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**NATIONAL REPORT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND YOUTH
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Chapter One

The Education System at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century: An Overview

Post-Independence (Seychelles received its independence in 1976) education experiences evolved in the context of a broad political vision of social, economic and educational transformation considered necessary for the creation of a post-colonial society which amongst other things would redress the discrimination and inequalities of the pre-independence period, build national unity and promote cultural identity.

Education was to be the pillar of this transformation process and the education legislation, policies, reforms and strategies of the Second and Third Republic reflect a clear commitment to the principle of re-dressing past inequalities and creating equal opportunities for all learners and accommodating diversity within a coherent and comprehensive education system.

1.1 Legal Framework

a) The Constitution — Key Dimensions

- Education as a Fundamental Right

Through a number of key provisions the Constitution of the Third Republic (1993) recognises basic human rights for all citizens one of which is the right to education.

Furthermore the Constitution through a number of provisions clearly establishes the conditions under which the State will guarantee the fundamental right to education to all its citizens.

The State recognises the right of every citizen to education and with a view to ensuring the effective realisation of this right undertakes;

- to provide compulsory education which shall be free in State Schools, for such minimum period, which shall not be less than ten years, as may be prescribed by law.*
- to ensure that the educational programmes in all schools are aimed at the complete development of the person.*
- to afford, on the basis of intellectual capability, every citizen equal access to educational opportunities and facilities beyond the period of compulsory education.*

The Constitution therefore provides not only for the provision of education but more importantly for the right of access to not less than ten years of tuition free education for all learners whatever their needs or differences are.

- **Non-discriminatory Provisions**

The non-discriminatory provisions of the Constitution are especially important in establishing the framework for inclusion and in preventing learners from being discriminated against on the basis of characteristics which bear no relation to their right to education or their capacity to participate in the learning process. In that context, the protection of learners with disabilities who historically have by and large been excluded from educational provisions is a fundamental dimension of the Constitution.

- **Language of Communication**

The right to receive education in one of the three national languages (Creole, English and French) is also provided in the Constitution. Given the importance of mother-tongue at critical stages of the learning process, the inclusion of Creole as one of the official languages in the Constitution provides education with a powerful legal framework to not only prevent linguistic barriers to learning but to facilitate inclusion by all learners.

b) The Education Act (presently under review)

The Education Act of 1982 (amended in 1991) embodies the vision and principles of the Constitution of the Second and Third Republic respectively.

One of the key features of the Education Act is the assertion of the right of all Seychellois to receive equal access to compulsory education opportunities in accordance with their abilities, aptitude and creed.

c) Policy on Education and Training

For the last two decades or so, the transformation process of the education system to ensure that education as a fundamental and constitutional right becomes more accessible to all learners has been guided by three fundamental principles—Education For All, Education for Life and Education for Personal and National Development.

Both the previous policy statement, **Education for a New Society (1984)** and the more recent document, **Education for A Learning Society (2000)** provide the necessary framework for the development and implementation of structures and strategies to further promote the holistic and integrated approach to the provision of quality education and training opportunities for all Seychellois.

The goals and objectives of education and training set out in the policy document, **Education for A Learning Society** is encapsulated in the following principles each of which has several dimensions:

- **Equity**, which encompasses equality of access to compulsory education, equitable sharing of resources, equal opportunity for optimum achievement ensuring that the context, content and medium of education are equally favorable for boys and girls, and catering for learners with special needs.
- **Quality**, which includes institutionally based planning for development and improvement, integrating mechanisms for monitoring and self-evaluation, complementarity of external and internal evaluations; the creation of conditions for institution to become ‘learning organisations’, improving institutions through staff development, integrating evolving technologies; aiming for service excellence and facilitating participation of stakeholders in education.
- **Accountability**, which includes partnerships with parents and communities; targeting-setting and development planning; transparency in reporting on performance; integration of assessment in curriculum, teaching and evaluation; cost-effectiveness through efficient use of resources and development of professional attitudes of accountability amongst teachers and students.

Viewed from the perspective of outcomes, the education system is geared towards achievement of **empowerment, productivity, social cohesion and global participation.**

d) National Curriculum Framework

The **Seychelles Curriculum Framework (2001)** describes the components which are fundamental to teaching and learning in Seychelles schools. It states the underlying principles which will guide all curriculum development and give direction to teaching and learning. It specifies the content of the National Curriculum in terms of Essential Learning Areas and describes in broad terms the main learning objectives of each area. It outlines the essential skills that should be developed by all students and indicates the desirable attitudes and values to be promoted through the curriculum. The framework also outlines the policy for assessment at school and national level.

e) Education Strategic Plan

The need to give strategic direction to the different dimensions of education development resulting from the re-structuring processes, and the education policy document culminated in the publication of the Education Strategic Plan (2002— 2006) following an extensive period of consultative and collaborative work with various stakeholders.

The Strategic Plan seeks to orchestrate a programmed, harmonious and unified process of education provision, capacity building and development in Seychelles for the coming five-year period.

f) Education For All National Plan of Action

The Education Strategic Plan is complimented by the **Education For All National Plan of Action: 2001 — 2015** (2001) within the context of the Dakar Framework of Action (2000) as a further re-affirmation of the national vision and collective commitment to pursue a broad-based strategy of ensuring that the learning needs of every child, young person and adult are adequately addressed.

g) Millennium Development Goals

Although nearly all the goals and targets related to education have been attained, the Ministry is committed to improving aspects of both the supportive environment and the various parameters of the monitoring mechanism so as to improve on the gains already achieved.

Evolution of the Education and Training System

The transformation process of the pre-independence education and training landscape has been facilitated by the following three main reform initiatives:

1978 Education Reform

1991 Education Reform

1998 Education Reform

The most recent reform agenda, that of 1998, followed the re-introduction of multi-party politics in 1993.

