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Zambia's Poorest Progressively Left Behind: Well-Being Denied

Brendan P. Carmody

Abstract

After Independence in 1964, the government of Zambia set out to fashion a national of equals. In this, the school was seen to be a key strategy along the lines of the modernisation route to development. Initially, this seemed to be well directed but within a short time it was evident that this mode of schooling was elitist, promoting division between 'haves' and 'have-nots.' Today, the country is greatly divided between those who are well-off and those who are not. This article traces the path to this outcome historically.

Keywords: Zambia, equity, school, modernization, marginalization, educational reform, equality of access, opportunity structure

1. Introduction

In the years following Independence in 1964, Zambia, like many African states, viewed education to be pivotal to its development as a nation. This belief in the power of school was partly grounded in what is known as the modernization approach which emphasizes investment in the formation of labour capital [1]. The political leaders were concerned with economic progress and the need to build an inclusive nation [2].

As this mode of national development has emerged, we find that in 2013 a Catholic secondary school in Lusaka's Matero township, a densely populated low-income section of the city, had approximately 10 percent of its students from the local district. This was because the local children did not reach the school's Grade VII qualifying grade [3]. As a result, the school, like many other private or semi-private schools, had a preponderance of its students from outside the immediate surroundings.

Matero Boys is grant-aided which means that it follows government direction and is also Church sponsored. It thus follows government practice of admitting those who reach a certain academic standard in the belief that this meritocratic way of proceeding is equitable and fair in avoiding marginalization and providing equal opportunity to all [4]. Yet, this mode of procedure appears to work against one of the Catholic school's prime purposes—inclusion of those at the margins. To better appreciate this paradoxical situation, we turn to a review of its setting.

2. Context

As a Catholic school, Matero boys is part of a long tradition that heralds social justice which includes concern for the poorest. The first Catholic missionaries

generally set up outposts where missionaries had outreach to the poor and were oftentimes accused of giving handouts [5]. Similarly, it is true that in later times such missionaries were branded as instruments of colonialism in so far as they are said to have cooperated with the British colonial state. A significant aspect of this emerged when, by adopting the school as a means of evangelization, the colonial government became more directive. At that point in the late 1920s, the Catholic school, as others, was faced with a dilemma. It could continue largely outside government jurisdiction as a church school or it could become part of the colonial state system.

Missionaries found themselves on both sides of this issue but with the visit of Monsignor Arthur Hinsley, the voice of Rome, Catholic missionaries were told to place their schools within the state framework [6]. For the most part, they did this even if sometimes reluctantly. In the long term, this proved to be a good means of outreach in so far as it promised people from the remotest areas escape from the village and the opportunity to find wage labour in the developing mines and towns. Attending school was a means for Northern Rhodesians (Zambians after 1964) to become what has been called the fortunate few [7]. What is evident is that the early missionaries directed their efforts at assisting the poor and, given the climate of the time, they could be seen to be weakly aware of the political implications of their activities one of which included the price of becoming part of the colonial state system.

After a Church Council called Vatican II ending in 1965, the Church adopted a more political approach with an emphasis on social justice [8]. It stressed individual human rights but extended this to what it called the common good where each person's participation in the general welfare is highlighted [9]. This ideal was elucidated principally in 1968 through a papal document called *Populorum Progressio* and formed a key aspect of the Latin American bishops' conference in Medellin in 1968 [10]. It meant that missionaries began to be conscious of the political dimension of their schools [11].

