



Curriculum Policy and Practice of Civic Education in Zambia: A Reflective Perspective

Gistered Muleya

Contents

Introduction	2
Education Provision in Zambia: Historical Perspective	3
The Contemporary Revival of Civic Education in Zambia	5
Conclusion	9
References	9

Abstract

In recent years Civic Education has evolved into an important school curriculum subject in Zambia. Similar to other parts of the world, Zambia has experienced changes mostly driven by educational policy innovations. The educational policy innovations have, in turn, been driven by the desire to democratize the teaching and learning environment in schools. As a result of this development, the call for more critical, active, and participatory approaches to the teaching of Civic Education has become imperative. In this chapter, the historical development of Civic Education in Zambia, including the curriculum policy provisions for Civic Education and current practical aspects of the subject, is discussed. Using the terms Civic Education and Citizenship Education interchangeably, the chapter articulates what it perceives to be the best practices and values derived from Civic Education. In so doing, the chapter concludes by highlighting the key arguments about the curriculum policy and practice of Civic Education in Zambia.

G. Muleya (✉)

Department of Language and Social Sciences Education, The University of Zambia,
Lusaka, Zambia

e-mail: muleya71@yahoo.com

KeywordsCivic Education · Citizenship Education · Curriculum policy · Values

Introduction

Civic Education, also known as Citizenship Education, has become an important focus in Zambia's educational policy, and this is in line with an international surge of interest and motivation in the wider field of Civic Education. One can speculate that the reason or reasons for such a position are based on the understanding that Civic Education is deemed as an important constituent of the development of citizenship in current and future generations. In a similar fashion, Sim and Chow (2018) note that the active participation of citizens is crucial to the sustenance of a healthy democratic society. The observation has been made on account of Civic Education being a subject that equips citizens with the relevant knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions which allow them to participate effectively in the community. Similarly, Print (2000) suggests that the purpose and content of Civic Education includes what is taught in schools about the system of government, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, the history of the government, parliament and constitution, the role of citizens in a liberal democracy, and a set of values based on democracy, social justice, and the civic virtues of an active, participating citizenry.

Despite Zambia's democratic space being relatively constrained owing to challenges arising from the current sociopolitical context, it can be argued that there has been a strong consensus among key stakeholders – academicians, educators, and policy makers – concerning the importance and content of Civic Education in schools, especially with regard to a revised curriculum of 2015. One of the key aspects in the revised curriculum is to produce among other things self-motivated, lifelong learners; confident and productive individuals; and holistic, independent learners with the values, skills, and knowledge to enable them to succeed in life (M.o.G.E 2015). This chapter discusses the historical development of Civic Education in Zambia, including the curriculum policy provisions for Civic Education and current practical aspects of the subject. As stated above, the subject has become compulsory in all secondary schools in Zambia from grades 10–12. The age range of the learners at this level (grades 10–12) is 15–19 years. At junior secondary level (grades 8–9, ages 12–14), the revised curriculum requires that Civic Education, History, and Geography are integrated within Social Studies. The chapter articulates what are perceived to be the best practices and values central to Civic Education in Zambia. Furthermore, the chapter highlights central arguments regarding the curriculum policy and practice of Civic Education in Zambia. The key argument of the chapter is that Civic Education has quickly become an important focus in Zambia's national educational provision owing to the fact that it teaches substantive knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that have a positive impact upon student behavior, all elements perceived by stakeholders to be vital for meaningful citizenship in Zambia.

Education Provision in Zambia: Historical Perspective

To put this chapter in its proper context, especially to readers who may not be familiar with Zambia, it is important that a brief background about Zambia is provided. Zambia gained her independence from the United Kingdom on the 24th of October 1964. In the period from independence to 1972, Zambia was governed by the socialist United National Independence Party, first within a multi-party system of governance, then, between 1973 and 1991, as a one-party state system. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was perceived discontent among Zambians regarding the one-party system resulting in calls for multi-partyism which was attained in 1991 under the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) (Muleya 2018a).

