



Education in Zimbabwe: Working Together for a Better Future

Summary of London Working Group Discussions

A series of small group discussions enabled participants to explore themes raised in the plenary sessions in greater detail. Six working groups were convened covering the following topics areas:

- 1) Rehabilitation of Schools and the School System
- 2) Teachers & Curriculum
- 3) Options & Prioritisation in the Face of Budget Constraints
- 4) Enabling Access to Education for Marginalised and Other Groups
- 5) Partnerships for Development
- 6) Skills, Diaspora and Volunteering

A brief summary of the discussions which took place in each group follows.

1. Rehabilitation of Schools and the School System

Overview:

The primary areas of concern are currently:

- shortage of toilets and scarcity of safe water
- shortage of classrooms in urban areas
- shortage of specialist teaching rooms (eg wood work, labs etc)

The session focussed on ways to address these shortages, using a case study of work done in Uganda as a starting point.

Chair:

Tom Machingaidze, MoESAC

Ministry:

Tom Machingaidze
Absalom Chinoona

Presenters:

Derek Nkata, LCD Uganda

Presentation & Discussion

Lessons from Uganda: Derek Nkata, Link Community Development

- Background: population of 21 million, and 17,000 primary schools; pre-school and primary education decentralized and managed at district level, secondary education is still managed centrally; responsibility is divided as follows:
 - government has responsibility for training teachers, salaries, textbooks, curriculum, inspection, assessment;
 - district has responsibility for teacher deployment, management of grants (conditional UPE grant, school facilities grant, textbook grant), and inspection;
 - parents have responsibility for uniform, exercise books and pens, feeding
- Rehabilitation of Uganda's school system involved
 - the **building of classrooms** with parents providing sand and labour and the government providing technical know how and cement. Due to community fatigue, the government needed to step in to complete many incomplete buildings;
 - the **building of pit latrines** was an important part of school rehabilitation with permanent structures being built over holes in the ground. Due to the numbers of pupils using pit latrines, they were quickly filling up, new pit latrines were sunk but there was no shelter

structure – now the shelter structure is movable (other options include emptying the cess pit and exploring the use of eco sand);

- ensuring the **availability and use of textbooks** was a priority – a policy was introduced to ensure textbooks make it into the hands of children and that they know how to use them;
- **teacher professional development** receives support through Link Community Development’s work at district and government level with School Performance Review which is a tool to identify gaps in teaching and learning, school governance, leadership and management, and community participation – once the gaps are identified plans can be put in place to provide support to fill the gaps, such as teacher training.
- **Community participation** is initiated during the School Performance Review process by involving community members in interpreting the data collected and in agreeing the School Improvement Plan priorities. With a school’s priorities identified as being infrastructural, related to the provision of teaching resources, or support for teacher development, **community participation in Uganda has proved to be vital to the success of the school rehabilitation process.**

Conclusions/Follow up

- Partnerships with private sector: to rehabilitate groups of schools
- Support engagement between community and schools (communities to contribute, and look for co-funding and/or resources from other donors)
- Co-ordinate with Ministry responsible for water provision (and donors) to provide toilets and safe water in education sector
- Develop solar power in schools to improve facilities and to attract teachers to rural areas
- Investigate sustainability and income generation opportunities to rehabilitate schools and alleviate other challenges (food, attendance, development of vocational education)
- Investigate provision of mobile phones for all schools (where there is network) to support provision of information, and school communication
- Investigate mobile science laboratory opportunities
- Develop school partnership opportunities (taking advantage of income generation)
- Ministry of Education needs to improve information provision and communication (upgrade website)

2. Teachers & Curriculum

Overview:

- Quantity gap –20% of teachers are unqualified
- Quality gap – lack of support for teachers in terms of payment, training and professional development
- Status and morale of teachers – poor teacher motivation and retention, results in teacher emigration and an inability to attract existing émigré teachers back into the system
- Stigma surrounding HIV/Aids remains a major problem
- Political context and learning without fear are crucial to all teaching issues

Chair:

Dennis Sinyolo, Education International (EI)

Ministry:

Zedias Chitiga, MoESAC

Presenters:

Dennis Sinyolo, EI
Mary Ndlovu, National Education Advisory Board

Discussion & Presentations

Mary Ndlovu, National Education Advisory Board

- **Status and morale of teachers** are a major concern, primarily as a result of remuneration. Teachers earn only 25-40% of the income required to keep a family of six above the poverty line.
- **Salary supplements** paid by parents have kept teachers in the system but pose problems of:
 - Equality – wide variations in the level of supplements; with teachers in rural and high density urban schools being severely disadvantaged.
 - Ill-will – Teachers see parents as their cash-cow and bring pressure to bear on parents and even on pupils.

