ZIMBABWE

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

CONSULTATION REPORT

20 JULY 2022

1.0 PREAMBLE

The Transforming Education consultations were carried out on Wednesday the 20th of July 2022 in three regions as follows:

i) **Northern Region**: Harare, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Manicaland Provinces;
ii) **Central Provincial Cluster**: Midlands, Masvingo, Mashonaland West Provinces; and
iii) **Southern Provincial Cluster**: Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South and Bulawayo Metropolitan Provinces.

Two remote districts were selected from the ten provinces. The District Schools Inspectors for the selected districts coordinated, through district structures, the consultations *(with other line ministries)*. These were face to face meetings so that the underserved communities could be reached to hear their voices.

The districts are:

i) **Mashonaland West:** Kariba and Makonde
ii) **Mashonaland Central:** Mbire and Muzarabani
iii) **Mashonaland East:** UMP and Mudzi
iv) **Manicaland:** Chipinge and Buhera
v) **Masvingo:** Chiredzi and Mwenezi
vi) **Matabeleland South:** Beitbridge and Bulilima
vii) **Matabeleland North:** Binga and Tsholotsho
viii) **Midlands:** Gokwe North and South
ix) **Bulawayo:** Reigate and Khami
x) **Harare:** Mabvuku Tafara and Highglen

The consultations involved a whole of government approached, included multiple constituencies the youths, persons with disabilities, students, teachers, lectures including the Parliamentarians, the private sector, development partners, education advocates, community and religious leaders, academia, research institutions and university networks.

Report

The report highlights responses as per interview guide on the key components for the consultations.

2.0 <u>Key Issue 1</u>: *Ensure full recovery from COVID-19 Educational disruptions*

2.1: What has been the impact of the COVID-19 Educational disruption on learning loss, student disengagement in learning, dropout, and failure of re-enrollment of students?

A number of responses were made. These included the following:

- The major issue is that we were not prepared for covid-19. There was no strategy in place for the unforeseen circumstances. Students lost valuable learning time during lockdowns.
- Students from tertiary institutions could not carry out practicals as scheduled for acquisition of vocational skills. The students therefore were unable to acquire the practical skills as per their course.
- There were high dropouts from education institutions due to child marriages and pregnancies as learners were out of class for a long time.
- Learners got involved in economic livelihood activities, making it difficult to return to class since they were making money and have since seen themselves as breadwinners. They simply lost interest in their education and indicated that education is not of uttermost priority to them.
- Learners lost the learning rhythm, making it difficult to catch up when schools reopened. Some learners had their performance negatively affected by the long stay at home. The long stay promoted delinquency in some cases eg. Drug abuse.
- The gap between the rich schools and poor schools was exacerbated by the pandemic where rich schools could afford e-learning, leaving behind the poor who access education in poorly resourced schools.
- Resources that could have been channeled towards financing education as prioritized, were diverted towards combating COVID-19, new infrastructure and schools, PPE, furniture to cater for social distancing.

- It is sad to note that some teachers and learners suffered complications relating to COVID-19 and could not go back to class on time.
- Teachers were not able to facilitate the completion of the syllabus with the learners.
- Learners with hearing impairments lost a lot because of lack of face-to-face instruction. Airing of radio lessons was not all inclusive. Those with visual impairments and those that rely on Sign Language were also negatively impacted. ICT gadgets that were required for use during the COVID19 period and beyond were not available.
- The COVID-19 pandemic was a blessing in disguise in some remote areas for IT gadgets were donated to them - e.g. Kariangwe in Binga, Regina Mundi (in Lupane) now have computers and computer rooms and teachers were able to embrace and use new e-learning technologies.
- A number of teachers have left the system through resignations as they realized new and fast ways of making money during the peak of the lengthy COVID-19 induced school closures.
- Re-admission of teenage parents, post pregnancy, into the school system has been received with mixed views. They are sometimes discriminated.

2.2 What has been the impact of the COVID-19 educational disruption on nutrition, health and well-being of both students and staff, including the protection of girls, and other vulnerable groups?

The responses were as follows:

- Teachers' welfare was neglected during the entire period as some were not provided with PPEs.
- The girl child is alleged to have been abused and, in some instances, raped as she was locked up, most of them became pregnant.
- In order to fight poverty, child headed families including the girl child ended up experimenting on other things to raise money.
- The girl child was overwhelmed with household chores at the expense of online learning.

