

# ZJER

ZIMBABWE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE EDUCATION LIBRARY

Volume 21 Number 1, March 2009

ISSN 1013-3445

## CONTENTS

Effect of Self-generated Concept-Mapping Instructional Strategy  
on the Achievement of Students in Evolutionary Concept  
**Dr. V. I. Oyedele**

Resisting New Concepts: Incorporation of Community-Based Conservation  
Concept at the University of Zimbabwe  
**V. Dzingai, R. Mashava, A. Shayamano**

Education for all in Zimbabwe: A Mirage?  
**Pharaoh Joseph Mavhunga, Manasa Madondo, Morin Phiri**

Teaching Vocabulary Through a Semantic Mapping Technique  
**Isaac Machakanja**

An Assessment of the Implementation of Guidance and Counselling  
Programmes at Ordinary Level in Gweru Urban Secondary Schools  
**Ellen Farisayi Zvobgo**

Views of Children with Visual Impairment on the Challenges of Inclusion  
**Francis Emson Dakwa**

An Experimental Study into the use of computers for teaching of  
composition writing in English at Prince Edward School in Harare  
**L. Tatira, N. Sithole, B.C. Manyarara and R. Gora**

Re-Examining the Source of Morality in Citizenship Education: A Brief  
Response to Aristotle  
**Fainos Mangena**

**Volume 21 Number 1 March 2009**

**ISSN 1013-3445**

**CONTENTS**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Effect of Self-generated Concept-Mapping Instructional Strategy on the Achievement of Students in Evolutionary Concept<br><i>Dr. V. I. Oyedele</i> .....   | 1   |
| Resisting New Concepts: Incorporation of Community-Based Conservation Concept at the University of Zimbabwe<br><i>V. Dzingai, R. Mashava, A. Shayamano</i> .....                                   | 15  |
| Education for all in Zimbabwe: A Mirage?<br><i>Pharaoh Joseph Mavhunga, Manasa Madondo, Morin Phiri</i> .....  | 25  |
| Teaching Vocabulary Through a Semantic Mapping Technique<br><i>Isaac Machakanja</i> .....  | 48  |
| An Assessment of the Implementation of Guidance and Counselling Programmes at Ordinary Level in Gweru Urban Secondary Schools<br><i>Ellen Farisayi Zvobgo</i> .....                                | 60  |
| Views of Children with Visual Impairment on the Challenges of Inclusion<br><i>Francis Emson Dakwa</i> .....  | 76  |
| An Experimental Study into the use of computers for teaching of composition writing in English at Prince Edward School in Harare<br><i>L. Tatira, N. Sithole, B.C. Manyarara and R. Gora</i> ..... | 85  |
| Re-Examining the Source of Morality in Citizenship Education: A Brief Response to Aristotle<br><i>Fainos Mangena</i> .....   | 102 |

# EDUCATION FOR ALL IN ZIMBABWE: A MIRAGE?

Pharaoh Joseph Mavhunga

Manasa Madondo

Morin Phiri

*Department of Curriculum and Arts Education, University of Zimbabwe*

## **Abstract**

*This paper assesses Zimbabwe's efforts towards the attainment of the goals of Education For All (EFA) as determined and agreed upon at the World Conference on Education For All (WCEFA) held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and re-affirmed in Dakar, Senegal in 2000. While Zimbabwe has been noted to have made huge strides in increasing access to education for previously marginalised Africans during the first decade of independence from Britain, there is need to take stock of progress in recent years against a background of socio-economic decline experienced in the country since the early 1990s, more so since the year 2000. The introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) marked the beginning of a phase of reduced government funding of social services sectors, education included. This saw the re-introduction of school fees and various levies in both primary and secondary schools, negatively impacting on access to education, particularly by children from disadvantaged groups such as those from impoverished rural, farming and mining communities. Added to this is the HIV/AIDS phenomenon that has ravaged communities particularly in the last decade, leaving a considerable number of children orphaned and without a means of sustaining their livelihoods in general and to pay school fees in particular. Then came the economic down-turn of the last decade, but particularly pronounced since the year 2000, again rendering more families poorer and with a reduced capacity to pay fees for school going children. It is against this background that this paper scrutinises Zimbabwe's efforts towards the attainment of the EFA goals. Is Zimbabwe still on course?*

## **Introduction**

The human capital theory, in its simplest terms, espouses that for any nation to develop, it has to develop its manpower base first through educating its citizens. All things being equal, education equals development. This is so because education, particularly basic education, lays the basis for skills development. It renders beneficiaries trainable in various fields of occupation, among other things. An educated and well trained workforce tends to be more productive and better orientated towards development. As Noor (1981) posits, education, particularly basic education, is of fundamental importance

in all facets of human life. It is a basic need because it equips learners with fundamental knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and attributes that are critical to individual and national development. Upon attainment of its independence in 1980, Zimbabwe took the provision of education to all its citizens, particularly Africans that had been deliberately and systematically restricted access during the colonial era, as a priority. A definitive policy position was spelt out and a number of measures were taken by the new post colonial government to address the issues of access, particularly in the first decade of independence as shall be discussed in more detail later.

