



# Swaziland

Updated version, September 2006.

## Principles and general objectives of education

Most of Swaziland's educational goals emerged from a report of the National Education Commission in 1975, which stated that “A nation's greatest asset is its human resources, human development is therefore the great aim of education” (NEC, 1975). In 1985, the National Education Review Commission confirmed that the educational process is meant to develop the individual person. The individual in turn will be able to contribute effectively to the development of his/her community for the benefit of the entire society and the country. It asserted that the development of the individual contributes toward improved living standards, the health of the Nation and better understanding among the people both at national and international levels.

The document *Our Children First* describes Swaziland's education development strategy (EDS). It takes the following national development goals as its starting point: economic growth, sustainable development, self-reliance, equity and participation, and social justice and stability. The EDS calls for a common vision for educational reform. According to the EDS, the goals of education are:

- to develop the intellectual, moral, aesthetic, emotional and practical capacities of children;
- to equip citizens with the capacities needed to shape and adapt to a fast changing, complex, and uncertain socio-economic environment;
- to engender a civic sense and to foster the skills necessary to participate effectively in a democratic society that reflects the socio-cultural context of Swaziland;
- to create a population of lifelong learners with creative minds.

## Current educational priorities and concerns

It is the belief of the government of Swaziland that a good basic education is necessary for each individual to make a meaningful contribution to the economic, social and developmental needs of the country. Educational reforms have aimed to achieve universal primary education, focusing on a child-centred approach to learning, finding solutions to the increasing costs of education, building the capacity of the educational management system, and improving the quality of education through special needs education, and programmes for entrepreneurship and technological competence.

Formal basic education will continue to provide the children with education and knowledge to survive in the world. The country has adopted a ten-year basic education programme under the SADC Protocol, i.e. seven years of primary followed



by three years of secondary education. This ten-year system has obvious challenges which include the availability of schools, teachers and teacher salaries since more children will have access to secondary education.

The rising cost of education has led to increase in the number of children failing to get a basic education. The Ministry of Education has endeavoured to improve access to primary education through a number of initiatives. In order to lower costs and improve enrolment levels, a subsidized book scheme has enabled parents to rent, rather than buy, books. A shift from the traditional teacher-centred approach to continuous assessment and a learner-centred approach, was also intended to improve the quality and efficiency of the education system. A few problems have appeared, however. These included big class sizes in some of the schools, which did not permit the one-to-one interaction that the strategy advocates; at the same time the teachers were overwhelmed by the amount of extra-work required. The lack of enthusiasm has resulted in rising levels of repetition and dropout in the system.

Nonetheless, the Ministry believes that the full integration of continuous assessment in primary school is a step in the right direction. To convince stakeholders of the advantages of the continuous assessment system, it is striving to have a fully operational and comprehensive continuous assessment system.

The Ministry is working not only to improve access, but also the relevance and quality of education. Through the Guidance and Counselling Department, and in close collaboration with NGOs, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and the nation at large, the impact of the HIV & AIDS on the education system is being studied (the rate of infection among pregnant women in Swaziland is at 38.6% according to 2002 estimates). To assess this, the Ministry is specifically examining the number of orphans and dropouts and the number of teachers; it is also reviewing the curriculum in order to eventually develop specific content for HIV & AIDS affected and/or infected population.

A special education wing within the Ministry is examining options for including and integrating special-needs children into the normal system. A full-time coordinator has been employed to coordinate all the necessary activities that pertain to special needs education. Another initiative aims at identifying the pockets of poverty in the country with the hope of channeling resources to those areas. This is being done with the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and the World Bank, through the National Poverty Alleviation Strategy.

Providing skills for entrepreneurship is also high on the educational agenda. The country, through the Asian Development Bank, has secured funding for 16 pilot high schools offering pre-vocational education. This programme focuses on the inclusion of women and gives students “hands-on” skills, technology-related competence, and entrepreneurial potential.

Efforts are also being made to ensure that all the excluded have access to quality and relevant education at the lowest cost. To this end, in January 2002 the Ministry introduced the Free Text Book system in all primary schools. There is also a Bursary Scheme for orphans and vulnerable children. The Financial year 2003/04 saw



a significant increase in the Bursary Scheme budget, though it still could not fund the education for all the needy pupils.

Other initiatives have been carried out to improve the quality of education. These include: (i) strengthening the Educational Management Information System (EMIS), which provides information that is considered in the decision-making process; (ii) working on having a fully functional inspection team, as the current, insufficient number of inspectors has prevented the successful implementation of some policy options; (iii) matching non-formal education to formal levels to enable students who have started off through it to join the formal system; (iv) shifting a sizeable amount of the budget from tertiary to primary education, for a financially accessible basic education; (v) introducing computers into the school system; (vi) moving from an academic examination system to one that allows students to develop their areas of competence; and (vii) introducing a university-level distance education programme, to give an opportunity to those who cannot attend university on a full-time basis.

In addition, there is need to monitor the relevance and quality of education. This is being explored at the primary level through the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), of which the country is a member, in particular assessing learning achievement in English, Mathematics and Science at grade 6 level. This will assist the country to review its standards in the region and internationally. In addition, the National Assessment Framework monitors the progress of the students in the system, which in turn will assess the effectiveness of the teaching process. Grades 4, 7 and 10 (basic education) students are tested to provide information on the “standards” and performance of the system.

## Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The basic law governing education in Swaziland is the **Education Act** of 1981 (**Act No. 9**). This repealed the Education Act of 1964, the Medical Inspection of Schools Act of 1928, and the Inspection of Schools Act of 1934.