- Pupils ended up working in non-conducive environments e.g. gold panning whilst waiting for schools to re-open.
- School feeding programme was disrupted and pupils did not get the vital supplementary nutrition.
- COVID-19 lock downs disrupted informal trading which is the main economic activity resulting in hunger affecting learners and hence poor nutrition.
- People lost their jobs, companies scaled down on their workforce hence affecting food security at household level which subsequently led to poor nutrition levels amongst communities.
- Some learners suffered from mental stress as they were not used to the status quo of remaining indoors for long days that turned into months without schooling.
- There were children who dependent on the school feeding programs and those children were really affected for there was nowhere they were able to get food again
- The fact that a lot of girl learners fell pregnant during covid 19 is testimony enough that many were exposed to H.I.V as they had unprotected sex
- The handicapped were hardly hit by lockdown; some were sexually abused and some suffered malnutrition as a result of unbalanced diet.
- In terms of nutrition, industrial closure led to a deficiency in food. Families could no longer afford to buy food.

2.3 What steps, both public and private, have been taken to recover pandemic-related losses, as stated above?

Participants gave the following as the steps:

- Adoption of alternative learning methods (e-learning, radio lessons, social media platforms, etc.). Due to poor connectivity, these platforms did not work as expected.
- Hearing impairment learners did video lessons which were very expensive and also required video recorders. Teachers disseminated these through WhatsApp platforms and learners could not download the video lessons.

- Modules that were not covered during the COVID19 era were included in post COVID19 learning material and this meant a lot of work for the learner and had little time for research activities.
- Those that could afford opted for private lessons nicodemously.
- Implementing a compressed syllabi aimed at accelerating learning and assist the learners to be ready for examinations.
- Revised the timetable to accommodate more learning time for those sitting for examinations;
- Some schools provided data and gadgets to teachers, though some teachers did not have the requisite gadgets to facilitate e-learning; however, there is in-appropriate use of the gadgets by the internet by the learners hence a call for parents to assist so that schools focus more on teaching than disciplinary issues;
- Support for Adolescent Girls Education Programme (SAGE) equipped learners with survival skills e.g. dressmaking and baking.
- Champion of Girls in Education (COGE)- for the girls that would have dropped out of schools on educational and life skills.
- Community Reading Camps were revived where learners are grouped in community groups for reading purposes.
- Teachers' union engaged the employers to improve on teacher welfare for them to get motivated to work and work under the pandemic.
- Establishment of computer labs in some remote areas to promote e-learning.
- Parental involvement became imperative during the COVID19 era and beyond.
- Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education reduced holiday time and increased learning time to cover up for the lost time.
- Mass vaccination of learners by the Ministry of Health and Child Care was a good intervention.

2.4: What progress has been made to date?

Progress noted include:

- Improved learning and attainment of educational goals.

- Online learning has been made through radio and TV lessons although it is still not catering for other groups such as the disabled and under privileged.
- Decrease in the number of learners infected by Covid 19.
- Free vaccinations to learners.
- MOPSE allocated a budget to cater for PPES for the institutions.

2.5: What additional measures are proposed to support further recovery in the-short term?

The measures proposed were:

- Offer free public Wi-Fi
- Improve accessibility of education material online and increase access to offline learning technologies
- Load-shedding should be addressed - address power challenges
- Address issues of internet penetration; it should be accessible to all in the country
- Address the disparity between the poor and rich families in access to learning platforms
- BEAM beneficiaries should not be turned away due to fees increments that are done after their fees has been paid by government. BEAM should be increased and disbursement should be timeously
- Upscale the capacitation of teachers with digital skills, including digital pedagogies. Needless to say, schools should not wait for Government funding but vigorously mobilise resources to equip schools with ICTs. Nobody knows the nature of the pandemic that will strike the world and education will inevitably go digital
- Government to offer free education for all
- Reintroduction of Part-Time Continued Education Classes in all schools
- Holiday lessons and weekend schools to be introduced
- Schools to utilize available land to them and embark on income generating projects to support school expenditure. School feeding program should be sustainable
- solarize all schools to avert electricity challenges. Improve on water provision as well

