# Education Out Loud Case Study: The GEAR Alliance

## Authors

### ACER

| | |
|---|---|
| Alexander Towne | Lead Researcher and Project Manager |
| Dr Sladana Krstic | Education Advocacy Expert |

### MDF

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|---|---|
| Sam Boering | Senior Adaptive Management Expert |

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## Acknowledgements

# Disclaimer

# Contents

# Introduction

This case study is part of a larger body of work funded by the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) Education Out Loud (EOL) programme. It explores the advocacy and policy influencing (API) activities of the GEAR Alliance, a transnational alliance of four East African civil society organisations (CSO) receiving funding from EOL, and the process, results and impact of action research project they conducted in partnership with MDF/ Australian Council for Education Research (ACER), an EOL 'Global Learning Partner' (GLP).

EOL is the GPEs fund for advocacy and social accountability. The fund aims to support CSOs to be active and effective in shaping policy for the communities which they serve, particularly those that are vulnerable or marginalised. As part of EOL's strategy, they have engaged a number of GLP to enhance the evidence base for effective API and crucially support the CSOs they fund (grantees), to develop their API strategies and become more effective. The MDF/ ACER consortium is one such GLP. They worked closely with a number of grantees in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia to develop action research projects, to test key assumptions in their programme theory of change (ToC). The aim of this was to support grantees to engage in adaptive management practices and ultimately improve the effectiveness of their API activities.

# Case Study Context

## Education Out Loud Context

It is well documented that there is a global learning crisis. UNESCO UIS (2018) estimates that 617 million children and adolescents are not proficient in either reading or mathematics. Two-thirds of these children are actually in school or were in school but dropped out. 258 million children, adolescents and youth are unable to access formal education (UNESCO UIS, 2019). The Covid-19 pandemic has further disrupted education and affected over 1.5 billion students across 190 countries, deepening inequalities in learning, especially for the most marginalised and disadvantaged children (EC, 2023).

GPE works with international partners, governments, and other organisations to address this challenge and contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4: "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". GPE 2025 strategic plan (2022) is aligned with SDG 4 and aims to "accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive, and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century".

Civil society plays a very important role in GPE country-level work by contributing to the development and monitoring of education sector policies and plans. GPE has been providing funding to CSOs since 2009 and currently supports CSOs through its Education Out Loud (EOL) programme (GPE, 2023; EOL, 2023). As stated, the aim of the EOL programme is to support CSOs to be active and effective in shaping policy for the communities which they serve, especially those that are vulnerable or marginalised. It does this by providing training opportunities, access to national and international networks, and crucially funding.

Since GPE has been active in this area, there have been significant advances in access to education, especially for girls (CGD, 2022). However, further action is needed is needed to address the learning crisis and achieve SDG4. This is particularly true for girls in marginalised communities or with other forms of disadvantage, because gender remains a multiplying factor when it intersects with other forms of disadvantage such as girls who also

have a disability or come from a lower socio-economic background (UNESCO, 2022). It is within this context that this research project operates and tries to make a meaningful contribution towards the achievement of SDG4.

## Action Research Project Context

The research project explores civil society's contributions to advancing equity and improving learning through different approaches and methodologies for education API. It focusses on how CSOs engage in API to improve equitable learning outcomes, particularly in relation to gender, intersectionality, and social inclusion. The main objective of the research is to investigate, review and learn from three EOL grantees' education API efforts, with the aim to identify strategies and practices that have proved effective in instigating change at local, regional and system levels, and shed some light on the conditions that have contributed to their effectiveness.

Actionable learning agendas were co-produced with the selected grantees, to jointly examine the conditions and reasons as to how identified strategies and practices have been effective. Through engaging in the action research process, grantees and their associated partners generated evidence on the effectiveness of their API practices, which allowed them to engage in adaptive management practices and enhance future effectiveness. Whilst the project was conducted jointly with grantees, MDF/ ACER provided overall leadership of the research and quality assurance. Nevertheless, this was very much a collaborative process, in which MDF/ ACER guided the research by providing advice, tools, and feedback, and facilitated critical reflection. In summary, the research examines:

- Effectiveness of API strategies and practices
- Different approaches, methods, strategies, and tools of API
- The processes related to the development, design and implementation of evidence-based lobby and advocacy in education
- Organisational and partnership capacities to implement API
- Organisational capacities for implementing actionable learning agendas and adaptive management in the field of API

The grantees MDF/ ACER partnered with as part of this action research project are IID (OC2, Bangladesh), School for Life (OC2, Ghana), and the GEAR Alliance (OC3, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). They are all recipients of EOL grants, from either OC2 or OC3. All the organisations worked with in the project are members of the Commonwealth, a voluntary association of 56 diverse nations around the globe. The commonwealth has its roots in a shared history, which has a left its mark on the political structures and institutions of the countries in the study and ostensibly produced a number of commonalities between the contexts. These include: presidential and multiparty systems; constitutional frameworks; independent judiciaries; regular elections; respect for the rule of law; a free press and active civil society; and the English language. Nevertheless, all contexts have their own distinct political history, culture, and challenges. As such, this mix of commonality and diversity means the contexts present a fascinating dynamic in which to explore effective API strategies.

# Grantee Overview

In terms of education, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are comparable. They are all signatories to education frameworks developed by transnational organisations, such as the Southern Africa Development Committee (SADC), the African Union, and the United Nations, and they all share similar challenges within their education systems. For example, low levels of domestic funding and inadequate infrastructure. Furthermore, in all contexts there has been a failure of civil society organisations (CSOs) to coordinate and align their educational advocacy efforts to hold their governments to account for the implementation of binding transnational frameworks, like Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, and the SADC protocol on education and training. The Girls Education Advocacy in the Region (GEAR) alliance was formed to help address some of these shared challenges. Namely, it aims to address the limited primary and secondary school access for girls and young women in rural and farming communities.

*Figure 1: GEAR Alliance Active Countries in East Africa*
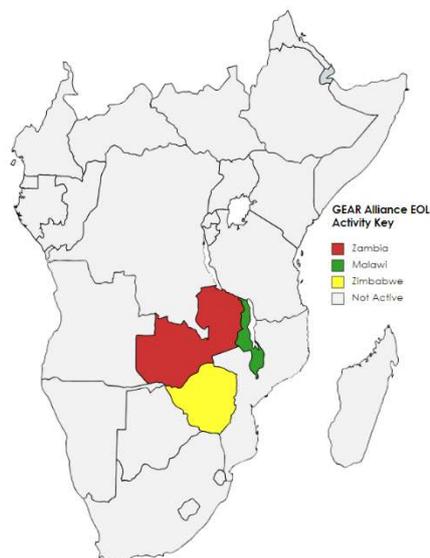


The GEAR alliance was founded in 2020 and is funded by the EOL as an OC3 grantee, meaning they have a focus on creating a stronger global and transnational enabling environment for national civil society advocacy and transparency efforts. It is made up from four sub-Saharan African organisations, which are Students and Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT) in Zimbabwe, Farming Communities Educational Trust (FACET) in Zimbabwe, Girls Activist Youth Organization (GAYO) in Malawi and National Action for Quality Education (NAQEZ) in Zambia (see figure 1). FACET, GAYO, and NAQEZ lead activities within their respective countries, and mobilise boundary partners to form a group of CSOs that support the advocacy work of the GEAR alliance. SAYWHAT is the lead organisation within the group and will coordinate the capacity strengthening of country level movements of CSOs to improve their skills and ability to influence.

The alliance is currently funded from November 2021 to June 2024. Its main objective is 'to ensure inclusive and equitable education systems for girls in rural and farming communities of Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe through the transnational education advocacy of GEAR Alliance members by June 2024'. The aim is premised, in part, on the governments' delivery of education as a human right using available transnational frameworks, which, in turn, makes collaborative advocacy by CSOs across the three countries an important step towards realising the goal. In order to achieve impact the GEAR project has developed four broad objectives.

1. To strengthen the capacities of GEAR alliance and its boundary partners in inclusive and equitable education advocacy for rural young women and girls in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe by June 2022.
2. To support in country advocacy activities by GEAR alliance CSOs on educational accountability for rural and farming community girls by June 2023.
3. To coordinate the participation of GEAR alliance members in pre, during and post review of regional and international educational frameworks at SADC, AU and UN levels by June 2024.
4. To promote the vertical and horizontal linking and learning on inclusive and equitable education between state and nonstate actors at national and transnational levels by June 2024

These are represented in the GEAR Alliance theory of change in figure 2 below:

*Figure 2: GEAR Alliance Theory of Change*

**IMPACT**

Inclusive and equitable education system for girls in rural and farming communities of Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

**Outcomes**

- Improved participation by CSOs in transnational education review processes at all levels
- Improved access by girls and young women in rural and farming communities to government supported primary and secondary education.
- Improved accountability on education commitments agreed and entered into by the three countries.
- Strong movement of CSOs in the transnational education advocacy for southern Africa

**Output**

Improved knowledge and skills by CSOs in transnational advocacy processes on the right to education

Quality engagements by CSOs during transnational advocacy processes on the right to education.

Increased programmes and schemes being done by line ministries of education to target enrolment of girls in rural areas.

Increased implementation of country level learning assessments tracking the implementation of transnational, education frameworks

Improved collaborations amongst CSOs in holding their governments accountable to education commitments.

Improved use of lessons learnt and promising models on education by governments of the 3 countries.

Availability of synthesized information on the gaps and solutions in the education sector

Coordinated participation by CSOs during the review cycle of educational frameworks at transnational levels.

Increased linking and learning by GEAR alliance CSOs and strategic partners in the provision of education at national and transnational levels.

Improved project adaptations to the changing environments for CSOs in the education sector

Increased public awareness and learning on SDG 4 and VNR processes at national and transnational levels.

**INTERVENTIONS**

- Strengthen the capacities of CSOs to utilise review processes on binding transnational frameworks on the right to education.
- Support participation by CSOs in the review cycles of progressive educational frameworks
- Support in-country collaborations by CSOs to demand government accountability on the right to education.
- Support CSOs linking and learning on transnational education advocacy.

**BARRIER**

Poor participation of CSOs in regional and international review frameworks on the right to education
Despite having progressive education frameworks in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, CSOs are not coordinated to push for government accountability in the delivery of the education for girls and young women in rural and farming communities.
Inadequate domestic funding by the three states to deliver the right to education for all.
The existence of economic, social, and cultural barriers for girls and young women in rural and farming communities hindering their access to education

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

That most adolescent girls and young women from rural and farming communities from Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe do not have access to quality, inclusive and equitable education particularly at primary and secondary education levels.

# Action Research Process

## Overall Approach to Case Studies

The research investigated grantee's API efforts, through a review of their existing approaches with the particular focus on their ToC. The review made use of the Social Change Matrix (SCM) (see figure 3) to identify and review the various underlying key assumption(s) that support pathways to their vision of success. The assumptions were jointly analysed in relation to the relevance and impact of the change in educational systems the grantee wants to bring about, and constituted the basis for an action research project for the grantees to conduct.

*Figure 3: Social Change Matrix*
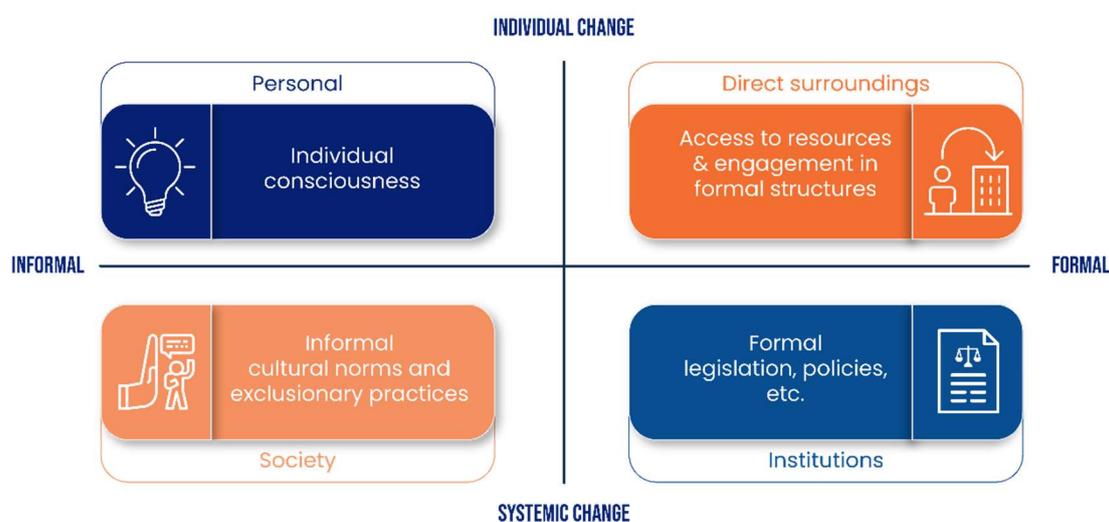


In addition to reviewing the grantees' ToC and the development of SCM, additional research included a review of relevant documents, such as, policy and planning reports and other documents related to participatory API activities, and specific background literature in order to better contextualise the research's focus in each country. Furthermore, each grantee underwent a capacity assessment in order to tailor capacity building activities to their particular needs. Where available, the research also examined any additional evidence-based education API approaches to strengthen advocacy for equitable learning outcomes particularly in relation to gender, intersectionality, and social inclusion.

In order to support the development of these case studies, stakeholder consultations were conducted in each country, aligned to the specific research questions of each grantee. Respondents consisted of representatives from the grantees, grantee associate organisations and stakeholders, and the regional management unit (RMU). Where appropriate, other GLPs were contacted in relation to specific actionable learning agenda items or findings, in order to consider any additional inputs they may have, such as suggested literature and similar research findings, as well as to share our knowledge from the research.

In summary, the participatory research consisted of:

- Documents and literature review, including CLAs where available.

- Review of ToC and development of SCM.

- Grantee capacity assessments and tailored capacity building activities.

- Grantee led action research projects.

- Stakeholder consultations.

- Research validation.

This process is captured in figure 4 below:

*Figure 4: Action Research Process*
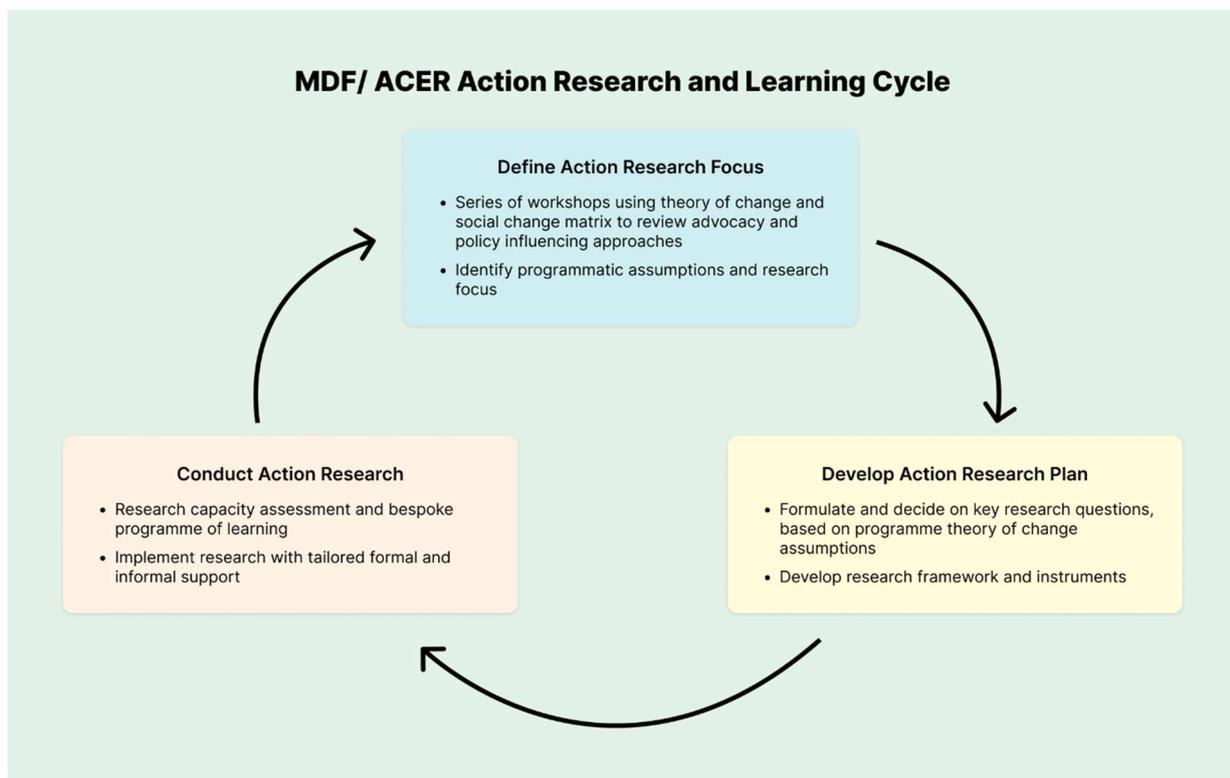


## GEAR Alliance Action Research

An agreed part of reviewing the GEAR Alliances approaches to API was to work with them on re-examining their ToC and its associated assumptions, to better understand any gaps in information that is beneficial to the success of the programme. By engaging with their ToC, and by using SCM as a tool to map out the intended stakeholder behavioural change (as a consequence of project activities) and assumptions underlying these change processes, the GEAR Alliances was able to identify some information gaps that can be addressed through action research. The GEAR Alliance and their associates engaged in the action research project at all stages and all member organisations successfully completed a piece of action research. This section summarises the activities at each stage of the action research process outlined in figure 4.

## Define Action Research Focus

During the define action research focus stage of the action research cycle, the GEAR Alliance collaborated with MDF/ ACER to draw out the planning assumptions they had made when developing their ToC, and map them to the SCM. This was done via a number of online workshops, using virtual whiteboard software, and can be seen in figure 5.

*Figure 5: GEAR Alliance ToC/ SCM Workshops*
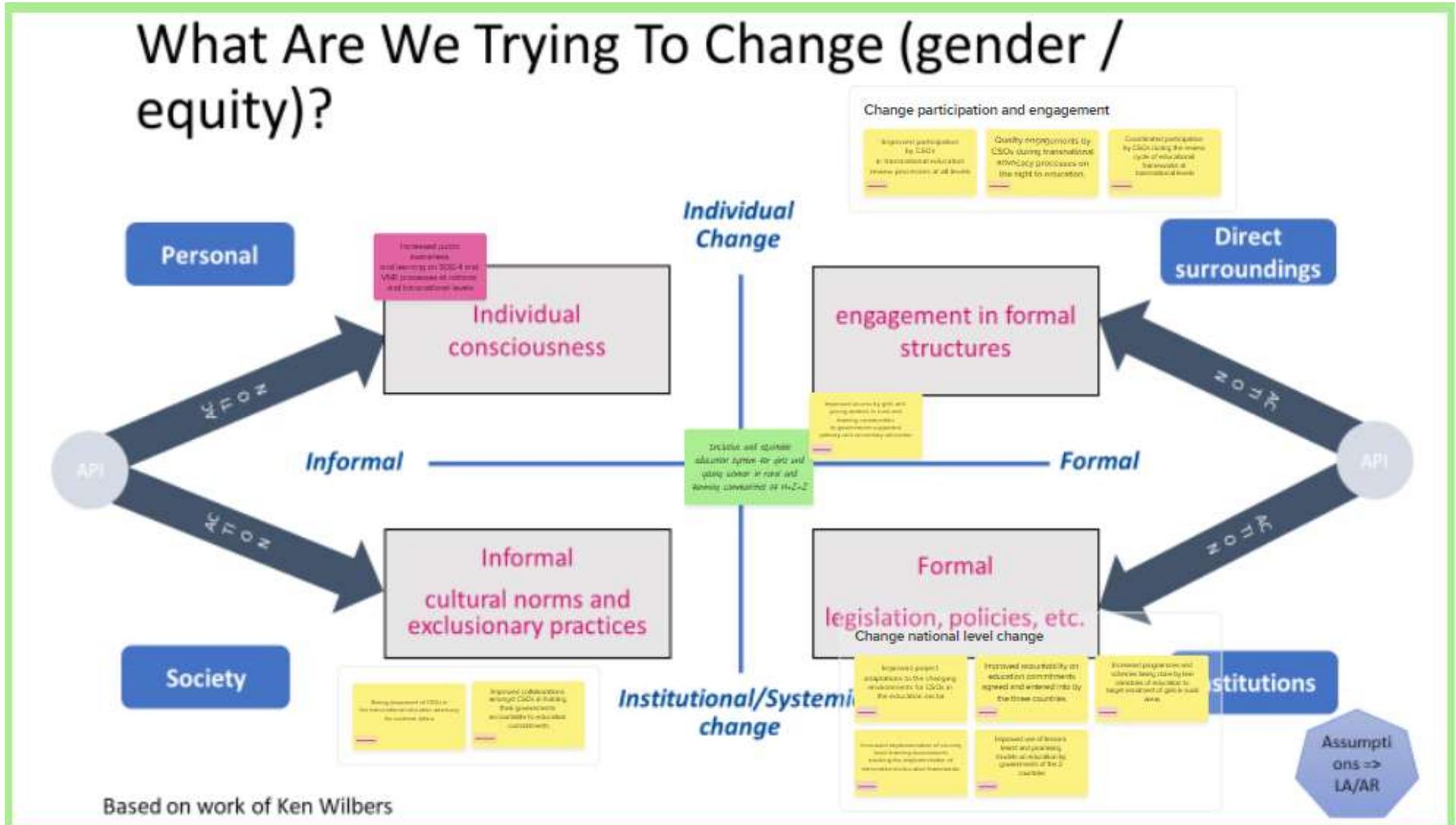
## Develop Action Research Plan

The GEAR Alliance then moved into the 'Develop Action Research Plan' phase of Figure 4. This phase began with an evaluation of the GEAR Alliance project assumptions. This focussed on:

- Which assumptions they would like to, or needed to, know more about in order to become more effective in their advocacy and policy influencing efforts.
- What could and would they do with the information gained through action research.

They then were able to prioritise their research questions through discussion in an online workshop. To explore their assumptions and in turn prioritise them, the GEAR Alliance members did a brainstorm and discussion activity, which focussed on the following three questions:

1. Do the stakeholders want to change? Why do we think that?
2. Can the stakeholders change? Why do we think that?
3. Do the stakeholders have the capacity to change? Why do we think that?

Some examples of the assumptions discussed include:

- If government representatives and, men and boys, girls and young women, and parents will be more aware, then they will participate in contextually specific engagement strategies?
- If the general public develops awareness and learning on SDG 4 and VNR processes at national and transnational levels, then they will participate in advocacy actions for better quality education for girls and young women.
- If individuals / communities develop shifts in mindsets, then they will challenge cultural norms?

Following this, further prioritisation of research questions took place to develop their learning agenda. Key discussions focussed on:

- Who would/ should be involved in collecting the information in the learning agenda?
- How would they use the information, focussing on organisational decisions that would need to be made?
- How useful is it i.e. how would it help them as organisation?
- What were internal and external conditions that needed to be in place for using the information and translating that in revised strategies.
- Deciding on key number of research questions.

This allowed the GEAR Alliance and their associates to finalise their research questions and framework. The research questions and a summary of their methods can be found below, and the full framework is available in Annex 1.

## Research Questions

Each organisation within the GEAR Alliance developed between one and two research questions, which they would research independently of the other members of the alliance. This is because action research must be relevant to the activities of the individual organisations, in order for them to then use the learnings to engage in adaptive management practices. These researcch questions can be found below:

GAYO - Malawi:

1. Are there any observable changes in supranational policy development processes affecting girls and Young women in education and what approaches made them work?

NAQEZ - Zambia:

2. What is the role and willingness of parents, girls, and young women to participate in advocating for change using bottom-up approaches?

SAYWHAT - Zimbabwe:

3. What role can transnational agencies play to influencing governments to enact and implement education policies in the SADC region?

FACET – Zimbabwe:

4. How does popular culture "norms and practices" affect what girls want in relation to education?

## Methods

The organisations that make up the GEAR Alliance collected information from a range of stakeholders, including girls and young women, parents, and community leaders, and used a variety of research methods. NAQEZ, FACET, and GAYO used Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews.

SAYWHAT intended to take a similar approach, but experienced challenges accessing transnational actors. Initially, the challenges centred around limited access to SADC PF members. SAYWHAT tried to pivot and conduct research with Plan International, shifting the focus from the policy makers to the influencers. However, they experienced a number of obstacles, which were prohibitive to the ethos of this action research project. Namely, quick and simple research, with the potential for significant organisational learning and the adoption of adaptive management practices. The obstacles revolved around Plan International's need for more formal research procedures, such as ethics approval, which meant the organisation would have navigate lengthy government processes to start their research. Therefore, they utilised a desk review methodology.

## Conduct Action Research

After finalising the research frameworks, the GEAR Alliance moved into the next phase of the action research process. This began with MDF/ ACER conducting capacity assessments for each organisation within the Alliance, in order to develop a bespoke programme of learning. For the GEAR Alliance, this led to MDF/ ACER delivering capacity building sessions on qualitative data analysis and on interviewing elites, such as politicians. As part of the organisational capacity building, MDF/ ACER also facilitated regular reflection sessions, informal advice, and feedback on research approach, tools, and outputs. With this support, all members of the GEAR Alliance were able to conduct a action research project, which reportedly had a meaningful impact on their organisational learning and management practices. The full reports can be found in annex 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Once the research was finalised, a validation session was held. This took the form of an online workshop, in which the grantee and their key stakeholders rationalised the findings of the research, by reflecting on the outcomes and process of the research. The main findings for each organisation are as follows:

SAYWHAT

- Education has gradually improved in the SADC region.

- SADC states appear to adopt a similar narrative to education.

- Transnational organisations engage in education advocacy, but there are gaps in M&E of policies.

- Transnational organisation support the implementation of laws, which improve the quality of education.

- Transnational organisations provide frameworks, which CSOs can use to support their own advocacy efforts.

- Transnational organisations work in partnership with governments to improve policy and provision in education.

FACET

- The study highlighted a range of cultural practices, which have negative impact on girls' education.

- Some cultural practices remove girls' agency in education choices.

- Highlighted the need for more support for girls in school re-entry, following practices like child marriage or early pregnancy.

NAQEZ

- The majority of the girls in the study were not actively participating in the advocacy for girl's education.

- Girls generally are not aware of or have little to no information about advocacy.

- The girls in the study were willing to be involved in API and understood the roles they should play.

- The girls sampled unanimously agreed that their role in API is to sensitize their community to girl specific education needs and that this would be carried out mostly through community groups.