Suggested responses include:

- Ongoing lobbying for higher rates of pay for teachers, but very little funding currently available; the ultimate solution is adequate pay from government.
- In order to deal with current inequality, an allowance could be offered to rural teachers.
- **The qualification gap** is another major issue. Suggested responses include:
 - Encouraging émigré teachers to return home.
 - Establishment of a teachers' professional council, responsible for accreditation and professional development, in order to address issues such as in-service training
- **Other issues** of note include:
 - Learning without fear is an issue for teacher and pupils.
 - HIV/AIDS and access to ARVs. Stigma is a problem, where teachers only have access through public clinics, as is the need for nutritional supplements.

Further Discussion on Teachers' Pay

- International community needs to respond to the underpayment of teachers through mechanisms such as drawing on part-investment of future teachers pay and pensions, etc. Reluctance from donors to provide direct budget support given political situation needs to be addressed. Worth noting that in 2008, during the cholera epidemic, the international community arranged for top-ups of health sector salaries and this continues.
- This is an economic problem requiring long-term interventions. Short-term solutions may exacerbate inequalities between groups, e.g. between health workers and workers in other essential services. Longer term solutions require sufficient economic growth to ensure that increments are sustainable for all groups.
- Teachers' pay should not be looked at in isolation:
 - Pay is not the only issue preventing teachers returning to work in Zimbabwe. Ongoing political instability and the political context are also crucial.
 - School leadership and management and adequate professional support are also crucial.

Conclusions & Follow up

Teachers' pay

- Engage teachers in the development of solutions.
- The international community needs to respond with innovative solutions.
- Consider re-introducing supplements for example for rural teachers.
- Need to expand the salary scale and create a clearer structure for career progression

Teachers' training

- Schools should lead on staff development in order to ensure targeted professional development.
- Consider the creation of a teachers' professional council.
- Consider involving NGOs in teacher training workshops or in-service training - a teacher's professional council could facilitate this by allowing for accreditation.
- Consider using existing qualified teachers to train and mentor unqualified teachers.
- Explore other modes of teacher training and professional development, particularly school-based in-service training and self-training modules.
- Consider revisiting the ZINTEC Programme (Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course), which helped to train large numbers of teachers soon after Zimbabwe's independence.
- Community-community links may offer some solutions.
- School partnerships may also be of benefit.

Curriculum

- Review and upgrade the curriculum – the Education Development Services, which incorporates the Curriculum Development Unit, has had this responsibility since the early 1980's, but is seriously under- resourced, lacking both equipment and qualified staff.
- The National Education Advisory Board established in 2009, must work in partnership with all stakeholders.
- Link the curriculum and the environment.
- Focus on introducing vocational training, trade training and entrepreneurship and on ensuring they are accorded equal status equivalent to academic training
- Take time to introduce curriculum reforms and engage all stakeholders, especially teachers, in the process.
- There should be no distinction between urban and rural curricula
- Checks and balances should be put in place to ensure the absence of corruption in the exams council and book approval procedures.

3. Options & Prioritisation in the Face of Budget Constraints

Overview:

- Budget requirements far exceed actual resources
- Gap is acute in Zimbabwe
- Session goal: share creative ideas to address underfunding
- Discussion will help prioritisation

Chair:

Peter Buckland, World Bank

Ministry:

Cris Bowora, MoESAC

Presenters:

Peter Buckland, World Bank

Discussion & Presentations

The Group noted that the strategic plan from the Ministry equates to a wish list because the Ministry's budget is so constrained. Addressing these constraints would require a twin-track approach of increasing revenue and economising on expenditures. Discussion focused on these two strategies but also noted that there could be a third option involving educating the population through new channels to supplement/ complement public provision of formal schooling.

