

# HRRRC

## HUMAN RESOURCES RESEARCH CENTRE

OCCASIONAL PAPER NUMBER 1

March 1989

*Minister of Primary and Secondary Education*

*The Hon. Fay Chung, M.P.*

---

**Policies for Primary and  
Secondary Education in Zimbabwe:**

**A Response to the  
World Bank Report**

**The Human Resources Research Centre (HRRC), which, is based in the University of Zimbabwe's Faculty of Education, opened in January 1988. The HRRC's decision to initiate an Occasional Paper series was based on the realization that there is a dearth of published research and policy-related material, focusing on the special needs of sub-Saharan Africa and limited publication outlets for African scholars.**

**Papers in this series are intended to disseminate research findings and to stimulate policy dialogue. The series includes works which, in the opinion of the HRRC Editorial Board, contribute significantly to the state of knowledge about human resources issues and warrant wide distribution. Occasional papers are widely circulated in Zimbabwe and internationally. Items in the series are selected by the Editorial Board. The contents of individual papers do not necessarily reflect the positions or opinions of either the University or the HRRC.**

**We are honoured and pleased to initiate our Occasional Paper series with an insightful interview with Comrade Fay Chung, Zimbabwe's Minister of Primary and Secondary Education. This paper provides a comprehensive response to recently published World Bank recommendations for the region's education sector. This occasional paper represents the full text of an interview which Cde Chung granted in late 1987; portions of the interview have been reprinted in the first issue of the Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research (Vol 1, no 1, March 1989).**

**Production and distribution of the Occasional Papers series is made possible by generous grants from the Swedish International Development Authority and the United States Agency for International Development.**

**Victor Levine  
HRRC Coordinator  
March 1989**

# **POLICIES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE:** **a Response to the World Bank** **Report**

*Fay Chung*  
*Minister of Primary and Secondary Education*  
*Zimbabwe*

**ZJER:** Comrade Minister, where appropriate, we would appreciate your answering questions first from the perspective of the region (sub-Saharan Africa) in your role as a leading authority, then from the perspective of Zimbabwe.

What are your general reactions to the WB Report?

**CHUNG:** On the whole I liked it. I thought that it showed some serious thought in the area of education and that along general lines it was correct. For example, I think it is true that we can improve the quality of education through greater emphasis say on printed materials and other educational materials. I think the question of innovative ways of lowering the cost of education has to be taught and I think that the WB is correct in saying so. On the whole, my reaction is favourable but I think there are a couple of areas where I would disagree quite strongly.

**ZJER:** What are your feelings about such a project being undertaken by an international body based in the United States? Could this project have been undertaken by African scholars who have a better understanding of local conditions?

**CHUNG:** I don't have problems about the WB doing such a study – I think it should be free and it is free to do such a study. But it is also up to African scholars to participate creatively. I think the problem really is that there is no facility for African scholars to get together and do research and many African scholars are over extended in their particular universities and are therefore not able to undertake research. Perhaps the problem is the infrastructure for African scholars to undertake the work. However one serious problem arises when the interests of outside bodies impinge on policy in Africa and this does happen frequently: you will find that quite often policy recommendations would be made which Africa would not consider as really the priority because this is seen from an outside perspective by people who have other interests than our own. That is the danger even with the question of cost effectiveness. I think very often the research is very narrowly based and in fact quite unsound and yet decisions are being made based on those research programmes that have been carried out by bodies such as the WB.

## THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA

**ZJER:** The Report makes some fairly strong and negative statements about the state of education in Africa. Do you tend to agree with these, in general?

The main educational issues in Africa today are the stagnation of enrollments and the erosion of quality. (page 2)

**CHUNG:** As an educationalist who has been in African education for more than 20 years, I do not think this is true. What has happened is that 20 or 30 years ago very few children were in school. For example, when I taught at Harare Secondary we were accepting 4 percent of the Grade 7 pupils and the Grade 7 pupils themselves represented less than 50 percent of the year group so actually we were ac-

cepting 2 percent of the year group. The number of children who got as far as Grade 3 or 4 was very small. So when you look at the situation then and describe the standard of education, you are talking about a standard which applied to only 2 percent. Of course the standard was high, but it was a false standard. I remember in the 60s there was an official ban on publications comparing the examination results of black schools and white schools in this country. The reason was that at that time black schools, our 2 percent, were getting 98 percent passes at "O" level whereas the white schools were getting 40 percent passes. If you went and published these results you would have been sacked from the Ministry. I think this is why one is talking about assumptions that quality has been eroded when in fact I think the research would not really support this because if you say the top 2 percent achieved 98 percent passes and now the top 85 percent achieve 30 percent passes, what are the actual quality levels? You will find that you can't very well say the quality of the top 2 percent was superior to the quality of the 85 percent: these are false statistics. Even on the question of the stagnation of enrolments, it may be that Zimbabwe is a bit different from other African countries; I don't think we have yet had a stagnation of enrolments.

