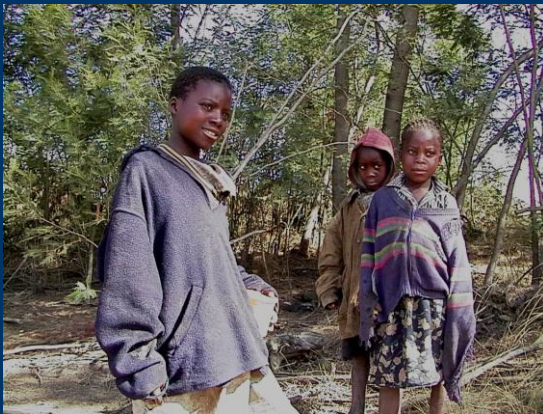**Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity**

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Re-entry to School after Giving Birth:
An Evaluation of the Process used to Design and Implement Policy in Zambia

Audrey Mwansa

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Address for correspondence:
CREATE,
Centre for International Education, Department of Education
School of Education & Social Work
Essex House, University of Sussex, Falmer BN1 9QQ
United Kingdom

Author email: audreymwa2001@yahoo.com
Website: http://www.create-rpc.org
Email   create@sussex.ac.uk

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Contents

List of Tables

List of Acronyms

BESSIP	Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme
CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
EFA	Education For All
FAWEZA	Forum for African Women Educationalist
FNDP	Fifth National Development Plan
GEM	Girl Education Movement
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
NEPAD	Network for Partnership for Africa's Development
PAGE	Programme for the Advancement of Girls Education
PEO	Provincial Education Officer
PSMRP	Public Sector Management Reform programme
SADC	Southern Africa Development Cooperation

Acknowledgements

Preface

In this monograph Audrey Mwansa offers us invaluable insights into the processes that surround the formulation and implementation of policies designed to address issues of access in Zambia. The issue in question is whether or not adolescent girls who become pregnant should be readmitted to secondary schooling after the birth of their child.

In contrast to the policy of exclusion that preceded it, the 're-entry to school' policy, launched in 1997, advocated that girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy should be readmitted after giving birth. The policy was grounded in the discourse of the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women, which recommended, *inter alia*, that girls who dropped out of school because of pregnancy should be readmitted. Audrey's account suggests that the detailed process of policy formulation in Zambia was less inclusive than it could and should have been. Policy makers eschewed early consultation with key stakeholders, creating problems of implementation subsequently. Once formulated, the ministry relied on policy 'circulars' and other media to 'inform' key stakeholders about implementation. Nonetheless, the policy did enjoy some implementation success. In her discussions of findings Audrey highlights the policy lessons that emerge, both for the policy process in general and for policies on readmission to school in particular.

Within the CREATE model of Zones of Exclusion this case study addresses the experience and concerns of young people in Zones 5 and 6, i.e. those who dropout before completing secondary education and those who are enrolled in secondary school but who are at risk of dropping out as a result of irregular attendance, low achievement and repetition, or 'silent exclusion' from learning. The formulation and implementation of the re-entry policy demonstrates how young people do not need to be consigned to these zones forever. Polices can be constructed to support those who dropout from school temporarily, to re-enter school and go on to complete their education. Policies can help young people move from a zone of exclusion to one of inclusion.

Professor Angela W Little
Partner Institute Convenor
Institute of Education
University of London

Summary

The re-entry policy launched in 1997 advocates that girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy should be readmitted after giving birth. The aim of this policy is to implement measures that will help prevent the exclusion of young mothers from furthering their education. In the event of a girl being forced out of school due to pregnancy, the Ministry of Education has provided policy guidelines to assist schools and other stakeholders such as parents and guardians to ensure that the girl is enabled to complete her education. In this study, views of school administrators, civil society organisations, teachers, pupils and the church are presented. The study calls for a further shift of attention and a redistribution of energies in developing and formulating policies. Evidence from the Ministry of Education suggests that when key stakeholders are left out of the policy formulation process, little is achieved in terms of implementation. Findings in this study further shows that although the policy is perceived as a good policy, various categories of people such as the church, schools and members of parliament particularly those from opposition parties consider the policy to be someone else's agenda influenced by the donor community. It is therefore important for future policies to take into account views of various stakeholders before policy directives are sent to schools.

Re-entry to School after Giving Birth: an Evaluation of the Process used to Design and Implement Policy in Zambia

1. Introduction

In contrast to the policy of exclusion that preceded it, the 're-entry to school' policy advocates that girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy should be readmitted after giving birth. The aim of this policy is to find more innovative measures to help prevent the exclusion of young mothers from education. In the event of a girl being forced out of school due to pregnancy, the Ministry of Education in Zambia has provided policy guidelines to assist schools and other stakeholders such as parents and guardians to ensure that the girl is enabled to complete her education. Despite having the policy in place a considerable number of pupils who dropout of school due to pregnancy do not come back after giving birth. In cases where girls return after giving birth, they opt to transfer to another school. It has also been observed that a considerable number of pupils do not return back to school or they temporally return and dropout completely after few months of being in school (FAWEZA, 2008, Ministry of Education, 2009). As a result of some of these challenges, the author designed a study to evaluate the processes used in designing and developing the re-entry policy in Zambia. The research was designed to respond to the following research questions:

- To what extent was the policy formulation process inclusive of all stakeholders?

- To what extent did donors influence the policy formulation process?

- How well informed and how prepared were pupils, teachers and school managers to implement the re-entry policy?

- What impact did the non-involvement of the pupils, teachers and head teachers have on the implementation of policy at school level?

1.1 Policy Environment

The policy is grounded in the outcomes of the Beijing Conference of 1995, a conference at which the Women's Movement drew up its own priorities and action plan. The conference demanded that girls who dropped out of school because of pregnancy should be readmitted. In addition to this, Zambia is a signatory to most of the international instruments that promote the rights of children and women. The country recognises education of all children as a basic human right as enshrined in Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It further recognises education as a right that is also guaranteed by the policy of Education for All (EFA), the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations Platform for Action, and the Millennium Development Goals. In addition to the international instruments, major national policy developments within the education sector were initiated, culminating in the development of the third Ministry of Education (MoE) policy on education in the document "*Educating Our Future*" (1996).

Despite being part and signatory to all the above conventions and having various policy declarations in place, the capacity of the Zambian government to articulate and implement concrete policy interventions has been an issue of tremendous concern. A number of policy

analysts within Zambia have observed that a notable feature of Zambia's situation is the multiplication of policy documents and an absence of implementation (Sassa, 1997; Kelly, 1994). At least three grand policy documents and a number of policy circulars have been produced since 1992 but compared to the policies of the 1970s, which were in place for a long time before any new policies was introduced, the recent policy documents have overlapped. Thus, *"Focus on Education"* (1992) was produced which gave priority to primary school development. In 1996 a national policy on education *"Educating Our Future"* was launched. This was followed by a number of other policy declarations to improve the education sector while addressing girls' education as priority. These include the Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme (BESSIP), the Programme for the Advancement of Girls Education (PAGE), the re-entry policy, the Free Primary Education Policy (2002). It can therefore be argued that recent policy-making in Zambia has been on an *ad hoc* basis.

In recent years, there have been signs of recovery regarding the government's capacity to formulate articulate and implement credible policy interventions. The late President Mwanawasa who succeeded Chiluba in 2002 began restoring and championing a fairly technocratic approach to policy-making patterned on an elaborate development vision for the country. Doubts were, however, expressed by parents, some churches and some civil society organisations as to whether President Mwanawasa's politics of policy-making would be significantly different from predecessor regimes. The argument by some politicians from the ruling party and the parents was that President Mwanawasa might have had a genuine desire to transform the way government works but his efforts were more likely to be undermined by the stark realities of Zambian politics. The involvement of the general public in the development of Vision 2030 was such one attempt. The Vision 2030 outlines possible long-term alternative development policy scenarios at different points which would contribute to the attainment of the desirable social economic indicators by the year 2030, summed in the aspiration to be "A Prosperous Middle Income Nation by 2030". The Vision is operationalised through the five year development plans starting with the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP) (2006-2010) and annual budgets. This marks a departure from past practice of preparing and implementing medium-term plans that were not anchored on a national vision. The Vision 2030 is underpinned by seven principles, namely:

a) Gender responsive sustainable development
b) Democracy
c) Respect for human rights
d) Good traditional and family values
e) Positive attitude towards work
f) Peaceful coexistence
g) Private-public partnerships.

