

Supporting Early Childhood Development in Informal Settlements Needs Assessment

2023

PLAY
FOR ALL

A small logo featuring a stylized girl with pigtails, arms raised, and a red dress, positioned between the words "PLAY" and "FOR ALL".



4	1. Background and Introduction
4	1.1 Development Workshop
5	1.2 Development Workshops <i>Play for All</i> ECD programme
5	2. Methodology
6	3. Overview of data collected
8	4. Summary of findings
11	5. ECD centre mapping
11	5.1 Centre ownership and curriculum
12	5.2 Children attending the centres
12	5.3 Teachers
13	5.4 School fees
14	5.5 Support to centres
14	5.6 Centre construction
16	6. Needs interviews
16	6.1 Questions for parents and community members
16	6.1.1 Perceived ECD importance
17	6.1.2 Greatest needs of young children aged 0–6 years
18	6.1.3 Greatest needs of parents
18	6.1.4 Greatest needs in the community
19	6.2 Questions for teachers
19	6.2.1 Education of teachers: general educational level
19	6.2.2 Education of teachers: qualifications in ECD
20	6.2.3 Training needs
22	7. Discussion of needs and next steps

With support from and thanks to:

Dr. Given Hapunda, Department of Psychology, University of Zambia, Ministry of Education,
and Ward Councillors of Chawama and Misisi.

Researchers: Memory Mundia, Chipso Hapunda, Brian Samulola, Caroline Phiri

1 Background and Introduction

Early Childhood Development (ECD) is a critical phase in a child's life that lays the foundation for their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. During these formative years, from conception to school-going age (around 6 year), children undergo rapid brain development and are highly receptive to the environment around them. The experiences and nurturing they receive during this period have a profound and lasting impact on their future well-being and potential.

Understanding the significance of ECD is not only a matter of child welfare but also one of societal and economic importance. The investments made in a child's early years can yield substantial dividends, not only for that individual but for the community and nation as a whole.

ECD encompasses a range of factors, including health, nutrition, early learning, responsive caregiving, safety and security, all of which play a pivotal role in shaping a child's physical and mental health, their capacity to learn, and their ability to form positive relationships.

This early nurturing and stimulation sets the stage for a child's success in school, career, and life in general. ECD plays a pivotal role in breaking the cycles of poverty, particularly for children living in impoverished conditions.

ECD programs offer children from low-income backgrounds access to essential resources like quality education, healthcare, and proper nutrition, levelling the playing field and mitigating the disadvantages they face. By nurturing cognitive and emotional development, ECD equips these children with the skills and resilience needed to overcome adversity, excel in school, and eventually secure better employment opportunities.

Moreover, ECD programs often engage parents and caregivers, empowering them with knowledge and support to create a nurturing home environment. Ultimately, investing in ECD for children in poverty not only transforms their individual trajectories but also holds the promise of breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty, fostering a more equitable and prosperous society for all.

1.1 Development Workshop

Development Workshop Zambia (DWZ) is a non-governmental organization which focuses on urban sustainable development and urban community empowerment.

The organisation primarily works to prevent the spread of informal settlement and to improve the quality of life, dignity and opportunities for people living in informal settlements (urban slums). Development Workshop works in partnership with communities, local authorities, ministries, private sector and like-minded partner organisations, and adopts efficient, sustainable and impactful approaches to deliver results.

DWZ is part of a world-wide network of Development Workshop (DW) organisations with centres in Switzerland, Canada, Angola, Namibia and France, and offices in Vietnam and Burkino Faso and supporting projects in Zimbabwe. It is funded by non-governmental organisations, private citizens, and national and international development organisations.

DW was founded to improve the livelihoods of poor and disadvantaged communities, with a specific focus on human settlements.

Over the last 40 years, DW has implemented many-award winning and successful programs in over 30 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. DW's biggest operations are currently in Namibia and Angola with a focus on early childhood development, parenting support, water & sanitation, micro-finance, social housing, and urban infrastructure.

DWZ is in the early stages of establishment, and in line with our other DW offices plans to work in close collaboration with local authorities, relevant ministries and in support of national development goals. Our priority programmes for Zambia are early childhood development (*Play for All*), social housing and urban infrastructure.

