



**The Social Impact of the Zimbabwean Crisis on
Access and Quality of Education:
Examining Teachers' Unruly Practices in Rural
Secondary Schools**

A Research Paper presented by:

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(Zimbabwe)

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:

Social Policy for Development

(SPD)

Specialization: PPM

Public Policy and Management

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The Hague, The Netherlands

December 2014

Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Dutch Government for funding this study. I would like to extend my sincere and heartfelt appreciation to my team of advisers: Drs - Auma Okwany, Sylvia Bergh and Ward Vloeberghs for their unwavering and duly professional guidance. To my SPD colleagues and fellow students, many thanks for your distinguished solidarity right from the design to the final presentation of this paper.

This study would not be successful without the cooperation of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe. To teachers, school heads, parents and children who sacrificed their precious time to participate in this research, your voices are the mainstay of this study – I salute you. I am indebted to my wife Rosaline and sons Samuelson and Selby, for their unswerving emotional support throughout the whole period of study. Last but not least, I thank my parents for always emphasizing the importance of education since my childhood.

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|----------------|--|
| ACRWC | African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child |
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| BEAM | Basic Education Assistance Module |
| CSC | Civil Service Commission |
| DEO | District Education Officer |
| ESAP | Economic Structural Adjustment Programme |
| ETF | Education Transition Fund |
| EFA | Education for All |
| EI | Education Inspector |
| EMIS | Education Management Information System |
| EMTP | Education Medium Term Plan |
| ESPP | Enhanced Social Protection Project |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GNU | Government of National Unity |
| GoZ | Government of Zimbabwe |
| GPA | Global Political Agreement |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| MDC | Movement for Democratic Change |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goal |
| MoESAC | Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture |
| MoHCW | Ministry of Health and Child Welfare |
| MoLSS | Ministry of Labour and Social Services |
| MoPSE | Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education |
| MoPSLSW | Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare |
| MTP | Medium Term Plan |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| PED | Provincial Education Director |
| PROBE | Public Report on Basic Education in India |
| PSC | Public Service Commission |
| PTUZ | Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe |
| RAU | Research and Advocacy Unit |
| SDC | School Development Committee |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| UNESCO | United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children’s Fund |
| USD | United States Dollars |
| ZANU-PF | Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front |
| ZimAsset | Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation |
| ZIMPREST | Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation |
| ZimVAC | Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee |
| ZIMTA | Zimbabwe Teachers’ Association |
| ZINTEC | Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course |
| ZNCWC | Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children |

Abstract

The crisis in Zimbabwe manifested itself in serious challenges in the education sector as a whole. However, rural schools have been the worst affected. Political intimidation and persecution of teachers resulted in mass exodus of teachers and closure of schools in 2008. Hyperinflation rendered the teachers' salaries worthless. Since then, the crisis is far from being over although there is now political stability. Rural teachers have been demoralised by poor remuneration and lack of motivation. In trying to adapt to the poor working conditions, teachers adopt a range of practices, some of which are adverse to access and quality of education. The paper focuses on the impact of the crisis on access and quality of education in the context of teachers' unruly practices.

Relevance to Development Studies

Education is fundamental in the development discourse. It is a right, capability and a tool to fight poverty. The way any government treats its teachers is a determinant factor for access and quality of education. A government of the day is ultimately judged by its investment in education. This study values the indispensability of teachers as frontline implementers of education policies. The paper emphasizes that the implementation context is crucial in determining the level of teachers' commitment to duty. Poor remuneration, lack of motivation, ill-equipped schools and poor infrastructure all demoralise rural teachers. As long as teachers are not motivated, access and quality of education are seriously compromised. The current state of education in rural schools is a threat to development.

Keywords

Teachers, crisis, education, rural schools, access, quality, exclusion, unruly practice

Chapter 1 Introduction

Zimbabwe is a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (AFRWC). Both instruments stipulate the right of the child to education. The Millennium Development Goals, which Zimbabwe also made a commitment to, also underline the achievement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015 (Goal 2). Goal 6 of the Education for All (EFA) global campaign is quality of education. The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) invested considerable resources into the education sector especially in the early years of independence. However, Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) implemented from 1991-1995 maladjusted the economy and public sectors like education began to face viability challenges. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme of the year 2000 that redistributed land from the white farmers to the indigenous Zimbabweans attracted vilification and subsequent 'smart' sanctions from the international community. The political upheaval and economic meltdown of 2008 is the climax of the Zimbabwe crisis. The public sector especially health and education almost collapsed in 2008. It is in this context that my research explores the repercussions of the crisis on access and quality of education in rural areas of Zimbabwe.

This paper examines access and quality of education through the lens of social exclusion. The concept underlies that despite the obligation of the state to meet the right to education, there is marginalisation of children due to the state's inadequate provisioning. The crisis constrained the state's ability to provide quality education. The decline of state support to education transferred the cost of education to parents who still struggled to eke a living. Thousands of children drop out of school as poor parents fail to meet the cost of education. At the behest of "current income levels and the prevailing poverty brought about by the harsh economic environment, the cost of education is prohibitively high" (UN Zimbabwe and GoZ 2010:52). The crisis manifested in poor working conditions for teachers who are in the frontline of implementing education policies. Teachers endure by adopting a range of practices, some of which are perverse. In this study, I am interested in the teachers' adverse responses to the crisis that Fraser terms 'unruly practices' (1989). Unruly practices are a form of social exclusion that, in the context of my study, compromise children's access and quality of education. Since the crisis, the teaching profession has been hit by a litany of unruly practices which include deliberate absenteeism, drunkenness and negligence of duty, moonlighting, demanding payment from parents, corporal punishment, improper association and social media during working hours. While corporal punishment and improper association could be as old as the teaching profession, the crisis worsened them. Officially, such behaviour is not condoned but happens against a backdrop of poor teacher motivation and lack of schools supervision generated by the crisis. The government of Zimbabwe is constantly passing policy directives to regulate conduct of teachers without addressing their working conditions. The

seemingly militant approach of the government is rather reinforcing the unruly practices instead of providing a lasting solution.

This study focuses on rural secondary schools. I am fully aware that primary school education is the basic foundation for any child. However, I also believe that secondary education is a building block to tertiary education and prospective career development. The social and economic benefits of education are more realisable when a child attains secondary education than only primary education (Kadzamira and Rose 2003: 512). When parents send children to school they perceive it as a means to escape poverty as the child gets employed after completion of studies. However, the reality is that “job opportunities for a primary school leaver are extremely limited as secondary education is now a minimum entry requirement for the formal job market” (ibid: 513). Kadzamira and Rose noted that free primary education leads to qualification inflation and as a result only those who access the limited secondary education would realise economic benefits of education (ibid.). According to Burke and Beegle (2004: 350), “given that secondary school enrolment is conditional on satisfactory completion of primary school...parents consider the education path beyond primary level when investing in the primary schooling of children”. Therefore, I find it imperative to focus on secondary schools.

I realised that issues of poor remuneration and poor working conditions for teachers in Zimbabwe are quite salient in past researches. However, there is silence on how teachers have adapted to the crisis and how their responses affect access, quality and participation. I am hopeful that my study would be insightful in that regard. Perhaps, the damage of the crisis to education could be understood better in the context of teachers’ unruly practices. This study could be a basis for future studies and formulation of relevant education policy.

1.1 What is the significance of focusing on the crisis and education?

In this section I highlight the historical background of education in Zimbabwe since independence. My interest is on the gains of early years of independence and the challenges imposed to the sector especially from 2008 to date.

Tracing the history: What really went amiss?

Upon attainment of independence in 1980, the government of Zimbabwe embarked on a massive educational reform to remove the colonial inequities and imbalances. The government adopted the socialist principle of ‘Growth with equity’ and reforms in public education were in line with the principle of ‘Education for All’ also adopted at independence (Nhundu 1992:80). The education policy initiatives were hinged on free and compulsory primary education, removal of age restrictions, community support for education and automatic progression from primary to secondary school (ibid.).

The government expanded the education system by building schools in marginalised areas and disadvantaged urban centres, accelerating the training of teachers, providing teaching and learning materials to schools...The supply of teachers was increased by introducing the Zim-

babwe Integrated Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC), a low cost teacher-training scheme (Kanyongo 2005:66).

At this stage the focus of the government was accessibility to education and not much about quality and efficiency (ibid.). Through the Education Act of 1987, the government abolished all forms of discrimination and made primary education free and compulsory (Mlambo 2013:360).

The number of primary schools by 187.6 percent from 2401 to 4504 between 1979 and 1989 and secondary schools by 748.6 percent from 177 to 1502 in the same period. As a result, primary school enrolment rose by 177.5 percent from 819,586 to 2,274,178, while secondary school enrolment increased by 950.9 percent from 66,215 to 695,882 (Kanyongo 2005: 65–74)

Throughout the first decade of independence, the Zimbabwean government managed to establish racial equity and improved gender parity in schools and increasing enrolment as well. White and black students could access the same education regardless of race (ibid: 70). The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2003:2) cited the national male literacy rate at 94.2 percent, female literacy rate at 87.2 percent which gave a total of 90.7 percent. This made Zimbabwe one of the top literacy in Africa, a development that was duly endorsed by UNICEF and UNESCO. In 1988, the World Bank acknowledged that the government of Zimbabwe had managed to “achieve the elusive goal of universal primary education and uninhibited access to secondary education” (cited in Nhundu 1992:80).

“Hailed as a leader in Africa for a literacy rate of 93 percent for males and 87 percent for females by the end of the twentieth century, Zimbabwe came very close to achieving its goals of “Education for All by 2000” (UNICEF 2003 cited in Tonini 2005:101). By then, teaching used to be one of the most revered professions in Zimbabwe. Teachers could prefer working in rural areas for low cost of living. If Zimbabwe achieved so much so early, what really went wrong in 34 years of independence? The party behind the early achievements is the same Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) that is in power today under the same leader. Are the politicians now obsessed with power to forget that education is a basic investment to fight poverty? Teachers’ salaries are low in many developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (UNESCO 2008). All governments face budgetary constraints in education although it is worse for low income countries. Like Zimbabwe, other countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia also experienced the bitter consequences of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). It is common that teachers’ remuneration consumes the biggest chunk of the education budget in developing countries (ibid). What then makes the Zimbabwean situation unique and worthwhile to study? I assume that the crisis was a deadly blow to the teaching profession and the education sector as a whole.

Understanding the importance of the 2008 crisis to the study

The year 2008 is significant in the history of Zimbabwe. It is the year that the economy of Zimbabwe dropped to its lowest ebb ever. It is the year the education sector and other social services ground to a standstill. The year is also remembered for the worst political violence since independence in 1980. It is the year that Zimbabwe gained attention for the second worst inflation

(after Hungary) in the history of the world. In July 2008, the official inflation rate was at an incredible 231 million percent (GoZ 2010). The year 2008 is also popular for harmonised national elections that did not produce an outright winner and went for a re-run that R.G Mugabe contested alone, for the first time in Zimbabwean history. The political campaigns were brutal and violent forcing leader of the opposition Morgan Tsvangirai to pull out of the re-run race. The rural areas became the battlefield for the political parties. Schools, especially in rural areas were turned into bases of political campaigns. Secondary school children were coerced into youth gangs who roamed villages to unleash violent political campaigns. Teachers were labelled 'political commissars for the opposition' and faced violent attacks that forced them to flee for dear life.

Although the genesis of the crisis predates 2008, I confine my study to the period 2008 to 2014. The paper is predicated on the central theme of unruly practices that teachers developed either out of the need to make ends meet or utter manipulation of the broken down system. In this research I attempt to ascertain how the teachers' survival mechanisms affected children's access and quality of education as well as the government's response to manage the situation.

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The purpose of this study is to identify the effects of the crisis on access and quality of education. The crisis-effects nexus is understood when I look at teachers' adaptation and implications for children, parents and the government. The four parties are important stakeholders in the education sector. The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the effects of the crisis on access and quality of education in rural secondary schools?
 - What are the strategies adopted by teachers to adapt to the crisis?
 - How are the teachers' responses affecting access, quality and participation?
 - What are the policy implications for the government to support teachers to improve access and quality of education?

For this study I purposively sampled two rural secondary schools in Mount Darwin district. The two schools are located in areas that experienced political disturbances, a synonym of national elections in Zimbabwe since the year 2000. For ethical considerations, I refer the two schools as schools A and B. I adopted the term 'unruly practice' that fits well to the concept of social exclusion although the common term in the Ministry of Education is 'misconduct'. The use of the term 'misconduct' by the government places the blame on teachers and ignores structured forces of state inertia.

1.3 Research Methods and Data Collection

The study is anchored on both historical perspective and contemporary state of education in Zimbabwe. The historical perspective provides the scope of the state of education in the period before the crisis. This gives an appreciation of the gains achieved by the government in the early years of independence. I briefly highlight experiences of the education sector from independence to 2008. The period from 2008 to present day provides an understanding of how teachers, government, children and parents responded to the crisis. The process of data collection focused on empirical studies, other written documents and the experiences of teachers, school heads, children, parents, District Education Officer (DEO), Directorate of secondary education in the Ministry and former Minister of Education.

