

March 2025, Harare, Zimbabwe

# Performance-Based Financing Primary Education System in Zimbabwe

## FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT REPORT



**Cordaid** 

BUILDING FLOURISHING COMMUNITIES

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

A-Level	Advanced Level
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
CO	Country Office
CORDAID	Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DEO	District Education Office
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSI	District School Inspection
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECG	Education Coordination Group
ECOZI	Education Coalition of Zimbabwe
EDF	Education Development Fund
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FCDO	The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, United Kingdom
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, German Development Bank
LMIC	Low and Middle-Income Countries
MoPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
MoFED&IP	Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion
MoHTEISTD	Ministry of Higher & Tertiary Education Innovation, Science, and Technology Development
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NFE	Non-Formal Education
O-Level	Ordinary Level
PBF	Performance-Based Financing
PCE	Pupil to Classroom Ratio
PED	Provincial Education Director
PEO	Provincial Education Office
RBF	Results Based Financing
SEN	Special Education Needs
SHP	School Health Policy
SIG	School Improvement Grant
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
ToR	Terms of Reference
TEACH	Teach and Educate Adolescent Girls with Community Help
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WinS	Wash in Schools
ZIMCODD	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development
ZIMSEC	Zimbabwe School Examinations Council
ZELA	Zimbabwe Early Learning Assessment

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a feasibility assessment conducted by Cordaid and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) during the period January and March 2025. The purpose of the assessment was to establish the feasibility of supporting and implementing a Performance Based Financing (PBF) Education Showcase Project that will strengthen the provision of quality and accessible primary education services in Zimbabwe. The assessment was also expected to provide benchmark information that would be used to mobilize resources to support implementation of the PBF Showcase project.

The assessment was cross sectional in design and data (both quantitative and qualitative) were collected through interviews and discussions with policy makers, education managers, research and monitoring and evaluation personnel, school administrators, teachers, members of School Development Committees (SDCs), development partners and donors, using a set of data collection tools (discussion guides). Data were also collected through desk reviews.

Eight primary schools participated in the assessment, and these were selected from 4 districts that were purposively sampled from two provinces. To promote regional balance, two provinces were selected, one from the northern region (Mashonaland West) and the other from the southern region (Matabeleland North). In each province, two districts were selected to participate in the assessment: Hurungwe and Kariba in Mashonaland West and Binga and Lupane in Matabeleland North. The provinces and districts were purposively sampled based on their low pass rates at Grade 2 and 7 assessment levels.

Fieldwork was conducted by two teams (one for Mashonaland West and the other for Matabeleland North) made up of officials from the MoPSE (national, provincial and district offices), Cordaid Global Office and Cordaid Zimbabwe Office. Based on findings from the interviews conducted at national and subnational levels, members of the two data collection teams anonymously filled in a feasibility scan, which was used to calculate and determine a feasibility score for PBF in primary education in Zimbabwe.

The overall score obtained at the end of the feasibility analysis was 73%, indicating sufficient ownership, supportive circumstances and backing for PBF in Primary Education in Zimbabwe. Consistently, the feasibility analysis also showed that all the 6 PBF principles are applicable to the local context (92%), all the objectives of PBF are aligned to government policy on education and there is buy-in/support for the approach at national and subnational levels (93%), the environment to showcase the PBF project in selected pilot districts is conducive (81%), and that the PBF approach is scalable and can be institutionalized for sustainability (78%). Most of the assessors did not perceive the existence of serious shortcomings in terms of transparency and accountability, nor concerning the reliability and availability of data in the sector. Donors and development partners interviewed expressed sound interest in the PBF approach and had positive perspectives on how the approach would help improve the education landscape in the country. However, the major challenge in implementing the approach is the constrained domestic and donor financing in the country. Detailed results of the feasibility scan are presented in chapter 5 of the report. The overall conclusion of the assessment was that it is feasible and viable to initiate a contextualised PBF approach in Primary education in Zimbabwe, first as a pilot in selected schools (with their DEOs and PEOs) and then scaling it up.

While it seems feasible to apply PBF to the education sector in Zimbabwe, some key considerations need to be made when designing the approach to enhance its success. The following **four key questions** must be answered objectively and with sincerity if the approach is to be successful:

1. *How to ensure that PBF is as inexpensive/cost effective as possible without losing effectiveness?*
2. *How to ensure the right balance between full integration of PBF within existing education programs and policies and the PBF as a complementarity approach?*
3. *To what extent should we adapt the traditional PBF design to address question 1 and 2?*
4. *To what extent should the intervention be scaled or target specific areas that lag behind?*

In the event that PBF is implemented in the primary education sector of Zimbabwe, the following **recommendations** are given for its design:

***Recommendation related to Context and scope:***

- First, showcase the PBF approach in primary education in a few targeted districts that are most marginalised with the lowest education outcomes, given the importance of reducing inequities in the country. These tend to be more remote areas. Consider districts with low pass rates for the Grade 7 examination, with a high number of non-readers or those with high drop-out rates. It could be an area that was visited during the feasibility assessment.
- Inequities within a district should also be considered in the design through, for example, considering the differences between schools located in remote areas vs. those in town and developing equity bonuses for the most vulnerable schools or indicators specifically focusing on students that are left behind (e.g., students with special needs).

***Recommendations related to (Institutional) setup:***

- Keep the design simple so that all actors, including the schools and their SDCs, can understand it easily and perceive the direct link between increased performance and payment.
- When designing PBF, consider long term sustainability, gradual scalability and a simple design.
- Build on the existing system structures and systemised practices in primary education that are supportive of PBF: each school, with support of the SDC, must already develop a School Development Plan that's broken down annually, which can serve as a basis for PBF contractualization. The District School Inspectorate (DSI) and Provincial Education Directorate (PED) already have partially standardized regulatory and supervisory mechanisms in place, such as the E-Inspection Tool that could be utilized for quality verifications by the DSI to the schools. Data collection & reporting should be aligned or integrated with existing routine MoPSE data reporting systems as much as possible.
- There is a need to simplify the verification process whilst maintaining its effectiveness, including modalities for achieving verifications at scale. Given the high number of schools, over time, a possible risk-based verification modality has to be designed and introduced.
- Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) could potentially serve as a contracting and verification agency, conducting independent school verifications, given its experience in verifying School Improvement Grant (SIG) usage at sampled schools.

***Recommendations related to Indicators and subsidies:***

- During the design phase, it is important to consider indicators that address access, quality, equity and inclusion. A larger focus should be placed on quality of education and reducing inequities. Access and inclusion should mainly focus on those children left behind (e.g., special needs children).
- Use an equity bonus to balance and motivate teachers to work in remote locations. It may need to be considered to give higher equity bonuses or set higher prices for satellite schools.
- Both the selected indicators and verification modalities should be aligned as closely as possible with the existing EMIS, supervision tools, and school calendar.
- At DSI level, consider indicators and subsidy levels to encourage them to support the most remote schools and those with low education outcomes.
- Given the challenge of teacher motivation, ideally a small part of the PBF payments can be used for staff incentives to motivate them (especially in rural areas).
- To support and enhance climate-smart programming in schools, climate-smart indicators should be integrated in the quality indicators.

## 2. BACKGROUND OF THE FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

This section provides a background understanding of the feasibility assessment, what is being assessed and how. First, a theoretical foundation of PBF is described examining the PBF principles, mechanisms and rational behind the systems strengthening approach. This is followed by an explanation of the scope and methodology used during the feasibility assessment.

### 2.1 UNPACKING PERFORMANCE BASED FINANCING

Broader than PBF is the often-used term, Results Based Financing (RBF). RBF is an overarching term that covers a broad range of supply or demand-side interventions, which all incorporate incentives or output-based payments. RBF is often defined as (Musgrove, 2011):

***"Any cash payment or non-monetary transfer made to a national or sub-national government, manager, provider, payer or consumer of services after predefined results have been attained and verified. Payment is conditional on measurable actions being undertaken".***

Compared to the traditional financing mechanisms in the education sector where inputs are provided to service providers (e.g., schools), RBF directly ties financing to obtained results rather than financing inputs centrally. RBF is an approach which is increasingly being used in low and middle-income countries (LMIC) to improve social service outcomes.

PBF is a specific form of RBF focussing on the supply side of an education system that is defined by three distinct features: (1) incentives are directed towards the service provider, that is the schools; (2) incentives are financial; (3) incentives are based on a fixed fee per output and includes a quality component<sup>1</sup>. With these conditions in mind, PBF can be defined as: a systems-strengthening approach that provides an additional form of financing, on top of regular (public) funding, to service providers (schools), through financial rewards for the delivery of outputs, upon the verification that the agreed-upon and reported performance has taken place, enabling the service providers (schools) to autonomously purchase inputs to improve the accessibility and quality of education and ultimately learning outcomes. Generally, local education authorities, for example at the district and provincial level, are also part of the institutional setup and they are financially rewarded in their respective roles such as supervision and inspection.

To operationalize the concept of PBF, implementation of this approach can be illustrated in a cyclical process

**PBF education has four key objectives:**

1. Increased Access to and Utilization of education
2. Improved Quality of education
3. Increased Reliability of education data (through strict verification)
4. Improved Governance through increased Transparency and Accountability.

generally defined by six components:

1. As a first step, schools periodically develop **business plans** in a participatory manner, such as with their School Development Committee (e.g., annually). These plans are aligned with or based on existing school improvement plans.
2. The purchaser (the party assigned to contract service providers) periodically (e.g., annually) signs **contracts** with schools and district/provincial education regulators upon approved business plans.
3. Schools carry out their **business plan** and **activities** during school terms. Follow-up & coaching is usually provided by the purchaser.
4. Periodically (e.g., per school term) schools and education regulators **report results**.

- The verification agency (the party that has been assigned to check these results), **verifies** reported results of schools and regulators, while usually the quality of schools is verified in conjunction with the regulator (e.g., district education office). A sample of learners and their parents per school will be interviewed by contracted community-based organizations (CBOs) about their satisfaction with the schools.
- The party that has been assigned the role of fundholder validates invoices & **pays** the contracted actors (schools, regulators and CBOs) based on their verified performance. . Part of the payment can be used for salary top-ups to motivate staff, while the majority of the payment should be used for investments proposed in the school business plans.

The visual below illustrates the described six step PBF process:



The design and contextualization of a PBF approach is always done in close collaboration with key education stakeholders in a country. Cordaid has defined six key PBF principles that can be used as a framework to lead this design to ensure the effectiveness of PBF interventions in addressing general systemic challenges. The six principles are linked to the following general education sector challenges:

- Low staff dedication and motivation: Linking payments to results **motivates** staff
- Expectations and priorities are not clear: Contracting schools, educational authorities and CBOs creates **clarity** of each other’s roles, expectations, and priorities and shifts **accountability** to producing results.
- Plans do not correspond to reality: **Autonomy** of schools to plan and implement their own solutions.
- No checks and balances: Separation of functions in the institutional design of a PBF intervention.
- The end user has little power and voice: Incorporate **community** perspectives through satisfaction surveys with parents and learners.
- Unequal access to education: Improve **equity** through design options such as paying higher amounts to remote schools or vulnerable children.

The visual below illustrates how the six PBF principles can address the education sector challenges:

**ADDRESSING EDUCATION SYSTEM CHALLENGES THROUGH 6 PBF PRINCIPLES**



When these six design principles are safeguarded and PBF is contextualized and implemented well, PBF can be a system-strengthening approach effectively addressing challenges in the education sector while reinforcing existing organizational structures and relations among education actors. Here are some ways in which PBF can contribute to aspects of a country's education system:

- **Service delivery:** PBF improves the *accessibility* and *quality* of education for all children, especially for girls and vulnerable children. Schools are financially supported in a performance-based way stimulating them to ensure a conducive and safe learning environment while having the autonomy to invest in their infrastructure. Schools can also decide to invest in midday meals or lower tuition fees to improve accessibility and improve concentration of students. As a result of better access and higher quality education, parents are more capable and motivated to send and keep their children in school.
- **Education workforce:** Through PBF, the education workforce becomes more motivated and committed, due to improved working conditions and because (in most PBF programs) they receive individual salary top-ups on a regular basis. Moreover, indicators at school and regulator levels can incentivize continuous professional education for teaching staff.
- **Education information system:** The quality of data on aspects measured in PBF improves. The verified data collected within PBF education programs (e.g., access and quality indicators, as well as parents/student satisfaction), allow more evidence-based decision-making at local and higher levels of the education system.
- **Access to school inputs and materials:** Although generally manuals and books for the public education system come from the national level, PBF stimulates schools to become more entrepreneurial and find creative ways to actively address shortages in materials (e.g., books, manuals, school kits, menstrual hygiene products, etc.) which hamper the quality of education.
- **Education financing:** By enhancing transparency and accountability, PBF allows for the available funds to be used in cost-effective ways, in particular through the decentralization of financial autonomy to schools and local education authorities. In light of sustainability and over time, it is important to gradually integrate these financing mechanisms into the education system at large.
- **Leadership and governance:** PBF strengthens the capacity of education authorities at all levels. It provides the school directors, teachers, school development committees and local authorities with effective management tools, e.g., business planning and supervisory tools, leading to increased transparency and accountability among education actors and thus to a stronger governance structure.
- **Parent, learners and community engagement:** Because schools are financially incentivised to improve student and parent satisfaction, this encourages them to listen to the needs of the parents and community, increasing the accountability of the school to the community. Schools should integrate parent, learner and community needs into their PBF business planning cycle. School-level incentives can also be developed to encourage community and specifically parent engagement in school activities.

## 2.2 SCOPE OF THE FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

The Zimbabwean primary education set-up has similarities with the system in Uganda where PBF in education has been initiated producing promising results in improving access to and quality of education. Many education sectors have needs that cannot be fulfilled because of inadequate funding. Any contribution, PBF or purely input based can be expected to have some positive change on improving the educational levels. Compared to the large amounts needed, spending a (limited) budget reserved for an intervention such as PBF will only be meaningful if it delivers relatively quick and efficient changes that are visible and generate interest of donors and policy makers. This is more likely to happen with a PBF intervention focusing on primary education where Cordaid has experience. Therefore, Cordaid already developed best practices in PBF in Primary Education in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, Ethiopia and Burundi. As indicated earlier, Cordaid gained PBF experience in Zimbabwe through the health sector since 2011. Hence these experiences and lessons learnt can also be tailor made to and be replicated in the education sector for positive education outcomes.

Cordaid in collaboration with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) through an assessment, conducted a feasibility of supporting and implementing a PBF in Education Showcase Project in Zimbabwe. Data and information collected through the feasibility assessment will inform if there is sufficient support and a conducive environment for the development of a showcase PBF Project (including the possibilities for resources mobilization) in the country. Cordaid global office therefore mobilized resources to perform a feasibility assessment, with MoPSE, taking into account the following main guiding questions:

- Will a showcase project make useful impact on improving access and quality of education?
- Is a showcase project technically implementable, while meeting the basic PBF principles?
- Is there enough (initial) political and policy commitment, interest and potential ownership?
- Is there potential for (external) funding: first to develop a PBF (learning) showcase project and when proved to be successful for gradual scale up?