This took place in the years after 1965 when Zambia was striving to establish itself as a newly Independent state and, as already indicated, it placed a heavy emphasis on education and, under the leadership of President Kaunda, the ideal of equity was fore-grounded. One might conjecture that this meant support for the promotion of social justice and the ideal that everyone would share equitably in the new nation's development. In that respect, the poorest seemed to have equal opportunity. What was new within this viewpoint, from the point of view of the Catholic Church, was that liberation of the poorest assumed a social structural or political framework. While the old system of assisting individuals to gain uplift remained, the church began to focus on social structures and their capacity to promote or impede social justice. In this way of thinking it was argued that there was a need to contribute towards building a just social order [12]. More specifically, a document called *The Catholic School* notes:

Since it is motivated by the Christian ideal, the Catholic school is particularly sensitive to the call from every part of the world for a more just society, and it tries to make its contribution towards it. It does not stop at the courageous teaching of the demands of justice even in the face of local opposition, but it tries to put these demands into practice in its own community in the daily life of the school [13].

The same document affirmed that, first and foremost, the church offers its educational service to the poor and if the church turns its attention exclusively to those who are wealthier it would be contributing to their privileged position and would thereby favour the development of a society that is unjust.

In this context of commitment to the poorest as developed in terms of the common good, we have the Matero Boys situation where the local poorest are excluded, not because they are unable to pay as was true elsewhere [14], but

because they failed to meet government-set academic criteria for entry. One could argue that what Edward Berman spoke about, when he charged missionaries of subordinating their mission to government aims, had come to pass [15]. However, it could also be argued that this was not the case but that the church under the authority of the Zambian Ministry of Education which is now called Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) the merit-based educational system provides an avenue towards equity and social justice and thus avoids marginalization of the poorest [16].

What follows argues that this claim is false but was uncritically accepted as true by the Catholic Church and more widely. It is a historical approach illustrating how, despite government intentions to create a nation that would not marginalize, the Zambian school system became a pivotal instrument of progressively excluding large sectors of society from the fruits of economic development which meant decreasing access to formal employment and the well-being that it promised.

The discussion emerges from secondary sources—published work, books, journals, educational reports on reforms, adjustments to World Bank demands, undergirded by the author's long-time experience in the country as a teacher, administrator, and researcher. It engages with such issues as the ideal of justice, opportunity structure, upward mobility, class formation, educational reform, education as reproductive of the status quo as it develops the the notion of marginalization. This speaks of social groups especially the poor in rural areas and densely parts of towns or cities as well as subgroups whose voices were weakly heard—girls, orphans, and those with special needs. As will be seen, the process of marinalization gains momentum when in the mid 1970s a new-found social elite gain control of the education system and strive to ensure that access to school maintains and reproduces its privileged position as the majority are left out.

3. The evolution of Zambia's education System

On gaining Independence in 1964 the new Zambian government had an extremely limited pool of educated labour. Out of a population of about four million only 110,000 had received six years of schooling and of these only fifty-eight percent had completed full primary school. Fourteen percent had passed the two-year junior secondary course as 961 had completed the Cambridge School Certificate [17]. In this setting, government realized that education was a major priority so that it could place its heavily marginalized people in positions of responsibility in the new state.

At the same time, the government lost no time in assuming almost total control of the education system through an Education Act in 1966. Subsequently, its Ministry of Education quickly expanded access to schooling so as to provide universal primary education for every Zambian, which had been a long-term ideal [18]. Given the challenge of creating a nation-state, government also saw schooling as a means towards national unity and prosperity for all. However, within that perspective, the President was concerned to develop a nation where there would be little division between 'haves' and 'have-nots. [19]' In its egalitarian concern, the Ministry of Education abolished school fees so that schooling would be open to all unlike what had been the case during colonialism.

4. Equity and prosperity through modernization

In pursuing this aim of promoting widespread education for prosperity and inclusion, government adopted what, at the time was seen to be the best or only

route, which was seen to be that of modernization [20]. This theory had been popularized in the 1950s and 60s to explain the relative under-development of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. It equated their current stage of under-development to an earlier historical period of the developed nations. It thereby assumed that development was unilinear consisting of a sequence of stages. One of its earliest proponents was Walter Rostow who spoke of the traditional, pre-condition, and take off stages [21].

