



**FIRST REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PRIMARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION
ON THE
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY (IEP) AND BETTER SCHOOLS PROGRAMME-
ZIMBABWE (BSPZ) PETITIONS.**

FOURTH SESSION-NINTH PARLIAMENT

Presented to Parliament May 2022

(S.C.15, 2022)

ORDER OF APPOINTMENT

STANDING ORDER NO. 17

- At the commencement of every Session, there must be as many Committees to be designated according to government portfolios as the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders may deem fit.
- Each Select Committee must be known by the portfolio determined for it by the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

STANDING ORDER NO. 20

Subject to these Standing Orders, Portfolio Committees must-

- examine expenditure administration and policy of government departments and other matters falling under their jurisdictions as Parliament may, by resolution determine;
- consider and deal with all Bills other than the Constitutional Bill and Statutory Instruments or other matters which are referred to them by or under a resolution of the House or by the Speaker;
- consider or deal with an Appropriation of Money Bill or any aspect of an Appropriation or Money Bill referred to them by these Standing Orders or by resolution of the House;
- monitor, investigate, enquire into and make recommendations relating to any aspect of the legislative programme, budget, policy or any other matter it may consider relevant to the government department falling within the category of affairs assigned to them, and may for that purpose consult and liaise with such a department; and
- consider or deal with all international treaties, conventions and agreements relevant to them, which are from time to time negotiated, entered into or agreed upon.

On 7 October 2021, the Speaker, announced that all the Committees of the Third Session would continue to operate as previously constituted until such time that new Committees were appointed by the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders. The following are Members of the Portfolio Committee on Primary and Secondary Education:

Hon. Moyo T (Chairperson),
Hon. Banda S,
Hon. Chanda G,
Hon. Dzepasi G,
Hon. Labode R,
Hon. Madhuku J,
Hon. Maronge C,
Hon. Masara B,
Hon. Mathe S,
Hon. Mchenje S,
Hon. Mkandla M,
Hon. Murambiwa O,
Hon. Musiyiwa R,
Hon. Mutambisi C,
Hon. Nkomo M,
Hon. Nyabote R,
Hon. Sanyatwe C,
Hon. Shirichena E,
Hon. Sithole J,

Hon. Moyo Torerayi to be the Chairperson

1.0 Introduction

The Portfolio Committee on Primary and Secondary Education received two petitions from Deaf Zimbabwe Trust and Mr. Shonhiwa on Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) and Better Schools Programme – Zimbabwe (BSPZ) respectively. Deaf Zimbabwe Trust raised concerns that the IEP has existed in draft form since 2019 despite the current education status which is not inclusive by excluding equal benefit of learners with disabilities. Deaf Zimbabwe Trust beseeched Parliament to exercise its legislative, representative and oversight function and protect the rights of pupils with disabilities in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution and international legal instruments of which Zimbabwe is a party and to ensure that MoPSE finalizes and adopt the IEP. On the other hand, Mr. Shonhiwa was aggrieved by the notion that schools were being deprived of infrastructural development, furniture and learning materials by the BSPZ’s demands for affiliation fees. Hence beseeched Parliament, to exercise its functions and protect the constitutionally guaranteed right to education and the rights of parents from abuses of public funds. The Committee deliberated on the two petitions and resolved to conduct an inquiry on the two matters.

2.0 Objectives

The inquiry was guided by the following objectives.

- To gather public views on the two petitions; and
- To offer policy recommendations for improvements.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 As part of its inquiry, the Committee conducted an oral evidence session with Hon. Moyo E, the Deputy Minister for Primary and Secondary Education on the two petitions on the 4th November 2021. In addition, the Committee conducted public hearings at the following places; Nyika Growth Point, Mberengwa RDC, Maphisa, Nkayi and Gokwe Centre from 20th – 26th February 2022.

4.0 Committee Findings

4.1 Oral evidence from the Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Hon. E. Moyo.

4.1 Better Schools Programme of Zimbabwe

4.1.2 In his presentation, the Deputy Minister highlighted that the BSPZ is one of the Ministry’s strategies that is meant to improve the standards of education services provided at each school through, mainly, peer training, the sharing of best practice, exchanges as well as peer supervision and monitoring of schools. Another key aspect of this strategy is the conducting of action research and holding of competitions, exhibitions and fairs to encourage schools to have a healthy competition and learners to learn from each other through such opportunities for experimental learning.