At an international level, the United Nations (UN), through its units such as UNESCO and UNICEF, takes a lot of interest in the provision of education in general, and basic education in particular. The World Conference on Education For All was a culmination of efforts by individual countries over the years to provide education to their citizens as well as the realisation by the UN that a coordinated approach to the provision of basic education was needed. The quest for providing basic education to all citizens by all countries of the world has been on the UN agenda since the declaration of education as a fundamental human right in 1948, yet seventeen years after the World Declaration on Education For All by the Year 2000, the goals of EFA seem far from being realised. What is even more interesting is that the targeted year of 2000 has long passed and a new target date has been set for 2015. A number of constraints militating against the attainment of the EFA goals have been noted, the major one being the limited capacity by individual countries, particularly in the developing world, in terms of financial, material and human resources to effectively tackle the mammoth task of providing education to all their citizens. It is against this background that this paper asks:

- Is EFA possible or is it simply an ideal that is unattainable – a mirage?
- Is Zimbabwe, as one of the participants at the WCEFA, on course in terms of realising EFA goals?
- What are the challenges and the way forward?

Before attempting to answer these questions, among others, it is important to provide an understanding of what EFA entails, its history and its goals.

### **EFA: A Conceptual Framework**

In its simplest sense, Education For All entails the provision of basic education to all citizens of any given country. While there are no rigid parameters

marking the level at which basic education can be said to be attained, it is generally agreed that basic education should enable those that go through it to cope with literacy and numeracy demands of the modern world (Ngawi 1996). For many countries, especially in the developing world, basic education is viewed as equivalent to primary education on the understanding that it is at primary school level that functional literacy and numeracy should be attained. However, in developed countries, the definition of basic education could be perceived in terms of the number of years that the child needs to be in school in order to master the literacy and numeracy skills that allow the child to function in their more sophisticated societies. For the purposes of this paper, basic education, whose provision is the major concern of EFA, is viewed as primary school level of education. This view is shared by Raymaekers and Bacquellaine (1985) who go further to prescribe that basic education is a top priority for Third World Countries, giving the arguments that basic education:

- puts the masses in a position to embark on social and economic change that is indispensable for indigenous self reliant development;
- provides the backbone of every education system;
- constitutes the only form of structured education that most women and a great number of men will ever receive in their lifetime, equipping them with elementary means of defence against poverty and exploitation;
- acts as a powerful catalyst between tradition and change both in the technical domain and at the socio-cultural level in order to facilitate progress towards a modern society;
- integrates the whole population including the underprivileged groups such as the disabled, inhabitants of rural areas, women and illiterates with the development process;
- creates greater equality of opportunity for access to higher levels of education; and,
- constitutes the underpinning of lifelong education, providing, in changing societies, a means of overcoming technical, cultural, socio-economic and political obstacles.

From what is indicated above, EFA, as realised through basic education, is defined from a utilitarian point of view. It aims to provide the learner, whether young or old, with knowledge, skills and competences needed for everyday

living. Its provision by individual nations is buttressed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other related United Nations conventions that proclaim education as a basic human right, among other rights. While EFA is a real issue of concern to Least Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) because of the high levels of illiteracy in those countries, it is less so in More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) where EFA is more of a 'mop-up operation' in the form of adult education for the poorest in society and minority groups. In LEDCs, EFA presents a real challenge involving provision of basic education to young children through primary education and adults through adult literacy programmes. EFA is, therefore, time and place specific in response to individual country requirements and needs.

### **EFA: A Historical Perspective**

The concern and efforts by various nations to provide basic education and eradicate illiteracy among their nationals have a long history pre-dating the WCEFA of 1990. According to Siyakwazi and Siyakwazi (1999), the concept of universal education can be traced to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Moravian educator John Comenius who wrote at that time:

Our final wish is that all persons should be educated fully to humanity: not one individual, not a few, not even many, but all persons together and singly, young and old, rich and poor, of high and lowly birth, men and women – all whose condition is to be born human beings. (Comenius in Siyakwazi and Siyakwazi 1999:7).

Comenius' perception of universal education way back in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century encapsulated in the statement above seems to have formed the basis for the Declaration of Education as a Human Right by the UN in 1948, which provided much impetus to the thrust towards provision of universal education by many nations. Of particular relevance is the first part of Article 26 of the Declaration which states, "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory" (Gabela 2001:2).

In the spirit of the Declaration cited above, UNESCO, a UN arm, through a series of regional and international conferences particularly in the early 1960s, set targets for achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE), a concept whose goals are in tandem with those of EFA. Through UPE, UNESCO expected nations to provide free and compulsory primary education which would ensure the

eradication of illiteracy, which EFA also sought to achieve. In line with UNESCO ideals, the Addis Ababa Conference of 1961 was convened where a resolution was passed to set 1980 as the target date for achieving UPE in Africa. Spurred by this set target, African countries embarked on phenomenal expansion in primary school enrolments. This was particularly the case in newly independent countries that felt obliged to provide education to previously disadvantaged Africans who had been denied education by colonialists hitherto. The Zimbabwean case cited earlier where dramatic expansion in the education system in the first decade of independence is a classic example of the thrust by African post-colonial governments to achieve UPE.

The initial efforts by African governments towards UPE scored moderate success with a continental attendance average of 62% being recorded by 1984 (WCOTP in Ndawi 1996). Interestingly, the illiteracy levels were recorded to have gone up during the same era, having risen from 124 million in 1961 to 126 million in 1980. Perhaps the increase may be attributed to more conscious efforts by governments to keep more accurate records of statistical information on school enrolments and literacy levels following the Addis Ababa Conference of 1961. However, outstanding achievement results were recorded in the Congo Republic, Gabon and Libya where UPE had been achieved by 1974 (Ndawi 1996). It should be noted, though, that these are mineral-rich and oil producing countries and, therefore, it can be argued that they had adequate resources to fund such a mammoth project.