Of particular relevance to this move to a multi-party democracy was the worldwide renewal of interest in citizenship, sparked by a number of political events and trends across the globe, including, among others, perceptions of increasing voter apathy, the resurgence of nationalist movements, the impact of global forces on local social traditions, the stresses created by increasingly multicultural societies, and a decline of volunteerism (Prior 2006). The MMD ruled for 20 years before losing power in 2011 to the Patriotic Front, which formed government in 2011. There is some perception that the coming of the Patriotic Front into government has eroded the process of a functioning democratic arrangement. The perception has arisen from the manner in which the principles and values of democracy are being applied in the different governance institutions. Arising from the foregoing, it would appear that such perceptions have the potential to impact on the intended capacities that Civic Education develops in learners such as critical thinking, creative thinking, and analytical thinking among the many others. Abdi, Shizha, and Bwalya (2006) have described Zambia's postcolonial economic development as a failed category on account that what had been created could be described as socioeconomic underdevelopment.

Civic Education, in general terms, provides possibilities for engaging students in civil and political issues. However, in Zambia, as observed elsewhere by Kennedy (2003), students are often marginalized and silenced through the use of repressive state apparatus such as the police service or force. Since the return to a multi-party state, Zambia has experienced political, economic, and social challenges constrained by the narrow, economic base, which historically is dependent on copper mining, concentrated ownership of assets, limited foreign and domestic investment, the legacy of authoritarianism, corruption, and high unemployment (USAID 2003). In addressing such challenges, Flanagan (2003) stated that Zambians needed to be socially and politically incorporated into "the body politic" and develop "habits" that promote and sustain social, political, and cultural rights. Additionally, they should be given opportunities to exercise these rights and learn to fulfil responsibilities in the community and institutions. In turn, Civic Education is prefaced as laying the foundation for democratic citizenship by educating citizens about the types of behavior and attitudes they need to function effectively in a democratic society (Morris 2002).

Within this changing political and economic context, education has remained as a core part of Zambia's political and social infrastructure (Abdi et al. 2006; Muleya 2015). This is not to suggest, however, that education and schooling have remained static and unchanged. Indeed, the development of education and schooling in Zambia has passed through many phases, including those dating back to pre-colonial traditional systems operated through Christian missionary-managed education in colonial times to the postindependence era (M.o.E 1964). It is also important to note that despite various educational policies that have come with successive governments since independence, the Education Act of 1966 has continued to set the basic framework for the education system in Zambia (M.o.E 2000). Despite achievements made in the implementation of previous educational reforms, much more remains to be done to realize real change and transformation within Zambian society (Muleya 2015). This observation is also supported by Carmody (2004: 158) who asserts that the educational system in Zambia has not clearly addressed the important question of educating future generations for democracy. In other words, he noted that schools across the country were not encouraging learners to foster a "democratic ethos in their interactions as young people," whether in school or out of school, and this has had an impact on the preparation of these learners for democracy in the community. It is important here to highlight that Civic Education had been discontinued in the school system in 1978 by the United National Independence Party (UNIP) of Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda on the understanding that the learners exposed to Civic Education knowledge, skills, and values would more easily challenge Dr. Kaunda and his government. On this score, the Government at that time decided that Civics should instead be maintained at the junior level of education so that learners would only learn basic knowledge, skills, and values on governance issues.

Carmody also noted that the lack of actual democratic education was creating challenges despite clear policy statements which hailed the ideal of democracy. The national education policy on education published in 1996, *Educating Our Future*, emphasized the democratic ideal that:

Zambia was a liberal democratic society. Hence, it was the values of liberal democracy that were to guide the formulation of educational policies and their implementation. The core values of rational and moral autonomy, equality, fairness and liberty were to underpin the concept of a liberal democracy. In this system, the people were expected to participate fully and rationally in the affairs of the country.

