

# Teacher Preparation through Continuous Professional Development in Zambia

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## Introduction and Context

This paper presents one project aimed at addressing the effects of HIV/AIDS on young children and their families by promoting holistic Early Childhood Learning Centers in the context of their local community through collaboration among stakeholders.

The Mongu District is in the Western Province of Zambia and has a population of 166,609. The majority of area residents are subsistence farmers with about 92% of them living below the national poverty line. The region contains no industry and very poor infrastructure. The western area of Zambia has the highest incidence of poverty in the country as well as the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country, with a larger number of AIDS orphans and vulnerable children. Currently the Orphans and Vulnerable Children Program is working with over 5000 children plus their families and guardians. (Personal Conversation with Beatrice Simona, OVC Director, September 1, 2007). At present, there is minimal government implementation of pre-school education for these children who are under seven years of age.

Significant papers such as the Early Childhood Care for Survival, Growth and Development, 2000; Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Zambia: Situation Analysis, 2004; Study and Stakeholders Symposium Report on Early Childhood Care Development and Education, EFA Secretariat 2004; have documented the imperative for comprehensive, directed early childhood development programming for all children below 0 - 7 years of age in Zambia (Ettlting, Phiri, Matafwali, et. al., 2006). Additionally, the UNESCO Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa elaborated on the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all teachers. This entails developing short workshops, seminars and courses to fill the inadequate opportunities offered for serving teachers (UNESCO, 2006). To respond to this tremendous need, the Zambia Ministry of Education has recognized the value of collaboration with committed educators from other countries.

In its mission statement the Ministry of Education of Zambia states that, "The Government must therefore seek to create, promote and support the conditions within which education can realize its potential in society." Among the goals of the educational system as outlined by the Zambian Ministry of Education are increasing access to education and life skills training and building capacity for the provision of quality education. "The Ministry of Education will encourage the establishment of programmes that support all-round early childhood development, particularly those programmes intended for children living in rural and poor urban areas" (MOE, 2009).

## Literature Review

Childhood education starts at home since a parent is a child's first teacher, and a presence that young children need as they grow and mature. Educators need preparation in order to be effective in their work, and early childhood educators require the knowledge and skills needed to prepare young children for life along with the parents. The spread of HIV and AIDS in Zambia and all of Sub-Saharan Africa has created rifts in the traditional African household. Zambia is a country with 1,100,000 orphans and 600,000 of those children orphaned by AIDS (UNICEF, 2007). And these numbers continue to grow. It is expected that by 2010, 18% of all children in Zambia will be orphans, with AIDS accounting for 75% of orphanhood (UNAIDS, UNICEF & USAID, 2002). Instead of having many generations and a large community living in the same or clustered households helping to raise children, more and more single-parent or guardian households are being seen in Africa (Ajayi, 2006). It is also as a result of this situation that mothers are under pressure to find work outside the home during child-rearing years.

In traditional African society, Ajayi (2006) states that the person responsible for the child's care is the biological mother, as well as the father and extended family such as grandparents, aunts and uncles. But in an ever-increasing society grappled with changing family structures and obligations it is becoming more and more evident that there needs to be greater support for the single working mother who no longer has the financial support of a husband or of an extended family support group. It has been reported that in Zambia orphans are more likely to be living in female-headed households (UNAIDS, UNICEF & USAID, 2004). So the argument can be made that building the capacity of early childhood educators is needed in order to supplement the much needed support that the children of Africa need.

Early childhood development programs that comprehensively address children's basic needs (health, nutrition, emotional and intellectual development) foster the development of capable and productive adults. Early interventions can alter the lifetime trajectories of children who are born poor or are deprived of the opportunities for growth and development available to those more fortunate. This is particularly true for developing nations around the globe. There is a compelling reason for underscoring the importance of development in the early years: Early interventions help children escape poverty. Disparities in children's development mirror the economic disparities in a country, and poverty is associated with poor social indicators, especially for poor children. Without the basic nutrition, health care, and stimulation needed to promote healthy growth, many poor children enter school not ready to learn. These children do poorly in class, repeat grades, and drop out at high rate. They are at a disadvantage when they enter the workplace, earning the lowest wages, and as parents they pass their poverty on to their children. Giving children a better chance is not only vital for attacking the worst effects of poverty, but also may be an effective way of breaking the relentless, vicious cycle of poverty transmitted across generations.