The Vision 2030 therefore provides a good pedestal for implementation of national development programmes for all sectors in a gendered framework. It would appear that gender is given prominence in addressing all developmental challenges in Zambia.

1.2 CREATE Conceptual Model

The CREATE conceptual model identifies a number of 'zones of exclusion' in which children and young people are excluded from education. Zones 1-4 describe exclusion in the primary stage of education, while zones 5 and 6 refer to those who dropout before completing

secondary education and those who are enrolled in secondary but who are at risk of dropping out as a result of irregular attendance, low achievement and repetition, or 'silent exclusion' from worthwhile learning (See appendix 1 for details on the zones). While schoolgirl mothers who fail to return to school after giving birth or those who are continuously absent from school due to the pressure of taking care of their babies and consequently fail to complete their secondary education are considered to be in exclusion zones 5 and 6, those who dropout temporarily, re-enter and go on to complete their education, supported by the re-entry policy may be considered to move from a zone of exclusion to one of inclusion,

1.3 Categories of the Re-entry Policy and Challenges during Implementation

In general, a pregnant schoolgirl meets with one of three outcomes: expulsion from school, re-entry, and continuation. Each of the three options that face the pregnant schoolgirl has both principled and practical difficulties. The expulsion policy violates the human rights of the girl and robs the country of a possible resource. The expulsion policy has further been specifically criticised as one that is insensitive to the needs of the girls and that it tends to bracket the reasons for teen pregnancy as a girl's problem and fail to look at factors that lead to her getting pregnant before completing her education. The re-entry policy on the other hand has been criticised for being discriminatory; for example, schoolboys who are fathers or fathers to be are not asked to leave school until the child is born. While the continuation policy meets the educational human rights of the girl, it may well be that it overlooks other rights such as those of having support and comfort during the pregnancy and after delivery (Chilisa, 2002).

Despite the policy being put in place in Zambia, an increasing number of girls do not return to school after giving birth. Social economic and cultural factors have been commonly cited as reasons for this failure. The annual statistics from the Zambia Ministry of Education Statistical Bulletin shows increased number of pregnancies. In addition, data from the *Zambia Demographic Health Survey* (CSO, 2007) reveals that each year approximately 30% of the girls who drop out from school, do so because of pregnancy. The main reason stated for dropouts is the lack of financial support. The survey reveals that generally girls from disproportionately poor backgrounds drop out of school due to pregnancy compared to those from better off households. The survey shows a link between poverty and early adolescent pregnancy, which consequently leads them to be temporarily excluded from school.

In addition, findings from the situational analysis on girls conducted in Zambia (Kelly, 1998) reveals the links with household income, gender and dropping out. The study indicates that girls from the poorest households were less likely to attend school in preference for boys. Thus, poverty is 'a plausible explanation' of school disruption (Hunter and May, 2003:5) for the majority of girls who drop out of school in Zambia. The direct and indirect costs charged by schools which include school fees, school uniforms and other PTA levies contribute to girls dropping out (Mwansa et al, 2004). Mwansa and her colleagues (2004) found that the failure to raise money to pay for school fees contributed to the majority of the early pregnancies as some of those who failed to raise the high school fees were assisted by elderly men who demanded sex in return.

Table 1 indicates that in 2005, 34,849 girls dropped out school. Out of these, 7,764 (22%) dropped out due to pregnancy. In 2007, the scenario was even gloomier: 36,324 girls dropped out of school for various reasons and out of these, 9,732 (27%) dropped out due to pregnancy.

Table 1: Dropout by Type of School and Reason for Dropping Out

Year	School Type	Total No. Drop outs	Dropout due to pregnancy	% drop out due to pregnancy
2005	Government	31,031	7,204	23
	Private/church	1,872	192	10
	Grant Aided	1,946	368	19
	Total	34,849	7,764	22
2006	Government	31,275	8,031	26
	Private/church	1,353	98	7
	Grant Aided	3,172	496	16
	Total	35,800	8,625	24
2007	Government	32,919	9,175	28
	Private/church	1,140	125	11
	Grant Aided	2,265	432	19
	Total	36,324	9,732	27

Source: Ministry of Education ED Assist (2007)

Table 1 shows major differences in the percentages of girls who drop out of the different kinds schools (government schools, private/church and grant aided schools) due to pregnancy in the years 2005, 2006 and 2007. From the data it is evident that the number of pupils who dropout each year is on an increase in all types of schools. However, the problem is more acute in government schools.

The relatively low numbers of girls being educated has implications for future generations. According to the Zambia Demographic Health Survey 2001-2002, 40% of women are illiterate compared to 19% of men (CSO and MoE Zambia, 2003; ZDHS 2007). The continued poor indicators for girls compared to boys mean that the education gap will continue to widen until more effort to promote girls' education is made.

Table 2: Pregnancies and Re-admissions in Grades 10-12 by Year

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Pregnancy	765	655	988	1,330
Readmission	606	505	802	932
% of re-admissions	79.2	77.1	81.2	70.1

Source: Ministry of Education 2005 Annual Statistical Bulletin

Table 2 above shows an upward trend in the number of girls who get pregnant over a four-year period. The number of girls who re-entered in each of the four years is significantly lower than the number of those who dropped out due to pregnancy. Perhaps more significantly, the percentage of those who are readmitted is generally falling rather than rising from year to year. However, there was a remarkable improvement in 2004 in the percentage

(81%) of the readmissions. Recent statistics shows that in 2007 out of 1,752 pregnancies at Grades 10-12, 1,441 (62%) were re-admitted (Ministry of Education, 2007).

1.4 Socio-Cultural Issues

Culture shapes people's lives and literature suggests that within the Zambian culture, which is predominantly controlled by men, women are raised to be obedient and submissive to men (Munachonga, 1995; Gwaba and Namalambo, 2005). The family remains the most important primary institution of authority, guidance, and socialisation. The knowledge, attitudes and practices within the family are critical to decisions concerning the education of both boys and girls. Poverty in a household contributes to disparities in educational opportunities between girls and boys. In traditional Zambian context boys are favoured over girls. This is because educational decisions by the family take into account perceived future utilities and benefits of educating a man or woman (Munachonga, 1995). A man's value lies in his being perceived as the future potential breadwinner while the woman's value lies in her being perceived as a caregiver. Culturally, the girl as a caregiver-in-training is expected to undertake activities that contribute to the productive needs of a family much earlier compared to the boy. This early cultural role assignment significantly affects all other activities that a girl may be engaged in including the quantity and quality of time a girl spends in doing schoolwork. If a girl falls pregnant, she is no longer perceived as schoolgirl but as a wife (Kelly, 1994; Chilangwa, al et 1994).

The girl child is discriminated against from the earliest stages of her childhood right into her adulthood. Girls are often treated as inferior and are socialised to put themselves last; undermining their self-esteem (Kelly 1994; Gwaba and Namalambo, 2005). This is compounded by customary law, which considers the girl child as an adult once they have attained puberty. The lack of a clear definition of a child within the legal system also works to the disadvantage of girls and makes it possible for a girl who has attained puberty to be married off before she is ready (Gwaba and Namalambo, 2005). Girls normally receive a variety of conflicting and confusing messages regarding their gender roles from their parents, teachers, peers, and the media. Parents for example emphasise the role of a girl as being subservient to male counterparts using terms such as *a woman is seen not heard and/or that a woman's place is the kitchen.* This leads to gender stereotypes that impact the girl child negatively. Teachers on the other hand tell the girls to be assertive and to speak up when their rights are infringed. The media on the other hand exposes young people to various cultures which give girls different perspectives on life from those that they may experience in Zambia.

