UNESCO INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION

THE DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION: THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY

1990-2000

NATIONAL REPORT OF

THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

PREPARED

BY

HARARE JULY 2001
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.0 INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Socio-economic and Political Context</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 The Country’s Educational Goals and Objectives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 The Structure of the Report</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.0 THE EDUCATION SYSTEM ST THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Major Reforms and Innovations Introduced in the Education System During the Last Ten Years</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 The Legal Framework of Education</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 The Organisation, Structure and Management of the Education System</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Overall Organisation and Structure of Education</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 Basic Education</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Secondary Education</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4 Tertiary Education</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Curriculum Content and Learning strategies for the Twenty-First Century</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Curriculum Development, Principles and Assumptions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2 Aims of Curriculum Development</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.3 Objective of Curriculum Development</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.4 Curriculum Decision-making Process</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.5 Curriculum Planning and Design</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.6 Time Allocation</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7 Teaching and Learning Strategies</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Assessment Policies, Methods and Instruments</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1 Primary and Secondary Level</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2 Tertiary Level</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Changing and adapting Educational Content</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Principal Institutions and Individuals Participating in the Process of Changing and adapting Educational content</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Strategies Adopted in the Design, Implementation and</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation of Curriculum Reforms 23

2.8 Curricula Achievements, Problems Encountered and Solutions 23

2.9 Objectives and Principal characteristics of the Current and Forthcoming Reforms 25

2.10 Major Achievements in the Period 1990 to 2000 26

2.10.1 Access to Education 26

2.10.2 Equity in Education: Primary Sector Gender Participation 29

2.10.3 Equity in Education: Secondary Sector Gender Participation 31

2.10.4 Equity in Education: Tertiary Level 32

2.10.5 The Reduction of Unqualified Teachers 33

2.11 Quality and Relevance of Education 34

2.12 Decentralisation: Participation by society in the Process of Educational Change 35

2.13 The Main Problems and Challenges Facing National Education at the Beginning of the 21st Century 35

3.0 CONCLUSION 39

4.0 REFERENCES 40
1.0 INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of the last decade of the twentieth century, Zimbabwe had two ministries of education: the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture organises, structures and manages education from pre-primary to secondary school level. The Ministry also deals with non-formal education and adult literacy, and technical, vocational and commercial education at secondary school level. The Ministry of Higher Education and Technology organises and manages tertiary education focusing on teacher, technical, vocational and university education. The activities and developments within this sector during the period 1990-2000 were within the scope of the national development plans such as the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST).

1.1 Socio-economic and Political Context

The country’s economy is agro-based and it also has a vibrant tourism sector. Other major sectors are manufacturing and mining. Some of the main minerals found in Zimbabwe include gold, nickel, chromium ore, iron ore and coal.

The population of Zimbabwe as at the 1992 national Census stood at 10 401 767. The annual population growth rate for the period 1990 to 1992 was 3.13%. The population density was 26.62 persons/Km². By 1997 when the Inter Censal Demographical Survey (ICDS) was carried out the population had risen to 11 789 274. 52.1% were women. This reflected an average population growth rate of 2.5% p.a. The population density had risen to 30/Km². The ICDS also revealed some inequalities in the population e.g. the literacy rate was higher in males (90%) than among the female population (80%). The national literacy rate stood at 86%.

Government expenditure on education has been quite substantial over the years. Just after 1980, budget allocations to the sector were quite high since the government was on a drive to redress the imbalance that had been the norm during the colonial era. Unfortunately, the bulk of government expenditure on the sector is still mainly on
salaries, which accounts for 90% of the education budget. Expenditure on the two education ministries is now almost 40% of the national budget.

In 1980 the new government of Zimbabwe inherited a system of education that was racially biased and unequal in both governance and financing as well as the quality it rendered to the different racial groups. For example, the colonial settler government made European education compulsory and therefore offered universal education, spent as much as 20 times more per European child than the African child. Mainly missionaries rather than government provided education, for the African child.

During the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence, the government followed a socialist path. The main driving principle was "Growth with Equity". This principle was adopted so that the government could redress the inherited inequities and imbalances in access to basic needs such as education and health facilities and services.

During this period, the government played a major role in the provision of services as well as in the redistribution of resources. For the period 1982 – 1992 the GDP growth at 2,7% lagged behind the population growth rate of 3,13%. Unfortunately a disproportionate share of this growth was in the provision of services and public administration. The overall export growth for the period 1980 - 1989 was very low at 3,4%. The debt service payments were as high as 34% of export earnings by the end of the 1980s. This had a negative impact on foreign currency earnings and reserves such that stringent foreign currency control measures were introduced. Besides the above problems, the market was characterised by price and investment controls and labour market restrictions. Unemployment continued to rise despite the expansion of the public sector especially in education and health. These problems contributed towards the creation of an environment that was not conducive to investment in the productive sectors of the economy.

Despite these problems, Government continued to invest heavily in the education sector such that primary and secondary school enrolments expanded by 79% and 841% respectively in the period 1980 to 1989. University enrolment increased by about 300%
during the same period. Public technical colleges had increased from two in 1980 to eight by 1989.

Primary school education was made free. This resulted in gross admission rates shooting to well over 100%. By the end of the first decade of independence, Zimbabwe had achieved universal primary education.

At the end of the 1980s it was clear that the socialist ideology pursued by the country was not going to help solve the above-mentioned problems. New strategies had to be developed to address the challenges that were now facing the government. These strategies were enshrined in the IMF recommended Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP), which was adopted towards the end of 1990.

1.2 The Country’s Goals and Objectives

The country’s objectives and goals for the education and training sector are enshrined in the mission statements of its two education ministries, which are listed below.

The mission statement of the Ministry of Education Sport and culture (MOESC) reads:

The Ministry of Education is committed to the provision of good quality basic, secondary and continuing education to all children and adults through schools, other learning centres and multi-media approaches so as to produce individuals with potential to contribute towards development.

In quest for efficiency and effectiveness, the Ministry cherishes in its clients and employees the values of critical thinking, innovativeness, self-discipline, self-actualisation, consultation and involvement, team work, transparency, professionalism and the role these play in development.

