



Transforming Education in Namibia Progress Report



15 August 2022

National Conference on Education
NCE
2022



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Annex 3: National Consultations Report Form

The consultation report form is intended to record the outcomes of the consultation and assist in preparing the National Commitment Statement. Please complete the form on the TES portal for tracking by 15 August 2022.

1. TES NATIONAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

Convenor's Name: **Hon. Ester Anna Nghipondoka, Minister of Education, Arts and Culture**

Number of consultations (if more than one consultation takes place): **Total of 19 consultations held at both national and regional levels.**

Basic information on all the consultation(s) convened

Date(s):	14 April to 15 August 2022
Title(s)	Consultations on the 2022 National Conference on Education and the Transforming Education Summit
Types (e.g. National/Subnational)	National and sub-national
Geographical Focus	All 14 sub-national administrative regions of Namibia and nationally
Number of Participants for each consultation	2330 participants attended the 14 regional consultations, 29 May until 13 June 2022 inclusive of a validation of consultations report. 82 youth (inclusive of learners with disabilities) in a youth forum on 29 June 2022, prior to the conference 649 (285 females and 364 males) participants attended the National Conference on Education (NCE) in person, while 2868 followed online – some from as far away as the USA, Jamaica and Malawi, 2 - 5 August 2022. In total, nearly 6,000 Namibians engaged directly during the stakeholder consultations.
Language used	English as the Official Language with translations in local languages and sign language interpretation in the regional consultations and simultaneous translations in 7 local languages and sign language in the National Conference on Education.

Total number of participants:

Age Range of Participants: (insert number)	
465	0 - 17
848	18 - 29
1646	30 - 59
102	60+

Gender of Participants in person in Consultations	
1624	Male
1437	Female
3061	Total

Number of Participants from each Sector:			
2111	Education	5	Nutrition
24	Child Protection	42	Communication
76	Health	46	Information Technology
71	Labour/unions	38	Social Protection
12	Environment	54	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
31	Finance	551	Other: Traditional authorities, political leadership, indigenous and marginalized community members, and organizations of persons with disabilities.

Number of participants from each Stakeholder Group:	
954	Teachers, educators, facilitators, and professors
46	Teacher union members (NANTU, TUN etc.)
22	Education Forum
699	Youth and students (including children with disability and adolescents)
83	School leaders (e.g., principals, school board members)
81	City and local government representatives
152	Parents and caregivers
62	Small/medium enterprises
25	Large national businesses
16	Members of Parliament
5	Multi-national corporations
37	Local authorities
75	Government and national institutions
470	Public Servants
2	Regional economic community
18	United Nations Organisations
58	Local Non-Governmental Organizations (including disability & children's rights NGOs)
4	International and/or Regional financial institutions
12	International Non-Governmental Organizations
75	Indigenous people and community leaders (including those with disability)
112	Scientific community, academic, universities and research institutes
48	Media
5	Other (Please explain) Diplomats (2); CSI Foundations (3)

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

How did you organize the consultation to ensure the following principles of national consultations?

✓	- A whole-of-government approach
✓	- Inclusion and equality with particular focus on people with disability
✓	- Focusing on youth as 'agents of change'
✓	- In all consultations input by youth, people with disability and minority ethnic groups, as well as migrant communities, were actively encouraged leading to a significant proportion of inputs being from these groups – particularly the youth and people with disability.

3. CONSULTATION FOCUS AND OUTCOMES

What was/were the main areas of focus of the national consultations, based on the TES five thematic action tracks* and the issues outlined in the Discussion Papers and the Futures of Education Briefing Notes?

Regional Consultations

All the presentations in the 14 regions of Namibia on the 5 thematic action tracks focused on addressing the following key issues:

- Current status of Namibian education, arts, culture and heritage system.
- Challenges the education, arts and culture system is experiencing prior to and due to COVID-19.
- Actions that Namibia will prioritise to transform education in the short (two years: 2023-2025), medium (five years: 2025-2030), and long term (12 years: 2023-2035).
- In total across all 14 regions 2,330 people participated in the regional consultations in late May and early June.
- The Minister of Education, Arts and Culture, and her Deputy Minister, attended every one of these consultations, ensuring that the participants realised the significance of the event.

