

Report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education

A NEW VISION FOR RURAL SCHOOLING

MAY 2005



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Department:
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Report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education

A new vision for rural schooling

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ALOE FEROX

UmHlaba (isiZulu) Mogopa (Setswana)

* single-stemmed aloe with thick rosettes of thorny succulent

Leaves (bitter in taste) and tall stunning spikes of tubular
orange-red flowers.

* flowers appear from May to August

* drought resistant

* leaves and roots are used for medicinal purposes.

* The cut leaf exudes copious thick yellow juice

* aloe ferox is widely distributed along the eastern parts of South
Africa

Sources: Creative Gardening with Indigenous Plants

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Acknowledgements

The MCRE is grateful to all those who provided the information and insights on which this report has been built. In acknowledging such sources, the committee faced a tension between, on the one hand, the normal requirement that sources are formally acknowledged; on the other hand, there is the possibility that individuals and organisations 'within' the formal education system could feel compromised at having particular views attributed to them. The committee's decision was to cite only submissions that were in the form of academic papers intended for (or already in) the public domain. If we have caused offence by not citing individuals who submitted comments, and who did wish to be named, we hope that our rationale will serve as an explanation and apology.

Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
BMP	Basic Minimum Package (for rural schools)
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Action Committee
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CALS	Centre for Applied Legal Studies (University of the Witwatersrand)
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CLC	Community Learning Centres
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DFID	Department for International Development
DEF	District Education Forum
DoE	Department of Education (i.e. the national Department)
ECD	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management and Information Systems
FET	Further Education and Training
GE	General Education
GET	General Education and Training
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDP	Integrated Development Plans
ISRDS	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy
LP	Limpopo Province
LESEN	Learners with Special Educational Needs
LSMS	Learning Support Materials
MEC	Member of Executive Council
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MCRE	Ministerial Committee on Rural Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OVCs	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PSoPL	Public Schools on Private Land
PEDS	Provincial Education Departments
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SASA	South African Schools Act
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SGB	School Governing Body
TA	Traditional Authorities
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

Executive Summary

The intent to form a Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (MCRE) was announced by then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal MP, at the meeting of the Council of Education Ministers on 22 September 2003. The committee was formally established by government gazette on 11 March 2004. From March 2004 to July 2004, the committee met with the Minister, the Council of Education Ministers and the Department of Education in a process of briefing and discussion designed to sharpen and refine its focus and mode of operation. This process continued after the appointment of Mrs Naledi Grace Pandor MP as Minister of Education in May 2004. By the end of July 2004, a brief for the committee had been determined: to produce a report containing practical recommendations to help the Department of Education (DoE) and the Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) develop an integrated multi-faceted plan of action for improving the quality of schooling in rural areas. In regard to *modus operandi*, the committee would draw, in the main, on the expertise and experience of members of the committee, consultations with officials from the DoE and the PEDs, interviews with key stakeholders and a process of public submissions.

The committee met for a total of fourteen days. It made two calls for submissions: a general call to the public, and invitations for comment to 200 organisations and institutions. Over 70 submissions were received and members of the committee held more than 30 interviews with DoE officials and representatives of various organizations. A survey questionnaire was sent to each provincial department of education. Using the information gathered through these processes, the committee produced an initial set of recommendations that were discussed with senior officials from provinces at a workshop held on 26 November 2004.

Many of the submissions and interviews make the point that post-1994 schooling policies are driven by the demographic profile, settlement patterns and the resource base of urban areas. This has exacerbated the difficulties inherited in 1994, resulting in a situation where the provision of schooling in rural areas remains in crisis. The state's commitment to social justice in all matters and especially to universal access to education, written into the Constitution, remains unfulfilled for large numbers of children, youths and adults living in rural areas. Qualitative and quantitative information consistently reveals the daily risks faced by these communities and shows that education is not fulfilling its mandate of promoting well-being.

Unsurprisingly, South Africa's first ten years of democracy are marked by an overwhelming commitment to equality to treating everyone in the same way no matter what their differences. Hence, rural schools have been managed and funded on the same principles and formulas as urban schools. So too, curriculum and pedagogies of rural schooling are planned to be the same as those found in urban settings. The committee found wide support for the view that allows for state provision of rural schooling to be resourced and organised differently from urban schools as a necessary measure to meet the needs of rural learners.

The challenges facing rural schooling are complex, intractable and interdependent. After ten years of democracy, rural schooling has shown little improvement. Addressing the challenges requires multi-faceted integrated strategies operating at macro and micro levels that link education interventions with interventions of other government departments, business, unions and civil society, as well as with on-going consultation with, and participation of, educators, learners, parents and communities. One factor that emerged strongly during the committee's consultation process was the diversity of rural areas. The rural areas of each province have different demographics, geographies, economies and cultures that shape the lives of rural people in fundamentally different ways. This report offers no 'one-size-fits-all' solutions and concentrates rather on approaches that will adapt to diverse rural milieus. Hence, the recommendations of this report are based on the assumption that quality of rural schooling can be improved only if delivery takes note of local milieus and builds on existing political, social and economic structures, capabilities and assets of local communities.

Making a difference to education provision in rural areas must begin with fundamental changes in the way

in which decisions regarding rural education are made and put into practice. To assure the transformation and redress of education in rural areas requires a combination of multi-sectoral integrated planning and implementation with the participation of local government, stakeholders and communities.

Definitions of 'rural' tend to emphasise a particular feature of rurality: settlement or demographic patterns; spatial or environmental characteristics; political or economic factors; and, socio-cultural or historical factors. In South Africa, colonialism and apartheid left an indelible print on all aspects of rural life through land disposessions, resettlement policies, and systematic exclusion from opportunities to improve personal and social well-being that made poverty the most endemic characteristic of rural areas.

Promoting rural development and schooling must go beyond 'deficit' approaches. From the second half of the twentieth century, the literature on rural education tends to emphasise histories and structures that have created conditions and circumstances of 'oppression', 'deprivation', 'disadvantage' and 'deficit'. In similar deficit terminology, people in rural areas are often stereotyped in ways that emphasise their powerlessness: 'rural peripheries' become the 'dark side' of urban centres of 'enlightenment'. While acknowledging the importance of history and quantitative factors, the committee believes that it is important to see beyond the numbers and negative 'deficit' views to recognise the positive capabilities and assets of rural people and the inherent worth of indigenous knowledges and practices. A people-centred exploration of rural Africa opens up a wealth of indigenous knowledge in fields such as medicine, conservation, arts and culture.

In view of these complexities, the committee approached rurality in a way that balances quantitative and qualitative features. The need for a focused definition useful for the kind of information gathering, monitoring and evaluation necessary for a state driven intervention programme for rural schooling led the committee to adopt the quantitative definition of 'rural' used by Statistics South Africa (SSA) in the 2001 Census. This is a spatial definition identifying Traditional Authority (TA) areas (primarily 'community owned' land in the erstwhile 'homelands') and formal rural areas (primarily commercial farms in erstwhile 'white' areas of South Africa). It provides a useful working definition for education planning as the availability of resources in these areas differs markedly from those available in urban areas.

Although a necessary means towards improving the quality of rural schooling, these 'quantitative' factors are insufficient for our purposes. A balance is needed with 'qualitative' elaborations that place people at the centre of analysis and of any programme of action. Effective interventions to improve the quality of rural schooling must aim at:

- investing in human rights and social justice as a prerequisite to improving living conditions;
- developing partnerships with civil society organisations;
- addressing gender inequalities;
- promoting well being, healthy and safe lifestyles;
- ensuring consistency with government's rural development strategy whereby access to economic activities is expanded in order to reduce poverty;
- investing in infrastructure and human capital and preparing rural people for employment outside the field of primary agricultural production by building knowledge and skills capacity;
- making state institutions responsive to poor people;
- monitoring and evaluation of key indicators of activity;

A number of tensions between different approaches to improving quality are apparent in the submissions to the committee:

- How does education serve rural development when much of its attraction is that it provides the avenue for some successful individuals to escape to modernity?
- A strong stress on building education in partnership with communities and respecting indigenous knowledges and cultures may be in tension with curriculum policy (learner centredness; creative, critical thinking, etc);
- Faith in integrated, multi-sectoral partnership approaches is strong, but it assumes a

- convergence of interests and a social consensus that does not always exist;
- The use of imported orthodoxies in terms of models may be in tension with building systems that take account of local contexts, experiences and resources;
- Do democratic principles or educational principles prevail? For example, parents not availing themselves of opportunity for early mother tongue instruction which government tries to provide;
- Most respondents saw 'rural' in completely deficit terms. Some, however, saw it in terms of asset or potential.

Improving the quality of rural schooling is a complex project, and the primary responsibility for this project rests with government. To maximize the value of this report for 'delivery' or 'implementation' purposes, the committee has focused on practical recommendations designed specifically for consideration by the DOE and the PEDS. The values and concepts informing the committee's orientation draw, broadly, on South Africa's democracy and human rights tradition together with a pragmatic recognition of the importance of understanding how power operates in rural communities. The importance of giving substance to South Africa's constitutional commitment to the right to education is balanced by a recognition of the importance of evaluating needs of particular people in specific contexts with their reservoirs of indigenous knowledge, capabilities and character. This orientation, and its underlying theoretical framework, is expressed in the following principles:

1. Section 29 of the Constitution declares: "Everyone has a right to basic education", and the preamble to the SA Schools Act states: "This country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in education provision". Constitutional entitlements therefore have to be met by provision of quality basic education for all sectors of society.
2. Treating unequals as equals can perpetuate inequality. Rural education and farm schools in particular merit differentiation of treatment as special cases for the provision and monitoring of quality education.
3. Equality of inputs in the form of material provision does not on its own meet the needs for redress. Quality is constituted in terms of outputs and learning outcomes.
4. Although education serves individual aspirations such as for social mobility, state education necessarily privileges social benefits. Current conditions imply that the most important aims for rural education are rural development and poverty alleviation.
5. Integrated, community-based education provision is sine qua non. Schools should be rooted in the social fabric of the communities in which they are sited.
6. Even though rural schooling is seriously under-resourced, strategies should avoid depicting rurality in purely deficit terms. Rural communities have their own unique assets on which quality schooling and development can be built.
7. A corollary of respect for the inherent worth, capabilities and assets of rural people is a respect for diverse forms of (indigenous) knowledge. This is also important in the light of Curriculum 2005 (C2005) respect for everyday knowledge.

These principles are supplemented by the following five operational strategies:

1. Primary responsibility for education provision obviously rests with the state and the Department of Education in particular. However, strategies and initiatives are immeasurably strengthened if they are multi-sectoral, involving, for example, other state departments, business, unions, and civil society.
2. The international literature may inform strategic approaches to developing quality education, for

3. Following point 2 above, it stands to reason that educational strategies will not - and cannot be - uniform across all sites. Unity of purpose, not of strategic detail, should be an operational principle.
4. Following principles 6 and 7, together with the oft-reported 'fact' that rural communities are characterised by a feeling of powerlessness, it is important that strategic initiatives are aimed at developing community sense of agency. Responsibility and resources, supported by suitable forms of training, should be entrusted to rural communities.
5. Strategies need to be mindful of tensions. For example, while local, context- specific 'indigenous' knowledges may be appropriate in particular situations, rural schools are also part of 'global' systems in which 'universal' benchmarking measures are powerful.

The majority of submissions focused on issues of rights and equity rather than on curriculum and quality of teaching and learning. Obviously without access and adequate resources one cannot begin to address quality of learning. However, the dominance of these enabling arguments goes together with seeing rural in deficit terms, and leads readily to approaches which start by focusing on the needs, deficiencies and problems of communities, and devising strategies to address these needs and problems. This approach encourages people to think about themselves as fundamentally deficient and as powerless victims rather than about how they can direct their capacities, skills and social resources towards available opportunities.

There is no evidence that a better quality of learning necessarily follows enhanced resourcing, and there is a further a danger of urban schools becoming the benchmark for measuring quality of all schooling. To balance and embed these conundrums and tensions in its recommendations, the committee has adopted an holistic orientation that values equity, access, human rights, provision of resources and prioritizes drawing on community assets and capabilities in assuring processes of planning and implementation.

The recommendations are framed, contextualized and given substance within a sequence of themes and sub themes. The eight themes delineating the main foci of the report are supplemented by sub themes elaborating on areas that must be addressed. Within the contextual descriptions of themes and sub themes, the committee recommends appropriate actions to improve rural schooling.

In order to avoid this report becoming too fragmented or piecemeal, the committee constructed a 'narrative framework' to contextualize and explain the recommendations. We begin in Theme 1 by surveying the single most dominant characteristic of rural schooling: Poverty. Poverty strongly influences the provision and quality of schooling, its 'take-up' by learners and the roles played by educators, parents and other community stakeholders. The most obvious strategy to address the crisis in rural schools is to increase funding. However, in a climate of fiscal austerity any increase in public expenditure must have a strong justification, come with guarantees that it will be spent in ways that are not only cost efficient and effective and a worthwhile investment, but above all, that promote personal and social well-being.

Theme 2 deals with the funding of rural schooling. Present expenditure patterns are strongly affected by the size and location of rural schools that are the product of a history of colonialism and apartheid overlaid by ad-hoc decisions by farmers and 'homeland' and Traditional Authorities. Notwithstanding measures to promote equity, inequities between the historically advantaged and disadvantaged schools, and above all between schools in rural and urban areas, have been reduced but not eliminated. Equity may indeed be unattainable within current modes of determining provincial and intra-provincial allocations to schools. Budgets cater for costs of operating - not establishing - essential facilities such as water,

sanitation and lights, and these are precisely what rural schools in the main do not have. Many rural schools are small schools, and for many learners progression is prevented by the absence of higher levels of schooling. Rural schooling requires an integrated and holistic approach to provision.

Theme 3 covers the 'size and shape' of education in rural areas. The demographic patterns of rural areas have begun to change rapidly in the last ten years (the number of learners in farm schools decreased by 60 per cent between 1996 and 2000) thus posing problems of location, transport and accommodation. Resolution of such difficulties, however, is dependent on decisions regarding the nature and size of schools. Following an overview of the merits and demerits of small and large schools, a model of two- and three-tier schools is proposed. It is also noted that school design should also take into account the learning needs of the broader community.

Making rural schools effective will require high quality management and governance at district and local levels. In Theme 4 we address the role of district offices and School Governing Bodies as the frontline delivery agents. For reasons including logistics and geography, as well lack of capacity, it appears as if District Offices have been unable to provide rural schools with adequate support. Provinces also have disparate structures resulting in patterns of support varying markedly. Policy design and procedures nest more easily in urban than in rural settings, yet community involvement in management and governance is vital. No less necessary is the involvement of other provincial departments such as health and social development, agriculture and public works. We argue the need to clarify the roles of stakeholders as the first necessary step in developing adequately supported communal systems of governance.

The curriculum (Theme 5) is at the heart of the schooling enterprise, yet tends to be overshadowed by issues around the more visible and immediate lack of essential facilities and material provision. Ultimately, however, quality and equity are realized in the domain of curriculum. The issues that count are the ability of educators to stimulate learning, and what learners achieve in cognitive and developmental terms. Relevant issues here include effective support for C2005, the role and contribution of indigenous knowledges, and questions of language and medium of instruction. Some may question the idea that rural schools should have a curriculum that differs, even in small ways, from urban schools. There are, however, strong grounds for elaborating on a common 'core' curriculum in ways that speak directly to different rural milieus.

Our fifth theme is strongly linked to the sixth because the curriculum is enacted and mediated by educators. In a very real sense, educators are the curriculum. Theme 6 addresses the key issues of educator recruitment, conditions of service, and appropriate forms of support and professional development. With respect to the latter, the committee emphasises the importance of collaborative, cooperative action between educators and other educational stakeholders.

Up to this point in the narrative, the report treats rural schools as inclusive of both schools on commercial farms and schools in Traditional Authority areas. Our seventh theme looks specifically at schools on commercial farms and, in a limited way, at all public schools on private land. A specific focus on schools in this sector - beginning with a brief historical overview - is warranted because farm schools embody and magnify all of the issues and problems besetting rural schooling. The quality of education at schools on commercial farms is patently inferior to that in other schools. Moreover, farm schools also have their own unique characteristics and difficulties. The South African Schools Act has not ended the dual management system. All public schools on private land were to be proclaimed public schools. But the majority of schools have not concluded agreements in all provinces. This legal hiatus results in district offices, farmers and parents being constrained in their attempts to improve schools and facilitate delivery of essential services.

The eighth and last theme covers key operational areas that must be addressed if the future of rural schools is to be an improvement on their past: clear line management roles and responsibilities, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation, and communication forums and decision making structures at national and provincial levels composed of designated directorates and officials having a special responsibility for rural schooling.

Part One

Processes and principles informing recommendations of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education

Background and overview

The intent to form a Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (MCRE) was announced by then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal MP, at the meeting of the Council of Education Ministers on 22 September 2003. The committee was formally established by government gazette on 11 March 2004 (see Appendix A for composition of committee). From March 2004 to July 2004, the committee met with the Minister, the Council of Education Ministers and the Department of Education in a process of briefing and discussion designed to sharpen and refine its focus and mode of operation. This process continued after the appointment of Mrs Naledi Grace Pandor MP as Minister of Education in May 2004. By the end of July 2004, a brief for the committee had been determined: to produce a report containing practical recommendations to help the Department of Education (DoE) and the Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) develop an integrated multi-faceted plan of action for improving the quality of schooling in rural areas. In regard to modus operandi, the committee would draw, in the main, on the expertise and experience of members of the committee, consultations with officials from the DoE and the PEDs, interviews with key stakeholders and a process of public submissions.

The limited scope of this report and its modus operandi reflects a sense of urgency to improve the quality of rural schooling, a desire to avoid a long drawn out process of investigation and rumination, and an awareness that the primary responsibility for changing the quality of provision of rural schooling rests with the state. The role of the committee, and of this report, is to provide some key signposts to assist the DoE and the PEDs to develop an effective strategy for improving the quality of rural schooling. The sense of urgency is reflected in the short timeline for interviews, public submissions and writing of the report (July to December 2005). Some submissions and interviews criticised this 'quick' process on the grounds that it excluded 'marginalized' voices. The committee acknowledges that addressing the challenges of rural schooling requires a sustained and comprehensive approach grounded in research and consultative processes. However, the task of this committee was to suggest how this should be done by the DoE and PEDs rather than enacting the actual task itself.

Provinces are engaged in a variety of innovative, albeit ad hoc, responses to the crisis in rural schools. There are a number of promising donor-funded projects which provide a source of examples for best practice. However, these responses and projects are under-evaluated and have not been replicated on a larger scale. The first step towards improving the quality of rural schooling is for the DoE, in consultation with the PEDs, to provide coordination and leadership. The recommendations contained in this report are designed specifically to promote such coordination and leadership.

The report provides recommendations for rural schooling that will promote quality education for all learners in rural areas in ways that are consistent with the government's integrated approach to poverty eradication and rural development. The education and training challenges faced by communities in rural areas are linked to socio-economic and development pressures specific to rural milieus which are exacerbated by poverty and isolation. While cognizant of the importance of an integrated, multi-sectoral strategy for rural development, the committee's recommendations speak immediately to the Minister of Education, the DoE and the PEDs — although we believe that the recommendations nest easily within the kinds of holistic approaches evident in present government policy.

The challenges facing rural schooling are complex, intractable and interdependent. After ten years of democracy, rural schooling has shown little improvement. Addressing the challenges requires multi-faceted integrated strategies operating at macro and micro levels that link education interventions with interventions of other government departments, business, unions and civil society, as well as with on-going consultation with, and participation of, educators, learners, parents and communities. One factor

that emerged strongly during the committee's consultation process was the diversity of rural areas. The rural areas of each province have different demographics, geographies, economies and cultures that shape the lives of rural people in fundamentally different ways. This report offers no 'one-size-fits-all' solutions and concentrates rather on approaches that will adapt to diverse rural milieus. Hence, the recommendations of this report are based on the assumption that quality of rural schooling can be improved only if delivery takes note of local milieus and builds on existing political, social and economic structures, capabilities and assets of local communities.

Process

The committee met for a total of fourteen days. It made two calls for submissions: a general call to the public, and invitations for comment to 200 organisations and institutions. Over 70 submissions were received and members of the committee held more than 30 interviews with DoE officials and representatives of various organizations. A survey questionnaire was sent to each provincial department of education. Using the information gathered through these processes, the committee produced an initial set of recommendations that were discussed with senior officials from provinces at a workshop held on 26 November 2004.

What is 'rural'?

Although the term 'rural' is ambiguous, and distinctions between rural and urban tend to be arbitrary and varied¹, the committee noted in the public submissions and interviews a surprisingly strong common recognition of what constitutes a rural area. In general, international literature defines 'rural' as a space where human settlement and infrastructure occupy only small patches of the landscape, and economic activity is dominated by primary production. In South Africa, however, this definition of rural has to be expanded to include areas of dense settlement created by apartheid driven land resettlement policies.

Definitions of 'rural' tend to emphasise a particular feature of rurality: settlement or demographic patterns; spatial or environmental characteristics; political or economic factors; and, socio-cultural or historical factors. In South Africa, colonialism and apartheid left an indelible print on all aspects of rural life through land disposessions, resettlement policies, and systematic exclusion from opportunities to improve personal and social well-being that made poverty the most endemic characteristic of rural areas.

Spatial definitions, the usual preserve of statisticians, often ignore differences embedded in specific milieus:

Such definitions also focus on space, not people, and thereby overlook the obvious truism that it is people, not places who have problems, and that different people in the same area may have different problems. Even if the issue was space, rural cannot be seen as one single space, but rather as a multiplicity of social spaces that overlap the same geographical area, with each social space having its own logic, its own institutions, as well as its network of actors.²

From the second half of the twentieth century, the literature on rural education tends to emphasise histories and structures that have created conditions and circumstances of 'oppression', 'deprivation', 'disadvantage' and 'deficit'. In similar deficit terminology, people in rural areas are often stereotyped in ways that emphasise their powerlessness: 'rural peripheries' become the 'dark side' of urban centres of 'enlightenment'. While acknowledging the importance of history and quantitative factors, the committee believes that it is important to see beyond the numbers and negative 'deficit' views to recognise the positive capabilities and assets of rural people and the inherent worth of indigenous knowledges and practices. A people-centred exploration of rural Africa opens up a wealth of indigenous knowledge in fields such as medicine, conservation, arts and culture.

Odora-Hoppers theorizes 'rurality' as a set of cultural and practical preferences, and then explores the place of education within those preferences. By doing this, she emphasises diversity among rural people,

¹ Ashley, A. & Maxwell, S. 2001. Rethinking rural development. *Development Policy Review*, 19 (4): 395 - 425; Aichoarena, D. & Gasperini, L. 2003. Education for rural development: Towards new policy responses. A joint study conducted by FAO and UNESCO Publishing, IIEP, Paris; Maxwell, S. (2003). *Heaven or Hubs: Reflections on the New New Poverty Agenda*. *Development Policy Review*, 21 (1): 5-25.

² Quoted in Odora Hoppers, CA. *Towards a New Social and Ethical Contract*. Paper prepared for the CEPD, November 2004

communities and economies; complexity; and the value of the rural sector. She argues further:

... Finally, it is also clear that everyone, from politicians and government officials, to business to urban residents, to rural dwellers need to be re-educated to understand the diversity of rural ecosystems and the related employment and economic benefits of ecologically sustainable development.³

In view of these complexities, the committee approached rurality in a way that balances quantitative and qualitative features. The need for a focused definition useful for the kind of information gathering, monitoring and evaluation necessary for a state driven intervention programme for rural schooling led the committee to adopt the quantitative definition of 'rural' used by Statistics South Africa (SSA) in the 2001 Census. This is a spatial definition identifying Traditional Authority (TA) areas (primarily 'community owned' land in the erstwhile 'homelands') and formal rural areas (primarily commercial farms in erstwhile 'white' areas of South Africa). It provides a useful working definition for education planning as the availability of resources in these areas differs markedly from those available in urban areas. This is true even of informal settlements in peri-urban areas where there is access to facilities and services offered in urban areas even though the education, social and cultural profiles of communities living in peri-urban informal settlements may be similar to those in rural areas as a result of the ongoing rural-urban population drift and the prevalence of high levels of impoverishment in both localities.

In order to capture the diversity of rural locations the committee suggests further refinements can be made to the SSA definition based on the following relevant features of the environment:

- distance to towns;
- topography (the condition of roads, bridges to schools, etc);
- settlement patterns (dense/isolated homesteads/villages);
- access to communications and information technologies (telephones, radio, television, computers);
- transport infrastructure (roads, buses, taxis);
- access to services and facilities (electricity, water, sanitation);
- the health, educational and economic status of the community;
- access to lifelong learning opportunities;
- social conditions in the community (e.g. levels of migrancy, proportion of children living without adults);
- activities of political, cultural and civil society organisations.

Each of these features represents a severe challenge to the delivery of schooling in rural areas and plays a role in determining the quality of provision. Although a necessary means towards improving the quality of rural schooling, these 'quantitative' factors are insufficient for our purposes. A balance is needed with 'qualitative' elaborations that place people at the centre of analysis and of any programme of action.

Effective interventions to improve the quality of rural schooling must recognise:

- the heterogeneous nature of rural areas as these relate to economic activities and political formations;
- that changes in size, structure and capabilities of rural populations are ongoing;
- the complementarity of urban/rural linkages: In South Africa, many rural households have diverse and geographically dispersed portfolios of income sources, a legacy of migrancy policies;
- the need for social justice through democratic decentralisation and an emphasis on local community involvement through the use of participatory methodologies.

Rural schooling must work in tandem with development programmes. On the one hand, approaches to development currently stress investment in human capital and increasingly recognise basic education as the starting point of successful rural development. On the other hand, if addressed in isolation from other economic and social investments that take place in depressed and stagnant areas where job opportunities are not available, educational progress might contribute to accelerating migration to urban areas.

³ Odora Hoppers, C.A., *Ibid*

What is "quality education"?

The committee sees quality as multi-faceted. In some aspects, particularly with respect to education provision and resources, the focus is on quantifiable indicators. In other aspects, notably with regard to quality and relevance of the learner's educational experience, qualitative dimensions are harder to measure, but no less, and arguably more, important. Some of the key factors influencing the quality of rural schooling include:

- local economy;
- relations between schools and SGBs and/or Traditional Authorities and/or Farmer;
- cultural and social capacity (understood as recognizing and responding to equity issues of race, gender and learners with special educational needs and to citizenship issues of democracy, religion, language, tradition and indigenous knowledge);
- management and governance (local /district /region/province);
- legislation and policy;
- funding;
- infrastructure/learning environment;
- educators (pre-service training and professional development, conditions of service and living conditions);
- learners (access, retention, progression, achievements);
- sporting, cultural and recreation facilities and opportunities.

Other elements necessary for a good schooling system are more intimately associated with curriculum and pedagogy, the needs and capacities of learners, the training, commitment and competence of educators, access to learning resources, and school-community relations (including, parents, traditional authorities and farmers).

Access to high quality schooling is regarded as the cornerstone of a democratic society that aims to give all citizens a fair start in life and equal opportunities as adults. The UNICEF report Quality Education For All: From a Girls Point of View, 2002, notes that access to education of poor quality is tantamount to no access at all. Obtaining equity and quality across the system, within a human rights framework and rigorous performance criteria, is still a distant goal. Despite the gains made in adopting a pro-poor approach to delivery, experts are of the opinion that the system is always 'running from behind'. Over the last decade, little progress has been made in: enhancing the learning and teaching environment; promoting the nutritional and health status of learners; reducing the learning achievement gap between girl and boy learners in rural schools.

Effective interventions to improve the quality of rural schooling must aim at:

- investing in human rights and social justice as a prerequisite to improving living conditions;
- developing partnerships with civil society organisations;
- addressing gender inequalities;
- promoting well being, healthy and safe lifestyles;
- ensuring consistency with government's rural development strategy whereby access to economic activities is expanded in order to reduce poverty;
- investing in infrastructure and human capital and preparing rural people for employment outside the field of primary agricultural production by building knowledge and skills capacity;
- making state institutions responsive to poor people;
- monitoring and evaluation of key indicators of activity;

Addressing the quality of rural schooling raises many questions: How can schooling contribute to development? Should there be special funding for rural schooling? Should rural schools be funded, managed and governed by the same 'rules' as urban schools? Should we continue with the practice of locating public schools on private land? Does it make sense to have so many small schools in rural areas? How does one overcome distances from schools? Should the provinces assist with transport to school?

Should we be looking at the building of hostel schools especially at the FET level where size is linked to curriculum specialization and access to laboratories, workshops, sport and recreation facilities? Should the curriculum of rural schools allow for differences from the curriculum of urban schools? What can be done to attract competent educators to rural areas?

In attempting to answer such questions, the committee believes there are no simple, universally agreed upon solutions. Although there is a common understanding of 'rural' schooling, a number of tensions between different approaches to improving quality are apparent in the submissions to the committee:

- How does education serve rural development when much of its attraction is that it provides the avenue for some successful individuals to escape to modernity?
- A strong stress on building education in partnership with communities and respecting indigenous knowledges and cultures may be in tension with curriculum policy (learner centredness; creative, critical thinking, etc);
- Faith in integrated, multi-sectoral partnership approaches is strong, but it assumes a convergence of interests and a social consensus that does not always exist;
- The use of imported orthodoxies in terms of models may be in tension with building systems that take account of local contexts, experiences and resources;
- Do democratic principles or educational principles prevail? For example, parents not availing themselves of opportunity for early mother tongue instruction which government tries to provide;
- Most respondents saw 'rural' in completely deficit terms. Some, however, saw it in terms of asset or potential.

Tensions arise relating to the constitutional obligations of different tiers of government. Many debates have revolved around (but not resolved) issues relating to national and provincial constitutional obligations regarding educational delivery. Another difficult area relates to the delivery of basic facilities and services and particularly water, sanitation and energy to schools as well as facilities such as libraries and learning centres. Who takes responsibility; the department of education or local government?

Appendix D presents an overview and analysis of submissions received.

A new vision for rural schooling

Many of the submissions and interviews make the point that post-1994 schooling policies are driven by the demographic profile, settlement patterns and the resource base of urban areas. This has exacerbated the difficulties inherited in 1994, resulting in a situation where the provision of schooling in rural areas remains in crisis. The state's commitment to social justice in all matters and especially to universal access to education, written into the Constitution, remains unfulfilled for large numbers of children, youths and adults living in rural areas. Qualitative and quantitative information consistently reveals the daily risks faced by these communities and shows that education is not fulfilling its mandate of promoting well-being.

