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# **A Study of the Right of Learners and Teachers to Quality Public Education in Zimbabwe**

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## **Abstract**

*Every day, everywhere in the world, the right of learners and teachers to quality public education is violated (Dorsi, 2014). The quality of education is undermined by a deficit of appropriately qualified teachers more particularly in the rural areas. It has been observed that there has been moral decadence in contemporary society, and a marked decline in the character, moral values and general behaviour of students coming out of our school system. According to Mangena (2006), modern society has become increasingly more corrupt, lawless, violent, undisciplined and permissive, and that the trend is more apparent among the younger generation. There is, thus, an urgent need for the country to strive to provide quality public education and to ensure that the products coming out of schools have moral values and good ethical behaviour. Research studies by Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) suggest that, among the major school-related factors that influence learner achievement, teachers matter most. Accordingly, the study sought to investigate issues of the right of learners and teachers to quality public education in Zimbabwe. The investigation employed the documentary research method, and used the secondary documentary sources to gather data. The findings revealed that every learner has a right to quality public education provided by quality teachers. The learners' right to quality public education demands that teachers have a right to quality pre-service teacher education, moral education and in-service teacher education, and continuing professional education, financed by*

*government. Quality education requires quality teachers who also have moral values and good ethical behaviour. The study recommended that government take practical measures to ensure that learners have access to quality education appropriately-qualified school heads and teachers. Finally, a call was made to teacher unions to form a professional teachers' council and establish a code of professional ethics.*

## **Introduction**

A well-educated citizenry is vital to today's society which is increasingly advancing technologically. As supported by Fantini (2003), the country's continued national development is measured by the quality of the education that its citizens enjoy. According to Education International (EI) (2001), the global federation of educator unions for teachers, quality education is fundamental to the wellbeing of society through its contribution to economic, social, technological and cultural development. Quality education is an effective tool for the socio-economic, technological and cultural development of a country; and is a crucial factor in combating poverty and inequality in society. As supported by Dorsi (2014), every day, everywhere in the world, the right of learners and teachers to quality public education is violated. In this area, the Zimbabwean government has made commendable strides in the provision of education. However, more can still be done, as there are still some challenges in fully realizing the right of learners and teachers to quality public education. In Zimbabwe, some of the challenges include inadequate public finance, poor quality education in some remote parts of the country, high school fees levels (especially levies) in non-government schools more especially Trust Schools (linked to the growth of privatization in education and an increase in private school enrolment); poor school infrastructure and inadequate teaching

and learning resources; gender inequality in upper secondary school levels, some tertiary institutions and universities.

In many countries, especially in Africa, the quality of education is undermined by a deficit of appropriately qualified teachers more particularly in the rural areas. While Zimbabwe may have a critical mass of qualified teachers, some of them shun working in schools in the rural areas. In Africa, the challenge of inadequate number of qualified teachers is compounded by one of quality: all too often, teachers work without resources or appropriate training. Because there is a huge shortage of professional, well-trained and well-supported teachers to achieve better quality education, the challenge of recruiting teachers does not lie just in the numbers, but in the provision of quality teachers. Far too often teachers remain under-qualified, poorly paid and with low social status. The focus should be on tackling the teacher gap, barriers to better quality education and teachers' role in developing globally-minded citizens. As the country shapes the new development agenda, and *mindful* that teachers shape the character of the next generation, it is essential and critically-important that teachers remain a priority, and are provided with quality public education; and have a deeper understanding of the ethical implications of their teaching profession.

The allocation of resources, across different functional areas of the education system, is important; as it affects the quality and performance of the education system. In Zimbabwe, a key concern is often the limited allocations for non-salary current needs. The bulk of expenditure on education goes to teachers' salaries and other benefits. There is typically a bias towards expenditure on salaries rather than non-salary inputs such as textbooks, internet/computers, teaching and learning materials that contribute more to the learner's attainment and learning. However, further breakdown, reveal relatively heavy

expenditures on salaries of non-teaching staff (administrative) relative to teaching staff. The two factors could explain why the examination pass rates may not significantly improve despite the improvements in the teacher /learner ratios and increase in the number of qualified teaching staff.

There has been moral decadence in contemporary society, and a marked decline in the character, moral values and general behaviour of products (students) coming out of our education system. According to Mangena (2006), modern society has become increasingly more corrupt, lawless, violent, undisciplined and permissive, and that the trend is more apparent among the younger generation. This trend of gradual erosion of moral values among people needs, as supported by Mangena (2006), to be reversed. For this trend to be reversed, learners should be provided with quality public education.

