Chapter 6
Education Policy Reform in Postapartheid South Africa: Constraints and Possibilities

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Introduction

This chapter is an analysis of the postapartheid government's policy vision that was meant to guide the reconstruction of South Africa's inequitable education system. By assessing the period from 1994 until about mid-2000, this paper argues that education policy is characterized by a restricted vision of reconstruction, which failed to provide the necessary basis for developing an equitable and united education system. The dramatic narrowing materialized in a complex and circumscribed political context. The focus of this analysis is on the interaction between the structural dynamics that delimited the policy terrain and the political dynamics that shaped education policy. Specific developments in the sphere of education, given its relative autonomy, shaped the eventual policy outcomes. Given the interaction between the structural and political dimensions, the government made very definite choices in giving effect to its favored vision of educational change. In this light I raise some thoughts towards an alternative conceptual approach to education policy reform in South Africa. This interpretative analysis is based on integrating work written over the last few years (Badat, 1997; Christie, 1996; Jansen, 1998; Kallaway, 1997) and my own work on schooling policy (Fataar, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2003, 2006).

Education Policy Reform in the Context of a Negotiated Political Settlement

The Black majority in South Africa has been looking to the postapartheid dispensation for a development platform to improve their lives. The post-1994 democratic state has had to confront a deep legacy of racially based inequality. The continuing impact of unequal education has its roots in the country's successive forms of colonialism under the Dutch (1652) and the British (1815). The apartheid

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state ruled from 1948 on the basis of a policy of rigid racial segregation, which led to an enormously inequitable education system. It was clear that the new democratic state had to confront enormous challenges in order to build a unified and equitable education system.

Educational reform must be understood in light of the political arrangements negotiated between the old apartheid state and the liberation movements. The nature of the political settlement played a fundamental role in shaping the direction of education reform. The transition to a negotiated political settlement limited the government's ability to establish an equity-informed policy agenda. Contrary to popular perception, the negotiated settlement displaced radical reform objectives with a narrow reform orientation. The constitutional framework entrenched liberal democratic rights while failing to guarantee the exercise of social rights such as the right to housing, free education, and health care. These were relegated to the realm of delivery given "existing capacity". Thus the political settlement had a negative impact on the government's ability to establish a viable platform for fundamental public and education reform.

The impact of the history of inequality under apartheid continued to have an impact during the postapartheid period. Under apartheid, educational development vacillated between the state's racial separatist ideology and the demands by industrial capitalism for appropriate forms of urban social reproduction (Cross & Chisholm, 1990; Molteno, 1984). By the late 1980s South Africa had the most racially skewed education system in the world. White education was 10 times better funded than that for the African majority (Fataar, 1997). One million Black kids of school age were not in school. The Indian (subcontinental origins) and Coloured (people of mixed-race origins) groups also were at the receiving end of education that was generally poor but slightly better than that for African groups. This intra-Black racial hierarchy was part of the grand plan of an ideology of racial differentiation. Schooling was meant to inculcate and naturalize an ideology of racial separateness among the country's different races.

The postapartheid government established in 1994 inherited a vastly unequal system with two fundamental challenges. The first was the need to place the 1 million poor and mostly African and Coloured children into school, which amounted to the challenge of an enormous expansion of the school system (Fataar, 1997). Research showed that the government succeeded fairly spectacularly in this regard. The current access rate of children attending school is about 98% (Fataar, 2003). The second challenge was the equitable provision of teachers, resources, and institutional capacity to provide the platform for a unified and qualitatively improved school system. A very complex and disappointing story began to emerge over the last few years in response to this latter challenge.

In this light, it is important to understand that the political settlement of 1994 accommodated the requirement to secure the basis for new forms of capitalism congruent with the country's desire to enter the global economy. The apartheid state's reformism during the 1980s failed to secure this new form of reproduction mainly because of refusal to scrap its race-based policies (Nasson, 1990). The official desegregation of South Africa in 1994 was a central element in laying the foundations for capital accumulation and gearing the country toward entry into the global economy (Wolpe, 1994). Global capital presumably could do business comfortably in a politically

normalized country. The political changes in South Africa came at the end of the Cold War and the accompanying discrediting of socialism and radical reform. The education policymaking arena was thus characterised by a conservative ideological and political climate. In this light a policy vision for equitable reforms failed to take account of the existing inequalities and power relations in society.

