



The Civil Society Voice in Education



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Mr Elvis Chitsungo

Message From The Director

It is my pleasure to present the Quarter One 2026 Newsletter, marking the beginning of a new year filled with renewed commitment, strategic focus, and collective action towards advancing our mission.

The first quarter of 2026 has set a strong foundation for the year ahead. As a Coalition, we have prioritized aligning our work with both national and global development frameworks, ensuring that our interventions remain relevant, impactful, and responsive to the evolving education landscape. Our efforts are guided by the aspirations of Zimbabwe's Vision 2030, the National Development Strategy 2, and continental and global commitments to inclusive and equitable quality education.

A key milestone during this quarter has been the development and refinement of the 2026 Annual Work Plan. This process has been highly consultative, drawing from the insights of our members, strategic partners, and stakeholders to ensure that the priorities are well-informed and strategically positioned. In addition, the Coalition has continued to implement activities under the GPE Education Out Loud program, UNICEF, UNESCO and Students and Academics International Help Fund (SAIH) providing us with an opportunity to deepen our impact in advocacy, inclusivity and policy engagement.

The Coalition is also pleased to note that the external audit process for the previous financial year is currently underway, reinforcing our commitment to transparency, accountability, and good governance. Such processes are critical in strengthening institutional credibility and sustaining stakeholder confidence.

Despite ongoing challenges in the funding environment and shifting donor priorities, our Coalition remains resilient. We continue to explore innovative approaches, strengthen partnerships, and mobilize resources to sustain our work and expand our reach.

As we reflect on the progress made in the first quarter, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to our members, strategic partners, and stakeholders for their unwavering support and collaboration. It is through our collective efforts that we continue to champion the Right to Education for all.

I encourage you to engage with this newsletter, which highlights key achievements, ongoing initiatives, and lessons learned during this quarter. Together, let us continue to build momentum as we advance into the rest of 2026.

Thank you.

ECOZI Signs Landmark MoU with Parliament of Zimbabwe to Strengthen Education Governance

On the 11th of March 2026, Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) reached a significant milestone by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Parliament of Zimbabwe. This strategic partnership marks a new chapter in advancing collaborative efforts to strengthen education governance and accountability in Zimbabwe.

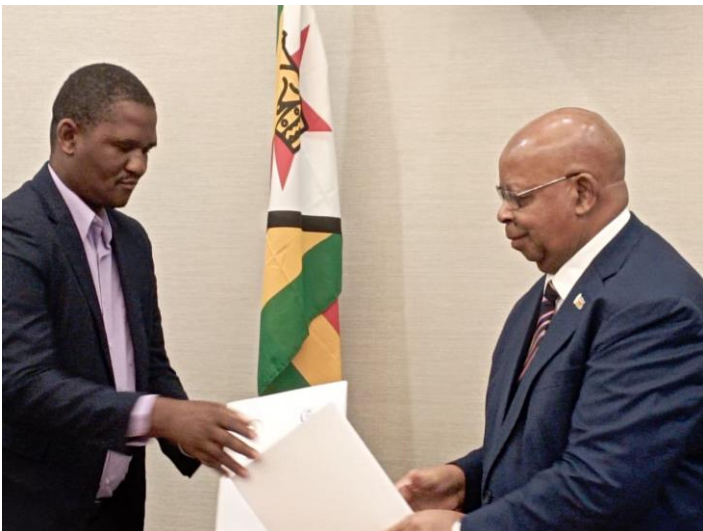
The MoU formalizes a shared commitment between ECOZI and Parliament to promote inclusive, transparent, and evidence based decision making processes within the education sector. At the core of this partnership is the recognition that effective education systems are built on strong collaboration between policymakers, civil society, and the communities they serve.

Through this partnership, ECOZI will play a critical role in supporting Parliament's oversight and legislative functions by providing credible, research driven evidence on key

education issues. This includes amplifying the voices and lived experiences of learners, teachers, parents, and communities across Zimbabwe to ensure that policies are responsive to real needs on the ground.

The collaboration will also focus on strengthening citizen engagement in education governance. By creating platforms for dialogue between communities and policymakers, the partnership seeks to bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation. This will contribute to improved transparency and accountability in the delivery of education services nationwide.

In addition, the MoU aligns with ECOZI's broader mission to advocate for equitable access to quality education for all. By working closely with Parliament, ECOZI aims to influence policy reforms, budget allocations, and oversight processes that directly impact the education sector.