The mission statement of the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology (MHET) reads:

The Mission of the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology is to provide, regulate and facilitate tertiary education and training through the planning, development and implementation of effective policies, the provision of resources and management of institutions in order to meet the human resources requirements of the economy and equip individuals to realise their full potential.
There are other ministries that offer sector specific training. These are the Ministries of Health & Child Welfare, Home Affairs and Agriculture, Lands and Rural Resettlement.

The major challenge facing government at the advent of ESAP was how to maintain and build upon past successes, especially in the education sector, while at the same time reducing the proportion of the budget devoted to education. The main issue within this perspective was how to improve the learning achievement of children, access, equity and the learning environment. All this was also within the scope of the resolutions of the Jomtien Conference that was held in Thailand in 1990.

1.3 The Structure of the Report
The Report covers highlights of developments in education over the last ten years of the 20th Century with special emphasis on the dawn of the 21st Century. It reviews major reforms and innovations introduced in the education system during the period 1990 to 2000; provides a brief legal framework of education; discusses the organisation, structure and management of the education system; analyses curricula content and learning strategies; enlightens on assessment and evaluation policies, methods and instruments; explains the objectives and principal characteristics of the current and forthcoming reforms; recounts major achievements of the last ten years; offers insight into the quality and relevance of Zimbabwean education; shows how society participates in the process of educational change; and highlights the main problems and challenges facing national education at the beginning of the 21st Century.

2.0 THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY

2.1 Major Reforms And Innovations Introduced In The Education System During The Last Ten Years

2.1.1 The Legal Framework of Education
At Independence in 1980, Zimbabwe inherited a dual education system characterised by inequities between a system designed to serve the needs of the minority Whites (whites
were defined in Zimbabwe as Europeans, Asians and Coloureds) and another system
designed for the vast majority who were Africans. In order to redress these inequitable
and discriminatory practices of successive colonial governments, the post-independence
Republic of Zimbabwe government adopted the policy of education as a basic human
right, and committed itself to universal and equal educational opportunity for all. It was
within this broad policy framework that the Government, buttressed by the progressive
Bill of Rights in the Independence Constitution (1979), reorganised, democratised and
expanded its education system. The Bill of Rights enshrined fundamental human rights
and freedoms designed to guarantee equality of opportunity for all regardless of race,
colour, gender, creed, place of origin, or any other considerations. Public policy thus
compels the State to ensure that there is equal opportunity for all. This principle has
guided all policies and strategies for the provision of education in Zimbabwe since
independence. State policy has been shaped, to a large extent, by the principle of equality
of treatment and opportunity for all children, women and girls. Several international
conventions on human rights and equality have exerted tremendous influence on
educational management and the education system.

The above are the key elements in the policy framework. Through this framework,
historical imbalances in the education system were redressed and the massive expansion
of the 1980s was effected in order to satisfy the nation’s thirst for education. The key
measures that were enshrined in the Education Act, as Amended in 1991, are:

- Abolition of all forms of racial discrimination in education;
- Creation of a unitary national education system;
- Abolition of primary school tuition fees as a way of introducing free and compulsory
  primary education;
- Provisions for all children who complete the primary school cycle to acquire secondary
  education;
- Provision of State support for non-formal, adult education and literacy programmes;
- Decentralisation of the management and administration of the education system to
  promote efficiency and equity in the development of regions.
- Expansion of teacher education so as to release more trained teachers into the school
  system, and reduce the use of untrained and often under-qualified teachers and
  expatriates;
- Discouragement of the establishment of boarding schools in favour of day schools that
  are less restrictive in terms of enrolment and are cheaper to construct, operate and
  maintain.
The Manpower Development Act of 1994 governs tertiary education and training in Zimbabwe. This Act was a successor to the Education Act of 1987 as well as the Manpower Planning and Development act of 1984. The key elements of the Act are as follows:

- To provide for the establishment, maintenance and operation of technical or vocational institutions, universities, teachers’ colleges and vocational training schemes;
- To provide for and promote the research, planning and development of human resources;
- To provide for the establishment of a National Manpower Advisory Council (NAMACO);
- To provide for the training of apprentices and the certification of skilled workers; and
- To provide for the continued existence of the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF) and for the imposition of levies to finance manpower development.

The National Council for Higher Education Act of 1990 was established to cater for higher education. Some of its functions include:

- To ensure the maintenance of appropriate standards with regards to teaching, courses of instruction, examinations and academic qualifications in institutions of higher learning;
- To receive and consider applications for the establishment of private universities and university colleges; and
- To establish common student admission procedures for institutions of higher learning.

Acts of Parliament govern the operations of public universities, while private universities are granted Charters, which stipulate the operations of such institutions.

2.2 The Organisation, Structure And Management Of The Education System

2.2.1 Overall Organisation and Structure of Education

In the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture the education administration system is made up of nine Administrative Education Regions. Each region is further divided into Administrative Districts. Currently there are fifty-nine official districts in the country. However, Harare, with a purely urban setting, is divided into seven administrative
circuits. This increases the number of “districts”, in the system, to sixty-six. The regions and their respective “capitals” include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Regional Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harare</td>
<td>Harare Capital City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manicaland</td>
<td>Mutare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland Central</td>
<td>Bindura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland East</td>
<td>Marondera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland West</td>
<td>Chinhoyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masvingo</td>
<td>Masvingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matabeleland North</td>
<td>Bulawayo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matabeleland South</td>
<td>Gwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>Gweru</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Map 1: Education Regions in Zimbabwe**

Diagram 1 captures the structure of the education system.
2.2.2 Basic Education

Zimbabwe’s basic education system comprises:

- *Early Childhood Education & Care (ECEC) system:* (pre-school for the 0–6 year-olds), and
- *Primary Education:* (for the 6–12 year-old children).

Primary education is a 7-year cycle where the official entry age is 6 years. This cycle espouses the policy of compulsory education and unimpeded progress. There is a terminal examination at the Grade 7 level.

