



**Republic of Zimbabwe**

**MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**STRATEGY FOR THE EQUITABLE PROVISION  
OF INCLUSIVE CONTINUOUS QUALITY  
TEACHING AND LEARNING AT ALL TIMES  
AND DURING EMERGENCIES**

## FOREWORD


In the context of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which recognises education as a basic human right and the related provisions in the Education Amendment Act of 2020, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is implementing a number of measures towards ensuring equitable access to quality education for all.

I am honoured to present the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Strategy for the Equitable Provision of Inclusive Continuous Quality Teaching and Learning at all times and during Emergencies. This strategy is aimed at minimising disruption to teaching and learning, particularly during emergencies.

This document provides guidelines for the practical delivery of blended teaching and learning, catch-up activities to compensate for any lost learning time, and a coordinated system for accelerated learning, all of which involve the use of alternative learning platforms for the benefit of all learners.

This Catch-Up Strategy is one of the major equity initiatives that my Ministry has undertaken for the benefit of all the children, adolescents and adults who require primary and secondary education in Zimbabwe. In this particular case, the Government of Zimbabwe seeks to further strengthen the continuity of learning in all circumstances, especially during emergencies. Therefore this Strategy seeks to institutionalise clinical remediation, guidance and counselling together with other learner support services at every school so that no learner is left behind.

On behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe, I commend the Ministry staff, development partners, civil society organisations, Heads of Schools, teachers, Learning Area Platforms and all other stakeholders for supporting the on-going efforts aimed at safeguarding the right to education for all.



**Honourable Ambassador N.C.G Mathema**

**MINISTER OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**



## **PREFACE**

This Strategy for the Equitable Provision of Inclusive Continuous Quality Teaching and Learning at all times and during Emergencies has been developed in the endeavour to fulfil the objectives of the African Union Agenda 2063, (Specifically, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa), the Global Agenda 2030 under the Sustainable Development Goals and the National Development Strategy aspirations on Human Capital Development and Social Protection.

Using lessons learnt from the experience of disrupted school activities due to several climatic change phenomena as well as the current global COVID-19 pandemic, this strategy seeks to enhance the continuity of teaching and learning for all learners at all times in Zimbabwe.

The strategy is a product of inclusive consultation and collaboration by the Ministry, the Education Cluster for Humanitarian Response, National Associations of Primary and Secondary Heads, Learning Area Platforms of teachers by their specialisations and other critical stakeholders.

The Ministry acknowledges the voices of its priority clients, learners themselves, who have clearly expressed their thoughts and also shared their ideas on solutions to existing challenges and gaps in their access to learning platforms when schools are not in session for one reason or another. Such contributions have shaped the content of this strategy.

Therefore, through the different components of the strategy, the primary and secondary education sector seeks to mainstream open and distance learning, ICTs deployment in e-learning, clinical remediation, guidance and counselling and other care and support services.

This is aimed at helping the Ministry move towards the attainment of optimal learning outcomes for each and every learner in their different geographical and socio-economic environments.

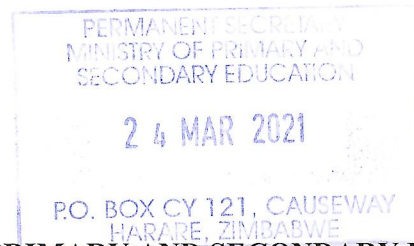
It is envisaged that this strategy will facilitate continuous and inclusive learning, at school, home, within school-led community settings and through online platforms, particularly during emergencies.

Partnership is key to the successful implementation of this strategy. I commend the teamwork within the Ministry and with partner organisations as well as key stakeholders that has culminated in the production of this document.

Together we will achieve inclusive equitable access to quality education in the best interest of every child.



T. Thabela (Mrs)



**SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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## **Abbreviations/Acronyms**

ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
CA.	Continuous Assessment
CAF	Continuous Assessment Framework
CALA	Continuous Assessment Learning Activity
CBC	Competence Based Curriculum
CDTS	Curriculum Development and Technical Services
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPC	Child Protection Committee
DLLC	District Literacy and Learning Coordinator
DSI	District Schools Inspector
DLSRC	District Learner Support Services Resource Centre
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ERI	Early Reading Initiative
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEC	Information Education and Communication
LAA	Learning Area Association
LAN	Local Area Network

LAP	Learning Area Platform
LSS	Learner Support Services
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PLAP	Performance Lag Address Programme
PSNE	Primary Secondary and Non-Formal Education
POTRAZ	Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe
SDC	School Development Committee
SI	Schools Inspector
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SOM	Sources of Material
SRGBV	School Related Gender Based Violence
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZIMSEC	Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council
ZSHP	Zimbabwe School Health Policy





## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Climatic change, natural and man-made disasters have the potential to derail Zimbabwe's efforts towards fulfilling the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa, and the National Development Strategy .

Having experienced cyclones, droughts, disease outbreaks, particularly the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry developed a strategy to ensure minimal disruption to learning.

Following the prolonged closure of schools from March to the phased reopening from September to November 2020, much concern was raised by various stakeholders, including the Ministry's priority clients, the learners and their parents /guardians. Key among the concerns are; loss of teaching and learning time, learner regression, unequal access to alternative learning platforms and the negative impact of school closure on the psychosocial welfare and conduct of learners.

From July to December 2020, the Ministry conducted a baseline survey to establish the facts on the ground. This was done through its provincial structures, consulted schools and other stakeholders and used the information in coming up with a strategy encompassing elaborate guidelines and activities for the continuity of learning, particularly during emergencies.

