



## Mauritius

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### Education for All 2015 National Review

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# **NATIONAL EFA 2015 REVIEW REPORT**

## **(Mauritius)**

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## List of Acronyms

BTG	Bridging the Gap
CPE	Certificate of Primary Education
ECCEA	Early Childhood and Care Education Authority
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
EHRSP	Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
HIC	High Income Country
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council
IAG	Internationally Agreed Goals
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IVTB	Industrial and Vocational Training Board
KM	KreolMorisien
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MITD	Mauritius Institute of Training and Development
MQA	Mauritius Qualifications Authority
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NEF	National Empowerment Fund
NIR	Net Intake Rate
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	Non State Actors
PSS	Private Secondary Schools
PSTF	Pre-School Trust Fund
PVE	Pre Vocational Education
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SEN	Special Education Needs
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ZEP	Zones d'EducationPrioritaires

# NATIONAL EFA 2015 REVIEW REPORT

## Introduction

Inhabited by an interesting mix of 1.3 million people, the multiracial and multiethnic Republic of Mauritius has had no indigenous population to boast of. Equally, natural resources have always been limited. Nonetheless, Mauritius has successfully diversified its economy, moving from a traditional agriculture-based one to tourism and the services sector today. Indeed, the Government Programme 2010 – 2015 stresses the development of Mauritius as a service hub for the region, a link between Africa and Asia and a positioning of Mauritius as a center for capacity building.

Over the years, though, typical of a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) that is relatively far from its trade markets, the country had systematically faced external economic shocks entwined with domestic economic issues like slow economic growth, rising unemployment, a high budget deficit and a major public debt.

Accordingly, to enable the positioning of the country in a highly competitive, open and globalized economy, Mauritius has embarked since 2005 on a 10-year economic reform programme structured around four main pillars, namely

- (i) fiscal consolidation and public sector efficiency;
- (ii) improving trade competitiveness;
- (iii) improving the investment climate ; and
- (iv) democratizing the economy through participation, social inclusion and sustainability

According to the 2013 UNDP Human Development Report, Mauritius today, ranks among those countries having a high Human Development Index. There has been a constant progress in the human development index from 0.686 in 2000 to 0.771 in 2013, with a rank of 63 out of 187 countries in 2013.

The average growth rate during the period 2010 and 2014 has been in the vicinity of 3.5 per cent. Today Mauritius aspires to move from its current Upper Middle Income Country status with a per capita income of 9,300 USD (in 2013) to a High Income Country one. As

well, this aspiration is coupled with the goals of both promoting an inclusive society and ensuring sustainable development.

However, hurdles do exist.

Overcoming social inequalities and improving the Gini coefficient that has regressed from 0.371 in 2001/02 to 0.413 in 2012 undoubtedly has several implications, not least for the education and training sector.

Indeed, one key challenge to developing a sustainable and vibrant economy that relies on increased labour productivity is sustaining the momentum for a continuous upgrading of knowledge and high level skills in a lifelong learning environment.

Fortunately, over the years, investment in human capital has always had pride of place since it has been viewed as one of the most important factors of production fuelling economic development.

Accordingly, Education has been the cardinal driver of change and the vector for innovation and participation in the “global knowledge economy”. The sector has enjoyed sustained public spending, with 13.0 percent of the national budget being earmarked for it in 2013 as against 12.1 percent in 2000/01 .

The result is revealing. Mauritius is today well on track to meet both the education-related MDGs and the EFA Goals by 2015. Most of the EFA targets have been met—with the exception being Goal 4. However, even there, it will be noted (as this Report makes evident) that the illiteracy rate is more marked for the 65+ aged adult population.

Achieving these globally-set targets has been the responsibility undertaken by successive governments and a culmination point was reached with the formulation and currently on-going implementation of the Education and Human Resources Strategic Plan (EHRSP ) 2008-2020.

Education Policy came to be centered around the vision of

*“A Quality Education for all and a Human Resource Development base to transform Mauritius into an intelligent nation state in the vanguard of global progress and innovation.”*

and a mission enunciated around the following:

- *To develop a culture of achievement and excellence by promoting an efficient and effective education and training system that is inclusive and integrated, comprehensive and holistic.*
- *To foster innovation and to generate new knowledge for the socio-economic and sustainable development of the nation.*
- *To ensure learning opportunities accessible to all, provide learners with values and skills to further their personal growth, enhance their critical and exploratory thinking and encourage them to innovate and to adapt to changes in an increasingly globalised environment.*

The eight objectives identified by the EHRSP 2008-2020 are both implicitly and explicitly articulated in keeping with the Internationally Agreed Goals (IAGs). These are

1. To ensure that **ALL** children aged 3 to 5 years in Mauritius have the opportunity to develop their individual intellectual, socio-emotional and psycho-motor skills to the best of their capacity in order to build the confidence and self-esteem in learning that will not only prepare them for the next level (primary school) but, more importantly, lay the foundations for learning that will support them throughout their lifetime.

2. To sustain equitable access to quality education, ensuring that all learners attain high levels of achievement in Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Communications Technology and such essential Life Skills as sound human values, healthy lifestyle and so forth as the basis for lifelong learning and good citizenship.

3. To ensure that all students are given the opportunity to embark on and complete higher secondary education for employability and higher and further education and training with the required maturity and confidence.
4. To build a system that ensures a supply of quality personnel that work collegially with a strong management and quality assurance system to improve and support learning achievement and overall development of all learners.
5. To provide an efficient and effective TVET system of greater public esteem responsive to the present and future needs by having a skilled and flexible workforce.
6. To make Mauritius an intelligent island, a Knowledge Hub to serve the Region and a Centre for Higher Learning and Excellence.
7. To build a creative and competent Human Resource base for Mauritius for sustainable national development.
8. To develop the Ministry into an efficient, effective, and accountable functioning public institution that exemplifies 'best practices' at all levels of the organisation.

Education is, however, a dynamic sector and because of the strong social demand, there are understandably high stakeholder expectations from the system. A whole set of innovative reforms has accordingly become the spokes of the Republic's education policy wheel—and now that the existing IAGs are to sunset in 2015, it becomes crucial for Mauritius to tie up all existing loose ends.



## Expanding Early Childhood Care and Education

### ***Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children***

#### **1.0 Background**

Pre-primary education covers the age group 3-5 years. Education of the young child started as a totally private enterprise and was dispensed in informal settings by private individuals. The sector was characterised by a large pool of unqualified teachers who had no formal curriculum to fall back upon. Several international agencies, namely, the Playgroup Movement, the World Organization for Preschool Education, and the Joint Child Health and Education Project became interested in the sub-sector and they contributed to the development of pre-primary education in Mauritius.

State intervention in the provision of early childhood programmes started with the setting up of pre-school units in public primary schools. The first attempt to regulate the sub-sector came in the mid-1980s with the setting up of a Pre-School Trust Fund to promote pre-school education and, in particular, teacher education.

To date 98 per cent of children aged 3-4 years are enrolled in pre-schools, of which 80 per cent are enrolled in private pre-schools; all teachers satisfy the minimum teaching requirements and a per pupil grant of Rs 200 (approximately 6 USD) is paid to all registered private pre-schools.

#### **1.1 Main Challenges in 2000 and Targets for 2015**

##### **(a) Disparity in provision of ECCE**

The provision of early childhood care and education has been historically associated with a disparity in the quality of pre-schools among private providers. While at one end of the spectrum, there were schools that were of international standard, there also existed, at the other end, schools of very poor quality. The fees charged by the highly-priced private schools were around tenfold compared to those at the lower end.

Further, in 2000, the per pupil subsidy paid to private schools covered children aged 4+ only and parents had to meet the entire schooling costs for the 3-year olds.

In addition, the system was not apt to either undertake early detection of children with special education needs (SEN) or welcome them in the pre-school settings.

**Targets:**

***(i) An enhanced regulatory framework that would ensure quality pre-primary education to all.***

***(ii) A more equitable and inclusive system that caters for the needs of disadvantaged children, including those with SEN***

**(b) Under-qualified teaching staff**

In 2000, the quality of the teaching staff in the pre-primary sector was a matter of concern. Over 30 per cent of teachers did not possess the minimum educational qualifications required for entry in the profession. This situation was a consequence of schools starting their operation well before any kind of regulations was set up.

**Target:**

***All staff should possess the minimum requirements in terms of qualifications and professional competence.***

**(c) Participation in pre-primary education**

In 2000, 23 per cent of children of pre-primary school age were not attending pre-primary schools, poverty being one of the principal causes. Most of the families involved lived in pockets of poverty in both urban and rural areas. There was hence a felt need to open free access to schools in the underserved and disadvantaged regions.

**Target:**

***The improvement of access, through the construction of pre-school units in all Government primary schools, with priority being given to schools in disadvantaged areas.***

**(d) The Need for a National Curriculum Framework**

In the early 2000, individual pre-primary schools were elaborating and implementing their own pedagogical programmes, there being neither a national curriculum framework for the sub-sector nor a proper mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of teaching-learning, save for a supervisory cadre mainly tasked with administrative duties. There was thus a critical gap in terms of harmonization of early childhood programmes and delivery in pre-primary schools.

**Target:**

***The improvement of the quality of learning experiences of all children with an enriched curriculum to cater for proper growth.***

**(e) The Institutional Framework**

The existing regulatory body, the Pre-School Trust Fund (PSTF), had a limited scope. It sub-served the basic functions of school registration, supervision of educational activities and teacher education. With the emerging challenges on the international scene, and the realisation that early childhood development (ECD) lies as the very foundation of sustainable human development, there was a need to establish a new ECD framework that would reposition the pre-primary sub-sector and secure a strong foundation for the young child.