The following were the specific objectives of the feasibility assessment:

- Identifying and analysing existing education system mechanisms (actors, roles, practice)
- Identifying contextual education challenges (e.g., accessibility, equity, quality of services; data reliability and management; local/national governance) in the study areas
- Assessing the extent to which PBF could address these challenges (relevance of PBF objectives).
- Assessing the extent to which challenges of the education system can be addressed through the PBF principles e.g., staff motivation, priority/role clarity, planning and financial autonomy, check and balances, parents/teacher empowerment, service equitability (Relevance of PBF principles)
- Assessing whether there are favourable circumstances that can promote the implementation of PBF e.g., availability of a formal information system, school supervision, sufficient staff, periodic action planning
- Assessing the extent to which PBF principles can be applied to the local context
- Assessing the extent to which PBF objectives are aligning with national and decentralized education policies in Zimbabwe (Alignment and ownership)
- Evaluating the acceptance of PBF by education stakeholders at the national level, provincial level and district level (Alignment and ownership)
- Assessing the interest of potential donors for PBF education in Zimbabwe & potential for (co)-funding.

*Upon request the Terms of Reference (ToR) used to shape the assessment is available to interested parties.*

## 2.3 METHODOLOGY OF THE FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

**Assessment sites:**

The assessment was conducted at national level (at the MoPSE HQ) and in two provinces (Mashonaland West and Matabeleland North). In each province, two districts were sampled for data collection: Hurungwe and Kariba in Mashonaland West and Binga and Lupane in Matabeleland North. A total of 8 primary schools were then selected from the two districts to participate in the assessment (see table below). Selection of the two provinces by the MoPSE was done purposively, to promote regional balance (Mashonaland West is located in the northern region of the country and Matabeleland South is in the southern region) and also due to the prevailing low pass rates at grades 2 and 7 assessment levels in the two provinces. The 4 districts were then also purposively sampled based on their low pass rates at the same assessment levels.

Table 1: Distribution of sampled schools by district and province

Province	District	Schools
Matabeleland North	Binga	Kariyangwe Primary School Lubu Primary School
	Lupane	Mzola 47 Primary School
Mashonaland West	Hurungwe	Katenhe Primary School Sadze Primary School Hilltop Satellite Primary School
	Kariba	Nyanhewe Primary School Mahombekombe Primary School.

**Design of the assessment:**

The assessment was cross sectional in design. Data (both quantitative and qualitative) was collected through interviews and discussions with policy makers, education managers, research and monitoring and evaluation personnel, school administrators, teachers, members of School Development Committees (SDCs), development partners and donors at national and subnational levels, using a set of standardized data collection tools. *The detailed data collection questionnaires are available on request to interested parties.* The assessment undertook a participatory process that entailed the following:

1. Before the assessment, Cordaid Country Office (CO) and Global Office (GO) carried out preparatory research on education sector policy documents (see Annex 10 for documents reviewed). The initial document review was important preparatory work that delineated the scope of the mission.
2. A feasibility assessment training/orientation meeting for the fieldwork team was conducted to create a common understanding on PBF, the scope, methodology and data collection tools.
3. Discussions with the MoPSE at national and subnational levels, donors, education partners, schools and community members. All interviews were conducted jointly by MoPSE and Cordaid.
4. A debriefing meeting was held at MoPSE for senior staff, the Permanent Secretary & Deputy Minister.

**Data collection and Analysis:**

Fieldwork was conducted by two teams (one for Mashonaland West and the other for Matabeleland North) made up of officials from the MoPSE (national, provincial and district offices), Cordaid GO and Cordaid CO. At each provincial level, courtesy calls and interviews were conducted with the MoPSE Provincial Education Directorate and other related Government Departments. This was also the case in each district where courtesy calls and interviews were done first with the District Schools Inspectorates. Three sets of standard interview guides (for regulators, donors and schools) were used to engage with policy makers, school development authorities, civil society organisations, school heads, teachers, school development committees and donors/development partners (World Bank, FCDO, UNICEF and ECOZI). A complete list of organizations and individuals interviewed is presented in Annex 7. The purpose of the interview guides were to provide interviewers with potential questions that could be asked in relation to specific criteria in the feasibility tool. The guides were not meant to be used as structured interview guides, but rather as means to support interviewers in determining which type of questions could be asked. Where applicable, relevant questions that were not on the interview guides were asked to get more specific information.

Based on findings from the interviews conducted at national and subnational levels, members of the two data collection teams filled in a feasibility scan tool, which was used to objectively calculate and determine a

feasibility score for the country on seven categories each with a number of questions and different weights (see annex 8). A higher score indicates that circumstances are favourable and seems opportunities are conducive to implement PBF to strengthen Zimbabwe's primary education system. The Delphi Technique was used in determining the final average score through group consensus based on each participant's expertise and information collected. All the assessment participants filled-in the feasibility scan individually for 2 rounds. Their anonymous responses were aggregated, shared and discussed with the group after each round. The feasibility scan tool was used before in Burkina Faso (2023), Uganda (2019), Ethiopia (2021) and Mali (2022),

## 3. THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE

### 3.1 STRUCTURE OF ZIMBABWE'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Zimbabwe education system falls under the responsibility of two ministries: the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Innovation Science, and Technology Development (MoHTEISTD). MoPSE is responsible for primary education, including ECD, secondary and non-formal education. The MoHTEISTD is responsible for higher and tertiary education. Other ministries control various Technical and Vocational Education and Trainings (TVET). The Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) and the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement (MoLAFWRS) are responsible for post-secondary education through nursing programmes and agricultural institutions respectively. Annex 3 provides an overview of key policies in the Zimbabwean Education sector, while annex 9 shows the organisational set-up of MoPSE.

The formal education system in Zimbabwe is divided into a 2-7-4-2-3+ structure with school years running from January to December divided into three terms with one-month breaks in between each term. Primary education consists of nine years of schooling: 4 years of infant education followed by five years of junior education. Primary education starts with 2 years of Early Childhood Development (ECD) for 4-year-olds (ECD A) and 5-year-olds (ECD B). ECD schooling helps learners develop pre-formal skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening through play. Formal primary education starts at age six in Grade 1 and continues through Grade 7. At the end of grade 7, students take an exam for the Grade Seven Certificate. Secondary school consists of six grades in total and is divided into two cycles. The first cycle is lower secondary (grades 8-11; Forms 1-4; 13-16-year-olds) referred to as the Ordinary Level (O-Level) cycle. At the end of lower secondary (grade 11), students sit for the Zimbabwe General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level (ZGCEO-Level). The second cycle, upper secondary (grades 12-13; Forms 5-6; 17-18-year olds), known as the Advanced Level (A-Level) cycle is optional, and at the end of upper secondary, students sit for the Higher School Certificate (HSC) or Advanced-level (A-level) examination, which provides entry to university. Tertiary education at the undergraduate level typically includes three years of schooling but may be more depending on the program. In annex 2 an image is provided of the Zimbabwean education structure.

The Education Amendment Act (2020) promotes that strides should be made to teach every officially recognized language (16 in total) and that the local mother tongue be taught during early childhood education. This is also strengthened with the Heritage Based Curriculum Framework 2024-2030 which states that the Infant Level (ECD A – Grade 2) should be taught in the commonly spoken indigenous languages in the school area. The Curriculum further aims to, among others, promote and cherish Zimbabwean Identity and the Unhu/Ubuntu orientation.

### 3.2 GENERAL EDUCATION DATA

The data provided in this paragraph is based on the information provided by the “*Primary and Secondary Education Statistics report-2024*” compiled by MoPSE. The number of primary and secondary schools, including schools with ECDs, has progressively increased. The number of schools with ECD increased from 6 761 in 2020 to 7 969 in 2024. In the same way, the number of primary schools increased from 6 798 in 2020 to 8 014 in 2024, while secondary schools increased from 2 980 in 2020 to 3 357 in 2024. The national Education Act broadly classifies schools into government and non-government schools. The other operational categories observed in this report are classification by registration status, location (rural/urban domains), per capita grant (P1, P2, P3), responsible authority, and mode of operation (day/boarding).

The majority of primary schools (75%) are run by the government, with just 25% run by non-government entities. At the secondary level, 71% of schools are government-run. There are registered, satellite and unregistered schools. Registered schools are those registered with MoPSE. Satellite schools are those granted authority to operate before registration while construction is in progress. These schools operate under the

supervision of a ‘mother’ school and cannot administer exams until they are registered. In 2024 the number of primary satellite schools was 985 and the number of secondary satellite schools was 775. Unregistered schools are operating without registration by the MoPSE.

In 2024 there were 650 753 pupils (328 055 males and 322 698 females) enrolled in ECD. The majority of pupils at the ECD level (495 108 pupils) were in P3 schools, followed by 114 140 pupils in P2 and the minority (41 505 pupils) in P1 schools. The majority of ECD pupils (548 533 pupils) were in registered schools, followed by 64 690 pupils in satellite schools and the minority (37 530 pupils) in unregistered schools. The majority at the ECD level (485 921 pupils) were in rural schools, while the remainder (164 832 pupils) were in urban schools.

The national primary school enrolment grew to 2 938 939 pupils (1 472 878 males, 1 466 061 females) in 2024 from 2 869 735 in 2020. The number of primary school pupils enrolled has been in favour of male pupils over the period 2020 to 2024, with the exception of 2023. The majority (70.42 percent, 2 069 568 pupils) of primary school pupils were enrolled in rural schools, while the remainder (29.58 percent, 869 371 pupils) were enrolled in urban schools. The highest proportion of primary school pupils (72.10 percent) were enrolled in P3 schools, followed by P2 schools with 22.01 percent, whilst P1 schools had the lowest proportion (5.90 percent). The majority of primary school pupils (2 629 692 pupils) were in registered schools, followed by 267 308 pupils in satellite schools and the minority (41 939 pupils) in unregistered schools. All the Grades, from 1 to 7, had over-aged pupils as a majority, followed by normal age and under-aged pupils as a minority. The majority of primary school pupils were in Manicaland (452 800 pupils), followed by Midlands (375 821 pupils), and the minority were in Bulawayo (120 753 pupils).

Zimbabwe's education sector has seen varying trends in student **progression** and **completion** rates. According to the “*Primary and Secondary Education Statistics report-2024*” nationally, 0.39 percent of primary students and 0.95 percent of secondary students repeat grades. Absconding was the primary reason for primary school **dropouts** (42.81%), while financial constraints contributed to 39.71 percent. Although this feasibility assessment did not focus at the secondary level, it is still interesting to have a look at some data. At the secondary level, financial constraints were the leading cause of dropouts, at 37.40 percent. Pregnancy was a significant factor affecting female dropouts. In terms of **transition rates**, 79.53 percent of students progressed from Grade 7 to Form 1 in the 2023-2024 academic year, with females outpacing males. The transition rate from Form 4 to Form 5 stood at 17.42 percent, with females maintaining a slight edge. **Survival rates** vary across primary and secondary school grades. Grade 2 had the highest survival rate at 98.86 percent, followed by Grade 3 at 98.29 percent. In contrast, Grade 7 had the lowest survival rate, at 89.31 percent. At the secondary level, Form 2 boasted the highest survival rate, at 95.54 percent, while Form 6 had the lowest, at 13.89 percent. Nationally, **completion rates** for different education levels were as follows: 85.47 percent for Early Childhood Development (ECD), 91.44 percent for primary education, 64.90 percent for lower secondary education, and 10.61 percent for upper secondary education.

### 3.3 MAIN CHALLENGES OF ZIMBABWE’S EDUCATION SECTOR

Key education sector challenges (as stated in the ESSP 2021-2025) are briefly described in this paragraph.

#### **Challenge 1: Education financing**

Persistent challenges in the Zimbabwean economy have significantly impacted the country’s education system. The sector and its schools are under-funded. This has reinforced inequities between schools in poor and comparatively less poor communities and urban and rural areas. Teachers have little support to effectively teach in schools impacting learning outcomes, especially at lower levels of the primary cycle. The financial stresses continue to negatively impact the education system leading to a deterioration of school infrastructure and the provision of teaching and learning materials in the education system. Teacher employment and salaries are also impacted by less money in the system.

While the 2020 Education Amendment Act states that universal basic education should be free (from ECD to form four), this is unlikely to be achieved in the current ESSP period (2021-2025). The School Financing Policy

states that significant increases in public spending will be necessary to achieve this. However, it does not provide direction for sustainable funding in the education sector. On the demand side of the education system, heavy reliance on parental contributions for fees and levies to support teaching and learning at school level continues to widen the gap between rich, urban schools and poorly resourced rural schools. The ability of parents and community to pay school fees is limited due to the economic situation and high inflation rates. School's capacity to self-finance through income-generating activities is also limited. The School Financing Policy does suggest exploring the opportunities of public-private partnerships and voucher schemes to increase access to free education at the point of delivery.

### ***Challenge 2: Humanitarian challenges and the effects of climate change***

Zimbabwe is susceptible to multiple humanitarian challenges including those caused by climate change. Increased drought, floods and cyclones contribute to food insecurity and increased diseases affecting parents, learners and schools. This has led to increased school dropouts and absenteeism. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events intensifies existing burdens for at-risk populations and also destroys (education) infrastructure. The Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (2019) reported that 59% of the rural population could suffer food insecurity during peak hunger periods. The lack of WASH facilities (at household and school level) and the limited access to quality healthcare compounds the situation. In annex 4 a more detailed analysis is provided of the effects of climate change on education.

### ***Challenge 3: Impact of Covid-19, even after re-opening***

The education sector was heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic as a result of the lock downs imposed to curb the spread of the disease. Schools were closed and learning suspended resulting in children missing school and eventually loss of schooling. Many children especially the poorest faced challenges in accessing technology and materials needed to access schooling. The closure of schools brought to light the many disparities in children's access to tools and technologies. School dropouts, especially among girls were reported. For example in Manicaland Province, 415 girls dropped out of exam classes during the March 2020 to October 2020 COVID-19 lockdown mainly due to marriage and pregnancy. Most of the schools rely on school fees or levies paid by parents. Since the majority of parents are self-employed in the informal sector and their businesses were severely affected by COVID-19 restrictions, the parents had difficulties to pay the school fees/ levies which affected the operations of the schools on opening following the lift of the lockdown restrictions.

### ***Challenge 4: Institutional and Human Resource Capacity***

In 2019 a skills audit was conducted by Ernst and Young as part of MoPSE's organisational development review. The report found that the skill/competency level stood at 60%. Technical competencies that require improvement included: basic financial competency, ICT, the new curriculum especially (at low-performing and satellite schools), guidance & counselling skills and project management. The report stated that if competencies gaps are not addressed, results could be: mismanagement/maladministration of finances at school level, increase in operational costs, increased workload for (non) teaching staff, reduced educational quality standards, increased student/parent complaints and difficulties in introducing new work practices.

### ***Challenge 5: Access, quality, equity and inclusivity***

The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has made efforts to improve the access, quality, equity and inclusivity of education. It has developed the Infrastructure Investment Plan for 2019 to develop schools in rural areas. The Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) has improved access for learner, particularly improving enrolment and completion rates. The Education Amendment Act (2020) aims to promote learners' access to free basic education and abolish corporal punishment in schools, creating a safe learning environment free from physical punishment and abuse. It also aims to improve retention of pregnant girls, promote menstrual health and teach in every recognized language (including the mother tongue) during early childhood education. However, key challenges in all these domains continue to exist. A more detailed description of the challenges related to access, quality, equity and inclusivity is provided in annex 5.

