



ECDE DRRM SOUTHERN  
AFRICA MULTI-  
COUNTRY REPORT

ZINECDA REPORT

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ECDE

### INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, over a billion children live in areas affected by conflict and high levels of violence, with an additional 175 million likely to be affected by climate-related disasters each year. In 2011, an average of 13 percent of refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons were children under the age of 5. Children in such fragile and conflict-affected environments are twice as likely to die before they reach their fifth birthday.

The southern African region has not been spared and have had to grapple with effects of several disasters that have struck in the recent past. In six southern African countries namely; Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and eSwatini, Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) has been significantly affected by disasters such as droughts, disease outbreaks, cyclones, floods, and malnutrition. As recent as 2023, Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe were affected by Tropical Cyclone Freddy which claimed more than 500 lives in Mozambique and Malawi. During the 2015/16 season, eSwatini was affected by an El-Nino induced drought which resulted in the death of 80, 000 livestock and more than half of the entire population became food insecure. Children were affected by malnutrition. Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi have recently suffered major polio outbreaks which resulted in children especially those below the age of five falling victim. These disasters have affected some of the key pillars of early child development which include nutrition, health, education and hygiene. While it is clear that these disasters have hindered Southern Africa from achieving SDG 4.2 which seeks to provide quality pre-primary education for all boys and girls, the key

question is, are there any ECDE DRRM policies that have been created regionally and nationally? This study engages with this question by arguing that various disasters have exposed Southern Africa's lack of elaborate ECDE DRRM policies both at national and regional levels. While there are no elaborate ECDE DRRM policies, the study identifies different interventions, plans and strategies which are being used in responding to disasters in all the six southern African countries.

### **ECDE/DRRM Overview in the SADC Region**

The SADC region has been witnessing a surge in the occurrence of multiple disasters, including cyclones and storms that led to heavy rains and flooding across the region leading to loss of lives, damage to assets and destruction of infrastructure. These disasters have to a large extent affected ECDE, through the disruption of learning as schools closed as a precaution to stop the spread of diseases as what happened under Covid 19 or due to destruction or loss of school infrastructure and homes which stalled any learning for brief or extended periods. In addition, the effects of the disasters have seen children experiencing trauma from the horrors encountered and thus causing a disruption in learning. For instance, when Cyclone Idai hit Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, "Thousands of classrooms were damaged or destroyed and half a million children had their education disrupted". Drought induced disasters in Southern Africa, have led to malnutrition and stunted growth among ECDE going children. In Lesotho, about 35% of children of ECDE children had stunted growth in 2018 (MICS). In Zimbabwe and Zambia, 30% and 40% of ECDE rural children have stunted growth respectively. Stunting does not just affect physical growth but also the

psychological development of children. In Lesotho and Zimbabwe, UNICEF has been working with national governments to leverage partnerships within the UN Nutrition Network and Government Food and Nutrition Coordination Offices to enhance ECDE nutrition focused programming. In Malawi, the government introduced the Universal School Meals Programme with support from WFP to promote nutrition and health among the ECD learners.

### **Bottlenecks/constraints to the implementation of reform**

Poor ECDE enrolments militate against robust ECDE DRRM policies in Southern Africa. Most marginalised and vulnerable children such as the poor and those living with disabilities lack access to pre-school education. The study finds a common denominator across the six countries that they all lack dedicated departments focusing on ECDE in Southern Africa. Instead, ECDE remains bundled together with many other departments. Ordinary community members in countries such as Malawi and Zimbabwe remain spectators in the DRRM policy making hence when disasters strike, community members are left at the mercy of calamities and will only have to wait for aid instead of taking a leading role in coming up with community driven ECDE DRRM initiatives.

Among the countries studied, the ECDE sector is poorly funded as compared to other sectors. There is lack of comprehensive ECDE data; hence any reform towards sustainable ECDE DRRM should be informed by accurate and up-to-date data. Furthermore, one of the challenges that may affect the formulation of such a policy is the lack of data. Moreover, fragmented ECDE management

thus in many countries in the region, ECDE falls under more than one government ministry or department. In eSwatini for example, ECDE falls under the Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Health, and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office. Yet other departments such as Higher and Tertiary Education in eSwatini and Zimbabwe are administered separately.

### **The impact of COVID-19 and natural hazards on policy design, implementation, and reform**

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the ECDE delivery systems in many different ways. The impact of COVID-19 and natural disasters on policy design in southern Africa varies from one country to another. In terms of policy design and reform, COVID-19 resulted in countries introducing new guidelines and plans which may improve service delivery in the long-term. The general impact of COVID-19 on policy and reform can therefore be regarded as largely negative.

In the case of Zimbabwe, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education introducing alternative learning through five different local radio stations.

Following Cyclone Idai, Cyclone Kenneth and the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Mozambique also mooted the idea of distance learning. Although in theory distance learning was a positive step towards bridging the gap between schools and ECD learners, it was hindered by poor technology and lack of access to electricity for many rural and urban dwellers.

Similarly, Malawi also introduced the Instructive Radio Instruction (IRI) project which was led by Save the Children to combat the effects of COVID-19 on ECDE. The concept was developed as a recovery tool meant to ensure continuity of ECDE.

In Zambia, the COVID-pandemic resulted in the Ministry of Education COVID-19 Response Plan to support existing educational policies. The Plan included the Zambia Enhancing Early Learning Project which was supported by the Global Partnership in Education to the tune of US\$ 39 million.

The government of eSwatini re-aligned its education policy with COVID-19 by introducing the Disaster and Management (COVID-19) Guidelines for Schools.

### **Policy and Practice at the Local Level**

It emerged from the research that ECDE is still a sector that is relatively new and developing in all the six countries. Authorities have also begun to formally recognize the importance of ECDE and to

integrate it within the broad educational policy framework. Similarly, parents and caregivers are also realizing the importance of ECDE, while a significant proportion are of the view that children are still young and need to stay at home. In essence, this means that ECDE is a sector that is still developing unlike the Junior School and Secondary School which have been there for longer periods. Arguably, it can be stated that ECDE is still a developing and sector within the Southern African region; thus, coupled with DRRM being a new phenomenon requiring policy attention there are still gaps in terms of policy and practice. This has meant that schools or ECDE centers are at different stages in terms of implementing DRRM related policies as these are also still under development.

# MAPPING ENABLING FRAMEWORKS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, over 1 billion children live in areas affected by conflict and high levels of violence,<sup>1</sup> with an additional 175 million likely to be affected by climate-related disasters each year.<sup>2</sup> In 2011, an average of 13 percent of refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons were children under the age of 5.<sup>3</sup> Children in such fragile and conflict-affected environments are twice as likely to die before they reach their fifth birthday.<sup>4</sup> With this in mind, it is critical that children's rights to life, survival and development—including, specifically, the rights to health, nutrition, education, rest, leisure and engagement in play (as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)- are continuously protected, promoted and upheld.

The southern African region has not been spared from different disasters that have in the recent past confronted the world. In six southern African countries namely; Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and eSwatini, Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) has been significantly affected by disasters such as droughts, disease outbreaks, cyclones, floods, and malnutrition. As recent as 2023, Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe were affected by Tropical Cyclone Freddy which claimed more than 500 lives in Mozambique and Malawi.<sup>5</sup> During the 2015/16 season, eSwatini was affected by an El-Nino induced drought which resulted in the death of 80, 000 livestock and more than half of the entire population became food insecure. Children were affected by malnutrition.<sup>6</sup> Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi have recently suffered major polio outbreaks which resulted in children especially those below the age of five falling victim.<sup>7</sup> These disasters have affected some of the key pillars of early child development which include nutrition, health, education and hygiene. While it is clear that these disaster have hindered Southern Africa from achieving SDG 4.2 which seeks

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF. (2012). Early childhood development kit: A treasure box of activities. Available on the UNICEF intranet (password required):<http://intranet.unicef.org/emops/emopssite.nsf/root/Page0704>

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF. (2010). UNICEF humanitarian action: Partnering for children in emergencies. New York, NY: UNICEF.

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR. (2011). Global trends 2011: A year of crisis. New York, NY: UNICEF.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank. (2011). World Development Report 2011. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Jazeera News, "Cyclone Freddy Surpasses 500 in south-eastern Africa" [https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/19/cyclone-freddy-death-toll-in-southeast-africa-surpasses-500#:~:text=The%20death%20toll%20in%20southeast,in%20Malawi%2C%20Mozambique%20and%20Madagascar](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/19/cyclone-freddy-death-toll-in-southeast-africa-surpasses-500#:~:text=The%20death%20toll%20in%20southeast,in%20Malawi%2C%20Mozambique%20and%20Madagascar.). 19 March 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Africa Portal 2017 Report.

<sup>7</sup> WHO Africa Press Release, 17 February 2023.

to provide quality pre-primary education for all boys and girls, the key question is, are there any ECDE DRRM policies that have been created regionally and nationally? This study engages with this question by arguing that various disasters have exposed Southern Africa's lack of elaborate ECDE DRRM policies both at national and regional levels. While there are no elaborate ECDE DRRM policies, the study identifies different interventions, plans and strategies which are being used in responding disasters in all the six southern African countries. In addition, the study identifies different challenges that have militated against creation of ECDE DRRM policies in the region as well as provide recommend specific actions to be taken. The COVID-19 pandemic is also brought into context and the study outlines how the disaster shaped ECDE policies in the region. Although there are no coherent mitigation policies for the ECDE sector in the region, different government agencies and non-governmental organisations have intervened through different strategies and plans.

### ECDE/DRRM Overview in the SADC Region

The SADC region has been witnessing a surge in the occurrence of multiple disasters, including cyclones and storms that led to heavy rains and flooding across the region leading to loss of lives, damage to assets and destruction of infrastructure.<sup>8</sup> These disasters have to a large extent affected ECDE, through the disruption of learning as schools become closed or destroyed, and homes of learners become destroyed. In addition, the effects of the disasters has seen children experiencing trauma from the horrors encountered and thus causing a disruption in learning. For instance, when Cyclone Idai hit Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe “Thousands of classrooms were damaged or destroyed and half a million children have had their education disrupted”.<sup>9</sup> Drought induced disasters in Southern Africa, have led to malnutrition and stunted growth among ECDE going children. In Lesotho, about 35% of children of ECDE children had stunted growth in 2018 (MICS). In Zimbabwe and Zambia, 30% and 40% of ECDE rural children have stunted growth respectively.<sup>1011</sup> Stunted growth due to chronic malnutrition hampers their overall development. Efforts have been made across countries to mitigate these challenges. In Lesotho and Zimbabwe, UNICEF has been working with national governments to leverage partnerships within the UN Nutrition Network and

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<sup>8</sup> SADC, 2021 Ministers Responsible for Disaster Risk Management meet to Review Progress on Regional Disaster Risk Management Programmes

<sup>9</sup> Theirworld. 2019. When disaster strikes: How education and children's futures were battered by Cyclone Idai. Available: <https://theirworld.org/news/cyclone-idai-batters-education-children-futures-mozambique-malawi-zimbabwe/>

<sup>10</sup> Light for the World. (2020). Leave No Child Behind Invest in the early years

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF. *State of the World's Children*. 2019.