Raising Revenue

- Currently, government allocates 26% of its total expenditures to education. A problem for Zimbabwe is that government revenue itself is not at all buoyant.
- Cross-sectoral collaboration could generate resources from other ministries to benefit schools e.g. getting public works/ health ministry to attend to provision of sanitation in schools (as discussed at the July engineers' conference in London).
- Other revenue options include foreign aid and recovering costs through fees and charges.
- Mobilise foreign aid through careful selection of strategies, pursuing programmes most eligible for aid. E.g in attempting to raise status of teachers, focus on improving housing and accommodation for teachers: instead of on salary payments which are more expensive and unlikely to be funded by donors.
- Better coordination and guidance might increase NGO contributions.
- More money from Diaspora (similar to Somalia).
- Public/private partnerships have potential
- Community contributions through school fees and semi-private schools might increase the resources available to the public system, while continuing to use BEAM to pay fees for students in particular need.

Reducing Outlays

The group noted at the outset that teacher salaries are the most expensive part of the budget, so economising on teachers (through better deployment, increased class sizes or shift operation of schools) could yield substantial benefits. Discussion ranged over four main areas:

a) Direct reductions of expenditure

- Identify cheaper input mixes e.g. low-cost building construction
- Increase pupil-teacher ratio. 40 does not need to be the standard, could be 45. Small changes in ratios could save millions. But noted that (a) that in rural areas of Zimbabwe 1:40 or 1:45 is very hard to attain and (b) higher PTRs are not costless in terms of learning achieved by pupils and their overall welfare, nor of strain on teachers.
- Two sessions of schools (one morning, one afternoon) to economise on buildings and sometimes on teacher salaries – this proved successful in Zambia.
- Reduce extravagance and waste.

b) Incentives to managers to reduce costs

- provide incentives to managers to make savings and to increase efficiency (normally higher/improved outputs for same financial input)
- Increase community engagement and accountability, and school management through School Development Committees (SDCs).
- Mini grants for schools to provide incentives and increase community (SDC) engagement

c) Better management practices

- Increase efficiency in school-district communication in order to improve district management capabilities - district office is the weakest link (LCD Solar Connect could help)
- Improve measurement of school performance in order to assess needs and priorities. Need data. EMIS and BEAM a good start, but not enough.
- Better organisation of meetings and management from top-down

d) Measures with high benefit-cost ratios but which may not necessarily reduce expenditure.

- Increase in-service training because reality is need to rely on “up-skilling” unqualified teachers
- Decrease malnourishment via school feeding programs thus increasing children’s capacity to learn

Conclusions & Follow up

- Need to broaden and deepen assessment of school and learning quality, beyond what examination results traditionally denote.
- Consider allowing ‘private backyard’ schools to register and incorporate
- Improve targeting and regulation of teacher training
- Encourage decentralisation
- Build on Zimbabwe’s strong traditions of social capital formation – work towards revitalising and reigniting existing education structures

4. Enabling access to education for marginalised & other groups

Overview:

Zimbabwe's marginalised children include:

- Around 1 million AIDS orphans
- 25% of children unable to pay school fees
- 150,000 learners with special needs
- An estimated 10-15% of children not in school

Chair:

Cris Bowora, MoESAC

Ministry:

Cris Bowora, MoESAC

Presenters:

Mary Ndlovu, National Education Advisory Board

Presentations & Discussion

Impact of Informal Schools

- Generally unregistered so hard to gather data, but tend to be poorly equipped and understaffed. Attended by street children, children in informal settlements or farm children.
- May have the effect of raising the number of children without access to quality education - 99% of children in informal schools would rather be in formal schools.
- However, alternative education can provide a service, however inadequate, for parents/children with limited options.
- Until issues in the formal education system have been addressed, informal schools should be supported. Interim registration of informal schools and informal-formal school linking through the satellite system were suggested.
- World Bank recommends that Ministry partners with NGOs who have a better understanding of issues regarding informal schools. All NGOs should be included in UNICEFs Education Atlas to enable the Ministry to work with them and to monitor their progress and impact. Stakeholders should focus on sharing learning and documenting experiences and best practice so that all benefit.

Children Not in Schools

- Likely that the estimate of 10-15% is lower than reality, but don't have accurate figures: a large sample systematic survey is needed.
- Planning a "Back to School" campaign will only work if issue of fees is addressed.
- Need to develop non-formal education system to assist those who have been out of formal schooling for prolonged periods. What stage should they go back to?
- UK now has a formal forum representing supplementary schools (eg Saturday schools, mosques, churches, community centres etc). How can communities in Zimbabwe be supported to provide education for their children?