2.2.3 Secondary Education

Secondary education in Zimbabwe comprises the following:

- *A 4-year Ordinary Level cycle:* where the official entry age is 13 years. There is unimpeded progress to the O-Level cycle but some schools set selection criteria based on Grade 7 examinations.
- *A 2-year Advanced Level cycle:* This is a restricted cycle since progression is on merit and is based on set pass grades and/or selection criteria.
2.2.4 **Tertiary Education**

This sub-sector is made up of polytechnics and technical colleges (8); Teacher training colleges (14); vocational skills training centres (29) and seven universities as well as two university colleges affiliated to the University of Zimbabwe. Besides these there are over 350 privately owned institutions, most of which offer commercial based programs.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Technology has a different organization, structure and management system. There are no education regions as is the case with the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture. Until recently the operations of the ministry were highly centralised, with all crucial decisions being made at Head Office in Harare. Today there is decentralisation of some authority and responsibilities to higher education institutions like colleges. Legal instruments are being proposed to transform College Advisory Boards into Management Boards. The later are expected in the long run to take over from government the management of these institutions. Public universities are governed separately through Acts of Parliament, which provide for the establishment of university councils and senates to run the affairs of the institutions.

Teacher Education is provided at fourteen colleges with mostly three-year programmes leading to the Diploma in Education. Technical Education is taught at various registered institutions. There are several vocational training centres, six technical and two Polytechnic colleges that are state run. These offer a wide range of technical subjects that lead to National Certificate (NC), National Diploma (ND), and Higher National Diploma (HND). University education is offered at 11 institutions, two of which are teachers colleges that are devolving to universities.

Government, in partnership with the Local Authorities, has also invested heavily in the Skills Training Programme, which is being promoted through the establishment of Vocational Training Centres (VTCs). Since 1998 25 new VTCs have been established. The programs offered at these centres are demand driven in the sense that they are designed after consultations with the local community in response to the needs of these same communities e.g. Metal fabrication. In this program government provides some of
the professional staff, the Local Authorities provide the infrastructure and all the additional staff while the private sector through Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF) are funding the equipmentation of these centres. For example the cumulative ZIMDEF expenditure on all projects in the institutions for the period 1995 to 1998 was about $140million.

2.3 Curriculum Content And Learning Strategies For The Twenty-First Century

2.3.1 Curriculum Development, Principles And Assumptions
The quality of the national curriculum is based on the extent to which it meets individual attributes, the requirements of the national economy, the needs of society and the future challenges and aspirations of the nation. It seeks to promote individual and national achievement through the recognition of the different abilities and needs of learners. The current curriculum requires strengthening in terms of developing values and catering for needs and aspirations for self-reliance and entrepreneurship, in order to produce a responsible, productive and self-sustaining citizen. The skills and competencies which pupils are expected to develop through the education system derive from:

- Language and communication
- Numeracy and literacy
- Science and technology
- Aesthetics and creativity
- Entrepreneurship
- Ethics and good citizenship.

2.3.2 Aims of Curriculum Development
The aims of the school curriculum are geared towards implementing national goals of:

- Establishing a strong scientific and technological base through strengthening the teaching and learning of Mathematics and Science;
- Expanding the technical/vocational curriculum with a view to providing learners with life skills for survival and appropriately prepare learners for upward mobility in technological areas;
- Promoting cultural values and norms through the teaching and learning of appropriate humanities and indigenous languages;
- Producing citizens who realise and accept their civic and moral responsibilities within society;
• Strengthening the development of problem-solving skills and attitudes; and
• Enhancing cultural identity, national pride, and the preservation of Zimbabwe’s heritage and national unity.

2.3.3 Objectives of Curriculum Development

The function of the Curriculum Development Unit is to translate government policies on primary and secondary education into measurable objectives, programmes and activities. The objectives of curriculum development are to:

• Develop and revise syllabuses
• Develop teaching and learning materials that support the syllabuses
• Promote creative teaching and interactive methodologies
• Organise courses on curricular matters
• Test and evaluate the curriculum
• Research into curricular issues.

2.3.4 The Curriculum Decision-making Process

The curriculum constitutes the legal framework for the development of teaching/learning activities. It should respond to the needs of the society and to the needs of individuals. The curriculum development process, therefore, involves close co-ordination between a variety of stakeholders and institutions. Curriculum development work cannot be done in isolation. Because of this, decisions about curriculum issues are made in close consultation with the learners, parents, teachers, heads of schools, education officers in the regions, the examinations council, subject specialists, commerce and industry, teachers colleges and universities.

Decisions on content and methodology are made in consultation with Teacher Education and Teachers' Colleges. This takes place at several levels through the Heads of Sections meetings and subject panels. Non-Formal Education (NFE), whose distance education materials in the Zimbabwe Integrated Secondary School Education (ZISSE) project are evaluated by Curriculum Development Unit, makes decisions on curriculum issues, mutual programmes and problems at the Heads of Sections meetings.

The Standards Control Unit (SCU) is responsible for setting and maintaining standards in classroom practice and school administration. The Unit makes decisions over curriculum
implementation, syllabus interpretation, assessment, in-service courses and curriculum evaluation.

At universities, the curriculum studies departments make decisions with regard to research, evaluation and the entire curriculum process.

In the course of researching curriculum materials, other ministries, departments, research institutes and parastatals are involved. Agriculture educationists liaise with the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement, and Agricultural Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX). Geography liaises with the Surveyor General's Office, the Meteorological Office, and so on. The Science team makes decisions together with the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare and its research institutions such as the Blair Institute and Agricultural Engineering Institute. In all cases, the decision-making process takes place through informal meetings and through formal tours and meetings at senior management level. Decisions made at all levels are implemented through syllabus review and revision. They are disseminated to schools through circulars, teacher education guides and seminars.

New decisions on curriculum issues are evaluated through regular trial testing by curriculum developers through questionnaires, interviews and observations. Annual external assessment, in addition to the regular internal testing and evaluation programme, has been very useful. The Evaluation Section of the Planning Department within the Divisions of Planning, Research and Development of the Ministries, the University of Zimbabwe and external organisations have provided external evaluations.