To meet the goal for universal primary education, poor children must be given a fair chance to benefit from school. In unequal societies that have high levels of poverty, a level playing field by the time a child enters school, may already be unfair for poor children. By intervening early, ECCDE programs offer all children the possibility to fully benefit from school. Frost, Wortham, and Reifel (2005) argue that the physical development of a child is affected by appropriate nutrition. Children who experience prenatal malnutrition and malnutrition after birth grow to be smaller in physical dimension. Kagan, Kearsley, and Zelazo (1978) indicate that deprivation and malnutrition can also result in delays in acquisition of basic skills. Since this is the most rapid period of development in human life, for better or worse, the period 0 to 6 years has an enormous effect on the future health, cognitive development, cultural attitudes, and productivity of an individual and the society. In discussing this point, Heckman (2008) states that family environments of young children are major predictors of cognitive and socio-emotional abilities, as well as a variety of outcomes such as crime and health. It is imperative that teachers, parents, guardians and caregivers are given helpful information to actively encourage the young child's development.

A report filed by the VSO (2002) states that teachers observed in Zambia were observed to want to do a good job, but their performance and motivation to continue to perform well is critically linked to the support they receive that enables them to perform their duties. The report went on to state that teacher motivation was associated with a sense of being enabled and supported. While Zambia was found to list salary as another motivating factor, the support system was also listed as of utmost importance. In situations where the school is situated far from regional or provincial authorities it is difficult to get visits from education authorities and materials and their delivery are scarce. All of this can compound the educators' frustration and severely impact motivation adversely. When support and little training and capacity building are not afforded, motivation can dwindle and then create a situation which was observed as fostering greater absenteeism and teacher turnover.

### Teacher Training Institute

The Children Under Seven Project began in 2004 as a five-year commitment with local leaders in Mongu, Zambia, to address unmet needs of orphans and vulnerable children. The goal was to promote, collaboratively, comprehensive, holistic Family Learning Centers to serve vulnerable children three to seven years of age and their caregivers in Mongu, Zambia. The specific objective was to pilot models for training under-prepared pre-school teachers that would be cost effective and sustainable in the long term. Partners have grown to include the Ministry of Education, Project Concern International, Mongu Diocese OVC, Mongu College of Teachers; the University of Zambia, UNICEF and Catholic Relief Services. In 2006, WGC collaborated with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF and the University of Zambia to develop and field test throughout the country an instrument for developmental assessment of children 0-7. This project reinforced the pressing need for additional opportunities for teacher training and on-going professional development. In 2007, WGC offered a Teacher's Training Institute (TTI), four weeks of intensive training to 30 pre-school teachers from 20 different pre-schools in Mongu. The outcome of the Institute was the implementation of a year-long mentoring project with 15 teachers mentoring other under-prepared teachers. In 2008, the Teacher Training Institute was offered to another 30 pre-school teachers and facilitated totally by eight of the mentors from the 2007 group. Now 60 teachers have received intensive training and 15 mentors are prepared to mentor other teachers and to facilitate additional training workshops locally and beyond. In 2009, the Institute Workshops concluded with a four-day workshop for 40 teachers on working with parents. A detailed Manual with the complete TTI program has been compiled and made available for on-going use. (Available at [www.womensglobalconnection.org](http://www.womensglobalconnection.org)).

The goal of the Teacher Training Institute (TTI) through Continuous Professional Development (CDP) was to build the capacity of teachers to implement more comprehensive and holistic Learning Centers in pre-school programs. A more comprehensive Center included: a) emphasis on children's development in all areas of cognitive and language development, psychosocial development and dealing with grief and loss; b) family and guardian's literacy in child development, nutrition, and health; c) involvement and commitment of the surrounding community; d) utilization of appropriate technology to implement teachers' training and learning; and e) planning for long-term sustainability. In 2009, the third year of implementation, WGC conducted a formative evaluation of the outcomes of the TTI in order to assess its perceived value and its potential as a sustainable model for Continuous Professional Development for Pre-School teachers in other rural areas. This paper includes a partial report of the evaluation. The full report is still in progress.