It encompasses all dimensions of the national education and training system and is guided by the following ten (10) goals.

- To consolidate Primary Education by further defining key skills, and taking steps to ensure mastery of these skills at key stages of learning. (This involves work on assessment, profiling and learning support structures in schools, particularly at the Early Childhood Education stage.)
- To reinforce the position of the applied technical/vocational subjects in the Secondary curriculum.
- To fully implement schemes of subject choice from completion of Secondary 2 onwards, such that individual students follow coherent three-year courses in their subjects of choice, within the framework of the National Curriculum, and in parallel with a number of core, compulsory subjects.
- To consolidate school-leaving assessment and accreditation and ensure that they cater for a wider ability band and a greater diversity of subjects including a range of technical subjects.
- To achieve greater economy in the use of resources by reinforcing education in secondary in such a way as to eliminate the need for a foundation year at the post-secondary level.
- To consolidate the programmes of the newly-established Youth Village, which provides access to a variety of social, recreational, environmental, outward-bound, and vocational activities to a wide range of students and young adults. (The Youth Village caters for different groups of students during the school holidays, but also accommodates other groups throughout the year.)
- To increase access to training schemes for school-leavers, through the development of a range of vocational skill training centres and schemes, linked to industry.

- To upgrade the level of Further Education and Training courses on offer at Seychelles Polytechnic and further develop linkage programmes with institutions of higher learning overseas.
- To improve programmes of teacher training and continuing professional development under the newly formed National Institute of Education. (access to degree and post-graduate courses through linkage programmes forms part of the plans for the development of this institution and its staff/students.)
- To introduce a system of quality assurance in education, with an initial focus on schools. (The model of quality assurance being developed links up with school development planning. One of its principal objectives is to strengthen self-evaluation already being practised in schools. Target-setting at both school and national levels will also form part of this initiative.)

1.3 Organisation Structure and Management of the Education System

The main characteristics of the systems are:

- a comprehensive, integrated and inclusive co-educational education and training system
- a system which accommodates both compulsory/non-compulsory and fee-paying/non-fee-paying dimensions of the service, and which is predominantly under the responsibility of the State and is supplemented by private initiatives at all levels from day-care to post-secondary and further education and training.
- a system which provides for education from Early Childhood to Secondary free of direct charge to all Seychellois children for a period of 13 years (nominally from 3+ to 16+ years of age) and makes available post-secondary and further education and training opportunities at nominal charge through a bursary system of allowance and fees and a Scholarship Scheme according to financial means to all Seychellois who meet the selection criteria appropriate to particular course of study or training for which the student applies.

The national education and training system is principally under the responsibility and management of the Ministry of Education and Youth although at the Further Education and Training level, this responsibility is shared with other Ministries.

Table 1: Responsibility for the Provision of Education and Training

Level of Education and Training	Mode of Instruction	Responsibility
Crèche, Primary and Secondary	Full-Time	Ministry of Education and Youth
Further Education & Training: Seychelles Polytechnic	Full-Time & Part-Time	Ministry of Education and Youth
National Institute of Education (NIE)	Full-Time & Part-Time	Ministry of Education and Youth
Industrial Training Center (ITC)	Full-Time & Part-Time	Ministry of Education and Youth
Adult Learning & Distance Education Center (ALDEC)	Part-Time	Ministry of Education and Youth
Skills Training Center	Full-Time & Part-Time	Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs
Seychelles Hotel and Tourism Training College (SHTTC)	Full-Time & Part-Time	Ministry of Transport and Tourism
National Institute of Health and Social Studies (NIHSS)	Full-Time & Part-Time	Ministry of Health
Seychelles Institute of Management (SIM)	Part-Time	Ministry of Administration
Farmers Training Center (FTC)	Full-Time & Part-Time	Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources
Maritime Training Center	Full-Time & Part-Time	Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources
National College of the Arts (NCA)	Full-Time	Ministry of Sports, Local Government and Culture

- **Non-Formal Early Childhood (0—3 years 3 months)**

This essentially covers the day-care and crèche levels of education

- **Day-Care Education**

To lay the solid foundation for life-long learning, all children need to be adequately cared for in their early developmental years. For many they are cared for at home by a parent, others are cared for by a relative or friend and others in a licensed facility.

Day-care is a non-compulsory dimension of the education system for the very young under the age of 3 years and 3 months. It is a licensed, fee-paying, privately owned and managed educational enterprise catering for the needs of a large number of working mothers and facilitating women's socio-economic careers.

At the end of 2003 there were twenty-eight (28) licensed day cares and the facilities were available in fifteen (15) of the twenty-four (24) districts accommodating an estimated 15 percent of the day-care going age cohort.

The State through the partnership work of certain key Ministries and organisations plays a supervisory role to ensure that day cares meet the minimum standards set out in the '*Guidelines For The Registration and Operation of Day Care Centers (1994)*'

The Ministry of Education and Youth has the portfolio responsibility to assist daycares in the process of quality improvement mainly at the following levels:

- guidance in the establishment of a suitable educational and child minding curriculum and programmes;
- monitoring of the implementation of such programmes;
- assistance in staff development.

- **Crèche Education**

Crèche Education is a dimension of Early Childhood Education and caters for children aged 3 years 3 months to 5+years. The service which is non-compulsory, non-fee paying and available for two years represents the beginning of formal education.

Crèche education is normally provided in centers adjacent to district primary schools.

Furthermore, it is an integral part of the district primary schools and falls under their direct management.

Although crèche education is not compulsory the service is accessed by almost all children in the 3 years 3 months to 5+years age group.

For 2003 crèche education was available in all the twenty-four (24) districts through thirty-five (35) centers.