The girl child is therefore at a disadvantage by virtue of being female and the resultant socialisation associated with femaleness, which prescribes roles, and responsibilities that are different from those of the boy child. In addition, cultural and traditional practices systematically subject females to male subordination and directly give boys advantage over girls in access to education when the labour of either is demanded at home, or when a parent consents to the marriage of his or her daughter to gain bride wealth. In some cases, it may even mean marrying off a young girl to get bride wealth that is in turn used to pay bride wealth for the brother who wants to marry.

In a study conducted in a Zambian traditional rural setting Chilangwa and her colleagues (1994), found that some cultural practices contributed to early dropout which resulted into early marriages. They found that, at puberty, the girl child is secluded from the rest of the community for almost one month. During this time girl is deprived of valuable learning time and that societal expectations were that they were now ready for marriage. Early marriages

were seen as ensuring social stability and sustaining family economies vital to the survival of the traditional society. In the face of scarce resources, it was thought that money for education should be invested in boys rather than in girls. Often girls were required to help in the home with the care of siblings, sick members of the immediate and extended family, and household chores (Kelly, 1994; Chilangwa et al. 1994).

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks

The literature review explores and reviews literature relevant to policy formulation and implementation. The first subsection discusses the key concepts and the main debates surrounding policy formulation and implementation and their theoretical underpinnings. It provides a definition of policy. It highlights the importance of understanding the politics of policies for processes of policy formulation and implementation. The second subsection defines the concept of implementation and factors associated with successful implementation of policies or innovations. Subsection three presents the summary and conclusion.

Since this study was on policy formulation process in education in a developing country, the literature used was drawn from the wide range of sources within the developing countries. However, due to the limited literature on the issue in Zambia, literature from developed countries was extensively used due to its relevance to the issues addressed. In addition, most of the conceptual concepts have been drawn from the theoretical and conceptual frameworks developed in developed countries. Attempts were made to discuss elements of the policy process, focusing on how qualitative research can provide the relevant information. A review of examples of qualitative research designed to influence the policy process was also done. Further attempts were made to demonstrate that for qualitative research to be policy relevant it needs to engage with the worlds and understanding of both policy makers and participants involved in the process.

2.1 Definition of Policy

There is a wide range of literature within a number of disciplines, including political science, public administration and policy sociology that attempts to define policy. In this study the author adapted the definition offered by Haddad and Demsky (1995:18) which states that a policy is:

> An explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions.

In Zambia like in most developing countries a policy can either be a single decision or group decisions which are sent to school level practitioners to begin immediate implementation. This can be in form of text or a practice that schools adapt and eventually enshrine it in their operations as a policy. These decisions are somewhat made without consultations with the lower levels such as schools.

2.2 Policy Cycle

Social policy process such as the re-entry policy has often been thought of as a cycle with three stages: policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation. This theoretical perspective has been articulated by Guba, (1984); Rista, (1994) and Fullan, (1993). Haddad and Demsky (1995) for example, describe the policy decision and adoption in terms of actors (who does it?) and the process (how it is done). Ball (1994) emphasises the need to understand the process of policy formulation and production of policy texts. He draws attention on the role of political influence in the formulation and implementation process. Thus, for Ball, policy discourse is subject to continued reconstruction, which might be constructed as policy formulation, interpretation and re-implementation. The study drew on these theoretical perspectives, because of the similarities in policy formulation process in

Zambia and their relevance to the study. Similar to Cuba, Rista and Fullan's perspectives, the process of policy formulation, in Zambia policy making follows the cycles of three stages namely: policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation. When critically examining the process used to design and develop the re-entry policy in Zambia, the author raised critical questions the author posed critical questions related to policy decision and adoption as described by Haddad and Demsky - who does it? and the process how it is done?

The study further drew on Hoppers' (2007) concept of participatory practices in the development of policies for disadvantaged children and found similarities with respect to the process used in developing the re-entry policy girls in Zambia. In his study for disadvantaged children through non-formal education in Uganda, Hoppers (2007) explored the dynamics of participatory practices in the development of policies. These dynamics include the following: the political, legal, economic, socio-cultural and institutional and power relations that influence the roles played by a range of stakeholder groups and their interactions. Hoppers observed that the fluidity of the process was illustrated by the decision of some policy actors to implement a draft version of the policy *before* it had been submitted to parliament. He argues that:

> Administrative implementation preceded the submission of the draft policy to parliament. In turn the latter has preceded the submission of the legal basis for the same policy. Thus, if the Bill, which is still to be submitted, is enacted with its current stipulations, the whole process would have to be rolled back so that the evolving appropriation as well as the Policy text can be aligned with the Bill (Hoppers, 2007:16).

In the Zambian context, a policy directive was sent to schools before it was debated on and discussed in parliament. Although the policy is implemented at school level, it has not been enacted as an Act by parliament. In Addition, the public discussions on the policy followed later on after the policy was introduced.

2.3 Policy Formulation

In contemporary approaches, policy is perceived less in terms of a technical-rational instrument in the political process; and emphasises more the nature of policy as a social event to which language and interpretation are central. In a study on educational policy making in Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritius, Mozambique and Uganda in the 1980s, Evans et al (1995) reached the following conclusion:

> Policy making and policy implementation in developing countries are a messy, fluid process which cannot be reduced to a simple linear model in reality it is more complex, less clearly ordered, and seldom reflects a simple application of technical rationality in decision making (Evans et al, 1995:5).

They further observed that rather than a set of discrete steps, the elements of the policy cycle are a continuously interactive process and reached a conclusion that:

> Policy leaders often underestimate the importance of large numbers of mid-level bureaucrats and school-level educators who will influence the form which policies take in practice … under some circumstance the actors can block or reverse policies when they reach local levels (Evans, et al, 1995:5).

In her analysis of primary education planning and policymaking in Sri Lanka, Little (2003) asked: *"Who are the educational planners, where they are, and what do they do?"* These

questions are critical in situating individuals or categories of people who perform various roles in policy formulation and implementation. In the Ministry of Education, responsibility for policy formulation rests under senior management. Senior management includes, the permanent secretaries, the directors in consultation with the minister of education and the deputies. The responsibility for translating the policies into implementation plans lies within various directorates at national level particularly, within the Directorate of Planning and Information.

2.4 Definition of Implementation

Implementation of policies has been variedly defined. According to Fullan (1991:65) implementation is:

> The process of putting into practice an idea, programme, or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change.

It is a phase of attempted use of innovation (Hopkins et al., 1997). It is the most crucial part of the change process where programmes can be adopted and affected in schools or neglected. Hord (1987:76) points out that "implementation is the likeliest point that innovations break down" and as such "is a serious business requiring considerable planning, nurturing and active involvement if it is to be fully realised". It is during this phase that skills and understanding are being acquired, some success is achieved, and the responsibility is delegated to working groups of teachers (Geijsel et al. 2001). Hopkins et al. (1997:74) make a distinction between "pre-implementation and implementation". They argue that many innovations founder at the pre-implementation stage because not enough support has been generated. Implementation involves a wide range of actors engaged in ongoing decisions about a wide range of specific allocations of public resources.

2.5 Barriers to Implementation

Failure to implement policies is often attributed to the inability to overcome the initial resistance of organisational members to change. Gross et al. (1971:1) suggest that this is an oversimplification. They maintain that while resistance to change may account for the some situations, it can also develop during the implementation of the innovation because of other factors. These include: the lack of clarity about the innovation or policy, lack of capability to perform the new role model, unavailability of necessary material and lack of motivation to make efforts to implement innovations (Gross et al., 1971:122-148). Fullan, cited in Mortimore (1993:12), on the other hand, identified barriers which may be erected to prevent the implementation of policies which include: overload; complexity; compatibility; (lack of) capability; limited resources and poor change strategies. Fullan (1991) claims that these problems cannot easily be overcome. He maintains that lack of capability, limited resources, and poor strategies are more open to positive interventions.

2.6 Factors Associated with Successful Implementation

While there is literature related to factors associated to failure to implement policies, the concern of this study was to review literature that contributes to improving policy making processes in order to replicate what has worked elsewhere in the education sector in Zambia. Gross et al., cited in Mortimore (1993:11) identified five conditions necessary for achieving policy change and implementation.