2.3.5 Curriculum Planning and Design

The general principle and basic assumption of the existing curriculum is that the curriculum is outcomes-based. By the end of the primary school courses, learners are expected to have acquired the following skills and competencies:

- Language and communication
- Numeracy and literacy
- Science and technology
• *Ethics and citizenship*
• *Practical skills to provide a background to and stimulate interest and creativity in Technical/Vocational subjects at this formative stage.*

At secondary school level the curriculum offers a broad and rich range of subjects to cater for the diversity of learner needs and abilities. The secondary school curriculum consists of five groups of subjects namely:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>Human and Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 5</td>
<td>Practical/Technical/Business/Commercial Subjects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS, Population Education, Adolescence Reproductive Health, Peer Education, Guidance and Counselling, and Gender Equity are generally not integrated into the curriculum. However, there is rationalisation and integration of some topics into carrier subjects.

### 2.3.6 Time Allocation

A school term has between 12 and 13 weeks and a year has from 36 to 39 weeks. The duration of class periods is 30 minutes at Primary school and 40 minutes in Secondary school. The amount of time allocated to each subject area in each grade or form is summarised in Table 1 and Table 2.
### Table 1: Primary School Curriculum Weekly Time Allocation Per Subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>GRADES 1 AND 2</th>
<th>GRADES 3 TO 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOURS</td>
<td>PERIODS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shona/Ndebele</td>
<td>4 ½</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4 ½</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2 ½</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Science</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>1 ½</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious and Moral Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular Activities</td>
<td>2 ½</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS Education</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Secondary School Curriculum Weekly Time Allocation Per Subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>ZJC</th>
<th>'O' LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOURS</td>
<td>PERIODS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shona/Ndebele</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Vocational</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/Commercial</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance and Counselling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1½</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Time allocation per subject/course/module varies at tertiary level. In some universities, a credit, modular, and/or semester system operates. On average, a semester is 15 weeks long. A credit is a four-hour exposure while a course is worth from half a credit to several credits. A lecture block is two hours in duration.

2.3.7 Teaching and Learning Strategies

The promotion of innovative teaching and learning methodologies is a central part of the continuous process of improving quality and the educational system. The Curriculum Development Unit has adopted the following methodologies:

- **Learning by experimentation, activity and discovery with the use of learning materials in the form of kits and readily available local materials.**
- **Group work in different sized groups with particular emphasis on interaction and feedback.**
- **Interactive learning through the use of audio-visual aids such as radio, video, charts, and posters, and, in some advanced schools, through the use of computer assisted learning.**
- **Collaborative teaching and learning.**

Teaching and learning strategies are developed in stages. The first stage involves identification of appropriate new strategies. This is done by searching and exploring for innovations used in other school systems, industry, apprenticeship programmes and in other countries. Once pedagogical strategies have been identified, the next stage involves testing and refining them. Several trials may be required to establish the validity of the method in question and to make all the necessary revisions. The third stage involves the development of materials to support the proposed innovation. The fourth stage involves implementation of new methodologies while carefully monitoring them to ensure that the new materials and teaching/learning techniques are utilised to their best advantage. The final stage involves continuous evaluation of methodologies to appraise their usefulness and validity and to replace them with more effective methods as these are discovered and developed.

To strengthen the interrelatedness between teaching and learning and to facilitate learner active participation the following are some of the participatory methods used:

- **Values clarification**
The process of curriculum development is closely related to teacher education. It is essential that close co-operation is built up between Curriculum Development Unit and Teachers' Colleges on the one hand, and CDU and Regional Offices on the other. Teachers' Colleges provide pre-service and in-service teacher training. Regional Offices are responsible for organising in-service courses for teachers in their regions.

2.4 Assessment Policies, Methods and Instruments

2.4.1 Primary and Secondary Level
At primary and secondary school the Teacher in Charge (TIC) and Head of Department (HOD) do the assessment at departmental level. The difference is that at primary school level the TIC is responsible for all the subjects in the curriculum whereas at secondary school level the HOD is in charge of a subject department.

The first assessment exercise at both primary and secondary school level is done after each topic throughout the term. The second form of assessment is the mid-term assessment when all the taught topics are assessed. The third is the end-of-term assessment. The fourth is the end-of-year assessment and evaluation. The final form of assessment is the end-of-cycle summative evaluation, which takes place at Grade 7, 'O' and 'A' levels. The Zimbabwe Junior Certificate (now defunct) used to be terminal and a mid-cycle assessment and evaluation. Tests and examinations are common instruments of assessment and evaluation. These are revised and refined regularly. The assessment procedures and policies are fixed in most institutions.

The Zimbabwe School Examinations Council is responsible for decisions on assessment objectives and content of public examinations, assessment and the awarding of end-of-
cycle grades. The Council can offer syllabus review suggestions. Most academic institutions and employers use the grades for selection purposes. However, every primary school pupil can progress unimpeded to Form 4.

Students sit for the General Certificate in Education Ordinary Level (O-Level) at the end of four years of secondary education. This examination is equivalent to the Cambridge University General Certificate of Education from which it emanated. Zimbabwe has now localised its curriculum and examinations at this level. The certificate is important in Zimbabwe. It determines entry into A-Level, tertiary education and the labour market.

The General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (A-Level) is a two-year post O-Level programme leading to public examinations that are used for qualification to our local universities. The A-Level examinations system is now being localised. The old system of external examinations is coming to an end.

Post-assessment remediation is done by individual teachers in primary schools and by individual subject teachers in secondary schools. In the case of secondary schools, pupils are encouraged to attend holiday lessons or are given work to be done during the school holidays. In some schools, the last two weeks of the term are used for revising those areas where pupils would not have done well. Boarding schools make use of part of evening study periods for remedial work. O and A-Level Candidates can re-sit failed subjects or those with low grades as many times as they can afford.

2.4.2 Tertiary Level
The 14 teachers colleges have associate status with the University of Zimbabwe Department of Teacher Education that coordinates and monitors their curricula and assessment systems. Final assessment is based on coursework and final examinations at equal weighting. The Department of Teacher Education (DTE) offers external examination services to the colleges monitored by an external examiner from local or international universities. The external examiner heads a team of examiners from other teachers colleges.
The Higher Education Examinations Council (HEXCO) examines all courses in technical colleges.

 Universities use continuous assessment, semester examinations, practicals and industrial attachment, research projects, and dissertations or theses. A system of external examining is used at the end of degree or diploma courses.

