



## Seychelles

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### Education for All 2015 National Review

*This report was prepared by the relevant national authorities in view of the World Education Forum (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19-22 May 2015). It was submitted in response to UNESCO's invitation to its Member States to assess progress made since 2000 towards achieving Education for All (EFA).*

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**Republic of Seychelles**

**Ministry of Education**

# **EDUCATION FOR ALL**



**NATIONAL EFA 2015 REVIEW REPORT**

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## FOREWORD

In 2000, Seychelles together with other countries and partner organizations from around the world, pledged to achieve by the year 2015 the six EFA goals, by implementing the twelve strategies presented in the Dakar Framework for Action. In 2002 the Seychelles Ministry of Education, in collaboration with other local partners, developed a national action plan for EFA entitled *Education for All National Action Plan 2001-2015: Meeting our Collective Commitments*.

While Seychelles was already well on the way towards achieving most of the EFA Goals, this Plan served as a guide to help us consolidate the progress made and move towards further improvements in education quality. We have in place a comprehensive, integrated, free co-educational education and training system which caters for all children and young people. This includes non-formal early childhood education, primary and secondary education, non-university tertiary education and training and university education. The system provides ten years of compulsory education from Primary year one to Secondary year four.

At UNESCO's 36<sup>th</sup> Conference, the Director General urged member states "to mobilize the international community and EFA partners for the achievement of the EFA" and at the same time to "continue to undertake benchmarking for monitoring progress towards EFA". In November 2012 in its final statement the Global EFA meeting agreed that a process of national and regional reviews should take place to inform a global conference for EFA in 2015.

In line with the Global EFA statement, Seychelles undertook a review of its EFA Action Plan to evaluate its achievements, challenges and possible ways forward with regard to the six EFA goals. An EFA core team and six technical committees were set up to plan, organize, coordinate and implement the main review tasks and to prepare the National EFA 2015 Review. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all the team members and leaders who have contributed to the production of our National EFA 2015 Review Report. I also wish to thank the national consultant who compiled the whole report.

Our achievements indicate that we are steering the right course. For the years ahead our national education priority remains the provision of quality education that is sustainable and adapted to our small island context, from early childhood onwards. To achieve this we cannot do it alone; we need to engage all education stakeholders, the civil society and the private sector in creative partnerships.



**Macsuzy Mondon**  
**Minister for Education**



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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ALDEC	Adult Learning and Distance Education Centre
CCATS	Centre for Curriculum, Assessment and Teacher Support
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CONFESJES	Conference des Ministres de la Jeunesse et des Sports de la Francophonie
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IECD	Institute for Early Childhood Development
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Education
IPAM	Improving Pupils Achievements in Mathematics
IT	Information Technology
LUNGOS	Liaison Unit for Non-Government Organisations, Seychelles
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NGO	Non-Government Organisations
OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
PSE	Personal and Social Education
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Measuring Education Quality
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCDS	Seychelles Child Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIALS	Seychelles Integrated Adult Learning Survey
SIP	School Improvement Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

# 1 BACKGROUND

Located in the western Indian Ocean, four degrees south of the Equator and approximately 1,600 km off the coast of East Africa, the Republic of Seychelles comprises 155 islands, scattered over some 500,000km<sup>2</sup> of sea. The islands have a total land area of 455.3 square kilometres, with about 491 km of coastline and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 1.374 million km<sup>2</sup>. As well as being geographically remote, the islands of Seychelles are highly dispersed, even for an archipelago. (See maps at Appendix 1)

The country's multi-ethnic population of 88,300<sup>1</sup> lives mainly on the four largest granitic islands of Mahé, Praslin, La Digue and Silhouette, with over 80% living on the main island of Mahé which accounts for approximately 35% of the total land area and hosts most of the country's economic activities. The capital, Victoria - also the major port - and the international airport are also located on Mahé. Most of the other smaller islands have no permanent population. The national languages are Kreol (a French based creole similar to that spoken in Mauritius), English and French, and the population is predominantly Christian in religious orientation.

The islands of Seychelles have been inhabited for just over two centuries, originally by French settlers from Mauritius together with contingents of African slaves. The British took over the colony in 1812 but only maintained an administrative presence for much of the time. After independence from Britain in 1976, the elected government was deposed through a coup d'état one year later and a one-party socialist government was established by the then party in opposition. Sixteen years later the country returned to multi-party democracy, with the adoption of a new constitution in 1993.

## 1.1 Economic and Social Context

Seychelles has the highest per capita GDP among African countries and ranks highest on social indicators (UNDP, 2010). Since independence the country has maintained a fairly consistent level of economic growth, reaching a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$9,028 in 2010 (from US\$800 at independence) and a high human development index of 0.773 in 2011<sup>2</sup>. It is classified as a middle income country, with a GDP of approximately US\$850 million in 2010. Seychelles has also made significant progress in social development terms, having institutionalized strong social welfare policies over the past thirty years. Practically all of the Millennium Development Goals have been achieved, especially those relating to education, health and social development, including access to ten years of education provided free at the point of use, free basic health care (including universal coverage for essential medicines and

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<sup>1</sup>National Bureau of Statistics – Seychelles in Figures 2012.

<sup>2</sup> UNDP (2011) Human Development Report, retrieved from website – <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/>

antiretroviral therapy). There is almost universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation and good housing provision. The country also has a high literacy rate (97%), significantly low infant mortality and high life expectancy at birth (74.2 years:- male 69.3 / female 79.4)<sup>3</sup>.

As the country progressed into the twenty first century a combination of factors, including substantial reductions in official development assistance, increased borrowing at commercial rates, accumulated debt arrears and heavy reliance on the rather volatile industries of fisheries and tourism, considerably threatened the maintenance of its social achievements. The situation was further exacerbated by other factors relative to small island developing states (SIDS), namely small size, inability to take advantage of economies of scale, limited capacity for economic diversification, distance from markets and high dependence on imports. The resulting macro-economic instability up until 2008 was characterized by huge gaps in the balance of payment and a debt crisis requiring major debt restructuring and fiscal reforms supported by an IMF Stand-by Arrangement facility, which was later replaced by an extended fund facility. The main objective of the interventions, started in November 2008, was to promote macro-economic stability, debt sustainability and viable economic growth. The economy has since stabilized, as evidenced by a much reduced inflation rate (from about 60% at the end of 2008 as a result of the floatation of the local currency to 5 ½ % at the end of 2011), falling interest rates and positive rates of economic growth in 2010 and 2011<sup>4</sup>.

## 1.2 The SIDS Context

Like many other small island developing states Seychelles had already achieved universal basic education and gender parity in primary and secondary schooling prior to the Jomtien era<sup>5</sup>. The advantages of scale and strong government commitment to education were important factors in bringing about such achievements. At the turn of the century education priorities were more concerned with improving education quality, enhancing teacher education and teacher retention, school leadership, promoting curriculum relevance and lifelong learning. In the development of the *Education for All National Action Plan 2001 – 2015* those priorities were brought to the fore as far as possible. The plan also took into consideration a number of challenges characteristic of SIDS, including:

- A very small population (88,300, with a labour force of 51,426 in 2013<sup>6</sup>), resulting in a very limited human resource base. Thus even if the whole labour force was fully trained and

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<sup>3</sup> National Bureau of Statistics – Seychelles in Figures, 2013

<sup>4</sup> The rate of GDP growth for 2010 was 6.7% and 5% for 2011 (IMF/Government of Seychelles, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> M Crossley and T Sprague (2012) Learning from small states for Post-2015 educational and international development. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 15(1) pp. 26-40.

<sup>6</sup> NBS, Seychelles in Figures, 2013

employed it is unlikely that Seychelles would be able to produce all the required expertise for all specialized areas of the economy and necessary services. Its reliance on outside expertise is therefore a permanent consideration that also entails additional costs.

- Limited possibilities of diversifying the economy, giving rise to a high dependence on a small number of sectors – tourism and fisheries mainly - which consequently lead to vulnerability to external shocks. This is compounded by relatively great distances from the main markets. Other consequences for education are the limited options for career choices and the effects of brain drain.
- A high dependence on imports, which again increases the country's vulnerability to external shocks. Currently over seventy percent of food and one hundred percent of commercial fuel are imported.
- Vulnerability to climate change.

## 2 EDUCATION

### 2.1 The Right to Education

The right to education for every citizen is guaranteed under Article 33 of the Constitution, and to ensure the effective realization of this right the state undertakes to:

- “a) 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.
- b) ensure that educational programmes in all schools are aimed at the complete development of the individual.
- c) afford, on the basis of intellectual capability, every citizen equal access to educational opportunities and facilities beyond the period of compulsory education.
- d) allow, subject to such reasonable restrictions, supervision and conditions as are necessary in a democratic society, any person, organization or institution to establish and maintain a private school.
- e) respect the right of parents to choose whether to send their children to a state or private school”.<sup>7</sup>

The Education Act (2004) is the principal law that guides education provision in primary and secondary schools. The Act specifies the education goals and objectives as follows:

- “a) The establishment of a comprehensive system of education and training reflecting universal and national values which promote the complete development of the person and equip the person to participate fully in social and economic development;
- b) The establishment of institutions for achieving the goals referred to in paragraph (a);
- c) The execution of the educational policy of the government”.<sup>8</sup>

The Education Act also provides for the organization, promotion and development of ten years of compulsory and inclusive education; it outlines regulations relating to the general administration of public and private educational institutions, rights and responsibilities of students, parents and teachers, as well as the requirements of the national curriculum and assessments.

Other legislations pertaining to the right to education include:

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<sup>7</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles, 1994, Article 33

<sup>8</sup> Education Act, 2004, sub-section 2

- The Children’s Act (1982, last amended in 1999), which aims to protect the rights of all children to an acceptable quality of life and to ensure their protection against harm.
- The Tertiary Education Act, 2013.
- The Seychelles Qualifications Act (2005) which established the Seychelles Qualifications Authority as the standard setting body for education and training nationally.
- The National Qualifications Framework Regulations (2008).

The education legal framework also takes into account a number of conventions and international instruments ratified or acceded to by Seychelles over the past two decades (refer to Appendix 2 for details).

## 2.2 Education Policy Framework

In line with the Education Act (2004) the Ministry of Education’s **vision** for education is “*to empower future citizens to contribute positively to the process of building a sustainable, peaceful and harmonious Seychelles society, whilst safeguarding and promoting our unique traditions and cultural values*”<sup>9</sup>. This vision is premised on certain fundamental beliefs, including the following:

- “Every individual has an equal right to education.
- Every individual has the ability to learn.
- The education process must be innovative and responsive to the needs of the learner and the wider society.
- Teaching should be centred on the needs and interests of the learner.
- There is a basic set of competencies and skills that all students must learn/acquire including reading, writing, communicating in a foreign language and information and communication technology.
- Knowledge without application is of limited value.
- The learner’s total development must be attended to, including the spiritual, intellectual, emotional and personal development.
- Learning is cumulative and every developmental stage is important but that the formative years are critical.
- Parents and community are essential partners in the education process”<sup>10</sup>.

The Ministry’s stated **mission** is ‘*to build a coherent and comprehensive system of quality education and training, reflecting shared universal and national values which promote the*

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<sup>9</sup> Seychelles Education Sector Medium Term Strategy, 2013-2017, p32

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

*integrated development of the person and empower him/her to participate fully in social and economic development*<sup>11</sup>.

Early Childhood, primary and secondary education provision is guided by a number of policy instruments, the main ones being:

- *Education for a Learning Society (2000)* which outlines the mission, principles, values and goals of education in Seychelles. The end goals of education are ‘education for empowerment, education for productivity, education for social cohesion and education for global participation’<sup>12</sup>.
- *National Curriculum Framework (2013)*, provides the principles and values to guide curriculum planning and implementation in schools; it outlines the expected outcomes for each essential learning area at each key stage and gives the essential competencies and life skills necessary for the development of successful lifelong learners who will become active and responsible citizens.
- *National Assessment Framework (2013)* describes the Ministry of Education’s policies on assessment *as learning*, assessment *of learning* and assessment *for learning* at the different key stages of schooling.
- The Inspectorate Unit’s standards for the evaluation of learning and teaching: ‘*Looking at our Schools – effective self-evaluation through collaborative partnerships*’ (2010) and ‘*External Quality Assessment Manual*’ (2010).
- The *Quality Assurance Manual of the Seychelles Qualifications Authority* (2011).
- Language policy as stated in the ‘*Policy on Languages in the Seychelles National Curriculum*’ (1998).
- *The inclusive education policy* (2013), which provides for the special education needs of learners throughout the school system.
- *National Schools’ nutrition policy* (2008) developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Health to guide schools towards the promotion of healthy eating and general well-being.
- *The Early Childhood Care and Education Framework* (2011) which promotes a holistic and integrated approach to ECCE for all children aged 0 – 7+ years.

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<sup>11</sup>Education for a Learning Society, 2000, Ministry of Education, p1

<sup>12</sup>Education for a Learning Society, 2000, p2



- *Seychelles Strategy 2017*, in particular the section on Education strategies which informed the last *Education Reform Action Plan 2009-2010*, and the medium term *National Development Strategy 2013 – 2017* due to come into effect shortly.

The legal and policy frameworks take into consideration international goals and strategies in education, including UNESCO’s Education for All Goals, the Millennium Development Goals, technical and vocational education and training goals and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (2005). In 2011 the *Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy 2012-2020* was launched, with the objective of promoting, co-ordinating and integrating sustainable development in Seychelles. Education is recognised as being central to the concept of sustainable development and it features prominently in the strategy.

### 2.3 Education for All – National Action Plan 2001-2015

The context within which the EFA national action plan was developed in 2001/2002 was characterised by a comprehensive, co-educational school system, available to all children free at the point of use, for 13 years, ten of which were compulsory. This situation has been maintained up to now, with early childhood, primary and secondary education provided through 29 crèches, 24 primary schools and 10 secondary schools on the three main islands. Students can also opt to attend any of the four private schools. In addition to the formal system, early childhood care and education is provided outside the home by 22 registered privately-owned day-care centres. Table 1 below gives details of schooling provision in 2014:

**Table 1: Schooling provision in 2014**

Institutions and locations	State-owned	Private	Total	Remarks
Registered day-care centres – in most districts	0	22	22	Their operation is monitored by the Ministry of Education
Crèche – district based, mostly within primary school compounds	29	5	34	Two years, entry age – 3yrs and 3months, non-compulsory; consistently 98% attendance over past three decades
Primary schools – district based	24	4	28	Six years, compulsory; consistently 100% attendance over the past three decades
Secondary schools - regional	10	4	14	Five years, 4 being compulsory; 98% attendance since established in 1997

Source: adapted from EMIS statistics, 2013

Tables 2 and 3 provide an overview of student numbers and distribution in primary and secondary schools.