Narrowing of Socioeconomic and Education Policy

The conservative turn in both socioeconomic and education policy was the outcome of the government's choice of a macroeconomic framework that targeted the country's entry into the global economy as the principal and overarching policy ideal of the postapartheid period. This thwarted the progressive educational idealism that underpinned the popular uprisings against apartheid education in the preceding decades. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), adopted in the early days of the Government of National Unity (GNU) was an attempt to keep the contradictory pressures of equality and economic development in tension as the conceptual undertow of socioeconomic policy. However, the choice of Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) to replace the RDP in 1996 showed a clear preference for a growth-first strategy in which redress and redistribution would depend on a trickle-down economic policy. Some labelled GEAR as "voluntary structural adjustment" in reference to the absence of direct pressure from northern monetary institutions to move in this direction (Vally & Spreen, 1998). This is not to discount the manifold pressures brought on by global political and economic dynamics that the government was unable to ignore in its choice to develop a functioning export-led economy and attract foreign investment.

However, the many internal contradictions that beset the GEAR strategy have resulted in the failure of its macroeconomic vision. GEAR's preference for economic development along post-Fordist lines, based on high-end quality production to establish global competitiveness, was unrealistic given the uneven and underdeveloped nature of the existing economy. A key consequence of the developmental approach was the entrenchment of fiscal conservatism as the basis of the approach to development. This led to a decrease in public financing of key social welfare sectors. In education this meant that for 4 consecutive years beginning in 1995, the education budgetary increase in real terms was well below the inflation rate. Internal budgetary reprioritization, not budgetary increase, became the chief mechanism to fund the government's commitment to equity in education (Greenstein, 1997). Building a unified school system of quality had to happen in a constricted financial environment. Funds from a smaller overall education budget had to be moved from certain parts of the education system to other, more disadvantaged parts of the system. As the aborted teacher cutback plan illustrated (Fataar, 1996, 2003), policies that attempted to effect internal budgetary reprioritization had disastrous consequences, incurring greater costs, which ran contrary to the need for fiscal discipline. Teachers were enticed to leave the profession with attractive retrenchment packages that drained the government financially. The government's

minimalist approach to funding the recurring costs of schools did not enable the majority of poor schools in the country to rebuild their shattered physical learning conditions.

A conservative education policy discourse was established concomitant to the neoliberal orientations of the state's economic approach. The need for fiscal discipline played a major role in determining the Education Ministry's approach to education reform. After initial contests inside the state, in which an expanded approach was defeated, a definite orientation emerged only during 1996 based on an integrated approach to reform. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was presented as a key part of the GEAR strategy. Both were grounded in an economic growth agenda. The NQF was touted as a way to produce the necessary sophisticated technological labor that would complement the development of a globally competitive economy. The idea of integrating education and training is based on developing an inclusive system able to incorporate adults, workers, and out-of-school youth. Integration would address the need for greater access to and mobility within the education system. The NQF envisages multiple sites of educational delivery and a flexible qualifications framework to provide expanded learning opportunities for those outside the formal education system.

However, the NQF's preferred pedagogical approach and assessment methodology, driven by industrial training interests, has resulted in a narrow pedagogical approach in the realm of the school curriculum. While outcomes-based education (OBE) may be suited to the needs of training for measurement and demonstration of skills and competencies, teaching to predefined outcomes in educational contexts such as schools undermined the development of a democratic pedagogy based on open-ended and critical enquiry. OBE was an essential part of the NQF's attempt to effect closer alignment between education and the economy based on the human capital theory view that education, among other factors, should play a leading role in constructing a competitive economy. This is predicated upon the flawed assumption that socioeconomic development is in large part dependent upon the ability of education to produce skilled workers. However, the logic of both GEAR and the NQF was internally inconsistent and flawed. The GEAR growth strategy did not lead to the development of a sophisticated post-Fordist globally competitive economy, placing the NQF's attempt to generate a high-skill HRD strategy in jeopardy. Thus, the relationship between GEAR and the NQF was not sustained. The government's choice of the NQF as the pivotal feature of its macroeducational framework, and OBE as the curriculum model, encompassed a narrow and conservative vision of education reconstruction.

