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**DECENTRALIZATION
AND
CONTROLLING THE COSTS
OF
EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE**

USAID/Zimbabwe

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the start of majority rule in 1980, Zimbabwe embarked on an ambitious program of expanding and equalizing educational opportunities. This program was characterized by universal primary education, large increases in secondary school enrollments and massive expenditures.

Soon after Zimbabwe embarked on the expansion of its educational system, significant attempts were made to control costs through cost cutting and cost sharing measures, and increased efficiencies. There has been no central policy statement on decentralization or the need to control costs. Rather, what we have seen is a series of steps, taken in response to the increasing costs, that form a pattern of shifting more educational costs to the users and increasing efficiencies by lowering the unit costs of the system. Since 1983 large increases in the amount and variety of school fees have taken place. It is estimated that today these fees make up between 10 and 20 percent of the total cost of primary and secondary education. This compares to a virtually completely Government financed system in 1980. Moreover, capital expenditures have always been recognised as largely a parent and community responsibility since the inception of majority rule at the time of a large scale need for reconstruction of rural schools. Another significant step was taken in 1983 when the number of students per teacher ratio was raised by 25 percent.

Though community and parental involvement is rapidly expanding in the areas of finance, the pace has been slower in areas of program and administration. It is still rare for parents and community representatives to have any formal input as to curriculum or school administration (selection of teachers for example). Although 'Government' schools make up only a small portion of the schools in Zimbabwe (most schools are District Council schools), the Ministry of Education (MOE) has firm control over hiring the large percentage of teachers from each school, curricula, and monitoring of staff. It is very rare for communities to hire or pay school staff for any of the types of school in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, rural communities do exert considerable informal influence on principals and their staff. This is particularly so in District Council and private schools. Also the numbers of schools committees and PTA Advisory Boards are increasing rapidly. The main approach Zimbabwe has used to reduce costs has been in developing programs designed to increase efficiency and cut unit costs. The major programs of this sort include computerization of regional MOE offices, the development of low cost Distance

Education materials, more rapid and less expensive teacher training programs, and the development of low cost science and vocational kits. These programs are having a significant effect in providing education for increasing numbers of students at a lower cost. Without them the costs of expanding primary and secondary education would have been considerably higher than they are now.

Zimbabwe's movement to reduce costs through decentralization and other programs raises a number of issues. The first is the question of how much control should be invested in parents and communities to match their increasing financial responsibility. Officially parents and communities have very little influence on curriculum, administration and pedagogical issues. In fact, and particularly in the more affluent schools, Parent Teachers Associations' influence is rapidly increasing in these areas.

Another important issue is that of quality. This is a complex issue. There is no doubt that as teacher-pupil ratios increase the quality of instruction will decrease. Will schools built by communities be of an equal standard in construction quality to those built by Government? The evidence is they are not. However, we must look at the question of quality of instruction for whom? Zimbabwe has, in a very short period of time, transformed an elitist educational system in which very few were educated to an essentially egalitarian one in which all its children have the opportunity to receive primary education, and many to go on to secondary education. Another complication is that this issue of equality is often viewed by black Zimbabweans as merely a subterfuge for those dissatisfied with the educational advances for black Zimbabweans. Certainly most of the programs described here have increased the quality of the educational programs throughout the country. Yet there is no evidence that the resources directed to the formerly elite schools have appreciably diminished. The main change taking place in these schools has been the racial integration of staff and student body.

A third issue relating to decentralization is how much expense can the local communities absorb and, concomitantly, at what point must expansion stop. Currently there does not appear to be any significant resentment among parents and committees to the increased costs they are bearing. There is widespread recognition that the Government has made a real commitment to education and that its funds are limited. It is recognised that the large yearly percentage increases in education's share of the budget will have to stop. In fact, for the last several

years increases in the budget have remained at about 11 percent. However, the Government has not made any significant attempts to cap the system as a whole and no check has been made on secondary school enrollments. The more costly but politically acceptable route is taken of allowing all primary school graduates to enter Form I. The consequence is a very high wastage rate in subsequent years. In fact, the problem of unemployed primary school graduates and secondary school leavers has become quite serious, and will become more so. The formal sector of the economy is not expanding rapidly enough to provide employment for the thousands of school leavers and graduates. The Government is taking the educationally sound strategy of providing new technical training programs for secondary schools geared to manpower needs. USAID, through its BEST program, has been instrumental in developing a number of these schools and programs.

The foregoing analysis suggests that Zimbabwe's educational strategies are dynamic and well thought out in their attempt to meet efficiently the educational needs and aspirations of its population and at the same time, control costs. It suggests, however, that these strategies are in transition and moving ahead of the development of an articulated policy which would recognize the absolute need to limit the expansion of the educational budget.

1

DECENTRALIZATION AND CONTROLLING THE COSTS
OF EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

This report will examine how the Government of Zimbabwe through its Ministry of Education attempts to cope with the cost increases of its rapidly expanding educational system. Total school enrollments have increased from 819,000 in 1979 to over 2.5 million in 1986. The Government's recurrent costs for education rose from Z\$ 118,000,000 in 1979 to approximately Z\$ 650,000,000 in 1986. Adjusting for an 80 percent inflation rate for this period we still have a 300 percent real increase in the cost of education.