Administration of BEAM

- BEAM has reached more than 500,000 children, but is not reaching all who need assistance.
- Those that are reached are not assisted in other areas – e.g. food, uniforms, books etc. Thus barriers to these children accessing education remain.
- Management of BEAM – through Ministry of Social Welfare – needs reviewing.
- Selection remains problematic, with many reports suggesting that those selected are not always the most needy
- Need to look at how BEAM can be adequately financed
 - \$8m was spent in the first 2 terms on Primary schools assisting 560,000 children. \$5m was spent on Secondary schools in first term assisting 200,000 children.
 - Money available is insufficient to support children who need assistance.
 - Section 5 of Education Act specifically states that basic education will be free and compulsory. Remains an intention as funding is insufficient.

- Other partners may come in to assist the children who are not being supported through BEAM. ETF made \$15m available for primary learners. Treasury released \$15m for secondary.
- Suggested a tiered approach to BEAM: level 1 pays fees, uniform, books etc; level 2 just fees and levies, level 3 just levies – right approach but administration costs would be prohibitive.

Flexible Approaches to Learning

- Zimbabwean Education has tried to have the same programme for everyone – perhaps there is now a need to be more flexible eg multigrade teaching particularly in rural areas - the Escuela Nueva Programme in Colombia and The Government Correspondence School in Zimbabwe, were cited as good examples of flexible learning for rural children provided they are regulated.

Special Education

- Policy is for inclusion in mainstream schooling, but inclusion is only possible if teachers have the knowledge and equipment to diagnose and support children.
- Albino children in particular find their special needs for eyeglasses and skin protection are not attended to.
- 10% of BEAM allocated to special needs. Most special schools are boarding, so are allocated money to cover boarding fees. Ministry of Health is involved in special needs schools.
- Programme in rural areas to set up committees to support disabled people – one of the roles is to identify disabled people who are not going to school.
- Not enough places in special needs schools to accommodate all those identified.

Gifted Children

- Some streaming taking place for academic subjects, but not in small schools, especially in rural areas. Current facilities for gifted children, in academics, sports or arts are very limited. The argument that they act as role models for other children is only valid if they remain motivated.
- If opening academies or special schools – would need to be very open and transparent about selection criteria.
- Career development: there are very limited opportunities for gifted children in government schools

Students affected by HIV/AIDS

- Child headed households are a marginalised group who need support. Not out of school because they are HIV positive, but usually because of poverty and need to support the rest of their family.
- Limited support provided beyond fees assistance. Some schools have counsellors and psycho-social support but too few to assist children dealing with complex issues.

Conclusions/Follow up

- Government should look at supporting/legitimising the informal education system in the short term as a key way to keep marginalised children in some form of schooling.
- Rethink BEAM in order to ensure that the most needy children are reached. A review of the selection process should be undertaken. Different approaches to BEAM should also be considered e.g. a tiered approach to support.
- MoESAC should learn from and support NGOs already working with marginalised children. How can relevant partners become part of Education Cluster group?

5. Partnerships for Development

Overview:

- The session explored partnerships at 3 levels: inter-governmental, non-governmental and institutional
- Coordination was the major issue at all levels – input and oversight from national and local government was seen as essential
- Engaging wider communities was a priority
- Sustainability and avoiding a dependency culture were also highlighted

Chair:

Tom Machingaidze, MoESAC

Ministry:

Tom Machingaidze

Presenters:

Catherine McKenna, LCD

Jan Addison, Stevenage-Kadoma Link

Presentations & Discussion

Inter-governmental cooperation

- Need to tackle the problem of donor reluctance to fund recurrent costs like teacher salaries – even though some governments are supporting salary supplements for key health workers in Zimbabwe and there is an argument for them to support teachers in the same way. Precedents include DFID paying wages for Afghan teachers and UNICEF paying health staff wages in Malawi and Zimbabwe itself.
- While current political obstacles to inter-governmental co-operation persist, the best hope for education appears to lie in identifying additional specific project areas, (beyond the current school textbook programme), within the remit of the Education Transition Fund.

