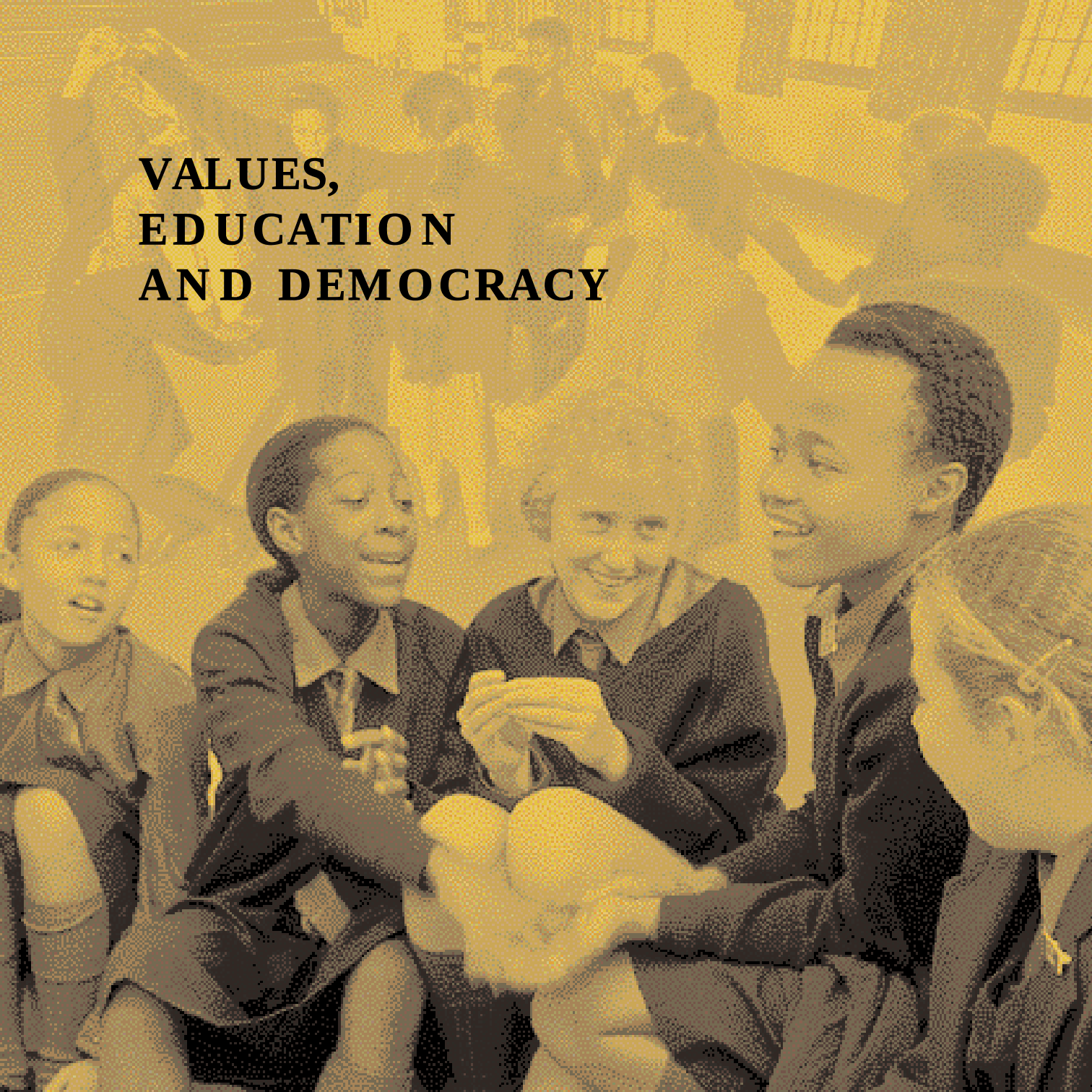
VALUES, EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY



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The Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal MP, requested in February 2000 the formation of a working group on values in education and, after a process of research and debate, the presentation of a formal report of findings and recommendations. Herewith the report. It is presented as a starting point in what ought to become a national debate on the appropriate values for South Africa to embrace in its primary and secondary educational institutions. It also has implications for the broader shaping of the quality of national character to which we as a people in a democracy wish to aspire.

Members of the working group were appointed by the Minister of Education in their individual capacities, in the belief that their background and expertise would add value to a discussion on values in education. The views expressed in the Report do not represent the institutions to which we are affiliated.

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REMARKS BY PROFESSOR KADER ASMAL, MP, MINISTER OF EDUCATION

In 1994, South Africa captured the imagination of the world when we plucked this country away from the brink of imminent destruction. We succeeded in achieving a peaceful transition to democracy when the probability for protracted discord and violence was extremely high. This was a supreme triumph.

The reward for these remarkable achievements was the adoption of our superb Constitution. This Constitution ushers in a new set of values that make an emphatic and fundamental break with the past.

It is boldly stated in the Preamble that the Constitution seeks to: "heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights; lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations".

However, we cannot expect that the intent and spirit of the Constitution will be realised without tremendous effort and purposeful action. People cannot automatically internalise the values embedded in the Constitution, the values that are essential to our important priority of nation-building. Three centuries of oppression has left deep scars on the collective soul of our people. Although we have made remarkable progress, it would be extremely foolish to remain complacent about the deep suspicions that continue to exist in the country. It would be foolish to expect that the severe corrosion of our human dignity would heal quickly and without purposeful effort, active reconciliation and focused attention to developing the values necessary to underpin our democracy.

The moral fibre and value systems of our people are constituted and reconstituted in our schools, in our places of worship, on the sports fields and at the workplace. Many other institutions and factors will influence and shape the development of our value systems, but all will agree that our schools, colleges, learning centres and institutions of higher learning have an extremely important role to play in supporting the development of our value system and in establishing the regeneration of the ethical fibre of our society.

Education systems throughout the world and through

the passage of time are not simply vehicles for the transmission of knowledge. In particular, the evolution of public education institutions as we know them coincides with the birth of the nation states in the modern era, where public education was seen as an indispensable adjunct of nation building. It is for this reason that any discussion about the kind of values that ought to be celebrated and cherished within our schools does not occur in a vacuum, but is inextricably linked to the type of society we wish to build. Schools are the social institutions through which the principal identity of a nation is conveyed to successive generations of learners.

The last few decades, particularly since the Second World War, have witnessed an unprecedented proliferation of knowledge. The dynamic and increasingly sophisticated knowledge available has seen applications that have impacted on almost every facet of human existence. It has impacted on the way we understand the world, the way we interact with others in the world and the way we solve simple and complex problems aimed at improving our lives. There have also been many dark moments in our global history, when sophisticated knowledge has resulted in applications that were used to inflict the most devastating violence during times of discord.