National Conference on Education (NCE)

The NCE, 2-5 August 2022, was another opportunity to debate the status of education, arts and culture in Namibia, reflect on the impact of COVID-19, and identify key levers of change to transform education in the short, medium and long term. The Conference built on the regional and national consultative processes held in May and June 2022, and endorsed the five transformative initiatives generated through that consultative process. In addition, the NCE revisited the commitments made in the 2011 NCE and assessed achievements of agreed targets and identified targets and processes which remain unattained. These were integrated into the priority actions which came through the regional and national consultations.

The four-day NCE was attended by 649 participants in person and 2,868 online while over 120,000 stakeholders followed via Facebook and Twitter under the motto “quality education is a shared responsibility” and could actively share their views.

At the NCE it was resolved that the recommendations will be implemented through the respective mainstream activities.

1. INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE, SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Present Good Practices:

- There are a number of recent policies in place such as the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education, Integrated School Health Policy, Namibia School Feeding Policy, Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy, Childcare and Protection Act. These create an enabling environment.
- Namibia School Sports for Development is assisting in enhancing school health and safety.
- There are coordinating structures such as the National School Health Task Force, which have also been cascaded to the regional level.
- The introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 2013, and Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2016 has resulted in Namibia nearly achieving universal primary education,

with 85 percent of children starting grade one, continuing to lower secondary (Grade 8) and has ensured gender parity in access to education at all levels.

- The introduction of the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education has resulted in provision of school access and hostels which allow children with disabilities, and from poor and vulnerable communities, to attend school.
- The introduction of the Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy has resulted in increasing access to education for the teenage mother and supporting her to access services.
- The Ministry has been implementing the Integrated School Health and Safety Programme and the National Safe Schools Framework, which have both contributed to addressing health and safety issues in schools and communities. Parents, through their representative school boards have also been trained to support schools to address health and safety issues.
- Life Skills teachers continue to receive in-service trainings to run programmes that address sexual violence and gender-based violence, school safety, mental health and phyco-social support.
- All schools were supported though trainings on infection prevention and control measures to reduce COVID-19 infections in schools, received masks and sanitisers for learners and received ongoing support to avoid infections in schools.

Challenges:

- High learner repetition and drop-out rates with 20 percent of learners repeating Grade 1.
- High teacher: learner ratios and overcrowded classrooms impacting on quality teaching.
- Unavailability of textbooks resulting in up to 5 learners sharing a textbook.
- Limited teacher capacity to address the individual needs of learners with disabilities and other special needs in education.
- Refugee and migrant children are enrolled in Namibian schools, but many do not have identification documents.
- Lack of accessible infrastructure and digital technologies, especially in remote and rural communities.
- Alcohol, drug abuse and violence in and around school communities.
- High levels of child poverty and school feeding is not expanded to early childhood development centres. The national school feeding programme is provided for the neediest learners and, in some schools, not delivered timely. In addition, a more diversified nutritious diet is needed.
- High learner pregnancy rates and negative cultural practices impact on the implementation of the Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy and the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education.
- Under-achievement of boys is linked to high levels of dropout and internal exclusion of boys.

The Proposed Levers of Change for Transforming Education in Namibia:

Short-term

- The Sector Policy on Inclusive Education should be implemented effectively, addressing the needs, safety and protection of all learners, particularly those with disability, orphans and vulnerable children, including refugee and migrant children.
- Cross-sectoral collaboration will be fostered to improve access to the National School Feeding Programme with consistent and nutritious meals to ensure learner well-being and retention in school. This should include national adoption of the Home Grown School Feeding initiative which encourages schools and local community members to work together to provide meals, while providing employment to local community members.
- The Government should provide free sanitary towels to all needy female learners in public schools to ensure no girl needs to miss school due to her periods. This could be funded through Public Private Partnership (PPP) processes and corporate assistance.