A Milestone for Girls' Education: Launch of the National MHM Network in Zimbabwe

Menstrual poverty remains a significant barrier to girls' education in Zimbabwe, affecting school attendance, participation, and overall dignity. In response to these challenges, Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) participated in the National Menstrual Health Management (MHM) for Resilience Network Platform Convening, coordinated and supported by CARE International and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe (MoPSE). The convening marked an important step toward establishing a National MHM Network Platform aimed at strengthening coordination of menstrual health interventions in schools across the country.

Discussions highlighted persistent gaps, including fragmented implementation, inconsistent data collection, weak integration between MHM, WASH, and health services,

and limited financing for menstrual health commodities. The proposed platform seeks to address these challenges by ensuring that interventions are coordinated, aligned with national education priorities, and systematically tracked and reported to improve impact.

As a coalition whose core mandate is coordination, ECOZI is strategically positioned to contribute meaningfully through its Gender Equality and Inclusion Thematic Committee by convening stakeholders, promoting collaboration, and strengthening evidence-based advocacy. Beyond coordination, ECOZI remains committed to championing increased investment in menstrual health and equitable access to menstrual products for adolescent girls in schools. Through strengthened coordination and sustained advocacy, ECOZI continues to work towards a Zimbabwe where no girl misses school because of her period.



Empowering Student Voices: ECOZI Capacitate Peer Educators at Joshua Nqabuko Nkomo Polytechnical College

On 12 February 2026, the Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI), with support from SAIH, facilitated a transformative full-day training workshop for 31 first-year peer educators at Joshua Nqabuko Nkomo Polytechnical College (JMNC) in Zimbabwe. The workshop focused on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), and college policies equipping participants with the knowledge and skills needed to support their fellow students and advocate for a safer campus environment.

Strong Results from the Start: Participants arrived with a solid foundation a pre-training assessment recorded an average score of 75%. By the end of the session, knowledge levels had risen by 20%, reflecting the immediate impact of the structured, participatory approach used throughout the day.

Learning Through Real-Life Scenarios: One of the session's highlights was a series of role play exercises where peer educators dramatized real challenges facing students: drug abuse driven by peer pressure, sexual harassment by a lecturer

and the barriers to reporting it, and housing insecurity affecting students living off campus. These scenarios sparked honest dialogue and reinforced the critical role peer educators play in connecting students to support services.

A New Committee Takes the Lead: The day concluded with the election of a new Peer Educator Committee formally tasked with coordinating peer education activities for the upcoming academic term, maintaining communication among trained educators, and liaising with college management and ECOZI.

Participants called on ECOZI to strengthen reporting mechanisms for abuse and harassment, expand psychosocial support services, advocate for affordable on-campus accommodation, and promote financial transparency around fees and support options. ECOZI remains committed to walking alongside these young leaders as they shape a more informed, inclusive, and empowered student community at JMNC and beyond.



Building Safer Schools Together: ECOZI Capacitate School Development Committees in Juru Cluster, Goromonzi

On 27 and 28 January 2026, ECOZI, with support from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) and funding from UNESCO under the O3 Plus Project, convened a two-day training workshop on school governance, health, and wellbeing at Oliver Juru Primary School in Juru Growth Point. The workshop brought together 163 participants drawn from eight schools Oliver Juru Primary, Ivordale Primary, Mukombami Secondary, Gosha Secondary, Bosha Secondary, Chabwino Secondary, Pagejorarubhi Primary, and Mwanza Primary including School Development Committee (SDC) members, teachers, learners, traditional leaders, and officials from MoPSE, the Ministry of Health and Child Care, the Department of Social Development, and the Victim Friendly Unit.

The training was designed to strengthen the capacity of SDCs and school management to promote safe, healthy, and inclusive learning environments, improve school-community linkages for child protection, and advance programmes that support the overall wellbeing of children and young people. Facilitators

included provincial and district education officers, a district nursing officer, an educational psychologist, a social development officer, and a district remedial tutor reflecting the deliberately multi-sectoral approach ECOZI champions

Discussions during the workshop revealed critical gaps: many schools had limited knowledge of school governance frameworks, Child Protection Committees were not functioning effectively, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) remained poorly implemented, and mental health and guidance and counselling services were being side-lined. Online safety education was also identified as an area requiring urgent attention. In response, schools agreed on concrete commitments including quarterly safeguarding compliance reviews, the reconstitution of inactive Child Protection Committees, monthly CPC meetings with formally recorded minutes, and the integration of community and traditional leaders into safeguarding dialogues



A particularly encouraging outcome was the schools' collective pledge to ensure that 100% of reported child protection cases receive documented follow-up within two weeks, and that at least 75% of SDC and school leadership members participate in governance workshops annually. Schools also called for the deliberate inclusion of upper secondary learners as peer mentors and safeguarding ambassadors a move expected to strengthen reporting mechanisms across the student body.