1.2 Development Workshops *Play for All* ECD programme

Play for All is DWs holistic early childhood development programme. The programme interventions and focus is tailored for different towns and areas based on need, but it broadly encompasses five intervention areas:

1. Training of ECD/early years teachers with play-based child centres practice with ongoing mentorship and support.
2. Provision of teaching and learning materials to support ECD centres and homes to provide early stimulation.
3. Physical improvements for ECD centres to create more conducive environments for children to play and develop.
4. Parental wellbeing and support.
5. Awareness raising more broadly about the importance of ECD.

In order to inform and develop a contextualised *Play for All* ECD programme that responds to the needs in urban informal settlements in Zambia study was undertaken in May of 2023 to assess the realities on the ground and the needs of the community.

2 Methodology

Development Workshop (DW) in partnership with the University of Zambia, Department of Psychology, conducted an assessment of the early childhood development (ECD) needs in two informal settlements in Lusaka, Namely Chawama L and Misisi.

Two different surveys were carried out.

1. An ECD centre mapping, which captured information about the different ECD centres, such as the ages and number of children, number of staff, type of construction, who runs the centre, and from whom they have received support if any.
2. Needs interviews, conducted with parents, community members and teachers. This captured information about how children spend their time, attitudes around ECD, and the greatest needs in the community. This interview also asked teachers the ECD training they have received, and their training needs.

The survey was conducted by four locally recruited enumerators. There were two women and two men who had previous experience of similar data collection. The enumerators were trained in Lusaka -

on Thursday 4 May, and a pilot was carried out on Friday 5 May.

The training and pilot enabled the team to refine the survey in line with local terminology and practice (e.g. ECD centres for 3-4 year olds are called “nursery schools” in Zambia, so the surveys were revised accordingly).

The data collection was carried out from 8 to 26 May 2023. It was carried out using the KoboCollect app on android smartphones. The data collection team were familiar with the software, and remote support was provided from Windhoek by the DW staff who designed the surveys. While the survey is in English, the respondents used local languages to communicate with the respondents. The training included ensure that translations were agreed upon by the enumerators, but the multiple languages risks missing nuance.

As there was not pre-existing information about the number of ECD centres in the communities we cannot say if this data is representative of all the ECD centres in these two constituencies, it is certainly enough to provide a detailed picture of the needs in the communities relating to ECD.

Informed consent was collected, and the enumerators were trained to behave in a kind and non-judgemental manner in order to elicit openness from the respondents.

However, it can be assumed that respondents may have framed their responses to encourage future intervention. Furthermore, it is possible that gender and cultural background may have influenced responses.

The surveys are quantitative data, based on multiple choice responses. The interview included several “other” options which were given as text by the respondents. During data cleaning, these were examined and recategorised into existing options –

where they existed, and some new options were added if required.

The interview ended with an open text option, which were also reviewed and previous responses were amended (e.g. if the respond highlights crime in the final text box, “security” was selected as a community priority in the relevant question).

This document lays out the key findings from the survey, and further details are available on request. It is noted that where a group is bigger than 30, findings are expressed as a percentage – otherwise, the numbers are provided.

3 Overview of data collected

3.1 ECD centre mapping

The following centres were identified across the two areas that were mapped:

ECD centre type	Community-run	Privately run	Supported by Faith-based groups	Government-run	Grand Total
Early childhood development centre (ages 0-6 years)	38	30	8	2	78
Nursery (ages 3-4 years)	12	5	3	1	21
Orphanage/centre for vulnerable children with early years programme	1		1		2
Grand Total	51	35	12	3	101

Average time per survey: 13 minutes (after the exclusion of anomalous data)

3.2 Needs interviews









Constituency Interviewee	Chawama L	Misisi	Grand Total
Community member	40	43	83
Teacher	35	35	70
Parent	43	48	91
Grand Total	118	126	244

Average time per survey: 13 minutes

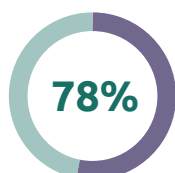


4 Summary of findings

The typical ECD centre in this sample has the following characteristics:

	Is an Early childhood development centre for children aged 0–6 years (rather than a nursery or orphanage)
	Is community-run (rather than run by government, private or a faith-based organisation)
	Follows the Government of Zambia's curriculum
	57 children aged 2–6 years regularly attend
	Classes are led by a total of two teachers or caregivers and one assistant
	Charges between 161 and 196 Zambian Kwacha (around US\$10) per child per month
	It has never received any external support
	It is made of brick, and has a pit latrine toilet

The key findings from the interviews with parents and community members indicate many needs in the community, with jobs and economic factors emerging commonly. Drug and alcohol abuse emerges commonly. Similar needs are mentioned in both Chawama L and Misisi. Nonetheless, the majority of parents value ECD and choose to send their children there, although insufficient money for school fees is the principle reason for not sending children to ECD centres.