**Table 2: Distribution of primary pupils by level and gender, 2012-2013**

	2012				2013			
	No.Female	F %	No. Male	M %	No.Female	F %	No. Male	M %
Creche Y1	650	12%	613	12%	686	13%	691	13%
Creche Y2	700	13%	677	13%	686	13%	656	12%
P1/P2	1277	24%	1318	25%	1363	25%	1403	26%
P3-P6	2603	50%	2698	51%	2661	49%	2725	50%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5230</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5306</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5396</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5475</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: EMIS Database May 2013

**Table 3: Student enrolment rates for secondary schools by level and gender, 2012- 2013**

**Table 3(a)** Number of students per level

YEAR LEVEL	2012			2013		
	F	M	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL
S1	648	615	1263	653	621	1274
S2	582	677	1259	664	634	1298
S3	601	621	1222	591	692	1283
<b>S1-S3</b>	<b>1831</b>	<b>1913</b>	<b>3744</b>	<b>1908</b>	<b>1947</b>	<b>3855</b>
S4	621	593	1214	558	532	1090
S4 TVET	22	90	112	32	100	132
S5	634	539	1173	597	545	1142
S5 TVET	7	60	67	22	77	99
<b>S4-S5</b>	<b>1284</b>	<b>1282</b>	<b>2566</b>	<b>1209</b>	<b>1254</b>	<b>2463</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3115</b>	<b>3195</b>	<b>6310</b>	<b>3117</b>	<b>3201</b>	<b>6318</b>

**Table 3(b)** Percentage of students per level

YEAR LEVEL	2012			2013		
	F	M	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL
S1	20.8%	19.2%	20.0%	20.9%	19.4%	20.2%
S2	18.7%	21.2%	20.0%	21.3%	19.8%	20.5%
S3	19.3%	19.4%	19.4%	19.0%	21.6%	20.3%
<b>S1-S3</b>	<b>58.8%</b>	<b>59.9%</b>	<b>59.3%</b>	<b>61.2%</b>	<b>60.8%</b>	<b>61.0%</b>
S4	19.9%	18.6%	19.2%	17.9%	16.6%	17.3%
S4 TVET	0.7%	2.8%	1.8%	1.0%	3.1%	2.1%
S5	20.4%	16.9%	18.6%	19.2%	17.0%	18.1%
S5 TVET	0.2%	1.9%	1.1%	0.7%	2.4%	1.6%
<b>S4-S5</b>	<b>41.2%</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>40.7%</b>	<b>38.8%</b>	<b>39.2%</b>	<b>39.0%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: EMIS Database May 2013

0.4% of the total student population attend special schools for reasons of physical or mental disability, as indicated in Table 4:

**Table 4: Student enrolment in special schools in 2013**

School	Total Boys	Total Girls	Total
School for the Exceptional Child	35	23	58
Baie Ste. Anne Centre, Praslin	2	1	3
Au Cap Primary School (Hearing impaired)	6	4	10

Source: EMIS Database, May 2013

Tables 5 and 6 give details of the number and qualifications of teachers in the school system.

**Table 5: Number of teachers by gender and nationality - public and private institutions, 2013**

Levels	Local			Expatriate			TOTAL		GENDER TOTAL
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	
Crèche	184	-	184	11	-	11	195	-	195
Primary	560	77	637	19	5	24	579	82	661
Special Education	26	2	28	-	-	-	26	2	28
Secondary	287	165	452	73	70	143	360	235	595
Post-Secondary	46	51	97	7	35	42	53	86	139
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,103</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>1,398</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>1,213</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>1,618</b>

Source: EMIS Database, May 2013

All schools are staffed by women predominantly: all crèche teachers are women, while at primary level they make up 67%. The 13% male primary teachers tend to be in the areas of

physical education and arts and craft. There is better balance at secondary where 60% of teachers are female and 40% are male.

**Table 6: Qualification levels of teachers in public educational institutions, 2013**

	CRECHE TEACHER		PRIMARY TEACHER		SECONDARY TEACHER		POST-SECONDARY TEACHER		TOTAL
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
<b>Masters/Maîtrise</b>	-	-	1	1	10	12	5	10	39
<b>Bachelors/Licence</b>	-	-	9	5	105	78	23	33	253
<b>Advanced Diploma/ Diplôme Supérieur/HND</b>	1	-	15	-	17	4	2	12	51
<b>Diploma/Diplôme</b>	1	-	3	-	7	10	9	17	47
<b>Diploma 2 – 4 years</b>	39	-	223	13	148	58	-	-	481
<b>Diploma 1 – 3 years</b>	17	-	65	10	6	4	-	-	102
<b>Certificated - 3/4 years</b>	59	-	89	18	15	29	2	9	221
<b>Ancillary Certificate</b>	1	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	8
<b>Uncertificated</b>	35	-	104	26	6	3	-	-	174
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>1,376</b>

*Source: EMIS Database, May 2013*

Over the past decade the number of teachers in the school system has remained fairly stable, with an average of about 1,400 teachers for a student population averaging around 20,500 for the past five years. Slow population growth and emigration have contributed to the stability of this situation - during the period 2000 to 2013, total student enrolment in schools and training

institutions has decreased by almost one tenth (22,651 in 2000 to 20,343 in 2013). National statistics indicate an annual growth rate of 1.0% and a gradually aging population<sup>13</sup>.

The teacher/ pupil ratio has been maintained at an average of 13:1 during the period under review and the large majority of teachers are trained – to certificate and diploma levels at primary, and first degree level at secondary. Almost all school leaders hold masters degrees in education leadership, as indicated in the table below. Overall only 3% of school leaders are men.

**Table 7: Qualifications of school leaders in state schools, 2014**

Schools leaders - Qualifications- 2014						
Schools	Diploma		Advanced Diploma/HND		Masters	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
PRIMARY	0	2	2	3	1	16
SECONDARY	0	0	0	0	2	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>27</b>	

Source: EMIS database, 2014

The content and delivery of school curricula is guided by the National Curriculum Framework and National Assessment Framework, both revised in 2013. Progression through the school system is automatic, with the possibility of moving into alternative learning pathways at upper secondary (key stage 5), largely based on general performance and student choices. However, provision for special educational needs at all levels in the system remains a challenge.

According to the language policy, teaching is done in Kreol from Creche to primary year two (key stage 1) and in English, the main language of government, from primary year three onwards; French is also taught all through. While this policy is generally adhered to, observation of classroom practice suggests that there is a good deal of code switching at all levels<sup>14</sup>. Almost all Seychellois are to some extent bilingual (Kreol and English), and about five to ten percent are fluent in all three national languages.

Throughout the past three decades enhancing the quality of education has remained a national priority, with the largest budgetary allocation – between 9% and 13% of national expenditure –

<sup>13</sup> Seychelles Bureau of Statistics – Seychelles in Figures from 2005 to 2013

<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Education (2012): Inspectorate reports 2012

being made to education. Over 90% of the education budget is spent on personal emoluments. Generally staffing, budgeting, infrastructural and resource management are centrally controlled by the Ministry of Education.

A key strategy for bringing about quality improvement was the School Improvement Programme launched in 1995. It aimed to create a culture of collaborative planning and self-evaluation in schools as a means of improving students' learning experiences and outcomes. All schools produced three-year development plans which established their own priorities for improvement, and the plans were implemented in collaboration with all partners, including the wider school community. School-based staff professional development was also a key factor in school projects. The programme is still ongoing but with much reduced support centrally.

The expected outcomes of the 48 projects developed under the six EFA goals intended to consolidate the achievements of the previous two decades and '*move towards transforming the education system in order to better meet individual and national development needs*'<sup>15</sup>. To ensure the effective implementation of the EFA National Action Plan an EFA secretariat was set up in 2002 and within it the National Education for All Forum had the responsibility to oversee, co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the plan.

## 2.4 EFA Goals – as adapted to Seychelles Context

Having already achieved some of the EFA goals in 2001, the Ministry of Education adapted them as recommended by the World Education Forum (2000), as follows:

**GOAL 1** - Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education.

**GOAL 2** -Ensuring that by 2015 all children have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary and secondary education of good quality.

**GOAL 3** - Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.

**GOAL 4** - Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015 and equitable access to basic and continuing education for adults.

**GOAL 5** - Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, by ensuring full and equal access to and achievement for both genders at primary and secondary levels of education.

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<sup>15</sup> Education Reform Action Plan 2009-2010

**GOAL 6** - Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills<sup>16</sup>.

The evaluation of the six goals in the next sections of this report is done in the light of the above adapted goals. For each goal there is a brief overview of the context of the evaluation and the targets set in the EFA National Action Plan. This is followed by short descriptions of the most significant initiatives undertaken to achieve each target, an analysis of the main achievements since 2002 as a result of the initiatives taken, and challenges that remain. Each section ends with some proposals for the way forward.

Although the EFA goals came into effect in 2001, Seychelles launched its National Action Plan in 2002; this report therefore takes that year as the starting point of the present evaluation.

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<sup>16</sup> Seychelles Education for All -National Action Plan 2001 – 2015, p21

### **3 GOAL 1 - EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION**

#### *Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education.*

In Seychelles 'Early childhood' is defined as the period from birth to 7+ years. As elsewhere in the world, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programs and services are seen as encompassing health, nutrition, safety, security and learning, which all contribute to the holistic development of the child. It is also acknowledged that early childhood constitutes a critical period in life and the quality of children's experiences in the early years has a major impact on their life chances.

The legal framework for ECCE in Seychelles is provided through the Children's Act 1982 (last amended in 1999), the Education Act 2004, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by Seychelles in 1989). Over the past decade work in this area was guided mainly by two national action plans for children (1995 – 2000 and 2005 – 2009), overseen and partly implemented by the Inter-agency Committee established in 1999. However, over time the need to take a more co-ordinated approach to ECCE was fully acknowledged by all partners, especially after Seychelles' adoption of the Moscow Framework of Action and Co-operation, following UNESCO's first World Conference on ECCE in 2010. It led to the development of a more integrated policy framework in 2011 – *"The Early Childhood Care and Education Framework – Winning for Children: a shared commitment"*.

ECCE services are provided by a combination of partners: parents and guardians, home-based minders, day care centres, crèches and the Early Childhood section of primary schools; the latter forms part of the compulsory education system. In the area of health care the main partners include health centres, the early childhood intervention centre, hospitals and dental clinics.

The targets set under this goal focused on improving infrastructure and enhancing the services offered by day-care centres and crèches, providing regular training of staff and engaging parents more fully in ECCE initiatives.

#### **3.1 Initiatives undertaken to achieve EFA Goal 1 since 2002**

##### ***An Overarching Policy Framework***

The Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education, which is the national policy framework for ECCE, was launched in late 2011. Its implementation is led by a high level committee chaired by the Vice-President. The Institute for Early Childhood Development (IECD),



established in 2013, oversees the application of the Framework, and it provides guidance and facilitates support to other related agencies and Ministries. The major partners are the Ministries of Health, Education, Social Affairs and Community Development, and Finance; also national agencies such as the National Council for Children, Seychelles Children Foundation, and a few non-government organisations. The delivery of programs and services are guided by a set of values and principles premised on the belief that all children have a right to equal access to high quality ECCE services and that adults have a duty to ensure that the rights and needs of children are met.

Structures and mechanisms to ensure the Framework's effective implementation have also been put in place. There is a technical committee for ECCE within each partner Ministry which reports to a co-ordinating committee led by the head of the Institute for Early Childhood Development (IECD). The work of the co-ordinating committee is guided by a high level ECCE Policy Committee headed by the Seychelles Vice-President. An ECCE Advisory Council also assists the policy committee and the IECD. A first *National Action Plan for ECCE: 2013 – 2014*, was developed following wide consultation with all partners and it is currently being implemented. A national ECCE Trust Fund was established in February 2012 to assist early childhood care and education institutions and organizations with project funding.

### ***Comprehensive Health Care***

All-inclusive and free antenatal and post-natal care is provided by the Ministry of Health through maternal and child health programmes in central and district health centres, on the four main islands with permanent populations. All births occur in healthcare facilities, assisted by health professionals. A 'baby-friendly hospital initiative' based on the UNICEF-WHO ten steps to successful breastfeeding is in place since 2008. Universal newborn hearing screening tests were introduced in 2012. Post-natal care is covered under the Maternal and Child Health Programme (MCHP), which includes regular mother and baby monitoring over the first three years of the baby's life. The service is accessible to all at district health centres and also covers maternal and child oral health. The School Health Programme takes over from the MCHP once the children go to crèches and primary schools.

The School Health Programme aims to provide 'comprehensive, preventive and promotive health services to school going children between the ages of 4 to 17 years.'<sup>17</sup> Health assessments, including basic screening procedures, are carried out at four stages in the children's school life: at the end of crèche, primary year 4, secondary 1 and secondary 4.

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<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Health, 2008 : The School Health Programme, p1

Parental consent is sought at each stage, and counselling and social support are also provided as necessary.

In addition to the generic services of the MCHP, early intervention programmes are available for children from birth to five years old. The Early Childhood Intervention Centre, opened in 2008, provides specialised examination and care by paediatricians and paediatric nurses. Intervention programmes are planned with parents, the home and the school, and the centre networks with other specialised sections of the Ministry of Health such as speech therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

An extensive immunization programme has been in place since pre-independence times, which was later extended from birth to 15 years. Presently the programme includes immunization against tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella and tetanus, and there is almost 100% coverage. Haemophilus influenza type b vaccine was introduced in 2010. The immunization programme forms part of the MCHP and the School Health programme.

### ***Increasing Day Care Facilities***

As more women in the 18 to 45 age-group move to full time employment and the extended family structure that permitted shared child minding change over time, the demand for community-based childcare facilities keeps rising. The provision of reliable, affordable and safe day care facilities has now become a priority. In 2012 there were 19 privately owned registered daycare centres catering for a total of 990 children in 13 districts. Fees ranged from SR500 (US\$42) to SR1800 (US\$150) per month per child. The other 12 districts had no such centres but many unregistered facilities were available<sup>18</sup>. A study carried out by the IECD on the conditions and quality of child-minding services in 2013 revealed that over a thousand children are in informal, home-based child-minding facilities of four or more children, and these vary widely in levels of quality. A project led by the IECD (as the regulator for child-minding services) to establish standards for home-based child-minding services is being developed.

Government has encouraged the setting up of more day care centres by leasing out district-based premises<sup>19</sup> and facilitating soft loans to prospective operators. The most needy parents may also obtain financial assistance through the Agency for Social Protection, but many parents still rely on informal child minding arrangements with family or neighbours.

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<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Education: Summary of relevant information and statistics on daycare education services, 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Government Lease Agreement for Day Care Centres, 2000

Day-care centres are regulated under the Education Act 2004, and the Ministry of Education is responsible for ensuring that established standards<sup>20</sup> are maintained in all licensed and registered centres. The guidelines are contained in the document: *Day-Care Centres – policy statement, standards for monitoring and evaluation* (2010). They make provision for inspection by Ministries of Education and Health staff with regard to staffing, health and safety, security, record keeping and early learning programmes. The Seychelles Fire and Rescue Services Agency also check on various aspects of safety. Training at certificate level for 15 daycare operators and 19 assistants was organised by the Ministry of Education in 2006 and 2007 respectively. In-service training of day-care assistants is on-going.

From the age of three years and three months all children can attend crèche, and although it is not compulsory the large majority does so – 80% of children in that age range, in 2013. The remaining 20% were in private crèches attached to the four private schools, in other private day care centres, or at home.

### ***Early Childhood Education***

The 34 crèches are mostly within the district primary school complex, or private school grounds, and fall under the same administration. Emphasis in crèche is on learning through play and the development of pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills. The crèche curriculum is of two years duration and it aims to establish a sound foundation for compulsory primary schooling. The majority of public crèche teachers – 100% women - are trained to certificate or diploma levels and the pupil /teacher ratio was 15:1 in 2013. There were also 236 teacher assistants at crèche level.

