FINAL REPORT:

Baseline Study on "Early Childhood Development and SDG 4.2 in Zimbabwe"

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This Baseline survey was commissioned by Zimbabwe Network of Early Childhood Development Actors (ZINECDA), partnering with Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) to document the status of Early Childhood Development (ECD), the policy, policy environment, track funding from the different stakeholders and implementation of SDG 4.2 so as to lobby and advocate for a quality ECD that is transformative, accessible and inclusive, – for all young girls and boys, and for their families, in Zimbabwe. Whilst ECD covers from birth up to 8 years the focus and target group of this study was mainly the school readiness age, that is, ECD-A and ECD – B. The consultancy was active from the June to October 2019.

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The views expressed in this study do not represent any official view of ECOZI and ZINECDA or Roger Federer Foundation (RFF) Foundation, the project sponsor.

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Disclaimer

This evaluation was commissioned by ECOZI and ZINECDA. The opinions expressed are those of the consultants and do not represent any official view of ECOZI and ZINECDA or the Roger Federer Foundation, the project partner.

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List of Abbreviations/ Acronyms

BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
CERD	Centre for Research and Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DFID	Department for International Development
DPs	Development Partners
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECEC	Early Childhood Development and Care
ECOZI	Education Coalition of Zimbabwe
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICT	Information. Communication and Technology
IDA	International Development Assistance
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LCR	Learner Classroom Ratio
LTR	Learner Teacher Ratio
LTTR	Learner Trained Teacher Ratio
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoCD & WA	Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoHCC	Ministry of Health and Child Care
MoHTESTD	Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development
MoLPS&SW	Ministry of Labour Public Service and Social welfare
MoPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
NELP	National Early Learning Policy
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPCE	Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Education
PRE	Planning Research and Evaluation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
ZELA	Zimbabwe Early Learning Assessment
ZIMSATS	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
ZINECDA	Zimbabwe Network of Early Childhood Development Actors
ZIMVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings of the "***Baseline Study on Early Childhood Development and SDG 4.2 in Zimbabwe"*** which was commissioned by ZINECDA, partnering with ECOZI to document the status of ECD in Zimbabwe, in particular the status of the policy, policy environment and implementation of SDG 4.2 so as to lobby and advocate for a quality ECD that is transformative, accessible and inclusive – for all young girls and boys, and for their families, in Zimbabwe. Whilst ECD covers children from conception up to 8 years the focus and target group of this study was mainly the ECD school going age, that is children of 36 to 59 months old (who are eligible for ECD-A and ECD – B) as the study is meant to inform the School *Readiness Programme* that ZINECDA /ECOZI is supporting while taking cognisance of the importance of the earlier period in a child's life.

METHODOLOGY

The study methodology used a mix of data collection techniques to determine current status of ECD as per objectives of the study and benchmarked indicators that will be used for longitudinal studies. Various tools and data collection techniques were used. These included Desk Studies, Key Informant Interviews and voice recordings of the interviews as needed. Key informants were drawn from various key stakeholders with an interest in ECD development. These included ZINECDA and ECOZI project staff, representatives from Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), , the World Bank, Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), PPCE, other CSOs and other stakeholders as relevant to the study. A total of 14 key informants were interviewed during the baseline study. The key informant guide was adapted into a questionnaire for those who were not available for a face- to-face interview. The study also prepared a budget tracking tool to enable it to understand the budgetary provision and expenditure trends for ECD. In addition to these data collection methods, the study team participated in an engagement workshop for stakeholders that involved some CSOs and private ECD providers. Quantitative data was derived from both key informants and desk studies and this was interpreted through descriptive statistics and trend analysis. Qualitative data was analysed by establishing emerging common patterns and trends on the basis of discourse analysis from the recorded interviews.

The study experienced delays in data collection due to challenges with protocols in some organisations. for some statistics, the study had to rely on statistics from available literature and as MoPSE provided scant information. Due to budgetary constraints the field work focussed on Harare based respondents although data from some partners stationed abroad was obtained through emailed questionnaire.

FINDINGS

The findings presented were validated and confirmed by various stakeholders who were present at the validation workshop organized by the client.

Status of SDG 4.2 in Zimbabwe

The SDG requires states to ensure *"that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education*. The status of the SDG 4.2 is guided by two indicators these are: "*4.2.1. Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex*" and *"4.2.2. Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex."* The Study observed that access to ECD is a necessary condition for the fulfilment of the two SDG indicators mentioned above and therefore explored the status of ECD as it relates to access before exploring issues related to quality of delivery and provision. The presentation of findings was further guided by the TORs

Access

There are 628 826 learners (females -312 616: males -316 210) enrolled for ECD A and ECD B in Zimbabwe. Progress has been registered in ECD enrolment as reflected in continuous positive annual percentage changes from 2014 to 2018[1]. 49.7% are females. Enrolment figures into ECD were found to be on the upward trend since 2004 when ECD became mandatory in 2006 (through Secretary Circular 14/2004) but Net Enrolment Ratio (N.E.R.) is still depressed and stands at 31.9% as at 2018[2]**.** Out of the 1.2 million children in the age group 3-4 years, the majority , 60% have never been to school.[3] A gender disaggregated analysis of the children shows that there is no significant difference in the affected population which is constituted of 59.5% male children and 59.7% female children according to Zimbabwe National Statistic Agency, (ZIMSTATS) 2019. These statistics indicate that a significant proportion of the target group has no access to ECD and therefore that is the proportion that is likely to be threatened and will not be *"developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being."* The net enrolment rate of 31.9% is incomparable to the other cohorts in the 7-13 years category and 14-17 years age category with enrolment figures of up to 96% and 71% respectively**.** Some of the reasons contributing lack of parental and care-givers' support with some parents and caregivers viewing their children as too young to enrol into school (57%)[4] . In addition, it emerged in recent national statistics that the poor participation especially in the rural areas has also been exacerbated by the prevailing macro-economic challenges with at least 28% of the caregivers citing ECD as too expensive and failing to raise adequate money for fees while some cited that distance travelled by the learners is too far (11%).[5]

Equity

It merged that because ECD has, historically, been largely a community-based and resourced programme, serious inequity issues exist in service provision and delivery with scales tipped heavily against those in the rural areas where the majority (81%[6]) of ECD learners are enrolled. Hence the right of these children to quality ECD that is transformative, accessible and inclusive is compromised. There are also inequity issues related to the enrolment into ECD of children with disabilities defined broadly to include health, psycho- social and emotional problems. Zimbabwe Vulnerability

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[1] MoPSE Annual Statistics Report 2018

[2] as above

[3] ZIMSTATS, 2019

[4] Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) Rural Livelihoods Assessment Report, 2019 page 28

[5] As above page 28

[6] MoPSE 2018 Report

Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC), Rural Livelihoods Assessment Report, 2019 shows that at least 4% of the 4-6-year age group do not attend school due to disabilities. MoPSE statistics do not give the statistics for ECD for children with disabilities per se but aggregates them with whole of the Infant Phase. MoPSE report indicates that only 8.6% of children with disability are enrolled and this is way below the 25% target set in the ESSP 2015-2020

Teaching/Learning Related Issues

Currently 58.5%[7] teachers are ECD trained and 36% of teachers are paraprofessionals. Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) efforts in training ECD teachers and in improving the recruitment of ECD trained teachers were acknowledged but the challenge cited, was the limited funding to pay their salaries, leading to a situation where vacant posts cannot be filled and yet there were reportedly 6000 trained teachers available. An analysis of the enrolment figures and teachers in post suggest a deficit of 7537 which could be reduced drastically if the 6000 trained teachers who are currently waiting recruitment were employed.

The MoPSE 2018 report acknowledges that ECD has the lowest ratio of trained teachers as compared to the other levels. There were also concerns regarding inappropriate deployment of ECD trained teachers when a school is short of teachers for higher grades or a school deploying to an ECD class, a trained teacher who is not ECD trained. These issues compromise the quality of ECD teaching and learning.

Teacher: Pupil Ratios range from 1:40-50 in urban areas and the ratio is even higher in peri-urban and rural centres where this can be up to 1:200. MoPSE (2018) report gives the national ECD Learner –Teacher- Ratio (LTR) at about double the recommended one of 20 at 42, with the Learner –Trained – Teacher Ratio (LTTR) more than treble (71)[8]. The rural LTTR is almost double the urban one. MoPSE put the upper limit at 1:120 in the questionnaire the MoPSE team completed. These varied responses which the study team got indicate that there are wide variations in the ECD LTTR. These high ratios militate against effective delivery of quality ECD. They are also tipped against the rural and poor peri-urban areas.

Further teachers do not have adequate teaching materials. 80% of respondents rated availability of learning materials at "not adequate at all" with the rural and peri-urban schools mostly being affected. It was pointed out that in some public schools, the only learning materials available are the UNICEF supplied kits and these were said to be a 'drop in the ocean'' by most of the KIIs. There are also no toys and some teachers have tried to improvise using whatever they got from their training. There is also no monitoring tool at national level to guide teachers to assess the developmental progress of individual children in order to ascertain if they are "developmentally on track in health, learning and psycho-social well-being", hence it is difficult to monitor and report on these aspects of the SDG 4.2. The study noted that the New Curriculum provides for the use of Learner Exit Profiles at the end of the Infant Phase (and also at the end of Junior Primary) to assess or describe the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and other attributes that learners should possess as result of their learning experiences[9] . There is nothing to guide teachers and assist them in early identification and intervention of children with disability and poor growth and facilitate appropriate placement of learners with disabilities.

Infrastructure

[7] As above

[8] 2018 EMIS Report, MoPSE

[9] MoPSE undated Learner Exit Profile Guidelines

The inequity issues referred to in previous sections are also reflected in the availability of age appropriate infrastructure in favour of communities with capacity and interest in ECD particularly the P1, P2 [10]and private schools and those supported by NGOS. ECD has an LCR (Learner to Classroom Ratio) of 64:1,[11] This suggests that MoPSE needs at least three times more classrooms than the current number since the LCR should be 20: 1. Some P3 Schools use makeshift classrooms exposing learners to harsh weather conditions which are not conducive for the learning environment. P3 schools comprise 86.3 % of the primary schools[12] and most of the ECD learners (83.7%) are in P3 schools. This very large group of learners is therefore likely to be more poorly provided for. Anecdotal evidence was given that schools short of classrooms sometimes assigned ECD classrooms if available to higher grades.

According to the MoPSE Report of 2018, most schools do not have adequate amenities for ECD. Baseline findings show that, 84% have a school feeding programme, and only 69% of the schools have a functioning health club and only 56% having a health teacher. [13] KIIs rated water and sanitation to be as poorly as 10-15% although on record 86% of primary schools have safe water[14]. It was observed that some ECD children are forced to walk long distances carrying water to use at school cognizant that these also include children with disabilities. Some schools in both rural and urban areas have dysfunctional water points due to high repairs and maintenance costs. Others run dry during the dry season thus forcing learners to walk long distances in order to access safe and clean drinking water. In most cases ECD pupils share toilets with the rest of the school children due to lack of age-appropriate ones. The primary school male learner to toilet ratio is 22, whilst the female one is 21. The recommended learner toilet ratio is 20 for females and 25 with a urinary for males. There was a huge gap even in the provision of other facilities that could be improvised or made from local materials such as sand pits, tree houses, balances, see-saws and swings[15].

Researches Past, Current and On-going

The study noted that several researches have been commissioned to gather data on the status of ECD in Zimbabwe. by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), DPs, the academia as well as Goz itself, ZINECDA has conducted among other studies a study on the status of infrastructures (outdoor play material referred to in earlier paragraph). ECOZI has also undertaken A Legal Analysis of Proposed Amendments of the Education Amendment Bill and The Education Act which fed into the Education Amendment Bill number (H.B 1 2019). This was aimed at lobbying for the alignment of the domestic law to the Constitution and International Protocols to which Zimbabwe is signatory. MoPSE in collaboration with the World Bank (WB) has conducted a needs assessment to inform the training of School leadership on ECD. The baseline study notes that even among Government through MoPSE sponsored studies recommendations are not always followed as was the case with the Presidential Commission on Education Training. UNICEF undertook a Pilot Project on Resilience which could offer lessons to ECD programming as it was targeting ECD learners. KIIs indicated that MoPSE is interested mainly in studies it will have commissioned and loses out on researches that are conducted by

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[10] In Zimbabwe schools are categorized by the economic status of communities sending their children to these schools, This determines the per capita grant allocated to them by government. P1 and S1 schools are located in urban low-density areas and some elite boarding schools regardless of their location. P2 and S2 schools are located in urban high-density areas including government schools and some boarding schools belonging to church organizations located in rural areas. P3 and S3 schools are located in rural and some peri-urban areas.

[11] MoPSE Education Statistics Report 2018

[12] MoPSE Education Statistics Report 2018

[13] MoPSE 2018 report

[14] As above

[15] ZINECDA Study

students of Teachers' Colleges, academia, and other relevant sources for more evidence to inform policies and programmes.

Management, Supervision and Registration of ECD Centres

School-based ECD centres are managed and supervised by the school leadership like other classes but there were challenges with satellite centres as the school leadership was already overburdened and could not find time or resources to go and inspect them. There could be a lot of unregistered centres *(the study could not ascertain the number as these are illegal and undocumented)* so by "virtue" of being unregistered or awaiting registration it means that they are not supervised by MoPSE. MoPSE also has on record "288 standalone ECD centres mainly in urban areas"[16]. The process of registration of private ECD centres was said to be a big challenge in terms of costs and bureaucracy and this further exacerbates the prevalence of unregistered centres as these centres operate while awaiting registration.

Government implementation plans/Oversight on ECD in Zimbabwe

Government's oversight and other roles are provided for in various pieces of legislation including the Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013 which safeguards the right of every child to free and compulsory basic education. Operationalization of these commitments' rests largely with MoPSE, who over time, have developed instruments to guide the provision and management of ECD. At national level, an SDG steering committee, complete with subcommittees and clusters has been set up to facilitate implementation and ensure oversight and that reporting obligations are met[17]. The study was informed that SDG4 reports are made by MoPSE to UNESCO and data is stored at UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS)[18]. The structures for implementation and oversight are therefore in place. The challenge is at point of delivery as the structures are not supported by the investment needed to meet the commitments. Other ministries that have a role in ECD are Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoH &CC) in terms of vaccinations and health checks as well as Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLPS& SW) which is responsible for children's welfare including managing Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) which assists Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) with school fees as well as Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MoHTETSD) under which the pre-service training of ECD teachers falls.

