

# Chapter 2

## THE FRAMEWORK FOR ESTABLISHING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The central objective of this White Paper is to extend the policy foundations, frameworks and programmes of existing policy for all bands of education and training so that our education and training system will recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.
- 2.1.2 The most significant conceptual change from current policy is that the development of education and training must be premised on the understanding that:
- All children, youth and adults have the potential to learn within all bands of education and they all require support.
  - Many learners experience barriers to learning or drop out primarily because of the inability of the system to recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs typically through inaccessible physical plants, curricula, assessment, learning materials and instructional methodologies. The approach advocated in this White Paper is fundamentally different from traditional ones that assume that barriers to learning reside primarily within the learner and accordingly, learner support should take the form of specialist, typically medical interventions.
  - Establishing an inclusive education and training system will require changes to mainstream education so that learners experiencing barriers to learning can be identified early and appropriate support provided. It will also require changes to special schools and specialised settings so that learners who experience mild to moderate disabilities can be adequately accommodated within mainstream education through appropriate support from district-based support teams including special schools and specialised settings. This will require that the quality of provision of special schools and specialised settings be upgraded so that they can provide a high-quality service for learners with severe and multiple disabilities.

2.1.3 We are persuaded that the inclusion of learners with disabilities that stem from impaired intellectual development will require curriculum adaptation rather than major structural adjustments or sophisticated equipment. Accordingly, their accommodation within an inclusive education and training framework would be more easily facilitated than the inclusion of those learners who require intensive support through medical interventions, structural adjustments to the built environment and/or assistive devices with minimal curriculum adaptation. Given the serious human resource constraints in the country and the demands for justice, there is an onus on the Government to ensure that all human resources are developed to their fullest potential. In the long run, such a policy will also lead to a reduction in the Government's fiscal burden as the inclusive education and training system increases the number of productive citizens relative to those who are dependant on the state for social security grants.

2.1.4 The central features of the inclusive education and training system put forward in this White Paper are:

- Criteria for the revision of existing policies and legislation for all bands of education and training, and frameworks for governance and organisation.
- A strengthened district-based education support service.
- The expansion of access and provision.
- Support for curriculum development and assessment, institutional development and quality improvement and assurance.
- A national information, advocacy and mobilisation campaign.
- A revised funding strategy.

2.1.5 It is also essential to acknowledge that many of the barriers to learning that we are drawing attention to in this White Paper are being tackled within many other national and provincial programmes of the Departments of Education, Health, Welfare, and Public Works in particular.

2.1.6 To illustrate, in the case of the Department of Education, the COLTS programme previously, and now the Tirisano programme, the District Development Programme, Curriculum 2005, the Language-in-Education Policy, Systemic Evaluation (of the attainment of Grade 3 learners), the HIV/AIDS Life Skills Programme and the joint programmes with the Business Trust on school efficiency and quality improvement, are examples of programmes that are already seeking to uncover and remove barriers to learning experienced in mainstream education.

2.1.7 The Department of Public Works is implementing a job creation project to provide ramp access for learners on wheelchairs to schools.

- 2.1.8 The Department of Health is implementing an Integrated Nutrition Strategy including the Primary Schools Nutrition Project to provide learners from poor families with a nutritious meal. The Department also provides free health care for children younger than six years, while the Technical Guidelines on Immunisation in South Africa (1995) provide for children younger than five years to be prioritised for nutritional intervention.
- 2.1.9 The Department of Social Development prioritises the provision of social development services to children under five years. The Department also provides a child support grant for needy children younger than seven years.
- 2.1.10 All of these programmes will be enhanced by policies and programmes being advocated in this White Paper.
- 2.1.11 Accordingly, in this White Paper, the Ministry puts forward a framework for transformation and change which aims to ensure increased and improved access to the education and training system for those learners who experience the most severe forms of learning difficulties and are most vulnerable to exclusion.
- 2.1.12 This will, of necessity, require that we focus our attention on those learners in special schools and settings and those in remedial or special classes in ordinary schools and settings.
- 2.1.13 However, while we must focus our efforts on improving the capacity of the education and training system to accommodate learners who experience the various forms of learning difficulties, our focus will require the transformation and change of the entire education and training system for us to be able to accomplish these objectives and to enable mainstream education and training to recognise and address the causes and effects of learning difficulties in 'ordinary' classes and lecture halls.
- 2.1.14 Transformation and change must therefore focus on the full range of education and training services: the organisations - national and provincial departments of education, further and higher education institutions, schools (both special and ordinary); education support services; curriculum and assessment; education managers and educators; and parents and communities.