We have heard hours of testimony of how intellectual talent was harnessed to perform some of the most heinous acts in support of apartheid. Advances in medical science were used to maim and kill our own people. It is clear that education cannot be value-free. We have collectively to develop and sustain values in our schools that are conducive to democracy, to nation building, to anti-racism and anti-sexism. We must ensure that never again will our education system actively promote values of racial hatred and intolerance. We need to promote values that will discourage the products of our education system from engaging in activities that undermine the wellbeing of our people.

There cannot be a nation, there cannot be a democracy unless our education and processes of knowledge production and utilisation actively internalise values of equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and honour. There must be a bond that holds the parts together.

There is a big task ahead to develop the values on which our democracy is being constructed and on which our future depends. Values cannot simply be asserted; it will require enormous effort to ensure that the values are internalised by all our people, by our institutions, and by our laws and policies. This is what we fought for. This is what our people deserve, not only because it is morally right, but also because we can never have peace without it. This is an unavoidable responsibility for everyone involved in education. I accept this responsibility on behalf of my department. I commend this report to all South Africans and call on you to accept this responsibility.

We must draw from those infinite qualities common to our diverse language, cultural, and religious traditions that will enable us to craft a new identity that defines us as a nation. We need to claim our diversity as a source of strength through which we can adopt a common set



of values that bind us together as South Africans under a single banner. This notion is aptly captured in the motto inscribed on our coat of arms - !ke e:/xarra//ke - which calls on us as a diverse people to unite.

This report lays an important basis for us to begin to discern those values that we require our education system to promote, in order to create a truly inclusive nation. The recommendations outlined in this report are intended to provide the Ministry of Education with an opportunity to open up a national dialogue on this matter. The report will be distributed to all key role-players and social institutions within the education sector, as well as to teachers and the larger public. I look forward to the ensuing debate.

I end by expressing my deep gratitude to members of the Working Group for their hard work and effort in producing this report in the interest of education in South Africa.

Professor Kader Asmal, MP
Minister of Education





REMARKS

Executive Summary

The promotion of the values of equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and social honour at our schools is the central argument of the Report of the Working Group on Values in Education. These values derive from our Constitution and Bill of Rights, as well as considerations of educational philosophy. They are important for the personal, intellectual and emotional development of the individual. They are also influential in determining the quality of national character to which we as a people in a democracy aspire.

To begin with the Report is emphatic about the responsibility of schools to develop the intellectual abilities of all learners. A democratic society flourishes when citizens are informed by a grasp of their history and current affairs; and when they are encouraged to explore ideas to their fullest. Our schooling system must provide an environment that nurtures informed and thinking citizens.

Secondly, the Report is insistent that discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of race, gender and culture are profoundly harmful to learning and to the development of the self-worth of individuals. Instead, the culture and ethos of schools must be that they invite, welcome and include all learners - no matter their background - in the formal and informal aspects of school life.
Thirdly, the authors of the Report believe that schools should provide learners with the tools to solve the problems that come with being human, throughout the cycle of life. This is about learning for life and the treatment of problems as challenges to be solved through knowledge and understanding, rather than as burdens to be endured without solution.

The value of equity is considered a necessary historical frame of reference for a discussion of specific values. Thus we wish to affirm the policy of giving priority to schools located in the most disadvantaged areas of our country, where the majority of our population live, for investment in infrastructure and teaching quality. The education and training of all of South Africa's people is critical for the country's prosperity in the 21st century and, therefore, it is in everyone's interests to ensure that this occurs.

The value of tolerance would be best promoted by deepening our understanding of the origins, evolution and achievements of humanity, on the one hand, and through the exploration and celebration of that which is common and diverse in our cultural heritage, on the other. It also requires taking a firm stand against racial, gender and other forms of discrimination at every school. The Report recommends that panels of historians, archaeologists and human biologists be appointed to make recommendations regarding the strengthening of history teaching and teacher training. Furthermore, it recommends exposure to, and participation in the visu-

al and performing arts (the latter including dance, theatre and music), literary creativity (written and oral), and the organisation of sporting activity. As a first step towards supporting arts activity, the Report recommends that an artist-in-residence programme be started at schools.

Regarding multilingualism, we propose that, as a medium of instruction, learners use the mother tongue or the mother tongue and English. We also strongly encourage a policy of multilingualism in which learners acquire one of the following official languages: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. Ideally children should learn the official languages of the province in which their school is located. In the cases where more than three languages are designated as official languages, parental choice should prevail.

The Report notes the lack of a strong reading and debating culture in our country and our schools. A key value that ought to be promoted is a thirst for knowledge and a receptiveness to new ideas, the value of openness. It is about the asking of penetrating questions and the willingness to debate ideas in order to arrive at quality conclusions. Schools can make a contribution to developing a stronger reading and debating culture if these desirable activities are strongly promoted by teachers, supported by an infrastructure of libraries and communication technology of which access to the internet is a key element.

The shift from apartheid education to education for democracy requires a move from the value of authoritarian discipline to the value of accountability. In this respect the Report underlines the importance of teaching as a vocation and not just a job. Through leadership and value-based conduct, a fellowship between educators, learners, administrators, trade unions and professional associations ought to develop to ensure that quality learning and teaching take place.

The final value is social honour. This is about cultivating a sense of honour and identity as South Africans. It is about a process where individuals are comfortable with both a local or cultural identity and a national South African one. The Report recommends that the national anthem be taught and sung, the national flag be prominently displayed and an oath of allegiance be declared. The Report offers a text for response and debate. The Report also recommends that these be supported by the teaching of a civic history of the democratic South Africa, with a focus on the Constitution and Bill of Rights.



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

It is necessary to repeat the proposition that a successful nation is more than likely an educated one.[1] An education system of value allows the talent of the nation's youth in all its diversity to thrive and flourish. In a democracy, public education is one of the major vehicles by which the values of a people are acquired by the children and young adults who make up our schools' population. It goes without saying that today's children and young adults are tomorrow's adults and leaders.

By values we mean desirable qualities of character such as honesty, integrity, tolerance, diligence, responsibility, compassion, altruism, justice and respect. We would like our young adults to possess these values and, therefore, our schooling system must actively promote them. The promotion of values is important not only for the sake of personal development, but also for the evolution of a national South African character. The definition we give to values today is an avenue to imagining the future character of the South African nation.

A 'values-in-schools-initiative' does not occur in a vacuum. In 1994 a democracy replaced decades of apartheid and centuries of one form of racial rule or another. The principles of that heritage were a corruption of the very values we wish to promote, for they denied the humanity of the majority of our population. The democratic Constitution and Bill of Rights accepted in 1995, defined the rights of all South Africans to be exercised in democratically responsive institutions, among a population of considerable economic, racial and cultural diversity.[2] Our educational institutions must reflect these rights, for they provide the frame of reference for



an educational philosophy of a democracy.[3]

There are at least three key elements to an educational philosophy. The first is to develop the intellectual abilities and critical faculties among all of the children and young adults in our schools. This is no small task, for the philosophical emphases of apartheid were conformity, obedience to rules and the suspension of intelligence. A democratic society flourishes when citizens are informed by a grasp of their history and of current affairs, where nothing is beyond question, where ideas are explored to their fullest extent and when there is an obligation on teachers to provide intelligent answers to questions. Our schooling system must therefore provide the basis of having informed and thinking citizens.