As the educational needs of our society become increasingly critical to our national development and total survival, specific policies must be adopted to guarantee their satisfaction within the parameters of the modern world. One such policy that has emerged at both national and state levels was to make education a legal right, thus, making public education a right protected by the law. Given that the Zimbabwean culture places a high premium on education, the investigator felt that it would be important to examine this right to quality public education for learners and teachers. Accordingly, the study sought to investigate issues of the right of learners and teachers to quality public education in Zimbabwe.

### **Public education and the Constitution of Zimbabwe**

The Constitution of Zimbabwe makes education a legal right. The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013 Amendment (Number 20) Act, in paragraphs 27(1) and 75(1), provides that:

27(1): The State must take all practical measures to promote (a) free and compulsory basic education for children; and (b) higher and tertiary education; and 75(1): Right to education. Every citizen (including learners and teachers) and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has a right to (a) a basic State-funded education, including adult basic education; and (b) further education, which the State, through reasonable legislative and other measures must make progressively available and accessible. So, every Zimbabwean, every learner and every teacher, has a constitutional right to State-funded basic education as well as further education

### **Quality public education**

*Public education* is education that is publicly-financed. It is education financed from the government revenue (all the taxes, fees and other income of the State from whatever source). Accordingly, public education must be available to all citizens of Zimbabwe. According to Education International (EI) (2001), quality public education is a cornerstone of a democratic society and has the task of providing equality of educational opportunities for all learners, children and youths, and is fundamental to the wellbeing of society through its contribution to economic, social, technological and cultural development.

The term “*quality education*”, as observed by Fantini (2003), is used by laypersons and professionals alike. Unfortunately, in too many cases, the notion of “*quality education*” remains undefined. It is a generalization that, like peace and justice, is almost universally-accepted, but has meanings as numerous as its advocates. This testifies to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. Furthermore, Shava (2012) posited that in many developing countries that strive to guarantee all children the right to education the focus has been overshadowed, to a large extent, by issues relating to *quantity*, yet *quality* is at

the centre of an education system. Improving the quality of education continue to be a great challenge in most developing countries. This concern was one of the key observations and recommendations of the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand, under the joint sponsorship of the UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank.

In defining *quality* in education in all aspects of the school and its surrounding education community, as pointed out by Bernard (1999), the rights of learners to quality education, survival, protection, development and participation are at the centre. So, the focus is on strengthening the capacities of learners to act progressively on their own behalf through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, useful skills, competences and appropriate attitudes; and which create for learners, and helps them create for themselves and others, learning environments, places of safety, security and healthy interaction. Quality education leads to empowerment of learners, individuals, organizations and communities. According to VVOB (2011), quality education “...provides all learners with capabilities they require to become economically productive. develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being.” While the required learning outcomes may vary according to context, “at the end of the basic education cycle they must include threshold levels of literacy and numeracy, basic scientific knowledge and life skills including awareness and prevention of disease.” Throughout this process, professional growth and capacity development, to improve the quality of teachers and other education stakeholders, are crucial. According to *Tomorrow's Schools*, as cited by Grima (2008), the basic requirement of quality education is one that is meaningful, worthwhile, responsive to learners and social needs; and ensures that each and every learner, without fail, get those requirements, regulated as these are their entitlement.



Considerable consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education today. VVOB (2011) distinguishes six dimensions that all organizational interventions should meet, viz: equity, contextualization and relevance, child-friendly teaching and learning, sustainability and balanced approach.

- ❖ The term *equity* entails non-discrimination: personal and social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background are not obstacles to achieving educational potential and all learners reach at least a basic minimum level of skills.
- ❖ There is need to *contextualize* education, and
- ❖ Make it *relevant* to the specific learners and situations. Thus, quality education cannot be based on a blueprint that is applicable in all learners and situations.
- ❖ Quality education entails *child-friendly teaching and learning*, so *puts* the learner in the centre, facilitates learner reaching his or her full potential; and requires the learner's active participation.
- ❖ The *sustainability* dimension, mindful that educational change processes often need time to be realized, highlights the need for enhancing the capacities of national, provincial, district and school-level education authorities, so that the afore-cited processes are institutionalized
- ❖ A *balanced approach* needs to be adopted since quality education aims at developing a balanced set of capabilities the learner requires to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance learner well-being.

