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Topic 2. Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

1. What do you think are the entry points for achieving this goal in Zambia?

Currently in Zambia, primary and secondary education is mandatory for all children however in reality not all school-aged children are attending school. Primary education is free for everyone but there are some costs families are expected to pay like books and uniforms. For some families this creates a great financial strain. Children will not go to school simply because they do not have the school uniform. Although Secondary Schools are also legally mandatory, fees are required making it very difficult for children of low-income families to attend secondary school. Other than financial burdens, children are prevented to going to school by how accessible schools are. Children living in rural areas especially struggle attending school because of how far it is. There are also less secondary schools in rural areas and often children have to board there increasing the cost.

When children are in school there can be issues with the quality of teaching. An issue that Zambia used to face was that teachers would hold private classes, at an additional cost, that would include material not taught during regular hours but that was crucial to the success of a student. This created an unequal education environment between those who could or couldn't afford these lessons. While this practice is no longer allowed, it is still often done to some extent meaning that those who cannot afford these additional lessons are at a disadvantage, especially when it comes to testing. Those who cannot afford these classes have to work harder to be at the same level as students whose families can afford them.

2. What recommendations would you make for achieving this goal in your Zambia?

It is easy to believe that having schools being completely free would increase the number of people who are educated but this is unrealistic. Supplying things such as books and uniforms for free to low income children may help but I think the biggest thing that needs to be reformed is the mentality of people who do not see the value in getting an education. While financial hardship is a main cause that

prevents children from going to school it coincides with the issue of families not thinking education is important. Some people believe that rather than sending children to school it is more beneficial to the family for the child to be helping with familial responsibilities such as housework or farming. There needs to be a shift in the idea that children only need basic education, if any, and then should start contributing to the family. Families need to see that education is an investment that will likely pay off. To do this there needs to be incentives created that would encourage parents to send their children to school and keep them in school. In several countries this has meant offering feeding programs or giving parents compensation if their child attends school.

3. How do you believe that goal four relates to goal five, “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”?

I think both of these goals are significantly interconnected with each other. In order to ‘achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’, it starts with education. Getting an education not only gives women more opportunities but those who receive a good quality education are able to have more control of their livelihood and make better informed life choices. Ultimately education is an essential tool for empowering women and girls. On the other side to achieve goal 4, “ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” girls and women have to be involved to create the equality and inclusiveness.