The failure to achieve UPE by the rest of the African countries can be attributed to a combination of factors, among them being the spiraling population growth rate on the continent, under-funding due to reduced foreign aid and galloping costs for educational provision (Bray 1981, Bishop 1985 and Ndawi 1996). Up to the time of WCEFA in 1990, UPE remained the intended, though elusive goal for African countries and other LEDCs. This background of failed attempts at UPE provided the setting for the WCEFA where EFA by the year 2000 was declared.

### **EFA 2000: An Overview**

The World Conference on Education For All held in Jomtien (Thailand) from 5 to 9 March 1990 was an interagency initiative which brought together government leaders, educationists and officials from 155 governments, representatives from multilateral and bilateral agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and professional bodies. Zimbabwe was represented

at the conference by its Minister of Education and Culture then. The conference deliberations were premised on the observation that despite notable efforts by countries around the globe to ensure the right to education for all, the following realities persisted:

- More than 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, had no access to primary schooling;
- More than 960 adults, two thirds of whom were women, were illiterate;
- More than one third of the world's adults had no access to printed knowledge;
- More than 100 million children and countless adults failed to complete basic education (<http://www.unesco.org/education/efa>).

In addition to the facts above, the conference also noted that the world was facing daunting problems, notably mounting debt burdens, the threat of economic stagnation and decline, widening economic disparities among and within nations, war, occupation, civil strife, violent crime, the preventable deaths of children and widespread environmental degradation (<http://www.unesco.org/education/efa>). These problems, the conference noted, constrained the provision of basic learning needs and, therefore, were at the core of conference deliberations as the delegates agonised on the way forward in a quest to attaining EFA by all nations, culminating in the all famous World Declaration on Education For All by Year 2000. The declaration was premised by delegates:

- recalling that education was a fundamental right for all people, men and women, of all ages, throughout the world;
- understanding that education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic and cultural progress, tolerance and international cooperation;
- knowing that education is an indispensable key to personal and social improvement;
- recognising that traditional knowledge and indigenous cultural heritage have a value and validity in their own right and a capacity to both define and promote development;

- acknowledging that overall, the current provision of education is seriously deficient and that it must be made more relevant and qualitatively improved, and made universally available;
- recognising that sound basic education is fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education and of scientific and technological literacy and capacity and thus to self-reliant development and
- recognising the necessity to give to present and coming generations an expanded version of, and a renewed commitment to basic education to address the scale and complexity of the challenge (<http://www.unesco.org/education/efa>).

Based on the realisation above, the WCEFA went on to proclaim ten articles focusing on meeting basic learning needs, shaping an extended vision, universalising access and promoting equity, refocusing learning, broadening the means and scope of basic learning, enhancing the environment for learning, strengthening partnerships, developing a supportive policy context, mobilising resources and strengthening international solidarity (<http://www.unesco.org/education/efa>).

Guided by the ten articles, participants went on to develop and agree on a Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs which, they envisaged, would facilitate the attainment of the goals set forth in the declaration. Targets within the agreed framework were as given below:

1. Expansion of early childhood care and development activities, including family and community intervention, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children;
2. Universal access to, and completion of, primary education (or whatever higher level of education considered as "basic") by the year 2000;
3. Improvement in learning achievement such that an agreed percentage of an appropriate age cohort (e.g. 80% of 14 year-olds) attains or surpasses a defined level of necessary learning achievement;
4. Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to, say, one-half its 1990 level by year 2000, with sufficient emphasis on female literacy to significantly reduce the current disparity between male and female literacy rates;

5. Expansion of provision of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults, with programme effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural changes and impacts on health, employment and productivity;
6. Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sound sustainable development, made available through all education channels including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication, and social action, with effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural change (<http://www.unesco.org/education/efa>).

The terms set above were meant to provide a framework within which individual countries were to set their own targets for the 1990s. A time frame of a decade was set as the target within which the goals of EFA were to be attained, hence EFA 2000. A follow-up conference was convened in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 in order to assess progress made by different countries towards the attainment of the goals set in 1990 and to map the way forward. Country reports were presented by participating countries based on the WCEFA framework. After country reports were presented, it was noted that perhaps EFA 2000 was a rather over-ambitious target for the mammoth task. Consequently, the target date for attaining EFA goals was extended by a further 15 years to 2015.

### **Zimbabwe's Efforts Towards EFA**

Historically, Africans in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia before independence in 1980) were deliberately restricted access to education during the colonial era as pointed out earlier and this became one of the major grievances that fueled the conflict between Africans and the European settler government, culminating in the armed struggle that liberated the country in 1980. Consequently, increasing access to education for the previously marginalised African majority became one of the immediate tasks for the new post-independence government. Within the purview of its new socialist philosophy which espoused egalitarianism and social justice, the new government declared education a basic human right for all its nationals in line with the United Nations Bill of Human Rights, a value that is enshrined in clause 4 of the Zimbabwe Education Act of 1987.