Three main overlapping trends will be examined, these are (1), direct cost cutting measures, (2) decentralization, and (3) programs aimed at increasing efficiency. The major thrust of Zimbabwe's educational activity has been to expand the system while controlling costs. These attempts have increased local control and responsibility for education. First, however, we must briefly trace the development of Zimbabwe's formal education system.

Historical Perspective: Historically, education in Zimbabwe (formally Rhodesia) was racially segregated and unequal. Education for Europeans, Asians and 'Coloureds' was compulsory and heavily subsidized by the government. Education for Africans by contrast was not free and was left mainly to missionaries and other private efforts although the government dictated policy. /1.

Since Independence in 1980, Zimbabwe has undertaken a full scale effort to ensure universal access to primary and secondary education. Educational policy makers in newly independent Zimbabwe viewed education as a powerful tool in the development of the country. In "Growth with Equity" /2. the Zimbabwean Government outlined its various views and objectives on the role of education in national development. "Growth with Equity" states that: " The central and pervasive role of education is of paramount and decisive importance.... in the social and economic development of the country. Education is a human right and a basic human need. In addition, education is an economic investment in human beings who are the most valuable resources of any country and the means and end of all economic activity. Without the output of the educational system, it will be impossible to sustain, let alone accelerate economic growth and development" /3.

In line with its stated objectives, the Government moved quickly to remove all areas of racial discrimination, amongst which was access to education. In September 1980, free primary education was introduced as a fundamental right of the people and as an obligation of the Government.

Post Independence Developments:

In the years following Independence a major development has been the phenomenal expansion of primary and secondary school enrollments.

Public demand for more education, combined with past racial inequalities put enormous pressure on the Government to give priority to universal free primary and secondary education. Some statistics are worth noting. In 1979, there were 819,128 pupils in primary schools and by 1985 the figure had risen to 2,229,396 pupils, an increase of 272 percent. Secondary school enrollments stood at 73,540 in 1979; however, by 1985 these had risen to 497,766 representing an enrollment increase of 677 percent. (See Table 1).

The number of schools has increased as the number of pupils increased. In 1979, Zimbabwe had 2,401 and 177 primary and secondary schools, respectively. By 1986, there were 4,297 primary and 1,276 secondary schools, representing increases of 179 percent and 721 percent, respectively. Of significance is the fact that most of the new secondary schools have been opened in rural areas.

Significant progress occurred in the transition rate from primary to secondary education. For example, in 1980 27 percent of the grade seven school leavers proceeded to Form 1 (grade 8), compared to 84 percent in 1984. The phenomenal enrollment and transition increases reflect government policy. As the Secretary for the Ministry of Education pointed out: "We have made provision that all the grade seven pupils will move to Form I next year (1983). There is no policy of weeding out yet, and the pupils will proceed to 'O' levels within four or five years depending on ability." /4.

Expansion: Implications/Constraints:

This expansion in enrollments has implications in other areas of education, particularly teacher training, expenditure on education and the quality of education. This has meant increased expenditure by the Central Government on education. The budgetary increase that result from the enrollment increases are at the center of the question of whether the financial resources are and will remain available to provide adequate funding for education.

3

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TABLE 1
SCHOOL ENROLMENTS

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
PRIMARY:									
Grade 1/Infants 1	174 551	163 522	173 050	376 392	455 536	410 453	368 329	368 329	346 335
Grade 2/Infants 2	155 080	144 904	142 702	207 899	370 141	428 976	374 850	341 503	326 426
Grade 3/Standard 1	141 624	130 495	126 854	170 420	326 901	360 025	397 734	360 829	331 028
Grade 4/Standard 2	124 544	114 905	110 753	144 746	182 348	228 316	321 032	372 641	347 265
Grade 5/Standard 3	111 850	102 070	99 254	125 977	160 447	187 107	219 817	313 987	357 937
Grade 6/Standard 4	97 636	89 528	88 089	112 890	145 378	166 805	183 498	214 922	304 416
Grade 7/Standard 5	85 853	82 089	77 887	97 099	128 647	152 187	168 769	182 742	214 121
Special classes	1 415	1 436	1 476	571	745	745	2 094	1 715	1 868
Aided Community classes	96	90	53						
Total Primary	829 651	829 839	819 128	1 635 994	1 680 143	1 934 614	2 046 123	2 147 898	2 229 396
SECONDARY:									
Grade 8/Form 1	19 632	18 947	19 962	22 201	82 262	94 841	110 725	140 045	153 439
Grade 9/Form 2	17 656	17 654	18 094	17 125	24 855	79 465	95 539	107 052	137 943
Grade 10/Form 3	14 558	14 715	14 720	15 891	15 478	26 572	93 232	93 232	101 970
Grade 11/Form 4	12 927	13 373	13 294	12 926	15 547	16 416	24 509	71 632	91 723
Form 5	3 687	3 622	3 202	1 815	1 893	1 858	2 189	3 164	3 246
Form 6 Lower	1 566	1 643	1 594	2 641	2 751	3 243	3 680	4 218	5 957
Form 6 Upper	1 367	1 460	1 432	1 413	1 667	2 220	2 890	2 962	3 200
Special classes	533	492	416	309	282	307	334	297	288
Post Primary Vocational and Homcraft classes	1 409	1 120	826	645†	628†				
Total Secondary	73 335	73 826	73 540	74 966	145 363	224 609	316 438	422 584	497 766
Total Enrolments	965 986	902 065	892 668	1 310 960	1 825 506	2 159 223	2 362 561	2 570 482	2 727 162

† Private (aided) homcraft schools only.