Such a position at the time demonstrated a clear need for a more participatory version of Civic Education to be reintroduced in schools in order to address the gap which the subject Civics had not clearly addressed. Civics as a school curriculum subject had a narrow focus and did not allow the learners to engage actively in their lessons. Civics was mainly promoting what would be described as procedural knowledge thus knowledge about state institutions as opposed to substantive knowledge or knowledge meant to challenge inequalities in the community and provide or

suggest alternative solutions to the powers that be without being censored. Civics as a subject also promoted blind loyalty to those in authority, and this encouraged the generally citizenry to remain mute on many issues that were affecting them for fear of being reprimanded by the state apparatus. The other point to note here is that Civics was only taught at the junior level of secondary education thus from grades 8–9 and could not be taken up at senior level of education (grades 10–12), and this was seen as one of the many gaps that prompted the Ministry of Education and other key stakeholders to reintroduce Civic Education at senior level.

In summary, the reintroduction of Civic Education at the level of secondary education aimed at renewing an ethos of critical thinking and creative thinking among students which was seen to be greatly lacking in previous iterations of Civics in Zambia. In the next section, the chapter discusses in more detail the reasons that led to the revival of Civic Education in the school curriculum.

The Contemporary Revival of Civic Education in Zambia

Before examining the contemporary revival of Civic Education in Zambia, it is worth highlighting that this revival has run concurrently with changing conceptions of both citizenship and education for citizenship in academic scholarship. These changes have recognized and prioritized the development of a set of skills to learners which, in turn, will help them to become active and informed participants in their communities (Muleya 2018a). As noted by Wilkins (2018), meanings of citizenship are now typically preceded by and affixed to other words which give citizenship new discursive meaning and political force, and, as such, it is no longer meaning the position or status of being just a citizen. In this way citizenship is about being an effective citizen able to get involved in what is going on in one's community or society. Wilkins (2018) further notes that citizenship should be understood to refer to the civil rights of citizens to liberty and equality before law as well as the political and social rights of citizens to participate in deliberative and judicial activities that affect communities and government. The reintroduction of Civic Education rose out of the need to produce learners who would be versed in the ideals and practices of a democratic community. Central to this new curriculum was teaching learners about how they can live as true citizens in the community, following the ideals of what may be referred to as transformative citizenship education. Banks (2008) states that transformative citizenship education aims to challenge mainstream conceptions of citizenship by engaging students in critical analysis of taken-for-granted assumptions about membership, identity, and community. Mainstream citizenship education – what Banks (2008) refers to as more traditional forms of citizenship education – is rooted in factual information about systems of government and constitutions, often reinforcing and therefore perpetuating hegemonic values and institutional knowledge. Banks suggests that this kind of education is grounded in versions of citizenship which adopt the established values and morals of the majority and maintains the dominant power relations in society.

Interest in the reintroduction of Civic Education in Zambia's school system arose from a feasibility study which was commissioned by the Southern University/Democratic Governance Project under USAID in 1995. Muleya (2015) reports that the study was undertaken by group of experts and academicians from the University of Zambia after realizing that there was a gap in the education of learners for democratic ideals in society such as the inability of the learners to challenge taken-for-granted positions in the community; lack of critical thinking skills; and lack of democratic skills like participatory, active, civic engagement and civic involvement just to mention a few. The need to retrain teachers in line with the objectives of Civic Education was also a critical element in the revitalization of Civic Education in the Zambian school curriculum. Reflecting on key issues with the approach taken prior previously, Carmody (2004) has argued that there were important deficiencies in education for the promotion of democracy, social responsibility, and justice. For example, he noted that discussions of explicitly political matters were not encouraged and when they did happen were so somewhat covertly. As efforts were made to depoliticize schools, they were not able to prepare students for the practice of democracy in the community. The recognition of the argument by Carmody above was an important factor that created the revived aims of fostering democratic communities and making such communities to become the loci of citizenship.

Indeed, according to an Irish Aid Report of 2002, the rationale for the reintroduction of Civic Education in schools in Zambia arose from the following factors: that civics was taught at junior level of secondary education, which had created a gap between the upper secondary and tertiary level; that the content at junior level was too loaded and detailed to be grasped by learners at junior level; that the skills and values in the content were limited to enabling learners to understand and practice their civic rights and obligations in society; and that trained civics teachers had a low esteem of the subject and preferred teaching subjects other than civics. The reports' last point was that pupils themselves thought of the subject as less important and therefore did not give it the status it deserved.

