



POLICY BRIEF

INTEGRATING "SCHOOL IN-SERVICE TEACHER MENTORSHIP AND SUPPORT" PROJECT PRINCIPLES INTO NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Preamble

This policy brief advocates for the integration of Strengthening In-Service Teacher Mentorship and Support (SITMS) principles into Zambia's educational framework. Informed by the findings from the SITMS pilot project in 7 teachers' colleges and 35 schools across four provinces, it outlines key strategy to align the national curriculum with SITMS principles, enhancing student engagement, improving teaching methodologies, and fostering a holistic learning experience.

Introduction

SITMS, operating as a pilot project in specific Zambian regions, embodies the School-based In-service Teacher Training (SITT) model. This approach emphasises practical, inclusive, and locally relevant teaching methods. Integrating these principles into the national curriculum is imperative to cultivate a dynamic educational environment conducive to 21st century learning. As can be observed Zambia is already making a mark in emphasising practised based (Ministry of Education, 2013) learning and a project of this nature will complement the efforts even more.

Methodology

The research utilized a clear methodology centered on monitoring and document synthesis. Monitoring activities included establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) such as student engagement and activity-based teaching and learning, which were assessed through classroom observations, interviews, and student surveys. Concurrently, a document synthesis approach was applied, involving the analysis of the 2013 Zambian curriculum framework, and comparing it with the elements of the SITT model. The insights gained from these activities were crucial in developing evidence-based policy recommendations to align Zambia's national curriculum with SITMS principles.

Key Findings

- 1) Enhanced Student Engagement: Schools and colleges that implemented the SITMS principles witnessed a significant increase in student engagement. Practical learning experiences captured students' interest, encouraging active participation and knowledge retention.

- 2) **Teacher Adaptability:** Educators showcased adaptability by integrating interactive teaching strategies from SITMS. This adaptability led to a student-centred approach, empowering learners to contribute meaningfully to the learning process.
- 3) **Collaborative Learning Culture:** SITMS encouraged collaborative learning environments. Peer-to-peer interactions and team teaching flourished, creating a supportive ecosystem where knowledge was co-created between teachers and students.
- 4) **Real-world relevance:** SITMS's emphasis on utilising local resources and relating lessons to practical contexts resonated with students. This approach not only enhanced subject understanding but also showcased the tangible relevance of education in their daily lives.

Key Policy Strategies

- 1) **Curriculum Alignment:** Collaborate with educational experts to realign the national curriculum with SITMS principles. The learning objectives should reflect the emphasis on practical, inclusive and locally applicable teaching methods.
- 2) **Teacher Training Enhancement:** Develop comprehensive training programmes for teachers, emphasising SITMS techniques. Modules should focus on interactive teaching, inclusivity, and innovative use of local resources to improve classroom experiences.
- 3) **Resource Development:** Invest in the creation of educational materials aligned with SITMS principles. These materials should promote hands-on learning, interactive classrooms, and real-world applications of knowledge.
- 4) **Assessment Integration:** Modify assessment methods to include practical components that allow students to demonstrate their understanding through real-life applications. Assessments should reflect the inclusive and engaging nature of SITMS.

Policy Implementation Enablers

- 1) **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Facilitate collaboration between educational institutions, curriculum developers, teacher training colleges, and local communities. Engage stakeholders in the curriculum alignment process to ensure diverse perspectives are considered.
- 2) **Continuous Professional Development:** Establish a robust system for ongoing teacher training and professional development. Regular workshops, seminars, and peer learning sessions will empower educators to effectively implement the SITMS principles.
- 3) **Community participation:** Encourage active participation of parents and community members in school activities. Involving local communities enriches student learning experiences, providing diverse perspectives and practical insights.
- 4) **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Implement a comprehensive data collection and analysis system to monitor the impact of integrating the SITMS principles. Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms will inform policymaking and enable continuous improvement.

Conclusion

Integrating SITMS ideas into the national curriculum is crucial to providing Zambian students with a transformative educational experience. Zambia can ensure that its education system not only teaches knowledge, but also nurtures key life skills, critical thinking, and creativity by aligning educational objectives with the proven results of SITMS. Collaborative efforts, ongoing training, and a focus on real-world applicability are critical to the policy's successful implementation. Embracing these values will set the groundwork for Zambia's education system to be vibrant, inclusive, and future-ready.

References

Ministry of Education (2013). *The Zambia Education Curriculum Framework 2013*. Retrieved 10 20, 2023, from http://say-zambia.org:8080/jspui/bitstream/11361/24/1/mestvee_zambia_education_curriculum_framework_2013.pdf

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