



Submission to the Universal
Periodic Review of the United
Nations Human Rights Council

4th Cycle – 42nd Session

Country Review: Zambia

June 2022

by Ntchindi Chilongozi Theu

Broken Chalk is an Amsterdam-based NGO established in 2020 and focused on raising awareness and minimizing human rights violations in the educational field.

Together with our international sponsors and partners, we encourage and support the following activities/projects: removing obstacles in education; contributing to the achievement of peace and tranquillity in society through adaptation studies in an environment of intercultural tolerance; preventing radicalism and polarization, and eliminating the opportunity gap in education for all. Our goal is to work with global partners to remove barriers to education and take concrete steps to ensure universal access to education.



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Introduction

1. Broken Chalk is an Amsterdam-based NGO established in 2020 and focused on raising awareness and minimizing human rights violations in the educational field. Together with our international sponsors and partners, we encourage and support the following activities/projects: removing obstacles in education; contributing to the achievement of peace and tranquillity in society through adaptation studies in an environment of intercultural tolerance; preventing radicalism and polarization, and eliminating the opportunity gap in education for all. Our goal is to work with global partners to remove barriers to education and take concrete steps to ensure universal access to education.
2. "Access to quality secondary education is key to poverty reduction", said Sahr Kpundeh, World Bank Country Manager for Zambia. The right to education is a fundamental pillar of children's rights. Achieving universal education, however, is a complex process that requires social policy to join with educational policy to develop strategies that bring about change.

Statistical insights

3. According to the World Bank, Zambia has struggled to stay on track to meet the 2030 targets for inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning (Sustainable Development Goal N°4). According to UNICEF, Zambia, for so many years, has been struggling to provide coverage of care, learning and education services. At the same time, many girls in Zambia are disadvantaged and end up dropping out in the upper primary and secondary levels, and poorer classes transition to junior secondary and senior secondary levels.
4. Zambia faces an apparent crisis regarding its educational system; however, its government has been working toward improving the industry's performance.
5. Zambia has ratified most international treaties that protect the right to education. Although the 1991 Constitution of the Republic of Zambia does not cover the right to education, it is under review. The right to education is expected to be included in the revised constitution. Because the current constitution does not have the right to education, however, there are currently few redress mechanisms for the right to education in Zambia
6. The Zambian education system consists of nine years of primary education (grades 1-9), three years of high school (grades 10-12) and tertiary education. The system is changing from seven years of primary education to nine years of basic education. However, secondary schools still offer education in grades 8 and 9 in addition to three high school years. The rationale behind this transition was that in a country where boarding schools

provided most secondary education, it would be more feasible to meet the objective of nine years of primary education for all if each of these nine years was provided at local primary schools (World Bank, 2006).

7. Provinces also show remarkable variation in educational attainment. Around one-quarter of the population in Eastern (29%) and Luapula (21%) regions have no formal education, compared to fewer than one in 20 residents in Western (4%), Lusaka (3%), Muchinga (2%), and Copperbelt (2%). Only one in 100 Eastern residents have post-secondary studies, compared to one-fourth (25%) of their Copperbelt compatriots.

II. Barriers in the Zambian Education System

8. The education system in Zambia is facing a lot of challenges, and these include; School locations being too far from most families in the rural area (with distances that exceed 5 kilometres between school and home), Economic situation/poverty, early and forced marriage, gender discrimination and last but not least, the lack of inappropriate school infrastructures which highly impacts children with special needs and disabilities.
9. Teachers in Zambia are often inadequately trained and ill-equipped to manage their overcrowded classrooms. Zambia has a shortage of qualified teachers nationally, and at the same time, reports have shown that most urban schools in the country have more teachers than necessary. At the same time, rural schools have very few teachers teaching large groups of students daily.
10. The disparity in education access is particularly between rural and urban settings, whereby 23% of children in the primary level in rural areas versus 9% in urban centres have dropped out of school. Some students drop out of school as early as Grade 4 because they cannot understand the material being taught and have fallen so behind that they give up. While others stop attending class and do everyday work to help support their families.
11. The lack of financial means for children to further/continue their education has been a massive problem for Zambian families.
12. Most of the youth in Zambia do not have access to quality education and are robbed of their rights to education. Many students lack school supplies and the resources needed to further their studies. Although the government and other companies are taking part in improving these conditions, there is still a need for more intervention as education is a key to a better life for families and the future of a nation.

IV. Turkey urges Zambia to transfer Turkish schools

13. There has been a problem between the Turkish government and the Gulen movement for the last ten years. The Gulen movement is led by a US-based Islamic cleric called

Fethullah Gülen, who is accused of being behind an incident that happened on July 15, 2016, in which a national army wanted to overpower the government and took action by bombing government buildings, Parliament and many more (The Guardian, 2022). Until now, Turkish government did not prove its accusation of the Gulen Movement.

14. The Gulen movement established over 1000 schools worldwide, aiming to improve educational sectors and heavily emphasizing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics studies. Zambia is on the list of countries where some of these schools were established. However, the political problems between the Turkish government and the Gulenists have led to Turkey urging the Zambia government to be closed and also transfer the school's management to a stand-alone organization called 'Maarif Foundation'. Whether the allegations of the Gulen movement are true or not, the closure and handing over of schools to Maarif is causing barriers in the educational sector of Zambia because, through this process, innocent Turkish teachers working in the schools are being left jobless, and others deported. Pupils are forced to stay home do not when the learning institutions are shut down due to the political problems. Lastly, some students cannot easily cope with the new management put in place by the Maarif foundation.

V. Recommendations & Conclusions

Broken Chalk recommends that Zambia should:

15. There should be more investment in higher education, especially in establishing new institutions and ensuring quality education is offered in all schools.
16. Government should introduce the transport facility exclusively for the students to help students living far away from the educational centres.
17. Create awareness through events and seminars to youth on the benefits of education, but also to educate youth on sexual education to reduce the number of young girls being impregnated while in school
18. Provide financial support to pupils who cannot afford school fees and supplies.
19. The Turkish schools the government seizes should be given back to their initial owners.

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