### 3.4 EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (EMIS)

Zimbabwe's Education Management Information System (EMIS) is managed and updated annually by MoPSE<sup>11</sup> through a school census form at primary (ED46 C) and secondary (ED46 B) levels during the second school term of every year. The census day is May 31<sup>st</sup> every year. The ED 46 forms are revised annually. In these Forms data is collected in school identification details, enrolments, teacher details, facilities, textbooks and curriculum, education finance and school administration. The Forms are filled out by the schools and verified by the DSIs for accuracy and completeness. Data capturing is decentralized to districts with two EMIS focal persons at the district level. The PEDs and DSIs monitor the process. Data entering, cleaning and analysis are conducted at the national level by MoPSE. The outcomes of data analysis are provided in an Annual Statistics Report available to the public on the MoPSE website. The annual census data are disaggregated by gender. However, there is limited data on SEN learners, and inadequate mapping of WASH at schools.<sup>13</sup> While mapping of schools/wards/clusters/mother-, satellite- and unregistered schools is not yet established.

Results and analysis of learning assessment data at Grade 2, Grade 7, Form 4 (O-level) and Form 6 (A-level) are segregated by gender and published annually to the public through a press statement which demonstrates transparency in sharing learning outcomes.

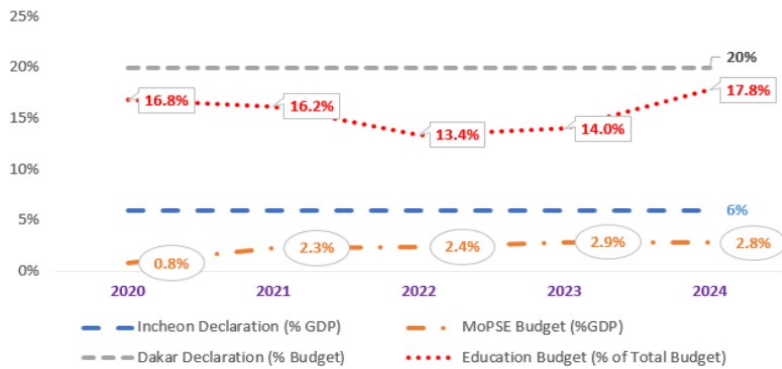
In conclusion, while education sector data are collected regularly, the utilization of the data in planning is not systematized. Data analysis and dissemination is conducted at the national level, but there is a lack of data-driven planning and monitoring at the local level. To tackle this Zimbabwe is working on IT resources and developing local capacity for EMIS.

### 3.5 EDUCATION SECTOR FINANCING IN ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe education is generally financed from three sources: public funding from the government, households with children in school, and development partners. Though the figures are illustrated with caution, EMIS figures in 2019 show that on average US\$1,132 million (54%) of education funds is sourced from the government, US\$931 million (44%) from households and US\$52 million (2%) from external sources. Before 2019, households were contributing proportionally more to education than the government. Funding for education also comes from other ministries supporting technical education in their fields and through the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare for BEAM, which is a program that financially supports disadvantaged students to improve school access, particularly at primary and secondary levels.

The picture below shows that, despite the government's efforts to allocate a significant portion of funds to education, the budget remains below the funding levels declared in international education commitments: the Dakar Declaration (20% of the national budget to public education) and the Incheon Declaration (at least 6% of the GDP towards public education). Between 2020 and 2024, the government of Zimbabwe spent an average of 2.2% of its GDP on public education. While budget allocation to education increased in 2024 to 17.8% (US\$652 million) of the total government budget, increased volatility of the macroeconomic situation has led to late disbursements of the budgeted funds. The persistent inflation and exchange rate depreciation also negatively impact the real value of annual education budgets, including the erosion of teacher salaries.

Figure 1: Public Education Funding Vs Benchmarks



Source: Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt & Development (ZIMCODD) - Health & Education Situational Report 2024

In 2024, the largest share of the national education budget was for staff salaries (83%) for primary and secondary education. This was followed by goods and services (8%) and capital (5%). Given that the largest chunk of funding goes to salaries, little remains for other critical items, leaving schools largely reliant on parental contributions for non-staff costs. However, the GoZ has made commitments to the GPE summit to lower personnel costs to 65% by 2025. In annex 6 more detailed information is provided on spendings per education program, domestic/external funding and school income.

## 4. KEY EDUCATION ACTORS AND THEIR ROLES

This section discusses the various actors and their roles in implementing education policy and ensuring quality education: state actors, donors, civil society, and community representatives.

### 4.1 National, Provincial and District Structures of MoPSE

The MoPSE has the mandate to develop and implement education policies to provide a wholesome primary and secondary education for all Zimbabweans. The functions of MoPSE at the national level include:

- Providing accessible, quality, inclusive, holistic and relevant infant, junior and secondary education
- Strategic planning, development, implementation, research, monitoring and review of policies
- Implement the curriculum
- Promote mainstreaming, access to and participation in school sports, arts and culture
- Administer all public examinations (Grade 7, “O” and “A” Levels)
- Provide and facilitate the acquisition of essential equipment for education

The MoPSE is structured into 10 departments at the national level. At the provincial level, each of the 10 provinces has a Provincial Education Office (PEO). Under the PEO fall numerous Districts, and each of the 72 District Education Offices (DEO) is responsible for supervising primary and secondary schools within their district. MoPSE has one parastatal, the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC), under its purview. ZIMSEC is an internationally accredited examination board and is responsible for the development and administration of examinations of primary and secondary education.

The *Provincial Education Offices* (PEOs) are responsible for implementing policies determined by the ministry at national level, overseeing certain human resource management and provincial recruitment, assisting with planning and infrastructure, managing the process of registering new schools and supporting District Education Offices (DEOs) and schools. The PEOs are directed by the Provincial Education Directors (PED) and the office is guided by the Provincial Operational Plans (POPs).

The *District Education Office* (DEO) is the most decentralized administrative level. The DEOs are headed by District School Inspectors (DSIs) and their work is guided by District Operational Plans (DOPs). The DEO continuously engage with schools within their district. They play a vital role in the monitoring, supervising and inspecting the schools and teachers to ensure the implementation of MoPSE policies, the Heritage Based Curriculum and improve teaching and learning. According to ESA 2020, each school should be visited once per annum for inspection. While the DSI ensures that School Heads are supervised in line with the Teacher Professional Standards (TPS). The school, in areas of governance and financial management, also has to be supervised at least once every term. The DSI supports schools in reviewing and validating their School Development Plans. The operability of conducting inspections and supervision depends on whether the DEO has a running vehicle, road conditions, and whether it is rainy season. Public transport is not a plausible option for many inspectors, as it is limited or not available in rural areas.

### 4.2 Key Education Mechanisms at the National Level

#### ***The Education Coordination Group***

The Education Coordination Group (ECG) is a national forum that coordinates multi-stakeholder support for education policy, strategy, and MoPSE priorities. It monitors bilateral and multilateral funding and progress towards SDGs and Vision 2030. Chaired by the MoPSE minister, with the Permanent Secretary as deputy and UNICEF as the secretariat, the ECG includes MoPSE senior management, development partners (FCDO, UNICEF, GPE, EU, World Bank, UNESCO), the Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI), and private sector organizations.

#### ***The Education Development Fund***

The Education Development Fund (EDF) supports MoPSE in achieving universal, equitable access to quality and relevant education in Zimbabwe, focusing on strengthening the ministry's capacity and teachers. It invests in system development and government capacity at national, provincial, and district levels. The EDF funded SIGs (regular), managed by UNICEF, aim to improve school performance. However, according to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) *Partnership Compact 2022 -2026* the number of donors funding the EDF is reducing.

### 4.3 Selected Primary Education Financial and Technical Partners

This section provides a short profile of selected primary education financial and technical partners, of which some were interviewed during the feasibility assessment.

Since 2013, the **GPE** has supported Zimbabwe's goal of equitable access to quality education for all children, funding three main programs totaling USD 28.4 million: the System Transformation Grant (STG), System Capacity Grant (SCG), and Girls Education Accelerator (GEA). The STG, managed by UNICEF, aims to transform the education system through SIGs to 4445 disadvantaged schools, teacher training, digital content development, and initiatives like WASH-focused SIGs, the complementary SIG for infrastructure, and the Early Warning System for preventing school drop-outs. The SCG strengthens MoPSE's capacity, among others, to foster equity-focused leadership. The GEA supports marginalized girls' access to quality, inclusive education. FCDO coordinates GPE funds, with UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children, and World Vision as implementing partners.

The **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)** has been a key supporter of Zimbabwe's education system, funding the EDF and Teach and Educate Adolescent Girls with Community Help (TEACH) programs. TEACH (2019-2025) improves equitable access through SIGs, teaching materials, and initiatives like ECD and solarization in schools. The Teacher Professional Development (TPD) component focuses on teacher capacity, including foundational literacy and numeracy, with Education Development Trust as the partner. FCDO also funds the Zimbabwe Girls' Secondary Education Programme (ZGSE), managed by CAMFED, to support girls' secondary education. Additionally, FCDO contributes to the GPE fund and is the coordinating agency for the GPE in Zimbabwe.

**UNICEF's** Education Programme in Zimbabwe aims to increase equitable access to, and completion of, quality, inclusive education with improved learning outcomes. As a GPE Grant Agent, UNICEF collaborates closely with MoPSE, providing technical support and oversight for GPE-supported programs, including the SIG program. UNICEF implements the GPE Multiplier grant to provide curricular materials, focusing on early years textbooks.

Other important funding actors in education are **World Bank** and the **European Union**. Important education partners active in Zimbabwe include **CAMFED**, **UNESCO**, **Save the Children**, **Plan International**, **World Vision** and **Care International**.

### 4.4 Civil Society Coordination

The Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) was established over a decade ago. It is mandated to coordinate civil society actors in education and carry out evidence-based advocacy for quality and inclusive education. The coalition has over 50 members, has provincial and district chapters in all 10 provinces, five thematic committees, and is a member of the ECG and Education Cluster. It comprises a network of local NGOs, international NGOs, teachers' unions, trust schools, faith-based organizations and community-based organisations in Zimbabwe all working in the education sector. ECOZI is an apolitical and nonpartisan coalition that unites civil society in the pursuit of the right to quality, compulsory and free basic education for all, with an emphasis on publicly funded education. The organization has a specific role in the SIG program independently verifying the usage of SIGs in sampled schools through their district and provincial chapters. ECOZI does this through physical visits as well as through mobile contact using standardized tools.

## 4.5 School-based governance

School Development Committees (SDCs) manage the development at the school level of public schools, such as rural district and urban council owned schools and faith-based schools as well as trust and private schools.<sup>11</sup> The SDCs consist of parent representatives, elected every year, and school staff. They play a key role in income-generating activities raising funds for school feeding and co-curricular activities. The SDCs also play a major role in deciding the level of school fees and levies and they manage the levy account. Expenditures can only be made with signatures from the SDC chairperson and vice-chairperson. Generally, SDCs have been effective in carrying out their mandates as evidenced by the holding of Annual General Meetings, initiating projects such as the construction of classroom blocks, teachers' cottages and toilets, boreholes and facilitating the procurement of furniture and teaching and learning resources. However, the SDCs have encountered several challenges in executing their role. The main challenge is related to raising school fees as they tend to be low in a majority of schools. Parents find it difficult to raise school fees for their children. Involvement and participation in SDCs are also a challenge due to a lack of capacity and not respecting school directors. The School Financing Policy also stated the need for more training of SDCs on financial management.

In collaboration with the SDCs, schools develop annual School Development Plans (SDPs). The SDP gives strategic direction for school improvement and brings together the school priorities, main measures it will take to raise standards, resources required and the key outcomes, as well as targets it intends to achieve. Schools hold Annual General Meetings to receive input from parents and teachers. The SDC and school Admin draw up the priority areas for the SDP based on the provided input. The SDP is shared with the DSI for review and validation.

## 5. FINDINGS OF THE FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT SCANNING

This chapter presents the results of the feasibility scanning process across the seven PBF education categories:

- i. Relevance of PBF objectives
- ii. Relevance of the six PBF principles
- iii. Favourable circumstances for PBF
- iv. Applicability of the six PBF principles
- v. Alignment (with policy) and political ownership/support
- vi. Possibility for financial sustainability and scaling up
- vii. Conducive Environment

In annex 8 the scoring on the feasibility scan by the assessment team (after round 2) is shown.

### 5.1 CATEGORY I: RELEVANCE OF THE PBF OBJECTIVES (weight: 5 points)

Category I has the following 5 criteria; the overall weighted score by the team in this category is **46%**.

- There is a lack of financial resources (budget) at primary school level (**Score: 70%**)
- There is insufficient access to and or use of (primary) education services (**Score: 50%**)
- The quality of education services from primary schools is inadequate (**Score: 55%**)
- The data available for managing the education sector is unreliable (**Score: 30%**)
- The education sector governance suffers from a lack of transparency and accountability (**Score: 23%**)

Through interviews, members of the two assessment teams gained a good impression of the main challenges in primary education in the two provinces and the four districts visited. There are three main challenges that stand out: (1) lack of financial resources at the primary level is seen as the most pertinent, (2) followed by the quality of education and (3) the access and utilization of primary education. These three challenges will be therefore be described in this paragraph in more detail. The majority of the team members however did not perceive serious shortcomings in terms of transparency and accountability nor in regard to the reliability and availability of data in the sector. Although on the latter, there was a discussion between team members on the quality of the data generated through the EMIS and the need to develop mechanisms to clean the data more thoroughly.

#### **Lack of financial resources at school level (score: 70%):**

Team members agreed that there is a serious lack of financial resources at school level especially at rural and satellite schools. This leads to many challenges related to infrastructure (not enough classrooms, latrines, WASH facilities, limited access to electricity, chairs benches and learning materials), a supportive learning and teaching environment (none or little ICT tools, insufficient or poor housing for teachers). These challenges have an effect on the motivation of teaching staff and on the quality of teaching provided. Both teams (Mashonaland West and Matabeleland North) found that schools mainly rely on school fees/levies from parents. One school mentioned that they are depending for 99% on parent payments. This while the majority of the parents in rural areas do not even pay these levies/fees or are very late in paying the fees to the school. The Mashonaland West team found that in some rural and satellite schools the percentage of parents paying was reported to be as low as 2%. Other percentages mentioned were: less than 10%, 20%, 30% to 50% (the latter was an urban school). The drought of last year impacted the level of payment by parents. Schools mentioned that because of the drought many parents, who for the most part are farmers, were not able to pay, only partially paid or paid later. The level of parent levies/fees to be paid per school term per learner varied from US\$ 20, US\$ 30 to US\$ 54 (the latter was an urban school).

