



SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MAURITIUS

THE POLICY AND STRATEGY DOCUMENT



Pledge in favour of the child

"In consideration of our love and care
for the 350,000 Mauritian children aged between 0-18,

We, the Citizens of the Republic of Mauritius,
Recognise that every Mauritian child has inherent rights:

...To live, to be nourished, to grow healthy,
To receive care and support from their parents
...To learn and develop to his/her full potential,
To be protected from abuse and exploitation, to be safe
To be informed and to be heard.

In our capacity of adults, we are the child rights' duty-bearers.

Thus, it is our ardent commitment and
We will strive to the best of our ability for these rights
To be fully realised by the year 2015.

We pledge for a 'Republic Fit for Children'

Where every child will be given the opportunity to
Grow to his/her potential and become a responsible adult citizen."

Abstract from the pledge in favour of the child:
National Policy for children for the years 2003-2015

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, Mauritius



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This document is the end product of cross-wide consultations that proved to be most rewarding, stimulating and innovative. The five ad-hoc Technical Committees set up in 2005 by the Special Education Needs Unit, have worked with gusto, pitching in with ideas that are both idealistic and realistic. Many of the committee members had already contributed to the Recommendations for Special Needs Education by the Task Force set up in June 2001.

Indeed, this Policy and Strategy Paper is both the 'Head' and the 'Heart' product of all the persons who believe that the provision of educational services for a child with special needs is not an act of charity but a human right which needs our immediate attention. Parents who have a child with a disability or severe learning difficulty know how hard it is to nurture, protect and provide all opportunities for that child to become as autonomous as possible. They cannot be left alone to struggle for educational services when education is in fact a basic human right.

Similarly, special educational services are needed for children who have special learning needs including those children with exceptional gifts or talents as well as children who have learning difficulties arising from social problems.

Actions that will follow this Policy and Strategy Document will be a reflection of how our society takes care of its most vulnerable members, as a responsible, caring and humane adult community.

Special thanks to the Editing Team composed of Directors, Technical Advisers and Officers of the Ministry of Education, as well as our closest collaborators who have been firm believers of the necessity of this programme for children with special educational needs.

On behalf of all children with special educational needs.

Thank you

Foreword

Minister of Education & Human Resources

In the past, in the absence of a well-defined policy, special needs education has been relatively neglected. Even when education was made free and government was funding a few special education needs schools, it was still very difficult for all children to have access to special education needs institutions.

Government is committed to leaving no child of our Republic behind. Through this National Policy and Strategy Paper on Special Education Needs, the way being shown forward is clear. The specific educational needs of all children, including those with disabilities and major learning difficulties, as well as those children who are gifted and talented, will be looked into. An inclusive educational system, starting in the early years of development, and aimed at responding to the educational needs of each student through a child-centred pedagogical approach and a flexible and adapted curriculum will help each child of Mauritius develop to his or her full potential.

The task has only just begun and improvement must be brought in all sectors, aiming at an educational system catering to the needs of each and every one. As a start, the focus of this Policy and Strategy Paper is on the special educational needs of children with disabilities. It provides for the inclusion of these children in our educational system through appropriate services, in partnership with relevant Ministries and Non-Government Organisations.

I would like to reiterate this Government's commitment to give all the children of Mauritius equal opportunities for quality education - on the basis of their human right to education, as well as our Government's moral and ethical obligation to protect our children who are more at risk of being excluded and marginalised. The educational grant allocated to dedicated NGOs providing relevant special needs educational services is a first step in bringing children with disabilities at par with their peers in mainstream. My Ministry will furthermore take some affirmative actions for this sector and aim at providing appropriate support services in our quest for world quality education.

My sincere wish is that all our partners and stakeholders in education keep up working together for the good of each and every child of our Republic.



Dharam Gokhool
Minister

March 2006



Honourable Dharam Gokhool



"Every child has

- the right to special attention for his physical, mental and social development
- the right to education and to special attention in case of physical or mental disability
- the right to free education and to leisure activities
- the right to be protected from all forms of cruelty, negligence and exploitation
- the right to priority assistance in all circumstances."

Abstract in The Convention on the Rights of the Child,
General Assembly of the United Nations, 1989.



Executive Summary

1. After multi-sectoral consultations with all stakeholders and partners and further to the
 - political will and
 - political commitment

of the government of Mauritius regarding special educational needs, this Policy and Strategy Document is founded on the following:

Rationale for the Special Educational Needs Policy and Strategy Document of Mauritius

- i. Children with special educational needs refer to
 - children with disabilities: physical, sensorial, intellectual...
 - children with specific learning needs (specialised learning needs for gifted children or children who have major learning difficulties)
 - children who have learning difficulties arising from social problems (vulnerable groups).
- ii. Focus will be mainly on the provision of special education services in
 - the mainstream schools where children with special educational needs have been integrated and are learning side by side with all other children
 - the Integrated Special Education Needs Units known as Integrated Classes created on mainstream primary school premises
 - the specialised institutions or Special Education Needs schools in the private sector
 - the specialised state sector institutions for special needs and rehabilitation.



2. The shared vision regarding the education of children with special needs rests on the following general policy guidelines:

General Policy Guidelines:

- i. Parity and Equity regarding quality educational services.
- ii. Inclusion and integration of all children in our educational system.
- iii. Inter-sectoral partnership with all relevant Ministries, private sector and parents for collaborative holistic services.



3. In order to create an inclusive educational system, the government, through the Ministry of Education & Human Resources, will embrace the following specific policy guidelines for action:

Specific Policy Guidelines:

- i. Access to education and recognition of our children with special educational needs having the same right and enjoying equality of education opportunities as their counterparts.
- ii. Relevance and Quality through the setting-up of structured systems aimed at meeting each child's needs.
- iii. Achievement in terms of teaching and learning as well as provision of support services within the classroom and the school through the collaboration of all school personnel and the multi-disciplinary team: educational, social, psychological, therapeutic and medical...

4. To support the special educational needs policy paper, the Special Education Needs Unit recommends the following:

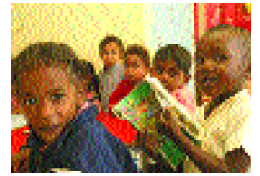
Five Strategy Directions:

- i. The Institutional Framework
- ii. The Regulatory Framework
- iii. Human Resource Development and Capacity Building
- iv. Information, Communication and Documentation
- v. Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

1. The Institutional Framework

The Special Education Needs Unit will operate within a proper institutional framework to

- Co-ordinate all existing Special Education Needs schools or specialised schools as known in Mauritius
- Facilitate provision of services, starting with the early years of development and beyond
- Network both at local and international levels for inter-ministerial and organisations' collaboration
- Work with the school community, stakeholders and parents
- Set up a user-friendly mechanism such as a National Special Education Needs Resource Centre that will act as a one-stop-shop providing various services at one premise.



2. The Regulatory Framework

A regulatory framework will be established with a view to

- Ensuring standard quality through proper mandatory norms in order to safeguard the holistic development of the child
- Facilitating registration of existing Special Education Needs schools
- Upgrading existing services
- Formulating recommendations for entitlement to grants.

3. Human Resource Development and Capacity Building

The Special Education Needs Unit will

- Develop human resources for special needs education
- Support special learning skills in the field of disabilities through in-service and immersion courses
- Facilitate, through the proper institution, standard pre-service training to pre-primary and primary school teachers
- Help to develop and evolve a component related to disabilities and severe learning difficulties as well as detection and appropriate pedagogical approach
- Facilitate specialisation in a specific field of disability or learning difficulty.

4. Information, Communication and Documentation

To start this special education needs programme, actions will be geared towards

- On-going information, communication and documentation
- Campaigns to inform the public, parents and all stakeholders
- Information compiled in a Directory of services and setting up of an Information Desk
- Database and evaluation with the aim of improving the special educational needs sector.



5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Development

Key actions will be in

- Setting up a Special Education Needs Intervention Team with medical and para-medical personnel
- Recruiting, training or contracting personnel for detection and early screening
- Developing an evaluation system with indicators and a referral system aiming at giving each child the best possible opportunities for his/her integrated development, protection and education.

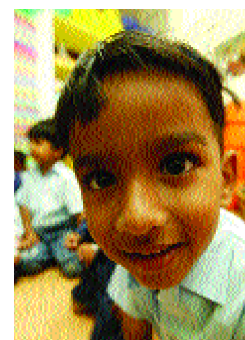


Budget Provision:

The four-fold increase in budget 2005-2006 aimed at achieving parity in treatment for the pupils in special needs schools as compared to those in mainstream schools. Successful implementation of the above strategies for the provision of appropriate support services is following. Necessary momentum is being given to the Special Education Needs sector, in partnership with existing structures, aiming at facilitating and upgrading existing services as well as expanding the services to include all the children with special educational needs.

"Early childhood is a crucial time of development for all children, including those with special educational needs."

Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989),
World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand 1990)
The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education
(Salamanca, Spain 1994)



Introduction

- 1.1 Consultation on Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education in Mauritius started at all levels in a multi-sectoral approach during the last few years. The latest documents produced are the following:
- Recommendations for Special Needs Education (Task Force 2001)
 - Position Paper on children with special needs (July - August 2004)
 - Report on Seminar on Inclusive Education, The Way Forward (6-10 December 2004)
 - Report on Seminar on Strategizing for Inclusion (26th January 2005) whereby 1st Draft of Strategy Document on Special Education Needs and Inclusive Education was given to the Ministry of Social Security and the Ministry of Education.
- 1.2 Recognising that children with special needs must also attend school and be provided with the best possible pedagogical services according to their specific needs, the Special Education Needs Unit has had the priority task of evolving a national policy and strategic plan regarding inclusion and special educational needs.
- 1.3 "The concept of 'children with special educational needs' extends beyond those who may be included in handicapped categories to cover those who are failing in school for a wide variety of other reasons that are known to be likely to impede a child's optimal progress."
- "These children are in need of additional support which depends on the extent to which schools need to adapt their curriculum, teaching and organisation and/or to provide additional human or material resources so as to stimulate efficient and effective learning..."
(<http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php>)
- 1.4 However, in the case of Mauritius, the majority of our children aged 5 to 16 being already in mainstream school, except for those with disabilities, this Policy Paper addresses in priority children with special educational needs due to specific learning disabilities and major learning difficulties arising from social problems.
- 1.5 As a first step towards greater commitment in this sector, this Government acknowledges that on the principle of equity and parity, all children are equal and deserve equity in treatment as to their educational needs. This becomes all the more necessary as education is now free and compulsory up to the age of 16 years and is made further possible in the context of in-depth educational reforms providing free transport to school and aiming at World Class Quality education.



1.6 As declared in the President's Speech in July 2005, the Government of Mauritius will "take steps to help pupils who experience learning difficulties... and will also implement a scheme for disabled children to meet their specific requirements." (par. 153) This plan of action will be closely linked to the Centre for Early Childhood Development (par. 152) and to the Regional Health and Education Councils (par.154) to be set up in order to co-ordinate all issues pertaining to the holistic development of school-going children.

1.7 Hence, this Policy Paper outlines the general policy guidelines regarding the provision of educational services to children with disabilities and their inclusion in our educational system:

- Parity and Equity regarding quality educational services
- Inclusion and integration of all children in our educational system
- Inter-sectoral partnership with all relevant Ministries, private sector and parents for collaborative holistic services.

1.8 This Paper highlights the present situation regarding the education of children with disabilities and the education of children with major learning difficulties. The major changes which have been brought in the sector in year 2005 will be underlined.

1.9 This document outlines the specific policy guidelines such as

- Access and Equity
- Relevance and Quality, and
- Achievement through appropriate teaching and learning as well as provision of multi-disciplinary support services in the field of special educational needs.

1.10 This document aims at providing a strategic plan to make access to inclusive and special needs education a reality for children with special educational needs.

It sets out

- the Institutional framework and
- the Regulatory framework

in order to facilitate the operation of the Special Education Needs sector which, for the past 35 years, has been run mostly by Non-Government Organisations.