**Target:**

***Review of the Institutional Framework that would ensure, inter alia, the facilitation of transition from pre-primary to primary education.***

## **1.2 Progress towards Achieving the EFA Goal 1**

- The Early Childhood Care and Education Authority ( ECCEA) Act was promulgated in 2007 after the Pre-School Trust Fund Act was repealed and the ECCEA set up in 2008 with a view to providing quality preschool education to all children within a safe, inclusive and child friendly environment. The Authority also seeks to provide equal access for all children to quality pre-schooling, including those at risk of delayed development and disabilities and those coming from conditions of vulnerability, through a child-centred and play-based approach. Parental involvement becomes de facto of cardinal importance.
- A National policy on SEN has been formulated and the ECCEA is being called upon to set up a SEN UNIT to implement the SEN policy.
- An intensive Capacity Building Programme has been mounted, as part of in-service training, to upgrade the professional qualifications of Educators.
- A national programme - the 'Eradication of Absolute Poverty' Programme has been implemented and measures taken to ensure no child is left out of school. New pre-schools have been opened in underserved areas. Enrolment rate in 2014 increased to 98 percent.
- A New National Curriculum Framework was elaborated in 2010 and provided a continuum in learning for the pre-primary and primary school years.

## **1.3 Implementation of National Strategies to achieve EFA Goal 1**

The above achievements became possible with strategic directions focusing on the main pillars of access, equity and quality.

## **(A) Improving Access**

### **(i) Measures Taken**

With a view to ensuring access to pre-primary education, several measures were taken, namely:

- the construction of new pre-primary schools in underserved regions and the opening of additional pre-primary classrooms in existing pre-primary units;
- the provision of free pre-primary education in all public pre-primary schools attached to primary schools (these schools enrol around 20 per cent of the pre-primary school children);
- extension of the per-pupil grant to all children attending private pre-primary schools; and
- review of regulations governing private preschools for dispensing child-minding services outside school hours. This is meant to facilitate young mothers in taking up paid employment and hence contribute to the economy.

### **(ii) The Public Private Partnership**

Over the last years, a strong public-private partnership in the provision of pre-school education has been fostered. This has been achieved through several initiatives taken by the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority and by other front line ministries responsible for ECD to forge close working collaboration with private pre-schools.

## **(B) Equity-driven measures**

With a view to ensuring that all children, irrespective of socio-economic status, gender or race, have access to quality pre-primary education, Government has introduced a series of measures and incentives to ensure the effective inclusion and integration of children, especially those coming from deprived conditions. Some of these measures are:

### **(i) Payment of a monthly per capita grant**

Since 1996, a monthly per capita grant of Rs200 has been paid to registered private pre-primary schools and covered children aged 4+ and above. As from 2012, this per capita grant has been extended to all children, including those aged 3+.

**(ii) Social Protection Measures**

Mauritius is committed to providing vulnerable children with opportunities to develop to their full potential. Some of these measures are:

➤ **The Child and Family Welfare Programme**

The Child and Family Welfare Programme (initially known as the Eradication of Absolute Poverty Program) put in place by the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment is a Government initiative that focuses on the 229 pockets of poverty that comprise about 7,500 households. It aims at facilitating the inclusion of all poor children of pre-primary school-going age into a pre-primary setting.

Under this programme, children are provided with a free lunch on a daily basis, transport facilities to and from school, school materials and uniforms, medical and health screening facilities and the payment of school fees to private pre-primary schools. Also included in this programme is the empowerment of parents and training in entrepreneurial skills for them to get access to a decent job with a sustainable income. This package of measures is designed to break the cycle of poverty.

➤ **Conditional cash transfer: Payment of child allowance to pre-primary school children.**

To rationalise the then existing social protection measures, another targeted measure introduced in 2013 was the payment of a monthly allowance of Rs750 to children coming from families earning less than Rs 6,200 per month (this amount being considered as the poverty line) and conditional to a compulsory monthly school attendance of 90 per cent and above.

➤ **Special Grant to sub-standard private pre-primary schools**

With a view to ensuring the provision of quality pre-primary education to all, a one-off grant of Rs 100,000 is paid to disadvantaged private pre-primary schools. With most of these pre-schools being found in the identified pockets of poverty, the incentive is meant to serve towards upgrading the quality of services offered.

**(iii) *Facilitating the inclusion of children with Special Needs***

During the last few years, a series of programmes and initiatives has been planned and implemented with a view to encouraging and facilitating the inclusion of children with special needs and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

Some of these measures include:

- Provision of training programmes to Educators in SEN schools which are mostly run by NGOs.
- Workshops for parents of children attending SEN schools.

**(C) *Quality issues in Early Childhood Education***

**(i) *Curriculum Development***

With a view to rationalising and harmonising the teaching/ learning process in all pre-primary schools, a New Curriculum Framework (NCF) for this level was launched in 2010. The curriculum framework sets the rationale, the performance indicators and the teaching and learning process and is organized around different domains of development, namely, the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and communication and language development.

**(ii) *Curriculum resource materials – Manual of Activities***

To support Educators in the implementation of the NCF, a manual of activities has been developed to equip teachers and other stakeholders with pedagogical guidelines for planning, designing, implementing and assessing pre-school activities.

**(iii) *Early Years Assessment Framework***

To standardize early years' assessment practice in the pre-primary sector, work has started for the development of a "***Developmental Learner Profile***". The main objective of the Developmental Learner Profile is to ensure that all children have acquired the basic literacy, numeracy and socio-emotional skills that will prepare them for a smooth and effective transition to primary schooling.

**(iv) Professionalization of the sub-sector**

To ensure the provision of quality early childhood education, teacher quality is being upgraded through continuous professional development programmes. To date, several training opportunities are available, ranging from basic proficiency and certificate courses to degree programmes in ECCE for pre-school teachers and the supervisory cadre.



## Universalising Primary/Basic Education

**Goal 2: Ensure that by 2015 all children particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and are able to complete education that is free, compulsory and of good quality.**

### 2.0 Background

Mauritius has today achieved the goal of universal access to primary education and gender parity in enrolment. This is largely the result of the country's vision of democratisation of access to primary education way back in the pre-independence era and coupled with a high social demand for education. This was a precursor to development of secondary education leading to education becoming compulsory for all up to age 16 in 2004. Enabling legislation, favourable policy initiatives, budgetary support and new infrastructural facilities went a long way towards this realisation.

### 2.1 Main Challenges in 2000 and Targets for 2015

A number of positives have traditionally been evident for the primary sub-sector which covers the age group of 5 to 11. All teachers are qualified and trained since pre-service training has always been mandatory; textbooks are provided free of charge to all pupils while all schools are adequately resourced in terms of physical facilities and learning materials.

The Gross Primary Enrolment Rate (GER) has stabilised over the last decade to reach 98 per cent in 2013 and the Net Primary Enrolment Rate (NER) has gradually improved to reach 97 per cent in 2013 with a gender parity index of 1.0

In 2000, there were a number of challenges that strongly impacted upon the sub-sector, and these can be captured as follows:

#### **(a) A highly elitist system**

The system had developed into a highly elitist system that was examination-oriented and that

- promoted the development of memorisation and lower order thinking skills at the expense of creativity and higher order thinking skills;

- resulted in the inadequacy and underutilisation of extra and co- curricular activities;
- the institutionalisation of and overreliance on Private tuition;
- created disparities between those perceived as ‘star’ schools and those viewed as failing or low achieving schools (with children from vulnerable groups mostly found in these latter), the heavy incidence of teacher allocation centrally carried out and perceived as favouring elite institutions with the ‘best’ and most competent teachers posted there; and
- resulted in low transition rates.

Ranking thus became an instrument of selection in the context of a dramatic mismatch between demand and supply for seats in a few highly regarded secondary schools.

Hence the drive to secure admission to these schools resulted in a fierce and unhealthy competition (commonly called a ‘rat race’).

**Target**

***The abolition of ranking at the primary end-of-cycle national examination, the Certificate of Primary education (CPE)***

**(b) High drop-out rate**

The system was characterised by a marked wastage of resources with a high repetition rate (including some of those who had actually passed the CPE examinations —just so they could be better ranked) and a high dropout rate among those failing the CPE twice.

**Target:**

***Extending the compulsory school age period from 12 to 16***

**(c) Distorted teaching methods**

Schools were characterised by a number of factors that negatively impinged upon the quality of education provided:

- Teaching to the test became the norm
- There was an absence of remedial education for slow learners resulting in high rates of absenteeism in low performing schools
- The prevalence of a rigid curriculum that concentrated more on examinable subjects but less on life skills and non-examinable subjects.
- A dichotomy between the theoretical postulates of teacher training programmes and the practical pedagogical reality in the classroom.

***Target:***

***Introduction of a new Education Framework based on the principles of Equity, Achievement and Excellence for all***

**(d) A highly centralised system**

The approach to managing the entire system was highly hierarchic, with overall control being exercised at the Ministry HQs backed by an Inspectorate body.

School autonomy was wanting.

***Target:***

***An effective decentralisation of educational administration.***

## 2.2 Progress towards Achieving the EFA Goal 2

Mauritius is a signatory of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and one classic example of legislation amended in favour of the child is that child labour cannot not stand in the way of education. By virtue of the Labour law in Mauritius, a Mauritian citizen is allowed to work only after age of 16. The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children acts as a watchdog over the application of the above.

