

CRITICAL REVIEW OF  
POLICY AND PROVISION  
OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION  
IN SOUTH AFRICA  
(1925 - 1994)  
with particular reference to  
the Natal  
Provincially/Departmentally  
Controlled Pre-Primary System  
(1975 - 1994)

by

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Carolyn Robinson-Thurlow declare that this dissertation, "Critical Review of Policy and Provision of Pre-Primary Education in South Africa (1925 - 1994) with particular reference to the Natal Provincially/Departmentally Controlled Pre-Primary System (1975 -1994)" is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn Robinson-Thurlow". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned centrally below the declaration text.

C. Robinson-Thurlow

Durban

September 1994

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- 
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## ABSTRACT

The importance of quality pre-primary education is universally acknowledged in terms of the educational, social and economic benefits that accrue to the individual and society as a result of this type of educational provision.

In South Africa, however, co-ordination, planning and funding of pre-primary education has never taken place at a national level. In terms of a policy statement made by the Minister of National Education in 1969, the four provincial authorities were given responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of pre-primary education, to be developed as and when the finances of the provinces permitted.

The provinces opted for different types of provision and so expansion in this phase differed from place to place and almost exclusively benefited white children. In Natal, a highly successful system of provincially-controlled pre-primary schools was established, staffed by teachers employed by the Natal Education Department, whose salaries were funded by the Natal Provincial Administration.

The money for the Natal pre-primary system did not come from the budget of the NED alone, but was supplemented by amounts transferred from other departments within the Natal Provincial Administration, authorised by the Provincial Council's 'right of virement'.

The introduction of the Tricameral System, in 1986, led to the closure of the provincial governments and traditional sources of funding for pre-primary education were thus removed.

Following the Government's declared commitment to move towards 'parity of provision' of education across all racially-based education departments, a new national financing formula for



education was introduced in 1987. This consisted of a 'general affairs' component (applicable to all race groups) and an unknown 'global factor' which was still linked to 'own affairs' provision. It was understood that the global factors would be equalised across race groups over a period of time. The main 'general affairs formula' was based on the number of pupils in compulsory education and did not include pre-primary pupils. This meant that pre-primary education did not receive funding or an allocation of teaching posts from this formula.

The Government did not wish pre-primary education to become a 'general affair', because of the cost implications of extending provision to all race groups. As an interim measure, funding for existing white pre-primary education was included in the global factor relating to education under the Department of Education and Culture: House of Assembly.

Bearing these factors in mind, this study attempts to:

- outline the historical development of pre-primary education in South Africa.
- describe the development of provincially-based pre-primary education, with particular reference to the Natal provincially-controlled system of pre-primary schools.
- document the 'less than transparent' planning and ad-hoc decision-making that took place at a national level, as the government sought to divest itself of responsibility for provincially developed pre-school provision.
- consider the implications of such decision making for the NED.

Rapid political and social changes have taken place in South Africa in the 1990's, culminating in the election of the Government of National Unity in April 1994. During the past two years several policy documents on education have been published, which include options or proposals relating to pre-primary education. In the final chapter of this dissertation, some of the main policy documents are reviewed and areas of consensus are

highlighted, particularly the need to:

- transform current junior primary (first phase) education by introducing a more activity-based, mediated learning approach.
- establish state funded reception classes (Grade 0) for all children in the 5 - 6 year old range.
- co-ordinate and upgrade pre-school services for the under 5's.

The importance of funding, to develop and implement this policy vision, is stressed and the question of financial feasibility is briefly considered.

Finally, attention is directed at the pivotal role that existing pre-primary teachers have to play in the development and delivery of teacher training courses (both in-service and pre-service) to equip people to teach in the first phase (Grade 0 - Grade 3).

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background	4
1.3 Terms and abbreviations used in this study	
1.3i Terms relating to early childhood education	18
1.3ii Abbreviations used in this study	29
1.4 Research Sources	31
1.5 Outline of Study	32
1.6 Summary	34
CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA (1925 - 1967)	37
2.1 Introduction	37
2.2 "The Wilderness Years" - Development of nursery education (1925 - 1960)	39
2.3 Signs of state commitment (1960 - 1967)	47
2.4 Conclusion	57
2.5 Summary	58
CHAPTER THREE: A NEW VISION OF NURSERY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN NATAL (1968 - 1975)	62
3.1 Introduction	62
3.2 Provincial responsibility for nursery education in Natal	64
3.3 New directions in Natal	67
3.4 Evolution of provincial policy - A provincially-controlled pre-primary system	75
3.5 Introduction of the new system	80
3.6 Conclusion	90
3.7 Summary	93

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	Page
CHAPTER FOUR: THE NATAL PROVINCIALY CONTROLLED PRE-PRIMARY SYSTEM (1975 - 1986)	98
4.1 Introduction	98
4.2 The period of expansion (1975 - 1980)	101
4.3 The battle to entrench existing provision	106
4.4 Signs of erosion and policy change	110
4.5 Conclusion	117
4.6 Summary	118
 CHAPTER FIVE: THE NATAL PRE-PRIMARY SYSTEM UNDER SIEGE	 123
5.1 Introduction	123
5.2 Decisions on staffing and financial provision	124
5.3 The establishment of a COH Ad-hoc Committee on Pre-Primary Education.	128
5.4 An embattled phase:	
5.4i NED downgrading measures in pre-primary provision	130
5.4ii Omission of provincially (departmentally) controlled pre-primary schools from the draft Education Affairs Bill	136
5.4iii The Ad-Hoc Committee and per capita subsidisation of pre- primary education	142
5.4iv NED staff cuts in the Natal pre-primary phase (1989)	153
5.4v Attempts to introduce a privatised per capita subsidised pre-primary system	157
5.4vi NPPTA publication: Formative Phase Education - The Foundation for the Future	162
5.4vii Further large scale staff cuts in Natal pre-primary schools (1991)	164
5.5 Conclusion	170
5.6 Summary	174

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

		Page
CHAPTER SIX:	POLICY OPTIONS RELATING TO PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION	187
6.1	Introduction	187
6.2	Critical review of policy perspectives relating to pre-primary education:	
6.2i	The ERS	189
6.2ii	The NEPI Reports	194
6.2iii	The ANC Education Policy Framework	202
6.2iv	The Report on the South African Study on Early Childhood Education (CEPD)	211
6.2v	NPPTA document on Formative Phase Education	223
6.2vi	The Reports of the Natal - Kwa Zulu Education Working Group	225
6.2vii	KZ-N Working group sub-committee on pre-primary education	229
6.3	Conclusion	
6.4	Summary	

## COMPLETE LIST OF REFERENCES

# LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

PAGE

## CHAPTER 1

FIG 1.1:	The Education System in South Africa following the introduction of the Tricameral system	7
FIG 1.2:	The Education System as it related to the NED (prior to 1986)	9
TABLE 1.1:	Per Capita State Expenditure for Teacher Training College/School Education in the RSA (excluding private ordinary schools) according to Racial Groups (1986 and 1989)	11

## CHAPTER 3

TABLE 3.1:	NED Staff Allocation to Pre-Primary Schools (1975)	83
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## CHAPTER 5:

TABLE 5.1:	Number of Pre-Primary Teachers Employed by the Provincial Education Departments (1988)	145
TABLE 5.2:	NED Staff Allocation to Pre-Primary Schools (1992)	168

## CHAPTER 6

FIG 6.1:	Governance Structure in Education at a National Level as they relate to Early Childhood Education. (based on ANC Policy Proposals, 1994)	207
FIG 6.2:	Proposed National Infrastructure to Support Early Childhood Development. (CEPD, 1994)	217
FIG 6.3:	Proposal for Equating Formal and Non-Formal Courses as Job Qualification. (CEPD, 1994)	220

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES (Continued)

### PAGE

#### CHAPTER 6 (Continued)

FIG 6.4: Possible Implementation Strategy for Reception Classes/Junior Primary Upgrade (KZ-N Working Group, 1993)	232
TABLE 6.1: Division of Functions/Powers Relating to Education (ANC: 1994)	209

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND  
AND OUTLINE OF STUDY

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Background

1.3 Terms and abbreviations used in this study

1.3i Terms relating to early childhood education

1.3ii Abbreviations used in this study

1.4 Research Sources

1.5 Outline of Study

1.6 Summary



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

In this study, the writer intends to critically review state policy and provision regarding pre-school education in South Africa, from 1925 to the present time, with particular reference to the system of provincially-controlled pre-primary schools in Natal.

During the past 45 years (1948 - 1993) the Nationalist Party has been the Government and development of pre-school education has largely been dictated by the policy choices of this Party.

Policy choices are not made in a vacuum and "...politics and values permeate the entire domain of policy consideration."

(NECC, 1993:6)

It is the writer's contention that the Nationalist Government consistently avoided articulating any clear state policy relating to pre-school education and provision, and that this 'non-policy' stance was rooted in political and financial expediency and influenced by certain cultural values.

Little fundamental change took place at the level of national politics until the 1980's, when mounting economic

and political pressure forced the Government to re-assess the status quo. Such changes as did occur, represented refinements of existing policy or reactive/adaptive changes focused on the level of planning and implementation.

Apparent policy declarations by the Government regarding pre-primary education, as evidenced by the 1969 'policy statement' issued by the Minister of National Education (NED, 1969d: Annexure 7), may be seen to exist largely on the level of political rhetoric, rather than real policy advocacy involving a commitment of State central funding and reconstruction/adjustment of previous policies.

Even in 1969, with apartheid education firmly entrenched and an economy bolstered by a high gold price, the Government chose to avoid making any structured financial commitment to pre-school education from central state coffers (even for white children) and viewed such education as an 'add on' component, to be developed if, and when, provincial finances allowed.

As a result, policy regarding pre-school education in South Africa was developed and implemented at a provincial level. This study will show that these provincial initiatives, which included the establishment of the Natal provincially-controlled pre-primary system, were always at risk, in terms of their long-term viability, due to a lack of commitment, on the part of the central Government

particularly in terms of funding.

## 1.2 Background

In 1967, as a result of increasing pressure from the South African Nursery School Association (SANSA), groups within the education and welfare departments and from the public, the Minister of National Education requested the Committee of Education Heads (COH) to undertake an investigation into 'nursery education for white children in South Africa and South West Africa' and to make recommendations. The final report of a special Interdepartmental Committee on Nursery Education was tabled at a COH meeting in 1969 and COH recommendations were forwarded to the Minister of National Education and to the Administrator's and Executive Committees (EXCO's) of the four provincial councils.

Arising out of these recommendations, the Minister of National Education issued a press statement, in April 1969, outlining future policy in regard to nursery education. While declaring that the provincial education departments should exercise control over nursery education and detailing such matters as registration, admission criteria and nature of the educational programme, this policy statement skirted the issue of funding. The Minister stated that nursery education should not be compulsory or free, but while handing responsibility for provision to the provinces, he gave no indication as to whether any State subsidy would be made available for the purpose of establishing or maintaining nursery schools.

(NED, 1969d: Annexure 7)

Prior to 1969, provincial administrations had not received any financial contribution towards the subsidisation of nursery education. The question of future financing was then referred to the 1969 Administrators' Conference.

The Administrators appeared to agree that:

"Assistance to and development of nursery school education (could) be undertaken only as far as the finances of the provinces (made) it possible."

(NED, 1969d: Annexure 7)

From documents studied by the writer, it would appear that no specific monetary allocation was ever made from Central Government to the provincial administrations in respect of nursery education. Thus the development of pre-school education that occurred following the Administrators' Conference in 1973, when the provinces finally took over the control of such education, largely reflected policy and financial prioritisation as developed within the separate provinces.

Financial feasibility and responsibility are, however, integral and critical elements of successful policy choice, development and implementation, and pre-primary education in South Africa was never established on the basis of Government acceptance of any direct financial responsibility for its apparent policy choice in this regard.

Within the framework of apartheid legislation and

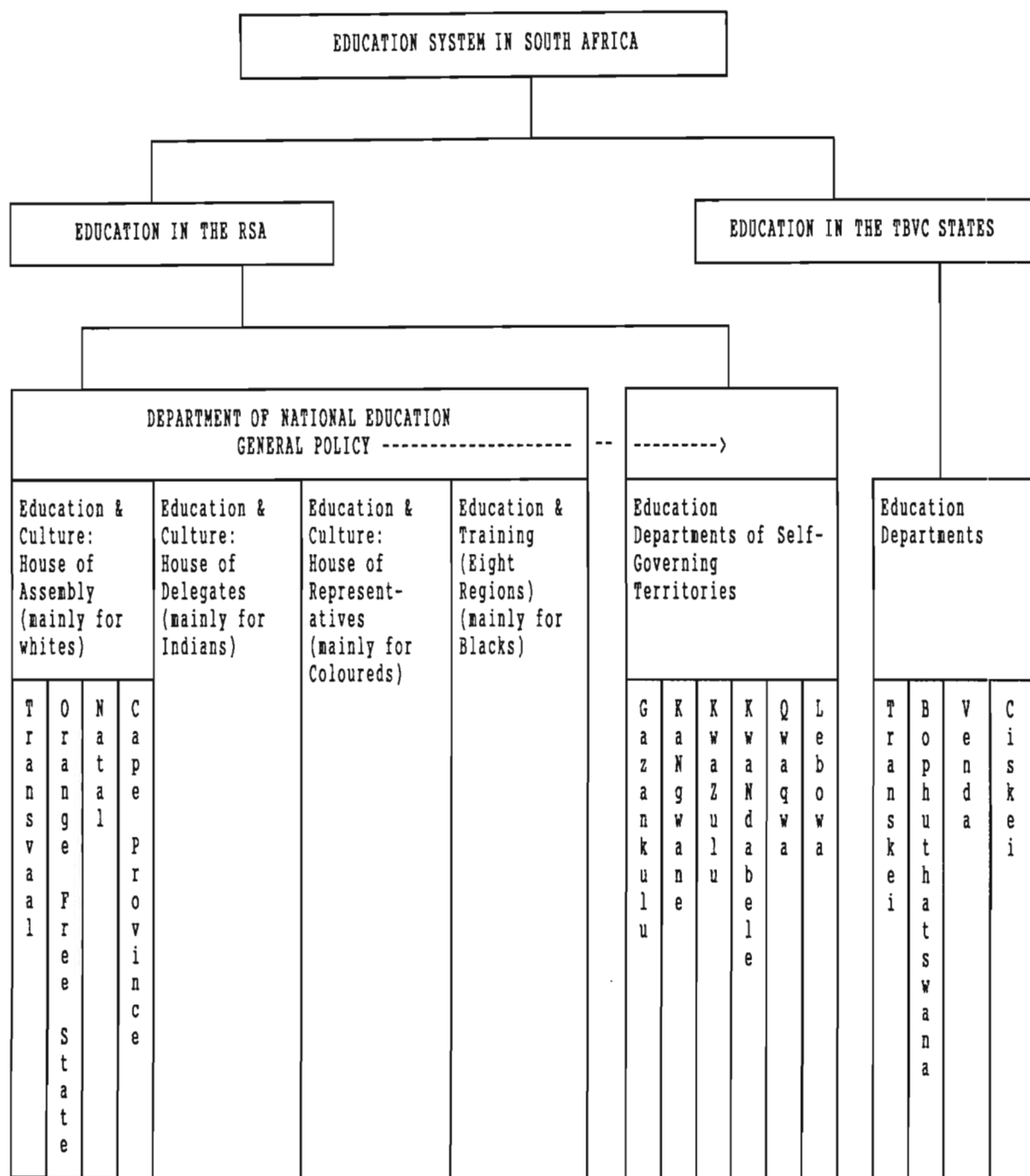
provincial responsibility for the development and funding of pre-school education, expansion of this sector was not uniform in the four provinces during the period 1973 - 1983 and then, almost exclusively, benefited white children.

The Government's attempts to modify its apartheid stance in order to deflect external economic and political pressure and increasing internal resistance, led to the Referendum of 1983 which resulted in the establishment of the 'Tricameral', 'Tripartite' or 'Own Affairs' system of government.

The Tricameral System gave the White, Indian and Coloured groups political representation in interlinked, but separate, Houses of Parliament viz The House of Assembly (Whites). The House of Representatives (Coloureds) and the House of Delegates (Indians). These Houses of Parliament made decisions on matters considered to be the 'own affair' of that population group. This included all aspects of education not specified by national education legislation and as such, deemed to be a 'general affair'.

Blacks were excluded from the Tricameral system and education for blacks fell under the jurisdiction of the self-governing territories (SGT's) or was dealt with by the Department of Education and Training (DET), as can be seen in Figure 1.1.

FIGURE 1.1: THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA FOLLOWING THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TRICAMERAL SYSTEM (1986)



(Source: DNE, 1991:8)

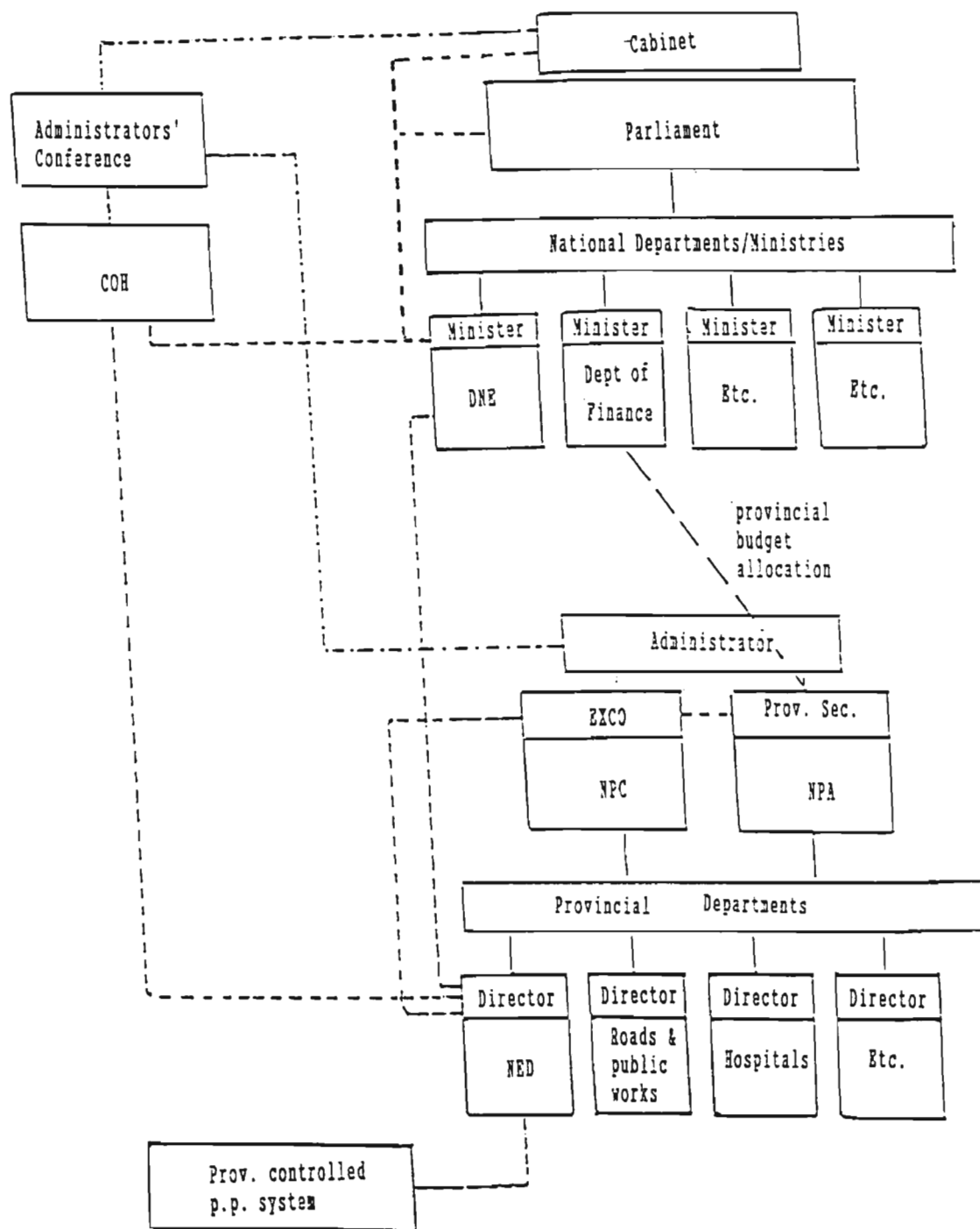
The introduction of the Tricameral System required the vertical stratification of the political and educational affairs of the White, Coloured and Indian groups, on a

national level. It resulted in the closure of provincial councils and administrations and the centralisation, in Pretoria, of White government departments (including education).

The demise of the provincial councils and administrations took place in 1986 and white provincial education departments then became regional offices of the Department of Education and Culture (DEC) (House of Assembly). The budget for such regional departments (which now came directly from the Head Office of the DEC: House of Assembly, in Pretoria), was calculated using a financial formula generated by the number of pupils in compulsory education, (Class 1 to Standard 10), in House of Assembly schools in a province. Previously the education budget of each province had been allocated from a provincial budget administered by the provincial authorities. Such provincial authorities could, with the approval of the Executive Committee (EXCO) of their provincial council, utilise the 'right of virement' which enabled money to be transferred from one department to another within the provincial budget, for example from roads to education. Funding for 'special projects', within a particular department, could be motivated through EXCO and funded in this way. It would appear that (in Natal at least) pre-primary education was financed largely through this strategy. The following figure shows the structure of the education system, prior to the introduction of the Tripartite system.



FIGURE 1.2: THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AS IT RELATED TO THE NED  
(PRIOR TO 1986)



Source: C. Robinson-Thurlow, 1994

As noted previously, no direct subsidy for pre-schooling was ever received from Central Government and the removal of the system of provincial administrations, and the introduction of a central financing formula for White education (which excluded the number of children in pre-primary education as it was a non-compulsory phase), cut off the main source of funds for pre-primary education in the four provinces. In Natal, provincial subsidies to pre-primary schools took the form of teacher salary-subsidies, so withdrawal of funding led to large-scale staff cut-backs by the Natal Education Department (NED).

The financing of pre-primary education became even more critical after 1987, when the Government started to move towards parity of per capita expenditure amongst the racially-based education departments. This naturally entailed additional funds flowing into departments, hitherto grossly underfunded, and a corresponding slow-down or 'freeze' on funding in education departments under the House of Assembly. The Table on the following page shows disparities as they existed in 1986 and the progress towards parity achieved by 1989.

TABLE 1.1: Per Capita State Expenditure for Teacher Training College/School Education in the RSA (excluding private ordinary schools) according to Racial Group, for 1986 and 1989

Racial Group	Per Capita Expenditure (Rand)		% Increase
	1986	1989	
Black DET	610	927	52
SGTs	347	647	86
TBVC	NA	NA	
White	2,746	3,572	30
Coloured	1,330	2,115	59
Asian	1,952	2,645	36

(Source: DNE, 1991: 47)

It was intended that parity of expenditure should be achieved within ten years, but, although the gap began closing, this plan to achieve parity was abandoned, as it was found to be unattainable within the given time-frame. This was as a result of a weak economy and the fact that the major funding in education (on which per capita costs are calculated) goes to the payment of teachers' salaries. These salaries are related to qualification and great discrepancies exist in terms of the qualifications of teachers in different race groups. It was, therefore, recognised that parity of qualification across racial groups could not be achieved in a few short years.

The move towards parity continued, however, and faced with increasing financial stringency, the erstwhile provincial education departments, now regional departments of DEC : House of Assembly, sought to protect their compulsory education sector. Crisis management and ad-hoc decision-

making became the order of the day. Cost-saving measures that were introduced by the NED, included large scale staff cut-backs in 'support services' viz pre-primary schools, remedial and psychological services and music schools.

In November 1992 the Department of National Education (DNE) published a document, entitled, *Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) - Management Solutions for Education in South Africa*, which was seen as being the Government's position on education.

The ERS dealt with pre-primary education in a page and a half and did not consider even one year of state-funded pre-primary education to be a possible option.

Paragraph 12.1 noted that the provision of pre-primary education by the departments had had to be scaled down due to budget restrictions and continued:

"Furthermore, no general policy for this type of education exists at present, each department determining its own approach to pre-primary education. This approach is based on a decision taken by the Education Ministers in 1987, that general policy for ordinary school education should first be determined in its various facets, after which pre-primary education could be considered."

(DNE, 1992)

It would appear to the writer, that the provincially-based education departments (House of Assembly) were placed in an invidious position, as their ability to consider, let alone determine, their approach to pre-primary education had been

severely circumscribed. In terms of the 1969 Government policy statement and the decision taken at the Administrators' Conference of 1973, they were given responsibility for pre-primary education utilising funds from their respective provincial administrations. Schools were built (often in partnership with parent communities), teachers were trained and employed and thousands of children educated. In 1986/7, however, the Government withdrew from its original position by creating legislation which effectively cut off traditional sources of funding for pre-primary provision. The writer has been informed that the salaries still being paid to pre-primary teachers by provincial education departments (House of Assembly), are now being drawn from their 'mainstream' budget (generated by the number of pupils in the compulsory phases).

The policy 'decision' made by the education ministers in 1987, did not represent consensus amongst stake-holders in education arising out of any widespread or inclusive debate around actual policy options. Such debate as did occur, was confined to certain committees constituted by the DEC (House of Assembly). The workings of these Committees were deemed confidential and policy decisions emanating from these fora were not the result of an inclusive or democratic process.

The benefits of quality pre-school education, in terms of educational and social gains, are widely documented and are

acknowledged, even in the ERS. The writer would suggest, therefore, that the Government's avoidance of a policy advocating State responsibility for any element of pre-primary education, was based on political and financial choices and not on educational efficacy.

The majority of young children in South Africa who most need the benefit of pre-school education are black. The amount of State funding necessary to achieve provision of even one year of pre-school education for all children in this country would require restructuring of the present education system and changed priorities within the education budget.

Money would have to be channelled from the secondary and tertiary education budgets into pre-school and basic education and in terms of the need for redress, prioritisation of education in the rural areas and a flow of state funding from urban to rural sectors would most likely be required.

It would appear to the writer that, in late 1992 when the ERS was published, these options would have been unpopular with many supporters of the Nationalist Government, most of whom had come to regard state-funded secondary education as a 'right'. The Nationalist Party would not choose to alienate support, at a time when opposition to the government was becoming increasingly powerful and coordinated in black liberation groups (the mass democratic



movement). The ERS, therefore, looked to find solutions to the problems in the South African education system by attempting to make the existing model more efficient - political expediency dictated that the validity of the model, itself, was not questioned.

Since 1992, rapid political change has taken place in South Africa and the Nationalist Party has now ended its long period of total power, following the results of the first democratic elections held on 27, 28 and 29 April 1994. It nevertheless retains considerable influence as a partner in the interim government, known as the Government of National Unity.

The Government of National Unity will be in place for five years, during which time policy for a future South African education system is likely to be decided. A single Ministry of Education has been established and by 1995 the various racially-based departments of education will move to become integrated into a single department within each of the nine newly delineated provinces, namely: KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Western Cape, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, PWV, Northern Transvaal, Eastern Transvaal and Southern Transvaal.

Policy options, regarding education, have already been formulated by various groups and some of these documents viz The NEPI Reports, The ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training and their Implementation Plan and

the Reports of the Natal - KwaZulu Working Group, emphasise the importance of pre-primary education and advocate a state-funded 'reception' class year for all five year olds.

There is also a call for the reconstruction of the primary education system in order to make it more relevant, developmentally appropriate and able to meet the needs of the majority of pupils who have, hitherto, failed or dropped out of the system during their primary school years.

Unlike policy formulation, acceptance and implementation under the previous Government, future education policies are likely to be the result of a more inclusive process, involving a wide range of stakeholders. Democratic procedures and philosophies, however, may 'hamstring' progress. The new government is likely to be torn between the need to demonstrate the political 'will', necessary to restructure education and achieve long term gains for the majority, whilst maintaining political 'goodwill' in the short term by meeting the raised expectations of its various constituencies. It may be logical to build an educational structure from sound foundations upwards, but this will require redirection of funds from educational constituencies (secondary and tertiary) which are more vocal, have more prestige and have the support and involvement of business 'lobbies' as they are closer to 'the market place'.



State support of pre-primary education, in terms of a policy vision and commitment of funds, will be an important part of future educational debate. Whatever the efficacy of the educational arguments, the writer is inclined to believe that the actions of those parties that make up the government will be strongly influenced by their desire to be returned to power in the next election. It is, therefore, likely that in the next few years, we will have a lot of rhetoric but education realities in South Africa will be a case of 'the more things change, the more they stay the same'.

### 1.3 Terms and Abbreviations used in this study

#### 1.3i Terminology relating to early childhood education

The terms 'pre-school education' or 'early childhood education' refer to all types of educational provision for children under the age required for compulsory school attendance.

There are, however, various terms that apply to specific types of provision, in the sphere of early childhood education, particularly in Natal, which require clarification for the purpose of this study.

#### NURSERY EDUCATION / PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

This refers to the voluntary, school-based education of children of three years and over, in institutions outside of the home, under the supervision and direction of qualified teachers, the majority of whom are specialists trained in the development of the pre-school child.