**ZJER:** Are things as desperate as the Report suggests?

**CHUNG:** I would say these are really broad generalizations not based on accurate measurements of educational quality. In my experience, the quality of education was pretty poor 20 years ago. Despite the stringent selection measures which allowed only the top 2 percent of the primary leavers to enter secondary school, only 4 percent of these were literate in English. The quality was so low that you had to teach literacy in Form 1. I don't believe the quality has gone down at all.

## GENERALIZING ABOUT THE CONTINENT

**ZJER:** While the Report does have disclaimers about the dangers of over generalizing it does attempt to generalize about the 39 countries in its study. Given the diversity of the region, are such generalizations useful? Would it have been wiser to have a series of separate reports on sub-regional groupings?

Any discussion of policies and priorities for a region as vast and diverse as sub-Saharan Africa naturally runs the risks of overstating commonalities and understating differences (page xi)

**CHUNG:** I think to some extent one can generalize usefully. I think there are some common features, although, of course, it would depend on what the research data were that led to these findings. So I don't think there is a problem in making some common statements. Maybe it depends on which common statements.

## **PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

**ZJER:** A pervasive theme of the Report is the promotion of private schools and the increased privatization of finance. Zimbabwe has one of the largest private school sectors in Africa. In addition, much of the responsibility for school construction is currently passed on to local communities. Many families are hard pressed to meet the costs of school fees and uniforms. What are your reactions to the WB recommendations in this area?

It is clear that families and nongovernmental organizations bear a significant and growing portion of the financial burden of education in much of Africa. It has been estimated, for example, that private expenditure accounted for ..... 31 percent of total national spending on education between 1975 and 1980 in Zimbabwe (page 16)

**CHUNG:** I feel that to some extent they are correct, because the responsibility for children must remain with the parents who decided to have them. I think it would be wrong for the government to take over all responsibility from the parents. Parents should have the right to decide on the number of children they want but they must also accept responsibility for their children. I have always felt that it is wrong for government to deprive parents of such a strong say and a strong responsibility for their children. But there are problems if you say the parents are solely responsible. For example in Zimbabwe, 30 to 40 percent of the population are so poor they are practically destitute. According to research I have been reading, 30 to 40 percent of the peasants are earning something like \$120,00 per year and at the moment the average annual cost of education is about \$300,00 a child. Now if you say a parent earning \$120,00 a year must cover the cost of educating his/her eight children, you are more or less saying the poor cannot be educated. On the other hand there is no sense in subsidizing those who are capable of paying for the education of their offspring. If 60 to 70 percent of our population actually can afford to pay something then why should we subsidize that 60 to 70 percent? Just because there is this 30 to 40 percent who are really desperately poor? I think there must be a formula which would allow us to ensure that the children of the poor 30 to 40 percent are educated whilst not subsidizing the very wealthy or the middle class. I think it is something that you can't just take as absolutely good, but something that has to be tempered by concern for all children. However, the other side of it is that by making education available and by asking parents (as we have done in Zimbabwe) to share some of the costs, you do boost economic productivity. As you know, peasants in this country have boosted their productivity several hundred percent and I think part of the reason for this is the desire to be able to pay for things like education. The very fact that education has not been entirely free has been a spur to productivity and I think most communities are proud to do it. Every community that I have been to is very proud of what it has achieved. Parents say "We did this on our own and we

want to do more." In fact this is the demand everywhere I have been going in the provinces: parents want to build more schools and to do more for their children. Actually we are now being forced to curb this local enthusiasm because we would end up with so many schools. People at grassroots are prepared and want to do more.

## POPULATION GROWTH

**ZJER:** Another theme in the Report is the impact of Africa's rate of population growth on education. Would you care to comment on that?

