



Ministry of Education

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National Policy Statement On Education 1999

MBABANE

INTRODUCTION

At independence, the concern of the government of Swaziland was to expand availability of space in the School system following restrictions of the previous government.

As a consequence, educational services and facilities were significantly expanded and Universal Primary Education i.e. access of every school going age child to school at primary level, was attained in 1985. Population growth however, threatens this attainment and there are now serious concerns with respect to overcrowding in schools and consequent understaffing.

Having achieved increased accessibility at primary level, Government's efforts have now shifted to not only consolidating the achievements, but also to addressing important issues such as quality, relevance and affordability of education. The ultimate goal is that graduates of the education system must meaningfully contribute to the development of both the cultural and economic development of the country.

Recognizing this need, Government consciously committed itself to specific decisions geared to resolving specific identified public problems that hinder such contribution.

1.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The present system of education in Swaziland is characterized by the following key features:

- 1.1 The system has not adequately adapted itself to the changing needs of the society; in that it has not **fully** addressed the problems of relevance, quality and accessibility. Areas of particular concern include:
 - a. a quality curriculum
 - b. well trained teachers
 - c. quality facilities
 - d. an improved teacher/pupil ratio
 - e. teaching and learning attitudes
 - f. improved attitudes, morals and values
- 1.2 Problems of adequacy and affordability of learning materials.
- 1.3 Unaffordability of education to a significant proportion of the nationals.
- 1.4 Limitations on curricula choices caused by inadequate provision of physical infrastructures.
- 1.5 Inadequate provisions for learners with special needs.
- 1.6 Imbalance between academic and practical subjects with limited opportunities for progression.

2.0 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The provision of opportunities for all pupils of school-going age-and adults to develop themselves in order to improve the quality of their own lives and the standard of living of their communities remains the central theme of the National Development Strategy (NDS).
- 2.2 The Ministry of Education shall offer a wide range of practical subjects so that more pupils would be made aware of their value. This would help change attitudes toward these subjects and develop the intellectual, moral, aesthetic, emotional, physical and practical capacities that are needed to shape and adapt to a fast-changing complex and uncertain socio-economic environment.
- 2.3 Education and training programmes shall engender a sense of civic mindedness and foster the skills that are necessary to participate effectively in the development of the country.

3.0 UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION

Universal access to basic education will remain a priority within available financial and other resource capacities. Such education shall be pragmatic enough to not only permit students to move on to higher education, but also to permit students to make a living through gainful employment in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy, after completing this level.

- 3.1 The school entry age shall be six years. The Ministry of Education shall provide a 10 year Universal Basic Education to all children of school-going age.
To achieve this objective, the Ministry of Education shall:
 - 3.1.1 With community participation and partnership expand the existing schools to accommodate the progression of all pupils through this general cycle.
 - 3.1.2 Empower communities to take responsibility for the care and protection of their schools.
 - 3.1.3 Provide quality teachers and facilities throughout the country.
- 3.2 Continuous Assessment shall be an integral part of teaching and learning strategies to reduce wastage, repetition and dropout rate. Continuous Assessment shall be made effective and workable as a mechanism that can allow normal progression.
- 3.3 An appropriate examination system shall be adopted to enable students to progress through the various levels of the education system.

