



# National Education Policy Suriname 2024-2031

Towards a Future of Opportunities



**This policy was developed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MinOWC) in close cooperation with the 5 directorates of the ministry and consultations with stakeholders from civil society and the private sector.**

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## **list of abbreviations**

<b>ATB</b>	Administratief Technisch Beheer (Division of Administrative and Technical Affairs MinOWC)
<b>AVO</b>	Algemeen Vormend Onderwijs (Division of General Education MinOWC)
<b>BEIP</b>	Basic Education Improvement Project
<b>BO</b>	Beroepsonderwijs (Division of Technical and Vocational Education MinOW)
<b>Caiques</b>	Consolidating Access to Inclusive Quality Education
<b>CBET</b>	Competency Based Education and Training
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>ETVET</b>	Enhancement of the Technical and Vocational Education
<b>GLO</b>	Gewoon Lager Onderwijs (Primary Education)
<b>HO</b>	Hoger Onderwijs (Higher Education)
<b>HRD</b>	Human Resource Development Strategy
<b>ICT</b>	Informatie en Communicatie Technologie (Information and Communication Technology)
<b>IDB</b>	Inter-American Development Bank
<b>IsDB</b>	Islamic Development Bank
<b>LBO</b>	Lager Beroepsonderwijs (Lower Technical and Vocational education)
<b>MinOWC</b>	Ministerie van Onderwijs, Wetenschap & Cultuur (Ministry of Education Science and Culture)
<b>MOP</b>	Meerjaren Ontwikkelingsplan (National multi-year development plan)
<b>MULO</b>	Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs (Lower Secondary education)
<b>NOBS</b>	Nationaal Onderwijs Beleidsplan Suriname (National Education Policy Suriname)
<b>OGO</b>	Ontwikkelingsgericht Onderwijs (Development oriented education)
<b>PURP</b>	Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Plan
<b>PPP</b>	Public Private Partnership

<b>STES</b>	Secondary and Technical Education Support
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNCIEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>VO</b>	Voortgezet Onderwijs (Secondary Education)
<b>WASH</b>	Water Sanitation and Hygiene (Water Sanitation and Hygiene)
<b>BBP</b>	Bruto Binnenlands Product (Gross Domestic Product)

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# Foreword

## **An Education Policy for Suriname's Future: The Key to Sustainable Development**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MinOWC) is responsible for providing quality education to all pupils and students at all levels of the education system throughout Suriname. Education is an essential pillar for economic and social development, so the ministry remains committed to addressing challenges in both the education and cultural sectors to enable accessible, affordable, and relevant quality education.

The National Education Policy Suriname 2024-2031 is a roadmap for developing the education sector for Suriname's future. To raise the educational level of the society it is important, among other things, to produce a sustainable plan. This document was written in this context.

This plan has been carefully prepared to address the unique challenges and opportunities of Suriname's education system and to lay a solid foundation for a prosperous, social, and just society. The plan is based in part on the Caricom Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy 2030 and the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Roadmap 2030.

This policy is crucial for the long-term development of the education and culture sectors by aligning stakeholders in these sectors. Through this plan, MinOWC emphasizes the following principles:

**Holistic Approach:** The plan covers all aspects of education from early childhood to permanent education and integrates six (6) critical areas. This ensures a coherent and effective approach to the complex issues in education.

**Focus on Quality:** The plan emphasizes not only the improvement of learning outcomes, but also the modernization of infrastructure, professionalization of teachers as well as new and up-to-date learning and teaching materials.

**Fair opportunities with attention to diversity:** Ensuring fair opportunities for all pupils irrespective of their background or circumstances by identifying and addressing inequalities in education, with special attention to pupils with disabilities, in the interior, from disadvantaged socio-economic groups, and from indigenous and maroon communities. This is essential for creating an inclusive and equitable society.

**Future-oriented:** The plan anticipates the changing needs of the 21st century by investing in skills such as social and cultural skills, critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy. This prepares pupils and students for success in a rapidly changing world.

**Cultural Relevance:** The plan recognizes and values Suriname's rich cultural diversity by integrating art, culture, and heritage into education. This strengthens a sense of national identity and promotes social cohesion.

**Sustainable Development:** The plan links education to broader development goals, such as poverty reduction, economic growth, and environmental protection. This contributes to a sustainable future for Suriname.

**Partnership and Participation:** The plan emphasizes cooperation in and between government, educational institutions, cultural institutions, the business community, and society. This ensures broad support and shared responsibility for the success of the plan.

The National Education Policy Plan Suriname 2024-2031 is an ambitious but realistic plan that has the potential to sustainably transform Surinamese education and have a positive impact on the lives (prosperity and well-being) of all people in Suriname.

MinOWC has the unique opportunity to adopt and implement this plan, creating a lasting legacy for future generations.

**Paramaribo, July 2024**

**Prof. H. Ori**

**Minister of Education, Science and Culture**

# Introduction

## Motivation for the National Education Policy Plan

The education sector has undergone several reforms over the past 10-20 years and continues to evolve, with the most recent reforms resulting from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education. These effects have contributed to insights aimed at strengthening the resilience of the education sector. In response, curriculum and system innovations have been implemented, and results are being monitored and adjusted. Environmental factors have a significant impact on education and this education policy will guide the further development of the sector, considering developments at macro, meso and micro levels. This will take into account current and future economic conditions, changes in demographic trends with a particular focus on rural areas, technological developments which is an area the sector has to catch up on, socio-cultural changes and societal expectations about inclusion, diversity and the need for 21st century skills, political decision-making and international influences.

Longer-term alignment of stakeholders about the direction of education across ministerial and coalition terms has always been a challenge in recent decades. A lack of long-term vision, policy and strategy puts education at risk of mostly reacting to short-term problems, making it difficult to achieve consistent progress and establish and maintain a coherent vision for the future of education. This National Education Policy is an essential tool to consolidate, update and expand successful past reforms to build an education system that is resilient and future-proof so that every Surinamese child (as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) has a fair chance to develop and thrive in a rapidly changing world. Children's education must be geared towards the development of every child. It should teach children respect as well as skills to advance the fulfillment of their human rights, peace and tolerance, different cultures and respect for the environment.

This policy contributes to the realization of the vision for the Surinamese society as contained in the Multi-Year Development Plan (MOP). The MOP describes a target level for the Surinamese society and its citizens for approximately 25 years into the future. The realization of quality education - in formal and non-formal sense - is crucial for the realization of this vision for Suriname.

***“In 2050, Suriname is a just society in which its values are realized. Everyone can decide freely within the system of law and justice on the realization of his/her own potential while respecting the sustainability of the environment. With a rich and eventful past, vibrant culture and natural wealth, every resident (irrespective of gender, ethnicity, origin, etc.) has self-confidence, responsibility and respect and pride in a life and country that offers prosperity and well-being. Good governance (founded on law and democracy) builds trust (and improves and strengthens the positive image of our country), creating many (national and international) collaborations that ensure accelerated development.” (MOP 2022-2026).***

## **Context**

Suriname's National Education Policy is embedded in various contexts, at national, regional, and international levels. The policy aims to provide every child of Suriname with powerful and contemporary education, preparing them not only to be citizens of today, but also to operate successfully and contribute to the world of tomorrow.

Although Suriname is classified by the World Bank as a high-middle-income country, the living conditions and income of about half the population do not reflect this level of prosperity. The estimated Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita increased by 22.15% in 2022 compared to 2020 to USD 5,858.80 nationally. However, there are huge disparities by socio-economic status, geographical location and educational attainment, with large sections of the population experiencing little or no benefit from this income status. The country's economic development has historically been driven by the mining industry, and with recent projections, the oil and gas industry are expected to play a decisive role in Suriname's further development. The prospects for exploiting these natural resources require more skilled workers and investments in technical and vocational education and (technological) innovation. Anticipating and taking actions based on those developments from the education sector is of eminent importance for the country's development.

The estimated population of Suriname in 2021 was 616,500 people. Compared to July 2020, a growth of 1.25% was observed and compared to the 2012 census (with a total population of 541,638), there was an overall growth of 13.82%. The country is administratively divided into 10 districts. The geographical distribution in 2021 was as follows: ±65% (406,800 people) lived in urban areas (Paramaribo and Wanica districts); ±20% (122,300 people) lived in rural coastal areas (the remaining 5 districts in the coastal region: Commewijne, Para, Saramacca, Coronie and Nickerie); and ±14% (87,400 people) lived in the 3 rural districts in the interior (Marowijne, Sipaliwini and Brokopondo). Suriname has a relatively young population, distributed by gender across all age groups. In 2020, about 25% of the total population was under the age of 15. The percentage of those aged 60 and over was 12%. Demographic analyses are essential for developing and providing education that is inclusive, provides equal opportunities and customized solutions, taking into account the diverse needs and characteristics of the population.

## **Structure and mandate of the ministry**

The Ministry is responsible for: matters relating to all forms of education of all courses; the training of teachers and lecturers, the practice of science and technology and its promotion; public education and the supervision of special education and institutes of an educational nature; the regulation of subsidies to bodies, which provide education on the basis of Government recognition; study facilities including the awarding of scholarships; the library system; the promotion, practice and development of art and culture; the museum system, archaeology and monuments; the Ministry is also charged with the care of all subjects directly or indirectly related to the matters mentioned in the preceding paragraph, insofar as they are not specially assigned to another Ministry.

In accordance with the Resolution of 14 December 2020 no. 26.385/20 establishing the organizational structure of the MinOWC, the Ministry consists of 5 directorates, namely:

- Directorate of Administrative and Technical Management (ATB);
- Directorate of General Education (AVO);
- Directorate of Vocational Education (BO);
- Directorate of Higher Education (HE);

- Directorate of Culture.

## Education trends

The ministry has 597 schools in the 2023-2024 school year, both public and denominations from General Education (AVO) to Secondary Education (General and Vocational) (VO) and at the higher education level, there are about 30 institutes.

Between 2019 and 2021, there was an annual decline in the number of primary school students of about 4,100 per year from 88,071 in 2019 to 79,827 in 2021. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER)<sup>1</sup>, which reflects the enrolment ratio according to the official age limit, showed a slight increase in 2020 compared to 2019 to 93.84%, with a subsequent notable decline to 84.28% in 2021. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER), which reflects the enrolment ratio regardless of age, fell to 102.34% from 114.6% in 2019. The percentages are above 100% indicating that there are students who enrolled late or early and students who dropped out.

At the formerly known as VOJ (lower secondary education) level the trend showed a slight decline in the number of pupils from 37,353 in 2019 to 36,873 in 2021. The NER of children in the VOJ age group was 55.9% in 2019 and showed a slight increase to 56.48% in 2020, with a subsequent decline to 51.3% in 2021. The GER nationwide stood at 100.29% in 2019, 102.25% in 2020 and dropped to 89.25% in 2021. At this level of education, it is notable that the proportion of students not in the official age group at the VOJ level varied around 40%, which is approximately double compared to Basic Education.

Graduation rates in Basic Education showed an increase from 59.87% in 2019 to 74.83% in 2020 in general education and a decrease from 3.83% in 2019 and 3.06% in 2020 for the vocational education stream.

The statistics also show that 12.59% of pupils in Basic Education in 2019 and 8.63% in 2020 dropped out of education early. The trends show that a large group of pupils starting Primary Education do not make the transition to Secondary Education.

Out of school Children rate<sup>2</sup> for children aged 6-11 more than doubled in 2021 to 15.72% from 6.16% in the previous year. For children in the 12-15 age group, the ratio was 48.66% in 2021, up from 43.46% in 2020. Between 2019 and 2021, more boys than girls in both age groups were consistently out of school.

Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Primary Education averaged 0.95 between 2019 and 2021. Although the gender balance is to the disadvantage of girls at the start in Primary Education, the gender gap keeps increasing at subsequent higher levels of education to the disadvantage of boys. At VOJ education level, the GPI increased to 1.05 on average between 2019-2021.

The ministry's aim is to keep pupils and students in school as long as possible and to achieve this goal, policy interventions will have to be made to drastically reduce the drop-out rate. Figures show that the drop-out rate in the 2018 - 2019 and 2019 - 2020 school years is between 35% - 45% at VO level. The literacy rate in Suriname is about 98% according to the 2012 census, however, this is offset by the fact that on average 10% of the population did not complete Primary Education. The data regarding

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<sup>1</sup> The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) is the total number of pupils in primary education according to the official age category (6 -11 years), expressed as a percentage of the population with the official age of primary education (6 - 11 years).

<sup>2</sup> This indicator shows the size of the population that is in the official age group (6-11 years/ 12-15 years) and not enrolled in school.

students in the age group of 12 - 15 who are not enrolled in a school in Sipaliwini in the period 2019 - 2021 is 90% on average.

The quality of (mainly primary) education in the interior has been lagging for many years. The need for upgrading as well as ensuring the quality of education content and, in addition, other factors that need attention is essential for improving the quality of education in the interior.

The problem of education in the interior has structural characteristics. In the field of education in Suriname, especially in the rural areas, the interior of the country suffers from various problems or obstacles that cause stagnation of the educational process. The challenges of rural areas transcend ministries and, because of this nature, require a sustainable intersectoral approach.

### **The process of policy development**

The National Education Policy is based on an extensive consultation process involving internal and external stakeholders. There has been an update of the organizational profiles of the ministry's 5 directorates which have been elaborated in the basic administrative notes. Ahead of the Education Congress, working groups consisting of experts within the ministry and external experts worked on developing 8 position papers to develop a future-proof direction for education in the areas of Vocational Education, Higher Education, General Education, Special Education, Early Childhood Development, Adult Education, Cultural Education and Multilingualism. The output of the two-day Education Congress held on 6 and 7 October 2023 was crucial in gathering insights and ideas for the future Surinamese education system. The congress brought together eminent leaders, skilled professionals and stakeholders who joined forces to shape the direction of the Surinamese education landscape. The methodology used consisted of dialogue sessions, lectures, workshops and discussions, during which three (3) basic principles, namely: appreciative learning, making learning visible and transformative learning, served as the starting point. This fleshed out the theme 'BUILDING, THE FUTURE, TOGETHER, EDUCATION'. Based on the results of this consultation process, the policy development process was further elaborated during three (3) workshops with experts from the ministry aimed at developing aspirations, concrete goals and actions. Additional consultations by directorate further contributed to the insights on the challenges, policy initiatives and goals for education.