Policy issues

Goz has a collection of policy documents dating back to 1973 and more recently the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2016-2022 as well as National Early Learning Policy (NELP) which awaits finalisation. These policies are not harmonised and aligned both within the MoPSE and across the relevant ministries. Each Ministry administers its own policies independent of the other and yet they all impact on the ECD child. This leads to uncoordinated responses and inefficient use of resources. Zimbabwe lacks a comprehensive National ECD Policy and there is disconnect between policy pronouncements and implementation. MoPSE made ECD mandatory in (Secretary Circular 14/2004), but did not make budgetary provisions for its delivery and expected communities to fund infrastructure and materials hence the inequities and in some cases policy failure. Policy inconsistencies have the effect of stalling progress in ECD and yet it is a relative new area which needs to be grown and nurtured. Consequently, this stalls progress in reaching the SDG 4.2 goals.

Stakeholder Mapping / Collaboration and Partnerships

There are many players involved in various activities and interventions towards ECD and advocacy for its policy development. These include the Government of Zimbabwe as the duty bearer, the private

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[16] Draft Early Learning Policy

[17] Zimbabwe Voluntary National Review (VNR) of SDGs for the High Level Political Forum July 2017

[18] KIIs

sector, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the international community and CSOs. There is however little coordination and integration for maximum use of their comparative advantage. CSOs deplored the length of time it takes to process a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and felt that such delays discouraged or delayed engagement thus adversely affecting the program and the attainment of the SDG 4.2. Partnerships with the traditional international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as UNICEF, UNESCO and ADEA are on-going in a variety of ways and can be strengthened and expanded without closing doors to new ones given a more inclusive and stable policy environment.

Contributions by multilateral institutions/ Sources of funds (2014 to Date)

Investment in the ECD sector in Zimbabwe was found to very low with initial ECDE National Budget beginning in 2015. Little has been devoted towards ECD development from the national budget notwithstanding that ECD is the backbone and basic foundation of all education. There has been a decrease in the national fiscal budget allocation towards ECD with the proportion dropping from 20% in 2014/15 to 16 in 2018 and totally removed in 2019[19]. This again speaks of policy inconsistency and retrogressive steps for an area which is new on the global agenda. It is worth noting that ECD is also a necessary condition for funding for some Development Partners (DPs).

Budget

Since ECD became part of Infant Education/ Module, funds are allocated to the module and inclusive, as such the data available does not show what is being invested specifically into ECD since 2018. An examination of the budget estimates for 2019 showed clearly laid out that the ECD-B sector was targeting an NER of 60% from 31% and ECD-A 35% from 15%. Given that N.E.R. at Junior level (Grades 3-7) is 80% and that the overall primary NER 92%, the expectation would have been that ECD gets preferential funding so that its N.E.R. matches that of the other levels. Based on 2018 enrolment figures, the Infants level receives the least grant per child of $456.59 with secondary level topping at almost double that of infants at $838.40. The current total education budget accounts for only 4% of the national budget while the total primary and secondary schools' budget is only 11% of the education budget. Over the years, while the percentage of the national budget allocated to the education sector continues to be high more than 90% of it goes towards human resources. Notably, for 2020, the real monetary value of funds allocated towards the infant budget has significantly reduced by more than 500% due to abolishment of the multi-currency system and re-introduction of the local currency. While the total education budget value has also reduced by more than 100% considering the bank rate of US$1/ RTGS15 as figures were given in local currency.

Tracking mechanisms

There is no specific monitoring and tracking mechanisms of funding that comes in towards ECD Development. Although there are policies governing this, little has been done by both government and key stakeholders in monitoring the allocation and use of funds with monitoring and audits being mainly initiated and conducted by funding partners. While MoPSE occasionally undertakes audits, these are not as regular as they should be, due to resource challenges and are not specifically targeting ECD funds. This has been identified as a weakness as there is no accountability to the stakeholders and other key players.

[19] UNICEF Zimbabwe Education Evaluation Report 2018

Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from the study and are not necessarily the views of the consultants and will need to be informed by the validation workshop. Adjustments will be made as necessary:

1. GoZ as duty bearer of the "right *to quality ECD for all children*" should provide for ECD a specific budget line and work towards increasing that budget towards the 1% GDP in line with international trends and the commitments the country has made both in the constitution and towards vision 2030. To that extent it should explore innovative ways of financing ECD both locally and abroad and increasing ECD non-salary financing to no less than 2% of national budget or 1% GDP.
2. Goz should set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound (SMART) targets and make budgetary provision for increasing N.E.R. and participation rate and for attaining other quality indicators of the SDG 4.2.2 so that targets are reached by 2030. This will require re-strategizing and re-invigorating efforts targeted specifically at ECD as progress has been minimal so far.
3. Goz should provide targeted support to disadvantaged rural and poorly resourced communities to address issues of equity. It should also consider funding deserving ECD learners with school fees through BEAM or whatever structure it puts in place to replace BEAM.
4. MoPSE should provide guidance on early identification and intervention of children with disability and poor growth. Teachers can undergo In-service Education and Training (INSET) on this. In addition, there should be provision for children with special needs to make sure that "no child is left behind".
5. MoPSE should establish or re-establish provincial and district level structures and expertise which focus on building ECD capacity and expertise in communities, schools and districts; retaining the ECD department to be headed by a senior position (director and above) with ECD expertise which enables participation in senior Ministry decision making processes as well as at field level to give support to teachers.
6. MoPSE in conjunction with CSOs should develop a strategy for collecting, disseminating and ensuring utilisation of relevant research studies for more evidence- based programming.
7. Education Management Information System (EMIS) and the Information Communication Technology (ICT) policies should address the broad spectrum of data needs of ECD so that policies and programmes (and partners) can be informed with accurate information at the right time noting that data on some areas such as infrastructure, and numbers of ECD-A and B children by disability was not available in the MoPSE records. It was aggregated under Infant Education. This makes difficult to inform decisions which are specific to ECD.
8. National Stakeholders including CSOs should increase engagement of Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Education (PPCE) and equip them with the information they need to lobby for increased funding from the national budget, mobilise their constituents and exercise their oversight role.

1. INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe is a signatory to global protocols and conventions on the wellbeing of children including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); UN Convention on the Right of Children and the Africa agenda 2063. In particular, the SDG four target 4.2, calls for governments to ensure that by 2030, all girls and boys have access to quality Early Childhood Development, Care and Pre-Primary Education so that they are ready for primary education. The Education 2030 Agenda (Incheon Declaration, 2016) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda called for increased access to quality, inclusive and equitable Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) and increased investment in this subsector respectively. The African Union's Agenda 2063 calls for universal access to quality early childhood, primary and secondary education, ensuring that no child is left behind, and that the potential of every child is nurtured. In Zimbabwe, the initial step in recognising the importance of ECD in human development was when the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs (MoCD & WA), in 1986, added the education aspect into the Early Childhood Development and Care (ECEC) by developing a curriculum. The majority of centres have been "care centres" as their function was "*to take care of children for a number of hours a day so that women would be free to work*"[20]. The centres were and largely remained community based and resourced. The major step came when ECD was transferred to the ministry responsible for education in 1988 [21] in recognition of the fact that it is a critical phase in the education of the child which cannot operate outside the rest of the education system. A further milestone was reached when ECD was made compulsory in 2004 when all public schools were mandated to have ECD- A and ECD-B by 2006 leading to the current ESSP MoPSE 2016 - 2020 which makes ECD part of Infant Education in a 2-7-4-2 structure of the curriculum of MoPSE[22]. The plan further lists the following policy issue tasks which need to be completed:

a) School level financing
b) ICT for the education sector
c) School feeding
d) Inclusive Education
e) Assessment for the infant years and review/develop the assessment framework for new areas such as the Life Skills Orientation Programme
f) Policy and/regulatory framework for Teacher Professional Standards
g) Infant/Early Childhood policy

1.1 Background

Agreement on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) signals that Early Childhood Development (ECD) should be a priority focus for the twenty-first century. SDG 4.2 states that by 2030 countries should: '*ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education*'. However, SDG 4.2 commitments to ECD are much broader than this education focused target as is clearly expressed by UNESCO[23]. Hence countries are called upon to ensure that all children under 5 years are *"…developmentally on track in health, learning, psycho-social"* and further that *"they participate in organised learning one year before official primary school entry age"*[24]. The importance of ECD human development is well documented in the project proposal that guides this School Readiness programme (which is the subject of this study) and is well supported by research and recognised worldwide. In some instances,

[20] Nziramasanga C.T. (1999) P 263
[21] As above : p 263 ECEC was transferred from MoCD & WA to the then MoPSE,(at the time of the Commission the ministry was called MoES&C) in 1988
[22] Zim –Curriculum Framework-4-MoPSE2015-2022Final Draft page 22
[23] UNESCO quick –guide …4-2018-en
[24] As above Indicators 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

provision of ECD is made a condition for securing multi/bilateral support, thus recognising that investing in very young children especially in the first 1000 days of their life is important not only for the realisation of their full potential but also for human development.

The achievement of SDG 4.2 remains a distant target. This has been due to a variety of challenges in terms of policy, provision and delivery as the findings of the study show. As a follow-up to the pursuit of commitments to SDG 4, Education 2030 Agenda appealed for increased access to quality, inclusive and equitable Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) and increased investment in this subsector respectively. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) under agenda 2063 identified ECDE as the pillar for future learning that is critical for Africa to realize sustained quality education and training. Investing in ECD services, such as quality pre-primary education and home visiting, can yield greater economic returns than interventions provided later in life[25]. Returns on investment in young children are greater than at any other time in human development and have a positive impact in later childhood and adulthood and thus the quality of children's early experiences cannot be ignored. The MoPSE system provides for 4 years of **Infant School Module** comprising 2 years of Early Childhood Development and 2 years of primary Grade 1 and 2.

It is against this background that ZINECDA, partnering with ECOZI is implementing a project on ECD advocacy in Zimbabwe and commissioned this baseline survey on the status of ECD, in particular, the status of the policy, policy environment and implementation of SDG 4.2 so as to lobby and advocate for a quality ECD that is transformative, accessible and inclusive, – for all young girls and boys, and for their families, in Zimbabwe. Whilst ECD covers from conception up to 8 years the focus and target group of this study was mainly the school going age, that is, ECD-A and ECD – B.

1.2 Objectives of the Baseline Survey

The purpose of this study was to provide a baseline on general policy issues as regard ECD as well as give an understanding of the implementation of SDG 4.2 in Zimbabwe.

The specific objectives of the Study were to:

(i) Establish and track the status of SDG 4.2 in Zimbabwe
(ii) Stakeholder mapping to ascertain which partners have a focus on SDG 4.2
(iii) Analyze what various stakeholders (MoPSE, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED), the World Bank, UNESCO, ADEA, UNICEF etc.) are doing in the implementation of SDG 4.2 and ECD in Zimbabwe
(iv) Outline researches carried or being carried out on ECD in Zimbabwe and show the relevance to SDG 4.2
(v) What government implementation plans/oversight on ECD in Zimbabwe exist.
(vi) In the context of the National Education budget, quantify ECD budget trends from 2014 to date.
(vii) Conduct an analysis of financial contributions by multilateral institutions, GoZ, CSOs towards ECD/infant education in Zimbabwe
(viii) Identify tracking mechanisms on ECD financing and budgeting in Zimbabwe and who does the tracking
(ix) Track how much money is going for infrastructure development, facilities (play areas and feeding houses) equipment such ECD kits, learning materials (workbooks, toys, blocks, reading materials, etc.) and allocation of teachers (the number of qualified ECD teachers after the current recruitment and what is the current deficit of trained teachers) to improve the quality of learning from 2014 to date.

[25] file:///C:/ZINECDA/ECD%20Literature/MoPSE/Budget%20and%20finance/ECD-Financing-Study-Volume-I_EdCommission_2016_vp_au_09222016.pdf

2. Methodology and Activities

2.1. Methodology

The baseline used a mix of data collection techniques to determine current levels of the above objectives and benchmarked indicators that will be used for longitudinal studies. As such different lenses were applied to collect qualitative data. Various tools and data collection techniques were used. The methodology contributed to gathering information which might have been missed by adopting only one perspective, hence brought in triangulation which resulted in more authentic analysis.

2.2. Sampling

Survey participants were selected through purposive sampling technique which was based on multi-sectoral engagement of the various key stakeholders in ECD development and delivery. These included representatives from relevant government ministries as well as project/ development partners and project coordinators. Sampling for the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) had been set at a minimum of 12 key informants with at least one representative from: UNICEF, UNESCO, ADEA, World Bank, MoFED, MoPSE, Parliament Portfolio Committee of Education, the Parliamentary Budget Office, MoHTESTD (in particular the Department of Teacher Education (UZ), Ministry of Labour and Social welfare (MoLP&SW), Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoH&CC) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that work on ECD issues in Zimbabwe as well as ZINECDA, ECOZI. A total of 14 key informants were interviewed during the baseline based on the sampling matrix below: -

Table 1: Sampling Matrix

Area of Interest	Organization
Implementing partners	ECOZI, ZINECDA
Governing bodies	Ministry of Education, Parliamentary Portfolio Committee of Education
Development Partners (funding organizations as well provision of technical support)	UNICEF, UNESCO, WORLD BANK, ADEA
CSOs	Chiedza,
Other key stakeholders (Owners of ECD Centres and ECD e-learning providers	Dare-Dzidzo, Royal Comfort, Kwality Play Centre, Fun and Laughter ECD Centre

2.3. Data collection methods

The data collection methods used included Desk Studies and individual interviews and voice recordings of the interviews as needed. The methods employed ensured that ethical considerations were conducted prior to data collection. Baseline tools, methodology and were reviewed, validated and approved by the organization.

Phase 1: Review of Background Material and Development of Baseline Tools

This stage was a desk study and involved review of ECD development in Zimbabwe including policy documents, other documents produced on ECD development in the country and other literature pertinent to the study. Information collected at this stage was used both to develop Baseline tools as well as to inform the study.