- **Primary Education**

Primary Education comprises six years of non-fee paying compulsory education (Primary 1–6). It caters for children aged 5/6 years to 11/12 years on a full-time basis. At the state level, children attend primary education in their districts.

There are twenty-six (26) district primary schools. They vary in size, the smallest having one class per year group with the average being three (3) classes per year group.

- **Secondary Education (12+ to 16/17)**

Secondary education is compulsory for the first four years of the cycle (secondary 1–4) and optional for the fifth year. The service for the full-five year cycle is non-fee paying and provided in ten (10) regional secondary schools on a full-time basis. Secondary education caters for children aged 11/12 years to 16/17 years.

- **Post-Secondary Education and Training (Post 16+ to 18+)**

Full-time post-secondary education is provided in a number of institutions. These are principally: The Seychelles Polytechnic, The National Institute of Education, The Industrial Training Center, The Seychelles Hospitality and Tourism Center, The Maritime Training Center, The Farmers Training Center, The National College of the Arts, The National Institute of Health and Social Studies. The first three institutions are under the responsibility of the Department of Education whilst the others operate under the umbrella of associate Ministries.

- **Higher Education and Training**

Seychelles has to date not invested in the development of locally based university infrastructure and training given that the student population base has not been big enough to supply viable course intakes in a sustainable manner.

Generally, those wishing or qualifying to continue their education and training at university level do so at overseas institutions.

However, certain institutions run partnership courses in conjunction with overseas universities. Such schemes not only reduce the costs of education and training but also benefits the local institutions by allowing them to participate in these initiatives and improving access to higher education and training.

- **Non-Formal Education and Training**

Non-formal education which essentially takes the form of adult and continuing education is offered by the Adult Learning and Distance Education Center (ALDEC) and is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education and Youth.

The service provides fee-paying academic upgrading and/or skill training opportunities to principally the following category of adult learners: early school leavers, school-leavers who have under-achieved during the full cycle of formal education; learners who abandoned or were denied access to the full cycle of formal education, employees who want to improve their employability prospects. The majority of the courses are usually offered after working hours on week days

with a few courses offered on Saturdays.

The service falls under the responsibility of the Department of Education.

- **Teacher Education and Professional Development**

Teacher Education and Professional development is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Youth. The responsibility is mandated to the National Institute of Education, established in 1999.

- **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**

Although this is predominantly a Ministry of Education and Youth responsibility, the provision of this service is also shared by other Ministries in particular at the Post-Secondary and Further Education levels.

Chapter Two

Curricular Policies, Educational Content and Teaching and Learning Strategies

Policies guiding curriculum-related issues at the Early Childhood to Secondary levels have been elaborated in the National Curriculum Framework (2001).

The National Curriculum Framework describes the components which are fundamental to teaching and learning in our schools. It states the underlying principles which guide all curriculum development and give directions to all teaching and learning. It specifies the structure of the education system, and the learning objectives of each area. It outlines the essential skills that should be developed by all students and it indicates the desirable attitudes and values to be promoted through the curriculum. The framework document also outlines recommended strategies for teaching and learning and the policy for assessment in schools. Finally it proposes a systematic process for the evaluation of the national curriculum.

The framework is guided by the following eight (8) underlying principles which should give direction to the national formal curricula and school-based teaching/learning programmes.

- All students must be provided with equal educational opportunities.
- A broad and balanced curriculum will enable all students to develop the qualities needed for adult and working life.
- Students must become independent and life-long learners if they are to function effectively in an environment of continuous change.
- Learning is more effective when students see the connections and relationships between ideas, people, events and processes, as in real life situations.
- School-based learning will be more effective if it relates to the local context as well as to the wider world.
- Learning involves developing values as well as knowledge and skills.
- Students need to understand and respect diversity, value equity and develop a sense of social responsibility, in order to play a meaningful role in society.
- Students achieve their best when they are challenged and motivated to reach higher standards.

Curriculum experiences are organized into the following five progressive key stages which indicate the levels of achievement learners are expected to attain over the period of compulsory education — **Early Childhood, Middle Primary, Upper Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary**.

The organization of content for the teaching and learning is along subject lines categorized into the following Eight (8) Essential Learning Areas to ensure a broad and balanced experience to established categories of knowledge and understanding at all levels of the compulsory stages of education.

- The Languages
- Mathematics
- Sciences
- Social Studies
- Technical Studies
- The Arts
- Personal and Social Education
- Physical Education and Extra Curricular Activities

Specification of content for each subject within the mentioned Essential Learning Areas is guided by the following nine (9) *End of Compulsory Cycle Learning Objectives*:

By the end of year 11 it is expected that students will have:

- *Developed competence in literacy and spoken language skills which will allow them to participate effectively as young adults in society.*
- *Developed mathematical skills that will enable them to function effectively in daily life as well as in the technological world.*
- *Had experience of various artistic, intellectual and practical activities which will allow them to apply aesthetic judgement in everyday life.*
- *Acquired the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to make wise and safe choices in relation to their health and well-being.*
- *Had formative experience in moral and religious education.*
- *Developed competence in scientific enquiry and practical skills- including computer literacy- to enable them to use critical and creative thinking and to solve problems.*
- *Acquire knowledge and appreciation of their social and cultural heritage, and of their environment.*
- *Acquire an understanding and appreciation of the central concepts of responsible citizenship.*
- *Developed the capacity to use the skills of learning to learn more effectively.*

A summary of the curricular structure of for the compulsory cycle of education is given below

Summary of the Compulsory Education Cycle Curriculum Structure

A) Primary (Primary 1-6) — All subjects are compulsory

Kreol*
English*
French*
Mathematics*
Science*
Social Science*
Arts & Craft
Music
Personal and Social Education
Religion
Physical Education & Extra Curricular
Activities

(* = Examinable Subjects)

