

# Pocket Guide to South Africa 2016/17

## Education



South Africa has prioritised the provision of comprehensive Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes to address the development needs of those aged 0–4 years. The ECD programmes are being offered at day-care centres, crèches, playgroups, and nursery and pre-primary schools.

According to the results of the General Household Survey, 2016 released by Statistics South Africa, approximately 41,3% of South African children aged 0–4 years attended day-care or educational facilities outside their homes.

The highest attendance was reported in Gauteng (56,2%) and Free State (47,6%). A much lower enrolment was, however, observed amongst children in KwaZulu-Natal (31,6%) and North West (32,9%).

Nationally, 32,8% of individuals aged five years and older attended an educational institution. Approximately 86,9% of South African individuals above the age of five years who attended educational institutions, attended school, while a further 4,8% attended tertiary institutions. By comparison, only 2,3% of individuals attended Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

Whilst the percentage in this broad age group has not changed, at peak ages of 7–15 years, attendance is almost universal. Just over a fifth (18,7%) of premature school leavers in this age group mentioned ‘a lack of money’ as the reason for not studying, while 18,9% reportedly fell out due to poor academic performance.

Although 9,9% of individuals left their studies as a result of family commitments (i.e. getting married, minding children and pregnancy), it is noticeable that a larger percentage of females than males offered this as a reason (18,5% compared to 1,3%).

Whilst this observation is accurate, the data also suggest that the ‘No fee’ school system and other funding initiatives are beginning to show improved results. The percentage of learners who reported that they were exempted from paying tuition fees increased from 0,4% in 2002 to 65,3% in 2016.

Provincially, 86,2% of learners in Limpopo and 73,2% of learners in the Eastern Cape attended no-fee schools, compared to 39,3% of learners in Western Cape and 37,4% of learners in Gauteng.

There were approximately 14 million learners at school in 2016, of which 5,8% attended private schools. Three-quarters (77,1%) of learners who attended public schools benefited from school feeding schemes. Furthermore, 69,8% of learners walked to school, while 8,2% used private vehicles.

Generally, the percentage of learners who experienced corporal punishment at school in 2016 has decreased nationally since 2011 and 9,8% of learners reportedly experienced corporal punishment at school in 2016. Corporal punishment was most common at schools in Eastern Cape (17,9%) and KwaZulu-Natal (15,0%). In terms of metros, it was most common at schools in eThekweni (14,2%).

Approximately 766 812 students were enrolled at higher educational institutions during 2016. More than two-thirds (66,4%) of these students were black African. However, proportionally this group is still under-represented.

Only 3,3% of black Africans aged 18 to 29 years were studying as opposed to 18,8% of Indian/Asian individuals and 17,5% of the white population in this age group. Only 3,5% of the coloured population was studying during 2016.

Educational attainment outcomes continue to improve with improved access to educational facilities and services. Among individuals aged 20 years and older, the percentage who attained Grade 12 as their highest level of education increased from 21,9% in 2002 to 28,4% in 2016.

Furthermore, the percentage of individuals with tertiary qualifications improved from 9,3% to 14,0%. The percentage of individuals without any schooling decreased from 10,6% in 2002 to 4,9% in 2016.

Although results show that there were declines in percentages of persons who had no formal schooling in all the provinces over the period 2002 to 2016.

Whilst functional illiteracy declined from 27,3% to 14,6% between 2002 and 2016, improved access to schooling has led to a significant decline in the percentage of functionally illiterate individuals in the 20–39 age group.

Between 2002 and 2016, the prevalence of functional illiteracy in the age group 20–39 years declined noticeably for both men (17,2% to 6,3%) and women (15,6% to 4,5%). The adult literacy rate, however, lagged behind the national average (94,4%) in provinces such as Northern Cape (89,8%), North West (90,1%) and Limpopo (90,7%).

## Basic education

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is responsible for Outcome 1 (quality basic education) of government's Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2014-2019.

The aim of the DBE, which deals with all schools from Grade R to Grade 12, is to develop, maintain and support a South African school education system for the 21st century.

The department planned to focus on: improving school infrastructure; improving curriculum delivery; increasing the number of learners completing Grade 12; providing educational opportunities to learners with severe to profound intellectual disabilities; ensuring the adequate supply of quality teachers; assessing the quality of teaching and learning and continuing the National School Nutrition Programme.

The DBE aimed to provide meals at 19 800 schools to feed about nine million learners each year, in support of the vision of the National Development Plan (NDP) of eliminating poverty and supporting food security.