GAYO

- Bottom-up inclusive multi-stakeholder collaboration advocacy ensures participation of all developmental actors in advocating for policy change and implementation. It leaves no one behind in advocacy work and result in achievement of sustainable development.

- CSO collaboration and collective agreement reportedly increases the impact of advocacy.

- Involving local female leaders supports change and helps avoid 'counter mobilisation'.

The GEAR Alliance and their partners shared that the action research project and wider process had been highly beneficial to their work. All organisations spoke of a commitment to mainstream and integrate research into their business as usual activities. Previously, they were reluctant to conduct independent research as they were unsure of their ability to do so in an informed and systemic way. However, they felt they now have the skills to design small research projects, with the potential to have a significant positive impact on their organisation's API effectiveness.

Members of the GEAR Alliance also felt that the project had put them more in touch with the needs of the people they represent, as opposed to just fulfilling the requirements of donors. The projects allowed the organisations to analyse and understand their stakeholders better. This not only allowed them to speak to new and important voices for their work, but they are also now more able to prioritise different voices for the change they would like to see. Examples of new voices the organisations will continue to engage with include: men, who are significant stakeholders when it comes to child marriage and early drop outs, and local and/ or traditional leaders, who play an important role in influencing attitudes and behaviours. Furthermore, the project gave member organisations a new focus on outcomes and improved their ability to assess impact. For instance, SAYWHAT shared that they had stakeholders which reportedly worked and influenced at the transnational level. Now they have the skills to assess the validity of such claims.

The GEAR Alliance was unique amongst the case studies in this project, being the only OC3 grantee. This meant they were an international consortium, with members all working in different countries, using different API strategies and techniques, in addition to their work at the transnational level. This added a layer of complexity to the work and brought a number of challenges in supporting them through the Action Research and Learning Cycle, which organisations conducting similar work in the future may want to consider.

As outlined above, the GEAR Alliance members chose to conduct individual action research projects, as opposed to one project collectively as an alliance. MDF/ ACER supported this decision, to encourage ownership of the process and the outputs, and, in turn, the application of the findings in both the GEAR Alliance itself and the respective member organisations. In addition, for practical reasons it was more feasible for each member to work within their own areas of influence. Nevertheless, this meant there were limitations on MDF/ ACERs ability to provide tailored support to each individual organisation and research project. For example, all members of the alliance chose to share their research findings in formal, independent, research reports. If this was made clear from the beginning, we may have considered additional capacity building sessions highlighting different strategies and formats for sharing research findings, depending on organisational capacities, target audience, or purpose.

Supporting four separate projects under one umbrella, as opposed to one, also has management and communication implications. MDF/ ACER found that to ensure effective communication and project management over a sustained period, it is important to explore communication expectations with partners and preferred modalities, and regularly review the chosen approach to ensure it remains appropriate. In this instance, WhatsApp was the preferred modality for general communications. However, anything 'official' or 'formal', was sent over email. MDF/ ACER also found it useful to rely on the pre-existing management structures in the GEAR Alliance to help coordinate the group, where SAYWHAT took on a leading role and provided MDF/ ACER with much support. The implications of this meant that the communication was complex and resource-consuming, which may have had an impact on the level of support that was possible to offer.

The OC3 nature of the GEAR Alliance case study also provides lessons for similar action research projects working at the transnational level. As was noted in the methods section, SAYWHAT found there were a number of barriers to conducting research with transnational actors. Therefore, it is important for organisations looking to engage in similar research to fully consider the access they have and test this early in the process. Whilst the MDF/ ACER action research and learning cycle methodology in no way encourages organisations to take a less robust or ethical approach to research, a key part of ethos is that the research should be low effort, high insight. This means that lengthy administrative tasks, such as formal ethics approval from government bodies, should be minimised. This is because action research is an iterative process, meaning once one cycle is complete, organisations should be looking to build on the learnings and start another cycle of research. Time consuming administrative tasks will become burdensome and a barrier to the organisation becoming a 'learning

organisation'. Consequently, if access proves to be challenging to enable data collection for the chosen research topic, the organisation should consider alternative methods that will enable similar capture of information and adapt their research focus accordingly.

# Approach to API

The GEAR Alliance is a transnational consortium with a focus on youth led advocacy. The consortium organisations are unique in their contexts, with national presence and a strong understanding of local context and issues. As discussed, the GEAR Alliance itself focuses on holding national governments accountable to the education commitments in the international treaties they have signed. It does this in a variety of ways, with a significant focus capacity building for their partners API skills. For example, they shared that the alliance facilitated a session on education finance by ActionAid for CSOs in their network. In addition to supporting education advocacy in the region, this knowledge cascading has worked to strengthen the GEAR Alliance's members position and reputation within their respective contexts. This is in turn has improved their ability to conduct API activities effectively. In addition to the training, each member organisation implements a range of API activities in their country. As part of this study the GEAR Alliance and their partners shared some examples of these activities. A number of the main examples are shared below.

## Tripartite Advocacy Strategy

The 'tripartite' advocacy strategy comes from Malawi. Essentially, this strategy ensures a flow of grassroots evidence into the organisation's national API strategy and helps connect local actors with national decision makers. They start by engaging the community level structures. This includes school management committees, child protection committees, the Community Development Committee, the disaster committee, and chiefs, with a particular emphasis on the latter group. They discuss the challenges faced by young girls in the specific community they are engaging with. This may include issues such as early pregnancy and child marriage. This provides opportunities for reflections by key stakeholders on how the government is delivering their services and what can be improved. These reflections provide the CSO with a nuanced understanding of policy implementation and are fed back into policy work at the national level. Representatives from the community are also encouraged to participate in the CSOs engagement activities at the national level, facilitating the connection of different power structures and levels of society. The organisation shared an example of local level input on the issue of girl dropouts. The tripartite approach gave them a platform, which they used to provide passionate input to the parliamentarian. The parliamentarians in turn felt it was great feedback, and it led to them championing these issues. Furthermore, this approach has also worked to validate the evidence the CSO presents to decision makers at the national level, further enhancing the effectiveness of their API activities.

## CSO Collaboration for API

The GEAR Alliance is built on collaboration between international organisations with aligned interests. During the research process, the organisations shared numerous examples where this type of collaboration had also proved successful for API at the national level. Two particularly impactful examples from NAQEZ and their Zambian partners are highlighted below:

Firstly, a pre-budget forum. NAQEZ shared that they bring together a number of key stakeholders and CSOs to review the government's forthcoming budget and identify any gaps and, crucially, any associated solutions. In a previous pre-budget forum, they shared they had identified the issue of low education budgets, with the education budget standing at roughly 11% of the total. The forum collaboratively produced a position paper highlighting the issue, with particular reference to the SADC commitments of a 20% of total expenditure threshold for education, which has been agreed to by all member states. This collaborative action reportedly produced a budget increase, up to 13.9% of total government expenditure.

Secondly, NAQEZ work closely with the Zambian Teachers Forum and the Chibombo Child Development Agency to maximise their respective positions and collect grassroots evidence and priorities, and feed them into their broader national strategy and awareness campaigns. This presents a novel approach to data collection for advocacy and builds on the fact that teachers are the main contact with the children NAQEZ is trying to support. This approach allows teachers to provide data on enrolment, dropouts, and girls challenges. Previous girls' education challenges identified using this method include, dropouts due to early pregnancy, child marriage, and the commuting distance to school. Unfortunately, this approach does not enable them to get information on learners from all localities, especially some rural and more remote areas. However, the information they do receive allows them to extrapolate the findings and build up a broader picture on the state of education in the country. This allows them to circumvent the chronic issue of poor publicly available data in the country. Their association with EOL has supported them in this process, helping them further define the data they should be collecting. Furthermore, the organisation noted that the capacity building workshops held by MDF/ ACER on data analysis had also improved their ability to work with data they collect.

## Conferences

A number of organisations in the GEAR Alliance noted that they found conferences to be a good way to engage youth in API. For example, SAYWHAT holds an annual national students conference, where students from all institutions meet policy makers and key service providers, to discuss key policy gaps.

## Advocacy through Social Media

The GEAR Alliance shared a number of examples of incorporating media into the API strategies. This includes:

- Representatives from the CSOs or youths interviewing politicians on radio or TV.
- Debates held on TV or radio. These can take a variety of forms, for example the United Kingdom parliamentary style was cited, and between a variety of people, for instance, between youth parliamentarians and local leaders.
- Press statements. There was some evidence to suggest politicians and policy makers responded well to these. However, like in other API strategies, contextually appropriate messaging is key.

One particularly innovative strategy comes from GAYO, where they use social media campaigns to engage youth. To do this, they identify the most popular social media influencers in a particular area and get them to promote key messages on girls' education as defined by GAYO. This is seen as an important awareness tool and reportedly supports changing attitudes amongst key gatekeepers as they realise the benefits of sending girls to school and the harms associated with not. In practice, they take the influencers into villages, where girls education challenges are high. The influencer acts as a crowd puller, and then they share their platform with women who have been identified as higher achievers, such as legislators and high-ranking military officials. These women then share their inspirational messages. Whilst this strategy has shown evidence of effectiveness, there are some limitations to this influencer driven approach to API. Namely, the CSO highlighted that there are some instances of girls dropping out of school, because there has not been an event like this held in their village yet, and they want one.

*Figure 7: GAYO Social Media Campaign Post Example*



## Voluntary National Reviews

A number of the organisations in the GEAR Alliance participated in voluntary national reviews, a process assessing national progress against the Sustainable Development Goals. This is completed in partnership with other CSOs and international organisations, and is led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). As part of this process, a range of documentation is produced, which is submitted to the government at the end. This was highlighted as an effective accountability tool, which produced positive policy change. For example, FACET noted that following submission of the voluntary national review documents to the Zimbabwean government, the allocation and distribution of budget for marginalised girls increased and a menstrual hygiene management programme was expanded. FACET shared they built on the voluntary national reviews, by doing voluntary local reviews. They would work with grassroot level stakeholders to look at the gaps in each and every policy that has impact on education, with a particular focus on access to education for the people from marginalised communities. FACET coordinates this process and produces a report that is designed to feed into the Voluntary National Review report.

## Policy Dialogues

The members of the GEAR Alliance all engage in policy dialogue with their respective governments. This is seen as an effective way to conduct API in East Africa. The direct engagement is carried in a multiple different ways depending on the sensitivity of the issue. For example, GEAR Alliance members may have private meetings with policy makers to settle on collective positions of issues, which allows the organisations to speak with one voice. In other instances, the organisations may publicly present evidence to policy makers, via the media or official forums, like the parliamentary select committee on education, in order to influence change. The organisations highlighted a number of tools and strategies to support this dialogue. These include:

| Letters to officials: | These letters are sent to key influencers, such as, ministers of education, chair of the teaching service commission, and permanent secretaries, and are designed to raise awareness on key issues, ask for progress updates, or request the government's position on an issue. Unfortunately, insights gained from the wider study suggest that direct letters are not the effective method of API, and government responses are generally vague and do not address the topic raised. As such, they should be reserved for important issues and used in conjunction with other API techniques to maximise impact. Another example |
|---|---|
| Policy briefs/ position papers: | All grantees on EOL are required to develop documents like this. The documents are seen as effective tools to maintain ongoing dialogue with parliamentarians on key issues. There is some evidence to suggest that when CSOs collaborate with each other and develop collective positions on key issues, it increases the impact of such documents. |

# Regional Learning Event

Having concluded the action-research and validated the action-research findings, MDF/ACER and the RMU HESA designed and facilitated a knowledge and experience sharing Learning Event/Workshop on November 9. The purpose was to share the action-research outcomes and learning with a cross section of EOL grantees in the HESA region with similar EOL funded projects focus.
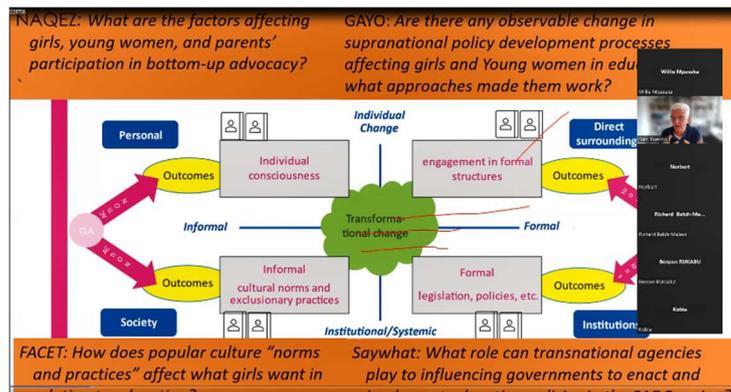


The learning event was intended to support EOL grantee participants to reflect on their practices. Furthermore, the event was designed to enable grantees in the WCA region who did not participate in the action-research and learning process to learn from the main stages in the action-research and learning process and connect these to their own reality in API for Inclusive Education.

A total of around 25 participants attended the learning event. The participants were drawn from other EOL grantees from across the HESA region.

Objectives:

1. Make EOL grantees in the HESA region enthusiastic about learning for API, making use of the SCM
2. Reflect on the usefulness of ToC thinking and action research.
3. Inspire EOL grantees to reflect on and research their own ToC "assumptions".
4. Inspire EOL grantees to think about "what it takes to change" and implement adaptive management (linked to action research)

## Methodology

The workshop was held online to facilitate the participation of representatives of different organisations from across the HESA region. After a presentation on the overall approach of the MDF/ ACER action research cycle, the consortium members presented their findings. Following this, group reflections took place based on "trigger statements". This workshop modality ensured reflections on the various API contexts and that participant voices were heard and included in the discussion. The agenda for the learning event can be seen in appendix 1.

## Reflections

The event was well received. The grantees were given a platform to share the journey they undertook with MDF/ ACER, its impact, and the findings of the research. As part of this process, participants were afforded a range of opportunities in which they could liken their own experiences to that of the GEAR Alliance. These opportunities demonstrated that their experiences were comparable and the action research and learning cycle was relevant to them.

# Conclusion

The overall objective of the research was to investigate, review and learn from the members of the GEAR Alliance and their partners' education API efforts, with the aim to identify strategies and practices that have shown to be effective in instigating change at local, regional and education system levels, and shed some light on the conditions that have contributed to their effectiveness.



The process started by the GEAR Alliance formulating their research questions and developing their research framework and research tools. The SCM was used to review the ToC and ToC assumptions, which was the main input for formulating the key research questions. The GEAR Alliance implemented the research by integrating it in their planned research activities. After the research was concluded, ACER/ MDF facilitated a ToC validation workshop with the GEAR Alliance to reflect on the ToC/ SCM and check the assumptions. The ToC/ SCM was updated and refined at this stage.

All members of the GEAR Alliance produced a piece of research, the findings of which allowed them to make adaptations and improvements to their API activities. Nevertheless, additional follow-up research will be needed to understand the longer-term impact of the project, particularly in relation to adaptive management practices.

As a final step in the process, an online workshop was co-facilitated by the GEAR Alliance and MDF/ ACER to share the findings with the GEAR Alliance's CSO network partners and East African-based EOL grantees.

The next steps are for EOL grantees and sub-grantees (CSO network) to find common ground and have aligned their agendas with regards to advocacy for inclusive primary education.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Regional Learning Event Agenda

| | |
|---|---|
| 09.00 | Introduction |
| 09.15 | What is the Social Change Matrix<br>The action research process + key research questions (linked to the SCM) |
| 09.30 | Key lessons learned – NAQEZ (Zambia)<br>Research Question: *What are the factors affecting girls, young women, and parents' participation in bottom-up advocacy?* |
| 10.15 | Small break |
| 10.20 | Key lessons learned and implications – GAYO (Malawi)<br>Research Question: *Are there any observable change in supranational policy development processes affecting girls and Young women in education and what approaches made them work?* |
| 11.05 | Small break |
| 11.10 | Key lessons learned and implications – FACET (Zimbabwe):<br>Research Question: *How does popular culture "norms and practices" affect what girls want in relation to education?* |
| 11.55 | Small Break |
| 12.00 | Key lessons learned and implications – SAYWHAT (Zimbabwe):<br>Research Question: *What role can transnational agencies play to influencing governments to enact and implement education policies in the SADC region?* |
| 12.45 | What do other EOL grantees want to (action) research? |
| 13.00 | Closure |

# Annex

## Annex 1: GEAR Alliance Research Framework

### Action research on:

The main objective of the research is to investigate, review and learn from grantees' education API efforts. The aim is to identify strategies and practices that have shown to be effective in instigating change at local, regional and education system levels, and shed some light on the conditions that have contributed to their effectiveness.

### Background

At the beginning of 2023, MDF/ACER in consultation with Regional Management Unit (RMU) proposed to the Girls Education Advocacy in the Region (GEAR) alliance, to participate as MDF/ACER case studies research into EOL Advocacy approaches. GEAR is made up of four core organizations: Students And Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT) in Zimbabwe; Farming Communities Educational Trust (FACET) in Zimbabwe; Girls Activist Youth Organization (GAYO) in Malawi; And National Action for Quality Education (NAQEZ) in Zambia. SAYWHAT is the lead organization within the alliance and the main contact. Part of the case study involves GEAR conducting an action research within their GEAR project. This support, as part of Education Out Loud's global learning partner initiative, envisions helping grantees like GEAR to achieve their project's outcomes more efficiently while also generating knowledge on education advocacy and policy influencing (API). The action research will concentrate on how civil society organizations (CSOs) engage in API to improve equitable learning outcomes, particularly in relation to gender, intersectionality, and social inclusion.

After two virtual meetings and a series of email communication, GEAR agreed to participate in the research. As part of it, MDF/ACER facilitated two workshops in January and February 2023 with the researchers and project management team at GEAR to contextualize the social change matrix for GEAR project and explore the potential research questions. This document is produced as the next step to further elaborate the methodology including research questions, objectives and scope of the action research.

### Objectives and research questions

The core objective of the action research is to identify the conditions under which citizen groups can influence government responsiveness; and which citizen-government interfaces are most effective, and why. Due to the nature of GEAR, the research aims are diverse, with each member of the alliance outlining one question to explore. The following four Research Questions are identified:

GAYO - Malawi:

1. Are there any observable changes in supranational policy development processes affecting girls and Young women in education and what approaches made them work?

NAQEZ - Zambia:

2. What is the role and willingness of parents, girls, and young women to participate in advocating for change using bottom-up approaches?

SAYWHAT - Zimbabwe:

3. What is the role of transnational agencies in national policy development?

FACET – Zimbabwe:

4. How does popular culture "norms and practices" affect what girls want in relation to education?

## Scope

The proposed action research seeks to align with the scheduled activities and priorities of the GEAR project and aims to support the project in achieving its objectives. As each partner will explore its own research question, the scope will necessarily be broad. However, each partner will only take on a relatively small research project, which is focused on specific geography or entity. Furthermore, the target sample sizes will also be accordingly limited. Partners in the GEAR alliance will gather data and information on the stated Research Questions in the following ways:

GAYO (Malawi) will take a mixed-method approach to address their research question. It will use a purposeful sampling method, selecting those individuals who were involved in the implementation of policies. They aim for a sample size of 55 for the qualitative data collection, which will collected via key informant interview and focus groups, and 100 for quantitative data, which will be collected via an online survey.

Stakeholders

- Policy implementors

NAQEZ (Zambia) will take a mixed method approach to address their research question, which will be cross-sectional in its design and observational in nature. It will conduct focus groups with community members in Chibombo and Kafue, aiming to achieve a sample size of 60.

Regions

- Chibombo
- Kafue

Stakeholders

- Girls and young women from rural communities between 15 and 35 years old.
- Parents belonging to a school PTA
- Head men
- Civic leaders
- Guidance and counselling leaders

SAYWHAT (Zimbabwe) will take a case study approach to address their research question. This will allow them to focus on a specific transnational agency representing girls and young women. The data will be collected via online and in-person interviews and a document analysis of primary and secondary sources (newspapers, articles, and official records).

Regions

- National/ Transnational

Stakeholders

- Government representatives
- Girls and young women
- Staff
- Coalition members
- CSOs

FACET (Zimbabwe) will take a mixed method approach to address their research question, involving qualitative and quantitative data collection. They will utilize a KAP (knowledge, attitudes, and

practices) survey, Questionnaire interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD's) and Key Informant Interviews. They will also develop a case study of one central Mashonaland district.

Regions

- Central Mashonaland

Stakeholders

- School youths and young women
- Out of school youth and young women
- Parents
- Professionals and Stakeholders from MoPSE and other ministries
- NGO staff
- CBO staff

## Methodology

Aligned with the core objective, this action research will encompass different data collection methods for four Research Questions. Briefly- the timeline, method and research participants are summarized in the following table.

| Research Questions | Time | Method of data collection | Research participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (GAYO) | June/ July | Focus group discussions | Affected learners Senior community leaders Boundary partners – Key representatives from 30 CSO boundary partners |
| | | Key informant interviews | Government Officials – Representatives from parliamentary committees, the ministry of education's district official and technical working group, and teacher union. |
| | | Online survey | Policy implementers at national, district, local and regional levels |
| 2 (NAQEZ) | June/ July | Focus group discussions | Community members |
| | | Key Informant Interviews | Head teachers, community leaders |
| 3 (SAYWHAT) | June/ July | Documents analysis | Newspapers, articles, and official records |
| | | Online and in-person in-depth interviews | Government representatives, girls and young women (target group), coalition members, representatives from transnational agencies |
| 4 (FACET) | June/ July | Focus group discussions | In school youths and young women, out of school youths and young women, parents (including youths), professionals and stakeholders from MoPSE and other ministries, NGOs, and CBOs. |
| | | Key informant interviews | 'People who know what is happening in the community', such as, community leaders, religious leaders, community members stakeholders, professionals and beneficiaries with firsthand information |

**Data collection methods**

Each partner in the GEAR alliance will take a different approach to collect the data to explore their research questions.

GAYO (Malawi) will take a mixed-method approach to examine whether there has been any observable change in supranational policy development processes affecting girls and young women in education. It will use a purposeful sampling method, selecting those individuals who were involved in the implementation of policies. They aim for a sample size of 55 for the qualitative data collection, which will be collected via key informant interview and focus groups, and 100 for quantitative data, which will be collected via an online survey. The focus groups will aim to reach affected learners (n=15), senior community leaders (n=10), and key representatives from 30 CSO boundary partners (n=20). The key informant interviews will aim to reach representatives from parliamentary committees (n=2), the ministry of education's district official and technical working group (n=6), and teacher union (n=2). The online survey will target policy implementers at national, district, local and regional levels (n=100).

NAQEZ (Zambia) will take a qualitative approach to explore how parents, girls and young women understand their role in bottom-up advocacy. This will be cross-sectional in its design and observational in nature. They will collect data via four focus group discussions with community members, which includes girls, young women, and parents. The four sessions will consist of three focus group discussions in Chibombo (n=15 girls and young women and n=10 parents) and three in Kafue (n=15 girls and young women and n=10 parents). They will also conduct five key informant interviews with community leaders (headmen, civic leaders, head teachers, church leaders, guidance teachers) in each district. The overall target sample size is 60. The methods used for the focus group discussions will include structured and semi structured interview guides and questionnaires.

SAYWHAT (Zimbabwe) will take a case study approach to further understand the role of transnational agencies in national policy development. The data will be collected via online and in-person key informant interviews and document analysis. These will target government representatives, girls and young women, coalition members, and representatives from transnational agencies. The document analysis will include primary and secondary sources, including newspapers, articles, and official records.

FACET (Zimbabwe) will take a mixed method approach to investigate how popular cultural 'norms and pactices' affect what girls want in reltation to education. This will involve qualitative and quantitative data collection. They will utilize a KAP (knowledge, attitudes, and practices) survey, Questionnaire interviews, Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews. There will be three focus group discussions, with between six and ten participants. Group one will consist of in school youths and young women, group two will focus on out of school youths and young women, and group three will consist of parents (including youths), professionals and stakeholders from MoPSE and other ministries, NGOs, and CBOs. For the key informant interview, in-depth interviews will be conducted with people who know what is happening in the community. For example, community leaders, religious leaders, community members stakeholders, and professionals and beneficiaries with firsthand information.

**Research participants**

The respondents for the action research will be mostly recruited from a list of participants of activities/events of GEAR project.

## Timeline

The activities related to Research Questions will be carried out in the following timeline:

| Activities | March | April | May | June | July |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Finalize Research Design | | | | | |
| Instrument Development | | | | | |
| Data Collection | | | | | |
| Data Analysis | | | | | |
| Validation workshop and ToC revision | | | | | |
| Report | | | | | |

## Conclusion and next steps

Through this research partnership, the GEAR Alliance will be able to leverage the expertise and resources of MDF and ACER to systematically investigate their project, identify areas for improvement, and optimize the project's implementation. Moreover, the partnership will contribute to the advancement of knowledge and best practices in education advocacy and policy influencing (API), which will have broader implications for the field of education and development.

The next steps are for this action research, in combination with some key document reviews and a few additional consultations with partners, to contribute to an overall understanding of the GEAR Alliance work.  A case study report will be produced, highlighting the key findings from this research. Based on the findings, strategies will be developed on how to use the produced knowledge during the implementation of the GEAR Alliance project. These strategies may include changes to project activities, modifications to the approach towards API, and targeted advocacy efforts aimed at policymakers and other stakeholders. Ultimately, the goal is to optimize the GEAR Alliance project's implementation and generate new knowledge and best practices for education API.

# The Role of Transnational Agencies in Influencing Education Policies in the SADC region: A Case of UNESCO and Plan International

**The Role of Transnational Agencies in Influencing Education Policies in the SADC region: A Case of UNESCO and Plan International**

A publication of


SAYWHAT


24 Jefferson Road, Logan Park, Hatfield, Harare, Zimbabwe


Cell: +263 772 819 786 / Tel +263 (0) 4 571184

Email: saywhat@mweb.zo.zw/ www.saywhat.org.zw


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Harare


Written by

Rodney Sibanda

with edits from Alexander Towne, Vita Hwenjere, and Jimmy Wilford

## ABSTRACT

The implementation of education policy reforms in the Southern Africa region has been met with limited progress despite efforts by various civic groups and transnational agencies. While the education sector has undergone policy changes, the region is not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of providing universal and equitable education by 2030 due to the neglect of other critical policies. This study proposes that transnational agencies should take an active role in ensuring all individuals have access to equitable, high-quality education and lifelong opportunities. Transnational agencies are important allies in holding states accountable and influencing the leaders to implement policies that promote education. This study employed a qualitative desk-based research methodology to investigate educational literature and recommendations in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region and internationally. Further, the study made use of multiple-case research studies where UNESCO and Plan International serve as case studies. The major findings reveal that inequity remains a key issue in education. The education sector in the SADC region is governed by a robust framework of policies and initiatives. However, the implementation of these policies appears to lack effective monitoring and review, leading to gaps, inconsistencies, and uncertainties. As a result, navigating the policy environment has become a challenging task. To address this issue, it is recommended that citizens through civic groups hold governments accountable for their actions. Furthermore, transnational agencies can play a crucial role in improving the education sector in the region by providing support and guidance to governments, leading to better implementation of policies and initiatives. Overall, a more comprehensive and accountable approach is needed to ensure that the education sector in the SADC region is effective and efficient.