It defines some priority actions pertaining to

- Human Resource Development and Capacity Building
- Information, Communication and Documentation
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

1.11 These actions have to be considered if quality services are to be provided in this sector - an uncharted world to all those working in the mainstream. Special needs education is an area which has not been sufficiently looked into in Mauritius. Strategies and priority actions will be based on what has been achieved in the public and private sectors in terms of special educational needs services. The Special Education Needs Unit will build on this in order to provide better access and quality educational services.

1.12 This document goes into the budget provision for special needs education. As a first step towards greater commitment in this sector, the Government has acknowledged that all children are equal and deserve equity in treatment. This becomes all the more necessary because Government has recently made the mainstream free education system compulsory up to the age of 16 years in the context of in-depth educational reforms. The Government is now addressing the difficulties encountered in the provision of a fair and equitable schooling system for children with special needs who have still been paying school fees up to now because the school they attend is not grant-in-aid or partially grant-in-aid.

1.13 The Government is setting the foundation for building a major programme in this sector:

- Professionals have been involved in designing with parents and educators the Policy and Strategy Document.
- Foundations have been laid with policy guidelines.
- Five pillars/strategy directions are proposed to support the programme.
- Budget provision has been made to start the programme.

1.14 Inclusive education is seen here as a major process which facilitates successful education. Given the proper means to support the programme, all children with special educational needs will be able to develop to their full potential.



1.15 An action plan is proposed for

- 2005-2006
- 2007-2010
- 2010-2015

to enable effective implementation of the national policy for children with special educational needs both at national level and within the school system.



"The learning needs of the disabled demand special attention. Steps need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the education system."

World Declaration on Education For All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990, article 3.5)

Present Situation

2.1 Children with disabilities receiving an education

The focus of this Policy and Strategy Document being on children with special educational needs due to disabilities, it is good to know the following about special needs education in Mauritius. Henceforth, for easier reading, Special Education Needs schools for children with disabilities or Specialised Schools (Ecoles Spécialisées) will be referred to as SEN schools.

In year 2004, there were

- A known figure of around 100 children with disabilities integrated individually in mainstream primary and secondary schools.
- 684 children with disabilities attending the 14 Special Education Needs (SEN) schools or the 9 Integrated Units or classrooms on the premises of the mainstream schools (3 of these Integrated Units are run by the Ministry of Education and all the other SEN schools are run by 11 NGOs recognised and partially grant-aided by the Ministry of Education).
- 550 children attending some other 12 SEN schools or day-care centres waiting for their registration.
- 700 children attending some 16 schools set up in a network of non-formal education or 'Development Centres', most of the pupils having dropped out of mainstream because of major learning difficulties or social problems, and some of them with physical, mental and sensorial disabilities.

2.2 Children with disabilities still at home

Many other children cannot attend SEN schools or Specialised Schools because

- there is no SEN school which can cater to their needs in the region where they live
- they are on the waiting list of the existing SEN schools which have limited seat capacity as well as limited human, material and financial resources
- they are not informed of possible existing educational facilities
- education of this child with special needs is not thought to be important.

2.3 Classification of disabilities as per the Ministry of Social Security

The Ministry of Social Security, in 2004, surveyed approximately 3000 children under 18 years old with disabilities (i.e. 1 % of school-aged population). Their special needs are due to disabilities ranging from specific deficiencies such as motor, physical, visual, auditory, intellectual or combined and multiple handicaps as a result of birth defects, illness or accident. The disabilities as classified by the Ministry of Social Security are namely:

- Autism
- Deafness and Hearing Impairment
- Visual Impairments
- Intellectual Impairment
- Orthopedic and Physical Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability



Speech and Language Impairments
 Serious Emotional Disturbance
 Severe and Multiple Disabilities
 Down's Syndrome
 Cerebral Palsy
 Epilepsy



2.4 Some estimates

The Master Plan for the year 2000 (MOESR, 1991) mentioned that about 6000 children needed special education. The Action Plan - For a New Education System in Mauritius (MOESR, 1998) gave an estimate of 5000 children of pre-primary and primary school-going children, aged 3 to 12 years, needing special attention because of some form of handicap. If world statistics are to give any indication, the population of school-aged children born with disabilities is generally in the order of 3%, that is, for Mauritius, an estimate of ± 10 000 children and youngsters aged 3 to 18 years. UNICEF world statistics also state that 10% of children are born with or acquire a disability (World Health Organization, WHO 2001a). Our school-aged population (aged 3 to 20) at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels for the Republic of Mauritius (Mauritius and Rodrigues) was 278,185 in 2004. (Digest of Education Statistics 2004).

Table 1: Total enrolment in mainstream schools in year 2004

Enrolment	No. of boys	No. of girls	TOTAL	
Pre-Primary	19,120	18,363	37,483	
Primary	64,019	62,207	126,226	
Secondary Academic	50,910	55,078	105,988	
Secondary Pre-Vocational	5,457	3,031	8,488	
TOTAL ENROLMENT Republic of Mauritius			278,185	Projection for no. of children with SEN
				10% = 27,819
				3% = 8,346
				1% = 2,782

Source: Digest of Education Statistics 2004, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

Table 2: Some known estimates regarding number of children with special educational needs

Year	Source	Age range	Estimate
1991	Master Plan for Year 2000, MOESR		6,000
1998	Action Plan - For a New Education System in Mauritius, MOESR	3-12	5,000
2004	Survey, Ministry of Social Security	0-18	3,000

2.5 Special Education Needs Schools in Mauritius

2.5.1 Specialised Government Schools

As far back as in the 1950's, three Specialised Government Schools were set up by an Act of Parliament. These schools are still run by NGOs but funded by Government. These schools are namely the

- The School for the Deaf founded by the Society for the Welfare of the Deaf (1965).
- The School for the Blind founded by the Society for the Welfare of the Blind, which was later renamed Lois Lagesse Trust Fund (1946).

- The School for Educationally Sub-Normal Children (ESN) founded by the Mauritius Mental Health Association (1958).

2.5.2 Specialised Integrated Government Units

There are two Specialised Integrated Government Units established on the premises of mainstream primary government schools and one other Government Unit, run by the Ministry of Education

- The Government Integrated Unit for children with intellectual disabilities in Goodlands
- The Government Integrated Unit for children with intellectual disabilities at Solferino
- The Government Unit for children with intellectual disabilities at Stanley.

and two other Specialised Integrated Units for children funded by the Ministry of Education but run by NGOs.

- The Integrated Unit for children who are deaf at Goodlands
- The Integrated Unit for children who are blind at Moka.

In year 2004, there was a total of 87 pupils in the Government SEN schools and 63 in the Specialised Integrated Units. These children benefit from free education as all their peers in the mainstream system. The buildings, furniture and equipment are provided by government... Mainstream primary teachers are posted there. The children benefit from books and any other facilities that other children in the primary schools get. The per-capita spending for the children attending these SEN schools is more than the recurrent per-capita in the publicly funded mainstream schools due to the smaller teacher:pupil ratio.

However, the majority of children with special education needs due to their disabilities attend SEN schools run by NGOs. In year 2004, more than 1000 pupils were attending these institutions.

2.5.3 Special Education Needs Schools run by Non-Government Organisations

The first school for children with mental disabilities was founded in 1970 by the Association de Parents d'Enfants Inadaptés de l'île Maurice (APEIM). As years went by, other NGOs were set up. Parents with the help of friends started running private Special Educational Needs Schools or Specialised schools.

These private SEN schools are

- non-fee paying or charging nominal fees depending on the donations the NGOs would receive, their capital and recurrent expenditure, the partial government grants allocated and their capacity for fund-raising
- charging heavier school fees according to expenditure and level of para-medical and professional services provided.

The situation in year 2004 was that some of the SEN schools did not charge fees and some others charged school fees ranging from Rs 200 to Rs 4000 monthly - in a country where education is free.





2.6 Available database in 2005 for private SEN Schools and Integrated Units

Table 4: Enrolment by age of children with disabilities and learning difficulties in private SEN schools and SEN day-care centres – Year 2005

No of Pupils	3 to 6	6 to 8	9 to 11	12 to 14	15 to 17	18 & over	Total
Private SEN schools and SEN day-care centres	49	217	369	329	183	204	1351
Government Integrated Units	-	22	15	13	15	-	63
Total							1414



Source: Special Education Needs Unit, 2005

Table 5: Enrolment per impairment type for the children aged 5 to 16 years old (registered for grant-in-aid) in private and government SEN schools and SEN day-care centres – Year 2005

Impairment Type	
Visual	28
Hearing	160
Physical	7
Mental	805
Multi-handicaps (Mental + other)	97
Other (Learning difficulties + Behavioural + Social)	86
	1183

Source: Special Education Needs Unit, 2005

Table 6: Enrolment of pupils per age groups: no.of pupils/adults attending the registered SEN schools and SEN day-care centres –Year 2005

Age Group	5 to 16 yrs old	3 to 20 yrs old	3 to 50+
No. of pupils/adults	1183	1414	1800*

Source: Special Education Needs Unit, 2005

* Note: Other NGOs are registered with the Ministry of Social Security for rehabilitation and social services to adults.



Summary:

1. Pupil enrolment

- 63 pupils are enrolled in the Government-run schools
- 1120 pupils are enrolled in the private-run NGO schools and day-care centres

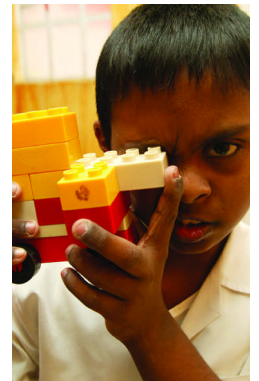
2. SEN Institutions

There are 39 such special education needs institutions:

- 3 NGO Government-funded specialised schools (Mental Health Association, Lois Lagesse Trust Fund, Society for the Welfare of the Deaf)
- 1 Government funded ESN school (Educationally Sub-normal meaning mental handicap) at Stanley
- 4 Government Integrated Units – Goodlands: 1 for the Deaf, 1 for ESN
Moka: 1 for the Blind
Solferino: 1 for ESN)
- 5 NGO Integrated Units
- 14 NGO private specialised schools
- 12 NGO private specialised day-care centres

3. Registration

At July 2005, these 39 special education needs institutions providing special educational services have been registered with the Ministry of Education & Human Resources



2.7 Number of children integrated individually in mainstream schools

In 2004, the known figure was 100. Following a survey launched in all primary and secondary schools in 2005, new data was reaching more than 600. However, this figure has to be verified as there is no official diagnosis. Heads of Schools seemed to categorise the type of disability as intellectual impairments in most cases because the children were non-performing or had behavioural problems. Many of the children were declared with a disability because of a visual impairment though it is unknown whether it was just because the children had to wear reading glasses or whether the disability was more severe. The estimate is between 300 to 400.

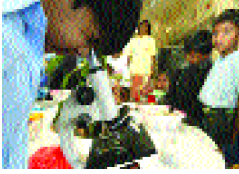
2.8 The situation in the island of Rodrigues

- There are three NGOs running SEN schools in Rodrigues.
- No figures are available as yet concerning the number of children with disabilities in mainstream.
- These NGOs are also looking forward to more commitment from the government.

2.9 Assistance to families from the Ministry of Social Security

- Families receive reimbursement from the Ministry of Social Security for bus expenses of the child with a disability and the adult who accompanies the child to school.
- Below 15, the child with a severe disability may receive a 'disability allowance' depending on the annual revenue of the parents.

- At the age of 15 years, the adolescent with a disability is eligible for an "Invalid's Pension" from the Ministry of Social Security.
- Children with disabilities who are successful at their Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) are eligible (according to specific criteria) for an allowance of Rs 500 from the National Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (NCRD) called the François Sockalingum Award. This monthly allowance helps the child in his secondary studies. The allowance increases to Rs 1000 for those who study at university level.



