

# A blueprint for education

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THE blueprint, a suggested substitute for the present system of Bantu Education in black schools, has been submitted to the Press for study by interested parties.

Here is the complete blueprint.

In presenting this blueprint the Black People's Convention wishes to point out certain fundamental beliefs which are important in considering a progressive educational policy for any nation like South Africa.

● Education should be an instrument for national unity.

● Education should be geared towards raising the cultural, social, economic and intellectual level of all citizens.

● The general content of education should be geared towards the promotion of self-reliance, a high level of critical awareness, understanding of the community and its problems, and a sense of positive self-identity.

● Education should be geared towards the destruction of all racist, tribalist and sectionalist notions.

Emphasis shall be based on school-based education although a general programme of rapid elimination of illiteracy involving adults should be designed and implemented.

Education should be free and compulsory for all from the beginning to the age of 16 as well as free but not compulsory up to junior degree.

Furthermore, education in senior degrees should be subsidised through Government-controlled scholarships.

Students and pupils should however, be made to see the process of education which is offered them free of charge as an important process for equipping them for a meaningful contribution in the development of a prosperous nation, and therefore, refrain from misusing the valuable time.

Any educational institution anywhere in the country should be open to any student from anywhere provided only resident nationals shall be subsidised by the State.

This is to emphasise that educational facilities should be open to all citizens without racial, tribal or any other sectional restrictions.

**THE Black People's Convention (BPC) has drawn up a blueprint on education and intends to submit it to its national congress at the end of the year for approval before presenting it to the Government.**

The responsibility of the state towards its citizens with regard to education should start at a very early age. This therefore brings us to the question of pre-school education.

With regard to this level of education BPC has the following points to make:

● All children should be admitted to nursery schools from the minimum age of two years to the maximum age of five. The details of the content of nursery education could be left to qualified nursery-education planners.

However, broadly speaking, the rhymes, verses and lessons prepared should be in keeping with the fundamental beliefs pointed out above.

● The running of nursery schools should be left to an exclusive staff of elderly or mothers' ladies who need to undertake supplementary studies not only in child psychology and sociology, but also in elementary community development and understanding.

With regard to primary and secondary education the following points are proposed:

● The State should strive to have a complete 'school' with all standards from Class One to Standard Ten for every 5,000 people and keep the pupil/teacher ratio at a maximum of 30:1. This would serve to put an end to the double session and platoon systems that so regrettably abound in black schools.

● Like in the case of nursery schools, elderly and mothers' ladies are recommended to handle the first two standard classes in primary education.

● Children should be admitted to Class One at the age of five and should continue with general education for ten years up to standard eight.

The last two years of secondary education, standards nine and ten should be specialised years in preparation for university work.

In the case of technical and vocational fields specialisation should start from standard seven.

● Elementary technical education should include electricity, electronics, motor mechanics and engineering.

Environmental studies must touch on geography, history, politics and constitutional structures mainly of our country but also States in Africa and others throughout the world.

Humanities must include anthropology, sociology and elementary community development.

The basic sciences should include arithmetic, mathematics, elementary physics and chemistry and comparative economic systems.

Extra curricula studies to include sport, music, arts and crafts and other related cultural studies.

● Teachers should be trained to specialise in various fields of education so that they can handle one or two related subjects in several classes.

In this case there would be no question of one teacher dealing with all seven or eight subjects taught in a class.

● If we accept and recognise the very important role played by teachers in the process of building the nation, we should appreciate the need for them to be decently and reasonably paid. It might encourage them not only to take their jobs more seriously, but also to keep them from leaving for jobs in industry and elsewhere.

● Courses of subjects at schools should be taught through an acceptable

language chosen by the community and English, an acceptable international language should preferably be used.

● For every district or circuit there should be a highly qualified child psychologist, whose task should be to assess the vocations and possible careers of pupils.

They should also develop IQ and aptitude tests to be conducted from time to time.

This would help children to advance fast in the correct direction to avoid ending up in careers that are frustrating and therefore fail to serve the nation.

● In many cases, and this is mainly prevalent in the oppressed communities, living conditions tend to affect the academic and social perfor-

mance of the child at school.

It is therefore important that each educational institution should have attached to it, a number of social workers whose task should be to go into the background of each and every child enrolled with the school, with a view to assist helping children and parents to adjust for better achievement of the ultimate goals of education as we see them.

● Special schools for physically and mentally handicapped children should be spread adequately throughout the country and such children must be sent to such schools as a matter of obligation.

● In many cases pupils and students tend to have a general phobia for examination time at the end of the year, and to a significant extent

this does affect the numbers of those that pass the examinations.

We therefore wish to recommend that a person's performance throughout the year should be what decides the question of promotion, rather than it being left to judgment based on an examination.

The same should apply to students in the institutions of higher learning.

With regard to higher education, it should be appreciated that the people involved are on the brink of being regarded as fully fledged members of society in their own right.

It is at this stage that the educational process should be sure that it has offered them enough opportunity to understand their environment and the types of

training in their particular fields, while still enrolled with the institutions of learning, so that by the time they leave, they are ready to start work as fully qualified professionals.

This would mean for example that lawyers and accountants would reserve their articles by doing professional duties, while they are registered students.

Thirdly, in studies of the humanities, the content should largely be relevant to the situation in our country, especially in the social sciences.

Fourthly, there must be strong student participation in the administration of the affairs of the institutions of higher learning. This is most important to ensure harmonious student-administration relations.

academic and social communities that make up the South African nation.

BPC therefore wishes to recommend that during the course of their stay at the institutions of higher learning, students should be offered obligatory opportunities to broaden their Community experience. Those from urban backgrounds should spend fruitful periods with rural communities, and take part in their day-to-day activities.

Similarly, those from rural areas should spend time with urban communities. This could be done during vacations and holidays.

Secondly, we wish to recommend that students studying for certain professions should be given both theoretical and practical

