

Zambia
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National Youth Policy

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NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

1.1 Macro Economic Background to the National Youth Policy

Since the early 1980's the Zambian Government has been faced with a serious deterioration in the national economy. In an attempt to solve the problems, the government has had to adopt economic Structure Adjustment Programme (SAP's).

However, despite the appreciable benefits of these programmes, their implementation has not been without adverse effects on the disadvantaged segment of the Zambian population. Millions of people, mostly women, the youth and children, currently lead difficult lives requiring an urgent response in the form of social safety nets.

Given the fact that these economic restructured programmes are expected to be an integral part of Zambian economy for some time to come, it is essential that the country initiates a social policy to go together with the economic programmes being implemented.

In view of this development, coupled with the need to respect the human rights of all Zambians (the youth especially included), the government now attaches much importance to the formulation of humane policies and programmes to safeguard the welfare of the vulnerable groups. It is in this regard that this National Youth Policy has been formulated.

1.2 Policy Definition of "Youth"

In the context of this Policy, a "youth" is defined as a male or female person aged between 15 and 25 years. This definition has been found to be ideal to work with in targeting support to the most disadvantaged population groups in society.

It is noted from Zambia's education system that the 15 to 25 years category of population constitutes largely the school drop-outs at the levels of Grades 7,9 and 12 (and, to a certain extent, college level). In view of the problems of school-leavers, among which is unemployment, the definition appropriately covers them.

Furthermore, this definition harmonised with the donor definition of "youth", under whose support a number of youth development projects are implemented..

1.3 The Youth Problem

1.3.1 Origin of the Problem

Despite national efforts and aspirations to improve the people's general welfare, development in Zambia has been uneven, especially as the economy began to deteriorate, thus worsening the problems of the youth.

1.3.2 The Problems

Youth development (as a comprehensive process through which the youth as persons will grow up to full adulthood in consonance with contemporary social, economic and political ideals and aspirations of the nation) has been hampered by a number of problems, critical among them are:

- (a) The youth lack the guidance necessary for their lives especially given their tender age.

- (b) Owing to lack of proper guidance and counselling, some of the youth are engaged in drug abuse, alcohol, crime, prostitution and teenage pregnancies.
- (c) In most cases, the youth indulge in these illegal practices due to lack of recreational facilities and the disintegration of the family as a nucleus of socio-economic development.
- (d) Most youths lack life skills, training and experience to enable them obtain formal employment and/or finance to engage in self-employment activities.
- (e) Is it felt the youth have been socially, economically, and even politically alienated from national development.

The current educational system does not guarantee continued education for the youths as their progression at every stage gets critically narrower, and is consequently "kicking out" armies of school leavers who cannot get school places.

Efforts by the government to redress youth problems have been seriously affected by lack of data to gauge with precision and certainty the nature, extent and magnitude of youth problems. The lack of reliable data stems from the fact that very few research works, case studies and surveys have been undertaken in the area of youth development to generate disaggregated data useful for planning.

Despite the availability of institutions that deal with the problems of youth development, none of them has scored any meaningful success as they all suffer from institutional weaknesses leading to their lack of operational capacity. Most are lowly prioritized especially in resource allocation.

Most youth development institutions lack clear-cut policies and guidelines, and so have overlapping activities with line organisations. This creates problems of accountability and wastage of effort and resources.

Perhaps the most vexing of these problems is the ever worsening macroeconomic situation in Zambia. For a decade now, economic growth has been falling in real terms resulting in a corresponding drop in social services among which is youth employment. The problem of unemployment has been worsened by a high population growth rate. It is estimated from the 1991 Priority Survey I that, out of about 8 million people, about 24% constitute the youths, while youth population growth rate has been estimated at 3.5% per annum. In terms of labour statistics (1991), about 65 % of the unemployed people in Zambia are youths.

1.4 Policy Goals

Within the general understanding of youth development as defined above, the following are the goals of the National Youth Policy:

- (a) Promotion of the welfare of the youth and safeguarding the rights of the youth to exist, develop and meet his/her life needs in accordance with international requirements;
- (b) Highlighted the youth problems and designing programmes or projects with a view to improving the quality of life of the youth in accordance with national development aspirations; and
- (c) Creation of the much-needed environment conducive to the development of the youth socially, culturally, spiritually, politically, economically, as well as to other areas of human development.

