Sustaining implementation of innovations beyond donor support: a case study of a literacy programme in Zambia

By

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ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades, donor agencies have provided aid for education systems in developing countries by introducing innovations that seek to improve the provision of education. However, it has been observed with much concern that many innovations are discontinued after donor funding is withdrawn, with Zambia being no exception. Despite this observation, little is known about why some innovations end up being unsustainable in Zambia. Accordingly, this research was conducted to ascertain the factors that may influence the sustainability of donor-driven innovations by examining the case of a literacy programme in Zambia – the Primary Reading Programme (PRP). Initially funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) between 1999 and 2005, the PRP was designed to implement the new literacy policy, which used local languages to teach initial literacy from Grades 1 to 7. In 2005, DFID withdrew, leaving the government to sustain the programme in all government primary schools in Zambia.

Drawing on data gathered through a qualitative-interpretivist-case approach that used semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and document analysis, the study found that the PRP was poorly sustained, as many aspects of the programme were drastically altered or discontinued after the termination of donor support. Key elements influencing sustainability included project-level factors associated with the design of the project, stakeholder ownership/motivation, the provision of financial, human and material resources for sustainability, and monitoring and evaluation. Contextual-level factors were related to attributes of the school (staff commitment/interest, leadership, staff retention, sustained professional development and availability of resources for continued implementation). At national level, Zambia's weak economic status and changes in policies affected the programme's sustainability. 'Project mentality' or the negative attitude stakeholders hold towards donor-supported innovations also contributed to poor sustainability. A critical finding of this study is that the PRP appears to have been designed with inputs and activities that were beyond the socio-economic capacity of Zambia to manage and maintain without external support. Consequently, a major recommendation is that innovations should not be designed

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with excessive activities or tools or deliver benefits that are beyond the socio-economic capacity of the beneficiaries.

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, **Charity Lengwe Meki Kombe**, declare that the thesis entiled: **“Sustaining implementation of innovations beyond donor support: a case study of a literacy programme in Zambia”** which I hereby submit for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor in Education Management, Law and Policy Studies at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution. The sources that I used have been acknowledged.

……………………………………………………………

Charity Lengwe Meki Kombe

Date: ……………………………………………………

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to 5 men and 2 women in my life

The Men	My husband, Joseph Kombe who has always coped with a bookworm wife
	My three 'J' sons, Joshua, Joel and Jeremiah, I robbed you of precious moments during my studies
	My dad, Wallace Meki, forever an inspiration;
The Women	My only daughter, Tasha and mum, Christine Ng'andwe who took charge in my absence

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Special and loving thanks go to my husband Joseph Kombe and our four children for their staunch support during my long 'PhD journey.'

Most of all, I give all the glory to JEHOVAH GOD for the special grace that allowed me to live the realisation of my childhood dream.

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KEY WORDS

Donor support, Education

Implementation

Innovation

Literacy

Programme

Sustainability

Zambia

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Donor support (foreign aid/assistance): Financial flows, technical assistance, and commodities designed to promote economic development and welfare and provided in the form of either grants or subsidised loans.

Implementation: A phase in the process of change when an innovation is put into practice.

Initiation: The first phase in the change process when decisions are made to embark on an innovation.

Innovation: The introduction of new products, processes or services for the purpose of improvement that can be executed through a programme or a project.

Lingua franca: Any of the various languages used as common or commercial tongues among peoples of diverse speech.

Literacy: The ability to read and write.

Mother tongue/home language/first language: The language(s) spoken both in the child's home environment and in the wider community.

Second language: Any language that one learns or acquires after first language acquisition.

Sustainability (continuation/institutionalisation): A phase in the change process when an innovation is incorporated into the routine of the organisation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BESSIP	Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme
BTL	Breakthrough To Literacy
CA	Continuous Assessment
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education For All
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
FPE	Free Primary Education
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LEA	Language Experience Approach
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MESTVEE	Ministry of Education, Science Vocational Training and Early Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAS	National Assessment Survey
NBTL	New Breakthrough to Literacy
NRC	National Reading Committee
PLP	Primary Literacy Programme
PRP	Primary Reading Programme
ROC	Read On Course
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Measuring Education Quality

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SITE	Step Into English
SWAP	Sector-Wide Approach
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
WEPEP	Western Province Education Programme
ZATEC	Zambian Teacher Education Course
ZEST	Zonal Education Support Team

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER

This study examined the sustainability of innovations in the education sector in Zambia, initially driven by donor support, by examining the case of a literacy programme known as the Primary Reading Programme (PRP). This chapter contextualises the study by presenting the background to the problem. It also outlines the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research objectives and the research questions, as well as the rationale of the study. The last section presents a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the study.

1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

At some time or another, all organisations are faced with the challenge of introducing new initiatives (Stirman et al, 2012). If soundly conceived, implemented and sustained, initiatives or innovations can play a catalytic role in improving and strengthening organisations' capacities and efficiency to achieve the intended goals (Adelman & Taylor, 2003). Like other organisations, educational institutions introduce innovations with the intention of promoting improved education outcomes. However, unfortunately many innovations that are successfully initiated are predictable failures, being short-lived, and sooner or later fading away thus failing to become part of the practice of the host organisations and communities. This has resulted in massive wastage in terms of finances, human and material resources (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Dwight, 2004; Krakowsky, 2008). The history of schools and the education system in general is therefore 'strewn with valuable innovations' that have not been sustained and, worst of all, not replicated (Dwight, 2004, p. 1; Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Dickerson, 2001; Saito, Khong & Tsukui, 2012; Taylor, 2006). In fact, Datnow (2005) states that few studies have actually examined the sustainability of reforms over long periods of time, partly because many of them do not last at all.

It is this recurring failure to sustain innovations that has raised the interest of scholars, funders, reformers, policy makers and other stakeholders when considering matters pertaining to sustainability. It is reported in the literature (Ertesvåg, Roland, Vaaland, Størksen, & Veland, 2010; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006) that many stakeholders have therefore studied and written

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about how to make innovations last. For example, Hargreaves and Goodson (2006, p. 4) argue that for more than three decades, there has been intensifying interest in why it is difficult to 'diffuse' and generalise or 'scale up' reforms beyond pilot projects or from one school or district to others.

The challenge has related particularly to sustaining innovations that are initially propelled by donor funding. For several decades, donor agencies have invested millions of dollars in various projects and programmes in developing countries. However, questions have been raised about the extent to which development aid has led to sustainable outcomes (Chapman & Moore, 2010). In particular, concerns have been expressed over the large number of development innovations initiated and/or sponsored by donors that perform below par and stop functioning once donor support comes to an end (Lockwood, Bakalian, & Wakeman, 2003; Hofisi & Chizimba, 2013; Israr, 2005).

Major donors have also expressed concerns over the number of projects or programmes that fail to be sustained beyond donor support (United States Government Accountability Office, 2007). For example, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Strategic Framework 2007–2010 acknowledged that sustainability was among its major challenges. This was confirmed by the 2008 Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations produced by IFAD's independent Office of Evaluation, which revealed that sustainability was satisfactory in 67 per cent of the projects evaluated in 2007, as compared to only 40 per cent in 2002. In 2007, 50 per cent of the projects evaluated were rated as 'moderately satisfactory' for sustainability, while 33 per cent were regarded as unsatisfactory. Therefore, in 2008, IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division placed high priority on matters relating to sustainability by conducting a multiphase research process. The study was aimed at identifying factors that affected the sustainability of investment projects. The research was also aimed at providing guidance on sustainability with the eventual intention of ensuring the long-lasting development impact of IFAD-funded operations in the Asia and the Pacific region (Tango International, 2009).

In another instance, in 1999, the Australian Agency for International Development's (AusAID) Quality Assurance Group observed that sustainability 'was often a weakness across an

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otherwise strong portfolio of donor-funded development programmes and projects' (Young & Hampshire, 2000, p. 29). Several studies conducted have also found that while implementation has shown significant improvement, post-implementation or the sustainability of innovations has been a disappointment (Khan, 2000; Hofisi & Chizimba, 2013). This means that while considerable resources are spent on introducing and implementing projects and programmes, poor sustainability has been depriving them of the expected returns. In addition, the 2008 United Nations Secretary General's report for the Development Cooperation Forum equally expressed concern that aid was unable to produce sustainable results.

It is also important to note that the sustainability of donor-supported innovations has been a topical issue as far back as the 1990s. For example, Wapenhans Report (1992, p. iv) and Bamberger & Cheema (1990) observed that while emphasis was placed on extensive monitoring of foreign-aided projects and programmes during the period of implementation, little was done to make certain how effectively they were sustained after donor funding was terminated.

Interestingly, despite a vast body of knowledge on the sustainability of innovations, scholars have not sufficiently understood the conditions under which innovations are likely to be sustained, particularly school reforms (Savaya & Spiro, 2012; Sindelar, Shearer, Yendol-Hoppey, & Liebert, 2006). In addition, on the whole, researchers have not reached a consensus on the factors that influence sustainability in the education sector (Lai, McNaughton, Timperley & Hsiao, 2009; Taylor, 2006). The gap identified in the literature is a major basis for further research.

The Zambian situation

Ranked among the poorest countries in the world, Zambia is one of the many developing countries in Africa that is dependent on aid to meet its development expenditure (Appolinario, 2009). Located in the southern region of Africa, the country gained its independence in 1964 (see map of Zambia at Appendix 12). After independence, the country was a relatively prosperous nation with an economy driven mainly by trade in copper. During the days of prosperity, the country was able to finance much of its development expenditure from locally

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generated resources. In the 1970s, the country suffered a huge setback economically following a decline in copper prices and a sharp increase in oil prices. Since then, the country has been struggling to recover from economic deterioration with the majority of its population (about 70%) living on or below the poverty line. The country is unable to meet its budget and, as a result, as already mentioned, it depends on international partners to support its needs (Beyani, 2013; Wohlgemuth & Saasa, 2008; Appolinario, 2009).

The 'importance of aid to Zambia is illustrated by its contribution to the government budget' (Wohlgemuth & Saasa, 2008, p. 3); for example, between 2000 and 2005, aid accounted for about 43 per cent of the total state budget. The highest percentage was recorded in 2001 when aid accounted for 53 per cent of the national budget. Since then, on average, 30 per cent of the national budget in Zambia has been met by development aid (Beyani, 2013; Wohlgemuth & Saasa, 2008; Appolinario, 2009).

The economic decline that hit Zambia in the 1970s equally affected the education sector. The national policy document on education, *Educating Our Future,* states that ever since the early 1980s, the education sector has suffered from insufficient and declining levels of public funding. A massive reduction is said to have occurred in real public expenditure on the system between 1982 and 1991. During the years 1987 to 1991, real public spending on the sector fell to less than half of what it had been in the 1981 to 1985 period, while in 1994 real spending per primary learner was less than 60 per cent of what it had been in 1985 (MoE, 1996, p. 163, 168–9).

Ever since 1989, annual real spending on the sector has fallen by between 35 and 40 billion Kwacha (1994 values) or between US$ 70 and US$ 75 million, for a system which had about 1.5 million institutions. Consequently, as a proportion of the gross domestic product (GDP) and of the total budget, public educational spending in Zambia was ranked among the lowest in Africa and in the world (MoE, 1996).

The failure to provide adequately in the education budget saw assistance being sought from donor organisations for the sector. For example, an estimated total of US$ 30.3 million and US$ 32.11 million of donor aid was given to the education sector in Zambia in 1992 and 1993

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respectively from more than twenty bilateral and multilateral donors (MoE, 1996, p. 169). The situation has not changed since the 1980s, as the education sector still depends on external support to meet many of its demands. For example, the Zambian government received 220 000 000 Kwacha (approximately US$ 36 667) from cooperating partners for priority programmes being implemented in the education sector for the year 2015 (Lumba, 2015).

Innovations in the education sector have been supported by donors largely under the principle that education is an essential means to eradicate poverty and encourage national development (MoE, 1996; Barro, 1991; Mankiw, Romer & Weil, 1992). The education sector has also received donor support as part of the attainment of Millennium Development Goal number 2, which advocates for 'achieving universal primary education', as well as the Education for All (EFA) movement – a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults (Gillies, 2010).

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Like the case of other countries, Zambia has not been spared the challenges associated with the sustainability of donor-supported innovations. For example, between 1998 and 2002, the Netherlands and United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) introduced a programme known as the Western Province Education Programme (WEPEP) at a total cost of €3.5 million. The WEPEP was initiated with the purpose of improving the quality of education in the Western Province of Zambia. Subsequently, an overall evaluation of the programme by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Netherland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2008) found that the outcomes were not sustained. This is in light of the fact that while the WEPEP target schools showed a relative improvement in their performance in examinations during the period in which the programme was under donor support, as well as for the four years following the exit of donor aid, the results declined from 2007 onwards.

In 2004, with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding, an innovation known as the Continuous Assessment (CA) Programme was introduced in Zambian primary schools. The major objective of the programme was to promote the use of formative assessment to improve the quality of learning and teaching. The programme, which

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commenced in pilot schools, was expected to be scaled up in all primary schools in 2010. In a study conducted by Kapambwe (2006) to find out what factors influenced the successful or unsuccessful implementation of the programme, a quarter of the interviewees raised doubts about the sustainability of the programme.

First, interviewees questioned whether the programme would be sustained without external assistance because it was largely dependent on USAID funding. Secondly, the participants questioned the sustainability of the programme because it seemed to have been perceived as a mere project whose activities were going to be discontinued once donor funds ceased. Thirdly, the participants suggested that the programme would not be sustained because the Ministry of Education had not integrated the activities in its structures and budget.

As the IOB (2008, 2011) argues, many innovations, including the WEPEP, have proved to be unsustainable beyond donor aid. In Zambia, in spite of this problem, few studies have been conducted to establish why some donor-funded innovations disappear and others survive once donor support is withdrawn. At the time of the current study, to my knowledge there was no research article or any form of literature that critically examined the factors that impede or facilitate the sustainability of innovations in the education system in Zambia after the termination of donor support. Most of the available literature has ended at outlining the challenges Zambia has faced in continuing the implementation of donor-supported innovations after the close of donor support (IOB, 2008, 2011; Kapambwe, 2006).

For example, IOB (2008, 2011) briefly refers to the various barriers experienced in sustaining the WEPEP. In a similar way, Kapambwe (2010) outlines the challenges Zambia faced in the implementation of the CA programme. While these studies contain useful insights about the challenges associated to the continued implementation of donor-supported innovations, they lack an in-depth and critical examination of the problem of sustainability. This poses a gap that this study seeks to fill.

Of prime interest to this study is the case of a literacy programme called the Primary Reading Programme (PRP). The programme, which was initially funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) at a total cost of £10.2 million between

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1999 and 2005, was designed to implement the new literacy policy whose strategy was to use local languages in teaching initial literacy. The programme was developed in response to the need to improve observed low levels of literacy in primary schools. In 2005, the donors (DFID) left the programme in the hands of the government to scale it up to all public or government primary schools in Zambia. The programme was in place for close to a decade up until in 2014 when it was replaced by a new literacy programme (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Most of the available literature on the PRP focuses more on what the PRP accomplished during the seven-year partnership between Zambia and the DFID. This information is largely contained in the programme implementation and evaluation documents that were generated when the programme was under the support of DFID (Allsop, Harrison, Higgins, & Tambulukani, 2005; Sampa, 2005; DFID, 2008). However, these documents provide a narrow view of the outcomes of the programme as they focus mainly on the major successes of the PRP when it was under donor support. Consequently, while there is vast literature that provides an account of the PRP while it was under the support of donors, literature that discusses the post-implementation or sustainability of the PRP after the withdrawal of donor support is limited (Arden, 2012; IOB, 2008, 2011; Linehan, 2004; Folotiya-Jere, 2014; Room to Read, 2010), merely capturing the challenges the country faced in continuing programme implementation after the withdrawal of aid.

For example, in a report on the PRP, Arden (2012) refers to the various challenges Zambia faced in sustaining the PRP. Equally, studies conducted by Folotiya-Jere (2014), Room to Read (2010) and the IOB (2008, 2011) simply outline the challenges Zambia faced in continuing the PRP implementation. While each of these reports provides essential information concerning the post-implementation of the PRP, none of them addresses the problem of sustainability exhaustively. In addition, the reports do not provide information that indicates what aspects of the programme were sustained amidst the identified challenges. The literature is also devoid of an in-depth examination and explanation of the factors that could have constrained or facilitated the sustainability of the various aspects and activities of the programme.

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1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

This investigation was therefore aimed at ascertaining the sustainability of education innovations in Zambia that are initially driven by donor support. This was done specifically by investigating the case of a literacy programme known as the Primary Reading Programme (PRP). The study particularly sought to find out the activities and aspects of the PRP that continued after donor funding had been withdrawn, as well as to develop an understanding of the reasons or factors that accounted for its level of sustainability.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In order to achieve its aim, the following objectives of the study were pursued:

- To establish the nature of support provided by donors towards the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) during the seven-year partnership with Zambia.
- To ascertain the changes that were observed in schools following the introduction of the PRP in the following areas:
    - ✓ The medium of instruction for literacy
    - ✓ Teaching/learning and related materials
    - ✓ Methodology to teach literacy
    - ✓ Capacity building
    - ✓ Assessment practices
    - ✓ Monitoring systems
    - ✓ Record keeping
    - ✓ Achievement levels in literacy among learners
    - ✓ Morale among various stakeholders regarding the programme.
- To find out what aspects of the PRP, if any, were sustained after the departure of donor support under the DFID.
- To gain a deep understanding of the reasons why some aspects of the PRP, if any, were sustained after the departure of donor support.

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- To find out what aspects of the PRP, if any, were not sustained after the departure of donor support.
- To gain a deep understanding of the reasons why some aspects of the PRP, if any, were not sustained after the departure of donor support.
- To draw lessons from the case of the PRP and propose a framework that can be used to explain the possible reasons why donor-supported innovations in the education sector in Zambia and related contexts may fail to achieve sustainability.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research was aimed at finding possible answers to the following questions:

- What was the nature of support provided by donors towards the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) during the seven-year partnership with Zambia?
- What changes were observed in schools following the introduction of the PRP in the following areas?
  - ✓ The medium of instruction for literacy
  - ✓ Teaching/learning and related materials
  - ✓ Methodology to teach literacy
  - ✓ Capacity building
  - ✓ Assessment practices
  - ✓ Monitoring systems
  - ✓ Record keeping
  - ✓ Achievement levels in literacy among learners
  - ✓ Morale among various stakeholders regarding the programme.
- What aspects of the PRP, if any, were sustained after the departure of donor support under DFID?
- Why were some aspects of the PRP, if any, sustained after the departure of donor support?

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- What aspects of the PRP, if any, were not sustained after the departure of donor support?
- Why were some aspects of the PRP, if any, not sustained after the departure of donor support?
- What lessons can be drawn from the case of the PRP to explain the possible reasons why donor supported innovations in the education sector in Zambia and related contexts may fail to achieve sustainability?

1.7 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The following reasons justify this research:

First, sustainability is generally regarded as an imperative criterion of development aid. The reasoning behind this assertion is that it becomes difficult to claim that development has occurred if the benefits of aid do not endure. Sustainability is also said to be an important final step in the life cycle of an innovation or change. This is because any beneficial innovation that is successfully initiated and implemented must also be continued for the benefit of the people it was intended (Chapman & Moore, 2010; Scheirer, 2005). Savaya and Spiro (2012) add in this regard that the sustainability of new programmes and projects is vital for both moral and financial reasons. Morally, the termination of a programme when the need still exists is a violation of its commitment to the target population for which it was introduced. Financially, the premature termination of a needed programme constitutes a waste of the often large sums of public funds invested in it.

Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone (1998, p. 88) add that sustainability is a concern for many stakeholders because 'having incurred significant start-up costs in human, fiscal and technical resources, many programs see their funds withdrawn before activities have reached full fruition'. Cunningham and Gresso (1993, cited in Dickerson, 2001) also add that apart from a wastage of an enormous amount of public funds, stakeholder apathy is created when innovations are not institutionalised or sustained. Another important related justification is that

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new innovations may encounter weakened support and commitment among beneficiaries when programmes are terminated abruptly (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998, p. 88).

Secondly, the case of a literacy programme was particularly selected because literacy is an important topic. The former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, in commemorating International Literacy Day, summarised the importance of literacy in his World Literacy Day message on 8 September 2003, when he stated that 'literacy unlocks the door to learning throughout life, is essential to development and health, and opens the way for democratic participation and active citizenship'. Scholars have also established through research that a child's ability to read and write is an immense predictor of success in school and later in life. Research has further ascertained that children who do not develop literacy skills in the first few grades are likely to lag behind in other subjects, repeat grades and eventually drop out of school (Stanovich & Siegal, 1994; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Chanda, 2012; Dodge, 1997).

In fact, the Ministry of Education in Zambia (2008, p. 54) has argued that if interventions such as the PRP were fully implemented in schools, literacy levels would improve and this would have a 'knock-on effect on the other learning areas' in the school. This study is therefore important because it may also provide insights on how to effectively sustain innovations that are aimed at promoting literacy in Zambia, especially those that are initially supported by donor funds. The findings will therefore add to the body of knowledge on the implementation of literacy-related programmes.

Thirdly, this study was conducted in line with the arguments of scholars like Savaya and Spiro (2012) and Sindelar et al. (2006) that despite the growing body of knowledge on the sustainability of innovations and particularly school reforms, researchers have not sufficiently understood the factors and processes that foster sustainability. Particularly in Zambia, to my knowledge, little research has been undertaken to understand the conditions under which donor supported innovations become sustained. Most available literature (Arden, 2012; IOB, 2008, 2011; Linehan, 2005; Folotiya-Jere, 2014; Room to Read, 2010; Kapambwe, 2010) have focused on the challenges Zambia has faced in continuing the implementation of donor-supported innovations. While these studies contain important lessons about the major

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challenges associated with implementation, they do not provide insights on factors that impede or facilitate the sustainability, institutionalisation, and scaling up of such innovations. Motivated by the need to address the identified knowledge or intellectual gap, this study was therefore undertaken.

By undertaking this research, it is anticipated that valuable information may be obtained that will add to the body of knowledge on factors that hamper or promote the sustainability of innovations in the education sector in Zambia and similar contexts after the completion of donor support. It is also hoped that this study will contribute to the body of knowledge on matters of donor aid.

Other than providing a systematic knowledge base on sustainability and donor aid, it is anticipated that this research may 'rouse' the interest of researchers, donors, policy makers and other stakeholders on matters surrounding the sustainability of innovations in the education sector that are initially supported by donor aid. The donors and recipients of aid (Zambia) may use the findings of the current study to draw lessons on how to ensure the effective sustainability of donor-supported innovations in future.

In line with what Israr (2005, p. 457) states, as an educationist and a researcher, I observed with a lot of concern that 'every time a project concludes, the concerns on its … sustainability are raised. This is followed by repetition of the same story for the next project without drawing any lessons from the previous experience'. Conducting this research was therefore an important personal undertaking because it offered me the opportunity to obtain answers (empirical evidence) to some of the questions which have left me, and I believe many, wondering why innovations that are initially supported by donors in the education sector in Zambia seem challenging to sustain.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is organised in **eight** chapters as follows:

Chapter one, which is the preamble of the thesis, contextualises the study by presenting the background to the problem. The research aim, objectives and questions are introduced, as well

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as the significance and justification of the study. The chapter brings out the main issues and challenges related to the sustainability of innovations, especially those that are supported by donor funding. The literature generally shows that despite the growing body of knowledge on the sustainability of innovations, the factors that facilitate or impede sustainability are not soundly established. The discussion demonstrates another gap in the literature relating to the fact that although there is evidence that the sustainability of donor-supported initiatives in the education sector in Zambia has been challenging, little research has been conducted to appreciate the conditions under which sustainability is likely to be attained.

Chapter two reviews relevant literature which places the research in context and provides a broader perspective on the subject of sustainability vis-à-vis donor-supported innovations. In this regard, the meaning, purpose and effectiveness of donor aid are examined. The concept of sustainability and how it is related to donor aid is also presented. In addition, literature pertaining to the factors that influence the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in various sectors, with particular focus on the education system, is outlined. Gaps in the literature are also identified that justify the current investigation. A major limitation is that although there is vast research on sustainability, there are few accounts both at international level and in the Zambian context that show the factors that specifically influence the sustainability of innovations in the education sector initially propelled by donor support. Another limitation is that although existing research has identified a series of potential sustainability factors, scholars have not reached a consensus on the factors that largely influence sustainability in the education sector.

Chapter three introduces the conceptual framework that guided this research. The framework was borrowed from the European Commission (2006) and highlights factors associated with the sustainability of education innovations based on the experiences of innovations that were funded by donors. The framework identifies two broad factors of sustainability – project-level factors and contextual-level factors. Project-level factors refer to elements that are inherent to the project design and implementation, while contextual-level factors have to do with issues that exist in the external environment that can influence the sustainability of an innovation.

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Project-level factors include the quality of the design of the innovation; the involvement of consortium members; effective management and leadership; the active participation of the audience and capacity for securing adequate resources for continuation. Context level factors encompass institutional level factors (attributes of an institution) and national level factors (socio-economic and political factors). The framework is also broadened to include 'project mentality', a factor the current research perceived to be influential in the sustainability of education innovations that are initially propelled by donor funding. The framework also incorporates various aspects pertaining to sustainability and related issues discussed in the literature review such as the effectiveness of aid in meeting its intended purpose.

Chapter four contains a description of the research methodology and includes the research context, research design, sample and sampling procedures, data collection methods and procedures and the analysis of data. The chapter also contains a discussion on the reliability and validity (trustworthiness) of the study, its limitations and ethical considerations.

In summary, the study employed a qualitative-interpretivist-case approach. Eight schools in the Lusaka district of Zambia where the PRP was expected to be implemented were randomly selected to be part of the research. From the sampled schools, teachers and head teachers were purposively selected to participate in the study. Representatives from donor agencies and officials from the Ministry of Education were also purposively sampled. During the course of data collection, participants who were not initially expected to be part of the study were incorporated in the study through the snowball sampling technique.

The study used semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and document analysis to collect data. Using the interview technique, teachers, head teachers, donor representatives and education officials were interviewed. Using a classroom observation schedule, literacy lessons for Grade 1 classes were observed. Pertinent documents that included programme evaluation reports, monitoring reports, research studies, policy documents, course materials and other documentation that had some bearing on the programme were reviewed. Data analysis was done manually and was based on an inductive approach and the grounded theory.

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Chapter five presents background information on the Primary Reading Programme (PRP), the literacy case that was under investigation. This chapter provides the context in which the findings of the study are presented and interpreted. In summary, the chapter contains a discussion on the language in education policy between 1965 and 1995 with a focus on the various circumstances that led to the emergence of a new language policy. An account of the PRP during the period it was under the sponsorship of donor funding is provided, focusing on the transformations that took place in the Zambian education system as a result of the introduction of programme. The changes that took place are presented across eight themes that include the language of instruction for literacy; teaching/learning materials and other literacy resources; methodology; assessment practices; monitoring activities; record keeping; learner achievement levels and motivation among stakeholders to implement the PRP. Under each theme, the data that was derived from the analysis of documents and interviews with various stakeholders is presented. Overall, participants' perceptions and the data from the analysis of documents were in agreement, recognising that when the PRP was under the support of donors, it was a success. One of the major achievements of the programme was that it had generally managed to raise the levels of literacy among learners in primary schools in Zambia.

Chapter six presents a description of the findings obtained by this study from the interviews with various stakeholders; the observation of Grade 1 classes and the analysis of pertinent documents. In this chapter, the story of the PRP after the Zambian government took over the implementation of the programme entirely is 'narrated'. Particular attention is given to 'measuring' the sustainability of the programme by finding out the activities and aspects of the programme that continued after donor funding had ceased, and the reasons or factors that could have accounted for the level of sustainability.

The findings generally demonstrated that after donors had ceased to support the PRP, what was documented as a 'success story' turned out to be a 'bad story', as many aspects and activities of the programme were poorly sustained. A major finding that points to poor sustainability is that the PRP was unable to sustain its major benefit or objective - increasing the levels of achievement in literacy among learners.

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Chapter seven contains a discussion of the findings obtained in the study in relation to the conceptual framework and the literature review. The discussion focuses on identifying areas of convergence and divergence between the factors that emerged from the study findings and those pointed out in the conceptual framework and literature review. The chapter theorises the findings of the study and graphically presents them in the form of a framework that may be used to show potential reasons why donor- supported innovations in the education sector in Zambia and similar contexts may be difficult to sustain.

Chapter eight is the concluding chapter of the study. It discusses the major findings of the study, makes recommendations, highlights the contribution of the study to knowledge and provides direction for further research. Overall, this study demonstrates that the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector can be influenced by project-level factors, contextual-level factors as well as the project mentality factor. A key result is that sustainability can be compromised if innovations are designed to deliver benefits that are beyond the financial capability of the beneficiaries to manage and maintain without external support. Another significant finding is that if mutual dialogue during the initiation and implementation phases is jeopardised, the necessary ownership of and support for the innovation may not be developed. Consequently, sustainability may be difficult to attain.

This study therefore suggests that overambitious innovations designed with inputs and activities that are beyond the capacity of host countries to manage and maintain should be avoided. Dialogue and partnership between the donors and recipient countries should be enhanced in order to ensure genuine commitment and ownership at national level. From the design of an innovation to its implementation, key implementers should be actively involved in order to build the necessary ownership and drive for sustainability at both the institutional and personal levels.

An original contribution of this study to knowledge is its emphasis on exploring the *project mentality* factor – a critical yet 'unexplored and unrealised' factor in the sustainability of donor-funded initiatives in the public sector in developing countries, as well as the subsequent development of a frame to understand how the phenomenon can affect the sustainability of

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donor-supported innovations. In addition, arising from the study findings, the research also identifies practical ways of addressing the project mentality factor.

Another important contribution to the expansion of knowledge is that this study has addressed an identified gap in literature – the paucity of accounts that show the factors that specifically influence the sustainability of donor-driven innovations in the education sector. In this regard, a frame for conceptualising the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector that can be applied to Zambia as well as similar contexts was developed.

A limitation identified in literature is that scholars have not sufficiently understood and agreed on the conditions under which innovations in the education sector are likely to be sustained. Through the development of a framework on sustainability, the findings of this research have in a way made a contribution to the quest by scholars to appreciate the possible reasons why donor-supported innovations in the education sector may fail to achieve sustainability.

A major limitation of this investigation is that the findings cannot be generalised owing to the design of the study. However, the strength of this study lies in its contribution to empirical data that can inform policy and practice on matters surrounding the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education system.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 OVERVIEW

The objective of the study was to ascertain the sustainability of education innovations initially driven by donor support by specifically investigating the case of a literacy programme in Zambia. In order to place the research in context and provide a broader perspective on the subject under investigation, the literature review covers a number of topics. The first part presents literature pertaining to the meaning and purpose of donor aid and its effectiveness in meeting its objective. The second component discusses the concept of sustainability and how it is related to donor aid.

The third part of the chapter contains a review of literature relating to factors that influence the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in various sectors other than the education sector. The fourth part presents a discussion on the sustainability of innovations in the education sector with a focus on factors associated with sustainability. The review will provide examples from Zambia and other relevant countries, taking into consideration the fact that the research is centred on the case of a literacy programme in Zambia.

2.2 THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF DONOR AID

Donor aid, which is also referred to as international, overseas or foreign aid, is divided into two broad categories, humanitarian aid and development aid. Humanitarian aid is emergency relief aimed at alleviating suffering on a short-term basis (e.g. in response to natural disasters). Development aid is distinguished from humanitarian aid because it centres on supporting efforts by recipient countries to achieve long-term development (Clemens, Radelet, & Bhavnani, 2004; Immanuel, 2011).

While the definitions of development are varied, this study has adopted the one given by Sen (1999, as quoted by Andrews, 2009), which emphasises the aspect of sustainability and freedom, two concepts the current study has deemed essential to the ‘real’ meaning and purpose of donor aid. Development is defined as the economic, social or cultural progress that serves the current and future basic needs of people. These basic needs encompass five

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interconnected freedoms that include economic opportunities, political freedoms, social freedoms, transparency and protective security.

Literature identifies different sources of foreign aid that include: (a) bilateral aid – aid from one country to another which is given through individual aid agencies such as USAID, AusAID and DFID; and (b) multilateral aid – aid given by organisations, institutions or agencies of developed countries such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to recipient countries (OECD, 2007; Anwar & Aman, 2010; Bhatta, 2011; Colclough & Webb, 2012).

The focus of this study is the second type of aid, which is aimed at promoting long-term development. The reason for this is that the current study is aimed at investigating the sustainability of innovations that are aimed at promoting development. For the purposes of this study, the definition of aid is borrowed and extended from the ones advanced by Immanuel (2011), Andrews (2009) and Kairu (2013). These scholars define aid as the transfer of capital, goods and services in the form of grants or subsidised loans from one government to another (bilateral) or through a multilateral assistance agency with the intention of eradicating poverty, supporting long-term (sustainable progress that serves the current and future basic needs of people) socio-economic development and welfare in recipient countries.

2.3 DONOR AID AND DEVELOPMENT

From the time aid came into existence, that is, when the United States of America (USA) released funds to assist Europe in reconstructing its economy after the Second World War, it was assumed or taken for granted that donor aid directly influenced development (McMillan, 2011). However, as early as the 1950s, scholars like Friedman (1958) and Bauer (1972) began to question the extent to which aid was effective in terms of meeting its goal. From the time these concerns were raised, the subject has spurred heated debate among politicians, researchers, economists, development experts and other stakeholders (Clemens et al., 2004; McMillan, 2011).

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Consequently, studies have been undertaken to establish the empirical link between foreign aid and economic development (Gupta, Pattilo, & Wagh, 2006; Chapman & Moore, 2010; Ndikumana, 2012; Akramov, 2012). However, even after numerous studies, the effectiveness of foreign aid in achieving its objectives remains questionable and the debate stands unresolved, as views range from those who are highly uncertain that aid has any effect on growth at all, to those who are convinced that aid can play a significant role in supporting socio-economic development (Rajan & Subramanian, 2005; Andrews, 2009; Juselius, Møller, & Tarp, 2011; Akramov, 2012; Frot & Perrotta, 2012).

Generally, the literature reveals three main views when it comes to the question as to whether aid promotes development in recipient countries or not. The first view consists of scholars that are against aid (anti-aid activists). The second group comprises scholars that are for aid (pro-aid activists). The third group, also referred to as the 'qualified' view, encompass scholars that take the neutral position (McMillan, 2011; Akramov, 2012).

2.3.1 The anti-aid activists

The anti-aid activists consist of scholars that argue that aid does not promote development and that sometimes it can hurt or undermine growth in recipient countries (McMillan, 2011; Akramov, 2012). This anti-aid school of thought dates back to the 1950s when economists like Friedman (1958) campaigned for an end to aid arguing that it was not a necessary requirement for development (McMillan, 2011). One of the major arguments advanced by the anti-aid activists is that millions of people continue to live in abject poverty and under-development in recipient countries despite the huge amounts of aid pumped into these economies (Radelet, Clemens & Bhavnani, 2006; Moyo, 2009; Ndikumana, 2012; Hofisi & Chizimba, 2013).

For example, a renowned professor of economics at New York University, William Easterly, argues that although official donors have spent over US$600 billion in aid to Africa over the past 45 years, on the whole there has not been any significant rise in the standard of living. In reaction to this state of affairs, Easterly calls the failure of aid to meet its objective one of the 'scandals of our generation' (Flintoff, 2007).

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Some scholars have added that the overall disappointing progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is evidence that aid has failed to meet long-term or sustainable development benefits. For example, Barigaba (2013) argues that although Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi have racked up billions of dollars worth of aid, the first target of the MDGs of ending extreme poverty and hunger will not be met and that the failure has a lot to do with aid.

One outstanding contributor to the anti-aid movement is Easterly (1999, 2001) quoted earlier. Interestingly, Easterly (2001) used Zambia among other countries to establish the relationship between aid and development. The findings of the study indicated that aid had little or no impact on spurring economic growth in Zambia and the other countries under investigation (McMillan, 2011). Other scholars with similar findings are Boone (1994, 1996); Clemens, Radelet, and Bhavnani (2004) and Griffin and Enos (1970).

There are a number of reasons that have been advanced to explain or suggest why aid has failed to bring about development and in some cases undermine it. For example, Roberts, Hite, and Chorev (2014, p. 403) argue that 'donors have a variety of motivations for providing aid, only some of which are directly related to economic development'. One of the identified reasons is that in certain instances, aid is given with ulterior motives and that it addresses the interests of donors more than those of recipient countries (Alesina & Dollar, 2000; Asante, 1985; Riddell, 2007; Minoiu & Reddy, 2010; Immanuel, 2011; Manning, 2012; Bandyopadhyay & Vermann, 2013).

For example, Bandyopadhyay and Vermann (2013) in their study to understand the motives and consequences for developed nations to provide aid to developing countries concluded that besides altruism (the practice of unselfish concern for or devotion to the welfare of others), donor countries were more likely to be motivated by political and strategic considerations when giving aid to countries in need. Other scholars that have advanced similar assertions are Manning (2012), Immanuel (2011) and Asante (1985), who also concluded that in most instances, aid is given on the basis or in pursuit of political influence, diplomatic approval, a military ally, market expansion, foreign investment and cultural extension among others. A

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case in point is given of the cold war era where donor aid was used as an instrument to buy allegiance from developing countries (Alesina & Dollar, 2000).

Other scholars have added that aid fails to spur economic development because it is given with conditions (Ndikumana, 2012; Manning, 2012; Kairu, 2013). Their argument is that conditional or tied aid may fail to address the real needs of people, inhibit the development of domestic industries in recipient countries and benefit donors more than those on the receiving end. For example, Deen (2004) argues that donor funding which comes with strings attached cuts the value of aid to recipient countries by 25 to 40 per cent because it obliges them to purchase uncompetitive priced imports from donor countries. Recipient countries are consequently compelled to procure inappropriate goods and services. Ultimately, resources given through aid are eventually ploughed back into the economies of donor nations while recipient countries remain wallowing in under-development.

A specific example is given by George Ayittey, President of the Free Africa Foundation, who asserts that the United States of America spends a huge percentage of aid on American contractors, suppliers and so forth (Flintoff, 2007). Perhaps this could be the reason why some scholars have argued that the reality is that donors have a lot more to gain than lose when they provide donor aid and that, after all, aid is not free. Actually, it is a misconception to perceive that aid is free because aid is a soft loan given to a recipient country at concessional rates (Flintoff, 2007; Kairu, 2013).

Some multilateral organisations such as the IMF have also been criticised for providing aid on conditions. For instance, in order to qualify for donor aid, some recipient countries have been forced to comply with 'harsh' conditions that have led to greater poverty (Kairu, 2013). David Rieff, a contributing writer to *The New York Times Magazine,* adds that the problem with aid 'is that it sets itself up as the kind of know-all and end-all' and that by definition, it is 'outsiders telling people in a place how to do it, and telling them if they don't behave satisfactorily,' aid will be withdrawn (Flintoff, 2007).

A case in point is given by Wohlgemuth and Saasa (2008), who argue that when Zambia accepted support from the international community, it had to agree to implement the Structural

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Adjustment Programmes (SAP) designed by the IMF and the World Bank. These programmes were criticised for contributing little to changing Zambia's economic performance and condemned for exerting severe function stress on an already declining economy.

In another instance, some scholars criticised the restrictive regulations on textbook provision imposed by the World Bank and some international development agencies that finance African education. Aitken (2012, p. 29) puts his argument clearly in the following quotation:

> French and British publishing companies, such as EDICEF and Heinemann, continue to hold a monopoly on the textbook market in Africa, due to restrictive regulations imposed by the World Bank and international development agencies that finance African education. Mazrui also provides the specific example of a World Bank loan for education to the Central African Republic that required the country to purchase all textbooks from France and Canada. Mazrui goes so far as to suggest that the European ... policies of the World Bank prevent an 'intellectual revolution' in Africa.

Yukhananov (2014) featured an article entitled 'IMF loan conditions grow despite vows to limit them: study', which is a report of the findings from research that was conducted by the European Network on Debt and Development (EURODAD) in 2014. EURODAD is reported to have reviewed 23 IMF loans covering the period from October 2011 to August 2013. The findings showed that the number of conditions the IMF attached to its loans had grown to nearly 20 on average in the recent past. This was despite promises the IMF made to limit loan conditions that critics call 'onerous requirements' which are entirely ineffective, excessive and harmful to the poor.

The conditions were further criticised for having unrealistic deadlines, not well tailored to the country circumstances and limiting a country's ability to effectively control its economic programmes. The aid given by the IMF was also described as 'negotiated at the barrel of a gun'. The article reported that the IMF reiterated that many conditions in donor fund-supported programmes were necessary to put economies on a growth track, enhance social protection as well as ensure the IMF recovered its money.

The manner in which aid is disbursed is another reason that has been advanced to explain the failure of aid to drive development in recipient countries. For example, Barigaba (2013) states that in actual fact, billions of dollars officially listed as aid received by poor countries never

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leave donor countries at all. A case in point is given where in 2011 alone, as much as $22 billion out of more than $100 billion worth of aid was in actual fact never transferred from the donor countries. Instead it was spent on various aid-related activities like debt cancellation in the benefactor countries.

It is also argued that aid fails to spur economic development because it is imposed on recipient countries. For instance, Kairu (2013) states that aid is a kind of patronage which donors use to control recipient countries. This indirect control of recipient countries, which Kwame Nkrumah (1965) terms as 'neo-colonialism' can manifest itself in situations where donors impose the direction of politics of recipient countries in terms of policies or reforms to be adopted and even the person to take up leadership (Nkrumah, 1965; Kairu, 2013).

Donors can also impose decisions on the projects or programmes they would like to support. This kind of control can damage the capacity of recipient countries to govern their own affairs. In addition, 'imposed aid' may be invested in inappropriate projects that may fail to boost economic growth but divert scare resources away from productive sources. Such aid can also be counter-productive because it may weaken national ownership and commitment (Manning, 2012; Kairu, 2013; Nkurumah, 1965). A number of scholars (Bossert, 1990; Edgren, 2003; Weeks et al., 2002; Islam, 2007) have actually established that innovations that are imposed or undertaken without consulting recipients tend to undergo severe resistance which ultimately constrains sustainability.

It is also argued that aid inhibits development because it creates a culture of dependency and laziness and prevents recipient economies from becoming self-sustaining (Immanuel, 2011; Manning; 2012). The dependency mentality that comes with aid is blamed for Africa's developmental mess, as recipient governments tend to consider foreign aid to be a permanent development instrument and consistent source of income. Scholars such as Andrews (2009) and Kairu (2013) state that it is the dependency mentality that has made recipients of aid 'worship' aid and find no reason to adopt alternative policies to foster and finance economic development. The dependency on aid has also been blamed for instigating inferiority and loss of both the social and legal identity of the African people (Immanuel, 2011). Garrett (2007) concludes that some donors have taken advantage of the culture of dependency on aid to

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indirectly control recipient countries through a cycle of borrowing. This situation arises especially in situations where donors have provided aid which does not foster the continuation of benefits.

One Zambian economist, Moyo (2009), and a Ghanaian entrepreneur and philanthropist, Elumelu (2013), hold strong views on aid and heavily condemn the dependency syndrome that comes along with it. Their argument is that aid to Africa must be drastically reduced because for many years, it has neither helped to reduce poverty nor increase development. Their submission is that instead of 'dishing out' aid that only provides temporary relief, donors must foster self-sufficient sustainable development in developing countries by harnessing resources to create change in the private sector, improving terms of trade and encouraging foreign business investment and access to international capital markets.

Apart from breeding dependency, development aid has been criticised for hindering development because it can increase corruption and misappropriation of resources (Immanuel, 2011). According to Ohu (2013); Manning (2012) and Immanuel (2011), corruption or the misappropriation of resources in matters of foreign aid occurs when local powerful politicians corruptly use money meant for development (aid) for their personal gain. In such situations, aid is made ineffective because it does not benefit the people it is intended for – the poor (Tavares, 2003; Alesina & Weder, 2002).

Regrettably, scholars like James Shikwati (a Kenyan economist) cite Zambia as one of the countries where aid was abused by the second republican president of Zambia, Dr Frederick Chiluba, for personal gain. Shikwati therefore makes the observation that in Africa the richest people are politicians and not entrepreneurs (Wikipedia, 2014).