The impressive gains recently won in African education are now seriously threatened by circumstances outside the sector, including Africa's explosive population growth.... Between 1970 and 1980, while the world's population was growing at an average annual rate of 1.9 percent, Africa's population grew at 2.9 percent, one and a half times the world's rate. (page 18)

**CHUNG:** It is important to have population education and population control but this is only a small part of the whole answer. There is a tendency to look at population control as if it is a panacea; as if all your problems will be solved once you fix your population but I don't think that is true at all. Of course having a controlled growth of population would lead to easier planning and better use of resources; but there is a tendency, particularly from the West (which may even have racist roots) to say Africa is over populated and Europe is under populated, when in fact if you were to look at it objectively, many African countries (for example, Zambia and Mozambique) are terribly under populated. Zim-



babwe may not be quite as under populated but definitely a lot of our neighbours are under populated. They don't have sufficient personnel to develop their resources.

## EDUCATIONAL FINANCE

**ZJER:** Despite the Report's generally negative description of the state of education and funding prospects, the Report's first recommendation is that overall expenditure on education be increased. This certainly seems to be the case in Zimbabwe where allocations to the new Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education now exceed spending on defence. What is your response to that recommendation?

... most African countries should try to increase both public and private expenditures on education (page 27)

**CHUNG:** I would say there is an optimal amount governments have to spend if they are going to get a product that is worth while. If they go below that amount they start getting rubbish. On the other hand, one could say if they go above the optimal figure they may not get more than they would have with a lesser amount. To give you an example, before Independence, I was in African education and we were getting one nineteenth per child of what was spent on a white child. Despite this terrible disparity, African education was, in many ways, more efficient than "European" white education. The white schools were full of luxuries and wastage. Even their teacher/pupil ratio which nominally was 1:22 was de facto 1:12. When we came back after Independence white schools had one teacher to 12 children and yet that did not actually mean better quality education. I agree, we must get a reasonable amount of money to allow us to do a good job. In countries I have been to I have seen education votes which were so low that you couldn't do the job properly, but I think the sort of thing we had for European education was very wasteful.

**ZJER:** Many of the Report's recommendations regard the allocation of funds away from tertiary to primary education. These recommendations are generally based on rate of return studies. In the current budget presented last week, there was substantial growth in funding for primary/secondary education. What are your reactions to the Bank's recommendations? Do you feel that this approach (rate of return analysis) is a good basis for such policy decisions?

A recent survey of cost-benefit studies conducted in sixteen African countries suggests average social rates of return to investment in

African education of the following magnitudes: primary 26 percent; secondary, 17 percent; and tertiary, 13 percent .... If the costs of tertiary education were to be prorated and the value of the research and other outputs of the education were to be assessed broadly to include some that may accrue to society in general, rather than only to the individuals who receive the education, then the rate of return to tertiary education would certainly appear higher. (page 22)

**CHUNG:** I think the rate of return analysis is too simplistic and is not a good basis for policy decisions. On the other hand, there must be a balance between primary and tertiary education. If you put too much emphasis on primary education ... for example, our friends in Tanzania have done that they have given everybody primary education and then less than 4 percent secondary and put a minute number into university and tertiary institutions ... I think that's a very serious mistake because it is not possible to bring about development if you have just a very small number of high level professionals with a vast body of very lowly educated people. Development is only possible where the general populace has quite a reasonable understanding of what you are trying to achieve. I would say we have to have quite a high investment in primary and secondary education. But I

think if you neglect tertiary education you get into a complete imbalance where you don't have people advanced enough to come out with innovative answers. My impression is that people with primary and secondary education and even lower levels of tertiary education can only imitate things they have seen but the really creative and innovative people are those who have a far higher level of skills and education. We are in a very difficult situation where you need high level people to bring about the creative and realistic answers to our problems and this cannot be done by people with only primary and secondary education. Neglecting tertiary education will only lead us to technological dependence on the developed world.

## EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

**ZJER:** In general, Zimbabwe has received very favourable mention in the report. For example, there is a feature on expansion since Independence. In fact, many of the Report's criticisms simply do not apply to Zimbabwe at all and, in many instances, Zimbabwe appears to have already implemented many of the Report's recommendations. Would you care to comment on this?