Other forms of income mentioned by the schools were:

- ✓ Contributions via the school owners: part of the schools interviewed were owned by the District Council, the Municipality or a Church. These schools stated that their owners did not contribute in monetary terms. However, some owners did provide support for instance when equipment or infrastructure broke down.
- ✓ The School Improvement Grant (SIG): the rural schools mentioned that they received SIGs.
- ✓ Most rural schools said they received support for the by the school (via the school's Child Protection Committee) selected vulnerable children via BEAM. However, the schools stated that the BEAM payments were late or not (yet) received for the last school year or even for the last two school years.
- ✓ Some schools did develop and had plans to further develop their own income generating activities. However, all said that the income generated from these activities was low. Examples of income generating activities are: rearing chickens, growing and selling trees and vegetable gardens.
- ✓ Support from third parties: especially the urban schools mentioned that they received support (for example for school fees) from third parties. Parties mentioned were for example: the Tony Waite Organisation, the Kariba Bay hotel and the Capernaum Trust.
- ✓ School feeding program: majority of the schools interviewed received support for and implemented the school feeding program. They provide food to learners once a day, with parents from the community cooking the food and providing the relish. This helps to tackle the adverse effects of the drought and helps to keep the children in school. However, it was not always possible to feed students daily due to lack of resources. A primary school in Lupane District, Matebeleland North stated that on average they could only provide school feeding 60 days out of the 90-day school term.
- ✓ Finally, many schools were able to, via their SDCs, mobilise community members to provide contributions in kind. Such as helping to build extra classrooms.

### **A need to improve the quality of primary education (score: 55%)**

Although the assessment team scored this challenge to a lesser extent as being a key problem for primary education (55%), the team members agreed that there are issues related to the quality of primary education, especially in rural and satellite schools. Part of the discussion centred around the fact that quality is a complex term to measure because it is composed of and influenced by many elements, causes and circumstances. While acknowledging that quality is more complex than this outcome, the team looked at the “*pass rate grade 7 (2024)*” of the visited schools to give an impression of the quality of education. The local authorities (district and province) indicated that in Matabeleland North some schools had a *pass rate grade 7 in 2024* of 0%. Other percentages mentioned by interviewed schools were 8%, 10% to 49%. The latter was a school in Hurungwe district that said they had the highest in their district. While an urban school in Kariba in 2024 had a *pass rate grade 7* of 78%. Therefore, the overall conclusion is that in the four visited districts, the quality of education (caused by many factors such as limited financial resources, poor rural population, high staff turnover, high teacher/pupil ratios, challenges with infrastructure) is a serious issue especially in the rural and satellite schools.

### **A need to improve access to and utilization of primary education (score: 50%)**

Almost all actors interviewed by the two teams (at school level as well as at district and provincial level) mentioned that, especially in the rural schools, the distance for the learners to travel to school is too long. This is especially for the ECD aged children, leading to low enrolment rates at that level. Furthermore, part of the children of poorer parents (farmers or fishermen, the latter in Kariba) are not able to pay the school levies for the entire year and keep their children at home until they have sufficient funds to pay for the levies or school learning materials. This leads to learners only partly following a school year. In Hurungwe district the schools mentioned that children with an Apostolic faith background were kept from schools on Fridays and also during other religious events, while these learners were also less likely to finish school. In relation to the satellite schools, interviewed parties mentioned that since these schools are not able to take exams, learners have to travel long distances to the mother school during exam period, which might influence the exam results. The urban schools mentioned that many of their rural learners have to travel long distances since their parents prefer to send them to an urban school instead of a rural school nearby because of higher quality of education.

## 5.2 CATEGORY II: RELEVANCE OF THE PBF PRINCIPLES (weight: 11 points)

Category II has the following 6 criteria; the overall weighted score by the team on this category is **41%**.

- There is lack of motivation and/or incentives for staff of primary schools (**Score: 70%**)
- The expectations and priorities of primary schools and/or of provincial and district education authorities are not sufficiently clear (**Score: 30%**)
- The action plans of primary schools and/or of local provincial and district education authorities do not correspond to reality or are completely absent (**Score: 36%**)
- Lack of checks & balances in the education governance system & in supervision of structures (**Score: 23%**)
- Lack of power on the part of end-users (pupils, parents, community) in the education sector to express their needs and opinions, and to influence the management of primary schools (**Score: 32%**)
- Access to quality (primary) education services is inequitable between the genders, because of vulnerabilities, because of geography, etc. (**Score: 68%**)

When we look at the above six scores, two of them stand out:

- ✓ The lack of motivations and/or incentives for staff at primary schools
- ✓ Access to quality education between gender, vulnerabilities and geography.

The other four have a lower score (below 50%) and therefore were not seen as major issues. Mostly since the visited schools, DEOs and PEOs were able to clearly describe and reflect on their interlinked mandates, plans, roles and priorities, while also the rules and tools for supervision, inspection and monitoring were clear and used between the actors involved.

### **Low motivation of primary school staff:**

Almost in all schools, but also at district level, low motivation of teachers is mentioned as an issue that influences the quality of education. In some districts, high staff turnover of teachers at remote rural schools was mentioned as a challenge to delivering quality education, with most teachers only staying one year or even less. This is not a serious problem at the urban schools, where the living environment is more conducive and teachers have better access to housing and better facilities such as electricity, water and shops.

The low motivation of staff at rural and satellite schools is for a substantial part caused by their living and teaching circumstances. Teachers mentioned that, if there is any housing for them at all, the quality is poor and the WASH facilities are below standard. Many have to share their housing with other teachers and some do not have housing at their schools at all, meaning they have to travel long distance by bus, leading to late arrivals at school and high costs for transport. In addition, their teaching environment is challenging: too little infrastructure (classrooms, chairs, tables, teaching materials, limited access to electricity and WASH) and not enough financial resources (high reliance of parent fees/low payment rate of these fees) to address these challenges. Often the low quality of education leads to tensions with parents, which further demotivates the teachers. Teaching composite classes, teaching students who have no learning materials (notebooks or exercise books to write in) and negative attitudes from parents were also mentioned as factors that demotivate teachers.

**PBF incentives:** A number of schools brought forward that, if PBF would be introduced in primary education, it would greatly help to include a percentage of the PBF subsidy earned by schools to be used for staff incentives (as was done in Zimbabwe in RBF in the Health sector). One school head stated: *“Mostly interventions and program only focus on infrastructure, learners or teaching materials but forget that quality education is greatly determined by the motivation and efforts of teachers, introducing staff incentives could help to boost the morale of teachers.”*

### **Inequitable access to quality education between the genders, vulnerability or geography.**

The interviewed parties did not mention the challenge in relation to difference in gender so much, although it was mentioned for children with an Apostolic Faith background for which girls-education is perceived by their parents as less important. In some schools it was mentioned that girls dropped out because of pregnancy and even early marriages. Also, challenges were mentioned in relation to access for disabled children and special needs children. For instance no or very little special needs materials, limited ramps for children in wheelchairs and too little teachers able to teach them). This is in line with the findings of UNICEF stating that only a small

portion of disabled and special needs children attend school: 10%. Furthermore, the *geographical location* of schools highly influences the access to quality education for learners. This can also be seen from the data and tables split-up per provinces in the “*2024 Primary and Secondary Education Statistics report*”. The quality of education provided by the schools visited in the four districts is lower compared to schools in most other Zimbabwean districts. This particularly applies to the rural and satellite schools.

### 5.3 CATEGORY III: FAVORABLE PBF CIRCUMSTANCES (weight: 4 points)

Category III has the following 4 criteria; the overall weighted score by the team on this category is **82%**.

- There is a formal (and preferably digitised) information system for managing the education sector, and the primary schools (whether public, private and/or conventional) are officially registered in this information system (**Score: 80%**)
- Supervision of (targeted) primary schools (whether public, private and/or conventional) by the provincial/district education authorities takes place regularly and uniformly (Score: 84%)
- (Targeted) primary schools have adequate staff, are sufficiently trained to provide quality education and are able to do their own accounting (**Score: 75%**)
- The primary schools are already used to developing (school) action plans (annual or quarterly) which can serve as a basis for (PBF) contracting (**Score: 89%**)

The scoring by the teams on all of the above four categories is high, which means that the team members, based on their findings, are of the opinion that all the four above circumstances are supportive to the successful implementation of PBF in the Zimbabwean primary education context.

#### **A formal education information management system (EMIS) is in place**

It is positive that Zimbabwe has a digitized EMIS system for education. The design of a PBF intervention could build on this system and it could also be useful for selecting key performance indicators and for the reporting and verification of these indicators. Schools also self-report, on an annual basis, in the EMIS through using the annually reviewed ED-46 Forms. However, it was mentioned that schools may overreport or underreport their performance and other school statistics. Furthermore, other tools that are useful for a successful PBF program are present and used in the education system and in schools. Examples are: regular supervision of teacher by school inspectors, while also standardized school registers and student progress records/books are kept.

#### **Supervision of primary schools by the provincial/district education authorities**

The DSI and PED level staff is present and capable of performing school supervisions on a regular basis and the school supervision procedures and tools for inspectors are clear and aim to reach the targets set for supervision. All schools visited had recently been supervised by the DSI for various reasons. Inspectors use an online E-Inspectorate tool using the Kobo Toolbox application to conduct school inspections. It was mentioned that DSIs have a national target of inspecting at least 15 schools per school term. One hindering factor mentioned by the DSI and PEDs staff is the lack of vehicles to perform regular supervision and monitoring. In Kariba district for instance the DSI only has one vehicle to perform all their tasks for a large geographical area with long distances from one school to the other. In Matabeleland North, the long distances were also mentioned as a challenge in visiting the most remote schools.

#### **Primary schools have adequate and sufficiently trained staff**

There were some contradicting perceptions in this regard. During the feasibility scan discussion team members stated that many teachers (in rural schools) feel demotivated, but that this does not mean they are not sufficiently trained and qualified to perform their job, if circumstances would change. The introduction of PBF could stimulate their qualifications since it could help to motivate staff. While during the discussion it was generally felt that there were adequately numbered staff and they have the right qualifications, many of the schools visited did have many vacancies and high-turnover rates reducing the quality of education provided. At the Matabeleland North PED office, it was mentioned that for many primary and secondary school levels, the teacher to learner norms were not met. In a school in Binga District, Matabeleland North, student teachers had to fill certain teaching positions because the teachers had left. It was also perceived by team members that the

capability and motivation of the school head teacher made a significant difference in the quality of education and outcomes of a school.

### **Primary schools are developing and using school plans**

Finally, it was clear that all visited schools together with their SDC's should develop School Development Plans (SDPs) and annual budgets. These are based on the school's five year plans. At the beginning of the academic year, schools hold Annual General Meetings where they consult parents, including on school priorities. The SDC and Admin choose priorities based on parents input to include in the school plans. The DSI should review and validate these plans. However, when inspecting some of these plans by the Matabeleland North team, it was clear that some plans were outdated. The school development plans and budgets can serve as basis for the schools to develop their (annual) PBF business plans (and termly action plans) and can form the basis to contract the schools under a PBF intervention.

## **5.4 CATEGORY IV: APPLICABILITY OF PBF PRINCIPLES (weight: 13 points)**

Category IV has the following 6 criteria; the overall weighted score by the team on this category is **92%**.

- Level of decentralisation in (primary) education sector is sufficient for PBF, allowing provincial & district education authorities to manage their own budgets and develop their own action plans (**Score: 89%**)
- It seems possible to create sufficient separation of functions and roles, which will be accepted by the MoPSE (**Score: 91%**)
- It is possible to develop a package of indicators (quantitative and qualitative) that is directly attributable to the performance of primary schools (**Score: 98%**)
- Financial incentives (total additional (PBF) amounts per primary school that are significant but still modest can really make a difference and help to resolve the main challenges identified (see criteria 1-11) Explanation: this is not the case if the problems cannot be resolved at school level, but must first be resolved at another level" (**Score: 93%**)
- Primary schools can be sufficiently autonomous to 1) sign a performance contract; 2) develop their own plans according to their priorities; 3) have a bank account and buy inputs, and 4) motivate or sanction staff. NB: deduct one point (from a total of 5) for each requirement that is not met" (**Score: 89%**)
- In this context, it is possible to assign an important role to the community and the targeted beneficiaries, strengthening accountability towards the population (**Score: 91%**)

As indicated earlier in this report, PBF is based on 6 principles that can be used to design a PBF approach that can address basic challenges in an education system. The principles are: 1) linking payments to results; 2) contracting; 3) autonomy; 4) separation of functions; 5) equity; and 6) community empowerment.

The feasibility assessment sought to establish if the 6 principles (through answering the above 6 criteria) are applicable to the education sector in Zimbabwe and if these principles could be used in a PBF design to strengthen the education system. Results from interviews with policy makers, education managers, school administrators, teachers and parents show that the 6 principles are indeed applicable to the Zimbabwean context and can be used in a PBF design to address challenges bedevilling the sector. Thus applicability of the 6 PBF principals was scored very highly on the feasibility scan by the team members: overall 92%.

The principle of **Linking payments to results (criteria 4)** was identified as the springboard to good performance at all levels (national, provincial and district). All agreed that modest financial performance incentives to schools and subsidies for teachers and education managers would help to address existing challenges with the work environment and with human resources in the education sector. The table below highlights the challenges at schools as given by teachers and SDC members and examples of how schools would use PBF subsidies.

Table 2: Challenges being faced at school environment, with human resources and SDCs' recommendations

Challenges with school work environment	Challenges with Human Resources for Education	How SDCs propose to use PBF subsidies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate teaching and learning resources e.g textbooks and exercise books.</li> <li>Inadequate desks and chairs for pupils.</li> <li>Inadequate water and sanitation facilities.</li> <li>Some classroom blocks &amp; teachers accommodation in poor state</li> <li>Accommodation and ablution facilities for teachers not adequate.</li> <li>Shortage of classrooms leading to hot seating.</li> <li>Human &amp; wildlife conflict (especially in Kariba) effecting schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High staff attrition leading to shortages of teachers - especially science teachers (mostly cited in Hurungwe District).</li> <li>Burnout among the remaining teachers due to high workload.</li> <li>Low staff motivation/morale due to difficulties in the work environment (for example poor/inadequate staff accommodation, inadequate tools for the job, remuneration).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procure textbooks for pupils.</li> <li>Procure desks, benches, tables, chairs, ICT materials for pupils.</li> <li>Renovate classroom blocks (roof and floors), ablution facilities and teachers' houses.</li> <li>Finance Income Generating Activities (IGAs)/projects for the school: e.g.,piggery, poultry, nutritional gardening, gumtree project, School tuckshop.</li> <li>Renovate school infrastructure to accommodate learners with physical disabilities e.g., building rumps/rails.</li> <li>Repairing broken waterpoints/boreholes Or drilling new boreholes.</li> <li>Pay incentives for school staff.</li> <li>Installing a security fence at the school</li> <li>Solarizing the schools.</li> <li>Building new classroom blocks or completing classroom blocks that are currently under construction.</li> </ul>

One SDC member had this to say during a focus group discussion:

*“You can see the status of this classroom where we are right now, the roof is no longer secure such that our kids and their books are not safe during the rainy season. We will use that money to repair this roof and those for other classroom blocks so that our kids will be safe when rains come”:* **SDC member at a Primary School in Hurungwe**

Results also show **that it is possible to develop a package of quantity and quality indicators (criteria 3)** that can be tracked and reported on a routine basis from the Education Management Information System (EMIS). Suggested (quantity) indicators could include: enrolment rate/ratio, intake rate (apparent and net), dropout rates, grade 7 pass rates (based on both subjects and units) and percentage of nonreaders. However, while the EMIS has been digitalized and is able to collect information from all the public schools in Zimbabwe, the system only collects annual data (not quarterly or per school term). In contrast, verifications and payments under PBF are usually done per term to link payments to results.

