

LEARNING BRIEF

Learning from what we've done and how we did it

Strengthening Zimbabwe's educational ecosystems for developing agency for sustainable development

<p>Date: July 2021</p> <p>Author Patricia Martin</p> <p>Contact bashni@miet.co.za</p> <p>Key words Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL); <i>Child and Youth Agency Framework (CYAF)</i>; co-educators; education for agency; educational ecosystem; Southern African Development Community (SADC) <i>Policy Framework on CSTL</i></p> <p>References See list at the end of the document</p>	<p>Key points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All SADC Member States, including Zimbabwe, have committed to developing child and youth agency to address persistent development challenges. • The <i>CSTL Policy Framework</i> and complementary <i>CYAF</i> provide a road-map for developing an education “ecosystem” for youth agency. • Developing agency requires a range of <i>co-educators</i> who are responsible for developing child and youth agency, under the leadership of the education sector. • To build agency, educational ecosystems must be systematized across the following “systemic building blocks”, which are described briefly by their strengths, biggest gaps and actions required to strengthen them in Zimbabwe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International instruments that mandate the development of educational ecosystems for child and youth agency ▪ Enabling national and policies and laws ▪ Programmes at scale for delivering agency by a continuum of <i>co-educators</i> through schools as hubs ▪ Qualified co-educators themselves ▪ Appropriate teaching and learning materials and infrastructure ▪ Adequate budgets to sustain the system ▪ Information management systems ▪ Leadership and coordination structures 	<p>MIET AFRICA's learning briefs are developed to share new ideas, best practices and learnings arising from our specific experience in implementing a project or through some other activity, so as to grow knowledge and share learning, with the ultimate aim of <i>improving the lives of children and youth</i>.</p>
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Introduction

By 2050, Africa will be home to a billion children. This represents an unprecedented opportunity to

... reap the demographic dividend and accelerate Africa's sustainable and equitable development. Children have the potential to transform Africa—but if neglected they could also increase the burden of poverty and inequality, whilst posing a serious risk to peace, security and prosperity.¹

By adopting *Africa's Agenda 2063* and *Africa's Agenda for Children 2040*, African States have committed to build human capital by realizing the right of all children, including the most vulnerable, to develop to their full potential. They have committed to do so through strengthened education systems that provide 21st century education that prepares children to be active, engaged, responsible 21st century citizens with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to bring a permanent end to the continent's greatest development challenges. Notably, they have committed to strengthen integrated transformational education and health systems to end persistent development challenges such as poverty, HIV&AIDS, early unintended pregnancies, gender inequality and climate change.

Various measures have been taken to fulfil these commitments, but progress has been slow. The UN's 2020 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) report confirmed that sub-Saharan Africa is at grave risk of not achieving the SDGs. Progress had slowed even before the COVID-19 pandemic and has since deteriorated further.² The UN has declared this the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030 and has called on all

Member States to take extraordinary measures to ensure accelerated, sustainable progress. Furthermore, 2021 marks the 30th anniversary of the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*—the treaty whereby Member States of the African Union (AU) collectively committed themselves to reap the youth dividend.

Reaping this dividend requires urgent action to strengthen education systems that build the agency of every child—in Zimbabwe, all other SADC Member States and the wider African region. This can and must be achieved through the operationalization of the *SADC CSTL Policy Framework* and supporting *Child and Youth Agency Framework (CYAF)* that were developed as vehicles to strengthen education systems to build human capital for sustainable development.

The CSTL Policy Framework and the Child and Youth Agency Framework

Most SADC Member States have undertaken curriculum reform to provide 21st century education to prepare children for tackling 21st century challenges. However, this has not developed child and youth agency adequately to address critical, persistent development challenges, such as high levels of HIV&AIDS among girls and young women, gender inequality, and early unintended pregnancies. Nor has it secured the knowledge, competencies and opportunities required to empower children and youth to make responsible, informed decisions and to act to bring a permanent end to these challenges. This is evidenced by ongoing development challenges—for example, the persistently high risky sexual and social behaviour, high HIV&AIDS transmission rates among girls and young women, low antiretroviral therapy (ART)-adherence rates, high early pregnancy rates, exclusion of girls from school because of pregnancy and early marriages, and persisting gender inequality—despite the development and delivery of a combination of life skills, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in schools and adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH) programmes.³ Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has eroded the fragile human capital foundations that had been built and has weakened the capacity of existing education and health systems to develop adolescent and youth agency. It has also deepened the vulnerability of children and pre-existing educational access and learning inequalities, access to health services, poverty and prevalence of harmful social and cultural behaviour.⁴ As a result, development challenges (such as early pregnancies, early marriages, child labour, school drop-outs, exposure to HIV&AIDS, non-ART adherence, and gender-based violence and abuse) have increased in the period 2020–21.⁵

