



# Education

Education plays an important role in equalising individuals' life chances, promoting economic mobility, advancing economic growth, creating employment, eradicating poverty and reducing inequality.

## Basic education

The aim of the Department of Basic Education (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.

Despite challenges, there has been a steady progress in education, with government systematically addressing the shortcomings that have hampered progress in the past. With less time left before the 2015 target, the DBE is set to fulfil the millennium development goals for expanding access to education.

In 2013, there were about 11,9 million learners in more than 24 000 public schools, with 391 708 educators. The independent schools have 513 694 000 learners, taught by 33 187 educators in 1 583 schools.

Grade R enrolment had more than doubled, from 300 000 in 2003 to 705 000 in 2011, which means it was well on track to meet government's target of having 100% coverage for Grade R by 2014. It is also encouraging that more learners are completing grades 9 and 12, and that the percentage of Grade 12 learners who qualify for Bachelor degree studies has increased.

During the 2013 examinations, the overall matric pass rate improved to 78,2%, with 439 779 learners out of 562 112 passing, while the physical science pass rate improved to 67,4%. In 2013, 142 666 learners passed maths taking the pass rate for this subject to 59,1%, compared with 54% in 2012.

## Action Plan 2014: Towards the realisation of Schooling 2025

The Action Plan to 2014, forms part of a larger vision called Schooling 2025. This Action Plan explains the 27 national goals that lie at the heart of the plan of which 13 are output goals dealing with better school results and better enrolment of learners in schools. The remaining 14 goals deal with things that must happen for the output goals to be realised.

The future of basic education is informed by the Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025.

In May 2013, the Department of Basic Education announced that all schools will from 2014 offer an African language to all learners from grades R to nine.

It is perceived that African languages do not enjoy the same development and utility as English and Afrikaans. The department will therefore ensure that all African languages are equally developed and used by learners in the best interest of their learning and performance in their 13 years of schooling.

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 early childhood development (ECD)
- ensuring a credible outcomes-focused planning and accountability system.

## 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 Subject Assessment Guidelines for all the subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement (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.

In 2013/14, the department increased its focus on technical secondary schools. To improve facilities and equipment R220,9 million was allocated for the recapitalisation of these schools. This will assist in addressing skills shortages and joblessness.

## 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.

At a CEM meeting in August 2013 it was decided that all provinces should strive to have a chair and a desk for every child.

### **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. In May 2013, the department received the unit’s first national report for 2012 on the state of literacy teaching and learning in the Foundation Phase.

This independent evaluation provided 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.

The department will engage Needu’s recommendations. For 2013/14, Needu was allocated R13,4 million.

### **Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC)**

The ELRC serves the public education sector nationally.

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

### **Programmes and projects Learning and teaching support material**

The department increased learner access to workbooks and coverage to improve literacy, numeracy and, reading.

Close to 24 million copies of Workbook 1 were delivered to 23 115 schools by November 2012, for use in 2013.

By 2013, around 114 million full-colour national workbooks, which the Australian Council for Educational Research has confirmed are of a high standard, had been distributed to schools.

In January 2013, the National Youth Development Agency gave R450 000 towards the My Future, My Career Project, which provides secondary school learners with career education screenings in cinema complexes.

## 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. The threshold target allocation for no-fee schools for operational expenditure has increased to R880 per learner. The national per learner target amount for Quintile 1 schools is R960.

## Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Development Initiative (Asidi)

The Asidi project has become part of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission, which is aimed at rolling out infrastructure delivery in the country. The Minister of Basic Education launched the One-school-a-week campaign in July 2013 at the handover ceremony of Mandela Park Primary School in Mthatha, which coincided with the celebration of the late former President Nelson Mandela’s 95th birthday.

The R8,2 billion public-private programme aims to eradicate the 496 mud schools in the country, provide water and sanitation to 1 257 schools and electricity to 878 schools by March 2016.

## Learner health

Key among the department’s successes is the Integrated School Health Programme that will offer, over time, a comprehensive and integrated package of health services to all learners. In 2013/14, the department aimed to provide health services to 750 000 learners in grades 1, 4, 8 and 10 as well as learners repeating grades in Quintile 1 and 2 primary and secondary schools. Services would also be extended to special schools.