Among the pivotal preconditions for the so-called take off, Rostow identified the development of natural science and technology and the values that accompany them. This came to mean that academic schooling was seen to be a crucial ingredient. Through the school, children would learn the tools of becoming modern. A key element of this theory would be that the nation-state. Developing countries could pursue a path to their development even if they might helpfully seek advice and assistance from developed countries. Subsequent development of Rostow's thesis occurred with articulation in 1961 of what was called the human capital approach where education came to be seen as an important investment which would lead to national prosperity [22]. This theory emphasized development of urban modern industrial centres which would then spread employment and prosperity to the whole population.

With this international framework for development in view, Zambia invested heavily in schooling, patterned on the educational systems of Europe with the hope that it would lead to widespread prosperity at the national level. It was founded in an understanding that school had a direct impact on producing a developed nation which would mean widespread, if not full, employment of those educated. In the Zambian context, it meant that government introduced what was a conventionally academic approach to school and saw success in the state academic examinations as perhaps the best and fairest means to national development in so far as it offered equality of access to all through free schools.

As a result, between 1964 and 1970, the number of children in primary schools increased dramatically as it did also at secondary as well as teacher and university education [23]. This surge of enrollment continued as the economy was buoyant and appeared to promise widespread schooling and opportunity to all, which accorded well with the government's desire to create a nation of equals where even the poorest child in the far off regions of the country would not be marginalized but would have equal chance to succeed as those in the cities coming from well-to-do families. In these early years, where formal employment was abundant for schooled people at primary level and beyond, the system was widely welcomed and enabled many of the poor to move up the social ladder.

5. The centre did not hold

Within a few years however this pattern of providing universal schooling and the opportunities that accompanied it began to show signs of break-down. By 1969, despite the promise of universal access to primary school, 33 percent of the seven-year old children were not in school and many of those who completed their primary schooling could not find places in secondary schools [24]. The ideal of universal primary schooling and wholesale employment in the formal sector were in question.

In subsequent years (1970-1975), the situation deteriorated with increasing numbers being excluded from the system at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels in part because the government could no longer afford to provide the kind of universal access which it had originally promised. This needs to be seen particularly

in light of the adverse economic situation for Zambia in the 1970s when the price of its main market product—copper—fell dramatically. In the situation of a growing squeeze on revenue and an increasing limit of access to school, by 1975 only 49 percent of the 7-14 year olds were in school.

6. Modernization under short-term review

With awareness of this fast-growing problem of over-emphasis on academic schooling and its failure to deliver equal opportunity and social inclusion in the early 1970s, the government sought an alternative route to development which questioned the modernization school model along socialist lines. The President noted the growing economic and social gap between the urban and rural population as well as the fact that new-found wealth was concentrated in the hands of a small but powerful group where the masses were increasingly marginalized [25].

At the same time, dependency theorists argued against a linear perspective on national development and spoke of core and periphery dimensions of such development within the capitalist order [26]. At the periphery where developing nations were located, development depended principally on what happened in the developed nations at the core. These nations in turn depended on the periphery for their own development and so economic development at the margins was highly dependent, resembling what had taken place in colonial times. Dependency theorists advocated cutting links with the modernization approach and promoting self-reliance. This was already occurring in places like Tanzania and Cuba. Efforts had already been made to diversify the curriculum along these lines but they seemed to be inadequate [27].

It is therefore not so astonishing that in 1973, the President called for a major review of the education system which resulted in a widespread survey, consultation, and a subsequent proposal, *Education for Development* [28]. It spoke of equity and the need to provide a system that did not favour a minority of the population by preparing an elite for high-status and leadership positions. Though there was appreciation for what the then current system offered in terms of social mobility for the less well-off, it pointed to the growing tendency to become socially reproductive. In that way it enhanced the position of those in power enabling them to maintain their privilege. It was recognized that continuation of the then current education system would result in shrinkage of the opportunity structure for the poorest. In addition, *Education for Development* questioned the value of schools that were oriented to passing exams with little or no consideration of their wider national economic and industrial roles. It likened the system to a train that travels on a single track bound for one destination ejecting most of the passengers on the way, keeping a small minority [29]. It was nonetheless acknowledged that changing the educational system in itself was insufficient; there was need to transform the socio-economic setting [30]. This signaled anxiety and resistance for those already benefitting from the system.

