

# REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAMBIA

## (Reformed Open Community Schools (ROCS))

**Background:** Reformed Open Community Schools (ROCS) is an initiative of the Reformed Church in Zambia set up to manage community schools set up by the Church. The Church has run schools in Zambia since 1899 when it started evangelising. Initially, it set up the Planning and Development Department (PDD) which ran community schools. ROCS was registered as an NGO with the Registrar of Societies in 1997 to take up the specific role of supporting community schools. To-date, more than 75, 000 children have benefited from the education support provided by ROCS through community schools in 6 provinces of Zambia.

**ROCS VISION:** A literate and self-sustaining society where all children have access to and quality of education.

**ROCS MISSION:** A Christian not for profit organisation that promotes provision of quality education that enhances social justice and equity for all children, especially the orphaned and vulnerable.

**ROCS STRATEGIC THEME:** “Education Is The Key To Empowerment And Sustainable Development.”

### ROCS CORE VALUES:

- ✓ Participation and Inclusiveness
- ✓ Transparency and Accountability
- ✓ Respect for human rights and the environment
- ✓ Protecting child’s rights
- ✓ Appreciative inquiry
- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Partnership and Volunteerism

**STRATEGIC GOAL 2014-2016:** “Improved Community school governance for better management and quality education”

### ROCS STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Improve school governance through networking, advocacy and lobbying
2. Contribute to an environment where poor and vulnerable children realize their rights and have access to quality primary education.
3. Improve hygiene behaviours of learners, teachers and communities through innovative and participatory approaches and motivational tools
4. Improve access to early childhood education for vulnerable children especially those in rural areas.
5. Strengthen accountability and measurement of results in the delivery of community school education in rural and peri-urban Zambia.

### PROGRAMMES

ROCS has set up five programmes which reinforce each other in order to offer education to the orphans and vulnerable children. These are:

- **Primary Education:** to facilitate, and support, the provision of quality primary education in community schools with increased educational opportunities especially to orphans and vulnerable children.

**Community Empowerment:** to increase community participation and mobilisation through PCSC capacity strengthening initiatives to enable them manage their schools and provide adequate support to the OVC in their communities.

- **Early Childhood Education:** Realising the full potential of children demands that the first few years of life are accorded priority attention thus the need to prepare children between the ages of 3 and 6 years for Grade 1 because it is a period when the brain develops rapidly.

- **Water and Sanitation:** to increase the provision of water and sanitation facilities to community schools and surrounding communities through the provision of boreholes, construction of Ventilated Improved Pit latrines and hygiene education.

- **Lobby and Advocacy:** to improve Community School governance through participatory policy engagement using approaches like RBA, STAR and RBME. **ROCS TARGET GROUPS**

ROCS targets the following groups:

- Children attending community schools
- Volunteer teachers in Community schools
- PCSCs as managers of community schools
- SHG/SG for improved income generating and support for vulnerable children
- Preschool aged childrens
- Caregivers and PMC
- CSEN
- Govt agencies, traditional and civic leaders

### OVERVIEW OF PAST PERFORMANCE

ROCS has been providing education in areas and places where government has not been able to set up schools since 1997. In essence, ROCS supplements government efforts in meeting the educational needs in the country. ROCS interventions are an integral part of the national efforts in human development. Without ROCS’ intervention, thousands of school aged children would not have been reached and would have remained on the national statistics of illiterate children.

Key achievements in the provision of education include the following:

**Teacher Training:** ROCS conducts capacity building training for volunteer community school teachers in order to improve their delivery of pedagogical knowledge to children in community schools. In the current 3 projects that are training teachers, a total of 328 teachers have been trained.



### School Infrastructure Improvement:

ROCS believes that a conducive learning environment starts with conducive infrastructure which is cardinal for effective teaching and learning to take place. Therefore, ROCS works with schools and communities to ensure that the school infrastructure is improved to attract children to come to school. ROCS also believes that sustainable structures are those that have been put up when the organisation and the community work together.

**Water and Sanitation:** aims to sustainably improve access to safe water, adequate sanitation, hygiene information and health practices in community schools and surrounding communities. The project also strives to increase advocacy and to raise awareness among key decision makers of the urgency to focus on rural sanitation and hygiene promotion and improvements, encourage both women and men to get involved in decision making at community level and in schools, ensure various decision making bodies and committees are gender sensitive and that training opportunities are offered to both men and women.

**ECUDE:** ROCS is supporting Early Childhood Care and Development Education centres in villages and community schools. Especially in rural



communities focusing at children between the ages 3 and 6 access early education

**Capacity building at community level:** Communities managing the schools, especially the committees, have been oriented on the principles of school management and organisation. Training in psychosocial counselling skills and public policy advocacy have been imparted to community leaders to enable them handle issues related to the management and financing of the community schools. Training in income generating activities intended to uplift the lives of the communities and help sustain the schools have been embarked on



**Children's Councils:** These have been formed in all the schools in Lundazi, Chama, Mafinga and Mbala. The main aim of these councils is to enable the children be involved in the active running and decision making at the schools as well as to educate their peers on the importance of education. The councils are expected to represent the interests of the rest of the learners in the schools. The councils are formed of 10 members each of 5 boys and 5 girls.



**Partnerships:** ROCS works with various organisations in achieving its Strategic Goals. Some of these organisations are RFF, ReK, EU, Tear Australia, WBR, and locally, with the ZGF, local NGOs and CBOs as well as government ministries and departments and with the Reformed Church in Zambia as well.

### FOCUS AND STRATEGY

An essential strategic approach adopted by ROCS in its programme of work is capacity building and strengthening key actors. These include volunteer untrained teachers, school and community leaders, children's

councils and parent management committees which are responsible for the management of ECCDE centre. Community and resource mobilisation are major challenges to the programme and where they have worked well, a lot of progress has been made in providing education. For sustainability to take root in running the schools, the communities need increased mobilisation and consolidation in community relations.

### Governance

As an initiative of the RCZ, ROCS is supervised by a Board appointed by the Church. The RCZ Education Secretary are the RCZ General Secretary are Ex-officio on the ROCS board. The composition of the board is open to the general public, particularly to individuals and institutions interested in improving the plight of the OVCs.

**Staffing:** ROCS secretariat is housed at the RCZ Synod HQ with field offices in Lundazi, Chama Mafinga and Mbala districts. ROCS is managed by the Executive Director, supported by an Accountant and three Program Officers and a driver in Lusaka. In Lundazi, there are 3 project officers and a driver while Mafinga has one project officer and a driver. Chama has one project officer. In Mbala, ROCS runs a joint program with the Diaconia Department to implement the Integrated Program .



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