Over three quarters of parents (78%) report send their young children to an ECD centre.



Amongst parents who reported sending their children to ECD centres (71), the most common reasons given are around promoting the children's development and preparing them for school.

Among the parents who reported not sending their children to an ECD centre (20), the most common reason by far (given by 16) was that they could not afford the fees.



Parents Not Sending Children to ECD Center



Primary Reason for Not Enrolling Children: Affordability

Parents and community members reported the most significant needs for children are the need for safety (63%), nutrition (47%), access to healthcare (41%) and safe and nurturing spaces to develop (32%).



63% Safety Need



47% Nutrition Need



41% Healthcare Access Need



32% Nurturing Spaces Need



69% Child Protection



52% ECD Training



53% Developmental Activities

Parents and community members reported the most significant needs for parents are related to keeping children safe from abuse (69%), being trained on the importance of ECD (52%) and practical information on activities to support the development of children (53%).

Parents and community members reported the most significant needs in the community are jobs (66%), sanitation (47%), water (45%), security (38%) and housing (33%).



66% Jobs Need



38% Security Need



47% Sanitation Need



33% Housing Need



45% Water Need

From the interviews with teachers, the following trends are identified.



Misisi
42%

Chawama L
75%

The educational level of teachers is lower in Misisi than in Chawama L, with just 42% holding a diploma or vocational certificate in Misisi – 75% in Chawama L.



Misisi
20%

Chawama L
54%

This trend is also reflected in ECD qualifications, with 20% in Misisi holding an ECD diploma or university degree, compared to 54% in Chawama L.

When asked about their training needs, the most commonly mentioned topics were the ECD resources available (49% respondents), how to design play-based learning (36%), types of learning material (31%), classroom management (27%) and working with children with different abilities (23%).



