

MAURITIUS POPPED up in the middle of the Indian Ocean about nine million years ago. Together with Reunion, Rodrigues and a number of smaller islands, it's part of an archipelago formed as a result of undersea volcanic eruptions. Its highest point is not much over 800 metres, and its hardly 2000 square kilometres in extent – yet these days it's one of SADC's most successful countries.

Originally uninhabited, Mauritius was first visited by Indian sailors about a thousand years ago. Then in the 16th century came the Europeans: first the Portuguese, then the Dutch who in 1638 established the first settlement. Then the French took charge in 1721, and after a slow start the island developed a successful economy based on sugar. By the beginning of the 19th century the British had grown tired of the attacks on their merchant fleet by island-based French pirates. So in 1810 they captured what the French had called *Ile de France*, renamed it Mauritius, and ruled the island for the next 150 years.

Around 65 percent of the population of Mauritius are either Creole or of French descent, with most of the remainder coming from India. Small European and Chinese communities make up the balance. Although the official language is English, Creole has become the lingua franca, and French is still widely used as well. The current population stands at just under 1,3-million, making Mauritius one of the most densely populated countries in the world.

Even in the 1970s the rapidly increasing population – a phenomenon caused in no small measure by the eradication of malaria in the previous decade – was thought to be insoluble. Writing in a British newspaper in 1972, author V S Naipaul referred to Mauritius as *The Overcrowded Barracoon*, making obvious reference to the island's slaving past when it used captive Madagascans and Africans to provide the labour for the sugar cane estates. Would this tiny slave enclosure finally sink back into the ocean under its own inexorably increasing weight? 'Tranquillity recedes,' Naipaul wrote. 'The barracoon is overcrowded; the escape routes are closed. The people are disaffected and have no sense of danger.'

Yet these pessimistic forecasts have not been fulfilled. Certainly, in the years following the island's independence from Britain in 1968 there were several years of hesitation, but in the end the people of Mauritius have proved more than capable of taking charge of their own destiny. High levels of emigration and sustained birth control campaigns have helped to stabilise the population. Even more important to this end was the attention paid to the economy and to education.

On the economic front, Mauritius set about reducing its dependency on sugar by pursuing an agricultural diversification programme and by the development of tax-free industrial zones that encouraged foreign investment in manufacturing, especially from the East. Mauritius is now set to become a duty free island within the next five years; corporate tax has recently been reduced to encourage non-resident companies to trade or invest. Tourism has also been nurtured, and Mauritius is set to become the first country in the world to have blanket wireless Internet coverage. All these measures have transformed the island from a low-income agriculturally based economy at independence to a middle-income diversified economy based in a politically stable democratic structure.