The difference in terminology (nursery / pre-primary) is essentially a historic one. Prior to February 1974 the terms 'nursery education' and 'nursery schools' were officially used, both in Natal and at national level. However, following the Administrators' Conference of 1973, at which provincial control of nursery education was accepted, Natal marked its change in structures and responsibility with a change in terminology. (This is reflected in Natal Ordinance

No 33 of 1974 to amend National Education Ordinance of 1969).

The Regulations (378 of 1975) that accompanied Ordinance 33, spelt out the conditions for "The Establishment, registration and Payment of Grants for White Pre-Primary Schools".

Para 2(4) states:

"No institution shall be styled a Pre-Primary School or use the words 'Pre-Primary School' as part of its name unless it is registered as a pre-primary school in terms of these regulations."

To qualify for registration, schools had to meet the Natal Education Department's requirements in terms of such matters as: qualification of teachers, pupil : teacher ratio, enrolment, educational programme, the length of the school day, physical facilities and equipment. To qualify for subsidies, they had to operate as non-profit organisations (details of Regulations can be found in Annexure 20).

#### PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

There are three categories of registered pre-primary schools in Natal at this time.

##### a) PRIVATE PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

These are pre-primary schools registered with the Natal Education Department, but not in receipt of

grants or subsidies. Several schools are 'private', as they have only been in existence since 1980 and have been unsuccessful in their application for subsidies, due to the financial difficulties being experienced by the NED. Others have elected to remain financially independent of the education department as they are owned by individuals or groups and are run as businesses. Sixteen private pre-primary schools exist in Natal at the time of writing. All staff are employed directly by the school and fees charged are retained by the school to cover expenses.

b) PROVINCIAL (DEPARTMENTAL) PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

These pre-primary schools were initially run on the same basis as Government schools. Buildings were owned and maintained by the NED and all teaching, secretarial and domestic staff were in its employ. In addition these schools could also draw their basic stationery and other supplies from departmental stores. A per-capita fee had to be paid to the Department, each quarter, out of fees charged to parents.

Following staff retrenchments in the pre-primary phase at the end of 1991, these schools had staff cut-backs proportional to those experienced in provincially (departmentally) controlled pre-

primary schools. At present only the principal and one teacher in each school are employed and paid by the Department. The NED retains responsibility for buildings and administration expenses.

There are currently two Departmental pre-primary schools in Natal, both linked to training colleges - Port Natal Pre-Primêre Skool to Durbanse Onderwyskollege/Durban College of Education and Stepping Stones Pre-Primary to Edgewood College.

c) PROVINCIAL/DEPARTMENTALLY CONTROLLED PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

These schools are registered with the NED and are non-profit associations, (usually registered under Section 21 of the Companies Act). Originally all teaching staff were in the direct employ of the NED with the same conditions of employment as teachers in the compulsory phases of education. All buildings, equipment, secretarial and domestic wages and other running costs remained the responsibility of the school associations (usually the parent community). Following a series of staff cut-backs (1984, 1989 and 1991), the NED now employs only the principal in smaller schools (less than 84 pupils) and the

principal and one teacher in the larger schools (85 - 160 pupils). Fees charged are retained by the school to meet expenses.

These schools, from the time of their introduction in 1975, to 1986, were originally classified as provincially-controlled pre-primary schools. Following the demise of the Natal Provincial Council and administration and the centralisation of white 'own-affairs' education, the term was changed in official correspondence in 1987 to 'departmentally controlled pre-primary schools'. 93 departmentally-controlled pre-primary schools operate in Natal at this time.

These schools are now registered as Private schools, but classified as departmentally controlled to denote the salary subsidies they receive. The future of these subsidies beyond December 1994 is uncertain.

NOTE: Another category of pre-primary school used to exist, namely:

#### SUBSIDISED PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

These schools were registered as non-profit concerns and received a small quarterly subsidy from the Department. All staff were employed directly by the school and fees charged retained by the school to cover expenses. There were 2

subsidised pre-primary schools in Natal, but these schools had their subsidies withdrawn at the end of 1992 and are now registered as private pre-primary schools.

#### OTHER TYPES OF PROVISION

Apart from pre-primary schools, which have a definite educational focus and are thus registered with education departments, there are various care and edu-care institutions catering for children in the pre-school age group.

#### EDU-CARE INSTITUTIONS

The following institutions vary greatly in quality in terms of the provision of education and care for children of pre-school age. Some provide only basic safety, supervision and nutrition, whilst others have good programmes to encourage intellectual stimulation and social interaction.

It is rare to find qualified teachers in these institutions, and as they do not meet requirements for registration with the NED, they have to be registered with the Department of Health and Welfare. The major concerns of this Department are nutrition, safety, hygiene and physical facilities, although many health workers are aware of the necessity for intellectual stimulation during early childhood.

### CRÊCHES

These institutions cater for children from birth to 6 years of age and are essentially 'care' facilities. Little or no structured educational programme is offered. They meet the need for full-day child-care and are normally used by working mothers.

Most crèches are run privately as businesses, although some are organised by welfare groups.

### PLAY SCHOOLS/PRE-SCHOOLS

These usually cater for children from 2 - 6 years of age. Some, however, provide an after-school care facility for school-going children. Basic playground equipment is usually provided and most play schools offer some painting and hand-craft activities.

Educational stimulation and quality of supervision varies greatly from play school to play school. They are also essentially care facilities used by working mothers, but some non-working mothers send their children for a couple of mornings a week to socialise with other children.

These institutions are usually privately owned and run for profit. Many call themselves pre-schools, and although they do not use the actual term 'pre-primary school' to which they would only be entitled if registered with the Education Department, the use of a similar name creates



confusion in the public mind.

In order to compete with registered pre-primary schools, many also attempt to offer 'educational' programmes including 'school readiness' courses. In doing so, some utilise developmentally inappropriate methodology and formally 'teach' writing and number, while limiting childrens' creative expression and problem solving experiences.

#### EDUCARE CENTRES

This term was coined to describe the type of early-childhood provision established in predominantly black communities. These institutions cater largely for the children of working parents and the 'care' aspect predominates. Children usually receive full day care, which includes a midday meal - the educational component is often limited or missing. Educare centres are much like play-schools. Staff are usually untrained or informally trained. Many educare centres were established as a result of community initiatives guided by non-governmental organisations (NGO's) working in the sphere of early childhood provision. Most community initiatives are non-profit making ventures, although some educare centres are privately owned and are run as businesses.

Parents pay fees, but much of the money goes on food for the children and so equipment is often limited and 'edu-

care' workers or child-minders receive very low salaries (often less than R250 per month!).

The upgrade and expansion of community educare centres and the introduction of an appropriate educational component and a more uniform quality in terms of staff training will be an important challenge in the future.

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

This is a new term which has been introduced to replace the term 'educare centres'. It is apparently felt that the word 'educare' is not widely used or understood outside of South Africa and that 'early childhood development' signifies more clearly, the holistic goals that such institutions should have.

*NOTE:* On 24 March 1994 a new national body was created called 'The South African Congress of Early Childhood Development'. This Congress resulted out of the union of the South African Association for Early Childhood Educare (SAAECE) which was formerly the South African Nursery School Association (SANSA) and the National Interim Working Committee on Early Childhood Educare (NIWC). The latter body, which was created as a lobby rather than an organisation, had its roots in the 'mass-democratic movement', particularly the ANC.

The aim of the Congress is to unite all 'players' in the

field of early childhood development - individuals, training agencies, donor agencies, educational institutions etc - to push for the rights of young children and of teachers and workers in this field and for recognition of the importance of early childhood education.

PRIVATE 'BRIDGING', 'RECEPTION' OR 'PRE-SCHOOL' CLASSES

In the past few years a further type of pre-school provision has come into being, namely, private 'reception', 'bridging' or 'pre-school' classes. These classes usually cater for 5 or 6 year olds, and are attached to primary schools.

It appears that many of these classes have not registered with the NED, but have elected to register with the Department of Health and Welfare, because of financial expediency. (The criteria required for registration with the NED in terms of physical facilities and educational equipment make it a more costly exercise.) This, however, has also meant that the qualification of teachers, the educational environment and teaching methodology is not monitored by the Department.

Certain primary schools have been eager to establish such classes as:

- They provide a 'feeder' service into Class i, so the school can have greater control of its intake.
- They provide 'bridging programmes' for children not

considered 'school ready' particularly in terms of competence in the language of instruction.

· They occupy empty facilities.

Pre-Primary educationists in Natal, support and advocate the introduction of reception classes with appropriately trained teachers and a child-centred curriculum as an extension of pre-school provision. They are, however, concerned that reception classes established in an ad-hoc way, will become watered-down versions of Class i with developmentally inappropriate teaching and learning styles.

'Reception classes' as envisaged in Chapter 6 of this study, would have the same learning environment as the senior classes in a pre-primary school.

1.3ii Abbreviations used in this study

AEP	Advisory Committee on Education Personnel
ANC	African National Congress
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development (of the ANC)
COH	Committee of Heads of Education
DEC	Department of Education and Culture
DET	Department of Education and Training
DNE	Department of National Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Educare
EXCO	Executive Committee
FedPASA	Federation of Parents Associations of South Africa
IPET	Implementation Plan for Education and Training (of the ANC)
KZ-N	KwaZulu - Natal
MPC	Member of the Provincial Council
N-KZ	Natal - KwaZulu
NEC	Natal Education Council
NECC	National Education Co-ordinating Committee
NED	Natal Education Department (also referred to as 'the Department')
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation (conducted at the request of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee)
NETF	National Education and Training Forum
NIWC	National Interim Working Committee (for

	Early Childhood Educare)
NOU	Natalse Onderwysersunie
NPA	Natal Provincial Administration
NPC	Natal Provincial Council
NPPTA	Natal Pre-Primary Teachers' Association
NTS	Natal Teachers' Society
PACES	Provincial Advisory Committee on Education Services
SAAECE	South African Association of Early Childhood Educare
SACECD	South African Congress for Early Childhood Development
SANSA	South African Nursery School Association
SATA	South African Teachers' Association
TED	Transvaal Education Department
TEC	Transvaal Education Council
TFC	Teachers' Federal Council
TO	Tranvaalse Onderwysersunie

#### 1.4 Research Sources

Except for those books pertaining to the broad historical development of pre-schooling in South Africa, this study is based almost entirely on primary source documents.

Copies of Circulars, Memoranda, Natal Education Ordinances and Regulations, as well as certain correspondence, were made available from the archives of the Natal Education Department.

Further documents were obtained from the Natal Teachers' Society (NTS) and from files of the Natal Pre-Primary Teachers' Association (NPPTA). Other materials were in the writer's possession as a result of personal involvement in the pre-primary phase.

The writer considers these documents to be an important resource and so they are bound into an Annexure which accompanies this dissertation.

In addition to perspectives gained from primary source materials, the writer conducted in-depth interviews with two past Directors of Education, namely Dr Gerald Hosking and Mr 'Willie' van Rooyen, as well as with Mr John Deane and Mr Keith Olivier (both Directors of Education at the NED when interviewed).

### 1.5 Outline of Study

In the first chapter, the study is defined and contextualised.

Chapter 2 gives a historical overview of the development of pre-school education in South Africa, in the period 1925 - 1967, during which time the central Government avoided any commitment beyond implicitly recognising the existence of nursery schools (subsidised by provincial authorities) in the definition of 'schools' contained in the National Education Policy Act of 1967.

In Chapter 3, events leading to the 1969 policy statement on nursery education are described and the impact of provincial responsibility for nursery school education is viewed from a Natal perspective.

The following Chapter traces the development of the Natal Provincially-Controlled Pre-Primary System, from its establishment in 1975 until 1986, in terms of planning and provision.

During this period, political and economic turbulence increased and Chapter 5 looks, in greater detail, at the effects on the Natal Pre-Primary System of ad-hoc decision making resulting from political and economic change.

In the final chapter, various education policy documents



are reviewed in terms of their vision for pre-school education and future directions are discussed.

## 1.6 Summary

In this chapter, the focus of the study was indicated and background provided. The writer described the (Nationalist) Government's avoidance of any direct financial commitment to pre-primary education for more than forty five years, despite advocacy of such education in terms of policy statements made at the political level.

Recent changes in political power and the existence of alternative policy options, with regard to pre-primary education, were noted.

Terminology, relating to early childhood education, was then defined in some detail to give the reader greater understanding of the subject and abbreviations were clarified.

The writer then indicated that, in terms of a research base, the study drew almost entirely on primary source documents.

Finally an outline of the structure of the study was given.

The next chapter will give a historical overview of the development of pre-primary education in South Africa from 1925 - 1967.

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Annexure 7

CHAPTER TWO : HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF  
PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION  
IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA 1925 - 1967

2.1 Introduction

2.2 "The Wilderness Years" - Development of Nursery Education  
in South Africa (1925 - 1960)

2.3 Signs of State commitment (1960 - 1967)

2.4 Conclusion

2.5 Summary

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE RSA

#### 2.1 Introduction

The advance of the pre-school movement internationally owed its impetus to the work of many talented and dedicated people: to the early pioneers- Johan Pestalozzi, Frederich Froebel and Robert Owen, to the inspiration of Maria Montessori and Margaret McMillan at the beginning of this Century and to the influence of John Dewey and Jean Piaget in the early 1930's. These men and women, through their concrete and theoretical work, gave rise to pre-school education in the form we have it at this stage in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe there was a marked rise in the status of women, whether in society, in the economy or in the role of wife and mother. In this new climate of thought there was also a growing recognition of the rights of the child.

"Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Europe there was a ferment of ideas, of quick development and of official recognition for the world of the young child and, by 1908, it was possible to say that half the children between 2 and 5 years in Belgium, a quarter of those in France and between 2 and 10% in Germany were regularly attending institutions of some kind."

(W. van der Eyken, 1987)

Despite the work of Owen and the McMillan sisters, the pre-

school movement had more of a struggle to establish itself in Britain, where the official view held that, as fewer women went out to work than on the Continent, no special provision or intervention was necessary.

Development in South Africa was even slower.

## 2.2 'The Wilderness Years' - development of nursery education in South Africa 1925 - 1960

In 1925 the National Child Protection Society established the Lady Buxton Mothercraft Training Centre in Claremont in the Cape and, five years later, the Johannesburg Municipality established two Nursery Health Classes in Vrededorp and Fordsburg respectively.

These early initiatives were a response to the needs of the urban poor. Drove of people were moving off the land seeking jobs in the cities, particularly on the Reef, at a time when the economy was depressed and employment opportunities were few and far between. The very young and old were usually the first to suffer in terms of malnutrition, sickness and abuse.

Exceptions to this trend of intervention nursery care were the establishment of the Margaret Morris School of Educational Movement (later renamed Tree Tops Nursery School) in Durban in 1932 and the Goede Hoop Kleuterskool in Pretoria in 1933. Both these nursery schools were under the supervision of principals who held overseas educational qualifications and the focus of their programmes was on education and the holistic development of the child, including care and nutrition.

The State played no recognised role in the financial support of any pre-schools at this time, although the



Orange Free State proved to be the most forward looking of the Provinces when it introduced Ordinance 15 of 1930 (article 30), which allowed for financial support to be paid to nursery schools established in lower socio-economic areas.

In 1934 two National Education Conferences were held, in Cape Town and Johannesburg respectively, which attracted speakers of international repute, including John Dewey, whose work on 'child centred' education was already well known. Five of the papers presented stressed the importance of early childhood education. As a result of the enthusiasm generated at the conferences, a "Committee for the Promotion of Pre-School Education" was established.

Arising out of this committee, the South African Nursery School Association (SANSA) was formed in 1939. Founder members of SANSA included Dr Ruth Arndt, a graduate of Columbia University, New York and founder of a Pretoria nursery school, Dr H. Nelson (then Medical Officer for Pretoria) and Prof J. Bosman (then Head of Education at the University of Pretoria).

These dedicated advocates of nursery school education worked tirelessly for SANSA for over thirty years, promoting awareness of the value of nursery education and establishing acceptable standards in terms of physical facilities, equipment and educational practice for these

schools in South Africa.

The impact of the work of the Committee was felt as early as 1936, when the Transvaal Provincial Administration started allocating small subsidies on a per capita basis to nursery schools. In 1941 and 1942 the Provincial Administrations of the Cape and Natal also undertook a measure of responsibility for the financial support of nursery schools. (In Natal, nursery schools could receive grants by being regarded as 'government-aided schools' in terms of Natal Education Ordinance No 23 of 1942.)

The Johannesburg Municipality continued its involvement in nursery health classes and by 1936, six of these classes, serving about 300 children, had been established.

From 1940 onwards, SANSA was the focus of the evolution of the nursery school movement as reputable nursery schools sought affiliation and accreditation with this body. It also acted as a lobby, pressing for Government acceptance of responsibility in the establishment and maintenance of nursery schools, as part of the broader educational structure.

The Central Government did take over control of the training of nursery school teachers by making this the responsibility of the, then, Witwatersrand Technical College and Pretoria University (in the Transvaal) and by

declaring the Buxton Pre-School Training Centre (later Barkly House) a place of Higher Education in 1945.

Payment of small per capita grants or subsidies, by provincial authorities or municipalities, was the only form of support available.

During the 1940's and 1950's the number of nursery schools grew slowly but steadily. Many of these schools received no subsidy and those that did, found that it usually came in dribs and drabs and in no way meaningfully subsidised their staffing bill, let alone other running costs.

SANSA undertook voluntary inspections of schools to advise on and see that standards were maintained, but as the number of nursery schools grew over a widespread area, this became an almost impossible task for volunteer members. During this time SANSA published a handbook to act as a guide in terms of equipment, facilities, educational and health standards.

In 1948 the Transvaal Education Department (TED) took over the function of inspecting nursery schools and the other provincial education departments followed suit.

The crucial question, however, of responsibility for nursery education itself, remained unresolved, with no-one seemingly prepared to create a precedent by making a

decision.

As a result of the unremitting campaign by SANSA for official recognition and financial support for nursery schools, many people came to recognise the importance of education in the pre-school years. Several government commissions also expressed the need and desirability for nursery schools. e.g. the Schumann Commission 1960.

In 1960 some degree of consensus was reached, between the Departments of Education and the Department of Social Welfare, as to the registration of pre-school institutions. It was decided that institutions with 20 or more children, between 3 years and school-going age, would register with the relevant education departments, whereas children younger than 3, in crèches and playschools, would register with the Department of Social Welfare. Dual registration could be applied to play-schools or crèches that had nursery classes. The Department of Social Welfare wanted all children aged 3 years and over to be registered with education departments so that educational standards could be monitored. It was, however, agreed that education departments could set their own criteria for registration and would not be forced to recognise institutions that did not meet their requirements.

Despite this apparent consensus, the provincial education departments continued to approach registration of nursery

schools very differently. This is one of the factors that later led to the creation of anomalies and misunderstandings, particularly in respect of the NED and TED.

The TED supported the recommendations of the Department of Social Welfare, in their broadest sense, and started registering 'private' nursery schools catering for children in the 3 - 6 age range, irrespective of whether these schools complied entirely with desired educational standards in terms of teacher qualification, educational programme, class size or physical facilities. Today there are over 360 private nursery or pre-primary schools registered with the TED, in addition to their Departmental and Departmentally controlled schools. Many of these private schools receive no subsidy from the TED and range from a small number of excellent educational institutions to many that have a highly questionable educational component.

In contrast, the NED adopted a very conservative approach and was not prepared to register nursery schools that did not meet its educational standards. Expansion was thus slow from 1960 until 1975, when the provincially-controlled system was introduced. Prior to 1975 only 50 private nursery schools were registered in Natal, most of which received subsidies.

The State's reluctance to accept any large-scale responsibility for nursery education may have stemmed, in part, from the fact that there were conflicting views as to the goals or purposes of nursery schooling. Some saw it as having first and foremost an educational emphasis, albeit in the sense of the development of the whole child - mentally, physically, socially and emotionally, whilst others viewed its primary purpose as one of custodial care. This educational 'debate' was complicated by a political and philosophical agenda which focussed largely on Afrikaner cultural identity - its protection and transmission.

The Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 on a 'volk vote', and was committed to establishing Afrikaner economic security and cultural identity. In traditional Afrikaner culture, the place of the young child was seen as being in the home with parents, especially the mother, until the age of school entry at six or seven years. Although some leading Afrikaans academics and educationalists advocated the importance of nursery education, many prominent churchmen and civic leaders spoke out against such education, claiming that it embodied an Anglo-American 'gees'.

In the post 1948 climate it appeared that many 'decision makers' viewed nursery education as being acceptable only in terms of an interventionist model, to benefit children

from extremely deprived homes. It was not seen as a means of enriching the potential of all children and it was definitely not considered a State responsibility in terms of broader educational provision.

Establishment of nursery schools was, therefore, slow and by the end of 1960 there were only 300 (white) nursery schools with a total enrolment of less than 10,000 children in the whole country.

### 2.3 Signs of State Commitment

During the 1960's the question of responsibility for nursery education appeared to receive most attention in the Transvaal, perhaps because of the pressure of urbanisation on the Reef and also as a result of representations from the Department of Social Welfare, SANSA and other bodies which had their headquarters in the Transvaal.

On 30 December 1960, the Bureau of Education of the TED was directed to investigate 'the whole issue' of nursery schooling and in 1963 its findings were referred to the National Education Council. This Council decided that the matter should be dealt with by the Transvaal Provincial Administration and recommended that the TED's assumption of responsibility for nursery school education should be approved in principle.

The question of policy and practice with regard to nursery school education, raised by the TED investigation, was first considered in 1963, at the annual Administrators' Conference. On that occasion it was resolved that the directors of education of the four provinces should consult with one another on the matter and report back at the next Administrator's Conference, which was to be convened by the Transvaal.

Policy, as regards nursery education, was discussed by the Committee of Education Heads (COH) in March 1964 and it was



decided to recommend to the administrators that, until such time as the question of the allocation of education had been clarified (in terms of the new State Education Policy Act that was being formulated), present policy, regarding nursery education within each province, would be followed.

At the Administrators' Conference in 1964 it was resolved that the matter of nursery school practice and policy should be investigated more fully and should stand over until the next meeting. In January 1965 the Bureau of Education of the TED was directed to carry out further investigations into nursery school education in the Transvaal in view of a possible take-over of such education by that Province.

In the same year the TED sent a delegation, including a nursery school inspectress and an architect, to study current trends in nursery education in the UK, Europe and the USA. Their findings, which formed part of the Bureau's investigation into nursery education, seemed to finally convince the TED that action and commitment were required and it started formulating plans for the establishment of provincial nursery schools in the Transvaal.

The TED submitted a report on the Bureau's investigation and its recommendations, to the directors of the provincial education departments in 1966 and a similar memorandum was submitted by the Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA)

to the administrators of the provinces for discussion at an Administrator's Conference to be held in January 1967.

In the report distributed to the Administrators, the TPA motivated the importance of nursery school education (in terms of an interventionist model) thus:

"In the light of a personal investigation, this Province accepts nursery education as a necessary educational service for all children from homes which need additional help, between the ages of two years and the attainment of compulsory school age."

(TPA, 1966: Annexure 1)

The TPA, acting on the advice of the TED, proposed 2 types of nursery schools, these being:

- a) Subsidised grant-in-aid schools in those areas where parents could afford to make financial contributions.
- b) Provincial nursery schools in 'needy' areas. Buildings would be erected and maintained by the TPA and teachers and basic equipment would also be provided by the Province.

Fees would be charged in accordance with parents' means.

(TPA, 1966: Annexure 1)

In a memorandum to EXCO of the Natal Provincial Council (NPC) dated December 1966, Mr Biebuyck, the Director of the NED, expressed reservations about the Transvaal proposals.

He noted:

"The fact the Natal pays a generous subsidy to nursery schools in this province indicates clearly that we are aware of its importance. We do not, however, deem it an essential part of the educational pattern and do not wish it to be made compulsory .... There is no proof that the normal school child suffers in any way through not having attended nursery school."

(NED, 1966: Annexure 2)

He also advised against the payment of teacher's salaries:

"We may then also be expected to provide the teachers and it may result in a considerable increase in the number of such schools." Instead he advocated an increase in subsidies paid to nursery schools (which would bring Natal more or less in line with the proposed Transvaal grants) as "... the only course open to us, if we are to yield in any measure to the pressure which will undoubtedly be brought to bear by the Nursery School Association as a result of the action taken by the Transvaal." (NED, 1966)

Natal's reluctance, at this time, to assume further responsibility for nursery education appeared to stem from a number of factors. Firstly, the NED did not consider it an urgent need, as Natal was not as industrialised as the Transvaal. Secondly, it also appeared that the NED was having difficulty meeting the demand for classrooms and teachers in the compulsory sector of education (that is for children 6 - 16 years of age) and so "the provision of buildings for nursery schools (could not) be contemplated for many years and consequently provincial schools (could not) be established." (NED, 1966)

The pressure on classroom space and the need for additional teachers may well have been influenced by the Natal policy of 'early admission' to Class 1. Unlike the other provinces, the NED permitted children to enter school the year that they turned 6, whether they turned 6 in the first or second half of the year. This meant that children born in the latter part of the year were admitted as 5 year olds and gained up to 6 months 'extra' schooling, compared with their peer group in the Transvaal and other provinces.

Research on reading norms, conducted by the NED, had revealed the advantages gained in this sphere by earlier entrance and as the benefit was accessible to large numbers of white children entering schools in Natal, it was widely accepted within the Department that maintenance of the existing system was more of a priority than the expansion of financial responsibility for nursery education.

Within the framework of reference existing prior to 1967 (as mentioned above), the NED's reluctance to become further involved in nursery education appears, to the writer, to be quite understandable. There was no intense social pressure within Natal for the establishment of nursery schools of the interventionist model, the NED was subsidising existing nursery schools that met their registration criteria and their policy of early Class 1 admittance meant that a considerable number of 5 year olds were being catered for within the school system.

At this stage, the legal position of nursery schools in Natal was set out in Provincial Notice No 160 of 1959:

- i) Nursery schools were required to register in terms of Section 26 of Ordinance 23 of 1942.
- ii) Registered nursery schools could, subject to the provisions of the relative regulations, receive a grant from the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA) based on the average enrolment of pupils between the age of 2 and 6  $\frac{1}{2}$  years.
- iii) All school buildings and grounds had to conform to the prescribed standards approved by the Director and such schools had to conform to a calendar providing for at least 190 school days per year.

Due to its policy of registration, the NED had registered less than 50 nursery schools, which were largely of the enrichment model. All met SANSA criteria. These schools received per-capita subsidies from the Province as grant-aided schools and were included in the inspectorial brief of the NED Inspector for Infant and Farm Schools, but otherwise ran administratively and financially independent of the Department. The training and, more particularly, the employment of nursery teachers (which represents the greatest financial commitment in any educational institution) were not the responsibility of the Department.

At that time women wishing to qualify as nursery school teachers trained at their own expense, in institutions

either in the Cape, Transvaal or abroad and were then employed by school committees or by the private owners of nursery schools.

The payment of subsidies to nursery schools was seen to fulfil the moral obligation of the Department and early entrance into Class I satisfied an educational one, so the NED, up until the introduction of the National Education Act of 1967, appeared quite content with the status quo.

When the TED proposals on nursery school education were discussed by the administrators at their conference on 19 January 1967, it was accepted that, following the proposed subsidisation procedure, the subsidy paid by a province might well cover 100% of the expenditure of a nursery school. Other provinces, particularly Natal and the OFS, objected to provincial assumption of responsibility for the establishment of nursery schools, as they felt that they could not meet the expenditure connected with such an undertaking. As a concession the Transvaal "... note(d) the objections raised by other Provinces against the establishment of nursery schools and (agreed) that (it) would undertake not to engage in large-scale establishment of such schools, thereby causing embarrassment to the other Provinces and would continue to restrict aid, as far as possible, to the paying of subsidies..."

(Administrators' Conference, 1967: Annexure 3)

The TED was, nevertheless, given the right to establish its own nursery schools "where proof had been given of the need of a nursery school and a suitable body could not be found to run it".

(Administrators' Conference, 1967)

Provincial responsibility for the establishment and running of certain nursery schools had implications for the training of nursery school teachers. Hitherto this had been a function of the Central Government. (In terms of Section 17 (1) Law no 36 of 1945 as amended by section 34 of Law no 70 of 1955). The Government was now requested by the Transvaal to hand over its power to train nursery school teachers.

Influenced, no doubt, by the Transvaal initiative concerning the establishment of nursery schools and training of nursery school teachers, pressure from SANSA and other bodies and increasing public awareness, the Minister for National Education requested the COH to form an Ad-Hoc committee to prepare 'a factual report on Nursery Education for white children in SA and SWA' and to make recommendations.

The National Education Policy Act of 1967, published that same year, gave implicit recognition to nursery schools in terms of its definition of 'schools' as institutions "that are established as, managed and controlled or subsidised by, the Department of a Provincial Administration".

This definition was interpreted as meaning that nursery schools registered and subsidised by the province were acknowledged as being part of the school system.

It has been suggested that with the passing of the National Education Act (which entrenched the Christian National character of the State education system), the Afrikaner saw the context of education in schools as less threatening to cultural values and so became more open to the positive potential of pre-schooling.