- 4.1.3 BSPZ uses the model of a cluster of neighbouring schools whose leadership engage in common programmes that enhance the capacities of the schools and school leadership for improved performance. This strategy was initially funded through the Royal Netherlands Government and then handed over to the individual communities for sustainability. The levies paid towards the BSPZ are thus meant to ensure the sustainability of this shared strategy of sharing best practices among peer leaders. Generally, funds that are collected for the BSPZ are ploughed back to schools, especially when they conduct their capacity building and research activities or set common mock examination tasks to gauge the strength of each school and help those lagging behind to increase their catch up efforts.
- 4.1.4 As a way of encouraging and institutionalising research within the Ministry, Provinces and Districts were challenged to come up with BSPZ centres in order to use them as research centres as well as offices and conference space for their periodic meetings. The provinces used different fundraising strategies and some have since come up with these centres, but others were still unable to do so. There is a management team made up of Ministry personnel and stakeholders within the community, inclusive of business people, local leadership and this Committee is the one that ordinarily comes up with fundraising models (inclusive of targeted levies) in consultation with heads of schools.
- 4.1.5 With respect to the BSPZ Chiredzi funds, the Ministry established that part of the money was meant to develop the Provincial BSPZ centre. It is not Chiredzi District alone that is making contributions to the Provincial Centre, but all the districts in Masvingo Province.

4.2 Inclusive Education Policy

- 4.2.1 The Deputy Minister informed the Committee that the mission of the Zimbabwean education system is to facilitate the equitable provision of quality, transformative, 21st century, practical/applied, inclusive and relevant Infant, Junior, Secondary and Non-formal education.
- 4.2.2 The National Constitution (2013) reaffirms this commitment as it enshrines the right to education for all. Section 75(1) states that “Every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has a right to basic education, state-funded education and further education, which the State through reasonable legislative and other measures must make progressively available and accessible.”
- 4.2.3 The Deputy Minister stressed that Section 22 of the Constitution states that, “the State and all its institutions and agencies of Government at every level must, within the limits of resources available to them, assist persons with physical or mental disabilities to achieve their full potential and to minimise the disadvantages suffered by them”.
- 4.2.4 Anchored on the Constitution, the Education Amendment Bill (2019) emphasises and also guarantees, the fundamental right to education for all.
- 4.2.5 Inclusive education therefore, is viewed as a process or approach that seeks to ensure universal access to and participation in education for all learners through mainstreaming responsive and individualised learner-centred support to overcome identified barriers to individual learners’ full participation in formal, non-formal and lifelong educational settings and activities.
- 4.2.6 Inclusion advocates that schools should seek out, welcome, nurture, respect and educate all children regardless of their physical, gender, intellectual, social, economic, emotional, linguistic or other characteristics. An inclusive school espouses the best interests of the

learners, promoting social cohesion, a sense of belonging, active participation in learning, a complete school experience, and positive interactions with peers and others in the school community.

- 4.2.7 The Ministry, deliberately created the department of Psychological Services, Learner Welfare and Special Needs to deal with issues of inclusivity in line with the IEP. The department deals with all forms of disabilities that our learners have and actively advocates for the provision of any infrastructure which learners with disabilities require.
- 4.2.8 The Committee was informed that the Ministry was at the finalisation stage of the IEP draft document. This process had been delayed by the COVID 19 lockdowns/closures which made it impossible to hold the Stakeholder Validation. This process had been completed on 30 September 2021 and the Ministry was factoring in the inputs from its stakeholders. Among the stakeholders at the Validation stage were representatives of the Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) whose members include Deaf Zimbabwe Trust, who have petitioned Parliament.
- 4.2.9 The harmonisation of IEP with the Disability Policy has been done and confirmed by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Services. The Ministry's endorsement of the Policy is targeted for end of November 2021, after which it will be presented to Cabinet.

4.3 Public Hearings: Better School Programme in Zimbabwe (BSPZ)

- 4.3.1 In response to the petition, participants exhibited polarized views with some in support and others against. Those in support particularly officials from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), acknowledged that, although there was no legal framework supporting the collection of revenue for BSPZ, there were written procedures on how the money should be collected and utilized. Representatives from the Ministry explained that the BSPZ funds were meant to improve management in schools by targeting the capacity development of school heads and teachers on the philosophical understanding that capacitating a teacher is the right means to build a better school.
- 4.3.2 Participants in Masvingo, informed the Committee that in their province, BSPZ demanded affiliation fee of US\$2 and US\$5 per child in respect of Primary and Secondary schools respectively. In contrast, those in Midlands, Matebeleland South and North and Gokwe were being charged US\$0.50 per child. Ministry officials were demanding the affiliation fees based on school's enrollment without giving consideration to whether the fees have been paid or not.
- 4.3.3 MoPSE officials informed the Committee that BSPZ funds were instrumental in manning districts as little to non-financial support was reaching districts from the Head Office. BSPZ funds are mainly being used for capacity building, inspection of schools and provision of secretarial and administrative support such as printing and photocopying. Furthermore, the funds are being used for capital expenditure such as procurement of vehicles and construction of offices and halls as was the case of BSPZ Nyika and Mberengwa respectively.

4.3.4 In Nyika, participants argued that the BSPZ should be banned, with the collection of revenue stopped as a matter of urgency because it was illegal. Participants noted that a significant amount of money that should be used to purchase furniture and learning materials at a local school was being diverted, thereby disadvantaging children.