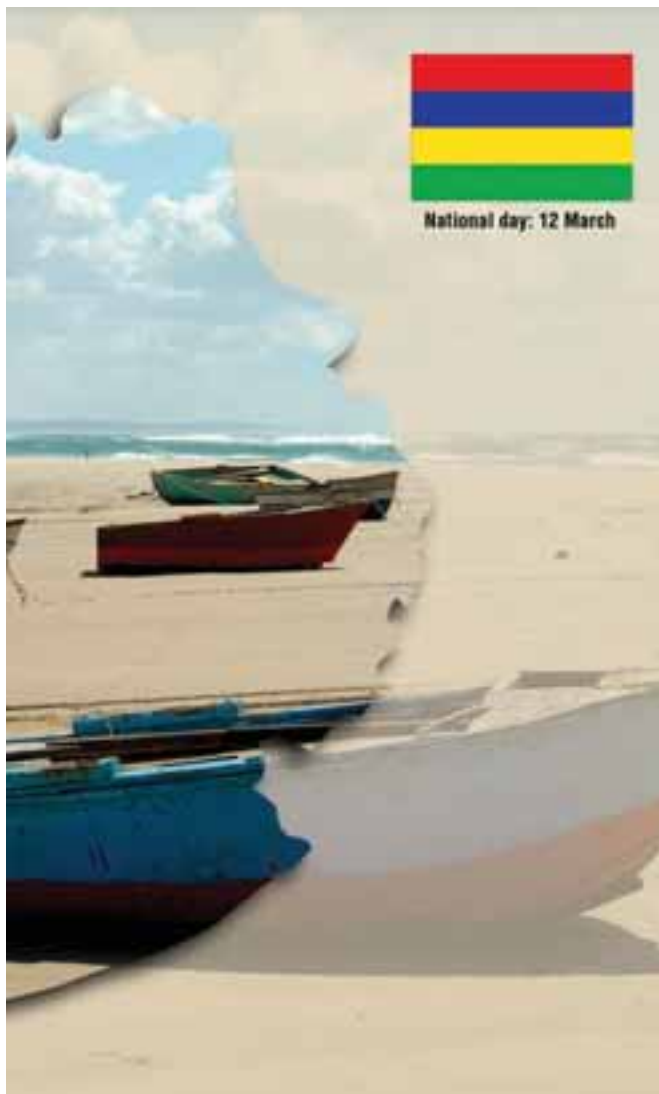
Impressive, post-independence progress has been made on the educational front. Primary education was made free, universal and compulsory; and as early as 1976 secondary schooling was also made free, as were certain elements of post-secondary education in 1988. Plans are now being developed to turn Mauritius into an international centre of excellence in the tertiary education sector.



KEY COUNTRY CONTEXT STATISTICS

Population:	1.253 million (2006)
GDP:	US\$5,273 (per capita, 2006)
Human Development Index (HDI):	0.804 (2007/08)
Unemployment levels:	8.8% (2007)
Key economic sectors:	Agriculture, Tourism, Manufacturing and Financial Services
Principal Exports:	Clothing and Textiles, Sugar, Molasses and cut Flowers
HIV and Aids prevalence:	1.7% (2007)
Gross Primary Enrolment Ratio:	102% (2006)
Gross Secondary Enrolment Ratio:	81% (2002)
Gross Tertiary Enrolment Ratio:	17% (2006)

Source: Country context data was obtained from a variety of sources: (CIA, 2008; SADC, 2008; UNAIDS, 2008; UNDP, 2008; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006)



NATIONAL LEVEL OVERVIEW

Primary education in Mauritius runs over six years from Standard I to VI. Children exit this level when they successfully complete the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) in their final year. Secondary education is effectively divided into two. Lower Secondary runs from Form I to Form V over five years and pupils exit this level when they complete the Cambridge School Certificate (SC). This effectively equates with 'O Levels'. In the Upper Secondary level, students spend two years completing Form VI. They exit this level by completing the Cambridge Higher School Certificate (HSC) which is effectively an 'A Level' accreditation (ILO, 2005).

There are two publicly funded universities: University of Mauritius and University of Technology

TYPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS
Publicly funded universities	2
Publicly funded polytechnics or specialised colleges	7
Privately funded, accredited universities or colleges	30
TOTAL	39

Source: Mauritius MoE questionnaire response

POLICY CONTEXT

The government of Mauritius aims to develop the country into a centre for higher education. Education reform is currently under way at the pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels, and the government has now turned its attention to the higher education sector. A national priority is to increase enrolment in higher education from the current gross tertiary enrolment rate of 17% to about 30%. As a result, the tertiary education sector is to be transformed and expanded. This priority dovetails with the government's national strategy to develop the country into a regional knowledge hub.

The overall goal of the National Strategic Plan for Education and Training (NSPET) 2008-2020 is to make Mauritius a knowledge hub to serve the region. The strategy is to create an enabling environment for Mauritius to emerge as a regional knowledge hub and a centre for higher learning and excellence (SARUA 2008 – MRCI Report).

HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Act 1988	Has been amended to implement the MoE's overarching regulatory framework that makes provision for the setting up of private universities and branches/centres/campuses of overseas institutions, and for the development of a robust framework for assuring quality in all tertiary education.

LIST OF STATUTORY BODIES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)	The TEC is the Ministry's executive arm to promote, plan, and co-ordinate post-secondary education in Mauritius. It has the responsibility of allocating government funds to public tertiary institutions and implementing a regulatory framework in the sector.
Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB)	The IVTB was launched in 1989 initially to regulate, facilitate and provide training. However, in 2001 the government changed the organisation's focus to become an enhanced provider of training. The IVTB now operates twelve Training Centres, offering courses in over 50 different fields at different levels, including at tertiary level, under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources.
Mauritius College of the Air (MCA)	Mauritius College of the Air (MCA).
Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES)	The Mauritius Examinations Syndicate is committed to organise and conduct examinations at all levels consistent with national policies and goals and in line with emerging international trends.
Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA)	The aim of the MQA is to enhance good practice and expertise, thereby safeguarding public interest in quality education and training. It grants approval for training institutions, training institution managers, programme officers, training institution trainers, and courses.

FUNDING DATA	
Public Expenditure on Education as a % of Gross National Income (GNI)	3.3%
% Education budget allocated to higher education	13%
Loan/Grant scheme in place	No

Source: SARUA (2008) – 'Towards a Common Future: Higher Education in the SADC Region'

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	
KEY INDICATORS	INDICATORS FOR MAURITIUS
R&D Intensity [The ratio of Gross expenditure on R&D (GERD) to Gross Domestic Product (GDP)]	0.29% (1997)
ISI Output (Number of papers published in the 7500+ journals of the ISI Web of Science)	1990-1995:96 1996-2001:212 2002-2007: 313

Source: SARUA (2008) – CREST report

LIST OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN MAURITIUS	
UNIVERSITIES IN MAURITIUS	WEBSITE
University of Mauritius	www.uom.ac.mu
University of Technology	www.utm.ac.mu



UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS

TERTIARY EDUCATION in Mauritius can be said to have started with the establishment of the island's College of Agriculture in 1924. It was around this nucleus that the University of Mauritius was constructed. The university opened in 1965 with three schools: Agriculture, Administration, and Industrial Technology. Since the 1960s it has expanded to comprise five faculties: Agriculture, Engineering, Law and Management, Science, and Social Studies and Humanities. It also has a Centre for Medical Research and Studies, a Centre for Distance Education, a Centre for Information Technology and Systems, and a Consultancy Centre where the university's expertise can be matched to client needs in the general economy. The university has grown at about 10 percent per annum over the past decade. Today, with 256 academic and research staff, the University of Mauritius dominates the tertiary education sector on the island. Its vision is 'to be a leading international university, bridging knowledge across continents through

excellence and intellectual creativity'.

Student fees account for 27 percent of the university's income, while a further 69 percent comes from government. The remaining four percent is earned through consultancy work and other income.

This is where the Consultancy Centre comes in. Its purpose is to maximise the revenue-earning potential of the university's expertise in research and training, and to consolidate existing links with local partners in the public and private sectors, as well as foreign partners, and to seek out new potentialities. The Consultancy Centre plays an important regional role by providing services to various African countries – for example in South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and also Mauritius – thus fulfilling the institution's secondary role of using teaching and research expertise as tools for sustainable development in the SADC region.

FACTS AND FIGURES AT A GLANCE⁴⁰

In 2007, the University of Mauritius had 8,220 contact students, of whom 5,632 were studying full-time and 2,588 part-time. The majority of students (8,170) were nationals, while there were also four SADC country citizens and 46 students from countries outside the SADC region.

