



THE WEEKEND READER

"Your Weekly Read on Debt, Development & Socio-Economic Justice"

EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY IN ZIMBABWE: A SNAPSHOT

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Nelson Mandela

Zimbabwe Constitution section 75 (1) (a) provides for the right to a basic state-funded education including adult basic education. Factors militating against full enjoyment of this constitutional right include an array of historical, economic, legislative, policy and cultural factors that inhibit access to quality education in Zimbabwe.

Historical inequalities in the education sector

The colonial policy of racial and class segregation left scars in the Zimbabwe education sector that remain visible and have somehow been perpetuated and 'modernised' or self-mutated. The education divide is currently exacerbated by financial status of households, with some good schools literally beyond the reach of poor households. It is disheartening that modern relevant practical and technical subjects are only available in schools that children from poor backgrounds cannot access.

Poor Regulation of the Education Sector

The declining standard in the public education system has created an opportunity for private education entrepreneurs. Zimbabwe is witnessing a proliferation of private schools at all levels. Common characteristics for some of these privately run schools are; exorbitant tuition fees, poorly ventilated, inappropriate infrastructure for learning - ranging from residential houses, farm houses, factories etc. converted to classrooms.

Patriarchal overtones

In the face of an overstretched macroeconomic crisis, structural and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequalities, Zimbabwean education sector manifests consistent overtones of patriarchy. Policy, legislative and systemic practices remain inadequate to empower the girl child in terms of access to quality education.

School Dropouts

Despite significant campaigns and advocacy efforts, girls still remain disenfranchised from the school system especially in rural areas. Only 14% of girls in Zimbabwe complete upper secondary school.¹ This is also due to the fact that 34% of girls are married before the age of 18 and 5% before the age of 15 (UNICEF, 2022). Due to incidences of these 'early child marriages', girls are forced to drop out of school thereby limiting their potential and condemning them to a life of poverty.

1.<https://camfed.org/what-we-do/where-we-operate/zimbabwe/#:~:text=Barriers%20to%20Education&text=Only%2014%25%20of%20girls%20in,children%20>

Poor Education financing

The Dakar declaration on Education commits African governments to allocate at least 9% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to education and at least 20% from the national budget. Across the continent, many fall short of this provision. The 2024 Zimbabwe budget allocated 17,7% thereby falling short. While this is a significant step, it should be evaluated against the allocation of these funds in the local currency which is subject to inflationary changes. To note, the issue is not allocation in local currency but the status of the currency due to loss of value. As a result, a few months into this allocation, the declared funds had already lost the anticipated value. Furthermore, allocation and disbursement variances present a challenge for implementation of robust education reforms and developments.

Corruption in the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) programme

As above, the management of public funds allocated to Education programmes such as the BEAM leaves a lot to be desired. First and foremost, the fund is inadequate to support all the vulnerable children across the country. Most discouraging of all, the little available is devalued by corruption. The Newsday of May 2 2023 flighted a headline stating, "BEAM a breeding ground for corruption." This is after calls from Teacher's Unions to audit the fund which they claim is not reaching intended targets. ZIMCODD also encountered irregularities in BEAM fund use in Gokwe which we have forwarded to the Ministry of Education and Parliamentary Portfolio on Education for investigation.

Brain Drain

Due to the severe economic hardship, many professionals are leaving the country for greener pastures. The teaching profession is not spared but actually preferred to the benefit of neighbouring countries such as Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. As a result, our nation loses key qualified and experienced educators². This has affected universities to the extent that certain departments are closing down due to a lack of expert educators. In the same vein, there's also 'internal brain drain' as teachers are also leaving public for private schools which are largely unregulated and compromising the quality of education provided.

The COVID-19 pandemic effect

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a gap in education for rural and urban children from vulnerable backgrounds. In a bid to have life continue, education was moved to online spaces where kids without access to internet and digital gadgets were left behind. Years after the pandemic has ended, not enough has been done to cover the 2/3 year gap these learners faced. As a result, there is need for deliberate action to support these kids.

²[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263269118_The_Causes_and_Impact_of_the_Brain_Drain_in_Institutions_of_Higher_Learning_in_Zimbabwe#:~:text=Zimbabwe's%20brain%20drain%20challenge%20has,Shumba%20%26%20Mawere%2C%202012\)%20](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263269118_The_Causes_and_Impact_of_the_Brain_Drain_in_Institutions_of_Higher_Learning_in_Zimbabwe#:~:text=Zimbabwe's%20brain%20drain%20challenge%20has,Shumba%20%26%20Mawere%2C%202012)%20)

Recommendations

- Government should recognize the 20% Abuja Declaration on Education financing which Zimbabwe is party to.
- Parliament and the Anti-Corruption Commission should investigate and redress maladministration and misuse of the BEAM fund.
- Domestic Resource Mobilization should be prioritised to ensure the funding base for education and other social services is strong.
- Regulation of schools including registration and quality assessment of services provided by sprouting private schools should be conducted.
- Supporting Ministries and authorities such as the Zimbabwe Republic Police, Gender Commission, Women's & Human rights organization should continue and step up efforts to curb 'child marriages'.
- Public-Private Partnerships to improve education in response to the ballooning urban population.

Read our April Health & Education Situational Report here: <https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/April-2024-Health-and-Education-SitRep.pdf>

Opportunities

1) 📄🔍 Consultancy Opportunity:

Interested parties are requested to submit their technical and financial proposals by July 15th, Close of Business (COB), to: Email: youthdecidezim@gmail.com
CC: ydzprograms@gmail.com, ydz.finance@gmail.com
Find TORs at: <https://tinyurl.com/YDZSAM>

2) 🎬🌟 Calling all Zimbabwean Filmmakers! 🌟🎬

Lights, Camera, Action! The Bioskop! Short Film Competition is back and better than ever! 🌟 Are you ready to showcase your filmmaking talent on a national stage? 🎥🌍

 Submission Deadline: July 20th, 2024, 11:59 PM CAT  Submission Platform: <https://filmfreeway.com/TheEuropeanFilmFestivalZimbabwe>

3) CHIEF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH OFFICER

Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission.

<https://x.com/zhrc365/status/1808069420691939705?s=46&t=blbcBEfogHFL4ucolhWCMQ>

4) The African Women's Collaborative for Healthy Food Systems is seeking a self-motivated freelance ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR. To apply, please send a CV and covering letter to applicationscollaborative@gmail.com by 5pm GMT on Friday 26 July.

5) END OF PROGRAMME EVALUATION UNPRPD

<https://careers.unesco.org/job/Harare-End-of-Programme-Evaluation-UNPRPD-Round-4-Joint-Programme-in-Zimbabwe-1/798277302/>



Are you passionate about Social & Economic Justice?
Do you believe in the movement for equality?

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Become a registered member of ZIMCODD today:
<https://rb.gy/ewz45>
Join our Mailing List by sending us your email address to stay caught up on our activities, weekly & monthly reading resources on the Social & Economic justice movement.



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#Youth4Integrity pledge

Are you a member of the youth (18-35 years) with a passion for fighting social and economic injustice? Do you want to join the action for Integrity? Do You want to become an Integrity Icon? If your answer to any of these questions is yes, take the pledge today: <https://rb.gy/9ogzgx>

Quote of the week: Oprah Winfrey

"Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not."

Picture of the week: A lighter moment at the ZIMCODD Mutasa Youth Integrity Hub's Town hall debate.