The **Teaching Service Act** was promulgated in 1982. It repealed the Unified Teaching Service Act of 1962 and established a Teaching Service Commission. The powers of the Minister and the Director of Education are established, as are the composition of the Teaching Service Commission and its powers and functions—including proceedings of the commission, offences and penalties, pensions and other terminal benefits. Under the Teaching Service Act, the **Teaching Service Regulations** (1983) were promulgated. These regulations provide for: registration of teachers; point of entry into service; confidential reports; general leave; liability for misconduct and inefficiency; retirement; subsistence allowance; etc.

The **University of Swaziland Act**, 1983 (**Act No. 2**) provides for the establishment and functions of the University. A schedule of the statutes is provided in the **Statutes of the University of Swaziland** of 1983.

A schedule outlining a **Minimum Standard of Professional Conduct for Teachers in Swaziland** has also been prepared and signed by all teachers. It provides



for recognition of responsibilities for the child under the teacher's care, the community in which the teacher lives, the teacher's profession and the employer. Various circulars are prepared from time to time and distributed to schools and administrative units. These are collected in a booklet form and published as *Selected Circulars* for the benefit of teachers and administrators. A *Guide to school regulations and procedures* is updated regularly, with the oldest dating back to 1978.

There is no compulsory schooling in Swaziland.

## **Administration and management of the education system**

The **Ministry of Education** is responsible for most educational activities, including some technical and vocational institutions. The **National Curriculum Centre (NCC)** is charged with the responsibility of designing and developing curriculum materials for the primary and secondary levels.

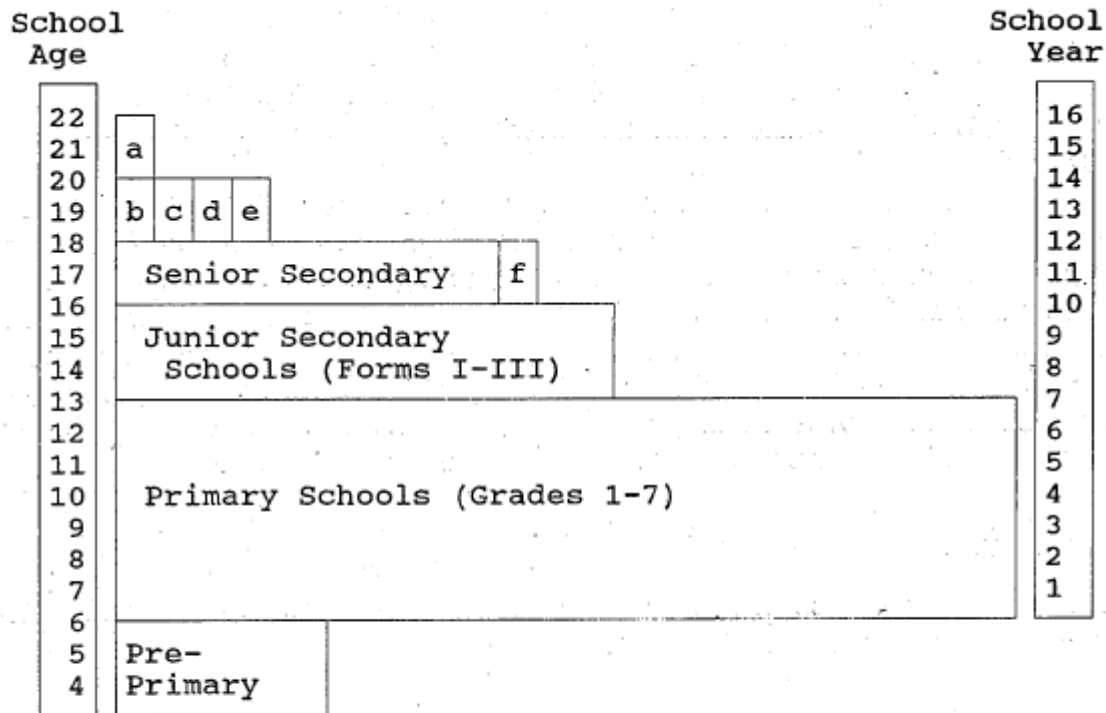
The **Teaching Service Commission (TSC)** is a department responsible for the recruitment, deployment, promotion, discipline and the welfare of teachers. The **Swaziland Examinations Council** administers the school examination system and assessment of students' performance.

The **Ministry of Labour and Public Service** is responsible for the Swaziland Institute of Public Administration and the Directorate of Industrial and Vocational Training.

The **Adult Literacy and Community Development Institute** is a parastatal entity which receives an annual subvention from the Ministry of Education.

## Structure and organization of the education system

### Swaziland: structure of the education system



**Legend:**

a	Degree (UNISWA)	b	Diploma (UNISWA)
c	Technical (SCOT)	d	Teacher Training
e	Nursing	f	Vocational (SCOT)

UNISWA = University of Swaziland  
 SCOT = Swaziland College of Technology

#### Pre-school education

Pre-school education caters to children between 4 and 5 years of age.

#### Primary education

Primary education lasts seven years and the official entry age is 6 years. At the end of Grade VII, pupils who have successfully passed the examination receive the Swaziland Primary Certificate. Primary education is considered as the first cycle of basic education.



## Secondary education

Secondary education lasts five years, divided into: junior secondary (or the second cycle of basic education), a three-year programme leading to the Junior Certificate (JC) examination; and senior secondary, a two-year programme preparing students for the General Certificate of Education, Ordinary level (GCE O-level) examination. Plans are underway for the phasing out of the JC examination since it is no longer a satisfactory terminal point of formal schooling.

Courses at the tertiary level vary in length from a few months to five years. Degree programmes are offered only at the University of Swaziland.

In 1996, primary and secondary schools operated for 196 days, divided into three terms. At the higher education level, the academic year normally extends from August to May, with the first semester ending in December. The second semester begins in January. Short breaks are taken in September-October and in February-March.