To foster the ideal of education for all its citizens, the new government put in place a number of measures that included the following; among others:

- Racial discrimination in all socio-economic spheres, including education, was abolished, thereby allowing Africans access to previously European-only schools.
- Primary education was declared free and compulsory compelling all eligible children to attend school.
- The age limit for entry into primary school was waived so that those that had missed schooling by reason of the war could re-enter school.
- Schools that had been destroyed during the war of liberation were reconstructed and new ones were built particularly in rural areas in order to increase capacity.
- Capacity at existing schools was increased by introducing double-sessioning as well as through the construction of new classroom blocks.
- The policy on zoning was relaxed in order to allow children to access schools where there were vacancies even if such schools were outside their zone.
- Expatriate teachers were hired to take charge of the increased number of classes especially at secondary school level.
- Untrained teachers were also recruited for this same reason.
- An innovative way of rapidly training primary school teachers through the Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) programme was introduced (Zvobgo 1986).

The measures cited above, among many others, facilitated the rapid expansion of the school system in the first decade of independence, leading to an exponential increase in enrolment figures at both primary and secondary school levels. Table 1 illustrates the increase in enrolment figures in the first five years of independence.

**Table 1. School Enrolment in Zimbabwe: 1979-1984**

| Year | Primary Schools | Secondary Schools | Total     |
|------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1979 | 891 586         | 68 215            | 857 801   |
| 1980 | 1 235 994       | 74 327            | 1 310 321 |
| 1981 | 1 684 481       | 145 327           | 1 829 808 |
| 1982 | 1 934 614       | 224 609           | 2 159 223 |
| 1983 | 2 046 123       | 316 438           | 2 362 561 |
| 1984 | 2 147 898       | 422 548           | 2 570 446 |

**Source** Siyakwazi (2001:7)

The picture emerging from the statistical information above indicates that Zimbabwe made some tremendous efforts to increase access to education, particularly at primary school level, in the first five years of independence, a trend which continued for the rest of that decade of the 1980s, even before the EFA 2000 declaration of 1990 was made at the WCEFA. However, the targets set at the WCEFA given earlier provided further impetus for the Zimbabwean government to re-invigorate efforts to provide education to all its citizens within the framework of UPE goals set at independence.

In pursuance of the WCEFA goals and the suggested framework, Zimbabwe assembled a national Technical Committee of the Education For All (EFA) campaign in Zimbabwe coordinated by a Ministry of Education Sport and Culture senior official that oversaw the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) of 2005. The NAP articulates Zimbabwe's own EFA targets that were framed within the broader framework of EFA 2000 goals, but taking into account local factors. Zimbabwe's National Action Plan (2005:1) stipulates the following targets to be accomplished by 2015:

- increase intake of six year olds into Grade 1 from 50% to 70%;
- increase Net Enrolment Ratio at primary level from 94% to 100%;
- increase the completion rate for the primary cycle from 75% to 90%;
- reduce drop-out rate in Grade 1 from 12% to 5%;
- reduce drop-off rate at primary level from 6% to 2%;
- increase transition rate into Form 1 from 70% to 90%;
- increase percentage of trained teachers from 90% to 100%
- achieve a pupil/textbook ratio of 1:2; and,
- Increase adult literacy rate from 87% to 100%.

The Zimbabwean EFA targets specified above formed the basis upon which the Zimbabwean government developed various policies meant for the attainment of the broader EFA goals. For the attainment of these goals and targets to be a reality within the EFA expanded vision, there was need for new resource levels, new instructional structures, new curricula and new delivery systems, and these form the categories by which the EFA goals and targets can be assessed. An analysis of the goals and targets shows that they encompass what Hallack (1991) calls 'the Jomtien consensus on a broader concept of education'. One major aspect of this broader vision was that education had to be comprehensive and continuous from the kindergarten

to the deathbed'. Before 1990, basic education was equated to primary education. However, after WCEFA (1990) it now encompassed Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) and adult literacy. An analysis of Zimbabwe's efforts, achievements and constraints towards EFA goals and targets follows, focusing on various target areas.

### **Early Childhood Education and Development**

Like any other form of education, ECEC was only accessible to a privileged few during the colonial era through a variety of uncoordinated pre-school programmes. However, the realisation by the new post-independence government that pre-school education was essential for the holistic development of children found expression in 1982 when the government placed what was then called Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) under the then Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs, and later transferred to the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1988, marking the beginning of an era of recognition of ECED as a fundamental component of basic education.

In 1990 the government went a step further and regarded the rebranded Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) as an integral part of the formal education system and, together with other forms of education, it became a basic human right. There was need to step up efforts to create structures especially in rural areas where provision of ECED was mostly conducted under trees and makeshift structures and to regulate its provision in urban centres where its provision had become too commercialised beyond the reach of the majority. The access rate which stood at 20% in 1990 was targeted to rise to 45% by 1998. Within the spirit of increasing the access to ECED at affordable cost and in a well coordinated manner, government introduced ECED-B classes commonly referred to as the 'zero grade' in primary schools in 2006. These are meant to cater for pre-school children of age range 4 to 5 years. In this regard, the government has stipulated that at least two ECED-B classes should be attached to each primary school.