- 3.4 The Ministry of Education shall develop an integrated system of education that provides equal opportunities to all irrespective of sex, religion, geographical location, special needs, political, or other factors.
- 3.5 Regular improvements in the curriculum shall continue to take place in all subject areas to meet new demands and to ensure continuity throughout the 10-year cycle of the school system. Consultation with parents, students and other major stakeholders shall be a priority when making regular improvements on the curriculum. Localisation of the school curriculum and examinations for the entire school system shall continue to improve the relevance, quality and cost effectiveness of education. In localizing, the Ministry of Education shall ensure that the education is still in line with the international standards of education.
- 3.6 Communities and other organizations shall be encouraged by the Ministry of Education to participate in pre-school education by providing infrastructure and ensuring that sound educational programmes at this level are implemented. The Ministry of Education shall continue to provide professional services to pre-school education through its inspectorate.
- 3.7 The Ministry of Education shall support initiatives aimed at providing education in the fields of Science, Technology and Mathematics, as these are crucial areas to development.
- 3.8 Practical arts taught at basic level shall be used as a foundation for vocational education.
- 3.9 In providing essential life-skills, the Ministry of Education shall also support efforts aimed at providing reading and writing skills as well as pre-vocational, vocational education and entrepreneurship within and outside the school system. Physical Education shall be encouraged to develop a healthy body and mind in the learner, thus creating a healthy nation.
- 3.10 As part of the Human Resource Development Strategy incorporated into the National Development Strategy (NDS), education shall address the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for social integration and sustainable human development such as: poverty alleviation, entrepreneurship, environmental protection, women empowerment both at formal and non-formal levels.
- 3.11 The Ministry of Education shall introduce and develop Information and Communication Technology Education in the school system to equip citizens to meet challenges of the 21st Century.

4.0 HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

There is no doubt that formal education continues to assume significant importance. Hence successful performance at School is still regarded as a prerequisite

for formal employment, though self-employment in both the formal and informal sectors is increasingly desirable. Of particular concern is the large numbers of students who graduate from High School but have no wage employment to go into. Thus the great concern about relevance and quality of education.

4.0 The Ministry of Education shall provide a two-year programme of high school education to pupils who shall have successfully completed their nine-year basic education. Such high school education shall prepare pupils for life skills and further education and training in accordance with the identified social economic needs of the country.

4.1 A variety of academic subjects including a quality core curriculum shall be offered. Pupils shall be encouraged to take at least one practical subject.

4.1.1 Pre-vocational education shall be offered through a range of practical subjects designed to provide pupils with skills, attitudes, practical and entrepreneurship skills suitable for making appropriate choices in career paths and vocational training.

4.2.2 Pre-vocational subjects in the curriculum shall have the same status as academic subjects.

5.0 SPECIAL EDUCATION

So far special education has been associated the needs of children with disabilities. The demand for places at the existing schools for outstrips supply. What compounds this shortage is the fact that identification of special needs happens late in childhood. The flip side of this challenge concerns children described as gifted i.e. very bright. They are also in need of attention and assistance. Government joins other countries in tackling these challenges as far as possible, within normal schools rather than creating dedicated facilities to resolve these.

5.1 Educational programmes shall be designed and offered to children with special needs such as physical disabilities, visual and auditory impairment, mental disabilities, social and behavioral problems as well as gifted children.

5.2 The Ministry of Education shall facilitate access to education for all learners with disabilities by improving the infrastructure to make it user-friendly from basic through tertiary level.

5.3 The Ministry of Education shall support the integration and inclusion of children with special learning needs in the Education System.

5.4 Special facilities for gifted children shall be made available in learning institutions.

6.0 ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Education is a continuous process with no possible end. Therefore the focus now is not just education but life long learning which takes place both formally and informally. Therefore, the Ministry of Education shall support:

6.1 All the Adult and Life-long Education initiatives in the country.

6.1.1 Adult Education shall provide numeracy, literacy and life skills

6.1.2 Distance Learning shall be used as one of the means to provide life-long learning.

6.1.3 Adult education and Life-long programmes shall be designed to meet the demands of target groups.

6.2 The Ministry of Education shall continue to perform its co-coordinating function while relevant Ministries continue to run such programmes.

7.0 EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Guidance and counseling services shall be offered to students at all levels of Education and training and shall be an integral part of the education process to add value and quality to the whole person i.e. the learner.

8.0 TERTIARY EDUCATION

The various formal Colleges and the University provide Human Resources specific to the needs of development. However, concern is increasing as more graduates do not get absorbed into the formal employment sector. Further, concern is growing on the disproportionate and very high cost of educating fewer numbers and solely borne by the government.

8.1 The Ministry of Education shall provide trained personnel in accordance with the identified social-economic needs of the country.