2.5 Changing And Adapting Educational Content

There are several factors that can be attributed to curriculum reform. The following are factors that motivate curriculum reforms in Zimbabwe:

- **Ideological Factors**
  At independence the government promoted a socialist ideology. It manifested itself in emphasis on "education with production". The ideology then changed to a blend of democracy and a free market economy. This led to the liberalisation of the economy. The curriculum was vocationalised to prepare school leavers for job opportunities.

- **Search for Relevance**
  Since many school leavers failed to get employment, the curriculum was blamed for unemployment. Various sections of society began to question the relevance of the curriculum as evidenced by criticism in the media and other channels. The Government had to review the curriculum. It instituted the *Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (1999)* that recommended the re-focusing of education on the sciences, mathematics, technology and life skills.

- **International Influence**
  Membership to various international organisations has influenced curriculum reform. Membership to the Commonwealth, United Nations and its specialised
agencies like UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNFPA, and the Organisation of African Unity (African Union), has led to the introduction of programmes such as HIV/AIDS Education, Environmental Science Education, Culture of Peace, Reproductive Health Education and Population Education, into the curriculum. Where donors have had interest in certain areas of the curriculum, they have managed to influence government to institute curriculum reforms.

- **Research**
  
  Research carried out in the country as well as in the other countries has also influenced reforms in Zimbabwe. Examples are the Primary School Mathematics Project and the implementation of the discovery method of teaching in the primary schools. The Communication Skills Project influenced methodology at secondary teachers colleges and the introduction and use of reflective and interactive methodologies in secondary schools.

### 2.6 Principal Institutions And Individuals Participating In The Process Of Changing And Adapting Educational Content.

In Zimbabwe, curriculum reforms have been instituted in response to commissions of inquiry, task forces and various stakeholders. The principal institutions involved in curriculum change are: the Curriculum Development Unit, Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council, the two Ministries of Education, colleges and universities, industry and commerce and religious organisations. Eminent educationalists, educational researchers and teachers are key participants in the process of changing and adapting educational content.

*The Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training* led by Dr C.T. Nziramasanga completed its task in 1999. The commission recommended an outcomes-based curriculum, which is broad-based in terms of subjects offered, and which focuses on learning areas, employment related skills and other essential skills to be developed across the curriculum.
The strategy of implementation considered the following eight components:

- Teacher training including in-service training
- ECEC - quality provision through the community
- School management that enhances headship
- Vocational education and training in schools, colleges and centres
- Gender balance and equal opportunities
- Inclusive education – provision for people with special needs
- Capacity building in Ministries of Education and Local Government

Most of these components are in use.

2.7 Strategies Adopted In The Design, Implementation And Evaluation Of Curriculum Reforms

Curriculum reforms are not designed and implemented haphazardly. Before reforms are implemented, base-line surveys are conducted to establish if there is a real need to implement reforms. At the implementation stage there is continuous annual monitoring and evaluation of reforms through observations, questionnaires and annual reports. It is desirable that a permanent body of experts be established outside the Ministries of Education to monitor and evaluate the design and implementation of curriculum reforms and to advise government timely of policy changes.

2.8 Curricula Achievements, Problems Encountered And Solutions

Since Independence in 1980, the Curriculum Development Unit has succeeded in designing and developing many syllabuses. The primary school now has grade-by-grade syllabus documents. Most of the syllabuses have also been reviewed and improved. Social Studies, Environmental Science and the languages are well received in schools. At secondary school level most syllabuses were localised. Subject panellists worked to make sure that the content and methodologies meet the needs of the pupils and those of the country.
Many teachers were in-serviced and efforts made to make sure that pre-service training programmes took on board the new initiatives. However, there are still problems and constraints in the following areas:

- **Methodology**
  Some teachers find new approaches difficult to implement and so take time to adjust to the new methodologies. Some teachers find the hands-on approach to science teaching and the communicative approach to language teaching difficult.

- **Examinations**
  Some teachers teach for examinations and as a result fail to develop their pupils’ skills and attitudes that are necessary for livelihood. In this area it is necessary to come up with assessment techniques that strike a balance between the affective and cognitive domains. Examinations have tended to require acquired knowledge other than a demonstration of an ability to apply knowledge. New examination techniques should match new curricula thrusts. This is the challenge to national examinations councils and universities. Since the call is for relevant content and skills, then that call is also for relevant examinations.

- **Relevance**
  To achieve quality and relevance of the curriculum is a great challenge. What is relevant to rural pupils may not be relevant to urban pupils. As knowledge is increasing at a fast rate due to globalisation and information technology, what is relevant when the Curriculum Development Unit and the subject panellists sit to design or review syllabuses may not be relevant when the syllabuses get printed. The quality and relevance of the curriculum depends on how far national socio-economic aspirations are met. It is now understood that a purely theoretical and academic education may not lead to socio-economic development. A skills based education is the linchpin of development.
## 2.9 Objectives And Principal Characteristics Of The Current And Forthcoming Reforms

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture have a new curriculum thrust, especially for secondary education. Focus is now on vocational, technical and commercial subjects, sciences, mathematics, computer technology, history and civic education. The objective is to develop a technical and scientific base so that Zimbabwe can develop its own commerce and industry.

In the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology, the National Council of Higher and Further Education and Training (NCHFET) will be established to monitor and coordinate tertiary education programmes. It is hoped this will herald an even more efficient and effective tertiary education system.

An Educational Management Information System (EMIS) was established in all teachers' colleges and is currently being extended to technical colleges. This WAN network links higher education institutions and Head office. This ensures faster movement of information among institutions for quick decision-making.

A new teacher education plan is being formulated. The main goal is the development of quality teachers. These become the cornerstone of educational development that should have a positive impact on the Zimbabwean society and the international community. Teacher education curriculum is being diversified so that it becomes innovative and responsive to changing needs of society. The on-going devolution of teachers colleges into degree awarding institutions is a milestone in teacher education reform in Zimbabwe. It symbolises the eternal quest for quality and excellence.

In technical education the main reform thrust is the infusion of a sense of entrepreneurship among products of technical/vocational institutions in order to promote confidence in job creation and imaginative business activity so as to generate wealth. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) will be a comprehensive and
self-contained system that fully addresses the demands and needs of commerce and industry. Its main methodology draws from commercial and industrial hands-on experience.