B) Lower Secondary Structure (S1& S3)

CORE SUBJECTS

English*
French*
Mathematics*
Combined Science*
History*
Geography*
Social Education
Physical Education

INTRODUCTION TO:

Art/Design*
Agriculture/Fishing
Construction/Technology
Social Economics
Computer Education

B) Upper Secondary Structure (S4-S5)

COMPULSORY CORE

English*
French*
Mathematics*

SCIENCE OPTION (Select one Bio/Che/Phy)

Chemistry*/Physics*
Biology*/Physics*
Combined Science*

SOCIAL SCIENCE (Select at least one)

History*
Geography*

APPLIED SUBJECTS OPTIONS (Select one according to time available)

Art/Design
Agriculture/Fishing
Construction Tech
Social Economics

The National Institute of Education is the lead agency in the curriculum development process for these levels. It works in close collaboration with other stakeholders namely members of Schools Division.

At the secondary and the further education and training levels, curriculum policies, educational content and learning strategies continue to a large extent to be influenced by the pressure for international recognition of the education and training credentials.

Decisions on major curriculum policies, educational content and teaching and learning strategies is recommended by the National Curriculum Committee which has the following mandate:

- work within the framework of the Policy Statement of the Ministry **‘Education for a Learning Society’**
- give direction and oversee the coordinated planning, development and implementation of the curriculum development process;
- ensure the effective implementation of strategies, plans and results by the different partners engaged in the curriculum development process in schools.

Chapter Three

Major Achievements and Lessons Learnt

2.1 Access to Education

2.1.1 Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary Levels

Seychelles has achieved 100% access at most of these levels. This achievement has been greatly facilitated by the legal framework of ten years of compulsory general education and a number of interventions at these levels. In addition, the country has experienced a relatively stable school population with a minimal growth rate (about 1.1%) requiring limited expansion in facilities.

a) Day Care Education

The service though non-compulsory and fee-paying is accessed by approximately 15 percent of the day-care going age-group.

Most day-care services are within easy reach of a primary school and are open throughout the day and at convenient hours to allow parents to travel to work and back bearing in mind that work places are not always close to the day care facilities.

Although there is no lower age limit for admission to a day-care center the ability to adequately cater for the different age groups is always taken into consideration by the authorities.

The language of communication in the majority of day-cares is predominantly, Creole, the mother-tongue, therefore limiting the barrier of language in access of learning.

Crèche Education

Although non-compulsory, enrolment at this level is virtually 100 per cent. Strategies and interventions which facilitate access at this level include the following:

- the facilities are available in all the 24 districts and are in proximity or adjacent to primary schools.
- the facilities benefit from the Ministry's investment programme related to infrastructure development, provision of teaching and learning materials and capacity development
- the advocacy campaigns aimed at parents on the long term advantages of crèche education to their children.

- the proximity of crèches to primary schools and the fact that they have similar operating hours means that during school hours they constitute a ‘convenient child-minding’ facility for the siblings of the older children attending primary schools.
- instruction is primarily in Creole although pupils are also initiated into English and French at this level.
- a favorable pupil/teacher ratio of 14:1
- a system of support to crèche teachers through crèche helpers
- access to free school-based health services

Primary Education

The 100 percent access to the six years of compulsory schooling has been achieved through a number of enabling policies and interventions which include the following:

- the service is available free of direct charges to parents.
- the provision of free teaching/learning materials with minimum contribution from parents towards students stationary needs.
- the relatively stable yearly population of about 1600 pupil for each year.
- a favorable teacher: student ratio of around 1:14 with very few classes with a population of more than thirty (30) pupils.
- provision of subsidized school uniform material.
- a sustained investment programme of physical infrastructure and human resource development and resourcing of schools with teaching and learning resources
- the easy accessibility of schools at district level.
- the zoning regulations of the Education Act by guaranteeing children primary schooling in his/her parents’ district of residence, thus limiting unnecessary overcrowding in certain schools.
- the policy of automatic promotion throughout the primary education cycle restricting repeat of classes for those who have not mastered the prerequisite skills to not more than once (with parental approval) during the first two years of the cycle
- the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction during the early years of the primary cycle.
- the provision of free transport of students who because of the nature of their disability need to attend the School of the Exceptional Child, a facility for children with certain category of disabilities.
- the provision of subsidized school meals and school-based health services

Secondary Education

Enrolment at this level remains very high with nearly all the students completing the compulsory cycle of four years proceeding to the optional fifth year. Only a

small number of students upon completion of Secondary 4 opt out to take up opportunities through apprenticeship schemes and/or some post-secondary institution.

Enabling policies, strategies and interventions at this level include the following:

- regionalisation of the service into ten (10) regional Secondary Schools resulting in the optimisation of resources and facilities.
- locating regional schools within reasonable reach of the feeder primary schools thus reducing the distance necessary to travel to attend a secondary school (usually less than 10 kilometers)
- subsidised uniform material and school meals and minimum direct parental contribution on stationery.
- a sustained investment programme of physical infrastructure and human resource development and resourcing of schools with teaching and learning materials.
- the availability of free transport for those who need to attend the School for the Exceptional Child for the secondary cycle of education
- a few classes with a student enrolment of more than 30 students and a teacher to student ratio 1:14.
- a system of careers guidance and counselling at the secondary level.
- the provision of subsidized school meals.

Post-Secondary Education and Training

Although access to full-time post-secondary and training institutions is competitive, around 70 per cent of the full time secondary 5 year-group population gain access to full-time courses. The remaining 30 percent enter work or part-time training on completion of secondary education. Students may also apply to gain access to some of the post-secondary institutions on completion of four years of secondary education. The number in this category is usually few around 120 per year and about 40 or 33 percent gain access to these institutions each year.

