started in the mid 1990's as a response to the vast HIV/AIDS epidemic and to the educational needs of the growing numbers of OVCs. Today it is one of the most common education alternatives in Zambia[1]. In 1996 there were 55 community schools in the country, while in 2006 the number had risen to 2700 (IOB 2008:54), providing education to 16% of all children currently receiving primary basic education (IOB 2008:55). The schools are incited by communities and often run by a Parents Community School Committee (PCSC) or by individuals, churches or local NGOs. Community schools were officially recognized by the GRZ in 1998 (DeStefano 2006:1) but many are still without government funding (IOB 2008:57-8). A high number of children in these schools are single or double orphans[2] or vulnerable due to socio-economic difficulties. In turn, they often lack funding for uniforms and books, which limits their access to government schools. Further, many of the orphans start school in a later age and are therefore excluded from government schools whereas the community schools take them on regardless of age (DeStefano 2006:3). The conditions of these schools are often poor in terms of infrastructure, desks and sanitation and the majority of the teachers work on voluntary basis or for small allowances (IOB 2008:52-3).

---

[1] In Lusaka, there are 351 community schools, compared to the number of government schools 234, grant-aided 20 and private 144 (DPI 2008:17)

[2] The definition of a single orphan is a child that has lost one of his/her parents. A double orphan has lost both parents (MSYCD 2004:8).

2.3 Education policy context

Together with the second Millennium Development Goal, the achievement of Universal Primary Education, the "Education for all" movement (EFA)[3] is today the most influential education initiative as its formulated goals are agreed upon by most governments in the world, including Zambia. In line with EFA guidelines, Zambia created in 1991 the Zambia Declaration on Education for All (ZDEFA). Since the implementation of the ZDEFA, one policy has been considered the cornerstone of formal education; "Educating Our Future - The National Policy on Education" produced in 1996 (CDC 2000:3). The GRZ began at this time to give priority to improvements in the basic education sector that later was established in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2003-2007. Since then the ESSP has together with the Strategic Framework for Implementation of Education for All (GRZ 2005) guided the interventions and programs on education.

When community schools started to emerge, the GRZ soon recognized the need to cooperate with these in the provision of education. A liberalization of the education system was introduced, which allowed individuals, local communities and other actors with resources to establish and run schools (MoE 1996:3). One of the most vital documents for community schools is the Operational Guidelines for Community Schools (OGCS), released by the MoE in 2007. The document entails guidelines on how children in community schools can be supported. By specifying policy measures to ensure this, the intention was to step up the process of supporting and integrating community schools in all areas of operation (MoE 2007:1). Another important document affecting local stakeholders was the Decentralization Policy from 2000, aiming to relocate the power from central level to district and school level and promote local responsibility, ownership and management (DPI 2008:13). The Free Basic Education Policy, introduced in 2002, allowed free basic education in grades 1-7 in all schools (IOB 2008:84). The policy developments has lead up to today's policy environment, where "the main aim of the Ministry of Education is to provide quality and relevant education which enhances acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and life-long learning" (ECZ 2006:2)

---

[3] Signed at the World Declaration on Education For All (EFA) (1990) (Barrett et al 2006:8).

3 Method

3.1 Methodological perspective

Our ontological position is constructivism and we hold that individuals create subjective meanings of objectives and situations (Creswell 2007:20) and social phenomena are in constant revision through social interaction (Bryman 2008:19). We therefore emphasize the complexity of quality education and understand the concept as socially, culturally and historically determined through human interactions. We follow the principles of phenomenology (Bryman 2008:15-17; Mikkelsen 2005:127,135), i.e. we interpret the world from the point of view of the informants. However, we can not escape our own interpretation of the world that has affected our choices throughout the research process and shaped our understanding of the information we have received (Bryman 2008:17; Mikkelsen 2005:135).

3.2 Research design

We chose to explore our research issue, i.e. the perceptions on quality education, by employing a case study design with multiple cases as this was the most appropriate method to inquire our research problem and fulfilling our aim (Creswell 2007:73). The cases are three community schools located in two districts in Lusaka within the bounded system of the Zambian education system. The case study design was selected as the cases embodied the issue to be researched, enabling an in-depth understanding of the issue. The research design further allowed us to explore the complexity and specific nature of the cases, i.e. the varied perceptions among the stakeholders within the cases formed by the specific context of the schools (Bryman 2008:52). We recognize that looking at more than one case could constrain the profound perception of the context of each case. Nevertheless, having more than one case could also increase our analytical benefits substantially (Yin 2003:53) as it enabled us to find patterns between the cases. This in turn strengthened our analysis and provided us with a better understanding of the research issue (Creswell 2007:75; Gomm et al 2000:3).

As community schools often address vulnerable children and other actors connected to the schools seldom being heard in the education debate in Zambia, we chose three community schools as our cases. The schools were selected on the basis of being *representative or typical cases* (Bryman 2008:56) within the Zambian community school system and could thus

capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation (Bryman 2008:56).

As the aim of this study is to reach a better understanding on how quality education can be applied so that the needs, views and values of local actors are fulfilled at the same time as national principles and perspectives on education are considered, we can not limit our study to the cases representing the local community school level. It was therefore imperative to include information from the national level, i.e. from national policy makers on education and education developers, which are an integral part of the bounded system of the cases, the Zambian education system.

3.3 Sampling

We utilized a purposive sampling method and snowballing method throughout the data collection process. These sampling methods were used throughout the data collection as they allowed us to find and choose relevant participants (see Table of Informants, Table 1 and List of Participants in Appendix III), identify our cases and conduct the research in accordance with our research aim and research questions (Bryman 2008:376, 415). We identified and approached two of our cases through the Zambian Open Community Schools (ZOCS), the largest coordinator of community schools in Zambia. The third case was identified through a contact within a local grassroots organization.

3.4 Data collection methods

The data collection process was performed from November 2009 to February 2010 and involved primary and secondary sources. One distinct feature of the case study design is the integration of multiple sources of information (Creswell 2007:75; Yin 2003:14). The primary data used in our study therefore consist of findings from semi-structured interviews, group interviews and direct observations. The secondary data is compiled of government documents i.e. education policies, strategic plans and frameworks, guidelines and national development plans. We performed semi-structured interviews with a majority of the informants as this method allowed the answers of the informants to guide the interview process while interview guides (see Enclosure I) helped us cover the topics important for our study. (Bryman 2008:438) This method also allowed us to re-define the interview guides throughout the

research process using the knowledge we gained along the way to develop more relevant interview topics (Bryman 2008:439).

One-on-one interviews were performed as we deemed this method to be most likely to yield the informants' perceptions (Creswell 2007:133). Engaging in one-on-one interviews with children was at times challenging as some were a bit shy and short-spoken but we considered it still to be the best option, as this gave even the quiet ones a chance to express their opinion (Creswell 2007:133). The interviews with PCSC members were conducted in group interviews[4] as we assumed that the interaction between them could reveal interesting thoughts (Creswell 2007:133). As the interpreter at times found it difficult to translate the dynamic discussions, some of the positive effects of the group interviews were lost. The informants, nevertheless, were encouraged by each other, which produced well elaborated answers. During our visits to the schools and during the time we lived and worked in Lusaka we engaged in direct observation[5] to complement the information gained from interviews and to give us a better understanding of the context in which the informants perceived their reality.

The informants, presented in the table (see Table 1) on next page, come from the local community school level, from now on referred to as the *local level*, and the national policy level, as from now the *national level*. This latter level is represented by actors from departments under MoE and the provincial and district level (see descriptions of their function in National level in Analysis and Background). As official representatives they are referred to by name. The informants on the local level have been coded (see List of Participants in Appendix III) to secure their personal integrity.

---

[4] Interviews with PCSC members at Jordan Community School were conducted as two separate one-on-one interviews due to the members' limited time.

[5] References in the analysis that refer to direct observations aim to our observations, experiences and impressions gained throughout the research period.

Local level						
	Number of informants					
Cases	**Students***	**Teachers**	**Head Masters**	**Parents**	**PCSC** Members**	**Zonals****
David Livingstone OVC Community School (DLCS)	10	7	1	5	3	1
Jordan Community School (JCS)	10	4	1	5	2	1
Linda Open Community School (LOCS)	10	6	1	7	7	1
Number of informants	**30**	**17**	**3**	**17**	**12**	**3**
Total number of informants						82

National level						
Informants	**Number of informants**					
Level	**Ministry Level**			**Province Level**	**District Level**	
	EQUIP2****	**Directorate of Planning and Information**	**Examinations Council of Zambia**	**Provincial Education Office**	**DEBS***** Lusaka**	**DEBS Kafue**
	3	2	2	3	3	1
Total number of informants						14

*The students interviewed were all in grade 6-9, ranging in age between 12 and 22
**Parents Community School Committee
***Zonal Committee Representative
****Education Quality Improvement Program 2
*****District Education Board Secretariat

Table 1: Table of Informants

3.5 Reliability and validity of the data

Throughout the research process we were mindful in securing the reliability and validity. We were observant to possible misinformation and misinterpretation (Creswell 2007:207), either by us as researchers or among the informants. During the interview process, we revised the interview guides when discovering unclear or irrelevant questions. Also, in order not to limit the interview topics to our theoretical knowledge we strived to develop the questions as open as possible. To avoid aspects being lost in translation when using a translator we went through the questions thoroughly with the interpreter to make that sure she was familiar with them and the purpose of our study. We further discussed the questions with our gatekeepers and

interpreters to limit, to the extent possible, 'researcher bias' (Creswell 2007:208). Through the authorization from the MoE our research was also formally approved (see Request and Approval for Research in Appendix IV). The validity of the data collected was further ensured by pre-interview meetings with Head Masters at the schools and with MoE gatekeepers. Further, we began every interview by introducing ourselves and what we were doing to ensure that our intentions were clear to every single informant.

The reliability of the data collected was kept intact by the recording and transcribing of interviews. Furthermore, throughout the research process we sustained an 'inter-observer consistency' (Bryman 2008:150, 376), meaning that we as two researchers discussed every step in the process and performed the interviews as a team. In order to understand the social world of our informants correctly and to enhance the reliability of our research (Creswell 2007:208), we utilized multiple sources of data and several methods for collecting the data, i.e. triangulation (Bryman 2008:379).

4 Previous research on quality education

Scanning the literature on the concept we found a division between two main approaches to quality education, although different authors name these approaches somewhat differently. According to David Stephens (2003:6), the two major frameworks for studying the concept of quality education are labeled *the Policy Mechanics Approach* and *the Classroom Culturalists*. The former has a positivistic view on quality education emphasizing a universal measurability of effective schools, seeing student performance rates, effective use of resources and sufficient school- materials, etc. as indicators of quality education. The latter approach understand quality in relation to particular contexts and cultures and focuses on what takes place in the classroom, i.e. the teaching and learning.

Tove Nagel and Tone Kvernbekk (1997:102-104) make a similar distinction between *the Performance Indicator Approach*, which reflects an economical and bureaucratic rationale that sees student performances in literacy and numeracy as good indicators for high quality education and *the Liberal Education View* or a *Here-and-now Approach*, seeing what goes on in a particular classroom as a determinant of quality. Barrett et al (2006:2) identifies two similar dominant perspectives on quality definitions; *the Economist View* and the *Humanist View*. The economist perspective emphasizes quantitative measurable outcomes, e.g. enrolment rates, and is largely influencing organizations such as the World Bank and its

definition of quality. In comparison, the humanist, or progressive, perspective on quality education is focused on the school itself and the content, e.g. learned-centered pedagogies, democratic school governance and inclusion (Barrett et al 2006:2).

