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ARTUZ Position Paper on 2025 Budget

**2025 Budget position paper from ARTUZ**

1. **Introduction**

The 2025 National Budget presents a crucial opportunity to address Zimbabwe's long-standing education challenges and ensure that the education sector is adequately funded to meet the needs of learners, educators, and the future workforce. The Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) acknowledges the efforts made in previous budget allocations but remains deeply concerned that the current levels of funding fall significantly short of what is required to support quality education, particularly for rural and disadvantaged communities. Drawing from our traditional demands and previous recommendations, we present a set of actionable proposals for the 2025 budget that reflect the urgent need for radical investment in education to safeguard the future of our nation.

1. **Overview of the Allocations For the 2024 Fiscal Year**

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education received significant budget support of Z$8 trillion, equivalent to USD$1375.61 million.[[1]](#footnote-1) This allocation highlights a prioritised commitment to providing quality education and easy access to learning opportunities for children. The substantial financial support indicates a strategic focus on enhancing educational resources, infrastructure, and programs to create an environment that facilitates effective learning experiences for the youth. This investment aligns to promote accessible and high-quality education, reflecting a dedication to the holistic development of primary and secondary education. The education sector was allocated 12.42% of the total national budget in the specified year.[[2]](#footnote-2) As a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP), the education budget declined to 2.8% in 2024 compared to 2.9% in 2023.

In the 2024 MoPSE budget, salaries commanded the largest share, amounting to approximately US$1.14 billion, constituting 82.92% of the total budget.[[3]](#footnote-3) This substantial allocation underscores the prioritisation of human resources, emphasising the significance of adequately compensating teachers and staff. However, the MoPSE budget, which dropped from 2.9% (2023) to 2.8% (2024) of GDP, fall significantly below the Incheon Declaration's recommendation of 6% for education spending. These percentages also lag behind commitments made by the government to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Replenishment Summit[[4]](#footnote-4) and the Transforming Education Summit. Education spending as a proportion of the overall budget slightly decreased to 12.42% in 2024, falling short of the Dakar Declaration's proposed level of 20%.

1. **Our Position or Demands for the 2025 Budget:**
2. **Adequate Budget Allocation for Education**

Historically, Zimbabwe has struggled to meet the stipulated 20% **Dakar Declaration and** 4-6% **Incheon Declaration for Education (2015)** benchmarks, with 0.8% in 2020, 2.3% (2021), 2.4% (2022), 2.9% (2023) and 2,8% (2024)[[5]](#footnote-5) leading to a decline in the quality of education, especially in rural areas. A budget that meets these minimum standards is necessary to improve infrastructure, provide teaching and learning materials, and ensure fair compensation for educators.

Thus, we strongly advocate **for a minimum of 20% of the national budget to be allocated to education, in accordance with the Dakar Declaration**. Furthermore, this allocation should represent **4-6% of the GDP, as stipulated by the Incheon Declaration for Education (2015)**. We further assert that the proposed figures in line with the Dakar Declaration and Incheon Declaration should be exclusive of the standalone tertiary education budget.

1. **Increase Support for Sanitary Wear for Schoolgirls**

Though allocations increased from 2,309,824.453 USD in 2023 to 2,677,029.361 USD in 2024 indicating a recognition of the importance of providing sanitary wear to a growing number of target female pupils.[[6]](#footnote-6)

In line with the provisions in the Education Act, that local schools should assist girls with sanitary wear and provide adequate, clean menstrual health facilities, including clean water and sanitation. We reiterate **our demand for a return to the 2022 allocation of USD 13 per girl per year for sanitary wear**. This allocation should be expanded in 2025 to address the growing number of families impacted by economic hardships. As poverty levels rise, so too does the need for targeted interventions to support the education of girls, particularly those in vulnerable communities. We call for sanitary wear to be recognised as a basic necessity, just as toilet paper is, and provided as such in schools. The government should adopt an ambitious approach that increases the coverage and availability of sanitary wear to ensure that no girl misses school due to menstrual challenges.