Cooperation with non-governmental partners

- Delegates noted with interest and admiration the UNICEF Education Interventions Atlas and the extensive mapping of activities it contained.
- They suggested the Atlas might be used to assist the coordination and monitoring of NGO activities. If aligned with Ministry objectives it could be used to track progress on priorities and as a planning tool. MoESAC should be more proactive in steering NGO support to geographical and theme areas where it could bring most benefit.
- Need for more coherent regulatory frameworks and agreed protocols to enable MoESAC to work more efficiently through NGOs and to prevent NGOs from tempting high-quality Ministry staff on to their pay-rolls. These issues should be raised more explicitly in dialogue with NGOs.
- The participation in the working group of non-profit professional organisations such as exam bodies, consultancy organisations, teacher associations and unions was a reminder of the range and depth of UK civil-society resources whose goodwill could be tapped in forming co-operative partnerships.

Partnerships at institutional level

- LCD Link Schools Programme (LSP): operates partnerships in 5 Sub-Saharan African countries with over 300 schools. Schools are partnered with LCD's UK- and US-based LSP schools. LCD provides partnership training, facilitates communication and offers a number of special projects for donors to support. As well as specific partner school benefits, part of the programme funding goes to a shared pot for other schools in the district to promote more equal development.
- Stevenage-Kadoma Link: 18 schools in Stevenage linked with 18 schools in Kadoma as part of a broader local community relationship. Links provide book supplies to Kadoma, teacher exchanges, and financial support (fee payments etc). Also offer broader support including library links, hospital funding and food aid. Local council and Diaspora engagement have been crucial.
- Other programmes include the British Council Connecting Classrooms programme, involving 33 UK schools and their counterparts in 11 Zimbabwean districts. UKOWLA was an important network

for sharing good practice of linking schools, and was reported to be ready to convene a Zimbabwe-oriented conference in the coming year.

- On the UK side, links promote cultural understanding and global citizenship. For the African schools they help to motivate staff and offer support to improve school infrastructure.
- Textbook shortages were noted as an issue on which schools could engage, but the ETF programme is likely to address this need over the next 12 months.
- Potential for relationship development with Local Education Authorities (LEA) and wider communities, and to develop synergies by connecting with programmes of other UK voluntary assistance programmes in e.g. teacher training, book supply, provision of longer-term volunteers.

Conclusions/Follow up

- Identify more specific project areas within the remit of the Education Transition Fund in order to increase accountability and donor confidence in potential of partnerships with MoESAC.
- MoESAC to consider developing frameworks and channels which would enable donors to sponsor priority items identified in the draft Strategic Plan on a unit basis – e.g. school furniture, water supply, latrines at identifiable schools, at a known cost.
- More proactive use by MoESAC and others of information collection, analysis and dissemination (e.g. through the Atlas) to co-ordinate and steer direction of NGO support/investments
- Contact agencies working elsewhere in Africa to explore whether they might extend their activities to Zimbabwe (e.g. READ- currently sending books to Tanzanian and Ugandan schools).
- Develop the potential of school linking by:
 - establishing a MoESAC structured framework to support links. MoESAC plans to gather information on school partnerships and to promote it country-wide.
 - developing a system to monitor the quality of links to ensure they meet school and government needs. Coordination will be key to this.
 - engaging the Diaspora and Church links more – contacts were made between MoESAC and Diaspora members during the session.
 - incorporating the introduction of internet access into school linking programmes.
 - embedding school linking programmes more firmly into the curriculum to promote the sharing of education.
 - encouraging more school-based fundraising to avoid a dependency culture.
 - exploring mobilisation of LEA support – town linking – involving wider community.
 - investigating potential of expanding linking programmes to include European links.

6. Skills, Diaspora and Volunteering

Overview:

- Necessity to focus on how to fill the skills gap within the Zimbabwean Education system, particularly given minimal resources available.
- The session considered the potential contribution of the diaspora in filling the gaps, including engagement with the range of volunteer placement models available, and other mechanisms for supporting the rehabilitation of education in Zimbabwe.

Chair:

Steve Blunden & Alex Wright, LCD

Ministry:

Zedias Chitiga,
Absalom Chinoona

Presenters:

Derek Nkata, LCD Uganda
Polly Kirby, VSO
Laura Wintour, CARA

Presentations & Discussion

Link Community Development's Global Teacher Programme

- Places UK/Irish teachers for 5 weeks in rural schools in Africa.
- Helps capacity of local schools and enhances development education in Northern schools.