In contrast to the division of the definitions of quality education mentioned above, the authors to *The Concept of Quality in Education- A review of the international literature on the concept of quality* identify five key dimensions of quality in education in their reviewed literature: effectiveness, efficiency, equality, relevance and sustainability (Barett et al. 2006:15). UNICEF classifies the different dimensions of the educational system quality as *learners, learning environments, content, process and outcomes*, stating that this definition enables an understanding of education as "a complex system embedded in a political, cultural and economic context." (Colby 2000:4-5). Margo O'Sullivan (2006:249) has in turn identified five other types of definitions of quality education: value quality, input quality, process quality, output quality and contextual defined quality, but understood herself quality in terms of processes and as contextually defined. In contrast to the thus far mentioned authors, Wim Hoppers (1994:41) does not try to list a number of components of quality education but rather stresses the importance of individual interpretations of quality education.

C. E. Beeby has made an important contribution to the contemporary debate on quality education. His theory builds on the assumption that quality education, or qualitative change, is about the change that takes place in the classroom and has to do with the process of teaching and learning (Beeby 1980:455). The factors that simplify or limit the change are mainly concerned with the teacher that has an essential role to play in student achievement (Beeby 1980:454).

A common distinction made by researchers within the field of education is between 'Education' and 'Schooling'. Barett et al (2006:2) underscore the importance of making a distinction between the two, as the concept of quality is elusive and has multiple meanings, shaped by ideological, social and political understandings. While 'Education' is about "the development of desirable qualities in people" (Hirst and Peters cited in Barett et al 2006:2), i.e. the process of teaching and learning, 'Schooling', is about the provision of effective service of education, i.e. the provision of education through institutionalized and organized learning. Quality in terms of schooling or school effectiveness, can easily be reduced to a static and technical activity (Bunting cited in Barett et al 2006:2, Stephens 2003:6,7).

To sum up, the interpretations of the concept of quality education are many, but we can distinguish two main approaches. These two can be divided into; Classroom Culturalists and Technical Economists. This terminology will be used when we are referring to the different approaches in the Analysis. While Classroom Culturalists emphasize aspects corresponding almost exclusively to 'Education', Technical Economists often emphasize aspects that are found within the term 'Schooling'.

5 Theory

The theoretical framework outlined in this chapter is obtained from the works of David Stephens and Wim Hoppers. We label these as Classroom Culturalists as they emphasize key aspects characteristic for Classroom Culturalists. Both emphasize contextual and locally relevant understanding of quality and, in particular, Stephens stresses teaching and learning processes. The main components in our framework are; a local perspective, relevance and teaching and learning processes. The structure of this chapter follows the three components.

5.1 A local perspective emphasizing culture, context and locality

Our rights-based approach, influenced by Sen's Capability Approach, underlines the importance of people taking part in decision-making in matters that directly affects their lives, which is the rationale for bringing in a local perspective into our framework. The local perspective consists of three components; locality, context and culture. This section presents the local perspective as comprised by these three components.

5.1.1 Locality

Locality builds on the notion that all education stakeholders, in particular the immediate users on the local level, should be able to make choices and take part in the educational development process as well as in the formulation of national definitions on quality education (Hoppers 1994:41,64). A local perspective also imply a more effective delivery of education in that policy makers need to be aware of the actual situation on the level of implementation and understand the effects of their decisions (Stephens 1991:232). More decisional power should be given to groups that many times are left out of the 'circle of decision-makers', especially children (Stephens 1991:227, 230). It can however be a challenging task to bring in local stakeholders into the national debate and decision making process as the local stakeholders can be scattered when it comes to common perceptions and interests, e.g. having

different social and economic interests. Between local actors and policy makers the interest can further diverge (Hoppers 1994:46,47).

5.1.2 The notion of context

Essential in Stephens' approach is that quality in education cannot be reduced to independent, separated factors quantitatively assessed and compared between different learning environments (Stephens 2003:7), thus quality education can have different meanings when interpreted in a particular context. The meanings therefore need to be translated into criteria that are functional in different contexts and on different levels, i.e. the system level and the classroom level (Stephens 2003:12).

Educational decisions can further not be separated from the historical, social, economic or political context in which schools exist, as these affect individuals' room for maneuver (Stephens 1991:227). The economic state of the government and the differences in economic status for the people are major factors in imbalanced education systems. The political context is characterized by the political will and political power influencing education in a country, whereas the social context entails influences from societal and community traditions and values (Stephens 1991:228).

5.1.3 The culture concept

The culture concept is a broad concept, used and understood differently (Stephens 2007:25). Stephens (2007:29) identifies culture in a twofold way. First, culture is concerned with the knowledge and ideas of individuals that gives meaning to their beliefs and actions. Second, culture is also about how people use their beliefs in order to act in the world. For Hoppers (1994:46) the usage of culture in relation to education is about paying attention to community practices and indigenous sources of competence and creativity, to incorporate a local perspective in educational development.

Stephens (2003:12; 2007:44) holds that education can not be separated from culture. Demands on education as well as the concept of quality in education are subjective matters and determined by cultural ideas, values and norms in a society (Stephens 2003:4; 2007:44). Thus, every discussion on educational development and policy making must take into account the cultural landscape in order to achieve a relevant schooling and education and quality in education should entail an understanding and respect for the different meanings and cultural norms that individuals carry with them (Stephens 2003:4,12). In similarity, Hoppers (1994:56) find that the different cultural interpretations of education and the socio-cultural

environment in homes and communities thus often determine what skills, attitudes, and values local actors consider their children should be learning in school. The school is further a vehicle by which culture is transmitted from one generation to the next and is in this sense not 'culture-free' (Stephens 2007:44), but instead part of a complex web of values, norms, social and power relationships and emotions" (Stephens 2003:12; 2007:44).

5.2 Relevance and teaching and learning processes

Classroom Culturalists accentuate the actual process of teaching and learning in the school and classroom context as an important element for quality education. Also, quality is linked to the relevance of the knowledge being taught and the purpose of education, which is entrenched within a broader social context (Hoppers 1994:59; Stephens 2003:5,6). Aspects of quality education can thus be divided into; the classroom and school context where the teaching and learning processes take place, and the wider context of the education system and society, in which we place the following discussion on relevance.

5.2.1 Relevance
Relevance is an important pillar for quality and refers to the knowledge that is relevant to a specific context and to specific needs and should thus be translated into criteria that is functional in different contexts and on different societal levels, e.g. on a local and a national level (Hoppers 1994:47; Stephens 2003:4,28).

One of the main features in discussions on relevance and education is the curriculum. The school curriculum has a significant effect on education outcomes but what is important, as argued by Stephens (2003:16), is that the curriculum should be relevant to the needs and context of the learners. Hoppers (1994:59) strongly emphasize relevance of curriculum in the debate of local perspective and quality education. He questions the notion of a universal education as this neglects local knowledge, needs and realities (Hoppers 1994:42). This critique mainly concerns the school curriculum, which in many developing countries is influenced by international standards while little attention is given to the views and needs of local stakeholders (Hoppers 1994:44).

As relevance is connected to the wider context of the education system and the society, and should be beneficial to local stakeholders, the aim of education therefore becomes an imperative element for any discussion on quality (Stephens 2003:5). However, the purpose of education can be highly subjective and connected to the contextual and cultural reality and

thus be very different depending on the personal interest in education of individuals (Hoppers 1994:62; Stephens 2003:4).

5.2.2 Teaching and learning processes

Classroom Culturalists deem the interaction between the teacher and the students, i.e. the teaching and learning process, and how this lead to improved student outcomes, as imperative for understanding and improving quality education (Stephens 2003:6).

The process of teaching and learning involves teaching methodology and planning, teaching and classroom strategies and other elements in the interaction between teacher and student that lead to learning outcomes. Further, quality is about relevant, inclusive and efficient teaching that can create good learning environments (Stephens 2003:20). The teacher plays a vital role as she/he is the main deliverer of education and thus the starting point for an implementation of quality education (Stephens 2003:19). The knowledge and qualification of the teacher is key as trained teachers have the ability to focus on student thinking, transfer of skills and creativity (Stephens 2003:20).

Students' learning outcomes can be regarded as the 'evidence of performance' of the teacher and the student. Evidence of performance can, in other words, be seen as an indicator for evaluating quality in the teaching and learning process (Stephens 2003:23). Nevertheless, for Classroom Culturalists, using quantifiable, universal or even national indicators for quality can be very problematic as these diverge from a focus on the local school and classroom context and also ignore outcomes of the learning process (Stephens 2003:7). It is therefore imperative, but nevertheless challenging, to develop indicators that are contextually sensitive (Stephens 2003:23).

5.3 Operationalization of analysis

5.3.1 Theory and method of analysis

Our operationalization has been divided into three levels of analysis; the local level, the national level and the crosscutting level. The local perspective permeates all three levels and thus work as a filter through which we run our data findings. It is used to analyze how local, contextual and cultural aspects affect the informants' perceptions, values and actions concerning quality education. An analytical model (see Figure 1 below) has been created to be used as a tool to analyze our data and help us reach our aim. The model is comprised of

components in our theoretical framework and is in line with the structure of the three analytical levels.

The analysis of the data collected is carried out using a form of thematic analysis technique (Bryman 2008:554; Creswell 2007:75). The technique is employed throughout the entire analysis and used to analyze all our findings and not exclusively those from our three cases on the local level. Patterns and themes are discerned (Creswell 2007:75) on the local level within and between the cases, on the national level, and between these two analytical levels. The technique is thus fashioned to suit our specific analysis structure consisting of three analytical levels. The themes and patterns are distinguished after a systematic reading of our transcripts and interview notes (Bryman 2008:554).

5.3.2 The three analytical levels

The local level is guided by our first sub-research question; *What patterns can be discerned among local stakeholders in three community schools in Lusaka in their perceptions of quality education?* We thus distinguish patterns between local actors' (Head Masters, Teachers, Parents, Students, PCSC members and Zonals) definitions and understandings on quality education.

We discern patterns that follow the two components retrieved from our theoretical framework; relevance and teaching and learning processes. Concerning *relevance,* we explore how quality can be connected to the purpose of education and the relevance of the curriculum. When searching for patterns in line with the second component, *teaching and learning processes,* we concentrate on the teaching process, the teacher's role and the process by which students learn. If we find patterns that go beyond the two main components these are presented in an individual section before the main findings are presented.

On the national level we distinguish patterns in definitions on quality education among policy makers and educational developers. Here we are guided by the second sub-research question*; What are the perceptions on quality education among national education developers and decision-makers and how are these connected to the official policy stance on quality?* The components that we focus on in this part are the same as those on the first level.

On the crosscutting level we continue to discern patterns but focus on patterns between the first two levels and how the definitions on quality education on the national level converge or not converge with the definitions on the local level. We also discuss the underlying factors that explain these findings. We here answer the third sub-question; *What patterns in*

perceptions on quality education can be discerned between the two levels, i.e. where do the perceptions meet and where do they part?

Our analytical model is presented below (see Figure 1). The three analytical levels in the model are in line with the three research questions. The aspects i.e. relevance and teaching and learning processes, that constitute our theoretical framework, are the components that are used to guide our research questions. The local perspective is applied to process the findings.

