

Achieve Universal Primary Education



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TARGET 3:

Ensure that, between 2000 and 2015, all Zimbabwean children boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full programme of primary education.

INDICATORS:

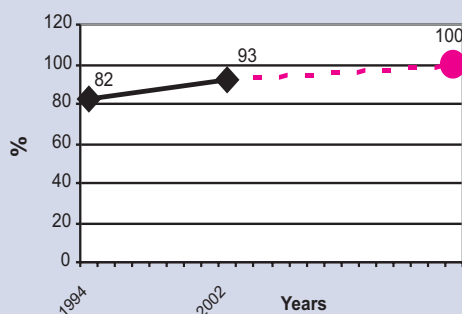
6. Primary school completion rate
7. Net enrolment ratio in primary education
8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds
9. Teacher pupil ratio

STATUS AND TRENDS

By the mid-1990s, Zimbabwe had achieved near universal primary education for all. In 1994 the Net Enrolment Ratio was 81.9%, improving to 93.0% in 2002 (fig. 2.1). Consequently, literacy levels for 15 - 24 year olds rose from 95% to 98% between 1992 and 1999 (Fig. 2.3). However, during the same period, the primary school completion rate¹² was 82.6%, declining to 76.1% by 1995, and further to 75.1% by 2000 (fig. 2.2).

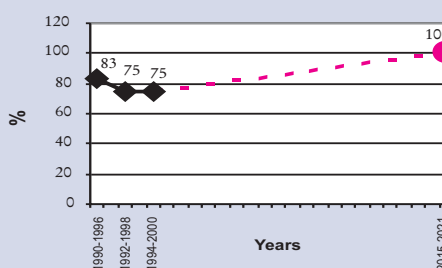
The achievement in high enrolment and literacy rates was mainly due to the universal primary education policy adopted soon after independence. By 1990, Zimbabwe had 4,530 primary schools, increasing to 4,741 in 2000, (an increase of 9.6%). During the same period, primary school enrolment increased from 2,119,881 to 2,400,669, an increase of 13%.

Figure 2.1: Net Enrolment Ratio, Primary Education, Zimbabwe, 1994-2015.



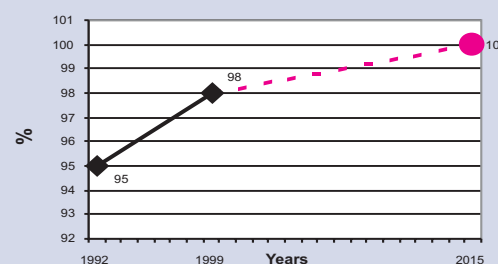
Source: Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, Zimbabwe, 2002.

Figure 2.2: Completion Rates, Zimbabwe, 1990-1996 to 2015-2021



Source: Statistics Unit: Education Management Information System: Ministry of Education Sports and Culture, 2001

Figure 2.3: Literacy rate 15-24 Years of Age, Zimbabwe, 1992-2015



Source: Central Statistical Office, Harare, 1992 Population Census and 1999 Indicator Monitoring, Labour Force Survey

Key

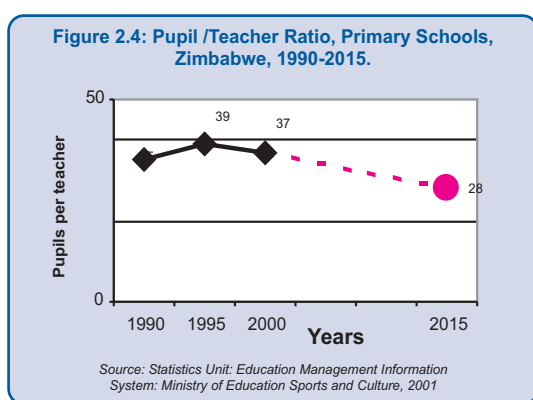
- ◆ Actual
- Target
- Current rate of progress
- - - Rate of progress required to reach goal

There were also significant improvements in the quality of teaching personnel in the primary education sector. In 1990, 51.5% of the 60,886 primary school teachers were trained, while 48.5% were untrained. By 2000, the proportion had

¹² Completion rate- Measures the proportion of children, in a cohort, who complete the education cycle of a particular stage

increased to 88.4% trained and 11.6% untrained, out of an increased total of 66,640 primary school teachers.