Government Food and Nutrition Coordination Offices to enhance ECDE nutrition focused programming. Lesotho launched the Multisectoral nutrition and food security plan, targeting 2000 households with children under the age of five from four districts with high stunting rates.<sup>12</sup> In Zimbabwe, the state, supported by UNICEF, initiated the home-grown school feeding program in 2016, offering meals for ECD children from ECD A to Grade 2.<sup>13</sup> In Malawi, the government introduced the Universal School Meals Programme with support from WFP to promote nutrition and health among the ECD learners.<sup>14</sup>

Cyclones and flood disasters affect learning processes for ECDE in countries like Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Efforts have been made to mitigate the impacts of floods and cyclones. In Zambia, a study by Mooto (2019) shows that the Barotseland Floods affect ECDE for close to two terms of the year. The age and vulnerability of the ECDE learners makes it difficult for them to wad in water for distances when the floods start. Due to absence of government paid sandaula, crossing canals, streams, rivers and oxbow lakes to and from school is difficult.<sup>15</sup> In response to flooding and cyclone disasters, Zimbabwe schools like Marume Primary in Buhera received 2 tents and 4 ‘School-in-a-Box’ kits. Each kit enables 1 teacher and up to 40 ECD students to set up a makeshift classroom anywhere.<sup>16</sup> In Mozambique, temporary learning spaces were established in Beira so that ECDE children who had their schools damaged or used as shelters could continue their education.<sup>17</sup> School safety guidelines are now being put into place in more than 1,000 classrooms across the country. UNICEF help to provide educational supplies and early childhood development (ECD) kits, establish temporary learning centers, distribute school tents, make repairs to school water and sanitation facilities, clean and disinfect schools, and train teachers on psychosocial support for children in the aftermath of cyclone Idai.<sup>18</sup> Efforts have also been made to build ECDE and primary classrooms in areas such as Muimi which are heavily hit by floods with the support of Save the Children, providing

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<sup>12</sup> Country Office Annual Report 2020. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/100361/file/Lesotho-2020-COAR.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Light for the World. (2020). Leave No Child Behind Invest in the early years

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> M. K. Mooto. 2019. Exploring The Provision of Early Childhood Education (ECE) In The Barotse Flood Plains, Mongu District, Western Province, Zambia (Paper ID: CFP/1414/2019).

<sup>16</sup> N. Mutizwa, 2021 UNICEF. *Satchels of hope for cyclone-affected schools in Manicaland*.

<sup>17</sup> Light for the World. (2020). Leave No Child Behind Invest in the early years.

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF (2019)

learning materials like books, desks, and cupboards and training to community teachers who volunteer at the school.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the COVID-19 health pandemic disrupted learning for at least 40 million ECDE learners world-wide in their critical pre-school as it shuttered childcare and early education facilities.<sup>20</sup> To counter the impacts, the Lesotho Distance Teaching Center developed materials to support school lessons, including radio and TV lessons and learner packs. In Mozambique, ECDE radio lessons, film lessons, and communications units were introduced in order to bridge the technology gap by providing forums in the community and involving children in the design and delivery of programs.<sup>21</sup> Despite these efforts, the partners' capacity to effectively and efficiently coordinate the rollout of these materials was limited, and the development of the learner packs was slow. The online learning introduced in Zimbabwe was not effective for the ECDE because of limited connectivity, high data charges, and a lack of gadgets by parents.

SADC member countries have adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster and Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030, with one of its four priorities being inclusiveness and risk reduction for three specific vulnerable target populations: women, children, and people with disabilities. More so, the initiatives like the Future Life-Now! Programme by SADC adopts an innovative approach towards providing child and youth-friendly services in support of health, gender, migration, food security, violence, climate change and other disasters and challenges facing children and youth, especially the most vulnerable.<sup>22</sup> At regional level, as part of harmonization and implementation efforts in line with SDG 4 target 4.2, all sixteen SADC Member States have institutional arrangements in place to support ECDE harmonization and implementation efforts, including ministries responsible for health, education, child protection, disaster risk reduction, and social development affairs.<sup>23</sup> However, despite the presence of these efforts, the national, inter-ministerial, and regional coordination needed for improved outcomes for ECDE/DRRM during disasters remains a challenge, which is compounded by limited budget

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<sup>19</sup>Save the Children. 2022. Zambia: Island School Keeps Children Learning Against Backdrop of Climate Crisis. *Press Release*

<sup>20</sup> UNICEF. (2020).

<sup>21</sup> UNICEF, 2021 The Situation of Children in Mozambique: Summary Report

<sup>22</sup> MIET AFRICA (2021) The Impact of COVID-19 on Adolescents and Young People in the SADC Region. South Africa. *MIET AFRICA*

<sup>23</sup> SADC, 2021 Ministers Responsible for Disaster Risk Management meet to Review Progress on Regional Disaster Risk Management Programmes

allocation to address ECDE health, social protection, and psychosocial support. For example, in 2021, ECDE financing in Swaziland was at 0%, in Lesotho at 2%, in Malawi at 2%, in Zambia at 1%, and in Zimbabwe at 2%, for an average of 0.68% for the five countries.<sup>24</sup> The absence of strategic direction at the SADC regional level has a negative impact on ECDE/DRRM initiatives at both national and transnational levels.<sup>25</sup>

The SADC regional block does not have a specific DRRM policy for ECDE. There is however different regional strategies to support basic education in general and plans are underway to have a regional ECDE policy. Despite the lack of a coherent regional ECDE policy, SADC countries have ratified various international laws and conventions to mitigate against disasters in general. Some of these key ratifications are outlines in the table below:

#### 1.1 Mapping enabling frameworks (for example, regulations, policy)

International/Regional		
Selected Policy/International Conventions	Policy/Legislation	Stakeholders
i. Sendai Framework 2015-2030 ii. Paris Agreement on climate iii. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development iv. Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All these international frameworks call for the inclusion of children and youth to integrate their voices and concerns. For example, the Sendai Framework states in <b>section 36(ii)</b>: "Children and youth are agents of change and should be given the space and modalities to contribute to disaster risk reduction, in accordance with legislation, national practice and educational curricula."</li> <li>Specifically, the GPEI is based on four pillars: routine immunisation, supplementary immunisation, and surveillance and mop-up campaigns against Polio for children below 5 years including those in schools and communities.<sup>26</sup> Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe are currently implementing national Polio campaigns.</li> </ul>	Member countries (states), International NGOs- for example, Child Fund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, UNICEF, and World Vision

<sup>24</sup> SADC Neglects Pre-Primary Education 15th October 2021 <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/sadc-neglects-pre-primary-education/>

<sup>25</sup> Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD) 17 April, 2019 Stakeholders Draft SADC Inclusive ECDE Strategy

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/polio/gpei/index.htm>

<p>v. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UN 1989) and the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (DRC) (UNHCHR 1959).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The right of children to participate in DRR is embedded in the UNCRC of 1989. The UNCRC focuses on protection, provision, and participation. Protection and provision are addressed by legislation, but participation as stated in Article 12 of the UNCRC is often forgotten (Sarkar and Mendoza 2005).</li> </ul>	
<p>vi. The Sustainable Development Goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SDGs are universal in scope, and their call to leave no one behind puts the world’s most vulnerable and marginalised people – including children – at the top of the agenda. Target 4 .2 seeks to increase access to ECD targeting children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Goal 2 seeks to eradicate hunger and poverty 13 calls for a comprehensive climate action in order to reduce climate induced disasters.</li> </ul>	
<p>vii. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Children's Charter is a comprehensive instrument that sets out rights and defines universal principles and norms for the status of children. African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) is the responsible organization making decisions on matters affecting children including ECD DRRM policies on the continent. The (ACERWC) was established in 2001, drawing its mandate from Articles 32-46 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The main goal of the Secretariat is to work towards making Africa a continent that is fit for children by protecting and respecting their rights. The committee’s main functions are to collect information, interpret provisions of the Charter, monitor the implementation of the Charter, give recommendations to governments for working with child rights organizations, consider individual complaints about violations of children’s rights, and investigate measures adopted by Member States to implement the Charter.<sup>27</sup></li> <li>• A framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential. The framework stipulates that children need the five inter-related and indivisible components of nurturing care: good health, adequate nutrition, safety and security, responsive caregiving and opportunities for early learning.<sup>28</sup></li> </ul>	

<sup>27</sup> Available at: <http://www.anppcan.org/the-african-charter-on-the-rights-and-welfare-of-the-child-acrwc/>.

<sup>28</sup> <https://nurturing-care.org>

<p>viii. The Nurturing Care Framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is responsible for cross-border coordinating regional preparedness and response programmes for transboundary hazards and disasters. The SADC Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was inaugurated in 2011. All SADC Member States have disaster management structures.<sup>29</sup> However, the unit is not specifically designed to deal with ECD related disasters.</li> </ul> <p>The framework provides a roadmap for action by building state-of-the-art evidence about how early child development unfolds and how it can be improved through policies and interventions. The framework also provides guiding principles, strategic actions and ways of monitoring progress ECDE policies.<sup>30</sup></p>	
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## ECDE DRRM Policies in SADC countries

Different countries in the region have experienced different disasters. In responding to such disasters, governments have deployed different strategies. There are also existing policies and plans in the region that address specific disasters. Besides governments, international development partners, CSOs and NGOs have intervened with various strategies and plans in the different countries. Below is an outline of national situations with regards to ECDE DRRM policies in southern Africa.

### 2.0 ZIMBABWE

#### 2.1 ECDE DRRM Enabling Frameworks in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has a well-established ECDE national policy with a total of 6 761 schools offering early childhood education as at 2020.<sup>31</sup> The percentage of children aged 36–59 months attending an early childhood education programme was 28.4% in 2019. As of 2020, ECDE enrolment was at 653 130, of which 327 492 were males and 325 638 females.<sup>32</sup> The teacher establishment for ECDE was at 16 298 with trained ECD teachers at 67.69 percent.<sup>33</sup> The sector falls under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE).

<sup>29</sup> Available at: <https://drmims.sadc.int/en/profiles/southern-african-development-community-sadc-drr-profile>

<sup>30</sup> World Health Organisation, “Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development”, 2018 Report.

<sup>31</sup> Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report 2020.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

However, despite having a sound national policy that guides the ECDE sector, the country does not have an elaborate ECDE DRRM policy. In the absence of a national ECDE DRRM policy, there have been several interventions, plans and strategies responding to different disasters at different times. These strategies, plans, and interventions are by and large initiated by international partners such as UNICEF and WHO.

Some of the most notable interventions by international partners include the Zimbabwe National Polio Vaccination Campaign which was started in 2022. The campaign specifically responded to a deadly polio outbreak. The National Polio Vaccination Campaign in Zimbabwe was launched through the support WHO’s Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).<sup>34</sup> The campaign involved the administration of multiple rounds of supplementary doses of oral polio vaccine (OPV) to all at risk children as a cost-effective public health measure to boost immunity levels among the children and avert importation of the poliovirus from affected countries.<sup>35</sup> It is important to note that the national disaster policy which is the Civil Protection Act (2001) does not at all address DRRM for ECDE.<sup>36</sup>

ECDE DRRM policies in Zimbabwe are not centralised, but fragmented and administered by different ministries and organisations. The major ECDE DRRM enabling framework being rolled out currently in Zimbabwe is the National Polio Vaccination Campaign which is a disaster. What informed this intervention by WHO was the organisation’s international health guidelines, not necessarily Zimbabwe government’s actions. In addition to the National Polio Vaccination Campaign, there are several other ECDE DRRM interventions, plans and strategies responding to various disasters. These policies and interventions are described in the table below.

## 2.2 Other ECDE DRRM interventions and key stakeholders in Zimbabwe

<b>ZIMBABWE</b>		
<b>Policy</b>	<b>How it addresses ECDE-DRRM</b>	<b>Key stakeholders</b>
The National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children and the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognises ECDE children affected by HIV/AIDS by commanding mobilisation of resources, strengthening the existing institutions in offering nutrition and health to the toddlers</li> </ul>	The Department of Child Welfare and Probation Services

<sup>34</sup> WHO. (2022). Zimbabwe to embark on mass vaccinations against Wild Polio. <https://www.afro.who.int/countries/zimbabwe/news/zimbabwe-embark-mass-vaccinations-against-wild-polio>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Zimbabwe Civil Protection Act, <https://www.jsc.org.zw/upload/Acts/2001/1006updated.pdf>

National Case Management System.	affected by HIV and AIDS, hygiene, HIV prevention, sanitation and diet. <sup>37</sup>	
The National Case Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central to the policy is the different action planning in terms of identification of the child in emergencies or disasters<sup>38</sup>. The policy gave powers to the teachers for case categorization, in this case, the children in disasters, they need emergency reference to the district social development office, where there will be assessment (family, survival, general health, development, social history, behaviour, education and aspirations), case planning, case implementation, case review and case closure.<sup>39</sup></li> </ul>	The Department of Child Welfare and Probation Services
The Home grown school feeding program 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responding to El-Nino induced drought disaster in the 2015 to 2016 seasons. With due consideration to the problem at stake, the government of Zimbabwe kick started the school feeding programme starting with infants before it was later extended up to grade 7. During the COVID-19 pandemic, with the availability of funds, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) with the support of UNICEF procured cooking serving utensils to support 100 selected schools in Gokwe North, Makoni and Masvingo.<sup>40</sup></li> </ul>	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
The Rural WASH Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeting schools and the vulnerable societies and ensure that children are protected from disasters like cholera and typhoid.</li> </ul>	Ministry of health and Child Care
Healthy Life Style Competence Based Curriculum 2015-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy sought to deal with drought disasters proactively by ensuring that the ECD curriculums emphasise health, nutrition and psycho-social stimulation as a way of promoting holistic early development. In addition, teachers and school heads liaise with parents, guardians and the community to address identified cases related to malnutrition. At community level, referrals to other government departments like Social Welfare and Health and Child Care also utilized by schools.<sup>41</sup></li> </ul>	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
The School Health policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From successful child vaccination programmes, incorporation of ECD A &amp; B into the formal education system provided an opportunity for early health monitoring, early prevention and swift referrals. Through this policy, the MOPSE will be better placed to collaborate with other sectoral Ministries on cross-cutting issues including school feeding, health and hygiene as well as HIV and AIDS.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

<sup>37</sup> Government of Zimbabwe. (2022). National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children 2017-2020.