## The financing of education

Several factors characterize education financing in Swaziland. These include the issue of equity; the growing budget deficit; reduced growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP); rising costs of education; marked inefficiencies within the education system; and the fact that education is already being offered free of charge at the tertiary level.

Government expenditures are currently financed by a growing deficit. From 42.2 million *emalangeni* in 1992 (US \$1 = 4.68 *emalangeni* in 1996), the revenue shortfall is projected to reach E486.2 million in 1998. The population growth is at an annual rate of 3.2%, with 58.5% of the total population falling under 18 years of age in 1993. The number of students at the primary and secondary level is projected to grow from 241,112 in 1993 to 320,196 in the year 2003—a 32% increase in ten years. The GDP is expected to grow by only 1.7% in 1998, revealing the prevailing economic climate. The education system has grown significantly since the independence in terms of enrolments, teachers and facilities. However, this rapid growth has limited improvements in quality—as demonstrated by the high rates of repetition and drop-out.

Parents' contributions cover 29.6% of the overall cost of basic education. In 1993, the total expenditure for tertiary education amounted to E72.8 million, representing 25.9% of all government expenditure on education. It should be noted that only 1.9% of total enrolment is at the tertiary level. The amount paid by the government for one tertiary student could relieve the burden on 61 parents who must pay for their children's basic education fees. Additionally, for every one student at the university, 97 parents could be relieved of the burden of basic education fees for their children. The average unit cost at the basic education level—government and parental contribution—is E1,304, while the average unit cost of tertiary education is E15,541. Inequity in education sector spending is one of the root causes of an increasing demand for free education, as school fees range from E25 to over E1,000 per year.



With the overall education allocation standing at 9.7% of GDP, there are more than enough funds being provided to education. It is almost certain that the money needed to fund quality-enhancing programmes to reduce inefficiencies in the system can be found within the system itself. It is a matter of perceiving where inefficiencies reside (wastage), identifying the components of the system with disproportionately high unit costs, and demonstrating how much money could be saved and re-directed toward quality-enhancing programmes. It is assumed that certain measures would be taken to reduce wastage and high unit costs. By using the *Imfundvo* policy support model, the Ministry of Education has already identified a number of areas where small, budgetary adjustments can be made, with the overall effect of trimming budgetary expenditures over the next ten years and achieving considerable savings. These adjustments relate to repetition; oversupply of teachers; average contact hours per teacher; curriculum rationalization; maintenance and rehabilitation of buildings; wastage at the tertiary level; and introduction of various cost reduction measures.

As mentioned, the total public expenditure on education in 1995 amounted to E352,153,000, representing approximately 9.7% of GDP. A total of 39.9% of the public expenditure is spent on primary education; 28.4% on secondary education; and 31.7% on tertiary education. Additionally, 83.9% of the public funding is allocated to current expenditures and 16.1% to capital expenditures. Development projects are included in capital expenditure.

The Ministry's share of the overall government budget for the financial year 2003/04 was 16%. Of the total government recurrent allocation, the Ministry of Education received 21% (of which 62% for teachers' salaries).

## The educational process

As mentioned, the main body for curriculum development in Swaziland is the National Curriculum Centre (NCC). The NCC's principal function is to interpret the Ministry's educational policy to formulate objectives, and to produce educational programmes for use in the school system.

The process of curriculum development involves the following sequence of steps. From the national educational goals formulated by policy-makers, curriculum developers articulate national educational aims, which state the knowledge, skills and attitudes that learners are expected to have acquired by the end of a given level or programme. They then develop more specific objectives and related educational content. In formulating goals and objectives, policy-makers and curriculum developers consider the aspirations of society, the needs of the learner, and the specific requisites of the subject area according to the discipline. In the curriculum document, goals and objectives appear in the order that respects the real sequence of curriculum development: (a) national educational goals; (b) educational aims/curriculum objectives (broadly stated for the various educational levels, i.e. primary, secondary, etc.); (c) instructional objectives (becoming more specific, for a unit, module or course); (d) behavioural objectives (very specific, for each lesson, in a unit or module). At each educational level, the objectives reflect the scope of what will be covered. Government-approval structures are in place to evaluate the suitability of instructional/learning materials bound for the school system. Hence, four



fundamental elements form the framework for systematic instructional planning: objectives, content, teaching and learning methods, and assessment and evaluation.

It is important to add that content is selected based on the goals, aims, and objectives of the particular level, according to: scope (breadth and depth); balance; validity; integration and continuity. In order to enable the pupil to organise his/her knowledge in ways that are meaningful to him/her, it is necessary to integrate knowledge in the curriculum, particularly at the primary level. Sometimes integration can be achieved by unifying different subjects, or by including objectives, content, teaching/learning aids and methods and evaluation into an integrated teaching package. Subjects like social sciences, religious education, social studies and development studies are an integration of geography, history, economics, anthropology, sociology, civics, and moral education. Similarly, the subject practical arts integrates home economics, agriculture, art and crafts, music and physical education. Curriculum planning must be connected to the society and culture in which it takes place. The curriculum developer must also be aware of the potential challenges that might arise, such as the tendency of teachers to cling to the teaching practices in which they were trained, and their refusal to innovate.

At the level of the NCC, four components (Design and Preparation, Evaluation, Production, and Teacher Education) work in a cooperative and coordinated manner to design, produce, trial-test, and evaluate curriculum materials. The four components have specialized functions, and make decisions about curriculum development. The Design and Preparation component writes materials based upon objectives that appear in policy documents. These materials, for each grade level, include teachers' guides, childrens' workbooks, posters and other teaching aids. All designed materials are reviewed and improved by national subject panels and other educational bodies before they are printed and piloted in specific schools. After the first trials the materials are revised and piloted again. They are revised a last time, and are introduced nation-wide once they have been commercially published.