Secondly, the educational philosophy of our democracy should emphasise inclusiveness. It is necessary but certainly not enough to discourage or outlaw harmful and illegitimate discrimination. It is equally important to develop a culture and ethos in our schools, that actively include all learners, irrespective of their background, in the formal and informal aspects of a school's life. This requires an enhanced degree of linguistic and cultural dexterity, tolerance and appreciation of difference on the part of teachers and administrators. Perhaps it is a quality that is difficult to define with any precision. Nevertheless, we desire that our schools be places where learning occurs in zones of comfort and safety and where learners feel that they belong to a community.

Thirdly, our educational philosophy should provide learners with the tools to solve the many problems that



come with being human, throughout the life cycle. We believe that these tools are the same as the tools of science which, broadly understood, are to bring all knowledge of a problem, however tentative and imperfect, to bear on finding its rational solution. It is to treat problems as challenges to be solved through knowledge and understanding, rather than as unbearable burdens to be endured without solution. The will and courage to approach life in this manner does not simply reside in science, but in the spirituality of humanity that defines our attitude to life.

These considerations about the role of education in a democratic and open society frame the arguments and recommendations that follow. They are presented as a starting point in what ought to become a national debate on the appropriate values and mores for South Africa to embrace in its primary and high schools. They also have broader implications for how we envision the quality of national character to which we as a people in a democracy wish to aspire.







EQUITY

In the racial order that existed in South Africa it is not surprising that education and training favoured whites.[4] Schools were segregated and, while compulsory schooling to secondary level had been introduced for whites in the 1920s, it was only extended to Africans in the 1990s, after the first democratic elections. Intervening in this period was Bantu Education, introduced by the apartheid government in the 1950s, with the explicit intention of subjecting all black African children of school-going age to an education that prepared them only for unskilled and servile labour.[5] Apartheid regulations made it very difficult for mission and private schools for black Africans, the springboards for the educated elite of Nelson Mandela's generation, to function.[6] Mathematics and science, when they were offered, was by exception, and under unusual circumstance.

A racial hierarchy of schooling emerged. Whites became the recipients of the best education South Africa could offer, equivalent to first world standards, followed by Indians and coloured people, with black Africans last, afforded less than even third world standards. Each group had their education administered separately. Teachers were trained at their respective racially organised colleges and universities, financed by apartheid's wicked formula of providing the best for those already privileged and the worst for those who had little. In 1994, the pre-democratic government was still spending R5 403 per white learner compared, for example, to R1 053 for every black African learner in the Transkei. The cumulative consequence of this unequal system was a desperately under-educated black African population.



Table 1
Education levels of people over 20: 1995

	African	Coloured	Indian	White	TOTAL
No education	2 640 000	182 000	34 000	8 000	2 864 000
Some primary	4 495 000	690 000	84 000	35 000	5 304 000
Some secondary	7 413 000	1 001 000	448 000	2 632 000	11 494 000
Some tertiary	822 000	102 000	74 000	952 000	1 950 000
TOTAL	15 370 000	1 975 000	640 000	3 627 000	21 612 000

Source: CSS October Household Survey (1995).

The figures are as unsurprising as they are alarming. Black Africans make up 92, coloureds 6, Indians 1 and whites 0,2 percent of adults who have no formal education at all. Of those who have formal schooling, the level of functional illiteracy is also alarmingly high. Most of our undereducated population are to be found in the more rural and poorer provinces of the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, the North West and Northern Province. The majority - 61 percent - are women. [7]

There is no question that matters have improved greatly. Access to schooling for black African children has improved beyond expectations. Since 1994, 2 500 schools have been renovated and 1 000 new ones built.[8] Curriculum 2005 lays the groundwork for improved content, new materials and revised teacher training. Curriculum 21 is a recent and welcome effort



to refine it. The increasing entry of black African matriculants at colleges and universities is significant. A single educational administration now exists, although the old bureaucracies and their staffs have not entirely disappeared.

However, a report of the President's Education Initiative Research Project shows that good ideas and initiatives are trapped in a system that often fails to work properly, compromising quality on a large scale.[9] The growth in sheer numbers should not conceal the fact that the schooling system struggles to enrol all eligible pupils, fails to retain the majority of them to secondary school level and offers them a quality of schooling which varies from the good to the abysmal. The rapid expansion in participation in tertiary education by black Africans has led to their enrolment mainly in the less technical fields, since most of the schools they have historically attended fail to qualify them in mathematics and science.

It should be clear that the overriding imperative of public policy is to remedy inferior schooling. There is little question that this is a massive undertaking and that success will be long term. Its historical importance lies in the fact that the investment in the young talent of all South Africans is important for the individual growth of every person and will also bring returns in growth, prosperity and wellbeing for the nation. We do not believe that the South African public adequately grasps this point. Enhanced investment in our poorly resourced schools is in everybody's interest.

A Council of Higher Education report cites the results



of a survey among 273 major employers where 76 percent of them reported a shortage of professional employees. The same survey predicted that in the period 1998 to 2003 job opportunities at the professional level would grow between 16 to 18 percent while those for unskilled employees would decline by 35 percent.[10] The demands for professional skills in the market can in part be met by an upgrading of quality schooling for the entire, and particularly, the black population.

An education system does not exist to simply serve a market, important as that may be for economic growth and material prosperity. Its primary purpose must be to enrich the individual, and by extension then, the broader society. The achievement of educational goals requires a more equitable distribution of resources, opportunities and enhanced social honour for the people who run our educational system. The need for equality of opportunity is a perspective that educators must bring to bear on the learning environment. It is a perspective that all sectors of society - business, government and civil society - must support in how they allocate resources, set priorities and define an ethos.

We make these remarks about equity in order to frame the discussion that follows. We make them also to affirm the policy of investing in the infrastructure and quality of teaching in schools located in the most disadvantaged areas of our country, where the majority of our population lives. We believe that to prosper in the 21st century requires the education and training of all of South Africa's people and that, therefore, it is in everyone's interests to ensure that this occurs.



TOLERANCE

TOLERANCE

It is not surprising that South African schools are largely segregated. Many schools, though, are enrolling learners from increasingly diverse backgrounds. Aggregate figures for 1997 suggest that 28 percent of our schools have learners from more than one population group, while 72 percent were, at that time, homogeneous. The figures for provinces are provided in table 2.

The figures tell us something about the extent to which schools have moved away from apartheid-style racially based segregation. They tell us nothing about the linguistic, religious, cultural and national diversity of learners and teachers. Because knowledge of the demographic character of our schools' population is necessary for policy, we recommend that these areas be included in the next annual schools survey. Yet, with or without that knowledge, an approach to how diverse school populations are to be managed and supported, in and outside the classroom, ought to be developed. We believe that the approach ought to be anchored in the value of tolerance.