Unlike the early pre-Independence period, Mauritius today offers no discrimination in the provision of education for both sexes. Typically, a Convention to which Mauritius is a party is that of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The country has equally endorsed the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender and Development while being as well a signatory of the SADC Declaration on Gender.

Progress made since 2000 include the following:

### (a) Universalisation of Education

The Net Primary Enrolment has stabilised at 97 percent over the period 2000 to 2013 which is near to universal primary schooling. The survival rate which is the proportion of pupils starting Grade 1 and culminating in the completion of the primary cycle improved from 97.8per cent in 1999 to 99.2per cent in 2013. The primary completion rate stands at 75.5per cent for 2013. The evolution of the GER and the survival rate is table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Evolution of GER and survival rate**

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>GER</b>	105	104	103	103	102	102	102	102	101	101	101	101	100	99	98
<b>Survival Rate</b>	97.8	98.9	98.6	98.2	98.9	98.1	98.0	97.2	97.5	98.3	97.6	98.2	98.1	98.7	99.2

### (b) The abolition of ranking

Ranking of pupils based on CPE examination results as a selection instrument for admission in secondary schools was abolished and replaced by a grading system in 2002. It was accompanied by major infrastructural developmentto provide a wider choice of schools while also enabling the regionalisation of the admission process.

This combination of measures was contributory to the overall improvement in the transition rate to secondary schooling.

**(c) The Promotion of Equity**

**(i) *The 'Zones d'Education Prioritaires' -( ZEP)***

The ZEP project was conceived and implemented at the beginning of the previous decade to address educational failure in a few schools and concerned some 6 percent of the primary school population. It aims at combating social inequalities and ensuring the provision of equal opportunities for learning to all children of the country. Twenty-nine primary schools were identified as low performing schools having a percentage pass rate at CPE consistently below 40 percent for a number of consecutive years. These schools had poverty as a common denominator.

The ZEP project takes a 'whole school' approach to address underperformance. It aims at integrating the school within its environment and focuses on the following 5 pillars:

- More equitable reallocation of human resources to schools;
- Improvement of infrastructure and school environment;
- Formulation and implementation of a School Development Plan;
- Strengthening community links; and
- Developing an improved management structure for the project.

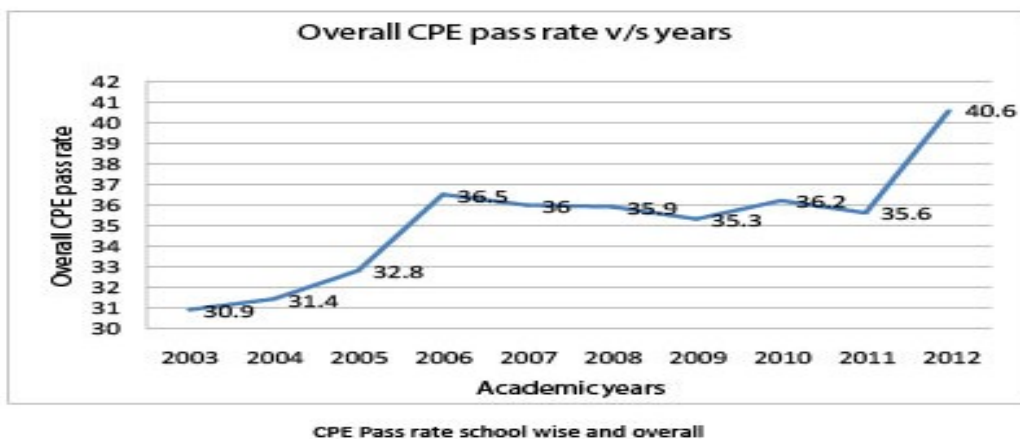
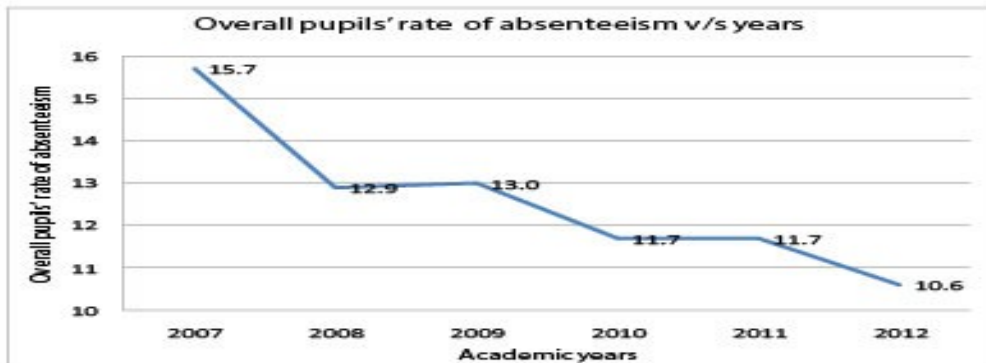
**(ii) *Achievement associated with the ZEP project***

The following progress is associated to the ZEP schools

- The provision of a daily free packed lunch—and action has started to convert this food programme into a Hot Meal programme;
- Decrease in pupil absenteeism rate from 15.2. per cent in 2006 to 9.7 per cent in 2013; and
- Nearly half of the low performing schools have pass rates above 40 per cent and are well on the way to graduate out of the ZEP classification (as illustrated in Figure 2.1)

Figure 2.1: Absenteeism Rate and Pass Rate in ZEP Schools

ZEP INDICATORS:



**(d) Introduction of Mother Tongue in Schools**

In line with the announcement made in the Government Programme 2010-2015 to encourage the use of mother tongue as a means to facilitate the teaching /learning process in schools, KreolMorisien(KM) was introduced as an optional language in Standard I in 2012. Upstream work relating to the standardisation of the language(grammar, syntax, etc), the validation of the orthography and the provision of necessary technical guidelines for the development of curriculum materials and training of teachers was undertaken by an “AkademiKreolMorisien”, that was set up and that comprised relevant stakeholders.

As part of a process to have a language policy that is non-discriminatory vis-à-vis any of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural components of the country, KM was placed at par with Asian Languages/ Arabic which have been taught subjects for quite some time. Alongside, Bhojpuri, another ancestral language for a number of Mauritians, was introduced in Grade 4 as a corollary of Hindi Language in 2012.

**(e) Policy Thrusts in ICT**

The Ministry of Education has embarked on several ICT Projects and continues to improve the ICT infrastructure in schools. The Strategy initially consisted of teaching of IT as a subject so as to promote IT Literacy in the early years and increase learner familiarity with the tool. To that effect, a number of actions were undertaken, including equipping schools with ICT labs and the recruitment of ICT Teachers.

This subsequently led to the utilization of ICT as a tool for teaching and learning. Innovative Projects have been started in primary schools (illustratively, the 'Sankoré Project'<sup>1</sup>) so as to enable the child to work and learn differently.

**(f) The Whole Child Development**

The competitive nature of the CPE examination was known to have resulted in an exclusive concentration on the academic achievement of the child, while other important dimensions for the development of the whole person were lacking. This emphasis has now changed, it being increasingly placed on the holistic development of the learner. The new curriculum that has been elaborated goes along these lines, too.

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<sup>1</sup>The Sankoré project has as objective to help achieve the Education for All goals through digital empowerment and the use of innovative technology. Interactive projectors and laptops are provided to schools, along with a digitisation of the curriculum being effected for Primary schools. Through the provision of a new innovative learning environment, teaching and learning are transformed with classes made more lively and interactive.

## 2.3 Implementation of National Strategies to achieve EFA Goal 2

### (a) Educational Reform Programme

There is a strong social demand for education in Mauritius. Stakeholder demands and pressures have over the years resulted in successive governments placing education high on the national development agenda.

However, whether in 2001 or 2005 onwards, the reforms were premised on the overall objective of guaranteeing free and compulsory quality Education for all from the age of 5 to 16 and rested on the following pillars ( as identified in the Education & Human resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020):

- Access
- Equity
- Relevance
- Quality
- Achievement

A series of programmes and projects conceived and implemented in relation to each of the above has been instrumental in attaining many of the targets set.

### (b) Emphasis on Relevance and Quality

Access never having been a problem in this sub-sector, much of the reform agenda has concentrated on the relevance and qualitative improvement of the system.

- (i) The curriculum and teaching methods have been reviewed and redesigned for improved relevance to the cultural environment and to the educational, psychological and socio-economic needs of the children ( inclusive of lifelong and social skills for self-improvement in a multicultural society).
- (ii) *Education for Sustainable Development*: Education is recognised as holding the key to securing a sustainable future for the nation. In a world constantly exposed —especially so for a SIDS like Mauritius-- to such critical challenges as



climate change and overdependence on fossil fuels, among others, it is incumbent upon creativity and innovation through education to be the major means to respond to these challenges. This can only happen if children are so educated as to internalise the norms and precepts associated with these right from an early age.

The Maurice Ile Durable project has accordingly been introduced in all schools with several ongoing projects pertaining to waste segregation, rainwater harvesting, tree planting, composting, photovoltaic for green energy and the greening of schools.

(iii) ***Introduction of the Bridging the Gap ( BTG) Project between Pre-Primary and Primary.***

This measure started in Grade 1 to facilitate the transition between Pre-Primary and Primary Schooling but also to cause an enrichment of the initial learning experience for those never previously exposed to pre-school experience. The programme then served to equilibrate the learning levels for different categories of learners and thus have all pupils more or less on the same starting line at the beginning of their primary schooling.

