



higher education  
& training

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING, DR BE NZIMANDE, AT THE STAKEHOLDER MEETING ON THE  
FUTURE OF ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTRES, SOUTHERN SUN,  
OR TAMBO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 16 APRIL 2014 AT 10H00**

Programme Director

The Director-General and Senior Management of the Department

Representatives from our Quality Councils

Representatives from Sector Education and Training Authorities

Representatives from Worker Education Organizations

Representatives from University Adult Education and Post School Sector

Representatives from the Non-Government Organizations

Representatives from formations of Adult Education and Training stakeholders

Adult Education and Training Officials from Provincial Departments of Education

Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to everyone present.

Thank you all for heeding the call to attend this meeting. As the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) we welcome you all. The Ministerial Task Team on Community Education and Training Centres, in doing its research, indicated the need, amongst other recommendations, for intervention with regard to the closure of adult education centres in universities.

In seeking to address the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, DHET seeks to provide different pathways towards catering for the needs of

communities. Since its establishment in 2009, the Department has made considerable strides towards achieving an effective post-school education and training system, driven by the vision in the 2013 White Paper for Post-School Education and Training. The White Paper seeks to provide a single, coherent, differentiated and highly articulated post-school education and training system, aligning it with the country's overall development agenda, and with links to various development strategies such as the National Development Plan, New Growth Path, Industrial Policy Action Plan, Human Resources Development Strategy for South Africa 2010-2030 and South Africa's Ten Year Innovation Plan. These policy frameworks highlight the importance of education and training as a strategic programme towards achieving our socio-economic goals.

The White Paper highlights a number of challenges within the sector and provides for an overhaul of the system in line with the various national policy frameworks and goals. These include increased access and greater quantity, improved quality and relevance, diversification and integration, mobility and innovation. The White Paper further commits the Department to increase enrolment in all sub-sectors of the system, with community colleges expected to enrol about 1 000 000 learners by the year 2030. The central tenet of such commitment is to address the needs of our out-of-school youth and adults, and generally to ensure that the majority of our people acquire the skills required to participate actively in the productive economy.

The White Paper identifies some key systemic issues that must be addressed. These are:

- i) the need to expand access to diverse but complementary post-school education and training opportunities;
- ii) the need for greatly enhanced levels of quality and success throughout the system and in individual institutions;
- iii) improved articulation between institutions and across the system; and
- iv) enhanced relevance of programmes offered in post-school institutions in relation to South African economic and developmental needs.

On the lines and in the spirit of the White Paper we intend to address these issues through institutions in the sector, expanding access particularly to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and community colleges, and creatively using distance and open education resources, while mainstreaming Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) strategies. The White Paper's overall strategy is to build on strength where it exists in the system and deal with weaknesses and gaps in a concerted way.

Social issues which challenge the realization of the White Paper and which need to be factored into intervention strategies are the impact of inherited class and race inequalities, along with gender inequality and the challenge of the patriarchal aspects of our society. However, the biggest challenge is youth who are neither in employment, nor in education and training (NEETs), facing poverty and the struggle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and other health and social ills.

According to Census 2011, about 18 million potential learners need some form of post school education and training. In addition, over 3.8 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are NEETs. If extended to include those under the age of 35, the number would be even higher. Given the extent of the challenge, its implications and impact on broader national policy imperatives, the Honourable President Jacob Zuma's administration has declared education an APEX priority which requires the involvement of society as a whole, with government as a lead agency joined by civic organizations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations, training providers, employers, business and communities.

In dealing with such a challenge, a multi-dimensional and integrated intervention is essential. We have established a number of dedicated projects and have appointed task teams to investigate and to advise on appropriate measures. The Ministerial Task Team on Community Education and Training Centres (CETCs) was established in 2011 to review and recommend a community college model that responds to the South African socio-economic landscape. Other complementary work was produced by task teams on the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) Performance Review, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education (SAIVCET) respectively.

These teams have completed their work and their reports were published for public comments.

The Ministerial Task Team on Community Education and Training Centres made far reaching recommendations in order to build a new community college sub-system within the post school education and training sector. The Task Team recommended a comprehensive vision taking into account the various target groups, each of them disaggregated according to age and potential learning needs. A community college system should aim to break the back of adult illiteracy, provide second chance opportunities to young people and adults who did not complete secondary school and provide flexible, lifelong and continuing education in communities. They should offer various routes to enable the development of skills including literacy, numeracy and vocational skills, to enhance personal, social, family and employment experiences. One of the critical areas raised by the Task Team is the role of communities in running and managing community education and training institutions. Their involvement should be underpinned by the principles of education as a public good and as critical for inclusive democracy, and the development of an active and participatory citizenry as central to social transformation of communities.

In recognizing the diverse nature of learning needs, the Task Team further proposed the development of a network of post school programmes and institutions providing multiple access and progression opportunities to adults and youth. To achieve this, the Team proposed that a substantial policy and legal framework be developed for community colleges once the White Paper process was complete. The policy and legal framework would provide guidance with regards to funding and governance arrangements in community colleges. The Department has already amended the Further Education and Training Colleges Act, providing the legal framework that will guide the establishment of community colleges. In addition to this, I will shortly be gazetting the first transitional Policy on Community Colleges for public comment. This policy will assist us in shifting the function of Adult Education and Training from a provincial to an exclusive national competence.

I have also made a determination that 9 community colleges will be established as part of piloting the implementation of this sub-system. Such piloting was welcomed in

your public comments on the Task Team report. A number of you also made critical observations in the process of public commentary on the roll-out of the sub-system, cautioning the Department against hasty decisions on the roll-out, requesting clarity on the nature of governance and the involvement of communities, highlighting the need for adequate funding for the system and looking for reassurance that the programmes offered would indeed respond to community needs. The policy I have referred to will provide more clarity on these matters.

In addition to the draft Policy on Community Colleges, I will also publish the draft Policy on Professional Qualifications for Community Education and Training Educators. The policy will provide a basis for the establishment of core curricula for community education and training educator qualifications. Accredited higher education institutions will have to use these to develop programmes leading to community education and training educator qualifications. It should be noted that this is but one of a suite of possible qualification policies for those providing education and training within the envisaged community colleges.

The establishment of the South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCET) would be a major initiative in contributing to the improvement in quality provision within the College Sector. In both the current TVET Colleges and Public Adult Learning Centres, the quality of provision is generally poor, with a few pockets of excellence. SAIVCET will therefore play a major role in supporting provision for the College Sector through research, curriculum development, educator development and support. The recommendations of the SAIVCET and CETC reports, though they start from different positions, have in common the conclusion that there is a need for dedicated and focused capacity for the adult and community education and training sector. Both reports argue for a separate institute focusing on this sector. The conceptualisation of SAIVCET is such that it will above all create the necessary networks and partnerships utilising current expertise as the basis for discharging its mandate.

If current expertise is to be utilised for the initiatives, then adult education and training capacity in universities must be preserved and re-built. In this regard, I am quite happy with the responses of the universities in relation to my request to

conceptualise their support role in the post school education and training system. The proposed and established post school education and training institutes in various universities are a welcome development. This will contribute greatly to provision in the envisaged community college sub-system.

In conclusion, I am quite clear that the challenges and initiatives I have highlighted point to the need for major collaboration with stakeholders in this sector, as a lot of intellectual and academic work must go into the development of the community college sub-system. I trust that the necessary partnerships will be forged with the Department in resolving the challenges confronting the country in relation to skills development.

I am therefore keen to listen and to engage with you today.

I thank you.