### Teacher Training Institute Framework

The TTI framework both in design and outcome is described in Figure 1. The learning model is based on a train-the-trainer model, as well as a student centered approach. This model was also encouraged and demonstrated as a format to use for planning lessons with children and is grounded in a hands-on learning approach. Play has been shown to develop young brains and the hands-on approach strengthens the stimulation children need to be active learners. The trainers designed an instructional design format which included the following: National curriculum standards (where applicable), focus, activity, objectives, guided practice, checking for understanding, independent practice and home-school connection activity. This offered the teachers a model which could be easily replicated in their daily lesson plan. The content of the training over the five weeks focused on 10 areas: Health and Safety; Learning Environment; Physical Development; Cognitive Development; Self; Psychosocial Development; Guidance; Family and Community; Program Management; and Professionalism. Mentor consultation involved both on-line mentoring for the 15 mentors and classroom mentoring as these teachers worked with other underprepared teachers in the community. Professional development goes beyond the term 'training' with its implications of learning skills, and encompasses a definition that includes formal and informal means of helping teachers not only learn new skills but also

develop new insights into pedagogy and their own practice, and explore new or advanced understandings of content and resources. Finally, there was an emphasis on engagement of stakeholders, particularly the Ministry of Education and other interested NGO's who were involved in Early Childhood services.

Knowledge Transfer	Outcome/Result	Capacity/Behavior	Source of Evidence
Specific Learning Model	Knowledge for Application	Incorporation into Learning activities	Survey, Interviews Observations
Instructional Design	Knowledge for Application	Structuring of Classroom and curriculum	Survey, Photos, Observation, Interviews
Workshop Content	Knowledge for Application	Use of information and materials	Survey, Photos, Blogs, Interviews
Mentor Consultation	Mentor Relationship Technology Application	Transmission to other teachers	Survey, Questionnaires, Blogs, Photos
Professional Development	Professional Identification	Evidence of leadership skills	Survey, Blogs, Observation
Engagement of Stakeholders	Value for Sustainability Community Partnership	Interest and Support	Survey, Interviews, Observation

Figure 1 Teacher Training Institute Framework

The seven outcomes listed on the framework were identified by teachers, pre-school directors and stakeholders as desirable results of the training program. They were inductively developed through a series of 25 personal interviews and three focus groups. These outcomes formed the basis for the development of the survey instrument administered in July 2009 to 115 pre-school teachers, directors, stakeholders and parents.

The behavior changes that are listed were documented through the various sources of data noted in the final column. This data was collected over a period of one year from July 2008 through July 2009. A sample of the results is included in a later section of this paper.

#### Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation process began in the summer of 2008 when the first TTI group of teachers began to gather data on their experience of mentoring. In this way, they were incorporated into the participatory research team. This was intended to be an added opportunity for skill building in research. They answered questionnaires within focus groups to document their perceptions of their mentees' progress and also began structured observations in their mentees' classrooms. Simultaneously, the U.S. based research team began to analyze the mentors' weekly reports on the WGC interactive website, [www.womensglobalconnection.org](http://www.womensglobalconnection.org) (referred to above as Blogs), to search for evidence of the mentors progressive development as a mentor of other teachers. In February, 2009, a U.S. based team member interviewed 25 persons in a week-long visit to Zambia. The intention of these interviews was to gather perceptions of the training program, its usefulness and potential as a sustainable model for continuous professional development of underprepared pre-school teachers. Extensive photographs of the actual classrooms were also taken at this time. As a result of this trip, a 62 item survey was developed that focused on the seven outcomes identified above. Some items

were designated for all the respondents and some were designated specifically for one group of respondents, e.g. the mentors, or the mentees. In July 2009, both the U.S. and Mongu based team members personally visited with mentors, mentees, other teachers, directors, parents and stakeholders and administered the survey. All this data is now being compiled into the final evaluation report.

### Evaluation Results

Four sources of data, Interviews, Blogs, Survey and Photos will be used to give a preliminary picture of the results of the evaluation.

*Interviews.* Here one can get a glimpse of the Value for Sustainability, particularly from the mentors' and Directors' perspectives.