UNESCO's continued investment in grassroots school governance is helping to shift the culture in Zimbabwe's tertiary and secondary institutions towards one where safeguarding is not an afterthought but a shared community responsibility. The Juru Cluster workshop is a powerful reminder that when schools, government, and communities work together, every learner is better protected.



Strengthening Protection, Voice and Agency: RISE Workshops Empower Out-of-School Adolescent Girls in Chitungwiza and Chipinge



Chitungwiza and Chipinge, Zimbabwe – February 2026 — The Forum for African Women Educationalists Zimbabwe (FAWEZI), with support from UNICEF, conducted two-day sensitisation workshops for out-of-school adolescent girls under the RISE: Resilient, Innovative, Skilled & Empowered Girls Project, targeting prevention of child marriage and improved access to protection and health services.

The workshops reached 100 adolescent girls in Wards 23 and 5 in Chitungwiza and 116 girls in Maparadze, Rimai and Muumbe villages in Chipinge, creating safe, participatory spaces to address risks linked to teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence (GBV) and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services.

The initiative brought together key government ministries — including Primary and Secondary Education, Health and Child Care, Women Affairs, Social Development, the National AIDS Council and Youth Empowerment alongside district leadership and community partners to strengthen referral pathways and local accountability.

Officially closing the Chitungwiza workshop, Acting Deputy Director for Local Government Services, Ms Cynthia Chari, underscored the urgency of coordinated action.

“Child marriage, teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence continue to undermine the rights and future potential of our adolescent girls, particularly those out of school. Programmes like RISE are critical in equipping girls with knowledge, confidence and access to support services,” she said.

The RISE Project, implemented over 15 months in both districts, targets 24,000 adolescent girls and 15,000 community members, reinforcing policy commitments to gender equality, protection and inclusive education in Zimbabwe.

GRP Training Strengthens Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Education in Chitungwiza Schools



Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe – 2026 — The Forum for African Women Educationalists Zimbabwe (FAWEZI), with support from UNICEF, convened a four-day Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) training for teachers and non-teaching staff from 20 project schools in Chitungwiza, reinforcing national efforts to promote safe, inclusive and gender-responsive learning environments.

The training, anchored on FAWE’s established GRP Model Manual, brought together educators and key government stakeholders including Mrs. I. Zinzombe, Director of Gender, Inclusion and Wellness in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), Chitungwiza District Schools Inspector Dr. E. Kujeke, the Department of Social Development and the National AIDS Council. The engagement reflected a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach to learner protection and wellbeing.

Addressing participants, Mrs. Zinzombe urged schools to remain committed to inclusive education. “Creating safe and supportive learning environments is not optional; it is

education. “Creating safe and supportive learning environments is not optional; it is central to ensuring that every learner, especially girls, can thrive and participate fully in STEM and beyond,” she said.

Over four days, educators strengthened practical skills to integrate gender-responsive STEM methodologies, menstrual health management (MHM), HPV awareness, HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) into school systems. Sessions also addressed school-related gender-based violence, reporting mechanisms and survivor-centred responses, linking learner wellbeing directly to retention and performance.

The training concluded with the handover of seed packs to participating schools to promote nutritional gardens that support learner wellbeing and sustainable school initiatives. Schools developed action plans to operationalise GRP principles, advancing safer, more inclusive classrooms and improved participation of girls in STEM.

Championing Girls' Education at Nyakabau Primary

In the hills of Mutoko District, Nyakabau Primary School is small in size but vast in ambition. Here, Tabeth Jasi, a Kuyenda Collective Rural Youth Champion and the District CAMFED (Campaign for Female Education) Association Chairperson for Mutoko, has transformed girls' education through her Reusable Pads Club. Since 2022, following her induction and training with the Kuyenda Collective, Tabeth has tackled period poverty by ensuring every girl has access to reusable pads, sanitary bags, and underwear, while also teaching menstrual health and hygiene.

Her approach empowers learners directly: girls participate in producing pads, fundraising within the community, and advocating for their own health and education. Beyond her school, Tabeth has organized district-wide pad donations, championing menstrual health and the use of reusable pads across Mutoko.

