

An investigation on the Correlation between Unemployment and Living Conditions in Zambia: A Case Study of Kaunda Square Stage II

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Abstract: Most of the Zambian population, the poor people in affluent society, are enmeshed in the net of poverty. The Zambian government seems to have failed in its contractual obligation to respect and sustain its social contract with the people. There is a seemingly total collapse of social security, increased unemployment rate and consequently decreased living conditions among the youth. This study sets out to investigate the correlation between unemployment and living conditions in Kaunda Square Stage II by analyzing the impact of unemployment and suggests strategic solutions to mitigate the levels of unemployment. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact on the living conditions caused by unemployment in Zambia specifically in Kaunda Square Stage II and adopt strategic solutions that will mitigate creation of jobs to improve the living conditions. The study underscores that unemployment is a universal phenomenon, not necessarily a peculiar characteristic of any segment of the society. Reducing poverty, preventing excessive inequality, and generating adequate employment are the three most important goals of a macroeconomic strategy that seeks to improve the living standards of the population. Inequality and employment are each a complex phenomenon and difficult to capture with a single measurement, particularly in a low-income economy undergoing change. It is in this context that the study intends to investigate the correlation between unemployment and living conditions in Kaunda Square Stage II and to provide strategic solutions that may improve living conditions in Kaunda Square Stage II. The study concludes that high unemployment in Kaunda Square Stage II increases poverty which subsequently affects living conditions. Therefore, when, unemployment rates increase the opportunities for earning income decreases which instigate individuals to be poor. The paper closes with reflections on how good strategic solutions can be used to underwrite more employment reduction strategies.

Key words: Unemployment, living conditions, inequality, poverty.

1. Introduction and Background

This study investigates the correlation between unemployment and living conditions in Zambia: A case study of Kaunda square stage II. Kaunda square stage II has a population of 7,819 [1] and is a township located in Munali constituency.

Zambia, once a middle-income country, attained its independence in 1964 with its economy stable. The economic activities included mainly copper mining through which Zambia sustained its living. After being independent the country was regarded as a

prosperous middle-income country with its GNP (Gross National Product) between \$760 and 9,360 in 1998 [2]. But this growth started to decline very quickly because of inflation, low copper prices, and poor government policies.

Reducing poverty, preventing excessive inequality, and generating adequate employment are the three most important goals of a macroeconomic strategy that seeks to improve the living standards of the population. Poverty, inequality and employment are each a complex phenomenon and difficult to capture with a single measure, particularly in a low-income economy undergoing change [3]. It is in this context that the study intends to investigate the correlation

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between unemployment and living conditions in Zambia particularly in Kaunda Square Stage II and to what extent unemployment levels have affected living conditions and to provide strategic solutions that may improve living conditions among youths particularly in Kaunda Square Stage II.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite weakness in the global economy, growth in Sub-Saharan Africa remains robust, supported by resilient domestic demand and commodity prices that, while declining, are still historically high. In 2012 the region's growth was estimated at 4.4 percent. Excluding South Africa, its largest economy, the region's economies grew a robust 5.4 percent—more than the developing country average of 5.0 percent. About a quarter of Sub-Saharan countries (including Zambia) grew at least 7 percent, and several are among the world's fastest growing. Medium-term growth prospects remain strong and should be supported by a pickup in the global economy, high commodity prices (expected to stay above average), and investment in the productive capacity of the region's economies. Overall, Sub-Saharan Africa forecasts to grow an average of more than 5 percent a year over 2013-2015: 4.9 percent in 2013 and gradually strengthening to 5.4 percent by 2015 [4].

Capital inflows to Zambia have remained resilient, with net FDI (foreign direct investment) and portfolio investments growing steadily over 2009-2012, from \$305 million to an estimated \$1.1 billion. Growth was especially strong in the second half of 2012. FDI inflows continue to be directed mainly at mining, with financial institutions, wholesale trade, real estate activities, and communications also contributing. Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom contribute the most FDI inflows to Zambia, consistent with investor composition in mining [5].