By tolerance we do not mean the shallow notion of putting up with people who are different, but a deeper and more meaningful concept of mutual understanding, reciprocal altruism and the active appreciation of the value of human difference. The notion of ubuntu is one example of such a value. To reach that state of human consciousness requires not only a truthfulness about the failures and successes of the human past but the active and deliberate incorporation of differences in the moral traditions, arts, culture, religions and sporting activity



Table 2
Number and percentage of schools with learners from more than one population group, per province, 1997

	Schools	Heterogeneous		Homogeneous	
	#	#	%	#	%
Eastern Cape	5 446	456	8	4 990	92
Free State	2 758	649	24	2 109	76
Gauteng	1 896	918	48	978	52
Kwazulu-Natal	5 352	748	14	4 604	86
Mpumalanga	1 823	409	22	1 414	78
Northern Cape	445	248	56	197	44
Northern Province	4 022	193	5	3 829	95
North West	1 942	486	25	1 456	75
Western Cape	1 608	745	46	863	54
TOTAL	25 827	4 847	28	20 440	72

Source: Department of Education, Education Statistics in 1997.
Please note that 1 650 schools did not respond to the question about heterogeneity in the annual school survey.

in the ethos and life of a school.

We are persuaded that the teaching of history is central to the promotion of all human values, including that of tolerance. History is one of the many memory systems that shape our values and morality, for it studies, records and diffuses knowledge of human failure and achievement over the millennia. There is good and bad history, parochial, national, continental and global history.



History is a wide subject and there are many choices to be made as to what kind of history ought to be offered at schools. We are interested in a history that excels in the truth about human failures and achievements, in at least three crucial respects.

Firstly, we do not believe that the history of human evolution is properly understood and taught in our schools. One consequence of this is the perpetuation of myths about the permanence and meaning of so-called racial difference.[11] It is conventional wisdom in the scientific community that human beings constitute a single species having evolved and survived by the successful and constant adaptation to the threats of the environment. One instrument of our successful survival as a species is our diversity. Our human biological differences are our survival apparatus and diversity is therefore good for us, a source of our perpetuation.

There is a large literature on the subject, but the essential points are the same.[12] Our outward appearance has nothing to do with our abilities; physical appearance is determined by less than 1 percent of our genetic structure; appearance cannot be scientifically grouped into types, or races or sub-species; differences in appearance were handed down from generation to generation because they help us survive; and the last 300 years or so of human history have done more by virtue of unprecedented human mobility than any other period, to blur and reshape the distinctions of physical appearance.

Secondly, a general and comprehensive history of all the people who happen to reside in South Africa, who in turn are connected to the people of Africa, Asia and Europe, can encourage openness, an understanding of our diverse past and a mutual grasp of and respect for cultural origin. More than any other discipline, good history put to good use taught by imaginative teachers can promote reconciliation and reciprocal respect of a meaningful kind, because it encourages a knowledge of the other, the unknown and the different.

Thirdly, a history of past abuses of human rights does not by itself prevent but can serve as a powerful reminder of the folly of repetition. About this matter we must not be naive. Human beings have the remarkable capacity to repeat the mistakes of the past. It is the combination of memory and democratic politics that minimise the risk of repeating past errors.[13] But the memory base must be there. This is why it is so important to recognise the importance of the record left by the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This is why knowledge of genocide in the 20th century is so important and why resistance to holocaust denial must be fierce.

We recommend that the Department of Education appoint appropriate panels of historians, archaeologists and human biologists to examine the teaching of history and human evolution at schools, teacher training in the historical and human biological disciplines and to make recommendations as to how best to strengthen the teaching of these disciplines. Academic history, archaeology and human biology are innovative fields in South Africa today. They are well developed and published, and there is no reason at all why they cannot be the



bases of more powerful interventions in the quality of history at schools. Curriculum 21 provides an opportunity for such an intervention.

We are also persuaded that more should be done to equip and provide support to teachers to communicate with and encourage learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. A key aspect of this is multilingual competence and we devote the next section of the report to this matter. The curriculum, educational materials, support aids and the attitude of teachers must be sensitive to and appreciative of difference, in an environment where an ethos of nurturing, encouragement and confidence building prevails.

Outside of the classroom, a variety of extra-mural activities ought to be encouraged and supported, to reinforce what happens in the classroom. The power of the performing and visual arts, and literature, as an active celebration of diversity, should not be underestimated. They are creative practices that invite great youthful enjoyment, promote the regularity of creative discipline and integrate individuals on the basis of talent. Participation in the performing arts (music, dance, theatre and other disciplines), the visual arts and crafts (drawing, sculpture, design, multimedia, weaving, and so on) and literary creativity (written and oral) at schools are part of an exciting learning experience. But they are also potentially powerful instruments of promoting tolerance through exposure to, and a sharing of, diverse cultural traditions and experience.

A multi-cultural approach to the arts ought to be actively developed. It is desirable if provincial departments of education interact with arts and culture bodies to develop diversity programmes in these areas; develop partnerships with local and provincial governments to secure funding for innovative programmes in schools-based arts activities; and interact with performing and visual arts divisions at technikons, colleges and universities for in-service and pre-service training of performing and visual arts teachers. A modest but important start would be an artist-in-residence programme at schools.

Sport is another vital area in which tolerance can be promoted. Some people argue that sports can be seen as ritualised aggression for men and benign passivity for women. That might be so. But the good thing about sports is their rule-based character, being a legitimate vehicle by which physicality finds expression within an accepted regimen of norms and rules. In team-based sports, success requires individual talent married with co-operation. In a sense, sports, like art, can and should imitate life. And given the popularity of sport with South African youth, sport is an area that schools must use to develop shared traditions and activities. While certain sports have traditionally been the preserve of particular groups - rugby at white schools, soccer at black schools, for example - media exposure to national teams and their successes has succeeded in uniting people across traditional barriers. The promotion of development programmes and access to resources in poor areas have also assisted in blurring those divisions. Provincial departments of education can assist in this by encouraging sports development programmes that bring pupils from schools in different areas together and work



towards ensuring a more even distribution of sporting resources and opportunities through innovations like twinning schools and implementing provincial programmes and competitions.

We are finally convinced that the value of tolerance is best promoted if a tougher line is taken on discriminatory practices. It is profoundly undesirable to have practices that undermine the sense of worth of any individual. Discrimination against learners on the basis of appearance or sex that have the intended or unintended consequence of excluding them from certain types of knowledge or social activities, breed alienation and fragmentation. We take it as given that the Department of Education will act against any overt form of illegitimate discrimination, whether on the grounds of visible difference, gender, language preference, disability or any other social characteristic, because these are antithetical to constitutional principles and harmful to learning.