Primary schools offer after-school services, on demand and free of charge, in two areas: homework and after-school supervision. The aim of these services is to provide children with a safe and supportive environment until their parents return home. Homework supervision is available three times a week by teachers whereas daily after-school supervision is organised mainly by non-teaching staff and parents, from 2.30pm to 5.00pm on school premises. In the first quarter of 2014 there were 18 schools providing after-school services, with about 200 children in the homework supervision group and 1300 using the after-school supervision service. The programme is funded through the Ministry of Education budget.

Crèches and primary schools management may apply for grants from the ECCE Trust Fund. A school can access up to SR100, 000 (US\$8300) at a time to implement school-based ECCE

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<sup>20</sup> As per Statutory Instrument 43 (2005)

related projects. So far three primary schools a few day care centres have made use of this opportunity to access additional funds for ECCE.

Following the macro-economic reforms of 2008 a special dedicated fund was introduced to assist children in need of basic necessities for attending school – such as breakfast, uniforms, lunch, stationery and transport. In consultation with parents and based on demand, school management requests funding directly for the children considered most in need of such assistance<sup>21</sup>.

### **3.2 EFA Goal 1- Main achievements since 2002**

With the adoption of the ECCE Framework in 2011 all partners involved are moving towards a more co-ordinated approach to the delivery of ECCE. The technical teams meet regularly and progress reports to the National Co-ordinating Committee for ECCE were made as planned. The IECD progress report for 2013<sup>22</sup> noted improved collaboration within and between sectors over the first year of the implementation of the national ECCE Action Plan.

Increased co-ordination between sectors has been promoted by participation in biennial ECCE conferences that bring together all partners to share achievements and concerns, and address challenges. The National Co-ordinating Committee provides on-going support to all technical teams; it is putting together a common ECCE terminology directory and it is proposing a new Act to establish IECD as a regulatory body for home-based child minding services<sup>23</sup>.

To ensure compliance with the statutory regulations on the maintenance of established standards in day-care centres, the Ministry of Education has set up a dedicated unit staffed by early childhood specialists. A number of inspections reports have been produced so far.

The universal health care programme at the early childhood stage has eliminated most communicable diseases and is leading to better mother and child health. Continuity is maintained through good record-keeping and established follow-up programmes.

The low rate of child mortality– between 9.8 and 12.9 per 1000 live births - has been maintained over the past two decades, along with the almost zero rate of maternal mortality. Maternal and child care reaches over 95% of children and extended vaccination programs reach all children as there is 100% school attendance. Women have three months paid maternity leave and the issue of paternity leave is still under consideration.

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<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Education (2009) Guidelines for Dedicated Funds for Needy Students

<sup>22</sup> IECD (2014): Progress Report – National Action Plan for ECCE, January –December 2013

<sup>23</sup> ibid

Free crèches education is well established and the programmes are included in the national curriculum framework for schools. This ensures good connectivity between crèche and the primary curriculum. An example of this is the introduction of a Kreol reading scheme in 2009 – Aprann Lir avèk Papiyon (ALAP)<sup>24</sup> - which started in crèche year two and has now progressed to primary year two. A similar process is being used for teaching reading in English, through a new reading scheme entitled ‘Jolly Phonics’. Two evaluation studies of the Kreol reading scheme carried out between 2009 and 2012<sup>25</sup> showed marked improvements in children’s reading skills that could reasonably be attributed to the effective use of the reading programme.

A number of mechanisms aiming to encourage good parent-teacher contacts are in place at different levels in schools; they include School Councils, Parent-Teacher Associations and regular parent meetings with school management. So far parent-teachers associations have been the most active in bringing parents into schools.

The majority of working parents have access to day-care facilities within or outside their districts and the project to ensure one day-care facility per district is on-going. Parents also have the back-up support of the after-school services for older children.

All early childhood teachers (crèches to primary year two) have at least one classroom assistant to help on a daily basis. The programme was introduced in 2006, and on-going training programmes help them develop pedagogical skills.

### 3.3 Challenges

The majority of early childhood teachers are in the 40 to 50+ age band. Fewer young graduates are joining the profession at this level. This will eventually lead to a higher teacher/ pupil ratio at crèche level.

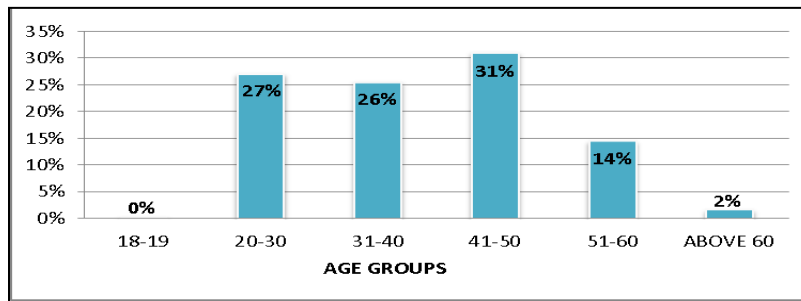
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<sup>24</sup> Translates as : Learn to read with the butterfly

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Education (2010): ALAP Reading Project: Establishing Standards in Early Childhood Education in Seychelles.

Ministry of Education (2013): Mother-Language Reading Project: Establishing Standards in Early Childhood Education in Seychelles 2009-2012 – Final Report

**Fig 1 - Distribution of teachers by age in crèches and primary schools, 2012**



Source: EMIS Database, May 2013

The fact that 100% of early childhood teachers are women makes for considerable gender imbalance in the process of early socialization of children. The imbalance is further reinforced by the lack of awareness of this situation as problematic, even though the issue of boys underperformance is well known<sup>26</sup>.

So far there are no minimum training requirements for day-care operation and so the demand for training is not strongly felt. However, the apparent lack of knowledge and skills noted as a result of routine inspections presents challenges in the operation of the service and point to the need for more targeted on-going training.

Opportunities for training for care givers have not been consistent over time; while some relatively good training programmes were developed and implemented up until 2009, changes at institutional and administrative levels have resulted in a discontinuation of the programmes.

Access to day care facilities and costs remain problematic for some working parents, especially those in the lower income brackets. The lack of such facilities in almost half of the districts and the unregulated nature of home-based child minding services leave parents with very limited choices.

Infrastructure available for day care and child minding services are, in many cases, not fully appropriate for such service for able children as well as those with special needs.

Consistent data collection related to ECCE, documentation and dissemination are still major challenges which impact on planning and decision making.

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<sup>26</sup> African Development Bank (2009) Seychelles – Gender Socialisation in the Home: its impact on boys’ achievement in primary and secondary schools.

The involvement of parents in ECCE initiatives has remained relatively marginal over the review period. While some individual centres and schools have tried to engage with parents, and the ECCE framework emphasises the role of parents, so far actions on the ground have tended to consider them as passive actors.

### 3.4 Way forward

- It is important to further consolidate the co-ordination of ECCE provision, to avoid duplication of efforts, and maximize the use of all available capacities and other resources. The engagement of parents at all stages in the process must be seen as a key factor for success.
- A data management system specifically for ECCE should be established in collaboration with all partners, by the IECD.
- Training for care givers and ECCE educators leading to basic qualifications (and SQA validated) should be provided by SITE in collaboration with IECD, in order to improve standards of care.
- ECCE as a specialization in pre and in-service teacher education and training should be reinforced and promoted as an attractive option for future teachers.
- Further development of early learning programmes in the three national languages is necessary in order to maintain the momentum and impact of existing programmes.
- The provision of appropriate and safe day care and child-minding facilities in all districts in Seychelles must remain a national priority.

## **4 GOAL 2 - ENSURING UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION**

*Ensuring that by 2015 all children have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary and secondary education of good quality.*

Ten years of compulsory education is stipulated in the Education Act (2004) and there is 100% attendance at primary level and about 98% at secondary level. For Seychelles the major focus remains the improvement of quality – as elaborated in the Ministry of Education’s policy statement: ‘*Education for a Learning Society*’ (2000). The targeted areas over the past decade were school development planning, training and professional development of school staff, curriculum and assessment, and greater autonomy in budget management. A number of strategies were implemented, including:

- Improving the quality of teachers and school leaders through training and continuous professional development
- Providing all appropriate infrastructure and other resources – specialist rooms, furniture, curriculum materials, adequate budget
- Strengthening support to schools through the establishment of regional resource centres, the provision of appropriate curriculum materials, and a range of co-curricular activities
- Developing standards-based assessment systems for primary and secondary schools and
- Establishing an internationally recognised certification system at the end of secondary education.

### **4.1 Initiatives undertaken to achieve EFA Goal 2 since 2002**

#### ***Improving the quality of teachers and school leaders***

The National Institute of Education was established in 1999 with responsibility for teacher education and training. Between 2002 and 2005 all teacher training programmes were revised and upgraded. New courses were developed in response to emerging needs, and a competency framework for newly qualified teachers was also developed and used as benchmark for training.

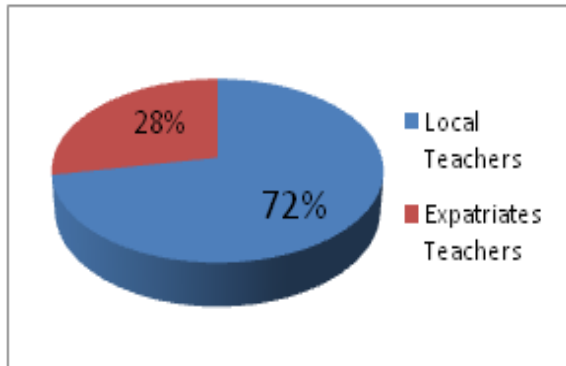
Up until 2009 an average of 30 newly qualified primary teachers, and 35 newly qualified secondary teachers (at diploma level) per year joined the teaching force. The diploma was equivalent to the first year of a B Ed degree, which was completed at overseas universities through a scholarship programme, covering mainly secondary teacher training. With the total number of teachers averaging 1,600 per year, a student/ teacher ratio of 13:1 at crèche, primary and secondary levels, and teacher attrition of about 4% per year, numbers remained relatively stable throughout.

In areas where specialist teachers are short (such as science, mathematics, history and geography) suitably qualified expatriate teachers are recruited to cover for the shortfall. A well-



established recruitment system is in place, targeting mainly teachers from the Indian Ocean region.

**Fig 2 - Percentage of expatriate teachers at Secondary Level, 2013**



*Source: Schools Division 2013*

A School Improvement Programme (SIP) launched in all state schools in 1996 introduced school development planning and continuous professional development of teaching staff. This called for the strengthening of capacities for school leaders. The Ministry of Education undertook to provide training in education leadership up to Masters degree level for all state school leaders. Through partnership programmes with three British universities, 85 school heads and middle level leaders were trained to Masters level, between 2004 and 2009. The courses were delivered through the National Institute of Education (NIE) to groups of 12 to 15 students yearly, and involved a number of local staff as personal tutors. At the same time four senior educators (three of them having graduated from the Masters degree programme) registered for PhDs under the same project, all successfully completed within six years of registration. In 2004 the NIE also developed an advanced diploma programme in educational leadership which provided another pathway into the Masters degree programme for school leaders.

The continuous professional development (CPD) of teachers in schools was institutionalised through the School Improvement Programme. Time is allocated for school-based CPD on a weekly basis within school time-tables and a professional development facilitator organizes the delivery of PD sessions in consultation with staff.

### ***Provision of appropriate infrastructure and other resources***

All crèches, primary and secondary schools have the required number of multi-purpose classrooms equipped with basic furniture for the student and staff population<sup>27</sup>. Except for about 50% of crèches, all other schools have separate toilet facilities for girls and boys.

Specialist rooms include rest rooms (in some crèches), dining rooms, school halls, staff rooms, libraries, sick bay, science laboratories and IT rooms (the last two only in secondary schools). Schools are equipped with some audio-visual equipment (TV, LCD projector, computers, printers, photocopiers) and 36% of primary schools and 70% of secondary schools have internet connectivity and fairly adequate server capacity<sup>28</sup>. All schools have a maintenance budget for minor works averaging SR40,000 (approx US\$3300) annually and it is managed at the level of the school.

Essential curriculum materials and equipment, in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum Framework, are supplied to all schools on request. Additional teaching and learning materials may be purchased by the school management through school-based projects and donations.

### ***Strengthening support to schools***

Three regional resource centres were set up in 2006 – two on Mahe and one on Praslin – for the purposes of promoting networking between teachers and schools and for professional development. Materials and equipment were procured through a project funded by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The centres were located on school premises, making access relatively easy for neighbouring schools. Permanent staff provided by the Ministry of Education helped to engaged teachers and school leaders in a range of collaborative activities. The centres are still operational but they are not staffed full-time.

The revision of the National Curriculum Framework in 2013 placed greater emphasis on inclusion, the attainment of essential competencies through differentiated teaching and learning and the monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching. The accompanying National Assessment Framework (2013) elaborates the principles, objectives and means of assessment at each of the five key stages. All subject areas of the national curriculum are now being reviewed in line with these revised national frameworks. This work, including related training of teachers and subject leaders, is being led by the Centre for Curriculum, Assessment and Teacher Support (CCATS).

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<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Education standards for school buildings, furniture and other resources, 2012

<sup>28</sup> CCATS database, 2013

As part of Education Reform 2009/2010, secondary school structure was adjusted to include a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) strand, which targets academically under-achieving students<sup>29</sup>. The first phase of the programme is in place, and it enables students to follow skills-based, technical vocational courses in post secondary institutions and work place environments.

The Special Needs and Inclusive Education Unit at the Ministry of Education headquarters was re-introduced in 2013. An Inclusive Education Policy (2013) has been developed and an implementation plan is almost completed. The training of special needs teachers is also under review.

The Personal and Social Education curriculum has been revised to further emphasise aspects of citizenship education and HIV AIDS education. These two subject areas have also been well integrated into the teacher training programmes. Training institutions and schools work in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, local NGOs and international partners to assist teachers in maintaining up-to-date knowledge and skills in the area of HIV and AIDS education. A number of training sessions have been organised and a variety of curriculum materials have been provided or produced. The result of the HIV-AIDS Knowledge Test (HAKT) administered by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Measuring Education Quality<sup>30</sup> (SACMEQ) 111 in 2010 shows that 98% of the teachers have a very sound knowledge base on HIV-AIDS<sup>31</sup>.

An Inspectorate Unit was set up in 2010 with the aim of 'Guaranteeing Quality Education in Schools'<sup>32</sup>. Its main focus is to set standards to guide schools to improve the quality of their self evaluation process, thus enhance the quality of education for all children in Seychelles schools.

Students have opportunities to participate in co- and extra-curricular activities, often linked to national and community-based events and campaigns. They are supported by the Ministry of Education's section for physical education and co-curricular support. A wide range of sports, cultural and social extra-curricular activities are organised at school level. Almost all schools

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<sup>29</sup> A Hughes- d'Aeth (2011) Assessment Report on the Implementation of Education Reform Action Plan 2009-2010, in Preparation for the Development of a Medium Term Education Sector Strategy 2011-2015 for Seychelles.

<sup>30</sup> The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality is an international network of 15 Ministries of Education. The mission of SACMEQ is to undertake integrated research and training activities to generate evidence-based information and to build research capacity. Its main role is to study the conditions in primary school and to inform policy makers of the quality of education.

<sup>31</sup> SACMEQ (2011) The SACMEQ III Project in Seychelles

<sup>32</sup> Looking at our Schools – effective self-evaluation through collaborative partnerships (2010) and External Quality Assessment Manual (2010).