4.4 Public Hearing: Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) Delays in adoption of the policy

4.4.1 The public unanimously agreed that the IEP is a noble policy, however raised concerns that the policy remains a draft document. Participants in Nyika, including school heads confirmed that they were consulted in the formulating of the policy. The Committee was also informed that the draft IEP was finalized before the inception of pandemics such as coronavirus (COVID-19), hence might need to be updated or reviewed to include matters such as online learning among others.

4.4.2 Budgetary and Material Support

4.4.3 It came out strongly that the IEP should be accompanied by a clear budgetary support to ensure that the policy is fully supported and implemented. Participants observed that the Government was well known for crafting magnificent policies that are not implemented due to lack of budgetary support. In case of IEP, participants noted that there were existing challenges such as shortages of resources, for example trained teachers and assistive devices hence the need to ensure that budgetary support is clear on how these issues will be resolved. Contributors acknowledged that the situation in most schools was inconsistent with the demands of the IED as they lack infrastructure. Furthermore, participants noted that Government should also budget for special allowances for teachers who will be assisting children with disabilities.

4.4.5 IEP a “Dream”

4.4.6 The IEP was referred to as a “dream” utopian model, far-fetched from the challenges being faced on the ground. Participants in Nkayi and Gokwe argued that there were some schools in areas such as Binga, Nkayi and Gokwe that were substandard, without any meaningful infrastructure to talk about. Some learners were walking 5 – 15 km to school, hence, questioned how the disabled learners would manage to cover such distances to access education. While the notion of IEP is to ensure that pupils access education within their localities despite their physical appearance, some participants felt that the current status or challenges in education would not be possible to ensure that the dream is achieved in the possible shortest time. Hence, some argued that it would be prudent to build model infrastructure or schools that are well equipped with the right infrastructure, where children with disability will access education from, but also opening their doors to those without disabilities.

4.4.7 Role of Communities

4.4.8 The Committee was informed there was need to be clear on the role of communities in the IEP. Throughout the public hearings, participants cried out that parents in most cases were not willing to bring children with disabilities to schools. This was attributed to

lack of information, unwillingness by parents and lack of assistive devices among others. Hence, contributors argued that there was need to carry out awareness programme on the IEP to various communities, as soon as the policy is adopted. Some parents were unwilling to take their children to schools because they do not see value in it, a position cemented by some participants who argued that because of lack of a conducive environment parents were not willing to take disabled children, hence depriving learners of education.

4.4.9 Role of Teachers

4.4.10 Contributors noted that the teacher remains an important actor in facilitating education services, hence the IEP was expected to be clear on their roles and responsibilities. Participants in Mberengwa noted that in anticipation of the launch of IEP, there is need to start training or capacitation of teachers on how to implement the policy. In addition, government should consider offering allowances and providing learning materials.

5.0 Committee Observation

5.1 Inclusive Education Policy

- The policy remains unadopted despite the assurance by the Deputy Minister that policy would be adopted by end of November 2021.
- Schools have inadequate resources including financial, material and human to implement IEP.
- There is a general lack of consensus or appreciation of what constitute inclusive education as reflected during the public hearings.
- The existing enormous challenges in the education sector such as lack of infrastructure, teachers, financial support among others may limit the success of the IEP.

5.2 Better Schools Programme – Zimbabwe

- The BSPZ is a noble idea, however due to lack of a legal framework there is no uniformity in the collection and use of the funds.
- The programme has too many loopholes due to lack of a legal framework particularly on transparency and accountability in the use of funds.
- The funds are no longer used for the benefit of learners, but for allowances by Ministry officials.
- BSPZ is increasing the burden on parents who are already struggling to pay tuition and fees.

6.0 Committee Recommendations

Inclusive Education Policy

- In the 2023 budget, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should consider provisions for the construction of model schools in each district, which should also serve as a good example on how an inclusive school.
- The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology should encompass special training for teachers on how to handle learners with disability by December 2022.
- The MoPSE should conduct an exercise to compile the statistics on learners with disabilities (either going to school or not) to ensure proper planning in future by December 2022.
- The MoPSE should ensure that every school has a trained teacher to handle learners with disability by December 2022.
- The Ministry should conduct awareness programmes on the IEP to ensure that communities, schools and teachers are informed and capacitated by December 2022.

Better Schools Programme

- The MoPSE should craft a legal framework on the collection and use of BSPZ funds by December 2022.
- The MoPSE should enact a Statutory Instrument to ensure uniformity in the collection and utilization of the affiliation fee throughout the country by June 2022.
- The Auditor General should audit the BSPZ funds, so that a clear picture on how the funds are being used can be explained and create room for improvements.

7.0 Conclusion

The IEP remains a noble idea and delays in the adoption and implementation has exacerbate the existing inequalities in schools and worsen the situation of learners with disabilities. IEP should be accompanied by a budgetary support to ensure its success. Lack of a legal framework to regulate the BSPZ has created abnormalities in the collection and use of the funds. Therefore, the Ministry should craft policies that regulate the collection and utilization of BSPZ funds.