1. **State Funded Basic Education:**

The Education Act makes it an offence for a parent or guardian to deprive children the chance of going to school. However, with the current socio-economic challenegs facing many poor families and marginalised groups. Moreover, the current climate change related disasters such as Cyclone Idai and the El Nino drought have worsened the situation of vulnerable and marginalised children especially in rural areas. To make matters worse, allocations, disbursements, and utilisation of BEAM funds remain significant concerns. Over the past years the budget has not adequately financed this programme with the result that children in need of BEAM assistance continue to be deprived. In real terms the allocations to BEAM have also fallen short of meeting the needs on the ground. In 2024, the BEAM promised to support around 1.5 million vulnerable and orphaned learners across all provinces. With an allocation per child for the BEAM program increased to USD 92.79.

However, in the context of rising prices, and climate change we recommend the scrapping of the now defunct and inconsistent BEAM and be replaced with equity grants allocated to each learner **to at least US$10 per school term (US$30 per year) per learner**. This funding will be essential in addressing the growing number of learners affected by declining family incomes and increasing poverty and climate related disasters.

In addition, it will also ensure that **schools are better resourced to provide quality education to all learners**, especially those in marginalised areas. The current allocations are insufficient to cater to the basic needs of learners and must be increased to ensure equal access to education.

1. **School Feeding:**

The devastating impacts of climate change, as seen in the El Niño-induced droughts and Cyclone Idai, have significantly worsened poverty and food insecurity in Zimbabwe's rural areas, leading to increased school dropouts. With families struggling to meet basic needs, many children are forced to abandon school to support their households, deepening the cycle of poverty.

As such, we propose an additional **US$0.50 per learner for each day of school attendance**. This measure incentivizes school attendance and helps cushion the cost of education, particularly for families struggling with economic challenges. It will also ensure schools are equipped to handle the increased operational costs associated with keeping learners engaged and in attendance.

1. **Fair and Competitive Teacher Salaries**

We acknowledge the fact that in the 2024 budget, salaries **had the largest share, amounting to approximately US$1.14 billion, constituting 82.92% of the total budget** however, the chronic underpayment of teachers continues to undermine the quality of education in Zimbabwe.

As such, we call for an urgent review of teacher salaries, **with a minimum monthly salary of USD 1,260 for every teacher**. This figure represents **a living wage that would help educators meet their basic needs and perform their duties effectively**. Current salaries are woefully inadequate and contribute to widespread dissatisfaction, leading to low morale and the migration of qualified teachers to other countries. An investment in teacher salaries is an investment in the future of Zimbabwe's children.

In addition, the rural allowance should be increased to **70%** of basic salary to motivate teachers working and living in rural areas as they cope with **decreased social amenities and inadequate social and technological infrastructure**

1. **Increased Housing Allowances for Teachers**

Teachers are struggling to afford dignified housing due to skyrocketing rental prices. We demand an upward revision of housing allowances to reflect actual market rates. Specifically, we demand a housing allowance of **at least USD 120 per month, in line with gazetted government rates for medium-density housing rentals**. This would allow teachers to secure safe, adequate housing and alleviate the financial strain they currently face. Providing decent accommodation for teachers **will also help retain qualified professionals, especially in rural areas where accommodation options are limited**.

1. **Investment in School Infrastructure**

A key barrier to quality education, especially in rural areas, **is the lack of adequate school infrastructure**. New settlements, emerging due to new demographic realities, have given rise to satellite schools currently approximately **numbering 1,963, of which 1,087 are in the primary sector and 876 are secondary**. These satellite schools **need substantial investment in improving infrastructure to meet the minimum standards of functionality set by MOPSE for their registration as standalone entities.**

Thus, the government has previously committed to building more schools, yet progress has been slow. We call for a dedicated **allocation of USD 3,360,000 in the 2025 budget for the construction of at least 420 schools based on our last estimations**, particularly in underserved rural communities. This investment would address overcrowding, reduce long distances students must travel to school, and improve the overall learning environment. **Building more schools is not only necessary for providing access to education but also for ensuring that every child learns in a safe and conducive environment.**

1. **Electrification and Connectivity of Rural Schools**

There is need to tap into the **RURAL ELECTRIFICATION AGENCY, RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ACT AND RURAL ELECTRIFICATION FUND** to electrify rural schools. This could be through conventional means or the installation of solar energy facilities especially in areas that enjoy plenty of sunshine. Since established in 2002, the agency was supposed to modernize even the rural shopping centers. The agency has completed 9970 projects which is far below the expectations and needs as well as the resources available. 83% of urban households and 13 of rural households have access to electricity and hence they are paying 6% tax for Rural Electrification Fund through ZETDC every month, amounting millions of dollars for the agency. For s start we propose 40% of the fund to be dedicated to supporting electrification of rural schools and health centers.