However, this impressive economic growth trend has not translated into significant gains in job creation, equality and poverty reduction that underpins

achievement of the MDGs (millennium development goals). Although the proportion of Zambians living in extreme poverty has gradually declined in the past decade, albeit at a very slow pace, the proportion of rural Zambians in extreme poverty has steadily increased (MDG Progress Report 2013). It took 19 years for Zambia to reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty from 58% in 1991 to 42.3% in 2010. Extreme poverty in rural areas (57.7%) is four times higher than in urban areas (13.1%).

1.2 Literature Review

A research was conducted by The World Bank which investigates Zambia's job challenges and realities on the ground comes at a time when Zambia is continuing to experience robust economic growth, but economic management is becoming more challenging. The execution of the 2013 budget highlights some of these challenges: the capacity to use costly foreign debt efficiently and keep personnel costs low so that essential spending on health and education services for the poor is not crowded out. The government rightly understands the importance of maintaining macroeconomic stability that has served the country well in the past decade.

The jobs section of the brief shines a light on what lies underneath Zambia's lower middle-income status. The researchers find that most Zambians are employed, working on farms, in nonfarm home businesses, and in wage jobs. Yet many remain mired in poverty because their earnings from work are low. So, while creating formal private sector jobs is a priority, an equally important development priority is to improve the living standards and earnings of working Zambians by boosting their productivity in agriculture, nonfarm self-employment, and formal employment. And who and where are the unemployed? They are mostly youth in urban areas, from relatively better off families who can afford to wait for jobs they desire. Therefore, unemployment per se is a lesser challenge in Zambia.

The researchers juxtapose these facts against the scenario where Zambia's labour force is growing fast, currently at more than 130,000 new entrants a year. But formal jobs are growing very slowly. Meanwhile, the ranks of the working poor continue to swell as youth from poor families and rural areas keep getting absorbed in the jobs their parents were in—largely farming and home businesses. These youths do not have the educational qualifications to improve their choices. This situation points toward the need to improve access to good quality basic education, which will go a long way in not only supporting the country's growth but also improving earnings from work, particularly for the working poor.

The researcher expects this report to support evidence-based policy debate in the country. In that spirit, the brief has generally stayed away from making specific policy prescriptions. The researcher hopes that the findings of the report will generate a healthy debate in the country on policies and interventions needed to meet Zambia's jobs challenge, which by all accounts is rather huge. The advantage of this approach is the use of quantitative and qualitative approach which will be practiced in data analysis of the current research.

Another study examines livelihoods, poverty and vulnerability in urban Zambia [7]. This qualitative study of living conditions in urban Zambia is part of the World Bank's PVA (Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment). It analyzes the living conditions of individuals, families and communities in informal urban settlements, and their coping mechanisms in response to social and economic shocks since the mid-1990s.

It builds on the existing literature and uses primary data from qualitative research conducted in informal urban settlements of Lusaka and secondary cities. After consultations with specialists of urban Zambia to define the research objectives and methodology, participatory data collection and analysis were carried out in 2003 and 2004 with extensive support of

academics and non-government organizations working on urban social and economic development. The final analysis was refined after further in-country consultations and peer-review between March and May 2005.

The research reviewed that Zambian economy appears to have stabilized although unemployment and underemployment are still major problems. The privatization program of the mid 1990s has been accompanied by a restructuring of the labor market and by retrenchments that may have improved the performance of most enterprises, but have not yet translated into the creation of new employment opportunities on a large scale. As a result, the livelihoods of most urban dwellers, which used to work in the protected formal sector including large state-owned enterprises today, depend on the informal rather than the formal sector. The better-off urban residents are still those in the protected formal sector who live mostly in the formally developed parts of urban centers. Meanwhile, most people earning their livelihoods from the informal sector live in informal settlements. The few residents of informal settlements who are formally employed mostly have low-paid jobs, as shop assistants, security guards, soldiers, domestic helpers or low-level civil servants.