Phase 2: Data Collection

Field data was based on information collected from ZINECDA, ECOZI, UNESCO, ADEA, World Bank, MoPSE, Parliament Portfolio Committee of Education, ADEA, CHIEDZA, and ECD practitioners based in Harare. The following baseline survey tools were utilized: -

(i) Key Informant Interviews Guides

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were guided by a pre-prepared checklist. The Baseline survey key informants included people representing different stakeholders as outlined in the preceding paragraph and the study administered a KII guide specific to the institution. The tool was also adapted into a questionnaire form for some respondents who are stationed abroad or who preferred mailed questionnaires. As at time of report writing 14 key informants from 8 of the sectors had been reached with a face to face interview with MoPSE still to be conducted as they had not yet specified a date, they could be available for the interview in view of other activities they had scheduled. The list of those who responded is attached as Annex to this report. The study drew insights from the Parliament Portfolio Committee of Education (PPCE) and also benefitted from the validation workshop that ECOZI/ZINECDA had organised for them.

(ii) Budget Tracking Tool

This was used to capture funds that were invested into and spent on ECD from 2014 to date by budget item.

Phase 3: Data Analysis and Draft Report Writing

Interviews were voice recorded and data transcribed. Transcribed data was analysed by establishing emerging common patterns and trends on the basis of discourse analysis. Responses were subjected to rigorous triangulation, comparing section specific responses across the spectrum of respondents and data sources to reduce bias and check for inconsistencies in the data. Quantitative data was derived from both key informants and desk studies and this was interpreted through descriptive statistics and trend analysis. This phase also witnessed the compilation and submission of a draft baseline report to ZINECDA and ECOZI. This provided an opportunity for the staff to respond to key issues emerging from the Baseline and provide input into the draft report.

2.4. Scope of the Study

While ECD is understood to cover the period from conception to 59 months, this study focused on the period from 36 months to 59 months of a child's life. This is because the study is meant to inform the School Readiness Programme that ZINECDA /ECOZI is supporting while taking cognisance of the importance of the earlier period in a child's life. Hence there will be occasional references to the period 0-36 months in the discourse.

2.5. Limitations of the Study

2.5.1. Protracted Delays in data collection

The study was commissioned with effect from 1 June 2019 and was supposed to be completed within 15 days. However due to complications of bureaucracy and protocols in line ministries and some NGOs who have a stake in ECD, data collection was a protracted process leading to data being "drip- fed" to the study team over a period of four months. As the interviews were voice recorded the data loss was minimal although its management and interpretation may have been affected by the delays. Quantitative data to support responses was obtained from MoPSE 2018 Statistics Report (among other sources), although the team failed to secure a face to face interview.

2.5.2. Non-Responses

The data for tracking the funding was based on available data from national statistics and available resources on ECD. First hand data from organizations could not be obtained as most organizations were sceptical due to the sensitivity of the information and thus did not respond to the Budget Tracking Tool both during the face to face interviews and the emailed tools. Questionnaires were emailed to four of the Key informants, but the response was poor as only two out of the four responded.

2.5.3. Budgetary Constraints

Due to budgetary constraints the study was mainly Harare based and did not therefore capture the views of those out of Harare who are involved in ECD delivery and who may have had views about the policies, policy environment and other relevant issues on ECD.

2.6. Ethical considerations

As the study did not involve any invasive procedures, no special permission was needed apart from clearance in terms of protocols that govern the institutions in the sample and these have been dealt with under limitations.

3. Key Findings

3.1. Status of SDG 4.2 in Zimbabwe

The status of the SDG 4.2 is guided by two indicators these are: "*4.2.1. Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex*" and *"4.2.2. Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex"*

The Study observed that access to ECD is a necessary condition for the fulfilment of the two SDG indicators mentioned above and therefore explored the status of ECD as it relates to access first. The findings on access are what follow in the foregoing section.

3.1.1. Access

ECD -A and -B are now considered part of the formal educational system in Zimbabwe. This caters for the 3-5-year olds and extended to 8 years in special circumstances. This phase is meant to prepare children for formal schooling with ECD -B being pre-requisite for enrolment into Grade One since 2006 as per Secretary's Circular Minute Number 14 of 2004. According to KIIs and desk studies[26] enrolment into ECD was reported to be on the upward trend for the past 5 years since 2004 when ECD became mandatory with an increase of 46.9% (Table 2). ECD enrolment reflected continuous positive annual percentage changes from 2014 to 2018, except for 2018 when it was lowest at 0.78% and "*because in this year, illegal ECDs did not complete ED46s for fear of being identified*[27]."

Table 2: ECD Enrolment Trend by Sex, Number and Percentage Change, Zimbabwe 2014-2018[28]

Year	Male	Female	Total	% Female	% Change
2014.	214 300	213526	427826	49.91	14.3
2015	259310	258640	517950	49.94	21.02
2016	290595	289770	580365	49.93	12.05
2017	313300	310681	623981	49.79	7.52
2018	316210	312616	628826	49.71	0.78

Source: MoPSE 2018

Participation rates in school are measured in terms of gross enrolment and net enrolment. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is defined as enrolment at a given level of education, regardless of age and it's expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical school age population corresponding to this level of education. Net Enrolment Ratio (N.E.R.) Net Enrolment Rate is the number of pupils enrolled who are of the official age group for a given level of education divided by the population for the same age group expressed as a percentage of the total age group in that population. Therefore the official school going age groups used in calculating the GERs and NERs for ECD is 3-5 years age group. KIIs rated GER at 53% or at best 56% and N.E.R. at 31.92% These statistics have also been

[26] 2018 Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report -MoPSE, July 2019, page 8

[27] 2018 Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report -MoPSE, July 2019

[28] 2018 Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report -MoPSE, July 2019, page

confirmed by data sources from MoPSE which also show the current GER at 56% and the N.E.R. at 31.9%[29] The N.E.R. has been retrogressive since 2012 but there has been a gradual improvement from 2014 with statistics showing a 28% increase from a low of 25% to a high of 32% in 2017. However, the current N.E.R. of 31.9% is still depressed and does not spell progress in ECD development. Refer toTable 3.

Table 3: ECD Enrolment Rates over the Years 2014- 2018

Year	Gross Enrolment Rate, %			GPI	Net Enrolment Rate, %			GPI
	M	F	T		M	F	T	
2014	39.50	39.29	39.40	0.99	24.74	25.21	24.98	1.02
2015	47.05	46.84	46.94	1.00	28.54	29.36	28.95	1.03
2016	52.10	51.85	51.98	1.00	32.82	33.32	33.07	1.02
2017	56.15	55.58	55.87	0.99	31.70	32.28	31.99	1.02
2018	56.11	55.38	55.74	0.99	31.75	32.10	31.92	1.01

(Source: MoPSE, 2018)

Both the ECD GER and the N.E.R. are low when compared against the primary school level N.E.R. of 89.8%. The ECD NER, is very low at 31.9% indicating that more than two thirds (68.1%) of the children in the 3-5 years age group who are supposed to be attending ECD are not doing so. The data illustrated above shows that there is an insignificant increase in the proportion of children attending ECD at the correct age between 2012 and 2017 from about 29.8% in 2012 to 31.9% in 2017. These statistics are also indicative of the fact that a sizeable number of children attending ECD are still outside the correct ages of 3 to 5 years which may suggest a high ratio of over- aged children who are enrolled into ECD and an evidently very low ratio of children of the appropriate age accessing ECD. Desk studies from current national statistics have also revealed that the highest proportion of learners in ECD are aged 5 years and 6 years with 37.1% and 32.1% respectively. For ECD A, 33.5% are correct aged learners (4 years), with 41.2% being aged 5 years. ECD A has 59.1 of its leaners being overaged, with 7.3% of underaged ones. For ECD B, 37.15 are correct aged learners (5 years), with 32.1% being aged 6 years. ECD B has 42.5% of its leaners being overaged, with 20.2% of underaged ones as shown in Figure 1.

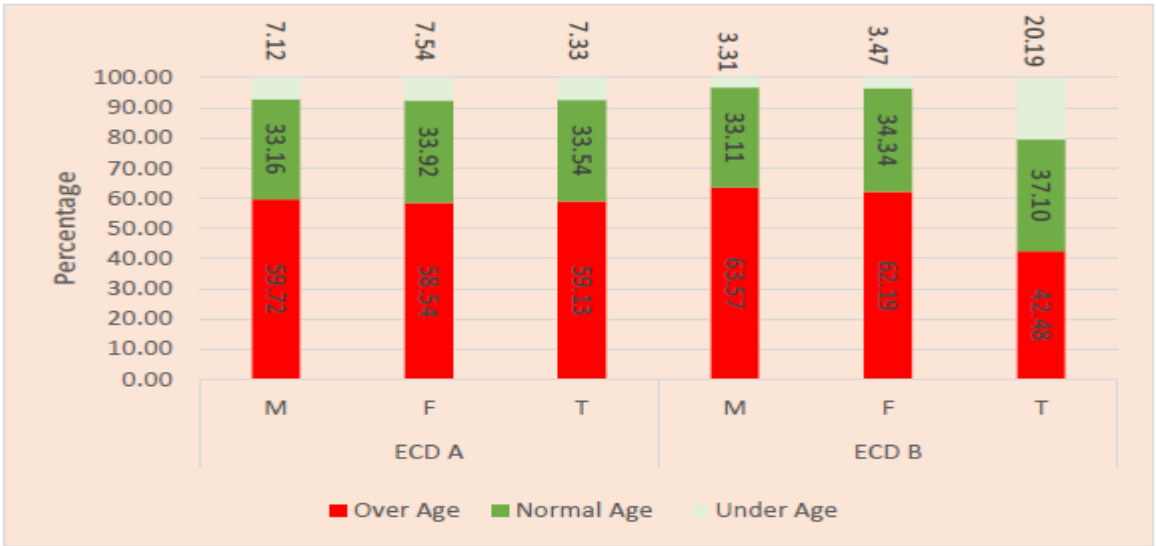

Figure 1: Distribution of ECD Enrolment by age and sex
(Source : 2018 EMIS Report)

[29] MoPSE 2018

The high proportion of over-aged pupils is mainly due to the high demand for enrolment, in which case some correctly aged learners fail to enrol because there will not be any vacancies in schools and also because of the distance of schools, particularly in rural areas.[30]

Considered separately GER of 53% to 56% suggests that slightly more than half of the infant's school going age children are accessing ECD. Results show a progressive change in children now enrolling for ECD. This is 31 years after the transfer of ECD to the ministry responsible for education (based on Nziramasanga C.T. (1998) and 13 years after the responsible ministry made it mandatory for public schools to attach ECD A and B by 2006. At the time of the Presidential (Nziramasanga) Commission referred to above, it was estimated that at least 66% (2/3) of children did not have access to ECD implying a GER of 34%. Hence the GER moved up 22 points from 34% to 56% since the Nziramasanga Commission representing significant improvement signifying an increase in overall ECD enrolment.

Respondents appreciated that there has been some improvement in that 99% of schools have ECD classes since ECD became mandatory. MoPSE (2018) report shows that 99.3% of primary schools have established ECD classes with 94.8% of them having the ECD - Grade 7 level, 4.5 percent have ECD only. ECD schools increased by 22.1%, from 5 114 in 2010 to 6 242 in 2018[31]. However, this has not translated into a higher N.E.R.

Most of primary and secondary schools are P3 and S3. (Table 4)[32] According to the 2018 EMIS Report, 86.3% of the schools in Zimbabwe are P3 schools. Schools in Zimbabwe are categorized by the economic status of communities sending their children to these schools. This determines the per capita grant allocated to them by government. P1 and S1 schools are located in urban low-density areas and some elite boarding schools regardless of their location. P2 and S2 schools are located in urban high-density areas including government schools and some boarding schools belonging to church organizations located in rural areas. P3 and S3 schools are located in rural areas. In terms of government aid, P3 and S3 schools will get the highest per capitation learner grant and S1 and P1 the lowest.

Table 4: Distribution of schools by per capita classification

Province	Primary				Secondary			
	Percentage							
	P1	P2	P3	T	S1	S2	S3	T
Bulawayo	27.75	55.95	16.30	100	35.63	51.72	12.64	100
Harare	29.68	66.43	3.89	100	24.90	71.08	4.02	100
Manicaland	2.16	3.64	94.20	100	4.61	6.91	88.48	100
Mashonaland Central	1.72	4.96	93.32	100	1.98	5.95	92.06	100
Mashonaland East	2.92	4.51	92.57	100	4.79	5.59	89.63	100
Mashonaland West	4.61	7.11	88.27	100	4.70	12.01	83.29	100
Masvingo	0.91	2.17	96.92	100	2.79	6.42	90.78	100
Matabeleland North	0.65	5.34	94.01	100	3.00	5.00	92.00	100
Matabeleland South	1.73	1.92	96.35	100	4.29	7.98	87.73	100
Midlands	2.84	7.21	89.95	100	5.42	12.20	82.38	100
Grand Total	4.41	9.29	86.31	100	6.86	14.80	78.34	100

The predominantly rural provinces have very high numbers of both P3 and S3 schools.