2.10 Financial situation of the Special Education Needs Schools

It is difficult for the private SEN schools run by NGOs to survive because

- they no longer have the advantage of being helped by international donors for on-going projects, setting-up of services and training in special needs pertaining to their category of disabilities and special needs
- they have limited seat capacity due to financial constraints regarding capital and recurrent costs, mainly due to maintenance of their building and staff costs
- salaries of teachers already represent 50% to 70% of the running costs and salary raise is getting increasingly difficult
- specialised equipment are needed and they are usually costly
- teachers or assistants are usually recruited in the ratio of 1 adult to 7 children.

It must be noted that the majority of the teachers are not qualified teachers. They are private staff paid by the NGOs.

2.11 The Ministry of Education's involvement

The Ministry of Education's involvement in SEN schools run by NGOs in so far has been in the form of

- a partial per-capita grant since 2002 to alleviate the school fees, grant which was yet to be at par with the per-capita spending on a normal child in main stream schools
- a few teachers posted in some specialised schools
- students' books which can be used by the children with disabilities
- ad-hoc help for integration of children and retrofitting of school buildings
- facilitation of the participation of the children with disabilities in national examinations (extended time or adapted presentation of exam papers)
- eligibility for the Book Loan scheme established by the Ministry.

Table 7: Comparative analysis of Ministry of Education's involvement in Government SEN schools and Private-run SEN schools

	Govt.-run SEN Schools and Integrated Units	Private-run SEN Schools and Institutions
2004-2005 No of pupils	152	532 (11 NGOs recognised)
2005-2006 No of pupils	160	1023 (28 NGOs recognised)
2005-2006 Government Staff deployed	25 (SEN schools) 8 (Shelters, Rehabilitation Youth Centres, Prisons)	9 (SEN schools)
Private Staff Employed in SEN schools by NGOs	nil	72.0 Teachers 13.5 Administrative Staff 34.5 Assistant Teachers/Helpers 120.0 Total
2004-2005 Budget of MOE for staff cost and other related services in SEN (Govt. & NGO)	Approx. 71.36 % of total amount Rs. 4,511,380	Approx. 28.64 % of total amount Rs. 1,810,620



2.12 Financial educational assistance to alleviate school fees

- Prior to 2002, the NGO Trust Fund of the Ministry of Social Security was contributing to some NGOs a grant-in-aid for their schools.
- Since 2002, the Ministry of Social Security transferred the grant item for education in specialised schools to the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research. This per-capita spending was at one-third of the per-capita spending for children in public mainstream schools.
- In the 2005-2006 budget, through more than a four-fold increase, the Government has raised its contributions to start matching the recurrent expenditure in mainstream.

Table 8

Budget Year	1999 2000	2000 2001	2001 2002	2002 2003	2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006
Budget for SEN Monitored by MOSS	Rs 3,5 M	Rs 3,5 M	Rs 3,5 M	nil	nil	nil	nil
Budget for SEN Monitored by MOE	nil	nil	nil	Rs 3,5 M	Rs 3,7 M	Rs 4 M	Rs 17 M



2.13 Funding to NGOs through the Ministry of Social Security

- The Ministry of Social Security continues to help towards rehabilitation by providing vocational training and employment opportunities to young adults.
- Through the NGO Trust Fund, grants are made to NGOs for specific projects and services provided other than educational services.
- It is clear that all matters pertaining to special education needs services are now the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Children with special needs will thus be catered for in the national educational system.
- Social aid for the child because of his or her disability and because of difficult family situations will be obtained as usual through the Ministry of Social Security.



2.14 Commitment of the Ministry of Education as from July 2005

Year 2005 is a milestone in the development of education services for the children with special needs, as compared to 2004, in terms of:

1. The budget which has increased from Rs 4M to Rs 17M, as a first step towards the recognition of the right to education for all children with special educational needs.
2. The number of children with disabilities eligible for grant-in-aid: from 684 to 1183.
3. The age-range of children with disabilities eligible for grant-in-aid: from 5 to 15 years old to children aged 5 to 16 years old.
4. The number of NGOs registered with Ministry of Education and running SEN institutions: from 11 to 28.
5. The number of SEN schools and SEN day-care centres registered with Ministry of Education: from 24 to 39.
6. The grant-in-aid: from an average of Rs 5,800 (grant which was at one-third of the average recurrent expenses in mainstream primary and secondary) to the amount reaching parity, either obtained by the NGOs as grants to run their schools (calculated on the same basis as in mainstream schools) or by the provision of adapted furniture and school equipment, or the posting of state teachers who are deployed in SEN schools...
7. Provision of additional services to the Special Education Needs institutions, either schools or day care centres, in terms of structures that are being set up to facilitate the educational services offered to the children in a holistic approach.
8. Provision of adapted and flexible curricula for each category of special need.
9. Provision of a supplementary feeding programme for the children.
10. Publication of the national Policy and Strategy Document for Special Education Needs and Inclusive Education in Mauritius.

The philosophy underlying this Policy Paper is that children with special needs will henceforth be provided with an education adapted to their needs and abilities.

- Parity has been a guiding principle because of the previous situation whereby the children were not being given equal opportunities for quality education as all their peers.
- Now, it is acknowledged that children with special educational needs will be offered all additional services and facilities they require in order to give them the best opportunities for their personal and social development.
- It is also clear that there will be greater flexibility of the age of admission at primary level and flexibility also in the time taken to finish lower primary or upper primary.

"There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school"

(Salamanca Framework for Action, article 7)

Our Policy

3.1 From Vision to Action

3.1.1 Our Vision:

To enable children with special needs to develop fully their potential so that they can contribute to their own welfare and that of the country.

3.1.2 Our Mission:

- To generate a dynamism that will increase access to special educational needs
- To strengthen private-public partnership for the provision of special educational needs services, support and regulate all existing structures providing these services
- To ensure learning achievement and improve the quality of provision of services responding to the individual needs of the child.

3.1.3 Inclusive Education, the way forward:

Inclusive education refers to school systems responding to the diverse and specific needs of each child with provision of appropriate structures in terms of

- physical/material and human resources
- various appropriate teaching tools
- adequate services
- evolution of the curriculum content.

Inclusive education challenges the traditional models of schools, offering a paradigm shift needed for the sharing of the common vision that all children must be able to reach their potential in inclusive educational settings whatever their abilities and learning needs.

3.2 General policy guidelines

This Policy Paper outlines the general policy guidelines based on:

- Parity and Equity regarding quality educational services
- Inclusion and integration of all children in our educational system
- Inter-sectoral partnership with all relevant ministries, private sector and parents for collaborative holistic services.

3.3 Specific policy guidelines

Our government acknowledges that children with special educational needs should be included as far as possible within the general education environment commonly referred to as inclusive education.

Our inclusive educational system will embrace the following specific policy guidelines:





- a. Access to education and recognition of our children with special educational needs having the same right and enjoying equality of education opportunities as their counterparts.

This implies

- Access to school for children with special needs either in mainstream, in integrated classrooms or units or special education needs schools as well as access to home-based programmes.



- b. Relevance and Quality through the setting-up of structures systems aimed at meeting each child's needs.

This implies

- Relevant programmes of learning specific to each special need, from the children with intellectual disabilities to the gifted and talented children.
- Close collaboration at inter-ministerial level, private partners such as Non-Governmental Organisations and parents.



- c. Achievement in terms of teaching and learning as well as provision of support services within the classroom and the school through the collaboration of all school personnel and the pluri-disciplinary team.

This implies

- Development and improvement of relevant pedagogical material in each specific disability or ability.
- Trained manpower at all levels in disabilities and special needs education in each specific domain.
- Provision of specific support services with a team of professionals in schools and at regional level covering the educational, social, psychological, therapeutic and medical needs.

3.4 Access

As from January 2005, the policy of compulsory education till age 16 has brought into focus educational provision for out of school children – in particular drop-outs and children with special needs.

With a view to ensuring access to education, particularly children with disabilities, partnership with the private sector - which has been fully active in providing such services in the past, is being further consolidated.

A three-pronged approach has been adopted in the process for providing access to children with disabilities:

Approach 1: Mainstream Integration

Children with a physical disability will be given access to regular mainstream schools of their region.

Upon parental choice and proper assessment and referral, children with a mild or moderate intellectual or sensorial disability can be placed in the regular classroom with the additional input of a consultancy support service and ancillary staff or support teacher who will provide assistance to the classroom teacher.

Approach 2: Integrated Classrooms/Units in mainstream

Children who are more severely disabled will be given access to education in specialised educational settings, either in public schools or other schools. These specialised educational settings may be in the form of

- i. Special education class or resource room (with special equipment and

specialised staff) in mainstream schools for part-time one-to-one interaction. All schools should eventually have a special education class or resource room.

- ii. Special education class (integrated classroom) operating full-time on the mainstream school premises.

Nine of these SEN Units already exist in primary mainstream schools. More of these SEN Units should be set up upon demand.

Approach 3: Special Education Needs (SEN) or specialised schools

Following proper professional assessment, children who cannot be integrated in the mainstream because of their specific educational needs will attend SEN schools. Such schools will be twinned with a mainstream in the locality for joint activities.

Through these three approaches regarding access, all children with disabilities who can attend school will be provided with educational services by trained teachers, support staff and professionals.

3.5 Relevance and Quality

It is the policy of the Ministry of Education to review all procedural matters to ensure curriculum relevance, appropriateness of pedagogy, required skills among personnel and necessary equipment and material. Services need to be tailored to the specific needs of intended recipients according to their specific learning needs and with an integrated approach within the context of an inclusive education system.

For this purpose, needs based education for the following categories of special education are being addressed to:

- i. children with specific disabilities whether physical, mental, sensorial - hearing, visual, or emotional and psychological
- ii. children with major learning disabilities
- iii. children who have dropped out of mainstream
- iv. children who are in shelters, correctional youth centres or rehabilitation centres
- v. children who are 'gifted and talented'.

3.6 Relevance of curriculum and pedagogy

Curriculum review for the primary and secondary level will focus on

- i. formulation of needs and development of competence-based curricula for children according to their different disabilities
- ii. development of material and pedagogical tools
- iii. staff development and training on necessary skills pertaining to each specific educational need
- iv. reviewing the mode of assessment of the students' performance according to their learning needs, abilities and potential.

3.7 Services and mechanisms for Quality

To implement policy actions, proper mechanisms must be set up in order to offer the appropriate services. It is therefore necessary to

- i. strengthen the Special Education Needs Unit with appropriate human resource to uphold the policy decisions
- ii. set up a National Resource Centre to enable early diagnosis and referral, user-friendly information and communication services, documentation and further research.
- iii. monitor the mechanism for allocation of grants and continuously upgrade quality of educational services.





3.8 Achievement

Achievement in terms of special educational needs will aim at

- improving the attainment of each child, ranging from best possible performance in the normal curriculum to basic competencies and life-skills
- improving the ability of all educators, school communities and parents to identify and meet the diverse needs of the school population
- allowing more flexibility and greater autonomy for completing the competence and skills-based curriculum.



It is the role of Government to ensure quality of educational services provided in each field of specific learning needs and to provide proper support for optimum learning.

Table 9: Different educational practices (T. Jonsson, UNDP 1995)

Traditional Approach	Inclusive Approach
Education for some	Education for all
Static	Flexible
Collective teaching	Individualised teaching
Learning in segregated settings	Learning in integrated settings
Emphasis on teaching	Emphasis on learning
Subject-centered	Child-centered
Diagnostic/prescriptive	Holistic
Opportunities limited by exclusion	Equalisation of opportunities for all

"We have the tools and resources to build communities for the future which value diversity and allow children who are now devalued to have their voice heard, their rights respected and to achieve their unique potential. Together we can work in solidarity to build a future where all are included."

