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# **Academic and Political Challenges Faced by Teachers in The Teaching of Civic Education: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*Civic Education means all the processes that affect people's beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members or prospective members of communities. Civic Education (also known as citizen education or democracy education) can be broadly defined as the provision of information and learning experiences to equip and empower citizens to participate in democratic processes. Civic knowledge is concerned with the content or what citizens ought to know. This study therefore sought to establish the academic and political challenges teachers face in the teaching of Civic Education in secondary schools in Lusaka district of Zambia with a focus on the development and consolidation of education for democratic citizenship among the learners. The study employed both the qualitative and quantitative methods and a descriptive research design that sampled community head teachers, civic education teachers and pupils of civic education from the selected secondary schools. Data was obtained from the respondents by means of interviews and questionnaires. Frequency tables, graphs, figures and pie-charts were used to analyze the qualitative data. Data generated from the questionnaires were analyzed manually by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 26) and Microsoft Excel (version 16). The findings revealed that teachers of Civic Education in secondary schools in Lusaka district used non-reflective strategies during teaching. Additionally, the findings indicated that Civic Education lessons were theoretically based and did not follow emancipatory approaches that are key in the development and consolidation of real-life situations. Also, the findings showed that the learning environment in secondary schools did not give opportunities to learners to fully express themselves in terms of practicing what they learnt in class. Based on these findings, the study recommended that the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) should take a deliberate move to provide workshops/short courses aimed at supporting the teachers of civic education in applying appropriate approaches whenever, there are teaching the subject in schools.*

**Keywords:** *Challenges, Civic Education, Learning, Pupils, Teaching and Teaching Strategies.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Many countries around the globe have realized the need to educate citizens especially, the young people in order to secure the future of society. This requires the imparting of necessary skills and knowledge that would shape, nurture and inculcate values that could help propel the agenda of nations to bring about development. Civic Education has been identified as a discipline that could drive the aforementioned agenda. This is evident in the capturing of some of its aspects in Sustainable Development Goal No. 4 which looks at Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship. The subject is seen by many scholars around the globe as a tool for shaping citizens into responsible members of the society. This is achieved through the transmission and imparting of civic skills, knowledge, values and dispositions to learners (USAID, 2018). There is no doubt that there is a general agreement that every child should study Civic Education as it is regarded by most people as one of the essential subjects. Therefore, civic education curriculum addresses a cross-section of political, economic, social and cultural issues that are key to Zambia's democratic system of governance. The topics include among others constitution, Governance, citizenship; Human rights, corruption Legal Education, Family law and Global issues. These topics are based on the set of the National Policy on Education (Educating Our Future, 1996). The ultimate aim of civic education is to enable school leavers gain civic knowledge and acquire skills that are necessary for them to understand and practice their civic rights and obligations with responsibility within and outside Zambia.

The introduction of Civic Education at High School level was to fill the gap that existed between Junior Secondary School and College or University level of education (Chola, 2016). This gap has had an impact on Senior Secondary school leavers who in most cases graduated with little or no experience of Civic Education with regards to their roles, rights and obligation. Hence, this major development in the curriculum was identified as an important contribution to Zambia's education system that is based on democratic principles and values. Undoubtedly, the teaching and learning of civic education will help society recognize the role that this subject play in our constantly changing world. It is therefore, hoped that through civic education learners will be equipped with knowledge; skills and values to enable them practice their civic rights and perform duties as responsible Zambian citizens at local, national and international levels. Given the importance of Civic Education to the Zambian society, it is imperative that teachers of Civic Education should apply effective strategies that will enhance democratic values and competences in the learners. This requires that teachers of Civic Education should be well versed with the subject matter and use appropriate teaching techniques to develop critical thinking in the minds of the learners. This view is in line

with the revised curriculum of 2013 which aims at making the education system relevant and more responsive to the needs of individuals and society (MoE, 2013).