(95%) have active eco-school and wildlife clubs, social and sports clubs, and many inter-school competitions in various areas of the national curriculum are organised annually<sup>33</sup>.

### ***Developing standards-based assessment systems***

The National Assessment Framework (2013) makes provision for the development of performance indicators at each key stage. It also specifies the purposes of assessment and advocates for different types of assessment at each key stage of the education system. It provides guidance on various assessment methods as a means of shifting the focus from the current practice of written tests. Training in assessment of learning is planned for in-service teachers and it is also being integrated into the teacher training programmes presently being revised.

The Ministry of Education's involvement in the SACMEQ regional testing process over a number of years has familiarised staff involved with the competency levels developed for the purpose, thus providing a basis for standard setting.

### ***Developing an internationally recognised certification system***

In 2004 the Ministry of Education moved from the Cambridge Assessment's General Certificate of Education Ordinary level (GCE 'O' Level) to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), as an internationally recognised system of certification at the end of secondary schooling. In 2013 84% of Secondary 5 (S5) students sat for a minimum of one and a maximum of seven subjects at IGCSE and 33 % of those registered scored a grade C or better in a range of 11 possible subjects. 81% also took the international diploma in French (Diplôme élémentaire de langue française – DELF). The overall pass rate for all subjects was 95%<sup>34</sup>.

At the end of secondary year 5 (S5), students can take a combination of IGCSE and Seychelles Certificate of Secondary Education examinations which will eventually contribute to the school leaving certificate. International examination fees are paid under the Ministry of Education budget for all students enrolled.

## **4.2 EFA Goal 2 - Main Achievements since 2002**

The quality of teachers improved consistently over this period: 59% of primary teachers now hold diploma level qualifications (or above) as opposed to 42% in 2002; at secondary level the large majority of teachers are qualified, with one third holding first degrees in their areas of specialisation.

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<sup>33</sup> Inspectorate Annual Report 2012/ 2013

<sup>34</sup> Education statistics, Examination Unit.

The mechanisms for providing teacher education and training have been reviewed and the Ministry of Education once again has direct responsibility for this, except for degree level programmes which remain with University of Seychelles. The Seychelles Institute for Teacher Education (SITE) became operational in 2014, with the mandate to provide teacher education and training for the whole school system. The diploma programmes are now being reinstated and new modalities for training delivery are being explored.

The quality of school leadership has improved considerably: presently almost all school leaders (headteachers, deputies and some middle level leaders) have advanced qualifications in educational leadership, most of them at Masters degree level. Improved leadership skills have enabled some schools to take greater responsibility for improving learning and teaching<sup>35</sup>.

Through the School Improvement Programme (SIP) a regular cycle of school development planning has become institutionalised. All schools have two or three-year development plans, produced through a process of auditing, prioritising areas for action and target setting, involving a broad spectrum of staff and students, and occasionally parents. School Improvement Teams oversee the implementation of action plans and monitor progress. Regular reviews and evaluation of the impact of the action plans are carried out. School improvement teams are also encouraged to network with other schools, especially those addressing similar areas of concern.

Improvement in teacher quality is also targeted through regular school-based professional development activities. A professional development facilitator, selected from among the teaching staff, plans and ensures the delivery of weekly PD sessions that should be based on staff's expressed needs.

The 2013 revision of the National Curriculum Framework has led to a system-wide review of all school curricula over the next few years. The review process adopted involves school curriculum leaders and teachers, to ensure school participation and better take-up at school level eventually.

The move towards standards-based assessment, along with a more inclusive approach to assessment in schools, has been boosted by the development of the new National Assessment Framework (2013). First steps in the implementation of the policy include a review of schools' current assessment practices and in-service training of teachers.

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<sup>35</sup> L Barallon (2011) Leadership Development in Small Island States: the case of Seychelles  
MT Purvis (2007) School Improvement in a Small Island Developing State: the Seychelles

New housing developments built during the review period necessitated the building of two primary schools and two crèches within the new communities, to enable easy access. These buildings are all equipped for accommodating disabled students. A centre for the hearing impaired has been set up at one of the district primary schools.

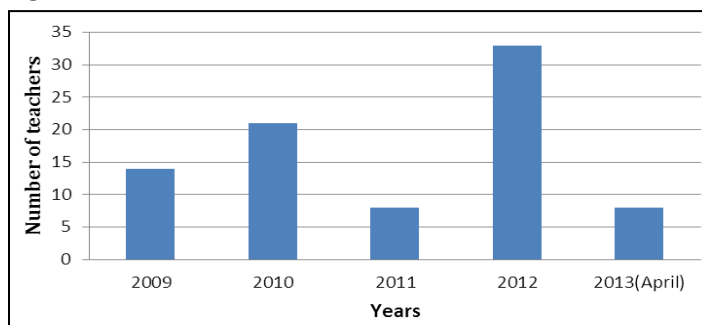
The newly developed *Education Sector Medium Term Strategy 2013-2017* intends to address, in particular, the main challenges related to improving education quality. It was produced with the assistance of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) using a number of analysis tools, including the UNESCO General Education Quality Assessment Framework (GEQAF). This analytical tool provided for a more systemic and in-depth approach to the evaluation process that backed the development of the strategy.

### 4.3 Challenges

Teacher supply and quality enhancement remains uncertain for a number of reasons: the system has to rely on expatriate teachers to cover certain areas of the national curriculum at secondary level, namely science, mathematics, history and geography. From 2002 to 2010, yearly, 25% of secondary and post-secondary teachers in the public school system were expatriates. A number of factors contributed to these shortfalls, including perceptions of teaching as an unattractive career path, and a restricted pool of potential candidates for further and higher education. The latter is also closely linked to general underperformance at secondary school level, resulting in insufficient numbers of eligible candidates who might have applied for teacher training programmes.

In 2009 the NIE was absorbed into the newly established University of Seychelles and the latter opted to offer only degree level courses in education. In the short term this meant a break in the supply of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and a considerable reduction in the number of candidates joining the training programmes. Coupled with increasing teacher attrition, the resulting shortages of qualified teachers in schools are now becoming apparent.

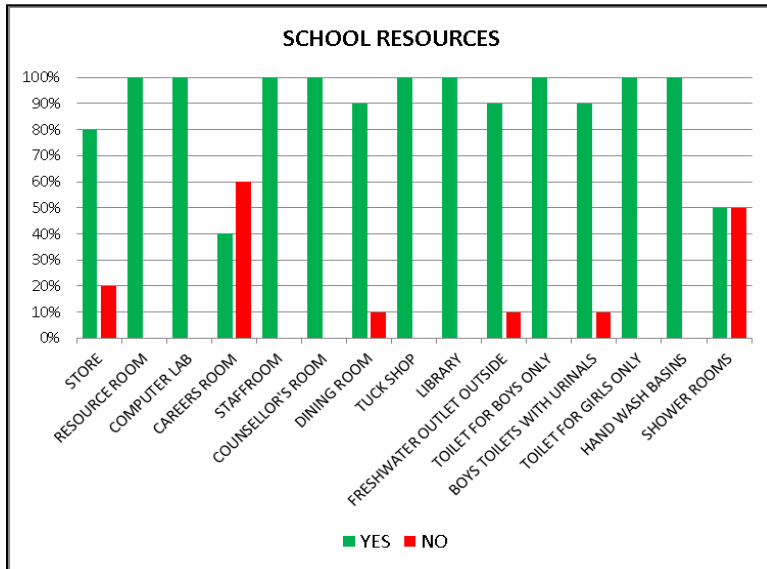
**Fig 3 - Level of teacher attrition – all levels, 2009 - 2013**



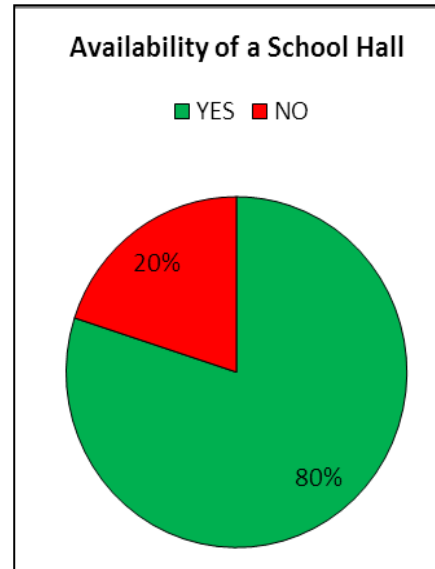
Source: Schools Division 2013

Economic reforms in 2008/2009 brought financial restrictions on public spending. As a consequence there were major restructuring of support mechanisms centrally (at Ministry headquarters level) and a reduction in the level of support to school leaders and teachers, including learning resources and infrastructure. The maintenance of buildings, specialist rooms and recreational facilities has suffered as a result. Schools are still in the process of adapting to the consequent changes.

**Fig 4 - School Resources – facilities, 2013**



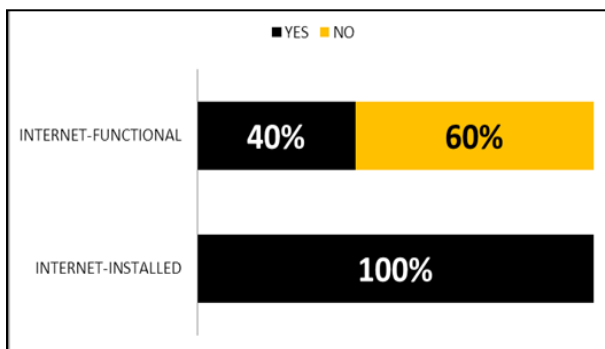
**School Halls, 2013**



Source: EMIS Database, May 2013

The provision of internet and other ICT facilities is a major concern for educational institutions. The majority of primary schools have very limited internet access for learning and teaching purposes while only 40% of secondary schools have functioning internet connectivity.

**Fig 5 - Internet connectivity, 2013**



Source: EMIS Database, May 2013

Funding arrangements for the School Improvement Programme (SIP) remain unclear and in some instances the momentum for maintaining the development planning cycle is being lost<sup>36</sup>. Frequent staff movement, especially those closely involved in implementing schools' development plans is also a cause for concern<sup>37</sup>.

The compulsory nature of SIP school-based professional development activities are not always perceived as useful by teachers, and they sometimes resent having to attend. Schools tend to offer a single activity per session rather than options linked to teachers' needs<sup>38</sup>. Teachers are not always consulted on the relevance of the activities to their needs.

On the whole the involvement of parents and the wider community in school development remains minimal, except for one or two schools where parents have been more proactive in partnering with them. The SIP does not have the prominence it used to have in school life and information about the programme is no longer readily available, neither at the Ministry nor at school level<sup>39</sup>.

Student performance remains relatively low in spite of considerable investment in improving infrastructure, teacher and leadership training. The SACMEQ II (2005) report noted that even if Seychelles performed well by SACMEQ standards, in both reading and mathematics at the end of Primary 6 there was a "*disproportionately large percentage of pupils*" performing at the lower three levels in mathematics and around 10 percent of Primary 6 pupils remained illiterate<sup>40</sup>.

The reports concludes that *'The results produced in this Policy Brief have shown that the Seychelles education system has not produced the desired results in reading and mathematics between 2000 and 2007, despite various interventions such as the IPAM project and other schools based action research initiatives that targeted the teaching and learning of reading and mathematics.'*<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> MT Purvis (2007), *ibid*

<sup>37</sup> L Barallon (2011) *ibid*

<sup>38</sup> MT Purvis (2007) *ibid*

<sup>39</sup> Human Science Research Council (2002): Seychelles School Improvement Programme – the baseline evaluation, and MT Purvis, *ibid*.

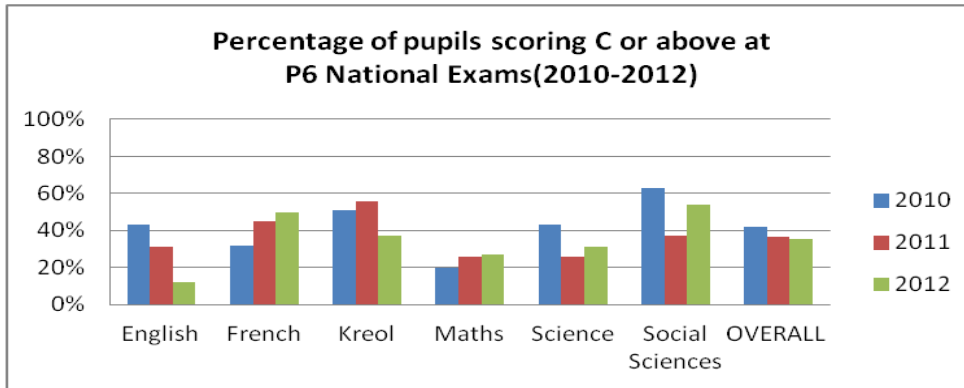
<sup>40</sup> The SACMEQ II Project in Seychelles (2005): A study of the Conditions of Schooling and the Quality of Education

<sup>41</sup> The SACMEQ (2005), *Ibid*, no page numbers.



This trend has shown little sign of improvement over the past six years. According to primary year six national examination results of 2012 only 35% of pupils scored a grade C and above overall, the lowest scores so far<sup>42</sup>.