More difficult to deal with are discriminatory practices that might masquerade under the pretensions of culture. One such practice that we are aware of is initiation rites or ceremonies, better known by the Afrikaans colloquialism, ontgroening (to, literally, de-green). Ontgroening appears to be a long-standing practice at some schools, where new learners are expected to suffer deprivation and tolerate humiliating behaviour as part of their socialisation into the authoritarian discipline of the school.

In this regard we would like to uphold a distinction between orientation and initiation. Orientation is a desirable and voluntary early exposure to the manner in which a school is governed and functions. Initiation is an undesirable and coercive subjection of new learners to authoritarian discipline. The latter is clearly contrary to an ethos of tolerance and ought, therefore, to be discouraged.



MULTILINGUALISM

MULTILINGUALISM

Apartheid attempted to divide the South African population by casting an ethnic frame over black people and uniting an ethnically diverse population into a single, so-called white-race, group. In language terms, this effort translated into the furthering of Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu as so-called tribal oral languages and English and Afrikaans as official, state supported, languages of communication, record and business.[14]

English is a global language of communication, literature, science, business and diplomacy. Through much effort, Afrikaans evolved from an oral language to a developed literary and scientific language supported by sizeable white economic power. Unlike English, it is spoken in South Africa and Namibia only, though it is possible to communicate conversationally with Dutch and Flemish speakers. Our other official languages have little such comparable scientific, business or in the case of English, diplomatic heritage.

The Constitution of 1996 grants equality of status to 11 official languages, which are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. In practice, English has in democratic South Africa become the national language of politics and record. It remains the language of diplomacy and international commerce. Afrikaans is a well-used language of politics in the Western Cape, Northern Cape and the Free State. Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu are unevenly used in a variety of public fora and they have some place in the public



broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

The question, of course, is what must happen in language terms at our schools. The language-in-education policy of the Department of Education recommended in 1997 that learners should study by way of either their home language or English and their home language. In this way it should be possible for all learners to learn by way of their most familiar language. This is a right enjoyed in practice today by English and Afrikaans speakers alone. The implementation of this policy requires provincial-level action, to which end we would like to provide some guidelines.

There are two main values we wish to promote in the area of language: firstly, the importance of studying through the language one knows best, or as it is popularly referred to, mother tongue education; and secondly, the fostering of multilingualism. We do believe that an initial grounding in mother-tongue learning is a pedagogically sound approach to learning. We also believe that multi-cultural communication requires clear governmental support and direction.

It is often assumed that by using English as a medium of instruction, learners will gain access to opportunities in the world of work and leisure. The value of English as the main language of the formal sector of the urban economy hardly needs elaboration. Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu are valuable because they offer access to by far the largest number of consumers in

GUALISM



many sectors of the market. Afrikaans is valuable because it is the language of most employers in many parts of the rural areas and because Afrikaans-speakers form the language community with probably the largest buying power in the consumer market.

Known parental preferences suggest that a dual-medium approach is likely to be more acceptable to parents and learners compared to the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. At the same time, the teaching of English as a subject is in need of dramatic improvement if we demand that learners acquire it. It would obviously help no end if teachers who are proficient in English teach learners. The quality of English offered to teachers in pre-service and in-service training courses and to learners as part of Curriculum 2005 requires significant improvement. Curriculum 21 offers just such an opportunity for the improvement of English language teaching.

When it comes to communication, the onus historically has been on Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu speakers to master English and Afrikaans. There has been very little pressure on English- and Afrikaans-speakers to acquire one of the nine other official languages. South Africa is a multilingual country with 11 official languages. In order to be a good South African citizen one needs to be at least bilingual, but preferably trilingual. It would therefore not be unreasonable to expect English- and Afrikaans-speakers to acquire at least one of the other nine official languages as part of their linguistic repertoire.

MULT



Our recommendation would therefore be that all learners acquire at least one official language other than English and Afrikaans as a subject throughout their school years. Which language this is likely to be ought to be determined at a provincial level. Such a step would add considerably to reconciliation processes and the promotion of a common South African citizenship. It is also likely to lead to pressure on the relevant government authorities to make learning and teaching resources available in Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu.

The implications of these recommendations are: firstly, the reorganisation of teacher training to accommodate the new language policy; secondly, the introduction of appropriate short courses in the provincially determined second or third language with in-service learning opportunities at universities and technikons; thirdly, the improvement in the training of language teachers; fourthly, the enhancement of the resources and partnerships available to develop Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu, in relation particularly to the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB), the publishers, lexicographers, terminologists and materials developers; and fifthly, the development of quality and appropriate reading materials.

A language-in-education policy must perforce be supported by initiatives in the wider society. We believe therefore that multilingual proficiency must be rewarded in other institutions. The public sector as a major employer needs to give preference to citizens who are at least trilingual. Promotion in the civil service should in part depend on mastering accredited courses in at least one language other than English or Afrikaans, appropriate to a province or region. Similarly, private sector companies who are multilingual in their practices need to be affirmed, in the same way that companies that employ women and black people, are given preferential treatment when it comes to government contracts. Educational, training and non-governmental institutions in the training of employees and potential employees in the service sector should require that they be able to communicate at the very least in a language other than Afrikaans or English.



OPENNESS

Well-rounded educational development requires the advancement of the intellect and the emotional maturation of the individual. A strong foundation in both prepares children and young adults for the changing demands of modern life. Our schooling system therefore has the responsibility of refining the intellectual development of every learner in an environment that is stimulating and emotionally supportive. It also has the responsibility of providing an approach to solving problems that will be useful throughout the life cycle.

Curriculum 2005 provides a theoretical grid that defines the substantive areas of knowledge a learner must master. It is up to the teacher, though, to make the experience for learners a quality one, to link areas of speciality and mould these into a well-rounded process of educational development. In our environment there is a special responsibility to promote numeracy and literacy in the scientific, humanities and social science divisions of Curriculum 2005 in our poorer and most disadvantaged schools. We welcome the intervention of Curriculum 21, which will provide substance to the theoretical orientation of Curriculum 2005.

We would like to emphasise the value of numeracy and the scientific approach to problem-solving, as essential life-skills. The ability to count, that is, to be arithmetically capable, is necessary for any person to function properly as a social being. Elementary numeracy is needed to maintain household accounts, to negotiate daily transactional business and to communicate with the ever-changing circle of individuals in the daily routine of life. The ability of parents to have numerically

