Ministry of Education and Training

2ˢᵗ Draft Report

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION SUMMIT NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS

Prepared by:

Ministry of Education and Training
TES Steering Committee

August 2022

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List of Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
4IR	4th Industrial Revolution
CANGO	Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organizations
CBE	Competency-Based Education
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
ECCDE	Early Childhood Care Development and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ENYC	Eswatini National Youth Council
EPA	Eswatini Principals Association
ESS	Education Sector Strategy
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FPE	Free Primary Education
GoE	Government of Eswatini
ICT	Information Communication Technology
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
LEG	Local Education Group
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NAE	Non-Formal Adult Education
NCC	National Curriculum Centre
NCFGE	National Curriculum Framework for General Education
NESP	National Education Sector Policy
OVC	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
PRSAP	Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
REO	Regional Education Office
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEN	Special Education Needs
SNAT	Swaziland National Association of Teachers
TES	Transforming Education Summit
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
TTI	Teacher Training Institution
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Executive Summary

Background

The Government of Eswatini, with support from the UN system in Eswatini, has been preparing for the Transforming Education Summit (TES) to be held in New York during the 77th United Nations General Assembly in September 2022 as announced by the United Nations Secretary-General. The Government of Eswatini will be participating, where opportunity to mobilize greater political ambition, commitment, and action to reverse the slide on SDG 4, reimagine education, and accelerate progress on education and the 2030 Agenda more broadly for the remainder of the Decade of Action will be provided. One of the major requirements for the preparation of the Summit is engaging key stakeholders to solicit input on how the country can re-emerge from the effects of COVID-19 and the recent civil unrest and be on track to meet SDG4 targets by 2030 and further transform its education system to meet the country's socio-economic development needs.

Consultations

The consultation process was conducted from July the 4th to August the 11th, 2022 covering thirteen categories of key stakeholders that included the Senior Management of the Ministry of Education and Training, other government ministries in the education cluster, educators, curriculum developers, Regional Education Officers, a selection of school committees and parents in the country's four regions, a selection of young people (out of school) from the country's four regions (including those with disabilities), academia, media, civil society organizations, development partners and industry captains (private sector).

Stakeholder observations

COVID-19 recovery

The trail of havoc caused by COVID-19 in the education system can by summarized by a wide scale disruption of learning through the closure of schools and other institutions of learning, learners falling behind regarding core skills (especially numeracy and literacy) and teachers and learners getting disoriented by not having the opportunity to continue with education. Many learners dropped out of school, with teenage girls getting pregnant and the teenage boys concentrating on other trades than school. Emergence of mental health and psychosocial challenges was observed by stakeholders.

Hopes of recovery of education losses from COVID-19 and civil unrest have been pinned on adjustments needed on the education calendar and prioritizing certain aspects of the curriculum to ensure the attainment certain skills at a certain point in time. There is need to re-orient teachers and learners through providing psychosocial support interventions at school level, as well as making education appeal again to learners. The sector needs to work towards ensuring that every learner gets back to learning and that the cost of education is lowered. Flexible payment terms for school fees should be made available to parents with difficulties paying due to loss of employment or business, or any other challenge induced by COVID-19 and the recent civil unrest. Policy on the education of pregnant pupils require intentional and careful implementation to ensure resumption of learning for the young mothers. The school nutrition program needs to be quickly revised for purposes of enhancing uninterrupted learning.

Blended learning (combining face-to-face and digital learning) can still make a significant contribution to recovering education losses. However, serious consideration should be given to inclusion.

A transformed education system

Generally, stakeholders are of the view that the sector has near adequate policies which, when implemented, can deliver a transformed education system with improved equitable and inclusive access to quality education. The 2018 National Curriculum Framework for General Education (NCFGE) is a case in point, with a number of transformational attributes (such as emphasis on Competency-Based Education), but requires proper and monitored implementation.

Stakeholders contend that free education should be expanded to pre-primary and secondary education levels in order to increase enrolment in both areas, based on the outcomes of the FPE initiative, however, there is need to review the budget allocation which has not changed for FPE, since inception in 2010.

A certain level of standardization of education input (schools, teaching, equipment, resources, approach, conditions of service) is required so that the differences in performance of rural and urban schools is minimized or eliminated. This will also reduce the current challenge of teachers shying away from rural schools in favour of urban schools. Part of standardization is to make Grade 0 compulsory, while improvements in the infrastructure are required to accommodate ECCDE and children with special needs.

Mismatch between skills produced by the education system and those required by the country's developmental needs in general, and industry in particular, has been identified as a serious gap in the education system, suggesting the need for proper interface between industry and tertiary institutions, a well prioritizing entrepreneurship, technical and vocational skills over skills that prepare learners for white collar jobs.

The quality of teaching is compromised by a number of factors, including shortage of trained teachers in general, and shortage of teachers in certain subject areas (especially in STEM subjects), lack of a structured continuous professional development for teachers, poor conditions of services for teachers (especially in rural schools), demotivated teachers (due to generally low pay and challenges they face in their work), generally poor ICT skills, as well as the fact that most teachers are increasingly politicised through their union. Transformation will be realized through prioritizing the training of teachers in subjects experiencing shortages, strengthening and capacitation of the In-Service Education and Training (INSET) Department (which is seriously under-resourced), expand psychosocial support services for teachers, and aligning curriculum of Teacher Training Institutions (TTI) with the NCFGE. Teachers also require motivation and the standardization of conditions of service across the urban and rural spaces.

Limitations to digital transformation in the education system include the lack of coverage for radio, television and internet signals, especially in the rural areas, the cost of internet connectivity, general lack of ICT skills and the lack of inclusive digital learning material. Necessary transformational interventions include the introduction of zero-rated access to

internet for educational purposes, investment by government and the private sector in expanding coverage of digital signals to the entire country, funding of gadgets and equipment for digital learning, and mainstreaming ICT and digital learning across all educational institution. A specific department or unit in the MoET should be established, mandated with ICT/digital learning mainstreaming.

Public financing of the education system has been on a downward spiral in the past couple of years, from about 21% of national budget in 2016 to about 16% by 2021, and the larger share (about 75%) goes towards personnel costs, stifling the financing of capital maintenance, developmental and operational expenditure good enough to transform education. While Government finances Free Primary Education, fees for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children at secondary education level, stakeholders agree that due to the country's socio-economic profile (70% of population living in poverty), there is need to extend free education to pre-primary and secondary education levels soon, even though such a policy should recognize the nation's social strata (no umbrella policy).

Transformation should be underpinned by increased public spending in education (at least to 2016 levels as a percentage of the budget), and the private sector should be incentivised to contribute more to education, while putting in place a structured resource mobilization mechanism to support the transformation of the education system.

Best practices and lessons learnt

The recovery of education losses either from pandemics or other interruptions of a similar nature is made easier by making the necessary adjustments the learning calendar, prioritizing and focusing on important aspects of the curriculum (compressed), providing psychosocial support to teachers and learners, and taking advantage of digital learning platforms.

Tapping into the knowledge, experience and views of stakeholders by education managers is a good approach to arriving at what can bring transformative changes to the education system, more so because collaboration between government, development partners, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders seems to be necessary for transformation.

Risk reduction, preparedness and contingency planning are very crucial in minimizing disruptions to the education system, ensuring resilience and quicker recovery. ICT can play an important role in resuscitation and adaptation efforts.

Successful transformation hinges on a strong monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanisms for policy, legislation and strategy implementation. Resource availability, accountability and efficiencies are also important but sufficiency for successful implementation requires early determination. Further, there is need for constant review the cost of education and effectiveness of the current public financing approach to the country's education system.

Conclusion

Recovery is possible and urgent but requires careful assessment of the extent of education losses and taking the necessary bold steps to get back to the expected skills proficiencies.

A transformed education system in Eswatini will lead to improved inclusivity, quality and relevance to the socio-economic development needs of the country, supported by determined implementation of transformational policies and strategies. Emphasis will have shift from

preparing learners for while collar jobs but will be on critical thinking, entrepreneurial, technical and vocational skills, with ICT mainstreamed throughout the education system.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 About TES

The Transforming Education Summit (TES) is an initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General for tracking progress to education, to be held at the 77th Session of United Nations General Assembly in September 2022. The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini will participate in this Summit whose main objective is "provide an opportunity to mobilize greater political ambition, commitment, and action to reverse the slide on SDG 4, reimagine education, and accelerate progress on education and the 2030 Agenda more broadly for the remainder of the Decade of Action".

Reeling from the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and civil, the Kingdome of Eswatini has the challenge of making a quick recovery from losses experienced and further reimagine the education that the country requires to achieve its developmental goals and objectives. Some of the effects of the Covid-19 on the country's education system include regression in the education gains made earlier, increased inequalities in the provision of education manifesting in, for example some learners from urban communities having access to online teaching and learning opportunities while those from remote rural communities did not have the same opportunities, children with visual and hearing impairments not supported to learn from home, many girls falling pregnant, while many boys and girls dropped out of school.

Besides the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the country is grappling with poor teaching and learning outcomes resulting in high failure and dropout rates, limited access to the use of information, communication technologies in education, high learner pregnancies, gender-based violence, limited access to ECCDE and secondary education for children with disabilities and vulnerable children.

In preparation for participation, a key requirement for the TES is conducting national consultations for evidence-based recommendations. These consultations are expected to result in a National Statement of Commitment on how the country plans to recover education losses due to COVID-19 and to transform its education system to levels good enough to take the country through its development trajectory.

1.1.2 National TES Consultations

The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini commissioned ~~tasked~~ the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to consult key stakeholders in the education sector, gathering inputs into the National Statement of Commitment on transforming education. A TES Steering Committee, led by the Director of Education, was established by the Ministry of ~~for~~ Education and Training to facilitate the stakeholder consultations and further compile a report on the process and its outcomes. The UN family in particular UNICEF and UNESCO, through the United Nations Resident

Coordinator's Office, were requested to support the Government of Eswatini (GoE) in preparing for the summit. ~~The~~ supporting covered the overall preparation for the TES, development of the subject-matter discussion papers, the organisation of the national and regional consultations, drafting of the consultations report with clear recommendations for priority action ~~and~~ as well as the organisation and facilitation of a national validation meeting.

Consultations were conducted during the months of July and August 2022, beginning with the senior management of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). Stakeholders within government, private sector and civil society were consulted. A selection of parents, school committees, youth and educators were also consulted. Towards the end, development partners were also consulted, ending with a high-level round-table discussion involving Heads of development partner institutions, Cabinet Ministers and captains of industry.

A total of 644 participants were consulted from all the different consultancies, including 66 adolescent and youth (38 male, 28female), and 50 young people living with disability. Another 50 participants could not be disaggregated by gender since they participated through the national radio and/or the Toll-Free Short-Messaging-System (SMS).

Importantly, consultations largely followed the recommended formats in the TES Convenors' Handbook. A combination of face-to-face and virtual meetings was used during the consultation process depending on what was feasible for each group of stakeholders. Guided by a set of concept papers with question guides, the team facilitated the meetings, beginning with a presentation of the TES concept, its rationale, the current state of the education system, a snapshot of events linked to COVID-19 and civil unrest, as well as what is expected from the discussions. Participants were largely requested to submit their observations regarding the impact of COVID-19 and the civil unrest, and generally the state of the education system and further suggest what needs to be done to recover education losses in the short term, and transform the education in the medium to long-term. Focused group discussions were used where possible, especially when consulting with the youth. The Consultation team recorded proceedings and captured attendance through attendance registers.

Annexure A outlines the different categories of stakeholders consulted in this process. Question guides followed during the stakeholder consultation process are found in Annexure B. A detailed documentation of the submissions by the different stakeholders is in Annexure C of this report.

A validation meeting was held for the TES Consultation Report, attended by representatives of stakeholders consulted during the TES national consultation process. The draft TES Consultation Report was made available to participants alongside the invitation to the validation meeting. The Minister and the Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Education and Training attended the validation meeting, together other stakeholders which included the UNICEF Country Representative and the UNESCO Secretary General for the Eswatini Office. Representatives of the adolescent youth and people with disability were also part of the validation meeting.

1.2 Status of the Eswatini Education System

1.2.1 Legal and policy environment

Access to equitable, safe, healthy education
The country's education system is anchored on the constitution of the country which dictates that the State shall promote free and compulsory basic education for all (Section 60(8)). The constitution further gives the Swazi child the right to free education in public schools at least up to the end of primary school, beginning with the first Grade, which is interpreted as Grade 1. However, training and/or skills development does not feature much in the constitution, only emerging stronger in the Higher Education Act, 2013, the Education Act No. 9 1981 and the Industrial and Vocational Training Act 1982, which give strong backing to training and skills development in the country's education system.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (PRSAP), 2007 highlights access to quality education as one of the pillars for taking the Eswatini population out of poverty, asserting that high poverty levels are directly linked to poor or lack of education. The strategy also states that for poor families, preference is sometimes given to boy's education when the hard choice has to be made.

Inclusive education
Supported by the Children Act of 2012 and the National Disability Act of 2018, the country's constitution outlines the country's intent to ensure an inclusive, safe and healthy education environment.