Research aim
To reach a better understanding on how quality education can be applied so that the needs, views and values of local actors are fulfilled at the same time as national principles and perspectives on education are considered.

Local level	**National level**	**Cross-cutting level**
Relevance	Relevance	
Teaching and learning processes	Teaching and learning processes	Patterns between local and national level
Patterns beyond theory?	Patterns beyond theory?	

Local perspective; locality, context, culture

Figure 1: Analytical Model – Constructed on the basis of components from the works of David Stephens and Wim Hoppers.

6 Analysis

In this section we present the analysis of our findings. As mentioned above, the analysis follows a structure of three analytical levels, starting with the local level. Before we proceed to the thematic analysis followed by a presentation of the main findings, we start by presenting the context of the three cases.

6.1 The Local level

6.1.1 Case context

The three community schools, i.e. our cases, operate in compounds where they are managed and governed by the community members themselves through an elected PCSC group. All three schools have high teacher turnover rates, as they are not under government payroll and receive highly irregularly allowances, if any. Most students in these schools are orphans and or vulnerable children and thus follow the general characteristic of students in Zambian community schools (see national context in background).

David Livingstone OVC Community School

The David Livingstone OVC Community School (DLCS) (see Picture 1) is situated in peri-urban Chazanga Compound in Lusaka District, in Emmasdale Zone. The number of registered students at the school is about 1200. However, the number of regularly attending students is much less. Nine teachers are currently working and attending to the students at the school. External donors e.g. USAID and WFP have contributed with infrastructure, food and school materials. The school currently has two buildings with three classrooms, but due to the largenumber of students there is a great need for further expansion.

Picture 1: Student standing outside David Livingstone OVC Community School (Photo: Helena Paulsson)

Jordan Community School

Jordan Community School (JCS) (see Picture 2) is located in the Lilanda Zone on a United Church of Zambia premise in George Compound in Lusaka District, with two buildings used for 340 students from grade 1-7. The infrastructure at Jordan is poor with run-down buildings and the main building being a church holding four classes simultaneously. The school provides the students with breakfast and lunch every day. The school is financially supported by donors through ZOCS, but experiences multiple challenges due to the poor resources and funding.

Picture 2: One of the buildings at Jordan Community School (Photo: Helena Paulsson)

Linda Open Community School

Linda Open Community School (LOCS) (see Picture 3) is located in Linda Compound, a semi-rural area of Chilanga Zone in Kafue District. The number of students in the school currently registered is 1445 with 13 teachers, a majority of them trained under the Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC). LOCS has a number of sponsors e.g. ZOCS, UNICEF, WFP and Irish Aid, supporting the school with teacher training, building and rehabilitation of school premises and materials such as desks, exercise books and school bags, and also provides the children with food. It however faces challenges with lack of classrooms and materials due to the constantly growing number of students.

Picture 3: The main building at Linda Open Community School (Photo: Helena Paulsson)

6.1.2 Findings - Relevance

6.1.2.1 Quality and the purpose of education

We stated in the theory that a discussion on quality education is intertwined with the fundamental question about the purpose of education (Stephens 2003:5). In fact, many informants made a direct connection between quality and what they perceived as the purpose of education, which often was related to the expected learning outcomes. For example, quality was; "to provide good results" (Interview: Teacher 2 at DLCS); "where a child can learn so many things for the future and he can achieve things even after finishing school" (Interview: Parent 4 at LOCS); "what you deliver to the learner" (Interview: Teacher 2 at LOCS).

Particularly parents and students experienced quality education in terms of concrete knowledge, as in a child learning how to read and write, speak English etc. (Interviews: Parent 2,3,5 at DLCS; Parent 1,2,3 at JCS; Parent 1,2,3 at LOCS; Student 2, 8, 9, 10 at JCS). Hence, quality was perceived in terms of learning outcomes, by Stephens highlighted as a common and important indicators for quality (Stephens 2003:23). While our theory calls for contextualized indicators that do not undermine local differences (Stephens 2003:7), the informants seemed to emphasize particularly the types of indicators that are measurable, which are often accentuated by Technical Economists (Barrett et al 2006:7).

> Here in Zambia, education is the key to success. If you don't go to school, your life will be bad (Interview: Student 1 at LOCS).

There was a consensus among the informants that education is the key to life and to success (Interviews: Head Masters, Parents, Students, Teachers, at LOCS, DLCS, JCS; PCSC members LOCS; Zonal, Chilanga). One teacher enunciated education as "a source of life, energy, employment, even self-employment (Interview: Teacher 5 at DLCS). The foremost expectation on education, none the least among the students, was to obtain employment in the future; "education make you live a better life, find a job /…/ because you learn to read and write" (Interview: Student 10 at LOCS). Both policy makers and public and private stakeholders promote education as a solution to socio-economic development (MoE 1996:2), and as unemployment is prevalent in the compounds[6] (Tranberg Hansen 2005:11) it comes as little surprise that the expectancy on education to create and deliver future employments was a common belief among the informants (Interviews: Parents DLCS, JCS, LOCS). As argued in our theory, societal norms and realities are important determinants for individuals' views and demands on education (Stephens 2007:29), which is evident in the concurrent perceptions among the informants that education leads to individual and social prosperity.

Among students and parents there was a clear sense of responsibility that comes when a child receives education. Many parents expected their children to support them once graduated (Interviews: Parents at LOCS, JCS, DLCS); "education is important for the children to have a bright future so that they can keep their parents" (Interview: Parent 2 at DLCS). A majority of the students also expressed both a wish and an obligation to become the future breadwinners of the family. Many referred to the harsh economic situation at home and their parents' struggle to pay for the school fees, which we understood could lead to a feeling of indebtedness (Interviews: Students at JCS, DLCS, LOCS). This reasoning can, through a local perspective, be seen as an answer to the challenging socio-economic situations, turning the education of a child in to an investment that is expected to benefit the household (Stephens 1991:227). It can also be explained by the norms and values in the Zambian society implying that family members should take care of each other and their relatives (Direct Observation 090905-100214). This again highlights the educational demands as formed by cultural values (Stephens 2007:29).

---

[6] Unemployment in this study refers to a person not being economically active in the public or private sector (CSO 2005:52,53). 65% of the parents in our study were formally unemployed following this definition but occasionally selling vegetables or hand crafts on the local markets.

6.1.2.2 Relevance of curriculum

Almost all 30 students (Interviews: Students at LOCS, DLCS, LCS) placed importance on Mathematics, English, Science and Social Science i.e. standard subjects in the curriculum (CDC 2000:35). From an early stage in their education, students know what subjects to prioritize in order to help them acquire a job in the future and we sensed that many of the students strived to break away from the compounds and live a modern life in the future having a steady employment. Many hoped to be nurses, teachers, accountants, doctors, pilots and engineers, etc. (Interviews: Students at LOCS, DLCS, JCS), which elucidates why the standard subjects were particularly popular. Hoppers' notion that schooling, focusing on the standard subjects, is isolated from the local reality and often neglect the needs in communities (Hoppers 1994:42), thus goes against the views of these students. Instead, they perceived quality as particularly connected to the standard subjects, which both filled the needs of them as learners and was relevant for their contextual situation.

A few parents but particularly Head Masters, Zonals and teachers placed, in comparison to the students, importance on students learning practical skills (Interviews: Head Master at JCS, DLCS; Teacher 1,3,5 at LOCS; Teacher 3,4 at JCS; Parent at LOCS, DLCS, JCS; PCSC at LOCS). Brick laying, drawing, pot making and tailoring were commonly mentioned and reflect the type of small businesses traditionally practiced in the compounds. Practical skills were considered important back-up plans for students that drop out in earlier grades; "It is not only about reading and writing, you teach them how to sew for example. The majority will go to school but not all will complete school, but if they have skills they will manage" (Interview: Teacher 3 at LOCS). It thus seemed like parents, Head Masters and teachers saw education in the wider social context from another angle, focusing on aspects such as high dropout-rates in the schools, often as a consequence of teenage pregnancies, lack of resources, etc (IOB 2008:98). A need for a more localized curriculum to increase the quality of education (Hoppers 1994:42) is thus emphasized by the majority of the informants, *except* by the students themselves. What needs to be emphasized is therefore that all local actors do not always support a localized curriculum, and that the knowledge and world views of the informants affect their perception on what they see as relevant to learn (Stephens 2003:12). This stresses the importance not to homogenize local stakeholders to a group with one set of needs, as pointed out by Hoppers (1994:46,47).

Parents, teachers, Head Masters and Zonals argued very strongly for children receiving education in life skills (Interviews: Head Masters at DLCS, JCS; Teachers and Parents at

LOCS, DLCS, JCS; Zonal Chilanga;). Quality for these actors was connected to the students learning everything they need in order to develop as human beings. One teacher explained that quality for him was "teaching extra curriculum programs, like life skills. Like here, they learn how they should live" (Interview: Teacher 3 at JCS). The school was in this regard expected to pass on traditions and cultural values and developing children into social and moral individuals (Interviews: Teacher 3,6 at LOCS; Teachers at DLCS; PCSC member 2 at JCS; Students at JCS, DLCS). The perception of the school as an important vehicle for producing and re-producing societal norms suggests that "education is not an island but part of the continent of culture" (Stephens 2007:44,45).

Another common thought among parents, teachers, Head Masters and Zonals was that children being in school reduces street crime, prostitution, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, etc. (Interviews: PCSC members and Parent 2,5 at LOCS; Parent 1,3,4, Teacher 3,4 at JCS; Parent 1,3 at DLCS). In a context where many of the children are orphans and some have been enrolled in older ages and have spent a lot of time in the compounds, the school became more than a center for delivering education.

> When someone is here, the only thing he does is learning, reading, writing, but when someone is spending a lot of time with his friends all he learn is fighting and assaulting (Interview: Parent 3 at JCS).

With a harsh situation at home, the school was thus understood as a breather zone but also a provider of nutrition (see Picture 4), as many children and teachers otherwise have limited access to food (Interviews: Parent 3 at JCS; Parent 4 at LOCS; Teacher 3 at DLCS; Head Master at DLCS; Teacher 3 at JCS). The importance of food and well-being was seen as an important factor for good performance and quality education as it makes the children and teachers perform better (Interviews: Zonal Chilanga; Head Master at JCS, LOCS; Teacher 3,5 at LOCS; Parent 2,3 at JCS). Classroom Culturalists fail to meet this particular understanding of quality as they often leave out factors and inputs closer related to Schooling. These aspects further go beyond the mere delivery of education (Bunting cited in Barett et al 2006:2).

Picture 4: Lunch being prepared for the children at Jordan Community School (Photo: Helena Paulsson)

Children are smiling because they are fed (Interview: Head Master at LOCS)

6.1.3 Findings - Teaching and learning processes

6.1.3.1 The role of the teacher as quality

The extensive need for more teachers was articulated throughout the empery from this level. A common opinion was that teachers have too many classes and subjects, which was understood as affecting the quality of teaching and learning. Many students expressed their frustration with teachers not having enough time for them (Interview: Student at LOCS; Student 1,4,7 at DLCS; Student 6,9 at JCS). Teachers, on their part, emphasized more time with the students to improve the quality of learning. The interaction between the students and teachers, i.e. "the minute-to-minute processes" (Stephens 2003:6) was for the informants, as for the Classroom Culturalists, a critical element for quality education as it is in this very process that education is provided (Stephens 2003:6). However, while Classroom Culturalists focus on the content or quality of the process (O'Sullivan 2006:248, Stephens 2003:6), the informants perceived the actual length of interaction as essential, which can be explained by the de facto limited time the students have with the teacher.