When asked, "What was the most valuable thing that this program accomplished?"

"Teaching in the four domains – physical, social, cognitive and emotional. We can now develop and teach activities in each domain." (Personal Communication, Mentor, 2009).

"To use instruction that is age-appropriate based on development stages." (Personal Communication, Mentor, 2009).

"The importance of grief and loss. We now know the importance of telling the truth to the children. We learned methods of how to tell the truth and to teach parents and caregivers how to do this." (Personal Communication, Mentor, 2009).

"Involving parents who were not involved. Before, they believed school was for play and eating – a waste of money. Now parents come to meetings with teachers. Parents observe class and see the counting and writing, and see learning take place." (Personal Communication, Mentor, 2009).

When asked, "What was the most valuable thing that this program did for the teachers?"

"Simple things like height of letters on wall where children can see and touch. Being resourceful to use local materials. For example, make a ship from sticks; use clay soil for writing letters or name." (Personal Communication, Mentor, 2009).

"They now understand what they need to do as teachers. They know how to plan and prepare their lessons. They are able to implement what they learned in the workshops, child-centered learning." (Personal Communication, Mentor, 2009).

"[Program] has provided experience to teachers. They can now write a lesson plan, teach physical and mental activities, balance learning and play activities. This includes general information, current events, as well as health and sanitation." (Personal Communication, School Administrator, 2009).

"We have demonstrated that mentors can be trained, we then used the manuals to train other teachers. We didn't have to wait for people from America to come back to help. We can do it now ourselves!" (Personal Communication, Mentor, 2009).

"The program is not restricted to the Western Province, it can be expanded to other areas." (Personal Communication, Mentor, 2009).

“This really works. We have experience it here. We have changed Mongu teachers. It really works. If you want this for the country, you should come to Mongu to see it. See how different it is from other teachers who have not received the training.” (Personal Communication, Mentor, 2009).

“She (the Pre-school Director) said the program had helped more especially her teacher who in turn helped the new teachers in working with children in her school. She really liked the program because it made her teacher work hard because the mentor spent time in planning and working together each week. She wished that there was another way in which this program could be continued.” (TTI Local Coordinator’s Personal communication with the Director, 2009).

“The mentoring program was helping the school teacher improve the way the teachers were working with the children. The model classroom had benefited very much in that it was getting a more serious approach that help them fully prepare for school readiness. The director also said her relationship had improved with the guardians and parents.” (TTI Local Coordinator’s Personal Communication with the Director, 2009)

*Blogs.* The interactive discussion board on the WGC website offered an excellent way to trace the development of the mentors as they met weekly with their mentee. Besides demonstrating a growing sense of Knowledge for Application in their sessions with mentees, the blogs evidenced that the mentors were developing other capacities. The research team focused on the eight senior mentors, capturing each one’s weekly report over an entire year and searching for signs of development of their leadership skills and attributes. The development of leadership capacity was deemed useful and important since the TTI was built on a train the trainer model. Figure 2 below captures a picture of this analysis. The text of the weekly reports evidenced a growing comfort and competency in the skills and attributes listed below and it can be inferred that the learning activities and developmental experiences played a role in developing this competency. No doubt, there were other dynamics in the lives of the mentors to enhance their leadership; yet, the TTI training did seem to be a factor.