The priority of the DBE is to ensure that all schools have access to water, sanitation, electricity and a safe structure, as per the minimum norms and standards for public school infrastructure.

South Africa's national basic education sector plan – the Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030, is designed to achieve the long-term vision of basic education as encapsulated in the NDP: Vision 2030.

The NDP states that “by 2030, South Africans should have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learning outcomes. The performance of South African learners in international standardised tests should be comparable to the performance of learners from countries at a similar level of development and with similar levels of access”.

## African languages

The NDP enjoins all South Africans to learn at least one indigenous language as part of nation-building and social cohesion.

The Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) is a priority programme aimed at promoting some aspects of social cohesion in society. The IIAL was piloted in grades 1-2 in 264 schools in 2014 and 2015 across all provinces. In 2016, the IIAL was implemented in 842 schools.

## Second Chance Matric Support Programme

The Second Chance Matric Support Programme started as a pilot project in 2016/17 to provide support to 10 000 registered learners preparing to rewrite the National Senior Certificate examination.

The programme provides face-to-face classes at 50 venues throughout the country, focusing on 11 subjects with high

failure rates, with two teachers per subject at each venue; as well as online support.

## **Support for learners with intellectual disabilities**

The DBE aimed to introduce a new conditional grant in 2017/18 to provide access to quality publicly funded education and support for about 8 000 learners with severe to profound intellectual disabilities.

The grant seeks to fund training for teachers and officials in 155 identified schools, 31 special schools and 280 special care centres. The learners, their caregivers and teachers will be supported by various specialist educators and therapists to ensure that educationally stimulating programmes are delivered at care centres and schools catering for learners with these disabilities.

## **Social cohesion**

The purpose of the social cohesion programmes of the DBE is to create a rights-based, socially cohesive and educationally conducive environment to support teaching and learning.

Through this approach, the DBE strives towards elevating the importance of institutional settings that acknowledge the existence of active citizenship and lays a firm foundation for social and economic development of South Africa.

The social cohesion programmes include: iNkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Programme, National Schools Moot Court, National Heritage, Youth Citizenry, Future Career Choices Campaign and Gender Empowerment programmes.

The DBE also uses sport and enrichment programmes to directly or indirectly drive the social cohesion agenda. The sport and enrichment programmes include Spelling Bee South Africa and reading clubs, school sport leagues (which include the KAY Motsepe Schools Cup), ABC Motsepe Schools Choral Eisteddfod, and physical education, which would include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Quality Physical Education and Let's Play Physical Education Challenge projects.

## **Operation Phakisa**

The Operation Phakisa Information and Communications Technology (ICT) interventions are focusing on providing an end-to-end ICT solution to schools through digital content development and distribution using offline and online

platforms, provision of connectivity, hardware, teacher professional development and e-Administration systems. This will ensure that teaching and learning experiences match the needs of the changing world.

## National Integrated Assessment Framework (NIAF)

The Annual National Assessment has since been reviewed and reconceptualised as the NIAF. The new model comprises three tiers, namely the Systemic Assessment will be administered in grades 3, 6 and 9, once every three years; the Diagnostic Assessment and the Summative Examination.

The Systemic Assessment was expected to be piloted in October 2017 and the first systemic assessment implemented in 2018.

## Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS)

CAPS is a single, comprehensive and concise policy document which has replaced the Subject and Learning Area Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines for all the subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12.

## Safety in schools

The DBE has implemented various policies and measures to ensure the safety of all learners, educators and relevant stakeholders in schools.

Interventions focus on addressing elements of physical infrastructure related to proper fencing, alarm systems and burglarproofing, resilience-building programmes for young people and the strengthening of partnerships with relevant stakeholders.

The department has a solid partnership with the South African Police Service aimed at linking schools with local police stations. A National School Safety Framework has been developed to serve as a management tool for provincial and district officials responsible for school safety, principals, senior management team members, SGB members, teachers and learners to identify and manage risk and threats of violence in and around schools.

The department has developed a National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug Use amongst learners in schools. Schools have been provided with a Guide to Drug Testing in South African Schools.

In terms of the Regulations for Safety Measures at all Public Schools, the Minister has declared all public schools as drug-free and dangerous weapon free zones. Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Sexual Violence and Harassment have been developed and distributed to schools to support schools and school communities in responding to cases of sexual harassment and violence against learners.