These include:

i.   The clarity of how well the staff understands the innovation;

ii. The capability of staff to carry it out;

iii. The availability of resources required;

iv. The compatibility of existing organisational arrangements; and

v.   The commitment of time and effort given by the staff to the innovation.

2.7 Summary

The history of education change and innovation reveals that there is often disparity between what education reforms intend to happen and what actually happens during implementation. The literature review has attempted to explore some of the issues relevant to this problem. In doing so, particular attention has been given to implementation phase of the change process because experience has shown that it is here projects/policies fail or survive. In this regard, three major themes were explored – policy formulation as a process, implementation as a process of putting into practice the policy, an idea or set of activities and structures new to people attempting to change and politics of policies for processes of policy formulation and implementation. Within these parameters, the review focused particularly on research findings that help to increase our understanding of the role of various stakeholders in the overall process of policy formulation, and implementation. Essentially, the aim was to reflect on the processes used to education policies and to pinpoint the view that involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the overall process of policy change is very important. In this regard the review found that a number of fundamentally important points are raised in the literature.

1. Implementation is the most crucial part of the change process
2. Policy making and policy implementation is a messy, fluid process which cannot be reduced to a simple linear model
3. Policy implementation is influenced by whose group interests are affected; types of benefits anticipated by different groups; the extent of change envisioned; the site of decision-making; the nature; expertise; and dedication of programme implementers and the level of committed resources.
4. The political environment in which administrative action is pursued influences implementation.

3. Research Methods

A triangulation of methods, integrating appropriate secondary and primary research methods was used. Triangulation is not simply a process to combine data, but an attempt to relate different kinds of data collected in order to enhance the validity of each type of data and reduce any bias from a single source (Robson, 2002).
The methods included:

    i.   A desk review of policy documents, statistical bulletins, annual reports and other relevant documents and materials related to the re-entry policy and policy formulation in general.

    ii.   Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with civil society organisations, the Catholic Secretariat, including the Ministry of Education officials at national level, and

    iii.   Site visits to four selected schools in two districts purposively selected to represent the urban and rural, grant-aided and government schools.

In consultation with the Ministry of Education officials, four schools stratified by district and location (urban and rural), were identified. The Zambian Central Statistical Office (CSO) defines a rural area as one in which agrarian economy predominates and in which a clear pattern exists of a network of villages and communities engaged in agrarian pursuits. It defines an urban area as one which possesses some minimum of social activities and services such as piped water and in which major economic activity is not agriculture (Central Statistical Office, 1997).

The sample size represented four schools which comprised of two grant aided and two government schools. In all, six focus group discussions were conducted with schoolgirl mothers and non-mothers, while four focus group discussions were conducted with teachers. Interviews were conducted with members of staff of two NGOs, one representative from the Catholic Secretariat, three directors, one former permanent secretary and the then current permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education. Informal and unplanned interviews were conducted with two lead donors in the Ministry of Education. Each focus group discussion consisted of ten participants. Overall, 128 people participated in the research as reflected in Table 3 below.

Semi-structured interviews were scheduled as designed covering a range of questions a range of questions ranging from participants' understanding of the policy, their engagement in the policy design, the impact on policy implementation as a consequence of not having been involved in the overall process of policy formulation and value of being involved.

Pilot interviews were conducted with two members of staff at the Community Health and Gender Support Programme 2 (CHANGES2) office and a student at a school that was not part of the sampled schools in order to determine the final questions and schedules for each interview during the data collection. Interviews were conducted at school level in the case of schools and in offices in the case of senior officials. Each interview lasted 45 minutes in the case of the directors and the permanent secretary and 60 minutes in the case of civil society organisations and head teachers. Focus group discussions lasted 50 to 60 minutes. These were recorded using a digital recorder except in two cases where head teachers refused to have the interview recorded. Overall, the fieldwork took place over a period of four months.

Table 3: Research Sample

Respondent	MOE Senior Staff			CSO, Lead donors &Church			School Level			Total
	Male	Female	**Total**	Male	Female	**Total**	Male	Female	**Total**	
Former Permanent Secretary	-	1	**1**	-	-	**-**	-	-	**-**	1
Permanent Secretary	-	1	**1**	-	-	**-**	-	-	**-**	1
Directors	1	2	**3**	-	-	**-**	-	-	**-**	3
CAMFED	-	-	**-**	-	1	**1**	-	-	**-**	1
Catholic Secretariat	-	-	**-**	-	1	**1**	-	-	**-**	1
Ireland Aid, Royal Netherlands, UNICEF				1	2	**3**				3
FAWEZA	-	-	**-**	1	2	**3**	2	2	**4**	7
Headteachers (Chongwe & Lusaka)	-	-	**-**	-	-	**-**	3	1	**4**	4
Teachers (Chongwe & Lusaka)	-	-	**-**	-	-	**-**	15	25	**40**	40
Schoolgirl mothers							-	40	**40**	40
Non-schoolgirl mothers					-		-	30	**30**	30
Overall Total										**131**

Recorded discussions were transcribed during the data collection exercise. In view of the likelihood of using direct quotations, written permission was obtained in advance from the participants. Drawing on works of Ezzy (2002); including ethnography (Rosaldo 1989), participatory action research (Nelson et al. 1998), grounded theory (Strauss 1987), data collection and transcription was done simultaneously as soon as each interview was completed. Simultaneous data collection and data analysis builds on the strengths of qualitative methods as an inductive method for building theory and interpretations from the perspective of the people being studied. It allows the analysis to be shaped by the participants in a more fundamental way than if analysis is left until after the data collection is completed.

Once the data collected was made manageable, the preference was to code the raw data and to summarise it into descriptive statements. Categories of recurrent themes were grouped together systemically allowing for the categories to emerge while constantly conferring and confirming from the raw data. Special attention was paid to data that seemed to contradict the flow. The aim in doing so was to provide an accurate description and assessment of the experiences of adolescent schoolgirl mothers.

4. Findings and Analysis

This section presents research findings based on the data collected from the permanent secretaries; directors in the Ministry of Education headquarters; FAWEZA; CAMFED; the Catholic Secretariat; donor agencies; head teachers; teachers and students from Chongwe and Lusaka districts of Zambia.

4.1 Involvement in the Policy Formulation Process

Research has shown that participation is an essential requirement if individual head teachers and teachers are to feel that they are part of the change and not just being asked merely to implement changes developed by others. Oliver argues (1996:9):

> If headteachers learn about change through the medium of memoranda and circular, then they will not gain that sense of ownership which is crucial if change is to be truly successful.

Although Oliver's views are about head teachers, they can also be applied to teachers, and pupils who are at the receiving end of the policies in this context. In spite of the concept of change in schools and institutions, and the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders in the policy formulation process being given much prominence in international literature, this study found that pupils, teachers, head teachers and the church were not involved at the initial stage of policy formulation. When key informants were asked to state at which stage they were involved in the policy formulation process, the majority (88%) of the informants reported that they were only involved at the implementation stage soon after the circular was circulated. A tiny percentage (2%) of the senior management informants reported that they were in another ministry when the policy was developed and nearly 10% of the informants, the majority of whom were senior management or officials of Civil Society Organisations reported having been involved in the design and development of both the circular and the guidelines. One head teacher for example reported the following:

> … the ministry has not been inclusive during policy formulation process. We are only directed to implement policies developed at the top with no guidelines in place. … we only received the re-entry policy guidelines after five years of introducing the policy.

Senior management officials from the ministry reported that while the process of policy formulation process was not inclusive, attempts were being made in recent years to include all relevant stakeholders in the education provision. They further reported that that lower level stakeholders have low capacity to formulate policies to involve them, and that involving all stakeholders would be costly for the ministry. Funds to conduct such activities are usually insufficient as most of the allocation is on infrastructure development.

Informal interviews with donor representatives revealed that they do not decide who gets invited to participate in the policy formulation process. Rather, it is the ministry that decides. They reported that their priorities are based on the ministry's priorities articulated in the National Development Plans and the ministry's annual work plans and budgets.