The evaluation function serves a two-pronged purpose. It assesses the efficacy of the instructional materials by eliciting feedback from the teachers and pupils. It also includes continually assessing the pupils' achievement of the curricular objectives and making the assessment data available for the teachers to use in diagnosing and correcting learning deficiencies in a timely manner. The production component is responsible for producing the trial materials for teachers and pupils of pilot schools and includes all the technical processes of illustration, photography, printing, collating and binding. In addition, this component is commissioned by the MOE and other organizations to print special bulletins, reports, and other publications. The main work of the teacher education component is to distribute the materials to the pilot schools, assist the teachers in using and understanding the materials, and getting feedback from both teachers and pupils about the effectiveness of the materials. The ideas of the teachers are reported back to the designers so that they may revise them. This component is also responsible for planning and coordinating workshops for pilot schools.

Workshops are an integral part of NCC activities. Orientation workshops are conducted to introduce school-teachers to the philosophy and approach of new NCC



materials. Feedback workshops help the curriculum developers, pilot school teachers, teacher educators and evaluators to share ideas on the curriculum materials being trial-tested in pilot schools. Infusion workshops bring together the NCC teacher educators, curriculum developers, inspectors, in-service teachers (INSET) and classroom teachers to familiarize them with the materials to be implemented nationwide, and to plan implementation strategies. Revision workshops bring together all the above-mentioned groups, including classroom teachers, to give feedback on the impact of specific NCC materials used nationwide, and to initiate the revision process on such materials.

The curriculum includes a wide range of possible teaching and learning strategies from which to make a selection. The teacher or curriculum developer must have a good knowledge of the relative advantages of each strategy and of the various supporting materials that might be used. Teaching/learning strategies for facilitating the learner's active participation include: educational visits/ field trips, memorization, demonstrations, singing, question and answer sessions, debates, group discussions, drama, role-playing, silent reading, reading aloud, lectures, individual work, projects, experiments, games for learning, problem solving, writing, simulations, note-taking, guest presentations, and research using reference material. Furthermore, the curriculum also suggests possible methods for assessing students. The teacher decides on the method of assessment and whether to assess pupils' behaviour, cognitive abilities, or affective and psychomotor competencies, depending on the nature of the learning objectives.

In 1999, a Draft National Assessment Framework was developed to spell out student evaluation and assessment policy. The main purpose of this document is to establish a direction for continuous assessment of students by providing answers to a number of questions pertaining to its implementation. From 2000 onwards, the Framework for National Assessment has formed a basis for the assessment of pupils from Grade 1 to 10. Assessment of pupils has been in the form of school-based continuous assessment with National tests in grades 4, 7, and 10, administered by the Examinations Council of Swaziland.

Assessment occurs at four levels. Classroom tests are developed, administered and scored by the teacher for instructional and remedial purposes. Term tests and annual tests correspond to the second and third levels of assessment, respectively. Annual tests are developed, administered and scored by the teachers and are used to monitor the effectiveness of the system and to validate term test scores. National tests developed by the Examinations Council are administered by teachers under the supervision of headteachers, scored by the teachers and submitted to the Council for moderation at the end of the year.

Recently, the major thrust in the curriculum has been a shift from a "white collar" curriculum to one that promotes a sense of entrepreneurship attitude in the children. This is also motivated by the demand placed upon the country by the levels of poverty and unemployment that are made worse by the HIV & AIDS situation. The Ministry has decided to formally establish "practical subjects" in the primary education cycle. Practical arts will be introduced from Grade 3 of basic education. Schools already offering agriculture and home economics shall continue to offer these as an extended curriculum. The business strand will be spread across all five



components to ensure that children see each strand in the light of a business opportunity.

Another major reform has been the introduction of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GSE) form of curriculum, which is of higher and relevant standard than the former O-level examination syllabus. This form of curriculum paradigm shift advocates for a normal progression throughout the system, this in turn will mean the country will have to introduce a system that will continuously monitor the achievement of students throughout their school life.

The greatest challenge with regard to curricular expansion and reforms is funding. The expansion of practical subjects to cover all secondary schools is much slower than the public expectations due to financial constraints. Such expansion in schools requires construction of appropriate laboratories/workshops and trained personnel. For this reason, a significant proportion of schools still offer a traditional and academic curriculum, which does not provide life skills for the majority of pupils. In schools where the curriculum is broad, practical subjects are well received with a motive for further education and training as opposed to self-employment.

### Pre-primary education

The concept of early childhood care and development (ECCD) in the country has been rapidly gaining popularity. ECCD is an umbrella term that embraces the holistic development of the child and ensures an environment characterized by safety, protection, anti-bias and cultural fairness. Young children, from birth to 8 years of age, need to be supported in the development of the abilities that will enable them to thrive in later years. That support comes from the family and community and it is in fact embedded in cultural values. When the family and community are unable to provide appropriate and nourishing environments, children are at risk of delayed or disturbed development. It is in this context that ECD programmes operate and strive to bring about lasting benefits. In recognition of the need for ECCD the Ministry of Education has established a pre-school department to take care of this important aspect of education with the aim to:

- Improve accessibility to ECCD programmes
- Support community and NGOs initiatives
- Improve the quality of ECD programmes through monitoring services
- Bring about standard training and curricula
- Develop quality curricula materials

A national curriculum for pre-schools has been developed and is designed to achieve high standards. It provides for a well-rounded educational programme focused in five major areas: language competence (in English and/or *siSwati*, the national language); academic and social skills; emotional development; intellectual development; and healthy physical development. The curriculum is used as a basis for the scheme of work and daily lesson planning. Teachers utilize many different story books, pre-reading and pre-numeracy activities to complement the curriculum. The Montessori method is used in several pre-schools.