Medium- to long-term

- To build a solid educational foundation for all learners, attention will be placed on early childhood education and the junior primary phases to ensure that all children have mastered early literacy and numeracy skills by the end of Grade 3.
- The effective implementation of the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education should be achieved through the provision of qualified teachers, learning support materials, assistive devices and emerging education technologies.
- Access to fully trained Life Skills teachers should be extended to all learners and systems of referral strengthened.
- Strengthen communication between the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) for orphans and vulnerable children to facilitate access to higher education if they achieve the required grades/ points.
- Ensure every school has key infrastructure, including toilets and safe buildings.
- Establish a multi-sector partnership to educate the public, promote alcohol and drug abuse awareness, and strengthen community policing.
- Develop regional maintenance plans for schools and hostels with initial focus on rural schools.
- The Namibia School Feeding Programme is being transitioned to Home Grown School Feeding and has been piloted in 7 regions with 29 schools. This pilot should be extended across the country to all schools.

2. LEARNING AND SKILLS FOR LIFE, WORK AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Present Good Practices:

- Namibia has been implementing an adult education and literacy programme over the years which has resulted in an increase in adult literacy rates. This programme trains adults and youth on employability skills.
- With the introduction of pre-primary education in 2009, many children are benefiting from early numeracy and literacy skills before starting their formal education. In addition, more children are accessing early childhood development centres.
- The Family Literacy Programme has been introduced in 249 primary schools across all 14 regions, with 5,838 participants.
- Education for Sustainable Development is taught in all public schools, as well as climate change as a cross-cutting issue across the curriculum.
- The Namibia Training Authority (NTA) was established to advise the Minister on TVET matters.
- There has been an increase in the number of private TVET providers, ensuring a mixed provision between public and private institutions.
- Physical infrastructure and equipment at public vocational training centres (VTCs) were upgraded and expanded.
- Trainers at public VTCs underwent various skills upgrading programmes to help improve the quality of training.
- Within the schooling system there are some technical schools and various programmes aimed at assisting young people with aspirations to engage in technical and vocational occupations. The Ministry has identified food production as being an important focus.
- Arts and culture have been moved into the Ministry of Education and are being reinvigorated.

Challenges:

- There is no clear system for transition from adult learning into formal education, especially after completing Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE).
- Low literacy, numeracy and computer skills across all phases of the basic education sector.

- Lack of appropriate skills orientation programmes for teachers in schools and the TVET sector mean many teachers have no or limited ICT skills with minimal learning opportunities and practical skills training in simulated workplaces.
- Limited emphasis on the acquisition of soft skills, entrepreneurial skills, financial literacy for lifelong learning and sustainable development.
- The TVET curriculum is not responsive to the requirements of the economy and to changing employment requirements.
- There is a lack of suitably qualified teachers for pre-vocational and vocational subjects across the sector.
- The duplication and overlap of functions, especially regulatory ones, is still prevalent and affects efficiency and effectiveness in the TVET sector.
- The TVET sector lacks a unified training model resulting in minimal links with the schooling sector.
- Limited access to the TVET sector due to inadequate funding and inequities in financing between public and private providers.
- Insufficiently qualified school and public librarians and limited school and public libraries.
- Artists and other practitioners of cultural occupations struggle to market their products and make a living using their skills.
- Arts and sports education are neglected. Although these subjects are part of the school curriculum, they require strengthening.

Proposed Levers of Change for Transforming Education in Namibia:

Short-term

- The foundation phase is regarded as the most important lever of change to transform education and future life chances in Namibia. The best prepared teachers should be assigned to teach these grades.
- A stronger focus is required on numeracy and literacy from early childhood education, through schooling, and for neo-literates, out of school youth and unemployed adults.
- Reducing the number of subjects at foundation phase and later in the primary cycle to focus on critical subjects.
- Considering the impact of global warming and climate change on education, the youth recommended that there should be a strengthened focus on the need to preserve the planet in the curriculum and on the way schools are run.
- Linkages are to be strengthened between the two Ministries responsible for education and other relevant stakeholders to ensure better provision of key linkages between basic and higher education.
- Strengthen and rollout the Family Literacy programme to improve parental engagement in supporting their children's literacy.