The Politics of Education Policymaking

A number of developments before and during 1994 and mid-2000 came together to shape policy. The moderate constitutional dispensation affected the nature of education policy, which compromised attempts to imbue policy with a redistributive

ethos. Provinces were awarded semiautonomous powers in educational decision making, which enabled them to make legislation that focuses on the implementation dimension of policy. This gave provinces such as the Western Cape the ability to retain a conservative policy thrust in order to protect its relatively privileged status. This resulted in incongruence between national and provincial education policy (Kruss, 1997). Examples of a conservative trend can be detected in the Western Cape's elaboration of national policy on school governing bodies, mother-tongue education, and religious observances. Furthermore, conservative groups in the province brought two court challenges against aspects of national legislation. These were (1) the successful challenge that brought the government's teacher rationalization and redeployment plan, intended to shift teachers to oversubscribed Black schools, to a halt (Fataar, 1996; Vally & Spreen, 1998), and (2) the unsuccessful challenge against dropping school admission requirements on the basis of language and religion (Chisholm & Vally, 1996). These challenges illustrate the complexity of advocating particular policy positions in a democratic environment made up of competing interests. It also highlights the difficult legal and constitutional environment in which a coherent policy framework had to be developed.

Protecting the jobs of senior apartheid-era civil servants in the education bureaucracy, a feature of the negotiated constitutional dispensation, constrained the Education Ministry in developing a coherent policy framework. While the policy rhetoric symbolically pronounced on the need for redress, the real power to change the functioning of the educational bureaucracy remained largely in the hands of these bureaucrats. Through their expertise, knowledge of the policy process, and an accommodating human relations approach they retained technical, though not political control, over the policy process. These White bureaucrats, for example, exercised technical control over the school curriculum policy processes. Their influence on the policy and bureaucratic processes are illustrated by the following two examples. First, they provided the framework for the provincialization of the education system (Kruss, 1997). New provincial bureaucracies were set up on the basis of their work in the Education Coordination Services. Second, they brought very important discursive influences into the school curriculum processes, such as the emphasis on learning areas, to replace the old subjects. These influences played a prominent role in shaping the postapartheid school curriculum (Fataar, 1999, 2006) and the integration approach of the NQF (Fataar, 1999; Mohamed, 1996). The apartheid-era bureaucrats also played a very important role in placing limitations on the structure and functioning of the bureaucracy. Attempts were made by the new ministry to break this conservative bureaucratic culture. For example, the redress-inspired Culture of Learning Programme (COLP), which targeted the physical refurbishment of schools, was an unsuccessful attempt to reorient the bureaucracy's financial and administrative functioning to be more responsive to the need for a redistributive orientation in educational delivery (Bloch, 1996; Chanza, 1995).

The reconstitution of civil society during the 1990s had a decisive impact on the education reform environment. The people-state dichotomy, in terms of which the progressive education movement galvanized popular resistance against apartheid education, was replaced by the need to develop policy in anticipation of governance.

In the process the substance of the radical People's Education discourse of the antiapartheid movements of the 1980s was marginalized. The closure of the leftist National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) in 1995 represented the collapse of a vibrant civic culture in education. Some prominent NECC activists became bureaucrats in the Department of Education (DoE), and organizations such as the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) were co-opted into government (Fataar, 1999). This diminished the capacity of the left to sustain a critique of a rapidly narrowing policy orientation. In the vacuum created by the dispersal of leftist activists and organizations, a constellation of conservative interests, motivated by the need to protect their privileged status and spurred on by the mainstream media, began to have an impact on the policy process. Consequently, the period after the 1994 election was characterized by the emergence of conservative groups that used the leverage provided by the moderate constitutional dispensation to push for the retention of educational privilege. This placed constraints on the government to legislate for a new path in educational reconstruction.

The establishment of the National Education and Training Forum (NETF) in 1993, an attempt to deal with the intermittent short-term crises that beset education in the early 1990s, gave rise to stakeholder politics in education policymaking. Instead of vibrant and critical civic participation in shaping the reforms, stakeholders essentially represented various organized interests, which mostly excluded poor and vulnerable sectors of society. Thus, only identified constituencies could participate in the policy reform processes, of which teacher unions and national provincial bureaucrats were the most powerful. Many groups were excluded, such as academics, subject associations, and curriculum and policy experts. The majority of teachers were sidelined because of the lack of consultation by their unions on the various reform initiatives. The curriculum policy process, driven by stakeholder participation, served to alienate teachers from the new curriculum (Kruss, 1997). The curriculum process was criticized as having been produced in smoke-filled committee rooms without any connection to the learning context. The policymaking model was technicist in that the process was divorced from the exigencies that had existed at the level of implementation.

