

21 March 2010

MEMORANDUM

We demand a National Policy on School Libraries: 1 School 1 Library 1 Librarian!

For the attention of:
Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa
Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education

SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION IS IN CRISIS

1. Education in South Africa is in crisis. Matric pass rates have steadily declined from 73.3% in 2003, to 66.5% in 2006, and 60.6% in 2009. South Africa's literacy is among the worst in the world and lags behind countries such as Mozambique, Tanzania and Swaziland (SACMEQ II report).
2. Results in schools are divided along class lines between rich and poor. These reflect a deeply unequal society, and deeply unequal schools. Some schools have enough resources to produce competent learners but township and rural schools suffer under the burden of overcrowded classes, poorly trained teachers and inadequate resources.
3. According to the National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) 2009, produced by the government, of the 24 460 public ordinary schools:
 - 3600 have no electricity supply
 - 2444 have no water supply, while a further 2563 have unreliable supply;

✉ **Postal:** PO Box 40114, Elonwabeni, 7791 🏢 **Office:** Washington Square, Capital Drive, Thembokwezi, Khayelitsha
📧 **E-mail:** info@equaleducation.org.za ~ 🌐 **Website:** www.equaleducation.org.za
☎ **Telephone:** 021 387 0023 ~ 📠 **Fax:** 0865169396

Registered S10(1)(cN) and S18A(1)(a) Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) (Exemption Number 930 027 221)

Registered Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) (Registration Number 068-288-NPO)

Equal Education Board: Prof Crain Soudien, Zackie Achmat, Dr Peliwe Lolwana, Prof Paula Ensor, Moses Masitha, Nathan Geffen, Ntombesizwe Mkonto, Doron Isaacs

Campaign for School Libraries Advisory Committee: Prof. Genevieve Hart (UWC); Peter Henshall; Prof. Mary Nassimbeni (UCT); Nkosinathi Mahala (Khayelitsha Librarian); Khosi Mabandla (WCED); Rose Damon (WCED)

Patrons of the Campaign: Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Dr Mamphela Ramphele, Lebo Mashile, Sindiwe Magona, Gcina Mhlophe, Nadine Gordimer, Dean Rowan Smith, Simphiwe Dana, Hip Hop Pantsula, Prof Mary Metcalfe, Vuyiseka Dubula, Graeme Bloch

- Only 7 847 have municipal flush toilets, while 970 still do not have any ablution facilities and 11 231 still use pit-latrines toilets;
 - Only 10% of public ordinary schools have stocked computer centers; and
 - Only 5% of public ordinary schools have stocked laboratories.
4. This crisis of quality and inequality is reflected in the Western Cape literacy results:

Percentage of Western Cape grade 6 learners literate at the standard level of grade 6

	2003	2005	2007	2009
CED (former 'white' schools)	82,9%	86,9%	Disaggregated results withheld from the public	
HOR (former 'coloured' schools)	26,6%	35,5%		
DET (former 'black' schools)	3,7%	4,7%		
Aggregate Result for all schools	35%	42,1%	44,8%	48,6%

Source: WCED

5. The core of our education crisis is illiteracy. Equal Education understands that many factors impact this crisis, most importantly the quality of teaching. We will campaign on this and other issues in future. There is no one solution.
6. It is also clear that a major step forwards would be to ensure that every public school has a stocked library serviced by a qualified full-time librarian.

THE STATE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

7. Only 8% (1,837 schools) of public ordinary schools have functioning libraries; 13% (3,384 schools) have an un-stocked library space, but the vast majority, 79% (19,239 schools) have no physical library space, nor a book collection.
8. Most of the 8% of schools with libraries are schools which charge fees and pay for the libraries themselves. For example, in Khayelitsha, less than 5 out of 54 schools have a functioning library.

LITERACY AND LIBRARIES ARE CENTRAL TO EDUCATION

9. Libraries play a critical role in building literacy by developing a culture of reading. They also develop information literacy and provide access to much needed



information and resources such as career help and HIV/AIDS education. Libraries are also safe spaces to study for young people who do not have a quiet, well-lit place at home.

10. In South Africa's *Library and Information Services (LIS) Transformation Charter*, it states:

Libraries contribute significantly to a culture of reading with an emphasis also on writing and learning. Although reading occurs both inside and outside of libraries, they play the leading role in building a nation of life-long readers[...]In addition... libraries contribute to economic development.

11. International research has demonstrated that when a well-functioning, well-stocked, well-staffed library is added to a school the performance of learners goes up by 10% - 25% (see Lance et al., 2000). Local research shows that schools in South Africa that do have a library have pass rates of 19% higher than those without (Bhorat and Oosthuizen., 2008).

THE FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

12. The government has to date failed to adopt a national policy on school libraries, nor to finalise proposed policies aimed at addressing the backlogs and inequality in access to school infrastructure.
13. Since 1997, five consecutive drafts for a national policy on school libraries have been circulated by the Department of Education (DoE), and yet there still exists no official policy. A sixth draft, entitled *National Guidelines for School Library Services 2009*, has recently emerged but it is a discussion document, not a policy, and contains no implementation plan.
14. An amendment to the SA Schools Act in 2007 added S5A. This gives the Minister the power to create regulations that specify minimum norms and standards for school infrastructure. The Act makes clear that these regulations 'must' require 'a library'. However, successive Ministers have failed to finalise these regulations. We are still waiting.