Inclusivity in education is also strongly presented in one of the policy objectives in the National Gender Policy (2010), which is to "ensure equitable access by girls and boys, women and men to education, training, and health services, and control over resources such as land and credit for improved quality of life". Specifically, on education and training, the policy position is that Government should provide opportunities for quality education for all children, boys and girls to complete the education system and also ensure that men and women have equitable access to training opportunities.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number 4 gives a broader world-view of the objective of education, through the responsibility of countries to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

The PRSAP alludes that there are only three schools in the country for special education: for the deaf, mentally retarded, blind and handicapped, providing only for primary education thus limiting the progression of handicapped children.

Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development

According to the country's Education and Training Sector Policy (2011), the country's primary aim is to "produce an enlightened and participant citizenry that has skills and knowledge to contribute positively to economic and social development". Related pieces of legislation such as the Higher Education Act (2013), the Industrial and Vocational Training Act (1982) emphasize the need for access to learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development for all. The National Development Strategy

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(1997-2022) envisioned a country in the top 10% of the medium human development group of countries founded on sustainable economic development, social justice and political stability by 2022. Even though there is no evidence suggesting that such a vision has been attained, this has been intentional and efforts were directed at the attainment of this vision, which remains relevant.

Of note is that SDG4-Education 2030 primarily aims to ensure equitable opportunities to education in a holistic and lifelong learning perspective, and ensuring universal pre-primary and secondary education leading to effective and relevant learning outcomes for all children, youth and adults as a foundation for lifelong and life-wide learning. The SDG further aims to ensure equal opportunity in access to further learning opportunities for youth and adults throughout life.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (PRSAP), 2007, recognized that "many households are unable to attain the minimum living standard. They face social exclusion and deprivation, hunger, lack of income, access to primary health care and basic education and they face the risk of degenerating families". Emphasizing economic empower through various means, including entrepreneurship skills, one of the important arguments in the PRSAP is that the standard of living and social circumstances of the poor can be transformed through preferential economic empowerment and improved access to social services especially health and education. The strategy also prioritizes basic education and life skills for both girls and boys as one of the main areas of empowerment. This is because it recognises lack of competitiveness in the labour market as the main causes of unemployment among the poor, mainly propelled by inadequate or no education and skills. As a result, the strategy proposes the enrichment of the education curriculum with vocational or skills development and remove the bias towards academic or white-collar jobs, encouraging Government to implement policies aimed at enhancing prospects for self-employment especially among the poor.

The National Education and Training Sector Policy (2018) prioritizes the need for providing "opportunity to continue with life-long education and training, so enhancing their personal development and contributing to Eswatini's cultural development, socio-economic growth and global competitiveness". Along the same vein, according to the PRSAP, the goal of the government is to reduce illiteracy by 50% by the year 2015 and ultimately eliminate it completely by 2022.

Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession

The National Curriculum Framework for General Education (NCFGE) envisions a teacher who is "prepared for the transmission of knowledge, independent thinking and organisational skills to learners, and for the development of learners' personalities in preparation for their contribution to society". This kind of a teacher is expected to be a skilled facilitator, a caring mentor, a long-life learner and an exemplary role model to learners.

The curriculum framework dictates that teachers should be trained on Competency-Based Education approach for primary, junior secondary and senior secondary education levels, advising Teacher Training Institutions (TTI) to align their curriculum with the National Curriculum Framework for General Education.

The In-Service Education and Training (INSET) department is expected to conduct capacity building workshops in schools for teachers on the curriculum ensuring that they are abreast with all issues relating to effective and innovating teaching based on CBE.

The Teaching Services Act No.1 of 1982 establishes the Teaching Service Commission (TSC), with the responsibility over human resource management in public primary, secondary, pre-vocational, special need schools, some Government teacher training colleges, and other public education and training institutions. The TSC is directly responsible for recruitment, employment, confirmation, promotion, transfer, discipline, and termination of employment of teachers and educators in public educational institutions.

Even though responsible for the teachers' general welfare, the mandate of the Commission does not seem to extend to teacher development and training in order to ensure the availability quality teachers, teaching and learning.

Digital learning and transformation

For the longest time, digital learning has not been vividly in the radar of the education sector's policy holders until recently. Challenges imposed by COVID-19 forced the education system to consider blended learning for survival.
The PRSAP states that growth of the private sector is increasingly dependent on a flexible, educated and healthy workforce that would take advantage of advanced information communication technology. It further acknowledges the importance of technology in the economic and social sectors in particular education, health and agriculture, which can directly benefit the poor.

Existing legislation and policy documents do not envision a period where radio, television, the internet and similar platforms will be instrumental to advancing education, and as such, do not appear to promote, protect and guide the use of such platforms for education and training.

The advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) indicates that the next platform for socio-economic development for countries of world is ICT, led by Artificial intelligence (AI).

Financing of education

According to the Eswatini Education Sector Analysis (2021), cost of schooling is by far the most common reason for dropping out, indicating the need for proper financing for education.

The Constitution of Eswatini Act (2005) expresses the desire to ensure that children should not be hindered by fees to access education, specifically directing that primary education should be free in the country. The Free Primary Education Act (2010) operationalizes the constitutional provision to make primary education free in public schools. However, other policy instruments such as the PRSAP recognises the need to expand free education to secondary and pre-primary education levels. This is similar to the recommendation of the Eswatini Education Sector Analysis report (2021).

Government policy also prioritizes providing fee secondary education to Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC), as well financing tertiary education scholarships, which are hardly sufficient to cover the number of students who require assistance.

The PRSAP proposed a "structural shift in the public spending pattern is needed to focus on primary and secondary education levels rather than academic tertiary levels, and, on preventive, core health services rather than curative services. Investing in people is valuable in itself and ensuring universal access to proper nutrition, health and education services".

According to the PRSAP, the cost of primary education is beyond the reach of poor parents and the consumer price index for education has been rising very steeply, proposing the need to seek ways to reduce the cost of education while providing free primary education. Notably, the Free Primary Education (FPE) funding by government to schools which is based on enrolment, has not been revised since its implementation in 2011. School administrators have solicited contributions from parents (top-ups), much against government policy, in order to cover costs shortfalls.

Structure of the education system

The NCFGE outlines the structure of the Eswatini education system, which comprises the formal and non-formal education subsectors. The formal education subsector is further broken down into Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Primary Education, Secondary Education and the TVET and Higher Education components. This subsector is driven by continuous teacher Education, which ensures quality of education. The other subsector is the Non-Formal Adult Education (NAE). Both subsectors are supposed to lead to a successful entrance to the world of work or the labour market.

As recent as 2018, Competency-Based Education (CBE) was introduced by the Ministry of Education through the NCFGE.
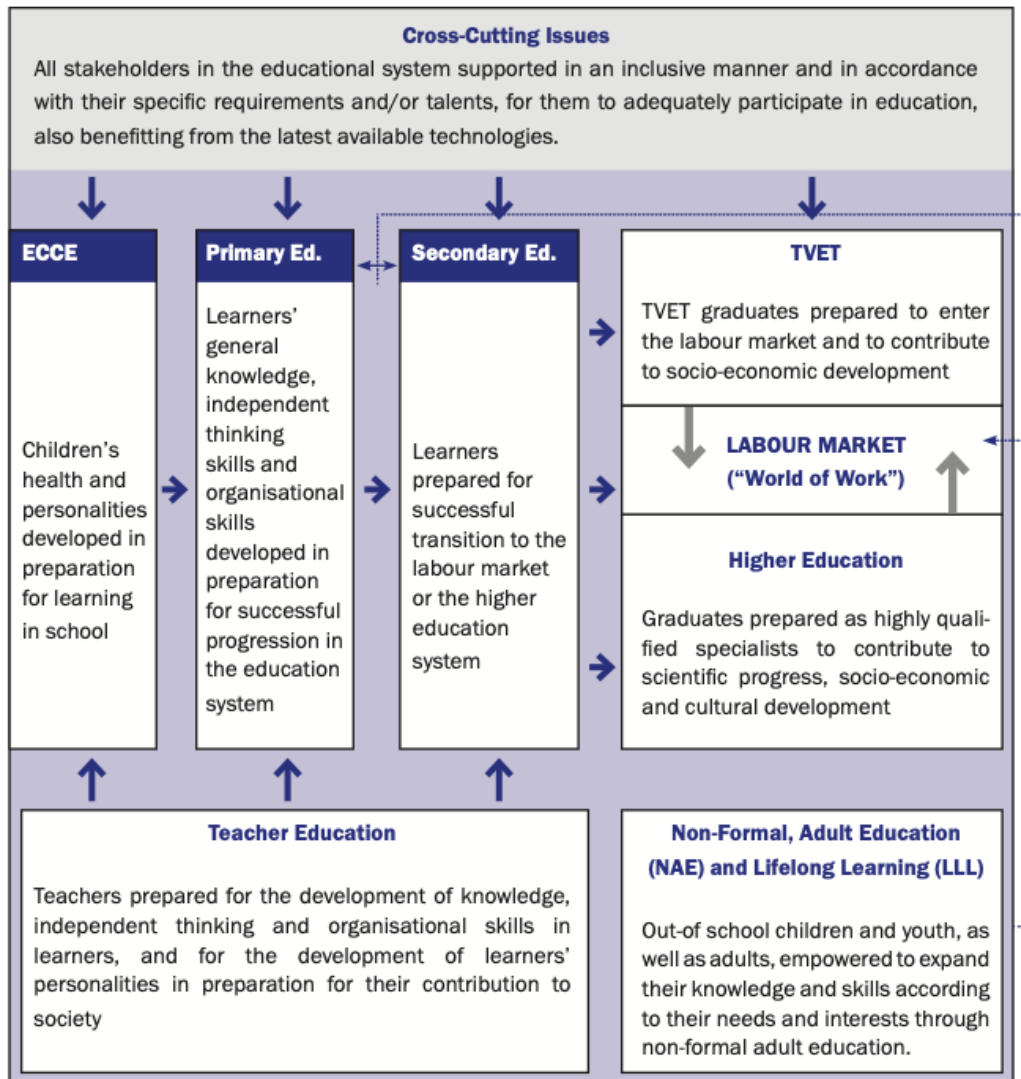
Cross-Cutting Issues

All stakeholders in the educational system supported in an inclusive manner and in accordance with their specific requirements and/or talents, for them to adequately participate in education, also benefitting from the latest available technologies.

ECCE

Children's health and personalities developed in preparation for learning in school

Primary Ed.

Learners' general knowledge, independent thinking skills and organisational skills developed in preparation for successful progression in the education system

Secondary Ed.

Learners prepared for successful transition to the labour market or the higher education system

TVET

TVET graduates prepared to enter the labour market and to contribute to socio-economic development

LABOUR MARKET ("World of Work")

Higher Education

Graduates prepared as highly qualified specialists to contribute to scientific progress, socio-economic and cultural development

Teacher Education

Teachers prepared for the development of knowledge, independent thinking and organisational skills in learners, and for the development of learners' personalities in preparation for their contribution to society

Non-Formal, Adult Education (NAE) and Lifelong Learning (LLL)

Out-of school children and youth, as well as adults, empowered to expand their knowledge and skills according to their needs and interests through non-formal adult education.

Figure 1: Eswatini Education System Configuration.

Taken from the National Curriculum Framework for General Education, 2018.

1.2.2 Milestones

The following milestones have been realized by Eswatini's education system in recent years:

a) Introduction of Free Primary Education, 2010.
b) Development of the National Education and Training Sector Policy in 2018.
c) Introduction of OVC education grant at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office Dpt. Of Social Welfare (DSW)
d) Care and Support for Teaching and Learning programme (CSTL/Inqaba) to promote safe and healthy schools
e) Introduction of Grade 0 in 2018
f) Introduction of Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2019
g) Pilot of Home grown feeding scheme in 50 schools in 2019
h) Introduced blended learning in 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to continue learning;

i) Conducting the Eswatini Education Sector Analysis in 2021
j) Early and Unintended Pregnancy Prevention Policy and Management Guidelines, 2021 (await endorsement by cabinet);
k) Introduction of the National Qualification Framework in 2021;
l) Review of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2022)

1.3 Problem Statement

The country's education system has been faced with challenges relating to its inability to deliver the skills needed to meet the country's human development needs, especially with regards to producing readily employable youth with skills that can lead to self-employment, job creation and critical and innovative thinking skills that lead to dealing with challenges presented by life in general.
The system tends to predominantly deliver towards white-collar jobs skills whose demand is already saturated while moving quite slowly towards the development of technical skills.
With 7 years remaining before the SGD 2030 education global agenda deadline, the country is trailing behind in meeting the SDG4 targets and more needs to be done in order to deliver to these targets.

The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the recent civil unrest in the country, has not made things easy. Instead, it has reversed the education gains made in recent years, resulting in education poverty typified by learners lagging behind in terms of the skills they should have acquired in their different levels of education. With hours of learning lost through restrictions in movement and gathering, resulting in the prolonged closure of schools and institutions of learning, much has been lost in terms of the learning content that should have been absorbed. The disturbance to the education system include many learners dropping out of school, negative impact on mental health of learners and teachers, increase in the disparities on equitable access to education and increased unemployed as a result of poor skills and an economy that performs below expectation, and the inability to create sufficient jobs.

Transforming the education system will require financial resources to support human resource development, capacity building, infrastructure development and digital transformation. The sector is currently under-funded and robust resource mobilization is needed to cover current and transformation resource needs.