1.5 Objectives

In order to redress youth problems successfully, the government has identified and targeted a number of development factors during policy implementation. To that end, the following policy objectives have been set:

- (a) to establish a general policy framework which will provide guide lines on all matters related to youth development;
- (b) to reduce youth unemployment through the promotion of self-employment enterprises;
- (c) to approach the problems of youths from a holistic (comprehensive) angle so as to ensure coverage of the most critical elements;
- (d) to mitigate the negative impact of the on-going economic adjustment measures;
- (e) to improve institutional performance capacity and ensure country-wide coverage in the execution of youth programmes;
- (f) to upgrade the quality of life among young Zambians through increased income generating ventures which improve real incomes;
- (g) to improve institutional co-ordination of youth programmes in the country both at the national and the local levels;
- (h) to understand youth problems better and identify sound ways of addressing them to meet the basic needs of the Zambian youth; and
- (i) to draw the private sector, donors, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), communities and individuals into the management of youth programmes.

1.6 Strategies

Because the successful implementation of this Policy will largely depend on its strategies, it was found necessary to use field experience gained from the mediocre implementation of past youth policies, programmes and projects. Research findings, seminars, and consultancy recommendations will be extensively used in the implementation of this Policy.

To this extent, the following strategies have been adopted to achieve the spirit of the policy goals and objectives outlined above:

- (a) Re-organisation and re-orientation of existing youth plans and programmes to suit current national needs and aspirations. This will include rehabilitation and restructuring of existing youth skill-training schemes in the country;
- (b) Development of youth enterprise programmes incorporating small-scale business management, basic skills and business training;
- (c) Provision of basic skills training facilities (through consolidation of existing skills training centres), infrastructure, finance, business advisory services and extension services to youth entrepreneurs;
- (d) Incorporation of basic skills and business training in the school curriculum;

- (e) Strengthening institutions dealing with youth development through institutional capacity-building programmes and improvement of networking and co-ordination to reduce portfolio and programme overlappings;
- (f) Formulation and implementation of human resource development programmes for youths and youth workers;
- (g) Undertaking research, surveys, case studies and statistical analysis to generate disaggregated data useful for planning. This will entail the establishment of sound management information system on youth development;
- (h) Improvement of resource allocation to youth programmes through resource mobilisation campaigns;
- (i) Conducting public awareness campaigns to educate the people on youth problems and development to reduce youth discrimination; and
- (j) Introduction of social safety nets in national economic programmes implemented ' under the Structure Adjustment Programme.

1.7 Policy Implementation

1.7.1 Policy Framework

Periodic reviews which have been undertaken on the Zambian economic in the 1980-1990 period have shown significant decline in economic welfare and a serious escalation in social impoverishment. Despite the numerous macroeconomic policies and measure, which the government has put in place over the years, the magnitude of social problems (youth unemployment being top on the list) has continued to grow.

Given the above scenario, national concern has arisen. Implementation of past policies and programmes has not led to any meaningful improvement in the socio-economic conditions in Zambia. This has prompted the call to adopt a more radical approach to the issue to ensure results in policy implementation. It is with this background of the National Youth Policy has been designed differently from the previous youth policies.

Because of the role which the National Youth Policy is playing in government endeavours to solve youth development problems, the policy has been designed to meet the aspirations of a sound social policy. This has, therefore, entailed coverage of the most critical components of youth development, namely problem address, goals and objectives, strategies, implementation and co-ordination, monitoring and periodic review systems.

Within the framework of this policy, measures aimed at creating the much-needed general (i.e. social, economic, political, infrastructural and financial) environment will be emphasised to facilitate success in solving youth problems. To this effect, policy implementation will give special attention to specific problem targeting, institution support, co-ordination, and provision of general guidelines and consultancy on youth development issues.

1.8 Specific Policy Issues

As the National Youth Policy aspires to take a radical approach to youth development, a number of identified factors critical to the successful achievement of policy goals and objectives will be targeted. Among these are the specific problems outlined in Chapter 2 and the need to address them through comprehensive

programmes, institutional capacity-building, institutional linkages and liaison, research, human rights advocacy and democratic practices, project management and economic protection of the youth as a vulnerable group.

One of the most critical determinants of successful policy and programme implementation in general, and solution to youth problems in particular, is the strengths of the organisations entrusted with the responsibility of addressing youth matters. Experience drawn from implementation of youth projects and programmes has shown that policy success depends on programme/project formulation, implementation and co-ordination, all of which in turn depend on the institutional capacity of the implementation organisation. Taking due account of this, it has been found necessary to make institutional capacity-building a crucial component of policy implementation. To this effect, the National Youth Policy, therefore, emphasizes the need to strengthen the Ministry responsible for Youth Development, the National Youth Development Council, and line institutions involved in youth work.

In order to successfully achieve institutional capacity, emphasis in this policy is laid on human resource development, improved funding, provision of technical support and upgrading of the status of these Organisations on the national priorities such as government budget and external funding. In this respect, adequate financial resources will be allocated to these institutions, while manpower procurement and training, and provision of logistic support will be ensured to instill operational capacity. This effect, a Planning Unit has been established at the Ministry Headquarters. In order for the policy to have significant impact at the grassroots level, operations of the Ministry (through the Department of Youth Development and the National Youth Development Council) are being decentralized to provincial and district levels.

