



Institute for Accountability in Southern Africa

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Project Proposal for an Accountability Audit of the Basic Education System in South Africa

1. The Need

Only 3.5% of the black (African) learners who entered the public school system in 1996, emerged 12 years later, both functionally literate and with a matriculation certificate.

This is not sustainable. The campaigns against poverty and unemployment can not be won if the education system remains dysfunctional.

Urgent steps are needed to improve upon the delivery of the constitutionally guaranteed right to basic education which ought to be enjoyed by all, young and old alike, if the guarantees of the Constitution are to be met.

2. The Opportunity

Following the 2009 general elections held on 22 April, in which all major parties identified education as a priority issue in their manifestos, the ministry of education at national level was divided into two, one minister (Blade Nzimande) is responsible for tertiary education and another (Angie Motshekga) for primary and secondary education. Both ministers are new appointees. Their early statements indicate that they are aware of the need to effect changes in the system.

3. The Challenge

It would be helpful if any changes that are contemplated are made on the basis of a *careful objective assessment* of the situation in schools which is both current and appropriately focused.

It would appear that too much of the planning in education over the last fifteen years has been based on dogma rather than on the practical exigencies of the day. In this process the right to basic education has not been adequately delivered by the system in place. Remedial measures are urgently required.

Directors: D. Groeneveldt, P. Hoffman, SC.

4. The Project Proposal

The notion of an accountability audit for the basic education system is premised on the need for the decisions which underpin any reforms to be based on a proper assessment of the current realities in the education system.

Accountability entails seeking explanations for decisions taken in the past and justification for the policies in place in the education system in South African public schools. Weaknesses need to be properly identified and addressed.

Expert input is advisable.

A constructive approach is indicated.

The accountability audit will be directed at the educational, human resource management and legal aspects of the basic educational system under scrutiny. This three pronged approach is designed to give the audit a balanced nature that will be of assistance to policy makers in their deliberations on the way forward in education. Blockages and bottle-necks will be identified, current needs highlighted and possible remedial measures suggested on the basis of the audit.

5. Methodology

An assessment of the policy implications of the educational system in place will be made; the human resource management practices in place will be compared with the requirements of the Constitution, especially sections 195 and 237, and a legal assessment of the efficacy of educational laws and legislated policies will be effected.

6. Personnel

The Institute for Accountability will collaborate with experts in the field of education to bring the audit to finality as efficiently as possible in time for any parliamentary debates. Its own resources can be used on the legal and human resource management fronts, see www.ifaisa.org for details of the skills available to the Institute.

On the educational aspects Mamphela Ramphele and Paul Colditz will hopefully be the main collaborators in the project. The former was vice chancellor of the University of Cape Town and the latter is an attorney who has forsaken private practice in order to lead FEDSAS, the Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools, an organisation dedicated to ensuring quality education for its members and all who live and learn in South Africa. Dr Huw Davies, a retired educationist and trade unionist, is also a possible collaborator as is Mr Clive Roos a former deputy director general of education.

7. Process

It is planned to have an initial plenary meeting in Cape Town to set the project in motion and agree the exact parameters of the audit. Thereafter each collaborator will carry out her or his part of the audit, a consolidated report will be prepared and cross checked.

The final report will be presented both to the Department of Education and to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Education as a civil society contribution to the debate on the reform of the education system. It will be released at a press conference. It will comment on the draft basic education laws amendment bill of 2009.

8. Costs of the full project (estimated)

Travel, accommodation and transport for 2 out of town auditors (provision for 2 meetings in person):	R 16 000
Professional fees of auditors (for the full project):	R 600 000
Printing and dissemination of initial outcome / plan – and final report:	R 4 000
Venue hire for plenary meetings (including meals):	R 10 000
Telephone and communication:	R 5 000
Refreshments (general):	R 1 200
Miscellaneous consumables:	R 2 000
Press conference liaison:	R 10 000
TOTAL COST of project over 6-8 week period:	R 648 200

9. The Way Forward

As the parliamentary process is likely to gain a momentum of its own as the bill is processed, it is appropriate to treat this project as sufficiently urgent to justify the commencement of the roll out of the audit before the bill is made law, with the view to completing it as soon as possible.

This is possible as the expertise is available; it is simply a question of finding funding urgently and putting the process in place to produce the audit report timeously.

The funds raised from the launch dinner of IFAISA on 22 October 2009 will be dedicated to getting this project started as soon as possible via setting up the initial investigative and planning meeting with all parties concerned.

Paul Hoffman SC

Director: Institute for Accountability in Southern Africa

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20 October, 2009

