

Every Child In School - ECIS Campaign

In 2017, Tag a Life International launched the campaign, ‘Every Child In School’ which brought together Zimbabwean child rights CSOs. The campaign demanded the government of Zimbabwe to provide basic education to the vulnerable children who are currently shut out of schools. The first petition was directed at the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education asking him to release a directive in the form of a Policy/Circular to instruct all public primary school heads to accept marginalized children who cannot pay school fees. Despite some resistance from the Minister at the beginning of the campaign, the campaign petitioned the Parliament of Zimbabwe to avail the same policy to allow every child access to education and the Parliament responded by inviting us to come and present before them. We also held side meetings in various forums lobbying members of parliament and the Speaker of Parliament to accelerate the policy to allow children in school.

In response, the Secretary’s circular 3 of 2019 was a result of this campaign. Along with that, the Education Amendment Act of 2020 which provides for basic state-funded education was also an outcome of the Every Child In School Campaign.

Another petition to the parliament was submitted during Covid 19 regarding access to education for children in rural and hard-to-reach areas who are being left out of radio, television and online lessons due to poverty or lack of access. In 2022 we submitted another petition with regards to access of documentation. There is a connection between the right to education and access to documentation due to the fact that seating for public examinations requires that students be in possession of identification documents. The imposition of the COVID-19 lockdown measures meant that children were restrained from accessing the Registrar General’s office. More so, most children, especially the girl child, dropped out of school due to COVID-19, since the requirements to acquire birth certificates or national IDs were unreachable for many children, including those without parents, or those whose parents do not have these registration documents as well.

Alignment of the Births and Deaths Registration Act to the Constitution was taking unnecessarily long despite the clear conflict with the Constitution. This is because, whilst the Act places the responsibility of registration on parents or adult guardians, it allows wide discretion on the Registrar General to register or deny registration of births. This means that the Registrar General can decide to take away the right of the adult to register a child, and



simultaneously deny the child's right to identification. This obviously does not promote the Constitutionalism and the observance of international standards. A national documentation campaign was then initiated and most citizens managed to acquire documents.