Policies, strategies and interventions to enable access at this level include the following;

- the selection process which include the setting of the selection criteria, the selection proper, and appeals is co-ordinated by the National Further Education Placement Board on which members from all the PostSecondary institutions are represented.
- applications from students are considered at one place at a time by a number of Selection Committees representing the different post-secondary institutions.
- subsidised transport and uniform materials for students.

- provision of subsidised accommodation at the Youth Hostel to students from islands other than Mahe (the main island) who have gained acceptance to post-secondary centers.
- Putting in place in 2000 of a cost-sharing mechanism based on parental income of the students through the 'Bursaries and Maintenance Allowances Scheme' this limiting the effect of parental financial status on access to education and training at this level

Higher Education and Training

Nearly all post-secondary graduates who meet entry requirements for tertiary studies and who wish to further their tertiary studies in an area of national need have access to this opportunity.

Studies at this level are usually undertaken either locally through distance; or partly overseas and partly local through partnership programmes with overseas Centers, or entirely overseas.

Barriers to access to courses are minimized by two main interventions:

- the **Scholarship Scheme For Pre-service Students Pursuing Tertiary Studies** which establishes a cost-sharing mechanism for student and State contributions towards overseas studies. Important parameters of the scheme include criteria for award of a full or partial scholarship, a student Loan Scheme to assist students/parents with meeting their financial contributions.
- the twinning programme with a certain number of overseas institutions of higher education and training which has made a number of courses more accessible to a larger number of students at lower costs.
- a variety of short-courses, and modular courses to accommodate non-full-time candidates.
- preliminary work on a National Qualification Framework to offer multiple entry and exist points to all learners and to ensure learners mobility and the accumulation of portability of learner credits at the pace set by the learners themselves.

Seychelles through its policies, strategies and interventions has made great stride in facilitating access to its learners from early childhood to post secondary and higher education and training levels.

However, the removing of barriers to access to various categories of learners with special needs, in particular those with disabilities, and their integration in mainstream education remains a challenge at the early childhood, primary, secondary levels.

Furthermore, given the small population base, and the critical importance of trained and skilled human resource to future development initiatives, further increasing access at the post-secondary and higher education and training levels remains a priority pre-occupation.

2.2 Equity in Education and Training

Equity is a necessary condition in a society founded on the principle of the dignity of the person, the maintenance of a tradition of social harmony and the recognition of the right of every citizen to contribute in a meaningful way to national development.

Equity encapsulates the following key concept:

- equity of access to compulsory education;
- equitable sharing of resources;
- equal opportunity/creating conditions for optimum achievement according to ability and career aspiration;
- ensuring that the context, content and medium of education are equally favorable to boys and girls;
- catering for special needs/working towards greater inclusion of the learning disabled.

Equity has largely been achieved in terms of equality of access to schools and to programmes of education and training.

Other areas where this achievement is being demonstrated include:

- the insignificant disparity between boys and girls irrespective of location of residence, family income and/or status
- the insignificant difference in literacy between genders for the age-group 15–24 (male: 98%, female 99%, overall 98%; see *Millennium Development Goals Status Report*, 2003)

Policies, strategies and interventions that have assisted the promotion of equity in education and training include;

- the effective central co-ordination of equitable resourcing of all schools with physical, human and financial resources;
- the setting up of the Gender in Education Committee within the Ministry focussing of the following six (6) areas for action.

- Gender Sensitization and Training for key target groups
- Training of trainers
- Gender Research
- Gender Mainstreaming
- Advocacy and Publicity
- Networking/Links with Organization/NGOs.

There is however significant in-balance in the performance of boys and girls. This has been reflected in a recent national study **‘Gender Differences in the Educational Achievement of Boys and Girls in Primary Schools in Seychelles’ (August 2002)**

In furthering equity of education and training greater emphasis is now being given to the following:

- the provision of teaching and learning programmes which will enhance the conditions for optimum achievement by every group, including the gifted, the slow learner and the learner disabled;
- the re-dressing of gender imbalance in performance within general education;
- providing equal opportunities for training and fair chances of success to both gender at the post-secondary level;
- better matching of career aspirations and ability profiles of young people to maximize the contribution of every individual to national development.

2.3 Quality of Education and Training

The quality of education includes amongst other characteristics:

- the conditions and outcomes of learning
- the social, economic and cultural relevance of education and training provided;
- the influence of the teaching and learning environment on the process of training

National strategies considered critical in the achievement of on-going quality of education and that have been part of the Ministry’s plan of action recently include the following:

- the development of a cadre of teaching professionals who in addition to being competent is also able to critically look at their practices;
- the on-going review of teaching methods and strategies in the light of advances in educational technology and information communication technology in

- general in the development of teachers to life-long professional development;
- the acquisition by educational institutions of the capacity to evaluate their own performances and to take appropriate action, in a planned, focused and systematic manner;
- the transformation of educational institutions into real communities of learners as teachers and institution-based staff acquire the habit of looking beyond their individual classroom and work collaboratively towards the improvement of their institutions as a whole;
- the increase in the participation of parents and the community in education and training

To better ensure the implementation and monitoring of these strategies, two national structures have been established and consolidated.

Firstly, the School Improvement Programme introduced in all primary and secondary schools in 1995. The Programme has the following three aims:

- to improve student outcomes and the quality of students' learning experiences by creating a culture of collaborative planning and self-evaluation in schools;
- to improve the support system so that all units/sections supporting schools can provide more focussed and co-ordinated assistance to schools and develop the capacity to support development planning;
- to translate findings on school improvement and school effectiveness into practical applications of what constitutes good schools in the context of Seychelles and to develop the capacity to audit schools against these agreed criteria

Secondly, the setting up of the Quality Assurance Service in 1999 to reinforce the work of the School Improvement Programme and promote improvement in quality through:

- support for self-evaluation in schools
- support for planning and policy development at both institutional and national levels, through the generation of independent evaluation data;
- monitoring of the performance of the education system against agreed standards and targets;
- the promotion of sound teaching and management through the documentation and dissemination of successful institutional practice

Interventions and enabling strategies to promote achievement with regards to the relevance dimension of quality include the socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects.