The South Africa Development Community (SADC) is looking into introducing a concept of a “reception year” that is called “grade zero” as a prerequisite for entry into Grade 1. Swaziland has not gone into that development as yet, but is exploring ways of reorganizing education at this level by involving organizations and communities.

ECCD centres include pre-schools and care centers (day-care as well as home-based). A survey funded by UNICEF and carried out by officials from the Ministry of Education in 2001, was intended to produce a comprehensive description of the status of ECD provision in Swaziland. The survey collected returns for 813 centres, catering for 17,281 children, or an estimated 15% of the 3 to 6 years old population. Approximately 34% of the centres were run privately, while 66% were community-based, although the categorization of ‘community’ or ‘private’ is rather fuzzy. A typical community based centre catered for between 15 and 25 children and charged E150-300 per term. In Shiselweni, the poorest of the four Swazi regions, some fees were as low as E20-30 per term. These fees were paid irregularly and were not sufficient to cover the teachers’ salary, let alone materials, equipment or maintenance. At the other extreme, in large private urban ECD centres, fees could be as high as E2,000 per term, and the most senior qualified teachers could earn as much as E3,000 per term. Approximately 60% of centres had electricity, 75% had access to water from a tank or pipe, and 35% had a fenced and equipped outside play space. In Shiselweni, less than 10% of centres had electricity or an outside play space. Generally, the higher the income of the preschool, the better the services it offered. Very few community based preschools in rural areas had books, play or writing materials, furniture or outside play equipment. The premises were most frequently bare huts in bare grounds, with a pit latrine or no facilities. Thus, for poorer communities, ECD centres were makeshift arrangements, surviving on very few resources. However, for more affluent communities, ECD offered a good preparation for school: children were taught the alphabet, and had access to visual aids, books and writing materials. The data about staff qualifications are not very clear. There is no prerequisite qualification for working in a preschool. Many of the staff had not gone beyond grade 5 of primary school.

## Primary education

The objectives of primary education are to: provide basic skills in reading writing and numeracy so that graduates can function in their day to day activities; prepare children for secondary education; and expose children to various skills and talents so that they can identify their areas of strength. The curriculum at the primary level includes the following subjects: English, *siSwati*, mathematics, science, foreign languages (e.g. French and Afrikaans in some schools), practical arts, religious education, social studies, agriculture and home economics (in approximately 50% of schools for the latter two).

A continuous assessment has been introduced in the first four years of primary education. This has touched, in the first instance, English and mathematics. It is planned that social science, *siSwati* and science will follow. Essentially, assessment is based on criterion-referenced tests which assist the teachers in determining which children are “masters” or “non-masters”. Non-masters are given remedial work, while masters are provided with enrichment materials.



Pupils sit a norm-referenced external examination at the end of grade 7, the final year of primary education. A certificate is awarded to all pupils who pass this examination according to the following categories: merit, first class and second class. Successful pupils may enter secondary school. The pass rate is approximately 80% of those who sit the examination.

A comparison of drop-out rates by grade for the years 1993, 1994 and 1995 is provided in the table below:

#### **Drop-out rates at the primary level**

	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>
Grade I	7.4%	6.2%	2.8%
Grade II	4.5%	4.2%	1.1%
Grade III	4.3%	5.3%	4.1%
Grade IV	4.8%	4.9%	4.9%
Grade V	6.7%	5.9%	3.7%
Grade VI	4.9%	6.2%	6.6%
Grade VII	7.1%	9.3%	9.5%

Repetition and progression rates for the period 1993-95 and for 1999 are presented in the tables below:

#### **Repetition rates at the primary level**

	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1999</b>
Grade I	19.7%	17.0%	19.1%	18.7%
Grade II	17.7%	16.3%	17.0%	17.9%
Grade III	19.0%	17.6%	17.8%	19.5%
Grade IV	15.8%	15.5%	16.7%	17.8%
Grade V	14.9%	15.0%	16.3%	16.1%
Grade VI	14.0%	13.1%	13.7%	16.6%
Grade VII	13.0%	11.8%	11.5%	10.2%

## Primary education progression rates

	1993	1994	1995	1999
Grade I	72.9%	76.8%	78.1%	75.9%
Grade II	77.8%	79.5%	81.9%	79.9%
Grade III	76.7%	77.1%	77.5%	72.0%
Grade IV	79.4%	79.6%	78.4%	76.4%
Grade V	78.4%	79.1%	80.0%	77.4%
Grade VI	81.1%	80.7%	79.7%	74.1%
Grade VII	79.9%	78.9%	79.0%	...

[...] data not available.

A cohort analysis indicates that out of 1,000 children entering primary school in 1993, 606 completed the primary cycle, with 175 entrants graduating on time (i.e., within seven years). The Primary Certificate pass rate in 1994 was 79.9% (89% in 2003).

At the primary level, there were about 37 pupils per teacher in 2001.

## Secondary education

Most secondary schools determine the mix of core and electives subjects from the variety offered in the country for the Junior Certificate and GCE O-level examinations. Core subjects offered at the junior secondary level include: English language and literature; Zulu/*siSwati*; mathematics; and biology/science. Electives are organized into four groups: (i) geography; history; religious education; English literature; (ii) French; Afrikaans; (iii) agriculture; technical subjects; commercial subjects; home economics; (iv) natural sciences; sports and culture. Schools are required to offer at least a minimum of six subjects at JC and O-Level.

