

ECIS Calls on Parliamentarians to Ensure Every Child In School.

Every Child in School (ECIS) Campaign, an initiative working with the local CSOs and led by Tag a Life International (TaLI) targeting the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to open all public primary schools to accommodate vulnerable children whose parents cannot pay school fees, is urging parliamentarians to represent their constituencies in ensuring the government delivers on its mandate to ensure every child is in school according to the Zimbabwean Constitution of 2013 Section 75 (a) which provides for the government to provide free compulsory basic education.

Launched on the 14th of December 2017, the campaign has asked the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education to **immediately release a circular** that will instruct all School Authorities in Public Primary Schools to allow children whose parents cannot pay for school fees to be accepted into schools. The current dilemma is that children who had dropped out of school for one reason or the other, or are moving from one place to another and are looking for enrolment places are not being accepted into schools unless their parents pay school fees to which many do not afford the small amounts required due to poverty.

The platform reminds the Parliamentarians and Zimbabweans that; according to research every year, more than a million school age children are at the risk of either dropping out of school or not enrolling at all. 6.6% of primary and 20.6% of secondary school children were not in school in 2014 (Child labour Survey 2014), and 68% of these children failed to enrol in school due to financial reasons leading to 23.3% failing to complete primary education whilst 58% were just demotivated to enrol, probably due to the same reasons (MoPSE Education Sector Strategic Plan 2016-2020).

Inspired by our country's new dispensation whose new President ED Mnangagwa has highlighted and promised on urgently addressing social services such as Education, and in the true spirit of Restoring our Education Legacy, the The ECIS Campaign is calling on the parliamentarians to deliver in conjunction with the the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, on basic education that the constitution promises. While the Minister of Education has since responded to this campaign that the Ministry is already doing what ECIS is calling on, there is nothing to support that position by the minister. Currently there is no written down policy in schools to this effect to hold school authorities accountable if they turn back children and the ministry is encouraged to promote clear accountability by putting policies, circulars and systems in place to promote transparency. We therefore call on the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education to realise that this is urgent, that this has lives of children at stake and as a public officer has to deliver on citizens calls and recommendations without delay.

We are imploring all legislators from the 10 provinces to deliver for their constituencies on primary basic education by urgently discussing this in parliament.

Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children (ZNCWC)

Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ), Forum for African Women Educationalists Zimbabwe (FAWEZI), Mambure Trust, Research Advocacy Unit(RAU), Higher Life Foundation(HLF), Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI), Justice for Children's Trust (JCT), Katswe Sisterhood, World Vision Zimbabwe, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), Issues Pane Nyaya, UDACIZA, Female Students Nrtwort (FSNT), Zimbabwe Alliance, PROWEB

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109