The guidelines set out clearly how public schools should treat victims of sexual harassment and violence, and the steps to be taken to deal with those who have or are alleged to have committed such acts.

The department has released a handbook for learners on how to prevent sexual abuse in public schools, titled *Speak Out – Youth Report Sexual Abuse*. The purpose of the handbook is to equip learners with knowledge and understanding of sexual harassment and sexual violence, its implications, ways to protect themselves from perpetrators, and where to report.

The handbook also provides very useful contact details of national and provincial organisations that can assist.

## **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.

### **Umalusi**

The Umalusi Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (GFET) sets and maintains standards through the development and management of the GFET qualifications sub-framework. The Nguni name means "herder" or "shepherd."

## **Programmes and projects**

### **Learning and teaching support material Educational portal**

Through the Thutong Portal ([www.thutong.doe.gov.za](http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za)), the DBE aims to lead the drive to improve learning in the country through appropriate use of technology.

The Thutong Portal is the online point of entry to a comprehensive array of free educational resources, policy information, and interactive services concerning all aspects of the South African schooling sector. It provides relevant information and services about the South African school curriculum, teacher development, school administration and management.

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

### **School fees and exemption**

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

Parents who cannot afford to pay school fees can apply to the SGB for conditional, partial or full exemption from paying school fees. Schools must not charge school fees for orphans.

The right not to charge school fees will be limited to the schools that have been declared no-fee schools. The names of the no-fee schools, which are determined based on the economic level of the community around the school, will be published in a provincial gazette.

### **Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Development Initiative (ASIDI)**

The objective of ASIDI is to eradicate the backlog in schools without water, sanitation and electricity, and to replace those schools constructed from inappropriate material such as mud, and asbestos to contribute towards levels of optimum learning and teaching. The Schools Infrastructure Backlog Grant funds the ASIDI portfolio.

### **Higher education and training**

The NDP envisages that by 2030, South Africans should have access to a post-school education system that empowers them to fulfil their potential. Outcome 5 (a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path)



of government's MTSF gives effect to this vision, stating that graduates of the post-school system should possess the skills and knowledge that allow them to meet the current and future needs of society and the economy.

Outcome 5 also highlights the need to expand access to programmes that address the labour market's need for intermediate skills and include a practical component.

The Department of Higher Education and Training is responsible for post-school education and training in universities, colleges and adult education centres.

The objective of the Post-School Education and Training function is that all South Africans have equitable access to relevant and quality post-school education and training.

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, Eastern Cape
- Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University.

## Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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 (SAQA)

SAQA is a statutory body that oversees the development of the National Qualifications Framework by formulating and publishing policies and criteria for the registration of organisations. It also oversees the implementation of the national framework by ensuring the registration, accreditation and assignment of functions.

#### Council on Higher Education (CHE)

The CHE is tasked with developing and implementing a system of quality assurance for higher education, including programme accreditation, institutional audits, quality promotion and capacity development.

#### Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)

The QCTO oversees the development and maintenance of the occupational qualifications sub-framework in the national qualifications framework, and advises the Minister of Higher Education and Training on all matters of policy concerning occupational standards and qualifications.

#### 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.

As per the Skills Development Act of 1998, Setas are mandated to implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve skills in the South African workforce; provide learnerships that lead to a recognised occupational qualification and fund skills development.

The core focus of Setas is creating a training system that caters for different needs and produces skilled individuals.

The authorities derive their objectives directly from the third National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), which aims to: increase access to occupationally directed programmes; promote the growth of public TVET colleges; address low levels of youth and adult literacy and numeracy skills; and encourage the better use of workplace-based skills development.

These objectives are in line with Outcome 5 (a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path) of government's MTSF 2014-2019. Setas continue to strengthen and deliver relevant priority skills to South Africa's labour market, with particular emphasis on artisan development, apprenticeships, learnerships, internships and bursaries; and partnerships with TVET colleges, universities and the market to provide work experience opportunities.

### **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)**

The NSFAS is responsible for providing loans and bursaries, developing criteria and conditions for the granting of loans and bursaries to eligible students, raising funds, recovering loans, maintaining and analysing a database of funded students, undertaking research for the better use of financial resources and advising the Minister on matters relating to student financial aid.

Government was expected to fund the increase in fees at higher learning institutions for the 2017 academic year up to a maximum of 8% for students from households earning



R600 000 or less per year. A new student-centred model to be introduced by the end of 2017/18 provides an automated financial means test that allows students to apply for funding online and directly to the scheme, not through institutions.