**Keywords:** Transnational Agencies, Influencing, Education Policies, Southern Africa

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACRWC | African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child |
| AU | Africa Union |
| AHF | Africa Hope Fund |
| CALA | Continuous Assessment of Learning Activities |
| CAMFED | Campaign for Female Education |
| CDF | Constituency Development Fund |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DBE | Department of Basic Education |
| DEAP | Digital Education Action Plan |
| ECD | Early Childhood Development |
| ECOZI | Education Coalition of Zimbabwe |
| ESSP | Education Sector Strategic Plan |
| EU | European Commission |
| GPE | Global Partner for Education |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| SADC PF | SADC Parliamentary Forum |
| MEESA | Middle East, Eastern and Southern Africa |
| MoPSE | Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| NELP | National Early Learning Policy |
| SDG | Sustainable Developments Goals |
| PTA | Parent Teacher Associations |
| SECMEQ | Southern and Eastern Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality |
| TVET | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UN | United Nations |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| UNGEI | UN Girls Education |
| WVZ | World Vision Zimbabwe |
| ZANEC | Zambia National Education Coalition |
| ZINECDA | Zimbabwe Network of Early Childhood Development Actors |

**DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

**Transnational agencies** – refer to international organizations that "transcend" the idea of a nation-state. They operate beyond national boundaries with the support of at least one nation (Guffey, 2015).

**Education policies** - A set of guidelines or rules that aims at improving the quality of education and the performance of teachers at schools, colleges, and universities. Consists of the principles and policy decisions that influence the field of education.

**Policy-** A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual.

**Implementation** – Refers to the early usage activities immediately following the decision to adopt an innovation and ending when the use of an innovation becomes routine practice (Meyers and Nakata, 1999).

**Policy reform -** A process in which changes are made to the formal "rules of the game" – including laws, regulations and institutions – to address a problem or achieve a goal such as economic growth, environmental protection or poverty alleviation

**SADC**- The Southern African Development Community is a Regional Economic Community comprising 16 Member States. The main objectives of SADC are to achieve economic development, peace and security, and growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa, and support the socially disadvantaged through Regional Integration.

**State** - A state is a community formed by people and exercising permanent power within a specified territory

**Government –** The political system by which a country or community is administered and regulated.

**Influence -** The capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behaviour of someone or something, or the effect itself.

**INTRODUCTION**

Despite considerable efforts and developments by different states in introducing policy and education provisions in the Southern African region, there is limited progress that have been made in terms of policy implementation which promote education. While the number of children excluded from education has been halved since 2000 and significant progress has been made in achieving education for all, 258 million children and adolescents today are still out of school (UNESCO, 2018). For almost a decade, this number has not decreased. Further, about 20% of children in Sub-Saharan Africa will still be excluded from school in 2030. According to data from the Southern and Eastern Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ, 2022), it is appalling to learn that less than 10% of children in Malawian schools achieve the basic targets whereas in Mauritius, it is over 70%, showing wide variations in achievements. Therefore, a lot still needs to be done by transnational agencies in terms of advocating for education policy reforms for states to enact and implement policies that promote access to education for all. Cherkaoui (2020) concurs with this and argues that more needs to be done to ensure secondary education is supported all the way through.

Transnational agencies are entities that operate beyond national boundaries with the support of at least one nation (Guffey, 2015). These agencies play a significant role in influencing national government actions in various fields including policy development and implementation among others. They exert political, and economic power and engage with influencing the politics of nations. These organizations do not have a specific country of origin but are representative of sovereign member states. According to Kern et al (2019), transnational agencies are also important players in the diffusion of management ideas, knowledge, and norms across borders because of pressures to standardize practices as much as possible, while adapting to local differences as much as necessary.

Rightly turning to SADC, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is an international intergovernmental organization comprised of 16 countries in Southern Africa. The member states are Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The organization defines its overall aim as to achieve regional integration and eradicate poverty within the Southern African region. To achieve its goals and ensure collaboration, SADC uses amongst other instruments Protocols, which enshrine the aims of the Community by providing codes of procedure and practise on various issues, as agreed by Member States. A Protocol is a legally binding document committing member states to the objectives and specific procedures stated within it. With the ratification of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training in 2000, member states acknowledged that whilst each member state has its own policies for education and training this can be facilitated more effectively by the development of harmonised and eventually standardised policies regarding education and training which guides the SADC Education and Skills Development Programme which facilitates and coordinates the harmonisation and implementation of regional policies to ensure access to relevant and quality education and training in the SADC region. The Protocol acknowledges that no SADC member state can alone offer the full range of world quality education and training programmes at affordable costs and on a sustainable basis and issues a call for collaboration to address systemic and historical challenges.

**EDUCATION IN THE SADC REGION**

Education has been broadly advocated as a crucial pillar of the human capital improvement of any society across the globe (Al-Shuaibi, 2014). It is a human right and a means for realizing and promoting other human rights. It is not only seen as a fundamental right for all gender but a country-wide and global priority (Lee, 2013). Resultantly transnational agencies continue to push for educational policy reforms. They play a significant role in influencing national governments to implement laws that advance education in different states world-wide. Nearly all member states of the United Nations have followed the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) that seek to ensure free and equitable education by 2030. SDG 4 aims to ensure access to equitable, free, quality education for all children and adults and to promote opportunities for lifelong. SDGs also call for the construction and improvement of schools with the aim to increase the number of qualified teachers and to eliminate gender inequalities in education.

Free secondary education is on the rise in Africa as different nation-states are making deliberate moves to promote education. For instance, research show that in Ghana, the government is constitutionally obliged to provide free access to education. Article 26(a) of the 1992 Ghanaian Constitution explicitly states that 'basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all'. Hence, successive governments have, in diverse ways, demonstrated commitment to making basic education free through the institution of a capitation grant, introduction of a school feeding programme, and supply of free textbooks and free uniforms. According to Walubengo (2022), the free education policy in Ghana enables people to get primary, junior high school, and senior high school education. He further notes that 1.6 million youth have benefitted from the Free Senior High School (SHS) policy. Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest rate of primary school enrolment in the world, with 34 million primary age children living in the region not in school. Without access to education, these children mature without many options for their future, allowing the cycle of poverty to continue in countries such as Ghana, Gambia and the Congo. In response to this, several organizations have put forth different efforts to deliver quality education where little is available.

Concerning Southern Africa, transnational organizations have made quite a substantial impact in the promotion of education in the SADC region. Numerous countries in Southern Africa have implemented progressive policies and legislation to advance education. One prominent example is Zambia, where Hakainde Hichilema's leadership introduced the Free Education Policy in 2022. This initiative has resulted in increased enrolment of children in schools, achieved through the elimination of primary and secondary school fees (Zenda, 2022). Setting aside a budget of 18.1 Zambian Kwacha (about $1 billion) for the education sector, the Zambian government announced the abolishment of Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), examination and tuition fees in all government schools. It also announced the recruitment of 30,000 additional teachers and plans to build 120 new secondary schools in order to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio (Zenda, 2022).

Additionally, Zenda (2022) notes that the government also made additional funds available through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) to bring relief to children from families suffering from extreme poverty - money that would allow children from remote areas to attend boarding schools as well as get such personal items like uniforms and school shoes.

Furthermore, national CSOs groups in Zambia also play a pivotal role in advancing the education and contributing to the efforts of the government. A case in point is that of the Africa Hope Fund (AHF) which is dedicated to provide education for students in Zambia. According to Dugan (2017), AHF has been providing free, quality education in Africa since 2009. AHF works on several different fronts such as sponsoring poor children to attend secondary school in Zambia, or issuing funding to build new classrooms, libraries and deliver school supplies across the continent.



**Source: zimlive.com (Ruzvidzo, 2023)**

The narrative is quite different in Zimbabwe. The image above shows pupils in a rural area set up in Zimbabwe learning without classrooms. According to Ruzvidzo (2023), pupils in rural schools continue to face myriad challenges which include lack of learning facilities and qualified teachers. At the same time, a privileged few are able to study in comfortable, well-resourced and safe learning environments. The Department of Basic Education's (DBE, 2015) highlight these disparities. 8 years on, thousands of school children still learn in unsafe learning conditions and others still learn in non-existent classroom set-ups. This is so despite Zimbabwe being a signatory of different regional and international frameworks that advocate for quality education for all. Poor policy implementation has significantly contributed to this (Fambasayi, 2020).

**EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

The issue of educational disparities and the implementation of policies by states has garnered significant scholarly attention. While some scholars contend that policies often remain unimplemented, others posit that this may be attributed to factors such as incompetence, corruption, and poor governance. This section presents several written works that offer insights into education advocacy and policies enacted by various states in Africa and the SADC region.

Musau (2018) has it that at the dawn of independence, incoming African leaders were quick to prioritize education on their development agendas. As rightly suggested by these leaders, attaining universal primary education would help post-independence Africa lift itself out of abject poverty. As governments began to build schools and post teachers even to the farthest corners of the continent, with help from religious organizations and other partners, children began to fill the classrooms and basic education was under way. This assertion is corroborated by Gakusi (2008) who forwarded that during the 1960s and 1970s, African education expanded steadily, prompted by high priority given to education by the newly independent governments, donors, parents and children. This was different to the situation prior 1960 where there was marginal access to school. Masau (2018) further noted that as of 2019, Africa's current primary school enrolment rate is above 80% on average, with the continent recording some of the biggest increases in elementary school enrolment globally in the last few decades, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which is tasked with coordinating international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication. More children in Africa are going to school than ever before.

| COUNTRY | POLICY & LEGAL FRAMEWORK | INSTITUTIONAL FRAMWORK |
|---|---|---|
| Kenya | <ul><li>The Basic Education Act No. 14 of 2013</li><li>The National School Health Policy of 2009</li><li>The National Pre-Primary Education Policy</li><li>The Basic Education Regulations of 2015 and the 100% transition policy.</li><li>The National ICT Policy in Education and Training of 2019.</li><li>National Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018-2022.</li></ul> | Ministry of Education |
| Tanzania | <ul><li>Educational Reform Act of 1962</li><li>Education for Self-Reliance Policy of 1967</li><li>Universal Primary Education policy of 1974</li><li>Basic Education Master Plan Policy of 1997</li><li>National Higher Education Policy of 1999</li><li>ICT Policy for Basic Education of 2007</li><li>Education and Training Policy of 2014</li></ul> | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. |
| Rwanda | <ul><li>The Free Education Policy of 2003</li><li>The Information Communication and Technology (ICT) in education policy of 2016.</li><li>The National Science, Technology and innovation policy of 2013/14.</li></ul> | Ministry of Education |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • Teacher Development and Management policy of 2016.<br>• Early Childhood Development Policy of 2016.<br>• The Education Sector Strategy Plan (2018/19-2023-24). | |
| Malawi | • The National Educational Policy of 2013<br>• Free Primary Education Policy<br>• National Education Act of 2013 | Ministry of Education |
| Zambia | • National Education Policy of 1996<br>• Free Primary Education (FPE) policy<br>• The Re-entry Policy<br>• Education and Skills Development chapter of the 7th National.<br>• Development Plan (SNDP, 2017–2021) | Ministry of General Education |
| Zimbabwe | • The Education Amendment Act, 2019.<br>• The Education Act of 2006.<br>• Education Sector Strategic Plan 2016-2020.<br>• The Non-Formal Education Policy<br>• The ECD Statutory Instruments/ Policy of 2004.<br>• School Feeding Policy.<br>• Teaching Profession Management and Quality Assurance Policy (currently under review).<br>• The School Financing Policy.<br>• Circular Minute No. P35 (1999).<br>• Strategies for the Equitable Provision of Inclusive Continuous.<br>• Quality Teaching and Learning at All Times Including During Emergencies (2021). | The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education |

**Table 1: National and Institutional Frameworks in some African countries across the MEESA Region**

According to a study conducted by Plan International, countries in the East African Community recorded the highest growth rates in national policy and institutional frameworks around education sector. The table above demonstrates national-level policy and institutional frameworks guiding the realization of the right to education within the Middle East, Eastern and Southern Africa (MEESA) Region. As shown above, countries in the East Africa are comparatively doing well in terms of educational policy enactment than those in the Southern Africa. For instance, the Kenyan government through its Ministry of Education has enacted and implemented several laws showing its dedication towards education. Kenya is committed to becoming a newly industrialized nation by 2030 and acknowledges that quality education is vital to achieving this vision. A good example which shows the government's commitment is

the rigorous, government owned National Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018–2022. This move was praised by development partners and civil society for moving Kenya in a positive direction, and making effort to address challenges such as governance and accountability.

According to the Kenya-Country Commercial Guide (2023), the government of Kenya continues to place a high priority on education in its budgetary allocation, in line with its mandate of ensuring every Kenyan citizen is literate and able to access basic education. Pursuant to the 20% Dakar Commitment on Education for All by the African Union, in the 2020-2021 national budget announcement, the education sector was allocated KSh 497.7 billion ($4.4 billion) which is 26.7% of the national budget.  Of this, KSh 59.4 billion ($524.8 million) was allocated for free secondary education and KSh 12.4 billion ($109.6 million) for free primary school education. This improvement in the Kenyan education system has been also necessitated by its partnership with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) which has existed since 2005. Civic groups like the Aga Khan Foundation are also playing a fundamental role through advocacy efforts in influencing the Kenyan government to implement favourable education policies.

In Southern Africa, Zimbabwe has arguably done well in promoting education, thanks to transnational agencies who continue to play an instrumental role in education advocacy. In May 2019, Human Rights Watch wrote an open letter to Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga, the then chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Education to ensure that it guaranteed equal realization of the right to education for all in Zimbabwe and comply with international human rights standards (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The government responded through crafting the Education Amendment Act which came into effect in May 2020. This Act sought to amend the Education Act (Chapter 25:05) by bringing in line with the constitutional provision on education and international practice as stipulated in the African Charter and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Mutongwiza, 2022). This Act addresses issues pertinent to girls and education including the prohibition of expelling pregnant girls from school, free and compulsory education and sexual and reproductive health issues. A new section was added to the Principal Act, section 68C, which states that no child shall be excluded from school on the basis of pregnancy. By this, pregnancy cannot affect the decision to admit, suspend, or expel a girl. This was applauded by many people as it promotes the prevalence of girls dropping out of school because pregnancy. Fambasayi (2020) forwarded that a 2019 report by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education noted the prevalence of school dropouts as a result of pregnancy or early marriages. Therefore, the Act has seen many pregnant girls attending schools thereby ensuring everyone has access to education. National civic groups who played a pivotal role in the amendment of the Education Act include the World Vision Zimbabwe (WVZ), and the Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) who participated in the policy consultation during the process of amending the Education Act and put forward petitions through to improve the situation of pregnant girls.

Moreover, under the 2022 national budget the Zimbabwe's Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) was allocated ZW$124.1 billion (US$652 million) which is equivalent to 13% of the total budget (UNICEF 2022 Budget Brief). The UNICEF (2022) Budget Brief

further denotes that the education budget of Zimbabwe, as a proportion of the total budget has been fairly constant at 13% over the past 4 years, 2019-2021. In 2022, education was the second highest budget allocation after agriculture. Commenting in the Standard Style, Chivore (2022) noted that on 24 November 2022, the Finance Minister of Zimbabwe Mthuli Ncube announced a ZW$4,5 trillion budget which equites to 14% of the total budget. This shows a 1 % increase from the 2022 budget which was 13%. Although the education budget still falls short of the 20% international agreed threshold, it continues to be a top priority in terms of budget allocations. In Zambia, civic groups also continue to monitor and hold their government accountable. For example, the National Action for Quality Education in Zambia (NAQEZ) appealed to the government through the Ministry of Finance to allocate at least 20% of the 2023 national budget to the education section in order to address the challenge the sector is facing (Muchiya, 2022).

Regarding Malawi, despite the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supporting the government of Malawi to achieve its vision of providing quality education for all students, this vision is far from being realised. According to the UNICEF (2022) report, the primary completion rate in Malawi is 33% indicating that two-thirds of the children of primary school completion age did not complete primary education. Further, only 13% of girls complete upper secondary school in Malawi (UNICEF, 2020). Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) a civil society organization based in Malawi has been making efforts to promote the government's vision of providing quality education for all students. Moreover, Malawian pupils' learning results showing that they are the lowest in the region. According to UNICEF Malawi 2022/23 Education Budget Brief, the share of the budget allocated to the education sector has been declining over the past three fiscal years, reaching a lowest level of 16.3% in 2022/23 and missing the Dakar Commitment Education has now been overtaken by public debt charges, which is now the largest item in the national budget, worth 18%. A growing body of evidence shows that an increased school budget leads to better student outcomes. Mokwetsi (2021) concurs and forwarded that a well-financed education sector leads to quality learning outcomes, inclusive quality inclusive teaching and learning, and increases girls' participation. Therefore, several scholars attribute poor education system in Malawi to poor financing by the government.

In Lesotho, an education policy was passed in the latter part of the 1980s, stating that all learners should have access to the curriculum and an integrated education system (Johnstone, 2007). However, policy implementation still remains a challenge. Limited resources such as insufficient teacher training, inadequate staff support and the lack of accountability and monitoring have been some of the barriers to the effective implementation of inclusive education and training in Lesotho. The narrative is the same in South Africa where policies continue to gather dust. According to Muller (2018) public discussions about higher education funding in South Africa has been beset by numerous fictions and misunderstandings since the *Fees Must Fall Movement* emerged in 2015. He added that In mid-December 2017, Jacob Zuma who was an aspiring President announced that in 2018 free higher education would be provided to all new first year students from families that earn less than R350 000 per year. Sadly, 11 years later, the introduction of free university education for poor students has been sitting and

gathering dust with the Department of Basic Education. This is evidenced by thousands of poor black students who continue to drop out of universities in South Africa.

Further, according to the South African education spending historical statistics provided by the World Bank, it was only in the years 2000 and 2002 when the country reached the 20% threshold set by the Dakar declaration. Since then, the country has never allocated a 20% of the national budget towards education. Although various scholars have argued that South Africa is leaning close to the 20% threshold more than any other states in the Southern Africa, this study argue that governments can do better. To this end, a lot still needs to be done by the governments in the SADC if the region is to achieve the goal towards increasing access to inclusive, equitable, and quality education.

Evidence from across the region indicates that reviews of sector policies and plans seem to be inadequate considering the need to regularly interrogate the policies to determine their effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness over time. There is limited evidence of regular and robust policy reviews. What exists are sector reviews which also appear dated considering country-level sector plans and implementation periods. This may be impacting policy-making especially with regard to costing of education sector needs. Zambia has been subject to many education policy reviews and changes (Bushilya, 2021, Kaisara & Bwalya, 2020; Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC), 2022). According to Bushilya (2021) there are up to 15 different educational-orientated policies that have been created but not sufficiently implemented. (2021) UNICEF Zimbabwe calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to invest at least 20% of the government resources to education.  Reaching the 20% target is needed to ensure access to quality education for all children in Zimbabwe, including the poorest children and the children living with disabilities. Today the Government of Zimbabwe is investing 13% of its expenditure in education, well below the engagement made by global to invest at least 20% (Mokwetsi, 2021).

Through their collaboration, the SADC Secretariat and UNESCO seek to facilitate inclusive learning opportunities for children, and youth during this period of sudden and unprecedented educational disruption. This is to support countries in scaling up good practices of distance learning solutions, and reaching the most at-risk children and youth. Investment in remote learning should both mitigate the immediate disruption caused by COVID-19, and accelerate the development of more open and flexible quality education systems. Through this agreement, the SADC Secretariat and UNESCO commit to work with SADC Member States, and other Global Coalition partners to provide support to Member States to ensure continuity of education under the hashtag '#LearningNeverStops'. Support will be provided to SADC countries for mobilizing resources and implementing innovative, and context appropriate solutions to provide education and learning remotely, leveraging hi-tech, low-tech and no-tech approaches, and seek equitable solutions and universal access.

**Regional and International Policy Frameworks on Education**

Africa has various education policy frameworks that influence the state of education in the various African states and inform the formulation of national policies and strategic plans. Some of the policies established for all the African states include the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), Sustainable Development Goal 4, in Action, 34 Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025. SADC Protocol on Education & Training (1997) established to promote a regionally integrated and harmonised education system, particularly with regard to issues pertaining to access, equity, relevance and quality of education.

Adding on, the SADC Regional Implementation Plan on Education and Training (2007-2015) established to provide a map for implementation of the Protocol on Education & Training, 1997. Addresses the components of cooperation and other cross-cutting issues affecting the education sector. It identifies the following: Early Childhood Education and Care, Gender and Culture, Education Management Information Systems, Teacher Education and Development, Higher Education and Training, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Curriculum Development including Teaching and Learning Materials, Quality Management and crosses cutting activities related to HIV and AIDS and Information Communication Technologies. The Continental TVET Strategy provides a comprehensive framework for the design and development of policies and strategies by the African states to address the challenges of education and technical and vocational training.

The United General Assembly established global SDGs that encompass economic, social and environmental dimensions, as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. Among these SDGs are goals that encircle the education sector. SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The goal is composed of targets to ensure access, equity, equality, and non-discrimination in the education sector. Other SDGs that have direct reference to the education sector and these include SDG 3 aimed at addressing Sexual and reproductive healthcare, SDG 5 which addresses gender equality, and SDG 13 addressing the improvement of education, awareness and capacity on climate change. Therefore, the above regional and international policies are there to promote education.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Questions and Objectives**

| Research Objectives | Research Questions |
|---|---|
| 1. To examine the role of transnational agencies in influencing governments in implementing education policies in the SADC region. | 1. What role can transnational agencies play to influencing governments to enact and implement education policies in the SADC region? |
| 2. To evaluate the impact of transnational agencies in influencing government actions in implementing education policies. | 2. What are the major obstacles being faced by transnational organizations in advocating for states to enact and implement education policies? |

**Research Design**

In order to satisfy the objectives of the study, this paper employed qualitative desk-based research. This desk based research derives information from the reports and material published by Plan International and UNESCO. Some information was also derived from the websites of these organizations. Through desk-based research, this paper also explores literature by other transnational organizations and recommendations on education and, education policies in the SADC region and the world at large.

**Case Study**

To inform this study, the researcher opted for multiple-case research study which allows for a more in-depth understanding of the cases as a unit. A case study can be defined as an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit (Gustafsson, 2017). According to Stake (2006), evidence arising from multiple-case studies is often stronger and more reliable than from single-case research. He further notes that multiple-case studies allow for more comprehensive exploration of research questions and theory development. A multiple case study is also invaluable in providing a comprehensive view of a particular issue or phenomenon. In this case, a multi-case study will provide deeper insights in investigating the role of transnational agencies in influencing educational policies in the SADC region. Plan International and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) serve as the case studies of this research. These organizations were mainly chosen due to their advocacy which is mainly hinged on education advocacy and these entities operate at international and regional level.

**Plan International**

Originally named Foster Parents Scheme for Children in Spain, Plan International was founded in 1937 by British journalist and broadcaster John Langdon-Davies. Plan International is a development and humanitarian organisation which works in over 75 countries across Africa, the Americas, and Asia to advance children's rights and equality for girls. Further, one of the objectives of this organization is to promote free, equal access to quality education for all children – from early learning to secondary education. Plan International also seeks to increase

access to quality sexual health services and eliminate harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and early and child marriage. Ultimately, the organization strives for a just world, working together with children, and young people.

**United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded in 1945. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education, providing global and regional leadership to drive progress, strengthening the resilience and capacity of national systems to serve all learners. The organization's programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in the 2030 Agenda, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. UNESCO develops educational tools to help people live as global citizens free of hate and intolerance. It works to ensure that every child and every citizen has access to quality education.

**LIMITATIONS**
Although the study's time constraints presented a challenge in analysing data through multiple collection methods as originally planned, the resulting report still adequately fulfilled the requirements outlined in the Terms of Reference. While the researcher initially considered conducting a field analysis in a bid to interview participants affiliated with transnational agencies, they encountered obstacles in obtaining clearance from transnational agencies. This resulted in the researcher adopting a desk based review which affected the depth of the study's findings. Secondary data also requires long processing before relevant information can be extracted which was a set-back considering limited time the researcher had. Despite this setback, however, the researcher diligently gathered as much pre-existing data as possible from sources such as UNESCO and Plan International, which were utilized as study case studies.

# RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

*"Students used to walk long distances and reached school very tired. They were required to wake up early and were dozing in class. This made it hard for the teacher to manage them, which delayed the lesson plans and completion of the curriculum. The new construction came to solve the problem. We believe that the quality of education has improved."* (Alotia Mukantwali, Head Teacher, Karama Primary School, Rwanda: Word Bank).



**Source: Save the Children**

Photo collage shows an unfinished structure, makeshift classroom and a modern block recently completed by Save the Children.

89% of African children are learning poor. Nevertheless, these countries are not giving up as they have been persistently implementing several bold reforms to their education systems (World Bank). The above image reveals completed classroom block at a local primary school in Zimbabwe. MoPSE statistics report (2021) notes that 958 primary schools and 236 secondary schools were built between 2017 and 2021. Ziwira (2022) added that at least 1194 primary and secondary schools, averaging 300 per year were built in the last four years in line with the government's quest to reduce the distance learners walk to and from school. This indicates significant progress made in terms of the education sector in the African context. However, more still needs to be done to by African governments if there is need to achieve access to inclusive, equitable, and quality education in Africa, especially in the SADC region. This section unpacks the findings and the analysis

## *Transnational organizations as influencers?*

The Education for All (EFA) movement has progressively chronicled cohorts of excluded students and mobilised governments, education authorities, non-government organisations and civil society to advance inclusive education (Slee, 2018). Indeed, it is the position of this study that transnational organizations have a role to play in advancing education in the SADC region.

Transnational organizations like, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and World Bank, exert an influence on the government and has contributed to the development of education world-wide (Turner et al, 2022). This is demonstrated by a series of agreements UNESCO has entered into. SADC and UNESCO signed a Joint Statement and Action Plan in 2020 on ensuring continuity of learning in the context of further COVID-19 (UNESCO, 2020). Through their collaboration, the SADC Secretariat and UNESCO sough to facilitate inclusive learning opportunities for children, and youth during this period of unprecedented educational disruption. A SADC and UNESCO statement cemented this as the duo emphasized that "Our collective actions can help build more resilient education systems. #LearningNeverStops" (UNESCO, 2020: 1).