In 2013, the department developed the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Use among Learners in Schools.

## 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.

## National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS)

The DHET is responsible for ensuring the development of a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path.

As part of an initiative to reduce the vacancy rate of about 45 000 jobs in the maritime industry, 12 Further Education and Training (FET) colleges across the country started offering courses in 2013 aimed at equipping young people for careers in the industry.

The FET colleges will meet at least 80% of the industry's skills demands, producing artisans such as riggers, welders and boilermakers.

## Further Education and Training

Over the 2013 Medium Term Expenditure Framework period, R17,4 billion was allocated to ensure that FET college enrolments continue on this trajectory. This includes investment in FET college infrastructure to turn college campuses into learning, information and communications technology, sports, entertainment and business incubation centres.

During 2013/14, the department ensured that each college had structures that enable a learning institution to function optimally.

At the beginning of 2013, a notice was published in the *Government Gazette*, which effectively transferred authority over FET college management staff from the provincial departments of education to the DHET with effect from 1 April 2013.

## 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.

### Quality Council for Trades and Occupations

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations addresses the quality of training in and for the workplace, and ensures that such training and knowledge is accredited and certified, including proper recognition of prior learning.

The National Artisan Moderation Body is responsible for coordinating artisan development in South Africa. Plans are in place to establish offices in the engineering campuses of public FET colleges.

## Higher Education South Africa (Hesa)

Hesa is the voice of South Africa's university leadership as it represents vice-chancellors of public universities. Hesa provides services to member universities in five main areas, namely:

- strategic research
- policy advocacy and stakeholder engagement
- sector support, including providing university leaders and their institutions with a supportive network and opportunities for collective action
- special programmes to strengthen institutions' capacity
- value-adding services, including scholarships and international programmes.

## Human Resource Development Council of South Africa (HRDCSA)

The HRDCSA is a national, multitiered and multi-stakeholder advisory body. HRDCSA held its first meeting of its second term in Pretoria, September 2013. New council members were also introduced at the meeting. The DHET presented recommendations from the Economic Development Department, the HRDCSA Technical Task Team on the Alignment of the Human Resource Development Strategy to the New Growth Path as well as skills planning.

## Sector education and training authorities (Setas)

Setas help to implement the National Skills Development Strategy and to increase the skills of people in particular sectors. New Seta grant regulations came into operation in April 2013 and require Setas to focus funding on structured workplace learning and experience, and promoting partnerships between education and training institutions and employers. This will help institutionalise this work within the post-school education and training system.

## 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.

In 2013, the Department of Higher Education and Training established a National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences. This initiative was to ensure that the humanities and social sciences were not neglected as focus was on developing the economy and providing it with the scientific, industrial and commercial skills.

## **National Skills Fund (NSF)**

In 2013, for the first time in its history, the NSF reached a stage where its annual disbursements were on par with annual income. In addition, all of the fund's R7 billion historic reserves were earmarked for specific skills-development projects of national priority.

Most of the expenditure was for improving infrastructure and programmes for expanding capacity and improving quality in the production of skills in engineering, medical and veterinary sciences, renewable energy, various trades and rural development.

## **National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)**

NSFAS is the department's primary tool for ensuring that poor students have access to post-school education. Since 1991, NSFAS has assisted 1,4 million students and many NSFAS alumni play important roles in the country's economy and society.

The board and staff of NSFAS continue to implement the recommendations of the Ministerial Review Committee Report of 2010 and have made significant progress in the turnaround process to enable the entity to deliver on its mandate.

The department's allocation to NSFAS for 2013/14 amounted to R5,769 billion. This included R3,693 billion for loans and bursaries to universities, and R1,988 billion for bursaries for FET colleges.

## **Libraries in the higher education sector**

The higher education libraries hold the bulk of South Africa's scientific and scholarly information resources and fulfil more than half of all interlibrary loan requests.

Pressure on higher education libraries includes redistribution of educational resources and rising prices. These libraries have responded by forming consortia, looking at access and exploring digital resources.