In their analysis, UNICEF adopts a broader perspective and demonstrates that quality education must encompass a broader definition involving learners, content, processes, environments and outcomes.

According to UNICEF, as articulated by Colby, Witt and Associates (2000), quality education includes the following dimensions:

- *Learners* who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;
- *Content* that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge;
- *Processes* through which trained teachers employ learner-centred instructional approaches and teaching methodologies in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;
- *Educational/school environments* that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities; and
- *Outcomes* that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national educational goals and positive participation in society.

A close examination of the afore-cited definitions reveals that they allow for an understanding of education as a complex system embedded in a political, socio-cultural and economic context. While mindful that education is systemic in nature, it is important to note that the afore-mentioned dimensions are interdependent and influence each other in ways that are sometimes unforeseeable.

From the afore-cited definitions of quality education, two principles characterize, as supported by the Education for All: Global Monitoring Report (GMR) (2005:17), most attempts to define quality in education. The first identifies learners' *cognitive development* as the major explicit objective of all education systems. The second emphasizes education's role in promoting *values* and *attitudes* of responsible citizenship and in nurturing creative and emotional development. *Quality* determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits.

### **Key attributes of quality education**

As articulated by the 1966 ILO/UNESCO recommendation 21 and reinforced by Education International (2001), quality education possesses the following *key attributes*:

- i) *Quality education is a fundamental human right for all learners, and a public good.*
- ii) *Quality education needs an inclusive and holistic approach.*

The right to education entails an inclusive and holistic approach to education. In policy and practice, quality education needs inputs, a comprehensive and inclusive teaching and learning process and broad outcomes (including critical thinking and problem-solving capabilities, civic-mindedness and other life skills).

Observing that the quality of education is always contextually specific, it is, therefore, important that the Zimbabwean Ministry of Education involve teachers and the broader Zimbabwean community in determining what quality is, through an inclusive and negotiated process.

*(iii) Fairness and equity are fundamental to quality education.*

The right to education for all learners includes equitable participation in quality education. So, all learners, including young people, orphans and vulnerable children, girls and boys, women and men, and the disabled, must have a fair and equitable access to quality public education.

*iv) Quality education requires quality teachers.*

Research studies (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007; etc.) suggest that the major factors that influence learner achievement are teachers and the learners' individual attributes, family and neighbourhood characteristics. Among school-related factors, *teachers* matter most.

Every learner should be taught by a qualified, suitably trained, and motivated teacher, supported by adequate teaching materials and school infrastructure. Quality teachers deserve professional recognition, decent salary / remuneration, pension and other social benefits, and good working conditions. Quality education requires investment in initial pre-service and in-service teacher education and continuing professional development for all teachers.

*v) Quality education must be publicly-financed.*

Governments need to invest in quality education for their own countries' socio-economic, cultural and technological development, as well as the individual development of their populations. Quality education must be publicly-financed and available to all learners, ideally free of charge, if the country's resources permit.

## **The three pillars of quality education**

Essential elements of quality education for a successful global future are the three pillars of quality education, viz: (i) *Quality teachers*. Teachers are the most important educational resource and a critical determinant of quality; (ii) *Quality tools*, appropriate curricula and inclusive teaching and learning materials and resources, including ICT; (iii) *Quality school environments*, supportive, safe, and secure facilities enabling teachers to teach effectively. Support for each of these pillars will help to ensure that quality education remains the basis for a sustainable, peaceful and prosperous future.

## **Policy issues which directly impact on teaching and learning**

Goal 6 of the *Dakar Framework for Action (2000)* emphasizes the need of a stimulating pedagogy. The GMR (2005) emphasizes six policy issues which directly impact on teaching and learning, viz:

- i) *Relevant aims*. The country's policy dialogue must arrive at a relevant balanced set of aims describing what learners should learn and why; the development of cognitive, creative and social skills and values; respect for human rights, the environment, peace and tolerance and cultural diversity.
- ii) *Subject balance* - how subjects are defined, the number of subjects taught and the time allocated to each;
- iii) *Good use of time*. Positive correlations are noted between instruction time and student achievement at both primary and secondary levels. Between 850 and 1,000 effective hours (not necessarily official hours) of schooling per year is broadly agreed as a benchmark;
- iv) *Pedagogic approaches for better learning*. Learner-centred active pedagogy, cooperative learning and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills need to be present;

- v) *Language policy.* Language of instruction is a policy choice affecting curriculum, content and pedagogy. A balance needs to be struck between enabling people to use local indigenous languages in learning and ensuring that they have access to global / international / regional languages; and
- vi) *Learning from assessment.* Regular, reliable, timely assessment is a key to improving learning achievement. The goals are to give learners feedback and improve learning and teaching practices. Formative assessment is needed to complement formal examinations, the summative assessment.