### **1.1 Key Elements of the strategy**

The key elements of the strategy are as follows:

- Accelerated syllabus coverage.
- A blended teaching and learning model.
- Incorporation of clinical remedial support for struggling learners and the enhanced delivery of special needs education for learners with disabilities.
- Mainstreaming of Guidance and Counselling Services as well as Child Protection Committee (CPC) activities to address topical issues such as school dropout, teen pregnancy, child marriages, child labour and some of the social ills within communities.
- Aligning learner assessment to the strategy to ensure effective assessment of learners.

- Strengthening of measures for the safety and health (both physical and mental) of learners and staff.
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluating for the implementation of the strategy.

## **1.2 Summary of end-of 2020 baseline assessment and recommendations for addressing teaching and learning gaps**

The Ministry carried out a baseline assessment of teaching and learning gaps for primary and secondary school learners in the ten educational provinces of Zimbabwe in the year 2020.

### **Findings**

The baseline assessment established the following:

- Two thirds of first term's work was covered by the time schools closed on 24 March 2020 translating to seven weeks of effective learning.
- The remaining first term's work was covered from the phased reopening of schools (28 September, 26 October and 9 November).
- The survey conducted with all learning associations reveals that first term's work was covered while that of second and third term was not covered particularly in day schools as boarding and Trust schools were taking advantage of alternative learning and teaching strategies.
- Second and third term's work was not covered because of the lockdown and unclear stay away.

The baseline assessment revealed that most learners especially those from public rural day, Government and Council schools (both primary and secondary) had limited access to teaching and learning after the announcement of the lockdown by the Head of State in March 2020.

There was no contact between teachers and learners and between schools and learners. It is only in some boarding schools and Trust and other non-government schools that were

providing online learning hence their syllabus coverage is different from that of the public schools, mainly rural- Government and Council schools.

The announcement of the lockdown due to COVID-19 saw all activities at Council, Government and rural public day schools coming to a standstill. There was no teaching and learning taking place, most learners especially those in ECD forgot the material they had covered and those in examination classes were not ready to sit for public examinations as they had not covered the required syllabi content.

In view of the above findings, effective teaching and learning did not take place because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **1.3 Recommendations**

The Ministry recommends the following activities and programmes to be undertaken as soon as possible to address the pertinent learning gaps:

- The expeditious opening of schools so as to cover up for the lost quality teaching and learning time.
- Online learning for schools that is sustainable.
- Television and radio lessons to be continued to complement the face to face interaction which will be done as soon as schools open.
- Government to prioritise the availability of water and sanitation facilities to all schools to ensure compliance with the WHO guidelines.
- Government to support the ministry to ensure that all learners have access to equal learning opportunities including online lessons despite the learners' circumstances.
- Team teaching to be encouraged.
- Staff development for e-learning for all teachers to be rolled out.
- Ministry to resuscitate and activate learning area platforms so that learners benefit from a wide range of experiences.
- Expediting of purchasing and distribution of teaching and learning resources to ensure equity.

## **2.0 SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS AND HEALTH PROMOTION FOR LEARNERS, TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING STAFF**

The health and safety of learners and staff is a top priority and the foundation for all other developments in this sector.

Accordingly, every school and independent college must have a Disaster Risk Map and Response Plan in place and a schedule of safety drills for all learners and staff to know what to do, how and where to assemble when any disaster occurs.

It is mandatory for schools and independent colleges to fully comply with Public Health requirements, in line with the Education Amendment Act of 2020.

Heads of Schools are therefore expected to make reference to the Zimbabwe School Health Policy which provides guidelines on the standards to be met to ensure a safe-school environment for all.

School leadership should spell out clear school policy and practical actions to be taken against all forms of violations of individual and collective rights such as bullying, abuse, harassment and victimization.

Under the current COVID-19 pandemic, all learning institutions must fully comply with the Standard Operating Procedures for the Prevention and Management of COVID-19 and other Influenza-like illnesses in the Primary and Secondary Education Sector (SOPs).

In addition, the Ministries of Primary and Secondary Education, Health and Child Care and Higher and Tertiary Education, Science, Innovation and Technology Development, have jointly developed the Standard Guidelines for the Coordinated Prevention and Management of COVID-19 at all learning institutions in Zimbabwe. A checklist to guide learning institutions on environmental health and safety is also in place.

Similar guidelines have been and will continue to be developed and shared for any identified threat to the health and safety of learners and staff.

All the references mentioned in this section are available on the Ministry website ([www.mopse.co.zw](http://www.mopse.co.zw)), with hard copies dispatched to schools for ease of reference.

### **3.0 ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY**

This strategy combines different interventions used to address the established learning and teaching gaps in schools.

The guidelines in this strategy are intended to trigger more school-based innovative strategies for the inclusive, full coverage of syllabi to cover up lost teaching and learning time.

The catch-up strategies are grouped into three categories, namely content, learner and teacher enhancement strategies.

Content strategies include syllabus compression and concept integration.

Teacher enhancement strategies are, team teaching, Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP), multigrade teaching and use of LAPs (Learning Area Platforms) to guide teachers to cover up for lost teaching time for the maximisation of teacher/learner contact learning.

Learning enhancement strategies include Clinical Remediation, Guidance and Counselling, Child Protection Committees, School Health Services, including Menstrual Health Management, Career Guidance as well as the Home Grown School Feeding Programme.

Schools are encouraged to work on these teaching and learning support strategies to ensure that learners catch up on the lost content and competencies in the shortest time available.

The major vehicle for the exchange of valuable practical competencies for effective pedagogy is the Learning Area Associations, Panels and Platforms, made up of Learning Area specialist teachers. These teacher platforms are engaged in a number of activities, including the following;

1. Assisting in identifying gaps that should be addressed by classroom practitioners making use of the compressed syllabi.
2. Working together on the production of skeletal lesson plans to be shared among teachers to facilitate compressed, effective syllabus coverage through blended teaching and learning activities to make full use of the limited time available.