- **Socio-Cultural Relevance – Language Dimension**

The National Curriculum considers tri-lingualism as the basis of the comprehensive education system.

It regards tri-lingualism as entailing the effective and confident mastery of the three official languages — Creole, English and French.

Measures taken and practices encouraged by the National Curriculum to achieve this goal focuses on the strengthening of the mother tongue used by the majority of children in their homes and community environment, through formal education, whilst providing pupils with every opportunity to develop the other two national languages — English and French

The process of strengthening Creole contributes to the learners' holistic development by providing a context for problem solving and creation of knowledge; facilitating the development of other languages; and maintaining the linguistic tradition of the Seychellois Society.

Interventions at school level include;

- the use of Creole as medium of instruction at the Early Childhood education stage (crèche – Primary 2) with initiation to English and French
- the use of English as medium of instruction for most of the curriculum subjects from the third year of primary schooling through the Secondary and post-secondary level.
- the inclusion of Creole, English and French as core compulsory subjects for the primary school curriculum and English and French at the Secondary and Post-secondary levels.

Two other areas worth mentioning is that of cultural heritage and citizenship education.

- **Cultural Heritage and Identity**

Seychellois culture is defined by an exemplary level of social cohesion and racial harmony.

The Seychellois identity has been forged from a unique blend of African, European and Asian cultures, the constituent parts of which are no longer to be noticed.

Despite this high level of integration, deliberate curriculum interventions to further consolidate this cohesion have been undertaken and these include:

- the socialization dimension of the then residential National Youth Service from 1990 to 1999 for students during the latter stages of their secondary education aimed at socializing the learners in a culture of community living and sharing as part of the strategy to eliminate barriers created by disparities in wealth, social status, etc...

- the replacement of the socialisation programme of the National Youth Service following its closure in 1999 by the holiday camp programme for the last years of primary and secondary learners on a voluntary basis;
- the inclusion of the teaching and learning of traditional art forms including traditional dance in the National Curriculum

- **Citizenship Education**

In its endeavour to educating caring and responsible citizens who amongst other things are able to appreciate cultural diversity and who are committed to the promotion of peace, tolerance, democracy and sustainable development the follow two (2) curriculum initiatives are worth nothing:

- the introduction of a new national curriculum subject, Personal and Social Education in 1998.
- the promotion of student exchanges at the regional and international levels.

- **Socio-Economic Relevance**

The National Curriculum has recognized the need to place greater effort in the awareness of development issues specific to the Seychellois nation and interventions included:

- re-adjustments to learning programmes to include the introduction of more relevant content as well as the local perspective in subjects like geography, history, etc...;
- integration of environment education at curriculum and co-curriculum levels focussing on issues of environmental concerns, protection and sustainable development;
- integration of technical and vocational education and training in the primary and secondary national curriculum and the establishment of greater working links between schools and workplaces from the secondary level onwards through the Work-Base Experience component of the National Curriculum;
- establishment of various centers focussing on skills training beyond the secondary level many of which have an entrepreneurial and apprenticeship component in partnership with the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs;
- increased opportunities to follow short-courses thus satisfying training needs and personal requirements;
- trend towards greater cost saving options with regards to more specialized training areas through such initiatives as partnership programmes with centers of higher learning overseas, improving access to distance/open learning, increase in locally-based inserving and greater diversification of overseas training venues.

Chapter Four

Content of Education (Major Trends and Challenges for Curriculum Development Processes)

The National Curriculum Framework (2001) emphasizes the principle of both equal education opportunities and the value of a broad and balanced curriculum that enables all students to develop the qualities and skills needed for adult and working life. Such an approach is expected to facilitate the flexible response to the different interests and aptitudes of a great diversity of learners.

The National Curriculum Framework also calls for a shift towards greater student-centered and project-based pedagogy-focussing on specific individual learning needs.

Notable initiatives and achievements to these new curricular orientations include the following:

Policy Review Dimension

Teaching/Learning Experience Related

- The development and consolidation of Special Needs Programmes at the Early Childhood and Primary levels and the training of focal persons at these levels to assist the classroom teachers to better attend to the learning needs of learners with learning difficulties.
- The implementation of a Work Experience Programme for Secondary level students in partnership with employing agencies and its consolidation at to post-secondary levels.
- The initiation of work on the Competency-Based Approach to teaching and learning at the post-secondary level.
- The introduction of setting and the subject option system as modes of offering teaching and learning experiences at the Secondary level.
- The inclusion of Information Communication Technology as a subject in the National Curriculum
- The placing of greater emphasis on co-curricular activities and its integration within the national curriculum as part of the strategy to cope with the on-going threat of curriculum over-loading

Assessment Related

- The introduction of Key Stage Assessment that will lead to the End of the Primary Cycle Assessment and eventually the School Leaving Assessment at the Secondary Level as part of a new Assessment Policy Proposal.

