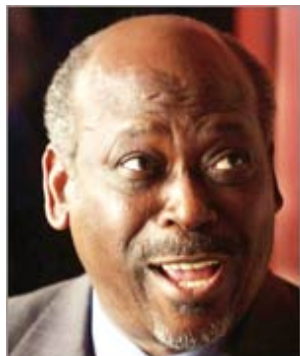




Zimbabwe

Dr. Isack Stanislaus Gorerazvo Mudenge
Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education



Dr. Mudenge has a wealth of experience in education and government. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree from York University and a PH.D from London University awarded in 1972. As a university lecturer he rose through the ranks to Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor at Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone and the National University of Lesotho between 1971 and 1980. At Independence, in 1980 he was appointed Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs. He was the first black Permanent Secretary in independent Zimbabwe and is credited with setting up all diplomatic missions. In 1985 he was posted to New York as the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe in the United Nations. Five years later he came back home to become Senior Permanent Secretary of Political Affairs. He was promoted and appointed Minister of Higher Education in 1992 and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1995 for a record ten years until 2005. From April 2005 to the present, he came back to the Ministry as the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education. Dr. Mudenge also held positions in several organizations such as being Treasurer and President of World University Service, Geneva (1974 to 1978). From 1976 to 1992 he twice held the position of Treasurer of International Congress of African Studies before becoming the President of the Organization from 1992 to present. He is one of the few living repositories of African History! While at the United Nations, in 1989 he was Vice President of United Nations General Assembly and from 1986 to 1989, Chairman of the Co-ordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Nations. In 1993, he was an Executive Member on the Board of the Donors on African Education, World Bank. Dr. Mudenge has published a number of books and articles in scholarly journals including the award winning A political history of Munhumutapa: 1400-1902, Editor, MAHLOM: Journal of Southern African Studies: 1979-1980.

Public policies to promote inclusive education targeting the vulnerable groups

At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe inherited a colonial engineered education system with glaring inequalities and biases in favour of the minority white population in urban areas. Over the past 28 years, the education system has witnessed major reforms to correct the imbalances of the past and to align it with the principle of education as a basic and fundamental human right. The first decade of independence witnessed quantitative expansion at primary, secondary, higher and tertiary levels. The post independence policies sought to increase, relevance, gender balance, equality issues and the delivery of quality education. Since 1990, the focus is on the quality of education and on inclusive education taking account of the needs of the poor, the most disadvantaged children and young people and those with special learning needs without discrimination. Government has therefore introduced policies and measures to drive inclusive education agenda in order to provide an education system that does not discriminate on grounds of disability, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, capabilities and social status.

Prior to independence, pre-school education was a preserve of the few, mostly urban families, who could afford to send their children to expensive nursery schools. Government has since democratized the provision of pre-school education by attaching Early Childhood Development (ECD) classes to existing primary schools. Teacher training colleges have started to churn out trained ECD teachers with the first crop of graduates completing in 2007. In addition, Government has set up 10 provincial model ECD centres, one in each province that is staffed by qualified teachers, to act as demonstration centres to the public.



Zimbabwe achieved gender parity in net enrolment of boys and girls in the primary school at 0.99 in 2000 and 1,0 in 2006. The country is moving steadily towards achieving gender parity in school enrolment at secondary school level where girls now constitute 48,1% of the student population. The Government of Zimbabwe has a policy that makes provision for a girl who falls pregnant to be allowed to go and give birth and resume classes if they so wish but not necessarily in the same school. Through deliberative affirmative policies by Government, females now surpass males in teacher training institutions while the level of female enrolment in universities continues to increase. Efforts are also being made to widen opportunities in tertiary education for people with disabilities and to put in place a system to facilitate the recognition of qualification obtained through work experience and other non-formal channels. Government has also mainstreamed gender into the curriculum of programmes offered by tertiary institutions. This is meant to create greater awareness of HIV risks and reduce loss of life among skilled personnel that would impact adversely on national development initiatives. To this end, it has developed a Training Manual on Gender Based Violence. The concept of inclusive education is now part and parcel of teacher education curriculum.

A National Steering Committee is developing a Zimbabwe Qualifications Framework which is a regulatory mechanism that allows portability and recognition of qualifications including prior learning and work with possibilities to change or move across occupational sectors and different education career paths. National and other recognized qualifications obtained in formal, non-formal, are located and registered on the framework and equivalencies worked out so that no one is excluded from contributing to the economic development of the country.

During the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) era, the Government put in place the Social Dimensions Fund (a safety net) to cushion primary and secondary school children from disadvantaged families against the negative effects of the programme by paying for their school fees and levies to keep them in school. At the behest of economic sanctions in 2001, the Government took a conscious decision to refine it into a more inclusive fund to support vulnerable children through the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM). Such children include among others those orphaned by the HIV & AIDS pandemic. In addition, Government has strengthened the Scholarship Scheme for the gifted but disadvantaged children.

HIV and AIDS is a cross cutting issue. Zimbabwe established a National AIDS Council in 2001 and developed an AIDS policy to combat the scourge. The National AIDS Levy is a unique innovation where every employee whether in the Private Sector or Government Service contributes 3% of their basic monthly salary as AIDS levy to service the needs of the vulnerable groups and pays school fees for children whose parents have died of AIDS. The Government has put in place a policy to have HIV and AIDS taught in school from Grade 4 to Form 6.

Beyond the formal education system, Ministries of Higher and Tertiary Education, Youth and Employment Creation, Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and Small Medium Enterprises have been mandated by Government to introduce the Integrated Skills Out-reach Programme (ISOP). The programme is meant to equip school dropouts, and youths who are not absorbed by the conventional training institutions and provide them with life skills such as building, welding, carpentry garment construction, baking etc. The key challenges remain the prohibitive costs of start up kits, training tools and limited mobility for the training teams.

Zimbabwe supports fully the adoption of inclusive approaches in education. Efforts will continue to focus on comprehensive approaches that take into account the needs of currently marginalized and excluded groups in society. The Government of Zimbabwe will continue to develop approaches, policies and strategies to address diversity in education. Many ideas from the dialogue such as the International Conference on Education will be adapted and implemented.