The tailor-made curriculum pays attention to the holistic development of the child and the totality of his learning needs.

Today, the BTG Project that was traditionally implemented over the first school trimester has given place to a year-long programme called 'The Foundation Year'.

(iv) ***Pedagogical innovation for improved performance.***

- Implementation of Diagnostic Assessment at Grade 3 and the consolidation of Remedial Education
- Introduction of Enhancement programme(EP) across Grades 3 and 4.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The Enhancement Programme(EP) introduced at Grades 4 and 5 is conducted after school hours thrice weekly to enhance teaching/learning in school through the provision of a 'play activity'-based learning and hence develop key competencies and skills that the child fails to fully develop during normal school hours.

Annual competitions culminating in a National Award ceremony are held to showcase the benefit of the programme

- Introduction of Continuous Assessment –Grades 3 and 4

(v) ***CPE Repeaters Project***

This project has as aim to reduce the failure rate among CPE repeaters. These pupils have, after six years of schooling, failed to master the essential learning competencies that ought to have been acquired in the earlier years of schooling. A special programme is mounted to strengthened the mastery of concepts of subject contents of Grades 3 to 6. Individual attention is provided to these pupils

(vi) ***The Summer and Winter School Project***

This project enables children from schools with low performance to be exposed to activity-based learning and other means during the school holidays. The teaching is conducted on three days a week during school holidays. Free hot meals are provided to all pupils following the programme and educational tours also are organized for the benefit of the pupils.

(vii) ***Use of IT as a pedagogical tool across the curriculum***

Implementation of the Sankoré project has led to the digitization of classrooms and teaching materials and the use of innovative technological means. The rationale is to provide students with the relevant digital skills and experiences for them to become confident learners in a technological world.

(c) **Improvement in Educational Infrastructure**

A major Primary School Renewal programme had been put on the rails, the purpose being to offer an enabling environment for sound teaching and learning.

(d) **Continuous Professional Development** for Educators and Heads of Schools and improvement in conditions of service through salary scales having now been aligned to those of secondary school Educators.

**(e) Improving the Achievement Level**

**(i) Resit At CPE Level**

For the first time, a resit examination was introduced at the primary level. This was introduced in 2013 and is meant for pupils who have not secured a pass in one subject at CPE level. It gives a second chance to pupils to acquire a CPE certificate. Remedial classes are held after the CPE results are proclaimed to prepare them for the resit paper.

Table 2.2 below shows the pass rate of the Grade 6 pupils from 2005 to 2013. In 2013 the percentage is higher after the Resit examinations (81.0 percent against 77.5 percent)

**Table 2.2: Trends in CPE Pass rate (First Sitting)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>CPE Pass rate</b>
<b>2005</b>	73.2
<b>2006</b>	76.2
<b>2007</b>	74.1
<b>2008</b>	75.4
<b>2009</b>	75.8
<b>2010</b>	76.0
<b>2011</b>	75.7
<b>2012</b>	76.4
<b>2013</b>	77.5
<b>2013 (with Resit)</b>	81.0

**(f) System Management**

To enable greater flexibility in the system and, ultimately, more autonomy to schools, the system of administration has been decentralised with the island of Mauritius being divided into four (4) Education Zones.

As for the island of Rodrigues, decentralisation is already effective with the Education Commission assuming responsibility for the system management for the entire island.

**(g) Legislation**

**(i) Amendment to the Education Act**

To reduce over-reliance on additional tuition ( aka private tuition), which is a real scourge in the educational system, and to render the teaching and learning experiences within schools more enriching, the Ministry has evolved a new policy to regulate and control additional tuition.

Amendments were brought to the Education Act in November 2011, the main ones providing for :

- Extension of the current ban on additional tuition at Grades I, II and III to cover Grade IV as well;
- Regulation of the provision of additional tuition to students in Grades V and VI and for secondary classes and to provide for registration of Educators wishing to give additional tuition; and
- The conduct of the Enhancement Programme and any other programmes in schools to enhance innovative teaching and learning experiences and the promotion of the integral development of pupils.

## Meeting the learning needs of youths and adults

### **Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skill programmes**

#### **3.0 Background**

No country can be expected to develop into a modern and open economy without a large proportion of its youth and adult workforce having completed at least secondary education. That was as much part of the motivation behind the provision of free secondary education in 1977 as part of Government's policy to democratize access to education.

Secondary education covers the age period 11 to 17 years, although students are allowed to remain in the system till age 20. It has two components - general education which is provided in secondary schools and vocational education which is dispensed both in secondary schools (for the Pre-vocational part) and in training centres. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for general and Pre-vocational education was 78 per cent in 2013 with a gender parity index of about 1.1.

#### **3.1 Main EFA challenges in 2000 and targets for 2015**

##### **(a) Overriding Bottlenecks constraining transition to secondary schooling**

In the year 2000 there were 34 public secondary schools in Mauritius and 3 in Rodrigues operating under the Rodrigues Educational Company (REDCO) while the number of Private Secondary Schools (PSS) was 101.

The private sector accounted for around 70 per cent of enrolment and it was characterised by a wide disparity, marked by the fact that all secondary schools did not enjoy the same degree of public esteem. The small number of high-demand schools had led to a major dysfunction which was the bottleneck impeding the transition from primary to secondary education.

The system institutionalized the catering for the intellectually gifted while an elitist pedagogy coupled with after-school private tutoring became the norm. This resulted in high

grade repetition and dropouts at intermediary stages. The low internal efficiency is expressed by the low percentage of a cohort completing upper secondary education, which stood at about 27 per cent in 2000 as illustrated in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Cohort entering first grade of primary and completing upper secondary education in 2000**

	Year	Enrolment	Percentage
Cohort starting Grade 1	1988	21,238	100
Cohort reaching Grade 6	1993	20,872	98
Cohort reaching Form 1	1994	15,640	74
Cohort reaching Form V	1998	12,746	60
Cohort reaching Form VI	2000	5,742	27

**Targets:**

- (i) Improved transition rate to secondary education;**
- (ii) Ensuring greater student achievement ; and**
- (iii) Successful completion rate at upper secondary.**

**(b) Catering for the Push-outs of the system**

In spite of a high Gross Primary Enrolment Rate of 103per cent and a survival rate of 98per cent at the primary level, the ranking system at the end of primary cycle examination, the CPE, itself a consequence of a lack of quality secondary schools, led to a distorted teaching-learning with a chronic failure cum repetition rate of about35per cent.

Access to secondary schooling being subject to success at the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) examination, as prescribed under the Education Act, unsuccessful students were therefore unable to join the secondary cycle. A high dropout rate occurred at this stage. Dropout was also high in the Pre-vocational training centres meant to provide pre-employment training in basic vocational skills.

**Target:**

***Provision of alternative pathways for children and youth with learning difficulties at post-primary level***

**(c) Improving Equity in Educational Provision**

Equity became a major challenge since there was a felt necessity to guarantee an effective implementation of free and compulsory quality education for all children and youths, including those with special needs. This also implied addressing the issue of curricular relevance to meet the variegated learning needs of students.

**Target :**

***An inclusive education system that caters for and satisfies the differing learning needs of all children.***

**(d) Lack of proper regulations and effective coordination in the provision of TVET resulting in restricted access**

In the late 1980s up till the early 2000s, the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB) cumulated the triple role of regulator, facilitator and training provider. Increase in access to TVET was, however, constrained, in view of the lack of diversity and levels of training on offer.

Public-private partnership in policy making, programme design, delivery and evaluation was elementary at best.

As significantly, this domain had traditionally been considered as ‘the poor relative’ of the sector and suffered from a stigma of a track fit only for the academically less endowed and, in the public perception, representing a ‘dead end’.

**Target:**

***A redefinition of Institutional roles and responsibilities and transforming the TVET sector into an attractive alternative.***

### **3.2 Progress towards Achieving the EFA goal 3**

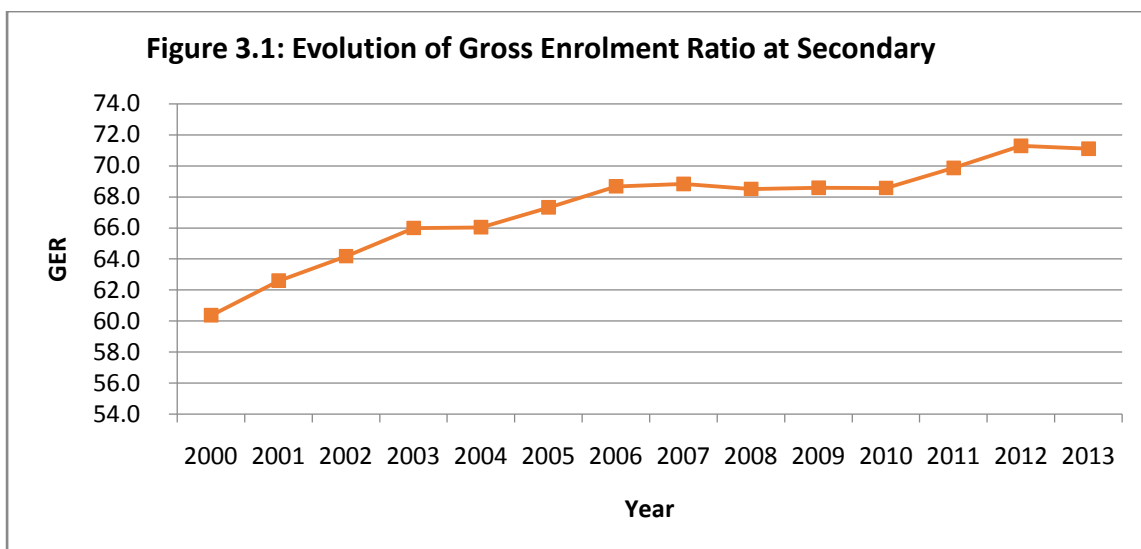
Since the year 2000, the education sector has gone through a succession of reform ventures. A series of measures has been adopted to improve both the provision and quality of secondary education.