The conceptual underpinnings of the NQF were generated mainly by a confluence of business and labor interests, which agreed on the need to make education and training more responsive to labor requirements. The education sector was almost completely ignored in the process (Human Sciences Research Council, 1995). OBE was determined as the school curriculum framework outside of the school curriculum process. The intensive work by stakeholder representatives in the curriculum policy processes between late 1996 and early 1997 amounted to an elaboration and ratification of the OBE. Paradoxically, an influential schooling interest group such as the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) agreed to this predetermined agenda because of its political support for the integration of education and training – even when it became clear that the new curriculum would have negative consequences for teachers. Policy borrowing from countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Scotland informed the conceptualization of the NQF and OBE

(Mohamed, 1996). It is clear that education policy narrowing was the outcome of a number of influences, mainly conservative, that operated in the conjuncture of the 1990s and which sidelined a transformational view of education.

Challenging Education Policy as "Symbolism"

My analysis supports the position that education policy reform during the first years of democratic rule favored the economic growth and development conceptual dimension. Equality became contingent on the social dividend gained from a growing economy. Put in another way, the postapartheid government developed a reform vision that aimed to have the education system facilitate the country's entry into a global capitalist environment. A constricted policy environment has become the dominant feature, leading to the government's wavering on providing social welfare, including education. In this light, the government has found it increasingly difficult to provide minimally acceptable living conditions for an expectant citizenry.

A vision of a just and equitable education system was thus compromised, rendering the government unable to sustain its legitimacy through actual delivery of equitable educational restructuring. In this context education policy has become limited to playing a mainly symbolic role in the government's attempts to regain lost legitimacy, especially for the then-Education Ministry that was widely regarded as ineffectual. Following Weiler (1990) and Fuller (1991), it can be said that education policy turned out to be a mechanism used by the government to achieve compensatory legitimization. The government symbolically used policy to signal progress and a commitment to transformation (as opposed to effecting real change). This was illustrated in its school access and school curriculum policies (Fataar, 1999). The government used the Culture of Learning Project (COLP), a cosmetic school refurbishing project, and Curriculum 2005 to attempt to reestablish legitimacy. The appropriation of populist education concepts to cloud an essentially technicist curriculum framework was an attempt to present policy at the symbolic level as tied to a vision of transformation in education. The COLP amounted to an endeavor to signal the government's commitment to fundamental change. However, this kind of use of policy at the symbolic level served only to mask patterns of educational inequality, which had begun to manifest along old and new lines in the postapartheid period (Fataar, 1999).

Given the pattern of policy conservatism established in the first few years of the postapartheid period, the question for progressive education praxis arises as to the manner in which an alternative policy orientation could be conceptualized. This task essentially involves the reinsertion of the principle of equality into public policy in such a manner that an appropriate development path can be laid. Currently, the sidelining of equality is having negative consequences for social redress. A starting point is to appreciate the particular character of the postapartheid policy settlement in order to ascertain the "limits of possibility" in terms of which policy has to be generated. A "sociology of possibility," i.e., a policy basis understood as the outcome of

converging global and national political and economic parameters, has to inform our understanding of what is achievable under the current circumstances, while keeping the demands of the majority of people for fundamental change firmly in sight. Tempering entitlement and heightened expectation may be a necessary consequence, but a more fundamental outcome would be to view policy more pragmatically in modest and realistic terms. This is consonant with Bowles's observation about South African education that "modesty … is not a prescription for quiescence or lowering expectations, it is only to recognise the way in which structures of domination may defeat progressive educational objectives" (Bowles, 1993, p. 36).