In 2012 in related circumstances, external auditors revealed that approximately 12 million pounds in aid from Scandinavian countries and Ireland was allegedly stashed in private bank accounts for some officials in the Prime Minister's Office in Uganda. Following these allegations, a number of donor agencies suspended aid to Uganda (Transparency International, 2012).

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2.3.2 *The pro-aid activists*

The second group of scholars that has added its voice to the debate on aid and development is one that has countered the arguments advanced by the anti-aid scholars. These scholars suggest a positive relationship between foreign aid and development by contending that although aid has shortcomings, it cannot be denied that it has been an instrument in assisting developing countries to overcome many problems (Hansen & Tarp, 2001; Roodman, 2003; Dalgaard, Hansen, & Tarp, 2004; Umbadda & Elgizouli, 2013).

The campaigners for aid have called for enhanced commitment to aid, pointing to substantial positive and impressive success stories that include improvement in access to health care (e.g. smallpox eradication and the supply of anti-retroviral treatment to AIDS victims who could have died), as well as reforms of the tax systems and other projects which could have otherwise taken many years, especially for countries that collect insufficient revenue from tax (Clemens et al., 2004; Flintoff, 2007; Ndikumana, 2012). Other scholars like Kairu (2013) state that foreign aid can facilitate and accelerate the process of development in a number of ways, one of which includes supplementing domestic sources of income, thus leading to an increase in the amount of investment and capital.

Particularly in the education sector, it is argued that aid has had a positive impact on the development of education in Third World countries, such as improvements in school enrolment, the teaching and learning materials made available, as well as infrastructure, to mention but a few (Ndikumana, 2012).

In the case of Zambia, the national policy document on education summarises the importance role aid plays in the education system through the following statements:

> The increase in the number of donors has brought increase in the resource flows for education and resulted in improvements in educational provision throughout the country. It is acknowledged that without donor aid, schools would be more bereft than they are of books and learning materials, the infrastructure would be more decayed, Ministry officials would be less mobile, teachers would receive less professional development, information on the system would be scarcer, and hopes for substantial improvement would be more remote (MoE, 1996, p. 169).

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Other scholars within this school of thought have made strong statements in support of aid, saying that if we conclude that aid is doing more harm than good, alternatives must be found. Their argument is that the provision of aid must continue because some countries still need aid to develop because there are limited alternatives (Flintoff, 2007).

Kairu (2013) also adds that one of the positive sides of aid is that it has sped up the structural transformation of many developing countries. This has been as a result of the demand by donor countries to implement certain policy reforms that promote good governance, efficiency, transparency and accountability. Kairu (2013), however, warns that on the negative side, certain countries like Liberia that have received a lot of aid on such conditions have ended up being controlled by donor countries.

Empirical evidence from a number of studies has backed the assertions that aid plays a positive role in promoting development. For instance, Juselius et al. (2011) conducted a study to establish the relationship between aid and growth in 36 sub-Saharan African countries. The findings showed strong evidence that aid had positive long-run effects on growth. Out of 36 sampled countries under investigation, 27 recorded positive and significant effects on either the gross domestic product or investment or both.

A similar study was conducted by Anwar and Aman (2010) to empirically examine the effect of foreign aid on the national educational outcomes of Pakistan, using time series data for the period 1991 to 2007. The findings indicated that both foreign aid given to the education sector of Pakistan and total aid disbursement had a significant positive relationship with the literacy rate in the country. However, the study also found that only a very small portion of foreign aid given to the education sector was utilised effectively and efficiently, as most of it was wasted. Similarly, the results of a study conducted by Michaelowa and Weber (2007) showed that there were positive effects of foreign aid on educational outcomes. However, the estimated effects were low.

Other scholars that have conducted similar studies and found a positive correlation between aid and development include Hansen and Tarp (2000, 2001), Stiglitz (2002), Stern (2002) and Dalgaard et al. (2004).

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2.3.3 The neutral or qualified activists

The third group consists of scholars that have taken a rather neutral position on the debate about the effectiveness of aid in fostering development (Isham, Kaufman, & Pritchett, 1995; Burnside & Dollar, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). According to McMillan (2011), this group consists of scholars that have taken a different approach, considering that the 'anti' and 'pro' aid activists have not provided absolute answers on the effect of aid on development. Rather than ascertaining whether aid has a positive or negative relationship with growth, these scholars endeavour to see where and in what situations foreign aid can have a positive or negative relationship. McMillan (2011) applauds this view as a more 'enlightened' approach to aid growth analysis.

One of the most prominent and influential studies in this category of scholars was conducted by Burnside and Dollar (2000), who investigated whether the policy environment in aid-receiving countries increased the effect of aid on the annual per capita GDP growth rate. The findings of the study revealed that an environment of 'good policies' encouraged growth. According to Burnside and Dollar (2000, p. 847), good policies are defined as 'good fiscal, monetary, and trade policies that are themselves important for growth'.

Another study was conducted by Bezemer and Wijsman (s.a.) to find out the effect of 'good policies' on the effectiveness of aid. This research, which was a follow up to the study conducted by Burnside and Dollar (2000), differed in that 'good policies' were redefined as a set of policies that point to the importance of strong and capable states, sector and credit policies, stable exchange rates and high savings rates, and educational investment. The findings did not differ, however, because they equally showed that these polices tended to improve aid effectiveness for growth in a sample of 112 developing countries.

In the light of what has been discussed under this section, it can be concluded that there is indeed vast literature on aid and development. What has been emphasised is that the question of whether aid promotes economic growth and reduces poverty is a subject of heated debate, as there is no firm consensus or conclusive evidence that foreign aid is positively or negatively related to development.

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While some argue that foreign aid does not have any effect on development and may even undermine growth, others suggest that foreign aid has a positive influence on development. There are yet others who suggest that foreign aid has a positive impact on growth but only under certain favourable conditions. Perhaps one of the reasons for this inconclusiveness is the admission by McMillan (2011) and Akramov (2012) that the pattern of development is complex and therefore the effect of foreign aid on development cannot be clearly determined. The impact of aid is influenced by many factors that can arise from the donor's side, the recipients' context and other exogenous factors.

Scholars such as Immanuel (2011) have bluntly called for the abolition of aid considering its negative effects. Andrews (2009) and Kairu (2013) argue that it is easier said than done to advocate for the abolition of aid because some developing countries are so dependent on aid that they cannot do without it. It is also important to point out that it may take a while for developing countries to be liberated from donor aid. This is because a number of them are struggling economically and have accumulated so much debt through aid that coming out is an almost unattainable task. In view of what has been discussed, the question that should be posed is, how can aid be made effective or be positioned to achieve intended sustainable outcomes? The next section is therefore aimed at discussing the efforts that have been made to make aid work more effectively.

2.4 IMPROVING AND EFFECTIVENESS

In March 2005, donors and recipient countries across the globe met and formally agreed on an agenda to boost the effectiveness of aid under what was known as the 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness'. This declaration represented a determined effort taken at the international level on what needed to be done to make aid produce better developmental outcomes for the benefit of the people it was intended for (Lingnau & Thavrak, 2009).

According to this declaration, donors and recipient countries committed themselves to new ways of operating in which aid would be more efficiently planned, delivered and evaluated. The major statements of the declaration were that aid was likely to be more effective and thus promote development when: (1) developing countries exercise leadership over their

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development policies and plans (ownership); (2) donors base their support on countries' development strategies and systems (alignment); (3) donors coordinate their activities and minimise the cost of delivering aid (harmonisation); (4) developing countries and donors orient their activities to achieve the desired results (managing for results); and (5) donors and developing countries are accountable to each other for progress in managing aid better and in achieving development results (mutual accountability) (OECD, 2007, p. 9).

Colclough and Webb (2012, p. 263) add another dimension to the interpretation of the Paris Declaration when they state that:

> The Paris Declaration promised that donor agencies would align themselves behind the objectives for poverty reduction set by developing countries themselves; utilising local systems to deliver and track aid resources, coordinating and sharing information amongst themselves to avoid duplication, and securing mutual accountability between donor and recipient countries for the results achieved.

Three years later a follow-up conference was held in Accra where it was further agreed that donors would, among other things, provide information on their planned programmes between three and five years. It was further agreed that donors would not impose their own conditions on how and when the aid resources would be used but that they would use conditions based on the recipient countries' own development targets and objectives (Colclough & Webb, 2012).

The Paris and Accra agreements also emphasised partnership and Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP). SWAP is a situation where funding for a sector, whether internal or from donors, supports a single policy and expenditure programme under the recipient government leadership and adopting common approaches across the sector (Sector-Wide Support Group (SWSG), 2004). The funding modalities under SWAP include, among others, 'basket' funding under which contributing donors pool their contributions in a single account to which the recipient government contributes its counterpart funding, thus allowing for the mingling of resources within the common basket; or small baskets within a larger basket, as opposed to funding individual projects (Bhatta, 2011).

According to the SWSG (2004), SWAP sprang from the realisation that fragmented, project-based aid had too little impact and was insufficiently sustainable. This argument was supported

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by the fact that many projects collapsed as soon as foreign experts left and funding 'dried up'. The SWAP therefore tries to achieve sustainable development by influencing and supporting the sectoral processes and institutions that reduce poverty, rather than funding poverty projects that focus on specific target groups.

Following the Paris and Accra agreements, research has been undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of the two declarations in improving aid effectiveness. By and large, the evaluations have revealed ample evidence of development agencies impeding the implementation of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action (2008).

For example, in the case of Cambodia, Lingnau and Thavrak (2009) found that donors continued to undertake studies and produce reports without the involvement of the government. As a result, the documents corresponded with the needs of the donors but not with those defined by the Cambodian government. Furthermore, some development agencies are reported to have shown little respect for partnership in terms of public relations and that many of them understood partnership as a 'one-way street'. Colclough and Webb (2012, p. 277) also revealed that the move towards genuine equal partnership between the donors and Kenya was limited considering that donors continued to 'call most of the shots' and to stick to their own interests and priorities.

In another related study, Samoff (2004) reported that although the new aid terminology emphasised partnership and a sectoral approach, in the case of Burkina Faso projects still persisted. Donors are also reported to have continued to instruct more than listen, thereby undermining the dialogue and partnership they claimed to construct. Samoff (2004) therefore argues that it was an illusion that recipient countries had ownership over their agenda because aid agencies had become more powerful and monolithic. The heavy reliance on external funding had made it difficult for the government to assert and maintain an independent posture. Samoff (2004, p. 422) therefore concluded that 'foreign aid, whether for education or other sectors, was primarily a foreign policy tool intended to serve the providing country's national interests as they are understood by that country'.

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Chigunta and Matshalaga (2010) also conducted an evaluation study that was aimed at taking stock of the implementation and progress in upholding the Paris Declaration in 34 countries. Zambia was among the countries that participated in the survey which was conducted in 2006. In the case of Zambia, the findings of the evaluation revealed a mixture of positive and negative outcomes. While the harmonisation and alignment agenda was reported to have been advancing relatively well, government ownership of the development process and leadership of the harmonisation and alignment agenda was still wanting. Policy dialogue between the cooperating partners and Zambia was also stated to have been weak, thus threatening local ownership.

Unlike the previous study by Chigunta and Matshalaga (2010), which focused on evaluating the implementation of the Paris Declaration in 34 countries, the study by Watt (2005) was specifically undertaken to find out how the SWAP to education was performing in Zambia. The findings revealed that although the Zambian education SWAP was often cited by donors as the modest progress towards harmonisation in practice, donors were not ‘buying in’ to the harmonisation agenda. For instance, only a third of aid was channelled through a common basket and procurement remained heavily tied. It was further indicated that the needs of the Zambian government was often an afterthought among donors in the education sector. In addition, too many donors continued to provide often small and unpredictable sums of money to support their priorities at the expense of government.

This finding by Chigunta and Matshalaga (2010) and Watt (2005) confirm the statements made in the national policy document on education in Zambia, *Educating Our Future* that

> … the increase (in the number of donors) has not been without challenges. One is the sheer scale of dealing with so many different donors, each with its own needs. A further problem lies in generating a sense of Ministry ownership for projects and activities that may respond more strongly to donor perceptions than to perceived needs within the Ministry. In the process, the local vision for education development may give way to donor-driven initiatives (MoE, 1996, p. 169).

In concluding this section, it is necessary to state that the Paris and Accra Declarations were undeniably resolute efforts at the international level to make aid produce better results (Lingnau & Thavrak, 2009). However, considering the literature that has been reviewed in this

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section, it must be stated that much more needs to be done if aid is to meet its objectives effectively. This statement is confirmed by the 2008 United Nations Secretary General's report for the Development Cooperation Forum, which indicated that the Paris Declaration process had not demonstrated genuine ability to change donor behaviour or link the aid-effectiveness agenda with sustainable results.

Perhaps what could help make aid effective is the proposal by Lingnau and Thavrak (2009) that for real progress to be seen under the Aid Effectiveness Declarations, a period of compliance should be agreed upon during which all necessary changes should happen and all players held strictly accountable.

Important to this study is the observation by Riddell (2007) and Flintoff (2007) that although aid has made a difference, it could become more effective if it were 'African-led' and produced sustainable results. The next section is therefore aimed at understanding the concept of sustainability and its relationship with donor aid.

2.5 THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABILITY

The section that follows examines the meaning of sustainability, the concept of sustainability in the education sector and the way in which sustainability is related to the change process.

2.5.1 Sustainability – what it generally entails

The concept of sustainability was first employed in relation to natural resources which focused on the way limited natural resources should be protected or maintained in the fact of over-extraction and shocks or stresses (Russell, 1995). The concept shifted its attention to encompass economic and social processes of development when sustainable development was defined under the United Nations (UN) document written in 1987, entitled 'Our Common Future', also known as the Brundtland Report, as 'progress that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs' (UN, 1987, p. 43).

Over the years, the definition of sustainability in development literature has varied widely and broadened in scope. It has become a catchword that has been used in various sectors because 'everything must now be sustainable, not only the environment, but also cities, agriculture,

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livelihoods' (Blanchet & James, 2014, p. 2; Tango International, 2009). Defining sustainability has therefore proved to be a hurdle because different people view the phenomenon from different perspectives (Johnson, Hays, Center, & Daley, 2004; Savaya & Spiro, 2012).

Although the definitions of sustainability may differ, the majority of them make reference to one fundamental aspect of sustainability – the ability of the project, programme or system, or community to manage on its own without external support. In addition, many definitions make reference to the continued flow of benefits or services after the withdrawal of external support (Lockwood et al., 2003).

It is important to emphasise that innovations that are initiated through a project, programme or other means are not meant to be sustainable because they have a start and finish date. Sustainability means that an innovation provides a continued flow of benefits which are 'owned by the stakeholders and supported on an ongoing basis with locally available resources' (Young & Hampshire, 2000: 1).

In the context of donor-funded development innovations, the definitions of sustainability highlight more or less the same issues. What is different is that there is an emphasis on the ability of the innovation to continue after major assistance from a donor has been completed (Bamberger & Cheema, 1990; Young & Hampshire, 2000).

Providing a description of what is sustained or not sustained can be a difficult undertaking because sustainability may not concern all the aspects of an innovation. In addition, in each innovation, some activities or outputs may be maintained while others may not be so important to maintain. 'A project can therefore be considered as sustainable if relevant activities are pursued and outputs are maintained' after the end of donor support (European Commission, 2006, p. 5).

It is also important to note that sustainability definitions can focus on three major aspects: maintenance of benefits, programme institutionalisation and capacity building. The definitions that emphasise outcomes propose that the purpose of an innovation is to maintain benefits. This implies that if benefits are not maintained, the innovation is not sustained. The definitions that focus on the institutionalisation of innovations are mainly concerned with ensuring that

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innovation activities (rather than outcomes) are incorporated into existing organisational and community structures. The definitions that focus on sustainable capacity emphasise the importance of building the capacity of the recipient community to continue a programme (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998).

2.5.2 The concept of sustainability in the education sector

In the field of education, many scholars generally view sustainability in terms of the institutionalisation of change. The institutionalisation of change is defined as a point when an innovation loses its 'special project' status and becomes a 'taken-for-granted feature' of life of an education institution. The argument is that sustainability and institutionalisation are closely linked because change or an innovation is institutionalised when it has been sustained over time and vice versa (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Johnson et al., 2004; Datnow, 2005; Dickerson, 2001; Saito et al., 2012).

In view of what has been discussed, this research defines sustainability as the continuation of an innovation (outcomes, activities and capacity) and its institutionalisation as an integral part of an organisation (school/education system) after the withdrawal of major assistance from a donor (Young & Hampshire, 2000; Savaya & Spiro, 2012; European Commission, 2006; Swerissen, 2007).

The definition adopted in this research applies to any innovation (new products, processes or services) that can be introduced at project, programme or sector approach level (where aid is provided through the government budget for the sector being assisted) with the intention of boosting development (Young & Hampshire, 2000; Loh, Friedman & Burdick, 2013).

2.5.3 Sustainability and the change process

As part of the appreciation of the concept of sustainability, it is important to note that sustainability is a part of the three major phases in the process of change. The process of change is said to be a series of three overlapping stages that co-exist in practice as depicted in the diagram below (Fullan, 1991; Miles, 1986).

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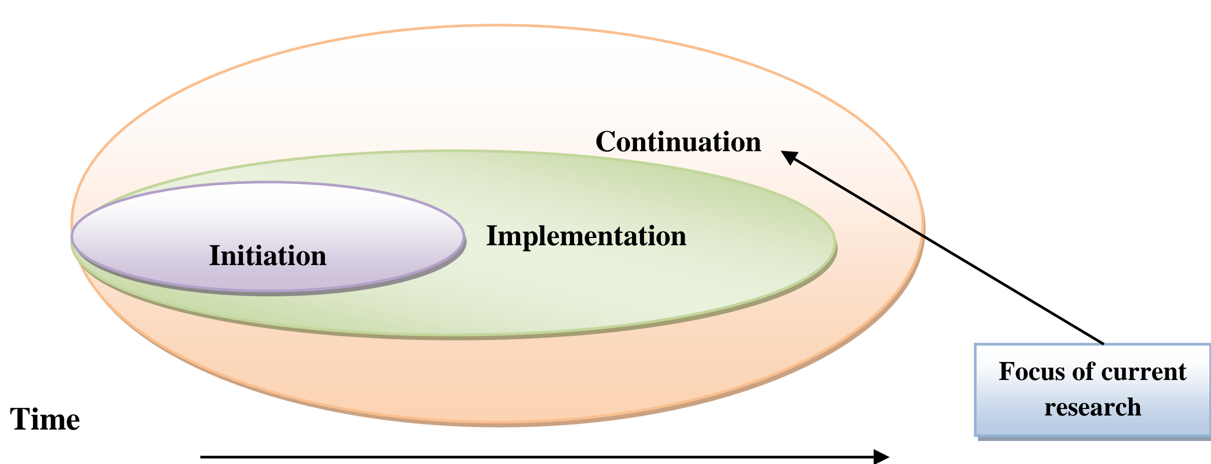

Figure 2.1: The three overlapping phases of the change process (Miles et al., 1987)

The first phase in the process of change is the **initiation stage,** a point where decisions are made to embark on an innovation. This period involves inquiry, planning and a consideration of the costs, materials, personnel and space required for its adoption. This stage is known to be a crucial stage especially for developing commitment towards the innovation (Swerissen, 2007; Dickerson, 2001; Fullan, 1991).

The **implementation phase** involves the process of putting change into practice or the attempted use of the innovation. This is the phase in the process of change that receives the most attention and resources. Some of the major key activities that occur during this stage include carrying out of action plans; developing and sustaining commitment among beneficiaries; checking of progress and overcoming identified challenges. Training and staff development are among the most crucial activities during this phase (Dickerson, 2001; Hargreaves, 2002).

The **continuation stage** (sustainability phase) is a period when an innovation is incorporated into the routine of the organisation. This stage is also known as the move from implementation to institutionalisation, which often involves the transformation of a pilot project to a nation-wide initiative. Compared to the implementation stage, this is a period that is often without the advantage of the previously available funding and support from donors or other external entities. This phase is considered to be one of the most difficult phases in the change process. This is because while many innovations are successfully initiated and implemented in the first

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months or years, sustaining them has proved to be hardest part of the whole change process (Bossert, 1990; Haysom, 2006; Kimaro & Nhampossa, 2007; Lockwood et al., 2003; Swerissen, 2007; White, Christie, D'Agnes, Lowry, & Milne, 2005).

Understanding the phases of change is significant in ensuring the sustainability of innovations. This is because sustainability co-exists with the other phases of change, as illustrated above. If one phase does not receive appropriate attention, the other phase(s) may be affected. For example, the inability to develop commitment among the direct beneficiaries towards the innovation at the initiation stage can affect both the implementation and the sustainability phases (Swerissen, 2007; Dickerson, 2001; Fullan, 1991). In addition, in cases where professional development is inadequate during implementation, sustainability can prove to be a difficult process because those expected to continue the implementation of the innovation may not have the capacity to do so (Dickerson, 2001; Hargreaves, 2002; Miles, 1986).

2.6 THE LINK BETWEEN DONOR AID AND SUSTAINABILITY

Establishing the linkage between sustainability and aid is important because the purpose of this study was to examine the sustainability of innovations that are initially propelled by donor funding. There are a number of ways in which sustainability can be linked to aid. One of them is by looking at the objective of development aid. The purpose of any form of development aid is closely linked to sustainability bearing in mind that any type of development aid is supposed to 'meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. In fact, as mentioned earlier, development aid is in essence different from humanitarian aid because it is not expected to provide temporal relief but long-term and sustainable developmental outcomes.

Savaya and Spiro (2012) add another dimension to the linkage between donor aid and sustainability when they state that the sustainability of innovations is a vital aspect for both moral and financial reasons. As mentioned earler, from a moral point of view, the termination of a programme when the need still exists is a violation of its commitment to the target population for which it was introduced. From a financial dimension, the premature close of a

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needed programme constitutes wastage of often colossal sums of public funds as well as creating stakeholder apathy (Savaya & Spiro, 2012; Cunningham & Gresso, 1993).

In addition, sustainability is generally regarded as an imperative criterion of development aid because it becomes difficult to claim that development occurred if the activity or at least the benefits do not endure (Chapman & Moore, 2010, p. 558). Tango International (2009) adds that it is not possible to claim lasting impact of donor support without ensuring the critical aspect of sustainability in development.

Sustainability is also acknowledged as one of the key attributes of high quality aid (Young & Hampshire, 2000). The argument is that when the benefits of aid are sustained, it helps recipient countries to reduce dependency on and demand for aid, as facilities will operate to the maximum level, generating adequate services and goods that could evolve into self-supporting entities (Garret, 2007). Sustainability is also said to be an important step in the life cycle of an innovation. This is because any innovation that proves beneficial to its recipients should be supported in order to continue (Scheirer, 2005).

If sustainability is an important aspect of development aid, the key question is, how can sustainability be effectively achieved? The next section therefore aims at reviewing literature on the factors that facilitate or impede the sustainability of innovations, especially those that are initially propelled by donor funding.

2.7 SUSTAINABILITY OF INNOVATIONS IN VARIOUS FIELDS

As earlier stated, over the past years, concerns over the sustainability of donor-supported innovations have been advanced by various scholars in different fields (Hofisi & Chizimba, 2013; Bossert, 1990; Haysom, 2006; Kimaro & Nhampossa, 2007; Lockwood et al., 2003; White et al., 2005). This section therefore reviews some studies that have been conducted in different sectors vis-à-vis the sustainability of innovations that are initially supported by donor aid.

Hofisi and Chizimba (2013) evaluated the sustainability of three donor-funded food security projects in Malawi. The findings of the study revealed that participatory approaches to

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development have a significant impact on the sustainability of development projects and that sustainability was influenced by how much recipients were empowered to sustain development initiatives after the end of project funding. The level of sophistication of technologies also affected sustainability. For example, while in one project interventions were sustained because 'only simple irrigation technologies were promoted which the farmers were able to maintain and replace easily' (p. 713), sustainability was a challenge in another project where an electrical pump-based scheme was employed. The study also found that projects with overambitious designs were unsustainable. An example is given of the projects that failed to be sustained because they involved the management and coordination of a large number of stakeholders' and institutions' activities that were untimely or even inappropriate.

The study suggests that projects are likely to be sustainable if their design has in-built exit strategies right from the commencement of the project because they do not create the dependency syndrome. The study also found that working with existing government structures ensured sustainability. However, the authors caution against the use of government staff because the workload factor may limit their effectiveness in meeting project targets, as they have to attend to both their core functions and project work. The study also acknowledged external factors such as flooding, droughts and erratic donor funding as factors that affected sustainability.

Bossert (1990) reviewed five country studies of the sustainability of US government-funded health projects in Central America and Africa. The review concluded that health projects in Africa were less sustained than those in Central America. The results of the study suggested that the weak economic and political contexts of the African cases hampered sustainability. In the case of Central America, the strength of the institution implementing the project determined sustainability. An assessment of the characteristics of the project associated with sustainability found that projects that were effective in achieving clearly defined goals and objectives; integrated activities in established administrative structures; and gained significant levels of funding from national sources during the life of the project had high chances of sustainability. In addition, projects whose designs were negotiated and had a strong training component were more likely to be sustained than the opposite.

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Another study was conducted to identify sustainability factors by focusing on the characteristics of health activities implemented in district hospitals after the end of international funding. An eye care programme was selected as a case study. The programme was implemented in Ghana and had been funded over a ten-year period by an international organisation, the Swiss Red Cross (Blanchet & James, 2014).

This study was unique considering that it used the diffusion of innovations theory to describe the attributes of activities in a health programme implemented in a low or middle-income country. A relationship was established between the level of sustainability of activities and the identified attributes. According to the theory, innovations are characterised by five attributes that include (i) relative advantage; (ii) compatibility; (iii) complexity; (iv) triability; and (v) observability. It is also important to mention that measuring sustainability in the study involved finding out whether each eye care activity (i.e. out-patient consultation, cataract surgery, outreach, school health, and statistics) continued or was interrupted after the end of Swiss Red Cross funding in the 11 district hospitals where the programme was implemented.

The findings of the study showed that the level of sustainability was determined by the attributes of every activity. Activities that were more likely to be unsustainable recorded the lowest score in terms of attributes – they were the most complex (being too complicated to understand, use, or implement) and the least compatible with the mandate and financing system. For instance, the school health screening held the lowest score in terms of attributes. They were also the most incompatible and complex activities, as well as the least triable and observable activities, among the four district activities. In contrast, facility-based consultations were more likely to be routinised because they were perceived by the hospital managers to be very compatible and not complex. One interesting conclusion of this research is that using the diffusion of innovations theory can help predict the sustainability of specific activities in a health programme.

In another health-related study, Kimaro and Nhampossa (2007) conducted research to assess the challenges of sustaining a Health Information System (HIS) using a comparative case analysis of the HIS in Mozambique and Tanzania. The study indicated that the major factor that contributed to the non-sustainability of HIS was the misalignment of the interests, roles

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and responsibilities of the actors involved in the process (the donors, developers and Minister of Health). Effective partnerships between these actors were said to be fundamental to sustaining the changes achieved in the long run.

White et al. (2005) also studied the sustainability of Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) projects in the Philippines and Indonesia. The findings suggest that policies, laws, governance structure, culture, relative economic development, environmental conditions, project design and personnel, type of funding arrangements and administration should all be taken into consideration during project design and implementation in order for gains to be sustainable.

In the water sector, a study commissioned by Water Aid was conducted to explore the reasons behind the non-functionality or non-sustainability of distribution points in central Tanzania. The study results showed that sustainability was mainly undermined by poor financial management (Haysom, 2006).

The literature that has been reviewed in this section provides valuable insights/lessons on the factors that can constrain or facilitate the sustainability of innovations that are initially supported by donors. The design of the project is among the most important factors that can determine the level of sustainability of an innovation. For example, innovations that are complex, overly ambitious and do not have clearly defined goals can be difficult to maintain. At the point of designing the innovation, it is essential to involve the beneficiaries in order to develop genuine ownership and commitment. Developing a clear exit strategy, using existing structures and ensuring that recipients are adequately empowered with the necessary tools/resources to continue implementing the innovation once donors withdraw support are crucial sustainability factors. Weak economic and political contexts including natural disasters such as floods and droughts can equally compromise sustainability.

2.8 SUSTAINABILITY OF INNOVATIONS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

A general review of the literature in relation to factors that affect the sustainability of innovations in the education sector make known different results and conclusions – to some extent overlapping and to some degree differing assumptions (Guhn, 2008; Adelman & Taylor,

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2003; Datnow, 2005; Fullan, 2007; Dickerson, 2001; Ertesvåg et al., 2010; Hargreaves & Goodson 2006; Saito et al., 2012; Sindelar et al., 2006).

However, what is apparent is that several studies in the education sector have been limited to examining internal and external factors that impede or facilitate the sustainability of innovations (Saito et al., 2012). Internal factors encompass issues at or within the institution (school) that can affect the sustainability of innovations (Datnow, 2005; Dickerson, 2001; Saito et al., 2012) and may include: **(a) commitment and genuine interest to change** (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Datnow, 2005; Dickerson, 2001; Saito et al., 2012); **(b) strong leadership** (Drysdale, Goode, & Gurr, 2009; Dickerson, 2001; Fullan, 2005; Guhn, 2008; Saito et al., 2012; Sindelar et al., 2006; Ertesvåg et al., 2010); **(c) staff development and training** (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Datnow, 2005; Dickerson, 2001; Fullan, 1991; Fullan, 1993; Fullan, 2005; Saito et al., 2012); **(d) School (institutional) culture** (Greenlee & Bruner, 2004; Sindelar et al., 2006; Dickerson, 2001); **(e) staff turnover** (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Datnow, 2005; Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Saito et al., 2012; Taylor, 2006; Sindelar et al., 2006; Ertesvåg et al., 2010); **(f) monitoring of the change** (Datnow, 2005; Dickerson, 2001; Diamond, 2006, Lockwood et al., 2003); **(g) innovation champions** (Owston, 2006); **(h) provision of resources** (Dickerson, 2001; Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Datnow, 2005).

External factors represent matters outside the school involving society and other stakeholders in education (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Dickerson, 2001; Sindelar et al., 2006). Some external factors include: **(a) support and commitment at local and national levels** (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Datnow, 2005; Dickerson, 2001; Hinde, 2004); **(b) provision of sufficient resources** (human, financial and materials support) (Dickerson, 2001; Datnow, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink 2003; Saito et al., 2012; Taylor 2006); and **(c) changes at district and national levels in terms of leadership or policies** (Datnow, 2005; Sindelar et al., 2006).

Literature that specifically examines factors that affect the sustainability of innovations in the education sector which are initially supported by donors is not widely available. This is one of the gaps identified in the literature which the current study intends to address. Nevertheless, a good source of this kind of literature is contained in the European Commission (2006) handbook on sustainability. The handbook provides, among other things, a description of the

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various features of sustainability to bear in mind when designing or managing higher education cooperation projects with a view to enhancing sustainability. Factors affecting the sustainability of donor-supported education innovations are identified and illustrated by examples from previous cooperation projects.

A gap identified in the European Commission framework is that the illustrations are drawn from western countries such as Russia, Croatia, Albania and Kosovo. The factors are therefore not representative of the African context and Zambia in particular. It is therefore anticipated that this study will make a contribution to the body of knowledge on factors that may influence the sustainability of innovation in the education sector from the African and Zambian perspectives.

According to the European Commission (2006), project-level factors and contextual-level factors influenced the sustainability of the various cooperation projects across the universities under review. The project-level factors refer to factors inherent to the project design and implementation, while the contextual-level factors have to do with elements that exist in the external environment surrounding an innovation.

Under the project-level factors the following were important sustainability elements: quality of the project design in meeting academic, professional and/or social needs; involvement of consortium members; sense of ownership and motivation; effective management and leadership; active participation of the audience (direct target groups); and capacity for securing adequate resources for continuation.

At the context level, institutional level and national level (socio-economic and political) factors were regarded as important elements of sustainability. These factors will be discussed in greater detail because they will be part of the conceptual framework that guided the investigation and analysis of the findings of this study. It is, however, important to note that the conceptual framework for the current study will be extended to include other factors that have been discussed in the literature review. The framework will also add another dimension – 'project mentality' – which the current research perceived to be an influential factor in the sustainability of education innovations that are initially propelled by donor funding.

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2.9 THE ZAMBIAN SCENARIO

The situation at global level is no different from Zambia, as literature that specifically looks at the post implementation of donor-driven initiatives is limited. In most cases, there is systematic documentation of innovations when under the support of donors. For example, when the case of the current study is closely examined, it is apparent that there is a great deal of literature that provides a comprehensive account of the PRP when it was under the support of donors, but there is little that gives an account of the sustainability the programme.

For instance, although Arden (2012) outlines the challenges Zambia faced to continue the implementation of the PRP, the literature does not provide a detailed analysis of the sustainability of the programme. The identified challenges include a methodology that was too demanding on the teachers; the regular transfer of heads and teachers initially trained in PRP; the inability of the government to re-supply the materials in schools; weak structures and financing of district trainers at in-service centres; and differences between the Directorate of Curriculum and Standards and the Teacher Education Departments over who should manage the programme. The report further showed that colleges of education did not buy into the approach sufficiently when they were trained in the later stages.

Similarly, Folotiya-Jere (2014) merely cites a lack of materials; large class sizes; the complexity of the methodology; lack of support from administrators; lack of training; the language of instruction; and high turnover among teachers and Ministry of Education staff, as some of the major challenges experienced in implementing the PRP after the withdraw of donor support.

In another related study, Room To Read, a non-governmental organisation involved in supporting literacy-related activities in Zambia, also found the following as the major difficulties the country faced in sustaining the PRP: insufficient numbers of teachers trained in PRP owing to high turnover; infrastructure that was unsupportive of the PRP such as inadequate classroom space; and a lack of PRP materials and systematic monitoring and evaluation of the programme. The last two (lack of materials and monitoring and evaluation) were said to have significantly challenged the programme. Overall, the findings revealed that

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PRP was not yielding the intended results in literacy because the programme was not receiving adequate support to run efficiently (Room To Read, 2010).

What is apparent from the discussion above is that the available documents simply identify the challenges encountered in the implementation or continuation of the PRP. The literature does not provide any evidence to show whether the PRP was sustained or not amidst the identified challenges. Further, it does not make known the aspects of the PRP that were sustained or not sustained and why. In addition, the literature does not indicate the extent to which the programme was sustained in the face of the challenges identified. These are the gaps that this study anticipated filling.

2.10 CONCLUSION

Overall, the chapter has reviewed relevant literature that placed the research in context and provided a broader perspective on the subject of sustainability vis-à-vis donor-supported innovations. In this regard, the meaning, purpose and effectiveness of donor aid were examined. The concept of sustainability and how it is related to donor aid was also presented. In addition, literature pertaining to the factors that influence the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in various sectors, with a particular focus on the education system, was outlined.

Gaps in the literature were also identified that justify the current investigation. A major limitation of the literature is that although there is vast research on sustainability, there are few accounts at either an international level or in the Zambian context that show the factors that specifically influence the sustainability of innovations initially propelled by donor support in the education sector. Another limitation is that although existing research has identified a series of potential sustainability factors, scholars have not reached a consensus on the elements that influence sustainability in the education sector.

The next chapter is aimed at outlining the conceptual framework applied in the study.

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CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 OVERVIEW

While the previous chapter focused on reviewing the literature pertaining to donor aid, the concept of sustainability and gaining understanding on the factors that influence the sustainability of innovations from various sectors, this chapter will focus on discussing the factors that can facilitate or impede the sustainability of innovations in the education system, with particular emphasis on the ones that are initially driven by donor support. This is in view of the objective of the study, which was to find out the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector. The ultimate objective of this chapter is therefore to outline the conceptual framework that was used to guide the current study.

3.2 FACTORS AFFECTING SUSTAINABILITY OF EDUCATION INNOVATIONS

It is worth noting that not all factors that influence the sustainability of innovations affect all education institutions. This is because certain factors might play a prominent role in some contexts and less important one in others. In certain contexts, particular factors might be present that are not found in another. This may be as a result of the study's specific theoretical assumptions, research questions, research designs and analytical approaches. Consequently, different scholars have identified different factors associated with the sustainability of educational innovations (Guhn, 2008).

In summary, existing research has identified a series of plausible sustainability factors but has not yet proven consistent linkages between these factors and sustainability. In addition, by and large scholars have not reached a consensus on the factors that significantly influence sustainability in the education sector (Lai et al., 2009; Taylor, 2006).

The conceptual framework used in this study was borrowed from that developed by the European Commission (2006). This is in view of the fact that it highlights factors associated with the sustainability of education innovations based on the experiences of projects and programmes that were funded by donors. In addition, the European Commission framework

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was selected as a basis for organising the factors of the framework because it makes a clear distinction between internal (project-level factors) and external factors (context-level factors) that can act as barriers to sustainability (Loh, Friedman & Burdick, 2013).

It must, however, be emphasised that the framework was broadened to integrate and synthesise other factors that affect sustainability in the review of the literature, especially the ones that relate to the education/school system. The framework also adds 'project mentality'; a factor the current study considers to be a possible impediment to the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education system.

3.2.1 Project-level factors

Project-level factors refer to factors that are inherent to the project design and implementation (Loh et al., 2013, p. 34; European Commission, 2006).

a. Quality of project design

The quality of the project design has to do with the characteristics of the innovation which is normally determined at the initiation of the programme or project. The design phase, which usually takes place at the initiation stage of change, is important because it is the first sustainability factor from a time point of view. First, for an innovation to guarantee high prospects for sustainability, it should be carefully designed to meet and match the specific/real needs and constraints of the beneficiaries (European Commission, 2006; Young & Hampshire, 2000). It is argued that beneficiaries are more likely to accept an innovation and invest time, resources and effort if they believe that it will clearly benefit them in one way or the other (European Commission, 2006; Dickerson, 2001). For instance, 'teachers have to believe that what they are doing in the classroom has merit before they are likely to give wholehearted support,' also known as 'perceived value' (Owston, 2006, p. 17).

In addition, an innovation must be designed in such a way that it is realistic, clear, simple and easy to implement. If not, the prospects of sustainability can be slim from the outset. For example, an innovation that is unrealistic, unclear, complex, overwhelming and demanding on those implementing it (e.g. if teachers have to work on too many fronts) can prove difficult to sustain (Young & Hampshire, 2000; European Commission, 2006; Hargreaves, 2002).

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In addition, an innovation whose design is not compatible with and supportive of a wider policy environment can be a barrier to sustainability. This is because such an innovation can lead to low-level political and institutional support both during implementation and beyond. In order to enhance sustainability, it is therefore advisable that the policy framework is carefully analysed during the design process of an innovation and that policy factors are taken into account (Young & Hampshire, 2000).

b. Involvement of consortium members

The involvement of all the consortium members is a critical sustainability factor which implies that the partners (donors and recipients) share common interests in the project and respect one another's values. If this involvement is not present, it can sometimes lead to a lack of national support. Additionally, shared involvement favours efficient management and the capacity to find alternative resources and support (European Commission, 2006).

Critics of donor aid have strongly argued that because some donors have imposed innovations on recipient countries (donor-led or top-down innovations), many of them have been counter-productive, failed to produce sustainable benefits, lacked ownership and commitment and ended up as 'white elephants' once donor aid ceases (Manning, 2012; Kairu, 2013; Young & Hampshire, 2000).

c. Active participation of the audience (direct target groups)

In order for an innovation to be successfully sustained, the people who are directly concerned with the innovation (those that stand to benefit) must be actively involved. Their involvement must be seen during both the initiation and implementation stages for the purpose of lobbying and building a sense of ownership, interest, consensus, commitment and support, as well as recruiting the new participants required to carry on the innovation once donor funding comes to an end (Young & Hampshire, 2000; European Commission, 2006; Hargreaves, 2002; Dickerson, 2001; Fullan, 1991).

It is important to mention that in a school setting, teachers are at the centre of any innovation because they are in charge of putting the innovation into practice. Therefore, any innovation

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that undermines their active involvement in the design and the implementation process should not be expected to be sustained (Han & Weiss, 2005; European Commission, 2006).

Innovations that are expected to result in sustainable benefits should also build on local demand and initiatives. This can only be achieved when the direct beneficiaries and local personnel play a core role in the identification and design process of the innovation. For this to be achieved, emphasis must be placed on investing adequate time and resources in order for key stakeholders to participate meaningfully. An 'up front' time for design is discouraged and emphasis is placed on an extended inception phase which allows for a 'progressive design' process during implementation (Young & Hampshire, 2000, p. 4; European Commission, 2006; Flintoff, 2007).

d. Effective management and leadership

For an innovation to have high prospects of sustainability there is a need for specific people to effectively manage and lead the innovation. This critical group of people, also referred to as 'innovation champions' or 'cadres of change', are expected to ensure ongoing delivery of innovation activities at all levels of the system (school, district, province and national levels). These 'champions' must be executive decision makers (influential); well informed and motivated individuals with the capacity to shape organisational action; have sufficient contact with and commitment to the implementation of the innovation; and understand what is needed to ensure sustainability (Swerissen, 2007; Stofile, 2008; Adelman & Taylor, 2003; European Commission, 2006).

Effective management and leadership also entail the ability to anticipate sustainability and address potential threats to sustainability in good time (European Commission, 2006).

e. Capacity for securing adequate resources for continuation

In order to ensure sustainability, appropriate resources (financial, human and material) expected to sustain an innovation should be available. Simply put, the programme or project must be self-sustainable or manage on its own after donor support comes to an end. Cost estimates for activities and assets that need to be maintained or replaced should be made

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known beforehand and potential sources of income after donor funding ceases identified and secured.

In short, a rigorous, clear and explicit sustainability strategy must be developed alongside the formulation of an innovation. This means that the strategy must be developed right at the start of the programme or project. The strategy should be prepared in a participatory manner with key stakeholders in order to ensure ownership and commitment. Additionally, the sustainability strategy should be evaluated on a regular basis for the purposes of drawing lessons and refining it (Young & Hampshire, 2000; Loh et al., 2013).

f. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is at the heart of any programme or project that is likely to be sustained. This process can provide valuable diagnostic information essential to check whether or not the programme or project activities have been properly institutionalised and there is a continued flow of benefits (Dickerson, 2001). Ongoing evaluation is particularly important where programmes or projects are expected to be scaled up, for instance at national level. The data gathered about the innovation processes and outcomes, as well as stakeholders' concerns, can inform project or programme planning that support sustainability (Loh et al., 2013; Swerissen, 2007; Lockwood et al., 2003).

3.2.2 Contextual-level factors

Contextual-level factors are elements external to the innovation that interact with the innovation and eventually affect its sustainability. These factors are categorised into two broad groups: institutional-level factors, also called institutional support factors, and national-level factors, also referred to as national support factors (Owston, 2006; European Commission, 2006).

a. Institutional support

Institutional support factors, also referred to as internal factors, as mentioned earlier, are issues within an institution (school) that can affect the sustainability of innovations. The literature review identified the following factors as key for sustaining an innovation at an institutional level (Saito et al., 2012; Diamond, 2006; European Commission, 2006).

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i. Staff commitment and interest

One crucial factor among the internal factors is interest in and commitment to change. An innovation has better chances of sustainability if the entire staff of an institution (head teacher and teachers) is genuinely committed to and interested in the innovation (Saito et al., 2012; Diamond, 2006; European Commission, 2006; Datnow, 2005; Young & Hampshire, 2000). Simply put, 'commitment is necessary, enthusiasm is not sufficient' if an innovation has to be sustained (European Commission, 2006, p. 12).

ii. Effective leadership

Effective leadership is singled out as being at the heart of any innovation that has been successfully sustained. The head of the school or an education institution is expected to devote time supervising, monitoring, coaching, marshalling resources (financial, material including time), uniting the entire staff, and collaborating and facilitating the implementation and sustainability of the innovation. The school leadership is also expected to be 'heroic' – able to resist the many forces that may inhibit the sustainability of an innovation by staying on course (Drysdale et al., 2009; Dickerson, 2001; Fullan, 2005; Guhn, 2008; Saito et al., 2012; Sindelar et al., 2006).