Making a difference to education provision in rural areas must begin with fundamental changes in the way in which decisions regarding rural education are made and put into practice. To assure the transformation and redress of education in rural areas requires a combination of multi-sectoral integrated planning and implementation with the participation of local government, stakeholders and communities.

As one submission from a teacher union stated:

"... most of our policies do not speak to the challenges experienced by teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders in rural communities. The experience of the community in practice should be mirrored by policies that address these issues."

The degree of redress required in rural areas is significantly higher than that needed in urban areas making it far harder for rural schools and communities to use an 'homogenous' regulatory system to improve the quality of education especially given high levels of poverty. Beginning at a far lower base, rural schools

and communities not only have farther to climb to achieve quality, they have fewer recourses with which to make the climb. Homogenous administrative, management and governance regulations fail to recognize the specific demands of rural contexts leading to a variety of 'failures'. It does not make sense to have learners under trees in one locale and empty classrooms in another; or, educators teaching a few small classes a week in one place (e.g. mathematics educators in a small rural senior secondary school), and educators teaching continuously to large classes in another locale.

A sense of urgency about alleviating poverty has emerged strongly at all levels of government and civil society. Poverty, HIV/AIDS, unemployment and the poor nutritional and health status of many members of rural communities pose severe risks for the fragile fabric of rural society. Schools are often seen as 'beacons of hope' in rural areas and many of the metaphorical expressions used to describe rural schools and teachers reflect a perception of education as a 'bringer of light'. Schools in rural areas are the most common manifestation of the 'presence of the state' — however weak that presence may be — and could become a focal point for rural development and poverty alleviation. Any utopian visions, however, are quickly tempered by the 'realities of rurality', and this report reflects a due modesty about what can be achieved.

Schools are not isolated islands and are intimately interwoven with their communities and environments. Developing the capacities and life chances of learners in rural areas could have significant spin-on effects. One clear implication of both the Human Rights Watch report and the Nelson Mandela Foundation⁴ research on rural schooling is that schools have to be rooted in their communities with local people engaging with schooling and nurturing them as an important common resource.

Certain pilot programmes introduced by the DoE from 1994 onwards recognise the importance of holistic and integrated approaches to rural schooling. One example is the Thuba Makote Project which built community learning centres at nine schools. This can be seen to have spearheaded a new direction by aligning the creation of schools with local communities' poverty reduction priorities. Similarly, since 2004, the School Feeding programme attempts to ensure food security through local food production. These programmes, in addition to the introduction of some educational initiatives in ISRDS nodes, have established education as a partner in the government's poverty alleviation programme. Unfortunately one has to query whether limited budgets and human capital constrain provincial departments from taking responsibilities for these projects and ensuring they go to scale.

Initiatives are also needed that extend into the social development realm. Through their presence in all communities, educational institutions have the capacity to mobilise social capital and develop care and support systems in communities, all of which are essential ingredients of communities' fight against illnesses and especially HIV/AIDS.

Rural Schooling: A special case

Unsurprisingly, South Africa's first ten years of democracy are marked by an overwhelming commitment to equality — to treating everyone in the same way no matter what their differences. Hence, rural schools have been managed and funded on the same principles and formulas as urban schools. So too, curriculum and pedagogies of rural schooling are planned to be the same as those found in urban settings. The committee found wide support for the view that allows for state provision of rural schooling to be resourced and organised differently from urban schools as a necessary measure to meet the needs of rural learners.

From the submissions, the most significant issue, one fundamental to rural education and farm schools, is that these submissions pointed uniformly in one direction:

"Rural education and farm schools in particular are special cases warranting special policy attention."

This principle was either implicit or explicit in almost all submissions. There was no dissenting view arguing that the rural domain is simply a particular site of 'mainstream' education. A teacher union concluded thus:

"It is therefore recommended that rural schools be treated as a separate category of 'special' schools and that they (and other schools in poor areas) receive more funding (over and above their 'quotile' based allocation)."

The purpose of 'special treatment' is clear: to improve the quality of education for all children in rural areas. One key indicator of the 'rightness' of rural schooling is gender parity. Despite growing gender parity in universal access to basic education⁵, social, economic and cultural factors continue to impact on gender inequities, particularly in rural areas: African girl learners achieve lower results than African boy learners in key learning areas and in the grade 12 examinations⁶. Furthermore, levels of illiteracy particularly amongst rural women remain critically low, and gender-based violence appears as the greatest threat to girls' education in South Africa as levels of safety at school and reports of high incidences of sexual harassment across the system continue to highlight the girl child at risk.

Principles, values and operational strategies

Improving the quality of rural schooling is a complex project and the primary responsibility for this project rests with government. To maximize the value of this report for 'delivery' or 'implementation' purposes, the committee has focused on practical recommendations designed specifically for consideration by the DoE and the PEDS. In order to keep the report succinct and practical, there is no detailed explanation of the theoretical framework informing this report, although the theory is implicit in the analytic perspectives, choice of themes and recommendations. The values and concepts informing the committee's orientation draw, broadly, on South Africa's democracy and human rights tradition together with a pragmatic recognition of the importance of understanding how power operates in rural communities. The importance of giving substance to South Africa's constitutional commitment to the right to education is balanced by a recognition of the importance of evaluating needs of particular people in specific contexts with their reservoirs of indigenous knowledge, capabilities and character. This orientation, and its underlying theoretical framework, is expressed in the following principles:

1. Section 29 of the Constitution declares: "Everyone has a right to basic education", and the preamble to the SA Schools Act states: "This country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in education provision". Constitutional entitlements therefore have to be met by provision of quality basic education for all sectors of society.
2. Treating unequals as equals can perpetuate inequality. This applies as well to systemic issues as to individuals'.
 - Rural education — and farm schools in particular — merit differentiation of treatment as special cases for the provision and monitoring of quality education.
 - Girl and boy learners face different challenges when attempting to access and stay in school, particularly when they come from impoverished households.
3. Equality of inputs in the form of material provision does not on its own meet the needs for redress. Outputs and learning outcomes are essential elements of quality assurance.
4. Although education serves individual aspirations such as for social mobility, state education necessarily privileges social benefits. Current conditions imply that the most important aims for rural education are rural development and poverty alleviation.
5. Integrated, community-based education provision is *sine qua non*. Schools should be rooted in the social fabric of the communities in which they are sited.
6. Even though rural schooling is seriously under-resourced, strategies should avoid depicting rurality in purely deficit terms. Rural communities have their own unique assets on which quality schooling and development can be built.

⁴ Nelson Mandela Foundation(2005). *Emerging Voices: A report on Education in South African Rural Communities*. Research by the HSRC and the Education Policy Consortium.

⁵ Department of Education, *EFA Status Report SA, 2002*. Incorporating Country Plan for 2002-2015. Pretoria.

⁶ Perry, H. 2003. *Female performance in the Senior Certificate Examination: Excellence hiding behind the averages*. EduSource Data News No.39/May 2003.

⁷ "There is no logical connection between the idea of education for all and a common curriculum, nor do demands for educational equality imply that all must have the same educational diet..." (Kelly, A. V. 1989 (3rd ed.). *The curriculum: Theory and practice*. London: Paul Chapman, p. 226.

7. A corollary of respect for the inherent worth, capabilities and assets of rural people is a respect for diverse forms of (indigenous) knowledge. This is also important in the light of Curriculum 2005 (C2005) respect for everyday knowledge.

These principles are supplemented by the following five operational strategies:

1. Primary responsibility for education provision obviously rests with the state and the DoE and PEDS in particular. However, strategies and initiatives are immeasurably strengthened if they are multi-sectoral, involving, for example, other state departments, business, unions, and civil society.
2. The international, and particularly African, literature may inform strategic approaches to developing quality education, for example in the form of models of 'whole school' development and 'effective schools'. However, in a developing context such as ours, the overriding principle should be strategic awareness of context. Contexts are not simply the scene of action: through their unique distinctive enabling and disabling features, contexts influence the nature of social action taking place within them. The African experience (particularly donor-funded project experience) has much to offer.
3. Following point 2 above, it stands to reason that educational strategies will not — and cannot be — uniform across all sites. Unity of purpose, not of strategic detail, should be an operational principle.
4. Following principles 6 and 7, together with the oft-reported 'fact' that rural communities are characterised by a feeling of powerlessness, it is important that strategic initiatives are aimed at developing community sense of agency. Responsibility and resources, supported by suitable forms of training, should be entrusted to rural communities.
5. Strategies need to be mindful of tensions. For example, while local, context- specific 'indigenous' knowledges may be appropriate in particular situations, rural schools are also part of 'global' systems in which 'universal' benchmarking measures are powerful.

A way forward

The majority of submissions focused on issues of rights and equity rather than on curriculum and quality of teaching and learning. Obviously without access and adequate resources one cannot begin to address quality of learning. However, the dominance of these enabling arguments goes together with seeing rural in deficit terms, and leads readily to approaches which start by focusing on the needs, deficiencies and problems of communities, and devising strategies to address these needs and problems. This approach encourages "members to think about themselves as fundamentally deficient and as powerless victims of their circumstances". An alternative approach "... is to focus on the capacities, skills and social resources of people and their communities ... [leading to thinking about] potential and about the ways the existing potential can be directed towards available opportunities".⁸

There is no evidence that a better quality of learning necessarily follows enhanced resourcing, and there is a further a danger of urban schools becoming the benchmark for measuring quality of all schooling. To balance and embed these conundrums and tensions in its recommendations, the committee has adopted an holistic orientation that values equity, access, human rights, provision of resources and prioritizes drawing on community assets and capabilities in assuring processes of planning and implementation.

The recommendations are framed, contextualized and given substance within a sequence of themes and sub themes. The eight themes delineating the main foci of the report are supplemented by sub themes elaborating on areas that must be addressed. Within the contextual descriptions of themes and sub themes, the committee recommends appropriate actions to improve rural schooling.

⁸ Ebersohn, L. 2004. Raising awareness of asset-based trends to support vulnerable children in education. Paper submitted to the MCRE.

In order to avoid this report becoming too fragmented or piecemeal, the committee constructed a 'narrative framework' to contextualize and explain the recommendations. We begin in Theme 1 by surveying the single most dominant characteristic of rural schooling: Poverty. Poverty strongly influences the provision and quality of schooling, its 'take-up' by learners and the roles played by educators, parents and other community stakeholders. The most obvious strategy to address the crisis in rural schools is to increase funding. However, in a climate of fiscal austerity any increase in public expenditure must have a strong justification, come with guarantees that it will be spent in ways that are not only cost efficient and effective, and a worthwhile investment, but above all, promote personal and social well-being.

Theme 2 deals with the funding of rural schooling. Present expenditure patterns are strongly affected by the size and location of rural schools that are the product of a history of colonialism and apartheid overlaid by ad-hoc decisions by farmers and 'homeland' and Traditional Authorities. Notwithstanding measures to promote equity, inequities between the historically advantaged and disadvantaged schools, and above all between schools in rural and urban areas, have been reduced but not eliminated. Equity may indeed be unattainable within current modes of determining provincial and intra-provincial allocations to schools. Budgets tend to cater for costs of operating — not establishing — essential facilities such as water, sanitation and lights, and these are precisely what rural schools in the main do not have. Many rural schools are small schools, and for many learners progression is prevented by the absence of higher levels of schooling. Rural schooling requires an integrated and holistic approach to provision.

Theme 3 covers the 'size and shape' of education in rural areas. The demographic patterns of rural areas have begun to change rapidly in the last ten years (the number of learners in farm schools decreased by 60 per cent between 1996 and 2000) thus posing problems of location, transport and accommodation. Resolution of such difficulties, however, is dependent on decisions regarding the nature and size of schools. Following an overview of the merits and demerits of small and large schools, a model of two- and three-tier schools is proposed. It is also noted that school design should also take into account the learning needs of the broader community.

Making rural schools effective will require high quality management and governance at district and local levels. In Theme 4 we address the role of district offices and School Governing Bodies as the frontline delivery agents. For reasons including logistics and geography, as well lack of capacity, it appears as if District Offices have been unable to provide rural schools with adequate support. Provinces also have disparate structures resulting in patterns of support varying markedly. Policy design and procedures nest more easily in urban than in rural settings, yet community involvement in management and governance is vital. No less necessary is the involvement of other provincial departments such as health and social development, agriculture and public works. We argue the need to clarify the roles of stakeholders as the first necessary step in developing adequately supported communal systems of governance.

The curriculum (Theme 5) is at the heart of the schooling enterprise, yet tends to be overshadowed by issues around the more visible and immediate lack of essential facilities and material provision. Ultimately, however, quality and equity are realized in the domain of curriculum. The issues that count are the ability of educators to stimulate learning, and what learners achieve in cognitive and developmental terms. Relevant issues here include effective support for C2005, the role and contribution of indigenous knowledges, and questions of language and medium of instruction. Some may question the idea that rural schools should have a curriculum that differs, even in small ways, from urban schools. There are, however, strong grounds for elaborating on a common 'core' curriculum in ways that speak directly to different rural milieus.

Our fifth theme is strongly linked to the sixth because the curriculum is enacted and mediated by educators. In a very real sense, educators are the curriculum. Theme 6 addresses the key issues of educator recruitment, conditions of service, and appropriate forms of support and professional development. With respect to the latter, the committee emphasises the importance of collaborative, cooperative action between educators and other educational stakeholders.

Up to this point in the narrative, the report treats rural schools as inclusive of both schools on commercial farms and schools in Traditional Authority areas. Our seventh theme looks specifically at schools on commercial farms and, in a limited way, at all public schools on private land. A specific focus on schools in this sector — beginning with a brief historical overview — is warranted because farm schools embody and magnify all of the issues and problems besetting rural schooling. The quality of education at schools on commercial farms is patently inferior to that in other schools. Moreover, farm schools also have their own unique characteristics and difficulties. The South African Schools Act has not ended the dual management system. All public schools on private land were to be proclaimed public schools. But the majority of schools have not concluded agreements in all the provinces. This legal hiatus results in district offices, farmers and parents being constrained in their attempts to improve schools and facilitate delivery of essential services.

The eighth and last theme covers key operational areas that must be addressed if the future of rural schools is to be an improvement on their past: clear line management roles and responsibilities, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation, and communication forums and decision making structures at national and provincial levels composed of designated directorates and officials having a special responsibility for rural schooling.

Part Two

Recommendations

Theme 1 : Eradicating poverty

Current status and challenges

Poverty, the most consistent feature of a constellation of factors that hinder access to quality education, retention and achievement, is pervasive having gender, race, family-type and spatial dimensions.⁹ Although endemic to urban and rural settings the forms it takes in rural locales differ from those found in urban areas. The Gini coefficient continues to place SA in the ranks of the most unequal societies in the world. The poverty gap has increased between 1995 and 2002 with the rise in poverty being more significant among women relative to men, Africans relative to other racial groups, 'single' families relative to other family types,¹⁰ and in the Eastern Cape relative to other provinces.

A recent study¹¹ reporting on the Gariep Basin illustrates that food security still affects millions that impoverished rural and peri-urban areas surround pockets of affluence and well-being, and furthermore, even though agriculture has made tremendous leaps in recent decades, this has come with severe costs to ecosystems and human health, underlining the need to consider human development and well-being in a holistic manner.

Dealing with high incidences of poverty amongst rural children requires concerted inter-sectoral interventions. Some are already in operation such as the school feeding programme, but resources are needed to ensure this programme and other similar social, development, economic and health initiatives can go to scale. Lack of resources and the harsh climatic conditions in many rural areas have resulted in the failure of many community initiatives. Dissonant political relations at community level can also undermine development efforts as illustrated in a development project in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

Box 1 Education and Democracy in rural KwaZulu-Natal

Experience from a village education project in the Maputaland area of north-eastern KwaZulu-Natal shows the political difficulties created when traditional power relations are disturbed. The education project began formally in 1989 although its roots lay in a process of community development stretching back to 1978. The project was managed by a democratically oriented development committee as part of a broad donor funded community development programme. The project was able to leverage expertise from universities and NGOs into various aspects of the project. The education programme included:

- A resources centre with books, videos, magazines and newspapers
- Four full-time personnel
- A school support programme
- An 'out-of-school' matriculation programme (in partnership with SACHED)
- A literacy programme
- A recreational (films, discos) and sports programme.

The education programme worked closely with work and skills development projects in agriculture, aquaculture, horticulture, health care and social welfare, the development of village infrastructure and skills training and production units. Over a five year period, this integrated community development programme developed a strong support base but was unable to win the support of the traditional authority structures. This led to the closure of the whole development project, including the education programme.

"The key issue to emerge from this example is that of governance. Who own and controls the project? [i.e. The TA or the development committee?]"¹²

⁹ South African Development Report. 2003. UNDP. Oxford University Press, p. 43.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 42.

¹¹ Ecosystem Services in the Gariep Basin (part of the Southern African Millennium Ecosystem Assessment) , CSIR, 2004, Cape Times: Human wellbeing suffers as gap between rich and poor widens. 2 November, 2004.

¹² Parker, B. 1995. Village education and democracy - Undoing the myths. Mathlasedi. 14 (3) November/December 1995.

Government's responses to poverty, increasingly multi-pronged and integrated through the ISRDS and local government's IDP, do not spell out the relationship between rural schooling and measures to address poverty and development. (Until now, these have not been applicable to privately-owned farms.) This lack of clarity may lead to unintended consequences (highlighting the importance of careful monitoring and evaluation). For example, while the Child Grant may be providing households with much needed income, information obtained from narrative reports indicate the grants may be having a negative affect on school attendance of young girls: there is speculation that access to the grant has led to increases in the pregnancy rates of young girls although there is no hard data to support such claims.

Poverty has direct and multiple effects on education. One of the most potent is that children's lives are fragmented due to the demands on their time from their responsibilities to their families. In many cases girls carry the heaviest burdens. Other challenges for rural learners include difficulties in accessing school, remaining at school, and achieving success.

Actions to reduce the impact of poverty on children's lives must take cognisance of differences in the contexts and circumstances of schools and their communities. Various initiatives have shown that key priorities to be undertaken in impoverished school communities include:

- ensuring communities are partners in development efforts in ways that enable them to use their assets and build their capacities;
- tackling vulnerabilities, especially relating to gender, including the impact of illnesses, malnutrition, child-headed households and child labour;
- addressing child labour;
- improving access to schooling;
- eliminating drop out, improving absenteeism rates and enhancing learner achievements;
- improving school safety and security, ensuring a safe environment (especially ending the abuse of women and children) and protecting the school's infrastructure and assets.

Government's responses to rural poverty follow a trajectory that has seen shifts from the original vision of the RDP through GEAR to the ISRDS. The committee's concern is to look forward to what can be done within the present constellation of policies that address rural poverty and how schooling can be best positioned to contribute to their implementation.

The Committee's recommendations relating to schooling and poverty embrace three interlinked sets of actions: Community mobilisation, promoting intersectoral programmes, and tackling risks.

Sub theme: Community mobilisation

The success of poverty alleviation or eradication strategies depends on community buy-in founded on their strengths and assets. As pointed out by some submissions:

- "... rural communities have many strengths. They may pertain to a powerful sense of community; to an understanding of the communities' cultural contexts; to an understanding of indigenous knowledge systems. All too often we look at rural schools as poor cousins, places which have deficits which have to be remedied."
- "The people who live in rural villages have indabas, imbizos, lekgotlas, forums and other kinds of meetings to discuss many aspects of community life. But no such forum exists for regular attention to educational matters, either that provided by the community or that which is offered by the local schools."

From the public submissions one was struck by the potential of environmental education as an organizing concept around which to mobilise communities. According to a number of respondents, environmental concerns are central to the functioning of rural communities:

- "... rural households are directly dependent on natural resources (the environment) for sustaining their livelihoods, for food security and for many social and cultural practices."
- In one project, educators defined environment as: "Environment means everything around us, it can [be] trees, water, community and animals"; " It is the community in which we live, people, houses, water, the seasons, weather, rocks and vegetation."

Environmental concerns have a clear potential for underpinning an approach based on enhancing community 'assets' (as opposed to remedying 'deficits'). The success of the Eco-Schools programme, albeit on a small scale, demonstrates how a fairly simple and cost-effective programme can strengthen community participation in schooling and unleash the potential for integrating knowledge across learning areas in ways that promote learner activity. The Eco-schools project appears to have a strong impact on the 'ethos' of schools with learners, educators and communities developing a strong sense of ownership and pride in their school.

Recommendation 1: District offices and schools should work with CBOs and NGOs (and when constituted, with Community/District Education Forums) to ascertain strategies and focal points of community-determined programmes of action regarding school development that integrates curriculum reform with community empowerment opportunities.

Recommendation 2: PEDs should develop a provincial strategy for taking school and community based projects to scale, concentrating on those that have the potential to sustain school community links, primarily those based on environmental concerns.

Recommendation 3: The DOE should assess features of school-community programmes and on the basis of best practices (as for example, demonstrated by environmentally oriented projects) develop a national strategy for supporting these local level initiatives as well as taking such projects to scale.

Recommendation 4: Raise awareness and knowledge of existing and potential community projects and programmes through extensive and appropriate media coverage and public debate that is available at local levels.

(The above link with Theme 4 : Constituting DEFs; the roles of district officials.)

Sub theme: Intersectoral programmes

As a member of the Social Service Cluster, the DOE has embarked on supporting the ISRDS through locating some of its activities (ABET, ECD, teacher development) in nodal areas. A critique of this approach is emerging. For example, a youth development organisation put its case thus:

"A lot of government interventions has (sic) been directed to the so called 'nodal areas' resulting in these areas being bombarded with projects whereas nothing happens in other areas that are as needy...All rural areas need to be given the same prioritisation. Government structures have to recognise the unique/ special needs of rural schools and devote additional resources to rural schools."

One DOE initiative that does exemplify a 'universal' approach to delivery is the national school-feeding programme whereby R800 million reaches 4.6 million 'desitute' children in 17,000 schools at R1700 per child per year. However, this programme is not yet achieving its 'development' potential as much of the food is 'imported' from urban areas rather than being purchased locally.¹³

Another initiative of the DOE that demonstrates some of the complexities that arise when attempting to link schools to local economic development is the Thuba Makote project with its nine pilot schools. This project embodies the Trisano vision of schools as community learning and resource centres. However, the schools are expensive to build and require PEDs to engage in activities that are outside of their core educational business (for example, running bakeries).

Nevertheless, opportunities now exist for the introduction of novel delivery modes that suit local contexts through locally prepared Integrated Development Plans (IDP). Working across districts, local government can support the delivery of essential facilities for schools and other services (health, social development) using mobile units or multi-purpose centres that are equipped with these facilities.

¹³ Until April 2004 the school feeding programme was run jointly by the DOE and the Department of Health. Difficulties in delivering food and administering the school feeding programme led to it becoming the sole responsibility of the national DOE. Many submissions wrote of the difficulties experienced relating to procuring food and the high costs and inefficiencies of operating the scheme. These have led to a radical restructuring of the scheme that is now focused on production, health and nutrition and greater efficiency by improving the capacity of provinces to run the scheme.

Recommendation 5 : The national DoE should prepare a phased implementation programme for pilot ISRDS programmes implemented by the DoE and provinces in nodal areas to go to scale, based on an evaluation of their operations.

Recommendation 6: Together with local communities, relevant provincial departments, local government, service providers and NGOs and CBOs develop a programme of action that considers priorities relating to the delivery of facilities and services and essential resources to schools and includes these into the district IDPs.

Recommendation 7: Extend aspects of the school-feeding programme that support the creation of food gardens and other forms of production that suit local community contexts by giving all schools the opportunity to become community centres that provide formal schooling as well as productive activities.

Sub theme: Tackling risks

Some of the most obvious features of rural schooling that indicate the vulnerability of rural learners include high drop out and absenteeism rates, the low nutritional status of children, and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and parasitic infections. Teenage girls are most vulnerable as indicated by the high incidence of teenage pregnancies and HIV/AIDS amongst teenage girls in rural areas. Special consideration is necessary to ensure that girls have the confidence and means to remain at school.

Various cultural, economic and social priorities operating in communities result in lowered performance for girls at schools. The Girls' Education Movement and programmes such as Talent Search are seen to have the potential to have an impact in retaining girls at school. This is despite the fact that they are piece-meal programmes relying on the commitment, passion and good-will of a few individuals rather than being 'mainstream', properly funded and supported by key role-players. For 'mainstreaming' to happen, national and provincial gender focal units have to be fully supported; a point made in the report prepared by the Gender Equity Task Team.¹⁴

Gender-based violence appears as the greatest threat to girls' education in South Africa. Whilst the DoE and PEDs have stepped-up efforts to address this, it is strongly advocated that gender-based violence be tackled more rigorously through wider school-community interventions and providing heightened awareness through the media amongst other strategies.

However, prevention of gender-based violence has to be accompanied by measures to expand school access to meet the need of learners who have somehow been lost to the system. A number of international programmes have been developed that provide models for such action. For example, BRAC offers a reduced but appropriate curriculum to such learners. Cuba's literacy programme of the 1960s is legendary in its successful transformation of an illiterate society to one with high levels of literacy. South Africa's drive to transform the countryside can bear fruit only through the medium of such a nationally sponsored programme that tackles our unacceptably high levels of illiteracy whilst also providing opportunities for the use of knowledge in productive endeavours. One of the submissions describes one such programme:

"Intervention programmes ... achieved a measure of success as communities realized the importance of advancing the education of both boy and girl child i.e. girls are no longer seen as or restricted to domestic works and they too can get to study for profession of their choice. Programmes like "Adopt a cop" "Gun free zone" and alcohol and drug abuse are in place for the protection and welfare of learners in schools."

In a submission, UNICEF proposes that the school system must respond to the traumas facing individuals and communities affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The following recommendations propose actions (that are linked to recommendations made in Theme 3 below) that consider how the needs of vulnerable children and households can be supported. These take account of the circumstances of the girl child in rural areas.

¹⁴ Wolpe, A, Quinlan, O & Martinez, L. (1997), Gender Equity in Education: A report by the GETT, Department of Education, SA.

Box 2 Supporting vulnerable learners

"Do cash transfers make significant contributions to eradicating child poverty?" Research has found that, in developing and transition economies, the provision of cash transfers and basic services to the poor are complementary activities, in order to ensure that supply responds to demand arising from the transfer programmes:

- Targeted conditional programs are vertically efficient (there are insignificant leakages to the non-poor) but they score less well on horizontal poverty reduction efficiency (i.e. they do not reach all the poor)
- On the other hand, family allowances, are less vertically efficient, but achieve almost perfect horizontal efficiency.
- In reviewing a number of programmes addressing child poverty in Mexico, South Africa and Chile, it appears that: Developing countries ought to consider developing cash transfer programs within integrated childhood poverty eradication programs
- Due attention be paid to the key role played by households in ensuring that transfer programs do effectively address child poverty. An implication of this is that poor households should be regarded less as clients and more as the main agents of change.¹⁵

Recommendation 8 : Flexible modalities of schooling should be identified and strategies developed for optimal enrolment of learners with special focus on girls and orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs). The creation of such flexible modalities of schooling will accommodate OVCs in light of the increasing number of child-headed households in South Africa, especially in rural communities. This should include a review of financing modalities and budgetary allocations in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework.

Recommendation 9 : Facilitate community led strategies to support vulnerable children and to assure safe and secure schools.

Recommendation 10: Introduce pilot programmes in quintile 1 schools on commercial farms and in TA areas to explore the ways in which incentives may be used to promote a learning culture amongst educators, learners and parents by ensuring that learners remain at school and indeed are able to enter tertiary level institutions.

Recommendation 11: Provide bursaries for girls with high levels of learning achievement.

Recommendation 12: Fortify the drive for literacy and basic education throughout the country by supporting successful current ventures and, in particular, introducing new initiatives, targeting youths in rural areas who have not completed their GET and FET.

¹⁵ From Proposal presented to City of Johannesburg, ECD programme by N Reynolds, for Gobodo and Woz'obono, August 2004.

Theme 2 : Funding rural schooling

One commentator pointed out: "There should be considerable bias towards rural schools with earmarked funding allocations for each school supported by effective monitoring."

Current status and challenges

Post 1994 education budgets have shown sharp increases with funding allocations to the poorer provinces, (that is, provinces with large rural communities) increasing in relation to the wealthier provinces. Also, provincial education departments have been encouraged to spend boldly on school funding norms allocations and to aggressively increase spending on capital and infrastructure. However, these measures have reduced but not eliminated inequities between historically advantaged and historically disadvantaged schools, and above all between schools in rural and urban areas. In per capita terms, it appears that spending on public schooling across provincial education departments has become more equal. Wildeman's analyses reveal that this does not necessarily reflect deliberate actions by the State, but represents a confluence of various factors:

- The slow real growth of rich provinces' budgets;
- The above-average real growth of most poor education departments' school budgets;
- The migration of learners from poor to rich provinces;
- The general decline in learner numbers in poor provinces.¹⁶

Equity may nevertheless not be an attainable goal using current modes of determining provincial and intra-provincial allocations to schools. One reason for this is that personnel budgets remain too high, constraining levels of expenditure on non-personnel, development items. The skewed distribution of qualified, and therefore highly paid educators, mainly servicing urban areas, is one source of the inequitable distribution of state funds.

How do we deal with the very real differences in teacher qualifications in urban and rural areas, as these relate to expenditure? As one submission pointed out, improved pedagogy in rural classrooms depends on funding professional development programmes for educators in rural areas:

"What most schools in poverty really require is a significant and carefully channelled increase in absolute levels of funding, designed to build capacity and improve the quality of educators. The Norms and Standards are unlikely to provide that."

Inequities are fuelled by SGBs who have funded the appointment of additional educators in historically advantaged schools, while at the same time redeployment strategies have failed to situate more experienced educators in areas of disadvantage.

A further ongoing challenge lies in the inequitable provision of essential facilities and services (water, sanitation and electricity) in rural areas. In practice it appears that provincial budgets for these items cover operational costs and not establishment costs. Whilst special grants have been directed towards establishing these services, provincial spending struggles to provide a full complement of essential infrastructure and services to all schools. Hence provincial budgets for these line items apparently continue to be weighted towards supporting schools already having facilities and services.