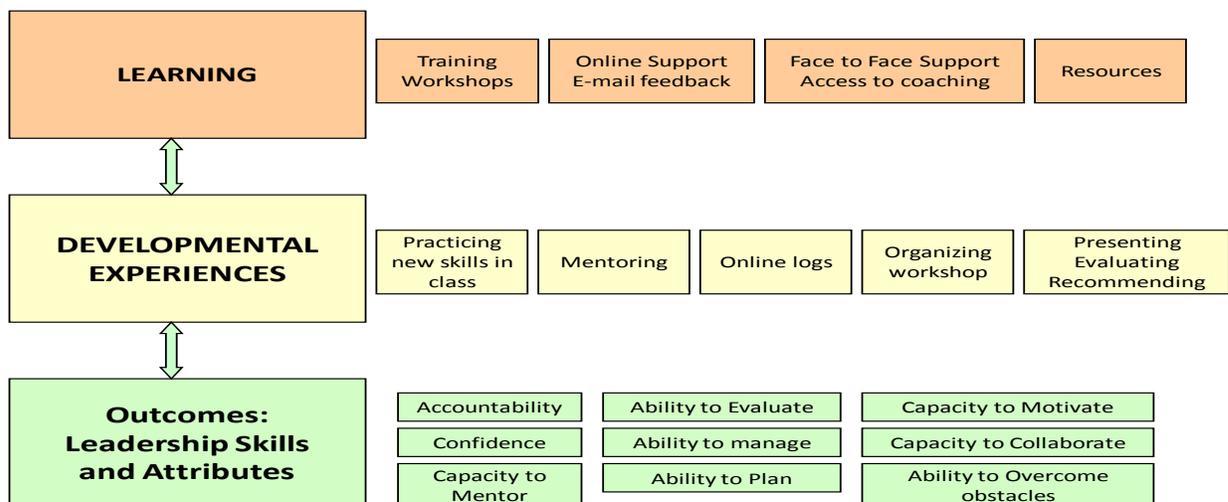


Figure 2 Analysis of the Mentor Blogs

*Survey.* The survey was administered to 114 persons, mentors, mentees, other teachers, directors, parents and stakeholders. What is presented here is a glimpse of how the entire sample of respondents responded to a few of the items and how the mentors responded to one of the items directly specifically to them.

2 Continuous Professional Development is seen by the Ministry of Education as an important aspect of teacher training

	Respondent Role						Total
	Parents	Mentees	Mentors	Teachers	Directors	Stakeholders	
Not at all	4	0	1	5	2	1	13
A Little	6	2	4	4	3	2	21
Some	0	1	1	4	0	1	7
A Lot	27	10	7	10	12	7	73
Total	37	13	13	23	17	11	114

4 Early Childhood Education is seen by the community as an important resource for children

	Respondent Role						Total
	Parents	Mentees	Mentors	Teachers	Directors	Stakeholders	
Not at all	2	0	0	0	0	2	4
A Little	1	1	1	2	3	0	8
Some	9	4	7	9	3	5	37
A Lot	24	8	5	12	11	5	65
Total	36	13	13	23	17	12	114

11 The need for Childhood programs will increase in Mongu

	Respondent Role						Total
	Parents	Mentees	Mentors	Teachers	Directors	Stakeholders	
Not at all	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
A Little	1	0	0	1	2	0	4
Some	4	2	0	4	4	2	16
A Lot	32	11	13	17	11	10	94
Total	37	13	13	23	17	12	115

16 Ongoing teacher training is important for Pre-School Programs

	Respondent Role						Total
	Parents	Mentees	Mentors	Teachers	Directors	Stakeholders	
Not at all	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
A Lot	36	5	12	23	17	11	104
Total	37	5	12	23	17	11	105

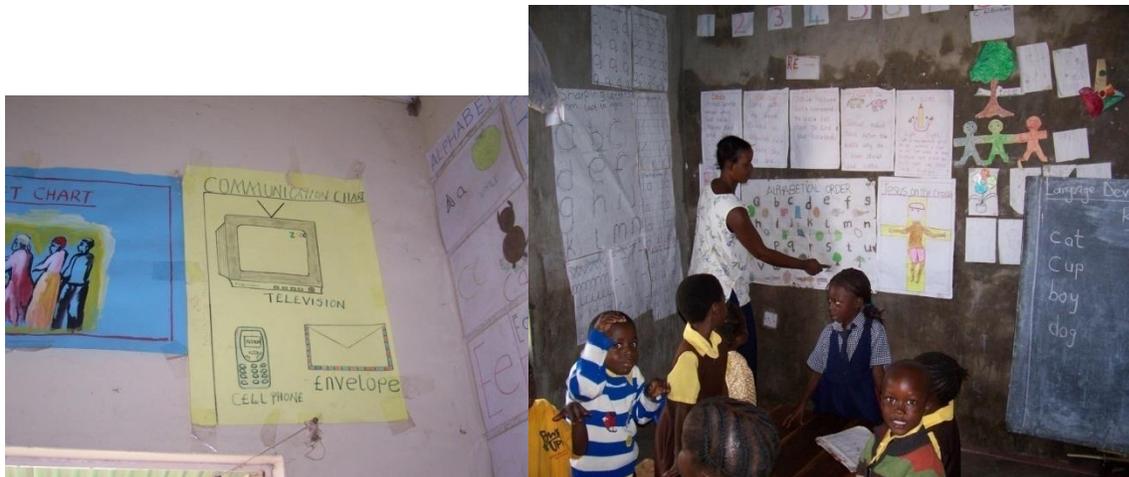
19 the four-week format for teacher training was useful