#### **(a) Increased Access to quality secondary education**

The Gross Secondary Enrolment Rate for general education improved from 60 percent in 2000 to 71per cent in 2013. This progress was the result of the following measures:

- Abolition of the ranking system at the CPEin 2002 and its replacement by a Grade System as the instrument for admission to secondary schools
- A massive infrastructure development plan with the construction of a number of public secondary schools
- Access to an adapted programme in the Pre-vocational Education Stream with the goal of providing a second chance for pupils who failed the CPEafter a second attempt or who had reached the age of thirteen and would hence not be eligible for admission to secondary schools.
- Adoption of a Regionalization policy for admission to secondary schools.
- A review of the Grant formula for the grant-aided private secondary schoolsleading to improved parity in per student spending between public and private sector. In addition, the new grant formula now includes a performance grant designed to embed a culture of school improvement.





**(b) Working towards greater Equity**

A national programme of poverty alleviation has been developed with the clear purpose of promoting greater social justice and a more inclusive society. A dedicated Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment was set up with the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) being institutionalised to undertake the relevant mandate.

Inter-ministerial collaboration between the Ministries of Education, of Social Security and of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare together with the NEF and Non State Actors (NSA) has accordingly been reinforced to address the multidimensional facets of poverty.

**(c) Pre Vocational Education**

A new Pre-vocational Education (PVE) stream was introduced in 2002 to take on board the CPE failures. Pre-vocational classes started to be run in secondary schools and became an integral part of secondary schooling. The adapted curriculum to which students were exposed aimed at bridging their learning gaps, especially in basic literacy and numeracy, so as to prepare them for further learning, vocational training or apprenticeship.

However, after a decade or so of its implementation, the PVE was further re-oriented. The Education and Human Resource Strategy Plan (EHRSP) 2008-2020 proposed a new strategic orientation aiming at making PVE more responsive to the future needs of the economy. This was charted out and implemented in 2012.

The reform has brought an extension of the programme from 3 to 4 years to align it on the compulsory schooling age of up to 16 years. The cycle leads to a recognised certification, pitched on the National Qualifications Framework, which allows the student to enrol for further Vocational Education or to join the world of work.

Another aspect of the reform is the option which has been given since 2013 to pupils who are unsuccessful at the CPE examinations at their first sitting, to join Pre-vocational Stream rather than repeating the CPE class. This measure eliminates the risk of students losing one year in repeating grade 6. It is a suitable alternative for slow learners as it allows them to obtain, after four years of study in PVE, a Level 2 certification which is higher than the CPE, itself is pitched at level 1 on the National Qualifications Framework ( NQF)

This initiative serves as a linkage to the technical and vocational education programme and contributes to the pool of skills required on the labour market.

**(d) Improving the management structure of TVET**

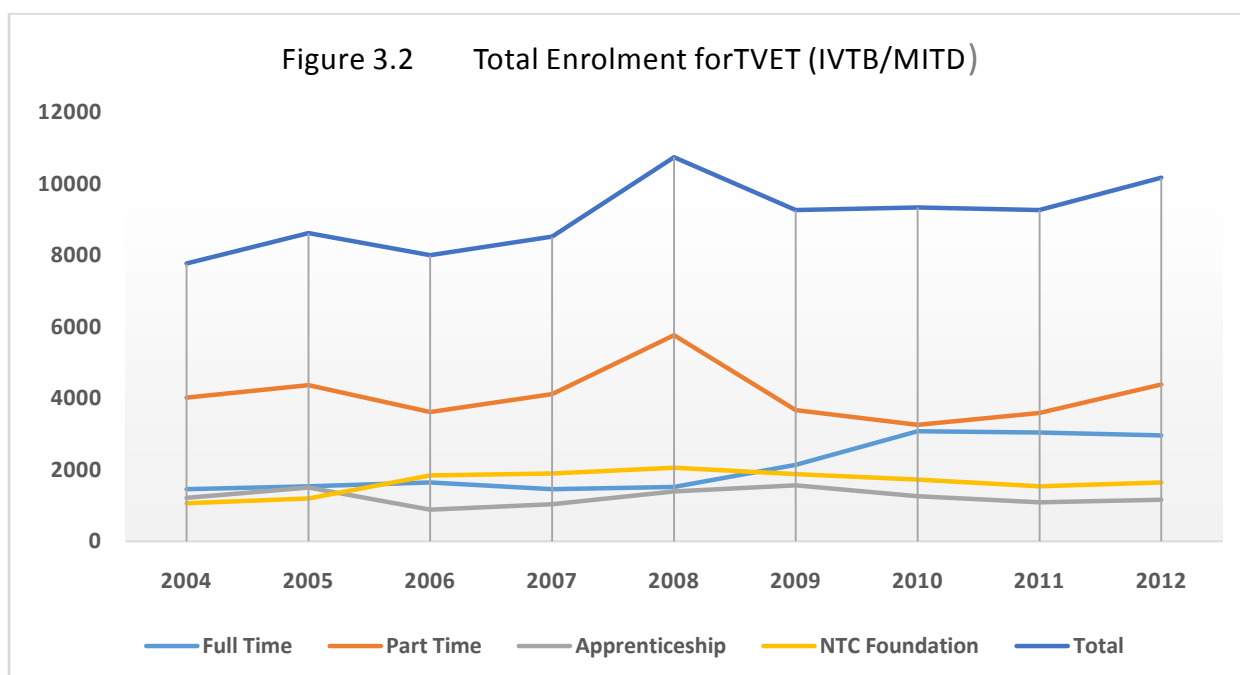
The legal and institutional frameworks have been reviewed and three separate entities have been created to, respectively, assume the role of provider, regulator and facilitator in the TVET Sector. This improved management structure is in line with principles of good governance and has led to enhanced coordination and greater accountability.

A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has been developed by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) that integrates both academic and vocational qualifications. The NQF ensures that qualifications are both valued and help promote lifelong learning.

A Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) has been set up to facilitate the training and retraining of employers to ensure the adaptability and employability

of the workforce. A National Human Resource Development Plan addresses the skill needs for the new economic sectors and provides pointers to reduce the large skill mismatch on the labour market.

The Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) (ex- IVTB) operates a network of training centres offering TVET courses at National Certificate and diploma level in a variety of fields. Trends in enrolment is illustrated in Fig 3.2.



### 3.3 Implementation of National strategies to achieve EFA Goal 3

An examination of the several policies adopted would best explain the achievements in this particular EFA Goal.

#### (a) Legislation & New Regulations

##### (i) *Raising the minimum school-leaving age*

In 2004, an important amendment was brought to the Education Act to extend the compulsory schooling age, initially from age 5 to 12, to age 16 in a bid to increase access to secondary education.

This measure brought about an awareness of parents about their responsibility to ensure that their children attend school and make the best of the educational opportunities provided to them.

It hence reduced the number of out-of-school children who could have been prone to delinquency or other social ills, while also addressing the issue of child labour.

Again, this policy ensured that all children receive the minimum basic education to help them become productive citizens and contribute to the country's economic growth.

Compliance by Mauritius to Article 28 (1) b of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, relating to the child's right to education has at the same time been guaranteed.

**(ii) *Enforcement of Compulsory schooling***

However, while education became compulsory up to the age of 16, enforcing the law has systematically been problematic: it is difficult to fine or imprison those parents who are already facing difficulties associated with extreme poverty.

The mechanism resorted to monitor compulsory attendance is the Student Tracking System introduced in 2011. It aims at ensuring that all children of compulsory school-going age are enrolled in an educational institution and remain in the education system till they reach the age of 16. This mechanism would allow the tracking of cases of student drop out, prolonged absences and tardy admission which are then referred to Educational Social Workers for further enquiry.

**(b) *Special Education Needs ( SEN)***

A policy has been evolved that aims at improving the quality of SEN delivery systems to ensure that all children in difficult conditions receive the education and training that meet their special needs. This has been accompanied by a strengthening of the capacities of all personnel for SEN and new forms of special needs programs.

Enrolment rates have constantly been improving over the years. In parallel, the Grant-in Aid to SEN schools operated by NSAs has been increased for greater parity in spending when compared to spending on children in general education.

### **(c) School Construction Programme**

Increasing access to quality secondary education was made possible by increasing the seat capacity in secondary schools. A major infrastructural development programme was implemented to build and equip new schools. The number of public secondary schools thus increased from 34 in 2000 to 67 in 2004 - a doubling in number of schools within a period of three years.

At the same time Government provided incentives and facilities to Private Secondary Schools to help them enhance their infrastructure and school environment.

Illustratively, a new loan scheme at preferential rates was established for PSS to improve their educational infrastructure, including the construction of new educational units/extension of existing units and the acquisition of land for the construction/extension of the said educational units in disadvantaged areas.

