

REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

Ministry of Education



ADEA

PROSPECTIVE STOCK-TAKING REVIEW:

**THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT OF
EDUCATION IN SEYCHELLES**

[1977 to 1998]

June 1999

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the major development in the education system of Seychelles from 1977 to 1998 and those factors which have consequently contributed to an estimated 100% enrolment in the primary and lower secondary schools. Particular consideration are given to development in the following areas:

- Human and physical resources
- Infrastructure
- Curriculum materials
- Teacher education

The paper also examines the changes in education policies of the country in view of providing quality education to all Seychellois.

The work in this paper is presented as follows: The next section provides a general background of Seychelles viz. Socio-economic setting, political history and education history of the country. Chapter 2 examines the development from 1977 to 1998. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the current situation i.e. the new direction, and the forecasted challenges and constraints.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT SEYCHELLES

Socio-Economic Setting

Seychelles is located in the Indian Ocean: to be precise, 4° south of the equator and 56° east of the Greenwich Meridian. The archipelago consists of 115 islands of which 4 only are permanently inhabited. According to the last census conducted in 1997, the overall population was estimated to be 78,004 with 256 more women than men (MISD, 1998). Mahé, the main island, consists of more than 85% of the population. The official languages are Creole, French and English: Creole being the mother tongue.

The GDP at current market prices of the country is on average 2600 million Seychelles rupees (Seychelles in Figures 1999 Edition). [SR1.00 ≈\$0.2]. The economy is based mainly on tourism and fisheries. Consequently, Seychelles imports most of its good. An amount of 2129 million rupees was spent on import in 1998.

Birth rate, death rate and infant mortality rate per '000 for 1998 were 17.9; 7.2; 8.5 respectively. The literacy rate as per 1997 statistics is 89.4% for female and 86.4% for male (MISD, 1998).

The Political History

The Islands were discovered in 1502 by a Portuguese navigator, Vasco Da Gama while on his way to Asia. It was until 1770 that the first settlers, the French and the African slaves, arrived on the Islands (Education Department, 1969).

Seychelles started off as a colony of France and in 1811 the British took over. In 1976 Seychelles got its independence and became a republic. At its independence the country was a multi-party state but one year later the government was over thrown by a coup [Liberation] and the country became a single-party state. Only recently, 1992, Seychelles re-adopted the multi-party philosophy. At the moment there are three major political parties in the country.

The History Educational System [The beginning to 1977]

The exact date of the foundation of the first school in Seychelles is uncertain. The Department of Education (1969) reported that in 1802 a small group of people who were exiled from France opened a small school at Anse Aux Pins to tutor the children of the first settlers. On the other hand Stone (1977) noted in his dissertation, that the first school in Seychelles was around early 1839 under the management of the Church of England. The literature, despite all, reveals that the period 1839 through 1890 saw the foundation of many schools in the country.

From 1851 onwards, schools were established by the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches as a necessary stage in the development of their parishes. The roles played by the colonial government was limited (Ernesta, 1988). The Department of Education, in its 1968 annual report, notes, 1861 and 1871 as two significant dates. This marked the arrival of religious orders who were to develop secondary grammar education. The government major role in public education started in 1949 commencing with the Education Ordinance.

Information contained in the 1960 census report shows that some 70% of person aged 12 years attended schools but due to limited opportunities for secondary education this proportion fell to 25% by the age of 15.

The early 1960's saw the building of a number of new schools in Seychelles and by 1971, 83% of 12 year olds and 29% of 15 year olds were attending school.

Other than the government's lack of commitment towards education there were other reasons why the percentage enrolment was low. Ernesta (1988) reported the following reasons:

- Parents did not value education.
- Children at an early age were to put to work in order to contribute toward home financing.
- Employment sectors then did not require highly skilled people.
- Older children were kept at home to look after younger ones.

There is sufficient evidence to support the claim that education received little attention before 1977. It is because of these reasons probably that the new influence the 1977 government to give education special attention in its development plan.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION FROM 1977 to 1998

Education is viewed as the first priority within the country's National Development Programme. Millions of rupees are being spent each year to cover the expenditure of the Ministry of Education. Education therefore receives the biggest share of the budget. For instance, from 1985 to 1990 the Ministry of Education was receiving an average of 17% of the total budget of the country. The years 1981 to 1990 saw some major reforms in the education system. Thus a considerable sum of money was needed to undertake these reforms. By 1998 things were more or less stabilised and education did not require that high percentage. In 1998 Education received 12% of the country's budget.