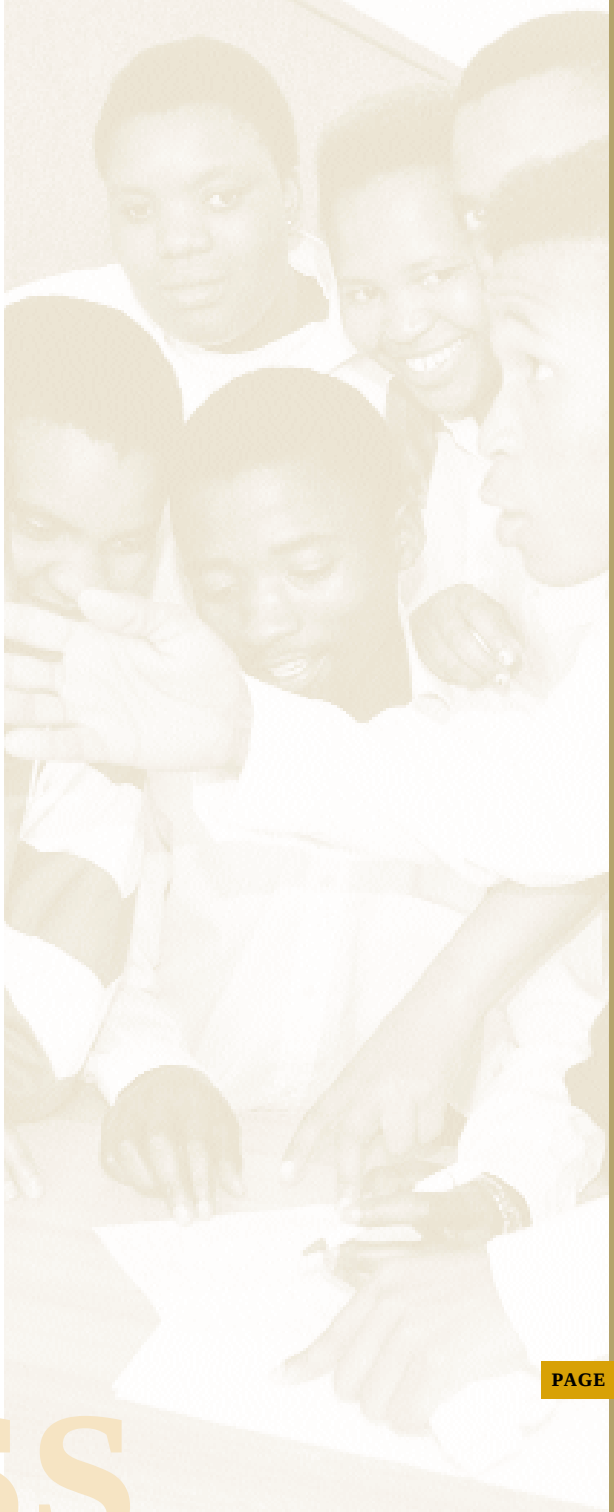


informed communication with children is critical.

A command over elementary science adds value. A grasp of environment patterns, the basic physics of the cosmology, human biology and the engineering logic of the built environment enhance the ability of the individual to function and to exercise a mastery over his or her fate. Many individuals by virtue of native intelligence and intuition can achieve success in life without the benefit of science, but most of us simply get by. The importance of mathematics and science cannot be overemphasised.

We do not live by numbers and science alone. We expect South Africans to know their history, culture, literature, economy, law and society. We desire to have a population that is both numerate and literate. We therefore believe strongly in the development of a national grid of adult learning opportunities, using our existing resources and infrastructure of universities, technikons and colleges and schools, to enhance the numeracy and literacy of our largely under-educated adult population. The creation of a National Literacy Agency by the Department of Education is absolutely welcome and necessary.

The issue runs deeper, though. We are bereft of a strong reading culture. Comparatively speaking, newspaper circulation in South Africa is relatively small. Books are out of the economic reach of the average person. The absence of tax concessions for imported reading materials makes it increasingly difficult for our national institutions to have adequate holdings of books and journals. In recent years more libraries have been built in previ-





ously unresourced areas. But even existing libraries are not as well used as they could be. There needs to be a strong drive to educate learners and the broader public about library use and to ensure that libraries become, and are recognised as, user-friendly community hubs of education, information and entertainment. The latter could include story-telling, writing workshops and meet-the-author opportunities.

It is not simply resources that determine a culture of reading, though, but attitude, interest and orientation. Poorer countries like India or Nigeria have well-developed reading cultures. A strong reading culture begins in the home where children are imbued with a love of reading through seeing parents enjoying reading and through having books and newspapers available in the home. Provincial education departments, schools, school governing bodies, non-governmental organisations, and so on, can cooperate on interventions to place reading materials in the home.

The internet has increasingly become an exceptional tool for education and accessing information. Schools that cannot afford this technology are excluded from benefiting from an important innovation. Support from the private sector, particularly corporations in the field of information technology and telecommunications, should be harnessed to help place these resources in schools and to educate learners and teachers in their use. Policies will need to be developed to determine access and ensure responsible use of this technology.

We are also bereft of a strong debating culture. It prob-



ably is rooted in our apartheid past, where rote learning and the slavish repetition of information were rewarded by a bureaucratic examination system; where asking probing questions was discouraged; and where an authoritarian attitude to learning and social conduct were expected of educators. Debate occurred at unusual and exceptional schools and in the many spaces prised open by democratic politics, but a culture of questioning and debate has yet to become a norm in the life of our schools today.[15]

We would therefore like to emphasise the importance and power of debate in advancing the intellectual development of the individual. The ability to ask penetrating questions is a skill that has to be encouraged and developed. To conduct good research on a topic of interest, using library materials, the internet and personal interviews, is a skill of lifelong value and benefit. The ability to conduct an informed and productive debate adds value to the quality of public understanding and the public discourse, as it does to arrive at a good decision, whether it is in the household, the school, the company, the government, and so on.

It is one of the most difficult qualities to define, but the issue principally has to do with the value of being open and receptive to new ideas; with developing the ability to ask good and penetrating questions; with insisting on good evidence for arguments; and with being willing to debate ideas in order to arrive at quality decisions.[16] We recommend that schools introduce debating societies and that the Department of Education supports these with a system of national awards to encourage and recognise ability and talent in this area.



ACCOUNTABILITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

Public perception of schooling is often assumed to be negative. Much of this is based on individual and anecdotal examples and on some academic studies of dysfunctional schools.[17] Strikes and the threat of strikes by teachers in their unions underline a public perception that some educators have lost a sense of vocation when it comes to the teaching of the nation's youth. The habit of blaming the teacher as some generic culprit for the ills of schooling has undermined the spirit of those who do devote their lives to education and training.

The truth of it is that the public perception of schooling and the degree of dysfunctionality of schools have not been tested. Systematic research on the problems of education is a poorly-developed and resourced field. The resulting generalities in observation and uninformed, counter-productive and damaging criticism, put the good teachers with the bad and the effective principals with the ineffective. Good teachers, principals and administrators need affirming to support the ideal of education as vocation and its associated norms and values as a public and national service.

A vocation is a mission in life and not just another job. When the vocation is the education of the young, the responsibility of guiding the development of our unique emotion and intellect is awesome. Exercising that responsibility requires a strong sense of commitment to some core norms of behaviour and conduct. As in politics, the reduction of education to the market and jobs, important as that may be in some respects, commodifies education. Schooling is for individual growth, not the market.