<sup>38</sup> Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Development. (2017).

<sup>39</sup> Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Development. (2017).

<sup>40</sup> Alternative School Feeding Programme Briefing

<sup>41</sup> Zimbabwe's Early Childhood Development (ECD) Education Programme: A Nutrition Perspective Presented by Peter Muzawazi Principal Director - Ministry of Primary & Secondary Education At the High Level Forum on Early Childhood Nutrition In Southern Africa - Multisectoral Approaches To Investing In Human Capital, October 2, 201, Maseru-Lesotho

The Civil Protection Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An ACT to establish a civil protection organisation and provide for the operation of civil protection services in times of disaster; to provide for the establishment of a fund to finance civil protection; and to provide for matters connected with or incidental to the foregoing.<sup>42</sup> The Act does not specifically speak to issues of DRRM in ECDE however; its mandate is to provide protection for all people in Zimbabwe including children less than 5 years.</li> </ul>	The Civil Protection Department
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### 2.3 ECDE DRRM key stakeholders and their roles in Zimbabwe

The different interventions outlined in the table above are informed by different state actors which included government ministries and departments. They are also informed by non-state actors which include international organisations and local NGOs and CSOs. Below is a description of the different stakeholders and their respective roles in DRRM interventions.

Stakeholders/Institutions	Roles
Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Development	The Ministry's statutory responsibility for the protection of vulnerable populations in Zimbabwe. The ministry develops and facilitates the implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy and coordinates all child protection activities according to the Children's Act and NAP for Orphans and Vulnerable Children's (OVCs).
Ministry of Health and Child Care	The Ministry of Health and Child Care seeks to achieve equity in Health by targeting resources and programmes to the most vulnerable and needy in our society. <sup>43</sup> Formulate and implement policies for pandemic induced disasters including those targeting children.

<sup>42</sup> Zimbabwe Legal Institute, Civil Protection Act, Available at: [Zimlii.org/akn/zw/act/1989/5/eng%402016-12-31](http://zimlii.org/akn/zw/act/1989/5/eng%402016-12-31)

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.mohcc.gov.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=156&Itemid=710](http://www.mohcc.gov.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=156&Itemid=710)



Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education	They are the Ministry in charge of running Zimbabwe's system of primary and secondary schools. In addition to overseeing the management and operation of all schools in the nation, they develop and carry out policies on education structure, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Rotary International, the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO). UNESCO, Plan International, UNICEF, UKAid, WFP	These are international funding agencies that support various ECDE child related funding and programming targeting different components of child development in Zimbabwe. For example, Zimbabwe successfully completed the first round of a vaccination drive against wild poliovirus between October 27 and 30, 2022, reaching 2.2 million eligible children under the age of five, who are most at risk of infection. The campaign was launched by the Government of Zimbabwe with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) as part of a comprehensive multi-country response to outbreaks of wild poliovirus reported in Malawi and Mozambique in February and May this year respectively. <sup>44</sup>
Ministry of environment, water and climate	The Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate has overall responsibility for the environment, water and climate related issues in the country. Coordinate and implement WASH Programmes.
ZINECDA and Teacher Unions	ZINECDA's vision is a Zimbabwe where all young children from conception to 8 year old are treasured in such a way that their basic rights are met and their rights to survive and thrive are realised. <sup>45</sup>
National AIDS Council	With support from UNICEF Zimbabwe, the National Aids Council (NAC) adopted a community-based approach to engage young people. The aim was to train volunteers to educate and disseminate information on disaster preparedness and HIV-prevention. <sup>46</sup>
The Department of Civil Protection	The Department of Civil Protection is a national organ, which is housed under the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing. The Department was established to carry out the overall co-ordination of all relevant disaster management stakeholders. However, the institutions have severe challenges in executing their mandate resulting in the increase of disaster impacts

<sup>44</sup> WHO Africa, 14 December 2022, Global Polio Eradication Initiative implements gender equality strategy in Zimbabwe's polio fight, <https://www.afro.who.int/photo-story/global-polio-eradication-initiative-implements-gender-equality-strategy-zimbabwes-polio#:~:text=Harare%20%20Zimbabwe%20successfully%20completed%20the,most%20at%20risk%20of%20infection>.

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.zinecda.org/our-purpose/>

<sup>46</sup> "Catch them Young" – Community-led trainings help young people prevent SGBV, HIV and COVID-19, Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/zimbabwe/stories/catch-them-young-community-led-trainings-help-young-people-prevent-sgbv-hiv-and-covid-19>

### 3.0 LESOTHO

#### 3.1 ECDE DRRM Enabling Frameworks in Lesotho

Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) is committed to providing Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) opportunities to all children at least for one year before primary school. MoET adopted the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (NPIECCD) in 2013 which guides ECCD policy and action.<sup>47</sup> The Volunteer National Report indicated that Pre-primary enrolment (children aged 3-5) stands at 30 percent with 49.9 percent male and 50.1 percent female as at 2017.<sup>48</sup>

Just like in the case of Zimbabwe, there is no specific ECDE DRRM policy in Lesotho. In the absence of a holistic ECDE DRRM policies, there are interventions in place addressing different disasters. These interventions are led by different state and non-state players. One of the key DRRM interventions in Lesotho is the **National Multisectoral Child Protection Strategy** which was enacted in 2014. The policy is informed by the Lesotho's government's constitution which calls for the protection of all children and is premised on granting children's rights to protection and their opportunity to benefit from education, health, economic development initiatives are fulfilled.<sup>49</sup> With specific reference to ECDE, the strategy emphasises that a child's first six years are the point at which his or her long-term development is most likely to succeed or be significantly impaired. The strategy was introduced to support the Children's Protection and Welfare Act of 2011.<sup>50</sup> The implementation of the strategy involves many other actors, but the Ministry of Social Development takes a leading role supported by a task force of key ministries and civic organisations.

However, Lesotho's National Multisectoral Strategy does not cover all disasters that target ECDE children. In light of this gap, there have been several other policies and strategies addressing different disasters. This suggests that, overall, child protection against disasters in

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<sup>47</sup> The Lesotho Council of NGO's 2021 Measure the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) A Review of SDG-4 Progress in Lesotho

<sup>48</sup> Volunteer National Review on the Implementation of Agenda 2030 (2019). [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23777Lesotho\\_VNR\\_Report\\_2019\\_Final.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23777Lesotho_VNR_Report_2019_Final.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> Lesotho Multisectoral Child Protection Strategy Document <https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/National%20Multisectoral%20Child%20Protection%20Strategy%202014.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Lesotho is fragmented and being implemented by various ministries under different policies, as shown in the table below.

### 3.2 Other ECDE DRRM interventions and stakeholders in Lesotho

<b>Policy</b>	<b>How it addresses ECDE-DRRM</b>	<b>Coordinating stakeholder</b>
Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides guidelines for integration of disaster risk reduction into all development and social sectors including education.</li> </ul>	Prime Ministers Office
School Seeding Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The scheme covers 2/3 of all the schools-preventing effects of food insecurity. In 2018, the scheme provided food relief to 56 752 pre-school pupils in the country. However, the existing system is fragmented and lacks a comprehensive coordination mechanism, leading evaluators to conclude that it has weaknesses.<sup>51</sup></li> </ul>	Ministry of Education and Training ; Ministry of Social Development
WFP assisted School Feeding Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The intervention is informed by WFP’s nutritional guidelines and access to basic needs for all children. Complements the state on health and nutrition for ECDE.</li> </ul>	WFP
Nutrition Support Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce stunting, child morbidity and mortality, reduce maternal mortality (NSDP) and to scale up universal access to comprehensive and quality treatment, care and support (NSP).</li> </ul>	Ministry of Social Development
Lesotho National Strategic Resilience Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build Stability through Preparedness, Response and Resource Mobilization among vulnerable groups like children.</li> </ul>	Prime Ministers Office
Lesotho, Education Sector Plan: 2016-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan promote climate change education and emergency preparedness which promote learning about the causes and effects of climate change and conflict as well as possible responses, providing a cross curricula and multidisciplinary perspectives Crucially, climate change education and emergency preparedness help schools and institutions to make informed decisions by preparing learners, communities and education systems to face natural and human induced hazards. It contributes to disaster risk reduction efforts.</li> <li>- At present, climate change and emergency are not fully addressed as components in Lesotho’s educational system. At pre-school, they are not distinct in the curriculum; however, some of the pre-school teachers use environment issues to teach about climate change and emergencies.<sup>52</sup></li> </ul>	Ministry of Education and Training

<sup>51</sup> [https://gcnf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CR\\_Lesotho\\_12\\_29\\_20.pdf](https://gcnf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CR_Lesotho_12_29_20.pdf)

<sup>52</sup>Government of Lesotho, Ministry of Education and Training, Lesotho, Education Sector Plan: 2016-2026, [https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/education\\_sector\\_plan\\_2016-2026\\_lesotho\\_0.pdf](https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/education_sector_plan_2016-2026_lesotho_0.pdf)

Children Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritising taking child into place of safety, section 24 of the Act allows a police officer, the Department of Social Welfare, a chief or member of the community who is satisfied on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of care and protection may take the child and place him in a place of safety.<sup>53</sup></li> </ul>	
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### 3.3 ECDE DRRM key stakeholders and their role in Lesotho

In the absence of a national ECDE DRRM policy in Lesotho, several stakeholders have initiated and led several DRRM interventions. As outlined below, such interventions are informed by the respective institutions' belief on the well-being of ECDE children.

Stakeholder	Roles
Network of Early Childhood Development Coalition of Lesotho (NECDOL)	Our Mission is that Network will ensure coordination of partners, stakeholders, programs and initiatives aimed at holistic development of children from 0 to 5 years old at national level through research, informed advocacy, resource mobilisation, capacity building, partnerships, innovation, monitoring and evaluation of ECD services and programs to improve the well-being of children in their early years of life. <sup>54</sup>
Ministry of Social Development	The long term goal of the Ministry is to improve the quality of life of all Basotho through interventions that address poverty, deprivation, vulnerability and inequality in a comprehensive and holistic manner. As such, the ministry coordinates all child protection measures. <sup>55</sup>
Ministry of Education	To develop and implement policies which ensure acquisition of functional literacy among all Basotho and development of a productive, quality human resource base through education and training. <sup>56</sup>
The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) of Lesotho	Lays down policies on disaster management and approves the national plan. The department is also responsible for approving plans prepared by different ministries or departments of the Government of Lesotho in accordance with the national plan.
UNICEF	UNICEF rehabilitated 13 water systems in seven drought-affected districts ensuring sustainable water to 7,316 people,

<sup>53</sup> ACT NO, 7 01'2011 Children's Protection and Welfare Act, 201 <http://jafbase.fr/docAfrique/Lesotho/children%20act%20lesotho.pdf>

<sup>54</sup>Available at <https://www.developmentaid.org/organizations/view/450267/necdol-network-of-early-childhood-development-of-lesotho>.