49% ECD Resources



36% Play-Based Learning



31% Learning Materials



27% Classroom Management

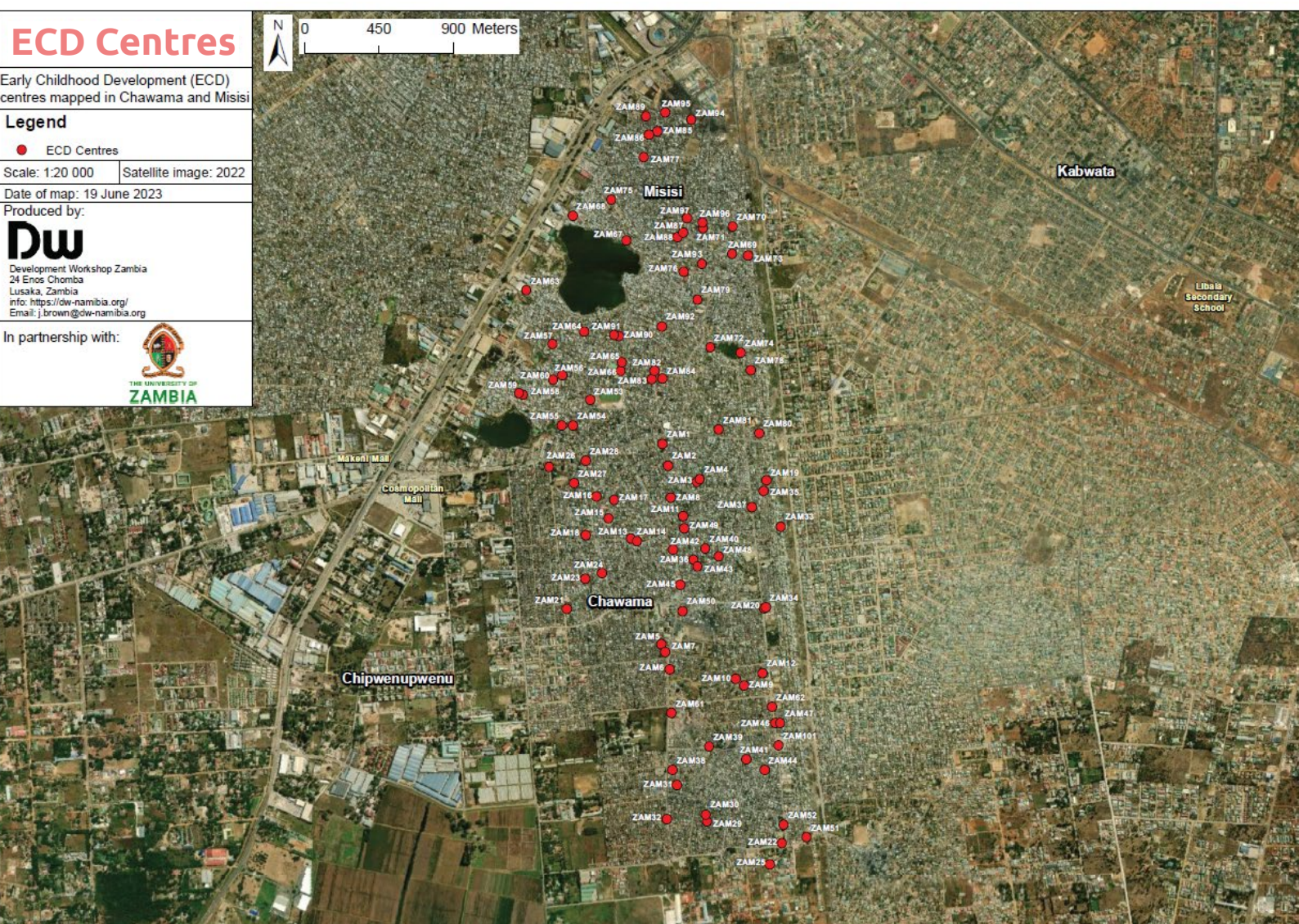


23% Inclusive Education



5 ECD centre mapping

The ECD centre mapping summary findings is also presented in a map.



5.1 Centre ownership and curriculum

ECD centre type and support	Early childhood development centre (ages 0-6 years)	Nursery (ages 3-4 years)	Orphanage/centre for vulnerable children with early years programme
Community-run	75%	24%	2%
Privately run	86%	14%	0%
Supported by faith-based groups	67%	25%	8%
Government-run	67%	33%	0%
Grand Total	77%	21%	2%

ECD centres (with children aged 0–6 years) make up the biggest proportion of the sample by a considerable margin (77% of all). Half (50%) of the centres are community-run, with 35% being privately run. The remaining centres are supported by faith-based organisations (12%), and government (3%). Most (86%) of the private centres are ECD centres.

Almost all (94%) of the sample were following the ECD curriculum from the government of Zambia.

5.2 Children attending the centres

The average number of children attending the centres is 57, but there is some variation by type.

Average children regularly attending the nursery school	Early childhood development centre (ages 0-6 years)	Nursery (ages 3-4 years)	Orphanage/centre for vulnerable children with early years programme
	59	52	29
Minimum number of children regularly attending the nursery school	10	3	27
Maximum number of children regularly attending the nursery school	200	120	30

Average children regularly attending the nursery school	Community-run	Government-run	Privately run	Supported by faith-based groups
	49	51	63	71
Minimum number of children regularly attending the nursery school	3	45	10	18
Maximum number of children regularly attending the nursery school	200	61	150	190

The average age range of children attending the centres is two to six years.

5.3 Teachers

Across all the different types of ECD centre, there was an average of two teachers and one assistant per centre, so a total of three staff. However, some variation between the centre ownership can be observed. Government-run and privately-run centres had a greater number of staff.