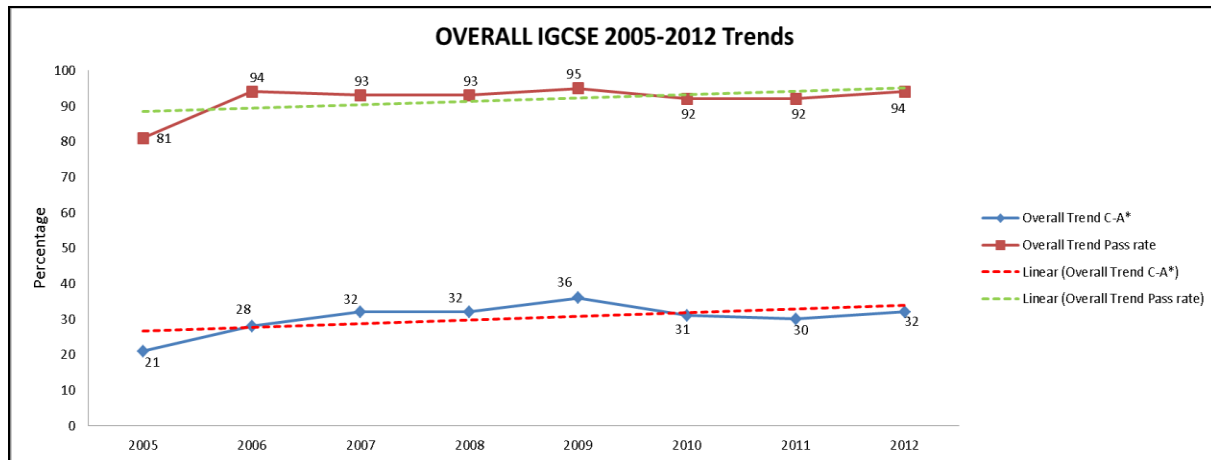
**Fig 6 - Primary 6 National Examinations Results, 2010 - 2012**



Source: CCATS Database 2013

<sup>42</sup> Ministry of Education (2013): Education Sector Medium Term Strategy 2013-2017, p57

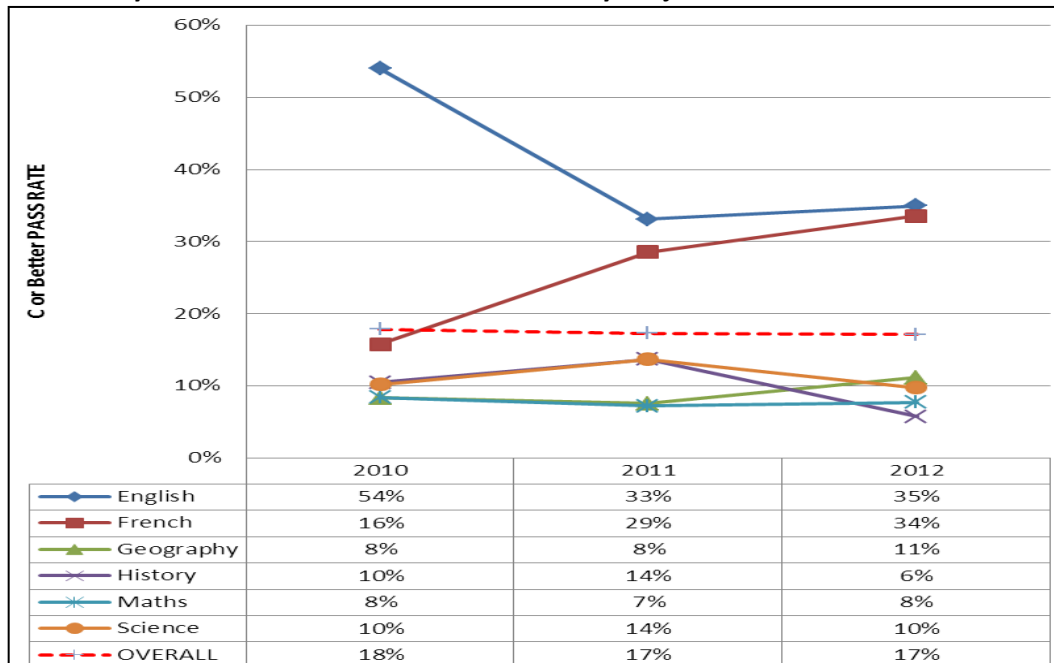
**Fig 7 - Secondary 5: International examinations result trends, 2005 - 2012**



Source: CCATS

In the secondary year three (S3) co-ordinated examinations, although the percentage of principal passes went up in 2012 for French and Geography, they were still below expected standards for all other subjects. Science and History have both decreased in 2012; Mathematics has remained the weakest for the past three years, in terms of the percentages of passes from A\* to C grades<sup>43</sup>.

**Fig 8 - Secondary 3 Coordinated Examination Results by subjects for 2010 to 2012**



Source: EMIS Database May 2013)

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

While the transmission and prevention of HIV-AIDS is covered in the Personal and Social Education curriculum as from Primary year five (P5), the findings of the SACMEQ 111 HIV and AIDS Knowledge Test (HAKT) administered to Primary year six (P6) students in 2010 show that only 50 of the 1500 students tested had reasonably sound knowledge of HIV-AIDS<sup>44</sup>. The very low HIV and AIDS Knowledge Test (HAKT) results achieved by the P6 students and the increase in HIV and AIDS cases and teenage pregnancy may suggest that (i) the students are not applying the knowledge gained into their lifestyles; (ii) the knowledge is not being effectively disseminated and/or (iii) the time allocated for PSE is not being used effectively.

An end of secondary school award certificate, in conformity with the SQA framework, is still to be established. This also requires the development of clear assessment standards. So far students only receive an attendance certificate.

#### 4.4 Way forward

- Comprehensive marketing strategies should be developed to promote teaching as a profession and attract appropriate candidates with the potential to become effective teachers. The Seychelles Institute for Teacher Education should also review all existing teacher education programmes with a view to enhancing the quality, levels and modalities of training.
- The Ministry of Education should develop a comprehensive teacher policy to address the needs, development, quality and retention of teachers for the whole education system.
- Mechanisms such as the Special Needs and Inclusive Education unit, CCATS, and units of Schools Division should be strengthened so that they may all provide support to schools in a planned and co-ordinated way. School management support and oversight of effective performance should also be done by enhancing the capacities of School Councils.
- Induction programmes and continuous professional development should be provided for all new staff joining the school system. School-based professional development activities should be responsive to the individual needs of teachers, thus aligning them with the new Teacher Appraisal Policy and Teacher Professional Competency Framework due to be implemented shortly.
- The Ministry of Education must ensure that all schools have the appropriate learning and teaching resources and infrastructure - including ICT as a tool for learning, in line with its established standards. It should consolidate partnerships with parents and the community

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<sup>44</sup> SACMEQ (2011) The SACMEQ III Project in Seychelles

to promote safe, secure, cost-effective and up-to-standard educational materials and infrastructure to satisfy the diversity of learners' needs.

- The Ministry should further facilitate the devolution of management responsibility for resources and programme outputs to the level of individual schools and other education institutions in line with the reform actions of 2009/ 2010, to improve service delivery.
- Adequate levels of financial and human resources should be provided to meet the scale and complexity of the changing education landscape within which the Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2013 - 2017 will be implemented. Capital and recurrent budget planning processes should be closely integrated for project type interventions for Programmes and Sub-Programmes.
- The National Assessment Framework should be fully implemented within the next five years, including the development of assessment standards. All essential learning areas of the national curriculum – including Personal and Social Education - should then be assessed in line with the standards.
- The causes of pupil underperformance in the different subject areas and at different key stages should be fully investigated, and where necessary adjustments should be made to the proposed actions of the MTS 2013-2017.

## **5 GOAL 3: LIFE SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS**

*Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.*

Young people, aged between 15 and 35 years, make up 33% of the Seychellois population<sup>45</sup>. Considering that they comprise the largest proportion of the population and the country's biggest asset, the importance of access to appropriate learning and life skills is nationally acknowledged. A wide range of life-skills development programmes are offered based on perceived needs over time. They are usually administered by public sector agencies and the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development, often in collaboration with non-government organizations and other community-based groups. These programmes are in addition to normal access to non-university tertiary education and training which caters for about 60% of all school leavers annually.

A number of post-secondary education and training institutions run apprenticeship schemes as an alternative pathway into technical and vocational education and training. With the setting up of the Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA) in 2005 and the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework (2009), the possibility of incorporating life-skills development programmes into the qualifications system is expanding.

The macro-economic reforms of 2008/2009 brought about a reduction in job opportunities and redundancies in the public sector in particular – the latter being the main employer at the time. The need for re-skilling gave rise to a number of training schemes that were then adapted to on-going demands.

The main targets under this goal focused on the development of an employment policy framework, increased flexibility and access to training, more diversified life skills programmes, improved training of staff, and greater co-ordination of programmes provided at different levels nationally.

### **5.1 Initiatives undertaken to achieve EFA Goal 2 since 2002**

#### ***National Employment Policy***

A new *National Employment Policy for Seychelles* was developed between 2012 and 2013 and launched in 2014. Its vision is 'to provide productive, non-discriminatory, exploitation-free, decent, safe, healthy work opportunities for citizens of working age'<sup>46</sup>. The policy framework

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<sup>45</sup> National Bureau of Statistics – Seychelles in Figures, 2013 Edition

<sup>46</sup> Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development (2014) National Employment Policy and Strategies.

aims to address the *Seychelles Decent Work Country Programme 2011-2015* priorities, which are:

- Review labour legislation and the dispute resolution framework.
- Promotion of quality employment and reduction of unemployment particularly for women and youth.
- Promotion of effective tripartism and Social Dialogue.

It also places strong emphasis on skills development, acquisition and retention, and advocates for the integration of employment objectives in all fiscal, monetary, trade and other sectoral policies. The Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development has the main responsibility for implementing the national employment policy.

### ***The National Qualifications Framework***

Unit standards establishing the desired education and training outcomes as specified in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF, 2009), enable the integration of skills-based training programmes into the qualifications map, so that students may receive credit-bearing qualifications in line with the Framework. In this way they may choose the qualifications they wish to achieve and plan career progressions. Training providers are strongly encouraged to get their courses validated by the SQA. Accreditation of prior learning is also possible.

### ***Apprenticeship Schemes***

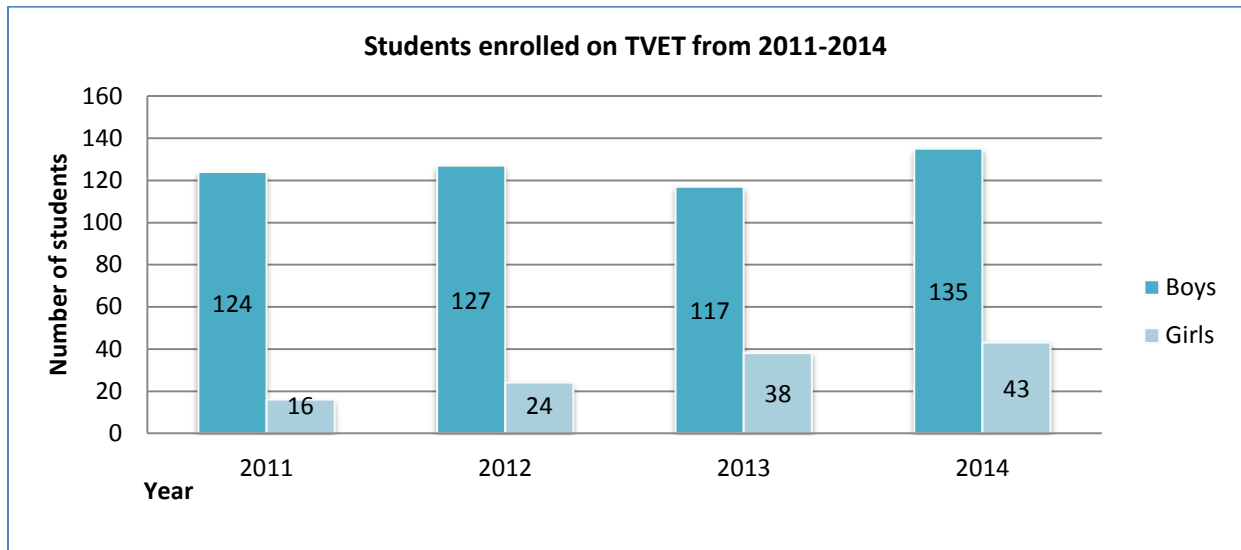
The Apprenticeship Scheme, which has been in operation since the 1990s, has undergone several changes in the past two decades. The leading roles and responsibilities have shifted from the Ministry of Employment to Ministry of Education, in collaboration with post secondary institutions and the private sector. Competency-based programmes at certificate level, in agriculture and horticulture, engineering, construction and visual arts are offered to school leavers who meet these programmes' entry criteria. Students spend about two thirds of the time in work practice and the rest at their respective training institutions. On completion of the one or two year programmes they have the option of joining other full time courses or seek employment. On average about 400 students join the Scheme each year.

### ***Technical and Vocational Education and Training***

Since 2011 – as part of the 2009/2010 reforms - all secondary schools offer a technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programme, as part of the national curriculum for schools. This is in line with the education policy of diversifying the secondary school curriculum and it is a first phase of the programme. Students can opt to join this skills development

pathway for the final two years of secondary schooling. The programme is conducted in partnership with post-secondary training institutions and workplaces that take students on attachment. The large majority of students choosing this option are boys, although the number of girls is gradually increasing – from a ratio of 1:7 in 2011 to 1:3 in 2014.

**Fig 9: TVET enrolment figures, 2011 - 2014**



Source: EMIS database, 2014

**Fig 10 - Proportion of Students in S4 and S5 following TVET Phase One Programme, 2012-2013**

	2012			2013		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
<b>Total S4</b>	643	683	1326	590	632	1222
<b>% S4TVET</b>	3.40%	13.20%	8.40%	5.40%	15.80%	10.80%
<b>Total S5</b>	641	599	1240	619	622	1241
<b>% S5TVET</b>	1.10%	10.00%	5.40%	3.60%	12.40%	8.00%

(Source: EMIS Database May 2013)

**Adult learning and skills development**

The Adult Learning and Distance Education Centre (ALDEC, an agency of the Ministry of Education) provides a range of life skills development programmes for out-of-school youths and adults, at minimum fees. Training modules are developed and delivered at the request of organizations or groups of individuals, in various skills areas. This programme has been on offer since 2004. In the past five years such short courses have included sewing, computer skills, office management, national and foreign languages, and over the past five years about 200 persons per year successfully completed the courses. (See details of the types of courses and enrolment figures in Part Four of statistical annex at Appendix 3).

A literacy programme in Kreol, English, French and numeracy is offered in all districts free of charge. A similar programme along with English at IGCSE is taught at the prison on Mahé, as an outreach programme.

The Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development runs two re-skilling development programmes under the Employment Training Schemes for young jobseekers who wish to acquire employable skills; started in 2005, the skills acquisition programme (SAP) and the skills development programme (SDP) target unemployed youth aged between 15 and 35 years. Courses within these programmes last between six and twelve months. The main aim is to help reduce unemployment among young people. Since 2005 about 1500 young people have accessed the courses and a total of 1,333 participants have completed training in the areas of construction, agriculture, engineering, hairdressing, craft work, hospitality, day-care and sales. The programme content also includes some aspects of entrepreneurship skills development.

A scheme for the promotion of small enterprises by young unemployed persons was launched in 2009 with the assistance of the 'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie' (OIF) and in partnership with the Francophonie intergovernmental organization: *Conference des Ministres de la Jeunesse et des Sports de la Francophonie* (CONFEJES). The programme is managed by the National Youth Council which advertises and runs the two-week training workshop on small business planning. By the end of the training participants are expected to develop a business plan that may be submitted to the CONFEJES for funding. The Council also oversees the selection of projects submitted by the students. Over 65 young persons have participated in the training and 27 projects have been selected by CONFEJES so far. After the training workshop of April 2014 twenty-one projects were submitted for consideration.

As part of the economic reform program of 2008/2009 the liaison unit for NGOs, LUNGOS, in partnership with government, co-ordinated a project to engage civil society in reform initiatives, including training programmes for more vulnerable groups. The 'Economic Reform Social Projects' involved one-year projects run by NGOs and funded by the European Union,



during the period 2009 and 2013. A total of 49 projects were implemented, all including various aspects of training for out-of-school youth, young mothers, disabled persons and prison inmates in areas such as masonry, sewing, craftwork, carpentry, sustainable farming, computer skills and book-keeping. A total of SR4.5 million (approx US\$350,000) was spent on the 49 projects which reached about 900 participants.

The Youth Health Centre, an agency of the Ministry of Health, in partnership with the National Youth Council, offers outreach programmes for young people at risk. Areas covered include reproductive health, substance abuse, relationships and healthy eating. The programmes are advertised at the centre, in schools and post secondary institutions through the student affairs officers. A peer education programme is also managed by the Youth Health Centre. Young people are trained to educate and support others in their peer groups who face health and social challenges in their daily lives. This programme was initiated in 1994 with the assistance of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and so far over 100 young people in schools and other institutions have received training as peer educators. Training of trainers to support and further train peer educators are organised occasionally, as needs arise.

Training for persons with disabilities is provided on an ad hoc basis by a number of non-government organizations, with the assistance of the Council for the Disabled. The Association of Parents of the Disabled, the Association of People with Hearing Impairment and the Love and Care Association are among the most active. A centre for deaf children has been established in one of the district primary schools; and classes in computing and English are offered by the Love and Care Association on demand.