[30] 2018 EMIS Report

[31] 2018 EMIS Report, page 8

[32] 208 EMIS Report, page 14

Various factors have been attributed to the slow increase in NER as listed below, but not exhaustively:

***Cost factors*:** ECD learners at public schools pay as much school fees as other children. The costs at private centres can even be higher than those at public schools. This puts an additional financial burden on the parents or guardians of the learners. When Government needs to reduce its spending ECD becomes an easy casualty as was experienced in 2018 when the minister) cut the salaries of ECD teachers from the budget. This has continued in 2019 when no mention of ECD was made in the budget statement. Hence only those communities with capacity and interest in ECD are able to recruit and retain qualified teacher and provide other resources. The Child labour Survey (2014) confirms reasons as to why children have failed to enrol in school with the most common reason being financial (68%) followed by refusal to attend where the main reason was lack of interest or the parents consider their children too young (57%).[33] The Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC), 2019 Rural Livelihoods Assessment Report also shows that at least 28% of the ECD learners are out of school because the schools are "expensive" and they "have no money".[34]

Long Distances: In rural and peri-urban areas children may have to walk very long distances and this can discourage children from attending school and guardians may fear for the safety of the children. In-depth discussions revealed that this is one of the major challenges especially in the peri-urban and rural (P2 and P3 respectively) which constitute more than 95%[35] of the ECD learners. In some instances, ECD pupils are forced to walk long distances to school, thus exhaustion from such long trips compromise their participation in class.[36]. Available data shows that at least 11% of children in the ECD age group are not attending school because distance to the nearest school is too far[37]. It is noteworthy that although the government has set up satellite schools to curb this challenge, children with disabilities have been the most affected. Available data shows that enrolment of children with disabilities or impairments of 8.6% is way below the 2015-2020 ESSP 2018 target of 25% of children with disabilities enrolled in ECD A and B.[38] This is also compounded by other factors such as lack of appropriate facilities, teaching material including human resources to teach and cater for this marginalized group of learners.

***Lack of appreciation of ECD**:* Some guardians and parents do not appreciate the value of ECD and prefer to "spend money" on formal school in anticipation of tangible academic results.

***Limited capacity of schools** :* Most schools generally have only 2 classes of ECD, their capacity to absorb all eligible children is thus limited and this may be compounded by over-aged children who seek enrolment to ensure a place into Grade One.

From the desk studies, national reports also show that there are currently only between 57- 67% of children in the 4-6 years age group are attending school[39] but this proportion is much lower *vis- a-vis* the other age groups in the junior and secondary school level education. Figure 2.

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[33] ZIMVAC 2019 Report, page 28

[34] ZIMVAC, 2019 Report page 28

[35] 2018 EMIS Report

[36] UNICEF, 2019

[37] ZIMVAC, 2019 Report page 28

[38] 2018 Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report -MoPSE, July 2019, page 77

[39] ZIMVAC, 2019 page 25

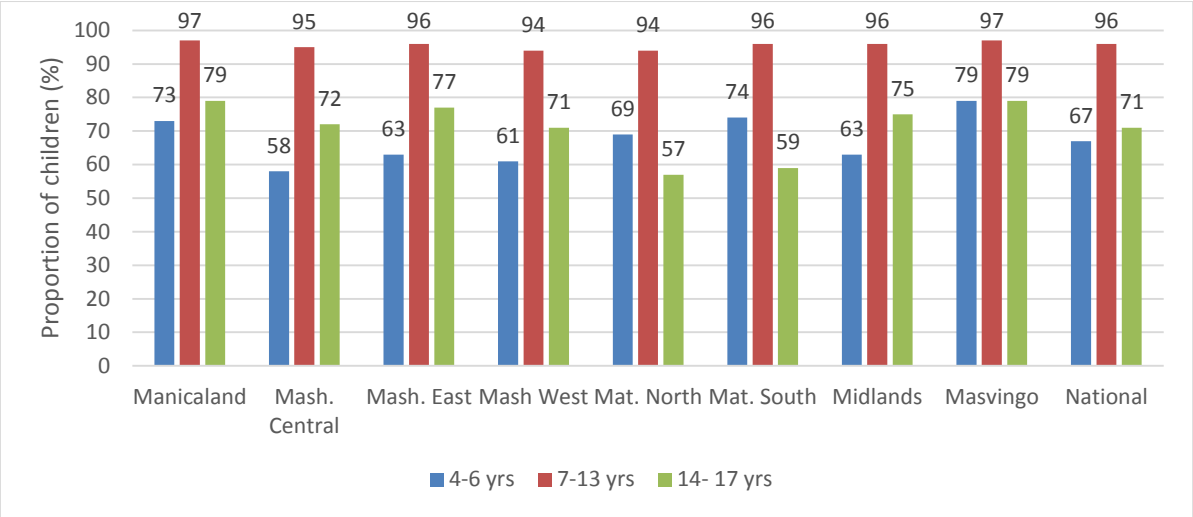

Figure 2: Children of School-going Age Attending School by age group[40]
(Source: Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) Rural Livelihoods Assessment Report, 2019 page 25).

More so, the reported low N.E.R. suggests a corresponding low proportion of children "*who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being"*. Literature reviewed[41] suggests that there is inadequate data to show current position on this outcome. The study also observed that MoPSE has no tool to guide ECD teachers to assess whether children are developmentally on track. However, the 2015 MCIS Report[42] has been used as a proxy to assess the Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI). The ECDI is used to determine the proportion of children under 5 years of age, who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being. It is calculated as the percentage of children who are developmentally on track in at least three of four domains below and is based on selected milestones that children are expected to achieve by ages 3 and 4. Out of 10 items selected categories as stated:

a) *Literacy-numeracy:* Children are identified as being developmentally on track based on whether they can identify/name at least ten letters of the alphabet, whether they can read at least four simple popular words and whether they know the name and recognize the symbols of all numbers from 1 to 10. If at least two of these are true, then the child is considered developmentally on track.
b) *Physical:* If the child can pick up a small object with two fingers, like a stick or a rock from the ground and/or the mother/caretaker does not indicate that the child is sometimes too sick to play, then the child is regarded as being developmentally on track in the physical domain.
c) *Social-emotional:* Children are considered to be developmentally on track if two of the following are true: If the child gets along well with other children, if the child does not kick, bite or hit other children and if the child does not get distracted easily.
d) *Learning:* If the child follows simple directions on how to do something correctly and/or when given something to do, is able to do it independently, then the child is considered to be developmentally on track in this domain.

According to ZIMSTATS, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MCIS), 2014, there are 61.8% of children in the 3-5 years age group who are developmentally on track. ECDI was higher among girls (64.3%) than

[40] ZIMVAC, 2019 page 25
[41] Countryreview-sdg4-zwe.pdf pages 6 and 17
[42] The just completed MICS report is not yet ready for public dissemination. (Source: www.unicef.org)

boys (59.2%). The index was higher in the 4-5 years age group (67.2 percent) compared to the 3 to <4 years age group (57.1%). Higher ECDI was observed in children attending an early childhood education programme at 71.1% compared to 59.3% among those who were not attending. See Table 5.

Table 5: Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being[43]

Percentage of children age 36-59 months who are developmentally on track in literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional, and learning domains, and the early child development index score, Zimbabwe MICS, 2014

	Percentage of children age 36-59 months who are developmentally on track for indicated domains				Early child development index score[1]	Number of children age 36-59 months
	Literacy-numeracy	Physical	Social-Emotional	Learning		
Total	**9.3**	**92.5**	**66.9**	**87.4**	**61.8**	**4 025**
Sex						
Male	8.8	93.5	63.9	87.3	59.2	1 978
Female	9.8	91.6	69.9	87.6	64.3	2 047
Province						
Manicaland	5.8	95.0	68.8	85.0	60.6	547
Mashonaland Central	7.6	89.5	55.1	82.2	49.2	222
Mashonaland East	12.5	91.8	60.6	89.5	59.8	437
Mashonaland West	5.0	91.0	52.5	89.6	50.7	508
Matabeleland North	6.7	91.2	77.3	82.4	64.9	382
Matabeleland South	8.1	91.8	81.0	90.2	74.2	348
Midlands	11.1	97.0	78.6	89.4	72.5	528
Masvingo	8.0	89.2	66.1	82.1	57.1	480
Harare	19.3	95.4	56.0	93.6	60.2	356
Bulawayo	12.6	89.9	71.5	91.3	69.7	216
Area						
Urban	15.2	93.9	63.5	91.8	64.2	998
Rural	7.4	92.1	68.1	86.0	61.0	3 027
Age						
36-47 months	4.6	89.6	65.4	82.9	57.1	2 145
48-59 months	14.8	95.9	68.7	92.6	67.2	1 879
Attendance to early childhood education						
Attending	23.6	97.1	68.2	93.7	71.1	871
Not attending	5.4	91.3	66.6	85.7	59.3	3 154

The baseline also assessed the status of SDG 4.2.2 i.e. *"Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex".* Available literature[44] shows that there has been a significant increase (46%) in ECD enrolment since 2014 to date with a gradual upward trend over the past years. See Table 2 in Section 3.1.1 above.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is a socio-economic indicator which was used as a proxy indicator to measure the relative access to education of males and females. A GPI equal to one signifies equality between males and females. A GPI less than one is an indication that gender parity favours males while a GPI greater than one indicates gender parity that favours females. The closer a GPI is to one, the closer a country is to achieving equality of access between males and females. It is notable that

[43] MCIS, 2014, page 192

[44] UNICEF Support for Education in Zimbabwe, Summative Evaluation Report 2019, page 100

there is almost equal participation between girls and boys and more in favour of girls for the past years. This is illustrated in Table 6 below which shows that at ECD level, there are signs that parity is improving with the Gender Parity Index (GPI) converging on 1.

Table 6: GPI Trends for ECD enrolments: 2012-2018[45]

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
GPI	1.02	1.01	0.99	1.00	1.00	0.99	0.99

(Source: adapted from UNICEF, 2018[46])

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Regarding "Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age by sex", KIIs concurred that the participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age, that is ECD-B was higher than in ECD-A. This was confirmed by the MoPSE 2018 statistics which showed an enrolment of 285796 and 343030 for ECD -A and B respectively for 2018. Respondents pointed out that this was because parents viewed participation at ECD B being "strategic" for ensuring enrolment into Grade One. Partners have indicated data as "not reported / not deemed publishable"47 for the greater part of the period from 2010 to 2016. This suggests a need for MoPSE and partners to have same information regarding these issues both for planning and reporting purposes. The study also showed that enrolment and participation data is also not available for the age ranges in the 0-3-year age group. This creates a further gap and can complicate planning for ECD-A and B as it should be informed by the situation at the lower level tiers.

This suggests a lack of appreciation of the intended benefits of the ECD programmes with a significant number of parents (57%) and child care givers considering their children too young to attend school. It was pointed out that schools did not have capacity to enrol all children eligible for ECD. In some instances, parents have to find alternative ECD-B provisions to meet the entry requirements into Grade One some of which are substandard and unregistered. The study assumes that enrolment data for these centres is not included in the MoPSE statistics therefore the numbers/enrolments may be understated representing a challenge for planning purposes

3.1.2. Equity

It merged that ECD is basically and has historically been largely a community -based and resourced programme[48]. Hence it relies mainly on the capacity and interest of the community leading to inequity issues in provision and delivery between those who have resource capacity and interest compared to the resource poor communities. In addition, because of its origin as a community based and resourced programme the scales were tipped heavily against those in the rural areas and poor urban /peri-urban areas. This equity issue was raised by Nziramasanga C.T (1998) and reinforced by Sibanda P (2018) when he observed that the ECD programme in rural primary schools in Zimbabwe remains greatly compromised casting doubt on its quality and effectiveness long after various policies have been enacted as will be discussed in the relevant sections that follow. The MCIS report of 2015 shows a disparity between the two groups with 20% of the ECD Age group attending school in the rural areas

[45] Figures extrapolated from UNICEF Zimbabwe Education Summative Evaluation Report, 2018 and MoPSE Education Statistics Report ,2018

[46] UNICEF Support for Education in Zimbabwe, Summative Evaluation Report 2019, page 100

[47] Country Review-sdg4-zwe.pdf pages 6 and 17

[48] Nziramasanga C.T ibid page 262

compared to 26% in the urban areas thus areas compromising the right of these children to quality ECD that is transformative, accessible and inclusive.

There are also inequity issues related to the enrolment into ECD of children with disabilities. Disabilities in this context have been defined broadly to include health, psycho- social and emotional problems.[49] It is estimated that 15% of the child population suffers from some disability. One respondent rated the national response at next to 0% at best 10% and that national efforts target mainly physical disabilities. Other disabilities do not seem to be catered for except in special schools which are run mainly by non-government agencies. These schools are sometimes out of reach for the ordinary and resource poor families. KIIs assess the proportion of children with disability who are not in ECD at 90% but according to the ZIMVAC, 2019 Report about 4% of children in the ECD age group are not attending school as a result of disabilities[50]. The disparity is due to lack of comprehensive independent data with the main data source for the education system being EMIS. Ideally data on this should be available for the whole ECD range, that is, over 0 months to 8-year olds by sex and by kind of disability to inform policy and planning. In depth discussions with KIIs also indicated that the design of infrastructure at most learning institutions does not cater for this group hence some parents and caregivers do not send their children to or withdrawing their children from ECD learning centres.

The curriculum is also not compatible with this group of learners in terms of approaches to teaching and learning as well as instructional materials. These are developed mostly with the "normal" child in mind. There are also no assistive devices for learners with special needs. This challenge is aggravated by lack of teachers with the necessary and requisite skills to address the different needs or disabilities. About 84.2% of the ECD teachers hold either a Diploma or Certificate in Education (50.8%), or are ECD Para Professionals (33.5%)[51].However, teachers specialised in Special Needs at ECD level are not captured by the EMIS Reports. Hence the study assumes that there no specific teachers trained for this level of learners. Key informants also indicated that there is dearth of learning centres which cater for children with special needs particularly in the rural areas and thus poor proximity to the learning institutions; poor road networks and limited access transport restrict enrolment of some children into the learning institutions. Some children with disabilities are particularly disadvantaged as parents may find it difficult to ferry them to school. Hence the parents or caregivers end up keeping them at home.

While KIIs reckon that there are approximately 90% of children with disabilities who are not in school, there have been varied statistics regarding this group of learners with MoPSE 2018 Report, reporting there are 61 946 learners with impairments, of whom 5 347 (8.6 %) are enrolled in ECD A and B[52] while the ZIMVAC Report of 2019 states that about 1%[53] of the ECD learners are not attending school due to disabilities. MoPSE 2018 reports that 8.6% of children with disability are enrolled into ECD and this is way below the 25% target set in the ESSP 2015-2020.The wide discrepancies and responses which are not congruent show wide gaps in the education information systems which can affect policy formulation.

The reasons for the poor enrolment which apply to ECD children with no apparent special needs already referred to in Section 3.1.1. also apply to those with special needs but are exacerbated by their conditions as well as lack of support for the parents and caregivers.