Inequities can be seen in inter-provincial differences relating to capital expenditure which remain substantial, as do per learner figures.¹⁷ While overall capital spending is projected to grow at a real annual average rate of 3.6 per cent, personnel expenditure grows by 0.3 per cent for the next three years. Variable spending on non-personnel goods has been a feature of the last few years' budgets. In 2004/05, when capital spending increases on average by 5.1 per cent, Eastern Cape's capital infrastructure budget grows by approximately 36%, while Free State and Gauteng's budgets decline by 10% and 12% respectively. While goods and services increase by 5.6 per cent in 2004/05, North West and Mpumalanga's grow by 35% and 30% respectively.¹⁸ This variable spending on non-personnel goods is

¹⁶ Wildeman, R. A. Reviewing Provincial Education Budgets 2004, Budget Brief No. 143, Budget Information Service, Idasa, 23 June 2004.

¹⁷ For 2002/03, three distinct clusters of spending groups emerged. The largest cluster contains six provinces whose per learner spending on public schools ranges from approximately R3800 in Mpumalanga to approximately R4100 in the Western Cape. Compared to a few years ago, this spending range is significantly smaller, and is indicative of the gains poorer provinces have made in achieving similar levels of per learner spending compared to the traditionally affluent provinces. The second cluster comprises Kwazulu Natal and Limpopo, whose per learner spending is still below the national average, indicating extreme pockets of deprivation. The third cluster, the Northern Cape, at R4 679, has per learner spending levels that are significantly above the rest of provincial education departments (Wildeman, *ibid.*, p 19).

¹⁸ Wildeman, *ibid.*, p 11.

not confined to the 2004/05 MTEF but has been a feature of the last few years' budgets.

These differences have led Wildeman to query whether the great variations in spending patterns necessitate the need for a broad normative national framework. If such a framework is indeed put into place, the question that must be posed is how PEDs will deal with intra-provincial differences, including rural / urban and rural / rural differences.

The extent of the inequities pertaining to the costs of rural and urban schooling cannot be ascertained because:

- As already discussed, data collection procedures do not differentiate between different categories of schools within and between schools in rural and urban areas;
- Provinces deal with payments for facilities and services differently, thus compounding difficulties in assessing comparative funding allocations for different categories of school and schools located in different areas.

Clearly, budget decisions on facilities and services must be interrogated to ascertain how funding for these items can cover development, maintenance and security costs in addition to operational costs. Failure to do so has resulted in inefficiencies in maintaining new services. A case in point is the solar energy project that has been undermined by thefts and poor maintenance. Another is the provision of electricity to schools that cannot afford electricity bills. Both of these examples point to the need to understand the context in which a particular service is being installed, and how contextual features influence delivery options and the ways in which schools make use of the service before funding decisions are made.

Some provinces are spending a significant amount to facilitate access to schools for learners in rural areas by providing: hostels (Free State); transport (Gauteng, Western Cape and Mpumalanga); and by closing and merging schools (Free State and Gauteng). Currently, there is no way of ascertaining intra-provincial expenditure between schools in urban and rural locations. For those provinces which 'top slice' payments for essential services such as water and electricity, expenditure is skewed in favour of those schools having the services, and not towards establishing services in disadvantaged rural schools.

Conditional grants have financed many development programmes. Although recent analyses indicate that levels of spending on conditional grants have been improved and that this improvement can be attributed to better access to human resources, provinces still struggle to negotiate the additional personnel costs this entails in their attempts to limit spending on personnel:

Although spending has improved for some conditional grants in 2003/04, the underlying tensions have not been addressed. Put simply, if provincial education departments were to remain within their personnel allocations, they cannot employ more staff to enhance the effectiveness of conditional grant spending. The result is under-staffed directorates, which are unable to manage the process and spending demands of grants. Potential recipients of grant funding lose out, thereby vitiating the effectiveness of spending. In almost all instances where better spending is reported, additional staff was employed. The Department of Education and other national agencies need to re-conceptualise the conditions that enable grant funding to be spent and to design appropriate interventions accordingly.¹⁹

Gaps and vulnerabilities

Although this report focuses on GET, it is important to note that FET²⁰, ECD²¹ and ABET²² are characterised by poor levels of capital spending. This does not bode well for these sectors nor for rural development programmes. Rural schooling requires an integrated and holistic approach to provision. In other sections of the report we have emphasised the need to expand FET opportunities in ways that benefit both communities as well as individuals forging their own careers. However, the educational budget is unlikely to cope with infrastructure deficits in the new enlarged public FET institutions. This is likely to retard the expansion of FET in rural areas as funds are likely to be directed towards populous urban areas rather than sparsely populated rural areas. The large numbers of youths and adults in rural areas who have not attained adequate levels of literacy, if they have attended school at all, require special attention as do the educational, nutritional and health needs of all children living in impoverished rural environments. The costs of introducing a long-term programme, beginning with the most vulnerable, must be ascertained, and

¹⁹ Wildeman, *ibid.* p.2.

²⁰ Public FET institutions' budgets are projected to grow by 5.6 per cent in 2004/05, while annually over the next three years, growth of 7 per cent is forecast. Free State and Eastern Cape project to grow their public FET allocations annually by approximately 25 per cent over the next three years. Four provincial education departments (Western Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Gauteng) continue to run maintenance budgets, while Northern Cape and North West increase their FET allocations by 4.9 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively over the medium term. Most of the positive real increases in FET budgets are spent on personnel and operational requirements of FET institutions. Salaries and wages constitute 68 per cent of total spending in 2003/04, 76 per cent in 2004/05, and 71 per cent in 2006/07. Capital spending, on the other hand, is non-existent for four provinces, namely the Western Cape, Mpumalanga, Kwazulu Natal and Gauteng. Small capital allocations of approximately R38 million are made in 2004/05 and 2005/06, while in 2006/07, this figure grows to R43.5 million

special funding elicited. It is also important to note that unless pilot ISRDS programmes are extended to all rural areas, pockets of privilege will emerge, with the result that inequities between rural domains will increase and this may be substantive.

No attempts have yet been made to ascertain the differential costs of supporting vulnerable learners²³ and educators in rural and urban areas. The ELRC has initiated a study that considers the implications of the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on educators and how to manage absenteeism caused by illness. It is likely that higher infection rates in rural areas and the greater shortage of educators in rural areas means that the impact of the pandemic will be worse in rural than in urban areas and that managing this will require different strategies that take note of the contextual features of rural schooling. These will probably translate into different costs of financing support. The higher infection rate amongst rural youths, and particularly amongst young girls, compels us to consider costs of immediate action amongst all sectors, beginning with securing the safety and well-being of children.²⁴

An interesting side issue arises when one considers funding social development projects such as School Feeding. Currently mothers do the cooking, but limited funds result in their being exploited as they are engaged as volunteers, and given an honorarium. To obviate this, the School Feeding Directorate is introducing a different funding model based on stimulating the establishment of CBOs that produce fresh produce and introduce community bakeries.

Conclusion

It is apparent that environmental features of rural areas, as well as ways in which learners, their families and the broader community have to deal with poverty, entail higher costs compared with schools in formal and informal urban areas, even those that facing similar levels of impoverishment. Therefore, it is perhaps timely to investigate current procedures with respect to allocations for redress funding derived from the state budget as well as special conditional grants and private grants considering location as well as economic status.

Wildeman points out:

In a budget that has so few additional resources, the gap between policy and planning processes on the one hand and available funding on the other hand is powerfully accentuated. Resources must be found to enable conditional grants to be better spent; to provide capital and infrastructure resources to FET institutions; to match the expansion of ECD services with meaningful financial resources; to provide crucial non-personnel and capital support to the ELSEN programme; to develop more meaningful ABET estimates and funding; and to sustain funding gains in public ordinary schools. The present set of budget proposals suggests that this gap is unlikely to be closed in the medium term.²⁵

How much greater are the needs in the neglected rural areas?

The direction set in the DOE's "Plan of Action" has led to greater effort in addressing infrastructure backlogs but the impact of increased expenditure is not yet known as they have not been subjected to a thorough assessment of capital spending. Wildeman²⁶ in fact maintains that provincial education expenditure is in the throes of adjusting to smaller spending margins as reflected in consolidated provincial education's declining share of total provincial expenditure, indicating that in future less funding may be available to provinces to tackle existing backlogs for capital items.

Sub theme: Costs of transport

Within this climate of fiscal constraints, provinces are struggling to provide funds to transport learners to schools. Provincial submissions did not provide full details on their budgets for transport. Clearly the number of learners in the province, the number of learners requiring transport, the state of roads in rural areas and the distances traveled to school all influence the size of the transport budget required by the different provinces.

The relative costs of transport and hostel accommodation is a key factor when considering how provinces can facilitate access to school for rural learners. The difficulty of calculating these costs is

²³ For example, transport for Learners with Social Education Needs will be more expensive in rural than in urban areas.

²⁴ Nationally, provincial education departments managed to spend 80.3 per cent of grant funding in 2002/03, and 87.3 per cent in 2003/04. The only provincial education department that did not make sufficient headway on life skills and HIV/AIDS spending is the Eastern Cape. In 2002/03, it managed to spend only 41 per cent of its allocation, while in 2003/04, approximately 44 per cent of its allocation had been spent. (Wildeman, *ibid.*, p. 20).

²⁵ The present set of budget proposals suggests that this gap is unlikely to be closed in the medium term.

²⁶ Wildeman, *ibid.*, p. 20.

compounded by rising costs of petrol and inflation generally.

Recommendation 13: Compare the costs of accessing school, categorising the most significant rural milieus in South Africa, covering transport costs and hostel accommodation.

Sub theme: Ring-fenced funding for creating a rural development task team

Recommendation 14: Ring-fenced redress funding through a special conditional grant should be made available for the rural school sector in the immediate future. The grant should cover various projects and human resource needs discussed in the recommendations made throughout this report. The rural task team, discussed below (Theme 8), will be responsible for determining the establishment of the grant and its operation.

Sub theme: Introducing a more progressive funding approach

Current status

It is clear from some of the submissions that the present homogenous approach used by the government to fund all schools fails to redress inequities in rural schools. Environmental features of rural areas as well as ways in which learners, their families and the broader community have to deal with poverty, make rural schooling more costly than schooling in formal and informal urban areas for the state and for families.

Inequities between rural and urban schools arise from:

- the need for additional resources in district offices;
- costs (direct and opportunity) arising from poor facilities and services;
- transport costs;
- educator conditions of service (especially accommodation) and professional development;
- security of school;
- paucity of funds for school development owing to high poverty levels in the communities.¹⁶

In analyzing rural school resource needs, it is important to go beyond resource equalization between urban and rural schools and account for challenges associated with learning in rural settings. It is necessary to assess the public and private costs of inputs in a rural school setting, questioning the assumptions usually made when costing a BMP so that costs cater for rural settings.

It is interesting to note that in the Western Cape per learner costs in 2003/4 were higher for rural than urban learners: calculations based on the total budget for the combined rural and urban EMDCs and per learner costs revealed that for the 2003/4 year, the per learner costs were R4837 and R4191 for learners in rural and urban EMDCs respectively. However it must be noted that in the Western Cape the rural EMDCs include small towns, commercial farms and informal settlements on the edges of the towns and hence do not conform to the definition of 'rural' used in this report. Nevertheless the fact that learners in rural areas cost the province more than learners in urban areas indicates the greater costs attributing to the delivery of education in rural areas.

Recommendation 15: Incorporate specific rural cost drivers into the design of a BMP as a means of assuring equity of access and quality of learning in rural and urban contexts.

Recommendation 16: A modified BMP must cover development as well as operational costs for facilities and services and their security. (Theme 3).

Sub theme: Access to school

Current status

Learners at schools in rural areas tend to leave school before the end of the compulsory phase of education, are absent or arrive late due to their multiple roles in the household economy. They also may

¹⁶ Wildeman, R. A. 2004. Reviewing Provincial Education Budgets 2004, Ikaasa- Budget Information Service. Budget Brief No. 143. Wildeman, ibid., p. 31.

This is based on the 2003/4 expenditure of R1 674 906 560 and R 2 552 391 440 and learner numbers of and 346 234 and 608 991 for rural and urban EMDCs respectively.

miss classes in order to collect wood and water for the school. Leaving school to work is common amongst girls and boys particularly those living on farms. Coupled with the growing rate of teenage pregnancy, said to be partially attributable to the availability of the Child Grant, creative ways of encouraging learners to remain at schools should be explored.

Recommendation 17: Introduce pilot programmes in quintile 1 schools on commercial farms and in TA areas to explore the ways in which incentives may be used to ensure learners remain at school. (This recommendation has links with Theme 7.)

Sub theme: Different modalities of schooling

To provide all intermediate phase and senior phase and FET learners with transport and subsidies in the short or even medium term is highly unlikely, given the high costs of education expenditure. Therefore, changing the size and shape of rural schooling is a lengthy and costly process which will have to be introduced in phases. In addition, all methods of increasing the effectiveness of rural schooling should be considered and appropriate pilot programmes introduced.

Recommendation 18: Sharpen understanding of the costs of different modalities of schooling including nodal and satellite schools, mobile units, etc. (This recommendation has links with Theme 3.)

Recommendation 19: Examine the costs of introducing distance education programmes for learners and educators at schools in remote areas based on international and South African best practices.

Recommendation 20: Consider current provincial expenditure on transport and hostels to ascertain expenditure levels needed to ensure access to learners living specified distances from schools.

Recommendation 21: Examine current expenditure levels on multi-purpose/ community/ public learning centres to establish resources required for their efficient and effective operation.

Recommendation 22: Initiate a study on the costs of introducing in communities an integrated and holistic agricultural learning programme that includes food production to enhance food security for adults, agricultural science in the GET and FET bands, and ABET programmes on primary and secondary agricultural production. This should provide a detailed indication of the resources needed to implement the programme, such as seeds, fertilizer, fodder for livestock, etc.

Sub theme: A development fund for schools in rural areas

Current status

Levelling the playing fields across advantaged and disadvantaged schools within rural districts and between rural and urban areas requires that SGBs are able to access funds to kick-start, operate and maintain school development programmes.

It is clear that the 'usual' (that is, approaches used by urban schools) to raise funds tend to be unsuccessful in rural areas. Innovative approaches to fund raising are called for. Illustrations of two such schemes that facilitate community involvement in school affairs by providing seed funding for development appear in the boxes below.

Box 3 Coordinating Community resources: The Huntington Trust

The Huntington Trust comprises a Community Development Forum, a 'representative' body of all the interest groups, and its partner the Huntington Trust for the purposes of creating and running enterprises in Huntington. The Trust is a body that belongs to all adult residents equally and it controls financial transactions.

All the adults living in Huntington own the Huntington Trust, having a vote and an account as an owner. Membership of the Huntington Trust entitles members to:

- Cash dividends paid out when 'profit' is earned by its businesses. This could include the rent of land, of buildings or of orchards and woodlots after maintenance and other costs have been deducted.
- 'Use Rights' are issued every year or season equally to all members to garden, to graze, to farm on irrigated land, to cut or receive firewood and timber etc.

By buying and selling these User Rights, members are able to learn what their membership is worth.

Box 4 Coordinating Community resources: The Social Change Assistance Trust (Scat)

Scat is an independent funding and development agency, supporting community controlled development projects in rural areas working in partnership with organisations funded by offering support on organisational development and capacity building. Scat's vision is to forge partnerships so that rural people work with their own skills and indigenous knowledge for their own survival. Scat has started its own fund-raising incentive scheme: project partners are expected to raise a certain amount of money from their own communities and this is supplemented by Scat with R5 for every R1 raised locally. These grants are small, enough to maintain one paid person, sometimes two, a small office, a telephone, a fax and a computer. Scat's field workers provide support to enable organisations to meet their own programme objectives and unpaid community-based committee members and other volunteers contribute to the local agencies. Efforts have mainly been directed towards needs identification, creating development plans, capacity development and networking.²⁸

Recommendation 23 : Create a school development fund for SGBs operating in impoverished environments to 'kick start' development projects at their schools.

²⁸ Orford, M. 2004. Rural voice: The Social Change Assistance Trust, 1984 - 2004. In Working in South Africa. Cape Town: David Phillips.

Theme 3 : The size and shape of education in rural areas

Current status and challenges

Tensions around issues of the size and shape of the rural school system revolve around a number of factors:

- Settlement patterns range from sparsely populated remote areas and villages and commercial farms to densely settled areas;
- Rapid shifts in demographic patterns as people migrate towards urban areas or other rural areas;
- Haphazard decision-making processes in the past have led to many anomalies in the placement of schools and the grade levels offered;²⁹
- Access is impeded by poor road and communication systems.

All of these limit access with the result that learners (and often educators) walk long distances to school, or leave school before completing the period of basic education.

Clearly the current 'shape' of the rural sector does not suit the location and profile of learners. In its deliberations, the committee considered various options to improve the system, each of which has advantages and disadvantages. These relate to options affecting school size and the provision of a two- or three-tier system. These options have to be considered in relation to governance and management options, the provision of LSMs, and capacitating educators to cope with exigencies of small schools and multi-grade classes.

Small schools

It is perhaps time to re-evaluate the opportunities and constraints facing small rural schools. The present distribution of widely dispersed, small schools ought to minimize the distance between home and school, but learners still have to walk long distances to school. Limited budgets mean that small schools cannot offer a full range of learning area choices, have limited potential to service specialised educational needs, and may have a poor range of learning and teaching support materials. Most small schools have multi-grade classes, which have become a feature of rural schools as they struggle with limited resources to increase the number of grades offered at the school. Post provisioning norms mean that educators can teach more than two grades in very small schools; in fact there are instances of educators teaching up to seven grades in small farm schools.

However, some commentators argue that small schools encourage democratic participation in school affairs as the school community is well known to the broader community. Moreover, such schools are reported to have fewer disciplinary problems than larger comprehensive schools. The argument that only large schools have the resources to provide specialised learning options is also contested byponents of distance education programmes. There are many examples of successful programmes operating in remote areas that make use of ICT and other media offering well-conceived programmes to small numbers of learners and educators.

While it is clear that economies of scale operate with larger schools, these savings are counterbalanced by the need for state transport schemes and hostels to facilitate access to these schools. There are indications that it is difficult for hostel staff to satisfy the social and emotional needs of young children. Costs might become prohibitive: many hostels were closed during the last twenty years and funds for re-establishing them or building new ones might not be forthcoming. Given the vital role of children in the rural household economy, it is likely that their families will miss their presence if they are at home only during vacations. Proponents of centralised schools argue that the trade-off of travel and accommodation expenses is access to quality education and reduced expenditure owing to economy of scale.

²⁹ A quote from the submission of a high school principal: "One of the huge disadvantages of rural schools in Eastern Cape is the fact that they are so divided into Junior Primary, Senior Primary, Junior Secondary, Senior secondary - there is no continuity for a child, teacher, nor a parent... A combined school is the secret of Elliot High's success - dedicated foundation teachers inspire the High School teachers - there is a cross fertilization of parents and children as well. In a city the combined school is not needed but it really works in rural areas."

The costs of infrastructure and transport assistance schemes must be factored into planning. In many cases, the design and cost of building schools to standard in rural areas is prohibitive; furthermore these schools are subject to enrolment patterns that can shift rapidly. A more flexible and cost-effective approach to school buildings is required. In addition, school design should take note of the learning needs of the broader community.

Providing fully funded transport schemes to all learners living too far to walk to school is prohibitively expensive. Flexible options are needed that make use of community resources. Possibly assisting with transport could follow a similar model to the national nutrition programme with the provision of transport becoming an economic opportunity for local people.

In conclusion, our key challenge is to re-align the size and shape of the system with the circumstances and needs of learners. Recommendations that follow take account of learners' evolving social, cognitive and physical needs and particularly those of OVCs (who require special consideration in poorly resourced rural areas) as they advance through the system.

Sub theme: Schools in dense settlements: A two-tier system

In dense settlements, it is suggested that improving access for compulsory schooling is best achieved by extending schools to provide Gr R - Gr 9 classes. Access to FET provision should be extended and improved by ensuring that learners have the option of attending FET schools or colleges that are linked to various work opportunities or entrance to higher education through hostels and/or transport assistance schemes.

Recommendation 24 : Through an examination of combined schools, assess the viability of a two-tier system (Grade R - Grade 9; Grade 10 - Grade 12) in dense settlement areas.

Sub theme: Small schools in dispersed settlements: A three-tier system

A two-tier arrangement will not meet the requirements of communities living in isolated settlements or on farms. It would merely replicate current problems stemming from insufficient learners, thus necessitating multi-grade classes and limited learning areas offered at these schools. In order to meet young children's social and emotional needs, it is proposed that sparsely populated areas be serviced by a three-tier system: two tiers for the three phases of the GET band, and one tier for the FET band. Cultural and sports activities would be mainstreamed and supported by community members in the Foundation Phase, while national, provincial and local sports councils and other agencies would facilitate entry into competitive sports and more formal cultural programmes as learners progressed to senior phases of education.

The first tier would be foundation phase schools (Grade R - Grade 3) so that young learners could remain at home yet not travel long distances to schools. These schools, resourced along the lines of British infant schools, would provide a rich learning environment with a cost-efficient use of educators as the three integrated learning areas of the foundation phase curriculum can be taught by a single educator. Parents and other family members would be encouraged to participate in school affairs, augmenting the learning programme with sports, recreation, cultural events, food gardens, etc.

The second tier would be the intermediate and senior phases of the GET band. Judicious placement of schools should ensure that learners could get to school by walking or by bus / taxi, although some hostel accommodation might still be needed for learners who live too far away from a school. These schools would be able to provide more subject specializations in the senior phase as well as more sport and cultural activities.

The third tier would be large 'nodal' FET schools (of at least 600 learners) and colleges (of at least 1000 learners) with a wide range of subject specializations, sport and cultural facilities. These FET schools and colleges would require hostel accommodation and/or transport schemes.

Recommendation 25: Plan the introduction of a three-tier system of schooling where communities live in dispersed settlement patterns or on farms. The tiers are: a Foundation Phase school situated close to households; intermediate and senior phases; FET schools and colleges requiring hostel accommodation and/or transport.

Recommendation 26: The DoE, in consultation with provinces, to develop guidelines on providing hostel accommodation and subsidized transport for the two and three tier systems.

Recommendation 27 : The DoE to develop guidelines to build the capacity to organise multi-grade classes and teaching.

Recommendation 28: The DoE, in consultation with provinces and NGOs, to develop guidelines on managing small schools that include a special focus on schools with multi-grade classes. Issues to be covered include: raising awareness of best practices; required administrative and management skills; post provisioning norms; capacity building of educators; the role of communities in supporting small schools.

Sub theme: Can ICT enrich learning?

It is important to consider alternatives to formal schooling. The use of ICT in other countries has been found to enrich the learning environment of small schools, reducing the need for state transport schemes and hostels. Recent conceptualisations of distance education provide for an integration of self-study and contact teaching time. For example, the University of Fort Hare distance education programme for educators includes classroom visits and weekend sessions in its programme.

Similar models whereby learner needs (whether learners be educators, learners at school, or district officials engaged in professional development programmes) can be met through the provision of 'mixed mode' programmes are needed to extend learning opportunities in rural areas. The value of radio as a means of communication in rural areas is often underestimated.

Recommendation 29: Explore South African and international best practices that provide learners in rural schools increased educational access through ICT (internet, radio, television, learning support materials).

Recommendation 30: Explore South African and international best practices that provide professional development support for educators in rural areas through ICT.

(These recommendations with respect to distance education have links with:

- . Theme 5 : Curriculum options.
- . Theme 6: Professional development for educators.

Sub theme: Community learning centres

Many community and multi-purpose centres are now provided by government and private organisations and used to facilitate professional development, capacity building of SGBs, and easing administrative demands made on district offices. There are examples of innovative school designs, such as the Thuba Makote project, where facilities for learners during the compulsory phase of school are an integral part of a community learning centre. This type of arrangement received support in submissions:

"Most of these facilities [school buildings] have very low utilisation rates, as they are generally only used by school learners during school hours. The existing infrastructure can be upgraded or new infrastructure can be designed in such a way that it can be used more efficiently and effectively for educational and community needs and development. ... If particular approaches are followed, schools can be developed to more effectively support community development and accommodate new developments such as new policy, curricula and the use of information technology."

Governing these centres is problematical, however, as the use of classrooms for two distinct sets of learners may lead to conflict regarding ownership and maintenance. Current policy states that there should be two governing bodies: one for the school, and one for the public learning centre. It is possible that these should be conflated into one body so that there is one structure responsible for maintaining and developing the school.

Recommendation 31 : Examine the effectiveness of present regulations relating to the governance structures of public learning and community centres and explore whether these should be amended to encourage the broader community to take responsibility for the building, its maintenance and development activities.

Recommendation 32 : Investigate the potential opportunities provided by community learning centres/ multi-purpose community centres for communities on farms or in remote settlements.

Theme 4 : Governance and management

Current status and challenges

It appears that management and administration procedures commonly supported by the national and provincial departments are best suited to urban landscapes where the school is in close contact with a range of facilities and services, and where communication between these, schools and learners' homes is not an issue.

It is also apparent that district offices cannot meet their responsibilities to Section 20 schools: various members of school management teams complained about the poor delivery of materials and services to Section 20 schools (some saying that delivery can take up to a year).

The efficacy of policies and procedures are best viewed in relation to (a) departmental district support, and (b) community involvement.

(a) *Departmental district support*

The cracks in the governance and management of rural schools are particularly problematic at district levels that do not have the resources to facilitate school management and governance. Public submissions expressed dismay at the lack of adequate support provided by district offices:

- "In many provinces there are district offices that are largely dysfunctional" (A teacher union).
- "From my experience the district officials from manager down do not have the capacity, the initiative, the support and the ability to support the schools in their districts. There are not enough EDOS nor enough subject advisers" (School principal).
- "Review the system of support via district offices with the understanding that district offices need to be appropriately resourced to be able to support the entire system" (A teacher union).

Support functions are severely compromised by resource challenges. Turnover of district staff is apparently high, with the result that too few learning area advisors are available across all learning areas, and administrative capacity is poor. District officials also have limited access to cars for visiting schools in remote areas. Technical difficulties such as these may be relatively easily addressed, provided the funds can be made available. For example, administrative services for schools could be provided either through a hub or mobile service including photocopying, and supplies, and vehicles could be made available for school visits to the more remote schools where poor roads provide the only means of access.

Limited capacity and inadequate funding are, however, only one aspect of a complex and challenging situation. South African schooling is characterised by inherited inequalities and great diversity. The CEPD's Education 2000 Plus project illustrates significant differences across provinces with respect to the frequency of district visits to schools, the purpose of visits, and the scope of their involvement with schools. It appears as if decisions on district structure and function have been based on the contextual demands of a particular province.³⁰ Provinces have thus structured their district offices differently, owing to the diverse demographic and settlement patterns across the country. For example, KwaZulu-Natal has three tiers: regions, districts and circuit offices; North West has two: regions and area project offices. This means that district offices are responsible for different numbers of schools. To what extent does this affect their management capacity?

There are many instances of provinces developing creative responses to the problem of management capacity, but these tend to be limited in scope and coverage. The introduction of the Integrated Quality Management System and the growing use of 'cluster' approaches to school support could have a significant impact in rural areas, especially when combined with the rolling out of ICT. In the main, however, it has been reported that there were few cases of districts providing schools with support, particularly for SGBs.³¹ Instead, officers spend their time relaying policy information, monitoring

³⁰ Narsee, H. 2004. Districts and their role in education delivery. Paper presented at Education 2000 Plus Conference, August 2004, Johannesburg.

³¹ CEPD: Education 2000 Plus. (This project is an initiative of the Centre for Education Policy Development, Evaluation and Management).

³² See Theme 8 for detail of additional factors affecting the governance of farm schools, and particularly how farm workers are impeded in their role as school governors.

implementation, checking compliance, and sometimes solving problems. On a more positive note, many district offices reported a trusting relationship with school principals.

There is common understanding that district offices are the primary agents of support. Nevertheless, their position at the interface between school and department leaves them in an ambivalent position with uneasy tensions: Do they take their mandate from their head office or from schools? At present, according to Narsee (op cit) centralist tendencies prevail as district officers appear to struggle to adopt facilitative roles supporting school development. As they do not have decision-making powers, schools have to go to the province and not their district if they have difficulties. In general, it is apparent that district officials have to tread carefully to avoid being seen as 'inspectors', a role which would thrust them into playing a policy function, transmitting information and urging compliance rather than offering active support. It is further argued that future debates should revolve around efficiency as this relates to the layering of administrative and management functions, the model of district delivery best suited to rural districts, and different resourcing strategies that will enable district offices to meet the needs of schools in their districts.

*(b) Community involvement*³²

A teacher union observes that: "... most of our policies do not speak to the challenges experienced by teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders in rural communities". It is apparent that the constitution of School Governing Bodies, as laid out in the South African Schools Act, may not be the most suitable for rural communities. Current governance policies do not take note of existing organisations in communities and therefore do not draw on their expertise. As a result, it is often the most marginalized members of the community, usually the women, who serve on these bodies and yet do not have the support (or endorsement) of their community. Also relevant is that the model of schools raising funds for their own development cannot take root in impoverished communities. Abolishing fees is a key step in the right direction.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation research on rural schools³³ points to the importance of process in sustaining educational endeavours in rural areas. Communities have the capacity to make pertinent decisions about education, and it is clear that communities believe schooling is a source of strength for the community as a whole and is crucial if their children are to develop their potential.

Sub theme: Clarifying roles and responsibilities in districts and schools

Current status and challenges

Rural schools are dependent on inter-sectoral, cooperative governance and management. This process needs to be accompanied by creative and intensive capacity building. At district level, roles and responsibilities of district offices need to be aligned with redress and the transformation of rural schools. These offices should have the capacity to engage with other sectors to effect the delivery of essential facilities and services to schools. This process will need to be accompanied by raising the awareness of all parties in the community so that there is 'buy-in' from civil society regarding school reform and development.

For all of these processes to take place, the key prerequisite is clarification of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, particularly in the case of district officials. This imperative is well captured in the submission of one of the teacher unions.