Medium- to Long-term

- Relate subjects available in schools more closely with the political and economic needs of the nation and make sure that these subjects are properly staffed and taught. This would also include the strengthening of teaching learners about the laws that regulate their lives and business registration, as part of entrepreneurship.
- Funding needs to be made available to provide qualified teachers as well as learning and teaching materials in arts, physical education and sports.
- Develop policies and conducive conditions for youth who want to pursue careers in sport.
- Conducive environments should be created for lifelong learning and up-skilling of workers for sustainable development, ensuring closer linkages between school and work.

- The TVET curriculum needs regular review to ensure it is responsive to the needs of students, the economy, the impact of climate change and the need for sustainable development. This could include the mainstreaming of traditional crafts such as thatching and crafting.
- Postgraduate courses are needed for graduates of VTCs so they can become teachers of pre-vocational and vocational subjects.
- The National Youth Service should be empowered to offer more NQA accredited out-of-school courses for small enterprises, allowing youth and adults to enter the semi-formal economy as hairdressers, bakers, beauticians, sausage and meat producers, web developers, graphic designers, etc.
- The Ministry should examine how to mainstream in schools the cultural institutions, literature/oral traditions, idioms, wisdom, way of life of their forefathers and mothers.
- Strengthen the Traditional Life Skills Project to preserve traditional practices and culture through community involvement as a co-curricular activity in order to: Promote and facilitate the transfer of traditional life skills, values, norms and customs from the adults in a given community to the learners; Promote a creative and entrepreneurial attitude among the learners and equip them with practical knowledge and skills; Reduce barriers between different cultures and promote tolerance for cultural diversity; Develop a sense of pride within learners for their cultural heritage and thereby keep their culture alive.
- Promote and invest in youth and adults trying to make a living out of creativity in line with policies.
- Conduct collaborative advocacy to promote the importance of technical and vocational subjects among learners and parents.
- Establish more sports clubs for youth with disability. Raise awareness on the ability of people with disability and train coaches specialising in training youth with disability.

TEACHERS, TEACHING AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Present Good Practices:

- Teachers are perceived as being at the core of the education system, having a direct impact on the life of a child.
- Teachers are regarded as the providers of knowledge and should thus be well qualified to instil such knowledge to learners from early childhood, through to secondary education.
- The Ministry prioritises the recruitment of qualified teachers in remote areas through the Teachers' Incentive Allowance.
- With the introduction of the revised curriculum, in-service training is regularly conducted to upskill teachers on its implementation.

Challenges:

- There is a mismatch between demand and supply of teachers across the different phases, schools and institutions of higher learning, as well as within subject areas.
- A lack of trained teachers in Namibian languages, especially in the junior primary and secondary phases, has resulted in the Language Policy not being implemented in many schools.
- Lack of qualified teachers in particular fields of expertise especially in languages, mathematics, sciences, technical subjects, computer studies and providing support to learners with disabilities and other special needs.
- Continuous professional development of teachers is not having the desired effect on improving pedagogical skills in the classroom.
- Slow turnaround time on teacher appointments leaves schools reliant on hiring temporary teachers from their limited budgets, putting the schools under financial strain.
- Teacher training courses are too theoretical and do not involve adequate time in school on teaching practice.

- Newly qualified teachers are not inducted properly in their first placement.
- High teacher: learner ratios resulting in teachers in some regions and schools having up to 50 learners in one classroom.
- Lack of teacher housing, especially in remote areas to attract qualified teachers.