Most residents of informal urban settlements are thus self-employed. They work in a variety of informal economic activities ranging from producing and selling building materials, to trading petty commodities, farming, and renting out houses or rooms. Housing-related activities provide jobs to many: unskilled workers produce crushed stones, sand and bricks, while skilled artisans produce fittings such as door and window frames, and offer services in plumbing, electrical work or carpentry. Most people working in the informal sector combine several activities, including the cultivation of undeveloped urban or peri-urban land to supplement their incomes and food intake. Much of the urban population is thus

dependent on informal economic activities (65% of Lusaka's labor force in 1999 according to its City Council). There is however much diversity across cities, and while some urban centers are economically active, others are plagued by a dependence syndrome, with their unemployed residents expecting direct help from large-scale employers, NGOs, or the government.

Further study reviewed that poverty has multiple facets and causes, some specific to urban living conditions. Whereas rural poverty is largely due to low agricultural productivity and its consequent stagnation, poor transport and other infrastructure, as well as lack of wage employment, urban poverty is due to low-income, made worse by overcrowding, and by the lack of access to infrastructure and services, including clean water and safe sanitation facilities. These make the urban poor vulnerable to diseases, which undermines their productivity and plunges them deeper into poverty. Women and young people contribute disproportionately to the poor and in general, poor urban households are larger extended households.

The researchers further pointed out that most challenging social problem in informal settlements remains the provision of care to orphans and vulnerable children. In many cases, they are left with aged grandparents who cannot even support themselves, let alone take care of children. As a result, many orphans and vulnerable children of school age must drop out of school to work or beg in the streets. In the worst cases, children have become the heads of households consisting of other children. In some of the poorest families who cannot meet their basic needs, children are also driven out of their homes into the streets even when their parents are still alive. Women and children are often victims of both physical and legal abuse (from domestic abuse, to property grabbing after the death of a husband or father).

The case study of Zambia [9] is the first in a regional project on Economic Policies for Poverty

Reduction by the Bureau for Development Policy and the Regional Bureau for Africa of the UNDP that aims to reinforce, at the country level, programs to strengthen the capacity for formulating and implementing macroeconomic, sectoral and structural policies that are more supportive of poverty reduction.

The project has the following major focus areas: (1) integrating poverty reduction objectives into policymaking and socioeconomic development strategies; and (2) facilitating practical policy options and institutional mechanisms to foster more pro-poor macroeconomic stabilization strategies, economic restructuring and sustainable growth. The project complements other related regional and country programs supporting preparation and implementation of PRSPs (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers), MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) progress reports including ongoing work on governance.

The writers point out at the 2000 Millennium Summit that poverty was designated as one of the main development challenges of the new century, which required a robust response both at the national and international levels. The heightened concern about poverty was prompted by the increasingly evident contrast between the rising incidence of poverty and growing inequality both within nations and among them; and, achievements in economic growth and significant advances on the technological front in many parts of the world. Macroeconomic stabilization and structural adjustment programs, which dominated economic policy during much of the last two decades, are to produce poverty reducing growth. This failure was contrary to expectations of both the adjusting countries and international financial institutions.

With their foundations in neoclassical theory, the stabilization and adjustment programs assumed that poverty reduction would flow automatically from resumption of growth and higher levels of employment. The record on both counts has not matched expectations.

2. Research Methodology

This was a mixed method study design. The design was chosen with a view of combining the collecting and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to better understand the research problem in a single study [10]. Therefore, the research adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A mixed method approach was considered so that the researcher could have a holistic picture of the issue under investigation in this study as well as to overcome the weaknesses of each one of them and take advantage of their strengths [11].