Schools are encouraged to activate learning area associations within their clusters so as to share information, notes, examination question papers as well as carry out action research in the different learning areas as identified through their context specific needs assessment exercises. This will enable wide coverage of topics and concepts. Schools can also come up with their own strategies that assist learners to catch up on lost time in their different clusters. Meantime, National Level Learning Area Platform Leadership should actively work with the department of Primary, Secondary and Non-Formal Education (PSNE) at Head Office to recommend and work out standard learning materials and resources for adoption or adaptation at local levels as deemed necessary.

### **3.1 Blended teaching and learning strategy**

The blended teaching and learning approach makes use of both the traditional face-to-face classroom interaction, online learning, home and school-led community-based learning with tutorial support as well as the use of printed self-study guides, revision notes and other modules. It should be noted that blended teaching and learning is designed to ensure that learning continues whether schools are in session or not, and entails the mainstreaming of Open and Distance Learning (ODL).

### **3.2 Accelerated syllabus coverage**

#### **3.2.1 Syllabus compression**

To compress according to The Concise English Dictionary is to express in a shorter form or to abridge content. To this end, syllabus compression was done to merge similar concepts /topics to cover up for lost time as it ensures the teaching of these concepts /topics in a shorter time and covering much ground on the syllabus topics. The out-of-school learners have been using this approach of compressed syllabi to prepare for the same examination with formal learners under our Non-Formal Education programming. This methodology of accessing education is becoming critical in light of formal school calendar disruptions that seem to be threatening to become a part of our operational environment.

All children have experienced unprecedented disruption to their education as a result of COVID-19. The impact of lost time in education is substantial for children, and more

particularly those who are most vulnerable or from disadvantaged backgrounds, hence the compression of syllabi.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the Ministry had compressed a number of syllabi for the out-of-school learners in partnership with UNICEF and PSNE Non-Formal Section and these will be our starting point in the use of this blended education form.

The Ministry has thus come up with strategies and approaches to support children as they return to school after the extensive period of disruption. To catch up on lost time, the Ministry has compressed the National syllabi for Primary and Secondary school curriculum. This accelerated learning programme shows a content outline of the Primary and Secondary education curriculum. It is designed to conform to the requirements of the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022.

The compressed syllabi, scope and sequence are designed to cover three levels at Primary school, two levels at Secondary school and one at A-Level.

	<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>GRADES/FORMS</b>
<b>Primary</b>	1	ECD- Grade 2
	2	Grade 3- Grade 5
	3	Grades 6 and 7
<b>Secondary</b>	1	Forms 1 and 2
	2	Forms 3 and 4
	3	Forms 5 and 6

The compressed syllabi documents outline the skills, concepts and content to be taught at each level and enable both teachers and learners to pick on important concepts for each level at a faster pace.

The aim of the compressed syllabi, scope and sequence is to facilitate teaching and learning for both formal and non-formal learners. It will help accelerate learning to cover the gap created by the disruption due to the COVID-19 induced lockdown. The documents highlight the key concepts and content for each topic in all learning areas. Learner centred



methodologies are encouraged to accelerate learning and bridge the gaps identified when learners stopped coming to school.

The compression strategy maintains the thrust of the competence-based curriculum, it focusses on creating independent learners and researchers who will emerge, at the point of their exit, with skills and competencies to fit them into their next level of development as spelt out in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015 – 2022.

It is expected that the blended catch up and learning strategy will help learners to develop the following exit profiles as outlined in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015 – 2022:

**Skills;**

- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Leadership
- Communication and team building
- Technological

**Knowledge;**

- Basic literacy and numeracy
- Business and financial literacy
- Mastery of specific subject content

**National Identity;**

- Patriotism
- Recognition and valuing of national symbols
- Participatory citizenship

**Values;**

- Discipline
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Unhu/Ubuntu/Vumunhu

### **Attitudes and dispositions;**

- Self-initiative and enterprising
- Self-managing
- Ability to plan and organize

The teacher is encouraged to use methods and activities that will accelerate coverage of content and development of skills within a short space of time. An integrated approach to concepts coverage is thus encouraged.

The teaching and learning that will be taking place should embrace cross-cutting themes to foster competence development for studies, life and work. In every context possible the learners should be helped to move from concept through modelling to the application of that concept to their real life situation. The application element should most naturally lead to formative assessment activities (Continuous Assessment Learning Activities {CALAs}) to enhance the institutionalisation of assessment as an essential part of learning. Learners should use lessons derived from these Continuous Assessment Learning Activities to improve their understanding of the concepts taught and also improve their competencies in similar skill/competence training activities. Teaching and learning methods should take into consideration different learning styles, interests and contexts.

To ensure full compliance with the Curriculum Framework, all schools should follow the National School Syllabi for both Primary and Secondary Education and innovate as guided by the suggested teaching methods, objectives and sources of material

### **3.2.2 National syllabus and weekly lesson plans**

Teachers are required to prepare weekly lesson plans based on the compressed syllabi. Preparation of weekly lesson plans should take cognisance of the following:

- a. Compressed syllabi per given period of time should show topics to be covered per level.
- b. Topics are divided into five effective teaching terms.
- c. Terms are then further divided into 10 effective teaching weeks. Each week has specific topics/content to be learnt/covered.

d. Weekly plans are based on the divided weekly topics/content.

The following are sub-topics for the weekly plan which could have further subtopics depending on the learning area:

- Week ending
- Topic / Content
- Objectives
- SOM (Sources of material)
- Media
- Methodology / Activities
- Catch up strategies used
- Evaluation (Individual and General)

**NB:** A section on catch up strategies must be included.

### **3.3 Content delivery strategies, alternative learning platforms and adaptations to resource availability**

Teaching and learning in the year 2020/21 was adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic hence there was need to put in place strategies to address the teaching and learning gaps which emanated from the prolonged closure of schools. The Ministry came up with content delivery strategies, in the form of alternative learning platforms utilising, adopting and adapting to resource availability. Outlined below are the alternative strategies implemented by the Ministry mainly through the leadership of our Curriculum Development and Technical Services Department (CDTS).