From the very beginning the government established its position regarding education. The overall aim was to establish equality in the education opportunity. This would eventually lead to the abolishment of a system whereby the rich go further and the poor lag behind. As soon as the 1977 government took over, President René declared:

"We have to teach the same subjects in all schools, use the same books and make sure that all children get the same opportunities." (Speech delivered by Mr. F.A. René, on June 29, 1977).

In 1977 at the moment of liberation, two parallel systems of education were in existence in the country. Each system provided education of differing quality and quantity to different classes of the society. For instance, the Seychelles College and the Regina Mundi, two fee-paying grammar schools were reserved for a small minority. The other schools, the parish schools, (government-aided schools) provided education to the majority of Seychellois and was based mainly in the rural part of the island. They were administered by the Roman Catholic and the Anglican churches. The Grammar Schools have courses up to A level standard thus their students were more eligible to go further studies in the university abroad. On the other hand the parish schools consisted of classes up to Primary 6. Some of these parish schools had a junior secondary school attached to them and contained classes up to Form III or Form IV.

This dualism resulted in the difference in progression through the system. Students studying in those government-aided schools were at a disadvantage. Access to post-secondary education was limited. About 87% of the children were enrolled at the non-fee-paying schools (Afif Didi, 1986). Only an estimated 32% could go beyond primary school meaning, that the other 68% had their education terminated after just eight years of education. On the other hand students studying at grammar schools were sure to complete at least five years of secondary education.

Although limited in number, there were some existing vocational and technical training schemes that catered for students who could not go beyond Form V because of financial problems.

The system was elitist. There were segregation based on social classes and financial resources of the parents. Those who could afford were at an advantage. Consequently, the percentage enrolment especially at the secondary level was low. The 1977 census shows that 94% of 12 years old but only 41% of 15 year olds were attending school (See Table 1).

Table 1: School Enrolment According to the 1977 Census

Age	% of the country's population attending school	% at Primary	% at Form 1 & 2	% at higher than Form 2
12	94	69	25	0
13	87	16	70	1
14	69	4	56	9
15	41	1	16	24
16	29	0	6	23
17	19	0	2	17
18	10	0	1	9
19	5	0	1	4

The table shows that as pupils approached 15 years old they were more likely to end formal education. This is represented by a small percentage of pupils at higher level after 15 years old.

The structure which follows, provides a good picture of the students movement from one level to the next, the alternatives which they had, and the various stages where selection exams were required to move to the next level.

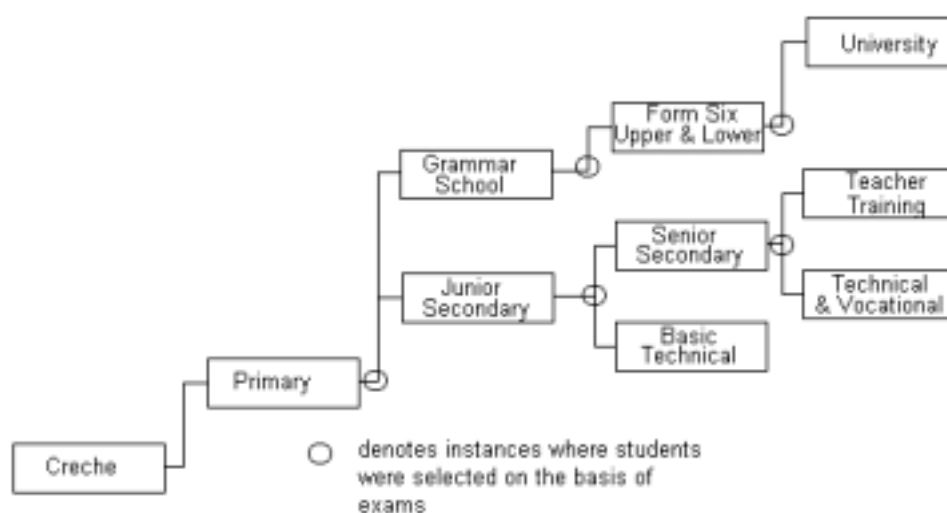


Figure 1: The structure of the education system in 1977

School then was not obligatory. Children entered creche at the 4 years old and spent two years there. Many of the creches were private and fee paying thus few students attend creche at that time. The primary schools consisted of six academic years. Upon completing the primary schools many students dropped out. In most cases the dropped out were due to financial reasons.