The introduction of ECED-B in the school system was also in line with one of the recommendations of The Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training Report (1999) which was in tandem with EFA goals. It is meant to ensure that every child, regardless of socio-economic background, has broadly similar pre-school experience upon entry into grade one. However, in spite of the noble goals underpinning its introduction, the ECED-B

programme has met with a number of teething implementation problems, some of which are summarised below:

- Most of the primary schools where the ECED-B classes are supposed to be located lack the rooms, teaching and learning materials and the general infrastructure needed for effective implementation of this innovation.
- Due to the problem cited above, the introduction of ECED-B has created over-crowding conditions in schools.
- Very few qualified teachers to handle this special group of learners at their formative stage of development are available. Consequently, unsuitably qualified teachers have to teach ECED-B classes, though efforts are underway to train ECED teachers at various primary teachers' colleges.
- The curriculum for the programme is not yet fully developed, thereby casting doubt on the quality of instructional provision in these classes.
- The long distances that the young children have to walk to school, particularly in rural areas where, in some cases, the nearest school is some 10 kilometres away, has led to irregular attendance and downright withdrawals by some pupils who fail to cope.
- Demands on parents to pay fees and in some cases to provide learning materials have led some parents to withdraw their children from the programme (National Action Plan of Zimbabwe 2005).

The problems cited above, among others, are proving a threat to successful integration of ECED in the formal school system, a measure that was meant to increase access to pre-school education by disadvantaged groups particularly in rural areas, thereby frustrating this noble EFA goal. The much awaited ECED-A classes in primary schools to cater for children of 3 to 4 years of age which was intended to be launched in January 2007 has barely taken off the ground.

### **Primary Education**

The phenomenal expansion in educational provision at primary school level in terms of enrolment figures in post-independence Zimbabwe was highlighted earlier in the paper. However, since 1988, government focus

shifted to emphasis on quality, equity, relevance and internal efficiency in addition to the earlier focus on access. In this quest, the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture has put in place a strategic thrust whose objectives hinge on the provision of universal, inclusive, affordable, quality primary school education. The strategies adopted to facilitate the attainment of these goals included building more schools in under-served areas, taking steps to keep education affordable, providing scholarships and other support services for disadvantaged children, integrating special education into the formal school system within the concept of inclusive education, construction of resource units in schools to cater for children with special learning needs, training staff in special needs education, improving quality and relevance of educational experience through incorporating changes to the curriculum and forming partnerships with various stakeholders in financing development of the primary school sub-sector (National Action Plan of Zimbabwe 2005).

Notable successes have been registered at the level of primary education, with the country nearly achieving UPE by mid 1990s. For instance, by 1994 the net enrolment ratio at primary school level was 81.9%, improving to 93.0% in 2002. During the same period, the literacy rate of children of between 15 and 24 years of age was between 95 and 98%. However, the primary school completion rate which had topped 82.6% had declined to about 75.1% by 2002 (Zimbabwe Millennium Goals 2004).

Another area that scored tremendous success was that of primary teacher training. The percentage of trained teachers rose dramatically from 51.48% in 1990 to 77.20% in 1997. This phenomenal increase is largely attributed to the success of the innovative Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) introduced soon after independence in 1980. Success has continued to be registered in this area to the extent that there is near saturation of primary schools with trained teachers despite the emigration of a sizeable number of qualified teachers to the diaspora and neighbouring countries in search of 'greener pastures'. Training of teachers for the handicapped children has also been going on at The United College of Education in Bulawayo. This development augers well for the government's efforts to provide quality basic education in primary schools.

### **Gender Equity in Education**

One of the important EFA goals under primary education was the need to narrow the participation gap and the transition rate from Grade Seven to

Form One between male and female pupils. In pursuance of this goal, the government crafted a policy of equal access and instituted some gender awareness programmes such as the Gender Equity in Education Project (GEEP), supported by similar programmes by NGOs. One example is the UNICEF scholarship programme targeting girls and administered by local NGOs namely Shamwari DzeVana VeZimbabwe and the Child Survival Foundation. The main idea behind the scholarship was to raise the percentage of girls reaching Grade Seven to 68% by 1996.

Another intervention project that can be cited is the Campaign For Female Education (CAMFED) launched between 1992 and 1993 whose major goal was to assist girls from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds to continue with their schooling to higher levels and to retain them in schools for as long as possible. The project is active in 15 rural districts that include Nyaminyami, Nyanga, Wedza, Chikomba, Binga, Mwenzi Mount Darwin, Buhera, Kwekwe, Lupane, Nkayi, Gokwe and Umzingwane. Of late CAMFED has introduced programmes in newly resettled areas to cater for orphans among other needy groups. However, in spite of all these efforts, there has not been a narrowing of the gap in the enrolment ratio between boys and girls particularly at primary school level as illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2. Evolution of Net Enrolment Ratio in Primary Education**

| Year | Male | Female | Both |
|------|------|--------|------|
| 1994 | 81.8 | 81.9   | 81.9 |
| 1998 | 86.7 | 82.8   | 84.7 |
| 1999 | 90.4 | 87.9   | 89.2 |
| 2000 | 95.1 | 90.0   | 92.5 |

Source: National Action Plan of Zimbabwe (2005:18)

The statistics in Table 2, though showing increased participation levels of both girls and boys between 1994 and 2000, also indicate that the participation gap between girls and boys which stood at 0,1% in 1994 had widened to 5,1% by year 2000 in favour of boys. A point of concern to note is that, as pointed out earlier, the impact of HIV/AIDS on families and the economic hardships currently gripping the country threaten to lower girl participation levels since girls continue to be sacrificed when a choice has to

be made between a boy and a girl as to who to withdraw from school when a situation arises where such a decision has to be made.