Additionally, having *qualified teachers* was further equalized with quality education (Zonal Lilanda; Zonal Chilanda; PCSC 2 at JCS; Teachers at DLCS, JCS, LOCS). The requirement of qualified teachers is a hot topic in education policies (MoE 1996:107-113: 2007:12-14) but barely half of the teachers in these schools are qualified through formal training (Interviews: Teachers at DLCS, JCS, LOCS). This circumstance can explain the extensive focus on the qualification of teachers among the informants. Having qualified teachers was for many students preferred as; "You need teachers that are intelligent and teach well /.../ teachers that teach us good things and so that we understand" (Interview: Student 6 at LOCS). There was an understanding among the students and parents that a good teacher is a teacher who follows the curriculum, and a qualified teacher knows how to do this (Interviews: Student 5,7,9 at JCS; Student 6,8 at DLCS; Parent 3,5 at JCS; Parent 3 at DLCS). Further, for children to gain knowledge that is contextually and culturally relevant from their education, they need qualified teachers that are aware of what the children need (Interviews: PCSC 1 at LOCS; Parent 1,2,4 at JCS; Parent 2,4,6 at LOCS). The teacher was thence seen to have a pivotal role in producing relevant learning outcomes (Stephens 2003:19). According to Stephens (2003:18), the role attributed to the teachers is often connected to the visions and values people want from the education system, which for many of the informants was clearly about students learning relevant things in school.

However, especially among parents there was an understanding that the teachers are good when they do the best with what they have and when they are committed to the children. The poor qualification of the teachers was often overlooked by the fact that they work voluntarily; "the most qualitative thing is that the children are learning and there is a change in them /.../ it is because of the teachers, they know how to teach" (Interview: Parent 3 at DLCS). The way the teacher acts is recurrent in discussions on teaching and learning process (Stephens 2003:18). The behavior of the teacher was for both parents and students understood as largely affecting the *motivation* of the pupil, and "the way the teacher teach" (Interview: Student 6 at DLCS) was a common understanding of good education (Interviews: Student 1,4,8,10 at JCS; Student 9 at LOCS; Student 2,6,7 at DLCS). The focus on the personal engagement and characteristics of the teachers follows Stephens' argument that "quality is defined in terms of values, aspirations and actions taken by /.../ the teachers, that have a positive effect on the learners" (Stephens 2003:18). What we can understand by the informants' views on quality in relation to teachers' engagement, lack of payment and the teaching itself is that contextual circumstances and prevailing norms and values in the compounds seemed to shape the values attributed to the teachers and in turn the perceptions on quality (Stephens 1991:227; 2003:18). The context surrounding the students, such as the home environment was further seen to affect the quality of learning (Stephens 1991:227), "if they have some difficulties from home it will affect them in school, pupil will not be very attentive if they have problems" (Interview: Teacher 1 at DLCS).

6.1.3.2 The learning environment

Although a majority of the students and parents and some teachers emphasized a strict teacher-student relationship where the teacher is planning and leading the lessons, a large group of students and teachers also preferred a more open learning environment where students are more active and students and teachers can feel 'free' to each other, meaning that students are free to ask questions in class and that the teacher is free to be open and friendly to the students. This place importance on a positive classroom environment where the teacher should "encourage the learners to be free in mind too so that things from home don't affect the performance in school" (Interview: Teacher 1 at DLCS). All things considered, the weight put on the interaction between teachers and students in the classroom display an important connection between the role of the teachers, the classroom and community context and quality education (Stephens 2003:6).

6.1.4 Patterns beyond the theory

As stated in the Operalization, we intend to capture the full spectra within the local perspective; therefore it is imperative to include patterns that go beyond the theoretical framework in our analysis.

The first aspect of quality falling beyond the scope of our theory is connected to the *school environment*, with an emphasis on the infrastructure, surroundings and 'practical' environment, e.g. safe buildings, enough desks, school location, blackboard and chalk, clean toilets etc. (Interviews: Students at LOCS, JCS; Teachers at LOCS). The concerns were often focused on the safety in the school; "This building is not stable, it can fall anytime, so I would be happy if we could build another school here" (Interview: Student 6 at JCS). The small number of classrooms and buildings and big class sizes with up to 80 pupils was further seriously affecting the order in the classes. Also, the lack of sitting space (see Picture 5) impeded on the learning environment as many children are forced to sit on the floor. This aspect was often connected to the actual lack of

Picture 5: Crowded classroom during a lesson at Linda Open Community School (Photo: Helena Paulsson)

infrastructure in the schools "community schools are falling back in terms of infrastructure /.../ we can not afford to reach that level" (Interview: Zonal Lilanda).

> There are three classes in the same building and they learn at the same time, so pupils lose concentration (Interview: PCSC 2 at JCS)

Many parents expressed that they had insufficient resources to pay for their children, and worried about the shortage of materials in the school, which was seen as a missing link to quality education; "only the teachers have the pupils' books. It makes it hard for the pupils to concentrate" (Interview: Parent 3 at LOCS). Even though theses answers themselves are cornered around materialistic aspects, they are also highly related to the context of the community schools; "I can't afford to buy my children books, pencils. /…/ there are no challenges apart from the material ones" (Interview: Parent 4 at DLCS). The materialistic

worries were also articulated by Zonals (Interviews: Zonals at Chilanda, Emmasdale, Lilanda). As community schools recently have been acknowledged as part of the national education system in Zambia, the exclusion often results in government grants and resources not reaching the schools. In fact, there was a clear feeling of exclusion among the informants on higher positions in the local school system, expressed in terms of not receiving financial support by the government, but also in terms of not being included in policy development affecting their delivery of education (Interviews: Head Master at LOCS, Zonals Lilanda and Emmasdale).

Hence, the scarce resources and material needs in the community, school and household were reflected in, and highly influential on, the informants' perceptions on quality. These aspects are often neglected by Classroom Culturalists (Stephens 2003:7) but underscored by Technical Economists (Barrett et al 2006:2, Stephens 2003:6) as well as organizations such as UNICEF stating that quality includes "environments that are healthy, safe, protective /.../ and provide adequate resources and facilities" (Colby 2000:4).

6.1.5 Main findings

For the children living under difficult socio-economical situations, obtaining a secure source of income was the ultimate aim of education. In turn, quality of education entailed children being taught relevant knowledge for future employment. Learning outcomes was not only an indicator for quality in teaching and learning as proposed in the theory, but an goal in itself and a definition of quality. The role of the teacher to deliver relevant student learning outcomes connects the teaching and learning in the classroom to the overall purpose of education, i.e. to deliver valuable knowledge, and the teacher was therefore a prerequisite for quality education.

Contextual and cultural factors influenced aspects on quality, e.g. in terms of the curriculum content, qualified teachers and the characteristics of the teacher. The school seen as a vehicle for production and re-production of values and norms and as a guardian providing shelter, food and security, also highlights that quality was understood in a broader term than what is incorporated in the concept of 'Education'.

The students disaffirmed our theory that emphasizes a localized curriculum by not stressing this as particularly important for quality in education. Different groups of actors had diverging perceptions in terms of relevance, e.g. all actors, except for students, emphasized practical and life skills. The common view on quality in terms of concrete knowledge, e.g. literacy and

numeracy further parted from our theory stating that indicators must be contextualized to fit local needs.

Many answers were shaped by what was missing and needed at the schools and in the community, e.g. lack of qualified teachers and teachers in general, teachers' allowances, lack of income and financial resources, limited employment opportunities, materials etc. The patterns beyond the theory thus re-emphasize that deficits often shaped the understanding on quality. The substantial material shortages in these schools further makes it inconclusive to limit quality in terms of the aspects in our theory, i.e. teaching and learning and relevance.

6.2 National level

This level of analysis focuses on the perceptions on quality education and the education system in general among national education developers and decision makers, but it also incorporates relevant features of government documents. In similarity with the local level it explores the elements of *relevance* and *teaching and learning processes*. The empirical material stems from interviews with various actors from bodies within and under the MoE, with representatives from the Education Quality Improvement Program 2 (EQUIP2) coordinating Educational Policy, Systems Development, and Management for quality enhancement, and Directorate of Planning and Information (DPI), gathering data and generating statistics on education activities in Zambia. Further, the semi-autonomous Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ), responsible for school examinations, and the PEO in Lusaka Province and the DEBS in Lusaka and Kafue District are represented.

6.2.1 Findings - Relevance

6.2.1.1 Perceptions on quality in terms of relevance

> The simple question is; why do we send our children to school? And the simple answer is; we want them to live better lives (Interview: Dr. Lupele, EQUIP2).

Perceptions on quality education seemed to be related to the aim of education for many national informants. Quality was recurrently associated to the specific expectations and demands on education that was anticipated by the community and the society at large. Skills, competencies and relevant knowledge were emphasized as vital cornerstones in children's education among representatives, along with children's ability to actually utilize these in a practical and professional matter. The Zambian policy context on education is compiled by

both national goals and international guidelines, emphasizing relevance and aim of education (GRZ 2005:5,6), and can very much be an influence to the informants' answers on what they deemed as crucial components for quality education.

The wider social context was also imperative when discussing relevance in quality education, as "quality education makes a person have a better understanding not only about their own surrounding in their community but they are able also to understand other claims, they understand their rights and their limitations, their freedoms" (Interview: Mrs. Mobisi, DEBS Kafue). Thus, by children being taught what is relevant for their life in the community and society they can become more aware of their choices and situation and able to make decisions on their own i.e. the individual's capabilities are enhanced (Sen 1999:11). However, the poor socio-economic structures adjacent to particularly community schools complicates the education situation in Zambia, and at times even have a negative impact on quality (Stephens 1991:227). Also, relevance did not necessarily always result in quality;

> You can have education of very high quality but not relevant for the needs of the society /.../ then you can have education that is of very poor quality and not relevant to the needs of society, that is the worst form of education we have /.../ provided that education is not relevant to the needs of society and individuals, then it is not of good quality (Interview: Mr. Kanyika, ECZ).

Due to the limited resources available for education in general and community schools in particular, the aim to provide relevant and quality education was often forced to be compromised.

6.2.1.2 Relevance and the content of curriculum

> If it were food no one would eat it but this is the poison we are giving our children (Interview: Dr. Lupele, EQUIP2).

What this particular representative was referring to was the national standard curriculum used in the basic schools. The curriculum for basic schools was re-designed in 2000 through the creation of the *Basic School Curriculum Framework* (BSCF) (CDC 2000) in order to make it more receptive to the needs of both learners and society at large (ECZ 2006:2). However, though the government has made a direct shift towards a more contextually relevant curriculum, the positive results in quality are absent and the levels of learning achievement have displayed mixed results (ECZ 2006:2). It was suggested in the National Policy of

Education (NPE) on an early stage to "/.../ allowing schools to adapt aspects of the curriculum to match local needs and circumstances" (MoE 1996:33). However, informants on the national level advocated during our interviews for the standard curriculum to be thoroughly reviewed and changed to further enhance local relevancy (Interviews: Mr. Chengo, EQUIP2; Dr. Lupele, EQUIP2; Mr. Nkoya, ECZ). To achieve this, as suggested in theory (Hoppers 1994:41; Stephens 1991:230), policy makers and education developers should turn to those directly affected by and responsible for the community schools to discern the local needs of and perceptions on quality education;

> /…/ the person in the street will tell you that the quality education is not good. They know that, and they know what they need for this country. But they are never consulted (Interview: Dr. Lupele, EQUIP2).