Don't exclude our children, Inclusion International, 2002

The Institutional Framework

4.1 Educational Legislation

- i. The last amendment 2004 to the Education Act renders education compulsory up to the age of 16.
 - It is recommended that there should be an amendment to the Education Act with a Disability and Special Educational Needs Bill to protect the children against any form of discrimination. Access to education, equity of rights to free education and quality of educational services for children with disabilities in mainstream and special education needs schools should be specifically mentioned, as well as a flexibility regarding school age readiness upon admission or time needed to complete a cycle.
- ii. While mainstream children still have the choice of continuing their studies in the free education system up to the age of 20, youngsters in SEN schools and integrated classrooms will find themselves out of the free schooling system after age 16.
 - It is recommended that possibility of a proviso be explored for youngsters with disabilities to remain in the free education system until age 20, as in NGOs, where most of the young adults move to Vocational Centres.

4.2 Organisational Framework

The Special Education Needs Unit of the Ministry of Education will work in a structured organigram and a steering committee with all ministries concerned with special needs. It will also encourage diversity and collaborative relationships with the NGOs which have the expertise and experience related to the 7 major specific types of disabilities: physical, visual, hearing, intellectual, psychological and emotional, combined and multiple and learning disabilities. As such, the Special Education Needs Unit must regulate, monitor and supervise these different collaborative actions.

Proper empowerment will be given to facilitate autonomy of action and efficient provision of services.

Appropriate structures and means, human and, material for the implementation of its policy paper will be set up as proposed in the following organigram:



SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS UNIT

ADMINISTRATION (Project Manager)

<p>SENU Office Administrative work Registration Allocation of grants Networking at local and international levels</p>	<p>SEN Resource Centre Centre-link with other Ministries Information Desk Communication Documentation/Research</p>	<p>SEN Pedagogical Team Pedagogical advice Facilitating training Developing teaching tools Monitoring and evaluation</p>	<p>SEN Intervention Team Early screening Detection Assessment Referral, Support services</p>
<p>*Assistant Project Manager/ Co-ordinator</p>	<p>* Librarian & Documentation Officer</p>	<p>Superintendent of Specialised Schools</p>	<p>*Senior Liaison Officer or Liaison Officer</p>
<p>Human Resource/ Public Relations Officer</p>	<p>* Primary School Inspector/ Supervisor/ Assistant Superintendent</p>		<p>*Psychologist/Counsellor</p>
<p>*Secretary/ Word Processing Operator</p>	<p>Mentor</p>		<p>*Speech Therapist</p>
<p>Accounts Clerk/Support IT Officer</p>	<p>Database/Statistics Clerk</p>		<p>Occupational Therapist</p>
<p>General Worker/Cleaner</p>	<p>Library Attendant</p>		<p>*Social Worker</p>
<p>Initial Organisation: Duties to be combined until SEN Unit is fully operational</p>			<p>Paediatrician/Nursing Officer (Professionals on part-time and consultancy basis and services provided on contract in partnership with NGOs which have the services)</p>

* Priority



"Inclusive education is the most effective approach to address the learning needs of all students in regular schools. It is the most cost-effective and it makes good educational and social sense."

(B. Lindqvist, UN-Rapporteur, 1994)

The Regulatory Framework

In collaboration with all the stakeholders and partners, private and public, the Ministry of Education, through the Special Education Needs Unit will aim at implementing the following policy actions:

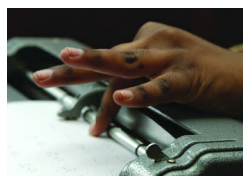
- 5.1 Developing new Norms and Standards for specialised schools with proper
 - Criteria for registration of SEN schools and grading system for allocation of grants
 - Mechanisms for monitoring and upgrading of services
- 5.2 Providing a child-centered environment through
 - Re-engineering of classrooms, school building and schoolyard.
 - Assessment and referral procedures for integration
 - Ancillary and support staff
 - Setting up of special education needs services at regional and school levels
- 5.3 Ensuring detection, referral and follow-up action of children with appropriate modalities of operation using
 - Health Card
 - Portfolio
 - Progress report
- 5.4 Reviewing of pedagogical approach in schools
 - Re-orientation of teachers from curriculum-centeredness to child-centeredness according to individual needs through training at all levels
 - Research
 - Pedagogical development programme
- 5.5 Adopting a holistic approach to Early Childhood Development issues
 - Integrating 0-3, 3-5 and 5-8 curriculum into the child-centered 0-8 programme.





"Programmes at this level should recognise the principle of inclusion and be developed in a comprehensive way."

Salamanca Framework for Action, article 53



Human Resources and Capacity Building

The main objectives and policy actions in this very important strategy direction on which depends the success of the Special Education Needs programme are the following:

- 6.1 Recruitment of appropriate and specialised staff
 - National Human Resource Development with professionals in child psychology, psychiatry, sociology, social work, probation work, child welfare work and community policing
- 6.2 Enabling teachers to cater to individual needs of each child with a focus on individualised teaching programme
 - Training of trainers, specialist teachers, teachers, helpers, support staff... during pre-induction, immersion and in-service courses at local and international levels using face-to-face, mix mode and open distance learning
- 6.3 Optimising available resources while incorporating human resource development
 - Standardising qualifications of present staff in NGOs and facilitating upgrading through further studies and proper career ladder
- 6.4 Evolving a competence and skill-based curriculum responsive to the differentiated needs of children with specific disabilities.
 - Use of audio-visual, media and modern technology IT support
- 6.5 Strengthening the capacity of parents and community partners in child welfare
 - Empowering families to play an effective role in promoting the education of the child with a disability and establishing a social link between the schools and the family environment with social workers, liaison officers or parent mediators to support children and family in difficulty
- 6.6 Collaborating with NGOs for setting-up of psychological support services
 - Consultation and residential facilities for follow-up and counselling of those children who need psychological and moral support

"Inclusive education is a human right, it's good education and it makes good social sense."

Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE), UK

A National Special Education Needs Resource Centre for Information, Communication and Documentation

Together with all stakeholders and partners, the Special Education Needs Unit will have to inform parents, educators and public in general of the services which can and will be available. A one-stop-shop or National Special Education Needs Resource Centre will be set up for:

7.1 Development of a database and a directory of services

The following actions will be taken:

- Survey in all primary, secondary mainstream schools and also at tertiary level
- Updating of database on all children attending specialised schools, non-formal educational settings and day-care centres
- Monitoring social, educational and family indicators as an on-going, national, data banking system

7.2 Raising of awareness on children with disabilities and promoting of their right to education

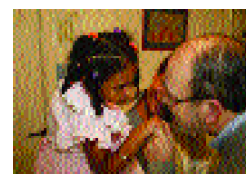
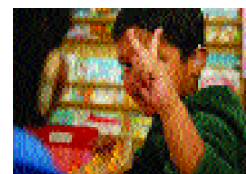
The National Special Education Needs Resource Centre will

- offer information services such as prevention, early identification, screening, counselling and referral
- raise awareness through communication strategies to launch policy on special needs education
- provide proper support services for children and families

7.3 Analysis of the impact of social and economic policies for children with disabilities on families and society

The National Special Education Needs Resource Centre will

- Conduct research on family life and quality of life of person with a disability
- Set up a Family Impact Assessment system
- Evaluate on-going projects for feedback and improvement.





"The success of the inclusive school depends considerably on early identification, assessment and stimulation of the very young child with special educational needs."

Salamanca Framework for Action, article 53



A Special Education Needs Intervention Team for Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

The Special Education Needs Unit will operate with a SEN Intervention Team which will link with the National SEN Resource Centre in order to:

- 8.1 Set up phases of intervention for children with proper
 - Early Screening, detection and orientation
 - Follow-up of school-aged children at regular intervals
- 8.2 Establish a referral system for the children based on
 - Assessment and eligibility by professionals following diagnosis, detection, screening
 - Referral system with the health card, portfolio and progress report
 - Orientation towards existing services
 - Placement in inclusive mainstream schools or specialised schools
 - Follow-up, Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Re-assessment and re-placement
- 8.3 Monitor, evaluate, further develop and carry out research on database, curriculum and pedagogical tools
 - Evaluation and reviewing
 - Regular Survey
 - Database Analysis
 - Reviewing of curriculum regularly
 - Evolution with new technology for special educational needs.

"An inclusive school provides a positive inclusive climate through policies, programmes and practices that are equitable for students."

Department of Education Province of New Brunswick, 1995

Recommendations for a sustainable Special Education Needs Reform Strategy



9.1 Planning for a sustainable Inclusive Reform Strategy

Planning, managing and implementing such programmes rely on having a good appraisal of the situation, of the needs and resources available. The presence of experienced, trained staff that can draw from a strong database, develop the programme, set up the evaluation processes are pre-conditions to inclusive education. Several levels of interventions have to start simultaneously, be as comprehensive as possible and staggered in initial and transitional phases within a self-reinforcing frame.

A: At National Level – The Global Approach

9.2 Action Plan for 2005-2006:


- i. Registration of SEN schools and payment of grants to the registered Special Education Needs institutions: for proper control and judicious utilisation of funds, a regulatory system must be set up with an internal checking device and periodical review.
- ii. Defining norms and standards and setting up a regulatory framework that will facilitate the assessment of SEN institutions, their eligibility to benefit from the per-capita grant and at the same time, serve as a motivating agent to enhance services.
- iii. Setting-up a Co-ordinating Body/Inter-ministerial/NGO team or Steering Committee through the Special Education Needs Unit to work within the context of a holistic and inter-sector approach, thus ensuring the planning and provision of quality services in line with the specific needs of the child.
- iv. Setting up a legal framework/referral system regarding access to education for children with disabilities with factors such as flexibility in age of admission in Standard I and flexibility in time given for the completion or progress in the curriculum of lower primary and upper primary. Individualised programme of learning will be the key.
- v. Initiating an audit of the situation regarding children with disabilities already integrated in mainstream, children in the integrated classrooms/units and children in the SEN schools.
- vi. Formulation of a scheme for early identification with the involvement of other public sectors as well as other private sector partners, thus mobilising expertise for professional intervention.
- vii. Setting up a mechanism accelerating the process of admission in either of the three existing modes and analysing sectors which need further expansion.
- viii. Accelerating the process of retrofitting with for example the decision that in the yearly budget for mainstream primary, there should be provision for the retrofitting of one primary school in each zone.
- ix. The development of the curriculum with the formulation of needs based curricula and material for children according to their different disabilities and capabilities.



- x. Strengthening and regulating the partnership between State and existing NGOs providing educational services to children.
- xi. Tapping into the expertise and experience of State partners and specialised NGOs for input on pedagogical approach and tools in each specific disability. Overseas training possibilities in areas where facilities are not locally available should be explored.
- xii. Deployment of more state teachers in the special education needs sector which has a teacher:pupil ratio of 1:7.
- xiii. Certification of the private-employed teachers through appropriate special education needs courses and cumulative training modules and career path for the staff.
- xiv. Enabling mainstream teachers and special education needs teachers to develop teaching and learning programs in an integrated framework.
- xv. Development of a sustainable approach to staffing and appointment by the Public Service Commission provision. A permanent staff on establishment that can provide services, follow-up and enrichment programmes should be instituted.
- xvi. Establishing an institutional framework with the
 - SEN National Resource Centre for database, information, communication and documentation
 - SEN Pedagogical Unit for development of pedagogical tools and facilitating the teaching and learning process for both students and teachers in each specific field of disability and special needs
 - SEN para-medical Intervention Team with proper staffing for identification, assessment, referral and follow-up.
- xvii. Record-keeping and follow-up of the children during their entire schooling time will be done through the portfolio and health card.
- xviii. Reviewing the budgetary provisions for the Special Education Needs sector, in a cumulative approach for phased implementation of programmes.
- xix. Local and international funding: each relevant local Ministry will make budgetary provision for children but at the same time, international funding agencies must be approached to obtain funds, equipment and material for the optimum growth and development of the children. Funds for training facilities for capacity building by experts from abroad will be initially sought until local resources are available.
- xx. NGOs – Roles and Responsibilities: NGOs have played a pioneering role in the provision of services to children with disabilities. Their roles and types of services they offer should be clearly stated so as to generate a fluid and transparent partnership. Modality of State assistance to such institutions should be clarified.