The Proposed Levers of Change for Transforming Education in Namibia:

Short-term

- Stakeholders recommended the urgent establishment of a Professional Teacher Regulatory Body, which should, amongst other issues, focus on the professionalisation of teaching. This process has started and needs to be expedited with a clear development plan followed.
- Teacher training courses should include a minimum level of teaching practice under the guidance of an experienced teacher. Teacher training courses which do not meet this requirement should be terminated.
- A liaison committee is required between the Ministry and the teacher training institutions to align the production of teachers with the requirements of schools and to ensure that the institutions have trained the teachers in teaching the revised curriculum.
- Continuous professional development needs to be reconceptualised by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation and its development partners to move from centre-based training to communities of practice, reinforced with classroom-based support.

Medium- to Long-term

- There needs to be alignment between the supply and demand of teachers to create greater synergies between pre-service education institutions and the Ministry's needs.
- With the emergent use of digital technologies, there is need for strengthening continuous professional development of all teachers on their implementation.
- Teacher: learner ratios should be reduced to allow teachers to focus on the individual needs of learners prescribed in the post-provisioning norms. This could be achieved in the early grades, where it is most needed, by a programme of employing recent school and university graduates as teaching assistants on a stipend.
- Train all teachers on how to attend to and teach learners with special needs.
- Train subject teachers for pre-vocational, vocational and technical subjects.

4. DIGITAL LEARNING AND TRANSFORMATION

Present Good Practices:

- It is understood that emerging digital technologies are the key to transforming education in the 21st Century.
- Information Communication (IC) is taught in Namibian schools.
- The Ministry has procured digital technologies for schools and continues to expand provision to ensure that more schools are reached.
- Through the partnership with the Namibia College of Open Learning (NAMCOL), the secondary curriculum was digitalised and is availed through online, as radio and as TV broadcasted lessons.
- Primary learning content was supplemented digitally through the partnership with the Namibia Media Holdings who assisted with the development of printed workbooks which were made accessible on-line.
- UNICEF, is assisting the Ministry with digitisation through the ICT4Learning project and involvement in teacher professional development in the use of ICTs.
- The Ministry has developed an Accelerated Infrastructure Development Plan to focus on the provision of digital technologies in all Namibian schools.

Challenges:

- A total of 59 percent of the population has access to the internet with access being mostly in urban areas and rural communities largely left behind.
- 77 percent of schools in Namibia do not have access to information communication technologies (ICTs) and 12.8 percent lack access to electricity (Education Management Information System 2021 report). These schools mainly serve rural and marginalised communities.
- Only 31 percent of schools are utilizing the ICT based school administration and learner management system, called SchoolLink, for administrative purposes.
- ICT Policy is good on paper, but it is not practiced as planned, and teachers are not trained for IC in the revised curriculum.
- The differentiated and unequal access to digital technology and connectivity during COVID-19 were acknowledged.
- Lack of personal devices caused learning loss during COVID-19 as learners could not be reached and had no access to learning resources in situations where teachers had not prepared any hard copies of learning materials.
- Lack of computers in many schools leads to Information Communication (IC) being taught purely theoretically.
- Many schools have no “gadget policy”, which means that learners cannot use their own devices at school.
- Computers and software in many schools are reportedly abandoned because they are obsolete and there is no dedicated budget to maintain and replace such devices.

The Proposed Levers of Change for Transforming Education:

Short-term

- Access to assistive devices and technologies for learners with disabilities should be prioritised.
- The digital literacy capacity of all teachers needs to be assessed and training programmes developed to inspire confidence in the use of emerging digital technologies.
- Expedite the development of the local Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level e-teaching and learning content.
- Integration of e-learning platforms on SchoolLink, Moodle and other Open Education Resources (OER)
- The Ministry should create a portal where a national repository of open-source and copyright free teaching and learning materials are available to learners and teachers free of charge, through downloadable and printable platforms.