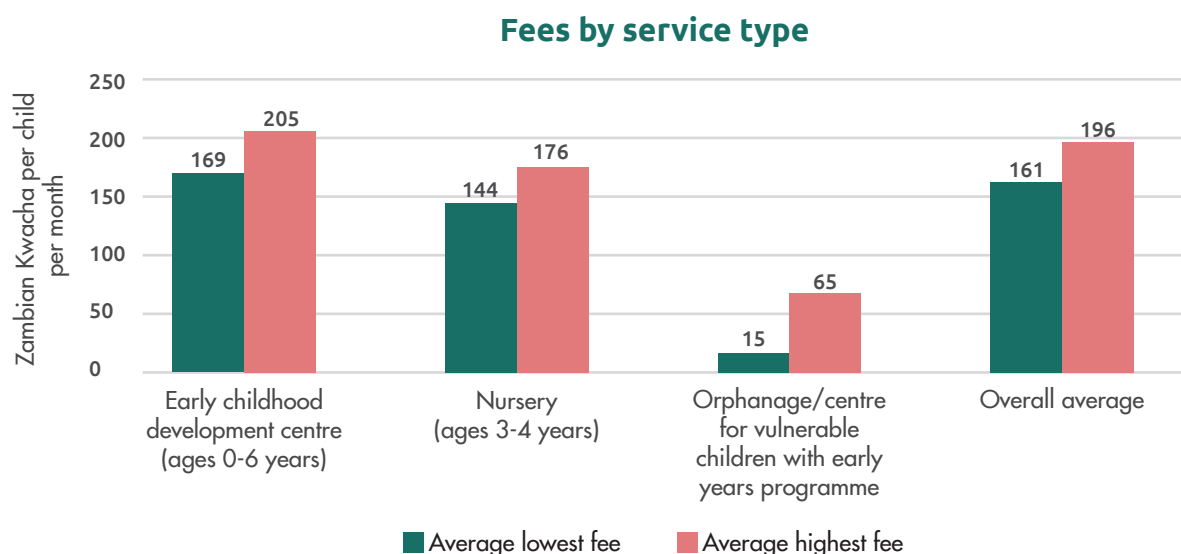
Average staff by centre ownership	Teachers/caregivers	Assistants
Community-run	2	1
Government-run	3	2
Privately run	3	1
Supported by faith-based groups	2	1

An average child:adult ratio of 18 is observed. This figure is almost doubled to 30 for the two orphanages in the sample. There is also variation between the different centre ownership.

Centre ownership	Average child: adult ratio
Community-run	20
Supported by faith-based groups	19
Privately run	17
Government-run	13

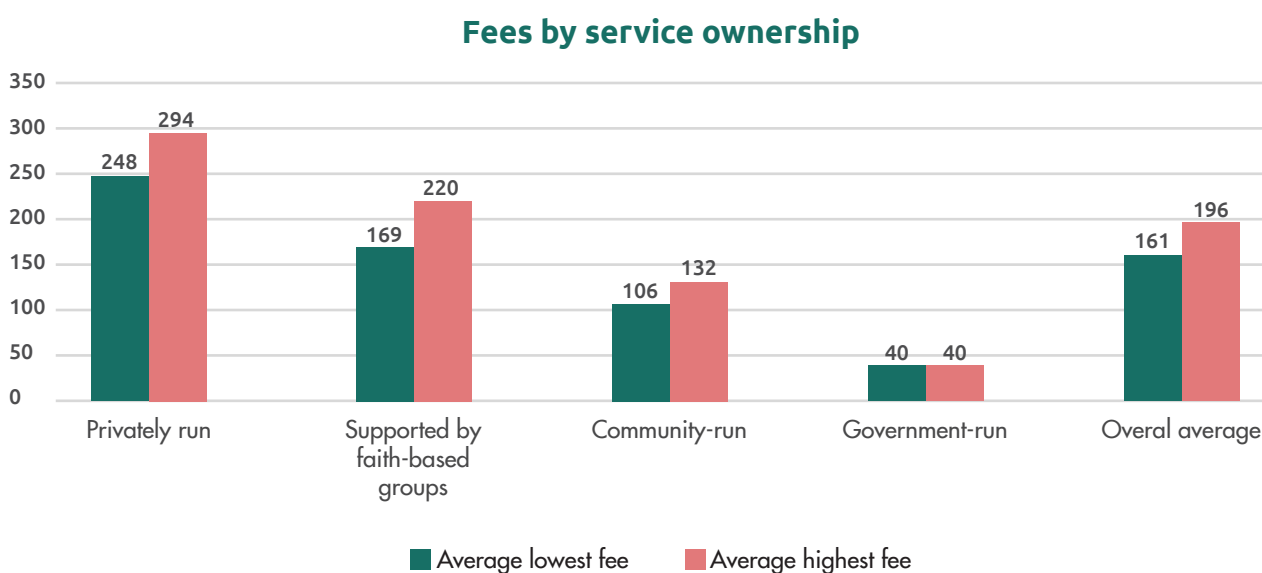
5.4 School fees

The overall average lowest fee per child per month is 161 Zambian Kwacha, while the average highest is 196 Zambian Kwacha.