Students who wanted to go in secondary education sat for an entrance examination. Those who passed the requirement of the exams were entered into the secondary schools. Those who could afford financially entered the grammar school viz Seychelles College for boys and Regina Mundi for girls. The others were registered for the Junior Secondary Schools.

From the Grammar School students could pursue further studies in universities abroad if they met the requirement of the selection exams at the different stages. Successful students from Junior Secondary Schools proceeded to Senior Secondary School (three academic years). Upon completing the Senior Secondary School they either entered the Teacher Training College (TTC) or Vocational Technical School (VTS). TTC was attracted mainly by the female students while VTS (excluding the secretarial studies) was attracted by the male students. The academic years of both TTC and VTS varied from two to four years depending on the nature of the courses.

From Junior Secondary School, the less able students either dropped off or entered the Basic Technical School.

Evidence from the various documents and sources of the Department of Education then, shows that there was a clear imbalance and lack of commitment by the government prior to the liberation to provide quality education to the people. There were minimal assistance given to the less fortunate students. Moreover, there were little measures taken to encourage students from staying at school. Consequently the percentage of job seekers under 18 was relatively high (38%). [1977 Census Report]

THE PERIOD OF CHANGE:

Immediately after the 1977 coup, the government made a massive structural reform to foster a more democratic system of education. The ultimate aim was to create equal opportunity to access of education in the country (President Rene's address, 29th June, 1977). This began by the establishment of three major policy principles.

- Education for all
- Education for life
- Education for personal and national development

The three sub-sections that follow outline a basic explanation of these principles. This is a summary of the work presented in the document "Education For the New Society" prepared by the Ministry of Education and Information, July 1985.

Education for all

People are viewed as the most valuable resources of society and education, the basis of all development. The aim of the government is to achieve equal access where all Seychellois are admitted in the system on an equal basis. Secondly this principle aims at providing equal educational opportunity both in quality and learning condition. This of course will lead to an equal chance for achievement.

Education for life

While viewing education as the fundamental to human development, the government acknowledges the need for long-life learning. Learning is thus made available to every individual in the society. It encompasses pre-school education, vocational training and adult literacy programme. Education also encompasses life-skill thus aims at improving the quality of life in the country.

Education for Personal and National Development

A developed society results from the development of its full human potential. Education for sure, develops one's personally and collective personal development ultimately develops the country. Thus the learners are made to develop their intellectual, physical, social, emotional, aesthetic and moral ability; positive attitude towards learning to the best of their ability.

Changes in Policy

The first step that was taken to ensure equality in education was "Zoning" (Afif-Didi, 1986). Zoning is based on the principle that all children go to school in their residing district. In cases where there were no school in the district in question, children go to school in district specified by the Ministry of Education.

Zoning was justified as one step of removing injustices in the education system then (Nation, 1977). By 1980 classes up to Form III were zoned with the exceptions of some classes from the Grammar Schools. Furthermore, the primary level was extended to nine academic years and all crèches which were at first private were passed over to the government and then integrated with the primary schools.

One other major step that was taken to increase access to education in the country was the fusion of the two parallel systems of education which existed. It was perhaps this fusion which led to the zoning system. There where no need then for parents to select better school for their children since all schools were being government funded and were operating on an equal basis. This fusion also resulted in the abolition of private schools and private tuition. The Ministry of Education and Culture then was the sole body responsible for providing education in the country.

Another major reform in the education policy was the establishment of free universal education. This allowed even the less fortunate children to have access to education. All materials provided by the schools were free. This included uniforms. Along with the free education policy, the government provided free meal to all school children. By 1982, 72% of total school enrolment were registered for school meal and six school meal centres were in operation. The government also provided free transport to students.

The other major decision was that the first nine years of schooling were made compulsory. The Education Act 1993 stated that:

“A Seychellois child who has attained the age of six years on or before the 1st January in any calendar year and has not attained the age of sixteen years shall attend regularly at the school situated in the educational zone in which he resides until he has completed his primary school education.”

This act however made special provision for the handicapped children stating that:

“The principal Secretary or his authorised representative may by notice in writing exempt a child from the application of the Act where it appears to him upon the certificate of a medical practitioner that the child is a handicapped.”