With regard to the transition rate which is one of the indicators of internal efficiency, statistics indicate that the transition rate from Grade Seven to Form One for boys is 92,3% while that for girls is 90,9% (National Action Plan of Zimbabwe 2005). While the difference in the transition rate between the two genders is relatively insignificant (1,4%), there emerges a worrying phenomenon in that almost 8% of boys completing Grade Seven do not proceed to Form One, while almost 10% of the girls faced a similar fate. In total, about 18% of the children completing Grade Seven do not proceed to Form One, signifying a degree of wastage in the system and this induces a measure of concern. Furthermore, as pointed out earlier, with the current economic situation and the impact of HIV/AIDS, the education system could be heading towards even more wastage.

In the final analysis, although government and other stakeholders' efforts through affirmative and gender sensitive policies have attempted to promote chances of access to education by girls and to remove obstacles that hamper their participation (WCEFA Final Report 1990), gender parity is yet to be achieved. Girls continue to be marginalised.

### **Education for Other Disadvantaged Children**

Increasing access to basic education by disadvantaged and marginalised groups was yet another major EFA goal in terms of expansion of educational provision. Other than the girl child, such groups include the disabled, children from poor communities particularly those from remote rural areas, farms, resettlement areas and mines as well as orphans whose numbers are increasing by the day due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Government has put in place some measures to mitigate the plight of disadvantaged groups of children such as the poor and the orphaned so as to improve their chances of access to basic education. The measures include the Social Dimension Fund (SDF) introduced in the early 1990s and later succeeded by the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) in 2001 which pays levies, school and examination fees for children from disadvantaged families (National Action Plan of Zimbabwe 2005). Various other players such as NGOs also have programmes in place to augment government efforts in funding education for disadvantaged children.

However, children with special learning needs such as those with different types of disabilities and those suffering from some kinds of chronic diseases and ailments have tended to suffer various forms of discrimination, not only in Zimbabwe, but the worldover. In some extreme cases, such children have actually been 'hidden' from mainstream society. Consequently, the education of such children has always been problematic.

According to the National Action Plan of Zimbabwe (2005:9) there was very little involvement of government in the education of children with special needs in Zimbabwe before independence. It says:

Up until independence, Government's involvement in the provision of special needs education had been minimum compared to that of the other players. Government owned only three schools while the other players had twenty-seven schools.

The situation took a positive turn after independence, with the government committing itself to the education of all its citizens including those with special needs as spelt out in the 1987 Education Act. For instance, 2089 children with disabilities were enrolled in primary schools by 1999, with the figure rising to 15 840 in 2001. However, as the National Action Plan of Zimbabwe (2005) acknowledges, this figure represented a small percentage of children with special needs, with the majority of them not being accounted for. This presents a challenge to the Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Division in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture to conduct a survey to establish the number of children with special needs who are out of school and to find ways of catering for them.

The other problem with the education of children with special needs in Zimbabwe is that the lucky few that gain access are normally placed in separate schools for children with different types of disabilities, for example, Emerald Hill for children with hearing impairment, Jairos Jiri and Danhiko for children with multiple physical handicaps, Kapota for visually impaired children, and Sibantubaye for children with mental handicaps (Zindi 2004). This runs contrary to the spirit of EFA as enunciated in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO 1994 in Zindi 2004: 13) which urges all governments to "—adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise." So, while

special schools may have been deemed suitable in the past, the direction to go is towards inclusive education in keeping with the ideals of EFA.

### **Adult Literacy, Basic and Continuing Education**

One of the negative consequences of the discriminatory policies regarding access to education for Africans during the colonial era was the unprecedented high levels of adult illiteracy which stood at about 50% in 1980. However, the post-independence Education Act of 1987 paved the way for the creation of Adult Non-Formal Continuing Education (ANCE) programmes to redress the anomaly. Joint efforts by government with NGOs, church organisations and private sector companies saw the introduction of a plethora of interventions to promote adult literacy programmes such that by 1999, the adult literacy rate had risen from about 50% at independence to about 87,8%.

Notable achievements were realised through the introduction of a three year primary equivalent course for adults, the Zimbabwe Adult Basic Education Course (ZABEC). This was an adult literacy programme that was mounted at primary schools and taught by primary school teachers on part-time basis. Participants sat a formal Grade Seven national examination at the end of three years of tuition and were awarded a certificate. Other programmes catering for various educational needs for adults were also mounted by government in line with its policy on continuing education.

### **Challenges to EFA in Zimbabwe**

In spite of the measures taken and the successes registered as indicated above, a number of challenges still plague the provision of accessible quality primary education as required by EFA 2000. Problems of access to quality education are particularly pronounced in newly resettled areas after the 2000 'fast-trek' land re-distribution exercise. Although the government has established in excess of 700 satellite schools in newly resettled areas, some parents who were allocated land still found themselves moving with their children to new settlements where no schooling facilities existed, leading to their children dropping from school. Where new schools were established, these were, in the majority of cases, hastily opened, with pupils learning in former tobacco barns or in makeshift pole and daga classrooms. In most of such schools, classes are manned by unqualified teachers as qualified teachers tend to shun the schools due to 'unfavourable' living and working conditions. In addition, very few or no teaching and learning materials are available in those schools.