Document and Empirical Studies Review

Secondary data is critical to my study. There are several published and unpublished documents: publications of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank; Ministry of Education reports; newspaper and journal articles. Some of the documents are specific to Zimbabwe whilst others generally apply to the broad spectrum of education. These documents were insightful to the study. I explore empirical studies about education in Zimbabwe as a basis for my primary data. The controversy and crisis in the education sector in Zimbabwe draws the attention of the media almost daily, hence my reference to newspaper articles. However, I followed both state-controlled and independent newspapers to at least strike a balance of views. To get a legal and policy perspective, I invoked policies and legal instruments that adjudicate provision of education in the Constitution of Zimbabwe. In this regard, The Education Act and the Education Medium Term Education Plan (EMTP) 2011-2015 were important to this study. The major challenge was that most of the data on education in Zimbabwe combines primary and secondary and rural and urban schools. Nevertheless, the gap is counterbalanced by primary data.

Area of Study

Mount Darwin district is located in Mashonaland Central province in the northern part of Zimbabwe. In the history of the country, the ruling party ZANU-PF considers the province its stronghold and 'out of bounds' for opposition parties. I chose Mount Darwin for the study because of its record of politically motivated electoral violence since 2000 that targeted teachers and other suspected members of the community. It was not easy to select two secondary schools out of a total of 40 in the district. However, accessibility, proximity and age of the schools eventually led me to decide on the two with the aid of the District Education Officer (DEO). I preferred schools that were established before the year 2000 to suit the context of my study. School A was established in 1988 whilst school B began in 1985 (district records).

Mount Darwin comprises 90 primary and 40 secondary schools. The district hierarchy constitutes the District Education Officer (DEO) who heads the district, 2 inspectors, 2 human resource officers, 1 accountant, 1 schools psychological services (SPS) officer and other auxiliary staff (DEO). The DEO,

inspectors and the accountant are the ones who are expected to visit schools for monitoring and supervision. The minimum standards that the district team is required to meet are that each school should be visited once a year, each inspector is supposed to supervise 42 teachers per term and the DEO is expected to supervise 10 school heads per term (district records¹). After interviewing the DEO, it was possible to identify strengths, gaps and challenges of the district education authority in meeting its mandate of schools supervision.

Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews “allow you to develop rapport and trust; provide rich, in-depth qualitative data; allow verbal and non-verbal data; are flexible to explore interesting tangents; and are structured enough to generate standardised, quantifiable data” (O’Leary 2014: 217). I prepared interview schedules with guiding questions specific to categories of participants. I did one to one semi-structured interviews with all my participants. A face-to-face interview “allows the researcher control over the process and the interviewee the freedom to express his or her thoughts” (ibid: 218). I interviewed a total of 23 participants comprising 14 males and 9 females. Below is a summary of the research participants:

- 6 teachers
- 2 school heads
- 6 children
- 4 parents
- 3 senior officials
- 2 trade union officials

In the process of interview, I was also keen to observe so that I could “explore what people actually do, and not just what they say they do” (ibid: 231). I observed the teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions and the state of infrastructure at the schools.

For children, parents, teachers and trade union officials I applied snowball sampling method. Through referrals I managed to reach in and out of school children; and parents who had children in and out of school since 2008. For teachers, I targeted those with more years in the profession than others. For the school heads and key informants, I used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling ensures that “all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter are covered and that within each of the key criteria, some diversity is included so that the impact of the characteristic concerned can be explored” (Ritchie ‘et al.’ 2003: 79).

Key informants are “individuals whose role or experiences result in them having relevant information or knowledge they are willing to share with a researcher. They can be instrumental in giving you access to a world you might have otherwise tried to understand while being locked on the outside” (ibid: 191). In this study, my key informants were the former Minister of Education

¹ District file for supervision standards

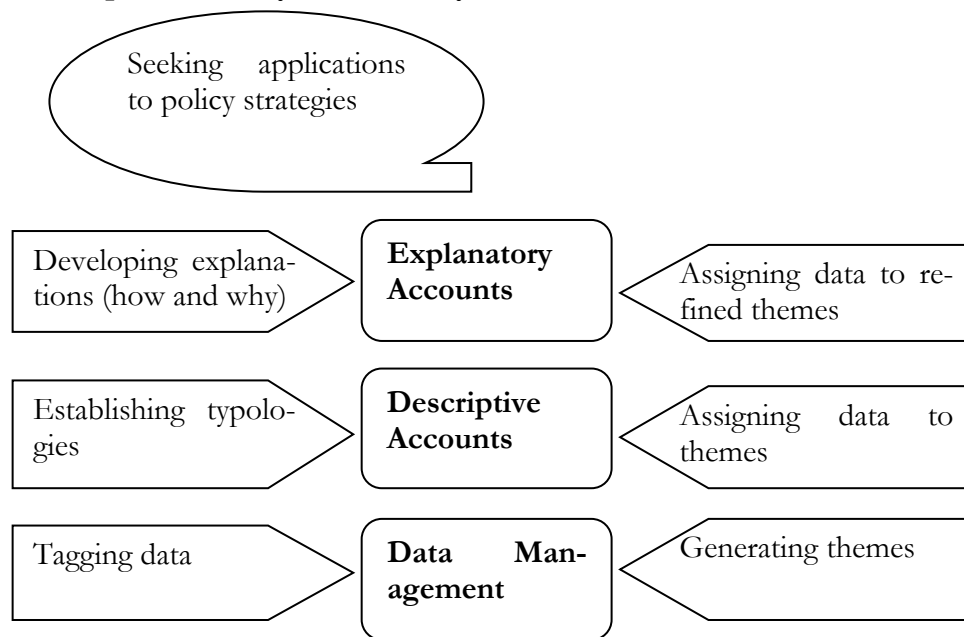
(February 2009- August 2013), Senator David Coltart, one official in the Directorate of Secondary Education and the DEO.

Data Analysis

The dominant discourse in the literature is the manifestation of poor working conditions driving teachers to adopt unruly practices, high school dropouts, political persecution and mass exodus of teachers, poor performance in national public examinations and the piecemeal response of the government in addressing the challenges. All these factors point to a diminishing access and quality of education.

In the process of analysis, I consciously focused on the literature, empirical studies and primary data. I was curious to see if my findings confirmed or refuted the literature reviewed. I used the thematic approach based on the two pillars of enabling policy and school environment as enunciated in Tikly’s framework of quality education defined in chapter 2. Below, I summarise my data analysis process.

Map 1 The Analytic Hierarchy



Source: Author’s summary of Spencer ‘et al.’ (2003: 212)

Ethical Considerations

I sought permission from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) in Harare to carry out my study. I booked appointments with all my respondents so that they could fit my research into their plans. Before any interview, I started by explaining the thrust of the study, importance of research in informing relevant policy formulation and emphasized that their views were very crucial. However, I was cautious not to seem to be promising something to them. I also told the respondents that their participation was purely voluntary and were free to opt out whenever they felt like doing so. Constantly, I reminded the participants that their identity and contributions would be treated with utmost privacy and confidentiality. I took all these steps

to ensure that respondents gave informed consent. “Informed consent implies that participants are competent, autonomous, involved voluntarily, not deceived, not coerced and not induced” (O’Leary 2014: 64). For out of school children, I sought consent from both the children and their parents. As for children I interviewed at school, I got consent from the children and the school head. For interviews I recorded, I sought consent first.

Reflexivity

Mount Darwin is my district of origin and I believe participants felt they were talking to one of them not a stranger. I was confronted with four roles of a former teacher, parent, former non-governmental organisation (NGO) worker and a researcher. As a former teacher, I could sympathise with teachers; as a parent and a former NGO worker I would be bitter about teachers’ unruly practices; and yet as a researcher I was supposed to be neutral and objective. However, subjectivity is a reality and “objectivity is never a given” in research (O’Leary 2014: 51). Throughout the data collection, I consciously reminded myself to elevate the role of a researcher and downplay the others. In fact, I capitalised on my experience as a former teacher and former NGO worker to establish rapport with my participants.

Limitations of the Study

Two schools are a small sample in a district that comprises 40 secondary schools and I am cautious to infer that my study was reflective of the whole district, let alone Zimbabwe. The sample size and the two methods of purposive and snowball sampling may not guarantee representativeness. However, I believe that the core principle of qualitative research is not representativeness but “rich understanding that may come from the few rather than the many. Such studies are reliant on the ability of the researcher to argue the ‘relativeness’ of any sample (even a single case) to a broader context” (O’Leary 2014: 186). It took me two weeks to get an approval from the Ministry’s headquarters in Harare. The period I collected data coincided with school mid-year examinations and both teachers and students were busy and thus limited the number of interviews. However, I managed to do some of the interviews after hours. Due to its political polarisation, the district is difficult to research especially if you are stranger. For instance, some teachers suspected that I was on a spying mission to see if they were complying with the new policy directives announced by the Minister. One of the school heads called me in October to check if I was really studying in The Netherlands.

Structure of the paper

The paper comprises five chapters. Chapter 1 is an overview of the study and chapter 2 provides the conceptual framework for the study. In the third chapter, I zero down to the details of the crisis as enunciated in the available literature. Chapter 4 presents and analyses findings of the study. The fifth chapter infers policy implications of the findings and concludes the paper.

Chapter 2 Conceptualising Quality, Access, Teachers and Unruly Practices

My focus on quality education is informed by the fact that past campaigns like the ‘Universal Primary Education by 2015’ were primarily concerned with quantitative access to education without any explicit reference to quality. However, it is most likely that quality of education is a key determinant factor for the achievement of universal participation (UNESCO 2004: 28). “Quality determines how long children stay in school and how regularly they attend. Parents decision to send children to school depends on judgements they make about the quality of teaching and learning provided” (ibid.).

2.1 Access and Quality: Two sides of the same coin

Access and quality of education are twin concepts that can hardly be separated. On one hand, access to education is premised on the principles of Education for All (EFA) and Inclusive Education. “The fundamental principle of EFA is that all children should have the opportunity to learn while that of Inclusive Education emphasises the need for all children to have the opportunity to learn together.” (Susan Peters quoted in UNESCO 2005:29). Thus, enrolment, attendance and completion rates are key determinants of access to education.

On the other hand, there is no universal definition of quality education. UNICEF (2000:3) defines quality education in terms of healthy learners, safe and well equipped environments, relevant curriculum, child-centred teaching and learning and outcomes that are in line with national development goals. UNESCO (2004:17) views quality education in two facets of “learners’ cognitive development and the role of education in promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and nurturing creative and emotional development”. The two definitions by the two UN agencies are in line with the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and the EFA Campaign.

It is worthwhile to note that the World Bank Group provides another perspective of quality education. It agitates for “more textbooks and instructional material, a renewed commitment to academic standards, principally through strengthening examination systems, greater investment in the maintenance of physical facilities and lowering of teachers salaries” Brock-Utne (2000: 49). Whilst I would concur with the other attributes, lowering teachers’ salaries is probably a misplaced agitation for the Zimbabwean context as teachers still play a critical role. Zimbabwe is gradually embracing the exploits of a digitalised world but to expect technology to replace teachers in the near future could be too far-fetched. For now, quality of education in Zimbabwe can be restored by improving teachers’ working conditions in terms of salaries, working hours,

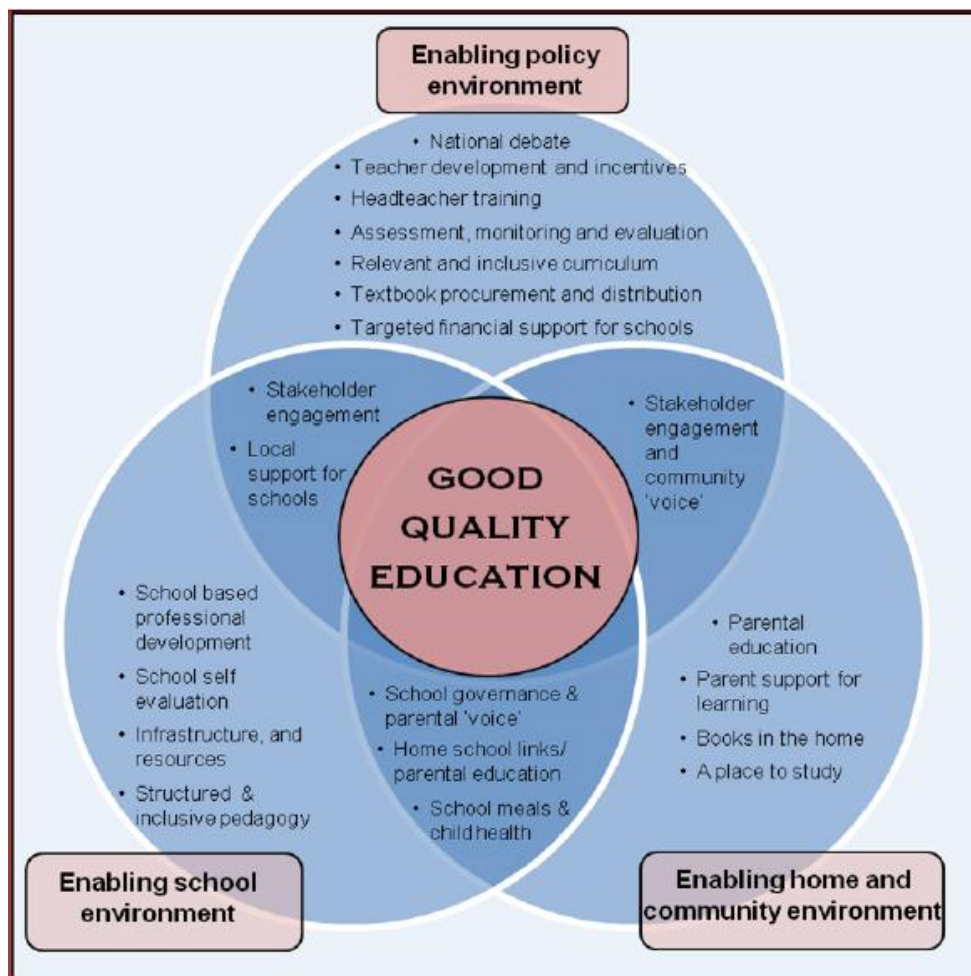
work load and class size (ibid: 50), among other strategies. Nevertheless, I am inclined to the framework developed by Tikly of EdQual² as it is the most comprehensive of all.

