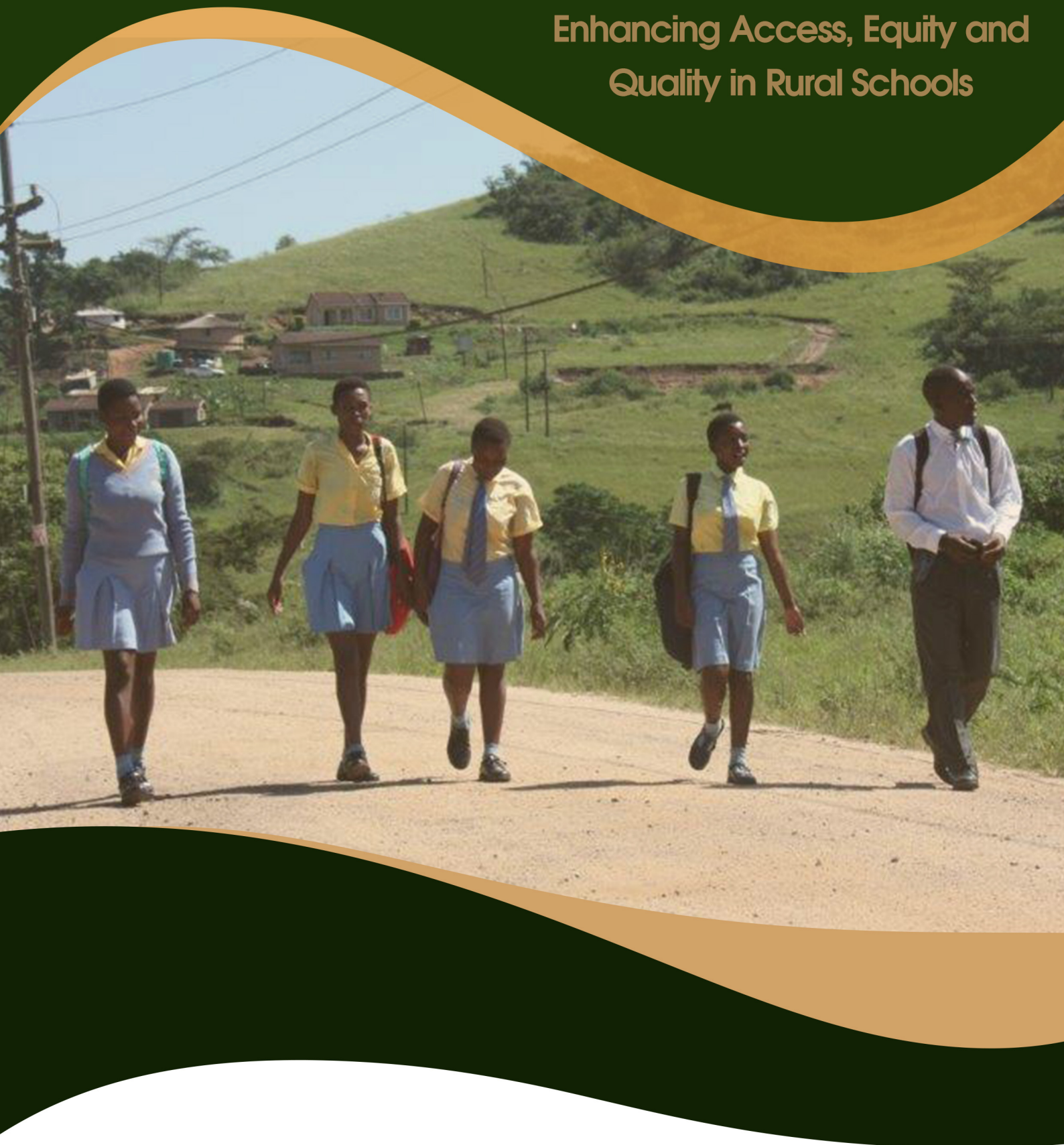


NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR RURAL EDUCATION:

Enhancing Access, Equity and
Quality in Rural Schools



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT THE CORONAVIRUS



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR RURAL EDUCATION: ENHANCING ACCESS, EQUITY AND QUALITY IN RURAL SCHOOLS