MIET AFRICA's recent study on the impact of COVID-19 on children and youth confirms that the pandemic has deepened the vulnerability of children and youth to risks and their ability to overcome them, and as a result, increased risky behaviour that have exacerbated the development challenges in Zimbabwe and other SADC Member States. The study found that COVID-19:

... led to loss of livelihoods, significant stress on families, increased gender-based violence (GBV), and lack of access to safe spaces and services for youth, particularly girls and young women. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the six SADC Member States under review have all recorded higher rates of child, early and forced marriages, early pregnancies and school dropouts.*

The UN's 2021 call to action requires all SADC Member States, along with the rest of Africa, to pursue a "deliberate policy of human development and put human development at the centre of their growth and development strategy."⁶ This necessitates all Member States, including Zimbabwe, strengthening their education systems to build the *agency* of every child, adolescent and youth to act to bring an end to development challenges—specifically, to build their agency to make sound evidence-based decisions, act responsibly, provide leadership and advocate for supporting decisions and changes among their peers, homes, schools and communities.

* Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe

The SADC Policy Framework on Care and Support for Teaching and Learning

The *CSTL Policy Framework* mandates and commits all Member States to strengthen their educational ecosystems to be effective inclusive vehicles for developing human capital for sustainable development. It provides a roadmap on what the ecosystem should achieve and describes its components to achieve the two main outcomes:

- Universal access to basic education
- Quality, transformative education for developing agency of every child

It requires the development of educational ecosystems, coordinated by the Ministry of Education, that bring together a diversity of role players to provide a combination of services and support to overcome access, participation and retention barriers and provide quality education for agency. CSTL schools are tasked with serving as facilitative hubs that coordinate the provision of quality education by all co-educators working in synergy to develop the agency of every child. However, while the *CTSL Policy Framework* provides detailed guidance on the partners and socioeconomic support that should be provided to address access barriers, it does not provide the same guidance on who the partners or co-educators are, and what is required to develop and deliver quality, relevant education to develop children's agency.

Child and Youth Agency Framework

The complementary *CYAF* was developed to address this gap. It provides a roadmap for the development and delivery of education for agency through an appropriate 21st century curriculum supported by enabling national policies, laws and systems. It describes the 21st century curriculum for developing agency, the requirements for implementing it, and key features of the supporting national system. It is being piloted in 40 schools across four Member States, including Zimbabwe,* which are being supported to operationalize the *CSTL Policy Framework* and *CYAF*. Both frameworks describe the building blocks that must be in place in all schools, as well as the systemic building blocks that must be in place at a national policy level within the relevant Ministries of Education, Health, Children, Youth and Gender (for example) to mandate, enable and support schools to become sustainable hubs for agency.

Given the impact of COVID-19 on education systems, increased vulnerability of children, and deepening development challenges, it is more important than ever that SADC Member States operationalize the CSTL Policy Framework, as augmented by the CYAF, to "reap the child and youth demographic dividend" to recover lost ground and accelerate Africa's sustainable and equitable development in this Decade of Action for achieving sustainable development.

Purpose of this brief

MIET AFRICA conducted research in the four pilot Member States (including Zimbabwe) to identify current strengths and weaknesses in the national educational ecosystems as measured against the *CSTL Policy Framework* and *CYAF*. This learning brief provides an overview of the causes of limited youth agency, the required responses, key gaps and recommended actions for strengthening the policy environment to mandate, enable and support the development of all schools as CSTL coordinating hubs that:

- Facilitate provision of services and support to ensure inclusion, retention and completion of school by vulnerable children
- Facilitate the provision of quality, relevant 21st century education for agency to address pressing development challenges

It also provides an overview of the gaps and actions that must be taken to strengthen the following standard systemic building blocks:

- International instruments

* The others being Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia

- Enabling policies and laws
- Programmes
- Human resources
- Learning materials and Infrastructure
- Financial resources
- Information systems
- Leadership and coordination

Limited child and youth agency

The problem and causes

SADC Member States face common persistent development problems, including high HIV&AIDS infection rates among young people, especially girls, low ART adherence rates, high numbers of early marriages and pregnancies, gender inequality and climate change. An immediate cause of *some* of these problems is risky and unsustainable behaviour by young people. So the solution requires sustained changes in child and youth behaviour. Member States, including Zimbabwe, have committed, through various instruments and initiatives, including the following, to provide quality and inclusive education to develop the agency of adolescents and youth:

- East and Southern Africa (ESA) Ministerial Commitment
- *Agenda 2063: The Africa we want and Africa's Agenda for Children 2040*
- SADC Regional Strategy for HIV prevention, treatment and care and sexual and reproductive health and rights among key populations (2018)
- *SADC Policy Framework on CSTL*

These commitments have led to curriculum innovations, including the introduction of subjects such as Life Skills, CSE and environmental studies. However, this has not resulted in the required change in behaviour among the growing young population. The reasons are many, but in summary, many vulnerable children still do not access and complete school because of social, economic and health-related barriers. Furthermore, those who are in school are not acquiring the requisite competencies and afforded the opportunities to apply their learned knowledge.

