SALVATION ARMY SCHOOLS
INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY
Vision Statement

Salvation Army schools seek to develop compassionate children of integrity and character with the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve their full God-given potential. This will be achieved by developing high-quality, holistic, faith-based and family-focused education prioritising vulnerable and marginalised children.

Guiding Principles for all Salvation Army Schools

For the purpose of this document schools are educational establishments for children aged between 3-18, including kindergarten, primary, junior, secondary and vocational training

1. Salvation Army schools will develop holistic, age appropriate quality education including social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual development by following a comprehensive academic curriculum and teaching relevant skills.

2. Character development will be at the heart of all Salvation Army schools to encourage the development of ‘compassionate people of integrity as skilled contributors to society, fuelling their life and work in worship and fellowship’ (Jonathan Sacks).

3. Salvation Army schools need to provide a safe and secure environment for children, physically, emotionally and spiritually recognising their rights and enabling them to learn in dignity from the positive example of adults and peers nurtured in the ethos of the school.

4. In order to nurture the spiritual development of each child and fulfil our integrated mission, all Salvation Army schools should be actively engaged with a local corps and each school should have a designated Salvation Army chaplain.

5. Salvation Army schools should be a resource for the community, a focal point for lifelong learning, contributing positively to the life of families and the neighbourhood in relevant and innovative ways.
6. The Salvation Army will prioritise initiatives where:
   - Our presence in often isolated communities enables us to remove barriers for the most vulnerable and marginalised.
   - We can add significant formative Christian values to the curriculum not offered by other schools and build close links to local corps and churches.
   - We are in Christian minority areas and the local community values Christian education.
   - We can improve the quality and availability of girls’ education.

7. The Salvation Army will exhibit concern for humanity and a desire to show Christian love and care to all people by seeking to provide high-quality special needs education.

8. When appropriate Salvation Army schools can develop vocational education opportunities including apprenticeships, evening classes and small group training to ensure relevant skills are being taught.

9. Schools may not always be the most appropriate and effective way to meet the educational needs of a community. The Salvation Army is also willing to develop informal education options, i.e. homework clubs, study groups in corps, mentoring for excluded and hard-to-educate children, and literacy classes.
Strategy and Implementation

The following areas have been identified as those most in need of strengthening and will be the priorities for at least the next seven years.

Focus 1: Providing quality education which leads to high achievement for all

Aim: Ensure every student has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and learn the necessary skills for them to make a meaningful contribution to the life of their community.

1.1 Quality education encourages lifelong learning, resilience and empowerment. This requires a holistic approach that focuses on character development and spiritual support as well as cognitive skills.

1.2 Pupil attainment and achievement must be clearly assessed and monitored. Support should be given to those students who are not achieving their anticipated grades or individual learning targets.

1.3 Head teachers and school coordinators need to ensure that teachers receive training that enhances learning through the improvement of teaching methodology, thorough lesson preparation and innovative lesson content.

1.4 There will be significant variations around the world in the design and delivery of primary and secondary curricula depending on government requirements and local context. However it is possible to identify key broad principles and subject matter which should be included in the Salvation Army school curriculum to enhance the social, character and spiritual development of students. These would include:

1.5 Religious education including the theology which underpins Christianity and Salvation Army history.
   i. Health education including reproductive health.
   ii. Family relationships.
   iii. Finance and budgeting.
   iv. Livelihood and career guidance.
   v. Rights, responsibilities and social awareness.
1.6 Access to higher education and vocational education for students who have completed secondary school will be considered in each local context in accordance with the guiding principles for Salvation Army schools and taking into account local needs and resources. Partnership with other institutions and community groups offering vocational and higher education is encouraged.

1.7 Informal education opportunities such as homework clubs and study support groups should be encouraged to support children in school who are unable to study at home or receive adequate teaching for their needs.

1.8 Programmes should be developed that give access to school for children who have been outside mainstream education due to social, economic, physical or behavioural reasons.

1.9 Special needs education requires teachers and assistants with appropriate special needs training according to the needs identified. Links need to be made with local health services to provide support and advice. There is a requirement for appropriate buildings which take student needs into account.

**Focus 2: Relationships and partnerships**

Aim: Ensure that a Salvation Army school becomes an integral part of community life, building strong relationships with families, local corps and churches.

2.1 It is important that Salvation Army schools add value to the community they serve. Schools are therefore encouraged to adopt specific programmes and activities which include the community and make the most of the many resources and skills the school has to offer. These may include:

2.2 Regular meetings with parents, guardians or relevant family members to provide an update on the child’s well-being and progress and to address any concerns either party might have:

   i. Parent Teacher Associations, local community management boards or community maintenance groups for the schools as appropriate in each community.
   
   ii. Homework clubs to support students unable to study at home and empower parents who are unable to support home learning.
   
   iii. Adult literacy and numeracy classes to empower parents with the skills to support their child’s education.
iv. Vocational training programmes to enhance income-generating opportunities and teach appropriate practical skills to the wider community.

v. Study support groups that enable children not attending school to be reintegrated into mainstream education.

vi. Local community events including fairs, public holiday events, music concerts, sports events.