Agricultural development is viewed as one of the important part of the schools curricula given the nature of the geography and economy of the country. Agricultural skills are taught at the primary and the secondary levels. One of the major thrust is to support modern agriculture, which is currently taught in about 45% primary, 78% junior secondary and 45% senior secondary schools. Technical subjects (woodwork, metalwork, and technical drawing) are taught in 70 senior secondary schools preparing pupils for entry into the higher technical institutions such as the Swaziland College of Technology (SCOT) and the Gwamile Vocational and Commercial Training Institute (VOCTIM). Home economics is taught in 60% of primary schools and 75% of secondary and high schools.

Two examinations are administered at the secondary level: the Junior Certificate at the end of Form III, and the Cambridge GCE O-level at the end of Form V. The Junior Certificate examination determines which students progress from secondary schools to high schools. The GCE O-level is a school-leaving examination



that determines which students may have access to various types of tertiary institutions, including universities.

The country is in the process of a paradigm shift from O-level to International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGSE), which involves curricula transformation and training of teachers. IGSE is a broad-based programme that accommodates 80% of the student population, opposed to the 20% that is catered for by O-level. Examinations have a broad-based scale ranging from A\* to G, totaling to eight grades, which are all discriminatory. It places more emphasis on pupils' achievements, opposed to pupils' weaknesses.

Few students in Swaziland enter upper secondary education; the bulk of students drop out at the preceding levels. According to the Ministry of Education, this is largely due to the assessment system, presently under review.

### Drop-out rates at the secondary level

Form	1993	1994	1995
Form I	17.7%	10.3%	9.8%
Form II	22.6%	17.8%	1.0%
Form III	17.6%	11.4%	13.6%
Form IV	24.0%	20.6%	17.7%
Form V	...	...	...

[...] data not available.

### Repetition rates at the secondary level

Form	1993	1994	1995
Form I	9.8%	10.8%	11.3%
Form II	15.4%	14.2%	10.1%
Form III	6.9%	5.7%	5.4%
Form IV	13.5%	15.4%	16.2%
Form V	...	...	...

[...] data not available.



## Progression rates at the secondary level

Form	1993	1994	1995
Form I	72.5%	78.9%	78.9%
Form II	62.0%	68.0%	88.9%
Form III	75.5%	82.9%	81.0%
Form IV	62.5%	64.0%	65.1%
Form V	...	...	...

[...] data not available.

In 1994, 76.4% of lower secondary school-leavers enrolled in high schools (83.7% in 2003). In 2001, the average number of students per teacher in secondary education establishments was 20.

## Assessing learning achievement nationwide

Information is not available.

## Higher education

The Director of Education, assisted by the Chief Inspector for Curriculum Development and Teacher Education, is responsible for institutions of higher education in Swaziland. These include teacher training, and technical and vocational institutions. A report entitled *Skills for the Future* recommended the establishment of a department responsible for this level. Despite the fact that it gets a large portion of its funds from the government, the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) is an autonomous institution with its own Governing Council. The challenge for the country will be to integrate all the teacher-training colleges to be part of the Faculty of Education to fall under the University of Swaziland, so that government will offer a relevant service to the country.

The University of Swaziland is also undergoing some changes. It has just completed its Strategic Development Plan (New Commitment to Self-Renewal), in which it affirms its faith in the principles of academic freedom and autonomy. It endeavours to provide a congenial learning environment that will facilitate excellence in teaching and learning, research, community service, consultancy, professional leadership and enterprise development. The University plans to achieve its mission through: (a) the provision of regular academic programmes at undergraduate and post graduate levels; (b) the creation of continuing education opportunities for the inclusion of demand-driven knowledge and skills, as well a positive attitude towards life-long learning; c) the creation and preservation of knowledge through research, consultancy and technology development; (d) the dissemination of innovations for the betterment of the quality of life of the people of Swaziland and beyond; (e) the involvement in relevant and profitable commercial ventures; and (f) the creation of an enabling environment for the efficient provision and utilization of the resources of the



university. The colleges still are unrecognized as institutions of their own mandate by the government.

A total 1,910 students were enrolled at UNISWA in 1993/94. The distribution by course was as follows:

**Distribution of student enrolment in the University of Swaziland (UNISWA), 1993/94**

B.A. degree	732
B.Sc. degree	363
Other degrees	216
Diploma in Business Studies	293
Diploma in Agriculture	209
Home Economics	67
Other courses	30

The Swaziland College of Technology (SCOT) is the principal institution of higher learning in technical and vocational education and training in the country. Currently the institution offers a wide range of diploma/technician and craft programme under four faculties namely: Engineering and Science (e.g. Mechanical, Electrical/Electronics, Computer Studies, Motor Vehicle and Biomedical Engineering); Building and Civic Engineering (e.g. Civil Engineering, Plumbing, Carpentry and Joinery); Education (e.g. Commercial Teaching, Technical Teaching, Prevocational Teaching in both Commercial and Technical); and Business Administration (e.g. Accounting, Secretarial, Hotel & Catering).

In the academic year 2003/04, student enrolment at UNISWA stood at 4,965.

## Special education

The Ministry of Education is developing an overall operational plan to support the education of mentally and physically challenged children. The Ministry now has a special education wing, and a full-time coordinator has been employed to coordinate all the necessary activities that pertain to special needs education. In order to facilitate the access of children with special needs to the regular school system, early diagnosis of learning and physical handicaps is essential. In this regard, more work needs to be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

There are three institutions serving the needs of children requiring special education: the Ekwetsembeni Primary School provides programmes for mentally retarded children. There are nine teachers and 102 children. The school was established by the Swaziland National Society for the Handicapped.

The Siteki School for the Deaf has been expanded in recent years by the government. There are new training workshops, classes, dormitories and staff houses.



The school enrolls approximately 90 children and has qualified teachers who were trained in Malawi and South Africa. The St. Joseph's Mission School provides education that is, primarily, for blind children. However, disabled children including mentally retarded and physically crippled are also enrolled and, together with blind children, are well integrated into the regular school system operated by the Mission.