This has had a negative impact on the quality of education provided. Another problem in such areas relates to the long distances that some pupils have to travel to the nearest school, leading to some children, particularly the younger ones, the disabled and in some cases girls, dropping out of school.

Efforts by parents to put up proper structures to improve the quality of education in the resettlement areas are being inhibited by inability of the new farmers to raise funds due to poor harvests on the new farms largely attributable to persistent droughts that have ravaged the country since early 1990s and an acute shortage of agricultural inputs. Coupled with donor fatigue and reduced government allocation of funds for infrastructural development in such schools, progress is slow and, resultantly, the majority of the schools have failed to attract qualified and experienced teachers, again militating against the provision of quality education.

On a broader scale, the gains scored by Zimbabwe during the first decade of independence have been eroded as a result of a combination of a host of factors. For instance, the adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and general trade liberalisation policies by the government in the early 1990s on the instigation of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) saw a consequent decline in government expenditure in service sectors including education. For instance, real government expenditure in education fell by 14% in the 1991-1992 period. The per-capita grant dropped in real terms from \$ 28, 70 to \$ 23, 71 within the same period (Ballies 1993), a trend that has continued over the years. Coupled with the decline in government expenditure was the introduction of cost recovery measures which saw the re-introduction of school fees at primary school level that had been scrapped at independence.

Some of the immediate impacts of the developments outlined above include an unprecedented increase in school dropouts especially among girls as poor families fail to raise school fees. A number of parents have also transferred their children from urban schools to schools in their rural homes where fees are relatively lower, thereby straining such schools whose resources are generally inadequate as part of the negative colonial legacy.

This trend of events has worsened recently, particularly since the turn of the century as the country experienced an unprecedented economic downturn due to, among other things, persistent droughts (1992-1993, 1995-1996, 2003-

2004, 2007), lack of credit lines and balance of payment support, decline in donor support etc. Of late, the country has been afflicted by yet another scourge in the form of a galloping annual rate of inflation that stood at a staggering 3 712% by the end of April 2007 (*The Sunday Mail*, June, 3-9 2007), with no signs of stabilisation. Consequently, the number of families leaving below the Poverty Datum Line (PDL) which stood at 61% in 1996 has increased sharply over the years (National Action Plan of Zimbabwe 2005).

The economic problems cited above have seen the country experiencing a huge brain drain particularly in the civil service where salaries of civil servants, teachers included, have fallen far below the PDL. Consequently, teachers have left the country for 'greener pastures' abroad in large numbers. At the beginning of the second school term in May 2007, it was reported that up to 2 500 teachers did not report for work in various schools in the country, with Matebeleland provinces and Masvingo being the hardest hit. Those that have remained behind are generally disenchanted by the meager salaries to the extent that they are de-motivated to carry out their teaching responsibilities effectively.

Another negative consequence of the economic downturn is the unavailability of adequate resources and facilities in schools in order to facilitate teaching and learning. Cases of as many as ten pupils sharing a single text book have been reported particularly in rural areas where impoverished parents can hardly chip in to augment the limited resources and materials bought through government funding and efforts of other responsible authorities. Necessarily, these factors are threatening the quality of education in public schools.

Added to the economic problem is the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has resulted, in some cases, in child-headed families where both parents have succumbed to the virus. In other cases one or both parents may be afflicted with the disease, rendering them incapable of working and raising some income. In both cases, school going children usually end up withdrawing from school as they fail to raise the required fees and levies, or in order to look after siblings or sick parents, particularly in the case of girls. Although statistics are difficult to come by, the *Zimbabwe Human Resources Development Report* (2003:98) sums up the situation as follows:

School attendance is affected by HIV and AIDS. Learners infected or affected by HIV and AIDS exhibit erratic attendance, are more likely

to concentrate less in class, and therefore tend to have lower attainment in school. All these are typical precursors to complete withdrawal from the system.

Further to the situation described above, the pandemic has not spared the teachers who, when they fall ill and eventually die, leave classes unattended thereby impacting negatively on the quality of education. This scenario has threatened EFA goals in terms of government ensuring universal access to basic education, a high completion rate, improved learning outcomes and quality of education and schooling.

Measures by government to mitigate the impact of the factors outlined above on disadvantaged children have also been rendered largely ineffective due to inadequacy of funds and the ever increasing number of children that need some assistance against a background of a shrinking government revenue base. Programmes such as BEAM and other scholarship arrangements described earlier simply cannot cope. Apart from inadequacy of funds, these interventions are afflicted with other problems such as late processing and disbursement of funds leading to pupils being 'pushed out' of school before funds are made available. Cases of the funds being abused through favouritism in the selection of beneficiaries and downright misuse have been registered, leaving deserving cases without assistance.

Another factor that is threatening attainment of UPE in Zimbabwe that the government has had to contend with is the high population growth rate which, despite a reasonable decline in recent years, still inputs into society a high percentage of school age population that currently stands at about 40%. Consequently, government expenditure on education remains high, thereby diverting investment away from productive sectors of the economy resulting in a vicious cycle. More schools need to be built, more teachers employed and more resources bought for the new schools in addition to existing ones which need constant re-equipping. The World Bank estimated in 1995 that a further lowering of the fertility rate would result in a 50% to 60% financial saving by the Zimbabwean government by 2015 (Zanamwe 1997).

