

NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

8 MARCH 1992

RESOLUTION: COMMISSION 2

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A CODE OF CONDUCT

The present education system in general and African education in particular is in a deep-rooted crisis. The crisis is characterised by a collapse of the culture of learning.

The responsibility for the crisis must be squarely placed at the door of the Nationalist Party Government and its Apartheid policies.

the people have a responsibility and the authority to re-establish the culture of learning.

the state has the responsibility to provide the necessary resources for the re-establishment of the culture of learning.

R sgive tq:

1.

Establish a code of conduct for parents, teachers and students based on democratic principles of accountability, mandate and community participation.

Adopt the proposed guidelines for such a code of conduct as tabled at the conference.

Refer the guidelines for a code of conduct to the various structures and constituencies for democratic consultation, for purposes of final ratification.

Pay particular attention to establishing the mechanisms to implement a code of conduct, in the consultative processes involving the various structures.

- NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE
COMMISSION ONE:
PRINCIPLES AND VALUES
ADOPTED: 8 MARCH 1992

RESOLUTION

This conference, holding that education is a basic human right, believes that education and training should be:
provided to all on a democratic and unitary basis, oppdsing any discrimination on grounds of race, gender, class and age;
extended to all disadvantaged groups including women, adults, students, youth and rural communities, in order to redress historical imbalances;
integrated within a coherent and comprehensive national development policy;
Accordingly resolves to commit itself to the pursuit of the following core values and principles in a future education system.

CORE VALUES

Human dignity, liberty and justice;
Democracy;
Equality;
National development.

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11.

KEY PRINCIPLES

The state has the central responsibility for the provision of education and training.

A nationally determined framework should ensure that employers observe their fundamental obligation for the provision of educational resources.

Education and training policy and practice shall be governed by the principle of democracy, ensuring the active participation of various interest groups, in particular teachers, parents, workers and students.

All people (children, youth and adults) shall have access to education.

There shall be special emphasis on the redress of educational inequalities among historically disadvantaged sectors of society, particularly the youth, the disabled, adults, women, the unemployed, rural communities and black people in general.

There shall be mechanisms to ensure horizontal and vertical mobility and flexibility of access between general formative, technical, industrial, and adult education and training in the formal and non-formal sectors.

There shall be nationally determined standards for accreditation and certification for formal and non-formal education and training, with due recognition of prior learning and experience.

Education shall aim at the development of a national democratic culture, with an accommodation of diversity which does not conflict with other key principles.

The provision of education and training shall be linked to the development of human resources within national development aimed at the restructuring of the economy, redistribution, and the democratisation of society.

The education process shall encourage national peace, justice and stability.

Education shall be based upon the principles of co-operation, critical thinking, and civic responsibility, and shall empower individuals for participation in all aspects of society.

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P. R E A??BkE;

The present education system in general. and African education in particular is characterized by a deep-rooted crisis. This crisis is reflected in inter-alia:

x The severe shortage of pre-school facilities in our communities

e The critical shortage and disrepair of schools. the non/under-utilisation of white schools. and overcrowded classrooms

X The lack of textbooks and other learning resources

x The high drop-out and failure rates in our schools. colleges and universities

x The large number of unqualified and poorly trained teachers

t The low levels of literacy and numeracy

t The collapse of the culture of learning

x The undemocratic, bureaucratic, inefficient and corrupt administration of education which has led to amongst other things. the collapse of the effective management of schools

t The lack of the legitimacy of the system

The ideological underpinnings of the education system which have perpetuated stereotypes around gender, race and Class issues

I The violence that has had a devastating effect on the stability in 'NN' communities and its ramifications for education.

The crisis of the education system has had profound effects on the development of the South African economy and society in general. It has resulted in the destruction of the human potential of our country with devastating consequences for the economic development of South Africa - this is evident in the severe shortage of skilled and technically trained labour. And more importantly. it has destroyed the culture of learning within our communities. In the struggle against apartheid education not only have thousands of students lost their lives. but many more have also stayed away from school for long periods of time and have fought standing battles with the army and the police.