TABLE 1 UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS: SUMMARY OF ENROLMENT NUMBERS (ACTUAL DATA, 2007)

MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY	TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS (HEADCOUNT)	NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED PER LEVEL OF STUDY				
		UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE/ DIPLOMA	POST-GRADUATE DEGREE/ DIPLOMA	MASTERS DEGREE	DOCTORAL DEGREE	OTHER QUALIFICATIONS (SHORT COURSES, CERTIFICATES ETC)
Science, Engineering & Technology	3,277	2,640	0	496	14	0
Business, Management & Law	3,055	2,582	0	456	17	0
Humanities and Social Sciences	1,366	1,148	0	119	46	53
Health Sciences	427	427	0	0	0	0
Other (Arts)	95	90	0	5	0	0
TOTALS	8,220	6,887	0	1,076	77	53

Source: University of Mauritius questionnaire response

TABLE 2 UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS: ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH STAFF (ACTUAL DATA, 2007)

MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY	TOTAL NUMBER (HEADCOUNT)
Science, Engineering & Technology	118
Business, Management & Law	44
Humanities and Social Sciences	59
Health Sciences	13
Other (Agricultural)	16
Other (Specialised Centres, Virtual Centre for Innovative Learning Technologies, Centre for Applied Social Research)	16
TOTALS	256

Source: University of Mauritius questionnaire response

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⁴⁰ All data presented in this section is headcount data.

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

THE GOVERNMENT of Mauritius approved the establishment of this university in January 2000. Three specialist schools were planned: the School of Business Informatics and Software Engineering; the School of Public Sector Policy and Management; and the School of Sustainable Development Science. The university became operational in September 2001.

The Mauritius University of Technology is determined to become one of the leading tertiary education institutions in the region, and on both sides of the Indian Ocean. At the moment there are 42 academic and research staff, 40 percent of them female, who in 2006/07 produced 35 research publications in internationally and locally accredited journals – but expansion is on the way. The mooted new campus at Moka on the island's central plateau will provide better facilities and enable the university to increase its numbers of staff and students, as well as the number of programmes offered by the various schools.

Some specific objectives that are being pursued at the

university will render the education and training services on offer more versatile and accessible. The first is to develop an admissions policy that will allow students with differing entry qualifications access. The second is to design programmes that can be entered and exited at different levels. The third is to offer part-time and distance learning options as well as full-time study.

In addition, the university seeks to promote the concepts of entrepreneurship and lifelong learning in all students, while helping them to take maximum benefit from a physical environment that is designed to be conducive to their development.

On the financial side, the institution runs for the most part on student fees, with only 10 percent coming from the state. In an attempt to increase revenue, the Mauritius University of Technology has designed a strategic plan to seek out additional sources of income.

FACTS AND FIGURES AT A GLANCE⁴¹

The University of Technology, Mauritius, had a student enrolment of 1,500 in 2007, all of whom were part-time students. All students were contact students, with the majority (1,485) being Mauritian nationals, while 15 were from countries outside the SADC region.

TABLE 1 UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, MAURITIUS: SUMMARY OF ENROLMENT NUMBERS (ACTUAL DATA, 2007)

MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY	TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS (HEADCOUNT)	NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED PER LEVEL OF STUDY				
		UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE/ DIPLOMA	POST-GRADUATE DEGREE/ DIPLOMA	MASTERS DEGREE	DOCTORAL DEGREE	OTHER QUALIFICATIONS (SHORT COURSES, CERTIFICATES ETC)
Science, Engineering & Technology	286	224	0	53	9	0
Business, Management & Law	1,214	957	0	226	16	15
TOTALS	1,500	1,166	0	279	25	15

Source: University of Technology, Mauritius, questionnaire response

TABLE 2 UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, MAURITIUS: ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH STAFF (ACTUAL DATA, 2007)

MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY	TOTAL NUMBER (HEADCOUNT)
Science, Engineering & Technology	21
Business, Management & Law	21
TOTALS	42

Source: University of Technology, Mauritius, questionnaire response

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⁴¹ All data presented in this section is headcount data.