[49] Inferred from the MoPSE 2018 Statistics Report, Page 95
[50] ZIMVAC,2019 Report, Page 28
[51] MoPSE 2018 Annual Statistics Report , Page 88
[52] MoPSE 201 Annual Statistics Report, Page 78
[53] ZIMVAC, 2019 Report, Page 28

3.2. Teaching and Learning Processes

The study noted that the quality of teaching and learning depends mainly on the quality of teachers, availability of appropriate infrastructure and in some cases on the expectations the school leadership has of ECD as will be explained in the section which follows.

3.2.1. Teachers and quality of ECD delivery

The study acknowledges GoZ's Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development' (MoHTESTD) efforts in training ECD teachers and (MoPSE) in improving the recruitment of ECD trained teachers. However, their deployment has been affected by limited funding to pay ECD teachers' salaries[54]. Zimbabwe continues to face serious economic challenges with significant implications on the education system leading to freezing of ECD posts and cutting out ECD provisions from the national fiscus. Over the years, while the percentage of the national budget allocated to the education sector continues to be high, a significantly large proportion of it goes towards human resources as will be shown in the Section on finance.[55] KIIs put the expenditure on human resources at 98% and this has also been confirmed by desk studies[56]. This huge budget line has financed mainly teachers of higher grades as ECD has the lowest percentage of trained teachers 58.4% compared to secondary school level (85.5%) and primary school level (97.1%).

3.2.2. Teacher to Pupil Ratio

The teachers are also inadequate in number leading to high Learner Teacher Ratio (LTR). Hence Not only are the classes too large but a good proportion (41.6%) are manned by unqualified teachers or para -professionals. KIIs indicated that currently there are some 6 000 ECD unemployed trained teachers and yet there are vacant ECD posts. An analysis of the enrolment figures and teachers in post suggest a deficit of 7537 which could be reduced drastically if the 6000 trained teachers who are currently waiting recruitment were employed. Table 7 shows trends in the provision of trained teachers and Learner- Trained –Teacher- Ratio (LTTR) for ECD compared to other two levels, viz primary and secondary school levels.

Table 7: Comparison of trained teachers by level of education - Learner to Teacher Ratio Trends, Zimbabwe 2014-2018

Year	ECD		PRIMARY		SECONDARY	
	Trained Teachers (%)	LTTR	Trained Teachers (%)	LTTR	Trained Teachers (%)	LTTR
2014	32.	108	89.2	40	74.2	30
2015	39.9	85	93.8	38	76.1	29
2016	50.5	82	97.2	38	80.1	29
2017	52.9	79	97.4	39	83.7	28
2018	58.5	71	97.1	39	85.4	28

Source: Adapted from MoPSE Education Statistics Report, 2018

The study appreciates that the current ECD LTTR of 71 and is a great improvement from its 2014 level of 108 and that the ESSP 2016-2020 target of LTTR of 70 in 2018 is almost achieved. The figures presented also show that other levels such as the Primary level have actually surpassed their ideal LTTR ratios. There is therefore need for positive discrimination in funding in favour of ECD to enable recruitment and retention of trained teacher, given the importance of ECD in unleashing and nurturing

[54] Ki
[55] UNICEF, 2019
[56] Zimbabwe, 2019 Budget

human potential. The stipulated teacher- pupil- ratio of 1:20[57] is meant to enable teachers give children more individualized attention and engage them in guided play as the latter is the primary mode of learning of children at this stage. However, the study was informed that this ratio is hardly ever observed in government schools especially in resource poor areas due to cost factors.

There is also a higher proportion of ECD trained teachers in urban areas (72.9%), than in rural areas (53.6%)[58]. While there are variations in teacher: pupil ratios, they range from 1:40-50 in urban areas and the ratio is even higher in peri-urban and rural centres where this can be up to 1 :200 in some schools, particularly in the P3 category according to KIIs. There are also variations by province; hardest hit are the largely rural provinces of Matabeleland South, Mashonaland Central and Matabeleland North in that order as illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8 :ECD Teachers by Training, Learner to Teacher Ratio (LTR), and Province for 2018

Province	Number of ECD trained teachers	Total number of ECD teachers	LTR	LTTR
Bulawayo	628	925	25	37
Harare	971	1170	33	39
Manic land	1115	2550	42	96
Mashonaland Central	509	1308	48	122
Mashonaland East	13366	1765	41	53
Mashonaland West	980	1688	42	72
Masvingo	1336	2069	45	70
Matabeleland North	351	1029	41	121
Matabeleland South	295	613	66	138
Midlands	1267	1969	41	63

Concerns were raised around the issue of deployment for ECD trained teachers. It was pointed out that when there is a shortage of teachers at school level in upper grades, it was the ECD teachers that were usually called upon to fill in the gap. Further to that, some schools deployed trained teachers to teach ECD while they are not ECD trained. This affects the processes of teaching/learning at ECD level as the modes of learning and pedagogy at this level are less formal than those at higher levels. Some ECD teachers tended to use a more formal approach thus down playing "learning- through- play'' and yet the latter is the primary mode of learning at this stage of development. This could be a result of inappropriate training or well-trained teachers trying to meet expectations of the school leadership. Some felt that the new ECD curriculum was couched in terms and followed a structure similar to that of other grades and this puts the ECD teachers under pressure to "teach it" in a manner similar to the other grades. ECD private providers interviewed in the course of the study said they preferred the old curriculum as they found it more appropriate and were using the new curriculum as an added resource. They also felt that there had been inadequate consultation in the process of curriculum formulation and preparation in terms of both pre- and in-service teacher training for its roll out.

KIIs acknowledged the plans underway to train school leadership so as to address the latter. This points to the importance of the District ECD trainer for teacher support; as well as liaison between the ministries of education to ensure a fit between pre-service training and the needs of schools.

Noting the huge gap in ECD delivery and provision when compared against the other levels of primary education ECD needs special targeting if the SDG4.2 target is to be realised. The restructuring reduces the visibility of ECD as well as the support it enjoyed under the previous structure by removing specialised support (District ECD Trainers) ECD from schools at grassroots level at the point at which

[57] 2018 Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report -MoPSE, July 2019

[58] 2018 Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report -MoPSE, July 2019

support is needed most as well as at policy- making- level Director post. Hence the steps taken by MoPSE seem retrogressive.

3.2.3. Learning and Teaching materials

It was pointed out by KIIs that in some public schools, the only learning materials available are the UNICEF supplied kits and these were said to be a ''drop in the ocean''. This has been aggravated by resource constraints in schools which limited further investments at the school level that would be necessary to capitalize further on these interventions, refurbish premises and replenish or provide toys and learning materials. Desk reviews revealed that plans to procure some learning kits under the Education Development Fund aborted owing to delays in finalizing the curriculum development and budgetary procedures resulting in the activity being suspended, and funds redirected[59].

The study was informed that there are no adequate teaching materials in the schools. 80% of the KIIs interviewed rated availability of teaching resources as not adequate at all, rating the level of adequacy at 4, based on a Lickert Scale of 1-4, with 1 being Most Adequate and 4 being "Very Inadequate". There are also no toys and some teachers have tried to improvise. It was pointed out that teachers need a Resource Book and a list of basic teaching materials to guide them. Some schools have a check list to guide teachers on the "competencies" expected of ECD children[60]. This arrangement seemed to be school specific and the school has prepared their ECD teachers to use it for their learners. It forms part of a child's report book that the school uses for continuous easement for the period the child will be at the school. At level of ECD the report seeks to capture the following on a termly basis:

- Emotional and Social Development e.g. …the child can play with others; can share, can take good care of her/his apparatus etc.
- Gross Motor Coordination e.g. child can balance; can skip, can hop on alternate legs etc.
- Fine Motor Coordination e.g. child can cut and paste can thread beads according to pattern etc.
- Auditory Perception e.g. child can follow instructions; can repeat rhythm pattern, can hear differences between sounds etc.
- Visual Perception, for example, can copy shapes, match colours, reproduce a pattern in sequence
- Language: Can listen and understand, can speak in sentences, retell a simple story in sequence
- Number Concepts e.g. knows colours, shape, and sort by size and colour; can group to quantity up to 5.

There is nothing at national level to guide teachers to assess how well individual children are "*developmentally on track in health, learning and psycho-social well-being***",** hence it is difficult to monitor and report on these aspects of the SDG 4.2. The school check list referred to above is a commendable initiative by the school, but it does not seem comprehensive enough for effective monitoring of the SDG 4.2 even at the level of the school as the issues of health, nutrition and psycho-social well-being are not captured.

3.2.4. Infrastructure

The inequity issues referred to in previous sections are also reflected in the availability of age appropriate infrastructure in favour of communities with capacity and interest in ECD particularly the P1, P2 and private schools and those supported by NGOS. At least 93% of the $905 million allocated to the Primary and Secondary Education Ministry in the 2018 national budget was channeled towards employment costs, leaving a measly seven per cent for capital expenditure, (UNICEF, 2019).

[59] UNICEF Support for Education in Zimbabwe, Summative Evaluation Report 2019, pages 47 &51

[60] See annex …obtained from one school

Classrooms: In resource constrained areas ECD classes operate under trees, in multi-grade classrooms or makeshift rooms. The estimated classroom to pupil ratio is around 1:73 with an estimated deficit of over 150% for ECD classrooms. The recommended learner to classroom ratios for ECD is 20:1; CSOs rated classroom to pupil ratio at 1: 70 which is almost three times the stipulated ratio of 1:25. Mashonaland Central province has the highest ECD ;Learner to Classroom ratio (LCR) (91), which is more the four times the recommended size and Bulawayo province the lowest (41) which is double the recommended size. Most of the classrooms in the poorly resourced areas were reported to be in a poor state of repair leading to large class sizes as teachers tried to accommodate all the children in the available habitable classrooms. [61] In other cases where classrooms are inadequate in the school and ECD classrooms are available, these are allocated to higher grades.

It was pointed out that there was also a huge gap in provision even of facilities that could be improvised or made from local materials such as sand pits, tree houses, balances, see-saws, swings as was shown by the following facility –to- children ratios.[62] Table 9 refers: -

Table 9: Facility –to- Children Ratios

Facility	Ratio
Sand pit:	1: 132
Tree house	1: 150
Balance	1: 234
Zig-zag	1:82
See –saw	1: 7
Swing	1:57

Other amenities essential for provision of quality ECD are listed in Table 10 below including ratings of their level of current provision.

Table 10: Proportion of Schools with functioning facilities

Amenity	% Schools	Observations made
Safe Water	86	some ECD children forced to walk long distances carrying water to use at the school even some urban schools are also now in similar position affected due to drought and poor municipal services
Health Teacher	56	Teacher is for whole school, little collaboration with MoH &CC
Functioning Health Club	69	As above
School Feeding Program	84	Sustainability was questioned

Toilets: It also emerged during the survey that, in most cases ECD pupils share toilets with the rest of the school children due to lack of age- appropriate ones. The primary school male learner to toilet

[61] ESSP 2016- 2050, Page 5

[62] ZINECDA Study

ratio is 22, whilst the female one is 21. The recommended learner toilet ratio is 20 for females and 25 with a urinary for males. According to MoPSE 2018; the primary school learner to toilet ratio has remained close at its 2014 level for both males and males. Table 11 shows the toilet learner ratios for ECD learner by Province and gender as at 2018.

Table 11: Toilet learner ratios for ECD learner by Province and gender as at 2018.

Province	Male	Females
Bulawayo	20	18
Harare	19	15
Manic land	28	27
Mashonaland Central	33	31
Mashonaland East	24	23
Mashonaland West	27	25
Masvingo	25	24
Matabeleland North	23	22
Matabeleland South	23	21
Midlands	24	21

The above figures show that in the Mashonaland Central, Manicaland and Mashonaland West are slightly under provided and Mashonaland Central and Manicaland females are also under provided.

However, according to a recent study by UNICEF, in most rural areas, sanitary facilities for the ECD pupils are very inadequate or not available for the enrolled children, with the infrastructure dilapidated and in some case a risk to children. Squat hole sizes were too big for ECD use and ECD children avoid using the existing toilets for fear of falling in the pit. It has also been noted that some schools experience open defecation around the schools due to inadequate toilets[63]. These challenges are a serious health threat to the ECD learners and greatly compromise quality service delivery and risk of erratic school attendance caused by water related diseases and poor hygiene practices

Water: It was also highlighted that some schools mostly in the rural areas, particularly the satellite schools have dysfunctional water points due to high repairs and maintenance costs while others run dry during the dry season thus forcing learners to walk long distances in order to have access to safe and clean drinking water. Satellite schools are regarded as informal schools as they do not meet the minimum standards for registration as formal schools. The main reason for establishment of satellite schools is to reduce walking distances to school. These schools are attached to a formal "mother school". The siting of satellite schools does not consider water availability. This posed challenges for the project as wet holes were only identified in distances further than the recommended 500 m from the school[64]. In some cases, ECD learners are expected to carry water from home and sometimes from the river.[65] This is especially catastrophic for children with disabilities as they also face the same predicaments notwithstanding their physical challenges and impediments. Handwashing tanks in these schools are manually filled and remain without water for long periods.

It was noted that while ECD children pay building fund equal to the other children they are not accorded same priority in terms of provision and this worsened by the fact that Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM does not support ECD children.