9.3 Action Plan 2007-2010 (Medium-term planning):

- i. The human resource, capacity building and development of necessary skills reaching out to the whole educational system with modules and specialisation in special educational needs.
- ii. Reviewing the mode of assessment of the students' performance according to their learning needs, abilities and potential.
- iii. Researching new fields of special educational needs responding to disabilities for which no educational services are yet available in Mauritius: example, autistic children...

- 
- iv. Enhancing inclusive education policy and its implementation at national level within the three-pronged approach of inclusive mainstream schools, integrated classrooms in mainstream and SEN schools.
 - v. Ensuring educational provision for children up to the age of 16 years old (or more likely 20 years old), bearing in mind that children with disabilities are still in lower secondary at 16 years old.
 - vi. Bridging the gap in terms of quality of services provided by the mainstream school system and by the duly registered and recognised SEN schools.
 - vii. Creation of "One-Stop-Shop services" in each zone: accessible centres enabling provision of an organised and sustained support for the care and welfare of the child in a specialised professional manner. General and holistic services should be offered: documentation and information, screening, early intervention and referral, follow-up in schools, counselling...
 - viii. Massive and sustained education programmes for youths and adults as a strategy for prevention of disabilities: education campaigns at regular intervals will be initiated as a measure of prevention.

9.4 Action Plan 2011-2015 (Long-term planning):

- i. Building on the database and evaluation process for the evolution of the policy actions.
- ii. Developing special educational needs services in all schools with proper specialised staff and professionals so that each school has access to a Special Education Needs Intervention Team (SENIT).
- iii. Developing home-based special educational services for children with severe disabilities and those who are too sick to attend school.
- iv. Providing beyond parity additional services required by children with special educational needs.

B: Within the School System – The Entire School Approach

9.5 Within the school system, for children with mild disabilities

- i. The inclusion of children with special needs (mild disabilities) in the school system will be engineered by the global approach already defined at national level.
- ii. An entire school approach should be taken in as far as planning, infrastructure and specialised services are concerned. Some elements to be taken into consideration for professional schooling by the school management and school community are:
 - classroom allocation (proximity to toilets, ramps, handrails...)
 - class size
 - adapted furniture
 - seating arrangement
 - peer briefing
 - involvement of teaching and non-teaching staff
 - team-building for a support system within the school: Head Teacher, Class Teacher, School Psychologist, Pedagogical Advisor, Social Worker, School Inspector...
 - parental involvement
 - record keeping
 - regular feedback to SEN Unit
 - inter-school clustering for help and sharing experiences



- adapted curriculum materials
 - appropriate pedagogy
 - adapted mode of evaluation
 - support mechanisms at school
 - provision of specialised remedial services
 - creation of a resource classroom in each school for the production of specific pedagogical teaching and learning materials – with the involvement of the whole staff
 - participation in a sustained training programme and regular briefing sessions by specialised local and international institutions
 - involvement of school psychological services and regular contact hours with the pupils with special needs and their teachers and school management
 - exploring the possibilities regarding community involvement and availability of voluntary human resources to help at school level.
- iii. The Special Education Needs Unit, supported by specialised staff, will help in the
- planning, organisation, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of all actions taken
 - scheduling with the Directorate and school management visits of medical specialists at regular intervals
 - provision of additional support services not available at school level for the child, the parents and the staff: screening, training, counselling...

9.6 Within the school system, for children with learning difficulties

- i. The inclusion of children with learning difficulties in the school system will be made possible through the
- Systematic screening of all students to identify the nature of the learning problem
 - Review of the whole concept of national literacy and numeracy strategy
 - In-built remedial programme and close follow-up in smaller groups, peer assisted collaborative learning, individualised attention within an established framework of essential and desired learning competencies
 - Development of individual learning programme and learning styles to facilitate concept acquisition, mastery of literacy and numeracy skills, memorisation, critical thinking, analytical thinking ...
 - Production and provision of essential learning materials by the whole staff and this pedagogical tool bank to be set up in the resource classroom, and made available to the whole staff, already posted or newly transferred...
 - Clear definition of roles of all providers

9.7 Within the school system, for children victims of social problems

- Pastoral care programmes and counselling to be available
- Pupils to be informed about the availability of services within the school, at local level and at national level if they need help.
- Parental education to become institutionalised and included in the school rules and regulations
- Pastoral assistance club to rope in peer accompaniment for after crisis action, group therapy, and organisation of activities and learning support system...



BRIEF regarding further action

Approach

- Inter-sector policy decision, strategic planning, implementation, review of processes with in-built evaluation
- Regulatory framework, establishment of norms and standards for quality service
- Prioritised collaborative implementation

Enabling factors

- National steering committee with focal persons representing all parties to spearhead prompt and efficient implementation of the action plan.
- Instituting support mechanisms at all levels
- Capacity building for professionalised services
- Parental and community involvement
- Budgeting devices

MOE&HR Action

- Consolidate early screening, detection and identification and eventual sustained follow-up, referrals and remedial services
- Information/sensitisation/documentation/research/educational development
- Mobilisation of local resources to support schooling and start whole school approach
- Co-ordination of existing services to facilitate schooling process
- Seeking technical support and getting organised.



"Inclusion means encouraging friendships between children with disabilities and their classmates/peers without disabilities"

UNESCO – UN Committee on Rights of the Child, 1997
Centre for Human Rights, Geneva

Budget Provision

10.1 Budget provision for 2005-2006

10.1.1 Prior to budget year 2002-2003, the Ministry of Social Security was giving grants to some NGOs running SEN schools for their educational services. Now, all costs relating to educational services in SEN institutions are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and all costs related to social aid and projects other than educational services in SEN schools are the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Security.

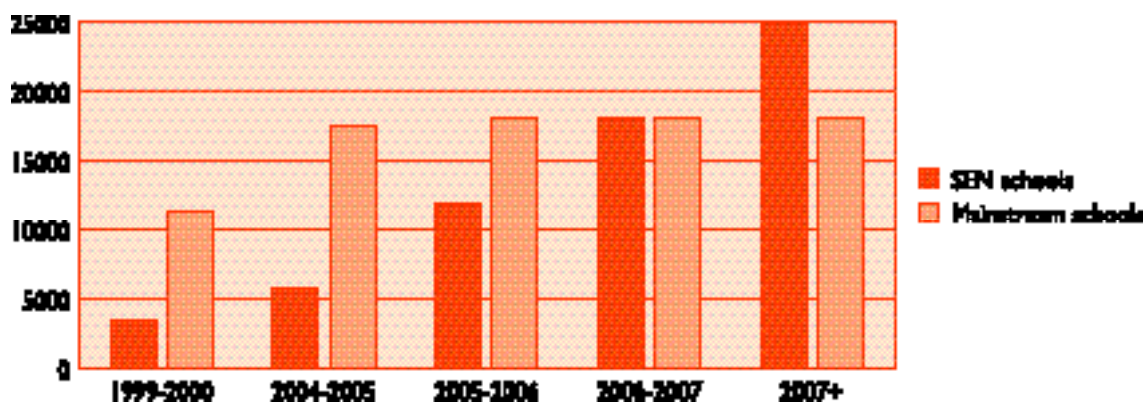
From a budget of Rs 3,5M in 2002-2003, then Rs 3,7M in 2003-2004, and Rs 4M in 2004-2005, the main complaint from NGOs was that they were not receiving enough grants from the Ministry of Education.

Whereas Government SEN schools catering for some 150 pupils were benefiting from all facilities as in mainstream schools (a budget of Rs 5M to Rs 6,3M from 2002 to 2004 on staff costs and other related costs), parents of some 532 children who were attending private-run SEN schools were still paying school fees (the Ministry of Education's budget for grant-in-aid to these schools being only Rs 3,5M to Rs 4M to alleviate school fees).

10.1.2 For budget year 2005-2006, an initial budget of Rs 25 M was requested by the Special Education Needs Unit to start implementing the action plan laid out in this Policy and Strategy Document for all the children already attending integrated units or special needs institutions. A starting budget of Rs 17 M was granted to include in our educational system children with special education needs through a grant-in-aid to be provided by the Ministry of Education after proper norms and standards had been defined.

Through this greater financial contribution, the Government is committing itself to giving equal opportunities to all the children of our Republic. It was evident that in a free education system involving both our mainstream public and private grant-in-aid schools, a group of vulnerable children could no longer be marginalised because they cannot afford to pay their way through school.

Chart 1 Illustrating disparity in per capita Mainstream/SEN schools run by NGOs, ideal projection for parity in the grant-in-aid and provision of services in 2005-2006 and gradual improvement in the provision of services according to the children's needs



10.2 Immediate beneficiaries

In addition to the 3 Government funded schools, the 4 Government Integrated Units and one other Government Unit, 12 SEN schools and 5 Integrated Units/classrooms run by 11 NGOs were already recognised by the Ministry of Education since 2002. 684 children admitted in these schools were benefiting from partial grant-in-aid. Some other 500 children attending other specialised schools or day-care centres for disabled children have, as from July 2005, been taken on board, totalling the number of beneficiaries to 1183. A total of 39 schools, units or day-care centres (involving the Government Schools or Units and the NGOs), are situated all around the island.

As from July 2005, the Ministry of Education is contributing to registered SEN schools the same recurrent per-capita for children with disabilities as for children in mainstream, either in terms of grants or in terms of equipment and services.

The budget allocation 2005-2006 for special education needs is covering two main budget items:

1. Grant-in-aid to SEN schools and SEN day-care centres
2. Implementation of policies and action plan

10.3 Implementation of policy actions

The budget allocation for Special Needs Education will be sufficient to start the main policy actions as highlighted in this Paper.

- The Special Education Needs Unit (SENU) Administrative Office is operational.
- The SENU through what will become the Special Educational Needs Resource Centre (SENRC) has already initiated some actions on data-banking for analysis and research.
- The SENRC will start its communication and documentation unit.
- The SENRC will provide screening and referral services through an initial consultancy-based Special Education Needs Intervention Team (SENIT) recruited on a part-time basis. It is estimated that this budget can start providing referral services to an initial group of children in pre-primary and primary.
- The SENIT will also start provision of psychological services to the children already integrated in the mainstream if and as required.
- The SENRC has started building on its human resource. In-service courses have been scheduled jointly with the primary sector and the ZEP Unit. Immersion courses are due to start in specific fields of disabilities and will address staff in the pre-primary, primary and SEN schools.

10.4 Starting enrichment programmes

In parallel to special needs education related to each specific disability, there is a need for enrichment programmes for the gifted and talented children. Whereas remedial education addresses children who need more time to finish the curriculum, enrichment programmes would fill the gaps for those children who have exceptional abilities or talents that need to be developed. Additional stimuli and opportunities must be provided.



10.5 Towards excellence

Projection of number of children in the school system will be made and budget adjusted accordingly to bridge the gap and give equal opportunities to all children through quality support services, in whichever school structure they are in. One major step has been to embrace parity as a guiding principle for equity amongst all children. A further step will be in the provision of all additional services and programmes which must be available for the development of the child with special educational needs, by building collaborative partnerships both at local and international levels.