Table of Contents

Contents	2
Acronyms	3
Definitions	4
Chapter 1: Introduction to the framework for Rural education	8
Preamble.	8
1.1 Conceptual Framework Purpose	9
1.2 Rationale	9
1.3 Scope	10
Chapter 2: Policy and Legislative Context	10
2.1 International Conventions.	11
2.2 National Mandates	11
Chapter 3 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework	12
3.1 Conceptual Framework	12
3.2 Classifying Rural schools.	14
Chapter 4: Main Pillars of the framework for Rural Education	14
4.1. Access and Inclusivity:	
4.1.1 Early Childhood Development	15
4.1.2 Inclusive Education.	15
4.1.3 Information Communication Technology	15
4.1.4 Infrastructure.	16
4.2 Mobilising Rural Communities	16
4.3 Harnessing existing Curriculum to better respond to the needs of rural communities	17
4.3.1 Agriculture Education for All	17
4.3.2 Enhancement of the teaching of Arts, Culture and Sports	18
4.3.3 Reading, Numeracy/Maths and Literacy/Languages.	18
4.4 Teacher Recruitment, Retention, Development and Incentives	18
4.5 Support to schools in unique circumstances	19
Chapter 5: Roles and Responsibilities	19
5.1 National/DBE Level	19
5.2 Provincial Level Human Stories – hearing the voices of the Assistants and Principals	20
5.3 District Level	21
5.4 School Level	21
Chapter 6: Conclusion	21

ACRONYMS

ASIDI	Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Development Initiative
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
GET	General Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Materials
MCRE	Ministerial Committee on Rural Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
NSC	National Senior Certificates
NMF	Nelson Mandela Foundation
PED	Provincial Education Department
RE	Rural Education
REAC	Rural Education Advisory Committee
SASA	South African Schools Act
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGB	School Governing Body
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

DEFINITIONS

agricultural education	the teaching of agriculture, natural resources and land management through hands-on experience and guidance to prepare learners for entry level jobs or to further education to prepare them for advance agricultural jobs.
classification	a set of discrete, exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories that can be assigned to one or more variables or items.
cluster of schools	more than one school with their own facilities on the same site. The site name is registered in the same name of one of the schools.
communal land	land which is occupied or used by members of a community subject to rules of custom of the community;
curriculum	a statement of intended outcomes to be achieved, what knowledge content is to be acquired, which competencies are to be developed, and the levels of performance that are expected from learners in each of the grades.
district	the geographic area within a province that has been demarcated by the MEC for Education as the first level administration sub-division within a PED.
Early Childhood Development	an umbrella term that applies to the process by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially.
education	education undertaken is an educational Institution established, declared or registered in terms of the Child Care Act, South African Schools Act, Adult Basic Education Act, Further Education and Training Colleges Act, Higher Education Act or provincial law.
edu-villages	sustainable rural educational developments that serve the broader school community in order to improve access to education and education delivery in the area. (This is based on the notion of agri-villages, a key concept in agricultural development, defined by the (CRDP).
expropriation	the act of taking possession of an item of property from its owner in exchange.
focus schools	a school that specializes in an area of the curriculum.
foundation phase	the first phase of a school curriculum applicable in Grades R, 1,2 and 3.
functional school	a school where learners and teachers have access to the following basic social services health, social development, library, and transport.
Further Education and Training	all learning and training programmes leading to qualifications on level 2,3 and 4 of the National Qualification Framework.