Diamond (2006) argues that the leader of a school or education institution must understand that he or she cannot do everything alone. Rather, he or she must identify other leaders to build a team to lead the institutionalisation of the innovation. These individuals can include teachers, parents and other stakeholders within the community (Dickerson, 2001).

iii. Nurturing a culture that supports change

Establishing a culture that nurtures an innovation is also important if sustainability has to be realised. Education institutions normally resist change because their operations depend on a stable and shared understanding (culture). To suggest that an education institution should change or integrate an innovation implies that old customs, traditions, habits, expectations and images are immediately modified or abandoned in order to acquire new ones. This usually then becomes an impracticable and challenging situation. Therefore steps must be taken to build an appropriate culture that supports the continued implementation of change. It is important to note that school leadership can play a very important role in creating and maintaining a school

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culture that supports and nurtures the institutionalisation of an innovation (Fullan, 1993; Levin, 2001; Greenlee & Bruner, 2004; Sindelar et al., 2006; Diamond, 2006; Hargreaves, 2002).

iv. Staff Turnover

Staff turnover is another factor many scholars have identified as a threat to sustainability. Staff turnover can adversely frustrate the sustainability of an innovation especially when key individuals that helped in creating and establishing an innovation 'fade away' through retirement, resignation, death or promotion, to mention but a few. (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Datnow, 2005; Giles & Hargreaves 2006; Saito et al., 2012; Taylor, 2006; Sinderlar et al., 2006).

v. Sustained professional development

Staff development and training is identified as being a critical factor in sustaining an innovation. Dickerson (2001) emphasises that everyone who is affected by the implementation of an innovation needs to be included in the staff development plan and to receive ongoing training to ensure sustainability. Ongoing capacity building activities can actually help to address a number of other factors that can threaten sustainability. For instance, capacity building activities can be an ideal strategy to re-culture the school, as well as teachers' attitudes and beliefs that may challenge the innovation. Dickerson (2001) particularly isolates the involvement of beneficiaries at school level through awareness activities (leaflets, radio programme etc) and various capacity building activities as an effective strategy for changing cultures that can affect sustainability.

In addition, ongoing staff development and training is key to addressing the negative effects that accompany staff turnover. It is advisable that capacity building activities should start right at the beginning of the innovation and continue throughout the programme or project and allow for repetition in order to accommodate those that join the system. Emphasis is also placed on having a well-designed professional development strategy to equip staff with the knowledge base they need for effectively implementing an innovation (Fullan, 1993; Levin, 2001; Greenlee & Bruner, 2004; Sindelar et al., 2006; Diamond, 2006; Hargreaves, 2002; Florian, 2000; Ertesvåg et al., 2010; Moffett, 2000; Yonezawa & Stringfield, 2000).

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vi. Resources for continued implementation

Inadequate provision of resources can adversely affect the sustainability of an innovation. This is because resources are usually in abundant supply during the initiation and implementation phase but problematic during the sustainability phase (Dickerson, 2001; Hargreaves, 2002). In fact, the failure to plan for resources is often a serious predicament for many innovations. Evidence shows that several innovations are often discontinued or drastically reduced and change their original activities when resources are reduced or discontinued (Swerissen, 2007). Other than the security of finances, it is important that institutions have satisfactory levels of human and material resources for the continued implementation of innovation activities (AIM, 2003; Berends, Kirby, Naftel, & McKelvey, 2001; Evans, Baugh, Sheffer, Martin, & Scarentino, 2004; Dickerson, 2001; Datnow, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink 2003; Saito et al., 2012; Taylor 2006). In a school set up, 'teachers need the best possible instructional tools' if sustainability of an innovation is to be attained (Diamond, 2006, p. 3).

b. National level support or socio-economic and political factors

It is argued that an innovation can never operate in isolation. This is because every innovation is implemented within a wider socio-economic and political environment. This means that the factors in the broader environment can affect the sustainability of innovations. For example, an innovation introduced in the education system that does not receive political backing from the government or official approval (accreditation) from the Ministry of Education is likely to be unsustainable because it may not receive the necessary support and resources for sustainability (European Commission, 2006; Berends et al., 2001; Datnow, 2005; Florian, 2000).

In the same way, the sustainability of innovations can be difficult to achieve in an unstable political environment. For instance, civil war or unrest can frustrate sustainability (European Commission, 2006). Additionally, natural disasters or external economic shocks, such as the collapse of market confidence in the region, can make sustainability almost impossible. The overall level of development of any particular country, region or district; changes in government policy and leadership; lack of direction within the executive; and a stalled legislative programme can also have an adverse impact on prospects for sustainability (Datnow, 2005; Sindelar et al., 2006; Young & Hampshire, 2000; European Commission,

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2006). To enhance sustainability, emphasis also needs to be placed on protecting the innovation from competing or contradictory practices and reforms (Datnow, 2005; Evans et al., 2004; Miles, 1986).

In terms of the socio-economic support factor, it is argued that ‘unless the “local” economy provides a secure base for meeting future operation and maintenance costs, no amount of good intentions or “documented agreements” with donors will make these resources available’ (Young & Hampshire, 2000, p. 9). It is therefore recommended that innovations should not be designed with excessive amounts of equipment or types of equipment or deliver benefits that are beyond the financial capacity of the stakeholders to operate and maintain. It is for this reason that donor funding policies that have often focused on new capital investments and excluded supporting operation and maintenance budgets have been criticised. This is because the inability to support operation and maintenance costs can have adverse effects on sustainability in economies undergoing severe internal budget deficit problems (Young & Hampshire, 2000; Hofisi & Chizimba, 2013). In fact, scholars such as Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone (1998, p. 103) have argued that ‘programs in poor, disadvantaged communities may require an on-going commitment of resources from external agencies in order to be viable in the long run’.

3.2.3 Project mentality factor

Project mentality is another factor that can influence prospects for sustainability. Project mentality is described as a well-known yet unexplored and highly ignored phenomenon. It is said to pose a great challenge to governments and donor agencies when it comes to effectively sustaining and managing donor-supported innovations. Project mentality is also said to be a cross cutting issue in the public sector that is observed during the implementation of various donor-funded projects. It is defined as the common tendency for those involved in the project to think about an innovation simply as a project whose work will end when the grant runs out. Sustaining innovations require ‘escaping’ this kind of mentality (Dwight 2004; Israr, 2005).

In situations where this mentality manifests itself, comments such as ‘It will end when the grant runs out’ or ‘I’ve seen so many reforms come and go; this too shall pass’ are made

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(Dwight, 2004, p. 1; Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Israr, 2005). Project mentality is further described as a phenomenon that exhibits itself as a non-tangible group of variables characterised by feelings, attitudes and behaviours of alienation and indifference towards any donor-funded initiative. These negative attitudes and behaviours usually arise in situations where individuals tasked to manage the implementation of a project or programme exhibit gratuitous expectations for personal gain (e.g. through low quality procurements and compromised training programmes). Other personnel that are not involved end up feeling indifferent, unconcerned and stereotyped towards the project activities. They consider the project or programme to be a useless and non-productive exercise arising from the selfish behaviour of those running the project. In the long run, ownership for the project within the public sector is severely jeopardised by the stakeholders, resulting in less effective and unsustainable efforts (Dwight, 2004, p. 1; Israr (2005).

An important question to pose is 'Why should we address project mentality?' The literature indicates that 'genuine' commitment and ownership on the part of stakeholders towards an innovation is a critical factor in promoting sustainability (Young & Hampshire, 2000; Lockwood et al., 2003; European Commission, 2006; Dickerson, 2001). In the light of what has been discussed, it is therefore important to address project mentality because it can erode the ownership and commitment required to sustain innovations.

The concept of project mentality is equally 'unexplored' in the literature related to the Zambian context. However, it is a topic that is observed in the literature surrounding studies on the implementation of donor-funded innovations. For example, in a study conducted by Kapambwe (2006) to find out what factors influenced the successful implementation of an innovation known as the Continuous Assessment (CA) Programme, which was initially funded by USAID, a quarter of the interviewees identified the concept of project mentality – the perception of the programme as a mere project whose activities were going to cease once donor funds were withdrawn – as one of the factors that was likely to impede the sustainability of the programme. What is apparent from the literature is that this concept has not been comprehensively examined. Accordingly, this is a gap the current study has endeavoured to address.

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An important point to note is that while the project mentality factor could be seen as part of the project-level factors vis-à-vis staff/stakeholder commitment and interest, in this study the factor was isolated. The separation was deliberate because the intention was to give the project mentality factor prominence. Singling this factor out was deemed to be an important dimension of this study because the goal was to explore the factor in detail, which according to Israr (2005, p. 457) is a 'highly ignored', 'critical yet an unexplored and unrealised' factor in the sustainability of donor-funded initiatives in the public sector in developing countries.

3.3 CONCLUSION

In summary, the conceptual framework that guided the current research identified three key factors associated with the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector as follows: 1) project-level factors; 2) contextual-level factors (national-level and institutional-level factors) and 3) project mentality. Figure 3.1 gives a representation of the key factors associated with the sustainability of donor-supported educational innovations. Each factor is interconnected and essential to sustaining donor supported innovations.

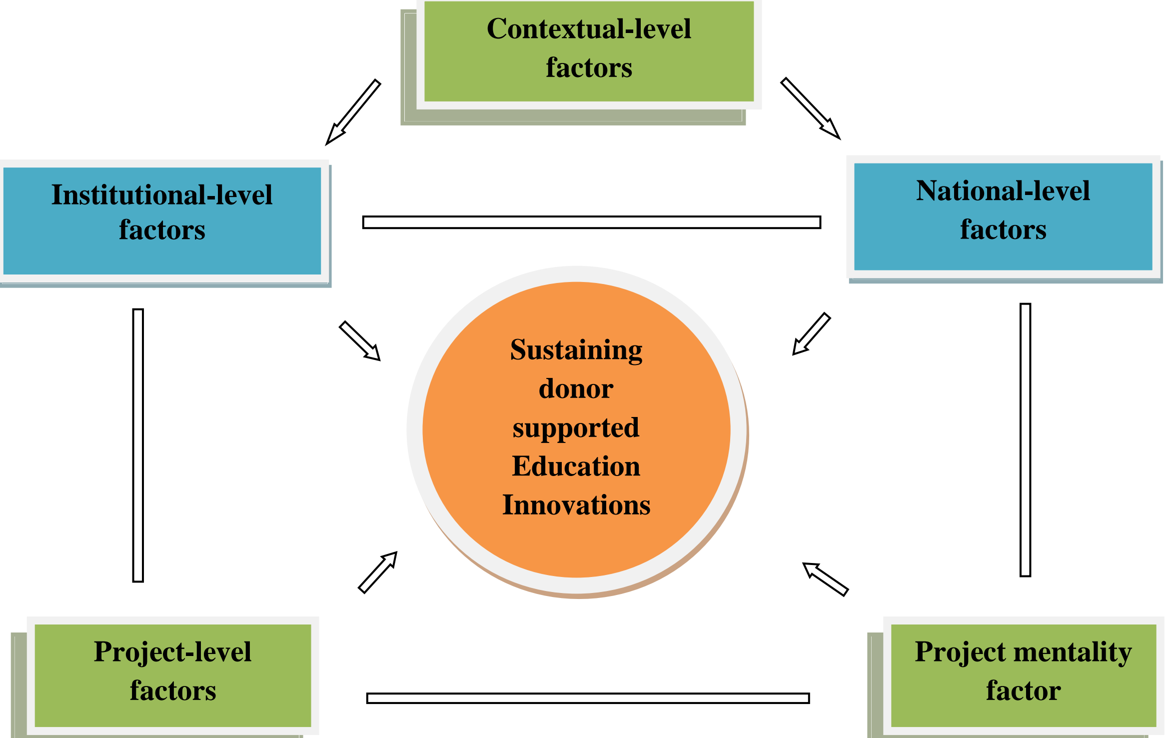

Figure 3.1: The conceptual framework for the study

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CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Investigating sustainability through observations, documents and the stakeholders' eyes

4.1 OVERVIEW

In this chapter, I will outline the research methodology and provide substantiated reasons for all the choices made. In particular, the research context, research design, sample and sampling procedures, data collection methods and procedures, including the analysis of data is discussed. In the last part of the chapter, a discussion on the reliability and validity (trustworthiness) of the study, its limitations and related ethical considerations is presented.

4.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

The research was conducted in Lusaka district, the capital city of Zambia. The city is located in Lusaka Province, one of the ten provinces of the country. Lusaka Province has six districts that include Chongwe, Kafue, Luangwa, Chilanga, Chirundu and Lusaka itself. Being the capital city, Lusaka is urbanised and highly populated by people from across the country that converge to seek socio-economic opportunities. Consequently, the city of Lusaka is diverse in terms of its socio-economic, cultural and political nature. It is also the chief administrative, financial and commercial centre. Lusaka also houses the Ministry of Education national headquarters where the policy makers are found.

In terms of education, it has a variety of school types that include government (public), private, grant-aided and community schools. This study was undertaken in government or public schools in Lusaka that have been offering free education from Grades 1 to 7 following the introduction of the Free Primary Education policy in February 2002. Free primary education was introduced to ensure that every child in Zambia was guaranteed access to primary education and it entailed the abolition of user fees in all government schools. In order to compensate schools for the loss of income obtained through user fees, the Ministry of Education (MoE) devised a grant scheme. Through the scheme, each school has been receiving a grant of approximately USD 1,900 per year. These grants are supposed to be disbursed in three instalments (Mwansa, Kaba, Zulu, Kalokoni, & Nyirongo, 2004).

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For many schools, the grants have been insufficient to meet the costs of teaching and learning materials and other operational costs. In addition, the disbursements of the grants have been erratic (Duncan, Macmillan & Simutanyi, 2003). In order to cope, several schools have resorted to raising Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) fees at the upper basic school level (Grades 8 and 9). They have also engaged in fundraising ventures such as gardening, raising poultry and selling various goods (Meki, 2005; Mwansa et al., 2004).

Cinyanja is the official language used in Lusaka district. However, being the capital city, it is populated by people that come from various provinces; therefore, the city's classrooms consist of learners from a variety of linguistic backgrounds (Tambulukani & Bus, 2012).

The diversity that Lusaka displays is one of the justifications for choosing it as a research setting. However, the basic rationale behind the selection of Lusaka is that all potential participants of the study (teachers, head teachers, Ministry of Education officials and donors) were readily available and easily accessible in the city. I also wish to mention that Lusaka was convenient for me because I live and work in Lusaka. The selection of Lusaka district was therefore arrived at as a combination of site-rich information and convenience, as well as the anticipation that I would undertake the research successfully within the confines of the time and resources at my disposal.

4.3 IN SEARCH OF A RESEARCH DESIGN

I must begin by stating that for the past ten years, I have been developing my skills as an educationist and a researcher. Working for the Examinations Council of Zambia, under the Research and Test Development Department mandated to conduct research in matters that relate to education, I have been part of various teams that have conducted small and large-scale studies, some at national level. These research studies have often been quantitative in nature. Consequently, I have been exposed to mainly quantitative research skills and knowledge.

I 'fell in love' with the quantitative research approach, particularly because most of my superiors had given me the impression that quantitative research was 'more scientific' than the qualitative paradigm. Through my casual and professional interactions with my superiors, I

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also came to learn that they viewed qualitative research as an effortless replacement for a 'statistical' approach. Perhaps the most important reason is that public institutions like the one I work for prefer quantitative studies because they provide 'hard data' (information such as numbers or facts that can be proved) to justify funding or certain decisions (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2015). When I enrolled for my PhD at the University of Pretoria in 2010, I therefore set my mind on conducting a 'scientific PhD study'; that is, a quantitative study.

After extensive consultation and reading, I was clear regarding my research problem –I wanted to appreciate, describe and theorise the sustainability of education innovations in Zambia after the departure of donor support, with particular reference to a literacy programme that was implemented in primary schools known as the Primary Reading Programme. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the issue at hand, I endeavoured to find answers to the following questions:

- What was the nature of support provided by donors for the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) during the seven-year partnership with Zambia?
- What changes were observed in schools following the introduction of the PRP in the following areas?
    - ✓ The medium of instruction for literacy
    - ✓ Teaching/learning and related materials
    - ✓ Methodology to teach literacy
    - ✓ Capacity building
    - ✓ Assessment practices
    - ✓ Monitoring
    - ✓ Record keeping
    - ✓ Achievement levels in literacy among learners
    - ✓ Morale among various stakeholders regarding the programme.
- What aspects of the PRP, if any, were sustained after the departure of donor support under DFID?

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- Why were some aspects of the PRP, if any, sustained after the departure of donor support?
- What aspects of the PRP, if any, were not sustained after the departure of donor support?
- Why were some aspects of the PRP, if any, not sustained after the departure of donor support?
- What lessons can be drawn from the case of the PRP to explain the possible reasons why donor-supported innovations in the education sector in Zambia and related contexts may fail to achieve sustainability?

Through a review of literature, I realised that my topic of interest – sustainability – is a complex phenomenon; one that many scholars have sought to understand (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Dickerson, 2001; Dwight, 2004; Saito et al., 2012; Stirman et al., 2012; Mason, 2008).

The complexity of the topic meant that I was to explore the issue at hand without any clear variable or theory. The intention was not to generalise my findings but to gain profound understanding. I therefore took it that the best way to understand the issue was to listen to and read the 'stories' of those involved in sustaining education related innovations. For this reason, I sought a design that would allow me to actively participate in what I was going to study. Since the study involved investigating the case of a literacy programme, I also saw the need to undertake an exploration of relevant literature that would provide me with information such as the historical background of the programme and its objectives.

Based on the assumptions above, I discovered that a qualitative approach would be the most apt design in facilitating my understanding of what it is that influences the sustainability of donor-supported innovations after the withdrawal of donor support. I particularly selected a qualitative interpretative case study research approach to answer my research questions. The detailed reasons for the selected approach are outlined in the section that follows.

I wish to acknowledge that at the end of this task, I learnt two major lessons. The first one was that it is the concern which needs to be addressed that mainly influences whether one will

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employ a qualitative or a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2003). The second major lesson learnt was that the quantitative and qualitative approaches serve different purposes. One is not superior to the other (Maree, 2012).

4.3.1 Why a qualitative approach?

I selected a qualitative approach because of the nature of my research, which was aimed at describing and understanding human behaviour rather than providing explanation and prediction (Babbie, 2001). I also chose the qualitative approach because my topic of interest needed 'exploring and discovering'. A qualitative approach is usually applied when there is uncertainty about the dimensions and characteristics of the problem being investigated (Domegan & Fleming, 2007, p. 24).

In addition, a qualitative approach is employed when it is difficult to identify variables and theories are not available to explain the behaviour of the population under investigation (Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2003). I therefore selected a qualitative approach because I wanted to develop a theory out of the data I would collect in order to assist in understanding the factors that may influence the sustainability of innovations initially supported by donors.

I also decided to employ a qualitative approach because I wanted to collect data in a natural setting. My intention was to go out into the field and gather data in real-world situations. I wanted to collect data that would unfold naturally without preset conditions. It was therefore important for me to select an approach that would allow me to play the role of an active learner who would tell the story from the participants' point of view rather than as an 'expert' who passed judgement on the participants. A qualitative approach was therefore employed because my aim was to understand a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words and reporting the detailed views of informants (Creswell, 1994, 2003; Patton, 2001, p. 39; Merriam, 1998).

4.3.2 Why an interpretive paradigm?

I wanted to understand sustainability by interpreting other people's interpretations. Ontologically and epistemologically, I was compelled to go by the principles of interpretivism

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which view reality and knowledge as a creation of subjective social interaction. In interpretivism, the researcher attempts to make sense of the world as it is from the subjective experiences of individuals (Maree, 2012; Golafshani, 2003). Interpretivists also presuppose that there is no objective knowledge that is free from the subjective experiences of individuals (thinking or reasoning of humans), because knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretation (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Reeves & Hedberg, 2003).

In a qualitative interpretive study, the meaning the researcher gives begins with the point of view of the people being studied. The purpose is to understand and interpret human behaviour rather than to predict causes and effects and generalise findings. The researcher interprets data by finding out how the subjects being studied see or interpret the world, how they define the situation, or what it means for them (Neuman, 2000; Carson, Gilmore, Perry, & Gronhaug, 2001). In this case, as opposed to the natural sciences where a researcher tries to understand and theorise the world using a 'one-way' approach, the researcher in the social sciences tries to engage in what Giddens (1984) refers to as double hermeneutics – a two-way relationship which involves the researcher interpreting the interpretation of the research subjects.

4.3.3 Why a case study?

A case study is defined as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context', especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, 'and in which multiple sources of evidence are used' (Yin, 1984, p. 23; Yin, 2009, p. 18). In view of this definition, I found a case study appropriate for my research because it concentrates on the analysis of a phenomenon for which the researcher would like to gain insights or in-depth understanding. In this instance, I endeavoured to develop a profound understanding of the phenomenon of sustainability as it pertains to innovations in the education system which are initially driven by donor support. Further, I settled for a case study because my intention was to use a variety of data sources (interviews, observations and document analysis) in order to explore the concept of sustainability through more than one lens (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

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A case study also allows a multi-perspective analysis, where ideas from different participants are jointly examined in order to increase understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). In this instance, the views of the teachers and head teachers, as well as officials from the Ministry of Education and donor agencies, were collated in order to develop a range of perspectives about the sustainability of donor-supported innovations, with the ultimate intention of increasing the possibilities of understanding the concept of sustainability vis-à-vis innovations that are initially driven by donor support.

In addition, I selected a case study because it allows a researcher to involve a limited sample or number of unit(s) of analysis that are intensively studied. The intention of my study was not to generalise my findings (as is the case of quantitative research designs) but to understand 'the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity' (Maree, 2012, pp. 193, 300). In a case study, the generalisation (transferability) of the findings is made to theory and not to populations. My research was therefore aimed at generating a theory out of the research findings (Yin, 1994).

The unit of analysis is the major entity that is analysed and can consist of individuals, groups, organisations, processes or a phenomenon (Yin, 1993, 1994). According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 25) the case is, 'in effect, your unit of analysis'. In this instance, the case or unit of analysis was the programme – the PRP.

Another reason for selecting a case study approach was the argument advanced by McMillan and Schumacher (2001) that, because a case study promotes a better understanding of a practice or an issue, it facilitates and contributes to informed decision-making, policy formulation, implementation and modifications. In this regard, the aim of my study was to understand the concept of sustainability in order to inform policy and practice. Yin (2003) adds that a case study design should be considered when the focus of the research is to answer the 'why' questions. By using the case of the PRP, I was able to answer some of the questions posed in the literature in relation to why it is difficult to achieve sustainability in innovations that are initially driven by donor support.

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4.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

This study used four sampling techniques that included simple random, purposive and snowball sampling, as well as the convenience sampling of Lusaka Province that was mentioned earlier.

4.5.1 Simple random sampling

In the first stage of sampling, simple random sampling was employed to select the eight (8) primary schools. The population from which the sample was drawn consisted of all the primary schools in Lusaka district run by the government. These were the eight schools from which the teachers and head teachers who participated in the study were drawn. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006, p. 79), simple random sampling is a procedure where all the individuals in the target population have an equal and independent chance of being chosen to form the sample.

Initially, the sampled schools were supposed to be divided into what I called PRP pilot and non-pilot schools. The first four schools were supposed to consist of 'pilot' schools that had received the PRP interventions during the seven years in which the programme had been under the support of donors (DFID). The second set of schools was supposed to comprise schools where PRP was expected to be scaled up under the support of the Zambian government following the end of DFID funding. The reason for dividing the sample into 'pilot' and 'non-pilot' schools was to find out what obtained in both cases before and after the withdrawal of donor support.

During data collection, I came to learn that there were no schools I could refer to as pilot schools because the PRP only had one pilot exercise. Details of this are documented in the next chapter which outlines the contextual history of the PRP. However, in summary, the PRP started as a pilot for Grade 1 in 1998 in Northern Province with Breakthrough to Literacy, a course for learning to read and write in a familiar language developed by a South African NGO. The pilot involved 25 schools, 50 teachers and 2000 learners under the support of Ireland Aid. In 1999, the pilot was evaluated and described as 'a great success'. A decision was subsequently passed to modify the course into what was called the PRP, which was expected to

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run from Grades 1 to 7. Thereafter, the PRP was rolled out countrywide in phases (Sampa, 2005). Particulars of the roll-out process are also outlined in the next chapter.

With this in mind, I therefore randomly sampled the eight schools for the study from the entire population without dividing them into pilot and non-pilot schools. The simple random sampling process was conducted as follows: First, I obtained a copy of the School Annual Census data for the year 2011, which according to the Ministry was the latest published document that contained information on the schools in Zambia. After this, using Microsoft Office Excel, I extracted, typed and numbered all the public primary schools in Lusaka district where the PRP was expected to be implemented. I used the standard Excel RAND function to generate random numbers. The simple random sample of schools consisted of the schools on the list that corresponded to the numbers that were generated in Excel. The sampled schools comprised Grades 1 to 9, with the number of streams for Grade 1 classes varying between one and three. Average enrolment was 55 learners per class. It is interesting and alarming to note that in one school there were 102 learners in one Grade 1 class.

4.5.2 Purposeful sampling

Purposeful sampling was used to draw the teachers and head teachers from the eight randomly selected schools in the study. The same sampling procedure was also used to select participants from donor agencies and the Ministry of Education. This type of sampling allows researchers to use their judgement in selecting cases that are expected to provide the most reliable and creditable information (Briggs et al., 2012; Babbie, 2011; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2012). This sampling procedure was appropriate because the aim of my study was to select cases that were expected to provide deep and relevant information to enable me to gain an understanding of the topic under investigation.

4.5.2.1 Teachers

Initially, I planned to exclusively involve teachers who had taught Grade 1 learners from the time PRP was under the support of donors (2000) up to the period of the study. I decided on Grade 1 classes because it was at this level that learners took the first course of the PRP (also known as the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL)). The NBTL was the foundation course

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on which all the other PRP courses were built. In addition, it was in Grade 1 that learners were supposed to acquire literacy in a local language. In Grade 2, learners were expected to transfer and use the local language literacy skills acquired in Grade 1 for the acquisition of literacy skills in English.

In the actual data collection process, it proved difficult to solely involve Grade 1 teachers who had taught in the same school from the year 2000 to the period of the study. This was because many years had elapsed since the programme was introduced in schools and, as a result, a number of teachers who had been involved in the PRP and had taught Grade 1 classes had been transferred or promoted or had resigned or died. I also came to learn that of the teachers that had been in the schools since the year 2000, only a few were still teaching Grade 1. Most of them had 'graduated' to teaching higher grades.

As is typical of a qualitative approach that allows a researcher to be flexible in the field, as the study unfolded I began to be aware of the realities on the ground; these prompted me to make changes and adaptations to the research process. One of the major changes I made was in the selection of the Grade 1 teachers that took part in the study. I subsequently decided to go ahead with data collection following a new strategy in which I maintained my initial plan of involving teachers that had taught Grade 1 classes in the schools since 2000 to the date of data collection. In schools where this was not feasible, however, I selected any long-serving Grade 1 teacher for interviewing and observing his/her literacy lesson. In addition, I interviewed a teacher who was present at the time the PRP was introduced in the school. Preference was given to teachers who taught Grade 1 classes or those that had been directly involved in the implementation of the PRP. This strategy allowed me to supplement the information I obtained from teachers who were not around at the time the PRP was introduced in the schools.

Following the stated criteria, in total 14 teachers successfully took part in the study. Of the 14 teachers, only two had taught Grade 1 since the year 2000 in the same school. The remaining 12 teachers were either teaching Grade 1 classes at the time of the study or had taught them in the past. Other teachers who were included in the study were selected on the basis of the fact that they were actively involved in the PRP activities when it was under donor support.

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4.5.2.2 Head teachers

The head teachers in all the eight randomly selected schools were also involved in the study by design. The data gathered from the head teachers was expected to corroborate the data collected from the teachers during the interviews and the classroom observations.

The overall experience of the head teachers who participated in the study ranged from one to fifteen years, with most having headed some other schools before the schools they were currently overseeing. A number of them had taught for several years before becoming head teachers. A few of the head teachers indicated that they had taught at a secondary school before they were appointed to head a primary school.

4.5.2.3 Education officials

Ministry of Education officials that were directly involved in the implementation of the PRP at national, provincial and district levels were targeted to participate in the study. At national level, officers in three directorates were involved in the study, including the Directorate of Curriculum and Standards, the Directorate of Planning and the Directorate of Teacher Education. According to available documentation, these Directorates played a vital role in implementing the PRP during and after the support of DFID (MoE, 2005).

In order to ensure the involvement of Ministry of Education officials who could provide the most consistent and credible information at national level, I wrote a formal letter to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education (see Appendix 3) requesting interviews with Ministry officials who were actively involved in the implementation of the PRP in each Directorate. Therefore, each Directorate identified an official that had the potential to provide me with the data required for the study. In total five Ministry of Education officials took part in the study.

4.5.2.4 Officials from donor agencies

Participants from donor agencies were selected from the major donor organisations involved in supporting educational programmes in Zambia. In particular, participants were drawn from agencies that were directly or indirectly involved in supporting the PRP and other educational programmes aimed at promoting literacy in Zambia. This was because the aim of the study was

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to examine the sustainability of educational programmes in Zambia with reference to the case of a specific literacy programme. Six donor representatives took part in the study, the majority of whom were directly or indirectly involved in the activities of the PRP. All the officials were based in Zambia although one of them worked both within Zambia and outside the country owing to the nature of their job.

4.5.3 Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling, also known as chain referral sampling, is a technique that builds or yields a sample through referrals made among people that share, or know others who possess, some characteristics that are of interest to the researcher (Koerber & McMichael, 2008). Initially, I did not plan to use the snowball sampling; however, on a number of occasions interviewees proposed the names of potential participants they thought would provide data relevant to my study. Faced with the need to obtain useful data for my study, I consequently employed the snowballing technique.

This approach proved useful because through it I was able to interview two additional participants who provided useful data for my study. These two participants included a retired official who had participated in the design, implementation and coordination of PRP at national level under the Ministry of Education. The second participant was a teacher who had been involved in training 'Trainers of Trainers' and had been recognised for improving learner performance through the PRP methodologies.

4.5.4 Summary of participants that took part in the study

In total, 35 people took part in the current study, as summarised in the table below. In all the eight schools, except for school 'I', two to three hours of classroom observations were conducted. In total 21 classroom observations were conducted entailing 21 hours. School 'I' is the ninth additional school from which a teacher was sampled using the snowball approach.

Other than the 35 people listed above, it is important to note that the Grade 1 learners that participated in the classroom observations were also participants of the study. This is because the participants in this study were defined as any human subject or person who participated in

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the research and from whom data was obtained through interaction (observations and interviews) (Institutional Review Board for Health Sciences Research, 2008).

Table 4.1: Summary of the study sample

School/ Position	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total No. of participants	Agency/ Position	Ministry of Education	Donor agency
Teacher	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	15	Official – district level	1	-
Head teacher	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	8	Official – provincial level	1	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Official – national level	3	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Retired official	1	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		Senior official	-	6
Total No. of observations	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	N/A	**21**			
Total No. of Participants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**23**	-	**6**	**6**

4.6 DATA COLLECTION

The section that follows provides a detailed description of the tools that were used to gather data for the study.

4.6.1 Overview of data collection methods

I employed three approaches to collect data for my research that included interviews, observations and document analysis. These are the leading sources of data in qualitative designs where emphasis is placed on understanding a given situation or phenomenon by taking a close look at people's words, actions and records (Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 2010; Golafshani, 2003; Myers, 2009; Creswell, 2009; Maree, 2012). Apart from being the three

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major sources of data in qualitative designs, I decided to use these three methods in order to both triangulate the data collected and validate the findings (Patton, 2002). The concept of triangulation is discussed in detail later in this chapter under the section that presents the validity and reliability (trustworthiness) of the research.

4.6.2 Interviews

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to collect data for the current study. This type of interview is the most preferred by the majority of researchers because it is not a 'straitjacket', as questions can be modified and supplementary questions asked to probe and clarify participants' responses. The interview schedule merely reminds the researcher of the major topics or themes that must be covered during the interview. Face-to-face interviews also help to establish a relationship between the participant and the researcher, thereby facilitating cooperation and the production of high response rates (Maree, 2012; Thomas, 2011).

The face-to-face interview technique was therefore appropriate because I was given an opportunity to engage participants in a conversation which encouraged them to relate, in their own terms, all the experiences and attitudes that were relevant to the PRP. In the process, the participants spoke about their perspectives and involvement in the programme. Overall conclusions about the level of sustainability of the programme and factors that influenced sustainability were drawn from these various discussions (Cohen et al., 2007).

Stakeholders that were interviewed included (a) teachers, (b) head teachers, (c) Ministry of Education officials, and (d) donor representatives. It is important to mention that all the interviews were done at the convenience of the participants. Interviews with teachers were conducted before or after class so that the teaching and learning process in schools was not interrupted.

On average, the interviews took about 45 to 60 minutes (1 hour). The longest interview took about 140 minutes (2 hours and 20 minutes). I must make mention of the fact that, in certain instances, I came across participants who were reluctant to be interviewed. It was also observable that some of the interviewees were hesitant and fearful to reveal their honest opinions because they related some of the questions to their performance as teachers in the

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classroom. I managed such situations by explaining the purpose of the research and assuring the participants of the confidentiality and anonymity of the data. Potential participants who remained resistant to the study were not coerced into participating.

The interview protocols for the various categories of participants differed slightly but the substance was similar. In summary, the first set of questions was intended mainly to create rapport. The questions that followed focused on finding out the following: the participants' understanding of the PRP; why the PRP was introduced; how participants learnt about the PRP; how the PRP was introduced in the schools; the roles they played in the implementation of the programme and their general perceptions of the programme. The second set of questions focused on finding out about the participants' perceptions of the nature and magnitude of the support offered by donors, as well as the changes they observed following the introduction of the PRP.

The next set of questions was meant to find out what happened to the PRP after the termination of donor support. These questions were meant to ascertain the level of sustainability of the PRP by focusing on the factors that could have constrained or facilitated the activities and aspects of the programme that were continued or discontinued. The questions that followed focused on finding out how participants perceived the general sustainability of the PRP and the reasons for their opinions. The last set of questions gave the participants the opportunity to add any other information pertaining to the interview that they felt was important. They were also given a chance to ask any questions they had about me and my study (see Appendices 6-9).

Here are a few examples of the questions that were asked:

Let us talk about the PRP in general:

a) What is your understanding of the Primary Reading Programme (PRP)?
b) Why was the PRP introduced?
c) How did you learn about the PRP? (where, when, how)
d) How was the PRP introduced in your school?
e) What role did you play in the PRP?

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I also wish to mention that interviews that were conducted in 2014 included a few questions pertaining to the implementation of a new literacy programme called the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) which ‘replaced’ the PRP. This set of questions mainly sought to find out the participants’ general views on what they thought could have prompted the Zambian government to change from the PRP to the PLP.

Neuman (2000) cautions that interviews can lead to unreliable and biased data because the researcher can influence the interviewee to give answers he/she wants to hear. In order to avoid this, I ensured that only questions in the interview protocol were asked and probing was only used to clarify or elaborate on matters. The use of interviews as a data collection instrument may also threaten the ‘trustworthiness’ of research where ‘participants may say what they think the researcher wants to hear and paint positive pictures of situations that are not altogether positive’ (Bowen, 2005, p. 218). To avoid such situations, participants were reminded to provide honest responses, emphasising that the data was going to be used for academic purposes only. During data analysis, I was also careful to triangulate the data collected through interviews with other sources. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

4.6.3 Classroom observations

What people do may differ from what they say they do. It was therefore important to collect data through observations in order to corroborate the data collected from other sources. Observation is a technique that involves the systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without communicating or questioning (Briggs et al., 2012; Bryman, 2008; Mashiyi, 2011). Observation provides a reality check and allows a researcher to look afresh at everyday behaviour that otherwise might be taken for granted, expected or go unnoticed (Cohen et al., 2007).

I particularly used the non-participant or complete observation technique where the researcher looks at the situation from a distance. This type of observation is usually guided by a structured protocol which can be a request for a description of events observed or a checklist or a rating scale of particular behaviours or activities that address the question of interest (Maree, 2012).

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I observed literacy lessons for Grade one classes using a classroom observation schedule (see Appendix 10). The schedule or checklist was compiled to guide and standardise what I would look for during the observation. It mainly focused on taking note of the following: Time tabling of literacy lessons; organisation of the classroom; language used in teaching literacy; the methodology used in the teaching and learning process, status of teaching and learning materials; record keeping pertaining to learners' achievement levels in literacy and monitoring activities.

The observations were done in such a way that teachers were observed in their teaching situation. It was therefore possible for me to watch the teacher and learners in action in a natural setting. The learners' books and other relevant documents such as learners' assessment results, timetables and class registers were also scrutinised.

The observation took no longer than an hour during what was known as the literacy hour, a period specifically allocated for literacy lessons. Before the commencement of the observations, I explained the purpose of the study and the observation. I also ensured that I created rapport with the observees. All observees that agreed to be part of the study signed the consent form, while teachers who expressed reservations about being observed even after the purpose of the study had been explained to them and assured of confidentiality were excluded from the study.

The teachers that took part in the observations were also interviewed, with interviews being conducted before and after the observations. The interviews that were conducted before the observations focused mainly on creating rapport with the teachers and getting any information that would enable me to appreciate what was to be observed. In most cases, the teachers used the lesson plan to provide the necessary information. To avoid disturbing the lessons, the interviews took place away from the lessons periods, either before or after teaching hours. After the observations, the same teachers were interviewed using the interview protocol for teachers provided in Appendix 6.

What the teachers said was generally not very different from what was observed. However, there were a few discrepancies. As is typical of the major limitations of the observation

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technique, my presence as a researcher and the recording that went along with the observation, appear to have influenced the teachers to behave differently from their everyday way of doing things. This is in line with Sapsford and Jupp (2006, p. 59), who state that ‘people may consciously or unconsciously change the way they behave and therefore observational accounts of their behaviours may be inaccurate representations of how they behave naturally’. For example from the interviews that were conducted after the observations, a few teachers indicated that they did not adhere strictly to the teaching of literacy in line with the PRP methodology owing to challenges related to the availability of materials and time constraints, to mention just a few. However, interestingly, during the lessons, the same teachers endeavoured as far as possible to stick to the PRP methodology.

Therefore, I have to acknowledge that I found conducting the observations very challenging because I did feel that that my presence and the recording of the lessons had an effect on the teachers. I got the impression, for example, that the teachers were striving to be careful with what they were doing all the time. They also appeared to be well prepared for the observations and seemed to have primed their learners, which, to some extent, I felt compromised the observations. In order to alleviate this, I assured the observees that all the information collected would be used purely for academic purposes. In addition, every teacher who participated in the study was observed at least twice. I used the first day mainly to get acquainted with the teacher and the learners and to collect the first round of data. The subsequent day was used to collect the actual data. Three observations were only conducted when I was not satisfied with what had transpired during the first two days. Despite these challenges, I managed to collect useful data for the study which was later triangulated with the data collected from other sources.

Welman et al. (2012) add another disadvantage of observations, stating that the researcher’s prejudices may affect their observations and consequently the validity of the research. I therefore continually reminded myself of my role as a ‘good researcher’ who must avoid any biases or bringing in my own values and personal interests into the research process. I did this by constantly reflecting on my conduct during the research (Maree, 2012).

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4.6.4 *Document analysis*

The study also undertook an analysis of pertinent documents as a source of data for this research. Document analysis is a qualitative technique used to collect data by analysing written materials that contain information relevant to the topic being examined. Documents are said to be important sources of evidence because they add information to an investigation; provide a historical review of ideas; corroborate evidence gathered from other sources and can be reviewed several times (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Strydom & Delport, 2005; Yin, 1994, p. 23; Maree, 2012).

An exploration of relevant literature such as policy documents, monitoring reports, other related evaluations and any other documentation which had some bearing on the programme was undertaken. The data obtained from the documents provided background information on the PRP, as well as what had happened to the PRP during and after the support of the programme by the donors. The data collected from the documents was used for data triangulation and also assisted me to raise new research questions.

In particular, the following documents were analysed in this study:

- Various reports (evaluation, status) on the PRP written by the donors, the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders.
- Report on the PRP Integration Meeting held at Hotel Intercontinental, Thursday 27 October 2005, Ministry of Education (Exit Strategy)
- The Ministry of Education National Assessment Survey Reports at Grade 5 level (1999 to 2012)
- School monitoring documents
- Learners' assessment records
- Teachers' lesson plans
- The National Literacy Framework
- Educating Our Future – 1996 National Policy Document on Education in Zambia.
- Education Statistical Bulletin published by the Ministry of Education

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4.6.5 Field notes

In the field, I jotted down notes that included all forms of observations/reflections captured during the interviews and the classroom observations. The notes also included informal discussions with teachers, head teachers, education officials and others experts/stakeholders in education. I tried as far as possible to expand the notes after every field trip. The discussions helped me to clarify any grey areas, stimulate new ideas during the data collection and data analysis as well as in the presentation and interpretation of my findings. The notes also included a record of my frustrations, confusion and impressions in the field (Maree, 2012).

4.6.6 My PhD diary

I also kept what I called 'My PhD Diary' which I used to jot down ideas, thoughts and reflections on my research experiences. I would like to mention that the information collected in the diary was not analysed. However, these documented ideas, thoughts and reflections helped me to constantly check whether I was doing the right thing throughout the research process, both ethically and methodologically (Maree, 2012).

4.7 RESEARCH PROCESS OVERVIEW

Without a doubt, one should not expect qualitative data collection to be a hasty process. A qualitative investigation is said to be for researchers who are prepared to spend a lot of time in the field and to engage in the intricate and lengthy process of data analysis. One cannot conduct a few short interviews or observations and expect to meet the goal of qualitative research – to get 'deep' data that will help gain an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Locke et al., 2010).

Conducting my research was therefore a long journey because I wanted to collect extensive data to help me understand what influences the sustainability of innovations in the education sector that are initially propelled by donor support. Consequently, I spent many hours in the field. I had to negotiate access to institutions, reschedule appointments, create rapport and conduct thorough data analysis of volumes of recorded information. Along the way, I encountered many obstacles which I believe 'refined' me as a researcher. In a nutshell, my

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research was conducted in six major phases. These phases were not neatly outlined but executed concurrently.

Phase I

My data collection journey began with a review of the literature. This process led to the development of a conceptual framework that was used to guide my research design and the ultimate development of my research instruments.

Phase II

On 16 January 2013, the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria gave me clearance to go ahead with my research. Following this milestone, I sought permission from the Zambian Ministry of Education, through the Provincial Education Office (PEO), to conduct my research in government (public) schools in Lusaka district. The process of obtaining consent from the PEO was quite lengthy and I only managed to obtain authorisation to conduct research in the schools in March 2013 (see Appendix 2). In order to catch up with what I felt was 'lost time', I used the end of March 2013 to send letters to ten randomly selected schools to obtain authorisation to conduct the research. Two schools were earmarked for the pilot exercise while the remaining eight were set aside for the full-scale data collection exercise.

Phase III

After obtaining consent from the schools in April 2013, I made appointments to conduct a pilot study in the two schools that were assigned for the exercise. From April to May 2013, schools went on recess; therefore, I only piloted my instruments in the second and third week of May 2013. In line with the definition and purpose of piloting instruments, I used this exercise as a smaller version of my study to assist in the preparation of the larger investigation. I piloted the interview schedule with three teachers and one head teacher. I also observed three literacy lessons at the two sampled schools. During the same period, I also interviewed one Ministry of Education officer and a representative from a donor agency in order to pre-test the instruments.

The following information was collected during the pre-test: The period taken to interview a participant; the clarity of the interview questions and the classroom observation points; the

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layout clarity and whether the data obtained was addressing the proposed research objectives. At the end of the exercise, the research tools were revised in line with the information that was collected during the pre-test. In summary, the information gathered through the pilot study was used to refine and validate the research methodology (Thabane et al., 2010; Leon, Davis & Kraemer, 2011). It is worth noting that the pre-test exercise also enabled me to reflect on my interviewing and observation skills. At the end of the exercise, therefore, I had learnt lessons that helped me to improve my data collection skills and process.

A notable lesson I learnt was that conducting a pilot study increases the chances of conducting the actual research effectively. This is because the researcher is accorded the opportunity to resolve some of the possible challenges that may be encountered during the research (Kim, 2011). For example, from the pilot study I learnt the importance of testing the study tools in the field prior to the actual research. For example, through the pilot study, I was able to determine the suitability of my tools. In particular, I had the opportunity to determine which questions were generating the data that was relevant to my research questions and those that were not. Through the process, I was also able to spot any ambiguous questions, repetitions and omissions which I addressed accordingly, after consultation with my supervisor, fellow students and some experts in the field. I also moved around the questions in the interview protocol in order to improve the flow of the questioning.