The **contracting** principle (**under criteria 5**) creates clarity of roles, expectations, and priorities and shifts accountability to producing results. The assessment team is of the opinion that in the visited districts it is possible for schools, District Schools Inspectorates and Provincial Education Directorates to be contracted separately and individually in Zimbabwe. This makes it possible to verify and reward individual performance.

All the schools that participated in the assessment have sufficient **autonomy (under criteria 5)** to develop their own plans, set their own priorities, implement the plans, manage their own budgets and evaluate their progress, and this was said to be the case with all other public schools in the country. All schools have their own bank accounts (mostly a US\$ account and a local currency account) and signatories to the bank accounts normally include the school head, deputy school head, SDC chairperson, vice SDC chairperson and a representative from the responsible authority (either the RDC or church). In almost all cases, School Development Committees (SDCs) under the guidance of school heads and in consultation with school pupils and community members have the mandate to develop their annual action plans/budgets, which are evaluated at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) that is held at the end of each year. However, while this should be the norm, results show that for some schools these plans were not current (needed to be updated) and that at one satellite school the SDC was not working well with the teaching staff at the school.

PBF is a systems approach and in any system, it is crucial to have **a clear separation of functions (criteria 2)** between actors. Interviews with education policy makers and officers at the national, provincial and district levels show that it is possible to separate functions and roles among PBF actors in the Zimbabwean

education sector. The (PBF) roles/functions of the regulator, service provider, purchaser, client and fund holder can be done separately by separate entities to guarantee sufficient checks and balances.

**Equity (under criteria 6)** could be realised by selecting geographical areas (to showcase the PBF) that have challenges in access and quality of education services. Within the chosen areas of intervention, there should be differentiation between schools that are relatively well connected (for example urban schools) such as those in Kariba Urban and have sizable catchment populations, and those that are less accessible, are hard to reach and have small catchment populations. Those in harder-to-reach areas could for example receive an isolation/equity bonus on top of the regular PBF subsidy payment.

The assessment team was of the opinion that the equity principle can be applied to the education sector in Zimbabwe. Poorly performing and marginalized districts are known, and these can be purposively targeted to pilot the PBF project. As such, the MoPSE selection of the sites for this assessment was done based on the performance of the districts and their marginalization.

In most schools visited there was a strong **link and engagement with the community (criteria 6)**. This was mostly realized through SDCs and it increased their shared accountability. SDCs invite communities to AGMs where action plans and financial statements for schools are presented and discussed. Thus SDCs can be regarded as conduits for establishing stronger links with communities and as vessels for community engagement and empowerment.

## 5.5 CATEGORY V: PBF ALIGNS TO POLICY, OWNERSHIP/POLITICAL SUPPORT (weight: 6 points)

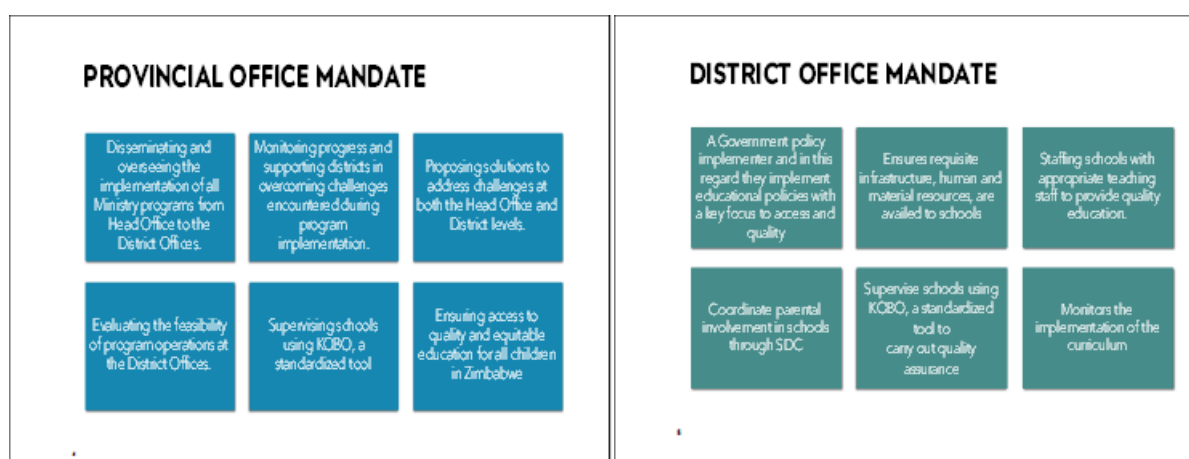
Category V has the following 3 criteria; the overall weighted score by the team on this category is **93%**.

- The objectives of PBF (promoting access, quality and equity of services and strengthening the governance of the sector) are aligned with the political priorities of the MoPSE, both at the national level (the ministry) and at the decentralized level **(Score: 93%)**
- At the national ministry level, MoPSE, there is a level of buy-in (support, interest and commitment) for the PBF approach and for the proposed project **(Score: 93%)**
- At the level of provincial/district sector authorities, there is a level of buy-in (support, interest and commitment) for the PBF approach and for the idea to develop a PBF intervention **(Score: 93%)**

The assessment team was of the opinion that the introduction of PBF aligns strongly with Zimbabwean education policies and that there is political will and buy in to implement the PBF approach. This explains the high score on this category: overall 93%.

The objectives of the PBF approach (i.e to increase access to and utilization of education services, improve quality of education services, increase the reliability of data and improve governance systems through increased transparency and accountability) *align with and are consistent* with the government priorities on education. This since the GoZ/MOPSE have developed explicit policies and strategies that seek to promote and improve access to and utilization of appropriate, quality, equitable and inclusive education services in country. The policies and strategies developed include the Non-Formal Education Policy of 2015, School Health Policy of 2018, the Education Amendment Act of 2020, National ICT Policy of 2022 and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) that spans from 2021-2025. The ESSP has 5 strategic priorities (listed earlier in the document) and is now in its last year of implementation.

The above mentioned PBF objectives *also align with the mandate of the provincial and district MoPSE offices.*



*In relation to buy-in and ownership:* during the assessment the PBF approach attracted a lot of interest and support from the interviewed politicians, policy makers, education managers, school administrators, teachers and SDCs at all levels. At national level, the approach and proposed project seems to have support and buy in from the Deputy Minister, Permanent Secretary, Chief Directors and Directors. The Chief Directors and Directors participated in the data collection exercise and also in the debriefing meeting that was done at the end of the assessment with the Deputy Minister and Permanent Secretary. They all expressed great interest in the approach and were ready to start implementation of the pilot project. The Permanent Secretary also stated he would engage with the MoFED&IP to ensure that the approach is institutionalized for sustainability.

Discussions with Provincial Education Directors (for the two provinces) and District Schools Inspectors (for the four districts) show that they all had interest in the PBF approach and were ready for implementation.

## 5.6 CATEGORY VI: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY & SCALING PBF (weight: 6)

Category VI has the following 3 criteria; the overall weighted score by the team on this category is **78%**.

- There is strong interest from the main partners in the education sector for the PBF approach and the financing of a pilot/showcase project. Examples: WB, UNICEF, EU, bilateral donors (**Score: 75%**)
- It seems likely that in the long term/future, the national ministry, MoPSE, (together with Cordaid) will attract the commitment of the main donors and partners and that PBF can be scaled-up and (financially) supported by the donors and partners (**Score: 77%**)
- In the future, it seems possible that PBF will be integrated into the MoPSE's policies and strategies and supported by the education sector's budget, using at least partially national resources (**Score: 82%**)

Consultations were done with selected donors and development partners supporting the education sector in Zimbabwe on the feasibility of implementing a PBF approach to the sector in country. The assessment team had interviews with the World Bank, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) and UNICEF.

Results show that all the donors and partners interviewed expressed interest in the PBF approach and had positive perspectives on how the approach would help improve the education landscape in the country. They indicated that the PBF approach has the potential to produce better education outcomes through enhancing staff motivation, improving access to education, reducing staff attrition, strengthening accountability at all levels and fostering autonomy in decision making for schools and their authorities.

The donors and partners highlighted that the PBF approach is potentially a fundable initiative if it is modelled and designed appropriately to include for example digital innovations and smart climate programming. The table below summarises key highlights from interviews with the donors and development partners.

A simple cost-effective PBF model aligned to the Schools Financing Policy (and were possible integrated in existing education programs for cost-effectiveness) could be able to attract future commitment from donors and development partners and gradually could be scaled up.

Table 3: Key highlights and profiles of the consulted donors and development partners

FCDO	World Bank	UNICEF	ECOZI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently preparing for and exploring potential areas to support in the next funding cycle</li> <li>• Is interested in Result oriented and PBF models that are: simple in design, implementable at schools in the lowest wealth quintile, scalable, sustainable, climate smart, able to work with a few indicators that can be verified per term through routine EMIS data/tools, integrated in existing programs such as SIG</li> <li>• PBF to be integrated in existing education programs such as SIG</li> <li>• For introduction PBF or results based financing modalities approval of &amp; alignment with approaches in the School based Financing Policy is key</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is supporting the MoPSE to implement an ICT Policy</li> <li>• Currently exploring ways to incentivize uptake and utilization of digital platforms in schools</li> <li>• The WB showed special interest in relation to PBF if for verification innovative ICT modalities could be used and mentioned for instance the use of block chain technologies. This will enable the World Bank to make a case for (partly) financing the approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF supports MoPSE through the Schools Improvement Grant (SIG) and the infant feeding program</li> <li>• Currently piloting an intervention to support girls on STEM</li> <li>• Is supporting the MoPSE to digitize and solarize schools</li> <li>• Piloted an early warning system on teacher drop out</li> <li>• Opinion: GoZ to adopt the PBF approach as a government policy. The approach should be modelled to compliment and strengthen other existing (education) approaches such as SIG (so if possible does not prefer integration of PBF in existing programs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the MoPSE to develop policies on education</li> <li>• Commissions research/studies to inform development of policies, strategies and education priorities in the country</li> <li>• Advocates for implementation of education curriculum (e.g. the recently developed Heritage Based Curriculum) at all levels</li> <li>• Is an independent verifier for the SIG supported activities and could play a similar role in a future PBF design</li> </ul>

To ensure sustainability of the PBF approach, policy makers in the MoPSE (chief directors and directors) indicated that the approach would have to be institutionalized via a phased approach. The goal will be to strengthen the overall education system to ensure sustainability and resilience of the PBF program, and to reduce dependency on external funding through integrating PBF principles into the broader education financing strategies. They were hopeful that there will be support from government officials (including those from the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion-MoFED&IP) to increase the Government’s role in executing key PBF functions (including payment for results) from the national to the district level.

Also there was willingness to learn from the Ministry of Health and Child Care on their experiences with institutionalizing the Results Based Financing program in Zimbabwe in Healthcare.

## 5.7 CATEGORY VII: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR PBF (weight: 5)

Category VII has the following 3 criteria; the overall weighted score by the team on this category is **81%**.

- The target districts are safe. There is no security risk in the area (**Score: 88%**)
- There is road access throughout the year - including in the rainy season - to (almost) all primary schools in the targeted districts (**Score: 71%**)
- The targeted districts for a possible pilot/showcase PBF education project can easily be visited for policy engagement (**Score: 80%**)

This component of the assessment sought to establish if the environment in the targeted districts was conducive (in terms of safety and accessibility) to pilot/showcase the PBF in education project. The assessment team scored the four districts highly on the above three feasibility criteria (overall: 81%) indicating that the team considered the environment conducive and favourable to initiate and implement a successful (pilot) PBF project. The districts were deemed as safe (there were no disturbances, violence or any other security risk) and were generally accessible throughout the year. All four district offices are located in an 'urban setup environment' with good road access (tarred roads) and hence they are easily reachable all year round.

However, most of the road network in the 4 districts is composed predominantly of unpaved gravel roads some of which are difficult to manoeuvre (especially during the rainy season) due to lack of proper maintenance. This will make it challenging to access some schools (located deep in the districts) during the rainy season and may cause absenteeism for pupils who stay far away from the school and would need to cross flooded rivers to attend school. The district staff mentioned that this inaccessibility usually only last for a couple of days. Therefore, the conclusion was that most primary schools in the 4 districts are generally accessible throughout the year. The main challenge would be the low number of primary schools in each district and the long distances between them on usually bad unpaved roads. This will make verifications under a PBF project time consuming, intense and costly. Therefore, the design for a possible PBF approach would have to come up with clever modalities that could address this challenge.

The scoring on the feasibility scan by all team members resulted in an overall score of 73% out of the highest possible score of 100% (see annex 8). This score indicates that there is sufficient ownership, supportive circumstances and backing for PBF in Primary Education. It also reflects that the team members are of the opinion that the challenges faced by Zimbabwean primary education and the conditions in which it operates are conducive for the PBF approach to be initiated and be effective. These assessment results therefore show that initiating the PBF approach in Primary education in Zimbabwe (preferably first via a pilot and then scaling up) is feasible. However, some issues need to be taken into account since they could hinder the introduction and success of PBF in primary education in Zimbabwe. These issues will be discussed in the final chapter of this report.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 CONCLUSION

In the context of Zimbabwe, several of the objectives of PBF are relevant in addressing key challenges faced by primary schools, particularly in rural areas. The assessment identified three main challenges in the four districts visited: financing at primary school level, quality of education and equity in access to education. Overall, there is a serious shortage of financial resources at the primary school level, which could be addressed through performance-based grants. At the same time, other challenges commonly found in other countries were not seen as a challenge, such as general transparency and accountability within the system, and the availability and reliability of data in the sector.

Several PBF principles also seem relevant, mainly the principles of linking payments and results and equity. Linking payments to results could address the system's challenge related to the lack of motivation of staff by creating financial incentives currently absent in school financing mechanisms. While School Improvement Grants (SIGs) are paid to schools, these contain few results-based mechanisms. Regarding the equity principle, it would be useful to address disparities based on geography (the most rural areas) and vulnerabilities, particularly students with disabilities. The added value of contractualization could be less pronounced as priorities and expectations of the schools appear to be quite clear, although not always. Schools also already have partial autonomy on deciding how to use funds, although this is limited to parent levies/fees. Separation of functions also seems fairly well respected as there are multiple checks and balances in the systems governance at school level and higher levels. Thanks to the role of the SDCs, the lack of power of the community, parents and students seems less striking than in other contexts where Cordaid has applied PBF.

With an overall outcome of 73% in the feasibility scan, it seems moderate to highly feasible to apply PBF Education in Zimbabwe. Within the MOPSE, visited provinces, districts and schools, there is a lot of interest and buy in for PBF, mainly premised on the potential positive results it could bring concerning the improvement of quality of education, infrastructure and the motivation of teachers. Financial and technical partners were also enthusiastic about PBF or results-based mechanisms. However, some key considerations need to be taken into account when designing the approach since they could hinder the introduction and success of PBF in primary education in Zimbabwe. As such, **four key questions** have been identified, which must be answered for the approach to be successful.