Following this act no student was permitted to stay out of school. If a child failed or neglected to regularly attend school without a good reason each of his parents were liable to a fine of SR1000 and three months imprisonment (NATION, 7th January, 1984). This step was taken to ensure that all Seychellois go through the system of education and eventually increase the literacy rate of the country. In 1991 Compulsory Education in the country was increased to 10 years (NATION, 6th September, 1990).

Changes in Infrastructure

Immediately after the liberation the government started renovation on schools and construction of new ones. In total, by 1982, 71 new schools, 15 science laboratories, and 37 crèches were opened. (Budget Address, 1979 – 1982).

With the construction of new schools and other infrastructure within schools, there were more teaching spaces. Consequently, schools were able to accommodate more children and entertained other activities such as ECA.

The table which follows shows how the number of schools in the country have changed over the years.

Table 2 Number of schools for some selected years

1976	1982	1984	1987	1992	1998
56	38	77	78	81	78

The table reports an increase in the number of schools from 1976 to 1992 but a decrease beyond this date. Before 1982 there were primary schools and secondary equivalent schools in all the major districts of the country. Also there were some schools with a small number of classes which were not cost effective. Those schools which were not cost effective were fused into single schools or integrated to another school with the region. Moreover, in 1992 to promote quality education, the primary schools were reduced to six academic years and regional secondary schools were built. Instead of having a secondary school in all districts, four major regional secondary schools were set up. Thus the decrease in the number of schools may be explained by the fusion of secondary schools and the closing of those schools which were not cost effective.

The increase in the number of schools also resulted in an improvement in the pupil:class:ratio. The table below presents how the pupils:class ratio has improved over the years.

Table 3 Pupils:Class Ratio For Primary & Secondary

Years	1983	1991	1998
Ratio	30:1	29:1	27:1

The government spent some SR7 million on the construction of education facilities in 1983. The president then noted that they were building the education because they knew the education would build for them.

National Youth Service & Polytechnic

Two major changes in the education structure were the introduction of the National Youth Service [NYS] in 1981 and the introduction of the Seychelles Polytechnic in 1983.

The NYS succeeded the nine years of primary education. Entrance to the NYS was optional and voluntary. Although optional in principle it was considered to be indirectly compulsory since entrance to the Seychelles Polytechnic was based on performance at NYS. Later however, Polytechnic reconsidered its entrance requirement to allow other students from other institutions to be accepted.

The basic principle of NYS

At its inauguration, the National youth Service was a two-year progressive educational programme for the youth of Seychelles. It functioned as a residential youth village on the main island. Later the number of campuses [villages] were extended to four at different part of the country.

NYS aimed at creating new opportunities for Primary 9 leavers. The opportunities included working skills, social interaction and further educational skills.

The educational aims of NYS included:

- Teaching youth the joy and reality of living and working together.
- Developing in the youth a sense of responsibility so that later in life they could feel concerned and involved in what would happen around them.
- Helping the youth to appreciate and project the true Seychellois culture and social values.
- Promoting a new education among young people.

[The paragraph below is a summary taken from "*The Seychelles National Youth Service: What it aims to do and how it will be run*", Department of Youth & Community].

The NYS survived eighteen years of success. However, its initial principle were continuously being modified to adapt to the changing ethos of the country. For instance, the service was cut down to one year in 1991 and students were given the opportunity to sit for O level exams in some selected subjects. Also the number of villages were cut to two only.

Among the various development in the education system after 1977 was the inauguration of the Seychelles Polytechnic. Polytechnic was a fusion of all post secondary schools which were in existence prior to the liberation viz Grammar School, Vocational & Technical School, and Teacher Training College. Its main mandate was to develop responsive training programme in partnership with the Manpower Division. The construction of the Polytechnic was largely funded by the Chinese government. An estimated of 50% students graduating from NYS per year were entering the Seychelles Polytechnic.

The following figure represents the education structure that was in place by 1983. Under the new structure the eligibility age for entrance in crèche had contantly

been revised from time to time; From 4 years to 3.5 years. Instead of taking cohorts at the beginning of each school term, this policy was revised to have only one intake per year thus allowing students to receive an equal two-year programme of crèche education.