Ways to quickly recover the education losses experienced due to COVID-19 and the civil unrest are needed urgently. Medium to long-term strategies and commitments are also required to transform the country's education system so that it delivers the calibre of graduates that the country needs for its development, especially with regards to economic empowerment and poverty eradication.

Through the TES preparation process, it is believed that input could be gathered from stakeholders in the education sector for purposes of making strides to turn the situation around for good resulting to an efficient and resilient education system.

1.4 TES Consultations objectives

Besides meeting the requirements of the TES to be held in September 2022, which requires evidence-based recommendations, the consultations are expected to:

a) Gather input from stakeholders on how the country can deal with current challenges resulting from COVID-19 and the recent civil unrest;
b) Gather stakeholder input on how the country can transform its education system;
c) Solicit stakeholder input on what should be done to ensure that the country meets the target of the SDG4 2030 Agenda;
d) Produce a country report with input from key stakeholders and clear recommendations on what should be done;
e) Produce a National Statement of Commitment on transforming education in Eswatini which will be presented by Government during the Transforming Education Summit.

1.5 Structure of the Report

Beginning with the background to the TES national and regional consultation process (Chapter 1), the report presents a summary of input from stakeholders separated into stakeholder observations about the current state of the education system, and suggested changes leading to the transformation of the education system (Chapter 2). The third chapter outlines the commitments by the country towards transforming education, following by a chapter on lessons learnt and best practices (Chapter 4). The report ends with conclusions (Chapter 5) and recommendations (Chapter 6).

2. Stakeholder perspective

2.1 Stakeholders' Observations

2.1.1   Impact of COVID-19 and Civil unrest on the education system

First and foremost, one should recognize that there is a lack of data to quantify the extent of the losses caused by COVID-19 and civil unrest, both in terms of numbers of drop out and learning losses.

a)   Learners:

Schools were closed in March 2020 as a mean to halt the spread of COVID 19. Learners could not attend classes. It took a couple of weeks before private schools resumed learning primarily through digital platforms. Public school followed with radio and TV programs. However, the digital platforms were not adequately inclusive to learners with disability, causing them to further miss out on lessons.

Social challenges emerged for learners such as social isolation, decrease in parent's revenue and capacity to care for them, teenage pregnancies, increased contracting of HIV amongst learners, as well as reversal of gains made from efforts directed at nutrition as schools are important centres for nutrition in the country. Notably, the elite continued learning when schools were closed due to COVID-19 and the civil unrest while the majority of learners we sitting at home.

By the time normal learning resumed, several behavioural issues were observed in learners, including negative attitude, loss of motivation and disrespect towards teachers. Many learners had lost interest in education. With school reopening, several initiatives were made by educators, including compressed curriculum and changes in the school calendar.

b)   Teachers:

It was generally observed that, like learners, teachers go disoriented at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, worse by the civil unrest through indirect participation within the country's national teachers' union.
Even though no specific statistics is available, some teachers passed away as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, reducing available teaching staff, and leaving colleagues and learners traumatized and demoralized.

To continue teaching, the education system went for blended learning. Stakeholders stated that teachers were not prepared for this change to digital learning across the education system, necessitating a massive change for them.

Stakeholders also observed that a large section of educators, especially teachers, are somewhat politicized, a factor that contributes to stifled learning in addition to the generic challenges posed by COVID-19. This has led to

Rapid assessments by educators revealed, amongst other things, that by 2022, basic skills which could have been learnt through early primary education levels were found

to be very low, such as literacy and numeracy, with learners unable to write or read at the age of 10 years.

Educators observed that the interruptions to pre-school learning due to COVID-19 exacerbated an already existing national challenge of a less structured and supported early childhood development and education setup. This meant that children would now go to Grade 1 without having acquired the necessary skills and struggle with acquiring skills at a higher level.

c) Skills

The already existing gap between the skills needed for employment in local industries and entrepreneurship could only be widened due to interruptions to learning during COVID-19. Institutions of higher learning, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions were faced with shortened learning times, depriving learners and teachers of the time required to exchange the much-needed education and skills. Notably, online learning, with all its benefits, could not accommodate practical subjects, depriving learners of the opportunity of amassing these important skills.

d) Digital learning

Limitation of access to internet during the civil unrest, affected digital teaching and learning where internet is concerned.

On a positive note, the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest showed us as a country that the education system can benefit from the use of existing digital platforms. However, digital teaching skills were found to be in short supply, causing the majority of teachers across all levels of education to struggle to effectively use digital platforms and gadgets for digital learning.

Stakeholders observed that the cost of accessing the internet (data) for digital learning seemed high and the ICT infrastructure was found not to be sufficiently spread throughout the country, limiting access to teachers and learners in remote/rural areas. However, it is encouraging that Government, through the Ministry of ICT, has recently responded to this predicament by zero-rating all educational sites in addition to reducing the cost of data.

2.1.2 Perspective on inclusive, equitable, safe and health schools

Whereas education laws and policies are in place that support inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools in the country, in practice, there remains a host of variations in the levels of these variables in the public schools and institutions of higher learning.

With the larger percentage of the country's population living in the rural areas (over 70%) and subject to high poverty levels, the majority of learners are struggling to pay school fees, resulting in reduced enrolment and a high dropout rate in schools. Urban schools seem to be performing better than rural schools in general.

The education system still struggles to accommodate children with special needs, such that these children are expected to be taught the same material using the same approach as children without special needs. Except for schools specifically designed for children with disabilities, which are very few in number, the general school infrastructure is not

necessarily accommodative to children with special needs. This is true regarding access to the classroom, ablution and other facilities, as well as the classroom set with regards to learners with albinism who usually suffer from visual impairment. It has also been observed that transcribers sometimes do not transcribe correctly, distorting the learning content for learners with disability. These are not only challenges for learners with disability in the school setting, but also result in discrimination against learners with disability. What complicates the situation further is the distance to school for learners with disability since they have difficulty walking and/or travelling to school, unlike their peers who are without disabilities.

The girl child remains vulnerable to dropping out of school due to early pregnancy, gender-based violence and other social ills compared to the boy child even after numerous policy, legislative and community initiatives to combat gender imbalance. The girl child remains vulnerable to violence along the way to and from school. Unfortunately, most parents seem not to understand the policy of allowing pregnant learners back to the classroom.

COVID-19 exacerbated existing mental challenges in the school setup caused by various factors within the social security space, especially levels of poverty, learners feeling discriminated against due to insufficient funds for school, their disability conditions or unwanted teenage pregnancy. Vulnerabilities stemming from the death or absence of parents, food and/or nutrition insecurity and other related stresses reveal themselves in the classroom setting, sometimes leading to dropping out of school or interference with the ability to learn.

2.1.3   Perspective on learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development

With a number of positive benefits, the current education system is seen as not capable of producing skills good enough to enable the graduate to live a fruitful life that contributes to the individual, community and country's development. Secondary and tertiary education level graduates can hardly anything for personal livelihood, development and enrichment except for employment. Even when employed, no readily usable skills are at the disposal of the graduate. This speaks of the low levels of relevance and effectiveness of the country's education system. Strong observations were made on poor critical thinking skills, with the education system putting more emphasis on understanding what is being presented, and the ability to re-present it without much processing and application.

Stakeholders further observed that there is a mismatch between skills required by the labour market and the skills possessed by graduates of our education system, which weakens the value of education and training in the context of demand and supply.

The job market is stagnant in the country, typified by large numbers of unemployed graduates. Stakeholders observed that had the graduates been equipped with entrepreneurial, technical and vocational skills, they would be able to either self-employ or open businesses that would, in turn, expand the job market and absorb other graduates, reducing unemployment levels and contribute to the country's economic development. So, the education system is currently unable to do that.

It has been further observed that the recently revised National Curriculum Framework for General Education (NCFGE) places emphasis on Competency-Based Education (CBE). However, the rollout of the framework has not yet yielded the desired results for various reasons, including the fact that it has only been implemented in the lower

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primary education level so far, and that educators are still struggling with adapting to CBE.

Apparently, Information Communication Technology (ICT) skills have become such a basic necessity that the education system can no longer ignore. As such, every teacher and learner needs ICT skills to be integrated in all learning spheres since the work place and life in general requires them.

The curriculum content, according to some stakeholders, lacks indigenous knowledge, depriving the learners to a wealth of knowledge they require to contextualize and refocus their lives.

2.1.4 Perspective on teacher, teaching and teaching profession

Stakeholders attempted to respond to the question of whether the country has the required calibre of teachers to actually lead a transformed education system. Stakeholders questioned the strength of congruence between the curriculum offered at teacher training colleges and the teaching skills and knowledge required to drive the country's curriculum for general education. Further, education administrators observed the lack of a structured continuous professional development for teachers, leading to some teachers pursuing their own personal development initiatives while others do not, leading to discrepancies in the competency levels of teachers within the education system.

The Ministry of Education and Training has a specific department tasked with the continuously equipping teachers in-service so that they are always abreast with the latest developments in the profession. However, it has been observed that this department is heavily under-resourced in areas of human, equipment and operational resources, rendering it incapable of appropriately executing its duties.

In essence, the quality of teaching is tied to the quality of teachers, informed by the teacher training processes, which seem not to be in synch with all that is required for an improved education system.

Teacher training colleges were observed to be lagging behind in ICT education, especially the use of digital platforms and equipment for teaching.

The shortage of trained teachers was also heighted by stakeholders as one of the factors that negatively affects progress in the education system. Shortages have been noted in maths and science subjects even though such shortages were not necessarily quantified. This is further compounded teachers avoiding serving in schools in rural areas due to the poor living and teaching conditions, opting to work in urban schools. Lack of incentives such as hardship allowances to appetize teachers to move to rural schools.

There is a general feeling that the teaching profession in the country is one of those that are not adequately remunerated and, as such, teachers are demotivated out of feeling not being part of an adequately recognized profession.

Stakeholders also observed that teachers, through their national union, are politicized, something that does not seem to contribute positively to the teaching profession or the quality of the teacher.

The mind-set of practitioners in the education system, teachers included, is no longer in synch with the latest developments in the sector, thus their actions are not

transformative. They still prefer to use old, tried, and tested methods of administration, teaching and management at a time of drastic and fast-paced changes.

Even though positions exist for psychosocial support personnel in schools, reality is that there are no psychosocial service providers in schools. The help desks are not there.

2.1.5 Digital learning and transformation

Stakeholders observed that the fact that learning material (schoolbooks) are physical without digital versions was found to be a serious limitation in the effective use of digital learning. Further, most schools and learners did not have means to access gadgets necessary for internet-based digital learning.

Stakeholders observed that the need for digital learning is greater now than before, especially with the advent of the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR), and a vibrant education system should not embrace but thrive from a strong ICT and digital learning foundation.

It has been observed that public schools and institutions of higher learning are generally behind on the use digital platforms for teaching, preferring the face-to-face teaching that they are used to. Private schools, however, were observed to be ahead, judging by their ability to continue learning during COVID-19 induced restrictions of movement and gathering, prohibiting face-to-face learning.

The future of Eswatini's education hinges on appropriately blending face-to-face teaching, which is still regarded as very important, and digital learning. Blended learning was attempted at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring continued learning for learners at all levels. The experience showed that while the country can adapt, several gaps need to be closed with the involvement of other sectors. Access to digital learning platforms is made difficult by the following:

- Poor coverage of digital learning infrastructure, with rural areas not prioritized. Internet connectivity/coverage is poor in rural areas. The reach of radio and TV signals is also poor in some parts of the country, especially rural Eswatini.
- The cost of data is high in a country where over 70% of the populations lives below the poverty line;
- Access to gadgets for digital learning may not be possible for the larger section of the population due to poverty levels. This is clearly a challenge where even paying for school fees remains a challenge;
- Both learners and teachers are not good with digital learning and teaching platforms respectively since this has not been, for a long time, mainstreamed across the education system.

However, parents raised concerns about possible abuse of digital platforms by children, leading to social challenges that may not immediately have a plan to either avoid or deal with.

2.2 Stakeholders' suggestions to transform education

2.2.1   To recover fully from COVID-19 education losses

Stakeholders contended that if the country does not take bold steps towards recovering education losses suffered due to COVID-19 and civil unrests, and continue with business as usual, it would take some 100 years for the country's education system to achieve 2030 targets

The following contributions were enlisted as desired changes in the education system in order to recover losses due to COVID-19 and civil unrest in the country's education system:

(i)   Ensure learners reach the desired skills level through learning assessment and remedial programs;

(ii)   Ensure all learners are back to class and learn, including pregnant pupils, those whose parents/guardians can no longer pay school fees, and those who have been disoriented by the situation. Make available relaxed payment terms for parents/guardians to pay school fees;

(iii)   Provide motivation and psycho-social support to teachers and learners to recover losses.

(iv)   Increase mileage of blended learning, combining face-to-face classroom learning and digital learning. This includes finding ways to finance the procurement of the necessary gadgets and reduced/zero-rated access to data.

2.2.2   To ensure inclusive, equitable, safe and health schools

Transforming the school, especially the classroom will call for a specific school and classroom transformation program (SCTP):

(i)   Standardization of public schools' infrastructure across the country so as to limit the variations between rural and urban schools with regards to facilities and performance levels;

(ii)   Improve the existing schools' infrastructure to properly take care of the needs of children with special needs.

