



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Education Towers, No.5 St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad

“The 6th Report of the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity on a Follow-up inquiry into the Implementation of the Recommendations of the 18th Report of the Committee, 11th Parliament, on an Inquiry into the Treatment of Migrants with specific focus on the Rights to Education, Employment and Protection from Sexual Exploitation”

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Item 3.71

- a. The MOE should report to Parliament on the status of its efforts to create additional classroom space in schools, as referenced in its May 15, 2023, submission.**

Through collaboration with the Catholic Educational Board of Management (CEBM), twenty (20) Roman Catholic schools were identified with spaces and the CEBM has provided specific training in preparation for the admission of Venezuelan migrant children. Apart from this, the School Supervision and Management Division of the Ministry of Education (MOE), will collect data from schools to identify available spaces that may exist. This data of schools will assist migrants to find the closest possible school to their location.

- b. The MOE should indicate to Parliament the following:**

- Which provisions, if any, of the Education Policy 2023-2027 would, once approved and implemented, alleviate any of the difficulties associated with the education of migrant children; or**

The Education Policy has as one of its strategic goals, Equity in Education, under which a policy for migrants may be implemented. In light of the amendment to the Immigration Act, new guidelines are being created to have the process of migrant children, as defined in the Act, to apply for registration at schools and be admitted upon receipt of a student permit exemption from the Ministry of National Security (MNS). This process was developed in collaboration with the MNS.

Currently, a team comprising persons from the MOE, the MNS, and the Education Working Group is participating in the International Visitors Leadership Programme (IVLP) sponsored by the US Department of State, with respect to the integration of migrant students and the use of emerging technologies in education. The group is expected to visit New York, Dallas (Texas) and Los Angeles (California), to gather firsthand information on the education of migrants. The recommendations of the team will be incorporated into the plan of action of the Committee already established to determine measures and/or policies that can be implemented to address issues relevant to the education of migrant children.

- The feasibility of incorporating issues relevant to the education of migrant into the Draft Policy before its approval.**

The Education Policy 2023-2027 was approved on September 8, 2023. As indicated therein, *Equity in Quality Education* is expected “to be achieved through the implementation and monitoring of the quality of educational offerings to ensure the maintenance of acceptable levels of equity by all institutions”. It is proposed that the implementation and monitoring of quality educational offerings for the migrant children be developed under the existing guidelines. Such a policy would be a supporting policy through which the Ministry’s strategic goal of *Equity in Quality Education* would be fulfilled.

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Item 3.88

- a. The MOE should report to Parliament on the feasibility of updating the existing 2009 Inclusive Education Policy to provide parameters for the guarantee of access to education for all children including migrant children; and**

The Inclusive Education Policy 2009 provides for all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional or other conditions access to education (pg. 5-6, 8.2 General Provisions, 8.2.1).

The Ministry of Education will review the Policy to include a specific guarantee of access to education for migrant children.

- b. The MOE should consult the UNESCO Policy Paper entitled If You Don't Understand, How Can You Learn?, and report to Parliament on the extent to which education can be provided in Trinidad and Tobago to non-English speaking migrant children in their native language, at least on a partial or short term basis. This brief report should specify the resources that would be necessary for the implementation of such a special measure.**

With respect to the children of Venezuelan migrants, the MOE has worked with stakeholders including the Living Waters Community, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the CEBM to develop a Teachers' Guide for the teaching of English to native Spanish-speakers. The Archdiocese of Port of Spain has indicated that teachers at twenty (20) RC schools have been provided with specific training in preparation for the admission of Venezuelan migrant children. Next steps include:

- i Review of the Teachers' Guide with a view to incorporating relevant information from the UNESCO Policy Paper.
- ii Sharing of the revised Teachers' Guide with teachers at schools expected to accommodate migrant students.
- iii Development of guidelines for the deployment of Spanish speaking teachers. Such deployment will be dependent on the availability of such teachers and the addressing of any deficit, as well as the funding required. The resources needed will be determined upon registration of eligible students.

The MOE will also need to explore other issues, such as providing instruction for non-English speaking children through the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) model that can be adapted and be used for multiple contexts and applied for all languages.; creation of additional spaces in schools; the mechanisms for appointment/engagement, and terms and conditions of employment (in collaboration with the relevant agencies); the expansion of the Ministry's online School Learning Management System (subject to students' access to devices and the internet); and the availability of funding.