CAMPAIGN FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES: 1 SCHOOL, 1 LIBRARY, 1 LIBRARIAN CAMPAIGN

15. In the Campaign for School Libraries, led by Equal Education, thousands of high school students, and their teachers and parents have made a commitment to ensuring that the government provides every school in the country with a fully functioning library. In recent months, EE has been flooded with hundreds of thousands of letters and petitions in support of these objectives from Makhado in Limpopo to Manenberg in the Western Cape, from Soweto in Gauteng to Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, and from all corners of South Africa.
16. The provision of school libraries in all South African schools is part of the constitutional right to basic education. There is no reason to limit this right because a national roll-out of school libraries is affordable.
17. Equal Education has calculated the total costs of a national roll-out of functional libraries in all ordinary public schools. These costs can be divided into four categories and, based on the most recent government statistics, are as follows: *infrastructure*, which consists of the furnished library structure itself (R7.92bn); *books and materials* (R1.98bn); *librarian training* (R350million); and *librarian salaries*, a continuous annual cost which varies according to the level of qualification (between R1.19bn and R2.67bn).
18. R13.61bn was spent on the 10 World Cup Stadiums. For this amount the government could build, stock and staff 20,000 school libraries.
19. It is possible for the government to phase in functional school libraries countrywide. If the early provisions of infrastructure, materials and training were put into operation over ten years, the costs would be less than 1% of the education budget for that period. Thereafter, only salary costs would remain, which on its own would amount to between 1% and 2% of the education budget.

EQUAL EDUCATION: A MOVEMENT FOR EQUALITY, QUALITY AND RIGHTS IN EDUCATION

20. Equal Education is a movement of learners, parents, teachers and community members working for quality and equality in South African education through analysis and activism. Our focus and attention is directed by the interests of our members, drawn largely from the working-class and poor. Our head office is in Khayelitsha, Western Cape.



21. Since our establishment in 2008, Equal Education has led initiatives aimed at the repair of various schools; the adequate and equitable distribution of teachers and learning resources; the building of commitment and passion among teachers and learners; and improving the overall efficacy of South Africa's education system.
22. EE organizes in communities, provides youth leadership training, hold parents meetings, engage with government, publish research, and makes recommendations to the executive and legislative branches of government. We will mobilise, educate and campaign until young person has quality and equal education.

WE DEMAND CHANGE

20. We demand a national policy on school libraries, with a national implementation plan. The policy should provide for:
 - 20.1. A library for **every school**.
 - 20.2. **Human resources:** A trained librarian or library administrator, working fulltime in each school library.
 - 20.3. New and improved **sites of training** to staff the school library roll-out, which must include university training for librarians and library administrators as both degree programmes and short courses.
 - 20.4. **Books and equipment:** Expand QIDS UP so to provide shelving, computers and 3 books per learner in every public ordinary school library.
 - 20.5. **Operational funding:** Legislate that each school must allocate 10% of its Learning Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) funding for updating and maintaining the school library collection.
 - 20.6. **Workshops** for teachers, parents, learners and SGB members concerning the role of the library and its place in the school programme.
 - 20.7. A weekly **library period** built into the curriculum for every class in every school.
 - 20.8. The **monitoring and evaluation** of the school library roll-out in order to ensure its effective implementation, and measure its impact.



- 20.9. Reopen the DoE's **School Libraries Unit** which can in turn oversee the development of a national policy on school libraries as well as an implementation plan.
- 20.10. **Sign into law** the regulations called for by Section 5A of the South African Schools Act as the first step towards a national plan for school libraries.
21. Further, we recommend that the following investigations are undertaken by government, and results made public:
- 21.1. The Department of Education should investigate **purchasing books directly** from publishers, rather than through book-sellers who significantly increase the price of their books before selling them on to government.
- 21.2. The Minister of Finance should investigate whether a **VAT exemption** on books bought for school libraries would assist schools and provincial education departments without adversely harming government revenue.
- 21.3. The Department of Trade and Industry should consider **lowering import tariffs** on books for school libraries.

1 School 1 Library 1 Librarian!

Forward to quality and equal education for all!

Forward to our Constitutional rights to basic education, equality and human dignity!

Yours Sincerely,

Ntombesizwe Mkonto

Matric Learner – Wynberg High School

Chairperson, Equal Education Youth Group
Leadership Committee Executive

Yoliswa Dwane

Head of Department

Equal Education: Policy
Communications and Research



We are calling for endorsements from organizations, schools, universities, student societies, youth movements, newspapers, and clubs. All organs of civil society are invited to endorse this memorandum and Equal Education's Campaign for School Libraries.*

International organizations, schools and civil society can also endorse. Local and international endorsements will be kept on separate lists.

Please fax your endorsement to 086 601 0666 or e-mail it to info@equaleducation.org.za ASAP!

This memorandum will be handed over to government at marches in:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| - Cape Town | - 21 March 2010 | 071 118 4662 |
| - Pretoria-Tshwane | - 26 March 2010 | 083 407 6047 |
| - Polokwane | - 30 March 2010 | 072 293 8201 |

Support Equal Education today!

<http://www.equaleducation.org.za/donate/donate-to-ee>

*Equal Education reserves the right not to accept any endorsement.



☎: 021 387 0023 ~ 📠 Fax: 0865169396 ~ info@equaleducation.org.za