DEFINITIONS

General Education and Training	all programmes leading to a qualification at level 1 on the National Qualification Framework.
Grade R	the reception year for a learner in a school or and ECD Centre, that is, the grade immediately before Grade 1.
Higher Education Institution	Any institution that provides higher education on a full time, part time or distance basis and which is established, deemed to be established or declared as a public higher education Institution, or registered or conditionally registered as a private higher education Institution under the Higher Education Institution Act.
home language	the language that is spoken most frequently at home by a learner.
indicators	a measure designed to assess the performance of a system, policy, programme or project.
indigenous languages	a language that originated in a specified territory or community and was not brought in from elsewhere.
intermediate phase	the second phase of the school curriculum applicable in Grades 4, 5 and 6.
learning outcomes	a description of what knowledge, and skills values learners need to know, demonstrate and be able to do.
literacy	ability to read and write with understanding in any language.
Language of Learning and Teaching	a language medium through which learning and teaching, including assessment occurs.
multilingualism	ability to speak more than two languages; proficiency in many languages.
private land	land that is not owned by the state or any organ of state.
public school	a school contemplated in Chapter 3 of the South African Schools Act 1996.
rural areas	farms and traditional areas characterised by low population densities, low levels of economic activity and low levels of infrastructure.
School Governing Body	A statutory body vested in the governance of a public school and it may perform only such functions and obligations and exercise such rights as prescribed by the South African Schools Act. 84 of 1996.
self-esteem'	indicates children's and teachers' valuing of themselves, an identity and sense of pride in oneself and the place where one lives, learns and works.
senior phase	the third phase of the school curriculum applicable in Grades 7,8 and 9.
Small schools	these are schools with low enrolment figures, that often contribute to problems around staff establishment and curriculum delivery.
social connectedness	points towards being connected to meaningful others and belonging to a group, that is school communities using partnerships to function as educational units of wellbeing, learning and teaching.
subjects	a specific body of academic knowledge selected and organised as part of a curriculum.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE FRAMEWORK FOR RURAL EDUCATION

Preamble

The DBE envisions an equitable and quality education for all. It is committed to the development of context specific, sustainable and effective strategies and programmes and projects that are tailor-made for rural schools to:

- Improve access, equity and quality of education in rural schools.
- Provide education that also responds to the needs of rural communities.
- Develop citizens who are capable of adapting and realising their aspirations in different contexts.

The DBE acknowledges the primary role of education in community development, and aims to enhance social connectedness and a sense of belonging among stakeholders as well as between the school and rural communities. It recognises the challenges facing rural communities and schools and seeks to harness various assets that exist in rural communities.

1.1 Purpose

The Rural Education Framework aims to:

- a) Improve access to, and the quality of education in rural schools.
- b) Address the isolation, disconnectedness, as well as the lack of development often associated with rural communities and schools.
- c) Provide a basis for the development of context-specific, relevant and sustainable strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools.

1.2 Rationale

As a country South Africa is considered to having immense inequalities and socio-economic challenges which are mostly intense in rural areas. These include learners' socio-economic background which is characterised by poverty, poor family life, poor housing and lack of fiscal power. These challenges translate into rural school situation which experience vast inequalities and are confronted with challenges of poor school infrastructure, inadequate resources, shortage of teachers, and poor educational outcomes. These challenges become a barrier to rural children's chances of accessing quality education.

Even after post-democratic education reforms and many pro-poor initiatives aimed at promoting equity and improving the quality of education in previously disadvantaged schools, rural schools are still lagging behind their urban counterparts. The main obstacle that hinders the impact of these interventions is the disregard of the significance of diverse contexts when planning for education matters.

Despite these rural challenges which cause inequalities, the education system uses a one size fits all approach. This means that contextual factors which include the learners' socio-economic background and the rural context are not taken into consideration. For a country that is suffering great inequalities there is a great concern about this uniform way of doing things. The notion of the importance of contextual factors in schooling has led to a growing critique of one size fits all in diverse contexts.

To accelerate the much needed reforms in reducing inequalities and improving the quality of education in rural schools there is a need to minimise the one-size-fits-all approach when dealing with rural schools and adopt a context-specific approach.

The Rural Education Framework does this by giving guidance to:

- What the sector should advocate and promote in pursuit of closing the disparities between rural schools and urban schools;
- The development of context-specific, relevant and sustainable strategies to deal with the monumental challenges in rural schools;
- The development of school programmes that address and make contribution to economic development in general and rural development in particular; and
- The provision of skills, values and attitudes that will enable rural learners to adapt and make a meaningful contribution to diverse/various contexts.

1.3 Scope

- a) This Framework applies uniformly to all provincial departments of education, districts and schools. The provincial education departments can use this Framework for the development of policies, guidelines and strategies for education in rural schools.