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[63] UNICEF, 2019

[64] 2019, UNICEF WASH in Schools Project Final Evaluation

[65] UNICEF, 2019

It has also been noted from desk studies that satellite schools are generally located in the most deprived communities who do not have the financial capacity to pay levies and support to the school to maintain the infrastructure is constrained. As a result, the schools are unable to meet maintenance costs of existing infrastructure. Consequently, satellite schools experience higher staff turnover than other schools because they often lack amenities and infrastructure for teachers' stay.[66]

3.3. Researches Past, Current and On-going

According to KIIs, a number of researches have been commissioned to gather data on the status of ECD in Zimbabwe by both ECOZI and ZINECDA. These include "*The state of ECD in Zimbabwe (Shumba, 2018)*" and "*Contributions by Multilateral institutions to early learning in Zimbabw*e" commissioned by ECOZI. ECOZI also undertook A Legal Analysis and of Proposed Amendments of the Education Amendment Bill and The Education Act which fed into the Education Amendment Bill number (H.B 1 2019) with a view to lobby for alignment of the domestic law to the Constitution and International Protocols to which Zimbabwe is signatory. MoPSE also indicated that two studies had been conducted: a "*Baseline to establish school leadership capacity gaps on ECD supervision",* which is the basis of the capacity development programme currently underway targeting school heads, deputies and teachers-in charge supported by World Bank. A "Situational *Analysis on ECD"* was also undertaken during the development of the NELP. This baseline study was informed that a comprehensive NELP was near completion

Partners noted that MoPSE seemed interested only in studies the ministry will have commissioned and that it would benefit the ministry to extend its interest to researches that are conducted by students of Teachers' Colleges, universities and other relevant sources for more evidence to inform its policies and programmes. It therefore loses out on a plethora of studies that have been conducted both locally and internationally. The study was not informed if there was currently any on-going research but the Nziramasanga C.T. (1998) report raised issues that are still pertinent to ECD so does the research by Sibanda P. (2018) which form part of our references. The study acknowledges that some attempts have been made to address some of these issues in the Curriculum Reviews. A lot of research may have been conducted in between these two, but there was no evidence that they were disseminated and utilised.

There have also been some researches done to inform policy and build the capacity of the education sector conducted by International donor organizations such as DFID and USAID through UNICEF and UNESCO. These include commissioning of ZELA UNICEF a four-year programme (2010 – 2015) aimed at supporting and enhancing national capacity to carry-out national assessment at early grades in Zimbabwe. The program also established a baseline for determining whether the EDF program (2015 - 2018) had the desired effects on children, their care-givers, schools, and the education sector in general, as well as to identify the extent to which changes are attributable to the EDF program interventions. UNICEF has also conducted researches on Schools WASH and education delivery and services. These were also backed by funding of the interventions to improve capacity and enhance service delivery. These include informing and the setting up of the ESSP, Zimbabwe Wash in Schools project and the UNICEF Support for Education in Zimbabwe summative evaluation of the EDF (2012 – 2015) and the GPE (2014 – 2016).

3.4. Supervision and Management

3.4.1. Management, Supervision and Registration of ECD Centres

ECD is supervised within the framework of the structures of MoPSE although as indicated in earlier sections, ECD is historically and has remained largely a community based and resourced programme. The ministry structures for supervision and inspection end at school level. This means that any centre

[66] 2019, UNICEF WASH in Schools Project Final Evaluation

that is not annexed to a school does not fall under the supervision of MoPSE. KIIs indicated that there are a lot of unregistered centres (and are therefore illegal) so by virtue of being unregistered or awaiting registration it means that they are not supervised by MoPSE. A significant number of children are enrolled at these unregistered centres because, as pointed earlier on, government sponsored schools have no capacity to absorb all eligible children and for some children the registered ones might not be within easy walking distance. This situation is not in the best interests of the children and compromises their right to quality pre-primary education and the attainment of SDG 4.2. The study could not ascertain the number of unregistered ECD centres or those awaiting registration but these need to be known in order to inform policy. Rural ECD centres and /or CBC (Community Based Centres) are supposed to be annexed to the nearest school and hence be managed and supervised by the host school. There are challenges cited in terms of increased workloads for the leadership, demands on their time and distances to be travelled. Further to that there is no compensation for these "extra" duties and inconveniences to the school leadership. The MoPSE needs to consider strategies to effectively bring these centres under the leadership of host schools as they have the potential to boost ministry's capacity for enrolling children who are eligible for ECD and reduce the problem of enrolling over-aged children.

The registration of ECD centres was said to be a big challenge in terms of costs and bureaucracy and this further exacerbates the prevalence of unregistered centres as these centres operate while awaiting registration. For privately run ECD centres, both initial and recurrent costs were said to be high and prohibitive.[67] The process of registering involved MoPSE, MoH&CC and Local Government or responsible authority and each charge both initial and recurrent costs for registration. The owners felt the charges were unfair as they were complementing government efforts to provide ECD for all eligible children as government centres have inadequate capacity. They observed that the children from their schools seek enrolment at government schools for ECD-B not because they find the government ECD centres any better than their own, but to ensure enrolment into Grade One. These transfers contribute to the bulge /strategic enrolment of the ECD-B enrolment referred in Section 3.1.1

These registered private centres are subject to inspection by the various ministries involved in the registration and supervision process but they said they often have to provide the officers with transport for these services making their financial burden even harder to bear.

3.4.2. Schools Inspection

While concerted efforts have been made by both MoPSE and stakeholders to inspect schools through the joint monitoring visits, no visible efforts have been made by other key government departments such as MOH&CC, and the ministry of Women's Affairs and Community Development. This creates possibilities for exposing the ECD learners to poor sanitary facilities compromising their health. Apart from that they lose out on opportunities for conducting health checks which are vital at this stage of development. For MoWA & CD opportunities to influence and assess gender mainstreaming policies at grassroots level are also lost. These gaps in schools' supervision and management not only have ripple effects on policy implementation but also enforcement on the ground.

3.4.3. Government implementation plans/oversight on ECD in Zimbabwe

Governments' oversight and other roles are provided for in various pieces of legislation including the Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013 which safeguards the right of every child to free and compulsory basic education. This right is operationalized in the Education Act (Chapter 25:04). Government 's role is further guided by the international protocols to which it is signatory such as Education 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda which call for increased access to quality, inclusive and equitable Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) and increased

[67] KIIs ECD private ECD providers at the PPCE Engagement meeting 16 September 2019

investment in this subsector. The African Union's Agenda 2063 calls for universal access to quality early childhood, primary and secondary education, ensuring that no child is left behind, and that the potential of every child is nurtured. At national level, an SDG steering committee, complete with subcommittees and clusters has been set up to facilitate implementation and ensure oversight and that reporting obligations are met[68]. The study was informed that SDG 4 reports are made by MoPSE to UNESCO and data is stored at UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS)[69]. The structures for implementation and oversight are therefore in place. The challenge is at point of delivery as the structures are not supported by the investment needed to meet the commitments.

Operationalization of these commitments' rests largely with MoPSE, who over time, have developed instruments to guide the provision and management of ECD such as:

- Principal's Director Circular No. 26 of 2011: which seeks to regulate the mushrooming of unregistered ECD centres.
- Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005**:** which provides for establishment, registration, inspection, curriculum standards for cleanliness, accommodation and pupil- teacher ratios in ECD.
- Circular No 14 of 2004: which directs all primary schools to incorporate ECD classes A and B for children 3-4 and 4-5 years old respectively.

MoPSE is a member of the Social Services cluster was reported to be meeting its reporting obligations. It was pointed out by KIIs that SDG4 reporting was done through UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) but available literature[70] indicate data on SDG4.2 on Zimbabwe was available for 2012, 2013 and 2014 and either unavailable or un-publishable for period apart from these casting a cloud on the position regarding on how up to date GoZ is its reporting obligations of how up to date UIS is in its record keeping. While Kii pointed out that Goz was meeting its reporting obligations the study did not get evidence of SDG 4 reporting. In the absence of evidence, the study recommends shadow reporting by CSOs

3.5. Policy issues

Overall success for ECD is defined as the point at which countries recognise that the first six years of a child's life are critical to ensuring all children reach their full potential, so that they make the appropriate investments with a focus on nurturing care, vis-à -vis health, nutrition, caring relationships, stimulation.[71] All this requires a policy environment that is supportive of ECD reflected in appropriate and budgeted comprehensive programmes.

Goz has a collection of policy documents dating back to 1973 (such as the Nursery School Regulations of 1973, Children's Protection and Adoption of Regulations of 1972, Statutory Instrument 72/1999, Secretary Circular 14/2004, Statutory Instrument 106/2005, Director's Circular 12/2005, Education Act, Child Act, Public Health Act and Physical Planning Act[72], and more recently the ESSP 2016-2020). Some have been subject of discussion in some papers[73] and mentioned in previous sections. Of particular note is the 2014 MoPSE circular which made it mandatory for a child) to go through ECD-A and B before going to Grade One. There is however no policy which makes it a requirement for schools to ensure that all eligible children are enrolled into ECD. Some of the policies need to be harmonised within MoPSE for example, the School Feeding Policy is not harmonised across the relevant ministries such as with the Child Act, Public Health Act and Physical Planning Act. Each Ministry administers its

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[68] Zimbabwe Voluntary National Review (VNR) of SDGs for the High Level Political Forum July 2017

[69] KIIs

[70] UNESCO/UIS country review-sdg4-zwe.pdf page 6 & 17

[71] UNICEF 2017: page 24

[72] ZINECDA undated School Readiness project document

[73] Shumba 2018

own policies independent of the other and yet they all impact on the ECD child. This leads to uncoordinated responses and inefficient use of resources. The study noted the that ECOZI had made a Legal Analysis of the Education Amendment Bill and the Education Act to lobby for harmonisation of the Education Policies with the Constitution and some of the recommendations are contained in the Education Amendment Bill (H.B 1, 2019) some its recommendations are of relevance to ECD such as the inclusion of ECD into Basic Education.

Available literature indicates that regardless of the various legislation, Zimbabwe lacks a comprehensive integrated national ECD Policy in place.[74] The draft that is pending finalisation is largely a MoPSE ELP policy in which MoPSE is the lead agency which takes on board several stakeholders. While it brings in a variety of stakeholders, it is not an integrated national policy that stakeholders take as their own as well. This creates gaps in provision and delivery of ECD. It also creates challenges for players who may want to register ECD centres as they have to navigate a through a web of ministries and this costs them time and money.

There is also disconnect between policy pronouncements and implementation. MoPSE made ECD mandatory in (Secretary Circular 14/2004), but did not make budgetary provisions for its delivery and expected communities to fund it. Of concern though is the fact that the policy places the obligation on the child or guardian while schools are apparently under no obligation to make sure that all children needing ECD are afforded a place. Respondents and available literature indicate schools were ill prepared and lacked capacity and UNICEF had to support by training para-professionals and provide resources. This created challenges which in some settings led to failure of institutions to implement the new policies and in other settings led to inequities in terms of ECD provision as its provision depends on the capacity and interest of the community. A programme that is critical to human development should be of national interest and its importance should reflect in the budgetary provisions if it is to be successful.

Policies enacted are sometimes reversed with no apparent justification and wider consultations with stakeholders thus resulting in apparent misplaced priorities such as the removal from the budget of ECD teachers which happened in 2018. In addition, in its restructuring of the education sector, the government has abolished some of the ECD posts of District ECD Trainers and also the position of Director focusing on ECD and infant development that was reported to have taken place while the study was underway. These and other policy inconsistencies have the effect of stalling progress in ECD and yet it is a relative new area which needs to be grown and nurtured. Opportunities for galvanising support around for it being "*For the first time on the global agenda"*. UNICEF (2017:36) may be lost. KIIs also noted that there have been inconsistencies in the implementation of education funding, which excludes ECD learners, such as in the BEAM programme which only catered for the older learner groups. This demonstrates the extent to which ECD policy and programmes are played down when determining national priorities.

While Policy documents are available there is dissonance /gaps between policy and implementation leading to policy failures. ECD was made mandatory but no provision was made for it in the fiscus except for teachers' salaries raising questions about political will. There are also policy inconsistencies such as declaring ECD as equally important to other levels but abolishing posts specific to it, excluding deserving ECD learner's assistance from BEAM, or removing ECD teachers' salaries from the budget. These and other similar policy challenges have the effect of sometimes undoing progress. They can also discourage partnerships and collaborations.

There are policy gaps that need to be addressed to enhance WASH in schools including hygiene education and related child friendly materials and ensuring schools are established in places with easy

[74] AfECN and Makororo P. March 2017, Shumba 2018, ZINECDA undated

access to water. While the Education Act provides for standards for WASH in schools in particular squat hole to student ratios (for both girls and boys), and the distance to a water point, there are several gaps that undermine provision of WASH in schools. There are no policy or legislative provisions for hand washing facilities in schools.

Exclusion of the age range 0-3: While SDG 4.2 speaks to the children of age range 3-5, a comprehensive ECD should include the 0-3 age range. These are left out in ESSP 2016-2020 leaving out the very basic foundation level of brain development as all KIIs pointed out and research[75] indicates that it is the first 1000 days of a child's life that are critical to their brain development. It is again the expectation of the study that the NELP will address this gap for it to be comprehensive and produce the desired result at both the individual level as well as for the national benefits. Addressing this age group will inevitably require that "Education in Parenting" be provided for as the first teachers in the critical period mentioned.

National ECD polices are silent on the provision of marginalised and disadvantaged as well children living disabilities of various kinds as well the age range 0-3. This exclusion does not advance progress towards the attainment of the SDG 4.2 target.

The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2016-2020, has committed itself to develop Infant /ECD Policy and to provide the necessary guidance in the operationalization and implementation of ECD/ Infant Education, according to KIIs with MoPSE What is not clear to the study is whether, under this ESSP, ECD will be treated as a distinct phase (within the Infant Education Module) with its own distinct needs and mode of learning and teaching different from the rest of the formal infant primary school grades or whether it will be absorbed and pressured to adopt the more formal approaches of the other grades

The policy environment is therefore riddled with gaps, inconsistencies and uncertainties that make it difficult to navigate and this stalls progress in reaching the SDG 4.2 goals. Inadequate data makes progress in ECD delivery (and indeed any programme) difficult to monitor hence the status of SDG 4.2 becomes blurred. The World Bank indicated that they are providing technical assistance to MoPSE in developing an ICT policy. The study hopes that the policy will include comprehensive ECD related data so that policies and programmes are well informed.

Given the above, the study concluded that policy intervention is currently not consistent with the importance ECD deserves on the national agenda and the realisation of the SGD 4.2 by 2030

3.6. Stakeholder mapping

In Zimbabwe, there are many players involved in various activities and interventions towards ECD and advocacy for its policy development. These include the Government of Zimbabwe as the duty bearer, the private sector, NGOs, the international community and CSOs. Areas of focus include but not limited to ECD provision, training and capacity building, infrastructure development, provision teaching and learning kits as well as funding. The Table 12 is only indicative of the some of the current key players and their mandates as collected during the study.