2.10 Major Achievements In The Period 1990 To 2000

2.10.1 Access to Education
The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture have maintained 100% gross enrolments in Primary education as seen in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>BOTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>123.8</td>
<td>119.3</td>
<td>121.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>135.0</td>
<td>127.1</td>
<td>131.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>138.1</td>
<td>125.8</td>
<td>131.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>137.6</td>
<td>128.2</td>
<td>132.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: National Educational Statistical Information System Report 2001*

Apparent Intake Rate is expressed as a percentage of the population of official admission to Grade 1. The apparent intake rate between 1992 and 1999 for both boys and girls ranged between 121.6 in 1992 and 132.9 in 1999. This means that there were more children above the age of 6 years in Grade 1 throughout the period. The re-introduction of tuition fees has not significantly reduced the enrolments and access to basic education. However, in the 1980s boys had higher chances of being in school than girls. Both boys and girls of the school going age now have almost equal chances of being in school although marginal disparities are still evident. The gender disparities can be attributed to socio-economic and cultural factors that tend to militate against the girl-child. Some of
these factors include poverty, direct costs, parents’ low level of education, low priority for girl child education, the requirement for domestic chores/tasks of girls and so on.

However, the net enrolment ratio increased from 82% in 1994 to 92.5% in 2000. This translates into about 7.5% of the primary school-going children not being accounted for in terms of receiving basic education. This percentage is likely to remain illiterate and thus make the goal of achieving 100% literacy more difficult unless provision is made for these children to be absorbed into mainstream Primary education.

The 1999 disaggregated gross and net enrolment ratios are given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Enrolment Ratio</td>
<td>112.34</td>
<td>102.49</td>
<td>107.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Enrolment Ratio</td>
<td>91.52</td>
<td>86.78</td>
<td>89.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology, on the other hand, access to tertiary education was affected by a number of factors that included entry requirements, ability to pay fees and the limited number of tertiary institutions. Although most candidates satisfied minimum entry requirements, institutions were forced to enrol those with high qualifications because of the large numbers of applicants. There were applicants in excess of 20,000 per teacher education institution at the beginning of each year when only 400 can be enrolled. Universities are forced to take those with 10 points or more at A-Level when the basic entry requirement is 2 points. Many well-qualified candidates fail to gain entry into technical and/or tertiary education. The rising number of dropouts resulting from the hiking of fees compounds this.
At the beginning of the 1990s it was realised that very few school leavers were accessing tertiary education. Competition was so high that institutions introduced stringent entry requirements that left out the bulk of qualifying candidates. To this end the ministry responsible for tertiary education and training embarked on a drive to increase access. The number of universities increased from one in 1990 to the present eight full-fledged universities and three university colleges. Enrolment increased from just over 9 000 in 1989 to 33 000 in 2000, an increase of almost 300%.

Although public technical colleges did not increase in number, enrolment in these institutions increased by about 114% between 1989 and 1999. Access to tertiary education and training was also increased through the establishment of twenty-five vocational training centres (VTCs) around the country. These are skills training centres whose main target groups are dropouts, retrenchees and other school leavers.

There are affirmative action policies, with respect to gender, the disabled and other disadvantaged groups. The policies do not seem to yield intended outcomes. Whereas the male-female ratio in teachers colleges was fairly balanced (see Table 5), at all other institutions of higher learning it was heavily skewed in favour of males. For example, as at January 2001, there was a total of 7 092 males (69%) and 3 171 females (31%) at the University of Zimbabwe. The proportion of female students was particularly low at the science and technology universities such as National University of Science and Technology (16%) and Bindura University of Science Education (19%). Table 4 below shows student enrolment by gender in government technical and teachers colleges and all universities. There is a need to attract more female students to technical and university education.
Table 5: Student Enrolment by Gender in Tertiary Institutions 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical Colleges</td>
<td>10 997</td>
<td>4 501</td>
<td>15 498</td>
<td>29,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' Colleges</td>
<td>8 118</td>
<td>9 646</td>
<td>17 764</td>
<td>54,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>22 526</td>
<td>10 833</td>
<td>33 359</td>
<td>32,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41 641</td>
<td>24 980</td>
<td>66 621</td>
<td>37,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The disabled are disadvantaged in tertiary education. Most efforts in dealing with special education issues did not go beyond primary and secondary schools. The number of disabled students in tertiary institutions is negligible. This area requires attention.

2.10.2 Equity in Education: Primary Sector Gender Participation

In the Primary school sector, the participation of the girl-child is almost at par with that of boys as evidenced by participation ratios and parity indices. At independence, girl child participation was slightly lower due to inherent discriminatory socio-economic and cultural factors. Over the years, the trend has hovered around 49% participation and a parity index of 0.97. This can be attributed to supportive government policies that include free and compulsory education at independence; proclamation and upholding of children’s right to education; financial support for the girl child; and gender equity sensitisation programmes.

Figure 1 and Table 6 show gradual gender participation improvement over the two decades of independence. The widening of the gap in 1992 may have been caused by a serious drought of the 1991/1992 seasons. It is hoped that the current economic downturn will not lead to further disparity resulting from socio-economic problems that tend to disadvantage the girl child.
Figure 1: Gender Participation – Primary 1980 - 1999

Table 6: Gender Participation – Primary 1980 - 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>% FEMALE</th>
<th>% MALE</th>
<th>PARITY INDEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>47.59</td>
<td>52.41</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>47.95</td>
<td>52.05</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>48.03</td>
<td>51.97</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>48.15</td>
<td>51.85</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>48.32</td>
<td>51.68</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>48.46</td>
<td>51.54</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>48.78</td>
<td>51.22</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>49.08</td>
<td>50.92</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>49.25</td>
<td>50.75</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>49.08</td>
<td>50.92</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>49.36</td>
<td>50.64</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>49.09</td>
<td>50.91</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>49.58</td>
<td>50.42</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>48.35</td>
<td>51.65</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>49.18</td>
<td>50.82</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>49.25</td>
<td>50.75</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>49.24</td>
<td>50.76</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>49.43</td>
<td>50.57</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>49.17</td>
<td>50.83</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>49.13</td>
<td>50.87</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.10.3 Equity in Education: Secondary Sector Gender Participation

Participation of the girl-child, in the secondary sector, has improved since independence. The early years of the post-independence era are marked by a relatively low participation of the girl-child due to socio-economic and cultural factors that militate against the girls. Over the years the trend has hovered around 47% participation and a parity index of 0.88. This can be attributed to supportive government policies that include proclamation of every child’s right to education, financial support for the girl child in the secondary sector, and spin-offs from the gender equity sensitisation programmes and so on.