Box 5 The need for role clarification

One submission commented on the roles various parties, including Traditional Authorities, in school development: "Tribal land owners, (on whose land rural schools may be built) parents, teachers, learners, district officials and the State e.g local municipalities must be in complete agreement about their own particular roles and obligations as well as those of other partners. ... discussion[s] could ... create a forum for future discussions in which roles could be negotiated ... It is also anticipated that the roles, rules and responsibilities that would be agreed upon in this kind of forum would be unique to the circumstances in which each rural school finds itself."

³³ Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005), *Emerging Voices: A report on Education in South African Rural Communities*. Research by the HSRC and the Education Policy Consortium.

Recommendation 33 : Hold workshops with national and provincial officials to discuss the role of district offices in rural schooling and how district officials and school management teams can be capacitated to meet their responsibilities. Develop a plan of action to meet the recommendations arising from this process.

Recommendation 34 : The responsibilities of district offices and officials must be aligned with the needs of rural schools, and resources allocated accordingly. This must take account of their responsibilities with regard to Section 20 and Section 21 schools and whether the categorisation of schools as either Section 20 or as Section 21 is a useful one for schools in rural areas.

Recommendation 35: Raise awareness of district officials to new policies and programmes through various means, including regular workshops and newsletters.

Recommendation 36: Recognising the complexity of delivery in rural areas, develop guidelines for provisioning norms for districts in rural areas based on new models of delivery. Develop guidelines regarding the capacity needed at district level to manage schools in rural areas (and particularly feasible ways of communicating with schools) taking into account their remoteness and poor array of facilities and services.

(These recommendations are linked with Theme 2 with respect to costing improvement in the capacity of district offices.)

Sub theme: Strengthening delivery

Current status and challenges

Cooperative governance — on which integrated programmes of delivery depend — has been slow to come into operation, putting brakes on the overall development thrust of rural communities.

Provinces are struggling to overcome backlogs in educational delivery, both with regard to infrastructure and the delivery of LSMs. In addition to poor resources, it appears that the efficiency of district offices is seriously constrained by lack of relevant information. At a provincial level, officials reported cooperation between local government and education, but capacity constraints have hindered these efforts.

Many rural areas, unlike most urban, do not have access to the most basic facilities and services. To overcome this, various projects have created integrated district community structures to enable communities to mobilise for essential services. Commonly this process begins with communities participating in vision-crafting exercises to prioritise the introduction of economic projects such as food gardens or simple education-oriented manufacturing (uniforms, tables) or to ensure learners' safety while they are in or travelling to school.

This process is beginning to show positive outcomes: there appears to be a growing consensus that SGBs and local government need to work together in the interests of the schools. There are also indications that the establishment of District Education Forums (DEFs) promotes cooperative management of basic facilities and services for the broader school communities and for schools. These ensure the cooperation of different officials at district level to organise and mobilise in collaboration with other district structures.

Box 6 Example of school and community joint enterprise

The DEFs in the Eastern Cape Education Department, operating under [the] Imbewu [Project], include representation of a wide range of players such as the broader school community, district management office, SGBs, clubs and traditional cultural groups. One commentator claimed that these are steeped in indigenous knowledge. For example, the use of clan names heightens the bonding process between the different parties. These bodies function organically in that there is an erosion of or disappearance of bureaucratic distinctions such as district managers, principles councillors etc and is replaced by clan names, giving the DEF a strong identity that enhances team spirit.

Nevertheless, it is likely that strong leadership at district level is needed to draw these groups together in order to forge a common identity giving schools support in attaining Section 21 status or in carrying out the functions required of Section 21 schools.

Other provincial departments such as health and social development, agriculture and public works also need to participate in forums so that there can be an integration and coordination of actions that involve schools.

Coordinated action between education authorities and local government is also needed to reduce backlogs in the delivery of essential services. Facilities such as water and sanitation are essential.³⁴

Recommendation 37 : The broader school communities in rural areas must be drawn into decision-making through broadly-based participatory processes including *imbizos*, *indabas* etc.

Recommendation 38 : Establish guidelines for holding regular discussions at local levels (*imbizos*, *indabas*) that include all parties involved in the delivery of basic facilities and services in a district and constituting a DEF.

Recommendation 39 : Discuss with SALGA best practices regarding the formulation of Integrated Development Plans (IDP) that cover the delivery of facilities and services to schools and that provide plans for operational and maintenance costs, including security. This requires resolution of the complementary roles of local government and the PEDs in delivering facilities and services, including facilities used by the broader community such as libraries and multi-purpose learning centres.

Sub theme: Support measures using local resources

Current status and challenges

There are many instances of clustering schools to ease administration, capacity building and governance. But, as the following submission indicates, without adequate infrastructure and support, clustering may not be suitable for schools in remote areas.

While clustering seems to offer a solution to the problems of teacher isolation, lack of resources and insufficient support for schools, questions remain as to whether it is indeed a sustainable strategy especially for rural and deep rural schools. The costs of travel between far-flung rural schools, the time and personnel it takes to co-ordinate cluster activities, are all difficulties that clusters encounter. ... [Yet] There seems to be principled support for the strategy for clustering schools as a means of enhancing education delivery. However this is not translated into significant and concrete support for the clusters. At the provincial level, no department of education seems to have a formal policy in place that articulates its positions with regards to school clustering .

With adequate support, however, creative supportive structures may evolve, as evidenced in the box below.

Box 7 Imbewu: District Professional Development Teams

District teams comprised 11 persons: an administrator and 10 professional persons. These ten persons were divided into 5 pairs, one for each of the 5 specialist areas (Languages, Mathematics, Science & Technology, Foundation Phase and EMD). One member of each pair was assigned responsibilities as the facilitator responsible for facilitating workshops and cluster visits as well as for providing tutorial support. The other member of the pair was assigned responsibilities for assisting with workshop facilitation, drawing up participant profiles and for providing school support visits to assist the school carry out its action plans within the frame of its whole school development plan.

Recommendation 40 : Research and monitor best practices regarding school clusters and how these can be relayed to all schools and districts.

³⁴ However, a more nuanced understanding of the role of electricity in supporting quality learning and learner well being is needed to take cognizance of the LSWs essential to different phases of education. At present it is assumed that all facilities merit the same weighting, but international and South African research problematises the importance of electricity for schools. Schools can use various energy sources depending on the activity. For example, gas can be used for the school feeding scheme.

Recommendation 41 : Relay information and best practices on the use of multipurpose community centres and public learning centres within a school district.

Sub theme: Gender issues and school safety

Current status and challenges

A recent survey illustrated that women are, relatively-speaking, under-represented on the governing bodies, especially so with respect to parent members. Educator and learner representation is more balanced. In addition, most SGB chairpersons are male. Unfortunately the findings of the study were not scrutinised to ascertain differences in composition and representation in rural and urban areas but some findings indicated that these trends were particularly marked in the former DET schools and most prevalent in rural areas.

This undermining of women's authority in rural communities affects women and girl children in multiple ways, such as exclusion from some learning areas, and poor performance in senior grades.³⁵ Perry's analysis of performance in the School Certificate Examination illustrated that girls' performance at school is better than boys except amongst African girls. Further analysis is required to assess whether performance levels are lower in rural or in urban areas.

Sexual abuse is widespread across schools, and school safety is a continuing problem. Even though this is widespread across South African schools, affecting all social and economic strata, abuse and exploitation in rural areas is often hidden because of silences concerning traditional practices and the dominance of patriarchal authority.

Recommendation 42 : Engage communities in discussions on statutory requirements with respect to the constitution of SGBs, examining whether they are regarded as legitimate agents within communities, with discussion covering also the role of women and girl learners in SGBs.

Recommendation 43 : Ensure DEFs include both SGBs and local government officials to prepare action plans (some within the scope of the IDPs) to provide schools with facilities and services, taking note of gender issues and key priority areas, notably safety and security.

Sub theme: Communication strategies

Recommendation 44 : Utilise a multi-media approach including radio and ICT to improve communication between the different tiers of management and community organisations.

Recommendation 45 : Establish cooperative governance of relevant programmes including IDPs at local levels by establishing the guidelines for a DEF that includes local government, traditional leadership, organs of civil society, district offices and SGBs.

Subtheme: Capacity development

Current status and challenges

In not one submission or interview were positive comments made about the way in which training is taking place. There is a lack of coordination between the training offered by various agencies and government, and the cascade model is carried out with less and less training as one moves down to institutional levels. Submissions indicated many difficulties in adopting a cascade model for capacity development, particularly in the more remote schools.³⁶ An example of one underlying tension can be seen in the question: Do the current goals of training in financial management make sense in impoverished communities? Should support rather be directed towards various forms of production (food gardens; secondary agricultural production; service industries, etc)?

Various strategies can be considered:

- Mobilisation and training associated with relevant projects such as environmental projects;

³⁵ Perry, H. 2003. Female performance in the Senior Certificate Examination: Excellence hiding behind the averages. Edusource Data News No.39/May 2003.

³⁶ A teacher in a Kenyan project observed that the problem with the cascade model was that: "The water doesn't reach those at the bottom of the cascade; and if it does, the water is dirty". (Cited in Barasa, F.S., Harley, K., Masakari, W. (2002) Evaluation of the Kenyan Strengthening of Primary Education (SPRED III) Project : Second Annual Review (May/June 2002).

- Mentors at district levels;
- Coordination of training amongst schools in a district with details of content and process being decided locally. (This would entail a district being awarded some sort of training budget and a list of available trainers/training organisations.)

Recommendation 46 : Strengthen delivery at district levels through a multifaceted human resource development programme as well as ensuring offices have requisite resources to engage with all schools under its jurisdiction

Box 8 Lessons Learnt: HR development: Imbewu Programme (Eastern Cape)

1. Human Resource Development is at the centre of many developmental efforts and may form the core of any transformation activity.
2. A project of this sort is affected by policy changes and by changes in organisational arrangements. New governmental policy related to human resource development, for instance, cannot be ignored whether or not it fits into the project brief. The key demands on the department must sometimes dictate the flow of project events if the project must be fully integrated into the Department.
3. The use of full time departmental counterparts in a project is a brilliant idea. But in the future, these counterparts must be fully prepared. They must be trained, given specific responsibilities and properly mentored and coached along the way. A supervisory structure within the department must also be established with full details and expectations and reporting responsibilities.
4. Not all programmes could be fully integrated into the department at the same time, and at the same rate and in the same manner. The capacity in the department, human and structurally differs greatly. In some cases, the dependant may not be ready to integrate.
5. Integration of programmes into the department is a process in which the department and the project must make commitments. The department must establish the structure and must allocate personnel so that programmes could be accommodated within its routine responsibilities.
6. People must be trained along the way to manage the programmes, so that in the end, there will be a readiness to implement.

Theme 5 : Curriculum reform

Current status and challenges

The following challenges with respect to curriculum issues are features of South African schooling generally. However, although not unique to rural education and farm schools, they are all experienced most acutely in the rural context.

The importance of curriculum

Although the curriculum is the lifeblood of schooling, it is seldom accorded priority status. In fact, the C2005 Review³⁷ found it necessary to re-assert the centrality of curriculum to the education system.

If public submissions to the MCRE are any indication, curriculum issues are even further on the margins of thinking about rural education compared to 'mainstream' education. Submissions placed much more emphasis on issues of equity, access and human rights than on curriculum, learning and teaching. The single most powerful recommendation to emerge from the submissions was the need to improve and equalise facilities and resources. With rural schools being deficient on every indicator of material provision — e.g. physical space and amenities such as electricity and running water, libraries, textbooks, the safety of learners — it appears as if curriculum issues are almost completely overshadowed by the more immediate and pressing need for resources to enable effective teaching and learning to take place.³⁸

C2005 implementation difficulties

A large body of research indicates that the introduction of C2005 in all schools is proving difficult. In addition to the need for appropriate resources for its introduction, it requires substantial changes in the mindset of educators and school managers. These difficulties are exacerbated in rural schools owing to the poor resource base at many schools, as well as their marginalisation and isolation. Indeed, a recent review of the literature found extensive evidence indicating that the gap between historically advantaged and disadvantaged schools has widened.³⁹ A foremost authority in the curriculum field concludes that: "Despite the best will and policies in the world, an education system has unintentionally emerged that privileges a deracialised middle class". Furthermore, in the absence of performance data that should be provided by comprehensive systemic assessment, inequities and disadvantages will "remain invisible".⁴⁰

If development and equity are to be achieved in rural settings, it is imperative that C2005 is addressed in a way that enhances the quality of teaching and learning. Curriculum measures need to be supported by Departmental endeavour and teacher development (areas in which rural schools are yet again poorly served, see Theme 6).

School curriculum and lifelong learning

There is a particular need to conceptualise the school curriculum within lifelong learning. Studies such as the Nelson Mandela Foundation research⁴¹ have pointed to the need for further investigation into the possible elaboration of the curriculum of rural schools in such a way that lifelong learning is made available to all community members, and, in particular, those most disadvantaged by apartheid — rural women.

Local knowledges

An assessment is needed of the ways in which learning programmes might appropriately include local knowledges in a way that achieves alignment with other information systems, including agricultural production and the variety of service industries that surround it in conjunction with the policies and programmes of the Departments of Labour and Agriculture.

Information communication technologies

Various international and South African programmes have illustrated that communication technologies such as telephone, computers and Internet, television and radio can effectively reduce the effects of

³⁷ Department of Education . 2000. A South African Curriculum for the Twenty-First Century. Report of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005. Pretoria: DE.

³⁸ One expression of this kind of view was captured in the words of university researchers doing development work in a rural area: "... the problem of scholastic underachievement in South Africa is by no means linearly a problem of scholastic underachievement. ... when children live in poor conditions and more critical issues. In most schools teaching facilities are sorely lacking. We wonder how it is possible to facilitate achievement. ... when children live in poor conditions often without even a toilet, a meal, running water or a bar of soap. In these circumstances, the initial aim of our research in Limpopo soon paled into insignificance (JG Maree and JM Molepo, Pretoria University).

³⁹ Hartley, K and Wedekind, V. 2004. Political change, curriculum change, and social formation, 1990 - 2002. In L. Chisholm (Ed.) Changing class: Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa. (Cape Town: HSRC Press).

remoteness and isolation. For example:

The Multi-media Rural Initiative is presented as a sophisticated and high tech intervention that is at the same time appropriate for the rural contexts for which it was designed: 'This promising project has already reached into rural areas, combining professional development with support for clusters of schools and communities around them. The project is also linked to poverty alleviation and serves as a vehicle for other projects such as 'Combating HIV/ AIDS'.⁴³

The challenge is to create an environment that allows Information Communication Technologies to take root in communities that have not yet had opportunities to engage in such technologies.

Medium of instruction

"Most schools in rural areas are implementing language policies that reflect 'dominant' cultures and social groups. For example, most of these schools have English as a language of teaching and learning".

For many learners in rural areas, English is a foreign language heard only at school. For most of their educators too, English is a second language. The use of English as a medium of instruction is often yet a further barrier to learning for rural children. Changes to existing language policy may be necessary with more use of mother-tongue instruction in the foundation grades and innovative approaches to switching to English as medium of instruction (such as more strategic uses of code-switching) as the learner progresses.

Complicating the issue of medium of instruction is the fact that it brings two important principles into potential tension with each other. On the one hand, mother tongue instruction has pedagogical advantages. On the other, non-English speaking parents exercising their democratic rights appear to opt for English as medium of instruction. "English still shapes conceptions of what is desired".⁴⁴ The difficulty of resolving this tension was evident in several of the public submissions on rural education. One school principal, for example, noted that: "It is a bad system that does not make mother-tongue instruction the norm in public schools ... Many of our parents are unable to communicate in English yet demand that their children are taught from Grade 0 to Grade 1 in English." One provincial authority reports that:

"We try to implement mother-tongue instruction so that learners can learn and be taught in Mother-tongue eg. Isi-Xhosa. We tried it at Voorwaarts near Riversdale where 2 teachers were provided, but parents took away their kids to an Afrikaans-medium school after 2 years of implementation."

Sub theme: Facilitating the implementation of C2005

Recommendation 47: Introduce a coordinated programme of teacher development that includes on-site school support and an adequate supply of LSMs.(see also Theme 6).

Recommendation 48: Ensure district offices and officials have the capacity to support C2005 at schools, either to individual schools or at CLCs/nodal schools (see also Theme 4).

Sub theme: Raising community awareness of the vision of C2005, and of possibilities for community involvement

Recommendation 49 : Raise the awareness of the broader rural school community regarding different curriculum options (particularly language of learning options), and of possible community involvement in enacting the curriculum.

Box 9 Community involvement in enacting the curriculum

"... there are in fact many resources for OBE and the RNCS in each community. What is needed, therefore, is a means to find ways of making these resources available to the schools so that the teachers can use them to promote learning within the framework of RNCS."

What is meant here by resources? In each village and community there are people with useful knowledge and skills. There are

40 Chisholm, L.2004, Introduction. In L. Chisholm (Ed.) Changing class: Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

41 Muller J. 2004, Assessment, qualifications and National Qualifications Framework in South Africa In L. Chisholm (ed.) Changing class: Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

42 Nelson Mandela Foundation. Ibid.

43 Overview and Analysis of Submissions made to the Ministerial Committee of Rural Education, November, 2004. Appendix D.

44 Mda, T. 2004, Multilingualism and education. In L.Chisholm (Ed.), Changing class: Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

active and retired professionals, there are community historians, there are young people with post-matric qualifications, there are poets and writers and dancers and musicians, there are healers, there are people with many different kinds of experience, there are business people and so on. There are also multiple kinds of object, book, cultural artefact, picture, family heirloom and other examples of interest and value that might be used for learning; ... a Community Education Forum should be established to be a platform for engagement by the community in the education and schooling of its children.

Sub theme: Meeting diverse needs: An integrated and inclusive programme of agricultural education utilising indigenous knowledges where appropriate

Current status and challenges

Provinces differ with respect to the contribution of agriculture to their GDP and to the proportion of rural populations engaging in subsistence farming as an essential element of their household economy. However, subsistence farming of various types is practised by almost all families in rural areas.

Agricultural education was an unpopular option during apartheid times. Nevertheless, in close conjunction with environmental issues, it is an important confluence of community interests and priorities.⁴⁵ The proposed approach is an integrated one, allowing for synergy between community subsistence farming, food gardens for school feeding, and income-generating initiatives, and agricultural science as a learning area. If taught within the spirit of C2005, Agricultural Science would not be a limited, context-specific learning area locking learners into agricultural contexts: in developing scientific principles, analysing situations and problem solving, learners would be acquiring transferable skills. Agricultural education is also a particularly fruitful area for contributing to development through the utilisation of indigenous knowledge. An indication of the value of such knowledge - as well as the return to the communities where it originates - is reflected in box below.

Box 10 Indigenous knowledge in medicine⁴⁶

... the annual world market for medicines derived from medicinal plants discovered from indigenous peoples amounted to US\$ 43 billion in 1985;

... of the 119 drugs developed from higher plants and on the world market today, it is estimated that 74 % were discovered from a pool of traditional herbal medicines (Laird 1994: 145-149);

... at the beginning of the 1990s, world wide sales of pharmaceuticals amounted to more than US\$130,000 billion annually;

... plant derived prescription drugs in the US originate from 40 species of which 20 are from the tropics. The 20 species from the tropics generate about US\$4billion for the economy of the U.S.A.;

... the only payments to the communities (less than 0.001% of the profits) were for the manual labour involved.

Indigenous knowledges are vulnerable to marginalisation if unsupported by appropriate assessment practices. Throughout all systems of education there are instances of the cultural specificity of 'knowledge' legitimated and sustained in assessment practices. The box below illustrates this phenomenon with respect to Namibia.

Box 11 Cultural hegemony in assessment⁴⁷

This confluence between a cultural bias, the obfuscation of learner's life choices and actual and concrete violation of human rights is best captured in an evaluation report conducted for the Namibian Ministry of Education and Culture in 1994. The study monitored the content of the junior secondary certificate examination in 1993 for cultural bias. The result was disgraceful to say the least. It showed that the examination in the home science subject had a clear cultural bias towards urban living and European food. All the illustrations were of Europeans or European home environments; all the recipes were of European food. There was nothing in the examination paper indicating that the actual examination was from Namibia, let alone Africa.

When it came to the examination paper in accounting it drew on a variety of cultural settings but nearly all persons mentioned were males. When it came to the examination paper in art it was found that only 16% of the 100 marks could be earned on anything to do with Namibia. Eighty four percent (84%) of the marks were devoted to European art history. Likewise the examination paper in music was dreadful in cultural bias. Of 100 marks, 74 could be gained on specifically European music. In a continent where music

45 Environmental sustainability (which means to create more sustainable alternatives to resource depletion and degradation) ought ... to be an important dimension of education in rural areas." (Rhodes University Environmental Education and Sustainability Unit).

46 From: Odora Hoppers C A., November 2004. Researching Education in Rural Communities Towards a New Social and Ethical Contract. Paper prepared for the CEPD.

47 From Odora Hoppers, November 2004.

permeates the tissue and fabric of existence only 10 marks out of 100 focused on specifically African music and 16 on culturally neutral music theory. Only male composers were referred to. The history paper was, however, praised for promoting awareness of Namibian and African history but criticized for making women and their contribution to history invisible. The monitoring paper concludes:

... with only a token to Namibian or African art, this examination continues the cultural disinheritance of Namibia, strongly criticized in Ministry documents, and counter to Ministry policy. The [examination] paper as a whole is also devoid of gender awareness.

The monitoring of exams in Namibia goes on and a small improvement in the examination papers set in the year 1995 has been detected.

Recommendation 50 : Engage in discussions at DEF levels (see Theme 4) regarding the agricultural practices of communities and how these can be supported by district education offices.

Recommendation 51 : Engage the broader school community in discussions regarding how agriculture and other related service industries can support the local economy and perhaps reduce the drift to urban areas by encouraging the community to adopt a mindset that allows them to realise the potential of their own areas for development.

Recommendation 52 : Collaboration between Department of Agriculture, the DOE and PEDS regarding strengthening agricultural output in rural communities specifically relating to the forms of education required to build understanding of the relationships between indigenous and other forms of production.

Sub theme: NGO-driven curriculum reform

Current status and challenges

NGOs have been heavily involved in a wide range of education initiatives, resulting in perceptions such as:

"NGOs are development-oriented and are better equipped to reach the poor, especially in rural areas that are not served by the public sector. Members of NGOs are frequently members of the population that the NGO is serving, consequently they identify more easily with the needs of the target group."

How can the experiences/lessons learnt/best practices of NGOs working with educators be optimised?

Recommendation 53 : Promote dialogue between NGO and government-funded projects on C2005 to ensure professional development programmes work in tangent with each other to avoid confusion and to optimise the benefits of all programmes. (Measures to follow through this recommendation would need to be mindful of perceptions that equity is compromised by targeted initiatives.)⁴⁸

NGO models of such curriculum support appear in the boxes below:

Box 12 MIET: IKhwezi Project

In this project there is support for curriculum integrated into a broad development thrust in the community.

The Multi Media Rural Initiative (MMRI) is a partnership project between the Royal Netherlands Embassy, KZNDOE, the MultiChoice Africa Foundation and the Media in Education Trust. It made significant progress towards developing 15 deep-rural RAIN distribution points and clusters. Establishment of school clusters around nodal points:

- Development of District Development Teams (DDT).
- Providing Information Technology (IT) Training.
- Developing Skills in educators, principals, School Governing Body members, and district managers.
- Training for school communities in life skills, with a focus on HIV/AIDS.
- Capacity Building through Training and Onsite Support

These centres have many potential functions such as: provide information storage; offer technology enhanced learning; provide teaching support material; act as ICT centres; provide facilities for workshops, meeting venues and a computer training.

⁴⁸ One commentator pointed out

"...Many government interventions have been directed to the so called 'nodal areas' resulting in these areas being bombarded with projects whereas nothing happens in other areas that are as needy". All rural areas need to be given the same prioritisation. Government structures have to recognise the unique/ special needs of rural schools and devote additional resources to rural schools"

Box 13 Imbewu, Eastern Cape

Imbewu is a Departmental Project, driven and owned by the DOE and funded by DfID.

It sees Practice Based Inquiry as crucial in implementing a curriculum in a collaborative and reflective way, with educators involved in constructing their own understanding of national documents and evaluating its appropriateness to their contexts. It also sees the work of Curriculum arising from a theory that includes Design, Implementation and Evaluation. It regards Curriculum Development and Implementation as part of an integrated thrust by the DOE. It rests its theory on a belief that Curriculum Development is part of a larger process of Transformation in Schools, one that depends on the concept of Whole School Development to ensure that all elements of school and community are involved. It sees the ownership by parents and community as essential if effective curriculum implementation is to take place. Finally, it recognises that implementation will only be effective in a model that provides for ongoing in-school Professional Development.

Outcomes: Capacity building through involvement in curriculum processes such as simplification of educator support materials, participation in a DFID Materials Development Conference, a provincial curriculum evaluation of Grades 1 and 2 educators and the merging of ideas and concepts at a Curriculum Directorate Strategic Planning Conference in 1999. An increase of trained facilitators at provincial, regional and more importantly district levels.

Lessons learnt: It is essential to see curriculum implementation as part of a larger process of Whole School Development. It is also now seen that curriculum implementation in isolated learning areas cannot take place effectively until a process of School and Community Transformation has been initiated.

- Although it was not easy to establish and sustain the work of interdirectorate working groups, the integration of, especially, Curriculum Development and Teacher Development is crucial in a period of intense curriculum change
- The focus of facilitation training should be at district level to ensure effective school based INSET and district teams were essential for the implementation of the project's training programme.

Sub theme: Sports and culture

Levelling the playing fields with respect to sports, recreation and cultural activities requires a massive introduction of resources and training. This calls for the support of national and provincial bodies such as the Sports Council; Department of Arts and Culture; National Youth Council, and provincial departments. However, the thrust of capacity building should target youths in ways that build their skills in administering sports and cultural events.

There is also evidence that School Management Teams require orientation regarding the importance of sports and culture:

"Most of the School Management Teams (SMTs) do not have a conceptual understanding of the need to invest in the development of the learner on activities outside their classroom learning. ... It has not been easy to get full cooperation from SMTs as we try to lobby for sports development. ... Most SMTs have seen any other activity than learning subjects as being playful and a waste of time. This has led to a number of schools missing out on very empowering programmes."

Box 14 Participation in sport as a fundamental right

...we would like to point out that the UNESCO Charter of Physical Education and Sport (1978) recognised then and still advocates today that physical education and sport, within the education system, is a fundamental human right. Further, in 1999 South Africa signed a resolution at the All Africa Games held in Johannesburg, which said that: "physical education is a fundamental human right and that society has a collective responsibility to ensure that the quantity and quality of physical education is adequate for all children and youth on this continent (Teacher union)."

Recommendation 54 : Enlist the support of various extra-curriculum organisations and other departments (e.g. Sports Council; DAC; National Youth Council; Catalyst Youth Development Society) to train unemployed members of the community to take charge of extra-curriculum programmes, especially in sport and recreation.

Schools and sporting facilities (to include a range of sporting codes) ought to be provided for in the rural areas, and should be equipped to give professional training and first aid for injuries.

Joint use of sporting facilities between the local communities and schools should be encouraged to ease problems of care and maintenance. Youth should be given more responsibilities to manage the sports and recreation facilities in collaboration with experienced adults/educators.

Theme 6: Educators

Current status and challenges

The legacy of under- and unqualified educators, few having competencies in key learning areas, working in poorly equipped schools, continues to undermine the teaching environment and conditions of service of educators in rural schools. Educators and communities alike are demoralized, and tensions between them destabilize attempts to reform education and training programmes.

Challenges include the need to provide pre- and in-service education competencies that are adapted to rural contexts while improving the conditions of service and living conditions at schools.

The teaching profession in rural areas is characterised by a critical shortage of qualified educators, particularly in the physical sciences and mathematics. Morale is low because of poor conditions of service and the dire teaching environment in many schools. Many educators are considered 'migrants' as they travel to schools from towns, never feeling a part of the community in which they teach. Professional development programmes may be inaccessible due to the long distances educators must travel to attend.

The redeployment of educators to rural schools has in the main not succeeded and it is likely that in the near future there will be a critical shortage of educators, particularly in key learning areas.

It appears that essential steps required to solve the inadequate supply of qualified educators in rural areas are: firstly, to recruit local members of communities to the teaching profession; secondly, to retain them by ensuring their well-being through the provision of acceptable conditions of service, and finally to ensure they engage in fruitful professional development programmes.

Women educators, especially those on remote schools and on farms, are liable to be exploited and face unnecessary risks due to lack of security while travelling to school and when at school.

Many educators living far from schools tend to arrive late at school on Mondays, and leave early on Fridays. It has been suggested that the state should provide accommodation at schools for educators, but this will not solve the problem of commuting home for weekends. School vandalism is rife, so promoting community ownership of schools appears to be the only answer to the question of how schools will be protected during vacations and over weekends.

Key issues arising from present conditions are: teacher recruitment; conditions of service; and professional development, including classroom support.

Box 15 A sample of educators' comments

"Most of our educators are from urban areas. They've been trained as educators in order to earn a living as some are bread-winners. [Regarding] the accommodation and commuting of educators:

- some stay in educator cottages;
- some commute to the neighbouring towns to and fro - - sometimes a distance exceeding 100km's single trip;
- others are local children of soil. "

"Educators teaching and residing in TA's are not accessing housing subsidies. Banks are reluctant to approve their home loans because the Tribal Authority owns the land."

"Most schools in rural areas have low enrolments thus the post provisioning model should be changed in order to cater for such schools. This should only be done in situations where schools cannot be merged and this will eliminate the problem of multi-grade teaching."

"A special allowance should be given to educators teaching and intending to teach in rural schools. This will assist in attracting more competent educators but also to retain such quality person-power."

Sub theme: Recruitment

The growing gap between the demand for, and the provision of, new educators will exacerbate the current problem of recruiting new educators for service in rural areas.

Noting that redeployment procedures in the past have resulted in the marginalisation of newly-employed educators, consideration should be given to:

- Pre-service courses to cover teaching in rural contexts
- Bursaries to local youths with the proviso that they will return to their communities once they have graduated (ETDP SETA learnerships and/or NSFAS). This calls for innovation and adequate resourcing, as is evident in the case below.

Limpopo Province has an oversupply of trained, unemployed educators who require retraining in learning areas where there is a scarce supply of educators.