In Hong Kong, a study was conducted to establish the challenges associated with the teaching of Citizenship Education in schools (Tigran, 2012). One of the challenges the study indicated was lack of agency that served to represent teachers professionally despite having two important bodies that represented teachers' interests namely; Professional Teachers' Union (PTU) and the Federation of Education Workers. The study revealed that these teacher unions were not representing teachers well due to alleged political inclination. This meant that teachers' welfare and grievances were not handled as expected because the school system was highly politicized. Hence, politicized government-teacher relationship did not motivate the government to raise the status of the occupation of teachers nor to promote the characteristics associated with a strong degree of professionalization. Debatably, one may assert that such school environments polluted and diluted with politics negatively affected subject delivery and academic performance of learners. Lack of awareness of political values was another challenge teacher in practice faced. This was because not every teacher had the knowledge and skills required for appreciating sensitivity of political values and political function of government (Shan, 2011). Undoubtedly, the status quo could have been because of teachers' insufficiency in content knowledge, curriculum knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, which could have emanated from inadequate training. Consistent with this assertion, Yuen (2016) stated that most teachers of Civic Education were not well trained, while others were untrained, and they did not have much political awareness.

Similarly, the study by Ibid (2016) revealed that Civic Education in Hong Kong was a weak discipline with low status and little ability to compete for resources with other subjects in schools. It was also found that schools did not set up slots for the subject on the timetable as it was often

integrated with moral education being the main subject. This implied that the priority was given to the major subjects hence, its low status among teachers and pupils in schools. The other revelation was that the subject had no assessment results and did not contribute to the overall portfolio of the students. Therefore, some schools were not timetabling the subject completely. The status quo could have affected those pupils and teachers who had the passion for the subject.

In India, the study by Mohit (2018) revealed that teachers had challenges in terms of bulkiness of Civic Education content in the curriculum and learners were losing interest in studying the subject on their own. Therefore, large subject content affects the teaching/learning process because teachers may not complete the syllabus on time, which puts them in a panic mode.

The focus on Civic Education across different curricula is based on the understanding that as a subject, it promotes active participation of citizens or learners with the view to manage themselves in society and ensure that everyone who needs help is supported (Muleya, 2016). While this may be the case with regard to what Civic Education does to the citizens, the manner in which the teachers of Civic Education teach the subject to these citizens or learners is without challenges. It is from this background that the study seeks to investigate the academic and political challenges faced by teachers in the teaching and learning of civic education in selected secondary schools of Lusaka District.

### ***1.2. Statement of the Problem***

Lack of adequate learning and teaching materials is seen as a challenge in the transmission of relevant knowledge, skills and values needed to enhance democratic citizenship (Muleya, 2015). Civic Education is seen as a subject with the potential of influencing learners to acquire civic knowledge, skills, dispositions and values which are vital elements in the transformation of any given society. The contextual situation of Civic Education, as advanced in MoE (2013) hopes that through Civic Education learners will be equipped with knowledge, skills and values to enable them practice their civic rights and perform duties as responsible Zambian citizens at Local, National and International Level. Ibid (2013) sets what should be an ideal situation of Civic Education in Zambia through the revised Civic Education Syllabus 10-12 which is aligned to the Outcome Based Education principle with an aim of linking education to real life experiences that will grant learners skills to access, criticize, analyze and practically apply knowledge that will help them to gain life skills. Peterson (2011) narrates that teachers fail to express their opinions to debate and to bring up current political event for discussion in class, they indicate that they are not given space to discuss anything of political nature. They fear to teach controversial issues or topics especially those bordering on political, social issues affecting citizens. Muleya (2018) adds on that the competences and general outcomes are the expected outcomes to be attained by the learners through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, techniques and values which are very important for the total development of the individual and the nation as a whole. Despite of the desired ideal situation by MoE (2013), the current situation in the area of Civic Education in many schools of Zambia is that, very little is known about the academic and political challenges of teaching Civic Education.

### ***1.3. The Purpose of the Study***

The purpose of this study was to establish the academic and political challenges teachers face in the teaching of Civic Education in Lusaka district, Zambia.

### ***1.4. Research Objectives***

The objectives of the study were to:

- Identify the teaching methods used in teaching Civic Education at the selected secondary schools in Lusaka district, Zambia.

- Establish the academic and political challenges faced by teachers in teaching Civic Education at the selected secondary schools in Lusaka district, Zambia.
- To suggest effective ways of improving the teaching of Civic Education at the selected secondary schools in Lusaka district, Zambia.