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.socialdevelopment.gov.ls>

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.lesothogov.net/home/company/705475>

## 4.0 ZAMBIA

### 4.1 ECDE DRRM Enabling Frameworks in Zambia

In rural regions, 40 percent of Zambian pre-school children (up to the age of four) have stunted growth due to chronic malnutrition, which hampers their overall development. In addition, 66 percent of Zambian children living outside cities live in poverty, and 45 percent in extreme poverty.<sup>57</sup> The percentage of children with stunted growth has, for instance, remained stable at around 40 percent since 1997. Moreover, access to basic drinking water (61 percent) and sanitation (31 percent) remain low and this exacerbates chronic malnutrition.<sup>58</sup> Malnutrition is a major disaster that is slowing down the growth of the ECDE sector in Zambia.

Although Zambia's national education policy acknowledges the importance of ECDE, there is no clear policy for disaster mitigation that specifically targets children below the age of 5. At the time of the research (February 2023), Zambia was revising its education policy and interestingly the issue of COVID-19 features once and there is little attention paid to education in emergencies despite coming from a lengthy COVID-19 lockdowns and recent experiences of cyclones and other adverse weather elements in the Southern African Region.<sup>59</sup> Like Lesotho and Zimbabwe, Zambia's ECDE disaster strategies are multi-sectoral in nature pulling together different stakeholders.

One of the many policies that speak to DRRM in Zambia is the **National Child Policy (NCP)** which was formulated in 2006 and revised in 2015. This is informed by national legislation and policies as well as provisions of various international and regional instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The NCP addresses challenges facing children in Zambia such as vulnerability to sexual and gender based violence, disabilities, HIV/AIDS. It also focuses on maternal and child health, food and nutrition, water and sanitation, early childhood development and education, leisure and recreation and family welfare.<sup>60</sup> However, the National Child Policy does not address specific disaster that affect ECDE but deals with all children in general. In light of this, some of the more specific ECDE disaster have been dealt with through multisectoral approach as different government ministries and private stakeholders come with

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<sup>57</sup><https://www.licht-fuer-die>

welt.at/app/uploads/sites/8/2021/09/leave\_no\_child\_behind\_country\_case\_study\_zambia\_english.pdf

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Key Informant Interview with a CSO leader in Lusaka.

<sup>60</sup> Government of Zambia National Child Policy, [https://www.mcdss.gov.zm/?page\\_id=2780](https://www.mcdss.gov.zm/?page_id=2780)

different strategies and policies. Below are some of the ECDE DRRM interventions, policies, and strategies.

#### 4.2 Other ECDE DRRM interventions and key stakeholders in Zambia

<b>Zambia</b>		
<b>Policy</b>	<b>How it addresses ECDE-DRRM</b>	<b>Coordinating stakeholder</b>
National Childhood Development Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Child Policy seeks to address existing challenges facing children in Zambia such as orphanhood, vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence, disabilities and HIV and AIDS. Additionally, the focus on maternal and child health, food and nutrition, water and sanitation, early childhood development and education and quality of life for all children in Zambia. The National Child Policy further address other issues such as the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on children, as well as children's access to information and communications technology (ICT). Reinforcing nutrition among ECD learners.<sup>61</sup></li> </ul>	Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare
National population policy and the National Health Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the country's disease burden and lower maternal, infant and child mortality figures. The policy contribute to the success of the countries Seventh National Development Plan and help Zambia achieve its Vision 2030 goal of becoming a prosperous, middle-income country.<sup>62</sup> However, the policy does not explicitly outline its vision and aims regarding ECDE in the country. It only addresses issues of under 5 year olds in relation to other challenges such as hunger and health pandemics.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Health
National Implementation Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes to achieving to national policy priorities and international commitments to increase access to ECD targeting children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The framework ensures that opportunities exist for all citizens to have equitable access to ECCDE, basic and high school, tertiary education and/or technical and vocational training.<sup>63</sup></li> </ul>	Ministry of General Education

<sup>61</sup> [https://www.mcdss.gov.zm/?page\\_id=2780](https://www.mcdss.gov.zm/?page_id=2780)

<sup>62</sup>Engage, *Policy Brief*, 2019, Managing our Population for a Healthier and more Prosperous Zambia <https://www.prb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/zambia-ENGAGE-policy-brief.pdf>

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

Government Grant- 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was meant to scale-provide relief to vulnerable children especially including introducing a 400 Zambian kwacha (ZMW) for every vulnerable child under the age of five. The scheme was announced by Zambia’s Vice President, Inonge Wina, Unfortunately, the intervention was not implemented in the 2019 budget due to debt servicing constraints.<sup>64</sup></li> </ul>	
The national food and nutrition policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy seeks to reduce drought induced disasters like malnutrition and hunger among the ECD learners by offering opportunities to integrate ECD principles into pre-existing and new policies in all relevant sectors.<sup>65</sup> However, to be successful, these frameworks must be matched with funding. According to one estimate, nutrition-related programmes represent approximately only 0.1% of Zambia’s national budget.<sup>66</sup></li> </ul>	

### 4.3 ECDE DRRM key stakeholders and their roles in Zambia

Stakeholder	Roles
Ministry of Health	Coordinating health related interventions such as vaccinations and nutrition programs of ECDE learners in the country.
UNICEF, FAO, OXFAM, WFP, UNESCO, EU, UKAid, Swiss Aid	Funding of DRRM and other related activities. UNICEF, for instance, which spends one-third of its Zambia ODA portfolio on ECD interventions. UNICEF plays a significant coordinating role as the lead convener for ECD development partners in Zambia, while supporting the government scale-up ECD services <sup>67</sup> The Global Partnership for Education approved US\$498,391 grant for Zambia to develop the education sector plan for 2017-2021. At bilateral level, countries like Canada, for instance, a country with a very strong ODA portfolio of child and maternal health and nutrition interventions. A third of its ODA in 2017 was spent on services Supportive of ECD in Zambia.
The Ministry of General Education (MoGE)	is responsible for Early Childhood Education (ECE), Primary, Secondary Education and Youth and Adult Literacy <sup>68</sup> All other ECDE related DRRM activities are implemented in conjunction with the MoGE

<sup>64</sup>[https://www.licht-fuer-die-welt.at/app/uploads/sites/8/2021/09/leave\\_no\\_child\\_behind\\_country\\_case\\_study\\_zambia\\_english.pdf](https://www.licht-fuer-die-welt.at/app/uploads/sites/8/2021/09/leave_no_child_behind_country_case_study_zambia_english.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Zambia Leave No Child Behind, Invest in the early years, [https://www.licht-fuer-die-welt.at/app/uploads/sites/8/2021/09/leave\\_no\\_child\\_behind\\_country\\_case\\_study\\_zambia\\_english.pdf](https://www.licht-fuer-die-welt.at/app/uploads/sites/8/2021/09/leave_no_child_behind_country_case_study_zambia_english.pdf)

<sup>68</sup> The Ministry of General Education and The Ministry of Higher Education, Education and Skills Sector Plan | 2017 – 2021, [https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/zambia\\_-\\_education-and-skills-sector-plan-2017-2021.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/zambia_-_education-and-skills-sector-plan-2017-2021.pdf)

Save the Children	Save the Children has been working in Zambia for nearly 40 years, running health, nutrition, education and protection programs across the country. In response to the climate change-induced hunger crisis, Save the Children is running school feeding programmes, providing education materials to children, and providing emergency cash and voucher assistance.
Zambia Anglican Council Outreach Programmes (ZACOP) and Episcopal Relief & Development	Implemented the <b>Integrated Early Childhood Development Program (ECD)</b> 1 in Zambia from 2012. The ECD Program uses an integrated rural development program model to address the holistic needs of young children and their primary caregivers. The target population is primarily families directly affected by HIV and AIDS and other vulnerable household's. <sup>69</sup> .

## 5.0 MALAWI

### 5.1 ECDE DRRM Enabling Frameworks in Malawi

Malawi is susceptible to a number of natural disasters. In the recent past, the country fell victim to cyclones, droughts, floods, and disease outbreaks. In the face of these disasters, Malawi developed the **Disaster Risk Management for Resilience Programme (DRMRP)** as a national policy. This national policy is implemented by the Department of Disaster Management Affairs in partnership with other government departments and authorities. The DRMRP is a developmental issue aimed at reducing social, economic and environmental disaster losses in order to achieve socio-economic growth in the country. Due to the crosscutting nature of the disaster risk management function, the NDRM Policy is linked to the **Child Protection Policy** and many other local policies.<sup>70</sup>

Although Malawi boasts of this sound multi-sectoral DRRM policy, there has not been a specific disaster mitigation policy specifically designed for children at the ECD stage (between 0 and 5 years of age) who are considered a vulnerable group. Despite lack of a specific ECDE DRRM policy in Malawi, there have been multi-sectoral numerous interventions, responses, and plans by both government in civic societies to different disasters. These include regional policies led by international organisations such as WHO and UNICEF. National interventions have been led by both government ministries and local civic groups as shown in the tables below.

<sup>69</sup>[https://www.episcopalrelief.org/wp-content/uploads/old-uploaded/files/What-We-Do/2016-ECD/2017\\_ECD\\_Evaluation\\_Summary\\_Report\\_Zambia.pdf](https://www.episcopalrelief.org/wp-content/uploads/old-uploaded/files/What-We-Do/2016-ECD/2017_ECD_Evaluation_Summary_Report_Zambia.pdf)

<sup>70</sup> Malawi DRM Policy 2015, [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43755\\_malawidrmpolicy2015.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/43755_malawidrmpolicy2015.pdf)



## 5.2 Other ECDE DRRM interventions and key stakeholders in Malawi

<b>MALAWI</b>		
<b>Policy</b>	<b>How it Addresses DRRM</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
National Policy on Early Childhood Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the face of disasters such as malnutrition and HIV/AIDS affecting children, the policy promotes cooperation between government, co-operating partners, the private sector, communities and households in the management and implementation of Early Childhood Development activities and programmes. The policy also facilitates the implementation of the Rights of the Child as stipulated in the Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to which Malawi is a signatory. The policy further calls for a holistic approach to childcare, by integrating all development concerns into the existing operational systems.<sup>71</sup></li> </ul>	Ministry of Gender and Child Development, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.
Universal School Meals Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In light of nutritional disasters largely affecting children at ECD stage, WFP in partnership with government intervened through the Universal School Meals Programme. WFP is the largest provider of school meals in Malawi, supporting education with school meals since 1999. Through the daily porridge initiative, WFP provided daily nutrition meals to children under the age of 5 years to reduce short-term hunger and improve attention span in class.<sup>72</sup> Through this initiative, WFP has so far supported 24,577 pre-primary aged children in 93 ECD centres in two districts.<sup>73</sup></li> </ul>	WFP, Ministry of Gender and Childcare
National Education Sector Investment Plan (2020-2030)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy addresses ECDE DRRM by recognising the need for WASH and holistic safety services for ECDE learners including those with disabilities. The main focus of the policy with regards to DRRM is to develop and implement an equity-based ECD delivery system with specialist support for children with special needs. This includes prototype designs for ECD learning centres that ensure safe, inclusive and effective learning environments for all, with due attention to support for children with special needs, WASH facilities and nutrition.<sup>74</sup></li> </ul>	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Gender and Childcare.
Malawi Safe Schools Construction Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following devastating Cyclone Idai which caused flooding in 2019, the GoM put in place Safe Schools Guidelines. The guidelines sought to construct disaster resilient schools that are able to withstand floods and other</li> </ul>	UNICEF, Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology.

<sup>71</sup> Government of Malawi 2017 Health Sector Strategic Plan II (2017-2022)

<sup>72</sup> World Food Programme 2018 Report, "School Meals Programme".

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Government of Malawi National Education Sector Investment Plan 2020-2030.

		calamities. <sup>75</sup> According to the Malawi Post-Floods Report of 2019, the guidelines are intended to guide the selection of construction sites, materials and designs for schools, at both primary and secondary levels. <sup>76</sup> The guidelines emphasised the need for the construction of smart educational infrastructure that is resilient to specific disasters as well as the provision of temporary learning facilities.	
Enhanced WASH Scheme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The scheme includes handwashing stations in schools, latrines and solar-powered water systems to prevent teachers and students for COVID-19.<sup>77</sup> One prototype enhanced WASH system by UNICEF was constructed at Mphunzi Primary School in Dedza district. It comprised of two storage tanks with a total capacity of 15 000 litres.<sup>78</sup> It is however important to note that the enhanced WASH system by UNICEF as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic is not directed specifically at ECD learners most of whom have special needs. It was a generalised response to both primary and secondary schools and therefore ignored the vulnerability of children between 0-5 years of age who require special attention.</li> </ul>	UNICEF, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

### 5.3 ECDE DRRM key stakeholders and their roles in Malawi

Without a consolidated national ECDE DRRM policy, different interventions are informed by different government departments, NGOS, CSOs and international development partners. As shown in the table below, different government departments and institutions lead different interventions in line with ECDE DRRM.