Teachers cannot, nor can they be expected to, provide the full package of services and support and teaching necessary for developing agency. This is the responsibility of a range of other role players—or *co-educators*—from whom children learn and who are responsible for providing care, support and services necessary for developing their agency. These co-educators, who make up an educational ecosystem for developing agency, include:

- Their caregivers* and families
- Their friends and peers
- Their teachers
- The media
- Community and religious leaders
- Politicians

* In this brief, "caregivers" is used to designate parents, other members of the family, guardians or other adults who provide daily care to the learner.

- Service providers, such as healthcare workers and social workers
- NGOs and development partners

However, many co-educators cannot provide the support and continuing education and opportunities children need because of their own circumstances, such as poverty, harmful traditional and religious values and practices, lack of knowledge, lack of a mandate, and lack of support and resources to provide the required services, support and education.

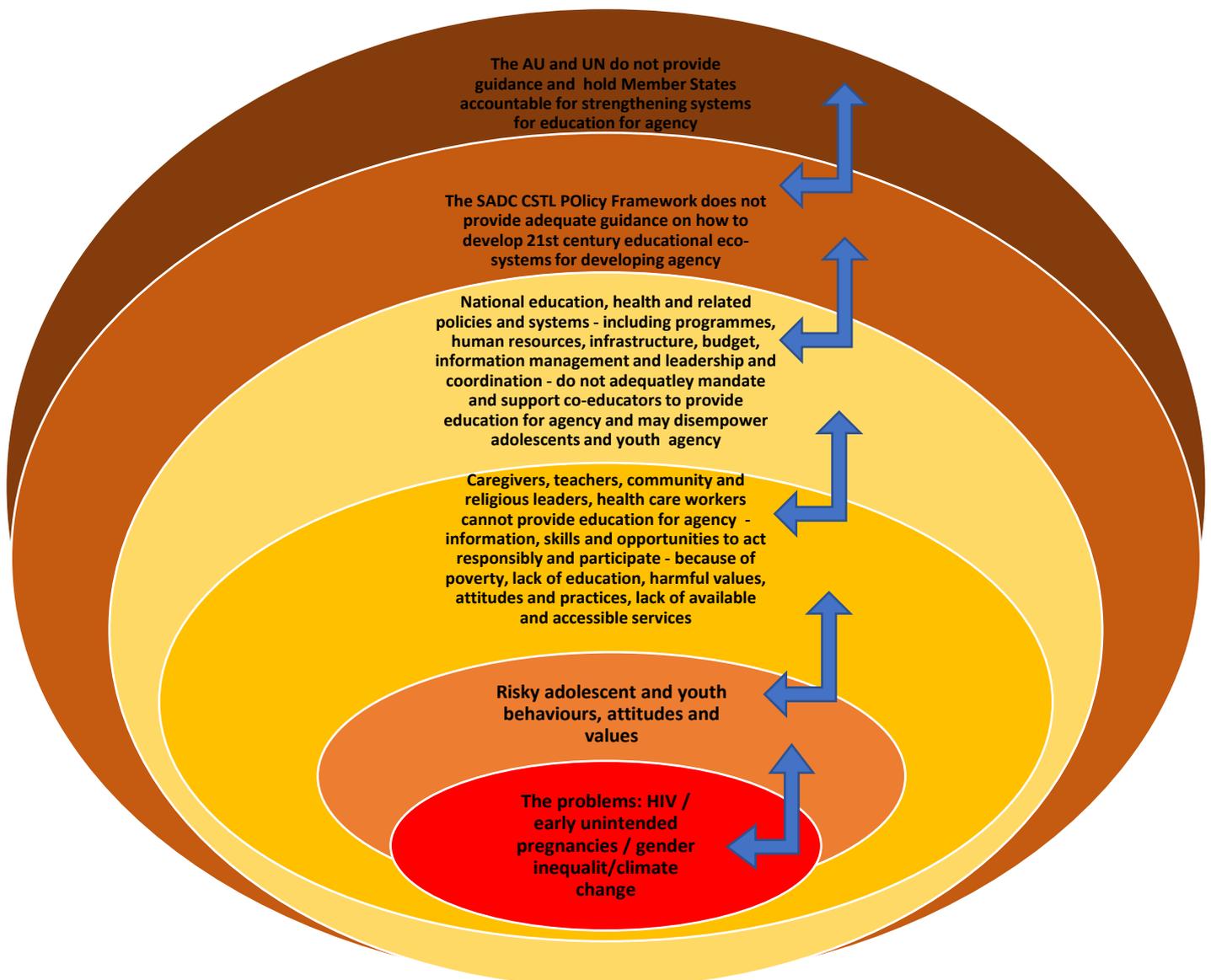


FIGURE 1: THE ECOSYSTEMIC CAUSES OF PERSISTING DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES DRIVEN BY RISKY BEHAVIOUR

The solution

To address the immediate cause of the problem, the whole educational ecosystem must be strengthened across all levels. Developing agency of the growing youth population requires that national educational ecosystems be strengthened to:

- Ensure all co-educators recognize and understand their role
- Are mandated and supported to provide the required support, education and opportunities

This in turn requires the strengthening of an *enabling system* made up of:

- Laws, policies and strategies that mandate and enable co-educators, and do not create legal barriers to children and youth acting responsibly
- Programmes at scale to provide co-educators with the support they need to fulfil their roles and that secure the provision of quality education for agency
- The required human resources to implement the programmes in the form of adequately mandated, trained, supported, and accountable co-educators
- The required infrastructure
- The required financial resources
- Leadership, coordination and supporting institutional arrangements to oversee the educational ecosystem and co-educators

To ensure that all national systems are developed to provide education for agency of all children in the region, SADC and the UN must enable, guide, support and hold Member States accountable for developing the required system through, for example:

- Adopting the CYAF as an addendum to the *CSTL Policy Framework*
- Developing General Comments on treaty implementation responsibilities
- Holding General Days of Discussion and facilitating regional policy dialogues, seminars and webinars on the importance of, and how to develop educational ecosystems for, child and youth agency