ENROLMENTS AT OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS*

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Agricultural Colleges	159	155	164	133	171	173	169	530	528	610	888
Teachers' Training Colleges	2 932	2 861	2 985	2 982	3 082	2 824	3 484	4 873	6 481	7 365	9 504
Technical Colleges†	4 033	4 472	3 852	3 694	3 663	3 469	6 048	6 962	7 791	10 373	18 213
University of Zimbabwe	1 355	1 506	1 617	1 798	1 481	1 873	2 525	3 091	3 620	4 130	4 742

* As at the beginning of the academic year which starts in January, except for the agricultural colleges (September) and the University of Zimbabwe (March).

† Includes part-time students.

Source: Ministry of Education, Annual Report.

In 1979, the recurrent expenditure on education accounted for about 12 percent of the total Government Budget or 4.4 percent of the Gross National Product. In 1980, recurrent expenditure on education accounted for over 17 percent of the total Government budget or 6.1 percent of the Gross National Product. From 1980 to 1985, education has had the largest share of the budget, larger than defense. /5. These rank among the highest proportions in the Third World.

Overall, recurrent education expenditure continued to rise from 1981 through 1985, but since 1982 the increase in recurrent expenditure has stabilized at about 11 percent (see Table 4 below).

Table 4: Growth of Recurrent Education Expenditure

<u>Year</u>	<u>Re-current Exp Z\$Mill.</u>	<u>% Inc.</u>	<u>GOZ Bud. Z\$mill.</u>	<u>Re-current as % of GOZ Budget</u>	<u>G.N.P Z\$mill</u>	<u>Ed Re-current Exp. as % of GNP</u>
79-80	118.705	0	1027,229	11.55	2658 (1979)	4.46
80-81	207.642	17.49	1202.242	17.27	3396 (1980)	6.11
81-82	308.357	14.85	1571.244	19.62	4318 (1981)	7.14
82-83	394.243	12.78	2012.051	19.59	4957 (1982)	7.95
83-84	463.166	11.74	2431.978	19.04	5743 (1983)	8.06
84-85	508.157	11.97	2564.381	19.81	6040 (1984)	8.23
85-86	640.519	12.60	2800.161	22.87	n/a (1985)	n/a

Source: Annual Estimates of Expenditures, MOE

Certainly the goal of expansion of educational opportunities and access has almost been achieved in Zimbabwe. Available data from 1981, one year after majority rule, show that about 1,715,200 pupils were enrolled in primary schools. This represented 104 percent of the recorded primary school age cohort (6 - 12), because of the enrollment of older children in primary schools, a legacy of the liberation war and the refugee problem. Enrollment at the secondary level (age 13 - 18) stood at 150,300, or about 15 percent of the secondary school age cohort. /6. For 1985 the figures for secondary enrollment are unofficially estimated at 500,000 and 50 percent.

Zimbabwe has made impressive progress on reducing illiteracy. The illiteracy rate estimates for 1980 stood at 40 percent with a 15 percent semi-illiterate rate. Practically, this means that at Independence, Zimbabwe's illiteracy rate stood at 55 percent. /7. The current illiteracy rate is estimated to stand at 37.7 percent.

Structure of Education and Contributions to its Costs:

The present structure of the school system in Zimbabwe comprises seven years of primary education, four years of secondary education up to 'O' levels (grade 11) and 2 years of secondary education up to 'A' levels (grade 13). This compares to a more common universal pattern of 6 years of primary education, three years of secondary education and another three years of vocational technical or higher academic education, adding to a total of 12 years.

At Independence, Zimbabwe inherited a highly diverse educational system in terms of types of schools, unit cost and fee structures and this diversity has continued. Table 5 sets out the different types of schools with related costs both to the Government of Zimbabwe and to parents. In general, the Government invests more into the education of the urban child than into that of the rural child; conversely, the parental cost is higher for the rural child than for the urban child. This is an inherited pattern resulting from the policies of successive colonial governments which provided education in urban areas while leaving the provision of rural education to missionaries and local authorities.

Different categories of schools have different fee structures in terms of both Government and parental expenditure on education. The first category is that of 'Independent Schools'. Independent schools are elite schools catering to mainly the wealthy, who in Zimbabwe are still predominantly white. The annual recurrent costs vary from Z\$871 for primary day scholars to Z\$2,250 for a secondary boarding scholar. The Government subsidizes these students at the same rate as other private schools. The subsidies range from Z\$337 to Z\$513 per pupil. However, parental costs are high, ranging from Z\$885 for a primary day scholar to Z\$1940 for a secondary boarder. The Government has taken the step of insisting on such schools having an enrollment of at least 60 percent black students, although this goal, considering the fees involved is probably unrealistic. The high recurrent costs in the independent schools are mainly related to the number and levels of teachers employed. These schools maintain a far more favourable teacher-pupil ratio than all other types of schools, sometimes as low as 1 to 14 as compared to 1 to 30 or 40 under Government controlled schools. This low teacher/pupil ratio would not be economically feasible if the Government had to pay for all the teachers in these schools.