#### **3.3.1 Radio and Television Lessons**

Access to learners including the disadvantaged is facilitated and enhanced through the production and airing of radio lessons using national and community radio stations for selected learning areas at primary and secondary levels. The radio stations are Star FM, Radio Zimbabwe, Nyaminyami FM and Diamond FM among others. Indigenous languages are strategically aired by community radio stations within the local communities where the language is commonly used.

The production of radio lessons is being conducted in a phased approach with the lessons now in the third phase. In order to cater for all learners especially those with special needs such as hearing impairments, the radio lessons are availed on the MoPSE Learning Platforms which are the Learning Passport and Ministry Website in both audio and text.

The radio lessons have had a considerable impact as more than one million learners are estimated to have benefitted. However, the figures indicate that the majority of our learners did not access these, hence the need for catch up and revision lessons for learners who will be learning from home.

Underprivileged communities are to be capacitated with 3 500 radios to ensure access to the lessons. Furthermore, the Ministry is now in the process of providing these communities with devices such as Bluetooth speakers, memory sticks and MP 3 players to play recorded lessons. This is because of the fact that the radio lessons, although highly commendable, cannot be accessed by learners where there is currently no local radio signal coverage. Television lessons are being developed to provide a visual reinforcement and to cover the gap for learners with Hearing Impairment.

### **3.3.2 Online Lessons**

MoPSE also managed to provide access to education through making its website more robust as well as collaborating with partners who availed access to learning platforms and other online resources:

- Higher Life Foundation's provided their RUZIVO platform soon after the school calendar disruption at no cost. The only requirement was for the learner to have access to the internet. The provision of this learning management system managed to have more than one million eight hundred thousand learners continuing with their learning during the closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ruzivo digital platform can be accessed at:  
<https://www.ruzivodigitallearning.co.zw/home/signin/1>
- MoPSE ensured that learners kept on having access to syllabus documents and important information concerning developments in the system through its website ([www.mopse.co.zw](http://www.mopse.co.zw)).

- The Odillo library platform provided learners with access to supplementary learning materials such as novels. This was availed by Odillo with support from the European Commission. This platform helped learners to collaborate in reading clubs and teachers to monitor learners' progress and assess progress and depth of reading (<https://appadvice.com/app/mopse-e-library/1520392719>).
- The Zimbabwe EduConnect platform is also another web-based platform at the learner's disposal with supplementary learning materials. It was availed in collaboration with UNESCO and can be accessed through <https://mopse.online/>. The Zimbabwe EduConnect platform is a public directory of open educational resources (OER) for primary and secondary school teachers. The repository was developed with support from the UNESCO-KFIT project on "ICT Transforming Education". The directory provides links to relevant digital resources that meet the requirements of the new Zimbabwean Curriculum, across all levels of school education in Zimbabwe and for all subject domains.
- The Learning Passport is a learning management system where learners can access learning material (<https://mopsezw.learningpassport.unicef.org/#/course/my-courses>) and was availed in collaboration with UNICEF and Microsoft.
- ProFuturo is a LAN based offline learning platform for learners without access to electricity and connectivity and was initially piloted in two districts; it is now being scaled up in collaboration with World Vision Zimbabwe. ProFuturo uses technology and innovative digital experiences to boost the **development of 21st Century skills** in the classroom and prevent the digital gap from worsening the already existing education.

The learning management platforms allow learners to be mobile. The mobility is achieved by using any mobile device to access learning material and learners can also be mobile across contexts of materials on the platforms such as audio, video, graphics and text,

### 3.3.3 WhatsApp

Another form of learning access provided by MoPSE is the Chatbot/ Dzidzopamhatso/ Imfudwe'ndlini. According to POTRAZ 2020 active mobile Cell phone subscription stands at

13 724 522 and the mobile penetration rate is 94.2%. From these statistics we conclude that nearly every household in Zimbabwe has a cell phone. This device bridges the gap for MoPSE by providing and delivering access to quality e-learning and assessment to all learners. Learners who are digital natives and spend an average of 6-8 hours on WhatsApp are directed to positive acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

## **4.0 BUILDING A STRONG READING, WRITING, SPELLING AND NUMERACY FOUNDATION**

Every learner needs a strong foundation in order to apply the critical tools of reading, handwriting, spelling and numeracy in fully benefitting from the competence-based curriculum. It is therefore imperative that every learner should be able to read, write, spell and calculate by the time s/he completes Grade 2. Remember, during the first two years learners ‘learn how to read’ and for the rest of their education life (and beyond) they ‘read in order to learn’. It is thus crucial that in schools where learners use a language (during the mother tongue based instruction years of the Infant module) which is different from English (the main language of instruction from Junior level) there is need for game based fun Literacy and Numeracy tools to help them acquire the required proficiency in the language of later instruction.

The Clinical Remediation Programme is especially designed to support learners who continue to struggle in their learning in spite of the catch-up strategies that are expected to benefit all. Teachers in-Charge (TICs) of Infant grades are encouraged to work closely with the Remedial Tutor in their District in order to get more support in the early identification of infant learners who require clinical remediation, the tools to apply and how to ensure successful early literacy and numeracy for all by the end of Grade 2.