Stakeholders/Institutions	Roles
Ministry of Gender, Youth and Community Services	The Ministry is responsible for implementing the National ECD Policy. It also leads the implementation of Safe Schools Guidelines after the 2019 Cyclone Idai. The guidelines involve construction of disaster-resilient and child-friendly school facilities.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

UNICEF	As a response to reduce the spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic in Malawi, UNICEF introduced an enhanced WASH scheme designed to improve hygiene and access to clean water in schools. The scheme included handwashing stations in schools, latrines and solar-powered water systems to prevent teachers and students for COVID-19. <sup>79</sup> One prototype enhanced WASH system by UNICEF was constructed at Mphunzi Primary School in Dedza district. It comprised of two storage tanks with a total capacity of 15 000 litres. The organisation also provided 7 000 buckets and soap for handwashing in the wake of COVID-19.
Department of Disaster Management Agency	The department implements the national disaster management policy in partnership with other line ministries and non-governmental organisations. The agency however does not have a specific disaster policy that addresses the ECD sector.
WFP	WFP initiated the Daily School Meals Programme to counter malnutrition among ECDE learners. WFP is the largest provider of school meals in Malawi, supporting education with school meals since 1999. Through the daily porridge initiative, WFP provided daily nutrition meals to children under the age of 5 years to reduce short-term hunger and improve attention span in class. <sup>80</sup> Through this initiative, WFP has so far supported 24,577 pre-primary aged children in 93 ECD centres in two districts. <sup>81</sup>
World Health Organisation (WHO)	The Integrated Management of Child Illness (IMCI) was introduced by WHO as a strategy to deal with diseases and reduce mortality among children aged 5 years and below. Malawi ratified the policy in 1999 and started to train health service providers in 2000. <sup>82</sup> One of the DRRM-related IMCI components is to check whether there are any dangers that pose a risk to child who are at ECDE level. However, it is not clear of the protocol is being enforced in both public and private sectors that deal with ECDE. This shows that the government has failed to fully enforce the protocol. Again, IMCI is another example of a regional policy of disease containment implemented in Malawi by international organisations.
Global Partnership for Education (GPE)	Provided funding to the Ministry of Education to develop materials for continuity of learning- 400 radio programmes aired for Standard 1 to 8 in English, <i>Chichewa</i> , and Science during COVID-19 lockdowns when schools were closed. Also provided US\$ 10 million for COVID-19 response in the education sector.
Ministry of Gender and Child Development	The ministry coordinates the multi-sectoral National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Strategic Plan. The plan is executed in partnership with other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health and other NGOs. It also coordinates general child welfare programmes such as vaccination, immunisation and nutrition programmes.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> World Food Programme 2018 Report, “School Meals Programme”.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Adherence to Integrated Management of Children Illness Report in Malawi.

Ministry of Health	Implements the Health Sector Strategic Plan which ensures vaccination and immunisation of all children at ECD level. Targets the health of children by preventing disasters such as food insecurity, preventing pandemics among the under 5 through immunisation. <sup>83</sup>
Ministry of Education	Responsible for designing DRRM curriculum for schools.
Ministry of Persons with Disabilities & Rehabilitation	Training of teachers regarding DRRM among ECD learners with disabilities
European Union, World Bank, UKaid, Japan Aid, Irish Aid and KFW	Funding of community and school resilient projects
Youth Wave, YONECO, Development Communications Trust	Empowering communities to hold duty bearers accountable for the delivery of quality and resilient, child-friendly services
Goal Malawi	Giving aid to families and communities prepare for and build resilience to climate change and economic shocks, and support them to overcome chronic vulnerabilities that affect children. <sup>84</sup>
Early Childhood Development Coalition of Malawi	Organising advocacy campaigns calling for robust ECDE DRRM policies that are sensitive to the needs of young children.

## 6.0 MOZAMBIQUE

### 6.1 ECDE DRRM Enabling Frameworks in Mozambique

Being a coastal country with a 2 700 km coastline, Mozambique has in the recent past fallen victim to disasters associated with its location such as floods, cyclones and coastal erosion.<sup>85</sup> With a total of 9 international river basins, high dependency on agriculture, Mozambique is susceptible to different calamities. In addition to these, there have also been incessant disease outbreaks and associated disasters such as malnutrition. There are also high levels of poverty

<sup>83</sup> Government of Malawi. (2021).

<sup>84</sup> UNICEF Malawi Country Report (2021).

<sup>85</sup> World Bank Country Vulnerability Assessment, <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/mozambique/vulnerability>

which ultimately result in poor living standards. In terms of composition, floods are the biggest contributor to disaster with a total contribution of 33.33 percent while epidemics come second with 26.67 percent of the total. Storms and droughts contribute 21.90 percent and 12.38 percent respectively.<sup>86</sup> Mozambique is considered to be one of the most vulnerable countries to natural disasters. According to the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, Mozambique is the third most vulnerable country in Africa to disaster risks.<sup>87</sup> Against the backdrop of this disaster vulnerability, Mozambique does not have a specific national policy that address disaster risk reduction and mitigation directed towards ECDE.

However, despite having no specific DRRM policy directed at ECDE, Mozambique has broad-based disaster management policies, laws, strategies and plans that address the generality of its population and social groups. These policies have been undergoing rapid transformation to suit new challenges for the past 20 years. In 1999 it adopted the **National Policy on Disaster Management (NDPM)**. In 2006 it developed the **Master Plan for Prevention and Mitigation of Natural Disasters** (*Plano Director of Prevencao e mitigacao das Calamidades Naturais or PDPMCN*) which was in place until 2016. This was specifically tailored towards mitigating natural disasters. In 2017 it was replaced by **the National Disaster Risk Reduction Master Plan** (*Plano Director para a Reducao do Risco de Desastres or PDRRD*) set to cover the period from 2017 to 2030. In 2014 Disaster Risk Management law was adopted and was repealed in 2020 and this law is complemented by a set of regulations approving the law on Disaster Risk Reduction Management (Decree 76/2020).

## 6.2 Other ECDE DRRM interventions and key stakeholders in Mozambique

MOZAMBIQUE		
Policy	How it addresses ECDE DRRM	Stakeholders

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Disaster Risk Reduction in Mozambique, 7 September 2011. [https://issuu.com/savethechildren/docs/drr\\_in\\_mozambique](https://issuu.com/savethechildren/docs/drr_in_mozambique)

National Integrated Pre-school Child Development Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy prioritises the protection of children against violence and abuse while boosting access to primary healthcare, nutrition, birth registration services and pre-school education. This intervention succeeded in the provision of parenting classes for caregivers such as mothers. There was also training and professional career guidance for educators and other pre-school professionals and this promoted a high level of multi-sectoral ECD coordination.</li> </ul>	The Ministry of Education and Human Development
Strategic Education Plan (2020-2029)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The focus of the policy engages the participation and mobilisation of the local communities in implementation of the plan which can expose equitable access. Although the plan makes positive impact in increasing the number of children under ECDE, it is again silent on the mitigation and reduction of natural and man-made disasters.</li> </ul>	The Ministry of Education and Human Development
The Child Grant 0-2 Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program aims at enhancing child development, growth and well-being. It is targeting 15 000 children between 0-24 months. The program involves nutritional support and case management delivering simplified health, nutrition and childhood development messages through INAS <i>Permanentes</i> (Social Assistance Volunteers). The program also introduced diet diversity and minimum meal frequency. Results shows that the program reduced material poverty for older children and improve caregiver well-being. Based on the positive evaluations results the Government of Mozambique has been committing to expand the Child Grant Program to reach 250, 000 children in 9 out of 11 provinces by 2026.</li> </ul>	National Institute of Social Action (INAS)
The National DRR Master plan (2017-2030)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is the country’s DRRM master plan that caters for all social groups. It identifies ECD children as a vulnerable group which requires special attention.</li> </ul>	
The River Game Disaster Module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The “river game” educational tool was introduced in Mozambique by Save the Children to a number of schools and covering 1000 learners in disaster prone areas. The game is an alternative of formalised teaching a disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness that was informative and stimulating. The “river game” was used by the community to spread awareness among both adults and children in disaster-prone communities on the different ways which can be used to prepare for disasters before they happen.<sup>88</sup></li> </ul>	Save the Children

<sup>88</sup> Save the Children. DDR in Mozambique. <https://dylbw5db8047o.cloudfront.net/uploads/6000.pdf>

### 6.3 ECDE DRRM key stakeholders and their roles in Mozambique

Stakeholder	Roles
Aga Khan Foundation, Ministry of Education and Save the Children.	Coordinating the ECD masterplan. The Ministry of Education and Human Development enacted the education sector plan with the aim of pre-school expansion prioritising districts with the lowest primary school learning indicators and identifying children with special needs to reduce vulnerability and disaster risks. This plan is supported by Aga Khan Foundation and Save the Children.
Global Development Alliance (GDA)	Coordinating a Public Private Partnership (PPP) between government and private players to improve child development outcomes for children between 0-3 years of age.
National Institute of Social Action (INAS)	INAS is a government agency that is made of volunteers providing nutritional support and case management delivering simplified health, nutrition and childhood development messages.
UNICEF	As a response to the disaster, UNICEF provided ECD Kits for Emergencies. Developed in 2009 by UNICEF, ECD Kits for Emergencies strengthen responses to disasters by ensuring that children have access to important resources they need for survival. Among other things, the kit includes hygiene, sanitation, health, nutrition, protection, and educational material. With each kit designed to reach up to 50 young children, the kit also contains material to help caregivers create a safe learning environment for young children between 0-8 years of age.
WHO, WFP, Save the Children and World Vision	These partners implemented the Infant and Young Children Feeding to support children suffering from severe malnutrition as a result of droughts and associated natural disasters such as floods.

## 7.0 ESWATINI

### 7.1 ECDE DRRM Enabling Frameworks in eSwatini

ECDE is a national priority for the Government of eSwatini and is articulated in some of its key policy documents. The legal and policy instruments guiding the sector include the Constitution of eSwatini of 2005, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the **National Children’s Policy** of 2009. The National Education and Training Sector Policy (MoET, 2018c) includes an ECDE section with the specific policy goal of prioritising the expansion of equitable access to early learning and quality ECDE for all children in eSwatini between the ages of 0 and 8 years. It also ensures the full integration of the nation’s most vulnerable children. **The Multi-sectoral ECDE Framework** aims to build on current service delivery and support systems, promoting cost-effective synergies and coordination of

efforts. It necessitates full collaboration among ECDE stakeholders, including government officials, line ministry staff, service providers, civil society, development partners, academia and the private sector. At the national level, the Deputy Prime Minister's Office is responsible for the overall coordination of multi-sectoral ECDE services across ministries and other implementing entities. ECDE services are coordinated through the National Children's Coordination Unit in the Deputy Prime Minister's Office.

A **Multisectoral ECDE Framework** has been developed to facilitate the scaling up of the delivery of essential care and protection services and support systems for children between the ages of 0-8 and their respective families. This framework has yet to be adopted. Pre-service training programs for ECDE teachers have been introduced at two of the five public teacher training institutions (TTIs). The Deputy Prime Minister's Office works closely with the ministries of education and training, health, local government administration and development, home affairs, agriculture and natural resources to ensure the provision of quality services.

Responsibility and oversight for the management of disasters in eSwatini lies with the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO). It exercises this responsibility through the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) which was established in 2008. The core responsibility of the NDMA is to coordinate the DRRM system, with a focus on reducing vulnerability. It does this by bringing together the efforts of all government institutions, development partners, the private sector and civil society organisations and agencies to deliver coordinated DRRM activities that address hazards of all kinds.

