Overall Response

Overall Response to the Evaluation: The evaluation report is very comprehensive with a huge amount of information gathered and analysed leading to sound set of conclusions, clear recommendations and useful lessons learnt. The report identifies clearly why and how the programme drifted away from its originally intended outcomes and impact due to inability of the government partner to deliver its expected contributions. The report also delves into the factors that allowed this drift to continue, the unfortunate results of this in terms of negative impact on poor and vulnerable groups and highlights the conflict in delivery between those committed to physical and financial targets and those more concerned over the humanitarian effects. The links from findings through conclusions to clear recommendations and lessons learnt are excellent. The role of the District Education Offices is alluded to in the lessons learnt and the recommendations but could be beneficially given more definitive discussion. The eight recommendations were reviewed extensively at the Education Development Fund (EDF) steering committee meeting led by the minister of education, and the response is based on realities on the ground and what realistically can be done to address the recommendations. The steering committee agreed to five recommendations, disagreed with 2 recommendations and partially agreed 1 recommendation.

Planned Use of the Evaluation: The evaluation covered the periods from 2014 to 2016, so while some of the recommendations are a bit outdated the steering committee felt that there are lessons learned and some other recommendations that should be considered and incorporated into the work planning process for EDF. A good example is strengthening the sector wide M&E framework. The evaluation report will also be used as part of the next sector planning process.

Recommendations and Actions

Recommendation #1:

Use the organisational review to promote better planning, in so doing: a) develop a holistic plan for teacher education; b) promote a more appropriate change management approach that moves away from an emphasis on inspection; c) ensure Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) and Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MoHTESTD) work together in a more systematic way.

Management Response: Partially Agree

Action #1:

Responsible Section: Education
Responsible Person: Saul Murimba
Expected Completion: 5/31/2018 12:00:00 AM
Implementation Stage: Completed

Action Planned: Provide technical support to MoPSE in conducting the organization development (HOD) exercise.

Action Taken: UNICEF provided support to MoPSE in conducting a organization development and the exercise was completed.

Action #2:
Responsible Section: Education  
Responsible Person: Saul Murimba  
Expected Completion: 6/30/2018 12:00:00 AM  
Implementation Stage: Completed

**Action Planned:** Development of inception report on holistic organizational development

**Action Taken:** MoPSE developed the inception report on holistic organizational development with the support of UNICEF.

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**Recommendation #2:**

Ensure development partners play a more proactive role, especially at the strategic level, by: a) reviewing existing partnership with development partners to ensure they take greater responsibility for their investments and meet their financial commitments; b) ensuring that the ECG allows UNICEF and Development partners can raise concerns about the education strategy and the financing of the sector; linking up more closely with other agencies working in the sector such as the World Bank.

**Management Response:** Disagree

**Reason**

The recommendation is irrelevant and out of context. While there may have been some challenges during the period the evaluation was covered (2014-2016), currently, there are two institutional platform that development partners are actively engaged and raise concerns on various issues affecting the sector. These are the education sector coordination (ECG) mechanism, and the EDF Steering Committee both chaired by the Hon. Minister of Education. World Bank is already a member of ECG. Development partners are also part of the steering committee on school financing. The continuation and increase of donor funding is evidence of confidence shown by donors.

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**Recommendation #3:**

Ensure that equity is central to the School Financing Policy (SFP), by: a) ensuring that all policies developed, including the school financing policy, are reviewed from an equity angle to ensure policy does not exacerbate inequality; b) exploring more creative ways to target the OVCs (including re-assessing whether SIG now contradicts existing UNICEF policy regarding vulnerable children).

**Management Response:** Agree

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**Action #1:**

Responsible Section: Education  
Responsible Person: Niki Abrishamian  
Expected Completion: 6/30/2018 12:00:00 AM  
Implementation Stage: Completed

**Action Planned:** Develop an inception report of School Financing Policy (SFP) to reflect the equity issue and overall equity lens.

**Action Taken:** SFP inception report was developed.

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**Action #2:**

Responsible Section: Education  
Responsible Person: Niki Abrishamian  
Expected Completion: 6/30/2018 12:00:00 AM  
Implementation Stage: Completed

**Action Planned:** To develop draft Equity Focused Criteria to be used for next School Improvement Grant (SIG) disbursement

**Action Taken:** a list of draft equity focused criteria for next SIG disbursement was developed.

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**Recommendation #4:**

In the development of a School Financing Policy, discussions should also focus on developing a textbook use and replacement policy that would incorporate, for instance: a) modelling different approaches that could be applied to different school contexts; b) examining all the inputs needed and reaching an agreement on who is funding what and in what proportion (bearing equity considerations in mind – hence targeting which includes textbooks).

**Management Response:** Agree

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**Action #1:**
**Recommendation #5:**

Greater emphasis is needed to demonstrate how tools such as Teacher Capacity Development Information System (TDIS) and Teacher Professional Standards (TPS) can be used to assist the management of schools by: a) empowering Cluster Schools to demonstrate that effective forward planning incorporates the analysis of assessment data; b) linking the educational needs of schools with teachers who are appropriately qualified. c) More support provided to teacher training which would include encouraging use of the cluster system to provide in-service training; focussed workshops; mentoring; coaching and other means of developing the teacher cohort (that do not involve expensive conferences / course that take teachers away from the classroom).