However, (Fambasayi, 2020) argues that although transnational agencies play a pivotal role in education, the implementation of policies still relies on the government, working in partnership with organisations such as PLAN International Zimbabwe and CAMFED, to foster behaviour change, inclusion and tolerance in communities. Additionally, civil society organisations have been litigating on behalf of learners and even came up with regulations called the Uniform Norms and Standards of School Infrastructure that stipulates the criteria for what public schools should be for them to be considered schools in South Africa (Ndzendze and Manaka, 2022). Commenting on behalf of the Mail & Guardian, Ndzendze and Manaka (2022) further noted that the conditions of many public schools are frightening and have taken a turn for the worse, which has at times resulted in the death of learners and teachers. "One could argue that these deaths are induced because they happen under the watch of officials who vowed to protect and ensure that learners are well taken care of", Ndzendze and Manaka (2022). They went on to argue that it is heart breaking to hear of learners who suffocate in human waste after falling into unsafe pit latrines that are still being used in schools in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo.

Activists call for education funding and real partnerships. While that is so, Plan International, Transform Education, UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), and UNICEF continue to call for a critical reset in education. According to Rodger (2022), Plan International believes that education should be available and accessible to all children on the basis of equal opportunity and non-discrimination. Every child must be able to access and complete an inclusive, quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education in order to meet global commitments (Rodger, 2022). Plan International also recognises that as the primary duty bearers, national governments are responsible for ensuring the right of all children to access and complete a quality, inclusive education. Pursuant to the organization's education advocacy efforts, in 2017 Plan International launched a Global Strategy 2017-2022 which was aimed at renewing and refocusing its commitment to quality education for all children, and particularly for girls and excluded groups. Plan International (2015) report reviews that the organization committed to contribute to ensuring that vulnerable and excluded children, and particularly girls, access and complete inclusive, quality education from pre-primary to secondary, supporting progress towards Targets 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, A & C of Goal 4 of Agenda 2030. Therefore, it is worth noting that transnational organizations play an immense role in influencing governments to implement education policies.

***Policy Implementation and Setting Legal Frameworks***

Research has shown that transnational agencies play a key role in policy implementation, and setting up of legal frameworks and transnational standards which governments agree to. After this, transnational agencies conduct research in a bid to understand whether the set standards are being met. Ultimately, this feeds into the advocacy work of these agencies and national civil society organizations (CSOs). For example, article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (CRWC) denotes that states shall have all appropriate measures to ensure that children who become pregnant before completing their education shall have an opportunity to continue with their education on the basis of their individual ability. This clause has been used by transnational agencies and CSOs as a tool to advocate for pregnant girls to remain in school in. The case in point is that of World Vision Zimbabwe (WVZ), together with other like-minded organizations in 2019 who participated during the process of amending the Education Act and put forward petitions through the Education Coalition of Zimbabwe to improve the situation of pregnant girls (World Vision Zimbabwe, 2023). This contributed to the passing of the Education Amendment Act of 2020 with provision of re-entry of pregnant girls and adolescents mothers which was a positive step towards access to education for girls in Zimbabwe.

However, some legal rights and policies are seldom implemented or enforced at a local level (Plan International, 2012). Plan's research found common reports of pregnant girls being forced into marriage with either the father of the child or someone else, even in circumstances where pregnancy was the result of forced sexual relations. The government of Zimbabwe has a collection of policy documents dating back to 1973 and more recently the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2016-2022 as well as National Early Learning Policy (NELP) which awaits finalisation. These policies are not harmonised and aligned both within the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) and across the relevant ministries. Each Ministry administers its own policies independent of the other and yet they all impact on the ECD child. The policy environment is therefore riddled with gaps, inconsistencies and uncertainties that make it difficult to navigate. Transnational agencies and national CSOs have however, been advocating against implementation inconsistences.

### Funding and Resources

Stable funding is an instrumental necessity to successful implementation (Durlak and DuPre, 2008: 336). For countries to achieve SDG 4 targets by 2030, the way governments and donors disburse their resources will have a huge bearing on that. It is unequivocal that there is a need for equitable financing of education in the region. Further, there is a need to invest resources to mitigate those factors that cause children from disadvantaged backgrounds to drop out before completing primary school. Resource allocation needs to follow the principle of progressive universalism which stems from the idea that social justice can be achieved through equal access to opportunities and high quality services. To achieve the goals of the global and continental agendas of repositioning access, equity, quality education and skills development as key drivers of inclusive growth and sustainable development, African governments must provide a level of predictable and sustainable investment in education (Plan International, 2019). To ensure that governments provide sustainable education investment, in 2022 the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) and Zimbabwe Network of Early Childhood Development Actors (ZINECDA) forged hands and urged legislators to push their governments to fund ECD. Further, a SADC representative Mammehla Matamane commended members of parliament

(MPs) to support SDGs that promote education. He forwaded that 'Funding ECD is done to ensure that countries fast track the issues of attaining SDG 4 which talks about ensuring that by 2030 all states are in a position to make sure that all boys and girls access education' (Chikandiwa, 2022:1).

While there has been significant progress in the education sector since the adoption of the Dakar Framework in 2000, inequity remains a key issue negatively affecting the marginalised. Governments in the SADC region are not meeting the requirements of the Dakar Framework given the amount of budget they area allocating towards education in their respective countries. The situation is dire given that international aid to education is declining. Between 2010 and 2012, such aid for basic education declined by 15% and It is projected that there will be a shortfall of 42% in meeting the total annual cost of pre-primary, primary and secondary education by 2030 (UNESCO, 2015). Transnational agencies, therefore, continue to advocate for budget allocation towards education. For instance, Human Rights Watch in 2019 made a clarion call to the government of Zimbabwe to ensure that it guaranteed equal realization of the right to education for all in Zimbabwe and comply with international human rights standards (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Resultantly, the government crafted the Education Amendment Act which came into effect in May 2020. As demonstrated in literature review, National Action for Quality Education in Zambia (NAQEZ) appealed to the Zambian government to allocate at least 20% of the 2023 national budget to the education section in order to address the challenge the sector is facing (Muchiya, 2022).

### *Constitution: A Legal Instrument*

Constitutions are an important tool in transnational organizations holding national government to account because it enables states to translate international agreements into domestic law, and obliges all branches of government to respect and ensure the rights it enunciates. A constitution 'marries power with justice' (Lutz, 2006: 17). It makes the operation of power procedurally predictable, upholds the rule of law, and places limits on the arbitrariness of power. A good example of this is Section 75(1)(a) of the Zimbabwean constitution which states 'every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has a right to a basic state-funded education including adult basic education'. World Vision Zimbabwe and ECOZI used this clause to advocate for the GoZ to provide free education through the Education Amendment Act. Although this has not come into effect, national CSOs and transnational organizations continue to push for the provision of free education. UNESCO and SADC also made use the clause to develop the Regional Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Strategic Plan (2022-2030) which promotes education.

Despite the enactment of the Zimbabwean Constitution which provides for the right to basic education, complaints, reminiscent of a failed basic education system, have marred the education system in Zimbabwe (Simbo, 2022). Notwithstanding glaring violations of the right to basic education by the government, no person has taken the government to court for failure to comply with its section 75(1)(a) constitutional obligations, and neither has the government conceded any failures or wrongdoings, he added. While it is progressive that the Education Act of Zimbabwe as amended in 2020 has addressed some aspects relating to section 75(1)(a) of the Constitution, it has still not provided an international law compliant scope and content of the right to basic education neither have any clarifications been provided by the courts.

### *Lack of Political Will*

Political will is defined as the context of committed support among key decision makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem. In the SADC region, some leaders lack political will and they are not intentional in leading the education sector. In South Africa, conditions of many public schools are worrisome and have taken a turn for the worse, which has at times resulted in the death of learners and teachers. One could argue that these deaths are induced because they happen under the watch of officials who vowed to protect and ensure that learners are well taken care of (Ndzendze and Manaka, 2022). The intention of the government is therefore not clear when it comes to fixing schools and calls to do so have been ignored by leaders who lack political will. Baghdady & Zaki (2019) correlate with this and added that the situation is not simply a shortage of government funds, it also has to do with levels of accountability regarding education expenditure. However, CSOs, like Equal Education have been advocating on behalf of boys and girls. The organization came up with regulations called the Uniform Norms and Standards of School Infrastructure that stipulates the criteria for what public schools should be for them to be considered schools. These legally binding standards, with timeframes, were adopted on 29 November 2013 and serve as a framework for schools. They further served as a tool for people to hold the minister to account (Ndzendze and Manaka, 2022).

### *Charting the success and impact of civic groups, and transnational organizations in education advocacy*

As demonstrated in the literature review, civic groups and transnational organizations have made a difference in the implementation of laws. This has considerably improved the quality of education for girls and boys in the region. This view is supported by Africa Report (2012) who noted that Plan's International *Because I am a Girl* global campaign supported four million girls to get the education, skills and support they need to move themselves from poverty to opportunity.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

*"Education should be available and accessible to all girls and boys. Every child must be able to access and complete an inclusive, quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education in order to meet the Global Goal for education by 2030"* (Plan International, 2018).

An analysis of the findings reveals that education has gradually improved in SADC and this has been necessitated through implementation of various policies that promote education. The case in point is that of the Zimbabwe's Education Amendment Act which came into effect in May 2020. This Act addresses issues pertinent to girls and education including the prohibition of expelling pregnant girls from school, free and compulsory education and sexual and reproductive health issues. A new section was added to the Principal Act, section 68C, which states that no child shall be excluded from school on the basis of pregnancy. This resulted in the rise of the number of girls who are enrolled in school in Zimbabwe. The same Act also aims at addressing issues of free and compulsory education. Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, this has not been implemented, there is no free and compulsory education in Zimbabwe. The narrative is the same with other member states and this suggests that there appear to be gaps in terms of monitoring and review of the policies. It is against this background that the following recommendations are proposed to ensure that every girl child and young boy attain quality education:

- As demonstrated in this paper, promoting education will require the engagement of everyone, especially transnational agencies. Transnational agencies need to support the development and implementation of laws that gives a strong priority on education.

- There is a need to conduct in-depth interviews with the transnational agencies to get an appreciation of how they are directly and in-directly influencing education in the region.

- Studies show public awareness of government policies and initiatives around girls' education remains very low. Therefore, the youth and school communities should participate in shaping the education system laws by making submissions to the government. By doing so one gets involved in conversations that strengthen democracy, as well as give force to the laws once passed.

- SADC requires more capable, dedicated, accountable, and well-functional governments and leadership.

**CONCLUSION**

The inquiry managed to get some insight into the role that transnational agencies play in influencing implementation of education policies in SADC to improve the quality of education. The major conclusion drawn from the research is that despite considerable progress that has been made by African leaders in enacting education policies, a lot needs to be done in order to meet the global goal for education by 2030. The research profiled a number of civic groups and transnational agencies who have been instrumental in policy formulation. This has demonstrated that transnational organizations play a pivotal role in promoting education. Nevertheless, it is worrisome that some policies take time to come into effect and some

continue to gather dust as the leaders are reluctant to implement them. While the Dakar Commitment on Education for all by the African Union stipulates that a government should allocate 20% of its national budget towards education, only a few countries in the SADC region has met that. A lot henceforth needs to be done to attain equal, and quality education for all by 2030. This can be better done with the government consulting CSOs and transnational organizations.

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# An Assessment of the role and Willingness of Parents, Girls and Young Women in Advocating for change in the Bottom-up approach

*Research Report of Selected Schools in Chibombo and Kafue Districts of Zambia (2023)*

**Compiled By:**

**NAQEZ-EOL**

**Acknowledgments**

We are grateful to the District Education Board Secretaries (DEBS) in the two districts the research was conducted for the permission to collect data in the schools targeted for inclusion in the study. We are also very grateful to the head teachers and the teachers in the very schools for facilitating the data collection process itself by organizing community members and civic leaders, grateful to community members and civic leaders that left their daily businesses to attend research and give in their time. Not leaving out all the girls, we took part in the research from all the participating schools from the two districts of Chibombo and Kafue.

Finally, but not least, we are grateful to EOL for all the support before, and during the research.

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## INTRODUCTION

Advocacy is an important strategy in achieving change in both international and local settings. According to Mefalopulos (2008), advocacy is considered a form of communication intended to influence change at the policy and public levels and promote issues related to social development. McKee et al. (2004) assert that advocacy is the organization of information into arguments to be communicated through various interpersonal and media channels to gain political and social leadership for a particular development program. Triggered by the increase in advocacy for girls' education in rural areas, advocacy has become a buzzword around the world and within Zambia (MOE, 1996 & 1997). In most regions around the world, including Zambia, advocacy for change starts from the top to the bottom. By the time communities are involved, resources will have been depleted. This assumption is confirmed in a study done by Piccinini (2010) in line with humanitarian advocacy. He concluded that advocacy is a good word gone bad because it has progressively lost its positive connotation and has simultaneously assumed negative significance. However, advocating for change in communities does not come easily if the parents, young women, and girls do not understand their role and are not willing to advocate for change. This observation was mentioned in the Let Girls Lead Curriculum of 2019, where a participant pointed out that "...you can advocate on behalf of someone, but if they can't speak on the issues themselves and how they affect them, then at the end of the day, your advocacy will be lacking" Parents, girls, and young women have an important role to play in the bottom-up advocacy approach. However, a rising concern is that most parents, girls, and young women are reluctant to participate in issues of advocacy. This is because so much advocacy has been done, but they have not seen the change that was promised to them. Hence, it is significant to explore deeper into this assumption and ascertain if they understand their roles in the advocacy for change in the bottom-up approach.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem to be tackled in this study is specifically formulated as follows: Do parents, girls, and young women understand their role and are willing to advocate for change in the bottom-up advocacy approach?

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To explore if parents, girls, and young women understand their role and are willing to advocate for change through bottom-up advocacy.

## RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This research will be significant to civil society organizations, civic leaders, the government, and the communities at large. The initiative has regional and global significance through the EOL platform and it will generate evidence for advocacy practitioners in other similar contexts. It is also critical to note that the initiative will gather evidence for hard to reach areas-which has been noted to be a gap.

## RESEARCH SCOPE

This study will be conducted in Zambia and be limited to rural areas. This is because the study focuses on parents, girls, and young women in rural areas. These areas will include Kafue district in Lusaka province and Chibombo district in the Central Province of Zambia. Target population: 60 respondents

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Advocacy is defined as any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends or pleads on behalf of others. Advocacy seeks to ensure that all people in society are able to have their voices heard on issues that are important to them. Besides, advocacy protects and promotes human rights. It also entails that communities have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made.

Advocacy is an important strategy in achieving change. Different aid agencies design and implement advocacy programs to influence political, policy, programs, public agenda as well as norms and practices. Despite the extensive recognition of the importance of advocacy its importance is sometimes questioned. A study by Adebayo (2017) on advocacy as strategy revealed that advocacy is still broadly perceived as indispensable in achieving social outcomes. But many development workers are ill equipped. The study further indicated that the major causes of advocacy is the ineffectiveness of a strategic approach and weak application of the advocacy program.

Having communities' participate in advocacy is one thing but to have them understand their role in the advocacy program is another. Hence parental advocacy is an essential component if the girls and young women will be willing to advocate for change in the bottom up approach. Research done by Molly et al (2021) on advocacy experiences among rural parents of children with disabilities revealed that families living in rural areas lack the necessary resources to advocate successfully for their children with disabilities. Notably, participants expressed that advocating and maintaining relationships with school personnel took an emotional toll. It should be mentioned that if parents, girls and young women have to participate in advocacy they will have to understand their role and be willing to advocate for change. They must be willing to understand the emotions and relationship attached to advocacy. As such community advocacy will help people to feel more enabled to take control of their own lives and provide practical support to overcome health and social issues. This approach equips people with the knowledge and skills to be their own best advocate. That's why it was important to explore if parents, girls and young women understood their role and are willing to advocate for change in the bottom up approach.

According to Finger (1994), the bottom up approach emphasizes community participation, grassroots movements and local decision making.it argues that community participation and grassroots initiative promote participatory decision making and self-reliance (finger, 1994,

panda, 2007). The bottom – up advocacy focuses on a central problem that has the potential to mobilize people. It highlights the importance of grassroots movement and organized civil society. While experts play a significant role, it's essential to acknowledge that they are not the sole owners of the problem. With a bottom up approach, those who are more involved with specifics of their field are included in the ideation and brainstorming process, with the result being a more harmonized and inclusive management system. Advocacy in the bottom up approach to social change can enable and empower people to press for change themselves.

It must be noted that civil society organizations play multiple roles. They are an important source of information for both citizens and the government. They monitor government policies and actions and hold the government accountable. They engage in advocacy and offer alternative policies for government, the private sector and other institutions. Therefore the bottom up approach is a way of ensuring that members of the community are included from the inception of a project. It was then important to establish if parents, girls and young women understood their role and were willing to participate in advocacy using the bottom up approach.

Bottom up approach
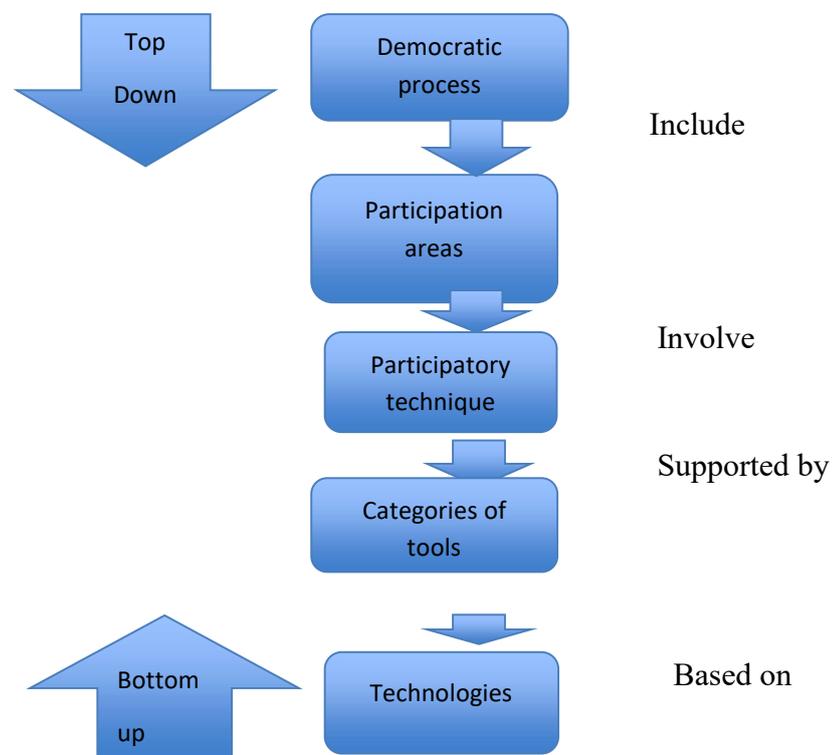


A bottom up approach emphasizes the fact that those who are out in the field everyday can provide significant insights. With the bottom up approach those who are more involved with the specific of their fields are included in the ideation and brainstorming process with the results

being more harmonized and inclusive. In this case parents, girls and young women involvement and understanding of advocacy can lead to a democratic process where they have views in decision making.    Hence civil society organizations ought to establish if the community understands their roles and are willing to participate in advocacy activities.

Deleon and Deleon (2001) established that CSO that use the bottom up –approach are more likely to reflect on the community's interest, while those who use the top - down approach are more likely to impose policy narrowly upon focused interest   groups.  It was also concluded that the bottom up implementation is more realistic and practical and much more democratic than the top down approach. Furthermore if the policy is indeed meant to coerce people's behaviors, then the bottom up approach may go beyond informing of the proposed legislative action to manipulate behavior.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

**THEORY OF CHANGE**
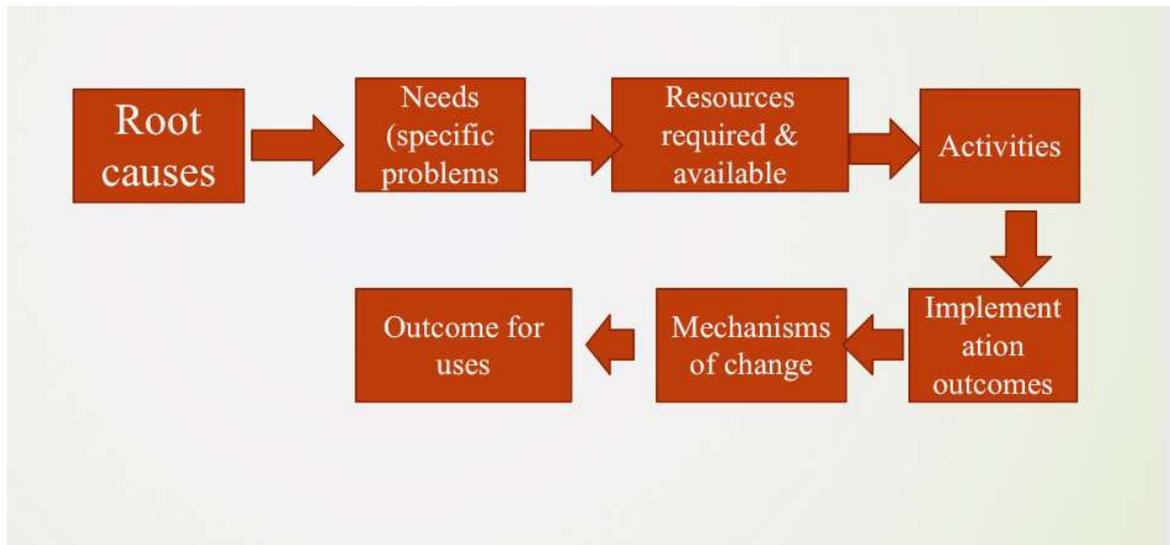
# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Settings: The proposed site of research is rural Kafue and Chibombo districts of Lusaka and central province in Zambia. Study Design: The study will be cross-sectional and observational in nature. Sample Size: The total number of participants will be 60. Sampling Procedure: Purposive sampling will be used to select the participants: 50 young girls and women, 5 community leaders, and 5 parents.

**Qualitative and Quantitative research approaches will be used.**

Inclusion criteria: girls and young women belonging to the rural community between 15 and 35 years; parents belonging to a school PTA; headmen; civic leaders; guidance and counseling leaders; Exclusion criteria: females above 35 years; young girls below 15 years; adults who are not community leaders.

Data collecting instruments: interview guide, questionnaire, and card sorting will also be used for data collection, including use of existing documents

Data analysis: from emerging themes, dedoose software will be used to analyze data

Ethical consideration: participants will be accorded privacy and permission will be sort for their participation.

**DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**
**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**
**INTERVIEW GUIDES:**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

The girl's education advocacy in the region alliance (GEAR) is a consortium of four organization from Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The project addresses the challenges of limited access to primary and secondary education for girls and young women in rural and farming communities.

You are invited to participate in this research. We are hoping to learn about how you understand your role in relation to girls and young women's education, and whether you are willing to advocate for change. Anything you say in the interview will be completely anonymous and will be reported on in a way, which means you cannot be identified. You are at liberty stop.

1. What do you see as your role in relation to the education of girls and young women?

2. What do you think the role of the community is in advocating for change in girls and Young women's education?

3. Do you know of any examples where parents have successfully advocated for change in Girls' education?

4. What are some of the strategies that can be used in the advocacy of girls and young women's education in the local communities?

5. How can the community participate in advocating for girls and young women's education?

6. What is the role of the family in the advocacy of girls and young women's education?

7. How can families be helped to develop effective advocacy skills for the education of girls and young women?

8. What is the role of parents as advocates for girls and young women's education?

9. How can parents be encouraged to advocate for the education of girls and young women in the communities

10. What can leaders in the country do to ensure that all girls and young women have access to equality education?

11. Do you participate in advocacy for girls and young women's education?

12. Why do you or do not participate in advocacy for girls and young women's education?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN**

The girl's education advocacy in the region alliance (GEAR) is a consortium of four organization from Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The project addresses the challenges of limited access to primary and secondary education for girls and young women in rural and farming communities.

You are invited to participate in this research. We are hoping to learn about how you understand your role in relation to girls and young women's education, and whether you are willing to advocate for change. Anything you say in the interview will be completely anonymous and will be reported on in a way, which means you cannot be identified. You are at liberty stop

## A. GIRL CHILD EDUCATION

1. Age

Below 18 years

18-25 years

25-35 years

2. Gender

Male

Female

3. Highest qualification

PhD

Masters

Degree

Certificate

Grade 12

Grade 9

Grade 7

No formal education

4. Are you willing to advocate for change in the education of girls and young women in your community

Yes

No

5. How do you want to advocate for the change in the education of girls and young women in your community?

 Attend PTA meetings

 Mobilize awareness and sensitization on girls and young women education.