(Potgieter, 1976)

By this time the Nationalist Government had been in power for almost twenty years. The introduction of various apartheid laws, especially those pertaining to job reservation and preferential education for whites, had facilitated the upliftment of the 'poor white' sector of the society and Afrikaners were now firmly in control of the institutions of government bureaucracy and state-owned facilities like the South African Railways, Eskom, and Post and Telegraphs and were also becoming increasingly prominent in the private sector.

Afrikaans had been entrenched as an official language, white children were entitled to twelve years of state funded education (with attendance compulsory in the year in which they turned 7), the economy was buoyed up by a high gold price and it would appear that in this climate pre-



primary education was being viewed, by the Government, in a more positive light, albeit that it may have been viewed as a further mechanism to ensure white 'upliftment' and elitism.

## 2.4 Conclusion

The State took almost 20 years to give recognition to the educational dimension of nursery schools by including them as a recognised category of 'school' in the Education Policy Act of 1967 by virtue of the definition of 'schools' as institutions "that are established as, managed and controlled or subsidised by, the Department of Provincial Administration".

Official recognition was one thing, financial commitment to nursery education on the part of the Central Government, was quite another. No Central Government funds have ever been clearly designated for pre-school education and responsibility for 'control' (establishment and funding) was passed to the four provinces.

The willingness of the provinces to accept responsibility for the establishment and funding of pre-primary schools was further influenced by availability of funding for this purpose and varied as a result of educational and political philosophies prevailing within the various provincial administrations and education departments at the time.

## 2.5 Summary

Nearly four decades of lobbying and dedicated field work by SANSA, supported by other bodies, were necessary before some degree of state recognition for nursery education was achieved.

Prior to the influence of the 1967 Education Policy Act, the establishment of nursery schools and subsidies to such institutions had been left to private initiative and the discretion of municipal and provincial authorities. Little or no direction or co-ordination had existed at a national level.

Support for pre-school education differed amongst the provinces as a result of their educational practices, priorities and philosophies, as well as their access to funding for this purpose.

The TED was instrumental in placing the case for nursery education on the agenda of the COH and the Administrators' Conferences from the early 1960's, motivating for the interventionist model as a "necessary educational service for all children from homes which need additional help..."

(TPA, 1966: Annexure 1)

The NED had, however, initially not reacted enthusiastically to the suggestion of increased provincial responsibility for nursery education, as it considered

interventionist or custodial nursery education beyond the scope of the Department's activities and saw the existing NED system of earlier school admission (ie in the year a child turned 6) as benefiting a wider child population.

The growth of nursery education in Natal, therefore, was slow, cautious and characterised by careful 'quality control'. The 1967 Act and changing political and educational circumstances necessitated a re-evaluation of NED policy and the articulation of a vision for nursery education in Natal. The development of policy and planning in this regard will be the focus of Chapter 3.

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CHAPTER THREE : A NEW VISION OF NURSERY EDUCATION  
IN NATAL (1968 - 1975)

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Provincial responsibility for Nursery Education

3.3 New directions in Natal

3.4 Evolution of provincial policy - A provincially-controlled  
pre-primary system

3.5 Introduction of the new system

3.6 Conclusion

3.7 Summary



### CHAPTER 3

#### A NEW VISION OF NURSERY EDUCATION IN NATAL 1968 - 1975

##### 3.1 Introduction

The National Education Policy Act of 1967 removed policy-making, regarding education, from the provincial councils. Natal was forced to change its education policy on matters like early school entrance (as described in Chapter 2). National policy now dictated that children could only be admitted to Class I in the year they turned 6, if their birthdate fell on or before 30 June of that year.

For almost a decade after 1967, successive directors of the NED, including Messrs Nel, Hosking and van Rooyen, tried to convince their colleagues, at COH meetings, of the importance of earlier school entrance. A final attempt was made in 1975 when the NED presented a well-researched document proposing a compulsory, state-funded year of education for 5 year olds.

The proposal was opposed by the TED, which said that it did not have the financial resources to provide adequate classroom facilities throughout the Transvaal.

It appears that, once the Natal battle for early school entrance, including proposals for a five year old 'reception' or 'bridging' class, was lost at COH level, the NED committed itself to the introduction and expansion of



the provincially controlled pre-primary system.

### 3.2 Provincial Responsibility for Nursery Education

In 1967, members of the COH Ad-Hoc Committee on Nursery Education (which in reality was dominated by the TED Bureau of Education) travelled overseas to investigate further models of nursery schooling. The Ad-Hoc Committee then worked for almost two years compiling its report and providing recommendations, which were tabled at a COH meeting held in February 1969.

As far as financial implications for nursery education were concerned, the Ad-Hoc Committee stated:

"Assistance to and development of nursery school education can be undertaken only as far as the finances of the Provinces make it possible."

(NED, 1969a: Annexure 4)

The Ad-Hoc Committee's recommendations were accepted by the COH and the then Director of National Education, the Hon. J. de Klerk, released a press statement in April 1969 outlining new policy directions in nursery education. The following points were highlighted:

- "• Nursery schools should provide for children from 3 years of age to the point of school entry.
- Nursery education should aim at the maximum development of the child, physically, mentally and in terms of social, emotional and religious aspects. (This could be achieved through a programme of planned activities, but no formal education in reading, writing or arithmetic should be given.)
- Nursery education should be voluntary.
- A properly planned educational programme should be compulsory at all institutions carrying the prescribed minimum number of infants.

- Nursery education should be controlled by the Provincial Education Departments.
- Registration with the respective education department should be compulsory in the case of all persons and establishments educating and training at least the prescribed minimum number of infants.
- To qualify for registration certain requirements would have to be fulfilled concerning buildings, equipment, qualification and allocation of staff, enrolment, educational programme, length of the school day and language medium."  
(NED, 1969a: Annexure 4)

Acceptance of these principles, that is, control by provincial education departments, a compulsory planned educational programme and requirements concerning qualification and allocation of staff, as National Policy for nursery education, had far reaching implications for all education departments regarding finance and manpower.

A properly planned educational programme necessitated curriculum development and inspectors and advisors to guide and oversee teachers in the field. The notion of provincial 'control' also meant that the registration of nursery schools and the implementation of the educational programme had to be monitored and channels for liaison with school committees established. Requirements regarding the 'allocation and qualification of staff', necessitated the registration of pupil numbers and of teachers and the establishment of criteria as to what teaching qualifications were to be recognised, equivalency in diplomas or certificates etc. Requirements in terms of buildings involved physical planners in the development of

guidelines relating to indoor and outdoor space, light, ventilation and toilet facilities and their presence on site to evaluate existing buildings and monitor new projects.

It is interesting to consider whether the NED would have accepted the principles of the Policy Statement with such apparent equanimity, if the Education Policy Act of 1967 had not brought about a forced change in its existing system of early admission of 5 year olds.



### 3.3 New Directions in Natal

In a memorandum to EXCO of the NPC (30 May 1969), Mr Philip Nel (then Director of the NED) detailed the recommendations on nursery education accepted at the COH meeting and suggested that, if nursery schools were controlled by the provinces, in keeping with paragraph 2(e) of the Recommendations, the financial implications could well include:

"...grants or subsidies , teacher training and bursaries for this purpose and building grants."

(NED, 1969a: Annexure 4)

Prior to 1969 no specific mention of nursery schools had been made in the existing Natal Education Ordinance (No 23/1942), but nevertheless such schools had been treated as government-aided schools and capitation grants had been paid in accordance with the provisions of Provincial Notice 160/1959. In the New Education Ordinance (no 46 of 1969), however, specific provision was made for nursery schools in Part 4. This was further clarified in an amendment to the Natal Ordinance No 27 of 1970 by substitution of section 33 with the following:

"33 (1) A 'nursery school' shall mean a private school registered and established for twenty or more children 3 years of age and over, but below the compulsory age of attendance laid down in section 26 (1)

33 (2) The proprietor of any nursery school may make application for the payment of grants-in-aid towards the maintenance of such school and if the Administrator is satisfied and other conditions

which he may prescribe are fulfilled, he may make grants-in-aid to such a school which shall thereafter not be deemed to be a private school in terms of the Ordinance.

33 (3) The Administrator may also make grants-in-aid towards the erection or establishment of any nursery school in respect of which the proprietor receives or intends to seek assistance as provided in sub-section (2) or towards the enlargement or alteration of any nursery school.

33 (4) Grants referred to in this section shall be made only on the conditions prescribed by the regulations."

(NPC, 1970: Annexure 8)

The details governing the establishment, registration of and payment of grants to white nursery schools were later spelt out in Natal Provincial Notice No 320 of 1971.

(NPC, 1971: Annexure 9)

In a memorandum to EXCO of the NPC (May 1969), Mr Nel proposed that the grant to nursery schools be based on an approved number of teaching posts and not on the per capita system relating to the average pupil enrolment. In making this recommendation, the NED stood opposed to the main system in force in the Transvaal and chose an approach closer to that of the Free State.

(NED, 1969a: Annexure 4)

Mr Nel's proposal, which was accepted by the EXCO of the NPC, marked a turning point in the relationship between the NED and nursery education in the Province. The payment of grants in terms of 'an approved number of teaching posts' meant that provincial subsidies were related to the number

of teachers in a school and could, therefore, be seen as teacher salary subsidies. Payment of such grants brought nursery schools into far more contact with the Department, as these schools were then required to furnish the NED with details of teaching staff, their qualifications and performance.

Mr Nel, in a subsequent memorandum to EXCO of the NPC (12 June 1969) examined in more detail the financial implications of provincial control of nursery education. (This was in preparation for the Administrator's Conference which was to be held in September of that year). He suggested that 15 teacher-training bursaries for nursery education be offered annually. Diploma courses in nursery education were not available at Natal teacher-training institutions and he, therefore, felt that bursaries were necessary, as "the shortage of qualified nursery school teachers throughout the Republic will necessitate some special inducement being offered to take up this training".

(NED, 1969b: Annexure 5)

The shortage of qualified nursery school teachers, particularly in the Cape and Natal, was due to various factors, some of which have already been mentioned, namely training was not available in Natal and had hitherto been at the trainees' own expense. In addition, employment for qualified nursery school teachers was not guaranteed and conditions of service in terms of salaries, leave and other



benefits were dictated by school committees and owners. There were no recognised minimum salary scales and salaries of qualified nursery teachers were much lower than those of their colleagues teaching in compulsory phases of education. The public generally held the perception that nursery teaching was a 'calling' and that these teachers worked for 'love not money'.

At the time, discussion also took place in the NED as to the possible establishment of nursery teacher-training courses at Natal teacher-training colleges. There was, however, some hesitation about the introduction of a specialist training course and it was felt that any course contemplated should "be of such a nature that they (the teachers) can be used in our primary schools" (handwritten note on the aforementioned memorandum.)

(NED, 1969b)

This desire to 'spread the risk' was influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, although the leadership of the NED (particularly Messrs Nel and Hosking) was increasingly convinced of the need for nursery education, such acceptance was not widespread in the Department. Its personnel were willing to withhold their active opposition, as long as any involvement in nursery education in no way diverted funds from the compulsory schooling sector.

Secondly, the NED had not given up its belief in the value



of education for 5 year-olds and was still contemplating the possibility of 'reception classes' attached to primary schools.

"This idea had been discussed at NED since 1966 ... once it was clear that Natal had lost the battle to retain early admission into infant schools."

(Hosking, 1991)

In a memo from the NED to EXCO of the NPC (September 1969), Mr Nel said:

"At a later stage, when finality has been reached on the future pattern of differentiated education in the Republic, I propose to submit recommendations covering the introduction of 'reception classes' at infant schools for infants between the ages of 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> and 6 years. The classes will be the means of forming a 'bridge' between the home and the infant school or the nursery school and the infant school as the case may be..."

(NED, 1969c: Annexure 6)

The most obvious reason for the introduction of a non-specialist diploma was the possibility that provincial control of nursery education, which was deemed a non-compulsory phase, might be short-lived. In such an eventuality the Department did not wish to be liable for the employment of teachers who could not be deployed elsewhere in the NED system. This seems to be indicated by Mr Hosking's remark concerning the training of nursery school teachers in Natal:

"Initially we were very unsure of ourselves in terms of the success of the venture. I was so uncertain that I insisted that training was in terms of a dual diploma - JP and PP - I didn't want these people to be without jobs."

(Hosking, 1991)

In addition to proposing grants in the form of salary subsidies and the introduction of teacher-training bursaries, Mr Nel also advocated that provincial building grants be made available to nursery schools, both for the establishment of new schools and for the upgrading and extension of existing institutions. These grants were to be made available on a 'rand for rand' basis, ie the Province would match monies (for this purpose) put forward by school committees or proprietors. (NED, 1969a) Conditions attached to such grants included an undertaking that the nursery schools would continue to operate for 10 years after the contract between the parties had been signed and furthermore, that they would be non-profit-making institutions.

By proposing the introduction of these measures, Mr Nel asked the NPA for a far greater financial commitment to nursery education in the Province. In his Memorandum (NED, 1969c) he also alerted the provincial administration to the fact that there was no clarity as to whether special subsidies from the Central Government would be made available to finance the expansion of nursery schooling in the provinces:

"The Minister of National Education , in a press statement earlier this year, declared that Provincial Education Departments should exercise control over nursery school education. No indication was given to special subsidies. The Committee of Education Heads recommended that the financial aspect be discussed at the Administrators' Conference.  
(As far as I am aware, the Central Government does not make any financial contribution to

Nursery School Education.)" (NED, 1969c: Annexure 6)

As shall be seen, the question as to whether the Central Government did, or did not, make any specific financial contribution towards nursery (or pre-primary) education had still not been answered satisfactorily almost 20 years after it was first raised.

EXCO approved all the recommendations made by Mr Nel and from mid June 1971, following the publication of Public Notice No 320 of 1971, many private nursery schools in Natal started applying for registration under the new conditions.

Included in the conditions for registration under Section 2(5) was the following:

"No institution shall be styled a 'nursery school' or use the word 'nursery school' as part of its name, unless it is registered in terms of these regulations."

(NPC, 1971: Annexure 9)

The NED's insistence on all nursery schools meeting specific criteria, especially in terms of teacher qualifications and requirements in terms of buildings and equipment, in order to qualify for registration, became even more evident from 1971 onwards. The TED while applying these criteria to its provincial schools (ie nursery schools that were owned and run by the province) continued to register a proliferating number of unsubsidised private nursery schools, paying scant attention to the physical and

educational standards of these institutions.

The result of the NED's and TED's divergent policies emerged during the 1980's, when during economic cut-backs, the provincial education departments debated the per capita costs of their pre-school systems at COH meetings. Natal appeared to have the most costly system, because it was uniform in standard and the NED was heavily committed to the payment of teacher's salaries. The TED, however, tabled what appeared to be extremely moderate per capita costs for extensive pre-primary school provision. It was later discovered that the TED figure was achieved by combining the per capita costs of their provincial pre-primary schools, (which being totally provincially supported were far more costly than Natal's salary subsidised model) with the per capita costs of all nursery schools registered with the TED, some of which received nominal per capita subsidies (±R85 per annum) and many receiving no subsidy at all!

Needless to say these discrepancies, between actual and reported costs, severely distorted any inter-provincial comparisons of statistical and financial data.

### 3.4 Evolution of Provincial Policy - a Provincially-Controlled Pre-Primary System

Philip Nel, Director of the NED from 1967 to 1977, was a leader who listened and consulted, an adept politician and an experienced and enlightened educationalist. He became personally convinced of the importance of pre-school education and together with other 'converts', such as the Chief Planner, later Director, Gerald Hosking and Nancy Lawrence (whose brief as Senior Subject Inspectress for Infant Teaching and Farm Schools encompassed supervision of nursery schools), and supported by EXCO of the NPC, Mr Nel planned and promoted the introduction of a provincially controlled pre-school system in Natal. This system was envisaged as a partnership between the Province and either parent communities controlling or proprietors owning nursery schools. The system was established on the accepted premise that nursery school education was beneficial and should, therefore, be available to as many children as possible.

Mr Nel's approach had important implications:

- i) If nursery schools were to be regarded as bona-fide educational institutions, the training, qualifications and employment of teachers became crucial;
- ii) If educational standards were seen as fundamental to the success of such schooling, a suitable educational programme would have to be developed, implemented and monitored in these schools;

iii) If access was to be as widespread as possible, the cost of nursery education would have to be shared, as Natal did not have the funds to initiate a provincially owned system (like that in the Transvaal).

Some of the administrative implications arising out of the introduction of such a system were:

- introduction of teacher-training courses;
- employment of specialist inspectresses and planners;
- further availability of building grants;
- employment of qualified teachers registered with the NED in order to ensure delivery of the educational programme irrespective of the controlling body of the school;
- the drawing up of legal contracts between the NED and school controlling bodies, detailing the conditions and responsibilities of both parties in this joint enterprise;
- access to funding to make all this possible.

In 1971 planners in the NED developed a dual diploma, the PJP Diploma course (Pre and Junior Primary) which was accepted by the COH. The Diploma course was evaluated as M+3 ie Matriculation was an entrance requirement followed by 3 years of study at a training college. This 3 year Diploma enabled diplomates to teach in any nursery or primary school in South Africa.

The PJP course was introduced at 3 training colleges in Natal at the beginning of 1972, viz Durbanse Onderwyskollege and the Edgewood and Natal Training Colleges. Thus the first graduates were available for teaching posts at the beginning of 1975.

The NED suggested to EXCO that, in future, the total salary grant paid to nursery schools in respect of teachers, be paid to the teacher, herself, in line with her qualifications, except for legal deductions e.g. tax. Prior to this Directive being issued to nursery schools, proprietors and school committees often used a portion of their grant to pay other expenses and so arbitrarily reduced the amount paid to teachers, themselves.

As can be understood, this Directive was not popular with the management of many nursery schools, but it was to become a 'watershed' decision by the NED, as it marked a further step towards direct employment of nursery school teachers by that body.

In 1972 there were 34 nursery schools receiving grants in respect of teachers' salaries, while a further 8 were registered with the NED, but were still in receipt of per capita subsidies, largely due to the fact that the qualifications of their staff were not recognised by the NED for salary purposes. Many of these staff members had no formal teaching qualifications, while others held overseas



certificates or diplomas that the NED did not accept.

At the Administrators' Conference in 1972, a resolution was passed to the effect that:

- That pre-primary education should not be compulsory;
- That it should not be free;
- That the Provinces should not be obliged to establish schools or to take over private schools.

It was also decided that the issue of subsidies be referred to the COH, so that a uniform basis for subsidy could be gradually and systematically introduced. Uniform service conditions for nursery school teachers and the fees payable for attending provincial pre-primary schools were also discussed.

At a meeting of the COH, held in 1973, the TED lobbied strongly for a per capita subsidy, based on parental income, to be accepted as the "uniform basis for subsidy". This was in line with their original proposals, dating back to 1966, for development of pre-school provision in the Transvaal. It is the writer's opinion that the TED wished for general acceptance of a per capita subsidy, which was vastly less than teacher salary subsidies, so that it would still have the funds necessary to develop provincial (ie provincially-owned and totally subsidised) nursery schools. These were being built, particularly on the Reef, in areas of socio-economic need. The areas happened to be where



grass-root support for the National Party was strongest at that time and establishment of provincial nursery schools of an interventionist model could be seen as part of a government sponsored upliftment strategy.

At the COH meeting it was agreed, despite Natal's dissent, that the Transvaal's recommendation be submitted to the next Administrators' Conference for their consideration.

### 3.5 Introduction of the New System

The NED was strongly opposed to the per-capita grant subsidy proposed by the Transvaal and, in a memorandum to EXCO of the NPC (10 September 1973), Mr Nel briefed its members as follows:

"I do not agree with the proposals of the Committee of Directors of Education and I consider that it would be a retrogressive step to return to a 'per capita' basis of subsidy. The Free State has a scheme whereby teachers on the provincial establishment, who enjoy the full right and salary of government teachers, are employed in government-aided nursery schools. I favour a similar scheme for this province and propose that such a scheme be approved in principle so that this province will have a strong basis for argument in favour of such a scheme when the scheme proposed by the Committee of Directors is discussed at the Administrators' Conference."

(NED, 1973a)

He then went on to clarify his vision of a 'provincially-controlled nursery school system' wherein all teaching staff would be in the employment of and paid by the Province, while buildings and their maintenance plus all other running costs, would be the responsibility of the school committees.

He proposed that there be 4 types of nursery school in Natal:

- Provincial Nursery Schools;
- Government-aided Nursery Schools (on a per capita basis as recommended by the COH);
- Provincially-controlled Nursery Schools (his own preference);

• Private Nursery Schools.

He further suggested that provincially-controlled nursery schools be introduced as from 1 January 1975, so that the first group of nursery school teachers, training in Natal, would have qualified and be ready for employment.

Accordingly Director Nel's recommendations to EXCO were as follows:

- "1) The proposed system of provincial-controlled nursery schools be approved in principle;
  - 2) The system of government-aided nursery schools, on a uniform subsidy basis (the proposed per capita subsidy system), also be approved in principle,
  - 3) Aided nursery schools in Natal be given the option of choosing between systems (1) or (2) above."
- (NED, 1973a)

On 27 September 1973 EXCO of the NPC approved these recommendations (Resolution 2357).

In October 1973, in a further memorandum to EXCO, Mr Nel commented on the 'Progress Report on Pre-Primary Education', that had been drawn up by the TED for submission to the forthcoming Administrators' Conference.

He said:

"I don't subscribe to the view that there should only be completely provincial or completely private schools. This would mean the elimination of government-aided schools which serve a good purpose in this Province. It should be left to the Provincial Administration to decide which of the four types of school it wishes to introduce..."

(NED, 1973b)

At the Administrators' Conference, held in November 1973,

four different categories of nursery schools were approved and it was agreed that the provinces could introduce the models that they favoured.

In a speech given at the opening of the NPC's February session in 1974, the Administrator referred to the expansion of the provincial pre-school system to include the four different models. He also introduced the term 'pre-primary' as opposed to 'nursery school'. This change in name appeared to symbolise the new NED vision of pre-school education - it was to be firmly educationally focused and, though the programme would be developmentally appropriate to the ages of the children concerned, it would be a co-ordinated part of the provincial education system, a 'fifth phase', according to the term coined by Dr Hosking at the time.

The NED submitted the necessary amendments to the Natal Education Ordinance to provide for the Provincially controlled category of pre-primary schools to the NPC. These amendments were passed by the Council in November 1974 and forwarded to the State President for his assent.

Among the amendments was a change to the Heading of Chapter IV of Ordinance 46 of 1969 to read as follows:

"THE TEACHING ESTABLISHMENT IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS  
AND PROVINCIALY CONTROLLED PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS".



Further amendments in this Chapter covered the employment of pre-primary teachers by the Province and brought their service conditions, in terms of salaries, leave and pension rights into line with those of teachers in other phases.

(NPC, 1974: Annexure 19)

These were most important changes, as they involved a definite and continuing financial commitment to teachers in pre-primary schools.

Pre-primary schools, that met the conditions for registration as provincially-controlled schools, could now be allocated a 'teaching establishment', the posts of which would relate to pupil enrolment as prescribed by regulation. The teaching staff allocation agreed on was as follows:

TABLE 3.1: NED STAFF ALLOCATION TO PRE PRIMARY SCHOOLS (1975)

Enrolment	Teachers
Up to 23 pupils	Principal
24 to 45 pupils	Principal + 1
46 to 67 pupils	Principal + 2
68 to 88 pupils	Principal + 3
89 to 110 pupils	Principal + 4
111 to 120 pupils	Principal + 5

Source: NPC (1974)

Once the Ordinances were amended, the NED then started preparing the management of existing nursery schools for

the changes that were about to take place. Thus Circular No 36/1974, dated 8 August 1974, was sent to the proprietors of pre-primary schools explaining the reclassification of all pre-primary schools that would take place from 1 January 1975 and what this reclassification entailed in terms of provincial subsidy for each of the four types of pre-school.

(NED, 1974a: Annexure 10)

Later in the year, Circular No 55/1974 invited proprietors and committees to attend information meetings to be held on 7 November in Durban and again on 11 November in Pietermaritzburg, to discuss the implications of reclassification for pre-schools in Natal.

(NED 1974b: Annexure 12)

The meetings referred to in Circular 55/1974 were addressed by the then Deputy Director of Education, Gerald Hosking, who introduced the concept of 'provincial-control' of pre-schools, ie the Province (NED) would be responsible for the structuring and monitoring of their educational programme and would train, supply and pay qualified teachers in these schools at the best teacher : pupil ratio that the NPA could afford. Parent committees or proprietors would, however, have to provide facilities, equipment and educational materials and employ secretarial and domestic staff.

Circular 48/1974 was addressed to principals of all pre-primary schools, informing them that the necessary amendments to the Natal Education Ordinance could not be effected before February/March 1975 (due to a delay in the State President's Department) and so reclassification of pre-primary schools, as set out in Circular No 36/1974, was to be postponed until 1 April 1975. Therefore the closing date for applications for registration had been extended until 21 December 1974. This Circular also gave information about:

- The composition of the controlling body,
- details of the teaching qualifications required for recognition by the NED (a minimum of Matriculation plus 2 years training in order to be considered for an appointment to the permanent staff),
- grading of schools as follows:

P IV - less than 50 pupils

P III - 50 - 120 pupils.

This grading of schools placed pre-primary schools on the same scale as schools in the other phases and gave increased salary recognition to principals who were in charge of larger pre-primary schools.

Circular 48/1974 also detailed the qualifications and teaching experience that would be considered necessary in order to be eligible to apply for the position of principal at a provincially-controlled pre-primary school. It further

advised that these posts would be advertised in a NED circular and that existing principals would act in posts until they were filled by NED 'permanent incumbents'.

(NED, 1974c: Annexure 11)

Existing principals could apply for their own posts, but as many did not hold the necessary qualifications, this period of transition brought personal stress and unhappiness to many nursery school teachers. Several were ousted from posts they had occupied for many years.

The introduction of the provincially controlled system, in terms of the take-over of existing schools that had applied for registration, was again postponed from 1 April to 1 July 1975, due to difficulties experienced by the NED in processing the appointment of teachers and because of the delay in passing the relevant legislation at Central Government level.

The necessary amendments to the National Education Ordinance of 1969 were finally assented to by the State President on 26 February 1975 (No 33 of 1974) and came into effect on 13 March 1975.

(NPC, 1975a: Annexure 19)

Amendments to the Ordinance concerning Regulations Governing the Establishment, Registration and Payment of Grants to Pre-Primary Schools for the White Group were



passed by the NPC on 26 June 1975 (No 38 of 1975).

(NPC, 1975b: Annexure 20)

In her Presidential address at the Annual General Meeting of SANSA, on 21 April 1975, Dr Ruth Arndt outlined that Association's long struggle for pre-school education and the high hopes that had been engendered by the 1969 National Education Policy on nursery education. She then described the Associations dismay at developments that were taking place, particularly in the Transvaal, where insufficient numbers of pre-primary teachers were being trained and a divide was growing between private and provincial nursery schools, as a result of the TED's approach to subsidisation of these schools.

She further noted:

"In the Free State and Natal, which it is maintained, historically have always favoured private education facilities and where a different financial policy is in operation with respect to pre-primary education, the new education policy has apparently had only beneficent effects."

(Arndt, 1975: Annexure 21)

She went on to describe enthusiastically the new system being implemented in Natal and added...

"The happy state of affairs in Natal may, in part, be attributable to the fact that the Natal Nursery School Teachers' Association is affiliated to the Natal Teachers' Society (NTS), which is officially recognised by the Province and which looks after the interests of its various groups. ... I understand that the (Natal) Provincial Administration is always willing to discuss troublesome matters with the Teachers' Society and did so when the new (Nursery)

Education Policy was announced, recognising that the society is representative of the interests that will be affected...." (Arndt, 1975: Annexure 21)

The role of the NTS in the pre-primary 'struggle' is worthy of mention. Established in 1916, the NTS has consistently promoted the liberal tradition of education (the so-called Natal ethos) and has vigorously defended Natal's right to 'self-determination' in terms of educational policy interpretation and implementation. The NED has for many years consulted the NTS and enlisted its support regarding education legislation and the NTS has also frequently directly petitioned and lobbied MPC's on educational matters. By permitting the affiliation of the Nursery School Teachers' Association to it, the NTS gave professional support and credibility, as well as group identity, to teachers who, before 1974, had no recognised professional rights in private grant-aided nursery schools.

In 1975, following the introduction of provincially controlled pre-primary education and the increasing number of locally trained teachers moving into this phase, the Natal Nursery School Association changed its name to the Natal Pre-Primary Teachers' Association (NPPTA) and became an integral part of the NTS by becoming a 'Subject Association' within that Society. The role of the NPPTA in the professional and political battle for pre-primary education will be referred to in Chapters 4 and 5.



There are presently (1994) three teachers' societies in Natal which are recognised by the NED, the NTS, NOU (Nataalse Onderwysersunie) and AFISOV (a small body representing the interests of teachers of technical subjects). The NTS, being the major (white) society in the Province, with over 4000 members, continues to liaise with the NED through its representatives on official committees, by means of formal delegations and informal communication and consultation with individuals in the Department.

Like the NED itself, however, the influence of the NTS on educational policy determination and implementation has been affected by the introduction of the 'own affairs system'. Policy making and administrative procedures in white education have been centralised at the Head Office of the Department of Education and Culture (House of Assembly) in Pretoria and the closure of the Natal Provincial Council in 1986, has led to the removal of MPC's who had often proved valuable allies.