4.2 Knowledge about the Re-entry Policy

Informants were asked to state what their knowledge on the policy was and the source of that knowledge. Of the 128 people interviewed at national, school levels and the Civil Society Organisations, all (100%) reported that they knew of the policy and were able to articulate what it was.

What was unclear was the number of times a girl can get pregnant and be re-admitted. One participant even remarked the following: "There should be a limit to how many times a girl should be pregnant and be readmitted[1]. Even bars have rules and limitations".

Key informant interviews confirmed similar concerns raised at the Ministry of Education Joint Annual Review of 2004 on the number of times a girl can be readmitted after getting pregnant. These concerns are also similar to the ones raised in Kenya and Malawi earlier in section 1 of this paper.

Table 4: Source of Knowledge about the Policy

Organisation/Participant	Involvement in policy formulation	From the Ministry of Education Circular	Heard from a friend	Heard from the radio
CAMFED	1			
Catholic Secretariat		1		
FAWEZA	3			
Lead donors	3			
Former Permanent Secretary	1			
Directors	3			
Headteachers		4		
Teachers		30		10
Students		15	30	25

Table 4 above shows how key informants learned about the policy. Overall, all school level informants and the Catholic Secretariat reported that they learnt about the policy from a circular. It is also interesting to note that of the 70 pupils who participated in the discussion, 30 (43%) learned about the policy from their friends. This finding is similar to the findings of a study conducted in Zambia by the CHANGES2 Programme (2006) on sources of information of young people. That study revealed that pupils learned about HIV and AIDS from their friends than their parents and teachers. Equally interesting was that of the 30 teachers interviewed, 10 (25%) learned about the policy from the radio. What is striking from the findings is that Civil Society Organisations, the Directors, donor representatives and the Permanent Secretaries were the only participants in the formulation of the policy. The lack of

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[1] Acting Catholic Education Secretary commenting on the weakness of the policy

involvement of stakeholders, in itself poses challenges in implementation at school level and by implementing organisations such as the churches.

4.3 Seen the Circular or the Policy Guidelines

Informants were asked whether they have received or seen the policy circular or the policy guidelines on the re-entry policy. The results shows that only 22 (17%) of the informants had seen both the circular and the policy guidelines while the majority (83%) of the informants interviewed who were mainly students and some teachers had not. The results are rather strange given the fact that at the time the time this study was conducted materials had been widely distributed through the District Education Board Secretaries (DEBS) and through FAWEZA. It became clear that although sampled schools had received the documents, head teachers had kept these documents in their offices. The researcher was also informed by both teachers and students interviewed that the head teachers in their schools had talked about these policies during the staff meetings and the school assemblies. In two schools the author was informed that the head teachers had talked about the policy to the parents during the open day. It also became clear that eleven of the teachers who had seen the materials were SAFE Overseers, FAWEZA members or heads of departments.

4.4 Clarity of the Policy for Implementers

When school level and the church informants were asked if the policy guidelines were clear enough to provide them guidance for implementation, more than half (60%) of the informants, a majority of whom were teachers and headteachers (42), reported that because the policy was new, they needed to be oriented to it, before being asked to implement it. This finding confirms Carter and O'Neill's (1995:58) argument that:

> Policy makers rarely develop a process for implementation of their policy formulations – the people at the receiving end of the policy are simply expected to make it work in practice.

4.5 Timing and Resources for Implementing the Policy

Informants were asked whether they were given sufficient time and extra support to implement the policy. Headteachers, teachers and the church representative interviewed reported that the announcement of the policy was hastily done. The former permanent secretary interviewed concurred with this view, adding:

> It is true the introduction of the policy by the then Minister of Education was rushed, but just as well because sometimes you cannot achieve much by waiting for people to be ready or to agree. Yes, there was a lot of resistance, at the beginning but at least we can now see some success stories in terms of girls who have been re-admitted.

On the other hand one head teacher said:

> the Ministry of Education was under pressure from NGOs and the donor agencies championing girls' education and gender issues in general to introduce the policy before consulting all relevant stakeholders. For some NGOs, introducing the policy has enabled them to earn a living because of the support they get from donors.

Another head teacher added:

> As implementers, we needed more sensitisation workshops and public debates before asking us to implement it.

Views of the girls interviewed converged with those of the head teachers, teachers, and the church. Both categories of girls interviewed stated that the policy was good although it did not address most of their concerns. When asked what their concerns were, adolescent schoolgirl mothers reported that the policy should have spelt out the need for providing counselling sessions to those who returned. They reported that while at school, they felt stigmatised by their friends and teachers through derogatory remarks such as addressing them by their children's names: "Bana Mary (Mother of Mary), aunt Lucy etc" which made them feel out of place. It was the view of the pupils that the Ministry of Education was doing very little to enforce the implementation of the policy and ensure that girls who returned to school were protected from verbal abuse by the teachers. At least 63% of the girls reported that they faced challenges with regard to combining the two roles of being a mother and a schoolgirl particularly when their children fell sick or needed to be taken to Under 5 clinics. They reported that they absented themselves from school and missed classes whenever they had to take their children to hospital. They further reported that the policy should have put in place mechanisms for following up those who for some reason decided not to return.

When informants were asked to state the kind of support they received from the ministry to implement the policy, the church and the school level implementers reported that they had received funds neither to photo-copy the circular for the parents and/or the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) nor to conduct local sensitisation meetings on the policy. At the same time, a director and the permanent secretary stated that the ministry was committed to ensuring that the policy gets fully implemented in all schools. Funds were planned to be set aside to conduct "massive sensitisation meetings" and workshops targeted at school level and members of the public.

Civil society organisations on the other hand reported that they were planning to advocate and lobby members of parliament and some permanent secretaries to ensure that the re-entry policy be included in the Education Bill which was to be tabled in parliament in July 2010. It is evident from this finding that that the policy was introduced in schools before it was discussed and enacted in parliament. The finding echoes that of Hoppers (2007) in Uganda in which he described the decision by some policy actors to implement a draft version of the policy *before* it is submitted to parliament. Similarly, the re-entry policy in Zambia was first declared as a policy by the then minister of education before it was discussed in parliament.

4.6 Would the Policy Implementation have been Different if Participation had been Broader?

When asked to state if the policy implementation would have been different if they were involved in the design and development of the policy, almost all (93%) of the school level and the church informants stated that it would. Gaps in the policy could have been addressed, thereby making it more user-friendly. One head teacher interviewed stated that:

> People who make policies are sometimes not in touch with reality. This is the reason they should seek consensus from most of us who interact with the children on the daily basis. If we had participated in the policy design, we would have addressed some of the challenges encountered now.

On the other hand, the church representative stated the following:

> Most of the policy makers are not well informed about the situation at the school level than we are. If they had consulted us, we would have given them a more user-friendly policy document. The current policy does not even address how many chances the girl should be given to come back to school after giving birth. ….surely how many times should a girl get pregnant and come back to school?

Such responses raised concern about the ownership of the policy by the key stakeholders. However, this view contradicted the view provided by the donor agencies who reported that their funding was based on the ministry's priorities articulated in the National Development Plan and the annual work plans and budgets. From this contradiction, it would appear that the role each of the stakeholders play in policy formulation is not clearly spelt out.

4.7 Policy Ownership

When teachers were invited to recommend improvements in the policy formulation process, they responded that:

> there was nothing they could recommend because their views and contributions are in most cases not taken.

It is true to argue that in most cases as designers of the policies and policy guidelines, we either ignored or underestimated the importance of engaging various categories of people who are critical in the implementation of the policy.

Responses such as the one above may have led to this somewhat unexpected outcome during implementation. It is also likely that since they were opposed to the policy from their beginning they would not have not implemented even if they were invited to participate at the initial stage. However, it can also be argued that the lack of involvement consequently affects the ownership of the policies at school level. As Evans et al. (1995) have noted:

> Policy leaders often underestimate the importance of large numbers of mid-level bureaucrats and school-level educators who will influence the form which policies take in practice…under some circumstance the actors can block or reverse policies when they reach local levels (Evans et al, 1995:5).