(iii)   Government and stakeholders should look for ways to provide social protection to learners so that they are able to concentrate to school and not worry about social challenges resulting from poverty.

(iv)   Extending free education to pre-school, Grade 0 and secondary education in order to reduce enrolment and dropout challenges currently experienced.

(v)   The mental health of learners and educators was negatively affected by the pandemic, stemming from a number of factors, including the death of educators due to COVID-19 related incidences, death of parents of learners, closing of schools for an extended period of time and hardship experienced by society from the effects of the pandemic. Teenage pregnancy increased dramatically during the pandemic. These are indicators that there is need for a better school health program;

(vi)   Bring back religious education that has diversity, and do away with focusing only on Christianity in schools;

(vii)   Learners with disability should be introduced into the digital space early so that they are able to navigate and learn through digital platforms with ease;

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2.2.3   Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development

The following contributions were submitted by stakeholders to ensure learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development:

(i)   Efforts should be directed at ensuring that all pre-schooling facilities are up and running

(ii)   Enhance the rollout of the curriculum framework for general education through making emphasis on technical and vocational training, including ensuring equity access to TVET (for boys and girls);

(iii)   Life skills should be taught to children from a young age in order to cope with pandemic and similar disturbances in order to minimize interruptions in the early childhood education;

(iv)   Improve access to library services, including digital access to reading material;

(v)   Institutions for higher learning need to devise strategies to ensure that learners continue, with increased pace to recover losses made, including re-orientating them from the impact of Covid-19 and civil unrest;

(vi)   Increase investment in entrepreneurial, technical and vocational education and training to increase enrolment and partnerships with the private sector for apprenticeship;

(vii)   Increase the interface between institutions of higher learning and the job market so needed skills are produced and less needed skills are not produced;

(viii) Intentionally introduce ICT learning and training in all institutions of learning, beginning from lower primary education level at minimum;

(ix)   Make emphasis on critical thinking skills, ensuring that educators are also able to possess and teach these skills;

(x)   Emphasize focus on entrepreneurship and digital skills in the National Curriculum for General Education;

(xi)   Ensure that out-of-school youth and adults are able to access learning, with emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills for all.

(xii)   Indigenous knowledge should be integrated across all education levels since it forms part of what makes a nation great.

2.2.4   Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession

The following proposals have been made by stakeholders with regards to teachers, teaching and the teaching profession:

(i)   Hire more teachers and improve teacher's allocation within the country.

(ii)   Review teacher training colleges curriculum to support a transformed education system for the country. The colleges are expected to produce teachers capable of imparting the skills necessary for life, work-life, lifelong learning and entrepreneurship. This should include the mainstreaming of ICT and digital teaching skills.

(iii)   Re-skill teachers in blended teaching, which should combine distance, digital and face-to-face teaching digital teaching skills, ensuring that blended learning continues to be the new normal way of delivering the curriculum. This should be coupled with the provision of the required infrastructure, equipment and gadgets;

(iv) Strengthen the provision of psycho-social support to teachers and learners in order to bring back normalcy and an environment conducive for teaching and learning;

(v) Review and standardize the conditions of service for teachers, bridging the rural/urban gaps in living and teaching conditions of teachers;

(vi) Teacher remunerations should be aligned with schemes of service for teachers. This will further state salary entry points in schools.

(vii) Head teachers should be thoroughly trained on school administration.

(viii) Prioritize the training of teachers that are in short supply in the profession;

(ix) Capacitate the In-Service Education and Training (INSET) Department so that it adequately provided the required services of keeping teachers relevant.

(x) Systematic mind-set shift for educators and teachers in order to foster new and relevant changes in the education system.

(xi) Teachers require training on money management, it affects their personal lives including the teaching profession.

(xii) Formulate guidelines for positive discipline.

(xiii) Some incentives (allowances) should be provided to teachers in order to speed up the catch-up process.

2.2.5 Digital learning and transformation

In order for digital learning and transformation to take root, the following key strategies need to be implemented:

(i) The education sector should upscale blended learning that combines face-to-face and digital learning. All teaching and learning material should be accessible in a digital format.

(ii) A mechanism for financing the development and accessing of digital teaching and learning material should be found;

(iii) All teachers should be trained on digital teaching.

(iv) Schools should be equipped with digital learning accessories

(v) Improve ICT infrastructure to support digital learning, including internet, radio and TV signals coverage;

(vi) Introduce zero-rated access to internet for educational purposes;

(vii) Support the procurement of ICT gadgets and equipment required for educational purposes (e.g. tablets for teachers and learners);

(viii) Mainstream ICT skills learning across the education system. This may include a review of the national curriculum for general education to incorporate strong ICT sentiments.

(ix) Create a specific department or unit responsible for ICT/digital learning mainstreaming within the Ministry of Education and Training;

(x) The sector should find ways to protect children from harm when using the internet for learning;

(xi) Basic IT skills should be ensured for learners with disability;

(xii) Digital learning should not be considered a replacement to face-to-face learning but a complementary approach to learners, helpful during emergencies;

(xiii) Government should fast-track the development and launching of the learning passport (digital learning platform).

(xiv) Coding should be introduced from as early as Grade 0 to prepare learners for the new IT-based era (4th Industrial Revolution).

2.3 Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education

2.3.1 Current financing arrangement

Discussions with stakeholders revealed three dimensions of the current financing model which requires attention. There is a strong sense that public education is seriously underfunded, underpinned by the observation that, over the years, the share of education in the national budget appropriation has been getting less and less, from 21% in 2016 to about 16% by 2021. While not disputed anywhere during the consultation process, this view was pitted against the notion that sector is not necessarily under-funded, but there are many inefficiencies in the system, indicating the need to improve efficiencies in order to get more returns from invested funds. The third dimension is that the bulk of the public budget going towards education is directed to personnel costs, with the sector employing in excess of 13,000 teachers, leaving less resources available for developmental/capital and operational costs.

Another point raised by stakeholders relates to the bigger share of education budget going towards tertiary education while primary and secondary education has the largest enrolment, indicating the need to make adjustments.

Stakeholders also noted that offering free primary education should begin in either Grade 0 or at Pre-school, and not end at primary education level, but should also cover the secondary education level. This is thought to contribute to high retention rate for learners, adding that the FPE investment is wasted if learners cannot go through the entire system due to lack of investment in secondary education.

At a higher level, stakeholders also took the view that all stakeholders, including government, should consider an investment in education as a necessity, and not a burden or a social good. In this way, meaningful ways of investing in the education system may be necessary, including tapping to Public-Private Partnerships, incentivising the private sector to invest in education, a review the funding model, and the introduction of efficiencies in the system.

The Ukraine conflict has not made the situation easier concerning the financing of the education system, especially from the perspective of external assistance. It reduced the amount of resources available from international donors.

2.3.2 Suggested changes

a) Policy and legislative changes

There is clearly a need to review the Free Primary Education Act of 2010 to include the entire basic education continuum. However, an approach that recognizes the nation's social strata is required as opposed to an umbrella policy and legislation.

b) Funding sources and public finance reforms

(i) Government should increase budget allocation to education back to 2016 levels in order to address infrastructure development and operational needs in order for the country to transform its education system and deliver the desired results;

(ii) The private sector should be incentivised to contribute more to education, including sponsoring certain developments and individual schools and students.

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To this end, a suggestion for the establishment of a not-for-profit establishment that could have proper management and monitoring system, to receive and management contributions from the private sector directed at the education sector.

(iii) A structured resource mobilization mechanism is required to support the transformation of the education sector, including securing funds for digital transformation initiatives.

c) Stakeholders held the views that:

(i)   An improved model of financing education in public institutions is needed. It should include government reviewing the allocation to Free Primary Education (FPE) since the amounts allocated have not be reviewed since inception (in 2010).

(ii)   Free education should also be extended to pre-school education, especially Grade Zero, as well as in the secondary education level, more so because research has proven that one of the leading causes to learners dropping out of school is lack of funds to pay for school fees.

(iii)   Government needs to feel vacant position for teachers in order to ensure that learning continues unhindered so that recovery from COVID-19 and civil unrest losses is sped up.

(iv)   There should be intentional investment in ICT infrastructure to support digital learning, which should include network coverage for ratio, television and internet signals, classroom infrastructure and other related equipment. Public-Private Partnerships were identified as some of the viable options towards such initiatives.

(v)   Review the Accounting Regulations & Procedures to be in line with SDG 4, The Education Agenda 2030.

(vi)   Relocate OVC grant from the DPM's Office to the Ministry of Education & Training.

(vii)   Introduce an autonomous National Education Fund to manage scholarships on a revolving basis;

(viii) Move Scholarship Board to the Ministry of Education and Training.

2.4 Raising the ambition of national education targets and benchmarks

2.4.1 Access to quality primary and secondary education for all children and youth.

The following has been submitted by stakeholders in this regard:

(i)   Introduce free secondary education;

(ii)   Improve curriculum to emphasize technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills;

(iii)   Improve curriculum to emphasize ICT skills and digital learning in particular.

(iv)   Strengthen teacher development and training, with particular emphasis to teacher training curriculum and in-service training;

(v)   Provide meals to all public schools to ensure nutrition and uninterrupted learning for all learners;

(vi)   Improve social protection for communities, especially rural communities to

ensure that access to education is not negatively affected.

(vii)   Strengthen school health program and LSE.

Essentially, there is need to respond to all the causes of less than 100% enrolment in primary and secondary education, including causes for dropping out of the education system. The 2030 deadline remains much valid for these targets.

2.4.2 Access to quality early childhood care and development and pre-primary education

The following has been submitted by stakeholders in this regard:

(i)   Make Grade 0 compulsory for all children;
(ii)   Public funding of pre-primary education, extending free education to pre-primary education;
(iii)   ECCDE curriculum should be strengthened
(iv)   Strengthen ECCDE centres, ensuring coverage throughout the country, accompanied by a strong monitoring mechanism;
(v)   Provide meals to all public schools, beginning from pre-primary education levels.

2.4.3 Adequate literacy and numeracy skills for all youth

The following have been suggested by stakeholders pertaining drastic improvements in ensuring adequacy of literacy and numeracy skills:

(i)   Ensure the most vulnerable and marginalized children have access to learning (refugee, stateless, children with disability, those living in poverty…)
(ii)   Establish community education centres for the out-of-school youth and adults to attend;
(iii)   Ensure parents and families have access to adequate support to accompany their children;
(iv)   Improve the implementation of the NCFGE, ensuring the monitoring of its implementation for effectiveness.

3. National Education Transformation Commitments

The following commitments are proposed for pursuit by the country to transform its education system:

3.1 Recovering education losses due to COVID-19 and civil unrest disruptions

In order to recover education losses due to COVID-19 and civil unrest, an assessment of the extent of education losses experienced by the country's education system will be conducted in order to inform actions that need to be taken towards recovery. An 'all learners back-to-school' campaign will be rolled out to ensure that all learners who dropped out due to COVID-19 and civil unrest are reoriented towards meeting their initial educational goals, allow flexible payment terms for school fees, and provide meals to learners in all levels of basic education.

An intentional adjustment in the implementation of the curriculum framework for general education will be made regarding pace, accommodation of learners with disability and focus on core skills, coupled with a more inclusive pursuit of blended learning approach, and the expanded provision of psychosocial support services to teachers and learners.

3.2 Strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century

a) Legislative and policy framework

(i)   Eswatini will improve the implementation of policies and strategies that drive transformation in inclusion and other elements of the education system. These include the National Gender Policy, the National Education and Training Sector Policy, the National Curriculum Framework for General Education, and others.

(ii)   Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework and institutional arrangement within the Ministry of Education and Training to ensure the successful implementation of transformational policies, strategies and initiatives.

(iii)   Review current legislation to promote contemporary approaches to education and training. These include the Education Act, the Teaching Services Act, and others.

b) Education inclusivity

In additional to legislative and policy review and implementation, the country shall:

Ensure that all learners enrol at pre-primary and complete secondary education through introducing free education until secondary education, improving education infrastructure to accommodate learners with disability/special needs, capacitating educators on effectively teaching learners with disability, and strengthening the school nutrition program, tied to community farming, ensuring it's roll out to all public schools.

c) *Quality and Relevance of the education system*

The country aims to develop a permanent interface between the labour market and the education system, ensuring the needed skills are produced through improved teacher training curriculum for colleges and in-service training and education, continuously improved curriculum for general education, expanding TVET and providing psychosocial support services for educators and learners.

In addition to the introduction of continuous professional development and performance management, the country will also standardize the teaching conditions to allow teachers to freely migrate to any school where needed, emphasizing the production of subject teachers in short supply and strengthen the In-Service Training and Education Department for improved effectiveness towards enhancing teacher quality.

Quality of education will also be transformed through adjustments in the examination framework will shift from summative to formative, aligned to Competency-Based Education, supported by aligned contemporary approaches to inspection (quality assurance).

d) *Digital transformation*

Eswatini aims to adopt a blended learning approach that combines distance learning, digital learning and face-to-face instruction supported by dedicated radio and television channels, enhanced access to ICT infrastructure coverage and enhanced access to e-learning, digital and learning equipment and material and the required capacity for digital teaching and learning.

In addition to zero-rated access to internet for education purposes, the country will work towards financing the procurement of ICT equipment and/or gadgets for digital learning, and improving the school and community environment to facilitate proper digital learning.