- Through the Key Stage assessment greater sensitivity will be given to learners achieving key skills/competencies at various stages of the education system.
- The replacement of O-levels by IGCSE and other more broad-based international examinations at the end of Secondary Education Cycle leading to the eventual localisation of examinations at this level. The policy also calls for the increasing use of school-based assessment as an integral component of the educational attainment certification process.
- The piloting of a system of individual learner profiles (Records of Achievement) with the aim of providing each learner with an accurate and sustained record of positive achievement keyed to specified 'sign posts' learning objectives to complement achievement on examinations. The intended long term plan is for the profile to accompany the learner throughout his/her schooling career, and provide meaningful evidence of achievement to parents, employees and educational institutions. (Process is on-going and implementation is scheduled for 2005)
- The initiation of work on the setting up of National Achievement Targets in selected areas of attainment at key stages of schooling.
- The review of the grading system for national examinations and the termly reports for reporting student scholastic achievement (implemented in 2004)

Administrative Dimension

The setting up of the Assessment, Testing and Accreditation Section to work closely with the other Sections/Units of the Department of Education namely the School Improvement Unit, the Research, Evaluation and Curriculum Planning Section and the National Institute of Education to make full use of available expertise and co-ordinate learner assessment and achievement throughout the early childhood, primary and secondary levels

- The setting up of a Careers Education and Planning Section to work closely with other Sections/Units within the Department and relevant agencies/organisation outside of the Department of Education to make full use of available expertise and co-ordinate careers education planning and guidance issues throughout the system.

Review of school management structure including the establishment of the post of Deputy Headteacher Curriculum with specific responsibilities for school-based curriculum issues.

The setting up of the Youth Section to co-ordinate the holiday camp programmes and youth exchanges initiatives.

The trend towards giving greater autonomy to educational establishments so that they can work out specific forms of actions and linkages with the local community and foster engagement by stakeholders in the life of the establishment.

The promotion of the team approach to curriculum development and the institutionalisation of Curriculum Development Team concept re-grouping various stakeholders in education including teachers as part of the curriculum development process.

Research Dimension

- Participation in the **Child Development Study** in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the University of Rochester in the study of the cognitive ability and the educational achievement of Seychellois children, the conditions which can affect achievement as they progress through the system. This longitudinal research study has led to the publication of a research paper '*Development and Educational Status of Children*' participating in the Seychelles Child Development Study. A follow-up planned project is the transfer of the Seychelles Child Development Study Database from the University of Rochester to the Ministry of Education and research work related to achievement in literacy and numeracy at the Early Childhood Education level.

- Participation in the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) Project II research aimed at assessing the impact of a range of conditions on students achievements in Mathematics and Reading Comprehension at the primary school.
Planned follow-up work from the study includes the use of the data archive together with other related research data to propose policy suggestions and development strategies to improve learner achievement especially in the area of literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.
- Participation in the UNESCO-UNICEF sponsored Monitoring of Learning Achievement Project II survey research on learning achievements in Mathematics, Science and Life skills within the context of objective 6 of the Dakar Framework of Action (2000)
- Initiation of the ‘Improving Pupils’ Achievement in Mathematics (IPAM) Project to assess the status of mathematics education at the primary level and devise strategies to improve pupils’ performance in the subject.

Teacher Training Dimension

Teachers and other school-based personnel continue to play a pivotal role in education reforms and quality improvement initiatives. Improved training is thus at the core of measures and strategies to improve the quality and relevance of education.

Necessary re-orientation of training programmes for teachers and other school-based personnel to promote sustainable development need to focus beyond the subject knowledge and skill competencies to include strategies better adapted to the challenge of educating responsible citizens committed to peace, democratic principles, and other human values.

Existing delivery systems will need to be re-examined in the light of the increasing demand for more trained and competent teachers and other school-based personnel.

The fact that teaching remains an unpopular career options for youths it is necessary to ensure that strategies to improve the morale, status and retention of teachers are continuously being explored.

In light of the contexts in which the teacher has to operate and the need for the teacher to meet current and emerging demands new and creative ways of providing teacher education and training has had to be explored. Additionally, measures to improve the terms and conditions of teachers have frequently been considered.

Interventions and achievements include the following:

- the establishment of the National Institute of Education in 1999 through the merging of then Curriculum Development Section of the Education Planning Division and the School of Education of the Seychelles Polytechnic mandated to further develop teacher education built on a sound understanding of the Seychellois society and the evolving national education system;
- the forging of partnership teacher education programmes with international teacher education institutions in the implementation of its mandate. Existing partners include Edith Cowan University of Australia, Bolton Institute of Education and Lincoln University of England.
- the review of the primary and secondary teacher education programmes to ensure better coherence and harmony between these programmes.
- the investing in the promotion of the teaching profession through various strategies including:
 - the introduction of school-based training as part of the School Improvement Plan of Action and the putting in place of a mentoring system to provide support to new graduates by more experienced teachers and school-based staff
 - the investing in the promotion of the teaching profession through various strategies including the following:
 - promotional programmes in the national media;
 - meeting with students at institutional level;
 - reviewing of the admission criteria to achieve better balance between personal attributes and academic/technical competencies;
 - the initiation of a special academic programme at the Seychelles Polytechnic for students anticipating to take up teaching as a career;
 - offering financial incentives to teachers involved in curriculum materials development activities;
- the putting in place of a comprehensive Teacher Scheme of Service and its continuous review (last reviewed in 2001) to:
 - improve the morale of serving teachers and instructors and encouraged them to make a full career in the profession;
 - encourage an increased number of young Seychellois to take up teaching as a career by making the profession more attractive.
- The development of the *Professional/Ethical Standards for Teachers in 1999* to guide teachers and instructors in undertaking their professional responsibilities vis-à-vis their main partners.

Chapter Five

Policy Dialogue, Participation by Civil Society in the Process of Education Strategies

The Department of Education is conscious of the importance of stakeholder commitment and engagement in the education development process. In this context various strategies have been initiated to better promote stakeholder commitment and engagement in the different dimensions of the education development process.

