

Chapter 4

ESTABLISHING THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

4.1 Our Long-term Goal

- 4.1.1 Our long-term goal is the development of an inclusive education and training system that will uncover and address barriers to learning, and recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.
- 4.1.2 This long-term goal is part of our programme to build an open, lifelong and high-quality education and training system for the 21st century.
- 4.1.3 The inclusive education and training system will include a range of different institutions, including special schools/resource centres and designated full-service and other schools, public adult learning centres and further and higher education and training institutions.
- 4.1.4 The vision and goals outlined in this White Paper reflect a 20-year developmental perspective.

4.2 Our Short-term to Medium-term Goals

- 4.2.1 Our short-term to medium-term goals will focus immediately on addressing the weaknesses and deficiencies of our current system and on expanding access and provision to those of compulsory school-going age who are not accommodated within the education and training system. In this manner, we will begin to lay the foundations for the kind of education and training system we wish to build over the next 20 years.
- 4.2.2 Below, we outline the strategic changes that will be introduced over the next eight years in more detail. These focus on the revision of all policies, legislation and structures that are necessary to facilitate the transformation process. This period will also include a public awareness and advocacy campaign, the development of appropriate and necessary capacities and competencies at all levels of the system and the rationalisation and efficient combination of limited resources. It will also include the development of those mechanisms within the system that are central to increasing access, accommodating diversity and addressing barriers to learning. This period will also see the development of the district and learning institutional-based support system and the establishment of evaluation and monitoring measures.

4.3 Strategic Areas of Change

4.3.1 Building capacity in all education departments

- 4.3.1.1 The Department of Education and the nine provincial departments of education will play a critical role, particularly over the next eight years, in laying the foundations of the inclusive education and training system. This will require the establishment of an effective management, policy, planning and monitoring capacity in the Department of Education, under senior departmental leadership, to guide and support the development of the inclusive education and training system.
- 4.3.1.2 Since the provincial departments of education will play a key role in building institutional capacity and in managing the introduction of the inclusive education and training system, the Department of Education will assist provincial education departments in developing effective management systems and capacity in respect of strategic planning, management information systems, financial management and curriculum development and assessment.
- 4.3.1.3 As provided for in the Constitution, the Minister of Education will, on the principles of co-operative governance, determine national policy, norms and standards for establishing the inclusive education and training system, and will, together with the nine Members of the Provincial Executive Councils responsible for education, oversee the laying of the foundations of the inclusive education and training system.

4.3.2 Strengthening the capacities of all advisory bodies

- 4.3.2.1 All advisory bodies will play a critical role in providing advice to the Minister of Education on the goals, priorities and targets for the establishment of the inclusive education and training system.
- 4.3.2.2 Accordingly, the Ministry will review, and where appropriate, strengthen the memberships of these advisory bodies so that they can provide appropriate and timely advice on these matters.
- 4.3.2.3 The memberships of provincial advisory bodies will similarly be reviewed and where appropriate, strengthened.

4.3.3 Establishing district support teams

- 4.3.3.1 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education, we will strengthen the education support service that will have at its centre the new district-based support teams. These teams will comprise staff from provincial district, regional and head offices and from special schools. Their primary function will be to evaluate and, through supporting teaching, build the capacity of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges and further and higher education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs.
- 4.3.3.2 District support teams will, firstly, be established in the 30 districts that form part of the District Development Programme and, on the basis of lessons learnt, expanding these to the remaining school districts may be considered.
- 4.3.4 Auditing and improving the quality of and converting special schools to resource centres
- 4.3.4.1 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education, we will complete a quantitative and qualitative audit of education provision of all 380 public special schools and independent special schools with a view to improving the quality of their services.
- 4.3.4.2 Also, based on the outcomes of these audits, special schools will be converted to resource centres that will have two primary responsibilities. Firstly, the new resource centres will provide an improved educational service to their targeted learner populations. Secondly, they will be integrated into district support teams so that they can provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to designated full-service and other neighbourhood schools.
- 4.3.4.3 The conversion of special schools to resource centres will necessitate their upgrading and the training of their staff for their new roles as part of district support teams.
- 4.3.4.4 Conditions of service and the post-provisioning model for educators will be reviewed to accommodate the approaches put forward in this White Paper - district support teams, special schools/resource centres and full-service educational institutions - while retaining the services of specialist personnel as far as is possible.