A specific unit within the Ministry of Education and Training will be established and designated with the responsibility to promote and monitor the implementation of digital learning within the education system across all levels.

3.3 Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education

Eswatini aims to increase allocation of public expenditure in education to at least 20% from the current 16% in order to finance education infrastructure in alignment to international benchmarks, allowing the country to introduce and maintain free education at pre-primary and secondary education levels.

Apart from mobilizing resources for providing scholarships for tertiary education and training, the country will establish a National Education Fund with revolving attributes, ensuring access by all qualifying learners graduating from secondary education, with more emphasis on Entrepreneurship, Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

A mechanism to constantly monitor the efficiencies of the education system will be rolled out, ensuring that more output is achieved from investments made to education, putting cosmetic expenditure behind critical developmental expenditure, ensure reduction in the cost of education through various means, including moving away from manual to digital learning material and strategic partnerships with the private and not-for-profit sectors in the financing of education.

1. Lessons Learnt and Best Practices

1.1 Best practices

Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption

a) Adjusting the education calendar to allow more time for learning in order to recover teaching and learning time lost. Time is a critical factor in teaching, and during the COVID-19 restrictions, time was lost and much teaching could not be covered. Even though this approach has worked for the education system, teacher and learner fatigue requires monitoring and proper handling.

b) Compressing the curriculum to target critical skills for a smooth progression of learners through the different levels of education. Certain levels of proficiency need to be agreed and prioritized for emergency situations such as those experienced during COVID-19 and the civil unrest.

c) Providing psychosocial support services to teachers and learners is important during situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This helps to bring back the much-needed focus and allow learning to take place again.

d) Employing the use of digital learning helped to bridge the learning gap. However, exclusion issues due to various factors have been observed that requires further analysis and solutions. The rural Eswatini that did not have sufficient coverage for radio and television educational programs as well as internet signal was somewhat excluded, together with learners with disability (especially hearing and sight disability).

Strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century

a) Collaborated effort and support is crucial for a complete overhaul of an education system. For instance, the review of the country's national curriculum framework benefitted from assistance from development partners. This framework has a number of transformative outcomes. Collaboration between Government and development partners, civil society organizations and the private sector has been instrumental in the achievements made by the sector in recent years.

b) Tapping into the knowledge, experience and views of stakeholders by education managers is a good approach to arriving at what can bring transformative changes to the education system.

Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education

a) Public financing of Free Primary Education, as well as the provision of nutrition programs yield positive results as shown by the increase in enrolment in the primary education level since the introduction of FPE and food items to schools. With about 70% of the Eswatini population living under poverty, affording the cost of education and paying for food can be elusive to many Emaswati, thus the positive impact of FPE and nutrition programs in schools.

b) It is unlikely for a developing country to have sufficient resources to finance its education entirely from the public purse. As such, international and local development partners, civil society, parents and the private sector play a crucial role in ensuring an adequately financed education system.

Raising the ambition of national education targets and benchmarks

a) A country's education system is considered to be sound when it meets that country's developmental needs and contributes to the achievement of its strategic goals and objectives. A proper linkage between where the country is going and the quality of graduates it produces is crucial for the success of an education system. As such, national education targets and benchmarks are better placed against the aspiration of the country. In Eswatini, poverty reduction and increased employment are considered critical development priorities and the education system works to deliver graduates who will be capable of taking themselves out of poverty and create employment.

1.2 Lessons learnt

Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption

a) Disruptions to education can be aggravated by lack of anticipation and preparedness for pandemics and other occurrences such as the civil. Countries that had stronger education systems with better disaster preparedness recovered quicker from COVID-19 disruptions.
b) A good information and communication technology infrastructure is crucial for continued learning and recovery from disturbances, especially with good coverage and accessibility attributes. The mainstreaming of ICT within schools can greatly enhance continued learning and recovery as could be seen from the majority of private schools.

Strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century

a) In order to realize meaningful changes from policy and legislative reforms and strategic priorities and plans, it is important to set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure effective implementation. This is more the case since the sector seems to have almost adequate policy and legislative frameworks, the majority of which are hardly implemented or their implementation is not tracked for progress.
b) Availability of resources for implementing change initiatives requires assessment at adoption of such initiatives so as to determine the likelihood of successful implementation. Government and development partner commitments are crucial for specific initiatives.

Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education
a) It is always advisable to constantly review the cost of education and the effectiveness of current of publicly financing country's education system, together with platforms for accountability on the use of public resources on education. Analysis of how the FPE funds are used revealed that in some schools, the funds are more than sufficient, while in other schools, the funds do not meet the needs on the ground, causing the school to struggle to manage its education processes.

Raising the ambition of national education targets and benchmarks

a) Setting sound and realistic national education targets requires the availability of baseline data on the subject. Research plays a crucial role in ensuring that data and information are available for decision-making without which strategies and programs may be misdirected.

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2. Conclusion

Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption

The country's full recovery from COVID-19 is possible. It requires education managers and policy holders to first determine the extent of the losses made before coming to the determination of the courses of action that need to be taken for full recovery.

Full recovery is also achievable through all key stakeholders playing their roles within the education system.

Imperatively, resources will be required to take advantage of the available ICT space in order to expand and mainstream digital learning in schools for a full recovery.

Full recovery also means ensuring that all learners are back in class, including those without means to pay for school fees and pregnant girls of school-going age.

Psychosocial and mental health needs of teachers and learners will need to be prioritized in order to recover from the effects of COVID-19.

Strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century

Stakeholders successfully identified what needs to be done for the country's education system to transform and deliver better results. Crucially important is ensuring the alignment of the country education with the needs of industry and socio-economic development of citizens, thereby producing the skills required.

More needs to be done to ensure inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy school in the country, calling for a wide range of initiatives, including policy improvements, implementation and monitoring, increasing the number of qualified teachers in schools, improving the quality of teachers through strengthening INSET, and improving the infrastructure for digital learning, which should come with zero-rated data and the public procurement of the required gadgets and equipment.

Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education

The downward trend in the financing of education from the public purse has not worked for the sector, neither for the country, instead, it has left education under-funded. The sector also suffers from being of the naturally labour-intensive, making it look like it receives the lion's share of the national budget, only to find that 75% of the funds go towards sector personnel costs, and very little going towards meeting operational and developmental expenditure needs.

The cost of education remains high, contributing to the national budget's inability to adequately meet it or parents to afford paying for their children.

Poverty levels also contributes to the challenge of public financing of education.

Raising the ambition of national education targets and benchmarks

The country's national education targets and benchmarks have remained ambitious, taking it from the various policies and strategies developed to implement policies. However, evidence suggest that the country has struggled to implement its policies and meet its targets, owing to the absence of a robust monitoring mechanism for policy and strategy implementation in the sector. Until such a mechanism is in place and effective, chances remain limited for the country to achieve its targets and the SDG 4 2030 Agenda.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption

a) An assessment of the extent of the education losses due to COVID-19 should be carried. It will be instrumental in the setting of sound and relevant programs and initiatives aimed at full recovery from the pandemic's losses.
b) Government should prioritize psychosocial support for learners and teachers, as well as an accelerated and compressed curriculum roll out, albeit taking caution against learner and teacher fatigue.
c) The government should take all measures possible to get learners back to school, whatever the reasons behind their dropping out.

3.2 Strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century

a) Since the TES takes place at a time when the Ministry of Education and Training is finalizing the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), it is recommended that the outcomes of the TES consultations be integrated into the strategy, with clear targets, implementation matrix and means, as well as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure progress.
b) The Ministry of Education and Training should set up a mechanism to oversee policy implementation in order to achieve and cement transformation achievements. Attached to this recommendation is the need for continuous capacity building for management, leadership, monitoring and evaluation and research within the Ministry as earlier recommended by the Education Sector Analysis report (2021).
c) Since the education system cannot transform on its own but requires a broader supportive environment to transformation, Government is encouraged to implement its development policies that support investment in education and improve on social protection which ultimately contributes to less interruptions in teaching and learning.
d) As incorporated in the PRSAP, Government is encouraged to shift priority from tertiary education that feed into while collar jobs, but place practical emphasis to pre-vocational education at secondary education level, and technical and vocation education and training at tertiary level and in the non-formal education space.

3.3 Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education

a) By bringing the budget allocation to 2016 and earlier levels (over 20% of national budget allocation), the education system can be able to fund its transformation, especially in the advent of digital learning, 4IR and CBE.
b) As opposed to considering education as costly and a burden to the public purse, it is recommended that Government considers investment in education as a necessity for development, and improve investment in order to attract more support from development partners;
c) It is further recommended that Government should put in place stronger accountability mechanisms that will ensure efficiencies in the use of public funds in the education sector. This should not leave out a review of the FPE funding to schools.

d) The private sector should be structurally brought on board to contribute to education, setting up systems and platforms that encourage the private sector to participate.

e) The public and private sectors should join hands to make access to digital learning easy and a reality in order to transform the country's education through investing in infrastructure development (improve signal coverage for radio, TV, and internet), finance the procurement of gadgets and equipment for digital learning and sponsor learning institutions and learners.

3.4 Raising the ambition of national education targets and benchmarks

a) The country needs to continue to drive for the attainment of SDG4 within its context, properly customized, by 2030.

b) It is recommended that the implementation of the 2018 National Curriculum Framework for General Education be up-scaled, while the framework is continuously improved to take into account the latest developments in the education space, including the need to produce graduates who are not only good for white-collar jobs;

c) Achieving universal access to inclusive quality education remains a key target for Eswatini. As such, it is recommended that the Government, working with development partners, set rolling a program for renewal of schools infrastructure to ensure that schools are a good environment for learning in all regions of the country, ensuring a pre-determined standardization levels for all schools in the country irrespective of location.

Annexure A – Consultation attendance summary

Stakeholder group	Consultation Date	Number of participants	
		Male	Female
1. Ministry of Education & Training			
a) Senior Management	July 4, 2022	13	9
b) Senior Inspectors	July 5, 2022	3	7
c) Curriculum Developers	July 8, 2022	22	13
d) Regional Educations Officers (including Planners Statisticians Finance Assessors Inspectors)			
Manzini REO/Inspectorate	July 7, 2021	6	6
Hhohho REO/Inspectorate	July 6, 2022	7	3
Lubombo and Shiselweni REO/Inspectorate	July 12, 2022	17	13
2. Local Education Group (LEG)	July 15, 2022	9	19
3. Other Ministries: Economic Planning and Development, Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Home Affairs	July 14, 2022	3	3
4. Educators (Swaziland Association of School Administrators, Eswatini Principals Association, professional staff)	July 26, August 8, 2022	24	20
5. Parents (School committees, selection of parents/guardians)			
Shiselweni	July 21, 2022	19	20
Manzini	July 18, 2022	18	22
Hhohho	July 20,2022	25	15
Lubombo	July 19, 2022	16	17
6. Civil Society Organizations	July 28,2022	14	18
7. Youth representatives	July 25, 2022	38	28
8. Development Partners Technical Teams (UN System, European Union, World Bank, Embassies, etc.)	July 27, 2022	10	10
9. Private Sector	July 27, 2022		
10. Parliament portfolio committees			
11. Young people with disabilities	July 29, 2022	27	23
12. Media	July 13, 2022	5	12
13. Academia, tertiary education	July 5, August 8, 2022	7	17
14. Public – national ratio	July 6, 2022	12	
15. Public – 8500 messaging platform	July 6,7, 2022	38	
16. High-Level Roundtable Consultation: Ministers, Ambassadors, UN System, Private Sector, Education Experts	July 4, 2022	15	18

Annexure B – Consultation Question Guides

National Consultations Questions:
The questions will be asked per key components and as relevant for each stakeholder consultation as guided in the Guidelines for National Consultations:

1. **Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption**
    a) What has been the impact of the COVID-19 educational disruption on learning loss, student disengagement, dropout, and non-reenrollment?
    b) What has been the impact of the COVID-19 educational disruption on nutrition and health, the protection of girls, and the well-being of both learners and teachers?
    c) What steps have been taken to recover pandemic-related losses? What progress has been made to date?
    d) What additional measures are proposed to support further recovery in the short-term?

2. **Identifying the main strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century and accelerating progress towards shared education goals**
    a) Was the country off-track with regard to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" before the pandemic?
    b) If yes, what are the main obstacles that have made it so difficult to move towards an adequate fulfillment of SDG 4?
    c) What possibilities for system change are apparent now that were not before?
    d) What features of education are most important to continue, strengthen and/or safeguard?
    e) What in current education policy and practice needs to be abandoned?
    f) What innovative transformations can be envisioned as desired features of education?
    g) What are the key levers of change within the national context?
    h) What coalitions and broad mobilizations can be activated?

3. **Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education**
    a) What is the current state of financing of education?
        - What is the share of national resource allocation for education per learner, in national income and in the national budget compared to other services?
        - What is the proportion of public and private education?
        - What is the significance of external funding for education?
    b) How can public financing of education be strengthened?
        - What is the trajectory for education investment over the medium to long term?
        - What measures are envisaged to ensure more efficiency in use?
        - How will greater equity in resource allocation be ensured?
        - What additional innovative and multi-sectoral mechanisms can ensure adequate and sustainable domestic financing of education?