A majority of the informants on the national level also linked quality education to the learning outcomes of the students (Interviews: Mr. Chengo, EQUIP2; Mr. Kanyika, ECZ; Mr. Katundu, EQUIP2; Dr. Lupele, EQUIP2; Mrs. Mobisi, DEBS Kafue; Mr. Simba, PEO). The NPE embraces the learner as "the most important product of any educational enterprise" (GRZ 2005:6) and states that curriculum relevance should be in the centre of any learning, teaching and training activity (GRZ 2005:6). However, there was on the national level a notion of the learner as an 'empty vessel' (Interview: Dr. Lupele, EQUIP2) who fails in contributing anything due to an insufficient and/or irrelevant learning. This was frequently exemplified by the many complaints that have occurred among employers that some employees are not even able to count, or write properly. Quality education was thus often understood in terms of results, i.e. seen as the extent of which the objectives of the curriculum were met and as certain indicators, such as students being able to count, read, communicate and use their skills in these areas (Interview: Mr Kanyika, ECZ; Mr. Katundu, EQUIP2; Mrs. Mobisi, DEBS Kafue; Mr. Simba, PEO). "There is one graduate who has gone through either a bachelor /.../ employed by the bank and that person fails to write a letter. Did that person go through quality education?" (Interview: Mr. Chengo, EQUIP2). It is thus clear that quantitative indicators were perceived as important measures for quality, also emphasized by the Technical Economists referred to in the Previous Research chapter (Nagel and Kvernbekk 1997:102-104, Stephens 2003:6).

In the Basic School Curriculum Framework, the connection between quality and a relevant and effective local curriculum, is strongly articulated (CDC 2000:16) thus following Hoppers'

argument for a localized curriculum (Hoppers 1994:42). According to one of the informants, a successfully implemented localized curriculum that delivers truly relevant knowledge to students must, however, be adjusted to the "cultural grouping" of people and thus take into account cultural and contextual differences (Interview: Mrs. Mubisi, DEBS Kafue; Stephens 2007:222). Relevant and contextually dependable education was thus seen as crucial for education to fulfill its purpose and, as suggested in theory (Stephens 2003:4), to enable it to develop into quality education.

6.2.2 Findings - Teaching and learning processes

When discussing quality education with national informants, quality was seldom defined in terms of the actual process of teaching and learning, as done by Classroom Culturalists (Stephens 2003:6) but discussions evolved around the challenges for the implementation of quality education linked to the teacher. Factors that the informants mentioned as hindering quality were; lack of qualified teachers, uneven teacher-pupil ratios (TPR) and low teacher accountability (Interviews: Mr. Chengo, EQUIP2; Ms. Golwe, DEBS Lusaka; Mr. Kanyika ECZ; Mr. Katundu, EQUIP2; Dr. Lupele, EQUIP; Mrs. Mobisi, DEBS Kafue; Mr. Musonda, DPI; Mr. Ndakala DPI; Mr. Nkoya, ECZ; Mr. Simba, PEO Lusaka).

The education system should according to the NPE be determined by "the success of the teaching and learning process in developing the analytical skills of children /.../ enabling them to use knowledge as well as to acquire it /.../" (MoE 1996:26). Though teaching and learning aspects were imperative for quality, our informants were concerned with their lesser priority compared to other areas within the educational sector. According to a Ministry representative, pedagogical issues are seldom addressed at policy level or in the curriculum (Interview: Dr. Lupele, EQUIP2) as a few educated people in the top of the educational hierarchy are responsible for decisions concerning the national curriculum without communicating with lower levels. There was thus an understanding on the policy level (Interviews: Mr. Chengo, EQUIP2; Dr. Lupele, EQUIP2) that for quality to be reached there have to be a better communication between the different layers in the educational system. This was especially emphasized on issues regarding teaching and learning, which is highlighted by Stephens (2003:18), as an imperative factor for contextualized quality education to raise the quality of learning outcomes. The recognition of the efforts needed to overcome the challenges in quality thus requires the full participation of "the broadest spectrum of stakeholders", as mentioned in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (MoE 2003:2).

6.2.2.1 The teacher's role and teaching processes

As mentioned above, many informants understood the role of the teacher as an imperative factor affecting quality; "teachers are the greatest agents for learning" (Interview: Mr. Kanyika, ECZ), linking the informants to the Classroom Culturalist Approach (Beeby cited in Barett et al 2006:3; Nagel & Kvernbekk 1997:104; Stephens 2003:19). A few informants did for example tied the low level of teachers' pedagogical skills to problems with implementing quality (Stephens 2003:4), and referred to community schools where many of the teachers go directly from basic school to teaching without any training; "some of those teachers can barely write their name in the community schools" (Interview: Dr. Lupele, EQUIP2).

What strongly separated many national informants from the Classroom Culturalists was their focus on the quantity of teachers. The NPE (MoE 1996:26) articulates over-crowded classrooms and the extensive use of untrained or unqualified teachers being two of the currently largest indicators of low quality in basic education and our informants did in compliance stress the actual availability aspect i.e. the lack of qualified teachers, as a restriction for quality in schools (Interviews: Mr Chengo, EQUIP2; Mr. Katundu, EQUIP2; Mr. Kangulu and Ms. Golwe, DEBS Lusaka). In terms of availability, a major recognized problem was the uneven Teacher-Pupil Ratio (TPR). As one DEBS representative explained, "the ideal is that one teacher handles 35 students, but in some cases there are 100 students per teacher" (Interview: Ms. Golwe and Mr. Kangulu, DEBS Lusaka). The ratios in the districts of our cases speak for themselves. In grade 1-9, the average TPR in Lusaka District is 39.7 respectively Kafue District 40.5 (DPI 2008:131). The uneven TPR can be seen as a direct consequence of the focus and investments on accessibility in basic education as the fast pace in school constructions has impeded the training of teachers.

The insufficient number of teachers in the system was thus seen as a major restrain for quality and further deemed to affect the real time children were in direct contact with the teacher. This contact was emphasized as an important factor for quality; "Whatever time they spend, and you increase the time, you get phenomenal results" (Interview: Mr. Kanyika, ECZ). The strong emphasis on availability and quantifiable inputs, e.g. number of teachers, actual time of teacher-student interaction, is in accordance with Technical Economists who see these inputs as important indicators for quality (Barrett et al 2006:2, Stephens 2003:6,7).

6.2.2.2 Learning outcomes as quality

Few aspects of quality were coupled with the actual learning process. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the discussions above, quality was often measured in terms of learning outcomes, "where the levels of reading, the levels of writing have gone down, the first thing we are accused of at the ministry is that the quality of education has gone down" (Interview: Mr. Chengo, EQUIP2). Learning outcomes was thus an indicator of the effectiveness of the teaching process itself (Stephens 2003:23); "We are more concentrating on the learning outcomes /.../ our core business at the ministry is teaching and learning" (Interview: Mr. Chengo, EQUIP2).

A frequently mentioned aspect connected to learning concerned the issue of accountability (Interview: Mr Kanyika, ECZ).

> with accountability even with the current restraints on resources there will be quality /…/ the community must be involved in the delivery of education so that teachers first and foremost are accountable for learning achievements of the children that are in their hands (Interview: Mr. Kanyika, ECZ).

Hence, for quality to be implemented teachers must be accountable towards the students and the community for what is going on in the classroom. A DEBS representative referred to community schools as an example of how accountability can lead to good learning outcomes; "those teachers they want their students to pass, so they always make sure they pump these children with the right materials" (Interview: DEBS Lusaka).

6.2.3 Patterns beyond theory

The response of the government to the increasing demand for education, mentioned in the Introduction, has been to build more schools and classrooms, i.e. increase the accessibility. The informants held that the expansion of access have had a draining effect on investments linked to the Classroom Culturalist Approach to quality, e.g. training of teachers, research on teaching and learning and curriculum review (Mr. Chengo, EQUIP2; Mrs. Sachingongu, PEO). However, accessibility in this matter was also considered as a necessary means for the implementation of quality to even come about.

> You cannot produce something that is of high quality when you are lacking what you are suppose to have is satisfactory, for you to produce quality, a quality product, you start with what is used for just that thing (Interview: Mrs. Sachingongu, PEO).

We could often observe a frustration among the informants in that they had a clear understanding of requirements for quality education to be fully implemented in Zambia, but that the scarce resources blocked these visions.

Even though a majority of the national informants placed a lot of emphasis on our theoretical components of relevance and teaching and learning processes, it is important to mention that the policy makers do not work completely in isolation from internal conditions (Stephens 1991:225). The focus on accessibility in relation to quality perceptions could possibly be enforced by the socio-economic context of Zambia. Thus, when discussing actions and decisions on education there might be an awareness of relevance and teaching and learning, but the prevailing norms emphasizing accessibility can be linked to the economic restraints and the social prerequisites existing in the country (Stephens 1991:227; 2007:44).

Though many representatives expressed a linkage between locality and quality, there was also a notion of standstill in the government efforts to promote locality (Interviews: Dr. Lupele, EQUIP2; Mr. Kanyika, ECZ; Mr. Kangulu, DEBS Lusaka). Some informants illustrated this standstill by mentioning the failures of implementing the decentralization policy; "we don't have any influence over policy issues /…/ when there is decentralization that is when we have more influence" (Interview: Mr. Kangulu, DEBS Lusaka). The full implementation of the decentralization was thus anticipated to enhance the local influence and in turn increase the quality, provided that the decision making apparatus is based on a system of inclusion and a multiple rule of local stakeholders (Hoppers 1994:42,43). With these prerequisites, the decentralization policy could very well enable a change of the current structures and objectives of the school (Hoppers 1994:42,43) to make it more locally relevant and improve the quality.

6.2.4 Main findings

There seemed to be a political will and responsibility on the national level to communicate and cooperate with local actors. The accountability downwards in the educational system and communication between the schools and the different layers was highlighted as important for quality implementation. However, due to severe socio-economic constraints the full implementation of policies for local inclusion is not possible.

The aim of education was linked to the expectations and demands on the delivery of education where the children's abilities and capabilities were emphasized. Education was seen as a way towards employment and to prepare the children to be good citizens contributing to a well-

functioning society. The teachers were expected to be accountable towards the students and for producing learning outcomes; however the lack of qualified teachers was impinging the learning achievements. Even though a localized curriculum customized to subjective needs was emphasized, there were also strong stipulations on learning outcomes to be quantified and comparable as this could enable the demonstration of visible outputs.

The view on quality as including relevance and teaching and learning aspects was often overlooked as a result of the limited resources allocated to the educational system. Also, the paradox of making education accessible for all children parallel to keeping the quality intact was seen as an immense problem in the Zambian education system.