# 1 Context

## 1.1 Economical context

Research by the World Bank (Ease of Doing Business Index) and the Heritage Foundation ranked Suriname as one of the least economically free countries in the world in 2020. It then ranked 162nd out of 190 places of degree of ease of doing business in countries. Despite Suriname being classified by the World Bank as a high middle-income country, the living conditions and income of about half the population do not reflect this level of prosperity, as mentioned in the introduction. Besides the huge inequality between households in different geographical areas, the deterioration of the economy has also affected households at the national level. Between 2015 and 2022, the purchasing power of all households fell significantly. The heavy reliance of the government budget on key mining products and expansionary fiscal and monetary policies to offset the impact of declining exports created and continues to generate significant economic risks. Suriname is a price taker because of its small share in the global market. Usually triggered by unfavorable global market sentiments, the country regularly faced major economic setbacks, for instance during much of the 1980s, 1997-1999 and more recently in 2015- 2016 and then in 2020-2021.

The incidence of multidimensional poverty in Suriname was 50.3% for the interior and 12.6% and 21.3% for urban and rural areas, respectively (MICS, 2018). Census 2012 data indicates that at the national level, 16% of households were classified as multidimensional poor. Looking at children's deprivation based on their area of residence, we see that children/adolescents aged 0 to 17 years living in the interior and coastal areas have higher deprivation rates of 79.1% and 39.8%, respectively, than children/adolescents living in urban areas (UNICEF, 2023). Due to the economic situation, we see children not finishing school or regularly not attending school because they have to work or take care of relatives while their parents go to work.

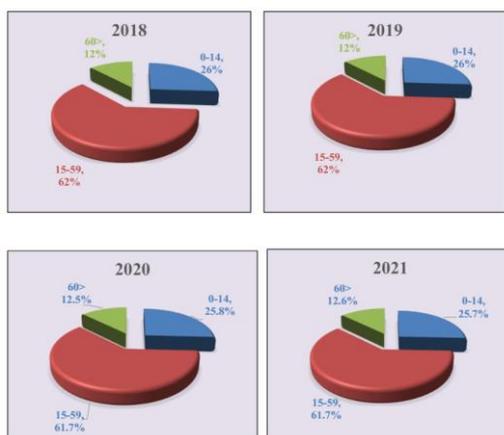
In order to achieve proper planning of the education policy, it is of eminent importance to know, based on this development, how much budget is available and needed from public resources in the medium term. The available resources in the coming years will have to be used efficiently so that targeted investments can be made to optimally deploy those human resources within the various production sectors. This will require good coordination between government, education, and the labor market.

Suriname is at the dawn of an era when it will begin to exploit its natural resources within the emerging offshore gas and oil industry, as an opportunity to reboot its economy, taking into account its commitment to green economic development. The prospects for exploiting these natural resources require more skilled workers and investment in technical and vocational education and (technological) innovation. Therefore, the government is making significant efforts to reform the education system, with a focus on technical and vocational education.

## 1.2 Demographic context

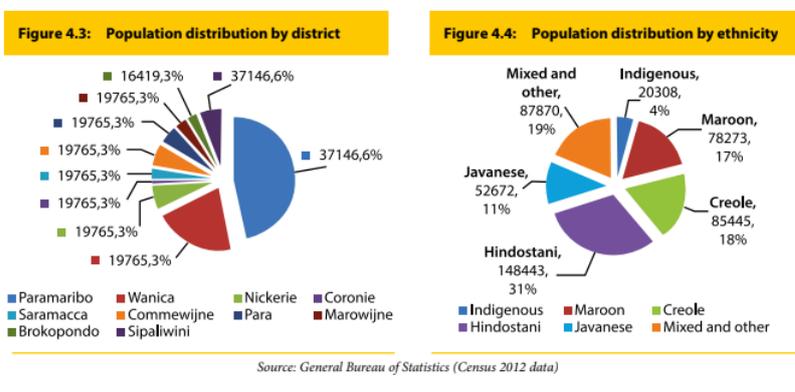
As of July 2021, Suriname's estimated mid-year population is 616,500. Compared to July 2020, this shows a growth of 1.25%. From Census 2012 to July 2021, there is a total growth of 13.82%. The average age of the Surinamese population as of July 2021, was 32.23 years for men and 33.67 years for women. For the total population, it was 32.95 years. The sex ratio of the total population as of 2018 shows that we have about 99 men for every 100 women in society. For the 'broad' age groups, the sex ratio in 2021 is as follows: 0-14 years: 104.8, 15- 59 years: 100.8 and for the 60+ age group it is 83.7. There is a male surplus for 0-14-year-olds and a large female surplus for those aged 60+. By 2021, men make up a total of 49.86% of the population in Suriname and women's total contribution is 50.14%.

Figure 1 Total population by age



The distribution of the broad age groups relative to the 2021 mid-year population was as follows: 25.7% for 0-14-year-olds, 61.7% for 15-59-year-olds and 12.6% for those aged 60+. There is hardly any difference in the proportions during the period 2018- 2021.

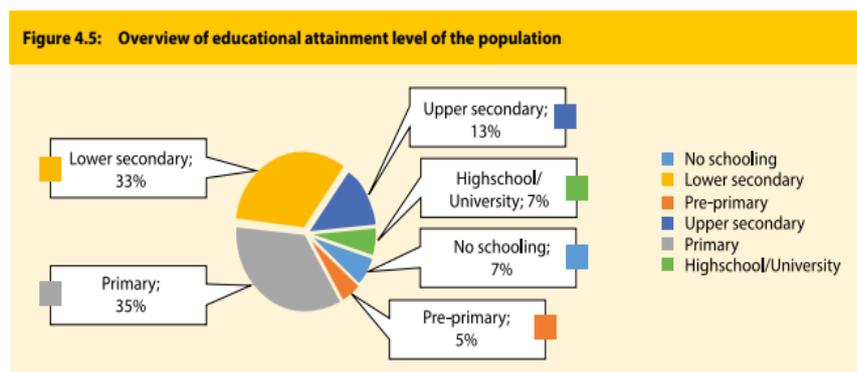
Figure 2 Population by district (left) and population by ethnicity (right)



In some districts (Nickerie, Brokopondo, Sipaliwini, Coronie and Marowijne) there is a majority (around 75 per cent or more) of one ethnic group, while in the other districts such as Paramaribo, Wanica and, to some extent, Commewijne, multiple ethnic groups are almost equally distributed.

Figure 2 shows the distribution by district and ethnicity, based on 2012 census data.

Figure 3 The population by highest level of education



Source: General Bureau of Statistics (Census 2012 data)

Figure 3 shows the various levels of education. The literacy rate in Suriname is about 98 per cent and on average less than 10 per cent never completed primary education.

Of children aged 0 to 18 years, 6,677 have at least one physical/functional difficulty; most of these children live in Sipaliwini, Paramaribo and Wanica. Problems with seeing, walking, and hearing are the most common types of difficulties (MICS, 2018). These difficulties can become disabilities if they are not addressed in a timely and appropriate manner by creating a supportive learning environment and care system.

### 1.3 Socio-cultural context

The macro-environmental factor socio-cultural context refers to the broad, social, and cultural conditions that influence how social interactions and communication take place. This includes factors such as culture, values, norms, and historical backgrounds that play a role in shaping social dynamics and intercultural relations in a country.

The UNESCO Framework for Promoting Intercultural Dialogue is an integrated approach to monitor the strength of the structures, processes, values, and skills that make intercultural dialogue effective as a tool for promoting peace and inclusion. Of the nine domains of the framework, Suriname scores highest on Freedom of Expression (0.76) and Social Cohesion (0.86).

Suriname scores lowest on the Good Governance and Citizenship domains (0.49) and Horizontal Inequality (0.41). Good Governance and Citizenship looks at how power is (re)distributed in governance structures and citizenship mechanisms that can significantly affect opportunities for intercultural dialogue. Effective governance and institutions lay the foundations to promote public trust and participation in society, ensure that everyone has a voice and create avenues for dialogue between governments and citizens and also between citizens.

Horizontal inequality provides insight into socio-economic inequality between groups with different identities. Addressing socio-economic inequality is crucial for successful intercultural dialogue. Efforts to address power imbalances between groups to support more equal opportunities should be inclusive and focused on coalition building, decentralization of governance and strengthening political leadership, rule of law, voting and quota systems and education<sup>3</sup>.

In child upbringing and care, physical punishment appears to be a common practice. About nine in 10 children (87.3%) between the ages of one and 14 have experienced physical or mental abuse at

<sup>3</sup> [Suriname Country Profile - Enabling Intercultural Dialogue \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org), consulted on 14 July 2024

home. About 14% of children/adolescents experience teenage pregnancy and early motherhood. The situation is also precarious as the situation shows no positive change as of 2018. Still about 54 girls per year between the ages of 10-15 give birth to a live-born baby<sup>4</sup>.

## 1.4 Technological context

Digital technologies offer an unprecedented opportunity to increase the depth, quality and scope of teaching and learning in Suriname. From improving access to information to embedding global expertise and experience in local educational offerings. Also, the increased availability and accessibility of smartphones and other devices increases the possibility of providing engaging and permanent education opportunities. Hybrid and distance learning products and services are based on digital technologies and make use of the aforementioned devices - and factors such as internet connectivity - to provide high-quality education.

Suriname has made strong efforts to develop its digital infrastructure base. The government's liberalization of the telecommunications sector in 2004 led to increased coverage of mobile telephony and broadband connections. The construction of the Suriname-Guyana Submarine Cable System in 2010 has also improved affordability and technology for accessibility. Currently, about 50% of Surinamese citizens use the internet daily, while 60% have access to the internet. However, progress in key infrastructure development can be accelerated given newer and more advanced technologies for connectivity especially when compared to neighboring countries' investments. Suriname scores 0.71 on the 'Telecommunications Infrastructure' section of the UN DESA e-Government Survey 2022<sup>5</sup>.

Growing digital awareness can be observed in the society which is driven by interest in social media and online content. A digital culture is developing in Suriname with an increasing demand for digital products and services. This is reflected in the consumer readiness score of 70.8 out of 100 in the GSMA Mobile Connectivity Index (2022) for Suriname. However, improvements are still needed in the area of digital literacy. Suriname has an internet network coverage ratio of 83.2. Investment is needed to improve the quality of the network, as well as further expansion nationwide. Work is also needed on the security and affordability of mobile data so that pupils, students, and teachers can make the best use of technological developments to enhance learning and teaching.

## 1.5 Ecological context

Several factors contribute to Suriname's particular vulnerability to the effects of climate change. The country is dependent on fossil fuels, has declining forests and fragile ecosystems. The low-lying coastal area is home to 87% of the population and is where most of the country's economic activity takes place.

Based on historical climate analyses and climate projections, it is found that Suriname is getting warmer and drier, with average minimum and maximum temperatures expected to rise significantly by the end of the century. Rainfall is expected to decrease during all seasons, with precipitation periods becoming more intense and rare. Further, maximum wind speed will increase moderately in all scenarios. Changing climate conditions will increase risks such as sea level rise and flooding, which will put severe pressure on Suriname's infrastructure and natural resources. The climate index by

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<sup>4</sup> Sobhie, R., Gillis, M., Wallerlei, S. (2024). A deep dive into the social protection system in Suriname for children, adolescents, and adults over 2015-2023. Final Report. Suriname Planning Office and UNICEF, 2024

<sup>5</sup> The Government of Suriname, National Digital Strategy, Paramaribo: Government of Suriname, 2023

district shows that Paramaribo, Sipaliwini and Wanica are the districts most at risk. Coronie and Nickerie are the least at risk. Sipaliwini and Brokopondo are the most vulnerable because of their vulnerable agricultural and infrastructure sectors, while Coronie is the least vulnerable district<sup>6</sup>.

Climate effects affect schools and learning processes. The infrastructure of school buildings and surroundings will increasingly have to take climate effects into account, including the development of alternative learning opportunities to cope with interruptions in the educational process due to increasing natural disasters and adverse weather conditions.

## 1.6 Political-legal context

This factor includes current legislation, legislative changes, government decisions, subsidies, licenses, trade barriers and tariffs.

Based on the Recovery Plan 2020-2022, the government, in an attempt to restore the economy, has adjusted its subsidy policy so that it does not spend more money than it raises. The plan shows that subsidies weigh too heavily on the state's budget and therefore need to be revised. The adjusted policy is aimed at transitioning from object subsidy to subject subsidy with the goal of reducing the subsidy share from 4.5% to 3% of GDP by 2023.

The Suriname Social Security System (SPS) consists of three categories: Social Security, Social Assistance and Social Services. Social Assistance is implemented in the form of socially targeted (group) programs for children, adolescents, adults, the elderly and vulnerable households. The General Child Benefit coverage is 54%, however, its level is far below the national poverty line and even 5 times lower than US\$1 per day (US\$5 per month AKB for 2023) and there are challenges in disbursements in rural areas. In addition, the child allowance received for children is usually used by parents to buy items for the household and not necessarily for the children<sup>7</sup>.

The current education legislation in force dates back to the 1960s. The ministry currently has several education-related laws developed and under development for submission to The National Assembly in line with the vision for education in Suriname.

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<sup>6</sup> State of the Climate Suriname report: Summary for Policymakers, IDB 2021

<sup>7</sup> Sobhie, R., Gillis, M., Wallerlei, S. (2024). A deep dive into the social protection system in Suriname for children, adolescents, and adults over 2015-2023. Final Report. Suriname Planning Office and UNICEF, 2024

## 1.7 Education trends

The ministry has 597 general and secondary schools.

Table 1: Number of schools by district by level of education 2024

District	General Education (grade 1 - 8)	General Education (grade 9 and 10) Vocational/ general education (grade 11 and 12)	General Education/Vocational Education (grade 13 - 16)
Paramaribo	134	73	28
Wanica	61	25	13
Sipaliwini	50	13	0
Nickerie	27	13	8
Commewijne	23	10	3
Marowijne	21	6	6
Para	21	9	0
Brokopondo	18	6	0
Saramacca	14	6	3
Coronie	4	2	0
<b>Totaal</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>61</b>

\* This count is based on education type and not buildings. Source: MinOWC Research and Planning Department (Jan 2024).