Although, quantitative aspects were used through the administration of questionnaires to collect data on the subject of “An Investigation on the Correlation between Unemployment and Living Conditions in Zambia”, with a focus on Kaunda Square Stage II Township (Lusaka), qualitative data were used to further broaden the scope of data collected. The strengths of qualitative approach allow the researcher to learn at hand, about the social world being investigated by means of involvement and participation of individual actors [12].

2.1 Target Population

The intended population was residents of Kaunda Square Stage II in Lusaka district. The residents consisted of individuals of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and races. Participants were asked if they were aged between 15 and 35 years to participate in the survey. Individuals under the age of 15 or older than 35 years did not participate because they did not fall under the definition of a youth. The study was solely an investigation on the correlation between unemployment and living conditions in Kaunda Square Stage II, deducing the impact and offer strategic solutions in Kaunda Square Stage II. The sample size for this study was calculated based on the population of 7819 people of Kaunda Square Stage II [13]. Using the sample size calculator for prevalence studies (Daniel 1999) as shown below, the sample size

of 48 participants had a 95% confidence interval, a 30% expected prevalence and 13% precision. Individuals were recruited using random sampling. Participants were recruited at various public places, including but not limited to, bus stations, grocery store/shops, restaurant, markets and clinics/health centers.

$$n = \frac{z^2 p \sqrt{1-p}}{d^2}$$

where n = sample size,

Z = Z statistic for a level of confidence,

P = expected prevalence or proportion

(in proportion of one; if 20%, P = 0.2), and

d = precision

(in proportion of one; if 5%, d = 0.05).

2.2 Sampling Technique

The cluster sampling method was used. The community areas in Kaunda Square Stage II were divided into five organization units and these included bus stations, restaurants, grocery store/shops, markets and clinics/health centers. Thereafter a random sampling technique was applied to the elements from each of the selected clusters to give equal chance to all the people in Kaunda Square Stage II community.

2.3 Instruments for Data Collection

Regarding the primary sources, information was generated from the questionnaires that were administered. In this research, the questionnaire was used. It can also be pointed out that a questionnaire is by far the most frequently used instrument in educational research as an instrument for data collection [14]. The questionnaire is probably the single most common research tool that is relatively well understood and has the advantages of simplicity, versatility and low cost [15]. Secondary Information came from the journals and other sources of reliable published literature.

Questionnaires were administered to 48 participants who came from different areas within Kaunda Square Stage II. A questionnaire is defined as “a form that

people fill out used to obtain demographic information and views and interests of those questioned". It is also a method for the elicitation and recording and collecting information [16].

The advantages of questionnaires include the fact that information is collected from a large sample and diverse regions. Confidentiality is also upheld using questionnaires. A questionnaire also saves on time as opposed to an interview. In this study, on average a questionnaire took 15 minutes. In this study, the questionnaire was designed to cater for both quantitative and qualitative questions. Generally, the research adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods so that both situations of qualitative and quantitative are catered for in data acquisition.

2.4 Data Analysis Technique

Analysis of data is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision making. Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under a variety of names, in different business, science, and social science domains.

All collected data by the result of questionnaires were entered in the Microsoft Excel program for analysis. The qualitative part was analyzed using content analysis; responses were grouped in similar thematic areas for easy aggregation and understanding of the trend of the data. Matrices were created to help identify patterns in the data. The matrices were for the open-ended questions for all respondents. Each row in each matrix represented one respondent. The matrices were useful in grouping the different responses within each theme, discerning differences and similarities between groups within themes, and making connections broadly between themes.

Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. The purpose of triangulation in

qualitative research is to increase the credibility and validity of the results. Triangulation is a method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in research data [17]. For triangulation purposes, the research examined the consistency of different data sources from within the same method. For example, at different points in time, in public versus private settings, compared people with different viewpoints and examined the consistency between qualitative and quantitative responses by a respondent.