TABLE 5.
1983 Summary of Cost Data

	Total Cost per pupil not incl. Prof. Sal.		Total Recurrent Cost per pupil		Teacher's Average Salary	Govt. Cost		Parental Cost		School Cost		Govt. Cost Total Cost		Parental Cost Total Cost	
	Day	Bding	Day	Bding		Day	Bding	Day	Bding	Day	Bding	Day	Bding	Day	Bding
	SECONDARY														
"Independent"	714	1449	1539	2250	13 275	490	513	1126	1946	-178	-209	0.32	0.23	0.80	0.86
Govt. A Urban	198	1068	666	1611	11 253	584	1303	88	316	-6		0.88	0.81	0.13	0.20
Govt. A Rural	382	762	840	1367	10 959	753	977	77	391	0		0.91	0.71	0.09	0.29
Govt. B Urban	80	716*	449	1210*	9 459	413	1124*	36	88*	0		0.92	0.93*	0.08*	0.07*
Govt. B Rural	141	531*	499	941*	9 575	464	849*	36	92	-1		0.93	0.90*	0.07*	0.10*
Urban Mission	121	736	507	1363	7 908	367	467	166	819	0	77	0.72	0.54	0.33	0.60
Rural Mission	140	270	416	565	7 453	306	329	169	258	-28	-22	0.74	0.58	0.41	0.56
Farm	92	186	420	515	6 772	324	347	3	3	93	165	0.77	0.67	0.01	0.01
Rural Council	83	150	321	415	6 236	249	289	114	216	-16	-90	0.78	0.70	0.36	0.52
District Council	67	396	313	715	6 684	257	354	110	249	-49	112	0.82	0.50	0.35	0.35
Line	17		272		6 232	247		39		-10		0.91		0.14	
PRIMARY															
"Independent"	306	861	871	1411	12 734	337	337	885	1525	-351	-451	0.39	0.24	1.02	1.08
Govt. A Urban	79	981	364	1324	9 919	353	1093	20	238	-9		0.97	0.83	0.05	0.18
Govt. A Rural	188	782	471	1122	9 087	462	894	14	232	-5		0.98	0.80	0.03	0.21
Govt. B Urban	21		188		5 886	187		2		0		0.99		0.01	
Govt. B Rural	30		166		5 397	164		2		0		0.99		0.01	
Urban Mission	30		246		6 715	199		55		-9		0.81		0.22	
Rural Mission	15	126*	129	285*	4 521	125	176*	5	149*	1	-4*	0.97	0.62*	0.04	0.52*
Farm	13		108		3 595	106		6		1		0.98		0.06	
Rural Council	12		109		3 803	106		5		0		0.97		0.05	
District Council	11		80		2 833	83		17		-2		1.04		0.21	
Line	13		177		6 101	174		4		1		0.98		0.02	

NOTE: All figures denote averages taken from larger sample, except where an asterisk (*) is present, indicating that there was only one school in the sample.

Government Schools comprised until recently the most prevalent types of schools. These schools are divided into four categories as follows:

- Government Primary Group A Urban
- Government Primary Group B Rural
- Government Secondary Group A Urban
- Government Secondary Group B Rural

The unit cost of education in Government Schools has been lowered considerably by the mandated 1983 teacher pupil ratios. These ratios were raised from 1:30 to 1:40 at the primary level and from 1:22,5 to about 1:30 for secondary education. Moreover, the gap between Group A (former European) and Group B (former African) schools has narrowed considerably. The unit costs of education in Government Schools in 1982 were as follows:

	<u>Day</u>	<u>Boarding</u>
Secondary Group A Urban	666 (per year)	1,511
Secondary Group B Rural	449	1,210
Primary Group A Urban	364	1,325
Primary Group B Rural	188	N/A

Parental Costs were as follows:

Secondary Group A	1982	54	316
	1983	60	360
Secondary Group B	1982	24	88
	1983	60	150
Primary Group A	1982	20	270
	1983	20	360
Primary Group B	1982	2	N/A
	1983	2	N/A

For sometime, the Government has been considering raising school fees in its schools. Recently the Deputy Minister of Education said "...the increase of fees for 1987 was being considered by Ministry officials in view of rising costs of maintaining schools". /8. Shortly afterwards the new Government School fees were announced. Secondary tuition fees were raised by 8.5 percent. Extra-territorial fees (fees for non-Zimbabweans) for primary schools were raised by 25 percent a term and for secondary schools, fees were raised by 50 percent. /9.

Of concern to the Government has been the high recurrent cost of boarding education compared to day education. Boarding education costs from 2.3 to 3.6 times more than day education in the same type of school. In 1983, the Government decided that boarding fees should be raised to an economic ratio which is closer to real costs. /10. In addition, the Government has made a conscious effort to restrict the expansion of government boarding schools. Boarding education in government institutions would be strictly limited to pupils for whom boarding is essential, that is, children with no access to a day school, children from broken homes, and children requiring special education.