In spite of the general improvement in the provision of primary education, the quality of education has been falling, due to a high teacher to pupil ratio averaging 1:37 (fig. 2.4), but is as high as 1:50 in some cases, against the desired ratio of 1:28; high book to pupil ratio; high attrition levels; and economic hardship. This situation has been exacerbated by human resource depletion due to HIV and AIDS, as well as, the need to provide for the newly resettled families under the land reform program.



On gender disparities, there is a relatively higher non-participation rate of the girl child, estimated at 10%, compared with 4.9% for boys in 2000.

Thus, Zimbabwe's progress towards achieving universal education appears to be under threat especially with the current population movements into newly resettled areas, the high staff attrition levels, brain drain and the impact of HIV and AIDS.

CHALLENGES

There are various challenges that the country is faced with in achieving universal primary education:

Inadequate financing of education

While education has consistently received the highest share of resources within the national budget in nominal terms, these resources remain inadequate in real terms to maintain the desired high quality of education. This has resulted in the following:

- Low per capita and equalisation¹³ grants;
- Inadequate basic teaching materials;
- High pupil to book ratio of 8 to 1 in 1997;

- High teacher to pupil ratio averaging 1:37, but as high as 1:50 in some cases in 2000, compared with a recommended ratio of 1:28;
- Poor environment for learning; and
- Inadequate infrastructure, (classrooms space, teacher accommodation and libraries, and ablution facilities).

Mapping of Primary School dropouts

In order for Zimbabwe to achieve its target of 100% primary school completion rate by 2015, the challenge is to understand the profile of school dropouts through a mapping exercise so that these can receive targeted intervention.

Population movements under Land reform

Population movements under the current land reform programme present new challenges to the provision of primary education for all children. The challenge, therefore, is to provide adequate primary school infrastructure in the newly resettled areas.

Low Teacher Morale and Brain Drain

Morale among teachers is generally very low due to the following:

- low salaries (which have been acutely eroded by the high inflationary environment) and poor staff accommodation, especially in rural areas.
- increased working loads which have worsened the working conditions and resulted in low teacher morale.

These factors have partly contributed to the massive brain drain of qualified teachers. The challenge is to continuously address teacher remuneration and working conditions.

Implementation of Decentralised Management Structures

In an effort to right-size management levels in the education system, the supervision machinery was adversely affected e.g. the abolition of the former District Education Officers Post (DEO). The challenge is to implement effectively the process of decentralised management structures.

Poverty and Hunger

General poverty and hunger, particularly in rural areas and disadvantaged communities, contribute to low enrolments, erratic school attendance, and dropouts. The challenge is to consolidate supplementary feeding programmes and other education support programmes to enable children from disadvantaged households to attend school.

HIV and AIDS

The HIV and AIDS pandemic is seriously undermining the education system, indiscriminately affecting pupils, their parents and teachers. The challenge is to reverse the spread and mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS especially for those children orphaned by the epidemic.



¹³ Equalization grants are provided to former Group B schools attended by the majority of children, in order to bring them at par with the former Group A schools with respect to facilities.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

As noted earlier, education continues to receive the largest vote allocation of the annual national budget since 1980. Education is also supported by other policies and programmes, such as:

█ Policies

- Universal Primary Education policy adopted soon after independence,
- 1987 Education Act, which made primary education tuition free,
- Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Training Course (ZINTEC), which facilitated on-the-job teacher training, and
- Decentralisation of functions and responsibilities to district schools and communities.

█ Programmes

- Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), which supports children from disadvantaged communities,
- Strong partnership support e.g. Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe (BSPZ), Education Transition and reform Programme (ETRP), Better Environmental Science Teaching (BEST), Health Promotion Schools Programme (HPSP), Management skills training for primary heads.
- Supportive parents and communities have always had a strong commitment in education cost-sharing in the form of school fees, levies, uniforms, labour and other learning materials.
- programs such as rural electrification, combined with ICT for development, constitute a highly supportive environment for education.

The highly supportive policy and community environment has greatly enhanced access to primary school level education.

PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

To achieve the target of universal primary education, the following national priorities need to be addressed:

█ Extend school system to newly resettled areas;

Providing education and related social infrastructure in the newly resettled areas.

█ **Allocation of additional resources for primary education development expenditure;** Rationalize budget priorities to free additional resources for development expenditure on primary education. Some resources must be targeted at combating the problem of school dropouts.

