

## Zambia – Schools projects progress Report – July 2023

Acknowledging the government's commitment to free education across all levels and their recruitment of over 30,000 teachers, the British Council is keen to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to achieve its ambitions through its Eighth National Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals. Managing the Girls Education Project funded by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the British Council's involvement in the innovative Empowerment and Development for Girls Education (EDGE) project is a crucial part of our partnership. EDGE is a unique approach to support the MoE and its cooperating partners to deliver political and economic commitments on secondary education.

### **Policy engagement and relationship building and sustaining**

Through the EDGE project, we have made good progress in building a positive and progressive working relationship with the Minister of Education and the two Permanent Secretaries. Minister of Education and Permanent Secretary officiated at three key events that EDGE project has supported including the symposium in October and November 2022, Head teachers meeting in December 2022 and in March 2023 during the Education Secretary's meeting for faith-based organisations.

A delegation of 3 MOE senior officials participated in the 2022 EWF and came away with insights about how to deal with challenges but also seeking solutions

EDGE project supported the Minister and his delegation to attend the EWF 2023 conference where the Minister spoke in the plenary session on a topic of Girls Education and the free education policy which allowed giving girl 2<sup>nd</sup> chance to complete their secondary education.

British Council met with the Permanent Secretary to initiate steps for exploring options policy for free education. The Ministry of Education is open to discussing the challenges of implementing the free education policy. The government's policy position, however, remains that education should be free.

Through our Schools Connect project, we supported two policy makers to attend the Conference in Cape Town on 'Driving Whole School Improvement through Instructional Leadership'. Participants in the conference had the opportunity to hear a range of key-note speakers and presenters from around sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the UK as well as the opportunity to participate in interactive workshops and discussion forums on this important topic.

### **Capacity strengthening of the Directorate of Secondary Education (DSE)**

Modeling DSE as an example for other delivery units to emulate in terms of operationalising their mandates and improving answerability

EDGE project has a well-established relationship with the DSE. The relationship is built on trust and a collaborative working relationship. The EDGE project team ensures that it is providing a supportive rather than leading collaborative working relationship

Supported Secondary School Symposium that was attended by over 150 MOE officials

Conducted Secondary School Head teachers meeting that was attended by over 90 MOE officials

Engaged DSE to participate in Funding of Schools study while modelling how to gather data and support leadership teams. The British Council and DSE team have visited 10 schools in two provinces to understand the impact of free education policy is having on schools

Supported DSE to conduct Education Secretaries Meeting that was attended by over 35 representatives of the religious organisations and MOE officials

### **Where we work across in Zambia**

Our work has expanded beyond the capital city. For example, through our Schools Connect project we supported Participated in commemorating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) on the 3rd of December 2022 in Livingstone and we have established strong relationships with local policy markers at districts level. Over 500 children and young adults with disabilities participated in the event. Among the participants, 160 were learners with disabilities, 40 Special Education teachers, 8 School Managers and 6 Ministry of Education officials from both Kazungula and Livingstone districts.

We are also working in rural districts in two provinces (Lusaka and Eastern) where we are establishing girls' clubs in 15 secondary schools that will help with the retention of girls in school to increase the number of girls that complete secondary education as well as giving the girls life skills in climate change projects that will help improve the quality of their lives.

### **Network of with other organisations within the education space**

We continue to engage with other organisations supporting education in Zambia. For example, engaging with monthly stakeholders in Cooperating Partners Coordinating Committee where all share what support they are providing in education.

Engaging stakeholders in resilience planning for the ministry of education under the Education Sector Working Group platform.

### **What are the lessons learnt so far?**

Through the EDGE project, our relationship with the Ministry of Education has enhanced from central, provincial down to district levels. Further, working with downstream partners enabled us to deliver the projects effectively.

### **Business development**

Following the legacy education projects (Connecting Classrooms, ZESSTA) we delivered in the recent years positioned us to be awarded a £1.8m Girls Education project until 2025. We are also positioning ourselves for a possible grant from the Swiss to deliver Arts projects.