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Reporting period	12 – 25 June 2020
Report number	#6

## Key figures

- **853,032** learners (ECD to Grade 7, ages 3 to 12) targeted under the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) through Education in Emergency support across 33 districts with severe needs.
- **3.5 Million** learners are currently affected and targeted under the COVID-19 pandemic. The cluster is targeting to reach them with various activities to address their needs.
- **63,325** people have been reached with **HRP related activities** with **243,670** people being reached with **COVID-19 related activities** as of May 2020.
- The cluster is appealing for **US \$41 Million** through the **Humanitarian Response Plan 2020** and **US \$11.5 Million** through the newly launched **COVID-19 Addendum**.
- **20** operational partners within the cluster with activities planned, ongoing or completed.

## Humanitarian needs

- The education system in Zimbabwe was already stretched before the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of multiple crises, including the impact of Cyclone Idai last year, the economic crisis coupled with hyperinflation and the ongoing drought. Before the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic, estimates by the Education Cluster were that of the more than 3.4 million children of school going age (3 to 12 years), at least 1.2 million (35 per cent), would need emergency and specialized education services in 2020. This includes more than **853,000** children in acute need, such as: children not enrolled in school; orphans and other vulnerable children (OCV), including children with disabilities and children living with HIV; and those in need of school feeding.
- The combined effect of the humanitarian crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to have far-reaching implications for the demand and supply of education services. While Zimbabwe closed schools on March 24, 2020 to contain the spread of COVID-19 and to protect school populations, school closures have disrupted the education of more than 4.6 million children, with adverse impacts on the protection and wellbeing of children as well as their readiness for school, attendance and participation in learning. Prolonged school closures are likely to have a major and negative affect on children's learning, physical, social and mental health and well-being threatening hard-won educational achievements for years to come. Prolonged school closures will likely exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and inequalities among children, especially girls, children with disabilities, those in rural areas, orphans and vulnerable children, as well as those from poor households and fragile families.
- The MoPSE has announced commencement of June examinations on 30 June 2020. This will be followed by schools re-opening on 30 July 2020. This will start with final year classes (Grade 7, Form 4 and 6) to provide adequate preparation for national examinations. While school closures have increased the risk of some learners permanently dropping out of school, opening schools in a context of increasing cases loads and without a well-resourced health response also represents major health risks for children, teachers and school communities.

To add to these challenges, schools, which traditionally fund their daily operations from user fees will likely be resource-constrained because of the inability of parents to pay school fees and the increased burden of operating schools.

- The cluster is targeting **3.5 million** learners in early childhood education, primary level and secondary level through prioritization of activities.

## Humanitarian response

- As of end of May 2020, a total of **63,325 people** have benefited from various activities implemented by the cluster partners as part of the **Humanitarian Response Planning 2020**.
- From the period March to May, cluster partners efforts towards combatting **COVID-19 pandemic** have supported **over 243,000 people**. In summary, the following activities were achieved during the reporting period: a total of 182,000 learners reached through implementation of alternative education options, a total of 21,769 learning materials distributed to learners outside of school/at home, 18,177 key messages sent through Radio and SMS/Text Messaging (), 11,488 people reached with implementation of Back to School campaigns (a total of 9,982 IEC print materials distributed to various stakeholders and 163 learners provided with PSS support at home (163).
- **Save the Children** completed a rapid assessment for children and households in Epworth and Chitungwiza. The assessment was to help in understanding of the level of awareness towards COVID-19, the learning opportunities available for continued learning and challenges children are facing among many other issues. The community distant learning outreach continues with the current reach at 4,800 households reached in 40 schools across the two districts.
- **UNICEF** supported the MoPSE to develop and broadcast radio lessons for Primary School level learners. The broadcasting commenced on 16 June 2020 and is currently being aired across 5 ZBC radio stations. A schedule covering the first two weeks has been published through various media platforms and a schedule for the next two weeks is being prepared to be shared in due course. Development and recording of new lessons is still on-going. A total of 13 titles on children story books in three languages namely English, Ndebele and Shona have been uploaded on Internet of Good Things. Furthermore, UNICEF is supporting MoPSE on the deployment of the digital Learning Passport (LP) in Zimbabwe.
- **CAMFED**, through their association members are following up with students in their homes and by phone to check on students' welfare and remind them of the importance of keeping up with their studies so that they are not left behind when schools reopen. The members are working with students by providing learning resources, which include notes from teachers, downloadable and printed past examination papers and other revision materials. Additionally, members recently participated in show casing Personal Protective Equipment that they produced following training by the Ministry of Health and Child Care which included masks, soaps, multi-purpose cleaners and sanitizers that will be distributed to learners when schools open.
- **UNESCO** and MoPSE are progressing well on setting up the MoPSE Open Educational Resources (OER) digital platform with the Server space now paid for and secured with Amazon. This digital platform is organized into six categories which are curriculum and syllabi; education management and policy; teaching and learning resources; revision and exam papers; professional development links to resources for teachers. Currently resources are being uploaded with contents from MoPSE and testing is happening concurrently. With support from World Vision, 4,000 Back to School and IEC materials on COVID-19 have been printed for learners and dispatched to respective provinces.
- **Plan International Zimbabwe (PIZ)** has rolled out COVID-19 protection Public Service Announcements being aired on two national radio stations. PIZ has reached out to 8,000 adolescent girls in 5 districts with 3-month packages of menstrual hygiene packs to address the gap in accessing them during the COVID-19 lockdown measures. The organization also supported Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC) to enhance delivery of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services through training of 75 Community Based Distributors in 5 districts on effective delivery of SRHR services during the lockdown period. Additionally, PIZ is supporting remote learning initiatives conducted through telephone calls targeting Out of School adolescent girls with the learners being supported with printed study modules to enhance the learning processes.