Mission Schools (grant aided schools) form another category of schools in Zimbabwe. Mission schools are considered to provide relatively high quality education at relatively low costs. The mission schools manage to keep low unit costs because they generally keep to the government regulated teacher pupil ratio. A large number of them run self-reliance projects which not only provide them with lower cost, food but often include other income generating activities.

The last category of schools in Zimbabwe is the District/Rural Council Schools. The majority of schools in Zimbabwe today are of this type. District Councils were formed in 1980, the District Council Schools are assisted and supervised in their work by District Councils.

Although the Government contributes to education with teacher's salaries*, per capita grants and capital grants, all schools charge and collect a variety of fees. School fees generally are used to cover both capital and recurrent costs of education. Fees are collected for a number of purposes including "tuition" fees, boarding fees, book fees, caution (disciplinary) fees, general purpose fees, sports fees, uniform fees, and building fees. There are disparities in fees charged by the various schools described and these fees are collected by a variety of bodies. Some fees are collected by the central government, others by the responsible authorities, such as mission bodies or District Councils. There are cases where Parents Committees also collect and retain fees; building fees are a case in point. However, building fees can also be collected by District Councils or Mission bodies. In rural areas, the District Council Rural Secondary schools average a fee of Z\$110 a year, which contrasts sharply with the relatively low charges made by the Government Rural Secondary Schools at Z\$60 a year. There appears to be little uniformity as to fees charged, even within the same

* The Government does not pay for all school teachers. There are some schools, especially the independent schools, who hire teachers in addition to the government entitlement and pay their salaries.

types of schools. For example, some District Councils and Missions charge less than half the fees charged by their counterparts for similar services. /11. Tuition fees are prohibited in primary schools. However, primary schools typically charge building, caution, sports and uniform fees.

In general, school fees provide additional resources to education which if unavailable would have to come from somewhere, possibly from the Government. Although the Government's contribution to education has drastically increased since independence, the costs passed on to parents have increased at an even greater rate. This is particularly evident since about 1983. Firm statistics are not available but we estimate that parents now provide between 10 - 20 percent of the capital and recurrent costs of the educational system.

Reducing Unit Costs.

An important way in which Zimbabwe has attempted to cut education costs is the raising of teacher-student ratios (this becomes an variable in cutting costs, with lower teacher-pupil ratios raising the unit cost.) During 1983, the Government of Zimbabwe decided to raise the teacher-pupil ratios from an average 1:30 to a uniform 1:40 at primary level and from 1:22.5 to 1:30 for secondary education. According to the Ministry of Education's Committee on School Fees, substantial savings were made in the 1983 school year by this decision. From Table 6 below it would appear that the Government made a potential savings of Z\$54,768,423 a year (using the 1983 enrollment figures). /12.

According to the latest available figure the average unit cost per year for primary education in Zimbabwe is Z\$143.70 (1985 figures) and the unit cost of secondary education is Z\$308.90 (1985 figures). /13. While this is a considerable decrease compared to 1982 or 1983, the increased number of students being educated accounts for the increase in the national budget.

The Zimbabwe Government has recognised that short of calling upon a combination of financial resources and explicit involvement in education by other parties, the realization of satisfactory levels of expenditure would be difficult. A National System seems to be evolving, one that permits participation and control from a variety of local sources. This nascent system involves the state, parents, churches, companies and local authorities which all contribute to education.

Following is a description of aspects of decentralization which have also cut the costs to government of expanding education.

TABLE 6

POTENTIAL SAVINGS RESULTING FROM REVISED STAFFING RATIOS (1983 figures)

	Projected Enrolments	No. of Teachers/Lecturers Required Under Old Ratios	No. of Teachers/Lecturers Required Under New Ratios	Number of Posts Saved	Cost Differential
Secondary (1:30)					
Government	110 066	5 503	3 669		\$
Private	250 314	11 125	8 344	1 834	14 734 356
	360 380	16 628	12 013	2 781	16 705 467
				4 615	31 439 823
Primary (1:40)					
Government	246 508	7 023	6 163		
Private	1 929 933	53 020	48 248	860	5 203 000
	2 176 441	60 043	54 411	4 772	15 509 000
				5 632	20 712 000
Teacher Education (1:20)					
Government	5 246	506	262		
Private	1 229	85	62	244	2 391 200
	6 475	591	324	23	225 400
				267	2 616 600
Total:					\$54 768 423
Total for 6 months:					\$27 384 211

Taken from Report of the Review Committee on Education.
 Report by Commission on School Fees, Ministry of Education, 1983.

Participation by Parents in Supporting Recurrent Costs and Capital Development

As the previous sections indicate, Zimbabwean parents play a greater financial role in the education of their children than ever before. A committee appointed to investigate school fees in 1983 supported the Government of Zimbabwe's policy of decentralization and higher fees. The committee recommended that the policy should be strengthened by more decentralization of financial responsibilities to local authorities such as District Councils and Municipalities, and eventually to Parent School Committees. /14.