### Drop – out rate<sup>8</sup>

Table 2 provides an overview of the drop-out rate in Basic Education by gender by district by year. From 2019 to 2020, there is a decrease in the national drop-out rate from 12.59% to 8.63%, respectively. The average drop-out rate over the years 2019 and 2020 is 10.60% for boys and 10.63% for girls. The highest rates are observed in the three rural districts and Paramaribo.

Table 2: Primary education Drop-out

District	2019			2020		
	M	V	Total	M	V	Total
Brokopondo	11.02	13.48	12.19	13.19	12.98	13.09
Commewijne	11.00	8.20	9.66	7.43	8.50	7.96
Coronie	8.00	8.48	8.25	-2.61	8.81	3.21
Marowijne	10.75	10.94	10.84	8.66	11.09	9.81
Nickerie	6.76	8.87	7.77	6.09	5.62	5.87
Para	11.40	12.28	11.83	7.19	7.67	7.42
Paramaribo	14.60	13.63	14.14	9.63	9.30	9.47
Saramacca	13.57	10.92	12.31	5.69	3.29	4.53

<sup>8</sup> The drop-out rate is the percentage of students from a given grade who do not enrol in the next school year. Typically, a student is categorised as a drop-out if he or she 'stays away' (does not complete the grade in which the student enrolled, or does not re-enrol for the next school year).

<b>Sipaliwini</b>	16.4 6	15.7 2	16.11	9.27	10.3 5	9.78
<b>Wanica</b>	11.2 5	11.1 1	11.18	6.75	8.40	7.55
<b>Totaal</b>	<b>12.8 1</b>	<b>12.3 5</b>	<b>12.59</b>	<b>8.39</b>	<b>8.90</b>	<b>8.63</b>

At the LBO level, the drop-out rate in 2019 is 44.53% nationwide, with the difference between boys (45.36%) and girls (42.92%) being minimal. The drop-out rate has decreased to 38.73% in 2020.

Table 3: LBO drop-out percentage

District	LBO					
	2019			2020		
	M	V	Total	M	V	Totaal
<b>Brokopondo</b>	29.4 9	41.3 9	35.27	33.7 7	39.6 2	36.32
<b>Commewijne</b>	36.4 7	26.8 8	32.90	41.8 7	36.0 3	39.74
<b>Coronie</b>	37.0 4	47.1 1	42.10	57.3 9	44.2 9	52.35
<b>Marowijne</b>	28.0 7	34.3 8	31.31	16.2 2	28.0 5	20.78
<b>Nickerie</b>	22.0 8	24.6 0	22.41	39.5 3	38.7 0	39.51
<b>Para</b>	37.6 2	37.0 9	37.75	34.1 4	27.4 2	32.07
<b>Paramaribo</b>	47.0 0	39.9 8	44.43	35.3 0	38.3 0	36.73
<b>Saramacca</b>	25.6 6	24.6 0	25.50	31.6 3	28.1 4	30.59
<b>Sipaliwini</b>	27.9 6	34.5 2	30.47	41.1 4	53.2 3	45.59
<b>Wanica</b>	54.3 1	52.7 3	53.73	55.9 4	46.5 6	52.71
<b>Totaal</b>	<b>45.3 6</b>	<b>42.9 2</b>	<b>44.53</b>	<b>35.8 9</b>	<b>43.6 4</b>	<b>38.73</b>

At MULO level, the drop-out rate in 2019 is 34.90% nationwide. In 2020, this percentage has increased to 36.42%. Female drop-out rate is higher than male drop-out rate.

Table 4: MULO drop-out rate

District	LBO					
	2019			2020		
	M	V	Total	M	V	Total
<b>Brokopondo</b>	29.4 9	41.3 9	35.2 7	33.7 7	39.6 2	36.32
<b>Commewijne</b>	36.4 7	26.8 8	32.9 0	41.8 7	36.0 3	39.74
<b>Coronie</b>	37.0 4	47.1 1	42.1 0	57.3 9	44.2 9	52.35

<b>Marowijne</b>	28.0 7	34.3 8	31.3 1	16.2 2	28.0 5	20.78
<b>Nickerie</b>	22.0 8	24.6 0	22.4 1	39.5 3	38.7 0	39.51
<b>Para</b>	37.6 2	37.0 9	37.7 5	34.1 4	27.4 2	32.07
<b>Paramaribo</b>	47.0 0	39.9 8	44.4 3	35.3 0	38.3 0	36.73
<b>Saramacca</b>	25.6 6	24.6 0	25.5 0	31.6 3	28.1 4	30.59
<b>Sipaliwini</b>	27.9 6	34.5 2	30.4 7	41.1 4	53.2 3	45.59
<b>Wanica</b>	54.3 1	52.7 3	53.7 3	55.9 4	46.5 6	52.71
<b>Totaal</b>	<b>45.3 6</b>	<b>42.9 2</b>	<b>44.5 3</b>	<b>35.8 9</b>	<b>43.6 4</b>	<b>38.73</b>

### ***Repeaters percentage<sup>9</sup>***

Table 5 provides an overview of the repeater percentage by year by gender and district. The year with the highest repeaters percentage nationally is 2019, at 15.42%. The majority of the repeaters are boys (m) (average boys 17.30% and average girls (f) 12.22%, with a difference of 5.08% compared to girls).

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<sup>9</sup> The repetition rate is the percentage of students from a given grade who did not transfer and re-enrol in the same grade the next school year. This indicator shows the percentage of pupils who do not move on to the next grade.

Table 5: Repeaters in primary education

District	2019			2020		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Brokopondo	27.38	19.35	23.58	24.56	17.11	21.07
Commewijne	11.22	7.55	9.47	9.09	7.01	8.07
Coronie	17.33	11.52	14.29	15.03	6.92	10.90
Marowijne	26.71	20.07	23.56	19.04	13.52	16.41
Nickerie	15.26	8.60	12.06	11.93	7.72	9.94
Para	21.77	15.99	18.90	21.51	16.68	19.13
Paramaribo	14.35	10.44	12.48	14.41	9.74	12.17
Saramacca	14.44	8.16	11.46	12.36	9.88	11.16
Sipaliwini	28.70	23.47	26.23	29.13	21.75	25.66
Wanica	17.57	13.02	15.36	17.29	10.66	14.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.72</b>	<b>12.94</b>	<b>15.42</b>	<b>16.89</b>	<b>11.50</b>	<b>14.30</b>

At LBO level, the repeat rate is 22.55% in 2019 and 23.25% in 2020. The highest percentage was measured in 2019 in Nickerie (36.94%) and the lowest in Sipaliwini (16.13%). In 2020, the highest percentage was measured in Commewijne (26.92%) and the lowest in Coronie (10.70%). The national gender gap is significant in 2020. Here, the percentage for boys is 27.59% and for girls 15.62%.

Table 6: Repeaters LBO

District	LBO					
	2019			2020		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Brokopondo	22.51	21.62	22.20	24.40	22.79	23.82
Commewijne	29.14	32.95	31.03	26.14	27.82	26.92
Coronie	15.79	18.80	16.67	11.03	10.00	10.70
Marowijne	32.08	20.45	26.80	35.09	28.57	32.61
Nickerie	35.84	38.71	36.94	18.76	17.65	18.33
Para	23.38	25.90	24.05	20.00	23.81	20.90
Paramaribo	24.08	25.98	24.84	28.61	21.40	25.71
Saramacca	24.34	21.15	23.21	23.16	20.18	22.11
Sipaliwini	16.67	14.89	16.13	17.55	12.36	15.88
Wanica	24.79	18.82	22.33	20.29	16.13	18.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>23.08</b>	<b>21.77</b>	<b>22.55</b>	<b>27.59</b>	<b>15.62</b>	<b>23.25</b>

At the MULO level, Table 7 observes that in 2019, the national repeaters average is 12.62% with a difference between boys (14.62%) and girls (11.04%). The average has very slightly dropped to 12.39% in 2020.

Table 7: Repeaters MULO

District	MULO					
	2019			2020		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Brokopondo	17.1 9	13.7 9	15.1 6	17.2 8	14.3 2	15.52
Commewijne	19.8 6	11.9 8	14.0 0	0.79	11.8 3	8.82
Coronie	16.6 9	8.97	12.4 0	12.5 0	9.06	10.63
Marowijne	23.5 3	14.6 7	18.8 8	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nickerie	22.9 4	19.2 5	20.5 7	25.1 1	17.4 4	20.06
Para	18.9 9	14.1 5	16.2 9	15.1 8	10.4 8	12.67
Paramaribo	27.6 0	20.8 1	23.3 0	21.9 3	16.1 0	18.23
Saramacca	17.0 2	15.6 3	16.1 8	15.1 0	15.2 5	15.19
Sipaliwini	16.6 0	10.0 5	12.7 1	20.1 4	17.3 2	18.55
Wanica	15.2 4	15.9 3	15.6 4	12.4 1	9.45	10.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.6 2</b>	<b>11.0 4</b>	<b>12.6 2</b>	<b>13.8 5</b>	<b>11.2 4</b>	<b>12.39</b>

### Out of school rate

Statistics on Out of School Children (OOSC) at primary education level provide information on the size of the population in the official age group (6-11 years) who are not enrolled in school<sup>10</sup>. This allows better, targeted and appropriate policies to be designed so that all children have access to education.

In 2020, the rate nationwide is 6.16%, a decrease from 2019 when the rate was 7.24%. However, an increase can be seen in 2021, with this rate rising to 15.72% nationwide. It is noteworthy that in 2020 and 2021, it is noticeable that in the official primary school age, the percentage of boys not attending school is lower than of girls.

Table 8: OOSC primary education

District	Calendar Year								
	2019			2020			2021		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Sipaliwini	11.7 4	9.36	10.5 9	12.8 9	15.06	13.9 5	24.5 1	25.1 4	24.82
Para	17.2 6	13.9 2	15.5 8	15.8 3	13.36	14.5 9	20.5 6	16.4 4	18.52
Paramaribo	9.38	9.05	9.22	4.84	6.39	5.61	18.0 2	19.4 3	18.72
Brokopondo	5.84	5.24	5.55	10.8 2	13.68	12.2 4	13.1 5	13.3 5	13.25

<sup>10</sup> This age attribution and statistics refer to the context of former 8-year primary education.

<b>Saramacca</b>	2.94	5.84	4.38	7.51	12.36	9.95	11.64	11.32	11.48
<b>Wanica</b>	4.40	4.85	4.62	4.67	4.65	4.66	8.88	10.67	9.77
<b>Commewijne</b>	3.47	5.81	4.62	5.55	2.31	3.98	10.39	8.83	9.62
<b>Marowijne</b>	-4.14	-3.37	-3.76	-4.84	-1.77	-3.30	21.82	26.69	24.25
<b>Nickerie</b>	4.45	0.82	2.69	0.51	-2.07	-0.72	7.85	4.57	6.29
<b>Coronie</b>	9.09	-3.85	2.39	6.87	-12.20	-2.36	0.00	2.29	1.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.46</b>	<b>7.02</b>	<b>7.24</b>	<b>5.87</b>	<b>6.47</b>	<b>6.16</b>	<b>15.31</b>	<b>16.13</b>	<b>15.72</b>

Table 9 shows that more than 50% of the percentage of the 'young population' aged between 12 - 15 years is not attending school. In 2019, the percentages were highest in Sipaliwini (89.01%) and lowest in Nickerie (23.36%). In 2020, the percentage was highest in Sipaliwini (91.52%) and lowest in Nickerie (26.06%).

Table 9: Out of School Children Rate age category 12-15 year

District	2019			2020			2021		
	M	V	Total	M	V	Total	M	V	Total
Brokopondo	81.59	70.57	76.12	86.30	72.49	79.58	75.10	57.23	66.53
Commewijne	30.65	24.03	27.44	34.02	23.99	29.19	35.23	30.01	32.66
Coronie	32.26	26.51	29.55	39.76	48.39	44.32	30.67	22.99	26.54
Marowijne	64.47	52.21	58.73	64.71	59.36	62.09	76.04	67.81	71.95
Nickerie	27.28	19.21	23.36	25.83	26.29	26.06	29.21	32.16	30.68
Para	59.38	45.25	52.29	58.75	44.71	51.57	60.20	45.44	52.72
Paramaribo	33.47	26.90	30.25	30.59	24.18	27.47	43.67	37.24	40.53
Saramacca	53.20	34.68	44.26	53.69	41.05	47.46	50.27	37.38	43.85
Sipaliwini	89.99	87.98	89.01	92.99	89.90	91.52	90.90	86.87	88.92
Wanica	53.80	46.04	49.93	52.20	42.43	47.36	53.48	42.13	47.83
<b>Totaal</b>	<b>47.80</b>	<b>40.10</b>	<b>44.02</b>	<b>47.25</b>	<b>39.51</b>	<b>43.46</b>	<b>52.63</b>	<b>44.58</b>	<b>48.66</b>

### Graduation rate

The national graduation rate of primary school students for MULO was highest in 2020 (74.83%) with a notable difference between boys (33.69%) and girls (41.14%). Nickerie (82.63%) scored the highest and the lowest scores are in Sipaliwini (58.38%).

Table 10: Primary education graduation rate for MULO-level

District	2019			2020		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Brokopondo	12.63	30.11	42.74	24.73	37.09	61.81
Commewijne	35.07	36.14	71.21	41.07	41.56	82.63
Coronie	20.51	32.05	52.56	25.81	38.71	64.52
Marowijne	12.26	26.18	38.44	27.61	39.44	67.05
Nickerie	37.90	40.87	78.77	40.52	43.11	83.63
Para	16.38	31.48	47.86	24.80	35.07	59.87
Paramaribo	28.96	34.65	63.61	35.32	41.45	76.76
Saramacca	36.07	33.93	70.00	33.01	42.81	75.82
Sipaliwini	14.06	23.72	37.78	20.81	37.56	58.38
Wanica	27.02	34.28	61.30	35.35	42.99	78.34
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.37</b>	<b>33.50</b>	<b>59.87</b>	<b>33.69</b>	<b>41.14</b>	<b>74.83</b>

The graduation rate for LBO has dropped from 3.83% in 2019 to 3.06% in 2020.