- Consider teacher replacement of those who go on vacation leave as their classes remain unattended for long times. Replace attrition vacant posts in time
- Equip supervisors with vehicles to effectively monitor schools

3.0 Key Issue 2: *Identifying the main strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century and accelerating progress towards shared goals*

3.1 How does the Competence Based Curriculum and Education 5.0 ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all?

Responses included the following:

- Skills developed through the implementation of CBC at primary and secondary level, and education 5.0 at tertiary level will continue to produce critical thinkers who are needed for nation building.
- Assessment methods of CBC and Education 5.0 gives opportunity for learners with diversity skills hence no one left behind.
- The key indicator to equitable and quality education is access to education before a learner can derive benefit from the Competence Based Curriculum and Education 5.0
- Introduction of Continuous Assessment Learning Area (CALA) is good in problem solving skills being inculcated in learners.
- Competence Based Curriculum is skills oriented and prepare learners for life and work.
- In-service training for newly appointed teachers so that they are able to fully implement the competence-based curriculum is ideal. Teachers already serving in the system need refresher courses on the Competence Based Curriculum implementation.
- Establishment of Centres of Excellence for learners to participate in different competences
- Five CALA components for the learners with disabilities are too much for them to cope- lessen the number of CALA components for the learners with disabilities;

- Education 5.0 –Tertiary is really re-aligning the students to be up to date to the current global trends and be able to solve societal problems- the products should be able to industrialise - not only as psychology teachers but as innovators and industrialists
- Inclusivity consider what Government is saying on living no place and no one behind- but more should be done to finance the education institutions
- Revise the time table so as to competently carryout the CALA
- Competence Based Curriculum, by the time learners get to Higher Education they would have had an appreciation of creativity and innovation, and be ready for the industry. However, it should be supported by stable economic structures, so there are no job seeking default settings resorted to
- Education 5.0 very welcome, CBC has widened the gap between the rich and poor - rich are gaining much earning because of their riches and ability to do CALA, it is a burden in terms of the timing considering the socio-economic shocks; Try and reduce it to accommodate the poor and the needy, then that way inclusivity and equality is guaranteed

3.2 What do you see as the hindrances towards the attainment Sustainable Development Goal 4?

Participants highlighted the following:

- Infrastructure ie physical and digital which is expensive to set up
- Financing model; funding patterns- guarantee for access to meaningful loans for the institutions
- Human resources- Salaries, conditions for teachers
- No disability resource centres at Universities, Teachers' Colleges and Polytechnics, serve for UZ and MSU
- Non-inclusion of people with disability in senior decision making foras, e.g. review of the curriculum
- Lack of equipment/materials which suit learners with disabilities-
- Policy inconsistency
- Unequal opportunities, CALA strain which some parents cannot comprehend and hence are unable to assist
- Lack of inclusive education specific laws, not just policies

- Lack of electricity for e-Learning
- Parents failing to pay school fees
- Teacher deployment policy should be revisited especially the Infant Department.

3.3 How do we gauge the effects of the Second Republic's thrust on transforming education?

- NDS 1's thrust on human capital development: the second republic mantra of no one left behind dovetails very well with the center pin of competence-based curriculum where learners' skills are promoted more than any aspect of the education process. The efforts of the government are on a positive path
- Education and implementation of 5.0 and CBC is a good stride, though its effectiveness has to be improved
- A recognition that persons with disabilities are productive and their views should be respected, though more can be done on issues raised in the previous session
- Strengthening of inclusive education
- Launched the 2021 national disability policy
- launched the Technical National Disability Committee which will foster disability issues
- Duty free importation of equipment for empowerment centres.
- Increased number of schools constructed by Government.
- Entrepreneurship skills inculcated in leaners.
- Increased BEAM beneficiaries and teachers' children assisted with levies/tuition fees.

3.4 In line of the thrust in iii), what policies and practices need to be abandoned?
- Do away with approaches that exclude certain sectors of society e.g. Persons with Disabilities.
- Centralised deployment of teachers should be replaced by decentralisation.
- Infant classes should be taught by teachers who are proficient in the indigenous language spoken by the community where the school is located.