Child and youth agency in and through the system

It is crucial that children and youth themselves be enabled to participate meaningfully in the development and delivery of an effective national educational system as they are both beneficiaries and co-educators. They must therefore be included in all system's strengthening planning and decision-making.

Advocacy and system–strengthening priorities

Inclusive, evidence-based and responsive system's strengthening measures

All SADC Member States, including Zimbabwe, must strengthen their educational ecosystems across the systemic building blocks by understanding:

- Their legal responsibilities and mandates, and fulfilling them in the design, development and operationalization of their systems
- The biggest challenges that prevent adolescents and youth from accessing the information they need, developing the skills to understand and apply this in their daily lives to make responsible decisions in their best interests and those around them
- What works and what does not, so as to strengthen their systems to address the challenges

System's strengthening priorities to build agency to end HIV infections

SADC Member States, including Zimbabwe, have signed global and regional instruments committing to ensure that children and youth are empowered through integrated education systems to alter their risky behaviours that drives high HIV infection rates, especially among girls and young women. However, the measures taken have not achieved the promises made. The policy audit found that all co-educators are not enabled to provide the support and education required for the development of agency.

Available evidence points to the need for developing prevention programmes that address the multiple and intersecting causes through integrated responses that reach the key populations.⁷ Systems must be deliberately designed to address the *multiple* risks faced by key populations—including social, economic, political, and not just biomedical, risks. A review of best practices confirms the need for multi-faceted advocacy and communication interventions that address the combination of adolescent-specific factors,

rather than just one or the other. It also found that the current system does not respond to the most pressing challenges preventing children and youth from acquiring the knowledge, skills and opportunities to act responsibly in their homes, schools, communities and countries.

To be sustainable and reach all children and adolescents, interventions must be systematized: reaching only *some* of the children *some* of the time will not have the population-scale transformation required. For this reason, responses *through* the education systems are favoured as they have the required education mandate and authority, as well as the reach, for scalability.

The following table provides an overview of some of the features that are essential to address the most pressing and common barriers to developing adolescent and youth agency.