## 2.2 The Framework for Establishing an Inclusive Education and Training System

### 2.2.1 Education and training policies, legislation, advisory bodies and governance and organisational arrangements

- 2.2.1.1 In order for the Ministry to establish an inclusive education and training system, it will review all existing policies and legislation for general, further and higher education and training so that these will be consistent with the policy proposals put forward in this White Paper. The South African Schools Act (1996), the Higher Education Act (1997), the Further Education and Training Act (1998), the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000) and the accompanying White Papers already provide the basis for the establishment of an inclusive education and training system. Accordingly, the Ministry will require all advisory bodies to provide it with advice on how to implement the policy proposals contained in this White Paper. The Ministry will also review the memberships of all advisory bodies to ensure that appropriate expertise and representation enable these bodies to advise the Minister and Members of the Provincial Executive Councils responsible for Education on goals, priorities and targets for the successful establishment of the inclusive education and training system.
- 2.2.1.2 In revising policies, legislation and frameworks, the Ministry will give particular, but not exclusive, attention to those that relate to the school and college systems. Policies, legislation and frameworks for the school and college systems must provide the basis for overcoming the causes and effects of barriers to learning. Specifically admission policies will be revised so that learners who can be accommodated outside of special schools and specialised settings can be accommodated within designated full-service or other schools and settings. Age grade norms will be revised to accommodate those learners requiring a departure from these norms as a result of their particular learning needs. Simultaneously, the Ministry will collaborate with the Ministries of Health and Social Development to design and implement early identification, assessment and education programmes for learners with disabilities in the age group 0-9 years. Boarding facilities and transport policies and practices will be reviewed on the understanding that the neighbourhood or full-service school should be promoted as the first choice.
- 2.2.1.3 In respect of reform schools and schools of industry, the Ministry will collaborate with the Ministry of Social Development and the provincial departments of education to ensure that children and youth awaiting trial in these schools are provided with a supportive and effective learning and teaching environment, and that appropriate assessment practices and clear criteria and guidelines for their placement are established.

- 2.2.1.4 In higher education institutions access for disabled learners and other learners who experience barriers to learning and development can be achieved through properly coordinated learner support services, and the cost-effective provision of such support services can be made possible through regional collaboration. Institutional planning is now a critical part of national planning for higher education, and higher education institutions will be required to plan the provision of programmes for learners with disabilities and impairments through regional collaboration. This is now a requirement of the National Plan for Higher Education.
- 2.2.1.5 An aspect of the development of learning settings that the Ministry will give urgent attention to is the creation of barrier-free physical environments. The manner in which the physical environment, such as buildings and grounds, is developed and organised contributes to the level of independence and equality that learners with disability enjoy. The physical environment of most ordinary schools and learning settings is not barrier-free and even where this is the case, accessibility has not been planned. Accordingly, space and cost norms for buildings, including grounds, will focus on the design and construction of new buildings, as well as the renovation of existing buildings. These actions will be undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works and provincial departments of public works.
- 2.2.1.6 In beginning to implement the policy proposals put forward in this White Paper, it will be essential to match the capacity of Government with the roles proposed for it. Professional development programmes will focus on the development of effective leadership in policy, administration and programme implementation, the establishment of management information systems, and the development of competencies necessary for addressing severe learning difficulties within all branches and sections of the national and provincial departments of education.
- 2.2.1.7 The National Norms and Standards for School Funding will apply to the new Inclusive Education and Training System and its application will be customised to ensure equity and redress.

## 2.2.2 **Strengthening education support services**

- 2.2.2.1 The Ministry believes that the key to reducing barriers to learning within all education and training lies in a strengthened education support service.

- 2.2.2.2 This strengthened education support service will have, at its centre, new district-based support teams that will comprise staff from provincial district, regional and head offices and from special schools. The primary function of these district support teams will be to evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modifications. Through supporting teaching, learning and management, they will build the capacity of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges and higher education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs.
- 2.2.2.3 At the institutional level, in general, further and higher education, we will require institutions to establish institutional-level support teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services. These services will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Where appropriate, these teams should be strengthened by expertise from the local community, district support teams and higher education institutions. District support teams will provide the full range of education support services, such as professional development in curriculum and assessment, to these institutional-level support teams.
- 2.2.2.4 The Ministry will also investigate how, within the principles of the post-provisioning model, designated posts can be created in all district support teams. Staff appointed to these posts can, as members of the district support team, develop and co-ordinate school-based support for all educators.
- 2.2.2.5 The Ministry recognises that the success of our approach to addressing barriers to learning and the provision of the full range of diverse learning needs lies with our education managers and educator cadre. Accordingly, and in collaboration with our provincial departments of education, the Ministry will, through the district support teams, provide access for educators to appropriate pre-service and in-service education and training and professional support services. The Ministry will also ensure that the norms and standards for the education and training of educators, trainers and other development practitioners include competencies in addressing barriers to learning and provide for the development of specialised competencies such as life skills, counselling and learning support.
- 2.2.2.6 Special schools and settings will be converted to resource centres and integrated into district support teams so that that they can provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to neighbourhood schools. This new role will be performed by special schools and settings in addition to the services