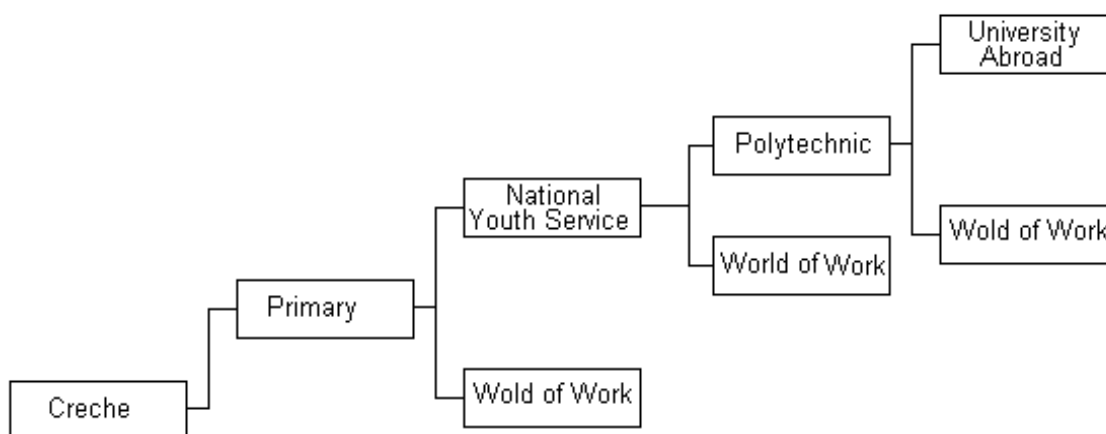


Figure **The education system which was in place by 1983.**

Changes in Learning Resources

To ensure quality education in school, the National Institute of Pedagogy [NIP] was formed in 1981. NIP was charged with the development of educational programmes relevant to the needs of the country and the in-service training of teachers. By 1983 some hundred locally produced titles were in use in schools.

The biggest stride taken in education as stated by the President, was the introduction of kreol as the language of learning in Primary 1 in 1982. Intensive training was given to Primary 1 teachers about the introduction of Kreol in the classroom and to better supervise learning in the primary school the post of studies co-ordinator was created in the same year.

To provide more access to education, the Ministry set up school libraries in all primary schools and besides these schools libraries, a mobile library service was set up in 1982. School children and the public in general did not have to worry about going to the national library but could borrow book from the mobile library, the bibliobus within their community.

The year 1986 saw the inauguration of a National audio-visual centre which, aimed at producing materials for the schools. Since its introduction NAVC has continuously assists the entire ministry in the production of materials.

Changes in Teacher Training

The success of education in the country was largely due to the effectiveness of the teacher within the system. To ensure that teachers were better equipped for the job significant changes happened in teacher education programme.

The formation of National Institute of Pedagogy [NIP] was one major step in the development of quality teacher education. The NIP provided pre-service and in-service training for teachers in the system. Moreover, many foreign institutions and universities established links with the ministry as a means of training teachers.

Besides quality formation, the teachers' scheme of service was constantly revised. This was done as a means of attracting teachers in the profession. The table following provides information about the number of teachers per qualification for some selected years.

Table 4: Number of Teachers by qualification

Types of Qualification	1976	1982	1987	1992	1998
Certified University Graduates	44	161	139	218	269
Overseas teacher's Diploma	47	75	99	99	61
Local Diploma			114	139	378
Local Certificates	397	438	501	597	514
Uncertified Graduates			51	44	23
Supply Teachers	177	227	295	266	236
Total	665	901	1199	1363	1481

NOTES

 No related qualification or information about this category is unknown

The table above illustrates some interesting observations. First, it reports an overall increase in the number of teachers over the past two decades. This overall increase in the number of teachers is a result from a better scheme of service and better incentives which the government undertook to get teachers in the system.

A second observation is that the number of university graduates has increased considerably and the non-certified graduates have decreased relatively. This justifies the effort put by the government to ensure that teachers are better

trained. The table also reports the introduction of local diploma qualification after 1982.

A particular attention is given to the increased number of supply teachers in the system. The “supply teachers” refers to those teachers with no teaching qualification and those teachers who were temporarily placed in teaching. This applies to those “A level-graduated students” who were waiting for a university scholarship. In the past years all students intended to go on university courses were put to teach during the time they were waiting for their courses to start.