Another area where parental support has been important is in reconstruction. At Independence, Zimbabwe had the task of reconstructing schools, mostly in the rural areas, which had been destroyed or damaged during the war. In order to minimise cost to itself, the Government adopted the policy which placed the onus on parents to provide physical facilities through self reliance. In this case, school reconstruction, expansion and the maintenance of schools and other buildings was to be achieved by self reliance. Impressive achievements have since been noted in rural areas where an expansion of school buildings has taken place since independence. Approximately 90 to 95 percent of the schools have been constructed by this method. According to the Report of the School Fees Committee:

"There is little doubt that the expansion of school places, through the policy of self reliance, has been not only highly successful but also popular, for whilst it has imposed a fairly high "tax" on rural inhabitants, this tax has, to a large extent been in the form of labour and the making of bricks." /15.

The Ministry of Education has estimated the total contributions by all parents to capital development at Z\$20.61 million for 1980 and Z\$77.07 million for 1985.

School Committees (or parents associations) represent a measure of decentralization and cost cutting and these are prevalent throughout the country. School Committees, comprised of parents, decide with assistance from District Council officials, on school levies and general purpose fees. Generally levies are set for specific purposes with the agreement of the parents and have not been a source of controversy. As noted before, the majority of schools in Zimbabwe are District Council Schools.

School Management Committees are prevalent in urban schools. These can be considered equivalent to the Parent School

Committees found mostly in the rural areas. The Government in 1982 decided to enter into legal agreements with properly constituted Parents Associations. Management Status Agreements, as they are called, represent the willingness of the Government to enter into partnership with parents of children attending Government Schools. These Management Status Agreements provide a legal framework under which parents acting jointly can augment the educational, cultural and other services of Government schools. These Management Status Agreements deal with financial resources, management and other skills available among parents. In the main, School Committees and Management Status Agreements concern themselves with recurrent expenditure items, additional teachers, learning materials, maintenance and improvement of facilities such as libraries, laboratories, cultural and sports training. Therefore important self help and self reliant developments are already in place in the Parents School Committees and the Management Status Agreements.

ZIMSCI

An important program at the secondary school level is the Zimbabwe Science (ZIMSCI) project. ZIMSCI is a collaborative effort involving the University of Zimbabwe Science Education Centre and the Ministry of Education. The project has created simplified kits which contain all the apparatus and chemicals needed to carry out experiments at Form I through Form IV levels. The kits are accompanied by well structured pupils' and teachers' guide books at an estimated cost per school of Z\$1,500 for the Form I and Form II levels and Z\$2,500 for the Form III and Form IV levels. The kits are produced locally with two-thirds local and one-third imported materials. In contrast a conventional laboratory is estimated to cost between Z\$35,000 to Z\$40,000. Therefore, ZIMSCI can provide a kit which is about 30 to 40 times cheaper than the conventional laboratory. The Ministry of Education has also designed and produced a solar powered cassette recorder which goes with these kits. The cassette lessons which run for about fifteen minutes, can be used in the remote areas of the country. /16.

Approximately 1,000 secondary schools throughout Zimbabwe used the ZIMSCI materials during 1984 and 1985. In 1984, students who

started with ZIMSCI in 1981 sat for their "O" level examinations. Of the 25,000 candidates 29 percent passed with "C" or better. It has been estimated that 70 percent of those entered came from rural day secondary schools. These results are above the national average which was between 18 percent and 20 percent in 1984. Usually, within schools, science results are better than in other subjects. Although the influence of various background variables have not been taken into account, the results indicate that the ZIMSCI approach has proved effective and cut costs dramatically. The future development of ZIMSCI will be closely linked with the new "O" level science syllabus to be introduced in all Zimbabwe secondary schools. The syllabus follows closely the approach to science that is reflected in the ZIMSCI materials. /17.

ZINTEC

In 1981, the Zimbabwe Government responding to the rising primary school enrollments and also faced with an increase in the number of untrained and underqualified teachers, launched a new primary teacher training program called ZINTEC (Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education).

ZINTEC has been the most significant recent development in teacher education in Zimbabwe. There are five ZINTEC Regional Teachers Training Centres (one of them, Gwanda ZINTEC, was financed by USAID) each catering for 200 student teachers, three times a year. Together these have the potential of producing 3,000 teachers a year. The entry qualifications are four years of secondary education and training time is divided between school, practical teaching and college courses. The graduates of the ZINTEC Colleges are certified by the University of Zimbabwe and training consists of 16 weeks initial College Residential course in theory, 10 terms practice teaching in school and 16 weeks final residential course. /18.

Zimbabwe's policy makers view ZINTEC as one of the cures for the untrained teachers now proliferating in the country's school system. ZINTEC however, is not only an innovative teacher training program but a cost saving one as well. The student teachers are in training colleges for a short period before they are deployed into schools. These student teachers are actually teaching but are paid less than a fully qualified teacher. Although the training is over four years, instead of the previous three years, under the ZINTEC method teachers get into schools earlier than before thus the cost of training, and the cost of teaching salaries are reduced, while new teachers are provided for primary schools. Ministry of Education officials believe

ZINTEC trained teachers are at least as effective as those trained under previous methods. However, because there has only been one graduating class of ZINTEC teachers to date, their performance is compared with conventionally trained teachers and has not been fully evaluated. The Government of Zimbabwe wants ZINTEC type training to become the dominant form of teacher education in the country. /19.