TABLE 1: BARRIERS TO ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH AGENCY

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES	REQUIRED RESPONSES
There is a lack of available, quality prevention services ⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to adolescent and youth-friendly services, <i>plus</i> community-led advocacy • Use systems that ensure they are rolled out at scale to reach the full population, especially the most vulnerable and at risk
Introducing adolescent-friendly services alone is not enough: they must be part of a comprehensive community-led empowerment, communications and advocacy programme that provides services <i>and</i> the required advocacy activities that increase awareness and demand for services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine services with activities that empower adolescents and youth to make positive, informed, responsible and independent use of the services <p>When affected populations are aware of their rights and responsibilities to use the services and supported to do so, and when the service is framed as an empowering prevention method and positive life choice, there is an increase in the uptake of services.⁹</p>
Many young boys and men exhibit low levels of knowledge of their HIV status, in part because of minimal contact by men with the health system.	<p>Develop programmes targeting boys and men that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase their access to the health system to ensure early testing and treatment • Effect attitude and behaviour change to address gender stereotypes and inequality
The heightened risk of infection among adolescent girls and young women could be mitigated by their routine access to effective SRH services, especially modern contraception and family planning.	Prevention efforts must include measures to improve population-scale access to SRH services (especially modern family planning and contraception services) for adolescent girls and young women. ¹⁰
Gender inequalities are a key barrier. Improving gender equality has been limited by the failure to address the underlying factors that disempower girls and women.	<p>Improve the power girls and young women have over their bodies and choices through measures to address gender inequality, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing them with cash grants or incentives • Ensuring their enrolment and retention at, and completion of, school, as well as providing academic support to improve education outcomes • Ensuring that should female learners fall pregnant, they be guaranteed the right to return to school and receive support upon their return to allow completion
Parental attitudes, values and practices are a major barrier to knowledge and the use of SRH services and positive behaviour.	<p>CSE is the responsibility of all caregivers, not just schools and teachers. CSE must therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be provided across the child's life—from the home, in communities, in health facilities, schools and tertiary institutions

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES	REQUIRED RESPONSES
<p>Laws that criminalize and prevent access to services for key populations are a key driver of poor access to services and risk of HIV transmission.¹² Harmful laws include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws that criminalize same-sex relationships¹³ • Age of consent to HIV testing laws • Laws that allow child marriages and other harmful practices¹⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include caregivers, who must be empowered, enabled and motivated to continue and support quality CSE in the home¹¹ <p>Review and revise enabling laws and policies to ensure they do not discriminate against key populations or prevent their access to services.</p>
<p>Participation of affected stakeholders is vital to success.</p> <p>"Where [affected] communities are able to participate in decision-making and service delivery, outcomes and impacts have generally improved."¹⁵ Conversely, where they are excluded, progress has stalled among key populations—driven by their marginalization.</p>	<p>There must be meaningful and routine participation by adolescents and young women and men affected by HIV&AIDS in decision-making and HIV service delivery.¹⁶</p> <p>Although progress has been made towards the 90:90:90 targets,* significant gaps remain. To escalate and sustain progress, the involvement of the affected populations in facility and national decision-making about HIV&AIDS is required, as well as their participation in service delivery.¹⁷</p>

Developing agency through educational ecosystems in Zimbabwe

The CSTL Policy Framework provides a legally mandated roadmap to strengthen Zimbabwe's educational ecosystem for developing agency - towards building human capital to achieve an HIV-free generation of young people.

To develop agency to address the developmental challenges, every child and young person must be provided with:

- *Information* (through CSE, and on gender equality and climate change, etc.) from a diversity of sources on the implications, different approaches, rights and responsibilities, global, regional, national goals, etc.
- *Support to develop analytical, communication and advocacy competencies* to find, analyse, understand and apply information to identify challenges and make responsible, evidence-based and rights-based decisions to change behaviour, attitudes, practices and values for themselves and their families, schools, communities and countries
- *The opportunity* to apply the information, advocate for and implement the plans to bring about the required changes in behaviour, practices, values, policies and instruments

Treaty and development instruments obligate education systems to develop agency because they have universal reach. However, schools acting alone cannot ensure universal quality education for agency. What is required is *the delivery of 21st century education for agency by co-educators acting in unity within a national educational ecosystem*. But this requires education ministries to take the lead in systematizing and coordinating educational ecosystems that bring the various role players (schools, teachers, caregivers, communities, peers, the media, traditional and religious leaders, healthcare providers, development partners etc.) together to:

* UNAIDS' target that by 2020: 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status; 90% of all people diagnosed with HIV will receive sustained ART; and 90% of all people receiving ART will have viral suppression.

- Address access barriers
- Provide quality, transformational education for agency—as co-educators—across multiple educational platforms

To ensure that every child is included, receives quality education and *develops agency*, CSTL schools must be universalized as hubs of the national educational ecosystems. Educational ecosystems must therefore be systematized across eight “systemic building blocks”. The biggest and most common gaps in these systemic building blocks in Zimbabwe are tabulated below.