### 3.6 Conclusion

The introduction of the provincially-controlled pre-primary system in Natal was made possible as a result of a complex interaction of factors.

The TED was the most powerful partner at COH meetings, because of the size of its constituency, the influence of research emanating from its Bureau of Education and, the writer would suggest, its political alignment and access to the corridors of power (influential government politicians and civil servants). This meant that in most cases COH decisions reflected TED policy preferences. The TED was determined to develop a system of provincial pre-primary schools, based in areas of socio-economic need and to recognise the majority of pre-schools in that province only in terms of registration or by granting of nominal per-capita subsidies. Pressure by the TED to accept the per capita system, as a uniform basis for subsidising nursery school education on a national level, forced the NED leadership to clarify its stance and define its policy directions in this regard.

Changes to the NED policy of early school admission of 5 year olds, as a result of the dictates of the National Education Act of 1967, made the NED leadership more open to acknowledging the educational potential of pre-primary education.

The NED also had far-sighted leaders in Director Philip Nel and Deputy Director Gerald Hosking and a supportive EXCO (most of whose members were drawn from the Government's political opposition), who were prepared to utilise the NPA's right of virement, in respect of budget allocation, to ensure that special education projects, including the new pre-primary system, were adequately funded.

The introduction of the provincially controlled system of pre-primary education thus went ahead, although, apart from the top leadership, it would appear that others in the NED were not particularly enthusiastic about the Departments' involvement, as Hosking points out:

"... in fact many of the senior people in our Department were not sure that I was on the right track... although they supported me, at many times it was virtually a lone conviction."

(Hosking, 1991)

The writer would suggest that this half-hearted support was given to the NED's top management because, firstly, other sectors of the NED were not adversely affected by the scheme as special funds had been voted by the NPC for this purpose and secondly, it may have been seen as detrimental to career aspirations to directly oppose one's superiors!

Changing political and economic policies led to the dissolution in 1986 of the NPC (and other provincial councils) and so access to extra finance, which had hitherto been available to the NED, disappeared. From that

time on budgets for the provincial education departments were dispensed directly from Pretoria. These budgets were based on a financing formula (drawn up by the Head Office of the Department of Education and Culture: House of Assembly) which translated the total number of pupils in schools in a particular province into a staff establishment for that province, and thence to the monetary allocation necessary to support such an establishment. On the basis that pre-primary education was not compulsory, pre-primary school pupils were excluded from the formula described above. It seemed, therefore, that all monies, then being spent on pre-primary education, were drawn from the 'mainstream' educational budget that was generated by pupils in the compulsory phases of education.

To further disadvantage pre-primary funding, the white education budget (Department of Education and Culture: House of Assembly) was radically trimmed from 1986 onward, as a result of a political commitment to move towards a policy of 'parity of provision' for all the racially divided education departments. Moreover a decline in economic growth in the country further reduced money available for pre-primary education.

All these factors did not augur well for the long term development of the Natal pre-primary school system.

### 3.7 Summary

The Natal provincially-controlled pre-primary system finally came into being on 1 July 1975. This date marked the beginning of a golden decade for pre-primary education in the Province.

The vision of a provincially-controlled pre-primary system in Natal, came from the NED leadership, particularly Director Philip Nel and Deputy Director, later Director, Gerald Hosking. They were able to translate their vision into reality, because of the support of an enlightened EXCO, who approved their recommendations, in terms of the creation of the system, and made funding available from the NPA budget, using the NPC's right of virement.

The extent of commitment to this vision of a provincially-controlled pre-primary system and the manner in which this project was financed, would have critical implications in the years that followed. The rapid development of the provincially-controlled pre-primary system from 1975 and the desubsidisation that then took place from 1984 as a result of political and economic factors, will be the focus of Chapter 4.

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Pietermaritzburg, February 1991. Dr Hosking  
had been Director of the NED from 1977 to  
1982 during the years of development of the  
Natal provincially controlled pre-primary  
system. He had also been instrumental in  
developing the dual pre-primary/junior  
primary teacher training certificate  
accepted by the COH.

CHAPTER FOUR : THE NATAL PROVINCIALY CONTROLLED  
PRE-PRIMARY SYSTEM (1975 - 1986)

4.1 Introduction

4.2 The period of expansion (1975 - 1980)

4.3 The battle to entrench existing provision

4.4 Signs of erosion and policy change

4.5 Conclusion

4.6 Summary

## CHAPTER 4

### THE NATAL PROVINCIALY CONTROLLED

#### PRE-PRIMARY SYSTEM (1975- 1986)

##### 4.1 Introduction

The implementation of a policy change in education, such as the introduction of a provincially controlled pre-primary system, was a complex procedure which involved changes on many levels: legal changes (acts, ordinances and regulations), professional changes (in terms of teacher training, conditions of service and curriculum development) social changes, as seen in the consultation and debate with parent communities, professional organisations and the general public and, also, administrative changes and financial adjustments.

In a memorandum to EXCO of the NPC (27 December 1974), Philip Nel proposed implementing the resolution of the Administrator's Conference of that year, in terms of the introduction of the four different categories of pre-primary schools. Under a section headed 'Financial Implications' he stated:

"It is anticipated that the majority of the existing government-aided schools will apply to become provincially controlled schools. The estimated cost of converting these schools to provincially controlled schools is R898,000 p.a. This figure includes an anticipated expansion during the year. It is estimated that the cost of subsidising the few schools that do not elect to become provincially controlled will be R70,800 p.a. The total cost for the year 1975/76 will be

R968,000 p.a. The anticipated expenditure for this item for the financial year 1974/75 is R460,000."

He attributed the increase of R508,000 to the fact that, under the new scheme, salaries of teachers would be assessed in terms of their qualifications, principals would be paid at the same rates applicable to principals in primary schools and that the minimum salary scale that would be used would be M+1. Hitherto a 'less than M+1 scale' existed with a fixed salary of R1800 p.a.

(NED, 1974: Annexure 14)

In addition to the costs involved, as a result of salary payments to teachers, Nel requested EXCO to authorise R400,000 in the Revenue Estimates to be allocated to building grants for pre-primary schools .

Until 1974, building grants had been made on a R1 for R1 basis, up to a maximum project value of R20,000. This figure was now raised to a maximum of R40,000 per project (ie a maximum R20,000 NPA grant) for the erection, enlargement and alteration of provincially controlled pre-primary schools.

(NPC, 1971: Annexure 9)

In March 1974 there were 51 pre-primary schools registered with the NED, with a total pupil enrolment of 3099 pupils. The majority of these schools applied for provincial control to meet the 1975 July changeover. A further 17

provincially-controlled schools were registered the following year, so that by late 1976 there were already 61 provincially-controlled pre-primary schools in Natal, an increase of almost 20%.

#### 4.2 The period of expansion (1975 - 1980)

The introduction of provincially controlled pre-primary schools marked the beginning of a period of rapid expansion and upgrading of the Natal pre-school system, as increased funding was channelled into this sector.

In a letter to the Director of the NED, dated 21 January 1975, Dr E.G. Malherbe requested information on pre-primary education, for his book on the history of nursery schools in South Africa. One of the questions asked was:

"What special financial recognition, if any, does the province receive from the central government for this service (pre-primary education) in arriving at the annual subsidy which this province receives?"

(Malherbe letter, 1975: Annexure 15)

In his response, on 2 February 1975, the Director noted:

"Financial assistance is received from the central government for education and all other services rendered by the Province, but it would be difficult to determine in what ratio pre-primary education is subsidised by the central government."

(Nel letter, 1975: Annexure 16)

In a HSRC 'Review of existing pre-primary education facilities for South African children', dated October 1976, Dr Dina Wessels noted:

"Proportionally more 3 - 6 year olds are benefiting from pre-primary education in Natal (22.3%) than in any other province, closely followed by the Transvaal (21.1%), the OFS (13.3%) and the Cape Province (13%). White pre-primary pupils comprise approximately 18% of the pre-school white population between 3 and 6 years of age."

(Wessels, 1976)



She also said:

"Whereas it is understood that the intention of the National Education Policy Act is to effect a co-ordinated national policy for education in the 4 provinces, and that a statutory body viz the Heads of Education Committee (COH) has been established for the purpose of effecting such co-ordination, there yet exists a disturbing extent of divergence in the implementation of policy with respect to certain vitally important aspects of pre-primary education."

(Wessels, 1976)

Dr Wessels greatest concern was the Transvaal's financial policy, regarding subsidised non-profit making, committee-run pre-primary schools. Whilst the other 3 provinces had conformed to the 1967 Act's ruling that salaries and conditions of service should be uniform throughout the country (Section 2 of the Education Act, Act no 39 of 1967), the Transvaal persisted in pursuing a policy of per capita subsidy, based on the family income of children. She felt that this policy was responsible for the "crippling shortage" of trained pre-primary teachers in the Transvaal as those emerging from the training colleges were employed "only in Provincial pre-primary schools or classes, or failing that, in primary schools... any other available teachers are inevitably drawn to the other provinces by the national salary scale paid there".

(Wessels, 1976)

Dr Wessels' review acknowledged the Transvaal's contribution to pre-primary education, through the establishment of its own provincial pre-primary schools and in terms of teacher training courses, but noted that this

development was at the expense of the private schools and pre-primary education and care as a whole, as private nursery schools catered for 85% of the children in pre-school institutions in that province (Transvaal). This meant that 85% of pre-school children in the Transvaal were being subsidised by the minimum per capita sum, or not at all, whereas 85% of those at pre-schools in Natal were heavily subsidised through teacher salary subsidies.

The differences in the interpretation and implementation of policy regarding pre-primary education, that existed amongst the provinces (and the lack of clarity as to exactly where the money came from to finance its development) did not appear to concern those involved in Natal pre-school education at that time. The apartheid system effectively shielded most people from the increasing turbulence in the external environment and during this period in the 1970's education in Natal appeared to be 'at its peak'.

By the end of 1977 there were 88 pre-primary schools registered with the NED: 75 provincially controlled, 5 provincially subsidised and 8 private schools. The NED also employed two pre-primary subject inspectresses, Mrs I. Noel and Ms R. Hattingh, who were actively involved in guiding teachers and monitoring their activities by giving attention to teaching methodology, the development and implementation of an appropriate curriculum and the

upgrading of physical facilities. The new pre-primary system continued to grow apace and a further 10 provincially-controlled schools were opened in 1978.

In certain quarters, however, concern was being voiced as to the future of white education in general and of pre-primary education in particular, as a result of changing economic and political circumstances. South Africa's apartheid policy was increasingly reviled by the rest of the world and in the late 1970's the economy began to falter under the impact of economic sanctions, low productivity and a falling gold price. Internal turbulence escalated, especially in black education, after the Soweto student riots of 1976 in which students protested against the imposition of Afrikaans as a language of tuition in black schools. Attention was increasingly focused on the educational disparities in educational provision that existed between racial groups.

Looking back on developments during this period, Dr Gerald Hosking (NED Director from 1977 - 1982) said during an interview:

"When it was perceived that the trouble in black education needed urgent attention - it was accepted that the discrepancy in financing between race groups was grossly inequitable and could not continue...

As a planner, I had seen this coming from the late 70's and had discussed it with certain colleagues, both in the Department and in other provinces."

(Hosking, 1991)

In the same interview Dr Hosking said that, as awareness of what could lie ahead filtered into the management structures of the NED, "...we realised that our white system was too expensive and that dislocation had set in... we had been overtaken by events....".

(Hosking, 1991)

#### 4.3 The battle to entrench existing provision

As the Natal Provincial Administration, and hence the NED, faced increasing budget stringency in the late 1970's and early 80's they initially responded by 'freezing' or not filling posts within the teaching establishment. In terms of pre-primary schools, the first move was to withdraw building grants and also to freeze further applications for provincial control (as this would have meant a further commitment to the payment of teachers salaries). Although the leadership of the NED remained convinced of the value of quality pre-primary education, decisions were taken as a matter of economic expediency.

"It was a case of educational philosophy versus financial control and educational philosophy went by the board."

(van Rooyen, 1991)

In a memorandum to EXCO of the NPC (23 May 1979) Dr Hosking attempted to soften the blow, particularly with respect to the withdrawal of building grants, by proposing that pre-primary schools be allowed to occupy vacant accommodation "in provincially controlled state premises which were no longer required for pupils who were subject to compulsory school attendance".

(NED, 1979: Annexure 25)

The premises would be leased to parent committees, on the basis of 4.25% of the value of the property, with the proviso, however, that "this rate of rental is not to be



regarded as a precedent for the calculation of all rentals of state-owned property and applies only to pre-primary schools".

The NPA would also accept responsibility for adapting the premises, so that they were suitable for pre-primary use and an additional rental, of 10% of the cost of the alterations, would be then levied for a period of 10 years. Parent committees were required to undertake that pre-primary schools would continue in existence for a minimum period of 10 years, after completion of the building work.

(NED, 1979)

Pre-primary schools such as Kloof, Durban Wes, New England, New Hanover, Seaview and Caldene were established in terms of these conditions.

The renting of vacant NED premises (usually classrooms in white schools that were experiencing falling pupil numbers) served a double purpose - it assisted in the establishment of further pre-primary schools and had the added advantage of obviating the necessity for these buildings to remain empty, causing possible political embarrassment. (Thousands of black children in the province could not gain access to schools due to lack of facilities and overcrowding, so unused classrooms in well-resourced white schools seemed a waste of state educational provision and provided a focus for political debate and discontent.)

Dr Hosking took early retirement in 1982 and was succeeded, as Director of the NED by Mr 'Solly' Levinsohn who died in 1984. Mr 'Willie' van Rooyen then took over, as budget cuts began to increasingly affect the NED. Faced with financial stringency, the Department started looking at 'unprescribed areas' of education (non-compulsory provision) for initial saving of costs.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, changes in political direction in which the Government attempted to adjust apartheid policy to make it more acceptable to its critics - both at home and abroad - led to National Referendum on the Tricameral System in 1983. The tricameral or tripartite approach advocated increased political representation and participation for the Indian and Coloured groups within compartmentalised 'own affairs' systems, but was fatally flawed in its exclusion of the majority of the people (blacks) from political decision-making. It was, however, perceived by many to be a progressive step and the majority of white voters voted 'yes' in the Referendum.

The introduction of the Tripartite or 'Own Affairs' system with its three houses of Parliament; House of Assembly [White], House of Delegates [Indian] and House of Representatives [Coloured]) led to the demise of the provincial councils in 1986. White education policy making, planning and budgeting now took place in Pretoria. This had enormous implications for education in Natal as the

influence of the TED, on education within the DEC (House of Assembly), became increasingly apparent.



#### 4.4 Signs of erosion and policy change

Pressured by financial stringency, Mr van Rooyen decided to implement, with effect from 31 December 1984, reductions in expenditure on the pre-primary phase. Savings could be effected by increasing the pupil : teacher ratios in provincially controlled pre-primary schools, which would lead to staff redundancy. Consultation concerning this policy matter took place neither with the management committees of pre-primary schools, nor with the principals and staff of the schools affected. Mr van Rooyen has since described these measures as: "...arbitrary cuts in terms of finances available".

(van Rooyen, 1991)

In 1991 when questioned, during an interview, about the manner in which these reductions had been introduced, Mr van Rooyen averred that he had consulted with both the NTS and NOU at the time but added:

"Whether they understood the implications - that's a different thing. At a meeting like that I did not have ready, at that particular time, the ratio of the cut, because you first try and get acceptance and then go and work out what is financially feasible."

(van Rooyen, 1991)

The writer doubts whether the representatives of NTS and NOU who attended the briefing session with the Director understood, or were particularly concerned about the implications of the proposed changes, especially as high schools were asked to take a voluntary staff cut at the

same time and neither teachers' organisation had any pre-primary representatives with their delegations.

Pre-primary teaching staff, made redundant by the increased pupil : teacher ratios (who were all teachers on temporary contracts), were informed verbally that their contracts would not be renewed after 31 December 1984. The circular that reflected the decision of EXCO of the NPC that authorised the change, only arrived in schools in February 1985!

(NED, 1985a: Annexure 26)

By early 1985 it appeared that the top management of the NED was becoming increasingly concerned about the future of pre-primary education. This may have been the reason why Mr van Rooyen briefed one of his planners to "investigate the possibility of increasing the number of admissions to pre-primary schools (without additional funding) and to make recommendations in this regard."

(NED, 1985b: Annexure 27)

Accordingly a document, entitled 'The Provision of Pre-Primary Education by the NED', was prepared with a view to it being distributed to management committees of pre-primary schools for their comment.

Because of some apparent confusion in the clerical section of the NED, the proposals contained in the above mentioned

document arrived, without warning, on the desks of pre-primary principals throughout the Province early in April of 1985.

(NED, 1985b)

Coming as it did, so soon after staff reductions in the pre-primary phase, some of the proposals in the document were seen as very threatening, ie double sessions, differentiated school attendance, reduced space norms and increased pupil : teacher ratios. What caused further reaction was the final section, which was headed "Analysis of Recommendations and the Decision of the NED". It appeared that comment was being called for, after decisions had already been made! Decisions included the reduction of indoor space from 2,50m<sup>2</sup> to 2,00m<sup>2</sup> per child and an increase in pupil : teacher ratio from 23:1 to 25:1. These changes would allow most schools to increase their enrolment, but any extra staff required would have to be paid by the management committees. The NED, however, wished to retain the role of employer ie additional teachers were to be appointed and employed, as temporary teachers, by the NED, but the funding for their monthly salaries had to be paid, in advance, by the management committees.

The NPPTA (of the NTS) submitted comprehensive comment on the NED planning document (NPPTA, 1985: Annexure 27b) and parent committees responded, rejecting many of the proposed changes, particularly the method of employing committee-

paid teachers. The matter was raised in Parliament when Mr Roger Burrows sought clarification by questioning the Minister of Education and Culture thus:

"...Whether his department has laid down any requirements or norms for the establishment and for inspection of pre-primary schools, if not, why not...?"

The Minister replied:

"The Department of Education and Culture did not lay down requirements or norms for pre-primary schools because it does not administer such schools. When the functions of the provincial education departments have been transferred to this department, a co-ordinated policy for these schools will be considered."

(Burrows, 1985: Annexure 29)

Despite all this opposition, the NED without further consultation imposed both the new space norms and pupil : teacher ratios in line with the document's proposals. One concession was that it did allow for the direct employment of teachers by parent committees.

In 1985, following closely on the heels of staff reductions in the pre-primary phase, the NED introduced the post of head of department in the larger pre-primary schools. The establishment of promotion posts, at a time when the NED faced budget problems, seemed strange, but Mr van Rooyen has, since, revealed that he saw it as an attempt to entrench more pre-primary educators in permanent positions in the staff structure. (HOD posts in pre-primary schools were, however, abolished two years later.)

At this time the NED also established eight experimental 'reception-classes' for 5 year-olds: four English medium classes (two attached to Montclair and two to Model Primary respectively) and two Afrikaans medium units at Piet Retief and Eendrag respectively. Mr van Rooyen revealed that the reason for this development was the belief in the importance of pre-primary education.

"We had lost the first battle for 5 year olds -  
let us now bring them in as a reception class -  
but let us do it on a sound educational basis..."  
(van Rooyen, 1991)

The experimental reception classes for 5 year olds were taught by trained pre-primary teachers, using developmentally appropriate methodology. Pupils were monitored and evaluated over a three year period. The classes proved very successful in educational terms, but, again, increasing financial stringency prevented the introduction of more such classes. (The NED withdrew funding from these reception classes in 1991 as they were proving to be a more expensive form of provision than the provincially controlled pre-primary system.)

The increasing centralisation of white education and the looming demise of the provincial councils, required changes in educational governance in white education. In December 1985, Director van Rooyen called meetings with principals and management committees of primary and high schools, to brief them on the new structures which were to be set up in

the provinces. Pre-primary principals and management committees were pointedly excluded from these meetings and it became apparent that pre-primary schools were not represented in the proposed structures.

These structures were understood to have been designed to allow for greater parental participation in education decision-making. Schools were grouped into 'wards' and the management committees of the schools, in a given ward, elected representatives of 'regional committees' who, in turn, elected representatives to serve on the Natal Education Council. It was envisaged that this Council would replace EXCO of the NPC in terms of its influence on the implementation of education policy in Natal. (In reality the NEC has proved to be merely an advisory body and the Minister of Education (House of Assembly) has often chosen to ignore its advice!)

Alarmed by the exclusion of pre-primary parent committees, a delegation, led by Mr S. Douglas, representing management committees of pre-primary schools, met the Administrator-in-Executive-Committee, on 15 February 1986, to put the case for direct representation of pre-primary parents on the proposed Natal Education Council.

The request for pre-primary parent committees to have specific representation on the proposed Natal Education Council was denied, but pre-primary representation was

finally included with that of private schools. This was not considered a satisfactory compromise, as only two delegates would represent all private schools in Natal. Private schools in Natal included many prestigious high schools and so it was deemed highly unlikely that pre-primary parents would be nominated to the Natal Education Council by this sector. This was one of the last acts of EXCO, as the Natal Provincial Council ceased to exist in July 1986.

In April 1986, the NED had, officially, become a part of the Ministry of Education and Culture: House of Assembly. It vacated its Pietermaritzburg headquarters at Natalia and moved to premises in Burger Street.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

The provincially controlled pre-primary system in Natal was a highly successful educational experiment in respect of its articulation of policy, planning and implementation. At its peak, over ninety schools, all with qualified teaching staff, operated throughout Natal. Although situated in diverse socio-economic communities, these schools managed to maintain a high degree of uniformity, in terms of educational quality.

The success of the system was due, in large measure, to the training and professional commitment of its teaching corps, who were, in turn, influenced by the dedication and enthusiasm of the NED pre-primary inspectresses (later called subject advisors) and the NPPTA, which provided a vehicle for professional development and group cohesion.

The Natal pre-primary system, however, was created and nurtured by an education department and provincial authority that existed within a framework of historical and political realities. From 1983, changes to the macro system began to have a critical impact on the future of pre-primary education in the province.



#### 4.6 Summary

The provincially controlled pre-primary system developed rapidly from 1975 - 1985, when the restructuring of apartheid policy, in terms of the requirements of the tricameral system, removed the flexibility that had existed in the system of the provincial councils. Natal lost its remaining autonomy, regarding the interpretation and implementation of national education policy, and the NED lost the additional funding that it had received from the NPA via EXCO's right of virement.

The effects of reduction of funding were exacerbated by the Government's commitment to achieving parity, in terms of per capita expenditure on education, for all race groups and by a rapidly declining national economy.

The implications for the Natal pre-primary system following these developments, will be examined in the next Chapter.

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Question 3

Annexure 31

## CHAPTER FIVE : THE NATAL PRE-PRIMARY SYSTEM

### UNDER SIEGE

#### 5.1 Introduction

#### 5.2 Decisions on staffing and financial provision

#### 5.3 The establishment of a COH Ad-hoc Committee on Pre-Primary Education

#### 5.4 An embattled phase:

5.4.i NED downgrading measures in pre-primary provision

5.4.ii Omission of provincially (departmentally) controlled pre-primary schools from the draft Education Affairs Bill

5.4.iii The Ad-Hoc Committee and per capita subsidisation of pre-primary education

5.4.iv NED staff cuts in the Natal pre-primary phase (1987)

5.4.v Attempts to introduce a privatised per capita subsidised pre-primary system

5.4.vi NPPTA publication: *Formative Phase Education - The Foundation for the Future*

5.4.vii Further large scale staff cuts in Natal pre-primary schools (1991)

#### 5.5 Conclusion

#### 5.6 Summary

## CHAPTER 5

### THE NATAL PRE-PRIMARY SYSTEM UNDER SIEGE

#### 5.1 Introduction

Following the introduction of the 'Tricameral' or 'Own Affairs' system, the NED changed its status and became a regional office of the Department of Education and Culture (DEC) (House of Assembly). Almost symbolic of its changed position (it was now directly responsible to head office in Pretoria) was the move from the NPA building, Natalia, to offices in Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg.

One of the key issues, once all the provincial education departments had been brought together in a single body, DEC (House of Assembly), was the introduction of uniform procedures relating to: service conditions, staffing patterns, management styles, conditions of appointment and pupil : teacher ratios. Accordingly committees, based in Pretoria, started drafting a new education act for the DEC (House of Assembly). This act and accompanying regulations, would replace the existing provincial education ordinances and regulations and bring white education together in a unitary system.

## 5.2 Decisions on staffing and financial provision:

In 1987, the concept of funding white education, on the basis of the number of pupils in compulsory schooling, was accepted by the relevant education departments. This concept was based on the 19<sup>th</sup> Report of the Advisory Committee on Education Personnel (AEP) and was intended to put staff allocation on an equitable basis in all provinces.

Discrepancies in education budget allocation to the provinces existed, at the time, as a result of the differing priorities that the provincial education departments had emphasised in the past. Thus, for example, it was claimed that:

"In Natal we had always spent our money to what we felt was the greatest advantage of the pupil : teacher ratio in the classroom. We didn't go for other grand schemes - overseas study trips or massive 'navorsing' - we channelled all possible funds into schools...

As far as the National Treasury was concerned, we were the most expensive department in the land."  
(Hosking, 1991)

A 10 Year Plan was developed to achieve parity, first between the provincial white education departments and then between the various racially based education departments. Phase one of the Plan was to begin in 1988.

With the acceptance of pupil numbers in the compulsory phases as the basis of the funding formula for education,



the question of how pre-primary education was financed became a matter of increasing debate.

When he was Director of the NED (1984 - 1986), Mr van Rooyen had always claimed that the Department did not receive funding for pre-primary education and that pre-primary teachers' salaries were paid out of the main budget based on the number of pupils in the compulsory phases. At the time this was disputed by other NED officials and by the NTS, who had been advised by the Teachers' Federal Council (TFC) that the provincial authorities did, indeed, receive money for pre-primary education in terms of a special adjustment to the funding formula known as the 'B' factor. It appeared, however, that in the new system this money was not connected to staff allocation. This meant that although the education departments were still receiving enough money to fund the salaries of pre-primary teachers, their actual teaching posts had to be taken from that of the formal post establishment, ie each pre-primary teaching post had to be subtracted from the staff allocation of the primary or high school sector. The looming threat to pre-primary education was in the availability of departmental teaching posts, rather than just in terms of funding.

The NED had always kept pupil : teacher ratios as low as possible, and so the implementation of the new formula, which was geared to equalise staff allocation between

education departments, required staff cuts within the NED post structure. The position of pre-primary teachers, within that structure, now posed a dilemma for NED management, as they were posts in a non-compulsory phase of education, now existing at the expense of posts in compulsory phases which themselves were ear-marked for reduction.

The NPPTA grew increasingly anxious about the position of pre-primary education in the new DEC (House of Assembly) structure and sought clarity on the funding and future of pre-primary education from both teacher organisations and politicians - no one seemed to have any answers. On 5 August 1987, Minister Clase during a Parliamentary debate, responded to a question on the formula applied to the financing of education as follows:

"I may mention, however, that the formula makes specific provision for a number of particular functions, as well as global provision for other categories of function, inter alia, pre-primary education. The formula does, therefore, make provision for pre-primary education."

(Clase, 1987a: Annexure 37)

The formula in question was the financing formula for education. It was equally applicable to all education departments in South Africa, but there was a special factor which related to the different population groups, which was applied to the formula to create different financial allocations. This factor, known as the 'B factor' in white education, was apparently enhanced to include pre-primary

education and private schools. The government was anxious to keep pre-primary as part of a global provision covered by the factor and not make it a specific provision, as it would then become a 'general affair' which would have to be included in the main financing formula applied to all population groups.

Pre-primary provision for all children of all race-groups would be costly to develop and maintain, and money for this purpose would have to be diverted from other education sectors ie secondary and tertiary education. The Government did not regard pre-primary education as an integral part of the state education system and appeared anxious to divest itself of its limited involvement, in order to avoid commitment to pre-primary for all race-groups in the future.

Expansion of pre-primary provision was obviously not on the government agenda and questions about the future of existing pre-primary schools remained unanswered, although provincially controlled pre-primary schools were now classified as departmentally controlled schools in official circulars.

### 5.3 The establishment of a COH ad-hoc committee on pre-primary education

As a result, perhaps, of the concern emanating from teacher and parent groups throughout the country, as well as the dilemma that faced the white provincial education departments regarding financial provision for pre-primary education, an ad-hoc Committee was convened by the COH to 'research all aspects of pre-primary education'. This Committee was chaired by Dr F.L. Knoetze of the Cape Education Department and its brief from the Superintendent General of Education, Mr de Villiers Terblanche, was to pay particular attention to:

- "1. The involvement of state/provincial education authorities in pre-primary education.
2. The continued existence of certain pre-primary schools as government schools.
3. The possibility of converting pre-primary government schools to government-aided pre-primary schools.
4. Staff allocation.
5. Training of pre-primary teachers.
6. Privatisation.
7. The legal implication of the findings, including criteria for the establishment, management and closure of pre-primary schools.
8. Control over, amongst others, the educational and financial affairs.
9. The educational programme.
10. The elimination of unnecessary policy differences."