Distance Education Materials

The AID funded Distance Education Materials project aims to provide printed low cost educational learning materials to pupils in as many primary and secondary schools as possible with particular emphasis on rural schools. The project was begun in February 1984 and is currently producing learning materials for all schools.

The project was designed to address the critical shortage of books in many schools in Zimbabwe and the cost of such books. The Ministry of Education aims to print at least five million booklets a year which will also include teachers guides and syllabuses. By April 1985, the Ministry of Education through its Curriculum Development teams had produced about 150 booklets on different subjects, with a total of approximately 2.5 million copies produced. Printed materials are dispatched from Government Printers in Harare, to various regional education offices for pickup by school officials. These materials offer a chance for teachers to try out new teaching methods but more importantly, they represent the first steps towards curriculum reform aimed at making Zimbabwean schools more relevant to the country's developmental needs. This project has significantly lowered the cost of educational materials. The average cost of these booklets is about Z\$0.28, whereas that of an equivalent text would be Z\$2.50. Most significant is the fact that the distance education materials are being provided to pupils who would not have had any educational materials at all. At the institutional level, this project has provided the impetus for the Ministry of Education to develop and train its own staff in curriculum development and design. /20.

Computerization of Regions and Management Improvement

The Government, with financial assistance from AID, initiated the Computerization of Regions project. The Ministry of Education has not been able adequately to deal with the volume and the rapid increases in the size and complexity of data and reporting generated. The pressure from increased numbers has resulted in glaring inefficiencies and loss of time in responding to needs of

students, teachers and the community. All Ministry of Education staff, especially those in the Regional offices are handling increased staffing workloads, such as payrolls, distribution of educational materials, supervision of thousands of more schools and teachers.

The increased operations of the Ministry have not been matched with a corresponding increase in staffing. The same number of personnel have to deal with an increased volume of work. The Regional Computerization project aims to enhance the Ministry's capacity to process data and expedite its administrative functions. Planning officers and staff at Head Office and at the nine Regional offices are being taught the use of micro-computers in planning exercises which will assist them to interpret Government education policies better, to guide education officers, and to advise the Government of the impact of its educational program. In addition, forms, administrative guides, functions and procedures will be simplified and streamlined.

The project has already made some functions of the Ministry of Education more efficient. These include data capture and analysis and administrative functions: this has reduced time spent on these functions, reducing costs and paperwork. Eventually this project will effect larger savings because the Ministry of Education will not have to employ additional staff. The project works closely with the commercial computer software companies in Zimbabwe to ensure an enhanced overall computer capacity in the country. Of note is the fact that the project is making maximum use of local computer talent available in both the private and public sectors. /21.

Technical Kits

Secondary School Technical Kits provide us another example of how the Government has strived to use relevant cost effective appropriate instructional technologies in both rural and urban schools. Those changes have meant an improvement of the quality of secondary school technical education.

At Independence, the Government decided on a new policy of active support and promotion of technical and science education. As a result more inputs have been channelled into science and technical teacher training curriculum development and the supply of basic technical equipment.

Technical and Science education require a supply of basic tools and equipment (eg. Metalwork, Woodwork and Home Economics) if successful practical learning is to take place. In this regard, the Government has decided to change from the conventional approach of supporting fully equipped laboratories and workshops which require large components of imported

materials to have science and technical subject kits made up of largely local equipment augmented by a smaller component of foreign materials.

A conventional school technical laboratory or workshop would cost Z\$31,000, however, under this AID funded project, the technical kits are being provided at an average cost of Z\$3,000 per kit per school. Basically the project promotes science and technical subjects by supporting the MOE's production of printed pupil and teacher materials and inservice courses.

The original plan was to distribute 150 kits each year with each school receiveing 3 kits. However, to date only about 350 schools have actually received technical kits. /22.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

With the start of majority rule in 1980, Zimbabwe embarked on an ambitious program of expanding and equalizing educational opportunities. This program was characterized by universal primary education, large increases in secondary school enrollments and massive expenditures.

The expansion of the educational system was accompanied by significant attempts to control costs through cost cutting and cost sharing measures, and increased efficiencies. While fixing a date to this development is somewhat arbitrary, 1983 seems to be a watershed in that the need to reduce government expenses and shift more costs to parents was recognized with the Report of the Committee on Fees. Interestingly, however, this report has remained a confidential document. There has been no central policy statement on decentralization or the need to control costs. Rather, what we have seen is a series of steps, taken in response to the increasing costs, that form a pattern of shifting more educational costs to the users and increasing efficiencies by lowering the unit costs of the system. It has also been since 1983 that large increases in the amount and variety of school fees have taken place. It is estimated that today these fees make up between 10 and 20 percent of the total cost of primary and secondary education. This compares to a virtually completely Government financed system in 1980. In the area of capital expenditures, however, this has been recognised as largely a parent/community responsibility since the inception of majority rule; generated by the need for large scale reconstruction of rural schools after the war.

Another significant step was taken in 1983 when teacher/student ratios were raised by 25 percent.