Box 16 An innovative strategy to attract and support black student educators from rural and disadvantaged backgrounds

Towards the end of 2002 the Faculty [of Education, Pretoria] began to articulate a strategy that would address the problems outlined above [diversifying the institution by ensuring that increasing numbers of black South Africans access and benefit from professional programmes]. The Faculty set out to recruit 100 of the brightest young minds in the Limpopo Province to enter the University of Pretoria as first time student teachers in 2003. ... The faculty implemented a vigorous selection process which targeted learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. ... 58 students were subsequently enrolled as first-year students... These 58 students were eager to learn and excited about the prospect of becoming teachers. ... the Faculty developed a three-way approach to learning, which ensured the success of the programme. ... Firstly, the students followed a rigorous four-year teacher education programme with at least 40% of their time spent working under the mentorship of the top teachers in science, mathematics and the humanities. ... Secondly, the 58 students were involved in a programme of development support ... Thirdly, each of the 58 students was assigned a personal mentor who met the students at least once a week to give him/ her general support, guidance and encouragement.

This innovative package bore fruit, as demonstrated in the outstanding performance of the Limpopo students at the end of 2003, despite the obvious disadvantages they had faced (Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria).

Recommendation 55: Assess the supply of educators in rural areas, considering gender equity and the current shortage of adequately trained educators in key learning areas and how recruitment and retraining unemployed educators can alleviate existing and potential shortages.

Recommendation 56: Engage in a recruitment drive amongst rural communities with new entrants obtaining bursaries.

Recommendation 57: Reconsider an induction year in rural areas. (See Recommendation 59).

Strategies to attract new and experienced educators to rural schools calls for ways of addressing the low morale of all educators, but particularly those in rural areas. This implies reconsideration of conditions of service for educators in rural areas.

Sub theme: Conditions of service

Provincial and public submissions on rural education highlight the centrality of conditions of service to teacher recruitment and retention.

Conditions of service were widely referred to in both provincial and public submissions. One province reported that:

"Poor services discourage better-qualified educators from teaching in rural areas. Previously educators were not part of the homeowners' scheme. Eventually when they were put on board, educators in the rural schools were still excluded. ... This scenario leads to a situation where the educators prefer to travel to work than to stay in the rural areas. Late coming, therefore, becomes the order of the day. Having to use their own vehicles on bad roads compounds the problem, as does lack of access to facilities such as medicine and health. ... Employment in rural areas becomes the last resort while the educator is looking for greener pastures."

Other views included the following:

"There are not enough teachers and principals who have the capacity, support and/or ability to run a school or teach. ... Extra pay is needed to attract good teachers" (School Principal).

"Teachers employed by the State have to be accommodated within reasonable distance of the school. Clearly, in such cases, teachers would not be entirely independent and free to follow the lifestyle of their choice, for example, there may be restrictions regarding accommodation for family members." (School Educator).

"Conditions of service, incentives for teachers in rural areas etc need to be reviewed in order to make teaching in rural and farm schools more attractive to teachers ... It is an informed SADTU assertion that the majority of qualified, but unemployed teachers have reached such a stage of desperation that they would be more than prepared to be re-trained in gateway subjects and be deployed in rural areas." (Teacher Union).

Although various initiatives have been proposed by the DoE and unions to address conditions of service, there is, as yet, no consensus on possible measures other than to provide accommodation and travel and improve school infrastructure. Housing subsidy is now part of educators' salary package, thus equalising the benefit across all locations (although educators in rural areas may still have to run two homes).

Recommendation 58 : Negotiate with major stakeholders the various options open to the profession to attract experienced educators to work in rural areas, signing short- or long- term contracts.

Recommendation 59 : An induction process should be implemented for newly qualified educators. In rural areas this should introduce educators to the lifestyle in villages by involving various role players in this process, including chiefs, principals and district offices to help induct and support new educators.

Recommendation 60 : Prepare a programme that addresses priorities for improving conditions of service, including transport, accommodation and access to essential facilities and services with DEF/CEF and major stakeholders. (This is linked to Theme 2.)

Sub theme: Professional development

Current status and challenges

What became popularly known as 'OBE training' has been heavily criticized in the literature.⁴⁹ Some criticism was evident in the public submissions too:

"There is also a lack of INSET - there are plenty of policies around and many workshops are conducted, but when it comes to dissemination at school level there is a serious breakdown."

"Educators require intensive training on OBE teaching methodologies Unsupported OBE guides and materials are insufficient for educators, whence there is a strong need to train educators in the planning, design and development of these materials."

"Educator development requires building professionalism through collective reflection on practice and through the development of support structures at the workplace. Education managers, school managers, SGBs and trainers need to support educators in their efforts to provide quality teaching and learning. Such support is however lacking or insufficient in the Limpopo Province."

49 Jansen, J. 1999 Setting the scene: historiographies of curriculum policy in South Africa. In J. Jansen and P. Christie (Eds), *Changing curriculum: studies on outcomes-based education in South Africa*. Kenwyn: Juta.

A recent international handbook on continuing professional development (CPD) highlights its complexity: there are simply no universally accepted formulas or 'recipes' to be drawn from the literature.⁵⁰ However, two broad approaches are evident in practice. These are (a) personal teacher growth, and (b) teacher 'defect'. In the developing world, CPD is generally rooted in the personal teacher growth model, recognizing that needs may be distinctly different from those of teachers in other phases, and in different contexts and times. In Africa, there has been a tendency for CPD to take the form of a political exercise to align the curriculum to particular political movements. In contrast with the 'growth' model, this is a 'defect' approach to teacher development in that it sees the teacher as being inefficient and obsolete, having had limited training, and not being 'up to date'.⁵¹ Given the political context in which C2005 was conceived and in which it still functions, together with research arguing that policy has led to teacher displacement⁵², it could be argued that CPD in South Africa has been rooted in 'teacher defect' assumptions and principles. If this judgement is correct, then it is clearly an inappropriate model if rurality is not to be caste in purely deficit terms, and if curriculum development is to follow the principle that rural communities have their own unique assets on which to build.

"The core of democratic professionalism is an emphasis on collaborative, cooperative action between teachers and other educational stakeholders."⁵³ Consistent with this philosophy, school-based study circles and networks are an important feature of reforms in Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala and Paraguay and Singapore. The constituents for such a model certainly exist in South Africa. The "Overview and Analysis" of public submissions notes that the clustering of schools for development and support has become a standard feature of most funded projects. Submissions were consistently positive regarding the benefits of clustering, with some suggesting that this should become the 'national approach', supported by PEDs. (Difficulties with clustering rural schools are noted above.)

Because a fundamental principle of rural education is that it should be community based, and that communities should be involved in curriculum issues it follows that aspects of professional development should also involve the community. A successful example of such extended professional development and involvement is reflected in the following report of a project that operated in Kenya.

Box 17 An example of professional development involving the community: The Strengthening of Primary Education (SPRED III) Project in Kenya

Rising costs of primary education to parents, and the resulting increase in the number of children failing to access or remain in schooling, led to the development of the DFID funded SPRED III programme that commenced in 2000. The project had two thrusts, intended as complementary:

- Textbooks and learning materials were provided to poor children in selected districts in order to involve parents in the selection of textbooks, and to increase access to primary education by reducing costs, and
- To improve the quality of teaching, and thereby addressing the issue of retention, a distance-learning, School-based Teacher Development programme was developed.

SPRED III had notable by products or unintended consequences. ... In schools, notable improvement was evident in teacher-parent and teacher-pupil relationships because of abandonment of the practice of pupils being 'chased away' from school when they did not have the required textbooks. Significant other gains were achieved in local empowerment. In a most innovative measure, schools were allocated funds following the training of head teachers in financial management. After making their selections, local school Textbook Selection Committees on which parents served negotiated the best possible deals with book suppliers. Enrolment improved, with increases of between 2 and 23% within the first year of schools receiving the textbooks. At the same time, an average increase of 3%, was evident in pupil attendance.⁵⁴

While aspects of professional development could be generic, there needs to be sensitivity to specific features that characterise small rural schools. Multigrade teaching is a fact of life in such schools. "This requires special skills and educators need to receive training on how to deal effectively with large 'multigrade' classes' (Teacher Union). Nevertheless, such features of schooling have the potential to be turned to advantage, as is evident in comments offered in public submissions.

Box 18 Positive aspects of multigrade classes

"The Multigrade Rural Schools Intervention of the Western Cape Education Department has been running since 2001. A considerable amount of experience (dominant practices - different from those in urban areas) and data have been built up ... As noted in this document, properly supported, it has the potential to encourage self directed learning and learner activity methods."

50 Day, C. and Sachs, J. (Eds). 2004. International handbook on the continuing professional development of teachers. Maidenhead: Open University Press/ McGraw-Hill Education.

51 Christie, P., Harley, K., and Penny, A. 2004. Case studies from Sub-Saharan Africa. In C. Day and J. Sachs (Eds), International handbook on the continuing professional development of teachers. Maidenhead: Open University Press/ McGraw-Hill Education.

52 Jansen, J. 2001. Image-ing teachers: Policy images and teacher identity in South African classrooms. South African Journal of Education, 21 (4).

53 Day, C. and Sachs, J. 2004. Professionalism, performativity and empowerment: discourses in the politics, policies and purpose of continuing professional development. In C. Day and J. Sachs (Eds), International handbook on the continuing professional development of teachers. Maidenhead: Open University Press/ McGraw-Hill Education.

Similarly, a report on the Kgatelelope project cites a teacher reporting that :
 "[After workshops] ... when we cluster with project multigrade classes, we really know what to do, even though it takes time ... I feel very positive ... "

Monitoring and research are particularly important with respect to continuing professional development and multigrade classes: "A detailed research [study] should be conducted to study what is happening in multigrade classrooms so that best experiences can be shared amongst practitioners."

Recommendation 61 : Within a teacher 'growth' and network or 'cluster' model of continuing professional development, consider flexible arrangements to improve pedagogy in rural areas through various means such as mentors, itinerant curriculum advisers in key learning areas, capacity development at nodal areas, and short-term courses for learners at nodal venues. Parents should be involved where appropriate.

Recommendation 62 : Implement a study that assesses the impact of and lessons learnt from South African and international experiences of distance education programmes operating in rural areas to assess the medium and long-term impact of distance modes of delivery on curriculum reform in rural areas and how these can go to scale.

Recommendation 63 : Monitor appointments to ensure that more women are represented at senior levels of the profession in rural schools and in management positions at district offices responsible for rural schools.

Theme 7: Farm schools

Current status and challenges

A central dilemma facing schools on farms, or indeed many of the public schools on private land, can be gleaned from the following submission to the MCRE:

"A school in the Waterberg area has had no clean water for years. The department took measurements ... with the promise of bringing a new water pump early this year. There has been no progress to date ... How do we deal with this school and its learners?"

In post-apartheid SA, why is the quality of education at schools on commercial farms patently inferior to other schools and why is it so difficult to improve delivery? The following brief historical overview attempts to answer these questions in order to substantiate recommendations that point to the need to end the category, 'Public Schools On Private Land' through closures, mergers or, in the final analysis, expropriation. Clearly this cannot take place in the short term as it is a considerable undertaking requiring clear mandates and guidelines and to establish the management and administrative machinery required for it to succeed. In addition, the process must be supported by targeted funding to ensure that no learner is denied access to school through this process.

A dual management system for schools on private land, 1955-1994

Since the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act No. 47 of 1953, which defined the status of public schools on private land, education delivery to schools on white-owned farms has been bound in complex and often contentious ways with agricultural production. Farm schools, which were partly subsidized by government and located on commercial farms, were classified as "state-aided" schools because property owners subsidised schooling through the provision of buildings and some facilities and services although the Bantu Education Department (renamed the Department of Education and Training) was directly responsible for these schools. However, farmers controlled many aspects of school management and governance. As property owners they had the power to open and close schools, and decide which learners should be allowed to attend the school and what grade levels the school could offer⁵⁵. They also had the final say on the selection of educators.

Children from neighbouring farms could attend the school with the permission of the farm owner on whose land the school was located. Where provision was sparse, children had to walk long distances to school. Under a contract with the government, the farm owner received a 50 percent subsidy for building the school and maintaining services at the school. Despite increases in subsidies to property owners, by 1994 schools remained in a parlous state. (By 1994, the state subsidy covered all building costs and 50 percent of the maintenance costs. In return, the farm owner had to enter into a contractual agreement with the provincial department of education to keep the school open for twenty years. However, this agreement could not be enforced, particularly if farms were sold as the agreement was not binding on a new owner.)⁵⁶

By 1994 provision of education to farms was somewhat uneven with some schools having excellent facilities, provided by farmers and other property owners such as the churches and private companies, but others, and unfortunately these were in the majority, remained poorly subsidised by the state and badly serviced by property owners and the state.

State-aided schools included all public schools on private land, that is, schools on church land, on mines or in hospitals. It has become clear to the MCRE that many of these, not only those on farms, raise critical management and governance challenges and policies regulating the management and governance of all public schools on private land should be appraised at this juncture.

⁵⁵ It was only after 1980 that farm schools were given permission to offer grades beyond grade 4.

⁵⁶ Department of Education, Report of the Committee to Review the Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools, August 31, 1995, p. 20, para 3.19.

⁵⁷ Hurran Rights Watch (2004), Forgotten schools: right to basic education for children on farms in South Africa, May 2004 Vol. 16, No. 7 (A). Wilson S (2002), Transforming Farm Schools Issue Paper 3, Education Rights Project, Centre For Applied Legal Studies & Education Policy Unit, University Of The Witwatersrand, Zafar S (2004), Farm

Schools: Poison Or Remedy? A Review of A Human Rights Watch Report, Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa, Volume 11 Number 3.

⁵⁸ The report specifies harassment and prohibiting access to schools or compelling learners to make lengthy detours to commute to school. The study also recorded the deliberate closure of some schools arising from labour disputes and the non-payment of rent by provincial departments.

⁵⁹ Nasson, B. (1988), Farm schooling for Black South Africans, Perspectives in Education, 10, 13-42.

Social and economic relations embedding farm schools

Children on farms are profoundly affected by the plight of their parents and circumstances in commercial agriculture generally.⁵⁷ While schools remain on private land their development tends to be subordinated to the interests of the owner of the land — the farmers, the church, mine or hospital management. Various studies, and most recently that of the Human Rights Watch, specify how farm schools are unable to fulfill their democratic mandate.⁵⁸

It is generally accepted that farm schools were established to prevent migration to the cities and stabilize labour and social relations on farms: farmers could expect workers to remain on the farm if there were a school for their children.⁵⁹ As there were no laws preventing child labour in SA, employers could employ all children, even those at school. The promulgation of the Education Laws (Education and Training) Amendment Act of 1988 prevented children from being withdrawn from school to work.⁶⁰ However child labour was not regulated and children on farms (as were children in other walks of life) were subjected to work that could compromise their health and general well-being.

Post-1994 legislation regulating land and labour raised the fears and uncertainty of farmers, who were already operating in a difficult economic climate due to diminishing state subsidies and credit in the 1980s, as well as lengthy periods of drought in the early 1990s. Many reports indicate that on a number of farms, social relations between farmers and workers are poor and there are too many instances of violent and abusive actions between workers and farmers.⁶¹

There has been a substantial decline in the number of farming units and in the population of farm workers (permanent and seasonal) between 1988 and 1996 nationally. The number of full-time workers declined from 724 430 to 625 451 from 1988 to 1996 whilst the number of farms decreased from 62 428 to 60 938. Evictions have contributed to this decline.⁶² Job losses not only result in farm workers losing jobs but also results in many workers, largely women, being compelled into temporary work affecting their children's access to regular schooling.

These factors have contributed to a significant decrease in the number of learners at farm schools, as illustrated in Table 2. The PEDs have responded to this decrease by closing many small schools.

Table 2 : Farm Schools Learners by Province, 1996 and 2000 ⁶³

	1996	2000	% increase/decrease 1996-2000
Eastern Cape	50307	18333	-64
Free State	104268	56618	-46
Gauteng	25297	12576	-50
KwaZulu-Natal	192615	55304	-71
Limpopo	48294	24877	-48
Mpumalanga	93352	32847	-65
North West	16528	8321	-50
Northern Cape	61107	35503	-42
Western Cape	47264	11769	-75
Total	639032	256148	-60

Outcomes

By placing educational provision for learners on farms at the confluence of struggles over land and production, delivery has been severely constrained leaving a legacy of illiteracy amongst farm workers. The restrictions on the financing of education for Africans in rural areas of SA exacerbated the situation further, restraining the mobility of children educated on farms. Pro-poor redress policies set in place after 1994 have not been able to change the situation in any significant way.

60 Act No. 31 of 1988 (an amendment to the Education and Training Act No. 90 of 1979).

61 Human Rights Watch, *Ibid*; Wilson, S. *Ibid*; Gordon, A (2000), 'Providing quality education in schools on commercial farms. Address prepared for the National Department of Education for the conference: 'Sowing the seeds of learning': A conference on farm schools.

62 Statistics SA, (1998), 'The People of South Africa Population Census 1996, Report No. 1: 03-01-11', Pretoria: Statistics SA.

63 It is possible that poor data collection may contribute to the magnitude of this decrease. However, even though the size of the decrease may be in question, the trend is clear: the numbers of learners at farm schools has decreased substantially as learners are leaving farm schools and PEDs are closing many of the small schools. Sources: Schneider, J. A statistical overview of farm schools in SA, 2000'. Edusource Datanews, No. 45 October 2004.; Department of Education, 2000, 'School Register of Needs, Data Base, Gordon, A. Providing quality education in schools on commercial farms. Keynote address prepared for the National Department of Education for the conference: 'Sowing the seeds of learning': A conference on farm schools convened by the Directorate of Planning Systems, National Department of Education, 13 May, 2000.

Not only are farm schools amongst the poorest in the country, in physical infrastructure, the provision of facilities and services and teaching resources, but also retention rates are significantly lower at farm schools than at all other schools.⁶⁴

Census '96 suggests that as many as 41% of Africans engaged in the agriculture and hunting sub-sector throughout the country had no schooling whereas more than three-quarters (77%) of whites had obtained 'matric or higher' qualifications.⁶⁵ Access to education in the former homelands was somewhat better than on commercial farms during the apartheid era, leaving farm workers on commercial farms less educated than those working in various sectors of the former homelands.

By 1994, half of the African children living on white-owned commercial farms were not enrolled at school and few schools offered secondary-level education.⁶⁶ One cannot comment on more recent trends as data does not disaggregate measures of learning achievement of learners at farm schools from learners at other schools.

In conclusion, a central dilemma confounds the delivery of education at public schools on private land. The Constitution provides for both the basic right to education as well as the private property rights. The placement of farm schools on private land has meant that the interests of learners at schools on private land sometimes clash with those of property owners to the detriment of all — learners, educators, parents and employers. It is therefore essential that schooling is severed from political and labour dynamics on the farms.

The SASA attempted to address this situation by securing educational rights over the land. However, as the analysis that follows illustrates, these efforts have in the main failed and as a result plans to improve school facilities seldom materialise. On the one hand, education departments are loathe to introduce school improvement programmes as these may be at risk if schools are not fully owned by the state: there is the possibility that private owners will close schools resulting in the wastage of the state's investment. On the other hand, farmers are cautious about allowing the state to improve school facilities on their land as these may compromise their farming operations.

A new dispensation? The provisions of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act No. 84 of 1996)

The passing of the South African Schools Act (SASA) in 1996 was supposed to be the death knell for this dual management system: farm schools, together with all public schools on private land, were to be proclaimed public schools, which meant they would be governed and financed in the same way as their public school counterparts.

Legislation on the organisation, governance and funding of schools provided for the transfer of assets or the transfer of management of schools from the property owners to the state. Sections 14 (1) - (7) of the SASA endorsed the state's responsibility for schools on private land, stating that a public school should be allowed to operate on private land only in terms of an agreement between the MEC and the property owner. This agreement should provide for the provision of education and the performance of the normal functions of a public school (with respect to governance, access, security of occupation, maintenance and capital improvements) together with the protection of the owner's rights. The Act stated further that the agreement would be enforced against successive owners if farms were sold.

Other options provided for in the SASA were:

- the closure of schools;
- the registration of educational rights on a piece of land, which could be endorsed on the title deed of the property;
- the expropriation of land or a real right in or over land for any purpose relating to school education in a province.

64 Department of Education, (1996, 2000), *Schools Register of Needs Survey*, Pretoria: Department of Education: Gordon A (2000), *ibid*.

65 Orkin, F.M. & Njube B. 2000, *Employment trends in agriculture in South Africa*, Statistics South Africa, National Department of Agriculture.

66 In 1990, only fourteen out of 5, 851 farm schools offered grade 12 classes. Gordon, A. 1991, *Farm Schools: A Bumper Harvest for the 1990s?* Mafhasedi, Nov/Dec 1991.

Legal status of schools

Human Rights Watch (HRW) interviews revealed that the majority of schools in the country have not concluded agreements in at least five of the provinces. There is some variation amongst the provinces: In the Western Cape almost all contracts have been signed possibly because many of the farm schools in this region are on church land and have had rental agreements in the past, whereas fewer than 10% have been signed in Limpopo Province.

**Table 3 :
Number of agreements signed in the provinces⁶⁷**

Province	No. of farm schools ⁶⁸	No. of agreements
Mpumalanga *	494	135
Limpopo *	317	15-20
North West*	316	50
Eastern Cape *	400	146
Free State*	1206	643

The SASA provided for schools signing agreements within six months after its promulgation and therefore those without agreements are left in a legal limbo. Where concluded, these have not always been able to protect the interests of the learners — or the farmers — as agreements do not include measures to enforce compliance. Legal opinions indicate that in cases where contracts have not been concluded, the operation of farm schools may be illegal because they should have been signed six months after the SASA was gazetted.

So, where farm schools continue to exist on private land, not only does the Act fail to give learners and educators clear rights against the landowning farmers, section 14 in fact renders the operation of such schools illegal:

Artikel 14 van die SA Skolewet van 1996 bepaal soos volg:

"14. (1) Subject to the Constitution and this Act, a public school may be provided on private property only in terms of an agreement between the Member of the Executive Council and the owner of the private property." Die woorde "only" maak dit na my mening duidelik dat 'n staatskool nie op privateiendom bedryf mag word in die afwesigheid van so ooreenkomers nie. In so geval sal die staat of die skoolmoet sluit en die kinders elders akkomodeer of ontien.

As a result, district offices, farmers and parents are constrained in their attempts to improve schools and facilitate delivery of essential services. Some comment as follows:

"... the Schools Act as it currently stands leaves schools that are not bound by contracts in a legal limbo. This legal ambiguity has had disastrous effects -- where provincial government departments are less inclined to make improvements on the premises due to uncertainty. The clause making provision for the expiry date has become null and void -- There needs to be an amendment to the law to clarify the legal status of these schools."

"... What happens in the interim re those schools — which are a sizeable number — that have no contracts and are awaiting a solution. We know how long things take to at provincial level. I can foresee children continuing to learn in poor conditions pending a rationalisation plan...."

Provinces have resorted to rationalising provision by closing and merging schools but this has not been without difficulties:

"Re rationalisation, there needs to be proper and adequate consultation within the departments and the community. You may be aware of the clustering process in the (provinces). In one area lack of proper planning and consultation has delayed clustering three schools; the problem is the lack of transport for children who now have to walk additional distances. These are some of the issues that need to be thought through. Here I would propose guidelines for provincial governments."

⁶⁷ From HRW, 2004

⁶⁸ Schindler, 2004

Despite the SASA providing for expropriation, no land on which schools are located has been expropriated. It is a difficult option particularly in view of existing tensions regarding the land resettlement and land restitution policies. One submission pointed to the difficulties that may arise if the state wishes to expropriate land for the purposes of acquiring a school:

"I would suggest that expropriation should have its own guidelines too. A small concern, having engaged with farm workers is the potential tension between farm owner and workers if a portion of his land is expropriated. There can be victimisation and all that flows from that. A farm worker remains marginalised and powerless: expropriation should not mean additional victimisation and harassment."

A few communities, aided by legal aid offices, have instituted action against the PED concerned in an attempt to compel it to meet its obligations regarding the provision of compulsory basic education.⁶⁹ Their lack of success in ensuring that the Court's judgments are put into effect indicates that agreements would have to include stronger enforcement penalties than they do at present (if current policies continue).

Submissions from a few organizations indicated that in some cases farmers were willing to enter into discussions regarding agreements with the department, but officials have appeared unwilling to engage. Officials responded by claiming that agreements 'had no teeth' and could not be used to support school development.

Views expressed by all parties during interviews and at the provincial workshop revealed high levels of frustration at the deadlocks and delays caused by difficulties in concluding and enforcing S14 agreements. A number of officials present at the provincial workshop argued that there should be an end to the PSOPL category of schools. This would require a decision regarding existing S14 agreements:

"... it would be hard to phase out S14 agreements in instances where schools already exist and which do service a particularly community and new ones cannot be built without huge costs, particularly where expropriation is a last resort".

However, the fact that many schools are operating outside the requirements of the SASA indicates that this eventually must be considered.

Governance and management of farm schools

The comments made in this section of the report are to be read together with those presented in Theme 4 where comments describe the need for support and capacity development for SGBs operating in impoverished and remote environments.

In terms of the SASA, the school governing body must be made up of parents (who are in the majority) and educators (and learners in the case of secondary schools). These members may then co-opt other members of the community as non-voting members. Therefore even if farmers are co-opted onto the committee as community members, they cannot vote. If they have a child at the school then they are eligible for election as a voting member like any other parent.

The legitimacy of SGBs was raised in many discussions and remains an issue fraught with tensions and contradictions. Whether or not farmers are co-opted onto SGBs, their powerful role in the community means they can control school development from the inside or outside, thereby demeaning the role of elected governors. It is clear that many farmers remain unwilling participants in school development, afraid (sometimes with good reason) that losing control over the schools can threaten their farming operations by putting pressure on their limited resources, particularly their water supply. This is seen in their refusal to sign S14 agreements.

Another problem concerns the responsibility of SGBs to promote school development. Information presented to the MCRE illustrates that farm school SGBs are constrained in their attempts to implement school development plans:

Those SGB members who are workers on adjacent farms find it difficult to attend meetings;

⁶⁹ Interview: CALS, September 2004.

- Where no agreement is signed, SGBs are not prepared to raise funds for capital equipment or infrastructural improvements if they are not certain that they 'own' the schools. (Farm schools can be closed by farmers if no agreement has been signed, if the rental period ends or if the provincial department decides schools have too few learners. This possibility of closure will certainly prevent SGBs from putting their own time or funds at risk.)

Other management and governance problems relate to:

- Friction over school affairs between some farmers and the broader school community which has affected access and in some cases resulted in the closure of schools;⁷⁰
- Departmental decisions regarding school closure do not always meet the community's vision of education on their farm and parents should be consulted if school closure is considered; even guidelines state that communities should be part of the decision to close the school;
- Educator well being and conditions of service (see Theme 6);
- The safety of children travelling to school;
- Difficulties in learner transfers from farm schools to other schools as learners progress up the educational ladder, because of the limited availability of FET schools — and sometimes senior GET classes — in the vicinity of farms;
- Reports of child labour persist, even though child labour is outlawed in terms of the BCEA. Child labour sometimes persists with the consent of their parents.

Regarding schools on land owned by various churches⁷¹ it became apparent that:

- Church involvement is not always positive, with many instances of churches not signing S14 agreements as they fear the school will be secularised
- In the Northern Cape the Roman Catholic Church plays a prominent role with regular forums taking place;
- In one school in Gauteng parents objected to the church's insistence on representation on the SGB, thus placing the department in an invidious position.

Pedagogical conditions and learner outcomes

All issues outlined in Themes 5 and 6 regarding classroom conditions and educator needs apply to farm schools. In addition to these there are conditions which apply only to farm schools. One of the most challenging is that of the multi-grade classes. Many farm schools are one - or two-educator schools having multi-grade classes. As a result one educator sometimes has to teach more than two grades — some teach as many as six grades. This indicates that current post provisioning formulas need to be amended to take account of the needs of these small, multi-grade schools. Capacity development is also required: school managers must be made aware of the management skills need to administer small schools and educators given skills to cope with multi-grade classes.

Another difficulty arises because of the distances learners have to travel: reports indicate that there are many over-age learners because they remain at home until strong enough to travel long distances.

Learners on farms face incredible barriers when attempting to access FET owing to the scarcity of FET schools on farms and the fact that parents cannot afford steep transport costs. This is evidenced in high levels of dropout throughout the FET band.

Infrastructure and the provision of facilities and services

Schindler (2004)⁷² provides detailed information on facilities and services at farm schools as well as the availability of LSMS and how provision has changed from 1996 to 2000. Data indicate that the conditions at approximately one in five schools are neither safe nor secure. The majority of schools in a poor or very poor condition, having poor sanitation, and without water, are farm schools.⁷³

Decentralisation vs centralisation options

A meta-analysis of farm school policy today reveals an interesting dichotomy between decentralised and centralised options for a school system in rural areas: Education for black learners was provided for by

⁷⁰ CALS and HRW report on cases where farmers have repeatedly locked the gates to schools. In other cases, teachers have to negotiate access continuously as they are not given keys to the locks on the gates. In another instances fences erected have lengthened the route to the school considerably (by as much as 20 kilometres).

⁷¹ It must be noted that differences in access and provision on land owned by churches differs markedly across SA, due to the range of churches involved.

⁷² Schindler, J. A statistical overview of farm schools in SA, 2000⁷². Edusource Datanews, No. 45 October 2004.

⁷³ Disparities in the availability of accessible information on farm schools within the provincial departments of education underlines the need for the government to collect and maintain a register, including statistical information, on the status of schools on commercial farms (HRW, 2004).

means of small schools on commercial farms, scattered across the length and breadth of South Africa, whereas facilities for white pupils were centralised in towns, with state provision of transport and boarding accommodation.

Neither model is without its problems. Worldwide, rural education offices are facing difficult choices regarding the placement and size of schools for rural learners. Even though centralised schools tend to offer its educators and learners more facilities and subject choices, the state has to finance transport or provide accommodation for learners. It is also considered harmful for young children to leave their homes. In contrast, a larger number of smaller schools may ease the transport burden, but the schools cannot offer the wealth of facilities and learning options that can be provided in larger schools.

Another consideration influencing the decision on centralisation/ decentralisation is the nature of the personal relationships at small and large schools. Small schools tend to suit the needs of young children, as well-organised small schools can encourage warm and caring relationships between educators and learners. Large schools can be impersonal and may even alienate parents from participating in school affairs. Some school districts in more advantaged areas of the world are attempting to solve the problem by implementing flexible distance education programmes to allow learners to study nearer their homes and provide them with a broader range of subjects.