Medium- to Long-term

- An incremental approach to achieving universal access to education requires the Ministry to acquire appropriate technologies for schools and introduce new technologies.
- The 12.8 percent of schools which lack access to electricity should be connected to the national grid or preferably provided with solar systems.
- It should be mandatory for every public school to have electricity, free access to wi-fi and a secure supply of relevant devices, with training in their use and a maintenance plan.
- Connect all schools, communities and learners to the internet and digital learning opportunities and skills in a sustainable, affordable and meaningful way, focusing on unconnected areas in the poorest parts, leveraging the UNICEF GIGA and International Telecommunication Union (ITU) partnership and strategy.
- Strengthen the rollout of ICT into all public schools through PPPs, such that the use of these computers should not be tied to specific subjects.
- Maintain open meeting links between learners/ students and teachers/ lecturers.
- The Ministry needs to commit to innovative interventions to address barriers to access in facilitating dialogue through PPPs and telecommunication providers to provide cost effective and bulk purchases of devices and connectivity.

- Enhance psycho-social, health and well-being so that every child is ready to learn by creating a digital learning hub for learner mental health and psycho-social support.

5. FINANCING OF EDUCATION

Present Good Practices:

- The Introduction of free basic education for primary and secondary schooling demonstrates government's commitment on prioritizing education for all.
- The Namibian government provides significant domestic resources to the education sector. The basic education sector receives the highest amount of the national budget, translating to close to 8 percent of GDP and 25 percent of the national budget.
- More than 60 percent of the education budget goes towards primary education, while a very small proportion of the budget is dedicated to pre-primary education.
- The Government is focusing on increasing access to pre-primary schooling through the construction of pre-primary classrooms with a focus on rural communities.
- The Ministry has developed a School Grant Policy with a targeted funding formula to ensure pro-poor equitable funding to education. This year the MoEAC is experimenting with paying the grants directly into school accounts rather than through the regional education offices.
- Focus is placed on the needs of learners with disabilities and those from the most poor, rural and marginalised communities.

Challenges:

- School and education budgets are under pressure and this will continue as more teachers need to be employed, minimum schooling standards are implemented, school infrastructures need to be built and maintained as more learners' transition to higher grades and previously marginalised children access school, and food costs rise.
- The concept of "Free Education" took away parental and community responsibilities to contribute to education.
- Funds allocated to schools do not arrive on time, hence the need for parents to contribute towards school costs, to meet operational obligations and maintain the quality of education.
- As a result of COVID-19, many parents who have been contributing voluntarily have lost income and are therefore unable to contribute.
- Other funding inefficiencies are related to funding flows. The financial year of government and the school year are not aligned, resulting in regions and schools not receiving funds on time to procure resources.
- Lack of monitoring of UPE and USE Funds at school level for accountability purposes.
- Schools are struggling with making payments for basic services and internet from the grants they receive.
- Inefficient procurement processes at school and regional levels have been identified as increasing costs of goods or services, with highly inflated bidding prices.
- Contracts for goods and services procured by schools are often awarded to individuals or companies with minimal expertise to deliver quality goods and services.
- Curriculum reform was introduced with inadequate preparation of teachers and has resulted in teaching and learning challenges.
- When the revised curriculum was introduced materials and information technologies, which are needed for the curriculum, were not provided to schools.
- Lack of an enabling environment for innovative teaching and learning due to inaccessibility of digital technologies, lack of electricity and internet connectivity in many schools.
- Limited access to assistive devices and technologies for learners with different disabilities.
- Inadequate decentralisation and inter-ministerial coordination to address the challenges faced by schools.

The Proposed Levers of Change for Transforming Education:

Short-term

- As financing education is the engine that drives quality and education transformation the Ministry is committing to mobilise and utilise available and presently untapped resources more effectively.
- To bridge the education financing gap there is a need for meaningful private sector support to education through developing a national framework on corporate social responsibility (CSR).
- Schools should be given preferential rates for services such as water, electricity and internet and should be able to access free banking services. The Ministry should negotiate this urgently.
- Develop a framework for parental and community resource mobilisation which introduces and builds awareness of the benefits of a cost-sharing model of 'fee free education'.
- A National Funders' Forum will be established so that donors and local corporates can align their funding of education with national priorities.
- Re-align budgets to better cater for curriculum implementation and CPD of teachers.
- Explore function shift of personnel budget to Treasury, so in turn increasing the operational budget.
- Conduct research on new infrastructure development programmes needed by schools.
- Study the Public Expenditure Review (2017) and its recommendations as well as the current usage of funds to identify inefficiencies and improve guidance for effective resource utilisation.
- Undertake a review of personnel structures to align them to obtain increased efficiency.

