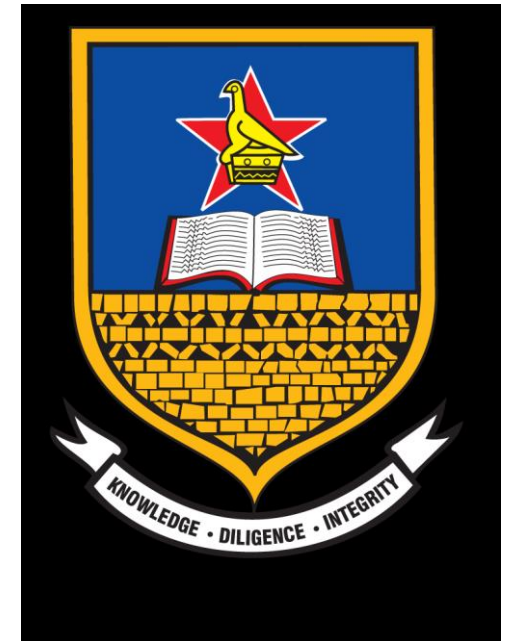


LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN ZIMBABWE



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Introduction

- There are no Occupational Therapy services being provided in public schools in Zimbabwe despite the need for their services.
- Legislation and Policy form the basis of Evidence based practice
- The research objectives were to determine:
 - if there is a legislative and a policy framework to support the provision of Occupational Therapy services in public schools.
 - The position of policy makers in various Ministries with regards to provision of educational support services and occupational therapy in public schools

Ethical Considerations:

- Application and permission for ethical clearance was sought from :
 - The Joint Research Ethics Committee for the University of Zimbabwe College of Health Sciences and Parirenyatwa Hospital (JREC)
 - The Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe (MRCZ)
 - The parliament of Zimbabwe
 - The office of the first lady of Zimbabwe
- Consent Permission was sought from the relevant ministries and departments to :
 - review their policy documents
 - interview their ministers and National directors

Methodology

- a descriptive qualitative study that focused on reviewing legislative documents, as well as interviews with policy makers as key informants.
- Content analysis procedures were used and
 - Analysis of data from the legislation documents was done using the Records review format.
 - Analysis of data from questionnaires was done using simple descriptive methods.

- Purposive sampling of Legislative documents and key informants was done targeting:
 - Child welfare,
 - Children's rights,
 - Educational Rights,
 - Rights of people living with disabilities,
 - Special Needs Education
 - Inclusion of persons with disabilities,
 - Educational Health Services and Rehabilitation services.

PARLIAMENTARY TITLE	MINISTRY	ACT
Title 5: Persons and the Family	Ministry of Public Service, Labour and social welfare	The Disabled Persons Act
Title 15: Health	Ministry of Health and Child Care	The Public Health Act and The Health Professions Act
Title 25: Education, Sport and Culture	Ministry of Education, Sports Arts and Culture	The Education Act
No Specific Title	Ministry of State for Liaising on Psychomotor Activities in Education and Vocational skills	No policy to support its existence yet

Results

- Review of legislative documents showed that the Constitution of Zimbabwe is the main legislation from which all the other legislations are derived.

Section	Title	Highlight
Section 19	Children	Governments' obligation to the Rights of children to education and health
Section 20	The Youth (ages 15 – 35)	Governments' obligation to the Rights of youth to education, health and employment (equal opportunities)
Section 22	Persons living with disabilities	Governments' obligation to the Rights of people living with disabilities to education, health and equal opportunities in society
Section 27	Education	Governments' obligation to the Rights of all Zimbabwean citizens to education

Act	Section	Highlight
Education Act (Chapter 24: 05)	Section 64 : Health in Schools	Stresses importance of health related service providers to work closely with teachers to assist children in a school setting
	Section 69	The minister of health can appoint Government medical officers or other medical practitioners as school medical officers at Government schools and non-Government schools;
Disability Act	Section 4 and 5	The need of medical rehabilitation professionals in early identification of mental and/ or physical challenges and early intervention.
Health Professions Act (Chapter 27: 19)	Section 58	Health Professionals' obligation to provide health related services where justified and appropriate
Public Health Act		The role of medical rehabilitation professionals is to be referred to the Health Professions Act.



- 8 out of 10 key informants noted OT to be important for:
 - performance in basic self care ADLs
 - Mobility and accessibility engagement in play
 - objective and standardized assessments to identify and support learning difficulties
 - Resettlement and vocational skills training

Challenges and limitations

- Unending Security checks to have interviews with key informants and to access government documents in Parliament building
- Constant rescheduling of interviews due to key informants' busy work schedule
- The study was not exhaustive of the legislation and the policy that can support the provision of Occupational Therapy services in schools, as there are a number of these documents that can be found in each ministry
- Politicization of the research

Conclusion

- Zimbabwean legislation supports provision of O.T services in schools as Health related services
- policy makers consider Occupational therapy as relevant especially for children with participation restrictions
- The government pledges through the legislature to ensure:
 - education for all, including those with special needs,
 - to provide health services for children and youth including those with special needs.

Recommendations

To Occupational therapists in Zimbabwe

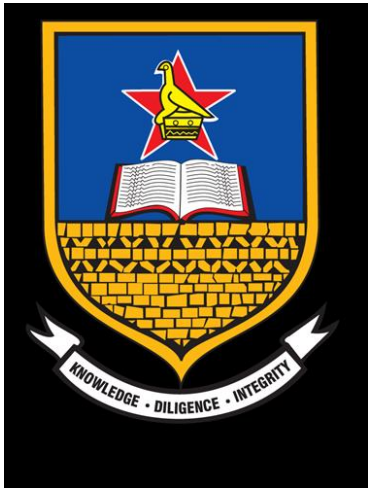
- Engage Civil society organizations and advocates for issues to do with children, their health and education and persons living with disabilities
- Provide an initiative of providing Therapy services in public schools,
- engage in more practical research to highlight (prove) the importance of Occupational Therapy services in specific areas in the school setting
- further their education and specialize

To the government ministries

- To employ Occupational therapists in schools to enhance effectiveness of the inclusive education program
- Ensure training of more occupational therapists
- Inter-ministerial programs
- To develop specific policy for the inclusive education program in Zimbabwe

Acknowledgements

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- The Parliament of Zimbabwe (House of Assembly and Senate)
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 - Ministry of Public Service, Labour and social welfare
 - Ministry of Health and Child Care
 - Ministry of Education, Sports Arts and Culture
 - Ministry of State for Liaising on Psychomotor Activities in Education and Vocational skills
- My Parents Mr and Mrs Maphosa and 3 siblings



Thank you



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