Chart 2 Illustrating projection of some 3000 children with disabilities within the school system by 2010

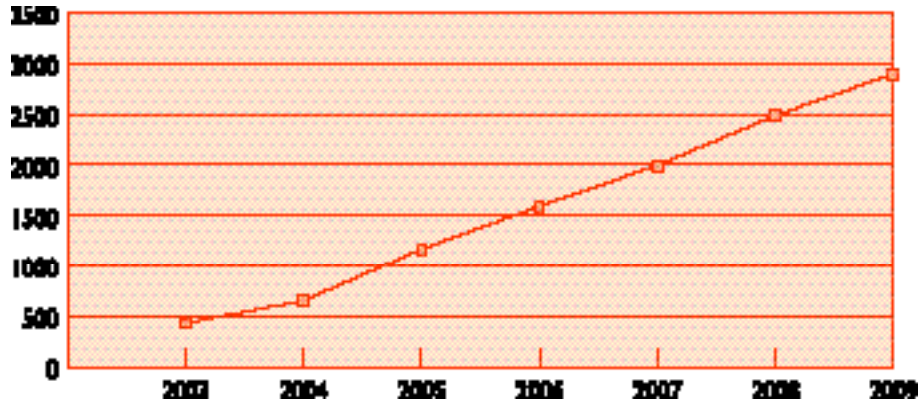
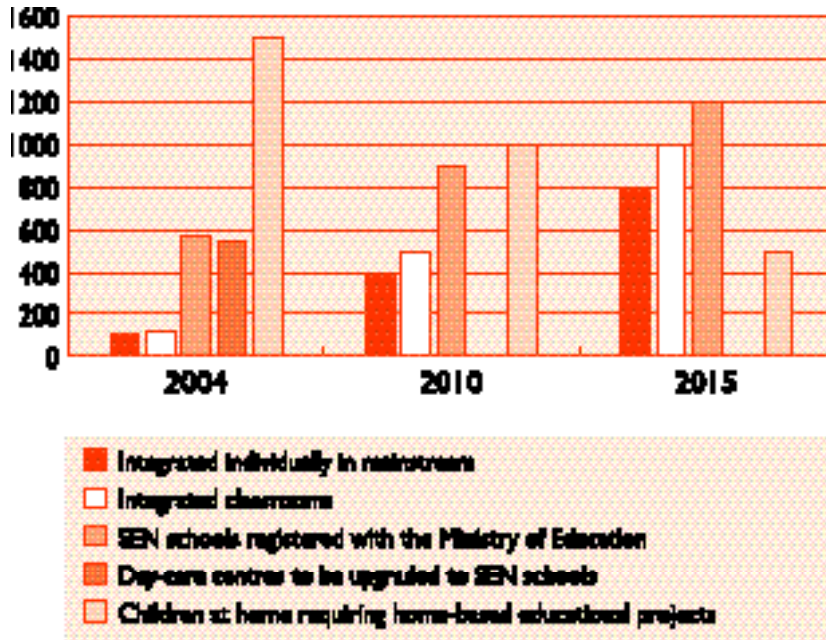


Chart 3 Illustrating the gradual integration of children with disabilities in our educational system and the mode of education



"Investment in a programme which is both pedagogically and psychologically responsive to children's learning needs seems of great importance... to enrich all children's learning, in fellowship with each other, and can at the same time prepare them for what the future may demand."

Gerda Hanko, 1999

Conclusion

11.1 This document has elaborated the National Policy regarding special educational needs and inclusive education. It has explained the rationale for inclusion in mainstream, in integrated classrooms and in specialised schools twinned with mainstreams. It has outlined the main strategic directions for implementation of our policy, based on what we have as existing system and how we can build on it with the help of existing resources.

11.2 It is clear that with proper legislation and structure, action can be articulated for a better management of the special education needs sector through the Special Education Needs Unit which will be the co-ordinator, the facilitator and the regulator.

11.3 In its determination to see every child at school, Mauritius is paving the way forward. Our country is creating a society for all, where people will learn to live together and respect their differences and abilities. The test of our civilisation lies in the way we take care of our underprivileged and excluded until the quality of life of each is improved.

11.4 A myth becoming a reality

Through the close collaboration of NGOs and the commitment of the Ministry of Education, children with disabilities will at last be able to say that they also can go to school like all their other peers. No child is to be forgotten in this national educational reform.

11.5 The task is gigantic but 35 years ago, parents stood up and founded their own schools. Today, with 39 SEN institutions and some mainstream schools integrating pupils, some 1500 children are having access to education. There is a will to create more educational facilities and there is hope that every child with a disability who can attend school will be able to do so.

11.6 There are still other fields of disabilities which have not been taken care of and no expertise is available. Parents will continue to mobilise themselves and resources available tapped into. It is the role of the Government to facilitate their endeavour to provide an education adapted to the needs of their children.

11.7 It is also the role of the Government to review the Policy and Strategy Document on a regular basis, after a proper evaluation process, for further improvement.

11.8 Likewise, programmes for children with learning difficulties and children who are gifted and talented must be set up. Including all children in the national educational system is part and parcel of the educational reform. At last, the Special Education Needs programme is bringing equal opportunities for all children of the Republic of Mauritius. Where there is a will, there is a way.







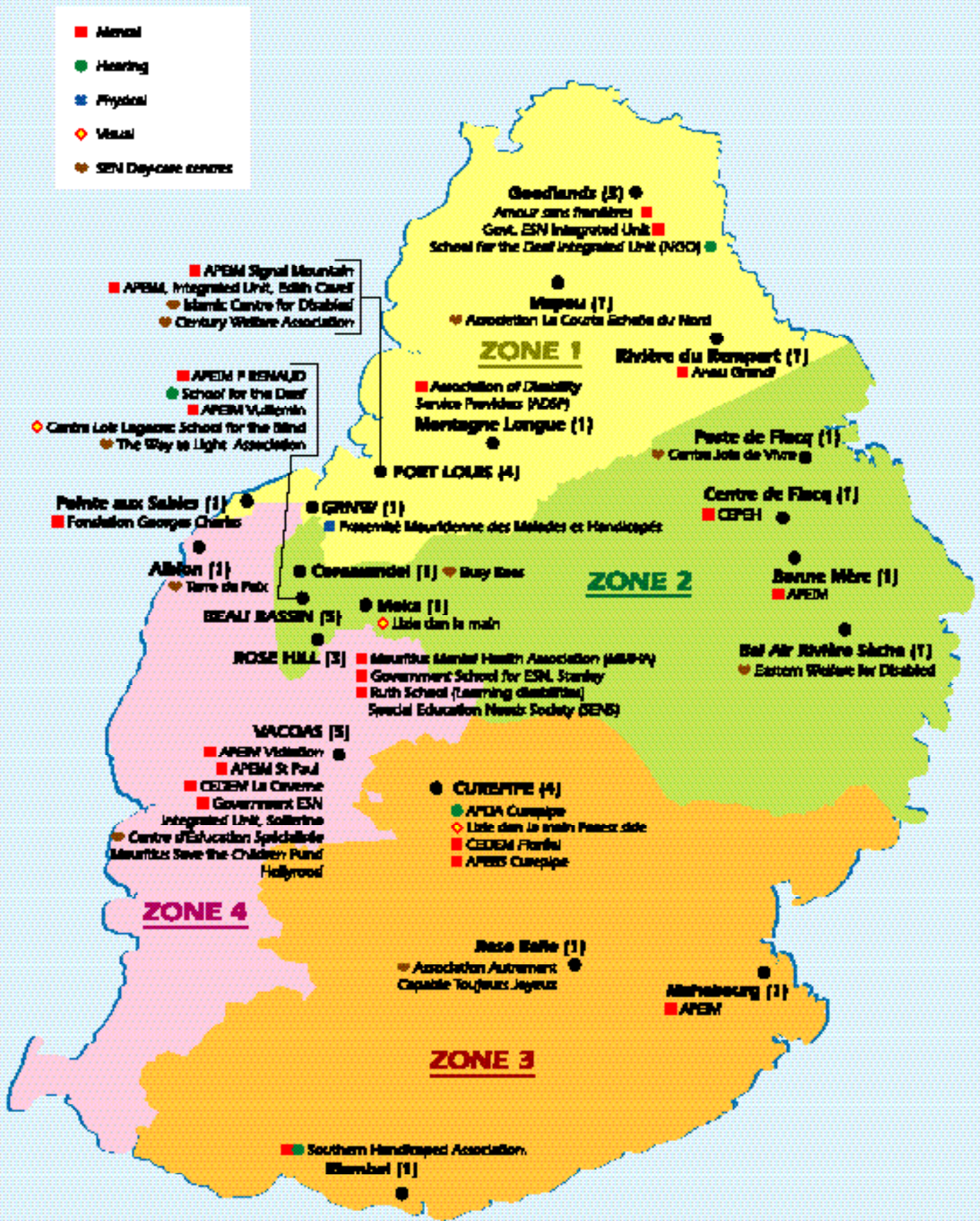
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Map illustrating the registered Special Education Needs schools and day-care centres



List of SEN schools registered with Ministry of Education

Nos 1 to 19: 19 schools run by 11 NGOs recognised by Ministry of Education in 2002-2005

Nos 1 to 22: 22 schools run by 14 NGOs duly registered by Ministry of Education as from July 2005

1	Mauritius Mental Health Association: MMHA	Ave Berthaud, Stanley, Rose-Hill
2	Association de Parents d'Enfants Inadaptés de l'île Maurice APEIM ST PAUL	Integrated Unit, 39, Rte St Paul, Phoenix
3	APEIM PORT-LOUIS	Integrated Unit, Edith Cavell, Port Louis
4	APEIM MAHEBOURG	Royal Rd, Mahebourg
5	APEIM BONNE MERE	Royal Rd, Bonne-Mère, Flacq
6	APEIM P RENAUD	Integrated Unit, Rago Pawar Lane, 5e Mille, Beau Bassin
7	APEIM SIGNAL MOUNTAIN	Integrated Unit, Victor Hugo St, Bell Village
8	APEIM VISITATION	Integrated Unit, Visitation Rd, Vacoas
9	APEIM VUILLEMIN	Vuillemin St, Beau Bassin
10	Fraternité Mauricienne des Malades et Handicapés: FMMH	175, Royal Rd, GRNW, Port Louis
11	Lizié dan la main	Louis Pasteur St, Forest-Side
12	Centre d'Education et de Développement de l'Enfant Mauricien: CEDEM	Pre-Primary & Primary, La Caverne, Vacoas
13	CEDEM	Primary College, Beetun Lane, Floréal
14	Association de Parents de Déficients Auditifs: APDA Hear Institute	8, Dupin St, Curepipe
15	Association de Parents d'Enfants aux Besoins Spéciaux: APEBS	9, Rue Remono, Curepipe
16	Ruth School Special Education Needs Society: SENS	Sir Charles Lees St, Rose Hill
17	Centre d'Education et de Progrès des Enfants Handicapés: CEPEH	Royal Rd, Argy, Central Flacq
18	Society for the Welfare of the Deaf: School for the Deaf	Pope Henessy St, Beau Bassin
19	Centre Lois Lagesse: School for the Blind	Colonel Maingard St, Beau Bassin
20	Fondation Georges Charles	16, Royal Rd, Terrasson, Pte aux Sables
21	Anou Grandi	Royal Rd, Mon Loisir, Riv. Du Rempart
22	Southern Handicapped Association.	Coastal Rd, Surinam, Riambel



List of 4 Integrated Units in primary government schools and 1 government school

23	School for the Deaf Integrated Unit (NGO)	Dr. Hurry GS, Goodlands
24	Lizié dan la main Integrated Unit (NGO)	Moka GS
25	Govt. ESN Integrated Unit	Dr. Hurry GS, Goodlands
26	Govt. ESN Integrated Unit	JT Ramsoondar GS, Solférino
27	Govt. School for ESN	Ave Berthaud, Stanley, Rose-Hill

List of 12 other SEN institutions (day-care centres) duly registered by Ministry of Education as from July 2005

28	Islamic Centre for Disabled	1, Military Rd, Cité Martial, Port Louis
29	Century Welfare Association	4, Kleber St, Cité Martial, Port Louis
30	The Way to Light Association	18, Yves Forget St, Roches-Brunes, Beau Bassin
31	Terre de Paix	Camp Créole, Albion
32	Centre Joie de Vivre	Assoc. des Malades et Handicapés de l'Est, Rue St Maurice, Poste de Flacq
33	Amour sans Frontières	St Antoine, Goodlands
34	Eastern Welfare for Disabled	Soopramanien Centre, Bel Air Riv. Sèche
35	Mauritius Save the Children Fund	Centre d'Education Spécialisée, Ave Swami Sivananda, Vacoas
36	Association Autrement Capable Toujours Joyeux	Kandan Lane, Mont Fertile, New Grove
37	Association La Courte Echelle du Nord	Labourdonnais, Mapou
38	Busy Bees	73, Ramana Maharishi Rd, Belle Etoile
39	Association of Disability Service Providers ADSP	Ruisseau Rose, Village Hall, Long Mountain

Note: Other NGOs are requesting registration of their SEN school or SEN day-care centre



Glossary

Words associated with Special Education Needs

1. Case conference

A formal meeting held by professional staff and parents to discuss a particular child.