### **1.5. Conceptual Framework**

Effective teaching involves aligning the three major components of instruction: learning objectives, assessments and instructional activities. Teacher effectiveness generally refers to the focus on students' outcomes and the teacher behaviors that promote better student outcomes. However, when teaching Civic Education, a lot of teachers face academic and political challenges. Textbooks are the most visible aspects of a curriculum and are often considered the main script that shapes the teaching and learning processes (Magasu, 2020). Effective teachers' guides should: contain explicit communication of conceptual goals with links to proposed activities, provide knowledge and support to help understand and implement teaching plans, reinforce pedagogical content knowledge, give guidance on the practice and understanding of relevant pedagogical activities, present alternatives and freedom of choice, and engage teachers in ongoing reflection. Lack of the provision of text books in schools affect the teaching of Civic Education. Irish Aid Report (2012) revealed that another challenge faced by the teachers is the use of an outdated syllabus. On the political point of view, a lot of teachers have faced challenges to teach Civic Education because of the lack of funds from the government to support Civic Education programs and activities at school and also not being able to receive incentives which may include workshop allowances.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that the study would generate information regarding the academic and political challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of Civic Education in secondary schools in Lusaka district. It is also hoped that the information that would be obtained from the study findings would be helpful in designing policies to address academic and political challenges faced by teachers in secondary schools. The findings derived from this study might also be of use to the stakeholders in Teacher Education Department (TED) and the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), for assessment and evaluation purposes of the Civic Education. The results from the study might also be eye opener to the Teacher Training Colleges in order for them to evaluate the content provider at their institutions.

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## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Study Design**

The study adopted a mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data. Exploratory and descriptive designs were as well considered appropriate as they also allowed for more flexible strategies of data collection in order to answer the research questions. The study was aimed at establishing academic and political challenges teachers face in the teaching of Civic Education at some selected secondary schools in Lusaka district in Zambia.

### **2.2. Research Site**

The research was conducted in Lusaka district in Zambia from which respondents were also sampled.

### **2.3. Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The population for the study comprised of head teachers, civic education teachers and pupils of civic education. The target population was 2000. The sample size involved a total of 200 respondents which included four (4) head teachers, one from each selected school. Twelve (12) civic education teachers, three from each selected school. One hundred eighty-four (184) pupils, forty-six from each selected school. The study employed both purposive and simple random sampling on different participants.

### **2.4. Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed qualitatively as the semi-structured interview schedules were used as data collection instruments. The thematic approach was used, where data analysis started with the categorizing themes from the semi-structured interview schedules. The data gathered was analyzed according to the themes of the study and the order of the research objectives. Data generated from the questionnaires were analyzed manually by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 26) and Microsoft Excel (version 16) to come up with frequency tables, pie charts and bar graphs.

### **2.5. Ethical Issues**

The ethical issues of research were applied to all phases of the research process. The researcher defined the purpose of the study and explained to participants so that they understand the need for them to be involved in the research. The researcher respected the participants, informants and the research sites by obtaining permission before conducting the research from the school managers. The participants were assured of confidentiality by not writing

their names or identity on the questionnaires. The researcher did not use any language or words that were biased against persons because of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability or age. The participants were assured of confidentiality as the information obtained was to be used strictly for academic purposes only.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following findings and discussions were presented according to set research objectives:

#### 3.1. Possible Methods Used in Teaching Civic Education

**Table 1: Possible Methods Used in Teaching Civic Education**

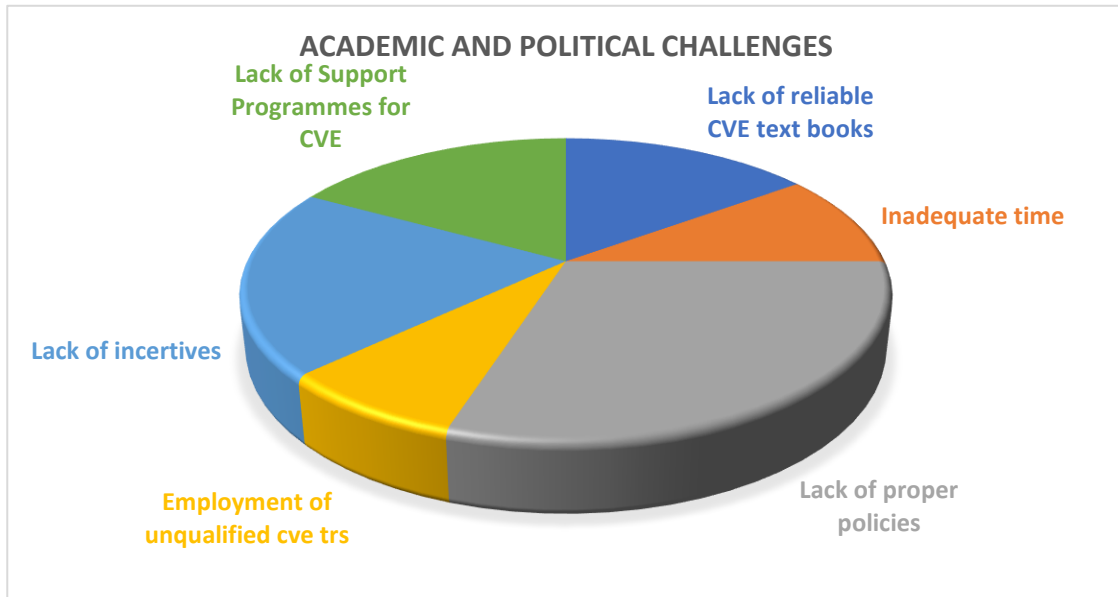
#	Teaching method	H/T			CVE TRS			PPS			TOTALS			
		A	A	D	T	A	D	T	A	D	T	A	D	T
I	Question and Answer	3	3	-	3	18	-	18	40	5	45	64	5	69
II	Text books	2	3	-	3	15	3	18	45	-	45	65	4	69
III	Discovery methods	2	3	-	3	17	1	18	20	25	45	43	2 6	69
IV	Cooperative learning	3	3	-	3	18	-	18	43	2	45	67	2	69
V	Discussion methods	3	3	-	3	18	-	18	40	5	45	64	5	69
VI	Education trip or tours	3	3	-	3	16	2	18	30	15	45	52	17	69
VII	Lecture method	3	1	2	3	14	4	18	25	20	45	42	27	69
VIII	Field project and community engagement	3	3	-	3	12	6	18	39	6	45	56	13	69
IX	Debate method	3	2	1	3	18	-	18	45	-	45	68	1	69
X	Research project	3	2	1	3	16	2	18	40	5	45	60	9	69
XI	Pupils' managements Boards	3	1	2	3	10	8	18	38	7	45	50	19	69

Source: Author, 2023

It can be noted from the above given table that 57% of the respondents responded positively to the different methods that different teachers use in the teaching of civic education and the remaining 43% were against the use of the above methods. It can be noted that, almost all the respondents had ideas on different methods that are used in the delivery of civic education lesson by different stake holders. In other words, 57% supported the use of the mentioned teaching methods as an effective way of delivering civic education lessons to the learners. Other respondents had doubts about other teaching methods due to lack of exposure of such methods by their teachers.