Tabeth's work extends further into holistic education. Using her own devices, she provides learners with practical ICT experience, engages them in climate and community projects, and fosters leadership and creativity. Her efforts have been recognized by the Regional Management Unit representing Oxfam Zimbabwe and the Global Partnership for Education, highlighting her as a model for youth-led advocacy.

Beyond Nyakabau, Tabeth is deeply involved in youth leadership and community development. She facilitates transition sessions for new CAMFED Learner Guides, mentor young women in leadership skills, and supports tertiary education access by helping girls apply for national and international scholarships. She actively links learners with service providers such as the Victim Friendly Unit, advocates for economic empowerment through community projects, and contributes to broader initiatives on gender-based violence, safeguarding, and social justice.

Because of her commitment and impact, Tabeth was selected to travel to South Africa for the Kuyenda Collective's review meeting—a recognition of her contributions and a platform to share best practices and insights with peers across the region. Tabeth Jasi's story demonstrates that dedicated educators, combining creativity, insight, and community engagement, can create lasting change.

By addressing immediate barriers like period poverty while fostering broader skills, leadership, and community participation, she ensures that girls not only attend school but thrive academically, socially, and personally.



Championing Girls' Education in Mudzi: Teach For Zimbabwe in Action

In Mudzi District, Kelvin Chiwesi, a 5th cohort Teach For Zimbabwe fellow, is leading efforts to ensure every child access education. At Kotwa Government Primary School, he runs a club called Girls Are Future Leaders, working alongside teachers, school administrators, and community members to identify children out of school and help them re-enrol through flexible learning programs. Since February 2025, his outreach has reached 86 out-of-school learners, including 56 girls, highlighting persistent gendered barriers to education (teachforzimbabwe.org).

Kelvin's work is part of Teach For Zimbabwe's broader provincial engagement, where fellows are implementing locally driven interventions to tackle challenges such as poverty, child labour, and limited access to schools. These initiatives combine mentorship, community engagement, and awareness campaigns, empowering families and local leaders to actively support education.

Despite successes, challenges remain: many rural communities still face structural barriers to learning, including high out-of-school rates, inadequate resources, and gendered obstacles.

By documenting these realities, Teach For Zimbabwe provides evidence-based insights to policymakers and stakeholders, demonstrating what works in rural education and advocating for inclusive, flexible, and sustainable programs.

The experience in Mudzi shows that community-centred, youth-led initiatives can transform education outcomes. Kelvin's story underscores how grassroots leadership, coupled with institutional support, not only helps individual learners but also informs policy decisions, systemic improvements, and resource allocation, reinforcing the importance of empowering local actors in shaping equitable education across Zimbabwe.



Restoring Hope for Education at Matedza Secondary School, Mutoko

An advocacy story highlighting youth-led change in Zimbabwe's rural schools Matedza Secondary School, in the rural reaches of Mutoko, once told a quiet but troubling story: one teacher, fewer than 30 learners, and classrooms echoing with absence. Many students, particularly girls and vulnerable children, had dropped out due to early pregnancies or financial hardship. Education in this marginalized community seemed like a door slowly closing.

On 20 October last year, youth advocates from Teach For Zimbabwe and Kuyenda Collective's role model champions—including Hillary Mabhiza, Annle Ncube, Taberth Jasi, Priscilla Goto, and Shamiso Magadzire—highlighted Matedza's crisis at a high-level Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) meeting with the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education. The Minister, unaware of the situation, responded positively, placing a second teacher in January. Teach For Zimbabwe complemented this intervention by deploying fellow Gary Marume to the school.

Gary quickly recognized that challenges went beyond the classroom. He engaged key stakeholders, including the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), securing funding for

10 vulnerable learners. Recognizing the barriers faced by teen mothers, Taberth Jasi, a CAMFED alumna and district chairperson, engaged CAMFED and successfully secured scholarships for six teen mothers, who are now back in school. Gary's continued support, through encouragement, counselling, and community dialogue, helped these learners rebuild confidence and reconnect with their education.

The combined efforts of youth advocates, partners, and community members transformed Matedza Secondary. Classrooms once empty now buzz with ambition, resilience, and renewed hope. Parents, reassured by these support systems, began sending children back to school, while students rediscovered their potential.

Matedza Secondary's story demonstrates the power of youth-led advocacy, strategic partnerships, and persistent action. With determination, compassion, and support, even the most marginalized schools can become spaces where education is not just a promise, but a lived reality. At Matedza, desks are no longer empty—they are filled with second chances.





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