Though the proposal was debated at some length, it was swiftly rejected in favour of essentially maintaining the then current system but including what might be identified as cosmetic reforms in *Educational Reform* [31]. The revised model focused on capacity building and emphasized education as an instrument for personal and national development. The system took on additional features including keeping an eye on rural development and self-reliance inspired by what appeared to be happening in places like Cuba and Tanzania. By keeping this ideal of self-reliance in the background, it was hoped that national development could be better balanced between what was happening in the urban and rural settings and as

a consequence that employment would not be so heavily focused on academic merit. It was moreover seen to be a better way to avoid creating a nation with 'haves' linked to jobs in the town and 'have-nots' in the rural areas.

As the country emerged from the so-called reforms in 1977, it was clear that control of the system was passing into the hands of what had developed as an elite who had become politically powerful. It favoured the modernization approach to development in its academically selective process even though this meant ever increasing numbers who would be marginalized by it. While, theoretically, the system was still free and open to all, because of its academic and Western-style curriculum including English as the medium of instruction, it favoured those who had become part of the growing elite, becoming reproductive of their status and less disposed to upward mobility for the many at the margins [32].

What resulted was a continuation of the system as it was but it kept in view the government's commitment to the promotion of equity in terms of a widespread access to primary schooling. Though this appeared to manifest concern for the so-called marginalized masses, it did not greatly impact the academically selective system which continued to favour those who were part of the growing elite [33]. In addition, because of government's debt, fees were introduced a few years later at different levels, which more severely impacted the poor.

With the introduction of fees at various points of the system, the Catholic Church, among others, pleaded on behalf of the marginalized sections of society and began to provide grants and bursaries. It had earlier praised the momentum of the first education reform proposal, *Education for Development*, for its emphasis on including the weaker elements of society and in general came to find itself at odds with the elitist system that had now emerged. It did not openly advocate for radical review or take major steps against what was taking place. This may indeed confirm Berman, in seeing the church subordinating its mission, but it probably makes some sense in so far as the church had to thread a tight line as the state became more authoritarian and intolerant of alternative viewpoints [34].

7. Modernization amended

Meanwhile, the education system continued to be informed by a human capital outlook leading to an elitist status for a minority while the political rhetoric spoke in terms of production units and local empowerment. By 1980, there were 493,000 employed in the formal sector of the economy which represented about 27 percent of the working-age sector. Already, 14 percent of the unemployed had some secondary schooling with most from the earlier drop-out points Grade 4 and Grade 7. Progression to Grade 8 pivoted at about 23 percent which meant that large numbers were being forced to leave school with little prospect of formal employment. This concern of relating school with access to jobs had been a crucial issue in the so-called reform movement but little had been done beyond discussion [35]. The curriculum had been designed to secure entry to school and to lead to formal employment. This was happening less and less with more and more children being marginalized. Linear expansion of the system was not sufficient [36].

Although there were piecemeal attempts to implement the so-called education reform, no comprehensive approach took place till, at the instigation of the World Bank, a major survey was undertaken and a report appeared in 1986 known as the *Educational Reform Implementation Project* (ERIP) [37]. This document focused on the need for equity in educational development and was seen to be best approached by according priority to primary schooling. It was seen in the light of employment opportunities which left many without the possibility of formal employment. The

concern became: how could the school system be revamped to assist the increasing numbers of those who were being marginalized which progressively meant the poorest in society? [38].