 Have meetings with community leaders

 Create community groups on girls and young's education

6. What is your role in the advocacy campaign?

 Mobilize the community

 Sensitize my family/community

 Am not sure

7. Do you understand your role in the advocacy of girls and young women's education in your community? 1,2,3,4.5

 Yes

 No

 Am not sure

8. What change would you like to see in the education of girls and young women in your community?


B. GIRL CHILD EDUCATION (ADVOCACY, GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN)

9. Age

 15-20

 20-25

 25-30

 30-35

10. Level of education

 University

 College

 Senior secondary


 Junior secondary

 No formal education

11. Do you participate in advocacy for girls and young women's education?

12. Why do you or do not participate in advocacy for girls and young women's education?

13. Do you understand your role? 1,2,3,4.5?

Yes

No

Not sure

14. What do you expect from the civil society organization and community leaders in the advocacy of girls and young women education in your community?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……

………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your time

**DATA FINDINGS**

*a)* *GIRLS*

*Question 1:*

| Age Ranges | |
|---|---|
| Age (Years) | Number of Girls |
| 10-15 | 10 |
| 15-20 | 7 |
| 20-35 | 1 |
| Total | 18 |

*Question 2:*
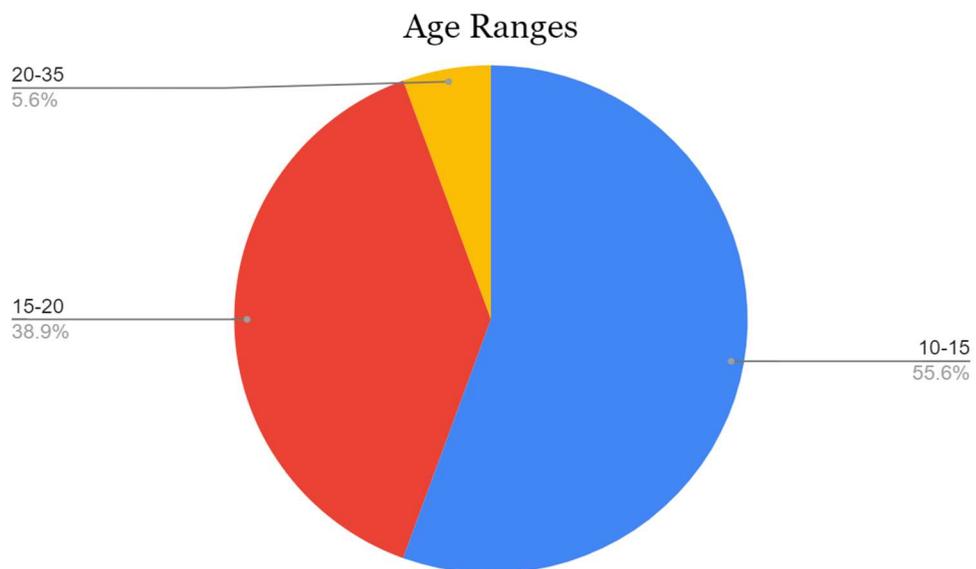
*Question 3:*

| Gender | |
|---|---|
| Male | 0 |
| Female | 18 |

| Level of Education | |
|---|---|
| Grade 7 | 1 |
| Grade 8 | 8 |
| Grade 9 | 3 |
| Grade 11 | 3 |
| Grade 12 | 3 |

*Question 4:*
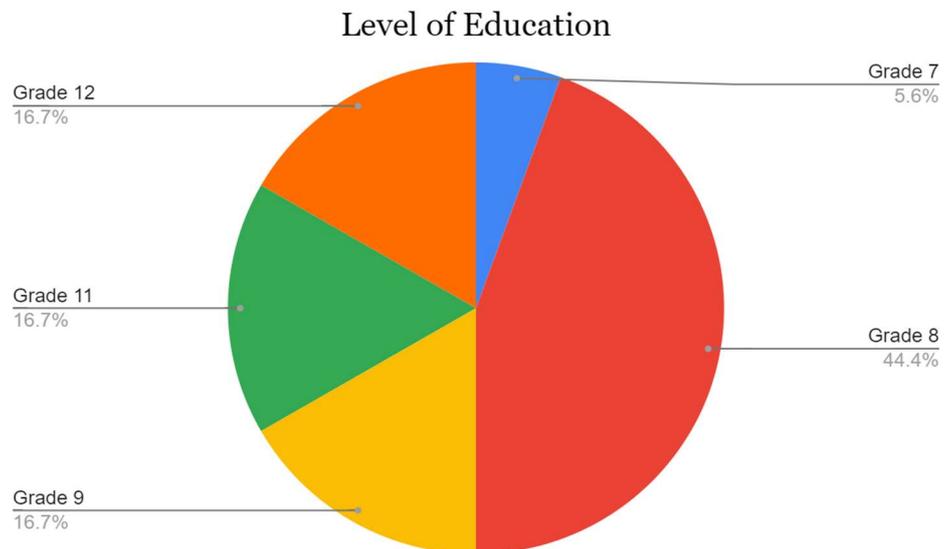
| Participation in Girl's Education Advocacy | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 6 |
| No | 12 |

*Question 5:*

| Participation Status | Reason(s) |
|---|---|
| Not Participating | You are not given a chance to participate |
| | Don't know about it |
| Participating | I know how it feels to be discriminated |
| | I want to become a role model |
| | I want to show that I am equally able to accomplish my dreams |

*Question 6:*

| Preferred Methods of Advocacy | |
|---|---|
| Attend PTA Meetings | 0 |
| Mobilize | 1 |
| Stakeholder Meetings | 2 |
| Community Groups on Girl's Education | 16 |
| No Method/ Non Applicable | 0 |

**Preferred Methods of Advocacy**

- Mobilize 5.3%
- Stakeholder Meetings 10.5%
- Community Groups… 84.2%
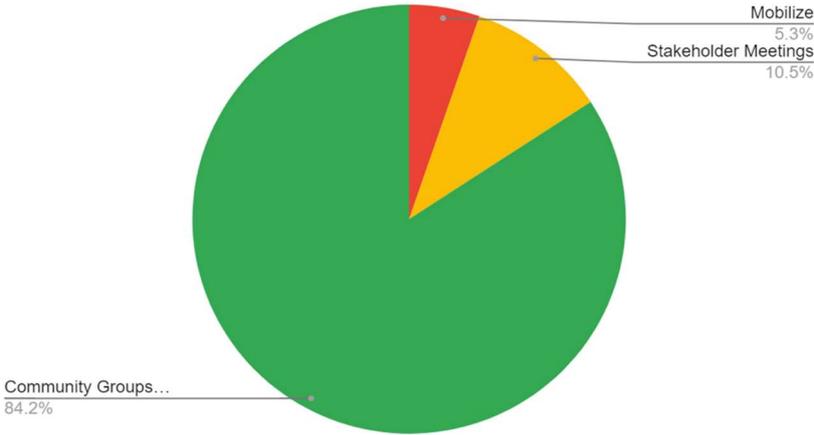
*Question 7:*

| Role in Advocacy Campaign | |
|---|---|
| Mobilize the Community | 8 |
| Sensitization (The process of making people aware) | 12 |
| Not Sure | 0 |



**Role in Advocacy**

- Mobilize the Commu… 40.0%
- Sensitization 60.0%
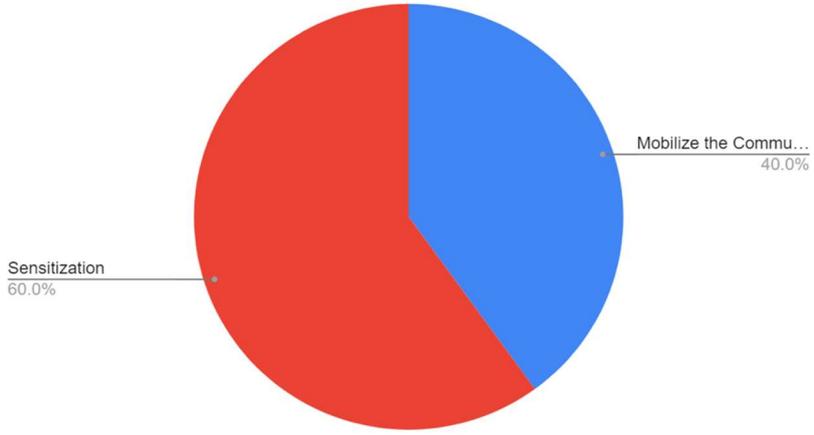
*Question 8:*

| Understanding One's Role in Advocacy | |
| --- | ---: |
| Yes | 15 |
| No | 3 |
| Not Sure | 2 |

Understanding Advocacy Role

Not Sure
10.0%

No
15.0%

Yes
75.0%
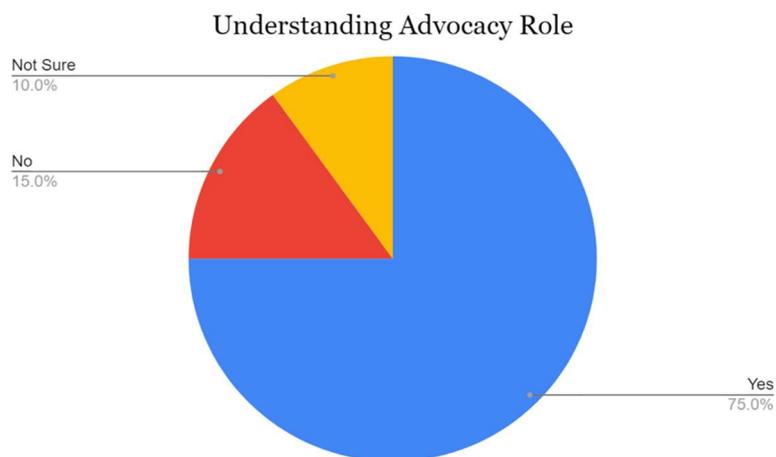
*Question 9:*

| **Change That One Would Like To See:** |
| --- |
| Girls should all have the right to education |
| They should all make sure girls are educated |
| Girls must return to school and know that they too are deserving of an education after teenage pregnancy |
| Girls must progress in society and develop the country |
| Provision of Sanitary Pads must be increased |
| Number of Teachers must be increased |
| Provision of school infrastructure, including desks and learning material |

*Question 10:*

| Expectations from CSOs and Community Leaders |
|---|
| CSOs must talk to the government about the existing challenges |
| CSOs must encourage the girls to go to school |
| They must support the existing groups of girls and young women |
| They must support vulnerable parents to take their children to school |
| Encourage participation of girls in different groups |

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

| Participation in Girls' Education Advocacy | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 9 |
| No | 0 |

| Why do you or do not participate in advocacy for girls and young women's education? |
|---|
| 1. Because when you advocate for girls or women's education, you are protecting their rights |
| 2. Because they are more vulnerable in society |
| 3. Because I have passion for the girls and young women to be prosperous and be part of decision making processes at all levels |
| 4. Because they can be empowered when they're educated |
| 5. I have been appointed not only to impart knowledge, but to take an extra mile on the welfare of the girls |
| 6. An educated mind has a different way of perceiving things |
| 7. So that they can get the education that they need to be independent and participate in the developing of the nation |
| 8. Because I want to see more girls independent and successful |

| What do you see as your role in relation to the education of girls and young women? |
|---|
| 1. When you educate girls, we educate a whole nation, so it will result to a better economy |
| 2. To implement policies that uplift the rights of girls' education |
| 3. To encourage parents to take their girl child to school and to encourage the children to go to school |
| 4. To advance girl child education so as for them to be in decision making positions |
| 5. To encourage young girls from the community to be in school and those who fall pregnant to continue schooling despite their condition |
| 6. The girls' education has been greatly improved through my innovation and personal commitment to the cause. |
| 7. As a mentor |
| 8. My role is to encourage them to work extra hard in their academic work and to explain the importance of education |
| 9. My role is to be a guide |

| What do you think is the role of the community in advocating for the education of girls and young women? |
|---|
| 1. It can change their mindset |
| 2. To complement the efforts of the government |
| 3. Being involved in the girl child's education |
| 4. Making sure young girls are enrolled in school avoiding early marriages |
| 5. The role of the community is very vital in our school especially on women/girls affairs. E.g The Entry Policies |
| 6. The role of the community is to speak about the goodness or benefits of educating a girl or young woman |
| 7. To ensure that the girls attain the education needed |

| 8. A supportive role |
| --- |
| 9. To support those who advocate for girls and women's education |

| Knowledge of any examples where parents have successfully advocated for change in girls' education? |
| --- |
| Yes |
| 1. By doing away with certain traditional practices which hinder girls' education |
| 2. The Girls Lead Organization |
| 3. I have witnessed this happen when parents of girls who have fallen pregnant in our school agree to allow them back to school |
| 4. Re-Entry Policy for pregnant girls/young mothers |
| 5. I have seen parents attend meetings on menstrual hygiene and others |
| 6. By embracing the Re-Entry Policy |

| Strategies that can be used in advocacy of girls and young women |
| --- |
| 1. Through sensitization, and involving both girls and women in creative activities. |
| 2. Shorten distances traveled by girls to school |
| 3. Sensitize the community members and train some community leaders |
| 4. Involving the girls in the activities taking place in community |
| 5. Door to door sensitization, empowering their parents financially as a means of preventing girls from choosing marriage or work, selling in the street over |
| 6. Through sensitization and clubs, PTA Meetings and parent's involvement. |
| 7, Continuing of school despite after getting married |

| 8. Bringing women who would have acquired an education to speak to the girls and young women, and explain benefits to them |
| --- |
| 9. Forming clubs to discuss the importance of girls and women's education and also through the creation of dramas and plays. |

| How the community participate in advocating for girls and young women's education |
| --- |
| 1. Open trade schools that will help them in tailoring, bricklaying to make them acquire skills |
| 2.Form watch groups to monitor girls attending schools |
| 3. Through community meetings and forming drama groups etc |
| 4. Advocating through dialogues, roadshows and radio platforms etc. |
| 5. Educating young girls on the importance of education. |
| 6. By daily involvement in the girls' affairs. Through meetings (PTAs etc.) and personal involvement |
| 7. Encourage classes for those that are the out-of-school age |
| 8. Increase the infrastructure in the community through their civic leaders |
| 9. By discouraging early marriages and sending the girls and women to school |

| The Role of the Family in the advocacy of girls and young women's education |
| --- |
| 1, To encourage the girls and young women about the importance of education |
| 2. Take the girls and young women to school and support them in terms of school requirements |
| 3. Be supportive |
| 4. Offer parental guidance, Take personal interest in the educational welfare of their child and take part in sensitizing the girls |
| 5. Parents should avoid sending young girls to do manual labor due to poverty. |

| |
|---|
| 6. To ensure that they provide the necessary needs the girls and young women need for their education, i.e. Sanitary Pads |
| 7. To ensure that they are fully involved in the girl child's education and to monitor the education facilities |
| 8. To give girls and boys the same opportunities in the family |
| 9. Educate them on the importance of skills, if the girl child obtains them |

| The Role of parents as advocates for girls and young women's education |
|---|
| 1. To protect their children's rights until they are old enough to make their own decisions |
| 2. Avoid giving girls chores that are tiring on them |
| 3. To make sure that every girl in their family is in school and to see to it that the government and teachers are also playing their roles in providing quality education |
| 4. To ensure that the girls are equally enrolled in schools and be provided with the necessary school needs |
| 5. To send their children to school and providing all their needs to prevent droup-out |
| 6. By helping to provide the basic educational needs to girls, by providing personal and family commitment and by taking part in the education of girls. |
| 7. To give guidance and support |
| 8. Parents should talk to their children about the importance of education and also to provide the educational needs |
| 9. Be examples, educate and encourage the girls and young women |

| How families can be helped to develop effective advocacy skills for the education of girls and women |
|---|
| 1. By educating them on the same skills so that they can help the girls and young women |
| 2. Through training the community about how the can hold their civic leaders accountable for their communities |
| 3. By creating a positive atmosphere that promotes continuity regardless of the situation a girl is found |

| with |
| --- |
| 4. Through clubs, through parent's involvement in the education of girls and through involving them in meetings |
| 5. Families can be helped to develop effective advocacy skills through workshops, capacity building, talk shows, flyers, etc. |
| 6. By equipping them with the full information on the importance of a girl child education |
| 7. Create more awareness |
| 8. To encourage them in doing the right things |

| How parents be encouraged to advocate for the education of girls and women in the community |
| --- |
| 1. They should know their interests first |
| 2. Parents can be encouraged if they are being engaged in advocacy programme |
| 3. Parents can be encouraged to advocate for the education of girls and young women through capacity building |
| 4. By telling them how education can benefit their children, family and country at large |
| 5. By involving them in PTA Meetings and other meetings involving the Education of Girls always |
| 6. By raising awareness against activities that hinder the girl child's progression in life e.g early pregnancy |
| 7. In case they are living in poverty, they can advise them to their girls to school, because it is a way of alleviating poverty |
| 8. Show them lived examples of successful women who are educated especially from those communities |

| What can leaders in the country do to ensure that all girls and young women have access to equal education? |
| --- |
| 1. By making sure that the learning and teaching facilities are available (facilities which favor girls education) |
| 2.Build more schools where girls can go and acquire education |
| 3. Make deliberate policies that will not discriminate a girl child |

| 4. Through sensitizing them on radio and Tv, by providing more education access to GCE centers. By providing them with more literacy lessons to the uneducated girls |
| --- |
| 5. Continue providing free education, continue with the re-entry policy for girls who fall pregnant. |
| 6. Leaders in the country need to ensure that all girls and young women have access to quality education by providing equal opportunities to both sexes providing the necessary needs. |

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

*PARENTS: GROUP A and GROUP B Responses*

| Participation in Girls Education Advocacy | |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | 100 % |

| Reasons for Participating |
| --- |
| A. They want to help the girl child to advance in their schooling, and they want to know the welfare of the young girls |
| B. We advocate through teacher recruitment in schools because the teachers are the ones that teach our children, so the only way we advocate is by asking our civic leaders to bring more teachers to our schools.<br><br>ii) One said she advocates through Facebook and other WhatsApp platforms from where he is involved, they talk about schools having proper sanitary pads for girls, desks, and proper toilets for girls, and asking different stakeholders to take part in championing girls' education.<br><br>iii) One said they advocate for the girls through CDF in terms of skills development for girls, an example is of one girl who was left out on the list of those who had applied for skills, and after pushing the council the girl was given a place and sponsored her for catering.<br><br>iv) One said they do not know anything about issues of advocating for the girls because our duty is to send them to school and it is the duty of the school to take care of them.<br><br>v) It is the responsibility of the government to help the girls. |

| Reasons for participating/Not Participating |
| --- |
| A. They have a responsibility to ensure that the girls have a better future |
| B. We do that so that they can have a better future<br><br>ii) Looking at traditions, in the past when a man died there was poverty in the family because only a man would be the only one providing for the family, so today if we support a girl child going to school even after the death of the loved one they would still help and support the children and family. This helps to strike a balance.<br><br>iii) Girls and women can also have equal opportunities; education will help them compete for any position and field of work.<br><br>iv) Some of us do not know how to advocate for girls. |

| The Role of the Community in advocating for a change in girls and young women's education? |
| --- |
| A. To help the girls understand the cultural norms and to help the girls grow well |
| B. Our role is to advise girls to go to school and to tell them the benefits of education especially now that we have free education from the government.<br><br>ii) I think our main role is to send them to school that is all. |

| Examples of where parents have successfully advocated for a change in girls education |
| --- |
| A. None-They have not seen any example |
| B. There has been no meaningful success because as parents, we do not know how to work together, due to a lack of advocacy skills, unity and it is maybe because we do not know what to do. |

| Strategies that can be used in the advocacy of girls' and young women's education |
| --- |
| A. Working together with the teachers to inculcate good values in the girls and school authorities of parents should ensure that they work together with parents |
| B. We must be sitting together as community members and agree on <br><br> how best we can help our girls, through a united voice we can achieve great change. <br><br> ii) It is the role of the community to seek dialogue with the government, and civic leaders to bring change that relates to girls education. <br><br> iii) Looking at the problems and challenges that we have around our schools, communities must come up with groups or clubs that must be allocated within schools to counsel girls in and out of school. This will help cab the issue of early pregnancies, early marriages, and other issues that influence girls to stay away from school. <br><br> iv) Schools and communities must work together to help girls who are in and out of school. <br><br> v) The issue of repeating one or two grades after one fails should be canceled as it is discouraging many not to go back to school in fear of being laughed at learning with younger girls than them. |

| How the community can participate in advocating for girls' and young women's education |
| --- |
| A. By attending meetings to address the challenges faced by the girls |
| B. Inform people through drama groups <br><br> ii) Formation of education literacy clubs in our communities and schools <br><br> iii) Through economic empowerment for the girls who have children, and those in schools so that even after school as they wait for jobs they can still be making a living. |

| The Role of the family in the advocacy of girls and young women's education |
| --- |
| A. Teach and protect, to advise and to encourage girls on the importance of education |
| B. As families, they should always work with schools to help girls in schools and sensitize community members on the importance of education so that those girls out of school can also have the zeal of going back to school. <br><br> ii) Families should involve teachers in one on one discussions |

| How families can be helped to develop effective advocacy skills for the education of girls and young women's education |
|---|
| A. Involve them in pieces of training (capacity building) and give flyers and hand-outs in vernacular local languages |
| B. Our role is first to ensure that girls are enrolled in school and our role is to support girls and the rest for the government. |

| How can parents be encouraged to advocate for the education of girls and young women in communities |
|---|
| A. They need information on how to advocate and gain capacity-building skills. |
| B. They must be involved in meetings<br><br>ii) We don't know how best families can help<br><br>iii) We can empower them through doing business if they cannot be educated because when they are economically empowered they will have independence and be able to make their own decisions.<br><br>iv) Those in school can also learn the business as it is an empowerment for them even if they are educated. |

| What leaders in the country do to ensure that all girls and young women have access to equal education |
|---|
| A. Help girls with business/scholarships, Equip the girls with skills (vocational), Provide sanitary pads for girls, |
| Provide opportunities for all girls regardless of their level of education, Increase on the opportunities for girls. |
| B. They must support communities through infrastructure development of schools/classroom blocks, toilets, and the deployment of teachers for quality education.<br><br>ii) Government must be able to properly monitor the support they to communities e.g. teachers who are deployed if they are really teaching in the schools they are posted to, are the built classes being used accordingly to the purpose?<br><br>iii) Both civic and traditional leaders must be engaging the community for them to know their concerns and needs.<br><br>iv) Community leaders must also be monitoring community works and policies in order to help the government in making correct decisions concerning girls' and young women's education. |

**Discussion of Findings**

Girl child education remains a slogan in the world of advocacy, and after years of fighting for equality and equal access to opportunities, the movement in empowering girls through education continues to grow. Whilst Zambia has a clear population demographic stipulating that there are more females than males in the country, the female gender continues to be marginalized and are disproportionately affected by a myriad of societal issues. In an attempt to configure the reasons for these discrepancies, this research sought to critically analyze the role of the key players in the activism of girl child education advocacy in rural areas by determining the willingness of stakeholders to participate in the advocacy as-well as analyzing whether they understand the specific roles they all play.

This study, carried out in Kafue and Chibombo, both being rural communities in Zambia, interrogated the parents, local authorities, head teachers, school teachers and secondary school going girls as key informants to help assess the progress of the girl child education movement in their locality.

As per the results harvested from this exercise, it was clear to note that majority of the Girls are actually not actively participating in the advocacy of Girl Child Education in their area, the main reason being that they aren't aware of it and have little to no information about advocacy. However, the girls confirmed to be willing to be involved and understand the roles they should play. Amongst the roles they ought to play, it was unanimously agreed that their role is to sensitize their community and that this would be carried out mostly through Community Groupings. The plights of the young women originated on the provision of a holistic and female-considerate education system that would factor the unique challenges that girls face such as a greater implementation of the return/re-entry policy of pregnant girls or young mothers, and having more provisions of Sanitary Wear for females. They believe that the responsibility of the procurement of educational infrastructure would be that of the government and CSO would provide support.

These findings slightly contrasted the position of the Parents who, in-fact, attested to being actively involved in the advocacy of girl child education.  The reasons for their involvement, amongst many others, was the general concern of equality and investing in the development of their community and country at large, through empowering young girls. It is important to note however, that a few parents disputed the involvement of parents in the advocacy of education of the girl child. One stated, "There has been no meaningful success because as

parents, we do not know how to work together, due to a lack of advocacy skills, unity and it is maybe because we do not know what to do."

Other Key Players consisted of the guidance and Counseling teachers, Teachers for English and School Head teachers, who affirmed active participation in girls 'education advocacy. They understood their role being to provide mentorship and to assist in the implementation of policies.

Ultimately, it is safe to say that all stakeholders in rural areas find great importance in educating the girl child, and have ideas of interventions that could be used to facilitate this movement. Players understand their roles, but they are equally aware of their limitations thereof. This level of self-consciousness is critical to ensure that tailor-made solutions are developed and that effective strategies are made and implemented.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is clear that the issue of girls' education in rural areas is complex and multifaceted, with various stakeholders playing different roles in the advocacy movement. While some key players such as parents, guidance and counseling teachers, teachers, and school head teachers have affirmed their active participation in girl child education advocacy, it is concerning that many girls are not aware of this advocacy or the specific roles they should play.

To address this issue, the following is recommended:

### 1. Education and Training:

This involves organizing educational workshops, community meetings with girls and young women, or awareness campaigns to engage with the target group (girls) and share information about the importance of the cause of advocating, especially from ground root. These educational programs that equip girls with the skills necessary for advocacy work.

### 2. Creating Safe Spaces:

There is a need for the government and institutions of learning to focus on creating safe and supportive environments where girls feel comfortable expressing their opinions and ideas. This could involve mentorship programs that help girls become empowered for public engagements, support groups for those girls who are introverts and are unable to break out from their fears, or creating platforms for sharing experiences as this will help girls develop

life skills like Self-awareness, Self Esteem, Assertiveness Empathy, Decision Making, Problem-Solving, Critical Thinking, Creative thinking, Effective Communication. Etc... The centers or r girls' corners will empower girls with the skill to advocate without fear or intimidation.

### 3. Community Engagement:

The government supports the creation of adult literacy centers at the grassroots level for engaging with local leaders, policymakers like ward councilors, chairpersons and those in charge of the Community Development Fund as this will also help in creating a political will to champion girls' affairs. This will also help community members to gain support and resources for education advocacy initiatives.

### 4. Communication Strategies:

Girls must be empowered in the positive use of effective communication strategies to raise awareness about the importance of girls' education and the role of advocacy in achieving it. This could involve social media campaigns, public awareness events, or partnerships with local media outlets.

- That there be a concerted effort to sensitize girls to the importance of their involvement in girls' education advocacy. This is because girls and young women are victims of different forms of abuse both in their communities and schools, sometimes even at their homes. In the Zambian communities child marriage is an economic and social problem mainly driven by poverty and luck of opportunity, with about 60% of Zambian population living in poverty. Child marriages are used as a way of reducing the perceived financial burden a girl child places on her family and to receive money through the payment of lobola (bride price) .This causes negative effects on families, community and Zambia's economy such as intergenerational cycle of poverty, lack of skills, knowledge and job prospects needed to lift families out of poverty and contribute to the country's social and economic growth. It is therefore important for girls to be involved in the advocacy process because they are the most affected. Currently, there is a global movement for girls and women's rights, equality, and justice that includes both men and women. Girls must lift their voices in unison to denounce any form of abuse on them. This can be done through community groupings where girls can

be educated about their rights and how they can actively participate in advocating for better educational opportunities.

- There should be a focus on providing a holistic and female-considerate education system that factors in the unique challenges that girls face. This could include greater implementation of policies such as the return/re-entry policy for pregnant girls or young mothers and the provision of sanitary wear for females. Government and CSOs should work together to provide support for these interventions and form a zonal district and provincial monitoring committees that will ensure that sanitary pads are administered well.

- Government through the Constituency Development Fund where we have a percentage for education grants they can apportion a small percentage that can be allocated to sanitary pads for the girls.

- The Government through the Community Development Fund must facilitate the construction of girls' inclusive ablutions blocks with proper washrooms.

- CSOs can advocate for community literacy clubs in rural communities to help community members with numeracy and literacy services as this will greatly help them become aware of the importance of education and in turn champion education for girls, and they can start by advocating through their area civic leaders.

- Furthermore, key players such as parents should be equipped with advocacy skills and encouraged to work together towards the common goal of empowering young girls through education.

- Open trade schools could also be established to help girls acquire skills like tailoring and bricklaying.


**Conclusion**

In conclusion, all stakeholders agree on the importance of educating the girl child in rural communities but acknowledge their limitations.