## **Private education**

Most primary and secondary schools in Swaziland are designated as “government” or “aided”. The majority of schools are supported by the government, which means that one or more teachers are provided by the Teaching Service Commission.

A few private schools exist and they are typically rural primary schools established by communities and awaiting government support. All pre-primary schools are privately owned or established by communities in rural areas. They are required to register with the Ministry of Education. A number of commercial entities provide a variety of training programmes at the post-secondary or tertiary levels. These institutions are required to register with the Ministry of Education.

## **Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure**

The government has recently stated its intent to introduce computers in all schools and to supply free textbooks to all primary students. According to a 1991 survey, there is a sufficient supply of books in the country. Each primary school pupil has, on average, four textbooks. There are, on average, twelve textbooks per student at the secondary level.

At the primary level, textbooks are prepared by the National Curriculum Centre and published by a local publishing company on a commercial basis. The distribution system was recently reorganized and is proving to be successful. The Ministry of Education operates a rental system whereby pupils pay one-fourth of the value of the book for its use. Each textbook is expected to be used for a period of four years. In general, primary school pupils have access to all the available textbooks in the country. Instructional materials, on the other hand, are in much shorter supply. The EPMT project is presently producing remedial and enrichment materials for use in primary school classrooms. Secondary school textbooks are imported and easily accessible in commercial bookstores, but are more costly. The Ministry is in the process of instituting a rental system at this level.

There are over 5,120 separate classrooms at the primary level—5,255 rooms are required—with an average of 40 pupils per classroom. The majority of classrooms are constructed by communities. At the secondary level, there are over 1,830 separate classrooms with an average of 30 students per classroom. A few schools provide residential facilities, but only at the secondary level.

In view of the current food crisis in the country, particularly in the Lubombo and Shiselweni regions, UNICEF through Save the Children Organization initiated a school-feeding project funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid organization. This emergency response benefited 29,000 primary school children in



80 schools in the drought and poverty stricken Lubombo and Shiselweni regions during the year 2003. The Ministry will continue to encourage education stakeholders and NGOs to render assistance in ensuring that the school-feeding programme is in place and continues to benefit the targeted population.

## Adult and non-formal education

In addition to the formal system there is the non-formal system that includes the SEBENTA National Institute, Rural Education Centres, and other NGOs. The main educating NGO is SEBENTA, which also operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. This organization was initially tasked with the education of adults. However, due to prevailing poverty, the inequitable distribution of resources and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it has been focusing on educating both adults and those school-aged individuals who did not get a chance to get a formal education.

SEBENTA enjoys nation-wide recognition and broad grassroots support. Its executive committee provides guidance from a wide range of senior officials from numerous sectors. In the past twenty-five years, over 67,000 adults have graduated from SEBENTA programmes in *siSwati* and English. Most of these are rural women. SEBENTA's curriculum has practical orientation. Learners are encouraged to establish post-literacy income-generating or community development projects. These represent a powerful incentive to apply, and thereby retain, newly acquired literacy skills.

However, SEBENTA's capacity to provide literacy programmes cannot keep pace with the growing numbers of illiterates. Over 2,000 adults complete their training each year, while at the same time over 3,500 children drop-out of primary schools before completing Grade 4. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education is placing greater emphasis on improving the quality of primary education in order to reduce the number of drop-outs, and thus increase the literacy rate through formal channels.

Three training centres are categorized under the Swaziland Skills Centre Group: the Manzani Industrial Training Centre (MITC), the Nhlanguano Agricultural Skills Training Centre (NASTC), and the Siteki Industrial Training Centre (SITC). These centres admit students between the ages of 18-25 without any formal academic certificates. They follow a two-year course of industrial or craft training. Besides training for direct employment, the centres also encourage their trainees to start their own small-scale businesses.

In addition, the Ministry of Education operates eight rural education centres offering formal education for school-age children and non-formal education for adults and young people. Practical training is offered, leading to acquisition of practical skills for self-reliance and self-employment. Adults and young people are also trained in income-generating activities and the development of community projects. More than 400 rural youngsters and adults have benefited from these training programmes.

The Emlaladini Development Centre (EDC) is a distance education institution whose mission is to provide continuing education at both secondary and high school levels on a correspondence basis. The institution is also running two other



programmes, namely the Agriculture Teacher In-service Training Course for primary agriculture teachers and the Vocational Unit, which specializes in providing students with basic skills in furniture and cabinet making. At the beginning of 2003, the distance education programme enrolment figures stood at 765 for the Junior Certificate Level, 1,367 for O-level and 14 for Higher International General Certificate in Secondary Education (HIGCSE). About 58% of the students who took more than six subjects at JC level passed.

## Teaching staff

In 1996, a total of 1,031 students were enrolled in various teacher training institutions. Pre-service teacher training is undertaken at Ngwane Teacher Training College and Nazarene Teacher Training College (primary education, three-year course); William Pitcher Teacher Training College (three-year programme for junior secondary education teachers); the University, and the Swaziland College of Technology (commercial and technical education).

The University offers courses leading to a diploma in adult education—an in-service programme for experienced adult and non-formal educators—; a post-graduate diploma in education—an in-service programme for holders of an appropriate degree—; and a bachelor's degree. There are two degree programmes for full-time students: the secondary B.Ed. programme, in which education is a major field of study combined with another major teaching subject; and the primary B.Ed. programme.

The qualifications required to teach at the primary level are a three-year primary teacher diploma and/or a four-year bachelor's degree. At the secondary level, the requirements are a three-year secondary teacher diploma and/or a four-year bachelor's degree—in various subjects taught at secondary level.

The number of students undergoing teacher training has been on a downward trend since 1997. In 1997 there were 1,924 students enrolled for teacher training and only 1,462 in 2001.