Proposed changes in policy

Should farm schools be seen as a viable, permanent feature of the rural landscape?⁷⁴ Opinions were divided. People appear loath to waste resources already spent on these schools and believe the situation of these schools can be remedied.

Some, basing their opinion on the history of failure in dealing with farm schools, were not hopeful:

"... despite its good intentions, the government's efforts to improve conditions on Farm Schools have achieved little. In particular, the state's inability to resolve the issue of Farm Schools' legal status has allowed their vulnerability to endure."

The MCRE heard expressions of anger by organisations and farmers. One farmer claimed that the situation in Limpopo Province is 'disgusting and abhorrent'.

"Do away with all farm schools. The children are in need of proper education."

Others, however, looked at opportunities such as transforming schools into a community resource:

"We believe that farm schools should be preserved at all costs, because the schools are also community centres and the demise of the schools will leave a void in the communities."

- ... We need a consistent and constructive engagement with all the farming communities [to address the]:
- Rampant retrenchment of Africans in the farms;
- Eviction of Africans in these farms
- Non-involvement of the local municipality."

Also, opinion was divided on whether S14 should remain in force, remain in the short-term and be phased out, or be altered to ensure that all parties are compelled to meet their obligations in terms of the agreement.

"S 14 should therefore remain to regulate the power of the farmer ... S14 has however not been effective to date. Some may even argue that the time for entering into S14 has lapsed."

"There may need to be an amendment giving the government full authority over the school where a contract has not been signed. I think that in this case, farm owners may be more inclined to sign contracts for fear of having government having full control of the premises."

74 Zafar, S ibid writes: 'It is imperative, therefore, to assess whether an apartheid aberration such as farm schools can be transformed into institutions for the development of young children under a democratic state and whether this can be done within the super-imposed proprietary relations in the current regulatory framework.'

One submission outlined a process that encompasses systemic changes to cover policy formulation and management concerns as well as communication between the Doe and PEDs and the broader school community on farms:

"Prioritise policies to ensure access to education for children living on commercial farms through adequate financing and planning. Appropriate steps could include establishing a unit at the national Department of Education to focus on the management of farm schools and facilitate a forum for provincial departments of education to exchange best practices on the governance and management of farm schools and strategies to ensure that all can access primary education. The unit could also convene a multi-sectoral forum, with farm owners, farm workers, teachers and farm owners' representative bodies, non governmental organizations and local government, to review the situation on farm schools and devise strategies for improvement. This unit should also maintain a database on farm schools."

The formation of a District Education Forum and its functions are elaborated in Theme 4.

Conclusions

PSoPL have been a source of great frustration for all involved in providing education to learners attending these schools. SASA regulations have not eased the situation, and in fact exacerbated difficulties.

The continuing nature of the dire state of many schools points to the need for immediate action in selected schools. Schools that are unsafe, unhygienic, without water and too far from learners' homes should be targeted with immediate effect.

It appears that this may be the time to alter the provision of schooling on commercial farms radically by implementing a carefully planned process of closing schools and replacing them with schools built on public land in a convenient locale. Some of the provinces have already begun to adopt innovative approaches. There is, however, a clear need for a national legislated approach that directly addresses the anomalies that arise from having public schools on private land, and that ensures that all learners living on commercial farms are able to access school in ways that do not compromise either their learning potential or social development.

The recommendations below must be read to include those covering proposed changes in the Size and Shape of rural schooling (Theme 3) and Governance and Management (Theme 4).

It became apparent at the provincial workshop that consideration has to be given to all PSoPL, that is, the schools situated on commercial farm land as well as on land owned by companies, hospitals and the churches. It is also advised that special consideration is given to schools on recently resettled farms.

What possible options are there? Two issues have to be examined immediately. The first concerns the legal status of farm schools where agreements have not been signed and the implications of this on the operation of the school. The second is the future of S14 agreements. If S14 is revisited, can obligations on the state and farmers be tightened, perhaps with new time limits and penalty clauses, so that all parties are compelled to act within the terms of the agreement?

The MCRE is of the opinion that it is highly unlikely that those farmers who have refused to sign agreements in the past, or those that have signed agreements, will agree to sign an agreement that includes penalty clauses. Therefore, our recommendations cover the closure of farm schools and other public schools on private land. (Recommendations relating to the size and distribution of schools for learners on private land are presented in Theme 3).

In essence this means that the category of schooling, PSoPL, will be phased out and various actions implemented to ensure that the state meets its constitutional obligations to learners living on commercial farms and other private land. It must be emphasised that closures can only take place if alternative schools and adequate transport is supplied to all learners and educators.

Briefly, the actions required cover:

1. The introduction of (or continuation of) provincial departments' rationalisation processes involving:

- Closure
- Mergers
- Expropriation.

This will involve establishing national and provincial guidelines and possibly changes in the legislation at national and provincial levels. The participation of school communities and district officials in decisions regarding rationalisation is an essential part of this process.

2. Improving access across all phases of the GET band and the FET band (see Theme 3, Size and shape of education in rural areas).
3. Improving the administration, management and governance of public schools on private land (see Theme 4, Governance and management).
4. Improve educators' conditions of service and professional development opportunities (see Theme 6, Educators).
5. Improve the quality of education through school and classroom reform (see Themes 5 & 6, Curriculum and Educators).
6. Engage communities in lifelong learning opportunities (see Theme 1, Alleviating poverty).

Sub theme: The status of S14 agreements

Recommendation 64 : Clarify the legal status of farm schools where agreements have not been signed and on the basis of the findings, consider amendments to the terms of S14 agreements in the SASA.

Recommendation 65 : Provide guidelines on the legal procedures required to expropriate land on which public schools are located.

Recommendation 66 : Provide guidelines on the rationalisation of farm schools in a district where contracts have not been signed. This must include closures, mergers and expropriation.

Recommendation 67 : Consider the implications of a phased closure of all public schools on private land and the process whereby it might take place that takes account of communities' vision of education, access to and retention at school.

Sub theme: Promoting quality education

Recommendation 68 : Immediate action with respect to schools having inadequate infrastructure, no sanitation and water, and where children are walking in excess of 5 kilometres to school.

Sub theme: Access to FET for farm school learners

Recommendation 69: Active recruitment of learners on farms completing the GET band to continue schooling at FET schools or at centralised schools with hostels and transport being provided.

Sub theme: Public learning centres/CLCs on private land

Recommendation 70 : In cooperation with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Land Affairs, consider strategies of providing learning opportunities for the community of farm workers at schools where agreements have been signed, creating public learning centres at schools servicing learners on farms.

Theme 8: Roles and responsibilities of the Department of Education and the Provincial Education Departments

Current status and challenges

Even though the roles and responsibilities ascribed in legislation and policy to the Department of Education and provincial Departments of Education provide a framework for policy and implementation respectively, it is apparent that a lack of clear policy, leadership and coordination at national level has led to PEDs responding proactively and independently to crises facing schools in rural areas. Innovative projects, driven by provincial teams and donor agencies, are responsible for the implementation of a variety of initiatives. A number of these provincial initiatives respond creatively to the challenges facing rural schools and, if adequately analysed, can provide a detailed array of best practices well-suited to the diversity of rural contexts in South Africa. Unfortunately, very few of these projects go to scale and there is no mechanism for monitoring and evaluating their impact over the long term as the time span of many of the projects depends on project funding rather than the completion of a cycle of reform. As a result, a number of the lessons learnt remain the preserve of the implementing agents, and less often, those officials directly involved in the project.

There is an urgent need for accurate information on rural schooling. Existing databases do not allow for the disaggregation of 'rural data'. In order to maximize the value of this information, more research is required to identify useful indicators for monitoring and evaluating the performance of rural schools, educators and learners. The lack of appropriate empirical data undermines attempts to monitor and evaluate the status of the system and the worth of planned interventions.

In terms of grading, farm schools and schools in traditional authority areas are the worst. To deal with these challenges a *Directorate for Rural Education has to be established at national and provincial levels to interface with other rural structures for effective learner support services.*

Current challenges arising from a lack of coordination between DoE and PEDs include:

- The legal limbo in which PSOPL find themselves (including church and farm schools) (see Theme 7).
- Information collection does not allow information to be disaggregated according to the location of schools, thereby preventing monitoring of learner enrolment and achievement (see Theme 8).
- Post provisioning policies do not suit the conditions prevailing in small rural schools (see Theme 6).
- Lack of designated redress funding for rural schools (see Theme 2).
- Insufficient multi-sectoral forums to craft an integrated rural development strategy (integration at cabinet cluster level does not appear to be filtering through the DoE and PEDs to local levels) (see Theme 8).
- Insufficient coordination of schooling provision with local and district government, traditional authorities and farmers (see Theme 8).

Decision-making in regard to policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of delivery in rural schools requires attention at all tiers of governance and management. In addition, developing an alternative 'peripheral' perspective and achieving participatory governance requires the DoE and PEDs to include rural communities from the initial stages of all ventures that affect their schools. This is not to deny that:

There are of course challenges in the concept and the practice of creating or reviving communities as recipients of state funding. ... the real poverty is in the absence of local institutions and the paucity of local management ... Trusting very poor people with large sums of money is counter-culture in the world today; and the skills of community entrepreneurship are not widely valued or highly paid.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ A new way to secure all children and all parents', Margaret Legum, Mail and Guardian, 19 November 2004.

Sub theme: Decision-making: National and provincial structures

At present, the DoE acknowledges rural schooling as a special case, but in a general manner — as a 'concern' of the department. If progress is to be made improving rural schooling, it has to be led by the DoE. This requires leadership and a focused and sustained programme of action managed by designated structures and persons within the DoE and PEDs. No such line-management responsibilities exist in the DoE and in most PEDs. This undercuts possibilities for coordination between the DoE and PEDs and for the development and operationalization of integrated, multi-sectoral plans that relate to rural schooling.

If democracy has to be deepened in the true sense of the word, concerted efforts have to be made to address the plight of the marginalized rural learners. At the most basic level, water, sanitation, and electricity have to be provided. Incentives have to be provided to attract educators to offer their services to rural schools.

Recommendation 71 : Designate responsibility for rural schooling within the national department that provides a coordinating function across all branches and liaising functions between the DoE and the PEDs, the DoE and other government departments and non-government sectors (see Theme 4).

Recommendation 72 : Designate similar responsibilities at provincial level with an additional emphasis on links at local and district levels (see Theme 4).

Recommendation 73 : Hold regular meetings of DoE and PED officials responsible for rural schooling to share information about rural schooling, debate the impact of policy and implementation strategies (lessons learnt, best practices) and publicise these to a wide audience.

Sub theme: Entering rural domains

The major risk facing intervention strategies lead by national and provincial government lies in a lack of 'take-up' at district level and by the school (management, educators, learners), and community (parents and other stakeholders). Without their engagement and participation, reforms are unlikely to succeed. Developing appropriate strategies to address this policy/ reality gap requires a sensitivity to rurality — an ability to see the world from the point of view of a person on the periphery of everything. This is best done by enabling rural 'voices' to participate in decision-making processes at district and local level and at national level (through parents' associations representing a rural voice, national traditional authority structures, and farmers' associations becoming more actively involved in education).

Communication regarding policies and practices relating to rural schooling must also be improved by using appropriate media that reaches rural communities.

Recommendation 74 : Devise and implement strategies to include community structures and individuals in school affairs by building on existing decision-making bodies and processes at community level. Recommendations relating to Governance and Management (Theme 4) include the formation of District Education Forums.

Recommendation 75 : Using the public media and local radio and newspapers, provide information and promote ongoing debates on educational policies and programmes in rural areas, nationally, provincially and locally.

Sub theme: Forging partnerships

Post 1994, a significant portion of donor funding has been directed at rural schooling, especially in TA areas. These projects tend to be small scale and of fairly short duration (3 to 5 years) and usually involve

education NGOs or consultants (sometimes foreign) as partners. These projects could be an importance source for 'lessons learnt' and of examples of best and worst practice. Unfortunately, there is little communication, coordination, sharing or disseminating of information between projects, PEDs and DoE. Although donor funded projects are evaluated, the reports or findings often remain in the private domain.

Recommendation 76 : Construct a national database of all projects with a rural schooling focus and develop appropriate forums for interaction between these projects.

Recommendation 77 : Coordinate a colloquium based on rural schooling projects that have or continue to operate, to consider how best practices and lessons learnt can be captured and communicated at national, provincial and local levels and how these practices may go to scale.

Sub theme: Monitoring and evaluation

The inability to disaggregate data on rural schools from EMIS makes it impossible to monitor or evaluate what is happening in rural schools. Nor is it possible to track improvements or the success or failure of specific interventions. It is therefore imperative to adapt EMIS at national and provincial levels to enable the disaggregation of data and information on rural schooling.

Recommendation 78 : Once new policies for rural schooling are in place, investigate how EMIS and its concomitant information gathering instruments can be adapted to allow for the collection, disaggregation and analysis of information on rural schools.

Recommendation 79 : Evaluate the effectiveness of existing indicators to monitor and evaluate schools in rural areas.

Recommendation 80 : Plan and introduce a programme of monitoring and evaluation of delivery in rural areas to assess the impact of educational innovations on educational indicators (access, quality, retention, achievement) as well as more broadly on poverty eradication at community levels.

Recommendation 81 : The Quality Assurance branch of the DoE should investigate ways in which the Integrated Quality Management System should be adapted to make it more useful for monitoring and evaluating whole school development and educator and learner performance in rural schools.

Sub theme: Constituting a rural education task team

Recommendation 82 : Constitute a joint DoE and PEDs rural education task team, comprised of national and provincial education officials with a designated responsibility for rural education, to take responsibility for developing a programme of action, based on these recommendations. The programme of action will have clear timeframes and aim at systemic reform, although it may be necessary to implement or continue certain pilot programmes.

Appendix A: The Composition of the Committee

- Professor Ben Parker, University of Fort Hare (Chairperson).
- Dr Adele Gordon: Farm school education specialist and Associate of the Centre for Policy Development, Evaluation and Management (CEPD) (Research Coordinator and main writer).
- Professor Meshack Jonglianga Matshazi, University of Fort Hare
- Ms Nnyadi Boitumelo Boshogo, Programme manager, Nelson Mandela Foundation
- Mr Mzikayise Siphon Khumalo, General Secretary: South African Agricultural Plantation and Allied Workers Union
- Mr H van der Merwe, CEO: Agri South Africa

Dr Gordon was responsible for directing and coordinating the consultation process and for the major share of the writing of the report. The committee was assisted by Professor Ken Harley who reviewed the public submissions and assisted with the writing of this report. The committee was given logistical and administrative support by personnel located in the Directorate: Policy Support in the System Planning Branch in the office of the Deputy Director-General: System Planning:

- Ms Carol Nuga-Deliwe (Director)
- Mr Mmeli Macanda (Until May 2004)
- Ms Ellen Machate
- Ms Thandile Khumalo (From May 2004)
- Mr Enos Nethengwe
- Ms Gugu Zulu (From November 2004)

Appendix B: Interviews

National Department of Education

Interviewee	DoE Branch	Chief Directorate/Directorate	Interview Mode	Tel:
1. Mr F Patel	Branch: P	Budget Office: Chief Director	Individual Interview	312 6083
2. Mr PW Morkel	Branch: P	Educator Provisioning and Employment Condition : Director	Group Interview	312 6079
3. Ms M Dlomo	Branch: P	Education Human Resource Planning: Chief Director	Group Interview	312 6072
4. Mr SG Padayachee	Branch: P	Education Labour Relations Management: Director	Group Interview	312 6076
6. Mr A Matlole	Branch: G	Adult Education: Director	Individual Interview	312 5368
7. Mr EAB Williams	Branch: G	GET- Curriculum and Assessment: Chief Director	Individual Interview	312 5281
8. Ms C Mpati	Branch: Q	School Nutrition Individual International Relation &UNESCO: Chief Director	Interview Group Interview	312 5081 312 5350
9. Mr G Jepie	DG	Provincial Administrative Support: Director	Group Interview	312 5432
10. Mr A M Raubenheimer	DG	Education Management &Governance Development: Director	Individual Interview	312 5474
11. Mr M Prew	Branch: G	General Education: Deputy Director General	Group Interview	312 5453
12. Dr R C Lubisi	Branch: G	Budget Office: Technical Support	Individual Interview	312 5982
13. Dr Thabo Mabogoane	Branch: P	Deputy Director General	Individual Interview	312 6071
14. Mr Duncan Hindle	Branch: P	EMIS	Group Interview	312 5960
15. Mr Jacques Appelgryn	Branch: P	EMIS	Group Interview	312 5961
16. Mr Christo Lombaard	Branch: P	Early Childhood Development: Director	Individual Interview	312 5343
17. Ms M L Samuels	Branch: G			

Organisations

Interviewee	Organisation/ Specialisation	Tel:	Interview Mode
1. Mr Mark Potterton	CIE	011 433 1888	Telephonic interview
2. Mr Rodney Veldtman	NAPTOSA	012 324 5214	Group interview
3. Ms Sue Mullek			
4. Mr Molefe Vincent Kwalet e			
5. Ms Alice Phaswana			
6. Mr Martin Ngcobo	NYC	012 309 7832	Individual interview
7. Mr Richard Ngobeni			
8. Mr Dingane Ngobeni	SADTU	011 334 4830	Group interview
9. Mr Kobus Pieterse	SAOU	012 807 6244/39	Individual interview
10. Mr Stuart Wilson (Researcher)	CALS	011 7178609	Individual interview
11. Ms Faranaaz Veriav a (Researcher)			
12. Ms Sharanjeet Shan (Director)	MCPPT	011 276 8200	Individual interview
13. Mr Cedric Peterson (Head of Action Research and Development Unit)			
12. Mr VMathonsi	NASGB	011 403 6131	Individual interview
13. Mr Thamsanga Twala (Education Officer)	NACTU	011 833 1040	Individual interview
14. Ms Rietha Prinsloo	SAVLU	012 664 4197	Group Interview
15. Ms Anphia Grobler			
16. Mr Johannes Jansen	AgrISA		Group Interview
17. Mr Marius Leschnisky	AgrISA/FEDSAS		Group Interview
18. Mr Chris Purcell	IT Power SA.		Individual interview

Appendix C: Information provided by Bophirima Region, Northwest Province

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1. PREAMBLE

Provision of education in rural areas has always been regarded to be of inferior quality than in urban areas. We have no empirical evidence to confirm this statement, but we have factual evidence that provision of education in rural areas has more and serious challenges than in urban areas. Many challenges in the form of illiteracy, walking long distances, poverty, disease, teenage pregnancies and substance abuse are amongst the factors that affect delivery of sound and quality education in rural areas.

Although a number of policies have been put in place to facilitate transformation of schooling and education, the backlogs in development are growing instead of being reduced. For example, the policy on Norms and Standards of Public School Funding is failing to achieve its very important objective: Redressing the imbalances of the past.

Good management and governance of schools in rural areas is key to successful implementation of educational programmes and sustainable development. These two aspects have been observed to be seriously lacking and wanting in most rural education environments.

2. NATURE OF THE REGION

Bophirima region is the most rural of the five regions of the North West Education department. Out of the 472 schools, there are only 13 schools that could be described as urban school as these are situated within 5 kilometres of the Vryburg Town. The rest of the schools are peri-urban and rural schools. Historically Infrastructural and social development was confined to urban centres. As a result of this, provision of education and was affected negatively. Impact on education is not confined to what the Department of education alone can provide. The Regional infrastructure with regard to roads, telecommunications, health centres, water and sanitation, which are shared responsibilities with other

governmental departments, is not efficient. Planning of settlements has been allowed to continue in a haphazard manner, making it difficult for the North West Education Department to plan for building new schools. Integrated Development Planning with municipalities and local authorities has not yet born any fruit.

3. STATISTICS

3.1. Small Rural Schools (Roll <50):

- The trend displayed by most schools is that the numbers are dropping/ decreasing. Communities also tend to expect the Department to provide Secondary schools in their villages regardless of the present numbers of learners admitted in primary schools.
- The allocation of teaching personnel is very problematic. Deviations from post provisioning model create extra costs on the Department personnel budget.
- Clustering of schools as a solution has serious financial implications for the Department with regard to transport, boarding and lodging subsidies.

Name and type of school	Roll: Feb. 2004	No. of Educators
1. Agang Thuto Primary	18	1
2. Balekudi Primary	46	2
3. Batshweneng Primary	34	2
4. Bavianskranz Primary	40	2
5. Bogale Primary	35	2
6. Deal Primary	19	1
7. Dinokaneng Primary	28	1
8. Florina Primary	38	2
9. Ganap Primary	11	1
10. Ganghaai Primary	37	2
11. Gasehubane Primary	21	2
12. Itapolosong Primary	21	1
13. Kabathose Primary	21	1
14. Kgomotsego Primary	38	2
15. Kubuge Primary	20	1
16. Mahahakgetlwa Primary	32	2
17. Mahukubung Primary	43	2
18. Malebogo Primary	40	2
19. Matoro Primary	18	1
20. Metsaneng Primary	19	1
21. Motabogi Primary	31	1
22. Platdrift Primary	30	1
23. Ratanang Primary	23	1
24. Reitshokile Primary	31	2
25. Tshegofatso Primary	44	2

3.2. Small Farm Schools (Roll <50):

- The numbers keep on decreasing as a result of population movements related to farm workers changed roles and attitudes of some farm owners. The future of the farm schools is also linked to the willingness of farm owners to sign property contracts with the NWED.
- Clustering of schools as a solution has serious financial implications for the Department with regard to transport, boarding and lodging subsidies.

Name and type of school	Roll: Feb. 2004	No. of Educators
1. Bokamoso Primary	33	2
2. Botsielo Primary	37	2
3. Goedgevind Primary	25	2
4. Kameel Primary	25	2
5. Kameelpan Primary	21	1
6. Kgotlelela Primary	38	2
7. Kokwaan Primary	49	3
8. Lelespruit Primary	45	2
9. Lokotsi Primary	40	2
10. Makame Primary	43	2
11. Malebogo Primary	40	2
12. Ontwikkel Primary	41	2
13. Santagetruide Primary	21	1
14. Tshwaranang Primary	41	2

4. CHALLENGES OF RURAL EDUCATION

4.1. Infrastructure

4.1.1. Poor infrastructure is one of the main challenges of rural education. Most of the schools buildings have been built by communities thus poor workmanship. Most of these building are in a serious state of despair. This has created a huge backlog on infrastructure.

4.1.2. Lack of sanitation is one of the major challenges. This is a heartbreaking issue in most of the rural schools. The present condition is a serious health hazard.

4.1.3. Most of the roads to rural schools are of very poor condition. This causes problems of access to schools.

4.1.4. Some of the rural schools do not have access to clean water, electricity and telephone facilities. It is also one of the main challenges in rural education. Schools cannot access all the necessary information for the education of the learners.

4.2. Educational resources

4.2.1. Most of the schools in rural areas are lacking educational resources. However, various projects involving NGO's were active in the rural schools as such schools in rural areas received various Educational Resources.

- 4.2.2. Projects that were involving rural schools.
- Oxford
 - FEBDEP (Commercial subjects)
 - STANBIC (Commercial subjects)
 - MCPT (mathematics)
 - NEEP
 - CDPTRUST (arts and culture)
 - READ (Literacy - Foundation phase)
 - OLSET
 - MMRI

4.2.3. The resources received from the above NGO projects covers a wide spectrum including inter alia:

- Atlases
- Mathematics kits
- Workbooks
- Radios
- Resource center equipments

4.2.4. An aspects which must be noted is that although a relative large number of NGO Partnerships were active in the Bophirima Region, the number of schools supported is a very small percentage of the schools in the Region.

4.2.5. LTSM in a large number of rural schools is not readily available. Special reference is made to textbooks in the FET phase, a possible reason might be the implementation of Curriculum 2005 since 1997 which prioritized delivery of LTSM to schools implementing Curriculum 2005.

4.3. Human resources

4.3.1. Both unqualified and under qualified educators - high number of unqualified educators were dealt with via Resolution 1 of 2003. Underqualified are being assisted through NPDE Programmes.

4.3.2. Small rural/farm schools are adversely affected by post provisioning model.

4.4. Governance

4.4.1. This is one area which is impacting on the performance of rural schools. Some members of the governing structures of these schools need training in a lot of things so as to capacitate them. Most of the available documents are in English and need to be translated to Setswana so as to make it easier for officials to workshop SGBs.

4.4.2. Due to lack of proper governance of schools, some parents neglect their main responsibility being in loco parentis with the educators. The governing structures do not do enough, as they themselves do not understand what their roles are.

4.5. Other Challenges

4.5.1. Overaged learners in rural/farm schools possibly due to child labour in farms/rural schools e.g. harvest time in Upington(grapes); learners involved are at Kagisano Molopo, Moshaweng and Gasegonyane APO.

4.5.2. Asbestos infected areas still pose a great challenge as it is a health hazard.

5. CURRICULUM PLANNING

5.1. As from Grade R up to Grade 9 all learning areas are compulsory in all schools as determined by National Policy.

5.2. In the FET band rural Education is affected negatively in the Curriculum offerings at rural schools. The majority of schools have only a basic number of subjects, mostly 2 languages and other subjects, without addressing the needs of the learner and community.

5.2. The trend is also for learners to enroll for subjects on standard grade level, as performance of learners who opted for subjects on the higher grade does not meet that of a learner who opted for standard grade.

- 5.3. Subject offered at rural schools quite often find it difficult to find relevant qualified educators.
- 5.5. Specialist subjects e.g. Technical subjects, compu-typing, computer science are almost non-existent in rural schools.
- 5.6. Small rural /farm schools with only one or two educators and a curriculum from grades 1 to 6 find it extremely challenging to cope. Small number of learners per grade but a wide spectrum of grades per educator supposed to teach all the relevant learning programmes/areas.

6. CONCLUSION

It must be noted that in spite of these challenges, the Department has made remarkable strides in developing rural education. Some rural areas have modern facilities and suitably qualified human resources.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Heighten provision of school infrastructure in rural areas. Department needs to be biased in favour of rural education developments.
- IDT programmes need to be biased to rural areas for development of rural education.
- Programmes pf HIV/AIDS, access to social grants need to be heightened.
- Initiation schools needs to be realigned to our Departmental programmes.
- Child labour needs to be discouraged by the relevant Department and transgressors need to be prosecuted.
- Policy on Norms and Standards of school funding to be revised to benefit rural schools
- Focus training on Governance matters should be conducted to all rural schools.
- Villages in areas affected by asbestos should be relocated to safe areas. The infected areas should be rehabilitated and demolished.
- Rural schools also need to be clustered in benefiting from the partnerships.
- Provisioning of CTSW/ textbooks in the FET phase as a topping up be prioritized by the NWED.
- The Bophirima Region need rural schools in the FET band that can offer specialized subjects. The possibility of targeting each APO with at least one technical school should be considered.
- Consideration should be given to certain incentives for educators teaching in rural schools, FET band in the so called "scarce" subjects e.g. Mathematics and Science, Technical Subjects.
- Merging of small rural/farm schools.
- Post provisioning model be more favourable to small rural/farm schools.
- In- service training programmes for educators to empower them on subject content be speeded up and intensified.

Appendix D: Overview and Analysis of Submissions made to the Ministerial Committee of Rural Education, November, 2004

Professor Ken Harley, November 2004

Background

On 11 March 2004 the then-Minister of Education Professor Kadar Asmal gazetted the establishment of a Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (MCRE) to explore conditions of rural education and training. The Committee's brief was to focus on issues relating to the quality of learning and teaching, to clarify issues affecting education outcomes in General Education and Training and in the schooling stream of Further Education and Training. In particular, the MCRE was to focus on institutions in commercial farming areas, institutions in the former homelands, and in peri-urban locations.

The public was invited to make submissions on the subject of rural education. This was followed by a letter from the Director-General : Education to Provincial Departments of Education, asking for a response to a detailed questionnaire on rural education.

Sixty-three public and provincial submissions were received. The present document is a collective representation of public submissions and the provincial questionnaire. It has two parts:

- (a) Overview and Summary of submissions
- (b) Analysis of submissions.

Note:

For purposes of this document, questionnaires were conflated with public submissions in the Overview and Analysis because a detailed analysis of the questionnaires would not have yielded the representative picture of provincial practices in line with the format of the questionnaire. Reasons for this will be evident in subsequent discussion.

Method of summarising and analysing submissions

The analysis was carried out on a commissioned 10 day contract basis.

Submissions were first skim read and scanned for purposes of gaining an overall sense of what respondents had offered. Tentative categories for summary and analysis were then constructed. Categories were consolidated and revised in two subsequent readings of the texts, during which significant statements were recorded so that respondents could, to some degree, be allowed to 'speak for themselves'.

The Overview and Summary of submissions (Section A) was aimed at capturing the letter and intent of submissions as faithfully as possible.

The Analysis of Submissions (Section B) is more interpretive. It was aimed at identifying issues arising from the summary for purposes of contributing to, and taking forward, the mission of MCRE.

Section A: Overview and Summary of submissions

Respondents' comments on the call for submissions

It is clear that the Minister's call for submissions struck a responsive chord. Several submissions were prefaced with comments such as:

"I firstly thank the Minister of Education for this initiative."

"Thank you for this opportunity to raise some of the highlights as well as the problems / deficiencies regarding education within this Municipal area."

However, there was one significant note of discord concerning the *medium of communication* in this regard:

"SADTU would like to raise a serious concern regarding the manner in which the consultative process is unfolding. We view the use of the website as an exclusionary strategy which leaves most of the people who have an interest in the status of rural education, with a lack of opportunity to input into the process. ... What other mechanism did the Ministerial Committee embark upon in order to hear the voices of the rural poor themselves ...? We are appealing to the Ministerial Committee to reconsider other interactive and communicative mechanisms that might enrich the consultative process ... "

Another voice of discord seems to imply a certain lack of confidence in the process to be followed in taking submissions forward:

"... on 25th August 2000, I made a submission to the National Ministry of Education when they were seeking public opinion about 'Review of Curriculum 2005'. A national call for public input went out and I am sad to report that I am still awaiting an acknowledgement of receipt or a response on my submission.
Ps: Who are the persons appointed to the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education, just as a matter of interest for both of us who collaborated in producing this submission."