Table 11: Primary education graduation rate for LBO-level

District	2019			2020		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Brokopondo	2.15	2.96	5.11	3.02	2.20	5.22
Commewijne	1.23	0.46	1.68	1.30	0.81	2.11
Coronie	5.13		5.13	1.61	3.23	4.84
Marowijne	4.72	2.12	6.84	1.62	2.09	3.71
Nickerie	1.59	0.60	2.18	1.80	0.40	2.20
Para	3.13	2.42	5.56	2.05	2.21	4.27
Paramaribo	2.13	1.37	3.50	1.47	1.18	2.65
Saramacca	1.43	1.07	2.50	1.63	0.98	2.61
Sipaliwini	3.27	3.84	7.10	2.71	3.05	5.75
Wanica	2.21	1.17	3.39	1.50	1.36	2.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.32</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>1.65</b>	<b>1.41</b>	<b>3.06</b>

The graduation rate of students in VOJ-MULO education in 2021 increased to 64.98% in 2020 from 48.59% in 2019.

Table 12: Graduation rates VOJ- MULO

District	MULO								
	2019*			2020			2021		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Brokopondo	10.37	22.96	33.33	16.15	38.51	54.66	6.13	33.13	39.26
Commewijne	19.87	38.28	58.16	30.43	46.62	77.05	32.62	42.15	74.77
Coronie	5.00	22.50	27.50	18.18	45.45	63.64	27.78	52.78	80.56
Marowijne	9.05	27.59	36.64	16.73	37.85	54.58	14.36	32.67	47.03
Nickerie	15.28	35.42	50.69	27.36	40.23	67.59	27.98	36.01	63.99
Para	10.00	30.32	40.32	19.68	42.26	61.94	21.54	35.77	57.31
Paramaribo	15.31	28.01	43.33	23.44	41.45	64.88	22.95	40.30	63.24
Saramacca	20.63	34.39	55.03	24.18	46.15	70.33	26.76	38.73	65.49
Sipaliwini	13.70	20.55	34.25	26.47	48.04	74.51	22.02	43.12	65.14
Wanica	23.86	38.11	61.97	30.16	44.41	74.57	28.59	44.69	73.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.97</b>	<b>31.62</b>	<b>48.59</b>	<b>25.09</b>	<b>42.49</b>	<b>67.58</b>	<b>24.43</b>	<b>40.54</b>	<b>64.98</b>

The graduation rate of students in VOJ-LBO education was highest in 2021 (88.62%). The percentages show an increasing trend from 2019 to 2021. Gender differences consistently favor boys.

Table 13: Graduation rate VOJ- LBO

District	LBO								
	2019			2020			2021		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total

Brokopondo	26.11	19.17	45.28	32.64	23.35	56.04	36.05	24.67	60.72
Commewijne	1.66	2.96	4.61	2.84	2.16	5.00	2.83	2.64	5.47
Coronie	1.07	0.58	1.66	1.89	1.49	3.38	1.91	1.76	3.66
Marowijne	0.72	0.76	1.48	1.49	0.86	2.34	0.68	0.44	1.12
Nickerie	1.21	1.21	2.42	1.26	0.86	2.12	0.83	0.93	1.76
Para	0.04	0.36	0.40	0.41	0.36	0.77	0.34	0.73	1.07
Paramaribo	2.19	1.12	3.31	3.97	1.08	5.05	3.37	2.05	5.42
Saramacca	1.88	1.03	2.91	2.93	3.11	6.04	3.71	3.18	6.89
Sipaliwini	0.63	0.63	1.25	0.63	0.81	1.44	0.83	1.27	2.10
Wanica	0.22		0.22	0.18	0.32	0.50	0.15	0.24	0.39
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.74</b>	<b>27.81</b>	<b>63.55</b>	<b>48.24</b>	<b>34.40</b>	<b>82.69</b>	<b>50.71</b>	<b>37.91</b>	<b>88.62</b>

Table 14: Number of students and teachers by gender by higher education institute 2021<sup>11</sup>

Institutes	Students			Lecturers		
	M	V	Totaal	M	V	Totaal
IOL	288	1532	1820	16	53	69
PTC	746	502	1248	117	90	207
UNASAT	442	749	1191	45	45	90
AHKCO	63	239	302	30	34	64
LOBO	46	64	110	24	38	62
<b>Totaal</b>	<b>1585</b>	<b>3086</b>	<b>4671</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>492</b>

<sup>11</sup> The institutes that have made their data available to the Research and Planning Department have been included in this publication.



## 2 Vision and Ambitions

Suriname's education system is undergoing a transformation, for which an inspiring vision for education, its core values, policy areas and goals have been developed.

### 2.1 Vision, mission and core values

#### Vision

*Education that is inclusive, focused on quality, promotes accessibility, provides equitable opportunities, is technology-driven and focuses on developing good and productive citizens.*

#### Mission

Transforming the education system aimed at sustainability, competence development and efficiency in supporting pupils and students (regardless of their individual and family characteristics) to develop their competences which can contribute to the national development of the country by providing a challenging and safe learning environment throughout Suriname in which they:

1. can work independently;
2. can follow their own learning path without unnecessary interruptions;
3. can solve issues both independently and with others;
4. become culturally aware so that they respect and appreciate intercultural diversity and acquire attitudes, skills and knowledge to function in different cultures; and
5. develop their talents and social emotional wellbeing and citizenship skills to become critical citizens.

Given the new educational vision, an approach focused on Child-centred Education has been chosen to implement this vision. This development-oriented education explicitly focuses on multilingualism, equality and equity, cultural diversity and physical and mental health. Developmental Education aims to transition from traditional education to developmental education with an emphasis on developing relevant skills for the labor market.

#### The core functions in Child-centred Education are:

- Developing **Learners and Students**;
- Developing **Teachers and Lecturers** and
- Establishing **Educational Infrastructure and Administrative Structures** (including school principals, directors and the content revision of education).

Figure 4 Child-centred Education

The education system focuses on the competency development of all pupils and students across Suriname by providing a challenging and safe learning environment, where they:

- Can work independently,
- Can follow their own learning path without repeating a year,
- Can solve problems both independently and collaboratively with others,
- Become culturally aware, so that they respect and appreciate cultural diversity and acquire the attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed to function in different cultures, and
- Learn to develop their talents, social-emotional well-being, and citizenship skills to become critical citizens.

In this development-oriented education, explicit attention is given to multilingualism, equality and equity, cultural diversity, as well as physical and mental health

## Core values

The guiding principles that will drive all educational decisions are (1) inclusivity, (2) excellence, (3) innovation, (4) cultural relevance and (5) quality.

### 1. Inclusivity

We ensure that all pupils/students, regardless of background, abilities or needs, have equal access to quality education and are able to achieve their full potential.

### 2. Excellence

We strive for excellence in education by setting high expectations for all students and challenging them to reach their full potential.

### 3. Innovation

We embrace innovation in education by using new technologies, pedagogical approaches and learning tools to enhance learning.

### 4. Cultural Relevance

We recognize and value the cultural diversity of our students and strive to make education relevant and meaningful to their lives and experiences.

## 5. Quality

We aim to continuously improve the quality of education through regular review, feedback and adjustment.

The education policy for the coming period is divided into six (6) policy areas and 18 policy priorities, with six (6) cross-cutting themes integrally intertwined.

Figure 5 Policy framework national education policy

<b>Vision</b>	Moving towards powerful and contemporary education for every child.	Education that is inclusive, focused on quality, promotes accessibility, provides equitable opportunities, is technology-driven and focuses on developing good and productive citizens.		
<b>Policy Plan Objective</b>	Consolidating successful reforms from the past period, fine-tuning, improving resilience, expanding and broadening the education system for the future so that every Surinamese child can enjoy powerful contemporary education and new citizens are brought into the world equipped with everything needed to know their way in the world and be able to act in the world of tomorrow.			
<b>Policy Areas</b>	<b>Reform of the education system</b>	<b>Transformation &amp; Quality of Teaching and Learning</b>	<b>Optimizing human capital</b>	
<b>Policy Priorities</b>	Curriculum reform	Professional Development	Recruitment and selection	
	Education structure and legislation	Learning Environment	Career Policy	
	Evaluation and assessment	Parent Involvement	Leadership in Education	
<b>Policy Areas</b>	<b>Arts and culture</b>	<b>Governance and Institutional Strengthening</b>	<b>Implementation, monitoring and evaluation</b>	
<b>Policy Priorities</b>	Cultural education	Governance Structure	Implementation plan	
	Promoting intercultural skills	Institutional Capacity	Monitoring and evaluation system	
	Cultural Heritage	Collaboration and Partnerships	Funding	
<b>Cross-cutting areas</b>	<b>  Technology integration   Gender transformative education   Life skills</b> <b>  Inclusive education   Education in rural areas   Student well-being</b>			
<b>Core Values</b>	<b>  Inclusivity   Cultural Relevance</b>		<b>  Innovation</b>	
	<b>  Excellence   Quality</b>			

## 2.2 Policy Areas and Policy Goals

Concrete and measurable goals have been formulated for the coming period aimed at improving learning outcomes, reducing inequality, and strengthening the education system.

### The overarching policy goal for this policy period

Consolidating successful reforms from the past period, fine-tuning, improving resilience, expanding, and broadening the education system for the future so that every Surinamese child can enjoy a powerful contemporary education and new citizens are brought into the world equipped with everything needed to know their way in the world and be able to act in the world of tomorrow.

This involves looking at change on:

- the level of the *system* as a whole;
- the level of *implementation* of education;
- the level of the *content* of education; and
- the level of *framework conditions* and *support services*.

To achieve the overarching policy goal, specific policy goals were formulated which were then further developed into operational policy goals.

### Specific policy goals

1. Increasing access to all levels of education, from pre-school to university;
2. Reducing gender, rural/urban and socio-economic inequalities in education;
3. Improving the quality of education at all levels of the education system;
4. Aligning the education system with the national needs of Surinamese society and labor market;
5. Strengthening management, monitoring and accountability of the education system and the development of education support systems and services

### Policy areas

By investing in leadership, digitization, personalized learning, and competence-based education, we can transform Surinamese education into a system that prepares pupils/students for a successful future. This requires a joint effort by government, teachers, educators, parents and society as a whole. Together, we can ensure that all pupils/students in Suriname have the opportunity to reach their full potential. For the coming policy period, the following six (6) policy domains will serve as guiding principles. The integration of specific policies and programs for education in the interior in all policy areas, aimed at improving the accessibility, quality, and relevance of education for students in these areas is a high priority. The main objective of rural development is the sustainable development of communities in rural areas, substantially improving the quality of life of citizens, as well as ensuring their prosperity and well-being.

### *Reform of the Education System*

Policy goal: To reform the education system focused on optimizing the education structure to provide learning pathways that meet the needs of students and society, providing a corresponding modern and future-oriented education curriculum at all levels and related forms of assessment, which are supported by a renewed set of education laws and regulations.

### *Transformation & Quality of Teaching and Learning*

Policy goal: To professionalize teachers and school managers in line with educational innovation, ensuring a conducive inclusive learning environment with attention to care in schools adapted to the unique context of each school and strengthening parent/community involvement in educational innovation, decision-making and student development.

### *Optimizing Human Capital*

Policy goal: To develop Human Resource systems for attracting and retaining an optimal workforce in quantitative and qualitative terms and to develop leadership for effectively implementing renewal processes.

### *Art and Culture*

Policy goal: To further integrate arts, culture and cultural heritage into the curriculum at all levels of education, protect and preserve Suriname's cultural heritage and promote respect for diversity and intercultural competencies through which students acquire the skills to effectively communicate, collaborate and interact with people from different cultures to successfully navigate and understand intercultural situations.

### *Governance and Institutional Strengthening*

Policy goal: To strengthen principles of good governance aimed at steering, controlling, supervising and accountability and monitoring the interrelatedness, also the ministry will work on institutional strengthening to improve framework conditions for policy implementation for quality education.

### *Implementation, monitoring and evaluation*

Policy goal: To develop implementation plans, including investment and financing plans derived from the policy plan for the directorates and down to the school level, with associated mechanism for monitoring, data collection and evaluation for adjustment of planning.

## **2.3 Cross-cutting areas**

Across all policy domains, 5 cross-cutting themes are integrated.

*Technology integration*: The importance of innovation and use of technology is essential for achieving a modern, quality-oriented, and effective education system. Technology must be integrated across all domains to give substance to educational innovations using technology to transform teaching, knowledge transfer, learning and decision-making processes.

The Suriname National Training Authority is developing a national qualifications framework together with the country's largest employer and employee organizations. The government is also taking important steps to promote efforts. A National Qualifications Framework for Technical and Vocational

Education (TVET) has been set up to align skills capacity-building efforts with the country's priorities in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and economics - and to develop a core group of digital specialists who can spearhead innovation in various industries. Broader reforms of the education system are also planned, including considering the role of digital technology in measuring national education outcomes - and focusing on developing the digital literacy of teachers and educators. The ministry is also working with the private sector to align technical vocational training programs with labor market needs and to offer technical training programs in collaboration with international partners. Opportunities to provide more advanced technical and digital training opportunities will also prove important. Ensuring hybrid and distance learning in Suriname requires:

- Availability of high-quality learning resources - including books, resources, platforms, courses and accreditation in our local languages;
- Access to devices, equipment and appropriate facilities, such as smartphones, and funding for devices and equipment (as well as ensuring affordable connectivity for our students) - including collaboration with the private sector;
- Strengthening our human capital - from increasing teacher skills to supporting improvements in digital and functional literacy among our population;
- Improving the underlying infrastructure, including providing accessible and affordable internet and affordable and reliable electricity (and leveraging local infrastructure, including data centers).

*Gender transformative education:* Gender transformative education will focus on creating an inclusive learning environment where traditional gender roles and stereotypes are challenged, with the aim of promoting equality and respect for all gender identities. This form of education promotes critical thinking skills and social justice by embracing diversity and challenging discrimination.

*More inclusive education:* Implementation of more inclusive education policies and practices to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their background or disabilities, can fully participate in education and reach their potential.