4.8 Benefits for Implementing the Policy

Despite the challenges highlighted above, the government-civil society interaction and the consultative process in Zambia represent one of the best-practice cases in sub-Saharan Africa. The policy is appreciated by a broad spectrum of people. Internationally, Zambia has been cited as a best example for implementing the policy. Representatives from a number of countries in the region, including Malawi, Botswana and South Africa have come to Zambia to learn about policy implementation. Interviews with the ministry of education senior officials, the national coordinator from a civil society organisation, head teachers, teachers and pupils indicated a high level of optimism for the ultimate success of the policy. Separate interviews with the former permanent secretary and the education secretary of the Catholic schools confirmed that the "re-entry policy is a good policy and indeed a historical watershed to the government of Zambia"[2]. Another informant pointed out that before the introduction of

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[2] Acting Executive Director Campaign for Female Education May, 2009

the policy, pregnant girls were treated like 'lepers, and it was like death penalty'. Interviews with girls also revealed a high level of appreciation for the policy among schoolgirl mothers who had re-entered after giving birth. They reported that they were grateful that the policy had given them a second chance. Achievements highlighted by the head teachers and teachers were with regard to the increased number of girls who were readmitted after giving birth each year and the level of awareness of the policy by the parents who sent back their daughters after giving birth. These positive stories are set however against the background of the high number of girls who fall pregnant before finishing school each year.

Table 5: Girl Dropout and Readmissions in Sampled Schools

Type of School	No. of schools	No. of dropout in 2007 due to pregnancy	Number of readmission cases in 2008
Govt schools	2	11	5
Grant Aided schools	2	4	*4
Total	4	15	9

*Data from school registers 200*9 *pupils who re-entered after giving birth got transfers to other schools other than their former schools

Table 5 above highlights the number of pupils who dropped out in 2007 and readmitted in 2008 in the four schools. Only four girls out of six hundred and fifty (650) students dropped out of school due to pregnancy from the two grant aided schools sampled compared to eleven girls from government schools with the girl population of five hundred. The school administration of grant-aided schools reported that girls who dropped out at the time of being pregnant were assisted by the schools administrators to transfer to other schools after giving birth based on the fact that they would influence their friends to get pregnant too. However, one of the pupils interviewed reported that some of their friends who got transferred to other schools would have loved to stay at the same school while majority were happy to be transferred because they would feel out of place if they came back despite the policy guidelines to go back to their schools.   The high number of girls who re-entered after giving birth indicates the high levels of awareness of the policy among girls and to some degree the acceptance of the policy by the schools.

4.9 Effects and Implications of the Policy

Interviews with key stakeholders and observations revealed a certain level apathy towards the implementation of the policy. In two interviews with headteachers, informants reported that policy making processes in the ministry were non-inclusive as a result it faces rejection when it comes as a directive for schools to implement. This raised may have given rise to the possibility that the guidelines though well intended were not sensitive to all the nuances of the problem as it is perceived by the target group and in particular by the implementers of the policy at school level. Schenk and Williamson (2005) for example have shown the desirability and necessity of involving young people in preparatory dialogue not only in order to respect their right to participate in the development of policies and innovations that are geared to their benefit, but also in order to enhance the likelihood of successful implementation of these policies.

Reservations with regard to the articulation and implications of the policy were voiced almost from the beginning. A circular by the Education Secretaries of grant aided schools *"Guidelines and Regulations Governing Aided Educational Institutions"* (Catholic Secretariat, 2007), states the following:

> The Re-entry Policy pronounced by the Ministry of Education is received with mixed feelings by churches running Aided Educational institutions. In the first place, churches as key stakeholders were neither consulted nor communicated to through the Educational Secretaries who would have referred the policy to the proprietors, the managing agencies or the Board of management (Catholic Secretariat, 2007:2)

As a result, the churches, through the Educational Secretaries' Forum demanded that in order not to compromise their ethos and at the same time not deprive the girl-child the right to education, the school administration in aided schools should be permitted and facilitated in transferring schoolgirl mothers, upon medical proof of pregnancy, to government schools. In addition, they demanded that such pupils should not be allowed to write examinations at any grant aided school for the reasons stated above.

Although most of the countries in eastern and southern region of Africa such as Malawi, Botswana, Kenya, Namibia and Uganda have introduced similar policies with guidelines for implementation, research conducted in these countries show that a good number of girls either abort or hide the pregnancy. In Malawi for example, it has been reported that although the policy is in place, girls still abort or hide their pregnancies due to the lack of proper dissemination of the policy (Chilisa, 2002).

In Zambia, the policy guidelines states that once the girl has been given maternity leave, the father should also be suspended from school until the girl returns to school. If the teacher is the one responsible for the pregnancy, it states that the teacher should be disciplined. However, in situations where teachers are responsible for the pregnancies, often due to connivance, they are not held accountable for their actions. One of the reasons cited for the practice where teachers who impregnate girls are not made accountable is that some teachers decide to settle the matter with the family of the girl with some of payment and promise to marry the girl when she completes her education. In a situation of economic hardship, some parents opt to take the money and never report the teachers responsible to the authorities (FAWEZA, 2004),

Examples from Malawi and Botswana show similar implementation disparities as those found in grant-aided schools in Zambia. Reports from these countries indicated that when schoolgirl mothers returned to school they found a hostile environment. They (schoolgirl mothers) further found that their old school saw them as bad influence and preferred them to go to another school (FAWE, 2004). In Kenya, Omondi (2008) reports that school head teachers fear allowing the return to school of girls who gave birth because of the stigma associated with having mothers in a student environment. Omondi (2008) observed that at a launch of a report on teenage pregnancy and schoolgirl dropout, school heads talked of ostracism faced by schools that have implemented a Ministry of Education policy on readmitting the girls who give birth in the same school. Omondi noted that other schools derogatorily refer to institutions that accept teenage mothers as "maternity schools", and openly encourage isolation of our girls in social gatherings. She further observed that head teachers from a private school in Nairobi were usually under pressure from parents to avoid girls who become pregnant because it is likely to send signals to other girls that it is alright to give birth while at school.

From the forgoing, it is evident that policy formulation and implementation is a process not an event. It requires the concerted effort of every stakeholder to make it work. It requires time, clarity, financial and skilled human capacity. While it is tempting for educators, policy makers and planners to think of change as a rational ordered sequence of events, findings of this study confirms that it does not happen like that. Change does not happen easily or, necessarily, in the manner intended by its planners. Rather "change is a journey not a blueprint Fullan (1993:21)". Educational reform/policy reform is complex, non-linear, frequently arbitrary and always highly political. The findings also concur Hord's (1987:76) assertion that "implementation is the likeliest point that innovations break down" and as such is a serious business requiring considerable planning, nurturing and active involvement if it is to be fully realized".

4.10 Reflections and Summary of the Findings

While there is much benefit towards the implementation of the re-entry policy, the author found a clear recognition that implementation of the policy is far from perfect and that there is much scepticism about the claims made for the exemplary success of the policy. Ministry of education top management and the FAWEZA national team look with appreciation and pride on the achievements of this policy and see it as a worthwhile and largely home-grown initiative that, in providing another chance to adolescent schoolgirl mothers to complete their education, contributes to the attainment of the EFA goals. Most civil society organisations appreciate that more school places are being provided to those who dropout when they return and that there is a much higher proportion of schoolgirl mothers now than there was 10 years ago. Despite the acclaimed achievement, recent statistics from the Ministry of Education 2009 preliminary statistical bulletin show that 15,497 girls got pregnant at basic and high school level in 2008/9 and only 6,679 were re-admitted in school, which means that nearly 9,000 girls may miss the chance of completing their education.

