

Education



In November 2014, South Africa participated in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization world conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), in Nagoya, Japan under the theme, “Celebrating a Decade of Action – What have we achieved, what lessons learnt.”

The conference praised South Africa for being one of the countries that have made much progress in the area of ESD in the past decade.

One of the most significant achievements in South Africa was the reaffirmation and attention given to the role of indigenous knowledge and practices regarding sustainable living, sustainable development and caring for the well-being of future eco-systems.

During the conference, awareness and engagements in ESD ensured that South Africa’s National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R to 12 embedded the essence of ESD principles in every subject. Principles include human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice: infusing the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.

The NCS grades R to 12 is sensitive to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors.

The Ministry of Education has committed to strengthening the progress already made in basic education by integrating the five priority action areas of the Global Action Programme into the strategic planning framework of the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

This would be done by:

- advancing policy
- integrating sustainability practices into education and training environments (whole-institution approaches)
- increasing the capacity of educators and trainers
- empowering and mobilising youth
- encouraging local communities and municipal authorities to develop community-based ESD programmes.

Basic education

The aim of the DBE is to develop, maintain and support a South African school education system for the 21st century in which all citizens have access to lifelong learning, as well as education and training, which will, in turn, contribute towards

improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic South Africa.

In November 2014, a task team established by the Minister of Basic Education recommended medium to long term improvements to the standard National Senior Certificate (NSC).

The DBE presented the task team's findings and recommendations to the Portfolio Committee on the report looking into the promotion requirements for the NSC.

Some of the recommendations included the retention of Mathematics Literacy and Mathematics following concerns around the NSC.

The 30% pass requirement was one of a small component of the pass requirements and it does not encapsulate the standard of NSC. The NSC reflected an equivalent if not higher standard in certain aspects to the old Senior Certificate (SC) and that the requirements for admission to bachelor studies were higher in the NSC than the old SC given that a candidate has to obtain a pass in four subjects at 50%.

Action Plan 2014: Towards the realisation of Schooling 2025

This action plan explains the 27 national goals that lie at the heart of the plan. The future of basic education is informed by Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025.

- Medium- to long-term interventions focus on:
- improving the quality of teaching and learning, with an emphasis on strengthening numeracy and literacy
- undertaking regular assessments to track progress
- improving ECD
- ensuring a credible outcomes-focused planning and accountability system.

Annual National Assessment (ANA)

ANA are standardised national assessments for languages and mathematics in the intermediate phase (grades 4 – 6) and in literacy and numeracy for the foundation phase (grades 1 – 3).

Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS)

CAPS is a single, comprehensive, and concise policy document, which will replace the current Subject and Learning Area Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Sub-

ject Assessment Guidelines for all the subjects listed in the NCS grades R to 12.

CAPS is part of the NCS grades R to 12 and represents a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools.

Role players

Provincial departments of education

The national department shares a concurrent role with the provincial departments for basic schooling and ECD, but it is the responsibility of each provincial department to finance and manage its schools directly.

District offices are the provincial departments' main interface with schools.

Council of education ministers (CEM)

The CEM, consisting of the Minister of Basic Education, the Minister of Higher Education and Training and the nine provincial members of the executive councils for education, meets regularly to discuss the promotion of national education policy, share information and views on all aspects of education in South Africa, and coordinate action on matters of mutual interest.

Heads of Education Departments Committee (Hedcom)

Hedcom consists of the Director-General (DG) of the DBE, the deputy DGs of the department and the heads of provincial departments of education.

Umalusi

Umalusi is responsible for the development and management of a sub-framework of qualifications for general and further education and training and for the attendant quality assurance hence its name, which means "herder" or "shepherd." In Nguni culture, this is the person who is the guardian of the family's wealth.

National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (Needu)

Needu ensures effective evaluation of all teachers based on the extent to which learner performance improves. This independent evaluation provides evidence to support proposals

on the need to remedy shortcomings in educational practice, eliminate barriers to quality education and develop the knowledge and professional capacity of educators.

Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC)

The main purpose of the ELRC is to maintain labour peace within public education through processes of dispute prevention and resolution.



Programmes and projects

Learning and teaching support material Educational portal

The portal is a free service to registered users, who must go through a once-off, no-cost registration process.

The www.thutong.doe.gov.za offers a range of curriculum and learner-support material, professional development programmes for educators, and administration and management resources for schools.

Thutong – meaning “a place of learning” in Setswana – features a searchable database of web-based curriculum resources for various education sectors, grades and subjects.

Improving access to free and quality basic education

School fees are set at annual public meetings of school governing bodies, where parents vote on the amount to be paid.

Parents who cannot afford to pay, or who can only afford a smaller amount, are granted an exemption or reduction in fees.

Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Development Initiative (Asidi)

The Asidi project forms part of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission, which is aimed at rolling out infrastructure delivery in the country.

Asidi is an ongoing programme aimed at implementing the basic safety norms and standards in school infrastructure, and to ensure that the facilities are conducive for effective teaching and learning.

The public-private programme aims to eradicate mud schools in the country, and provide electricity, water and sanitation to needy schools by March 2016.

Higher education and training

Education at all levels remains a top priority of government. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is responsible for post-school education and training in universities, colleges and adult education centres. The department has been building a single, coherent, differentiated and articulated post-school education and training system. This will contribute to overcoming the structural challenges facing society by expanding access to education and training opportunities and increasing equity, as well as achieving high levels of excellence and innovation.

South Africa's higher education landscape comprises the following institutions:

- Cape Peninsula University of Technology
- Central University of Technology, Free State
- Durban Institute of Technology
- Mangosuthu University of Technology
- National Institute for Higher Education, Northern Cape
- National Institute for Higher Education, Mpumalanga
- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
- North West University
- Rhodes University
- Sol Plaatje University, Eastern Cape
- Tshwane University of Technology
- University of Cape Town
- University of Fort Hare
- University of the Free State
- University of Johannesburg
- University of KwaZulu-Natal
- University of Limpopo
- University of Mpumalanga

- University of Pretoria
- University of South Africa
- University of Stellenbosch
- University of Venda
- University of the Western Cape
- University of the Witwatersrand
- University of Zululand
- Vaal University of Technology
- Walter Sisulu University.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

TVET comprises vocational, occupational and Artisan education and training as offered by TVET colleges. This band of education and training is also referred to as 'post-school',



meaning that it refers to education and training that takes place after leaving school, even if only with a Grade 9 completed. The only age restriction for a person wishing to study at the TVET level is that the person should be 16 years or older. There are 50 registered and accredited public TVET colleges in South Africa operating on more than 264 campuses spread across the rural and urban areas of the country.

Role players

South African Qualifications Authority (Saq)

Saqa is a statutory body originally set up in terms of the Saqa Act of 1995. The organisation, which is well-recognised nationally and internationally, focuses on upholding the principles of the National Qualifications Framework, including ensuring access, quality, redress and development for all

learners through an integrated national framework of learning achievements.

Sector education and training authorities (Setas)

Skills development has been identified as a key requirement for economic growth in South Africa and for the economic empowerment of the previously disadvantaged majority.

Setas are responsible for the disbursement of training levies payable by all employers in the country.

Part of the objective of the Setas is to ensure that the skills requirements of the various sectors are identified, and that the adequate and appropriate skills are readily available.

They are required to ensure that training is of the appropriate quality and meets standards as laid out by the national framework.

National Skills Authority (NSA)

The NSA is an advisory body to give guidance to the Minister of Higher Education and Training on:

- policy, strategy, implementation and NSA allocations
- liaising with Setas about policy, strategy and sector-skills plans
- implementing the NSDS
- reviewing the accounts and balance sheet of NSA annually
- receiving and using information from the Skills Development Planning Unit.

National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)

NSFAS is responsible for providing loans and bursaries to eligible students at all public universities and TVET colleges throughout the country. It also collects student loan repayments to replenish the funds available for future generations of students.