*Life skills:* These skills are the essential skills that help people deal effectively with the challenges and demands of everyday life.

*Student well-being:* Student well-being revolves around promoting the physical, mental, and emotional health of students in general and specific focus groups in particular to intertwine their academic and personal success.

*Education in rural areas:* The integration of specific policies and programs for education in rural areas into all policies aimed at improving the accessibility, quality, and relevance of education for students in these areas is a high priority. The main goal of rural development is the sustainable development of communities in rural areas, substantially improving the quality of life of citizens, as well as ensuring their prosperity and well-being<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> National Annual Plan 2021

### 3 Reform of the Education System

Education system reform is a process that focuses on changes to make education more effective, inclusive, relevant, and responsive to the needs of students and society so that students are well prepared for challenges and opportunities. By using adaptive technologies and flexible learning pathways, we can ensure that all pupils and students can reach their full potential.

There are several approaches that highlight approaches to educational innovation in schools, the idea being that schools are non-rational organizations. They are based on the assumption that all kinds of changes inside and outside school organizations affect a change process. The local situation matters as well as possibilities of the school organization to change. Procedures and activities are not fixed in advance but are adapted to local conditions. Hence a distinction is made between planned and less planned approaches:

1. A strongly plan-based approach (characteristic of this approach is the use of a top-down strategy, where action is strongly guided by goals, set from above, for example by external experts or the donor);
2. A systematic approach (less strongly planned approach allows more room for autonomous action by those involved. Much value is placed on internal and external guidance, coordination and process- and product-oriented approaches);
3. A developmental approach (the change process is seen as a learning process. The ability to change is seen as a learning process);
4. An incremental approach (a process where authorities, e.g. government, deposit an innovation plan, goal or theme with implementers. No specific goals, means or activities are prescribed. The details of an innovation process are subject to further consultation. Innovation is a process that develops step by step, focusing on the problems, as they arise).

#### Policy goal

**To reform the education system focused on optimizing the education structure to provide learning pathways that meet the needs of students and society, providing a corresponding modern and future-oriented education curriculum at all levels, and corresponding forms of assessment, which are supported by a renewed set of education laws and regulations.**

## 3.1 Curriculum Reform

### Policy goal

***Develop a modern, relevant and future-oriented curriculum for all levels of education, with attention for a seamless alignment between levels, learning pathways, 21st-century skills, sustainability, gender transformative education and arts and cultural heritage.***

Curriculum innovation aims to implement a flexible curriculum that responds to the dynamic needs of (cultural) society and the labor market. This requires regular evaluation and adaptation, with attention to emerging disciplines and technologies. Also providing tailor-made curriculum for the various target groups such as adults and people with disabilities and, above all, the curriculum should be area (geographic)-, context- and school-specific, taking into account multilingualism within education. Development of digital learning resources for online platforms that fit the Surinamese context and curriculum.

Important aspects included in the reform pertaining to reforming the curriculum, applying the concept of Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STREAM), and giving greater emphasis to arts and cultural education. Reforming the national curriculum will enable students to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for their personal development and development of the nation.

Each child is unique and has their own learning style, pace, and interests. By applying personalized learning, we can provide customized education that meets the individual needs of each pupil and student. This means giving pupils and students more control over their own learning and teachers acting as coaches and mentors.

Certain innovations to the curriculum have already been implemented and will continue in the coming period. In the Basic Education Improvement Programme (BEIP 1 and 2) funded by the IDB, care has been taken to develop new curriculum for primary education. Subsequently, in the Consolidating Access to Inclusive Education programme, period 2022- 2027, work is underway to develop a new curriculum for grades 9 - 12. The process of curriculum reform will also be continued at subsequent levels of education up to the Higher Education level, seeking to provide a current and relevant curriculum that meets the needs of the labor market and social developments. Sustainable development and innovation of learning materials at all educational levels will be continued. In vocational education, teachers have also been trained to incorporate Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) and ICT tools in the lesson plan.

Table 15: Curriculum development policy framework

Policy goal	Policy objectives
<p><b>Curriculum reform</b></p> <p>Develop a modern, relevant, and future-oriented curriculum for all levels of education, with attention for a seamless alignment between levels, learning pathways, 21st-century skills, sustainability, gender transformative education and arts and cultural heritage.</p>	<p>Curriculum reform in primary education with emphasis on grade 9 and 10, integration of Basic Life Skills, multilingualism, special education, and customization for rural context, including digital content.</p>
	<p>Reform the curriculum at secondary level, focusing on integration of Basic Life Skills, multilingualism, Second Chance Education programs for students who have dropped out, special education and customization for rural context, including digital content.</p>
	<p>Provide technical support for curriculum reforms for early stimulation and learning, with a focus on learning tailored to geographical areas to improve accessibility of quality early stimulation and learning services and thus children's school readiness.</p>
	<p>Curriculum reform of vocational education at all levels based on market-aligned occupational profiles, standards and the Labor Market Information System to deliver competent vocationally oriented global citizens with different attainment levels in line with international standards.</p>
	<p>Develop an appropriate package (curriculum) for Higher Education to deliver quality programs and research that fits within the framework of the earning capacity of the specific sectors based on the national needs of the Surinamese economy.</p>
	<p>Curriculum reform of pedagogical institutes for the delivery of future teachers who have the competences in line with the innovations in education.</p>

## 3.2 Education structure and legislation

### Policy goal

***Evaluate and optimize the current educational structure, with possible adjustments to the number of grades per level, the transition between levels, and the differentiation of learning pathways and update educational laws and regulations.***

It is now time for Suriname to adopt a flexible education system, one that fits into a society that Suriname wants to form with its own cultural and linguistic diversity, social and economic challenges and strategic positioning vis-à-vis the rest of the world. In short, a system that fits the Suriname of today. A system that fits the challenges Suriname faces and that knows how to move Suriname forward in accomplishing its position in the world.

The reforms of the education structure, aimed at expanding primary education by 2 grades and redefining the subsequent learning pathways, will be evaluated. There will be an optimization of the current educational structure with possible adjustments to number of grades per level, the transition between levels, and the differentiation of learning pathways.

*Table 16: Policy framework Education structure and legislation*

Policy goal Education structure and legislation	Policy objectives
Evaluate and optimize the current education structure, with possible adjustments to the number of grades per level, the transition between levels, and the differentiation of learning pathways, and update education laws and regulations.	Evaluate and adapt the education structure to optimize individual learning pathways (including reintegration) for students to improve learning outcomes from primary to tertiary education aligned with learning needs, the labor market and with attention to opportunities for students who have dropped out, individuals who have never been in education and those living with disabilities.
	Developing legislation for primary, secondary and tertiary education and the inspection authority.

## 3.4 Evaluation and Assessment

### Policy goal

***Implementation of an effective evaluation and assessment system, covering both formative and summative assessment, aimed at measuring student performance, identifying learning needs and improving teaching quality.***

In conjunction with the curriculum innovations, efforts will be made to develop and update the evaluation and assessment guidelines. Creating the optimal constructive alignment, in which learning activities and assessment are closely aligned with learning objectives, is essential for the development of pupils and students and quality assurance of the final diploma that is issued. To this end, efforts will be made to ensure close alignment between curriculum development and test developers, implementers and inspection aligned with the educational vision.

Testing and assessment will be deployed taking into account various stakeholders. It should give pupils/students, parents, and caretakers a picture of learning performance and development; provide teachers and educators with input to optimize their teaching and improve pupil guidance; give school leaders insight into their school's performance and make adjustments at school and classroom level to improve the quality of education; provide the ministry with an instrument for adjusting policy, partly based on in-depth analyses by researchers.

The ministry will promote a flexible and diverse approach to testing within education, aimed at measuring and promoting learning outcomes and competences at different levels and stages of education. It will focus on:

**Formative assessment.** It gives pupils insight into their own learning process. They receive feedback on what they have or have not mastered and can thus focus on their development and learning objectives. By means of assessment tests in specific years, a picture can be obtained of the development level of pupils/students in order to make adjustments.

**Summative assessment:** This form of assessment serves to determine whether pupils have acquired certain knowledge or skills. The results determine what level a student is at and whether they can move on to the next year. In close cooperation between curriculum development and the Examination Office, summative testing will be aligned to developments in education.

**Test methods.** Attention will be paid to flexibility and combined test methods. Test methods may differ depending on the type of education, the level of education and moments of administering the tests. Various testing methods will be adapted based on desired learning outcomes, a development-oriented curriculum, and the need for flexibility in the timing of testing. This aims to provide the most holistic picture possible of pupils' /students' development.

**Assessment.** Interpretations of test results determine promotion to higher levels based on grades and progress reports, where both an analytical and holistic view are decisive and assessment procedures take place based on four pillars: educational history, results of written and practical examinations and the student's study profile.

Table 17: Policy framework Evaluation and Assessment

Policy goal Evaluation and Assessment	Policy objectives
<p>Implementation of an effective evaluation and assessment system, covering both formative and summative assessment, aimed at measuring student performance, identifying learning needs and improving teaching quality.</p>	<p>Develop a quality assessment system for assessment and examination that is linked to the national curriculum and generates data for improvement for teaching and learning.</p>
	<p>Develop new assessment methods that focus on measuring competences rather than just knowledge.</p>

# 4 Transformation & Quality of Teaching and Learning

Professionalization of teachers is the key to successful educational innovation. It is therefore essential to invest in their professional development. Teachers should be supported and trained to apply new teaching methods such as personalized learning, competence-based education, and integration of technology.

A conducive learning environment that is inclusive and where all pupils/students, regardless of their background or abilities feel valued and supported is essential for their development. The provision of care for pupils/students and school teams at school should take into account the specific context of the school such as pupils/students' socio-economic background, cultural diversity and available resources.

Parents/caregivers play an important role in supporting their children in learning and encouraging their involvement in education. They should be informed about educational innovation and involved as partners in decision-making at school level.

## Policy goal

**Professionalizing teachers and school managers (individually and or collectively) in line with educational innovations, ensuring a conducive inclusive learning environment with attention to care in schools adapted to the unique context of each school and strengthening parent/community involvement in educational innovation, decision-making and student development.**

## 4.1 Professional Development of School Leaders and Teachers

### Policy goal

***Development and implementation of a comprehensive program of collective, professional development for teachers aimed at improving pedagogical skills, subject knowledge and the use of innovative teaching methods.***

The aim is to improve and develop the quality of education by improving and developing educational processes and learning areas. Furthermore, school leaders and teachers will be professionalized in the didactics and methodology of the new learning areas with attention to team learning so that school-wide developments can be set in motion. The nucleus center's will also be used effectively to train teachers employed in the interior. Attention will be paid to training teachers/lecturers in the use of digital technologies for teaching and learning and setting up an education and knowledge platform for teachers.

There will also be a focus on encouraging innovative uses of technology in education, such as personalized learning and gamification, by:

- Deploying adaptive technologies that provide students with targeted feedback and support;
- Training teachers in guiding pupils/students in a personalized learning environment;

- Training of teachers/lecturers in applying competence-based education in the classroom.
- Training of teams (including their leaders) to promote team learning and collaboration for school-wide alignment of innovation.

Education policy should give high priority to the target group of teachers/educators. Teachers should not only be experts in a learning domain or subject area, but should also have advanced design skills, research skills, innovation skills and collaboration competences. Teacher education institutions face the task not only of renewing initial education, but also of giving a strong impetus to the systematic further professionalization of teachers throughout their professional careers. This demands agility, a willingness to cooperate, high intellectual aspiration, an innovation-oriented professional attitude and creativity from teachers with an eye for their pupils/students. In many countries, the qualification requirements for a teacher are being raised to a master's degree and professional doctorates are being experimented with.

### **The new professional profile of teachers**

Creativity has to do with being open to different perspectives through which new developments can arise, cooperation between different disciplines and joint (new) knowledge development.

Specific national research on success and failure of educational innovations in Surinamese education is scarce. However, much can be found in donor files (bilateral and multilateral) indicating many stagnations in terms of communication, expertise, implementation capacity and institutional weaknesses of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Implementation of these large-scale innovations is difficult at the school level, as it places new demands on both school leaders and teachers (van den Berg, 1999).

Passionate teachers keep developing themselves continuously and are open to new insights and innovations. Practice-oriented research, educational innovations and innovation networks can provide them with tools to continuously professionalize themselves. Through knowledge sharing, teachers can learn from each other and thus progress. Exchanging innovative and well-working practices as well as sharing the wide range of learning resources from a variety of organizations are examples of this. Being open to and gaining insight into many good practices is important here. Good communication should ensure that these practices are better known and disseminated. That way, we work on the image of the teacher as a socially valued professional (Ori, 2021, p28).

Teacher professionalization involves setting and maintaining qualifications and standards for teachers at all levels. Professionalization of teachers through continuous training and development. Teacher programs focusing on current educational trends, multilingualism, digital pedagogy, and intercultural understanding to ensure that teachers are well equipped for their role as educational leaders, including a focus on partnership, collaboration, and dialogue.

Table 18: Policy framework Professional Development of school leaders and teachers

Policy goal	Policy objectives
<b>Professional Development of Teachers</b>  Develop and implement a comprehensive teacher professional development program aimed at improving pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and the use of innovative teaching methods.	Transformation of teacher training into (digital) professionalization programs and the possibility of using an incentive program for quality certification of teachers.  Boosting the capacity of school leaders and teachers to effectively integrate technology, gender-sensitive teaching, differentiation and inclusive and developmental approaches into teaching and improve students' learning experience.

## 4.2 Learning environment

### Policy goal

***Create a stimulating, safe and inclusive learning environment for all students, with a focus on improving educational facilities to ensure physical and digital accessibility for all students, including those in disadvantaged areas and provide social-emotional support.***

The learning environment can refer to the broader context in which learning takes place such as the physical, digital, psychological and pedagogical environment to support and promote the learning process. This section of the policy focuses on the:

- physical learning environment;
- digital learning environment;
- psychological learning environment.

The physical and digital learning environment focuses on accessibility aimed at creating equal opportunities for all students to access educational facilities and programs both physically and through digital channels, with special attention to students from disadvantaged and rural areas including students with disabilities. It includes setting up various places such as classrooms within the school, workspaces outside the classroom, practical rooms, library/media library, ICT lab, the school yard and possibly a school garden. It also includes external locations where students gain practical experience.