Every primary and secondary school should have a Learner Support Services core-team, whose responsibilities include the identification, referral and organisation of support for all learners who struggle with reading, handwriting, spelling and numeracy at Junior and Secondary education level. Through the same identification tools, teachers of Infant grades, the Junior and Secondary level Learner Support Services core-team can assist all learners with hidden special needs, learning difficulties as well as emerging signs of disabilities and, where necessary, refer them for appropriate support by the Learner Welfare Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Department of the Ministry for further guidance on management of the learners.

#### **4.1 Learners moving to Grade 1 without full 2 years of ECD**

The importance of ECD is to provide a firm foundation for the acquisition of basic skills that are vital in the early years of a learner's primary education. The pre-formal learning activities that characterise this level prepare the learner mentally and socially and provide the basis of numeracy, reading and writing in formal learning. Therefore catch-up activities are essential for such learners, particularly during the first 6 weeks of Grade 1. Thereafter, Clinical Remediation should be provided for the struggling performers. Schools are encouraged to make full use of the guidance provided by the Learner Welfare Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Department under the topics on Diagnostic Assessment and Building a Strong Foundation on Reading, Writing, Spelling and Numeracy.

#### **4.2 Grade 1 learners moving to Grade 2 after only 1 full term**

While the Catch-up Strategy has provided for the compressed coverage of syllabus material not covered in 2020, there are learners who will require clinical remedial support to be able to effectively grasp the foundational skills of reading, spelling, handwriting and computation. Schools are encouraged to make full use of the guidance provided by the Learner Welfare Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Department under the topics on Diagnostic Assessment and Building a Strong Foundation on Reading, Writing, Spelling and Numeracy.

#### **4.3 Grade 2 learners struggling with basic skills while moving to Grade 3**

Learners usually find it difficult to adjust to junior school work after the infant stage. Therefore, preparation of the learners makes them adjust easily to more complex work of the junior stage. It is therefore important to refer to the section on diagnostic testing and designing of individualised remedial education plans for learners in this category. Schools are encouraged to make full use of the guidance provided by the Learner Welfare Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Department under the topics on Diagnostic Assessment and Building a Strong Foundation on Reading, Writing, Spelling and Numeracy



#### **4.4 Grade 3, 4, 5 and 6 learners struggling with basic skills while moving to the next grade**

Gaps are usually noted when learners are moving from one grade to the next hence the need for more intensified clinical remediation to continue. Schools are encouraged to make full use of the guidance provided by the Learner Welfare Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Department under the topics on Diagnostic Assessment and Building a Strong Foundation on Reading, Writing, Spelling and Numeracy. Schools are also encouraged to work with LSS core team to engage the local Remedial Tutor and the DLLC for support on strengthening functional literacy among learners still struggling with basic skills. The existence of non-readers in these grades, and beyond, should not be tolerated as it is a very crippling handicap for a learner's cognitive development: it is a sign that the learner is still operating at the Infant module level in terms of the very fundamental literacy and numeracy skills.

#### **4.5 Supporting the transition of Grade 7 learners struggling with basic skills while moving to Form 1**

In addition to the guidelines provided on Building a Strong Foundation on Reading, Writing, Spelling and Numeracy, the LSS core-team should also engage the local Remedial Tutor and the DLLC for support on strengthening functional literacy among learners still struggling with basic skills.

#### **4.6 Guidelines for coordinating and delivering clinical remediation to learners struggling with academic work as well as facilitating disability-responsive programmes at the infant, junior and lower secondary education levels**

The goal of providing clinical remediation is to strengthen basic reading, comprehension, writing and numeracy skills to facilitate effective teaching and learning. The guidelines in this chapter are intended to assist the district, cluster and individual schools to establish effective clinical remediation programmes for the benefit of such learners.

While it is important for all learners to acquire these basic skills by the end of Grade 2 in preparation for transition from Infant to Junior Education level, there are some that need more support to fully grasp part or most of these skills in time. If no clinical remedial support is provided, such learners face an uphill struggle in meeting their learning targets.

In order to enhance the quality of diagnosis and learner support intervention strategies in schools, the Ministry has a team of Educational Psychologists, Remedial Tutors and Speech Correctionists whose role is to assist schools through proactive and responsive activities in every province.

The Remedial Tutor in the District has a key role in coordinating clinical remediation programme activities through established remedial structures from the school to the cluster and district level.

District Learner Support Services Resource Centres (DLSLRCs) have been established in order to reduce travelling distances and make full use of the available resources within the district. Special needs education support can be accessed through these centres. More detail on the function and materials available at these DLSLRCs and the list of designated LSS Resource centres is available on the Ministry website as well as from the local District Office.

## **5.0 THE COORDINATING ROLE OF THE REMEDIAL TUTOR IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CLINICAL REMEDIATION PROGRAMME IN EVERY DISTRICT**

1. Coordinating all clinical remediation programmes in the district and making sure that the programme is functional and learners are benefiting from the programme.
2. Maintaining a database of clinical remedial teachers, learners assisted and those on the waiting list.
3. Distributing clinical remediation resource materials.
4. Conducting demonstration sessions on clinical remediation techniques.
5. Identifying and facilitating online platforms that benefit more learners and setting modalities for reaching the marginalized.

**For reference materials refer to Appendix A**

## 6.0 ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The Ministry, working with ZIMSEC produced the Continuous Assessment Framework (CAF) for use in schools starting 2021. Under the Competence Based Curriculum, assessment is in three parts which are learner proficiency, formative assessment and summative assessment. The CAF emphasises the assessment of knowledge, skills, abilities, values and trends to ascertain the achievement of desired learner exit profiles at any level. This Assessment Framework is championed by the philosophy of **Unhu/Ubuntu** which epitomises universal human interdependence, solidarity, humanness and a sense of belonging. It guides the preparation of learners for appropriation of roles in society and the real world of work. The Assessment Framework which was developed by the Ministry sets out what learners are expected to know, value and be able to do as a direct result of their learning experiences in schools and non-formal education, starting from ECD to secondary level. It sets out the parameters at which schools can build interactive education programmes that ensure learners achieve desired outcomes and function productively and efficiently in their societies.