At the same time, Civic Education across the globe had become a primary concern for many countries in their endeavor to nurture citizens who were going to possess the capacity to address local and global issues rationally (Gilbert 1996; Crick 1998; Criddle et al. 2004; Noddings 2013). The Zambian Government White Paper, the *National Capacity Building Programme for Good Governance in Zambia*, identified and stated that central to the development of good governance was a need to expand and intensify Civic Education (Muleya 2015). It is worth reflecting, too, that the reintroduction of Civic Education in Zambian schools had become a critical issue due to the fact that what was being offered to the learners under Civics was in most cases not impacting on the national consciousness required of the general citizenry in addressing local and global issues rationally. The revised focus on Civic Education was also meant to support the new overall education policy direction which had been conceived on the lines of democratic principles and ideals (M.o.E 1996).

In strengthening the subject in schools, the revised curriculum of 2015 has made Civic Education a compulsory subject at senior level of the secondary education

where in both career pathways (academic and vocational), it appears as one of the core subjects. This was not the case before the revision of the 2015 revised curriculum. It also goes without saying that the Civic Education curriculum as revised has a different approach to the way learning should be conducted as it places a lot of emphasis on civic engagement among the learners a point of departure from Civics which was carefully tailored to produce passive and obedient learners. As such the observation to be made here is that the *Zambian School curriculum* no longer has Civics as a subject but rather has now Civic Education. While Civic Education is now compulsory at senior secondary school level, it is integrated at the Junior Secondary level into what is referred to as Social Studies. The social studies subject combines Civic Education with Geography and History on account that there is interrelated content and similar competencies between these disciplines. (Religious Education does not fall into the social studies dimension in Zambia, and it is a stand-alone in the current curriculum framework.) The Junior Secondary School Curriculum is a 2-year course that covers grades 8 and 9 (12–14 years) of the *Zambian Education system* (M.o.G.E 2015). However, Civic Education is a living subject experiencing changes from time to time. As such, the curriculum intends to provide learners with the basis for the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills, and values needed for learning in subsequent formal studies at Senior Secondary School. According to the M.o.G.E, (2015), the curriculum at this level also equips the learners with knowledge and skills to either continue with the academic education or pursue prevocational and life skills. It is also important to point out here that the two career pathways at senior secondary level are deemed as academic and vocational. In order to realize the aspirations of the revised curriculum of 2015, respective schools across the country are being encouraged to come up with continuous professional development activities (CPDs) in Civic Education so that teachers would be oriented and reoriented on the innovations taking place in their field of study. Equally to note is that training institutions are also encouraged to train the students in line with the changes made in the revised curriculum. Additionally, the training institutions are also encouraged to design programs that will cater for the integration of Civic Education, History, or Geography into social studies at grades 8 and 9.

In all this, the practice of Civic Education in Zambia remains alive to its mission of what one could call refocusing, reinvigorating, and repositioning as well as recreating in learners the tenets and rudiments of what it means to be citizens, whether nationally or globally. According to Print and Smith (2000), the key elements of Civic Education are the critical values required for participation in democratic societies. Values in this case appear to play an important role in the formation of social capital, one of the foundation stones of civil societies and democracies (Putnam 1995; Montgomery 1998 as cited in Print and Smith 2000). Law (2018) observes that Civic Education enhances the dominant orthodoxy values and fosters an obedient citizenry for social and political stability rather than cultivating people to become more independent and autonomous. It is clear from such a position that the values found in Civic Education are variously applied in different contexts. Peterson et al. (2018) observed that the rationale for the Australian

Curriculum Civics and Citizenship was aimed at helping the students to explore ways they could actively shape their lives, value their belonging in a diverse and dynamic society, and positively contribute locally, nationally, regionally, and globally. Similarly, Muleya (2016) noted that Civic Education as a subject involved the active participation of citizens in managing themselves in society and to make sure that everyone who needs help is supported. Furthermore Muleya (2018b) contends that Civic Education reflects on the assumptions, approaches, paradigms, world-views, philosophies, systems, structures, and people of diverse backgrounds as the means to gain great understanding through hands-on knowledge on the ways of life in society. This again has bearing on the kind of values that one gets through the principles and ideals of Civic Education. A scrutiny of the 1996 *National Policy of Education, Educating our Future* points to the upholding of national peace, citizenship, patriotism, national pride, and respect for other people's freedom and sovereignty as some of the values that should be promoted through Civic Education. These values are guiding ideals for the nation in terms of what Civic Education should contribute to the education of Zambian citizens. Thus, Civic Education is considered in the Zambian education curriculum as achieving the objectives that may not be attained by other subjects only.