6.3 Cross-cutting Analysis

6.3.1 Patterns between the local and nation level

The role of the teacher and the teaching process was underlined on both levels as vital for the delivery of quality education and the availability of qualified teachers was highlighted as a key aspect. An important element linking the levels was the apparent shortage of teachers and qualified teachers in the three schools as well as in the education system at large. The shortage can explain why the aspect of availability was stressed while the actual characteristic of the teachers and content of the teaching process often came secondary. In other words, the shortage link the views on the two levels in that they followed the Technical Economists approach, emphasizing the provision of basic school inputs (Barett et al 2006:2; Colby 2000:4; Stephens 2003:7). This contrasts to Classroom Culturalists, who focus almost exclusively on the process of interaction in itself (Barrett et al 2006:2; Nagel and Kvernbekk 1997:102-104; Stephens 2003:6). This does not mean that the informants on neither level rejected the importance of the processes but that economic constraints presumably hindered them to see past the shortage issue to focus on the process.

The element of human and material shortages was expressed on both levels, often as a result of economic constraints, and affected the views on quality in the same direction. The general emphasis on material aspects, e.g. that infrastructure was a limiting factor for quality further illustrates a common view that parted from our theory focusing on processes but that was closer to those approaches to quality that emphasize the importance of inputs (Colby 2000:7). The contextual circumstances and how these affect the line of thoughts and values that in turn affect the perceptions on quality can thus be seen as relevant for the two levels alike.

Both national and local actors underlined qualified teachers and the school as important for quality but in different ways. For the national level, the school and the teachers were mere tools that contributed to the purpose, and quality, of education. For local actors the school and the teachers further contributed to the well being of the individual child in that they served as guardians that nourished and provided food and security (Barrett et al 2006:2) As teachers were the deliverers of education, they personified the important role of the school for many of the local informants. Thus, for them the role of the school as a deliverer of education and as a center for social security was intertwined. In turn, quality was partly related to aspects of 'schooling', i.e. material and social inputs enabling education (as discussed in the Previous Research chapter) (Barrett et al 2006:2). This aspect was however not emphasized by the national informants. Similarly, while actors on both levels accentuated the same aspects in regards to *relevance* and *teaching and learning processes*, they had different perspectives on why these aspects were important; the national level recognized the national profits with quality in education while local actors saw their individual needs being met. Hence, these patterns do not necessarily reflect an understanding on the national level about local actors' needs, i.e. that they adopt a local perspective on quality. Instead the patterns discerned suggest that our local and national informants had similar perceptions on quality, but that the meanings of these were shaped by their various contextual and cultural realities (Stephens 2003:4). Quality thus had different meanings depending on the context it was interpreted in (Stephens 2003:7). As the national informants were steered by the policy context and certain political norms, and local informants were influenced by their surroundings, the clash between the different levels is thus difficult to avoid. This also complicates the possibilities for the local perspective to be incorporated in policy debates and decisions on quality education on national level.

The informants on both levels recognized a clear linkage between quality, the aim of education, relevance and learning outcomes. However, while local actors hoped that the gained knowledge would guarantee economic security and self-sustainability through future employment, national actors connected it to a broader purpose; that this knowledge would make students responsible and well-functioning citizens contributing to the socio-economic development in society. Their differences can again be linked to the diverging norms in their close environment that shape their demand and expectations on education, which highlights the importance of having a cultural and contextual perspective to understand how norms and

values lay the ground for investments in quality on the different levels throughout the education system (Stephens 2007:44).

Informants on both levels further emphasized a localized curriculum, except for the students who regarded the standard subjects sufficient to fill their future needs. Looking closer at the findings, they revealed that a localized curriculum was more abundantly stressed the higher up the education system hierarchy we came. On the local level the learners, i.e. the actors directly affected by education were least supportive of a localized curriculum while teachers, Head Masters and Zonals were strong advocates. At the policy level a localized curriculum was further seen as a very important determinant for quality and also here emphasized to a great extent. This suggests that a localized curriculum not always correspond with the views of education stakeholders as suggested by Hoppers (1994:42) but this does not necessarily imply that learners reject a localized curriculum or that the national policy level ignores local needs. It can be explained by what Stephens (1991:225) perceive as a passive behavior among learners who are indoctrinated to not take active part in decisions affecting their education, which in turn could be a product of asymmetric power relations within the education system. The students' expressed content about what was being taught can thus be linked to this phenomenon. To change this, our theory suggests that decision making should be participatory and inclusive on all levels, from the local level to the national level (Hoppers 1994:41; Stephens 1991:230).

We can, however, discern a general pattern concerning a perceived gap in communication between the different layers in the education system. The frustration among local actors of being excluded and voiceless was apparent (Interviews: Head Master at LOCS, Zonals Lilanda and Emmasdale) and pinpoints that participation has not been entrenched throughout the education system (Hoppers 1994:58,59). We also recognized the imbalanced communication in a notion of 'us and them' permeating the national level in discussions on community schools (Interview: Mrs. Sakhala, Mrs. Sachingongu and Mr. Simba, PEO; Mr. Ndakala and Mr. Musunda, DPI). The conversation below on community schools somewhat illustrates the complicated relationship between government and community schools.

> Mr. Ndakala: If we had adequate resources we would build an adequate number of schools so that we take every applicant on board. Mr Musunda: Then we would not have community schools, because they have no good standards (Mr. Ndakala and Mr. Musunda, DPI).

Though both the local and national level, to some extent, referred to the same educational needs in terms of resources and similar, from a national position, the incorporation of local actors' perspective on education seemed to be more of a common discourse than an actual undertaking in practice.

When it comes to the implementation of quality education the feeling of inclusion and being heard is just as important as having similar views on quality. As Hoppers (1994:46) explains; The common denominator on culture is that it is not local culture per se that should be represented in education development but rather there is a "perceived need for the local stakeholders in education to bring their beliefs, interests and goals into the debate on what education should be all about" (Hoppers 1994:46). A participatory and local approach should thus be there, to create and enable a education system that incorporates both national demands and local needs and where quality entails an understanding and respect for the different meanings and cultural norms that individuals carry with them (Stephens 2003:12). However, as Hoppers states (1994:46,47), this undertaking can be more complicated at a national level as local needs and views, as confirmed in our study, often diverge. As we have seen from our findings, social norms often determine the specific demands and needs for education and these can be strongly embedded in people's understanding of reality and can thus be difficult to change, creating further challenges for taking in local perceptions (Stephens 1991:228). A response to this can be to create more effective ways of merging macro policy goals with the complex world of practitioners and local stakeholders (Stephens 1991:232). Generally, national representatives were aware of the need for more communication with the local level for the implementation of quality education and promoted decentralization as a means for better local participation (Interviews: Mr. Kangulu, DEBS Lusaka; Mr. Katundu, EQUIP2).

6.3.2 Main findings

To answer the third research question, we have found that there are evident similarities between the opinions and perceptions on quality education. However, this does not necessarily entail an understanding on the national level for the particular local needs and views discerned in this study. It can instead be drawn to the similar challenges and stipulations in terms of financial resources, etc. The national level did not accentuate the schools as important providers of food and security, which illustrates an inadequate understanding on the national level for local needs. The gap between the two levels was demonstrated in the mode of expression among the national informants when speaking about the relationship with community schools in terms of 'us' and 'them'. The notion of 'us' and

'them' suggests a distancing away from community schools. Nevertheless, the awareness on the national level of the importance to have a local perspective shows a political will to understand and respond to local needs and views, including those from actors in community schools.

7 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to reach a better understanding on how quality education can be applied so that the needs, views and values of local actors are fulfilled at the same time as national principles and perspectives on education are considered. We have shown a number of areas where the two levels can meet but also where they diverge. By taking in contextual and cultural factors, we can conclude that the *aim of education* is the one feature that permeated the overall perceptions on quality and framed what were seen as prerequisites for enabling quality to even come about. The aim of education further evolved around measurable learning outcomes, perceived as vital for both the development of the nation as well as for the well-being of the local actors. The curriculum was in turn the key tool for combining the demands on education on both levels.

By using a local perspective we could further uncover that teaching and learning processes, with a main focus on availability of qualified teachers, were imperative for both levels in meeting the demands on education and for implementing quality education. If the shortage of qualified teachers is met, national and local actors may be better prepared to foresee the practical implications for quality in the actual process of teaching and learning. However, the perceptions and expectations on the teachers and the school among local informants went beyond the delivery of education. We can thus conclude that though the original components in our analytical model have proven to be suitable for exploring our research aim, certain components need to be added to our analytical model (see Figure 2).

In order to increase the understanding of how national demands on quality and the local needs and views can meet, we have come to the conclusion to add the aspect of 'Schooling'. Human and material resources, e.g. infrastructure, basic materials, food and the school environment, were seen as important prerequisites in order for the schools to deliver quality education. These as static and technical inputs in the provision of education fall under the concept of 'Schooling'. Thus, the distinction between 'Education' and 'Schooling', stressed particularly by Classroom Culturalists, has been proven irrelevant when applying a local perspective on

quality education as elements from both terms were recurrently addressed by the informants. We therefore suggest that our model takes a more holistic character and also includes the term 'Schooling'.

The sense of exclusion among local stakeholders in decisions concerning education is an apparent proof of the gap in the communication between the layers of the education system. As communication and local participation in education development is emphasized as a way towards quality, this component need to be incorporated in the analytical model.

The analytical model presented below is thus a modified version of the one presented in the Operationalization, with *Schooling* and *communication* representing those additional aspects discussed above.

Research aim
To reach a better understanding on how quality education can be applied so that the needs, views and values of local actors are fulfilled at the same time as national principles and perspectives on education are considered.

Local level	National level	Cross-cutting level
Relevance	Relevance	
Teaching and learning processes	Teaching and learning processes	Patterns between local and national level
Communication		
Schooling	Schooling	

Local perspective; locality, context, culture

Figure 2: Modified Analytical Model - Constructed on the basis of components from the works of David Stephens and Wim Hoppers and findings from research by Helena Paulsson and Madeleine Winqvist.

The lack of financial and human resources is a major factor to take into consideration when understanding and improving the quality of education in Zambia. However, our proposed model is a knowledge contribution that captures perceptions on quality education that can be found on local and national level in the Zambian education system. Our hope is thus that this contribution can broaden, but also liaise the different understandings on quality and needs in education and schooling in Zambia and in similar contexts. The issue of communication and participation is both a prerequisite and an obstacle to the incorporation of a local perspective in matters on education concerning quality. To grasp the underlying factors affecting communication and participation, we propose further research that explores how these can be used as tools by national policy makers to comprehend and address the perceptions of local actors. It is also important to examine the challenges that come with participation to enable true and genuine implementation of quality education.

8 Bibliography

Barrett, Angeline M., Chawla-Duggan, Rita, Lowe, John Nikel, J. & Ukpo, Eugenia (2006) *The concept of quality in education – A review of the 'international literature on the concept of quality in education*, Edqual Working Paper, Quality No. 2, DFID, United Kingdom.

Beeby, Clarence E. (1980) "The Thesis of Stages Fourteen Years Later" in *International Review of Education*, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 451-474, Springer.

Bryman, Alan (2008) *Social Research Methods* (3rd ed.), Oxford University Press, New York.

Central Statistical Office (2005) *Living Conditions Monitoring Survey Report 2004*, Government of the Republic of Zambia Living Conditions Monitoring Branch, Lusaka.

Colby, Jeanette (2000) *Defining Quality in Education*, Working Paper Series, Document No. UNICEF/PD/ED/00/02, Programme Division, United Nations Children's Fund, New York.

Creswell, John (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design – Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.), Sage Publications, Inc. USA.

