

Japan support for the under-privileged cheers Zambia

By AARON CHIYANZO

A sight one can never forget is that of a rural girl child being thankful for an education that has been brought close to her door step.

Education is the most compelling means to initiate social alterations and improve community development in any country.

The role of education, both in urban and rural areas is huge and imperative for growth of the country's economy.

Although education in the urban areas has progressed rapidly during the last few decades, there are still some areas where education is not given sufficient priority.

Schooling in the rural areas is often a challenge, with classrooms in a dilapidated state, lack of equipment, a shortage of teachers, not to mention that many pupils go without three square meals a day.

In Katete district of Eastern province of Zambia for example, conditions of many schools leaves a lot to be desired.

But much gratitude goes to the Japanese Government for their commitment in ensuring that the education system in rural areas of Zambia is titivated.

In their quest to ensure that the education sector is promptly extended to the rural areas, the Japanese government last month handed over three primary schools to Government in Katete district.

The Japanese government extended over K 436, 568 for the construction of a new building with classrooms and for the provision of the necessary furniture there for each of the three community schools.

One could easily see that the children, including parents and guardians of Chief M'bang'ombe's area were very elated by the gesture by the Japanese government.

We could not believe the constructively arranged poems, expressing gratitude to Japan that were presented by pupils from one of the community schools that was refurbished by Japanese government.

Eastern Province permanent Chanda Kasolo said at the handover ceremony of the three schools in Katete that the Japanese government remains a key friend of Zambia in extending the education sector to the under-privileged children in rural areas.

It was a colorful ceremony filled with songs of praise from both the parents and pupils, and traditional dances by the 'Nyau' to the amusement of the visitors.

Mr Kasolo took time to thank the Japanese government for life continued support to the Zambian people in various sectors.

He notes with keen interest that community schools play a key role in providing education to millions of Zambian children especially the under-privileged.

"The support the Japanese government has rendered to the under-privileged in Zambia will forever be cherished because it has greatly improved the learning ability of pupils in community schools" said Mr Kasolo.

It is no secret that community schools have not been spared from challenges despite the positive characteristics that have been recorded so far, hence the support from the Japanese gov-

ernment could not have come at any better time than this.

"I thank the Japanese government for these three community schools and the numerous support they have rendered to Zambia. They remain a key friend in extending education to the under-privileged in rural areas. This will greatly improve the proficiency of pupils in these schools. But they have however not been spared from challenges," said Mr Kasolo.

Earlier, the Japanese government also gave out a U\$76,956 grant for the construction of a 1 x 3 classroom block in Chief Mumba's village in Mumbwa district which will benefit 377 orphans as well as vulnerable children.

And Japanese ambassador to Zambia Hidenobu Sobashima said that his government has so far funded 160 projects throughout Zambia under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects which was introduced in Zambia in 1990.

Ambassador Sobashima explained that the primary objective of the programme is to support various development and human security projects that enhance the livelihood of vulnerable people.

Zambia Impact Network regional is the organization that lobbied for funds from the Japanese government for the three schools in Katete.

Its director Daniel Mwanza said that his organization has also secured another grant from an American agency for the construction of two community schools in Sinda and Petauke districts of Eastern province.

Mr Mwanza said that the two community schools will be fully furnished and provided with

power. Meanwhile, Chief M'bang'ombe of Katete district in Eastern province stressed the need for children in rural areas to take advantage of the education that had been brought to their door steps and use it to transform their lives and the community.

He pointed out that an educated community would help eradicate poverty that he said had stricken many rural areas and called on parents to ensure that their children were enrolled into school.

Chief M'bang'ombe expressed happiness that many people in his chiefdom had responded to the call to education and that



Japanese ambassador to Zambia Hidenobu Sobashima, Eastern Province permanent Chanda Kasolo and Chief M'bang'ombe of Katete.

many children who failed to secure a place in the schools were often disappointed.

He, however, assured that the new schools would ensure that more children in the dis-

and that they should extend the gesture to other needy communities.

However, the education sector has experienced retarded growth over the years because

tance to programs and services, accessibility to resources and limited interaction with other high achieving students, all hamper opportunities for gifted students.

ordered the establishment of committees in all villages of his chiefdom to promote education against child marriages and look at family affairs.

The chief noted that many young girls in rural areas are subjected to early marriages at the expense of their education.

He warned his subjects that he did not want to hear of parents in his chiefdom forcing their young girls into early marriage.

Chief M'bang'ombe explains that there are many problems in marriages that many young people will not understand and that it is among the reasons why many marriages nowadays are ending up into a disaster.

He encouraged children to instead concentrate on getting an education so that they can better their lives, that of their children and also become citizens who contribute to the economic development of the country.

The chief ordered the establishment of committees in villages around his chiefdom that will look at the plight of young girls in all areas of their lives and also family affairs.

"Siniifuna kuvvela ati nlonse tate akwatilisa bana bake bakali bang'ono (I do not want to hear of any parent forcing their young girls into early marriages), So, I order the establishment of committees in all communities to look at the affairs of young girls and they will be reporting directly to me.

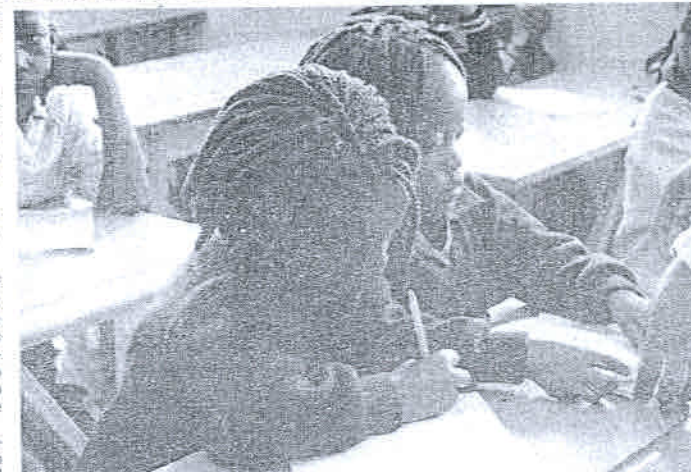
"Let us instead encourage these girls to concentrate on school so that they can better their lives and also look after you. There are many problems in marriages that young people might not understand," he said.

And First Lady Esther Lungu has always said that ending poverty in Zambia and other developing countries will depend on the attention given to rural women.

Ms Lungu said rural women are the primary agents of change in the fight against hunger and poverty in their communities.

She pointed out that empowering rural women will lead to agricultural growth and poverty eradication.

When it came to education, parents preferred to send their boy children to school rather than the girls, which should not be the case.



Pupils in a classroom

tributed attained an education and get a chance to excel up to university level.

Chief M'bang'ombe thanked the Japanese government for the three Community schools

of a number of challenges especially pupils have been facing.

With regard to education in particular, various conditions in rural schools serving low income communities include dis-

But among the many challenges, earlier marriages and child abuse are among the leading causes of school drop outs in rural areas.

And chief M'bang'ombe has



First Lady Esther Lungu