Most schools in Zimbabwe now have Parents Committees which help to oversee the administrative and finance management of these schools. While community and parental involvement is rapidly taking place in the areas of finance, the pace has been slower in areas of program and administration. It is still rare for parents and community representatives to have any formal input as to curriculum or school administration (selection of teachers for example). Not surprisingly, the Ministry of Education has firm control over hiring the large percentage of teachers from each school, curricula, and monitoring of staff. It is very rare for communities to hire or pay school staff for any of the types of schools in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, rural communities do exert considerable informal influence on principals and their staff. This is particularly so in District Council and private schools. Also the numbers of schools committees and PTA Advisory Boards are increasing rapidly. The main approach Zimbabwe has used to reduce costs has been in developing programs designed to increase efficiency and cut unit costs. The major programs of this sort include computerization of regional MOE offices, rural public works, ZIMSCI, ZINTEC and the development of low cost Distance Education materials.

These programs are having a significant role in providing education for increasing numbers of students at a lower cost. Without these programs the cost of expanding primary and secondary education would have been considerably higher than they are now, and possibly falling on Government.

Zimbabwe's movement to reduce costs through decentralization and other programs raise a number of issues. The first, which has already been alluded to is the question of how much control should be invested in parents/community to match increasing financial responsibility.

Another important issue is that of quality. This is a complex issue. There is no doubt that while teacher pupil ratios increase the quality of instruction will decrease. Will schools built by communities be of an equal standard in construction quality to those built by Government? The evidence is they are not. However, we must look at the quality of instruction for whom. Zimbabwe has, in a very short period of time, transformed an elitist educational system in which very few were educated to an essentially egalitarian one in which all its children have the opportunity to receive primary education, and many to go on to secondary education. Another complication is that this issue of equality is often viewed by black Zimbabweans as merely a subterfuge for those dissatisfied with the educational advances for black Zimbabweans. Certainly the ZINTEC, ZIMSCI, and other

programs described above here have increased the quality of the educational programs throughout the country. Yet there is no evidence that the resources directed to the formerly elite schools have appreciably diminished. The main change taking place in these schools has been the racial integration of staff and student body.

A third issue relating to decentralization is how much expense can the local communities absorb and, concomitantly, at what point must expansion stop. Currently there does not appear to be any significant resentment among parents and committees to the increased costs they are bearing. There is widespread recognition that the Government has made a real commitment to education and that its funds are limited. It is recognized that the large yearly percentage increases in education's share of the budget will have to stop. In fact, for the last several years increases in the budget have remained at about 11 percent cited above. However, the Government has not made any significant attempts to cap the system as a whole and no check has been made on secondary school enrollments. The more costly but politically acceptable route is taken of allowing all primary school graduates to enter Form I. The consequence is a very high wastage rate in subsequent years. In fact, the problem of unemployed primary school graduates and secondary school leavers has become quite serious. The Government is now taking the educationally sound strategy of providing new technical training programs for secondary schools geared to manpower needs. USAID, through its BEST program, has been instrumental in developing a number of these schools and programs.

The foregoing analysis suggests that Zimbabwe's educational strategies are dynamic and well thought out in their attempt to meet efficiently the educational needs and aspirations of its population and at the same time, control costs. It suggests, however, that these strategies are in transition and moving ahead of the development of an articulated policy which would recognize the absolute need to limit the expansion of the educational budget.

FOOTNOTES:

- /1. Carnegie Quarterly, Volume XXIX - No. 3. Summer 1984, p.2.
- /2. Growth with Equity. An Economic Policy Statement, Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, February 1981 - G. Chekenyere Thesis, p 269.
- /3. Growth with Equity IBID. p 11.
- /4. N.G.G. Makura. Secretary for Education in the Sunday Mail/September 19, 1982, quoted in Education and Socio-Economic Equality in Zimbabwe by P. Mazvero, p. 12.
- /5. G. Chekenyere, Op.Cit. p. 310 -316.
- /6. Education and Training Sector Study, World Bank Document Report No. 3763, Zimbabwe, February 1982.
- /7. Report on the Census, 1982. Central Statistical Office.
- /8. The Herald, October 16, 1986, Harare, Zimbabwe
- /9. The Herald, October 18, 1986, Harare, Zimbabwe.
- /10. Report of the School Fees Committee, Ministry of Education and Culture, November 1983.
- /11. IBID p. 33
- /13. IBID p. 3.
- /14. IBID p. 22.
- /15. IBID p. 24, 25, 26.
- /16. IBID p. 39.
- /17. Norman Reynolds & Mary Chirume. A National Financial and Management System for the Education Sector. Harare, May 1986.

- /18. Francis Mazvero. Education and Socio-Economic Equality in Zimbabwe. Harare, 1982. p. 8.
- /19. Francis Mazvero. Educational Development in Zimbabwe: The Main Issues and Problems. Harare, 1982 p. 17 - 18.
- /20. IBID.
- /21. Project Description Document produced by the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Development Unit, 1984. Also see BEST Projects Profile, 1985.
- /22. Computer Services needs of the Ministry of Education, Kurt D. Moses, Harare, 1982. Ministry of Education Project Description, 1982. Also see BEST Project Profile, 1986.
- /23. Project Description document produced by the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Development Unit, 1982. Also see BEST Projects Profile, 1985.