Type of centre	Average lowest fee	Average highest fee
Early childhood development centre (ages 0-6 years)	169	205
Nursery (ages 3-4 years)	144	176
Orphanage/centre for vulnerable children with early years programme	15	65
Overall average	161	196

While ECD centres and nurseries have similar fees, orphanages charge a lot less. Meanwhile, private institutions are the most expensive, followed by those supported by faith-based groups, and then community-run centres. It is noted that while government centres are the cheapest in this sample, they have the most staff and the lowest child:adult ratio.



Centre ownership	Average lowest fee	Average highest fee
Privately run	248	294
Supported by faith-based groups	169	220
Community-run	106	132
Government-run	40	40
Grand Total	161	196

5.5 Support to centres

The vast majority (84%) of the sampled centres reported never having received any external support, although a third (33%) of government centres reporting having received some support.

External support ever received?	Community-run	Government-run	Privately run	Supported by faith-based groups
No	78%	67%	91%	92%
Yes	22%	33%	9%	8%

Of the 16 centres reporting having previously received external support, the most common types of support received were learning/playing resources e.g. books, games, toys, financial donation and centre improvements e.g. construction. This support most commonly came from the government.

5.6 Centre construction

It is noted that for the construction section of the survey, the enumerator visited the centre and did not rely on teacher reporting.

All (100%) of the sampled centres were made of brick. Almost all (96%) were found to have a toilet, of which 63% were pit latrines and 37% were flush toilets. It is noted that community-run centres with toilets were particularly likely to have pit latrines (81%), while government-run centres with toilets were more likely to have flush toilets (67%).

Toilet type	Community-run	Government-run	Privately run	Supported by faith-based groups
Flush	19%	67%	57%	42%
Pit latrine	81%	33%	43%	58%



6 Needs interviews


The needs interview was adapted to ask one set of questions to parents and community members, and another set to the teachers.

Interviewee	Total
Parent	91
Community member	83
Teacher	70
Grand Total	244

6.1 Questions for parents and community members

6.1.1 Perceived ECD importance

When asked how children aged 0–6 years spend their time, the most common responses were as follows. Respondents were able to select all that apply. While the overall trend is the same in both areas in Misisi almost three quarters (74%) were reported to stay at home with the parents, which was 58% in Chawama L.



How children spend their time	Chawama L	Misisi	Average
Stay at home with the parents/family	58%	74%	66%
Spend time unsupervised by adults, alone or with other children	57%	64%	60%
Go to early childhood development centre	42%	59%	51%
Looked after by other family in another home	31%	34%	33%
Go to a government school (from age 4)	14%	30%	22%

The 91 parent respondents were asked if they kept their 0–6 year olds at home or if they sent them to an ECD centre. The majority (78%) reported that they sent their kids to an ECD centre.

Of the 71 (78%) that reported sending their children to an ECD centre, the most common reasons were as follows, noting similar results in the different constituencies. Respondents were able to select all that apply.

Reasons reported for sending child to ECD centre	Chawama L	Misisi	Average
Nursery schools are good for children's development	74%	68%	70%
ECD education prepares the children for school	65%	70%	68%
The children enjoy going to the nursery schools	53%	49%	51%
It is good for the children to be with other kids their age	50%	38%	44%
The ECD teachers are well-trained at looking after these children	24%	49%	37%

Of the same 71 who reported sending their children to ECD centres, the average age of starting attendance was three years, for both constituencies. 72% of these parents reported that their children attend ECD centres by the age of three years, and by four years, this figure is 93% of these parents.

Amongst the 20 respondents who reported not sending their young children to an ECD centre, the most common reasons given were as follows. It is noted that these are given as a number rather than percentage since the number of respondents is too small. Respondents were able to select all that apply.

