

LINK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FACILITATES KEY MEETING ON THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

Link Community Development, working with the Commonwealth Consortium for Education (CCfE) organised a key meeting in Harare last week on behalf of the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture (MoESAC).

The Seminar, which took place 12-13 July at the Meikles Hotel, Harare was opened by the Minister of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, Senator David Coltart. The Minister also engaged in a panel discussion with the audience of more than 90 delegates from over 40 organisations including MoESAC, other Ministries from the Government of Zimbabwe, the World Bank, donors, teachers' unions, international and local NGOs and church groups.

The seminar provided the first opportunity for MoESAC to share its Draft Interim (July 2010 – December 2011) and Five Year (2011-2015) Plans with a wider audience. Over the course of the two-days the draft plans were debated with representatives from within government and beyond.

The main was the six key areas of the 2010-2011 interim plan:

- restoring the professional status of teachers;
- re-establishing minimum conditions of service;
- improving the quality of learning;
- reinvigorating school and system government;
- focusing resources on those with the greatest need;
- and strengthening sport, arts and culture.

Debate centred on identifying and prioritizing achievable targets, and on improving processes and communication between stakeholders in order to achieve the goals set within each key area. As a result of the seminar the draft plans have been reinforced with the knowledge and insights provided by the various stakeholders and the process of building a broad-based national consensus around the plans has begun.

The Minister and a delegation of Senior Officials from Zimbabwe will be in London 19-23 July to continue the process begun in Harare. LCD, with CCfE, have organised a seminar 22-23 July which will provide an opportunity for the Minister and his team to present their interim plans to an audience that will consist of UK and European donors, NGOs and friends of Zimbabwe. On Thursday 22 July Minister give an open address to inform a wider audience about the realities facing Zimbabwean education, the progress being made to improve education, the Ministry's interim plan, the support currently being received from existing partners and the gaps that remain. This will be followed by a panel discussion featuring representatives from three of the Ministry's key development partners: UNICEF, the World Bank and the UK Department for International Development. Each will outline the role they play in Zimbabwe, the level of co-operation they receive and their view of the next steps in the rehabilitation of Zimbabwean education. The remainder of the seminar will

comprise of working groups examining key areas of the Ministry's interim plan to give a wider understanding of the need and potential way ahead, and "market place" sessions to allow interested donors, NGOs, and potential supporters a chance to engage with MoESAC team members on their plans and to get advice on how to move forward.

Link Community Development, together with the Commonwealth Consortium for Education (CCfE), have been working with the Zimbabwean Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture since early 2010 to support the rehabilitation of education in Zimbabwe.

The Seminar will take place with the kind support of Freshfields, Bruckhaus, Deringer, at the Freshfields Conference Centre, London, 22-23 July 2010. For further details please visit www.lcdinternational.org or contact alex@lcd.org.uk