In response to the World Bank's directives and promise of assistance, ERIP proposed large-scale investment in what had been an initial ideal namely primary schooling for all Zambian children [39]. In so doing, there was also a proposed moratorium on investment in secondary and higher education. At the primary level, it meant expansion of provision which led to the construction of schools and invitation to the local community to help in this project. In many instances, the response of the community was predominantly to construct basic schools (schools that added facilities for Grade 7 and 8). This led to increased enrolment in what would often be rather make-shift schools throughout the country and many of these allowed children to enter the lower secondary school level (basic included Grades 8 and 9 which were lower secondary), adding to what already was a bad situation:

Reports from several parts of the country drew attention to the bad physical condition of school buildings... cracked walls... termite infested... broken or missing doors, windows without glass... leaking water ... blocked toilets [40].

ERIP thus concentrated on how to achieve the long cherished ideal of seven years primary school for every Zambian child, despite a bleak economic climate where government struggled to pay the nation's external debt and was subjected to conditions set by the International Monetary Fund known as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). *Educational Reform Implementation Project* considered that by widening the net at the primary school level economic growth would be enhanced. It claimed that returns to investment in primary schooling were greater nationally than at higher levels. Besides, investment per student at this level was hugely less costly than investment than at university level [41].

What was ambiguous was that the report appeared to envisage primary schooling (and less obviously basic schooling) to be the end of the road for most children but that did not fit the long-term understanding that primary school's real value in the minds of children and their parents. They saw it as a stepping stone to Grade 8 and beyond; hence, local community's support for basic schools which not only allowed more primary-aged children to be admitted but enabled most of them to stay to Grade 9. The report paradoxically also envisaged the introduction of fees because of the poor condition of the nation's financial situation, breaking the welfare state system of free schooling that had characterized the nation since Independence and threatening the welfare and access to school for those who were poor [42].

8. Achieving primary education for all

To address the challenge of including all children in quality primary school as a prelude to better economic standing, the new MMD government continued to emphasize self-reliance through production units but after 1991 sought more input from the local community as it further transformed the country into a market-based economy. Under this government, Zambia committed itself to the *World Declaration on Education for All*. Enrolment in primary (Grades 1-7) and basic (Grades 1-9) increased as initiatives to ensure better inclusion of girls, orphans, special needs, and rural children followed as did monitoring of attainment of basic literacy.

Nonetheless, enrolment levels were constrained by the introduction of fees in a climate of widespread unemployment as well as by an increasing lack of confidence in the system to deliver much coveted formal employment as the opportunity

structure contracted [43]. Fees disproportionately impacted the poor many of whom not only failed to enroll but after enrolment were likely to drop out. Most parents could not afford to meet the obligatory costs of sending their children to school [44]. By 1998, the national average attendance in primary school was 66 percent of which only 50 percent progressed to Grades 8 and about 20 percent to Grade 10. This represented 61 percent in rural versus 80 percent in urban areas [45]. Not only did this reveal how rural children were marginalized but, despite efforts to assist, those excluded were disproportionately girls, those with special needs, and orphans [46].

However, though the overall impact was that the intake into the primary schools increased, because of government's financial situation and input, many of the schools were of poor quality leaving one wonder about the level of literacy of those who completed at either primary or basic level [47]. These basic schools provided wider access. However, only 64 percent of richer families enrolled in them. Instead, the better endowed opted for private or faith-based schools some of which did not transform their lower secondary schools to become basic. As a result, they had better facilities which promised better quality learning, increasing their chances of what was severely limited, entry to Grade 10 [48].

This overall movement towards primary and in some cases basic education for all became a leading motif within the system under strain. As a result, by 2001, the primary school enrollment reached 1.77 million as against 1.4 million in 1990. This modest increase nonetheless meant that 65 percent equal to 700,000 of seven-year-olds were not in school. Of those who completed primary school, roughly 50 percent proceeded to Grade 8 (because of the basic school movement) and approximately 20 percent to Grade 10 which represented a significant drop-out rate especially at the end of Grade 9.