█ Address HIV and AIDS in the education sector;

Consolidate strategies to reverse HIV and AIDS prevalence and its impact in the education sector.

█ School infrastructure development.

Expansion of school infrastructure and the provision of better learning conditions for children and good working environment for teachers.

█ Address Brain Drain

Even though sufficient numbers of primary school teachers have been trained, many have left the education sector due to poor working conditions. Thus addressing teacher's working conditions (salaries, accommodation, water) is a national priority.

█ Provide for children with learning disabilities

Provision of facilities for disabled children in the national school system to enable the disabled attend school.

PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Zimbabwe's progress towards achieving universal and quality primary education could be enhanced by focusing on the following priorities for development assistance.

- ◆ Provision of support for school infrastructure development, including learning and teaching materials.
- ◆ Support for the prevention and mitigation of HIV and AIDS to children and education personnel.
- ◆ Provision of facilities that cater for children with physical disabilities in the regular schooling system.

COSTING THE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION GOAL

Overview: The MDG focuses on the completion rate of Primary education. In this regard, two considerations are worth mentioning. First and foremost, the affordability of parents - the demand side of education - to send the child to school without interruption for 7 years of schooling, including the fact that some parents may be able to afford the cost of education, but may not think that it is a priority, especially for girls. The second consideration - the supply side of education - is the Government's willingness and ability to allocate more resources for education to bring about a higher enrolment rate and improvement to the quality of education. Combining the demand and supply sides, it is reasonable to conclude that simply allocating more government resources will not necessarily result in higher enrolment or completion rates, given constraints such as



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weaknesses in service delivery and cases where low enrolment rates are concentrated in certain parts of the country. As such, in order to ensure higher enrolment rates, more resources from the Government will need to be equally matched by a rise in household incomes.

Costing Method for Primary Education: The approach used for calculating the cost of meeting the primary education goal is the application of 'Unit Cost' method. The unit cost for a particular year is obtained by dividing the expenditure incurred in providing the education by number of children enrolled. The figures for expenditures are generally available on a yearly basis as budget-revised estimates and actual or via audited accounts of government. However, data on enrolment rates, dropout rates and completion rates are harder to ascertain on a regular basis. Therefore, not only do the allocation of spending become difficult, but also assessing the impact of spending.

Projected Cost on Primary Education¹⁴: The goal for Zimbabwe is to increase completion rates from 76% in 2000 to 100% in 2015, also taking into consideration an annual 1.1% increase in population.

Without quality improvement:

Basic assumptions (in year 2000):

- ◆ *Students enrolled = 2.4 mn*
- ◆ *Completion rate = 75%*
- ◆ *Budget expenditure = Z\$25,585 mn*

- ◆ *Per child expenditure = Z\$ 6618.8*
- ◆ *Per child expenditure = US\$ 120.3*

Given these assumptions, annual real increase in expenditures to attain 100% (including 1.1% population increase) completion rate by 2015 is 4.5% per annum. Average spending over the period should increase to US\$ 171 per child. The total resource requirement, under this scenario, amounts to US\$381million, or an average of US\$25.4 million per annum.

With quality improvement:

The goal for Zimbabwe is to achieve the above, but, additionally, to improve the quality as defined by;

- ◆ Average class size being reduced from the current pupil teacher ratio of 37 to 28.
- ◆ Number of teachers increased by 4.3% per annum between 2000 and 2015.
- ◆ An increase in real spending (based on 2000) in salaries and wages of 11% per annum until 2015.
- ◆ Supplies per child increased in real terms by 50% between 2000 and 2015, implying an increase of 3.3% per year.

Given these assumptions, annual real increase in expenditures to attain 100% (including 1.1% population increase) completion rate by 2015 is 6.5% per annum. Average spending over the period should increase to US\$ 198 per child. The total resource requirement under this scenario amounts to US\$447.8 million, or an average of US\$29.8 million per annum.



¹⁴ The average unit cost is derived from Budget Estimates 2000 (Vote 17- Education, Sport and Culture) and statistics available for net completion rate, numbers of students enrolled in primary education in 2000. Both recurrent and capital expenditures are taken in to account in estimating Unit Costs.



“ As a Nation with Oneness
of Purpose, Together we can
Score this Goal! ”