TABLE 2: SYSTEMIC STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES AND NEXT STEPS FOR ZIMBABWE

SYSTEMIC BUILDING BLOCK	STRENGTHS	BIGGEST GAPS	ACTION REQUIRED
<p>International, continental and regional (SADC) instruments that obligate and guide Member States to develop educational ecosystems for quality education for agency through coordinated action of co-educators under the leadership of the education sector</p>	<p>Zimbabwe has ratified and/or endorsed multiple instruments that can only be implemented through educational ecosystems that provide for developing child and youth agency, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ESA Commitment • <i>Africa's Agenda 2063</i> and the <i>Sustainable Development Agenda</i> • <i>Africa's Agenda for Children 2040</i> • <i>The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child</i> • <i>The CSTL Policy Framework</i> <p>Not only has Zimbabwe endorsed the Policy Framework, it has also domesticated it by developing a CSTL National Model to ensure inclusive education to address key development challenges, with HIV&AIDS being an express priority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UN and AU do not have frameworks in place that direct Member States to develop educational ecosystems for developing child and youth agency. • Although the <i>CSTL Policy Framework</i> has been domesticated, the National Model does not address strengthening the quality of education for addressing agency. <p>The National Model and <i>CSTL Policy Framework</i> are not yet universally known and applied as planning tools, nor have they been adequately systematized within the education sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the CYAF as a guide, revise the CSTL National Model to make the quality of education for agency a priority and with guidance on how to do so. <p>The National Model must prioritize the following critical CSTL essential elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curriculum quality (including Life Skills and CSE) ▪ The curriculum for developing civic and political competencies ▪ Teacher development and support for developing agency ▪ Caregiver and community involvement ▪ Learner participation in decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an advocacy plan on the roles and responsibilities of co-educators: education, health, caregivers, communities, the media, etc.
<p>Enabling national and policies and laws that mandate the delivery of education for agency through educational ecosystems to achieving SDGs, HIV targets, and treaty responsibilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 21st century National Curriculum Policy Framework (NCF) • CSE policies and curriculum • School–Health policies 	<p>Zimbabwe has adopted several policies that address the heightened risks of adolescents to HIV, among other health-related issues. They identify adolescents, especially girls and young women, as high-risk groups, and make provision for integrated services to prevent transmission and increase treatment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health Strategy (2016–2020) <p>This mandates integrated services through various partners to empower children and youth to engage in healthy behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current policies and strategies do not adequately address boys' vulnerability. • There is no standalone HIV-prevention strategy and supporting costed implementation plan for adolescents that addresses the full continuum of risks to agency and that spells out the roles of the different sectors. <p>This results in limited implementation, which is often project-driven and donor-funded, rather than funded through public budgets.</p> <p>The 2015 ESA scorecard noted that the enabling environment in Zimbabwe is</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national, multisectoral adolescent and youth HIV&AIDS prevention strategy that develops agency for safe and healthy behaviour, and avoidance of risky behaviour, through an educational ecosystem <p>Policies must be reviewed to ensure that boys' vulnerability is addressed in the prevention strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop standardized operating procedures for all sectors in the provision of quality youth-friendly SRH services and CSE that comply with the WHO guidelines

SYSTEMIC BUILDING BLOCK	STRENGTHS	BIGGEST GAPS	ACTION REQUIRED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSTL National Model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A National HIV&AIDS Strategic Plan (ZNASPIII) 2016–2020 • National Health Strategy • School Health Policy • National Youth Policy (2013) • Life Skills, Sexuality, HIV&AIDS Education Strategy <p>Zimbabwe reaches out-of-school adolescents and youth through its Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and HIV&AIDS Strategic Plan.¹⁸</p>	<p>relatively weak, and there is a “need for focused, school-based, community-based and health facility interventions and strategies promoting treatment literacy and adherence. among adolescents and young people.”¹⁹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WHO requires every country to develop standardized operating procedures for all sectors to use in the provision of quality youth-friendly SRH services and CSE.²⁰ However, Zimbabwe has not developed the required standardized guidelines yet. • Current laws in Zimbabwe limit agency by setting the minimum age of access to contraception without parental consent at 16.²¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for revision of the laws governing the age of consent to SRH services without parental consent
<p>The following programmes at scale for delivering agency by a continuum of co-educators through schools as hubs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A curriculum that that builds capacity for advocacy and related skills • School health • CSE for the provision of knowledge and services • Extra-curricular peer groups and clubs • Debating clubs • Child and youth media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zimbabwe has adopted a competency-based 21st century Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015–2022 that explicitly identifies the role of education as preparing learners to support national development aspirations. <p>The NCF also integrates CSE, which is supplemented by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The School Health Policy (2018) that defines CSE as “a formal curriculum that is part of a comprehensive school health education approach.” ▪ The School-Based Life Skills Empowerment and Support Programme Strategic Plan (2020–2025) 	<p>The NCF focuses almost exclusively on socioeconomic skills and competencies rather than civic agency. The terms ‘civic engagement’ and ‘participation’ are not mentioned.</p> <p>Given these omissions in the NCF, the education system exhibits the following key gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and opportunities to exercise civic and political responsibilities and rights through decision-making platforms in families, schools and nationally • Teaching and learning methodology and extra-curricular activities to support the development of advocacy and communications for change and leadership skills • Opportunities to act for change and participate in decisions affecting their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the NCF to make civic agency an explicit priority and strengthen the supporting 21st century curriculum across the CSTL pillars and systemic building blocks, by, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying civic and political agency as a core competency of the NCF, CSE curriculum and integrated school health policy with clearly defined and measurable learning outcomes for agency—social and economic, as well as civil and political ▪ Developing programmes to develop agency (with supporting pedagogy and extra-curricular activities) that are delivered in and through schools by co-educators ▪ Supporting co-educators to attain the necessary competencies to fulfil their respective education for agency roles