A key reason for the large out of school population was that, because of fees, the poorest were excluded. Yet, while the overall number gaining primary school education had increased, this did not translate into the fact that they would gain formal employment. What we have instead is a better schooled population within a declining employment rate [49]. Investment in education on a national level had not expanded economic productivity as had been promised and expected. Moreover, in this expansion of provision, as already indicated, the quality of schooling was uneven especially in rural areas, leaving those that completed largely and progressively less qualified in their search for formal employment.

Though basic literacy is to be prized as a human right, the universal primary school movement appears to have done little to enable those with primary or basic schooling to avoid marginalization and climb the educational pyramid especially since investment and expansion at the secondary level and higher level had been somewhat frozen. Yet, clearly that was what most desired in the interest of finding formal employment. It came to mean that more and more young people emerged from basic schools with slimmer and slimmer chances of being selected to go further. The opportunities for entry to Grade 10 were clearly linked to those who had quality schooling, which in rural and poor urban communities was less likely because of deprived facilities. Related to this, the question emerged: what was the economic or social value of these years in school when at the end graduates could not find formal employment? This needs to be seen within the context where about 10 percent of Zambia's employment was then at the formal level [50].

Since the majority of children who entered Grade I were blocked from ascending the ladder to higher secondary school (high school as it was called for some years) and beyond, the age-old question of seeking a different kind of schooling re-emerged. Though numbers in school increased, the problem of formal employment for those who emerged remained, resembling what it had happened in the colonial

times. It was the long and fast developing problem of 'educated unemployed' [51]. Juxtaposed to this was the high poverty level ranging at about 80 percent of the population.

As the overall population increased and as the country went through financial struggle, the Ministry of Education sought more community (local and international) support, moving one might say from a welfare state to a market-based economy. In that setting it pressed ahead with the goal of universal primary schooling under the impression that this was the route not only to greater prosperity but to decreased marginalization and more equitable distribution of resources. The decade between 1990 and 2001 thus witnessed increased enrollment but did little for what was the major concern namely formal employment bringing again to focus the question of how appropriate was the school curriculum for job creation [52].

Attention inevitably focused on the nature and role of the Technical Education, Vocational, and Entrepreneurship Authority (TEVETA) which had been set up in the past and provided education more directly linked to employable skills. In 2000, 151 institutions under its control had an overall enrollment of 24,648 students. One might wonder why these settings with promise of some formal and self-employment had not become more attractive. It is true that many were private which entailed fees but perhaps more pivotally academic schooling had been seen for generations to be the pathway to formal and well-paid employment [53]. Thus, getting people interested in this technical mode of schooling proved to be difficult even if it promised to assist students to become productive particularly in the informal sector [54].

In any event, in the light of ERIP, by 2001, there was 1.770,000 million pupils in primary school and the progression rate to Grade 8 had pivoted around 35 percent. This overall increase in the primary and basic school populations resulted in large part because of the growth of basic and latterly community schools [55]. Though both these models of school made a major contribution in reducing the number of out-of-school children largely because they were free, they operated in ways that were rudimentary [56].

As Zambia gained relief from its debt through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative in 2002, one of its first responses was again to provide free basic schooling in view of achieving universal primary schooling which had been such a long-term issue. This helped. Implementation and interpretation of this free schooling revealed 'hidden' fees as well as increased quantity at the cost of quality. There were too many over-crowded classrooms and schools with shortage of teachers. This was especially true in rural areas and densely populated sectors of cities and towns [57].

Following the re-introduction of the free basic schooling in 2002, enrollments increased though the degree to which the schools were free remained an on-going question. Correlated with this was government's inadequate support of school infrastructural needs [58]. By 2008, enrollments had increased to 2,909,436 at the primary level and 3,290,000 at the basic level [59]. This could clearly be seen as a major step forward in the goal of providing primary schooling for all Zambian children even if it included a low intake rate of 56 percent for the age 7-13 [60] This pattern of increased enrollment was enhanced in the years following by economic growth in the economy largely because of increased copper sales and greater government investment in schooling.