It is thus clear that successive governments in the postindependence period in Zambia adopted different education policies especially in the 1990s which played a critical role in informing current educational provision and practices (Muleya 2018a). In addition to focusing on Civic Education as a curricular subject, as argued by Abdi, Shizha, and Ellis (2010), educational policies and reforms during this era also sought to democratize the education system. The current government's educational vision aims at providing education which is responsive and relevant to the requirements of society. In doing so, through its *Vision 2030 policy document*, the Government of the Republic of Zambia notes that the Ministry of Education should provide for wider values and goals that are significant to the core of Civic Education, namely, providing learners with the required knowledge, skills, and values meant to uphold and respect their own freedoms and those of others in society.

Based on the *Civitas Framework* of 1991, Muleya (2018a) contends that Civic Education in Zambia has the capacity to bring forth to the learners' attitudes and habits that would help them as citizens to contribute effectively to the development of their communities. Civic Education is also said to help learners acquire relevant knowledge and skills required of them to participate accordingly in society and that Civic Education supports learners in becoming part of what is happening around them and this in the long run has the potential to help get involved in addressing the challenges of the day in their local communities. To be able to fulfil their rightful obligations, the learners will first of all have to understand their role as citizens of Zambia. Without this understanding of who they are as citizens, it is difficult to realize the goals of Civic Education, especially the values derived out of it. As to whether the current curriculum is addressing the problems which led to the revival of Civic Education at the senior level of secondary education, it can only be speculated that there is still a lot of work to be done in this area. While the revised curriculum is

clear on the aims of Civic Education, there is a lack of studies which explicitly examine the practice and impact of Civic Education in Zambian schools.

Whether the intended practices are being realized or not is something that will have to be seen once the revised curriculum of 2015 has been fully implemented in schools. However, it can be argued that Civic Education in the Zambian school curriculum remains an important way and means of teaching citizens about their individual rights, duties and responsibilities. It is worth concluding this section by referencing Jekayinfa et al.'s (2010) contention, written in relation to Civic Education in Nigeria, that Civic Education brings benefits for schools, other educational organizations, and society at large. Schools and other educational organizations argue that Civic Education supports motivated and responsible learners, who relate positively to each other, to staff, and to the surrounding community, creating for society, an active and responsible citizenry, willing to participate in the life of the nation and the wider world and play its part in the democratic process. In this way, that Civic Education stands out as a subject in the Zambian school curriculum whose responsibility is to prepare the citizens for life and thus speaking to the depth and breadth of what needs to be learnt.

Conclusion

Civic Education in Zambia has now become one of the compulsory subjects in the school curriculum. The Ministry of General Education has been at the center of policy, curricula, resources, curriculum materials, teacher professional development, and research directed to Civic Education. It is clear to note that Civic Education in the Zambian school system looks promising for now, and one gets the sense that with this kind of support not only from the government but also from key stakeholders, such civil society organizations and the like will continue to support the application of the policy in schools. One interesting aspect about Civic Education in Zambia is that it has become one of the subjects being taken at all stages of education provision, and one can argue that just like in other parts of world, Civic Education in Zambia is indeed experiencing rapid renaissance.

References

- Abdi, A. A., Shizha, E., & Bwalya, I. (2006). Recasting postcolonial citizenship through civic education: Critical perspectives on Zambia. *Spring, 35*(2), 47–64.
- Abdi, A. A., Shizha, E., & Ellis, L. (2010). *Citizenship education and social development in Zambia*. Charlotte: Age Publishing Inc.
- Banks, J. A. (2008). Diversity, group identity and citizenship education in a global age. *Educational Researcher, 37*(3), 129–139.
- Carmody, B. (2004). *The evolution of education in Zambia*. Ndola: Mission Press. (Reprinted 2009).