This measure was accompanied by the closure of poor quality PSS. The increase of seat capacity in high-quality secondary schools coupled with a declining school population made this an unavoidable option.

### **(d) Equity Measures**

The following accompanying measures have been instrumental in alleviating the financial burden of families of secondary school- going children and, accordingly, giving a fillip to the achievement of this EFA Goal:

- Free transport: Since 2005, all students are provided with free transport to travel to school and back. They also benefit from a concessionary rate when travelling outside school time and on other routes.
- Free textbooks are provided to needy students
- Government provides a full subsidy on fees for School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations for students on the Social Register of Mauritius<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>The Social Register of Mauritius (SRM) is meant to be a comprehensive database of potential and actual beneficiaries of social assistance programmes.

- A conditional cash transfer in the form of a monthly stipend is also paid to these families, provided their wards reckon a 90per cent or above attendance at schools.
- The Government Scholarship Schemes have been reviewed in 2013 and, out of the 68 now available (as against the 30 previously awarded), 24 are now awarded on a ***combination of academic merit and social criteria***, the latter being based on the family income.

### **(e) Institutional Rationalisation**

The vision for Education and Training in Mauritius has systematically placed a premium on education and employability. In the Government Programme 2005-2010, the vision was as follows:

*"[The] Government is committed to carrying out fundamental reforms in education towards a World Class Quality Education for All to enable young Mauritians to be employable in the new sectors of the economy, to have more fulfilling jobs and also to be competitive at the international level."*

In the late 1980s up till the early 2000s the IVTB alone shouldered the role of regulator, as well as those of facilitator and provider of TVET. The possibility for a conflict of interests was self-evident. Two new institutions, the MQA and the HRDC, were therefore set up by legislative Acts in order to eliminate this risk.

The REGULATORY role was entrusted to the MQA set up in 2001, and the FACILITATOR role to the HRDC instituted in 2003 and mandated to fulfil the following three main objectives:

- To promote human resource development at national level;
- To stimulate a culture of training and life-long learning; and
- To provide the necessary human resource thrust to transform the country's economy into a Knowledge Economy.

The IVTB for its part was transformed by a legislative Act into a training provider - the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD), through a merger of the IVTB and part of the ex-Technical School Management Trust Fund (TSMTF), another institution

involved in the provision of training. This helped to address the issue of duplication between the IVTB and the TSMTF while ensuring an effective coordination of the provision of TVET. The MITD was entrusted with the responsibility of promoting excellence in TVET and of increasing access through the setting up of new training centres. It was also called upon to assist in the apprenticeship of those who were, or would be employed in commercial, technical and vocational fields.

**(f) Second Chance Programme**

To address the issue of out-of-school youth, a Second Chance Programme was introduced in 2009. Its aim was to inculcate basic numeracy & literacy skills in those youngsters aged between 16-21 years who were not in education or employment. or, again, in training.

The 300-hour training programme aims at orientating them to vocational training programmes by developing their reading, writing and communication skills while laying strong emphasis on essential life and training skills and fostering in them a positive attitude. Students are provided with psychological and social back up and they are psychologically prepared for the world of work (Enrolment in this programme is shown in Table 3.2)

To encourage eligible candidates to follow the training programme, incentives in the form of a monthly stipend of Rs 1500, the refund of their bus fare and free learning materials are allocated to them. A free psychological support service is also made available.

**Table 3.2: Enrolment in Second Chance Programme**

Year	No. Enrolled		
	M	F	T
<b>2009</b>	203	144	347
<b>2010</b>	196	159	355
<b>2011</b>	216	117	333
<b>2012</b>	188	139	327
<b>2013</b>	170	74	244

**(g) An Education & Training Programme relevant to Youth**

A strong need has always been felt to overcome the mismatch between what is taught and the life skills needed for future citizenry. In other words, the curriculum had to be more relevant to ensure that students are able to relate their learning experiences with their immediate environment and prepare themselves for economic employability.

The premise is that if young people are to continue learning after the age of 16, they have to be provided with learning experiences and opportunities that meet their aspirations and match their abilities.

**(i) Curriculum & Assessment**

A review of National Curriculum Framework (Secondary) was undertaken in 2009 to come up with a curriculum more relevant to the emerging economic and social needs of the country and which would better prepare the youth to meet new challenges.

This led to:

- A new broad-based, flexible and responsive curriculum for Lower secondary;
- A broadening of the curricular base with the introduction of new subjects such as Travel and Tourism, Entrepreneurship Education and Marine Science;
- Institutionalising extra-curricular activities in schools by formalising them on the time table so as to help learners develop soft skills and be holistically developed to enable them live a well-balanced adult life. Learning areas comprise Value-based Education, Citizenship Education, Sexuality Education, among others
- New modes of assessment were devised to shift the focus from pure academic subjects to a blend of academic and technical subjects. The 'HSC Professional' will be piloted in January 2015 as a new qualification in the Mauritian educational system as a corollary to the traditional Cambridge HSC/A-level qualifications. Formal work placements are an integral part of the two- year course.



**(ii) Recognition of Prior Learning**

The implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been a seminal venture introduced in Mauritius so as to give acquired work experience its 'lettre de noblesse'. It has proved to be an invaluable asset in the reintegration of skilled workers into the education and training system and encouraging the concept of Lifelong Learning.

Pilot projects were conducted in the Tourism and Construction sectors in 2007 and 2008 respectively and, as a result of their success, RPL was subsequently launched at the national level in 2009. RPL has now been extended to all sectors of the Mauritian economy and is also being seen as a best practice to be shared with member states of the SADC.

**(iii) Work Placement for Lower VI and Vocational School Students**

Launched in 2007 with the aim of bridging the gap between the schooling system and the world of work, the Work Placement Programme for Lower VI and Vocational School students emphasises the importance of out of classroom career-related experiences for students through short term placement of 2-3 weeks during the school holidays. To date, as many as 4,760 students have successfully completed their placement in some 250 companies.

**(iv) Youth Employment Programme (YEP)**

This programme is aimed at extending job-specific training to graduates and other unemployed people aged between 16 and 30 years to enhance their skills and career prospects. During the financial year 2012, a number of employers were involved in the programme and unemployed persons had their placement in businesses and other economic concerns.

**(v) Career Orientation**

Work is underway to assess the current situation in terms of career guidance, counselling and management and come up with recommendations for an integrated career counselling system adapted to Mauritian needs.

## Improving adult literacy level

***Goal 4: Achieve a 50 per cent improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.***

### **4.0 Background**

Owing to the scarcity of natural resources, Mauritius has always had to rely largely on its human resource to sustain its economic growth. Growth in itself, however, depends mainly on the level of literacy and education attained by the population at large.

While the country is today aiming at making the successful transition from its current Middle Income Country status to a High Income one and while new economic areas – the Blue Economy, for instance—are being placed high on the development agenda, literacy rates have to be increased.

Mauritius is fortunate in that, even in the year 2000, i.e., at the onset of the EFA Goals, the literacy rate was already 85.0 percent as against 89.8 percent at the time of the last census in 2011.

However, it is noticeable in table 4.1 below that the illiteracy rate (10 percent) is at its peak for the 65+ age group.

**Table 4.1: Resident population 12 years of age and over, by literacy, age and sex - 1990, 2000 and 2011 Population Census**

Age (in years)	Literacy Rate								
	1990			2000			2011		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Total	80.8	85.6	76.1	85.0	88.7	81.5	89.8	92.3	87.3
12 - 14	91.6	90.6	92.7	96.7	96.0	97.5	98.8	98.5	99.1
15 - 19	91.5	90.7	92.3	95.4	94.4	96.4	98.6	98.2	98.9
20 - 24	90.9	90.7	91.1	93.8	93.0	94.5	97.7	97.1	98.2
25 - 29	89.7	90.4	89.1	92.6	92.2	93.0	95.6	95.5	95.7
30 - 34	87.6	90.1	85.0	91.0	91.1	91.0	94.5	94.0	95.1
35 - 39	83.3	88.5	77.9	89.6	90.3	88.9	93.2	92.7	93.7
40 - 44	77.8	86.4	69.2	87.2	90.1	84.3	91.5	91.5	91.5
45 - 49	70.0	80.7	59.8	82.3	88.6	75.9	90.4	90.9	89.9
50 - 54	62.1	73.7	51.1	76.4	86.1	67.2	88.3	90.8	85.8
55 - 59	58.8	69.9	48.1	68.6	80.8	57.5	84.4	90.0	79.0
60 - 64	55.7	68.5	43.9	60.0	72.5	49.2	78.7	88.0	70.4
65+	50.9	65.8	40.0	52.4	66.6	42.2	64.6	78.4	54.8

#### 4.1 Main Challenges in 2000 and Targets for 2015

The literacy rate in 2000 was 85 percent, with female literacy standing at 81.5 per cent as against 88.7 for male—the literacy gender gap being of 7.2 percentage points.

The Youth illiteracy rate (15– 24) was around 5.5 per cent in 2000, largely accounted for by the CPE push-out factor referred to earlier as well as the drop outs from the secondary sub-sector. These latter had a greater propensity to relapse into illiteracy, given their weak assimilation of literacy and numeracy skills.

The traditional focus of the Ministry of Education has been on the formal educational setup, and whatever little responsibility it had assumed for Adult literacy in the '90s was soon divested, with different Ministries and NSAs gradually assuming overall responsibility for such programmes in line with their several mandates.