Reasons for not sending children to ECD centres	No. parents
I can't afford the fees	16
I do not think the nursery schools are safe	9
I want to take care of my children at home	7
There is no nursery school near me	7
I don't know what ECD is	5
My child is not yet old enough	3
I do not think that teachers are well qualified	2
ECD does not make a difference	1
I cannot get a place for my child in a nursery school as they are too full	1

6.1.2 Greatest needs of young children aged 0-6 years

All parents and community members were asked what they felt were the greatest needs of young children. Respondents were able to select all that apply.

There are similar findings between the constituencies, although in Misisi, 41% of respondents emphasised a need for targeted support for orphans, which was much smaller in Chawama L (11%). Further, needs in nutrition and healthcare were also emphasised to a greater extent in Misisi.

Needs of young children	Chawama L	Misisi	Average
Children need to be protected from harm	65%	60%	63%
Children need appropriate nutrition	39%	54%	47%
Children need access to healthcare	28%	53%	41%
Children need safe and nurturing spaces to develop	37%	27%	32%
Children need better preparation for school	31%	22%	26%
Orphans need targeted support	11%	41%	26%
Children need more/improved care from parents and caregivers	25%	26%	26%
Children need to be able to access a centre/school near them (there are not enough places)	27%	50%	20%
Children need access to services e.g. sanitation, water, protection services	14%	14%	14%
Children need to spend time with trained people who understand their needs	11%	15%	13%

6.1.3 Greatest needs of parents

All parents and community members were asked about the needs of parents. Respondents were able to select all that apply. Although this question was framed around needs as parents, it is noted that 14% of people mentioned that parents need to be economically empowered, even though this was not mentioned as an option. This seems to highlight the strong dominance of poverty in these communities, affecting all areas of people's lives.

Parents' needs	Chawama L	Misisi	Average
Parents would benefit from learning about keeping children safe from abuse	59%	78%	69%
Parents would benefit from being trained on the importance of ECD	51%	54%	52%
Parents would benefit from practical information on activities to support the development of children	47%	59%	53%
Parents would benefit from learning about child nutrition	36%	47%	42%
Parents would benefit from learning about hygiene for children	28%	24%	26%
Parents need to be economically empowered	18%	10%	14%

6.1.4 Greatest needs in the community

All parents and community members were finally asked about their perceptions of the community needs in general, not relating specifically to the care of young children. Respondents were able to select all that apply. It is noted that drug and alcohol abuse was not on the original list of choices, but was frequently mentioned by respondents.

Protection from flooding and waste management also commonly emerged, particularly in Misisi. In their comments, many respondents referred to security issues in the community, commonly linking this to drug and alcohol abuse amongst youths.

Community needs	Chawama L	Misisi	Average
Jobs	72%	59%	66%
Sanitation (toilets)	42%	52%	47%
Water	40%	49%	45%
Security	40%	36%	38%
Housing	17%	46%	33%
Social services (e.g. protection against family abuse)	20%	10%	15%
Roads	2%	25%	14%
Support for drug and alcohol abuse	7%	8%	7%
Hunger	5%	8%	6%
Protection from flooding and waste management	1%	7%	4%
Electricity	2%	4%	3%
I do not think that our community has any needs	4%	1%	2%

6.2 Questions for teachers

The profile of the teachers is as follows.

Type of centre where work	Chawama L		Misisi	
	# respondents	% respondents	# respondents	% respondents
Early childhood development centre (ages 0-6 years)	24	69%	30	86%
Nursery (ages 3-4 years)	8	26%	3	9%
Orphanage/centre for vulnerable children with early years programme	2	6%	2	6%
Reception/Pre-school (ages 5-6 years)	1	3%	0	0%
Grand Total	35	100%	35	100%

6.2.1 Education of teachers: general educational level

The below table summarises general educational level between the two constituencies.

Education level	Chawama L	Misisi
No formal education certificates	0%	9%
Certificate of Primary Education (age 14)	14%	29%
Junior Secondary School Certificate (age 16)	3%	6%
School leaving certificate / Senior Secondary School Certificate (age 19)	9%	14%
Diploma/vocational certificate	66%	31%
University degree	9%	11%

6.2.2 Education of teachers: qualifications in early childhood education ECE

Overall, it appears that the educational level in Chawama L is greater than that of Misisi, with 51% of respondents holding an ECE diploma (17% in Misisi).