- Policy of promises should be done away with- e.g. teachers were promised that they were going to be given assistive devices
- Revise the language policy - Change the medium of instruction to Language One
- The curriculum that does not include Terminology on people with disability
- Teachers' entry qualification must be at degree level, as such the diploma level can be abolished
- At primary level it is high time we abolish one teacher one class policy and allow specialization teaching as what is happening at secondary sector

3.5 What features of education are most important to continue, strengthen and/or safeguard?

- Strengthen inclusivity
- Deploy qualified teachers with all the requisite inclusivity skills.
- Sport activities that will include those with disability.
- Provision of age-appropriate infrastructure and inclusive education leaving no child and no school behind.
- Strengthen national values in the curriculum- they should reflect a national outlook in their diverse cultures
- Capacitate students on how to relate with those learners with disabilities, do away with issues of discrimination
- Strengthen the maintenance and safeguarding of infrastructure at institutions
- Strengthen provision of ICT tools and soft skills. Internet coverage and connectivity for all areas so that online learning can be enhanced
- Continuous assessment learning activity will definitely contribute positively on nation building

3.6 What innovative transformations can be envisioned as desired features of education at all levels?

- Embrace the two prongs of innovation ad industrialization - let us see them to fruition
- Improve on state of preparedness for emergencies/eventualities

- Deliberate policy on refurbishing infrastructure e.g Science laboratories
- More implementable education- not theory
- ICT driven education system
- Incentives for innovativeness
- An educator who is well respected
- Strengthening gender issues
- Students should also contribute to the economy through the inclusion of economic or business-related subjects in the Curriculum
- Strengthening of G and C (Guidance and Counselling)
- Science hubs, and tech-voc hubs at each and every district
- Sports academies accessible to all learners

3.7 What are the key missing linkages between basic education and tertiary education and Technical & Vocational Education and Training?

- Pre-requisite for enrolling at higher education does not match with what was studied at lower level e.g. for practical subjects
- No good link between the education and organisation of persons with disabilities
- Late introduction of certain concepts into the education system, e.g. introduction of Braille and sign language at Tertiary level and not at primary level
- Limited ICT resources for some rural learners
- Research skills to be taught at all levels
- Streamlining of career choices
- Universities should market themselves on courses on offer to learners. Increase number of universities that each District has its own institution.

3.8 What coalitions and broad mobilizations can be activated as catalysts for the growth of basic and tertiary education in our quest to achieve SDG 4

- Collaboration between Ministries of education and language associations in drawing up the syllabi

- Regional collaboration for border languages e.g. Venda (Zim-SA), Tonga (Zim-Zam),
- Need structures for education at community level such as VHW (Village Health Workers), Ward Development Coordinators, and not just rely on teachers;
- Government should strengthen stakeholder consultations
- Counseling should be available in all education institutions
- Secondary schools to be equipped with science laboratories and ICT gadgets to promote the teaching of STEM

4.0 Ensure strengthened and more sustainable public financing of Education

4.1 How are you paying for the education of your children?

- Supplementary chores after work
- Bead work, basketry, community gardens
- Prostitution
- Manual work (Work for fees program) at college and paid at govt labor rates
- Teachers should be allowed to establish businesses like schools in order for them to raise school fees for their children
- Migrate the SDC engaged workers (grounds persons and janitors/ancilliary staff etc) into the SSB wage bill because of the fall in revenue due to Covid 19 pandemic
- Remittances from Diaspora
- Selling of livestock
- Bank loans
- Parents paying in form of labour provision.

4.2 How many public and private schools are there? Which ones are popular and why? Which schools are more popular and why?

- For high schools private are more popular because of the quality of service offered, for tertiary popularity is on performance and innovation (HIT, UZ, NUST),

- Private schools are more popular, the funding model has no bureaucracy and there is transparency in the administration of funds
- In private schools, learners get adequate learning resources for their learning outcomes
- Public and government schools are preferred/popular because they are affordable although the funding of these should be reinforced to support resource acquisition.
- In the Southern Provincial Cluster, especially in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, most preferred private schools are Dominican Convent, Petra, Girls College, Falcon, Christian Brothers College- apart from academic performance there are also extra curricula activities
- Mpopoma, Mzilikazi, Eastview, Sizane, St Columbus are popular public schools.