Nevertheless, the comprehensive nature of many responses suggests that respondents were at pains to respond constructively to an issue they clearly perceived to be very important.

The nature of submissions

Submissions varied considerably with respect to:

Length, which varied between less than single page statements to lengthy, detailed reports. Such reports dealt with research, reviews, and project or course material. For purposes of analysis, a submission from a single individual or organization was regarded as a single unit

Foci : A small minority of submissions addressed the issue of rural education in a holistic, integrated way⁷⁶, however, most took the form of accounts of research or experience of specialised activities that by design or default took place in rural settings. Such submissions left the MCRE to draw their own inferences and conclusions.⁷⁷

Individual responses

Table 1 (see Annex 1) provides the overview of individual submissions.⁷⁸

Table 2 The main institutional bases from which submissions came

Universities*	22
Organizations	20
Individuals	9
Education departments**	7
Teacher unions	2

* The figure for universities includes 1 technikon and 1 university from USA.

** Of the seven Departmental submissions, 3 were in response to the public invitation and 4 in response to the questionnaire request from the Director-General : Education. The submissions included a funding proposal for the extension of the life of a project, a report on the School Nutrition Programme, and a report on policy with respect to centres of learning. While these have relevance to rural education and certainly contribute towards it, they were not derived from specific policy on rural education. Detail on responses to the provincial questionnaire follows under a separate sub heading

⁷⁶ There were 5 such responses from individuals (2 principals and 3 individuals likely to be teachers), and 2 teacher unions. Human Rights Watch and the Education Rights Project addressed farm schools, but not rural education more broadly.

⁷⁷ The challenge of interpreting submissions of this kind and of allocating categories to an analytic framework must be acknowledged as a limitation of this Overview and Analysis.

⁷⁸ Note on reading the tables. Statistics based on open-ended responses are inevitably approximations. Statistics in the following tables are best read as relative weightings of emphasis. Totals in the tables are not equivalent to the number of submissions - eg, one submission was anonymous, and 5 were no more than acknowledgements. Categories that appeared to be of secondary significance to respondents were also omitted in the interests of not diverting from numerically strong points.

Notes:

A surprising feature of responses from higher education is that only 6 were from Faculties or Schools of Education. Other main contributors were Humanities (3), Maths and Science (3) and Psychology (2). From the schooling sector, there were 2 submissions from school principals, and a number of the individual submissions appeared to be from teachers. A more positive way of looking at the relatively weak representation of 'mainstream' education is to assert that other disciplinary areas are relatively strongly represented.

Formal schooling enjoyed almost exclusive focus. ABET was barely mentioned.

Of the 20 organizations, half did not have education as their main focus (eg. the focus was on nutrition, agriculture, the rights of children).

Table 3 Basis of submissions

Provide relevant research (articles, references)	17*
Personal experience (from practice or fieldwork)	16
Offering a service / proposal for initiative	11
Report on project or intervention being conducted	8
Acknowledgement of invitation only	5
Departmental response to questionnaire	4
Policy statement	3

* One organization provided 2 sets of documents, one providing research, one offering a service.

Table 4 Apparent value basis of submission (impressionistic judgement)

Concern for human rights, social development, equity, safety, health	20
Quality / process of learning experience, cognitive issues	12
Bureaucratic accountability	5

Notes:

Submissions evidenced an acute awareness of human rights issues and the Constitution, as in: "Section 29 of the Constitution states: 'Everyone has a right to basic education' ..." or: "Preamble to the SA Schools Act states: 'This country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in education provision'"

Table 5 MCRE Terms of Reference addressed - a prominent thrust of submission was on:

Offering recommendations	30
Conditions in rural schools	19
Quality of learning and teaching	2
Outcomes of educational practice	2

Table 6 Perception of 'rural education'⁷⁹

Seen in (overt or implicit) terms of deficit	24
Seen in terms of an opportunity to build on potential or assets of community	4

Notes:

Deficit in these terms did not generally apply to people (parents, teachers, learners) in rural communities, although in some instances it did (ie. parents appeared to be disparaged as 'illiterates'; teachers depicted as having accepted rural posts as a way of getting into 'the system' and then biding their time until something better turned up in an urban area). Categorisation as deficient more often followed generalisations about practices such as: "Rural schools are a disgrace when one looks at what happening in our school" (a view from a teacher). Most frequent, however, were judgements of inadequate facilities and resources, as for example: "To be honest with you we have been appalled at the conditions in [schools in] most of the rural areas that we have visited" (a Professor in Health Sciences). "The school we visited in Limpopo had pupils borrowing (sic) sand from the river so that teachers could re-coement the floors."

A typical example of an Assets perspective on a rural setting is: "... rural communities have many strengths. They may pertain to a powerful sense of community; to an understanding of the communities' cultural context; to an understanding of indigenous knowledge systems."

⁷⁹ As a concept, 'rural education' appears to be seen as a taken for granted, homogenous (refined?) entity. Three of the submissions grappled with definitions, acknowledging this to be no easy matter.

Table 7 Major points of recommendation

Improve/ equalise facilities / resources	17
Build on / around community approaches	13
Integrated, multi-sectoral approaches	8
'Whole school/ district' approach to development	8
Improved management / leadership	6
Better departmental support	6
Links with HE institutions, other schools, industry	6
Improve Departmental systems	4
Better provision for teachers (inc. incentives)	4
Clarify legal position of farm schools	4

Notes:

There were many other recommendations on aspects of service delivery, such as the need for more hostels and subsidised transport for students.

The benefit of schools operating in 'clusters' was frequently implicit. Surprisingly, it was not explicitly offered as a recommendation. One possible reason for this is that it seems to be regarded as a 'fact of life' in sites where it has been in operation.

Table 8 Main focus of submission: conditions to enable learning, or focus on curriculum issues?

Submission mainly concerned with conditions to enable learning	27
Submission includes focus on actual learning / curriculum issues	7

A note on responses to Provincial questionnaire

Of the four responses⁸⁰ received, one was received too late for inclusion in the analysis; and of the other three, only one followed the format of the questionnaire in a consolidated way. The other two provided documentation relevant to questionnaire items, but not necessarily in direct response to them. It appeared as if collating holistic information was no easy task for provincial departments as different classes of information appear to reside in different directorates or in district offices. In a covering letter accompanying one of the returned questionnaires it was stated that:

"Please note that the provision of education in the province is not clearly divided into rural and urban. It was therefore difficult to respond to all the questions due to absence of criteria to differentiate the schools (writer's emphasis). The Department does not have a committee dedicated to rural education, however rural education matters are also discussed within the Cross-Border Committee of the Department.... Rural schools are managed by Circuit Managers together with all other schools that are not rural."

The fact that provinces were not in a ready position to respond to the questionnaire in a consolidated manner could be interpreted as an indication of the status of rural education as an undifferentiated entity subsumed under a general system of education provision. There appears to be one exception, however:

Western Cape Education Department has a "Rural Education Provisioning Framework" which tries "to ensure quality education for rural schools." This entails measures of economy of scale expressed as principles such as: "Farm schools > 25 learners to amalgamate or close"; "If <100 learners only 2 phases per school"; "Learner Transport Schemes (LTS) to be phased out gradually." "... In the Western Cape we have ensured this right [learners having access to farm schools and adequate learning conditions] by making sure that all lease agreements with our 315 farm schools have been signed."

Successes and Failures

As a follow up to the general features of submissions, here we list successes and failures as indicated, or alluded to, by respondents. Some of these success and failures might be of a limited scale or even atypical, but the fact that they have been recorded or claimed in a submission warrants their inclusion, even though the particular point may not be representative.

⁸⁰ An additional four provincial submissions were received subsequent to the writing of this analysis of submissions and the information was included in the final report.

Successes

Initiatives involving partnerships and multi sectoral approaches

A feature of major funded projects was the involvement of a range of co-operating or contributing bodies. Whatever tensions and stresses might have occurred were not mentioned in reports. In fact, the partnership model is widely accepted and praised as being essential for success.

On a smaller scale, there were reports of initiatives involving, for example:

A municipal-led initiative in the Breede River Winelands involving partnership between the local authority, commercial farmers and rural communities. Farm Worker Committees are being trained by the Resources and Development Foundation in functioning independently and being able to address the needs of rural communities.

"A number of initiatives are taking place in many of our schools. The Stellenbosch University, UCT - Schools Development Unit, Various Companies, EQUIP, to mention a few, are involved. We are forging closer links and working relationships with AGRI-WES-CAPE, Local Government, Health and Social Services."

Overall, the permutations of partnership are varied and impressive.

Feeding schemes

The transfer of responsibility for school feeding schemes from the Department of Health to Education and the creation of new Directorate was reportedly functioning efficiently:

"In all schools visited there was evidence that school feeding is part of the daily school routine and the level of information of principals and delegated educators was satisfactory ... With the exception of a few farm schools, monitors were satisfied that service providers and schools adhered to menu options and recommended quantities."⁸¹

Instances of community and political support for a school

Several submissions alluded to community support as essential ingredients in the success in initiatives. For example, an account of a university-led initiative in Maths and Science reports a success unusually involving a farm school:

"[I]t [the atypical farm school] had computers where learners not only did typing but were able to do mathematics and physical sciences and other content subjects on the computer. The learners all did mathematics at the school and the work ethic was very high. As a result, percentage pass rates at the school were high. The curriculum was of a high quality and the staff and community had high expectations of the teachers and learners ... the school had not always achieved so well previously. The turn around happened with the new leadership at the school together with very strong community and political support for the school ... this farm not only managed to attract local white students into its ranks but had also attracted overseas exchange students from Switzerland and other European countries ... [On this basis] "I am able to argue that dedicating special resources for rural schools indeed works wonders for quality education."

School infrastructure and community

Cautious optimism may be drawn from the innovative Thuba Makote project aimed at piloting innovation in school building design and management, together with community support. After pilot, it was found that:

"The existing infrastructure can be upgraded or new infrastructure can be designed in such a way that it can be used more efficiently and effectively for education and community needs and development."

Multigrade teaching

Multigrade teaching is a fact of life in small schools. Some provinces reported this in a way that suggested that the practice is a problem, such as in the statement: "Teachers at just over 20 percent of Farm School

⁸¹ Firstly, here is one of several indications that like Russian Doll, disadvantage has different layers which, if opened up, reveal farm schools at the core. Secondly, the favourable findings with respect to the National School Nutrition Programme were endorsed at provincial level, with the exception of one province that reported: "Leaves much to be desired... Service delivery is poor because of ineffective school governing bodies."

are forced to teach more than one grade at once." However, seeming disadvantage has the potential to be turned into a positive feature:

"The Multigrade Rural Schools Intervention of the Western Cape Education Department has been running since 2001. A considerable amount of experience (dominant practices - different from those in urban areas) and data have been built up ... As noted in this document, properly supported, it has the potential to encourage self directed learning and learner activity methods."

One form of support mentioned was through the use of technology in the form of the Multigrade website which could be accessed at <http://wced.wcape.gov.za> .

Similarly, a report on the Kgatelopele project cites a teacher reporting that :

"[After workshops] ... when we cluster with project multigrade classes, we really know what to do, even though it takes time ... I feel very positive ..."

School clusters

The clustering of schools for development and support has become a standard feature of most funded projects. Reports are consistently positive, e.g.:

"Many NGOs involved in teacher development have used clusters as an organizational tool in their delivery of training. It is believed that clustering can help address the often limited or insufficient impact of cascade traininging ... the clustering strategy fits in well with the move to decentralisation of educational services. It also purports to offer a means of countering the short fall in district personnel in terms of school-based support in under-resourced districts.

"Rural school cluster communities identify and prioritise their own educational needs, assume ownership over the multi-media centres and develop a shared vision for how they will jointly use, manage, staff and maintain these centres to meet prioritised needs."

With support, the cluster model appears sustainable: "Clusters can now run the model on their own, but do need back-up resources: this should be the national approach".

Materials distribution

Whereas the broader literature on materials distribution in Africa reports depressingly consistent failure in the distribution of materials to schools, the Resources and Information Network (RAIN) has achieved striking success in distributing materials to the 6000 schools in Kwazulu-Natal. In conjunction with the operation of school clusters, RAIN has provided a valuable infrastructure and pool of expertise.

Project experiences

It is rare for projects to report to report failure, especially as evaluation reports are frequently built upon the perceptions and opinions of stakeholders. Nevertheless, amongst the reported successes submitted, a number of projects stand out. The Multi-media Rural Initiative is presented as a sophisticated and high tech intervention that is at the same time appropriate for the rural contexts for which it was designed. This promising project has already reached into rural areas, combining professional development with support for clusters of schools and communities around them. The project is also linked to poverty alleviation and serves as a vehicle for other projects such as 'Combating HIV/ AIDS'.

The Eco Schools programme offers an integrated approach to rural school improvement - with a focus on the relationship between people the environment and learning. It has shown the potential of a cluster-based in-service programme that enhances the quality of learning.

Overall, there is a rich body of knowledge on project experiences. Much of it, however, has not been adequately reported in the public domain.

Small scale, locally relevant teacher development works?

Success has been reported in relatively small but locally relevant teacher development initiatives. One such reads:

"The dramatic growth patterns observed in the teachers' professional development is phenomenal. This improvement in skills can be attributed to a combination of factors such as facilitation during classroom visits, lesson modelling, workshops and ultimately the implementation of learning material to change an overwhelmingly facilitation style or approach to teaching. All of this occurred within the OBE paradigm."

Failures

It is notable that the successes identified above do not represent advances at a systemic level. With the exception of the National School Nutrition Programme, the successes have come about as a result of 'add on' initiatives and projects that have taken place outside of the formal educational system (even though provincial departments are invariably partners in project conceptualisation and management).

In the judgement of respondents, the system itself has failed rural schools, or at least has failed them relative to their urban counterparts. The first sad failure described below is thus of the system itself. It is followed by descriptions of categories of failure that are constituent parts of the system.

Rural and farm schooling at a systemic level

Rural and farms were typically described as being underdeveloped, lacking in resources and unable to provide constitutional entitlements. Several expressions of this judgement are cited at various points of this report, but perhaps best summed up in the following statement based on extensive university research:

"Core to this proposal ... is the belief that rural education is the single most neglected area of the educational project in South Africa."

Public schools on private property

While the legal framework adopted by the government to convert schools on commercial farms is in place,

"the process of concluding these contracts has been unacceptably slow and threatens the continued operation of these schools. To date, a minority of these farm schools is governed by such agreements the failure of provincial governments of education to conclude contracts with landowners is a major obstacle to the enjoyment and exercise of the right to a basic education for farm children."

A legal question asked is :

"... given that 88 percent of Farm Schools were not covered by Section 14 agreements by the end of 2000, why, it might be asked, has the state not begun to expropriate the land on which these schools stand?"

At the same time, it is acknowledged that the issue is complex, with some suspicion on both sides. Broader changes impinge too: the changing nature of farming operations in some regions reportedly affects prospects for amelioration, and "in some cases, landowners argue that pending land claims where farm schools are located prevent the upgrading of school premises".

Departmental support for school managers and teachers

Lack of departmental support was a powerful and consistent theme, e.g.

"In many provinces there are district offices that are largely dysfunctional!"

"Education managers, school managers, SGBs and trainers need to support educators in their efforts to provide quality teaching and learning. Such support is however lacking or insufficient in Limpopo province."

Those working in schools were particularly emphatic about lack of support. A school principal, for example, declared that:

"From my experience the district officials from manager down do not have the capacity, the initiative, the support and the ability to support the schools in their districts. There are not enough EDOs nor enough subject advisers."

"Capacity building" for officials was a frequently cited need. At the same time, it was clear that the problem was not simply a lack of expertise and commitment. The isolation of schools is compounded by long distances officials have to cover, poor roads, and budgetary constraints.

Lack of accountability

Linked to support for school personnel is the question of their accountability. A number of submissions alluded to a lack of teacher accountability with respect to time spent 'on task', and latecoming on the part of teachers and learners. In sites of geographic isolation, the question of to whom schools are responsible was implicit in several accounts of problematic conditions and practices. One submission observed:

"It is interesting to compare local accountability in Ghana, Uganda and South Africa. ...Parents [in Ghana and Uganda] know that if they don't like what is happening at school level, they can go to their locally elected politician. In South Africa where do they go?"⁸²

Non-functional or dysfunctional SGBs

More moderate expressions of SGB dysfunctionality referred to the illiteracy and poverty of parents compromising the effectivity of SGBs. Some submissions - notably from those in or closest to schools - bordered on the disparagement of parents and SGBs as being "uneducated" or uninterested in their schools. One principal noted that only after three fruitless meetings and intervention on the part of the Department had he finally been able to constitute an SGB. Parents had simply not attended meetings that had been scheduled. In other cases it was mentioned that relations were clouded by tension, distrust, and disregard.

A Provincial Department noted that:

"Most members of SGBs are illiterate thus impact negatively on policy implementation." ... "Skills deficit among SGB members ... " was the problem. In conclusion: "One would say that because of their high illiteracy levels of SGBs their contributions to the effectiveness of school have been minimal."

There can be little doubt that the SGB problem is widespread. Human Rights Watch found that SGB participation was rare, and teacher unions report concern on this matter. Even though an isolated case mentioned a farmer transporting parents to a meeting, and "some creative principals" using time after church to have meetings with parents and SGBs, school governance was a major problem.

Lack of resources and lack of utilization of available resources

Lack of resources was the single most powerful theme in comments on conditions in schools, and it underpins notions of rural schools and rural settings as deficit (see Table 6 and Notes for examples).

There is an interesting obverse side of the coin, however:

"The highly qualified and skilled personnel has been IDLE for most of the past eighteen months. ... The Giyani Multi-Purpose Centre is standing empty and its staff, I wish to reiterate, underutilised. Some persons make no effort to report or register that they are around and others are allowed to sign in on their behalf. There are staff members who are currently studying as if they are full-time students at places of higher education, enjoying their monthly remuneration and time they are granted."

Implementation of C2005

Curriculum and issues of education quality were seemingly overshadowed by the more immediate and pressing problems of needs and resources (see Table 8). Insufficient comment on the part of respondents makes it difficult to assert too much in this regard, but there were suggestions that C2005 was not being implemented in a manner consistent with policy script. For example, one Department noted that schools were not yet structured "in line with NQF"; overcrowding and lack of learning materials made for

⁸² This was one of the very few submissions that making reference to experience in Africa.

difficulties; and teachers suffered from "work overload because of multigrade classes" and were in need of training.

Conditions of service for teachers

There is widespread agreement that there is a problem around conditions of service for teachers in rural areas. This is best reflected in a report from one province:

"Poor services discourage better-qualified educators from teaching in rural areas. Previously educators were not part of the homeowners' scheme. Eventually when they were put on board, educators in the rural schools were still excluded. ... This scenario leads to a situation where the educators prefer to travel to work than to stay in the rural areas. Late coming, there fore, becomes the order of the day." Having to use their own vehicles on bad roads compounds the problem, as does lack of access to facilities such as medicine and health. Thus: "Employment in rural areas becomes the last resort while the educator is looking for greener pastures."

Omissions / areas accorded secondary status

In terms of the range of organizations and individuals who made submissions, there is an imbalance favouring providers of education. An impressive range of service providers and interested parties made submissions. However, there is a completed void with respect to the intended beneficiaries of education. Not a single voice from parents and learners is represented in this report.

In terms of issues raised, there were some surprising omissions or lack of emphasis.

- Issues of gender were barely touched on (and when they were, by organizations such as a youth development agency)
- One would imagine that medium of instruction would be a pressing issue in rural and farm schools, but there were few references to it. (Exceptions were the principal who declared that it was a bad system that did not provide mother-tongue instruction; and a teacher union which commented on the relationship between the dominant language - English - and power relations).
- FET was barely mentioned (with an exception being the teacher union which drew attention to the very limited options open to rural children).
- In both issues raised, and in models that have currency at present, there was a noticeable dominance of the literature from the developed world. The African experience seems hardly to exist.⁸³ At the same time, models of school improvement from the developed world appear to have become orthodoxies to the extent that their terminology is frequently invoked as prescriptions, and without reference to the source of the theory (e.g.: "The DoE must be able to identify winning, moving, stuck and failing schools (writer's emphasis) - and have appropriate action for each group."

⁸³ Even local experiences such "Education with production" seem to have receded into a forgotten past. At the same time, it was noticeable that some of the projects that struck the writer of this report as most impressive were managed by organisations that were in fact in touch with other agencies in Africa. Eco-Schools, for example, is part of an international grouping but "11 countries from southern and eastern Africa met to explore how the ECO-Schools programme could be adapted (writer's emphasis) for our countries."

Section B : Analysis of submissions

This analysis is intended to build on issues arising from the Overview, with the intention of moving towards pointers and strategies as the next step for the MCRE.

Experience and knowledge base from submissions

Notwithstanding the unfortunate fact that parents and learners did not make submissions, the activities outlined in submissions are testimony to the commitment and passion of a wide range of parties who are intent on improving the lives of all South Africans through education. There is an acute awareness of social justice and human rights issues.

The range of organisations who made submissions is one indication of the number and diversity of the parties interested in rural education. Reports on initiatives to improve rural schooling provide a further indication of the diversity of 'players' in the field, as is evident in submissions from organizations such as Municipalities, the Health sector, and Human Rights Watch. The culture of 'partnerships' is flourishing too - at least 10 of the reported initiatives in the field involved partnerships of one kind or another. In terms of research, initiatives and inventions in the field, submissions testify to the value and promise of creative local solutions to our particular challenges.

Involvement in rural education is clearly not the sole preserve of 'formal' or 'mainstream' education. On the contrary, 'mainstream' education is relatively weakly represented in the submissions from institutions of higher education. (This is linked, perhaps, to the lack of focus on curriculum and teaching and learning in the submissions.) Similarly, with one exception, reports from the provincial departments did not convey an impression of being 'on top' of service delivery or even planning with respect to rural education and farm schools. In contrast with the innovation evident in project initiatives, provinces seem to be locked into existing bureaucratic arrangements which appear to be given, as evident in the following response :

"Directorate to concentrate on the farm schools seems to a non-starter. If this route has to be taken then a sub-Directorate under the General Education and Training Directorate may be considered like it is the case with the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) issue. Any committee or structure created outside the Circuit Office is a non-starter."

Tensions in the views of respondents

One of the weaknesses in the type of Overview and Summary in Section A of this report is that the views and experiences of individual respondents may not be broadly representative. Respondents may also not agree with each other. Potential areas of disagreement or tension were evident in submissions, and it can be helpful to identify these. Briefly:

- How does education serve rural development when much of its attraction is that it provides the avenue for some successful individuals to escape to modernity?

The strong stress on building education within the Community, and respecting indigenous knowledges, in many submissions may be in tension with curriculum policy with its underpinning principles of learner centredness, and creative and critical thinking,

However oversimplistic and politically fraught it might be to consider constructions of 'traditional' and 'modernist' cultures, a number of submissions implied such a tension. For example, in research into the nature of rural communities, it was reported that:

"A typical cosmology of a traditional rural Zulu community is of an undivided universe, where plants, animals humans ancestors, earth, sky and the entire universe all so-exist in a varying state of balance between order and disorder, harmony and chaos."

The "undivided universe" stands in contrast with the divisions of modern social organization, such as church and state, sacred and profane, etc. The bureaucratic niche of education departments themselves represent an organizational schism from the notion of communities with their lived

experiences being at the core of local education provision.

Following the previous point, a teacher union noted that: "... most of our policies do not speak to the challenges experienced by teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders in rural communities. The experience of the community in practice should be mirrored by policies that address these issues." National priorities expressed in education policy have the potential to stand in tension with respect for diversity and perhaps even democracy.

Submissions were virtually unanimous in their adherence to the importance of community approaches, yet the ineffectiveness of SGBs was pointed out with equal consistency.

Faith in integrated, multi sectoral partnership approaches is strong, but it assumes social consensus. Such consensus does not exist, the most striking instance here being the differing perspectives with respect to farm schools evident in submissions from the Women's Agricultural Union and the Education Rights Project. The latter cites legal challenges and cases "where landowners obstructed physical access to schools or frustrated their functioning by suspending water supply or closing off short routes to a school." The former also focuses on the human rights of teachers rather than on the human rights of learners: "Due to human rights and the law against corporal punishment, tools for maintenance of discipline have been removed from the hands of educators."⁸⁴

There is a potential tension involved in reconciling imported orthodoxies in terms of educational models (mostly, of 'whole school' development and school improvement), while yet building systems that take account of local contexts, experiences, and resources.

In some views, a continuous professional development model "may take us beyond the 'workshop culture' that has overtaken professional development in South Africa". At the same time, work shops are an integral feature of some of the successful small scale, local development projects reported in submissions.

Do democratic principles or educational principles prevail? For example, in one provincial report parents did not avail themselves of opportunity for early mother tongue instruction which the department was trying to provide: "We try to implement mother-tongue instruction so that learners can learn and be taught in Mother-tongue eg isiXhosa. We tried it at Voorwaarts near Riversdale where 2 teachers were provided, but parents took away their kids to an Afrikaans-medium school after 2 years of implementation."

Should planning for rural education reflect critically on general education policy or does it take implementation with fidelity as an unproblematic 'given'? (e.g. a teacher union suggested that SGBs should not be expected to function in the way envisaged by policy because "... most of our policies do not speak to the challenges experienced by teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders in rural communities. The experience of the community in practice should be mirrored by policies that address these issues."

Most respondents saw 'rural' in completely deficit terms. Some, on the other hand, saw 'rural' in terms of asset or potential. This crucially important distinction is developed in the section that follows.

⁸⁴ This submission also contained negative stereotypes: "Schools in rural areas seen not to stick to time schedule"... "Pupils and teachers arrive very late at school - loss of teaching hours"... "History has proved that the parent or rural learners are not involved and do not accept responsibility for either the establishment or upkeep of teaching facilities of their children". Rather than blaming the history and systems for poverty, this submission appeared to be blaming the poor for their poverty.

Possibilities for taking forward the work of MCRE

Establishing principles

Building on recommendations made in submissions, it is reasonable to suggest that there was consensus on the following approaches:

- Integrated, cross-sectoral approaches to rural education
- Local provision and practices rooted in the community
- Provision should be supported departmentally and politically (and perhaps be politically accountable too)
- Project-type support should be locally relevant, with different permutations of constituent partners and actors, as appropriate
- 'Cluster' arrangements amongst schools.

If accepted, any such principles would need to be operationalised in ways that are mindful of the kinds of tensions identified in the section above.

Any such principles, however, would need to be worked through *within an appropriate regulatory policy framework*. In this regard, the most significant issue, one fundamental to rural education and farm schools, is that submissions pointed uniformly in one direction:

Rural education and farm schools in particular are special cases warranting special policy attention.

This principle was either implicit or explicit in almost all submissions. There was no dissenting view arguing that this domain is simply a particular site of 'mainstream' education. The research-based judgement that rural education is the single most neglected educational project in the country has already been cited. A teacher union concluded thus:

"It is therefore recommended that rural schools be treated as a separate category of 'special' schools and that they (and other schools in poor areas) receive more funding (over and above their 'quintile' based allocation) ..."

Farm schools, in turn, were identified in other submissions as a further special case within the special case of rural education, eg:

"We believe that farm schools should be preserved at all costs, because the schools are also community centers and the demise of the schools will leave a void in the communities."

"... despite its good intentions, the government's efforts to improve conditions on Farm Schools have achieved little. In particular, the state's inability to resolve the issue of Farm Schools' legal status has allowed their vulnerability to endure."

A youth development organisation put its case thus:

"A lot of government interventions has (sic) been directed to the so called 'nodal areas' resulting in these areas being bombarded with projects whereas nothing happens in other areas that are as needy...All rural areas need to be given the same prioritisation. Government structures have to recognise the unique/ special needs of rural schools and devote additional resources to rural schools."

A provincial submission implies that rural and farm schools will continue to be disadvantaged if service delivery is organized along lines of bureaucratically specialised functions being applied to all schools in an undifferentiated way. In this submission it was noted that :

"EMDCs cover:
 Farm land
 Small towns
 Informal settlements

But the statistics hide essential differences:
Gender differences across the province relating to access, retention and learning achievement
Urban rural differences relating to success, retention and learning achievement
 Historically advantaged vs historically disadvantaged schools
 Economic profiles of learners.

What about the differences in infrastructure and service delivery?

It is essential for these differences to be highlighted in future so that the success of policies can be monitored and evaluated."⁸⁵

A submission from another province highlights the point regarding the lack of differentiation between schools. The Kwazulu-Natal policy on Education Centres has obvious relevance and potential to meet the special needs of rural schools, yet in it there is no distinction between rural and urban. Brute statistics for different categories of educational services and achievements will also inevitably be flattened out when no distinction exists between classes of schools.

If it is accepted that rural and farm schools should constitute a special category of school, definition will be necessary. In most submissions there was an assumed, taken-for-granted image of what rural education is, and what its parameters are. A small number of submissions grappled with definition without reaching firm conclusions. In various ways it was certainly depicted as a multi-faceted concept that could include cultural as well as geographic factors, poverty indices, and even unique school challenges:

The challenges that confront these schools are very often different from the challenges faced by other public schools."

Other submissions alluded to potentially fraught social relationships embodying potential tensions between insiders and outsiders, modernity and traditionalism.

Towards strategies

On the basis of submissions, consideration of strategies to improve rural education would seem to revolve around two basic, inter-related questions.

Firstly, what is the relationship between a focus on resources to achieve equity of access, on the one hand, and a focus on curriculum issues on the other?

Submissions placed much more emphasis on issues of equity, access and human rights than on curriculum, learning and teaching (see Section A, Table 4). Similarly, the dominant recommendation in Table 7 was the need to improve and equalise facilities and resources. None of the categories in Table 7 invoked curriculum issues. Table 8 reflects the situation most clearly: above all, submissions were concerned with the provision of *enabling* conditions for learning and teaching.

The seeming neglect of curriculum issues could be serious, if recent literature is taken into account. There is no evidence that quality of learning necessarily follows enhanced resourcing. For example, Rose (2004) concludes that inequalities stem neither from resources, nor from "the overt content of the curriculum, nor in an emphasis on learner-centred or teacher-centred philosophies, but in persistent evolved classroom practices that engage and enable different learners unequally".⁸⁶

⁸⁵ See also provincial comments under the subheading 'A note on responses to Provincial questionnaire', Section A.
⁸⁶ Similar kinds of conclusions have recently been drawn by Taylor et al (2003) and Harley and Wedekind (2004).