4. **Raising the ambition of national education targets and benchmarks**

a) Has the national government set SDG 4 benchmarks to date, including for the seventh indicator on gender equity?

b) Do national benchmark values reflect the maximum level of ambition possible, given the urgent need to accelerate progress towards SDG 4 commitments and the opportunities for progress that?

c) Can global benchmarks for other SDG 4 targets (e.g., skills development, youth and adult literacy, higher education, enrollment, vocational and tertiary education) be elaborated further at the national level? If so, how?

d) How can political accountability for achieving national SDG 4 benchmarks be strengthened?

Annexure C – Summarized Stakeholder Submissions

Stakeholder group	Observations	Suggested changes
1. Ministry of Education & Training		
a) **Senior Management**	**a)** **Transformation** can imply relevant radical change. It not an event but a process. It can also imply shift in mind-set, attitudes and practices.	
	b) **Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) There is a need for a policy to address retention of learners at school. This stems from the huge number of learners dropping out due to pregnancy and other reasons. (ii) There is need for multi-sectoral partnerships and community engagement in supporting retention of learners. (iii) Male involvement in advocacy and strengthening protection issues, menstrual hygiene and GBV issues is a necessity. **(iv)** The education transformation should be founded on inclusion principles in terms of infrastructure, teacher support, gender disparities, disadvantaged learners.	
	c) **Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development** (i) Green environment contributes positively to climate change.	**Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development** (i) There is need to conduct learning assessment both quantitative and qualitative to determine learning loss. (ii) Skills-oriented curriculum should be strengthened across all levels.
	d) **Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession** (i) There is need for ICT savvy Head Teachers and Teachers. (ii) All teachers from pre-service to in-service should have high ICT skills	

	e) Digital learning and transformation (i) Re-define the mode of delivery and be more innovative on technology based learning, blended leaning approaches. (ii) Develop online learning platform, school and management. (iii) Invest in capacity strengthening of the entire chain in the provision of digital learning. (iv) Re-define classroom and assessment. (v) Promote a paperless environment in the education sector; e-learning, e-books. (vi) Invest in data systems, data analysis and data management.	
	f) Financing of Education (i) Invest in early learning through the roll out Grade 0 to all primary schools. (ii) The Education sector should use targeted financing for their social assistance services. This is in terms of Free Primary Education, School feeding programme, special education and OVC grants.	
a) Senior Inspectors	**a) Impact of COVID-19 educational disruptions** (i) Closing of the nutrition program (ii) Negative health impact of Covid-19 on leaners and teachers (iii) Schools were closed for a longer time compared to other countries (iv) Social, curriculum, teacher, economic aspects of the disturbances (v) We do not have a strong data collection system – who is out of school, what age, what gender? Respond specifically to these aspects; (vi) Some learners will not be able to be reintegrated back to school (vii) Children are not used to distance learning or e-learning (viii) Covid-19 escalated problems that already existed.	**Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption** (i) There is need to finalize policy guidance on pregnant girls continuing with school (ii) The curriculum should be adjusted to the level of the child (not necessarily to the age) – (iii) Education baseline is needed to determine where we are and how can we catch-up (iv) We should move from loss to recovery, from recovery to resilience (v) Provide 100% school meal (vi) E-learning will imply e-books. (vii) Back to school campaign should not stop. (viii) Mental health/psycho-social support services needed at school (ix) Consider ways of delivering more with less time.

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	Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools (i) Do not take a blanket approach to social protection. (ii) Children with special needs – travelling to school: Maybe learning from home can cut down on this challenge. (iii) Make sure all teachers are well-trained on a number of issues, including gender-sensitive pedagogy	
	Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development (i) Introduce or strengthen distance learning, make it free; (ii) Establish a committee to look at transformation	
	Teaching, teachers and the teaching profession (i) Do inspection differently – ensuring quality education (ii) Introduce subject-specific inspectors at Primary School (iii) Introduce performance management at schools (motivations, measurement, etc.) (iv) Training of administrators – These are the people who can improve performance	
	Digital learning and transformation (i) There is need for a dedicated e-learning unit to ensure the mainstreaming of e-learning; (ii) Use of gadgets – Policy needed on the use of gadgets (iii) Multi-sectoral approach needed.... e.g. zero-rated data.... (iv) Consider the cost of accessing E-learning; dedicated radio, TV channels	
b) Curriculum Developers	**a) Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) Support should be provided to disadvantage learners in accessing e-learning platforms is key.	
	b) Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development (i) The professionalism of managing learning institutions is poor. (ii) Legislators were not engaged and still not aware of the essence of CBE.	**Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development** (i) Skills-based education, arts, practical/ physical education is imperative; we should move away from emphasizing white collar jobs. (ii) There should be a balance between academic learning and skills-based education.

(iii) The location of colleges was strategically placed to inform what industry needs, purposeful skills audit is important. (iv) Assessment – has moved away from pen-paper examination. Universities around the globe have moved towards presentations and more profound assessment methods. (v) Implement competency based education from primary to tertiary. There is no cohesion within the education system. (vi) The wastage, the Swazis that are unable to make it to formal tertiary institution should be taken in to get a skill. (vii) Subject combination is a huge problem in at tertiary level. (viii) Tertiary level schooling is worrying; the learners are not at school most of the time. Either being teachers or any other profession are not producing quality graduates. (ix) Practical subjects have been a need from the 1970s, there is a need a political will. (x) Curriculum is at the centre and a pill in responding to national problems. It is important as a curriculum expert to transform the subject in itself to respond to the current and future problems.	Prevocational education should continue to cascade to lower grades. (iii) There is need to manage corruption that results in waste of funds in the sector. (iv) We need to expand the technical vocational education and training. (v) Increase professional, technical, arts learning pathways. (vi) Proper monitoring and evaluation of the CBE is critical, therefore needs for funds to finance it. (vii) There is need to enforce supervision, strong supervision in management. (viii) Normal progression is vital to avoid wastage of resources in repetition. (ix) In every subject area, it should ensure that it shows how they can earn a living. Enticing learners on how their learning should be self-sufficient. (x) Rethink entrepreneurship at all levels.
c) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession (i) Surplus training of certain graduates causes wastage in the education system.	**Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession** (i) Need for assessment training for teachers.

	(ii) The In-Service Department is seriously under-capacitated; (iii) The head teachers are doing whatever they like in schools and not following policy, need for responsible action planning and management. (iv) It is important to trust the NCC with the mandate and authority to work well in transforming the education system of the country.	(ii) We need to strengthen pre-service but mostly in-service because our teachers are not able to implement it work. (iii) Continuous training of the curriculum experts is vital to be ahead of time and be at par with the rest of world.
	d) Digital learning and transformation (i) The effectiveness of online education differs across subjects. There is need to understand which subjects are most effectively delivered in which platform; radio and television. (ii) The standing position of resilience of the system is weak. We have relaxed our position in the provision of distance education	**Digital learning and transformation** **(i)** Digital learning is a must in terms of radio, television and online.
	e) Financing of Education (i) Difficulties in the current financing arrangement for the National Curriculum Centre is problematic, compromising the quality of education. (ii) It is important to give institution such as NCC, the resources, the ability to function independently with the resources that would be given to the institution. (iii) In as much as FPE is a right, we need to re-think education financing. Primary education is state funded, secondary is expensive, tertiary requires funding. We need to do targeting in terms of state funded education.	**Financing of education** (i) Financial support for implementing the entire curriculum framework is vital. (ii) Learn from the Singapore experience – their education system has brought great increase in their economic growth. (iii) The resources when implementing transformative practices is important. The political will to finance improving the sector is important. (iv) Full rollout of grade 0 in all primary schools.

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	(iv) If the MoET is prioritized, we should see it. Not showing budget, but it should mean that the Government should take real and tangible solutions should be provided to allow education to take precedence. (v) Education is not cheap, once you do it cheaply, the quality of Education will be compromised.	(v) Implementation of policies that we have drafted is important. There is need for political will to implement all the suggested. (vi) Review of Free Primary Education – the cost that government is giving the schools is low to implement CBE, comprising the quality of education. (vii) There is need to employ teachers on permanent basis to ensure they are fully in school. (viii) The NCC needs to be given the authority to work independently so that it executes its mandate properly. (ix) Let us use the Regional Education Fund for infrastructure projects in education.
Regional Education Officers (including Planners Statisticians Finance Assessors Inspectors)	**a) Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) Learners and teachers need motivation, guidance and counselling programme; (ii) Psychosocial and mental health programmes are a necessity in schools; (iii)Engage head teachers in bringing back drop-outs due to pregnancy and other reasons; (iv)Campaigns on safety of leaners should be conducted; (v) Community engagement in education programmes at homes; (vi)Role of parents in education should be clearly outlined and emphasized.	
	b) Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development (i) Use of Workbooks when learners are at home (ii) Poor policy implementation and enforcement is worrying. A strategy towards enforcement is very vital. (iii) Improve the inspection strategy to minimize on need to personally visit schools; improve networking. **(iv)** Benchmark with other countries on how inspections are being carried out. **(v)** Strengthen, and sponsor vocational training across all education levels, beginning from secondary education level;	

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	(vi) Change attitude, mind-set of learners, parents and teachers on skills-based education.
	(vii) All schools should have the entire spectrum of the subjects to choose from.
	(viii) Enforce policy on repetition/normal progression.
	c) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
	(i) There is need for capacity strengthening of teachers on how best to reach out to learners when not in front of them
	(ii) There is need for teachers and administrators to know how to respond during emergencies.
	(iii) Teachers should be capacitated on SEN both in-service and mostly pre-service.
	(iv) New teachers need to be prioritized in terms of training.
	(v) Investing in teachers is very important in terms of retaining them in schools for a while.
	(vi) Continuous professional development for teachers is a must and further reward for it is vital.
	(vii) Institutionalized in-service training - Compulsory teacher courses that teachers need to take, for example, every after five years to new their teaching license.
	d) Digital learning and transformation
	(i) Blended learning approaches should be pursued;
	(ii) Expansion of online learning using various platforms is an urgent need;
	(iii) Enforce radio lessons;
	(iv) School online – radio, TV, websites, social media
	(v) Printed books era is coming to an end, need for e-books. This will decrease cost of education.
	(vi) There is need for investments in ICT infrastructure in education.
	(vii) Introduce electronic notes for teachers to decrease note writing time.
	e) Financing of education
	(i) Financial assistance at ECCDE is important. Some parents are unable to pay for their children at this level.
	(ii) Education resource prioritization in terms of human resource.
	(iii) A policy that enables pre-primary education be a prerequisite and be financed by government should be introduced because the teachers are not qualified since the pay is low at that level.
	(iv) Contract teachers are demotivated due to uncertainty about their employment.
	(v) Contract period is very low; two years is not consistent for in-service training.

		(vi) Rollout grade 0 in all primary school	
2. Other Ministries (Economic Planning and Development, Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Home Affairs)		**a) Current status of the education system** • COVID-19 hampered the delivery of services by the department of Home Affairs (HA) – there was no issuance of official documents, especially birth registration and National Identity Documents for children. • No issuing of permits and passports was done for both students and teachers. • The ministry observed high pregnancy rates among young girls due to COVID-19. • Quality of Education – the ministry observed that most schools recorded unprecedented high passing rates yet no learning took place during COVID-19/and civil unrest.	**Improving service to the education sector** • Introduction and implementation of online services/platforms for Home Affairs clients which should be followed by capacity building for end users and Home Affairs staff. • Government should strengthen school infrastructure in all the regions and ensure that it is evenly distributed in overpopulated areas. • Government should re-allocate funds from other ministries to cater for the educational needs of children and learners for instance, provision of water. • State funded education – Government should support free education throughout the education system (from Pre-Primary to Tertiary)
b) Educators (Swaziland Association of School Administrators, Eswatini Principals Association, professional staff)		**a) Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) Many learners lost hope and motivation to learn. (ii) Mental health issues for teachers require attention. Develop a program intended to support psychological health for teachers. (iii) High drop-out rates **b) Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development**	**Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) Develop, sustain and improve the concept of "health desk" in schools. **Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development**

(i) Lack of job opportunities is no longer the only challenge for graduates, but lack of relevant skills is the other major challenge; (ii) CBE is good but it requires an entire system change. We need to escalate to secondary and tertiary; (iii) School Management is very weak. The school head teachers are not well capacitated for this position; (iv) The divide between the community and school is too large. The community should protect the school. The school should be an important part of the community development.	(i) Re-configure the national curriculum and be based on the current skills needs for the country; (ii) Pre-vocational education needs to up-scaled to all schools; (iii) There is a need to review legislations in educations; (iv) Research based approach towards interventions done in the education sector; (v) Take recommendations of the skills audit report (2021).
c) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession (i) Lack of teachers in schools a huge challenge. (ii) Teacher-pupil ratio for CBE is not sufficient. (iii) The council of Educators a huge step towards professionalism of the teaching profession. (iv) Three-hours workshops are not enough in-service training.	**Teachers, teaching, and the teaching profession** (i) Joint collaboration with teachers' unions on development of the teaching sector. (ii) Need to address the deployment arrangement of teachers. There is need to hire all required teachers, fill all vacant posts. (iii) Teacher remunerations should be aligned with schemes of service for teachers. This will further state salary entry points in schools. (iv) Teachers require training on money management, it affects their personal lives including the teaching profession.
d) Digital learning and transformation (i) The technology gap was widened during COVID-19 and unrest	**Digital learning and transformation** (i) Online learning is a vital resilience building technique.