CHAPTER 2: POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

2.1 International Conventions

- a) South Africa is a signatory to various international protocols. One of the most recent, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), addresses extreme poverty in its many dimensions and, in particular, SDG 4: Quality Education, aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN, 2015, p.21).
- b) The Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2015a) further prioritises inclusion and equity in and through education by improving education policies and the way they work together.
- c) United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007).

2.2 National Mandates

- a) South Africa is committed to achieving these internationally mandated goals through effecting the values underpinning the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 and the Bill of Rights, notably, principles of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms, including the right to education.
- b) The National Development Plan (NDP, 2011), through its education and training vision, highlights the need for access to quality education for all. In this context, educational outcomes must be aligned to the interests of all stakeholders and be responsive to local community needs and economic development.
- c) The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP, 2009) highlights the need for the transformation of the rural economy through programmes that facilitate integrated development and social cohesion through participatory approaches in partnership with all sectors of society.

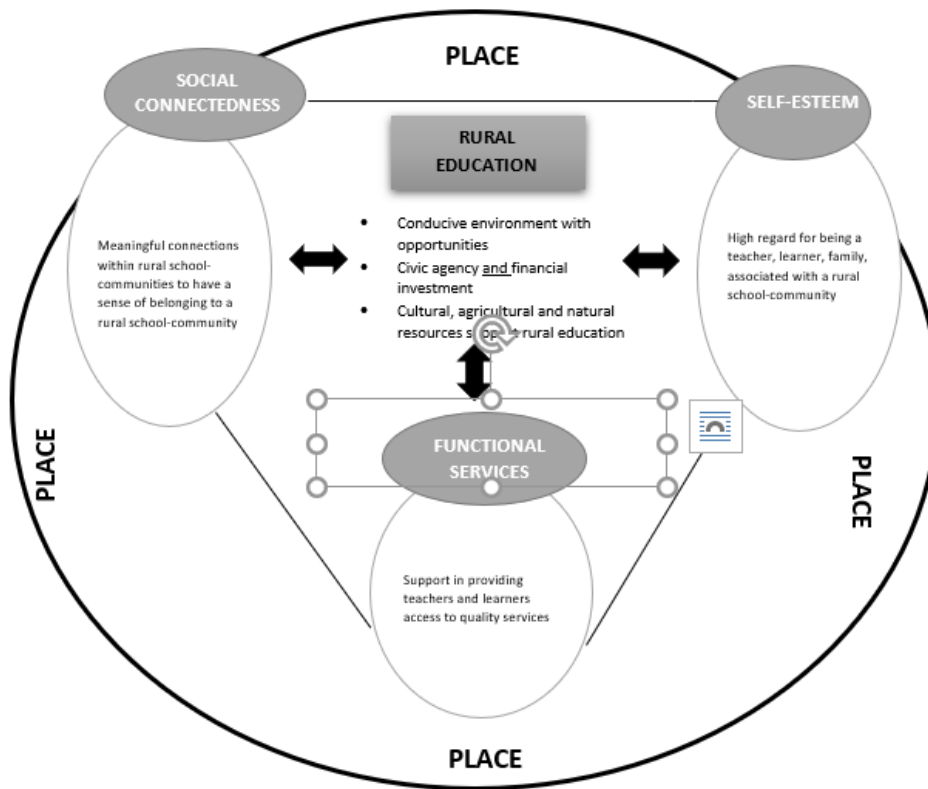
- d) Together with the above, this Framework draws from, and should be read in conjunction with the following:
- i. National Education Policy Act (NEPA), (Act 27 of 1996).
 - ii. The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996).
 - iii. Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive and Training System (2001) .
 - iv. Screening and Identification Assessment and Support. (SAIS) (2014).
 - v. Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act No. 76 of 1998).
 - vi. National Norms and Standards for School Funding (DoE, 1998).
 - vii. Language in Education Policy. (1997) .
 - viii. Regulations around Section 14 agreements, closure and merging of small schools. (RDE, 2009).
 - ix. White Paper on The Rights of Persons With Disability (2016).
 - x. White Paper on eLearning. (2004).