Concerning the pre-service training curriculum, the following units are part of the primary-level course:

### **PART 1: Theory**

- History and philosophy of education, Years I and III;
- Child development, Years I-III;
- Learning, Year II;
- Methods of teaching, Years I and III;
- Methods of grouping learners;
- Roles, Years II and III;



- Measurement and evaluation of learning, Year III;
- Principles of teaching, Year I;
- Teacher's role, Year II;
- School administration in Swaziland, Years II and III;
- Educational technology, Years I-III;
- Curriculum development, Year III.

## **PART 2: Teaching practice**

- Observation, Year I;
- Micro-teaching and peer teaching, Year I;
- Block teaching practice, Years II and III.

Assessment is based on allocating 40% for coursework, 50% for final examination and 10% for project work.

At the secondary level, the general aim of the course in education is to contribute to the development of professional skills and attitudes by providing opportunities to develop—through academic study and practice—an understanding of educational theory and practices which will help prospective teachers to function successfully and with self-fulfillment in teaching and school supervision. The following units are provided:

## **PART 1: Theory**

- History and philosophy of education, Year I;
- Developmental psychology, Year I;
- Learning, Years I and II;
- Methods of teaching, Years I and II;
- Principles of teaching, Years I and II;
- Educational technology, Years I and II;
- Measurement and evaluation, Year III;
- Curriculum planning, Year III;
- Sociology of education, Year III;



- Comparative education, Year III;
- School administration in Swaziland, Year II;
- Methods of research, Year III;
- Adult education offered by the Adult Education Division of UNISWA, Years II and III.

## **PART 2: Practice**

- Teaching practice theory observation, Year I;
- Micro-teaching and peer teaching, Year I;
- Block teaching practice, twelve weeks, Years II and III.

Assessment is based on 40% for coursework, 10% for project work and 50% for the final examination at the end of the third year.

The recruitment of teachers is done both locally and outside the country. All vacant positions are advertised, and a recruitment process takes place. Teachers who qualify in terms of the advertisement are encouraged to apply. Interviews and appointments are the prerogative of the Teaching Service Commission (TSC).

Although teachers are administered by the TSC, they draw their salaries from the same pool as civil servants. The salary scale is commensurate with qualifications. In the teaching profession for every additional qualification there is a monetary compensation, which does not happen with other professions. The following are the minimum teaching hours in schools, not including intervals or recreation:

– Grades I and II:	5 hours per day
– Grades III-VII:	5½ hours per day
– Forms I-V:	6½ hours per day
– Teacher training and vocational classes:	6½ hours per day

The Inspectorate based both at the Ministry of Education and at regional level, is charged with the responsibility of providing professional support in the form of meetings, workshops or visits to schools. Notwithstanding, the support is hampered by the poor working conditions which exist in a number of schools. Lack of interest and motivation frequently leads to teachers giving up their profession. Teachers efforts to supplement their meagre salaries lead to increased absenteeism in a number of schools in both rural and urban areas.

There is no specific training for the inspectors, except for workshops lasting one or two days. However, when there is a specific teacher training to be done, inspectors and members from other departments participate in the training sessions.



This is done with the purpose of equipping inspectors with skills and knowledge needed to support teachers.

A training programme for school principals, at both primary and secondary levels, has been ongoing since 1991. The basic components of the course include: financial management, personnel management, organizational development and instructional leadership. All school principals in the country have received the training in these four major components. Newly appointed principals are also expected to go through the training.

Between 1972 and 1985, distance education programmes were offered to train unqualified teachers or to up-grade those teachers with low qualifications. This was the function of the In-service Department. From 1986, this Department has been in charge of in-service training for qualified teachers. Since then, distance education is no longer used for the training of teachers.

In-service training is presently being reorganized. The types of centres for in-service training can be classified into three types: teacher centres, zones and schools. Teacher centres are mainly used for monthly, open-day workshops for teachers and headteachers. Zones are mainly used for the dissemination of new materials, as it was felt that calling teachers to a central venue, which sometimes might be too far from their schools, was not an appropriate solution. Zones are becoming popularly used as distribution centres for learning materials (e.g. textbooks).

The In-service Department is encouraging schools to host various workshops as school-based in-service workshops. This is another attempt to reach the teachers and respond to their needs. This initiative started in 1995, after a questionnaire was disseminated to a number of schools, and received a popular support.

Open-day workshops and school-based workshops are not compulsory. The percentage of teachers who attend them varies from one topic to another; on the average, participation ranges from 40% to 80%. On the other hand, all teachers are expected to attend the “infusion” workshops, partly because this is where new materials are discussed.

## **Educational research and information**

The Faculty of Education at UNISWA supports research and aims to:

- encourage and co-ordinate the work of individual researchers within and outside the University; increase communication between researchers in and outside Swaziland;
- execute research projects on a contractual basis;
- execute priority projects of a long-term nature;
- provide the means for evaluating education and training programmes, as well as for evaluating students' work.



With support from some projects, the Ministry of Education has been encouraging classroom-based research using qualitative research methods. Three research projects were undertaken in three rural primary schools under this arrangement.

The continuous assessment programme at the National Curriculum Centre has conducted classroom observations using the same techniques.

## References

Ministry of Education. *The development of education. National report of Swaziland.* International Conference on Education, 45th session, Geneva, 1996.

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Ministry of Education. *The education system at the beginning of the Twenty-first century: An overview.* International Conference on Education, 47th session, Geneva, 2004.

Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO. *Enhancing the role of teachers in a changing world.* Report to the 45th session of the International Conference of Education, Geneva, 1996.

## Web resources

Ministry of Education: <http://www.gov.sz/home.asp?pid=57> [In English. Last checked: October 2007]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>