Inspired by the Social Justice Approach, EdQual defines quality education as below:

A good quality education is one that enables all learners to realise the capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance wellbeing. The learning outcomes that are required vary according to context but at the end of the basic education cycle must include threshold levels of literacy and numeracy and life skills including awareness and prevention of disease (Tikly 2010: 13).

Tikly takes a step further to develop a comprehensive framework of quality education as illustrated below:

Figure 1 Quality of education framework



Source: Leon Tikly (2010)

² A Research Programme Consortium on Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries led by University of Bristol and funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID)

The above framework draws and extends insights from the human capital and human rights approaches and emphasises the importance of voice and participation (ibid.). The same approach is inspired by Sen's Capability Approach that perceives education as a gateway to other opportunities for both individuals and society at large (ibid.). The process further asserts that quality education is not reducible to outcomes like numeracy and literacy but should include other capabilities such as autonomy, critical thinking and emotional intelligence (Walker 2006 cited in Tikly 2010: 12). In the same line of argument, capabilities of quality education depend on the context and are determined through public debate instead of being predetermined (ibid.). Taking cognisance of the fact that schools can deprive capabilities by reproducing inequalities, Fraser infers that there are institutional and structural barriers that impede the realisation of human capabilities (Fraser 2007: 20-22). Thus EdQual conception of quality education is anchored on the three pillars of inclusion, relevance and democracy (Tikly 2010: 13). Firstly, inclusive education removes barriers and ensures that all learners achieve desired outcomes. Secondly, relevant education is geared towards "sustainable livelihoods and wellbeing of all learners defined by their communities and compliant to national development priorities" (ibid.). Third and lastly, a democratic education is underpinned on public debate to ensure accountability (ibid.). Consequently, a good quality education is determined by the overlapping interface of the three environments of policy, school and home/community (ibid.).

The above framework guided me to ask questions that are relevant to the concept of quality education. It also enabled me to take cognisance of what aspects to watch out for when observing the school environment. In this study I concentrate on the two environments of school and policy. It is through the framework that I managed to assess the level of government support to schools, the state of infrastructure, professional status of teachers and their level of motivation, textbook ratios and the status of schools supervision. I was thus able to see how the crisis threatened quality education.

2.2 Social Exclusion, Unruly Practices and Street-Level Bureaucracy

In this section, I discuss concepts that reinforce each other to explain the behaviour of teachers.

Spatial location as social exclusion

Zimbabwe is a geographic demarcation of rural and urban areas. The rural populace lives on rain-fed agriculture that is continuously being threatened by persistent drought due to climate change. Poverty in the rural areas could be more than in urban areas. 82 percent of rural parents are poor compared to 37 percent in urban areas (Chakanyuka, 'et al.' 2009: 67). Urban areas are the domain for the working class (low, medium and high income). Administratively, all state institutions are located in towns and cities making them a preserve for the urban dwellers. Hospitals and schools in urban areas are better equipped than those in rural areas. Contrary to colonial period, where exclusion was

largely racially defined, in post-colonial Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole it has become even more complex. Kabeer (2000) points out that there is inherent inadequate provisioning for rural areas by governments.

In Zimbabwe rural schools were hardest hit by the crisis and that was compounded by lack of government support. Rurality at its own is an economic disadvantage that requires the government to intervene with a redistribution remedy to close the gap (ibid.). Rural schools have small revenue as they charge paltry fees which the parents still struggle to raise. Gore believes that “exclusion is not something that ‘just happens’”. Social exclusion is precisely a practice of the more powerful which structures the possible field of action for the less powerful” (1994:14). Gore further advises that exclusion can be comprehensively analysed not in terms of the victims but the social institutions (ibid: 15). However, when the state institutions responsible for redistribution of resources to the disadvantaged rural schools fail to do so they perpetrate social exclusion as the children cannot realise their full potential (Kabeer 2000:87).

Unruly practices: A response to the crisis and manipulation of the system

‘Unruly practices’ is a mechanism of exclusion coined by Fraser (1989) to refer to the gap between rules and implementation in public provisioning (Kabeer 2000: 92). Fraser developed the concept as critique to the United States of America (USA) welfare system that was based on ‘politics of need interpretation’ to design programmes along masculine (workforce) and feminine (household) subsystems (1989: 151). In the ‘masculine’ social insurance schemes beneficiaries were rights-holders whilst those in the ‘feminine’ were labelled ‘clients of public charity’, ‘welfare mothers’ and members of ‘failed’ families (ibid: 153). Fraser blames the state for a gender-blind welfare system that “does not honour women but stigmatizes, humiliates and harasses them” (ibid.). Fraser further posits that justice “requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life. Overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalised obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction” (2007:22). Principally, public provision of social services like education and health is expected to meet social needs and get rid of social exclusion in the community but there is often deviation from this mandate (Kabeer 2000: 93). In his critique of Sen’s legal positivism, Gore argues that it is fallacious to assume that “public goods and services are strictly allocated according to bureaucratic and administrative rules” (1993:442) as moral rules take centre stage. Unruly practices are a common manifestation in both education and health sectors.

A study of health service in two poor rural districts of Uganda discovered that ‘assistants’ whose qualifications were unknown attended to patients and prescribed drugs that were unavailable (Lucas and Nuwagaba 1999:33). Drugs were illegally sold to private providers, there were numerous demands for cash from staff in the guise of cost recovery and there was lack of effective monitoring and auditing (ibid.). The people incurred high costs in illicit payments and purchase of drugs from private facilities (ibid.). Quality of service at public health centres was determined by amount of illegal fee that was demanded by the health workers before patients could be attended to (ibid.). The malpractice

brewed mistrust and suspicion between the community and the health providers.

A study of the Indian public education sector also unearthed unruly practices. Wayward teachers' behaviour like deliberate absenteeism, drunkenness on duty and forcing children to supply them with liquor, corporal punishment and using children for errands and domestic chores compromised access to and quality of education (PROBE Team 1999). The study indicates that teachers were agents of exclusion through social discrimination of lower caste children as they were systematically labelled dull and inferior (ibid.). The PROBE Team also discovered that Indian public schools had inadequate and dilapidated infrastructure, multi-grade teaching due to teacher shortage, high pupil-teacher ratio and gender bias (ibid.). The findings of the PROBE Team reflect badly on the quality of education in India. Yet teachers' trade union predominantly engages on the salaries and working conditions but never uses its powers to better the needs of school children. In fact, Kabeer (2000:93) argues that the trade union capitalises on the lack of agency among parents and pupils and she suspects that is one of the reason why India has not achieved the goals of universal primary education.

Street-level bureaucracy: Teachers as 'Street Ministers of Education'

Lipsky's (1980) concept of street-level bureaucracy³ blends well with 'unruly practices' and is important to understand the conduct of teachers and other public servants.

The decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressure, effectively become the public policies they carry out...Those who stay on often grow in the jobs and perfect techniques, but not without adjusting their habits and attitudes to reflect lower expectations for themselves, clients, and the potential of public policy. Ultimately, the adjustments permit acceptance of the view that clients receive the best that can be provided under the prevailing circumstances. (Lipsky 1980: xii)

Due to discretion and relative autonomy from organisational authority, street-level bureaucrats are the centre of political controversy over public services (ibid: 4). It is clear from the above that "street-level bureaucrats often behave in ways that are not sanctioned and even violate official policy" (Hupe and Hill 2007:280). Thus street-level bureaucrats "withhold cooperation by excessive absenteeism, quitting, stealing, cheating, deliberate wasting, alienation and apathy" (Lipsky 1980:17). Meyers and Vorsanger (2003:245) assert that

Street-level bureaucrats occupy a unique, and uniquely influential, position in the implementation process. If we fail to consider how the implementation context structures the job of front-line workers, we risk assigning them credit or blame for policy outcomes that are largely

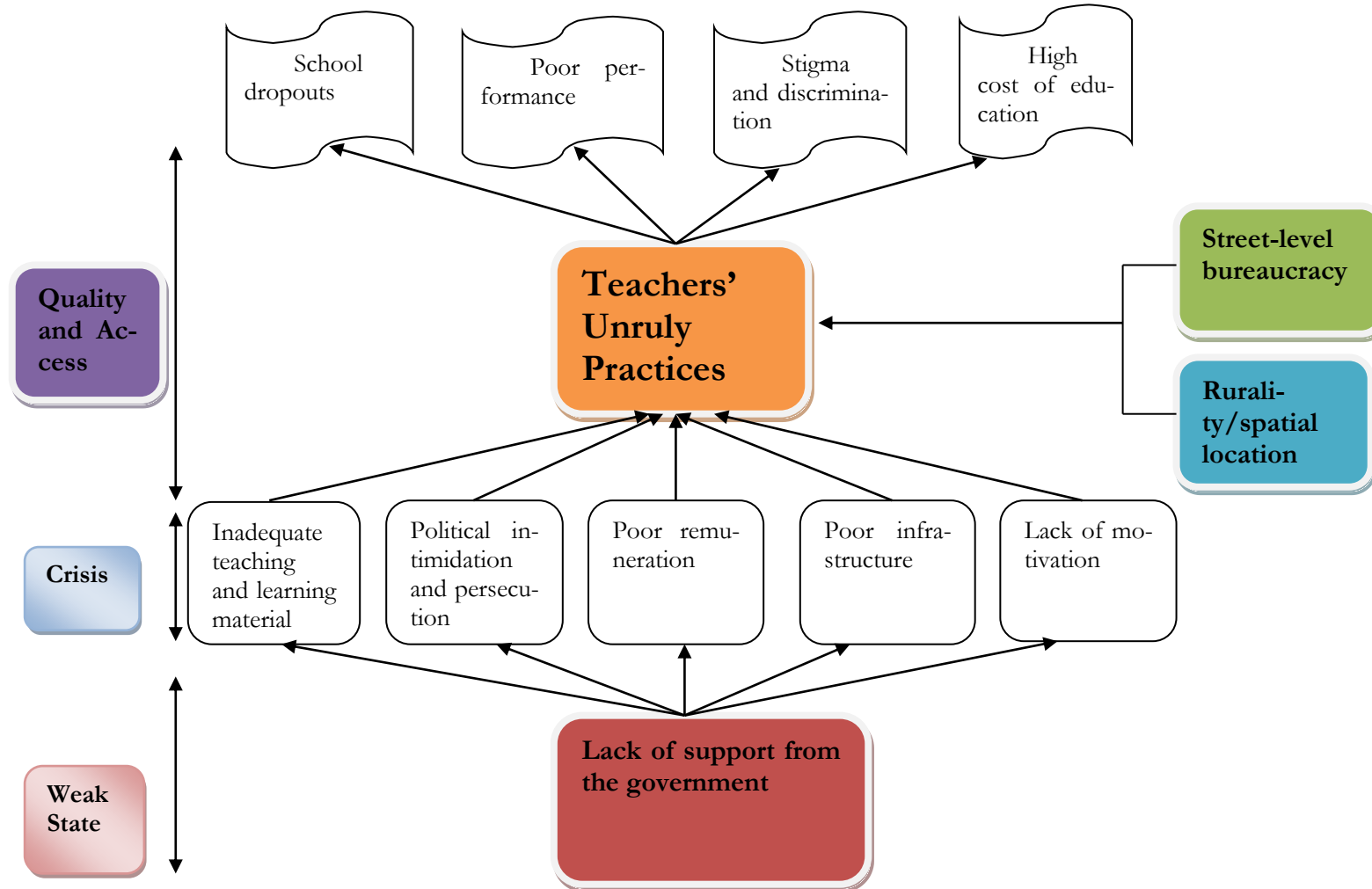
³ Street-level bureaucrats are public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work, e.g. teachers, police, social workers, judges, lawyers, health workers etc. Public service agencies that employ significant number of street-level bureaucrats are called street-level bureaucracies (Lipsky 1980: xii).

determined by features of the policy design, the organisational capacity or other implementation factors.

Hupe and Hill (2007) add a governance dimension by conceding that decisions in public policy implementation are enmeshed in multi-dimensional institutional system and multi-faceted accountability.