[75] UNICEF (2017)

Table 12: *Current Key Players in ECD*

Key Players	Focus
Government-(MOPSE, MOH&CC, MoHTETSD MoPS L&SW, P.P C.E.)	Policy development and advocacy, Management, and Oversight Staff development, Funding, health development, training and capacity infrastructure, social services
UNICEF	Learning kits, SDG 4 monitoring, Technical advice
World Bank	Funding and technical assistance; covering: the new curriculum; ICT policy, development strengthening of school leadership on ECD
UNESCO **UIS** **IECD**	Capacity building, research and development; Custodian agency of SDG 4 indicators Collaboration on accountability and transparency, curriculum development
Roger Federer Foundation	Funding of ECD Activities including learning kits
ADEA **ICQN-ECD**	Training and capacity building, technical support Policy dialogue and collaborative action among African Ministers of Education and strategic partners for advancing ECD agenda in Africa.
ECOZI	Monitoring and supervision, advocacy, policy implementation.
CHIEDZA	Working with schools targeting Children with special disability
ZINECDA	Lead agency in ECD in Zimbabwe; Advocacy, research, information sharing
CPS	In 7 districts through partners to facilitate enrolment, retention and transition into grade one; Capacity building
Plan International	Advocacy for education development, aid government in child nutrition programmes
JF Kapneck Trust	Learning Kits
World Vision	Learning kits
Masaisai Trust	Educational support for the marginalized children

Source: KIIs &Stakeholders Engagement Workshop

3.7. Collaboration and Partnerships

The survey revealed that there has been some partnerships and collaboration between the government and ECOZI as the umbrella body in schools monitoring and supervision of ECD related activities. There are also CSOs active in the field whose resources can be tapped into if a cohesive coordinating mechanism was established. KIIs deplored the length of time it takes to process an MoU and felt that such delays were counterproductive given that ECD is an area needing growth support given the huge need for it. Partnerships with international NGOS such as UNICEF and UNESCO and ADEA are on-going in a variety of ways and can be strengthened and expanded if given a more, inclusive and stable policy environment.

3.8. Budget

The study acknowledges GoZ efforts (MoHTESTD) in training ECD teachers and (MoPSE) in improving the recruitment of ECD trained teachers. However, their deployment has been affected by limited funding to pay ECD teachers' salaries[76]. Zimbabwe continues to face serious economic challenges with significant implications on the education system. An analysis of the budget appropriations over the years shows that although there has been an increase in the funds allocated towards infant education

[76] Ki

against the other two levels over the years, the proportions still remain way below the other two groups (junior and secondary levels). Refer to Figure 3.

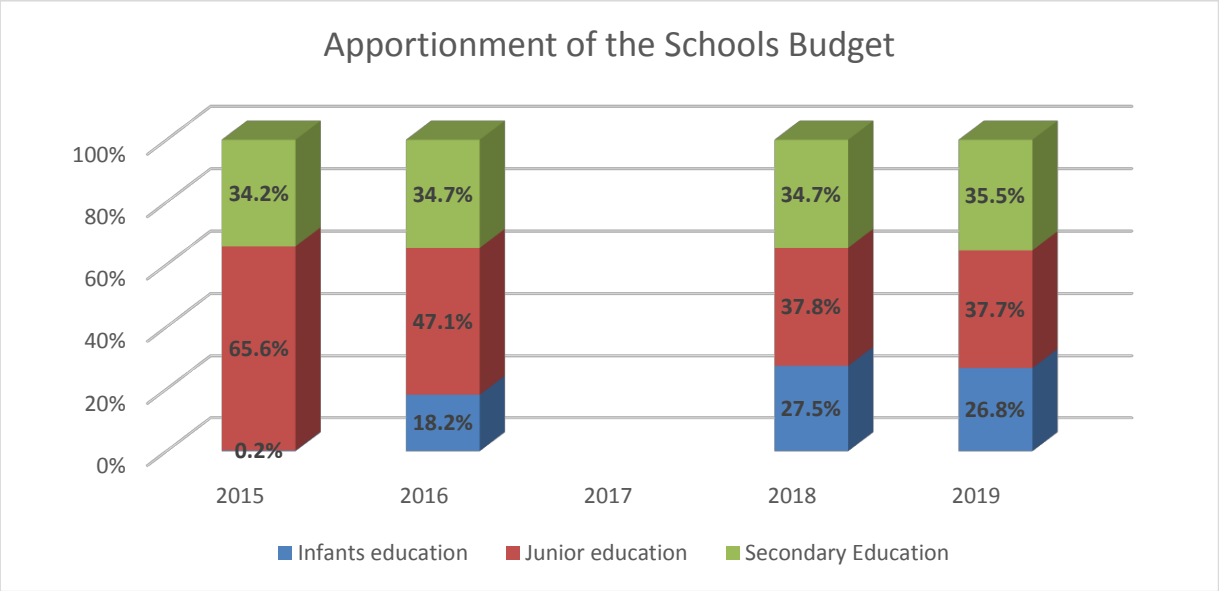
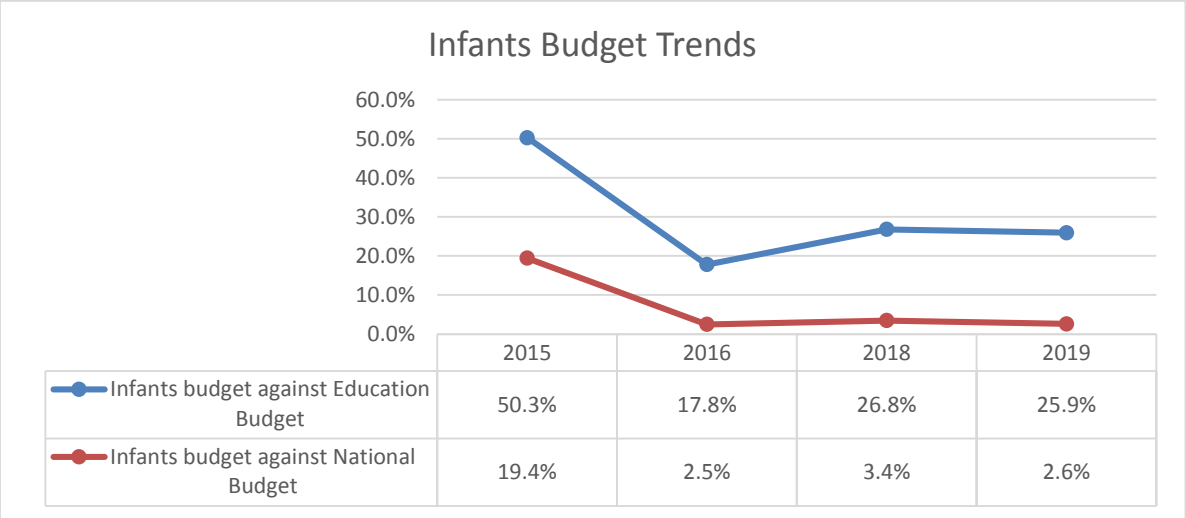


Figure 3: *Apportionment of the Schools Budget for the Past Five Years*[77]

In addition, the funds allocated towards have not been clearly defined in the national fiscus. Thus, having been included in the infant education budget, the total infant education budget has significantly gone down by about 18% over the past five years from 19.1% to 2.8% in 2019. Notably, in 2018, total expenditure on ECD was estimated to be around 3.4% of the national budget according to UNICEF Summative Evaluation of 2019, while actual expenditure on ECD was only 0.8% of the total budget allocated to the primary and secondary education sector[78].



	2015	2016	2018	2019
Infants budget against Education Budget	50.3%	17.8%	26.8%	25.9%
Infants budget against National Budget	19.4%	2.5%	3.4%	2.6%

Figure 4: *Infants Budget Appropriations Over the Past Five Years*

An examination of the budget estimates for 2019 showed clearly laid out that the ECD-B sector was targeting an NER of 60% from 31% and ECD-A 35% from 15%. Given that N.E.R. at Junior level (Grades 3-7) is 80% and that the overall primary NER 91.91%, the expectation would have been that ECD gets

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[78] UNICEF Zimbabwe Education Evaluation Report 2018

preferential funding so that its N.E.R. matches that of the other levels. Instead ECD continues to be underfunded compared to the other levels as illustrated Table 13 and Figure 3. Based on 2018 enrolment figures, the 2019 Infants level received the least grant per child of $198.35 with secondary topping with almost double of infants at $367.49. The total education budget accounts for only 10.9% of the national budget while the total infants' budget accounts for 26% of the total education budget and only 2.8% of the national which is significantly lower than the junior and secondary education. Table 13.

***Table 13: 2019** Budget by School Category and comparison by school enrolment*[79]

School Type	Budget	% of School budget	% of Education Budget	% of National Budget	Enrolment Totals	Unit budget per learner
Infants	$301,561,000.00	26.8%	25.9%	2.8%	1520343	$198.35
Junior	$424,663,000.00	37.7%	36.5%	4.0%	1834453	$231.49
Secondary	$399,035,000.00	35.5%	34.3%	3.7%	1085828	$367.49
Total Schools budget	$1,125,259,000.00			10.5%		
Education budget	$1,162,681,000.00			10.9%		
National Budget	10,688,767,000.00					

The study has attempted to track how funds have been allocated to ECD from available literature[80]. These are shown under ECD or Infant Education and illustrated in the Tables 14 & 15 below. Over the years, while the percentage of the national budget allocated to the education sector continues to be high, a significantly large proportion of it (more than 90%) goes towards human resources.[81] Table 14: The trend has remained the same over the years with only less than 5% of the Education budget allocated to capital expenditure and teaching and learning material.

***Table 14:** Funds **A**llocation of the Infants Budget over the past 5 years in USD*

	2015	2016	2018	2019
Employment Costs		142,730,000	232,485,000	287,172,000
Good and Services	353,000	485,000	3,641,000	4,981,000
Maintenance	3,000		567,000	770,000
Current Transfers	415,000	325,000	2,100,000	1,700,000
Programmes	500,000	430,000		
Acquisitions of fixed capital Assets		150,000	1,097,000	5,600,000
Capital Transfers	500,000	250,000	2,680,000	1,338,000
Infants budget	1,771,000	144,235,000	242,570,000	301,561,000
Total Education budget	890,137,000	810,431,000	905,593,000	1,162,681,000
National budget	4,578,400,000	5,795,804,907	7,033,706,000	10,687,670,000

[79] Zimbabwe 2019 Blue Book

[80] Zimbabwe Blue Books

[81] UNICEF, 2019

***Table 15**: Funds Allocation over the Past 5 Years as Percentages of the Total Infants Budget.*

	2015	2016	2018	2019
Employment Cost	0.0%	98.9%	95.8%	95.2%
Good and Services	19.9%	0.3%	2.5%	1.7%
Maintenance	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%
Current Transfers	23.4%	0.2%	1.5%	9.8%
Programmes	28.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Acquisitions of fixed capital Assets	0.0%	0.1%	0.8%	1.9%
Capital Transfers	28.2%	0.2%	1.9%	0.4%
Total Infants budget	100	100	100	100

Source: "Blue" Books

The only capital expenditure the study noted under 2016 under Education Coordination is USD1 110 000 for 5 ECD centres specifically listed under works to be funded. Since ECD became part of Infant Education/ Module, funds are allocated to the module and inclusive, as such the data available does not show what is being invested specifically into ECD since 2018. These inconsistencies have already been highlighted under policy issues as it affects the allocation of funds as well. It is noteworthy and incongruous that notwithstanding that ECD is the pillar and foundation of education no appropriations were made for ECD in the 2019 budget. This leaves the education system heavily dependent on donor support and parental contributions.

3.9. Sources of funds (2014 to Date

According to both literature review and desk studies, in the fiscal budget and in most grants from international donor organizations, there has not been specific funding channelled towards ECD development and this remains so in 2020 budget with ECD lumped together Infant Module clouding the picture regarding actual expenditure on ECD. Most funds are lumped towards primary and secondary education with ECD benefitting funding allocated towards primary education development as a core group within that cohort. The study shows that UNICEF (2019) report, 3,159 out of the 3,200 schools targeted (98 per cent) received school improvement grants in 2016, benefitting just over 750,000 children. The grants have contributed to the improvement of the schools' physical environment and to the availability of teaching and learning materials. Income from the grants also enhanced the retention of poor children in school by subsidising their overall costs of education. The allocation was not however not specifically towards ECD but for all children in the 4-13 years age category in ECD and primary level[82]. Discussions with KIIs revealed that investment in the ECD sector in Zimbabwe has been very low with initial ECDE National Budget beginning in 2015. From in-depth discussions with KIIs, it was highlighted that since 2015 to 2018, only $7.305 million of the $3.47763 billion Education non-salary budget has been invested in ECDE broken down as $820,000 for teaching learning materials, $245 000 supervision and monitoring activities and $5.66 million for the construction of more age appropriate infrastructure. The level of funding is not sufficient as no less than $50 million per year of non-salary is required to provide adequate and age appropriate infrastructure, equipment and facilities. Little has been devoted towards ECD development from the national budget besides the government's effort to introduce austerity measures on education

[82] UNICEF, 2019 : Source http://www.unicef.org/

development in the country, notwithstanding that ECD is the backbone and basic foundation of all education. From 2015 to 2018, there was mention of ECD in the National Budget Statement by Minister of Finance and a corresponding budget line but as of 2019 there was none of both. No budget has been allocated for ECD teachers. A large proportion (16.9%)[83] of the national budget was allocated to primary and secondary education but no specific allocations have been made towards ECD.