8.2 There shall be cost sharing mechanism between the Ministry of Education and beneficiaries of tertiary education.

8.3 Tertiary education curriculum shall be structured to suit the 'world of work' and self-employment.

8.4 Duration of programmes for tertiary training shall take into account cost implications and relevance.

8.5 Tertiary education shall impart research skills and inculcate the culture of research for personal, professional and social development.

9.0 TEACHER EDUCATION

Various calls have been made for reform of overall curricular content information communication technology, and special needs. In order to be in a position to respond to these needs, there is an urgent need to reorient teacher education.

9.1 PRE-SERVICE

9.1.1 Students who are admitted into teachers' colleges, in addition to their academic aptitude, shall be expected to conform to the norms of the teaching profession.

9.1.2 Duration of programmes for teacher training shall take into account cost implications and relevance.

9.1.3 Curriculum for Teacher Education shall be flexible to address and/or integrate relevant educational innovations as they come.

9.1.4 Teacher education shall impart research skills and inculcate the culture of research for personal, professional and social development.

9.2 IN-SERVICE

The Ministry of Education shall provide in-service facilities to improve knowledge and expertise of serving teachers and keep them in step with current trends of the teaching profession.

10.0 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

10.1 Objective:

10.1.1 Ensuring that the financing of vocational training is a joint venture between the Government, the employers and their enterprises, the trainees and others, through the introduction of jointly managed and administrated financing schemes.

10.1.2 Promotion or provision of vocational training, including the Establishment of Training Resource Centre, according to needs, within the framework of overall socio-economic Development plans and policies.

10.1.3 To contribute significantly to the solving of employment related problems, through a flexible vocational training system in order to ensure that:

- Vocational training addresses imbalances between supply and demand for qualified skilled-labour by steering away from a predominant focus on preparing school-leavers for wage-employment in the formal sector, towards providing appropriate skills and attitudes which people need for self-employment in both rural and urban areas.
- Vocational Training becomes an important element in efforts at eradicating inequity and inequality among the people of Swaziland and includes groups thus far neglected, such as women and disabled.

10.1.4 Utilization of a vocational training system which incorporates the following:

- Training programmes based on Swazi or regional Standard Classification of Occupations.
- Provision for life-long training and arrangements for trainees to re-enter the main educational system for higher-level education and training and further advancement (e.g. Master Craft, Technician or Engineer), as appropriate.
- Training programmes based on Swazi or regional Standard Classification of Occupations.
- Provision for life-long training and arrangements for trainees to re-enter the main educational system for higher-level education and training and further advancement (e.g. Master Craft, Technician or Engineer), as appropriate.
- Provision of training for widest possible range of citizens, irrespective of their level of formal education to enter the system for training.

10.1.5 Ensuring that sufficient numbers of adequately qualified and experienced training officers, instructors, in-plant trainers and other related training personnel are available to meet the needs of the overall vocational training programme in the country.

10.1.6 Ensuring that the financing of vocational training is a joint venture between the Government, the employers and their enterprises, the

trainees and others, through the introduction of jointly managed and administrated financing schemes.

10.2 GOALS

The main goals of Vocational Education and Training will be the:

- Development of a functional gender sensitive, affordable and efficient VET-System of sufficient capacity according to the needs of the economy, the society and the individual.
- Enhancement of VET as an attractive and integrated component of a permeable comprehensive System of Education.
- Promotion of entrepreneurial skills and values as an integral element of VET at all stages, sectors and areas.
- Contribution to a foresighted and coordinated National Skills Development Planning and to Business and Employment Promotion Programs.

10.3 Cornerstones of VET

To achieve all these the Ministry of Education shall:

- Provide for a Self-dynamic, flexible and functional system, driven and implemented by the interests of the users and providers.
- Implement VET as a fully integrated component of education and training as of equal value with horizontal and vertical permeability in the national system of education.
- Provide a Holistic training with nationally recognized standards of competencies and attitudes in trades set by the needs of self-employment and the employment sector.
- Provide for a Gender open VET including promotion of female preferred trades.

11.0 FUNDING IN EDUCATION

- 11.1 School fees shall be determined and justified by the head teacher and committee of each school. It shall then be presented for approval to parents in consultation with the Regional Education Officer (REO).