The ministry will work on improving the physical and digital learning environment through infrastructure improvements, technology integration and optimization of connectivity (including widening accessibility to the internet), taking into account climate impacts. For this purpose, a loan has been approved by the IDB.

Physical environments should also be designed in a way that students can engage in hands-on, creative, and innovative activities and provide them with access to tools, materials, and technology to support practical learning and encourage experimentation and problem-solving skills.

In shaping the micro-level learning environment, attention should be paid to the design of classrooms that, in addition to the traditional row-arrangement, create a learning environment to promote collaboration, with students working together in groups or pairs to solve problems, complete projects or discuss ideas. It encourages active participation, communication, and teamwork among students.

With the advancement of technology, online learning environments have become increasingly popular. The ministry will work to develop learning through the digital learning environment at primary and secondary levels of education, and strengthen it at higher education levels, allowing learners and students to access course materials online, participate in learning activities and complete assignments online. This type of environment offers flexibility and convenience for students. Through virtual reality technology, students will be able to immerse themselves in a simulated environment that mimics real scenarios. It offers a highly interactive and engaging learning experience, especially in fields such as science, medicine, and engineering.

These developments enable blended learning where traditional face-to-face education can be combined with online learning, making the education system more resilient to disruptions, and promoting continuity of learning. It allows a mix of face-to-face interactions and self-directed online activities, offering flexibility and personalized learning experiences.

Utilizing the outdoor learning environment will also be encouraged, moving learning outside the traditional classroom environment, and using the natural environment as a learning space. This learning environment outside school may include field trips, nature walks or outdoor activities that promote hands-on learning and connection to the natural world.

Pupil/student well-being revolves around promoting the physical, mental, and emotional health of students in general and specific focus groups in particular to intertwine their academic and personal success. A focus on preventing bullying is also important. As part of student wellbeing, the ministry has committed to ensuring that all pupils/students are provided with nutrition at school by 2030 at the latest.

Table 19: Learning environment policy framework

Policy Goal	Policy objectives
<p><b>Learning Environment</b></p> <p>Create a stimulating, safe and inclusive learning environment for all students, with a focus on improving educational facilities to ensure physical and digital accessibility for all students, including those in disadvantaged areas, and provide social-emotional support.</p>	<p>Invest in digital infrastructure, connectivity in schools, online platforms, access, and digital learning tools to improve students' learning experience, including for children with disabilities and in rural areas.</p>
	<p>Improving access to modern technologies to improve digital accessibility through educational apps and access to devices (such as computers, Tablets, and smartphones) in schools.</p>
	<p>Improving physical school facilities, including upgrading facilities to meet standards for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), climate resilience and disasters to ensure that accessibility is optimized for students with different physical needs.</p>
	<p>Further decentralizing education provision to districts through the construction of multi-purpose school complexes to increase accessibility in rural areas to education and align it with district needs, including second-chance education and adult education programs.</p>
	<p>Optimizing care support psychosocial and paramedical services to improve pupil care (mental health, learning and behavioral problems), including for those living with disabilities and contributing to the improvement of learning outcomes, as well as psychosocial care for teachers.</p>
<p>Developing a national school nutrition policy where all pupils/students are provided with a healthy meal at school.</p>	

### 4.3 Parental involvement

## Policy goal

***Encourage active parent involvement in education, through communication, cooperation and participation in school activities.***

Research<sup>13</sup> has shown that strong parental involvement has a positive effect on children's self-confidence, motivation and learning performance at school. This is best achieved by establishing parent committees. In education, there is already some experience with the concept of parent committees. Parent committees did not yet have a legal basis. With the impending Basic Education legislation, parents are given the opportunity to be active within the school organization. This law includes the legal basis for parents' committees. Parents' committees are given legal powers.

School management is expected to make every effort to shape the parents' committee within their school or cluster. The parents' committee is allowed to advise in educational matters, but it is by no means intended that the parents' committee should take control of educational policy. Issues can largely be solved through information, training(s), education and guidance. The parents' committee has an advisory role to the management on the one hand and is helpful in all kinds of school activities on the other. The Ministry sets the rules and guidelines.

*Table 20: Policy framework Parental involvement*

<b>Policy goal</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>
<b>Parental involvement</b>	
Encourage active parent involvement in education, through communication, collaboration, and participation in school activities.	Setting up structures for participation (meso environment) by stakeholders (parents/caregivers, community organizations, village communities, and other social groups) at the school.
	Promoting a favorable supportive educational environment among stakeholders (parents/caregivers, community organizations, village communities, and other social groups) through education and awareness programs targeting knowledge, attitudes and behaviors.

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<sup>13</sup>Epstein,  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326848511\\_School\\_family\\_and\\_community\\_partnerships\\_Preparing\\_educators\\_and\\_improving\\_schools\\_second\\_edition](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326848511_School_family_and_community_partnerships_Preparing_educators_and_improving_schools_second_edition)

# 5 Optimizing Human Capital

Optimizing human capital focuses on maximizing the potential and effectiveness of staff. To this end, a recruitment and selection system and career policy is essential for attracting and retaining highly qualified and passionate teaching and non-teaching staff. Educational leadership ensures the promotion of a positive climate for realizing educational innovations. It includes inspiring school teams to make a clear translation of innovations, promoting collaboration and developing a culture of continuous staff improvement towards the best development of the pupil/student.

## Policy goal

*Develop Human Resource systems for attracting and retaining an optimal workforce in quantitative and qualitative terms and develop leadership for effectively implementing innovation processes.*

## 5.1 Recruitment and Selection

### Policy goal

*Develop an effective system for recruitment and selection of teaching and non-teaching staff, focusing on qualifications, competences, and personal suitability.*

The development of this system requires the establishment of a Human Resource Management department within the ministry. Within this policy period, the ministry will focus on developing and implementing Human Resource systems for attracting and retaining an optimal workforce in quantitative and qualitative terms and developing leadership for effectively implementing innovation processes.

Table 21: Recruitment and selection policy framework

<b>Policy goal recruitment and selection</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>
Develop an effective system for recruitment and selection of teaching and non-teaching staff, focusing on qualifications, competences, and personal suitability.	Optimize the quantitative and qualitative staffing of teachers and school managers in line with the policy objectives aimed at education reforms.

## 5.2 Career policy

### Policy goal

***Implement attractive career policies for school leaders, teachers and faculty with opportunities for professional growth, career development and performance-based pay.***

Implementation of an attractive career policy for teaching and non-teaching staff, with opportunities for professional growth, career development and pay based on performance. The above can be achieved by developing and introducing Human Resource Management instruments (performance appraisal and assessment system, etc.) aimed at promoting the personal development of teaching and non-teaching staff with an associated incentive.

Professionalization of teachers is the key to successful educational innovation. It is therefore essential to invest in their professional development. Teachers must be supported and trained to apply new teaching methods, such as personalized learning, competence-based education, and integration of technology.

Teaching staff are the backbone of any education system, but in Suriname they face several challenges that limit their effectiveness. One of the biggest problems is the lack of adequate professional development, appreciation, and image of the profession. Many teachers do not have access to high-quality training and permanent education, which prevents them from keeping abreast of the latest content, teaching methods and technologies. This means that things like regular refresher training, mentoring programs, certification, and opportunities for teachers to learn from each other are necessary. It is also important to invest in developing leadership among teachers so that they can play an active role in the innovation process.

Teaching staff can have an important influence on the quality of education from their role as professionals. Parents and pupils/students can influence the educational process through the choices they make. The government can have a steering influence on education through rules, instruments, and funding. The strength of solutions for Suriname must be sought in the direction of developing, strengthening, and deploying human capital, both inside and outside the education field, as well as reuniting and structuring this social capital for all who care about education.

There is relatively insufficient human capital in Suriname. It is necessary to work on upgrading the workforce given the needs of society and developments in the specific sectors of the labor market. Education needs to be upgraded as well. It is mainly a matter of taking action: With all stakeholders - students, teachers, principals, policymakers and decision-makers - formulating a vision of sustainable education and encouraging professionalization. Establishing a common new frame of reference through a proactive education policy seeking vital spaces. However, we need to agree on the underlying roots of the problems, challenges and contradictions that adversely affect our education system (Ori, 2021, p10).

The quality of human capital depends on the availability of high-quality education. The benefits are reaped in the longer term: there is therefore a continuous trade-off between spending resources on short-term needs and long-term investment in high-quality education. In the long term, labor productivity can only be increased by investing in knowledge, a knowledge-based economy. It is therefore essential that the education system works well and that companies innovate. Education must prepare the 'workforce' of today and the future to make the Surinamese economy competitive, innovative, and productive (Ori, 2013).

Table 22: Career policy framework

Policy goal	Policy objectives
<p><b>Career policy</b></p> <p>Implement attractive career policies for school leaders, teachers, and faculty with opportunities for professional growth, career development and performance-based pay.</p>	<p>Develop and introduce Human Resource Management instruments (performance and appraisal system, etc.) aimed at promoting the personal development of teachers and school managers and the educational curriculum.</p> <p>Development of a pool of national education professionals to develop and implement an integrated national education framework that outlines a common vision for education in Suriname. This should establish long-term strategies, priorities, and benchmarks for education quality.</p>

## 5.3 Leadership in Education

### Policy goal

***Strengthening leadership at all levels of the education system, from teaching to non-teaching staff, through training, coaching, and mentoring.***

The Surinamese educational system is insufficiently anchored in society, insufficiently attuned to the labor market, lacking dynamism, weakly politically driven, policy-poor, institutionally weak and poorly performing. There is a lack of vision on the contribution of education to the country's economic and social development. The education system needs to focus more on demand-driven provision of educational types and courses. The dividing line between formal, informal, and non-formal education should become more blurred. In addition to primary, secondary, and tertiary education, there should be quaternary education: adult education and corporate training. The latter is already being implemented but needs to be better integrated and developed. Education should be better aligned with the needs of the labor market. The knowledge economy will only come about through intensive cooperation between Education, Entrepreneurship and Research.

In these three concepts – Education, Entrepreneurship and Research - lies the basis for prosperity and growth of earning capacity. Science Development, Technology and Innovation are areas that need to be paid attention to. Cooperation between industry and the education sector should be institutionally strengthened through covenants, laws and regulations and intermediary institutes. Sustainable growth will require investment in new technology and R&D so that new products and techniques are developed. An education agenda is needed, but 'transition management' is also required: improving education performance and meeting long-term goals cannot suffice by addressing symptoms and putting out fires. Transition management must ensure a long-term vision for the sector and create favorable conditions. All positive forces must work together to create a Strategic Plan for the Education Sector, equipped with performance indicators and with measurement tools. More transparency is needed in accounting for educational outcomes and returns to our society. The establishment of a Social Cultural Planning Office is important for monitoring developments in the

formation of social capital in Suriname. The transition management does the following: - long-term horizon (> 25 years); - integral approach (multi-actor, multi-level and multi-domain); - concrete objectives; - focused on innovation and sustainability; - new forms of steering instead of command-and-control steering; - use uncertainty as a starting point; - transition arena and political arena; - process approach, participative and interactive; - learning by doing, doing while learning (Ori, 2021, 26).

**Strengthening of leadership and management:**

Creating strong and effective educational leadership at all levels, from school boards to ministerial level, capable of initiating, implementing and evaluating change through:

- Development of a professional development program for teaching and non-teaching staff focused on strategic management, change management and data use;
- Implementation of a performance management system for teaching and non-teaching staff, with clear objectives and evaluation criteria;
- Promoting cooperation and knowledge sharing between teaching and non-teaching staff through networks and platforms.

Within the Ministry, several programs on leadership and management in education have already been implemented, are under way and/or in the pipeline. These will be continued and developed further.

A key strategy is to align education programs with the needs of the labor market. This can be achieved through collaboration with industry, a hands-on approach to learning and specialization in niche areas. Entrepreneurship education also plays an important role, with integration into the curriculum, support for start-ups and close links with the business community.

It is important that higher education institution staff and teachers are trained the deployment of inclusive practices and supporting students with diverse accessibility needs.

A program has been developed for the above trainings, which will be continued at the training institutes in charge of teacher training for lower and secondary education level. Master trainers are also being trained, thus ensuring the continuation of these programs at selected training institutes. The above projects will be implemented in phases, with each phase subject to activities that will be carried out in coordination with the training institutes.

*Table 23: Leadership policy framework*

Policy goal	Policy objectives
<p><b>Leadership in Education</b></p> <p>Strengthening leadership at all levels of the education system, from school leaders to policy makers, through training, coaching, and mentoring.</p>	<p>Creating strong and effective educational leadership at all levels, from school level to central ministerial level, capable of initiating, implementing and evaluating change.</p>



## 6 Arts and culture, including cultural heritage

General cultural policy will also aim, in recognition of Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to allow everyone to participate freely in the cultural life of the community and its fruits. Furthermore, everyone has the right to protection of spiritual and material interests arising from a scientific, literary, or artistic work he/she has produced.

The cultural pluralism of Surinamese society is the policy philosophy based on the principles of cultural democracy. With the hallmark being recognition of the equality of all cultures.

With cultural democracy, the aim is the mutual acceptance of each other's cultural expressions, and if necessary, the exchange of cultural values. This should guarantee that all individuals without exception can participate freely in cultural life; further development, which is aimed at strengthening Surinamese cultural identity, creativity, national unity, utilization of all cultural resources; and that the great and rich diversity of cultural values are preserved and further developed.

The cultural policy strives for a society in which Suriname's rich cultural diversity and heritage is celebrated, appreciated, and used as a force for national development.

To achieve this, the promotion, preservation and innovation of our Surinamese art, culture and heritage will be strengthened in order to contribute to the socio-economic development of Suriname, with a focus on:

- Sustainable national development in which culture plays a central role;
- Establishing intercultural encounters at all levels of cultural practice in our country, so that the experience of our cultural diversity becomes visible and tangible across the board.