(NED, 1987)

While this committee focused on its task, the draft regulations for pre-primary schools were being framed and the DEC (House of Assembly) called for all applicable documents, relating to pre-primary education, including

regulations, directives and guidelines, to be submitted by the provincial education departments to the committee concerned.

The work of both the Ad-Hoc Committee and the Committee drafting the regulations, was conducted under a blanket of strict 'confidentiality' and so, at school level, parent committees and teachers were unaware of the investigations taking place, concerning the future of pre-primary education.

#### 5.4 An embattled phase

##### 5.4.1 NED 'downgrading' measures in pre-primary provision

On 22 May 1987, the NED called a meeting of PACES (Provincial Advisory Committee on Educational Services). PACES advised the Director on educational matters and its members included NED officials and representatives from the recognised white teachers' associations in Natal. The business of 22 May was carried over to a further meeting on 22 June, at which the NED officials outlined financial difficulties that were being experienced by the Department and discussed those areas of cost-saving that were being contemplated. Pre-primary education was one such area.

After discussion it was agreed by member of PACES that, concerning the pre-primary phase, and as an interim measure, no further HOD posts would be advertised. It was also decided to recommend to the Director that the four Post Level 3 principals' posts, that were being advertised at that time in the Gazette, be withdrawn and the posts filled by persons appointed in an acting capacity. The committees of the schools concerned were to be notified accordingly.

It was later confirmed that, at a NED management meeting following PACES, Mr Olmesdahl (who had succeeded Mr van Rooyen as Director of the NED) in consultation with Messrs Olivier, Reusch and Deane, decided, not only to withdraw the four posts, as had been agreed to by the teachers'

societies, but to downgrade all pre-primary principal's posts, as they fell vacant, from Post Level 3 to Post Level 2 (equivalent to the position of Head of Department).

(NTS, 1987)

This decision changed the policy introduced by Mr Nel, when he was Director of the NED, which gave pre-primary principals the same status as those principals in the compulsory phases and related their post levels to the size of the schools they ran.

These decisions were not relayed, at the time, to either the NTS or NOU (the two main white teachers' societies in Natal). However, almost two months later, on 18 August 1987, the Director met with the management committees of both the NTS and NOU and outlined a variety of cost-saving measures, which were being contemplated. Various documents were handed to the Teachers' Societies, who were asked to provide comments and suggestions by mid-September. (This deadline was later extended at the request of the NTS.) Among the documents was one relating to pre-primary education entitled 'Rationalisation of Pre-Primary Structures and Concomitant Economy Measures'.

This document referred to the research into pre-primary that was being undertaken by the COH Ad-hoc Committee and the drafting of regulations for private pre-primary schools that was also in progress. It included the following

statement:

"In view of the above, an independent investigation into rationalisation would appear to be premature and should wait until such times as the findings of these committees have been made known".

(NED, 1987a: Annexure 38)

The document then proposed that economy measures in Natal pre-primary education be limited to:

- "1. all pre-primary schools be reclassified as P4 (irrespective of size of pupil enrolment)
2. all future principalships be advertised as post level 2 (equivalent to HOD)
3. all HOD posts be phased out (Personnel holding P3 principalships and P2 HOD posts would retain these as personal) (ie the rank would remain with the present incumbent while they are in the post but would revert to a lower post level or be phased out once they vacated the posts)
4. no acting HOD's to be appointed after 1 January 1988
5. Registration in respect of an increased enrolment to be permitted, including the appointment of additional staff, provided these teachers are not employed by the Department
6. no substantive vacancies at post level 1 to be filled on a permanent basis until further notice
7. The payment of building loans to be abolished
8. The amount of the per-capita grant for subsidised schools to be reduced
9. The allowance of R55 per pupil in government pre-primary schools and reception classes in addition to the normal monetary allocation to be reviewed
10. The above decisions to be made known to schools by a departmental circular minute.

Further recommendations to follow after the findings and decisions of the committees have been made known."

(NED, 1987a: Annexure 38)

The NTS handed the NED document on pre-primary rationalisation to their Subject Association, the NPPTA,



for comment. A detailed response, (which strongly opposed the downgrading of pre-primary schools and principalships and voiced concern over the freezing of permanent posts) was returned to the NTS on 2 September (NPPTA, 1987a: Annexure 39) to be forwarded to the NED. On 15 September 1987, as a result of concerns expressed to him by the NPPTA, Roger Burrows, spokesman on education for the Progressive Federal Party, questioned the Minister of Education (House of Assembly) in Parliament as to whether the NED:

"...has taken or intends taking certain steps in respect of the a) reclassification of, b) removal of certain posts at, and c) staffing of pre-primary schools; if so, i) what are the particulars of the steps envisaged, ii) when were the decisions on these steps taken, iii) which organisations were consulted before the decisions were taken and iv) what amount is it estimated will be saved by taking these steps;..."

Minister Clase's reply was as follows:

- "1) (a), (b) and (c) Yes
- i) all vacant Post Level 1 posts will for the interim be advertised as temporary posts. Post level 3 principal posts will, as they become vacant, be advertised as Post Level 2 posts. All Head of Department posts will phase out as they become vacant.
- ii) June 1987
- iii) NTS and NOU"

(Clase, 1987a: Annexure 41)

This question and answer session was reported, or rather misreported, in The Natal Mercury on 16 September 1987, in an article entitled 'Cut back in Natal posts'. The 'cut back' measures were outlined, but the reporter failed to mention that they applied to the pre-primary phase!

(Natal Mercury, 1987 a: Annexure 42a)

The Natal Mercury article caused a furore in schools in Natal and the NED was bombarded with so many anxious telephone calls, that it put a message on the emergency telephone network that links all schools. The message read 'The article on page 2 of The Natal Mercury only refers to the pre-primary phase'. The Natal Mercury corrected its report the following day in a short article headed 'Only pre-primary downgraded'.

(Natal Mercury, 1987b: Annexure 42b)

It was in this indirect manner that teachers and parent committees at Natal's pre-primary schools learnt of the cut-backs affecting this phase. The NPPTA requested the NTS to urgently arrange a delegation to the Director to protest the NED's action. At the meeting, which took place on 22 September, representatives of the NPPTA voiced their deep concern at the downgrading of schools and principals' posts and the freezing of permanent posts and expressed dismay that the Director had requested input from the teachers' societies in August, when decisions had been *fait accompli* since June. The teachers' societies had not been 'consulted' on this issue as Minister Clase had stated.

The NPPTA also questioned the necessity for the NED to take these 'interim measures' prior to the findings of the COH Ad-Hoc Committee investigation, when it appeared that no other provinces felt the need to do so. Mr Olmedahl replied that it was because the NED's commitment to pre-primary

education was proportionally greater than that of the other provinces and that the measures were deemed necessary.

After some discussion, Director Olmesdahl, following consultation with his senior management staff, stated that the decisions, regarding permanent posts and the downgrading of principalships, were to be seen as 'interim measures', awaiting the outcome of the COH investigation into the rationalisation of pre-primary provision on a national scale. It was suggested that a paragraph acknowledging the provisional nature of these decisions was then added to the draft circular which had been prepared for distribution to all pre-primary schools.

(NED, 1987b: Annexure 44)

Those involved in pre-primary education felt increasingly under siege. The NED had made a charade of consultation and Natal representatives involved in the COH investigation into pre-primary education, two NED officials and Mr Harris of PANNO (Parents Association of Natal/Natalse Ouervereniging), had been sworn to confidentiality and so were unable to give feedback to or get feedback from their constituencies.

5.4.ii     Omission of provincially (departmentally) controlled pre-primary schools from the draft 'Education Affairs Bill'

In October 1987, the draft Education Affairs Bill was circulated to various bodies for confidential comment. The NTS received a copy of the draft Bill from the Teachers' Federal Council (TFC) and on perusal, it became apparent that the 'provincially' or 'departmentally controlled' system of pre-primary schools had been omitted from the Bill. It only made provision for Government pre-primary schools and classes, and private pre-primary schools, whether subsidised in terms of an annual per capita grant or unsubsidised.

Urgent enquiries from the NTS to the NED and to the TFC concerning this omission, brought no clarity on the matter and NPPTA's feelings of uncertainty and suspicion grew. NPPTA members who, in their capacity as members of the NTS Executive, had read the draft Bill, felt that the insistence on confidentiality was a ploy to prevent the wider public becoming informed of the contents of the Bill until it was too late. On Thursday 15 November, Roger Burrows MP, gave a press interview to the 'Daily News' in which he made public the omission of the departmentally controlled schools from the draft Education Affairs Bill.

The NPPTA felt that action was required and so their central committee wrote a memorandum motivating for the

inclusion of the provincially (departmentally) controlled model of pre-primary school in the draft Bill. The NTS sent a copy of this memorandum to Minister Clase through the Director of the NED. The matter was also placed on the agenda of the Natal Education Council, which was due to meet in February 1988. Copies of the memorandum were sent to all members of the Council as well as to all pre-primary schools in the province. (NPPTA, 1987b: Annexure 45) The NPPTA also initiated a large scale awareness campaign promoting the value of pre-primary education. Exhibitions were held in major shopping centres, the press provided extensive coverage and parents, at departmentally controlled pre-primary schools in Natal, started a massive petition campaign which drew over 30,000 signatures in support of the inclusion of the departmentally-controlled model of pre-primary school in the draft Bill. The Natal Education Council, at its meeting on 11 February 1988, voted unanimously in support of retaining departmentally controlled pre-primary schools.

On 15 March 1988, four months after the omission of the departmentally/provincially controlled model had been the subject of a major debate, the Minister of Education and Culture (House of Assembly) P.J. Clase, issued a statement entitled 'Provincially Controlled Pre-Primary Schools' in which he said:

"Provision for provincially controlled pre-primary schools is, in fact, in the Education Affairs Bill. There is no reason for concern

about this...

In order to regulate the provision of education for the pre-primary, primary and secondary schools of the Department of Education and Culture, House of Assembly it was decided to have a single Act in terms of which such education will be provided.

For this purpose a Bill was drafted and submitted for comment to various interested parties... As is customary the deliberations took place on a confidential basis.

While the Bill was being edited it was noted about a month ago that provision for provincially controlled pre-primary schools, had, by mistake, been omitted from the document made available for the purpose of consultation. The necessary editorial adjustments were immediately made to the Bill to provide for this..."

(Clase, 1988: Annexure 47)

As the Bill was already in its third draft, when it was distributed for confidential comment, many people remained unconvinced that the omission of the controlled pre-primary schools had been merely an editorial 'mistake'. Nevertheless the departmentally controlled schools were included in the final draft and appeared in the Education Affairs Act (House of Assembly) Act no 70, 1988 under chapter 5 'Private Schools and State aided schools'.

Chapter 5 included the following information: Departmentally controlled schools were regarded as private pre-primary schools, except in terms of the type of subsidy received. Thus under the heading 'Subsidies to private pre-primary schools' it read:

- 26(1) "A private pre-primary school may apply in writing to the Head of Education to

be classified for subsidy purposes as a departmentally controlled pre-primary school'.

- (2) A private pre-primary school which has not been classified as contemplated in sub-section (1) may annually on or prior to a prescribed date apply in writing to the Head of Education for a subsidy

Other paragraphs that were relevant included:

- (3) "The Head of Education may at his discretion grant or refuse an application referred to in (1) or (2), but he shall not grant an application if he is of the opinion that the private pre-primary does not comply with the prescribed conditions for subsidisation, or classification, as the case may be.

Further it was stated:

- (4) As from the date on which an application for classification as contemplated in subsection (1) is granted under subsection (3), the persons employed in teaching posts at such departmentally controlled pre-primary school shall be deemed to be employed in teaching posts at a departmental institution.
- (5) A provincially controlled nursery school or pre-primary school classified or maintained in terms of a law repealed by this act and which existed immediately prior to the fixed date, shall from that date be deemed to be a departmentally controlled pre-primary school which has been classified in terms of this Act."

(House of Assembly: Annexure 50)

The terms of the new Act were broad. Actual provision concerning matters such as staff : pupil ratios, which were at that time laid down in provincial ordinances and regulations, were to be spelt out in new regulations which

would accompany the Act and regulate its application.

A series of draft regulations on different aspects of education were sent to the provincial education councils for comment. The NEC formed a sub-committee to look into the various regulations and Mr Len Harris (PANNO), Mrs D. de Waal (NED), Mrs I. Botha (NOU) and Mrs C. Robinson (NTS) were asked to assess the 'Regulations relating to the registration, classification and subsidisation of pre-primary schools' and provide the Council with their comment.

The draft regulations were only available in Afrikaans and followed those in place in the TED at the time.

(DEC: House of Assembly, 1988: Annexure 51)

In its report, the NEC sub-committee criticised the draft regulations on the following grounds:

- i) They did not clearly define the nature of departmentally controlled schools
- ii) They did not set out standards in terms of staff allocation and teacher : pupil ratio
- iii) They undermined parental-community autonomy particularly in terms of language of instruction, composition of pupil population and the structure of school management committees and placed too much discretionary power in the hands of the Head of Education (ie Superintendent General)
- iv) They placed unrealistic requirements on private per capita subsidised pre-primary schools (ie 20 : 1 pupil : teacher ratio and qualified pre-primary specialist teaching staff) while not detailing these criteria for the departmentally controlled schools.

(NEC, 1988: Annexure 53)



The NEC supported the concerns and recommendations made in the report of the sub-committee and forwarded a copy to Minister Clase on 15 November 1988.

When, however, the regulations, No R698 Education Affairs Act (House of Assembly) 1988 'Regulations Relating to the Registration, Classification and Subsidisation of Private Pre-Primary Schools', were finally promulgated on 30 March 1990, apart from the extension of the pupil : teacher ratio in private subsidised schools from 20 : 1 to 25 : 1, very few other changes had been made and the comment from the NEC had been disregarded.

(DEC: House of Assembly: Annexure 66)

5.4.iii The Ad-hoc Committee and per capita subsidisation of pre-primary schools

Over a period of eighteen months the Ad-Hoc Committee had continued with its task and, when they met in May 1988, an interim report was tabled reflecting consensus of opinion to date. Members were asked to submit any further comments, in writing, to Dr Knoetze by 30 June 1988, so that a final report could be forwarded to the Superintendent General and thence to the Minister.

The interim report contained no radical departures from the status quo, but recommended that provincially (departmentally) controlled pre-primary schools be given greater statutory recognition in the Education Act and that the present commitment to pre-primary staffing be maintained.

(COH, Ad-hoc Committee, 1988a: Annexure 53a)

In a further short report of the Ad-hoc Committee, dated 10 May 1988, paragraph 3 notes:

"Twee sake is nog nie heeltemaal duidelik nie:

- 3.1 Presies wat die finansiële behoefte in verband met die voersiening van pre-primêre onderwys is en
- 3.2 presies hoe die pre-primêre onderwys tans gefinansier word (konflikterende uitsprake word in die verband deur die provinsiale direkteurs van onderwys aan die een kant en die voorsitter van die ADF, aan die ander kant gemaak)"

(COH, Ad-Hoc Committee: Annexure 53b)

Confusion over the financing of pre-primary education was being compounded by a number of factors:

- The widely disproportionate per capita costs of pre-primary education being tabled at the Ad-hoc Committee by the provincial education departments (especially with regard to the TED and the NED due to their divergent policies on the registration of pre-primary schools mentioned previously: Chapter 4).
- The new financing formula for education which ignored the existence of pre-primary pupils and teachers and was based on the number of pupils in the compulsory phases and then linked to a post allocation for those phases.
- The unknown value of the 'B' factor (sometimes also referred to as the 'A' factor) in white education, which inflated 'general affairs' education provision available to all race groups, to allow for the continuation of various aspects of white education including pre-primary education

The final report which reflected the essential points of agreement reached by the Ad-Hoc Committee was forwarded to the Superintendent General, Mr de Villiers Terblanche.

At a subsequent COH meeting it was apparently decided not to accept the Report, as it did not reflect the policy

directions the government wished to pursue. The report was to be returned to the Ad-Hoc Committee to enable it to investigate the possibilities for phasing out subsidies, particularly teacher salary-subsidies. The response of the Ad-Hoc Committee was to be ready for the COH meeting of 1 September 1988.

The Ad-Hoc Committee was called to a further meeting in August 1988, at which a document entitled 'Verdere Verslag van die Ad-Hoc Komitee insake Pre-Primêre onderwys' was tabled for discussion. (COH, 1988: Annexure 54) In paragraph 2.2 of the above document it said:

"Die komitee (KOH) vertolk dit dat die aanbeveling .... van die verslag wat handel oor die status quo ten opsigte van onderwyspersoneel, vir die KOH nie aanvaarbaar is nie, vanweë die nie-beskikbaarheid van fondse en dat riglyne neergelê moet word vir die uitfasering van salarissubsidies aan provinsiaal-beheerde pre-primêre skole/privaatskole waar salarisse van onderwysers betaal word sowel as die van onderwysers in die departementele skole of klasse..."

(COH: 1988)

The report noted that 1959 pre-primary teachers were employed by the provincial education departments in 1988 as follows:

TABLE 5.1: NUMBER OF PRE-PRIMARY TEACHERS EMPLOYED BY PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS (1988)

TED	680
CED	654
NED	452
OFSED	173

Source: COH (1988)

Paragraph 3.7 of the report stated:

"As gevolg van inkortings, word dit deur die onderwysdepartemente ervaar dat hulle die volle subsidïering van pre-primêre onderwysers se salarisse nie langer kan dra nie, aangesien dit geskied ten koste van ander noodsaakliker dienste binne die sektor van verpligte onderwys."

(The writer would contest the exclusion of pre-primary education on the grounds of being less 'noodsaaklik' than other services within compulsory education, given the proven and long term educational, social and financial benefits of early childhood education.)

"h Besluit waardeur hierdie groot groep onderwysers van die diensstate van onderwysdepartement verwyder word, sal ruim tyd moet laat vir h doeltreffende reorganisasie binne die departement en ook binne die skole. h Uitfaseringstydperk waaroor oorbruggings finansiering beding moet word, mag moontlik die enigste wyse wees waarop h doeltreffende oorgang bewerkstelling kan word."

(COH: 1988)

The report described various scenarios for the phasing out of the State's commitment to the payment of teachers' salaries in the pre-primary phase, and a conversion to a per capita subsidy (of between R100 and R200 per pre-school child per year) to be implemented, with effect from 1 April

1990.

The next meeting of the Ad-Hoc Committee took place in August 1988 and members of the Committee considered the implications of the task they were being requested to do. Members of the Ad-Hoc Committee, representing the TFC, withdrew from the meeting as they said that they did not have a mandate from the TFC to participate in decisions or procedures that would lead to the dismantling of the provincial pre-primary systems, as such decisions would severely disadvantage hundreds of pre-primary teachers who were members of the TFC.

The representatives of FedPASA (The Federation of Parents' Associations of South Africa) later excused themselves from the same meeting as they felt that they also did not have a mandate to participate in planning the de-subsidisation of the pre-primary system.

Following the FedPASA withdrawal, Mr Len Harris, their Vice-Chairman, wrote a letter to Dr Knoetze, the chairman of the Ad-Hoc Committee, explaining Fed PASA's position.

His letter, dated 23 August 1988, said:

"FedPASA notes that:

- The Report of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Pre-Primary Education dated 10 May 1988 was rejected or at least referred back to the ad-hoc committee because 'it did not go far enough' or because the initial brief was not clear enough.

- The impression is gained that the CHE has already taken a decision to de-subsidise pre-primary education.
- FedPASA regards such a decision as a political decision and therefore the responsibility of the Minister.
- To our knowledge, no such decision has been made publicly or even privately within the Department.

FedPASA supports the recommendation of the original ad-hoc committee report, to which we were party, regarding the maintenance of the status quo in the allocation of teachers to pre-primary schools.

FedPASA cannot, on the information available to it, support the desubsidising of pre-primary education for the following reasons:

- pre-primary schools would either disappear completely or be reduced to a system of educationally ineffective day-care centres.
- a nucleus of effective pre-basic education would be lost.
- pre-primary education would be lost to those who need it most, namely the socio-economically disadvantaged sectors of our community.
- any future contribution which white Own Affairs education might make to other groups, particularly the Blacks where pre-basic education is most needed, would be forfeited.
- the school-readiness of our children would suffer
- in the medium and long term the need for and cost of remedial education could increase.
- the quality of teaching would suffer due to the lower salaries which private schools would be forced to pay in order to survive.
- the recruitment of qualified pre-primary teachers would dwindle to nothing and after all this
- the saving generated would be less than 1.5% of the annual Own Affairs education budget of R3.6 billion....

FedPASA is not aware of the activities and recommendations of other committees regarding possible cut backs and we are concerned that the financial problems in education appear to be addressed on an ad-hoc basis and with a certain amount of political expediency..."

(FedPASA, 1988: Annexure 55)

The writer has quoted at length from Mr Harris' letter as it raises a number of important issues and helps expose some of the 'behind-the-scenes' manipulation that was occurring at the highest level. regarding pre-primary education.

The point on 'political expediency' is worth noting, as it would appear to the writer, that politicians within the Nationalist Party were kept in ignorance of their leader's intentions or were cynically attempting to keep the process 'on track' by allaying public fears until changes were 'fait accompli'.

Thus in a letter to a concerned parent who had sent in school petitions supporting the inclusion of the provincially/departmentally controlled pre-primary system dated 22 March 1988, Mr Con Botha (MP) for Umlazi, having re-iterated Minister Clase's statement of 2 March, said:

"I may add that the Natal Head Committee of the National Party unanimously adopted the following resolution at its meeting held in Durban on Saturday 19 March 1988:

'The Head Committee re-affirms its unqualified support for the concept of provincially controlled pre-primary education in Natal and accordingly welcomes the recent assurances given by the Minister of Education, Mr P.J. Clase to the effect that provision is, in fact made in the Education Affairs Bill'."

(Botha, 1988: Annexure 48)

In a letter to the Chairman of Sea View Pre-Primary School, dated 29 March 1988, Dr P.J. Steenkamp MP, a member of the



Nationalist Party's Standing Committee on Education wrote:

"On 2 March Minister P. Clase in Parliament summarised the Government's approach as follows:

'The teachers currently teaching at pre-primary schools and who receive their salaries from my department will continue to receive those salaries and do that work!'

He continued:

'I trust that we'll always have sufficient funds in our budget to at least maintain the present situation in pre-primary schools and, if more funds become available, to even extend since this is a very important aspect of education'."

Dr Steenkamp concluded his letter by indicating that the whole Natal parent petition campaign had been unnecessary and was based merely on a misconception. He commented thus:

"Similar misconceptions, and the resulting unnecessary effort, can be avoided by encouraging teachers and parents associations to avail themselves of the official channels of information available to them in order to ensure that they are correctly informed. This will prevent one from having to rely entirely on mischievous journalism and the politics of desperation."

(Steenkamp, 1988: Annexure 49)

Shortly after the abortive Ad-Hoc Committee meeting in August, members of the Committee were requested to reconvene at another meeting in Pretoria, on 16 November 1988. The Superintendent General was present and told committee members that the report on desubsidisation had been tabled at the ad-hoc committee meeting in error and had therefore been withdrawn from the table. He told

teacher and parent representatives how much he appreciated their contribution to the work of the Ad-Hoc Committee and valued pre-primary education, but stressed the unavailability of sufficient funding for this phase.

At this November meeting a small sub-committee of the Ad-Hoc Committee was constituted to develop different models for pre-primary education with varying components of state subsidisation, which would then be presented to the full Ad-Hoc Committee at a meeting in January 1989. Members were also assured that the status quo relating to state funding of pre-primary education would continue in 1989. A member of the sub-committee who represented the TFC, told the writer that the TFC had agreed to participate in drawing up different financial models for pre-primary education as the Superintendent General had clearly indicated that de-subsidisation would proceed 'with or without them' and the TFC felt that they should be involved, in order to protect the interests of pre-primary teachers as much as possible.

Various models for financing pre-primary education were considered by this sub-committee, in accordance with their brief; which was to extend pre-primary provision to the greatest number of children, without any increase in funding. The models included:

- (a) per capita funding of a privatised pre-school system.
- (b) a state funded pre-school year for all 5 year-olds

(reception classes).

It was known that the Superintendent General and members of his staff in Pretoria preferred the per capita model, which involved the granting of a specific subsidy per child and was thus related directly to pupil enrolment. The TED had applied this system to many of its private pre-schools since the late 1960's and almost 20 years later the per capita grant was less than R100 per child per annum. By contrast teacher salary subsidies in Natal, when seen as a cost allocation per child, were approximately R1300 per child per annum.

The extent of financial involvement was not the only difference between the two types of subsidy - the degree of government contractual obligation was another. Teacher salary subsidies, especially to members on permanent staff, involved an ongoing commitment to salaries and other conditions of service. Per capita grants, on the other hand, usually had to be applied for on a quarterly basis (every 3 months) and, if granted, were paid in arrears. The amount was arbitrary and could be altered at the stroke of a pen.

The writer would suggest that the Superintendent General's advocacy of the per-capita model was because of the 'flexibility' it afforded the government in terms of financial and contractual commitment.

The per capita model was, however, proposed on the basis that it would enable pre-primary provision to be extended to more children - a persuasive argument in the political climate of the time, when the government was making much of its commitment to parity of educational provision between all population groups.

The NPPTA became aware of the dominance of the per capita scenario in House of Assembly circles, by the frequency with which it was mooted by high officials in the NED. It wished to know whether any decisions had been taken in this regard, as a result of the Ad-Hoc Committee sub-committee investigation into various models of pre-primary education.

Enquiries to official sources once again did not provide answers and Roger Burrows wrote to Minister Clase seeking clarification. Minister Clase responded in a letter dated 1 November 1989 and said:

"Your conclusion that a per capita subsidy regarding pre-primary schools has, as yet, not been considered by the Minister's Council, is correct. Furthermore, may I assure you that my standpoint in regard to pre-primary education is still as it appeared in Hansard of 2 March 1988."

(Clase, 1989: Annexure 57)

5.4.iv NED staff cut backs in the pre-primary phase (1989):

On 5 October 1989, Director Olmesdhal requested an urgent meeting with the executive members of NTS and NOU, and informed them that the NED would have to reduce the teaching establishment at Post Level 1 by the equivalent of 200 posts at the end of the year.

In a 'Statement to Members' dated 6 October 1989, Gavin Kedian, then NTS President, noted:

"He (the Director) indicated that no decision had yet been reached on how this (reduction of teaching posts) would be done.

It appears probable that a large proportion of the cuts will be effected in the pre-primary phase...

Other areas in which cuts can be made have also been investigated. These include 'uneconomical units' in music schools, the re-organisation of remedial education, minor changes to the teacher ratio in schools and cuts to the quota of teachers on leave. Also under consideration is the position of colleges of education. The Natal Teachers' Society expressed grave concern at proposals to cut back on pre-primary education. We cannot overlook the fact that in South Africa the demand and need is greatest at pre-primary level. The expansion of the pre-primary phase should be a government priority..."

(NTS, 1989a: Annexure 56)

The NTS' public commitment to pre-primary education had come about largely as a result of the work done by members of the NPPTA, who had involved themselves in all NTS structures. Over the years, personal and professional contact on NTS Executive Committee, MANCO and the Principals' Association had convinced many of those in NTS



leadership of the importance of pre-primary education.

The NED issued a lengthy statement to the press on 20 October in which the Director responded to criticism, from the NTS and the press, over teacher cuts. In the statement Mr Olmesdahl noted:

"In the first place, neither the Natal Education Department nor the Department of Education and Culture in the House of Assembly makes policy regarding the provision of education. All such decisions made in the country are taken at the political level by the Government who also provides the necessary funding. The function of the education departments is to carry out the policy of the government of the day.

The adoption of the new constitution which resulted in the establishment of The Department of Education and Culture: House of Assembly, which centralised the provision of education for whites, and the present Government's decision to work rapidly towards a uniform system of funding education for all groups, are political decisions over which this department has no control. The latter decision, which is wholeheartedly supported, taken together with the financial difficulty in which the country finds itself, must inevitably result in less money being available for white education in Natal, than previously..."

(NED, 1989: Annexure 56b)

The Director's statement went on to explain about the financing formula for education:

"This excludes pre-primary pupils who have not reached the minimum school going age. It does not, however, exclude pupils over the minimum school leaving age because the law makes provision for them to remain at school."

(NED, 1989)

His statement also attempted to explain the position of

pre-primary teachers in the post structure and the confusion that had arisen in the NED over the interpretation of the formula regarding the term 'full time equivalents'. The NED had taken this to mean 'teaching posts' where as it included locum tenentes and other replacements. The NED had thus applied the formula incorrectly and this had resulted in the need for a reduction of 200 posts.

After considering the limited options open to the NED for staff reduction, the statement concluded:

"Only two other options are open, either to introduce new more stringent staffing formula which would reduce the number of teachers in each school and so make Natal out of step with the other provincial education departments, or to effect savings in the pre-primary sector, which is the only area in which the Department provides teachers but where the pupils do not generate either funds or teachers in terms of the financing formula and where the pupils are also not subject to compulsory school attendance."

(NED, 1989)

At the end of 1989, 82 pre-primary posts were cut from the NED staff establishment.