**Management Response:** Disagree

**Reason**

In theory, this recommendation is sound but in practical terms it is not possible to implement largely due to many factors. 1) TDIS data is outdated, and not updated for more than a year due to commitment not shown by Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) to invest in it, 2) to date cluster approach for this area has not been functional due to lack of capacity and guidance, and 3) all teacher trainings are organized at central level and then implemented at District level. The issue of teacher professional development is a systemic issue that requires 2-3 years of investment to build a sound system of teacher professional development. The holistic organization development exercise which was conducted with the support of UNICEF will partially address some of the capacity gaps, but to address all the issues will require a systemic approach to teacher development and management.

**Recommendation #6:**

Developing a system-wide approach to M&E that would include: a) ensuring the M&E system is better at measuring progress towards intermediate outcomes; b) providing a better early warning system re limitations and constraints both EDF and GPE face; c) developing a consolidated database, aligned to MoPSE’s M&E Framework (and hence reduces transactions costs and avoids duplication) which records all EDF and GPE activities, which is compatible with the EMIS database.

**Management Response:** Agree

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**Action #1:**

**Responsible Section:** Education
**Responsible Person:** Niki Abrishamian
**Expected Completion:** 2/28/2019 12:00:00 AM
**Implementation Stage:** Not Started

**Action Planned:** To review current M&E mechanism within the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and UNICEF’s education programme

**Action Taken:** No action has been taken as yet but UNICEF and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education are going to review the current M & E mechanism and the outcome of the review will be used to develop a more robust M&E system for use in tracking progress against targets. Mechanisms for the implementation of this system will also be developed. This system will have: o Clear structure, designated staff with assigned roles, & supported by the requisite resources o M&E system to have in-built warning features (e.g. dashboard) that can be easily read by managers or decision makers o An integrated database (e.g. on all SIG recipient schools dating back to 2013) that is simple to use but versatile enough to inform players across the sector. o This is a critical recommendation,
which require long-term investment and so must be prioritized by MoPSE and UNICEF. It must be linked to a broader strategy for strengthening program design & accountability for results, yet implemented in phased approach.

**Action #2:**

- **Responsible Section:** Education
- **Responsible Person:** Niki Abrishamian
- **Expected Completion:** 4/30/2019 12:00:00 AM
- **Implementation Stage:** Not Started

**Action Planned:** To develop an M&E strategy with phased implementation

**Action Taken:** No action taken to date but UNICEF will work with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in developing the M&E strategy.

**Action #3:**

- **Responsible Section:** Education
- **Responsible Person:** Niki Abrishamian
- **Expected Completion:** 12/31/2019 12:00:00 AM
- **Implementation Stage:** Not Started

**Action Planned:** To provide technical and financial support in the implementation of selected recommendations arising from the review of the current M&E mechanism including addressing development of M&E tools

**Action Taken:** No action taken, action is planned for 2019.

**Recommendation #7:**

Future programming needs to incorporate an appropriate level of ICT interventions, with an emphasis on a) promoting synergy with other ICT initiatives in Zimbabwe such as the work the World Bank are doing by providing technical assistance, to assist Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, to develop an ICT policy for the sector b) learning applicable lessons from other successful ICT interventions conducted by UNICEF in other regions.

**Management Response:** Agree

**Action #1:**

- **Responsible Section:** Education
- **Responsible Person:** Niki Abrishamian
- **Expected Completion:** 6/30/2019 12:00:00 AM
- **Implementation Stage:** Underway

**Action Planned:** To provide inputs into the draft ICT policy, and share lessons learned with Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

**Action Taken:** Ministry of Primary and Secondary and Secondary Education has prioritized ICT (e.g. use of ICT to promote learning incl. e-learning) as part of the updated curriculum. Connectivity is also prioritized. Development of the ICT policy is underway and point (a) of the recommendations will be addressed through he policy. Through initiatives such as the TCDP, as well as Microsoft- and British Council supported initiatives, MoPSE has invested in training of teachers in ICT, and will use these teachers as a resource for enhancement of skills in this area.

**Recommendation #8:**

Thought needs to be given to: a) How the decision to grant or withdraw SIG funding is communicated to schools, b) Whether the onerous approval system is the most efficient (and whether any steps can be done in less time), c) Whether the current funding formula is not unfairly penalising schools who are just outside the current SIG threshold

**Management Response:** Agree

**Action #1:**

- **Responsible Section:** Education
- **Responsible Person:** Niki Abrishamian
- **Expected Completion:** 12/31/2018 12:00:00 AM
- **Implementation Stage:** Not Started

**Action Planned:** To review the current mode of communication to provinces, districts and schools and identify better communication strategy through consultation with relevant authorities
**Action Taken:** No action taken as yet but the current mode of communication will be reviewed and a Communication package will be prepared and sent to schools to enhance transparency on criteria used to select SIG recipient schools.

**Action #2:**

- **Responsible Section:** Education
- **Responsible Person:** Niki Abrishamian
- **Expected Completion:** 12/31/2018 12:00:00 AM
- **Implementation Stage:** Underway

**Action Planned:** To revisit school selection criteria to explore performance based options as well as low income schools and revise current practice if deemed necessary

**Action Taken:** Discussions are underway to revisit the criteria. The criteria to be used in 2019 will be reviewed this year to guide 2019 SIG selection processes with a view to simplifying it but without losing the equity focus and ensuring that the most needy and deserving schools are reached. As 2018 SIG payments have been done, the new SIG selection criteria will be used during 2019 SIG disbursement.