Curriculum Development Centre (2000) *The Basic School Curriculum Framework*, Ministry of Education, Government of the Republic of Zambia.

DeStefano, Josef (2006) *Case Study, Meeting EFA: Zambia Community Schools*, Center for collaboration and the future of schooling, EQUIP2.
Available at: http://www.equip123.net/docs/e2-ZambiaCaseStudy.pdf

Directorate of Planning and Information (2008) *2008 Educational Statistical Bulletin,* Ministry of Education, Government of the Republic of Zambia, Lusaka.

Examinations Council of Zambia (2006) *Learning Achievement at the Middle Basic Level - Zambia's National Assessment Survey Report 2006,* on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Government of the Republic of Zambia, Lusaka.

Gomm, Roger, Hammersley, Martyn and Peter Foster (2000) *Case Study Method*, Sage Publications, USA.

Government of the Republic of Zambia (2005) *Educating the Nation - Strategic Framework for Implementation of Education For All,* Education Sector Ministries, Lusaka.

Hoppers, Wim (1994) "Questioning the School-What Room for the Local Perspective" in *Quality of Education in the Context of Culture in Developing Countries*, (ed.) Takala, T. University of Tampere, Finland.

IOB (2008) *Primary Education in Zambia - IOB Impact Evaluation* Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Netherlands No. 312, Haag.

Mikkelsen, Britha (2005) *Methods for Development Work and Research: A new guide for practitioners*, New Delhi, Sage Publications.

Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development (2004) *Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Zambia – 2004 Situation Analysis,* Summary Report December 2004, Government of the Republic of Zambia.

Ministry of Education (1996) *Educating Our Future - National Policy on Education*, Government of the Republic of Zambia, Zambia Educational Publishing House, Lusaka.

Ministry of Education (2003) *Strategic Plan 2003-2007 (Final version – February 2003)*, Government of the Republic of Zambia, Lusaka.

Ministry of Education (2007) *Operational Guidelines for Community Schools,* Government of the Republic of Zambia, Printed with assistance from UNICEF and USAID, Lusaka.

Nagel, Tove & Kvernbeck, Tone (1997) "A dialogue about the quality of education" in *Quality Assurance in education*, Vol. 5, No, 3. Pp. 101-109, MCB University Press.

O'Sullivan Margo (2006) "Lesson observation and quality in primary education as contextual teaching and learning processes" in *International Journal of Educational Development*, 26, pp. 246-260.

Ragin, Charles (1994) *Constructing Social Research: the Unity and Diversity of Method*, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks.

Sen, Amartya (1999) *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Smith, William & Ngoma-Maema, Wendy Yolisa (2003) "Education for All in South Africa: developing a national system for quality assurance" in *Comparative Education*, Vol. 39, No. 3, pp. 345-3.

Stephens, David (1991) "The Quality of Primary Education in Developing Countries: Who Defines and Who Decides?" in *Comparative Education*, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 223-233.

Stephens, David (2003) "Quality of Basic Education" *Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003/4, Gender and Education for All: The Leap to Equality*, UNESCO, United States.
Available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001469/146968e.pdf

Stephens, David (2007) *Culture in education and development: principles, practice and policy*, Symposium books, Oxford.

Tranberg Hansen, Karen (2005) "Getting Stuck in the Compound: Some Odds against Social Adulthood in Lusaka, Zambia", in *Africa Today,* Vol. 51, No. 4, pp. 3-16.

UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, available at:
http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b38f0.html [accessed 20 May 2010]

Yin, Robert K (2003) Case Study Research, (3rd Ed.), Sage Publication Inc, Thousand Oaks.

Appendix I: Map of Zambia and Lusaka
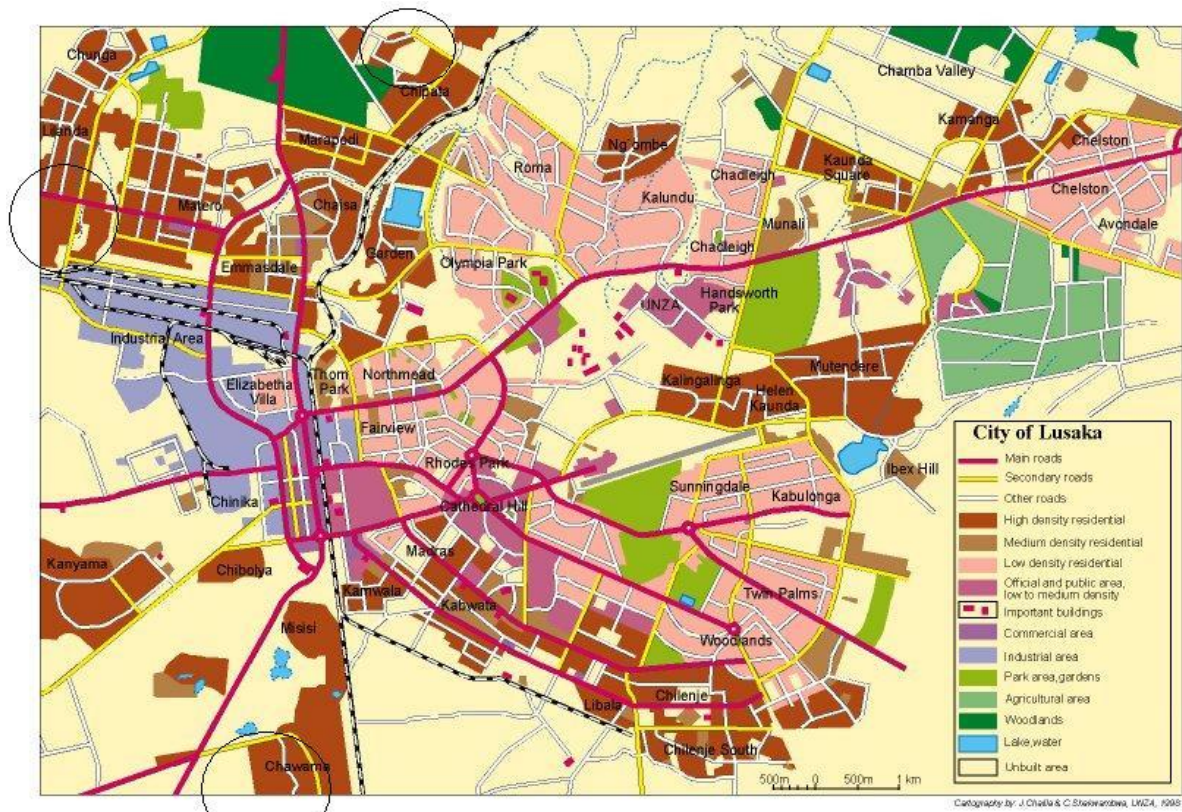
The three community schools in the case study was situated in high-density areas of Lusaka; in the Northwest (Jordan Community School, George Compound), North (David Livingstone OVC Community School, Chazanga Compound) and South (Linda Open Community School, Linda Compound). The compounds are not marked on the map, but areas close to their location are circled.

Appendix II: Education Structure in Zambia
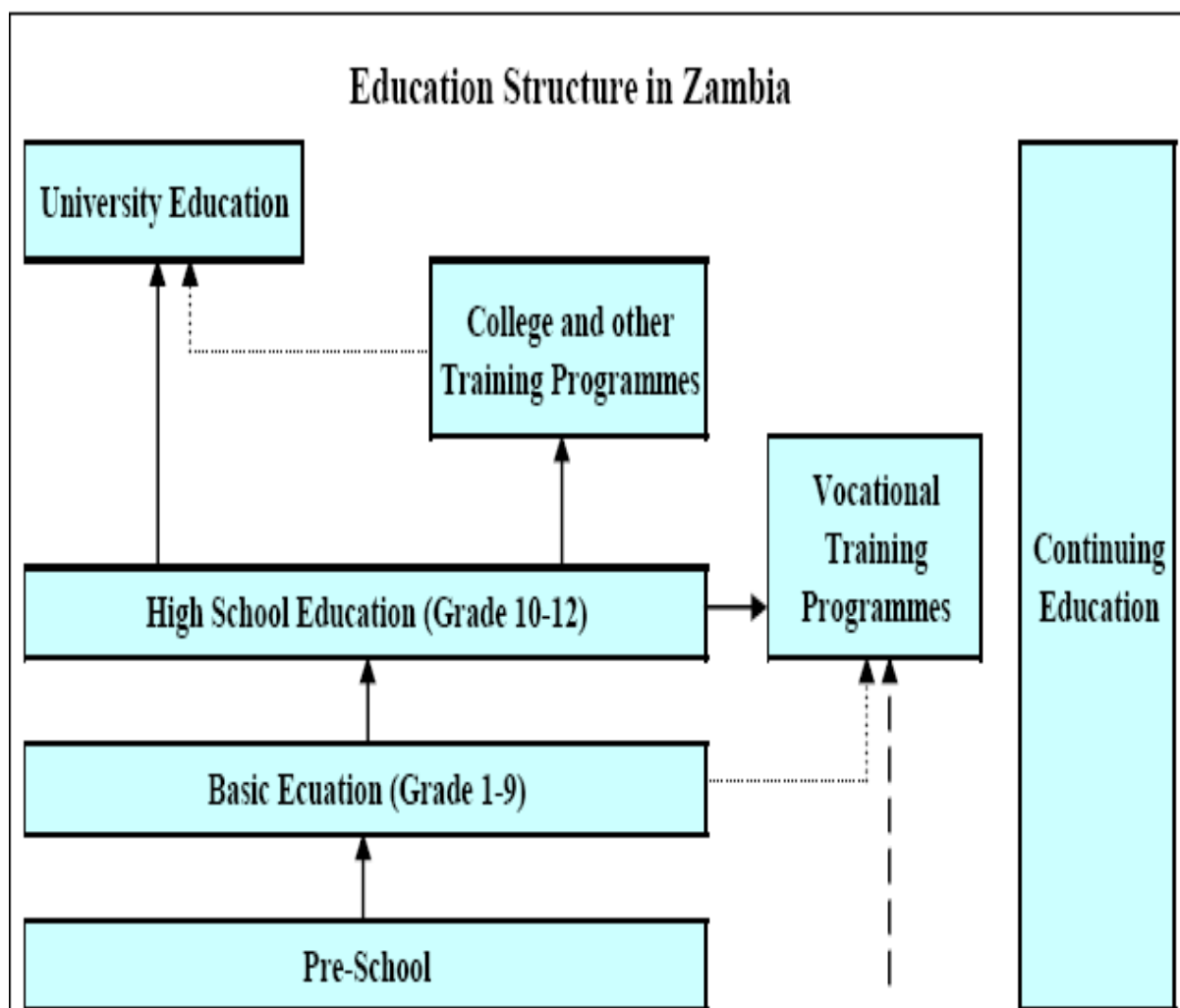
Education Structure in Zambia

```
┌─────────────────────┐
│ University Education │
└─────────────────────┘
         ↑  ↑                    ┌──────────────────┐
         │  ·····················│  College and other│
         │                       │ Training Programmes│
         │                       └──────────────────┘
         │                                ↑
┌─────────────────────────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐   ┌────────────┐
│ High School Education (Grade 10-12) │ → │  Vocational  │   │ Continuing │
└─────────────────────────────────┘    │   Training   │   │  Education │
         ↑                              │  Programmes  │   └────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────┐    └──────────────┘
│    Basic Ecuation (Grade 1-9)   │········↑  ↑
└─────────────────────────────────┘        │  │
         ↑                                  │  │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐        │  │
│            Pre-School           │        │  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
```