Everything having been said and done, the provision of quality education, as required by EFA goals, still has a long way to go. As reported earlier, the challenges of providing infrastructure and teaching-learning materials particularly in marginal areas is far from being accomplished. Coupled with this is the prevalence of untrained teachers in the education system in spite

of the huge successes registered through various teacher training programmes in the country. By 2006, there were still some 5 758 untrained primary school teachers out of a national total of 63 219, translating into 9% of primary school pupils being taught by untrained teachers (National Action Plan 2005). This has obvious implications on quality.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Discussion in this paper focused on goals and targets of EFA as spelt out at the WCEFA in 1990 and reaffirmed at the Dakar conference in 2000 where the year for attainment of set goals was postponed to 2015. Particular focus was on Zimbabwe's efforts towards attaining its own goals and targets, first towards UPE as set at independence in 1980 and later towards EFA as set at the WCEFA in 1990. Successes have been registered in the country's efforts to increase access to basic education by all citizens, particularly among Africans whose access was restricted during the colonial era. Consequently, the literacy level in the country is among the highest on the continent. Efforts to increase participation by disadvantaged and marginalised groups have also been noted to have yielded positive results to some extent.

However, it has also been noted in the paper that the progress towards attainment of EFA goals and targets in Zimbabwe is threatened by a number of factors as noted by Machingaidze (2002), chief among them being the country's economic downturn coupled with a high level of inflation that has rendered the majority of citizens poor and incapable of paying the ever increasing school fees for their children. Due to under-funding, some schools, particularly in rural and recently resettled areas, have to do without basics such as, in some cases, pieces of chalk and textbooks. New infrastructure can hardly be constructed in newly resettled areas to cater for children that have moved into such areas with their parents. Teachers are reported to be leaving classes unattended in search of greener pastures. Those that have remained are poorly paid and de-motivated. On the other hand, HIV/AIDS has forced some children to withdraw from school either because their parents who paid their school fees would have succumbed to the virus or they may have been rendered bed-ridden and needing the attention of their children during their illness. Teachers too, have not been spared by the pandemic. Some fall ill, hence they fail to deliver. Worse still, some die with their wealth of skills and experience. These factors, among others, have impacted negatively on government programmes aimed at increasing access to quality basic education in accordance with EFA goals.

As the EFA deadline of 2015 draws closer, it is becoming doubtful that targets will be met and goals achieved in providing education to all Zimbabweans who need it in the remaining eight years unless other funding opportunities arise in the near future. Funds are needed for the mobilisation of human, material and financial resources; working towards the general improvement of the welfare of teachers; provision of relevant instructional materials and fighting the scourge of HIV/AIDS in order to have an impact on provision of universal primary education in line with EFA goals and provisions of The Dar es Salaam declaration made by the Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education (2002), of which Zimbabwe is a member.

### References

- Baillies, P. (1993) *A Critical Guide to ESAP*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Bishop, G. (1985) *Curriculum Development: A Textbook for Students* London: MacMillan.
- Bray, M. (1981) *Universal Primary Education in Nigeria* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education (2002) *Declaration of Dar es Salaam 1<sup>st</sup> December 2002*. Dar es Salaam: FAPED.
- Hallack, J. (1991). *Education For All: High Expectations False Hopes*. Paris: IIEP.
- Machingaidze, T. G. (2002) *A Case Study of The Education for All National Plan of Action: Zimbabwe*. (Unpublished Paper Presented to Parliamentarians).
- National Action Plan of Zimbabwe: Education for All Towards 2015 (2005) Harare: Printflow (Private) Limited.
- Ndawi, O. P. (1996). "Education For All by the Year 2000 (EFA 2000): Its Feasibility in Some Countries in Africa, Can Teacher Education Ensure Quantity, Quality and Relevance for Education in the Year 2000?" *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research*. Vol. 8 No. 1. Harare: HRRC.
- Noor, A. (1981) *Education and Basic Human Needs*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Raymaekers, E. and Bacquelaine, M. (1985). "Basic Education for Rural Development" *Prospects*, Vol. xv No. 3.
- Siyakwazi, B. J. and Siyakwazi, P. D. (1999). *Strategies in Teaching and Learning* Harare: SAPES Books.

The Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training Report (1999), Harare.

*The Sunday Mail*, 3-9 June 2007, Harare.

The Zimbabwe EFA 2000 Country Report (1999). (Unpublished).

World Conference on Education for All Final Report (1990). New York: Inter-Agency Commission.

Zanamwe, L. (1997). "Rapid Population Growth and Economic Development: Causes, Consequences and Implications," *Geographical Education*

Zimbabwe Human Development Report (2003). "Redirecting our Response to HIV and AIDS". *Poverty Reduction Forum*. Harare: IDS/UNDP.

Zimbabwe Millennium Goals (2004), Harare.

Zindi, F. (2004). "Education for All: Towards Inclusive Education Policy Development in Zimbabwe" *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research* Vol. 16 No. 1. Harare:HRRC.

Zvobgo, R. J. (1986) *Transforming Education: The Zimbabwean Experience*. Harare: College Press Publishers.

<http://www.unesco.org/education/efa>



This work is licensed under a  
Creative Commons  
Attribution – NonCommercial - NoDerivs 3.0 License.

To view a copy of the license please see:  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

This is a download from the BLDS Digital Library on OpenDocs  
<http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/>