I believe that the current political climate provides space for launching a sustained challenge, on both the political and academic terrain, in destabilizing the prevailing situation. The period between 1994 and 2000 represented an unstable truce between social forces, which defined a historically specific relationship between state and civil society (Smyth, 1995) and in terms of which the current policy orientation was achieved. The conflict that did occur in this period was subjected to the imperative of putting in place a functional policy environment, which drew leftist individuals and groups into the government's agenda for social reconstruction. While right-wing interest groups have been active in manipulating this truce, their political objectives became prominent on the back of global and national circumstances that have operated to circumscribe the policy process (Fataar, 1999). The government's macroeconomic and education policy choices had to be made in response to the complex apartheid legacy of educational development on the one hand, and the economically constraining impact of global dynamics on the other. Policy narrowing, I contend, has occurred as a result of weak policy decisions by the government whose desire to create conditions for South Africa's entry into the global capitalist economy left it with very few policy options. The contradictions of these policies have now become visible especially in the light of the end of "reconciliation politics" as symbolized by former President Nelson Mandela, who has retired from political office. Recent criticism from the left of the political spectrum, mainly against negative policy outcomes in practice such as Curriculum 2005, the COLP program, and the school funding formula, has highlighted fundamental questions about the efficacy of current education policy in meeting the objectives of social reconstruction. This potentially holds the seeds for more robust debate and contestation that could set new political boundaries for education reform. The extent to which an emerging new settlement would favor the reinsertion of equality will depend partly on the ability of education-based social movements to organize themselves around and advance pragmatic policy objectives in attempting to destabilize the current policy settlement.

Toward an Alternative Reform Approach

A different education reform approach has to be founded on a viable alternative to the current macroeconomic framework. The education reform trajectory has confirmed the truism that a country's economic approach sets delimitations for other

areas of public policy. GEAR's stringent fiscal approach led to financial austerity, which affected the government's capacity to provide social welfare and other public services. Instead of an expanded budget to fund increasing demand in social consumption, the result of incorporating the Black majority as political equals into the democratic polity, the government's financial policy resembles the smaller state approach found in many other developing countries. Despite heroic attempts by ministries that deal with provision of social services such as health and social welfare, and those who concentrate on infrastructural provision in areas such as water, electricity, and housing to expand basic services, their work has been hampered by limited budgets. In education, limited finances have led to a number of measures that target formal equity but which are devoid of effective redress strategies.

A necessary condition for social reconstruction is to increase social consumption spending, which I believe is dependent upon a more flexible monetary strategy. Economists have, for example, pointed out that South Africa's approach to reducing the fiscal deficit to an arbitrary figure of 3% is much too stringent for a developing country when compared to other OECD countries (Marais, 2002). Too great a percentage of the overall budget goes to servicing the debt, which diminishes funds available for social spending. Even World Bank economists allowed for a less stringent approach to fiscal deficit reduction, as long as it is integral to a growth pattern (World Bank, 1993). Padayachee argues for a reconsideration of fiscal policy elements such as taxation and inflation, growth, and investment targets to derive a financial and budgetary approach that would make more money available for social spending (Padayachee, 1995). The point I want to make is that enough space exists for a debate in economic policy circles about the most appropriate economic approach to developing a flexible fiscal strategy that would enable an increase in social consumption spending. This is not to suggest that such an approach would either lead to huge increases in social services provision or be a panacea for the eradication of social inequality. On the contrary, while it would be expected that a flexible fiscal approach would provide more money for social spending, it is clear that in the current global economic climate the increase would not be much greater than current levels. South Africa, as other countries at the same level of development, does not have much room to maneuver in determining financial policy.

While a new financial approach would not lead to a marked increase in funding, the extra money could nevertheless contribute to laying a bedrock for greater equity and redress that current funding levels have impeded. Instead of equity without redress, a long-term development path at the community level could be stimulated that would involve community participation, local industries, and human resource-capacity building. Strategic funding of sustainable development and capacity-building projects that would lead to state-community partnerships could be put in place without having to establish inefficient bureaucracies. The idea that communities are responsible for their own development would be promoted. Without financial stimulation from the central government, this kind of development would be difficult to put on track. Greater financial investment in stimulating community participation in development would not just signal the government's commitment to alleviating

conditions of poverty, but would place communities in a favorable position to embark on actual social improvement.

Toward a Principled Approach to Educational Reform

Two issues are central to an approach for effecting greater equity and redress in education. First, a basis for prioritizing certain aspects of education over others has to be put in place by identifying those areas that have greatest need. For example, schools in Black townships and rural areas, which make up 70% of all schools, have the most impoverished conditions (Department of National Education, 1997). Redress strategies would thus have to prioritize schools in these areas, as opposed, for example, to former White schools in urban centers. The latter schools have displayed a remarkable ability to develop their own redress strategies, ranging from user fees to corporate funding and investment. A case could be made for these schools to share their resources with poor schools in mutually enriching partnerships that could involve exchange of teacher expertise, sharing of learning resources, use of athletic and extracurricular facilities, and sharing financial and managerial know-how. As public institutions essentially established on the basis of racial differentiation under apartheid, these schools must find a way to play a bigger role in augmenting the resource-poor environments of Black schools. However, this strategy has obvious limitations. It would be difficult, if not constitutionally impossible, to legislate for this kind of partnership. This strategy thus would depend mostly on the volition and goodwill of the former White schools. Also, the strategy could not be universally applied because there are too few former White schools to establish partnerships with the large number of the Black schools. Large geographic distances between these schools are another constraining factor.