The concepts of street-level bureaucracy and unruly practices underpin my understanding of teachers' behaviour in schools. I get the impression that teachers are professional people who are committed to serve but the conditions of service make them to behave otherwise. The two concepts encourage me not to criminalise teachers but to understand the context of working environment at both macro and micro levels. I identified the unruly practices through observation of interaction and behaviour of both teachers and pupils with guidelines from the PROBE Team and the Uganda rural health survey. Asking teachers how they were adapting to the crisis was also a way of unearthing the unruly practices. Furthermore, I talked to children and parents about their experiences with teachers. In the next page, I attempt to map the concepts.

Map 2 Concept mapping (author's own)



Chapter 3 The Crisis and its implications on education

This chapter examines effects of the crisis on rural schools and the government response. The crisis is a defining period for the education sector. It is a litmus test for the government's obligation to provide quality education to all the children of Zimbabwe. In spite of the GNU to revive the education sector, the economy faces further challenges. There is fear that if the current trend persists, Zimbabwe might slide back to 2008, more or less. It is worrying to note that state support for education and health sectors is fast fading away. Furthermore, donors are also pulling out their support.

3.1 The Crisis and Disruption of Learning: Schools as Bases for Political Violence

Disruption of learning was the immediate and direct result of the pandemic. An inflation of 231 million percent (GoZ 2010) rendered the Zimbabwean dollar and teachers' salaries worthless (Appendix B page 49). Poor salaries and political persecution forced the teachers to flee the schools to nearby countries and overseas for greener pastures or simply "stayed away from their schools" (Mlambo 2013:372). A national study by the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) revealed that teachers were a target of political persecution because "they were suspected to sympathise with opposition; as influential figures, they were deemed to influence people to vote for opposition; and were accused of not actively supporting ZANU PF" (2011: 2). Teachers were voter educators and polling officers in elections and were thus suspected of plotting the failure of R.G Mugabe to garner at least 50.1 percent to be declared a winner (UNICEF 2008). Violence against teachers included "threats, assault, indecent assault, torture, extortion, forced displacement, property destruction and abduction" (PTUZ 2011: 3). Another study by the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) discovered that "51 percent of the teachers directly experienced political violence and intimidation, whilst 56 percent reported witnessing the same" (2012: 17). Rural teachers were forced to profess illiteracy or blindness so that they could be 'assisted' to vote for ZANU-PF as narrated below:

All teachers at St. Joseph High were forced to attend a ZANU-PF rally held at the school grounds on the 25th June 2008. The teachers were allegedly allocated a polling station where they were going to vote. They were also allocated a number in the voting queue that was going to form on the allocated polling station. At the same meeting teachers were accused of being sell-outs who contributed to the disastrous performance of ZANU-PF in the March 29 elections. This time around they were bluntly told to declare themselves illiterate so that they could be assisted in casting their votes. On election day, 27 June, teachers, their family members and maids were force marched from the school cottage to the polling station (PTUZ 2011: 6).

It is fascinating to note that political attacks on education in Zimbabwe could be traced to the liberation struggle against colonialism. During that era

schools provided recruiting ground for freedom fighters and were targeted by the colonial regime (Pswarayi and Reeler 2012: 2). After independence, the same politicians who fought the colonial system afford to sanction political violence in schools. The teacher in both pre and post-independence Zimbabwe is a 'political suspect' who can never be trusted by the government of the day.

In 2008, "94 percent of rural schools closed down because the teachers had fled political persecution" (ibid.). The attacks usually happened during school hours with children witnessing (ibid: 10).

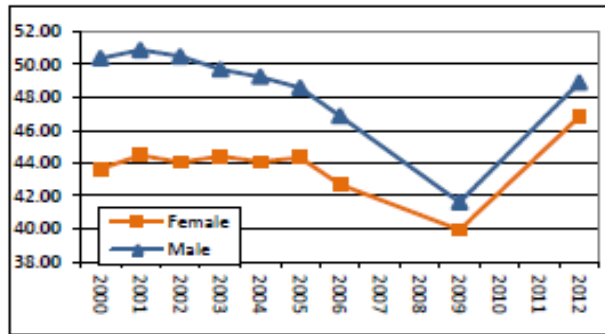
Teachers at Muzinda and Machiva schools in Zaka West Constituency were attacked by ZANU-PF youths led by the losing ZANU-PF local government election for a ward in the constituency. On this tragic day, the 2nd June 2008, teachers who were voter educators were accused of campaigning for the MDC. The attack resulted in one teacher, Taurai Gwenzzi (not real name) severely injured and hospitalised at St. Anthony's Mission Hospital. Teachers at Muzinda, Machiva, Judea and Dzororo schools deserted the schools from the 2nd of June and only came back after run-off elections... (PTUZ 2011: 8).

Teachers in Zimbabwe are aware that politicians use education as an instrument for political change that fuels political intolerance adversely affecting school operations (Kurasha and Chiome 2013: 92). Quality education is unattainable when violence takes precedence in schools. Teachers lament that "the politics of the day is taking the steam out of the teachers" (ibid.). Between 2007 and 2008, 20000 teachers left the service due to political persecution and hyperinflation that made them destitute (MoESAC 2011: xv). For teachers who remained in schools morale was at its lowest ebb and by end of 2008 only 20% of children were attending school compared to 85% in late 2007 (Mlambo 2013:373). If only 20% of children in the whole country were attending school then it implies that almost no children were in schools in the rural areas given the precarious political environment. In 2009, The Zimbabwe Teachers Association (ZIMTA) warned that the education sector faced imminent collapse due to "critical shortage of teachers, teaching and learning materials, poor remuneration and low morale" (Sokwanele 2008 cited in Mlambo 2013: 372). A UNICEF report noted that the country's poor economic situation had negatively affected school attendance and the education system was characterized by "low enrolment rates, declining attendance and completion rates, a low transition rate to secondary schools and insufficient learning spaces, shortage of teachers and learning materials" (2008: 4). By March 2009, two months after schools were officially re-opened, more than 80 percent of rural schools remained closed and the 2008 public examination results had not been marked and published (ibid). Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies ascertained that the year was irrecoverable in terms of learning and it remains a huge gap in the education of Zimbabwe's children (ibid.).

Secondary participation rates: Sharp decline

The graph below shows the Gross Enrolment Rate for secondary schools from 2000 to 2012.

Figure 2 Secondary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER)



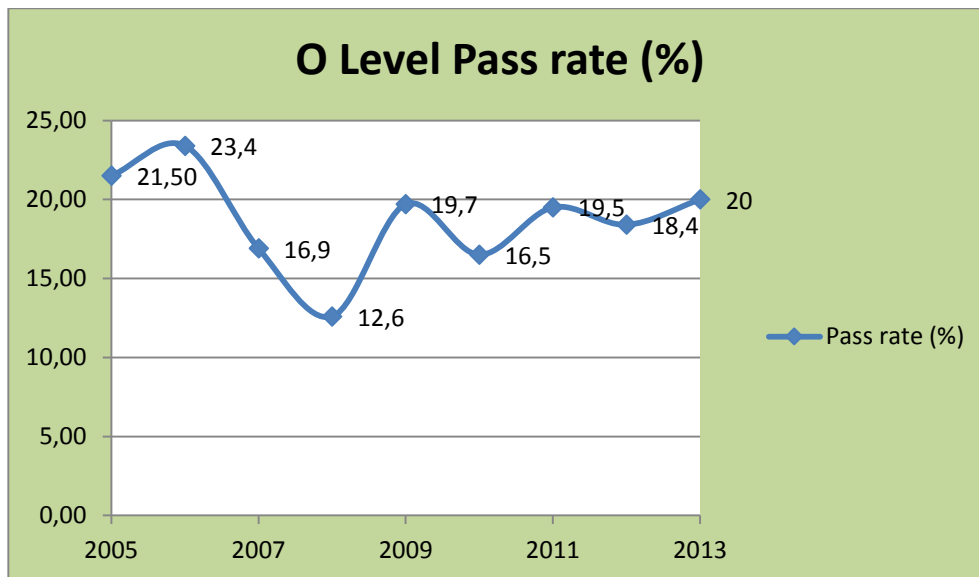
Source: MoESAC 2013

Participation rate steadily declines from the year 2000 to 2005. There is a sharp decline between 2006 and 2009 which is an indication that the three years were the worst for the education sector. 2009 was the worst as secondary school participation dropped to below 42 percent. However, it recovers by almost 8 percent (MoESAC 2013) from 2010 to 2012 and that is attributable to the efforts made by the GNU to resuscitate the sector.

The attempt by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party to penetrate rural areas, a traditional stronghold for the ruling party, outraged ZANU PF party resulting in serious inter-party conflicts. In contrast, urban areas were predominantly opposition and thus largely politically stable during that period. Consequently, rural schools failed to attract qualified staff and relied on contracted temporary teachers thereby compromising efficiency and quality (Pswarayi and Reeler 2012:15). This translated to poor results in public examinations with some of the rural schools registering a zero percent pass rate. The illustration below shows the national ‘O’ level pass rates for the period 2005-2013⁴.

⁴ Ordinary Level refers to the first public examinations for the first four years in secondary school

Figure 3 National 'O' Level Pass Rates 2005-2013



Source: author's elaboration of MoESAC (2011) and ZNCWC (2012) records

The graph depicts the gravity of performance in national public examinations. It is interesting to note that “in the past 14 years, more than three million pupils sat for Ordinary(O) Level in Zimbabwe, and of these only 470 000 passed.” (Guchu 2014). ‘O’ level is crucial as it determines progress to Advanced (A) Level, tertiary institutions or employment. 2008 is a lost year for particularly the rural children. The low national pass rates for Ordinary Level public exams are blamed on rural schools that perform dismally. There is lack of appreciation of the fact that the high rate of failure is attributable to the crisis. Principally, children who failed the exams are a ‘lost’ generation who need to be redeemed by a second chance to education. The implication of poverty for such children, their families and future generations is vicious. Carol Bellamy, Chair of the Global Partnership for Education provides a great insight when she said, “In a crisis, education is the strongest investment that can be made to reduce poverty” (quoted in Pswarayi and Reeler 2012:2).

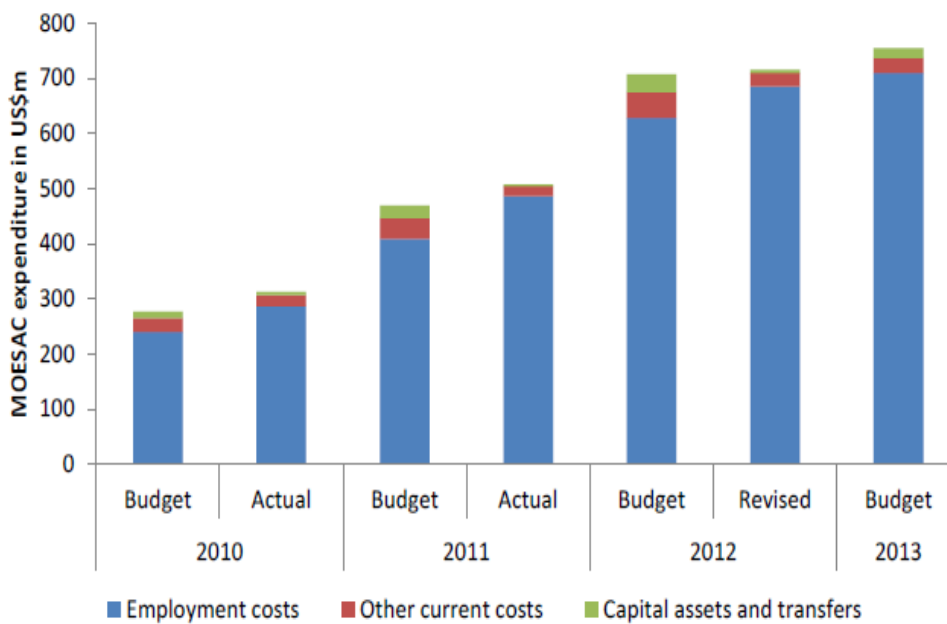
3.2 Legal and Policy Framework: Appealing on paper

The political impasse of 2008 was resolved by the formation of a government of national unity (GNU) through the Global Political Agreement (GPA) facilitated by the then President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki. The GNU lasted from January 2009-July 2013 and some frantic efforts were made to address the challenges bedeviling the education sector.

Fiscal commitment to education: Lack of political will

Although there was noted economic and fiscal recovery between 2009 and 2011, investment in basic services particularly education and health is very low (MoESAC 2013:1). Below is an illustration of the state of expenditure on education.

Figure 4 MoESAC budget and actual expenditure by economic item in million US\$



Source: MoESAC 2013

The budget for education has increased significantly since 2009 but unfortunately 92-98 percent was gobbled by salaries between 2010 and 2012 (ibid). In 2011, education constituted 25 percent of the total government expenditure and 27 percent of the 2013 budget (ibid.). Of the total 200 000 civil servants in 2012, 116 000 were MoESAC employees (ibid: 5). In spite of this, MoESAC is not prioritised in capital budget and, for instance, it only got 6 percent of the government capital investment in 2011 (ibid). It is also critical to note that 50 percent of the non-salary costs are from the multi-donor funded Education Transition Fund (ETF) and Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) (ibid). It is critical to note that “increasing a central government budget does not automatically translate into funding for teachers, schools, textbooks, and everything else that children need” (Tomasevski 2003: 24). Thus, targeted financial support for schools is critical to enhance quality education (Tikly 2010: 19).