From Figure 2 and Table 7, it is observed that there has been a steady increase in gender parity. The 1991/1992 drought does not seem to have negatively influenced parity like it did for the Primary sector gender participation.

Figure 2: Gender Participation – Secondary 1980 – 1999
Table 7: Gender Participation – Secondary (1980 – 1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>% FEMALE</th>
<th>% MALE</th>
<th>PARITY INDEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>43.31</td>
<td>56.69</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>41.79</td>
<td>58.21</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>41.10</td>
<td>58.90</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>40.72</td>
<td>59.28</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>40.42</td>
<td>59.58</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>40.44</td>
<td>59.65</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>40.31</td>
<td>59.69</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>41.40</td>
<td>58.58</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>41.81</td>
<td>58.19</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>42.30</td>
<td>57.70</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>43.35</td>
<td>56.65</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>44.01</td>
<td>55.99</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>56.00</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>44.55</td>
<td>55.45</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>55.00</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>45.61</td>
<td>54.39</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>46.18</td>
<td>53.82</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>46.61</td>
<td>53.39</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>46.72</td>
<td>53.28</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>46.93</td>
<td>53.07</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.10.4 Equity in Education: Tertiary Level

Tertiary colleges have a skewed enrolment pattern in favour of males. In the mid-1990s the male population accounted for about 70% while females accounted for about 30% of the student population. By the year 2000 the overall female enrolment in public tertiary institutions, including the three private universities, had risen to almost 40% of total enrolment. This is a result of the introduction of affirmative action. The low enrolment of females in science related disciplines could be attributed to the fact that fewer females opt for science subjects at high school due to various reasons. It must however, be noted that there is parity in the enrolment of male and female students at teachers colleges and in some colleges there are more female than male students. Table 8 shows gender disparity by sex at university. There are very few females who take up industrial and water engineering.
Table 8: Gender Disparity By Subject Area At University: 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT AREA</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>%F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2148</td>
<td>1218</td>
<td>3366</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial &amp; Water Engineering</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Science</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the field of employment females now benefit from affirmative action, this will help to redress past imbalances. Even the distribution of female lecturers in tertiary institutions is skewed. In some cases, female lecturers account for as little as 1% of staff. There is much to be done to reach gender parity.

Several measures have been put in place to improve the lot of females and the disadvantaged e.g. measures to improve the access of females to science and mathematics. In order to improve access for females to tertiary education it has been recommended that the entry requirement be lowered. Girls are now actively encouraged to opt for the former male dominated disciplines like engineering. Boys on the other hand are also encouraged to opt for those disciplines that were the domain of female students like Food and Nutrition and Fashion & Fabrics. The entry qualifications for females into tertiary institutions have been lowered. In the sphere of employment females enjoy affirmative action over males when it comes to promotion.

2.10.5 The Reduction Of Unqualified Teachers

An important achievement is the reduction of unqualified teachers in the education system from 37 572 in 1990 to 3 954 in December 2000. This is the reason why the new teacher education plan now focuses on the quality of teachers.
2.11 Quality And Relevance Of Education

The drive for quality and relevance of education is evident in the new curriculum thrust for Secondary, Technical, Vocational and Commercial Education and the new teacher education plan. The following are the major areas of focus:

- Vocational, technical and commercial
- Sciences, mathematics and computer technology
- History and civic education

Starting in 2001 every secondary school will offer at least two subjects among technical, vocational and commercial subjects. Mathematics and Science subjects will be overhauled and strengthened with a view to establishing a solid technological base. Every school that is electrified should eventually offer computer studies to children from an early age. History will be re-introduced with specific attention to its relevance to Zimbabwe. Civics Education will also be introduced.

Those intending to train, as teachers, will with effect from 2002 generally have a minimum of 5 O-Level passes, at Grade C or better. However, some colleges require that candidates have 5 O-Level passes at Grade C or better including English, Science and Mathematics. There are colleges that are now taking only those with A-Level qualifications. The main thrust is to train people with a good general academic background in order to improve the quality of teacher and technical education. It is this calibre of teachers that can meet the challenges of the education system and socio-economic dynamics of the 21st Century.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Technology developed the Human Resources Development Plan (HRDP) 1996 - 2000 to address the issue of the quality of tertiary education and training. For instance the devolution of the Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Technology Degrees to teacher colleges is meant to improve the quality of diploma teachers through further training.
2.12 Decentralisation: Participation By Society In The Process Of Educational Change

The government of Zimbabwe, in line with the objectives of ESAP and ZIMPREST has adopted the policy of decentralisation as a means of:

- Empowering of the local levels of society
- Improving the delivery of services to the nation and ensuring equitable distribution of national resources
- Enhancing and using local talent and initiative
- Improving and enhancing efficiency at local level
- Achieving cost benefit
- Reducing bureaucracy
- Promoting democracy, public participation and civic responsibility in the development process
- Increasing efficiency and effectiveness in government and therefore enhancing service delivery
- Reducing the direct role of central government administration in the delivery of services

The decentralisation process has been carried out through local authority structures such as rural district councils, urban councils, religious organisations and other interest groups. The legal framework has been cast mainly in the provisions of various acts of parliament regulating urban councils and education. The rest of Zimbabwean statutes have yet to be reviewed to include the principles of decentralisation. All the same, decentralisation is taking place in all sectors of government.

As a result of the decentralisation process, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture have devolved some functions to the Regions, Districts and Schools. Some examples are: the promotion of certain grades of employees now done at Regional level and the recruitment of teachers now done by heads of schools.