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Conceptual Framework

- a) This Framework proposes that rural education provisioning capitalises on resources available in rural communities. The provision of quality education in rural schools requires not only targeted fiscal investments, but also civic agency; the Department of Basic Education (DBE) must collaborate with rural communities to mobilise resources (including socio-cultural, agricultural and natural resources, as well as indigenous knowledge systems).
- b) From this perspective, developmental outcomes (learning, wellbeing) are rooted in:
- i) Self-esteem: Children’s and teachers’ valuing of themselves, having an identity and sense of pride in themselves and the place where they live, learn and work.
 - ii) Social Connectedness: Being connected to meaningful others and belonging to a group, that is, school communities create partnerships to function as units of wellbeing, learning and teaching.
 - iii) Functional Services: Learners and teachers have access to basic development services that include but are not limited to others, including health, social development, transport and libraries (see Wilkinson and Pickett (2009).

Figure 1: Conceptual framework: three interrelated dimensions of “place” influencing rural education.



Wilkinson R & Pickett K, 2009. *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*. London, Allen Lane.

3.2 Classifying Rural schools

- In South Africa 'rural' refers to areas that consist of the tribal lands controlled by traditional leaders; as well as agricultural areas. While elsewhere 'rural' usually refers to settings that are sparsely populated and where agriculture is the major means of economic activity, in South Africa the concept also includes areas of dense settlement created by colonial and apartheid-driven land settlements. mining' areas in rural contexts where mining is no longer active.
- This diversity of rural contexts makes it difficult to define rurality in South Africa. This prevents the formulation of policies and programmes that are tailor-made for rural schools. No "one-size fits all" Framework can meaningfully improve education in rural schools.

- c) Overcoming this challenge requires a rigorous classification of rural schools so that specific interventions can target schools accurately. Such a classification can be informed by a set of indicators relating to school functioning and performance. These are:
- i. Location: public schools in rural areas may be situated on government land, communal land or private land (primarily on farms and on church land).
 - ii. School factors: School phase, teacher learner ratio, educational facilities such as available LTSM, libraries, laboratories and sports equipment, infrastructure and services.
 - iii. Cultural, social and economic factors.
 - iv. Physical features: Transport, terrain and distance from services and facilities.

CHAPTER 4: MAIN PILLARS OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR RURAL EDUCATION

4.1 Access and Inclusivity

4.1.1 Early Childhood Development

With the migration of ECD from social development to Education, increasing numbers of children will be attending Grade R in primary schools. The Framework proposes that:

- a) Facilities in primary schools should be expanded to absorb the young children going into Grade R.
- b) Appropriate resources, including qualified practitioners and material resources, should be made available for quality grade R programs.
- c) Where required, available infrastructure should be re-purposed for grade R intake, and where it is insufficient, additional infrastructure should be made provided.

4.1.2 Inclusive Education

- a) White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education provides comprehensive recommendations with regard to addressing the issues of learners with Special Education Needs. The Rural Education Framework acknowledges the provisions of the White Paper 6 and extends its recommendations with regard to learners with special needs.
 - i. Specialised units should be established in the proposed Edu-villages that will provide specialised training for educators, including inclusive education.
 - ii. The DBE should strengthen the monitoring of the current inclusion model in Specialised, Special Needs and Full-Service Schools in rural contexts.

4.1.3 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

- a) The government has committed to transforming learning and teaching through ICT by adopting WP7 on e-Learning.
- b) Edu-villages should serve as hubs from which various kinds of ICT related services and materials can be accessed by educators and learners.
- c) Advances in ICT should be leveraged in a manner that facilitates access for learners in rural schools.
- d) ICT should be incorporated into all facets of learning and teaching.

4.1.4 Infrastructure

- a) Physical infrastructure available in rural schools (classrooms, ablution facilities) should be of the standards as encapsulated in the Norms and Standards for Schools Infrastructure.
- b) Additional infrastructure should be considered, where appropriate, to cope with the increase in intake due to the migration of ECD to Education.