I also learnt that confirming the availability of the participants before the actual meeting was important to avoid wasting time and other resources. In addition, the pilot study accorded me the opportunity to estimate the amount of time I needed to conduct an interview with the various participants. Further, I was able to approximate the time required to be spent in each school in order to conduct interviews with the teachers and head teachers successfully, as well as observe the Grade 1 literacy lessons. This helped me to plan my data collection in the schools effectively.

I also wish to note that at a personal level, I learnt a number of things such as the need to improve my listening and speaking skills, as well as the importance of establishing rapport and trust with the participants in order to create an atmosphere conducive to conducting the interviews and observations. I also came to the realisation that my probing skills were not

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particularly good. Therefore, I did a lot of reading on how to improve my questioning skills. At the end of the piloting exercise, I came to appreciate scholars such as Dickson-Swift, James Kippen and Liamputtong (2007), who maintain that interviewing is a complex skill that requires a lot of practice. Therefore, I would like to emphasise that the pilot study neither transformed me into a 'perfect interviewer or observer' nor did it make my data collection challenge free. However, the pilot study accorded me the opportunity to pre-empt possible challenges as well as identify areas that needed solutions/improvement.

Phase IV

The actual or full-scale data collection exercise commenced in June 2013 and lasted until November 2014. The collection of data in schools took a relatively long time because, during the exercise, whenever schools went on holiday or learners were writing tests, my research activities had to be suspended. However, I used school holidays to collect data from other participants such as officials from the Ministry of Education and donor agencies. I also used the school holidays to collect and review documents pertinent to the study. The data collection was also prolonged because other than interviewing the teachers and head teachers, I also had to conduct two to three classroom observations in eight schools. This meant that in order to finish my data collection in one school, I had to use not fewer than five working days.

In addition, the data collection exercise was time consuming because I could not easily access some head teachers, donor representatives and Ministry of Education officials. Most of them had busy schedules and, as a result, on a number of occasions interviews had to be re-scheduled. With patience and persistence, however, these participants were all eventually interviewed.

Phase V

My data analysis was an ongoing process and it overlapped with the data collection phase. I conducted preliminary data analysis through a review of the data each time I came back from the field. This exercise was useful when it came to informing subsequent data collection exercises. For example, I was able to pursue issues and aspects that were vague by conducting follow-up interviews or classroom observations (Creswell, 2009; Corbin & Straus, 2008). The

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comprehensive data analysis was undertaken after I had finished most of the data collection during the third quarter of 2014 and lasted until the first quarter of 2015.

Phase VI

I spent the first quarter of 2015 analysing my data. During this period, I spent most of the time reading through the transcriptions and immersing myself in the data in order to identify emerging patterns. The data that was collected from the interviews, document analysis and classroom observations was subsequently analysed and triangulated. The analysed data was then aligned with the research questions, the literature review and the conceptual framework and was later presented as the findings. Conclusions were drawn from the data and then interpreted to make appropriate recommendations in the light of the research questions. In February 2015, following the data analysis, I started writing the chapters to present and discuss the findings. During the same period, I refined the other chapters that were in draft form. My first complete draft thesis was completed in June 2015 and the thesis was finalised in August 2015.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The main objective of qualitative research is to discover patterns which emerge after close observation, careful documentation and thoughtful analysis of the research topic. It is important to mention that what can be revealed by qualitative research is not sweeping generalisations but contextual findings. The identification of themes is one of the most important tasks in qualitative research data analysis. Themes are defined as umbrella constructs that are typically recognised by the researcher before, after and during data collection (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Yin, 2003).

Initially, I had planned to utilise the qualitative data analysis software known as Atlas-ti to analyse and manage my data. After the successful installation of the software, I was able to load three transcriptions. However, along the way, the programme was unable to function properly on my laptop owing to technical problems and efforts to secure the software in Zambia failed. The immediate alternative was to purchase the software online; however, owing

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to limitations in terms of time and finances, I opted to analyse my data manually based on the inductive thematic analysis approach.

Thematic analysis is a data analysis approach that involves the creation and application of 'codes' to data. The data can take the form of an interview transcript, field notes, policy documents, photographs or video footage. This type of data analysis is inductive in nature, considering that it analyses the data without engaging pre-existing themes (Maree, 2012; Patton, 1980; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Inductive analysis entails that 'patterns, themes and categories of analysis come from the data' because they are not imposed before the collection and analysis of data but rather surface from the data itself. In an inductive approach, the themes identified are strongly linked to the data itself since they emerge from it and, as such, this form of thematic analysis bears some similarity to grounded theory. 'A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23). On the other hand, deductive analysis entails that a theory (patterns, themes and categories) is already in place and, based on it, a prediction of its consequences is made. In a deductive analysis, there is a movement from the general, which is the theory, to the specific – the observations (Patton, 1980, p. 306; Maree, 2012).

An inductive thematic analysis is suitable where little or nothing is known about the study phenomenon (Burnard et al., 2008). This type type of data analysis was therefore appropriate for my study because I wanted to 'dig' into the data and find answers in order to understand and explain the factors that influence the sustainability of donor-supported innovations without any preconceived ideas. In a nutshell, my analysis of data involved 'working with data, organising it, breaking it into meaningful units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to tell others' (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 145; Burnard et al., 2008).

It is worth noting that the data analysis and interpretation exercise was an ongoing process interwoven with the data collection phase. As mentioned earlier, I conducted preliminary data analysis and interpretation through a review of the data each time I came back from the field.

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This helped me to check whether I was collecting appropriate data (Silverman, 2005). I must however state that an extensive analysis of data was undertaken after I had finished most of the data collection.

Overall, in conformity to the inductive thematic analysis, my data analysis process involved six major phases that included familiarisation with the data; generation of initial codes; searching for themes among codes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and producing the final report.

The analysis commenced with the transcription of all the interviews word for word. After transcribing about a quarter of the interviews, I realised that it was an enormous task. I therefore brought on board two research assistants, students at the University of Zambia, to help me transcribe the interviews. The two were familiar with transcribing interviews because they also employed interviews to collect data for their masters' research projects.

After the two research assistants had transcribed the interviews, I confirmed the transcriptions by reading them through carefully word for word alongside the recordings. After validating the data, I realised that I had collected a large volume of data which had to be organised and reduced to meaningful information. I therefore came to agree with scholars who state that after the compilation and processing of data, 'the challenge is to reduce the huge amount of data to manageable and understandable texts' (Welman et al., 2012, p. 213). The task can be a tedious experience, especially if an inductive thematic approach is employed.

In the next stage, I immersed myself in the data by reading through the texts line by line and over and over again. This was done in order to familiarise myself with the data and understand it in depth. After reading through the transcriptions several times, I proceeded to the next stage which involved the generation of initial codes. I sorted and collapsed data for a few transcriptions by generating a list of all the possible topics I had identified in the data. Similar topics were grouped together to form new broader topics and then each topic was assigned an abbreviated code. I later went back to the remaining transcriptions to assign codes to the data that corresponded with the already formulated codes, with any new topics that emerged being assigned new codes.

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The next stage involved searching for themes among codes and this was achieved by assigning the most descriptive wording I could come up with to my topics and turning them into themes. The next phase involved a review of the themes to check if they made sense and accounted for all the coded extracts and the entire data. I would like to mention that on several occasions I reviewed the data to determine the emergence of any overlaps, ambiguities and similarities. The pattern characteristics that were searched in the data also included frequency (they happened often or seldom); sequence (they happened in a certain order); correspondence (they happened in relation to other activities or events); and causation (one appeared to cause another) (Saldana, 2009, p. 6).

I also reorganised the data to form propositions that summarised the salient themes and patterns. I have to admit that this was a tiresome process. The seond last stage involved defining and naming each theme in order to have a comprehensive analysis of the way the themes contributed to understanding the data. The final part of data analysis involved deciding which themes made meaningful contributions to understanding what was going on within the data, and deciding how to present it in the report in order to answer the research questions (Saldana, 2009).

Data that was collected through observations and document analysis in the form of notes was expanded in order to make it intelligible and ready for analysis. This data was equally subjected to the data analysis process outlined above. The table below is an illustration of how the responses to the following question were analysed: 'What are some of things that you think influenced the level of sustainability of the PRP you have just described?

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Table 4.2: An illustration of text analysis

Interviewee details	Response	Important words, phrases – code	Emerging themes
Teacher 12: 2013	There are many things that are working against the PRP. The textbooks and other necessary tools for the teachers and learners are not there. The head teachers and those in charge from the Ministry do not take time to go round and find out what is happening.	Reason for poor sustainability – lack of books, tools for teachers and learners; head and Ministry officials not going round	• Scarcity of teaching and learning materials • Inadequate monitoring and supervision within and outside the school
Donor Representative 1: 2014	… because the PRP was heavily funded, it was not easy for the Zambian government to sustain it. The continued supply of materials was not an easy task for the government. The materials were expensive because they were produced outside Zambia. The national trainers were well equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to train various implementers but there is always mobility that comes with promotion, resignation ... so continuity was affected.	Reason for poor sustainability – cost – heavily funded; not easy task; materials expensive and produced outside; trainers promoted or resigned	• High cost of maintaining the programme without external help • Scarcity of materials (expensive and not found locally) • Staff turnover

In the table, Teacher 12: 2013 means that the interviewee is teacher number twelve that was interviewed while 2013 stands for the year in which the interview was conducted. Similarly, Donor 1: 2014 refers to the fact that the interviewee was donor number one who was interviewed and the interview was conducted in the year 2014.

In the next step of data analysis, the major themes that emerged from the data were tabulated and conclusions were generated in relation to the research questions, the literature review and the conceptual framework. The final stage of data analysis involved a deep reflection on the findings with a view to drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

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4.9 QUALITY ASSURANCE: VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY (TRUSTWORTHINESS) OF THE STUDY

Critics of qualitative research approaches make the assumption that such studies offer no grounds for establishing the reliability and validity of the study. This is because reliability and validity are terms commonly used in quantitative research (Golafshani, 2003; Bowen, 2005). However, reliability and validity are as relevant to qualitative research as to any other approach because every researcher should be concerned about the two concepts while designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Silverman, 1993; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2001). It is, however, argued that if the two concepts are relevant and have to be applied to qualitative studies, they need to be redefined because, traditionally, they are associated with quantitative studies. Scholars have therefore reconceptualised the terms 'validity' and 'reliability' as 'trustworthiness' (Golafshani, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Padgett, 1998; Maree, 2012).

The concept of trustworthiness as viewed in qualitative approaches is said to encompass four aspects – credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Golafshani, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Padgett, 1998; Maree, 2012).

Credibility (in preference to internal validity) refers to the confidence one can have in the truth of the findings – the assurance that the researcher's conclusions stem from the data. Transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability) means that other researchers can apply the findings of the study to their own – the extent to which the findings of the study can be transferred to other contexts or generalised. Dependability (in preference to reliability) refers to the stability of the findings over time – the degree to which the researcher is able to convince the audience that the findings of the study are worth paying attention to and that they did indeed occur as the researcher says they did. Confirmability (in preference to objectivity) refers to the internal coherence of the data in relation to the findings, interpretations and recommendations (Maree, 2012; Welman et al., 2012; Bowen, 2005, pp. 215–6; Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 290; Shenton, 2004; Creswell, 2003).

Researchers who use the qualitative approaches argue that there are various ways that can be employed to increase the trustworthiness of studies (Golafshani, 2003). The next section

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outlines the strategies that were employed to promote the trustworthiness (reliability and validity) of this study.

To enhance the rigour of my research, I employed triangulation – one of the most commonly used techniques in qualitative studies. Triangulation dictates that the researcher uses multiple methods for collecting and analysing data so that all sources converge to form themes or categories in a study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Some scholars (Richardson, 1994; Jennings, 2010) argue that triangulation is associated with establishing a fixed point as an established reality and that from a qualitative perspective; such a reality is questionable given an ontological worldview of multiple realities. As a result, rather than 'triangulation', the term 'crystalisation' is preferred. The term 'crystalisation', which 'refers to the practice of "validating" results by using multiple methods of data collection and analysis' emanates from the work of Richardson (1994). Crystalisation is argued to be a better lens through which to view the components of qualitative research. According to Richardson (1994), when viewing a phenonomenon, in this case sustainability, we will only achieve partial views of it, somewhat like attempting to view the many components of a crystal at one time in a snapshot (Maree, 2012, p. 40).

The advantage of triangulation (crystalisation) is that it acknowledges the complexity of human behaviour, minimises researcher bias and increases researcher confidence. The other advantage of triangulation is that the researcher is not method-bound. This therefore improves the trustworthiness of the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p. 112). The strength of triangulation also lies in its recognition that all methods have inherent biases and weaknesses and that using different techniques in the study of a common phenomenon allows us to gain a more extensive and accurate grasp of that which we are attempting to examine, therefore increasing internal validity (Duffy, 2007; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007).

Triangulation or crystalisation was an important strategy for my research because it provided me with an opportunity to narrate the same story through data gathered from different techniques (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Triangulation also increases the likelihood of collecting richer and more meaningful data that is useful in answering the research question (Duffy, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007). Triangulation is also important because human beings are said to be

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complex and their lives are dynamic. As such, it is better to use a variety of methods to study them in order to get a better understanding of how they view the world and describe a situation as well as the meaning they attach to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Another form of triangulation that was used to increase the trustworthiness of the study was the use of a wide range of participants (teachers, head teachers and officials from the Ministry of Education and donor agencies). For example, the viewpoints and experiences that were gathered from the implementers of the programme (teachers and teachers) were used to 'check out bits of information' obtained from the policy makers (education officials) (Shenton, 2004, p. 66).

To ensure the trustiworthiness or the credibility of my research, each person who was approached was given the opportunity to refuse to participate in the study. In this way, only those who were genuinely willing to participate and provide data freely were involved. Participants were also encouraged to be as frank as possible from the outset of the research (Shenton, 2004).

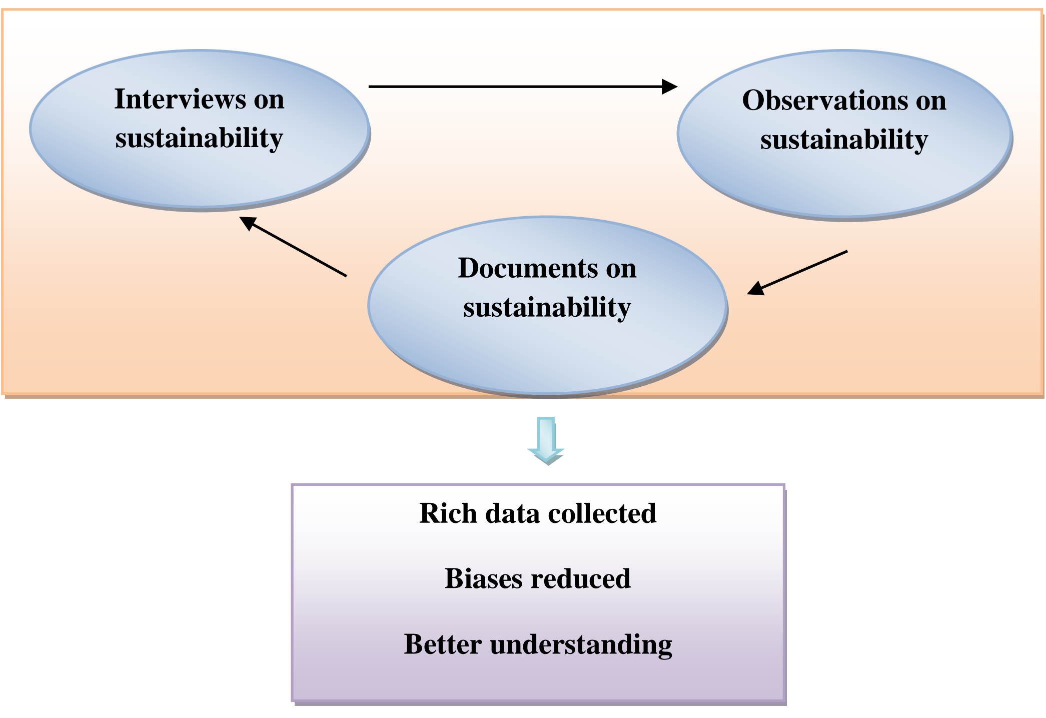

Figure 4.1: Triangulation of methods

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Apart from triangulation, member checks were also conducted which involved getting back to participants to verify whether the data reflected their views accurately (Maree, 2012). In addition, I would like to report that none of my participants made any significant changes to the original data. Most of them merely added their thoughts to the data and made clarifications.

I also improved the trustworthiness of my study by piloting my research instruments, as discussed earlier in this chapter. In addition, I audio-taped all the interviews and took down notes that included major points, significant non-verbal observations and intuitions to support the recorded data. Recording the interviews made it possible for me to go back to the data whenever I needed to clarify or verify anything.

In addition, my data is presented using the excerpt presentation style, also known as the 'preservationist approach'. This involves the presentation of the participants' original words. Preserving the participant's original thoughts helps, among other things, to provide evidence of the researcher's assertions and assists in strengthening credibility (Cordon & Sainsbury, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 2003; Bowen, 2005). The excerpts that were included in the research were selected on the basis of the issues they represented or if they appeared significant or interesting.

At a personal level, I was alive to the fact that because I was an active participant in the research process it was tempting to include my own assumptions, views and theoretical orientation during the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. I therefore put in place checks and balances in order to maintain acceptable standards of scientific inquiry. I achieved this by constantly reminding myself that I was an active learner who was expected to report what I read, saw and heard about the study without passing any judgement. I also conducted 'peer examination' where my supervisor was the major external observer who reviewed my data and the entire research process to ensure that I was always on the right track (Maree, 2012; Bowen, 2005).

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4.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

I would like to state that owing to constraints in terms of time and other resources, the study drew its sample from one province only – Lusaka. In addition, the fact that a case study approach was used means that the sample was small. Therefore, as some qualitative critics would put it, the results provide little basis for scientific generalisation (Yin, 2003).

It is important to point out that what motivates the researcher to consider a large number of cases is the idea of generalising findings, a term that held little meaning for my research. This is because the essence of my research, which took an interpretivist approach, was 'not to generalize but rather to provide a rich, contextualized understanding of some aspect of human experience through the intensive study of particular cases' (Polit & Beck, 2010, p. 1451). The findings were therefore not meant to be generalised to populations (statistical generalisation) but to provide 'theoretical propositions' (analytical generalisation) (Yin, 2003, p. 10). Therefore, the lack of generalisability should not be viewed as a limitation (Maree, 2012, p. 300; Kohlbacher, 2006). In addition, although the findings cannot be generalised to other populations, they may be applicable in similar contexts. The study also provides a 'baseline understanding with which the results of subsequent work' could be compared (Shenton, 2004, p. 71). I would like to agree with Shenton (2004, p. 71) who contends that 'even when different investigations offer results that are not entirely consistent with one another, this does not, of course, necessarily imply that one or more is untrustworthy'. The results may simply reveal multiple realities.The findings can also provide insights, and inform policy and practice relating to the topic under discussion.

Data collection for this study was in part ex post and, as such, some participants experienced challenges in recalling some of the important events relating to the PRP. As this could have compromised the accuracy of the information, I attempted to resolve this challenge by triangulating the data with other sources, especially the analysis of documents pertaining to the programme.

According to the available literature, a great deal of support was offered by parents and members of the community to the PRP when the programme was under the support of donors,

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with parents being reported as having been involved in the teaching and learning process in schools. For example, they followed up on the progress made by their children and attended special days such as open days (Sampa, 2005). Originally, I had planned to involve parents in the study in order to find out their level of support for the PRP after the end of donor support.

However, owing to time and resource limitations, I subsequently decided to exclude parents from the study. Nevertheless, their involvement in the PRP was still indirectly captured in the study as the people who participated were asked about matters pertaining to the involvement of parents in the PRP. I also attempted to fill in this gap by analysing pertinent documents.

4.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As required in every research, I paid particular attention to ethical considerations – a task that required me to conform to the standards of research (Maree, 2012; Welman et al., 2012).

During my reading on research ethics and its actual application in the whole research process, I learnt that honesty and respect for the rights of individuals are the basic issues a researcher must address (Welman et al., 2012, p. 181). In addition, in line with Couper and Singer (2009), the most important ethical issues I faced as a researcher included obtaining informed consent from participants to participate in the study and upholding the confidentiality of their responses.

Maree (2012) identifies informed consent and voluntary participation, protection from harm, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity as ethical principles a researcher must understand and pay attention to when working with individuals. The paragraphs that follow provide a summary of the various ways in which I conducted myself in a manner that befits a researcher.

First and foremost I only proceeded with my fieldwork after my application for ethical clearance had been approved by the University of Pretoria Ethical Clearance Committee.

Before proceeding with the collection of data in schools, I obtained written permission from the Ministry of Education Provincial Education Officer – Lusaka. I also obtained permission from the head teachers of each of the sampled schools to conduct the research in their schools.

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Permission was also sought from various institutions to allow the participation of officials from the Ministry of Education and donor agencies. The letters seeking permission to conduct the research clearly explained the purpose of the study and provided details of what was expected of the people that would be involved in the study (see Appendix 1).

Prior to the interviews and the classroom observations, after obtaining clearance from the various institutions, consent was further obtained from all the individuals that took part in the study. This process involved giving full details of my identity; and explaining to participants the purpose of the study and its procedure and what was expected of them. The participants were also assured that all the information obtained would be treated in the strictest confidence and used for academic purposes only.

All participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Participants were also expected to sign a consent form in order to affirm their willingness to participate in the research (Maree, 2012; Bowen, 2005). A sample of the consent form is attached to this thesis as Appendix 5. In situations where pictures were taken, consent was also obtained.

I was aware that obtaining parent consent before a child participates in a study is a requirement in South Africa. The literature (Metis Center, 2010; Dawson & Kass, 2005; Liamputtong, 2008) observes that practices and protocols for obtaining consent to participate in research can differ from community to community. In my cultural context, it is not necessary to obtain consent from parents before their children can participate in research. In Zambia, the principle of 'collective consent' (Dawson & Kass, 2005; Liamputtong, 2008) is applied. This means that a leader of a community gives authority to allow targets to participate in research. In this study, consent was therefore obtained from the overseer of the schools in Lusaka Province, namely, the Provincial Education Officer (PEO), to conduct research among the teachers, head teachers and the learners in schools.

However, it is important to note that the PEO 'easily' grants permission to researchers to conduct studies as long as no risk of potential harm to the learners and the other participants is observed. Once a researcher is cleared by the PEO, what remains is to obtain consent from

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individual head teachers and the teachers to involve the learners in the study. However, I would like to emphasise that at the individual level, head teachers and teachers were given the right to decide about their participation in the study. In addition, before any classroom observation was conducted, oral consent to participate in the study was obtained from the learners. However, I noticed that because the learners were so young, they did not seem to fully appreciate the consequences of research.

Research ethics also require that participants are not at risk of harm as a result of their participation. Breaching confidentiality was therefore the most likely way in which my participants would be harmed. Confidentiality is closely related to the principle of anonymity which essentially demands that participants will remain anonymous throughout the study and afterwards (Maree, 2012; Creswell, 2003; Bowen, 2005).

In order to uphold confidentiality, all the data that was collected from the interviews and classroom observations was carefully stored on my private laptop and only accessible to my supervisor for academic purposes. In addition, the data was made available to the participants for verification and validation purposes. Participants remained anonymous throughout the study, including data collection, analysis, interpretation and the writing of the report (Welman et al., 2012; Couper & Singer, 2009; Maree, 2012). During the writing of my thesis, I constantly reminded myself of the need to use unbiased language as well as to report my findings as honestly as possible (Creswell, 2003).

Ethical dilemmas emerged throughout the research process. In some of the sampled schools, both the head teachers and the teachers had found out that I was an employee of the Examinations Council of Zambia – an institutions that operates under the guidance of the Ministry of Education. To some, I was therefore perceived as their superior. I therefore got the impression that some of them were trying to provide data that reflected the ideal situation rather than what was happening in reality with regard to the PRP. In one interesting case, I came to learn that the head teacher went out of her way to borrow PRP materials from the nearest school in order to ensure that her teacher, who was scheduled for an observation, taught the lesson as prescribed by the PRP. I managed the situation by assuring the participants that

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the visit to the school was not in any way related to my official duties but was solely for academic purposes.

As indicated earlier, I had decided to pursue the topic of sustainability because I was frustrated that several innovations that had seemed to be beneficial to the education system in Zambia were discontinued once donor support was withdrawn. During the research, I encountered participants who shared my views. I was therefore tempted to share my opinions with them. However, during data analysis and when I wrote up the research I was careful not to impose my beliefs and biases on the data. I resisted the temptation by constantly reminding myself that my role was to collect data and report it as plainly as possible.

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CHAPTER 5: HISTORY OF THE PRIMARY READING PROGRAMME

5.1 OVERVIEW

This study sought to examine the sustainability of education innovations in Zambia that are initially driven by donor support, with a specific focus on the case of a literacy programme known as the Primary Reading Programme (PRP). In order to understand the context in which the findings of the study are presented and interpreted, in this chapter the background information on the programme is presented. In essence, the first two research questions of the study as listed below are addressed:

- What was the nature of support provided by donors towards the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) during the seven-year partnership with Zambia?
- What changes were observed in schools following the introduction of the PRP in the following areas?
  - ✓ the medium of instruction for literacy
  - ✓ teaching/learning and related materials
  - ✓ methodology to teach literacy
  - ✓ capacity building
  - ✓ assessment practices
  - ✓ monitoring systems
  - ✓ record keeping
  - ✓ achievement levels in literacy among learners
  - ✓ morale among various stakeholders regarding the programme

The chapter is organised in three major sections. The first section presents the contextual background of the PRP based on the pertinent documents that were reviewed. In this section the language in education policy between 1965 and 1995 is discussed with a focus on the various circumstances that led to the emergence of a new language policy and the PRP. This section also outlines the support for the PRP that was provided by the donors and the way the programme was rolled out nationwide.

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The second section presents an account of the PRP with a focus on the transformation that took place in the Zambian education system as a result of the introduction of the programme under the auspices of donor funding. These changes are presented in the form of eight themes which include the language of instruction for literacy; teaching/learning materials and other literacy resources; methodology; assessment practices; monitoring activities; record keeping; learner achievement levels and motivation among stakeholders to implement the PRP. Under each theme, the findings that emerged from the analysis of documents and interviews with various stakeholders are presented. The third and last section of the chapter contains the conclusion to the chapter which highlights the major points that emanated from the discussion.

5.2 THE ACCOUNT OF THE PRIMARY READING PROGRAMME

A number of documents were analysed as part of the process of providing the contextual background of the PRP. These documents included policy documents, programme evaluation reports, monitoring reports, research studies, course materials and other documentation that had some bearing on the programme.

5.2.1 The 'English-only' era

Zambia is a multilingual country that is said to have over 72 languages. However, it is argued that many of the languages are better regarded as dialects (Kashoki, 1990; Linehan, 2004; Gordon, 2014). Like other multilingual nations, the country has faced challenges in developing and implementing a language policy in education that supports effective teaching and learning in schools, particularly one that supports the effective acquisition of literacy skills (Linehan, 2004).

The emergence of policies on initial literacy in Zambia can be traced back as far as 1927, when the country was still under the colonial rule of the British Protectorate. Between 1927 and 1963, the language policy in education in Zambia was consistent as the mother tongue was used for the first two years of primary education followed by a dominant local language up to Standard 5, and English thereafter (Linehan, 2004).

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In 1963, a year before Zambia obtained its independence, the education system underwent reviews that saw the country modify its policies in line with the aspirations of a newly independent nation. In 1965, therefore, a year following its independence, Zambia officially adopted English as the medium of instruction from Grade 1 to the end of tertiary education. Of the 72 languages and dialects in Zambia, seven languages were also recognised as official languages, including Cinyanja, Chitonga, Icibemba, Kiikaonde, Lunda, Luvale and Silozi. However, these languages were merely taught as subjects. English was chosen as the official medium of instruction because it was mainly considered to be a unifying factor in a nation that had many languages and dialects. English was also adopted as the medium of instruction because it was assumed that the earlier it was introduced to children the better. This new policy became enshrined in the 1966 Education Act (Linehan, 2004; Kashoki, 1990).

5.2.2 The move towards a new literacy policy

Between 1965 and 1995, attempts were made to abandon English as the sole medium of instruction in education. For example, the *Ministry of Education 1977 Educational Reforms* acknowledged that instruction in the mother tongue was better than a child's second language. However, the implementation of such an approach was challenged by concerns pertaining to national harmony in view of the fact that Zambia is a multilingual nation (MoE, 1977). In addition, although the 1992 policy document on education called *Focus on Learning* also declared that the seven major Zambian languages would be the basic languages of education from Grades 1 to 4, this policy was also not implemented for various reasons (MoE, 1992).

During the mid 1990s, concerns over the continued use of English as the only medium of instruction in schools intensified. The sole use of English was seen as the major reason for the poor literacy levels among learners in primary schools in Zambia (Kelly, 1995; MoE, 1996; Sampa, 2005; Linehan, 2004; Williams, 1993).

Scholars like Kelly (1995, p. 6) argue that 'but … were it not for the language policy, we would have had better educated people who would have known better how to cope with the economic problems, and even with those arising from drought, AIDS, and other extrinsic factors'. Kelly (2000, p. 7) further argued that:

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> By and large, the educational impacts of thirty years of application of this policy were negative. The 'English medium' programme which was in place during that time resulted in a schooled but uneducated generation. Rote learning and memorization replaced genuine understanding … For great numbers of children, school remained alien, unrelated to real life, something that gets done to you … For the majority of children it provided little more than an introduction to literacy. In reality, it equipped school learners with very meagre and fragile literacy (and numeracy) skills with which to face life … as the English medium of instruction failed to give them access to literacy that would enable them to benefit from educational, social, economic and democratic opportunities.

However, Kelly (1995) points out that the language policy cannot be entirely blamed for the poor literacy levels among learners because there were other factors at play: 'the colossal neglect of education during years of economic collapse, droughts, and sickness are among other adverse factors' (p. 6).

The concerns among stakeholders over the language of instruction in education were confirmed by recurring evidence from research studies. For example, in a study carried out by the Ministry of Education – Zambia (MoE) under the auspices of the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) in 1995 reported pitiable literacy levels among Grade 6 learners. The study revealed that only 25 per cent of Grade 6 learners could read at defined minimum levels and only 3 per cent could read at defined desirable levels. The same study also isolated language (the sole use of English) as the major cause of backwardness in reading and writing amongst Zambian children (Kanyika & Musakanya, 2010).

In 1993, another major research study commissioned by the Britain's Overseas Development Administration (ODA) was conducted by the University of Reading. The purpose of the study was to look at reading levels in a sample of Zambian schools in English and Cinyanja (a local language) at Grades 3, 4 and 6. The findings of the study indicated that, overall, learners could not read texts two levels below their own grade level (Williams, 1993).

The call for the change of the medium of instruction from English to a more 'friendlier' language was further supported by studies that were conducted in other African countries. A case in point is Afolayan (1999), who argued that using Yoruba, a local language, as the

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medium of instruction in Nigeria, was more effective in aiding learners to attain literacy skills than English. The findings also indicated that it was easy for learners to transfer skills learnt in the mother tongue to an unfamiliar language, which in this case was English. Other studies that revealed similar findings included Umolu (1999), Williams and Mchazime (1999) and Williams (1996).

In 1995, Zambia saw an important development in the debate on literacy levels in Zambian schools when the Ministry of Education organised the First National Reading Forum. A number of recommendations from the forum emerged, among the key ones were as follows: initial literacy in Grade 1 should first be achieved in a language familiar to learners, preferably their mother tongue; basic literacy in English should be developed in Grade 2; and a pilot programme should be field tested for one year in Kasama District in a local language – Cibemba (Kotze & Higgins, 1999).

5.2.3 The emergence of a new literacy policy and the PRP

In 1996, the 'straight-for-English' policy, which Kelly (2000, p. 7) refers to as 'pernicious', was replaced by 'a more liberal policy and practice' envisioned in the new policy document on education called *Educating Our Future* (Ministry of Education, 1996). This policy document made a number of significant statements on literacy, among them was that 'officially English will be used as the language of instruction', but that 'all learners from Grades 1–4 will be given an opportunity to learn initial basic skills in reading and writing in a local language' (one that seems best suited to promoting meaningful learning) (MoE, 1996, pp. 34, 39, 45).

In 1999, in collaboration with the Government of the United Kingdom's Department of International Development (DFID), Zambia introduced a literacy programme called the Primary Reading Programme (PRP). The main purpose of the programme was to improve the literacy (reading and writing) skills of all Zambian primary school children, as a major contribution to the goal of children learning effectively across the school curriculum (DFID, 1998).

According to policy, the seven main Zambian languages that were already in use in schools for learning would be employed for initial literacy. The selection of the seven languages for the

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instruction of initial literacy was not based on the language spoken by children in their homes, however, since this varied from home to home. It was based on the premise that these languages represented the lingua franca in the areas where they were spoken and therefore perceived as the language of play, familiar to the majority of the children (Sampa, 2005; Linehan, 2004; Ministry of Education, 1996).

In line with the recommendations of the National Reading Forum held in 1995, the PRP started as a pilot for Grade 1 in 1998 in Northern Province, with a course that was initially called the Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL), which emphasised children learning to read and write in a familiar language. The programme was piloted in two districts, Kasama and Mungwi, and involved 25 schools, 50 teachers and 2000 learners. The pilot was supported by Ireland Aid. An evaluation report on the pilot programme carried out in Kasama indicated that the programme was an ‘unqualified success’, considering that children in BTL classes were reading and writing at a level equivalent to Grade 4 or higher compared with children following the traditional course (Kotze & Higgins, 1999, p. 4; Sampa, 2005).

In order for the BTL course to meet the needs of a Zambian child and work in a Zambian environment, the course was customised. The new Grade 1 literacy course was therefore renamed the Zambian New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL). There was demand by the Ministry of Education that similar literacy courses should be developed for other grade levels at primary school level. Therefore, the PRP was extended up to Grade 7 to become a seven-year action plan that consisted of three courses.

The first course – NBTL – introduced children in Grade 1 to initial literacy in one of the seven official Zambian local languages. In the second course, called Step In To English (SITE), children were expected to build on the skills learnt in Grade 1 by transferring them into English. The consolidation of reading and writing skills acquired in a local language and English was anticipated to be done from Grades 3 to 7 in a course called Read On Course (ROC) (Linehan, 2004; Sampa, 2005).

The PRP is basically a version of a primary literacy programme developed by a South African NGO into what was called the Molteno Project for developing initial literacy in African

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languages. This South African initiative was adapted from a well-known Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL) course that was developed and used in the United Kingdom in the 1960s. This literacy innovation has been modified and used in various African contexts that include, among others, South Africa, Malawi, Uganda, Namibia, Botswana and Ghana (Barrett et al., 2007; Higgins, Tambulukani, & Chikalanga, 2000, p. 4).

5.2.4 The rolling out of the Primary Reading Programme

The PRP was not rolled out countrywide at the same time, but was conducted in phases. In 2000, NBTL was implemented in 21 schools in Lusaka, Luangwa, Chipata and Mongu. The SITE course was written in the same year and the ROC was also conceptualised. The piloting of the NBTL was extended to two more languages, Cinyanja and Silozi, in order to ascertain whether it would score similar results. The results subsequently indicated that the course was a success in other languages as well.

From the lessons learnt from the pilot, in 2001 the NBTL was revised and translated into seven Zambian languages. The printing of modules for teacher training was also undertaken. During the same year, the SITE course was implemented in 46 schools in Lusaka, Luangwa, Chipata, Mongu and Kasama. In addition, the ROC teachers' guide was written for Grades 3 to 7.

In 2002, the NBTL course for Grade 1 was implemented in one school in every zone countrywide. An evaluation of the programme was then once more conducted to see whether literacy levels among learners were improving or not. During the same year, modules for teacher training colleges were printed for language and literacy, while the ROC was implemented in 46 schools in Lusaka, Luangwa, Chipata, Mongu and Kasama on a trial basis.

In 2003, the NBTL course was implemented in every school countrywide. In addition, the SITE course was implemented in one school in every zone countrywide. The ROC was also expanded to all zone centre schools through school-based training (SPRINT). The head teacher, the Zone In-Service provider and one teacher were trained to train others for the ROC at their schools. By the year 2004, the SITE course and the ROC were also implemented in every school countrywide.

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5.2.5 Support towards the Primary Reading Programme

The literature indicates that Zambia received a £10.2 million grant from the DFID for a period of seven years to implement PRP interventions in government schools between 1999 and 2005. The donor funds were spent on various activities that included training in-service and pre-service teachers, head teachers, in-service providers and Ministry officials. The funds were also used for the production of teaching/learning resources and any other support materials; staff overheads, office equipment and maintenance of vehicles and other expenses related to the programme (Sampa, 2005; Allsop et al., 2005). The finances were also used to pay 'overnight' (out-of-pocket) allowances for attendance at training workshops. These allowances are said to have been quite substantial in consideration of the meagre salaries paid to teachers at that time (Higgins et al., 2000).

From the analysis of documents, it is evident that the programme was sufficiently funded to meet the objectives of the PRP. This is implied from statements such as those made by scholars like Linehan (2004, p. 15) that the years when the PRP was under the support of donors were 'spending years' when resources were readily available 'to solve problems'. The final evaluation of the PRP also indicated that for seven years, the PRP was 'protected from the uncertainties of the budget process by the security of project funding from DFID which ended on 30 November 2005' (Allsop, et al., 2005, p. 5).

It is also important to mention that in the first evaluation of the BTL some personnel involved in the pilot programme in Kasama regarded the programme as an expensive venture. A number of them therefore questioned the ability of the Zambian government to successfully extend and maintain the programme without external support. For example, some stakeholders felt that the estimated cost of equipping one classroom with the required BTL materials (K500, that is, about $100) was a costly undertaking. A related criticism was that the conditions in which the pilot programme operated were to some extent artificial and would never lend themselves to a nationwide replication (Kotze & Higgins, 1999).

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5.3 THE PRIMARY READING PROGRAMME UNDER DONORS

Following the introduction of the PRP, a number of changes were observed in the area of activities pertaining to literacy in the education system in Zambia, particularly from Grades 1 to 7. Higgins et al. (2000, p. 18) referred to the transformations as the 'many refreshing changes'. A good summary of the major positive outcomes of the PRP cited in various DFID evaluation and related reports is recorded in Linehan (2004, p. 12) as follows:

> Some of the general outcomes of the literacy programme … include: better all round teaching; successful learning; motivated teachers; supportive parents and communities; a learner-centred approach in reality rather than in theory; collaborative learning; confident children; leadership roles for children in group work situations. There is also growing evidence that supports the contention by Head teachers that enrolment levels are growing and absenteeism is on the wane in schools that are spearheading PRP strategies.

In order to better appreciate the transformations that took place in the Zambian education system as a result of the introduction of the PRP, the next section focuses its attention on presenting a discussion on these changes under the eight themes identified earlier in the chapter.

5.3.1 The language of instruction for literacy

In area of the language of instruction for literacy, the idea of children in Grade 1 being taught to read and write in a local familiar language was promoted. The campaign was mainly backed by the national policy on education in Zambia and research that indicated that children learnt literacy much more easily and faster through the Language Experience Approach (LEA). The LEA is a strategy in terms of which teachers use learners' existing or familiar language and prior everyday experiences to develop reading and writing skills (Higgins et al., 2000; Kotze & Higgins, 1999).

It is also reported that when the PRP was introduced, much sensitisation was done to members of the public to help them understand the implications of the new language policy. Head teachers are reported to have held talks with parents to explain the implementation of the new policy. Other methods used to communicate the information included radio programmes, newspaper articles and fliers (Sampa, 2005).

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The new language policy did not come without challenges. For instance, some stakeholders argued that initial literacy through a local language meant that all teachers would have to be deployed to areas where their own language was spoken. However, it was argued that, in practice, teachers did not need to be native speakers of the language in order to teach it in Grade 1. The major argument was that the concepts and vocabulary used at Grade 1 level were very basic and would be known by any adult person living in the area regardless of whether the language used was his/her mother tongue or not (Linehan, 2004).

Some stakeholders also argued that since English was spoken in urban areas, using local languages to teach literacy would disadvantage the urban child. This concern was countered by claims that in urban areas, the language of play was not English but the dominant local language. Related to this point was the concern that since schools (especially in urban areas) often had many language groups represented in their student body, it would be impossible to choose a language of instruction that would suit all learners. Yet again, it was argued that there was no need to be concerned because children quickly picked up the language of play (Linehan, 2004; Higgins et al., 2000).

There were also fears that parents would see the use of local languages in schools as a backward step, since English had long been the high status language of education, public life and commerce. It was claimed that the fears expressed by parents 'evaporated' following various vigorous campaigns that explained the benefits of using local languages. In addition, it is recorded that parents' concerns were alleviated by the satisfaction they obtained from seeing their children learning to read and write easily as a result of the new language policy (Linehan, 2004).

Findings obtained from interviews

Asked about what was observed regarding the language used in the instruction of literacy following the introduction of the PRP, stakeholders interviewed for the current study confirmed that a new language policy was decreed and that schools were expected to use a local language to teach literacy in Grade 1 before moving to the English language in Grade 2 onwards.

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In order to gain an in-depth understanding of what the participants thought about the new language policy on literacy, they were asked to share their overall perceptions of it. The majority of the participants thought that the policy was a good initiative but emphasised that it could have been applied with a lot more caution. For instance, a number of them felt strongly that the new language policy disadvantaged learners and teachers who were unfamiliar with the 'familiar language'. This finding is in agreement with what is recorded in documents in which teachers and other stakeholders expressed some discomfort with the use of local languages for initial literacy (Linehan, 2004).

The participants further recollected that parents and the community at large appeared uncomfortable with the use of local languages because they believed that their children were sent to school to learn English and not local languages. The participants further recalled that some sensitisation campaigns were conducted but they seem not to have 'been explicit and convincing' to the parents and the community because a number of them expressed dissatisfaction. This finding is inconsistent with the literature, which seems to have 'painted a positive picture' of parents and the community at large embracing the language policy after being sensitised on the value and relevance of teaching learners in a local language (Sampa, 2005).

5.3.2 Teaching/learning materials and other literacy resources

According to Sampa (2005), a number of changes were also observed in the area of teaching/learning materials and other resources related to literacy following the introduction of the PRP. It is recorded that throughout the programme, different materials were developed through a consultative process involving teachers, head teachers, college lecturers, inspectors, curriculum specialists, provincial and district in-service providers based at resource centres and consultants.

It is also documented that although the PRP involved the adoption of a primary literacy programme developed by a South African NGO called the Molteno Project, it was modified to make it 'teacher-friendly' and 'relevant' to the Zambian setting. For instance, Kotze and Higgins (1999, p. 21) indicate that the materials were 'customised and Zambianised, following

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a number of translation and adaptation workshops'. Sampa (2005, p. 32) adds that 'the materials were developed with relevance to the children's environment', based on the vocabulary they used all the time in their communities.

Apart from the literacy syllabus, a number of other materials were developed (see examples at appendix 11). The various categories are listed below.

- *Teachers' guides:* These materials provided guidelines for teachers on the literacy methodology. The New Breakthrough to Literacy teacher's guide was in English with examples in all seven Zambian languages, while the rest of the teacher's guides were written in English, because they were to be used by teachers who understood the English language.

- *Learners' activity books:* These were the learners' books containing activities for the teacher to give to children to do individually, in pairs or groups. The activities in the books were graded according to the level or ability of the child. For the Grade 1 New Breakthrough course these were written in the Zambian languages but for the Grade 2 Step In To English literacy course they were written in English.

- *Conversation posters:* These were pictures (posters) showing people in action. They were used by the teachers to elicit the core vocabulary that was expected to be taught.

- *Rainbow readers:* These were readers graded from most simple to most difficult with colours (red, yellow and green) representing the various levels. A set consisted of about 130 copies in every classroom and formed part of the class library. In Grade 1 these were written in the Zambian languages, while in Grade 2 the same stories were written in English, and for Grades 3 to 7 the sets were written in both English and the Zambian languages.

The PRP materials came as an integrated reading and writing kit. Apart from the materials listed above, a typical kit was also supposed to include the following materials: learner's and teacher's word cards, sentence makers, dowels for the sentence makers, a phonic flip chart, learner's and teacher's sentence holders, a carry bag and a slate. Each grade was also expected

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to have a mat for learners to sit on as they listened to a story, were given instructions for the day or did other activities as laid down by the methodology.

