



Position Paper: 2023 Budget consultations (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development Parliamentary Portfolio Committee consultations.

Presented by ZIMBABWE NETWORK OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT ACTORS.

This paper on budgeting explores the extent to which the projected 2023 budget for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) should address the basic education needs of children in Zimbabwe. It provides a snapshot of the current and previous allocations versus expenditure for ECD in the whole education budget, an analysis of the critical issues related to adequacy, allocative efficiency, effectiveness, inclusivity, and equity of the current and past education spending is also highlighted. The brief also assesses the extent to which the budget addresses issues related to rehabilitation and development of school infrastructure, provision of essential teaching and learning materials, as well as ensuring availability of an adequate pool of qualified and well-trained teachers. Furthermore, the paper makes recommendations on ways to improve education budgeting that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Scientific studies have proven that 90% of a human being's ability is developed within the first one thousand days of their existence. The traits of all adults can be derived from their upbringing. From that end, ECD is an important component as much as we want an intellectually, physically society. A strong pre-primary system places children's learning and development outcomes at the core of its work. These desirable outcomes include, but are not limited to, children's physical well-being, social and emotional competence, and cognitive and communication abilities, as well as their overall curiosity and motivation to learn, often referred to as school readiness skills. The acquisition of these critical skills depends, to a large extent, on availability and equitable access to pre-primary services and equally on the quality of these services.

In the interest of promoting better prioritisation of budget allocations to the education sector the continent has agreed on specific benchmarks for allocations to the education sector. The Education for All Framework for Action in Sub-Saharan Africa (1999) which was reinforced by the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments in 2000 calls for increasing budgetary allocation to education by ensuring that at least 7 % of GDP is allocated to education within five years and 9 % within ten years (UNESCO 2000). In addition, the 2011 Jomtien Statement recognises that states should spend at least 6% of their GDP and /or at least 20% of their national budgets on education in order to achieve quality education



for all.

Status of Education and ECD Financing

1. There has been a notable downward trend in the allocation of money towards the education ministry. There has been a drastic decline in ECD share on the total education budget from 27% in 2016 to under 14% in 2021. Of late, over 70% of the total allocated budget for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has been going towards teacher and staff remuneration which is an unprecedented trend for promoting ECD since it has not been on the priority list.
2. A deficit in financial resources for the Ministry disadvantages ECD to a greater extent thereby reducing access to ECD. One of the mandate of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education is to provide access to quality inclusive education.
3. Currently, in Zimbabwe out of 100 pupils only 45 have access to ECD owing to the financial constraints. It is also important to note that very little has been put at the disposal of ECD pupils with the government spending at most \$70 per learner annually which is reasonably inadequate. The education budget is commonly utilized through –Construction of ECDE infrastructure, teacher training and learning materials. However, from a quick mathematical point of view 70% of \$70 allocated per child is going through teacher and teaching staff remuneration. This translates that on \$21 is left out to cater for an ECD pupil for the whole year.
4. As a nation, we are falling far short in financing existing education goals, let alone addressing the challenges of the future. It is clear that we need transformative collective action on financing from national government. We need to understand all the forces that affect education finance, and all the levers at our collective disposal to make the transformation.
5. The volume of resources raised for education is not adequate. By far the largest source of education finance is domestic revenue, and this remains the most promising avenue to mobilize additional resources. In recent decades, GDP growth has been the biggest driver of increased resources for education, and this will continue to be important.



6. As a share of total MoPSE budget, Junior Education budget share was increased from 29% in 2020 to 44%, while Infant Education budget was reduced from 20% of total to 15%, in 2021. Given the current challenges related to shortage of age-appropriate infrastructure and the huge deficit in qualified and well-trained early childhood development (ECD) teachers, priority should be given to infant education in allocation of resources.

Our Ask/ Recommendations

1. Allocate 5% of the national education budget towards ECD
2. Though the education sector is human resource intensive, it is critical to increase the share of non-wage expenditures, especially capital expenditures, to be able to meet the infrastructure deficit and provide learners with age appropriate learning facilities.
3. We take note that the government has finalized the development of School Financing Policy for the education sector in Zimbabwe. This will allow multi-stakeholder partnerships in education financing through bringing in other players including the private sector, philanthropic organizations, and foundations in the sector. The government is encouraged to speed up the adoption and immediately develop an implementation plan on how it will be rolled across the country.
4. Budget overruns have widened since 2018, with actual expenditure exceeding budget by 23% in 2019, and by 99% in 2020, partly owing to high inflation a decline in buying power of ZWL. Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in expenditure forecasting and costing in a hyperinflationary environment is critical to improve budget credibility.
5. Some of the free basic education financing mechanisms such as BEAM and Tuition grants are fragmented. It is recommended that the government strengthen institutional coordination and bringing together of all national education funding sources, particularly BEAM and Tuition Grants to improve efficiency, reduce overlaps, and enhance cost effectiveness. This also improves targeting of the most deserving groups and ensures that available resources are put to maximum use to enhance equity and inclusion.

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