- **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)** is conducting positive parenting services through the telephone to children and their caregivers with sessions taking between 5-10 minutes of discussion. Additionally, CRS distributed positive parenting fliers translated into vernacular language to compliment the telephone discussions. Cognitive Theory Behavior Therapists continue to give psychosocial support to children and caregivers through phone calls and some clients were reached through periodic home visits.
- **World Vision** has developed COVID-19 messaging and audio recordings for 10,000 learners which is currently undergoing quality checks with the Ministry of Health and Child Care. Learner study guides for Grade 7 Mathematics and English are under final review by CDTS before they are distributed.
- **Higher Life Foundation** launched a Radio Programme to educate communities on COVID-19 and promote hand hygiene to drive sustainable behavior change on June 8th, 2020 in partnership with Clean City and health professionals from the Medical Air Rescue Services (MARS). As part of the programme, information is shared through 15-minute episodes in English, Shona and Ndebele across 8 Radio stations. This programme is part of wider efforts under the National Hand Washing and COVID-19 Education Programme.
- **FAWEZI** conducted Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) dialogues on Menstrual Hygiene Day with dissemination of COVID-19 information in Shamva and Chitungwiza districts via texts messages. FAWEZI plans to train non-teaching staff in Bulilima, Rushinga, and Muzarabani districts on COVID-19 in identifying and reporting Sex and Gender Based Violence (SGBV).
- **Mavambo Orphan Care** is implementing supplementary feeding for 6,000 children living with HIV in Harare, Goromonzi and Chitungwiza where a child is receiving a bag of 6kg of CSB porridge per month for 3 meals a day. Additionally, the children are receiving soap that is being used for handwashing with hand washing posters for information sharing with the generous support of Mary's Meals International. Mavambo with the support of its partners has developed and disseminated posters and video clips on HIV, GBV and COVID-19 to raise awareness for its beneficiaries.
- **HOSPAZ** started parenting sessions for 1,686 parents and their children using the Families! Matter model. HOSPAZ is currently capacitating 1,422 Community Health Workers inclusive of Community Child Workers, Village health workers, Community Facilitators on virtual case management during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Gaps and constraints

- **Inadequate Human and Financial Resources:** While partners have supported the development of the Education Cluster COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan, many face human and financial resource constraints to fully respond to the urgent needs of learners. Financial challenges induced by the economic crisis and lockdown threaten the capacity to respond to the health and education needs of learners.
- **Reduced Mobility and Access:** Both partners and Government staff are facing fiscal and technical constraints to enable them to work remotely and respond to the needs of learners. To add to the challenge, the lockdown has also reduced the mobility of staff, with implications for the implementation of response activities. While Government issued some letters following the initial lockdown, some partners are facing renewed mobility challenges during the second phase of the lock-down. Time-critical solutions to focus on learners who cannot access digital or radio lessons, due to coverage or household considerations are minimal and need to be addressed further to enhance response.
- **Communication Gaps:** Lack of information about sector plans continue to threaten the national buy-in of critical stakeholders such as parents, teachers and learners.

## Coordination

- The cluster is currently having **weekly coordination meetings** with partners **every Tuesday** from **1430Hrs to 1530Hrs**. The Cluster has also established WhatsApp groups to ensure regular communication and collaboration around response plans.
- Despite the national lockdown and technical challenges related to communication, partners have continued to convene virtual meetings every week, to discuss and address issues related to the proposed response. In addition, the cluster has established Technical Working Groups to

operationalize the COVID-19 Strategy. These TWGs meet regularly to discuss technical issues and provide updates to the larger weekly cluster meetings on WhatsApp.

- Partners encouraged to visit the cluster webpage on Humanitarian Response to access latest products and resources shared in relation to HRP and COVID-19 Response. Please access the webpage using the following link: [ZIM Education Cluster HR Info Webpage](#).

### Pictures from the Field:



Figure 1: CAMFED Association members showcasing masks and detergents they made after Ministry of Health Training.



Figure 2: Save the Children volunteer taking children through a short lesson during her visit in Chitungwiza district.