Medium- to Long-term

- Financial accountability and management should be reinforced at all levels of the education sector to ensure efficient utilisation of existing resources.
- The Ministry will explore innovative forms of funding education such as Development and Social Impact Bonds.
- A national Corporate Social Investment (CSI) Act is required, with education as a priority. This Act will encourage CSI through potential tax breaks and other benefits.
- Linked to CSI, it is proposed that income from fishing quotas and mining license grants be made available to the education sector, or that the sector is allocated fishing quotas and mining shares.
- Develop the regulatory framework needed in order to introduce an education levy from corporate profits.
- Examine ways of shifting the budget so that schools get higher capitation grants with a stronger pro-poor equation helping close the historical school resourcing differential between wealthier and poorer communities.
- Allow schools to fund-raise and even establish business units.
- Research more cost-effective ways of funding and managing school hostels while protecting learners' rights.
- Amend policies or develop a national school procurement strategy to improve inefficiencies in planning (align school and Ministry funding cycles) and procurement which will involve some re-centralising of tendering to gain economies of scale and reduce price gouging of schools.
- Explore the use of Development- and Social Impact Bonds to help fund education.
- Align finances to responsibilities and functions.
- Identify financing gaps and work on closing those gaps.
- Ensure school accounts are audited to monitor the usage of funds and embed monitoring and evaluation of funding into Ministry processes.
- Schools need to be required to post their income and expenditure on a notice-boards for parents, learners and community members to see. Such transparency builds confidence.
- Create a fund for emergencies that does not need to return unspent funds to Treasury, but if unused can be used for other priorities.
- Conduct a 'real' costing exercise for provision of quality education.
- Design and implement systemic and consistent budget tracking.

4. KEY OUTCOMES OF THE NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS

Recovery from Covid-19 disruption [short-term]

1. Due to prolonged school closure in 2020, high learner pregnancy and dropout rates were recorded in all 14 regions of Namibia.
2. COVID-19 school closure has also negatively impacted on the school feeding programme which could not be extended to communities to benefit the neediest school children.
3. Recovery from COVID-19 focused specifically on the school recovery and resilience plan to accelerate teaching and address the learning losses due to the prolonged face to face school closure in 2020. This involved advocacy especially targeted at mothers of learners to return children back in school; addressing the mental health and psychosocial needs of learners and teachers; and expanding access to electricity and communication technology so that all children and adults, even in remote communities, can access virtual lessons and learning.
4. The Accelerated Infrastructure Development Plan (AIDeP) was developed to address the urgent school infrastructure needs, including the construction and renovation of classrooms, water tanks and sanitation facilities.

Transformation of education [medium-longer-term]

Stakeholders at the national and regional consultations committed to four broad-based systemic outcomes to transforming education in Namibia. These would address many of the concerns raised during the regional and national consultations by all groups (and which are listed above in the five tracks). They do this in a joined up manner, while having the potential to fundamentally improve the financing and delivery of education, and so improving learning outcomes in a sustainable manner.