that they provide to their existing learner base. In order to ensure that special schools and settings are well prepared for their new role, we will conduct an audit of their current capacities and the quality of their provision, raise the quality of their provision, upgrade them to resource centres and train their staff to assume these new roles as part of the district support team.

2.2.2.7 In revising and aligning our education support service, we will focus our efforts on establishing a co-ordinated education support service along a continuum from national through to provincial departments of education, through to schools, colleges, adult and early childhood learning centres, and higher education, which is sensitive to and accommodates diversity, with appropriate capacities, policies and support services.

### 2.2.3 Expanding provision and access

2.2.3.1 A central feature of our programme to build an inclusive education and training system is the enrolment of the approximately 280,000 disabled children and youth of compulsory school-going age that are not accommodated in our school system.

2.2.3.2 The Ministry will put in place a public education programme to inform and educate parents of these children and youth, and will collaborate with the Department of Social Development to develop a programme to support their special welfare needs, including the provision of devices such as wheel chairs and hearing aids.

2.2.3.3 To accommodate these children and youth of school-going age, we will, in collaboration with the provincial departments of education, designate and then convert, as a first step, primary schools to full-service schools, beginning in those school districts that form part of the national schools district development programme. Eventually, we expect to designate and convert to a full-service school at least one primary school within each of our school districts, taking into account the location of the special schools/resource centres. These full-service schools will be provided with the necessary physical and material resources and the staff and professional development that are essential to accommodate the full range of learning needs. In this manner, we will expand provision and access to disabled learners within neighbourhood schools alongside their non-disabled peers.

2.2.3.4 Together with the provincial departments of education, the Ministry will monitor the successes and impact of these pilot schools closely to inform the expansion of the model to other primary and high schools.

2.2.3.5 With the collaboration of the provincial departments of education and school governing bodies, full service schools will be made available to adult learners as part of public adult learning programmes.

#### 2.2.4 Further education and training

2.2.4.1 The Ministry will link the provision of education to learners with disabilities stemming from impaired intellectual development and who do not require intensive support to the general restructuring of the further education and training sector currently being undertaken.

2.2.4.2 It is likely that a similar model to that proposed for general education will be developed for technical colleges, namely that there will be dedicated special colleges which will mirror the full-service schools in the general education sector.

#### 2.2.5 Higher education

2.2.5.1 The National Plan for Higher Education (Ministry of Education, February 2001) commits our higher education institutions to increasing the access of learners with special education needs. The Ministry, therefore, expects institutions to indicate in their institutional plans the strategies and steps, with the relevant time frames, they intend taking to increase enrolment of these learners.

2.2.5.2 The Ministry will also make recommendations to higher education institutions regarding minimum levels of provision for learners with special needs. However, all higher education institutions will be required to ensure that there is appropriate physical access for physically disabled learners.

2.2.5.3 It will not be possible to provide relatively expensive equipment and other resources, particularly for blind and deaf students, at all higher education institutions. Such facilities will therefore have to be organised on a regional basis.

#### 2.2.6 Curriculum, assessment and quality assurance

2.2.6.1 Central to the accommodation of diversity in our schools, colleges, and adult and early childhood learning centres and higher education institutions, is a flexible curriculum and assessment policy that is accessible to all learners, irrespective of the nature of their learning needs. This is so since curricula create the most significant barrier to learning and exclusion for many learners, whether they are in special schools or

settings, or 'ordinary' schools and settings. These barriers to learning arise from within the various interlocking parts of the curriculum, such as the content of learning programmes, the language and medium of learning and teaching, the management and organisation of classrooms, teaching style and pace, time frames for completion of curricula, the materials and equipment that are available, and assessment methods and techniques. Barriers to learning and exclusion of this kind also arise from the physical and psycho-social environment within which learning occurs.

2.2.6.2 Accordingly, new curriculum and assessment initiatives will be required to focus on the inclusion of the full range of diverse learning needs. A key responsibility of the district support teams will be to provide curriculum, assessment and instructional support to public adult learning centres, schools and further education institutions in the form of illustrative learning programmes, learning support materials and assessment instruments.