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	(ii) COVID-19 has given an opportunity to purse digital learning	(ii) Zero-rate internet education sites for both teachers and learners for all learning resources. (iii) For our education system to be sustainable and quality, we need to take advantage technology. (iv) Need to phase out scheme books, lessons plan, prep books. Let us move the entire teaching tools to electronic.
	e) Financing of education (i) Take advantage of GPE funding. (ii) Roll out Grade 0 to all primary schools (iii) Government should help by employing school support stuff, this will decrease the burden from schools. (iv) Invest on tertiary education financing – the intake at tertiary education is very low. Need to expand relevant tertiary institutions in the country. (v) National education fund – This is a fund that that receives money from beneficiaries of the fund and only fund again future beneficiaries (vi) Private-public partnerships are important. Companies should come to the party and fund education.	
c) Parents (School committees, selection of parents/guardians)	**a) Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) Children who do not have IDs are unable to access school because the school is not able to register them. (ii) The mix-match between Ministry policy and action at school level. (iii) Learners are dropping out of the school system due to the discrimination of being chased away. (iv) A high number of EmaSwati do not have enough money, even to pay for pre-primary education. (i) The interviews in schools are also hindering access.	**Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) The government should show political ambition for learners who are vulnerable because the teachers are chasing them away. (ii) Stakeholder engagement is important in making policies. (iii) Inter-ministerial collaboration is important: DPM office vs Education vs Labour.

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(ii) There corruption at the grass root level on OVC targeting (v) The rate at which the youth is impregnating and is irresponsible in financing the education of their children (vi) The political campaigns usually put government pressure. Collaboration between EBC during campaigns. (vii) Parents do not have ability to discipline their children, government has huge oversight in parenting these days.	(iv) Psychosocial support for learners, and teachers. Have social worker in schools or have regional psychosocial support teams. (v) There is need to protect the welfare of our teachers, including offering them counselling;
b) Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development (i) Curriculum issue is huge, constantly changing books which are expensive. (ii) Pre-vocational education was exceptionally introduced but no progression has been made. (iii) Political ambitions are killing the education system.	**Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development** (i) The school committees should be strengthened for proper school management. (ii) Skills based education is important in our curriculum, same strength should be given towards skills. **(iii)** Politics and education should be differentiated.
c) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession **(i)** Teachers are not being prioritized in employment. (ii) Vacant posts are not being filled. (iii) When committees make a decision to employ and pay teachers they are stopped. (iv) Other Ministries are able to take our teachers – to do national assignments.	**Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession** (i) Qualified teachers across the levels is critical. (ii) Teacher should be capacitated to be on issues that deal with their personal lives.

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	(v) Contract teachers are unable to do their work well due uncertainty with their employment. (vi) The teacher profession is not prioritized, contract teachers are more in schools but work more, their financial stress affects teaching and learning.	
	d) Financing of education (i) The disbursement of FPE grants have made it difficult to operate in schools. (ii) Parents are unable to continue paying at secondary level because they are not used to paying. (iii) The current education financing model is poor. (iv) Financing of education is not prioritized by government for FPE, OVC & Scholarships (v) Support stuff not paid due to disbursement of funds. (vi) Parents have been irresponsible in the financing of education of their children.	**Financing of education** (i) The review of the FPE grant fee schedule is a must. (ii) Government should make an education loan that will cut across all levels. (iii) Head teachers should be diligent and sensitive and come up with strategies that will help parents. (iv) Let government prioritize education in the financing either with loans, grants or budgets due huge costs. (v) Standardized costs of secondary education. (vi) The Exams council should quickly announce deadlines for paying fees to avoid penalties.
d) Civil Society Organizations	**a) Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) Psychosocial support – mental issues in schools for both teachers and teachers; dedicated staff in school for mental health. (ii) Implementation of the CSTL programme in schools. (iii) Teachers are not well capacitated to identify people with different kinds of disabilities. (iv) The MoET has good policies but implementation is short.	**Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) Incorporate the community in all projects/ activities that occur in schools. The school should look into the community and solve societal problems. (ii) This will transform both the school and community; this is help that the community protect the school during also during unrests situation.

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	(v) Rights of children always come from the children yet it's important that they start with parents (vi) Our curriculum should be diversified from the lowest level to tertiary.	(iii) Parents should also enforce indigenous knowledge to also understand sense of being and direction for people. (iv) Decision making should also focus from bottom-up approach, stakeholder engagement. (v) Home-grown school feeding programme should be enrolled in all schools.
	b) Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development (i) Skills-based education is very critical at giving us autonomous critical thinking for sustainable development and livelihoods. (ii) The education system only prepares learners for the field of employment. The country is suffering because if they are unemployed they are not able to earn a living. (iii) It is important for the school curriculum to concentrate on skills training especially in school. (iv) The divide between private and public schools brings societal divide. (v) The role of parents in the past has concentrated on financing thus support towards their learning has been limited. (vi) In public schools are highly-populated and teachers are unable to concentrate on all learners. (vii) Risk management policy in education is vital.	**Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development** (i) Let us re-brand the education brand. (ii) Mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of our policies. (iii) Investment in research development as well risk assessment. (iv) Strengthen collaboration with Ministry of Sports, this will give an opportunity for learners who are capable in arts, sports and other extra-curricular activities (v) Government should further enhance learners with disabilities to acquire skills because all they do is beg on the street after they complete school. (vi) Let us see people who are educated be employed, let us see critical thinking, let us see educated people be marketable about education.

	(viii) Dignity of education is low; it is important to bring back incentives to education.	
	c) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession (i) The teachers are not well capacitated for a transformed education system. There is need to integrate out teachers to match the forth industrial revolution. (ii) Teacher training and motivation.	
	d) Digital learning and transformation (i) Laying down key infrastructure that we need to invest in. Further, we need to evolve and bring internet, ICT equipment and tech-savvy teachers (ii) Further training of teachers that need to be capacitated on humanitarian courses.	
	e) Financing of education (i) The budget allocated for the functioning and implementation of policies and strategies to cater for learners with disabilities. (ii) Include grade 0 to be part of free primary education as it is an important foundation stage for learning. (iii) We have disempowered parents from supporting the education of their children by taking more responsibility to government (iv) Parents should understand that they have a responsibility to finance the education of their children. (v) Transforming education starts with parents taking responsibility of their children finance and also further look into also look into their studies. (vi) The reason why we looking up to government for everything is that we have lost our moral compass for taking care of our children.	**Financing of education** (i) Let scholarship be given to financial banking solutions (ii) Why is education financing very expensive for government and how can we close the loop holes that come with education financing – analysis on how we can finance education better. (iii) Income that comes through education should come through the education purse, funds should go back and finance education (iv) Financing during disasters should also focus on the most vulnerable. (v) Tax justice for education – need to extend free primary education to at least junior but eventually entire secondary education. (vi) It also important to look into education levy – funds solely to fund education progression.

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		(vii) Increase budget for special education – tertiary education does not accommodate learners with disabilities (viii) Scholarship recovery fund should go directly to finance
e) Youth representatives	**a) Impact of COVID-19 on education** (i) Curriculum is being hurried in preparation for exams. Pupils are no longer learning and rather memorizing. (ii) Pupils were unable to adapt to the rapid switch between online learning and face-to-face learning. (iii) Students have lost motivation to continue learning. (iv) Learners experienced psychological distress during the pandemic.	**Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruptions** a) Educating pupils on financial literacy. b) Education must advance with technology and society. Advancement in education must be in line with the direction the world is headed. c) Teachers must also adapt their teaching methods to the direction of the world. d) Offer more courses that are in demand.
	b) Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools (i) Schools have adopted a 'survival of the fittest' admission style. (ii) Free primary education was a good initiative. However, it must be remodeled to encompass the entire academic year. (iii) Schools are not inclusive of people with disabilities in terms of infrastructure such as ramps.	**Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) School admissions should be more inclusive for all learners whether they have excelled or not. (ii) The cleanliness of school bathrooms can be improved. Pupils should be taught how to properly maintain sanitation in school restrooms such as properly disposing sanitary pads etc.
	c) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession (i) Corporal punishment evokes a lot of personal trauma in pupils and does not in fact 'fix them.'	**Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession** (i) Teachers need to better understand mental health in learners.

		(ii) Learners must be understood and supported. (ii) Teachers need to be trained on how to teach pupils living with disabilities as well as being able to identify them. (iii)Provide training for teachers in order to reignite the passion they once had for their job. (iv)More incentives for teachers as a means to motivate them.
	d) Digital learning and transformation (i) Invest more in network infrastructure for easier and cheaper internet connection. (ii) Allow network provider competitors. (iii) Not only should teaching be digitalized but also school operations such as the admission processes.	
	e) Financing of education (i) When education is funded and changes are being implemented, they should be in line with trends and the direction of business and the economy. **(ii)** Finance start-up kits for pupils who want to venture into business.	
f) Development Partners (UN System, European Union, World Bank, Embassies, etc.)	**a) Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) Violence and teenage pregnancy were observed impacts of COVID-19 disruptions to the education system; (ii) Home-grown school feeding programme has good nutritional value; (iii) Rationing of the school feeding at schools; (iv) Discouraged learning activities due to high rate of unemployment; (v) Rural urban divide is high; (vi) Diversity in solutions: radio, TV & paper will not reach everyone;	**Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools.** (i) Need for remedial lessons for children who have been left out (ii) Need for life skills education (iii) Resilience building should be pursued; (iv) The food supplied in schools should be nutritious (v) Psychosocial support is needed for learners and teachers due to shocks from civil unrest and COVID19 (vi) Breakfast should be introduced in schools (vii) Access to contraceptive services in schools, alongside empowered youth

	(vii) Government will invest more in primary education vs tertiary because it has a social return.	(viii) Inter-ministerial collaboration should be prioritized; (ix) Leave no one behind: children with disabilities (x) Ensure that life skills education is examinable to ensure that it is taken seriously. (xi) Attractiveness of school: Youth should be motivated to be at school; (xii) It is important to remember who we are as a people so that we can bring out a curriculum that allows education for the people.
	a) Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development (i) Education system does not produce labor market required skills (ii) It is not clear what is government doing about the learners that are not accessing tertiary education (iii) We cannot rely on services that are just at school but also concentrate on these services also outside school. (iv) Structural problem that needs to be addressed of consciousness to be aware of who we are and greatness to become needs to be introduced at school level (v) A transformative change needs breaking from the chains of colonialism	**Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development** (i) Transform education to be relevant – move from skeletons learning towards skills (ii) Serious analysis to ensure that education is attractive (iii) We need a transformative mind-set as a nation and build heavy self-introspection as a nation. (iv) Celebrate ourselves for what we have done and appreciate what we are capable of doing as a nation, integrate indigenous knowledge because that what makes nations great.

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		(v) Use the advantage of low population to make investment in education easier, affordable, dynamic (vi) There is a need for a curriculum that allows for critical thinking. (vii) First and foremost, there is need for a comprehensive study that details the impacts of COVID into education. We are responding on speculation. There is need for assessments on learning outcomes, learning attainments and funding areas. (viii) When addressing quality education, it is important to look into quality education.
	a) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession (i) Strengthen teacher development programmes on ICT to ensure that they are able to deliver lessons in schools. **(ii)** Use unemployed graduated youth for catch up programmes as volunteers. Provide stipends form partners.	
	b) Digital learning and transformation **(i)** Continue learning on radio, TV, paper **(ii)** Full provision of digital infrastructure, equipment, network, internet, reduced data cost **(iii)** Strategic partnerships are critical in identification	
	c) Financing of education **(i)** Financing of ECCDE is important to ensure equitable access and quality **(ii)** Universal Social protection scheme that covers everyone is necessary (Livelihoods, uniforms, dignity packs, school fees, etc.) **(iii)** There is need for the introduction of an education levy to fund education **(iv)** Introduce tax rebates for private sector companies supporting education	

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g) People with disabilities (including youths)	a) Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools	Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools
	(i) During civil unrest, blind people, deaf and some other disabled people were unable to figure out what was happening. They were caught up with the effects without knowing where to run to. (ii) Most of our schools in our country are not inclusive to achieve access for learners with disabilities. (iii) Disabled learners usually come from disadvantaged backgrounds, there is need for special attention (iv) Admission of persons with disabilities in schools is a problem. The schools do not accept them because they are unable to teach/accommodate them (v) Early childhood education for people with disabilities is unavailable. They are unable to access. (vi) Tertiary access for persons with disabilities has never been prioritized. (vii) Some schools are not safe in terms of fencing, entrances and security guard's availability especially amid civil unrest. (viii) The school environment is not receptive to accommodate Persons with disabilities, in terms of attitudes further than just infrastructure. (ix) There is strong need for consultations when it comes to the designs as some designs are not ideal at all. Ramps very step, the surface is usually slippery, etc. (x) Inclusive books should also take into account people with albinism as the writing needs to be increased.	(i) People with disabilities should be prioritized during interventions, to be inclusive. It is important to have sub-titles, special education equipment. (ii) Inclusive and equitable access to education is a must in terms of infrastructure as well as learning material. (iii) Well-being of teachers is of prime importance, dealing mental health problems by providing psychosocial support for teachers. (iv) The existing infrastructure needs to remodelled to allow inclusion, in toilets, in classrooms, in laboratories so that disabled learners can be able to access all services in the school. (v) Learners with disabilities should have access to all learning platforms. (vi) Awareness raising in collaboration with the organizations of people with disabilities. (vii) When the Education Sector changes books, it should also consider people with disabilities. For instance, braille books should also come out at the same time. (viii) Admission policy should strongly speak and address issues of learners with disabilities. (ix) School management bodies need to have capacitated on inclusive education. They need to understand what inclusive education means

	b) **Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development**	and what they need to do to improve on inclusive accessing of the school premises.

b) Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development

(i) With the disruption of learning during COVID -19, lesson time was cut need for remedial/ catch-up lessons.