4.2 Mobilising Rural Communities

Enhancing community participation in educational affairs remains one of the key pillars for improving school functionality and the quality of education provision. The Framework proposes:

- a) The establishment of partnerships between the school and local community (businesses, local government, service providers, faith-based organisations, traditional councils) to support teaching, learning and wellbeing;
- b) Recruitment of Education Assistants (EAs) to provide support in curricular (Numeracy, Literacy, Reading), co-curricular (arts, sports, culture), and administrative activities.
- c) Expansion of the local pool of educators by offering training to EAs so that they can enter the teaching profession.
- d) Mobilising the school community in development initiatives (environmentally specific: agriculture, mining, fishing, wildlife management, nutrition).
- e) Mobilising elders to share cultural and natural heritage of the community (history, arts and culture, language).
- f) Mobilising communities to participate in activities that enhance inclusive practices.

4.3 Harnessing existing curriculum to better respond to the needs of rural communities

- a) The South Africa curriculum policy serves all learning communities. Curriculum provisioning, resourcing and subject choice should:
 - i. Promote a sense of place, pride and belonging in the school community but at the same time allows for individual mobility;
 - ii. Recognise resource scarcity but at the same time acknowledges and harnesses the resources and knowledge base that exists in rural communities;
 - iii. Reflect the aspirations of the individual learner and the community whilst responding to the well-being and development needs of the community; and
 - iv. Acknowledge diversity and advances people's holistic development by addressing individual needs and offering support in response to the unique situation of rural schools.

4.3.1 Agriculture Education for all

- a) Agriculture is a key economic sector in South Africa, and South Africa has a long history of subsistence and agribusiness in rural areas. Agricultural education can play a crucial role in economic development in general and rural socio-economic development in particular.
- b) This Framework recommends the following:
 - i Formalising agriculture as a teaching subject throughout the system.
 - ii Expanding focus schools for agriculture that offer all Agricultural Education Subjects. Consideration should be made to having at least one Agricultural school in each district.
 - iii Funding should be ring-fenced for Agriculture.
 - iv Ensure that there are qualified Agriculture educators to enable the expansion of Agricultural Education.

4.3.2 Enhancement of the teaching of Arts, Culture and Sports

- a) Arts, Culture and Sports are important for the holistic development of youth, their well-being, and potentially significant contributors to rural economic development. The Framework proposes strengthening the teaching of these subject, which will require placing value on indigenous activities and resources that are inherent to rural spaces.

It is proposed that:

- i Focus schools for Arts, Culture and Sports should be expanded in rural areas.
- ii Technological advances should be leveraged to enhance curriculum implementation in these subjects.
- iii Investments are required in appropriate LTSM, for the teaching of these subjects, together with teacher training.

- iv Schools should be encouraged to drawing on knowledges available in communities (amongst elders) to enhance learning and teaching.
- v) Indigenous Arts, games and sports should be encouraged as a way of enhancing teaching of these subjects.

4.3.3 Reading, Numeracy/Maths and Literacy/ Languages

Numeracy/ Mathematics and Literacy/ Languages are the cornerstones for future employability and further studies. The Framework proposes the strengthening of these skills in rural schools through:

- i. Initiating projects that aim to increase the Numeracy and Literacy skills of learners in rural schools.
- ii. Making available the necessary Learning and Teaching Support Materials to enhance the development of basic skills in these subjects.
- iii. Deploying Education Assistants to facilitate Reading and Maths Clubs.

4.4 Teacher Recruitment, Retention, Development and Incentives

- a) It is difficult to recruit, retain and develop qualified teachers in a rural setting due to distances of schools from towns, poor infrastructure and limited service delivery. To address these challenges, the Framework proposes:
 - i. Recruitment and appointment of Education Assistants to provide support to teachers as a way of enhancing teacher well-being.
 - ii. Opportunities should be created for Education Assistants to access Initial Teacher Education through school-based teacher education programmes using various modes (distance, online and block release for face-to-face sessions).
 - iii. Creating a package of teacher incentives that goes beyond finance and includes teacher development, career progression, transport, accommodation, recreation and other essential services.
 - iv. Establishing Edu-villages with the intention of providing accommodation for teachers. These Edu-villages should also serve as hubs for teacher development activities.