4.3 What is the deficit of our national funding? How can it be catered for?

- Development of infrastructure is lagging behind, e.g. at NUST- need for infrastructure improvement;
- Transport at schools is limited

4.4 How can public financing of education be strengthened?
- Identify who has interest in the education sector and partner with them
- monetising innovative ideas e.g. in the Tertiary institutions, e.g. at CUT students had innovation on COVID-19 response mechanisms and managed to raise funds out of it;
- Schools should run income generating projects- the market is readily available
- Engage SDC and improve on fundraising strategies
- Engage school alumni who can easily fund the schools
- Reintroduce grants to the Tertiary Education system
- Improvement of investment climate to attract investors in order to increase Government revenue through taxes.

- Propose and introduce for implantation an education levy on individuals and companies.
- Education to be given first priority with its budget crafted collaboratively.
- Everyone who is gainfully employed to be taxed to increase revenue inflows.

4.5 What is the trajectory for education investment over the medium to long term?

- Schools encouraged to be business enterprises.
- Schools to have sustainable short-term projects.

4.6 How efficient is the funding of education?

- BEAM, the timing of the release of funds is very late, e.g. First term disbursement has not yet been released;
- Grant-in-aid of tuition model's funds are released very late and usually eroded by inflation, maybe peg them against USD;
- Scholarships platforms are not very visible and accessible;
- Funding models do not cater for other provisions such as food and accommodation, transport and uniforms (BEAM is only catering for tuition)

4.7 How will greater equity in resource allocation be ensured?

- No transparency on provincial allocations for devolution;
- Decentralisation policy should be effected.
- Devolution should not consider urban or rural settings, parents are suffering equally
- Resources should be allocated to all communities.
- Fair and equitable staffing.
- Carry out a needs analysis.
- Resources should meet the needs of individual schools.

4.8 What additional innovative and multi-sectoral mechanisms can ensure adequate and sustainable domestic financing of education?

- Levy certain business enterprises in the locality towards education, such CAMPFIRE levy
- Incentivising companies that are contributing towards education
- Government partnering with Development partners e.g UNICEF, WHO
- A quota system to fund education
- Taxation towards education
- Increase community projects to finance education
- Need for education levy for the learning of our children
- Consider schools with basic special needs.

4.9 How can we as a nation finance the basic state funded education and how much in USD for a pry and Sec learner

- Introduce an education levy, and /or tax levy.
- USD$450 for primary schools' pupils per year, USD$600 for secondary schools' pupils per year

4.10 If the Basic State funded education were to start in 2023, which schools should be given priority?

- All schools at once or
- Start with all primary schools and pay for everything, and only examination pupils in secondary school.

5.0 **Key Issue 4:** *Review national Education targets and benchmarks in line with the SDG4 and the National Development Strategy 1*

5.1 Has the government set SDG 4 benchmarks to date, including for the seventh indicator on gender equity?

- Yes, government has set Education Funding mechanisms e.g BEAM
- Establishment of more schools
- Establishment of more Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions

- Main streaming Gender and Inclusive education in curriculum.

5.2 Do national benchmark values reflect the maximum level of ambition possible, given the urgent need to accelerate progress towards SDG 4 commitments and the opportunities for progress that?

- Workshops and consultations being held.
- Respect for conventions and protocols in place.
- More Special needs schools should be established and should be accessible.

5.3 Can global benchmarks for other SDG 4 targets (e.g., skills development, youth and adult literacy, higher education, enrolment, vocational and tertiary education) be elaborated further at the national level? If so, how?

- Youths should be given start-up packages in skills development for them to pursue their areas of competence.
- Increase the uptake of TVET for skills development
- Innovation to be commercial used
- Industry and commerce should start from primary school.

5.4 How can the political will be strengthened for achieving national SDG 4 benchmarks?

- Manufacturing should be done locally
- Revive production industries
- Change our mindset in line with stated issues
- Appropriate Tax Regimes to be introduced
- PPEs manufacturing and distribution by the government

- Manufacturing of Assistive devices
- Income generating projects.

6.0 Conclusion

The consultations went well in all the regions and in the districts. A whole of government approach was used and learners, educators, parents, traditional leaders, civil society organisations, development partners and all education stakeholders participated actively virtually and physically at all centres. Their responses show that they are aware of challenges that arose because of COVID 19 pandemic. They also proposed strategies on how Zimbabwe can transform education to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, especially goal number 4.