From the fore-going discussion, it emerges that it is the teaching and learning process that brings the curriculum to life, which determines what happens in the classroom and subsequently the quality of the learning outcomes.

### **The right to education, its content and protection**

*The right to education* is the right that ensures learners access to quality schools and to an education that is directed towards the development of their full potential and the full development of their human personality. The right to education is not only the right to access education but also the right to receive quality education. Education must be available and accessible but also acceptable and adaptable. Education is not a privilege, it is a human right.

Education as a human right means: (i) the right to education is guaranteed legally *for all* without any discrimination; (ii) countries, including Zimbabwe, have the obligation to protect, respect and fulfil the right to education; and (iii) there exist ways to hold countries accountable for violations or deprivations of the right of learners and teachers to education. Both individuals (learners and

teachers) and society benefit from the right to education, so the right to education is fundamental. It is fundamental for human, social and economic development and a key element to achieving lasting peace and sustainable development. It is a powerful tool in developing the full potential of every learner and in promoting individual and collective wellbeing. So, it is an empowerment right; lifts marginalized groups out of poverty; is an indispensable means of realizing other rights, and contributes to the full development of the human personality.

As articulated by Dorsi (2014), Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) recognizes education as a right and provides that:

- ❖ Every learner has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.
- ❖ Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children (learners);
- ❖ After the adoption of the UDHR, the right to education has been reaffirmed and further developed in a number of *international and regional treaties*. Today, most countries (including Zimbabwe) have ratified at least one human rights treaty, accepting the legal obligation to *respect, protect and fulfill* the right to education for all, without discrimination;
- ❖ However, there are still huge challenges in fully realizing the right to education. Every day, everywhere in the world, this right is violated whenever we celebrate Human Rights Day, every 10 December of each year, it is important to remember that the right to education is more than words written in legal instruments; and

- ❖ The law is fundamental in guaranteeing the right to education, but the law alone does not mean every learner and every teacher is enjoying their universal right to quality education.

Regarding its content, the right to education encompasses both entitlements and freedoms, including right to: (i) free and compulsory primary education; (ii) available and accessible secondary education; (iii) equal access to higher education on the basis of capacity made progressively free; (iv) fundamental education for those who have not received or completed primary education; (v) *quality education* both in public and private schools; and freedom of parents to choose schools for their children which are in conformity with their religious and moral convictions; freedom of individuals and bodies to establish and direct education institutions in conformity with minimum standards established by the State; and academic freedom of teachers and learners.

An examination of the afore-mentioned entitlements shows that Zimbabwe is complying with most of the provisions of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), with the exceptions of the violation of free education due to the levying of indirect costs and fees, and few cases of non-access and discrimination against some marginalized groups. The right to education is protected by Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Articles 28, 29 & 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Articles 13 & 14 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights; Article 5 of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and Articles 10 & 14 of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.



## **Human rights principles**

According to the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI) (2001), the following six priority human rights *principles* are fundamental to guaranteeing the right to education:

***Individual Rights:*** Every learner must have equal access to quality education adapted to meet his or her needs;

***Aims of education:*** The aims of education must be directed toward the development of each learner's personality and full potential, preparing learners to participate in society and to do work that is rewarding and reasonably remunerative, and to continue learning throughout life;

***Dignity:*** Schools must respect the inherent dignity of every learner creating an environment of respect and tolerance in the classroom, preventing practices and disciplinary policies that cause harm or humiliation to learners, and promoting self-confidence and self-expression;

***Equity:*** There must be equitable distribution of resources in education across communities according to need.

***Non-discrimination:*** The government must ensure that the human right to education “will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to *race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status*”; and

***Participation:*** Learners, parents and communities have the right to participate in decisions that affect their schools and right to education.

## **The right of learners to quality public education**

According to the provisions of the Zimbabwe Constitution (2013), every learner who is a citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe, has a right to a basic state-funded education, including adult basic education; and further education, which the state, through reasonable legislative and other measures,

make progressively available and accessible. UNICEF (2000) posits that children, as learners, have a right to quality education. Quality education is both a *right* for all learners and an *essential enabler* for the achievement of other rights. According to Education International (EI) (2001), every learner has the right to quality education and this right begins at birth. In the same vein, Delors Commission (UNESCO, 1996), posits that governments and other public authorities should ensure that quality public education is provided and available to all learners from early childhood into adulthood. *Article 26* of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), as cited by Dorsi (2014), provides that education is a right, and that every learner has the right to education; and that it shall be free, at least in the early childhood development and primary school levels. Primary school education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all learners on the basis of merit. Accordingly, every learner has a legal right to quality public education that includes further education.