3. Research Question

Based on the aim of the study, the research questions are:

- (1) What are the levels and types of qualifications among the youths?
- (2) What kind of jobs are most youths involved in?
- (3) What wages/salary are these youths earning?
- (4) What kind of programs has the government put in place to empower youths?

4. Findings and Discussion

Table 1 below shows the variables that were considered in the study. The study sample was composed of more males (67%) than females (33%) out of which 65% of the respondents were single, 31% married, 2% divorced while 2% were widowed. The average age of the respondents was between 25-29 years. Education levels were slightly high among the study sample as 42% of the respondents had attained tertiary education, with the remainder of the respondents having senior secondary education (50%), junior secondary 4%, primary education (2%) and no education (2%). The study showed that most of the respondents were in formal employment at 42%, 21% of the respondents were still in school, 25% were in self-employment, and 13% were unemployed. Although the study did not reveal what kind of accommodation the respondents had, the study showed that 48% of the respondents owned the

accommodation they lived in outright, 35% rented from private landlords, 4% lived in accommodation that was being bought on mortgage another 4% lived in accommodation rented from local authority, 6% lived in accommodation rented from housing authority while 8% did not specify the kind of arrangement on accommodation they had.

4.1 Income and Benefits

Generally, this study has shown that in most of the households only one person received an income or other benefits as indicated by 40% of the respondents, 31% revealed that two persons in a household received income or other benefits while 29% of the households had three or more people receiving something. Of the income and benefits received 94% were earnings from formal employment or self-employment, 2% from regular allowances outside

the household, while 4% from other sources of income such as rent.

The study further reviewed 29% of the youths were unemployed, 4% have been unemployed for 12 months or longer, 67% were not applicable as this constituted the employed and school going youths. According to the 2008 Labor Force Survey, 15 to 34-year-olds make up 65 percent of the working population, and youth unemployment was estimated at 28 percent. This is in line with the findings in the study. The study also shows that looking back over the last ten years, 2% had been unemployed for over 12 months in total and 81% said that it was not relevant while 17% did not know.

4.2 Poverty

The study revealed that the average amount of money required per week to support a household of an

Table 1 Background characteristics of the respondents.

Characteristics	Count (<i>n</i> = 100)	%
Sex		
Female	16	33
Male	32	67
Age		
15-19	8	17
20-24	10	21
24-29	13	27
30-34	4	8
35-39	13	27
Marital status		
Single	31	65
Married	15	31
Divorced	1	2
Widow/widower	1	2
Education attained		
Nil	1	2
Primary	1	2
Junior secondary	2	4
Senior secondary	24	50
Tertiary	20	42
Occupation		
In School	10	21
Employed	20	42
Self Employed	12	25
Unemployed	6	13
Accommodation		
Owned outright	20	48
Mortgage	2	4
Rented local authority	2	4
Rented housing authority	3	6
Rented local landlords	17	35
Other	4	8

average of 4 members was K616 which translates K22 per day per person. This value is slightly more than \$2 per day per person. This is in line with what the World Bank estimated in 2013 that 74.3% of the Zambian population lives on or below US\$ 1.25 a day. Poverty incidence in rural Zambia stands at around 80%, compared with 34% in urban areas. The study also found when respondents were asked to state how far above or below that level (K22 per day) their households were, the study revealed that 2% were a lot above that level of income, 29% said above the same level, 38% said a little below that level of income and 19% said a lot below that level of income while 6% did not know.

Lack of education and gender inequalities in tertiary education also limit the extent to which measures meant to accelerate improved nutrition, and infant and maternal outcomes can effectively deliver benefits. Limited access to primary, secondary and tertiary education is one of the major factors responsible for low economic opportunities in the rural areas. This further explains the high incidence of poverty and low levels of human development in the rural communities [18].