In the sensitization of the parents and guardians recommended in earlier sections, effort should be made to include sensitizing them on the need to value the education of their girl child as much as that of their boy child. They need to be made to realize that a girl's continuing with school does not mean that she will never get married.

Working together through informed sensitization programs aimed at equipping girls with information on how they can participate actively in advocating for girl child education coupled with tailor-made solutions and effective strategies backed by government support will go a long way toward achieving this important objective.

Lastly, highlight the potential benefits of investing in girls' education, both at an individual and societal level leads to the creation of equal opportunities. For example, educating girls can lead to improved health outcomes, increased economic participation, and reduced rates of infant mortality.

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# Annex 4: FACET Action Research Report

**FACET EOL ACTION RESEARCH**

<div align="center">

**Section One**

**INTRODUCTION**

</div>

## Background of the study

Access to quality education for girls and young women from rural and farming communities is a fundamental right and a powerful tool for personal empowerment, economic development and social progress. However, many girls and young women in rural and farming communities continue to face barriers to education due to a wide range of factors in their social, cultural and political environments. This view is also shared by Msuya, (2020) who argues that traditional beliefs, cultural norms and practices are still deeply rooted in farming communities and still have a major impact on the accessibility of education to girls and young women.

Farming communities form the backbone of Zimbabwe's agricultural sector, contributing to the country's food security and economic stability. These communities often adhere to traditional beliefs, customs, and gender roles that perpetuate gender inequalities and hinder girls' educational opportunities (Msuya, 2020). Cultural practices such as early marriage where girls are forced into unions at a young age result in their withdrawal from school. Child marriage is a significant issue in Zimbabwe particularly in rural and farming communities where poverty rates are high and traditional practices deeply entrenched. According to a 2019 UNICEF report, 32% of girls in Zimbabwe are married before the age of 18, with a higher prevalence in rural areas. Mazowe is reported to have 50% of girls married before the age of 18. (Brown, 2012) highlights that early marriages serve as a barrier to education for many girls and that the longer a girl stays in school tends to reduce the likelihood of early marriage.

Farming Community Educational Trust (FACET) area of operation Mazowe Rural district is located in Mashonaland Central province of Zimbabwe. Farming communities in Mazowe Rural District are dominated by Malawians, Mozambicans and Zambians who migrated to Zimbabwe to provide labor in farms during the 1895- 1961 colonial era (Madimu, 2017). Both 'alien' and domestic farm workers tend to be the poorest sections of rural communities. The conditions under which these workers were recruited were exploitative and oppressive. Many were subjected to forced labor, low wages, and poor living conditions and they had little or no legal protection. Indeed, the majority of them have lived in Zimbabwe their entire lives and have no formal links with the countries of their ancestral

origin. Nevertheless, as a result mainly of bureaucratic obstacles and high levels of illiteracy among these foreign farm workers, few had ever acquired Zimbabwean citizenship documents, or even any identity documents such as birth certificates. Simply because their ancestors came from outside Zimbabwe, when these workers lost their homes on the commercial farms during the land Redistribution in 2000, they had no ancestral homes to which they could return (IDMC, 2008). Many of these workers settled permanently in the country and their descendants continue to be part of Zimbabwe's multi-cultural society today.

Farming communities in Zimbabwe are known for having various ethnic groups and backgrounds living and working together on farms exposed to vulnerable conditions and subject to precarious livelihoods, poor working conditions and limited access to assets. As a result of this parents fail to send their children to school and because of lack of education in these communities young people tend to have poor health seeking behaviors, there are high infection rates of HIV, STIs, child marriages and teen pregnancies are common. Mashonaland Central's estimated number of people living with HIV is 32 279 and prevalence of HIV is 9.2% (2022 estimates) according to National Aids Council. Sexual debuts within the district start at a very young age as low as between 8 and 9 years hence high rates of child marriages and unwanted pregnancies. Quite a number cultural practices, norms and attitudes in farming communities fuel the spread of HIV at the same time greatly affecting girls and young women's access to education evidenced by the high rate of female students' school drop outs in the district.

The consequences of limited access to education in farming communities are wide ranging. It not only deprives them of their right to learn and develop their potential but also hampers their ability to break free from poverty, contribute to their communities, and participate fully in social and economic life. Recognizing the urgent need to address these various issues, various global frameworks and commitments provide a foundation for advocating for girls' education. The Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education underscore the importance of ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all including girls. International human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child instruments further highlight the necessity of protecting girls' rights to education, free from discrimination and harmful cultural practices.

To drive effective change and develop targeted interventions, it is crucial to understand the specific effects of cultural practices and norms on girls and young women's access to education in farming communities. By employing the social change matrix, SDGs, human rights perspectives, patriarchy analysis and social norms theory complexities of these issues can be delved into and light on potential pathways for transformation can be shed.

**Statement of the problem**

Education must be for everyone as enshrined in the education act of Zimbabwe; however, it seems not to be the case in Mazowe District of Mashonaland Central of Zimbabwe as evidenced by the high rate of female students' school drop outs in the district.

**Objectives**

- To explore the existing cultural norms and exclusionary practices in farming communities and how they have enabled or constrained change in relation to what girls and young women want in terms of education
- To identify opportunities for policy interventions, community engagement and awareness campaigns to dismantle barriers and promote gender equality in education
- Evaluate our advocacy message relevance, accessibility and effectiveness to our advocacy targets

**Research Questions**

1. What are the effects of cultural norms and practices on girl child education in Mazowe Rural District of Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe.
2. What are the aims of education for girls in rural and farming communities? Has education been achieving these aims?
3. What are the reflections of the work of FACET and its effectiveness?
4. What are the recommendations to increase FACET's impact in communities?

**Significance**

The research may be relevant to policy makers as they may find it useful to comprehend responsibility in their communities. As a result, the study may provide insightful data in the management of such problems. Additionally, the data gathered from this study can be used to develop fresh approaches to forming public policy or to abandon the outmoded ones. This study might also lay the groundwork for the stakeholders to learn new things and establish a new foundation of dealing with issues concerning the education of the girl child.

**Literature review**

Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which knowledge, skills, abilities and habits of a group of people are transported from one generation to the next through teaching training, research or simply through auto-dictatism. India leads the world in the number of children and the majority of them are girls. While the enrolment of girls in public education has increased substantially since independence. In the present world, overall female participation in education at all levels is still below

50% (Miller, 2007). Education for the girls is one of the principles that track ways to promote social and economic development.

Cultural norms and beliefs prove to be restraints upon the acquisition of education. The older individuals mainly possess this viewpoint that girls should be trained regarding the household management and in taking care of the needs and requirements of the family members (Alabi, & Alabi, 2014). Education and academic learning is not meant for them, as they will not be able to utilize their education, skills and abilities in an effective manner in any area. Early marriage of girls is the primary factor that lead to discontinuation of education (Gupta, & Aggarwal, 2012). There have been cases, when girls get married within the course of their acquisition of education. Marriage imposes numerous responsibilities on girls and they do not find time to attend schools. In the household of the parents, they may attend schools, but as they get married and go to another home, they eventually have to drop out of schools.

**Research Approach**

This study employed a case study methodology - a type of qualitative research methodology which enables in depth examinations in a natural environment.

**Data Collection Methods**

The researchers collected data using questionnaires. A sample of 105 people were used. Data was collected by means of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews. Collection was done in four communities in Mazowe Rural District, Mashonaland Central Zimbabwe. The FGDs consisted of parents, in and out of school youths including adolescent girl and young women, community leaders, stakeholders and representatives from ministries. Each group comprised of 6-10 participants. Key informant interviews were done with community leaders of the mentioned groups.

<div align="center">**Section Two**</div>

<div align="center">**LITERATURE REVIEW**</div>

The issue of girls' access to education in farming communities is influenced by various factors, including cultural practices and norms. This literature review aims to explore the effects of these cultural practices and norms on girls' education using a multidimensional framework incorporating the social change matrix, SDGs, human rights, patriarchy and social norms theory. Understanding these effects is crucial for developing effective policies and interventions to promote gender equality in education.

Like many African societies, Zimbabwean society is strongly patriarchal. The relationship between men and women is one of male domination and female subordination (Kambarami 2016), which in general deprives women of the power to influence processes and functions in society. This view is also supported by Newbury and Wallace, (2015) who see power as a question of domination. In addition, Zimbabwean tribes and communities are traditionally collectivistic. People tend to put their group or family's interests before their own, receiving support, protection and a sense of belonging in return. There is a great emphasis on communal gathering within tribes, where people share stories, music, songs and dance. However, the social change matrix provides a framework for understanding social issues and strategies for change. In the context of girls' education, it helps analyze the interplay between individual attitudes, community beliefs, institutional practices, and broader social structures. By examining each dimension, barriers and opportunities for transforming cultural practices and norms that affect girls' education in farming communities can be identified.

The model is both descriptive, in that it can be used to analyze current efforts and where they may be falling short, and strategic, in that it can be used to help think through how to achieve your goals (Wallace, 2016). The social change matrix consists of four dimensions; individual, interpersonal, institutional and socio-cultural. Individual dimensions explore the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of individuals such as parents, community members, teachers regarding girls' education. This dimension plays a significant role in identifying and analyzing gender biases stereotypes or expectations that hinder girls' access to education. The interpersonal dimension examines the relationship and interactions between individuals and groups within the community. They may be social norms, peer pressure or family dynamics that may restrict girls' education or reinforce traditional gender roles. Socio- cultural dimension considers the cultural and societal context, cultural values, traditions, media representations and prevailing social norms related to gender roles and education. Wallace, (2016) further brings to light that; social change occurs if there are enough people, if the right people are involved, when minds are changed and when systems are changed.

Social norms theory examines the underwritten rules and expectations that guide behavior within a community. In farming communities social norms related to gender roles, marriage practices and the value of education heavily influences girls' access to education. Social norms are defined as ideals that create shared expectations and dictate informal rules among a group of people that influence how people should behave. They are reinforced from a young age and are deeply internalized by community members including women and girls deeply rooted in values that serve to endow power to men and boys and that perpetuate ideologies around feminity  as being subordinate and submissive. Gender biases are taught across a wide range of societal structures from homes, places of worship and at school (Yotebieng, 2021).  Contextually social norms influence behavior by shaping what a group of people of people deem to be normal and acceptable. Reasons for a person to conform to a social norm depends on a person's privilege access to various forms of capital and is often linked with power and status and the rewards or punishments linked with complying or breaking the law (Vaitlan et al, 2017). ALIGN, (2019) identified several prevalent practices and attitudes that stem from gendered social norms that serve as barriers to girls' education and these are; perceptions on girls' education as inappropriate or irrelevant, early marriage and pregnancy, the need for girls to work outside the home, girls' lack of aspirations and motivation linked with a lack of appropriate role models, corporal punishment, religious and traditional concerns, gender based violence and harassment, teacher bias against girls  and rites of passage. Vaitlan et al, (2017) stressed the importance of understanding girls' aspirations when theorizing and subsequently formulating interventions that address barriers to access and quality of girls' education. Girls around the world continue to strive to realize various educational, personal and professional aspirations despite the social norms and that often lead to discrimination and which may limit their opportunities and increase their exposure to various social and physical harms (Vaitlan et al, (2017). Yotebieng, (2021) further proposes that barriers to girls' education need to be conceptualized at the intersection of where their aspirations meet the obstacles erected by practices stemming from social norms, while also identifying the driving forces that keep these forces in place. Social norms can influence health, environmental and philanthropic attitudes and behaviors can be influenced through communication campaigns (Schulman et al, 2017).

The term cultural practices denote forms of human activities and ways to become part of social circles and networks. Practice draws attention to circumstances or opportunities in which culturally defined forms of human activity are initiated. The Centre for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition defines culture as shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs that are learned by socialization. Culture can essentially be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group. Human beings are social animals with an innate desire to conform to

socially accepted norms and values (Ogundipe, 2019). Cultural practices can have substantial effects on girls' access to education. Examples of practices that can hinder girls' access to education include gender roles and expectations, early marriage and child bearing, social norms and discrimination, safety and security concerns and lack of decision-making power. Although some cultural practices are progressive, culture is sometimes used as a reason to perpetuate various forms of abuse that are harmful to girls (International NGO Council on Violence Against Children, 2012). These practices confine girls to inferior positions with respect to inheritance, property, marriage and decision making, foster violence and abuse, and encourage sexual, physical and psychological harm (Kohli &Malhotra 2011).

Patriarchy structures and gender norms prevalent in farming communities often reinforce gender inequalities in education. Studies highlight how patriarchal beliefs and expectations perpetuate a cycle of poverty and often reinforce the marginalization of girls in accessing education in farming communities. According to Guy-Evans, (2023) patriarchy is the idea that men have more power, dominance and privilege than women. It is a social system in which men hold primary power and pre-dominant in roles of political authority. It is a set of symbols that make up a culture, embodied by everything from the conversations to literature and film. Patriarchy has institutions defined as a set of mechanisms, practices, beliefs, myths and relationships relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to the distribution of resources, the reproduction of individuals and the type of societal structures within a given patriarchy ((Facio, 2013). In patriarchy it is usually, men who are able to maintain oppression over women through institutions such as education, religion and the family. Patriarchy justifies inequalities and injustices between genders. The power dynamics often results in the devaluation of girls' education, as traditional gender roles assign women to domestic spheres while men are expected to be breadwinners and decision makers. This reduction perpetuates gender disparities in educational opportunities. Patriarchal societies often uphold social norms and expectations that restrict girls' access to education. Patriarchal systems can lead to direct and indirect discrimination against girls through unequal resource allocation. Patriarchy intersects with economic factors as poverty excessively affects girls' access to education. Economic constrains also often force families to prioritize boys' education over girls spreading disparities (Guy-Evans, 2023).

Sustainable Development Goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. They were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 (UNDP, 2022). The SDGs, particularly goal 4 on quality education and Goal 5 on gender equality, emphasize the importance of ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all, including girls. Literature shows that cultural practices and norms in farming communities can hinder progress towards these goals. For instance, early marriage and gendered roles often result in girls being

withdrawn form school, perpetuating gender disparities in education. Sustainable Development Goal 4 focuses specifically on education and is aimed at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The right to education is as fundamental human right, and cultural practices and norms should not infringe upon it. From a human rights perspective, it is essential to challenge discriminatory practices and ensure equal educational opportunities for girls. Several international human rights agreements exist to protect the rights of the girl child. The Convention on the rights of the child is an important treaty for girls as well as for boys because it establishes the economic, political, civil, social and cultural rights of children. The CRC is a legally binding international treaty and countries that have ratified it are obliged to implement its provisions within their domestic legislation (UN, 1989). The CRC has been ratified by 196 countries making it the most ratified human rights treaty in history. The CRC article consists of 54 articles that cover a wide range of rights for children. Some of the key principles of the convention include non-discrimination *outlined in Article 2,* best interests of the child *outlined in Article 3*, right to life survival and development, health and healthcare, participation, Civil right and freedoms – this CRC recognizes children's rights to freedom of expression, thought, conscience, religion, association and peaceful assembly. The CRC on education and cultural rights recognizes the right to education and aims to ensure that all children have access to quality education. The principle of protection from abuse, exploitation, and violence seeks to protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. It addresses issues such as child labor, child trafficking, sexual exploitation and harmful traditional practices (UN, 1989).

This literature review highlights the significant effects of cultural practices and norms on girls' education in farming communities. By utilizing frameworks such as the social change matrix, SDGs, human rights, patriarchy, and social norms theory complexities of these issues can be understood and can also lead to the development of strategies to promote gender equality in education. Addressing cultural practices and norms requires a multidimensional approach that involves collaboration between communities, policy makers and stakeholders to ensure inclusive and equitable educational opportunities for girls in farming communities.

**Section Three**

**DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

**<u>Cultural norms and practices.</u>**

Participants from different groups outlined and described existing cultural practices, attitudes and beliefs that impact the girl child's education. They stated that:

> "…in farming communities of Zimbabwe there exists a traditional belief known as *"kuripiswa ngozi".* This belief holds that if a family member has committed an offence resulting in harm or death to someone else, a form of retribution is required to appease the spirit of the victim in accordance with this belief the family of the offender is obliged to offer a young girl to be married off to the affected family as a way to compensate for the wrongdoing".

Other participants stated that "in certain farming communities there exists a distressing practice known as *Kuzvarira*".  They further noted that this practice involves the unknowing offering of a girl from one family to another for marriage with the intention of alleviating poverty in her own family. It typically occurs during times of crisis such as food and resource shortages, when families are driven to extreme measures to survive. They further elaborated that "Kuzvarira" was particularly prevalent during the economic downturn of 2008 and the ongoing Covid 19 era, which exacerbated the already challenging circumstances faced by communities. Thus, these crises intensified the desperation felt by families, leading to exploitation of their own children as a means of coping with dire circumstances.

In certain popular religious sects in Zimbabwe, known as "*vapostori"* apostolic sects, the belief of *kurotera-* dreaming prevalent. This practice revolves around the belief that a person's merit or spiritual standing is dependent on the number of women they marry. Within the Johane Marange sect a distinct seating arrangement is observed during church services. Men occupy the front seats, while boys sit at the back. On the other hand, girls are positioned at the front, seemingly to allow older men to scrutinize them.  Dreaming taken seriously in these religious sects. It is deeply concerning that after men older men from the church declare that they have given a young girl in their dreams, some parent may accept this without considering the well-being and rights of the child at a young age. This belief can lead to forced marriages of young girls at young age under the guise of respecting traditions.

Some respondents reported that they had been subjected to *Makumburo* without consent*. Makumburo* is a traditional practice prevalent if farming communities, characterized by the examination of a girl's sexual organs to determine if she has been engaged in sexual activities

or been intimate with men. This practice is based on the belief that the sexual purity and virtue of a girl are markers of her adherence to cultural or societal norms. During the examination, individuals often community elders or designated examiners scrutinize the girl's genitals for signs of previous sexual activity. If any indication of such activity is found, it is assumed that the girl has violated societal expectations leading to severe consequences. In cases where signs of prior sexual activity are detected, the girl is typically forced to elope or marry the person she is suspected to be involved with, even without her consent. Additionally, if a girl is seen walking with a boy during odd hours, it may be assumed that they are engaging in inappropriate behavior, further perpetuating the belief that such actions warrant forced marriage.

Some respondents reported that they had been subjected to the practice called "*Chigadzamapfihwa*". The "*Chigadzamapfihwa*" practice observed in certain communities involves the selection of a girl by the deceased's husband to marry following the death of his wife. The selection is typically based on the preferences of the widower, who choses a girl he wishes to marry and potentially establish a new marital relationship with. In some cases, the deceased husband's wealth plays a significant role in influencing the decisions of family members. If the deceased husband was providing substantial benefits to his family, relatives may object to the widower marrying a girl from a different family. This objection stems from the desire to retain resources that were previously associated the deceased's husband. Additionally, the deceased's wife prior to her death may also designate a specific girl such as their niece to marry her husband without obtaining consent of the girl.

*Chinanwari* is a traditional process observed in certain farming communities to initiate girls into womanhood. During this initiation girls are taught various aspects of adult life, including bedroom practices and other aspects related to marriage, The intention behind *Chinamwari* is to prepare girls for their future roles as wives and mothers. *Chinamwari* begins as early as 9,10,11 years of age. However, it is important to note that early exposure to intimate knowledge and practices can have unintended consequences particularly when it comes to early marriages and early sexual debuts. The initiation process may create a cultural expectation that girls are ready for marriage and sexual relationships once they have undergone *Chinawari*. In some cases, men may actively pursue girls who have undergone *Chinamwari* assuming that they are now prepared for adult relationships. This can lead to situations where girls are pressured into early marriages or engage in early sexual activity, sometimes without fully understanding the consequences to make informed decisions."

Some participants reported that survivors of child marriages and harmful cultural practices frequently encounter stigmatization when attempting to resume their education, which is particularly evident in farming communities. These survivors face the added difficulty of age disparities with their classmates and in some instances, they are unfairly labelled as polluting other children due to their past experiences. Other participants stated that "the re-entry or the re admission process of girls from farming communities back into school after dropping out due to pregnancy is hindered by men, as motivated by jealousy men are reluctant to allow young women to return to school". Thus, there is a prevailing fear among these men that once their wives attain education, they may abandon them.

Some participants reported that patriarchy continues to hold sway in farming communities, where girls often bear the burnt of its effects. They are frequently sacrificed, their needs and aspirations overshadowed by the prioritization of boys. It was noted that gender bias is especially evident when it comes to resource allocation, where limited resources are disproportionately channeled towards boys' education leaving girls at a disadvantage.

Other participants also reported that in some farming communities, a clear bias exists towards prioritizing boys over girls when it comes to educational opportunities. Within the family structure, parents often face the difficult decision of choosing which child between a male and female, to sacrifice in terms of education. In many cases girls are overlooked or given lower priority. Further to that cultural beliefs and practices contribute to this disparity. In certain contexts, marriage is viewed as a profession or a primary role for girls rather than pursuing education. This mindset perpetuates the early marriage of girls within some apostolic sects, where children as young as 13, 14 and 15 are forced into marriage. In a family when a parent falls ill, it is often expected that the girl child takes the responsibility of caring for her siblings She is required to assume caregiving duties and potentially sacrificing her own educational and personal development. This expectation stems from gender norms and community beliefs that consider girls as nurturing and responsible for familial duties. As a result, when a parent falls sick, the immediate response is often to rely on the girl child to step in and take care of siblings.

The other proportion of girls engages in transactional relationships with older individuals commonly known as blessers or sugar daddies. The phenomenon was said to be often driven by a combination of socio-economic factors and low self-esteem among girls. Girls may see entering into relationships with blessers as a means of obtaining financial support material possessions and an escape from their current situations.

Some girls willingly leave school to get married and have children at a young age due to financial considerations or the belief that it will provide them with a better life. So were said to see it an escape

from poverty or as a way to access resources and support from their partners and partners' families. Other participants reported that the presence of drugs in communities partially contributes to increased school drop out rates among girls. Girls abusing have developed addictions, poor decisions making and lack focus on education therefore making it difficult to balance their education with their substance abuse habits leading them to drop out of school.

The issue of parenting particularly in situations where children are living grandparents or single parents has impact on the child's education, well being and overall development. When children are living with grandparents, grandparents may face challenges in providing adequate support and supervision, including ensuring regular school attendance. Grandparents may also face difficulties in meeting the emotional and educational needs of the children, particularly if they themselves are elderly or facing health issues.

Single parents, who are often faced with the sole responsibility of parenting can face challenges in meeting the demands of raising a child. Balancing work, childcare and other responsibilities can be overwhelming, and it may impact their ability to provide the necessary support and guidance for their children's education. Single parents may also face financial constrains and limited access to resources, making it difficult to provide adequate educational opportunities for their children.

Participants from different groups highlighted that

> Education benefits everyone at large, including community, parents and the nation itself. It adds more value when the girl child is educated and they are able to make better life decisions and live better. If there is no education, it becomes a burden on the whole community as this brings about early marriages and early child pregnancies. The participants all agreed that education is important and it increases the value of young girls as after learning they can reason better and also become self-sustainable. Girls' role in education in the family is to work so that they can be able to help their siblings and elevate the rest of the family members.

> Girls' role in education in the family is to work so that they can be able to help their siblings and elevate the rest of the family members.

Others stated that

> Education makes women independent, self-reliant, gives them knowledge on human rights, makes them competent in various aspects of life make them modern, reduces child births- uneducated women give birth to more children. Education acquaints women with life management skills, knowledge, critical thinking, resilience, hygiene, equality and equity.

Education molds personalities. Uneducated women are oppressed because of illiteracy. Education also reduces child marriages and molds personalities.

Some of the participants also noted that the economic situation in Zimbabwe does not motivate them to learn as there is lack of job opportunities and those with education are also sitting at home.

Key informants from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education articulated that,

The achievement is approximately 60% because men are still dominating. Women are not getting equal opportunities. Education is trying to achieve these aims because there is guidance and counselling from ECD to form 6. Schools have clubs, quiz and child protection committees from Grade 3 to form 6. Girls now know their rights.

Groups of school going children stated that;

It depends with the type of education for example education 5.0 is making learning hands on and not only theoretical

**Priorities for FACET**

Participants stated the activities has been conducting in Mazowe rural District. They stated;

the re-entry advocacy, reusable pads sewing project, empowerment through information dissemination, returning girl to school – examples at Rujeko High school and Batanai Secondary school, introducing games, sporting activities and assisting with uniforms, trainings, debates to bring out themes, awareness campaigns on child marriages stating the advantages and disadvantages, trainings bringing enlightenment – girls now know their rights, Children are becoming closer to their parents, building relations between children and parents, roadshows, radio and TV programs.

Parent representatives stated that,

FACET needs to source for funds to pay fees for vulnerable children in each and every ward, increase sporting activities so as to reduce drug abuse in communities, increase impact and cover all communities in the district, undertake projects such as gardening to help communities, facilitate for informal education at one of the idle farmhouses, farmhouses to become schools so as to avoid mixing. Elder women need to be selected to become education champions to teach younger women as they are more serious with life.

They concluded by stating these organizational goals everyone needs to be incorporated

Representatives from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education District stipulated that;

Survivors of child marriages have to become role models. MoPSE alone cannot conduct all the education advocacy. FACET needs to get into mines and rural schools to increase coverage. FACET should increase child protection programs, Fund early warning systems that identification of those at the risk of dropping out of school. The District has 150 schools that need assistance.

Teacher representatives articulated that;

FACET should do quiz activities as often as possible, capacitate teachers, market its works in many schools in the district.

Representatives from the Ministry of youth stated that;

FACET should advocate for the boy child because their advocacy is one sided, follow up on people and have many branches for communication.

Girls from farm schools stated that they wanted to be big shop workers, teachers, entrepreneurs, musicians and actors. They stated that their role models were Polo G, Elon Musk, Robert Mugabe and Martin Luther King.

**Interpretation of findings**

According to groups of parents *Kuripa Ngozi* meant the end and payment of debt. People from the affected would stop experiencing repercussions such a death after a girl or a young woman saves them. The deceased family also benefited by getting another wife. *Kuzvarira* ends poverty in families. With regards to *Kurotera*, it is only the husband who has advantages. It has become the new type of slave trade. The girl child is left with no choice but to stop acquiring education. This practice deprives girls of their rights and exposes them to HIV and AIDS. *Chinamwari* exposes children to early sexual debuts and HIV/AIDS. Girls who go through the process of **chinamwari** are not divorced they become good wives. Participants highlighted that *kurotera* in churches, *makumburo* in communities, *chinamwari* and the fact tend to abuse women because of their accumulated abuse wealth.