ECE qualifications – by constituency	Chawama L	Misisi
No ECE qualifications	14%	26%
ECE course offered by NGO/government	31%	54%
ECE diploma	51%	14%
University Bachelor's degree in ECE	3%	3%

The rate of ECE qualifications is also different between the different types of centre. Overall, it seems that teachers in nurseries are more likely to have higher qualifications, although the sample is very small.

ECE qualifications – by type of centre	Early childhood development centre (ages 0-6 years)	Nursery (ages 3-4 years)	Orphanage/centre for vulnerable children with early years programme	Reception /Pre-school (ages 5-6 years)
No ECE qualifications	10	3	1	0
ECE course offered by NGO/government	26	2	2	0
ECE diploma	16	6	1	1
University Bachelor's degree in ECE	2	0	0	0

6.2.3 Training needs

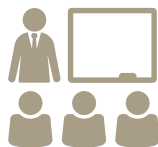
Teachers were asked about their training needs (selecting all that apply) and invited to select all that apply (and add their own suggestions).

Training type	Chawama L	Misisi	Average
What ECD resources are available (e.g. through government, UNICEF, NGOs) and how to access them	49%	49%	49%
How to design play-based learning	29%	43%	36%
What types of learning material I can use	49%	14%	31%
Managing the classroom, including disciplining children	31%	23%	27%
How to work with children with different abilities (e.g. living with disability or gifted learners)	17%	29%	23%
Work with schools to better prepare children for Grade 1	11%	26%	19%
How to plan my lessons	26%	9%	17%
Child protection and keeping children safe	9%	26%	17%
How to involve parents	14%	14%	14%
How children develop	11%	17%	14%
Which other nursery schools are in my area and how to work with them	17%	9%	13%
Why ECD is important	6%	17%	11%
Which curriculum I should follow and how	11%	6%	9%
How to assess children	11%	3%	7%
Hygiene and nutrition for young children	6%	6%	6%
How to read with young children	6%	3%	4%

These training needs can be further categorised into four broad areas:



Understanding
child development



Early years pedagogy
and classroom
management



Supporting children
and their families
holistically



ECD centre/ nursery
school management



7 Discussion of needs and next steps

The mapping has demonstrated the number of ECD service providers within this small area and indicates a demand for ECD as well as a good supply of children to attend the existing centres. The density of services within this space is notable, and the need for support is clearly large.

The needs assessment has shown that there is definite scope and space for the DWZ *Play for All* programme in the informal settlements that were mapped in Lusaka. The programme would be adapted for the specific context, but the overall principles are well aligned do DW's methods.

The assessment indicated that although the importance of ECD is known by some parents and community members, there is still a need to deepen the understanding and strengthen holistic interventions to children. Many children are also at home without access to ECD centres, this is not necessarily a significant issue, as many of these children may still be young, but it would be important that while at home they are receiving nurturing care and early stimulation in a safe environment to support their optimal development.

Teachers have also indicated their interest in further support, training and resources. Large class sizes also make it challenging to provide child-centred and play-based early learning, and so support and guidance on how to deliver this within the limitations could be valuable.

The topics requested by teachers show that practical trainings as well as mentoring and in- class- room support would be beneficial.

The cramped class sizes and some of the issues with access to water and sanitation is also inline with the *Play for All* programme, where centre improvements are made if funds are available. Overall, the data shows that ECD interventions would have a significant impact based on the challenging context that children and their families are living in.

As next steps DWZ will be starting *Play for All* programmes in interested areas, building on the learnings from this report.

As the data is limited to only being from two areas within Lusaka, an additional data collection exercise will take place in towns in Luapula province and in Southern province to identify regional differences in the status of ECD in informal settlements and the needs.

Mapping will also take place in all towns where DWZ starts working to identify the existing ECD services within the informal settlements and to contribute to national and local data sources, with a view to help support planning and service delivery.







www.dw-zambia.org

Photography Credits:

*Bill Wegener - Cover Photo | Alex Radelich - Page 2 | Arno Partissimo - Page 7 | Felicia Montenegro - Page 10 |
Melissa Askew - Page 15 | Topsphere Media - Page 21 | Evan Wise - Page 22-23*