9. Modernization with new horizons

As the enrollment at the primary and basic levels moved towards the goal of primary schooling for all, it is not surprising that government's attention moved

towards expansion of the secondary and higher levels, which had been on hold since the late 1980s in order to support the movement towards universal primary education as the best effort towards equity creation. This shift to post-primary was also prompted by the fact that the workforce grew at an annual average rate of 4.9 percent between 2005 and 2012. Increasingly, employment went to the more educated. Those with no education and those with Grade 7 found it harder to get jobs while those with Grades 8-12 s and university level had a better chance, prompting a perceived need for higher academic credentials. The majority of school leavers were thus marginalized and faced with employment in the informal sector which TEVET supported. Despite government rhetoric however, its investment in TEVET compared poorly with that of other sectors especially the university [61].

When the Patriotic Front (PF) government was elected in 2011, it took steps to include more people at the higher levels of the education system. As part of its approach, it renamed and reframed the educational system, reverting to the older system of speaking of primary school as Grades 1–7, secondary school Grades 8–12 followed by tertiary education. The previous system had been introduced to facilitate the inclusion of Grades 8 and 9. The problem had now shifted to include more pupils in Grades 8-12. Access to secondary school and higher levels of education was seen to be part of the route to achieving the country's middle-income status in the light of Vision 2030. At the same time, government recognized that the dynamic of the current system of education poorly related to the creation of employment and as a result the country still wrestled with high level poverty and marginalization. Would large-scale investment at the higher levels create more employment or would school leavers face the need for higher credentials for roughly the same level of formal employment?

10. Modernization reframed

With dramatic expansion at secondary and higher level enrolment in view, the PF government decided through *Framework 2012* [62] to leave the system fundamentally as it was but to balance the curriculum so that the technical learning might no longer be seen to be inferior [63]. Instead of a major effort at reform of the system as happened in the mid-1970s, it proposed a two-career twin pathway in the school curriculum—academic and technical. This re-emphasis and effort to better include technical education together with a review of English being displaced by local languages at the lower Grades as the medium of instruction could be seen to re-surface the age-old issue of the relevance of the predominant kind of the schooling on offer. In an effort towards greater inclusion and less marginalization, it also opened pre-schools so that head-starts were not monopolized by the better off members of society.

This concern to integrate the different streams of schooling appears to be well directed but to be effective in breaking the age-old bias against technical education, the overall system may need a greater commitment to educate for formal employment and greater backing for TEVET's 275 institutions. Currently, the almost exclusive human capital perspective on social development continues to dominate and to be reproductive of the social order with highly unsatisfactory implications for inclusion of the majority. As, at the time of the so-called education reform in 1976, making this job-oriented learning attractive promises to be a hard battle. In the minds of most, formal employment is linked to academic achievement [64]. In some instances as in the case of university academic staff, this appears incontestable [65]. Perception of the opportunity structure remains pivotal and, until that opportunity window opens more widely through better reward for technical qualification, it is

difficult to see how any significant change will occur. Middle-income status may be achieved by 2030 but there is still likely to be large sectors of the population, marginalized in poverty with obvious consequences for their wellbeing [66].

11. Conclusion

Within this setting of overall growth in the economy and in school enrollments no longer principally at primary and basic school levels but at secondary and higher levels, by 2017 the primary school enrollment reached 3, 300,000 [67]. The country had almost achieved its target of universal primary schooling. It was noted that this goal, though in sight, was still not achieved as the net enrollment rate of the age-relevant children was 80 percent and completion rate 79 percent [68]. Part of the reason entails high repetition and drop-out rates, low quality linked to poor infrastructure including high numbers of students in classrooms, insufficient numbers of teachers, lack of textbooks and free schooling in theory rather than in reality [69]. One could argue that the whole Zambian population has been included in gaining some degree of literacy at the primary level, leaving overall literacy at approximately 75 percent. This of course assumes that completion of primary or even basic school can be correlated with a satisfactory level of literacy [70].