This increase in the number of teachers in the system has consequently improved the pupil:teacher ratio. In 1976 for instance, this ratio for primary school was 25 : 1 and in 1998 the ratio stood at 18:1. At secondary level this value is more or less the same.

The Financial Sources

To support and sustain the education system emerged after 1977, many foreign organisations contributed significantly in providing assistance to Seychelles. The major bodies were UNESCO, ADB, Common Wealth, the Chinese, British, and French government. Many school projects had been fully or partially financed by ADB. Seychelles also received university scholarship from other governments. To name a few: Australian Government, Indian, Cuban....,

The Main Breakthrough

The education system originated from 1977 has consequently resulted in an almost 100% enrollment at the primary and secondary level. Thus justifies that from 1977 onwards there have been more access to education in the country as compared to the system which was in existence before.

Every Seychellois has access to education. Besides, there is complete equity in the education opportunity. Advancement in post secondary education depends on one’s ability and choice.

Education is made accessible to adult. Since 1981 with the introduction of adult literacy programme, all citizens who wanted to read and write were able to enrolled in courses within their respective community. At present there is a centre within the Ministry of Education which deals specifically with adult learning and distance education.

Education is also made accessible to disable students. The government has continuously support the setting up of a School of Exceptional. This institution caters for students with mental and to some extent, physical ability. Entrance to the School of the Exceptional is from 5 years to 14 years old. At the moment the school has 83 pupils. This represents an estimated 118% of students eligible for this institution. This value is more than expected because of the following reasons:

- The school in extreme cases, retains students even beyond 15 years old.
- Some normal schools are transferring students with remedial problems to the Exceptional School.
- The definite total number of disable children is not fully ascertained.

The School Enrolment

Table 5 Enrolment by Years

	1978	1981	1985	1991	1998
Crèche		2428	3180	3228	3175
Primary	13891+c	9806	9678	10078	9453
Secondary	635	6054	7534	7623	8304
Vocational Training	375	660	1207	1378	877

Notes: +c denotes that these values include enrolment at crèche

Primary represents Primary 1 to Primary 6

Secondary represents all levels after P6 to Form 6 [1976, 1978], After P6, NYS, Humanities & Science, and Foundation Studies from the Polytechnic [from 1981 to 1998].

The table illustrates an overall increase in the enrolment. The most significant increase is at the secondary level. There are some variations however. For instance, in 1978 the total number of students at crèche and primary level is more than in 1981. There are many factors which may have produced this variation in the results. First, the entry age at crèche level was not standard and there were few means of controlling. Secondly, the primary students contained many repeating cases. Also, at that time many students came from outer island. When they were enrolled in school they were placed in Primary 1 regardless of their age.

Another noticeable irregularity in the above table is the number of students enrolled in the vocational studies in 1991 and 1998. With the introduction of Foundation Studies at the Seychelles Polytechnic, the first year's students of

some courses, namely Education and Health, were placed in Foundation. Students under Foundation Studies are counted as secondary students for the case of this research.

Table 6: Estimated Percentage Enrolment

	1981	1985	1991	1998
Crèche	79	94	111	
Primary	88	89	97	
Secondary	48	63	71	

Note: Population Statistics for 1998 is not out yet

The two tables shows that changes in policy have resulted in a gradual improvement of enrolment over the years. The most significant improvement is at crèche level and at secondary level. It is obvious that the system did cater for the everybody and provide access to people.

The 111% in the latter table may be explained as follows: Normally crèche students consists of 3.5 year old to 5 year old. However, the population values includes students of 4 years to 5 years. As a result there happen to have more students at crèche than to what are expected to be in the age category.

THE CHALLENGES FACED

The process of establishing equal education opportunities has not been an easy process. The system has undergone several major challenges. There were pressure coming from several directions. For instance, the fusion of the two parallel systems of education in 1978 and especially the closing down of the grammar schools in 1983 resulted in many critics against the government. The setting up of NYS created further conflict since the concept was new and also the influence NYS had on the entire education system. One other major disagreement was the abolition of the private schools.

One other barrier that the government has to face was the critic against the introduction of Creole as the medium of instruction. There has been a lot of unjustified argument against the introduction of Creole in schools.

As a result of these critics and challenges there were major reforms in 1991. The number of years spent at NYS reduced. This followed by re-structuring in the

NYS system. The primary education was reduced to 6 years. The role of Creole in the primary school was reduced significantly.