Polly Kirby on VSO

- Places people in the South for 2 years.
- Average age is mid 40's so volunteers have strong experiences.
- Also do national and diaspora volunteering programmes.
- Support in-country volunteering (25% of volunteers are South to South).
- Partnerships and preparation are critical.
- Sometimes personalities can create problems.
- Volunteers are asked to contribute to costs.
- Conduct evaluations and extensive exit-reviews.

Derek Nkata on working with VSO

- Has received VSO volunteers at both District and National level over the last 15 years.
- Experienced volunteers are critical.
- Need local people to participate and own the programme.
- Strong personalities can be distracting.
- Volunteers with good management skills and flexible personalities are key.
- Need to budget for costs (accommodation, transport, etc).
- Costs can be shared - doesn't need to fall on local government.
- Volunteers are safe as long as the community is engaged, thereby serving as a shield.
- Volunteers should be incorporated into the Ministry's strategic plan.

Other Volunteer Partnerships

- The contribution of volunteers is not limited to the school level: Link has successfully placed highly qualified volunteers with Ministries of Education to strengthen and develop capacity in critical areas such as national inspectorates. This enables a small number of strategically placed volunteers to have a significant impact at a comparatively low cost.
- CARA has facilitated an agreement between universities in South Africa and Zimbabwe that enables Zimbabwean academics now working in South Africa to undertake regular and structured paid work in Zimbabwean Universities (e.g. one semester a year). The system is designed to harness the diaspora's skills and commitment to Zimbabwe, while recognising their fear of surrendering the security and prospects they have established in South Africa.
- "Virtual partnerships", and models for exchange that do not involve physical return, are important because they enable skills to be shared without having to support long-term placements, and may

offer a means of harnessing the skills in the diaspora while many are not yet ready or willing to repatriate.

- Examples of “virtual partnerships” include South African and Zimbabwean universities communicating via video teleconference and other open and distance learning (ODL) media, and an Education International initiative to bring together teachers in the diaspora, who may have benefited from additional experience and training, to provide continuing professional development for teachers in Zimbabwe via ODL.
- The diaspora can also provide momentum for the development of NGO-facilitated links between Northern and Southern schools (or communities) to create long-term partnerships and share best practice.

Engaging the Diaspora

- The diaspora is not a homogenous group. However, it does contain a large number of skilled individuals, including teachers and educationalists, who have much to offer Zimbabwe, and who are generally highly motivated to assist the rehabilitation of education in Zimbabwe.
- Many of the diaspora are cautious about the prospects of return. Factors include:
 - A feeling that the Government views them as “enemies”, though Ministry representatives refuted that this is the case and noted that the new constitution will hopefully recognise the role of the diaspora.
 - Unease at how they would be received in the communities to which they return. The reason for leaving was often due to politics, therefore returnees are likely to be labeled as opposition supporters which could cause difficulties.
 - A fear that they would have difficulty returning to the UK (or other receiving countries) if they visited or undertook work in Zimbabwe (therefore those who have been granted full citizenship will be most likely to return or volunteer at this stage).
 - Confidence in the long term stability of life in Zimbabwe.
- It was noted that while many of the diaspora are highly skilled, a large number have been unable to work while in the UK or elsewhere due to their immigration status. Therefore before their skills can benefit Zimbabwe an element of retraining will be necessary.

Conclusions/Follow up

- The following comments and suggestions regarding next steps emerged from the discussion:
 - Well-supported and carefully monitored volunteer programmes should be considered as part of the strategy for the rehabilitation of the education sector in Zimbabwe.
 - A clear and consistent message from the Government of Zimbabwe towards the diaspora, to signal a move away from hostility and towards a willingness to engage with them as partners, is a necessity.
 - The establishment of a single point of contact for the diaspora at the Ministry of Education (in coordination with the Office of the Prime Minister) would be a useful first step in developing a relationship with the diaspora
 - The continued development of “virtual” means of engaging the skills and commitment of the diaspora should be encouraged.
 - Programmes for the return of members of the diaspora as volunteers or otherwise should include a strong element of (re)training for those who have been out of work.