## **5.2 EFA Goal 3 - Main Achievements since 2002**

The various skills development training programmes have contributed significantly to youth employment. They are backed by the Small Enterprise Promotion Agency (SEnPA) and the Small Business Financing Agency (SBFA) which facilitate contact, provide information and – in the case of SBFA – small loans for financing home-based enterprises.

The TVET and apprenticeship schemes are good examples of viable alternative pathways to skills development that may lead to further qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework. Already students are able to enroll on regular certificate courses at post secondary training institutions after successfully completing these programmes, as illustrated by the case study below.

*Sixteen-year-olds Derrick and Heron from Belonie and Anse Royale secondary schools respectively opted for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme in secondary year 4, and they have not looked back. Now in year 5, they spend two days in normal school and the rest of the time with the Maritime Training Centre. The programme also involves between six and eight months of work attachment which they did with the Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA).*

*Derrick and Heron hugely appreciated the time they spent with the Operations Section of the SNPA and are proud of the experience they gained and the skills they learnt. For them the highlights included assisting marine park rangers on patrol, helping with boat repairs, learning to tie knots and using this skill to set up mooring buoys. They also worked in the forest reserves where they helped with the maintenance of trails and resting kiosks, and the maintenance of boardwalks through marshes. But best of all they had the opportunity to take part in a trip to Recif Island – some 30 km from Mahe – with University of Seychelles students and a raft race organised by the Global Vision International team in Seychelles – especially as Derrick’s team won the race!*

*The two boys are currently doing an attachment with the Seychelles Coast Guard until the end of 2014 when they will complete the TEVT programme. They both plan to apply for places at the Maritime Training Centre next year. Derrick would like to then join the SNPA again while Heron hopes to become a dive instructor.*

There has been considerable expansion in the number of outreach programs targeting vulnerable groups and increases in the number of participants over the period under review. The scope of training has also broadened, now including drug abusers and prison inmates. The involvement of civil society groups in skills development initiatives is also noteworthy.

### 5.3 Challenges

The overall approach to the development and delivery of life-skills and other skills development programmes remains fragmented and lacking in co-ordination between ministries and agencies. Opportunities for streamlining the programmes on offer and aligning them with the NQF are therefore limited. This has the effect of curtailing the possible options for lifelong learning for young people.

Data collection as well as access to accurate and reliable data for the purposes of planning and decision-making in this domain is very problematic. Consequently ad hoc decisions are made about the types, levels and quality of programmes, and timely actions do not always happen, with the result that many students drop out before completion.

While the SQA standards for programme development are well established and the National Qualifications Framework has been in place for the past six years, training and support in the areas of course development and accreditation have not kept pace with the demand for training nationally. Therefore the scope for integrating life skills and life-long learning

programmes within the qualifications framework – including accreditation for prior learning - has not been fully pursued.

Implementation of the TVET programme is rather costly, especially in terms of monitoring and support. Sourcing for funding is also marred by the fact that many of the students who opt for the programme are often labeled as low achievers with unacceptable behaviour.

While there has been considerable diversification in the types and levels of life-skills programmes on offer over the period under review, the lack of co-ordination among the main providers has led to some duplication of efforts, disconnect with the SQA framework and wide variations in the quality of training.

#### **5.4 Way forward**

- Mechanisms to ensure a more co-ordinated approach among all partners – in both the public and private sectors - must be put in place as a matter of priority, so that young people and adults may optimize the available opportunities for developing life skills, and view learning as a life-long endeavour.
- In line with the new employment policy, data on skills development programmes should form part of the labour market information system, which is one of the main objectives of the policy. Thus appropriate data from partner ministries and agencies will feed into this main system.
- As much as possible skills development programmes should take SQA standards and the NQF into account, and training providers should be encouraged to seek the SQA's assistance in the process of programme development.
- Positive publicity on the TVET programme should be enhanced, presenting it as an alternative pathway to learning at secondary level. The programme should be fully developed to offer a wider range of vocational options in order to attract more students of higher academic abilities, especially girls.
- Regular destination surveys should be conducted to establish whether the students enrolled on the TVET Programme have remained in their chosen career paths, and to obtain crucial data to improve the programme.
- A comprehensive survey of out-of-school youths and their aspirations should be carried out to obtain baseline information for the co-ordinated planning of future training and other interventions that better respond to their needs.

## **6 GOAL 4: ADULT LITERACY AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

*Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for adults.*

Seychelles first community based adult literacy programme was launched in 1971 on the premise that all citizens should acquire basic literacy skills. At the time the adult literacy rate was about 61.1%. The programme was structured to be delivered as close as possible to the prospective learners, and the target group was between 15 and 69+. Language and numeracy skills were delivered in Kreol, and once these skills were acquired basic skills in English and French were introduced. By 1978 the National Adult Literacy Programme was offered in all districts free of charge, and managed by a centre for adult learning. During the period under review the literacy rate has further improved, from 91% in 2000 to 94% in 2010. According to the national census report of 2010<sup>47</sup> the literacy rate stood at 95% for women and 94% for men.

The Adult Learning and Distance Education Centre (ALDEC) continues to offer district-based adult literacy programmes free of charge. Presently the programme starts with literacy in Kreol and then moves to English and French, and basic numeracy. Courses are offered at three progressive levels, and each level may last one to two years. In addition, ALDEC offers general education courses that enable adults and young people to upgrade their academic levels so that they may take advantage of further education and training. Skills-based learning through short courses are developed and run on demand, and distance education courses in collaboration with overseas institutions are also offered.

The main targets set under this goal focused on evaluating and updating the literacy programmes; seeking media engagement in literacy promotion; enhancing on-going staff professional development; setting up a resource centre for adult and continuing education including ICT facilities for students, and promoting life-long learning through distance and open learning.

### **6.1 Initiatives undertaken to achieve EFA Goal 4 since 2002**

#### ***Evaluation of adult literacy***

A comprehensive survey of adult learning was initiated in 2008 – Seychelles Integrated Adult Learning Survey (SIALS) – with a view to establishing a baseline for assessing adult literacy and adult learning in the country. The survey was funded by UNESCO and conducted with the

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<sup>47</sup> Seychelles National Bureau of Statistics, 2010: Population and Housing Census – 2010 Report.

assistance of the National Statistics Bureau. Data collection was completed in 2009 and additional funding is still being sought for the analysis and reporting phases. Revisions of the literacy programmes are to undertaken once this is done.

### ***Promotion of Literacy***

Within the context of UNESCO's Literacy Decade (2003-2012) under the theme "Literacy as Freedom", a national action plan for literacy in Seychelles was developed and launched in April 2003 during EFA Week. The targets encompassed policy and planning, advocacy, capacity building, research and partnerships, and monitoring and evaluation.

ALDEC organises an Adult Literacy Week annually, and since 2010 this is done from 8 September to coincide with the International Literacy Day. Various events under different themes are organised during the week to promote literacy and encourage people to join literacy classes. Activities have included the launching of an academic upgrading programme run jointly with the Centre for Skills Development (Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs), obtaining the commitment of members of the National Assembly to support literacy centres in their districts, encouraging existing participants to invite a friend to their classes and inviting all government ministries to nominate at least one staff member for literacy classes. These activities received publicity nationally through the broadcast and print media.

Adult Literacy Week is also the time when awards and certificates are presented to adult literacy participants who have completed relevant levels of the programme. This provides an opportunity for the learners to give testimonies of their achievements in a bid to motivate others. Many of the week's activities are televised and also reported through other media.

During EFA week in 2005 the head of state pledged 'to take concrete action during the course of the decade to ensure that all Seychellois youths and adults continue to benefit from quality basic education and lifelong educational opportunities'. Among the activities of that year, facilities for literacy classes were made available on Praslin and La Digue islands, the other two main population centres of Seychelles. The mobile book box service was resumed on Silhouette Island which at the time had a small population of about 200 permanent residents and no library service.

A TV documentary entitled 'Vennsizan Alfabetizasyon dan Sesel' (26 years of Adult Literacy in Seychelles) was produced in 2007 to commemorate the occasion. The film was screened on national television during the EFA week of that year and it highlighted the importance of literacy for personal development as well as improved job prospects.

### ***On-going Professional Development of Teachers***

About thirty staff deliver the adult literacy programme and they are qualified practicing teachers from schools. ALDEC provides an induction package in adult pedagogy for newly recruited teachers and occasionally offers training in adult learning and teaching for the whole group. A series of workshops were organised between 2005 and 2007 to train teachers on the techniques of teaching adults and the basics of course review. Several teachers were then involved in programme development for the four areas – Kreol, English, French and numeracy.

### ***Distance and Open Learning***

ALDEC has been offering distance and open learning programmes since 2003 when a Distance Education unit was established. Between 2005 and 2008 a number of projects were implemented in the use of ICT as a tool for distance learning. Training for IT technicians and other support persons was done in 2005 and 2006. IT facilities were made available by the Ministry of Education for training purposes but ALDEC was not in a position then to set up its own resource centre.

Currently most distance and open learning programmes are offered by UNISA, through ALDEC as a licensee. This arrangement is in place since 2008 when the two institutions signed an MOU. In total (since 2003) about twenty students have so far successfully completed award bearing distance courses, mostly at diploma and degree levels.

## **6.2 EFA Goal 4 - Main Achievements since 2002**

The increase in literacy rates over the period under review has surpassed the target and it indicates steady progress towards achieving a hundred percent literacy. The literacy programme has also remained consistent in its achievements so far: an average of 120 participants per year successfully completed the programme over the past ten years. The large majority of participants are women – over 80% - and they also tend to remain on the programme for longer.

Outreach programmes in literacy have been maintained on the other two main islands, although the number of participants has not increased significantly since it started in 2005.

The National Qualifications Framework makes articulation between the literacy programme and other further education programmes possible. In principle participants who successfully complete the literacy programme may join ALDEC's general education courses which would

enable them to attain the secondary school leaving certificate, and progress to further education.

Opportunities for accessing distance and open learning programmes have increased over the past ten years and more young people and adults are now considering this option for continuing education and life-long learning. Presently 21 students are using the facilities offered by ALDEC to study for award bearing courses by distance.

### **6.3 Challenges**

Completion of the SIALS evaluation remains outstanding. The data collected in 2008 has to be processed and analysed as soon as possible to ensure that policy and programme changes are evidence-based. The study should also help to establish the basis for developing competency standards for literacy for adult learners.

Greater commitment to the promotion of adult literacy through the media, as part of the national sustainable development process, is necessary if all vulnerable groups are to be reached. Media engagement with ALDEC tends to be sporadic and often limited to a few established promotional activities.

Limited capacity within ALDEC has sometimes curtailed the extent to which it can engage with its targets groups. Out-of-school youths are proving to be particularly hard to reach, and efforts have been limited by the perception that literacy programmes are for older people who missed out on general education in their time.

The quality of literacy programmes and their delivery are not always adapted to learners' needs. The principles of and methodology for adult learning are not always applied and this may be one of the reasons for the rather high drop-out rate among learners. Another contributing factor may be the limited facilities available in some of the teaching centres.

Systematic review of learning programmes to bring them in line with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework is necessary, in order that appropriate certification levels may be established. So far the literacy programmes have not been accredited by the SQA and this restricts the scope of learners' capacities to access further education and training.

The establishment of an adequately equipped resource centre for adult learning is still to be completed. Present library facilities are very limited and access to ICT by students on-site is very limited.

## 6.4 Way forward

- The Seychelles Integrated Adult Learning Survey of 2008 should be complete as a matter of urgency to ensure that programmes are more responsive to learners' needs.
- A dedicated media campaign plan for literacy should be developed, targeting out-of-school youth in particular, as part of ALDEC's new strategic plan for the next five years.
- In the light of the results of the 2008 survey and other available data, all literacy learning programmes should be reviewed to better respond to the needs of adult learners. Programmes should be developed using the competency based approach, as recommended by the SQA.
- All literacy programmes should be articulated with the general education standards, and they should be validated in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework.
- Continue to engage with other partners in the community, including non-government organisations and businesses, to promote literacy as a factor in long term sustainable development.
- Support for learners should be enhanced through the provision of adequate learning facilities, access to appropriate learning resources, including ICT, for all learners. This could be done in collaboration with other partners such as the Centre for Curriculum, Assessment and Teacher Support of the Ministry of Education, Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education and University of Seychelles.
- In order to consolidate the gains made in this area so far and expand access, adult education programmes should be integrated into national education reform programmes and other national education strategies. This would strengthen the policy of lifelong learning nationally. It is particularly important to provide opportunities and strategies for continuing education for emergent literate adults and youths, to help them practise and develop their newly acquired skills.



## 7 GOAL 5: GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

*Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, by ensuring full and equal access to and achievement for both genders at primary and secondary levels of education.*

Gender equality in terms of access to primary and secondary education has been achieved since the early 1980s. From 1984 education policy was guided by the principles of 'Education for All, Education Life and Education for Personal and National Development'. A comprehensive system of education was established, with a greater focus on ensuring access and equal opportunities for all children of school age. A policy review in 2000 shifted emphasis to greater inclusion, backed by the guiding principles of equity, quality, and accountability, education for empowerment, education for productivity, education for social cohesion and education for global participation<sup>48</sup>.

The principle of equity encapsulates the key concepts of:

- Equality of access to compulsory education
- Equitable sharing of resources
- Equal opportunity in terms of creating conditions for optimum achievement according to ability and career aspirations
- Ensuring that the context, content and medium of education are equally favourable to boys and girls
- Catering for special needs and working towards greater inclusion of the learning disabled.

Further to the government's commitment to providing broad based education for all children aged 3+ to 16+, the Ministry of Education developed a new '*Plan of Action for Gender Equality in Education, 2002 – 2015*', in tandem with its EFA Strategic Plan 2002- 2015, in order to ensure the effective implementation of Goal 5. The following targets were set:

- The Ministry of Education to become a model of good practice in mainstreaming gender;
- Acquire adequate funds and resources to sustain gender development work and implement the gender action plan;
- Strengthen the capacity of gender trainers to implement the gender action plan;
- Conduct gender research in key areas where disparities exist;

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<sup>48</sup> Education for a Learning Society, 2000

- Create gender inclusive teaching/learning environments in primary and secondary schools which enhance academic success for both genders;
- Create school environments where both genders feel safe and where they are respected and valued;
- Ensure that the new national curriculum addresses gender equity principles which meet the needs of both girls and boys;
- Sensitise parents and the general public on gender disparities in education; and
- Establish productive links with partners/agencies working with women/children.

## 7.1 Initiatives undertaken to achieve EFA Goal 5 since 2002

### *Gender Mainstreaming in Education*

Awareness of gender equality has grown steadily over the review period and the education system has integrated gender into almost all of its practices. The Ministry of Education has actively promoted gender awareness through the training of a large number of teachers and gender trainers; the development of training manuals and frameworks for gender analysis; gender desegregation of all education data; the production of gender friendly curriculum materials, and it has helped schools to integrate gender in their development plans.

Government and the Ministry of Education have also supported and participated in gender awareness training and sensitization programmes conducted by local and overseas agencies for large groups of participants from the public and private sectors. The main ones were:

- Gender mainstreaming and good governance in 2005;
- Gender analysis and planning, a series of workshops in 2006;
- Gender-sensitive indicators in 2007;
- Strategic gender sensitive communications planning in 2008;
- Law enforcement and the rights of women, a series of lectures throughout 2008-2009;
- Gender Based Violence and National Strategy on Domestic Violence in 2007 and 2008;
- Gender and the rising cost of living in 2009.