With the re-introduction of multi-party in 1992, the government became more liberal on its education power. Private school for instance was re-introduced and there were better alternatives for students who do not want to go through NYS.

The beginning of this year [1999] saw drastic alterations in the education system. Education for the first time in the country stands as a ministry of its own. NYS was abolished altogether, re-introduction of French and English in the early primary school, a new teacher training institution [N.I.E] was established.

Concluding Remarks

The education system of Seychelles has been very dynamics over the last two decades. Alterations have continuously been made to the structure. There is enough evidence to support the claim that the major policy principles established in 1977 have been fully achieved.

The policy of education for all is seen to be a success when you notice that in the country everybody can have access to education for primary and secondary level. Besides the education fee is almost nil.

In assessing the principle of education for life, it is observed that indeed much effort has been done to ensure that every Seychellois got enough skill to function and survive in this society.

Thirdly is evident that the education system permits young Seychellois to fully develop one's ability and acquires skills to develop the nation. Thus the principle of education for personal and human development is assessed to have been a success.

On the eve of the new millennium the government is making a change in its course. New visions are being formed and major re-structuring is being done.

CHAPTER 3

THE NEW DIRECTION

The education priority of the government of Seychelles established in 1977 is being evaluated. Successes have been made and the Ministry of Education reckoned that a change in the course and alterations on the initial goals are needed. At the beginning of 1999 the Ministry of Education made drastic reforms in the education structure and principles. At present its mission is:

“To build a coherent and comprehensive system of quality education, reflecting shared universal and national values, which will promote the integrated development of the person and empower him/her to participate fully in social and economic development” (Document from the Ministry of Education).

To achieve this mission the education system is thus based on seven major principles.

- **Education for Equity** [Access to all education opportunities without favour or ill-will]
- **Education for Quality** [Developing excellence in both learning materials and learning environment]
- **Education for Empowerment** [Developing self-responsibility and vital skills for living]
- **Education for Accountability** [Working towards targets and establishing transparency in reporting performance]
- **Education for Productivity** [Preparing a working force]
- **Education for Social Cohesion** [Developing social values and attitudes]
- **Education for Global Participation** [Active involvement in preserving the global village]

The Ministry of Education is committed to the following actions:

1. Adopting a planned approach to education development based on systematic investigation and research.
2. Creating an all-pervasive culture of quality based on enquiry and self-evaluation.
3. Developing a system that is transparent and accountable to public for free quality of the education which it provides.

4. Providing an environment that encourages schools to share responsibility for improvement.
5. Establishing a co-ordinated network of support services, which places schools at the centre of education development.
6. Creating a system which recognises and rewards good performance and provides the conditions for the continuing professional development of staff.
7. Establishing structures and processes which promote the widest possible participation of professionals in policy-making.
8. Building effective partnerships based on cooperation and open communication with all stake-holders in education
9. Creating an inclusive school environment which challenges every individual to achieve his/her potential
10. Establishing a system of human resource training and development which produces a strong cadre of leaders and managers in education.
11. Providing a flexible and innovative system of education which widens access for life-long learning.
12. Developing national curricula which anticipate and respond to the individual and collective needs of learners in a fast changing world.
13. Providing for the development and equitable distribution of quality resources to support learning in schools
14. Developing an efficient administrative system which guarantees the most cost effective use of educational resources.
15. Providing the widest possible access to information technology and harnessing its full potential for supporting and enhancing the learning process, and increasing the effectiveness of management in education.

THE NEW STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

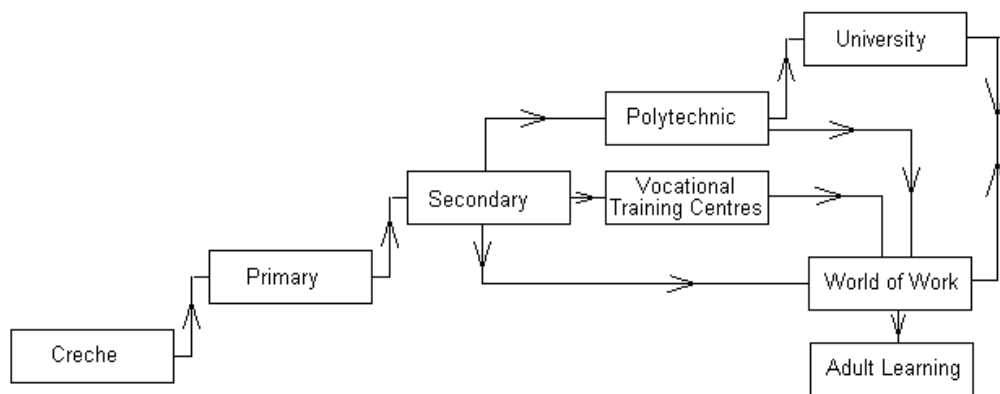


Figure 3: The basic structure of the current education system

Note: The vocational Training Centre includes: Industrial Training Centre and National Institute of Education