3.2. Academic and Political Challenges Faced by Teachers

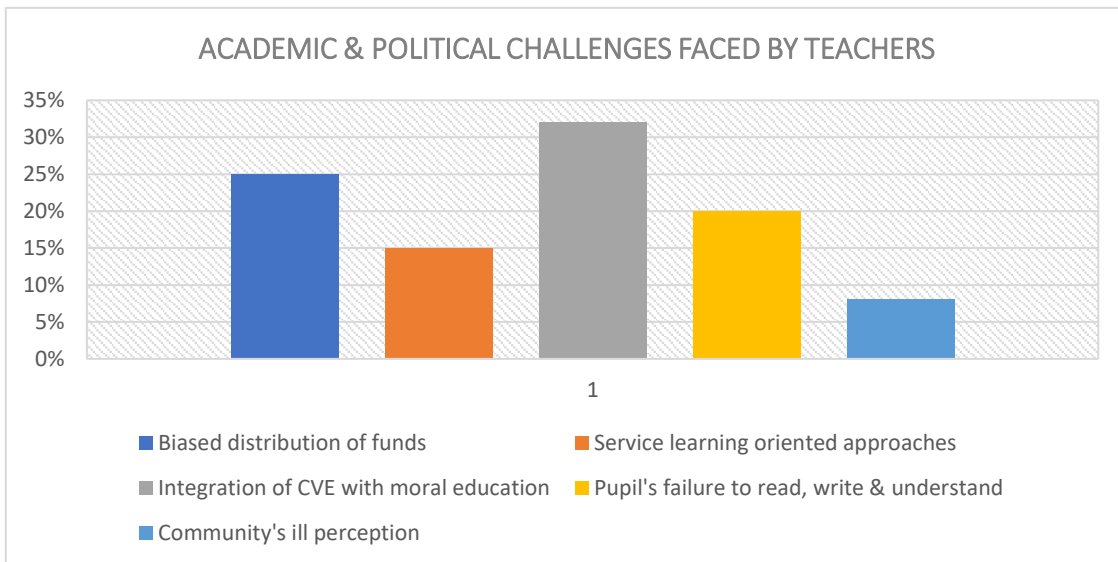
Figure 1: Pupil's Responses on Academic and Political Challenges Faced by Teachers



Source: Author, 2023

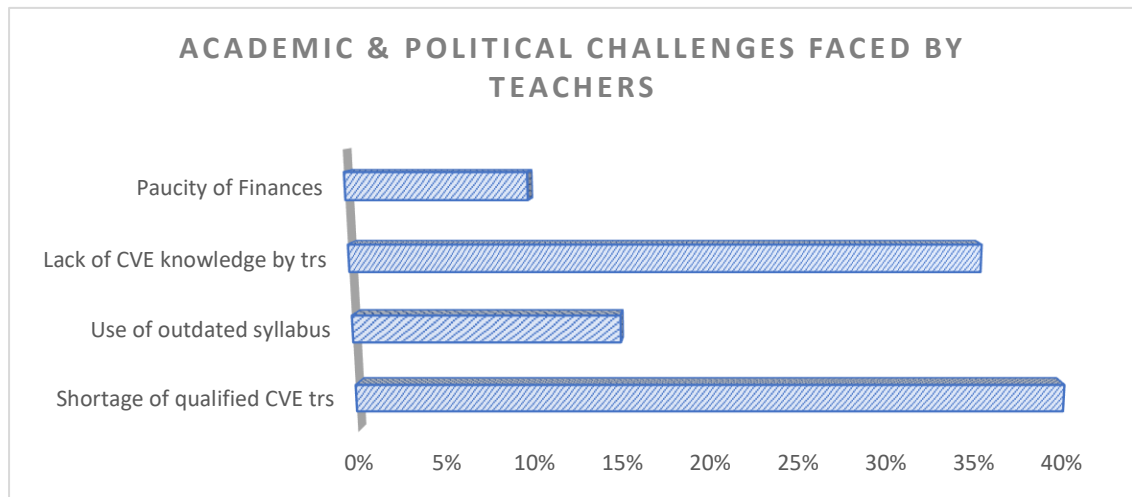
On the academic and political challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of civic education, learners' responses towards the same was excellent. Learners outlined five main challenges that teachers encounter in the delivery of civic education lessons. It can be noted from the above figure that the majority of the respondents acknowledged to the above stated factors as the challenges that teachers face according to their own understanding. Additionally, it can be noted that 98% of the respondents had knowledge on the challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of civic education, whereas the remaining 2% had little or no knowledge about the academic and political challenges that teachers face in the delivery of civic education.

Figure 2: Teacher's Responses on Academic and Political Challenges Faced by Teachers



Source: Author, 2023

The figure above indicates civic education teacher's responses in this study. It was noted that 25% was represented by biased distribution of funds, 15% was represented by service learning oriented approaches. Further, 32% was represented by integration of CVE with moral education, 20% was represented by Pupil's failure to read, write & understand and lastly, 8% was represented by Community's ill perception.