#### **1. How can we ensure PBF is as inexpensive as possible without losing effectiveness?**

The education sector in Zimbabwe faces domestic financial constraints due to its economic and monetary instability and a shrinking donor landscape with donors retracting funding or making budget cuts. While experience has shown that the cost of *traditional* PBF programs can range from 2 to 10 USD per pupil/year in primary education for school incentives (excluding operational costs), in this environment it seems desirable to keep operational costs and financial incentives low while still maintaining them at a level that PBF remains effective. This could be achieved by exploring efficiency gains such as the integration with existing interventions and structures, strategically choosing incentives and targeting high need areas. From the start, it seems desirable to institutionalize and integrate PBF arrangements within existing structures, programs and policies as much as possible to avoid complicating the system with new processes and checks and balances, and to minimize operational costs and improve efficiency. Simplifying verification mechanisms can also reduce operational costs, and strategically selecting a limited set of indicators and prices that are of high impact and low cost can reduce financial incentives. As such, a higher focus could be placed on PBF principles 'linking payments to results' and 'equity' rather than some of the other principles.

#### **2. How to ensure the right balance between full integration with existing programs and policies and complementarity?**

Key in the design of an approach for Zimbabwe would be to make it simple and finding the right balance between (1) *integrating* result-based financing mechanisms into existing education policies and interventions (such as modalities of the School Financing Policy and interventions like SIGs and the Grant in Aid of Tuition

pilot) and (2) designing it as a *complementary* (additional) approach that can strengthen existing education interventions. It's recommended that PBF is at least aligned, if not integrated, with the School Financing Policy to ensure PBF is complementary to other financial arrangements to schools. As a supply-side approach, PBF can be used as a financing mechanism in alignment and conjunction with demand-side interventions, such as free-basic education. At the same time, it seems desirable to complement or integrate with the work of UNICEF, GPE and FCDO on the SIG program. Targeted schools, mainly those in rural areas with low income, have received various forms of input-based SIGs (regular, complementary, etc) ranging from approximately 1,500 – 2,000 USD per annum. Further discussion is needed to explore the complementarity of PBF mechanisms to SIGs or whether results-based mechanisms can be integrated and if that's desired to do so. If complementary, PBF can serve as an add-on to targeted schools already receiving SIG payments or could target separate schools. In the first case, SIGs would remain an upfront input-based mechanism for schools to invest in activities as per their School Development Plans, while PBF would provide an output-based payment based on verified performance. If integrated, it is to be determined what part of the payment will become output-based using PBF mechanisms. These are aspects that would need to be further considered between the MoPSE, partners and Cordaid.

### **3. To what extent should we adapt the traditional PBF design to address question 1 & 2?**

A traditional PBF design where all principles are fully incorporated in the approach is likely not the answer to either question 1 or 2, as it may not be financially feasible given the budget constraints, nor is it needed since certain aspects like checks and balances and sector governance were not considered major challenges. Rather, it seems relevant to simplify some of the existing mechanisms of PBF, which could resemble more broadly RBF modalities. However, careful consideration should be given to how much the approach can be simplified while remaining effective. Verifications every school term (generally done in traditional PBF) may not be feasible. A low number of verifications, say annually, would make the approach simpler and less expensive, but this also loosens the link between performance and payment, which may reduce staff motivation and effectiveness. Consideration should be given to what fewer (annual) verifications will trigger or incentivize and whether fewer verifications will sustain year-round motivation for improvement or only prompt action in the months before verification. This is, of course, also dependent on the type of indicators to be selected. Risk-based verification—only verifying those schools having low data reliability—or sampling verification mechanisms should also be considered during the design, as well as how often payments should be made to ensure a sufficient link between performance and payment. The school's link with the community seems already quite strong through their SDCs, including its accountability to the community, considering most income comes from parents. As such, it could also be considered loosening the community engagement principle in the PBF design for instance via simplifying or removing the community verification aspect during a pilot.

### **4. To what extent should the PBF intervention be scaled or should it target specific areas that lag behind?**

Given the large number of primary schools in the country (over 8,000 in 2024), there is a need to showcase a PBF design that can be scaled efficiently, or it should target specific areas that lag behind. It is important to start with a showcase, for example, in a few districts, to learn, test and adapt the design to fully contextualize it and ensure that the approach will be able to realize the aimed-for results. Especially, when simplifying the traditional PBF design, it's important to get the design right to ensure effectiveness and avoid developing perverse incentives. Simplicity and efficiency are key when developing a scalable approach. However, it's not financially feasible or even desirable to scale the approach to all primary schools. Given the rural/urban divide and the large geographical inequities in education outcomes, it may be desirable to target areas that lag behind. In doing so, it should be determined in those areas if satellite, rural and urban schools are targeted or only a subset and what criteria are to be used to select targeted schools. Even within a subset of schools (e.g., P3 primary schools), further equity considerations may need to be taken into account to ensure the most marginalized schools and students receive the most needed support.

## **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The assessment established that if the raised four questions are resolved, a simplified and contextualized PBF approach or RBF modalities could contribute to achieving key objectives of the ESSP. Below are therefore some recommendations for designing and implementing a Zimbabwean PBF education initiative:

***Recommendation related to context and scope:***

- First, showcase the PBF approach in primary education in a few targeted districts that are most marginalised with the lowest education outcomes, given the importance of reducing inequities in the country. These tend to be more remote areas. Consider districts with low passing rates for the Grade 7 exam, with a high number of non-readers or those with high drop-out rates. It could be an area that was visited during the feasibility assessment.
- Inequities within a district should also be considered in the design through, for example, considering the differences between schools located in remote areas versus those in town and developing equity bonuses for the most vulnerable schools or indicators specifically focusing on students that are left behind (e.g., students with special needs).

***Recommendations related to (Institutional) setup:***

- Keep the design simple so that all actors, including the schools and their SDCs, can understand it easily and perceive the direct link between increased performance and payment.
- When designing PBF, from the start consider long term (institutional) sustainability and gradual scalability.
- Build on the existing system structures and systemised practices in primary education that are supportive of PBF: each school, with support of their SDC, must already develop a School Development Plan that's broken down annually, which can serve as a basis for PBF contractualization and business planning. The DSI and PED already have partially standardized regulatory and supervisory mechanisms in place, such as the E-Inspection Tool that could be utilized for quality verifications by the DSI to the schools. Data collection and reporting should be aligned or integrated with existing routine data reporting systems within MoPSE as much as possible.
- There is a need to simplify the verification process whilst maintaining its effectiveness, including modalities for achieving verifications at scale. Given the high number of schools, over time, a possible risk-based verification modality has to be designed and introduced.
- ECOZI could potentially serve as a contracting and verification agency, through its local chapters, conducting independent school verifications, given its experience in verifying SIG usage at sampled schools.

***Recommendations in relation to Indicators and subsidies:***

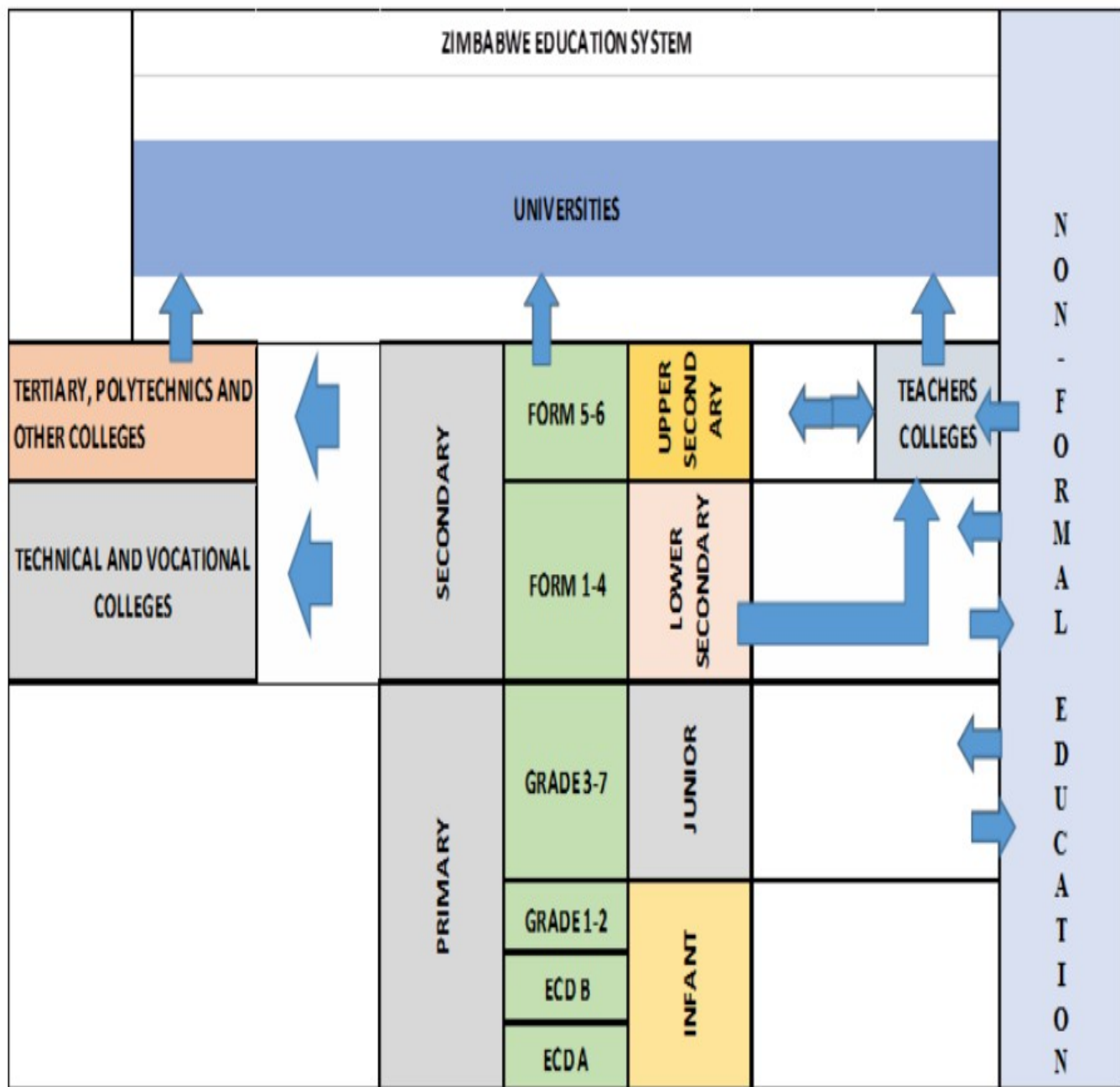
- During the design phase, it is important to consider indicators that address access, quality, equity and inclusion. However, a larger focus should be placed on quality of education and reducing inequities. Access and inclusion should mainly focus on those children left behind (e.g., special needs children).
- Use an equity bonus to balance and motivate teachers to work in remote locations. It may need to be considered to give higher equity bonuses or set higher prices for satellite schools.
- Both the selected indicators and verification modalities should be aligned as closely as possible with the existing EMIS, supervision tools, and school calendar.
- At DSI level, consider indicators and subsidy levels to encourage them to support the most remote schools and those with low education outcomes.
- Given the challenge of teacher motivation, ideally a small part of the PBF payments can be used for staff incentives to motivate them (especially in rural areas).
- To support and enhance climate-smart programming in schools, climate-smart indicators (and business planning) should be integrated in the quality indicators.

## 7. APPENDICES

### Annex 1: Feasibility Assessment Team

Institution	Full Name	Designation
<b>Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education</b>	Moses Mhike	Permanent Secretary
	Olicah Kaira	Chief Director Primary, Secondary and Nonformal Education
	Barnabas Emmanuel Mangosho	Chief Director Finance & Administration
	Edson Chauke	Director Non-formal Education
	Innocent Chishumbah	Director Secondary Education
	Loreen Antonio	Acting Director, Learner Welfare, Psychological Services, Special Needs Education
	Nyarai Choruma	Principal Material Production Officer -English CDTS
	Collen Jonas	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
	Rainos Mukanya	Communication and Advocacy Officer
	Elizabeth Muhlauro	Research and Statistics Officer
	Bafana A Ndhlovu	Education Research Officer
<b>Cordaid</b>	Trish Mukunyadzi	Country Manager, Zimbabwe
	Inge Barmentlo	PBF Expert, Cordaid Global Office
	Carmen Schakel	PBF Expert, Cordaid Global Office
	Bloodwell Tarume	PBF Education Focal Person, Zimbabwe
	Winston Chirombe	Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Zimbabwe
	Aveneni Mangombe	Programme Officer, Zimbabwe
	Zivengwa Taruberekera	Business Development Coordinator, Zimbabwe

## Annex 2: Image of the structure of the Zimbabwean Education system



Source: Education Statistics Report, MoPSE, 2020

## Annex 3: Overview of key Zimbabwean Education sector policies

**The new Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013):** secures the right to education stating that “Every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has a right to a basic state-funded education, including adult basic education, and that the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within the limits of the resources to it, to achieve the realisation of this right”.

**Vision 2030 agenda:** The government of Zimbabwe has an ambitious aspiration through its Vision 2030 agenda to become an ‘empowered and prosperous upper middle-income society by 2030’. The National Development Strategy 1: 2021-2025 (NDS1) was developed to guide the way towards achieving this 2030 Vision. Human capital development was identified as one of the priorities that will drive the NDS1 towards this goal, to create a knowledge-driven economy through reconfiguration of the education system with a strong emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM). The ESSP 2021– 2025, prepared by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), is premised on this NDS1 deriving its mandate to provide quality, equity and inclusive education for all children in Zimbabwe.

**The Education Amendment Act (No. 15 of 2020):** MoPSE has commenced to align all education sector policies with the 2020 Education Amendment Act. The Education Act guarantees (1) the right to free (state-funded) and compulsory basic education for all children from ECD to Form 4 and that teaching and learning materials should be provided by the government. The Act also (2) abolishes corporal punishment in schools and disciplinary measures should be moderate and appropriate. The Act also (3) allows the return and retention of pregnant girls in school, states the (4) critical provision of sanitary products and other menstrual hygiene facilities to females to promote menstrual health and (5) states efforts should be made to teach every officially recognized language and early childhood education should be taught in the local indigenous language.

**The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2021-2025:** the ESSP is the main education sector plan guiding the education sector during these five years. It links with international, continental, and key aspects of Zimbabwe’s national policies and strategies and reflects the following national policies: Vision 2030, National Development Strategy 2021-2025, Disaster Risk Management and Resilience Plan, Inclusive Education Policy, School Health Policy, ICT Policy, Non-Formal Education Policy and education priorities as found in the Education Sectoral Analysis 2020 (ESP). The ESSP’s vision is “*An education sector that provides access to quality, equitable, and inclusive education for all*”. The ESSP 2021-2025 identifies the following five strategic priorities with core programs to contribute to improving access, quality, equity and inclusivity:

- **Strategic Priority 1.** Improved Schools’ Infrastructure
- **Strategic Priority 2.** Enhanced Curriculum and Assessment
- **Strategic Priority 3.** Adequate Safeguarding and Learners’ Support
- **Strategic Priority 4.** Enhanced Teachers’ Capacity
- **Strategic Priority 5.** Enhanced Capacity of Leadership, Governance, Planning and implementation.