These strategies which has been at both the organizational and process levels include the following:

- The setting up of the Public Relations Office in 2000 and its evolution into the Education Services Bureau in 2002 to provide a system of open communication, consultation and information dissemination in the overall effort to build shared vision in education and training and to clarify this vision in a timely and effective manner.
- The development of the Department of Education Website in 2002 which in addition to providing information about departmental policy events and activities to stakeholders and the public in general offers an avenue for interested members of the public to interact with the Department on educational issues of interests and concerns.
- The use of the weekly Education Page in the national newspaper as a communication and information tool on relevant educational issues.
- The organisation of annual education forums/conferences in some cases with the assistance of international facilitators to allow educators, stakeholders and other partners to reflect and discuss issues of relevance, the challenges facing education and training and possible strategies to address them. Since Education reform 1998 the following five (5) forums have been held.
 - *Education — Charting a Course for 2000 and Beyond (1999)*
 - *Building a Person Centered School (2000)*
 - *Secondary Education — Challenges for the 21st century (2001)*
 - *Looking into schools — Management, Processes and Learner Performance (2002)*
 - *Post Secondary Education and Training — Towards Standardization and Integration? (2003)*

The theme for the Sixth Annual Education Conference to be held later this year is ‘*Achievement in Mathematics — Leave No Child Behind*’

- The setting up of the Technical Cooperation Section to initiate and coordinate regional and international assistance and support to education development.
- The consolidation of the Parents Teachers Associations and the Setting up of the Parents Educators Council in 1999 to provide better leadership and direction to the Parent Teachers Association and further develop the necessary dialogue, partnership and working cooperation between the Department of Education, School Management and the stakeholder groups within the community in promoting excellence and quality in education and training.
- The adoption of the consultative process to policy formulation process involving the principal role players. The development of the policy documents listed in this report underwent this process. The approach is being implemented with the review of the Education Act which is currently underway.
- The setting up of student councils at three of the main levels of the education system — primary, secondary and post secondary and the National Student Council to increase students' participation in the process of education and training development.
- The development and consolidation of working partnership with non-governmental organisations which despite its short history is witnessing an increase in numbers in particular following the restoration of multi-party politics in 1993. In certain circumstances this partnership has been consolidate through the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Education and the non-governmental agency. The following three Non-governmental organizations with which the Department of Education has consolidate its working partnership and which have had a significant impact on the education development process recently, are worth mentioning:
 - The Committee for Awareness, Resilience and Education (CARE) has been very active in setting up CARE clubs in schools as a means of educating young people about the dangers of substance abuse, and suggesting strategies they can adopt to say 'no' to drugs and alcohol.
 - The National Council For Children (NCC) has been especially active in raising awareness of and campaigning against various forms of child abuse. Through its child protection activities and various public education programmes the National Council For Children helps teachers to become more attentive to the needs of their pupils and more able to pick up the distress signals that may point to disturbances of concerns within the family.
 - Birdlife Seychelles (now Nature Seychelles) and Wildlife Clubs of Seychelles which have been key partners in the promotion of environmental education and awareness in schools.

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In this process, every effort will need to be made to develop and implement the most appropriate strategic continuing and emerging challenges including the following:

- The necessity to develop and implement successful approaches and programmes to reduce gender disparity in performance;
- The necessity to recognize that training, status and motivation of teachers will continue to remain at the core of education development plans. Whilst we make better and wider usage of information communication technology, these can complement and not replace the teacher as the organizer of the instruction process and as a guide and model to the youth;
- The necessity to ensure that approaches to teaching/learning and programmes reinforce important social and moral values such as mutual respect, social cohesion and democratic governance;
- The need to make education and training experiences more responsive to both the immediate realities facing learners and the changing realities inherent in the economic of island and global societies;
- The challenge of developing efficient management systems making more effective use of partnership and drawing more systematically on research findings and developing reliable information and fair and appropriate assessment systems;
- The challenge of sustaining the spirit of partnership and of broadening the involvement of the 'community of stakeholder groups'. Greater attention will need to be given to the forging of strategic alliances between public and private sectors decision-makers in the provision of quality education and training.
- The challenge of problems associated with forging regional and international partnership in institutionalising flexible training programmes responsive to the needs of Seychelles for a broader clientele through cost-effective delivery systems.
- The challenge of developing educational institutions into exemplary places for the exercise of tolerance, respect for human rights, the practice of democracy and the learning about diversity and wealth of cultural identities.

Chapter Seven

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Seychelles is amongst the small family of developing countries that have achieved the desirable goals of universal primary and secondary education and is now exploring effective ways and means to improved access to post-secondary and tertiary education and training.

The achievement of these challenging goals within a relatively short time since 1977 would not have been possible without a number of critical enabling factors in place.

The Ministry of Education and Youth's continued engagement to sustain and improve on its achievements will understandably become more challenging given the emerging national and international socio-economic landscapes.

Future policies and education development strategic options aimed at quality improvement will necessarily have to be enlightened by the lessons and experiences of the past twenty-five years or so if they are to be successful. This process will need to take into consideration the peculiarities of Seychelles as a Small Island Developing State.

Some of the pertinent lessons learnt include the following:

- The importance of political commitment and leadership and policy dialogue in the process;
- The importance of effective partnerships with civil society, local communities and development agencies in efforts to strengthen capacity and ensure lasting support for improvement initiatives;
- The recognition that successful learning requires well-prepared students, schools that provide favourable teaching and learning conditions, ample number of motivated and competent teachers, curriculum content that are relevant and reflect real needs, effective teaching methodologies, fair assessment strategies and regular monitoring of students' progress;
- The recognition that schools/educational institutions are the units that drive changes and the need to support initiatives taken at the level of individual schools, encourage a gradual approach to change and to offer learning opportunities drawn from experience.
- The need to ensure that the improvement process is as inclusive as possible and that the welfare of vulnerable groups is not overlooked.
- The recognition that quality improvement is to a large measure dependent on efficient management methods, sustained/increased financing and capacity-building strategies that encompass the entire schools system.