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This has led to a Oraqual but definite nrosion 0? ?ho need to learn - a feelina that education hag no value and that the Situation is without hnoe. This ha? hnpn hsrthOr pxarorhated hv the fact that education doeg not Quarantwp n iob. Thus a whole generation of our vmuih have grown H0 hpljevina that education and learnino have no value.

The VQSDCHVSihil iiv t "V 9 hw mrthativWT "i ieihxi inrltuiinm Lho destruction of the culture of learnino must \$quarely hp placed at the doors of tho Nationalist govnrnmpnt and its apartheid policies. Similarly. it is the Governmpntts resnonsibilitv t0 resolva the immediate crisis in education a: reflected in the Symptoms identified above. The lonomtorm r,structurino Of the education system. however. must CIPRYIV await the hlovtion of a democratic government.

whilst we acknowledge that thp MidhlgRO': whit a Deriod in which it oftpn became virtually impossible to conduct learning and teaching. it also need? to be said that thero was a tendenbv t0 polarize active political participation and the need to develop educational expertise. Ono was coon as Pithot a serious activist or as a serious student/teacher. what is needed in the present political climate is a Combination of a political rootedness and intellectual expertise. Only then will we be able to restore the culture Of learninn.

In order to re-tstablish and develop the culture of learning in our communities. it is nocessary to develop a code of conduct which would provide a set of Guidelings within whihh we conduct our struggles for a -jemocratic oducatiort and Sufivty. The development of such a code hf conduct must Clearly be located in the context of the values and principloa that guide our vision of a Future education svstem (Roe Nortinq Group One).

Although the code at COHdUCT downloood fncusps on the roeoonsibilities Of Gaihnts. toachnxc and student?. this does not absolve the atatw of if: rcahonswhliti6cg Tho Drimarv vesoonsihilitv For me9 education CttFiE. including the destruction of the tuitulp of lmainino. rests with Lh? state.

It jg: 1119 gtuatgays rtv3n(n12ilnil it&' 143 (?H?1lt0 tlwal; tIV? mi nirmim conditions ovist for the effective functionino of the education SVETem. The demarmj that the state meet its responsibility needs. however. to he comnlpmnted by an acceptance that we too need to understand what uur YPQDHHTibjthiOE are in the strugole for d non-discrimihater. demonratir PdU(athH aystem and iociety.

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A. Student Responsibilities

1.

The primary responsibility of students is to learn as formal learning is a fundamental component of the educational system. This is a precondition for the students' development as individuals, as well as for the development of the community and society in general.

Learning for individual and societal development involves inter-alia:

- (i) The development of the all-round potential of each individual, that is, academic as well as social and cultural development
- (ii) The development of students as active, independent and critical learners driven by self-discipline and motivation
- (iii) The participation of students in decision-making relating to the learning process such as curriculum development, self, peer and teacher evaluation, etc.
- (iv) The participation of students in the governance structure of the institutions - schools, colleges and universities, in which learning takes place.
- (v) The maintenance of the culture of teaching and learning.

The undertaking of the learning responsibilities identified above requires the following:

- (i) The development of mutual respect between students and teachers and among students themselves.
 - (a) In the case of the student-teacher relationship mutual respect refers to equality as human beings and not equality in terms of power within the classroom. Equality as human beings refers to the development of mutual respect between students and teachers on the basis that they learn from each other and that both parties contribute, albeit differently, to the learning process.
 - (b) In the case of: the student-student relationship equality based on mutual respect is similarly based on the notion that students have as much to learn from each other as they do from the formal learning process in the classroom. It is based on the notion that learning should be co-operative and supportive instead of competitive and unsupportive.

(ii) The development of: respect by students for their parents and the community in general.

(iii) The regular and punctual attendance of school and classes.

(iv) The conscientious and diligent undertaking of all work assigned by the teacher.

(v) The avoidance of antiesocial behaviour which disrupts the learning process such as drunkenness, the use of drugs, assault, the carrying of dangerous weapons, vandalism to school property, the non-return of textbooks, etc.