It is therefore clear that Black townships and rural schools will depend on government intervention for their improvement. The COLP amounted to a one-off intervention under the now-abandoned RDP to improve the physical conditions but has failed to lay a material basis for the generation of a learning culture in schools (Fataar, 1999). Schools in townships and rural areas remain impoverished without basic resources such as textbooks, desks, and electricity. The question as to the basis for redress funding for these schools is therefore an urgent one. A redress tax has been proposed that would see the user fee income of those schools that charge more than 1,000 rand per capita taxed by 20% (Fataar, 1996: 37–39). This money would then be redistributed to poorer schools. This measure has been deemed unpopular by an already overtaxed middle class's objection to having their tax burden increased. A second measure is based on applying different funding norms to different schools without increasing the education budget. Differential funding would be implemented in terms of which the poorest schools would receive the largest proportion of money and the richest schools the least. While this measure is worth considering, despite protestations from middle class parents that it would amount to indirect taxation, calculations have shown that a viable implementation

of the measure would not redirect enough funding to implement redress mechanisms in poor schools. Clearly, what is required is an expansion in the educational budget that would apply a higher funding norm to impoverished schools. An increase in the education budget is justified on the basis of the dictum that redress needs money. As I have indicated, a more flexible financial policy approach would result in an increase in social consumption spending from which areas such as education could benefit. While the level of funding would not lead to a sea change in the conditions of schooling in poor communities, it could establish a sound basis for a sustainable community participatory approach to improving conditions in these schools. The extra money should be made available to poor schools for targeted school development programs that conform to strict measurable development criteria. Redress funding should be regarded as an inspiration of broader school development as opposed to a cure-all for the problems, whether material or behavioral, that impoverished schools currently face.

The second principal issue of a redress orientation relates to the pace of educational development, which I contend should be determined by the pace of the overall development of society. Generally, this means that an equitable education system would be generated over a much longer period compared to the rapid and unsustainable approach to change envisaged by government policy. A fundamental criterion of such development has to be visibility of social change and educational improvement. Educational development has to be a key part of a long-term overall socioeconomic development strategy. I would suggest that an educational rationale for slower and more sustainable implementation of change is based on the wisdom that teachers, schools, and educational bureaucracies take a very long time to adapt to a new orientation. The new school curriculum – labeled "Curriculum 2005" – that was introduced in 1998 and replaced the apartheid-based curriculum, confounded this wisdom. It proposed a radical new pedagogical and curriculum orientation that was alien to most teachers. It adopted an outcomes-based approach that resulted in wide-scale implementation problems and confusion (Fataar, 2006). The inefficacy of Curriculum 2005 is in part the result of the policymakers' inability to factor into their curriculum planning the capacity of teachers to give effect to the required new pedagogy. Teacher identities are constituted and reinforced over a long period of time. The shift to a new pedagogy and thus teacher identity has to be conceptualized and supported over a long period. The Education Ministry's unwillingness to institutionalize teacher development, and instead to have information workshops on the new curriculum, points to a lack of understanding of teachers' capacity to implement the curriculum. A slower and more sustainable pace of change has to be established in areas such as institutional reorientation, the development of new textbooks and learning resources, and managerial capacity. And a fundamental priority, even a precondition, for any policy change and innovation is to establish conditions of stability and orderly routines in schools where the learning culture currently is dysfunctional.

In sum, it is clear that South Africa's approach to educational development after apartheid has been complex and uneven. The majority of poor schools for Blacks have not been placed on a sustainable platform for their improvement. This has by

and large been the result of a policy orientation driven more by financial imperatives than the requirements to qualitatively improve the everyday functioning of schools. A change in reform orientation will depend on the ability of schools, their communities, and social movements active in education to develop a political platform to influence the government's policy approach. A responsive government has to be cajoled to serve the interests of the majority of those Black people whom apartheid excluded from a decent education. This should the main driving force in the country's approach to constructing a viable school system.

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