However, the national ECDE policy and the national DRRM policies discussed above specifically address the ECD sector. Stated differently, there is not customised ECD DRRM policy in eSwatini. This is despite the realisation that eSwatini has in the past 20 years been subjected to recurring natural disasters such as droughts, epidemics, floods, storms and wildfires.<sup>89</sup> The recurring droughts have resulted in 25 percent of the entire population being food and water insecure.<sup>90</sup> In 2015-16, the country experienced an El-Nino-induced drought which resulted in a 30-40 percent reduction in food (maize) production.<sup>91</sup> In light of this, there

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<sup>89</sup> World Bank Country Vulnerability Report.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program "eSwatini Drought Preparedness".



are several DRRM policies and frameworks that address different disasters affecting ECDE using a multi-sectoral approach.

## 7.2 Other ECDE DRRM interventions and key stakeholders in eSwatini

<b>eSwatini</b>		
<b>Policy</b>	<b>How it addresses ECDE-DRRM</b>	<b>Coordinating stakeholder</b>
Neighbourhood Care Points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECD centres established to enable communities to provide care and food to orphans and vulnerable children in their neighbourhood especially those affected by HIV and AIDS.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education and Training
National Child Protection Policy 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes a wide range of services for children in the education, health, and nutrition sectors-main focus is on HIV and AIDS.</li> </ul>	Prime Minister's office, various ministerial bodies, and civil society and international partners.
Fortification Standards (2010) Salt Iodization Policy (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommends the need for rice, wheat and iodized salt for children to deal with student growth</li> </ul>	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
Disaster Management (COVID-19) Regulations (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All schools in eSwatini (irrespective of ownership or status) were required to comply with the Public Health COVID -19 Regulations, establishing a School-Based Monitoring Team, and developing specific communication protocols. If any school failed to comply with any of the government requirements, the Ministry of Education and Training inspectorate was given the authority to close down the school.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Health
Periodic Intensification of Routine Immunization (PIRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 13,000 children who were screened for child health issues including nutrition. Children found eligible were vaccinated, provided with Vitamin A supplementation, dewormed. The Programme also had a referral mechanism that directed children with other health issues to the nearest health facilities.</li> </ul>	UNICEF, Ministry of Health
Children's Protection and Welfare Regulations (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures the protection of children from all forms of violence and violent conflict and offers support to child victims of violence.</li> </ul>	UNICEF, Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA)

Education Sector Contingency Plan (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During COVID 19, school lessons were broadcast on both television and radio to ensure that students get access to education from the comfort of their homes. Through UNICEF support 2,166 lessons were broadcasted on TV and radio targeting 354,936 learners (Females 172 498, Males 182 438) across all grades in 2020.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education and Training, UNICEF.
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### 7.3 ECDE DRRM key stakeholders and their roles in eSwatini

Like all the other countries in the region, the absence of a comprehensive national ECDE DRRM is supplemented by different stakeholder interventions as described below.

Stakeholder	Roles
National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA)	The core responsibility of the NDMA is to coordinate the DRRM system, with a focus on reducing vulnerability. It does this by bringing together the efforts of all government institutions, development partners, the private sector and civil society organisations and agencies to deliver coordinated DRRM activities that address hazards of all kinds.
Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO)	The office has the responsibility and oversight for the management of all disasters in eSwatini. It works closely with the National Disaster Management Agency.
Ministry of Education and Training	The ministry is responsible for implementing the national ECD policy. In the event of disasters, the ministry coordinates disaster responses. However, the ministry does not have an elaborate DRRM policy for ECDE.
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare	Coordinates nutrition programmes for ECDE in partnership with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Health also leads in disaster responses through vaccination and immunisation of children below the age of 5.
UNICEF	Over 13 000 children below the age of 5 were screened for different diseases. UNICEF is the largest provider of child-related healthcare services through mass immunisation and vaccination programmes. For ECDE related health campaigns, UNICEF works in collaboration with the Ministry of health and the Ministry of Education.
Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA)	Provides advocacy encouraging government and NGOs to ensure the protection of children from violent conflict and abuse.

## **How ECDE/DRRM decisions are made in theory and in practice**

### **Zimbabwe**

In the case of Zimbabwe, all decisions to do with national disasters are made by the National Civil Protection Committee which also advises the minister on disaster matters. In terms of hierarchy, the national committee is followed by provincial committee, then district committees. All these committees from national level are made of representatives of different government departments such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Social Welfare.<sup>92</sup> Decision-making regarding national disasters are made by the national committee and then cascaded down to the provincial and district committees. In terms of their composition, the national, provincial, and district committees are multisectoral in nature. Some committees include district and provincial education officers. It is important to note that those officials who are part of the Civil Protection Committees are not direct ECDE practitioners and are detached from real issues affecting early child development. There is very limited involvement of ECDE teachers, parents or schools. Decisions are only imposed without the input of teachers or ECDE practitioners who have a realistic grasp of the needs of children. Non-governmental organisations that take part in disaster responses in Zimbabwe are not directly involved in decision-making. They only come in as partners to assist in strategies and policies laid out by the government through the National Civil Protection Committee.

The same applies in ECDE related educational policies. The National Early Learning Policy (NELP) in Zimbabwe is implemented by MoPSE. Decision-making processes are done through an executive made of senior ministry officials including provincial directors who help implement the decisions in their respective provinces and districts. ECDE teachers are not directly involved in making ECDE-related policies and decisions. The hierarchy often involves senior management and not ECDE practitioners or community members. These national policies are not inclusive of vulnerable groups such as the disabled and rural communities because decisions are made at the top and only brought down to the schools and communities as policies. The policies do not contain the views of ordinary people and vulnerable groups.

### **Zambia**

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<sup>92</sup> Civil Protect Act Zimbabwe <https://www.jsc.org.zw/upload/Acts/2001/1006updated.pdf>

In the case of Zambia, the creation of the National Child Policy (NCP) was consultative in nature. The government of Zambia through the Ministry of Youth, Sport, and Child Development conducted consultative meetings with faith-based organisations, civic organisations, communities, children, and the general public.<sup>93</sup> The consultations resulted in integration of certain aspects that had earlier been neglected in the initial 2006 NCP being included. By involving different groups in policy-making, the Zambian government ensured that the new document was sensitive to the needs of marginalised children such as the disabled and those infected by diseases such as HIV/AIDS. The NCP can therefore be regarded as more inclusive because it incorporates the views of members of the society.

### **Lesotho**

In 1997, the country formulated the Disaster Risk Management Act of 1997 to guide the implementation of DRRM. The act establishes the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and district secretaries who make decisions in terms of coordination of disaster preparedness and mitigation measures. In 2011 the country established the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy which provides guidelines for integration of disaster risk reduction into all development and social sectors including education and this is coordinated by the Prime Ministers Office<sup>94</sup>. Decisions are done by the national and district committees directed by the prime minister. The department of disaster preparedness is responsible for the making of decisions, guided by the office of the vice president.

Schools and ECDE centers do not make policy decisions besides taking contingency measures to deal with disasters reactively as the overall DRRM plans are done by the office of Vice President and Prime Minister.<sup>95</sup> As a result, Lesotho is designing the ECDE policy that will be ready for use at end of the year which includes sections of DRRM. There is no clear way on what centers or schools do with regards DRRM. There are no plans or guidelines at center level to help with preparation to mitigate any future disasters.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Government of Zambia National Child Policy, [https://www.mcdss.gov.zm/?page\\_id=2780](https://www.mcdss.gov.zm/?page_id=2780)

<sup>94</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2021. Legal Preparedness For International Disaster Assistance In Lesotho Mapping Of Domestic Laws And Policies.

<sup>95</sup> KII CSO leader.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

However, it is important to note, the Multisectoral Child Protection Strategy was arrived at following a scientific quantitative mapping and assessment process.<sup>97</sup> The process first identified the prevailing child protection status in Lesotho, then went on to identify systems-building priorities to build on and improve the current situation. The findings and strategic priorities were reviewed and validated by stakeholders at two national workshops, in March and again in April 2014. This shows that the national policy/strategy came as a result of a mapping process and stakeholder consultative meetings.<sup>98</sup> This suggests that the making of ECDE/DRRM national policies in Lesotho do not necessarily involve the general public and ECDE practitioners, but revolve around government officials and stakeholders who often involve civic organisations and international institutions. The Disaster Management Authority (DMA) is tasked with designing and coordinating responses to emergencies. The policy informing the work of the DMA has no specific section on education in emergencies or for child protection in emergencies.<sup>99</sup> The development of the National Disaster Policy however excluded women and disabled children as historically marginalised groups. Groups that were involved in policy-making include members of the DMA Working Groups, the representatives of the Banks and Insurance Companies and the business community for their insight and contributions, District Administrators and members of the District Disaster Management Teams (DDMTs), Community Councils, members of the Village Disaster Management Teams, DMA policy development team, and the DMA staff.<sup>100</sup> It is important to note that rural communities represented by Village Disaster Committees were represented in the policy-making process.

## Malawi

ECDE policies are fairly inclusive if the process through which the policy was created is to be considered. The process of developing the national ECD policy was largely participatory in nature and included key informant interviews and focus group discussions with communities. ECDE practices in selected centres were observed. Meetings with stakeholders such as guardians, government ministries, departments, communities, NGOs, international

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<sup>97</sup> Lesotho National Child Protection Strategy  
<https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/National%20Multisectoral%20Child%20Protection%20Strategy%202014.pdf>

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> KII with CSO leader.

<sup>100</sup> Lesotho Prime Minister's Office, Disaster Management Authority,  
<https://drmims.sadc.int/sites/default/files/document/2020-03/Final%20Lesotho%20DRR%20policy.pdf>

organisations, the National ECD network, and the University of Malawi.<sup>101</sup> These meetings ensured that the needs of different social groups such as rural communities were incorporated into the ECDE national policy. In terms of ECDE and DRRM, Malawi has no specific or tailor-made policy dedicated to this. There is a general DRRM policy framework that is generally applicable to all sectors. In 2015 the country initiated the National Disaster Risk Management Policy as the main DRRM law. The policy aims to integrate DRRM in all sectors of the society and make communities resilient to the natural and other disasters as well as improved preparedness and recovery from the disasters. There are several structures dealing with disasters in the country, from national to the village level. It is made up of the Cabinet, National Disaster Risk Management Committee, National Disaster Risk Management Technical Committee – also other private organizations (UN, NGOs, CSOs, private sectors and academia), Technical Sub Committees (Various sectors of the economy including education) and Department of Risk Management Affairs, District executive committee, District Disaster Risk Management Committee, Area Disaster Risk Management Committee, Village Disaster Risk Management Committee<sup>102</sup>.

Decisions are directed by the National Disaster Risk Management Committee (NDRMC) who provides policy directions to the Department of Disaster Management Affairs on the implementation of DRRM Programmes. The committee comprises of principal secretaries of line ministries/departments, the Inspector General of Police, the Commander of Malawi Defense Force, and civil society representatives. The committee is chaired by the Chief Secretary<sup>103</sup>. The National Disaster Risk Management Technical Committee (NDRM TC) is a multi-stakeholder committee. It serves as an advocate of disaster risk management; provides advice and technical support; and is the coordinating mechanism for mainstreaming disaster risk management into sustainable development policies, planning and programmes. The NDRM TC is composed of designated senior representatives who are formally appointed to serve on the NDRM TC as the disaster risk management focal points for their government line ministries and departments, civil society organizations, scientific and academic institutions, the private sector, UN agencies, donor community and the mass media. The NDRM TC establishes multi-disciplinary Technical Sub-Committees (TSCs) for proper coordination and guidance in the planning and implementation of disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery Programmes. The following TSCs have been established: Agriculture and food

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<sup>101</sup> National Strategic Plan for ECDE Development in Malawi, 2014.

<sup>102</sup> “DoDMA (2015), Malawi Hazards and Vulnerability Atlas

<sup>103</sup> Government of Malawi. (2015). National Disaster Risk Management Policy

security; Health and nutrition; Water and sanitation; Early warning; Search and rescue; Education; Protection; Coordination and assessment; Media and publicity; Transport and logistics; and Spatial planning, shelter, and camp management<sup>104</sup>. Disaster Risk Management Committees (DRMC's) are responsible for coordinating the implementation of the policy at City, Municipal, District, Area, and Village levels. The CSOs and other private organizations are actively involved in disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery Programmes in different sectors at national, district and community levels.