It is also important to state that for the methodology to be executed as prescribed by the programme, a teacher was supposed to have a full kit. For instance, every teacher was supposed to have a teacher's guide which gave guidance for the lessons. The guides were also expected to be used with the support of other materials in the kit. This meant that it was practically impossible to implement the PRP methodology if an item was missing from the kit.

Training materials: Materials for in-service and pre-service teachers were also provided and included training manuals. These manuals included a six-day programme for training in New Breakthrough to Literacy and guidelines and notes for trainers to use when training teachers.

Modules were also developed for literacy and language for colleges to be used by the Department for Language and Literacy Education. A training video was also developed showing classroom organisation and lesson procedures for teachers. Calendars were also produced to remind teachers in the classrooms of the stage at which they were expected to be in particular month in terms of teaching literacy.

Other than being relevant, it is also documented that the PRP materials were produced by renowned publishers. The idea was to ensure that they were of high quality so as to guarantee durability. It was therefore an expensive undertaking. It has actually been placed on record that PRP materials were 'initially' 'expensive' to produce as it was anticipated that replacement would be less costly since some elements of the PRP were almost 'indestructible' (Linehan, 2004, p. 10). It is also recorded that the development of materials for the PRP was initially expensive because of complicated royalty arrangements with Molteno, South Africa, the originators of Breakthrough to Literacy and the fact that they were published outside the country (Arden, 2012).

In terms of quantity, there was a 'plentiful supply of teaching/learning materials'. These materials were supplied after training was completed (Sampa, 2005, p. 64). It is also reported that as a result of the 'plentiful supply of teaching and learning materials', the classrooms were

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attractive with a wide arrays of colourful teaching resources coupled with striking displays of learners' work (Higgins et al., 2000, p. 18).

Some stakeholders that took part in the first evaluation of the pilot programme indicated that there were too many 'bits and pieces' of teaching/learning materials that placed extreme demands on the teacher as well as confusing the learners. They were also concerns that the exorbitant cost of the materials would be a hindrance to the effective rolling out and sustainability of the programme (Kotze & Higgins, 1999). About five years later, an evaluation of the programme was conducted and the cost of the materials was once more perceived as one of the greatest expenditure items the Zambian government would incur in sustaining the PRP (Allsop et al., 2005).

Findings obtained from the interviews

Participants were asked to comment on the materials that accompanied the PRP in terms of their quality, quantity and relevance. They were generally in agreement with what documents stated that the materials were of high quality and in abundant supply. They attributed this to the availability of funds and the fact that the materials were produced by well-known publishers outside the country. Participants emphasised that schools were supplied with all the relevant literacy materials for effective teaching and learning after every orientation on the PRP.

> ***Because it (PRP) was heavily funded ... the programme developed good and comprehensive materials. Each class had about 11 different materials for the teachers' use*** **(Donor representative 1, 2014).**

> ***In terms of quantity, every teacher that received training was given a PRP kit. These materials were of very high quality because their production was competitively done. The materials were produced by publishers who were selected through strict tender procedures. The materials were expected to last long and it is for this reason that the type of paper that was used was gloss so that even if water fell on the book, it could easily be wiped out*** **(Retired Education Official, 2014).**

It is interesting to note that while available documentation claimed that materials were generally 'friendly', most participants especially teachers revealed a different picture that was not consistent with the findings from the initial evaluations of the PRP (Kotze & Higgins,

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1999). For example, they contended that the materials were 'not friendly' because they were too many to handle in one lesson. They also felt that the language that was used in the materials was too complex for the average teacher or learner in towns to understand easily. They cited the case of Lusaka, arguing that most learners and teachers were more familiar with 'town Cinyanja' than 'complicated Cinyanja', which was expected to be used as the official language of instruction. This point is presented in the following comment:

> ***I am also of the view that the materials are not friendly to the learners because the Cinyanja used in the books is different from the children's language of play. It is the deep Cinyanja which actually confuses the children including me as a tecaher because I am equally not familiar with the type of Cinyanja used*** **(Teacher 13, 2014).**

5.3.3 Capacity-building activities

The implementation of the PRP was accompanied by capacity-building activities. According to Sampa (2005, p. 38), the PRP built 'outstanding capacity at national, provincial and district levels'. The training took about five to ten days, with teams of trainers providing intensive in-service training for head teachers and teachers in district and school-based courses. Follow-up, support and observation in schools was also conducted.

Capacity building also trickled down to the school level where Zone Education Support Teams (the head teachers, the zone inset provider and the subject inset provider from each zone) were trained in PRP activities. In turn, they supported the implementation of PRP reforms at school level by strengthening the School Programme of In-service for the Term (SPRINT) system.

The 2005 final PRP evaluation report acknowledged that during the initial stages of the PRP, lecturers at teacher training colleges had not been sufficiently involved in the PRP. Recognising their importance in the implementation of PRP, deliberate efforts were subsequently made to involve them in the programme. To this effect, they were trained and provided with all the PRP materials, among them a literacy module for distance learning students. Some lecturers were also selected to become national trainers. This was done to ensure that students graduating from 2003 onwards were ready to teach the literacy courses in the schools where they were deployed (Allsop et al., 2005).

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Despite these efforts, ‘serious and growing disconnect between the colleges and PRP initiatives’ were observed (Allsop et al., 2005, p. 41). In particular, it was noted that there was little in-depth focus on or effective instruction in the PRP. Most of the instruction is said to have been more theoretical than practical, resulting in teachers that were insufficiently prepared for the PRP. Some students in colleges who were interviewed to find out what was happening in the colleges as part of the PRP evaluation in 2005 confirmed this. The students revealed that some lecturers indicated that they were not very familiar with the PRP with others stating that the students would be oriented in the PRP through in-service courses. Staff turnover is one of the major factors reported to have caused this as it led to a severe reduction in the original pool of PRP expertise in colleges. To ensure sustainability, it was therefore strongly recommended that lecturers in colleges be trained and retrained in the PRP.

From the start of the programme, it was acknowledged that the government would find it expensive to sustain the training activities in the manner they were conducted under donor funds (Linehan, 2004). In the discussion to do with the sustainability of the programme, it was categorically stated that ‘the greatest expenditure items would be on the huge cascade training process’ (Linehan, 2005, p. 24).

To ensure sustainability at reasonable cost, modes of training such as face-to-face training at the level of the school cluster or zone through a Zonal Education Support Team (ZEST) training were proposed. The ZEST was identified as a key and strategic structure to support the PRP. This is because it acted as a link between schools and the higher Ministry of Education structures. It was anticipated that as ZEST received the routine training through an annual cycle, these teams would be trained in PRP interventions with a view to training or retraining teachers in their zones (Allsop et al., 2005; Sampa, 2005).

Overall, the capacity building activities that were conducted ‘received remarkably high ratings’, as those who were trained acknowledged that the trainings were beneficial (Higgins et al., 2000, p. 31–32).

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Findings obtained from the interviews

Participants were asked to provide their views on the capacity-building activities they witnessed following the introduction of the PRP. By and large, they confirmed that many capacity-building activities had taken place at the national, provincial, district and school levels to equip implementers with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the PRP. These activities are said to have been held regularly and timeously. A retired Ministry of Education official had the following to say:

> ***Training started by orientating Ministry of Education officials ... and then there was training of trainers from each province who were facilitators ... trainers of trainers went out to each province to train trainers, then the trainers went in districts to train teachers so it was a cascade mode of training. The activities were systematically done and planned for in advance*** **(Retired Education official, 2014).**

Another education official added that the training sessions were strategically held in the month of December in order to ensure that teachers were equipped to start implementing the PRP in the first term of the following year. Some participants also revealed that the training sessions had been conducted more than once in order to ensure that the programme was implemented correctly.

> ***As a key teacher who was the focal person at the school for the PRP activities, I remember attending training several times, apart from the initial one. They were very helpful to keep me on course ...*** **(Teacher 4, 2014).**

The participants who took part in the trainings generally rated the capacity building activities as beneficial and maintained that they had helped them to implement the PRP effectively. This finding is consistent with the literature (Higgins et al., 2000; Sampa, 2005) which indicates that the trainings played a significant role in equipping implementers with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the programme activities. The participants also reported that all stakeholders that participated in the trainings were given certificates, the PRP kits and other relevant material to implement the programme. According to the participants, the training, the provision of the PRP kits, certificates including ‘overnight’ or out-of-pocket allowances were among the major reasons that motivated those involved in the implementation of the PRP.

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5.3.4 The PRP methodology

A fundamental feature of the PRP methodology was a child-centred approach that built on children's experiences, thus emphasising learning from the known to the unknown. The teacher was more of a facilitator of learning and allowed children to explore their experiences. In the PRP course, the weakest children were expected to be a priority during the lesson and were given extra attention in order for them to catch up and move to the next step. Another essential feature of the PRP was that learners were supposed to progress at their own pace.

The methodology involved dividing the class in four ability groups. Ideally, each group was supposed to consist of 10 learners. However, owing to large class sizes in Zambia, the group comprised more than 10 children. It was the teacher's responsibility to divide the learners within groups on the basis of the learners' reading development. While the teacher attended to one group, the other three groups were given activities at their level of performance, usually from the activity book but sometimes teacher-created materials and activities. These ability groups were identified by a wide variety of names in the local language ranging from animals to colours.

The lesson routine comprised three parts: starting time (Starting Together), teaching time and sharing time (Sharing Together). In the first stage, individual groups interacted with the teacher at what was called the teaching station. While seated on a mat, a learner either narrated a story to fellow learners or the learners were told a story by the teacher. The learners also received instructions for the day's activity from the station. In the second stage, the teacher conducted focused teaching with a particular group, while the other groups conducted independent learning activities at their learning stations.

The third stage was the concluding phase. Learners from the various groups were encouraged to share their group activities and to provide constructive comments and criticisms on the feedback given by other groups. The 130 readers supplied with other course materials were used for activities and reading by children who had finished their work before the others. The assumption was that this approach made 'the teaching of the courses very simple for teachers' (Sampa, 2005, p. 28).

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In terms of timing, the Starting Together was supposed to last for 15 minutes while the Teaching Corner was expected to be undertaken in 20 minutes. The Group Activities were expected to last for 20 minutes and the lesson was supposed to be concluded in five minutes during the Sharing Together activities (Allsop et al., 2005; Sampa, 2005).

The PRP also employed the look-and-say method for teaching children to read, where words were always taught in association with a picture, an object or a word card. For example, by looking at a picture that had various familiar activities in it, learners said what they saw and from which they learnt new words that aided the acquisition of reading and writing skills. The PRP also used what is known as the whole-word method for teaching children to read in which emphasis is placed on children recognising 'whole words' rather than letter names (as in the alphabetic method) or sounds (as in phonics). The concept of phonics was presented in context since the content was taken from sentences generated by the learners (Kotze & Higgins, 1999; Sampa, 2005).

The Language Experience Approach also meant that teachers were expected to build on the skills the learners had acquired at home. The teacher therefore used the vocabulary the learners already knew to elicit sentences from them. It is also important to note that the PRP methodology was similar to the Zambia Basic Education Course (ZBEC), a child-centred course that emphasised the development of cognitive skills through language. The ZBEC course was also similar to the PRP in terms of classroom organisation and task types (Sampa, 2005).

In one of the evaluation reports for DFID, a distiguished professor of education from the United States of America, Professor Richard Kraft, with special interest in African education, summarised the changes observed in the area of the methodology used to teach literacy in the following quotation:

> The most important innovation in Zambian schools is the Primary Reading Programme. On a classroom level, it is immediately apparent when one enters an NBTL classroom, as it contains children working in groups, age appropriate reading materials in Zambian and English languages, children learning individually and in groups, teachers working with groups of children rather than the whole class, little copying off the board, etc. Its success has been exceptional Zambia has become THE international leader in literacy

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> and its successes are now being copied throughout the continent (2008 Evaluation of DFID Country Programmes: Zambia, p. 46).

The methods and classroom management systems of the PRP were considered so effective that they were also applied to mathematics. In this regard, a resource book for numeracy called the Mathematics Rainbow Kit (MARK) was produced (Allsop et al., 2005).

While the methodology was 'hailed' as effective, it was acknowledged that the approach was very demanding on the part of the teachers. For example, the PRP courses were written in such a way that teachers were expected to prepare for their lessons a day before. If they failed to do so, there was the possibility of being challenged by the learners, who were familiar with routines and could tell whether a teacher was ready or not (Sampa, 2005). The first evaluation of the programme revealed similar concerns where the methodology was criticised for being too challenging for the teacher. The methodology was also criticised for using the whole-word approach, defined earlier (Kotze & Higgins, 1999).

While acknowledging the fact that the methodology was demanding, it was argued that teachers were supposed to work as such. It is put on record that the teachers had actually started seeing the methodology as part of their routine (Sampa, 2005).

Findings obtained from the interviews

The participants were asked to describe the changes they saw in terms of the methodology used to teach literacy. They were also expected to give their perceptions of the methodology.

The findings were impressive considering that all the participants were aware of the key tenets of the PRP methodology. However, it is interesting to note that the participants who were actively involved in the programme from the start had more insight into the methodology. For example, teachers who were directly involved in the programme in its early stages had more insights into the methodology than those that were new to the system. This finding could imply that capacity building in the PRP may have been 'diluted' with time.

It is also interesting to note that while documentation described the PRP methodology as 'friendly' because 'it was designed to suit the Zambian setting,' participants had opposing

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views. Similar to what was observed in the earlier evaluations of the PRP, they noted that the methodology made too many demands on the teachers (Kotze & Higgins, 1999).

5.3.5 Assessment practices

The PRP course had in-built continuous assessment procedures and tasks that enabled teachers to monitor learners' progress. The procedures were clearly spelt out in Teacher's Guides. Assessments were supposed to be conducted after teaching a block of ten lessons during which a designated number of words were introduced to the learners. Assessment results were used to place learners in ability groups and plan for appropriate activities that were expected to improve the learning and teaching process, and ultimately achievement levels. Learners only progressed to the next stage after they had passed the assessment exercise at the end of the previous stage.

It is put on record that teachers faced challenges with conducting numerous assessments, considering that most classes consisted of more than 40 learners. It was, however, expected that as the teachers got used to the system, this would become manageable and they would see it as part of the system of teaching (Sampa, 2005).

Findings obtained from the interviews

Participants were asked to describe the assessment practices that were introduced by the PRP. Overall, they showed satisfactory awareness of the key PRP assessment practices. They also overwhelmingly described the assessment practices as a good feature of the course, acknowledging that ideally assessment should be continuous and used to plan and improve the teaching and learning process.

It is interesting to note that while all the participants generally commended the PRP assessment practices, most of the teachers were quick to state that the kind of assessment practices advocated by the programme made too many demands on the teachers.

For instance, the demand by the PRP to comprehensively assess learners after every ten lessons was perceived as an impractical undertaking. Teachers frequently cited large class size and insufficient time as the major factors that exerted enormous pressure on the teachers, and ultimately limited their ability to conduct assessments as recommended by the PRP. This

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finding seems to suggest that the designers of the programme did not take time to adequately 'Zambianise' the assessment practices by taking into consideration the Zambian setting. What is interesting is that although the earlier evaluations of the PRP acknowledged that teachers faced challenges in conducting numerous assessments effectively because of large class sizes, this observation seems to have been overlooked (Sampa, 2005).

5.3.6 Monitoring systems

Besides the routine monitoring visits that were conducted by the Ministry of Education officials, the PRP introduced a monitoring system that was solely targeted at literacy-related activities in schools. Monitoring involved checking on how teachers were teaching and how learners were progressing. The monitoring was done in the form of a visit, discussion and observation of lessons. A remarkable change was the introduction of a monitoring instrument called 'My Literacy Monitoring Book' in which all monitoring activities were supposed to be recorded. Monitoring was usually done at five levels:

- ✓ Self-monitoring: Done once a month by each teacher monitoring him/herself.
- ✓ Peer monitoring: Conducted once a term by the teachers visiting one another and observing each others' lessons.
- ✓ School monitoring: Undertaken once per term by the head teachers or senior teachers.
- ✓ Zonal monitoring: Done once a term by the zone in-service coordinator by visiting the class and observing a lesson.
- ✓ External monitoring: Conducted twice a year by provincial, district or national ministry officials who sampled schools and observed lessons.

The first evaluation of the programme acknowledged that costs relating to the monitoring of programme activities were high and were a potential barrier to the effective extension and sustainability of the PRP. However, it was argued that this was not a direct cost that should be attributed to the programme in isolation because the costs would be there, irrespective of the kind of initial literacy programme implemented. Monitoring and class visits were said to be

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essential components of in-service initiatives that strive to upgrade teachers' instruction skills (Kotze & Higgins, 1999).

Findings obtained from the interviews

The participants were asked to identify and comment on the monitoring activities that were introduced as part of the PRP. In general, they all expressed awareness of the various categories of monitoring activities. Their views were also in line with the literature that there were many intensive monitoring activities that took place when the PRP was under the support of donors.

Aside from the routine monitoring of school activities by the Ministry of Education officials, for the first time the country had monitoring that was specifically targeted at literacy activities. It was also revealed that various categories of stakeholders that included donors, education officials and even parents closely monitored what was happening in schools with regard to literacy activities. In this regard, a teacher had the following to say:

> ***… there were many monitoring activities. Apart from the routine checks by school inspectors, the donors themselves came to check on us very often. Ministry officials from the district as well as Lusaka also came to check on how the programme was being implemented. In fact, even parents came to monitor what was happening*** **(Teacher 2, 2013).**

Asked about what they thought about the monitoring activities, most participants acknowledged that the visits were helpful to the teacher, the head, the education officials and those spearheading the programme to ensure that implementation was undertaken as planned. Teachers in particular felt strongly that the visits had contributed greatly to their professional growth and development. They also recognised the constant visits as a source of motivation in their work. One teacher made the following comment:

> ***I always looked forward to the visits because they encouraged me to teach more and to make sure that the children were progressing well. This is because I knew that someone was watching what I was doing*** **(Teacher 4, 2014).**

One education official had the following to add about the monitoring activities:

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> ***It was a good system as it helped teachers to improve quite a lot. It was also reflective. In addition, feedback to the teachers was not delayed*** **(Retired Education Official, 2014).**

However, the participants observed that effective monitoring as advocated by the PRP was not very practical in the Zambian setting owing to a lack of transport, manpower and funds to monitor all the schools. This finding is in line with the initial evaluation of the programme which acknowledged the high costs relating to monitoring of programme activities as a potential barrier to the sustainability of monitoring (Kotze & Higgins, 1999).

One participant brought to light an interesting finding, stating that the monitoring of the education system seen in Zambia at the time donors were 'in-charge' of the PRP was artificial. The participant argued that the Ministry was not genuinely committed as it was only fulfilling the demands of the donors.

5.3.7 Record keeping

The PRP demanded that teachers kept an updated record of every child's performance in literacy. The records were expected to be updated after every assessment. The results were important for the teacher to track learners' performance, plan for remediation and determine which ability groups they were going to be placed in.

The teachers were also expected to keep all records pertaining to monitoring activities in the monitoring book designated for this activity (My Literacy Monitoring Book). The book was supposed to be in the custody of the teachers and made available to any designated person who wished to monitor literacy-related activities.

The literature states that teachers faced challenges when it came to keeping up-to-date information even at the start of the PRP. It was however hoped that as the teachers got used to the system, the new practices relating to record keeping would become easier and that teachers would perceive them as part of their core function (Sampa, 2005).

Findings obtained from the interviews

Asked if they observed any changes regarding record keeping, participants acknowledged that there was emphasis on keeping records that were up to date. The participants explained that it

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was inevitable for records to be kept because the whole design of the PRP demanded teachers and schools to do so. The participants explained that teachers and schools had to keep assessment records as well as monitor literacy-related activities as part of improving the teaching and learning process.

Asked about what their perceptions were with regard to the record keeping that came along with the PRP, the participants were categorical in acknowledging that record keeping was important in the entire teaching and learning process. For example, some participants explained that records were important in order to track the learning and teaching process for the purposes of improving.

Similar to what is recorded in literature, the teachers claimed that it was not easy to keep up-to-date information because of, among other things, large class sizes and other demands like lesson planning, marking of learners' work and so on.

5.3.8 Achievement levels of learners in literacy

Overall, the PRP was judged to have contributed to a significant improvement in the levels of literacy in schools. For example it was revealed that children in Grade 4 in PRP schools were performing one grade higher than their appropriate level while those in non-PRP schools were performing at the Grade 2 level, two grades below what was expected of them (Sampa, 2005; Higgins et al., 2000; Kotze & Higgins, 1999).

Another major report that revealed similar findings was the 2003 National Assessment Survey report conducted by the Zambia Ministry of Education. The study revealed impressive results in favour of 'PRP schools'. The results showed that learners in schools where the PRP had been introduced performed better in the English and Zambian languages than those in ordinary schools where the PRP had not yet been rolled out (MOE, 2003; Kanyika, 2004).

Findings obtained from the interviews

The participants were asked to comment on the performance of learners when the PRP was under the support of donors. The participants confirmed what documents stated that learners' performance had improved significantly.

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> ***We were all excited. It was amazing because a number of our learners were able to read by the end of Grade one* (Teacher 2, 2013).**

When asked to outline the main factors that contributed to the good performance in literacy among learners when the programme was under the support of donors, the interviewees listed the following as especially significant: supply of adequate teaching and learning materials, adequate training in the methodology, frequent and systematic monitoring and the provision of incentives for teachers.

5.3.9 Motivation of various stakeholders

The national coordinator of the PRP in Zambia is quoted to have stated in one of the reports on the PRP that as a result of the changes they saw in the quality of learning by the children, members of the community were supportive of schools. Teachers were also equally motivated to implement the PRP (Sampa, 2005).

In the initial evaluation of the BTL, some stakeholders anticipated difficulty in maintaining the work ethic of teachers, particularly the high morale of teachers, without some incentives, financial or otherwise. It was therefore recommended, for instance, that teachers, especially those handling the Grade 1 learners, who were said to have been working much harder than when they used more traditional teaching strategies, be given incentives such as responsibility allowances to motivate them (Kotze & Higgins, 1999).

The participants were asked to give their perceptions of the motivation among various stakeholders in relation to the PRP when it was under donor support. The majority of the participants confirmed that schools had received some support from members of the community towards the implementation of the PRP. This is because the programme deliberately engaged parents and the community in various related activities.

The participants were also in agreement with what was documented that the morale of teachers was high at the time PRP was under the support of donors. They added that there was a lot of drive to implement the PRP among various stakeholders including politicians. Some of the major reasons that were brought to the fore for the high motivation was the good supply of

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teaching/learning materials, comprehensive and regular monitoring (internal and external), and the provision of incentives for teachers and other implementers of the programme.

A number of participants also isolated the monitoring visits that were regularly conducted as one of the major sources of motivation. Incentives such as refreshments for teachers who remained behind at school in order to prepare for literacy lessons are said to have equally motivated the teachers. Interestingly, the majority also cited the monetary gains as another significant source of motivation for those involved in the programme.

> ***Those who were directly involved in the PRP gained quite a lot. They went for workshops for many days and were given huge amounts of subsitence allowances (night allowances) which motivated them to teach and implement the PRP*** **(Teacher 4, 2014).**

One Ministry of Education official summarised what has been stated above in the following comment:

> ***Motivation usually goes hand in hand with money in Zambia … the teachers were usually called to a central place and they were given a little bit of something (money) ... Teachers didn't have a lot of materials for teaching so when they were given materials after the training, they were motivated to go and teach … And also, they had more visits from the coordinators and standard officers*** **(Education official – National level, 2014).**

Interestingly, the high motivation among stakeholders to implement the PRP was also attributed to the fact that the programme was new. The argument was that the PRP brought with it a new curriculum, fresh teaching/learning materials in schools, a novel methodology and a new policy. Stakeholders were therefore eager to try it out. The teachers and other implementers that had received training on PRP methodology were also motivated to put into practice what they had learnt.

The findings also revealed that the high morale among stakeholders was derived from the donor's interest in seeing the programme succeed. The observation was that donors ensured that regular monitoring was conducted so that every activity was done 'religiously'. Donors also provided various incentives to teachers whose learners 'broke-through' rapidly in order to motivate them to implement the programme.

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5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the background information on the PRP with a view to understanding the context in which the findings of the current study are presented and interpreted.

The documents provided evidence that the PRP introduced 'fresh things' that revolutionised classroom methodology, the language of instruction, teacher and learner behaviour, learner attainment and many other aspects pertaining to the teaching of literacy in Zambia. On the whole, the findings from the interviews conducted with various stakeholders confirmed these changes.

Interestingly, what participants revealed as the major successes and challenges encountered in the implementation of the PRP is similar to what is recorded in the various documents that were analysed. However, a few contradictions were revealed. For instance, while documents seem to suggest that parents' resistance to the use of local languages as the medium of instruction for initial literacy was adequately addressed through sensitisation, participants felt that this was not the case. The participants observed that resistance was still apparent among parents because sensitisation was not adequately done.

It is also interesting to note that while documentation portrayed the PRP teaching/learning materials as 'friendly', participants seem to have had divergent views. For example they observed that the language that was used in the materials was too complex for the average teacher or learner in the city to comprehend easily.

It is noteworthy that the findings of the interviews seemed to have added insight to what is documented on the PRP. For example, while available literature (Sampa, 2005) stressed that the changes the teachers, parents and the entire community saw in the quality of learning by the children was a basis for motivation, the interview findings added systematic monitoring and monetary gains as being the major sources of motivation for the teachers and other implementers of the programme.

Overall, participants' perceptions and data from the analysis of documents were in agreement, recognising that when the PRP was under the support of donors, it had achieved its major goal of raising the levels of literacy among learners in primary schools in Zambia. Simply put, the

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findings of the interviews and the documents paint a picture of the PRP as a success when it was under the support of donors. Many questions arise from this conclusion regarding the programme. A major question is whether the recorded successes were sustained after donors had withdrawn their support. Other questions included whether the major aspects of the programme had been sustained or not and why, and what factors had accounted for their level of sustainability. The next chapter will focus on providing answers to these questions.

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CHAPTER 6: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

PRP after the exit of donors from the perspective of stakeholders, observations and documents

6.1 OVERVIEW

Using a qualitative approach, this study sought to examine the sustainability of education innovations in Zambia that are initially driven by donor support, by examining the case of a literacy programme known as the Primary Reading Programme (PRP).

The aim of the previous chapter was to address the first two research objectives of the study and this was achieved by presenting background information on the PRP with a focus on the events of the programme when it was under the support of donors. The chapter was based on the data that was gathered from the analysis of documents and interviews with various stakeholders. The discussion in the previous chapter is significant because it provides the context in which the subsequent findings of the study are presented and interpreted.

This chapter presents the account of the PRP after the Zambian government had taken over the implementation of the programme entirely. In essence, in this chapter, the third to the sixth research objectives of the study outlined below are addressed. Particular attention will be given to gauging the sustainability of the programme by finding out aspects of the programme that continued or discontinued after donor funding had ceased, and the reasons or factors that could have accounted for the level of sustainability. The findings are based on the major themes that emerged from the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews, the classroom observations and pertinent documents.

- To find out what aspects of the PRP, if any, were sustained after the departure of donor support under the DFID.
- To gain a deep understanding of the reasons why some aspects of the PRP, if any, were sustained after the departure of donor support.

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- To find out what aspects of the PRP, if any, were not sustained after the departure of donor support.
- To gain a deep understanding of the reasons why some aspects of the PRP, if any, were not sustained after the departure of donor support.

It is important to point out that the last research question (What lessons can be drawn from the case of the PRP to explain possible reasons why donor-supported innovations in the education sector in Zambia and related contexts may fail to achieve sustainability?) will not be discussed in this chapter because it will form part of the discussion and interpretation of the findings in the next chapter. This question was meant to draw conclusions from the findings that were expected to surface from the first four research questions.

The chapter is organised into three major sections. Part one provides a summary of the major events recorded in the literature in relation to the PRP after the Zambian government took over. Part two presents an account of the PRP after the withdrawal of donor support based on the data obtained from interviews and classroom observations conducted under this study. The final part of the chapter contains the conclusion which highlights the major issues of the discussion**.**

6.2 THE END OF DONOR FUNDING

In the third quarter of the year 2005, the Acting Director of Teacher Education and Specialised Services under the Ministry of Education called for a one-day meeting to discuss the transition of the PRP. This followed the reality that on 30 November 2005, the PRP ceased to be a 'project' because it was expected to be fully integrated into the normal Ministry of Education structures. Among the major objectives of the meeting were to begin the process of fully integrating all PRP systems, structures and resources into the Ministry and evaluating the draft budget for sustaining the literacy initiative over a 10-year period. The meeting was also aimed at identifying the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders that were going to spearhead the continued implementation of the PRP in its next phase (Ministry of Education, 2005).

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At the time the data for the current study was being collected, the PRP had been in existence in Zambia for close to a decade. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the data for this research was gathered before and after the PRP was replaced by a new literacy programme called the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP). As such, the original speeches of the participants that are quoted as evidence in this chapter refer to the PRP and events surrounding the programme in both the present and the past. The verbatim quotations that refer to the PRP in the past relate to the fact that the participants were interviewed after the PRP had been phased out, while those that refer to the PRP in the present mean that the participants were interviewed while the programme was still in effect.

6.3 PRP UNDER GRZ: WHAT SURVIVED AND WHAT DID NOT SURVIVE – WHY?

The participants were asked to give an account of the implementation of the PRP in schools after the Zambian government had taken over the programme. In particular, they were asked to describe the level of implementation for each aspect/activity that was of interest to the current research; this included the language of instruction for literacy, status of teaching/learning materials, methodology, capacity-building activities, assessment practices, monitoring, record keeping, achievement levels among learners and the motivation of stakeholders. The participants were also requested to identify the factors that facilitated and/or constrained what schools continued to implement, or did not continue putting into practice, respectively.

Gauging the sustainability of the PRP involved finding out the activities and aspects of the programme that continued after donor funding had ceased. In other words, activities and aspects of the PRP that were in existence when the PRP was under the support of DFID were compared to those that were still being implemented after the donors had withdrawn support up to the years 2013 and 2014 (the period during which the data for the current study was being collected).

6.3.1 Language for instructing literacy

The participants unanimously affirmed that the policy of using local languages for the instruction of literacy was 'continued' to a large extent by schools in Zambia. However, it is

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remarkable to note that the majority also contended that the implementation of the policy was only 'partially' sustained since it was adapted to suit various situations. For instance, some teachers admitted that in certain circumstances, they did not employ the prescribed local language but used English and other dominant local languages in their deliver of literacy lessons.

Why was the language policy adapted?

When participants were asked to explain why the language policy was 'adapted', they gave a number of reasons. A major reason was that it was not plausible to use the official language of instruction religiously in Lusaka and other towns in Zambia. This is because learners in these areas come from different linguistic backgrounds and as such they speak various languages. In this regard, one teacher commented:

> ***I try to use Cinyanja most of the times but sometimes I use Cibemba and English because some of my learners are not very conversant with Cinyanja. In Lusaka, most parents speak to their children in English and their mother tongue so using Cinyanja alone disadvantages such children* (Teacher 9, 2014).**

Secondly, a number of participants indicated that the language policy was adapted because the official language used in the teaching and learning materials differed from that spoken by most learners as well as the teachers in Lusaka. This finding negates what is stated in the literature (Sampa, 2005, p. 32) that the PRP 'materials were developed with relevance to the children's environment' based on the vocabulary they used all the time in their communities.

Literature supports the findings under this study that the Cinyanja that is officially used for instruction in Lusaka differs from the language used by most teachers and learners, indicating that Cicewa, the official language of instruction is actually a 'standard Nyanja' regarded as a 'pure' or 'deep' Bantu dialect spoken by the Cewa people of the country of Malawi (Kashoki, 1990; Tambulukani & Bus, 2012).

The Cinyanja that is used in Lusaka is referred to as 'town Nyanja', an urban lingua franca that incorporates the 'deep' Cinyanja and includes English and other local languages. The 'town Cinyanja' also includes a lot of code switching between 'town Nyanja' and English, as well as other languages. Some scholars have therefore claimed that in places such as Lusaka, learners

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are more familiar with the 'town Nyanja' than they are with the 'deep' Cicewa. The difference between the familiar language of learners (town Cinyanja) and the official language of instruction in the classroom (Cicewa) has been deemed to be an obstacle to the effective acquisition of literacy skills among learners in Lusaka Province (Tambulukani & Bus, 2012; Gray, Lubasi, & Bwalya, 2013).

One teacher actually observed that because the language of play for learners was different from that used in the teaching and learning materials, there were instances when teachers shifted their attention from teaching literacy to teaching Cicewa. This particular teacher therefore argued that this state of affairs affected the effective teaching and learning of literacy.

> ***The PRP materials were not written in the so called language of play and as such it was like introducing learners to a new language all together. It was quite inconveniencing and frustrating. So sometimes, instead of teaching reading skills, I ended up teaching the language by translating the words and so on. I was also affected because initially, I had to ask other teachers to help me correctly translate and pronounce a number of Cinyanja words. I think the language in the materials was hard for me as well as the learners*** **(Teacher 8, 2014).**

While most of the participants, the teachers in particular, were of the view that the difference between the learners' language of play and that used in the teaching resources affected the teaching and learning of literacy, there were a few that strongly opposed this view. These participants acknowledged that differences existed between the 'Cicewa' in the PRP materials and the 'town Cinyanja' the learners' used as the language of play but claimed that this did not significantly affect the delivery of literacy lessons. In line with Linehan (2004), they argued that the language and concepts used in the PRP materials were elementary and as such, they were easy to grasp and understand by the average learner and teacher.

Thirdly, some participants felt that the language of instruction for literacy was adapted because of the 'early exit model' adopted by the programme. According to this model, children were expected to learn literacy in a familiar local language in Grade 1 and transition to English from Grade 2 onwards. Participants felt that the sudden shift from reading and writing in a familiar local language in Grade 1 to a different language (English) in Grade 2 was detrimental to some learners. Therefore some teachers adjusted this feature of the policy in that they continued

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using local languages to deliver literacy lessons even in subsequent grades thereby disregarding the feature of the policy that encouraged teachers to use English from Grade 2 onwards. Most participants were of the view that the use of a familiar language should have been extended up to the fourth grade because this was a more effective strategy. The following excerpt summarises this view:

> ***One of the challenges being experienced is the abrupt switch of the language of instruction from a local language in Grade 1 to English language in Grade 2. After children get used to learning in a local language in Grade 1, it is damaging and confusing for them to suddenly switch to English in Grade 2. The best way is for the change to be gradual – bit by bit*** **(Education Official – Provincial Level, 2013).**

Findings obtained from the classroom observations

The findings of the classroom observations did not differ from those that emerged from the interviews. It is interesting to note that the teachers that took part in the classroom observations made an effort to use Cinyanja, the official language of instruction, as they interacted with the learners, confirming the finding from the interviews that schools continued implementing the local language policy. I assume that the fact that teaching/learning materials were written in Cinyanja largely contributed to the use of the official language of instruction.

However, in agreement with the findings of the interviews, I observed that the language policy was not strictly adhered to but rather adapted. First, I observed that there were a few learners who used Cibemba (another dominant lingua franca in Lusaka) and English to interact with the teachers – a sign that the policy had been ‘adjusted’. In addition, I noticed that the teachers and the learners used a lot of ‘town Cinyanja’ and English during the lessons. The teachers also translated a number of Cicewa words during the learning process. In one instance, the teacher had to translate several words as she read a story to learners because they were unfamiliar. An interesting Cicewa word that was translated is ‘kupambana’ which means ‘running fast’. The teacher had to use a combination of ‘town Cinyanja’ and English (kutamanga speed) to explain the meaning of the word to the learners.

In agreement with the findings obtained from the interviews, I also felt strongly that the translation of words during teaching process tended to interrupt the teaching and learning

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process. For example, in one lesson, a teacher was introducing the letter sound ‘W’ to the children. To do so she drew a radio on the board and asked learners to identify the object. She expected the learners to identify the word as ‘wayalesi,’ a Cicewa word that means a radio, so that she could introduce the letter sound ‘w’. Interestingly, learners gave two responses that were different from what was expected. While some learners shouted ‘radio’, an English word, others yelled ‘chilimba’, a ‘town Cinyanja’ word for radio. When the teacher informed the learners that the object on the board was called ‘wayalesi’ in Cinyanja, the learners appeared to be taken aback that they were learning a new word. In the process, the teacher also found it difficult to draw the learners’ attention to the focus of the lesson.

The claims by some of the interviewees that some teachers who were not familiar with the official language of instruction experienced challenges during the teaching process were confirmed by the data collected from the classroom observations. For example, I noticed that one particular teacher ‘struggled’ to pronounce some Cinyanja words when she was reading a story to the learners causing laughter among some learners who were familiar with the language.

Participants were asked to outline the reasons that could have accounted for the ‘continued’ use of the language policy. Below are the major reasons that were recurrently cited by the participants:

- The language of instruction was clearly spelt out as policy in the national documents.
- There was a curriculum in place to back the policy.
- Teaching/learning materials to implement the policy and curriculum were in local languages.
- Stakeholders were exposed to empirical evidence on the advantages of using a familiar language as a medium of instruction.
- Local languages were viewed as the most practical medium to introduce learners to literacy, especially in rural areas where English was not familiar to most children.

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Interestingly, the study revealed that one of the reasons that influenced schools to continue implementing the language policy was the high political will that was exhibited towards the policy as shown in the excerpt below:

> ***I also think that there was a lot of support from the politicians to use local languages as a medium of instruction. This helped to consolidate the*** **policy (Education Official – National Level, 2014).**

6.3.2 Teaching and learning and other materials

In terms of teaching and learning materials, participants described this aspect of the PRP as the most ‘poorly’ sustained.

> ***Among the major things that were difficult to sustain by the Zambian government in the PRP was the continued supply of materials. It was not an easy task for the*** **government (Donor Representative 3, 2014).**

In support of the assertion above, almost all the schools that were sampled reported having PRP materials that were ‘not usable’ either because they were in tatters or some pieces of the many materials for the PRP were missing. Only one school reported having a complete set of the PRP materials because it had purchased a PRP kit the year before.

It also came to light that certain materials that were available at the time the programme was under the support of the donors were no longer in existence. For example, as part of the PRP, initially special calendars were produced and supplied to schools to remind teachers at what stage they were expected to be in a particular month in terms of teaching literacy. After the termination of donor support, these materials were never seen in the schools again.

> ***The government failed to continue purchasing materials for the Primary Reading Programme. Textbooks were few, they could not go round because either they were missing or torn, Teacher Guides had pages missing. The worst part of it was that small items contained in the kit went missing. They were little, little things in the kit that disappeared over time. I remember we were given calendars to remind us on what we were expected to teach. These items have never been seen in the schools again*** **(Teacher 15, 2013).**

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What factors constrained the procurement of PRP materials?

When participants were asked to state the factors that could have constrained the sustainability of 'a good supply' of teaching and learning materials, most of them cited the issue of cost, emphasising that the materials were too expensive for the Zambian government and schools to manage.

> ***The government could not manage when the donors pulled out and one of the biggest costs was the procurement of the PRP kit*** **(Donor Representative 4, 2014).**

Apart from the materials being unaffordable, the participants indicated that there was a lack of materials in schools because they were only supplied once. After this, schools were expected to purchase the materials on their own. This followed the decentralisation policy where grants to schools were directly disbursed to the districts and in turn schools were expected to draw funds from the districts to purchase the teaching and learning materials. The participants reported that the funds that were allocated to schools were too inadequate and erratic to procure school supplies especially PRP materials. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the PRP materials were costly.

> ***Before the decentralisation policy, the Ministry procured and distributed some PRP materials to schools. In fact the Ministry partially did this in 2005. But when the policy of decentralisation was effected, schools were expected to buy teaching and learning materials from the funds they were given. However, because the PRP materials were expensive and schools were not receiving enough funding, they failed to buy the required materials for the programme. A full PRP kit costed about K1, 500 which is approximately $300 but if you look at the allocation that went to the districts and schools, the funds were and are still meagre. Replacing the materials therefore became a challenge and that is how the PRP started dying*** **(Retired Education Official – National Level, 2014).**

The participants added that the situation was compounded by the Free Primary Education policy. They explained that with free education, learners in Grades 1 to 7 were not expected to pay any user fees. Schools therefore claimed that they had no extra income to supplement the insufficient grants from the government. Their argument was that if schools continued collecting user fees, part of the funds could have been used to purchase materials for the PRP.

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> ***The money that is given to schools isn't adequate especially that learners are not paying any fees. In fact I feel that free education has brought down the PRP. If learners were still paying some fees, schools could have had enough money to buy materials for the PRP*** **(Education official – Provincial Level, 2013).**

Interestingly, one participant felt strongly that the government and schools did not procure PRP materials because they did not prioritise literacy. This participant argued that it was a paradox for schools to make claims that they did not have money to procure PRP materials when in fact many of them had managed to purchase school buses.

> ***I can't say PRP didn't work because the materials were expensive, if you prioritise materials you will buy them, no matter how expensive. I will give you a practical example, the procurement of buses has become very familiar in all schools but if you ask the management team of that school whether they have PRP books, they will tell you that they don't have them because they don't have the money. The question is if they can buy an expensive bus then why can't they buy materials? So … the issue is more of the lack of prioritisation of learning*** **(Donor Representative 2, 2014).**

Some participants added that it was difficult to secure the PRP materials because they were not readily available in Zambia. In particular, it was revealed that the PRP materials were produced by well-known publishers in South Africa which only published the materials on request. In fact, some participants indicated that this is the reason why the PRP materials were so expensive – they were produced outside Zambia.

> ***The PRP materials were produced by Longman, Macmillan and Heinemann, companies that were based in South Africa. The materials were only produced once a certain number of copies were ordered. So for these companies, producing the materials was a business deal that was meant to make a profit. This made the veture an expensive undertaking for the schools and Zambia at large*** **(Retired Education Official, 2014).**

The inaccessibility of the PRP materials was compounded by the fact that the Department tasked with the responsibility for developing materials for primary schools in Zambia, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) under the Ministry of Education, was not actively involved in the process of publishing the materials and making them available to schools. Therefore, when schools approached the CDC for the materials, they were equally not certain where and how they could be easily accessed.

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> ***The materials in the kits were not recorded under the CDC evaluation system and therefore there were no records to show where the materials could be accessed. Some found the materials from Longman while others got them from MacMillan. They were not easy to access. Although CDC was the owner of the show in tthe generation of materials, it was totally in the dark as it was equally unaware of the obvious places where to find the kit*** **(Education Officer, National Level, 2014).**

The study findings also showed that one of the other factors that affected the availability of the materials had to do with the PRP kit itself. The participants indicated that because the kit had many pieces, it was challenging for schools to secure the materials.

> ***The PRP kit had too many things, the textbooks, the sentence makers and holders and others ... These materials were not easy to keep. For example because one kit was handled by myself and two other teachers, some pieces got missing as they were exchanged from class to class. In addition, because our school is also not secured, some materials were also stolen*** **(Teacher 15, 2014).**

Other than the issue of security, the participants noted that the many 'bits and pieces' contained in a kit made great demands on teachers as they had to use many of them during the delivery of lessons.

> ***The materials were just too many, there were teachers' guides, sentence makers, then we had the conversation posters, the cards, all those things ... One had to be fast to handle them all in a lesson*** **(Teacher 8, 2014).**

The participants also indicated that the high turnover of people who had been trained to implement the PRP affected the supply of PRP materials. They explained that many people in authority who appreciated the PRP had left the education system. The new people that occupied influential positions seemed not to have valued the programme and as such, they failed to prioritise the procurement of PRP materials. For example, one of the teachers had the following to say:

> ***Some head teachers do not take it upon themselves to purchase the materials because they don't understand the PRP. I will give you an example of our head teacher; he can't be blamed for not prioritising the PRP because he came from a secondary school. He has no heart for the PRP because he doesn't understand it. Those who appreciated the programme have since left the schools as a result of retirement, promotionand so on*** **(Teacher 14, 2013).**

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Why did some schools sustain the procurement of PRP materials?

Asked about the reasons that could have allowed some schools to sustain the procurement of PRP materials despite the various challenges listed above, participants cited one major factor – leadership. The participants explained that schools that had leadership or supervisors who understood the importance of materials in the implementation of the PRP ensured that materials were purchased no matter what.