In November 1989 new staff quotas detailing the allocation of permanent and temporary posts in the different phases were approved for NED schools and were forwarded to the NTS and NOU for their information. Pre-Primary teachers were not included in these quotas.

The NTS was still receiving contradictory information, concerning the funding of pre-primary education and, under pressure from the NPPTA, sought to finally clarify the matter by requesting an interview in Pretoria with Mr de Jager, from whose Department the financing formula emanated.

In terms of paragraph 2 of the 'Konsepskakelingsprosedures vir die Georganiseerde Onderwysprofessie' a recognised teachers' society could arrange for an interview with the Superintendent General through a Director of Education and so, in November 1989, NTS requested the NED Director, Mr Olmesdahl to arrange an interview with the Superintendent General and/or Mr de Jager.

(NTS, 1989b: Annexure 60)

An interview with Mr de Jager was confirmed, but was later cancelled, on the instruction of the Superintendent General.



5.4.v     Attempts to introduce a privatised, per capita subsidised pre-primary system

In February 1990, the NPPTA received an anxious call from a sister association, The Pre-Primary Interest Group of the Transvaal Teachers' Association (TTA), seeking to confirm whether an official decision had been taken to implement the private per capita subsidy model.

The concern of the TTA's Pre-Primary Interest Group arose as a result of a speech, given by the Superintendent General, de Villiers Terblanche, at the AGM of 'die Belangegroep Pre-Primêre Onderwys van die Transvaalse Onderwysers Vereniging' (TO) which took place on 24 February 1990. In this speech, he promoted the private per capita subsidy model for pre-primary saying:

"By die invoering van so 'n model, sou die volgende belangrike oorwegings geld:

- 'n Beter opvoedkundig-verantwoordbare verspreiding van fondse onder instansies wat pre-primêre onderwys bedryf, sal daar daardeur verkry word.
- Skole wat aan die neergeleëde registrasievereistes voldoen, moet vir 'n per capita-subsidie kan kwalifiseer.
- Om vir minder goeie gebiede voorsiening te maak, moet 'n formule of glyskaal, gebaseer op die bruto inkomste van beide ouers of die gemiddelde inkomste per gesin in 'n bepaalde skool, ontwerp word.
- Permanente onderwyspersoneel of die dienstate van die provinsiale onderwysdepartemente se posisie moet verskans bly."

(de Villiers Terblanche, 1990: Annexure 61)

The Superintendent General went on to describe how the per capita system would be phased in over a period of years: as permanent and temporary posts became vacant, they would be phased out and the funds saved from salaries would go into a pool, from which schools (which met the relevant criteria) would be paid a per capita subsidy. This subsidy would be limited by the size of the pool, but would reach its maximum when all teachers were paid by school management committees and not by the education departments.

This speech was reported in the TO magazine *MONDSTUK* in March 1990 and in a March edition of *SATA Education News*. (Mondstuk, 1990 Annexure 62) (*SATA Education News*, 1990: Annexure 63). The latter also gave some background to the Ad-Hoc Committee investigation into pre-primary education and then stated:

"Approval has been given, in principle, by the Ministers' Council of the House of Assembly and further consultation with the TFC and the Federation of Parents' Associations will take place before the model is laid before the Provincial Education Councils in June of this year. A date of commencement has, therefore, not been set."

(*SATA*, 1990: Annexure 63)

It appeared to the NPPTA that decisions had already been taken and a new policy agreed upon, however, it could still move to ensure that such a policy proposal met with informed resistance at the NEC. NPPTA's Central Committee held an emergency meeting, at which a memorandum was drafted motivating the rejection of the per capita subsidy

for Natal pre-primary schools.

(NPPTA, 1990: Annexure 70)

In mid May 1990, this memorandum was circulated to all members of the NEC, to management committees of pre-primary schools in the province, to the press and through the NTS to officials in the NED and to the TFC.

(NPPTA, 1990: Annexure 70)

A letter was also drafted by NPPTA, which was sent to Minister P.J. Clase from the NTS, signed by the President, Gavin Kedian. This letter posed a number of questions relating to statements made by Minister Clase and Superintendent General de villiers Terblanche and pointed out how the uniform system of provincially/departmentally controlled pre-primary schools in Natal had not led to the vast disparities of provision that existed amongst pre-schools in the Transvaal. The letter continued:

"It seems tragically short-sighted to impose an inflexible central model where it is both inappropriate and unnecessary. It also seems illogical, at a time when your Department is looking to create greater flexibility in other phases by offering options in terms of models (A, B, C, etc) additional to the existing system, that you would seek to simultaneously impose a single, centralised 'final solution' model on the pre-primary system.

The mere linear expansion of educational provision in any phase does not mean that the benefits will be equally distributed..."

(NTS, 1990: Annexure 71)

NPPTA felt that the strength of the departmentally controlled pre-primary system lay in the quality of the teachers employed in these schools. They not only delivered the educational programme, but developed and sustained the ethos of these schools, as the letter noted:

"Parent committees at pre-schools serve an average term of 2 years while their children are at school. The provincially-controlled schools are not owned by individuals, but are owned by parent associations registered as non-profit making companies. The members of these associations change from year to year. In these schools the continuity, in terms of both educational quality and the schools relationship with the local community, is maintained by the principal and teaching staff."

(NTS, 1990)

The Minister's talk of privatisation of pre-primary education was questioned as follows:

"Investment in pre-primary schools is not a priority with the private sector as:

- there are no tax benefits
- it does not have the same prestige (as other sectors of education)
- in the South African context there is little reason to support white or largely white institutions when the need is obviously greater in the black sector

Therefore 'privatisation' is misleading in this context and should be stated as 'desubsidisation' with associated cost increases for parents..."

(NTS, 1990)

The Minister's office acknowledged receipt of the above letter, but no reply was ever received.

A Memorandum emanating from head office of the DEC (House



of Assembly) entitled 'Financing of Pre-Primary Education' was tabled during June 1990 at the NEC and at the other provincial education councils.

(DEC [House of Assembly], 1990: Annexure 72)

The memorandum appeared as an item towards the end of a lengthy NEC agenda and it motivated the changeover from a salary subsidy system to a per capita subsidy system for all pre-primary schools by using funds presently 'within the system' (ie state funds being used for teachers salaries and grants).

The amount 'presently within the system' was given as R53 million. (R73.4 million was voted for the 1990/1991 financial year which represented between 1.5% and 2% of the total education budget, House of Assembly.)

This Memorandum indicated that the introduction of the new system would take place over a 'bridging period of 3 years'. After discussion, which was to a large measure facilitated by information gained by members from NPPTA's memorandum, the Natal Education Council rejected the per capita system and advocated the continuation of the salary subsidy (departmentally controlled) model in Natal pre-primary schools. The per capita subsidy model was also rejected by two of the other provincial education councils.

5.4.vi NPPTA publication: *Formative Phase Education - The Foundation for the Future*

Although relieved by the NEC's rejection of the proposed per capita subsidy system, the NPPTA felt that the future of the departmentally controlled system was by no means assured.

NPPTA Executive Committee accepted that, in light of demographic and economic realities, no future government would be able to fund the present three year system of pre-primary education for all children. Members were convinced of the transformational potential of quality pre-primary education and so debate focused more and more on how to retain and maximise the impact of trained pre-primary teachers in a new educational dispensation and spread the philosophy and methodology of activity-based, mediated learning into the lower levels of primary education. A four year, state-funded 'Formative Phase' module was envisaged. Children would enter a pre-primary class aged 5 and then proceed to Class i, ii and Std 1.

A sub-committee of NPPTA was formed to draft a document promoting this vision. The final document entitled '*Formative Phase Education: Foundation for the Future*' was printed at the end of April 1991. NPPTA distributed it widely: to teacher associations, political organisations, church groupings, the top hundred companies, education departments, universities and newspaper editors as well as

to junior-primary and pre-primary schools; to try and promote a common consciousness and vision and an awareness of the importance of education in the early years.

A copy was also sent to Minister Clase who acknowledged receipt in a letter dated 12 June 1991 and commented as follows:

"... The significance and essential nature of formative phase education - known by a variety of names in various countries - has been demonstrated beyond doubt. As you will appreciate, the nature of the debate then becomes not so much whether there should be formative phase education, but how best it can be implemented - and, in countries with scarce financial resources such as our own, what priority it should enjoy if not all educational priorities can be funded."

(Clase, 1991: Annexure 81)

The writer would suggest that in a state education system prioritisation should be decided, firstly, on the basis of human rights and also in terms of returns on investment - the cost effectiveness of a particular education in terms of educational, social and economic gains.

5.4.vii Further large scale staff cuts in Natal pre-primary schools (1991)

In February 1991 NTS representatives had heard of impending staff cuts in white education while attending confidential executive meetings of the TFC. These cuts were related to the accelerated introduction of moves to parity in the 'B' factor between white provincial education departments. A decision had apparently been taken at central government level that required all departments to move to a 'B' factor of 1 by 1994 (it was believed that a factor of 1 was going to be the base-level for funding all education departments in the future). White education departments had been instructed to move to a 'B' factor of 1.4 by the end of 1991. The NED at that time had a 'B' factor of 1.58 and would need to abolish 600 teaching posts at the end of the year in order to achieve this.

The NED, on receiving information from head office, called an urgent meeting with NTS and NOU, where it outlined the areas in which these cutbacks would be effected. The two Teachers' Societies were informed that virtually the entire cut was to be made in 'auxiliary services' ie pre-primary, remedial, psychological services and special education etc. Almost 50% of pre-primary school teachers, still employed by the NED, were to be retrenched. (The number of NED paid pre-primary teaching posts at that time was 334, but taking into account teachers on paid leave replaced by loci, about 360 teachers were still within the system.)



To try and gain clarity on the future of pre-primary teachers in Natal, Roger Burrows wrote to the Director of the NED asking questions about the staffing and financing of this phase.

In his reply, dated 6 March 1991, Mr Olmesdahl indicated that no cuts would take place during the course of 1991, but added:

"...owing to the severe financial restraints imposed on the Natal Education Department considerable adjustments will have to be made from January 1992. The scope and nature of these adjustments are presently being investigated in conjunction with the two professional societies, but I am certain that no section of the NED will remain un-affected. This includes the provision made for pre-primary education..."

(NED, 1991a: annexure 73)

The letter also contained calculations of NED expenditure on pre-primary education in the 1990/91 financial year. This was given as almost R15½ million. According to NED officials this represented ±4% of the total NED budget.

Roger Burrows forwarded a copy of this letter to the NPPTA on 19 March 1991.

On 18 March 1991 the NPPTA sent out an information letter to all its members in which it warned them of the impending cuts. (NPPTA, 1991: Annexure 73) This move was deemed necessary as most schools finalised their pupil acceptances in May and June for the following year and staffing cuts

would mean that schools would have to totally reassess their budgets and fee structure. The NPPTA letter read as follows:

"The Director has stated in the Natal Education Council that, in future, only the five year old year is likely to be subsidised. Faced with the realities of black child population and the limitations of state funding this would appear reasonable.

As a pre-school phase we might well have to accept that only 5 year olds would be funded in terms of teachers' salaries - however, our schools are being destroyed without allowing us opportunities for creative adaption..."

(NPPTA, 1991)

It also said that the enrolments and age groupings that existed in Natal pre-primary schools at that time reflected the dictates of NED policy and that pre-schools, unlike those in the compulsory sector, had not been given the opportunity to vote on models for 'open schools'.

"Irrespective of the convictions of parent communities (many of whom are now subsidising their schools almost 50% in terms of total costs) pre-schools have no autonomy to admit children of other races..."

Given the opportunity to re-arrange age groupings (over a period of a year or two) many schools could cut out their 3 year old groups and either serve a 4 and 5 year old population or have an exclusively 'bridging' school focus on 5/6 year olds. This is particularly feasible in an open schools perspective..."

(NPPTA, 1991)

NPPTA pointed out that, within a bridging school scenario, the majority of teachers in the school would still be subsidised by the state and the 'school readiness' year

would be extended to a far wider group of 5 year old children of all races.

On 22 March 1991 the NED gave a statement to the press on the staff cuts that were to be implemented with effect from 1 January 1992. The 50% cut in the pre-primary phase was explained as follows:

"A survey has revealed that 50% of pupils attending these (pre-primary) schools in Natal are in the pre-school year, the balance being 3 and 4 year olds. It is our belief that the onus is on the parent community to pay for all 3 and 4 year olds, but that the Department could, in terms of its consistent support of pre-primary education, as long as financially possible, continue to provide assistance for the immediate pre-school group - this despite the fact that no pre-primary pupils are taken into account in the formula which determines the number of teaching staff which the Natal Education Department may employ. Accordingly a 50% reduction of staff quotas (approximately 165 posts) will be applied and school management councils will be advised individually of their revised staff allocations..."

(NED, 1991b: Annexure 75)

The same press statement was sent to principals of pre-primary schools in an information circular signed by Mr John Deane (NED, 1991b: Annexure 77) and a few weeks later Circular Minute 43/1991, dated 26 April, was distributed which gave the staff allocation scales for 1992 which were as follows:

**TABLE 5.2: NED STAFF ALLOCATION TO PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS (1992)**

Pupil Enrolment	Staff for 1992
1 - 30	0
31 - 79	1
80 and above	2

Source: NED (1991)

In the Circular Minute 43/1991 it was stated:

"6.1 The allocation of staff is determined by the actual pupil enrolment, which in turn, may not exceed the official maximum registration as fixed on 31 March 1991....

6.2 All pupils, irrespective of colour, are included in the pupil enrolment. You are reminded, however, that the admission procedure for pupils of colour remains unchanged for the present."

(NED, 1991d: Annexure 78)

As regards paragraph 6.2 'the admission procedures' had initially required the principal and management committee of the pre-primary concerned to motivate for each individual case to the Director and thence to the Minister. The school had to give assurance that admission of a black child did not prevent any white child attending. As many pre-primary schools had long waiting lists, this requirement meant that black parents, who had placed their child's name on the waiting list when it was only a few months old, could be denied entry by any late application from a white child.

These admission procedures were adjusted in 1990 so that decisions on application could be made by the Director of the NED, without going to the Minister and, since 1992, these admissions are now left to the management committees of the schools concerned - provided that the admission of children from other population groups does not exceed 50% of the total pupil enrolment.

### 5.5 Conclusion

Pre-primary education in Natal underwent large scale desubsidisation in the years from 1985 to 1992 which was reflected in staff cut-backs of NED teachers in the phase. Retrenchments took place at the end of 1984, 1989 and 1991, which left departmentally controlled pre-primary schools in the province with only one third of their teaching staff paid by the Department. Teachers, who had been cut from the NED staff establishment, now relied on parent committees for employment - usually at salaries well below those they had hitherto been receiving. Parent committees, burdened with two thirds of the teachers' salary bill, in addition to the salaries of domestic and administrative staff, bond payments or rentals on buildings, and all other running costs, were forced to raise fees and by 1992, the average quarterly fee per child had risen to over R400.

From the beginning of 1992, NED salary subsidies to schools were reduced to: payment of the principal's salary (in schools with 84 pupils or less) or payment of the salaries of the principal plus that of one teacher in the larger schools (85 - 160 pupils).

In the other provinces, pre-primary schools did not suffer staff cuts in the 1980's, but retrenchments occurred at the end of 1991 as the provincial education departments worked to reduce the value of their 'B' factor in the financing formula for education.

At its peak, the amount spent on (white) pre-primary education in South Africa was less than 1.6% of the (white) national education budget. This small budgetary allocation represented the combined expenditure of the four provinces at the time of the introduction of 'own-affairs' education in 1986.

Since 1989, the Government has sought to withdraw from the structured commitment to pre-primary education, established by the provinces, in terms of teacher salary-subsidies and has advocated 'privatising' all pre-primary schools and funding them, if at all, on a nominal per-capita basis.

Although the proposed per capita scenario was rejected by the provincial education councils in 1990, the writer doubts whether the plan was abandoned at that stage.

The Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) document published in November 1992, which was taken to reflect government thinking, dealt with the whole question of pre-primary education in just over two pages in chapters 12 and 24.

Paragraph 12.1 states:

"Although some education departments are involved in providing pre-primary education, most departments have had to scale down their activities in this sphere owing to severe budget restrictions. Furthermore, no general policy for this type of education exists at present, each education department determining its own approach to pre-primary education. This approach is based

on a decision taken by the Education Ministers in 1987 that general policy for ordinary school education should first be determined in its various facets, after which policy for pre-primary education could be considered."

(ERS, 1992)

The writer would query whether the fact that there is 'no general policy' should be viewed as a reason or excuse for lack of provision. There is no 'general policy' because the central government has never chosen to commit itself to a policy beyond the level of rhetoric. Even under apartheid provision, pre-primary education for whites, was not seen as an integral part of the system, but was viewed as a non-essential 'add-on' component, to be provided as and when the finances of the provinces allowed.

It would appear that no-one advising the Education Ministers, considered the possibility that 'ordinary education' was failing the majority of pupils and that a more relevant basic education system could be informed by the philosophy and practice of pre-primary education.

The ERS document acknowledged the value of pre-primary education, thus, before writing off even one year of state-funded pre-primary education as totally unaffordable!

"The value of pre-primary education in improving performance in the ordinary school is universally acknowledged. This is the case particularly with learners from disadvantaged backgrounds who frequently are not ready for school when reaching school-going age. The result is usually manifested in high drop-out rates during later school years."

(ERS, 1992)



It would appear to the writer that this statement suggests the very reason that this country cannot afford to do without pre-primary education.

Statistics for black education reveal appalling failure and drop-out rates that result in almost 50% of children (who enter Grade 1 in any given year) not completing primary education. The highest drop-out occurs in Grade 1 itself, where apart from problems of access and poverty, major factors that influence the drop-out and failure rates are the lack of 'school readiness', a sense of alienation arising out of the disjunction that occurs between the culture of the home and that of the school and the formal rote-learning approach employed in most primary schools.

A large proportion of black children in South Africa come from 'disadvantaged backgrounds' in terms of their knowledge of concepts that facilitate successful formal learning. Quality pre-primary education, even of one year's duration, combined with a change of teaching approach in the lower primary classes, would greatly ameliorate this situation.

## 5.6 Summary

The development and desubsidisation of the Natal provincially/departmentally controlled pre-primary system occurred as a result of Departmental reaction to changing political and economic circumstances.

The NED instituted downgrading measures in pre-primary education in 1987 in an attempt to limit expenditure on the phase. These measures were followed by large-scale staff retrenchments of NED-employed teachers in departmentally controlled pre-primary schools in 1989 and 1992. The pre-primary sector, and remedial education, bore the brunt of crisis management and ad-hoc decisions taken by NED officials forced to adjust to rapid change and resource constraint without clarity as to a centrally formulated policy vision or guidance in terms of long-term planning.

At national level, the creation of the COH Ad-Hoc Committee on Pre-Primary Education and the attempt to privatise pre-primary education and limit funding to nominal per-capita subsidies, based on a finite monetary pool, is seen by the writer as an attempt to 'side line' pre-primary education and in doing so avoid state commitment to pre-schooling in any future education dispensation.

Black education has, for the past few years, been moving closer and closer to the brink of chaos. The vast problems of under-resourcing (lack of facilities, teachers, text

books and equipment) have been exacerbated by pupil and teacher stay-aways, strikes, intimidation and destruction of facilities.

White education, while functioning fairly efficiently, is in a state of limbo awaiting the outcome of a new political dispensation.

In July 1993, the National Education and Training Forum (NETF) was created to bring together all recognised national 'stakeholders' in education; departments, teacher organisations, parent organisations, business groups and political parties, with the intention of trying to solve the crisis in education and consider policy options for the future.

In the last three years, various reports, investigations and discussion documents, including policy proposals and options for education in South Africa, have been drawn up by different groups. Following the first national elections, held from 27 to 29 April 1994, the Interim Government, in all likelihood advised by the NETF, will be seeking to create policy for a new South African education system.

Policy options and proposals already on the table include the Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) (which is seen to reflect the position of the erstwhile Nationalist

Government), the reports of the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), commissioned by the NECC and the ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training.

On a provincial level, the two reports of the Natal-Kwa Zulu Education Working Group represent an initiative, among the education departments in that province, which focusses largely on the practical and bureaucratic realities of trying to merge the five racially based education departments into a single, regional education department. The reports do, however, contain some policy advocacy.

The place of pre-primary education in the aforementioned documents will be discussed in Chapter 6.

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- NED, (1987b): Circular No 71/1987  
TO: Rectors of Colleges of Education  
and Principals of all Government  
Schools and Private Pre-Primary Schools  
Teaching Posts at Pre-Primary Schools  
Annexure 44
- NED, (1989): Press Statement by the NED Executive  
Director: Education  
Reply to Sunday Tribune re: Cutback of  
Teachers  
20 October 1989  
Annexure 56b
- NED, (1991a): Letter from Director of NED to R.  
Burrows  
Pre-Primary Funding  
6 March 1991  
Annexure 74

NED, (1991b): Press Release by the NED Executive Director: Education, regarding staff cut-backs

25 March 1991

Annexure 71

NED, (1991c): Letter from the Deputy Director of the NED to NED Principals containing information on the Press Release by the Executive Director: Education

Annexure 77

NED, (1991d): Circular Minute No 43/1991  
To Principals of Provincially Controlled Pre-Primary Schools

Staffing of Pre-Primary Schools: 1992

25 April 1991

Annexure 78

NPPTA Source Materials

NPPTA, (1987a): Response to the NTS regarding 'Proposed NED 'economy measures' in the Pre-Primary Phase

2 September 1987

Annexure 39

NPPTA, (1987b):                   Memorandum supporting the continuance  
of the Provincially-Controlled system  
of Pre-Primary Education  
Annexure 45

NPPTA, (1990):                   Memorandum to the NEC Motivating the  
Rejection of the Private Per Capita  
Subsidy System for Natal Pre-Primary  
Schools  
15 May 1990  
Annexure 70

NPPTA, (1991a):                  Information letter to Colleagues  
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pre-primary education with effect from  
31 December 1991  
Annexure 73

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downgrading of pre-primary provision  
22 September 1987  
Annexure 43

- NTS, (1989a):                      President's Statement to Members  
                                         (regarding staff-cuts)  
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- NTS, (1989b):                      Letter of request for an interview with  
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                                         Jager  
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Annexure 48

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23 August 1988

Annexure 55

Steenkamp, P., (1988): Letter from P.J. Steenkamp, MP (House of Assembly) to the Chairman of Sea View Pre-Primary School

29 March 1988

Annexure 49

Interview

Hosking, G, (1991): Interview with Dr G Hosking

Director of the NED from 1972 to 1982

CHAPTER SIX : POLICY OPTIONS  
RELATING TO PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Critical review of policy perspectives relating to pre-primary education:

- 6.2.i The ERS
- 6.2.ii The NEPI Reports
- 6.2.iii The ANC Education Policy Framework
- 6.2.iv The Report on the South African Study on Early Childhood Education
- 6.2.v NPPTA Memorandum: Formative Phase Education - The Foundation for the Future
- 6.2.vi The Reports of the Natal-KwaZulu Education Working Group
- 6.2.vii Interim Report from the KZ-N Working Group Sub-Committee on pre-primary education.

6.3 Conclusion

6.4 Summary

## CHAPTER 6

### POLICY OPTIONS RELATING TO PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

#### 6.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, various policy proposals and options will be looked at, in terms of the consideration given to pre-primary education and the more extended concept of early childhood education or development. Possible future directions will then be discussed. The ERS, NEPI Reports, ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training, The CEPD Report on the South African Study on Early Childhood Development and their subsequent IPET (Implementation Plan for Education and Training) task team report as well as the KwaZulu-Natal Education Working Group Reports will be the main sources of reference.

This dissertation has documented the way in which the Nationalist Government sought to avoid any direct commitment to pre-primary education for the entire period they were in power (1948 - April 1994). Although a broad policy statement on nursery education was made by the Minister of National Education in 1969, policy development, planning, implementation and funding were made the responsibility of the provinces.

Financial feasibility and commitment of funds are, however, critical facets of policy development, if things are to move from the level of rhetoric to that of planning and



implementation. It is the writer's contention that the Nationalist Government rejected financial responsibility for pre-primary education because it did not regard it as an educational priority and funding of this sector could not take place if the status quo in the rest of the white education system was to be maintained. State funding of even one year of pre-primary education would require comprehensive changes to the system brought into being by the 1967 National Education Policy Act.

The main argument against any form of state provision of pre-primary education has always been that it is not economically feasible - that there are not sufficient funds available within the education budget to support pre-primary education. Allocation of funds within the budget is, however, a matter of prioritisation and the result of trade-offs between competing sectors. It would appear that the priorities of the Nationalist Government have been increasingly influenced by a constructed white reality and biased towards the interests of secondary and tertiary education, right up until the election in April 1994.

This can be seen in the way in which pre-primary education was dealt with in the ERS, which was published by the Department of National Education in November 1992.

## 6.2 Critical review of policy perspectives relating to pre-primary education

### 6.2.i Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) Management solutions for education in South Africa (1992)

In the foreword, the then Minister of National Education, Mr P.G. Marais said:

"The ERS does not merely comprise of an implementation blueprint for education. It represents policy standpoints and proposed short and medium term solutions for the most important problems and questions in education. The policy standpoints stated in this report provide a broad framework for the development of implementation plans for the renewal of education..."

(ERS, 1992: iv)

In the Executive Summary of the ERS a resumé of the main standpoints are given, which clearly spell out the authors' position on pre-primary education.

Firstly, a period of 9 years of compulsory general education is advocated, financed by the state at approximately 95%. Children are seen as entering the compulsory education system at the age of 6 or 7 years. No pre-primary component is included in the system.

(ERS, 1992: ix & xii)

Then the question of pre-primary education is dealt with thus:

"The financing models for education show that a compulsory and mainly state financed year of pre-school education is not attainable due to the large numbers of pupils involved. Nevertheless the importance of pre-school education is ensuring high success and retention rates in

later school years is beyond doubt." (ERS, 1992: xi)

It is then suggested that a task group, representative of all role players, be set up to conduct a national investigation into the provision of pre-primary education. In the interim (for which no time period is suggested) the state is not seen as having any responsibility for provision which, it is understood, will be provided by "...private sector and community initiatives and distance education aimed at parents and pre-schoolers."

(ERS, 1992: xi)

Pre-primary education is briefly touched on again in Chapter 12 and a single year of state-funded pre-school education is included in one of the scenarios in Chapter 24 (which deals with the financial implications of various policy options).

The scenario in Chapter 24 looks at 8 years of totally state-funded compulsory education, Grade 0 - 7, (on a 35:1 pupil : teacher ratio). It also suggests that Grades 8 and 9 are funded at 75% and Grade 10 - 12 at 50%.

After projecting expenditure for 10 years the authors conclude:

"... This scenario amounts to wishful thinking. There is absolutely no way the state can finance pre-school education on the basis proposed in this scenario..."

(ERS, 1992: 126)

They further state that pupil : teacher ratios (which could result in classes of 38) were "...quite out of the question in the pre-school year if the aim of such a (pre-school) year is to teach school-readiness..."

(ERS, 1992: 127)

They then contemplate the effects of less than full state funding of the pre-school year and discard this option also, as it could then not be made compulsory and "...the great numbers of learners for whom school-readiness programmes are essential, because they are handicapped by their unfavourable milieu, could not be compelled to undergo this type of education."

(ERS, 1992: 127)

Whilst the rejection of state responsibility for pre-primary education is quite apparent in the ERS - the writer would suggest that the rather emotive use of language and the oddly contradictory arguments employed, would suggest that the authors 'doth protest too much'!

To speak of aspects of pre-primary education (school-readiness programmes) as being 'essential' for great numbers of disadvantaged learners, to acknowledge the importance of pre-school education in 'ensuring high success and retention rates in later school years' and then to discard pre-primary education as 'unattainable' on the basis of one financial scenario would appear illogical. It

also seems rather unrealistic to discount pupil : teacher ratios of 35 : 1 as being unacceptable, if school readiness is to be attained and yet expect children a year older, without the advantage of any form of pre-school education, to be successfully educated in Grade 1 classes where 35 : 1 will possibly be the most favourable ratio encountered.

The rejection of a state-funded pre-school year on the grounds that it is "...not attainable due to the large numbers of pupils involved", (ERS, 1992: xi) underscores the writer's contention, in Chapters 1 and 5, that the Government's attempt to withdraw funding from (white) pre-primary education, following the introduction of the Tricameral system, was to avoid the financial implications of having pre-primary education considered a 'general affair'. If it had become a 'general affair', provision would have had to have been extended to all population groups, which would have necessitated a fundamental change in education policy and financial provision. White education would have been the sector most profoundly affected by such changes.

Whereas the ERS reflected policy choices or preferences of the, then Government, the NEPI Reports, published in 1993, were commissioned by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) and presented various policy options seen as being acceptable to the 'mass democratic movement' (which to a large degree represented the disenfranchised

sectors of the population).

6.2.ii National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) Reports

The NEPI was commissioned by the NECC at the end of 1990 with a brief to 'produce an analysis of education options and their implications in all major areas of education policy' (NEPI, 1993: 1). Twelve research groups were set up to look into particular aspects of education. One such group focused on 'Early Childhood Edu-care'. These groups produced reports on their particular areas of interest, but NEPI also included summaries of the twelve reports in a document entitled '*The Framework Report and Final Report Summaries*'.