2.3 Every Salvation Army school and informal educational programme will be encouraged to intentionally develop spiritual formation components with explicit connections to the worshipping community in the local corps. The Faith-based Facilitation process and tools are designed to assist in this task as they help build deeper relationships. This should include the provision of pastoral care and support from the local corps officer.

2.4 Building partnerships with government is essential even when funding is not provided. It is important that school leadership and Salvation Army personnel, be they corps officers or school coordinators, engage positively with local education offices and national government education departments through ongoing dialogue.

2.5 The school engages with feeder schools and other education providers in the area.

2.6 Schools are encouraged to be active participants in networks and coalitions on child development and child rights in order to learn from others and share expertise.
Focus 3: Improving Infrastructure and maximising resources

Aim: Ensure that all Salvation Army schools are ‘fit for purpose’ with appropriate infrastructure and resources to provide high-quality education in a safe and secure environment.

3.1 Infrastructure: Buildings need to be fit for purpose, child-friendly, safe and secure with appropriate ventilation. All building work should be completed according to government regulations.

3.2 Resources: In order to provide quality education the following resources are required as a minimum:

i. Classroom furniture which is child-friendly and fit for purpose.
ii. Appropriate, up-to-date instruction books for teaching staff.
iii. Exercise books and writing tools for all students.
iv. Equipment for extra-curricular activities including sports clubs, music and art.
v. Additional facilities to improve physical access for children with disabilities.

3.3 Sanitation and water: Children and staff require access to clean drinking water and sanitary, secure private toilet facilities. Where required, training should be given in water and sanitation health (WASH).

Focus 4: Developing a plan for sustainability

Aim: Increasing the sustainability of Salvation Army schools to ensure present and future generations benefit from quality education.

4.1 Education in marginalised communities is difficult to adequately finance as families can rarely afford to pay sufficient to fund teachers’ salaries. There are also increasing demands with respect to infrastructure development and classroom resources. Long-term funding streams are required to ensure high-quality education is properly resourced.

4.2 A range of new funding sources will need to be developed and sustained. These will include:
i. Ensuring ownership by the community – a Parent Teacher Association should organise community events that encourage the community to invest in the school, protect it, offer their time, services, skills and financial support.

ii. Local community initiatives, including microcredit schemes to help families pay school fees at the level they can afford or one-off costs for books and equipment.

iii. Equipping territories through the in-country project officers to apply for internal sources of funding in accordance with the international schools principles and vision statement.

iv. Where it is possible to improve the relationship with the government to access further funds, this option should be explored.

v. Adopt a strategic approach to sponsorship, enabling funds to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools attended by sponsored children.

vi. Utilising our alumni network to benefit from their skills, expertise and resources.

vii. Networks initiated by the board of governors to link with local business.

4.3 The term ‘sustainability’ should be re-examined to include a more nuanced concept of long-term impact on individual students, their families, and the communities within which students live and ultimately work. Children become a resource to their community and the benefits of a quality education will reap dividends in social and spiritual terms as well as economically for society and the church family.

Focus 5: Continually improving the quality of teaching staff and management systems

Aim: To support teachers and school leadership in the pursuit of teaching and learning excellence through in service training.

5.1 Every Salvation Army school should have a strategy for attracting and retaining qualified teaching staff, ensuring that staff are treated fairly and paid an acceptable local wage.

5.2 In order to provide the highest quality of teaching, schools must invest in teachers and support staff through regular training and review meetings. Training may be provided internally or in partnership with national government and other professional organisations.
5.3 Leadership and management systems, Salvation Army school coordinators should work with boards of governors, corps leadership and school leadership to support management systems in schools and, where possible, arrange cluster management meetings.

5.4 Accurate financial data should regularly be submitted to Salvation Army leadership. The systems regulating the data should be rigorous and audited both internally and externally as appropriate. It is recognised that financial training will often be required to support this.

Focus 6: Developing minimum standards and guidelines on child safety and protection

Aim: Ensure a minimum level of child safety and protection is central to high-quality education across all Salvation Army schools.

6.1 Minimum standards should be in place in all schools and educational facilities to ensure schools are a safe environment for both children and adults. It is assumed that schools are currently striving to reach child protection and safety standards set by national governments. However, where these are not available, sufficient or appropriate, guidelines should be developed as part of a territorial schools strategy that will be adapted according to local contexts.

The implementation of this strategy will require significant energy, commitment and resources. IHQ will support territories in the development of a territorial school strategy and provide support tools to gauge progress and develop each of the six focus areas.