Count

	Respondent Role	
	Mentors	
19 the four-week format for teacher training was useful	A	0
	Little	
	Some	1
	A Lot	12
	Total	13

*Photos.* Finally, a few photos show some of the changes that were encountered in the classrooms with the use of simple materials and a reorientation of seating arrangements.





**Cost-effective**

A major consideration in developing a model of continuous professional development was that it could be cost-effective in rural areas where resources are limited. This factor would also play an important role in the potential for long term sustainability. It was assumed that it will be some time before adequate preparation can be offered to pre-school teachers and caregivers in the present academic programs. Thus, in light of the great need of so many children for pre-school in preparation for basic school, alternative teacher preparation programs are an imperative.

The table below reflects the minimum cost that this TTI program requires. The plan allows for 4 week-long sessions during the year, using the TTI model, with 30 motivated teachers. Half of those teachers selected would have some teaching experience, but not necessarily academic certification. The other fifteen could be beginning teachers. The 15 senior teachers could offer valuable experience in the sessions and they could simultaneously mentor an additional fifteen teachers in the community, while receiving on-line consultation. This would enable 45 teachers in a local community to be gaining additional professional preparation during a one year time period. We have found that the experience of gaining professional knowledge and expertise is an ample reward for the teachers to stay involved during this time period.

The replication of this plan within the costs reflected on table below assumes two givens: the availability of two in country Facilitators, prepared in the TTI Model, to implement the program; and the collaboration of Early Childhood consultants, like the volunteers in Women’s Global Connection, to contribute their time and expertise in web-based mentoring. These expectations do not seem unreasonable since there are early childhood educators from Zambia and elsewhere who would likely be willing to collaborate in a program like this for the development of teachers. Financing and coordination would be entrusted to the Regional Ministry of Education. This would enable some form of sanction and oversight and maintain the integrity of the Continuous Professional Development.

<b><u>Cost of Teacher Training Institute for one year</u></b>				
<b><u>Participants: 2 prepared facilitators and 30 teachers/15 senior and 15 junior. Senior teacher is one who has some preparation but not necessarily certification.</u></b>				
<b><u>Workshop cost (30 teachers)</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,250.00</u></b>	<b><u>x4 sessions</u></b>	<b><u>\$6,000</u></b>	
<b><u>Venue</u></b>				
<b><u>Lunch &amp; Tea</u></b>				
<b><u>Materials</u></b>				

<u>Facilitation (2 prepared facilitators)</u>				
<u>Facilitator Travel</u>				
<u>Weekly mentoring (per month)</u>	<u>\$30.00</u>	<u>x15x9mo.</u>	<u>\$4,050</u>	
<u>Internet Stipend</u>				
<u>Transportation</u>				
<u>School Stipend</u>				
<u>Local coordination (per month)</u>	<u>\$225.00</u>	<u>x12</u>	<u>\$2,700</u>	
<b><u>TOTAL cost of CPD for one year for 45 teachers</u></b>			<b><u>\$12,750</u></b>	
<b><u>Cost per teacher</u></b>			<b><u>\$283.00</u></b>	

### Conclusion

There are many ways to respond to the Zambian Government's mandate to create, promote and support the conditions within which education can realize its potential in society. The Teacher Training Institute is simply one model that can be particularly useful in rural areas where there is minimal opportunity for the preparation of pre-school teachers and caregivers. Whether one adopts this model or some other program for on-going training, this pilot program has demonstrated an effective means for furthering the preparation and professionalism of a significant group of educators. Young children today deserve the very best that society can offer. They are the future leaders of tomorrow in a world that will demand much more than it ever demanded of their parents. We can never afford to forget this.

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