The five key transformative initiatives are:

- **Resourcing Quality Education:** Ensure efficient, effective and timely disbursement of UPE/USE funds to schools based on the actual enrolment figures. Move responsibility for some tendering processes from schools to regional or national offices to allow for economies of scale and avoid wastage. Develop a public private partnership (PPP) and corporate social investment (CSI) framework and encourage parental contributions to their local schools to strengthen private sector education financing. Examine innovative financing measures to increase the pool of funds available to education through Social- and Development Impact Bonds and establish a National Funders Forum (reactivate and popularise FENSI, Friends of Education in Namibia Special Initiative account) where the Ministry can meet with donors and local CSI funders and guide their funding to support national priorities.
- **National Literacy and Numeracy Drive:** A national early grade literacy and numeracy political and community drive to strengthen the foundational skills for lifelong learning and in addressing challenges related to repetition rates. All early grade teachers will be trained to administer reading and mathematics assessments to their learners regularly as part of a cycle of planning and remediation. Those learners who are failing to read by Grade 2 and 3 will be invited to weekend and holiday camps where they are provided with intensive reading support.
- **Education Office Transformation:** A national and regional education office transformation programme, in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister, using organisational development processes to align the human resources and the funding of these offices to their primary goal – serving local education sites effectively. At regional level this will involve restructuring and re-imagining their role in relation to head office and schools/ Early Childhood Education sites. The initiative will also help create the space and the mechanisms for absorbing ECD into the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture.

- **Teacher Training Transformation:** A reform of the teacher training process is essential so that the training of teachers and CPD is made more practice-oriented and institutions training teachers align their supply of teachers by phase and subject to the projected needs of the system. This needs to be a cooperative process between the Ministry and the higher education institutions which train teachers.
- As the fifth broad-based systemic outcome it is the intent to reinforce a cross-cutting programme of provision of **universal, inclusive access to digital technology** for all teachers and learners.

Review of National Targets and Benchmarks

It was noted in the regional and national consultations that Namibia requires standards and a benchmark to be set for early grade reading and numeracy. Without these it is difficult for the country to benchmark itself against other countries. This is symptomatic of a general lack of system standards. This will be addressed in the next Education Strategic Plan.

There are two important separate, but linked processes, that will be taken forward to ensure that the agreements reached during this planning process will be adopted by the Government of the Republic of Namibia and systematically implemented.

The **first** is the development of a new Strategic Plan for the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. All the agreements reached in the NCE will need to be carefully crafted into SMART deliverables, with success indicators and measures to inform the work of the Ministry between 2024 and 2030. The planning process was due to take place in 2021 but was postponed due to the need to also engage with the **second** linked process, namely the development of a revised National Development Plan (NDP). The intention will be to ensure that in addition to the MoEAC including the NCE outcomes in its plans, the important roles to be played by other Ministries and government as a whole, will be documented in the NDP.

Ensuring Sustainable Public Financing of Education

With 8 percent of GDP already allocated to education, the focus will be on using the funds already allocated more efficiently and to use the public funding of education as a lever to encourage and ratchet up targeted private and community funding of schools and education more generally. This will be linked to less regressive taxation support of education – with high levels of subsidy for low return levels in the system, particularly subsidisation of higher education – and make it more progressive with greater investment in ECD and early grade learning, which has a much higher rate of return. This will be difficult politically, but will in the long run benefit the whole education system and the economy. Areas of the education system which are in this way defunded will need to be assisted in attracting private funding or accessing innovative sources of funding. The latter could include government issued “Development Impact Bonds” and access to fishing and mining rights. These involve costs to government, but have the potential to generate substantial incomes and long term growth, in other words, investment returns.

All sources of income will be monitored to ensure that they are implemented efficiently and effectively and do not open up ways for abuse. Similarly, present inefficient financing modalities will be revised. School level procurement processes have been shown to open schools to inflated prices and lack of economies of scale. Where appropriate, such tendering processes should be undertaken by the regional or national office.

Schools and other education institutions should be spared paying commercial prices for services, internet and bank charges. This needs to be resolved by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture with the relevant Ministries and State Owned Enterprises (SEOs) and service providers.

Finally, areas of abuse will be identified and closed down. This includes the payment of ghost teachers and workers and the payment of inflated prices by education institutions for substandard goods and services – including food for the school feeding programme. The latter needs to learn lessons from similar programmes in the region which involve schools in purchasing food stuffs and community members in cooking the meals. This leaves the process in the control of the school, encourages community gardens and employs local women. A truly virtuous cycle.