In its advocacy FACET should advocate for the availability of schools set aside specifically for re-entry and child marriage survivors. FACET with its influence needs to facilitate for corners of learning where young women and girls can freely return to school. FACET's advocacy for re-entry should expand and cater for those who never received education at all. FACET to conduct community awareness campaigns at schools to teach those at school about the re-entry. Effectively DE campaign stigmatization at school and in the community. Awareness campaigns in schools to teach those at school about the re-entry policy. Educate men about the age of consent. Sensitize communities on the modalities of reporting cases of abuse as they ae underreported in the District. Girls continue to be

abused after getting married. Schools to protect children from extended families mostly orphans overwork and may not get assistance they need schools therefore need to protect them. FACET needs to help the underprivileged as they are prone to abuse.

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EOL ACTION RESEARCH

**ARE THERE ANY OBSERVABLE CHANGE IN SUPRANATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES AFFECTING GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN EDUCATION AND WHAT APPROACHES MADE THEM WORK**

**By**

**Girls Activist Youths Organization**

**Malawi**

A thesis submitted to the

SAYWHAT

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

**Background**

At the beginning of 2023, MDF/ACER in consultation with Regional Management Unit (RMU) proposed to the Girls Education Advocacy in the Region (GEAR) alliance, to participate as MDF/ACER case studies research into EOL Advocacy approaches. Girls Activist Youth Organization (GAYO) in Malawi participated in the action research. The action research will concentrate on how civil society organizations (CSOs) engage in Advocacy Polic Implementation in Malawi to improve equitable learning outcomes, particularly in relation to gender, intersectionality, and social inclusion.

The Education Sector Analysis (ESA) is a document chronicling the status of education in Malawi following the implementation of the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) from 2008 to 2017 and preceding the development of the 2020-2030 National Education Sector Investment Plan (NESIP). Cognisant of the role education plays in building the citizens' capacity intellectually, socially, economically and culturally, the Government of Malawi designated education as one of its key priority areas in third Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III) for execution for a period of five years from 2017 to 2022. It is against this background that the Government of Malawi intends to implement evidence based interventions and put up some investments in education to accelerate performance of all the other sectors in Malawi, thereby achieving sustainable reductions in hunger, poverty, malnutrition, and ill-health in the enlightened society. The ESA produces such evidence as it outlines achievements in education, and highlights impediments to the performance of the sector which, if addressed, will enable the country to fulfil its aspirations in line with its international commitments such as Continental Education Strategy Agenda (CESA) (2016-

2025), African Union Agenda 2063 (AU Agenda 2063) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for a period from 2015 to 2030.

**Legal and policy frameworks**

The Malawi National Policy Framework is guided by the 1993 Malawi Constitution in which education is a human right, the 2013 Education Policy, the National Education Act (2016) that provides for establishment, administration and management of primary and secondary education and teacher training colleges. Other acts guide the implementation of higher education institutions and technical and vocational training in Malawi. Malawi recognises that education is the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and African Union Agenda 2030 and education is essential for the success of all the other goals stipulated in the SDGs. Malawi, as a member of the African Union, is a signatory to the Continental Education Strategy Agenda (CESA 16-25). The African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government, during their Twenty-Sixth Ordinary Session on 31st January 2016 in Addis Ababa adopted CESA 16-25 as a framework for transforming education and training systems in Africa. Malawi has domesticated these global and continental initiatives through the third Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III) running from 2017 to 2022, which is an overarching development agenda for the country. MDGS III is a 5-year rolling plan that highlights Key Priority Areas (KPAs) of the nation, so that all development initiatives are aligned to it. MGDS III identifies Education and Skills Development as one of its KPAs. Malawi is undertaking several initiatives to address the issues advanced in the global, continental and national agendas. For instance, the education sector is allocated highest share of the national budget to implement various programs, projects and activities in the education sector and develop necessary human capital for sustainable socio-economic development of the country. Malawi has good international, regional and National framework that support

education. However, the implementation is not as much as it should be. The influence of CSOs is critical for the tracking of these framework implementation.

**Purpose of study**

The purpose of this study was to assess impact of CSO advocacy and effective approach of CSO to education advocacy in Malawi. The core objective of the action research is to identify the conditions under which citizen groups can influence government responsiveness. The research is trying to find out "Are there any observable change in supranational policy development processes affecting girls and young women in education and what approaches made them work"

The participants were asked to provide information related to the following questions;

- Most effective ways, strategy or approach for education policy advocacy

- Best practices that have led to success establishment of education investment policy

- Role of CSO in advocacy involvement in policy advocacy, development and implementation

- Roles of local leaders in advocacy and community members in advocacy

- What are Key actors of education advocacy

- What were the key forums/ spaces for advocacy for engagement

- Key priority and Challenges in education advocacy

- Impact education Advocacy of Education Policy

- Are there any observable change in supranational policy development processes affecting girls and young women in education

**Significant of study**

The results of this study are intended to help Malawian CSOs to understand the impact of CSO advocacy and effective approach of CSO to education advocacy in Malawi. It will help CSOs who designs advocacy approaches and strategy to effectively plan for the engagements with policy holder. The study will looked closely at Collaborative learning among the CSOs because they all used different approaches and they learn from one another they might come develop an effective approaches. Ford (2002) states that, "Meangful learning outcomes include those outcomes or task which people go around doing in a meanful way for the rest of their live" (p.69). It means CSOs should focus on the learning experiences of students when designing the curriculum. The study provides first-hand information from the CSOs which can help Malawian stakeholder to evaluate, revise and implement Education advocacy in Malawi.

Theoretical Framework

There are many theories that can explain how to come up with effective approaches to advocacy and draw the impact of CSOs advocacy in Malawi. However, this study used Cooperative learning theory as its theoretical framework because it deals with CSOs' social interactions. Learning and collaboration are the core aim of CSOs advocacy and it lead to outcome harvesting of project. Santrock (2001) defined Cooperative learning as "learning process that occurs when people work in small groups to help each other learn" (p. 358). The main emphasis here is interaction.

Vygotsky in his theory claimed that learning is highly dependent on people's social interaction with others who are better informed and learning is manifested in social interaction as well. Vygotsky believe that learning and all higher mental process depend on social interaction (Lefrancois, 1997). Santrock (2001) said that Cooperative learning promote people's positive peer interaction and positive personal decision making. Studying the

interaction of CSOs with government and among the CSOs themselves will help to draw impact

of advocacy as well development of effective advocacy

# CHAPTER 2
## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to assess impact of CSO advocacy and effective approach of CSO to education advocacy in Malawi. The participants of the study ware CSOs, Government official, Community leaders and Girls in the rural areas. The study examined the participants' experiences and perceptions in order to understand the impact of advocacy approaches and impact of CSOs education advocacy in Malawi. This chapter describes the research methods, design, participants' sampling methods, instrument of collecting data and analyzing data from participants, limitations of the study, validity and reliability of the information and research ethical issues.

Research method

This study used qualitative study method of research. Dawson (2002) said, "Qualitative research explores attitudes, behavior and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups. It attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants." (p.14). the qualitative method was relevant because it focused on the participants' perceptions and experiences, and how they make sense of the concepts in their life. Samy (2005) said that it is the believe of qualitative researchers that human beings are fundamentally different. Qualitative method revealed how each participant perceives extracurricular activities different. It also used some quantitative data to back up qualitative study.

The study results were trust wealthy because the researcher was involved in data collection as primary instrument. Active interaction between the researcher and participant allowed the researcher to gain insight and appreciation of the depth of the impact of the extracurricular activities on the participants' learning process. Study results were driven by valid data. The study was developed from gap existing in literature review and was explained

and expanded by the data that was collected. In this case the theory was realistic and trust wealthy (Creswell, 2014 ; Dawson, 2002 ; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005 ; Samy, 2005)

Research Design

Advocacy Activities are type of the activities that mostly are learned through experiences. This research used phenomenological design because the researcher wanted to understand experiences from the participant point of view (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005 ; Creswell, 2014).The research questions were design to provoke participants to provide descriptive personal information which was analyzed effectively. The study result provides knowledge of the major impact of impact of CSO advocacy and effective approach of CSO to education advocacy in Malawi.

**Sampling of the participants**

In this research participants that could give valid information were selected. To get valid information the researcher used purposeful sampling method of selecting participants. Samy (2005) defined purposeful sampling as the type of sampling in which the researcher draw on their knowledge of the subject under study and sample only participants that have useful information of behaviors or events that are relevant and that the participant experienced. The following are sample of the participants

| GROUP | NUMBER |
|---|---|
| Girls and boys | 30 |
| Chiefs | 30 |
| Key informants | 9 |
| CSOs | 10 |

| TOTAL | 79 |
|-------|-----|
|  |  |

**Data collection method and instruments**

In this reseach the primary data collection instrument was the researcher himself because the researcherhad personal interaction with participant. Other instruments which was used are phone recorder, note pad and pen. Recording material  stored information that contain both facts, perceptive, as well as feelings (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005 ; Creswell, 2014 ; Samy, 2005).The reseacher used face-to-face-one-on-one intesive interview method of data collection. Interview is a type of data collection method in which the researcher have personal interaction with the participants where the researcher ask participants same question  about the subject of study.

As explained by Samy (2005) using face-to-face-one-on-one intensive interviews is important because  it provided very detailed information about the reasons why respondents gave specific answers, and also it gave participants time to elaborate data concerning their opinions, values, motivation, recollections, experiences, and feelings are obtained. Another advantage was that personal intensive interview provided accurate responses on sensitive issues .During interviews the respondent could refuse to answer a question. however the researcher were able to  get information from the emotional feeling expessed by the responded.The researcher was aware that some of the participant was timid and some were highly exited to provide information. Creswel,(2014) and Samy, (2005)  explained that this can lead to false information. To get true the researcher  built good rapport with the participant and also observed both verbal and nonverbal information of the participants.

**Limitation of the study**

The research data correction method used was interviews. The researcher faced limitations during research. Firstly, the sample populations only consisted of CSOs, Government officials, community leaders and Girls in the rural area who are involved in education advocacy in Malawi under GEAR project. Due to inadequate resources and time to conduct research because the researcher is a student the information collected was biased toward some district and Zone. Secondly, the researcher did not include other examples of advocacy approaches. Therefore, the research findings are limited to specific areas of examples of developmental education advocacy and excludes political advocacy and confrontation advocacy. Thirdly, mostly method of research qualitative was used, therefore the results are biased to personal experiences of participants not number of outcomes.

Fourthly, one of the expert participants was not committed to the study. The researcher gave up and chooses another prospective participant.

Validity of the Study

The valid conclusion of the study was reached because the researcher compared the result to the research literature review which was drawn from various geographical locations. Throughout the process of research, EOL and SAYWHAT had to assess the validity of the data and results. As many research authors recommended like Creswell (2014), Dawson ( 2002) and Samy ( 2005 the final report which includes specific themes and conclusion of the research were shown to the participants to allow the participants to comment whether they feel that the report displayed their ideas and it was verified to be accurate.

The role of the researcher and research ethical issues

The researcher selected the research topic after many discussion with EOL research agency because of the relationship between advocacy and GEAR project. With  the experiences of GEAR project implementation the researcher as GEAR project implementors

wants to find out the reality of the impact of the education advocacy in Malawi as learning process without any biases. GAYO is implementing GEAR project in Malawi has built good relationship with CSOs, Community leader and members as well as government stakeholders. Despite good relationship with schools the researcher wrote letters of permission to the gate keeper authorities to gain consent of conducting research in the schools. The nature of the research was explained to the participants and all participants voluntarily signed consent form before they participate in the study.

The study was conducted in respect to participants' rights, values, privacy, and decisions. The participants was not forced or manipulated to give information. The data was analyzed manipulation. Following research ethics recommended by many research experts any use of the information from this study will be under permission from the participants (Creswell, 2014 ; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005 ; Samy, 2005 ; Dawson, 2002). In conclusion, this research was effectively done because the researcher followed proper research protocols of conducting action research study.

# CHAPTER 3
# RESEARCH RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to assess impact of CSO advocacy and effective approach of CSO to education advocacy in Malawi. The variables in this action research are CSOs and Government Ministry of Education officials and Teachers Union Malawi official.

**ACTION RESEARCH VARIABLES**

| CASE | FILE | SECTOR | NAME OF GROUP | REPRESANTATIVE | OPERATION AREA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | CISE | Local Organization | CISE | Davis Damson | MCHINJI |
| 10 | Community Leader | Community | T/A kapondo | Kaponda ADC | MCHINJI |
| 2 | CONCERNED | Local Organization | Concerned Youth | Faith Chawanda | BLANTYRE |
| 3 | Educate Her | Local Organization | Educate Her | Antony Kamwana | ZOMBA |
| 4 | Fawema | Local Organization | FAWEMA | Thokozani Phiri | DOWA |
| 9 | GAYO | Local Organization | GAYO | John Palichesi | MCHINJI |
| 11 | Girls from rural | Community | T/A Kapondo | Kapondo Youth club | MCHINJI |
| 5 | Link Malawi | Local Organization | LINK MALAWI | Clement Mwazambumba | SALIMA |
| 6 | lutheran | Local Organization | Evangelical Lutheran | Andrew Chiputu | MCHINJI |
| 7 | MAM | Local Organization | Mchinji Action Movement | Andrew Banda | MCHINJI |
| 8 | OSSEDI | Local Organization | OSSEDI | Ezra Black | NKHATABAY |
| 12 | TUM | Government | Teacher Union of Malawi | Pilirani Kamaliza | ALL DISTRICTS |
| 12 | MOE | Government | Ministry of education | Edwin Kanyama | ALL DISTRICTS |

These variables were selected based on their operation area to achieve representation from each region of Malawi. These variables group have been facilitating advocacy activities. The participants were chosen because they are experts in the field. Some of the experts or key informants was from Ministry of education and Teachers Union of Malawi because they are so experienced in policy implementation as policy holders. Girls from rural area as participants were chosen because they are beneficiaries of advocacy and policy implementation and they represent vulnerable group.

Each participant responded to the following same basic main questions;

1. Most *effective ways, strategy or approach* for education policy advocacy
2. *Best practices* that have led to success establishment of education investment policy
3. *Role of CSO in advocacy* involvement in policy advocacy, development and implementation

4. *Roles of local leaders in advocacy and community* members in advocacy
5. What are *Key actors of education advocacy*
6. What were *the key forums/ spaces for advocacy* for engagement
7. Key priority and *Challenges in education advocacy*
8. *Impact education Advocacy* of Education Policy
9. Are there any *observable change* in supranational policy development processes affecting girls and young women in education

## Data analysis and interpretation procedures

The information which the researcher collected from the participants was analyzed using four step analysis procedure developed by Creswell (1998, as quoted by Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Firstly, the audio data was translated into written document for easy analysis. The phenomenological study was designed to examine the participants' experiences and perceptions in order to understand impact of CSO advocacy and effective approach of CSO education advocacy in Malawi. This section discusses the results of the study under guideline of central theme, themes, and subthemes. These guidelines have been created based data analysis using Qualitative Data Analysis Miner (QDA)Software which operate the same as NVivo software. During data analysis using Qualitative Data Analysis Miner (QDA)Software, first the interview transcript for each participant or focus group was uploaded as separate case amounting to 12 cases. Then the variables were generated from case transcript. Secondly, coding process occurred which resulted into production of themes and subthemes. Thirdly, we conducted  case similarity analysis using QDA which lead to development of central theme.

# Coding Results

**effective ways, strategy or approach**
- collaboration
- consultants'
- engagement
- Monitoring
- activism
- dialogue
- Awareness

**Best practices**
- Community mobilization
- Strengthening of community structures
- Capacity building of communities in advocacy

**Role of CSO in advocacy**
- Development of positions papers
- engagement with relevant stakeholders
- Promoting school policy
- Advocating for cooperate social accountability for education from companies
- Bridge between policy holders and community
- Working with communities for find the gap in policy implementation
- Provision of training to community on advocacy
- Conducting Campaigns that promote girls' education

**Roles of local leaders in advocacy**
- Monitoring implementation of education policies
- Community awareness
- Enhancement of policy at local level
- Establishing by laws

**Key actors of education advocacy**
- Community structure
  *These are the groups or individuals that participate in education advocacy*
- Government departments
- Local leaders
- CSOs
- Parents

**key forums/ spaces for advocacy**
- Social media
- Public consultation meetings
- parliamentary committees
- virtual and physical meetings
- Civil Society Education Coalition MeetingDistrict
- Education Network  meetings

**Challenges in education advocacy**
- stakeholders in education sector are left without being consulted due to lack of funds
- stakeholder Inclusivity
- Inadequate funding
- lack of policy implementation monitoring mechanism
- implementation and enforcement of the existing legislations
- Need for harmonization of existing policies
- Duplication of efforts during implementation of advocacy

**Impact education Advocacy**

**Impact education Advocacy**
- empowerment of the girls
- Through advocacy Projects are done at a good speed
- Children returning to school because of CSO advocacy
- Sharing of lessons with government and learning that influences programming
- promotion of girl child education
- Specialization of CSOs in their network helps to make the work easy
- Continuous engagement with Government has led the government to be more effective

Using QDA to understand the in-depth perception of participants on impact and effective approaches of education advocacy the coded data were analyzed in form of word coding frequency, case similarity, coding sequence, coding co-occurrence, coding agreement, coding variables, and coding proximity. The words or messages used during analysis showed that variables (participants) has closely related experience because they expressed similar sentiment during the interview. The table below show how participants messages related to one another.

**Code Link Analysis**
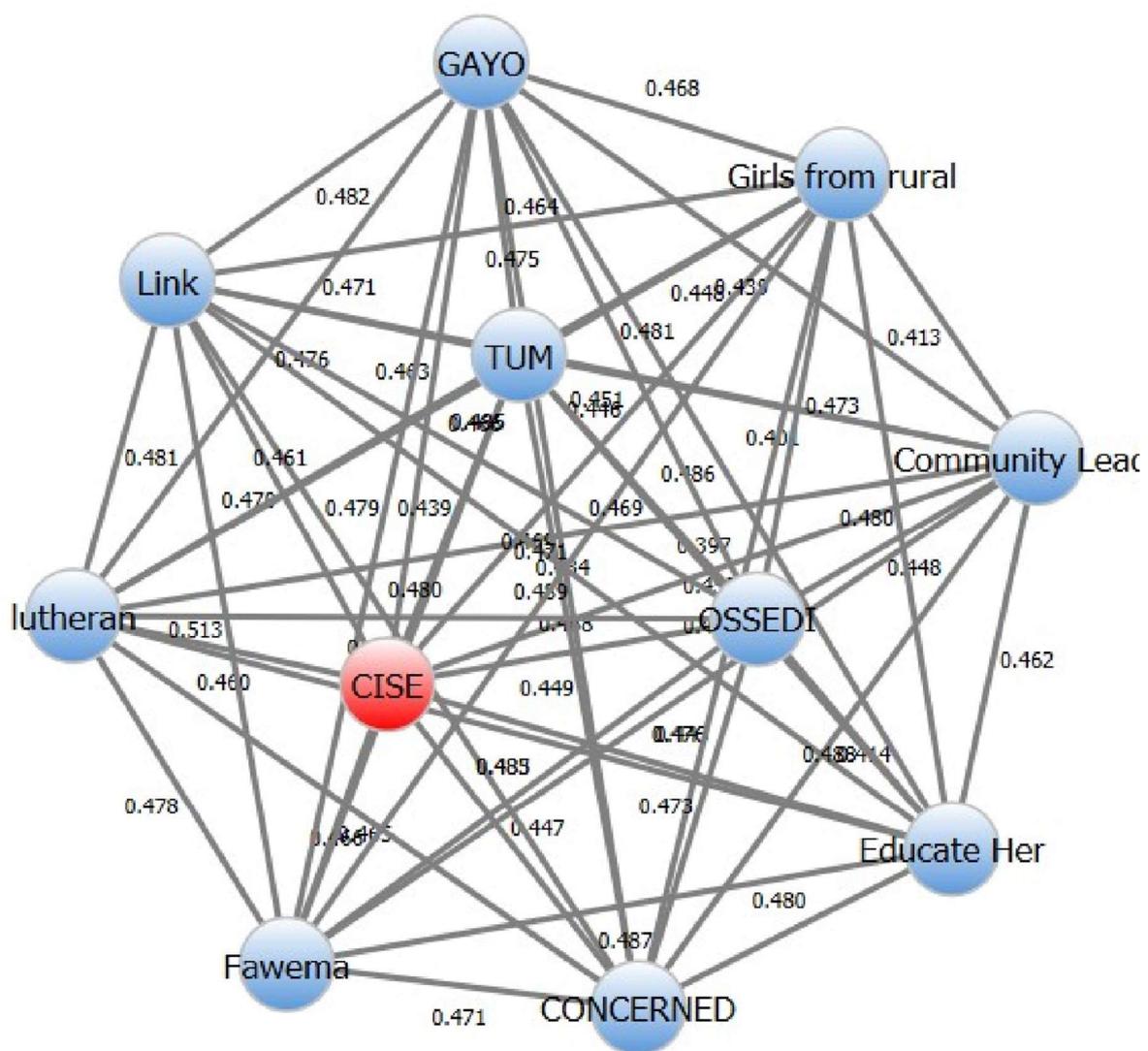
**Action Research Results**

**Central Theme**

This action research Central Theme is '***Bottom up inclusive mult-stakeholder collaboration advocacy approach*** *ensures participation of all developmental actors in advocating for policy change and implementation. It leaves no one behind in advocacy work and result in sustainable development goal achievement*'. By analysis of participants expression on advocacy approach the participants expressed sentiment that the effective advocacy approach is bottom up inclusive mult-stakeholder collaboration advocacy approach.

**Subthemes**

1. ***Bottom up inclusive mult-stakeholder collaboration advocacy approach***

When participants were asked to describe the most effective ways, processes or approach for education policy advocacy, eight top thematic words sentiments come out of participants. Using QDA the frequency percentage of mentioned words in relation to advocacy approach or processes the researcher were able to know the most used advocacy approach among the CSOs in Malawi. Among other approaches Engagement and collaboration are the most used advocacy approach in Malawi. The pie chart below shows the most used advocacy approach

**Most Used Advocacy Approaches**
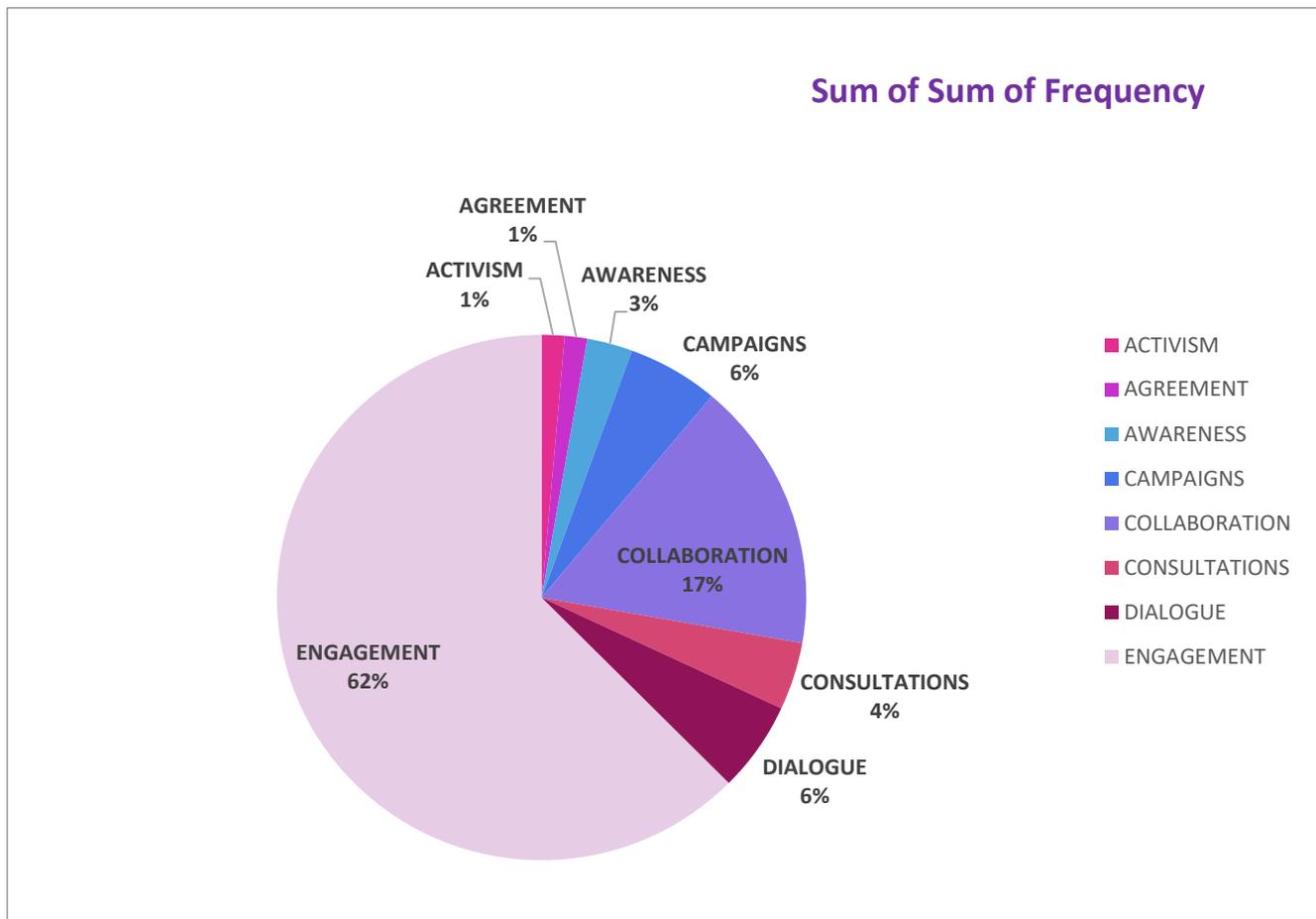


After identifying the most used advocacy approaches in Malawi the researcher consulted the participants again using team online focus group meeting to find out what could be the effective patten, process, cycle or sequence of advocacy that was practiced and which might be deduced from already advocacy interventions in Malawi. From the participants explanations the researcher used QDA software coding sequence analysis and coding co-occurrence analysis to come up with a cycle of interventions that forms the effective approach of advocacy in Malawi that led to Malawi registering observable change in supranational policy development processes affecting girls and Young women. The following is the approach generated during analysis;

**Effective Advocacy Approach in Malawi**
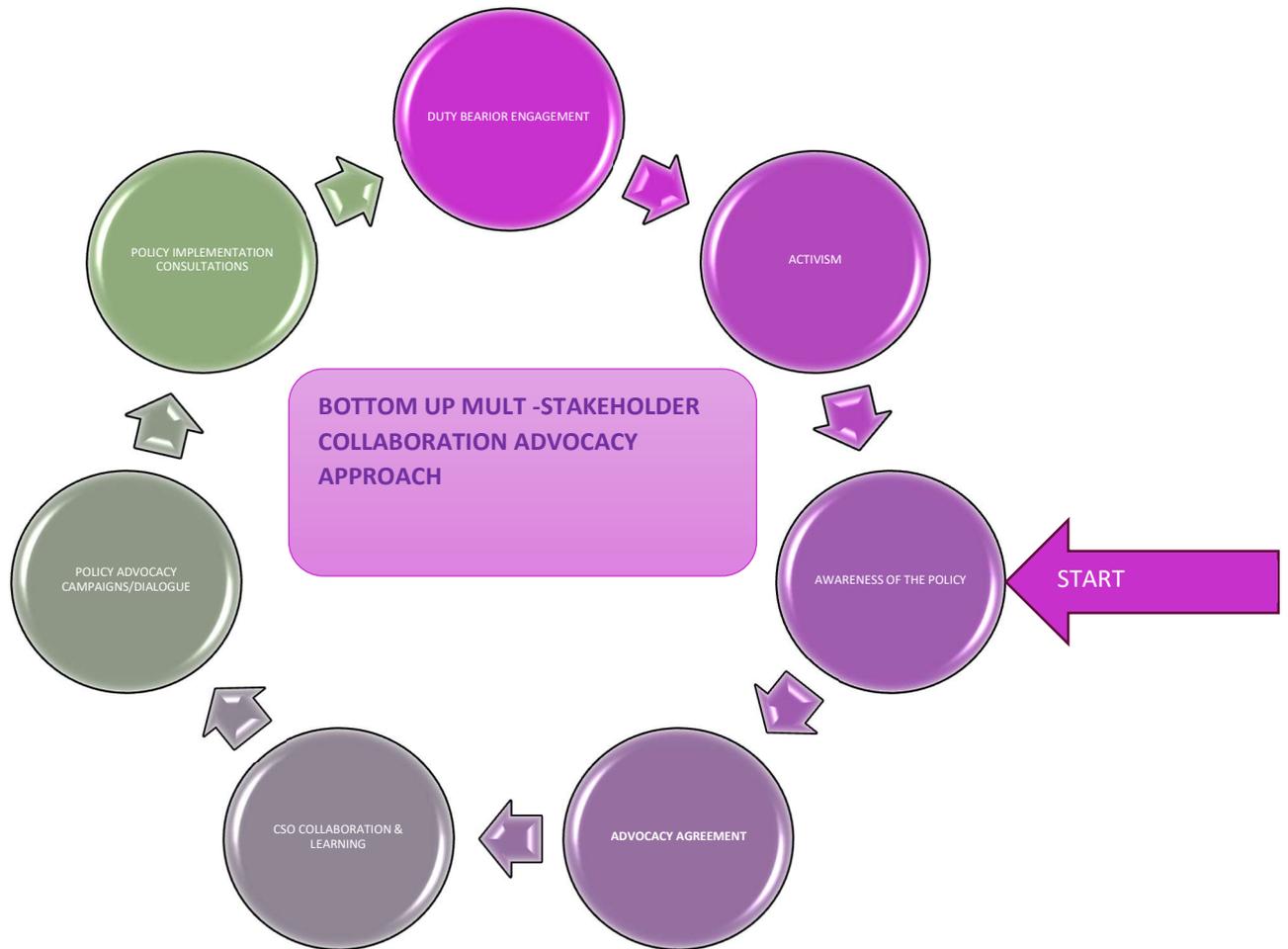


After critically analyzing the above cycle, the researcher noted three things in common in this cycle

1) It starts from the grassroot intervention to National level interventions

2) It involves collaboration of structures, stakeholders and implementors at all levels

3) It is a sequential way of achieving advocacy in short it is an approach

It was concluded that this process should be called Bottom Up Mult-Stakeholder Collaboration Advocacy Approaches.