**CHUNG:** I think it is true that we have taken the policy of expanding access to primary and secondary education to more or less everybody and we went for lower cost alternatives as opposed to say Zambia and Tanzania where they went for higher cost alternatives, such as boarding schools at secondary level. Because they went for higher cost alternatives, the number of children who could get into secondary was minute. I think in Zambia it is less than 17 percent, it keeps on going down. Some years ago they were allowing 4 percent through in Tanzania but that low percentage was inevitable given their policy decision to ensure that secondary education would be mainly boarding. The reason why they came to that decision was that they were following the pattern of the past, and then they had political

reasons too, particularly in Tanzania. They said that because there were so many tribes it would be bad to have schools whose pupils came from one tribe only. But it was a high cost decision because we know boarding school capital development cost is eight times that of a day school and the recurrent cost is three to three and a half times. In that regard we made a decision that the WB would approve of, that is, it was cost effective! I think we had to expand and we took the road that was taken in the USA, Britain, Western Europe and Eastern Europe but not the road taken by our neighbours, so we look as if we are the odd man out but it is not really the case. This is why we have been able to examine other systems, such as Sweden and China, rather than simply trying to extend the system that was here.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS ON TEACHERS**

### **Student/Teacher Ratios**

**ZJER:** Despite dramatic increases in the size of the trained teaching force, Zimbabwe is still experiencing shortages of qualified teachers, at least at the higher levels of secondary education. One of the Report's suggestions is that student/teacher ratios can be increased substantially with no serious effect on student achievement thereby reducing the need for additional teachers. Do you agree with this assertion?

Substantial evidence from research supports the proposition that within broad limits (between 25 and 50 pupils) changes in class size influence pupil achievement modestly or not at all. (page 40)

**CHUNG:** I think this can only be seen in a specific situation related to the specific skills of teachers. Definitely if we had very high level teachers this would be true but we have a very mixed bag and already some of our lower level and even middle level teachers cannot cope. So if you

were to try and impose a higher teacher/pupil ratio on teachers whose abilities were already overextended you would create new problems. I don't think you can just accept it as true in all situations. It could be true if other supports were put in and if the teacher's level were already quite high and if the teacher were already confident and morale were already high. But if you just did it as if it was another magic formula ... I think this is the problem with a lot of IMF and the WB things, they tend to think they are magicians you know. For example, at the moment our teacher/pupil ratio at primary is 1:40, and they say why not 1:60? That formula can create a lot of problems such as very demoralized teachers, very low standard of education – not because it is not possible to have a higher teacher/pupil ratio, but because of the way it has been implemented. I saw it in Zambia where they have a system where not only are the classrooms used twice or thrice a day but the teachers have to teach two classes and the head usually has to do three sessions. The result was that they started losing their teachers because the teachers were so demoralized already, their pay was very low and they were not prepared to do two sessions. You find in Zambia, although they had a very ambitious teacher training programme, they have lost their best teachers to other countries.

### **Pre-service Teacher Training**

**ZJER:** Another assertion of the report is that relatively little pre-service training in education is required, especially for primary school teachers. I believe that Zimbabwe is currently decreasing the duration of its teacher training programme. Do you agree with the Report's recommendations in this area?

The increasing body of evidence on the payoff on various amounts and kinds of teacher training indicates that for primary school teachers pre service training that consists of more than general secondary education and a minimum exposure to pedagogical theory is not cost-effective (page 40)

**CHUNG:** I definitely disagree in that I feel the tendency to say that you need a less qualified teacher can become self defeating. I think this is related to two things: one is if you have a lower qualified person you can pay him less, then the period of training can be shorter. I think it's not quite true. If you take the situation in this country 20 years ago, primary teachers in this country only needed to have primary education themselves, then they were trained as teachers. Now this system was institutionalized in Tanzania: all their primary teachers are equivalent to our Primary Teachers Lower (PTL) and I think it has had a bad effect because it means when the teachers are all low level they will be locked into repeating what they have experienced themselves. Therefore you will have the whole education system locked into a system that is archaic and of a very low level. On the other hand one could have an argument in favour of having different levels of teaching personnel because I think really whether you are teaching Grade 1 or Form 4, you need a very high level person to teach, not just the lowest level person with the lowest teacher training. But because of the nature of teaching, having been a teacher myself, you will find that there is more to teaching which is not purely intellectual. You are a child care person whether you like it or not. Sometimes you are a sort of policeman or policewoman, you have to keep order. Sometimes you are the supervisor of toilet cleaning! The teacher's job is so elastic. If you were to say of the teacher's job: How much of it requires high level skills? How much of it requires a sympathetic caring person who would be good with children? And how much of it is just supervising to ensure that there is some order: you would then get a good answer and the answer is that from Grade 1 onwards you need the highest level teacher academically and professionally, but this teacher can be complemented by lower level personnel who can do the child care, who can do the supervision, ensure orderliness, and help in all the other jobs related to teaching.