A Gender in Education Committee was established in 1998 in response to the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995. One of its main aims was to ensure the mainstreaming of gender in all aspects of education. This committee evolved into the Ministry of Education's Gender Action

Team in 2007 to oversee the implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality in Education. The Action Plan was fully aligned with the EFA Goal 5.

### **Gender Research**

In collaboration with international organisations including the Commonwealth Secretariat and UNESCO, a few gender research projects were carried out in Seychelles schools, which provided baseline information on gender awareness, attitudes and gender socialisation.

In 2006 Seychelles participated in a Commonwealth Secretariat funded research project intending to explore the extent of gender bias in secondary school and classroom contexts, in six different Commonwealth countries. The findings, with regard to Seychelles, indicated that many school processes and procedures, teacher attitudes and expectations were strongly gender biased, often working against a large number of boys<sup>49</sup>. They also revealed parents' strongly stereotyped attitudes towards career choices for girls and boys: for instance 80% of parents would not approve of their girls choosing construction or engineering as a career, while 65% parents would not be happy with their boys opting for nursing and primary school teaching.<sup>50</sup>

As a follow-up, two action research projects aiming to create more gender-friendly schools were launched in 2008 in two pilot secondary schools on Mahe<sup>51</sup>. The project lasted a couple of years and produced some positive results. An action guide<sup>52</sup> based on lessons learnt was published by the Commonwealth Secretariat and served as a tool to help teachers and school leaders move towards more gender friendly and gender inclusive institutions. The intention was to replicate the project in other schools, subject to funding.

The project was extended to all schools in 2010 with funding assistance from UNESCO<sup>53</sup>. The main strategy was to use existing mechanisms and structures to evaluate the extent of gender awareness and to create gender-friendly schools that will enable both girls and boys to develop to their full potential. The School Improvement Programme was the main channel through which schools attempted to address gender issues. Following training of all school management teams in a series of eight workshops, almost all primary and secondary schools analysed gender issues in their self evaluation reports and 53% included gender interventions in their school development plans for 2012-2014, as shown in Table 3 below. Management teams and teachers used the gender action guide: *The Gender Responsive School: an action guide*, produced in the 2009 Commonwealth project as the main analysis tool.

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<sup>49</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat (2006) Exploring the Bias: Gender and stereotyping in secondary schools.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*

<sup>51</sup> Mont Fleuri and Anse Boileau secondary schools

<sup>52</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat (2009) *The Gender Responsive School: an action guide*.

<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Education (2012) Gender Evaluation Report for UNESCO Project 2010 – 2011.

**Table 8: inclusion of gender in schools’ self evaluation, 2011 – 2012**

Total number of public schools	Schools that have submitted gender action plans for 2012	Schools that have included areas for gender development for 2012	Schools that did not self evaluate gender in 2011
Primary schools - 24	5	8	2
Secondary schools - 10	3	2	2

*Source: Gender Evaluation Report for UNESCO Project 2010 – 2011*

Another research project in 2009 examined issues of gender socialization in the home and its impact on boys’ achievements in school<sup>54</sup>. It was commissioned by the Social Development Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs and funded by the African Development Bank. The study further confirmed the prevalence of strongly stereotyped roles and expectations associated with men and women in the home which get transferred to schools and become part of the hidden curriculum.

### **Networking and Training**

Participation of Ministry of Education staff in the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) regional policy research projects has further contributed to local capacity building in research. Two main research projects on the quality of primary education in Seychelles took place in 2000-2002 and 2007<sup>55</sup>, and the findings point to consistent under-performance by boys, especially in literacy and numeracy.

As a result of collaboration between the Ministry of Education and local and regional organizations (in particular the Seychelles Association of Women Professionals (SAWOP) and the Forum for African Women Educationalists – FAWE) a significant number of teachers and school leaders have participated in many training events focusing on gender responsive schools and gender mainstreaming. Recent schools’ development plans and co-curricular activities provide some indication of the impact of such capacity building on at least some schools<sup>56</sup>.

One school reported on a student club being set up after its deputy head attended a FAWE gender responsive school workshop in 2010 and was introduced to the ‘Tuseme model’. The

<sup>54</sup> African Development Bank (2009) Seychelles – Gender Socialisation in the Home: its impact on boys’ achievement in primary and secondary schools.

<sup>55</sup> SACMEQ (2011) The SACMEQ III Project in Seychelles

<sup>56</sup> Ministry of Education (2012) Gender Evaluation Report for UNESCO Project 2010-2011

club activities aimed at getting girls and boys to speak out about problems affecting them and to seek solutions for themselves through drama and music.

*'Tuseme' a Kiswahili term meaning 'Let us speak out' is a youth empowerment programme initiated by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in 1996. It uses theatre-for-development techniques to identify and address gender-based concerns that may hinder the social and academic development of girls and boys. Through drama, song and creative arts, girls and boys learn how to speak out, develop negotiating skills, decision-making and leadership skills. They learn to develop action plans to address the problems identified, with the support of peers, teachers, parents and community members.*

*After attending the FAWE gender responsive school workshop in Nairobi in 2010, the deputy head teacher and other management staff of Pointe Larue Secondary School launched a series of workshops to introduce the concept of the Tuseme model to teachers, students, parents and the wider community. They were fully supported in this venture by the senior management of the Ministry of Education and FAWE. Over half of the student population of the school participated in the workshops. A further 60 students were trained in how to set up the model, and 15 teachers and three students undertook the training of trainers programme.*

*The Pointe Larue Tuseme club was launched in March 2011 in the presence of the Minister for Education and members of the senior management of the Ministry, the FAWE Network chairperson and Executive Board members, members of the SAWOP-FAWE group and many parents and community members. The students explained how they came to realize, as a result of the training, that a number of factors were hindering their academic and social development and they were determined to commit themselves to carry out research, discussions, collect data, draw up and implement action plans and find solutions to the problems facing them. They believed they could go far with the support of the whole school community. For its part the Ministry of Education pledged its full support for the Tuseme club and encouraged other secondary schools to also adopt the model. Parents were very enthusiastic about the programme and wanted to know more about issues of gender and gender equity in education.*

### **Promoting Gender Equity**

The Inspectorate Unit's evaluation framework: *'Looking at our Schools – effective self-evaluation through collaborative partnerships'* (2010) and *'External Quality Assessment Manual'* (2010) have ensured the mainstreaming of gender in all performance indicators in the school evaluation process. Schools use the standards set therein to do their own self evaluation prior to the external school evaluation exercise.

The newly revised National Curriculum Framework (2013) and National Assessment Framework (2013) clearly emphasise gender balance and gender equity, promoting the achievements of both girls and boys and building learning environments where they all feel safe and valued. The

development and revision of all school curricula are guided by these policy frameworks which are also linked to the Inspectorate Unit's evaluation framework.

The Ministry of Education is represented on the National Gender Management Team, a national body that aims to mainstream gender in all aspects of national development. It also participates actively in the gender based activities of regional and international organizations such as COMESA, SADC and OIF.

## 7.2 EFA Goal 5 - Main Achievements since 2002

The Ministry of Education has played a very active role in mainstreaming gender in education. Gender awareness within the sector, and in schools in particular, has steadily increased over the past decade. All school leaders have undergone training in gender awareness and the majority of schools are addressing gender issues in their development plans as an area of priority (as indicated in Table 8 above). Participation in many international forums, networking among schools and sharing of research findings have all helped to maintain the momentum at sector and school levels.

In relative terms a considerable number of gender research projects have been carried out and the findings have contributed to policy changes and further actions targeting greater gender awareness at school level. A number of local researchers, including headteachers<sup>57</sup>, have undertaken research projects in schools, thus building capacity over time. As a consequence of such research the practice of streaming students on the basis of ability, for instance, has been brought into question and the related issue of boys' underperformance has been identified as one that needs concerted action at different levels in the education system<sup>58</sup>.

The school-based action research projects of 2008 and 2010 (Mont Fleuri and Anse Boileau secondary schools) provided examples of good practice for Seychelles schools which have been documented and can be replicated. Action research activities were planned and carried out at department and classroom levels to ensure changes on the ground, where it most mattered. A small pool of trainers also developed over that period, with the potential to expand and help guide the implementation of future action plans.

The heightened gender awareness within the education sector has to some extent challenged gender stereotyping at post-secondary level where selection of students for technical and

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<sup>57</sup> MC Albert (2005) Underperformance of Boys in Seychelles Secondary Schools. (Unpublished MA dissertation), University of Lincoln, UK.

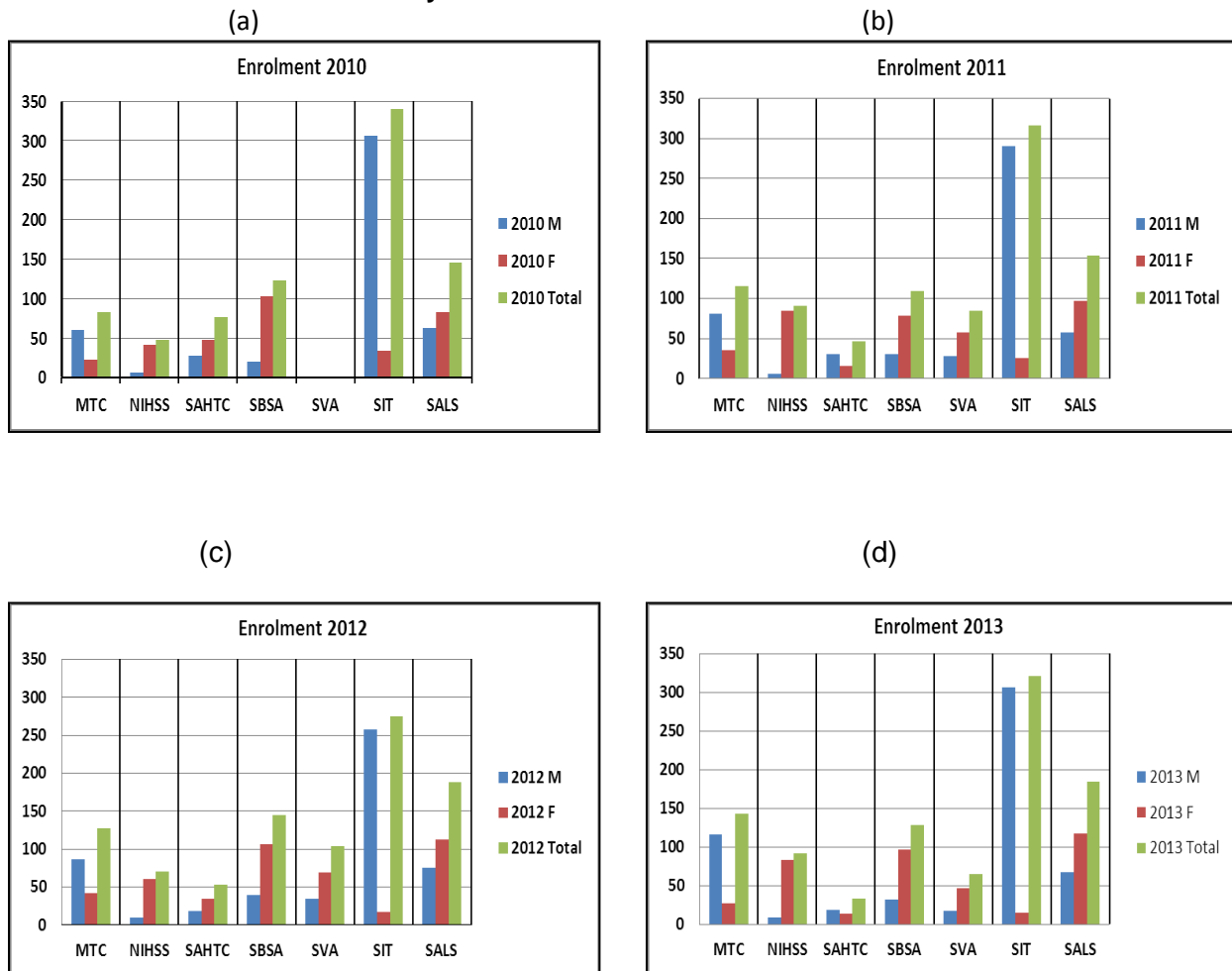
MT Elizabeth (2005) Underperformance of Boys in English – a case of Seychelles primary schools. (Unpublished dissertation), University of Lincoln, UK.

<sup>58</sup> R Jolicoeur (2008) An Examination of the Impact of de-streaming in P5 in Seychelles Schools. (Unpublished MA dissertation), University of Warwick, UK.

SACMEQ (2011) The SACMEQ III Project in Seychelles

vocational courses was strongly influenced by traditional career pathways along gender lines. Careers guidance education in secondary schools taught by teachers who had been trained in gender responsiveness encouraged students to shift from the conventional perceptions of career choices and further training. Figure 3 below illustrates the small shifts that have occurred over the past four years:

**Figure 11 (a) – (d): Series of graphs showing students enrolment by gender and year level for the Post-Secondary Institutions from 2010 to 2013**



[MTC: Maritime Training Centre; NIHSS: National Institute of Health and Social Studies; SAHTC: Seychelles Agricultural and Horticultural Training Centre; SBSA: School of Business Studies and Accounting; SVA: School of Visual Arts; SIT: Seychelles Institute of Technology; SALS: School of Advanced Level Studies]

Data is now disaggregated at all levels in the education management information system of the Ministry of Education and also at school level.

### 7.3 Challenges

The present lack of a dedicated focal point for gender in the Ministry of Education mitigates the results of the many efforts to mainstream gender in schools. While awareness is growing, this unco-ordinated approach weakens capacity to maintain the momentum especially in continued training, and often individual actors get overtaken by other priorities. Opportunities for on-going gender-based project development and funding are also lost.

A documentation centre for all gender related research projects and findings is still to be established. School leaders and teachers have no ready access to such information and this hinders the implementation of new projects and the replication of action research activities already undertaken in Seychelles. Gender based and disaggregated data remains dispersed across departments and institutions.

The common belief that gender inequality is not a significant issue in Seychelles persists; facilitative legislation for gender equality, the widespread participation of women in public and social life and national efforts to further promote equal opportunities are overshadowed by deeply entrenched perceptions of traditional gender-based roles for women and men. These are all the more difficult to shift as they are largely unconscious and often unintentional<sup>59</sup>.

In spite of training of school personnel the overwhelming representation of women in education suggests some degree of bias towards girls, to the detriment of boys' performance throughout their schooling. This has been documented in the two SACMEQ studies on primary school performance, which is confirmed by national examination results at secondary level as well.

Access to adequate funding and resources to sustain gender development work in education and to implement gender action plans remains problematic. External project funding is sporadic and tends to be led by the funding partners. Schools do not have easy access to consistent sources of funding and externally funded projects usually operate at sector level.

## 7.4 Way forward

- A gender unit in the Ministry of Education to promote and co-ordinate further research, guide the development of policies, identify potential sources of funding and support, monitor and evaluate gender related projects should be re-established. It should also oversee the functioning of a gender resource centre which should be accessible to all partners, especially schools.
- Existing capacities should be strengthened by re-mobilising trained gender trainers, broadening the scope of training programmes and recruiting new trainers. The

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<sup>59</sup> Ministry of Social Development and Culture (2011) Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1993-2009).



development of a new gender action plan for schools, taking into account boys' under-performance in schools and sustainable development goals should also be undertaken.