In the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology (MHET), decentralisation has led to the creation of Advisory Councils in teachers and technical colleges. Their functions are to advise and make recommendations in various areas such as amenities, development fund, annual budget, fund raising activities, and the fostering of partnerships between the institutions and the community. Under the MHET 2001-2003 Corporate Plan, it is
envisaged that a legal instrument will be developed to transform the advisory councils into management boards. This will give the community more involvement in the management of institutions.

In both ministries of education, some functions such as maintenance of school grounds, hostel services, cleaning services, and catering services have been subcontracted to School Development Committees, Associations and companies established by former government employees.

When Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) were established it was on the principle that government would go into partnership with the local authorities. In this case government was to provide initial equipment and skeletal vital staff while the local authorities would provide the necessary infrastructure and the remaining staff as well as maintenance and repairs at the institutions.

2.13 The Main Problems And Challenges Facing National Education At The Beginning Of The 21st Century.

The relevance of the curriculum, access to education, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, prerequisites of social development, financing of education, raising the status of technical and vocational education, and absorption of the products of the education system into employment are the some of the major problems and challenges that have to be faced at the beginning of the century.

- **Relevance of education and training:**
  Rising youth unemployment has raised questions about the relevance of the curriculum especially in technical colleges. The challenge facing the nation in this regard is to ensure the relevance of education and training through e.g. the development of relevant and diversified curricula through the involvement of the relevant stakeholders. Enhancing entrepreneurship education throughout the education and training system can also ensure relevance.
• **Access to Education: The Gaps in the Provision of Schools and Colleges**

In the Primary and Secondary school sectors, there is inadequate provision of schools especially in the commercial farming areas and the newly established resettlement areas where about a fifth of the population lives. The majority of the schools that exist in these areas do not qualify for registration under the Ministry's criteria. The unregistered schools do not receive Ministry inputs such as the supervision, and grants in-aid. This may need to be reviewed in the light of the current land reform.

Most tertiary institutions are situated in urban areas and this is a big disadvantage to those from rural areas who have to look for their own accommodation. A related problem is that some regions have less tertiary institutions than others.

• **The HIV/AIDS Pandemic**

Zimbabwe has a high incidence of HIV/AIDS with potentially devastating socio-economic outcomes. The effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the education system have yet to clearly declare themselves. There is need for effective programmes that capture the youth before they are infected. The education system can be used to inject behaviour changes in the society but the effectiveness of an academic approach to HIV/AIDS is questionable. It is not about knowing everything about HIV/AIDS that matters. *It is sweeping, intensive, fast, focussed and persistent nation-wide behaviour modification approaches that may now have a big role to play.*

• **Social Development**

The Republic of Zimbabwe government encourages the establishment and strengthening of school-based and community-based education programmes which equip children, adolescents and adults, with special attention to girls and women, with a whole range of knowledge, living skills, and values required for success in life. Organs of government, the private sector and civil society such as NGOs have taken up the challenge to educate local communities in improved
general, mental and reproductive health; environmental management; and on water and sanitation. These are some of the necessary prerequisites of social development.

Relevant initiatives in this regard have led to innovations in school curricula at both primary and secondary school levels. The efforts have been supported and complemented by the efforts of civil groups such as the human rights, non-governmental, church, and employer organisations, trade unions and community groups.

It is in this context of increasing acquisition of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living by individuals and families that the Government lays emphasis on full and equal access to education for girls and women. The education of women is a key element in achieving social equality, higher productivity and social development in terms of better national health, lower infant mortality and the reduced fertility.

- **Improving the Resource Base and Management of Education**

Financing education has been a major problem and a challenge. The education system has been highly consumptive with a total annual budget of an average of Z$12 billion per year for the two ministries. These financial constraints result in shortage of staff and training materials thus compromising the quality of education. The introduction of the policy of cost recovery adds to the resource base to an extent. It can, however, affect the achievement of education for all by generating increased dropout rates at all levels of education.

Student financing has been a major problem for some time now. As a result there is need to develop a student finance policy that will put in place an effective loan recovery system.
ESAP and ZIMPREST advocated for the reduction of government expenditure. Education was heavily affected by this policy. The problem of funding in this sector is further worsened by the fact that the bulk of funds channelled to the sector are taken up by salaries (94%), leaving 6% for financing development projects.

- **Improving the Status of Technical and Vocational Education**
  Technical and vocational education tends to be viewed as an option for the academically weak and school dropouts. Attitudes in the 21st century must drastically change so that more resources are channelled to this type of education than at present. Technical and vocational education should absorb the majority of the education products so as to lay the foundation of a wide formal economy and the creation of a sound and vibrant non-formal industrial sector.

- **Promoting the development and advancement of Science & Technology**
  Globalisation is becoming a reality and those economies that fail to adjust to this phenomenon will find themselves operating on the periphery of the global village. If Zimbabwe is to survive in the global village there is need to enhance science and technology especially with regards to research, development and implementation.

- **Absorbing Education Products into Employment**
  The education system is churning out more graduates at all levels than the economy can absorb. The challenge that faces the education system is that of offering relevant programmes that also offer skills and opportunities for employment creation.
3.0 CONCLUSION

The Zimbabwean education sector is undergoing re-vitalisation through a concerted and extensive educational reform programme. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture are paying more attention to early childhood care and education, non-formal education and functional adult literacy, and secondary education. New thrusts and curricula are being developed and implemented. The Ministry of Higher Education and Technology are re-focusing higher education towards entrepreneurship education, science and technology as tools for manpower and economic development.

The main thrusts of the two ministries of education, which are in concordance with UNESCO and global trends are:

- *Education for all for life (EFA)*;
- *Life skills education or social development centring, amongst many thrusts, on, population education, HIV/AIDS and health education, guidance and counselling; and*
- *Education for poverty eradication and*
- *Education for peace and a sustainable future.*

Considering the size of the economy and the fact that all sectors of the nation are undergoing transformation, capacity building and development, the major stumbling block is how to finance the plethora of competing reforms.

There is room for input in human resource development and training; capacity building; the development of science and technology; equipment and infrastructure development; and the development of technical and vocational education.

The country has to encourage the development of partnerships in education. The private sector and local authorities have already come on board. International educational smart partnerships may also elect to have a part to play within the aspirations and visions of the Republic of Zimbabwe.
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