SYSTEMIC BUILDING BLOCK	STRENGTHS	BIGGEST GAPS	ACTION REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The country implements several joint education–health sector programmes for SRH and HIV-prevention. Zimbabwe's NCF and Climate Change Response Strategy aim to mainstream climate change in all education curricula. 	<p>agency are not universally available, including healthcare in and through all schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recognition and measurement of the required skills and the exercise of agency as 21st century learning outcomes Pedagogical support for all co-educators to fulfil their roles Inadequate infrastructure and materials to realize the relevant curriculum goals Inadequate financial resources to secure implementation <p>While the country does implement several joint education–health sector programmes for SRH and HIV-prevention, because of significant financial, infrastructure and human resourcing constraints, implementation is limited; this impacts on the sustainability, reach, equitable coverage and quality of the services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing the infrastructure (such as youth-friendly health facilities, information and communication technology) required for environmentally sustainable practices and access to information and opportunities to exercise agency Revise the CSTL National Model to make quality education for agency a priority and domesticate the CYAF to provide a roadmap of role players and responsibilities, as well as outcomes and indicators to measure progress Develop a costed implementation plan to roll out programmes at scale and mobilize adequate resources to ensure sustainable implementation
<p>Mandated and qualified co-educators across the continuum, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers Teachers Peers Health and social workers Civil society organizations Community leaders Media 	<p>CSE education for educators has been mainstreamed and systematized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2015, 25 200 pre-service teachers were trained in CSE. A systematic programme of training was implemented for in-service teachers; 3 693 primary school teachers and 7 720 secondary school teachers have benefited. <p>“Zimbabwe’s 14 teacher training colleges provide compulsory CSE under the Health and Life Skills Education subject and as a result of the newly developed Zimbabwe Curriculum Framework (2015-2022), the Ministry of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Along with the other three pilot Member States, Zimbabwe has embedded CSE into its education curriculum. However, teacher attitudes, values and practices are seen as a particular challenge.²³ The systemic approach that was adopted for developing CSE educator capacity has not been adopted to train educators on the new 21st century curriculum. Conservative values and attitudes limit learner-centred teaching and learning practices, and there is minimal in-service training to develop the required knowledge, skills and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a human resources development strategy for building the capacity and support for all co-educators (caregivers, teachers, healthcare workers, peers, the media, community and religious leaders, etc.) to enable them to provide education for agency Develop specific training and support modules for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers in pilot schools Caregivers as co-educators Health workers Augment the current <i>Standard National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive</i>

SYSTEMIC BUILDING BLOCK	STRENGTHS	BIGGEST GAPS	ACTION REQUIRED
	<p>Primary and Secondary Education recently put together a comprehensive syllabus and teachers' manual on life skills, sexuality, and HIV&AIDS education, in line with regional and international standards."</p> <p>Zimbabwe has developed a national adolescent SRH training manual to "guide facilitators in preparing, delivering, and evaluating standard training in youth-friendly SRH service provision for service providers (both pre- and in-service)."22 However, it is unclear how many healthcare workers have been trained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and programmes provide for the delivery of CSE and SRH and of adolescent and youth agency through the education system. However, implementation is hampered by conservative or traditional values and practices of adults responsible for providing the interventions, including teachers, caregivers and community leaders. • There is a gap between policy and practice and there is limited communication between schools, communities and caregivers to address the gap.24 • Many co-educators do not recognize their role in the educational ecosystem and lack the capacity to fulfil their education-for-agency role. • <i>Caregivers as co-educators</i> is a neglected area, and there is little direction or policy in place to formalize and secure their role. 	<p><i>Health Training Manual</i> by integrating materials on the role of healthcare workers as co-educators for agency</p>
<p>Appropriate teaching and learning materials and infrastructure to support education for agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to diverse media and technology • Enough written and published materials • Environmentally-friendly infrastructure • Youth-friendly accessible SRH services 	<p>Zimbabwe has developed several programmes (as discussed previously) and teaching resources to support teachers and learners: however, supply, scale and sustainability are limited by lack of resources.</p>	<p>Inadequate infrastructure is a crosscutting concern that impacts on the delivery of CSE and SRH services in schools and clinics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of teaching and learning support material to facilitate knowledge and pedagogical practices for developing agency and for learner-centred practices. <p>Materials must be developed, drawing on lessons from other countries where good practices are in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and learning resources and materials that support the application of 	<p>Develop, cost and implement an infrastructure development plan and monitor its progress to support an effective 21st century curriculum and CSTL schools as hubs of educational ecosystems for developing agency.</p>