4.5 Support to schools in unique circumstances

There are areas which have schools with special or unique circumstances. These are:

- a) Small primary and secondary schools which are the only means of access to education in some communities; and
- b) Schools that struggle to recruit and retain teachers in scarce subjects.

The Framework recommends:

- i The use of Education Assistants to provide support to teachers in these schools.
- ii The appointment and deployment of itinerant teams of educators and specialists to work with clusters of schools in areas such as Maths and Science.

CHAPTER 5: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 National/DBE level

- a) The DBE is responsible for setting guidelines; developing strategies; and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the rural education Framework. It is responsible for ensuring that resources required for the implementation of the Framework are available. To do this:
 - i. The Minister will establish a Rural Education Advisory Committee (REAC) comprising key role players and stakeholders to advise the Minister on the implementation of the rural education framework; funding rural education programmes; and monitoring and evaluating the impact of policies and programmes on rural schools.
 - ii. The Director-General will establish inter-departmental collaborations to strengthen and support the delivery of quality education in rural schools.
 - iii. The Director-General will establish a national team of key heads of branches that meets to plan, implement and account for the ways in which their branches respond to this rural education Framework mandate. Further, this team will report on other programmes and initiatives that target rural schools.
 - iv. The Director-General will establish an interprovincial rural education committee that comprises officials responsible for rural education from all provinces. This committee will be responsible for the coordination of a multidisciplinary approach to support rural schools in providing quality education.

5.2 Provincial level

- a) Each province is responsible for implementation. To do this provinces should:
 - i. Establish a dedicated Directorate/ Sub-directorate or unit for rural education.
 - ii. Establish a Provincial Rural Education Committee that interpret national policies and frameworks, prepare implementation plans and coordinate the activities embracing rural education across the province.
 - iii. Prepare plans for implementation at individual and school cluster level and plan the placement of Edu-villages and teacher development centres.
 - iv. Secure the required financial, material and human resources to implement the programmes.
 - v. Monitor and evaluate the implementation.

5.3 District level

- a) Establish a District Rural Education Committee to oversee and monitor the implementation processes and to support the schools in rural areas.

To strengthen this Committee will require:

- i. Strengthening and capacitating existing structures at the district level;
- ii. Allocating a dedicated person responsible for rural education in all districts; and
- iii. Facilitating the training of SGBs in specialised functions arising from this Framework.

5.4 School level

- a) The SGB's responsibilities include:
 - i. Mobilising the community to enhance the participation of the broader school community and various stakeholders in school development; and
 - ii. Identifying and harnessing resources (cultural, natural, material, social) to support teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

- a) The rural education framework aims to ensure that rural schools provide quality and inclusive education for all learners, in line with the democratic principles of the Constitution as well as the vision of the NDP. This requires overcoming many challenges of concern to the macro environment as well as school level disparities across the public school system.
- b) The next steps in this Framework process is to develop special projects and actions aimed at improving education in rural schools. These should be accompanied by and a carefully constructed financial plan to support the implementation of those projects. For most recommendations the DBE and the RE Directorate together with their counterparts in the PEDs will spearhead these processes, and coordinate activities at provincial and local levels of management and governance.
- c) The DBE will also develop a monitoring and evaluation plan to assess whether and in what ways the rural education Framework, and subsequent programme initiatives are being implemented and how they impact on the quality of education in rural schools.
- d) The improvement of rural education in SA is inextricably linked to effective service delivery in other sectors. These include, among others, health, social development and transport, and economic development.
- e) In addition, educational access and success in one phase are interlinked with similar outcomes across the system – ECD, Basic Education (GET and FET) and Higher Education and Training - and that poor educational outcomes in any one phase hinder access to and performance in the next phase. Consequently, although this Framework considers the GET and FET phases, it also recognises that reform of rural education depends on a holistic view of transformation where education mediates development.

Published by the Department of Basic Education

222 Struben Street

Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001

Telephon: 012 357 3000 Fax: 012 323 0601

ISBN: 978-1-4315-3812-6



Make Every Child A National Asset

FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/BasicEd

WEBSITE

www.education.gov.za

TWITTER

www.twitter.com/dbe_sa