- Crick, B. (1998). *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools: The final report of the advisory group on citizenship*. London: Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.
- Criddle, E., Vidovich, L., & O'Neill, M. (2004). Discovering democracy: An analysis of curriculum policy for citizenship education. *Westminster Studies in Education*, 27(1), 27–41.
- Flanagan, C. (2003). Development roots of political engagement. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 36(7), 257–261.
- Gilbert, R. (1996). Identity, culture and environment: Education for citizenship for the 21st century. In J. Demaine & H. Entwistle (Eds.), *Beyond communitarianism: Citizenship, politics and education* (pp. 42–63). Houndmills: Macmillan Press.
- Jekayinfa et al. (2010). *Implementation of civic education curriculum in Nigeria: Challenges for social studies teachers*. Nigerian Observer Online.
- Kennedy, K. (2003). *The “new globalisation” and what it means for the preparation of future citizens*. Paper prepared for the “Role of the School in Citizenship Education in an Era of Globalisation Panel”, 27th Annual Conference of the Pacific Circle Consortium, University of Minnesota.
- Law, W. W. (2018). The role of the state and state orthodoxy in citizenship and education in China. In Peterson et al. (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of citizenship and education*. London: Springer International Publishing.
- M.o.E. (1964). *Annual reports*. Lusaka: GRZ.
- M.o.E. (1996). *Educating our future: National Policy on education*. Lusaka: Zambia Publishing House.
- M.o.E. (2000). *Ministry of Education annual report*. Lusaka: GRZ.
- M.o.G.E. (2015). *Zambia education curriculum framework 2015*. Lusaka: CDC.
- Montgomery (1998). In Print, M., & Smith, A. (2000). Teaching civic education for a civil democratic society in the Asian region. *Asian Pacific Education Review*, 1(1), 101–109.
- Morris, S. (2002). *Approaches to civic education: Lessons learned*. Washington, DC: Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID.
- Muleya, G. (2015). *The teaching of civic education in Zambia: An examination of trends in the teaching of civic education in Schools*. Doctoral thesis, University of South Africa.
- Muleya, G. (2016). Managing and leading through Ubuntu. In M. Letseka (Ed.), *Education in a competitive and globalising world: Open distance learning (ODL) through the philosophy of Ubuntu*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Muleya, G. (2018a). Civic education in Zambia before and beyond the Golden Jubilee. In G. Masaiti (Ed.), *Education at fifty years of Independence and beyond*. Lusaka: Unza Press.
- Muleya, G. (2018b). Civic education versus citizenship education: Where is the point of convergence? *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*, 1(2), 125–148.
- Noddings, N. (2013). *Education and democracy in the 21st century*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Peterson, et al. (2018). Education for youth civic and political action in Australia’, In Peterson et al. (eds.) *The Palgrave handbook of citizenship and education*. London: Springer International Publishing.
- Print, M. (2000). Curriculum policy, values and changes in civic education in Australia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 20(1), 21–35.
- Print, M., & Smith, A. (2000). Teaching civic education for a civil democratic society in the Asian Region. *Asian Pacific Education Review*, 1(1), 101–109.
- Prior, W. (2006). Civics and citizenship education. *Ethos*, 14(4), 6–10.
- Putnam (1995). In Print, M., & Smith, A. (2000). Teaching civic education for a civil democratic society in the Asian region’. *Asian Pacific education review*, 1(1), 101–109.
- Sim, J. B. Y., & Chow, L. T. (2018). The development of civic participation among youths in Singapore. In Peterson et al. (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of citizenship and education*. London: Springer International Publishing.

-
- USAID. (2003). *USAID/Zambia annual report FY 2003*, USAID development experience clearinghouse.
- Wilkins, A. (2018). Neoliberalism, citizenship and education: A policy discourses analysis. In Peterson et al. (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of citizenship and education*. London: Springer International Publishing.