2. Code of practice for special educational needs

A guide for schools on the practical help they should offer children with SEN. The code must be considered when making any decisions about a child's education.

3. Developmental curriculum

A programme for children who need to learn everyday skills, self-care, dressing, etc, and who may spend most of their education working towards the first level of the core school subjects in the national curriculum.

4. Differentiated curriculum

A curriculum that is specially adapted to meet the special educational needs of individual children.

5. Disability/Impairment/Handicap

Condition which causes a difficulty which may be sensorial, motor or intellectual. A handicap is usually related to an identifiable structural impairment which causes partial or total inability. As a consequence, the person with a disability has learning difficulties.

6. Inclusion

Inclusion is a term which expresses commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent appropriate in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from the class (rather than having to keep up with other students)." (UNESCO) Inclusion is a philosophy built on the belief that all people are equal and should be respected and valued, whether they are born with disabilities or without disabilities.

7. Inclusive school

The inclusive school gives access to all children who learn together, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. The inclusive school recognises and responds to the diverse needs of the students. It is structured and resourced accordingly to enable it to welcome and accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other abilities and needs.

8. Individual Education Plan

A learning programme for an individual child with learning difficulties, which includes what the child needs to learn and how that will be taught.

9. Integration

This means educating children with special educational needs together with children without special educational needs in mainstream schools wherever possible, and ensuring that children with special educational needs engage in the activities of the school together with children who do not have special educational needs.

10. Educational psychology service

The educational psychology service visits schools regularly and provides psychological advice in the form of a report based on observations and tests. Educational psychologists are trained, have worked as teachers and work with teachers. They should not be confused with psychiatrists who are doctors concerned with mental illness.

11. Education social workers

Education social workers link schools and families to promote good school attendance. They also work with individual children who have behavioural difficulties.

12. Learning support assistants (teaching assistant, helper or ancillary staff)

The assistants work under the direction of teachers and are appointed to provide additional help in the classroom for a child or a group of children with identified special educational needs. Also known as teaching assistants.



13. Occupational therapist

They provide programmes to develop the management of everyday tasks. They can also advise about aids and adaptations. Occupational therapists usually work for the local health authority.

14. Paediatricians

Doctors who specialise in children's needs and can refer a child to other health specialists, if necessary.

15. Peripatetic specialist teacher (or specialist, advisory, or support teacher)

A teacher with specific expertise who travels from school to school and is employed by the SENU to give appropriate specialist advice and support to the child and the school. Often, he or she will also teach children with special educational needs on a sessional basis, usually when an individual school does not justify the services of a full time teacher for the purpose.

16. Physiotherapists

Trained to assess movement and physical development such as balance, co-ordination, ability to sit, stand and walk. They advise on how to help a child develop movement.

17. Remedial Education

Remedial education is distinct from special education. Remedial education means the same curriculum as the rest but at a slower pace for the sub average, slow learners and problem children.

18. School medical officer

A doctor who ensures that a child's health is not stopping them from learning. They may do regular check-ups.

19. Special Education

Special education means a curriculum adapted for

- children with heavy physical, sensory and mental disabilities
- children who need special equipment and tools to make learning possible
- children who despite all remedial treatment cannot adapt in the mainstream.

On the other side of the spectrum, special education also means an enriched curriculum for those children who are gifted and talented and have difficulties adapting to their school environment because of their difference.

20. Special Educational Needs (SEN)

A child has special educational needs if he/she has a learning difficulty that requires special educational provision to be made.

21. Specialised schools

Term which also means Special Educational Needs Schools or Special Needs Schools. Specialised schools provide educational services to children with special educational needs due to disabilities (physical, visual, hearing, intellectual, emotional, psychological...) or due to other specific educational needs.

22. Specialised Information Technology (IT)

This covers a range of microcomputers, both portable and desktop; generic or integrated software packages, such as word processors, spreadsheets, databases and communication programmes; input devices such as keyboards, overlay keyboards, specialised access switches and touch screens; output devices such as monitors, printers and plotters; storage devices such as CD-ROM, and microelectronics controlled devices such as a floor turtle.

23. Speech therapist

The speech therapist helps children who have difficulty talking or communicating. He or she works in schools, health centres and other community centres.



The "abc" of Special Education Needs

It may help to think of special education as a programme of provision, rather than a label for children and young people.

ADHD (Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity or Hyperkinetic Disorder)

ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder)

A mental disorder which affects children at all stages of education and which is more common in boys. The child doesn't seem to be able to control his activities or attention. He/she has poor concentration, finds it hard to settle down and is always on the go. He/she is not good at organising things, finds it hard to take part in anything requiring sustained effort and will not wait for others. He/she often acts without thinking; has difficulty following instructions or completing tasks. Learning is impaired and behaviour is disruptive and may be defiant or aggressive.

Asperger's Syndrome

A condition often considered to be a mild form of autism. Children with this condition have many of the tendencies of others on the autism spectrum but they are more sociable. They do try to interact and to use language but they may do so in naïve and inappropriate ways. These pupils share the same triad of impairments but have higher intellectual abilities and their language development is different from the majority of pupils with autism.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Autism (Kanner's syndrome) is a rare psychiatric disorder of childhood. It is marked by severe difficulties in communicating and forming relationships with other people, in developing language, and in using abstract concepts. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental changes or change in daily routines and unusual responses to sensory experiences. About 50% have learning disabilities, but some are very intelligent and may even be gifted in specific areas.

Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder find it difficult to:

- Understand and use non-verbal and verbal communication. Many are delayed in learning to speak and some never develop meaningful speech.
- Understand social behaviour - which affects their ability to interact with children and adults. They are literal thinkers and fail to understand the social context. This can lead to inappropriate behaviour.
- Think and behave flexibly - which may be shown in restricted, obsessional or repetitive activities.

Behaviourally Challenged Pupils

Children may fall into this category for all sorts of reasons. They are likely to have some or many other difficulties which cause frustration and lead to undesirable behaviour. They may have difficulties socialising with other people; they may find it hard to accept authority; they may be looking for attention or they may be using avoidance tactics to get out of doing something which is causing frustration.

Brittle Bone Disease

This condition is caused by a lack of the collagen protein which builds bone, nails, skin, ligaments and teeth. The absence of this leads to bones fracturing extremely easily. Repeated fractures and weak bones can result in small stature. This condition can lead to deafness in adulthood.

Cerebral Palsy

This is a disorder of movement resulting from damage to the brain before, during, or immediately after birth causing problems with sight, hearing and learning. The degree to which a child is affected can vary greatly from mild difficulties in an arm to complete paralysis and disablement. Speech can be affected. Some people with



cerebral palsy suffer from spasticity (tense muscles), some have involuntary jerking of the limbs and others have balance problems when walking.

Communication Disorder

A speech disorder is an impairment of voice, articulation of speech sounds, and/or fluency. These impairments are observed in the transmission and use of the oral symbol system.

A language disorder is the impairment or deviant development of comprehension and/or use of a spoken, written, and/or other symbol system. The disorder may involve (1) the form of language, (2) the content of language, and/or (3) the function of language in communication in any combination.

Down's Syndrome

Down's Syndrome (medical name is trisomy 21) is the result of having an extra chromosome in the body's genetic makeup. There are three no. 21 chromosomes instead of the usual two, giving a total of 47 chromosomes instead of 46. The result is a distinctive appearance: narrow eyes, a broad nose, a tendency towards a round face... They tend to be of short stature and often overweight as they grow older. The condition always causes learning difficulties though in varying degrees of severity. Some people with Down's Syndrome can also have problems with sight, hearing and heart conditions.

Deafness/Hearing Problems (Hearing Impairment)

About one in 1000 babies are born with hearing loss.

- Other trauma throughout the first 10 years of life causes the numbers to rise to 2 in 1000 with hearing loss.
- 'Glue ear' can cause temporary hearing loss to some children resulting in delayed learning.

Dysarthria

This condition is a weakness of the muscles used for speaking. The pronunciation is unclear although the linguistic content and meaning are normal. The child might speak in a whisper, have slurred speech or appear to be talking through his nose. There may also be other physical problems related to their being unable to control their muscle movement. Children with cerebral palsy often have dysarthria.

Dyscalculia

A very specific difficulty in mathematics, often with numeracy, but no accompanying difficulty with literacy. Pupils may have difficulty in remembering and carrying out sequenced instructions; they can confuse telephone numbers. They might have problems with word sums or following procedures in problem-solving.


Dyslexia (Specific Literacy Difficulties)

Pupils with dyslexia have a marked and persistent difficulty in learning to read, write and spell, despite progress in other areas. Pupils may have poor reading comprehension, handwriting and punctuation. They may also have difficulties in concentration and organisation and in remembering sequences of words. They may mispronounce common words or reverse letters and sounds in words. Some other terms used for this developmental disorder are specific dyslexia, developmental reading disorder or developmental word blindness.

Dyspraxia

- Often known as 'clumsy child syndrome'
- May be mild to severe
- Can affect speech
- Can cause child to have low self-esteem and later mental problems.

This condition is a lack of development in planning of physical movement and organisation. The affected motor problems result in difficulties in academic learning



and also in daily life skills. Pupils may have poor balance and co-ordination and may be hesitant in many actions (running, skipping, hopping, holding a pencil, doing jigsaws, etc). Their articulation may also be immature and their language late to develop. They may also have poor awareness of body position and poor social skills. They often have difficulty coping with multi-sensory stimuli and can feel pain from too much sound or visual stimuli. They may also have poor awareness of body position and poor social skills.

Emotionally Disturbed/Behavioural Problems

The behaviour of children with problems of this kind is likely to vary from situation to situation and from day to day. One day the child may seem quiet and withdrawn and refuse to engage in conversation, answering only with a grunt. Other days they can seem friendly and sociable. They may seem unable to control their emotions and are likely to have aggressive outbursts. They can be very sensitive and because their self-esteem is low, they cannot 'take a joke'. They are more likely to see it as a criticism. They may also act as if they expect to be blamed for everything and have a persecution complex.

Gifted and Talented Children

'Gifted' and 'Talented' refers to the top ten per cent of the school population in academic subjects and other subjects. Experience in secondary schools has shown that the terms apply to 40 per cent of pupils in at least one area: mainstream academic subjects, expressive arts, sports and music...

Gifted children are quite rare. It is important to distinguish between children of high ability and those who are exceptional. Gifted children possess extensive general knowledge, are exceptionally curious, are able to read, learn and memorise concepts rapidly, engage in logic and problem solving activities confidently, are capable of being inventive...

Gifted children often have emotional or behavioural difficulties also. They can have excessive energy, short attention spans and get bored easily. They can resent authority, flout the rules regularly and be particular about the ways they wish to learn. They like to have secure and stable adults around them and can get frustrated if their ideas cannot be carried out. They may have difficulties with fine motor skills and handwriting. They are often highly sensitive and compassionate and can have strong fears over death and loss of family.

Hearing Impairment

Pupils with a hearing impairment range from those with a mild hearing loss to those who are profoundly deaf. They cover the whole ability range. For educational purposes, pupils are regarded as having a hearing impairment if they require hearing aids, adaptations to their environment and/or particular teaching strategies in order to access the concepts and language of the curriculum. A number of pupils with a hearing impairment also have an additional disability or learning difficulty. Hearing loss may be because of conductive or sensori-neural problems and can be measured on a decibel scale. Four categories are generally used: mild, moderate, severe and profound. Some pupils with a significant loss, communicate through sign instead of, or as well as, speech.

