

# School problem essay sample



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Many schools in my rural home in Hurungwe District, near Kariba have very low Ordinary level pass rates (ranging from 5% and 8%). The unavailability of resources and utilities found in urban areas such as electricity and local transport (taxis) contributes to this very apoling statistics. As a result learners have to travel very long distances (25km on average) to go to school on foot. When given homework, the learners have to write during daylight (at school) because they hardly study because of the unavailability of electricity, and besides they will be very exhausted. AIMS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This research project is aimed at investigating the effect of Proximity of schools

Unavailability of services and utilities such as taxis and electricity, to the Ordinary level pass rate in my home area.

#### JUSTIFICATION OF PROBLEM

Statistics reveal that in Zimbabwean rural areas, learners have to walk an average of 15km to school because there are few secondary schools. This means the learners have to wake up very early (4 am) to start their journey to school as there is no transport to ferry them to school. In my home area, Kapiri Secondary school is approximately 12km from the homestead. When the learners arrive at school they will be very tired, and can hardly concentrate because of lack of adequate sleep and the long distance they cover. After school, the learners have to do extracurricular activities, and then they write their homework while at school. They then return home and have to do household chores before going to bed. The learners have to put up with this life for the four years of their secondary education. The most

pathetic thing is that when they sit for their examinations only 8% of them pass and the remainder fails.

According to a research paper entitled “ School Proximity and Child Labor Evidence from Rural Tanzania” by Florence Kondylis (2006), there is a negative correlation between proximity of schools to school attendance and consequently, the academic attainment. This research was done in Tanzania in primary schools. This was supported by Siddiqui, F. and Patrinos, H. A. (1995). Furthermore, the research results showed that the zeal and interest of the learners drop, resulting in child labour and other antisocial behaviours.

According to a case study by Wisdom Moyo (2013) in Insiza District, Tshazi Secondary School is the only school that offers secondary education in the Thandanani cluster of schools. Its feeder area comprises of seven primary schools. This therefore suggests the high possibility of long distances which some learners travel on a daily basis on their way to and from school.

Walking over long distances might lead to late coming at school and at home after school in evening. Fatigue and hunger might lead to drowsiness during learning as a result of walking over long distances. Children from rich families would usually cycle to school. This puts them at the advantage of arriving at school early without having lost any considerable amount of energy. Moyo also found out that most learners that walk long distances to school are out performed by those who travel less distances to school.

The problem of unavailability of electricity in most rural areas affects the pass rate. The learners in rural schools have to rely on candlelight and

kerosene for their study, which have negative effects on health. These lamps also could start fires when the learners fall asleep in the study process.

Oyadonghan. J. C and Eke. F. M (2011) carried out research on rural Universities in Nigeria and proved that poor performances of learners in information Technology was partly caused by unavailability of electricity.

#### WHAT OTHER SOURCES SAY ABOUT THE PROBLEM

The Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI) (2011) suggested for Zimbabwean government to extend the roles of Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) to raise funds from the well able urban schools to build new schools within the reach of the learners. UNICEF in 2010 came up with a textbook distribution programme that seeks to ensure a textbook to pupil ratio of 1: 1 in all schools (Mutseyekwa, 2010). This has been fulfilled in the existing schools and if new schools are built, resources would not be a problem. SOLUTION TO PROBLEM

It is a fact that more schools have to be built in the rural areas, including the one in my home area, to cater for the needs of these learners. The raising of funds should not only be restricted to BEAM, but to other well wishers and Non Governmental organisations. Solar lamps should be donated to the rural areas to help learners in their study at night. Such lamps use clean energy, and do not have devastating effects. CONCLUSION

The problem of the study of proximity of schools to the pass rate of learners in a rural school provokes and boggles the mind of a researcher to investigate more, not only in one school, but to similar situations in other homesteads. As the research is going on, more findings would be found on

other contributing factors which would then be investigated. By doing so, as an educator, I would be a researcher and lifelong learner as well.

#### List of Sources

Siddiqui, F. and Patrinos, H. A. (1995), ' Child Labor Issues, Causes and Interventions', World Bank HR and Operations Policy working paper, 1995.

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Mutseyekwa, T. L. (2010, August). Education Transition Fund Sensitisation. Retrieved from, [http://www.unicef.org/Zimbabwe/media\\_6135.html](http://www.unicef.org/Zimbabwe/media_6135.html)

#### PROBLEM 2: NATIONAL PROBLEM

##### PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Zimbabwean Educational system has been hampered by many problems ever since the economic decline in the country. National Statistics revealed that the National Ordinary level pass rate (of examination candidates that pass five or more subjects) has deteriorated to as low as 18% at present. UNICEF has tried to assist by providing textbooks and other necessities, but results on the ground are far from impressive. At the height of the country's economic meltdown in 2008, the country experienced a mass exodus of skilled personnel including teachers. Science and

mathematics were the most affected subjects and this has been cited as one of the reasons for poor pass rates in schools. AIMS OF A RESEARCH PROJECT

This research paper aims to investigate the problem of Brain drain, how it has contributed to the decline of the National O' level pass rate in Zimbabwe. It also seeks to provide a possible solution to the existing problem. JUSTIFICATION OF PROBLEM

By the term brain drain, what is intended is the phenomenon of abandonment of a country in favour of another by professionals or people with a high level of education, generally following an offer of better pay or living conditions (Grubel, 1994), as well as improved conditions for conducting one's professional activities. The problem of brain drain has been chosen to be one of the critical problems affecting the country because it can be singled out as one of the root causes of other national problems. The government channels resources towards the training of professionals, who migrate with skills acquired at taxpayer expense. The country is then left with a smaller number of teachers possessing a tertiary education compared to the high-income countries, where the teachers have migrated to. It is thus difficult to replace the experienced teachers and as a result untrained teachers fill up the vacant posts. The untrained teachers include graduates with no teaching qualifications and school leavers awaiting university entry.