The NEPI rejects the total privatisation of edu-care (pre-school) services on the grounds that it is the poorest children who need the services most. It, nevertheless, does not see free edu-care services as a viable option, as it recognises that the state cannot afford to assume full responsibility for the education and care of the under 6's. It is envisaged that responsibility for provision of pre-school services be viewed as a partnership between the state and those who benefit - mainly parents and the community. Additional support could be obtained from the private sector, development agencies, churches, foundations and foreign aid. Employer support for full-day edu-care is also advocated.

The NEPI suggests that state assistance to the pre-school sector takes the form of per capita grants to subsidise

operating costs.

Much of the pre-school development envisaged by the NEPI would be community-based and training of staff and accreditation of training courses and of the edu-care centres themselves, would be largely in the hands of the non-governmental organisations (NGO's).

The authors' of the NEPI Summary Report on ECE acknowledge a bias towards the development of policy and provision for 'edu-care' (informal, grass-roots, community-based initiatives which operate under the umbrella of NGO's) rather than for pre-primary or junior primary education. This stance is understandable when one considers not only the long years of neglect, the vast needs and limited resources available to this pre-school sector, but the fact that most of the NEPI researchers and authors are drawn from the NGO's or from tertiary institutions!

The NEPI does, however, see what could be described as specialist pre-primary education, as having relevance, both in terms of preparation for school and in upgrading the quality of junior primary education:

Options considered as a preparation for school include:

- A bridging period programme (BPP) which is introduced in the first year of formal schooling for those



children who are not ready for formal instruction. This programme is seen as being very flexible, extending from a few weeks to an entire year, with children passing into Class i at various times - as they reach certain levels of competence.

- A pre-primary class of one years duration for 5 year olds, before formal schooling.

(NEPI, 1993a: 125)

The authors of the NEPI do not consider that a pre-primary class for 5 year olds will add greatly to the overall cost of education, if it is combined with a junior primary upgrading programme, as failure, drop out and repetition rates in primary education will be greatly ameliorated.

When considering the problems that beset many junior primary classes ie overcrowding, poor teacher : pupil ratios, inappropriate teaching methodology, lack of facilities and resources and under-trained teachers, the urgent need for the upgrading of junior primary education becomes apparent.

Options related to junior primary upgrading considered in the NEPI include:

- A primary education upgrading programme' which includes automatic promotion to ease congestion in the early grades.

- A British infant school system with school entrance at 5 years of age and a flexible promotion policy so that children can progress to the end of Standard 1 in either three or four years.

(NEPI, 1993a: 125)

The bridging period programme (BPP) is seen as being a 'minimum first step' towards the upgrading of the quality of junior primary schooling and a second best option to a pre-school year for all 5 year olds along the lines of the British infant school model.

Such a BPP programme would be based on a high activity curriculum, with teacher-friendly school-readiness manuals and materials and in-class support for teachers. Implementation of such a programme would, therefore, also amount to INSET courses for teachers.

The NEPI Report Summary on ECE includes sections on Governance and Training and Support Services, which have relevance for this study.

### Governance

In terms of Governance, it states:

"There are two key issues around which major policy decisions will have to be made. The first relates to co-ordination and the second to decentralisation."

(NEPI, 1993: 127)

### Co-ordination of provision

Regarding co-ordination of edu-care provision, the authors accept the need for central state involvement in planning and policy development in order to achieve "...unity and ensure redistribution and redress, as well as co-ordination between different departments and sectors if necessary..."

(NEPI, 1993: 127)

The question is raised as to whether edu-care should be located in one ministry or whether existing multi-sectoral involvement should be encouraged and co-ordinated in some way.

Edu-care provision for the under-fives is seen as possibly being facilitated through a separate over-arching Ministry which co-ordinates inter-sectoral co-operation between departments like Health, Welfare, Education, Housing etc, guided by a national policy for children.

Pre-school services for 5 year olds are, however, seen as being part of junior primary education and, as such, it is accepted that provision for this age group will become a responsibility of the education department/s under a single Ministry of Education.

### Decentralisation

When considering the balance between centralisation versus de-centralisation of edu-care provision, the authors' of

NEPI strongly advocate the principle that there should be maximum devolution of management and control of pre-school services to the community level. They accept the need for central planning, particularly in terms of resource allocation, but stress the importance of community participation and control.

While accepting that the costs of junior primary school education, including the five year old year, should be borne by the state, the importance of parent involvement in school upgrade is noted as "...a means of strengthening the parental role in early childhood education, reintegrating schools into the community and offsetting certain costs."

(NEPI, 1993a: 129)

#### Training and Support Services

In the NEPI it is estimated that about 6% of African children in the 0 - 6 year age range attend any sort of pre-school facility (Short: 1992) and most of these children are in centres where edu-care workers are untrained or have received some basic training from NGO's. (Many of the NGO trainers hold no formally recognised qualification in pre-school education.)

Many Indian, Coloured and White children are also in pre-school institutions in which staff are untrained or informally trained. There is presently only a small group

of tertiary qualified pre-primary educators in the field, mainly in schools where White, Indian and Coloured children are in the majority. The challenges of spreading and upgrading the training of 'teachers' in the pre-school sector are both enormous and immediate.

The NEPI maintains that one ministry should take overall responsibility for both formal and non-formal training of pre-school teachers in order to "ensure that all training needs are met as effectively as possible and to eliminate existing disparities".

(NEPI, 1993: 130)

Various principles related to training are discussed viz: the integration of formal and non-formal training, an overall system of accreditation, access to courses, equivalency of different types of training, job status and salary, the training and accreditation, of those who train teachers and the funding of training courses.

The authors note:

"The main policy issues relate to the length and purpose of pre-service formal training, future state - NGO relationships and the system of course accreditation. Possible options reflect different degrees of state control."

(NEPI, 1993: 130)

The writer would suggest that, as the degree of state control would be greatest in the case of provision for five year olds, (if provision is state-funded and falls under

the Ministry of Education) the qualification/training of teachers for this age group would have to be equivalent to that of other teachers in junior primary education. This is likely to lead to more formal tertiary requirements in terms of training, as differentiation of qualification, salaries and other benefits, within the same education phase, may prove to be problematic in the longer term.

The NEPI reports have been dealt with in terms of what they contribute to this study, regarding policy and provision of pre-primary education. The writer would, however, like to acknowledge the NEPI Report on Edu-care and the position papers which contributed to that report, as important contributions to the debate on early childhood education - not only because of suggested policy directions, but in terms of the detailed information and research data included.

6.2.iii The ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training

In December 1993, the ANC discussion document *A Policy Framework for Education and Training* was published and circulated for comment. In February 1994 a revised edition was published which reflected no fundamental policy changes.

The 'Policy Framework for Education and Training' was drawn up by the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) commissioned by the ANC. In terms of much of its vision for pre-school education it draws heavily on the NEPI.

The importance of care and development of the under fives is stressed. The ANC adopts the NEPI suggestions that edu-care provision be expanded by supporting an increase in both state and private sector funding and that special divisions be established both at national and provincial levels, to facilitate inter-sectoral liaison between relevant departments.

The authors describe the attitude of the former Government thus:

"Previous Governments have taken the view that the care of infants and young children is mainly the responsibility of families, communities and the private sector, and is not a priority for the State. Thus there has been no national ECE policy and no state department or office has been given overall responsibility for national edu-care needs.

Instead, state involvement in ECE, including funding, has been fragmented across the apartheid education, health and welfare departments and

local government structures, without uniformity,  
planning or co-ordination..."

(ANC, 1994: 92/93)

The authors do, however, concede that "...some state  
departments have done valuable innovatory work..."

(ANC, 1994: 92)

The ANC document defines four areas of policy development  
within the sector of early childhood education:

1. A policy for child care and development in the  
community (edu-care).
2. A policy for the early years of schooling (reception  
year and junior primary education).
3. A policy for ECE carers and teachers (including  
teacher training and accreditation - PRESET and INSET)  
and curriculum development.
4. A policy on the funding of ECE services.

While acknowledging edu-care as a priority area, along with  
adult basic education, in terms of the need for redress in  
the context of a national reconstruction and development  
programme, the ANC document also strongly supports the need  
for a transformed junior primary education system starting  
with a Reception Class for five year olds. They propose  
that:

"...the early years of schooling be targeted for  
a major overhaul ... the present rates of  
repetition and drop-out in the early years of  
school are intolerable and must be reversed. A  
completely different approach to the learning



needs of young children must be designed and implemented..."

(ANC, 1994: 96)

The authors advocate a "reception class" year for 5 year olds with "an enriched play and activity based curriculum" and they stress that this year should form part of an integrated four year lower-primary programme in which the methodology would be largely one of interactive learning.

The importance of the transformation of the early years of state schooling is re-iterated in Chapter 20 entitled 'General Education'. The inclusion of one year of pre-school education within the period of 'General Education' is seen as a means of enriching and transforming the early years of schooling and providing an opportunity to promote greater continuity between ECE and the school.

### Training

The ANC Framework document recognises that the success and quality of all forms of ECE provision, depends on improving the quality of staff and curricula "...including teachers and curricula in the lower primary schools". (ANC, 1994: 96) They acknowledge that this will be a lengthy process requiring "a sustained and targeted programme of action over many years". (ANC, 1994: 96)

In the early years of schooling they envisage five to ten year phased programmes of both PRESET and INSET, linked to curriculum development, to equip teachers for the new

approach to junior primary education. Within the pre-school sector itself, it will be necessary for carers and teachers to have access to accredited training programmes, linked to nationally recognised certificates, so that defined career paths can be established within the field, or links with other sectors of education facilitated.

### Governance

The structures of educational governance proposed in the ANC document, emphasise democratic participation and education is said to be "a concurrent function of central government and the provinces". (ANC, 1994: 2)

A single national Ministry of Education and Training is proposed, which would be responsible for all aspects of policy. Apart from a Ministry of Education and Training, at both national and provincial levels, the establishment of four Statutory Councils is advocated to enable "stakeholders" to participate in the formation and development of education and training policy. These councils would exist at both national and provincial levels. The ANC document does not state whether such Councils would be purely advisory in nature, or whether they would have the democratic right to block policy 'proposed' by the Minister/s. (The Provincial Education Councils established in White Education structures after 1986 had no real powers and were only advisory in nature. Their input could be ignored by the Ministers and often

was!)

The proposed Councils are as follows:

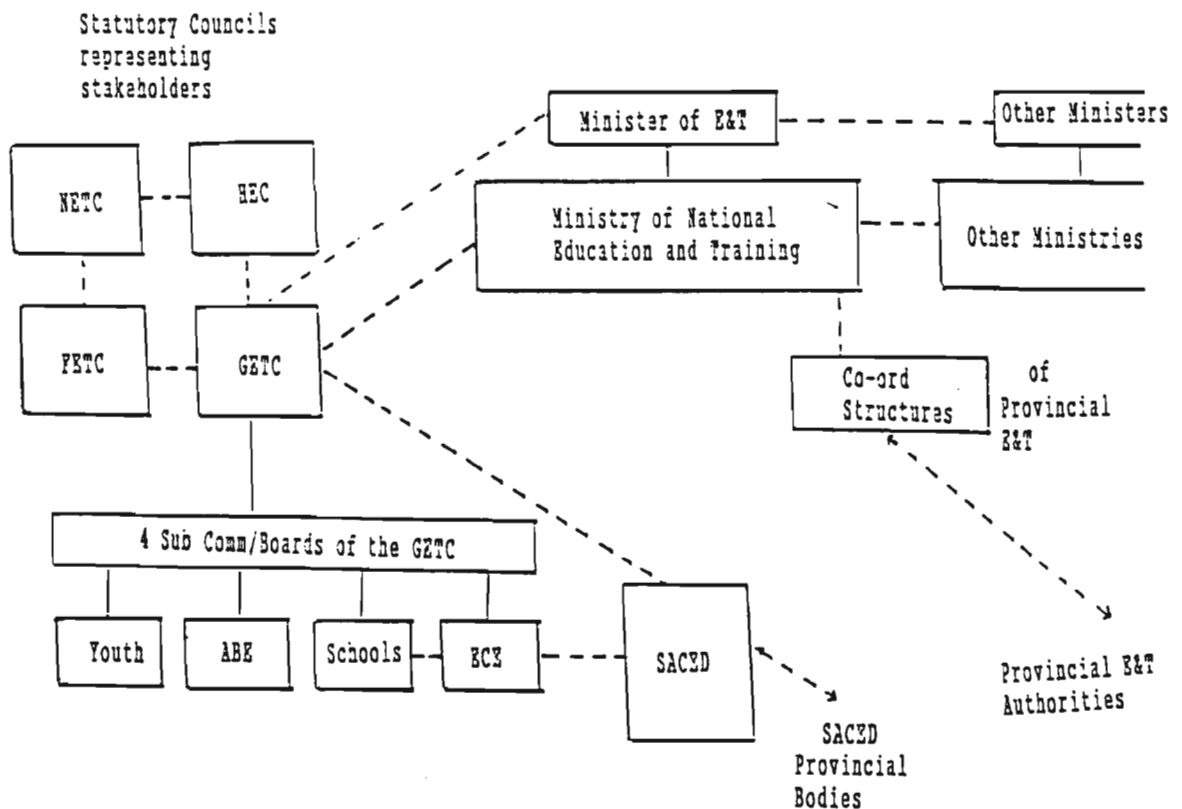
- National Education and Training Co-ordinating Council (NETCC) to formulate and develop national education and training policy and to co-ordinate the activities of the sub-councils.
- General Education and Training Council (GETC) to formulate and develop policy relating to all aspects of General Education.
- Further Education and Training Council (FETC) to formulate and develop policy relating to all aspects of Further Education.
- Higher Education Council (HEC) to formulate and develop policy relating to all aspects of diploma and degree level study.

Of particular relevance to this study is the General Education and Training Council (GETC) which has four sub-committees or Boards namely:

- an Edu-care Board
- a Schools Board
- a Youth Board
- an Adult Basic Education Board.

The writer would suggest that, following policies proposed by the ANC, close liaison would have to take place between the Edu-care Board and the Schools Board to ensure continuity in both the formal and non formal early childhood sectors.

**Fig 6.1 Governance Structures in Education at a National Level, as they relate to Early Childhood Education. (Based on ANC Policy Proposals 1994)**



Source: Based on information drawn from the ANC Policy and Framework Document, 1994

In figure 6.1, the writer has attempted to graphically represent the governance structures envisaged by the ANC at national level, as they affect early childhood education, both within the informal edu-care sphere and the proposed state system of early schooling (5 - 9 years of age).

The ECE and Schools Boards, would no doubt have input from the organised teaching profession, parent groups, training institutions etc and also from the non-formal pre-school sector and NGO's, via the South African Congress of Early Childhood Development (SACECD). This national organisation was launched in March 1994, combining SAAECE (which evolved out of SANSA) and NIWC (National Interim Working Committee on ECE), in order to create, among other things, a powerful and unified lobby for early childhood interests.

Other aspects of the proposed governance structure, appear to the writer to be similar to those relating to white education in the days of the four provincial administrations. An advisory 'Co-ordinating structure of the Provincial Education and Training Authorities' is mentioned, but its composition is not specified. It could well include committees like the erstwhile COH, and a committee of the MEC's of education from each province.

At a provincial level, the Provincial Education and Training authorities are seen to be accountable to the provincial legislature regarding administration of

education and training and for funds allocated from the provincial Budget.

The MEC Education within the provincial legislature and the Education and Training authorities would be advised by the same type of statutory councils formed at a national level with the same sub-committees or Boards (ie School Boards, ECE Board, ABE Board and Youth Board).

The ANC document allocates functions and powers to the National and Provincial levels as seen in the following table:

**TABLE 6.1 Division of Functions/Powers relating to education**

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>National</u> (Ministry of Education and Training) Minister of Education and Training</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Provincial</u> (Provincial E&amp;T Authority) MEC Education</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy frameworks and guidelines</li> <li>• The national qualifications system</li> <li>• The national curriculum framework</li> <li>• Norms and standards</li> <li>• Management information systems</li> <li>• Planning and financing</li> <li>• Processes including fiscal equalisation</li> <li>• Conditions of service of education personnel</li> <li>• Industrial relations in education and training (public employees only)</li> <li>• Special education policies</li> <li>• A national quality assurance system, including the monitoring of redress</li> <li>• The national higher education system, including teacher education</li> <li>• The National Adult Basic Education System</li> <li>• The National Early Childhood Edu-care System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of national policy</li> <li>• Adaptation of national policy in line with provincial needs</li> <li>• Provisioning and delivery of primary and secondary education (within national policy in respect of the national qualifications system, the national curriculum framework policy frameworks and guidelines norms and standards, planning and financing processes including fiscal equalisation, conditions of service of education personnel, management information systems and a national quality assurance system including the monitoring of redress.....)</li> <li>• Employment of staff</li> <li>• School mapping and specifications design</li> <li>• School construction and maintenance</li> <li>• Development of delivery systems</li> <li>• Allocation and management of resources</li> <li>• Information collecting and processing</li> <li>• Quality assurance systems</li> <li>• ABE within National Guidelines</li> <li>• ECE within National Guidelines</li> </ul>

Source: ANC policy Framework for Education and Training (pg 23/23)

In terms of the ANC policy on early childhood education, (which includes Edu-care, the Reception Class year and the transformation of early primary education) a lot of responsibility for provision rests with the provinces. It would appear, however, that a policy framework would be developed to a large extent at central government level and realistic funding assigned to the provinces for the purposes of development and implementation.

The formulation of the Provincial Education Budget is seen to be the responsibility of the Provinces E & T Authorities in co-operation with the Statutory Councils and Boards established at provincial level. The Authorities, in consultation, will also bear the responsibility for adapting national policy to meet provincial needs.

The ANC document also mentions the possibility of involving elected local government (ie municipalities) in aspects of education, including ECE and ABE, either autonomously or acting as agents of the provincial government.

- 6.2.iv A few months after the publication of the ANC Policy Framework on Education and Training, a document entitled, 'Report on South African Study on Early Childhood Development: Recommendation for Action in Support of Young Children' was published (April 1994).

It emanated from the CEPD and was, in many ways, an extension and refinement of ANC policy on early childhood development.

The study was facilitated by an external consultant from the USA, Judith L. Evans, whose participation was financed by the World Bank and USAID.

A previous study had been initiated in late 1992, when the World Bank in association with the CEPD looked at the feasibility of adding a pre-school year for 5 year olds to the formal education system, as a means of improving the unacceptably high repetition, drop out and failure rate. Apparently some of those involved in the exercise viewed the main purpose of a years education for 5 year olds as the attainment of 'school readiness'. Many people within the early childhood field, however, thought that this was too narrow a vision. It was felt that quality pre-school education was valuable in itself and its curriculum and methodology should not be distorted to serve the needs of a primary education system, which had not proved to be sensitive to the developmental needs of young children.



The recommendations in the 1994 study are, therefore, said to be:

"...consistent with a developmental definition of appropriate curriculum and teaching methodology for young children rather than being focused narrowly on 'school-readiness'."

(CEPD, 1994: 3)

As this study was facilitated by the World Bank and other donor agencies with a view to possible areas of funding, it attempts to move from the level of policy advocacy to include more detail on planning and proposed implementation strategies. Apart from proposals on governance, teacher training and funding, the study team puts a 'cost tag' on its vision. Taking cognisance of demographic data, it estimates per capita costs of a state-funded reception class year and suggested per capita grants to 0 - 4 year olds targeted for special support.

In this Report, the authors use the term "early childhood development" (ECD) as opposed to early childhood edu-care (ECE). This change in terminology is explained on the grounds that the term ECD has broad international acceptance and meaning, whereas the use of the term ECE is largely limited to the South African context. ECD is also taken to include children from birth to eight or nine years of age and not only those under six.

Despite reservations about the nature of 'school readiness', the Report does not reject the notion of a state-funded pre-school year for 5 year olds, in fact it

concludes; "...that an essential part of the strategy for upgrading education is to bring 5 year olds into the education system."

(CEPD, 1994a: iv)

The authors feel, however, that the reception year must not be viewed in isolation, but should be linked to monitored upgrade, in both the pre-school and junior school sectors.

It was also felt that state input into pre-school education should not be solely focused on 5 year olds, but should also be directed into early childhood programmes for selected (at risk) children in the 0 - 4 age group. Unless such intervention took place it was felt that for many children the reception year would be "too little - too late". Some of the main policy recommendations made in this Report are as follows:

- "• Support for the development, expansion, management and funding of early childhood provision is the joint responsibility of the state, regional and local governments, the private sector, the community and parents.
- A Department of Early Childhood Development (ECD) should be created within the Ministry of Education and Training, responsible for creating policy guidelines
- An inter-ministerial ECD Committee should be created to promote integration across sectors of services in support of young children and their families.
- Responsibility for interpretation and implementation of guidelines and policies for ECD programmes should be based at the

### Provincial level

- Implementation of ECD programmes should be the responsibility of Local Authorities and ECD management committees. They would be responsible for stimulating the development of ECD programmes, registering and monitoring the activities of individual early childhood programmes and would be involved in direct provision
- At the programme level, parents will have the responsibility for management of early childhood provision. They would be responsible for establishing and maintaining the facilities, and paying of the teachers, whose salaries would be provided by a combination of state subsidies, local funding and parent fees.
- Resource and Training Centres need to be established in each Province to provide training and support to ECD programmes. Current NGO's can be accredited and contracted to serve at RTC's. These should be subsidised by government.
- A Reception Class for five-year olds should be created. This should be phased in over a period of five years. By the end of the fifth year 100% of five-year olds should have access to a reception class.
- A Reception year for five year olds should not be implemented in isolation. It must be linked to reform within Junior Primary (education)
- Alternative ways of reaching those under five need to continue to be explored
- Curriculum guidelines for early childhood development should be established by the Institute for Curriculum Development - taking into consideration childrens' needs in health, nutrition, education and psycho-social development.

(CEPD, 1994a: V & VI)

### Governance

In terms of Governance structures the report extends the recommendation of the ANC Policy Framework by proposing the inclusion of a Department of Early Childhood Development

(ECD) in the Ministry of Education and Training. It is envisaged that the Department of ECD would be responsible for structuring early childhood provision for children from birth through to nine years of age. It would issue the White Paper on National ECD Policy, develop principles and guidelines for curriculum and training and establish guidelines for setting standards to be used in registering ECD programmes. It would also facilitate inter-sectoral co-ordination.

It is proposed that the Department of ECD consists of seven sections namely:

- Training
- Curriculum
- Provision and Standards
- Finance
- Inter-sectoral co-ordination
- Research, Development and Planning
- Administration

A National Director of ECD would head the Department and each section would have its own staffing.

A similar format is envisaged at the provincial level. The Provincial ECD Department would establish policies, set guidelines for the province, consistent with national guidelines and determine provincial policy regarding ECD.

The Report supports the ANC Policy Framework regarding the establishment of statutory advisory Councils which include specialist sub-committees or Boards. The National Early Childhood Development Board would fall within the General Education and Training Council (GETC). It is envisaged that, as the GETC develops, it will provide a general framework within which individual Boards will have direct access to the Departments with whom they are linked.

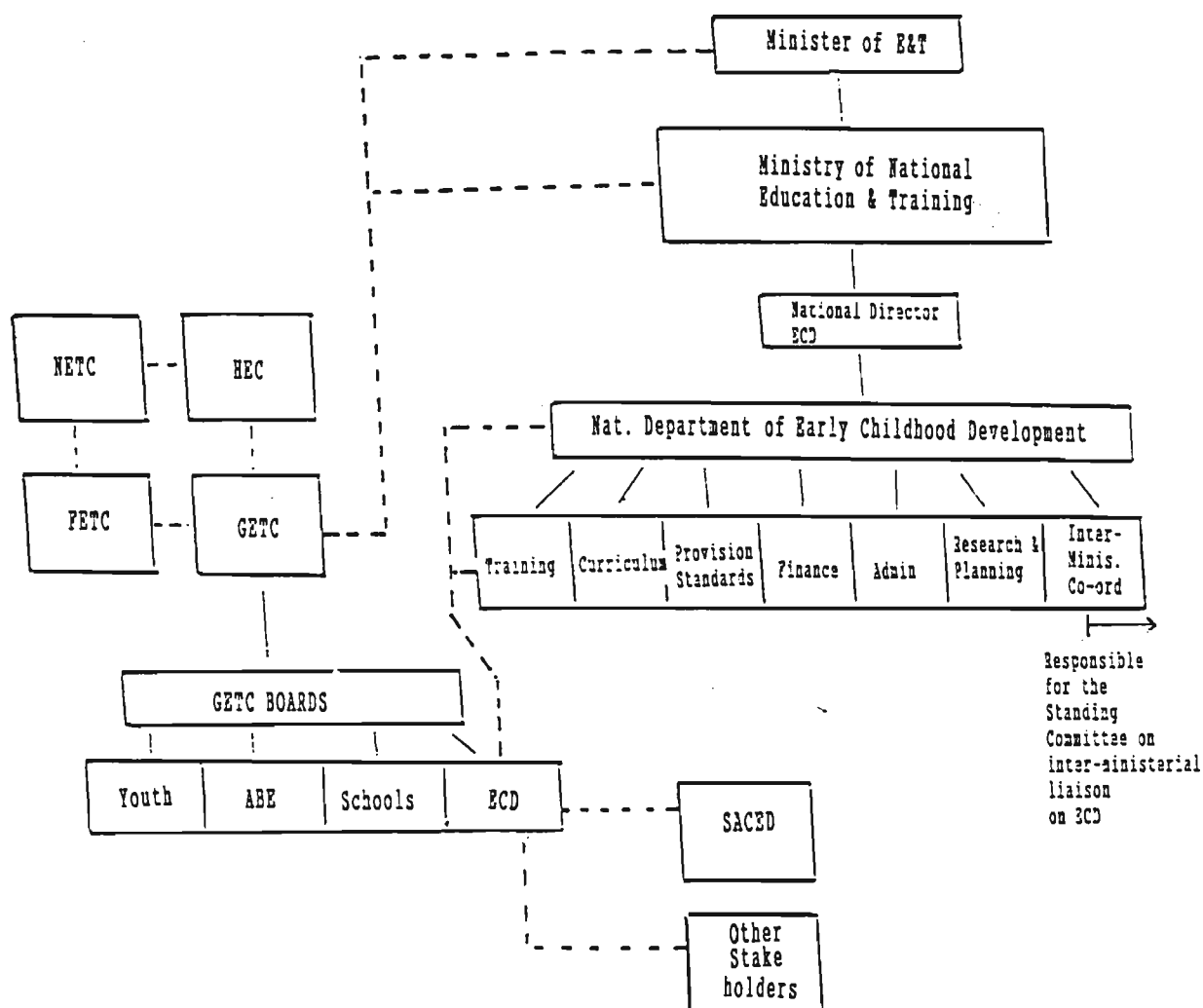
The ECD Board would include representatives of "all major stakeholding interests in ECD". It is suggested that at least 50% of the Board should include representatives nominated by the new national organisation (SACECD) representing ECD and its constituent members in the provinces. The balance is seen to consist of representatives of the State, business, the funding community and the formal academic training institutions.

(CEPD, 1994a: 43)

The writer would suggest that the omission of the organised teaching profession from the list of stakeholders is rather a glaring one. Almost all tertiary-trained specialists in pre-primary education are registered teachers and by their own admission most NGO's do not have the capacity to train at an advanced level, particularly in terms of training other 'trainers'.

The proposed national infrastructure for early childhood development can be seen in Figure 6.2.

FIGURE 6.2 : PROPOSED NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (CEPD: 1994)



SOURCE: CEPD, 1994b: 42 (adapted by the writer)

### Training

The report recognises the inability of the present state teacher-training institutions to meet the demands for PRESET and INSET of teachers for early childhood development, particularly in the short and medium term.

They therefore propose a partnership between the State and NGO's in the establishment of state-funded, provincially-based Resource and Training Centres (RTC's). It is suggested that these RTC's be based within existing NGO's, currently providing training in early childhood development. These NGO's would be accredited as training agencies and their work would be co-ordinated by the Provincial Department of ECD.

The Report envisages training of Reception Class teachers and upgrade courses for Junior Primary teachers being delivered by accredited RTC's. Training for those working with children under five "would be provided by current and emerging training agencies that might not necessarily be accredited RTC's". (CEPD, 1994a: 51)

With reference to tertiary training of early childhood educators, including "training of trainers", the Report acknowledges that, at this time, most NGO's do not have the capacity to deliver accredited courses at this level and proposes that:

"It would be the responsibility of the Provincial Department of ECD in consultation with the Provincial ECD Board, to identify ways in which level 4 training needs can be met within the province. It is for the purposes of level 4 training that it will be important for the NGO community to work with tertiary training institutions to develop appropriate courses..."

(CEPD, 1994: 47)

The members of the 'study team' that produced the Report

are drawn almost exclusively from NGO's in the early childhood sector and the writer would suggest that this fact has introduced an element of bias into their perspective.

Once again the potential role of the formally qualified teaching profession has been overlooked. The Report advocates NGO's working with tertiary institutions towards the development of advanced courses in early childhood education. The reality of KwaZulu-Natal is that there are no tertiary institutions offering a pre-primary specialisation.