(Directorate of Planning and Information (2008) *2008 Educational Statistical Bulletin,* Ministry of Education, Government of the Republic of Zambia, Lusaka)

Appendix III: List of Participants

Participants David Livingstone OVC Community School Chazanga Compound						
	Teacher	**Student**	**Parent**	**PCSC member**	**Head Master**	**Zonal Committee Representative (ZCR)**
Coding *	Teacher 1	Student 1	Parent 1	PCSC member 1	Head Master	ZCR
	Teacher 2	Student 2	Parent 2	PCSC member 2		
	Teacher 3	Student 3	Parent 3	PCSC member 3		
	Teacher 4	Student 4	Parent 4			
	Teacher 5	Student 5	Parent 5			
	Teacher 6	Student 6				
	Teacher 7	Student 7				
		Student 8				
		Student 9				
		Student 10				
Date	**Teacher 1-2** 100126 **Teacher 3-7** 100127	**Student 1-4** 100128 **Student 5-9** 100201 **Student 10** 100202	**Parent 1-5** 100202	**PCSC member 1-3** 100203	100126	100202
Participants Jordan Community School George Compound						
	Teacher	**Student**	**Parent**	**PCSC member**	**Head Master**	**Zonal Committee Representative (ZCR)**
Coding	Teacher 1	Student 1	Parent 1	PCSC member 1	Head Master	ZCR
	Teacher 2	Student 2	Parent 2	PCSC member 2		
	Teacher 3	Student 3	Parent 3			
	Teacher 4	Student 4	Parent 4			
		Student 5	Parent 5			
		Student 6				
		Student 7				
		Student 8				
		Student 9				
		Student 10				
Date	**Teacher 1-3** 091221 **Teacher 4** 100104	**Student 1-5** 100129 **Student 6-10** 100205	**Parent 1-4** 100204 **Parent 5** 100205	**PCSC member 1** 100104 **PCSC member 2** 100204	100205	100210

	Teacher	Student	Parent	PCSC member	Head Master	Zonal Committee Representative (ZCR)
Participants Linda Open Community School **Linda Compound**						
Coding	Teacher 1	Student 1	Parent 1	PCSC member 1	Head Master	ZCR
	Teacher 2	Student 2	Parent 2	PCSC member 2		
	Teacher 3	Student 3	Parent 3	PCSC member 3		
	Teacher 4	Student 4	Parent 4	PCSC member 4		
	Teacher 5	Student 5	Parent 5	PCSC member 5		
	Teacher 6	Student 6	Parent 6	PCSC member 6		
		Student 7	Parent 7	PCSC member 7		
		Student 8				
		Student 9				
		Student 10				
Date	**Teacher 1-4** 091222 **Teacher 5** 091230 **Teacher 6** 091216*	**Student 1-4** 091223 **Student 5-10** 091229	**Parent 1** 091230 **Parent 2-7** 091231	**PCSC member 1-7** 100209	091222	100209

*Teacher 6 was the first teacher informant but not initially coded, thus after coding the first teacher interviewed became Teacher 6.

Participants Ministry Level			
Name	Body/Department	Position	Date
Mr. Bupe Musonda	Directorate of Planning and Information	Senior Statistician	091215
Mr. Charles Ndakala		Systems Development Manager	
Mr. Arnold Chengo	Education Quality Improvement Program 2	Chief of Party	100129
Mr. Chris Katundu		Former Chief Planning Officer	100129
Dr. Justin Lupele		Training Advisor	100129
Mr. Joe Kanyika	Examinations Council of Zambia	Assistant Director	100201
Mr. Shadreck Nkoya		Senior Research Officer	091218
Participants Province Level			
Mr. Sylvester Simba	Province Education Office Lusaka	Senior Education Standards Officer	100203
Mrs. Esther Sachingongu	Province Education Office Lusaka	Senior Education Standards Officer	100203
Mrs. Silomi Sakhala	Province Education Office Lusaka	Senior Education Standards Officer	100203
Participants District Level			
Mrs. Mobisi	District Education Board Kafue	District Education Standards Officer	100209
Mrs. Banda	District Education Board Lusaka	Head of Department	100210
Mr.Kangulu	District Education Board Lusaka	District Planning Officer	100210
Ms. Golwe	District Education Board Lusaka	District Education Standards Officer	100210

Appendix IV: Request and Approval of Research

All communications should be addressed to
the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education
Not to any individual by name

Telephone: 250855/251315/251283
251293/211318/251291
251003/251319/250760

In reply please quote:

No...........................

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 50093
LUSAKA

4th February 20109

The Provincial Education Officer
Lusaka Province
Lusaka

Dear Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The bearers of this letter Madeleine Winqvist and Helena Palsson are students from the Lund University Master of International Development (LUMID), Sweden. As part of their programme they would like to collect data in Zambia on the subject of quality education. They have been in the country from 9th September 2009 and will stay up to 14th February 2010.

Please help them in their data collection by according them time to talk to yourself or any of your officers.

Your usual cooperation will be appreciated

Charles Ndakala
Systems Development Manager
For/ Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICER
LUSAKA REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS
Private Bag RW21E
LUSAKA.

5TH February, 2010

To : The District Education Board Secretaries
Lusaka and Kafue
LUSAKA.

RE: AUTHORISATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The subject matter above refers.

I write to inform you that Madeleine Wingvist and Helena Palsson are students at Lunds University in Sweden pursuing a Master's programme in International Development.

Authority has been granted to them to conduct research in your districts.

Any assistance to facilitate their research will be greatly appreciated.

for A.M. Nzala (Mrs) A.O.D.
PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICER
LUSAKA PROVINCE

Enclosure I: Interview Guides

Interview guide 1 - Students

1. What grade are you in?

2. What do you like about school?

3. Is there something you don't like about school?

4. What is your favorite subject?

5. Any subject that you find less important/interesting?

6. Why is education important?

7. What do you want to do after school?

8. For you, what is good education?

9. What knowledge/skills do you want to have when you finish school?

10. Imagine that you are a headmaster at a school.

    - What would the teachers be like?

    - What would the teachers teach?

    - What would the school be like?

    - What should the pupils be like in the classroom?

    - What would a lesson be like?

    - What would you teach the children?

11. What motivates you to learn more in class?

12. Are there any challenges in school?

13. What is the best thing about your school?

14. Is there something you don't like about your school?

15. Do you feel you receive enough attention in class?

16. Are you active in class? What could help you participate more?

17. Are you encouraged by the teachers?

Interview Guide 2 - Teachers and Head Masters

1. How long have you been working at…?
2. How long have you been working as a Headmaster/teacher?
3. What is your professional/academic background?
4. Why do you want to work with education?
5. Why did you choose to work in a community school?
6. (Headmaster) How are activities planned at your school?
7. (Headmaster) What does the structure look like when it comes to decision-making?
8. (Headmaster) Do you cooperate with other stakeholders outside the school?
9. In general, what strengths and weaknesses can you identify at your school?
10. What is important to attain a good education?
11. How can the school provide this?
12. What is quality education (for you)?
13. How do you incorporate quality education in your work?
14. Can you describe the best way for quality education to be implemented?
15. What do you think about the current standard curriculum?
16. What do you think about the current national education policies?
17. How are you affected by the education policies in your work?
18. If you had the opportunity to create a policy for improving quality in education, what would you include in that policy?
19. (Headmaster) Can you influence the national policies on quality education, and if so, how?
20. (Headmaster) How do you communicate with other national education levels?
21. What is a good school environment for children to learn in?
22. Why is education important?
23. How does education affect children in your community?
24. How can the community benefit from having educated children?
25. How can the community contribute to quality education?
26. What is important for children to learn in school?

Interview Guide 3 - Parents

1. How many children do you have at ... community school?

2. What do you do for a living?

3. What is your school background?

4. Are there any challenges in your community? What?

5. How does your community support schools in the community/area?

6. Why is education important? –For your child –For the community?

7. What do you think about … community school? –Positive/negative aspects?
–Teachers? –Teaching, Provision of education?

8. What is quality education (for you)?

9. What is needed for your children to attain quality education?

10. How is the school providing quality education?

11. What do you think is important that your children learn in school? –Why? –Are they (is he/she) learning this in school now?

12. What do you want/hope your children do after finishing school?

13. What challenges does your child face in school? –How can this be avoided/solved?

14. Do you participate in your child's education? –How? –Do you think this is important? –Why?

15. Would you like to improve/change anything with your child's education? –Why?

16. Are you well informed about how your child is performing in school?

17. What kind of school activities does your child participate in? –Do you think this is important? –Why?

18. What is most positive about … school?

Interview guide 4 - PCSC members

1. How long have you been a member of the PCSC?
2. Why did you join?
3. What is the function of the PCSC?
4. How long has the PCSC been functioning at this school?
5. How long has this particular PCSC group been functioning?
6. How does the PCSC work with the community school and educational issues in the community?
7. What is quality education for you?
8. How is quality education achieved?
9. What is important for children to attain good education?
10. What can the community do to provide quality education?
11. Why is education important? For the individual and for the community?
12. What are the main challenges in your community?
13. What is important that children learn in school?

Interview Guide 5 - Zonals

1. What is your role within the educational system?
2. How do you work with educational issues?
3. How can you influence policy development on quality education?
4. In general, what strengths and weaknesses can you identify with the current education policies?
5. How would you define quality education?
6. In general, what strengths and weaknesses can you identify with the current definition of quality education? Are there any components that you feel are more important?
7. Are you familiar with the development of a new (local) definition? How?
8. How do you work with quality education?
9. What do schools need to implement quality education?
10. What are the challenges of implementing quality education?
11. How are the views and needs of local stakeholders taken into account in quality education policies?
12. What do you think of the current education system?
13. How do you work with community schools?
14. What strengths and weaknesses can you identify with community schools?
15. What strengths and weaknesses can you identify with the implementation of quality education in community schools?
16. Is the current definition of quality education relevant when it comes to community schools?
17. What role do they play in the education system?
18. Why is education important?
19. What do you think children need to attain a good education?
20. What makes children perform well or better when it comes to examination rates and grades?

Interview Guide 6 - National Representatives (including Provincial Education Office and District Education Board Secretariat)

1. What is your role within the ministry?
2. How do you work with educational issues?
3. What is your role in policy development?
4. What do you think of the current education policy environment?
5. Are there any policies that are more relevant than others?
6. In general, what strengths and weaknesses can you identify with the current education policies?
7. How is quality education represented in the current policies?
8. How much focus is placed on quality education in the policies?
9. How does Ministry of Education define quality education?
10. How would you define quality education?
11. In general, what strengths and weaknesses can you identify with the current definition of quality education? Are there any components that you feel are more important?
12. How has the definition of quality education been developed?
13. Are you familiar with the development of a new (local) definition? How?
14. How do you work with quality education?
15. What do schools need to implement quality education?
16. What are the challenges of implementing quality education?
17. How are local views and needs taken into account in quality education policies?
18. What do you think of the current education system?
19. What are your thoughts on community schools?
20. What role do they play in the education system?
21. In general, what strengths and weaknesses can you identify with community schools?
22. Why is education important?
23. What do you think children need to attain a good education?
24. What makes children perform well or better when it comes to examination rates and grades?
25. In what way do good or bad examination rates reflect the quality of education?