This right to public quality education should ensure that learners have access to quality schools that are staffed by *appropriately-qualified* school heads as school educational leaders; and *qualified hardworking* teachers who behave ethically; and have the requisite hallmarks of a professional teacher and an education that is directed towards the full development of the human personality.

During the past decade much has been done in Zimbabwe nationally and globally to provide quality education for children as provided for in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. All levels in Zimbabwe, viz: head office, provinces, districts and schools are expected, collectively and individually, to

**make quality public education available to all learners. Every learner, in whatever educational setting, has the fundamental right to quality education provided by quality teachers. It is commendable that the Zimbabwean government is striving to ensure that local and national education laws are in line with international human rights treaties.**

### **The right of teachers to quality public education**

**As cited by the UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova (2014), teachers are an investment for the future of countries. What today's learners will face in their future adult life cannot be predicted and so the teachers of today and tomorrow need the skills, competences, knowledge and support that will enable them to meet the diverse needs of every learner. ILO/UNESCO and Education International (2001) posit that every learner should be taught by a qualified, suitably trained, and motivated teacher, supported by adequate teaching materials and school infrastructure. Thus, quality education requires quality teachers. So, every country should invest in teacher education and provide every learner with professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers. Governments and other public authorities should ensure that a quality public education service is available freely to all teachers. Since teachers are the most powerful force for equity, access and quality education, a call for teachers means calling for quality education for all.**

**Accordingly, teachers who staff the quality schools have a right to quality public education. The right to quality public education should ensure that school heads, as school educational leaders, and teachers who staff quality schools have the requisite pre-service teacher education, in-service teacher education, continuing professional development, moral education and hallmarks of a professional teacher. So, teachers should receive stronger**

training upfront and continual professional development and support. On-going professional development, as cited by UNICEF (2000), can help overcome shortcomings that may have been part of teachers' pre-service education and keep teachers abreast of new knowledge and practices in the field. As such, quality education demands that our country makes investments in initial high quality pre-service teacher education, moral education and in-service teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers. Teachers should also receive exposure and staff development in pedagogical innovations in education and on how Information and communication Technology (ICT) can support teacher training.

On the occasion of the 2013 World Teachers' Day, Irina Bokova, the UNESCO Director General, made a call for teachers to receive stronger training when she posited that:

“Teachers' professional knowledge and skills are the most important factor for quality education. This (2013) World Teachers' Day, we call for teachers to receive stronger training upfront and continual professional development and support...”

Given the growing realization that teaching is shaping the character of the next generation, quality teachers should have not only the requisite education, training and competences, but moral values and good ethical behaviour as well. Quality teachers also deserve professional recognition. It is, therefore, critically-important that teachers get the full support of the nation and be facilitated to have a deeper understanding of the ethical implications of their teaching profession.

## **Professionalism and professional ethics**

Quality teachers deserve professional recognition. The first step in becoming a professional is to earn a recognized qualification, a diploma or degree in education that meets the requirements of the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZimCHE) and Civil Service Commission regulations. Behaving ethically is at the heart of what it means to be a professional; it distinguishes professionals from others in the marketplace. *Professionalism* in the education system, as cited by Hall (2001), is a standard of excellence that distinguishes members of the teaching profession. It is built upon individual integrity, taking responsibility, always providing a *high standard of service and ethical behaviour* that demonstrate a profound respect for all learners. Miller-Keane Encyclopaedia defines professional ethics as the norms, values and principles that guide a profession and the ethics of decisions made within the profession. Codes of professional ethics are often established by professional organizations to guide members in performing their job functions according to sound ethical principles. So, teacher unions are advised to form a teachers' Professional Council and establish a code of professional ethics, so as to help guide members in performing their job functions according to sound and *consistent ethical* behaviour.