(vi) The elimination of criminal and oppressive behaviour such as rape and sexual harassment.

(vii) The adherence to the rules and regulations of the school, including grievance procedures.

(viii) The tolerance of differing views relating to academic, social, cultural and political issues in the classroom, within the institution, as well as within the community.

(ix) The resolution of differences between teachers and students in a non-violent manner.

(x) The formation of Student Representative Council's to represent the views and interests of the students within the decision-making structures of the institution. SRC's should be (i) non-party political: (ii) the supreme body representing the interests and views of the students within the institution. In the case of student organisations, while they have a right to exist and organise within the institution, they cannot replace or subsume the role of the SRC.

B. TEACHERS

(Note: Teachers refer to any educator in the various education sectors e.g. school, pre-school, tertiary and non-formal education.)

1. The primary responsibility of teachers is to teach as the formal teaching process is critical to education. This is the foundation on which the professional status and authority of teachers rests.

Furthermore, it contributes to the development of students as individuals as well as the community and society in general. '

2. The teacher should teach in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical characteristics, age, language, ancestry, sexual inclination or place of origin.

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(iii) The development of respect for the job, and in particular, to be punctual, attentive, of sober mind and body, enthusiastic and well--prepared in lessons, etc.

(iv) The active participation in departmental and union forums.

(v) The protection and respect of: the educational resources in their care.

(vi) The elimination of unprofessional behaviour which destroys the culture of learning, such as drunkenness, the use of drugs, and assault.

(vii) The elimination of criminal and oppressive behaviour such as rape and sexual harassment.

The development of: teacher unions and associations to represent the views and interests of its members. This involves:

(i) Negotiating collective bargaining agreements with the Education Department.

(ii) Defending the interests of teachers with regard to conditions of service and levels of remuneration without discrimination on the basis of race or gender.

(iii) Identifying the resource and educational needs of teachers and to aim to meet these needs in conjunction with the authorities.

(iv) The development of consultative structures in which the tension between teachers' labour rights and their obligation to teach can be sensitively dealt with by all affected parties.

Demand the provision by the authorities of the following:

(i) The development of in-service training in consultation and conjunction with teacher unions, aimed at providing teachers with the skills necessary to achieve their responsibilities.

(ii) Conditions of service and levels of remuneration based on non/anti-racist and non/anti-sexist criteria that act to motivate rather than discourage teachers in the tasks at hand.

(iii) Developing open channels of: communication with teachers and their unions with the aim of facilitating, rather than exacerbating, the solution of problems.

(iv) The eradication of all graft and corruption as this militates against the achievement of the above aims.

C. Parents and the Community

1. The primary educational responsibility of parents (and the community through its organisations) is to contribute to the development of a healthy, co-operative educational environment at home, in the community and at school.

2 The undertaking of the responsibilities identified above requires that parents and community organisations:

(i) Involve themselves actively both as individual parents and as a collective in governance structures that affect the education of their children, especially in areas such as subject and career choices, the progress of their children at different stages of: the educational cycle.

(ii) Have regular discussions with their children about general school matters in order to be informed about conditions in the school as well as to be informed about the views and concerns of their children.

(iii) Attend and call for regular class and school meetings in order to keep themselves informed and updated about the school and its environment.

(iv) Acquaint themselves with their children's teachers and cultivate a healthy, open and co-operative relationship with them.

(v) Be approachable, communicative and understanding in their dealings with students, teachers and the school administration.

(vi) Develop in the children, discipline and responsible values and positive attitudes and values of education and of life skills.

(vii) Endeavour to create a home environment conducive to study _ for example, regulate and monitor play and leisure time as well as observe homework time.

(viii) They must protect and respect the educational resources such as textbooks, etc. in their care.

ADDENDUMJ

1. An analysis of responsibilities cannot be adequate unless it is complemented by an equally comprehensive analysis of rights. The latter will obviously have to be worked out in a separate document at a subsequent conference.

2. In addition, the question of the responsibilities and rights of citizens must be seen in relation to the duties of the state in specific settings.

3. The bureaucratic role of inspectors and principals need to be elaborated upon. '