**Figure 3: Head Teacher's Responses on Academic and Political Challenges Faced by Teachers**

Source: Author, 2023

According to the findings represented in the above figure, shortage of qualified civic education teachers was represented by 40%, use of outdated syllabus was presented by 15%, lack of civic knowledge by the teachers was presented by 35% and lastly, paucity of resources was represented by 10%.

### 3.3. Effective Ways of Improving the Teaching of Civic Education

**Table 2: Effective Ways of Improving the Teaching of Civic Education**

#	ITEM	YES		NO		TOTALS	
		F	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
I	Regular revision of CVE syllabus	60	87	6	13	69	100
II	Provision of recommended and reliable CVE text books and pamphlets	69	100	-	-	69	100
III	Unbiased distribution of funds	68	99	1	1	69	100
IV	Employment of qualified CVE teachers	69	100	-	-	69	100
V	Exposure to civic content and knowledge and narrowing down the content	59	86	10	14	69	100
VI	Provision of proper policies that favour both parties	60	87	6	13	69	100
VII	Improve on the teaching and learning methods and increase time allocated to it.	69	100	-	-	69	100

Source: Author, 2023

All the respondents who participated in the study suggested that there is need for the provision of recommended and reliable civic education text books and pamphlets, improve on the teaching and learning methods and increase time allocated to the subject. The Teaching Council of Zambia (TCZ) should consider posting more Civic Education teachers in schools for effective teaching and learning. They further suggested as shown in the table above in variable I that there is need especially by the Ministry of Education to find means and ways of revising the syllabus regularly. According to 86% of the respondents as shown in Variable V, there is need to narrow down the Civic Education subject content and allow the exposure of civic content and knowledge. Variable VII indicates that the most important thing to do is to increase time allocated for the subject so that the content can be covered within the required time and improve on the teaching methods as illustrated by 100%. Other respondents were affirmative of the idea that there is need to relate the subject to life situation that life approach method should be encouraged to stimulate learner's interest. From the findings the major academic and political factors that affect the teaching and learning of Civic Education in schools are inadequate teaching and learning resources, understaffing, negative attitude towards the subject created by emphasis laid on science subjects, biased distribution of resources, lack of reliable text books, use of outdated syllabus, lack of funding by the government, lack of proper policies and so forth.

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#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that there were a number of academic and political challenges associated with the teaching of Civic Education lessons in schools. These were; shortage of qualified Civic Education teachers, a dearth of teaching and learning materials. Additionally, substandard textbooks, shortage of desks, lack of funding by the government, lack of incentives, lack of proper policies, inadequate contact time, pupil congestion and the challenge of low literacy levels among learners. In this study, an attempt has been made to investigate on the teaching methods in Civic Education in secondary schools in Zambia particularly in three selected secondary schools in Lusaka district. It is undoubtedly clear that Civic Education teachers in Zambia still used the old traditional methods when teaching the subject. This study demonstrates that there is need to use reflective teaching methods in Civic Education if the learners were to develop critical minds and overcome the challenges faced. It was established that teachers should avoid the use of lecture method, instead debate, discussion, education tour, community engagement, and pupils' management boards in teaching Civic Education in secondary schools in order to improve on the academic challenges faced by the teachers. On contrary, to the political challenges, solutions such as unbiased distribution of resources, employment of qualified civic education teachers, provision of proper policies and many other points were brought out by the respondents as the best ways to improve the political challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of civic education.

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#### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are actions that should be taken on the basis of the findings of this study:

- There is need for the Ministry of General Education, Examinations Council of Zambia and Curriculum Development Center to consider a practical assessment for Civic Education if the desired goals were to be achieved.
- The Ministry of General Education should strengthen Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities in secondary schools so that teachers of Civic Education are oriented to the contents of the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework.
- School administrators should encourage teachers who were trained in Civics a long time ago to re- train in Civic Education and get acquainted with fresh civic knowledge.
- The Ministry of Education should employ both qualified Civic Education teachers and Social Studies teachers.
- The Ministry of Education should allocate adequate funds to schools for the procurement of teaching/learning materials as well as enhancing field studies in order for learners to supplement on theories learnt in the classroom environment.

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