- 11.2 The Ministry of Education shall fund different levels of education according to priority needs of the time.
- 11.3 The Ministry of Education shall continue to assist needy pupils with bursaries for basic education.
- 11.4 There shall be cost sharing between the Ministry of Education and beneficiaries.

12.0 MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL/EDUCATION SYSTEM

- 12.1 School inspector/supervision shall remain an integral part of the school management system.
- 12.2 Success in improving the quality of education and training shall depend on having an effective and responsive organization to manage change in terms of mechanisms, institutions and legislation.
- 12.3 The school/education system must be re-organised at national, sectoral and regional levels to include:
 - 12.3.1 decentralization of most of the powers and responsibilities currently vested in the headquarters to the regions.
 - 12.3.2 disciplining of students at school level in accordance with school regulations and the existing laws of the country.
 - 12.3.3 de-regularization of services from the Ministry of Education to the private sector for cost - effectiveness and quality services. However, the Ministry of Education shall monitor the standard of performance by the private sector.
 - 12.3.4 mechanisms and legislation for managing the system such as the:
 - 12.3.4.1 Education Act
 - 12.3.4.2 Teaching Service Act and Regulations
 - 12.3.4.3 Schools Accounting Regulations
 - 12.3.5 an act of parliament establishing colleges, NCC and INSET.
 - 12.3.6 the provision of education by private institutions provided that such institutions are properly registered with the Ministry of Education.
 - 12.3.7 structures of institutional governance such as School Committees, Parents-Teachers' Association (PTA) and School Boards of Directors that will reflect

the interest of all stakeholders and the broader community served by the school.

12.3.8 Proper articulation and co-ordination of curriculum throughout all levels of education.

12.3.9 A statutory National Accreditation and Certification Board with a responsibility for accreditation, certification and maintenance of national standards.

12.3.10 the strengthening of auditing system to improve financial management in schools.

12.3.11 Training of Head-teachers, School Committees, PTAs and School Board Members to manage relevant aspects of the school life effectively.

12.4 School Rules and Regulations shall be reviewed from time-to-time to facilitate the smooth running and management of the school system.

13.0 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

13.1 There shall be a Management Information System (MIS) unit, which shall be an integral part of the planning section of the Ministry of Education.

13.2 The MIS shall be charged with the responsibility of collecting all information needed by the Ministry of Education in making informed policy decisions.

13.3 The MIS shall devise ways and means of disseminating information to all stakeholders.

13.4 The Ministry of Education shall continuously update skills and technology in the MIS unit.

14.0 LIBRARY SERVICES

An act of parliament establishing library services shall be enacted.

The National Library Services shall be the National Resource Information Centre. The National Library Services shall advise in the development and upgrading of school libraries.

15.0 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

15.1 There shall be an act of parliament promulgated to establish and delineate the functions of and grant the relevant authority to the National Curriculum Centre (NCC).

- 15.2 The NCC shall be charged with the responsibility of producing and procuring relevant quality instructional materials, which shall be monitored and approved by the Ministry of Education.
- 15.3 The Ministry of Education shall support and strengthen curriculum development, evaluation and research through in-service training and further education of the relevant personnel.
- 15.4 The National Curriculum Centre shall advise the Ministry of Education on issues related to instructional materials production and procurement.

16.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

There shall be a mechanism to monitor the implementation of education policy.

17.0 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Ministry of Education shall continue to support and enjoy friendship with International organizations that have the same aims and objectives of educating the nation as the Ministry of Education.

Annual subscriptions and any other dues required for various subject affiliations shall be made payable to respective International organizations. The Ministry of Education shall in return expect all benefits enjoyed by members/institutional members of those respective International Organizations. The various departments of the Ministry which have subscribed/and or affiliated to any International organization shall be required from time to time to furnish the office of the Principal Secretary with all the activities of the International organization and also continuously up-date it with all necessary information pertaining to the department which are the result of affiliation to any particular International organization.

By affiliating to such organizations, the Ministry of Education shall be bound by obligations to play an active role in the activities of such organizations to ensure optimum opportunities and benefits arising from such membership.