**The Early Childhood Development Policy:** Guides the establishment and implementation of Early Childhood Development (ECD). In addition, the Secretary’s Circulars No. 14 of 2004 and No. 2 of 2014 made ECD A and ECD B compulsory for all children, extending primary schooling to a total of nine years.

**The Disabled Persons Act of 1992.** The Act makes provisions for the welfare of disabled persons as well as for the appointment and functions of a Director for Disabled Persons’ Affairs. It also provided for the establishment of a National Disability Board.

**Non-formal Education (NFE) Policy:** In 2015, Government directed primary and secondary schools to establish NFE curricula to absorb more than one million teenagers and young adults who were out of school for various reasons including early pregnancies and child marriages as well as those children who had never been to school.

**School Health Policy (SHP 2018):** Proposes a comprehensive school health package based on the principle of education as a human right and a child-centred pedagogy that considers the best interest of the child as paramount at all times.

**Practical Inclusive Education handbook:** MoPSE coordinated the development of a practical handbook on inclusive education for all primary and secondary schools with guidelines and standards for optimal curriculum implementation. The handbook covers different dimensions of inclusive education and contains practical hints on what should be done at school level to make the mainstream classroom more inclusive in the areas of pedagogical approaches, curriculum adaptation, modifications to the school and classroom environment, school policies, and community involvement.

## Annex 4: A brief analysis of climate change & the effects on education

Climate change has emerged as a pressing global issue including for Zimbabwe, with far-reaching consequences for various sectors, including education. Climate-related disasters, such as cyclones and droughts, have devastated Zimbabwe's educational infrastructure. According to the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (Zimvac, 2020), the 2019 Cyclone Idai disaster damaged and/or destroyed over 390 schools in the eastern regions. This not only disrupts the learning process but also diverts critical funds from educational resources to repair and rebuilding efforts. As noted by UNESCO (2019), climate-related disasters can have a devastating impact on education infrastructure, leading to significant economic losses and disruption to the learning process. Deforestation, as noted by Katerere (2015) and Moyo (2018), leaves school buildings prone to soil erosion and increased vulnerability to climate-related disasters that destroy school buildings and blocks. Climate-resilient infrastructure is essential for ensuring the continuity of education services during and after climate-related disasters. In this regard, greening schools through initiatives such as tree planting and sustainable land management practices can help mitigate climate impacts (WWF, 2019).



*Effect of a storm: roof of a classroom of a visited primary school in Hurungwe blown off*

Climate change disproportionately impacts marginalized groups, particularly girls and children with disabilities. Plan International (2021) found that girls in climate-affected areas are 1.4 times more likely to drop out of school due to increased domestic duties or early marriages. Children with disabilities face additional barriers to education during climate disruptions. UNESCO (2020) highlights that climate change worsens existing

educational inequalities for these vulnerable groups.

Climate change worsens health issues in rural schools, leading to increased absenteeism and reduced academic performance. Flooding and waterborne diseases, such as cholera, have caused a 30% rise in absenteeism in affected districts (WHO, 2022). Schools are sometimes forced to close due to outbreaks. The lack of clean water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities in rural schools exacerbates these health risks, making students more vulnerable (WHO, 2018). Rural schools also face limited access to healthcare, with inadequate first aid supplies and scarce healthcare professionals, forcing students to travel long distances for treatment (Ministry of Health and Child Care, 2020). To mitigate these issues, schools can improve sanitation, provide climate-health education, and partner with local healthcare providers. Incorporating climate-resilient infrastructure, such as rainwater harvesting systems, solar-powered ventilation, and green roofs, can reduce health risks like waterborne diseases and heat stress (UNESCO, 2019). Establishing climate-resilient gardens can also provide nutritious food. By addressing both the health and infrastructure challenges posed by climate change, rural schools can create a safer, healthier learning environment for students.

## Annex 5: Overview of Access, Quality, Equity & Inclusivity challenges

### Challenge A: Access to education

According to the UNICEF report “*Zimbabwe goes back to School 2023*”, 9 out of 10 of primary age children are in school. Zimbabwe has a high net enrolment ratio in primary school. This figure has remained stable in the last decade. While the country targets universal enrolment of children in primary school, maintaining the current high level of enrolment is a challenge. Barriers to accessing quality, equitable and inclusive education are intersectional. Many children experience multiple constraints and disadvantages in accessing education such as poverty, gender, disability, abuse and long travels to school. Chronic poverty is the largest constraint hindering children in Zimbabwe from attending school with approximately 20% of learners of school age not attending school. Similarly, finances are the main reason for students dropping out of school. Households of students do not have the ability to pay school fees and lack school supplies, such as uniforms and textbooks. Girls also drop out due safety issues when traveling to school, household chores and parents not regarding school as valuable. The poorest quintile has lowest enrolment rates and those living in rural areas also have worse access compared to those in urban settings. Only 10% of disabled children are going to school. Non-Formal Education (NFE) is also limited due to financial barriers.

The *2022 Population and Housing Census* found that 93.8% of persons had attended school at some point, while 5.3% had never attended school at all with the remainder of persons having an unknown attendance status. The main reasons for never attending school were financial constraints (36.3%), education not considered valuable (24%), ‘still too young’ (23.8%) and school too far away (5.4%). Education seen as invaluable was a higher constraint in rural settings where 26.8% of people said they had never attended school for this reason, while this is 11.4% on urban settings.

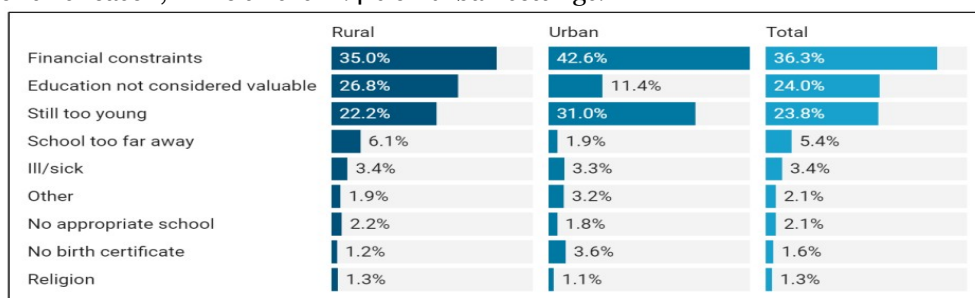


Figure 5.5: Distribution of Persons 4 Years and Above who Never Attended School by Reason and Rural/Urban

Source: Zimbabwe 2022 Population and Housing Census Report

Reasons for never attending school were also distinct among girls and boys. Education was not considered valuable by 31.6% of females never attending school and 13% of males. For those students who dropped out of school, the Census found that 44.9% of people cited financial constraints as the main reason followed by 18.2% of students leaving due to marriage/pregnancy related reason. Financial constraints was a larger reason to the dropout of school for males (51.6%) compared to females (38.9%). On the other hand, marriage/pregnancy related reasons was a larger reason for females (31.7%) compared to males (3.0%) to leave school. In both rural and urban settings, financial constraints was the largest reasons for students to drop out at 50.2% and 36.7%, respectively. Marriage/pregnancy related reasons was the second highest reason in rural (19.8%) and urban (15.7%) settings for students to drop-out.

### Challenge B: Quality of education

Issues related to teaching staff are pressing, especially in rural areas, where experienced educators are more scarce. The attrition of qualified teachers due to challenges in the operating environment and the lure of better opportunities elsewhere influences education quality, exacerbates the teacher shortage and affects student-teacher ratios. Additionally, insufficient infrastructure, including classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and sanitation facilities, hampers the learning environment and impedes the delivery of quality education. The school-aged population is projected to increase from over 6.7 million in 2021 to over seven million in 2025

which will place additional pressures on resources and will have an effect on the quality of education (*Zimbabwe Education Statistical Report 2021*).

In the “*Primary and Secondary Education Statistics report-2024*” data on indicators affecting the quality education are provided. In this paragraph three examples of indicators that effect quality are described.

**A. *Pupil to Classroom Ratio*:** in 2024 for all school levels (ECD, primary and secondary) the number of pupils per classroom is higher than the PCR norm. At *ECD* level statistics reveals that all provinces exceed the recommended pupil to classroom ratio (PCR) of 20. In terms of pupil to classroom ratios (PCR), Matabeleland North has the largest ratio at 67, closely followed by Masvingo at 59, while Harare has the smallest PCR at 28. A review of the provincial *primary* school statistics reveals that all provinces exceed the recommended pupil to classroom ratio (PCR) of 40 except for Matabeleland South with PCR of 38, while Harare has the largest ratio at 53, closely followed by Mashonaland Central at 52.

**B. *Seating and Writing Places*:** The provision of appropriate seating and writing places creates a conducive environment for learning. The recommended Pupil-to-Seating Place Ratio/Pupil to writing ratio is 1:1. The ratios above one means that the seating/writing places are shared by more than 1 pupils. In 2024 all provinces, except Harare, have primary school Pupil-to-Seating Place Ratio that are above the ideal ratio of 1:1. Mashonaland Central has the highest primary school Pupil-to-Seating Place Ratio (1.46), while Harare has the least (1.08). The proportion of primary school pupils without seating places range from 7.28 percent in Harare to 31.36 percent in Mashonaland Central. At national level, the primary school Pupil-to-Writing Place Ratio is 1.38. Also, all provinces have primary school Pupil-to-Writing Place Ratio that are above the ideal ratio of 1:1. Mashonaland Central has the highest primary school Pupil-to-Writing Place Ratio (1.56), while Harare has the least (1.14). The proportion of primary school pupils without writing places range from 12.63 percent in Harare to 35.73 percent in Mashonaland Central.

**C. *ICT, Computer Access, Use and Connectivity*:** Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education improves teaching and learning. In 2024 there are challenges related to this. In general Harare and Bulawayo have disproportionately higher proportions of primary schools with internet connectivity. Primary schools with access to internet are 39.99 percent. Country wide the proportion of schools with computers for pupils at primary level are 38.25 percent.

According to the *National Development Strategy Document: “Towards a Prosperous & Empowered Upper Middle Income Society by 2030”* of November 2020, despite the policy of automatic promotion (that is in force at the basic education level, whereby learners proceed to the next level regardless of their results), about 17.8% of Grade 7 learners have been failing to enroll for Form 1 mainly due to inability to pay fees. The document also stated that over the past decade, the *quality of education* and basic foundational skills such as *literacy* and *numeracy* have declined, which is generally of concern across the country, and particularly for disadvantaged learners in rural and remote areas. *Dropouts* at the primary level are relatively low as compared to secondary level. The major causes for secondary level dropouts include child marriages, adolescent pregnancy and the burden of high fees, with about 30% of girls dropping out in Forms 3 and 4. *School Infrastructure* remains a critical challenge as the demand for education continues to increase and school facilities require renovation and upgrading.

### **Challenge C: Equity, including gender**

Among others in its ESSP MoPSE acknowledges that equity remains an issue. There are specific issues that relate to access for those learners with disabilities and the provision of sexual and reproductive health rights information, which includes poor and insensitive Menstrual Health Management (MHM) and the lack of comprehensive provision of sanitary wear. Also, the language of instruction, teachers’ attitudes and behaviour, and marginalised boys and girls who leave school early for the world of work. As was also shown in the paragraph on Quality and is clearly shown in the “*Primary and Secondary Education Statistics report-2024*”, there are equity (access and quality) differences between provinces and between rural and urban schools.

According to “*UNICEF’s MICS Education Analysis for Global Learning and Equity findings*” for Zimbabwe, at the primary level, girls finish primary school at a higher rate (92%) than boys (86%). However, this pattern changes at upper secondary school level with 17% of boys complete education as compared to 14% of girls suggesting factors specific to girls that impede their education. One such factor is child marriage. The “*2022 UNICEF report on Child Marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa*” estimates that one in three young women were first married or in union before the age of 18. This early marriage significantly impacts girls’ educational attainment, with 63% of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18 having only a primary education as compared to 27% who had at least a secondary education.

The “*Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey 2019 for Zimbabwe*” reports that there is near parity between males and female pupils in net attendance and completion rates in early childhood, primary and upper secondary. However, there is a noticeable disparity between males and females in school attendance at lower secondary (55 percent for males and 65 percent for females), and children from the richest households are four times more likely to attend lower secondary than those from the poorest. School completion outcomes are the most equitable for primary schooling although significant disparities with respect to rural-urban and household wealth still exist. The situation worsens considerably in higher levels with the majority of rural youth, particularly girls, not having completed lower secondary schools (*Zimbabwe Policy Brief KIX EMIS cdv1*).

### **Challenge D: Inclusivity**

MoPSE focuses on the needs of the most marginalised learners and addresses inclusivity in education through the Psychological Services, Special Needs and Learner Welfare Department. Within the Department, the identification of learners with disabilities and how to support them is undertaken and covers ECD to secondary school. Gross Enrolment Rates for ECD, especially in some provinces, are low. Net Enrolment Rates at upper secondary level remain in favour of males, but at other levels it is in favour of females. The “*Towards a Prosperous & Empowered Upper Middle Income Society by 2030*” document states that, although an inclusive approach has been adopted, with resource units set up in primary schools, this has not been the case for secondary schools, where such facilities are significantly under-resourced and teachers require additional support and training to make them fully viable. Also, children with disabilities exhibit lower school attendance and are not completing a full cycle of education. The Curriculum Development and Technical Services (CDTS) Department has revitalised radio lessons’ production and the Human Resources Department provides support for teachers, although there remains a shortage of teachers trained in STEM/STEAM. SEN of learners are not adequately addressed. The use of indigenous languages is not currently adequately considered, with a lack of trained teachers and resources in this area.

## Annex 6: Financing per program, domestic/external and at school level

### **Education Sector Spending by Program**

Based on a “*UNICEF Budget Brief*”, in 2022 the largest share (43%) of the MoPSE education budget (US\$652 million) was allocated to Junior Education (Grade 3 – 7). This is followed by the Secondary Education Programme (30.7%) and then Infant Education (14.5%). Funding for infant education continues to decline during 2017 – 2022, despite its critical role in foundational learning and education outcomes. MoPSE does aim to annually increase the Infant Education budget as shown in the ESSP 2020-2025 budget forecast. Meanwhile, the Learner Support Services budget, which includes crucial social interventions in the education sector, was allocated US\$25 million (4%) of the total MoPSE budget in 2022. Of the Learner Support Services budget, 58% was earmarked for the School Feed Programme benefiting 80% of schools and 26% for sanitary wear targeting 80% of female learners in rural schools.

### **Education Sector Financing (Domestic & External)**

According to a “*UNICEF Education Budget Brief (2022)*”, during 2017 – 2022 domestic resources accounted for 95% of education financing in Zimbabwe, while 5% came from external resources. The largest share of domestic financing was in 2022 amounting to US\$682 (98%) while US\$26 million (2%) came from development partners. External education financing remained relatively unchanged over 2023 and 2024 contributing approximately US\$25 each year. In 2024, this accounted for 4% of the total development partner support (US\$628 million). However, given that the largest bulk of domestic funding goes to employment costs, there is a very large funding gap for non-wage activities.

There is little to no domestic financing available within the fiscus to schools, except through the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) financing and the Grant-In-Aid of Tuition program. Schools fund more than 50% of their activities through funds and levies raised from parents. However, as a result of the economic crisis, more parents are now failing to meet levy payments.