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Every parent knows that children grow and develop best when they feel secure, are part of a routine and experience a stable social life. Instability is not good for growth. It is important therefore to uphold and insist on structure, and for educators and learners alike to value structure. Punctuality is a sign of respect for one another. Absenteeism without demonstrably legitimate medical or other reason is a dereliction of duty. The monitoring and scrutiny of homework set regularly are an estimable recognition of the worth of the learner. Every teacher knows that to do this properly takes effort after hours.

Teachers and administrators must be leaders and set the example. Children learn by example, consciously or unconsciously. What parents or teachers do is much more important than what they say they do. If teachers do not want learners to be absent they must not be absent. If teachers expect homework to be completed, they must complete their homework. As the dedicated teacher well knows, a relationship of trust and fellowship develops when educators and learners become partners in the vocation of schooling.

The positive conduct of teachers must be reinforced by the conduct of parents. School governing bodies created by legislation are the vehicles by which the synergies between teachers and parents are established. There is concern about how well school governing bodies are working. Parents serving on such bodies do not always understand their role, and teachers all too frequently see governing bodies as nuisances to be tolerated rather than

TABILITY





as useful accountability structures. The Department of Education is to be commended for injecting new energy into the powerfully democratic ideals that lie behind school governing bodies.[18]

The challenge is to make school governing bodies a legitimate and working institution of civil society. In becoming this, they need to be supported by the more long-standing institutions of association: the churches and mosques, temples and synagogues, sports clubs and leisure bodies, civic associations and political parties, non-governmental organisations and local authorities. Sharing in the experiences and problems of governance and accountability in a transitional society like ours will enrich the quality of parental support work in education.

We would like to emphasise the importance of institutionalising lines of accountability. Children and young adults are the responsibility of parents and teachers, who in turn are accountable to school governing bodies and the educational authorities, who in turn are accountable to the citizens of the democratic society. Ours is a transitional society on the move from an authoritarian heritage, where the rules of punitive sanction are replaced by the rules of democratic accountability. Adjustments in social conduct by learners, educators, parents and the citizenry are required to lend stability to recently established democratic rules.

Numerous efforts have been made in schools and tertiary institutions to negotiate codes of conduct which all educators and learners will accept as fair and binding. For the most part, such efforts have floundered in acrimonious, politicised negotiations or simply through pervasive non-compliance. We recommend that the Department of Education develop a binding social contract that is consistent with the philosophical underpinnings of Tirisano (working together), between educators, administrators, parents, trade unions and professional associations. This contract should comply with the normative presumptions central to the notion of education as vocation operating in an environment of democratic accountability and good governance. This document can be the basis of such a social contract.



HONOUR

HONOUR

The primary purpose of a school is to provide an environment where teaching and learning takes place. Part of the learning experience involves an anticipation of the responsibilities of adulthood, including those of citizenship in a democracy. A good citizen is an informed citizen, someone versed in the values and principles of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, the history of South Africa and what it means to exercise democratic freedom with the restraints of personal moral character. The well-rounded South African of the future is someone with a historical consciousness, an open and inquiring mind, is trilingual, and has a healthy respect for the obligations of citizenship.

As a people we come from a divided past and divided loyalties. Before 1994 there was by definition no common loyalty to the state or to national symbols. The state and its symbols were partial to a white minority and seen and contested as such. Since 1994 we have sought to build universal state legitimacy by democratic rules and motivate the public to find a common allegiance to national symbols. The effort is projected as one of nation building, led in the first phase of it by former President Nelson Mandela.

The pursuit of narrow and xenophobic nationalism and patriotism have left many scars on the recent history of humankind and all too frequent recurrences of genocide blights the history of Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. In many countries the pursuit of narrow nationalism has destroyed educational systems, by making schools the instruments of state ideology and the wishes of political leaders. It is for these reasons that



schools are often caricatured as mere instruments of the ideological apparatus of state.

Because of this history, we have developed a cautious and tentative approach to nation building in the political sphere. The effort has been more to reconcile and find common ground between all of our citizens than to aggressively assert our South African-ness against outsiders and the 'other'. Leadership has been much more cautious in their approach compared to some members of the public, judging by xenophobic responses to immigration. We do believe that caution and circumspection are appropriate in dealing with potentially explosive and emotive matters like nationalism and patriotism.

For the average person, the limits of one's immediate culture are the limits of employability, social acceptance, dignity, social honour and citizenship. Beyond these immediate limits of community, the average person can be handicapped. It is personal investment in education that gives us access to opportunities.[19] Education in the culture beyond the immediate neighbourhood, or city, or area, or country, or continent, means increased freedom and liberty from local handicap.

Democracy in South Africa is an effort to increasingly make available the opportunities of the national community to the individual living in their local settings. It has not been an effort to suppress the local or parochial, but to link it through common citizenship to the national. President Thabo Mbeki articulates a vision that locates citizenship in a common South African





ancestry and links our future to that of the regeneration of the continent of Africa. It is an effort therefore to extend the limits of the imagination to a widening sense of community beyond one's immediate circumstance.

A distinction can be drawn between a liberal and civic-republican notion of citizenship. In the former the individual exercises his or her democratic freedom as an autonomous person and worries about social consequences after the fact. In the latter, the individual exercises his or her democratic freedom first through a group or community and worries about individual consequences later. The former can be seen as unbridled individualism and the latter the subjection of the individual to the community.[20] Neither is desirable in its extreme form. Our effort should be to find an appropriate balance between these two traditions.

This effort includes our sense of honour and identity as South Africans. The majority of South Africans already embrace the symbols of a national identity, such as the flag, the national anthem and the recently unveiled coat of arms. We have invested a great deal of pride in our national sporting teams and see their successes and failures as our own. Our political institutions are national ones and not designed to serve the interests of any one group. Our schools are also a national resource, not belonging to any one group of people but to all.

It is therefore appropriate that the symbols of national identity and a South African social honour be celebrated at our schools. In this respect we recommend that the national anthem be taught and sung at schools, at ceremonies or on occasions best defined by schools themselves. We suggest, though, a minimum requirement, which is at the opening of the first and last school assemblies of every school term. We also recommend that the national flag be displayed in a prominent place, such as the entrance lobby of a school or above the stage frame in the assembly hall. Such symbolic rituals should be supported by the teaching of civic responsibility and a civic history of the democratic South Africa, with a focus on the Constitution and Bill of Rights of 1996.

We also believe that the ritual of declaring a pledge of allegiance or vow at weekly school assemblies will serve as a reminder of the fundamental values to which South Africans in a democracy aspire. We offer the following text as illustration of the spirit that we believe ought to be conveyed and would invite responses as to its suitability in various contexts:

I promise to be loyal to my country, South Africa,

and to do my best to promote its welfare

and the wellbeing of all of its citizens.