Working conditions and Motivation of teachers: ‘Live within your means’

The year 2008 grounded teachers’ motivation to the lowest level ever. “Teachers became susceptible to corruption, sold school property, books, computers and forced children to pay for ‘extra’ lessons” (*The Standard* 2013). When David Coltart took over as the Minister of Education in February 2009, almost all schools were closed, 20 000 teachers had quit the profession between 2007 and 2008, 90 000 teachers were on strike and public examinations of the previous year had not been marked (*NewsDay* 2013). Upon the adoption of the multi-currency system in 2009 and inception of the GNU, teachers and majority civil servants began to receive a salary of USD100 per month (MoPSE

2013). Whenever, teachers threatened to strike for better remuneration, they were constantly reminded by the government to ‘live within their means’. In one of the studies, teachers revealed that “financial rewards commensurate with economic realities must accompany the idea of quality education” (Kurasha and Chiome 2013: 88). The treasury failed to pay decent salaries and the then Minister of Education called upon parents to pay teachers incentives as a supplement of their meagre salaries. The stop-gap measure was introduced to motivate teachers back to work. The financially affluent private schools managed to retain their teachers through incentives while poor urban and rural schools struggled. Incentives potentially generated conflict between teachers and parents and divided rural and urban teachers.

Kurasha and Chiome found out that the following factors have a bearing on quality of education in Zimbabwean schools:

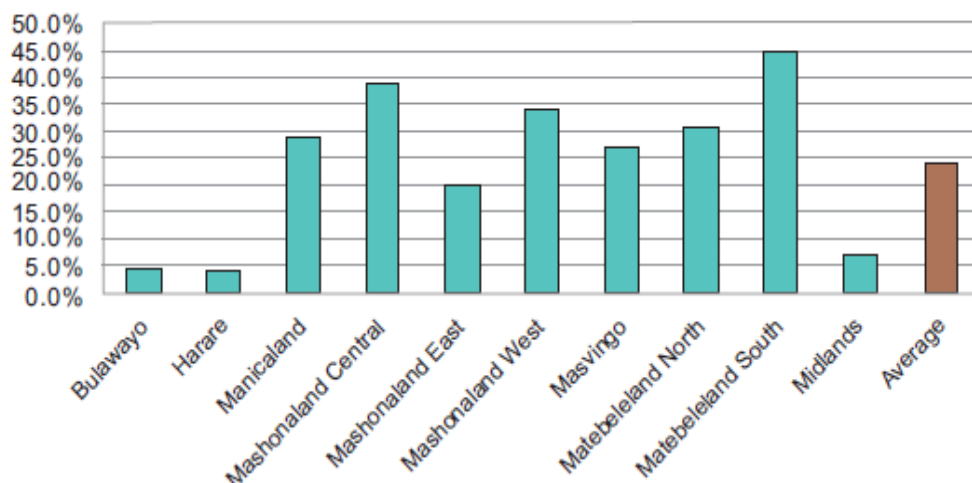
poor remuneration; poor working conditions; lack of teacher retention; shortage of resources; administrative shortcomings; absenteeism; lack of a shared vision; lack of strategic thinking; lack of professional development; no research based innovations; non-use of ICT to achieve excellence; hostile political environment; and lack of cluster governance of schools (2013: 88-92).

A study by Chireshe and Shumba is also consistent with the above findings (2011: 4-5). Teacher development and incentives (Tikly 2010: 19) are lacking in rural schools making them disabling environments for quality education.

Professional status of teachers: More untrained teachers for rural schools

The greatest brain drain experienced by the education sector resulted in many unqualified and under-qualified teachers recruited to fill the void. By 2010, 19 732 temporary teachers were employed constituting 17 percent of the teaching personnel (MoESAC 2011:9) as shown by graph below.

Figure 5 Percentage of temporary teachers by province

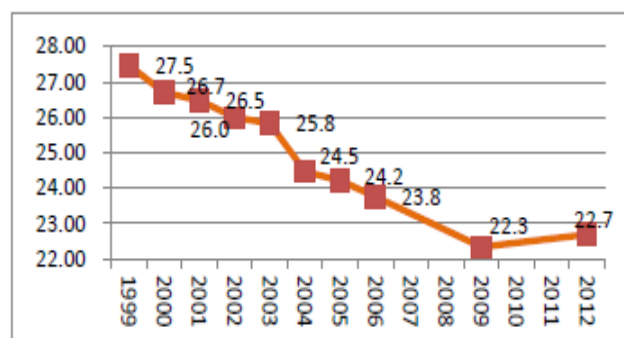


Source: MoESAC 2011

Temporary teachers are ‘O’ and ‘A’ level graduates who have not yet received any tertiary education. The Ministry of Education employ them to countervail the shortage of qualified teachers. Worryingly, the great majority of them were in rural schools as reflected above. Untrained teachers are a recipe for poor quality education and reduce education to nothing short of “merely filling spaces called ‘schools’ with children...” (UNESCO 2004: 29). Teachers’ education, training and experience are crucial for students’ achievements (Tikly 2010: 14).

An amnesty declared by Coltart in 2009 enabled 15000 teachers to rejoin the service (Gweshe 2013). To date, there are around 109 000 teachers in service and a teacher gets an average salary of USD400 per month against a poverty datum line of USD540 (*NewsDay* 2013). In 2009, it was agreed between teachers’ trade unions and the government that teachers who quit the profession at the height of the crisis would be extended unconditional re-entry. Practically, the Public Service Commission (now known as the Civil Service Commission under the new Constitution) applies stringent conditions on re-admission of the applicants. Recently, the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Lazarus Dokora revealed that Zimbabwe secondary schools are short of more than 1 500 Science and Mathematics teachers (Torubanda 2014). According to the Minister, the subjects are strategic to the development of the country (*ibid.*) and the two provinces of Matebeleland and Midlands are the hardest hit with a vacancy rate of more than 55 percent (*ibid.*). The shortage is attributable to brain drain during the crisis period when teachers left for greener pastures abroad. Ironically, there were about 3000 qualified teachers whose applications for readmission were being withheld, by time of this study (*The Herald* 2014a). While schools face critical shortage of qualified teachers, the CSC restricts the re-employment of such teachers. Apparently, it takes 6 to 12 months for a teacher to be readmitted, firstly on temporary grounds and then only applies for permanent contract after two years (*ibid.*). Currently there are close to 15 000 unqualified teachers in Zimbabwe (Tshuma 2014). It is baffling to note that the government perceives teachers who left the service during the crisis as unpatriotic and thus frustrates them when they apply for re-entry. The graph below illustrates falling pupil to teacher ratio.

Figure 6 Secondary teacher to pupil ratio

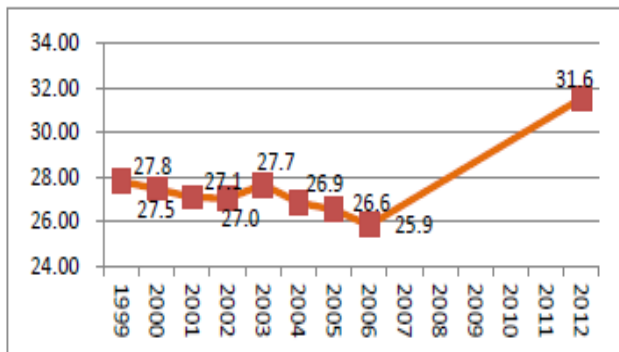


Source: MoESAC 2013

Ironically, the decline was not due to increase in teachers but rather decrease in enrolment due to the crisis. Again, 2009 is the worst and there is a

slight gain from 2010 to 2012. 1:30 is the standard ratio for secondary schools (school files).

Figure 7 Secondary qualified teacher to pupil ratio



Source: MoESAC 2013

The illustration above shows a sharp decline in the number of qualified teachers from 2006 to 2012. This portrays the crisis period when the education sector was hit by brain drain and decrease in enrolment of teachers at teachers' colleges when the country was mired in hyperinflation and economic melt-down (MoESAC 2013). The shortage is severe for Science and Mathematics and in Mashonaland Central Province majority of Mathematics and Science teachers are temporary and unqualified teachers (ibid).

Education Transition Fund (ETF): Donor-funded and donor-driven

In September 2009, the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture (MoESAC) launched ETF. The ETF is a “multi-donor pooled fund, managed by UNICEF and seeks to support the Government of Zimbabwe in delivering education services by providing teaching and learning materials and technical assistance to the MoESAC”. (UNICEF 2011:3). To date, the fund has procured and delivered a total of 22 million textbooks for both primary and secondary schools (ibid.). 7 million textbooks and storage cabinets were delivered to secondary schools in six subject areas of English, Shona, Mathematics, History, Geography and Science (ibid.). This was a ‘landmark’ development especially that pupil: textbook ratio was 1:9 on average (Chakanyuka, ‘et al.’ 2009) before the intervention. School Development Committees (SDCs) were trained in school governance. Secondary schools also received laboratory kits to support the teaching of science subjects like Chemistry, Physics and Biology (MoESAC 2013). Through the same fund, schools were promised annual school improvement grants (SIGs) from donors (MoESAC 2013). With evident donor fatigue throughout the whole country, the hope of SIGs is fading away. Through ETF, only one component of quality education was partly addressed, that is, teaching and learning material. Teachers remain bitter that their concerns are being sidelined.

Constitutional obligations: Rhetoric promises

According to the Constitution of Zimbabwe, “the state must take all practical measures to promote free and compulsory basic education for children,

higher and tertiary education. The state must take measures to ensure that girls are afforded the same opportunities as boys to obtain education at all levels". (GoZ 2013: 22). The constitution further declares that every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe is entitled to state-funded basic education (ibid: 37). The Education Act also stresses that no child shall be denied admission to any school or be discriminated on the grounds of race, class, ethnic background, gender, political opinion, colour, tribe and place of origin (GoZ 1987). With demoralised teachers and lack of support from the government, rural schools are far from meeting the most basic standards for quality and equity (UNESCO 2008).

Education Medium Term Plan (EMTP) 2011-2015: Riding on the hopes of donor funding

Upon the inception of the GNU, the ministry of education came up with the Education Medium Term Plan (EMTP) 2011-2015 whose overall goal is to "revitalise the provision of relevant, quality, inclusive and holistic education, sport, arts and culture for all Zimbabweans in line with the MDG targets by 2015"(MoESAC 2011: 14). The top four priorities are "Restore the professional status of teachers; Revitalise learning quality and relevance; Restore and improve conditions of learning; and Quality Assurance and Staff Development" (ibid: xi). It is important to note that the EMTP is quite comprehensive as it is anchored on the context of a crisis-hit education sector. However, it was designed in anticipation of funding from donors not the government. Donors began to pull out in 2012. Without political will to fund education, the hopes and aspirations expressed in the EMTP are dashed.

Conclusion

The 2008 crisis subjected teachers to political violence, worthless salaries and poor working conditions subsequently degrading the once revered profession. The sector was hit by the greatest brain drain and most of the rural schools closed. Parents had to meet the costs of education for their children while failure to do so would result in school drop outs. Incentives overburdened the rural parent. The GNU attempted to restore sanity but its efforts were dependent on donor funds. Quality of education is still contentious and access is questionable in the face of increasing dropouts. Majority of trained teachers are now in urban areas while rural schools are manned by a majority of untrained ones. Not much has been done to improve the motivation of rural teachers.

Chapter 4 Unlocking the unruly practices and lived experiences of the crisis in schools and communities

This chapter answers the three questions on strategies developed by teachers to adapt to the crisis, how parents' and children's quest for quality education is affected by those strategies and the government's response. I divide my findings into themes that I derive from Tikly's framework for quality education (2010). In the analysis, there is infusion of both primary and secondary data.

4.1 Poor remuneration and lack of motivation: 'Pay us peanuts and we behave like monkeys'

Teachers feel that they are getting a raw deal from the government. During a national strike led by teachers in 2012, a placard read, "Pay us peanuts and we behave like monkeys" (*The Sunday Mail* 2012), Appendix A, page 48. It is difficult to imagine what happens to children when a teacher behaves like a monkey. When a teacher is frustrated by a paltry salary the repercussions are felt by the students. Confronting the government for better working conditions has not paid significant dividends as the treasury insists on bankruptcy. The teacher, consciously or sub-consciously or as a matter of frustration, adopts unruly practices to adjust to the crisis. I do not seek to blame or incriminate teachers for I believe unruly practices are symptomatic of a broken-down system. Apparently, the government is struggling to meet payroll and pay dates are erratic further exacerbating the teachers' situation.

Incentives: A necessary evil but burden to parents?

