



FACT SHEET

Education

Enrollment in primary education in Zambia doubled from 1.6 million learners in 2002 to 3.2 million in 2009. This increase is thanks in part to Zambia's decision to abolish primary school fees in 2002 and a strategic emphasis by the Zambian Government to increase learner access to education opportunities.

Despite the progress made in providing greater access to education, the Zambian education system still faces difficult challenges, including: weak education management, large inequalities in education access between rural and urban areas, a high pupil-to-teacher ratio, and inadequate supplies of learning materials. These factors are contributing to poor national exam results. The majority of Zambia's rural schools are in poor condition and the distance that students must travel to schools is often far. Teacher retention is an ongoing problem as resignations are high due to poor living conditions at most schools.

Fast Facts

- 51:1 Average primary school pupil:teacher ratio
- 672,960 orphans enrolled in grades 1 -7
- 18.9% of females complete 12th grade
- 8,000 scholarships provided annually by U.S. government



**Children attending basic school
(Photo: USAID/Zambia)**

Twenty percent of Zambian learners, approximately 600,000 of the basic education student population, attend community schools. Local communities create and operate these schools with untrained volunteer teachers and no government support. Often, these schools cater to the poorest children, many of them AIDS orphans, who are unable to access government-operated schools.

USAID/Zambia works closely with the Zambian Ministry of Education to promote positive changes in the education sector through teacher training, support to community schools, HIV/AIDS

prevention, scholarships for orphans, school health services, and grants to boost local school development. In addition, USAID provides institutional support directly to the Ministry for policy reform, information management, and training of school administrators.



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Currently, USAID is focusing on the following areas:

- Improving the quality of teaching in community schools. USAID supports teacher training to improve volunteer community teacher basic teaching skills. In addition, teaching and learning materials have been provided to 3,000 community schools.
- Assisting the Ministry of Education to improve operational procedures. USAID supports education leadership and management training, focusing on training for school administrators. USAID also supports the improvement of school research procedures and the preparation of education statistics. These statistics provide specific management information such as the number of students in each school and teacher placements, enabling local officials to identify problems and develop solutions.
- Reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector. USAID supports a very successful HIV/AIDS workplace program for teachers and their families. This program provides prevention information together with counseling and testing services, right at the schools. In addition, students in the teacher training colleges receive HIV/AIDS instruction, while life skills training is offered through community radio broadcasts.



**An interactive lesson
(Photo: C. Mahoney
USAID/Zambia)**

In 2009, USAID provided more than 8,000 scholarships to the most vulnerable orphans in an effort to keep them productive and in school.

The USAID water and sanitation program is designed to improve community health and the school learning environment by providing clean water and sanitation facilities in the neediest schools. The program is repairing and installing water pumps and constructing latrines suitable for both boys and girls.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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