Were submissions un mindful of the ultimately crucial importance of the quality of teaching and learning, or are inequalities of provision so vast that these must be addressed before curriculum issues can even be considered? In the opinion of this writer, the issue of resources had a powerfully overriding symbolic role in some submissions. A number of submissions from teachers were of this kind: rural schools did not have the computer. This seemed to become an issue in itself. On the other hand, a number of other submissions invoked the resources/ enabling argument as a *necessary but perhaps not sufficient condition* for quality learning and teaching. This judgement is well captured in the words of a university researcher doing development work in a rural area:

"... the problem of scholastic underachievement in South Africa is by no means linearly a problem of scholastic underachievement. This problem is embedded in much deeper and more critical issues. In most schools teaching facilities are sorely lacking. We wonder how it is possible to facilitate achievement... when children live in poor conditions often without even a toilet, a meal, running water or a bar of soap. In these circumstances, the initial aim of our research in Limpopo soon paled into insignificance. As in any intervention strategy the individual and his/her environment must be treated holistically."

In the judgement of the writer of this Analysis, respondents were indeed arguing for equity of provision from a human rights perspective, but that at an often implicit level, the ultimate purpose was to achieve quality of learning as well. If this interpretation is correct, corrective strategies should not view the resourcing of schools and curriculum in practice as either / or questions. The answer from respondents would seem to be: Equity of provision and quality of curriculum practice are indivisible.

The *second* question is about how 'rural' should conceptualised in any policy or implementation strategy. Arguments concerned mainly with conditions to enable learning (see Table 8) lead easily to deficit views of rural schools and the communities in which they are situated. Indeed, Table 6 (Section A) indicates that 'rural' was indeed perceived in overwhelmingly deficit terms. How should strategies view the intended beneficiaries of reform : as Deficit or Asset?

A number of submissions pointed out the perils of conceptualising 'rural' in purely deficit terms. Such perceptions lead readily to approaches which in the words of one respondent "start by focusing on the needs, deficiencies and problems of communities, and accordingly devise strategies to address these needs and problems." Moreover, this approach encourages "members to think about themselves as fundamentally deficient and as powerless victims of their circumstances."⁸⁷ "The alternative is to focus on the capacities, skills and social resources of people and their communities ... [leading to thinking about] potential and about the ways the existing potential can be directed towards available opportunities."

Ways of taking conditions and recommendations further should, in the opinion of the writer, be framed by the equity, access, human rights/ provision of resources/ community deficit perspective

in relation to
the community asset, potential / focus on quality and real change with respect to what individual learners experience and achieve.

⁸⁷ One can see how this might happen, even in a well intentioned scheme described by one respondent: "The advanced successful city or private schools have to mentor the poor and under performing rural schools. For this to be a success the rural schools must see the benefits of this mutual relationship. They themselves must identify their mentor schools and be willing to get help. The challenge therefore is to help rural schools to see the need of learning from the successful ones." Urban schools can all too easily become benchmarks for quality."

Quotes for consideration by the MCRE

Rather than interpretations of respondents' views (as immediately above) this section includes a number of quotes from respondents that might contribute to the categories with which the MCRE is currently working.

Reconsidering 'rural' and rural education: (from periphery to the centre)

The political / ideological level

"Rural education experience has been a tool used by architects of apartheid to divide and rule racially, culturally and educationally. In this democratic era it is a tool used by the government to implement trial and error programs at the expense of poor people who need real development. Rural schools are situated in underdeveloped areas that are characterised by:

- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Illiteracy
- Lack of electricity
- Unavailability of clean water
- Lack of proper sanitation
- Inequitable distribution of available resources
- Diseases such as cholera, HIV, Aids and dysentery (from a Youth Development Society)"

"... calls for genuine commitment from government to invest in education to combat inequities and challenges. This would translate into a more collaborative strategy among the different ministries."

"An interdisciplinary approach should be followed and cannot be entirely based on remuneration. Education, Sport, Arts & Culture, Health, Public Works, Social Development, Trade and Industry depts and the private sector should produce an anti-rural decay development strategy" (a teacher).

"It is clear to us that different policy options are needed to advance and fast track implementation of the changes in education in rural areas ..." (Teacher union).

The level of practice (curriculum and quality)

From one of several projects and recommendations to build education within the community from an assets / potential view of 'rural':

... there are in fact many resources for OBE and the RNCS in each community. What is needed, therefore, is a means to find ways of making these resources available to the schools so that the teachers can use them to promote learning within the framework of RNCS.

What is meant here by resources? In each village and community there are people with useful knowledge and skills. There are active and retired professionals, there are community historians, there are young people with post-matric qualifications, there are poets and writers and dancers and musicians, there are healers, there are people with many different kinds of experience, there are business people and so on. There are also multiple kinds of object, book, cultural artefact, picture, family heirloom and other examples of interest and value that might be used for learning.

.... a Community Education Forum should be established to be a platform for engagement by the community in the education and schooling of its children."

Poverty alleviation and rural development

The Multi-media Rural Initiative has poverty alleviation built in - but this did not seem to be a factor in other submissions. No illustrative quotes are available.

Special interventions: School feeding, HIV/Aids, school safety and donor-assisted initiatives

School feeding schemes have been reported to be successful (see 'Successes' in Section A.)

One submission links special interventions within the community approach:

"An action plan at national level to protect the children, families and educators. This action plan should include a strategy where the wisdom (and assets) within the rural communities are acknowledged and mobilized by the communities themselves."

Various other interventions eg. Learn about Healthy Living Project (MIET) are cited in submissions, but too few of these have been reported for present purposes.⁸⁸

Funding rural education

A provincial response notes that technicalities in differentiation between levels of poverty in individual schools could lead to farm schools not being classified as the most needy.

"What most schools in poverty really require is a significant and carefully channelled increase in absolute levels of funding, designed to build capacity and improve the quality of educators. The Norms and Standards are unlikely to provide that."

"There should be a considerable bias towards rural schools supported by effective monitoring committee for earmarked fund allocation for each school" (Provincial Education Department).

The shape and size of the rural school system

One province notes a drop in the number of learners from grade 7 onwards.

"Overall, the capacity in rural areas is very weak and so learners are leaving for bigger centres, better schools." (A School Principal).

Governance and management across all tiers

"It may be necessary ... to make special provision for alternative methods/ strategies for governance along more traditional lines and to gradually develop capacity. NAPTOSA believes that it would be unrealistic, even at this stage, to expect all rural schools to function in accordance with the South African Schools Act in respect of school governance."

"Increasing the rate at which schools become Section 21 institutions. This means that a range of development programmes for Governing Bodies and school managers have to be launched to ensure that the management capacity exists for schools to take control of certain key functions. In the final analysis, we need to move to a situation where schools will eventually control and manage all functions relating to effective schools. By devolving key management functions to schools, much of the responsibility for provisioning and logistical services will shift to schools, enabling head office and EMDCs to focus on policy mediation, support, monitoring."

"One of the huge disadvantages of rural schools in Eastern Cape is the fact that they are so divided into Junior Primary, Senior Primary, Junior Secondary, Senior secondary - there is no continuity for a child, teacher, nor a parent. A combined school is the secret of Elliot High's success - dedicated foundation teachers inspire the High School teachers - here is a cross fertilization of parents and children as well. In a city the combined school is not needed but it really works in rural areas."

⁸⁸ A major obstacle to HIV/AIDS initiatives is that we simply do not know enough about the issue. In a review of the HIV/AIDS research, Baxen and Breifeld (forthcoming) conclude that although existing studies have relevance, they are framed within a medical metaphor and neglect to provide an understanding of the situated context in which knowledge, attitudes, practices and interventions are produced and reproduced. In other words, we do not know what is happening in schools.

"While clustering seems to offer a solution to the problems of teacher isolation, lack of resources and insufficient support for schools, questions remain as to whether it is indeed a sustainable strategy especially for rural and deep rural schools. The costs of travel between far-flung rural schools, the time and personnel it takes to co-ordinate cluster activities, are all difficulties that clusters encounter." ... [Yet] "There seems to be principled support for the strategy for clustering schools as a means of enhancing education delivery. However this is not translated into significant and concrete support for the clusters. At the provincial level, no department of education seems to have a formal policy in place that articulates its positions with regards to school clustering."

"In terms of grading the farm schools and traditional authority areas school are the worst (sic). To deal with these challenges a Directorate of Rural Education has to be established at provincial level to interface with all other rural community structures for effective learner support services."

Curriculum and priority learning areas

Very little was offered here.

"Many of our parents are unable to communicate in English yet demand that their children are taught from Grade 0 to Grade 1 in English. ",, "It is a bad system that does not make mother-tongue instruction the norm in public schools" (School principal)

Educators (recruitment, conditions of service, professional development)

"There are not enough teachers and principals who have the capacity, support and or ability to run a school or teach. ... Extra pay to attract good teachers " (School Principal).

"Teachers employed by the State have to be accommodated within reasonable distance of the school. Clearly, in such cases, teachers would not be entirely independent and free to follow the lifestyle of their choice, for example, there may be restrictions regarding accommodation for family members" (School teacher).

"Conditions of service, incentives for teachers in rural areas etc need to be reviewed in order to make teaching in rural and farm schools more attractive to teachers" (Teacher Union).

"...the majority of qualified, but unemployed teachers have reached such a stage of desperation that they would be more than prepared to be re-trained in gateway subjects and be deployed in rural areas. ... This would be to ensure that teaching in rural schools is not reduced to a 'post securing strategy' by urban based qualified but unemployed teachers."

Farm schools

Numbers appear to have been declining since 1994.

"... public schools on private commercial farms, ... constitute 13 percent of all state-funded schools and provide education to about 3% of learners in the public school system ..."

"It will take a very serious campaign from very high up to make the point that we all care about these [farm] schools - and that they are also South African schools!"

"Prioritise policies to ensure access to education for children living on commercial farms through adequate financing and planning. Appropriate steps could include establishing a unit at the national Department of Education for focus on the management of farm schools and facilitate a forum for provincial departments of education to exchange best practices on the governance and management of farm schools and

strategies to ensure that all can access primary education. The unit could also convene a multi-sectoral forum, with farm owners, farmworkers, teachers and farm owners' representative bodies, non governmental organizations and local government, to review the situation on farm schools and devise strategies for improvement. This unit should also maintain a database on farm schools."

Monitoring and evaluation of rural education

Matriculation results are all too often a proxy for quality, eg. ". . .there has been a marked increase in the pass rates of grade 12 students (matriculants). District officials and school managers attribute this success directly to the impact of the project."

In actual fact, there were improvements in matriculation scores, but these included many instances of equally dramatic improvement in non-project schools.

In other instances, indices of quality are derived from levels of resourcing:

"The low quality of education is evident in the lack of physical resources in schools - 90% of Eastern Cape schools lack electricity and running water and many have no textbooks or supplementary materials."

How to kick start the process : creation of a National Task Team

"NGOs are development-oriented and are better equipped to reach the poor, especially in rural areas that are not served by the public sector. Members of NGOs are frequently members of the population that the NGO is serving, consequently they identify more easily with the needs of the target group" (Youth Development Society).

"Tribal land owners, (on whose land rural schools may be built) parents, teachers, learners, district officials and the State e.g local municipalities must be in complete agreement about their own particular roles and obligations as well as those of other partners. The discussion could also create a forum for future discussions in which roles could be negotiated. It is also anticipated that the roles, rules and responsibilities that would be agreed upon in this kind of forum would be unique to the circumstances in which each rural school finds itself."

"Youth development in South Africa should be addressed in an environment where all stakeholders, including young people, work towards common goals. It should demonstrate the distinctive and complementary roles of all Ministries and departments, the private sector, civil society, no-governmental organizations, youth groups and young people."

"A key theme within service delivery more generally is one which attends to the need for integrated and multi-sectoral approaches to basic service delivery within decentralization, community development, local government and so on within rural areas. Some recent cases supported by UNICEF and the World Bank on integrating health, education, nutrition, feeding schemes, environmental issues at the school level have met with at least partial success within the framework of school-based community initiatives."

"Most of these facilities [school buildings] have very low utilisation rates, as they are generally only used by school learners during school hours. The existing infrastructure can be upgraded or new infrastructure can be designed in such a way that it can be used more efficiently and effectively for educational and community needs and development. ... If particular approaches are followed, schools can be developed to more effectively support community development and accommodate new developments such as new policy, curricula and the use of information technology."

"Qualitative field research should be conducted investigating the lived experience of teachers, pupils, parents and other school stakeholders ... Quantitative research on overall economic patterns (Incomes, occupations, demographics etc.) within a community and on school enrolments, attendance, school fees and pass rates will also help establish the level of poverty within a particular community."

Conclusion

This report has sought to capture and reflect the views of stakeholders on rural education. It has also attempted to analyse these views. It is hoped that these aims have been achieved in a way that is helpful to the mission of the MCRE.

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A personal postscript arising from the review of submissions

A number of personal impressions are added to the Overview and Analysis that has been based on submissions and responses to the provincial questionnaire.

Firstly, the sad corollary of the many creative initiatives taking place is that we learn so little from them about their impact on teacher development on pupil learning. Reports are most often based on the perceptions of stakeholders, and these are characteristically laudatory. In the case of funded projects, reports appear to prioritise accountability to funders rather than the development of ideas and theories about change and school improvement.

But we cannot even begin to learn about ways enhancing quality unless we have confidence in the validity of evaluative reports and reviews in the first place.⁸⁹ Departmental activities such as the feeding scheme are reported to be "monitored", but by whom, and how, we are not told. One is left with the impression of such bodies monitoring themselves. External views and perspectives are singularly lacking. Some funded projects record having utilized the services of a "technical adviser/ evaluator" who also served as a "critical friend" to give practical support, monitor progress and evaluate whether outcomes were being achieved.

In short, much could be gained by more rigorous external monitoring and evaluation. The value of an 'evaluative account', a meta narrative developed around a set of studies on a clearly articulated focus, has been well documented by Bhola (2002). There is ample project experience in South Africa upon which to base such an evaluative account.

Reviews or evaluative accounts could also cover the kinds of research which submissions exposed. Higher degree students, for example, produce a good deal of research on teachers' experiences of curriculum implementation. There are seemingly no reviews and overviews of this kind of research, leaving it at the level of disconnected case studies.

⁸⁹ An exception here was 'A case study of the NEEP-GET Makana Cluster - Eastern Cape'. Monitoring was theoretically sophisticated and included: 'Evaluations of cluster meetings and field trips; Observations schedules drawn up for analysing school visits and field trips; Teacher and classroom, and community profiles to gain a better understanding of the contexts in which individual schools and teachers operated; Teacher portfolios.

Secondly, there is the conundrum of respondents advocating community-based approaches to rural schooling, yet at the same time reporting the lack of community involvement in SGBs. How might communities be mobilised? From the accounts of respondents one was struck by the potential of environmental education as an organizing concept around which to mobilise communities. According to a number of respondents, environmental concerns are central to the functioning of rural communities. Environmental concerns also have the potential for a community 'assets' rather than 'deficit' approach. This argument is illustrated by a number of quotes:

- "... rural households are directly dependent on natural resources (the environment) for sustaining their livelihoods, for food security and for many social and cultural practices."
- "... rural communities have many strengths. They may pertain to a powerful sense of community; to an understanding of the communities' cultural context; to an understanding of indigenous knowledge systems. All too often we look at rural schools as poor cousins, places which have deficits which have to be remedied."
- "The people who live in rural villages have indabas, imbizos, xvidjos, lekgotlas, forums and other kinds of meeting to discuss many aspects of community life. But no such forum exists for regular attention to educational matters, either that provided by the community or that which is offered by the local schools."
- In one project, teachers defined environment as: "Environment means everything around us, it can trees, water, community and animals"; " It is the community in which we live, people, houses, water, the seasons, weather, rocks and vegetation."

A personal judgement too is that the Eco-Schools programme demonstrates the potential of integrating knowledge across Learning Areas in way that promotes learner activity, thus meeting the underpinning principles of C2005.

	Submission received from	Individual or organizational base	Basis of submission, eg. Offer a service, experience, research, report	Apparent value position / nature of activity	Aspect of MCRE TOR addressed	Understanding of 'rural'	Comment / recommendations (explicit or implicit) aimed at:	Involved in partnerships; Stress on community or integrated approach	Relationship to Learning
1	Anonymous *								
2	ABA IMFUNDO	Organization (Service provider: Actor in the field)	1 Provide research on ICT 2 Proposal to establish ICT infrastructure in schools	Equity – widen access to ICT	Recommend and offer ICT services on franchise / business principles	1 Research optimism re project; 2 Implicit: rural synonymous with deprived Deficit model	Narrowing the digital divide by establishing infrastructure to support learning	Partnership with higher ed.; Community involvement in use of facilities	Indirect : concerned with enabling conditions
3	Mr S M Bhengu	Individual	Experience of conditions: nepotism / corruption in rural schools	Concern for quality	Highlights Conditions	Implicit: rural synonymous with corruption/ absence of accountability Deficit	Cleaning up corrupt practices		Indirect : concerned with enabling conditions
4	Breede River Municipality ☺	Non-educational Organization (Section 1 company formed)	Describe experience of network / partnerships to integrate rural development	Development and social upliftment	Highlights a local strategy	Implicit, Deficit model	Implicit – illustrates promise of partnerships/ networks	Partnership with employers	Direct: Training Committees & providing ABET
5	Berg River Municipality	Organization (Non-educational)	Acknowledge Initiative only						
6	Catalyst Youth Development Society	Organization (non profit)	Experience : of inequalities and problems. Recommend extra-curricular activities & provision of	Quality of life for youth (beyond the school day)	Highlights conditions and local strategy	Defines rurality Deficit	Provision of Resources (closing the gap with the 'haves'); Advocates sport/ extra curricular activities;	Integrated approach – align government departments	Indirect – focus is extra curricular

			resources						
7	Education Policy Consortium **	Organization – (NGO + university)	Offering a service – to research community needs/ways to involve	Equity, the Constitution; Quality, the curriculum	Recommend nity Education Forum	Conceptually implicit. Build on community strengths.	Research into ways of developing community-curriculum link	Partnership Community Integrated approach	Direct – parents will assist with curriculum
8	Deloitte & New Horizons *	Organization							
9	National School Nutrition Programme	Department of Education	Report on School Nutrition Programme	Bureaucratic accountability	Report on policy and monitoring of nutrition scheme	Key in rural areas, but not rural specific	Not applicable		Indirect: aimed at creating enabling conditions
10	Educational Psychology, Stellenbosch University	University Faculty	Research with implications for rural education	Rights of children, and educators	Recommend on basis of research	Not addressed.	National action plan based on wisdom of communities; reading programmes	Community assets or wisdom as a basis	Indirect: aimed at creating enabling conditions
11	Teacher Education Dept, Eastern Michigan University *	University Faculty	Offer a service-curriculum, trainers, publications						
12	EduAction *	Organization	Acknowledged invitation – no comment						
13	Tom Noot -	Individual School Principal	Professional experience	School functionality, quality, outcomes	Recommendations linked to practices	Implicit and deficit – earmarked by marginalisation	Continuity in schooling; dept. support; teacher provision; hostels professionalism		Indirect Enabling functional system
14	Faculty of Education and Nursing RAU	University Faculty	research data base (students); research:teacher narratives	Belief in value of research	Data base is offered. It's up to others to interpret, decide what to do. Conditions may be inferred	Not addressed. Projects are management, computers etc: Site rural	No comment or recommendation	Not applicable	Not articulated
15	Health Sciences, Wits	University Faculty	Experience of school conditions	Hygiene and welfare of rural	Highlights conditions		Implicit – improve basic facilities	Not applicable	Indirect, enabling

			from field visits	people					
16	Fukula MHS Skills	Organization (a CC)	Offer services in measuring quality and advising schools	School improvement along business lines		No necessary link with rural	Provision of services	Not applicable	Not systemic – through own programme
17	Helene Perold and Associates	Organization	Reports on 2 funded projects to improve governance, management and professional competence	Reflections on commissioned work	It's up to others to interpret reports: conditions and recommendations may be inferred	Implicit – projects operated in rural contexts Deficit	Left to reader to infer – seemingly: consultative, whole school / whole district approaches	Need for partnerships and building dynamic communities implied	Indirect, enabling
18	Human Rights Watch	Organization	Research into farm schools	Human rights concern for access to schools	Highlights conditions, makes recommendations	Deficit	Contracts with landowners; multi-sectoral forum for management; monitoring	Community forum for management; need legal framework for farm schools	Indirect, enabling
19	Wonga Tabata	Individual, School Principal	Experience as an educator and Principal	Rural schools still suffer from under-resourcing	Highlights conditions, makes recommendations	Implicit Deficit	Provide facilities & resources; communal infrastructure; stem migration	Integrated policy approach	Indirect, enabling
20	Kayz Naidoo	Individual, research student	Reference for MBA research						
21	Patuleni Zandile	Individual	Offer : open computer/ business college						
22	Grace Radingwana	Individual	Personal Experience		Highlights conditions, makes recommendations	Implicit Deficit	Provide facilities & resources, including water	Integrated policy approach	Indirect, enabling
23	ZT Tshangase	Individual	Personal Experience		Conditions, Recommendations	Implicit Deficit	Provide computers and teachers for music & sport		Indirect, enabling

24	NE Rowles	Individual	Offer: book or literature on gardening		Recommendation	Implicit Deficit	Include gardening in curriculum/ timetable		Indirect, enabling
25	Loyiso Jita	Joint Centre for Science, Mathematics & Technology Education University of Pretoria	Research experience in rural schools	Disciplinary and rural school enthusiast	Recommendation on basis of single good experience; Focus too on quality and outcomes	Rural, synonymous with deprived Deficit	Provide integrated support for schools; Special resources; Link with HE institutions and industry	Community involvement & Integrated approach	Indirect enabling with implied causal connection with exam results
26	Mr S Zukula	Kearsney College	Offers experience	Equity	Recommendation	Deficit	Successful (urban) schools to mentor rural schools		Enabling
27	Link Community Development	Organization	Offer experience; offer a service		Recommend "whole district development" model	Assumes there is common understanding	Leadership; mentoring; measuring performance; local accountability; import UK teachers	Community accountability	Indirect, enabling
28	Maths Centre, SA	Organization	Report on programme and activities	Advance learning of Maths	Commend their product	Not applicable – generic product	Implicit - Improvement of Maths		Maths learning, universally not rurally
29	P Esau & W Visser	Individuals (from Giyani Education Multi-purpose Centre DoE)	Offer research and experience	Concern for improvement and use of available resources	Highlight conditions; discuss quality; offer recommendations	Notion of rural is central organizing category Deficit	Use available resources! Revise RNCS for rural areas; Leadership; Professionalism		Direct: curriculum issues addressed
30	Media in Education Trust	Organization (Service provider: actor in the field)	1 Annual Report & project account. 2 Proposal re pilot Multi-media Rural Network 3 Guides	Equality with respect to access to quality education	For inference: models and experience, and recommendations for improvement	Notion of rural is central organizing category in activities	Comprehensive array of projects achieving professional development and curriculum delivery in schools. Repository of invaluable experiences.	Exemplify partnership; Community central in initiatives	Enabling, address curriculum issues directly. Learning materials: 'hands on'

31	NAPTOSA	Teacher union	Experience of conditions; offer recommendations Holistic reponse	Equity and quality	Highlight conditions; make recommendations	Grapple with a definition or delimiter Largely deficit	Rural is 'special' case; Incentives for teachers; Adapted form of governance; Dept support; Professional development; Access: More combined schools	Need for strong community forums	Focus on enabling conditions; assumed causal relationship between inputs and quality
32	National Youth Commission	Office of the President	Policy for youth development; offer a meeting & services	Youth development (generic)	None		Not applicable	Recommend integrated approach	Not applicable
33	Ndima Community Services *	Organization					Recognition of indigenous knowledge systems		
34	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	University	Invitation acknowledged						
35	Peninsula Technikon	Technikon	Invitation acknowledged						
36	Research Unit, Tshwane University of Technology	University	Offer 5 research papers on management	Illuminate issues relevant to better management		Not addressed	Notes differences in approach between urban and rural principals		Not stated
37	Dr Marc Schafer	Mathematics Education, Rhodes University	Personal research & experience	Rural education enthusiast		Not addressed			Not stated
38	Prof Heila Lotz-Sisitka	Environmental Education Unit, Rhodes	Offers research experience and insights	Relationship between people, environment & learning	Programme evaluation (outcomes); sample of materials; quality; outcomes; offers recommendations	Defined w.r.t. dependency on natural resources	Integrated approach; cluster-based INSET	Exemplifies and argues for partnership model enabling an integrated approach	Direct: Addresses curriculum, teaching and learning. Learning materials: 'hands on'

39	D Pullen, St Mary's DSG Outreach Education Trust	Organization	Experience and offer service	School 'upgrade'	Highlights conditions. Practical 'outreach' to a farm school	Not addressed	Report implies benefit of 'adopting' farm schools	One to one relationship; has a community dimension	Enabling: First establish functional environment
40	Sue Beard, Research Librarian : Education Foundation Trust	Organization	Offer access to publications in Resource Centre						
41	Prof SKG Lenyai	Tshwane University of Technology	Report on (generic) activities of Drama Dept				No implications can be inferred		
42	Dr Heather Jacklin *	School of Education, University of Cape Town	Offer issues w.r.t. inequalities urban/rural						
43	Prof E Pretorius	Humanities, University of OFS	Brief report of activities (generic) within faculty				No implications can be inferred		
44	Dr RJ Balfour & Prof C Mitchell	Faulty of Education, U of KwaZulu-Natal	Propose Institute for Teacher Development for Rural Education at UKZN	Equity / belief in importance of rural education	Recommends a teacher development initiative	Grappled with. Authors do not agree with deficit conceptualization	Research and development	Strong case for research and integrated multi sectoral approach	Semi direct through teacher development
45	Prof D Coetzee *	Philosophy and Policy Studies, University of OFS	Provide reference for student research paper						
46	Office of Vice Chancellor *	University of Port Elizabeth	Acknowledge invitation						
47	Prof JG Maree & JM Molepo	Education Faculty, University of Pretoria	1 Provide research article 2 Report of teacher recruitment initiative	1 Education development; 2 Provision of teachers - disadvantaged	1 & 2 Highlight research and local strategies	Implicit, assumed	Implication: interventions need to address local circumstances	Partnerships (and funders!) needed	Enabling conditions
48	Prof ME Muller	Humanities, University of Pretoria	Provides overview of honours thesis	Unusually here, focus is on gender					

49	Prof P Higgs	Educational Studies, UNISA	Details of relevant teaching 1 NPDE 2 Details of science outreach programme		For inference - recommendations	1 Informed by Norms & Standards, not rural conditions 2 Outreach Workkshop Programme in rural setting	Unclear		Indirect, through teacher qualifications
50	Prof SD Edwards	Psychology, UNIZUL	Research papers on community psychology, health, indigenous healing	Respect for community understanding	Highlights conditions with implications for rural education	Defined in social/cultural terms Positive	Implied: respect for traditional cultural understandings	Communities central organizing category	Not aimed at schooling per se
51	SADTU	Teacher Union	Professional experience of conditions Holistic response	Address disparity between urban/rural schools	Conditions; Recommendations	Implicit, linked with 'the poor'; Deficit	Seen as government responsibility w.r.t. access, resources, integration across departments, teacher deployment	Need for integrated approach	Enabling conditions; curriculum not addressed
52	SA Women's Agricultural Union	Organization	Personal experience	Children should be taught life skills, morality, discipline	Conditions; Recommendations	Implicit; Deficit	Lack resources, accountability, discipline and responsibility.		Enabling conditions; curriculum not addressed
53	UNICEF	Organization	Organizational experience	Safety of children and impact of HIV AIDS	Recommendations	Implicit; Deficit	Flexible modalities for vulnerable children; learner safety (girls esp.); multi-grade proficiency		Enabling conditions
54	Institute for Mathematics and Science Teaching, Stellenbosch University	University	Research experience from the field	INSET : Maths and Science teachers; rural focus	Conditions; Recommendations	Implicit; Deficit	Classroom-based teacher support: workshops, materials, modeling		Directly involved with teaching & curriculum
55	Dr Liesel Ebersohn, Educational Psychology ***	University of Pretoria	Research paper	Concern for vulnerable children	Conditions; Recommendations	Implicit; Positive	Asset-based approaches – based on local potential	Community based interventions	Enabling conditions
56	KZN DoE Policy on Education	Department	Policy regarding de-centralised centers to support learning	Derived from KZN Master Strategic Plan	Articulates policy			Need for partnership (funding);	

	Centres ***							aimed at community	
57	CSIR ***	Organization	Report on Thuba Matoke pilot to redesign school buildings	Transform school buildings into community centres	Implicit recommendation	Implicit Deficit	Buildings as a contribution to schools as centers of community life		Enabling
58	Eastern Cape Department of Education ***	Department	Funding proposal with project experience	Meet project aim of sustainability	For inference, recommendation		Extension of project aimed at better district support, governance and management	DoE is in partnership	Enabling better primary education
59	Education Rights Project, EPU, Wits ***	Organization	Research into legal position of farm schools	Human rights	Conditions and recommendations	Deficit	Legal status of farm schools leaves them vulnerable		Enabling
60	Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Education ▼	Department	Response to Questionnaire						
61	Mpumulange Provincial Department of Education	Department	Response to Questionnaire	Bureaucratic responsibility	Focus on conditions and policy statements	Deficit	Develop models of provision; amalgamate schools; transport; hostels		Enabling conditions dominant
62	North West Provincial Department of Education	Department	Response to Questionnaire	Bureaucratic responsibility	Focus on conditions and policy statements	Deficit	In effect: Improve systems, bring into line with norms for other schools		Enabling conditions dominant
63	Free State Provincial Department of Education	Department	Description of mega-school project						
64	Western Cape Provincial Department of Education	Department	Varied policy documents and statistics eg. on farm schools, learner transport, multi-grade	Bureaucratic responsibility	Highlight conditions and for inference, strategies	Has a specific focus Positive	Improving service delivery	Dept is in partnerships with NGOs, government depts. etc	Directly linked with curriculum issues

* Listed on catalogue, not received from Department

** Duplicated on catalogue

*** Not listed on catalogue

► Faxed, received too late for inclusion in analysis