This was a mechanism introduced in 2009 by the then Minister of Education, David Coltart, to motivate teachers to go back to work against a backdrop of a salary of USD100 per month. Parents were thus expected to pay the teachers an incentive to supplement their little wage. It was a stop gap measure that would be stopped after teachers' salaries were improved (Senator Coltart). The Ministry allowed schools to deduct 10 percent of school levies paid by parents to pay teachers as incentives (MoESAC 2009). This was open to abuse as some schools deducted more than 10 percent thereby crippling the functionality of schools (MoPSE 2014a). Children were sent back home for non-payment and BEAM funds were used to pay teachers' incentives. Sending away children for non-payment of fees increased dropouts. Teachers in urban and private schools benefited more than rural teachers. This is one of the reasons why qualified teachers are now concentrated in urban areas. In a national work boycott of September 2009, one of the teachers declared, "If government will not pay us then the students will have to pay for the lessons because we cannot

toil for the whole month for just USD150, it is a waste of time” (*The Zimbabwean* 2009).

Incentives are a key component of an enabling policy environment (Tikly 2010) and without them teachers are bound to underperform and compromise quality of education. The bitterness I witnessed from teachers could be a warning that the situation in schools may further worsen as teachers get less and less committed to work.

Extra lessons: fleecing parents for extra income

Due to hyperinflation and worthless salaries in 2008, teachers devised extra lessons to earn extra income. The major worry about extra lessons is that teachers deliberately underperform during the school term so that they fleece parents of additional income for extra lessons during the holidays⁵. Not all of the rural folk could pay for extra lessons in cash, thus some children brought foodstuffs like maize grain and sugar beans. Parents were also distressed but they had to sacrifice the little they had to ensure that their children were educated. Charged extra lessons were not officially permitted by the Ministry of Education. Despite warnings from the government to stop the unruly practice, teachers persisted. Even with the inception of the multi-currency system in 2009, the extra lessons saga rages on as teachers are still disgruntled with their salaries. Issues of salary and conditions of service are prominent in education governance debates and salary level determines who enters the profession (UNESCO 2008: 171).

Moonlighting: Loss of learning time for the class

One of the parents vividly recalled what happened in schools and narrated:

It was a common practice in schools to find teachers running their ‘enterprises’ during working hours especially between 2007 and 2010. Children lost considerable learning time as teachers got pre-occupied with their ‘small businesses’ some of which were done within the school premises. Teachers brought items like sweets and stationery that they sold to children and some children had to buy in anticipation of preferential treatment. Teachers even ‘employed’ children to sell their items in return for preferential treatment (parent).

A teacher said, “I got a piece of land in the community where I am growing tobacco. That piece of land is my source of livelihood not the pittance I get from the government. Much of my time is on farming because at least the project enables me to send my children to school” (teacher school A).

The two narratives are indicative of the fact children lose precious time of learning as teachers concentrate on ‘other businesses’. In such circumstances, the value of education depreciates remarkably.

⁵ There are 3 one-month holidays in the Zimbabwean school calendar

4.2 Schools Monitoring and Supervision: A missing link

Effective assessment, monitoring and evaluation of quality are critical (Tikly 2000). The two school heads could hardly recall when they last got a visit from the district education officials showing that schools are hardly visited for supervision. Teachers are aware that it takes ages to be monitored by the district education authorities and they can afford to behave anyhow. The district education officials assume that all is well in schools unless they receive an adverse report. For instance, the DEO had no clue about corporal punishment in schools when he said:

School heads submit reports about schools. We depend on those reports because we cannot visit all the schools. Some of the schools are too far and have poor road network. If we were to visit remote schools, by the time we arrive we will be tired to conduct effective supervision. If we do not get any adverse reports we assume that all is well in our schools (DEO).

The district education authorities are over-dependent on reports from school heads. At the school that children were complaining about corporal punishment of girls, it was the head that was at the forefront of the malpractice. Other teachers were emulating the head. From my interview with the DEO, I discovered that the district education authorities were out of touch with the actual situation in schools. For my encounter with the two schools, it was not easy to get statistical records from the heads yet the Ministry requires such information to be displayed in both the head and deputy's offices. The *laissez-faire* that prevailed in the schools was an indication that there was lack of supervision.

Unscrupulous absenteeism and negligence of duty: Less time to learn and a recipe for gross indiscipline

When I got to one of the schools I got an impression that there were no teachers at the school. Children were dotted all over the place and some were even outside school premises. Teachers were in offices and seemed not to be bothered and it was not surprising to note there were problems of indiscipline at the school. The head boy complained: "Children at our school are indisciplined because our teachers are not interested in controlling them. My class loses an average of four girls per year to marriage and I blame it on teachers who lack commitment to instil discipline and order at the school" (head boy school A).

One of the teachers admitted that there were cases of children caught intimate in the school plantation and blamed it on teachers who were not playing their role. Through my conversations with both students and teachers I discovered that teachers were not dedicated to give pupils enough school work hence they could afford loitering and playing during learning hours. "The enforcement of and administration of proper school discipline is in fact a prerequisite to successful learning" (MoESAC 1999: 1). The study found out that teachers play an important role in the discipline of children and when they are not committed chaos takes precedence.

Deliberate absenteeism of teachers has been common since the crisis. Teachers could connive with doctors for a fee to get a sick leave. Once a teacher had a letter from a medical doctor, the district education authority could not object but grant the leave. During the 'faked' leave some teachers crossed the border to neighbouring countries like South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique where they bought goods for sale upon return. There were also suspicions that some teachers connived with the school heads to be allowed to be away from duty. The amount of time of learning that the children lose during the absence of a teacher is costly. At both schools, there were at least two teachers in the habit of regular absenteeism.

Improper association: Abuse of power and betraying the trust of children and parents

Improper association is intimate love affair between pupils and teachers. I reckon that this practice has been there but I realised that the crisis has exacerbated its frequency. Cases that are brought to book are only a tip of the iceberg as many go unreported. The DEO explained,

When it comes to improper association, male teachers especially the young ones are the chief culprits. When it happens the school head investigates the case and the accused teacher attends disciplinary hearings. Where there is overwhelming evidence, the accused is discharged from the service (DEO).

For all the two schools I sampled, I discovered that the unruly practice was common. It was disturbing to note that the two of the three cases cited involved the school heads. I could imagine how teachers could then behave if a school head dated a school girl. At one school, the head dated a form two girl in 2010 that he later impregnated in 2011 and she dropped out of school the same year when she was form three (parent). The head was expelled from the teaching profession in 2011 but damage was already inflicted. Today, the former head and girl are staying together as husband and wife. At the other school, the school head in 2010 dated several girls and sexually abused them. After one of the girls reported the sexual abuse, the school head disappeared and never came back (parent). There are fears that he could have infected the girls with HIV. At the same school in 2012, a male teacher was discharged from service for a sexual relationship with a form four girl (head school A). All the children I interviewed indicated that love affairs between school girls and teachers are common at the schools. Nevertheless, teachers' trade unions blame the government for lack of orientation for teachers upon deployment and lack of entertainment for the rural teacher (ZIMTA Official).

Corporal punishment: Is it a matter of discipline or frustration?

There is noted increased use of corporal punishment in schools due to weak professional leadership and lack of supervision (Chakanyuka 'et al.' 2009). The DEO said, "Corporal punishment is not allowed on girls and can only be administered on boys by the school head or someone assigned by him for cases like bullying and it is supposed to be recorded in the school's log book" (DEO).

At one of the schools, boys and girls were unhappy about the canning of girls at buttocks. A boy in form three had this to say,

Both boys and girls are beaten at the buttocks but I think it is very unfair for girls. Canning of girls at buttocks was started by the school head in 2014 but before that they were beaten on palms. Last week, one of the girls bled at the buttocks and spoilt her skirt after being canned. We are beaten even for minor issues like making noise in class. We learn in fear and we do not know where we can complain (student school B).

The practice makes the school a hostile learning environment. The policy on corporal punishment states that “Every Head should strive to cultivate a school climate where pupils will/can develop internal discipline which is not initiated by fear of punishment. Corporal punishment is an admission that the school has ultimately failed to ‘correct’ the child” (MoESAC, 1999:7). According to the instrument, corporal punishment may only be applicable in cases of insubordination, indecency or other offences of similar gravity (ibid). It further states that it is supposed to be inflicted only on boys on the buttocks with a suitable strap, cane or smooth light switch (ibid.). An official in the directorate of secondary education at head office shared this sentiment: “Principally, Ministry of Education should provide the schools with the suitable straps for corporal punishment. However, the fact that the instrument is not supplied to schools literally implies that corporal punishment is prohibited” (official head office).

The conflicting narratives indicate that there is no common position on corporal punishment in the education sector. Teachers and trade unions feel corporal punishment is a necessary tool for discipline.

Social Media: Manipulation of a broken down system

Social media has also taken its toll in schools. The discovery came to me as a surprise as it never featured in my imaginations. *WhatsApp* is a popular social platform but I was surprised to discover it was compromising teaching and learning in schools. I observed that there were teachers who were quite fanatic to *WhatsApp* to an extent that they could sacrifice working hours. At both schools, pupils lamented that there were teachers who came to class to give them assignments without doing proper lessons. Such teachers would either sit in the classroom to concentrate on *WhatsApp* or skipped lessons. Two teachers I interviewed could not concentrate because they were glued to *WhatsApp* on their smart phones. One of the students recalled how they were constantly repudiated when they challenged the practice: “Do not expect me to concentrate on teaching you when the government pays me peanuts. It is better to connect with friends and relatives on *WhatsApp* for social capital. After all, why should I waste my time on dull rural children?” (student school A).

Such a statement falls short of respect, dignity and professionalism that befit a teacher. The bottom line is that the teachers are frustrated by conditions of their service. However, they are unmindful of the fact that they are victimising innocent children who, by right, are entitled to quality education. Children lose precious time of learning to such practices. When children are lambasted by people whom they regard highly, they lose self-esteem and confidence.

4.3 Infrastructure and Resources: Is it feasible for quality education?

The issue of infrastructure and resources is very prominent in the debate for quality education. Investing on infrastructure and resources can improve learning outcomes for disadvantaged learners (Tikly 2010: 15). The biggest questions are whether the current status of rural schools promotes quality education or not and if it is justified to hold teachers accountable for poor quality if the state does not support schools with required resources and infrastructural development.

Teaching and learning material: Make the available desirable

Appropriate teaching and learning material is an important input for quality education (Tikly 2010). Whilst there are more than adequate textbooks supplied by ETF in the six subject areas of English, Shona, Geography, History, Mathematics and Science, teachers noted that most of the textbooks were too shallow. Furthermore, there are serious shortages in other subjects like Accounts, Commerce, Religious Studies, Building Studies, Agriculture and Fashion and Fabrics (F/F). At school A, a total of 156 students in forms 1 and 2 were sharing only 18 textbooks for Agriculture at a ratio of almost 1:9 (Agriculture teacher). School A did not have text books for F/F, Commerce and Accounts while School B only had teachers' copies for the same subjects (interview with student at school B). "Textbooks play an important role in raising learner achievement (Barrett, Ali 'et al.' 2007, cited in Tikly 2010: 15). Tikly (2010:15) also asserts that "textbooks are critical for supporting the teaching and learning process, particularly in disadvantaged contexts and where teacher subject knowledge is limited". UNESCO (2008) warns that shortage of textbooks promotes corruption and mismanagement thereby marginalising disadvantaged students. The two schools also lack tools and equipment for all the practical subjects and that defeat the whole purpose of a practical subject.

I also observed a severe shortage of furniture at both schools. I witnessed children sitting on windows while they were writing their mid-year tests. An average of four students squashed on a two-seater desk. The available furniture was old and some of it broken. The staff rooms at the two schools did not have furniture and teachers were using students' desks (Appendix C, page 49). UNESCO rightly points out that "If education is to be expected to help the poor to lift themselves out of poverty, then education itself needs to be lifted out of poverty" (cited in Kurasha and Chiome 2013: 89).

The importance of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to support learning in schools cannot be underestimated. School A had ten computers donated by the President in 2000. However, for the past 14 years the computers have been a white elephant because of inability to use and lack of electricity as well. I witnessed teachers struggling to operate the machines using a diesel-powered generator. School B only had two machines that were only used to run school examinations.

Infrastructure: Inadequate and dilapidated

A school needs proper and adequate infrastructure to facilitate quality education. I observed that both schools lack appropriate infrastructure. Both schools did not have separate learning units for Agriculture, Building Studies and F/F. There was a shortage of classrooms at both schools resulting in huge classes. For instance, form 1 and form 2 classes comprised 93 and 63 children respectively (teacher school A). The sizes of the classes exceeded the standard of 33 students set by the ministry. Teachers' houses lack maintenance and are not secured. At school B, 4 teachers shared a house at 1 room each and it is a huge embarrassment especially to teachers with families (teacher school B). At both schools, damaged floors, cracked walls and unfinished structures were a common sight. The state of infrastructure at both schools depicts lack of support from the government. Teachers are not happy about the state of housing and learning facilities. Tikly (2010) challenges policy makers to provide sufficient funding as disadvantaged rural schools cannot run properly without government support.