With the comprehensive decision-making structure for DRRM in Malawi, there is lack of structures for education within this main DRRM policy and there is no aspect of decision making, practitioners and interventions specifically for ECDE. Schools only respond to ministerial policies and guidelines aiming to deal with different social and development needs of ECDE learners.

## **Mozambique**

In the case of Mozambique, ECDE policies are theoretically inclusive. This inclusivity is made possible by Article 4 of the 2018 National Education System Law states that inclusion, equity and equal opportunity should be implemented in all subsystems of education. There has also been the Inclusive Education Policy which ensures that all children despite social background should have access to basic education. However, there have been a lot of practicalities which have militated against inclusivity. Only 0.9 percent of disabled children attend school out of a total of 1.4 percent.<sup>105</sup> This means that a huge number of disabled children have no access to ECDE despite a theoretical commitment to inclusive education.

Mozambique passed the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management law in 2020. This law provides the country with a legislative framework for DRRM. The main structures coordinating DRRM at the national level include the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), the Coordinating Council for Disaster Management and Risk Reduction and the Technical Council for Disaster Management and Risk Reduction. Technically, non-governmental partners such as the Red Crescent Society and Red Cross may be invited into these national

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<sup>104</sup> Government of Malawi. (2015).

<sup>105</sup> UNICEF Summary Report, "The Situation of Children in Mozambique", 2021.

DRRM councils.<sup>106</sup> The NIDM is the main governmental body that is responsible for implementing the policy and overseeing all national disaster management operations. It operates under the Ministry of State Administration.<sup>107</sup> In terms of its composition, the institute is made of central government leaders such as directors of governments. This suggests that bureaucrats such as directors of education are incorporated into this institute as partners. With the absence of an ECDE department, this suggests that decision made at the national levels are rather general and not tailored for ECDE.

## **eSwatini**

eSwatini's multi-sector education plan does not specifically address ECDE sector but their entire basic education system. The plan was formulated after a number of virtual stakeholder workshops coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Training. Although all workshops were highly participatory in nature, there is no evidence of the involvement of historically marginalised groups such as women and representatives of people with disabilities.

In 2006, the government of eSwatini passed the Disasters Management Act which is the main law governing disasters in the country.<sup>108</sup> The Act was later amended in 2020. There are a number of dedicated structures that deal with disasters at the national level. These include a national disaster management committee which is usually comprised of many different ministries and departments. This committee is often headed by a Minister who makes key strategic policy decisions about DRRM. The administrative authority rests with a dedicated disaster management agency/authority. These structures/authorities make disaster-related decisions at the national level in eSwatini. In addition to these, there are also similar structures at the provincial and middle levels. These are usually made up of provincial heads of government. These are mandated with making key strategic decisions at the provincial level on behalf of the government. The provincial disaster management office is also incorporated into this middle-level provincial structure. One of the key duties of the provincial structures is to provide early warnings of disasters to their respective communities. There are also low-level local government disaster management structures. These do not make any decisions and are

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<sup>106</sup> UN Office of Outer Space Affairs [https://www.un-spider.org/mozambique-national-institute-disaster-management-ingc#:~:text=INGC%20is%20responsible%20for%20coordinating,\)%20and%20cyclones%20\(Nacala\)](https://www.un-spider.org/mozambique-national-institute-disaster-management-ingc#:~:text=INGC%20is%20responsible%20for%20coordinating,)%20and%20cyclones%20(Nacala).). Accessed 29 June 2023.

<sup>107</sup> National Institute of Disaster Management, <https://www.devex.com/organizations/national-institute-for-disaster-management-ingc-mozambique-125940> Accessed 29 June 2023.

<sup>108</sup> [https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/dmi/dmi\\_country/13](https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/dmi/dmi_country/13) Accessed 28 June 2023.



only there to implement decisions made at the national and provincial levels. It is evidently clear that these authorities and structures do not include education in general and ECDE practitioners. Decisions made are often general and lose sight of the specific needs of ECDE in the event of disasters.

### **Bottlenecks/constraints to the implementation of reform**

#### **Poor ECDE enrolment rates**

Poor ECDE enrolments militate against robust ECDE DRRM policies in Southern Africa. The Government of eSwatini reports that only 29 percent of children below the age of 5 have access to pre-school education. Most marginalised and vulnerable children such as the poor and the disabled do not have access to pre-school education. The majority of OVCs and special educational needs children are currently unable to access pre-primary ECDE due to unaffordability and inequitable access to ECDE centres. Even if a holistic ECDE DRRM policy is put in place, it will not be able to accommodate all children. The same can be said for Malawi where 68 percent of children do not have access to ECDE. In eSwatini, only 29 percent of children below five have access to ECDE. In Zimbabwe, less than 50 percent of children under five are enrolled in ECDE. Even if robust ECDE DRRM policies are implemented, they will largely cater for children enrolled in schools. Those outside the formal school system will find it difficult to access, for example, DRRM resources and information.

#### **Lack of dedicated ECDE departments**

There are no dedicated departments focussing on ECDE in Southern Africa. Instead, ECDE remains bundled with together with many other departments. In the case of Malawi, ECDE falls under the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare yet within the entire ministry, there is no department mandated with ECDE. ECDE is often overshadowed by the departments of Sports and Youths which even get more funding when it comes to budgets. Without standalone ECDE departments/units, it is difficult for countries to develop sound ECDE DRRM policies that can be effectively monitored. This is because the implementation ECDE DRRM policies will require further monitoring and tracking by specific departments.

#### **Limited community involvement in ECDE DRRM**

Ordinary community members in countries such as Malawi and Zimbabwe remain spectators in the DRRM policy making. Government departments, respective officials and civic groups

have remained key players in ECDE DRRM. In light of this, community take the place of passive participants in the event of disasters such as floods. When disasters strike, community members are left at the mercy of calamities and will only have to wait for aid instead of taking a leading role in coming up with community driven ECDE DRRM initiatives. For example, school committees and ECD teachers who are in charge of day to day affairs in schools are left out in ECDE DRRM education yet they are the very people who interact with ECDE learners on a daily basis within the schools. The national DRRM policy does not smoothly cascade to school committees which are key players in everyday ECDE affairs in countries such as Malawi.

### **Poor ECDE funding**

Among many countries studied, the ECDE sector is poorly funded as compared to other sectors. In Malawi, the government is highly, if not overly, dependent on the non-governmental sector for provision of ECDE resources. Most CBCCs are voluntary based and largely run on goodwill and/or external support by CBOs, NGOs and international organisations.<sup>109</sup> Even though the government is spending more on education than most low-income countries, ECDE is only seeing a small share of the overall expenditure. From the total education budget allocated in 2019 and 2020, only 0.2 percent of the education budget was allocated to ECD, while basic/primary education received 47.8 percent, secondary education 11.5 percent and higher (tertiary) education 35.7 percent.<sup>110</sup> The same can be said for eSwatini where there is no specific budget for ECDE. This has resulted in the ECDE depending largely on private institutions such as faith-based organisations.

### **Lack of comprehensive ECDE data**

Any reform towards sustainable ECDE DRRM should be informed by accurate and up-to-date data. One of the challenges that may affect the formulation of such a policy is the lack of data. In eSwatini, the government only relies on estimates of its ECDE population. This is because most ECDE centres are privately run and government may not have access to their data. With most of these institutions operating informally without being registered, it is difficult even to track the implementation of the national ECD policy. The same applies in rural Malawi where a huge number of children attend informal ECDE centres run by community volunteers.

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<sup>109</sup> Helpdesk Report: Evidence on ECD approaches in Malawi.

<sup>110</sup> Roger Federer Foundation 2021 School Readiness Initiative in Malawi.

## **Fragmented ECDE management**

In many countries in the region, ECDE falls under more than one government ministries or departments. In eSwatini for example, ECDE falls under the Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Health, and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office. Yet other departments such as Higher and Tertiary Education in eSwatini and Zimbabwe are administered separately. Similarly, the ECDE policy in Malawi is administered by both the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Gender, Child Development and Social Welfare. This may often result in duplication of roles and discord in terms of policy implementation.

## **The impact of COVID-19 and natural hazards on policy design, implementation, and reform**

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the ECDE delivery systems in many different ways. The impact of COVID-19 and natural disasters on policy design in southern Africa varies from one country to another. In terms of policy design and reform, COVID-19 resulted in countries introducing new guidelines and plans which may improve service delivery in the long-term. The general impact of COVID-19 on policy and reform can therefore be regarded as largely negative.

In the case of Zimbabwe, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education introducing **alternative learning** through five different local radio stations. The broadcasting of ECD lessons was done through Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's (ZBC) National FM and started on 16 June 2020.<sup>111</sup> As of 31 December 2020, 1257 lessons (all Primary school level) had been developed, recorded and broadcast on the various radio stations but largely through ZBC.<sup>112</sup>

Following Cyclone Idai, Cyclone Kenneth and the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Mozambique also mooted the idea of **distance learning**. Although in theory distance learning was a positive step towards bridging the gap between schools and ECD learners, it was hindered by poor technology and lack of access to electricity for many rural and urban dwellers.

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<sup>111</sup> MoPSE, Alternate Radio Learning, [http://mopse.co.zw/sites/default/files/public/covid-downloads/Alternate%20Learning%20-%20Radio%20lessons\\_0.docx](http://mopse.co.zw/sites/default/files/public/covid-downloads/Alternate%20Learning%20-%20Radio%20lessons_0.docx)

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

In Mozambique, only 26 percent of households have electricity, 35 percent have access to radio, 22 per cent have access to television and 2 per cent to the internet.<sup>113</sup>

Similarly, Malawi also introduced the **Instructive Radio Instruction (IRI)** project which was led by Save the Children to combat the effects of COVID-19 on ECDE. The concept was developed as a recovery tool meant to ensure continuity of ECDE. The concept was embraced by many communities and by 2020 it was covering 12 000 Community Based Childcare Centres nationwide. It was actively supported by many ECDE stakeholders including the Ministry of Gender, UNICEF, and ActionAid. Save the Children provides weekly progress reports to the National Education Cluster.<sup>114</sup> ActionAid Malawi also supported the broadcasting of ECDE content to an additional four radio stations. Together, Save the Children and ActionAid directly reached 663,740 and indirectly 940,808 ECD learners.<sup>115</sup>

**WASH policies in schools also improved** as a result of COVID-19 awareness. For example, in Mozambique, handwashing was made mandatory at all ECDE centres, and this necessitated improved water supply. Hygiene awareness became part of the informal education curriculum in many schools in the wake of the pandemic. Handwashing rates among the general stood at 80 percent following increased COVID-19 awareness.<sup>116</sup>

In terms of infant health, the Ministry of Health in Mozambique developed **new infant feeding and immunization guidelines** that suited the COVID-19 context. In light of this, ECDE was integrated into the nutrition intervention package training, and community health workers were trained to deliver ECD counselling. Additionally, the impact of COVID-19 on ECDE necessitated a comprehensive training manual to be developed to equip key government stakeholders for effective delivery of the ECDE sub-sector rollout.<sup>117</sup>

In Zambia, the COVID-pandemic resulted in the **Ministry of Education COVID-19 Response Plan** to support existing educational policies. The Plan included the Zambia Enhancing Early Learning Project which was supported by the Global Partnership in Education to the tune of

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<sup>113</sup> UNICEF Country Office Annual Report 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/media/100431/file/Mozambique-2020-COAR.pdf>

<sup>114</sup> Save the Children Report, 1 September 2020, <https://malawi.savethechildren.net/news/radio-programme-keeps-learning-alive-amid-covid-19>

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

US\$ 39 million.<sup>118</sup> The project aims to improve equitable access and quality learning condition in early childhood education following COVID-19 disruptions. According to the Global Education Fund, the program also includes a contingency emergency response component, which allows the government to request rapid reallocation of funds to respond promptly and effectively to an emergency or crisis.<sup>119</sup>

The government of eSwatini re-aligned its education policy with COVID-19 by introducing the **Disaster and Management (COVID-19) Guidelines for Schools**. All schools, both public and private, were required to abide by government health and safety guidelines.<sup>120</sup> The regulations included complying with public health COVID-19 guidelines.