In the Continuous Assessment Framework, teachers/facilitators are accorded the opportunity to participate fully in the assessment of their learners. The new Curriculum Framework prescribes a new model of assessment which is a hybrid of assessment for learning, assessment as learning and assessment of learning. This Assessment Framework is therefore an integration of the three forms of assessment into the teaching-learning processes. The Assessment Framework accommodates diverse needs such as different aptitudes, talents, gender, disabilities, socio-economic status and vulnerabilities. The Assessment Framework also takes on board, ICT as a key learning area and critical enabler of teaching and learning processes. The Assessment Framework for the first phase will focus on examination levels, that is, Grade 7, Form 4 and Form 6 in 2021. The catch up strategies thus strive to ensure the effective assessment of learners with different aptitudes, interests, disabilities, skills, attitudes and competencies and its thrust is the effective examination of the learner's knowledge, skills and competencies in a positive and transparent manner.

## **7.0 THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING**

We have learnt from past experiences that during emergencies our learners lose learning time. This was observed during Cyclone Idai and the current COVID-19 pandemic. In the two cited incidences, learners lost learning time and fell far behind in syllabi coverage.

Pursuant to the above, the Government has transformed the Correspondence School in Mt. Pleasant into the National Centre for Open and Distance Learning. In the context of the current pandemic and the need to comply with social distancing requirements, in some schools, it is not possible to have all learners attend lessons in one day. Face-to-face sessions shall, in some contexts, alternate with Open and Distance Learning. When learners are not in direct contact with the teacher they will learn through, among other media, written modules. In essence, all learners will receive modules, either as soft or hard copies. The use of this blended form of learning will ensure that no teaching and learning time will be lost.

### **7.1 The role of the National Centre for Open and Distance Learning**

The role of the Centre shall be to:

- Develop learning and teaching materials.
- Distribute compressed syllabi to Provinces.
- Distribute written modules based on compressed syllabi to Provinces.
- Facilitate access to radio, television lessons and other technology-based learning interventions in liaison with the Technical Services division of CDTS.
- Coordinate training of school Heads, teachers and other education personnel on how to run their institutions and schools using ICT tools in liaison with CDTS, PSNE, Learner Welfare, Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs Education and Human Resources Development (HRD) Departments.
- Conduct demonstration lessons on new Innovations as and when required.

- Continue to offer modularised learning opportunities for learners who are too far (more than 5kilometres) from any formal school.

The role of the National ODL Centre is therefore to strengthen the provision of blended teaching and learning services through the development of learning and teaching materials, their distribution and the production of demonstration lessons.

## **8.0 THE LEARNING AREA PLATFORMS (LAPs/) AND LEARNING AREA ASSOCIATIONS (LAAs)**

LAPs and LAAs were promulgated by the Secretary's Circular Number 7 of 2018 which was released on 20 December 2018. This circular provides guidelines for the formation, functioning and operations of LAPs as structures that enhance the implementation of the Curriculum.

LAPs are associations of teachers who teach closely related learning areas and were reconfigured to ensure greater integration, more efficient utilisation of resources and enhanced effectiveness of Curriculum implementation. Essentially, Learning Area Platforms bring teachers of particular learning areas together for the creation of collaborations and networks that facilitate professional development, leading to effective teaching and learning. This is especially critical in view of the Competence-based curriculum where there is a shift from content-based teaching to competence-based learning: where teachers require constant sharpening with additional knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in their learning areas. In this regard such platforms have become a vital cog in closing teaching and learning gaps caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. PEDs are advised to activate these platforms so that the sharing of best practice and benchmarking of performance on teachers with greater expertise is tapped on to both standardise and improve teaching and learning in their provinces.

### **8.1 Functions of the LAPs**

The functions of the LAPs include, among others:

- Creating peer support systems.
- Collaborating and networking in research.
- Reviewing of syllabi and textbooks.
- Developing teaching and learning methodologies.
- Developing teaching and learning resources.
- Coming up with standards assessment tools and strategies

- Evaluating examination results in a particular learning area and using the same to come up with strategies for improving learner outcomes.
- Acting as a chain that links Ministry with various stakeholders related to the learning areas such as corporate partners in industry and commerce.

## **8.2 The eight LAPs**

All learning areas fall under these eight platforms:

1. Sciences,
2. Mathematics,
3. English and Foreign Language,
4. Indigenous Languages,
5. Physical Education, Sport and Mass Displays,
6. Humanities,
7. Design and Technology and
8. Commercials.



## **9.0 GUIDELINES FOR THE MAINSTREAMING OF LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES AT EVERY PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL**

In line with the Zimbabwe School Health Policy, the Children's Act and the Disaster Risk Management Manual, it is important for every school to actively provide care and support services to all learners.

Learners experience various challenges as part of their growing up, with some needing more support than others in coping with such, as well as any negative life experiences that they might be going through at some point during their school years. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, learners are facing challenges due to the prolonged absence from school hence learner support services have become more critical.

It is therefore mandatory for each school or independent college to have a team with the specific role of managing the physical and mental health, safety, conduct and any other pastoral care needs of all learners.

At every school there should be a team of teachers with the responsibility to ensure that all learners feel protected and safe. Learners should have access to group and individual counselling support, referral for more specialised attention, school health provisions, including nutrition and menstrual health management support and positive mentorship for desired character development and behavioural outcomes in line with the school ethos.

### **9.1 Active participation platforms for learners in school governance**

In line with the Child Participation Principle, each school should have a system for learner participation on matters affecting them. Through learners representatives, the learner support needs will be more effectively handled with more harmonious human relations that foster positive results for all.