In this policy period, attention will be paid to cultural education, intercultural skills, and cultural heritage. Cultural education will include a reassessment of our rich cultural heritage. Pupils will learn about the history, traditions, art forms and languages of the various population groups in Suriname. They will be encouraged to discover and appreciate their own cultural identity and to respect the cultures of others. Intercultural competence is essential in a world where cultural diversity is becoming more prevalent. It enables individuals to function effectively in international environments, multicultural societies and in diverse professional and social settings. In education, promoting intercultural competence is important to create an inclusive and respectful learning environment, where students from different backgrounds feel seen, heard and valued.

Policies will be developed that focus on creative diversity and acceptance and meet the needs and requirements of all groups.

## Policy goal

*Further integration of arts, culture, and cultural heritage into the curriculum at all levels of education, protect and preserve Surinamese cultural heritage and promote respect for diversity and intercultural competences through which students acquire the skills to effectively communicate, collaborate, and interact with people from different cultures and to successfully navigate and understand intercultural situations.*

## 6.1 Cultural Education

### Policy goal

*Integrate arts, culture, and cultural heritage into the curriculum at all levels of education to make pupils/students aware of their cultural identity, stimulate creativity, and promote cultural expression.*

Integrating arts, culture including cultural heritage into the curriculum is essential at all levels of education. This fosters awareness of cultural identity stimulates creativity and promotes cultural expression among pupils/students. The Directorates of General Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Higher Education have already developed programs to flesh out the integration of culture-related educational interventions in the coming years.

With regard to cultural education within the education sector, the following principles can be assumed. The (renewed) education focuses on the **competence development** of all pupils and students across Suriname by **providing a challenging and safe learning environment**, in which they:

- 1. become culturally aware so that they respect and appreciate cultural diversity and acquire attitudes, skills, and knowledge to function in different cultures and*
- 2. learn to develop their talents and socio-emotional wellbeing as well as citizenship competences that shape pupils/students into critical citizens.*

### An integrated cultural education system

Preserving and promoting our cultural heritage is invaluable for our national identity and social cohesion. Cultural education plays a crucial role in this process. It is imperative that cultural heritage is given a prominent place in the curricula of all levels of education. This means investing in the development of teaching materials that highlight our rich cultural traditions, art forms, languages, and history.

The MinOWC will also organize cultural activities and events that enable students to experience and appreciate their cultural heritage. This could include music and dance performances, exhibitions, workshops, and excursions to culturally significant sites. For the integration of culture and education, there are several strategies namely:

- **Cultural Diversity and Creativity:** Integrating diverse cultural perspectives into the curriculum, fostering creativity, and adding life skills to education are key factors in promoting inclusiveness and cultural awareness.

- **Intercultural and Inclusive Cultural Education:** Cultural education within schools is often referred to as cultural education. Deliberate learning about and with art, heritage and media through targeted instructions, both inside and outside school. Through cultural education, pupils develop cultural competences and talents, gain knowledge about culture as a phenomenon and as a means of expression. Pupils and students develop cultural skills and an open attitude towards culture.

It is important that also within Technical and Vocational Education attention is also paid to a dynamic curriculum for permanent education, including Arts and Cultural Education, which is regularly reviewed and adapted to continue to meet the evolving needs of the labor market.

Table 24: Cultural education policy framework

Policy goal Cultural education	Policy objective
Integrate arts, culture, and cultural heritage into the curriculum at all levels of education to make pupils/students aware of their cultural identity, stimulate creativity and promote cultural expression.	Raising pupils' cultural awareness through music and dance performances, exhibitions, workshops, and excursions to culturally significant locations.
	Capacity building of the cultural sector, including development Music institutions.

## 6.2 Intercultural skills promotion

### Policy goal

***Promote intercultural competencies of society through which individuals will acquire the skills to effectively communicate, collaborate, and interact with people from different cultures, to successfully navigate and understand intercultural situations.***

The Culture Directorate will ensure the strengthening of cooperative ties with cultural and heritage organizations and agencies, in and outside Suriname. The core mission of the directorate is to organize and promote cultural activities and events in schools and in the community, to increase appreciation of arts and culture and encourage talent development.

Table 25: Policy framework Intercultural skills promotion

Policy goal Intercultural skills promotion	Policy objective
Promote intercultural competences of society through which individuals acquire the skills to effectively communicate, collaborate and interact with people from different cultures, to successfully navigate and understand intercultural situations.	Strengthening Intercultural cooperation ties with cultural and heritage organizations and agencies, in and outside Suriname.
	Developing an international cultural policy.
	Developing and organizing trainings and workshops to raise awareness about national cultural diversity, enabling individuals to recognize, understand and respect their own cultural lens and that of others. This will contribute to nation building.

## 6.3 Cultural Heritage

### Policy goal

***Protect and preserve Surinamese cultural heritage, through educational programs, research, and collaboration with cultural institutions.***

Heritage brings people together and creates a certain familiarity. Through heritage, we share stories about who we are. Monuments, customs, and traditions from the past have meaning for the future of our country, for dialogue about identity and for the search for what binds us.

Protection and preservation of Surinamese cultural heritage is possible through educational programs, research, documentation, and cooperation with cultural institutions. A platform and database will be developed for sustainable protection of our tangible and intangible heritage.

A core program developed by the ministry aimed at cultural heritage preservation and will be continued in this policy period is the Paramaribo Urban Rehabilitation Program (PURP) (program I and II). It is a program designed to contribute to the socio-economic revitalization of the historic center of Paramaribo and the preservation of its built heritage, including the strengthening of the governing body and the development of a Tourism Plan.

Table 26: Cultural Heritage policy framework

Policy goal Cultural Heritage	Policy objective
<p>Protect and preserve Surinamese cultural heritage through educational programs, research, and cooperation with cultural institutions.</p>	<p>Protect and preserve Surinamese cultural heritage through educational programs, research, recording and collaboration with cultural institutions.</p>
	<p>Protect, preserve, and manage archaeological sites and artefacts as important cultural heritage, encourage, and promote research on archaeological sites and artefacts to learn more about the history, culture, and ways of life of past civilizations.</p>
	<p>Encouraging archaeological tourism and the development of cultural tours.</p>
	<p>Contributing to the socio-economic revitalization of Paramaribo's historic city center or revitalizing Paramaribo's historic city center.</p>

# 7 Governance and Institutional Strengthening

Governance and institutional strengthening are two key concepts within the context of policy making, organizational management and policy implementation where the ministry will strengthen principles such as transparency, accountability, participation, equity, and effectiveness. To effectively implement education policy, institutional strengthening will take place aimed at improving the Ministry's capacities, structures, and processes to be better able to deliver education and implement policy.

## Policy goal

***Strengthening principles of good governance to improve leadership, management, oversight, accountability, and the coherence of processes. The ministry will also work on institutional strengthening to improve the preconditions for policy implementation for quality education.***

## 7.1 Governance Structure

### Policy goal

***Evaluate and optimize the governance structure of the education system, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, decision-making processes, and accountability.***

Evaluate and optimize the governance structure of the education system, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, decision-making processes, and accountability. To establish a good Governance structure, adequate internal and external communication top-down and bottom-up is of paramount importance.

The Ministry will strengthen participatory policymaking by promoting participation of all stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and industry representatives.

**Table 27: Policy framework Governance structure**

<b>Policy goal</b>	<b>Governance Structure</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>
Evaluate and optimize the governance structure of the education system, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, decision-making processes, and accountability.		Promote the planning and control cycle at all levels of the ministry from central ministerial to school level (Strengthen the Plan Unit).
		Develop effective internal consultation structures among directorates, departments, schools, and all levels from ministerial level to school teams for improving collaboration, smooth information, and decision-making for policy implementation.

	Establishing an institute (in collaboration with partners) focused on:
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Institutional and organizational development for history and culture.

## 7.2 Institutional Capacity

### Policy goal

***Strengthening the institutional capacity of MinOWC and other education organizations, through training, human resource development and improvement of systems and processes.***

Developing a training and coaching program for the entire Ministry, with an institutionalized HRM unit playing a crucial role in this.

Strengthening the policy framework for better policy outcomes and impact and improving management and leadership through:

- Working with higher education institutions to strengthen the capacity of the senior staff both qualitative and quantitative, within the Ministry. Offering workplace learning to improve accessibility to the labor market;
- Offering action-learning oriented tertiary-level academic training programs to the senior staff within the MinOWC to broaden the availability of senior staff within the ministry and to improve evidence-based policy-making;
- Implementing capacity-building projects for policy officers to support the institute at management level in the preparation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of policy programs and projects.

With regard to strengthening the capacity of the internal organization, reorganization including decentralizing services as well as merging services, introducing new units (for optimal service delivery) is important.

Table 28: Policy framework Institutional Capacity

Policy goal Institutional Capacity	Policy objectives
Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Education and other education organizations, through training, human resource development, and improvement of systems and processes.	Strengthen the policy framework for better policy outcomes and impacts and improve management and leadership.

## 7.3 Collaboration and Partnerships

### Policy goal

*Promoting collaboration and partnerships between MinOWC, educational institutions, private sector, civil society, and international partners to achieve the goals of the education plan.*

Collaboration and partnerships locally and internationally will play a crucial role in this policy period to deliver education reforms and improve learning through shared knowledge, resources, alignment of stakeholders and commitment to common goals. This aims at taking a holistic approach to education improvement and increasing the long-term impact of interventions. The Education Congress that underpinned this policy plan was a step in that direction, bringing together stakeholders from the education sector and other sectors to exchange views on the future of Surinamese education.

**Knowledge Sharing and Best Practices.** Collaboration between education institutions, other ministries, civil society organizations and international partners will be established to share knowledge and best practices for identifying and implementing effective education strategies and methods.

**Joint Projects and Initiatives.** The ministry will work to establish partnerships to carry out joint projects and initiatives that would otherwise be difficult to implement. This can range from joint research projects to jointly developing new educational programs.

**Access to Resources and Expertise.** Collaborations will be established with various partners offering access to resource sharing and expertise. This may include financial support, technological infrastructure, professional development of teachers and other resources essential for improving educational quality.

**Strengthening Institutional Capacity:** Strengthening the institutional capacity of the ministry is one of the policy priorities and again, collaborations and partnerships will be crucial to contribute to strengthening administrative capacities, including planning, management, and policymaking.

**Innovation and Creativity:** By bringing different stakeholders together we will work to create a conducive environment for innovation and creativity, generating new ideas that can lead to innovative educational solutions.

**Community Involvement and Support:** Partnerships with local communities, businesses, and civil society organizations increase community involvement in education issues and linking education to the labor market. This can lead to greater support for education policies and reforms and development of Suriname's human capital, which is essential for sustainable development.

Table 29: Policy framework Collaboration and Partnerships

Policy goal Collaboration and Partnerships	Policy objectives
<p>Promote cooperation and partnerships between the ministry, educational institutions, business, civil society organizations, and international partners to achieve the goals of education and culture.</p>	<p>Strengthening partnerships with the business community, the diaspora, and donors to improve quality and design need-based education provision.</p>
	<p>Coordinate the development of an intersectoral national ECD policy and strengthen intersectoral coordination for a holistic ECD approach.</p>
	<p>Setting up a Local Education Group including development partners, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and other relevant stakeholders from the sector to coordinate plans, funding, and monitoring.</p>
	<p>Establishing partnerships in the field of Lifelong learning (adult education) and also special education.</p>
	<p>Initiating collaborative research center projects with Higher Education Institutions and companies to fund research of mutual interest.</p>
	<p>Establishing a platform for sustainable collaboration at national and international level of the arts and culture sector.</p>

# 8 Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Operationalizing the policy plan is a crucial step to realize the intended educational improvements. Plans at various levels will be developed to guide implementation.

A robust monitoring and evaluation system is essential to track the progress of the NOBS and assess the effectiveness of the interventions. This system will collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data, and report regularly to stakeholders for adjustment to respond to changing circumstances.

Open and transparent communication is crucial to the success of the NOBS. A communication plan will be developed to inform all stakeholders about the progress of the plan and involve them in the implementation.

## 8.1 Implementation planning

Development of a detailed implementation plan for the education plan, with concrete actions, timelines, responsibilities, and required resources is necessary for the realization of the policy plan. The implementation plans will describe the key steps, responsibilities, and timelines for the successful implementation of the NOBS.

The purpose of this operationalization plan of the policy is to outline the specific steps, timelines and resources required to implement the policy, and to ensure that all stakeholders are informed and involved in the process.

The operationalization plan of the policy will translate down to the school level, ensuring that the policy is integrated at all levels within the Ministry.

The Plan Unit together with the Directorates will be responsible for working out the operationalization of the policy plan in the short and long term for directorates, cluster/region, and school level.

For operationalization of the policy plan, the following resources are needed:

- Staff expertise:
  - Educational experts with expertise in educational planning, professional development, instructional design, result-based management and monitoring and evaluation.
- Software tools:
  - Project management software (in addition to the already existing projects database managed by the planning office) for planning and tracking progress.
- Capacity building:
  - Professional development of key ministry officials including school leaders in strategic management and planning and control.
- Accessibility to Experts:
  - Access to external experts through, among others, partnerships whose expertise is not in-house.

Through this approach, efforts will be made to develop comprehensive strategic and operational plans in line with the ministry's vision, mission, and objectives. The following phasing will be applied:

- Phase 1: 2024, operationalizing the policy plan and preparing for implementation;
- Phase 2: 2025 - 2030, implementation, continuous monitoring and adjustment also a mid-term evaluation in 2027;
- Phase 3: 2030 - 2031, Evaluation and Consolidation during which a comprehensive final evaluation of the NOBS, including impact measurement will be conducted, which will also serve as input for the subsequent policy period.

Table 30: Implementation plan

Policy Goal  Implementation plan	Policy objectives
Develop a detailed implementation plan for the education plan, with concrete actions, timelines, responsibilities, and required resources.	<p>Develop and implement a communication plan to raise awareness about the ministry's policy internally and externally.</p> <p>Coordinate the policy operationalization into implementation plans from central to school level.</p>

## 8.2 Risks and Constraints

Implementing the NOBS is an ambitious project that comes with a number of potential risks and constraints. It is crucial to recognize and proactively address these challenges to increase the chances of success.