2.2.6.3 As described earlier, the prevailing situation in special schools and settings and in remedial classes and programmes is inappropriate, and in general fails to provide a cost-effective and comprehensive learning experience for participating learners. In taking the first steps in building an inclusive education and training system, we will review, improve and expand participation in special schools/resource centres and full-service institutions. The Ministry believes that these programmes should provide a comprehensive education, and should provide life skills and programme-to-work linkages. As described earlier, these programmes will also be required to provide their services to neighbourhood schools. Attention will also be given to those programmes and settings that accommodate learners requiring secure care, specialised programmes and/or high levels of support to ensure that these are provided in an appropriate and cost-effective manner, and that they provide for the psycho-social needs of these learners.

2.2.6.4 Institutional development will therefore focus on assisting educational institutions to recognise and address the diverse range of learning needs among learners. While we provide a framework for educational practices that are consistent with the establishment of an inclusive education and training system in this White Paper, we will focus on and prioritise special schools/resource centres and full-service schools and colleges that provide education services to learners most profoundly affected by learning barriers and exclusion.

2.2.6.5 The Ministry fully appreciates the importance of assessment and interventions during the early phases of life. It is during the pre-schooling years that hearing and vision-testing programmes should reveal early organic impairments that are barriers to learning.

Community-based clinics are in the best position to conduct an initial assessment and plan a suitable course of action in conjunction with parents and personnel from various social services such as education. In order to ensure the continuity of such services throughout learning, the Ministry recognises that it is essential that links be established between community-based clinics and other service providers and the education and training system. Once learners have entered the formal education system, school-based support teams should be involved centrally in identifying 'at risk' learners and addressing barriers to learning. To achieve this important objective, the Ministry shall work closely with the Ministries of Social Development and Health, and the provincial departments of education. With respect to the school system, early identification of barriers to learning will focus on learners in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) who may require support, for example through the tailoring of the curriculum, assessment and instruction.

2.2.6.6 Together with the Department of Public Works, we will make a special effort to develop sites of learning that provide physical access to most learners - in terms of buildings and grounds, beginning with designated full-service institutions.

2.2.6.7 Materials and equipment, in particular devices such as hearing aids and wheelchairs, will be made progressively accessible and available to those learners who cannot gain access to learning because of a lack of appropriate resources. In this respect, our primary focus shall be on the designated full-service institutions.

2.2.6.8 Assessment processes will address barriers to learning and current policies and practices will be reviewed and revised to ensure that the needs of all learners are acknowledged and addressed.

2.2.6.9 Existing quality assurance mechanisms at all levels of education and training, and at all sites of learning, will facilitate the development of quality education for all learners, including those who are disabled.

## 2.2.7 Information, advocacy and mobilisation

2.2.7.1 Public awareness and acceptance of inclusion will be essential for the establishment of an inclusive society and the inclusive education and training system put forward in this White Paper. Uncovering negative stereotypes, advocating unconditional acceptance and winning support for the policies put forward in this White Paper will be essential to the establishment of the inclusive education and training system.

2.2.7.2 Accordingly, the Ministry will launch an information and advocacy campaign to communicate the policy proposals contained in this White Paper, including the rights, responsibilities and obligations attached to these. The Ministry will also continue its discussions with national actors and role-players to win their support for the policy of inclusion and to review rights, responsibilities and obligations attached to these. One of the central thrusts of the advocacy campaign will be to target parents, since they are regarded as an important form of support.

2.2.7.3 Special attention will be given to the mobilisation of community support for the designation of full-service institutions and the conversion of special schools to resource centres.

2.2.7.4 As part of its information, advocacy and mobilisation campaign, and subject to the expansion of provision and access described in this White Paper, the Ministry will target the recruitment of those learners of compulsory school-going age who are not yet accommodated in our schools. Similarly, the Ministry will target the recruitment of learners to the designated public adult learning centres, and further and higher education institutions as these are established.

## 2.2.8 HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases

2.2.8.1 The Ministry will, on an ongoing basis, analyse the effects of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases on the education system, and develop and implement appropriate and timely programmes.

2.2.8.2 These programmes will include special measures, such as strengthening our information systems, establishing a system to identify orphans, co-ordinate support and care programmes for such learners, put in place referral procedures for educators, and develop teaching guidelines on how to support orphans and other children in distress.

2.2.8.3 In this regard, the Ministry will work closely with provincial departments of education and the Departments of Social Development, Health and the Public Service Administration.

## 2.3 Funding Strategy

- 2.3.1 The funding strategy outlined in this White Paper needs to be adequately resourced to ensure successful implementation.
- 2.3.2 In Chapter 3 we describe the proposed funding strategy for the policies advocated in this White Paper.