

## WHITE PAPER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Department of Education, Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 1995. Available at <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=855fT9w3A2U%3D&tabid=191&id=484>

### Rationale of the strategy

The White Paper describes the first steps in policy formation by the Ministry of Education in the Government of National Unity. It locates education and training within the national Reconstruction and Development Programme, and outlines the new priorities, values and principles for the education and training system. It discusses the implications of the new constitution for the education system, especially in respect to fundamental rights, and analyses the necessity of a strategic approach to education funding in relation to the national priority for human resource development. It discusses in detail two significant policy initiatives for the school system: the organization, governance and funding of schools, and the approach to the provision of free and compulsory general education.

### Concept of lifelong learning

The White Paper refers to the concept of lifelong learning, but does not provide a definition. It states that general education, further education and higher education are to be seen as components of lifelong learning. Furthermore, lifelong learning is recognized as the organizing principle of a national human resource development strategy of the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme.

### Main challenges

- Millions of adult South Africans are functionally illiterate
- Millions of South African children and youth are learning in school conditions resembling those in the most impoverished states
- In the large, poorly resourced schools that most young people attend, a majority of students drop out of school prematurely or fail the senior certificate
- Access to technological and professional careers requiring a strong basis in mathematics and science is denied to all but a fraction of students, largely because of the chronic inadequacy of teaching in these subjects
- The historic inadequacy of school education, especially for black communities, has ensured that a majority of the adult population has had no schooling or inadequate schooling
- The concept of further education is not well developed in South Africa
- The higher education system is dealing with the effects of rapid enrolment growth and simultaneous decline in the real value of state subsidies
- The structure of higher education programmes is the inverse of what is required by society and the economy, with a small technical sector, a relatively large university sector, a poorly developed and fragmented post-secondary college system and inadequate communication among these various parts

### Main targets and measures

The document targets all levels of the education system, from early childhood to adult education, and makes references to non-formal training and informally acquired competences. There are several developmental initiatives described in the White Paper, which together comprise a large part of the Ministry of Education's main policy agenda for the reconstruction and development of the system:

- **National Qualification Framework:** to massively upgrade the knowledge and skills base of the working and unemployed population
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- **Curriculum development:** necessity of an overhaul of the learning programmes in the nation's schools and colleges; this should be guided as an open and participatory process
- **National Open Learning Agency:** open learning as a fresh approach to the provision of learning opportunities to counteract South Africa's vast learning deficit
- **Education support services and education for learners with special educational needs:** encompassing all education-related health, social work, vocational and general guidance and counselling as well as services to learners with special educational needs in mainstream schools
- **Teachers, trainers and educators:** teacher education regarded as one of the central pillars of national human resource development strategy
- **A student recovery programme in science and mathematics:** as a 'second chance to learn' that offers alternative entry to higher education and employment
- **Adult basic education and training:** to ensure basic education as a right guaranteed to all persons by the constitution
- **Further education and training:** addresses the inadequacy of programmes at senior secondary level and above, in schools, the workplace and other institutions or by private study
- **Higher education:** a National Commission on Higher Education has been appointed
- **Early childhood development:** programmes include a variety of strategies and services aimed at helping families and communities to support children from birth to 9 years
- **Partnerships for human resource development:** building partnerships for consultation, advocacy, planning and resourcing

### Particular feature of the policy

The White Paper includes a section on '**Fundamental rights to education and training, and within education and training**'. It refers to Chapter 3 of the South African Constitution, which affirms and specifies the fundamental rights and freedoms of all persons. The following rights and actions are expressed:

- The right to education: right to basic education; equal access to educational institutions; choice of language of instruction; establishment of educational institutions of a certain character
- Language and culture in education: right to use the language and participate in the cultural life of one's choice
- Freedoms of religion, belief, opinion and expression in education: including academic freedom in higher learning institutions
- Special provisions regarding educational institutions
- Other rights of the person: management practices in the education sector must comply with the nation's new constitutionally protected human rights culture
- Labour relations: rights to fair labour practices; workers' rights to form and join trade unions; employers' rights to form and join employers' organizations
- Action Plan for Human Rights in Education: action plans within each school and educational institution and within each branch and section of the education services at national and provincial levels
- Gender Equality Unit: establishment of Commission on Gender Equality ensuring gender equality within the education system

*Relevant documents that the strategy refers to:*

- South Africa. 1993. [\*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa\*](#)
  - South Africa. African National Congress. 1994. *Reconstruction and Development Programme*
  - South Africa. Department of Labour. 1995. [\*Education Labour Relations Act\*](#)
  - South Africa. Ministry of Education. 2008. [\*National Qualifications Framework Bill\*](#)
  - South African Qualifications Authority. 2012. [\*Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework\*](#)
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*Stakeholders responsible for implementation of the strategy:*

- [Ministry of Education](#)

*Further readings and web links:*

- [South African Qualifications Authority](#)
  - [Education Labour Relations Council](#)
  - [Human Sciences Research Council](#)
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