With time, however, the benefits of having a panoply of interventions from different sources to remedy post-schooling age Youth and Adult illiteracy have been offset by the absence of a coordination mechanism or body.

#### **Target:**

***Reduce further the illiteracy rate***

## 4.2 Progress towards Achievement of EFA goal 4

### (a) Adult Literacy Rate

The Adult literacy rate improved from 85 per cent in 2000 to 89.8 percent in 2011, the improvement being higher among females with a decrease in the gender gap from 7.2 to 5.0 percentage point (Table 4.2)

Table 4.2: Adult Literacy rate

SEX	Year 2000	Year 2011	Difference
Male	88.7	92.3	+ 3.6
Female	81.5	87.3	+5.8
<b>Both sexes</b>	<b>85.0</b>	<b>89.8</b>	<b>+4.8</b>

### (b) Youth Literacy rate

The Youth Literacy Rate has increased from 94.5 percent in 2000 to 98.1 per cent in 2011, representing an increase of 3.6 percentage points as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Youth Literacy rate

	Year 2000	Year 2011	Progress
<b>Youth Literacy Rate</b>	94.5	98.1	+3.6
<b>Male Literacy Rate</b>	93.7	97.7	+4.0
<b>Female Literacy Rate</b>	95.4	98.6	+3.2

### Contributory Factors

- Extension of compulsory schooling age from 12 to 16 as from 2005 that also resulted in increased potential for learning.

- Greater equity of access to education programmes across the sub-sectors through targeted measures. Of special note is the significant increase in enrolment in the pre-primary sub-sector(the foundations for later learning) that jumped from 85 per cent in 2006 to 98 percent in 2013.
- Government’s policy to eradicate illiteracy through the provision of:
  - Comprehensive adult literacy programmes and continuing education for all adults.
  - Adequate courses for Training of Trainers in adult literacy.
  - Subsidy to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) involved in adult literacy programmes

### 4.3 Implementation of National strategies to achieve EFA Goal 4

#### (a) Adult Literacy Programmes

During the period 2000 - 2014, policy steps were taken to improve adult literacy rate through the implementation of a series of programmes and initiatives in line with the vision of ‘Putting People First’. The following sub-sections outline the considerable progress made towards adult literacy in Mauritius.

#### (b) Second Chance Programme

As from 2009, a Second Chance Programme<sup>4</sup> is being implemented. The modules comprise Life Skills Management, Basic Literacy and Numeracy and Advanced Literacy & Numeracy modules + an ICT-related module. This serves the purpose of preparing youth for future employability.

#### (c) NGO- driven Adult Literacy Programmes

A number of Adult literacy programmes are run by Non-Government Organisations and NSAs to improve Basic Functional Literacy and Numeracy to enable them to cope with difficulties encountered in everyday life.

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<sup>4</sup> See page 38 above

One of the funding mechanisms to enable NSAs to fulfil their mandate is the support provided by the Development Partners (the donor community) through the Ministry of Finance that assumes the coordination role.

**(d) Other Adult Literacy programmes**

Different literacy programmes in Mauritius pursue the following several objectives:

- To help citizens to learn how to read and write.
- To support lifelong learning and promote sustainable methods of developing reading and writing skills.
- To develop and maintain a skilled labour force to support economic growth in Mauritius.
- To address the disparity between male and female adult literacy rate (conducted under the aegis of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority).
- Literacy for women between the ages of 18 and 80 across Mauritius conducted by the National Women Council, operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child development and Family Welfare. ( Since its inception in 1986, literacy levels have improved and the stark difference between the literacy rate for men and women has significantly decreased.)

*(Appendix 1 shows a list of other programmes conducted within the Corporate Social Responsibility Programme.)*

## Gender Parity and equality in education

***Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality***

### 5.0 Background

According to UNESCO's EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004, gender equality refers to the notion of boys and girls experiencing the same advantages or disadvantages in attending school, receiving teaching methods, curricula and academic orientation, and producing equal learning achievement and subsequent life opportunities.

In Mauritius, the principle of equality between men and women is enshrined in the Constitution. Gender equality has been integrated in national legislation through the Sex Discrimination Act, the Protection from Domestic Violence Act and, lately, the Equal Opportunities Act. Institutional mechanisms have been strengthened for more effective service delivery and support for women. A Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare reflects successive Governments' commitment to place women's development high on their agenda, as a key route to growth and development. A National Gender Action Plan outlines a series of measures for the empowerment of women.

Gender has been mainstreamed in national policies, and, more specifically, in the process of poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth to overcome the feminization of poverty and unemployment.

The National Gender Policy Framework, 2008 strives to fulfil a vision of

*“a society in which all girls and boys, women and men live together in dignity, safety, mutual respect, harmony and social justice, there is an enabling environment in which they are able to achieve their full potential, in full enjoyment of their human rights, are equal partners in taking decisions to shape economic, social and cultural development, in determining the values that guide and sustain such development and equally enjoy its benefits”.*

## 5.1 Main Challenges in 2000 and Targets for 2015

Given that Education policies show no overt discrimination against the schooling of girls, there were no major explicit challenges perceived in the provision of education as such. Where access is concerned, there were no gender gaps or disparities in enrolment at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels

The gender parity index at the primary level has been constant at 1.0 since the year 2000.

Implicitly, however, the curriculum did carry biases in a subtle manner that reinforced gender stereotypes.

Equally, learners showed a gender preference for specific streams of learning at secondary level.

### Target:

***Eliminate gender disparity in enrolment and in learning outcomes at primary and secondary education.***

## 5.2 Progress towards Achieving EFAgoal 5

- The gender parity index in enrolment has remained constant over the years at around 1.0
- Boys and girls are offered the same curriculum in settings that are co-educational at primary and mostly single sex at secondary level.
- Girls' performance in examinations has been noticeably ahead of that of boys—which may give indications that boys are placed at a disadvantage in achievement. A study is forthcoming to develop research-based evidence to better understand what drives gender differences in academic performance.
- As part of the curriculum renewal process, gender stereotypes have been removed from the school curriculum and school textbooks.
- It is pertinent to remain alert on the issue so as to address the fundamental issue of equity. The EHRSP 2008-2020 recommends that an education sector gender policy consistent with the principles and operational strategies of the National Gender



Policy Framework be developed to ensure equal opportunities are given to both sexes to achieve gender equality in learning achievement. Same has been developed.

### 5.3 Implementation of National strategies to achieve EFA Goal 5

Facilitation measures pertain to the following:

- Enabling legislation: free and compulsory for all up to the age of 16
- Favourable policy initiatives ( free transport / bus facilities to school children/ free meals)
- Sustained budgetary support
- Infrastructural facilities with construction of new schools and facilities so as to provide an adequate number of seats for both sexes
- The Equity Issue: Programmes and Projects falling under the national Eradication of Absolute Poverty Programme and the National Empowerment Fund as well as the *ZEP Strategy* and the *New Pre-Vocational Programme* show equal benefits for male and female learners alike.

## Quality of Education

***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.***

### Background

Education policies in Mauritius rest on the major pillars of increasing access, broadening equity, ensuring relevance and promoting learner achievement. The quality dimension cuts across all programmes and projects and a strong regulatory system is in place to ensure adherence to norms and standards.

#### 6.1 Main Challenges in 2000 and Targets for 2015

- There was a wide disparity in the provision of Pre-Primary education, with the inevitable impact on the quality dimension.
- The end-of-primary cycle examination, the CPE carried the dual functions of Certification and Selection for entry into prized secondary schools. Qualitative improvement of learning came out second best in a context that placed a premium on teaching to the text and the propagation of an exam-based pedagogy.
- While pre-service training had always been a requirement for entry into primary school teaching, this was not the case for the secondary sub-sector, with even in-service programmes being reduced to the strict minimum.
- Despite the presence of an Inspectorate body, there was inadequate monitoring of the teaching / learning process in all three sub-sectors.
- Automatic promotion prevailed in the primary sub-sector, with no institutionalised remedial education.
- Here were low rates of completion of upper secondary education as demonstrated by the cohort analysis shown above. The qualitative nature of the output was equally on the low side.
- There was the lack of a sustained capacity building programme for School Leaders.
- No regular and systematic evaluation of *learning* actually took place.

## 6.2 Progress towards Achieving EFA goal 6

### (a) Pre-Primary

- Strengthening of the institutional and regulatory framework for the provision of early childhood care and education.
- Measures introduced to reduce disparity among pre-schools.
- Development of a National Curriculum Framework for the Pre-Primary subsector.
- Efforts made at the Pre-Primary level to standardize the teaching and learning and to adopt the best practices most suited to the overall development of the child. In addition, an assessment tool is being developed to ensure readiness of the children for primary education.
- Strengthening of partnership with parents through a Parent Empowerment Programme.

### (b) Primary Education

- Elaboration for the first time of a Primary Curriculum Framework and a competence-based primary school curriculum for improved relevance, among other things, in 2009 with an inbuilt holistic system of assessment to ensure learning outcomes are met. The Curriculum Framework is today being reviewed
- Baseline Profiling at the start of primary schooling to give an indication of the learner's acquisition of skills and competencies at the end of the pre-school cycle and aiming at addressing learning deficits for all children to start on the same footing.
- Implementation of Diagnostic Assessment at Grade 3 to map the weaknesses and strengths of pupils after two years of primary schooling for early remediation.
- Implementation of a Remedial Education Strategy to provide intervention measures for improvement in attainment level. The strategy looks at a wider range of consideration besides the cognitive; it targets the physical, social, psychological and mental development of the learner.