Findings obtained from classroom observations

It was apparent that materials were in short supply in schools. Overall, the PRP kits were incomplete with most materials being either old or missing. Most learners' activity books had missing pages and there were not enough to go round. A number of classrooms observed contained a bookshelf that pointed to the existence of a 'library corner'. However, the shelves were either completely empty or had 'residues' of the 130 story books that were expected to be contained in them. The pictures to illustrate this point are attached in the appendices (see Appendix 11). This state of affairs confirmed the findings obtained from the interviews that revealed that schools had failed to sustain the adequate provision of PRP materials.

In some classrooms, learners sat on ragged mats which I presumed must have been given to schools initially with the other PRP materials. Teachers who improvised had their learners sitting on sacks. Teachers who did not improvise had their learners sitting on the bare floor. I noticed that it was quite uncomfortable for the learners because the floor was usually dirty and cold.

It was easy to tell that the same class was also used by higher grades because other than a few Grade 1 posters, a wide range of advanced posters for other grades were pinned to the walls. This was against PRP practice which advocates for specific classrooms to be allocated for Grade 1 learners so that they are only exposed to materials appropriate to their level. The PRP conversation posters were not permanently stuck on the wall but only put up during lessons. This was probably done to protect the materials from damage and theft.

It was also evident that the teachers handled too many materials in a lesson. In one class, the teachers' guides, the conversation posters, sentence makers, sentence holders, flash cards and

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other materials were all used by the teacher in the teaching process. In agreement with data obtained from the interviews, this seemed to have exerted a lot of pressure on the teachers.

6.3.3 The PRP methodology

It is interesting to note again that participants perceived the PRP methodology as one of the aspects of the PRP that was not sustained to a very large extent. The following teacher summarises this assertion well:

> ***Teachers do not religiously stick to the methodology. Most of them are using the methodology in part. Some have gone back to the traditional way of doing things while others teach in any convenient way possible. For example, it is common to find that teachers' use of ability groups has been compromised. Learners are more or less placed in ability groups permanently because they are not assessed regularly. Those who 'breakthrough' are not upgraded and so on*** **(Teacher 2, 2013).**

An Education Official had the following to add:

> ***I can give you an example of Southern Province - despite having access to the Teacher's Guide that provided step by step guidance for the methodology, most teachers still found teaching literacy challenging. They twisted the methodology - almost everything they did was the opposite of what was expected of them*** **(Education Official – National Level, 2014).**

From the analysis of the data, it was evident that the teachers experienced many challenges with the PRP methodology that ultimately constrained the 'full' continuation of the approach.

What constrained teachers from fully implementing the PRP methodology?

One of the most frequently cited factors that were reported to have constrained the sustainability of the PRP methodology was the lack of materials. The participants argued that the PRP was designed in such a way that a teacher was supposed to have all the materials at his/her disposal to implement the PRP methodology, as prescribed by the programme. First and foremost, every teacher was supposed to have a Teacher's Guide in which step-by-step guidance was given for the lessons. In addition, the teacher was expected to have other supporting materials in the kit to execute the methodology effectively. Therefore, if an item was missing from the kit, the methodology was unworkable.

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> ***Schools failed to buy the PRP kits because they were expensive; and because of this, teachers did not have the necessary materials to use. At the end of it all, each teacher or each school changed the methodology. The reason is simple, for the PRP methodology to be employed effectively, a teacher was supposed to have a full kit. So if any of the materials in the kit was missing, it was difficult to apply the methodology* (Teacher 9, 2014).**

Most participants also indicated that it was difficult to sustain the implementation of the methodology because it demanded too much from the teachers. These participants observed that the methodology had too many activities that put a lot of pressure on the teachers during the delivery of lessons. Participants also cited the large class sizes in most schools as a major challenge to implementing the PRP methodology. They explained that the large class size limited the teacher–learner interaction, the effectiveness of group activities and the teacher's ability to track down learners' progression.

> ***The methodology was too involving. A lot of activities had to be done in a single lesson. In some schools, the learners were too many to handle and as such, it was not easy to give them individualised attention in line with the PRP methodology. How can one teacher give adequate attention to 80 learners in one class? That is why we made short cuts in the methodology* (Teacher 15, 2014).**

Several participants added that the inability to give teachers incentives for the extra work that accompanied the PRP was another reason that constrained teachers from employing the PRP methodology effectively. Many of the teachers, especially those who handled Grade 1 classes, felt strongly that their role as first grade teachers involved more work than any of the other teachers. Based on this assumption, they held the view that they should have been given incentives in the form of additional allowances. However, since this did not materialise, they ended up adapting the methodology to 'suit their pay'.

> ***Surely we were de-motivated to teach Grade one classes because there were no allowances to recognise and award the extra effort we were putting in. So we also put in what was equal to our salaries* (Teacher 13, 2014).**

The majority of participants also isolated inadequate training as a barrier to the effective implementation of the PRP methodology. The participants explained that the teachers and other key implementers of the programme were not given adequate capacity-building activities to

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help them implement the methodology effectively. Most serving teachers complained that they had not received sufficient in-service training, while those who were graduating from colleges claimed that they were not 'fully baked' during teacher training.

> ***One of the things that happened was that the training of the teachers became inconsistent so we had a situation where some teachers passed through the training while others didn't pass through the training. I don't know if there was a realisation by the government or the authorities that some teachers were being asked to teach without being trained* (Donor Representative 5, 2014).**

Monitoring is another factor that was cited by a number of participants as having affected the continued implementation of the PRP methodology. The study revealed that teachers lacked the necessary support to implement the PRP effectively because there was inadequate monitoring conducted by the head teachers at school level. In addition, the Ministry of Education officials at district, provincial and national level charged with the responsibility of monitoring schools are reported to have inadequately monitored the PRP activities.

Other factors that were cited by some participants as being responsible for the failure to sustain the PRP methodology include the following: Time allocated for literacy was inadequate and as such it was challenging to finish all the prescribed activities in one lesson; some teachers were expected to teach more than one class in a day (double shift) which made them too tired and demotivated to prepare adequately for the lessons, as well as deliver the methodology as prescribed by the PRP. The double shift arrangement was originally adopted to ease overcrowding in classes and to make teaching more controllable in countries attempting to expand access to education (Ogola, 2010).

> ***It is always de-motivating to be given a Grade one class, especially when you handle double classes. If you follow the PRP methodology step by step, you end up tired. To be frank, you work like a slave* (Teacher 14, 2013).**

It is interesting to note that some participants cited lack of commitment and mere laziness by some teachers as one of the factors that constrained the sustainability of the PRP methodology.

> ***Indeed the methodology was quite involving but I must say that some teachers were not just committed. Some of them don't like working hard. They want simple and straightforward***

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> ***ways of doing things. Teachers who were committed used the PRP methodology and their children started reading. I am a living testimony. I used the PRP methodology and my children were always breaking through by term 2 in Grade one. As a result, I was called to different places to encourage the teachers on how to effectively use the PRP methodology* (Teacher 4, 2014).**

Why was the PRP methodology retained in some cases?

Participants were asked to provide reasons why some aspects of the methodology were retained. They cited two major factors. First, they indicated that some aspects of the methodology were similar to what was used in the past. Therefore, they found some activities in the approach easy to implement. Secondly, the PRP methodology was adapted to other subjects like Mathematics and as such it became even more enshrined in the system. In particular, the participants explained that the PRP methodology was adapted to Mathematics through the MARK (Mathematics Rainbow Kit).

> ***Since the PRP methodology yielded good fruits, people pressurised that the practices be transferred to numeracy. The result was the development of a programme called MARK - The Mathematics Rainbow Kit* (Retired Education Official, 2014).**

The participants added that the methodology was also taught in colleges of education, therefore teachers graduated with some knowledge and skills pertaining to PRP. Further, the findings revealed that some school authorities conducted internal monitoring that ensured that the teachers were supported in implementing the PRP methodology. Some participants also noted that the availability of the PRP teaching/learning materials compelled them to use the methodology.

Findings obtained from the classroom observations

From the classroom observations, it was apparent that a number of classes were overcrowded in that they were in excess of the ideal teacher–learner ratio of 1:40. In general, the teacher–learner ratio was 1:55. In one particular case, one class had 102 learners. Consequently, in general there was not enough space to implement the PRP methodology effectively. For example, some classes were too small for the teacher to group learners into four distinctive ability groups. This observation confirms earlier findings that some classroom environments were not supportive of the PRP methodologies (Room to Read, 2010).

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Despite the problem of space, one of the first things that were common to all the classes I observed was that learners were placed in four ability groups that were identified by colours, animals or fruits. This confirmed the findings of the interviews that the placement of learners in achievement groups is one the tenets of the PRP that continued to be implemented. A teaching station was also set up by the teacher in all the classes, as laid down by the PRP approach.

The teachers followed the four main phases of a typical PRP lesson that included the starting together, teaching corner, group activities and sharing together times. An interesting finding is that for all the lessons I observed, teachers who endeavoured to follow every step of the methodology failed to finish all the tasks in the one hour allocated for literacy. Those who followed every step of the methodology did so hurriedly. This confirms the finding from the interviews that it was difficult for teachers to finish all the planned activities in the one hour that was allocated for literacy.

It was also evident that teachers struggled to manage their learners. For example, while the teacher attended to one group, learners in the other three groups became very noisy, and did not concentrate on their work. They only got back to their tasks when the teacher reminded them to do so. This confirms a recurrent criticism of the PRP methodology that it made too many demands on the teacher.

By and large, teachers found it difficult to manage the learners during the lesson because of over-enrolment. I particularly observed that the teachers found it quite challenging to give learners individualised attention as demanded by the PRP.

6.3.4 Capacity-building activities

Generally, there was a strong sense among many participants that the sustainability of capacity-building activities was very poor. This is because few capacity-building activities targeted at literacy or the PRP were reported to have been conducted. For example, most of the teachers that participated in the study indicated that they had not received any formal training or retraining in the PRP course in the last one to two years through the zonal and district structures that were expected to ensure the continuation of these activities.

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Teachers who reported attending some capacity building activities for the PRP did so mainly through Teacher Group Meetings (TGMs) that were held at school and zonal levels. However, they argued that these trainings were usually too short and lacked detail. Most teachers, especially those that were new to the system, reported receiving informal capacity building support from fellow teachers.

What factors challenged the sustainability of capacity-building activities?

The participants revealed a number of factors that challenged the sustainability of capacity-building activities. First, the data showed that as much as the training structures were in place to continue capacity-building activities at minimal cost, there was evidence that they were weak and lacked support, especially finances to help them operate as expected. In this regard two education officials said the following:

> ***We banked on the structures for INSERT (In-Service Training) to spearhead the continued implementation of the PRP trainings. The structures needed a lot of support. Since these structures were not supported, they were unable to lead the sustainability of the PRP. I think we have not done very well in this area and for me, this is the danger that literally every programme we implement may ultimately face*** **(Education Official – National Level, 2014).**

> ***For instance the District Resource Centre Coordinators were tasked to facilitate the continued implementation of capacity building activities related to the PRP. However, they became handicapped because they were not receiving enough resources. Consequently, they ended up being white elephants*** **(Retired Education Official, 2014).**

The findings of the study also showed that it became difficult for capacity-building activities to be continued because the people that were expected to conduct or coordinate the training were phased out of the system. New people, who were expected to ensure that the training took place, did not appreciate the PRP.

> ***In addition, because the government has not continued training, some teachers and others that are expected to train others have left the system. New people have come and they have never been trained. They don't understand PRP so it is never on their agenda*** **(Education Official –Provincial, 2013).**

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A few participants noted that it became difficult to sustain capacity-building activities because of the costs involved. These participants explained that schools could not send their teachers for capacity-building activities outside the schools because there were no funds to meet transport and related allowances. In the Zambian set up, schools are expected to cater for teachers whenever they attend capacity-building activities outside the school in the form of transport, lunch and other allowances.

> ***Over the years, it really became a challenge to send teachers for CPD (Continuos Professional Development) activities at DRCs (District Resource Centres) and other places because schools did not have the money to cater for transport and their lunch. Before, donors used to meet these expenses*** **(Head Teacher 2, 2014).**

A number of participants strongly felt that the problem of lack of capacity-building activities in the PRP was compounded by the fact that new teachers who were joining the education system were 'half baked'. Colleges of teacher education were reported to have inadequately imparted PRP knowledge and skills during teacher training. One of the teachers who happened to have graduated from college the year before and who taught Grade 1 learners attested to the fact that colleges of education 'did not do their job well' in preparing graduating teachers to handle the PRP in schools.

A few participants added that it was a challenge for colleges of education to impart adequate skills and knowledge to the students because the time they spent in college was inadequate. It was explained that during the 1990s, Zambia experienced a sharp decrease in the number of teachers in primary schools. Therefore, the Ministry of Education introduced the Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC) in order to increase the teacher output of teacher training colleges. To achieve this, the residential programme was reduced from two years to one year. The second year was a practical year in which students were expected to teach in schools while studying by means of distance learning (IOB, 2008).

> ***… and to make matters worse, the Ministry of Education introduced what I would call a crash programme for teachers. I am sure you must have heard about ZATEC (Zambian Teacher Education Course). According to this programme, teachers were expected to learn all the theory in one year and begin to teach in the next year. Consequently, they did not***

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> ***acquire enough content in PRP before they were sent to schools* (Education Official, National Level, 2014).**

It is interesting to report that, in fact, some participants felt strongly that the 'downfall of the PRP' started when colleges of education 'relaxed' the training of student teachers in PRP skills and knowledge. They argued that the Ministry of Education could have strengthened pre-service training to adequately prepare teachers in the PRP because the training that was conducted under in-service activities lacked the necessary detail to adequately equip teachers in sound pedagogical skills.

> ***The introduction of ZATEC also contributed to the downfall of the PRP. The students were not adequately prepared to teach the literacy courses when they graduated. What they learnt was more of theory than practice. The lecturers rushed in their work in order to cover the syllabi in one year* (Retired Education Official, 2014).**

What factors facilitated the sustainability of capacity-building activities?

Asked about the factors that could have facilitated the 'meagre' capacity-building activities that were still in existence, participants cited a number of reasons. First and foremost, they acknowledged that, from the outset of the programme, capacity-building activities were conducted through existing structures within the Ministry of Education. It was therefore 'easy' to keep them going. Secondly, the data seems to suggest that personal interest among some teachers to acquire or polish the PRP methodology facilitated the continuation of PRP capacity-building activities. For example, it was revealed that some PRP capacity-building activities were conducted at the school or zonal level, following demands from some teachers to conduct training. Thirdly, the data also indicated that the 'Champions of Change' – teachers or Ministry of Education officials who played pivotal roles in the PRP from the commencement of the programme, understood the need for continued capacity-building activities. Therefore, they tried in the midst of many challenges to conduct training in the PRP.

6.3.5 Assessment practices

The participants reported that assessment practices were sustained to some extent. However, the teachers did not implement them as laid down by the PRP. For instance, it was indicated that instead of assessing learners after teaching a set of words as prescribed by PRP, teachers

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administered tests to learners at the end of the term – a practice that was not advocated for in the PRP. In fact the findings revealed that some teachers reverted back to the old system of merely marking learners' work without necessarily using assessment results to improve the teaching and learning process.

A few teachers categorically stated that they only administered assessments or tests at the end of the term because it was practically impossible to regularly conduct the 'numerous' assessments as prescribed by the PRP approach.

What hindered the effective implementation of assessment practices?

The participants, especially the teachers, cited four major reasons that hindered them from effectively assessing learners in line with the PRP approach. First, they indicated that the class sizes, which had increased especially with the advent of free education, were a major barrier to conducting assessment as prescribed by the PRP. Secondly, they stated that the task was too involved because the teachers were required to mark and keep updated records for all assessment results at close intervals. Thirdly, the participants reported that the time allocated for literacy lessons was not sufficient to conduct the assessments as set by the programme. The teachers further revealed that some of them taught more than one class in a day (double classes) and, as such, their workload had increased because they were required to assess more learners. The following interview excepts summarise the findings above:

> ***Assessing learners using the PRP approach was tiring. We actually went back to the old system of assessing the children at the end of the term. The task was not manageable*** **(Teacher 9, 2014).**
>
> ***Imagine this teacher who has 80 children in a class and he/she must assess all the learners in one hour after teaching 10 lessons. In fact some teachers had double shifts, 80 learners in the morning and another 80 in the afternoon … It is so demanding … So for me, this is what discouraged the teachers from assessing effectively*** **(Teacher 7, 2014).**
>
> ***This can effectively be done in classes where numbers are manageable but with free education, in some schools, there are over 120 learners per class. So although some traces of assessment are still there, teachers no longer assess the learners exactly in the manner it is supposed to be done*** **(Education Officer – Provincial level, 2013).**

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Another factor that was frequently cited by the participants for the discontinued implementation of the assessment practices as prescribed by the PRP was lack of monitoring, especially by the school authorities. The participants argued that the lack of monitoring affected commitment and motivation among the teachers to conducting assessment as set by PRP.

> ***The monitoring systems are weak, both at school and external levels. In addition, assessment is involving and teachers normally shun it especially when no one is closely watching them*** **(Education Official – National Level, 2014).**

Lack of teaching/learning materials, particularly the Teacher's Guide that was expected to guide the teachers on matters of assessment, is said to have hindered teachers from carrying out assessment as laid down by the PRP.

What supported the continuation of assessment practices?

Asked about what could have influenced some teachers to continue assessing learners as set out by the PRP, the following factors were identified: First, teachers were expected to transfer learners in ability groups as they progress in reading, therefore assessment was inevitable; secondly, some school authorities made sure that the teachers conducted the assessments as laid down by PRP; thirdly, teachers who appreciated the assessment practices and genuinely sought to improve the teaching and learning process as well as see their learners 'break through' adhered to the assessment practices as laid down by PRP; and lastly, some teachers conducted assessment as prescribed by the PRP because it was part of the laid down methodology.

Findings obtained from the classroom observations

The findings from the classroom observations confirm the findings obtained from the interviews which indicated that most teachers did not assess the learners as laid down by the PRP. For instance, it is interesting to note that the majority of the teachers were only confident about producing updated records for termly assessments. They were unable to produce up-to-date records of assessments conducted at intervals of less than a term. This was a sign that they generally assessed learners on a termly basis rather than regularly, as prescribed by the PRP.

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6.3.6 Monitoring activities

Many of the participants reported that monitoring of literacy-related activities were poorly sustained.

> ***Monitoring should have been conducted in the same way it was being done during the start of the programme. In fact, if monitoring and evaluation was systematically undertaken, the government could have had the hard evidence that PRP was not working at all*** **(Donor Representative 4, 2014).**

> ***Before, the PRP was frequently monitored. Infact monitors would come and even inspect the teachers' files and the learners' exercise books but with time, this died*** **(Teacher 6, 2014).**

It is interesting to note that all the teachers and head teachers reported that no education official had conducted monitoring of literacy-related activities in their schools in the last one to two years. The monitoring that took place in schools in the stated period is said to have been conventional, involving the inspection of teaching without particular attention on literacy-related activities.

What challenged the sustainability of monitoring activities?

The participants were asked to provide reasons that could have constrained the sustainability of the monitoring activities for the PRP. A lack of funds and transport for Ministry of Education officials at district, provincial and national levels was among the most frequently cited factors for the poor sustainability of monitoring activities. In addition, participants cited inadequate staffing at district, provincial and national levels to conduct monitoring of literacy-related activities as another major factor that challenged the sustainability of monitoring activities.

A few teachers also indicated that it was not possible to conduct certain types of monitoring such as the peer and self-monitoring because of a lack of time.

> ***For example, with peer and self monitoring, lack of time was the cause of its death because teachers were already overburdened with the methodology*** **(Teacher 9, 2014).**

Interestingly, some participants also contended that it was 'a ridiculous expectation' to monitor the PRP because the programme was not being supported.

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> ***Monitors have found it ridiculous to monitor literacy activities because there are no books and there is no training. It is actually abnormal as an inspector of schools to go to a school and monitor literacy which has not been supported*** **(Education Official – Provincial Level, 2013).**

The findings further revealed that officials who were expected to support and spearhead the monitoring of the programme were new in the system. As such, they lacked the necessary understanding of the PRP as well as the zeal to effectively monitor the programme.

> ***At one point, I was surprised to learn that some inspectors of schools knew very liitle about the PRP. I therefore realised that this was the reason why the PRP went down because an inspector can only effectively monitor what he/she is adequately aware of*** **(Teacher 12, 2013).**

The participants further revealed that it had become difficult to sustain regular and systematic monitoring of the PRP because new donor-supported programmes had been introduced in the education sector that drew the attention of monitors.

> ***Actually, it is government's tendency to … regularly monitor them (innovations) when they are still fresh but with time, nobody really cares. So when new programmes like 'Taonga' came in, the PRP was overshadowed as monitors shifted their attention towards the new programme*** **(Teacher 4, 2014).**

What factors helped to sustain monitoring activities?

Asked about the reasons that could have accounted for the monitoring activities that were retained in schools, the participants frequently cited supportive leadership at school level as an important variable for sustainability. The participants explained that head teachers who appreciated the PRP, set aside some time to monitor the teaching and learning of literacy in their schools.

6.3.7 Record keeping

The findings indicated that record keeping was among the most poorly sustained aspects of the PRP in that eventually records for assessment and monitoring activities were not kept up to date.

> ***Records for assessment are not up-to-date in many schools. In fact, I can assure you that you will be fortunate to find the latest weekly continuous assessment records. The obvious records***

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> ***you are likely to find are for the end of term assessments*** **(Education Official – Provincial Level, 2013).**

Reasons for not keeping records up to date

Asked to give reasons why records were not kept up to date as prescribed by the PRP, participants noted a number of issues. The aspect of large class size was frequently cited by the participants as a major challenge. Both the teachers and the other participants explained that owing to large class sizes, the workload increased as teachers were required to assess and keep progress records for all the learners. Other factors that were cited by the participants included inadequate monitoring by school and external monitors, laziness and lack of seriousness among some teachers.

One participant also revealed that the lack of books for keeping records constrained some teachers from keeping records.

> ***Some teachers may have found it difficult to keep updated records because they were not given books to enter the records. Before, such books were made available. Small as this may seem to be, record keeping was affected*** **(Education Official, Provincial Level, 2013).**

Findings obtained from classroom observations

Findings from classroom observations confirmed the findings obtained from the interviews in that in all the schools that were part of this research, I did not find a single teacher who could produce up-to-date continuous assessment records pertaining to literacy. Teachers gave a range of excuses for not updating records that included illness, attending funerals or that the data was yet to be recorded properly because it was entered in a temporary file. Interestingly, there were a few a few teachers were frank enough to state that because they were overloaded with work, they did not find time to update or keep records as prescribed by the PRP.

What factors supported the continuation of record keeping?

Participants revealed that schools that had teachers who had tried to sustain the keeping of up-to-date records did so because the school authorities demanded that they do so. Other participants stated that some schools and individual teachers understood the importance of records and so they tried to keep them current. It was further revealed that some teachers found

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the activity significant, knowing that without records it would be difficult to know whether the teaching and learning process was improving or not.

> ***As an individual, it was important for me to have those records for future reference and planning purposes* (Teacher 14, 2014).**

6.3.8 Achievement levels of learners in literacy

Among all the other aspects of the PRP, the participants collectively agreed that the high levels of achievement among learners in literacy that had been recorded when the PRP was under the support of donors was not sustained at all. Participants revealed that learners' performance had gone down compared to what it had been in the early years of the PRP. This finding was confirmed by the data collected from the review of documents that included the 2006, 2008, 2012 and 2014 National Assessment Surveys (NAS) at Grade 5 level. All the NAS reports consistently reported that learners were not able to read and write at Grade 5 level because they were not grounded in initial literacy skills (MoE, 2006; MoE, 2008; MESVTEE, 2013; MESVTEE, 2015).

Table 6.1: Trends in performance in reading in English at the Grade 5 level

Trends in performance in reading in English at Grade 5 level (2006 - 2013)

Mean % (axis: 30–40)

	2006	2008	2012	2013
Mean %	34.5	35.3	35.4	32.6

Source: Zambia's National Assessment Survey Report – 2013: Learning ahievement at middle primary school level

Similar findings were revealed in the Grade 2 National Assessment Baseline Survey conducted in 2014, using an instrument popularly known as the Early Grade Reading Assessment

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(EGRA) which showed that Grade 2 learners in Zambia were struggling to read fluently. On average, the oral reading fluency rate for local languages ranged from two to eight words per minute, a sign that most learners in Zambia were struggling to string words from a passage into a coherent sentence (Brombacher, Bulat, King, Kochetkova, & Nordstrum, 2015).

What factors challenged the sustainability of good performance?

The recurring responses of many participants when questioned about the factors that could have hindered good performance in literacy included a shortage of PRP materials; inadequate monitoring of literacy activities; inconsistent and inadequate in-service and pre-service training and demotivation among teachers owing to a lack of incentives, especially for teachers who handled Grade 1 classes. These and other factors are reported to have hindered teachers from effectively implementing the methodology as prescribed by the PRP, which ultimately led to poor performance among learners in literacy.

6.3.9 Motivation among stakeholders to implement PRP

The participants reported that the high morale that seemed to have been exhibited by teachers when teaching literacy when the PRP was under the support of donors dwindled over the years. In fact the findings revealed that apart from the teachers, other stakeholders such as officials from the Ministry of Education as well as parents and the community at large lost the earlier zeal for implementing the PRP over time.

What challenged the morale of stakeholders?

Some of the significant factors that were cited for the low morale among various stakeholders to implement the PRP included a lack of teaching/learning materials; poor monitoring of literacy activities by school authorities; the complexity of the methodology coupled with over-enrolment; the scarcity of capacity-building activities; a lack of incentives to motivate teachers during capacity-building activities; and the inability of the government to reward teachers for the extra work they put in to prepare and teach literacy.

> ***I think the decrease in morale is as a result of insufficient materials, this is actually an everyday complaint by the teachers whenever they are visited. I also think that the lack of training and re-training has affected sustaianbility. To be particular, I would also say that the***

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teachers' morale has gone down because they are not rewarded for the hard work they put in **(Education Official – Provincial Level, 2013).**

6.4 PARTICIPANTS' IMPRESSION OF THE SUSTAINABILITY OF PRP

Besides investigating the sustainability of various aspects and activities of the PRP, participants were also asked two concluding questions about the programme as a whole. First, they were requested to give their perceptions on whether the PRP, as a programme, had been sustained or not. Secondly, the participants were expected to give the major reasons for their conclusions. The findings of the study revealed three major views representing three groups. The first group, which represented the majority of the participants, held the view that the PRP was not sustained. The second group comprised a few participants who maintained that the PRP was sustained. The last group consisted equally of a few participants who held the neutral view that PRP was both sustained and not sustained.

6.4.1 Group one – The PRP was not sustained

As indicated above, the first group consisted of participants with the extreme view that the PRP was not sustained. The participants in this group repeatedly described the PRP as a 'dead' programme. Interestingly, this view was held by the majority of the participants and included all the interviewee categories (teachers, head teachers, donor representatives and education officials). However, many of the participants who held this view were teachers and head teachers. This could be attributed to the fact these two categories of participants were among the key people implementing the programme at school level and as such they were alive to the realities on the ground. This group of participants strongly felt that after the withdrawal of donor support, the PRP only existed hypothetically. The following comments provide evidence:

Really, there is nothing happening in schools. PRP is just on paper, an imagination of people who are not in the classroom **(Teacher 15, 2013).**

For me PRP is dead (**Head Teacher 1, 2013).**

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The participants in this category argued that the fact that many aspects and activities of the PRP were not maintained to the same level as when the programme was under the support of donors was evidence enough that it had not survived. For instance, they contended that the fact that there was a shortage of teaching/learning materials in schools meant that the PRP was as good as not being in existence. They explained that it was practically impossible for teachers to effectively employ the PRP methodology without materials. Therefore, they believed that, whatever the literacy programme that existed in the schools, it was not PRP but something else. They added that the fact that the learners were not reading was evidence enough that the programme was 'dead'. Below are some interesting interview excerpts that represent the assertions above:

> ***It is a lie to say we are implementing PRP without materials, practically impossible*** **(Head Teacher 1, 2013).**

> ***The SACMEQ report ... showed that in Zambia more than 60% of our children in Grade 6 were reading at the pre-reading level and that simply shows that the PRP failed and died*** **(Donor Representative 5, 2014).**

> ***Many things affected the sustainability of the PRP. For example, training was not sustained to the same standards; there was lack of the monitoring. Kits that had lost materials were not replaced. So teachers had to do without materials or improvise. This meant that some teachers skipped a particular lesson because a piece of the kit was missing. The head teachers were told that it was the responsibility of the school to replace the PRP materialss but they couldn't afford them because they claimed not to have had enough funds. The production of the kit and other PRP materials was handed over by the government to Longman Publishers, which is a profit making organisation. This was a huge mistake. It should have been the responsibility of local publishers. If the government held rights to produce the materials, they could have been printed at a lower cost*** **(Donor Representative 5, 2014).**

The participants also isolated the Free Primary Education policy and the decentralisation policy as having adversely affected the sustainability of the PRP. For example, as mentioned earlier, as a result of the two policies, schools were unable to procure PRP materials due to inadequate funding.

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Other than the issues mentioned above, participants added a number of interesting factors they perceived to have led to the 'death' of the PRP. Many participants strongly felt that the PRP was not sustained because the Zambian government did not have the capacity (economic muscle) to support the programme at the same level as the donors. In this regard, a donor representative, a former education official and a teacher made the following statements respectively:

> ***I think the sustainability of the PRP was severely undermined after DFID withdrew funding because the government was not ready financially to provide all the support to the same extent that DFID had been doing*** **(Donor Representative 6, 2014).**
>
> ***The sustainability of PRP was very poor … It was poorly supported, poorly funded*** **(Retired Education Official, 2014).**
>
> ***The government tried its level best but it was an expensive programme. I think the government could not manage to maintain it, especially the buying of materials*** **(Teacher 11, 2014).**

There were other participants that felt that the programme was not sustained because it was poorly designed. The argument was that the engineers or decision makers had not taken the Zambian setting into consideration when they were designing the programme. For instance some participants strongly felt that the PRP methodology was difficult to sustain because of the over-enrolments that characterise the Zambian classes. As already mentioned, the PRP is suitable in classes that have a teacher–learner ratio of 1:40. Participants blamed the people in authority for their failure to adequately consult teachers in developing a methodology that was workable in the Zambian context.

> ***In the first place they didn't adequately consult teachers in the making of the programme that could stand a test of time*** **(Teacher 12, 2013).**

There were a few participants who also felt that the PRP was not sustained because it adopted a methodology that did not encourage meaningful learning. According to some participants, by employing the whole-word approach for teaching children to read, emphasis was placed on the children recognising whole words rather than letter names and sounds. This approach is reported to have encouraged rote learning or memorisation, which hinders effective teaching.

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In addition, it was revealed that this method of teaching was against the internationally recognised approach that stresses the importance of literacy instruction that progressively transitions from teaching letter sounds, to the blending of sounds and syllables, to teaching the components of language.

> ***That is where the problem was with PRP. There was no emphasis on sounds. The methodology was made in such a way that the teaching of words and not sounds was emphasised. So it was difficult for children to learn to read because the basics (sounds) were overlooked*** **(Teacher 8, 2014).**

Another participant added that:

> ***The PRP could not be continued because new approaches for effective teaching of reading were introduced globally. PRP used the Language Experience Approach which emphasised teaching reading from a word. The current trend is the phonics-based approach*** **(Retired Education Official, 2014).**

The participants in this category also blamed the 'champions' of the programme for their failure to execute their assignments. The champions referred to in this case were the Ministry of Education Directorates which were given specific responsibility for sustaining the programme when the donors withdrew their support.

> ***When DFID was winding up, there was a meeting to mainstream ... and at this meeting, the roles of each Directorate were spelt out. I remember the document was developed at Intercontinental hotel; each group brainstormed their role and presented. But after DFID left, the Directorates did not stick to the responsibilities they had planned for. Lack of institutional memory came in – people forgot their roles because they were carried away with other activities*** **(Retired Education Official, 2014).**

> ***There is little learning of literacy … This is because someone at the top is sleeping. There has been a breakdown somewhere; schools have been left alone to keep the programme running without tangible support from the Ministry of Education, particularly the people in the Ministry that were given the responsibility to continue the programme*** **(Head Teacher 3, 2013).**

A few participants also indicated that the programme was not sustained because of weaknesses in the way the PRP was handed over to the Zambian government. The findings revealed that

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although an exit strategy had been put in place to facilitate sustainability, the participants argued that it was not effective for two major reasons: Firsty, they felt that the strategy could have been planned for at the start of the programme, implying that it came in quite late. Secondly, and perhaps the most important point, the participants argued that while the exit plan or sustainability plan could have been brilliant and documented, it was practically impossible to implement it because the government just did not have the necessary resources.

> ***The mainstreaming was not very effective because it was done at the last* minute (Education Official -National Level, 2014).**

> ***When the programme was handed over to the government, the impression that was given was that the budget line was there and that it would be continued. However, over the years, it became apparent that the gocernment didn't have enough capacity to keep it running at the same level as DFID* (Donor Representative 5, 2014).**

A few participants added that the PRP was not sustained because the idea of the programme did not originate from Zambians. As a result, the country lacked genuine ownership which ultimately adversely constrained sustainability. According to one participant, the PRP was more of a reflection of donor intents than the wish of Zambia.

> ***If you look at the PRP, the rationale or conviction that low literacy levels was a problem in Zambia wasn't an internal investigation. We did not come to a realisation as a country that our children were not reading and writing. We had another person (donors) telling us that we have a problem. Politically, you might admit that you have a problem and agree that you need help and also concur to be given the money to sort out the problem. However, after the money is finished, you are likely to go back to your old ways because someone just pushed you into doing the new thing. For me, PRP is an example of what I just explained - a programme that was a demonstration of donors' intents* (Donor Representative 2, 2014).**

One of the participants revealed a different dimension of the problem, stating that donor-supported innovations are usually difficult to sustain because of the nature of the relationship that exists between poor countries like Zambia (recipient) and donors (giver) – the superiority–inferiority relationship. The assumption is that the receiving country, which is usually dependent on aid, finds it difficult to go against the views and values of the givers - donors. The recipient therefore accepts any innovation that is proposed, whether it is practical or

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impractical, beneficial or not beneficial. In the process, the genuine dialogue that is required to build ownership for sustainability is jeopardised. In this regard one participant said the following:

> ***… there will always be a problem as long as we are poor. We will always be accepting anything that comes our way. We are the beggars and so when the donors come and say use this approach, we will accept it even if we know that it won't work (Head Teacher 5, 2014).***

It is also important to note that a number of participants isolated 'project mentality' as one of the factors that constrained the sustainability of the PRP programme. These participants argued that the attitude that people have towards donor-supported initiatives affected the sustainability of the PRP in two ways. On one hand, it was revealed that some people failed to genuinely own the PRP because they viewed it as a temporal undertaking that was initiated by donors. Like similar innovations in the past, the PRP was perceived as a 'donor experiment' that was not supposed to be taken seriously. It was further revealed that the PRP was difficult to sustain because, like other donor-supported initiatives, the programme did not achieve any tangible results. Two different participants had the following to say:

> ***In some schools, some teachers think that PRP is just a programme that will be phased out with time just like other programmes. So they don't take it seriously*** **(Teacher 12, 2013).**

> ***I also want to emphasis something. You know many programmes like PRP have been difficult to sustain because teachers and including us the administrators, we are tired of implementing different programmes. Zambia is like an experiment for new things by the foreigners. Yesterday it was PRP, today it is PLP. We don't know what tomorrow holds. So people don't take these programmes seriously because it's like they come and go without really achieving anything at all*** **(Head Teacher 2, 2014).**

Some participants also felt that the PRP, as well as other innovations in Zambia, are unsustainable because during the initiation and implementation phases there is a tendency to pay the people that participate in workshops 'attractive packages'. In addition, those tasked with the responsibility of implementing the innovation are rewarded with 'huge' allowances. As such, some stakeholders develop a habit of seeking remuneration before they can participate in anything that relates to a donor project or programme. Therefore, when donors depart and funds are not available, it becomes difficult to sustain the commitment of those

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expected to implement the innovation without any incentives. For example, one head teacher lamentably observed that over the years, some teachers seemed to have lost the zeal to get involved in PRP activities because there were no incentives attached to the programme.

> ***Sometimes it is becomes difficult to make people work without giving them anything. For example … teachers who participated in implementing PRP when it just started got used to earning some money whenever they attended a workshop or participated in carrying out some programme activities. Therefore, when donors left and there was no money attached to the PRP, some teachers had to be forced to dedicate their time without any benefit. This should not be the case but it is unfortunate because it is a culture that is growing silently. In a government run institution, people must work selflessly, with passion because it is their job*** **(Head Teacher 2, 2014).**

6.4.2 Group two – PRP was sustained

The second cluster comprised a few participants who maintained that PRP had been sustained. This group of participants argued that the fact that the programme had been in existence in schools for close to a decade was evidence that it had been sustained. Among those that held this view was a donor representative who contended that the PRP was a good example of an innovation that was initially supported by donor funding yet sustained because it had stood the test of time. An education official who participated in coordinating the implementation of the PRP when it was under the support of donors was another participant who expressed similar thoughts. This finding seems to suggest that the people who played a pivotal role at the start of the programme (the designers) were not prepared to objectively admit that the programme did not fare well in the area of sustainability.

> ***The reality is that it was sustained … the fact that it was still there a good number of years later, and its remnants are still there. In fact, some aspects of the PRP were used in the the design of the new programme. For me this is a really good example of sustainability. There are many, many examples of what doesn't work. I think potentially, we managed to sustain what we didn't expect for a long period of time because it is almost 10 years ago*** **now (Donor Representative 6, 2014).**

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6.4.3 Group three – PRP was both sustained and not sustained

The third group that equally consisted of a few participants took a neutral position. The main argument advanced by this group was that the PRP had been both sustained and not sustained because while some activities and aspects remained in existence years after the donors had withdrawn support, others were discontinued because of various challenges.

> ***I am saying it is a 50–50 situation because some things were not retained. For instance strict monitoring and the replacement of materials was poorly sustained because the programme suffered many setbacks. However certain things remained, like we still have a few PRP books that are being used. In addition, teachers still use local languages to teach literacy*** **(Head Teacher 6, 2014).**

> ***On one hand the programme was sustained and on the other hand it was not sustained. For me, it was not sustained because learners failed to read and write. Many learners were just mastering sentences without comprehending what they were reading (laughter). However, I also want to believe that it was sustained because the programme changed the way we teach. For example, we are still using a local language to teach literacy and from the time PRP was introdcuecd issues of frequent assessment have been emphasised. In fact these issues are still being emphasised even in the new programme, the PLP (Primary Literacy Programme)*** **(Teacher 8, 2014).**

6.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a description of the data that was collected and later analysed in order to find out the sustainability of education innovations in Zambia that are initially driven by donor support, by specifically investigating the case of a literacy programme known as the Primary Reading Programme (PRP). The chapter endeavoured to merge the data that was collected from interviews and classroom observations with what pertinent documents state in order to triangulate the findings around the key research questions.

To sum up, the findings demonstrated that after donors had ceased to support the PRP, what was documented as a 'success story' turned out to be a 'bad story', as many aspects of the programme are reported to have been poorly sustained. One of the strongest points that came out of the findings was that learners' achievement levels were low despite the PRP 'being in effect'. This pointed to the reality that the main objective of the PRP was not being achieved

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and, as such, it is safe to state that this was conclusive evidence that the programme was poorly sustained.

Overall, the participants perceived the following as the major factors that influenced the sustainability of the PRP: a lack of teaching/learning materials; a methodology that made too many demands on the part of the teachers; inadequate pre-service and in-service training; and insufficient monitoring. Other factors included demotivation among teachers and stakeholders in general in implementing the programme, as well as the inability of the programme to follow an internationally recognised approach to teaching children to read – the recognition of sounds rather than words.

In addition, the evidence generally demonstrates that the aspect of cost is one of the fundamental factors that affected the sustainability of the PRP. Many participants held strong views that the PRP was a highly funded programme by the donors and, as such, the operating conditions of the programme when it was under the support of the donors were somewhat artificial (unrealistic). Therefore when donors withdrew their support and the Zambian government took over the programme, it did not have the financial capacity to support it at the same level. In particular, owing to financial constraints the government was unable to support the procurement of materials, conduct training and monitoring activities and generally motivate the implementers in the same the way as when the programme was under donor support.

What is also evident from the findings is that there were nevertheless a few aspectsof the PRP that were sustained. However, it is necessary to emphasise that even aspects of the programme that appeared to have survived were compromised – altered or customised. Overall, the use of local languages as a medium of instruction for literacy was the most sustained aspect of the PRP. The major reason was that this was in line with the pronouncements of the national policy document in education. The language policy was also sustained to a large extent because it was strongly supported by the politicians. .

Some aspects of the methodology such as the division of learners into four ability groups and adherence to the main phases of a typical PRP lesson (starting together, teaching corner, group activities and sharing together times) were also retained because they were considered

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‘implementable’. The few capacity-building activities relating to the PRP that were sustained were generally conducted at school and zonal levels. These were predominantly driven by teachers who saw the need to receive training in order to teach effectively. Assessment practices were retained although they were fewer and irregularly administered. They were largely influenced by the strict supervision from the school authorities.

In 2014, at the time the data for the current study was being collected, as stated in the methodology chapter, the PRP was phased out and a new approach to teaching early grade literacy was introduced through a programme known as the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP). However, the PLP is beyond the scope of the current research, and accordingly will only be discussed in passing.

However, what is of interest to the current study is that when participants were asked about what they generally thought about the PLP and why it was introduced, an overwhelming majority were quick to compare it with the PRP. They expressed much satisfaction and the hope that the new programme would work more efficiently to improve the low literacy levels among Zambian learners compared to the PRP. They generally believed that the PLP would be sustained because it was developed through a consultative process that addressed the flaws that were exhibited in the old programme – the PRP. The table below summarise the reasons that compelled the participants to contend that the PLP would work more efficiently than the PRP.

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Table 6.2: Participants' perceptions of the differences between the PRP and the PLP

Primary Reading Programme (PRP)	***Primary Literacy Programme (PLP)***
Employed the 'ineffective' whole-word approach that encouraged rote learning	*Employs internationally recognised method that emphasises meaningful learning starting from phonemic awareness (sounds)*
Used costly and complicated materials that were not easily accessible in Zambia	*Uses less costly, simple and locally available teaching materials – encourages TALULAR (Teaching And Learning Using Locally Available Resources)*
Lacked ownership as donors spearheaded the agenda and the key implementers were not adequately consulted	*Genuinely 'born' out of the need to improve literacy in Zambia and designed after a lot of consultation*
Employed a complex methodology that made demands on teachers e.g. division of learners into ability groups	*Employs a simple methodology that is less demanding on teachers e.g. using a whole-class approach*
The sudden switch of learning literacy from a familiar language in Grade 1 to an unfamiliar language in Grade 2 was injurious to the learners	*Use of local language instruction officially extended up to Grade 4.*
The division of learners into aptitude groups was detrimental to 'slow learners' who were incapable of progressing to the next ability group	*Employs a whole-class approach that does not isolate learners according to their abilities*
The transition of the programme from DFID to Zambia had weaknesses e.g. it was done late	*The donors that were supporting programme activities (USAID) had already put in place an exit strategy*

In the next chapter, an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the study findings in the context of the conceptual framework that was developed in Chapter three will be done. The findings will also be discussed in the light of the literature that was reviewed in Chapters two.

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CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

7.1 OVERVIEW

Chapter six presented a descriptive analysis of the data collected from the interviews, pertinent documents and classroom observations. In this chapter, an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the study findings in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter two and the conceptual framework that was developed in Chapter three will be presented. The conceptual framework identified three key factors associated with the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector as follows: 1) project-level factors; 2) contextual-level factors (national and institutional level factors); and 3) project mentality factor.

The current chapter is organised as follows: In the light of the study findings and the literature review, the first section provides the stance of this study with regard to the level of sustainability of the PRP. The second part presents a discussion on the factors that affected the sustainability of the PRP in the context of each of the three propositions of sustainability articulated in the conceptual framework as well as the literature review. The discussion focuses on identifying areas of convergence and divergence between the factors that emerged from the study findings and those pointed out in the conceptual framework, as well as in the literature review.

The third part focuses its attention on unveiling notable lessons drawn from the case of the PRP with regard to the possible factors that can impede or facilitate the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector in Zambia and similar contexts. These lessons and insights are graphically presented in the form of a framework that may be used to explain possible reasons why donor-supported innovations in the education sector may fail to achieve sustainability. The final part presents highlights of the discussion that will form the conclusion of the chapter.