While this emerges as an unquestionable achievement and the result of a long-time ambition, it has a major shadow. It does not provide the majority with the prospect of formal employment and the rewards associated with that. Instead, it leaves the country, like many other African countries, with 60 percent of the population of approximately 16 million marginalized. They are said to be in poverty of varying degrees, high level or extreme for 5 million and moderate for almost 8 million [71]. One might say that the education system that was originally thought to promote a prosperous nation with wealth equitably shared has delivered something very different.

Among other things, this means that, while 88 percent of students in primary school aspire to university education, only 3-4 percent have access to it. Though one might claim that the system offers equality of opportunity through its meritocratic system, is this true? The boy/girl from Matero who we mentioned at the outset has a much weaker chance of climbing the educational ladder not necessarily because he/she is less gifted but because he/she is located where he/she does not have the resources to enter the school system well equipped. He/she is unlikely to have had pre-school, educated parents, facility in speaking and reading English at home, which most of his/her well-to-do age-mates from more affluence parts of the city have and so they are likely to gain higher grades in the Grade VII test. This enables them to be admitted to the Catholic school which, like most Catholic schools, prides itself on good performance in meritocratic pro-privileged national league Tables [72]. The Matero boy/girl has to travel to where his/her schooling is likely to be less well resourced.

This trend is seen more widely where 37 percent of Grade I students reach Grade 9 or secondary school. Even if he/she finds him/herself in the 26 percent who reach Grade XII, College entry ranges at roughly 3 percent and there is almost no chance of having access to university [73]. Given this pattern that clearly favours the 'haves', we find that 77 percent of university students coming from the richest 10 percent of the population and they were assisted with state bursaries at tax-payers' cost [74].

As the overall rate of inclusion of the population at the primary level is to be commended so too is the overall expansion of those completing secondary and higher education in large part because of widespread development of private contributions so that the country now has five public and upward of 32 private

universities and multiple colleges in concord with the human capital approach to the goal of middle-income status in 2030 [75]. However, without large-scale economic development and dramatic increase in the formal employment rate, what is likely to result, will be somewhat like we find in 2017 when the country had 85,000 or so teachers emerging from colleges, there was employment for 2,000 or so, leaving the country with ever larger numbers of marginalized college and university graduates [76]. The linear system, even modified by *Framework 2012*, still needs urgent and radical reform if it is to deliver not purely middle-income status for a fortunate few.

Despite the hopes of those who led the country after 1964 of creating a prosperous nation where the division between those who 'have' and those 'left out' or marginalized would be small, the modernization mode of schooling by which they strove to achieve this delivered a different outcome, dispelling the persistent myth of achieving equality through a meritocratic system. This was glimpsed early in the history of schooling in the country but adopting an alternative paradigm proved to be difficult not only for the state but even for faith-based public schools because of the power of a newly formed elite.

This discussion has recounted how the Zambian school system has marginalized a major part of the population from access to the kind of lifestyle that each person has reason to value. Government initially attempted to counteract this progressive exclusion of the majority through reform in the 1970s. It failed and resorted to a piece-meal solution along the lines of basic education for all. In the early part of the 21st century, after debt relief and a more buoyant economy, government invested in setting the school system on better footing. Though welcome, this has not confronted the social structure and the school system as part of it, marginalising the majority and frustrating its desire for an acceptably equitable level of well-being for every Zambian.

Author details

Brendan P. Carmody^{1,2}

1 Institute of Education, University College, London

2 St. Mary's University, London

*Address all correspondence to: carmody.brendan4@gmail.com

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