The areas most affected are the rural areas, where school teaching posts are filled up with such personnel, and at times, with no teachers at all. In the urban areas when parents emigrate and leave their children behind, the children's educational attainment is lower. This is because of poor

supervision from the guardians that remain with the children. Brain drain also diverts attention away from domestic problems and investment because professionals orient their skills and resources to other nations (Benjamin Hebblethwaite 2013: 56). Brain drain worsens poverty in a country. It results in the loss of present and future savings, collected taxes, taxpayer investment in education, and sources of leadership. The country where the professionals migrate improves, economically, while the country of origin suffers more. Most industries have shut down in Zimbabwe, and the country now relies on imports, resulting in the unavailability of foreign currency for exchange. This in turn affects the schools as little or no development is made due to budgetary constraints from Ministry of Finance. The infrastructure dilapidates which culminates to poor standards of education.

The departure of skilled professionals results in the loss of international recognition in institutions, the overworking of those who remain the use of under- or less-qualified replacement workers, weaker modelling in the workplace, and the erosion of morale in postgraduate education. The credibility of the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (Zimsec) has also been questioned in the past five years. The increase in the number of complaints from candidates due to inconsistencies in the marking of the exams, further gives evidence that the personnel could be either poorly trained or not trained at all. WHAT OTHER SOURCES SAY ABOUT THE

#### PROBLEM

Brain drain mostly affects developing countries as most skilled workers and professionals migrate to developed countries, where there are better living conditions and remuneration. Hence many scholars have researched on the

problem at articles have been produced. According to Benjamin Hebblethwaite (1994) various methods can mitigate the stresses caused by brain drain; 1. Governments may increase the net incomes of the highly skilled and decrease the redistributive taxation that operates at their expense. If governments want to keep the highly skilled and the system of redistributive taxation, education and public discourse need to persuade citizens that taxation is beneficial for the common good.

2. Proactive policies that recruit skilled foreigners can help turn brain drain into brain gain. While it may be desirable to offset brain drain losses with open immigration policies, in many states this incites nationalist anti-immigration sentiments. Government bureaus that only handle skilled personnel may offset this hostility. 3. Governments can produce more high-skilled graduates and improve living conditions through security and economic opportunity. 4. Placing limits on the amount of currency that can be taken out of a country may also diminish the attractiveness of migrating. 5. Strengthening loyalty can be accomplished by cultivating community bonds and breaking the culture of anonymity so that there is an emotional cost to emigration. Citizens will stay if they are proud of their nation's political, legal, economic, educational, and social institutions. 6. Another policy that may slow brain drain outside the Anglophone world is the affirmation of linguistic territoriality wherein the national language is prioritized over the English language.

Governments can assert the dominance of the territorial languages throughout public education. Host governments can impose compulsory education in the national language and culture to encourage assimilation. 7.



Corruption, nepotism, and the lack of accountability need to diminish just as law, order, meritocracy, and justice need to increase in the source country.

8. The government can also regulate professionals who seek international opportunities in order to negotiate the migrant's length of stay abroad, and temporary or permanent returnees should be encouraged to share their skills and knowledge.

Three interviews were also conducted with various people in the teaching profession Deputy Head in my school, St George's College, Mr Vitos Katsukunya, fellow teacher, Mr Sylester Mautsa and the Deputy Director in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Mr Musari, and they echoed points 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8. Mr Musari also said if sabbaticals are offered to highly educated personnel who work for the Zimsec, it can also be an incentive to lure them to work and improve the standards of the Examination Council.

#### DECISION ON THE RELEVANCE OF THE SOURCES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTION

Most of the points above agree, to a large extent with the situation in Zimbabwe. The issues (outlined in point 8) of nepotism, corruption and the lack of accountability have to be dealt with first, from the very top Government officials to the least person on the streets. The majority of the professionals are willing to work for their country, as long as there is the assurance that point 8 is dealt with. If the resources in the country are channelled correctly, e. g., minerals and tourism, the experts would be well paid, their morale boosted and they would do their best to ensure the country is developed. All ' push' factors have to be converted to ' pull' factors to retain all the trained and experienced personnel through the

incentives stated in point 8. However, point 6 could be adopted as a long term strategy for the country. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research of the above stated and elaborated problem of Brain drain is of paramount importance to me as an educator, researcher and lifelong learner because it has assisted me in reflecting on the problems facing the country, and critically analysing and testing the assumptions by the general public, other professionals in the teaching fraternity and my own assumptions. Interviews and consultations have sharpened my views on the problem investigated. This approach of thought provocation and self-examination can well be applied in the classroom when teaching learners in my area of expertise.

#### List of Sources

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#### APPENDIX

Three interviews were conducted with the Deputy Head in my school, St George's College, Mr Vitos Katsukunya, fellow teacher, Mr Sylester Mautsa and the Deputy Director in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Mr Musari.

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