Below is a detailed elaboration of the main risks and constraints:

### 1. Financial Constraints:

- **Insufficient government funding:** Government spending on education in Suriname has historically been relatively low. There is a risk that the available funds will not be sufficient to realize all the ambitious goals of the NOBS, especially given the current economic situation.
- **Fluctuations in the economy:** Suriname's economy is sensitive to fluctuations in commodity prices and external economic factors. This can lead to unpredictability in the funding available for education.
- **Competition for resources:** Education must compete with other sectors, such as health and infrastructure, for limited government resources. This may jeopardize funding for NOBS.

## 2. Resistance to Change:

- **Conservative attitude:** In some parts of society, there may be resistance to changes in the education system, especially if these changes are perceived as too radical.
- **Conflicts of interest:** Different stakeholders, such as teachers, school boards and parents, may have different interests that may clash with the objectives of the NOBS.
- **Lack of support:** If there is insufficient support for the reforms, this may lead to delays in implementation and reduced effectiveness of the policy.

## 3. Lack of Qualified Staff:

- **Shortage of teachers:** There is a national shortage of qualified teachers, especially in specialized subjects such as mathematics, physics, and languages. This can hamper the quality of teaching and delay the implementation of new curricula;
- **Limited capacity for professional development:** There may be insufficient resources and expertise available to provide all teachers with the necessary training and support to effectively implement new teaching methods and technologies;
- **Brain drain:** Talented Surinamese teachers and education professionals may be attracted by better career opportunities abroad, further weakening the education system.

## 4. Political Instability:

- **Changing priorities:** Political instability can lead to changing priorities in policy, jeopardizing the long-term vision of the NOBS.
- **Insufficient continuity:** Frequent changes of ministers and policymakers may lead to a lack of continuity in the implementation of the policy plan.
- **Bureaucratic obstacles:** Political factors can create bureaucratic obstacles that delay the implementation of the NOBS.

## 5. Other Risks:

- **Natural disasters:** Suriname is vulnerable to natural disasters such as floods and drought, which can damage school infrastructure and hinder access to education;
- **Health crises:** Disease outbreaks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, can lead to school closures and disruptions in education;
- **Social inequality:** Deep-seated social inequalities can limit access to education for certain groups, such as children from poor families or children with disabilities.

## Recommendations:

To mitigate these risks and constraints, the following recommendations are important:

- **Diversification of funding sources:** In addition to government funding, actively seek additional funding from international donors, the private sector and philanthropic organizations.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Actively involve all stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and the community in the development and implementation of the NOBS to build support and reduce resistance.
- **Investment in human capital:** Targeted investment in the recruitment, training and professional development of teachers and education professionals.

- **Political stability:** Promote political stability and a long-term vision for education policy.
- **Risk management:** Develop a proactive risk management plan to identify and address potential disruptions.

By proactively addressing these risks and constraints, the chances of success of the National Education Policy Plan Suriname 2024-2031 can be significantly increased.

### 8.3 Monitoring and evaluation system

Design and implement a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track progress of the plan, assess the effectiveness of interventions and make adjustments where necessary. To ensure effective implementation of the education plan, a monitoring and evaluation system will be designed to track progress, assess effectiveness, and make adjustments where necessary. The system will consist of the following components:

#### 1. Data collection:

- Regular surveys and assessments of pupils/students, teachers and parents to gather information on school students' learning outcomes, teacher satisfaction and parent involvement;
- Collection of data on pupil/student demographics, attendance and retention rates;
- Monitoring of learning resources and materials.

#### 2. Data analysis:

- Data will be analyzed regularly to track progress towards targets and identify areas for improvement;
- Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize data and identify trends;
- Inferential statistics will be used to test hypotheses and draw conclusions about the effectiveness of interventions.

#### 3. Evaluation framework:

- A comprehensive framework will be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the education plan;
- The framework will include criteria such as pupil/student performance, teacher satisfaction, parent involvement and resource use.

#### 4. Monitoring plan:

Regular monitoring sessions will be held every six (6) weeks to assess progress, discuss challenges and make adjustments if necessary.

The monitoring schedule will include:

- Assessment of learning outcomes of school students;
- Analysis of feedback and concerns from teaching staff;
- Assessment of resource use;
- Identification of areas for improvement.

## 5. Adjustments:

- Based on the monitoring results, adjustments to the education plan will be made if necessary.
- Adjustments may include changes in instructional strategies, curriculum design or resource allocation.

The following resources are needed to implement the monitoring and evaluation system:

1. Staff expertise: Education Team members with expertise in data analysis and evaluation;
2. Data management software: A reliable data management system to collect and store data;
3. Training materials: Training programs for staff on data analysis and evaluation techniques;
4. Budget: Funding for software licenses, training materials and staff expertise.

Implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system will be required:

1. To track the direction of progress towards objectives and identify areas in need of improvement;
2. To assess the effectiveness of interventions and make necessary adjustments;
3. For accountability and transparency in the education planning process.

This comprehensive system will enable us to make data-driven decisions, formulate data-structured policies, improve pupil/student outcomes and improve overall educational quality.

*Table 31: Monitoring and evaluation*

<b>Policy Goal</b> <b>Monitoring and evaluation system</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>
Design and implement a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track the progress of the plan, assess the effectiveness of interventions and make adjustments where necessary.	Develop a monitoring and evaluation system based on a Result Based Management framework and associated data collection systems.
	Mid-term policy evaluation and adjustment.
	Expand the education information system into a full-fledged Education Management Information System (EMIS) including a student tracking system that can provide timely, accurate and complete information to monitor and adjust quality improvements in education given the reform.

## 8.4 Funding

Development of a sustainable financial plan for the implementation of the education plan, focusing on both public investment and cooperation with private and international partners.

The education plan will require a comprehensive financial plan to ensure its successful implementation and sustainability. The plan will focus on securing public investment, exploring private and international partnerships and leveraging internal resources to ensure a stable and sustainable financial structure.

The total budget required to finance this plan has been set at an amount of SRD 5.8 billion (about USD 193 million, at a rate of SRD 30 to 1) on an annual basis.

The current education budget is set at approximately SRD 5.5 billion (approximately USD 183 million, at a rate of SRD 30 to 1) on an annual basis. This amount in the Ministry's budget is insufficient, to cover the costs for all education programs or innovation.

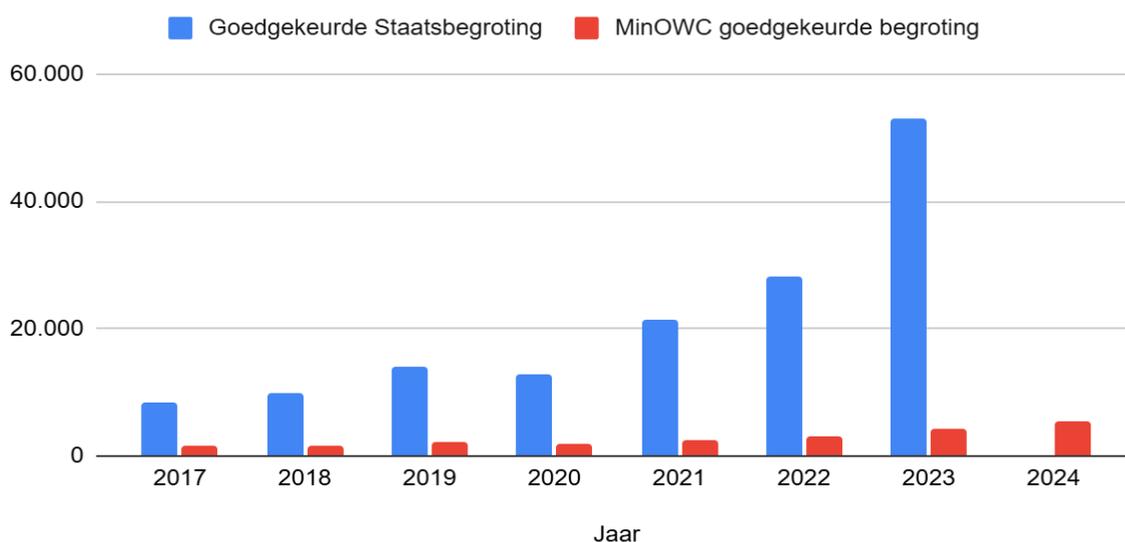
The overview below shows the historical figures regarding the MinOWC's approved budget as part of the state budget.

*Table 32: Analysis of budgets*

Analysis approved budgets period 2017 - 2024 in billions SRD			
Year	Approved state budget	MinOWC approved budget	Percentage share of budget MinOWC compared to approved state budget
2017	8.474	1.481	17
2018	9.970	1.480	15
2019	14.080	2.196	16
2020	12.731	1.827	14
2021	21.285	2.613	12
2022	28.050	3.168	11
2023	52.905	4.148	8
2024	NA	5.467	NA

The percentage of MinOWC's approved budget relative to the State budget shows a declining trend. This means that percentage-wise less funding is available for MinOWC each year from the State budget.

Graph 1: Approved State budget versus MinOWC budget



\*Approved total state annual budget (blue) and the MinOWC approved budget (red)

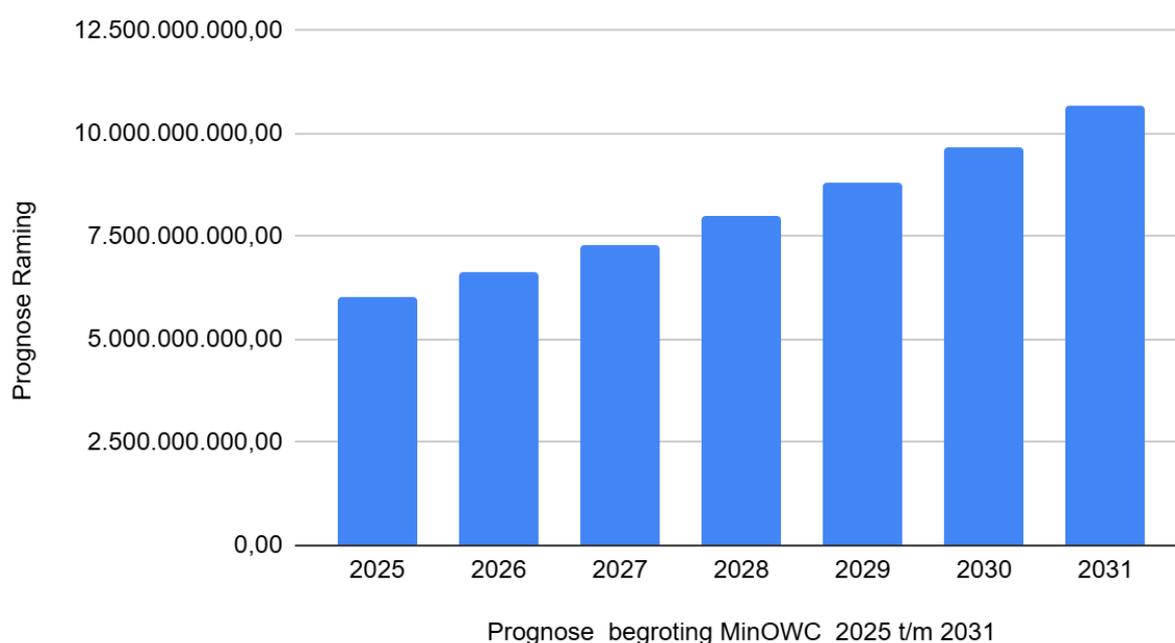
The table below shows a forecast of the MinOWC budget. The base year used is the approved 2024 budget. The historical figures show a 10% annual increase in the multi-year budget. If the same trend is maintained, approximately SRD 63 billion will be available from the government budget for MinOWC from 2024 to 2031.

Table 33: MinOWC budget forecast

Budget forecast MinOWC 2025 to 2031		
Year	Forecast	Percentages
2024	5.466.765.000,00	1,10
2025	6.013.441.500,00	
2026	6.614.785.650,00	
2027	7.276.264.215,00	
2028	8.003.890.636,50	
2029	8.804.279.700,15	
2030	9.684.707.670,17	
2031	10.653.178.437,18	
<b>Totaal</b>	<b>62.517.312.809,00</b>	

The 2024 budget has been approved and serves as the base year. Over the period 2024 to 2031, the forecast budget is SRD 63 billion.

Graph 2: Budget forecast MinOWC 2025 - 2031



Ministry has about USD 100 million available for education and culture programs in terms of loans from the IDB.

Table 34: Loan overview MinOWC

Overview of loans to MinOWC over the past 10 years				
No	Name	Duration	Amount in USD	Comments
<b>Onderwijs</b>				
1	TVET	2013-2023	15.770.000,00	<b>These loans have been completed/ are maturing</b>
2	ETVET	2015-2024	21.940.000,00	
3	BEIP 2	2015-2023	20.000.000,00	
4	STES	2016-2024	30.800.000,00	
5	Caiques 1	2022-2026	30.000.000,00	
6	Caiques 2	2024-2029	40.000.000,00	
		<b>Sub-totaal Onderwijs</b>	<b>158.510.000,00</b>	
<b>Cultuur</b>				
7	PURP 1	2017-2025	20.000.000,00	
8	PURP 2	2024-2029	30.000.000,00	
		<b>Sub total Culture</b>	<b>50.000.000,00</b>	
		<b>End total MinOWC</b>	<b>208.510.000,00</b>	

Note: A total estimate of USD 100 million is available from loans for the period 2024 to 2031

The projected budget from the ministerial budget and loans are insufficient to bear the entire educational reform. Respectively, SRD 63 billion and USD 100 million at a rate of 30 (SRD 3 billion).

In view of the above, entering into partnerships and or cooperation with various donors nationally and internationally will help to expand the budget. Further developing and structuring Public Private Partnerships (PPP) will result in a win-win situation for parties. Setting up an education and culture fund is necessary for the sustainability of the programs.

## Funding

Funding for the NOBS will come from various sources, including:

- Government budget;
- International donors;
- Private sector;
- Philanthropic organizations.

A detailed financial plan will be developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance.

*Table 35: Funding*

Policy Goal  Funding	Policy objectives
Development of a sustainable financial plan for the implementation of the education plan, focusing on both public investment and cooperation with private and international partners.	Aligning all available financial resources and mechanisms with targets to improve outcomes, expand access and equity, and account for the outcomes and impacts of the education system.