4.4 Training: 'Rural schools are for untrained teachers?'

Due to migration of teachers en masse, the two schools were dominated by temporary teachers from 2007 to 2010 because that was the only option for the Ministry of Education to fill the gap. However, temporary teachers, as mere school leavers devoid of any professional skill, received their share of blame for poor results. Temporary teachers have been replaced by degreed though untrained teachers. Untrained degreed teachers are considered better than temporary teachers by the government because they hold a professional qualification at least. In 2011, there were only 2 trained teachers including the head at school B (teacher school B). Only the head was a trained teacher at school A between 2007 and 2009. Below was the status at the time of research:

Table 1 Qualification status of teachers

| School | Trained teachers | Degreed but untrained teachers | Temporary teachers | Total |
|----------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| A | 3 | 10 | 0 | 13 |
| B | 7 | 5 | 0 | 12 |

Source: author's elaboration of school and district records⁶

Even trained teachers need refresher training for them to be abreast with demands of the day. The following statements are common among rural teachers: "We are allowed to rote in the schools without any rejuvenation. Pedagogical skills change from time to time and we must move with times. Staff development in new subjects such as HIV and AIDS is a must if quality is anything

⁶ School and district teacher qualifications files

to go by. Most of us have no skills in computer use” (Kurasha and Chiome 2013: 91)

Talking to one of the untrained degreed teacher, I realised that she was so bitter that she was in a profession that she was ashamed of:

I graduated with a BSc Honours in Psychology in 2012 at the University of Zimbabwe. I had high hopes that I could find appropriate job but never got it. I had no option but to join teaching and I was deployed to this remote and unelectrified rural school where I am teaching English to children who cannot communicate in English. I am expected to give daily work that I also mark daily and I feel overstretched. I pray that I get another job (teacher school A).

Although the Ministry of Education is commendable for engaging untrained degreed people to teach in schools, it is critical to note that such individuals only join the profession out of failure to get suitable employment. Such teachers are in transit and will quit the profession the moment they get their appropriate jobs. Commitment of such teachers to work might also be questionable. Rural children, by virtue of being rural, are disadvantaged and teachers lack school based training that is consistent with the context of rural schools. Tikly (2010) emphasizes the importance of context in teacher training. When rural schools are manned by majority untrained and unsuitably trained teachers, the nation should not expect miracles.

4.5 Lack of national policy debate: Brewing a storm

National debate is critical for quality education to be attained. Education policy needs to be informed by the context of the schools environments. However, the current Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Lazarus Dokora, is behaving otherwise. Since his appointment in September 2013, the incumbent has been accused of making unilateral and controversial policy directives. Below, I quote his response to parents who inquired about how children could be assisted to go to school amidst the economic crisis:

Parents have a responsibility to take care of their children because it's you who gave birth to these children. If you have a child, it is your responsibility to pay levy for the child. Failure to do that is criminal and I told headmasters to take such people and report them to authorities. If you are in rural areas, report to local headmen. I don't remember saying education is for free. Take that list of parents who don't want to pay to the magistrates' court so that they are called one by one and swear to God that they will pay the fees... (Matenga 2014).

In January 2014, the minister issued a moratorium which had the effect of freezing fees and levy increases for the year 2014. In the same directive, he declared that no child would be sent away for non-payment of fees and if it happened the parent was supposed to seek dialogue with the school head and make a payment plan (Matenga and Langa 2014). The minister insists on legal action against 'errant' parents. It is difficult to comprehend the justification of the legal action. Firstly, the majority rural folk are poor and cannot afford to pay school fees and levies. Secondly, the HIV/AIDS scourge is taking its toll resulting in an increasing number of OVC who require assistance from the

government to access education. Thirdly, people are rapidly losing jobs as companies close due to economic crisis. Unemployment stands at 80 percent (Tafirenyika 2014), an average of 2060 workers lost their jobs in the first half of the year 2014 and the retrenchment board handles a minimum of 100 retrenchments per week owing to viability challenges (*The Zimbabwean* 2014). Fourthly, the government did not secure funding for BEAM for 2014 and owes secondary schools USD5 million in arrears for 2013 (*The Herald* 2014b). When the government does not meet its obligations, who shall take legal action against it? Parents and other stakeholders are bitter about the move and there is fear that families will lose property through the legal action (ibid.). One of the parents reactively said “We paid incentives, practically bribed teachers to educate our children. Now we are being threatened with court action; what kind of nonsense is that?” (Nyabadza and Chabata 2014). The directive of the minister creates acrimony between teachers and parents, a situation that is bad for school governance.

The minister made another unilateral policy directive in January 2014 that cancelled vacation lessons in all schools (MoPSE 2014a). It was a common practice of teachers to prepare learners for public examinations at Grade 7, ‘O’ and ‘A’ levels during vacations for free (ibid.) However, with the advent of the crisis, teachers began to charge fees for the holiday lessons to supplement their meagre salaries. The ban enraged the teachers and there is fear that performance will drop further more. In a dramatic move, in July 2014 the minister made a u-turn by making a policy pronouncement that permitted holiday lessons for Grade 7, ‘O’ and ‘A’ levels (MoPSE 2014c). The new directive requires schools to apply for authority to conduct the lessons during August/September vacation and the lessons would be conducted free of charge (ibid.). I noted that teachers were not keen to go through the application process when they were not allowed to charge a fee.

In April 2014, the Minister of Education abolished incentives saying they were no longer relevant and had brought disharmony between parents and teachers, on one hand, and rural and urban teachers on the other hand (MoPSE 2014b). According to the policy circular, the facility was being abused as schools were exceeding the permitted 10 percent and school heads were misappropriating funds resulting in little or no development at some schools (ibid.). However, abolishing incentives without providing an alternative could be stirring a hornet’s nest. Teachers I talked to expressed disgruntlement over the ban and the move is likely to spell disastrous results in schools. One of the teachers had this to say, “As rural teachers we were not getting much as compared to our urban colleagues but that little made a huge difference. When the minister bans the incentives without improving our salaries then he should expect worse results in schools. We have been demoralised, to say the least” (teacher school A).

The inconsistency in the above highlighted policy directives reflects a lack of stakeholder consultation. Stakeholder engagement is a basic requirement for policy making. Policy instruments that are announced in the media, helter-skelter, face resistance from the concerned stakeholders. Parents are furious about being taken to court for non-payment of fees, teachers are fuming over the ban of incentives and extra lessons, teachers’ trade unions ponder on how

to confront the minister and hapless learners are trapped in the predicament. The government's unilateralism does not promote quality education as

overcoming the so-called 'implementation gap' between national policy and its implementation at the school level requires engaging with the experiences and views of teachers and head teachers, ensuring that initial and continuing professional development opportunities are consistent with the demands of new curricula and other initiatives, and providing support for schools in implementing and monitoring change (Tikly 2010:14).

4.5 The costs of unruly practices

The various unruly practices adopted by teachers had negative implications for access and quality education.

Stigma and discrimination

The Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Education officially permits children who fail public examinations and other dropouts to go back to school regardless of age. However, at both schools I found out that repeaters were discriminated by both school heads and teachers. In fact, repeaters are not welcome as they are subjected to several labels as shown by the following 'proud' narrative from one of the school heads:

I denied enrolment for two girls, one aged 23 who wanted a place for form 4 then the other one aged 20 years who wanted to be enrolled for form 2. Both are former students of this school. The 20 year old had stopped coming to school after being constantly sent away for non payment of fees. The 23 year old wanted to repeat form four since she did not pass in the first attempt. It is a risk to enrol such individuals because they have a tendency of spoiling our young conventional students (head school A).

The above referred girls are some of the many students who dropped out of the school system due to challenges imposed by the crisis. Disallowing them a second chance to education is a travesty of justice and gross violation of their right to education. Unfortunately, they were accused of all kinds of misdemeanours that they could not be readmitted. I had an opportunity to talk to a girl aged 19 who failed 'O' Level examinations in two attempts.

I sat for my 'O' level examinations first in 2012 and repeated in 2013. In each attempt I passed one subject because the school did not have textbooks until 2011. When I repeated in 2013 teachers labelled me an 'off-layer' and I was denied access to textbooks on the pretext that I could not be entrusted with school assets. Teachers were not interested in assisting me and I felt out of place. This year the school head refused to enrol me saying I have exhausted my chances. I am only 19. I will try to study at home and register again for 'O' Level examinations (former student).

This was also confirmed by two students (a boy and a girl) who were repeating form four at the two schools. The two were also being denied textbooks for the same reason yet the schools received more than enough textbooks for the six core subjects from ETF. The ill-treatment they get from teachers kills their self-esteem and confidence. In such hostility, it would be difficult for the repeaters and 'returnees' to produce the best of their perfor-

mance. Consequently, those who fail or drop out of school are hesitant to go back to school for fear of stigma, discrimination or outright rejection.

High Cost of Education: Parents overstretched

The *de facto* withdrawal of government funding of schools transferred the overall responsibility to parents. Rural parents are finding it hard to meet the costs of education of their children due to unreliable livelihood of subsistence farming. They have not been spared by the vagaries of climate change. Since the crisis, parents were expected to pay teachers incentives and extra lessons above all the other expenses of education. The peasant farmers also get a raw deal at the market as their produce is bought at very low and unsustainable prices. For instance, two of the parents I talked to were cotton growers who were bitter about low market price:

I grow cotton every year but we always get low prices. This year they are buying at 39 cents per kilogram, a price lower than last year. The price is close to nothing. I have a loan of fertiliser, seeds and chemicals that I am supposed to pay otherwise I will lose my livestock, the only assets I have. I am also supposed to pay fees for my 3 children at secondary school at USD30 each per term. I need to buy uniforms, stationery and the family needs food. The teachers expect a token of appreciation for teaching my children. Life is tough for us (parent).

According to the two school heads, it is only during the second term which coincides with the selling season for agricultural produce that parents sacrifice to pay school fees. For the first and third terms, parents would be bankrupt. The two schools charge USD30 per head per term which translates to USD90 per year for each child. For a rural peasant parent who struggles to raise a dollar to process a bucket of maize into mealie-meal, the education costs are unaffordable.

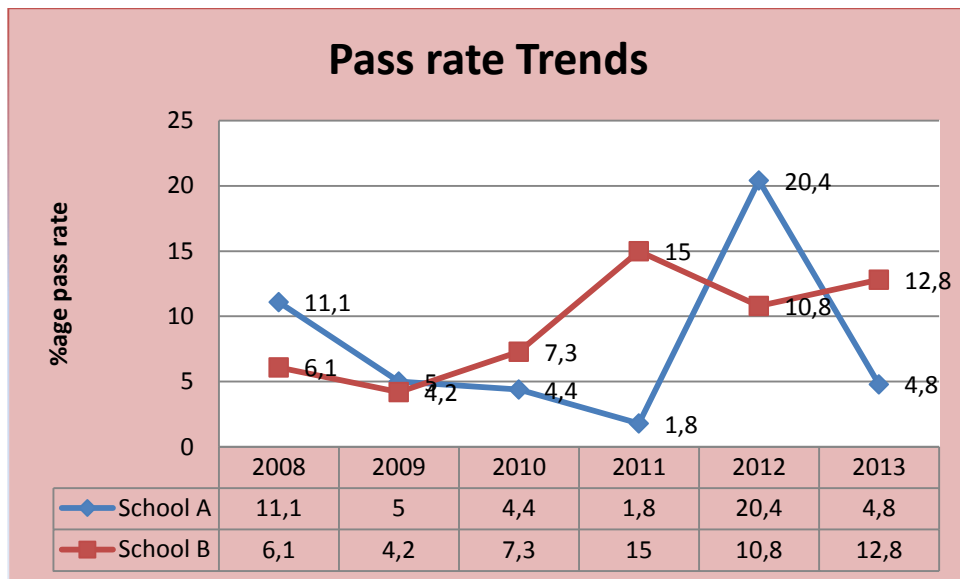
Poor and inconsistent school performance in national examinations

Poor examination results are attributable to the crisis. The former Minister of Education narrated his experience of the crisis:

We seem not to fully appreciate the damage inflicted on our children by the 2008 crisis. The whole year recorded only 27 days of teaching and learning, 20000 teachers left the profession and pupil-textbook ratio was 1:15 on average. Young children especially Grades 1 to 4 were the worst affected and literacy rates plummeted dismally for the group. Grades 1 to 4 are the basic education building blocks and when they are disturbed it is difficult to catch up at secondary school. Secondary school teachers are not trained to teach basic literacy and numeracy. These are the children who are now in secondary schools today and when they do not perform well let us remember the background. (Senator Coltart).

Below is an illustration of the two schools' performance for the past six years.

Fig 8 'O' Level Pass rates for the two schools, 2008-2013



Source: author's elaboration of school and district records⁷

The pass rates reflect crisis riddled schools and the performance could not be any better. The two heads were not comfortable to share pass rate records for 2007-2010 and instead gave ranges. I later got them from the district records and, again, the district officials were ashamed of the 2007 pass rates to the extent they only said they were between 0 and 1 percent for the two schools. (DEO).

Dropouts: Financial constraints or diminishing value of education?