SYSTEMIC BUILDING BLOCK	STRENGTHS	BIGGEST GAPS	ACTION REQUIRED
		<p>information and knowledge is inadequate to develop agency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to exercise agency are limited by infrastructure constraints. • Access to and the free distribution of information—critical to 21st century skills—is hampered by limited infrastructure, connectivity and electronic equipment. • Access to the following infrastructure for agency is inadequate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technology ▪ Information, education and communication materials ▪ Environmentally-friendly infrastructure ▪ Adequate water and sanitation facilities 	
<p>Adequate budgets to sustain the system and the suite of services and support at scale</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 27% of the public health budget is allocated to HIV&AIDS.²⁵ However, it is not clear what percentage of this is allocated to adolescent-targeted interventions, or what percentage of the education budget is allocated to adolescent-focused HIV interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate education and health budgets limit scaled-up, sustained delivery of support and quality education for agency, and drive the other major systemic gaps. • Budget cuts post-COVID-19 will exacerbate resource inadequacies. • The lack of clear and costed implementation plans to support 21st century educational ecosystems makes it impossible to mobilize appropriate, sustainable resources. 	<p>Develop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costed implementation plans to support the educational ecosystem in pilot schools and then country-wide • A national resource mobilization strategy to ensure adequate, sustained funding of system-strengthening initiatives

SYSTEMIC BUILDING BLOCK	STRENGTHS	BIGGEST GAPS	ACTION REQUIRED
<p>Information management systems for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring progress in acquiring agency Strengthening systems <p><i>The CSTL reporting tool (structured around the existing Policy Framework and implementing mechanisms) addresses many of the issues.</i></p>	<p>There is an existing CSTL monitoring framework against that pilot Member States (including Zimbabwe) must integrate into their national education monitoring systems and report to SADC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National educational assessment curriculum frameworks and evaluation systems do not adequately define agency competencies, outcomes and measures of progress. Global, regional and national monitoring frameworks do not assess improvements in strengthening educational ecosystems for providing education for agency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and integrate agency outcomes (including civic and political agency) as a core, measurable educational outcome of the 21st century curriculum, and develop aligned indicators and assessment procedures for monitoring and reporting on the development of skills Integrate the CSTL reporting framework into the education monitoring and reporting system Embed system-strengthening indicators for measuring progress in developing educational ecosystem for agency in management information systems
<p>Leadership and coordination structures that are inclusive, representative and multi-sectoral, and which engage in the co-identification of challenges and development of solutions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-educators across the continuum Children and youth Media 	<p>Carious coordinating structures exist, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A multisectoral National AIDS Council (NAC) established by law It has been replicated at provincial-, district-, village- and ward-levels in the form of various action committees.²⁶ The NAC provides effective leadership, coordination and monitoring of the multisectoral national strategy. However, it is not strong and fully operational at decentralized levels.²⁷ An ESA commitment coordination mechanism However, coordination remains a challenge.²⁸ A CSTL National Coordination Unit However, to date it has not enjoyed adequate leadership or participation by the Curriculum Directorate. 	<p>Among the various structures there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential for duplication of roles and responsibilities, and a lack of clarity on how they relate to and support each other. Limited accountability and reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a leadership and coordination framework, strategy and implementation plan to consolidate, align and ensure mutual support across structures to advance inclusive educational ecosystems at national, Education and Health Ministry and school levels Develop terms of reference for all structures delineating roles and responsibilities and measures to support the development of capacity for effective, inclusive leadership and coordination

SYSTEMIC BUILDING BLOCK	STRENGTHS	BIGGEST GAPS	ACTION REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Community-level adolescent SRH committees to support community participation, leadership, and ownership of adolescent SRH programmes²⁹		

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