**ZJER:** The report also asserts that in-service teacher training is more cost-effective than pre-service training. Would you care to comment?

In many countries an emphasis on in-service training over preservice training has been found to be cost-effective provided that there is constructive supervision of the training. (page 41)

In most of these countries in-service training is likely to prove more cost-effective than alternative programs of preservice training in ameliorating this problem. (page 41)

**CHUNG:** I think there is a lot to be said for in-service training although I don't think that excludes some periods of pre-service training. The advantage of in-service training is that the student teacher is on the job and understands the problems that he/she is going to face. Of course there are also problems ... that if he/she is doing full time work, he/she might not have enough time to study. I think there definitely are professional advantages to having a large component of in-service training and certainly it is more cost effective but I think some pre-service training may also be helpful. The main reason for favouring in-service training, I would say, is a lot of people think they want to become teachers and actually go through the training programme and never become teachers because they actually dislike it once they get onto the job ... I think that problem would be removed by having a larger in-service component.

### **Teachers' Salaries**

**ZJER:** One of the Report's major areas of concern is teachers' salaries. The Report states that in Africa, teachers appear to be overpaid, relative to other occupations. Do you agree with that assertion?

Primary teachers' salaries in relation to per capita incomes reveal that primary school teachers in Africa... earn relatively more than their counterparts in other regions. (page 46)

**CHUNG:** If you looked at it in a purely economic way this might be true but I think it would be a major mistake to underpay teachers because you would then have a body of people doing one of the key jobs in the country who would become so demoralized that they wouldn't do the job properly. I would say it depends on how you look at it. In terms of what we are trying to do, we have to pay teachers a reasonable salary, reasonable in our own context. We couldn't have a situation where teachers are being paid less than clerks and less than nurses and so on. But on the other hand I suppose it is true that, given our stage of development and the fact that Zimbabwe's per capita income is about \$1 000 a year and our trained teachers begin at \$8 900 a year, our teachers have an income 8 or 9 times more than the per capita income. I think sometimes this report contradicts itself because at a particular stage it says African countries are not paying their high level personnel properly and as a result they are losing them all. I think this report thinks teaching is not a high level job but it is actually. Although some low level personnel may be successful in the sense that as long as you keep 40 children quiet you are thought to be doing a "good job," actually if you are doing the job well then it requires very high level skills.

**ZJER:** The Report makes a number of suggestions about strategies to lower salaries (at least hourly salaries). Do you believe that this is desirable and/or feasible?

There may be some scope for lowering the overall structure hourly earnings for primary teachers. (page 46)

**CHUNG:** The only way to do this would be to either increase the number of pupils per teacher or to increase the number of teaching hours. This is theoretically possible, but would depend very much on the real situation in a country.

### **Use of Unqualified Teachers**



**ZJER:** Zimbabwe has devoted substantial resources to improving the qualifications of its teaching force. One of the Report's recommendations is that unqualified teachers be deliberately recruited to reduce salary costs. Would you care to comment on this suggestion?

It is possible and perhaps desirable to recruit teachers who are less well trained and hence less costly.... In view of the modest effects on educational quality (as measured by pupil achievement) of the duration of professional pedagogical training for teachers, recruitment of the more trained group of teachers is not likely to be cost-effective in these countries. (page 47)

**CHUNG:** I think I have already answered that: I think the highest level of training is needed for the teacher. But this could be supplemented and complemented by a teacher aide who would do some of the child care and supervision.

### **Delaying Teacher Promotions**

**ZJER:** Another proposal for reducing the salary costs of the teaching force would be to delay promotion of teachers. What impact do you believe this would have on recruitment and retention?

Finally, a country could reduce the average rate at which teachers move from step to step on the salary scale. (page 47)

**CHUNG:** Well in this country before Independence we had some 3 000 white teachers and 20 000 black teachers with different salary scales based on race. At Independence it was decided that all teachers should go to one salary scale, the white salary scale. Now you extend a system applicable to 3 000 white teachers to 80 000 teachers and you find you have financial chaos. The salary scales for white