## **Findings from the data**

The study sought to investigate issues of the right of learners and teachers to quality public education in Zimbabwe. A close analysis of the findings reveals that every learner, in whatever educational setting, who is a citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe, has a right to quality public education. Quality education is education that provides all learners with capabilities and empowerment they require to become economically productive, develop

sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being. It was found that two principles characterize most definitions of quality education, viz: learners' *cognitive development*, the major explicit objective of all education systems; and education's role in promoting *values* and *attitudes* of responsible citizenship and in nurturing creative and emotional development. *Quality* determines how much and how well learners understand and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social, economic and developmental benefits.

It was observed that essential elements of quality education for a successful global future are the three pillars of quality education, viz: *quality teachers* (the most important educational resource and a critical determinant of quality); *quality tools* (appropriate curricula and inclusive teaching and learning materials and resources, including ICT); and *quality educational/school environments* (supportive, safe, and secure facilities enabling teachers to teach effectively). Each of these pillars should be supported to ensure that quality education remains the basis for a sustainable, peaceful and prosperous future.

Observing that quality education is both a *right* for all learners and an *essential enabler* for the achievement of other rights, quality education must be publicly-financed and made available to all learners. The right to quality public education should ensure that learners have access to quality schools staffed by appropriately-qualified school heads as school educational leaders; and qualified competent teachers who behave ethically; and have the requisite hallmarks of a professional teacher and an education that is directed towards the full development of the learner's personality. In Zimbabwe, all levels, viz: head office, provinces, districts and schools, are expected, collectively and individually, to make quality public education available to learners, in line with

the objectives of the country's economic blueprint, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim-Asset).

The research findings show that teachers have a right to quality education that is publicly-financed. Teachers are an investment for the future of a country. What today's learners will face in their future adult life cannot be predicted, and so the teachers of today and tomorrow need knowledge, the skills, competences and support that will enable them to meet the diverse needs of every learner. Every learner should be taught by a qualified, suitably trained, and motivated teacher, supported by adequate teaching materials and school infrastructure. Accordingly, every country, Zimbabwe included, should invest in teacher education and provide every learner with professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers. Governments and other public authorities should ensure that a quality public education service is available freely to all teachers. Since teachers are the most powerful force for equity, access and quality education, any call for teachers means calling for quality education for all.

Quality education offers hope and the promise of a better standard of living. Thus, teachers who staff quality schools have a right to quality public education. The right to quality public education should ensure that school heads and teachers who staff quality schools have the requisite pre-service teacher education, moral education and in-service teacher education, and hallmarks of a professional teacher. Thus, teachers should receive stronger training upfront and continual professional development and support. As such, quality education demands that our country makes investments in initial high quality pre-service teacher education, moral education and in-service teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers. Furthermore, the high quality pre-service and in-service training for teachers should be based on respect for human rights and the principles of inclusive education; and

effective management, including effective and equitable teacher recruitment and deployment.

Given the growing realization that teaching is shaping the character of the next generation, quality teachers should have not only the requisite quality public education, training and competences; as well as moral values and good ethical behaviour. Quality teachers also deserve professional recognition. It is, therefore, critically-important that teachers get the full support of the nation and be facilitated to have a deeper understanding of the ethical implications of their teaching profession.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of the study, the investigator puts forward the following recommendations for consideration by the relevant authorities, that:

- Mindful that every learner has a legal right to quality public education, government must take all practical measures to ensure that *learners* have access to quality education: *quality schools* staffed by *appropriately-qualified* school heads as school educational leaders; and quality teachers who behave ethically.
- Government invests in teacher education so that they provide every learner with professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers. So, the country should make investments in initial quality pre-service teacher education, moral education and in-service teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers.
- Mindful that teaching is shaping the character of the next generation; teachers should be facilitated to have a deeper understanding of the ethical implications of their teaching profession; and
- Teacher unions should form teachers' Professional Council and



establish a code of professional ethics, so as to help guide members in performing their job functions according to sound and *consistent ethical* behaviour.

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing analysis, it has emerged that quality public education is critical to the socio-economic, technological and cultural development of a country. So, quality public education is the cornerstone of a democratic society and has the task of providing equality of educational opportunities to all learners. Learners have a right to quality public education. Every learner should be taught by a qualified, suitably trained, and motivated teacher paid by government, supported by adequate teaching materials and school infrastructure. Quality education requires quality teachers. Accordingly, teachers have a right to quality public education. Quality education requires quality school educational leaders, school heads and teachers, suitably-trained and having appropriate education and requisite competences; good moral values and good ethical behaviour. Accordingly, quality teachers deserve professional recognition, decent salary / remuneration, pension and other social benefits, and good working conditions.

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