Generally, this study has shown that over the last 10 years poverty in Kaunda Squares Stage II was on the increase, as 77% of the respondents indicated although 11% said poverty was decreasing, 10% said poverty had stayed about the same level for the last 10 years while another 2% did not know. The study also revealed that poverty was going to continue increasing over the next years as 40% of the respondents claimed so, 33% indicted that poverty was expected to decrease over the next years to come and 2% said that poverty would stay at the same level over the next years while 25% said that they did not know.

Respondents were further asked to give an opinion as to why there are still people in need and in response, 17% stated that most of the people that were in poverty were unlucky, 21% said that it was due to laziness and lack of will power to work hard, 33%

said that it was because there is much injustice in our society, 17% said it was an inevitable part of modern progress while 13% did not know.

4.3 Mitigating Programs by Government

Over people that lacked things or necessities for a living in Kaunda Squares Stage II the study wanted to know how much the government was doing to help these people and in response 4% said the government was doing too much, 54% indicated that the government was doing too little, 31% said the government was doing about the right amount while 10% did not know. The study further revealed that there were a number of programs in place to reduce poverty out of which 29% said that improving education or literacy and training of people in various fields would work best to improve their own livelihood, 40% said income and employment support could work best for them, 19% indicated awareness and collaboration of various programs would work best for them, 6% preferred access to improved and affordable health care would work best for them while another 6% did not know the programs that would work best for them.

Unless the Government of Zambia undertakes initiatives to reduce unemployment in Kaunda Squares Stage II, poverty will continue to increase. The MOFNP (Ministry of Finance and National Planning) is the lead government ministry responsible for creating a conducive and enabling environment for international cooperation to take place particularly between the private sector, donor community, multilateral and bilateral partners. MOFNP also ensures that line ministries are working in cooperation with international development partners. Many researches have been done in poverty such as Living Conditions Monitoring Survey I and II, Priority Survey II and Poverty Participatory Assessment. To promote policy-related research, some programs such as PWAS (Public Welfare Assistance Scheme), HCCS (Health Care Cost Scheme) as well as Literacy, MBT

(Micro Bankers Trust), the NTD (National Trust for the Disabled) and hammer mill projects have been evaluated with assistance of the study fund (Zambia Social Investment Fund) UNESCO and other agencies. In the case of PWAS, one major finding was that it was not reaching out to the poorest due to lack of publicity and those who knew and accessed the program were not necessarily the poorest. For literacy, the evaluation results indicated that the program provided only literacy and numeracy, which the participants could not easily translate into gainful activities.

5. Conclusions

The main objective which this paper sought to achieve was stated in the introduction as an investigation on the correlation between unemployment and living conditions in Zambia by appreciating the impact and recommending strategic solutions on the youth of Kaunda Squares Stage II Township (Lusaka). What emerged from this survey is a clear picture that shows a pattern of correlation between variables that are considered important for any constructive understanding of the linkage between unemployment and poverty. The variables that were examined were education, unemployment, poverty, occupation, monthly family income and living conditions in Zambia with emphasis on Kaunda Squares Stage II. The failure of leadership which led to bad governance in the country despite democracy confounded the problems of economic development and social fragmentation among the vast number of Zambians. The resultant effects of this poor economy, and social fragmentation were unemployment and institutionalized social inequality. These factors are responsible for the current levels of poverty in all its manifestations in Zambia specifically Kaunda Squares Stage II.

The challenge therefore is not so much in allocating resources towards effective policing in peri-urban areas, but in designing and evolving people-centered

policies and strategies that would revive the economy, ensure equitable distribution of social wealth, and institutionalization of good governance, political accountability, and probity at all levels of governance in Zambia. Anything short of these steps would have counterproductive impact on the level of poverty in Zambia's peri-urban areas like Kaunda Squares Stage II. For in failing to address the problems associated with unemployment, authorities at all levels of government merely create the environment on which poverty is fostered and flourished. In the final analysis, tackling poverty level in peri-urban areas boils down to addressing unemployment, bad governance, and inequality among the people.

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