- Introduction of a Continuous Assessment Scheme with its merits of regularity, feedback and performance-based tasks to make students become better learners, develop self-confidence and perform autonomously.
- Undertaking a Summer/Winter School Project during school vacation with the core philosophy of providing *“targeted supplementary education in reading, writing and arithmetic for students who have not achieved the required proficiency.”* First initiated in December 2011 for schools selected on the basis of CPE pass rates of less than 50 per cent.
- Introduction of Mother Tongue as a support language to facilitate the learning process.
- Participation of Mauritius in regional and international assessment studies like SACMEQ and PASEC (and the PISA study in 2010 for the Secondary) that help both to provide a skill profile of learners and serve as a means of measuring national progress against international benchmarks.

**(c) Secondary Education**

- New Curriculum Framework elaborated for the subsector in 2010
- National Assessment at Form III introduced on a pilot mode in a few secondary schools in 2010 and rolled out to all secondary schools since 2013. This National Assessment at Form III is an annual evaluation mechanism that helps to measure achievement levels of students in Mathematics, English, French, Computer Studies/Literacy, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, after the first three years of secondary schooling.
- Co- and Extra-curricular activities now a mandatory part of the curriculum of both Primary and Secondary sub-sectors to promote a healthy learning environment and for each child to realise his/her potential. In the secondary sub-sector, activity periods have been formalized by being scheduled on the school timetable since 2009. This has transformed schools in that the integration of activities in the

curriculum creates a balance with academic studies, unleashes the potential of students and provides them with opportunities to develop their hidden talents and their multiple intelligences.

**(d) Capacity Building**

Induction and continuing professional development programmes to enable the different cadres to better adapt themselves to the posts occupied as well as refine their capacity for effective deliverables.

**(e) Institutional Support**

***(i) Setting up of the Quality Assurance and Inspectorate Division at the Ministry to, inter alia,***

- Provide anational understanding of what School Leaders and Educators should do to support and improve quality teaching and student attainment as from their point of entry;
- Describe levels of teaching quality to which teachers might aspire and assure development opportunities; and
- Provide a basis for national recognition of quality of teaching and alignment of standards.

***(ii) Setting up of the National Education Counselling Service (NECS)***

This acts as a support service to promote the psychological and social well-being of pre-primary, primary and secondary school children and their families through a wide range of integrated services.

## 7.0 Prospects for post-2015

There are a number of elements that seem to indicate the direction the Post 2015 Development Agenda is likely to take in so far as Education is concerned. The three central thrusts of the Education First initiative of United Nations Secretary-General BAN Ki-moon -- putting every child in school, improving the quality of learning, and fostering global citizenship—deeply echo the ‘Learning for All’ thrust that Mauritius is planning to further.

Accordingly, the major challenges that have to be faced and overcome in 2015 and beyond relate to:

- ❖ Making Pre-Primary education compulsory for all ( ages 3-5).

This rests on

- Overcoming the disparity among the private pre-primary schools in terms of provision of the quality of pre-school experience would have to be overcome;
- Strengthening the institutional framework and set up proper quality assurance mechanisms;and
- Fostering Continuous Professional Development and accelerated research in the domain.

- ❖ 9 Years of continuous basic education as a stepping stone to achieving Universal Secondary Education.

- ❖ (i) Institutionalising an assessment and evaluation of the schooling system across the sub-sectors (right from pre-primary through to secondary) so as to gauge progress in learning outcomes.

This entails the necessity to elaborate and establish standards of learning at the national, institutional and individual learner levels.

- ❖ Improving equity in the system to take on board, illustratively,
  - the concerns of learners across the spectrum of learning abilities as well as those with severe disabilities.

- the removal of the stigma of TVET seen as a track fit only for the academically less endowed and representing a 'dead end' : a greater articulation is to be created between the TVET and academic pathways.
- ❖ Addressing the issue of underperformance of boys as compared to that of girls to achieve gender equality in learning outcomes.
- ❖ Increasing investment in Education: Government has to contemplate a progressive increase in the share of public investment in education—and ensuring that the system provides the value-added dimension through improved efficiency and effectiveness as well as greater accountability.
- ❖ Strengthening the management of the education system with a move towards greater decentralisation and institutional autonomy.
- ❖ Further strengthening the Outreach project –through a Parental empowerment programme that will be central to the School Plus Concept <sup>5</sup>
- ❖ There is an urgent need to standardize the instruments and tools currently used to determine the rate of literacy. Conventional methods need to be revisited and the tools so sharpened as to provide an empirical evidence of the literacy levels attained by different sections of the population.
- ❖ Entrusting the responsibility for the taking over of the coordination for the implementation of youth and adult literacy/ education programmes by the Ministry of Education & HR. That would help set standards for non-governmental organizations conducting such programmes.
- ❖ Emphasising the centrality of Education for Sustainable Development in policy formulation and strategic implementation.
- ❖ Creating conditions for skills upgrading and skills development to fulfill the vision of transforming Mauritius into an HIC.

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<sup>5</sup>The School Plus project aims at establishing a bridge, an interface, between the school and the family for an improved dialogue between the two.

## References

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## LITERACY PROGRAMMES WITHIN THE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAMME

SN	PROGRAMME	DETAILS
1	Basic Adult Literacy	Launched in January 2010 under the aegis of NEF/EAP (National Empowerment Foundation/Employee Assistance Programme) to – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- impart basic literacy to people having low educational achievements,</li> <li>- promote self-reliance, and</li> <li>- give exposure to English and French language to beneficiaries and to empower women for a better integration, in both social and professional life.</li> </ul>
2	Empowerment Programme	To provide placement for training for unemployment & retrenched workers and to support unemployed women in micro business projects.
3	Eradication of Absolute Poverty Programme	To provide outreach facilities in the 229 pockets of poverty in terms of support to pre-primary school children not attending school, social and life skills, integrated health support, remedial education, adult literacy, upgrading of living environment, etc.
4	Integrated Social Development Programme	To assist in integrated community development of vulnerable families with a view to empowering them by providing support in terms of civic education and social housing.

## 3.5 OTHER LITERACY PROGRAMMES

SN	PROGRAMME	DETAILS
1	Open Community School for Adult Learning	The first Open Community School for Adult Learning was launched by the <i>Bureau de l'Education Catholique</i> in 2010, with some 250 adults aged 20 to 50 years wishing to resume their high school studies.
2	Adult Literacy for Entrepreneurship Development	Launched on 08 September 2008 by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare in collaboration with the National Women's Council.

		<p>Objectives: To enhance the self-confidence of women to enable them to engage in income generating activities, and to provide them with basic skills in bookkeeping, budgeting and filling of appropriate forms.</p> <p>ProgrammeRationale: to facilitate women’s participation in the labour market by enhancing their employability and their capacity to set up small enterprises.</p> <p>The duration of the module is four months.</p>
4	Adult Literacy Programme run by the NWC	<p>Launched in 1986 with the object of providing basic skills in writing, reading and numeracy to women who have not been to school.</p> <p>For the past years, some 400 women are being trained annually. Instructors run classes at Women's Centres, Social Welfare Centres and Community Centres in both rural and urban areas and they are employed either on a month-to-month basis or on sessional basis. Contents of Level 1 and Level 2 of the programme are at Appendix 3.</p>
5	Educational facilities in penal institutions	<p>Education in penal institutions forms part of the Special Education Needs (SEN) segment existing in the community. Education is one of the basic rights of detainees, therefore each institution is equipped with an education centre where facilities are provided to detainees in respect of basic computer literacy programme, primary level education, adult education, and distance learning courses (See Appendix 3).</p>
6	Adult Literacy Training Programme	<p>The recruitment of Adult Literacy Instructor/ Instructress should be from among holders of the Cambridge School Certificate with credit in at least five subjects. New recruits should follow a course in Adult Literacy Training Programme. The Adult Literacy Instructor/Instructress are required, to run adult literacy classes for the non-literates and motivate women on the benefits of literacy and further education.</p>
7	English Literacy using IT (ELIT)	<p>ELIT project was initiated in 2005 with a seed grant from UNESCO. It is a face-to-face training of adults using ICT. Above</p>

	<p>conducted by the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC)</p>	<p>1000 women and 40 men above 16 years old were awarded a certificate for the period 2007 to 2013. More than 100 trainers were trained to deliver the course.</p> <p>Purpose: To enable participants improve their competencies in functional English Literacy so as to participate actively in their socio-economic environment.</p> <p>Target group: women aged 16 and above with a few years of primary schooling, at least up to standard V.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To speak, read and write fluently in English.</li> <li>• To use basic productivity concepts in their daily life.</li> <li>• To use technology for communication in their daily life.</li> <li>• To use technology as a tool for learning.</li> <li>• To develop a strategy for their professional life.</li> </ul> <p>Duration: 120 hours spread over 3 months.</p> <p>-Pilot tested in 2006 with the collaboration of the Ministry of Women’s Right, Family Welfare and Child Development,  -In 2007 the project was launched inviting NGOs to take ownership. For the period 2012-2013, Microsoft Indian Ocean Islands and French Pacific sponsored training of 10 NGOs through the collaboration with E-Inclusion Foundation. The project was kicked off in 2012 with the training of trainers in May 2012 with at least one participant from each NGO. The ELIT course was then delivered relying on the ability of each NGO to organize and administer the training. At August 2013, five NGOs were able to complete the course.</p>
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