teachers cannot just be extended to cover 30 times more teachers because it was a very privileged scale. Now the question is how do we put brakes on this. Our present situation is that a trained teacher starts at \$8 900 and has unimpeded progression to about \$17 000. The end result of that is within 14 years, which is 14 salary steps, the salary bill for the same number of teachers will double without an extra teacher. Obviously you can't do this without looking at opportunities elsewhere in the economy: what those opportunities are, what is the reasonable salary in the whole economy, and whether teachers are more privileged than other people of the same level. In some ways they are and in some ways they aren't because if you were to compare a teacher's salary with that of an Agritex officer, you might find that a teacher is better off. We can look at this question and deal with it as logically and professionally as possible and if we were to delay promotions we would have to work out why we needed to do this. It would be a political question too - that is, one would have to persuade the country to have a consensus that this was the right way to do it. For example at the moment we are looking at our salary bill doubling within the decade ... indeed it's not just doubling, as we still have a third of unqualified teachers - as we eliminate the unqualified teachers and as the teachers trained after Independence going up to \$18 000 enter, our salary bill will treble. Now how do we tackle this situation? What we have tried to do is to look at it economically, financially and say: What is the reasonable level of pay? What's the minimum amount that one can do a good job on? What's the reasonable amount that we can pay our teachers given that we want some of the highest level to remain in education? Then how do we define the job if some parts of the job require very high level intellectual and professional people, and some parts of the job require lower level people? Can we divide these jobs and say we have complementary staff? This happens in health: we have doctors, we have nurses, we have medical assistants. In education we just have teachers. At present of our 80 000 teachers only 3 000 are graduates and then we have another 18 000 who have "O"

levels. That means only one quarter of our teaching staff have 5 "O" levels plus teacher training or university, while 75 percent are below that.

The long and the short of it is our teachers as a whole are very under qualified. We could use the delay in teacher promotion to actually say we require teachers to do more to improve their academic and professional qualifications. This is what we are aiming to do. We can and will demand that teachers improve their academic level.

Definitely if we delay teacher promotions we will link it to improving academic and professional qualifications and to achievement. For example we can measure the teacher's contribution in terms of students' achievement, teacher participation in school activities, contribution to extra-curricular exercises, contribution to the community etc. You find actually some of these PTL/ PTH teachers who academically are not very brilliant are wonderful teachers and have done a great deal for the community in such programmes as reafforestation. Although this teacher only has primary education, he/she may have contributed so much that he/she must be promoted. This teacher's contribution may be far above those who have "O" levels and "A" levels.

**ZJER:** What is the difference between the person that starts at \$8 000 and the PTL/PTH person who has been in the field?

**CHUNG:** PTL/PTH teachers start at about \$6 000 and they both have their ceiling at \$10 000, whereas newly trained university certified teachers stop at \$18 000.

## **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

### **School-based versus job-based training**

**ZJER:** The Report is generally critical of vocational education programmes, and tends to recommend on-the-job or employer-supplied education as more effective. Zimbabwe is currently piloting a vocational secondary curriculum in a selected sample of schools. How would you respond to the Report's assessment of vocational education?

First there is an apparent tendency, particularly in developing countries, to overstate the need to acquire specific skills before employment. Most entry-level jobs require relatively little in the way of specific skills (page 63)

Third, there is mounting evidence that, for many occupation-specific skill categories, the training provided in schools is generally less useful (that is, the market demand for it is less strong) than training provided on the job or in specialized training centers. (page 64)

**CHUNG:** Well I am completely in disagreement with the WB here. First of all I think the research work they have done, which is done by Psacharopoulos, is very narrow. It compares rate of return for a very high level of technical education with the most expensive equipment (something that costs an average of two to three thousand dollars per student in Zimbabwe) to a general education course at say \$300 unit cost as we are doing here in Zimbabwe. Obviously he will find that it does not pay to spend \$3 000 on vocationalized as opposed to \$300 on general education, but I wouldn't accept that for a number of reasons. One is that if you say training must be done by employers or on-the-job, you immediately narrow the number of people who can be trained. For example, in this country industries are a very small sector of the economy, and if we were to say the existing industries could recruit the number they wanted, we would be training about a thousand a year so that would lock us into a system of maintaining the present size of industry. This is particularly so in Zimbabwe where you have got a lot of job protection – white dominated industries do not want

higher skills to be generalized otherwise skilled artisans would be paid less because of the law of supply and demand. The other reason I am against this idea of having only a high level of vocational education is you have to have all the different levels of technical education from very basic, let's say very basic like the Domboshawa level, to very high level like the Bachelor of Engineering level. I think a country which does not have this wide spectrum of technical skills then becomes very messy. You find if they have only engineering graduates and no lower level, the country can't carry out or maintain programmes properly and the other way round – if a country has only low level and no higher level, it can't innovate and think up new programmes or adapt technology to suit its particular situation.

