

Education in the Second Decade of Freedom

Strategic Priorities for KwaZulu-Natal

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Revisiting the legacy

The province comes from a legacy of under-development, characterised by the following:

- hunger and poverty, especially among the rural poor and black people on the margins of urban areas
- high levels of illiteracy, proportionally pronounced in rural areas but absolutely pronounced in urban areas

Revisiting the legacy

- lack of skills necessary for active participation in the first economy
- high unemployment
- lack of prerequisite infrastructure for proper human settlement
- unsustainable reliance on social security grants
- high prevalence of poverty-related and other diseases, including HIV and AIDS
- stunted economic growth
- sectarianism and lack of a people-centred ethic in the ruling elite

A new comprehensive response

In the past year and half, the KZN government, in response to the above stated legacy, adopted the following as its growth & development priorities:

- Strengthening governance and service delivery
- Integrated investment in community infrastructure
- Developing human capability
- Developing a comprehensive response to HIV and AIDS
- Fighting poverty and protecting vulnerable groups.

Education and the NDR

- The most urgent question of our time is to mitigate conditions of under-development
- In doing so, we have to address the social contradictions that are characteristic of our legacy.
- Education has a central role to play in addressing these contradictions, as part of the national democratic revolution (NDR).
- In this regard, the education sector's approach in the next decade should clearly articulate with our dominant strategy in the current phase of the NDR

Education and the NDR

- For us in education, we should answer the question of what our role is in mitigating the conditions of under-development which the province finds itself in.
- Our response to this question should be the provision of access to quality education and skills for all, and in particular the poor.

Reconceptualising access

Our conception of access should go beyond the narrow and the technician, and incorporate three broad areas of emphasis:

1. Physical access
2. Epistemological access
3. Socio-cultural access

Physical access

Broadly speaking, physical access refers to addressing the barriers that limit the ability of learners to physically locate themselves in an institution of learning.

These potential barriers vary from immovables, through learning support materials, to direct costs associated with attending school, college or an ABET institution.

Physical access

Immovables

- Classrooms and workshops (including disability friendliness)
- Water
- Sanitation
- Electricity

Physical access

Hardware

- Equipment
- ICT hardware
- Appropriate furniture

Physical access

Learning Support Materials

- Stationery
- Manipulatives

Physical access

Enabling resources

- Transport
- Nutrition

Physical access

Direct costs

- Addressing the barrier of school fees
- Addressing the barrier of school uniforms, while taking identity into account

Epistemological access

Epistemological access refers to addressing the barriers that limit the ability of learners to acquire relevant knowledge and skills.

These range from soft to hard items.

Epistemological access

The following are key to the provision of epistemological access:

- Literacy
- Relevant curricula
- Quality teaching and learning interactions
- Awareness of HIV and AIDS
- Appropriate texts
- Interactive IT software

Socio-cultural access

Epistemological access Socio-cultural access refers to rendering our institutions as homes for all, institutions in which learners and educators are happy to learn and teach, respectively.

Socio-cultural access

The following are key to ensuring that socio-cultural access is opened to all:

- Racial integration in all its forms (the national question)
- Gender integration and equity
- Class integration and equity
- Sensitivity to locality

Socio-cultural access

(cont.)

- Inclusive education
- Multi-lingualism
- Sport and recreation
- Arts and culture

Our primary constituencies

The following three are our primary constituencies, to whom access to quality education should be provided:

- Children of school going age
- Youth
- Adults with a level of education and training below grade 12

Organisational readiness

The challenges facing us in the second decade of freedom in our quest to provide access to quality education and skills require us to build a strong, functional, responsive and caring organisation at all levels of the system.

Organisational readiness

In this regard, the following are key areas of intervention in enhancing our organisational capacity:

- Building efficient and caring HR structures and systems
- Building efficient and reliable financial management structures and systems
- Introducing a rigorous planning function

Organisational readiness

(cont.)

- Putting in place an efficient and responsive infrastructure delivery machinery throughout the system
- Significantly enhancing our teaching and learning support function
- Institutional renewal (in terms of form, content, effectiveness and efficiency)

Organisational readiness

(cont.)

- Building a strong values, ethics and integration function to deal with the challenges of broad transformation
- Enhancing our wellness function to ensure a caring work, teaching and learning environment
- Building effective systems of accountability, monitoring and evaluation.

Lest we forget ...

In putting all these systems in place, we dare not lose sight of our greater goal of using education and training to mitigate conditions of under-development and to build national consciousness ...