Furthermore, inter-institutional linkages and co-ordination are being strengthened. In order to reduce overlappings in responsibilities and programme implementation, which have in the past resulted in poor achievement of critical goals and objectives in youth programmes, the government will continue to ensure that inter-institutional liaison, defined responsibilities, and full coverage of youth programmes are prompted.

To achieve better co-ordination, the government will continue to ensure that the operations of the Ministries responsible for Youth Development; Commerce, Trade and Industry; Technical Education and Vocational Training; Education; Local Government; Community' Development and Social Services; and Organisations such as Small Industries Development Organisations; Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (COMET); Village Industry Service; and Non-Governmental Organisations, complement and not overlap or undermine one another.

In order to ensure that the youth gain from government efforts in the re-organisation and consolidation of the informal sector (through the on-going institutional framework for small scale enterprise programme in Zambia), ties between the public and the private sectors are being strengthened.

All the international level, co-operation is being stepped up through exchange programmes with other countries as facilitated by existing Joint Permanent Commissions between Zambia and those countries.

Since the core of most youth programmes has been availability of statistical data and management information, it is now part and parcel of government policy to promote research into and analysis of youth problems. To achieve this, the Planning Unit in the Ministry responsible for Youth Development, in collaboration with the King George VI Memorial Research Centre (Kabwe), the Commonwealth Youth Centre and the University of Zambia will undertake periodic field research in youth development issues. A data bank will be created with the assistance of the Central Statistic Office.

As Zambia continues to implement economic structural adjustment programmes, whose adverse effects will continue to be felt especially among the youth, it is now government policy to adopt protective measures within these programmes to reduce suffering among the vulnerable groups. It is in this connection, therefore, that social safety nets are being incorporated in the adjustment programmes.

Other crucial policy components which will seriously be taken into account in the course of policy

implementation are the need to adequately provide national advocacy on youth matters (especially youth protection and human rights), democratization of the institutions which administer youth development, inclusion of participation in development programmes and national administration, and the prioritisation of the rural youths and the disabled in youth plans and activities with emphasis on the provision of adequate recreation and other social services.

1.9 Policy Co-ordination

Besides the policy issues outlined above, another critical concern pertaining to the National Youth Policy is policy coordination among government and non-governmental organisations. In order to guarantee effectiveness and accountability, and to avoid gaps in implementation, institutional role-playing will be as follows:

- (a) The government provides enabling environment as defined in the policy goals, legal framework, finance, infrastructure and social amenities and general policy guidelines.
- (b) The donor community will be approached to provide funding to supplement government budgetary resources as well as provide technical support to government ministries and departments.
- (c) Non-governmental organisations will play a supportive role, while the local communities and individuals will render active participation.
- (d) Within the government set, Ministries will play their roles according to statutory functions as specified from time to time by Government Gazette Notices which define the statutory functions, portfolios and composition of government.
- (e) Therefore, the Ministry responsible for Youth Development will improve its co-ordination of policy implementation through the Department of Youth, the Planning Unit, and the National Youth Development Council.
- (f) The Ministry responsible for Commerce, Trade and Industry will provide guidelines on government policy and regulations related to commerce, trade and small-scale industry for youth enterprises and licensing.
- (g) The Ministry of Finance will deal with government financial policy with specific reference to financing social development through the budget.
- (h) The National Commission for Development Planning (NCDP) will play the role of a resource mobilisation office for youth development programmes through bilateral, multi-lateral and specific youth exchange programmes.
- (i) The Ministry responsible for Agriculture will provide guidelines on small-scale enterprise for the youth related to agriculture, food processing and agriculture marketing.
- (j) The Ministry of Education will strengthen training in basic and entrepreneurial skills through curriculum development.
- (k) The Ministry responsible for Vocational Training will intensify skills training through the provision of technical guidelines on the use of appropriate technology for youth small-scale enterprise.
- (l) In the provision of land, the Ministry responsible for Lands and Local Government and Housing will assist in the provision of land for youth entrepreneurs after they have been trained in basic and entrepreneurial skills.

- (m) The Ministry of Legal Affairs will provide the much-needed technical support in the legal drafting of legislation related to the youth and human rights issues.
- (n) The Ministry responsible for Community Development and Social Services will play a supportive but active role through its implementation of community development and social welfare policy to uplift the well being of the youth.
- (o) In the campaigns to invoke awareness and provide youth advocacy through the media, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services will assist in the dissemination of information.
- (p) To ensure national coverage, the private sector, the NGO's, the church, local communities and individuals will be encouraged actively participate at various levels of policy implementation.

1.10 The National Programme of Action

This policy is being implemented through the National Programme of Action which will be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary. Like the Policy, the Programme of Action will be implemented jointly with line Ministries and other relevant organisation.

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