7.2 THE LEVEL OF SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PRP

Drawing a conclusion on whether the PRP was sustained or not sustained was no easy matter, as the study findings revealed that participants had diverse perceptions. While one group of

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participants insisted or maintained that the PRP was not sustained, another group perceived the programme as a good example of sustainability. The third group took a neutral position, maintaining that the PRP was both sustained and not sustained. The differences in perceptions regarding whether the PRP was sustained or not corresponds with the literature (Johnson, Hays, Center & Daley, 2004; Savaya & Spiro, 2012; Blanchet & James, 2014; European Commission, 2006, p. 5) which recognises sustainability as a difficult concept to define, conceptualise and determine because different people interpret the phenomenon from different perspectives.

While the findings revealed three different perspectives regarding the sustainability of the PRP, the current study would like to take the position that the programme was a poorly sustained innovation. This conclusion is made within the context of the definitions of sustainability that were provided in Chapter three. According to Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone (1998), definitions of sustainability should focus on three major aspects: 1) maintenance of benefits; 2) programme institutionalisation; and 3) capacity building. The definitions that emphasise outcomes suggest that the purpose of innovations is to produce benefits. Therefore, if benefits are not produced and maintained, then the innovation has failed to achieve sustainability. On the other hand, the definitions that focus on the institutionalisation of innovations are mainly concerned with ensuring that innovation activities (rather than outcomes) are incorporated into existing organisational and community structures. Meanwhile, the definitions that are concerned with sustainable capacity emphasise the importance of building the capacity of the recipient community or organisation to continue a programme.

In line with the definitions given above, the study findings demonstrate that the PRP failed to maintain its major benefit or outcome – to improve the literacy (reading and writing) skills of learners in primary schools, as a major contribution to the goal of children learning effectively across the school curriculum (DFID, 1998). Secondly, the evidence from the findings indicates that a number of aspects of the programme (e.g. the methodology, procurement of materials, monitoring, and assessment practices) were not successfully institutionalised in schools. Thirdly, capacity building for people to continue the implementation of the PRP was inadequately maintained. By and large, it is therefore safe to conclude that the PRP is an

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example of a poorly sustained innovation that was initially driven by donor support because, to a large extent, it failed to maintain its major benefit – the institutionalisation of activities – and to continue building capacity for the continuation of the programme.

Literature also states that although the definitions of sustainability may differ, the majority of them make reference to one fundamental aspect of sustainability – the ability of the project, programme or system, or community to manage on its own without the help of external support (Lockwood et al., 2003). In line with this definition, it is also safe to conclude that the PRP was poorly sustained, as evidence from the study findings indicate that the Zambian government appeared to have failed to manage the programme without external support.

It is also safe to affirm that the PRP was poorly sustained in view of the fact that it was replaced by a new programme, the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP), briefly alluded to in the previous chapter. According to the findings, there were strong perceptions among the majority of the participants that the PRP exhibited many weaknesses which prevented it from being sustained. For example, the findings indicate that the PRP employed a complex methodology that the teachers found too demanding. In addition, the teaching and learning materials under the programme are said to have been costly, complicated and difficult to access in Zambia.

The evidence from the findings also demonstrated that the PRP lacked ownership because it appeared to have been a '***demonstration of donors' intents'*** **(Donor Representative 2, 2014).** It was therefore inevitable that it would have to be replaced by a new programme that would address the flaws identified in the PRP. Unlike the PRP, the findings revealed that the new programme is perceived to have an undemanding methodology and utilise simple, affordable and easily accessible teaching and learning materials. The findings also indicate that unlike the PRP, the new programme is a 'home-grown' idea because it was ***'born' out of the need to improve literacy in Zambia and designed after a lot of consultation*** **(Donor Representative 2, 2014).**

The finding that the PRP was a poorly sustained donor-supported innovation is not a unique finding because available literature reports similar results (Bossert, 1990; Israr, 2005; Hofisi & Chizimba, 2013; European Commission, 2006; Young & Hampshire, 2000; US Agency for

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International Development, 1988; Bamberger & Cheema, 1990). For example, in 1999 the Australian Agency for International Development's Quality Assurance Group 'found that sustainability was often a weakness across an otherwise strong portfolio of development projects' (Young & Hampshire, 2000, p. 29). In view of what has been discussed above, a critical question to pose is, like other donor-supported innovations, why was the PRP poorly sustained? Arising from the evidence obtained from the case of the PRP, the next section therefore concentrates on unveiling some possible factors that can affect the sustainability of donor-supported innovations.

7.3 WHY WAS THE PRP POORLY SUSTAINED?

On the whole, the findings of the current study established that the propositions articulated in the conceptual framework developed in Chapter three, as well as the literature reviewed in Chapter two, are important for explaining why some donor-supported innovations are poorly sustained. The propositions in the framework included the following: project-level factors, context-level factors and the project mentality factor. These factors are discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

7.3.1 Project level factors

The findings obtained in this study demonstrate that project-level factors are important factors that can influence the sustainability of donor-supported innovations (European Commission, 2006; Young & Hampshire, 2000; Loh et al., 2013). In this study, project-level factors referred to aspects of the design of the programme and its implementation (Loh et al., 2013, p. 34; European Commission, 2006). Under the project-level factors the following sub-factors are discussed: the quality of the project design; the involvement of consortium members; the active participation of the audience; effective management and leadership; and capacity for securing adequate resources including monitoring and evaluation.

a. Quality of project design

It is evident that the design or quality of an innovation is an important variable of sustainability. An important finding arising from the current study is that an innovation with a complicated design is bound to be unsustainable. For example, the findings demonstrated that

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many teachers shunned or altered the teaching methodology advocated by the PRP because it involved many activities during the preparation and actual delivery of the lessons.

The finding above is in line with the literature that suggests that innovations that are unrealistic, unclear, complex, overwhelming and demanding on those implementing them can prove difficult to sustain (Fullan, 1993; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999; Miles, 1986; Loh et al. 2013, European Commission, 2006, Dickerson, 2001; Swerissen, 2007; Fullan, 1991; Young & Hampshire, 2000; Hargreaves, 2002; Blanchet & James, 2014).

The evidence from this study also suggests that innovations that are designed with materials that are beyond the financial capacity of the stakeholders to maintain can be a challenge to sustain. For example, the study established that the estimated cost of equipping one classroom with the required PRP materials was a costly undertaking that was beyond the economic status of the schools and the Zambian government at large This finding is in agreement with the results from a study conducted by Hofisi and Chizimba (2013) that established that projects with overambitious designs that required capital-intensive technologies beyond the financial capacities of the recipients were bound to be unsustainable. Young and Hampshire (2000, p. 9) add that innovations that are designed with excessive amounts of equipment or types of equipment or deliver benefits that are beyond the financial capacity of the stakeholders to operate and maintain can prove difficult to sustain.

The study also established that the ability of an innovation to produce intended outcomes is an important factor in sustainability. For instance, the findings demonstrated that the PRP was difficult to sustain because it was unable to attain its intended purpose of increasing the levels of performance in literacy among learners. The finding suggests that when an innovation is not producing its intended outcomes, commitment among stakeholders is jeopardised, therefore affecting sustainability. This finding is consistent with the literature that indicates that if an innovation does not meet and match the specific needs and constraints of the beneficiaries or it does not produce beneficial outcomes over time, the prospects of sustainability can decline (European Commission, 2006: Dickerson, 2001; Swerissen, 2007).

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A good example is a study conducted by Bossert (1990) on donor-supported health innovations and White et al. (2005) on the sustainability of integrated coastal management projects which revealed that sustainability was associated with the ability of the innovation to produce intended benefits or outcomes. The literature further shows that if beneficiaries of an innovation do not have what is called 'perceived value', sustainability can be difficult to achieve. This is because the people involved in the implementation of the initiative must believe that what they are doing has merit or value before they are likely to support it wholeheartedly (Owston, 2006, p. 17).

The finding that the PRP failed to produce sustainable outcomes is not peculiar to initiatives that are initially supported by donors. For example, in a study conducted by Michaelowa and Weber (2007) to investigate the effectiveness of aid in the development of the education sector, the findings showed that the positive effects of foreign aid on educational outcomes were low. Similar findings were found in a study conducted by Chapman and Moore (2010), where development aid towards the education sector did not achieve a noticeable impact.

The findings of the current study also demonstrate the importance of designing an innovation that is aligned with existing government policies. For example, it is interesting to note that to a large extent, the use of a local language as a medium of instruction for literacy was among the few aspects of the PRP that were continued to a large extent. This is because the innovation was was in agreement with the existing language policy which advocates the use of local languages to instruct learners at primary school level (Ministry of Education, 1996). This finding supports the proposition advanced by Young and Hampshire (2000) that for an innovation to be sustained, its design must be compatible with and supportive of a wider policy environment, as it is then more likely to gain political and institutional support.

The findings of the current study also suggest that donor-supported innovations may be difficult to sustain because of the manner in which they are initiated and implemented. It has been observed that donor-supported innovations often operate under artificial conditions during the initiation and implementation stage. It is interesting to note that in the initial evaluation of the PRP (Kotze & Higgins, 1999), the pilot programme was criticised for operating under artificial conditions that would make the nationwide replication of the programme challenging.

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This observation was proved true because when donors withdrew support and the PRP was 'fully absorbed within the day-to-day school routine', it 'failed to survive the rough and tumble of a more normal environment' (Linehan, 2004, p. 15).

This study therefore concurs with arguments advanced by Giles and Hargreaves (2006, p. 125) that the sustainability of school innovations has a weak record because they tend to be unlike 'real schools'. In addition, they have a tendency of having unusual structures. They are also adequately financed during the initiation and implementation period and handpick the best local teachers and leaders which threatens sustainability and the 'scaling up' of new ideas.

Overall, the evidence from the current study demonstrates that the design and quality of an innovation is an important factor in sustainability. For an innovation to be effectively sustained it must not be too complex to implement; it should be aligned with the wider policy environment; it ought to be within the financial capacity of the beneficiaries; it should produce the intended outcomes; and it must not be initiated and implemented under artificial conditions.

b. Involvement of consortium members

This study also ascertained that a participatory approach in the identification, preparation and implementation of an innovation is an important factor in sustaining donor-supported innovations. For an innovation to guarantee sustainability, partners (donors and recipients) must share common interest in the project and take into consideration each other's values.

In this regard, the study also found that top-down or donor-driven initiatives were likely to be unsustainable because they usually fail to secure the recipient ownership and control of the innovation. Interestingly, Edgren (2003) coined a new word 'donorship', an antonym of 'ownership', to describe the situation where donors control the critical decisions pertaining to the innovation. For example, the evidence from the current study demonstrated that the PRP was difficult to sustain because it was perceived as a foreign idea or 'a demonstration of donors' intents' that were 'imposed' on Zambia (Donor Representative 2, 2014). This finding corresponds with the results of other studies such as the one conducted by Islam (2007), which suggested that the reform under investigation was poorly sustained because donors determined the 'major rules of the game'. Consequently, recipient ownership and sustainability were

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adversely compromised. Islam therefore suggests that to ensure sustainability, donors should support a locally owned initiative.

It may thus also perhaps be inferred that the country lacked the necessary ownership to continue implementing the innovation because of issues surrounding the origin of the programme. As was explained in the background on the PRP in Chapter five, the programme was not 'born in Zambia' but was an adapted version of a primary literacy programme that was originally developed and used in the United Kingdom in the 1960s. Later, it was adapted by a South African NGO into what was called the Molteno Project for developing initial literacy in African languages (Barrett et al., 2007; Higgins et al., 2000, p. 4).

Although the PRP is reported to have been 'customised and 'Zambianised' in order to make it 'relevant' to the Zambian setting (Kotze & Higgins, 1999, p. 21), the idea that the programme was a foreign invention seems to have 'stuck' in the minds of Zambians. This perception also seems to have affected recipient ownership which was critical to sustaining the innovation. This study therefore supports the assertions by Young and Hampshire (2000), European Commission (2006), Flintoff (2007) and others (Hanyani-Mlambo, 2002; Bossert, 1990; Edgren, 2003) that innovations that are expected to result in sustainable benefits should build on local demands and initiatives because they normally guarantee the ownership needed for sustainability.

The findings of the current study also suggest that the nature of the relationship that generally exists between the donors and recipients can affect the sustainability of donor-supported innovations. In many cases, because recipient countries are poor and dependent on aid, they find it difficult to maintain an objective stance and thus to challenge any unfavourable views and values on the part of donors. This dependency on donor support means that recipient countries accept any innovation whether it is beneficial and practicable or not. In such instances, the genuine dialogue that is required to build appropriate levels of ownership for effective sustainability is undermined (Carlsson & Wolhgemuth, 2000). As one participant put it ***'there will always be a problem as long as we are poor. We will always be accepting anything that comes our way. We are the beggars and so when the donors come and say use this approach, we will accept it even if we know that it won't work'*** **(Head Teacher 5, 2014).** Some scholars such as Sachs (1992, p. 65) describe

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the 'non-mutual' or inferiority–superiority relationship which exists between the recipients and the donors as 'the shame of the receiver and the arrogance of the giver'.

Bearing in mind that Zambia depends on international partners to support the education sector and other development projects (Beyani, 2013), the findings of the current study suggest that although the country projected that sustaining the PRP was an impracticable task, the country proceeded to pay 'lip service' to sustaining the programme. This is because as a country in need of support (a 'beggar') it seemed to have had no choice or voice.

Overall, the evidence from the current study has established that innovations that are donor-led or top-down do not develop the required ownership and commitment among the beneficiaries to produce sustainable benefits. This may perhaps be one of the major reasons why donor-supported innovations end up as 'white elephants' once donor aid is withdrawn (Manning, 2012; Kairu, 2013; Young & Hampshire, 2000).

c. Active participation of the audience (direct target groups)

The findings of the current study also demonstrate that the involvement of key implementers during the design of an innovation and its implementation is an important factor in sustainability. This is because it determines a sense of ownership and motivation for those that are expected to implement the innovation (Young & Hampshire, 2000; European Commission, 2006; Hargreaves, 2002; Dickerson, 2001; Fullan, 1991; Flintoff, 2007).

Consistent with the literature (Han & Weiss, 2005; European Commission, 2006), this study particularly found that innovations that are supposed to be implemented at school level should deliberately involve the teachers during the identification and design process if sustainability is to be achievable. This is because teachers are the ones who put the innovation into practice. If for any reason they are side-lined, the chances of frustrating sustainability can be high.

For example, the evidence from the current study suggests that because teachers were not adequately consulted, they lacked the ownership and support required to continue the innovation. In one interesting instance, a teacher is quoted as having said that the PRP methodology did not stand the test of time because insufficient time and resources were allocated for meaningful participation by teachers during the design of the methodology.

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One important piece of evidence that suggests that key implementers' concerns were not actively addressed during the design and subsequent implementation of the PRP can be inferred from the documents that relate to the evaluation of the programme. For example, from the inception of the PRP, some personnel (head teachers, teachers, senior education officials, parents and other stakeholders) that were involved in the pilot programme, which culminated in the PRP, raised a number of issues relating to the characteristics of the programme that were seen as possible threats to sustainability. They identified the complexity of the methodology among the major issues that were seen as potential threats to sustainability (Kotze & Higgins, 1999).

The evidence from the findings of this study indicates that the concerns raised by stakeholders were not used for the purpose of learning lessons. Instead, they were overlooked. Consequently, it is interesting to note that the participants in the current study isolated the involved nature of the methodology as one of the major factors that eventually constrained the sustainability of the programme.

d. Effective management and leadership

The evidence from this study indicates that securing 'innovation champions' or 'cadres of change' to effectively manage and lead the innovation is a critical element of sustainability. This finding is in line with the literature which shows that innovations are most likely to be sustained when there are key people in place to drive the continued implementation of an innovation (Swerissen, 2007; Stofile, 2008; Adelman & Taylor, 2003; European Commission, 2006).

However, the findings suggest that it is not enough to merely secure these champions. Supporting them is of the utmost importance. For example, in the case of the PRP, while the champions of change at school, district, provincial and national levels were identified and tasked to ensure the ongoing delivery of the innovation, they were unable to execute their assignments effectively because they were not adequately supported.

This study also established that staff turnover affected the effectiveness of the champions of change. The findings particularly show that as a result of staff turnover in the Ministry of

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Education, the original champions of change, who appreciated the programme during its inception, were phased out of the system. Those who took over seem to have lacked the motivation, commitment and necessary capacity to ensure sustainability.

All in all, the study established the importance of securing and supporting the champions of change to continue the implementation of an innovation.

e. Capacity for securing adequate resources for continuation

The study established that donor-based innovations were likely to be poorly sustained after the exit of donors if they failed to secure adequate financial, human and material resources. This finding is consistent with the literature that has ascertained the importance of resources in sustaining innovations (Young & Hampshire, 2000; Dickerson, 2001; Datnow, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Saito et al., 2012; Taylor, 2006; Swerissen, 2007). For example, the PRP became difficult to sustain because schools lacked the financial resources required to procure materials for teaching and learning. In turn, the non-availability of teaching and learning resources is reported to have constrained teachers from effectively employing the PRP methodology.

In line with the literature (Young & Hampshire, 2000), this research also demonstrate that in order to enhance sustainability, it is important to develop a sustainability strategy. The strategy should accordingly define the benefits to be sustained and provide guidance on how various aspects and activities of the programme are to be sustained. However, the findings of this study showed that developing a strategy is not enough. The strategy must be developed in good time. In addition, the plan must be realistic and it is also important to secure adequate resources in order to put the strategy into action.

For example, the findings of this study show that a sustainability strategy was devised that stipulated the cost estimates for activities and assets of the PRP that would require maintenance and replacement. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders identified to continue the sustainability of the PRP were laid down. However, the strategy was not effective for two major reasons. First, unlike what is identified as good practice in the literature (Young & Hampshire, 2000), the strategy appears to have been given attention towards the end of

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donor funding. Secondly, perhaps the most important point and consistent with the literature (Young & Hampshire, 2000; Swerissen, 2007), funds to support the continuation of the programme were not available because the government did not have the capacity to meet the running costs of the programme.

While the Government of Zambia may genuinely have lacked the resources required to continue implementing the programme, a notable feature that was overlooked by those presiding over the sustainability strategy was that they were relying solely on funding from the government and had failed to identify other potential sources of income to sustain the innovation after donor funding ceased. This oversight was crucial because when the Zambian government failed to meet the budget, there were no other sources of income to sustain the programme. This finding is in line with the literature (Swerissen, 2007, p. 10), which states that for many innovations, the 'failure to plan for resource sustainability is a critical problem'.

f. Monitoring and evaluation

The study findings also indicate that regular monitoring and evaluation of donor-supported innovations is a critical element of sustainability. This is because the process helps in the identification of issues that could challenge sustainability. The information collected can used to address threats to sustainability with a view to ensuring that the innovation is being implemented as planned and the intended outcomes are also produced.

For instance, the findings of the current study showed that, as a result of inadequate external monitoring of programme activities, schools lacked the support required to continue implementing the PRP as was laid down. Inadequate internal monitoring, particularly by the head teacher, equally affected the way teachers implemented the programme activities, often preventing the effective execution of the methodology. This finding is in line with the major conclusion of an evaluation of another donor-supported innovation – the WEPEP mentioned earlier – which concluded that lack of supervision and inadequate monitoring undermined the effectiveness of the programme (IOB, 2011). This finding also confirms the assertions by Mulkeen et al. (2010, in IOB, 2011) that systems for managing teachers are weak in Zambian public schools. Head teachers who are expected to 'play important roles in managing,

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supervising and mentoring teachers … devote much of their time to dealing with administrative authorities outside the school' (p. 94).

The findings also suggest that the programme was poorly sustained because it was inadequately evaluated. As was observed in Chapter five, after the evaluation of the PRP in 2005, the year when donors withdrew their support, there is little evidence that indicates that the programme was evaluated when it was under the support of the government. The findings of this study therefore confirm the literature that has established that inadequate monitoring and evaluation of innovations can make sustainability difficult (Dickerson, 2001; Swerissen, 2007; Loh et al., 2013; Lockwood et al., 2003).

Overall, the evidence in this study demonstrates that project-level factors related to the design of the project, stakeholder ownership and motivation, adequate provision of resources for sustainability, as well as monitoring and evaluation are important factors that can affect sustainability.

7.3.2 Contextual-level factors

Apart from project-level factors, this study also established that contextual-level factors were important elements in sustaining donor-supported innovations. Contextual-level factors are elements external to the innovation that interact with the innovation and eventually affect its sustainability. These factors are categorised into two broad groups: 1) institutional-level factors also called institutional support factors; and 2) national-level factors, also referred to as national support factors or socio-economic and political factors (European Commission, 2006; Young & Hampshire, 2000; Owston, 2006).

a. Institutional support

In this research, institutional support factors (internal factors) are defined as attributes of an institution or issues within an institution (school) that can affect the sustainability of innovations (Saito et al., 2012; Diamond, 2006; European Commission, 2006). The key variables of this broad factor that were identified as important in sustainability include staff commitment and interest, effective leadership, staff retention, sustained professional development and the availability of resources for continued implementation.

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i. *Staff commitment and interest*

The evidence from this study indicates that innovations are likely to be sustained if staff in an institution is committed to continued implementation. Consistent with the literature (Saito et al., 2012; Diamond, 2006; European Commission, 2006; Datnow, 2005; Young & Hampshire, 2000), this study revealed that the PRP was poorly sustained because the people who were supposed to continue its implementation lacked the necessary commitment and interest.

The findings of this study indicate a number of possible elements that can affect the commitment and interest of staff towards an innovation. A major factor was the lack of the necessary tools (PRP materials) for teaching and learning. This finding corresponds with arguments advanced by Diamond (2006, p. 3) that in a school set up, 'teachers need the best possible instructional tools' if sustainability is to be attained.

Another important finding is that inadequate monitoring of an innovation at an institutional level can affect the levels of commitment and interest among staff. For example, it is interesting to note that some participants felt strongly that the PRP was poorly sustained because 'no one was watching' what was happening in the schools. Other reasons that appear to have affected staff commitment and interest include the inability of the government to provide incentives, financial or otherwise, for teachers, especially for those handling the Grade 1 learners. This is because Grade 1 teachers are perceived to have been working much harder than when they used more traditional teaching approaches.

The findings of this study suggest that commitment and interest are among the most critical factors in sustaining innovations at institutional level. For example, the findings revealed that although the PRP kit was considered to be an unaffordable item by the majority of schools, some schools purchased these kits because they had the commitment to and an interest in the programme. This finding is in agreement with empirical evidence (Swerissen, 2007; Stofile, 2008; Adelman & Taylor, 2003; European Commission, 2006) that has established that commitment is key to sustaining innovations. For instance, in a study on sustainability conducted by Dickerson (2001), the findings indicated that above all else, the programme was mainly sustained as a result of the willingness and motivation of the community to overcome any barriers to implementing the programme.

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ii. ***Effective leadership***

This study singles out effective leadership as an important factor that can determine the levels of sustainability in donor-supported innovations. For example, the study findings demonstrated that schools that had head teachers who were committed to the ideals of the PRP facilitated the continued implementation of the PRP by monitoring how teachers were teaching. In addition, amidst budget constraints, these heads of schools also tried to organise capacity-building activities at school level as well as set aside funds to send their teachers to attend training activities outside the school related to the PRP. Such head teachers are also reported to have marshalled the resources to purchase the PRP materials, even though this was as an expensive undertaking. These findings are in conformity with the literature (Drysdale et al., 2009; Dickerson, 2001; Fullan, 2005; Guhn, 2008; Saito et al., 2012; Sindelar et al., 2006) which isolates effective leadership as a crucial sustainability factor.

iii. ***Staff retention***

This study also demonstrates that staff turnover can affect the sustainability of innovations. In situations where individuals that participated in the initiation and implementation of an innovation leave the institution, the consequences are usually adverse. For example, when the key people who were initially trained in the PRP left the system as a result of retirement, resignation, death, promotion and so on, sustainability was challenged because the people who subsequently joined the system did not appreciate the PRP. This finding supports the literature and the empirical evidence (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Datnow, 2005; Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Sinderlar et al., 2006) that has established that staff turnover is a critical feature of poorly sustained innovations.

iv. ***Sustained professional development***

This study demonstrates that staff development and training is another major factor that determines the sustainability of donor-supported innovations. As was revealed by the study findings, inadequate pre-service and in-service capacity-building activities influenced the effective implementation of the programme activities. For example, as a result of inadequate pre-service training, the new teaching force was inadequately prepared to teach literacy as laid down by the PRP. This study therefore agrees with the statement by Hargreaves and Fink

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(2003: 3) that 'sustainable improvement requires investment … such as the development of teachers' skills, which will stay with them forever, long after the project money has gone.'

The findings of this study also correspond with empirical evidence provided by Bossert (1990) and other available literature (Fullan, 1993; Levin, 2001; Greenlee & Bruner, 2004; Sindelar et al., 2006; Diamond, 2006; Hargreaves, 2002; Florian, 2000; Ertesvåg et al., 2010; Moffett, 2000; Yonezawa & Stringfield, 2000), which echoes the importance of sustaining a well-designed on-going professional development strategy to equip staff with the knowledge and skills required to implement an innovation successfully.

v. *Availability of resources for continued implementation*

This research also established that donor-driven innovations can be difficult to sustain when the resources necessary to implement innovation activities at institutional level are not readily available. The findings showed that as a result of scarce resources (financial, human and materials) at school level, many activities in the programme were either discontinued, reduced or altered. For example, as a result of inadequate and erratic funds, the procurement of PRP materials was discontinued in many schools. In turn, as a result of inadequate materials, the sustainability of the programme was compromised because teachers did not have the appropriate tools to effectively implement the methodology. These findings match those in the available literature (Swerissen, 2007; Berends et al., 2001; Evans et al., 2004; Dickerson, 2001; Datnow, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink 2003; Saito et al., 2012; Taylor 2006; European Commission, 2006) that has demonstrated the importance of resources for continuing the implementation of innovation activities at institutional level.

An important issue to note is that many schools failed to secure the teaching and learning materials required because they were unaffordable. In addition, the findings show that schools could not secure the desired materials because they were not readily available in Zambia. The materials are reported to have been produced in South Africa by British publishing companies such as Heinemann and Longman. This finding is in line with the results established by Room to Read (2010), Folotiya-Jere (2014) and Arden (2012), which also isolated lack of materials as being among the major factors that constrained the continued implementation of the PRP in schools.

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This study would like to make an assumption in agreement with the literature (Aitken, 2012) that the arrangement to produce the PRP materials in South Africa owned by British publishing companies is an indirect demonstration of the control of textbook provision in Africa. As Aitken (2012, p. 29) observes, 'French and British publishing companies, such as EDICEF and Heinemann, continue to hold a monopoly on the textbook market in Africa, due to restrictive regulations imposed by the World Bank and international development agencies that finance African education'. An example is given of the Central African Republic, which was required by the World Bank to purchase all textbooks from France and Canada.

This study would like to further speculate that the plan to produce the PRP materials outside the country is a demonstration of tied aid or aid given on conditions, which demands recipient countries to purchase project or programme materials from companies in donor countries. It is therefore safe to conclude in line with scholars such as Ndikumana (2012), Manning (2012) and Kairu (2013) that some donor-supported innovations fail to produce sustainable outcomes because the support is given with conditions. In addition, the findings of the current study seem to suggest that sometimes when donors provide aid, they have a lot more to gain than lose.

vi. Nurturing a culture that supports change

It is interesting to note that one contextual-level factor that was articulated in the theoretical framework did not emerge as a theme in the study findings under the institutional-level factors. This factor had to do with the importance of nurturing a culture that supports change in the process of sustainability. However, it is worth noting that issues relating to culture emerged under the project mentality factor which will be discussed in detail later in the section.

b. National-level support

In this investigation, national-level factors were defined as elements in the wider environment (social, economic and political issues) that have the potential to influence the sustainability of an innovation (European Commission, 2006). For instance, the findings of this study demonstrated that some aspects of the PRP 'remained in existence' because of high levels of political will. A good example is that one of the tenets of the PRP – the use of local languages as the medium of instruction – is said to have been sustained because it was backed by both politicians and the Ministry of Education.

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The evidence from the current study also demonstrates that the socio-economic context in which innovations are implemented can affect the sustainability of donor-supported initiatives. For example, the study clearly showed that it was difficult to sustain the PRP largely because of economic challenges. In particular, when donors ceased supporting the programme, typical of developing countries, Zambia did not have the resources needed to continue supporting the PRP at the same level as the donors. This finding corresponds with the results of a study that was conducted by Bossert (1990), which concluded that the weak economic context of African cases held back the sustainability of donor-supported health projects.

In addition, in line with available literature (Young & Hampshire, 2000, p. 9), this study demonstrates that 'unless the local economy provides a secure base for meeting future operation and maintenance costs, no amount of good intentions or documented agreements with donors will make these resources available'.

Interestingly, this study revealed contradictory evidence to that found by Hofisi and Chizimba (2013) and Bossert (1990), as well as arguments by Young and Hampshire (2000), which suggests that innovations whose activities are integrated in established administrative structures are more likely to be sustained than those that use parallel structures. This study found that although the PRP used existing structures in the Ministry of Education such as District Resource Centres and Zonal Education Support Teams (ZEST) for implementation, these structures did not facilitate sustainability because they were weakly supported. The evidence therefore suggests that the use of existing structures is not a guarantee of sustainability. What seems to be more important is the support these structures receive once donor funding is withdrawn. Otherwise, as one participant observed, without adequate support these structures end up as 'white elephants'.

In agreement with the available literature, this study also established that changes in government policy can affect the sustainability of donor-supported innovations (Young & Hampshire, 2000). For example, the findings of the current study indicated that the decentralisation policy that was implemented in the Ministry of Education influenced the sustainability of the PRP. On one front, the policy affected the supply of PRP teaching materials. As part of the decentralisation policy, it became the responsibility of individual

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schools to purchase teaching and learning materials. However, because the grants that were given to schools were inadequate and erratic, schools failed to procure the required PRP materials, especially because they were expensive.

The Free Primary Education policy equally contributed to the poor sustainability of the PRP because, with free education, learners in Grades 1 to 7 were not expected to pay any user fees. As such, schools could not generate extra income to supplement the insufficient grants from the government to assist in purchasing the PRP materials. This finding is in line with results of a study conducted by Sindelar et al. (2006), which established that a shift in district and state policy contributed to the demise of the reform that was under investigation.

In a nutshell, this study indicates that the socio-economic and political contexts in which innovations are implemented can contribute to the sustainability of donor-supported innovations; in particular, the economic status of a country, the political environment and changes in policies can affect sustainability.

7.3.3 Project mentality factor

The findings of this study also demonstrate that project mentality, which is defined as the negative attitude, mindset or culture people develop towards any donor-funded initiative, can frustrate sustainability (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Dwight, 2004, p. 1; Israr, 2005; Islam, 2007). This negative 'energy' that is usually developed over time can be triggered by various circumstances.

In some cases, project mentality is caused by an influx of innovations into the education sector and the observation that a number of them unceremoniously disappear once donor support ceases. As one participant observed, stakeholders in education seem to have developed negative perceptions about donor-supported initiatives, regarding them as mere 'experiments' that must not be taken seriously because they abruptly disappear once donors leave. This finding conforms to the results of a study conducted by Kapambwe (2006) in which participants projected that a USAID supported programme in Zambia was likely be discontinued because, like other innovations in the past, it was perceived to be merely a project whose activities were going to come to a close once donor funds ran out. Islam (2007, p. 131)

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equally established that 'due to the availability of too many donor-supported projects' in Bangladesh, beneficiaries developed negative attitudes which eventually constrained sustainability.

This study also established that in certain circumstances, the negative 'energy' towards donor-supported innovations is developed because some innovations have failed to achieve their intended purpose. For instance, in the case of the PRP, the findings suggest that stakeholders developed a negative attitude towards the innovation because the programme was unable to meet its intended target – raising achievement levels in literacy among learners.

Interestingly, the findings of the current study also reveal that the negative 'energy' towards donor-driven initiatives can spring from the manner in which innovations are introduced and implemented. Since donor-supported innovations are adequately financed during the initiation and implementation phase, the people involved in the programme are usually awarded with 'attractive' monetary and other forms of incentives. Consequently, some of them perceive the innovation as a source of revenue. Their involvement in the activities of a programme is therefore motivated by financial gain rather than genuine commitment to achieve the programme objectives. Eventually, this negative habit grows into a tradition or culture of seeking remuneration before participating in any activity related to donors.

For example, some stakeholders (including the champions of change) are reported to have lost the zeal to continue the implementation of the PRP because there were no tangible incentives associated to the programme after the end of donor support. It was reported the PRP was 'abandoned' when attention was shifted to new donor-supported innovations that were offering 'attractive packages'.

Overall, the findings of the current research are in agreement with the literature (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Dwight, 2004; Islam, 2007; Israr, 2005) that asserts that sustaining donor-supported innovations requires 'escaping' the project mentality. The illustration below provides a summary of how the negative attitude or culture towards donor-supported innovations can affect sustainability.

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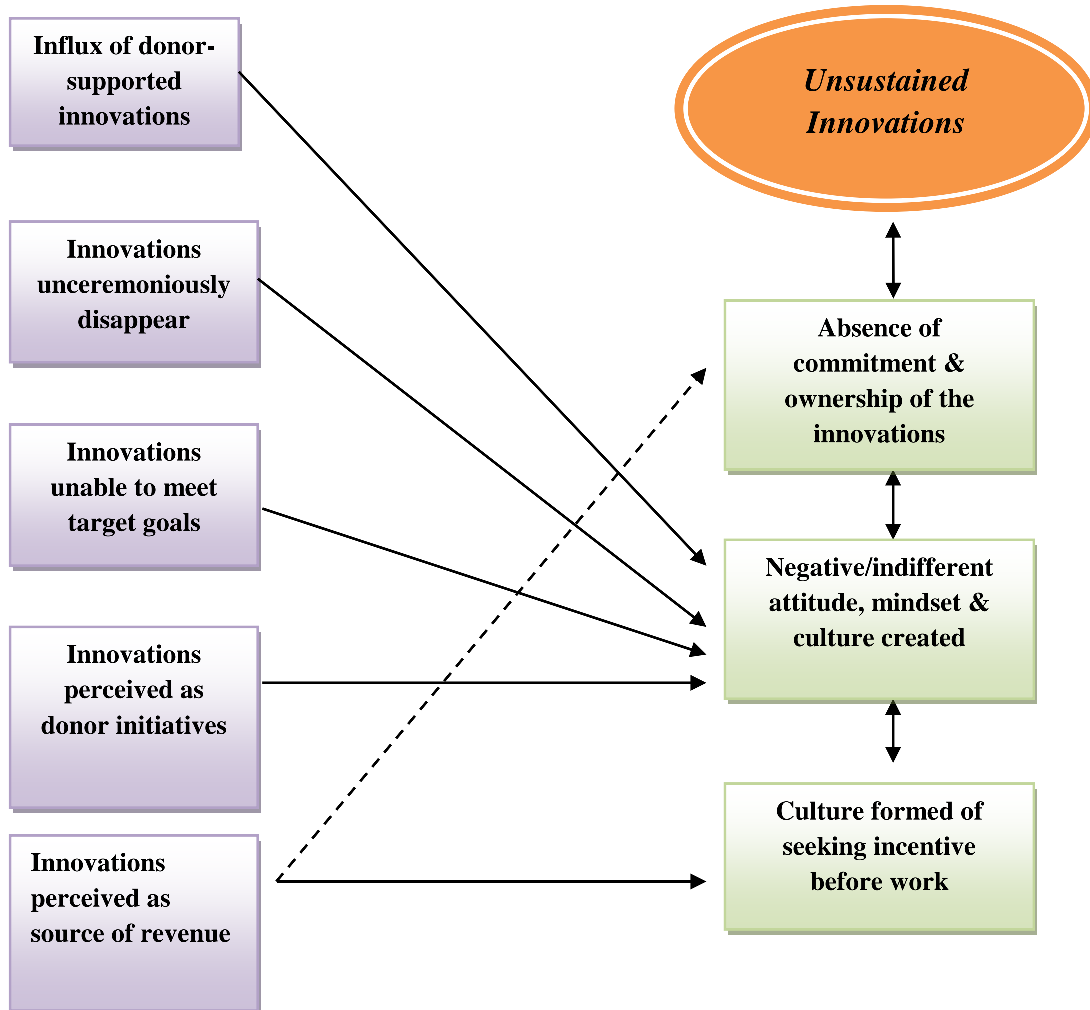

Figure 7.1: Frame for understanding how project mentality can affect sustainability

7.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the major factors that can be used to explain the poor sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector were discussed. The identified factors were based on evidence that was generated from investigating the case of a literacy programme that was implemented in Zambia. This study has shown that project-level factors that are related to the nature of the innovation and its capacity to meet the needs of the beneficiaries were associated with sustainability. In addition, stakeholder participation in the preparation and implementation of the innovation, as well as its monitoring and evaluation, were regarded as important elements of sustainability.

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Context-level factors that influenced sustainability were related to both institutional and national (socio-economic and political) factors, such as the economic muscle of the country to keep the innovation going after the cessation of donor support. This study also demonstrated that the 'project mentality', which basically constitutes the negative attitude stakeholders develop towards donor-supported innovations, can hamper sustainability. Figure 7.2 below provides a summary of the lessons drawn from the case of the PRP and proposes a framework that may be used to explain possible reasons why donor-supported innovations in the education sector in Zambia and related contexts may fail to achieve sustainability.

The focus of the next chapter is to draw the conclusions of the study, highlight the major contribution of the study to the body of knowledge, make relevant recommendations as well as suggestions for further research.

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Project Level Factors

- Complicated and overambitious innovation
- Innovation unable to achieve intended goals
- Innovation not monitored & evaluated
- Innovation does not fit in existing host country policies
- Innovation donor-led and void of mutual dialogue
- Innovation designed with materials beyond capacity of host country
- Innovation implemented under artificial conditions
- Inadequate human, financial & material resources to support the innovation

Donor-supported innovations not sustained

Contextual Level Factors

Institutional Level

- Lack of staff interest & commitment
- Ineffective leadership
- Lack of resources for continued implementation
- Inadequate & inconsistent training
- Staff attrition

National Level

- Host country unable to manage & maintain an innovation
- Lack of political support for the innovation
- Changes in policies
- Structures to facilitate sustainability not supported

Project Mentality

- Influx of donor supported innovations
- Innovations unceremoniously disappear
- Innovations perceived as donor initiative
- Innovations unable to meet target goals
- Innovations perceived as source of income
- Absence of commitment & ownership
- Negative / indifferent attitude, culture created towards innovations
- Culture formed of seeking incentive before work

Figure 7.2: Frame for conceptualising the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector

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CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 OVERVIEW

In this chapter, the major conclusions drawn from the findings of the study are presented. The chapter also contains the recommendations of the study, highlights the major contribution of the study to the body of knowledge, and makes suggestions for further research.

To achieve this, the chapter is divided into five major sections. The first section provides a brief background to the problem under investigation and the purpose of the study. The second segment contains the conclusions of the study while the third section outlines the recommendations of the study. The last two sections present the contribution of the study to the body of knowledge and make some suggestions for further study.

8.2 A SUMMARY OF THE BACKGROUND AND AIM OF THE STUDY

Zambia is a developing country located in the southern part of Africa. The country is considered to be one of the poorest nations in the world. In order to meet its development expenditure, the country depends on foreign aid. Currently, 30 per cent of the national budget in Zambia is met by development aid (Beyani, 2013; Appolinario, 2009; Wohlgemuth & Saasa, 2008; Appolinario, 2009), with the education sector being among the major beneficiaries of aid. Through such assistance, a number of development projects and programmes are implemented.

However, a concern for stakeholders in education is that many of the innovations that are initially supported by donor aid are poorly sustained or worst of all disappear with the termination of donor support. Despite this observation, little was formerly known about the factors that influence the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector in Zambia.

Motivated by the need to address the identified gap, this investigation was undertaken to find out the sustainability of innovations that are initially supported by donor funding by specifically examining the case of a literacy programme known as the Primary Reading Programme (PRP). The PRP was introduced in 1999 in the anticipation that it would help to increase literacy levels

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among primary schools learners in Zambia. For seven years, between 1999 and 2005, the programme was supported by a £10.2 million grant from the United Kingdom's government Department for International Development (DFID) after which the Zambian government took over. This study particularly sought to find out the activities and aspects of the PRP that continued after donor funding was withdrawn, as well as develop an understanding of the reasons or factors that accounted for its level of sustainability.

In order to achieve this, seven major research questions were formulated. The first question was concerned with establishing the nature of support provided by donors towards the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) during the seven-year partnership with Zambia. The second question was aimed at ascertaining the changes that were observed in schools following the introduction of the PRP. The purpose of the first two questions was to provide the context in which the findings of the study were going to be presented and interpreted.

The next four research questions were concerned with finding out what aspects of the PRP were sustained and not sustained after the departure of donor support and the reasons for the state of affairs. The aim of the two questions was twofold: to gauge the sustainability of the PRP and secondly to find out the factors that could have constrained or facilitated the sustainability of the programme. The intention of the last question was to draw lessons from the case of the PRP with regard to possible factors that may impede or facilitate the sustainability of innovations in the education sector in Zambia that are initially propelled by donor funding.

8.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

Overall, the findings of this investigation demonstrated that the three broad groups of factors derived from the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter two and the review of available literature are potential determinants of sustainability. In particular, this study found that innovations can become unsustainable as a result of factors relating to the nature of the innovation and how it is implemented (project-level factors); issues within the setting of an institution or organisation and the broad environment (contextual-level factors) and the negative

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attitudes among stakeholders towards donor-supported innovations (project mentality). In line with the above, this study makes a number of conclusions:

1. An innovation that proves to be complicated and overwhelming for those expected to implement it can be challenging to sustain.
2. An innovation that is designed with equipment or materials that are beyond the financial capacity of the beneficiaries to maintain can equally lead to unsustainable outcomes.
3. An innovation that fails to produce intended outcomes tends to lose the support of stakeholders, which in turn puts sustainability at risk.
4. An innovation that is well matched with existing policies of the host government has greater chances of sustainability because it is more likely to gain political and institutional support.
5. Donor-supported innovations may be difficult to sustain because they are usually initiated and implemented under artificial conditions. During the initiation and implementation phases, there is usually an abundant supply of finances, the use of unusual structures and a tendency to pick the best personnel to implement the innovation. Therefore, after the termination of donor support, it becomes difficult to replicate the innovations because they begin to operate under 'normal circumstances' where resources are usually scarce and the general conditions are 'unsuitable'.
6. An innovation that is donor-led or imposed on the beneficiaries is likely to be unsustainable. An innovation that has greater chances of sustainability is usually based on a 'mutually respectful negotiating process between funders and host government' (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998, p. 98). This process cannot be over-emphasised because it usually guarantees ownership and commitment among the beneficiaries, which is crucial for sustainability.
7. The involvement of key implementers from the design of an innovation to its implementation is an important factor in sustainability. Employing participatory

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approaches helps to build ownership and motivation for those that are expected to put the innovation into practice, which ultimately promotes sustainability.

8. Securing ‘innovation champions’ to effectively manage and lead the innovation is a critical sustainability variable. However, securing these champions is not enough because the support they receive determines how well they facilitate sustainability.

9. Donor-based innovations may be unsustainable if adequate financial, human and material resources are not secured. An important finding is that a lack of adequate financial, human and material support can adversely affect sustainability. This is in consideration of the fact that innovation activities and aspects could either be radically altered or discontinued if the necessary resources are not made available.

10. It is important to develop a sustainability strategy to provide guidance on how various aspects and activities of the programme are to be sustained. However, developing a strategy does not guarantee sustainability. The strategy must be in-built or ‘fed into the design’ of the innovation, realistic and achievable (Young and Hampshire, 200: 10). Above all else, adequate resources must be secured for implementation; otherwise the plan will probably just remain on paper.

11. Regular and frequent monitoring and evaluation of donor-supported innovations is a critical element of sustainability. This is because the process provides a platform for collecting valuable diagnostic information to confirm whether an innovation is being implemented as planned and outcomes are being produced or not. Monitoring also helps to motivate the people that are expected to continue the implementation of the innovation.

12. The attributes of an institution or issues within an institution (school) can affect the sustainability of innovations. The key elements under this broad factor identified as important in sustainability include the level of staff commitment and interest, effective leadership, staff retention, sustained professional development and the availability of resources for continued implementation.