1. **Indigenisation policy and economic empowerment Act**

We propose that **10% of community share should be directed to the infrastructural development including ICT for the public education**. The president through the open for business mantra, scrapped the Indigenization Policy in all sectors of the economy but reserved for mining, which means that 10% community share is still applicable. There is therefore the need for the organized, independent provincial board that account and take the 10% from all mining companies in the province and therefore that 10% must be directed to development of the districts-with half of 10% directed to ICT and electricity infrastructure of rural public schools. This is attainable given that all the provinces are endowed with Mineral-Gold in Mashonaland Central and Midlands, Diamond in Chiadzwa, Lithium in Bikita, Coal in Hwange and all other provinces. The National Treasure should take 1% from the 10% and distribute to their areas without minerals for the sake of equity.

10% of community share must not only applied to the foreign companies, but even the small-scale local mining companies and the Informal Gold Mining operations must contribute 10% to the national development like education.

1. **Universal Services Fund**

The government needs to tap into the Universal Services Fund to connect rural schools as well as back that with alternative energy infrastructure.

1. **Debt Resolution for Civil Servants**

Civil servants are heavily indebted and given the current macro-economic difficulties, there is need to come up with a debt resolution fund for civil servants. One potential source of funding is mining royalties. The suggested Munhumutapa Sovereign Wealth Fund can be leveraged to support this initiative.

1. **Revision of Civil Servants Car Rebate.**

The current car rebate threshold for civil servants of US$4000 has been overtaken by economic condition as the market value of cars allowed in the country at the moment are costing a minimum of US$8000. We therefore proposal a civil servants car rebate of US$9,000.

**Demands Summary:**

* A minimum of 20% of the national budget allocated to education, and 4-6% of GDP.
* USD 13 per girl per year for sanitary wear, with expanded coverage.
* A basic salary of USD 1,260 per teacher per month.
* A housing allowance of USD 120 per teacher, aligned with actual rental costs.
* USD 3,360,000 allocated for the construction of 420 schools.
* **An extra US$10 per school term (US$30 per year) per learner to support with their education.**
* **A US$0.50 per learner for each day of school attendance**
* **Revision of civil servants rebate from US$4000 to US$9000.**
* **Establishment of a civil servants debt resolution fund.**
* Tap into Rural Electrification Fund, Universal Services Fund and the Indigenisation and Empowerment Policy to mobilise funds to support digital and electricity infrastructure in rural schools.

**Conclusion**

The 2025 budget must reflect the urgency of addressing the chronic underfunding of Zimbabwe’s education sector. ARTUZ’s recommendations are based on the principles of equity, fairness, and the belief that quality education is a fundamental right for all children, regardless of their socio-economic background. The proposed radical increase in funding per learner, adherence to international budgetary standards, improvement of teacher remuneration, and investment in school infrastructure are critical to safeguarding the future of our education system. We urge the government to take bold action and commit to these demands in the 2025 budget, as they are essential for the growth and prosperity of Zimbabwe.

1. Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion, Zimbabwe, *The 2024 National Budget* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 2024 National Budget Analysis Primary and Secondary Education, Available at: <https://www.africaeducationhub.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/hesa/104/2024_National_Budget_Analysis_Primary_and_Secondary_Education.pdf?sequence=1#:~:text=For%20the%202024%20fiscal%20year,to%20learning%20opportunities%20for%20children>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Available at: <https://www.ipned.org/global-partnership-for-education-replenishment> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 2024 National Budget Analysis Primary and Secondary Education [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion, Zimbabwe, *The 2024 National Budget* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)