4.3.5 Identifying, designating and establishing full-service schools, public adult learning centres, and further and higher education institutions

4.3.5.1 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education, and beginning in the 30 districts that form part of the District Development Programme, we will identify and designate primary schools for conversion to full-service schools so that we can expand provision and access to disabled learners within neighbourhood schools. Based on lessons learnt, at least one primary school per district will be designated as a full-service school. Full-service schools will be provided with the necessary physical, material and human resources and professional development of staff so that they can accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.

4.3.5.2 In the further education and training sector, 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 by the Ministry. It is likely that a similar model to that proposed for general education will be developed for colleges, namely that there will be dedicated special colleges that will mirror the full-service schools in the general education sector.

4.3.5.3 In the higher education sector, and as part of the National Plan for Higher Education, the Ministry will require all higher education institutions to indicate in their institutional plans the strategies and steps, with related time frames, they intend taking to increase enrolment of learners with special education needs. The Ministry will undertake investigations and 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 all physically disabled learners. At the level of education provision, it will be fiscally possible to provide relatively expensive equipment, particularly for blind and deaf students, at only some of the higher education institutions. Such facilities will have to be rationalised on a regional basis.

4.3.6 Establishing institutional-level support teams

4.3.6.1 At the institutional level, we will assist general and further education and training institutions in establishing institutional-level support teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services that will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Where appropriate, institutions should strengthen these teams

with 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.

4.3.7 Assisting in establishing mechanisms at community level for the early identification of severe learning difficulties

4.3.7.1 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education and the Ministries of Health and Welfare, the Ministry will investigate how learners that experience severe barriers to learning during the pre-school years can be identified and supported. Mechanisms and measures to be investigated will include the role of community-based clinics and early admission of such learners to special schools/resource centres and full-service and other schools.

4.3.7.2 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education, the Ministry will investigate measures to raise capacity in primary schools for the early identification and support of learners who experience barriers to learning and require learning support.

4.3.8 Developing the professional capacity of all educators in curriculum development and assessment

4.3.8.1 We will require that all curriculum development, assessment and instructional development programmes make special efforts to address the learning and teaching requirements of the diverse range of learning needs and that they address barriers to learning that arise from language and the medium of learning and instruction; teaching style and pace; time frames for the completion of curricula; learning support materials and equipment; and assessment methods and techniques.

4.3.8.2 District support teams and institutional-level support teams will be required to provide curriculum, assessment and instructional support in the form of illustrative learning programmes, learner support materials and equipment, assessment instruments and professional support for educators at special schools/resource centres and full-service and other educational institutions.

4.3.8.3 The norms and standards for teacher education will be revised where appropriate to include the development of competencies to recognise and address barriers to learning and to accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.

4.3.8.4 The 80 hours annual in-service education and training requirement of the Government in respect of educators, will be structured in such a manner that they include the requirement to complete courses relating to policies and programmes put forward in this White Paper.

4.3.9 Promoting quality assurance and quality improvement

4.3.9.1 The Ministry will require that all quality assurance bodies created for the education sector develop their programmes of quality assurance, taking into account the current and future access to and provision of educational services for learners with disabilities, including how special schools/resource centres, full-service and other educational institutions can uncover and address barriers to learning.

4.3.10 Mobilising public support

4.3.10.1 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education, 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.

4.3.10.2 The Ministry will also continue its discussions with all national community-based organisations, NGOs, organisations of the disabled, health professionals and other members of the public who will play a central role in supporting the building of the inclusive education and training system.

4.3.10.3 At the institutional education level, partnerships will be established with parents so that they can, armed with information, counselling and skills, participate more effectively in the planning and implementation of inclusion activities, and so that they can play a more active role in the learning and teaching of their own children, despite limitations due to disabilities or chronic illnesses.

4.3.11 HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases

4.3.11.1 The Ministry will, on an ongoing basis, analyse the effects of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases on the education and training system.

4.3.11.2 The Ministry will develop and implement appropriate and timely programmes, including 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.

4.3.11.3 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.

4.4.12 Developing an appropriate funding strategy

4.4.12.1 The funding strategy that is proposed in this White Paper is a realistic one that takes into account the country's fiscal capacity. The important features of this strategy are its emphasis on cost-effectiveness and exploiting the economies of scale that result from expanding access and provision within an inclusive education and training system.

4.4.12.2 For the short to medium term (that is, the first eight years) a three-pronged approach to funding is proposed, with new conditional grants from the national government, funding from the line budgets of provincial education departments and donor funds constituting the chief sources of funding.

4.4.12.3 Further investigation will be undertaken by the Ministry regarding the magnitude of these expenditures and how they can be phased in over the eight-year period.