- Gender should be mainstreamed in all pre- and in-service teacher training programmes.
- Advocacy for gender awareness and mainstreaming should be enhanced so that gender becomes a priority in all education sectors and nationally. This could be done through the parent-teachers associations, national media, national forums for gender, civil society organisations, parliamentarians; and show-case examples of good practice.
- Collaboration with other organisations to implement gender related policies and programmes nationally should be reinforced, in particular with the Gender Secretariat of the Department of Social Affairs.
- The PSE curriculum at primary and secondary levels should adequately address issues related to gender relations, sexual violence, sexual harassment, HIV-AIDS, health and safety.
- Training sessions for peer counsellors in areas such as relationship skills and the management of conflict should be organised on a regular basis.
- School policies should provide clear guidelines for dealing with all forms of violence.
- The capacities of the national co-ordinating body, the National Gender Management Team, should be strengthened so that it can more effectively ensure gender mainstreaming nationally.

## 8 GOAL 6: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

*Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.*

The enhancement of education quality remains the major goal of the Seychelles education system, as specified in the Ministry of Education's policy *Education for a Learning Society* (2000). The principle of quality encapsulates the following key concepts:

- institutionally-based planning for development and improvement
- integrating mechanisms for monitoring and self-evaluation
- complementarity of external and internal evaluation / quality assurance
- creating conditions for educational institutions to become 'learning organisations'
- improving educational institutions through staff development / teacher quality
- integration of evolving technologies
- aiming for service excellence / quality of curriculum and resources
- facilitating the participation of learners, teachers, parents and other partners, including industry.<sup>60</sup>

In the light of the above, a set of related targets were developed for the achievement of Goal 6, focusing on quality improvement at early childhood, primary and secondary levels. They are:

### *Early Childhood Education*

- (1) By 2006 a data archive will have been set up for the study Early Childhood Education
- (2) By 2010 baseline information on attainment at various stages of early childhood will be available
- (3) By 2015 an evaluation of the quality of early childhood education will be carried out.

### *Primary education*

- (1) By 2006 baseline information to measure the quality of basic education will be established
- (2) By 2010 a structure to monitor the quality of basic education will be set up
- (3) By 2015 an evaluation to measure the quality of educational provisions and outcomes will be carried out.

### *Secondary education*

- (1) By 2006 the level of educational achievement at the end of the third year of secondary education will be set
- (2) By 2010 the broad educational achievements of students at the end of the third year of secondary education will be monitored
- (3) By 2015 an evaluation to measure the quality of educational provisions and achievement.

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<sup>60</sup> Ministry of Education (2000) *Education for a Learning Society*

## 8.1 Initiatives undertaken to achieve EFA Goal 6 since 2002

### *A data archive for Early Childhood Education*

A data archive on child development was started in 1985 through a joint project involving the ministries of Health and Education, Rochester University (New York, USA) and the University of Ulster (Ireland). The main aim of the ‘Seychelles Child Development Study’ (SCDS) is to monitor the effects of low-level mercury exposure (as a result of long-term fish consumption by pregnant mothers and children) on infants and young children. The longitudinal study<sup>61</sup> – still on-going - focuses on neuro-developmental disorders in particular, but the data archive that has built up over time contains information on a range of developmental variables such as cognitive abilities, nutrition, school-based behaviour, language, memory, motor, perceptual-motor and behaviour functions for two cohorts of over 700 children each. The project also involved capacity building for a considerable number of Seychellois health and education professionals. As an associated project of the SCDS, a children’s diagnostic centre was set up in one of the capital’s health centres for the purpose of providing early intervention services.

It has been proposed by the main partners involved that the data archive can function as the main national resource for informing early childhood development initiatives, but so far the mechanisms are not in place to fully enable this move. The setting up of an Institute for Early Childhood Development (IECD) in 2013 is expected to provide a focal point for ECCE nationally.

### *Availability of Baseline Information*

Baseline information on attainment in literacy in Kreol (the mother language of the large majority of children) was established in 2009, and further studies using locally developed tests and ability estimates calculated on the basis of the Rasch Model, were carried out in 2010 and 2012. The Centre for Curriculum, Assessment and Teacher Support (CCATS) of the Ministry of Education is gradually building up a database on student attainment for the early childhood stage, which should, among other things, inform the current revision of the Crèche curriculum.

In addition to the baseline information on Kreol literacy, the Ministry’s Education Management Information System (EMIS) maintains a database on physical and recreational facilities, teaching and learning resources, staffing and student /teacher ratios. As the IECD becomes established as the focal point for ECCE all such data will be shared between the institutions.

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<sup>61</sup> PW Davidson, GJ Myers, C Cox et al (1998): *Effects of prenatal and postnatal methylmercury exposure from fish consumption on neurodevelopment: outcomes at 66 months of age in the Seychelles Child Development Study.*

### ***Primary education – Baseline information and monitoring mechanisms***

Summative assessments in Kreol, English, French, mathematics, science and social sciences are carried out annually at national level, at the end of the sixth and final year of primary school. This process has been in place since the 1970s and the main purpose of the end-of-primary evaluation is to measure the quality of basic education and identify areas for improvement. Annual reports on performance by school are produced and shared with all state schools.

Over the past six years key stage assessments have also been institutionalized at the end of primary year 2 (in mathematics, English, and Kreol) and primary year 4 (mathematics, English, Kreol and science). The assessment results are sent to schools and the data is presented to various stakeholders including school and parent representatives.

Seychelles is also a member of SACMEQ and it has participated in their regular evaluation studies between 2005 and 2011. The findings are shared with education decision makers, school leaders and other stakeholders nationally and regionally.

Along with the policy planning units of the Ministry of Education, the Centre for Curriculum, Assessment and Teacher Support (CCATS), the Seychelles Institute for Teacher Education and schools are the principal users of the data obtained from these various measures of education quality. Generally they inform the development of school curricula, teacher training, and teaching and learning.

Data is also maintained by EMIS on other aspects of education, including physical facilities – classrooms, furniture, recreational facilities, specialist rooms – and learning and teaching resources, including textbooks, computer and internet facilities, and library access.

### ***Secondary education – establishing levels of educational achievements and monitoring***

Nationally co-ordinated examinations are carried out annually in five of the nine essential learning areas of the National curriculum, at the end of secondary year three (S3 - end of key stage 4) mainly for diagnostic purposes. The results are also used in the orientation of students into the final stage of secondary schooling, where more differentiated programmes are available. This process has been in place for the past three decades and a bank of students' performance data is available. Annual reports on the examination results were produced up until 2008 and will resume in 2014. Summaries of results are shared with all state schools. As for the end-of-primary national assessment, the data collected through the S3 co-ordinated examinations generally inform future curriculum development, teacher training and learning and teaching.

Evaluation of learning at the end of secondary year five (S5) takes different forms: students may sit for the Cambridge Assessment IGCSE examinations in one or more subjects, or the end of S5 local examinations, based on a selection process. Those who opt for the TVET program at secondary year four (S4) are evaluated at the end of S5 in those subject areas covered in that program. All students receive a national school leaving certificate of attendance at the end of S5.

## **8.2 EFA Goal 6 - Main Achievements since 2002**

There is a long established national assessment mechanism that can be built on to provide more accurate measurements of education quality at all key stages. The recently produced policy document *National Assessment Framework, 2013* has formalized the assessment process and it gives guidance on how the process is to be implemented and optimized. The Examination Unit is exploring ways of adapting and enhancing the existing assessment mechanisms in the light of the policy framework.

A substantial databank of student assessment results at three key stages, and maintained over more than three decades, provides the Ministry of Education with adequate information to establish clearer baseline performance standards. Such information was used in setting overall standards for essential learning areas in the newly revised National Curriculum Framework (2013).

The introduction and maintenance of records of achievement (ROA) for each student from secondary year 3 onwards in 2009 presents a complementary set of evidence of student' broader achievements. These cumulative records are maintained by students as evidence of their progress and they move with them up the system.

An inclusive education policy is being finalized and an implementation plan is being developed for 2014. It calls for a greater focus on the holistic development of the person and renewed emphasis on the special needs of all learners throughout the school system.

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNESCO has sensitized all education stakeholders on the use of the General Education Quality Analysis Framework (GEQAF). This analysis tool, developed by UNESCO to assist general education systems in analyzing and diagnosing challenges to education quality, was used in the development of the education sector Medium Term Strategy 2013-2017.

### 8.3 Challenges

Limited capacity to fully exploit the available data on student achievements (both in terms of human power and know-how) has hindered progress in systematically measuring educational development and enhancing performance. In particular school management teams are often unable to make full use of performance data in their school improvement planning process<sup>62</sup>.

Evidence of underperformance by students at the end of primary and secondary schooling persists, in spite of a number of reform initiatives over the past two decades that have attempted to enhance the capacities of school leaders and teachers, and improve learning and teaching resources. Disparities between the performance of girls and boys are also significant, with girls outperforming boys in all subjects throughout the school system. Research into the causes of such underperformance and gender-based performance gaps has been limited by capacity and resources.

The over-reliance on closed pen-and-paper tests as the main means of assessment has given rise to an examination culture that does not do justice to the capacities of students within a comprehensive education system. Almost half of the subject areas of the national curriculum – technology and enterprise, personal, social and citizenship education, religious education, health and physical education – are not included in the present national assessment process, resulting in the relegation of these subject areas to a lower level of importance at school level. The languages of instruction – Kreol and English – are factors that also need further research.

While the National Curriculum Framework specifies essential competencies to be achieved by all students by the end of secondary schooling, assessment mechanisms at school level do not always take them into account. It is therefore difficult to reliably ascertain the achievement of these competencies.

In spite of the many initiatives to improve education quality so far, evidence presented under the other goals suggests that three student groups are not being reached effectively: students experiencing learning difficulties, those with behaviour problems and students with disabilities. As noted under Goal 5, the first two groups include a majority of boys<sup>63</sup>.

Up until 2013 there was no provision for special needs education in secondary schools. Teachers are expected to cope with a wide range of student abilities in a context of limited

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<sup>62</sup> MT Purvis (2007) *ibid*

<sup>63</sup> Also in the African Development Bank (2009) report: *Seychelles – Gender Socialisation in the Home: its impact on boys' achievement in primary and secondary schools*.

support and a lack of differentiated teaching and learning capacities and resources. Existing data indicates a very wide range of ability and performance<sup>64</sup>.

## 8.4 Way forward

- As well as developing locally adapted standards, Seychelles should consider using UNESCO's Holistic Child Development Index (HCDI) once it is fully developed, as a monitoring and bench-marking instrument that can be used to report progress by 2015 and beyond. We could also use the instrument to help with making final decisions on the appropriateness of indicators.
- The quality and availability of statistics to guide policy and programme development requires considerable improvement. Establishing functional co-ordinated and disaggregated data management systems should allow for free exchange of regularly updated statistics among professionals and people working in the area of early childhood. The Ministry of Education should also tap into the National Bureau of Statistics' (NBS) national data portal for all MDG and SDG indicators once it is completed.
- Assessment of learning should be done for **all** essential learning areas of the national curriculum and at each key stage as specified in the National Assessment Framework. This should help to provide a fuller picture of educational quality.
- A validated national set of indicators should help addressing the issue of quality of education. These should be aligned with the national priorities contained in key national documents, such as the Medium-Term Development Strategy 2013-2017 and the Millennium Development Goals Report 2010 and 2013 so that education becomes more relevant to national development.
- The implementation of the inclusive education policy should be backed by dedicated capacity building programmes, adequate amounts of and differentiated types of learning resources, and on-going support at school level.
- Appropriate mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure the effective implementation of the Medium Term Strategy for Education 2013 – 2017.

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<sup>64</sup> EMIS data between 2005 and 2012.

## 9 CONCLUSION

Overall, many of the targets set in the Seychelles *EFA National Action Plan 2001 – 2015* have been achieved, along with others closely linked to national priorities. Marked progress has been made in establishing a more co-ordinated approach to ECCE, capacity development of teachers and school leaders, skills development of youths and adults, improvements in adult literacy, gender equity and data collection and management. The Ministry of Education's information management system. However, constraints in developing an educational evaluation system adapted to our SIDS context and limited capacity to maintain educational gains over time have somewhat impacted on measurements of progress. Clear performance indicators emanating from locally grounded educational research would have been helpful in the evaluation of the EFA National Action Plan.

Another compounding factor was the weakening of the mechanisms put in place to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the EFA National Action Plan. Over the review period major reforms took place, particularly in 2009/2010, which involved substantial re-structuring of the Ministry of Education and re-deployment of key staff, some of whom had direct responsibility for the Plan. New emerging priorities also needed to be addressed in the context of the macro-economic reforms of 2008.

The Education Sector Medium Term Strategy 2013 – 2017 presents a comprehensive framework for consolidating the achievements of the EFA goals and addressing the many challenges encountered. It should be implemented within a context of constant monitoring and evaluation built into the national system. Much preparatory work has been done and the time is now for action.

### 9.1 Post-2015 : Education for Sustainable Development

Ultimately the aim of all development efforts is to bring about sustainable improvements in human wellbeing. This calls for a substantial transformation in approaches to development, one which effectively blends social progress, inclusive and equitable growth, and sustainable environmental management. One of the crucial elements of sustainable development goals has to be the provision of **quality education for sustainability**.

Education is a fundamental right, and full access to quality education at all levels and for all is an essential condition for sustainable development and poverty eradication. The education system must be able to respond to the learning needs of all children and young people, providing them with skills for life, work and the means of earning a decent livelihood. They should be guided by teachers who are professionals in their fields and who expect all their students to succeed.



As noted in the Seychelles MDG status report 2013<sup>65</sup>, education for sustainability goes beyond the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. It should enable children and young people to realize their full potential, so that they may become successful lifelong learners with the capacities and values to become active and responsible citizens. Critical and creative thinking, problem solving, learning to learn and effective communication skills are vital components of quality education that promotes inclusive and equitable growth. As children move to higher levels of education they need to acquire the skills of leadership, entrepreneurship, relating to others through teamwork, as well as develop sound understandings of natural resources, sustainable consumption and production and the effects of climate change.

The education and training system should help to produce job creators rather than job seekers, and donor support should promote quality education for sustainability. At the local level, this would require the collaborative efforts of parents, the Ministries of Education, Health, Social Affairs, Finance, along with partners from the private sector and civil society.

People being the most important assets of a small island state such as Seychelles, it is imperative that we **invest in people**, especially women, children and other vulnerable groups: sustainable development starts with people, and harnessing the capacities and potentials of **all people** is the only means by which sustainable development will work. It is crucial therefore that the potentials of all women, men, children and youth are recognised and developed so that they may fully engage in this process.

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<sup>65</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013: Millennium Development Goals Status Report 2013 – Assessing Seychelles Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

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**APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX 1 – Seychelles Location



Source: Worldatlas, Graphic Maps.com

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Relevant Treaties and Conventions ratified by Seychelles**

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, accession in 1990), which provides for children's entitlement to a basic quality of life, including education, and protection from harm.
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999, ratified 1992).
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979, accession in 1992).
- International covenant on social, economic and cultural rights (1976, accession in 1992).
- International convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (1965, accession in 1978).
- Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2007, ratified in 2009).