There are a number of critical issues that can be isolated from the re-entry policy process, which participants referred to that present potential challenges to the success of the re-entry policy. To a great extent, these challenges underlie the complexity and inherently political nature of policy processes. This is to say that policy-making entails processes of negotiating and bargaining among stakeholders with different forms and styles of expertise. In this sense, policy-making can be epitomised as a struggle among sundry stakeholders about whose interests should be included, dominate or excluded altogether from the final policy outcomes (UNDP, 2004). These processes are thus played out in uneven struggles between differently positioned and capacitated actors. Viewed in this way, the main feature of policy-making is the stratified interaction of institutions and processes which, in turn affect the kinds of policies that ultimately made. The main issues of concern among lower level participants and the church were: 1) non-inclusiveness of the policy process which includes policy formulation and implementation concerns; 2) weak capacity of the government in driving the policy process.

4.10.1 Non-inclusiveness of the Policy Formulation Process

The study findings revealed the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders in the policy design and development processes no matter how small the innovation further taking into account the quality of that involvement. Civil society organisations have lobbied for inclusion in the policy making process and have usually won the battle. Donors on the other hand do not lobby but they are always invited. Despite not lobbying for inclusion on policy

formulation, donors have been influential in driving the process even though they do not agree to this fact. From my own experience, donors have expertise in policy formulation which they can share with the ministry counterparts at national level where such interaction takes place. From my experience, the grassroots, local government structures and the churches remain stuck at the periphery of the policy process, which is also evidenced in this study. The exclusion of these actors has significant implications on the potential success of the policy process as evidenced in this study.

Interesting views came from two head teachers from two different districts who pointed out that inclusion in the policy-making processes should not only include cabinet ministers but other members of the parliament who have great influence on the electorate in their constituency. While attempts have been made to sensitise chiefs on the policy, little or no attempt has been made to include members of parliament particularly from opposition parties in the policy development processes. One head teacher stated the following:

> I am of the view that no MP was included in the actual policy-making process. Their exclusion is a huge risk because policy-making processes are inherently political since they ultimately deal with the question of resource allocation and distribution, however, invisible they may be.

The views of the head teacher resonate with the fact that 'political will' both at the national level is key for the adoption let alone implementation of policies such as the re-entry policy which require long-term investment. Political will is actually characterised as the fundamental driving force for long-term investment in education and girls' education in particular. The failure to closely involve MPs in the re-entry policy making process means that an auspicious opportunity has been missed out to progressively build a constituency of support for the final product.

In the author's view, the peripheral role of the legislators in the policy process is an enduring historical legacy of the one-party era. The main task of parliament was to establish the legitimacy and legal standards for policy implementation. It thus simply served a legitimisation function of tightly controlled public policy agendas. This has been carried over into the multiparty political dispensation. The parliament is marginalised in legislative functions on the pretext of its lack of skills and expertise to be involved in the demanding and challenging policy processes. The huge affinity for technocratic policy-making is justified on the account of the fact that more than 30% of the MPs have qualifications below college diploma, and only about 25% have a first degree or more. The paradox, however, is that while donor interventions are consistently undertaken to strengthen the technical knowledge of the executive, similar initiatives targeted at the legislature are rarely championed. This amounts to technocratic style of policy-making which poses a considerable threat to democracy because the public cannot scrutinise decisions when parliament is yet to be fully engaged in the policy processes – a scrutiny that is at the heart of democratic politics.

The official position is that various stakeholders were consulted after the policy had been finalised. It is, however, doubtful and based on the findings from this study whether the retrospective consultations registered the same effects countrywide compared to if the consultations were either done prior to or in the course of the drafting exercise. The hangover effects of the top down and technocratic policy-making processes are surely quite strong. Nevertheless, it has been noted that the consultations are instrumental in raising citizen's awareness of their rights but perhaps more importantly, that they are able to demand accountability and advocate for their entitlements accordingly. The irony is that if people

don't know about programmes they will not appreciate them even when they are designated as beneficiaries.

Literature has shown that implementation is a phase of attempted use of innovation (Hopkins et al., 1997) it is the most crucial part of the policy making process where programs can be adopted and effected in schools or neglected. It is the "likeliest point that innovations breakdown and as such is a serious business requiring considerable planning, nurturing and active involvement if it is to be fully realised" (Hord, 1987:76). However, according to research findings, there are still challenges in the implementation of the policy at school level. Challenges in the implementation of the policy have been attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, the study noted that there was an inability by the implementers to overcome the initial resistance to change. The Catholic and the United Church of Zambia for example believes that allowing girls back into school may compromise the moral principles on which they are founded. Secondly, it is evidenced from the findings that there is a tendency by planners and policy makers to oversimplify the implementation process. Although policy designers have the power to give directives to schools to implement policies, school level implementers also re-make the policy and implement it based on the contexts in which the policy is implemented. Thirdly, studies internationally have shown that a number of factors contribute to the failure to implement policies as stated in policy circulars (Gross et al., 1971). According to Gross et al. (1971) lack of clarity about the innovation, lack of capability to perform the new role model, and lack of motivation to make the effort to implement the innovation hinder the effective implementation of an innovation. Based on the findings in this study, it is evident that there is no automatic or easy way to implement the re-entry policy in Zambia. The commitment by the government to ensure that adolescent schoolgirl mothers are not excluded from education after giving birth is commended. However, based on the findings of this study, the process of successful implementation cannot be taken for granted. Fourthly, other factors hindering effective implementation of the policy at school level identified in this study involve the socio-economic backgrounds of the girls. These factors contribute to girls becoming pregnant in the first place and later act as barrier to their going back after giving birth. All these factors need to be seriously examined and taken into account if the policy is to be fully institutionalised in the education sector.

While planners and policy makers may argue that the policy and its guidelines are clear, this may not be the same interpretation that school level implementers may have. For instance, while the policy promotes gender parity by addressing the issue related to exclusion of the girls from schooling due to pregnancy, this study found that a large proportion of girls still continue to stay away from school. Some of the reasons given relate to hostile school environments and lack of support to those who return at school level. Therefore to turn a blind eye on these factors may not improve the effective implementation of the policy.

4.10.2 Weak Government Leadership

Head teachers and the Catholic Secretariat representative reported that the re-entry policy process was not driven by the government but by the donor agencies. They stated that the process should have been government driven in order to demonstrate its commitment and ensure ownership. This is, in part, in the recognition of the fact that efforts did not achieve the desired impact because they lacked government ownership. They stated that the process was almost entirely driven by development partners. One informant stated that:

> … the ministry would have designed the policy at its own time but there was pressure
> from the civil society organisations and some donors to fully domesticate the policy
> before major consultations were done.

This view however was refuted by a representative from the development partner stating that
they (donors) only provide support to the ministry based on the ministry's plans. She stated
the following:

> In line with various agreements particularly the Joint Assistance Strategy to Zambia
> (JASZ) and memorandum of understanding, our role in any policy development is to
> provide both financial and technical support where the government sees it fit. Our
> role is to ensure that government is in the driving seat on all programs. We always
> leave the government to decide what programs they intend to embark on and all we
> do is support by ensuring that the ministry has sufficient funds to implement the
> activity.

The critical examination of the re-entry policy process, however, shows that government's
leadership of the process has essentially remained at the level of rhetoric. It is clear from this
study that while the directorate entrusted with the task of developing the policy was
dominated by government officials, they lacked the technical understanding of girls and of
other peoples concerned in the implementation of the policy. Consequently the key building
blocks of the policy were not developed by the directorate; rather they were outsourced to
two consultants funded by UNICEF. The problem of lack of capacity is clearly underpinned
by the staffing situation of the Directorate of Planning under whose directorate policy matters
fall. Participants from CAMFED including one director interviewed pointed out that the
directorate had been weakly and staff turnover at national, provincial and district levels was
high.

Deficiencies in the ministry's leadership of policy development process created a favourable
environment for donor policy politics to flourish. In the context of an apparent leadership
vacuum, UNICEF assumed the leadership. The education secretary from the Catholic
Secretariat on the other hand had a contradictory view of donor and international NGOs'
commitment to the re-entry policy as she pointed out:

> As far as we can see, some donor agencies and international NGOs are not keen on the
> re-entry policy. They just want to use Zambia as an experimental ground. This is the
> price you pay for excessive deficits in policy-making skills and expertise.