In the new structure, admission age to crèche is 3.5 years old. Primary level consists of 6 academic years, secondary level consists of 5 academic years. Then onward the number of years varies according to the nature of the course.

The primary and the secondary levels [up to Secondary 4] are compulsory meaning that the system offers ten years of compulsory education. Secondary 5 is optional.

The education system is free from crèche to Secondary 5. However, parents are being asked to contribute in the following areas: school uniform, school meal, transport, stationary. Beyond secondary level students have to pay for their tuition. Polytechnic fee for instance, is proportional to total parents' income. The institution has established guidelines as to how many students will pay. In cases where the parents' income is low, the student in question receives free tuition.

The general situation for studying in undergraduate courses at university is that the government pays the tuition fee but parents have to pay for all other expenses. The government may offer free scholarships to excellent polytechnic graduates.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Changes are allows associated with difficulties and resistance. At the moment the whole nation are trying to cope and adapt to the new education policies.

Perhaps the most difficult challenge is the ability to move from a free education system to a contributing-form system. For the last two decades almost everything was free. At the moment parents are being asked to contribute in the education of their children.

Another major challenge that the Ministry is facing is the establishment of a proper monitoring mechanism to ensure that all children who should be at school are really at school. Although the enrolment rate is high, many students, especially at secondary level are out of school. There is no consistent follow up to ensure that they regularly attend school.

Associated with quality education is quality resource. At the moment the ministry is finding it difficult to have all the required learning materials and resources. There is not enough textbooks, equipment or chemicals. Students are sharing materials or equipment. Teachers have limited teaching tools. Access to technology in schools is limited. For instance, not all schools are equipped with a proper photocopying machine. Teachers have difficulties in accessing information or making phone calls. The Ministry is being called to address these matters.

With the introduction of school improvement project, schools are being asked to implement changes and involve themselves in staff development projects. Moreover, schools are being asked to produce their own materials and have more control on the development of learning and teaching environment. With limited resources both human and physical, these processes become difficult and ineffective.

Parents are also being asked to participate actively in school activities. The greatest challenge at this point in time, is to get maximum parents' involvement in this process.

With the establishment of a National Institute of Education and a Distance Education Centre, the Ministry's intention is to produce quality personnel. The challenge is the ability of the Ministry to attract people in the education field. Thus create some insurmountable challenges.

INSURMOUNTABLE CHALLENGES

Perhaps the most insurmountable challenges at this point in time are:

1. Fully equip the system especially the teaching force with Seychellois, thus reduce the number of expatriates.

The following table provides an indication of the current situation of the teaching force in the country.

Levels	No. Male	No. Female	% Expatriate
Crèche	0	182	0
Primary	102	552	0
Secondary	242	281	20
Post Secondary	138	80	26

The table shows that at present there are no expatriates at crèche or at primary level. However, a relatively high percentage of expatriate teachers at secondary and post secondary level. In total the percentage of expatriate in the teaching force is approximately 10%.

2. Produce all our teaching and learning materials.

Many of the materials that are being used at secondary level and beyond are imported materials. Locally produced resources are limited.

VALUABLE LESSONS

There are of course valuable lessons to be drawn from our education system.

1. When the government shows commitment to education, this results in a high literacy rate and a more educated society.
2. A policy of compulsory education results in a high enrolment rate. High enrolment rate however, does not necessarily mean high attendance rate. Proper monitoring mechanism is needed.
3. A third lesson to be drawn from our education system is associated with policy of free education. Students have come to believe that education is the government responsibility and that they are not accountable for anything. Consequently, there has been a lot of irresponsibility on the part of the students to fully engage themselves in learning. Moreover, this system has brought about much wastage in the school resources. At the moment students are finding it very hard to buy their own materials. They believe that it is the government responsibility to provide everything.

THE END