I would say it is possible to democratize the basic level of vocational training as is done in other countries. There is no reason to say Africa or Zimbabwe should be different from, say, what is common in western Europe and the United States. Let's take the United States – at the end of secondary school a student knows that he has to put water into an engine and oil it and clean it, as part of his education, but a person in Africa who has received secondary education does not know that. I have seen this: I have been to a co-op where the tractor was not working and I asked these co-op members who had "O" levels, "What's wrong with your tractor?" and they said, "It's tired," as if the tractor was a horse or human being. Really the problem was that they didn't have the vocational training to clean the engine. So I would say that a basic level of vocational technical training must be there and I don't think it needs to cost 10 times more. I might agree that there is no point in saying every school has to be a polytechnic because if you have that very high level of technical skill in a country like this, which has a very narrow industrial base, then you will find that people will be frustrated because they can't get jobs in high level electronics and chemical engineering. But if one were to say, Can people improve their level of agriculture, which is a type of vocational education, I think that is what we have to do. We have to look at the existing level of

agriculture and improve it. Can they improve their level of housing? I think they should and can do it. If they are living in huts what is the way of improving the huts? The same thing for toilets – we have the Blair pit latrine which is a very low level of technology, but although it is low level it was invented by a person with a Ph.D. Some of these very simple technologies are invented by people with high technical skills, because a simple technological innovation may be based on a knowledge of all aspects of the technological system, something a simple uneducated person can't do.

### **Vocational training staff**

**ZJER:** The Report also comments on problems in recruiting and retaining vocational instructors. Would you care to comment on this problem? What has your experience been in staffing the pilot schools? How would you obtain staff for a national programme?

Schools have trouble recruiting and retaining competent instructors... (page 64)

**CHUNG:** I think there is a contradiction where they say teachers can be of a lower level, then they say we have difficulty in recruiting vocational instructors. I would say the vocational instructors and the teachers are really staff of a similar level, so if you want good staff you must pay them good salaries relative to the whole country. I think there are a few problems in this country. One is the level of pay which may be too low relative to competing demands. The other one is that there is a shortage – it's a supply and demand situation, and if we have a shortage then the few demand higher pay. The problem is that we have not trained enough technical/vocational personnel because of the historical problem in this country. It was a reserved area for whites, and up to recently we did keep to exactly what the WB said: that is, we trained as many as were required by

industry and that meant really we trained very few, so that institutions were under utilized and today we are desperately short of vocational instructors.

## MINISTERIAL ORGANIZATION

**ZJER:** Two of the Report's recommendations have to do with organization at the ministerial level. Interestingly, the Report suggests moving to a single ministry of education. This seems to run contrary to recent reorganization in Zimbabwe. Would you care to comment?

Certainly those few African countries with three or more such ministries, will wish to consider consolidating these entities into a single ministry. This will encourage more cohesive development of education policy.  
(page 84)

**CHUNG:** There are a number of ways of looking at the question of having one or two ministries. I think of course from a physical point of view it is much cheaper to have one ministry. Now from an administrative point of view it would depend on the particular situation and the particular staff you had at a particular time. You cannot give a general answer because what may be the right answer this year may not be the right answer in three years time. Whilst I do believe professionally, physically and administrative-ly it's better to have one ministry, on the other hand you may find that a specific situation at a specific time may mean that for a short while it's better to split them. Perhaps one could compare this - in terms of theories of administration, when you split an administrative structure and create rivals, there may be a better performance because when there is a monopoly, people can become very complacent with nobody to criticize them. I think there is an ad-

vantage sometimes to putting in rival systems and saying: Deliver the goods in your separate way and see who delivers best. It may be in the long run that if our two ministries were to be joined together later we might have the advantages of the improvements which were obtained when we were separate.

## CAPACITY BUILDING R&D

### Ministerial Planning Capacity

**ZJER:** The Report calls for increased efforts directed at increasing the analytic and planning role in education. How would you assess your Ministry's capacities in analysis and planning? What steps are underway to strengthen these roles? Do you see a role for the University in some of these functions?

Analysis and planning are central to the efficient allocation of resources and, therefore, to the achievement of quality education under conditions of austerity. Educational leaders must be able to assess the performance of their systems and gauge the effects of their policies. (page 86)

**CHUNG:** I think definitely the amount of research and the quality of research into education leaves a lot to be desired. It is very necessary that both the ministry and the university increase their capacity and their involvement in research. If this is not done you find that a lot of decisions are made, which have far reaching implications, without proper research foundations. I think the university must be involved because the university is the centre of research and it is essential for the university to have an impact in practical areas like the implementation of educational policy. On the other hand I think it is important for the practitioners of education to have access to university research so definitely I



think these areas must be emphasized more. Planning is so important and if you get it messed up you will mess the whole system up.