(ii) Special education equipment is expensive, it requires care, maintenance and further monitoring of the equipment.

(iii) The learners with disabilities find themselves on a dead-end after form 5. There is no way in which disabled people are accommodated in tertiary education. They are not admitted in tertiary education.

(iv) Even if they would pass exceptionally, tertiary institutions are not well equipped/ teach deaf or disabled learning.

(v) Sports for learners with disabilities is not provided in schools. There are international competitions and Olympics where learners with disabilities can also compete and earn a living.

(vi) The examination process for learners with disabilities are not fair. The structure has to change because there is a lot of disengagement from the usual learning process and examination.

(vii) Transportation of Persons with disabilities is difficult in schools, when we speak access, let us consider route to school. Parents are usually unable to provide specialized transportation for learners with disabilities.

(viii) The vocational institutions government has afforded for persons with disabilities produces certificates that the same government does not recognize.

a) Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development

(i) The ministry should ensure that they invest in equipment for teaching and learning.

(ii) Catching-up programs for learners with disabilities needs to holistic and inclusive. Compressed curriculum is not ideal as because they consist of a lot of slow learners.

(iii) Skills based education for learners with disabilities as there is no intentional tertiary education programme and limited job opportunities for them skills will give them an opportunity for livelihoods.

(iv) There is need for sports to be taken as serious as curriculum in schools.

(v) Consultations with people with disabilities needs to be done. The idea of having solutions for persons with disabilities without involving them is not the approach to take. Stakeholder engagement should be the direct people with disabilities.

(vi) The curriculum should also look into skills especially for the people living with disabilities, because they do not have access to tertiary.

(vii) Persons with disabilities need to be prioritized in employment, especially in

		areas where it touches on their programming (special education inspectors) as they understand better what is required to them. (viii) Need to expand competency-based education to be inclusive and cater for learners with disabilities
	c) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession (i) Theory says special education training for teachers should be happening at pre-service but practice is different. (ii) The instructors, at tertiary level, and other places of influence are only theory based yet there are people on the ground who can teach better the use of sign language, braille and other special equipment who are not taken seriously due to qualifications. (iii) Motivation for teachers in special schools needs to be taken seriously, they deal with a lot of issues outside of their normal job description. (iv) Teaching Persons with disabilities requires a lot of ICT knowledge as gadgets are more and more tech-savvy	**b) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession** (i) The teachers need to be capacitated in how to read braille. (ii) There is need for in-service and pre-service training for teachers to understand teaching persons with disabilities (iii) Need for every teacher to be able to teach persons with disabilities (iv) Special education at tertiary level should be compulsory, no need for teachers who are not inclusive. (v) Strong pre-service and in-service training for teacher on special education is very important. (vi) Incentives for teachers for persons with disabilities should be improved. (vii) Special schools need more teachers as than normal schools. Learners with disabilities requires more attention as they different forms of disabilities.

	d) Digital learning and transformation 　(i)　Data cost is very high in the country, making online learning expensive. 　(v)　The school situation is writing/ paper base assessment yet some learners with disabilities have writing disabilities need to also consider oral form of assessments. **e) Financing of education** 　(i)　Special schools are equipped, need to equip every school in the same way. 　(ii)　The budget that goes to financing special education is very low, there is need to expand and be intentional with funding special education.	(viii)　Special schools further need government to employ persons with disabilities assistants as usually the work load is given to teachers. **Digital learning and transformation** 　(i)　E-books need to be accessible 　(vi)　During TV lessons, the interpreters should be teachers not just ordinary interpreters because the outcome is not the same 　(vii)　There is need for full digitalization of school operations from administration to learning as well as examination and parent's engagement. 　(viii)　Cloud storage for learning material as storms have the capacity to destroy teaching and learning materials **c) Financing of education** 　(i)　It is important to provide equipment, assistive devices, wheelchairs, tablets, ramps and pathways 　(ii)　There is need for transport infrastructure to accommodate learning. 　(iii)　Special attention in financing of FPE or OVC needs to be different for learners with disability.
h) High Level Round Table Discussion (Cabinet Ministers,	**a) Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** 　(i)　**Gender-based violence** – Many cases reported on gender based violence.	**Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** 　(i)　Strengthen ECCDE to enhance equity and inclusion – create safe learning spaces

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Ambassadors, UN System, Education Experts, Private Sector)	(ii) Prevalence of HIV is still high and in order to reduce new infection and mitigate the impact of HIV girls must be kept in school. (iii)Psychologist – All schools should have psychologists. They can help to conduct learner assessments as well as provide psychosocial support for teachers.	(ii) Discussions around Gender-based violence should no longer place emphasis on the girl child but on all children to avoid the need to now focus on the boy child at a later stage. (iii) There is need to establish partnerships with Municipalities who, in turn, can organize YOUTH camps and teach teen mothers on parenting skills and other life skills. (iv) Upscale home-grown school feeding programme to ensure sustainability and healthy schools

b) Teachers, teaching and teaching profession
   (i) COVID RECOVERY – There is clearly a need to forge a clear direction on how learners can catch up on lost learning
   (ii) It is important to ask ourselves questions such as; where are we and what do we need to do?
   (iii)There is a need to ensure that teachers are able to impart critical thinking skills;
   (iv)Capacity building for teachers – Government should provide training to teachers on how to teach in the new era and ensure that they possess the correct set of skills.

c) Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development
   (i) Children should not only survive but build sustainable environments by learning skills to thrive - Bridge the gap between skills and private sector; Mismatch between industry and the curriculum (what is learnt in school/tertiary).
   (ii) Avoid wastage which is caused by not following through our plans for example, ECCDE framework that was developed but never implemented.
   (iii)Role of Parents – parents should play their parenting roles by teaching/instilling life skills on their children.
   (iv)Communities should create social networks to be consolidated to target the children rather than individuals.

	d) Digital learning and transformation (i) Access to digital gadgets and online learning should start from as early as basic education throughout Tertiary. (ii) **Gender aspects**: MOET should ensure targeted intervention for the learners who didn't benefit from the online learning hence the need to have disaggregated data in order to determine who was most impacted by COVID-19. (iii) Government should increase **broadband internet** in order for all the learners to access data		

e) Financing of education

(i) **Innovation:** Let us take bold decisions to finance education

(ii) Adopt a contextualized model that maintains a high level of investment by public funds and high level of delivery by private sector.

(iii) 20% of budget for education need to be secured and protected for the next generation

(iv) Identify and agree on priorities

(v) **Synergies and working together** - Government should work with the private sector

(vi) Government should provide Free Secondary education to enable children to transit to Secondary.

(vii) **Review FPE** – there is needed to review and amended the FPE Act. Government should consider the needs of the school vis-à-vis enrolment. Schools with high enrolment are at an advantage whilst schools with low enrolment suffer.

(viii) Political leadership and courage needed to go forward; Intellectual action and the best practices

i) Eswatini Higher Education Council	**a) Impact of COVID-19 on education** (i) COVID-19 made education to be expensive with the move towards e-learning which required gadgets for e-learning (ii) Learners did not return to school, others fell pregnant, got married, some went for income generating activities that minimized the need for education in the minds of the learners; (iii) Quality of education was compromised: Private schools could not sustain themselves, no funds to	**Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption** (i) Regulating the cost of education (OVC never sufficient to cushion the child), regulate school uniform, (ii) Remove hidden costs of education – increasing school fees, uniforms, building funds, do away with these while parents recover from the economic challenges posed by Covid-19

	pay the teaching staff, inspections were made impossible by the lockdowns (iv) How many months lost in an academic year; **b) Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) Decentralize institutions of higher education **c) Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development** (v) Employability rate for higher education graduates is very low	(iii) Invest aggressively in IT infrastructure to cover rural areas as well **Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools** (i) Involve banks in the management of scholarships since the Ministry of Labour is seemingly struggling; (ii) Strengthen institutional safety standards of tertiary education. (iii) Risk assessment report for tertiary institutions should also be mandatory. **Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development** (i) Universities must produce tracer studies (ii) ESHEC must enforce the law regarding compliance to quality standards; (iii) ESHEC must conduct an assessment of the higher education situation. (iv) ESHEC has the responsibility to empower citizens to demand quality education (v) The regulator of tertiary of institutions should ensure that they bring relevance of skills in the industry. (vi) Re-brand ESHEQ, empower the public to know standards required for all institutions to know. (vii) Revise ESHEC strategy, impact of COVID-19: some private institutions have closed.

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		(viii) There is need for inclusive tertiary education in terms of infrastructure, learning and teachers.
	d) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession (i) Digital transformation is required for lecturers – need for re-skilling of lecturers to stay relevant. (ii) There is need for improved inspection by ESHEC.	
	e) Digital learning (i) Invest aggressively in ICT infrastructure in the entire education sector, it will further assist in inspection of teaching and learning.	
	f) Financing of education (i) Schools are charging different costs for same services. (ii) Government is losing a lot from tertiary education funding because these scholarships are funding programs that are not even helping government due not innovative and labor market led. The benefit is not matching the investment. (iii) ESERPAC is conducting a study on the scholarship model, which is supposed to also propose a sustainable approach to funding higher education;	**Financing of education** (i) Government should regulate cost of education at secondary level. (ii) Remove hidden costs to education, remove yearly increments of school fees (iii) Privatize scholarship grants by involving banking institutions. (iv) Sustainable model for funding scholarship.
j) General Public – Radio	**a) Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption** (i) Assist pupils with parents who cannot afford to pay, extend free education beyond primary education level.	
	b) Strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century (i) The education system should assist learners to establish businesses and create jobs (ii) There should be places of studying within communities besides schools – for lifelong learning. (iii) Specializing should begin at earlier stages, and not at the secondary education level. That stage is too late; (iv) Strengthen pre-vocational education. Make sure educators understand the concept since its lack of progress is tied to educators not understanding and promoting the concept	

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		(v) Establish vocational training centres/infrastructure throughout the country;
		(vi) The combination of subjects for pupils is complicated, making difficult for learners to make good career choices, especially when it comes to acceptance at universities or colleges.
		(vii) There is need to find out what happens to children who drop out of the school system for whatever reason (research).
		(viii) Government should bring all the units directly related to education under the Ministry, including the unit responsible for students' bursary/scholarship which remains under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
	c) Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education	
		(i) Lower the cost of education – it is current very high, limiting access
		(ii) Private sector should be incentivised to support education
k) General Public – Toll-free messaging	**a) Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools**	
		(i) Ensure that the disabled are taken care of;
		(ii) Bring schools closure to pupils, some travel long distances to school, including learners with disability;
	b) Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development	
		(i) Strengthen vocational education and training;
		(ii) Let's collaborate with Rwanda and learn from their educational experience
		(iii) Learners should be taught practical arts
		(iv) Place emphasis on vocational skills;
		(v) My concern is that, if you don't make it at Form 5 you have to restart by doing from 4. Which is a waste of money because you have to pay schools fees, which then lead to some students drop out as you find out that they we not even able to pay while they were still at school.
		(vi) Agriculture should be made compulsory – source of life;
		(vii) Ensure that children continue till they finish school,
		(viii) Take care of learners who could not make it to Form 5.
		(ix) Create vocational schools for as early as grade 1
		(x) There is a need to strengthen TVET and also introduce Entrepreneurship in schools so that we can have effective contributors who will be self-reliant
		(xi) There is need to do more advocacy in terms of CBE and NCF. Stakeholders need to be well versed with such policies as these are the backbone of the country's education system
		(xii) Numeracy and ICT skills need to be accelerated in both early grades and junior secondary so that the country can produce more scientists who will come with new innovations and thus boost the economy thus eliminating foreign dependency

	(xiii) A need to liaise with industry to ascertain the skill force they require and the ministry try to avail such courses so as to reduce the unemployment rate
	c) Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession (i) Teachers should be able to identify the learner's subject orientation and/or aptitude at primary level so that the secondary level, the learner is channelled to the relevant streams based on the primary level assessment. (ii) Teachers are still applying corporal punishment, including the use of objects such as belts or open hand; (iii) Improve the In-service department and make it effective in delivering its mandate
	d) Digital learning and transformation (i) Learners are required to learn online yet they do not have means to buy the required gadgets such as cell phones and tablets;
	e) Financing of education (i) The free primary education grant should be reviewed because prices have been increasing since the introduction of the FPE in 2010; (ii) Free education should be extended to secondary education; (iii) Scholarship or financial assistance should be provided to all learners who have qualified for tertiary education, especially when they have been accepted in tertiary institutions. (iv) Children will help payback money by committing at least 2 years with half pay working for government, (v) Government should create a graduate scheme to help pay a stipend equivalent to 50 % of a graduate salary for at least two years whilst still searching for employment; (vi) Do not frustrate learners who cannot pay school fees (e.g. not releasing their symbols);