I promise to show self-respect in all that I do

and to respect all of my fellow citizens

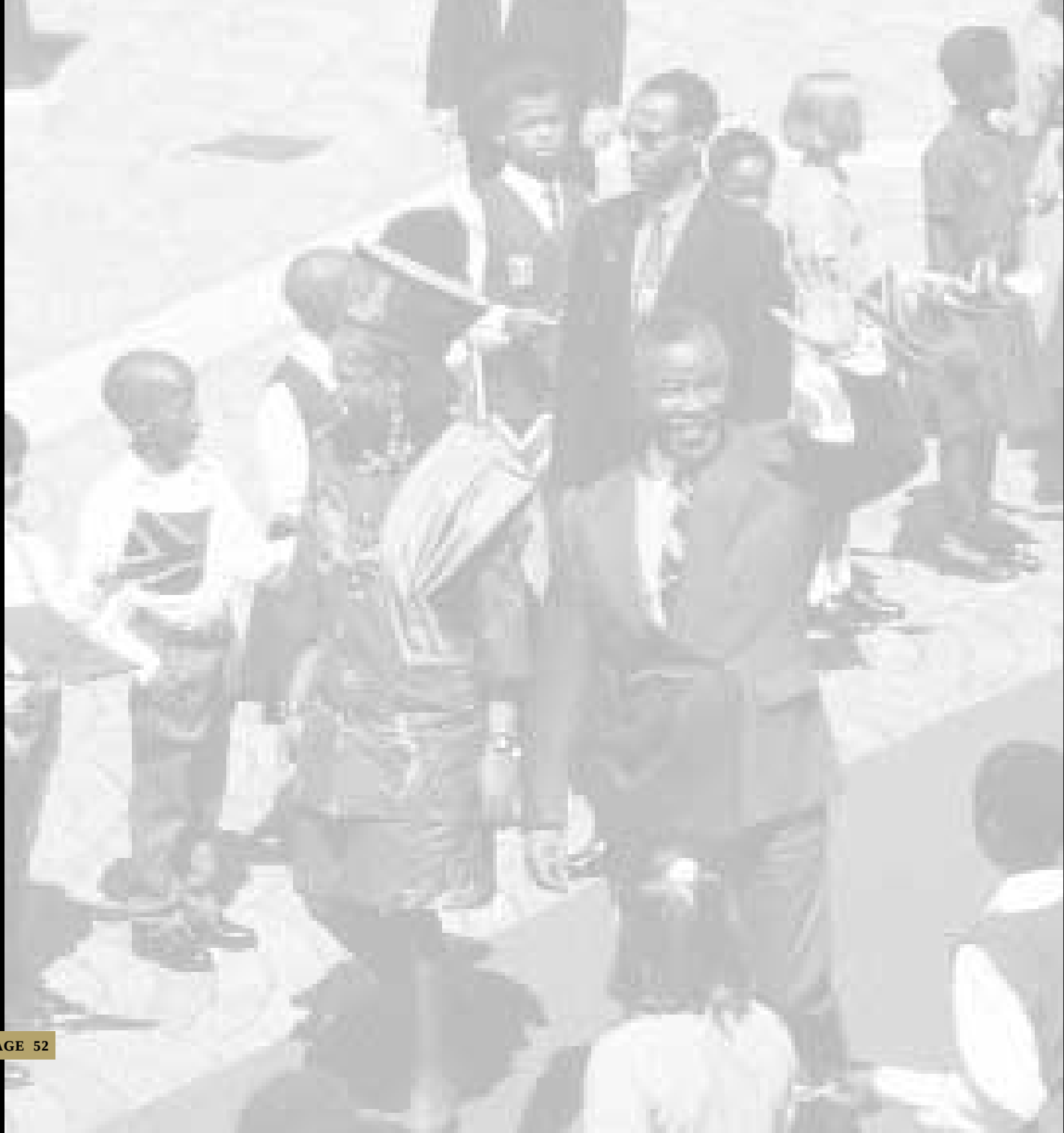
and all of our various traditions.

Let us work for peace, friendship and reconciliation

and heal the scars left by past conflicts,

and let us build a common destiny together.





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Ms Pansy Tlakula is a member of the South African Human Rights Commission. She has a background in law.

NOTES

[1]Lesley O'Connell & Nancy Birdsall, 'Race, Human Capital Inequality, and Income Distribution in South Africa, Brazil and the United States' (Washington DC, unpublished paper, 2000).

[2] The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Cape Town, 1996).

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[4] This section draws from Jeffrey Lever & Wilmot James, 'The Second Republic: Race, Inequality and Democracy in South Africa' in Three Nations at the Crossroads: Brazil, South Africa, United States (Atlanta, 2000).

[5] See Peter Kallaway ed. Apartheid and Education (Cape Town, 1984).

[6] Edgar Brookes, Native Education in South Africa (Johannesburg, 1930); IB Tabata, Education for Barbarism (Durban, 1959).

[7] Shirley Robinson, 'Demographics and Quality of Life' in Wilmot James & Moira Levy, eds. Pulse: Passages in Democracy Building (Cape Town, 1998) p62.

[8] Ian Goldin & Chris Heymans, 'Moulding a New Society: The RDP in Perspective', in Gitanjali Maharaj ed. Between Unity and Diversity (Cape Town, 1999) p110.

[9] Nick Taylor & Penny Vinjevold, eds. Getting Learning Right: Report of the President's Education Initiative Research Project (Johannesburg, 1999).

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[11] See Saul Dubow for an acount of the power of scientific racism in South African history, Dubow, Illicit Union; Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa (Johannesburg, 1995).

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[13] See Heribert & Kanya Adam, 'Divided Memories: How emerging democracies deal with the crimes of previous regimes' in W. James & L. Van de Vijver, eds., Lazarus and the TRC: Life After the Death of Apartheid (Cape Town, forthcoming).

[14] See Kogila Moodley's elegant summary of the history and complexities of language in South Africa. Kogila Moodley, 'African Renaissance and Language Policies in Comparative Perspective', Politikon Vol 27 no 1, 2000.

[15] Anthony Sampson provides a vivid account of the debating culture that developed on Robben Island. See Sampson, Mandela: The Authorised Biography (Johannesburg, 1999).

[16] See Karl Popper, The Open Society and Its Enemies (London, 1948).

[17] See Taylor & Vinjevold, eds, Getting Learning Right.

[18] Ministry of Education, 'Conference on School Governance', 14-15 April 2000. See Anne McLennan, 'The Challenge of Tirisano' (University of the Witwatersrand, unpublished paper, 2000).

[19] See Ernest Gellner, Conditions of Liberty (London, 1994) pp106-7.

[20] See Mamphela Ramphele, 'Citizenship challenges for South Africa's young democracy' (2000, unpublished paper forthcoming in Daedalus, The Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences); Stephen Ndengwa, 'Citizenship and Ethnicity: An examination of two transition movements in Kenyan politics', American Political Science Review vol 9 no 2 pp599-615 (1997); Dipankar Gupta, 'Survivors or Survivals - Reconciling citizenship and cultural particulatisms', Economic and Political Weekly, vol 34 no 33 (1999); and Mahmood Mamdani, Citizen and Subject; Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism, (London, 1997).