### **9.2 Learner Support System (LSS) Core Team**

The core team is instituted to attend to all learner welfare issues in all schools. The committee should be gender balanced.

The team should take a proactive approach of providing group counselling sessions to cohorts of learners in order to prevent some of the predictable challenges that may affect the well-being and conduct of learners.

The composition of the Learner Support Services core-team should ensure that the expected functions are effectively manned, with contingencies for the absence of any of the members.

### **9.2.1 Composition of the LSS Core Team**

The team should consist of at least **four** teachers whose duties should cover:

- School health and safety.
- Group counselling and practical life skills empowerment sessions for different cohorts to cover the whole learner population.
- Confidential individual counselling and referral.
- Career guidance activities to enhance curriculum benefits.
- Learner conduct and positive discipline.
- School feeding (as per Secretary's Circular 5 of 2019).
- Assessment of learners using standard diagnostic tools
- Management of the Confidential Learner Health database
- Clinical remediation and referral.
- Special needs support for learners with disabilities and other additional needs.

### **9.2.2 Key activities of the LSS Core Team**

The core team's key activities include the following:

- Offering mentorship on social and personal issues.
- Providing guidance and counselling services.
- Providing awareness and support on School Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV).
- Advocating for Positive Disciplinary approaches.
- Profiling, incidents reporting and management.

- Conducting system and local school orientations.
- Carrying out career exhibitions and educational guidance.
- Providing remedial support.
- Raising awareness on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health issues and services.
- Attending to child protection issues, including OVC and overseeing the Child Protection Committee's practical functionality in the community.
- Handling learner welfare incidents and referrals.
- Addressing possible school dropout and encouraging school completion for all, including girls affected by pregnancy or child marriage and boys at risk of falling through the cracks.
- Coordinating the school with the Cluster, District, and partners in G & C school level programming.
- Monitoring the operationalisation of the ZSHP focusing on the health, safety, (nutrition with regards to Zimbabwe Home Grown School Feeding Programme), and welfare of all learners at a school.
- Raising awareness to teachers and learners on emerging issues in health.
- Availing of IEC materials and fliers.
- Advocating for the prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases.
- Managing of common ailments and chronic conditions among learners including those on life prolonging medications such as antiretroviral (ART) treatment.
- Record keeping and submission of returns and reports on monthly basis to the School Head and District Office on G&C school level programming.
- Coordinating community responsibility activities such as charity /volunteering activities.

### **9.1.3 Psychosocial issues**

Psychosocial issues include the following:

- Bullying
- Sexual abuse
- Gender based violence.
- Poverty: food and school fees issues.
- Challenges of growing up.

- Involvement in sexual relationships.
- Teen pregnancy.
- Early marriages.
- Communication with parents and other peers.
- Drug and substance abuse.
- Online safety.
- Family issues (parenting and child headed families).
- School dropouts.
- Stress and stress management issues.

#### **9.2.4 Principles to be followed in providing Counselling and other forms of Psychosocial Support**

These principles include the following:

- Safety.
- Confidentiality.
- Informed consent.
- Calming
- Connecting learners with issues to the right care
- Instilling hope
- Work with learners themselves and community in producing the desired results or reach a solution

#### **9.2.5 How to raise awareness of the existence of Learner Support Services at the school**

Raising awareness can be done through the following:

- Special assembly sessions (peer presentations).
- WhatsApp learning platforms.
- Class teachers.
- Radio, television and newspapers.
- Community gatherings and forms of communication.

- Peer educators.
- Working closely with CPC.
- Enrolment and orientation stages.
- Awareness campaigns.
- Consultation days.
- Fliers and IEC materials (inclusive of brochures that guide learners on Learning Areas and the possible careers/occupations they can lead to).
- Notices and bill boards.
- Career Exhibitions.
- Outreach events.

### **9.2.6 Provision of Group and individual Guidance and Counselling Support services to learners**

- Guidance and Counselling services should be provided and accessible to all learners, addressing their personal needs.
- The core team should be readily available at all times to address and respond to learner needs.
- The core team should come up with context guided modalities for providing services to learners.
- Learners should be availed with contact details of the core team members to ensure that they access services even when it is not feasible to visit the school.
- Learners should be involved in coming up with different platforms that they can use in accessing services all the time.

### **9.2.7 Referral Protocol**

- The core team should have a referral structure, or systems in place and contact details and networks that are reliable to refer learners for further and relevant assistance from the health, law enforcement, justice sectors and other supporting organisations.
- All referrals should be done through the School Head's office to ensure that all teachers are always protected.
- Sensitization on the need for further assistance.
- Parental /guardian involvement.

- Suggestion boxes.
- Identification of learners requiring special assistance.
- Diagnosis and assessment to determine assistance to be rendered.
- Actual referral to different service providers.
- Intervention and follow-up.

## 10.0 CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

The success of the catch up strategy hinges on the capacitation of District Schools Inspectors (DSIs), Schools Inspectors (SIs), school leadership and teachers. Capacitation will target the following:

- School leadership (e-administration, internal monitoring, Supervision and Inspection). The training department working together with the ICT department will organise training workshops for District Schools Inspectors and Schools' Inspectors on how to use the available e-platforms (such as e-inspection tools, EMIS) for effective online supervision of schools and school leadership as well as for evidence based programmatic planning.
- Lesson production, delivery and evaluation (e-enabled): This involves the Training department working together with the ICT and CDTS in capacitating School Heads, Deputy Heads, TICs and HODs on how to create, upload, deliver and evaluate online content. There is also need for training School Leadership on how to use the available Ministry approved e-learning platforms such as mopse.online, Zimbabwe Learning Passport, Ruzivo, my-eclass, dzidzopaden for lesson production, delivery and evaluation.
- External Monitoring, Supervision and Inspection (e-enabled). Relevant Ministry structures, that is, PEDs, DSIs, SIs and School Heads are going to be capacitated so as to enhance their monitoring, supervision and inspection capacity. With assistance from UNICEF, the Ministry will set up a server to facilitate the monitoring, supervision and inspection tools. The Ministry is going to train DSIs and SIs on e-inspection with sponsorship from UNICEF. The e-inspection is part of ensuring that teachers cover the content and competence gaps that arose as a result of the lockdown due to COVID-19. The monitoring process will involve ensuring that learners have access to online facilities such as online lessons, teaching and learning materials, radio and TV lessons among others. The external monitoring will also involve joint

operations with Ministry partners and it will focus on school infrastructure, WASH programmes and syllabus content coverage, among others.