### **Income at the level of Schools**

The largest proportion (more than 50%) of school income for both levels is from household contributions. Schools receive parental contributions for school tuition fees, amounting to approximately 1/4 of all reported income. Other sources of school income include the School Development Committee (SDC) levies and building levies which are mostly used to fund building projects at the schools. There are also other household contributions, and individual schools combine or separate fees in various ways. Based on the geographical/grant category of schools, the level of school levies households paid varied greatly. P1 schools (in wealthy urban areas) paid more than US\$600 per year during 2016 – 2019, while P3 (rural schools) paid only 1/10<sup>th</sup> of this level. In 2020, the Education Amendment Act was set to make basic education free. However, this is still being draft in the School Financing Policy and is still to be operationalized at the school level.

Certain schools also received income other than from household contributions. Payments that schools receive include: School Improvement Grants (SIGs), BEAM payments, per capita building and salary grants that come from the government or development partners, as does other external aid. Other school income comes from income-generating projects and rental of school property. SIGs, per capita and building grants are given to schools based on their geographical category (P1, P2 or P3 for primary schools). The most disadvantaged rural schools (P3) with the lowest income, receive the greatest preferential treatment, while those schools categorized in P1 receive the least or no assistance. BEAM payments support vulnerable children with the payment of a basic education package that includes levies, tuition and examination fees. Underneath some more detail is provided on SIGs, BEAM and Grants in Aid of Tuition.

**A. School Improvement Grants (SIGs):** The SIG has been in place since 2013 and is implemented by MoPSE with support from UNICEF. UNICEF is the fund holder and technical partner and is responsible for the payment of the grant directly to the beneficiary schools’ bank accounts. The expectation was that the SIGs would reduce compulsory education costs for parents over time, especially the poor and vulnerable. Various types of SIGs exist for disadvantaged schools: SIG regular, SIG Complementary Funds (focusing on infrastructure), School Feeding, SIG Emergency and SIG WASH. Each SIG has its objective and in 2024 targeted schools received on average 1,500 – 2,000 USD from SIGs. School selection criteria for receiving

SIG have shifted over time but have a strong equity focus and generally accounted for school income, grant class (P3, S3 registered schools and satellite schools), and distance from the district office. Data from the Education Management Information System (EMIS) are used for the annual selection criteria. The Regular SIG is provided through the GPE STG, as well as the FCDO-funded TEACH programme.

- B. Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) support program:** Launched in 2000 as part of GoZ's Enhanced Social Protection Programme, BEAM is implemented by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MPSLSW) in conjunction with MoPSE. BEAM was specifically established to assist primary and secondary learners aged between six and 19 years in the following categories: those in school but failing to pay or having financial difficulties in paying levies, tuition fees and examination fees; those who have dropped-out of school for financial reasons; children of school age who have never been to school for financial reasons. BEAM supports children with special needs enrolled in special schools and special classes. 10% of BEAM funds are reserved for learners with disabilities. At least 50 percent of beneficiaries should be female learners. However, payments are often delayed by years.
- C. Grants in Aid of Tuition:** The recent pilot of free basic education, funded by the Government of Zimbabwe's Grant in Aid of Tuition, initially covered two disadvantaged districts per province (16 rural districts in total) and aimed to improve access, quality, equity, and inclusivity, as students in these districts won't pay tuition fees. In non-pilot districts, parents are required to pay levies.

## Annex 7: List of actors consulted during the Mission

No	Organization/Unit	Type
1	FCDO	Donor
2	UNICEF	UN agency
3	World Bank	UN agency/Donor
4	Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI)	Coalition of organization supporting the provision of education services in Zimbabwe
5	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Head Office	Government Ministry
6	Provincial Education Directorate	Government Department Provincial Level
7	District Schools Inspectorate	District regulatory authorities
8	Educators (Teachers and Headmasters)	Educators/Service providers
9	School Development Committees	Parent associations
10	Office of the President and Cabinet	Government Department
11	Provincial Affairs and Devolution	Government Department
12	Rural District Councils	Government Department

## Annex 8: Feasibility Scan (scored by team: round 2)

### Used score (scale of Likert):

- 1 - Completely false / strongly disagree
- 2 - (Rather) false / disagree
- 3 - Neither false nor true / neither disagree nor agree
- 4 - (Rather) true / agree
- 5 - Completely true / completely agree

Categories and feasibility criteria		Average score	Weight	Weighted score	%
<b>I - Relevance of PBF objectives</b>			<b>5</b>	14.14	<b>46%</b>
1	There is lack of financial resources (budget) at primary school level	3.79	1	3.79	70%
2	There is insufficient access to and or use of (primary) education services	3.00	1	3.00	50%
3	The quality of education services from primary schools is inadequate	3.21	1	3.21	55%
4	The data available for managing the education sector is unreliable	2.21	1	2.21	30%
5	The education sector governance suffers from a lack of transparency and accountability	1.93	1	1.93	23%
<b>II - Relevance of the PBF principles</b>			<b>11</b>	29.00	<b>41%</b>
6	There is lack of motivation and/or incentives for staff of primary schools	3.79	2	7.57	70%
7	The expectations and priorities of primary schools and/or of provincial and district education authorities are not sufficiently clear	2.21	2	4.43	30%
8	The action plans of primary schools and/or of local provincial and district education authorities do not correspond to reality or are completely absent	2.43	2	4.86	36%
9	There is lack of checks and balances in the education governance system and in the supervision of structures	1.93	2	3.86	23%
10	There is lack of power on the part of end-users (pupils, parents, community) in the education sector to express their needs and opinions, and to influence the management of primary schools	2.29	2	4.57	32%
11	Access to quality (primary) education services is inequitable (between the genders, because of vulnerabilities, because of geography, etc.)	3.71	1	3.71	68%
<b>III - Favorable circumstances for PBF</b>			<b>4</b>	17.14	<b>82%</b>
12	There is a formal (and preferably digitised) information system for managing the education sector, and the primary schools (whether public, private and/or conventional) are officially registered in this information system	4.21	1	4.21	80%
13	Supervision of (targeted) primary schools (whether public, private and/or conventional) by the provincial/district education authorities takes place regularly and uniformly	4.36	1	4.36	84%
14	(Targeted) primary schools have adequate staff, are sufficiently trained to provide quality education and are able to do their own accounting	4.00	1	4.00	75%
15	The primary schools are already used to developing (school) action plans (annual or quarterly) which can serve as a basis for (PBF) contracting	4.57	1	4.57	89%
<b>IV - Applicability of the PBF principles</b>			<b>13</b>	60.71	<b>92%</b>

16	There is a level of decentralisation in the (primary) education sector that is sufficient for PBF, allowing provincial and district education authorities to manage their own budgets and develop their own action plans	4.57	2	9.14	89%
17	It seems possible to create sufficient separation of functions and roles, which will be accepted by the MoPSE	4.64	2	9.29	91%
18	It is possible to develop a package of indicators (quantitative and qualitative) that is <i>directly attributable</i> to the performance of primary schools	4.93	2	9.86	98%
19	Financial incentives (total additional (PBF) amounts per primary school that are significant but still modest) can really make a difference and help to resolve the main challenges identified (see criteria 1-11)  <i>Explanation: this is not the case if the problems cannot be resolved at school level, but must first be resolved at another level</i>	4.71	2	9.43	93%
20	Primary schools can be sufficiently autonomous to 1) sign a performance contract; 2) develop their own plans <i>according</i> to their priorities; 3) have a bank account and buy inputs, and 4) motivate or sanction staff NB: deduct one point (from a total of 5) for each requirement that is not met	4.57	3	13.71	89%
21	In this context, it is possible to assign an important role to the community and the targeted beneficiaries, strengthening accountability towards the population	4.64	2	9.29	91%
	<b>V - Alignment of PBF with policy and political ownership/support</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>28.29</b>	<b>93%</b>
22	The objectives of PBF (promoting access, quality and equity of services and strengthening the governance of the sector) are aligned with the political priorities of the MoPSE, both at the national level (the ministry) and at the decentralized level	4.71	2	9.43	93%
23	At the national ministry level, MoPSE, there is a level of buy-in (support, interest and commitment) for the PBF approach and for the proposed project	4.71	2	9.43	93%
24	At the level of provincial/district sector authorities, there is a level of buy-in (support, interest and commitment) for the PBF approach and for the idea to develop a PBF intervention	4.71	2	9.43	93%
	<b>VI - Financial sustainability and scaling up for PBF</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>24.71</b>	<b>78%</b>
25	There is strong interest from the main partners in the education sector for the PBF approach and the financing of a pilot/showcase project (Example: WB, UNICEF, EU, bilateral donors)	4.00	2	8.00	75%
26	It seems likely that in the long term/future, the national ministry, MoPSE, (together with Cordaid) will attract the commitment of the main donors and partners and that PBF can be scaled-up and (financially) supported by the donors and partners	4.07	2	8.14	77%
27	In the future, it seems possible that PBF will be integrated into the MoPSE's policies and strategies and supported by the education sector's budget (using at least partially national resources)	4.29	2	8.57	82%
	<b>VII - Conducive Environment for PBF</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>21.29</b>	<b>81%</b>
28	The target districts are safe. There is no security risk in the area	4.50	2	9.00	88%
29	There is road access throughout the year - including in the rainy season - to (almost) all primary schools in the targeted districts	3.86	1	3.86	71%
30	The targeted districts for a possible pilot/showcase PBF education project can easily be visited for policy engagement	4.21	2	8.43	80%
	<b>TOTAL SCORE - minimum of 50 (0%) and maximum of 250 (100%)</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>195.29</b>	<b>73%</b>

## Annex 9: The Structure of MoPSE

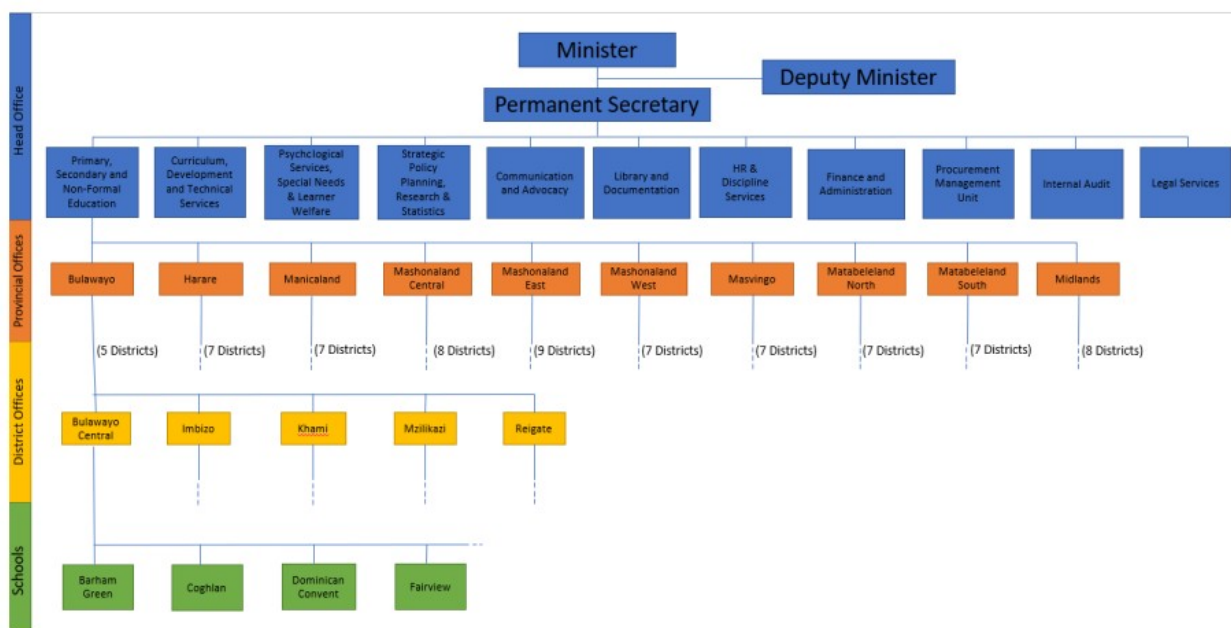


Figure 2. MoPSE structure

Source: Zimbabwe ESSP 2021-2025

1. The Primary, Secondary and Non-Formal Education department
2. Department of Curriculum Development and Technical Services is composed of two divisions: the Curriculum Development Unit and E-learning and Technical Services Unit.
3. The Department of Learner Welfare and Psychological Services comprises three sections: the Learner Welfare Services, Psychological Services and the Special Needs Education.
4. The Department of Human Resources and Discipline
5. The Department of Finance and Administration
6. The Procurement Management Unit,
7. Communications and Advocacy Division,
8. Legal Services Division,
9. Gender Mainstreaming Inclusivity and Wellness Division,
10. Strategic Policy Planning, Research and Statistics Division,
11. National Library and Documentation Services Division.

## Annex 10: Documents Reviewed

	<i>Document titles</i>
1	Philip Musgrove: Financial and Other Rewards for Good Performance or Results: A Guided Tour of concepts and Terms and a Short Glossary
2	Secretary's Circular NO 4 of 2024. Implementation of the Heritage Based Curriculum Framework 2024 – 2030.
3	Education Sector Strategic Plan, 2021-2025
4	Education Amendment Act (No. 15 of 2020)
5	Education Sector Analysis. 2020. Cadena International Development Projects.
6	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. (2019). Practical Inclusive Education Handbook for Primary and Secondary Schools
7	<a href="https://www.zimtreasury.gov.zw/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Citizens-Budget-2024.-Final_compressed-1.pdf">https://www.zimtreasury.gov.zw/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Citizens-Budget-2024.-Final_compressed-1.pdf</a>
8	ZIMCODD: Health and Education Situational Report. February 2024.
9	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. 2024 Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report.
10	<a href="https://www.iicba.unesco.org/en/zimbabwe">https://www.iicba.unesco.org/en/zimbabwe</a>
11	Policy Brief: KIX EMIS Peer Review   Ministry of Education   Zimbabwe
12	<a href="https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2023-03-zimbabwe-partnership-compact.pdf">https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2023-03-zimbabwe-partnership-compact.pdf</a>
13	<a href="https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2024-09-program-document-system-transformation-multiplier-grant-zimbabwe.pdf">https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2024-09-program-document-system-transformation-multiplier-grant-zimbabwe.pdf</a>
14	<a href="https://www.unicef.org/esa/sites/unicef.org/esa/files/2018-09/UNICEF-2017-Language-and-Learning-Zimbabwe.pdf">https://www.unicef.org/esa/sites/unicef.org/esa/files/2018-09/UNICEF-2017-Language-and-Learning-Zimbabwe.pdf</a>
15	<a href="https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/11846/file/Unicef_Zimbabwe_Education_Budget_Brief_2022.pdf">https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/11846/file/Unicef_Zimbabwe_Education_Budget_Brief_2022.pdf</a>
16	<a href="https://www.unicef.org/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-goes-back-school-2023">https://www.unicef.org/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-goes-back-school-2023</a>
17	<a href="#">Independent Impact Study of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) in Zimbabwe.pdf</a>
18	Zimbabwe: Education Country Brief   International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (unesco.org)