If all the above plans and strategies continue to be implemented even after COVID-19, they have the potential of improving ECDE service delivery system in Southern Africa. In light of this, unforeseen and unpredicted events such as cyclones and pandemics in the region have resulted in creative and disaster-oriented thinking among policy-makers.

#### Policy and Practice at the Local Level

It emerged from the research that ECDE is still a sector that is relatively new and developing in all the six countries. Authorities have also begun to formally recognise the importance of ECDE and to integrate it within the broad educational policy framework. Similarly, parents and caregivers are also realising the importance of ECDE, while a significant proportion are of the view that children are still young and need to stay at home. In essence, this means that ECDE is a sector that is still developing unlike the Junior School and Secondary School which have been there for longer periods. For Instance, Zimbabwe relied on a circular from 2005-2014 when ECDE was formally introduced;<sup>121</sup> in Malawi it is a component under Child Affairs within the Ministry of Gender and Community Development and the ECDE ACT is still under development;<sup>122</sup> in Mozambique community pre-schools who dominate ECDE are not covered by government budget with only 10 public pre-schools in the whole country are covered by the national fiscus;<sup>123</sup> and in Eswatini the Ministry of Education tends to focus from Grade 0 which is 5-6 years, thus leaving out the ages below.<sup>124</sup> Arguably, it can be stated that ECDE is still a

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<sup>118</sup> Global Partnership in Education, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/where-we-work/zambia>

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> UNESCO Report on eSwatini “Non-State Actors in eSwatini”.

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<sup>122</sup> KII with CSO leader.

<sup>123</sup> KII International Development Agency Official.

<sup>124</sup> KII CSO leader.

developing and sector within the Southern African region; thus, coupled with DRRM being a new phenomenon requiring policy attention there are still gaps in terms of policy and practise. This has meant that schools or ECDE centers are at different stages in terms of implementing DRRM related policies as these are also still under development. In most cases, schools or ECDE centers wait for directives from the parent ministry for guidance and come at the implementation stage. For instance, a respondent from Malawi and Lesotho had this to say:

*In terms of how ECDE Centers or school Most schools follow the guidelines of the ministry of Education would then issue. The Ministry of Education will issue guidelines based on what the main government office or Prime Minister's Office is saying in terms of any disaster. There is no clear way on how they would operate in those instances in terms of DRRM. Most schools follow what the Ministry is saying. There is no clear guidelines on what to do but it is based on each and every disaster.*<sup>125</sup>

*So far the policy on DRRM and ECDE follows the national disaster preparedness policy framework. We are now reviewing the ECDE policy and other strategies and guidance which should be ready for use by year end. The policy also has a section on DRRM. In terms of ECDE Center or community decision making; yes, they make decisions but most of their decisions are not of a higher level. They make a decisions which are immediate or after a disaster or famine. They don't do decisions like before, to prepare for disaster. No, they don't have those decisions apart from planting trees. They don't make decisions on DRRM apart from making decision after those situations.*<sup>126</sup>

It is important to note, that for Zimbabwe DRRM is embedded in the main school curriculum and not ECDE per se; while the Zimbabwe School Health Policy refers to issues of DRRM but at a broad level.<sup>127</sup> Pursuant to this, MoPSE and Department of Civil Protection Unit (DCPU) do carry out trainings on DRRM but there is no clear national strategy on DRRM and education. MoPSE is currently developing Disaster Risk Management and Resilience plan for the Education Sector and subsequently a Disaster Risk Management and Resilience in Schools Manual.<sup>128</sup> Therefore, this points to earlier observations that ECDE and DRRM sector within the Southern African region are still relatively new and developing frameworks and guidelines

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<sup>125</sup> KII CSO leader Lesotho.

<sup>126</sup> KII CSO leader Malawi.

<sup>127</sup> KII CSO leader.

<sup>128</sup> KII Government official.

to inform policy and practice. Countries need to develop national DRRM frameworks that incorporates comprehensive school safety standards and deliberate focus on ECDE.

## CONCLUSION

In all the six southern African countries studied, there is no unified and elaborate ECDE DRRM policy. This is despite the fact the region has in the recent past been subjected to disasters such as malnutrition, diseases, floods, cyclones and droughts. These disasters have made a huge impact on children between the ages of 0-5 years. As a vulnerable group, children at ECDE stage have continued to lag behind in terms of health, nutrition and academic development. At regional level alike, a regional ECDE DRRM policy is also lacking despite southern Africa being subjected to several natural disasters in the recent past. Not only has the SADC bloc failed to create a unified disaster policy for the ECDE sector, but it has also been unsuccessful in meaningful disaster recovery strategies specifically targeted at early childhood development in its member states. This lack of policy at both national and regional levels in southern Africa has resulted in countries failing to meet SDG target 4.2 which states that by 2030, all children, boys and girls, should have equal access to pre-primary school education.

What is common among all the six SADC countries studied is that despite lack of a dedicated ECDE DRRM policies, there have been different strategies and plans for specific disasters. For example, malnutrition has been tackled through School Feeding Schemes led by UNICEF and coordinated by government ministries in countries such as Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. Different government ministries and international institutions have also responded to different disasters in different ways. Ultimately, this has resulted in the six southern African countries only instituting standalone strategies and schemes that respond to specific disasters. The creation of unified ECDE DRRM policies both at the national and at regional levels remains a pipeline dream.

In light of the findings of this report, the following recommendations are proffered.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Regional/SADC Recommendations**

- **A regional ECDE DRRM policy:** as a regional bloc, SADC needs to develop a regional ECDE DRRM policy that governs early child education for all its member states. SADC has already demonstrated its potential to do this because it has already demonstrated a keen interest to safeguard the interests of children by developing, for example, the SADC Minimum Package of Services for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children and Youth which was adopted on 1 July 2011.<sup>129</sup> SADC can develop a regional ECDE DRRM policy as a way of the regional bloc's commitment to achieving SDG 4.2 which advocates for the need to ensure that all children have access to quality pre-primary education.
- **A regional ECDE DRRM fund:** a regional ECDE DRRM policy should be supported by a corresponding disaster fund. In 2016, SADC made commendable progress by developing the SADC Disaster Preparedness and Response Strategy Fund (2016-2030).<sup>130</sup> This generalised regional DRR fund can be used as model to develop a customised ECDE DRRM fund that specifically addresses education, health, and nutritional needs to children in the region. A regional ECDE DRRM fund will enable countries to benefit from the fund in the event of natural disaster or in terms of preparedness.

### **Recommendations for governments**

- **Review ECDE policies to include DRRM:** as evident in this study, all ECDE national policies in all the given six SADC countries cast a blind eye on DRRM. Considering how disasters such as floods, cyclones, malnutrition have affected early child development in the region, government should ensure that the current national policies are reviewed to ensure that disasters are mitigated even before they happen. National ECD policies that include DRRM strategies will ultimately ensure that all children have access to quality pre-school education in the region.
- **Increase ECDE enrolment:** since most ECDE DRRM policies are implemented through the school system under the respective line ministries, there is a need to ensure

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<sup>129</sup> SADC Minimum Package of Services for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, <https://www.sadc.int/document/sadc-minimum-package-services-ovcy>

<sup>130</sup> SADC Regional Disaster Preparedness and Response Strategy Fund (2016-2030), [https://drmims.sadc.int/sites/default/files/document/2020-03/SADC%20DISASTER%20PREP%20STRATEGY%20AND%20FUND%20FINAL%20DRAFT\\_V%206July%202017.pdf](https://drmims.sadc.int/sites/default/files/document/2020-03/SADC%20DISASTER%20PREP%20STRATEGY%20AND%20FUND%20FINAL%20DRAFT_V%206July%202017.pdf) 11 July 2011.



that every eligible child is incorporated. In Zimbabwe, for example, the percentage of Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at ECDE stood at only 32 percent.<sup>131</sup> This means 72 percent of eligible children are out of school. For example, mass immunisation and vaccination campaigns are done using formal school systems and those outside these institutions may be left out. Ensuring that all children are enrolled in school will assist in making sure that they are covered in ECDE DRRM policies through pre-existing school structures and systems.

- **Inclusive ECDE DRRM policies:** existing ECDE national policies and strategies are inclusive only in theory. They have failed to practically incorporate children with disabilities. Existing disaster strategies have maintain this bias as well. There is therefore a need to ensure that future ECDE DRRM policies include the interests of disabled and special needs children. Current national policies do not accommodate children who have different disabilities such as visual and hearing impairments.
- **Inclusion and regulation of informal ECDE centres/communities:** countries such as Malawi and eSwatini have large numbers of children in informal ECDE centres. In addition, there is also a need to ensure that the ECDE DRRM policies include children who are not formally enrolled in pre-primary education. In the case of eSwatini and Malawi where the majority of children are enrolled in Community Care Centres and KaGoGo Centres, future policies should ensure that these institutions are also accommodated and included in DRRM programmes. Furthermore, inclusion of communities will ensure that children below the age of three who are not in school are included in ECDE DRRM programmes.
- **Long-term financing strategy:** governments should fund the ECDE DRRM sector. In many southern African countries, ECDE is poorly funded. For example, in Malawi, only 0.2 percent of the education budget was allocated to ECD, while basic/primary education received 47.8 percent in 2019-20.<sup>132</sup> The lack of a dedicated ECDE budget puts a cap on what can be done. Without adequate financial support from governments,

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<sup>131</sup> A Report by Child Protection Society Camfed Municipal Development Programme ZINECDA/ECOZI “Zimbabwe SRI Baseline Report for Scale Up Phase Schools 1 November 2021 to 31 October 2023”, [https://www.zinecda.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Zimbabwe\\_Baseline-DCIS-and-general-Data-8-April-2022-1.pdf](https://www.zinecda.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Zimbabwe_Baseline-DCIS-and-general-Data-8-April-2022-1.pdf) Accessed 26 June 2023, p. 20.

<sup>132</sup> Roger Federer Foundation 2021 School Readiness Initiative in Malawi.

line ministries that support ECDE DRRM will not be able to craft robust policies and strategies.

- **Community-based ECDE DRRM policies:** countries in the region should adopt community-based disaster policies. The current ECDE national policies in these SADC countries are mainly school/institution based and they neglect the role that communities play in the education particularly of children below the age of five. This process may involve training and capacity building to ensure that community members in general and traditional leaders are knowledgeable on disaster policies for ECD children. Parents and guardians should also be involved since they are the immediate custodians and the first line of defence available for children below the age 5. Such a holistic approach to disasters should be implemented not only in the urban areas but also in the rural areas where more than 50 percent of households in southern Africa are based. In eSwatini, 80 percent of ECDE centres are run by the communities. This means ECDE DRRM policies that are only implemented in formal state-run institutions will leave out the majority of potential beneficiaries.

#### **Recommendations for NGOs and CSOs**

- **Capacity building of community ECDE players:** NGOs and CSOs have played an important role in supporting SADC governments' interventions in responses to disasters. Organisations such as ZINECDA in Zimbabwe, NECDOL in Lesotho, and ECDC in Malawi have already demonstrated a keen interest in disaster policy formulation and should take the leading role in sensitising and capacity building of ECDE players in their respective countries. This capacity building should include educating and equipping community ECDE players (ECDE teachers and parents) with knowledge on disaster mitigation strategies using locally available knowledge and resources. This will ensure a community-based ECDE DRRM system.
- **Increase DRRM advocacy among ECDE players:** advocacy should be increased among ECDE actors such as guardians and ECDE teachers. Advocacy should be implemented in a way that parents and teachers become key actors in disaster response and mitigation. In turn, they will be able to spread knowledge to children and community members.

#### **Recommendations for ECDE centres and schools**

- **Establishment of community/institution-based DRRM committees:** ECDE players such as schools and pre-schools should establish institution-based DRRM committees. These committees should comprise ECDE teachers, community members and parents. The advantage of having DRRM committees at an institutional level is that they craft customised disaster strategies that apply to their specific area or location unlike national DRRM policies that may be too broad and may not be applicable to some local contexts.