**ZJER:** One suggestion in the Report is for the creation of Centers of excellence in research and instruction that would serve the region. This would allow Africans to train at other specialized African institutions rather than going abroad. Would you comment.

**CHUNG:** I agree really African countries are too small and if one country develops specialist research in a particular area (let's say mathematics) this should be shared. But you find that there is a lot of resistance to this both from those who have it and those who want it. There is a lot of petty nationalism and each country insists on doing it its own way, but to set up a department is expensive. You take our secondary school science – to do that we have got to have at least three full time personnel. You have got to have a budget of 2 million dollars. Now for each little African country to do this is expensive. I think there are about 30 African countries. To repeat this means 2 million times 30, which is 60 million dollars. In fact one country can do it for all 30 and the other countries could just adapt it. This would be much more cost effective and there is no reason why this should not be promoted.

**ZJER:** The Report calls for the international community to develop a cadre of non-political technical experts to assist African governments in planning and evaluation. Would you support such a proposal? Is there any reason why such a cadre could not be formed and staffed by African countries themselves, with finance coming from the donor community.

**CHUNG:** I don't think there is such a thing as non-political technical experts. I think the tendency is that technical experts come with their baggage of cultural and other political prejudices and this baggage has to be taken with the expert and this can lead to problems. Even when experts are very well meaning they can do things which cannot work in

that country. For example, if you look at Mozambique where they had experts from East Germany with brilliant plans, those plans did not work: they did not work because the socio-economic, cultural, educational levels of Mozambique are different from East Germany. All together, I agree that if we have technical experts, it would be useful to have some who have a similar experience. I wouldn't necessarily say these would be only from African countries: I would say some Latin American countries, some Asian countries and some European countries may have experiences which are very relevant to our own. If we looked only at African countries I think we would narrow our base to an extent where we exclude a lot of experience which is more important. For example, I think that although Lobengula is important in local historical terms, for some problems studying about Latin America or about China may be more relevant than studying about Lobengula. I am just trying to say that we shouldn't narrow ourselves only to African countries but I am a bit suspicious of having these so-called non-political technical experts.

## **PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION**

**ZJER:** The report says relatively little about pre-school education and nutritional interventions and their impact on school achievement. Your Ministry has recently assumed responsibility for pre-school education. Would you care to comment on activities and plans in this area?

**CHUNG:** We are definitely looking into that. We have 1,8 million pre-school children who are presently not well catered for and it is a virgin area where we don't have to pick up systems that were developed previously. So we can actually say we can move on to a completely new field and plan solutions which are not as constraining as our present primary and secondary system. The school system is very constraining because we can't move away very far from the models we inherited. If we did we would have a political uproar, but in pre-school we are in virgin territory. The

same thing with adult education and non-formal education – we are in territory that is more or less untouched and I think this gives us possibilities for very innovative approaches at the same time ensuring we have the highest quality.

## HRRC Publications

In addition to the Occasional Paper Series, The Human Resources Research Centre publishes the Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research (ZJER) and the HRRC Working Paper Series.

Editorial policy for all publications is set by a five-member Editorial Board:

Dr C E M Chikombah, Chairman  
Dr M J Matshazi  
Dr L M Nyagura  
Mrs F Ntabeni-Bhebe, Technical Editor  
Dr V Levine, Editor

The ZJER is published three times a year; articles are selected on the basis of peer review. Occasional Papers are distributed widely in Zimbabwe and internationally. Working Papers are intended for a more specialized, and limited audience and are circulated within the University community.

Manuscripts for all three publication series are actively solicited and should be sent to either of the addresses listed below. Comprehensive guidelines to contributors are also available, upon request.

The HRRC welcomes exchange of publications with other research organizations and exchange of advertising in the ZJER.

Manuscripts and requests for information should be mailed to either address listed below:

HRRC Publications  
Faculty of Education  
University of Zimbabwe  
PO Box MP 167  
Mount Pleasant, Harare  
Zimbabwe

HRRC Publications  
Learning Systems Institute  
204 Dodd Hall  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FA 32306  
U.S.A.

Manuscripts should conform to the APA Publication Manual (3rd Edition).



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

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

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