Moderate Learning Difficulties

This is likely to be the most common difficulty present in the pupils in your class. Pupils with this problem are usually performing at a significantly lower level than their peers in reading, writing, spelling and sometimes numeracy. A learner with MLD is likely to be struggling with both the content and the presentation of their work. There is no identified specific reason for this difficulty.

Mental Retardation

Mental Retardation refers to substantial limitations in present functioning. It is characterised by significantly subaverage intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with



related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skill areas: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure, and work.

Multi-Sensory Impairment

Pupils with multi-sensory impairment have a combination of visual and hearing difficulties. They are sometimes referred to as deafblind but may have some residual sight and/or hearing. Many also have additional disabilities but their complex needs mean that it may be difficult to ascertain their intellectual abilities. Pupils with multi-sensory impairment have much greater difficulties in accessing the curriculum and the environment than those with a single sensory impairment. They have difficulties in perception, communication and in the acquisition of information. Incidental learning is limited. The combination can result in high anxiety and multi-sensory deprivation. Pupils need teaching approaches which make good use of their residual hearing and vision, together with their other senses. They may need alternative means of communication.

Muscular Dystrophy

- Genetic
- Ranges from mild to life-limiting
- Progressive condition
- More common in boys

A disorder of the nerves connecting the brain and spinal cord to the muscles. The disease leads to a breakdown of muscle fibres causing weak and wasted muscles.

Physical Disability

There is a wide range of physical disabilities and pupils cover the whole ability range. Some pupils are able to access the curriculum and learn effectively without additional educational provision. They have a disability but do not have a special educational need. For others, the impact on their education may be severe.

Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have complex learning needs. In addition to very severe learning difficulties, pupils have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. Pupils require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care. They are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Some pupils communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language.

Specific Literacy Difficulties (Dyslexia)

- Three times as many males as females affected
- Three types of dyslexia; motor, visual and auditory.

Dyslexia is usually diagnosed by a psychologist based on data gathered by teachers and parents. In order to decide whether a child has SLD/dyslexia a picture of the whole child needs to be developed. It is likely that there will be marked deficits in their achievements despite being of average or above ability.

Severe or Complex Learning Difficulties

Pupils with severe learning difficulties have significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. This has a major effect on their ability to participate in the school curriculum without support. They may also have difficulties in mobility and co-ordination, communication and perception and the acquisition of self-help skills. Pupils with severe learning difficulties will need support in all areas of the curriculum. They may also require teaching of self-help, independence and social skills. Some pupils may use sign and symbols but most will be able to hold simple conversations.

Speech and Language Disorders

Speech and language difficulties usually fall into three categories, (though there may be other speech/language disorders such as those caused by physical deformities, e.g. dysarthria); expressive disorders, receptive disorders and phonological difficulties.

Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus

- Present from birth
- Often accompanied by hydrocephalus (water on the brain)

Spina Bifida & hydrocephalus

This condition is caused by a defect in the neural tube which forms the spine, spinal cord and brain. A gap is left in the vertebrae.

Hydrocephalus

- Often accompanies spina bifida
- Can be caused by meningitis, head injury or premature birth.

This condition is caused by an obstruction in the flow of fluid around and over the ventricles in the brain. The problem when it happens in babies causes the head to swell up and enlarge. This leads to learning difficulties.

Tourette's Syndrome

- Usually begins between 5 and 11 with an upper limit of 18
- Can be suppressed so may appear different in one place (e.g. school)
- Different degrees of severity; from mild to socially debilitating.
- 3 times as common in males
- Symptoms can increase or decrease or even go into remission
- Condition usually improves after adolescence

This condition causes sufferers to have an overwhelming compulsion to produce (usually facial) tics or to make or say uncontrolled noises or words. Sometimes the sufferer can be seen to be repeating phrases or mimicking gestures.

Traumatic Brain Injury

Traumatic Brain Injury results from rapid acceleration and deceleration of the brain, including shearing (tearing) of nerve fibers, contusion (bruising) of the brain tissue against the skull, brain stem injuries, and edema (swelling).

Visual Impairment/Blindness

There is a wide range of types and degree of visual impairment from short-sightedness, correctable with glasses to people who have virtually no useful sight - those registered blind. There is also the problem of colour blindness which can occur in up to 10% of boys.

Visual impairments encompass people who have never had any visual function, those who had normal vision for some years before becoming gradually or suddenly partially or totally blind, those with [disabilities] in addition to the visual loss, those with selective impairments of parts of the visual field, and those with a general degradation of acuity across the visual field.

Legally Blind - A person who has visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye even with correction (e.g., eyeglasses) or has a field of vision so narrow that its widest diameter subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees.

Sources:

The Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 1998

The National Association for Gifted Children www.nagbritain.org.uk.

Junior Education, October 2003

http://www.teacher.gov.uk/whole_school/sen/senglossary/

<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/sped/projects/categories/>



Some extracts from previous reports and action plans from the Ministry of Education

- 10th April 1978: Report of the Commission of Enquiry on post-primary and secondary sectors of Education: THE ROAD AHEAD (V. Glover)

"It is suggested that our secondary education should adopt an integrated approach ... in accommodating a child who is blind in a secondary school."
Pages 46-47

- 17th May 1978: Report of the Commission of Enquiry on pre-primary and secondary Education in Mauritius: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS (F. Richard)

"Special Education is based on the principle that no child is ineducable."

Under this heading would also fall, in a sense, both the slow learner and the bright child.

Page 150, par.18.6

1. Special Education should cater for all who are physically or mentally handicapped.
2. The proposed school psychological service should be of help in drawing up schemes of Special Education.
3. A special effort should be made by the Public Sector in the detection and treatment of physical and mental handicaps.
4. The Ministry of Education should, in the long term, take over the provision of Special Education.
5. There should be a 'classe de transition' for the slow learners and their course of study could be of 4 years instead of 3 after Standard III.
6. All teachers must be trained to apply diagnostic and prognostic tests in methods of teaching slow learners.

- 1982-1983: Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Education: WE HAVE ALL BEEN CHILDREN (V. Glover)

Page 55

(d) ... Remedial and special attention is necessary at the primary level to try and recuperate the late developers and the slow learners and to encourage the better pupils.

Page 81

(c) ... At the primary level, we have already indicated where the curriculum should start and where it should end and we have proposed a special attention class as an important and regular fixture of the time-table.

Pages 98-99

(b) ... Every school child should have a record card which will accompany him from school to school.

The object is to record the progress of the child in all areas including physical development, social adaptability and so on. From the pedagogical angle the idea is to record progress in the child's abilities in defined areas at given periods of time. The record card should in some way reflect the areas where the child needs special or remedial attention, but the notes should be made in such a way as not to brand him as a failure or a reject in any particular field.



Page 132

(f) ... The programmes which have been presented to us in relation to education of children with severe disabilities should be given a measure of priority.

- August 1991: Master Plan for the Year 2000

Page 51, Plan for the Future

v.7.9

Education for mildly and moderately handicapped – Emphasis will be laid on the identification of handicapped children at a very early age...In this connexion, close liaison will be established with the Ministry of Health ...An Assessment and Referral Centre will be established ...

v.7.10

The provision of Special Education is expensive, but in order to fulfill the objectives of the UN decade of Disabled Persons for full participation and equality, education will be made accessible to all disabled persons. To this end, the majority of mildly or moderately disabled persons will attend normal schools with an adequate support system...

v.7.11

Teachers who have been trained in Special Education will take charge of mildly handicapped children in small groups. They will be supported regularly by a pluri-disciplinary service (Doctor, Psychologist, etc). These children will follow courses according to the nature of their disabilities. Many of them will follow the mainstream programme. The main aim will be to integrate them into the normal class...

v.7.12

Most children can benefit from normal classroom teaching provided suitable modifications are made in the educational programme...The services of an audiologist and a speech therapist will be made available. Also, the built environment in existing schools will be made more accessible to handicapped students. All newly constructed or rehabilitated schools will include provision for easy access by handicapped children.

v.7.14

(i) A Special Education unit will be set up in the Ministry of Education...

(ii) The Government will support and encourage Special education Schools to decentralise in order to reach all pupils in need... Government will invite NGOs to participate in a joint programme for the development of special schools. Government will continue to support the NGOs through capital grants, training and payment of salary of teachers.

(vi) A permanent team of medical and screening officers will screen and assess children for admission in special schools.

v.7.16

Consideration will be given to the establishment of a National Steering Committee on teacher training for Special Education. The MIE will be asked to co-ordinate some of the courses in close collaboration with the NGOs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Security and the Psychological Services of the Ministry of Education...



v.7.17

As a matter of urgency, courses will be offered to teachers who are already working in special classes in order to give them a grounding in theoretical and practical aspects of Special Education. Foreign sources will be approached for assistance.

v.7.21

Legislation – The present legal position of handicapped children will be studied, and, if necessary, legislation for protecting their right to education will be presented in Parliament.

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A Special Needs Education Division will be set within the Ministry under the responsibility of one of the Directors that will take care of children with special needs. The Division will evolve a new strategy in full collaboration with all voluntary organisations to ensure affirmative action...

There may be a case for Government to establish separate specialised schools for children with severe impairment. This will be actively studied and implemented.

We will, as a priority, carry out an island-wide survey with the collaboration of other ministries and organisations to establish the full extent of requirements of Special Needs Education and plan accordingly.

The Special Needs Education Division will take care of the children, with mild impairment, in order to ensure their integration into the mainstream of the education system.

The Ministry will take all necessary actions regarding children with special educational needs as part of its nation-wide strategy to provide education for all. Principles of inclusion, integrated education, community-based rehabilitation and participation are some of our policy options to promote equality of access.



Some references to current World Policy

Mauritius has a formal commitment to the education of children with disabilities. Its national Policy subscribes to international declarations and initiatives towards Education For All. Some best known references are:

- 1949 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 26) guarantees education for all.
- 1989 Convention of the Rights of the Child (articles 2 and 23) stipulating that "disabled children should not be discriminated against".
- 1990 World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand, setting the goals for education for all.
- 1993 United Nations Standard Rules on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
- 1994 Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, Spain (article 2) asserting that "regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discrimination, creating education for all" and inviting UNESCO to address early childhood education as a priority area within special needs education
- 2000 World Education Forum on Education for All, Dakar, Senegal (article 23.1/3) concluding with the official commitment of the Mauritian Government for education for all, inclusive of children with special educational needs.
- 2003 ADEA, Association for the Development of Education in Africa putting emphasis on "inclusion and the right of all children with disabilities to a quality education which will enable them to become full-fledged citizens, participating in the development of their personal life, their family and their nation".
- 2005 3rd African International Conference on Early Childhood Development, Accra, Ghana with special mention about access and use of quality basic services as well as supportive policy environment and services for children with special needs.



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Have participated in the elaboration of this Policy and Strategy Document, representatives of the:

MOEHR	Ministry of Education & Human Resources Directors, Administrative and Technical Officers
ZEP	Zones d'Education Prioritaire
MIE	Mauritius Institute of Education
MCA	Mauritius College of the Air
MOSS	Ministry of Social Security
NCRD	National Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, MOSS
SCU	Street Children Unit
MWRCDFW	Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare
CDU	Child Development Unit
MOHQL	Ministry of Health and Quality of Life
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
BEC	Bureau of Catholic Education
PSTF	Pre-School Trust Fund & Private Pre-Primary Schools
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
APDA	Association de Parents de Déficients Auditifs
APEIM	Association de Parents d'Enfants Inadaptés de l'île Maurice
ANFEN	Adolescent Non-Formal Education Network
CEDEM	Centre d'Education et de Développement de l'Enfant Mauricien
SENS	Special Education Needs Society
SOS	SOS Children's Villages
IIM	Inclusion International Mauritius
MMHA	Mauritius Mental Health Association
FMMH	Fraternité Mauricienne des Malades et Handicapés
	Association Anou Grandi
	The Way to Light Association
	Lois Lagesse Trust Fund
	Lizié dan la main
	Society for the Welfare of the Deaf
	Terre de Paix

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