## **11.0 COORDINATION, PARTNERSHIPS, COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY**

The Ministry encourages schools to embark on income generating projects to raise resources for the implementation of sustainable development initiatives and the operationalisation of this catch up strategy.

Using the foundational objectives of the Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe (BSPZ), schools are expected to mobilise the support of their Responsible Authorities and approach community leaders, business community, former students as well as civil society organisations within their communities for the benefit of all learners.

Corporate Social Investment programmes and Constituency Development Funds are possible sources of resources that can assist schools in the provision of:

- Infrastructure (classrooms, toilets, boreholes).
- Teaching and learning materials.
- Essential health and safety supplies.

Sound corporate governance is expected of all leadership in order to inspire the confidence of partners in this regard.

The Communication and Advocacy Division should ensure that all stakeholders are made aware of the catch up strategy. It is important to get buy-in from stakeholders so that there is acceptance of the strategy. Various media channels and platforms, both internal and external, will be used in advocating for the strategy. Such communication platforms include Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and internal memos among others. There is need for training school leaders in effective communication of the strategy so that teachers, learners and community members are convinced on its applicability and benefit to the education system.

M & E is key in measuring progress towards the attainment of the ultimate goal of this strategy. A robust M & E plan is going to be put in place to monitor progress towards



outputs, outcomes and the impact as well as to evaluate successes of the strategy. A results-based M & E approach will be implemented.

## 12.0 RESOURCE MOBILISATION AND BUDGETING GUIDELINES

This strategy has clear implications for the revision of School Development Plans and the role of all stakeholders and partners in education.

Through existing BSPZ clusters, DSIs have a key role in the following:

- Needs assessment to quantify what schools have and what they do not have.
- Prioritisation of requirements for optimal results.
- Ensuring effective communication to be done at all levels on all activities in the schools, particularly the capacitation of School Development Committees (SDCs) for their effective functioning.
- Coordination of partners, mapping of contributions and documentation for accountability.
- Immediate distribution of resources to needy schools.
- Maintenance of requisite asset registers, distribution details and stock levels.
- Proper observance of good governance as per Administrative and Accounting Procedures

**Examples of resources to be mobilised for the success of this strategy are tabulated below:**

<b>Budget line</b>	<b>Costing Guide</b>
Learning area platforms	Meetings/Workshops at cluster and school level  Virtual meetings/workshops
Additional learning spaces for physical distancing	Including tents, temporary infrastructure that meet Local Government standards.
Additional Teaching	Downloading of soft-copy materials

and learning materials	Collection of materials from sources or distribution points More textbooks to prevent sharing
Materials for the Assessment framework	To be guided by the CALAs
ICT equipment and gadgets for learners	Smart phones Tablets Laptops Projectors
Energy for electrical equipment	Solar power Connection to the grid Utility costs
Connectivity	Service agreements Data bundles
Alternative learning platforms and Open including Distance learning	Production of teaching materials
Diagnostic testing committees	Stationery Transport Refreshments Airtime and data bundles COVID-19 requirements per venue
Diagnostic testing	Stationery T&S
Model lesson plans	Logistics for LAP activities
Printing of resource material	Printing of IEC Material
Cluster clinical remediation committees	Stationery Transport Refreshments Airtime and data bundles

	COVID-19 requirements per venue
Learner Support Services in every school	Logistics for Guidance and Counseling, Psychosocial support, Child Protection, School Health activities
Career exhibitions and fairs	Stationery Refreshments Transport Airtime and data bundles Promotional materials Resource persons
Staff development	Both face-to-face and virtual training Stationery Transport Refreshments Airtime and data bundles COVID-19 requirements per venue
Health Promotion for learners and staff	Extra COVID-19 Preventive measures for learners and teachers with disabilities  Extra COVID-19 measures for learners in boarding schools
Organisation of school-led Community learning logistics	Contingency plans for any situation such as the restrictions experienced under lockdown measures. Stand-by plans for any disruptions to normal school attendance by learners. Ensuring continuity of learning, whether schools are open or not.

## **13.0 CONCLUSION**

This document focussed on the strategies the Ministry has adopted to address the equitable provision of inclusive quality teaching and learning at all times and during emergencies. The strategy takes a holistic approach in addressing learning gaps as every aspect of the learner's school experience is catered for.

The effectiveness of the strategy depends on the support of parents, teachers, learners and other partners and stakeholders involved in the education of the learner. While attempts have been made to develop a comprehensive strategy, teachers are also encouraged to be innovative. It is envisaged that if properly implemented the catch-up strategy will help close the existing teaching and learning gaps emanating from disruptions due to emergencies and help learners to improve their performance.

## **Appendix A- References**

1. The Remedial Programme Booklet published by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
2. Practical Inclusive Education Handbook for Primary and Secondary Schools
3. Inclusive Supplement to the ERI and PLAP Handbooks
4. Key implementation Circulars, soft and hard copies of relevant materials
5. Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022