The World Bank (WB) is acknowledged as a leader internationally in terms of funding ECD recognising as it does the importance in investing in ECD for human development. Zimbabwe could be benefitting more in terms of funds if it paid up its arrears to WB which were said to date back to 2000. Currently Zimbabwe is not International Development Assistance (IDA) eligible but has benefitted from the Zimbabwe Reconstruction Fund (*ZIMREF*) a little over U$1m over the past three years and from Early Learning Partnership Trust funds ($250 000) which is very little compared to what other countries are getting.[84]

There was also a total of US$558,036.35 funding from the UN Australia National Committee and administered by UNICEF between June 2014 and ended in December 2018[85] for a schools Water Sanitation and Hygiene project. The aim of the project aimed to improve access to safe water by pupils and communities in the catchment areas of twenty-seven (27) satellite schools in three districts of Hurungwe, Mwenezi and Binga. Some of the key outcomes of the project were to have appropriate sanitation facilities for 500 ECD pupils at 27 satellite schools by June 2018 and to train at least 300 teachers in child friendly teaching methodologies by June 2018. The project paid special attention to students with special needs such as those living with disabilities and students in Early Childhood Development (ECD) classes. In this regard, sanitation infrastructure was designed to make them accessible to these target groups as well[86]. Over US$130 million, has also been invested in the education sector, through the GPE and Education Development Fund (EDF) and an approximate USD118.8 million of this was received for ECD development.[87] Contributing funding partners to the EDF included the UK Department for International Development (DFID), Finland, the European Commission (EC), Germany, the United States Fund for UNICEF through the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA), Norway and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The grant was managed by UNICEF.

3.10. Contributions by multilateral institutions

According to discussions with KIIs, ECOZI, has been advocating for innovative education finance models to ensure appropriate funding of the education sector which is inclusive of ECD up to Advanced Level. Efforts are being made to have a budget allocation of 2% on the fiscus towards ECD from the current 0.001% for them to benefit as a subgroup. Lobbying for increased domestic financing from the fiscus ensures sustainability of the funding mechanisms. Lessons can be learnt from countries[88] which have used “sin tax” or money from lotteries to finance ECD and others who have successfully lobbied their governments to increase allocation to ECD.

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[83] Citizen’s Budget: A Citizen’s Guide to the 2019 National Budget page 15

[84] KIIs

[85] 2018: UNICEF Water Sanitation and Hygiene Project In Satellite Schools End of Project Evaluation, 2019, - Source: https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Zimbabwe-2018-004-WASH_in_Schools_Evaluation_Final_Report.pdf

[86] 2019 UNICEF WASH in Schools Project Final Evaluation Report

[87] UNICEF Zimbabwe: Education Summative Evaluation Report, 2018

[88] Research for Development August 2016 page30

The responsibility to finance ECD lies with the Goz through MoPSE, however, it has emerged that development partners have been responsible for funding of most activities. To complement these efforts, lobbying for churches, local authorities and communities to finance ECD activities should be promoted since little is being done towards this and hence finance for ECD is dwindling.

Due to the sensitivity regarding financing of activities, there were no responses to this section with the exception of one organization who reported receiving an average of USD2500 per annum towards ECD learning kits and equipment since 2014 from JF Kapneck Trust. Thus, a trend analysis could not be done due to the non-responses to analyse the funds received from the various sources to date and how they have been allocated. The sensitivity which surrounds ECD finances may be due to inadequate tracking mechanisms. It has been observed elsewhere that "*Data on financing ECD services is difficult to obtain and analyse. Tracing the flow of ECD financing from sources of funds to beneficiary is extremely challenging. Many countries have uncoordinated institutional arrangements for financing ECD and/or an opaque budget development process*."[89]

3.11. Tracking mechanisms

The survey revealed that there are no specific monitoring and tracking mechanisms of funding that comes in towards ECD Development. Most funding is administered and managed by funding sources who have the overall oversight of funds administration. Researchers have found that, in most development initiatives, were financial support is from International Organizations such as UNICEF and other Civil Society Organizations (INGO/NGOs) the Implementation and supervision of activities is done jointly through existing Rural District Council structures, school structures and community management structures and other NGOs[90]. Although there are policies governing this, little has been done by both government and key stakeholders in monitoring the allocation and use of funds with monitoring and audits being mainly initiated and conducted by funding partners. While MoPSE occasionally undertakes audits, these are not as regular as they should be due to resource challenges and are not specifically targeting ECD funds. School financing has resulted in huge inequity issues generated from an arrangement in which parental contributions provide anything that is not employment costs with additional support from donor funds. Furthermore linked to the paucity of government finance beyond teachers' salaries and allowances and the unchanged de facto prioritisation of the government budget not enabling greater operational school finance has resulted in even district operations being funded as a proportion of the levies charged by schools with little transparency in the management of these funds and no oversight on their use.[91]

This has been identified as a weakness as there is no accountability to the stakeholders and other key players. Some development partners do their own monitoring but this is said to be inadequate as it is usually done sometimes as just a day's visit to the site once a term[92]. The study also showed that stakeholders mainly rely on data from Education Management Information System (EMIS) to inform policy design but the data captured is not comprehensive to inform ECD policies adequately. There are no structured data collection systems and monitoring and evaluation frameworks by independent bodies besides those set by MoPSE on funding of ECD activities, infrastructure development, pupil enrolment and their pyscho-social needs.

Besides fostering of transparency, accountability and learning, proper monitoring and tracking mechanisms by the umbrella organization can adequately inform the technical working group in policy design, lobbying and advocacy. This can contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the various

[89] Research for Development August 2016 page a28

[91] UNICEF Support for Education in Zimbabwe, Summative Evaluation Report 2019, page 72

[92] Ki

interventions by funding partners and key stakeholders as well as eliminating duplication of efforts and unequal distribution or re-directing of resources in consultation with the funding sources.

4. Conclusion

On the basis of available data, the study reached the following conclusions:

4.1. The Status of SDG 4.2 in Zimbabwe

1. While Enrolments into ECD are increasing they have not translated into high NER when compared against a N.E.R. of 89. 87 at primary school level suggests that a high proportion of children enrol into the formal primary school without attending ECD. It further suggests that there is a high proportion of over-aged children being enrolled.
2. The SDG.4.2.1 makes specific reference to proportion of children under 5 who are on developmentally on track attributable to ECD programme and the study found the N.E.R. stands at only 32%. Progress has been minimal since ECD became mandatory in 2006.
3. The N.E.R. of 32% is suggestive of an equally low participation rate in organised learning a year prior formal schooling. that the participation rate at ECD-B is higher than that at ECD-A is because parents were said to engage in "strategic enrolment" to ensure enrolment into Grade One.
4. Issues that militate against access include costs to parents, distances the young children have to walk to ECD centres, lack of capacity by ECD centres to enrol all the eligible children. It was also noted that some parents did not appreciate the value ECD.
5. There is serious inequity in the provision and delivery of ECD with scales tipped in favour of communities which have capacity (to resource ECD) and interest in it and this leads to differentials in the quality of ECD provided with the rural areas being particularly disadvantaged.
6. Provision for children with disability was also near non-exist except for those living with physical disability. It was noted that a wide range of children living such disabilities such as visual impairment and psycho-social problems and poor growth are not catered for.
7. The new curriculum is couched along the lines of the formal school curriculum which is subject based as against developmental milestones which need to be reached in preparation for formal learning; it needs to be revisited. Further to that there is no assessment scheme to enable early identification, intervention and placement (in cases of need) of children with developmental problems before they leave ECD.
8. The majority 81.1 % of ECD learners are enrolled in rural areas which are operate in under depraved conditions in terms infrastructure and other resources.
9. MoPSE has an inadequate data *base* for ECD to inform and guide policy. Policies are therefore either misinformed and become, as one key informant called them, "bouncing cheques". EMIS and ICT policy should address the of the information needs of ECD.

4.2. Supervision and Management

1. ECD is supervised within the framework of the structures of MoPSE. The ministry structures for supervision and inspection end at school level and to a large extent exclude those classes/ centres which do not fall within easy reach as well the unregistered ones leaving children prone to exposure to substandard ECD programmes.
2. There is inadequate coordination with MoH&CC and MoLPS & SW in terms of inspection and supervision of the aspects that are under their mandates.
3. The process of registration for private ECD centres is cumbersome as it falls under three ministries each charging high initial and recurrent costs for registration. Providers believe this is unfair as they complement government in providing an essential service and which government has no capacity to meet.

4.3. Government implementation plans/oversight on ECD in Zimbabwe

Structures for implementation and oversight are in place. The challenge is at point of delivery as the structures are not supported by the investment needed to meet the commitments. Liaison among MoH& CC,MoLPS& SW as well MoHTETSD needs strengthening .

4.4. Stakeholder mapping

A wide variety of ECD players are available there is however little coordination and integration for maximum use of their comparative advantage. MoUs take too long to process thus delaying or discouraging engagement when it would benefit the program and facilitate the attainment of the SDG 4. 2.

4.5. Contributions by multilateral institutions/ Sources of funds (2014 to Date)

Parents and development partners have borne the brunt for funding of most ECD activities. While WB is known be largest funder globally ECD Zimbabwe has not benefited as much as other countries due to arrears dating back 2000. Efforts are being made to lobby (through PPCE and others) for a budget allocation of 2% from the fiscus towards ECD from the current 0.001%.

4.6. Budget Trends

Notwithstanding that ECD is the backbone and basic foundation of all education. It remains ill-funded and if there is a financial crisis either at household or national level ECD is the first casualty as can be recalled that from 2015 to 2018, there was mention of ECD in the National Budget Statement by Minister of Finance and a corresponding budget line but as of 2019 there was none of both.

4.7. Tracking mechanisms

The survey revealed that there are no proper monitoring and tracking mechanisms of funding that comes in towards ECD. Although there are policies governing this, little has been done by both government and key stakeholders in monitoring the allocation and use of funds with monitoring and audits being mainly initiated and conducted by funding partners.

The study noted that the ECD budget is in real terms declining. None of the agencies interviewed however submitted the budget tracking tool that was part of the data tools of the study. This non submission could be indicative of inadequacy of tracking mechanism rather than unwillingness to disclose budget expenditure patterns. Whatever the case maybe it does not augur well for effective collaborations and partnerships as transparency and accountability are a sine- qua- non for effective collaboration.

5. Recommendations

Some of the recommendations below represent the views of the different stakeholders and are not necessarily the views of the consultants. They will be presented and adjustments made as necessary at the stakeholders' validation workshop to be organized by the client at a date to be advised.

1. Goz as duty bearer of the of the " *right to quality ECD for all children* …." should provide for ECD a specific budget line and work towards increasing that budget towards the 1% GDP and 10% of the Education budget in line with international trends and the commitments the country has made both in the constitution and towards vision 2030. To that extend it should explore innovative ways of financing ECD both from locally and abroad and increasing ECD non-salary financing to no less than 2% of national budget or 1% GDP.
2. Goz should set SMART targets and a budgetary provision for increasing N.E.R. and participation rate and improve other quality indicators of the SDG 4. 2 so as to achieve this target by 2030. This will require re-strategizing and re-invigorating efforts targeted specifically at ECD as progress has been minimal so far.
3. Goz should provide targeted support to disadvantaged rural and less to do communities to address issues of equity.
4. Goz /MoPSE should strengthen current partnerships without closing doors to new ones and create a mechanism that ensures coordination and maximum and effective use of resources
5. MoPSE should retain the ECD department to be headed by a senior position (director and above) with ECD expertise which enables participation in senior Ministry decision making processes and gives expert support to teachers at District level as close to the teacher as possible.
6. MoPSE should provide guidance on early identification and intervention of children with disability and poor growth. Teacher can undergo INSET on this. In addition, there should be provision for children with special needs all kinds to make sure that "no child is left behind".
7. MoPSE should revisit the curriculum to align it to the modes of learning of children appropriate to the level of development of the 3- 5 age range; making it developmental -milestone based.
8. MoPSE as lead agency should engage all relevant ministries to ensure their cooperation and participation to ensure achievement of the SDG 4.2 targets. MoHTETSD should ensure that its teacher education curriculum remains relevant to the needs of the teaching service. MoH& CC should undertake regular health checks and assist in early identification and intervention as and when needed. MoLPS&SW should also undertake regular checks to ensure Learner welfare is safe guarded and promoted. This is best provided for in an all-inclusive truly national ELP whose development the MoPSE should lead.
9. MoPSE should establishing or re-establishing provincial and district level structures and expertise which focus on building ECD capacity and expertise in communities, schools and districts; retaining the ECD department to be headed by a senior position (director and above) with ECD expertise which enables participation in senior Ministry decision making processes as well at field level to give support to teachers.
10. MoPSE in conjunction with CSOs should develop a strategy for collecting, disseminating and ensure utilisation of relevant research studies for more evidence- based programming
11. EMIS and the ICT policy should address the broad spectrum of data needs of ECD so that policies and programmes (and partners) can be informed with the accurate information at the right.
12. A Country-wide Monitoring and Evaluation system needs to be urgently developed to reduce over-reliance on the one main source of data (EMIS) in order to ensure that all relevant data is captured in a systematic and structured manner to allow informed policy development and efficient and effective allocation of resources.
13. CSOs should conduct on-going awareness raising efforts on the importance of ECD as human development issue at every level of decision-making beginning at household level.

14. National Stakeholders /CSOs should increase engagement of PPCE and equip them with the information they need to lobby for increased funding from the national budget, mobilise their constituents and exercise their oversight role. Development partners can such efforts even in the face of changing leadership such efforts be on-going.
15. Given lack of evidence of SDG4 Reporting, the study recommends shadow reporting.
16. A study to establish unit cost for ECD learner should be undertaken so that realistic the budgetary provisions can be made or sourced.
17. The success of all these recommendations will hinge on a policy environment that is inclusive and takes into account the various agencies and ministries that have a role in ECD and the need for clear role clarification, clear accountability mechanisms.

6. References

(i) Goz: Education Act, Chapter 25:04 being amended by Education Amendment Bill (H.B.I, 2019

(ii) Goz: Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005

(iii) MoPSE Circular Minute Number 12 of 2005

(iv) MoPSE Education Report, 2017

(v) MoPSE Education Sector Strategic Plan 2016-2020

(vi) MoPSE - 2018 Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report - July 2019

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7. ANNEXES

Annex 1 TORs

Annex 2 ZINECDA-ECOZI ECD Baseline Report Structure

Annex 3 ZINECDA-ECOZI ECD Baseline - KI Guide – MoPSE

Annex 4 ZINECDA-ECOZI ECD Baseline - KI Guide - MoHCC and MoPSLSW

Annex 5 ZINECDA-ECOZI ECD Baseline - KI Guide - Parliamentary Committee

Annex 6 ZINECDA-ECOZI ECD Baseline - KI Guide – Partners

Annex 7 List of Key Informants who responded