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13. Factors in the broad environment (social, economic and political matters) can affect the levels at which a donor-supported initiative is sustained. Under the economic factors, in agreement with the assertion by Young and Hampshire (2000, p. 9), the general 'level of development of any particular country can influence prospects for sustainability'. Furthermore, 'unless the local economy provides a secure base for meeting future operation and maintenance costs, no amount of good intentions or documented agreements with donors will make these resources available'. This study therefore strongly agrees with another statement by Young and Hampshire (2000, p. 6) that '[i]f donors wish to see benefits sustained, they should, on a case-by-case basis, also consider taking on responsibility for contributing to solving operation and maintenance cost problems in a more direct way … particularly in countries with very limited budgetary resources'.

14. While this study supports the proposition that innovations that are implemented within existing government structures help to achieve sustainability, this does not warrant sustainability in itself. What is of cardinal importance is the support these structures receive to facilitate sustainability.

15. Changes in government policy can affect the sustainability of donor-supported innovations. In this regard, the study supports the proposition by Young and Hampshire (2000, p. 3) that the policy framework for recipient countries 'needs to be carefully analysed during design and policy factors taken into account. If it is appropriate, policy reform could be included as part of the design'.

16. The concept of project mentality was found to be a significant variable in explaining why some donor-supported innovations are poorly sustained. The basic finding under this factor is that if people develop a negative attitude, mindset or culture towards donor-funded initiatives, sustainability can be frustrated. The findings revealed that this counter-productive culture is triggered by various circumstances which include:

    a. The influx of donor innovations in the education sector.

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b. The observation that a number of donor-driven innovations unceremoniously disappear once donor support ceases.

c. The inability of innovations to achieve their intended purpose.

d. The manner in which innovations are introduced and implemented – because donor-driven initiatives are adequately financed during the initiation and implementation phase, the people involved in the programme are usually given incentives. Consequently, some perceive the innovation as a source of revenue and develop the habit of seeking payment before participating in any activity related to donor-supported initiatives. When donor funding ceases and incentives are no longer available, their commitment also diminishes.

8.4 POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY, POLICY, PRACTICE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings that emerged from the study, a number of possible implications for theory, policy, practice and future research have been proposed as a way to ensure the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector in Zambia and similar contexts:

1. Donor supported innovations should be designed in such a way that the beneficiaries find them easy to understand and implement.

2. Overambitious innovations designed with inputs and activities that are beyond the capacity of host countries to manage and maintain should be avoided. Accordingly, before an innovation is introduced, donors should assess the capacity of the host country to manage and maintain the innovation without external assistance (conduct a situational analysis).

3. In countries with weak economic profiles, donors should consider supporting some key operation and maintenance costs even after the termination of major support.

4. Donor-supported innovations should be compatible with the existing policies of the partner government. This is critical because this enhances political and institutional

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support. In this regard, donors must examine the policy framework carefully when designing an innovation.

5. Donor-supported innovations should be initiated and implemented under conditions that are as close to reality as possible so that from inception there is some level of assurance that the innovation is feasible and manageable.

6. Donor-funded innovations should be formulated through a 'mutually respectful negotiating process between funders and host government' (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998, p. 98). This process cannot be over-emphasised because it generally ensures government ownership and commitment, which is essential for sustainability.

7. Ownership and motivation among the key implementers of the innovation must be developed through the employment of participatory approaches from the initiation of an innovation to the implementation stage.

8. Innovation champions, who are identified to manage and lead the innovation, must receive the necessary support to execute their assignments effectively.

9. Before a new innovation is introduced, similar innovations should be evaluated in order to draw lessons from previous experience.

10. A sustainability strategy to provide guidance on how various aspects and activities of the programme are to be sustained should be developed. Emphasis should be placed on developing an in-built exit plan at the design stage of the innovation. This should be clear, explicit and attainable. It is of the utmost importance that adequate financial, human and material resources are secured to ensure that the strategy is put into practice.

11. Regular and frequent monitoring and evaluation of innovations should be conducted so that diagnostic information is collected to check whether the innovation is being implemented as planned and the intended outcomes are being produced or not. In addition, progress should be monitored and feedback obtained on the challenges encountered by stakeholders, as well as identifying possible solutions.

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12. Institutions should be provided with the necessary resources (financial, material and human) to continue the implementation of innovation activities efficiently.

13. Capacity-building activities should commence at the beginning of the innovation and continue throughout the programme with key implementers, giving them the knowledge base and skills they need to implement innovation activities effectively.

14. The structures that are used to implement the innovations must receive the necessary support to facilitate sustainability.

15. Appropriate strategies must be devised and employed to reverse the effects of project mentality or the negative mindset, attitude and culture that stakeholders may have towards donor-supported innovations. The strategies could include the following:

    a. Employing rigorous participatory processes during the initiation and implementation stage in order to develop a sense of ownership;

    b. Donors supporting locally initiated innovations;

    c. Conducting capacity-building activities targeted at re-culturing or changing stakeholders' attitudes and beliefs that may challenge sustainability

    d. Donors implementing innovations within established government structures so that stakeholders avoid perceiving them as temporal undertakings or 'experiments' by donors.

8.5 CONTRIBUTION TO THE GROWTH OF KNOWLEDGE

An original contribution of this study to the body of knowledge is its emphasis on exploring the project mentality factor – which according to Israr (2005, p. 457) is a critical yet an 'unexplored and unrealised' factor in the sustainability of donor-funded initiatives in the public sector in developing countries. Subsequently, this study has developed a frame to understand the way in which the project mentality factor can affect the sustainability of donor-supported innovations. In

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addition, arising from the study findings, the research also identifies practical ways of addressing the project mentality factor.

Another important contribution to the expansion of knowledge is the fact that this study has addressed an identified gap in literature – the paucity of accounts that show the factors that specifically influence the sustainability of donor-driven innovations in the education sector. In this regard, a frame for conceptualising the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector that can be applied to Zambia and similar contexts was developed.

A limitation identified in the literature is the fact that scholars have not yet sufficiently understood and agreed on the conditions under which innovations in the education sector are likely to be sustained. Through the development of a framework on sustainability, the findings of this research have in a way made a contribution to the quest by scholars to appreciate the possible reasons why donor-supported innovations may fail to achieve sustainability.

A major limitation of this investigation is the fact that the findings cannot be generalised as a result of the design of the study. However, the strength of this investigation lies in its contribution to empirical data that can inform policy and practice on matters surrounding the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education system.

8.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

I would like to end this thesis by quoting Sir Isaac Newton: ‘To explain all nature is too difficult a task for any one man or even for any one age. ’Tis much better to do a little with certainty, and leave the rest for others that come after you, than to explain all things by conjecture without making sure of anything.’ In line with these sentiments, future research could focus on the following:

1. A longitudinal case study could be conducted on the sustainability of donor-supported innovations in the education sector. This approach would enhance the accuracy of the information taking into consideration the idea that some participants found it difficult to recall some events given that much of the data collection was ex post.

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2. A similar study could be conducted that would employ quantitative methods in order to generalise the findings.
3. An in-depth investigation could be instituted to understand the concept of project mentality and how it affects sustainability and to identify effective ways of addressing it.

8.7 A REFLECTION ON MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

During my research journey, I learnt many things, which are difficult to condense into a few paragraphs. First and foremost I would like state that on commencement of my studies I experienced a massive shift in my life. This is because I made the decision to pursue my studies while working on a full-time basis. This meant that I had to balance my time well; otherwise, I was not going to make it. It was quite difficult to adjust because other than working full time, I had three children and a husband to attend to. At the outset, I found it very difficult because there was so much pressure from all quarters. During the tough times I was encouraged by my family and supervisor to 'run towards the mark' – obtaining my PhD. I was also encouraged by the fact that I was wanted to realise my childhood dream of going all the way in my studies. In addition, what kept me going was the fact that during my studies I learnt many new things.

One of the most valuable things I learnt was the skill of scholarly writing. I had to develop the art of academia, I had to immerse myself in the scholarly literature, and I had to find scholarly writing; I had to learn how to carry out research in the library and to conduct 'endless' searches on the internet.

Another major lesson I learnt was that coming up with a topic for a study is an overwhelming task. It needs a lot of time, reading and critical thinking, coupled with a lot of consultation. It is a back and forth process that often seems like a fruitless mission. However, with focus and endurance, things became clearer and clearer.

For a number of years, I was exposed to quantitative research skills and knowledge in my work as a Senior Research Officer under the Examinations Council of Zambia. I was therefore excited to apply these quantitative methods, such as the descriptive statistics and inferential statistics,

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conducting a survey and the like, in my PhD. After it became clear what my topic should be, I discovered that a qualitative approach would be most appropriate. In the proposal that was sent to the University of Pretoria for ratification, I justified the inclusion of a quantitative aspect, suggesting that my study would employ a mixed method approach. However, I was advised that the problem I was investigating did not warrant such an approach.

Conducting a research study that was purely qualitative seemed like an uphill battle. One of the reasons why I found it so challenging was that I was convinced that a quantitative paradigm was more 'scientific' than a qualitative approach. I held the strong view that there is only one correct description of reality. Conducting a qualitative research study meant that I had to forsake my old beliefs and embrace the ontological worldview of multiple realities (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Bowen, 2005; Reeves & Hedberg, 2003).

With a lot of reading, it became clear to me that quantitative and qualitative approaches have distinctive purposes (Maree, 2016). What radically changed my thinking was the statement by Bowen (2005, p. 209) that 'quantitative and qualitative research have distinct and complementary strengths'. Notably, what I learnt during the process of preparing a thesis based on qualitative research methods was that a qualitative approach is just as rigorous as any other quantitative approach. As earlier indicated in the thesis, qualitative research approaches have their place in the world of research and, as such, they should not be seen as an easy alternative to a quantitative approach. Secondly, qualitative studies equally include detailed methods and a thorough approach to data collection, data analysis and report writing that employs persuasive writing so that the readers experience 'being there' (Bowen, 2005).

The long process of obtaining ethical clearance from the University and securing consent from organisations and individuals taught me the importance adhering to ethics in research. During data collection and analysis, I came to appreciate the reality, that is, that qualitative research requires a lot of time and patience in order to obtain 'deep and rich data', as well as to make credible conclusions (Locke et al., 2010).

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One other important thing I learnt about qualitative approaches is that a number of stages in the investigation are ongoing rather than once-off activities. For example, my review of the literature continued until the writing of my last draft. Data analysis also started soon after I started collecting data and continued up to the very end of my research. Even after I had 'completed' my data analysis, I often went back to my participants to collect additional data or probe and probe. I also learnt the importance of reading, reading and reading; consulting experts and paying attention to rigour, detail and trustworthiness throughout the research process (Bowen, 2005)

Perhaps the most important thing to note is that my 'journey' was a rich and rewarding experience that served to enhance my knowledge and skills as both a researcher and a writer for scholarly publications.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: GENERAL LETTER OF CONSENT

Date:..

....

....

....

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Request to Conduct Research

I am a postgraduate student studying at the University of Pretoria. One of the requirements is that I conduct research and write a report about my work. My research topic is 'Sustaining implementation of innovations beyond donor support: a case study of a literacy programme in Zambia.'

In line with the above, I write to request your permission to conduct an interview with you that will take between 30 minutes and 1 hour. This research project will involve interviews with various education stakeholders in Lusaka as well as the observation of lessons for Grade one classes in sampled schools.

Kindly note that the information obtained will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and shall only be used for the purposes of the study.

I hope that the information obtained from this research will bring out suggestions and/or recommendations to enhance the sustainability of current as well as future education innovations that are initially driven by donor support.

I look forward to your positive response.

© University of Pretoria

Yours sincerely

Name of student: **Charity Lengwe Meki Kombe**
Contact number: **+260 977 815434**
E-mail of student: cmekikombe@yahoo.com

Name of supervisor: **Prof Chaya Herman - University of Pretoria**
Contact number: **+27 12 4205665**
E-mail of supervisor: chaya.herman@up.ac.za

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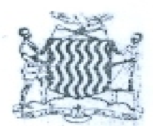
APPENDIX 2: LETTER OF APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

All communications should be addressed to the Provincial Educational Officer

Telephone:250655



In reply please quote: No. PEO/101/5/4

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EARLY EDUCATION

PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICER
LUSAKA REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS
Private Bag RW 21E
LUSAKA

1st March, 2013

The District Education Board Secretary
LUSAKA

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

This serves to introduce Charity Lengwe Meki Kombe who is pursuing her PhD with University of Pretoria. She has been permitted to conduct her research in your schools. Her research topic is "Sustaining Implementation of Innovation Beyond Donor support – A Case Study of the Primary Reading Program in Zambia."

The research project will involve interviews with Head teachers, teachers and observing Literacy lessons in session.

Kindly help her successfully conduct her research in your district.

Neroh H. Mwanapabu
PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICER
LUSAKA PROVINCE

/mn

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APPENDIX 3: CONSENT LETTER TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

21st October 2014

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education
P.O. Box 50093
LUSAKA

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Request to Conduct Research

I am a postgraduate student studying at the University of Pretoria. One of the requirements is that I conduct research and write a report about my work. My research topic is 'Sustaining implementation of innovations beyond donor support: a case study of a literacy programme in Zambia.'

In line with the above, I write to request your permission to conduct interviews with senior members of staff under three Directorates of the Ministry of Education who were actively involved in the Primary Reading Programme, which was implemented in primary schools between 1999 and 2013. The interview will take between 30 minutes and 1 hour. The three Directorates of interest to this research include the following: Standards and Curriculum, Planning and Information and Teacher Education.

Kindly note that the information obtained will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and shall only be used for the purposes of the study. I hope that the information obtained from this research will bring out suggestions and/or recommendations to enhance the sustainability of current as well as future education innovations that are initially driven by donors.

I look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely

Name of student: **Charity Lengwe Meki Kombe**
Contact number: **+260 977 815434**
E-mail of student: cmekikombe@yahoo.com

Name of supervisor: **Prof Chaya Herman - University of Pretoria**
Contact number: **+27 12 4205665**
E-mail of supervisor: chaya.herman@up.ac.za

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APPENDIX 4: CONSENT LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

All communications should be addressed to:
the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education
not to any individual by name.

Telephone: +260 211 250855/251315/251283
251298/251318/251291
251306/251319

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

In reply please quote:

No.:............................

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EARLY EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 50093
LUSAKA

15th April, 2015

The University of Pretoria
Education Faculty
Pretoria
SOUTH AFRICA

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: DATA COLLECTION – CHARITY L. MEKI KOMBE

This letter serves as confirmation that Charity L. Meki Kombe a student at your University in the Faculty of Education collected data for her research project titled 'The Sustainability of Donor Supported Innovations': the Case of a Literacy Programme in Zambia.

Mrs. Kombe successfully interviewed Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education officials under three (3) Directorates as follows: Standards and Curriculum, Planning and Information and Teacher Education.

Yours Sincerely

Chishimba Nkosha
Permanent Secretary
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EARLY EDUCATION

/bm

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APPENDIX 5: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Informed consent for participants

Introduction

I have understood that Charity Lengwe Meki Kombe, a postgraduate student studying at the University of Pretoria is conducting a research, as one the requirements for her doctoral degree. Her research topic is '*Sustaining implementation of innovations beyond donor support: a case study of a literacy programme in Zambia.'*

This research project will involve interviews with various education stakeholders in Lusaka as well as the observation of lessons for Grade one classes in sampled schools.

I have read and understood the purpose of the study, and all my questions regarding this project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw without any consequence or prejudice. I also understand that all the information I will provide will be kept confidential and only used for academic purposes.

I therefore agree to voluntarily participate in this study.

Signature: ________________________________

Date: ____________________________________

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APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL A – TEACHERS

Date of interview: ………………………………………………………….….

Time of interview: ……………………………….….……….…………...

Name of school: ………………………………………………………….

Name of teacher: …………………………………………………………

Gender: ……………………………………………………………………..

Number of learners……………………………………………………….

Contact details ………………………………………………………..…….

Duration of interview: ……………………………………………………

- *How long have you been a teacher?*
- *How long have you been teaching in this school?*
- *What grade(s) do you teach?*
- *What do you like the most about your job?*

Part I: Let us talk about the PRP in general:

a) What is your understanding of the Primary Reading Programme (PRP)?

b) Why was the PRP introduced?

c) How did you learn about the PRP? (where, when, how)

d) How was the PRP introduced in your school?

e) What role did you play in the PRP?

f) What are your general thoughts about the PRP?

Part II: Let us discuss the PRP when it was under the support of donors:

a) What was the nature of the support given towards the PRP?

b) What are your thoughts regarding the support given towards the PRP? (Sufficiency of the support to meet the PRP activities and objectives).

c) What sort of changes did you observe in your school and other schools following the implementation of the PRP?

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Probe participant on the changes observed in the areas listed below:

i. Medium of instruction for literacy
ii. Teaching/learning and related materials
iii. Methodology to teach literacy
iv. Capacity building activities
v. Assessment practices
vi. Monitoring
vii. Record keeping
viii. Achievement levels in literacy among learners
ix. Morale among various stakeholders towards the programme *(teachers, head teachers, education officials, parents).*

Part III: Let us talk about the PRP when it was under the support of the Zambian Government – after the termination of donor support

a) Do you still implement the PRP?
b) Can you explain why?

(Probe participant on the aspects/activities of the PRP that are still in effect and find out why. *(Focus on the areas listed below))*

i. Medium of instruction for literacy
ii. Teaching/learning and related materials
iii. Methodology to teach literacy
iv. Capacity building activities
v. Assessment practices
vi. Monitoring
vii. Record keeping
viii. Achievement levels in literacy among learners
ix. Morale among various stakeholders towards the programme *(teachers, head teachers, education officials, parents).*

Part IV

a) How can you describe the sustainability of the PRP?

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b) What are some of things that you think influenced the level of sustainability of the PRP you have just described?

Part V

a. Is there anything else I should know concerning this interview that you feel is important?
b. Do you have any question(s) for me?

Thank you for your participation

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APPENDIX 7 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL B – HEAD TEACHERS

Date of interview: …………………………………………………………….….

Time of interview: ………………………………….….……….………….

Name of school: ……………………………………………………………….

Name of head teacher: ……………………………………………………..

Gender: ……………………………………………………………………..…

Contact details ……………………………………………………..……

Duration of interview: ……………………………………………………..

- *How long have you been heading this school?*
- *What are some of the things that you enjoy about your job?*

Part I: Let us talk about the PRP in general:

a) What is your understanding of the Primary Reading Programme (PRP)?

b) Why was the PRP introduced?

c) How did you learn about the PRP? (where, when, how)

d) How was the PRP introduced in your school?

e) What role did you play in the PRP?

f) What are your general thoughts about the PRP?

Part II: Let us discuss the PRP when it was under the support of donors:

a) What was the nature of the support given towards the PRP?

b) What are your thoughts regarding the support given towards the PRP? (Sufficiency of the support to meet the PRP activities and objectives).

c) What sort of changes did you observe in your school and other schools following the implementation of the PRP?

Probe participant on the changes observed in the areas listed below:

i. Medium of instruction for literacy

ii. Teaching/learning and related materials

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iii. Methodology to teach literacy
iv. Capacity building activities
v. Assessment practices
vi. Monitoring
vii. Record keeping
viii. Achievement levels in literacy among learners
ix. Morale among various stakeholders towards the programme *(teachers, head teachers, education officials, parents).*

Part III: Let us talk about the PRP when it was under the support of the Zambian Government – after the termination of donor support

a) Do you still implement the PRP in your school?

b) Can you explain why?

(Probe participant on the aspects/activities of the PRP that are still in effect and find out why.

(Focus on the areas listed below))

i. Medium of instruction for literacy
ii. Teaching/learning and related materials
iii. Methodology to teach literacy
iv. Capacity building activities
v. Assessment practices
vi. Monitoring
vii. Record keeping
viii. Achievement levels in literacy among learners
ix. Morale among various stakeholders towards the programme *(teachers, head teachers, education officials, parents).*

Part IV

a) How can you describe the sustainability of the PRP?

b) What are some of things that you think influenced the level of sustainability of the PRP you have just described?

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Part V

a) Is there anything else I should know concerning this interview that you feel is important?

b) Do you have any question(s) for me?

Thank you for your participation

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APPENDIX 8 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL C – MINISTRY OFFICIALS

Date of interview:…………………………………..……………………………………...

Time of interview: ………………………………….……………………………….…

Ministry level – national, provincial, district or other ……………………..…………..…

Name of Interviewee: ………………..………………………………..……………….

Gender: ………………………………………………………..……….……………………

Contact details ………………………………………………………..…………………..

Duration of interview: ……………………………………………….…………………...

- *What is your current position?*
- *What are your major duties?*
- *How long have you been in the position?*

Part I: Let us talk about the PRP in general:

a) What is your understanding of the Primary Reading Programme (PRP)?

b) Why was the PRP introduced?

c) How did you learn about the PRP? (where, when, how)

d) What role did you play in the PRP?

e) What are your general thoughts about the PRP?

Part II: Let us discuss the PRP when it was under the support of donors:

a) What was the nature of the support given towards the PRP?

b) What are your thoughts regarding the support given towards the PRP? (Sufficiency of the support to meet the PRP activities and objectives).

c) What sort of changes did you observe in schools following the implementation of the PRP?

Probe participant on the changes observed in the areas listed below:

i. Medium of instruction for literacy

ii. Teaching/learning and related materials

iii. Methodology to teach literacy

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iv. Capacity building activities
v. Assessment practices
vi. Monitoring
vii. Record keeping
viii. Achievement levels in literacy among learners
ix. Morale among various stakeholders towards the programme *(teachers, head teachers, education officials, parents).*

Part III: ***Let us talk about the PRP when it was under the support of the Zambian Government – after the termination of donor support***

a) Are schools still implementing the PRP?
b) Can you explain why?

(Probe participant on the aspects/activities of the PRP that are still in effect and find out why. *(Focus on the areas listed below)*

i. Medium of instruction for literacy
ii. Teaching/learning and related materials
iii. Methodology to teach literacy
iv. Capacity building activities
v. Assessment practices
vi. Monitoring
vii. Record keeping
viii. Achievement levels in literacy among learners
ix. Morale among various stakeholders towards the programme *(teachers, head teachers, education officials, parents).*

Part IV

a) How can you describe the sustainability of the PRP?
b) What are some of things that you think influenced the level of sustainability of the PRP you have just described?

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Part V

a) Is there anything else I should know concerning this interview that you feel is important?

b) Do you have any question(s) for me?

Thank you for your participation

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APPENDIX 9 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL D – DONOR REPRESENTATIVES

Date of interview: ……………………………………………….………………………..….

Time of interview: ……………………………………..…..…….…………….…………

Name of agency …………………………………..…………………..…………….

Name of interviewee:…………………………………………………………………….

Gender: ………………………………………………………….…..…………………….

Contact details:.…………………………………………………....…………………….

Duration of interview: ……………………………………………………………………….

- *What is the major mandate of your agency?*
- *What is your current position?*
- *What are your major duties?*
- *How long have you been working for the organisation?*

Part I: Let us talk about the PRP in general:

a) What is your understanding of the Primary Reading Programme (PRP)?

b) Why was the PRP introduced?

c) How did you learn about the PRP? (where, when, how)

d) What role did you play in the PRP?

e) What are your general thoughts about the PRP?

Part II: Let us discuss the PRP when it was under the support of donors:

a) What was the nature of the support given towards the PRP?

b) What are your thoughts regarding the support given towards the PRP? (Sufficiency of the support to meet the PRP activities and objectives).

c) What sort of changes did you observe in schools following the implementation of the PRP?

Probe participant on the changes observed in the areas listed below:

i. Medium of instruction for literacy

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ii. Teaching/learning and related materials
iii. Methodology to teach literacy
iv. Capacity building activities
v. Assessment practices
vi. Monitoring
vii. Record keeping
viii. Achievement levels in literacy among learners
ix. Morale among various stakeholders towards the programme *(teachers, head teachers, education officials, parents).*

Part III: Let us talk about the PRP when it was under the support of the Zambian Government – after the termination of donor support

a) Are schools still implementing the PRP?
b) Can you explain why?

(Probe participant on the aspects/activities of the PRP that are still in effect and find out why. *(Focus on the areas listed below))*

i. Medium of instruction for literacy
ii. Teaching/learning and related materials
iii. Methodology to teach literacy
iv. Capacity building activities
v. Assessment practices
vi. Monitoring
vii. Record keeping
viii. Achievement levels in literacy among learners
ix. Morale among various stakeholders towards the programme *(teachers, head teachers, education officials, parents).*

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Part IV

a) How can you describe the sustainability of the PRP?

b) What are some of things that you think influenced the level of sustainability of the PRP you have just described?

Part V

a) Is there anything else I should know concerning this interview that you feel is important?

b) Do you have any question(s) for me?

Thank you for your participation

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APPENDIX 10 CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Classroom observation tool for a PhD study titled *'Sustaining implementation of innovations beyond donor support – a case study of a literacy programme in Zambia.'*

Date of observation: ____

Time of observation: ____

Name of school: ____

Name of teacher: ____

Sex of teacher: ____

Number of learners: _____ Boys: ______ Girls: ____________________

Observation number (1, 2, 3 4): ____________________________________

Duration of observation: ____

Criterion	Elements	Yes	No	Comment
Time table	The timetable provides for literacy lessons			
	The time table has allocated the prescribed contact teaching time for literacy i.e. 1 hour			
	The literacy lesson is completed in the prescribed contact teaching time			
Class organisation	Talking walls (conversation posters) with appropriate vocabulary are displayed in class			
	Tables of learners in four groups clearly labelled according to ability groups			
	Teaching station is set up appropriately			
	Class library (library corner) setup appropriately			
Materials	Class library has 130 Rainbow readers graded according to red, yellow and green levels with other course materials			
	Teacher has Teacher Guide			
	Teacher has all other materials (Learner's and Teacher's word cards, Sentence maker, Dowel for sentence makers, Phonic flip chart, Learner's and			

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	Teacher's sentence holders, a carry bag and slate)			
	Learners' Activity books are available			
	Learners' Activity books are sufficient			
Language of instruction	Literacy lessons are taught in the prescribed local language			
Methodology	Learners divided in four distinctive ability groups			
	The teacher teaches only one group at a time of about 12 - 20 learners			
	When teacher attends to one group, the other three groups are given activities at their level of performance			
	The lesson routine has **three parts:** starting time, teaching time and sharing time.			
	Starting Together lasts for **15 minutes**			
	Teaching Corner takes **20 minutes**			
	Group Activities last for **20 minutes**			
	Sharing Together activities take **5 minutes**			
Monitoring	Teacher has monitoring book also known as *My Literacy Monitoring Book*			
	Monitoring book is filled in by all appropriate individuals and is up to date			
Assessment	Evidence produced that teacher tracks learner performance			
	Assessment records are up-to-date			

GENERALCOMMENTS:

____

____

Tool adapted from Sampa (2005, p. 96)

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APPENDIX 11 PHOTO FOCUS

The rudiments of the PRP reading corner in two sampled schools

© University of Pretoria

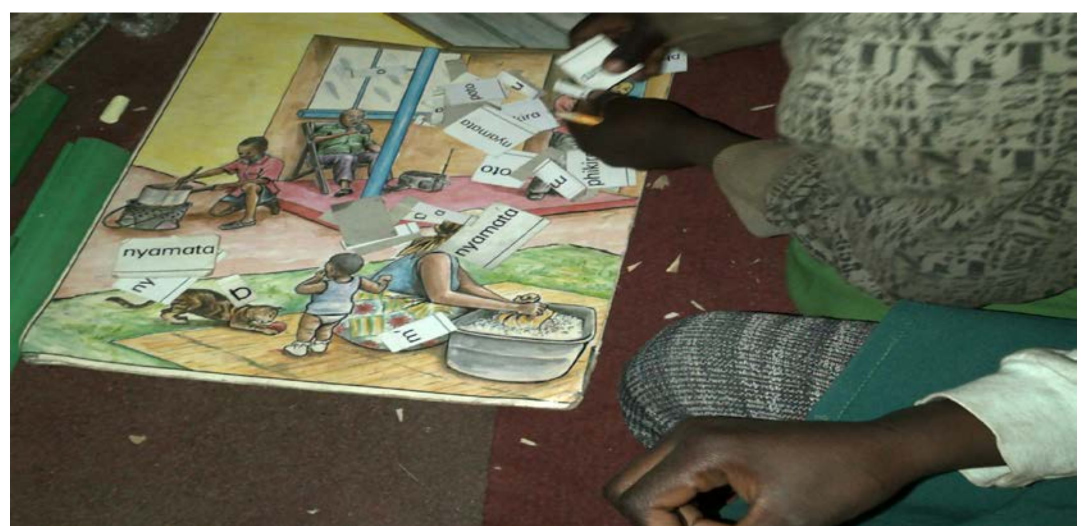
Grade one learners seated on an old mat and others on a sack listening to a story being told by their teacher (School A)

Grade one learners (from one ability group) seated on a mat being given instructions for the activity of the day by the teacher (School B)

© University of Pretoria

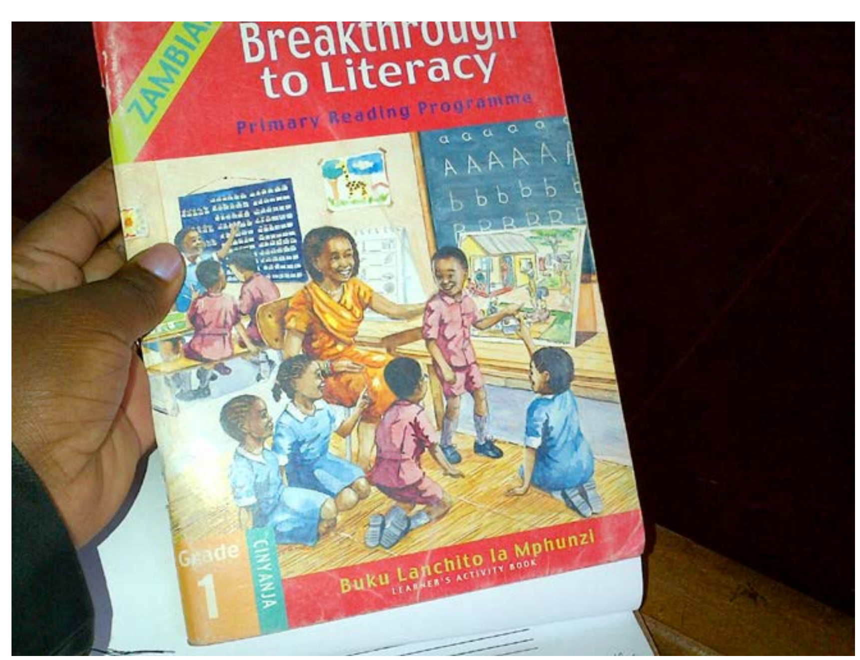
Word cards on a sentence holder

Some word cards

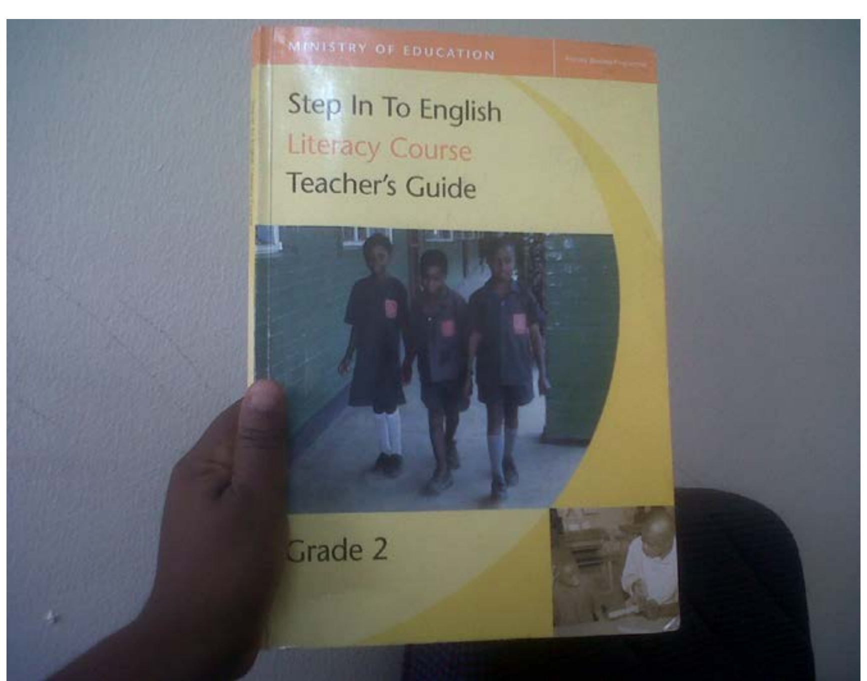


A learner putting word cards on a conversation poster

© University of Pretoria



Learners' activity book



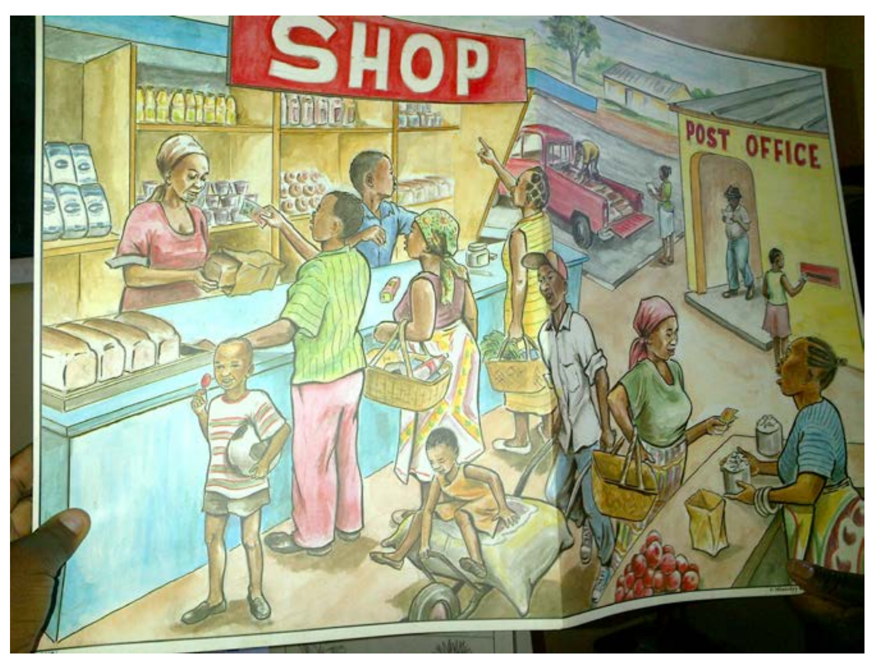
Teacher's Guide

© University of Pretoria

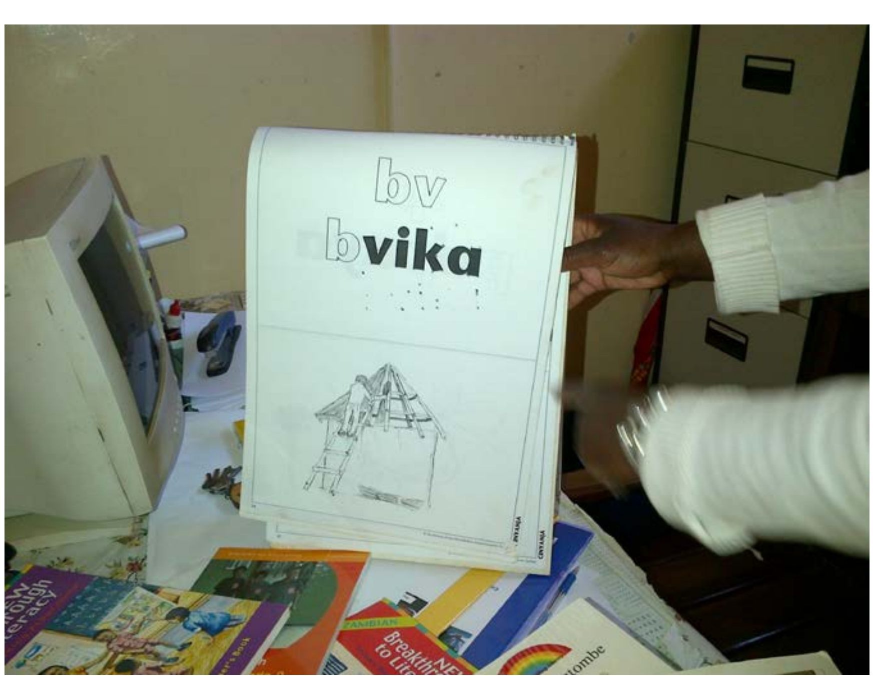
A word slate

Conversation poster one

© University of Pretoria

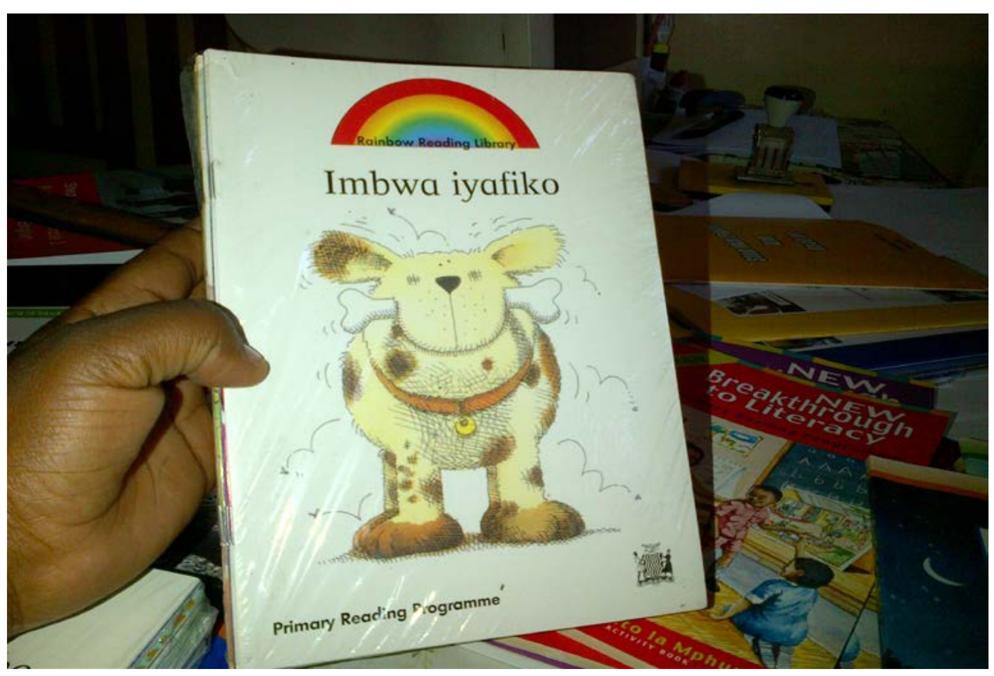


Conversation poster two

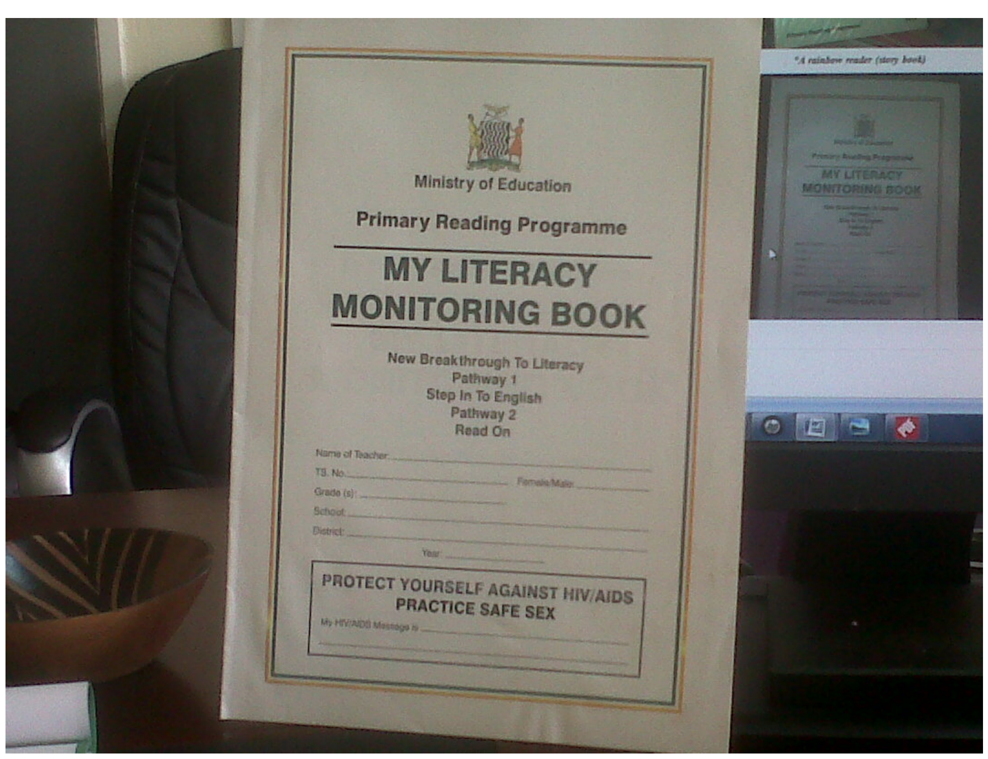


Phonic flip chart

© University of Pretoria



***A rainbow reader (story book)**



***The monitoring book**

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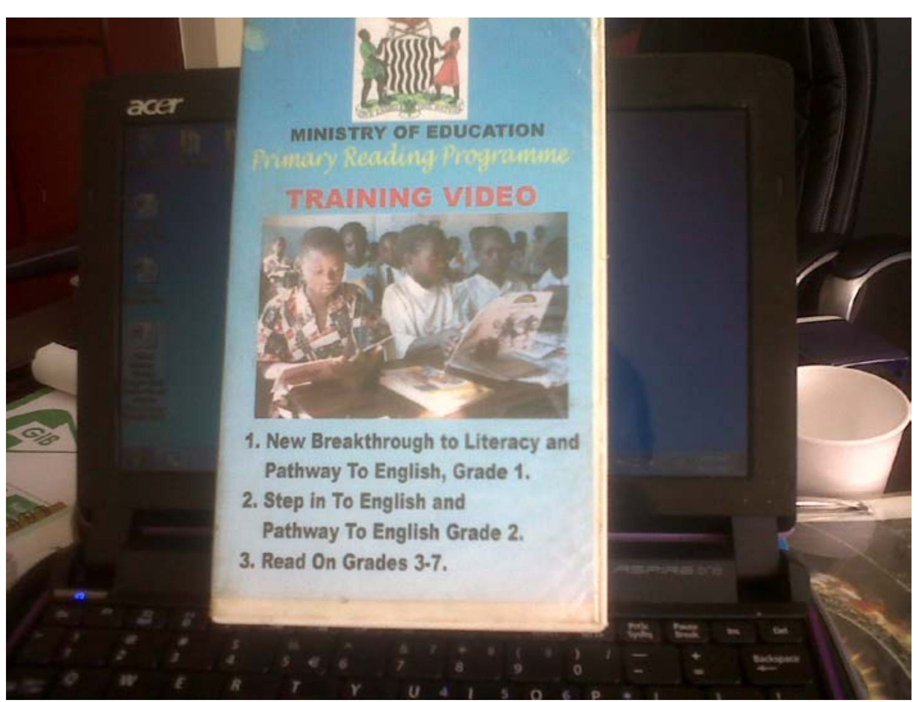

A training video

© University of Pretoria

APPENDIX 12 MAP OF ZAMBIA

Source: http://www.zambia-mining.com/country.html

© University of Pretoria

APPENDIX 13: ETHICS CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**CLEARANCE NUMBER :** EM 12/11/02
DEGREE AND PROJECT	PhD Sustaining implementation of innovations beyond donor support: a case of a literacy programme in Zambia
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Charity Lengwe Meki Kombe
DEPARTMENT	Education Management and Policy Studies
DATE PROTOCOL APPROVED	16 January 2013
DATE CLEARANCE ISSUED	19 August 2015

Please note:

For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years

For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE	Prof Liesel Ebersöhn
DATE	19 August 2015
CC	Jeannie Beukes Liesel Ebersöhn Prof C Herman

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This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following condition:

1. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.
2. The protocol you were granted approval on was implemented.
3. The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education does not accept any liability for research misconduct, of whatsoever nature, committed by the researcher(s) in the implementation of the approved protocol.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

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