It is very clear from these observations and comments that the ministry's firm and technically
sound leadership in the policy process is indispensable. Without it, it is very difficult to
develop a genuinely Zambian re-entry policy that takes into account the varied concerns of
the people at the implementation level. In addition, the EFA goals which Zambia is signatory
to may not be attained if relevant stakeholders are not engaged and the political leadership are
weak.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study clearly illustrate that the policy formulation and implementation process is an inherently political process even though, in this particular case, there are tendencies to treat policy formulation entirely as a technical process. Policy making entails processes of negotiation and bargaining among actors with different forms and styles of expertise, power and influence. From my experience and based on the views of some teachers and the church, donor politics (although the views of the donors indicated otherwise in this study), has been rife because of failure of the ministry to provide firm leadership and technical guidance to the policy-making process. The desire for the ministry to play a leadership role in the policy process as the basis for commitment and ownership has remained essentially at the level of rhetoric. The directorate (Directorate of Planning and Information) entrusted with the leadership role are not only understaffed but are also not very well versed with the nuances of policy-making processes particularly the ones that affect school going teenagers.

Despite being part and signatory to a number of international conventions on the right to education for all upon which the re-entry policy based, for Zambia this right is not clearly understood or addressed. In this monograph, findings show that implementation of the re-entry policy has been saddled with challenges. In particular, it is doubtful whether the policy is in a position to garner the requisite stakeholder support that can be sustained beyond the pomp and fun of the declaration and launch of the policy by the Honourable Minister of Education. The main reason is that key stakeholders in the policy process, namely: politicians, local government structures, schools, and the beneficiaries have to some extent been relegated to the periphery of the policy formulation process. The circular and policy guidelines though useful do not take into account the various contexts in which the policy is being implemented. Despite the policy discourse favouring an education for all approach, the policy implementation has moved away from this priority as more girls do not return to school after giving birth as evidenced in the findings of this monograph. By bypassing political parties, local government structures, parliament, schools, parents and beneficiaries, the re-entry policy dialogue lies distant not only from the formal policy-making processes but also from the budget. Political parties and parliament are particularly crucial in the formal policy process as the arenas for policy dialogue and debates. The 'dominance' of the central bureaucracy under the tutelage of donors in making and shaping policies means that key stakeholders in the policy process are quite distant from the true locus of decision making. Several conclusions can be drawn from this study. These include:

1. While policy making is essentially technocratic in nature, the capacity of the Executive Organs (the organ which is even higher than the staff in Directorate of Planning) to firmly steer the policy process is quite limited. There is therefore, an urgent need to build up technocratic capacity of the policy-making agencies within the government. The imbalance between donors and government agencies in steering the policy process is a cause of great concern especially when one considers that donors are accountable externally to their home governments or board of directors while the government must ultimately be held accountable to its citizens.

2. There is need to institutionalise and widen the participatory policy processes in order to address issues of Education For All, inclusion and the promotion of human rights and good governance. Policies should be products of fair joint efforts of the citizens, parliament, political parties, civil society, government and the donor community.

Citizens should in this process be duly recognised as the principal actors of development and strategic partners rather than passive recipients and target groups. This would, however, require the establishment of wider and stronger network of structures for interest articulation at local levels since currently the grassroots have very limited options of voice.

3. The democratisation of the political system potentially provides more opportunities for participation of a wide range of stakeholders in the policy-making processes but these opportunities are hardly utilised because of the enduring legacy of the 'technocratic policy-views' on government policy. The challenge, however, is to increase opportunities for engagement without fuelling unrealistic demands on the government that are well beyond capacity.

4. In order to implement the re-entry policy, the Ministry of Education should recognise the concept of contingency and allow for a diversity of views and perspectives. The re-entry policy guidelines in their current state give no room to teachers and other stakeholders to adjust it according to their context. The policy emphasises that all girls should be readmitted in the school where they were before falling pregnant unless they choose not to themselves. As evidenced in this school from the views of the students, not all girls may feel confident to go back to the schools were they were before becoming pregnant at the same time, transferring girls to other schools may not be the best solution. Views of the girls during interviews were that they would like to be given a choice to choose whether they should return to the same school or transfer to other school as opposed to having their parents and teachers decide for them. It is therefore that critical that a balance of the two scenarios to be taken into account.

5. Divergent views such as the ones shared by the church should be accommodated; however, church schools should also not make it mandatory to transfer girls to other schools, normally against their will. The role of the church should be to assist these girls to change; sending them away to other schools is not the best way of addressing the problem.

6. There is need for the Ministry of Education in Zambia to strengthen the guidance and counselling sections at school level and broaden the issues that guidance teachers deal with by including emotional and psychological support of re-entry girls.

7. There is need to broaden the scope of their monitoring tools in order enable the standards officers monitor and provide support to re-entry girls who may experience stigma and discrimination.

The cause of concern raised in this monograph is that policy processes have been dominated by the government bureaucracy and ministry technocrats in terms of setting the tone and the overall policy development agenda almost entirely, insulating it from the school processes and other education providers in the country such as the church. While this is the democratic right for the government and technocrats, a certain level of discretion should be exercised in developing policies that impact on societal beliefs. The challenge for the Ministry of Education in Zambia therefore, is to ensure that schools and communities do not lose confidence in the democratic process by according them an opportunity to influence the shape the momentous decisions that affect their lives. National politics need to be accorded an explanatory role in the policy processes, with a view to promoting policy-making that is inclusive and serves the interest of the citizens in a transparent and accountable manner. In an attempt to attain the EFA goals through the re-entry policy for girls, Zambia can benefit from

the insights of CREATE and its research around the zones of exclusion at both primary and high school levels. The zones can assist the education sector to identify the risk factors affecting children and consequently target the resources accordingly. Political will and sustained reform discussed extensively in this monograph which is part of the CREATE agenda can also assist the education sector in Zambia in promoting wider access and participation of adolescent schoolgirl mothers through such good policies as the re-entry policy.

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Appendix 1: CREATE Zones of exclusion

Zone 0   Children who are excluded from pre-schooling

Zone 1   Children who have never been to school, and are unlikely to attend school

Zone 3   Children who enter primary schooling, but who drop out before completing the primary cycle

Zone 4   Children who enter primary schooling and are enrolled but are "at risk" of dropping out before completion as a result of irregular attendance, low achievement, and silent exclusion from worthwhile learning

Zone 5   Children who enter secondary schooling but who drop out before completing the cycle

Zone 6   Children who enter secondary schooling and are enrolled but are "at risk" of dropping out before completion as a result of irregular attendance, low achievement and silent exclusion from worthwhile learning

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Report summary:
The re-entry policy launched in 1997 advocates that girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy should be readmitted after giving birth. The aim of this policy is to implement measures that will help prevent the exclusion of young mothers from furthering their education. In the event of a girl being forced out of school due to pregnancy, the Ministry of Education has provided policy guidelines to assist schools and other stakeholders such as parents and guardians to ensure that the girl is enabled to complete her education. In this study, views of school administrators, civil society organisations, teachers, pupils and the church are presented. The study calls for a further shift of attention and a redistribution of energies in developing and formulating policies. Evidence from the Ministry of Education suggests that when key stakeholders are left out of the policy formulation process, little is achieved in terms of implementation. Findings in this study further shows that although the policy is perceived as a good policy, various categories of people such as the church, schools and members of parliament particularly those from opposition parties consider the policy to be someone else's agenda influenced by the donor community. It is therefore important for future policies to take into account views of various stakeholders before policy directives are sent to schools.

Author notes:
Audrey Mwansa is a CREATE associate and doctoral student at the Institute of Education, University of London where she holds a Centenary Scholarship. Audrey advises the Zambian Ministry of Education and local and international NGOs on the provision of services to ophans and vulnerable children. Her doctoral dissertation focuses on political agendas and the provision of universal primary education in Zambia.

Address for Correspondence:
CREATE, Centre for International Education
Department of Education, School of Education & Social Work
Essex House, University of Sussex
Falmer, BN1 9QQ, UK.
Website: http://www.create-rpc.org
Email: create@sussex.ac.uk