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South Africa: effective service delivery in the education and health sectors. A discussion paper

Newlands: Open Society Institute for South Africa, 2007. 53 p.

Organizations:

AfriMAP

Open Society Foundation for South Africa

ISBN:

978-1-920051-82-2

Description:

Among the many urgent priorities on the agenda of the new African National Congress (ANC) government in 1994 was the extension of public services to the whole population that up to then only white South Africans had been able to take for granted. This discussion document considers the challenges of achieving this ambition, with particular reference to the delivery of health and education services in South Africa in the post-apartheid state. It is based on research carried out in both sectors during 2006-in relation both to the national departments and also the provinces of the Western Cape and Limpopo. The research aims to assess the processes, procedures and outcomes of the South African government's attempts against a range of international, continental and national legislation and standards. The researchers' primary conclusion is that though South Africa is at the forefront of promoting good governance-that is, it has adopted the necessary legislative and institutional frameworks to facilitate access to services and to gain greater transparency and accountability-it is still challenged to translate these into effective implementation. Its greatest challenge is in the arena of human resource management. The research considered six areas related to the delivery of education and health services in South Africa: the international and national legal framework; the collection, management and publication of information; strategic planning; the budget process and expenditure management; human resource management; and the effectiveness of the oversight institutions that are responsible for ensuring that the public service delivers on its responsibilities. Reference is made throughout the paper to the impact of HIV and AIDS on service delivery. Recommendations include the development of systems to provide generally accepted figures for the school drop-out rate and the death rate due to AIDS-related illnesses and building relations with civil society, especially groups working on HIV and AIDS.

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