

Advocacy and Policy Entrepreneurship for Education Civil Society Organisations in Zambia

**7th – 11th November 2005
Commonwealth Youth Centre, Lusaka, Zambia**

Summary Workshop Report

The Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) Policy Entrepreneurship and Advocacy Skills Building workshop took place 7th to 11th November 2005 at the Commonwealth Youth Centre, University of Zambia Campus, Lusaka. Commonwealth Education Fund, which supports ZANEC, took the initiative to organise a workshop to expose ZANEC partners to current theory and practice of evidence-based policymaking and asked ODI, which has been working on this for the last five years, to run a workshop in Lusaka for the education civil society organisations (CSOs) in Zambia.

The organisational capacity assessment of ZANEC, conducted in September 2004 with the support of PACT-Zambia, and the capacity needs assessment, facilitated with the support of the Commonwealth Education Fund in October 2004, revealed that ZANEC needed to develop its capacity in advocacy, policy analysis and evaluation, which are some of the critical factors for reaching its goals and objectives. This was the rationale behind the hosting of the training workshop in advocacy and policy entrepreneurship for ZANEC members.

The workshop aimed to enhance knowledge and skills in advocacy, lobbying and policy entrepreneurship amongst ZANEC member organisations. It was expected that with the knowledge gained at the workshop the ZANEC members will be better placed to understand and apply advocacy, lobbying and policy entrepreneurship tools in influencing the attainment of the Education for All goal.

The specific workshop objectives were to:

1. Enhance advocacy knowledge and skills among ZANEC member organisations.
2. Enhance the awareness amongst member organisations of the latest theories and practices about policies processes and policy influence.
3. Explore the types of policy/advocacy tools and frameworks and their application.
4. Identify opportunities and limitations for influence in the education sector.
5. Design and develop advocacy strategies and key messages, with agreed work plans.

Naved Chowdhury, from ODI's Civil Society Partnerships Programme (CSPP), facilitated the policy entrepreneurship section of the workshop and local consultant Kenny Simamuna facilitated the advocacy and action planning components. CEF Global Coordinator Chike Anyanwu and Emily Lungano, CEF Africa Coordinator also took part in facilitation.

The workshop began with a presentation by Kenny Simamuna on the historical perspective of CSOs engagement in the education sector in Zambia to help workshop participants understand the current role of CSOs in the sector. Various types and characteristics of different CSOs were explored in great detail. The presenter highlighted that policy advocacy is a response to bring about a change on behalf of the affected constituency and therefore strives to create awareness and also involves an attempt to influence the political climate. The policy entrepreneurship sessions discussed various theories on policy formulation, analysis and influencing. This included the various practical frameworks, tools and approaches to maximise policy impact, various communication tools and key elements needed when developing a communication/advocacy strategy. Finally the education context was mapped and linked to advocacy and policy influencing processes.

Key issues in Basic Education were identified as: an outdated Education Act (1966); fees versus free primary education; and the provision of uniforms for children. The thematic groups identified a number of policy actions that need to be undertaken in order to address the identified issues and these will be incorporated in the thematic activities for ZANEC's 2006/07 work plan and budget. The key advocacy message for ZANEC was agreed as *'Every child needs a quality teacher'*. ZANEC's overall goal for policy advocacy was also agreed and will be the basis for developing ZANEC's advocacy and policy action plan for 2006.

Participants discussed the issues in four thematic groups, namely: Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD); Universal Primary Education (UPE); Adult Literacy; and Livelihoods and Education (life skills) and identified broad issues that impact the uptake of research in policy making in Zambia. One issue is the slow and unclear policy formulation processes, e.g. in the case of the Early Childhood Care Education and Development (ECCED) programme, this lack of policy meant there were no funds allocated in the budget. In the case of Adult Education, there is a total lack of appreciation of the vital role adult education can play in the achievement of education for all. Therefore, there is no national coordinating body for adult education in Zambia, which makes it difficult for the CSOs to provide information on issues around adult education. The major policy issue in universal primary education is the government's inability to recruit and retain teachers. Whether ZANEC can influence the review of the current syllabus to include life skills at all levels of the education process in Zambia is seen as the crucial policy challenge in the broader policy debate on if and how to link livelihood issues to education in Zambia.

The RAPID Framework provided both an analytical tool to help participants understand the political context that CSOs are working in and a practical approach to decide what needs to be done to maximize impact. The framework also emphasised the importance of evidence and how to link it to the policy processes.

The participants learnt how the RAPID Framework can also be used as a practical tool to identify what they should do to maximize their chances of influencing the education policy in Zambia. It was felt that there is an urgent need to improve understanding around: (i) ways to engage with policymakers to achieve objectives collectively; (ii) how to respond to policy windows and requests from government to provide credible information; (iii) the skills necessary to package messages which are simple and straightforward and therefore have a better chance of being used by the policymakers; and (iv) the need to develop long term programmes of credible research and to develop an overall strategy for their work. Several tools were introduced which the participants can use for mapping policy processes, research, communication and policy influence.

On the second day of the policy entrepreneurship section of the workshop the participants used Force field analysis and SWOT analysis to identify strategies to improve policy impact of the issues identified and discussed in the case study. There is an immediate need to identify the forces acting against any issues and deal with them before the government is approached. For example, the issue of recruiting teachers is very controversial in Zambia, thus ZANEC needs to identify those forces which impact policies in education and come up with a strategy to address them before recommendations can be presented to the government. ZANEC also should come up with an advocacy statement that is persuasive and reflects the overall objective of the coalition.

In their evaluation the participants felt that the workshop was of high quality and value as well as relevant to their work. The challenge remains with the ZANEC secretariat and its member organisations to follow through the issues raised and develop an action plan that will yield desirable results in influencing the attainment of Education for All in Zambia.