Most KwaZulu training colleges do not even offer a specific junior-primary course and as the majority of training college lecturers are male and drawn from a secondary education background, there is little or no relevant expertise within the existing tertiary institutions within the province. The writer would suggest that a similar situation exists in most of the other eight provinces.

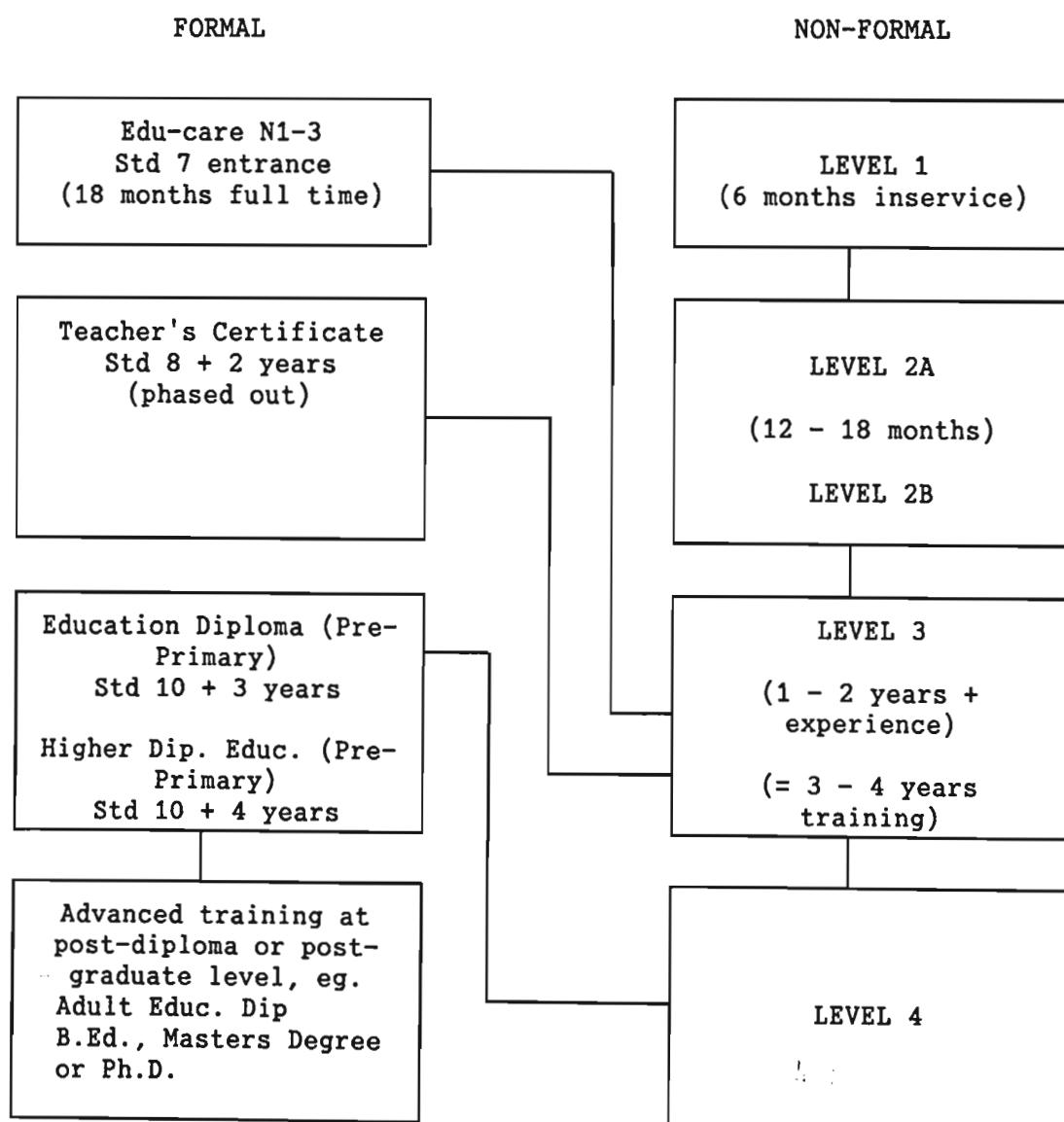
The expertise, in many aspects of early childhood education, in terms of academic qualification and relevant experience (particularly relating to reception class education and the upgrading of junior primary education), resides in qualified pre-primary teachers. Most of these teachers are currently employed in schools registered with the erstwhile House of Assembly. The former House of



Delegates also has qualified pre-primary teachers in its employ.

The Report proposes a framework for equating non-formal and formal courses in terms of qualification as seen in the figure below:

**FIGURE 6.3 PROPOSAL FOR EQUATING FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL COURSES AS JOB QUALIFICATION**



SOURCE: CEPD, 1994b: Annexure L

Based on such a framework, the majority of teachers employed in pre-primary schools in Natal, registered with the ex Natal Education Department would be qualified at level 4 and above. Their input in a lecturing and training capacity, as well as in the development of curricula, will be vital if the introduction of Reception classes and the transformation of junior primary education is to become a reality in the province.

Following close on the heels of the CEPD Report on ECD came the publication of the ANC 'Implementation Plan for Education and Training' which was published by the CEPD in May 1994. Included in the main Summary Report of the IPET Task Teams, was the Task Team Report on Early Childhood Development. The substance of this report was drawn directly from the CEPD Report on ECD published two months previously.

The documents that have been dealt with thus far, were all formulated at a national level with the purpose of promoting specific policies or policy options for a future South African education system. The last four, namely the NEPI, the ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training, The CEPD Report on South African Study on Early Childhood Development and the IPET Task Team Report, are essentially 'from the same political stable' and are, therefore, largely in agreement on the main policies advocated for early childhood education.

These policy documents have been reviewed in order of their dates of publication, namely the ERS (late 1992), the NEPI Reports (early 1993), the ANC 'Policy Framework for Education and Training' (December 1993 re-edited February 1994), the 'Report on South African Study on Early Childhood Development' (April 1994) and the IPET Task Team Report (May 1994).

Important areas of consensus in the last four documents are the need for:

- state provision of a reception class for 5 year olds
- multi sectoral involvement in provision of ECD programmes for the under 5's
- upgrade and transformation of junior primary education

6.2.v A very similar vision was promoted by the Natal Pre-Primary Teachers' Association (NPPTA) in its document entitled 'Formative Phase Education - The Foundation for the Future' which was published a year or so earlier than the national policy documents. As mentioned previously, this memorandum was circulated widely (the hundred top companies, universities and training colleges, political parties, churches, the press etc) in an attempt to create a common consciousness of the importance of early childhood education as a catalyst for change in the education system, and to warn against the effects of ongoing government disinvestment in this sector of education. The NPPTA memorandum stated:

"The 'Formative Phase' should be envisaged as a four year educational module resulting in elementary literacy, numeracy and life skills. Ideally, entry into The Formative Phase would be at approximately four years of age, but (given the economic and demographic realities) it seems likely that admission will have to be deferred until the age of five".

(NPPTA, 1991: 7)

The NPPTA document also noted that the critical value of Formative Phase education had long been neglected due to the misplaced emphasis on the importance of 'matric'.

In Chapter 5 of this dissertation, the writer noted the 50% cut-back in pre-primary teaching staff employed by the NED, that occurred at the end of 1991. When the 'Formative Phase' document was written, the NPPTA was aware of this

looming threat, and so ended on the following note:

"...the present pre-primary system, which forms an integral part of the Formative Phase, cannot sustain itself against continued government desubsidisation. Valuable human resources are being lost to education at a time when the educational philosophy, methodology and teaching expertise should be incorporated into the initial level of a state-supported Formative Phase education system."

(NPPTA, 1991: 9)

Another provincial publication, which emphasised the importance of a state funded pre-school year for five year-olds was the 'Report of the Natal-KwaZulu Education Working Group' which was published in December 1992.

6.2.vi Report of the Natal-KwaZulu Education Working Group

This Report (often referred to as 'The Red Document' because of the colour its cover!) was not envisaged as a policy document. Rather, it was the result of a provincial bureaucratic initiative, facilitated by The Natal Education Board, whereby the Heads of the five education departments operating in the region, decided to form a working group to consider how best to integrate their departments in the event of a single unitary system of education becoming a reality. The Working Group (which consisted of three representatives from each department) under the Chairmanship of Mr Keith Olivier of the NED, completed its task in less than six months and the Report was published in December 1992.

Although the Natal-KwaZulu Report essentially reflected an auditing and planning exercise, key principles were defined to serve as a frame of reference, on which to base recommendations and to provide guidance for leaders in future educational negotiations.

These principles were as follows:

- Education is a basic human right
- Education must be guided by the goals of democracy, equality, liberty and justice within the framework of a non-racial, non sexist society
- The institutions of society should be transformed in the interests of its citizens

- The standards of teaching and learning must be raised
- A lean, efficient bureaucracy must be established
- The financial allocation for the Natal-KwaZulu Region must be equitably determined.

(N-KZ, 1992)

Arising out of the first principle, namely that education is a basic human right, the Working Group decided that implications of that right included:

- "i. A school readiness programme of one year's duration must be provided free by the State immediately prior to the commencement of formal education.
- ii. Formal education should start in the year in which a child turns 6.
- iii. In addition to primary and secondary education there must be provision for special education.
- iv. A period of compulsory education is essential for all children.

The minimum goal should be 10 years of education...."

(N-KZ 1992: 1)

In Chapter 18, entitled 'Summary and recommendations' the N-KZ Report states:

"A school-readiness programme of one year's duration is regarded as possibly the greatest single need in the region in order to ensure that all children can benefit from the system of formal education. The intention is to provide this as a free service to all children who require it and to incorporate the programme as part of the curriculum for all primary schools."

(N-KZ, 1992: 57)

The report goes on to recommend that in existing pre-primary schools, staffing for the pre-school group (5 year

olds) would be provided by the education department, while all other staff in these schools would have to be privately employed. The implementation of the programme is taken to be a matter of the highest priority which

"...should be undertaken in consultation with experts in the field of pre-primary education and existing pre-primary schools should be incorporated as part of the programme."

(N-KZ, 192: 57)

By stating their belief that a state-funded school-readiness class for five year olds was an educational priority, the Natal-KwaZulu Working Group (which was made up of education 'bureaucrats') took a policy stance that was ahead of its time and in direct opposition to that of the ERS. They also clearly linked the state funded year of education for five year olds to pre-primary education, implicitly accepting the significance of the methodology and philosophy of this phase, and not envisaging a formalised downward extension of traditional primary education.

The writer contends that the Report of the Natal-KwaZulu Education Working Group was never accorded the respect it deserved and was, in many instances, deliberately ignored, because of the political situation which prevailed at the time. It was doubly damned - firstly as it emanated from an inter-departmental initiative and was not the result of democratic participation or consensus, and secondly, because the group included officials of the KwaZulu Education Department, which made it unacceptable to groups



aligned to the ANC.

6.2.vii Interim Report of the KZ-N Working Group Sub-committee on pre-primary education

Arising out of recommendations and directions outlined in 'The Red Document', the Working Group extended its brief to pursue these matters in more depth. Various sub-committees were formed, including one on pre-primary education.

The writer was asked to convene the sub-committee on pre-primary education on behalf of the NED. She accepted the position, on the understanding that members of the sub-committee would not be limited to departmental representatives, but would also include people from teachers' associations, NGO's, training institutions and parent organisations.

This committee submitted an Interim Report in September 1993, which clarified the vision of 'reception classes' for five year olds thus:

- "i. The state school system should start with a reception class year. Children would enter reception classes in the year that they turned 5 (on or before 30 June).
- ii. Reception classes should not be viewed as a possible 'add-on' component, but as the very foundation of the state education system.
- iii. Reception classes should be state-funded.
- iv. Developmentally appropriate curriculum content and methodology must be ensured.
- v. The aims and philosophy of reception classes should be consistent with the principles of sound edu-care practice in this country.
- vi. A national 'core-curriculum' should be agreed upon, but the reception class programme should be flexible enough to accommodate regionally or locally specific

- content.
- v. Reception classes cannot achieve educational transformation while the primary education system remains unchanged. There is an urgent need to deconstruct the type of primary schooling experienced by the majority of children in our country.  
(KZ-N/PP Committee, 1993: 82)

### Teacher Training

In terms of teacher training, the necessity for school-based, state-funded INSET programmes for junior primary teachers was emphasised, in order to retrain them in developmentally appropriate practice and philosophy. It was suggested that teachers took part in a two year INSET programme leading to a certificate in School Readiness/Reception Class Education.

It was felt that Class i teachers should first be targeted for INSET programmes, which would then be rolled progressively up the school. This would help to ensure that children entering junior primary classes from newly established reception classes would continue to learn in an interactive style.

In PRESET (both college-based and by means of distance learning) training of teachers for the reception class/junior primary phase was seen as a priority and the interim report urged the introduction of a Formative Phase diploma (qualifying teachers to teach from Reception Class to Std 1 or 2) at a majority of training colleges.

Recognising the lack of relevant expertise within existing colleges the report noted:

"... courses must, therefore, be structured so that key modules can be developed and delivered part-time by teachers who have the necessary qualifications and expertise and are active in the field."

(KZ-N/PP Committee, 1993)

As reception classes for all 5 year olds could not be established at a point of time, due to the lack of physical and human resources, it was suggested that, once Class i teachers had completed INSET training, the entrance age into Class i be lowered by 6 months, so that children could enter school anytime in the year they turned 6. This would enable children who turned 6, after 30 June and before 31 December, to enter Class i aged 5 plus and gain an additional six months of stimulation. The lowering of the entrance age was seen as an interim strategy and was totally linked to the re-orientation (in teaching practice and philosophy) of junior primary teachers. It was not merely a downward extension of formal learning. Once proper reception classes were established, the entrance age into Class i would be adjusted upwards once again. A graphic representation of this implementation strategy which was included in the interim report is seen on the next page (Figure 6.4)

**FIGURE 6.4: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR RECEPTION CLASSES/JUNIOR PRIMARY UPGRADE**

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
In-Service Training	Methodology	On-site Education and Learning Resource Centres				
	Target / Duration	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
		Class one teachers	Class two teachers	Standard one teachers		
<p>NOTE: Formal reception classes cannot be established at a point of time, but will have to be "phased in" as the necessary teachers are trained and facilities established.</p> <p>In the interim, however, a flexible approach should be adopted. Experienced education workers (especially those holding certificates from recognised NGOs) should be invited to network with local primary schools in the establishment of informal "school readiness" classes.</p>						
Pre-Service Training	Methodology	Initial focus on Colleges which have appropriately trained staff and/or access to qualified Primary teachers for part-time mentoring, tutoring and workshops.				
	Enquiry Venue	Edinburgh / Springfield / DOK / Inverness / LC Johnson / Mountbatten / Appin / Dumfries / ML Sutton				
	Numbers	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
	Target / Duration	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
	"Masters" - 3 Years	College First Year	College Second Year	First First Year	First Second Year	
			College First Year	College Second Year	First First Year	First Second Year
				College First Year	College Second Year	First First Year
					College First Year	College Second Year
						College First Year
	"Masters" - 2 Years	College Only Year	First First Year	First Second Year	First Second Year	
Propos:	Entrance Age	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
KEY:	Entrance age to CLASS at ALL state schools adjusted <u>downwards</u> to admit children reaching 5th birthday any time during that year					
	Entrance allowed to RECEPTION CLASSES at PRIORITISED state schools in the year children reach 5th birthday before mid-year					
	Entrance age to CLASS at state schools with RECEPTION CLASSES adjusted <u>upwards</u> to admit children reaching 5th birthday before mid-year					
Buildings / Facilities:		Colleges / 1000 for 1st year	More classrooms	More classrooms	More classrooms	More classrooms
		Begin construction				
		Approximate opening Class One				

Source: KZ-N/PP (1993)

It was recognised that, due to the present lack of physical facilities and appropriately trained teachers, it could take several years before all children had access to state-funded reception classes. Co-operation between the state and the NGO's would be of great importance and a variety of flexible, interim approaches would have to be utilised.

The Interim Report from the Sub-Committee on Pre-Primary Education was submitted to the main Working Committee of

the N-KZ Education Working Group in September 1993 and a further updated report in December 1993.

These reports were also sent to all committee members to feed back to their constituencies and in the interests of openness and a common vision, the chairman faxed copies to various groups outside the province, including the CEPD.

In January 1994, a 'Discussion Document for KwaZulu-Natal' entitled 'A Unitary Department of Education and Training' was circulated for comment. This document was an extension/revision of the 1992 Report of the N-KZ Education Working Group and its objectives were to consider:

- ".
- a management structure for the region
- a common set of role responsibilities for professional and administrative staff
- uniform admission of pupils, teacher : pupil ratios, the curriculum and examinations
- auxiliary and administrative services
- common personal policy."

(KZ-N, 1994: ii)

In the section on 'Recommendations', the support for Reception Classes is clearly seen, paragraph 3.5.2 states:

- ".
- Reception classes should be accepted as a fundamental and integral part of the state education system and should be provided for in the planning for a unitary system of education.
- Funding of reception classes and junior primary education should be given priority within the education budget on the grounds of both educational efficiency and equity.
- Policy should reflect these decisions and

should be strongly advocated at regional and national fora

- The phase-in of reception classes and the upgrade of junior-primary education should take place simultaneously, with phased introduction from January 1995."

(KZ-N: 41,42)

### 6.3 CONCLUSION

It would appear, from the documents reviewed in this chapter, that a high degree of consensus and an increasingly coherent vision for early childhood education have developed amongst some very influential 'stakeholders' in South African education.

Aspects of this vision are further reflected and clarified in a recent discussion document published by the DBSA (Development Bank of South Africa) in June 1994. Entitled 'A Policy for Quality Primary Education in South Africa', this policy document was developed at a two-day workshop facilitated by the DBSA, held in February 1994.

The working team was given a brief that required them to articulate a vision or mission for basic education, define a 25 year plan with desired outcomes and detail a feasible plan for the first five years of implementation. They were also required to identify the resources required and analyse financial implications.

The authors of the DBSA study concluded:

"Good basic (primary) education is the basis of a sound education system and all further human development.

...Therefore, world educational reform is aimed at basic education and improving access, equity, learning, delivery, school environment and educational partnership. Priority attention is being given to process and content of education, including early childhood learning, cohort



performance (to reduce repeaters and drop-outs), curriculum, instructional materials, contact time, teachers, health/nutrition and gender. South Africa should, therefore, give priority to investment in general education and particularly the first four years. Targeting the first four years of compulsory schooling is the best economic investment South Africa can make."

(DBSA, 1994: 6)

This report limits its study on basic education to the four years from Grade 0 (the reception class) to Standard 1 for the following reasons:

- " . the present inefficiency and inequity of the education system is most evident at this level where as much as one third of any education cohort has already repeated or dropped out by the end of the third year of primary schooling.
- the education function of Grade 0 to Grade Three has as its main function a focus on early learning and language and thinking skills acquisition.
- the education process of Grade One to Grade Three is in greatest need of transformation from the recitation pedagogy prevalent in much of the present DET and homeland systems to a more learner-centred and resource based method of education.
- the pupil : teacher and pupil : classroom ratio needs to be most favourable with, if necessary, the use of Classroom Assistants to facilitate maximum individualised attention.
- the physical learning environment (learning places and spaces) needs to be more conducive to learning.
- the language issue is most significant because of the need to first establish literacy in the mother tongue.
- good teachers who are specifically trained in cognitive skills for beginners are needed.

- more classroom based in-service teacher training is required.
- more psychological and social-services are required to identify learning and health problems at an early stage.
- the objective of parity education for all within the first five year term of the new government's development plan can best be achieved at this level at least cost and with greatest long-term benefit.
- the experience of capital and operating costs of the present largely privatised Pre-school system can be used to help quantify the costs of this level of basic education.
- at present this is the most neglected level of education."

(DBSA, 1994: 9)

They further justify focusing investment on junior basic education (Grades 0 to 3) because:

- " • qualitative improvements are most likely to be the best investment at this level.
- automatic promotion to ease congestion is more acceptable in the early years of schooling.
- a Grade 0 (or reception year) will increase access for all children to Grade 1 at a reasonable cost.
- equalising provision through once off capital costs and once off resource allocations at this level is affordable.
- Classroom Assistants can be used most effectively at this level of education and are cheaper to employ.
- teacher upgrading is at its most urgent at this level.
- staggered introduction of a new education system is most likely to occur.
- a coherent education system with equal opportunities can best be implemented and

monitored for effectiveness for the early years of schooling.

- NGO and community involvement is possible at this level.
- working with a more detailed and realistic unit cost may better ensure that desirable outcomes are achieved with minimum wastage in the system."

(DBSA, 1994: 21)

The DBSA policy document looks at the cost of Reception (Grade 0) classes in terms of the one-off capital costs required for setting them up and then in terms of recurrent costs associated with teachers' salaries, learning resources, INSET and other running costs.

The recurrent costs (when reduced to per capita costs on 'real unit costs per pupil') were estimated to be R1590 per annum, plus a further R600 p.a. arising out of the costs of administering the system at provincial, head-office and circuit level.

(The costs were calculated on the basis of Grade 0 classes housing 50 pupils. Classes would be divided into 2 units and would be taught by a qualified teacher supported by a teacher-assistant.)

The total cost of implementing the plan to uplift Junior Basic Education (which includes the establishment of Grade 0 classes) is estimated to be R12,1 billion for the 1994/95 budget. It is estimated that this amount could be reduced to R8.6 bn if savings were effected by spreading initial

costs over 5 years and by charging fees of R350 per child per annum, to be contributed by parents or the community on a sliding-scale basis. The total amount allocated to education in the 1994/95 budget is given as R29.2bn which is 22% of the National Budget. This means that junior basic education would require over a quarter of the total education budget.

Although the arguments for investment in reception classes and junior primary upgrade are compelling, the question of how this development will be financed, remains problematic.

The Government has committed itself to a massive upliftment programme, known as the RDP (Reconstruction and Development Plan), which encompasses housing, health services, job creation and feeding programmes, in addition to education. In the sphere of education alone, the government intends to introduce 10 years of state-funded, compulsory education for all children, as well as extend adult basic education services and early childhood development programmes. It also recognises that support of quality secondary and tertiary education is vital, if the country is to experience economic growth.

The RDP as a whole and the government's plan for education in particular, have great political appeal and their intentions are laudable. The question of funding, however, has not been adequately addressed and it is a critical

element in the development and implementation of any successful policy. The writer would suggest that because of its interim nature and its desire to please as many constituencies as possible, the present government does not have the political power or 'will' to commit a quarter of the national education budget to the first four years of schooling - whatever the returns may be in educational, economic and social terms.

The implementation plans outlined in the 'White Paper' recently published by the Ministry of Education, would seem to support this view.

Whilst emphasising government commitment to ECD, including the reception year and upgraded junior primary education, the White Paper repeatedly alludes to budget pressures, ie:

"...given the sluggish economy and the government's firm commitment to fiscal discipline, the level of budgetary resources available to fund the education sector is severely constrained."

(Min of Educ, 1994: 76)

The document does indicate that a directorate of ECD and Lower Primary Education will be established in the new department of national education, which, amongst other things, will be responsible for the development of policy for the reception class year. Policy will be formulated in consultation with similar directorates set up at provincial level, as the responsibility for "...taking up the massive

challenge of spearheading the phasing in of policy" will be left to the provinces.

(Min of Educ, 1994: 20)

It appears that the education budget for 1994/95 has already been drawn up at a national level and is largely a combination of the budgets of the previous education departments, most of which do not include any pre-primary or reception class component. Departments which currently provide for pre-primary education, are those which have had more advantaged funding and teacher : pupil ratios. These departments have been asked to "implement austerity campaigns to keep their expenditure as low as possible during the first three quarters of 1994/95 financial year".

(Min of Educ, 1994: 146)

It, therefore, appears that no special funding has been earmarked for the development of reception classes in the 1994/95 budget.

The 'White Paper' states that it is not possible to make the reception class year compulsory in 1995, due to the "enormous deficits of appropriately trained teachers and suitable facilities for 5 year olds" and indicates that the year will be given over to "planning of the reception year".

(Min of Educ, 1994: 74)

The government, nevertheless, intends to introduce compulsory education in Grade 1 at the beginning of 1995. No mention is made of targeting Grade 1 teachers for INSET during this period.

The writer finds this decision disturbing, given the rote pedagogy and high repetition and failure rates associated with Grade 1 in most of the black education departments. To extend access, without the introduction of large scale teacher upgrade programmes through INSET, would seem to be a poor investment in both educational and economic terms.

The White Paper also makes no mention of the phasing in of PRESET for teachers of reception classes (and the early grades) in 1995 and there appears to be no reception class building programme planned.

The writer believes that 1996 is likely to reveal much the same pattern, as the 'White Paper' indicates that the 1995/96 budget will "reflect no real increase in consumption expenditure over 1994/95 and no increase in the deficit as a share of the GDP".

(Min of Educ, 1994: 47)

Although financial accountability is expected to be assigned to the provinces before the beginning of the 1995 school year, the 'White Paper' states:

"...because of the lead time required to construct the 1995/96 estimates of expenditure, this process too has been started by the Department of State Expenditure, on the basis of the old existing structures, although provincial governments will have an increasingly influential role in the process as time goes on."

(Min of Educ, 1994: 45)

The writer feels that in the light of such statements, it seems likely that budget constraints will prolong the 'planning' period for reception classes and very little real development will be evident in this sphere in the next couple of years.

The 1996/97 budget for education is, therefore, likely to be the first to be really developed at the level of the new provinces. By that stage the provincial governments will be operating with a large degree of autonomy in terms of their financial affairs, in much the same way as the white provincial structures operated prior to 1986. The 'White Paper' notes:

"Provincial governments will construct their own budgets in relation to their total revenue estimates and spending requirements. Education will almost certainly claim the largest share of the education budgets, but the question is how adequately the various financial needs of the provincial departments of education will be assessed under this complex revenue sharing arrangement."

(Min of Educ, 1994: 48)

The establishment of a provincial government in KwaZulu-



Natal brings with it both possibilities and problems in relation to the provision of early childhood education. On one hand, the provincial parliament will have the autonomy to create its own priorities, both within the education budget and between the budgets of different provincial departments. The 'right of virement' is likely to operate once again in terms of inter-departmental budgeting. The province will also be able to raise its own revenues in addition to monies received from the State Revenue Fund.

The problems that face the provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal are, however, more huge and complex than those encountered by the Natal Provincial government that existed prior to 1986.

It is widely acknowledged that the KwaZulu Education Department (which is by far the largest department in the province) has been the most poorly funded education department in the country in terms of central government funding. At the moment the five education departments operating in KwaZulu-Natal provide schooling for approximately 22% of South Africa's total school-going population. It is also estimated that within the province there are about half a million children of school-going age who are not attending school. If these children were to be enrolled at schools, the new KwaZulu-Natal Education Department would be responsible for educating over 25% of the pupils in South Africa. The province, however,

currently receives 19.5% of the National Education Budget.

(N-KZ, 1992: 53)

Given the huge backlogs that exist in terms of provision of education and the competition for funding from other sectors (housing, health services, social welfare etc) the early childhood education lobby will have to be extremely powerful and persuasive if a transformed formative phase system (Grade 0 - Grade 3) is ever to get off the drawing board!

Apart from the obvious need for both political and educational leaders with vision and courage, a critical factor, in the future of early childhood education in the province, will be whether KwaZulu-Natal receives funding from the National Revenue Fund on the basis of equity.

Given the backlogs created by years of under-funding, there could also be a cogent argument for additional funding, on the basis of redress.

The old Natal provincially/departmentally-controlled pre-primary system has maintained itself despite the radical staff-cuts that took place in the mid 80's and early 90's. Schools are spread throughout the province, and if adequate funding was made available, they could form an important framework for teacher training. The writer believes that if these schools were linked to accredited NGO Training

Centres and tertiary Teacher Training Colleges, pre-school facilities and qualified pre-primary teaching personnel could prove valuable resources in INSET and PRESET of teachers for the Reception year and early grades.

#### 6.4 Summary

In this chapter, various policy options and proposals were reviewed, in terms of their vision for pre-primary or early childhood education.

Apart from the position taken in the ERS, broad areas of agreement emerged in other policy documents, with regard to the early years of schooling. It was felt that state-funded reception classes for 5 year olds should be introduced and junior primary education should be targeted for transformation. The reception year (Grade 0), was seen as being based on the sort of methodology and philosophy that is presently associated with pre-primary education. This activity-based, mediated style of learning, was also seen as a means of transforming Grades 1 - 3, by helping overcome the current failure and drop-out rates that occur at this level. It was felt that investment in these first years of schooling would provide the greatest returns in educational, social and economic terms.

Despite this consensus in terms of policy (which was echoed in the 'White Paper' released by the Ministry of Education in September 1994) the writer noted the lack of any specific financial commitment to this vision in the 1994/95 education budget. It also appeared unlikely that the situation would alter in the 1995/96 financial year.

The possibility of change under a financially more

autonomous provincial government in 1997 was indicated and attention was drawn to the need for equity and redress in terms of funding for education in KwaZulu-Natal.

Finally, the writer noted the potentially influential and supportive role pre-primary teachers and provincially/departmentally controlled pre-primary schools could play in the development of structures for teacher-training in the province.

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