**Understanding the stages of Bottom Up Mult-Stakeholder Advocacy Approach**

**1) AWARENESS**

The analysis of participants answers showed that awareness is closely or in the same category of words dissemination of policy and mobilization of community or stakeholders. The participants words proximity graph also shows other content or process that might be involved in awareness.

## Proximity plot
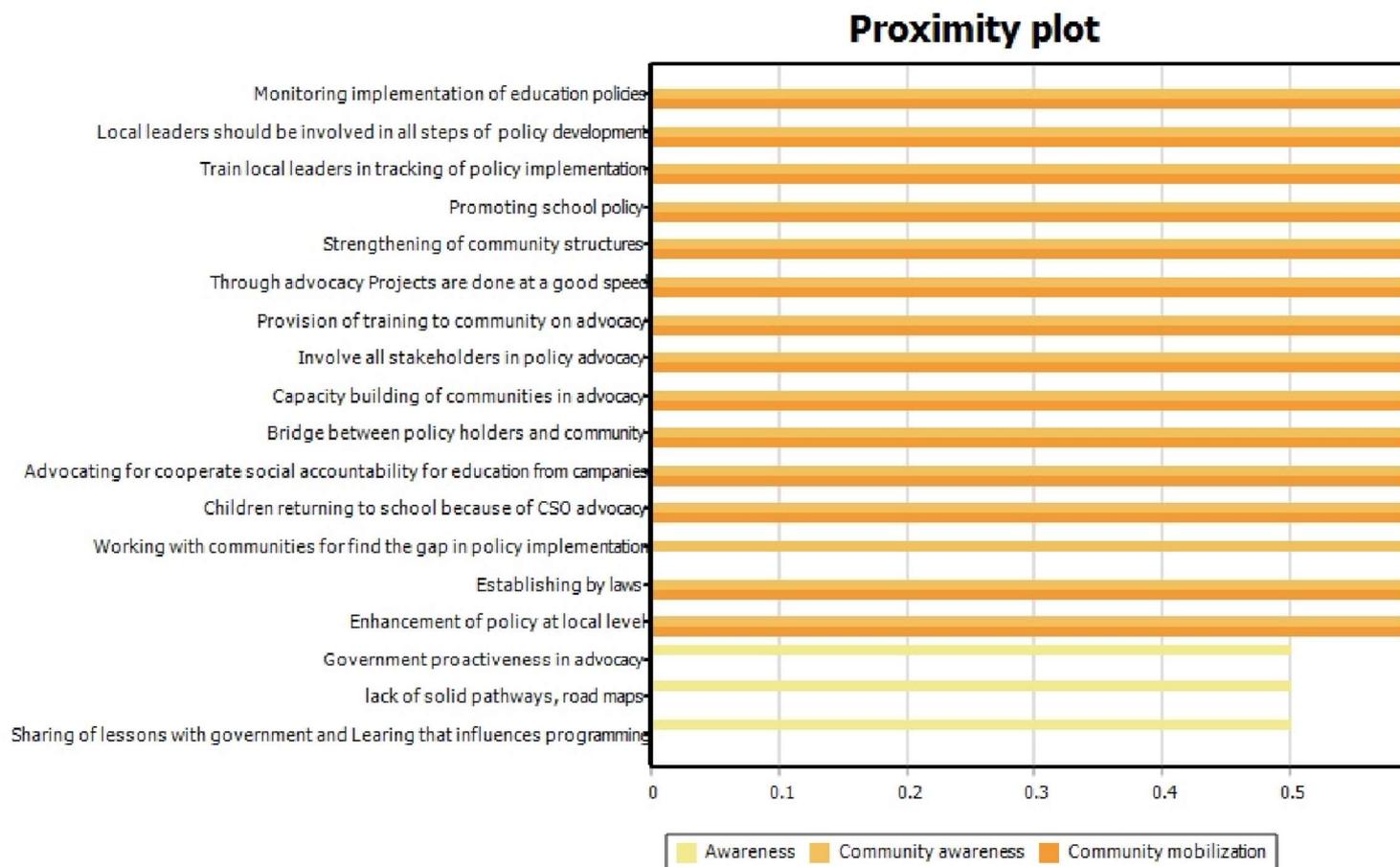


According to participants at this stage of awareness CSOs need to build their capacity on transnational policy and treaties. Then they need to conduct policy awareness campaign on the government policies to community, district, regional and national stakeholders in order to built capacity of communities and stakeholders. The government stakeholders should proactively be involved in dissemination of the policy and the cooperate society should be sensitized to be part of the policy implementation. Stakeholders should share gaps and lesson at this stage.

## 2) ADVOCACY AGREEMENT

According to participants at this stage the CSOs have to meet the duty holders / government stakeholder /policy implementing stakeholder. They should agree on key advocacy players and expected changes needed. They should agree when the interface or engagement meeting should take place

## 3) CSO COLLABORATION AND LEARNING

According to participants at this stage the CSOs should meet and develop learning and collaboration plan. They will evaluate their strengths and weakness in accordance to advocacy and assign each other duties according to their strengths. They should also plan what policy they should measure at that particular phase of time. For instance, those who strong in consultancy let them lead policy consultation and others should learn to them and those who are good on legislature dialogue let them lead parliamentary dialogue and others support them. The collaboration will enhance policy implementation

## 4) POLICY ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS/DIALOGUE

According to participants CSO sometimes advocate policy that is not popular to community of Malawi and it is difficult for actors to participate in advocacy events. Even though the awareness of the policies has already been done there is need for CSOs to popularize the policies they have chosen to advocate for in that particular year. This might be done through uncooperating the policy dissemination in events like commemoration. Conducting public dialogue and campaign on the chosen policies.

## 6) POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CONSULTATIONS

According to participants before having interface meeting with government line ministries and legislatures the CSOs are required have practical data evidence of the performance of the chosen policy. This requires CSOs to hire an independent consultant to go to the districts and line ministries to collect real time data. The data should be analyzed and used as part of engagement meeting with policy holders.

## 7) DUTY BEARIOR ENGAGEMENT

According to participants expressions engagement is closely linked to holding interfaces meeting with policy holders like line ministries, heads of departments and legislatures with an aim do discuss achievements, gaps and solutions to policy implementation. This is a discussion stage after tracking the progress using consultation. Using QDA proximity analysis the researcher was able to know some of the element of engagement associated with engagement stage as the proximity plot below shows:
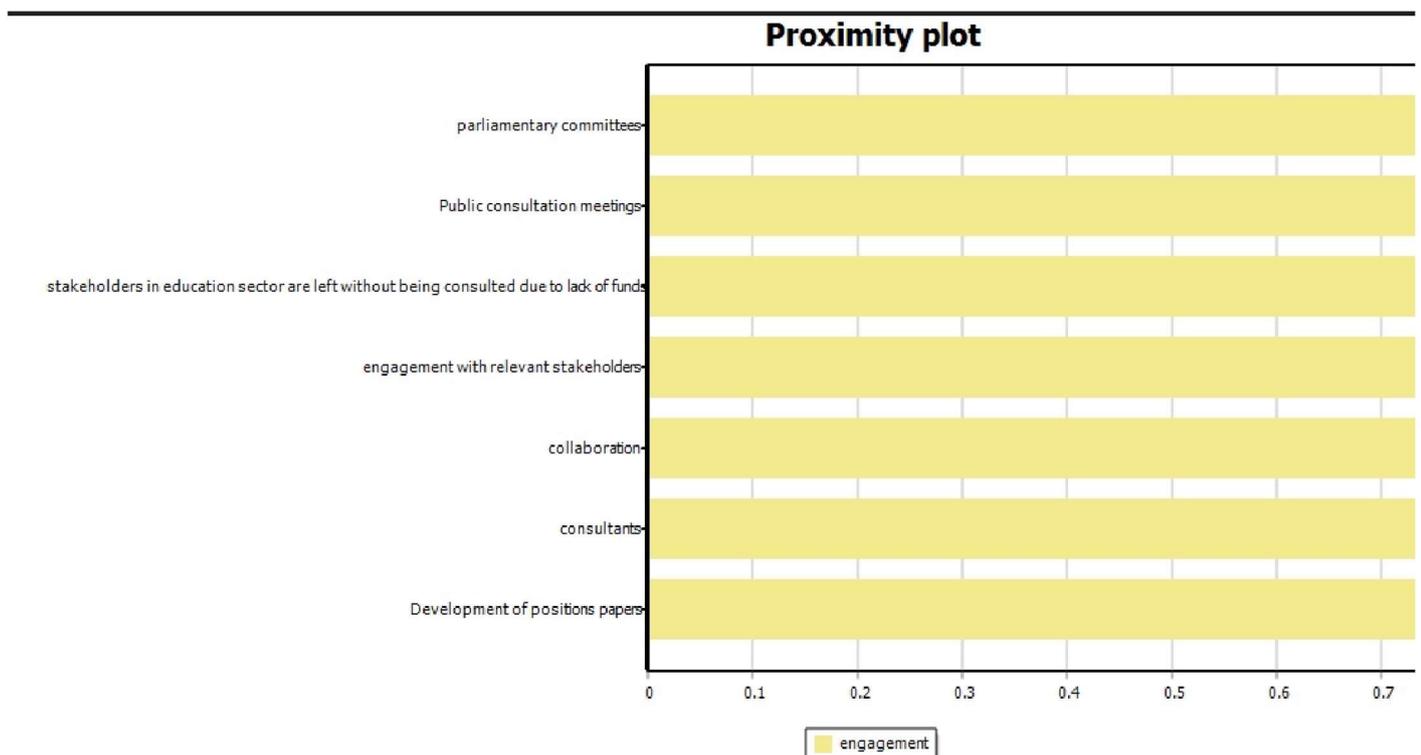
According to participants expression the main principle in engagement stage is '**leave no one behind during the engagement**'. Even though its high-level engagement meetings inclusion of target group like girls in rural area and other beneficiaries is critical and importance at this stage. Girls in rural areas who participated in parliamentary CSOs engagement and air their view direct to policy holder expressed that some of their views are considered faster when they direct engage than sending representative. One of the parliamentarian committee members in education said that speech from girls in rural area during the engagement was more valid and persuasive more than consultant research presentations because the emotions carried within girls' speech shows real situations on the ground. According to proximity plot CSO might use platform like parliamentary committee engagement, public consultation meeting, direct engagement of relevant stakeholder, Submission of position paper, and policy briefs.

8) **ACTIVISM**

The last stage is activism. The word activism has difference meaning in other cycles but according to research participants sentiments the word activism means being closely involved and ensure policy implementations actions which you have agreed are done on time, scope and with required budget support. Many activists end up in interface meeting with policy holders and they wait for another without follow up. The participants especially the government side said that follow up and reviews acts as reminder of what was agreed upon and tracks the action plan.
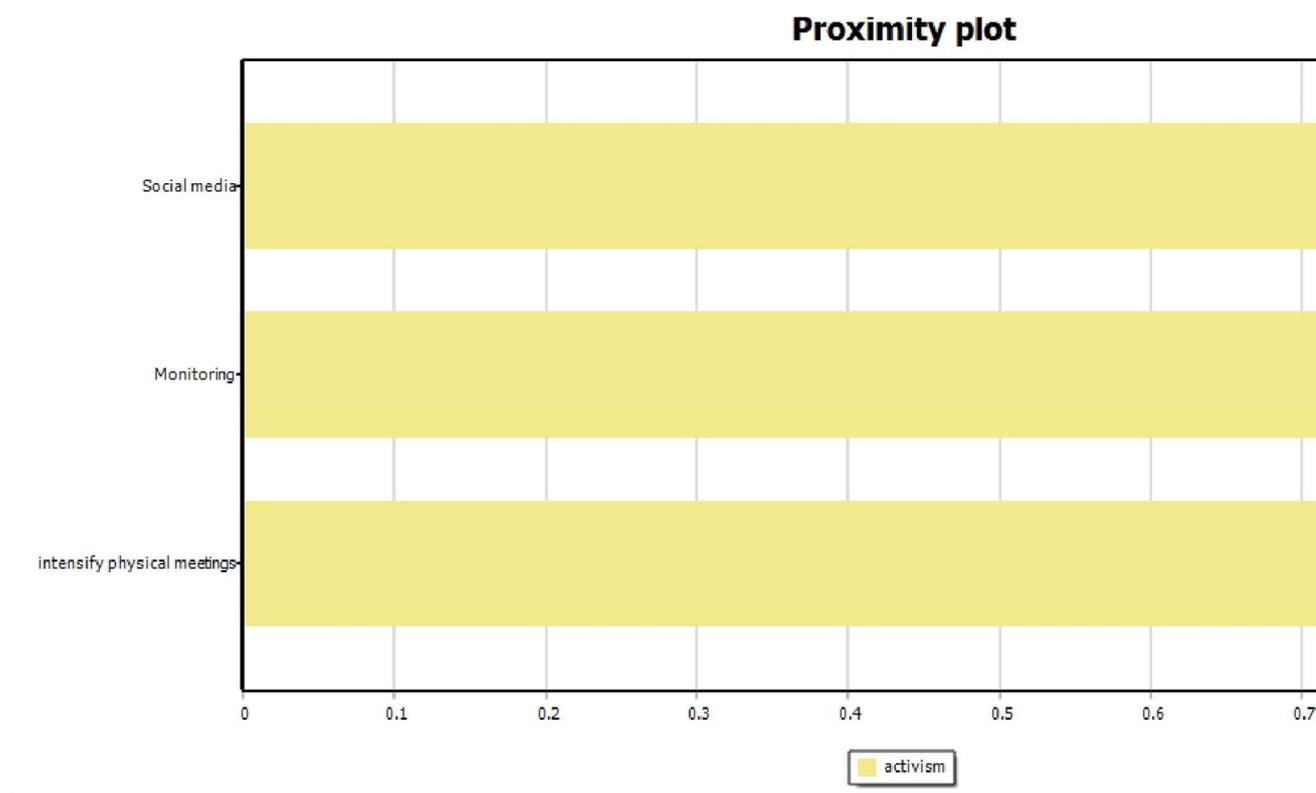
**Proximity plot**



The QDA proximity plot above shows some of the element of activism according to participants perceptions. At this stage CSO can disseminate what was agreed during the policy engagements using social media. Some of the solution that can be agreed up during the engagement might be sensitizing the community social media and physical campaign might be one of the interventions. Some of the interface meeting with policy holder action requires special intensified physical meeting with targeted stakeholder e.g. Meeting CEOs, heads of departments and follow up certain policy interventions. At this stage the monitoring of the implementation of action plans as well as implementation of policies and commitments should be enhanced and collaboratively been done.

Following these stages of this approach to advocacy has enabled Malawi to register some impact in advocacy.

## 2. Impact of CSO advocacy on policy changes in Malawi

The CSOs advocacy in Malawi has produced many impact as per this research findings . the following are some of the impact of the CSO advocacy in malawi.

a) Enabled the implementation or development of policy and strategies in Malawi.

The government participants in the research revealed that CSOs in Malawi have been providing feedback information on the gap of policy implementation which led to government to take extra step in implementing or developing of some policies. Some of the policy mentioned by government officials which they attributed them to CSOs involvement in advocating for education are;

- Development of the 2020-2030 National Education Sector Investment Plan (NESIP). This was a result of CSO advocating for domestic funding Increase in Malawi

- The National Education Policy (2016) was based on Vision 2020 and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II for the period from 2011 to 2016. The priority areas in this policy are (1) Quality, Accessible, and Equitable Basic Education, (2) Accessible and Secondary Education, (3) Quality Teacher Education (Primary and Secondary), (4)Quality and Equitably Accessed TEVET, (5) Quality and Equitably Accessed Higher Education, (6) Quality and Equitably Accessed Open and Distance Learning, and (7) Science, Technology, and Innovation in Education. The Education Policy (2016) includes the Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation Strategy that provided the implementation plan and strategies within each policy priority area and the Monitoring.

- Implementation of the Guidelines for the National Policy on Special Needs Education (2020). This was a result of CSO engagement during VNR for special needs sector  and other engagement

- The Ministry of Education Science Technology  launched the National Education Standards: Primary and Secondary Education (May 2015). Six outcomes were identified: Learning in lessons, students' outcomes in the curriculum (e.g., mastery of learning outcomes), attainment across the schools (for instance, examination results), students' participation in education (such as repetition and/or completion), students' behaviour and involvement in school life, and students' safety and protection. Twenty-six standards were prescribed for schools; eight monitored under the DAIS inspection system.

**b) Girls' empowerment through involvement of female local leaders**

In recent years, traditional leaders have been included in strategies to challenge discriminatory cultural practices that are considered detrimental to women and children. In comparative study of resistance to child marriage reform in Sudan and Zambia, Muriaas et al.(2016) found that the decision to include traditional leaders in a comprehensive campaign was efficient for avoiding counter-mobilization. Malawi has more female Traditional leaders than male. The Malawi government allows traditional chief to participate in forum like  parliamentary engagements and district councils. Taking advantages of large number of  female local leaders and  challeges faced by girls in the rural areas, CSOs like Oxfarm, GAYO, World Vision and CISEC  have including female chiefs  as education champions during their advocacy campaign.

Number of Traditional Leaders in Malawi
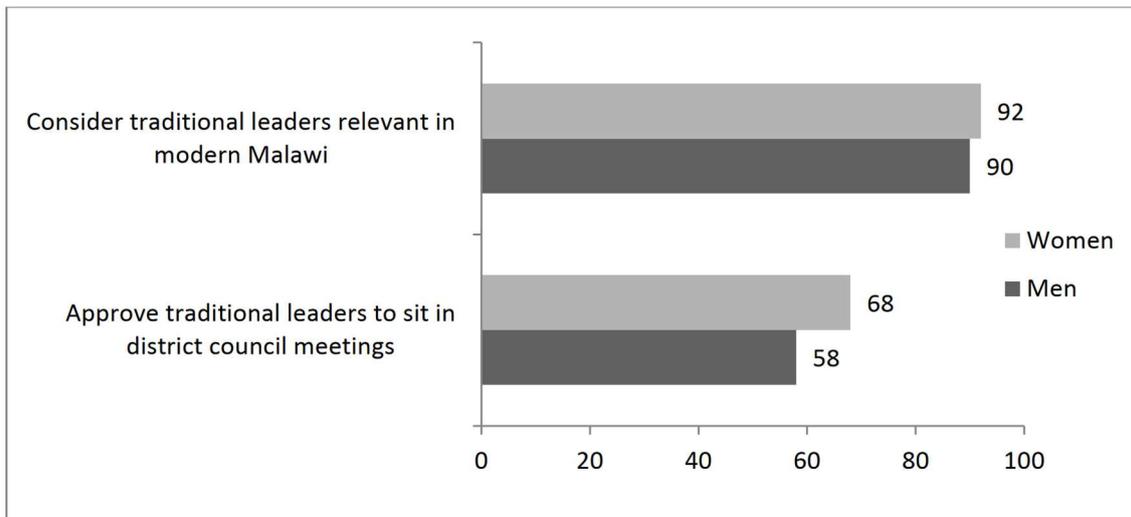


The participant in this research said that since they started using female traditional leaders in advocacy girls are more empowered and there is significant reduction of child marriages in Malawi. Female chiefs tend to be more vigilant to girls education issues and their advocacy views tend to hold more pollical will because stakeholder tend to respect them.

### c) Strengthen the CSOs learning and collaboration

The participants said that CSOs advocacy in Malawi has brought CSOs together in collaboration, networking and advocacy. In the past most CSOs could not work together but now many CSO are working together to advocate for education. This has positive impact since the there is strong voice and cost sharing of resources. It also enables CSOs to avoid duplication of effort. However, the CSOs were quick to point out that there is more that the CSOs need to be doing especially after the CSOs engagement meeting with the line ministry they do not go and monitor the implementation of what they have agreed during the engagement.

### d) Advocacy helped to measure the Outcome harvest in relation to EOL project

CSOs in Malawi who are funded by EOL like GAYO, FAWEMA, CISEC and RAYS of HOPE expressed that it was easy to harvest outcomes for their projects and outcome harvest significant change stories came out easly during advocacy engagement because many stakeholders are able explain Impact at outcome level with valid backing data which made it easly for the researchers to capture the outcome. Therefore, it  was concluded that advocacy engagement should be treated as one of the tools which might be used to measure outcome harvest.

### e) Advocacy Helped to collect information for projects redesign

Some CSOs like Evangelical Lutheran, Link Malawi and CISEC  expressed that they have once redesigned some of their project after effective education advocacy engagement which provided more information of gaps not only for the government but also  CSOs projects. Almost all CSO organization has redesign their budgets to include advocacy as one of the sustainability drivers and unlike the past advocacy is taken serious by many CSOs in Malawi. In the past organization did not put advocacy budget in their project they only valued monitoring however, through learning and collaboration, organization are able to able to budget for advocacy.

### f) Introduction of government  district advocacy desk officer as positive move by the government

CSOs and Government participants agreed that collaboration , learning and positive engagement in advocacy have lead the government to be satisfied and take advocacy as one of pillar in government programing to the level that government has introduced district advocacy desk officer who handles advocacy issues at the district level and create conducive environment for CSOs education advocacy

# CHAPTER 4
## CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATION

In chapter 4 the GAYO as a researcher presented the findings of the research based on the analysis and interpretations of data collected from respondents. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the conclusions, recommendations and the implication of this research. Conclusions and recommendations are drawn from the literature study and from the research study covered in chapter four.

## Conclusion

Inclusive approaches to Education advocacy are pivotal to success. Part of success was due to involving relevant officials in the entire advocacy process, from analysis through results. Their involvement helped these officials appreciate the potential benefits of education advocacy initiatives. Success in Education advocacy also hinges on effective presentation of facts and evidence, and utilization of available, opportune moments in time, such as budget reviews. Different approaches should be used to achieve better results. One CSO can not afford to achieve better education advocacy result and there is a need of learning and collaboration as a pillar of advocacy. The success of advocacy also depend on budgeting for advocacy in project documents.

## Implications for practice of CSO

The following action should be done by CSOs

- Training CSOs in the advocacy approach

- Strengthening CSO collaboration in advocacy

- Involvement of the grassroot or targeted beneficiaries in the high level advocacy engagement

- Localizing policies in vernacular language of targeted beneficiaries

- Determination of policies to targeted beneficiaries

**Implications for research on GAYO**

This research is not an answer of everything that Education advocacy approaches and and advocacy activities program is facing in Malawi therefore it is suggested that further research focuses on the following issues:

- How international NGO contribute to local advocacy and implementation of transnational education policy

- How culture affect advocacy in Malawi.

However, GAYO is recommended to ;

- Champion formation of advocacy collaborative plan

- Champion translation of policy into vernacular language

- Champion monitoring of agreement of engagements

**Conclusion of the research**

The study aims to investigate the impact of CSOs education Advocacy were reached .Within the broader theoretical context of the research study an attempt has been made to understand the approaches and try to suggest the best approach according to Malawi setting. GAYO and should take a vigilant position in bring awareness on findings of this research in Malawi

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