The two schools also experienced high rate of school drop outs as highlighted below:

Between 2008 and 2010, over 20 pupils per year dropped out of school. The majority of the dropouts during that period were boys as they opted for menial jobs like gold panning to fend for their families at the height of the economic challenges. From 2011 to date, the trend of dropouts has changed. While dropout rate has relatively gone down, girls are now the majority of those falling out of schools. Girls are eloping to men in the community. The young men who are growing tobacco are splashing some cash and goodies to attract the girls. We now lose about 7 girls out of a total of 10 pupils per year (Head school B).

The same situation prevailed at the other school. The gender biased dropouts could be a revelation that rural areas are still patriarchal. A national rural livelihoods study by the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (Zim-VAC) discovered that 55 percent of the children were not in school due to financial constraints (2013: 27). This study found out that children drop out due to the extra burden of incentives and extra lessons, corporal punishment, sending away for non payment of fees and improper association. Both heads confirmed low completion rates as each school as 1 student drops out for every 10

⁷ School and district pass rate files

students between forms 1 and 4. The increase in enrolment for the two schools is insignificant if children enrol and then drop out as shown below:

Table 2 Enrolment for the two schools

| School | 2008 | | | 2009 | | | 2010 | | | 2011 | | | 2012 | | | 2013 | | | 2014 | | |
|--------|------|---|---|------|---|---|------|---|---|------|---|---|------|---|---|------|---|---|------|---|---|
| | G | B | T | G | B | T | G | B | T | G | B | T | G | B | T | G | B | T | G | B | T |
| A | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| | 5 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| | 5 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| B | 1 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| | 1 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 0 |
| | 1 | | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 0 |

Source: Author's elaboration of School records⁸ *Key:* sch-school, G-girls, B-boys, T-total enrolment

Some parents did not see the value of education because the chances of getting employed after completion of school were very slim. One of the parents had this to say:

There are no jobs in the country for our children; even if I pay the fees s/he will still stay at home unemployed or get married after school. It is better I stay with my children at home and teach them life skills like farming. These days there is no difference between an educated and uneducated person, we are all wailing in poverty (parent).

The parent's statement is a pointer to the inadequacies of the curriculum of schools in Zimbabwe. The former Minister of Education also revealed that the curriculum being implemented in Zimbabwean schools is too academic that non-academically talented children would find it irrelevant.

Conclusion

This chapter unfolded teachers' unruly practices which I treat as a response to poor remuneration, lack of motivation, poor infrastructure, inadequate teaching and learning material, lack of training, lack of schools monitoring and supervision and incriminating policy proclamations. The unruly practices result in stigma and discrimination of students, poor performance, prohibitively high cost of education and dropouts. As alluded earlier on, unruly practices are a pointer to the crisis and lack of support from the government. However, I noted that there are teachers who are very passionate about the profession. Such teachers go an extra mile to teach on weekends and holidays for free. Their level of commitment is amazing and I personally feel that such teachers are a great asset and a source of hope to children, parents and Zimbabwe as a whole.

⁸ School enrolment files

Chapter 5 Policy Implications and Conclusion

This chapter summarises findings and reflect policy recommendations from the problems in the beleaguered education sector.

5.1 Summary of findings

In this section, I sum up my findings in line with the research questions.

Teachers' unruly practices

Teachers are entangled in unruly practices that are adverse to the provision of quality education. As implementers of education policy, the current poor remuneration, poor working conditions and lack of motivation push them hard to compromise access and quality of education. As street-level bureaucrats, they are rarely bound by formal policy directives but their moral judgement (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003:6) and what they offer is the 'best' in the current working environment.

Implications for access, quality and participation

Levies, extra lessons, incentives and other costs of education all confront a rural parent who struggles for basic subsistence. Children drop out of school due to the costs of education. Children lose precious time of learning when teachers renege on their obligation. The girl child is a victim of unjust improper association and corporal punishment. Performance gets below par. When unruly practices are a norm, parents and children do not see the value of education. "The poorer people are, the greater the influence of street-level bureaucrats...they may well be taken to be part of the problem of being poor" (Lipsky, 1980: 6).

Government's response

A government that does not respect and value teachers yet expects them to implement its education policy, in earnest, is a liability to the nation. The Minister of Education unilaterally banned incentives and extra lessons without addressing the root of the problem. Rural teachers lack motivation and working conditions are poor. His policy directives incriminate the teachers and potentially drive the profession underground. The government is not committed to improve teachers' working conditions and support the rural schools.

5.2 Policy Implications

Based on the findings of this study, I derive the following policy inferences:

Heavy investment in education

Whilst the Ministry of Education is allocated the biggest chunk of the national budget it is worth noting that only very little, if any, trickles to schools. This is so because over 90 percent of the expenditure is on salaries and administration (MoESAC 2013). Thus, the claim that ministry of education gets the biggest budget is a fallacy. The state of infrastructure in schools and the collapsing BEAM requires the government to inject more resources into schools. The recent experience of donor withdrawal from BEAM is a lesson to the government to play a central role in education provision. Apparently, the future of ETF, which has been critical to the efforts to resuscitate education, looks bleak at the behest of donor fatigue. Provision of education remains an obligation for the government and non-state actors can only play a complementary role. It is possible to prioritize education by cutting budgets for defence and foreign travel and other ambitious projects. In 2012, the then Minister of Education criticised the GNU for misplaced priorities. In 2011, foreign travel spent USD20 million (Karimakwenda 2012). Ministry of Education got a pittance of only USD8 million in 2012 budget whilst USD100 million was spent on construction of a military college and another USD6 million on constructing a ZANU PF conference hall for annual congress (ibid.). The government has since embarked on construction of a new parliament (ibid.). Coltart also noted that there was lack of accountability for diamond revenue and loss of customs duty through corruption (ibid.). It is thus unjustified for the government to claim that it is broke to finance education.

Dialogue not directives

The current situation of unilateral policy declarations by the Minister of Education could cause more problems for the education sector. The current policy directives are incriminating teachers and parents.

Implementing a good quality education requires that policy making is informed by processes of dialogue, consultation and debate both within the state and between the government and interest groups including teachers and teachers unions, non-governmental and community organisations representing parents and other interests with a stake in education (Tikly 2010: 16).

Dialogue with all stakeholders gives hope and is in line with the scenarios approach that is “especially helpful in enabling diverse groups to openly discuss their different perspectives, to develop a shared language and to find common ground” (Rossel 2004:45). A shared long term vision would be pertinent to move away from the current disputes. The greatest asset in Zimbabwe is the passion for education within all stakeholders. Schools were sustained by committed teachers and parents during the turbulence. Incriminating teachers drives the profession into more clandestine unruly practices. After all, “street-level work is, ironically, rule saturated but not rule-bound” (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003: 8). Most rural parents cannot afford the cost of education and taking legal action against them is illegal, cheap politicking and out of context.

Teachers' Motivation and Professional Development

“Lack of or poor training, poor pay and poor working conditions contribute to teacher discontent” (UNESCO 2008: 172). According to Maxwell Rafemoyo, National Coordinator for the Educational Coalition of Zimbabwe, non-monetary benefits like “accelerated promotions, housing stands, subsidies on fees for teachers’ children and manpower development” could improve teachers’ motivation (Tshuma 2014). Senator Coltart asserts that committed teachers resemble a strong education system but failure to address their concerns is a threat to access and quality of education (Gweshe 2014).

The evident urban bias of trained teachers could be countervailed by state-funded recruiting and training people from the rural localities. There are ‘O’ and ‘A’ level graduates who passed but are unemployed. Although not a quick fix, local recruitment could be a long term remedy only if backed by training and professional development services (UNESCO 2008: 177). Again, there are teachers who are still committed to their work regardless of challenges and such individuals could be targeted for further training that aligns to specific needs of the rural schools. Training in ICT could also motivate and add value to the teachers and benefit schools as a whole. Majority teachers are computer illiterate and are keen to learn. It is worrisome to note that, at one of the schools, computers have been idle for the past 14 years because of inability to use them. Teachers need support to use computers for teaching and learning (Tikly 2010: 15). Teachers have different levels of qualifications ranging from certificates, diplomas and degrees and they may require different support.

Regular schools monitoring and supervision

Lack of schools monitoring and supervision compromises access and quality of education. The crisis developed a culture of waiting for school heads to appraise district education authorities about schools. Such a culture allows malpractices to be swept under the carpet. “Policies and programmes intended to improve education quality need to focus on schools and teachers, supported by strong supervision, flexible policies, efficient administration and community involvement” (Leu 2005: iii). However, the aim of schools supervision is “not only to check teacher and school performance but also to identify and support needed quality improvements” (UNESCO 2008: 183). A strong system of assessment, monitoring and evaluation “plays an important diagnostic role in identifying strengths and weaknesses, highlighting groups at risk of underachieving and areas of possible intervention” (Tikly 2010: 17).

Curriculum Reform

The crisis in the education sector exposed the inadequacies of the current curriculum in schools. Zimbabwe’s school curriculum is inherently academically oriented and was designed for a pass rate not more than 25 percent (Senator Coltart). The curriculum rarely focuses on vocational education yet one of the major recommendations of the 1999 Nziramasanga Commission, a presidential inquiry into education and training, was to vocationalize the schools curricula. Parents are losing confidence in the current curriculum especially at secondary schools. Unemployment is high and “education needs to be adapted to local

circumstances. A shift away from denigrating vocational as inferior to academic education is necessary” (Tomasevski 2003: 32). Children who are not academically talented do not see the value of education and parents would prefer to impart practical skills on their children at home instead of sending them to school where they come back empty-handed. However, curriculum reform is a big and taxing exercise that requires a substantial investment of resources for both infrastructural upgrading, teaching and learning material and teacher training.

Conclusion

Politicians who sanction political intimidation and persecution of teachers for the selfish interest of ‘power at all costs’ have themselves to blame if teachers use their discretion and autonomy to ‘subvert’ education policies. When the government relinquishes its role to fund education to donors, politicians need measure the value of their slogan: ‘Zimbabwe will never be a colony again’. Since 2009, donors have funded efforts to resuscitate the education sector whilst the government took a back seat. Now that they realised the government was not playing its role, the donors are pulling out. The state of education in rural schools requires substantial support from the government. Donors and other non-state players are there to complement the government. Teachers are the frontline implementers of education policy and they have all the potential to shape the destiny of the children if they are motivated. Teachers are learned people who are very aware that the government is an expert in empty promises and they have thus mastered the art of survival in hostile working conditions. The current working environment for teachers in rural areas compromises access and makes quality education an elusive goal. Poor infrastructure, lack of teaching and learning material, demoralised teachers and unaffordable cost of education all besiege access and quality of education. This study was a snapshot of rural schools and the findings are a tip of the ice-berg. I believe a wider research could be conducted for more information and in-depth understanding. Hence, I am cautious to generalise my findings for the whole country. Nonetheless, “improved understanding of complex human issues is more important than generalizability of results” in the qualitative approach (Marshall 1996: 524). This study could inspire other researchers passionate about education to make further explorations. Future studies could make a comparison of rural and urban schools to get a better understanding of the experiences of the crisis.

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Appendices

Appendix A

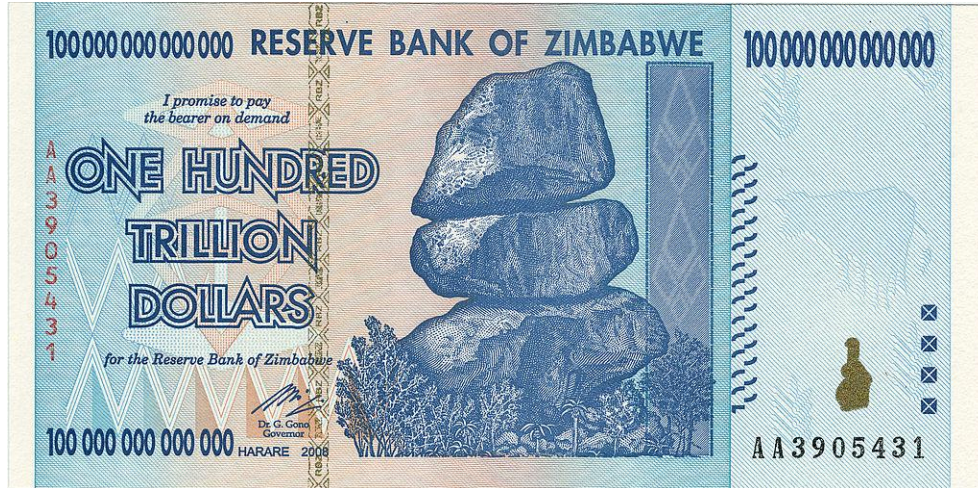
'Pay us peanuts and we behave like monkeys'



This is a rendition of the 2012 civil servant strike led by teachers that appeared in *The Sunday Mail* (January 29-February 4, 2012), a state owned weekly newspaper.

Appendix B

Hyperinflation and worthless currency



Due to hyperinflation, the Zimbabwean dollar became valueless and salaries for workers were worthless. In schools, teachers were still expected to teach yet they could not afford basics of life. In 2008, a teacher's monthly dropped to the equivalent of less than USD2 (UNICEF and GoZ, 2011). The Central Bank tirelessly printed big denominations with a chain of zeros but that never salvaged the crisis. Photographed by author.

Appendix C

Teachers staff room doubling as a classroom



Source: Author's capture of cracked walls, worn-out floors and no furniture at school A